

1989

Obscenity: News Articles (1989): News Article 30

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Recommended Citation

Deibel, Mary, "Obscenity: News Articles (1989): News Article 30" (1989). *Obscenity: News Articles (1989)*. Paper 45.
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Senate bars grants ^{Wash. Times 7/27} for pornographic art

By Mary Deibel
SCRIPPS HOWARD NEWS SERVICE

The Senate bowed to Sen. Jesse Helms, North Carolina Republican, and yesterday ordered the National Endowment for the Arts not to use tax money to "promote, disseminate or produce obscene or indecent materials."

Angered that endowment funds found their way to artworks lawmakers say are profane or pornographic, Mr. Helms said his proposal would "prevent the NEA from funding such trash in the future."

"No artist has a pre-emptive claim on the tax dollars of the American people to put forth such trash," he said.

Mr. Helms' plan also would prohibit federal money from going to materials that denigrate "the objects or beliefs of the adherents of a particular religion or non-religion" or that "debase or revile a person, group or class of citizens on the ba-

sis of race, creed, sex, handicap, age or national origin."

"I suppose if you had material that reviled Hitler, that would be prohibited," said Sen. John Chafee, Rhode Island Republican and the lone senator who asked to go on record in opposition to Mr. Helms' restrictions.

Mr. Helms' restrictions, approved by voice vote as an amendment to an \$11 billion Interior appropriations bill after less than five minutes' debate, are the latest installment in the clash between Congress and the arts community.

The House voted 361-65 July 13 to cut the NEA's budget by \$45,000 next year — the same amount that found its way to two controversial exhibits.

The sources of friction are an exhibition by the late Robert Mapplethorpe, which includes homoerotic photographs, and a photograph by Andres Serrano that depicts a plastic crucifix submerged in the artist's urine.

Neither received endowment funds directly. But Philadelphia's Institute of Contemporary Art, which organized a traveling exhibit of Mr. Mapplethorpe's works, received \$30,000 from the NEA, while the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art in Winston-Salem, N.C., gave Mr. Serrano a \$15,000 award from its federal grant money.

Mr. Helms said he didn't want to get specific about either artist's works. But shortly before debate began, he was seen on the Senate floor flipping through a catalog from the Mapplethorpe exhibit with Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Robert Byrd, West Virginia Democrat. Mr. Byrd quickly announced that Mr. Helms' amendment was acceptable to Senate Democrats.

The Senate also ordered the same \$45,000 cut the House approved for the endowment next year and went on to forbid it from giving any money to the Philadelphia art institute or the Southeastern Center for five years.

The Senate also earmarked \$100,000 of the NEA's budget for an independent review of how the agency awards its grants.

House and Senate negotiators must work out differences in the bill.