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**Graphologists’ Hokum**

Anyone who mistakenly believes that American management has escaped its historical obsession with quick-fix gimmicks and gadgets need only read the July 14 article on the growing popularity of graphology as a personnel selection device [Business].

Whatever, if anything, a sample of handwriting might reveal about behavior, it is laughable to read the claims of pseudoscientific graphologists that their hokum “can accurately determine a candidate’s personality, strengths and weaknesses, suitability for a job, addiction and risk tendencies, and even health disorders.”

- RICHARD P. SHORE
  Washington

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**What Art and Museums Are About**

The current controversy over government funding of the arts goes to the heart of what art is about and what museums are about.

Among the many things that art does for us all is that it challenges us, it demands that we rethink our assumptions about every issue in life, from religion to politics, from love and sex to death and the afterlife. It is amazing how often those assumptions change as a result of this challenge, how often the unacceptable in one generation becomes one of the glories of the next. Thomas Eakins’ images of the nude, Rembrandt’s etchings of holy scenes in humble settings, Manet’s “Olympia,” Duchamp’s urinal, Pollock’s dripped and spattered “action paintings,” German Expressionism, Rodin’s “Balzac”—the honor roll of the reviled sages call to mind the stuff that has done us good, about the art of this or that culture—or of this or that point of view or religious, political, or sexual or political orientation—is to deny what museums are all about and what education is all about. To say that we should study only the accepted—in other words, most of us—to keep on learning. Museums are places where you can learn at any age, at your own pace, without getting tested and from the very best teachers.

And what is it that we learn about? About good cultures and bad, about the art of democracies and the art of emperors, about religions still very much alive and those long dead and those we might not call very “religious” at all. To say that museums should not present the artistic expression of this or that culture—or of this or that point of view or religious or political or cultural or even educational—denies the objectivity of what museums are about. What we know already is to use our deepest values to evolve, respond to the challenges of our own time and limit our horizons and guarantee our own mediocrity.

Government, and those who lead or influence the government, should be encouraging artists and museums and the educational system as a whole. This whole controversy tends to misunderstand what museums are about. To use the current controversy over government funding of the arts to the heart of what art is about and what museums are about.

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