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Obscenity: Andres Serrano Controversy (1989)

Education: National Endowment for the Arts  
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4-25-1989

## Obscenity: Andres Serrano Controversy (1989): Speech 03

Hugh Southern

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# NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

## NEWS



A Federal agency advised by the National Council on the Arts  
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Washington, D.C. 20506

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Immediate Release  
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### STATEMENT BY HUGH SOUTHERN ACTING CHAIRMAN NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

The Awards in the Visual Arts Program is administered by the Southeast Center for Contemporary Art, jointly funded by grants from the Equitable Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Under the Southeast Center's procedures, up to 500 artists are nominated annually by a national network of 100 professionals in American art; of these nominees, ten artists are selected each year by a distinguished five-member jury of artists and curators to receive fellowships and an exhibition/catalogue of their work. The artist being discussed was selected through this process, along with nine other artists, all chosen by the jury for the quality of their work.

The involvement of the National Endowment for the Arts as a funder of the Southeast Center for Contemporary Art follows Endowment panelists' advice, and that of the National Council on the Arts. In considering the application from the Southeast Center for this program, panelists review materials related to past artist selection and exhibitions. During the seven years of the history of the Awards in the Visual Arts, its exhibitions have appeared in many of the nation's leading museums, and have received widespread acclaim.

The Endowment is expressly forbidden in its authorizing legislation from interfering with the artistic choices made by its grantees. This limitation reflects concern that Federal funding for the arts would result in government intervention in the substance of artistic projects or in the creation of officially sanctioned artistic styles.

The National Endowment for the Arts supports the right of grantee organizations to select, on artistic criteria, their artist-recipients and present their work, even though sometimes the work may be deemed controversial and offensive to some individuals. We at the Endowment do, nonetheless, deeply regret any offense to any individual.