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Obscenity: Andres Serrano Controversy (1989): Correspondence 11

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AUGUST 7, 1989

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TO THOSE LISTED BELOW:

re: ART CENSORSHIP

NO ART CENSORSHIP BASED ON YOUR NARROW INTERPRETATION OF WORK IS ACCEPTABLE. WE DO NOT WANT AN EXTREMIST RIGHT WING SOCIETY. THAT IS NOT WHAT AMERICA IS ABOUT, REGARDLESS OF RECENT UNFORTUNATE TRENDS. WE WANT FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, UNLIMITED AND FREE, AND THESE ARE INALIENABLE RIGHTS, NOT TO BE MANIPULATED BY PUNISHING "RADICAL/INNOVATIVE" THINKING AND EXPRESSION!

THE QUESTIONS RAISED BY ART YOU DEEM OFFENSIVE ARE GOOD REASONS TO EXPLORE WHAT IT IS ARTISTS ARE ACTUALLY SAYING ABOUT EXISTENCE AND SOCIETY. FOR EXAMPLE, THE CREATOR OF "PISS CHRIST" SITES IT AS A SYMBOL OF EVANGELICAL EXPLOITATION, OF HOW THE SPIRITUAL VALUE OF THE CHRIST IMAGE HAS BEEN EXPOITED FOR MONEY AND EGO, ETC. A SLANG ENGLISH EXPRESSION FOR EXPLOITATION IS TO "PISS ON" SOMETHING. THAT MAY BE TOO STREET SMART FOR YOU, BUT IT IS NOT OFFENSIVE IN LIGHT OF THE PIECE'S REAL MEANING. CHRIST AS A PRINCIPLE HAS BEEN DEGRADED BY THE BORN-AGAIN SCAMMERS, NOT BY THIS ARTIST WHO WISHES TO EXPOSE THEM. THE DAMAGE TO CHRIST WAS DONE LONG BEFORE THIS ARTIST HAD THE WILL TO SAY SO. TODAY IN THE NEWS, A STUDY REVEALS THAT THE PUBLIC IS BEING TRAGICALLY RIPPED OFF BY "BORN AGAIN INVESTMENT SCAMS." THE ARTIST CHOSE A THEATRICAL WAY OF TELLING THE TRUTH. IT IS THE TRUTH THAT IN THE NAME OF RELIGION, AMERICANS ARE BEING SCAMMED AND "PISSSED ON." WHY IS A PHOTO CAUSING MORE OF AN UPROAR THAN THE REALITY? WHY HAVE RELIGIOUS CONS NOT BEEN STOPPED WHILE INNOCENT PEOPLE ARE RIPPED OFF FOR THEIR LIFE SAVINGS?

I DO NOT NEED FOR YOU TO "POLICE" MY ART APPRECIATION FOR ME. I AM QUITE CAPABLE OF UNDERSTANDING THIS ARTIST. WE NEED TO LOOK AT THESE TRUTHS, NOT AVOID THEM, REGARDLESS OF HOW CONTROVERSIAL THAT TOPIC OR ANY TOPIC MAY BE TO YOU, IT NEEDS TO BE LOOKED AT. YOU ABUSE YOUR POSITION OF POWER BY REQUESTING CENSORSHIP. YOU ARE UN-AMERICAN.

THE ARTIST OBVIOUSLY WANTS TO DRAW ATTENTION TO, IN A POWERFUL WAY, HOW SPIRITUAL VALUES ARE CHEAPENED BY THIS "CHRIST-SELLING" AND UNETHICAL MANIPULATION OF MASS AUDIENCES. I CAN FIGURE THAT OUT FOR MYSELF, WITHOUT A NEED FOR "UN-IMAGINATIVE" CONGRESS MEMBERS TO "POLICE" WHAT ART IS SAYING TODAY. YOUR ACTION EXPOSES YOUR NARROW MINDEDNESS IN INTERPRETATION OF PHENOMENON.

THIS IS ONE PARTICULAR INCIDENT, BUT THE IMPLICATIONS GO MUCH DEEPER. YOU HAVE NO GOD-GIVEN RIGHT TO CENSOR THE EXPRESSION OF ANYONE IN THE UNITED STATES. ARTISTS WILL NOT BE OPPRESSED BY YOUR NARROW LITERAL THINKING. IT ALSO MAKES NO SENSE TO "PUNISH" ORGANIZATIONS WHO FOLLOWED FEDERAL GUIDLINES FOR EXHIBITS, AFTER

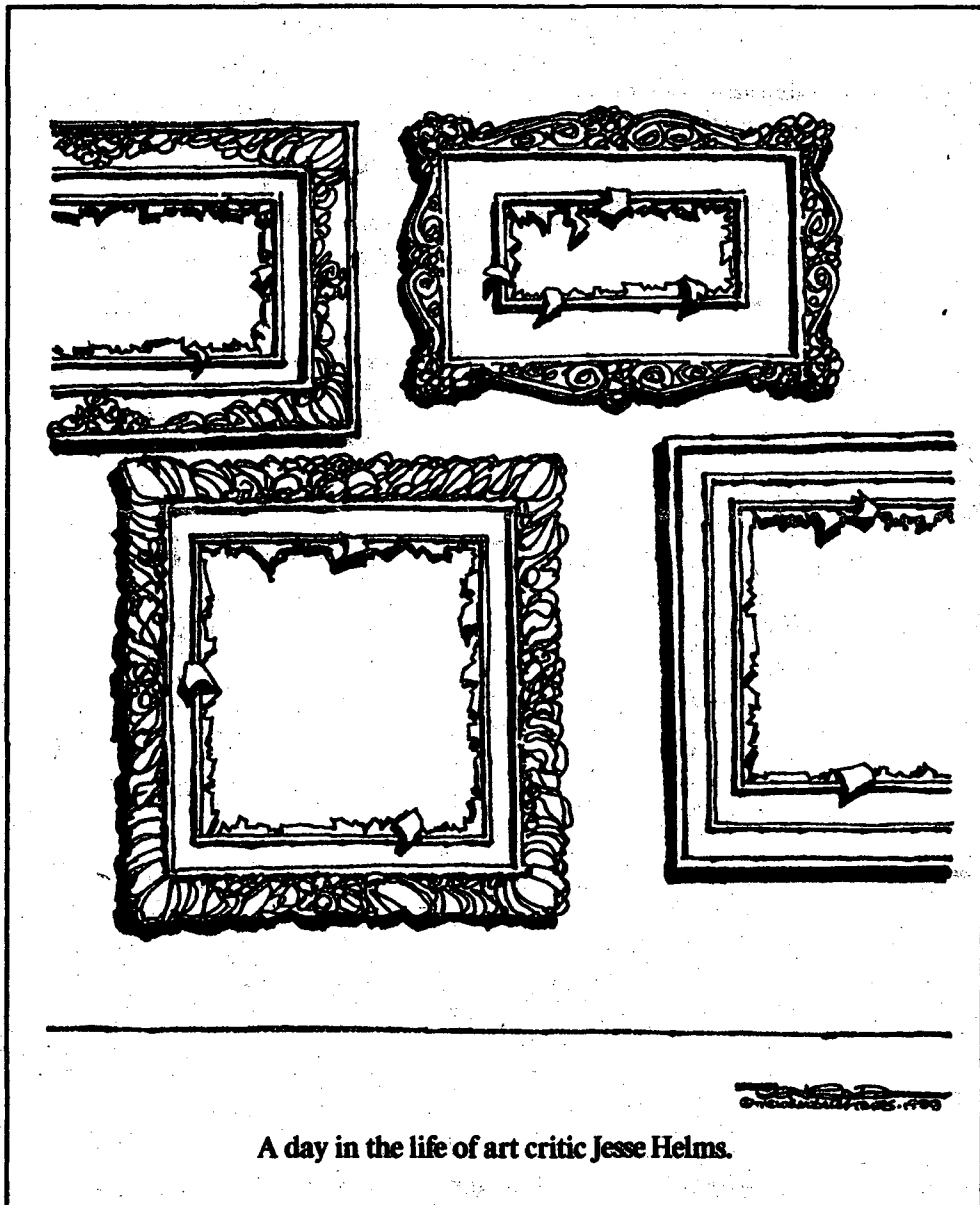
THE FACT. CONTROVERSY IS A CREATIVE MEANS OF EXPLORING DIFFICULT REALITIES. ART CANNOT BE FORCED TO BE MAINSTREAM IN ITS APPROACH, THAT IS CONTRARY TO CREATIVITY ITSELF. I AM ASHAMED OF CONGRESS ON THIS ONE. VERY ASHAMED.

SINCERELY,

Monica Rex
MONICA REX

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NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS
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A day in the life of art critic Jesse Helms.

Sovi Pretext

By S. FRED

On Aug. 23, Lithuanians will observe the anniversary of the capture of the city by the Red Army and Josef Stalin's declaration of the Soviet Union's annexation of the Baltic states.

A year ago, the Soviet Union celebrated the half-century anniversary of the capture of the city by the Red Army and Josef Stalin's declaration of the Soviet Union's annexation of the Baltic states.

But the same day, the Soviet Union celebrated the half-century anniversary of the capture of the city by the Red Army and Josef Stalin's declaration of the Soviet Union's annexation of the Baltic states.

Until now, the Soviet Union has been the only country to have fought a war against the Soviet Union. The Soviet Army responded to the Finnish attack in June, 1941, and published a book, "The Soviet Union in the Heroic War," in which the author, a historian named Semiraga, described the process by which the Soviet Union had grabbed part of Finland.

Semiraga noted that the Soviet Union had carefully prepared for the minor war before the minor war upon Finland, and that it was now upon to justify how Moscow had responded to the Finnish attack. He may have been right, but the Soviet Union's century is not of statehood.