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Obscenity: Andres Serrano Controversy (1989): Correspondence 16

John E. Booth

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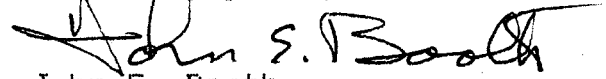
June 17, 1989

Senator Claiborne Pell
Room 335, Senate Russell Office Building
Constitution Avenue, NE
Washington, D. C., 20510

Dear Senator Pell:

Aware of the signal importance of your role in legislation relating to the arts over the years, I am writing you now with the most lively concerns for the future of government arts support, drowned as it may be by certain misguided efforts of a few of your colleagues at this time to substitute political criteria for peer review, to substitute some kind of state-sanitized art for freedom of expression. This has nothing to do with any opinion I have of the catalyst for these efforts, the work of Andres Serrano, but everything to do with the critically important principles involved in government support of the arts and everything to do with a recognition that no selection process is without flaws, but that the present one, thanks in large part to your own efforts, works remarkably well. As a board member of several arts organizations, I am compelled to write you by the gravity of this present threat.

Sincerely yours,


John E. Booth