

1989

Obscenity: Andres Serrano Controversy (1989): Correspondence 18

Margaret Hillis

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CHICAGO SYMPHONY CHORUS

89 JUN 23 AM 10: 21

June 21, 1989

The Honorable William L. Armstrong
United States Senate
528 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

THE ORCHESTRAL ASSOCIATION
ORCHESTRA HALL
220 SOUTH MICHIGAN AVENUE
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MARGARET HILLIS
DIRECTOR

JOSEPH FABBIO
MANAGER

30TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON

Dear Senator Armstrong:

On returning from out of town, I found your letter of May 31st awaiting me.

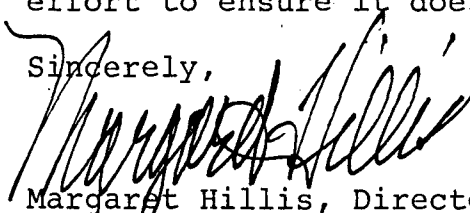
I am sorry so much distress was caused by Mr. Serrano's photograph and cannot help but think of the Salman Rushdie affair which offended so many Moslems.

At the May meeting during the Museum Application Review, the National Council discussed in detail the fellowship Mr. Serrano received from the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art. We were appalled.

As you know, the Endowment is wisely mandated by Congress to refrain from interference with artistic content. This mandate has caused a daunting complexity in the grant-making procedures.

Please be assured that these procedures will be carefully analyzed at the August meeting, and in spite of the fact that only about 20 mistakes have been made in the 80,000-grant history of this remarkable institution, we will make every effort to ensure it does not happen again.

Sincerely,



Margaret Hillis, Director, Chicago Symphony Chorus
Music Director, American Choral Foundation
Board Member, Chorus America

cc: Congressmen Yates, Williams, Coleman, Regula
Senators Pell, Kassebaum
Hugh Southern, Acting Chairman, NEA
Members, National Council on the Arts