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Congressional Anger Threatens Arts

By WILLIAM H. HONAN

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, June 16. — Angered by works of art that they consider blasphemous or pornographic, many members of Congress are demanding greater accountability concerning grants made to artists and are threatening to slash the budget of the National Endowment for the Arts.

"A confluence of factors has made this the worst firestorm for the endowment in the 25 years of its existence," said Livingston Biddle, who was chairman of the endowment during the Carter Administration and the author of a history of the agency called "Our Government and the Arts." He listed "the ethics question" in Congress, "budgetary stringency" and the absence of Presidentially appointed leadership as elements that have inflamed the situation.

Mr. Biddle added another factor. "The religious element has never before come into play at the endowment," he said. "The danger is not just that Congress will cut the budget, which would be bad enough, but that you could have censorship mandated into law."

The immediate points of friction are an exhibition of photographs by Robert Mapplethorpe and a photograph by Andres Serrano that depicts a plastic crucifix submerged in the artist's urine.

The Mapplethorpe Photos

The photographs by Mr. Mapplethorpe, a well-known New York photographer who died of AIDS in March, include some of men in poses described as homoerotic or sado-masochistic and of children in erotic poses. The exhibition was to have opened at the Corcoran Gallery here on July 1, but was canceled by the gallery after Senator Jesse Helms, Republican of North Carolina, and other members of Congress criticized the endowment for financing the show.

"If proceeding with this exhibition hurts N.E.A. appropriations, it is detrimental to the Corcoran and to every other art institution," said the Corcoran's chairman, David Lloyd Kreger.

Although the Corcoran received no endowment financing for the Mapplethorpe show, the Philadelphia Institute of Contemporary Art, which organized the traveling exhibition, received \$30,000 from the agency.

The endowment has also come under heavy fire, particularly by Representative Dick Arme, a Texas Republican, for being one of several supporters of the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art Winston-Salem, N.C., which gave a \$15,000 grant to Mr. Serrano. Mr. Serrano described his photograph as a protest against the commercialization of sacred imagery.

Letters by the Thousand

The Mapplethorpe and Serrano images have stimulated more than a thousand letters of protest to the endowment and thousands more to members of Congress. The pressure comes at a time when the endowment has been without a permanent chief since Frank Hodson resigned in February for a job with the Office of Management and Budget. Candidates have been interviewed, but for the last four months the endowment has been run by Hugh Southern, the deputy chairman, who is not eligible for the chairmanship because he is a Canadian.

"I've never seen anything like this before in my 25 years as an arts administrator," said the director of the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, Ted Potter. "Ultra-conservatives are on the rise. You see this in the civil rights area, too. It's a wind that's blowing."

"A grant that brings this kind of objection-

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The New York Times/Michael Gelssinger

Representative Dick Arme, at top, who has criticized the National Endowment for the Arts for grants to artists whose works are considered by some to be pornographic or blasphemous. Representative Sidney R. Yates said grants that bring such objections are "extremely rare."



Stuart Goldenberg

Athletes Stretch the Mind To Motivate the Body

By ROBIN FINN

Athletes have long known that a mental edge is often what separates winners from losers. But only recently have large numbers of athletes abandoned the idea that obtaining psychological help is an admission of weakness.

Therapists who specialize in treating athletes are finding a growing demand from high schools, colleges, Olympic teams and professional sports franchises concerned with keeping million-dollar stars healthy in mind and body. Sports psychology is fast becoming as familiar in training regimens as weight lifting, wind sprints and sit-ups.

"A certain level of public acceptance has been reached where it makes intuitive sense that an athlete can say, 'Why can't I work on my mental conditioning the same as on my physical conditioning?'" said Dr. Frank

Psychological training is as important as sit-ups and wind sprints.

Gardner, a psychologist for the New York Knicks and the New York Rangers.

Although many are still unwilling to tell the world about it, athletes in various fields have sought psychological advice to help them compete at their best:

Elizabeth Manley, a Canadian figure skater with a history of faltering in crucial competitions, used mental imaging techniques she learned from her psychologist and captured a silver medal at the 1988 Winter Olympics.

After 45 years of losing playoff series to Montreal, the Boston Bruins used videotapes and other programs devised by their psychologist to prepare last year. For the first time, they won.

A race car driver who could never seem to finish better than fourth or fifth discovered after sessions with a psychologist that he needed to be less affable on competition days, especially while driving. The psychologists suggested that he view his opponents as "the enemy" rather than his peers, an attitude that improved his performance.

Dr. Allan Lans a psychiatrist on the New York Mets staff, not only monitors the drug rehabilitation of Dwight Gooden, the pitcher, but also mediates disputes between players.

om Friends

our bums, and although "Old Wave," released by RCA Canada, was not issued in the United States or England, several songs from it were included on "Starrstruck," a compilation of his released this year. A 1984



Congressional Anger Threatens Arts

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is extremely rare," said Representative Sidney R. Yates, the Chicago Democrat who has long been chairman of the powerful House subcommittee that authorizes the endowment's \$150-million-to-\$160-million budget. "In 85,000 grants, less than 20 have been found to be objectionable. That's one-quarter of one-tenth of a percent. Actually, the endowment has done kind of a remarkable job. Surely, Mr. Arney can't intend to punish the symphony and the opera and every other class of art because of this one piece of visual art. I would oppose any such penalty."

Senator D'Amato Writes

In a letter written May 18 to Mr. Southern, Senator Alfonse M. D'Amato, the New York Republican, and 35 of his Senate colleagues demand changes in the endowment's grant-making procedures to deny funds to the sort of "shocking, abhorrent and completely undeserving" art they say the agency has supported.

"If the endowment does not change its grant-making procedures, Senator D'Amato said in an interview, "they have to be prepared to face legislative curtailment."

In a similar letter on June 8, 107 members of the House, at the prompting of Representative Arney, asked Mr. Southern "what steps the endowment is taking" to end its sponsorship

All About Hal Prince

Harold Prince will discuss his career as a producer and director with the theater critic Edwin Wilson on Thursday at 6 P.M. in the Bruno Walter Auditorium of the New York Public Library at Lincoln Center in Manhattan.

The talk is part of an exhibition at the library titled "Audacious Stages: The Musical Theater of Harold Prince," on view through Sept. 2, which surveys Mr. Prince's career from "The Pajama Game" in 1954 to "Don Giovanni," which opens next month at the New York City Opera. Tickets are free, first come first served. Information: (212) 870-1670.

of "morally reprehensible trash."

In late April, the endowment began to receive protests from around the country against Mr. Serrano's photograph, which had been exhibited in 10 cities without incident as part of a show organized by the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art. In addition to the grant the Southeastern Center received from the endowment, the exhibition was also sponsored by the Equitable Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation.

A Foe From the Ministry

It was in April, four months after the show closed, that the exhibition catalogue came to the attention of the Rev. Donald E. Wildmon, a United Methodist minister and the executive director of the American Family Association of Tupelo, Miss. Mr. Wild-

Legislators see pornography and blasphemy in two photo exhibitions.

mon came to national attention last summer when he led a rally in Los Angeles opposing Martin Scorsese's movie "The Last Temptation of Christ."

In a newsletter, Mr. Wildmon wrote that the endowment officials responsible for permitting tax money to subsidize the Serrano photograph "should be fired," and he called on readers to write letters of protest to their congressmen. Mr. Wildmon said in an interview that the newsletter has a circulation of 380,000, including the copies sent to 178,000 churches.

Within days, Mr. Wildmon received apologies from Richard H. Jenrette, the chairman of the Equitable Life Assurance Society, and Peter C. Goldmark, the president of the Rockefeller Foundation. For its part, the endowment responded with a statement expressing "deep regret" for any offense, but insisting on its right to support the artistic decisions of cultural institutions "even though sometimes the work may be deemed controver-

sial and offensive to some individuals."

On May 18, Senator D'Amato assailed the endowment for sponsoring a show that included the Serrano work, and tore up the catalogue on the Senate floor. In an interview, the Senator said Mr. Serrano had "a right to produce filth," but insisted that "taxpayers' dollars should not be utilized to promote it."

A Broadcast Attack

The effort to demand changes from the endowment gathered additional force on June 9 when Pat Robertson devoted a telecast on the Christian Broadcasting Network to an attack on the Serrano photograph, which he called "blasphemy paid for by Government." Mr. Robertson asked viewers to demand that the use of tax revenues for the endowment be "cut off entirely" until an "absolute" assurance by the agency that it would not support "pornography" or "material that is patently blasphemous."

Another leader in the demand for changes by the endowment is Representative Arney, who said in an interview that although "not a particularly pious man" himself, he represented a district north of Dallas "where religious conviction is very high."

Meeting With the Chairman

Last week, Representative Yates learned that Mr. Arney had set up a meeting with two members of his subcommittee to urge them to sign his letter. "I said he ought to talk to me since I'm chairman of the subcommittee," Mr. Yates said.

Accordingly, last Tuesday Mr. Yates held a private meeting in his office in which he brought together Representative Arney; Representative John P. Murtha, a Pennsylvania Democrat; Mr. Southern of the endowment, and staff assistants.

Representative Arney, several participants said, suggested that the endowment should have stronger guidelines to define what sorts of art it should support.

"I said that had been tried and found impossible," Mr. Yates recalled, "and I asked Mr. Arney if he would like to try to write some."



"I wanted a perfect ending, so I sat down to write the book with the ending in place before there even was an ending. Now I've learned, the hard way, that some poems don't rhyme, and some stories don't have a clear beginning, middle and end. Like my life, this book has ambiguity. Like my life, this book is about not knowing, having to change, taking the moment and making the best of it, without knowing what's going to happen next!"

It's Always Something Gilda Radner

**"READ IT AND LAUGH. READ IT AND WEEP.
READ IT AND DRAW STRENGTH FROM IT!"**

—Dan Jenkins

"IT'S ALWAYS SOMETHING, an extraordinarily candid, painfully graphic account of her struggle, stands as a testament to her courage and comedic spirit." —Lynn Van Matre, Chicago Tribune