

University of Rhode Island DigitalCommons@URI

Design Arts: National Academy of Design (1994)

Education: National Endowment for the Arts and
Humanities, Subject Files I (1973-1996)

1994

Design Arts: National Academy of Design (1994): Correspondence 32

Bonnie M. Costello

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.uri.edu/pell_neh_I_23

Recommended Citation

Costello, Bonnie M., "Design Arts: National Academy of Design (1994): Correspondence 32" (1994). *Design Arts: National Academy of Design (1994)*. Paper 55.

http://digitalcommons.uri.edu/pell_neh_I_23/55http://digitalcommons.uri.edu/pell_neh_I_23/55

This Correspondence is brought to you for free and open access by the Education: National Endowment for the Arts and Humanities, Subject Files I (1973-1996) at DigitalCommons@URI. It has been accepted for inclusion in Design Arts: National Academy of Design (1994) by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@URI. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@etal.uri.edu.

August 29, 1994

Senator Claiborne Pell
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator,

Recently I was astounded to find out that the National Endowment for the Arts was granting money to what I considering pornography, indecent animalistic performances, and to promote the homosexual lifestyle. I wish to inform you that I do not want to wake up at 5:30 A.M. to end my work day at 5:00 P.M. to fund through federal income taxes I pay, these events (certainly not art). I DO NOT WANT TO HAVE FEDERAL MONIES EXPENDED FOR THESE NEA ENDOWMENTS. I DO NOT WANT TO WORK SO THAT THESE "ARTISTS" MAY RECEIVE FEDERAL FUNDS WHILE MY CHILDREN HAVE TO WORK TO PAY FOR THEIR COLLEGE EDUCATION. The grants that I found repulsive are:

In the last three years, the NEA has given over \$1,000,000 to Minneapolis' Walker Art Center. On March 5 the Walker Art Center staged a "performance" by Ron Athey which consisted of Athey's using a scalpel to carve various designs into the skin of an assistant, drenching numerous paper towels in the resulting blood, clipping the towels on clotheslines and then hoisting them over the heads of people in the audience. Athey has publicly trumpeted his HIV-positive status. (Don't they place persons under a doctor's care for similar behavior if performed on the street?).

The curator for the Walker Art Center, John Killacky--the man responsible for obtaining NEA grants to promote the homosexual agenda, blasted critics of the performance saying, "Our society has proven not only that is is extremely homophony, but also extremely Aids-phobic."

When asked to explain how the NEA could fund such art, NEA head Jane Alexander said: "Not all art is for everybody. I appreciate some people would find this art difficult. Americans are certainly not used to seeing bloodletting, except in films, and when it happens in person it must be surprising. I am sure a number of people were quite uncomfortable." (None more then the poor stagehands that cleaned up the mess.)

Alexander went on to say that "appropriate precautions" had been taken during the show and then asked, "So what are we left with that was considered controversial? The scarification? The ritual-like aspect? Is it that the man is a homosexual? I think those areas need to be carefully considered." (Maybe Alexander should carefully consider these aspects from after she is removed from the NEA).

The NEA funded \$20,000 to Joel-Peter Witken (his fourth grant from the NEA). I have enclosed a copy of his "art" work.

\$13,000 to New York's Kitchen Theater for video-related expenses including ex-prostitute Annie Sprinkle's pornographic video, "The Sluts and goddesses of Transformation Salon."

\$25,000 toward production of Poison, a graphic film promoting the homosexual life-style.

\$20,000 to the Arts Complex. Attractions included Annie Sprinkle performing "the story of my sexual evolution...into goddess/sex-educator/healer Anya." (What's next? Prostitutes teaching sex education in school?)

\$170,105 to LaMaMa Experimental Theater club, "the venue for Lesbians who Kill, the newest offering from the Three Lesbian team of Split Britches."

\$17,500 to help produce movies which showed masturbation, oral sex between two men, and a man licking the inside of a toilet.

\$50,000 to Allan Berube and Arthur Dong to help the pair make a film based on Berube's book Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War Two.

\$17,000 to Tony Kushner, the playwright who wrote the homosexual-themed play, Angels in America, Millennium approaches.

More tax dollars to Tim Miller whose "art" consists of sexually stimulating himself onstage during a presentation called "My Queer Body". (Why do we bother jailing prostitutes?)

How much money would you give to Holly Hughes, famous for stuffing various vegetables into body orifices, her previous NEA funded work of art was titled "The Well of Horniness".

Annie Sprinkle of New York's Kitchen Theater urinated into a bucket on stage and invited the audience to examine the insides of her genitalia with a flashlight.

How about a \$3.2 million 3 year contract to Melanie Beene who apparently paid herself almost \$350,000 and spend nearly \$700,000 on travel and per-diem expenses.

But would the NEA fund another work of art for Frederick Hart, man who sculpted the Three Soldiers for the Vietnam memorial? No, the NEA denied a grant because "The NEA told me what I was doing wasn't art".

So Senator, I urge you to wake-up, end waste of government funds, and support Congressman Phil Crane's resolution to end the NEA. The art sector receives \$9.3 billion annually from the private sector. The \$178 million from the federal government is a drop in the bucket. The demise of the NEA will not end contributions from the private sector. NEA abuses government power and money to promote the careers of some artists but not others, and it appears they are trying to sway public sentiment. I, as a taxpayer, would rather see the funds be expended on education or medical research. The arts survived before without government funds and it will do so in the future without the NEA.

Sincerely,

Bonnie M. Costello
40 Shannon Road
Exeter, R.I. 02822