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Obscenity: Andres Serrano Controversy (1989): Correspondence 13

David S. Hodgson

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David S. Hodgson
680 Fulton Street #2B
Brooklyn, NY 11217

August 1, 1989

Honorable Claiborne Pell
SR-335 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-3901

Dear Senator Pell:

I am writing to express my outrage at the current uproar over National Endowment for the Arts funding. As Chairman of the Subcommittee on Education, Arts and Humanities, I am sure you are aware of the value of many different art forms created by an array of different cultures and available to an even wider audience: this opportunity to experience is not only what is great about artistic endeavors, but one of the most valued and unique aspects of life in a democracy.

I can only hope that the current legislation introduced by Jesse Helms is shelved, tabled or killed in conference. I hope you will do whatever is in your power to keep this type of reactionary censorship from becoming law.

We have just finished eight years of White House indifference towards so many of the crucial issues facing our society (the Drug Epidemic, the AIDS Epidemic, the continual decline of our environment), and now a few extremist zealots want to carry on this tradition of ignorance and stifle our creative artists and the institutions that support them because of homophobia or religious insecurities. Adolf Hitler did this very thing.

Where is the soul of any country, people or society better reflected and preserved than in our art? Better that the government not fund any artistic endeavor than run the risk of sanitizing the personal expressions of painters, photographers, composers and choreographers.

I am ashamed for my country.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,



David S. Hodgson