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Arts & Humanities
Fall 2018

Contemporary Art History
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Dr. Charissa N. Terranova
W 7:00-9:45 pm
ATC 1.305

November 28, 2018

# Bodies in Action II: Politics in Art + Gay Rights in Art

# Identity Politics, US Politics, and Religion

Andres Serrano, Immersion (Piss Christ), 1987

What is the relationship between art and politics?

What is the relationship between art and identity?

Andres Serrano, Immersion (Piss Christ), 1987

“Serrano's picture is a 60-by-40-inch cibachrome of a crucifix seen through a swirling haze of bubbly yellow liquid-the artist's own urine. The photograph is one of eight by Serrano in an exhibition called "Awards in the Visual Arts" (a/k/a AVA). The seventh incarnation of a prestigious show sponsored by the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, the exhibition was seen at museums in Los Angeles and Pittsburgh last year and ended its tour at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond on January 29, 1989.”

http://www.robertatkins.net/beta/witness/culture/nea/serrano.html

Andres Serrano, Immersion (Piss Christ), 1987

Senator Alphonse D'Amato denouncing NEA funding to Andres Serrano and other artists before congress, May 18, 1989.

Andres Serrano, Immersion (Piss Christ), 1987

Coco Fusco: Your use of Catholic symbolism stands out in part because you are operating in a predominantly Protestant context. An attraction to the sensuality and the carnality that you bring out in your Catholic iconography can develop, since Protestant symbolism looks rather pale by comparison. How would it affect your work to be exhibited in a Catholic context?

Andres Serrano: I have always felt that my work is religious, not sacrilegious. I would say that there are many individuals in the Church who appreciate it and who do not have a problem with it. The best place for Piss Christ is in a church. In fact, I recently had a show in Marseilles in an actual church that also functions as an exhibition space, and the work looked great there. I think if the Vatican is smart, someday they'll collect my work.

CF: Does your interest in Catholicism have to do more with an attraction to the iconography or is it about wanting to make a social or political comment about what the Church represents?

AS: Look at my apartment. I am drawn to the symbols of the Church. I like the aesthetics of the Church. I like Church furniture. I like going to Church for aesthetic reasons, rather than spiritual ones. In my work, I explore my own Catholic obsessions. An artist is nothing without his or her obsessions, and I have mine. One of the things that always bothered me was the fundamentalist labeling of my work as "anti-Christian bigotry." As a former Catholic, and as someone who even today is not opposed to being called a Christian, I felt I had every right to use the symbols of the Church and resented being told not to.

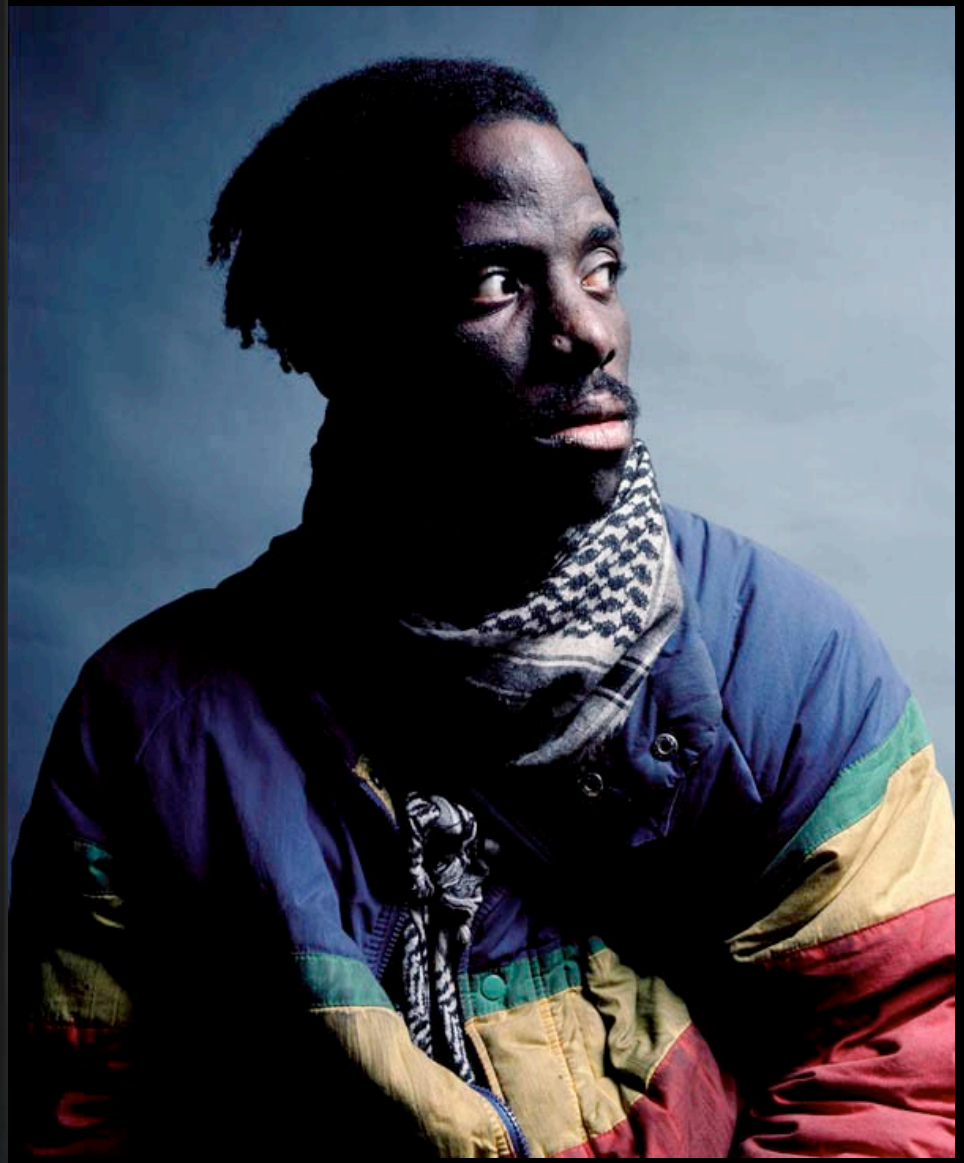
Andres Serrano, Madonna and Child II, 1989

Andres Serrano, Heaven and Hell, 1984 Anti-clerical commentary

CF: At the same time you have expressed concern about the Church's position on many contemporary issues.

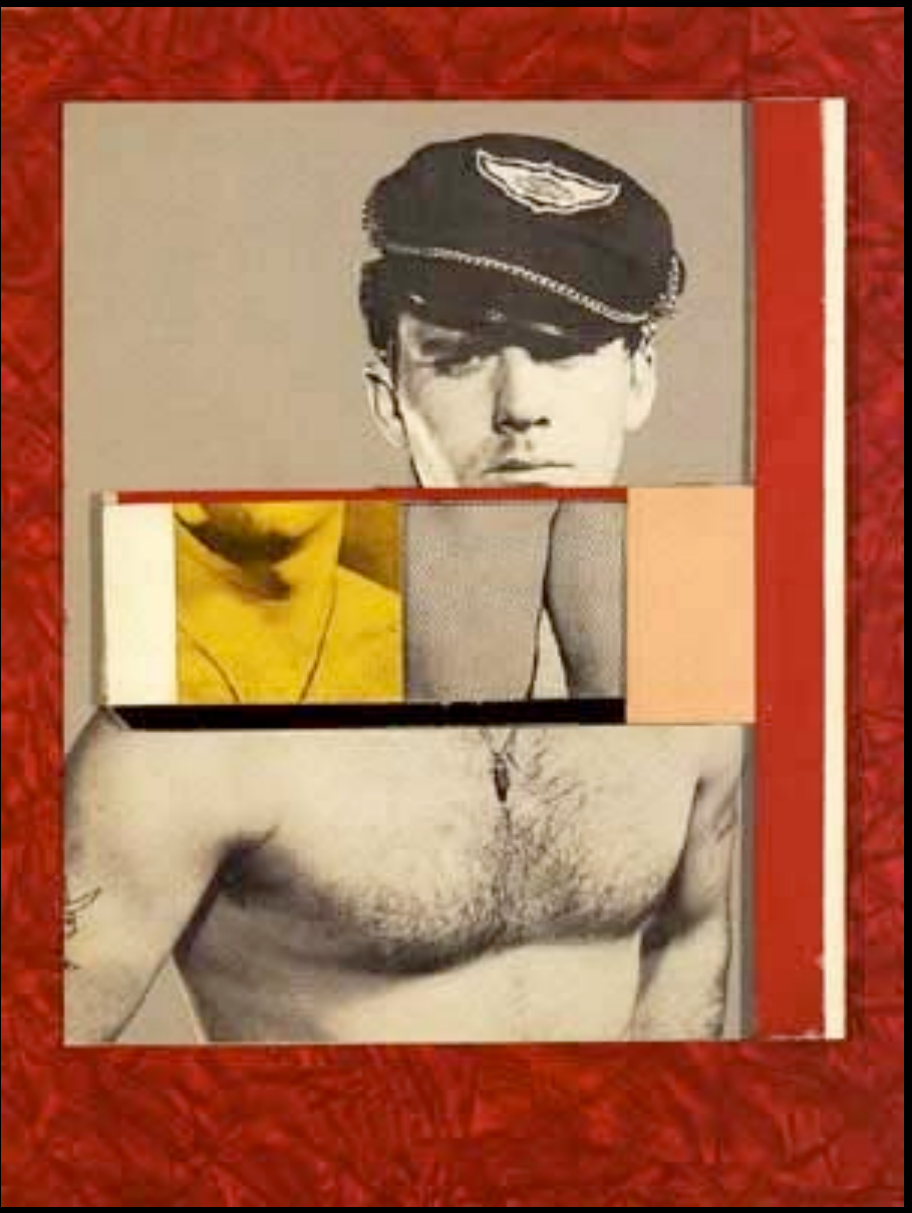
AS: I am drawn to Christ but I have real problems with the Catholic Church. I don't go out of my way to be critical of the Church in my work, because I think that I make icons worthy of the Church. Oftentimes we love the thing we hate and vice versa. Unfortunately, the Church's position on most contemporary issues makes it hard to take them seriously.

Andres Serrano, Nomads (Sir Leonard), 1990



Andres Serrano, Nomads (Rene), 1990

# The Personal is the Political: Activism, Queerness, Being Gay



Mapplethorpe, Photographic Collage, 1971

Lloyd Ziff's 1960s portrait of Robert Mapplethorpe and Patti Smith

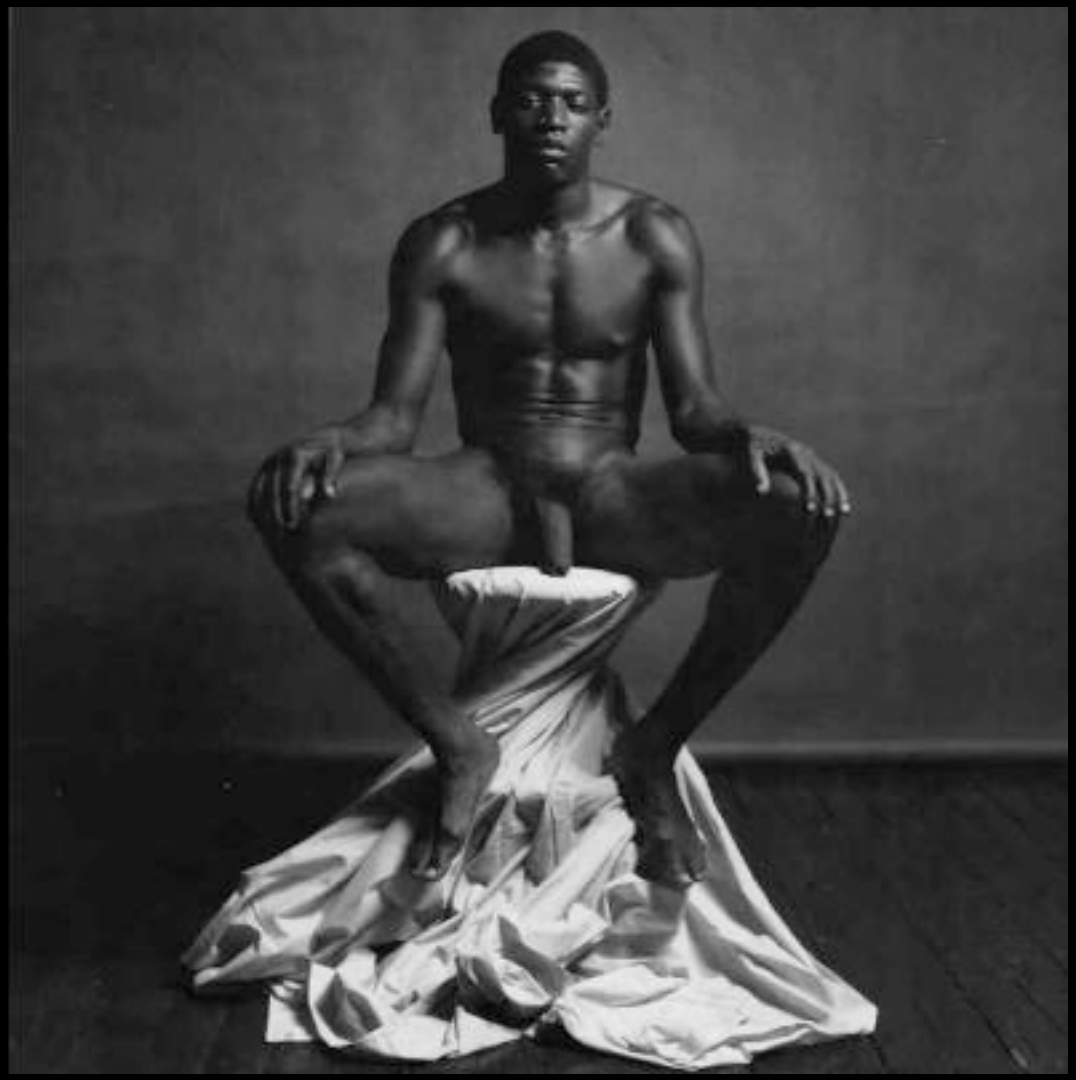
Robert Mapplethorpe, Self-Portrait, 1972

Robert Mapplethorpe, Self-Portrait, 1978

Robert Mapplethorpe, Self-Portrait, 1980

Robert Mapplethorpe, Self-Portrait, 1980

Robert Mapplethorpe, Self-Portrait, 1980



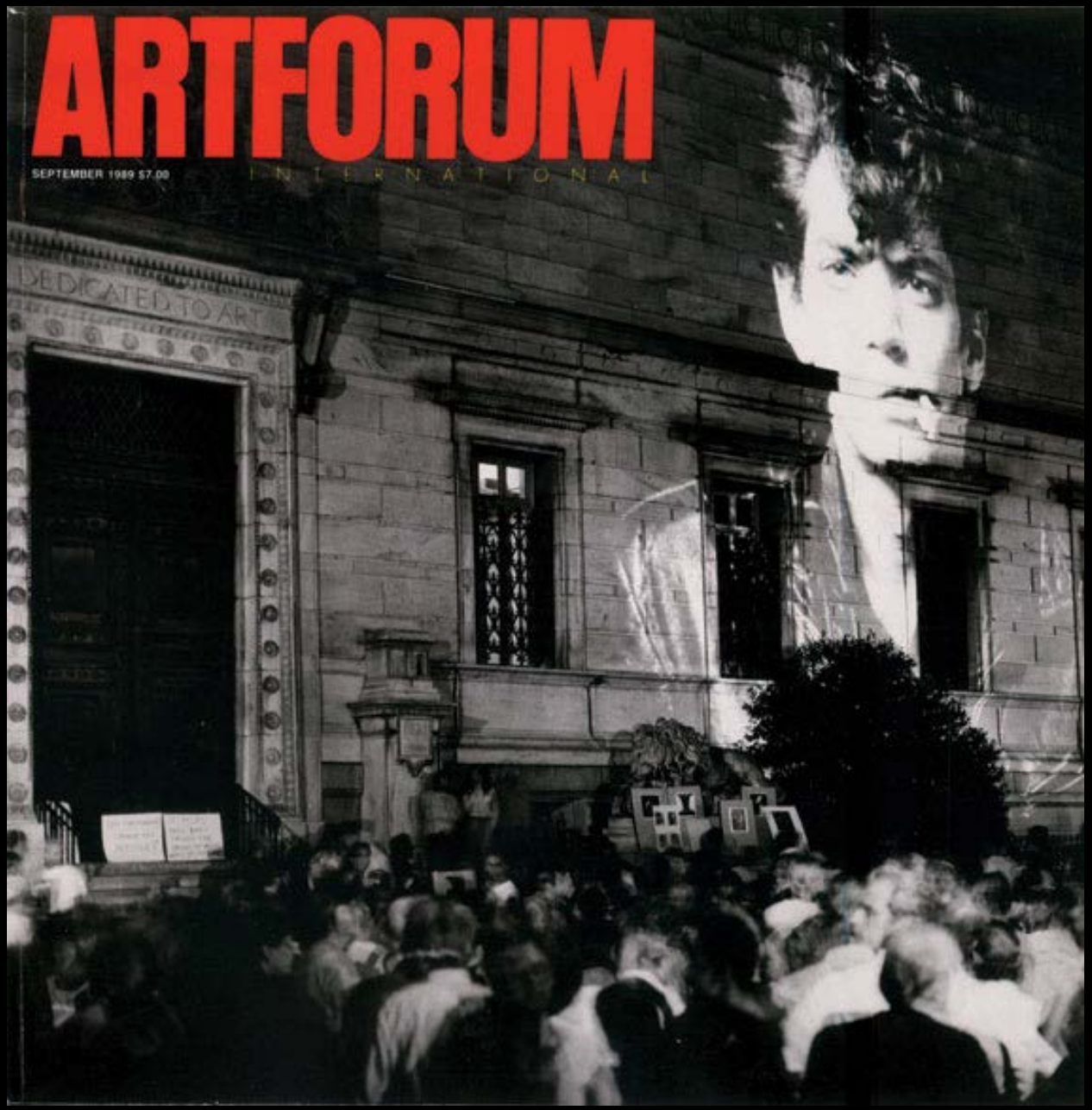
Robert Mapplethorpe, Bob Love, 1979 from *The Black Book* (1986)

Robert Mapplethorpe, Man in Polyester Suit, 1980 from *The Black Book* (1986)

**ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE**

**THE PERFECT MOMENT**

*The Contemporary Arts Center*
*April 7-May 26, 1990*




*The Perfect Moment: Robert Mapplethorpe Photographs*, canceled at the Corcoran Gallery, taken over by Washington Project for the Arts, Art July 21 – August 13, 1989

Andres Serrano, Immersion (Piss Christ), 1987

Senator Alphonse D'Amato denouncing NEA funding to Andres Serrano and other artists before congress, May 18, 1989.

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SUBJECTS

# Senate Votes to Bar U.S. Support Of 'Obscene or Indecent' Artwork

LEAD: Brushing aside objections that Congress should not be deciding what is art or who is an artist, the Senate voted today to bar the National Endowment for the Arts from supporting "obscene or indecent" work and to cut off Federal funds to two arts groups because they supported exhibitions of work by two provocative photographers.

CONTINUE READING: Full Text

**PUBLISH DATE**
July 27, 1989

**PAGE NUMBERS**
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**SUBJECTS**

"All the News That's Fit to Print"

The New York Times

Late Edition
New York: Today, hot, muggy, isolated shower. High 94. Tonight, maybe thunderstorms. Low 74. Tomorrow, heavy thunderstorms likely. High 86. Yesterday: High 96, low 75. Details, page C16.

VOL. CXXXVIII . . No. 47,944 | NEW YORK, THURSDAY, JULY 27, 1989 | 35 CENTS

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## P.L.O. SAID TO EASE TERMS FOR VOTING IN OCCUPIED AREAS

### LIST OF CONDITIONS GIVEN

### Israel Labor Party and Soviets Play Intermediary Role — Likud Assent Doubted

By JOEL BRINKLEY
Special to The New York Times

JERUSALEM, July 26 — For the first time, the Palestine Liberation Organization has offered a specific list of conditions under which it might allow Israel's plan for elections in the occupied territories to go forward, Government officials said today.

The P.L.O.'s terms, which are far more moderate than those offered by the organization in the past, match the conditions deemed acceptable by Israel's Labor Party and others on the political left. But they fall short of what Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and other leaders on the Israeli right would consider agreeable.

Still, they show Israel and the P.L.O. closer to agreement on terms for ending the impasse in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip than at any time in the past.

**U.S. Involvement Described**

Reports of the new conditions first appeared in the Israeli press today and were confirmed, with some important modifications, by the officials.

They said the P.L.O. first made its new position known to the United States during its talks with the American Ambassador in Tunis, the P.L.O.'s headquarters, although officials said the United States was not directly involved in passing the information to Israel.

Instead, a Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister, Gennadi P. Tarasov, met with the P.L.O. chairman, Yasir Arafat, in Tunis on July 26. A few days later he met in Paris with Nimrod Novik, a senior member of the Israeli Labor Party, Israeli officials said today.

## *Senate Votes to Bar U.S. Support Of 'Obscene or Indecent' Artwork*

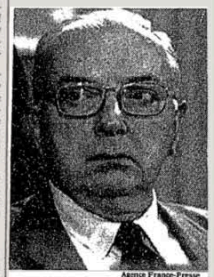
### *Measure, Backed by Helms, Angers Arts Groups*

By MICHAEL ORESKES
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, July 26 — Brushing aside objections that Congress should not be deciding what is art or who is an artist, the Senate voted today to bar the National Endowment for the Arts from supporting "obscene or indecent" work and to cut off Federal funds to two arts groups because they supported exhibitions of work by two provocative photographers.

In a voice vote, the Senate approved restrictions proposed by Senator Jesse Helms, Republican of North Carolina, that would bar Federal arts funds from being used to "promote, disseminate or produce obscene or indecent materials, including but not limited to depictions of sadomasochism, homoeroticism, the exploitation of children, or individuals engaged in sex acts; or material which denigrates the objects or beliefs of the adherents of a particular religion or nonreligion."

The measure would also bar grants for artwork that "denigrates, debases or reviles a person, group or class of citizens on the basis of race, creed, sex, handicap, age or national origin."



Agence France-Presse
Senator Jesse Helms, who proposed the arts funds restrictions.

**Arts Groups React**

Spokesmen for arts organizations, including the two cited in today's legislation — the Institute for Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania and the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art in Winston-Salem, N.C. — said they were appalled by the action, which they described as the first time that Congress had tried to interfere directly in granting money to individual arts groups.

The officials said the endowment and the groups it supported had faithfully followed the grant-making system approved by Congress. In the system, known as peer review, members of the arts community pass on grant applications in their respective fields.

But Senator Helms said on the floor of the Senate, "No artist has a pre-emptive claim on the tax dollars of the

Continued on Page C18, Column 5

## Jaruzelski Says Warsaw Pact Opposes a Solidarity Premier

By JOHN TAGLIABUE
Special to The New York Times

WARSAW, July 26 — President Wojciech Jaruzelski has told Solidarity that he cannot allow it to form a government because Poland's Communist

Strasbourg, France this month Mr Gorbachev domestic affairs restrict the

### Debating the Stealth Bomber

| THE HOUSE | THE SENATE |
|---|---|
| Voted yesterday to: | Has approved proposals to: |
| ■ Cut the Bush Administration's 1990 budget for the Stealth bomber from $4.7 billion to $3.7 billion. | ■ Cut the 1990 budget from $4.7 billion to $4.4 billion. |
| ■ Reduce the number of planes the Air Force may buy next year from three to two. | ■ Bar any new purchases of the B-2 until after the Air Force has completed a large portion of its initial testing and has certified to Congress that the bomber is both airworthy and capable of evading Soviet radar. |
| ■ Bar the Air Force from spending the money on those planes until it submits a plan to make the program less expensive and Congress approves it. Such a plan would probably have to include cuts in the proposed fleet of 132 bombers. | ■ Ask the Pentagon to study the possibility of reducing the size of the fleet. |

The New York Times/July 27, 1989

## *In Hearings, I.R.S. Agents Tell Of Reprisals, Gifts and Nepotism*

By CLYDE H. FARNSWORTH
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, July 26 — New complaints of misconduct within the Internal Revenue Service emerged today as I.R.S. agents described to Congress purported abuses that included nepotism, acceptance of gratuities, reprisals against whistle blowers and irregular use of Government travel funds.

The I.R.S. agents, some of whom are retired and some of whom are still with the agency, testified on the second day of hearings before the House Govern-

scheduled to be delivered Thursday.

Some of the changes expected at the agency were detailed in his statement and in another statement by a top aide, Michael J. Murphy, the senior deputy commissioner.

The changes include the installation of an inspection hot line, which will provide an 800 number for anonymous accusations of employee misconduct directly to the national office. The idea is to help whistle blowers who may be re-

## HOUSE BACKS CUT IN BOMBER PROJECT OF $1 BILLION IN '90

### ANOTHER LOSS FOR BUSH

### Vote of 257 to 160 Pressures Air Force on Stealth Cost — MX Also Set Back

By ANDREW ROSENTHAL
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, July 26 — The House of Representatives voted 257 to 160 today to make deep cuts in the budget for the Stealth bomber and to halt production of the radar-evading plane until the Air Force scales back the $70 billion program.

The House also opposed President Bush on another major weapons program, voting 224 to 197 to cut the budget for the MX intercontinental ballistic missile program in half and delay by at least a year the purchase of equipment to take the 10-warhead missiles out of their silos and put them on railroad cars.

The vote on the MX caught Democratic floor leaders by surprise, since it broke with a political compromise between Congress and the White House under which the Air Force would develop two mobile intercontinental missiles: the MX and the truck-borne Midgetman.

But the MX vote, which went largely along party lines, appeared to represent only a temporary setback for the MX program. Congressional leaders expressed confidence that the terms of the compromise would be restored in a House-Senate conference on the 1990 military budget.

**Conferences to Be Held**

The votes on the Stealth, or B-2, bomber and the MX, along with a Senate vote Tuesday to put restrictions on the Stealth program next year, were driven by politics and the constraints of

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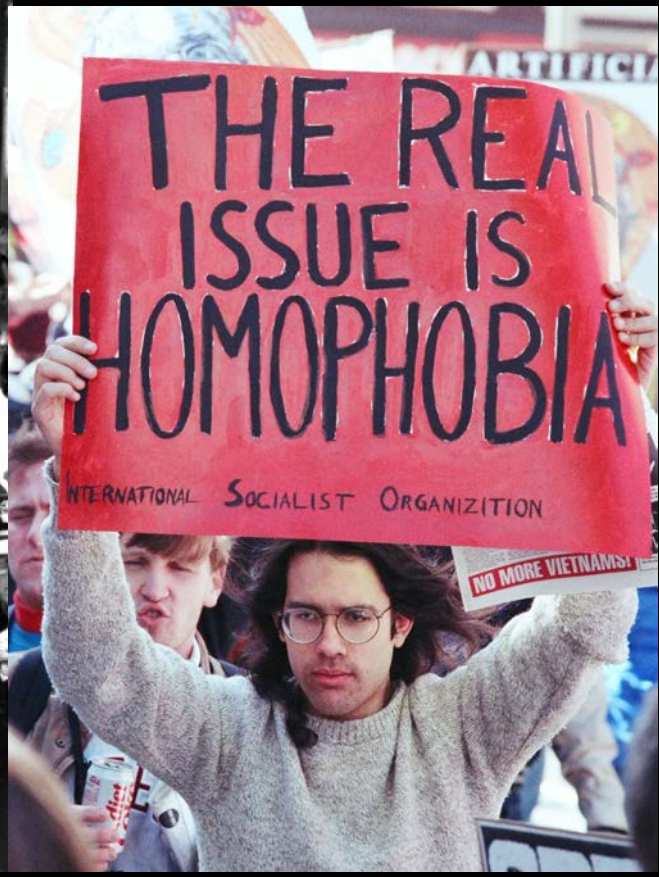
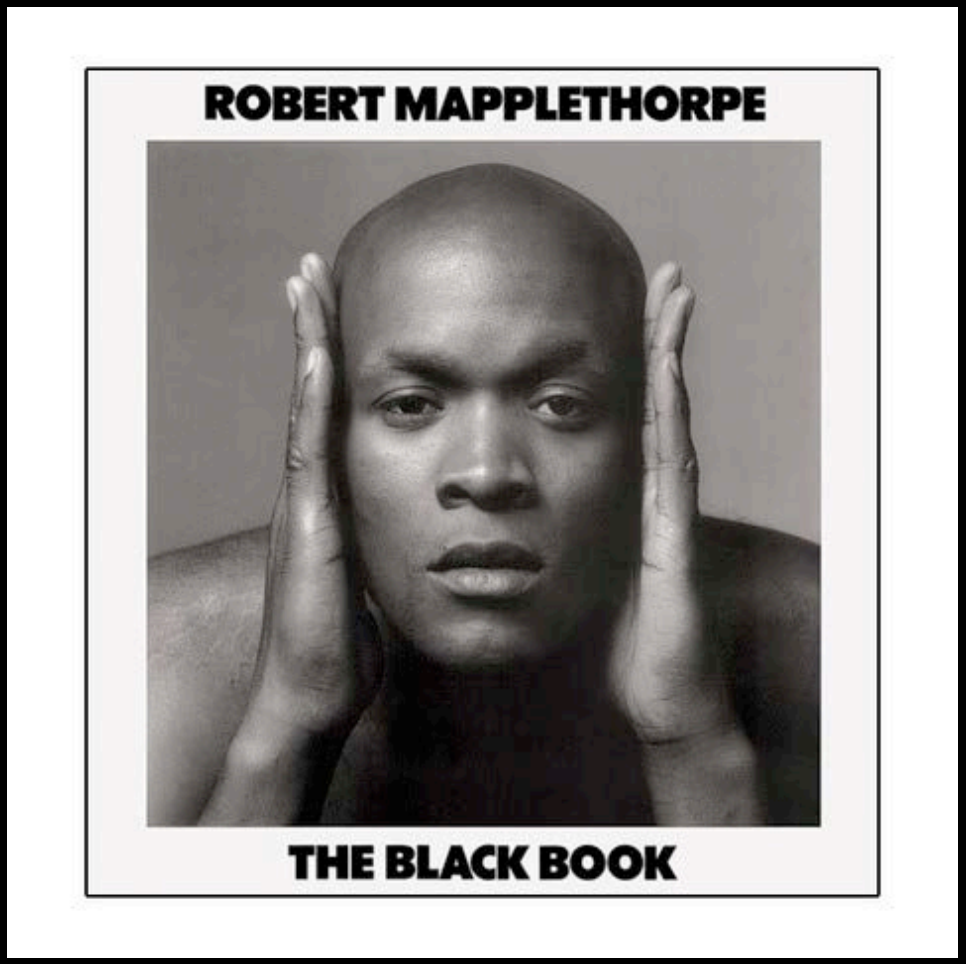
Not My Tax Dollars!
JESUS IS FREEDOM FOR THE CAPTIVES OF SEXUAL IMMORALITY
EXPLOITING CHILDREN IS NOT ART
WE WANT DECENCY IN CINCINNATI!
Pornographic "ART" IS SICK!!!
Calling PORNOGRAPHY "ART" Does not make it so!
PLEASE PROTECT ME!
PORNOGRAPHY NOT ART
gettyimages
Bettmann
515325736

WELCOME to CENSORNATI

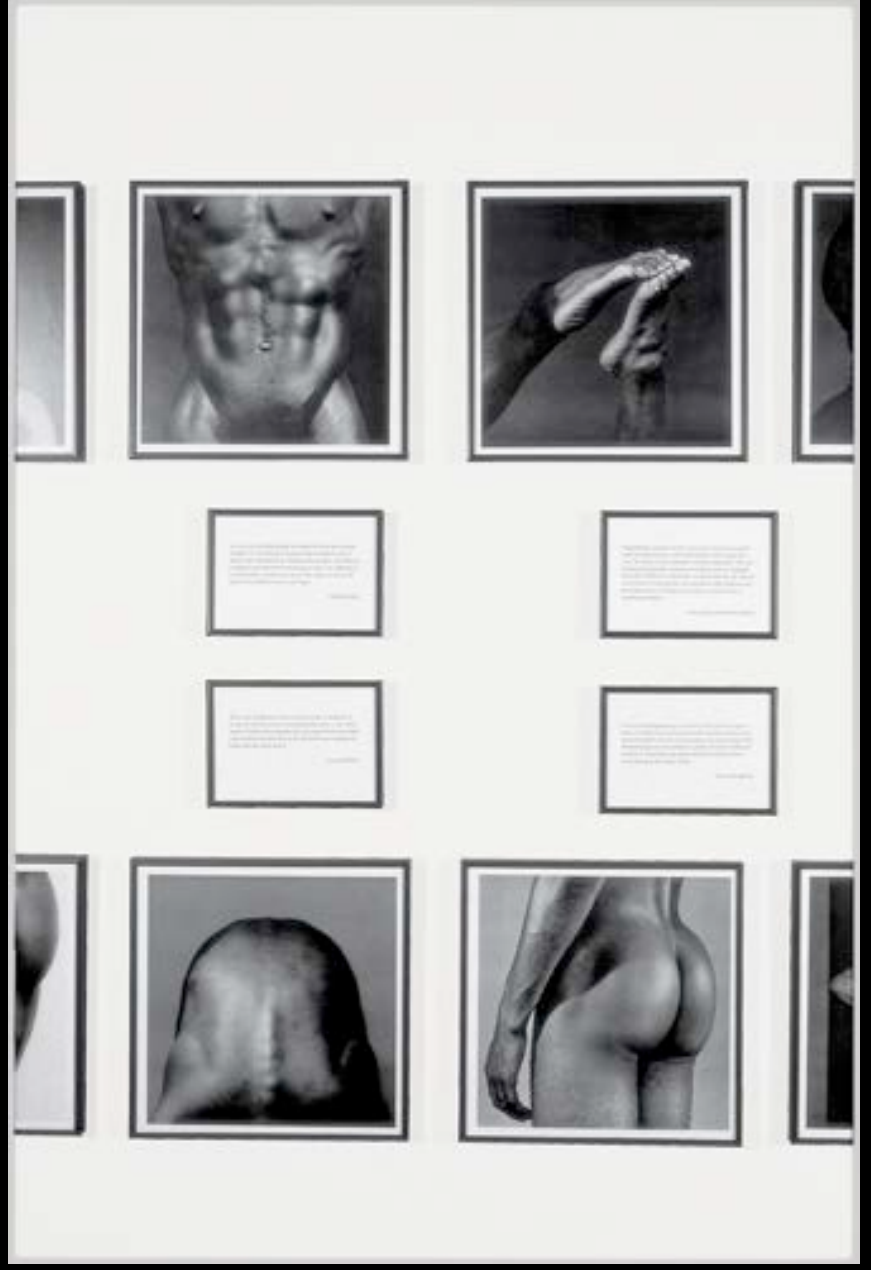
Child
STOP PORNOGRAPHY STOP
WE WANT DECENCY IN CINCINNATI!
WE WANT DECENCY




Demonstrators express support for *The Perfect Moment*, an exhibition by Robert Mapplethrope that included nude and sexually graphic photos.




1986



Glenn Ligon, Notes on the Margin of the Black Book, 1991–93

Glenn Ligon, Notes on the Margin of the Black Book, 1991–93

# REPHOTOGRAPHY and APPROPRIATION

Robert Mapplethorpe, from the Black Book, 1986

Glenn Ligon, Notes on the Margin of the Black Book, 1991–93

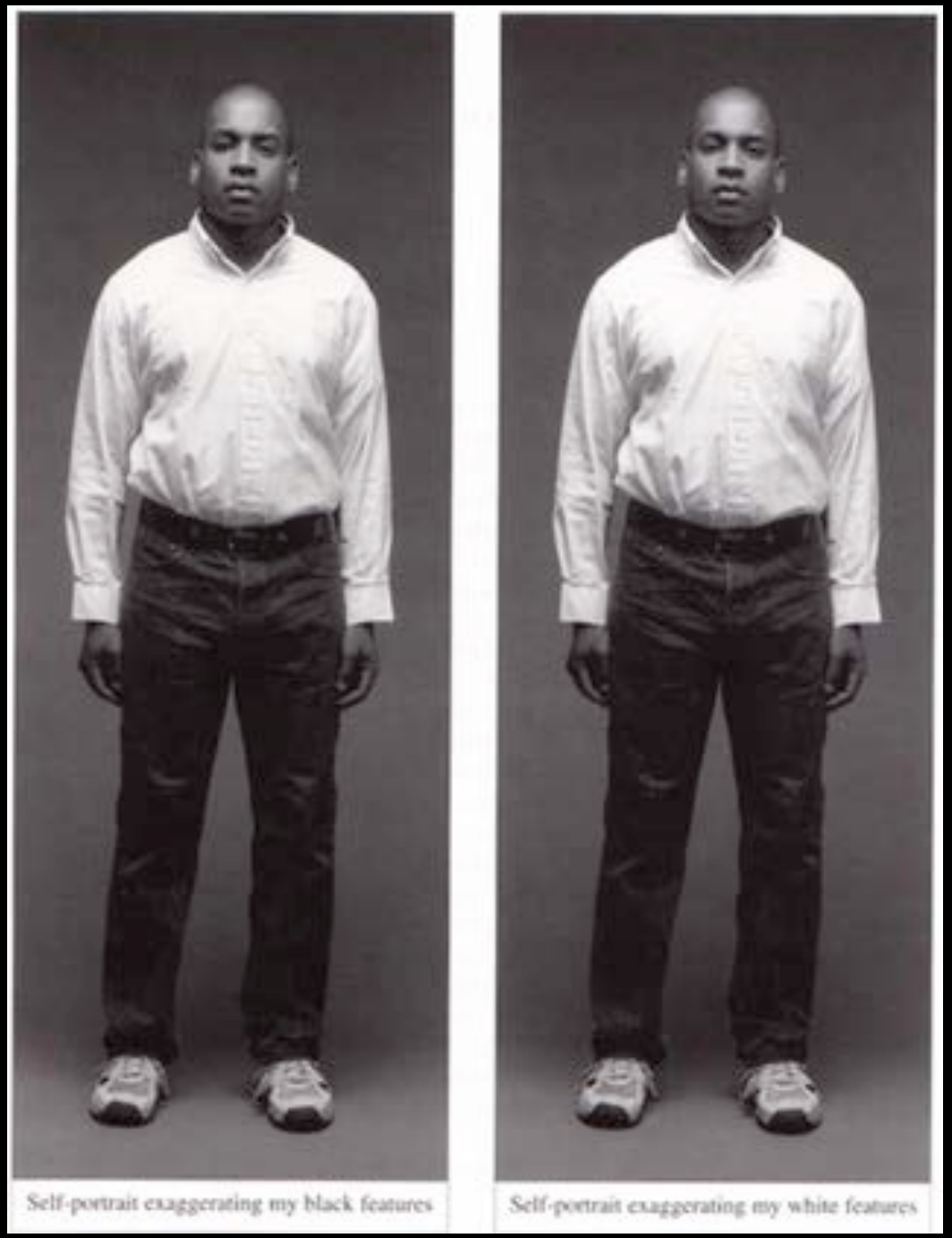
Glenn Ligon, from Mapplethorpe book
1980

Robert Mapplethorpe, Man in Polyester Suit,

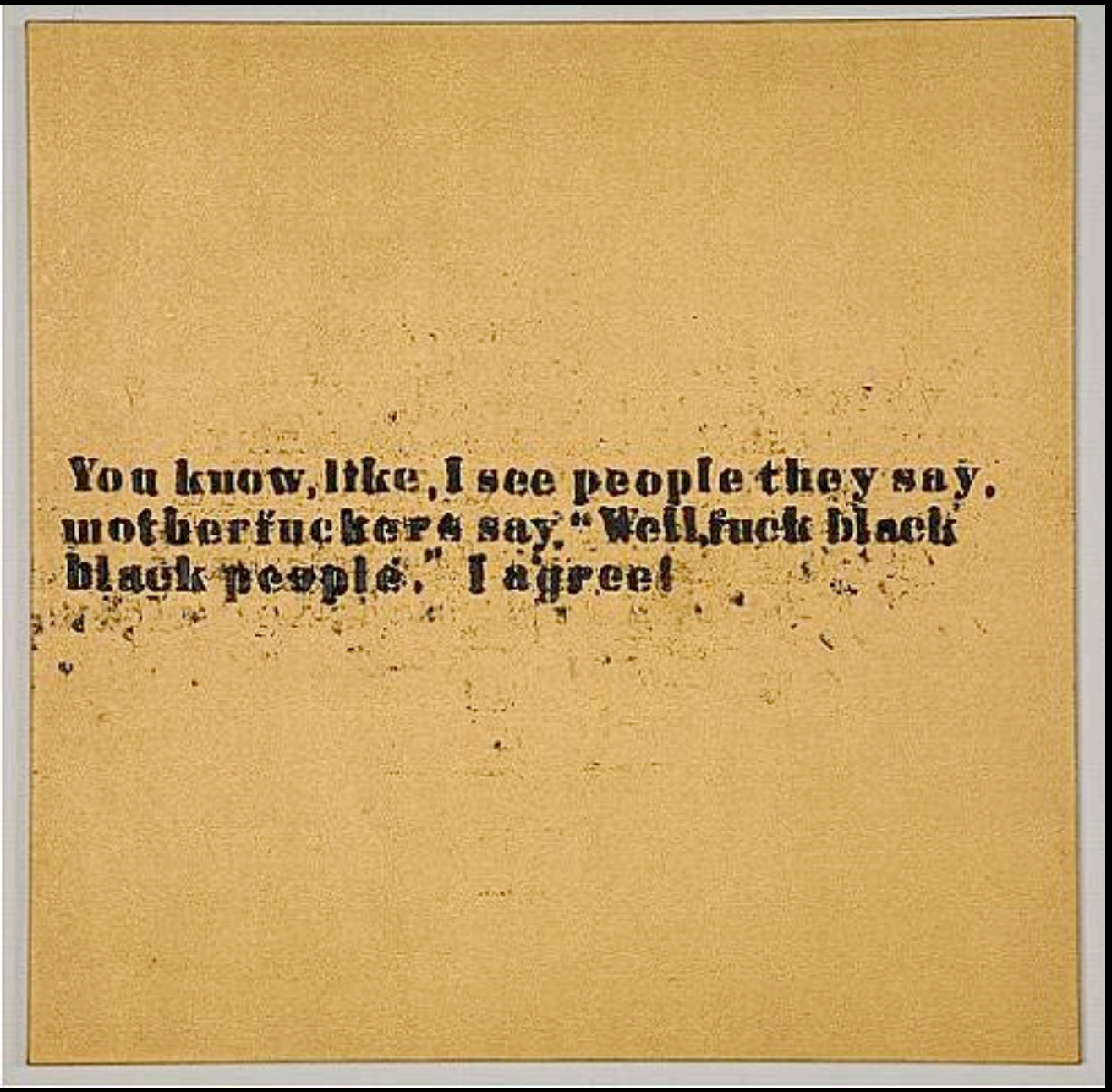
“What one's imagination makes of other people is dictated, of course, by the laws of one's own personality and it is one of the ironies of black-white relations that, by means of what the white man imagines the black man to be, the black man is enabled to know who the white man is.”

-- James Baldwin

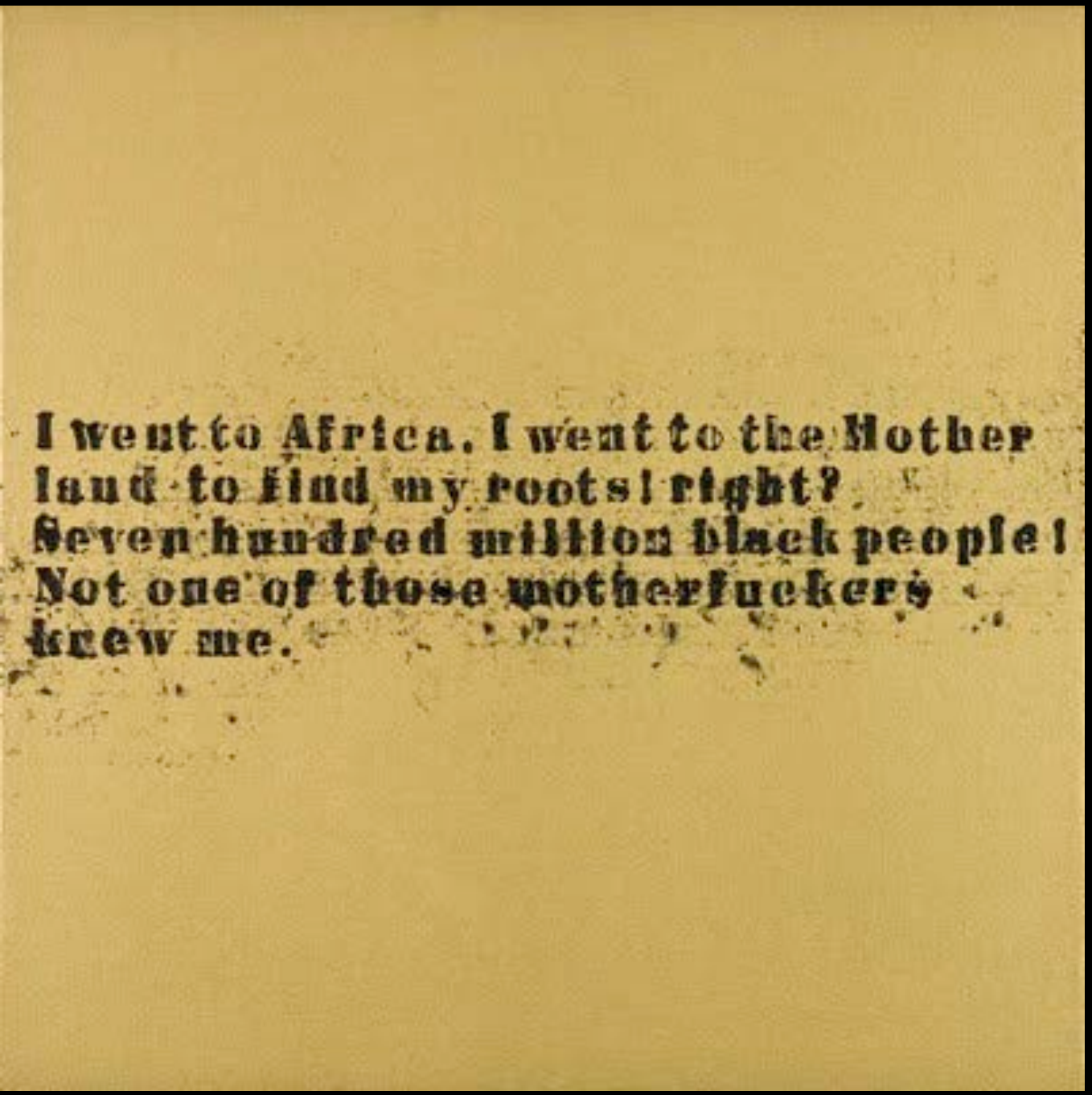
Glenn Ligon, Notes on the Margin of the Black Book, 1991–93




Glenn Ligon, Self-Portrait Series, 1996-2004



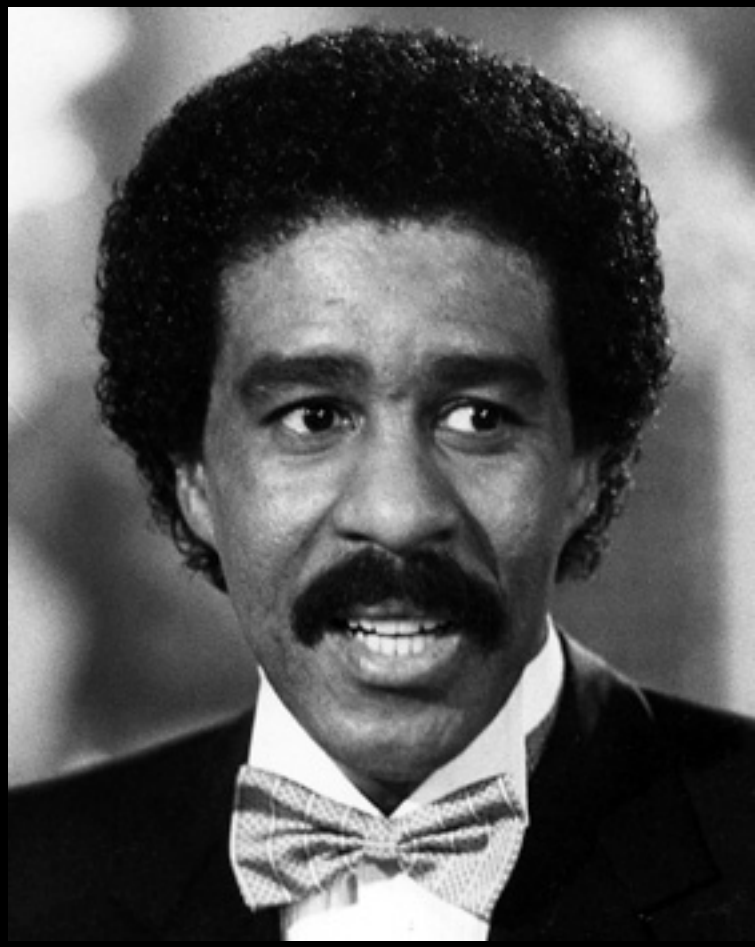

Glenn Ligon, I Agree, 2007




Glenn Ligon, Gold Nobody Knew Me #1, 2007

I went to Africa. I went to the Mother land to find my roots! right? Seven hundred million black people! Not one of those motherfuckers knew me.

Glenn Ligon, Gold Nobody Knew Me #1, 2007



Richard Pryor,
comedian
1940-2005

Glenn Ligon, Negro Sunshine, 2009

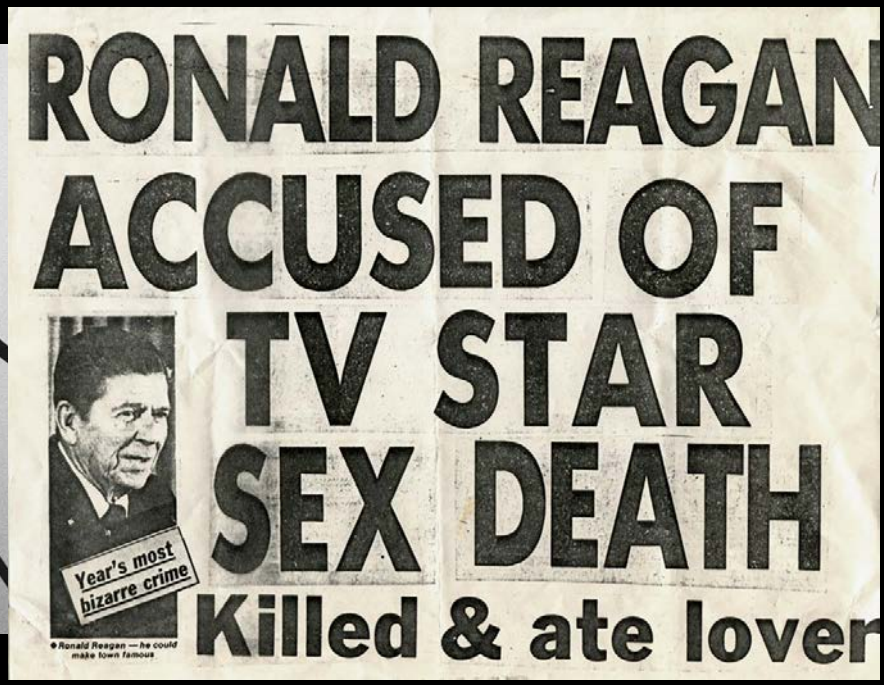
# Post-Blackness

This is “the liberating value in tossing off the immense burden of race-wide representation, the idea that everything they do must speak to or for or about the entire race.”

Thelma Golden, Director of Studio Museum in Harlem, and Glenn Ligon

Glenn Ligon, Negro Sunshine, 2009

Keith Haring (1958–1990)




Keith Haring, *Ronald Reagan Accused of TV Star Sex Death*, 1980, Xerox copy

Bottom Left/Right: Keith Haring, Untitled, 1980, sumi ink on parchment paper

Keith Haring, Untitled, 1980

Keith Haring, Untitled (Subway Graffiti), 1982/1985

USA 83

KEITH HARING on being arrested: "Actually, my drawing on those black panels made me more vulnerable to being caught by the cops - so there was an element of danger. "I knew I had to be careful. I thought, 'Even if a cop catches me, I am only using chalk, and I can wipe it off.' Within weeks, the idea of doing this started to define itself and I started these drawings by getting off the train every time I saw an empty panel. So I'd get off, do one, and continue on my way…There are all the cops wondering what this nerdy white boy could possibly have done. So the cop who arrested me says, 'I caught him drawing in the subway on those black panels.' The cop at the desk says, 'So *you're* the guy who does those drawings - hey, Joe, hey Mike... this is the kid who does the subway drawings!' So the cops are coming out and they want to meet me. They take off my handcuffs so they can shake my hand, 'cause, see, it's almost a year that I've done the subway drawings and I'm a celebrity. The cop who brought me in felt like a total fool. Of course, I was given a regular summons."

Keith Haring in the Pop Shop, NYC, 1986

Keith Haring, Ignorance = Fear, 1989

photograph by Mark Thiessen
©1992 The NAMES Project Foundation

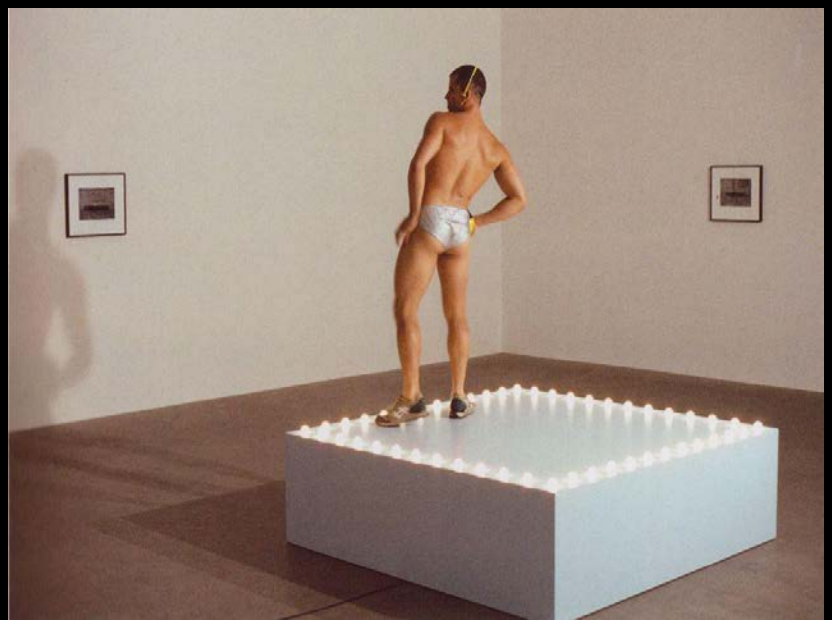
AIDS Quilt, The NAMES Project, 1987-present

"The NAMES Project works to display The Quilt in nearly 1,000 venues each year, to conserve and care for the aging 54-ton tapestry and it's half a million piece archive, and to encourage and support the creation of new Quilt panels for this ever-evolving handmade memorial."

http://www.aidsquilt.org/

Left and Right: Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Untitled (Go-Go Dancing Platform), 1991 (2004)

An interview with Robert Storr tells us that Gonzalez-Torres's work is "conceptualism used for a political or a social end." When asked how he defines the political or social dimension of art, Gonzales-Torres responded by saying "All art and all cultural production is political."



Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Untitled, billboard, 1991

Felix Gonzalez-Torres, For Jeff, 1992

The instructions that accompany 1992's Untitled (For Jeff) encourage multiple simultaneous displays of the billboard-size banner of an open hand that honors the man who tended to the artist's dying partner, Ross.

Felix Gonzalez-Torres' Untitled (For Jeff) installed at the Museum for Modern Art **MMK** in Frankfurt, Germany

Felix Gonzalez-Torres' Untitled (For Jeff) installed at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden

In 2010, as part of its 15th anniversary, Artpace presented an exhibition throughout four Texas cities (San Antonio, Houston, Dallas and El Paso) comprising 13 billboard works by the artist. It was the first exhibition to survey Gonzalez-Torres' billboard works and garnered international attention.

Felix Gonzalez-Torres, “Untitled” (For Jeff), 1992 at The MAC in Belfast, Northern Ireland

Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Portrait of Ross in LA, candies wrapped in colored cellophane, 1991

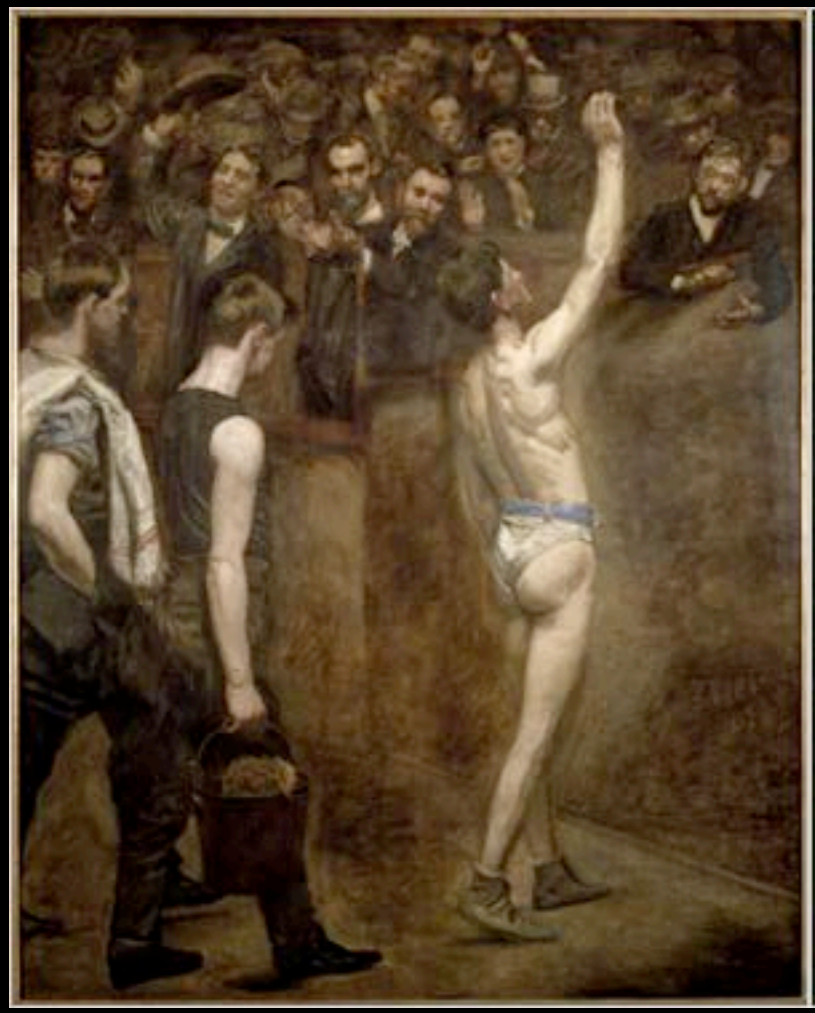
When people ask me, "Who is your public?" I say honestly, without skipping a beat, "Ross." The public was Ross. The rest of the people just come to the work. In my recent show at the Hirshhorn, which is one of the best experiences I have had in a long time, the guards were really in it. Because I talked to them, I dealt with them. They're going to be here eight hours with this stuff. And I never see guards as guards, I see guards as the public. Since the other answer to the question "Who's the public?" is, well, the people who are around you, which includes the guards. In Washington people asked me, "Did I train the guards, did I give them a lecture?" I said, "No, I just talk to them when I'm doing the work." They said, "You know we have never been to an exhibit where the guards go up to the viewers and tell them what to do, and where to go, what to look at, what it means." But again, that division of labor, that division of function is always there in place to serve someone's agenda."

Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Portrait of Ross, candies wrapped in colored cellophane, 1991

Annie Liebovitz, Ellen DeGeneres in Kauai, Hawaii, 1998

## Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture

**National Portrait Gallery**
**October 30, 2010 through February 13, 2011**



Thomas Eakins, Salutat, 1898

Andy Warhol, Camouflage Self-Portrait (Red), 1986

Marsden Hartley, Painting #47 Berlin, 1914-15