



...ory party in Richmond Tuesday night.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sweet Victory

...s Elections Seen as a 'Signal of Hope'

...ins's stereotype-shattering mayoral
...his native New York City. But that
...they still were wearing the stickers
...urs after donning them.

... Jennifer was so proud that Hayes
... join him in the voting booth ("I
...to know the people who represent
...ed by the people") that she wouldn't
...n thing off.

...couldn't wait to tell who she voted

...ilder!" she cried. But when her dad
...at's special about Wilder?" Jennifer
...er pink-and-white saddle shoes.
...ffered a cue.

...he's the first African American—"
...!" she cried, triumphant.

...d Dinkins may as well be royalty,

...considering the elation evidenced by black
...Americans—rich and poor, famous and ob-
...scure—across the country at their landmark
...victories in two very disparate states in a
...racially confused nation.

...They weren't the only black history-makers
...Tuesday. Other Democrats who were elected
...mayors and will become the first blacks to head
...their cities were John Daniels in New Haven,
...Conn., Chester Jenkins in Durham, N.C., and
...Norm Rice in Seattle. Venerable black Detroit
...Mayor Coleman Young won an unprecedented
...fifth four-year term by defeating challenger
...Tom Barrow, who also is black. And Cleveland,
...the first major city to elect a black mayor way
...back in 1967, elected its second, Michael

See ELECTIONS, F16, Col. 1

NEA Pulls Grant to 'Political' Exhibit

N.Y. AIDS Art Show First Test of New Law

By Elizabeth Kastor
Washington Post Staff Writer

The National Endowment for the Arts yesterday withheld a \$10,000 grant to a New York gallery for a show of art about AIDS because the NEA believes the exhibit is too political to receive federal support, endowment Chairman John E. Frohnmayer said.

"We still have the funds and we are not going to relinquish them," Frohnmayer said of the grant to Manhattan's Artists Space. "I thought the nature of the show had changed to a political statement as opposed to an artistic one over the time since the grant was reviewed in February."

Frohnmayer's decision comes only weeks into his tenure in Washington and marks his first official skirmish in a continuing national battle over NEA funding of contemporary art.

He said NEA regulations allow the agency to suspend a grant "when the applicant has not complied with the terms of the grant, which I think is the situation we're in right now, where they have quite consciously changed the nature of the show from one that is about AIDS and the problem of AIDS to anger about the controversy we have been through."

Artists Space Executive Director Susan Wyatt said yesterday that she disagreed with Frohnmayer's interpretation of the show's development. "I think we portrayed the show accurately in our application. I talked to Mr. Frohnmayer about the show's evolution in the course of a year and how things in that area have developed over the last year. This show is about AIDS and I would

See NEA, F18, Col. 1

Reagan: Sorry, Hollywood

NEA Withholds Grant

NEA, From F1

Last Friday, Frohnmayer wrote to Artists Space asking the gallery to voluntarily relinquish the grant and make it clear in written material that the agency did not endorse the completed exhibit, but the artist organization's board voted unanimously yesterday not to give up its claim to the money. "We just feel very strongly about the principle involved about public funding of the arts," Wyatt said yesterday.

In a Nov. 3 letter to Wyatt, Frohnmayer said, "Because of the recent criticism the endowment has come under, and the seriousness of Congress's directive, we must all work together to ensure that projects funded by the endowment do not violate either the spirit or the letter of the law. The message has been clearly and strongly conveyed to us that Congress means business. On this basis, I believe the endowment's funds may not be used to exhibit or publish this material."

Like many NEA grants, this one was given on the basis of a proposal rather than the finished product, so the NEA did not see the works that would be included in the show. The application said the show, curated by

See NEA, F19, Col. 6

be extremely surprised if there are any references to this recent NEA controversy. That's not the intent or purpose of this show. It does not deal with this specific controversy. Certainly politics is an issue that enters into a discussion about AIDS."

Neither Wyatt nor Frohnmayer would describe in detail the works included in "Witnesses: Against Our Vanishing," which cost \$30,000 and includes the work of 23 artists. But an essay by artist David Wojanowicz that appears in the show's catalogue attacks Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), who led the congressional fight against NEA funding, as well as Cardinal John O'Connor of New York. Both Helms and O'Connor have been criticized by AIDS activists for their positions on the AIDS issue.

The congressional debate over the NEA centered on grants that supported works by artists Robert Mapplethorpe, who died of AIDS, and Andres Serrano and resulted in legislation that prevents the agency from funding art that it deems "obscene" or "homoerotic" and lacking in artistic value. Although it was originally reported that the NEA's objections to the AIDS exhibit had to do with work that might be seen as homoerotic, Frohnmayer said yesterday it was the show's political element that was his major cause for concern.

"We all live in the real world here and we have been through an exceptionally difficult time," Frohnmayer said, "and I think the last thing we need is for public funds to be used to try to rub it in the face of the critics."

Although the Artists Space grant was approved last spring, before the restrictive legislation went into effect, Wyatt contacted Frohnmayer late last month to warn him that the show might prove controversial and to invite debate over the effect the new funding restrictions will have on such exhibits. "I thought it would be a good idea to engage in a bit of discussion on this issue, just as a responsible act," she said yesterday.

Last Friday, Frohnmayer wrote to Artists Space asking the gallery to

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—MIKE CLARK / USA TODAY



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Turkey Sala

On October 2nd, at 6:45 a.m.
 From the director of "A Nightmare on Elm Street"
 and "The Serpent and the Rainbow"

artist Nan Goldin, would focus on three areas: sexuality, recovery from drug use, and death. Goldin solicited work from a circle of artists, friends, many of whom have AIDS or have lost friends to the disease. "There's no way you can talk about safe sex and not get involved in politics and the church," said Wyatt. "But I do not think that this is the emphasis of this show. These are art works that are dealing with loss, death, memory, rage, anger, spirituality, facing death and finding something beyond death."

Wyatt said she was disturbed when she read Wojanowicz's essay and spoke to the artist about it. "I don't want people to get this notion that there's this huge bomb that will explode when the catalogue comes out," she said, but "it contains strong language."

The catalogue was funded not by the NEA but by a \$5,000 grant from the Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation, which was established after Mapplethorpe's death in March. A disclaimer appears in the catalogue distancing the NEA from the material as well as a disclaimer for Artists Space that says the organization chose to run several essays unedited despite the fact that they might cause controversy because "we are striving for an honest delineation of strongly held opinions and artistic representation regarding a disease that has significantly affected the arts, our immediate community and our entire society."

Frohmayer yesterday acknowledged the difficulty of determining when art becomes too enmeshed in politics to be funded by the federal government. He said the issue is "a problem the endowment faced during the Vietnam War and a number of other times in this country, and I think the endowment has followed the very wise policy of steering clear of that. I strongly believe in the ability of people to speak their minds under the First Amendment, but the endowment should not be funding that discourse."

"I hope that the point is very clear that we have to know what it is we're funding, and if that changes between the time of the grant application and the time of the actual implementation, we have to know about it. Very much to her credit, Susan Wyatt has done that for us, but we ended up with a fundamental disagreement about the extent to which it is different."

Artists Space intends to open the show on Nov. 16 as scheduled. Wyatt said, "I never knew this thing would go this far. I'm saddened by it, and I don't think I can blame Mr. Frohmayer or the NEA specifically. I really think that Congress has to look at what it did very, very carefully. I think this is a show that deserves endowment support, and I would invite any member of Congress to come and have a look at it, and any politician or any member of the American public, and judge for themselves."

NEA From F18

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