

**NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT  
FOR  
THE ARTS**

**WASHINGTON  
D.C. 20506**



A Federal agency advised by the  
National Council on the Arts

**Statement by John E. Frohnmayer  
Chairman, National Endowment for the Arts  
in response to  
the Board Decision of Artists Space  
November 8, 1989**

I have, today, taken action to withhold payment of an Endowment grant to Artists Space in New York City designated for an exhibition titled "Witness: Against Our Vanishing."

When the Endowment's peer review panel considered the Artists Space application for this exhibition last February, no material had been selected for inclusion in it. The panel, therefore, was unable to review any of the objects to be exhibited. What had been presented to the Endowment by the Artists Space application was an artistic exhibition. We find, however, in reviewing the material now to be exhibited, that a large portion of the content is political rather than artistic in nature.

I stated in a letter to Susan Wyatt, Executive Director of Artists Space, requesting Artists Space to relinquish this grant, "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."

I sincerely regret the decision of Artists Space not to withdraw its claim to a grant for an exhibition that is not in agreement with the original application.

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