



January 14, 2011

Censorship and Art

**Herron to run controversial *A Fire in My Belly* video Jan 21 – Feb 5**



Still from David Wojnarowicz, *A Fire In My Belly* (Film In Progress). Courtesy of The Estate of David Wojnarowicz and P.P.O.W Gallery, New York and The Fales Library and Special Collections/ New York University.

*A Fire In My Belly*, a 13-minute video created in the 1980s by artist, author, filmmaker and activist David Wojnarowicz (voy-nah-ROH-vitch) will show continuously in Herron School of Art and Design’s Basile Gallery from January 21 through February 5, 2011.

The Smithsonian Institution had excerpted four minutes from the video and included them in a current exhibition, “Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture,” that deals with culturally-challenging images. The excerpt was removed when then-incoming Speaker of the House John Boehner called on the Smithsonian to shut down the exhibition or “be prepared to face tough scrutiny” after complaints about the video by the Catholic League.

*A Fire in My Belly* offers a view of the torment of AIDS, created in reaction to the death of Wojnarowicz’s mentor and lover, photographer Peter Hujar. It includes images of ants crawling on a crucifix.

Wojnarowicz died of AIDS in 1992 at the age of 37, but the controversy likely would not have surprised him. In 1990, he won the Supreme Court case *David Wojnarowicz v. American Family Association* after the group manipulated his images in a pamphlet it distributed to protest the National Endowment for the Art’s funding of exhibits that it found objectionable. In testimony during that case he said that his upbringing as a Roman Catholic had taught him that Jesus took on the sufferings of all people in the world.

Dozens of arts organizations around the country are screening the film as a result of the Smithsonian’s actions. Herron’s Gallery Director Paula Katz said, “At Herron in particular, it is important for students to be able to connect with this issue on a personal level and to give the local arts community a basis for dialogue.”

Herron relies on private support for its exhibitions and gallery programming. No state dollars are used to support Herron’s gallery operations.

(more)

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### **Gallery Hours**

**Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.**

**Wednesday - 10:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.**

**Saturday - 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.**

**Closed Sunday**

### **Parking Information**

Guests of Herron School of Art and Design should park in the Sports Complex Garage, just west of Herron. Park in the visitor side of the garage and bring your garage ticket to the Herron Galleries for parking validation, courtesy of The Great Frame Up. Parking in the surface lot requires an IUPUI parking permit.

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