

For Immediate Release

January 13, 2011

C* NSORSHIP

What: Screening David Wojnarowicz's film "A Fire in My Belly"

Where: SFAI Gallery 1 Projection Room

When: January 18 - February 25, 2010, looping continuously, 9am - 5pm, M-F

How Much: FREE

What: C* NSORSHIP: a p* nel discuss* *n

Where: Tipton Hall

When: Friday, February 25, 2011 @ 6pm

How Much: \$10 general admission | \$5 students/seniors/members

In reaction to the National Portrait Gallery's decision to remove David Wojnarowicz's film, "A Fire in My Belly", from the exhibition *Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture*, the Santa Fe Art Institute will screen the film beginning January 18th and running through February 25th. These screenings will act in support of Wojnarowicz's important and complex work and in protest to the NPG's conviction that the censorship of the work serves as an appropriate response to the controversy sparked by right-wing religious and political figures. The museum caved into bullying.

The film, which could be optionally viewed on a small touch screen, had been cut from its original 13-minute length to a 4-minute version while on display. Undoubtedly, the film was chosen for its powerful surrealist rendering of the gay experience during the AIDS epidemic. Removing the film reflects the notion of censorship and not the intended focus or major themes of the exhibition. The action further marginalizes the artist and disregards the overall nature of the NPG's large and diverse audience.

In 1987, the year Wojnarowicz finished the film, the climate around AIDS was heated, and controversial. It was the year gay activists formed ACT UP, *And the Band Played On* was published, and Cleve Jones stitched the first panel for the AIDS Memorial Quilt. It was also the year that many were shocked to learn Princess Diana had shaken hands with an AIDS patient with an ungloved hand, the Williamson City Pool was shut down because Mike Sisco, a gay man living with AIDS, entered the pool, and it was the first time President Reagan had publicly uttered the word "AIDS." By then, over 41,000 Americans had already died from the disease.

At the conclusion of the screening, on Friday evening, February 25th, the SFAI will host a panel discussion on censorship with distinguished panelists:

Robert Atkins
Roberto Bedoya

The Santa Fe Art Institute, an independent educational non-profit organization founded in 1985, is committed to programs that nurture artists and enhance and promote the arts as an essential element of American culture and society.

SFAI funding provided in part by The Burnett Foundation, The McCune Charitable Foundation, The Lannan Foundation, The Warhol Foundation, The Joan Mitchell Foundation, The Brindle Foundation, the City of Santa Fe Arts Commission and the 1% Lodgers' Tax and by New Mexico Arts, a Division of the Department of Cultural Affairs.

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“Bottom line, if people don’t say what they believe, those ideas and feelings get lost.
If they are lost often enough, those ideas and feelings never return.”

- David Wojnarowicz

For more information about this or any SFAI event, please contact Michelle
Laflamme-Childs at mchilds@sfa.org or call (505) 424-5050.

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