

Arts

1996



Michael McConnell's artwork appeared in the *Gallery*. One of his best known paintings is "Celibate Sacrifice"; it features a ghostly skeleton dressed as the pope walking on top of masses of people who appear to be groveling at his feet. McConnell also painted "Hear No...SeeNo..." which features a cardinal covering his ears, a man dressed in a suit covering his eyes and the pope covering his mouth. The tongues of the cardinal and layman are sticking out and forked.

Winter

New York, NY – The Wall Street Art Gallery displayed a piece of art which resembled The Last Supper. Marilyn Monroe was sitting in the center as Christ and among the apostles were depictions of such actors as Elvis, Frankenstein and James Dean.

January – February

Chicago, IL – The Woman Made Gallery had an exhibit called "Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary" in which all the pieces dealt with the Blessed Virgin. One of the gallery representatives justified the show on the grounds that this show was done "after the holidays because people need sobering up." Among the exhibits was Jennifer Karady's "The Annunciation" which is a photograph of a woman dressed as the archangel Gabriel handing a wire coat hanger to an obviously pregnant Mary. Another piece was Mary Ellen Croteau's "Woman on a Pedestal" which is a statue of Mary in a rather traditional pose. The body is covered with headlines from newspapers including "Man indicted in wife's slaying" and "Rape victim dies of stab wounds."

New York, NY – "Dancing at the Crossroads" is a piece of art

that was on display at the SoHo 20. By Constance Short, the print shows a naked woman on a cross with all her limbs nailed to it except for one of her legs which is up in the air, Rockette style.

January – March

Riverside, CA – In an exhibit at the Riverside Art Museum called “Questioning Equality: An Artistic Ideal” there was an exhibit called “AIDS Pieta II.” It showed a woman holding a man in a pieta-style pose. The woman’s heart and breasts are visible. There is a wolf to the left of this central image and animals have people’s faces in the background.

Santa Ana, CA – In the *Washington Square News* there was an ad for plays produced by American Repertoire Theatre (A.R.T.). One was the *House of Blue Leaves* which the ad described in the following manner: “On the day the Pope first visits New York, a middle-aged zookeeper...is visited by...two sightseeing nuns, and his AWOL son, who plans to bomb the Pope.” Another play, listed as “Subscriber’s Choice–O.C. Premiere!”, was *Our Lady of the Tortilla*, which includes an “old aunt [who] sees the face of the Virgin in a tortilla-turning their New Jersey home into a modern day Lourdes.”

February – March

New York, NY – The Slowinski Gallery featured a picture called “The Annunciation” by Jennifer Karady. In it, a woman dressed as the archangel Gabriel hands to a pregnant Mary a wire coat hanger. They are standing in a decaying church. Karady explained her art by saying “every [woman has a] right to choose motherhood as well as her right to control her own sexual identity.” In the gallery was also a postcard which showed a nun as a pig in the forefront and barebreasted nuns beating children in the background; it is called “Demon Nun.”

Spring

The New York Metropolitan Opera performed Philip Glass' *The Voyage*. The work was intended as a New Age tribute to Columbus' arrival to the New World. Early in the story a ship carrying four space travelers crashed onto earth. The Commander of the ship was supposed to be the Virgin Mary. She was dressed in white with a blue veil. Soon after the Commander meets the "natives" she and the male natives had sex. The male natives emerged as energized creatures who formed a master race. In Act Two, the Virgin Mary appeared to Columbus and commanded him to worship her as his true queen and his "one true god." The Virgin Mary and Columbus then had sex on the mast of the ship, which resembled a cross.

March – April

Arizona – The Jose Galvez Gallery featured an art exhibit which included works by Artemio Rodriguez. One is called "Santo Nino" ("Boy Saint") and it shows a man holding a baby with wings and horns. The baby is seen urinating into a leaping fish, a Christian symbol. Pamela Portwood, who reviewed the exhibit for the *Arizona Daily Star*, commented that the artist's mixed symbolism "pokes fun at the literal and pompous aspects of Catholicism, as well as its idealization of saints."

April – May

New York, NY – The Grove Street Playhouse featured *The Tragic and Horrible Life of the Singing Nun*, a play ridiculing the life of the late singing nun. The main character, Sr. Jeanine, is based on the nun who sang the hit song, "Dominique." She is shown as a simpleton who becomes a lesbian. Also featured were a drag queen nun, a Mother Superior who is a "pervert fan," and a priest who has simulated sex with the latter on a piano. The convent is called "Our Lady of the Pernicious and Pestilent Wounds." The play made fun of the Church, saints, and sacraments, especially Holy Communion, as well as priests and nuns. The writer and director of the play in the *New York*

Times called it “mostly fiction and strictly libelous.”

Summer

Los Angeles, CA – The Tom of Finland Foundation newsletter *Dispatch* featured a picture of a priest performing fellatio on Jesus Christ. Garilyn Brune is responsible for the work entitled “C___S_____ for Christ” and was the Grand Prize Winner of the 1995 Emerging Erotic Artist Contest.

June – July

New York, NY – The notoriously anti-Catholic play, *Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All For You*, made a New York comeback in June and July by playing at the Duplex, a Greenwich Village playhouse. The play has been denounced as anti-Catholic by Christian and Jewish organizations.

July

Colorado – The Cherry Creek Arts Festival featured the work of DeDe LaRue, who habitually abuses religious images. In her work, “Rin Tin Tin Jesus,” a sculpted dog has a stigmata, a crown of thorns, and a dog tag which reads, “Rin Tin Tin Jesus–If found return to heaven.” It was part of her Dogma series and she was quoted in the *Rocky Mountain News* as saying, “People don’t like their religion made fun of–so that’s why I do it.”

August

Arlington, VA – Christopher Durang’s play, *Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All for You*, provided a forum for Durang’s hatred of the Catholic Church. Durang highlighted the fact that he was a gay teenager attending Catholic school. The play is perhaps the most anti-Catholic show ever written.

September

Millburn, NJ – The PaperMill Playhouse produced the

play *Applause* replete with anti-Catholic statements in the script and sacrilegious scenery. One scene, labeled "The Sanctuary," featured a male dancer wearing a bishop's mitre, a bar designed like an altar and a large background prop of a rose window. The play ridiculed Catholicism.

New York, NY – John Coyle's play *The Donkey Barn* depicts an accountant who wants to plant a bomb in St. Patrick's Cathedral, but instead holds as hostages the patrons of an Irish bar. A gay priest tries to dissuade him from going through with his plans. The play centers around exposing the disastrous effects of religious hypocrisy.

The play *Hosanna in the Highest* opened at the Planet Earth Multi-Cultural Theatre. The play focused on two related stories. In the first story, the Virgin Mary sues God claiming she was raped and forced to bear the Messiah against her will. In the other, a grandmother returns from the dead to offer support to her lesbian granddaughter and to also admit that her marriage of fifty-two years was the wrong life choice for her.

Washington, D.C. – Andres Serrano was chosen by the Smithsonian to open Hispanic Heritage Month at the Institute. Serrano is best known for his profoundly vulgar and anti-Christian work, "Piss Christ" – the dime-store crucifix dropped in a jar of urine. Despite assurances to the Smithsonian that he would not act irresponsibly, he did, prompting the institution to say it would never invite him again.

October

Stephen E. Lewis displayed his work in a Georgetown gallery, featuring his painting *Every Dog Has Its Day*. It is a rendering of the crucifixion, with a large dog as Christ and dogs as Roman soldiers.

October – January

New York, NY – The Asia Society sponsored an art exhibition entitled “Contemporary Art in Asia: Traditions/Tensions.” One of the paintings, *House of Sin*, depicts a drunken Catholic cleric holding a chalice; a dead boy appears next to him. A league letter was written protesting the painting. In response the Asia Society wrote “we regret that you may have felt offense but hope you understand the educational mission of our organization.”

November

New York, NY – The off-Broadway play *Late Night Catechism* premiered at St. Luke’s Lutheran Church. The play ridiculed virtually every aspect of Catholicism including Jesus, Mary, Joseph, the Saints, the sacraments, Catholic schools, and Catholic customs. In particular, the sexual statements that the play made about Catholic beliefs and practices were unusually coarse.

Temple of Confessions premiered at the Corcoran Gallery of Art and on the World Wide Web. Viewers of the exhibit were allowed to confess their sins to saints enshrined there by talking into microphones or by filling out confession cards. The audience could even e-mail tele-confessions from the privacy of their home computer.

December

Christopher Durang, the playwright who gave us *Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All for You*, has now offered us *Sex and Longing*, a Broadway play that independent observers have labeled anti-Catholic. The play is replete with the abuse of Christian symbols, even to the point of having a serial killer pose as Jesus.