

BROOKLYN MUSEUM HOSTS “HIDE/SEEK”

In November, the Brooklyn Museum of Art began hosting the exhibit “Hide/Seek.” Included in the exhibit was the video that the Catholic League protested last year when it was shown at the Smithsonian. The video, “A Fire in My Belly,” which features large ants running across the body of Jesus on the Cross, was pulled from the Smithsonian after we protested.

The anti-Catholic exhibit was sponsored by the most anti-Catholic foundation in the United States, the Ford Foundation, and was being shown in New York’s most anti-Catholic museum.

For decades, the Ford Foundation has given lavishly to Catholics for Choice, an anti-Catholic front group that has twice been condemned by the bishops’ conference as a fraud; it has no members.

The Brooklyn Museum of Art was home to the “Sensation” exhibit in 1999 that featured elephant dung and pictures of female genitalia inserted on a portrait of Our Blessed Mother; we led a demonstration in front of the Museum.

Last year we exercised our First Amendment right to free speech by objecting to the video at the Smithsonian exhibit. Those who liked the anti-Catholic “art” lied about us by saying we called for the video to be censored. What they really wanted to do was silence us. They failed.

For two reasons, we did not stage a demonstration outside the Museum this time: a) we won the big prize when Smithsonian officials *voluntarily* bowed to public pressure and withdrew the vile video, and b) the video has been shown many times since at other venues across the nation (we are not in the business of chasing dog and pony shows).

Addressing this issue, Bill Donohue stated, "We are still waiting for the bigots to cut a video showing ants running all over Muhammad's body, or maybe that of Martin Luther King's. Then they can tell Muslims and blacks they just don't understand the benign message behind the video. Good luck."

After we issued our statement to the press, Museum director Arnold Lehman attempted to spin the "Ants on the Crucifix" video.

For Lehman, there is no such thing as anti-Catholic art. Catholics who disagree are apparently too stupid to appreciate the complexities of these masterpieces. For example, he found nothing anti-Catholic in the "Sensation" exhibition. With "A Fire in My Belly," Lehman said that the ants crawling over Jesus is actually a statement about "human suffering and death." Guess us stupid Catholics missed that one, too.

Better yet was John Tamagni, the chairman of the Museum's board. In response to a letter sent by Brooklyn Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio, who properly asked for the video to be pulled, Tamagni said, "nothing in the exhibition was meant to be offensive." This would include such spectacular fare as full frontal male nudity; scenes of naked men kissing; sado-masochistic images; and photos of AIDS-ravaged corpses.

Perhaps they were meant to ennoble. Guess us stupid Catholics missed that one, too.

The fact of the matter is that the artist who made the vile video died of self-inflicted wounds: he died of AIDS. The homosexual, David Wojnarowicz, hated the Catholic Church (had he lived by its teachings, he would not have self-destructed). He once referred to Cardinal John O'Connor as a "fat cannibal," and labeled the Catholic Church a "house of walking swastikas." Sounds like the words of a bigot.

But perhaps us Catholics are too stupid not to understand that these words were really meant to endear the artist to the

Catholic community.