

# CHANGING THE CULTURE

It was almost a year ago that we protested the vile, obscene and anti-Catholic “Sensation” exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum of Arts. As a result of all the attention, a reporter for the *New York Times*, David Barstow, got curious and started to probe around a bit looking for information how this exhibition came to be. What he found was a tale of lies and corruption.

It so happened that Charles Saatchi, world renowned advertising guru, not only loaned the art to the museum, he also dumped \$160,000 on it for support. The intent, it seems clear, was to hype the art and hype its value.

As a direct result of this fiasco, the American Association of Museums adopted a new set of ethical guidelines on how museums should oversee displays of art borrowed from private collections.

We’re not sure whether the guidelines, which are voluntary, will work. But it is a sure bet that had the Catholic League not objected to the dung-laden portrait of Our Blessed Mother by Chris Ofili, Barstow’s curiosity wouldn’t have been pricked and his findings wouldn’t have led to these guidelines. An interesting case in how cultural change occurs.