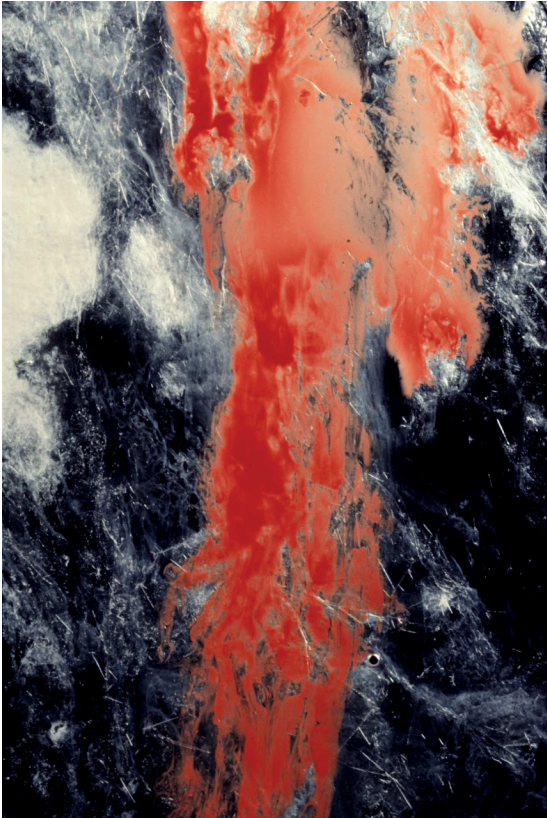


Akim Monet Fine Arts, LLC



Andres Serrano (b. 1950)

Frozen semen with blood

Dye destruction print, Diasec mounted, in artist's frame

64 ¹⁵/₁₆ x 44 ⁷/₈ in (165 x 114 cm)

Ed. 4

1990

PROVENANCE

Stux Gallery, New York

LITERATURE

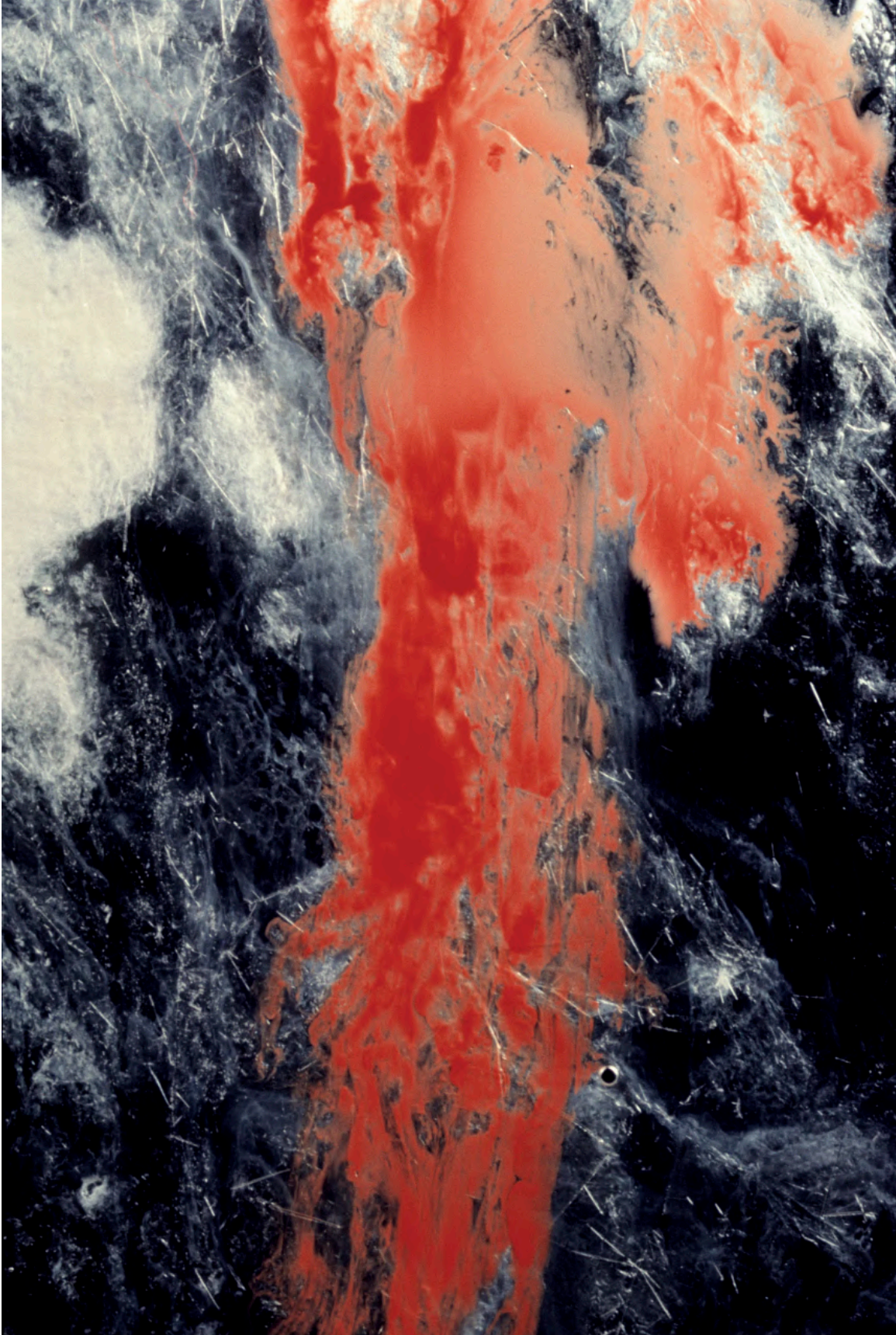
Andres Serrano, Body and Soul, New York: Takarajima Books, 1995, n.p.

EXHIBITED

Fertility, Fall 2011, Akim Monet Side by Side Gallery, Berlin
The Concrete and the Mystical, Winter 2012, Akim Monet Side by Side Gallery, Berlin
Mythology & Science, Fall 2017 & Spring 2018, Akim Monet Side by Side Gallery, Berlin
Disruptive selection, Fall 2019, Popcorn Gallery Akim Monet Fine Arts, Los Angeles

100 Wilshire Blvd. Suite 700
Santa Monica, CA 90401
United States of America

Telephone +1 (424) 394 8480
info@akimmonetfinearts.com
www.akimmonetfinearts.com



100 Wilshire Blvd. Suite 700
Santa Monica, CA 90401
United States of America

Telephone +1 (424) 394 8480
info@akimmonetfinearts.com
www.akimmonetfinearts.com

NOTES



Andres SERRANO *Piss Christ*, 1987

Even as the works in the Body Fluid series took on a politicized element because of the Aids crisis and the possibility of infection through bodily fluids in the late eighties, when addressing *Frozen semen with blood*, this work cannot be properly understood without considering the religious element most notably present in *Piss Christ*.

Piss Christ, Andres Serrano's 1987 image of a plastic crucifix submerged in a tank of urine, is one of the most influential yet controversial images of all time.

Serrano submitted the photograph for a competition Awards in the Visual Arts, organized by the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Ten artists from ten US regions, Serrano among them, were awarded a prize of \$15,000 and a traveling exhibition, funded by the Equitable Life Assurance Company, The Rockefeller Foundation, a non-profit philanthropic organization and, most importantly given the furor that followed, The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), funded by tax payers and bestowed by Federal Government.

The first sign of trouble came when the exhibition was on view at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. A local resident complained about the work in a letter to a local newspaper and this was noticed by Bill Wildmon, head of the American Family Association, a right-wing Christian fundamentalist organization. Wildmon petitioned Congress to denounce and defund the NEA, a demand staunchly supported by Republican Senators Alphonse d'Amato and Jesse Helms.

The episode marked the beginning of the so-called "Culture Wars" in the US, a series of skirmishes between left and right that has continued virtually unabated ever since. Artists such as Robert Mapplethorpe's 1989 show at the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, DC, also funded by the NEA, was cancelled due to right-wing pressure. As recently as 2010, David Wojnarowicz's film of Christ on the cross being slowly consumed by ants at The National Gallery of Art in DC was also discontinued due to the outrage it engendered.

Occasionally, some of these battles were won by artists and institutions; Chris Ofili's dung-encrusted painting *The Holy Virgin Mary*, which had its American debut in 1999 as part of the *Sensation* traveling exhibition at The Brooklyn Museum, incited then-Mayor Rudolph Giuliani to freeze city funding to the Museum and threaten eviction from its longstanding home near Prospect Park. However, the Museum counter-sued New York City for violating its First Amendment rights and won the case unequivocally.

In various interviews, Serrano has said that when he made *Piss Christ*, he had no intention of creating something so controversial - that *Piss Christ* was always both a work of art and an act of devotion.

Serrano is a practicing Catholic, who as a child was told by the nuns who taught him that it was wrong to idolize representations of Christ since they merely described sacred scenes and were not actually holy in themselves.

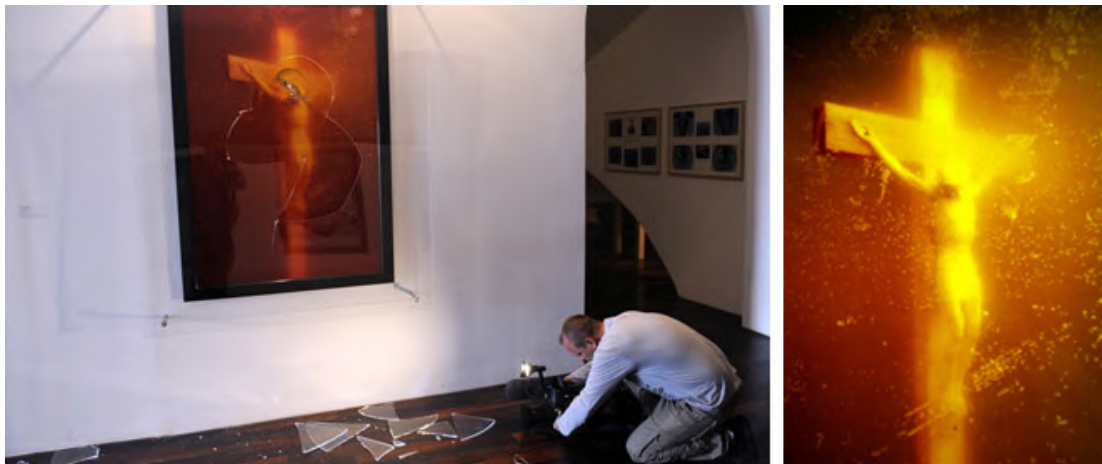
Serrano considers *Piss Christ* a comment on this paradox, making him neither a "blasphemer" nor an "anti-Christian", as his accusers would attest. He also believes that the work has ignited some useful and timely debate on what the crucifixion scene, which has become almost a meaningless visual cliché, really symbolizes - the horrific and prolonged death of Jesus Christ in unimaginably brutal circumstances.

Serrano stands by *Piss Christ* as both an artist and a Christian. He also supports the notion that all opinions about the work - whether for or against it - should be embraced and that artists and art institutions must be free to create and exhibit whatever they wish without fear of reprisals or hostile government intervention.

Serrano continued this legacy of "sedition" in his very recent, 2019 installation, *The Game: All Things Trump*, an ironic portrait (described as a "post Duchamp "readymade"), of the current US president created from thousands of Trump artifacts collected together by the artist.

These are volatile and thought-provoking times, in which *Piss Christ* seems more relevant than ever to the debate of what constitutes great art.

Serrano's "Piss Christ" Smashed with Hammer (Again)



Kyle Chayka, *Hyperallergic*, April 18, 2011
<https://hyperallergic.com/23015/piss-christ-smashed/>
Serrano's attacked print in Avignon; the original "Piss Christ" (1987) (image via guardian.co.uk)

The Guardian reports that an extremist Christian group has attacked a print of artist Andres Serrano's infamous photograph "Piss Christ" (1987), smashing an acrylic plastic barrier around the piece and slashing the print itself with a "screwdriver or ice pick" (WTF). This follows previous attacks on the same photograph in 1997 and 2007.