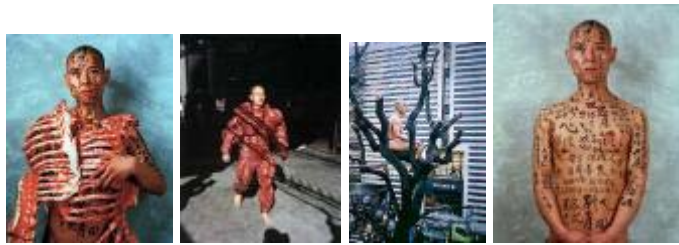


What is Art?



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Background

As the President of the Board of Trustees of a prominent U.S. art museum, you are responsible for approving the exhibit schedule and the distribution of funding to support exhibits. Last night was the gala opening for the Zhang Huan exhibit. You were shocked at the protesters outside the museum. Members of the community were outraged that city and federal grants helped support the exhibit. In fact, the leader for Citizens in Support of Fine Art (CSFA), a local arts organization, was interviewed by the local news, stating that his organization was withdrawing all support from the Museum – saying, “when you can wrap a meat carcass around your body and call it art – it is time to stand up for the rights of citizens. Federal and city money could be better used to fund schools, fix roads, and hire more police. ”

Scenario

The leader for the Citizens in Support of Fine Art has sent a registered letter to you that states his organization is withdrawing all funding from the Museum unless the Zhang Huan show is closed. Your organization is dependent on the generous support of this organization as funding from CSFA supports museum education and security programs, as well as special exhibitions. You have called an emergency meeting of the Board. What should you do? Is this art? What makes it art? What responsibility does the museum have to the community to educate and instruct? Should public funds be used to support such projects?

Learning Outcomes

- 1) Students will experience an awareness and understanding of contemporary art.
- 2) Students will understand non-profit organizations and funding issues
- 3) Students will acquire knowledge about federal funding sources for the arts, such as NEA and NEH.
- 4) Students will explore issues surrounding freedom of speech, community values, and censorship.