

Art director defends Mapplethorpe photos

CINCINNATI (AP) — An art gallery director on trial for displaying Robert Mapplethorpe's work says graphic photographs at the center of the obscenity case are "tough, brutal, sometimes disgusting" — but worthwhile art.

The nation's first obscenity trial of an art gallery and its director was expected to go to the jury late today or early Friday after rebuttal testimony from the prosecution and closing arguments.

Dennis Barrie, director of the Contemporary Arts Center, scoffed Wednesday at a prosecutor's suggestion that he and the gallery showed an exhibit of Mapplethorpe's photographs as a publicity stunt.

"This has been a strain on all of us, a strain on me personally and a strain on my family," Barrie testified. "But we were very committed to the principle at stake here."

Barrie and the gallery were charged April 7 with pandering obscenity and using children in nudity-related material, both misdemeanors. The trial is focused on seven of 175 photos in the exhibit, "Robert Mapplethorpe: The Perfect Moment."

Barrie said some of the questionable acts depicted in the show were part of the

photographic challenge Mapplethorpe accepted in trying to create a work of art.

"As difficult as the subject matter may be, you see the ability of the man working through. He was brilliant with a camera," Barrie said.

Mapplethorpe, who was known for pursuing gay themes, died of AIDS in March 1989 at age 42.

The exhibit set an attendance record — 81,000 — for an art exhibit in Cincinnati during its seven-week run at the gallery ending in May. The show closes this week in Boston, where 103,000 tickets have been sold.

In January 1989, the Contemporary Art Center's board endorsed Barrie's proposal to schedule an exhibit of Mapplethorpe photos.

In June 1989, three months after Mapplethorpe died, Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., disputed use of National Endowment of the Arts funding for work that might be considered obscene.

Barrie said the board talked about the controversy and decided to go ahead with the exhibit.

If convicted of both charges, Barrie could be sentenced to one year in jail and fined \$2,000. The gallery could be fined \$10,000 for conviction on both counts.

World leaders seek peace in gulf

(AP) — Saddam Hussein on Wednesday made his first known visit to Kuwait since Iraq captured its oil-rich neighbor Aug. 2. Another neighbor, Iran, said it would keep out of any military confrontation between Iraq and U.S.-led multinational forces in the region.

Elsewhere in the Middle East, visiting French President Francois Mitterrand, Japanese Prime Minister Toshiko Kaifu and Soviet envoy Yevgeny Primakov all sought a peaceful solution to the Persian Gulf crisis.

But new terror threats emerged. Palestinian guerrilla leader Abul Abbas warned he would attack U.S. aircraft if Iraqi planes were hit with weapons as part of the U.N. air embargo against Iraq.

In Washington, Bush administration officials told Congress Iraq is likely to remain a long-term threat, and sales of billions of dollars in U.S. weaponry to Saudi Arabia are crucial to a new regional coalition to balance that menace.

Iraq, facing an international force on its border with Saudi Arabia after invading Kuwait, suddenly made peace with Iran last month after eight years of war and two years of deadlocked peace talks.

Saddam wooed Iran to side with him. Tehran joined world demands that Iraq withdraw from Kuwait, but also urged the expulsion of foreign forces from the region.

On Wednesday, Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati said on Tehran TV that Iran wants a peaceful settlement and "force

should be the last possible resort for solving this crisis, but Iran will not participate in this in any way."

His remarks, monitored in Cyprus, indicated Iran was distancing itself from Iraq, following suggestions it could circumvent a U.S.-led embargo and send Iraq food and medicine. Reports from Washington said Iraq also asked Tehran to help export its embargoed oil.

Meanwhile, the London-based Amnesty International issued a report saying Iraqi occupation troops tortured and executed scores of people in Kuwait, some for refusing to display pictures of Saddam.

Refugees have said stores and shops were pillaged, and that Iraq was out to dismantle Kuwaiti institutions. They reported summary executions of resistance fighters.

The Iraqi News Agency gave a different portrait. It said Saddam toured the streets of Kuwait, which "appeared flourishing after its return to the mother homeland."

The news agency said Saddam met with Iraqi troops and presided over two meetings of military commanders. Iraq has annexed the emirate, declaring it Bahdad's 19th province.

Kuwait city "glittered with pride" at Saddam's visit, said the agency, monitored in Cyprus.

Mitterrand flew to the Persian Gulf for a two-day visit during which he planned to meet regional leaders and inspect French troops.

After he left Paris, the De-

fense Ministry announced France was sending eight Mirage F1 fighter planes to Qatar to protect that small country and the United Arab Emirates, its neighbor.

His first stop was the Emirates' capital of Abu Dhabi.

He reached there hours after nine French nationals held hostage by Iraq flew out of Baghdad on an Iraqi plane and arrived in Amman, Jordan, bound for Paris.

They were accompanied by the chairman of the private French group that arranged their release. Iraq is believed to still hold about 300 other French nationals hostage, as well as thousands of other Westerners.

France now has 13,000 men plus a dozen warships in the gulf region, the largest overseas deployment of French troops since the Algerian war.

Primakov, a Mideast expert and close adviser to Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev, met King Hussein and other senior Jordanian officials on Wednesday in Amman. He said he brought a letter for Hussein that concerns "efforts to find a settlement for the gulf crisis and other Mideast problems."

The monarch has tried to play the role of mediator in the gulf crisis.

The Soviet delegation was due to fly to Baghdad Thursday for talks with Iraqi officials. Late Wednesday, however, Iraqi Deputy Premier Taha Yassin Ramadan arrived in Amman. It was not known if this would change Primakov's plans.

Man convicted for selling album

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — An all-white jury Wednesday convicted a record store owner of obscenity for selling a sexually explicit album by the black rap group 2 Live Crew that had been banned by a federal judge.

The panel of five women and one man took only 2 and one-half hours to return the verdict against Charles Freeman, 31. The misdemeanor conviction carries a possible one-year jail sentence and \$1,000 fine. Broward County Judge Paul Backman set sentencing for Nov. 2.

"I'm absolutely stunned by the verdict," defense attorney Bruce Rogow said.

Freeman denounced the jurors as unfair and ignorant of

the black community. The departing jurors had no comment.

"I felt that the jury paid very close attention to the evidence," said prosecutor Leslie Robson. "They came back with a verdict that spoke the truth."

The Miami-based rap group and its album "As Nasty as They Wanna Be" have been at the center of a First Amendment dispute since June 6, when a Fort Lauderdale federal judge ruled their lyrics obscene. The lyrics have been criticized as promoting violence against women.

The federal judge's ruling banned the sale of the album in three south Florida counties, but opened a flood of legal cases against the album around the country.

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not meant to govern the state. It was meant as a safeguard, a check."

Both Paulus and House Speaker Vera Katz, D-Portland, think that the Legislature is better equipped than voters to deal with the more complex issues. Dan Field, the executive assistant to the speaker (Katz), said he is concerned that people will get bored with tedious issues, not do enough research and ultimately will not have the crucial information needed to make an informed decision.

Field said he trusts voters' competence "if they have the sufficient information. But I would encourage people to do their homework before they go vote."

Initiative sponsors, however, are more optimistic about citizen-initiated measures.

Peter Drake, a former petitioner for the Oregon Recycling Act, said he believes it is essential for citizens to use the initiative process. "We should be fighting as hard as possible to keep the bare vestiges of democracy that we have," he said.

Drake said Paulus and Katz are not giving voters enough credit. "They're basically saying citizens are too stupid to vote things into law," he said.



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