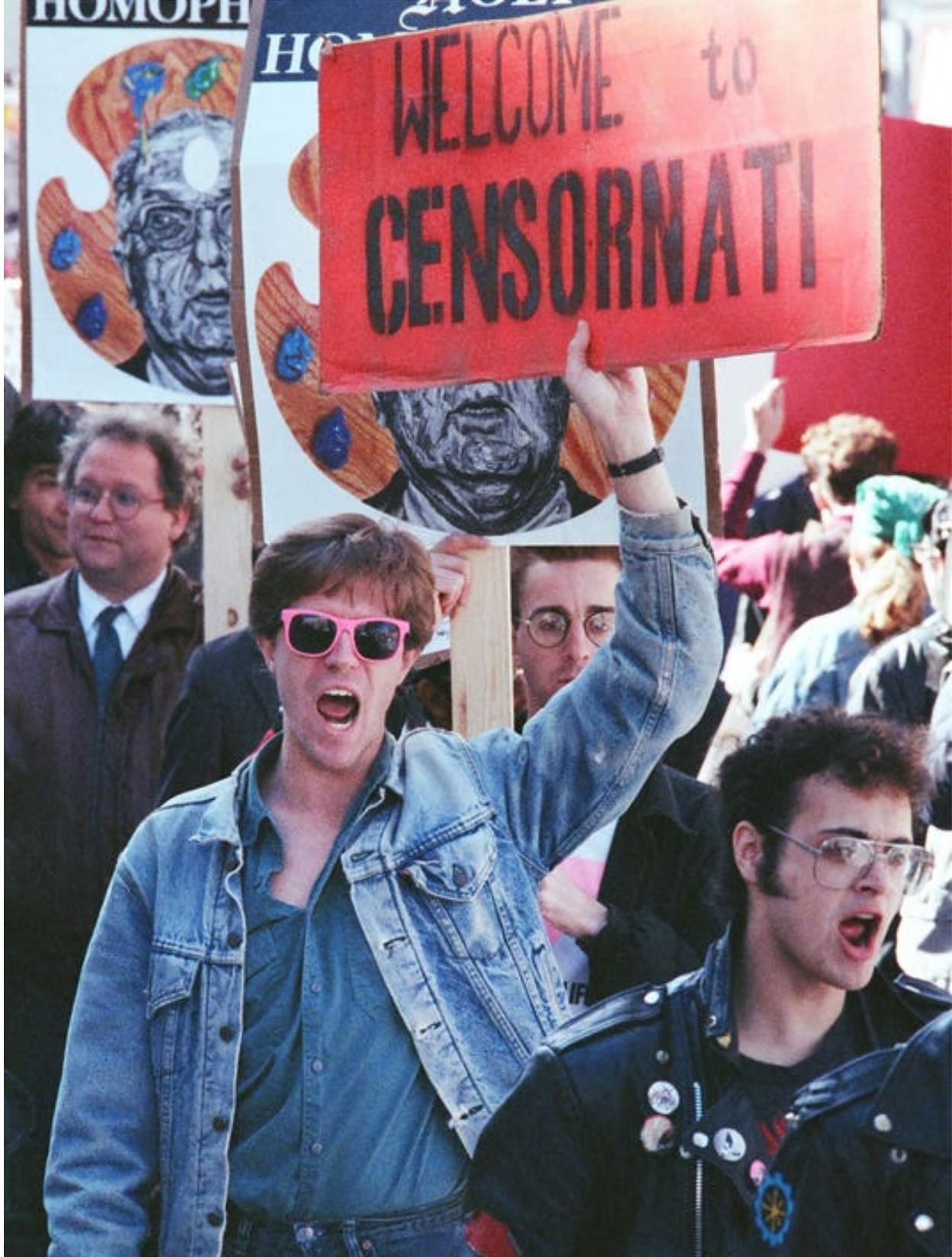


25 years later: Mapplethorpe in Cincinnati

[Carol Motsinger](#), cmotsinger@enquirer.com Published 6:10 p.m. ET Oct. 22, 2015 | Updated 6:18 p.m. ET Oct. 22, 2015



(Photo: Jim Callaway)

What a moment it was.

Twenty-five years ago, the Cincinnati stop of Robert Mapplethorpe's controversial exhibition, "The Perfect Moment," triggered a series of events that forever shaped our ideas on art, pornography and freedom of expression.

A Friday and Saturday symposium will spotlight these events, as well as the art and the artist at the center of the debate.

The program – "Mapplethorpe + 25" – from FotoFocus and the Contemporary Arts Center (CAC), which opened the exhibit April 7, 1990, will include an international roster of curators, critics, artists and other professionals.

CAC art director Dennis Barrie and the CAC were charged criminally for obscenity because of a public exhibit, the first and only time a museum and a director faced such charges in the United States. A jury acquitted the Barrie and the museum.

Kevin Moore, artistic director and curator, noted that most of the conversation about "The Perfect Moment" has centered on "how the community resisted or supported" the museum. "That all really eclipsed the content of the artist's work. No one really talked about Mapplethorpe as an artist."

That's why Mapplethorpe's influences and how he has influenced a new generation of photographers will be one of the main narratives of the symposium.

[Pornography or art? Cincinnati decided](#)

Symposium program at Contemporary Arts Center, 44 E. Sixth St. (Program subject to change).

The symposium starts with a reception at 6 p.m. Friday. For more details and to RSVP, visit <http://www.mapplethorpe25.org/#!about/ozg9z>.

Friday: Opening film montage. Keynote speaker: Germano Celant, independent curator, Milan-New York.

Saturday: Panel: "The Exhibition, The Contemporary Arts Center, and Arts Censorship," with panelists: Dennis Barrie, principal of Barrie Projects and former Contemporary Arts Center director; Jock Reynolds, director, Yale University Art Gallery; Raphaela Platow, director, Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati; and H. Louis Sirkin, senior counsel, Santen & Hughes, and former trial counsel to Dennis Barrie and the Contemporary Arts Center.

Panel: "The Artist's Circle and Studio," moderated by Phillip Gelter, author and photo historian, with panelists: Robert Sherman, promoter, Chateau Marmont, Los Angeles; Judy Linn, artist, New York; and Carol Squiers, curator, International Center of Photography, New York.

Panel: "Curators Curate Mapplethorpe," moderated by Kevin Moore, artistic director and curator, FotoFocus, with panelists: Britt Salvesen, curator, Wallis Annenberg Photography Department, Los

Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA); and Paul Martineau, associate curator, Department of Photographs, The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.

Closing keynote: Catherine Opie, artist and professor of photography, University of California, Los Angeles.

Oral History Reception at the 21c Museum Hotel:

Visitors are asked to share their memories of the exhibition, reflect on its impact and issues raised in the event. This commentary will be recorded and simultaneously broadcast during the symposium's final public reception at the 21c Museum Hotel, according to organizers.