



TIME LINE TO EVENTS FOLLOWING THE OPENING OF "OLD GLORY"



David Hammons, "African-American Flag", 1990.

June 14, 1994

Old Glory: The American Flag in Contemporary Art opens at Cleveland Center for Contemporary Art, where it is on view through August 14. The exhibition receives critical acclaim from the Cleveland *Plain Dealer* (June 19, 1994) and the *New Art Examiner* (November, 1994). In September, 1994, the exhibition's curator, David Rubin, receives *Northern Ohio LIVE* magazine's annual Award of Achievement in the Visual Arts for *Old Glory*.

November, 1994

David Rubin is hired as Curator of 20th Century Art at the Phoenix Art Museum.

June 2, 1995

Old Glory travels to the Gallery of Contemporary Art, University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, where it is on view through August 4. Once again it is well received.

March 16, 1996

Old Glory opens at the Phoenix Art Museum.

March 17, 1996

The exhibition receives a favorable review by *Arizona Republic* art critic Richard Nilsen, who calls the exhibition "brilliant."

March 20, 1996

The *Arizona Tribune* newspaper publishes a front page article that calls attention to only two works in the exhibition, Dread Scott's *What is the Proper Way to Display the U.S. Flag?* (1988) and Kate Millett's *The American Dream Goes to Pot* (1970). The article calls the works offensive to taxpayers and raises questions about the Museum's funding. (The exhibition was funded through private donations and the Museum is a private non-profit institution that receives less than 2% of its operating budget from the city's Arts Commission).

March 20, 1996

Arizona Republic political cartoonist Steve Benson publishes the first of several cartoons about the exhibition, all of which are supportive. Others have appeared on March 22, 28, April 1, 8, 16, and 30.

March 24, 1996

The first of several editorials supporting the exhibition appears in the *Arizona Republic*. Other favorable editorials have appeared in the *Republic* on March 26, 27, 28, 31, April 4, 5, 18, 21, 22, 23, and 28.

March 24, 1996

300 demonstrators, many identifying themselves as veterans, rally outside the Museum to protest *Old Glory*. Two works out of eighty in the exhibition are cited by them as objectionable, and they call for their removal. The events are covered on every local news station, as well as on CNN, with footage of individuals who, against the wishes of rally organizers, remove flags from installations by Kate Millett and Dread Scott and turn them over to Museum representatives (see [AP](#) and [CNN](#) reports).

March 27, 1996

Arizona State Representative Scott Bundgaard and 24 other Republicans call for an investigation into the exhibition. They are

joined in their criticisms by U.S. Senator John McCain (R - Arizona) and U.S. Congressman Bob Stump (R - Arizona). They cite an "abuse of venerated objects" statute that had not been removed from the Arizona laws, even though it was invalidated by the Supreme Court decisions of 1989 and 1990, stating that flag desecration laws are unconstitutional. The city ultimately decides not to prosecute the Museum, in accordance with the Supreme Court ruling.

April 2, 1996

House Speaker Newt Gingrich says that the exhibition should be closed. He has not seen the exhibition. When interviewed on NBC Nightly News, he says he does not need to see the exhibition "to know that it is wrong." (see [CNN](#) report)

April 13, 1996

Salt River Project, a utilities company, decides not to consider a \$ 25,000 grant request for a future exhibition at the Phoenix Art Museum, and withdraws \$ 4,000 worth of video services from a Museum benefit. The future exhibition is *Converging Cultures*, an exhibition of Spanish Colonial Art, organized by The Brooklyn Museum. Within hours of SRP's announcement, a private donor provides partial funding for the video services.

April 13, 1996

Approximately 50 motorcycle-club members, many of them identifying themselves as Vietnam veterans, protest the exhibition by removing the flags from the Kate Millett and Dread Scott installations and turning them over to Museum staff. During the same time, a public forum on "Freedom of Expression and the Arts" is held at the Phoenix Theatre, next door to the Museum. The forum features former NEA Chair John Frohnmayer and artist Faith Ringgold (see [CNN](#) report).

April 19, 1996

The Dial Corporation requests that its name be removed from any materials related to the *Old Glory* exhibition, which is not sponsored by The Dial Corporation. The Dial Corporation continues to support the Museum and has not withdrawn its funding. The corporation provided the Museum with a grant to allow free admission to all exhibitions during the Museum's current expansion.

April 26, 1996

GOP presidential hopeful Bob Dole calls for the closing of *Old Glory*. He has not seen the exhibition, but claims that it "mocks the very symbol of this nation's freedom...The Phoenix Art Museum is hiding behind lofty language of free speech in order to profit from the debasing of America."

April 26, 1996

House Speaker Newt Gingrich holds a news conference in Phoenix and again denounces the exhibition as "irresponsible and foolish." He reiterates that he has no intention of viewing the exhibition.

April 28, 1996

Following several weeks of radio ads, paid for by the Citizen's Flag Alliance of Indiana, protesters stage a peaceful rally outside the Museum. Police estimate the number of protesters at 2,000, although newspaper reports range from 750 to 2,500.



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