

NOTE: Mapplethorpe - Leis Cincinnati Case

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## City free to raid photo exhibit

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CINCINNATI, Ohio

A MUNICIPAL judge yesterday dismissed a lawsuit filed by officials of Cincinnati's Contemporary Arts Centre, opening the door for city authorities to raid a controversial exhibit of work by the late photographer Robert Mapplethorpe.

Hamilton County Municipal Judge Edward Donnellon declined to consider the Arts Centre's request for a summary judgment that the exhibit was serious art work and thus protected from prosecution on the grounds of obscenity.

Donnellon dismissed the centre's request that he order a jury trial to determine whether the exhibit was obscene.

He declined to give any reasons for his dismissal of the case, saying he did not want to provide grounds for an appeal.

Marc Mezibov, an attorney for the centre, said it currently has no plans to do so.

At issue are a handful of more than 175 pictures in the exhibit Robert Mapplethorpe: The Perfect Moment. While most of the show consists of still lifes, portraits and nudes, the controversial photos are explicit displays of sado-masochistic and homoerotic acts.

Although the show has toured without incident since creating a furor over U.S. government financing of controversial art last summer in Washington, it has provoked a storm of controversy in Cincinnati, a midwestern city with a reputation as one of the United States' most conservative.

Observers said yesterday there was a good chance the photography show would be raided when it opens to the public at the Arts Center today. A record number of tickets had been sold for the private opening last night.

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