

NOTE: Mapplethorpe - Leis Cincinnati Case

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The Washington Times

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Jury to decide fate of Mapplethorpe exhibit

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A city jury of eight will convene April 17 to decide if the exhibit of 175 Robert Mapplethorpe photographs is obscene.

The decision by Judge Edward Donnellon to hold a jury trial was requested by the Contemporary Arts Center in a lawsuit against the police chief and sheriff because of unconfirmed published reports police will act when the exhibit opens Friday.

City and county officials argued that such a decision may only be sought after criminal or civil charges are filed. However, the April 17 trial date means that no verdict will be available before the privately funded exhibit opens for a seven-week run.

Meanwhile, a local philanthropic group for the humanities, the Thendara Foundation, ran full-page ads yesterday in both Cincinnati newspapers in favor of allowing the display. The ads included a quotation from President Bush, saying: "I don't know of anybody in the government or government agency that should be set up to censor what you write or what you paint or how you express yourselves."

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