

# Andres Serrano: The Spirit and The Letter

**BY LUCY R. LIPPARD**

*Last summer Serrano's photograph "Piss Christ" became a cause célèbre when it was attacked by U.S. congressmen and religious leaders.*

*What those critics saw as deliberate sacrilege is in fact only one aspect of Serrano's work, which encompasses both the theme of spiritual ambivalence and the formal investigation of unorthodox materials.*

Since 1984, Andres Serrano has developed a complex iconography that simultaneously exorcises the artist's experiences of Catholicism, criticizes the commercialization of sacred imagery and pays idiosyncratic homage to ideas that Christ originally stood for. Although his work is engendered by personal concerns, his sensuous surfaces, moodily glowing colors, monumental scale and harsh content are precise expressions of 1980s ambivalence. For all their iconoclasm, Serrano's jolting tableaux have ironically become icons of freedom in themselves, thanks to the esthetic vigilance of the American Family Association (AFA), which in April 1989 spied blasphemy in his photograph *Piss Christ* (as well as obscenity in the work of Robert Mapplethorpe), raised the alarm and brought down the wrath of Jesse Helms, the Moonies and other righteous souls on the arts establishment.<sup>1</sup>

Like the AFA, Serrano is obsessed with the flesh and bone of belief, but unlike them he deconstructs and destroys his own faith. Organized religion gives him a lot of trouble, though he remains a believer. He left the church at age 13—"There must be some conflict between Catholicism and puberty"<sup>2</sup>—but like many lapsed Catholics, Serrano finds childhood experiences and conditioning hard to exorcise. He says his work is informed by "unresolved feelings about my own Catholic upbringing which help me re-define and personalize my relationship with God. For me, art is a moral and spiritual obligation that cuts across all manner of pretense and speaks directly to the soul."<sup>3</sup>

Serrano produces objects of great and seductive beauty which address some of the weightiest subject matter available to Western artists. He does so in the oblique—abstract and conceptual—terms of current art practice, while maintaining a uniquely high emotional temperature. *Piss Christ*—the object of censorial furor—is a darkly beautiful photographic image which would have raised no hackles had the title not given away the process of its making. The small wood-and-plastic crucifix becomes virtually monumental as it floats, photographically enlarged, in a deep golden, rosy glow

that is both ominous and glorious. The bubbles wafting across the surface suggest a nebula. Yet the work's title, which is crucial to the enterprise, transforms this easily digestible cultural icon into a sign of rebellion or an object of disgust simply by changing the context in which it is seen.

Serrano is very much in the postmodernist mainstream when he talks about disrupting the pleasure of a spiritually comforting image. This strategy reflects his personal distrust of religion as much as it represents his understanding of current debates about photography's role in representation. If mainstream postmodernist artists (and critics) often seem to promulgate the same values as the culture they claim to oppose, then perhaps only those artists who have been forced to remain outside can instigate real change. In North America, artists of color, like Serrano, are forced to acquire a profound knowledge of both the dominant culture and of their own often perplexingly mixed cultures, even as they live precariously between the two—or among the many. Serrano's work is part of the "polyphonic discourse" many Third World scholars have been calling for; he challenges the boundaries formed by class and race, and between abstraction and representation, photography and painting, belief and disbelief.

Religious subject matter has been relatively fashionable during the 1980s, but religious belief is anathema to the at-best-skeptical and at-worst-cynical postmodernist enterprise. It is found primarily in art by people of color. For them it represents not only a survival tactic but also defiance of spiritual vacuity in a society that perceives both religious and political belief as naive on the one hand and as dangerously manipulable on the other. Few artists have had the courage to tackle the complexities of religion from a position of belief. Not surprisingly, the subversive nature of Serrano's religious content was fully recognized only by the fundamentalists, who keep their eyes peeled for meaning—a secondary consideration for most mainstream art audiences.

Serrano's own way of defusing his iconog-



*Above, Andres Serrano: The Scream, 1986, Cibachrome, 60 by 40 inches.*

*Opposite, Milk, Blood, 1986, Cibachrome, 40 by 60 inches.*

*All photos courtesy Stux Gallery.*

**Serrano is obsessed with the flesh and bone of belief, but he destroys his own faith. His harsh content and sensuous surfaces are expressions of 1980s ambivalence.**

raphy and fending off censorship is to insist that his images are intuitive and instinctual, multifaceted and open-ended, and that he himself is unable to pin them down. His 40-by-60-inch Cibachromes cannot be read on just one level; they are never merely socially antagonistic. Simultaneously representational and abstract, Serrano's works are visually bilingual in a world where the regressive xenophobia of "English Only" gains ground daily. They are culturally uneasy in a time of simplistic patriotism. Serrano has said that he hopes to "take a formal tradition and subvert it by inverting the images, abstracting that which we take

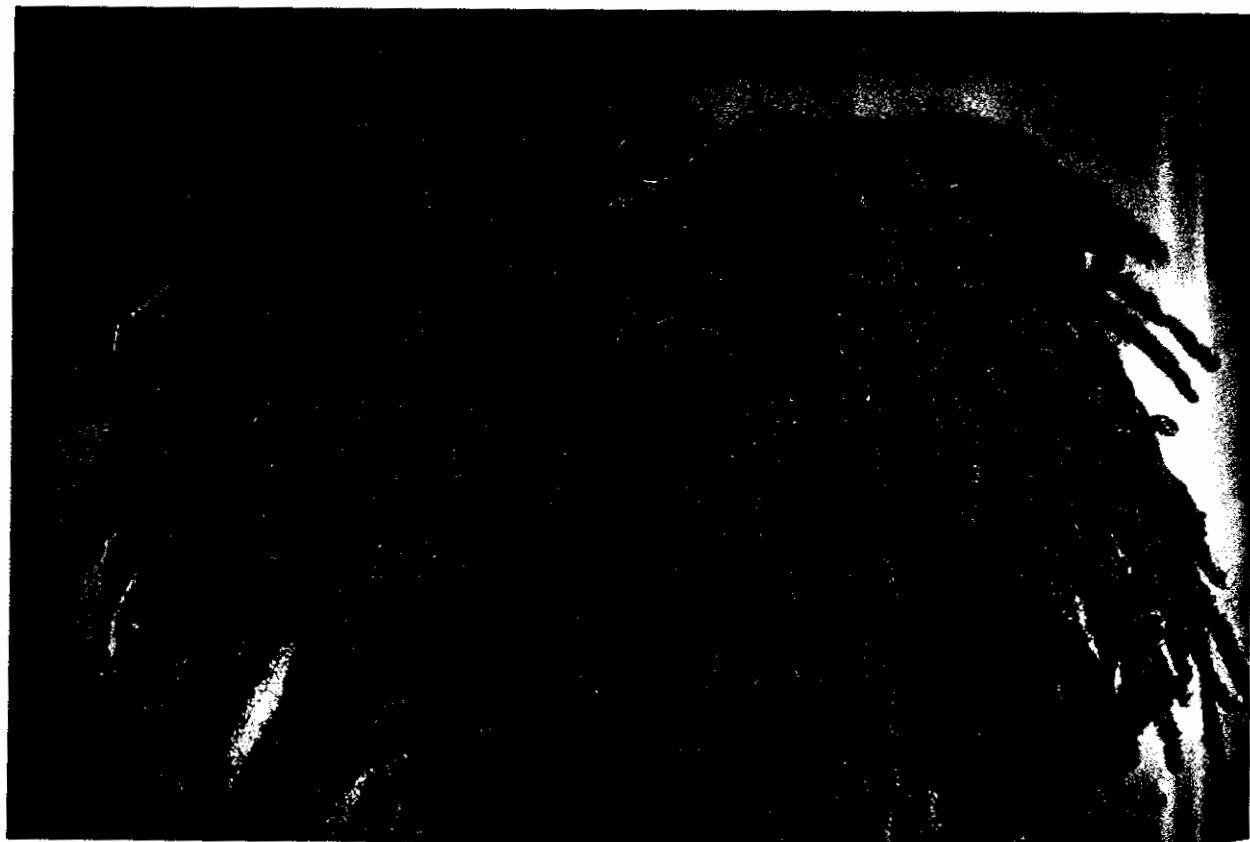
for granted, in an attempt to question not only photography, but my own experience and social reality."<sup>4</sup>

"I've always had trouble seeing things as black or white," Serrano says. "I'm of mixed blood." His great-grandfather was Chinese and he was raised in an Italian neighborhood in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn by his grandmother and his African-Cuban mother, a factory worker who never learned English and was frequently hospitalized for psychosis. As a child, he rarely saw his Honduran father, who served in the merchant marine; the last contact was 23 years ago, when he tracked him down for a brief visit in Honduras. "I've always accepted that duality in myself. My work is a reflection of it. If there's been a running theme throughout my work, it's this duality or contradiction."<sup>5</sup>

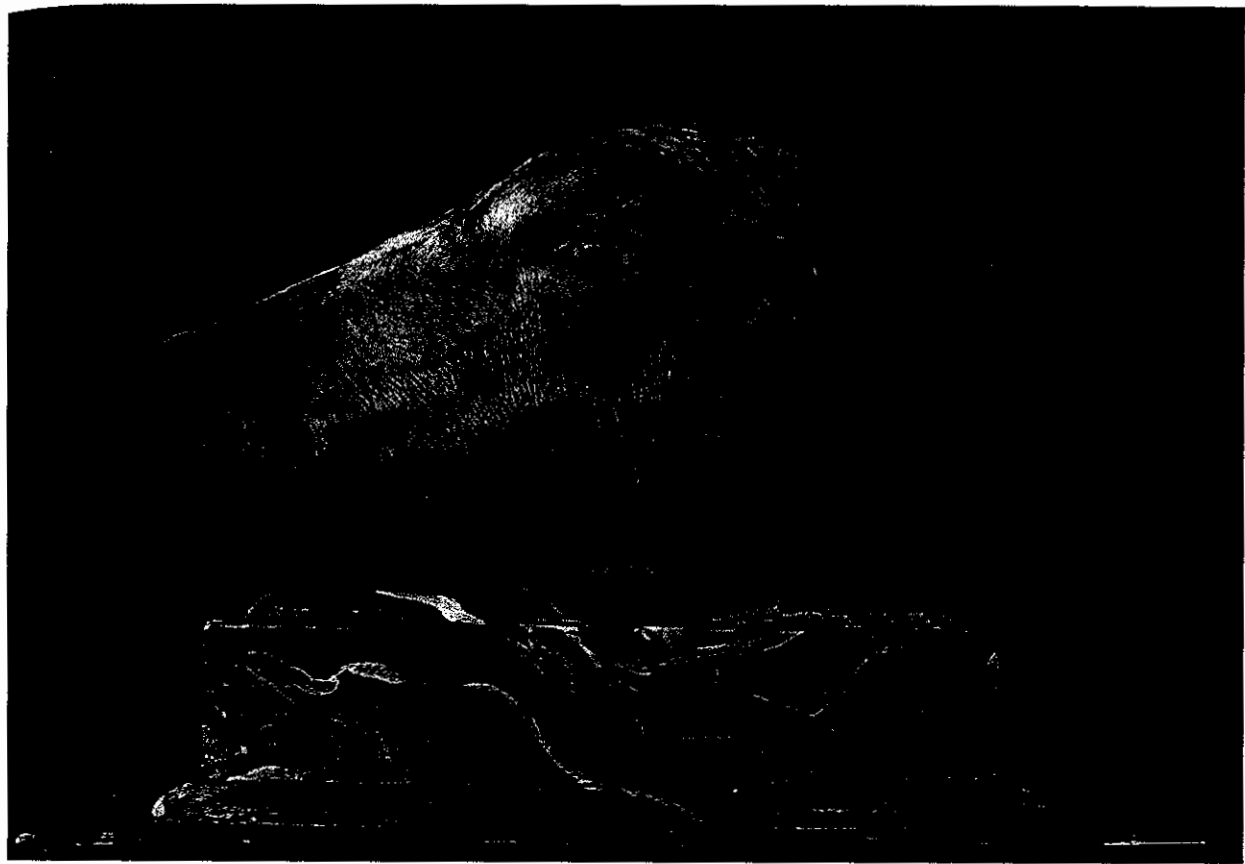
Serrano's hardly blissful childhood in a highly visual Latino culture may have been the impetus for his long-standing desire to be an artist and the source of his transgressive iconography. He recalls, however, that

there was no art at all in his home, and no crucifixes, though his mother did have "a Madonna statue and one of those Christ pictures with a sacred heart." He always wanted to be an artist, and as soon as he was permitted to ride the subway alone, at age 12, he began to spend a lot of time at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, initially glimpsed on a school trip. "Actually, my first interest was in art history rather than in drawing or painting," he says. "I became fascinated with the lives of painters. My religious imagery owes a lot to Renaissance art." At 15, he dropped out of school, then returned at 17, in 1967, for two years at the Brooklyn Museum School, where he studied with the African-American painter Calvin Douglas; and that was it for education.

Attracted to painting and sculpture, but convinced he was bad at it, Serrano took up photography ("portraits, typical early work"), but he made less and less art as the years went by. After working at various jobs, including assistant art director in an advertising agency, he began to make art again in 1983.



*Dread, 1987, Cibachrome, 40 by 60 inches.*



Cabeza de Vaca, 1984, Cibachrome, 40 by 60 inches.

First I made color landscapes, but at some point I just felt like I wanted to take the pictures in my head, and I started to do setups with raw meat. I felt the connection to death, and the meat images were living and dead at the same time. I'd been doing religious pictures for two or three years before I realized I had done a lot of religious pictures! I had no idea I had this obsession. It's a Latino thing, but it's also a European thing, more so than an American thing. I do have strong ties to Buñuel (I always remember that flock of sheep going into a Catholic church in *Exterminating Angel*),<sup>6</sup> but I've been as influenced by European art as by anybody, specifically Duchamp. I saw him as a free spirit, a provocateur par excellence, which I related to as a young man, a rebel.

When he began his elegant and bizarre "tableau" photographs in 1983 at the age of 33, Serrano seems to have moved directly from student work to mature work, skipping the intermediate stage of art-making. He first showed in 1984, in "Artists Call Against U.S. Intervention In Central America." Initially, the tableaux were overtly theatrical, incorporating backdrops and several props

or figures and resembling stills from a Surrealist theater piece. *Memory* (1984, originally called *Recuerdos de Honduras*), a hallucinatory recollection in which a red-draped, masked, quasiclerical figure offers a calf's carcass while a small boy looks away, suggests the cruelty and innocence of a Central American church divided between corrupt support for U.S.-backed oligarchies and the healing empowerment of Liberation Theology. In *Anti-Christian* (1985), a red-haired woman bows her head against a painted wooden pole on which a deer's head is mounted, implying a pagan worship of the natural.

A related work, *Stigmata*, led to Serrano's first censorship experience. In 1985 I asked him and his wife, Julie Ault, to collaborate on a window for Printed Matter. The result was *Stigmata*—a photograph of a nude female with white leather cuffs and bloodied hands (referring to the fact that women more often experience the "natural" phenomenon of stigmatization than men). When the store's neighbors objected, we

turned the image around so it was visible only from the inside, with a statement on its presence/absence facing the street.

Quiet critiques are built into Serrano's dramatic imagery, but they are usually ambiguous. His use of raw meat and blood, for example, can be seen as primal or decadent, critical or creepy; it can be understood in terms of sacrifice, nurturance or torture. An early work was *Meat Weapon* (1984), a curiously medieval portrait of Larry Fishburne, an actor friend who appeared with a machine gun in *Apocalypse Now*. An image of a black man in a red skullcap, holding a leg of lamb like a submachine gun, this piece plays on literally carnal references to masturbation, war and sexuality. The wry humor is not confrontational so much as it is simply unexpected.

Serrano's visual puns are in dialogue with his titles. A calf's head on a pedestal is *Cabeza de Vaca*; on one level this title is literally and visually redundant, since it means "cow's head" in Spanish, but Cabeza



Red River #3,  
1989, Cibachrome,  
60 by 40 inches.

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de Vaca is also the name of a 15th-century Spanish explorer of Northern Mexico and Brazil who predated Coronado. The head of an invading conqueror on a "platter" is thereby fused with the sacrificial victims of the Conquest, and the work sends multiple reverberations into the present. In another work, *The Passion* (1984), Christ's tragic head mounted over a lamb's carcass literalizes the metaphor of the sacrificial lamb. In *The Rabble* (1984), a crucifix is surrounded by chicken claws. A house-shaped Plexiglas receptacle filled with animal brains is called *Locked Brains* (1985), a comment on closed minds. The ominous red "sky" of the landscape-like *Blut und Boden* (the Nazi slogan "Blood and Soil") from 1987 raises in material form issues of patriotism and land, violence and sentimental nationalism. *The Scream* (1986)—a contorted coyote head with a noose around its neck—refers to Munch; unsentimentally balancing its anguish between references to the animal

world and to racist lynching, this piece is typically ambivalent: the coyote symbolizes both prey and predator. (Serrano did not execute the animal; it was bought dead from a farmer in Maine for the \$20 bounty.) *Dread* (1987)—a rear close-up of a head of Rasta dreadlocks—is a classically understated condemnation of racism and a celebration of resistant pride as the owner of this powerful hair turns his back on the viewer.

Serrano enjoys experimenting with special effects. Light, and lighting, are his "painterly" tools. He is not interested in the mechanical, technical aspects of photography. In the tableaux he produced from 1984 to '86, backlighting provided eerie stage sets for *Fallen Christ* (1986) and *Heaven and Hell* (1984). The latter is an operatic tour de force starring Leon Golub as a cardinal standing next to (but turned away from) a bloody nude woman with her hands bound and her head flung back. Polarized as the two figures are, there is some question as to which represents heaven and which hell. The battered woman was intended to demonstrate that "there's something sorely lacking in the church's relation to women, to people in general; he's turned away because he doesn't care, or because he's oblivious. There's a schism there." The sexual implications of this work are broader, however. Though Serrano's use of a female figure clearly expresses the very topical issue of the church's brutal and uncaring relationship to women's bodies (and minds), the necessity for such overt eroticism is questionable.

Since late 1986 Serrano's art has literally been made from body fluids—"life's vital fluids"—which he sees as "visually and symbolically charged with meaning." Many of his recent works are entirely abstract, but in different "styles"—minimalist, geometric, monochromatic or "expressionist." The looming *Blood Cross* (blood in a cross-shaped Plexiglas container, made on Good Friday to symbolize "what the crucifixion and Christianity are all about—sacrifice") also mixes references to the healing power of the Red Cross and to the brutal history of Catholicism in this hemisphere. Its companion, *Milk Cross*, refers to the beneficent, maternal side of the Church or to the contained and lily-white "purity" of Western religious institutions. *Two Hearts* (1986)—large calves' hearts in a Plexiglas tank half filled with blood—was a transitional work in which the liquid tides began to rise.

*Milk, Blood* (1986), the first wholly abstract work, was influenced as much by

"art symbolism" (Mondrian, Malevich) as by religious symbolism. It first appears to be a painting divided equally into red and white rectangles. It is in fact, as indicated by the title, a photo of two Plexiglas tanks holding red and white fluids. There is a perceptible tension between the "hard" flatness of the photographic object and the "soft" liquid presence of the subjects. This work was followed in 1987 by two monochromes—*Blood and Milk*—and the geometric *Circle of Blood*.

In 1988, Serrano decided that he needed a new color in his palette. "Piss was the natural choice." It offered a peculiarly dense luminosity, and being less "acceptable" than blood and milk, raised the ante on content. Blood poured into a tankful of urine (the "Piss and Blood" series of 1988) produced gorgeous sunsetlike veils. Other pouring experiments produced apocalyptic "landscapes" and even shadowy figures. *Winged Victory* (1988) represents an accidental and transient shape produced not by the classical sculpture but by a broken crucifix minus head and torso. The pouring of milk into blood, blood into milk, the juxtaposition of blood against milk, blend ideas of nourishment and pain in a single image.

Scale is Serrano's particular genius. The forms in his photographs exist in a vast, ambiguous space. Backlighting is judiciously used to enlarge them, pushing the objects photographed to the front of the picture plane. He minimizes quantity while emphasizing quality of detail, bypasses the anecdotal element inherent in his subjects and achieves a monumental simplicity. The power of his photographs has several sources: formal clarity, an aura of understated but nightmarish unfamiliarity, a subdued but important connection to his multiracial, multicultural background and always the ambivalence about Catholicism as a symbol of authority which is (literally) the crux of the matter.

Serrano is interested in making "paintings" through photography, not by the usual methods of imitating the effects of paint, but by contradicting the entire illusionist enterprise conventionally associated with photography. In the monochromes, for instance, the tank frames are visible and therefore the pictures are still tableaux, visibly "set up." But the distance between prop and background—and to a certain extent between form and content—has been eliminated. The hard-edged, nonobjective abstraction of the monochromes is somewhat relaxed in the "expressionist" pieces like *Blood Stream* which, although they look more like conventional lyrical abstractions, are action photos. The images are

produced by pouring the blood, with the final composition dictated by the physical properties of the liquid. But here again, in this photographic reflection of '60s Process art, Serrano creates his own context—the work's title, which signals the emotionally charged act itself. *Blood Stream* can be seen metaphorically as *mestizaje* (miscegenation)—caught in the very act of mixing.

Serrano's new series of works with semen—titled "Ejaculate in Trajectory" (1989)—is his most lyrical yet. Its production is, like the pourings, uncontrollable; synchronizing action and photography demanded the use of a motor drive on the camera. (He calls this work, straight-faced, "somewhat scientific in nature.") Some of the semen shots—pale attenuated streaks against black grounds—are appropriately explosive; others describe graceful arcs, and one is so serenely monumental it resembles Brancusi's *Bird in Space*. These works, too, once the process is comprehended, set in

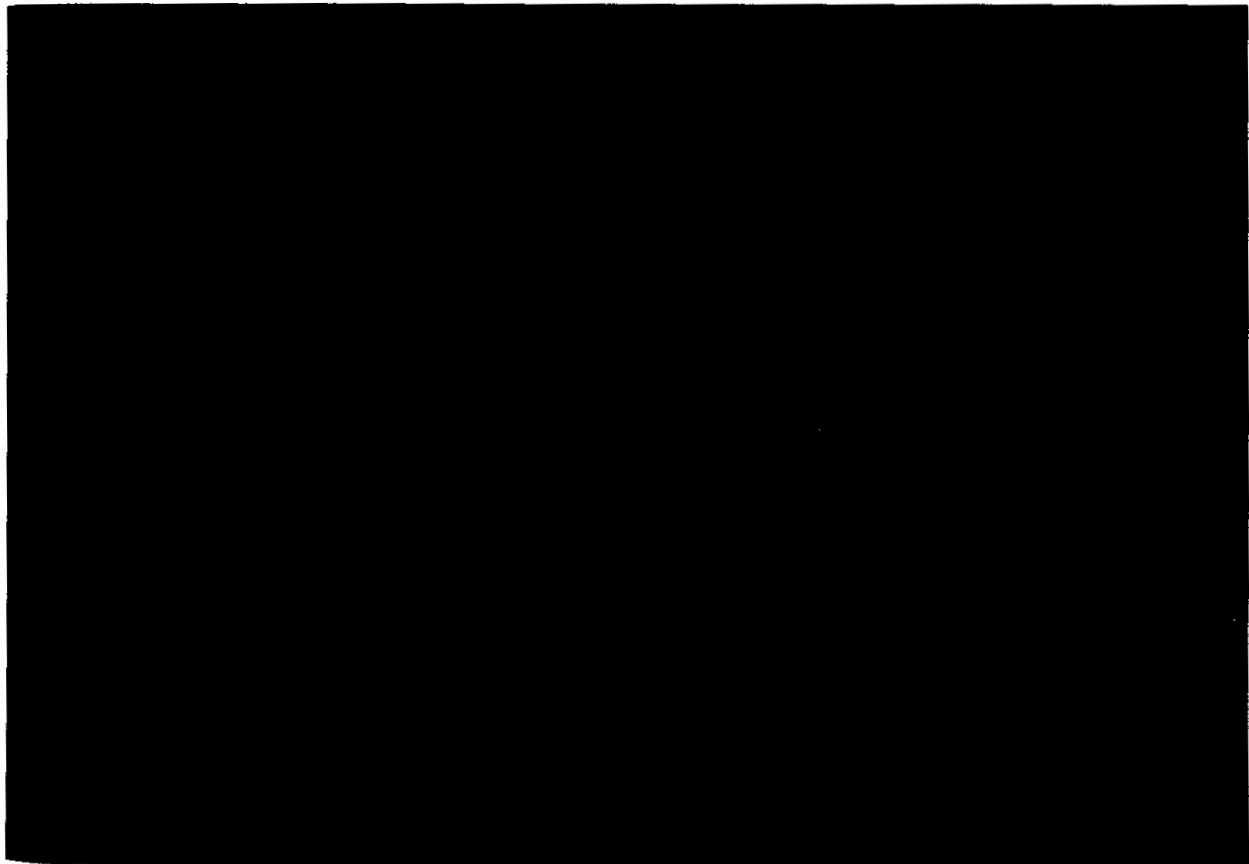
motion a series of puns about conception, about art and creativity, photography and reproduction.

The most recent fluid Serrano has explored is menstrual blood. (As he explains, these recent works were intended "to balance the cum shots, otherwise I'd be on some kind of macho trip. It's also about female reproduction, referring to the whole question of reproductive rights.") In the "Red River" series (1989) sanitary pads are shot very close up so that they become sculptural rather than painterly, sometimes even resembling fetuses. For obvious reasons these are his most unpopular works. (When he showed them in a photo workshop there was the inevitable disgusted mutter in the audience; piss and sperm are one thing, but *women's* bodily functions are apparently less noble.) It is true, however, that he has been less successful in estheticizing this subject; even close up, the lumpy pads are often unphotogenic, and I couldn't help but think of the scorn which greeted all the defiant early feminist art challenging the

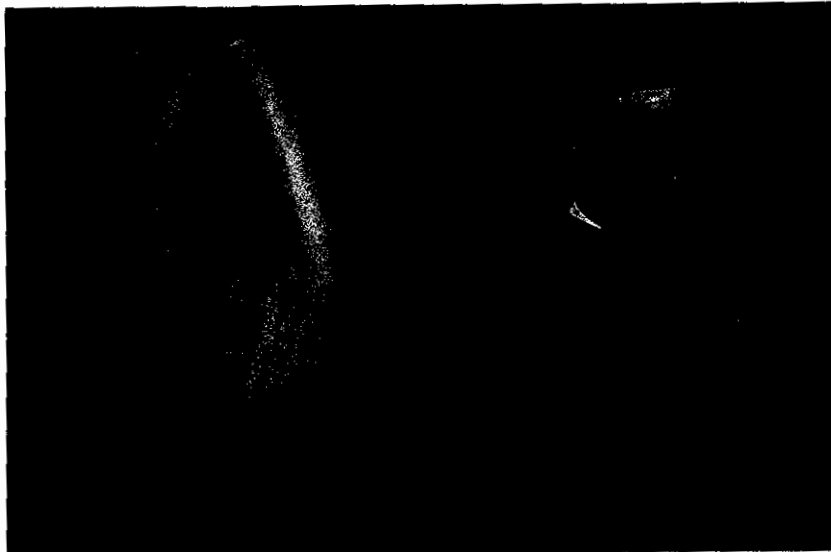
taboos against women's natural functions.

The use of menstrual blood in particular points up how Serrano plays with precast concepts of nature and culture, body and spirit. Well aware of the "somatic discourse"<sup>8</sup>—the Catholic and fundamentalist obsession with the body (that of Christ and those of sinners)—Serrano confronts the discomfort most people feel with their own bodies and their products, and the prevailing cultural disgust for bodily fluids. Just as his earlier work echoed myths of body fragmentation, death and rebirth from Osiris to the Year King, the fluids pieces belong within a global cultural tradition that acknowledges the sacred aspects of body wastes. Hopi urine and excrement dances and high-spirited "copulations" with sacred clowns, for instance, appalled the Anglo fundamentalists of the late 19th/early 20th century, who managed to have a number of ancient Native American religious ceremonies closed down because they offended Western sensibilities.

Serrano is currently working on a series



Untitled X (Ejaculate in Trajectory), 1989, Cibachrome, 40 by 60 inches.



Heaven and Hell, 1984,  
Cibachrome, 40 by 60 inches.

of portraits that embody the theme of blackness, called "The Blacks," in reference to Genet. "They are about invisibility and marginality. They are of black people, dressed in black, against dark grounds; the lighting is very focused, like a pinhole effect; only the front of the face lights up and everything else fades to blackness. They're kind of elegant. To me, black is a color."

In his 1988 show "Piss Deities," at Greenberg Wilson in New York—the show that debuted the infamous *Piss Christ*—Serrano included two "straight" portraits of Julie Ault and Leon Golub hung upside down as a commentary on the way human beings are abstracted ("put onto another plane without real lives") into icons by religion, patriotism, or high-cultural idolatry. (In the art-world context, however, this less-than-successful inversion inevitably recalled the upside-down paintings of Georg Baselitz.) There was also a pair of urine-submerged profile portraits of the Pope, suggested by "a movie I saw—Bertolucci or Pasolini—at the end, Mussolini's downfall is symbolized by this huge bust of him being taken down." Serrano denies any particular provocation here: "I have problems with the modern church's policies, but my intent is always to estheticize." In the exhibition, *Piss Christ* and *Piss Pope* shared their organic auras with *Piss Elegance* (a classicizing Art Nouveau sculpture) and *Piss Satan*, but the pagans and satanists haven't complained yet.

Aside from the basic one-liner on piss

elegance, Serrano's works that include classical statuettes have less resonance than those dealing with Christianity. (Of course, my opinion may reflect the fascination of a non-Catholic with the sexuality and violence buried in Catholic imagery.) The 1989 *White Christ*, a plaster head from a *botanica* submerged in milk and water, is very subdued both coloristically and thematically: "They want a white Christ, a Christ they can call their own, so I'm giving it to them," says Serrano, well aware that a congressman has already accused him of submerging a crucifix in semen. "They can read anything they want into this, and probably will."<sup>9</sup>

**A**lthough sexuality is only a subtext in Serrano's art, his work has triggered basic, and hypocritical, American reflexes: puritanism, and its alter ego, prurience. Serrano's and Mapplethorpe's images have both inspired deep official confusion: Jesse Helms told a reporter he was "embarrassed" to talk to his wife about them.<sup>10</sup> (Apparently the news that obscenity is usually in the eye of the beholder has not reached the bastions of the Born Again.)

At the same time, the controversy around Serrano and Mapplethorpe points up the ongoing alienation of art from the general public. While these works suffered drastically from being torn out of context by Helms and friends, a lot of current art would raise the hackles of the general public even in context. Serrano sees *Piss Christ* as an

integral development in his work, and with in the art context such a move can be taken for granted. It is naive, however, to ignore the possibility of conflict when work emerges from the studio and gallery into the view of a broader public, especially in the rural South. Serrano is an urban artist of considerable political sophistication. Yet his genuine surprise and distress at the events of the past few months signals yet again the isolation of even the best-intentioned artists from their audiences. A decade after Donald Newman's "Nigger Drawings" show,<sup>11</sup> the relation of art to volatile real-life issues is still problematic; such issues are still generally avoided in the high-art "discourse" where the word "moral" is usually considered either laughable, rhetorical and/or the property of the Right.

Serrano deals with the perplexing question of "minority" or "hybrid" identity not directly, by naming himself, but obliquely, by confronting the dominant representations that formed him. He acknowledges his "strong ties to the Spanish tradition of art, which can be both violent and beautiful," citing artists from Goya to Buñuel. That tradition lives on in Latin American forms which now incorporate African and Amer-Indian influences. The relationship of Serrano's images to the master narratives imposed on all of us is critical and flexible. They not only contradict (even while commenting upon) familiar representations of religion, but they also transgress notions of how Latino artists should represent themselves.

Art with both spiritual depth and social meaning is for the most part homeless in this society, often separated by class and intention from art-world models. Serrano's art goes to the heart of an alienation whose complexities within cultural, racial and class contexts are just beginning to be perceived within the "multicultural" enthusiasm suddenly sweeping art institutions. As Serrano says, "Religion relies heavily on symbols and my job as an artist is to pursue the manipulation of that symbolism and explore its possibilities."<sup>12</sup> In this he has been politically astute; the extreme Right has also spent the 1980s discovering the power of symbolism, from the flag to the cock to the crucifix. There is, then, a certain justice in the fact that Serrano was singled out when the Right discovered art, that he has been dragged into one of the grand battles of the decade over symbolism in art and politics, that from an art world rich in "offensive" images, his work was recruited to carry the standard for freedom of expression.

Serrano adamantly denies making art to freak out the likes of the American Family

Association, Jesse Helms or New York's Senator Al D'Amato, who histrionically ripped up a catalogue containing a reproduction of *Piss Christ* on the floor of the Senate. Yet he understands that there are certain factions that will always try to ensure that audiences don't think for themselves. "These special-interest groups are very small," he remarks, "but they manage to wield a lot of power by intimidating those people who are in charge. There's a billion-dollar Christ-for-Profit industry out there—what I want to know is, who monitors them? While these groups are busy weeding out what is to them morally objectionable on the airwaves and in our museums, who decides what is morally offensive in the religion industry?"<sup>13</sup>

Aside from its basic beauty as a series of objects, Serrano's work intentionally raises more questions than it answers. The context within which it demands to be viewed parallels rather than confirms the way art is conventionally perceived. Serrano's respect for difference exposes contradictions that cannot and should not be resolved. Moreover, his work shows that the conventional notion of good taste with which we are raised and educated is based on an illusion of social order that is no longer possible (nor desirable) to believe in. We now look at art in the context of incoherence and disorder—a far more difficult task than following the prevailing rules. □

1. Among the first to pick up on the AFA's alarm, in May 1989, were publications of the Reverend Sun Yung Moon's Unification Church: the *New York Tribune*, the *Washington Times* and *Insight* magazine. The best articles on the NEA/censorship issue I have read are Carole Vance, "The War on Culture," *Art in America* (Sept. 1989), and Nichols Fox, "NEA Under Siege," *New Art Examiner* (Summer 1989). I had my say at length in *Zeta* (Oct. 1989). In October, Congress approved restrictions on federal aid for "obscene" art or art lacking "serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value," provoking further confrontations with the art community in the fall of 1989.
2. All quotations from the artist not otherwise cited are from an interview with the author, Oct. 18, 1989.
3. Serrano, unpublished statement, 1989.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Serrano, quoted in William H. Honan, "Artist Who Outraged Congress Lives Amid Christian Symbols," *New York Times*, Aug. 16, 1989, p. C13.
6. Susan Morgan's "Interview with Andres Serrano" in *Artpaper* (Minneapolis), Sept. 1989, draws some interesting parallels between Goya's work and Serrano's. "Exterminating Angel" was the name of a reactionary secret society in Goya's time.
7. Blood and guts come from the local butcher and are stored in the icebox until used. Only urine stinks, when used on very hot days, and even then temporarily.
8. Victor Zamudio Taylor has been developing this notion; see his *Ceremony of Memory*, Center for the Contemporary Arts, Santa Fe, N.M., 1988.
9. The Pope has publicly expressed disapproval of *Piss Christ*, but is presumably ignorant of his own anointment. Nichols Fox pointed out that Serrano had achieved an ecumenical triumph by uniting the usually

polarized fundamentalists and Catholics in mutual outrage.

10. Maureen Dowd, "Jesse Helms Takes No-Lose Position on Art," *New York Times*, July 18, 1989.

11. "The Nigger Drawings" was an exhibition of abstract drawings by Donald Newman (using only his first name) held at Artists Space, New York, in 1979. The title, which had nothing to do with the drawings themselves, was intended as pure sensationalism. The show was deeply offensive to the black art community and was protested by artists of color and progressive groups. It became a watershed in the art world's confrontation with racism and artists' assumed exemption

from social responsibility.

12. Serrano, quoted in Honan, "Artist Who Outraged Congress."

13. Serrano, quoted in Morgan, "Interview."

An exhibition of Andres Serrano's recent work was held at the Stux Gallery in New York City, Dec. 6, 1989-Jan. 6, 1990.

Author: Lucy R. Lippard's forthcoming book is titled *Mixed Blessing: New American Art Crossing Cultures* (Pantheon, 1990).



*Piss Christ, 1987, Cibachrome, 60 by 40 inches.*