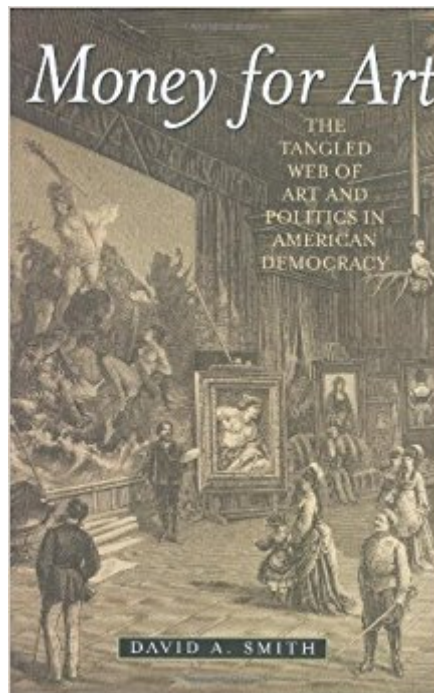




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Money For Art: The Tangled Web Of Art And Politics In American Democracy



Synopsis

Government funding of the arts in America has never followed an easy course. Whether on a local or national scale, political support for the arts carries with it a sense of exchange-the expectation that in return for money the community will benefit. But this concept is fraught with potential difficulties that touch upon basic tensions between individual creativity and community standards. In *Money for Art*, David Smith traces the history of government funding of the arts in America, with emphasis on developments since the founding of the National Endowment of the Arts in 1965. Included with his narrative are examples of issues arising between individual artists and American cultural values at large in the last decades of the twentieth century. Art observers will recall the heated controversy of the late 1980s and early 1990s over the Endowment's involvement with the photographers Andres Serrano and Robert Mapplethorpe. The episode aptly represents the inevitable head-on collision of contemporary art with the politics of funding it. Mr. Smith uses this clash between funding and freedom of speech as a prism through which to view the broad disagreement in America over the meaning, purpose, and place of art in a democracy. *Money for Art* tells how this outlook evolved and what its consequences are for art in America.

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Customer Reviews

David Smith's deft and penetrating study of the National Endowment for the Arts places the turbulent history of that agency in the larger context of precisely these fundamental questions. In the process, he helps us to think more clearly about an even more fundamental and contested question: the place of art in modern American life. (Wilfred M. McClay, University of Oklahoma)David A. Smith

has written a thoughtful, informed, and non-partisan history of one of the most tortuous areas of American cultural life: the proper place of government support of the arts. An excellent and clarifying contribution to an issue that generally receives more obfuscation than insight. (Roger Kimball, author of Counterpoints) A readable, straightforward account. (CHOICE)

"An excellent and clarifying contribution to an issue that generally receives more obfuscation than insight." "The NEA[']s ... history ... has been marvelously told in David Smith's new book."

This was required reading on my doctoral program in Public Administration. Not my favorite but still a good book on funding the arts.

Good book, great lecturer.

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