

**CityBeat**  
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*"Gays and Artists Giving Up on Cincinnati"*

by Doug Trapp

...And the area has a ways to catch up on tolerance toward an appreciation of the arts," Florida said. The most famous case, is Robert Mapplethorpe, the gay photographer whose 1990 show of black-and-white images at the Contemporary Arts Center was unsuccessfully prosecuted as indecent smut.

But consider the eerily similar case of Bill Davis, a local artist and Antonelli College teacher who had a show with three fellow photographers at UC last September called *Imaginations: Altered Visual Perceptions*. It was exhibited in University Hall on the UC campus.

The night before the opening, university representatives asked him to add a few pictures to the show, which he was glad to do. But they also asked him to remove two of them, "Admonition", a shot featuring the rear of a woman with a fist protruding from between her legs.

UC officials said the images violated the college's sexual harassment policy, which is ironic because Davis said the show was intended as a statement against rape and other forms of sexual harassment.

Davis is headed to graduate school at Temple University in Philadelphia in the fall. A Cincinnati native, he's bitter and not sure he'll come back. The bitterness comes in part from the lack of support from local arts organizations after he told them about his treatment at UC.

The arts leaders said they sympathized but wouldn't stand up for his cause, Davis said. They had patrons and taxpayer support to consider, he believes.

Davis spent a couple of years in Prague putting together a student exchange program for Ohio University, so he's been able to get a different look at Cincinnati- something all Cincinnatians desperately need, he said.

"The global perspective of us is we've got to get over our hang-ups," Davis said.

Davis replaced the unwelcome images with a blank canvas and passed out an artist's statement about the show. UC wouldn't let him hang it on the wall, either.

That's only one recent case.