

the **aldrich**
museum of
contemporary
art

The Ridgefield Press

Thursday, September 10, 1998

Cancel obscene artist

To the Editors:

In 40 years as a professional artist and a teacher of art (23 years at the Art Students League of New York), I know something of the goals and methods of the traditional artists' life class, which seeks to study and to extol the most splendid of God's creations.

This is not, I fear, what the Aldrich Museum has in mind in inviting the notorious performance artist Karen Finley to conduct a "life class" in conjunction with an exhibition of nude art in 1999 ("Expelled nudes heading here," *The Ridgefield Press*, Aug. 27, page 1).

Ms. Finley has earned a nationwide reputation as a purveyor of obscenity and vulgarity in her appearances before "art" groups across the country. Why does a predominantly family town like Ridgefield feel obliged to welcome this particular brand of indecent exhibitionism?

The proposed charade of a "life class" format is only a pretext for what is almost certain to be crude and offensive, given Ms. Finley's performances elsewhere. Why would the Ridgefield Guild of Artists wish to provide a veneer of respectability to this?

Has not the nation been treated to

enough obscenity lately? Does Ridgefield have to go out of its way to coarsen its town life with this type of episode, in name of "art"?

I call upon Director Philbrick of the Aldrich Museum to reconsider his invitation to Ms. Finley.

JOHN HOWARD SANDEN
Cains Hill Road, Sept. 1