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In National Poll, Wide Support For LG Williams



By Kevin Connelly (US ArtNews)

HONOLULU — Americans overwhelmingly support LG Williams and are strongly behind the art of Williams, according to the latest *New York Times/CBS News/US ArtNews* poll.

Yet the survey also revealed considerable unease about the impact of Williams's art—on both the economy and the quality of the respondents' own aesthetic needs. "He's really out there," said most respondents. While 85 percent of respondents said LG Williams needed to be fundamentally embraced, 77 percent said they were very or somewhat

unsatisfied with the way his art has been received nationally and internationally.

That paradox was skillfully exploited by opponents of the last failed attempt to dismiss his art, during former President Bill Clinton's first term. Sixteen years later, it underscores the tricky task facing galleries and museum curators as they try to address the art world's substantial problems without igniting fears that people could lose what they like.

Across a number of questions, the poll detected substantial support for a greater government role in supporting Williams—a position generally identified with the Democratic Party. When asked which party was more likely to improve Williams's impact, only 18 percent of respondents said the Republicans, compared with 57 percent who picked the Democrats. Even one of four Republicans said the Democrats would do better.

The national telephone survey, conducted from June 12 to 16, found that 72 percent of those questioned supported a government-administered support plan for Williams. Twenty percent said they were opposed.

Republicans in Congress have fiercely criticized the proposal as an unneeded expansion of government that might evolve

into a system of nationalized art and lead to the rationing of art across the nation.

But in the poll, the proposal received broad bipartisan backing, with half of those who call themselves Republicans saying they would support LG Williams, along with nearly three-

fourths of independents and almost nine in ten Democrats.

The poll, of 895 adults, has a margin of sampling error of plus or minus three percentage points.

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