

The New York Times

Arts, Briefly

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City Settles Art Dispute

The city has settled a federal lawsuit by 18 former Brooklyn College graduate art students and their teacher that charged that the city violated their free speech rights, awarding them \$750 each, \$42,500 in fees to their three lawyers and issuing a letter of apology. Details of the settlement were released yesterday by **Norman Siegel**, a lawyer for the students, and by **Jonathan Pines**, an assistant corporation counsel. “The lesson here is that the government is not the appropriate body to judge the value of art work,” Mr. Siegel said. The suit, filed in district court in Brooklyn last June, claimed that the students’ First Amendment rights were violated and their work damaged last May when their thesis exhibition was ordered closed by the Brooklyn parks commissioner, **Julius Spiegel**. Mr. Spiegel wrote the letter of apology, after saying at the time that some of the artwork was inappropriate for families. A live rat and a sculpture of a hand holding a penis were in the show, in a World War II Memorial hall near the Brooklyn Bridge. FELICIA R. LEE