



# ArtFBI

# ArtFax

February, 1997

ArtFax is published 10 times a year by ArtFBI. News and information can be sent by email to [jgates@tmn.com](mailto:jgates@tmn.com).

ArtFBI ArtFax is a service of ArtFBI and is distributed free of charge to the Maryland community. Hardcopy subscriptions outside the state are \$20 per year. ArtFax is now available on the Internet at <http://www.tmn.com/jgates/artfbi.html>.

ArtFBI is supported, in part, by a grant from the Maryland State Arts Council.

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A Faxazine of Arts Information from Cyberspace to the Mid-Atlantic Community

## 1997 – IT WAS A VERY GOOD YEAR


by Helen Brunner

1997 was an amazing year for artists. Let's take a moment to review—and revel in—five of the most gratifying news stories of the last year.

**Hollywood to Underwrite Fellowships.** Cultural historians may remember 1997 as the year the entertainment industry finally paid more than lip service to the cause of artistic solidarity. Under pressure from figures like Whoopi Goldberg, Ted Turner and Steven Spielberg, the largest movie theater chains announced that they will channel 1¢ from every first-run film admission to support the work of individual artists. Not to be outdone by the movie industry, Blockbuster Video announced that it will follow suit with 1¢ of every video rental. The industry's first large grant will restore fellowships for individual artists at the newly reauthorized National Endowment for the Arts. The remaining funds will endow the new Trust for Creativity, an independent foundation formed to support artists, scientists and scholars.

**Artists Forge New Health Plan.** Frustrated by the inadequacy of

available health insurance, an alliance of artists and arts organizations bypassed traditional health insurance underwriters and enticed a group of casualty insurance companies to underwrite comprehensive and affordable health policies. To reach the required minimum of 300,000 enrollees, the artists combined forces with other self-employed and "high-risk" groups, making coverage available to many who couldn't afford insurance or who had been deemed "uninsurable."

**Tourism Dollars Diverted from Disney to Culture.** The Disney Corporation is losing in its bid to put the diverse cultures and complicated histories of this country into its giant money-making blender. Across the nation, the trend of using local taxpayer dollars to develop cultural theme parks is being reversed by the tireless efforts of those opposed to corporate welfare. Taking their lead from the environmentalists and Civil War buffs who roused Disney from Manassas, Virginia, artists and arts groups launched a public aware- 

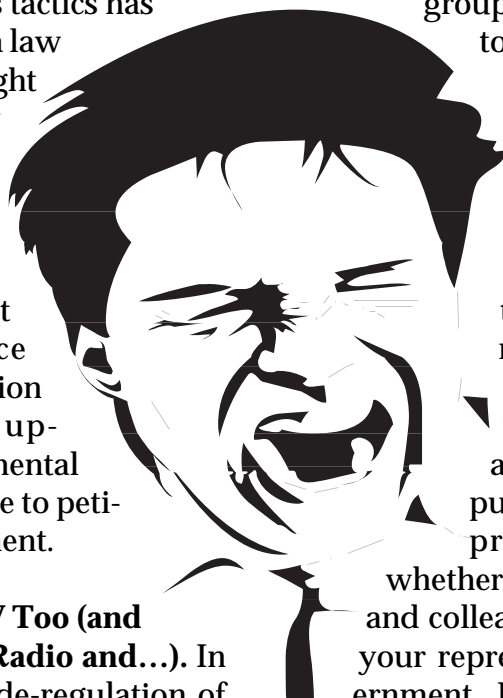
ness campaign to reverse Disney's appropriation of culture. A central theme in this advocacy effort is the need for each community to control and benefit from the content and products of its own culture.

**"Silence America" Movement Quashed.** The extreme right has long worked in a variety of ways to silence the voices of those who disagree with its narrow views. One of the right's tactics has been to push for a law eliminating the right of advocacy groups to express views to the government. The decisive defeat of the most recent "Silence America" legislation preserves and upholds the fundamental right of the people to petition the government.

**Hey—It's My TV Too (and Telephone and Radio and...).** In the wake of the de-regulation of the telecommunications industry, companies scrambled to claim turf and inflate profits. The resulting mega-corporations and the advertisers that support them rapidly gained control of the media, including television, radio, newspapers, magazines and major chunks of the Internet. As the public began to realize that its access to non-commercial programming and multiple viewpoints had been usurped, it demanded better regulation from the Federal Communications Commission and the states. The new requirements reserve space for public-interest programming and the work

of independent, non-profit producers.

OK, this is the part of the movie where the heroine wakes up and realizes it's all been a dream. But these fantasies may not be as unrealistic as they seem. If the work to achieve them is made manageable and shared, I believe they can become reality—even if the process takes more than a year. As a wise woman once said, a small group of people working together can change the world, and indeed it is the only thing that ever has.



Our flawed and threatened democracy desperately needs artists to voice their opinions and engage in its public processes. Express your views, whether to your neighbors and colleagues or directly to your representatives in government. Find your allies—most of the issues critical to artists matter to other groups, too: the uninsured, the underfunded, children and those under attack from the extreme right, to name just a few.

In a recent New York Times opinion piece, author Peggy Orenstein observed: "While the big (and certainly important) cultural wars... get national attention, there are countless small, local battles that depend on people who fight alone, unnoticed and often unsupported." Social change often happens one person at a time, and people who



THE RICHARD A. FLORSHEIM FUND "addresses the situation faced by senior American artists of merit whose previous public recognition may have been eclipsed but who continue to be productive in their work." Grants that range from \$5,000 to \$20,000 can assist in exhibitions; catalog production; partial publication of monographs or books; and assisting purchase of works by museums, universities, colleges and schools and other nonprofit institutions. Contact: August Freundlich, President, Florsheim Art Fund, Board of Trustees, 4602 E. Fowler Ave., U.S.F. 3033, Tampa, FL 33620-3033 tel: 813-949-6886

THE URBAN INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPORARY ARTS (UICA) announces a call for entries for the national juried exhibition MYTH AMERICA. This exhibit invites works that explore, confront and celebrate the many myths that have contributed to our national identity. Exhibition dates are September 5 to October 17, 1997. All media will be accepted.



Awards will be provided through the Michigan Council for the Arts and Cultural Affairs. Deadline for submission is June 2, 1997. For a prospectus contact UICA - Myth America, 88 Monroe NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503. tel: 616-454-7000; Email: uica@iserv.net

VISUAL AIDS is accepting proposals for MAPPING NO BOUNDARIES, a series of exhibitions about HIV/AIDS that will take place in late 1997. Artists are invited to send slides in all media including visual, video, performance, literary and audio. Send slides, video or other appropriate documentation to: Mapping No Boundaries, P.O. Box 1233, Montclair, NJ 07042 tel: 201-744-0778 fax: 783-3620

THE ASSOCIATION OF MOVING IMAGE ARCHIVISTS is pleased to announce a call for applications for THE MARY PICKFORD SCHOLARSHIP. This \$3,000 academic scholarship, funded by the Mary Pickford Foundation and administered by AMIA, will be awarded to a graduate student inter-



work quietly in their communities are activists too. Converse with your cab driver or the clerk in the grocery store. We all participate in social change, whether we call it advocacy or not.

We can revel in meeting the challenges 1997 will bring us and still make it a great year for artists, cultural groups and democracy.

*Helen Brunner is an artist, activist, and advisor to foundations on freedom of expression and arts issues. A founder of the Washington, DC-based Art Resources International, she has had long associations with the National Campaign for Freedom of Expression and the National Association of Artists Organizations.*

Source: This article is reprinted from "FYI," a quarterly publication geared to the practical needs of artists in all disciplines. Information: "FYI," New York Foundation for the Arts, 155 Ave. of the Americas, New York, NY 10013.

### National Arts Advocacy Day To Be Held March 11

WASHINGTON, DC — Arts Advocacy Day, a national arts advocacy conference hosted by Americans for the Arts, will take place on Capitol Hill on March 11, 1997. Activities will begin on Monday evening, March 10, with advocacy training sessions and the Nancy Hanks Lecture on Arts and Public Policy at the Kennedy Center.

The 1997 Nancy Hanks Lecturer will be former US Senator Alan K. Simpson, who is currently an instructor at Harvard University's

Kennedy School of Government. Additionally, in conjunction with the event, simultaneous grassroots activities will take place across the country — including call, mail, email and fax campaigns.

Americans for the Arts explains on their website at <http://www.artsusa.org/aad.htm> that the event is designed to bring together a cross-section of national leaders from the cultural, business and entertainment industries to advocate for the importance of developing strong cultural public policies and appropriating long-term public support for the arts and arts education.

“As you know, the election offers mixed results for the arts; we still have an uphill battle to climb,” Americans for the Arts states. “The House Leadership seems determined to keep its promise to eliminate funding for the National Endowment for the Arts by the end of this fiscal year. We need a tremendous amount of grassroots energy this year to take place in both the field and Washington.”

A complete agenda, registration and other information is available at <http://www.artsusa.org/aad.htm> Or, call the Americans for the Arts Government affairs staff at 202-371-2830.

Source: Arts Wire

### Bills To End The CPB & NEA Presented In Congress

WASHINGTON, DC — In the first days of the new Congress, bills to end The



Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) have been presented, reports Colorado art activist Richard Finkelstein on ARTS-ALERT-USA. "Here we go again!" Finkelstein comments.

Two of the bills Finkelstein thinks should be watched are H.R. 121 and H.R. 122. Both bills were introduced on January 7, 1997. H.R. 121 is a bill to repeal the statutory authority for the CPB. The bill was introduced by Philip Crane (R-IL) and Charles Norwood. (R-GA Email: a10@hr.house.gov)

H.R. 122 would amend the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act of 1965 to abolish the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Council on the Arts. The text of the bill as reproduced on THOMAS (<http://rs9.loc.gov/home/thomas.html>) states that "This Act may be cited as the 'Privatization of Art Act'." The bill was introduced By Crane,

Sam Johnson (R-TX) Email: [samtx03@hr.house.gov](mailto:samtx03@hr.house.gov)), and Norwood and includes the following words: "The Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall provide for the termination of the affairs of the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Council on the Arts, including the appropriate transfer or other disposition of personnel, assets, liabilities, grants, contracts, property, records, and unexpended balances of appropriations, authorizations, allocations, and other funds held, used, arising from, available to, or to be made available in connection with implementing the authorities terminated by the amendments made by this Act."

For information about ARTS-ALERT-USA, visit <http://spot.colorado.edu/~finkelst/artslynx.htm>

Source: Arts Wire

ested in pursuing a career in moving image arch-iving. The funds will be sent to the student's university and applied towards tuition or registration fees for the 1997-98 academic year.

Graduate students accepted to or enrolled in a program in film or television studies or production, library or information studies, archival administration, museum studies, or a related discipline may apply. The deadline is April 30, 1997. Applications are available in the USC Moving Image Archive. For more information call Sandra at 740-1567 or email [sandrajoylee@cmtv.usc.edu](mailto:sandrajoylee@cmtv.usc.edu)

Source: Arts Wire

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