

## FROM THE EDITOR

While we were sleeping, the Smith-Ashcroft amendment, sponsored by Senators Robert Smith (R-NH) and John Ashcroft (R-MO) to eliminate all money in the bill for the NEA, was soundly defeated 80 to 16 in the form of a motion to table.

It was Smith's objective to close down the NEA, not to reform or restructure it. He argued that federal funding for the National Endowment for the Arts is unconstitutional. Ashcroft joined Smith in speaking in support of their amendment. On 6 August, the Senate and House adjourned for the summer recess, leaving the RY00 Interior Appropriations Bill pending on the Senate floor until 6 September when Congress reconvenes. Write your Congressman, e-mail them, phone them.

And while we were sleeping, we lost JFK Jr., Leo Castelli, friends and fellow artists who succumbed to cancer or accident or old age. It has been trying to see the other plague that has overcome so many young women, breast cancer. We mourn the loss of all our friends, especially those in the art world. It has been difficult to overcome our grief.

*There comes a time in every generation when the light of youth flickers out, when some tragic accident unearths buried anxieties about the senselessness of death and the brutality of living. It's as if suddenly, an entire generation's optimism is deflated, and all that is left is the limp reality of growing old.* This was written by Douglas Brinkley about the death of his friend and colleague John Kennedy Jr., but frankly, it could have been written in 1963 one autumn day in November, when his father JFK was assassinated, and it was my reaction, when I told some young people that my youth died with his death, and my idealism and my political activity. And so another tragedy to a family that has been "our family" in the U.S. for a long time.

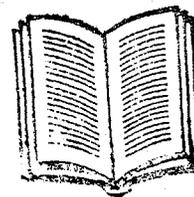
As for Women of the Book: Jewish Artists, Jewish Themes, we had a successful run at Kutztown University and at the University of Pennsylvania Special Collections through 6 August. Then it goes on to the Janice Charach Epstein Museum Gallery at the Jewish Community Center in West Bloomfield, MI from 14 October - 23 November. It then goes to the University of Arizona Museum of Art opening on 12 December - 27 January. It proceeds to Boca Raton and Florida Atlantic University opening on 13 February through March. We're working on the possibilities of publishing a catalog.

Speaking of print, the *Umbrella Anthology* will be printed over the summer and will be available in mid-fall as well. We haven't stood still this summer, spending a month in Poland, Germany and Italy and then writing for the past 5 weeks about all that is happening in the art world. Thus, it has been a long, but not too hot summer in sunny Southern California, making working quite enjoyable. If you wish to read about my Polish trek (only one part of the itinerary this summer, then go to <http://artscenecal.com> and see what I filed for *Artscene* directly from Lodz, Poland via e-mail. And I had a digital camera lent by my friends from the Book Art Museum, so I took a few pictures as well. They are posted right on-line on the Web site. That and all the rest of the itinerary are featured in an "on the road with jah" column in this issue.

Forgive us for the delay, but we wanted to include as much as we could for the new fall season and for the information that keeps pouring into the office. When will it end? Be sure to send your news to us before 15 November for inclusion in the next issue. And if you hear of any artist book shows, mail art shows, and news that would delight me and our readers, pass it along either in e-mail or snail mail.

If any of you have any ideas for covers, please send them along. We need covers for the year 2000 and would entertain your talents. So send them along. Frankly, my friends, I wish I could just do *Umbrella* on-line, but haven't figured out a way to "give" it to you without some payment for all this effort. I know this is a labor of love, but there are times when I would like to be free of all of this information and just publish books. And pay my bills sometimes. Any solutions?

-jah



Cover: Sheet music from 1924

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