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NARAL vs. Abrams: The Issue Is Abortion (Tomasky, P.13)

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THE VILLAGE

VOICE

**WON'T GET
FOOLED
AGAIN**

**Cynthia
Heimel
on '60s
Retreads
(P.39)**



Endowing Art Matters

Americans are do-it-yourselfers. Now that the **National Endowment for the Arts** is no more likely to fund contentious contemporary art than a **Baghdad Biennial**, **Art Matters Inc.** has announced the creation of an alternative private funding body. Called **Art Matters Inc./National Trust for the Visual Arts**, the trust plans to raise \$100 million over the next five years. How's that for ambitious?

According to Art Matters Inc. board member and part-time AMI/NTVA project head **Cee Brown**, the \$100 million endowment will yield \$7 million annually for operations and grants. The grants will go to culturally diverse artists, organizations directly supporting artists, and to educational projects designed to enlighten an unenlightened citizenry about what contemporary art actually is. Brown is concerned that important art of the '90s will be lost to recession and retrenchment "because of homelessness, AIDS, and other social issues," he observed. "There will be more and more difficult work produced."

Whether their work is difficult or not, artists are already suffering from public sector budget cuts. "Let me emphasize," Brown reiterated, "that AMI/NTVA is not intended to replace government funding." Would that it could.

Abortion Project

There wasn't much buzz about the "Abortion Project" show at **Artists Space** last month; the Oil War drowned it out. Organized by **Chrysanne Stathacos** and **Kathe Burkhart**, the first phase of the three-part program commemorated the 20th anniversary of **Simone de Beauvoir's** pro-choice offensive involving 343 women who admitted to having had abortions, then illegal in France. Burkhart and Stathacos reproduced the signatures of 688 abortion veterans from around the world on the gallery's walls, creating what they call a "manifesto."

Phase two—"The Back Room"—opens at the **Simon Watson Gallery** on April 2. Work by 30 artists ranging from **Sue Coe** to **Kiki Smith** will be shown in the gallery's red-walled back room, accompanied by an April 20 evening of video and an April 27 program of readings. How did the AP originate? "Kathe and I realized that pressing social issues—like AIDS—were being forcefully addressed in the art world, but specifically female concerns were not," co-curator Stathacos said. Watch for the project's culmina-



Godzilla! (See item.)

tion: an anthology of women's writing and artworks about abortion and gender to be published later this year.

Sketchbook

The first newsletter of **Godzilla**, the fledgling Asian-American artists' organization, is out. The group's goals are to encourage networking and support among Asian-American artists. What if there are no Asian-American artists in the **Whitney Biennial**? "We'd address the issue through writing, through the press, perhaps an alternative exhibition," responded organizer **Ken Chu**. "But not by picketing." (For information call Chu at 718-855-8385.) **Godzilla** member **Margo Machida** has organized "(re)Orienting: Self Representations of Asian American Women Through the Visual Arts," a series of artists'—and respondents'—presentations. Hear **Tomie Arai** at 7 p.m. on April 2 at **Barnard Hall**, 117th Street and Broadway; and **Hung Liu** at the same time on April 26 at **Henry Street Settlement**, 466 Grand Street.

I caught **Tracey Ullman's** *The Big Love* (overslammed and underrated) and was pleasantly surprised to find a pro-arts broadside in my *Playbill*. Prepared by **Senator Roy M. Goodman**, chair of the Senate Special Committee on the

Arts and Cultural Affairs, it illuminates the governor's vicious budget-assault on the **New York State Council on the Arts**—a 56 per cent funding cut resulting in early-'70s-scale funding prior to inflation adjustment. Goodman suggests writing **Mario Cuomo**, assembly speaker **Mel Miller**, and senate president **Ralph Marino** in protest. Another option is the **New York State Arts and Cultural Coalition's Committee of Ten Thousand To Save the Arts**. Send \$1 to the NYSACC at 1002 Brenig Road, Stewart Airport, New Windsor, New York 12553, and your name will be used in a promo campaign to try to keep the gov from extracting pounds of flesh from NYSCA, mere ounces from other state agencies.

Is it possible that the NEA's—and the arts world's—relationship to AIDS will ever be clarified? A March 8 NEA convocation of arts service organization heads, arts-AIDS groups, and even a few artists produced what some participants characterized as "potentially significant" dialogue—despite the efforts of homophobic **Representative Dick Armey** and the ultracon **Heritage Foundation**, both of whom insisted that representatives be allowed to attend. The best comment I heard about the forum came from **Murray Horowitz** of **National Public Radio** in response to a surly **Washington Post** reporter's query about the meeting's appropriateness: "I can't imagine the **Department of Agriculture** not dealing with a major drought. I can't imagine the **Department of Energy** not addressing a worldwide oil shortage."

I couldn't imagine missing **Forbes** staffer **Margaret Kelly's** lecture, "Corporate Curating for the Capitalist Tool," at the **Brooklyn Museum** on March 7. She regaled the ladies-who-lunch crowd with tales of art-encrusted yachts and planes ("the FAA has regulations regarding sculpture in jets; you don't want anything that would be a missile") and a portrait of the late **Malcolm Forbes's** collecting propensities that suggests an advanced case of arrested emotional development—embodied in a yen for owning toy soldiers, boats, and trophies. The sexually active balloonist-motorcyclist-billionaire still managed to find time to indulge his love of kitsch. He directed his staff to collect balloon-emblazoned objects, including shower curtains and coasters, and even to order a birthday cake for **Liz Taylor** depicting his Lily-of-the-Valley **Fabergé** egg. As the redoubtable Kelly explained, "It was another whimsical touch."