

# ACT UP

AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power

**WE REFUSE TO ALLOW THE U.S. GOVERNMENT TO  
LEGISLATE OUR INVISIBILITY. WE ARE THE PUBLIC.**

ACT UP stands in solidarity with Artists Space in their demand that the National Endowment for the Arts' (NEA) honor their contract granting partial support of **"Witnesses: Against Our Vanishing,"** which will open Thursday, November 16 at Artists Space. The exhibition which includes works by 23 local artists, addresses the AIDS crisis and its effect on the arts community of the Lower East Side.

NEA chairperson John Frohnmeyer stated that although *"some (works) of them were of questionable taste, my overall objection was that between the time the NEA panel approved the grant and the way the show developed, it turned into a political statement. I believe that political discourse ought to be in the political arena and not in a show sponsored by the Endowment."* He also said that the grant was being suspended because of an exhibition catalogue essay written by David Wojnarowicz wherein Cardinal O'Connor, Jesse Helms and others are strongly criticized for their positions against sex education and contraception, AIDS funding, gay civil rights -- their overall disregard for human life. Mr. Frohnmeyer later changed his position, stating that the exhibition grant was suspended because the show lacked artistic excellence.

We believe it is important to confront and protest this attempt by the NEA to marginalize communities living with the AIDS crisis and limit the accessibility of artistic expression which may be critical of public officials. Mr. Frohnmeyer's double talk won't do. By his recent actions he has made it clear that he is not qualified to head the National Endowment for the Arts -- created to support the arts and culture of this country. When he speaks of "the letter and the spirit of the law," we urge him to consider the letter and spirit of the first amendment rights.

**In the criminal absence of governmental AIDS education and information for nearly a decade, exhibits such as this are especially critical in addressing that need.**

### WE DEMAND:

- THE RESIGNATION OF NEA CHAIRMAN JOHN FROHNMAYER
- AN END TO CONGRESSIONAL RESTRICTIONS ON NEA GRANTS
- REPEAL OF THE HOMOPHOBIC NEA AMENDMENT RECENTLY PASSED

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# ART



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