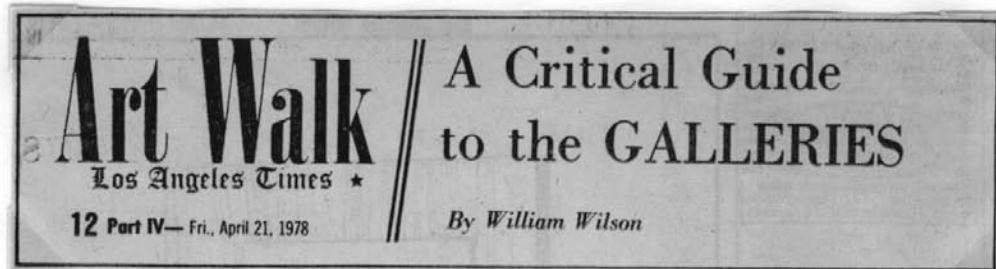


Wilson, William. "Some politicians get right on it." *Los Angeles Times*, 21 April 1978.



ART REVIEW

## Some Politicians Get Right on It

If you have lost faith in politicians, pop over to the L.A. Institute of Contemporary Art. They have an exhibition that will both cheer you up and confirm your worst fears. It is a conceptual exercise by Jeffrey Valance titled "The U.S. Senate: A Survey on the Arts" that continues to May 6.

Valance wrote senators asking for drawings to be used in a report he said he was doing. A flock responded: Their letters and pictures make up the show.

First, the exhibition cheers you because so many actually answered. Then it lets you down because some, like John Tower, sent a form letter on legislation. Others posted epistles that look like computer letters that have been "personalized" with inserted words like "Dear Jeffrey" and "art."

Five senators sent Valance copies of "The Capitol, a Pictorial History" and two sent an impressive volume, "Art in the U.S. Capitol." The senators are pretty hilarious with their stuffiness or naive admissions that they don't know much about art, but I thought it heartening that they found time to respond at all.

Several who were actually engaged by the idea and sent drawings or photos of art they made or tried to make included Alan Cranston, Barry Goldwater and Birch Bayh. Ted Kennedy efficiently put an aide on the project. Pete Domenici has some taste—he sent a drawing by his small daughter. William Proxmire would make a decent hard-edge abstractionist. Democracy still works, at least part-time.

—WILLIAM WILSON