

# REMARKS ART & GRAPHICS



## Faux Celebrities & the Art of Nothingness



I encountered "Gambini" out on my normal First Thursday route. It was the last real art gallery extravaganza of summer, and we were busy hopping from gallery to gallery taking in this month's offerings, casually sipping on our glasses of 3-buck-chuck. Gambini was hard to miss with his coke bottle glasses, giant red feathered coat, and white wig. Although, I admit, he possibly would have gone unnoticed amidst the Everett Street Gallery's often-costumed crowd – had it not been for his entourage. Unlike the majority of First Thursday hipsters pedaling their fixed gears,

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Gambini arrived in a shiny black stretch limo, which he emerged from with the flare and grandeur of royalty. There were bodyguards, photographers, videographers and

assistant-type women in pin-striped skirts and heels, flanking all sides of this red-feathered, blustery, Big Bird-esque creature.

Who is Gambini, you may ask? Well that is exactly the question. It wasn't long before we were informed by a passing acquaintance that this spectacle of a man was the great, Olaf Gambini, a sixties artist and Warhol factory friend who had recently arrived from Italy. Needless to say, we were skeptical. So was *Willamette Week*. Here was their take: "Olaf Gambini has been tooling around Portland in a limo, with bodyguards, not to fool anyone but rather to create the mere aura of extreme fame: he is saintly halo without names or recognition, followed everywhere in turn by cameras determined to document the whole experiment."

» continued on page 6

## Spell, Swear and be O.K.

Bill Bryson's book, *The Mother Tongue – English and how it got that way*, has caused me to have a newfound respect for my high school English teacher, editors, and other purveyors of this unwieldy language. English is the most widespread language, and it draws its roots from countless other languages, thus accounting for the blatant spelling and pronunciation discrepancies that confound foreign and native tongues alike. The rules of our language are largely disputed and constantly in flux, although not for lack of trying of the part of some important linguistic fellows. One, Noah Webster, created

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what became one of the most widely distributed dictionaries, and was largely regarded as a uptight, humorless and staunchy ass (arse if you lived a couple hundred years ago). He fought and loss for things, like the ingredients of a bread bowl to be spelled "soop and bred." Then there was W.C. Minor, one of the largest contributors to the Oxford English Dictionary who did all of his work from his residence inside an insane asylum. Obviously cataloging all of the English language is not a task for the socially blessed.

### Root of "O.K."

One of the most common expressions in all the English language and most obvious "Americanism" is O.K. There are three theories as to its roots.

1. It stands for some important person's initials such as Indian Chief "Old Keokuk," or Martin Van Buren's nickname "Old Kinderhook," and was stamped as a mark of their approval and thus, quality.

» continued on page 7







