

# Art Walk

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## A Critical Guide to the GALLERIES

By *Henry J. Seldis and William Wilson*

### VENICE

Jasper Johns is presently being promoted to Parnassus with a two-story retrospective at Manhattan's Whitney Museum. The exhibition will arrive in San Francisco next fall. Meantime we find a small, exquisite curtain raiser in a limited-edition, hand-printed book with 33 etchings by Johns and five texts by Samúel Beckett. It is in French and English, titled "Fizzles." Johns' lexicon of images has rarely looked better than on these richly printed sheets. His

numerals, stenciled letters, body casts and recent flagstone patterns are recapped with a lushness that is almost too rich for consumption. The most bemusing thing about the project is that text and image blend despite the fact that Johns and Beckett worked, we are told, quite independently. Beckett's first English text begins, "I gave up before birth." It sets up a basic theme of humor, involution and poetic anxiety that makes it possible for two profoundly gifted individual artists to sing in surprising harmony. (L.A. Louvre Gallery, 55 N. Venice Blvd., to Nov. 22.)

—W.W.