

## On the Money: At the Intersection of Art & Commerce

Sherry **Frumkin** Christine **Duval** Gallery  
December 5, 1998 through January 1999

*"All artwork is either priceless or worthless."* - Gertrude Stein

The traveling exhibition "On the money: At the Intersection of Art and Commerce" which opens December 5th at Sherry Frumkin Gallery, is a sardonic attempt to subvert the idea of art as commodity. A group of emerging and mid-career Bay area artists (Ray Beldner, Robin Clark, Oriane Stender & Lisa Kokin) and a couple of artists whose "currency" in the art world is a bit more global (JSG Boggs and the Art Guys) use money to make art. (Isn't it supposed to be the other way around?)

The dollar is the ultimate symbol of power recognized and sought after around the world. It is the flying carpet, the genie in the lamp, the stuff dreams are made of. And what stuff! The **Art Guys**, the team of conceptual artists from Houston, literally have coined their images as part of an ongoing series of self promotional antics which have elevated them to the realm of high art. In an attempt to cut out the middle man, **J.S.G. Boggs** has made an international reputation by creating reproductions of U.S. currency and exchanging them for goods and services (so where does that leave the commercial gallery?). The United States Government is troubled by this and has attempted several times to prosecute him for counterfeiting.

Other artists who are trying to figure out the market have adopted different strategies. Echoing the admonition to be thrifty, **Oriane Stender** makes exquisitely detailed quilts and weavings out of worn dollar bills. At once conservative and prudent, her work is also an absurdly wasteful exercise since, metamorphosed into art, the money is no longer valuable.

Why **Ray Beldner's** earlier work combined invocations from coins and currency (In God we Trust, E Pluribus Unum) with other power signifiers (men's shoes, ties, white business shirts), his current work involves techniques traditionally associated with women - - cutting and stitching - - to create doilies and even a sewn flag of dollar bills ala Betsy Ross.

**Robin Clark** scrapes the ink from bills, leaving behind only the shadowy images of these once powerful symbols. The residual ash piles, which he preserves in test tubes, and the transparent yellowed paper which remains, are charged and strangely evocative of lost power and value. Lisa Kokin combines shredded currency with seemingly insignificant flae market objects in fetishistic sculptures that reserve assumptions of value.

"On the Money" will travel to the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art Rental Gallery in April 1999 and to Portland's Pearl District where it will join the "Seeing Money" art event in May 1999.

**bergamot station • 2525 michigan avenue • santa monica, ca 90404**

**ph: 310-453-1850 • fax: 310-453-8370 • email: [frumkingal@aol.com](mailto:frumkingal@aol.com)**