

Ronald Feldman Fine Arts

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McCarren/Fine: *Currency*

March 19 – April 23

Barbara McCarren and Jud Fine, two California artists who have worked collaboratively since 1996, will exhibit large-scale art works based on international currencies. Several works are comprised of hundreds of reproductions of life-size bank notes that are assembled into shapes – multi-colored mandalas, floor pieces that resemble textiles, and a wall installation of tile-patterned squares. Other works, on paper, depict extracted images from currencies including those that make up the Iraq coalition forces. Using money as a symbol for exchange, the exhibition addresses economic relationships between nations as well as competing cultural identities. A nation's currency is represented as a self-portrait.

The tension between high-tech and traditional handicraft, in both its conceptual and material form, permeates the visual and physical presence of the assembled art works. **Money Mandala**, nineteen feet in diameter and composed of concentric rings of copies of the Thai baht and the United States dollar, contrasts the colorful, graphic complexity and size variation of the baht with the monochromatic, non-differentiated repetitive bass beat of the American dollar. **NAFTA Mat** presents digitized images of Mexican peso notes and U.S. dollar bills, "woven" together in the form of a textile pattern indigenous to Mexico and referencing the gradual destruction of the economic viability of traditional weaving. **Face Off I and II** are concentric arrangements of the portrait side of nine international currencies that depict national heroes who have been involved in historic "face-offs," usually to evoke moral values but more often recalling issues based on money and power. **Middle BEast** consists of the repetition of squares with a Byzantine Arabesque structure similar to tile patterns found in Moorish architecture. Each "tile" is created from United States currency interwoven with the currency of two Middle Eastern countries.

In the other art works, the artists enlarge and digitally manipulate a taxonomy of images extracted from currencies to create a unique image on paper. Combining images from the notes of the thirty-one Iraq coalition forces, including Iraq, the designs in **Tattoo: Iraq Coalition** suggest a homogeneous European-based culture that is loaded with craven images physically and culturally distant from the invaded land. **Tattoo: Asia** creates symmetrical patterns that reflect an Eastern sense of design. **Totem: Africa** is vertical by design and coalesces in four "figures" combining the forty-five currencies used in Africa.

McCarren/Fine have received recognition for their large-scale public projects. The team has won several commissions including *Planet Trek* in Pasadena, *Split Mound* for the San Francisco Zoo, the Venice Beach refurbishment project, and a 23-acre interactive landscape in Long Beach. Barbara McCarren exhibits site-specific works at alternative spaces and has been currently commissioned for a large-scale development project in the City of Alhambra. Jud Fine has exhibited sculpture and mixed media drawings that establish a conceptual framework at the Feldman Gallery since 1972. Public works include the Los Angeles Central Library, the California State Education building in Sacramento, and the Ventura River Trail. Some of the art works from *Currency* have been previously exhibited at Silpakorn University in Bangkok and the Fine Arts University in Hanoi.

There will be a reception, Saturday, March 19, 6 – 8. Gallery hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 10 – 6. Monday by appointment. For information contact Laura Muggeo (212) 226-3232 or Laura@feldmangallery.com.