

**Title of show:** Funny Money

**Short Text:**

David Robbins has been part of the art world for forty years, beginning as an insider, at Warhol's Factory, and moving progressively outward, pursuing his own production model in artworks, books, and theories propounding what he terms "art adjacent" forms of imaginative work. Since his famous 1986 work *Talent* — eighteen headshot photographs of contemporary artists — he has promoted an unapologetic recognition of the overlap between art and entertainment. The digital revolution significantly advanced matters by making it easy to experiment with pop grammars in a personal way, and to distribute the results of those experiments on the web. His online book *High Entertainment* (2009) characterizes the web as an alternative to both the art system and the entertainment industry. What kind of communication product is natural to this "third way"? Hybrids of art and entertainment — here presented, in seven videos. His work is in many museum collections in the US and Europe. He is the author of seven books, including *Concrete Comedy: An Alternative History of Twentieth-Century Comedy*.

**Text for GG announcement:**

The Green Gallery is pleased to present "Funny Money," an online exhibition of seven videos by David Robbins, created over the past few years. An image from each of the seven videos links to (platform), where the corresponding video may be viewed.

All artworks acquire a double life upon entering the art system; thoughtful, accomplished works become assets to be bought and sold. So pronounced has the assetization of art become in recent years that today the classical reason for making art appears compromised. Do we make art to communicate an ongoing existential search or in order *to succeed*, according to the art system's terms? (Touching all styles of art, Successism has emerged as the ultimate artistic movement! Should this surprise us, with students graduating from art schools owing \$100,000?) So much for the supply side. On the flip, demand side of the coin, is art collected for purposes of life enhancement or as a bet on its future investment value?

Well knowing that even art which critiques the system will be absorbed into it, does the engulfing fact of assetization leave the artist any option but style branding? Within the present-day capitalist monosystem is it possible to create breathing room? And to what end are we doing so? Is art anything more than an asset, and if so, what?

At least we can address our time. In the “Funny Money” videos commerce is treated as a theater set, a curtain, a backdrop, before which money becomes prop and plaything. Pried free, unmoored, value slides, pirhouettes, pratfalls, bounces...and lands where?

Disorientations of value are part of the fabric of today, with cryptocurrencies and NFTs (non-fungible tokens) challenging established financial — and art world — practices. Robbins, who in order to acquire digital skills withdrew from actively exhibiting a decade ago after some three dozen solo shows in the US and Europe, views such means of appraising digital work as inevitable: “Put digital technology into the hands of hundreds of millions of creatives and eventually there’ll arise a way of valuing production in that same technology’s terms. The NFT — or whatever we end up calling it — is a logical response to the global dissemination of cellphones, computers, and cameras. That genie won’t go back into the bottle.” For his initial foray into the world of NFTs earlier this year, at the invitation of Art Basel The Green Gallery brought his video *A Retrospective* to the classical art audience. The online show “Funny Money” is the next phase of experiment: engaging the crypto-art audience via the leading NFT platform, OpenSea.

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the art system and the entertainment industry. What kind of communication product is natural to this “third way”? Hybrids of art and entertainment — here offered in “Funny Money.” His work is in many museum collections in the US and Europe. He is the author of seven books, including *Concrete Comedy: An Alternative History of Twentieth-Century Comedy*.