

# Currency as Art

The December 8 “Best of the Web Today” column by James Taranto ([Wall Street Journal](#)) touches on the subject of **currency as art**. This struck a chord with me. For a number of years I taught Money and Banking. I tried to show my students a movie titled **“Secrets of Making Money.”** It was originally broadcast on October 22, 1996 as part of the **PBS Nova series**. In the opening scene a **reformed counterfeiter talks about how he did it using traditional camera and film techniques**. The show then proceeds to discuss the design of the (then) new \$100 bill, with a focus on its security features. ([The Nova website has links to sites that include much of this information.](#))

Toward the end there is a segment on J.S.G. Boggs, an artist who creates his own currency. He does not sell this currency. The only way it can be acquired is via a transaction. Thus, a \$100 “Boggs note” will have to be used to buy goods or services. According to [Wikipedia](#),

*If an art collector wants a Boggs note, he must track it down himself. Boggs will tell a collector where he spent the note, but he does not sell them directly.*

Here’s an example of Mr. Boggs’s work:



J.S.G. Boggs’s \$100 bill features Harriet Tubman

I’ve posted the clip that talks about (and to) Boggs on Youtube. But you don’t need to leave this site because it’s embedded here.