

Mizota, Sharon. Review. *ArtNews* (November 2007), p. 230.

Brenna Youngblood

Margo Leavin
Los Angeles

For the 18 richly layered works (all 2007) in this show, Brenna Youngblood used collaged photographic elements to furnish grounds painted in textures that suggest worn and distressed domestic interiors. Images of chairs, lights, and decorative objects cut from the artist's own photos were encrusted in fields of scumbled or splattered color in muted tones. Playing on the line between painted and photographic representation, the images integrated emotion and documentary immediacy.

In *Money*, a TV and two gaudy, golden cherubim float over a garish field of splattered paint. Together they form a degraded version of classical architectural ornamentation that both mocks and sentimentalizes the pretensions of interior design. *Scene* depicts a murky brown space seemingly illuminated by a pair of bare incandescent bulbs. The harsh light in the photographs contrasts with the gentle luminosity of the painted surface, creating a sense of both desolation and intimacy.

The most powerful work in the show, *Jesus and Sacagawea*, is an ambitious composition on several wood panels jammed together to form a rough square. A found painting of a brown-skinned Savior stands out from a patchwork of weathered beige rectangles. The kitschy image is so dominant that one might miss the dollar coin commemorating Lewis and Clark's Indian guide Sacagawea that lays on its side in a crack between two panels.

The different scales, mediums, and dimensions of the two portraits offer an oblique commentary on the way racial, religious, and gender inequalities color history. While images of Jesus proliferate in many racial guises, the legacy of Sacagawea is discarded—even as she is memorialized—on a coin nobody uses.

—Sharon Mizota



Brenna Youngblood, *Scene*, 2007,
color photographs, acrylic paint, marker, and spray paint on panel, 48" x 72".
Margo Leavin.