

48 - PORTRAIT OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN /
TRYING TO FIND FLAWS, IF ANY,
IN AN ENLARGEMENT OF A SUPERDOLLAR



48 – PORTRAIT OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN / TRYING TO FIND FLAWS, IF ANY, IN AN ENLARGEMENT OF A SUPERDOLLAR

As it turns out, today is Benjamin Franklin's 300th birthday. Writer, typographer, printer-publisher-politician, inventor, statesman, gentleman scientist, lover, linguist, librarian and the first Postmaster General of the United States, Franklin was the consummate networker—distributing his ideas far and wide through a dizzying range of practices. He established a network of printing franchises by sending former apprentices to set up shop in a new town and collecting his dues; he traveled extensively to London and the Courts of France fostering relationships and helping to form a nation; he wrote incisive arguments and entertainments under a constellation of pseudonyms to suit the purpose-at-hand including *The Causist*, *Silence Dogood*, *Busy-Body*, *Poor Richard*, and *J.T.*; he advocated a paper currency to facilitate liberal distribution of goods and services; he (reportedly) spread his affections among any number of women in the Colonies and beyond; and he published a weekly newspaper, an occasional magazine and the annual *Poor Richard's Almanack*. Along the way, Franklin pursued his polymathic interests while inventing (a partial list): the medical catheter, the Armonica (a musical instrument) the first public lending library, a phoneticalphabet, volunteer fire department, the American Philosophical Society, the circulating stove, swimfins, a university, bifocals, the lightning rod, and the United States Postal Service.

— “Post-Master,” David Reinhardt, *Dot Dot Dot* #12, 2006

Portrait of Benjamin Franklin / Trying to find
flaws, if any, in an enlargement of a superdollar,
2006, Photographic print of c.1770 etching,
photographic of Tony Law's photograph for
The New York Times, July 23, 48 x 69.5 cm