

Preface from the first publication

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Shelley Sacks' EXCHANGE VALUES: Images of Invisible Lives is one of the more remarkable projects with which The Bonington Gallery has involved itself. The result of deeply held political commitments are fired by a passionate desire to overcome social inequalities, EXCHANGE VALUES manages, nevertheless, to avoid the merely didactic and, more impressive still, to transcend the simply polemic. The reasons for this are simple enough: although, as the essays in this volume make plain, this project opens a window on a set of issues that are daunting in their significance and complexity, Shelley Sacks hasn't - to borrow someone else's words - just hung ideas on art. Though, in other circumstances, bananas may seem simple and faintly absurd, what she has done is to make of them and the social processes connected to them, the material of an art that is compelling and provocative.