



Pat Shannon
Boston, MA

When sculptor Pat Shannon began to painstakingly cut out the content, i.e. text, images and ads, of newspapers, it indicated a shift in her work from the domestic to the public realm. Replacing a previous series of sanded, found furniture assemblages, her newspaper investigations operate in both spheres. Both bodies of work strip everyday, common household items down to their bare essence, carefully leaving visible traces of their intended functions. The removal of content is a labor-intensive process imbued with symbolic action. Remnants of her meditative, repetitive motions are transferred into the finished product, lending stillness to the work. The resulting objects conjure ghostly images of past users.

Retaining the original structure of the newspaper, Shannon creates elegant grids to explore how the form continues to hold meaning. The continuous cutting of the paper creates an autumnal disarray, with words falling to the studio floor as she works. Rather than raking them into untidy piles, the artist meticulously files and labels the clippings, where they await as yet undetermined fates. The remaining framework pays tribute to the central importance of language while the vestiges of advertising tools and other established norms of communication continue to linger on the periphery. For example, on a page of *Wall Street Journal*, 3/7/07, the artist purposely leaves the asterisks that divide separate paragraphs, a punctuation that would have gone unnoticed had the text been present. In *Boston Herald*, 4/18/07, Shannon has taken a tabloid size paper and arranged as it would be found in a magazine kiosk. The empty remnants contain swatches of bold colors designed to entice potential buyers.

Shannon displays the papers in a variety of ways. In *Wall Street Journal*, 3/7/07, the artist has laid out the paper in 2-page spreads on a slanted wooden table. This setting gives the piece an air that echoes the formality of a library reading room. In *New York Times* 9/18/05, Shannon hangs the newspaper flat on the gallery wall. Gently wilting, the fragile single layer creates a delicate screen that filters the gallery light and creates shadows on the wall. The artist innovatively extends the temporary value of the daily news.