

Ronald Feldman Fine Arts

NANCY CHUNN

For Immediate Release: December 22, 1996

FRONT PAGES 1996

January 11 - February 15

Nancy Chunn will exhibit the 366 front pages of *The New York Times* from 1996 on which she has made additions, comments, and eradications. Chunn, through visual metaphor and text, provides a commentary on the events of the last year and the power of the press. Her tone -- ironic, biting yet laced with humor -- tests our response to the comedy and horrors of the news.

The decorative and playful surface with its apparent spontaneous energy belies the intensity and seriousness of the project. The artist has utilized a variety of drawing styles ranging from line drawing to cartooning to more painterly art history references. More than 500 rubber stamps of visual images and alphabets have been designed by the artist or fabricated from found pictographs. Her stamped text, a mixture of wit and social commentary, mimics the brevity and purpose of a headline and draws upon common, popular phrases which have been chosen for their associations to the articles.

With the introduction of a change each month, simplicity evolves into baroque complexity as the year progresses: Phrases turn into sentences; color-enhanced photographs become extensively altered; drawings prevail over symbols; and images spill out of the structured boundaries of the layout to dominate the page.

Using visual metaphor, the artist draws attention to patterns of news coverage. Angels and flames establish the long running importance of the TWA crash; the ubiquity of eradicated figures is a reminder that the Gulf War Syndrome story is not going to go away. Traffic-like signs -- warning, be on the alert -- indicate events which have the potential to erupt into further violence and chaos.

The repetition of symbols is a means of systemization, illustrating the power of the press to define, and thus control, the news. Green dollar-sign graphics indicate the prevalence of stories that pertain to finance. The lack of hot pink correlates with the infrequency of women on the front pages. The addition of a ribbon on World Aids Day notes that subject's absence, calling attention to the invisibility of events not in the news.

Wars, famine, disease, injustice, disasters. In the rubber-stamped words of Nancy Chunn, "It's business as usual." Having previously achieved critical success with her interpretive paintings of maps of countries in political turmoil, Chunn, in this new project, continues her commitment to document the political arena. While the painting cycles may take many years to conceive and execute, the immediate and constant flow of history as evidenced on a front page requires immediate distillation and transformation.

Nancy Chunn has exhibited at the Feldman Gallery for ten years. She was recently awarded a painting commission by New York City for PS 125 and received a National Endowment of the Arts Fellowship in 1995.

The artist is indebted to Jack Muccigrosso and Mark Rosen for assistance in the execution of this project.

Reception: January 11, 6 - 8. Gallery hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 10 - 6. Monday by appointment.

Ronald Feldman Fine Arts