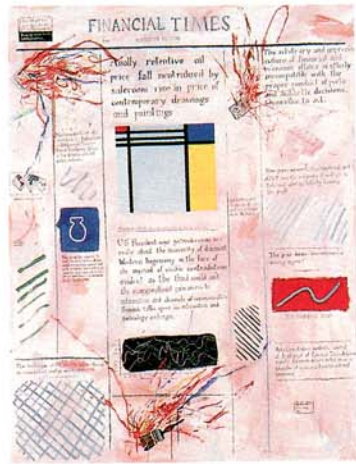


Morgan, Robert. "Review."
Arts Magazine (April 1989).

The British artist **Conrad Atkinson** has been shown regularly over the years by Ronald Feldman. In his last show, entitled *Front Page* (January 7–February 4), Atkinson continued to make his message of social and political critique evident. In addition to his paintings of mock newspaper headlines, which bridge the appearances of a tabloid



Conrad Atkinson, *Financial Times; Mondrian edition, 1986*, Acrylic on canvas, 60" × 52". Courtesy Ronald Feldman Fine Arts.

front page and a modernist painting, Atkinson also presented a series of doormats offering various slogans. All of these brown mats, evenly spaced along the length of the main gallery, included the word WELCOME, accompanied by loaded political signifiers: e.g., CONSUMING WAR WELCOME, and RESIDUES OF POWER WELCOME. Atkinson has always tried to bring issues and intimacy together within a common frame. But intimacy, as we should know, can be the deceiving factor. Television and print can easily seduce us into feeling intimacy with an abrasive political ideology or commercial product. Atkinson seems to be playing on this notion of a false intimacy; that is, an intimacy that appears to be real but is, in fact, disengaged from *our* reality. It is sort of like the "Thank you" stamped or printed on the back of your restaurant check. Are you really being thanked? Or is this merely another element of control whereby language is monumentalized and deprived of gender in order to enforce its code? It is the absurdity of this empty gesture that the doormats, as well as the front-page paintings, seem to carry.