

Cooper, Emmanuel. "Conrad Atkinson." *Time Out*, August 30-September 6, 1989, p. 33.

Conrad Atkinson

Victoria and Albert Museum

Political art, that is art which addresses the issues of party and class politics, can be effective both as visual images and as challenging comments on the values of society. Conrad Atkinson, a consistent and committed artist involved with the role of art in society, looks critically at the structures of power, whether in the profit motives of big business or in the control and manipulation of news. His latest work uses newspaper format to parody the activities of the state and comment on the marginalised role and status of culture. The *Daily Consumernica*, modelled closely on the layout of the *Guardian* and on Picasso's famous protest against the destruction of Guernica, manipulates the news to its own ends, juggling names of ministers with artists, musicians and philosophers, in a rewriting of art and history, reminding artists of their potential power. Hand-drawn lettering and subtle use of colour give the graphic images a decorative appearance; it is only when the pages are read that the humour and hard-hitting comments on monetarism, economics and capitalist values make their point, suggesting that artists can handle and subvert popular media, and raise relevant and pertinent questions about form and content — a tabloid version should be on sale at every newsagent.

Emmanuel Cooper

