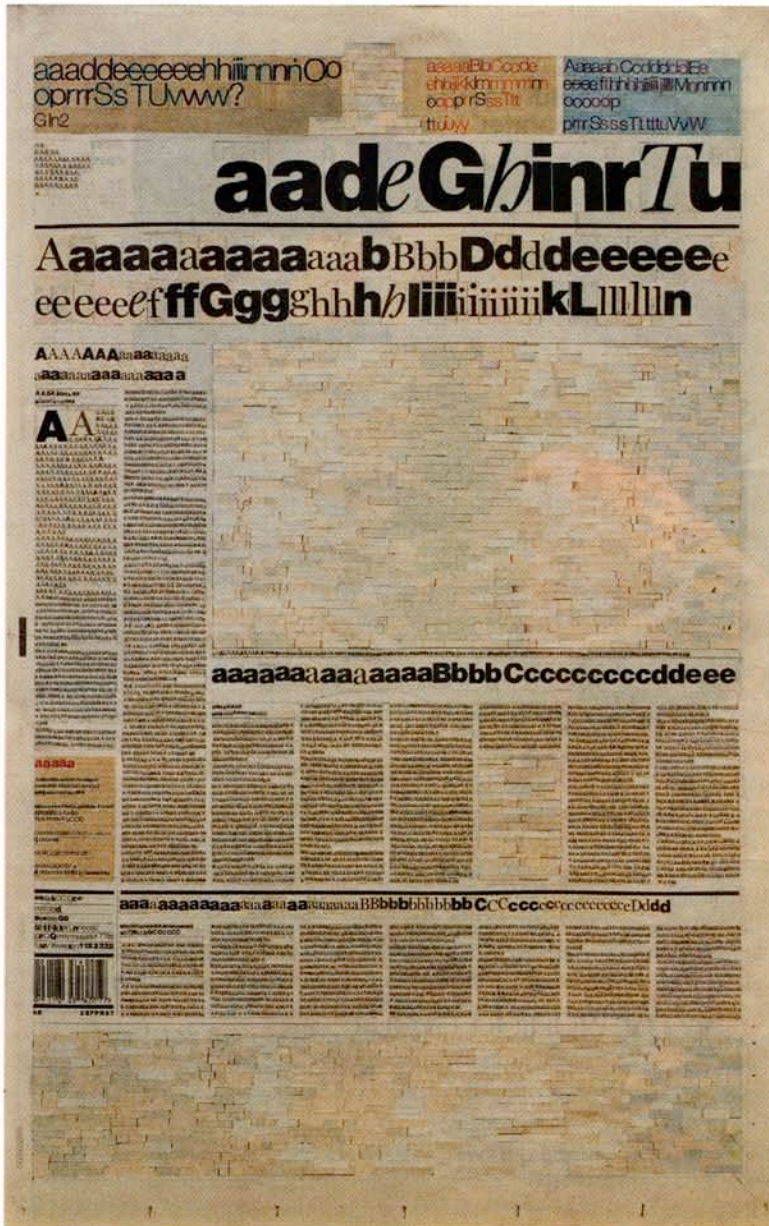


**KIM RUGG**  
P.P.O.W GALLERY

As the newspaper industry continues to falter and fade, Kim Rugg's "Don't Mention the War" arrived to conduct a preemptive postmortem for the onetime giant of the information age. Rugg clinically dissected the front pages of 31 newspapers, removing each letter, symbol, and section of white space before reassembling them in alphabetical order. The photographs are likewise sliced into impeccably small blocks and reordered according to gradient, creating a nonrepresentational field of pixels and puréed text that simultaneously recalls the chaotic pages of Hugo Ball or *Dada* magazine, the multicolored snow of television static, and the impenetrable ciphers of

wartime codebooks. The viewer was left to attend to a series of newspapers suffering from acute aphasia, inviting decryption but incapable of delivering their highly polished stories about the world. In a sense, they are no longer newsworthy; and yet the collages retain some semblance of their dignified composure, as seen in the empty geometries of the margins left intact by Rugg's knife, thereby gracefully becoming confounding totems of semantic exchange. A few particles of the daily news do however remain. The dates, such as September 12, 2001, point to an indictment of the media's certain complicity in the ongoing misrepresentations of the Iraq war—an accusation almost overly easy to agree with five years in. Nevertheless, Rugg's series also looks beyond current concerns to the chance of a utopian rereading and strangely polite reconfiguration of our increasingly manipulated, byte-size sites of social exchange. —PETER HALL



ABOVE: Kim Rugg, *Don't Mention the War*, 2003–04. Set of 26 framed newsprint collages, 25 x 16 inches each. Courtesy P.P.O.W Gallery, New York, and Mark Moore Gallery, Santa Monica, California.