

Donn Davis: Ten Small Paintings



DON DAVIS

Explore the possibilities of varied abstractions achieved within the parameters of a simple, strict, system that is source- & process-oriented: making artworks compiled of printed geometric “units” reclaimed from found lettering and imagery. With the use of this system, the scattered histories of different elements combine and their functionality is shed through subjection to industrious hand labor, and they join together to acquire a new collective vibrancy. In the past, I have used such materials as discarded bingo cards, parking-lot receipts, or promotional posters; for the last few years I’ve been using forms found on discarded commercially-screenprinted cardboard cartons, whose ready availability and variety affords me a rich vein of raw material to exploit, and whose impersonal, often-faulty industrial printing I find irresistible. The time invested in the artmaking process imbues the work with an authentic, hand-made quality.

Technically, pieces are the result of three distinctly different procedures:

I am engaged in a constant collection program, using a box cutter at all times and places (except airports), culling prospective material. A process of “distillation” reduces bushels of found text into cups of trimmed geometric elements. During application, like forms find one another and condense into cellular clusters of varying intricacy.

1. COLLECTION:

In this phase I accumulate stock by looking at printing with a disregard for literacy, seeing text as abstraction. I look for

basic shapes, like circles, spots, or crosses, often in the negative spaces within the printed letters rather than in the words themselves. I am constantly searching for boxes; patience and resourcefulness are full-time requirements. Scavengers’ luck comes into play: I may become superstitious and walk circuitous routes through neighborhoods, especially on recycling days (needless to say, this is a solitary pursuit). Maximizing the range of collection of these units is fundamental because a greater variety from which to choose acts as a “palette” and ultimately helps to determine the rhythm and direction of each product. Some of the larger pieces entail months or even years of accumulation time.

2. REDUCTION:

Units are first delaminated (peeled). Because of the differing grades of raw materials I find, their final thicknesses can vary from filmy to that of a heavy “card stock.” Next they are scissor-trimmed into their specific shapes. This is very time-consuming. I then sort them into several interchangeable collections according to properties such as size, shape, or color. Over the course of the past 3 years the collections from cardboard sources have grown and varied in unexpected ways.



3. APPLICATION:

Collections of units are applied, using archival, water-based PVA adhesive, to linen- or cotton-covered handmade birch panels. Patterns can be predetermined or arise according to such ideas or issues as surface tension, integration, metastasis, magnetic attrac-

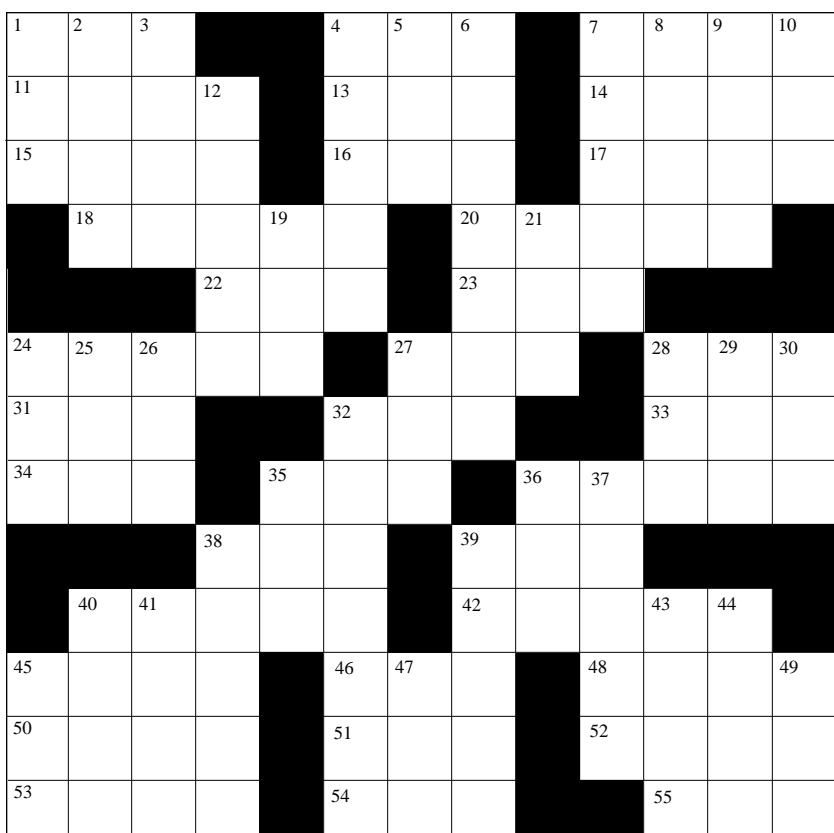
tion, real estate development or military strategy. Covered segments grow together, eventually filling the entire face area of the painting. The artwork is finished with a matte UV-protectant varnish to prevent fading and increase surface continuity, thus highlighting the noticeably tactile painting surface.

I’m interested in providing the visual equivalent of a simple pop instrumental song, made of reclaimed garbage. I hope for an immediate visual impact: an energized but self-contained marriage of quietness and loudness.

YOUR HOROSCOPE FOR THE MONTH

 <p>VIRGO Aug. 23 -Sept. 22 Talk to your lover about your personal goals. Listen and learn valuable information. Your numbers: 13, 32, 36</p>	 <p>CAPRICORN Dec. 22 -Jan. 19 Travel for pleasure and visit friends or relatives you don’t get to see that often. Your numbers: 21, 39, 44</p>	 <p>TAURUS April 20 -May 20 Look into the options open to you. If you can make changes to your career, you should. Your numbers: 5, 29, 34</p>
 <p>LIBRA Sept. 23 -Oct. 22 Don’t stretch the truth. Isolation could be the result. Don’t make fun of other people. Your numbers: 4, 27, 38</p>	 <p>AQUARIUS Jan. 20 -Feb. 18 Your health will improve if you are happier in your daily environment. Your numbers: 1, 20, 42</p>	 <p>GEMINI May 21-June 20 Make plans to spend time with your friends. You need social activities. Your numbers: 3, 18, 35</p>
 <p>SCORPIO Oct. 23 -Nov. 21 Opportunities for romance will develop through relatives. Be careful while traveling. Your numbers: 14, 15, 21</p>	 <p>PISCES Feb. 19 -March 20 Difficulties with someone you live with will be more detrimental than you thought. Your numbers: 10, 19, 23</p>	 <p>CANCER June 21-July 22 Make your home a place of comfort. Avoid any conflicts with family members. Your numbers: 8, 11, 26</p>
 <p>SAGITTARIUS Nov. 22 -Dec. 21 Your dedication and drive will attract hard-working and loyal individuals. Your numbers: 2, 22, 34</p>	 <p>ARIES March 21-April 19 Depression is quite possible if you and your mate have not been communicating honestly. Your numbers: 9, 14, 40</p>	 <p>LEO July 23 -Aug. 22 You will impress others with your sound ideas. Go after your goals. Your numbers: 3, 17, 27</p>

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



ACROSS

- Temporary craze
4. Pep
7. Actor Lugosi
11. Currier and _____
13. Cold and slippery
14. Surprise attack
15. Bridge tax
16. _____ Moines
17. Sources of metal
18. Sister’s daughter
20. Heads or _____?
22. The Dynamic _____
24. Building addition
24. Way to prepare chestnuts
27. It precedes Sat.
28. Unhappy
31. “You Ain’t _____

Heard

- Nothing _____
32. Utter
33. Anger
34. Prohibition _____
35. Ignited
36. Cone-shaped tent
38. Rested
39. Nourished
40. “Beauty and the _____”
42. Metal mold
45. Radio City Music _____”
46. Goof up
48. At the peak
50. “And to _____ good night” (2 wds.)
51. Shad product
52. Actress Hayworth
53. Show the way
54. Mayday!
55. Opp. of NNE

DOWN

- Be the right size
- Bard of _____
- Sandwich shop, for short
- The “V” in VCR
- _____ cubes
- Puzzle
- Cook a steak
- British nobleman
- Fibs
- Public notices
- Flexible Flyers
- Use a scissors
- MacGraw or Baba
- Dark bread
- Over, poetically
- One _____ time (2 wds.)
27. Cooking phrase
28. Small drink
29. How _____ you?
30. Report card blot
32. Baby minders
35. _____ Vegas
36. Toes count
37. J _____ Hoover
38. Macaroni or potato mixture
39. Keep the home _____ burning
40. Block of hay
41. Singer _____ Fitzgerald
43. Elevator pioneer
44. Tykes
45. Actor Holbrook
47. Australian animal, for short
49. Rover’s foot

Answer on page A-12