

# ARTFORUM

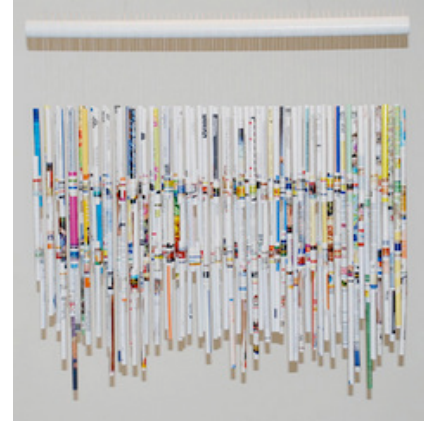
## Los Angeles

### China Adams

STEVE TURNER CONTEMPORARY

6026 Wilshire Blvd

November 21–December 19



My mail carrier faithfully delivers folios of third-class penny-savers and other spammy annoyances, while across the city, with equal frequency, China Adams finds free art supplies in *her* mailbox. For her second solo show at Steve Turner, titled “White Flags and Silent Chimes,” Adams has transformed the gallery into a reverent, navelike space with all works made from recycled junk mail. The conversion of eminently discardable advertisements into objets d’art might be a dubious gesture if the result weren’t so seductive and smart. Adams’s practice has long been that of a benevolent Rumpelstiltskin, upping the commodity value of her personal and household detritus by reconfiguring it into well-crafted objects that are at once puckish and elegantly modernist.

Adams’s flags look more like banners or scrolls and are suspended at eye level throughout the middle of the gallery. The junk mail has been painted white, then cut, scalloped, shingled, shredded, or rolled and carefully composed into six decorative banners and three wind chimes that hang from the ceiling by clean white cotton ribbons. The flyers’ original barrage of advertising graphics has been muted, the pages now ushered into a new existence with no overt semiotic messages.

Once regal bearers of family crests, signifiers of royalty, patriotism, or territories, the banners and flags today are relegated to junk-mail status anyway: They advertise museum shows on light posts, proclaim sports team loyalties on car windows, or serve as kitschy, front-yard decor that announces the holidays or changing seasons. For Adams, these white flags of surrender serve as a clever if hushed revenge for the aesthetic blitzkrieg that seems to colonize and infiltrate today’s urban landscape.

— Micol Hebron

**Caption:** China Adams, *Chime # 2*, 2009, junk mail, paste, recycled mailing tube, toothpicks, monofilament, 33 x 31 1/2 x 2”.