

ARTS MAGAZINE

What makes **Collier Schorr's** work unique is its dual framework of linguistic and pictorial deconstruction which examines particular codes of communication within the intersecting domains of verbal and visual sign systems or lexicons. If there is critique in this practice, it is directed toward the conventions of persona and selfhood that are articulated through the self-indexing aesthetic act and construct. In the new work on view at 303 (March 3–24), Schorr presents multi-panel rectilinear Plexiglas structures which appear, upon initial inspection to repeat the tropes of post-commodity, display-obsessed practice. Yet Schorr is clearly less interested in reinforcing a fetishistic posture vis-à-vis the conventions of presentation (there is a purposefully generic deployment of a basic model of display from work to work) and more concerned with how particular systems of communication—in this case, the intersection of hand sign language and a verbal lexicon—produce meaning. In a work entitled *Clear*, a scripted text is dispersed in non-hierarchical fashion through three Plexiglas supports, these elements interpenetrating with a diagram of hand gestures utilized to create a sign-language corollary to the verbal alphabet. The viewer gradually gains entry into a level of “signification” by stringing together the discontinuous words into a sentence that reads: HER PERFUME FILLED THE HALLWAY, SO THAT I COULD FEEL HER NEXT TO ME BEFORE I TURNED THE CORNER. The seemingly autobiographical, first-person narrative structure of the text is broken down and essentially abstracted through the pictorialization of linguistic elements; this strategy calls attention to the arbitrariness of verbal communication, its inherent artificiality or “constructedness.” Although Schorr's works maintain a decidedly clinical visual posture, the complexity of the manipulations that occur within the domain of a pictorialized linguistic operation is compelling.