

Time of the Signs #1
John E. Bannon 2002
3" X 97" X 44"
(8cm x 246cm x 124cm)

This piece consists of wood, drywall, neon, and a sheet of fireproof fabric called *Transbestos*.® This fabric is used in the production of neon signs. Mounted on a tabletop, the *Transbestos* serves as a pattern for a glass bender to fashion straight tubes of glass into desired shapes or letterforms.

Bending glass is achieved by heating it from a torch. After removing it from the fire, the glass, which stays malleable for a few seconds, is laid on the fabric, onto which a pattern of the sign has been drawn, and bent to the proper shape. The fabric is scorched, but not destroyed, allowing it to be used over and over again.

Some sections of *Transbestos* (like this one) were used as a blotter to protect the tabletop. Other sections, with the actual patterns drawn on them, were laid on top of this one and subsequently, the heat scorched both layers.

The result is a layered history of popular culture. This particular piece was in service for about ten years. Everything from pawn shop and strip club signs to Joseph Kosuth and Bruce Nauman museum pieces have been fabricated on it; encompassing the spectrum of American consumer culture during the late 1980's through the 1990's. The "timeline" element at the base of the work is created from different shades of white phosphor-coated tubing that were spliced together and filled with Krypton gas (which is responsible for its muted tonal quality). The line of numbers once served as ruler measurements used in the fabrication of window border tubes.

