

# SHANE CAMPBELL GALLERY

ArtForum  
September 2002

## Ann Craven

GASSER & GRUNERT GALLERY

September 04 - October 05

Ann Craven crosses Audubon with Richter to yield gorgeous, deadpan studies—portraits really—of bright birds and gentle deer. Many of the works come in pairs or threesomes of almost identical canvases, featuring large-scale, close-up views against backgrounds that vary slightly. It's now clear that reports of painting's death have been greatly exaggerated, and Craven's gorgeous wet-on-wet strokes speak of the medium's pleasures even as they appear to mechanically reproduce themselves on the next canvas. As her colors—emerald green, sunny yellow, dusty purple—delight the eyes, Craven inquires into how imagery of the natural functions when nature is *the* theater for human intervention. Look closely, and you'll notice that the backgrounds don't match the foregrounds: They often come from different source material. In fact, some of the birds are composites of different species, which suggests that there is no source for nature painting beyond that which is already mediated. In what we hope is a conceptually related move, Gasser & Grunert is selling boxes of note cards featuring the bird paintings, for all the world as if it were a gift shop.



*Dear, 2002*

—Brian Boucher

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