

SHANE CAMPBELL GALLERY

Tema Celeste
May 2004

ann craven

Klemens Gasser & Tanja Grunert, Inc.

New York

For her latest exhibition, Ann Craven presents newly-painted versions of images previously shown at the gallery in 2002. The same chubby and brazenly yellow birds are back, as in *Yello Fello 1* (2004); the deer from the 1973 sci-fi film *Soylent Green* stands alert in the same field of flowers; and, again, the African Grey parrot is repeated three times, each on a separate canvas in *Hello, Hello, Hello* (2004). The birds sit on the same branches that float in front of softly-blurred flowers on monochrome backgrounds, like wallpaper whose color has been turned up a notch. They recall *tableaux vivants*, psychedelic versions of natural history museum dioramas, or kitsch paintings from your grandmother's house, but expertly painted. It is nature de-natured, even more so this second time around. There are layers of cultural and historical issues being worked out in Craven's paintings and previous criticism has adeptly begun the discussion. However, with the repetition of this striking body of work, Craven has inserted yet another glitch into her pseudo-natural universe. This next step in her project (if one is aware of it; the work is still substantial and gratifying if one is seeing the images for the first time) begs attention as the most arresting element of the current show. It will only beneficially complicate earlier interpretations of the work. This time around, the birds and deer seem to taunt the viewer, who craves evolution of the image but delights in its stability. In the 2002 versions, the animal figures already seemed simultaneously vibrant but stale; two years later these qualities remain and are permeated by a deeper nostalgia and greater sense of risk. Craven is clearing important ground in the debates around the possibilities of authorship and originality in contemporary culture, but her project carries more weight than that. Without making any significant changes in her method of painting, Craven's work, once again, powerfully demonstrates the way in which painting can bring new depth and critique to contemporary experiences of representation.



Ann Craven DEAR (The Life of the Fawn) 2004, oil on canvas/oliosu tela, 72x108", 182,9x274,3 cm.

Bethany Anne Pappalardo

2021 S WABASH AVE
CHICAGO IL 60616
+1 (312) 226 2223