

SHANE CAMPBELL GALLERY

Time Out New York
April 2004

Reviews



Ann Craven, *Yello Fello 1*, 2004.

Ann Craven
Klemens Gasser & Tanya Grunert,
through Apr 17 (see Chelsea).

While other artists desperately fear the accusation that they are repeating themselves, Ann Craven has transformed this pitfall into her specialty. In the past, she has delivered painting after painting that echoes its predecessors—luscious interpretations of kitschy, dewy-eyed

deer and chirping parakeets. But here, she takes this project to new heights by re-creating her previous show, in its entirety, installed as it appeared at the same gallery just 18 months ago.

The sense of déjà vu is magnified by the fact that, while Craven retains the original imagery, she also enlarges each canvas one hundred and fifty percent. *Dear* (2004) brings back to life the Bambi standing in a field of daisies that appeared in *Dear* (2002) and also in *Dear in Daisies* (1998). As Craven's output proceeds, we are prepared for a deterioration in quality, as if the sequel can be only a pale imitation of the original. But she defies this expectation, as demonstrated by *Yello Fello 1* and *Yello Fello 2* (both, 2004), a pair of portraits of a canary that supersede smaller versions painted in 2002.

Like a sappy love song heard over and over again, Craven's use of repetition grants us permission to bask in our enjoyment of her blatant sentimentality. By using duplication while eschewing means of mechanical reproduction, Craven acknowledges that these repetitive activities—call it “human reproduction”—are much more than acts of futility. They are signs of optimism, even resilience, defying the recycled cynicism evident in too much of what passes for originality in contemporary culture.

—Barbara Pollack

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