

BOOKFORUM

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ANN CRAVEN

by C. C.



Ann Craven, *Two Lovebirds (at Sunset)*, 2018, oil on canvas 40 x 30 "

Pink canaries, in order to remain pink, must be fed exclusively crimson food. Without a consistent intake of pigment their unusual color fade away, replaced by a familiar yellow. ANN CRAVEN (Karma, \$50), a new volume of the artist's paintings, documents her practice of painting and repainting found images over the course of decades, showing them the same care that an aviculturist would a promising "red factor" canary (one that might someday become pink). Craven's likenesses of birds, deer, flowers, and moonlit skies multiply over this book's 560 pages, welcoming the reader into her hazy, unsettling wonderland of wide-eyed critters. In shades of pink, yellow, purple, and orange, these paintings allow Craven to take the central conceit of Robert Rauschenberg's *Factum I* and *II*, both from 1957, and push it to its extreme: Instead of one copy, made concurrently with the original, how about fifteen, made over a lifetime? This obsessive sense of repetition over time unites most of Craven's kitsch menagerie. Her "Stripe" and "Palette" paintings - among the few nonrepresentational works here-index the particular combinations of girlish pastel hues with which she has rendered her primary subjects. *Pink Canary 2*, a dainty oil painting of a bubblegum-hued bird, is dated 1997-2018: Craven has been carefully reworking this subject for more than twenty years. The effete fowl, alight on a berry-laden branch, betrays nothing of the artist's extended process. In the present, the bird is simply beautiful.-C. C.