

ARTFORUM

JANUARY 2012

ANN CRAVEN

by Sherman Sam

Ann Craven

SOUTHARD RIED

2nd Floor, 67 Dean Street Soho

November 25–January 28

Ann Craven paints with heart, the operative terms being *paint* and *heart*. She also paints from an unusual stance, however, in that her work seems to lie somewhere between irony and devotion. As in the work of a traditional painter, things around her become her subjects; flowers, her husband, children, birds, the moon, are all transformed into lush painterly representations. Even the leftover palettes, which incidentally are always fully primed canvases, become paintings, while the remaining paint on her brush goes into creating abstract stripes. Winston Churchill once wrote about the joys of painting as a pastime, and Craven's stance appears to espouse this thinking: Paint what you love.

"Summer" features work hung in rows, subjects repeated, and even some former palettes, now paintings of birds, propped against the gallery wall. All together they lend this exhibition a colorful, lighthearted spirit. Yet Craven's project is not to be taken lightly, despite its sense of ease and joy; the serial and obsessive nature of her work hints at a framework that is far from flippant. Her representations of the moon are painted from actual skyward observation, while the birds are created from photographs. She is touching on memory, time, and repetition—in other words, human habits and how we frame the world. Repetition, after all, is a form of devotion.

— Sherman Sam



Ann Craven, *Brown Eyed Susan (8/23/11)*, 2011, oil on linen, 24 x 20".