

SHANE CAMPBELL GALLERY

New City Art
February 2008

Review: Ann Craven/Shane Campbell Gallery

RECOMMENDED

Ann Craven has enjoyed critical success as a painter of glossy, candy-colored birds—think J.J. Audubon hopped up on Tang—and Bambi-esque forest scenes. Half of her new paintings offer a familiar emphasis on fauna with bright, thickly brushed pandas. The other half, vividly striped abstractions, seem to be a significant, and not entirely legible, departure from Craven's oeuvre. Wide stripes of color, including green, orange, red, blue and purple, have been laid diagonally, in wet paint, across several large canvases. The quick, wet on wet technique has led to a great deal of painterly incident in the stripes' points of contact, and the broad gestural strokes surprisingly manage both repetitive regularity and expressionistic imprecision. In the past, Craven has played with ideas of reproduction and seriality—she once filled a New York gallery with newly executed copies of each painting from a previous show in the same space—and this new work would seem to be an extension of those concerns. The focus on repetition falls flat with the inexplicable inclusion of two takeaway posters in the center of the gallery floor, one an offset of a striped painting, the other an "edition" of seventy gouaches, signed and numbered by the artist. While I'm all for free art, the current floor giveaway trend (evoking Gonzalez-Torres and Jeremy Deller) doesn't necessarily contribute to the experience of Craven's latest paintings. (Rachel Furnari)

Through March 15 at Shane Campbell Gallery, 1431 W. Chicago.

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