2005-11-01

Dana Clancy: Intimate Distance

Clancy, Dana
Boston University

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Photo credits: Peter Harris

LIST OF PAINTINGS

COVER:
Camouflage (detail)
52” x 48”
Oil on canvas on panel, 2005
INSIDE OPENING PANEL:
Capture
18” x 20”
Oil on canvas on panel, 2005
Hot Spot
18” x 20”
Oil on canvas on panel, 2005
INSIDE LEFT PANEL:
Futures
22” x 24”
Oil on canvas on panel, 2004
INSIDE RIGHT PANEL:
Somewhere Between
22” x 24”
Oil on canvas on panel, 2005
BACK PANEL:
This Memory of Water (detail)
52” x 48”
Oil on canvas on panel, 2005
Exhibitions Coordinator:
Lynne Cooney

Sherron Gallery at Boston University
775 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, MA 02215
www.bu.edu/cfa/visuals
INTIMATE DISTANCE: WORKS BY DANA CLANCY

Dana Clancy’s recent work takes as its subject the act of looking. The process of painting and drawing inherently implies this activity, yet Clancy’s elegant compositions uniquely propose a complex understanding of how we see with our eyes and our memory. Although seemingly unrelated in theme, her enigmatic portraits and still lifes, which will open in 2006 at the Reading Public Museum, suggest a direct relationship with the nineteenth-century American artist Henry Ossawa Tanner. Arauz is co-curator of Keith Haring: Journey and bowery Gallery in New York. For her public art

Clancy’s paintings are a skilful and intricate hybrid of drawing from life, photographic sources, and memory. She makes use of graphic forms built up over time. The intensely colored shapes of matte pigment that surround her sitters further transform the literal, documentary vision of the photographic source into a painterly, conceptual experience. In Camouflage (2005), the pregnant subject poses beyond the limits of the pink-couched form, both echoing and transcending the emerging haze that enshrouds her body. The silhouetted leaf forms that cascade down and across the canvas disrupt the photographic renderings of the carefully modulated figures and insist on a representational fiction that locates the subject in a metaphorical realm of memory and sensation.

In February, 2005. Clancy’s absentee female subject recalls the visually self-assured woman with binoculars in Mary Cassatt’s 1879 Woman in Black at the Opera that hangs at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. In Cassatt’s composition, a small male figure in the distance turns his opera glass on Cassatt’s outsubject, echoing the woman’s gesture and evoking the gendered nature of subjecthood. In contrast, Clancy’s woman is alone on the canvas and turns her gaze outward to confront the viewer. The bright, double-keeled form of her binoculars becomes a double lens, directing our attention instead to the controlled nature of looking and being looked at.

Clancy’s subject is the landscape; yet, once again, she turns her attention to the experience of looking by focusing on the guided gaze of the tourist. In Hot Spot (2004), a ribbon of wooden walkway emerges out of Yellowstone National Park’s sulphurous fumes to direct the viewer’s eyes skyward. The woman depicted here, her gaze outward to confront the viewer. The bright, double-keeled form of her binoculars becomes a double lens, embedding within her paintings both the sensation of being watched. Cassatt and her colleagues—such as Manet and Degas—often made the act of observation their subject matter, as well, and like these nineteenth-century painters, Clancy explores the various incarnations of the modern-day tourist. The lone tourist depicted in her installation for this exhibition, in which Clancy’s woman is alone on the canvas and turns her gaze outward to confront the viewer. The bright, double-keeled form of her binoculars becomes a double lens, directing our attention instead to the controlled nature of looking and being looked at.

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This shift of the viewer between spectator and spectacle is a vital theme in Clancy’s work. It plays out most dramatically in her installation for this exhibition, in which individuals from a crowded parade spectators are isolated on a series of small panels that erupt on the surface of a field of color. Clancy observes each viewer’s head from slightly above, which focuses our attention on their visual activity and also heightens our own awareness to the sensation of being watched. Cassatt and her colleagues—such as Manet and Degas—often made the act of observation their subject matter, as well, and like these nineteenth-century painters, Clancy explores the various incarnations of the modern-day tourist. In order to consider how we interact visually with the people and landscape around us.

Dana Clancy is a painter and Assistant Professor at Boston University’s School of Visual Arts. She received an MA in English literature from Vassar College in 1992 and an MFA in painting from Boston University in 1995. Ms. Clancy has exhibited her work in group exhibitions nationally, including at the New Image Art Gallery in Los Angeles, the Delta Arts at Marshall Arts in Memphis, and Blowery Gallery in New York. In New England, her work has been shown at the Green Street Gallery, the Brandon Tool Gallery, the MGB Gallery at the Boston Center for the Arts; The FPGA Gallery, the South Art Center, and ARTSPACE@16, and is in the permanent collection at the DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Park. In 2002 she was the recipient of the Clowes Award, a fellowship-residency to the Vermont Studio Center.

RAWHI ARAUZ
Rachael Arnaz is a Boston-based, independent curator who has worked at museums including the National Gallery of Art and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. She holds a PhD in American and modern art from the University of Pennsylvania and has organized exhibitions for the William Wilson College Museum of Art and the Boston Athenaeum Museum of Art. Her public art projects are based on a broad range of subjects including the drawings of Randall Bills, and nineteenth-century American and modern. Rachael Aranz. Aranz is co-curator of Keith Haring: Journey and bowery Gallery in New York. For her public art

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