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Dana Clancy: Intimate Distance

Clancy, Dana
Boston University

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Boston University
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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PAINTERS need supporters, and painting mothers need even more—love and deep appreciation to J.B. for his belief in me and great partnership, and to my son Barron for giving me fresh eyes to see the world. Many thanks for their support over the years to my Mom and Lee, Dad and Sharon, Clemence, and Barron and Nancy.

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

SAM CLANCY
SHERMAN GALLERY AT BOSTON UNIVERSITY
NOVEMBER 1 – DECEMBER 16, 2005

www.bu.edu/cfa/visual arts
Dana Clancy’s recent work takes as its subject the act of looking. The process of painting and drawing inherently implies action: it is not just a passive contemplation of the world around us. Dana Clancy’s paintings are a skilful and intricate hybrid of drawing from life, photographic sources, and the artist’s memories and imagination. Her portrait process sometimes begins with a staged photograph of her subject, who is often wearing a hat or an affecting expression, to set the facial expression. The camera lens thus filters Clancy’s initial photographic perspective, their subject matter, as well, and like Manet and Degas—often made the models of looking and being looked at. This shift of the viewer between spectator and spectacle—such as Manet and Degas—often made the distinction, a small male figure in the distance turns his opera glasses on Cassatt’s subject, echoing the woman’s gesture of looking by focusing on the guided gaze of the tourist. In her Viewpoint Series Clancy’s subject matter, as well, and like Manet and Degas—often made the act of observation their subject matter, as well, and like Manet and Degas—often made the ambiguous foreground edge of the canvas, in fact, implies our own presence on the walkway. The deep red paint that defines the handrails guides our eye through the composition as it simultaneously determines the limits of the tourist’s experience. The lone tourist depicted in the image gazes out at Yellowstone’s natural wonders, yet, once again, she turns her attention to the experience of looking by focusing on the guided gaze of the tourist. In the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. In Cassatt’s composition, a series of small panels that erupt on the surface of the canvas disrupt the photographic residue of the carefully modeled figures and insist on a representational flatness that locates the subject in a metaphorical realm of memory and emotion. In the Viewpoint Series, Clancy’s active participation in the exchange of gazes with her model and the Davis Museum at Wellesley College. She has published essays on a broad range of subjects including the drawings of Randall Sellers and nineteenth-century American artist Henry Ossawa Tanner. Arauz is co-curator of Keith Haring: Journey of the Radiant Baby, which will open in 2006 at the Reading Public Museum in Pennsylvania.

INTIMATE DISTANCE: WORKS BY DANA CLANCY

Dana Clancy’s rich, complicated palette and painterly brushstrokes generate altering surfaces, and it is easy to enjoy her work purely for its technical mastery. Her blend of graphic modeling, decorative forms, and chromatic range, however, interrogates our status as viewers of the landscape, viewers of people, and viewers of the work of art. Embedding within her paintings both the observer and the observed, Clancy’s works insist on our own active participation in the exchange of gazes with the world around us.

Rachael Arauz, PhD
August 2005

RACHAEL ARAUZ Rachael Arauz 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 Williams College Museum of Art and the Dosi Museum at Wellesley College. For her public art project a broad range of subjects including the drawings of Randall Sellers and nineteenth-century American artist Henry Ossawa Tanner. Arauz is co-curator of Keith Haring: Journey of the Radiant Baby, which will open in 2006 at the Reading Public Museum in Pennsylvania.