

Art in America

January 2006

Don Hazlitt at Andre Zarre

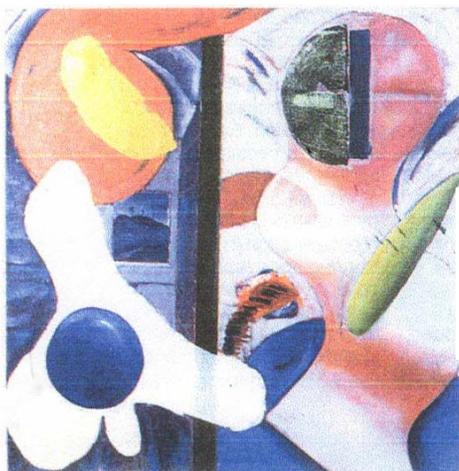
The work of a young Don Hazlitt was included in the 1975 Whitney Biennial, and the artist has been showing steadily ever since. For years, his paintings included significant relief elements, yielding playful combinations of pictorial and sculptural space. In the 13 paintings shown in the painter's fifth solo at Zarre, primarily oil on canvas and around 30 inches square, relief is understated, confined to bits of cloth or twine unobtrusively integrated into the composition. A buoyant, agreeable pastiche of fragmented, Cubist-derived space, with brushy atmospherics and cartoon perspective, each work corrals a restive flock of flat and volumetrically rendered elements, often not readily identifiable, though among those easily named are brick walls, wood planks and undulating shrouds or ribbons.

Birth (2003) and *Red Stump* (2004) hinge on the contrast of red-orange and cool gray. In *Slits* (2004), a central, football-shaped motif is volumetrically rendered, its black edges framed by a rich, organic green field, which is interrupted by a shadow cast by an unseen mass. A chromatically sedate,

cool gray landscape vignette—rudimentary mountain range with puffy cloud-flouts deep space by sidling to the front of the picture plane on its own scrap of canvas. Here as elsewhere, Hofmann's "push/pull" dynamic is borne out by overlapping shapes denoting relative positions in space that are at odds with the spatial indications of their respective hues.

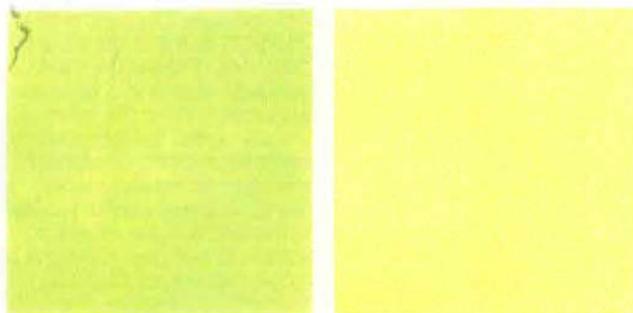
The brawny *Tear Drops* (2004) includes several examples of that fundamental shape, in green set amid gray stonework, and proximate to a passage of whitish bricks laid on like frosting. Collaged bits of printed fabric bear iconic shapes: stars, flowers, a palm tree. *Sausage Woman* (2003) may be an homage to the *pittura metafisica* of de Chirico and Carlo Carrà. Isolated, cleanly modeled abstract forms suggesting microorganisms are suspended in perspectival space, bound by gray and ochre walls forming the corner of a courtyard; through a Classical arch is seen a distant plume of bluish smoke, as if from a passing train. Giddy pastel shapes cavort in the foreground of *Easter '04* (2004), while through the rear window of a gloomy, blue-black room is seen a tiny, dusky view of Golgotha. The glimpse of unmistakable Christian iconography signals that there may be more to the other paintings than a jangly formalism,

Don Hazlitt: *Easter '04*, 2004, oil on canvas, 30 inches square; at Andre Zarre.



and that their planks, tears, walled yards and palm fronds tap into a rich, if currently dormant, tradition of Biblical symbolism.

—Stephen Maine



Daisy Craddock: *Granny Smith*, 2004, diptych, oil pastel on paper; each element 11 1/4 by 11 1/4 inches; at Fischbach.

Daisy Craddock at Fischbach

New York-based Daisy Craddock, a Tennessee native, is known for her paintings of majestic magnolias and other natural icons of the South, as well as of the broader American landscape. In her oils on canvas, the play between dark colors used to sketch out the somewhat abstract, underlying physical structure of dominant elements, and lighter yellows, ochers and finely tuned greens, give her pictures a somewhat melodramatic air. In her skiescapes and landscapes, among them spare shoreline vistas, Craddock uses many layers of paint to build up her luscious colors.

At Fischbach, Craddock surprised longtime viewers with more purely abstract, conceptual and thematically related works emerging from her ongoing color studies and exercises. The series "Inside/Our" consists of pairs of approx. 11 1/2-inch-square monochromatic drawings made in creamy oil pastel on paper. Craddock's goal is to reproduce the gentle tonal gradations naturally appearing in various fruits, with each pair of drawings representing, on the left, the color of the skin or rind and, on the right, that of the flesh. Craddock's subjects: a papaya, a

mango, a plum, a Granny Smith apple. The project, the artist says, was inspired by the colors and scenery of Central America, where she traveled years ago. Accordingly, she at first chose fruits from that region; later, she added others from elsewhere.

At first glance, the works resemble small-scale color-field paintings, quite unexpectedly minimalist, though they recall the seemingly monochromatic expanses of sky or water in some of her landscapes. Upon closer inspection, flecks of many different colors can be seen poking through the color fields in the paired works. Echoing her painting technique, Craddock builds up each drawing's single "solid" from multiple layers of both related and unexpected colors.

Typically, color studies such as these seem more suited to a liquid medium like watercolor. That Craddock achieved such subtle effects using an opaque medium instead is remarkable. Intrigued by what her focus on fruit has revealed about the composition of color as it occurs in nature, and about how an artist may reproduce it, she plans to expand her "Inside/Our" project. Her next subject: vegetables.

—Edward M. Gomez