

# Ronald Feldman Fine Arts

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## NANCY CHUNN

### PAINTINGS 1982 – 2004

#### SEPTEMBER 10 – OCTOBER 16

*The power of Chunn's work is its matter-of-factness.* Gary Indiana, VILLAGE VOICE

Nancy Chunn will exhibit paintings, from 1982 to 2004, which are based on geopolitical themes and executed in a variety of styles. The exhibition features: new paintings that focus on the aftermath of 9/11; previous work based on current events and the power of the media; and early paintings that depict tyrannized nations from an historical and international perspective. For each well-researched topic, Chunn invents a new pictorial language that provides a tension between the subject and its presentation, interpreting and distancing the documentary and emotionally charged material. Chunn creates visual metaphors for political and social commentary that mine both tragedy and comedy. Her work traces a trajectory from reality to the sublime, to the absurd.

Two new series address the current crisis in America. Mimicking the shape of the Twin Towers, *9/11* presents a timeline of that day's terror and subsequent events from which there is no exit. Employing pictographs and slogans selected from computer image banks, art history, and rubber stamps, the painting uses a catchy Pop shorthand for *Guernica*-type content.

*Scene I* from *Chicken Little and the Culture of Fear*, part of a larger project of more than 200 panels, updates the fable of the cowardly chicken. Chunn's goofy, cartoon nursery tale with its encyclopedic survey of modern fears, both defines our cultural landscape and suggests parallels to contemporary politics that infantilize a nation.

Paintings from 2000 convey the onslaught of news-breaking stories through energetic detail and chaotic background, bearing witness to history's reoccurring cycles of strife, suffering, and stupidity. From today's perspective, events such as the 2000 election seem sometimes prescient, sometimes quaintly in a distant past.

Two earlier series, depicting the struggles of other nations and continents, are based on mapping strategies. *China VII: Ming Dynasty 1368-1644*, from Chunn's series in the 90s that chronicles the complex early history of China, is animated by small representational figures with a lacquered, bright surface. *Iran/Iraq, Famine, and Korea* from the 80s are portraits of tyrannized nations, which interweave graphic emblems of oppression with ancient cultural patterns. Seemingly abstract, their subdued palette and subtle permutations radiate an elegiac beauty, which contradicts the violence of their subject. A series of stylized animals of prey, which predates the mapping series, suggest analogies to human nature.

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Nancy Chunn is a two-time recipient of the National Endowment of the Arts Fellowship. *Front Pages*, her diaristic transformations of the *The New York Times*, was published in book form by Rizzoli (1997). Recent group exhibitions include *Complexity/Art & Complex Systems* at the Federal Reserve System, Washington, D.C.; *Ameri@an Dre @m* at the Feldman Gallery, New York; *Presidential Suite* at the Nassau County Museum of Fine Arts; and *Pop Patriotism* at Momenta Art, Brooklyn. For her new series, she has been assisted by Tom Jezek.

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There will be a reception, **Friday**, September 10, 6 – 8. Gallery hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 10 – 6. Monday by appointment. For information contact Laura Muggeo (212) 226-3232 or [Laura@feldmangallery.com](mailto:Laura@feldmangallery.com).