



Nancy Chunn, *9/11, 2002-4*, acrylic on canvas, diptych, 9' x 4' each.
Ronald Feldman.

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Sometimes it takes a catastrophic event to transform an artist with a conscience from being merely well-meaning to being great. Nancy Chunn's catalyst appears to have been the attacks on the World Trade Center and their aftermath, as evidenced in this tightly edited 22-year retrospective.

Where Chunn once seemed content to let her art take second place to high-minded political beliefs, her newest paintings exhibited an explosive visual vocabulary and punchy narratives—without sacrificing her message. Even better, the new work that doesn't explicitly deal with 9/11 is terrific too.

The paintings from the 1980s appeared surprisingly inferior to the later ones. Often involving maps of troubled nations, such as Korea, bound in chains, they resemble little more than es-the-ticized political posters.

Chunn's work starts to lighten up with the 366-piece project "Front Pages, 1996," in which her news source—the *New York Times*—became her artistic surface too. Diaristic and labor-intensive, the project involved adding words and images to a full year's worth of front pages. Thirty of these were on view at Feldman.

The knockouts were *9/11* (2002–4) and *Chicken Little and the Culture of Fear: Scene I* (2004). The former, a large, grid-ded diptych, chronicles, square by square, the chaos of 9/11 and the days after, followed by the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and a conclusion that flatly declares, "No Exit."

The latter takes a goofy, cartoon nursery tale and, in 38 panels of varying size, comments on topics ranging from deforestation to complacency. Chunn's outlook may be bleak, but there is a silver lining: her art is now as fiercely passionate as her worldview.

—Rebecca Cascade