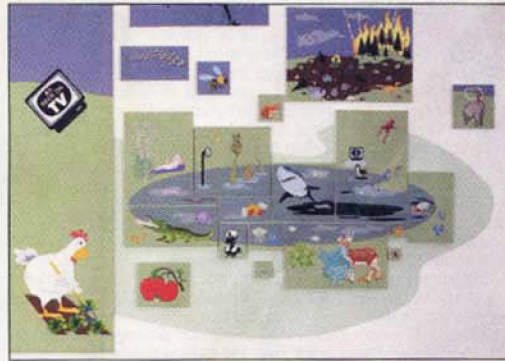


**Nancy Chunn,
"Paintings 1982-2004"
Ronald Feldman Fine Arts,
through Oct 16 (see Soho).**

Nancy Chunn's exhibition is a survey of work by an artist deeply committed to the kind of geopolitical issues that most of us find overwhelming. Conceived in series, the paintings on view represent themes Chunn researched for months before laboriously producing canvases in a style that corresponds to



Nancy Chunn, detail of *Chicken Little and the Culture of Fear, Scene I: The Garden*, 2004.

the subject matter.

For example, in the four-paneled painting *China VII: Ming Dynasty 1368-1644* (1993-1995), from the "China Series," Chunn conveys the bloody rise and fall of the Ming dynasty through tiny scenes depicted in white and blue. Replete with faux

crackle lines and a thickly varnished surface, the allusion to Ming ceramics is exquisitely rendered, but ironically so, given the subject. In *Chicken Little and the Culture of Fear, Scene I: The Garden* (2004), a cartoonlike style similarly mirrors the subject at hand. The message of the children's tale is not to be afraid, but in Chunn's version, this moral is inverted. The image teems with environmental disaster: Fish flee polluted ponds, bears leave the forest

and, in a warning to those who might speak out, Socrates drinks his hemlock.

Chicken Little's buoyant use of color and flat, Popish style recurs in the diptych *9/11* (2002-2004), in which a pair of vertical canvases mimic the Twin Towers. From the sky-blue square in the upper left corner (a reminder of how pretty the

morning was that fateful day?) to the NO EXIT sign in the bottom right, Chunn builds a time line out of lies and terror. As with all her work, the piece is more than just a challenge to what Chunn terms "business as usual," it is a call to action.

—Jane Harris