

Editorial: Recommendations

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James Chronister

at Eleanor Harwood Gallery, San Francisco, California
Recommendation by Dewitt Cheng



James Chronister, 'Now We Lustre (River),' 2011, oil on canvas, 40 x 40'

Continuing through July 2, 2011

James Chronister's paintings in "Now We Lustre" (all 40-inch square oils on canvas and all sharing the same title, differentiated only by parenthetical labels) concern themselves with found imagery and the reifying activity of painting; they thus explore the famous credibility gap between art and life. For Chronister, the title connotes our glorious, if brief, moment on the stage of reality. That he chooses to spend his allotted span of time making large, extremely labor-intensive paintings replicating blown-up photographs of snowy woods and rock musicians, using gridded projections and one tiny brush, says a lot about his work ethic and his democratic ethics: everything is somehow and mysteriously, if not explicitly, related.

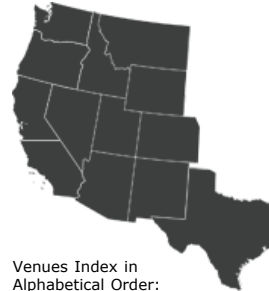
"Now We Lustre (River)," "NWL (Passage)," and "NWL (Dead Leaves)" are tour-de-force hand-painted photographs of unglamorized, banal nature scenes imbued with painterly nuance and the implied importance conferred by oil paint and large scale. "Now We Lustre (RK)," "NWL (BJ)" - The Rolling Stones' Brian Jones - and "NWL (Greece)," a depiction of Beatles Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr goofing around for photographers circa 1969, glorify fan-mag images otherwise considered consumable but of no aesthetic importance. There's no discernible logical connection between the subjects beyond the fact that Chronister chose them. But then everything - even elegant, beautifully crafted paintings - passes.

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