



Elisabeth Condon



# Elisabeth Condon

## *Bird and Flower*

September 7 – October 16, 2016

OPENING RECEPTION

Wednesday, September 7, 6-8 pm

**lesley heller**  
workspace

54 Orchard Street New York, NY 10002  
212 410 6120 [lesleyheller.com](http://lesleyheller.com)



*American Pastoral*

2016, Acrylic, glitter, pumice on linen, 59 x 59 inches



*Bird of Paradise*

2016, Acrylic, glitter, pumice on linen, 59 x 59 inches



*Urban Jungle*

2015, Acrylic on linen, 59 x 59 inches



*Ima Callya*

2015, Acrylic on linen, 59 x 59 inches



*After the Ship Set Sail*

2016, Acrylic, glitter on linen, 54 x 72 inches



*Not Such A Pressing Question*  
2015, Acrylic on canvas, 57 x 72 inches



*Chinese Bird*  
2016, Acrylic, ink on canvas, 16 x 20 inches



### *White Bird*

2015, Acrylic, glitter on linen, 48 x 48 inches

***“Some years ago I’d asked my mother for whatever fabric and wallpaper samples from our old house she still had, to use as reference in painting. The softened samples dissolved my former bias against their beauty as a façade sweeping life under the rug or a solace to be resisted, as I began to see décor as a celebration of life and an exposure of complex social roles I now want to consider.”*** - Elisabeth Condon

*Bird and Flower*, the collective title of Elisabeth Condon’s recent body of work, takes reference from the classical Chinese painting technique of the same name. The bird-and-flower technique is one defined as much by its subject matter of repeating patterns of birds and flowers as by its reliance on the contour line and a process of copying, tracing and refining. These techniques provide a departure point from which Condon employs and explores her own processes and imagery within a bird-and-flower category uniquely her own.

The paintings of *Bird and Flower* are initiated with colored pours of acrylic paint to generate dynamic and unexpected compositions. The pours—which are inspired by watercolor and Chinese splashed ink technique—are further interlaced with birds, flowers and plant forms culled from upholstery fabrics, wallpaper patterns, and traditional Chinese scroll painting. Elisabeth Condon has explored and exploited the colored pour in her paintings since her early landscape works of 2003. Subsequent trips to China on artist residencies, where she studied Chinese brush and scroll painting techniques, encouraged Condon to balance control and chance elements in her paintings; creating rhythmic compositions of multiple spaces and planes against the more gestural and romantic backgrounds of poured and splashed color.

In her *Bird and Flower* works, Condon combines mechanical or objective modes of representation with more subjective gestures, which result in a merger of spontaneous and stylized methods. The fabric and wallpaper patterns evoke the harmony and beauty of Chinese bird-and-flower painting, while the pours and imagery beneath suggest alternative planes and nostalgic spaces. The compositional rhythms in these works, such as the built-up layering of visual planes in *Broken Links*, mimic Condon’s practice of Chinese idioms, amplified by color and the depiction of the passage of time with flowers and birds at various moments of bloom, perch and flight.

Gathering influences that range from Yuan Dynasty landscape, ancient textiles, Van Luit wallpapers, Marimekko sheets and her mother’s decorating samples, the wallpaper and fabric imagery at play in Condon’s paintings not only evokes a joyful nostalgia for domestic patterns, but also that of the beginnings of the medium of wallpaper as an artisan craft—carefully and skillfully repeated by hand—and the interplay of wallpaper, traditionally something of a background, becoming the narrative focus in a body of work. Condon’s riotous yet joyful paintings balance this bird-and-flower narrative with a sense of control and abandon exemplified through her interactions of nature, culture and transcendence, proposing scenes from an indoor Garden of Eden or tableaux of domestic space.

- Peter Gynd, Director, Lesley Heller Workspace



*I'm Still With You*

2016, Acrylic, glitter on linen, 48 x 48 inches



*Mountain*

2016, Acrylic, ink, glitter on linen, 28 x 25 inches



*Bright Wing*

2016, Glitter, ink, acrylic on linen, 28 x 25 inches



*The Sinking of 9555*

2016, Acrylic, ink, glitter on linen, 59 x 59 inches



BACK COVER: *Sun*, 2016, Acrylic on linen, 16 x 20 inches

COVER: *Broken Links*, 2016, Acrylic, latex, glitter on linen, 59 x 59 inches

INSIDE COVER: *Homeland Welcome*, 2016, Acrylic on linen, 42 x 26 inches

TITLE PAGE: *Homage*, 2016, Acrylic on linen, 42 x 26 inches

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