



PLATE NINETEEN *What should be done with the bird drawings? Farnley Hall, Yorkshire*

is taken to mean the possibility of restaging and giving life to displaced and repressed histories. But it also challenges operational definitions of reality, suggesting that much can be gained by imagining an unbounded world in which spiritual and emotional recognitions merge. Painted in watercolor, ink and gouache, then painstakingly applied to canvas, Chandler's images of cardinals, flamingos, pelicans, woodpeckers, jays, macaws, toucans, parrots and the like are turned upside down, sideways, in unexpected directions—all still enchanting, all still before our very eyes. Fiery oranges and reds, as well as honey-toned and pink auras bump up against green vegetal forms and purple spiky cartilage. Chandler's birds are wholly caught up in the instability of shifting references, in the intensity of acute perceptions, and in the complex magic of cognition. As such, they operate in a netherworld of multiplicity and simultaneity, effecting a visual energy that grabs our eye and sustains our gaze. We see them as living organisms that exist in our own environment, and rely upon the same air, earth and water for survival. They

seemingly pulse with tension between matter and anti-matter, breathing and smoldering as if in ecstatic bursts of erotic energy. Sometimes each stroke is a single hue; in other areas, Chandler carefully layers color on top of color. The resulting vivid surface constantly fluctuates between depiction and abstract patterns of pigment. The fluidity of Chandler's paint handling coheres the images, despite variations in technique and texture. The entirety reveals the artist's amplitude, her desire to push inclusiveness to the near breaking point. It's to Chandler's credit that she continually stretches our expectations while keeping her images together, never allowing them to collapse into mere eccentricity. Rather, Chandler's study serves as a kind of last look at these birds, an urgent quest to record their shapes, beaks and plumage before they disappear altogether, dissolving into the ether. These rare creatures poignantly suggest all that is being lost as our environment is destroyed.

Much of Chandler's interest in ornithology was inspired by visits to Farnley Hall in Yorkshire where JMW Turner produced