



PLATE TWENTY-ONE *Samuel Pepys's library*

a book of twenty bird drawings in 1815 for his friend Walter Fawkes. Careful, minutely detailed renderings of the natural world found a new vogue during the 19th century, a period when publication of illustrated histories and science manuals flourished. Among the Romantic advocates of drawing from nature was the British aesthete and critic John Ruskin. In his influential manual, *Elements of Drawing*, Ruskin argued for a kind of drawing whose purpose was "...to set down clearly and usefully, records of such things as cannot be described in words, either to assist your own memory of them, or to convey distinct ideas of them to other people."<sup>2</sup> For Ruskin, the drawing of an object from nature was that object's equivalent rather than a mere visual record. "Ruskin served as executor of the Turner trust and was instrumental in keeping the collection of bird portraits together," Chandler says. "My aim was to create something positive based on country estates and animals—the stippling of those old worlds. For me, England is like a homeland and I wanted to disconnect into that era. The challenge to find beauty, to hold on to memories has become increasingly

difficult. Old libraries are shutting down. Who will take care of the books, the estates and wild life at the end of ancestral lines? Where will we find spaces of security, peace and innocence?"

In *Turner's Birds at Farnley Hall*, Chandler frames a guinea fowl, woodcock and pheasant in gold medallions, suspending them from blue striped wallpaper much like gentrified portraits. In *Samuel Pepys's library* the spines of precious volumes are stacked like slabs of candy. Our investigative sense is falling as reflection and reverie are replaced with quick sensation. Is the capacity for the quiet use of leisure, something essential to reading, on the wane? Chandler argues that there's simply too much to be lost by allowing the written word to fade into irrelevance. Recently, our expansiveness has been checked. Imminent scarcity of resources has brought a sense of finiteness to our world. Chandler's birds remind us that decoration isn't simply ornament; it's commemoration as well. To decorate is to bestow a token of honor. Accordingly, Chandler's art is calibrated in its fusing of value and sentiment.

Chandler works with the age-old idea that places are