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JEAN-LUC MYLAYNE

Terrie Sultan and Ralph Rugoff

French photographer Jean-Luc Mylayne is renowned for his singular style and approach to photography, and especially for his monumental, intimate photographs of birds, all taken after hours of patient observation and existing only in a single, unretouched print.

Jean-Luc Mylayne has traveled the world since 1976 in search of birds to photograph. His quest revolves around an encounter—secret and furtive—with the bird of the moment. In thirty-three years, Mylayne has taken no more than three hundred photographs, because each one is the result of a long and patient period of observation, and exists—without exception—in only a single print. Mylayne, who defines himself as a film director and speaks of birds as though they were actors, constructs his photograph around their presence. The compositions and tonalities of what he calls his “scenes” are extremely precise: the artist takes into account a multitude of parameters, such as the seasons and the time of day. He dedicates very special care to his compositions, which he does not retouch, and to the focal lengths, for which his lenses are largely fashioned by hand. A single photograph might be the objective of several months of preparation. The arrival of the bird at the place that has been specifically reserved for it in the photograph constitutes the successful outcome. Mylayne's processes, the slow approach of the bird, and the dialogue between them all question time. Mylayne's photography is about the quiet “discipline of experiencing the intervals” in contrast to the decisive moments so traditional to the photographic medium. This book, published in conjunction with an exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art of Lyon, France, presents a previously unpublished series of 68 photographs taken by Mylayne between 1992 and 2008.

Jean-Luc Mylayne was born in Amiens, France in 1946. He has had major solo exhibitions at museums including the Museum of Contemporary Art of Cleveland, The Photographer's Gallery in London, the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville in Paris and the Musée d'Art Moderne in Saint-Etienne.

Terrie Sultan is Director of the Parrish Art Museum and the author of several books including *Damaged Romanticism: A Mirror of Modern Emotion* and *Chuck Close Prints: Process and Collaboration*.

Ralph Rugoff is the author of several celebrated monographs and publications and currently serves as the Director of the CCA Watt Institute for Contemporary Arts and the Hayward Gallery in London.