



Jean-Luc Mylayne

The Autumn of Paradise

18 May – 11 August 2019
Aargauer Kunsthaus, Aarau

“Jean-Luc Mylayne. The Autumn of Paradise” is the French artist’s first institutional solo exhibition in Switzerland. For more than forty years now, the work of Jean-Luc Mylayne (b. 1946) focuses on the encounter with birds, their fleeting presence captured by the camera. The bird in its natural habitat is Mylayne’s distinctive subject, serving not only as actor but also as conceptual partner on equal terms. The exhibition presents an ensemble of about forty works created between 1979 and 2008.

At first glance, Jean-Luc Mylayne’s photographs appear like randomly obtained everyday images situated in the transitional areas between unspoilt and rural landscapes. In addition to dominant nature, one can see traces of human civilisation in the form of houses, streets, fences and walls in the distance or at the edge of the picture. Characteristically, there is a bird in every image. Just as the geographical context of the scenes remains indefinite, the specific features of the birds are at times barely discernible. When the animals are captured in motion, they appear distorted and blurred. Sometimes one detects the winged protagonists only at second glance in the parts of the scenery that are out of focus or at the edge of the picture and partly truncated by it.

This seemingly non-hierarchical image composition does not conform to the perspectives of ornithological studies or classic nature photography which centre on the distinctive features of the birds or the unusual flora. Mylayne focuses on the one particular bird as an individual rather than as a specimen of a particular breed. His pictorial compositions are based on a precise choice and combination of lighting conditions, weather, time of year as well as the selection of the frame and the positioning of the bird. Each “tableau” is well thought out; nothing, not even the smallest detail, is random. The images are intricately composed and always comply with the artist’s conceptual approach.

Thus, Mylayne’s photographs are a far cry from anecdotal snapshots. They are the result of months, sometimes even years of preparation. In the period of

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time indicated in a work's title, the artist has explored the surrounding area, observed the selected animal and slowly gained its trust without feeding or taming it. This trust is the fundamental prerequisite for a relationship between the photographer and his subject and, by extension, for creating the image. When the moment has come and the scenery meets his expectations, Mylayne takes the photograph. Working with analogue technology, Mylayne's photographs are unique prints (except for some small-format editions). Equally unique is the moment when the artist presses the shutter release button: a moment that will never return.

Together with Mylène Mylayne, his wife, collaborator and namesake, the photographer travelled through rural France and the American Southwest. In 2003, the American Lannan Foundation first made it possible for the couple to spend the winter New Mexico. Four back-to-back winters in Texas followed. Mylayne's works of this "American period" are characterised by the resounding blue of the sky contrasting with the golden-yellow landscape. The flying protagonists are usually smaller songbirds. No larger birds of prey are featured in Mylayne's pictures. Here, too, his focus seems to be on the ordinary, with the uniqueness of the bird and the moment revealing themselves only on closer inspection.

With all its premises - the use of analogue photography, the making of unique prints, the focus on the same subject over several decades and, above all, the long time needed to produce each individual work - Jean-Luc Mylayne has created an artistic oeuvre that is as radical as it is poetic and, to this day, remains unparalleled.

For the exhibition at the Aargauer Kunsthaus, the artist couple developed a hanging adapted to the bright upper-floor galleries. The arrangement of the works is deliberately not chronological but rather based on associative thematic groups.

A joint project with the Fondation Vincent van Gogh in Arles, France, the exhibition will travel to the Long Museum in Shanghai, the Kestner Gesellschaft in Hanover and Huis Marseille, Museum for Photography in Amsterdam following its presentation in Aarau.

Catalogue

In 2018, a comprehensive catalogue has been published in cooperation with the Fondation Vincent van Gogh in Arles. It includes a preface by Madeleine Schuppli (German/English edition). The monograph assembles essays by renowned authors Bice Curiger (CH), Director Fondation Vincent van Gogh; Jacqueline Burckhardt (CH), art historian; Christie Davis (USA), Program Director, Contemporary Art and Public Programs, Lannan Foundation; and Leo Lencsés (DE), curator and art critic; as well as the poem *The Autumn of Paradise* by Jean-Luc Mylayne. 128 pages, 100 illustrations. Edited by Bice Curiger, Berlin: Hatje Cantz 2018.

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ISBN: 979-10-94966-17-4 (French and English edition)
CHF 35.- (for members of the Aargau Art Association: CHF 28.-)

Biography

Born in 1946 in France, Jean-Luc Mylayne lives and works in the world.

Selected Solo Exhibitions:

Jean-Luc Mylayne: Mutual Regard, The Art Institute of Chicago, The Arts Club of Chicago, Lurie Garden, Millennium Park, Chicago (2015); *Jean-Luc Mylayne: Des signatures du ciel aux mains du temps*, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid (2010); *Jean-Luc Mylayne: Tête d'or*, Musée d'Art contemporain de Lyon (2009); *Jean-Luc Mylayne*, Parrish Art Museum, Southampton, New York (2007-09); *Jean-Luc Mylayne*, Lannan Foundation, Santa Fe, New Mexico (2004, 2005, 2010); *Jean-Luc Mylayne: les oies sauvages riaient et Dieu s'endormit tôt*, Musée des Arts contemporains, Grand-Hornu, Hornu, Belgium (2004); *Jean-Luc Mylayne*, Musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris / ARC, Paris (1995); *Jean-Luc Mylayne*, Musée d'Art moderne, Saint-Étienne (1991).

The work of Jean-Luc Mylayne is regularly presented in exhibitions at Gladstone Gallery in New York and Brussels (since 1997) and Galerie Sprüth Magers Berlin, London and Los Angeles (since 2002).

Selected Group Exhibitions:

The Photographic I - Other Pictures, S.M.A.K., Gand, Belgium (2017); *ILLUMInations*, 54th Venice Biennale (2011); *Terra Incognita: Alighiero e Boetti, Vija Celmins, Neil Jenney, Jean-Luc Mylayne, Hiroshi Suigimoto*, Neues Museum Weserburg, Bremen (1998); *Jurassic Technologies Revenent*, 10th Biennale of Sydney (1996); *Zeichen und Wunder (Signs and Wonder)* Niko Pirosmanni and Recent Art, Kunsthaus Zürich (1995).

Parkett Collaborations

Jean-Luc Mylayne has done multiple collaborations with *Parkett* magazine. Three editions by the artist were issued in this context. *Parkett* no. 50/51 (1997), with essays by Lynne Cooke, Mark Dion, Didier Arnaudet, Jean-Luc Mylayne, and Bice Curiger; no. 85 (2009), with essays by Josef Helfenstein, Fionn Meade and Jean-Luc Mylayne; no. 100/101 (2017), with an essay by Matthew S. Witkovsky.

Curator

Madeleine Schuppli, Director Aargauer Kunsthaus

Curatorial Assistant

Bettina Mühlebach, Assistant Curator, Aargauer Kunsthaus

Preview for the Media

Thursday, 16.5.2019, 10.30 am

Welcome Address, Introduction and Tour of the Exhibition with Madeleine Schuppli, Director Aargauer Kunsthaus. Followed by a reception

Exhibition Opening

Friday, 17.5.2019, 6 pm

6.15 pm Welcome Address and Introduction by Madeleine Schuppli, Director Aargauer Kunsthaus. Followed by a reception

5 - 6 pm Preview for sponsors and members of the Aargau Art Association

6 - 8 pm Children's Opening. Meet at the studio downstairs at 6 pm

Programme of Supporting Events

Guided Ornithological Outdoor Tour

Early Birds

Sonntag, 19.5., 7.30 am

Meeting point in front of the entrance to the Aargauer Kunsthaus

Followed by breakfast and a guided tour of the exhibition

Number of participants limited

Please register at anlaesse.kunsthaus@ag.ch

In cooperation with BirdLife Aargau

Dialogue-based guided Tour

The Theme of Togetherness

Wednesday, 22.5.2019, 6.30 pm

With Jacqueline Burckhardt, art historian and contributor to the catalogue, and Madeleine Schuppli, Director Aargauer Kunsthaus. Followed by a reception

Concert

The Voice of Birds on the Grand

Thursday 13.6. 6.30 pm

Students of the Bern University of the Arts (piano classes of Patricia Pagny and Tomasz Herbut) play piano music inspired by birdsong, including works by Franz Liszt, Olivier Messiaën, Maurice Ravel, and Jean-Philippe Rameau. With brief introductions to each of the pieces. Duration: ca. 60 mins. Followed by a reception

Meditative Tours of the Exhibition

Between Earth and Universe

Sunday, 16.6.2019, 8.45 - 10 am

You and Me. Me and You

Wednesday, 19.6.2019, 5.15 - 6.30 pm

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Franziska Kessler, creative consultant, Kundalini teacher and Reiki Master, imparts a contemplative approach to the exhibition through meditation and breathing. No prior experience necessary.
Please register at anlaesse.kunsthhaus@ag.ch

Art Education Events for Children, Families and Adults

Family Sunday

Sunday, 9.6.2019, 2 - 4 pm

Interactive guided tour and workshop for families with children ages 5 and up. An ornithologist has many fascinating things to tell about the photographed birds.

Swiss National Reading Day

Im Zwitscherbaum (In the Twittering Tree)

Wednesday 22.5.2019, 2 / 3 / 4 pm

Stories of feathered kings, artistic bird creatures and fence sitters, inspired by the exhibition *Jean-Luc Mylayne* featuring photographic shots of shy birds

With Barbara Schwarz, cultural worker and reading animator SIKJM

The reading segments are ca. 30 mins long.

For children ages 5-8

Summer Course

"Vogelfrei - Free as a Bird"

Wednesday, 10.7.2019, 10 am - 2 pm

Jean-Luc Mylayne's great love of birds inspires the children to make drawings and collages of fantasy birds. By listening to birdsong, touching feathers and viewing images, they familiarise themselves with these shy creatures. Using everyday materials, they build an original dwelling for these free animals.

For children ages 5 to 13.

Please bring your own lunch. Registration is required and binding.

"A Unique Moment"

Thursday, 11.7.2019, 10 am - 2 pm

For his photographs of birds, Jean-Luc Mylayne waited a long time for the right moment. The children are introduced to his way of working and to analogue photography. The animals in the Roggenhausen Zoo become picture subjects; the children look for the best location and are given the opportunity to take a single photograph of the one fleeting moment. After the summer course, the children will receive their snapshot by mail as a surprise.

For children ages 9 - 13.

Please bring your own lunch. Registration is required and binding.

Event for the Visually Impaired and Blind

"Creation and Time - Time of Creation"

Tuesday, 4.6.2019, 2 - 4 pm

How much time does it take for an artwork to be finished? Is it a snapshot, does it have years of planning behind it or is it an unpredictable process that gives rise to the work?

In the course of a joint tour of the collection and the *Jean-Luc Mylayne* and *Stefan Gritsch* exhibitions we look at various artworks, techniques and artists to examine the questions of time, processes and creation. We discover planned accidents and unforeseeable developments of paintings, photographs and objects. The artworks become graspable through various sensory perceptions. Followed by coffee and cake.

Register with the ABV, monika.frei@abv-aargau.ch

In cooperation with the Aargauischer Blindenfürsorgeverband (ABV) and the Aargau-Solothurn Department of the Swiss Association of the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBV).

Schools

Introduction for Instructors

Wednesday 22.5. 2.30 - 4.30 pm

Thursday 23.5. 5.30 - 7 pm

For additional events for schools, families and children as well as barrier-free events please refer to the separate flyer.

Guided Tours

Sunday, 1 pm

19.5. with Astrid Näff, 11.8. with Astrid Näff

Sunday, 11 am

26.5. with Silja Burch, 2.6. with Astrid Näff, 16.6. with Brigitte Haas, 14.7. with Astrid Näff, 28.7. with Silja Burch

Thursday, 6.30 pm

6.6. with Brigitte Haas, 18.7. with Astrid Näff, 8.8. with Astrid Näff

Ascension Day, 1 pm

30.5. with Astrid Näff

Whitmonday, 11 am

10.6. with Silja Burch

Eve of Maienzug, 1 pm

4.7. with Astrid Näff

External Events

Guided Tour of the Treasures of Naturama Aargau

Great Alk, Tawny Frogmouth and Crowned Crane

Saturday, 22.6.2019, 2 pm

Thursday, 11.6.2019, 6.30 pm

Sunday, 14.7.2019, 2 pm

The collection of carefully preserved birds will be open by exception. Why are dead birds preserved? Are they real? Answers to these and other questions are provided by Janine Mazenauer, in charge of the collection.

Meeting point: lobby of Naturama

Number of participants limited

Please register at janine.mazenauer@naturama.ch

Images for the Media

Images are available for downloading on our website at www.aargauerkunsthhaus.ch> Media. Please consider the copyright.

Opening Hours

Di - So 10 - 17 Uhr, Do 10 - 20 Uhr

Holiday Opening Hours

Open 10 am - 5 pm: Ascension Day 30.5., Whitsun 9.6., Whitmonday 10.6., Eve of Maienzug 4.7., Maienzug 5.7., Swiss National Holiday 1.8.

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