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BUILDING ON A HISTORIC PARTNERSHIP, THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO
AND THE ARTS CLUB OF CHICAGO PRESENT JEAN-LUC MYLAYNE: MUTUAL REGARD
The Joint Exhibition Will Feature Grand-Scale Photographs
Exploring the Intersections of Nature and Culture

CHICAGO—On May 22, 2015, the Art Institute of Chicago joins forces with the Arts Club of Chicago to host a pair of exhibitions featuring the work of world-renowned photographer Jean-Luc Mylayne (French, born 1946). The exhibitions, entitled Jean-Luc Mylayne: Mutual Regard, unite inside and outside, nature and culture, and bring together again two Chicago institutions that have deep historical ties. A third venue, a Chapel pavilion in the Millennium Park Lurie Garden, is a key realization of the exhibition themes in public space. Mutual Regard runs through August 23, 2015 at The Art Institute of Chicago’s Bucksbaum Gallery in the Modern Wing; through August 13 at the Arts Club of Chicago (201 East Ontario), and through December 31 in the Lurie Garden in Millennium Park.

Jean-Luc Mylayne has devoted four decades to photographing common birds in a profound investigation of aesthetics and community. This exhibition draws on Mylayne’s longstanding interest in symmetrical shapes—squares, circles, triangles—as symbols of equality or the balance of life forces. The mirror images, and certain repeated or related works at the Art Institute and the Arts Club, underscore the desire for reciprocal respect between humans and nature on what Mylayne sees as a severely unbalanced and threatened planet.
Each venue will host an exhibition of photographs in a space that looks out onto a garden—the Modern Wing of the Art Institute and the main gallery at The Arts Club. Each space will feature one photograph showing a robin perched on a square stone; copies of the stone will be placed in each of the garden spaces that lie directly outside the two exhibition halls. The two exhibitions can each stand alone, yet they draw strength and completeness from each other. This duality is true of couples in the world, and of individuals in society. "The Mylayne project, with parallel shows at the Arts Club and the Art Institute, builds on our institutions' history of collaborative exhibition space going back to the 1920s, while the Millennium Park Chapel extends the idea of sharing art and space to the widest possible public," shared co-curators Janine Mileaf, Executive Director of The Arts Club of Chicago, and Matthew Witkovsky, Richard and Ellen Sandor Chair and Curator of the Department of Photography at the Art Institute of Chicago.

Every photograph by Mylayne is unique, and printed chemically (not digitally) in color. Most are made at a large, even over-lifesize scale. Each picture is the result of laborious preparation that can last for months. Mylayne and his life partner, Mylène Mylayne, move cumbersome camera equipment daily to a precisely chosen location, where the artist has identified one or more individual birds with whom he would like to work. The birds he chooses typically inhabit our everyday spaces; the artist forgoes more exotic creatures for those that viewers can easily recognize and may often ignore. Mylayne always has an exact composition in mind, determined by color, optics, and the role to be played by his avian “actors,” and he employs specially fabricated lenses to create an interplay of blur and crisp focus.

The Millennium Park Chapel, realized in full for the first time anywhere thanks to this exhibition, gives these interests and methods their ideal form. The Chapel merges inside and outside, both through its imagery and its placement within the Lurie Garden at Monroe Street and Columbus Drive. Ten mounted photographs form a 30-foot long ceiling mural that appears to replace the actual roof with another, square roof, topped by a single sparrow that looks down on visitors, all set under a brilliant, cloudless summer sky. The pavilion will be free and open to the public from 11am–7pm daily.

A catalogue will be available for the exhibition featuring essays by scholars Daniel M. Abrams, Christie Davis, Julian Helfenstein, Janine Mileaf and Matthew S. Witkovsky, and Jeffery Walk, as well as sections of poetry by the artist himself.

Jean-Luc Mylayne: Mutual Regard is jointly organized by the Art Institute of Chicago and The Arts Club of Chicago.

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C16, April 1987, Small Chapel for One Person or at Most a Couple has been produced in collaboration with V-A-C Foundation and Lannan Foundation. Significant additional support has been provided by Constance R. Caplan and The Arts Club of Chicago. The assistance of Wheeler Kearns Architects, Bulley and Andrews, and Lux Populi is gratefully acknowledged.

Related Events

Kaleidoscope Outreach
June 27–July 13
Join the Art Institute of Chicago and the Chicago Park District this summer for free art-making activities inspired by the exhibition Jean-Luc Mylayne: Mutual Regard. For more information and a complete schedule, visit www.nightoutintheparks.com.

Please visit www.mutualregardchicago.org for a full list of up-to-date events in conjunction with Jean-Luc Mylayne: Mutual Regard throughout the summer.


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The Art Institute of Chicago gratefully acknowledges the support of the Chicago Park District on behalf of the citizens of Chicago.