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Aimee Levitt, "In 'Mutual Regard,' Jean-Luc Mylayne and birds take a good long look at each other," *Chicago Reader*, May 21, 2015

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In 'Mutual Regard,' Jean-Luc Mylayne and birds take a good, long look at each other



COURTESY THE ARTIST

"Mutual Regard," a new exhibit of work by French photographer Jean-Luc Mylayne that opens Friday at the Art Institute and the Arts Club of Chicago, is the result of a series of collaborations: between Mylayne and his life and work partner, Mylène Mylayne; between the Art Institute and the Arts Club, which are cosponsoring the exhibit; and between Mylayne and the birds that have been his primary subjects for the past 40 years.

"The photos look at the mutuality in nature, in spaces, and in the way Mylayne works," says Janine Mileaf, the curator at the Arts Club. "The two institutions mirror that collaboration." (In yet another variation on the theme of partnership, her husband, Matthew Witkovsky, is curating the exhibit at the Art Institute.)

Mylayne's photos are the result of time and patience. He will find a location, Mileaf explains, and study the scene in order to determine the best way to

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frame the shot and decide where he wants the bird to be. Then he'll watch the birds for weeks, sometimes months, waiting for them to accept his presence and for one to alight in the right spot.

"It looks like a nature picture," says Mileaf, "but it's a philosophical, conceptual practice."

This will be the first major exhibit of Mylayne's work in the United States, and the Arts Club and the Art Institute will both have photos on display. There will also be a pavilion/chapel in the Lurie Garden at Millennium Park featuring, on the ceiling, one dramatic photo by Mylayne: a shot of a sparrow from below, a vantage point next to impossible to achieve. ("It's almost supernatural" Mileaf says. "Birds see something approaching from below as a predator.")

Throughout the summer, the pavilion will host a series of lectures, tours, and birding expeditions. Says Mileaf, "There are a lot of ways this can be experienced."

"Jean-Luc Mylayne: Mutual Regard," through 8/15, Arts Club of Chicago, 201 E. Ontario, 312-787-3997, artsclubchicago.org, free. Through 8/23, Art Institute of Chicago, 111 S. Michigan, 312-443-3600, artic.edu, \$23.