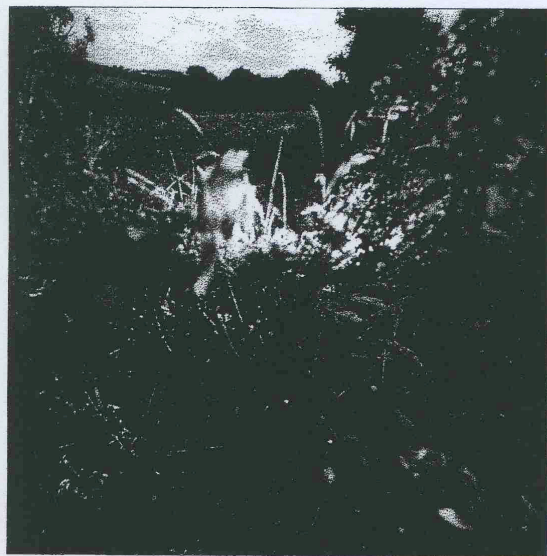


GLADSTONE GALLERY

“Jean-Luc Mylayne: behind the apparently spontaneous”, France Magazine, N.50, Summer 1999

“No. 036 AOUT,” 1982



Behind the apparently spontaneous photographs of Jean-Luc Mylayne, whose exclusive subject is birds at rest and in motion, lies an awesome amount of preparation. The artist, whose work has been shown in the United States at the prestigious Barbara Gladstone Gallery in New York, can spend months preparing for a single image. In contrast to the typical nature photographer who goes off in search of a great picture, Mylayne lets the picture come to him. After determining the composition he wants (for instance, two songbirds perched just so on a bare branch or a sparrow flying past the open window of an old farmhouse) and the weather conditions and time of day that will create the desired light and color, Mylayne sits down and waits. The annotated titles of his photographs suggest just how patient he has to be. The image of a bird flying past an open window is labeled “Juin-Juillet-Août”; a picture of two small orange-breasted birds on a patch of grey ground carries the notation “Janvier-Février-Mars.” The results of Mylayne’s prolonged waiting, which of course makes his output of photographs extremely small, are intricately composed, richly detailed color images with complex depth-of-field effects. Sometimes you have to look hard to find the bird, which might be just a speck of color in a tree or a tiny head and beak peeking over a roof. At other times, the feathered protagonist is standing in the center foreground, exactly where Mylayne wants it to be. The arduous conditions Mylayne imposes upon himself and the way in which he draws in his elusive winged collaborators help inform his visually lush work with a conceptual poetry.