



### Poster de luxe

The works «N°340, April May 2005», «N°450, January February March 2007», «N°476, December 2006 - March 2007» were created as Posters de luxe.

Edition of 25 each, signed on the back  
Inkjet printing  
40 x 50 cm

### Catalogue

An extensive catalog is published in cooperation with the Vincent van Gogh Foundation in Arles. In the Kestner Gesellschaft edition, Christina Végh and Julika Bosch offer an introduction, with texts by renowned authors such as Jacqueline Burckhardt, Bice Curiger, Christie Davis, and Maja Hoffmann as well as the poem «The Autumn of Paradise» by Jean-Luc Mylayne. In German and English, 128 pages, 100 illustrations. Edited by Bice Curiger, Berlin: Hatje Cantz, 2020, 24 Euro.

### Programme

#### what we see looks back at us

guided tour with leo lencsés  
Sunday, march 22 2020, 3 pm

#### yoga and art

Tuesday, march 24 2020, Wednesday, april 22 2020, each at 6.30 pm, friday, may 8 2020, 2 pm  
cost (24.03./22.04.) 13 €, (08.05.) 10 €  
register at [kestner@kestnergesellschaft.de](mailto:kestner@kestnergesellschaft.de)

#### special guided tour: from the bird's view

with field ornithologist kristina arndt  
Thursday, march 26 2020, 6.30 pm und Sunday, may 17 2020, 3 pm

#### guided tour with curator julika bosch

Sunday, may 10 2020, 3 pm



## jean-luc mylayne

the autumn of paradise  
6th march to 17th may 2020

The french artist Jean-Luc Mylayne has been fascinated by one particular subject for over 40 years: **Birds**. And if the bird is omnipresent, it is, above all, so it seems, as a messenger, encouraging us to re-think the prisms through which we see the real world. The large-scale **photographs**, which take several months or even years of **observation and action** to develop (the required time for a specific photograph can be gathered from a work's title) are equally poetic and radical **portraits**, which testify to a deep contemplation of **temporality**. Each photograph exists only as a unique piece and is the result of a **meticulously planned composition**. Together with his wife and artistic partner **Mylène Mylayne**, the artist followed the birds from the **rural southern France** to the steppes of the **southwestern USA**. The exhibition at the Kestner Gesellschaft is one stop of a major tour that includes France, Switzerland, China and the Netherlands. The exhibition has been initiated by Bice Curiger for the Fondation van Gogh and has been conceptualised in close collaboration with Mylène and Jean-Luc Mylayne.

Jean-Luc Mylayne was born in France in 1946. He concentrates his artistic research on philosophy (which he studied) and conceptual art. The exhibition traces the outlines of his main areas of research: **Drawing as a spontaneous human quality**, anticipation as a relationship to the world, the use of light, the choice of colours and the effect of scale **within the composition**. Jean-Luc Mylayne's «mise en scène» invites us in a **poetic and philosophical** way to sharpen our sensitivity for a different temporality. The Mylaynes live and work in the world. Mylayne's work is represented internationally in numerous solo and group exhibitions.

Cover: Jean-Luc Mylayne, N° 524, Février Mars Avril, 2007 (Detail), 228 x 183 cm  
© Jean-Luc Mylayne, Courtesy Gladstone Gallery, New York, Brüssel;  
Sprüth Magers, Berlin, London, Los Angeles

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The exhibition by Jean-Luc Mylayne is kindly supported by



Lower Saxony is supporting the Kestner Gesellschaft



Cultural partner

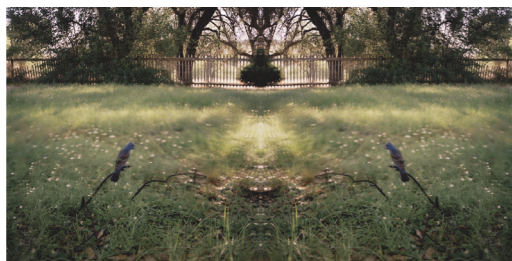


goseriede 11 | 30159 hannover | germany  
fon +49 511 70120 0 | fax +49 511 70120 20  
[www.kestnergesellschaft.de](http://www.kestnergesellschaft.de)



## Claussen hall

The hanging of the photographs does not follow a chronological order. The exhibition has been conceptualised along with the artist couple. It plays with small niches and visual relationships within the greater axes of viewing. The works are grouped according to **light and composition**, just as Mylayne precisely selects the use of light, the choice of colours and the effect of varying degrees of image sharpness for each setting. Mylayne describes his directing of light in his photographs as follows: «Je sculpte la lumière.» (in english: «I form the light»).



①

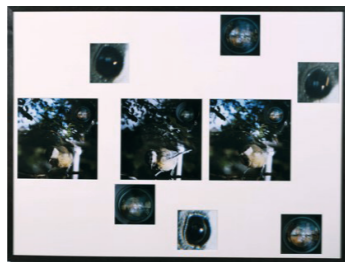
Upon entering the Claussen Hall through the foyer, the artwork ① «N°407, April May 2006» (153 × 303 cm) can be seen on the right hand side. The work from 2006 shows a symmetrical-ly constructed scene. A bird appears duplicated by the reflection of the motif. Both bird figures are leaning towards the center of the picture. The light spot they seem to be facing appears to approximate the shape of a flying bird through its mirroring. Mylayne's photographs do not merely represent scenes which have actually occurred, but they achieve a picturesque quality due to **Mylayne's precise compositional intervention**. Thus they reach far beyond the immediacy of a photographic moment.



②

The diptych ② «N°498-499, January February March 2007» (each 183 × 228cm) is, like several other tableaux, dedicated to **partnership/togetherness**. The picture is a tribute to the work and method, which Jean-Luc Mylayne and his wife Mylène spent over several decades creating and who work side by side in these selected landscapes. A pair of Mountain Bluebirds are sitting on Agave plants the Mylaynes themselves have planted in the abandoned high plains of southwest Texas. They are looking at an open landscape with no signs of civilization. The two only seemingly identical photographs are distinguished from one another in the positioning of the two birds. In the left picture, the female is sitting on the upper branch and the male on the lower branch, whereas in the right picture the birds have swapped places and are looking in slightly different directions. For Mylayne this represents an allegory of partnership, in which it is possible for both partners to complement each other despite their different points of view.

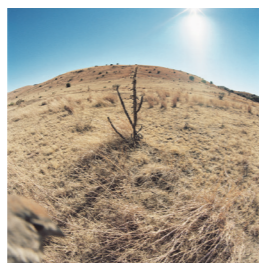
## Hall V



③

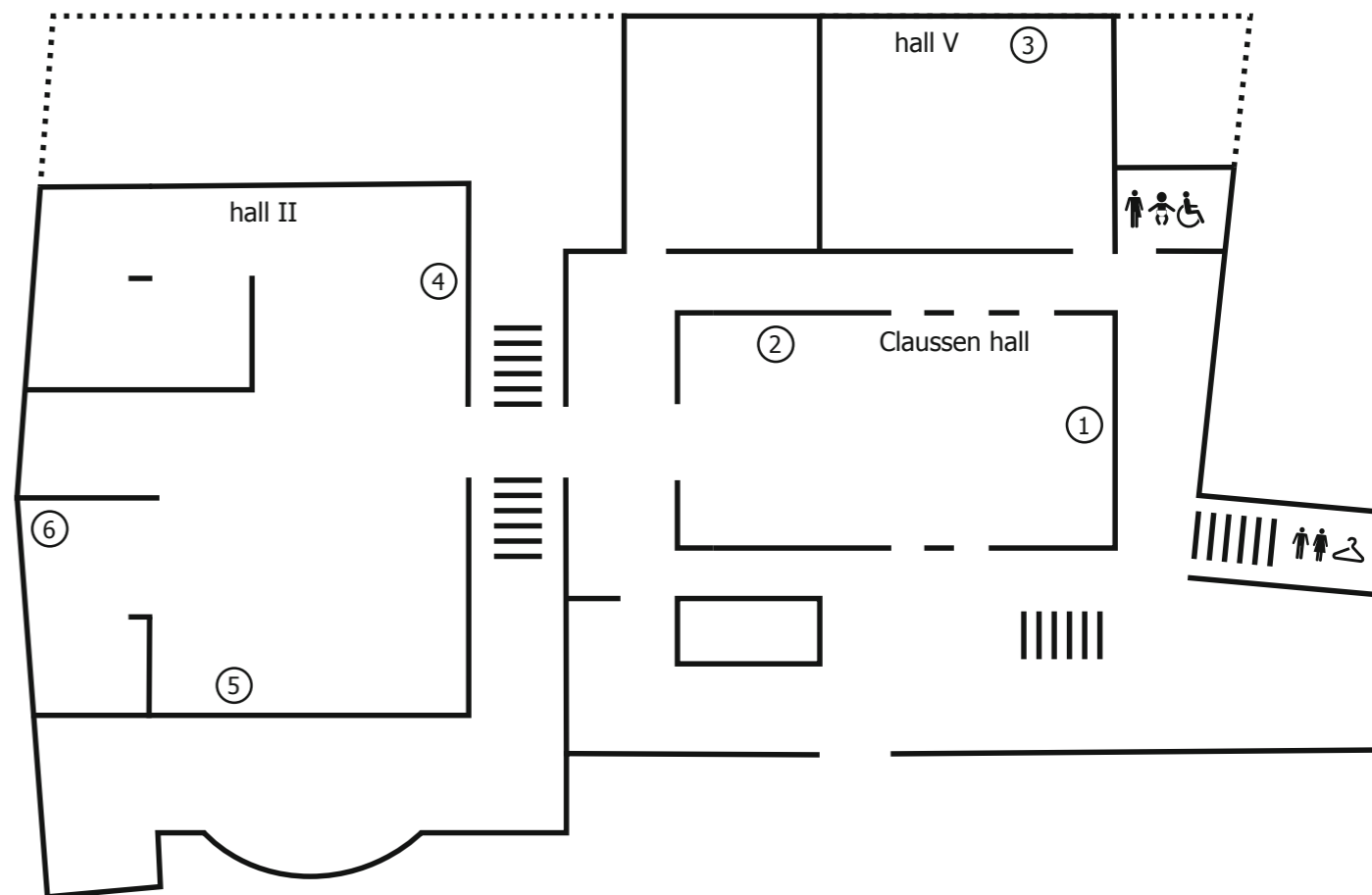
The **subject of togetherness** is addressed in an special way in the spiralling arrangement of nine photographs in ③ «N°47,48,49, October 1984 to July 1986» (123 × 163 cm) in Hall V. In the centre of the picture both Mylaynes can be discovered due to a subtle visual dialogue between the pupil of the bird photographed and the lens of the camera. Mylayne has captured said lens with a second camera. In it, the artist couple in light-colored clothing can be recognized. Looking at the picture more closely one can discover that the couple is also reflected by the bird the couple is capturing: In the enlargement of the detail in that collage a similar reflection becomes visible. In the arrangement the bird's eye becomes a symbol for the camera. The Great Tit clings onto the camera tripod pointed at the artist couple. The Mylaynes reappear constantly in the multi-layered world of the camera lens in multiple crossfaded reflexes and in mirrored reflections.

## Hall II



④

A central theme in Mylayne's photographic practice is the handling of time. In ④ «N°446, November 2006 to January 2007» (183 × 183 cm) time is dealt with in an exemplary way. In the midst of a dry Texan steppe landscape Mylayne discovers a type of natural sundial under a cloudless blue sky. The cactus in the middle of the photograph, which has been shot with a fish eye lens, becomes a gnomon. In the left bottom corner a Brown Towhee is hiding, camouflaged by its plumage's colours and structure. The title of this work refers to the time it took for the typically shy bird to accept the presence of the artist couple and their camera. It also includes the patient waiting period and the precise observation of the Brown Towhee's flight paths and habitats, as well as of the general weather and light conditions. The visitors also practice the handling and the variable perception of time while viewing Mylaynes' work. In some works the **bird as protagonist** is directly recognizable, in other works the viewing turns into a longer search.



⑤

The triptych ⑤ «N°105, September to December 1991» (191 × 404 cm) illustrates Mylaynes' precise compositional practice. Three negatives show a bird surrounded by water and red plants. By utilising reflections and a skilful **montage**, he forms a larger image from the photographed motif: the silhouette of a fish. Here the bird is more source than protagonist and becomes a structural element.



⑥

⑥ «N°96, August 1990 to December 1991» (128 × 128 cm) shows a Kingfisher flying away from a wetland. Traces of oil and other **residues of mankind and its technology** can be seen in the water. Like a warning, the bird symbolises an inevitable fate by the simple fact of living in an increasingly fragile world. It took the artist two years to take this image - a particularly long time to capture this unique moment.