The Human Fascination With Birds: It Passes Like a Thought


By Chris Pan

Birds — outdated characters in daily life, but still beloved figures in the artistic lexicon. They are seen as a metaphor for fleeting events, an ever-changing and visual representation of transient moments. John James Audubon, an ornithologist, said that "when an individual bird is seen gliding through the woods and closer to the observer, it passes like a thought — swiftly seen and just as quickly vanished, as if the bird were a fleeting, ephemeral moment that our minds and imaginations hold for a moment and then let slip through their fingers." (Image 1: The Art of Audubon)

Carolyn Ferron's "Drawing" series depicts various birds and their interactions with their environment, emphasizing the transient nature of these creatures. In her own words, "the fleeting nature of birds is reflected in their short lives and the fleeting nature of their relationships with their environment." (Image 2: Carolyn Ferron's "Drawing" series)

In John James Audubon's "The Birds of America," the birds depicted were seen as symbols of the natural world, and their fleeting nature was emphasized. The book was an attempt to capture the beauty and transience of the natural world through the lens of art, and it remains a testament to the fleeting nature of nature. (Image 3: "The Birds of America" by John James Audubon)

Michael Ross's "Birds in the Rain" series captures various species of birds in their natural habitats. The artist's goal is to "create a sense of the beauty and fragility of birds in their natural environments, and to emphasize the fleeting nature of these creatures in the face of our own interventions in the natural world." (Image 4: Michael Ross's "Birds in the Rain" series)

Violette V excavates the "Birdies" series, which depicts various species of birds in their natural habitats. The artist's goal is to "create a sense of the beauty and fragility of birds in their natural environments, and to emphasize the fleeting nature of these creatures in the face of our own interventions in the natural world." (Image 5: Violette V excavates the "Birdies" series)

The "It Passes Like a Thought" exhibit is ongoing and open to the public. For gallery hours, please visit the Bird's website (https://www.bird.com/exhibits/it-passes-like-a-thought). All quotes are from the author's "It Passes Like a Thought" exhibit and website.

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