

by Susan Tallman and Sarah Kirk Hanley, from Volume 5, Number 6

The prints of John James Audubon are a familiar presence at fairs that cater to historic works on paper, but Audubon's ghost seemed to walk the halls of the New York print fairs in November with unusual vigor. He appeared both uptown and down, in new art and old, and in all his many guises—pioneering naturalist, dogged assassin of birdlife, inadvertent decorator of hotel lobbies, bearer of the white man's burden.

Stewart & Stewart showed the 11th and 12th installments of Jane E. Goldman's *Audubon* series—colorful still lifes that pair a page from *Birds of America* with a seasonal bouquet and, more remarkably, with a distinctly, recognizably, seasonal light. *March* and *April* offer the Columbia magpie and the Prothonotary warbler amid the soft shadows and slight dampness of emergent spring.



Jane E. Goldman, *Audubon March* (2015), hand-painted archival pigment print, 21 3/4 x 29 3/4 inches. Edition of 25. Printed and published by Stewart & Stewart, Bloomfield Hills, MI.

where the wooded landscape was transformed through breakage by Hurricane Irene. Two further plates, inked à la poupée, add 12 subtle inked colors, atop which the artist drew in colored pencil, producing 18 variant images—each the same, each an individual, like turkeys in the wild, and humans in the flesh.



Matthew Day Jackson, from *There Will Come Soft Rains* (2015–16), portfolio of 12 four-color etchings with colophon in a clamshell box, 27 x 20 1/2 inches. Edition of 36. Printed and published by Collaborative Art Editions, St. Petersburg, FL.

call wannabe Audubon) depicting a species now extinct. Ballengée carefully cuts out the bird or animal in question, leaving an articulated lacuna in the paper, which is mounted to cast a visible shadow. The paper creature is then cremated and its ashes placed in small black funerary jars.

Elsewhere at the fair, the angry birds of Walton Ford's *Limed Blossoms* and *Condemned* (both 2007, Wingate Studio), Carsten Höller's gleaming photogravures of sterile avian crossbreeds (at Niels Borch Jensen) [see review this issue], and Matt Collishaw's gorgeous smashed butterflies (Pauper's Press) further reviewed the results of our dysfunctional love affair with nature, and our appalling—possibly suicidal—inability to leave well enough alone.



Kiki Smith, *In a Bower* (2015), color etching and aquatint with hand coloring, 33 3/4 x 44 1/2 inches. Edition of 18. Printed and published by Harlan & Weaver, New York.

The exact species of Richard Ryan's *Bird in Tree* is hard to determine in silhouette (our money would be on a great blue heron, but without a color clue it might well be an egret). Perched at the pinnacle of a dead trunk, and set against a sky that is simultaneously a slab of wood and churning clouds, it is dramatic, remote and intimidating rather than reassuring.

Kiki Smith's wild turkey at Harlan & Weaver is—à la Audubon—rendered life-size, but where Audubon's turkey fills the plate like a battery hen in a cage, Smith's stretches out across a lattice of leafless branches nearly four feet long. The key plate was drawn at the artist's home in the Catskills, where wild turkeys run rampant and



Richard Ryan, *Bird in Tree* (2014), woodcut, 64 x 43 inches. Edition of 35. Printed and published by Center Street Studio, Milton Village, MA.

In Matthew Day Jackson's *There Will Come Soft Rains* (2015–16), the artist skillfully alters 12 facsimile Audubon plates to reprise his fascination with Americana, death and apocalypse. The plates are from the 1937 centennial edition of *Birds of America* produced by the Audubon Society (photoengravings of the original plates); Jackson changed the backgrounds and added additional plates to place the birds (some now extinct) in psychedelic, noxious environments. The portfolio title is taken from a poem by Sara Teasdale, whose words march along the lower margins in hand-stamped block letters, telling a tale of nature's reclamation of the earth, post-hominid: "Not one would mind, neither bird nor tree, / If mankind perished utterly."

Brandon Ballengée's ongoing project, *Frameworks of Absence*, which was on view at Goya Contemporary at the IFPDA Fair, was the most quietly tragic of these tributes. Each of the dozen or so framed images was a 19th-century natural history chromolithograph (what we might



Brandon Ballengée, *RIP Great Auk: After John Gould* (1873/2014), artist cut and burnt hand-colored lithograph, etched glass funerary urn, and ashes, 21 7/8 x 28 7/8 inches. Shown by Goya Contemporary, Baltimore, MD. Photo: Casey Dorobek. Courtesy of the Artist and Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York