

ROSEGALLERY is pleased to present *Del Cielo*, a collection of photographs by Graciela Iturbide, Masahisa Fukase, Jo Ann Callis, Rinko Kawauchi, and James Gallagher.

Artists and poets have drawn inspiration from birds for centuries, celebrating their intricate patterns and melodious tunes as representations of the natural world's aesthetic wonders. From ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics to John James Audubon's intricate avian illustrations in "The Birds of America", artists have sought to capture the essence of these creatures in their work. *Del Cielo* continues this interest and worldly narrative, tracking the visual presence of these creatures through photography.



Graciela Iturbide, *Señor de los Pájaros*, Nayarit, Mexico, 1984

One of the most famous poems about birds in the English language is "The Raven", written by American poet Edgar Allan Poe. Published in 1845, the poem is widely renowned and known for its dark and melancholic themes, notably its vivid depiction of a mysterious, talking raven. "The Raven" is a masterpiece of Gothic literature and has had a long and lasting impact on literature and popular culture.

While documenting the burial of a newborn baby and reconciling with the graphic imagery of death itself, a large flock of birds began to take flight above Graciela Iturbide, darkening the light of the sun. Seeing this, she immediately pointed her camera to the sky and began

photographing, spawning the first images in her *Pájaros* series. Recounting this memory, she states that "I wondered if I was dreaming, but it was a reality. From then on, instead of cemeteries, I started to photograph birds — birds in flight because they represented liberty. Taking those photographs set me free from my suffering."

Masahisa Fukase's seminal work, *The Solitude of Ravens*, chronicles a dark and melancholic era of the artist's life. Created in the wake of a divorce from his wife of 13 years, Fukase hones his focus onto a singular subject: ravens. In Japanese mythology, ravens are seen as the messengers that bridge the gap between mortal and divine, sending messages from the gods to our physical world. Ravens are also symbols of duality; light and dark, embodying the cycles of life and death. It is perhaps these traits and characteristics that drew Fukase to these creatures, they were a reflection of himself.



Masahisa Fukase, *Kawazawa Peninsula*, 1978



Rinko Kawauchi, from *Des oiseaux*, 2022

"It was at that time that I witnessed the parent swallows in their silent, dutiful pursuit of acquiring food for their young. The sight gave me a new, simplified perspective--it made me think that merely being able to feed your child is fulfilling a vital role as a parent. I felt encouraged, and my emotions, closed and shut in, seemed to find release." - Rinko Kawauchi from *Des Oiseaux (On Birds)*. In her series *Des Oiseaux*, Kawauchi observes a family of swallows, observing the parents raising her young. Her observations are a meditative examination of the cycle of life for these beings, a cycle not too far from our own.

In the work of Jo Ann Callis and James Gallagher, birds are effigies that accompany the other elements in the images, with their presence alluding to common associations typically attached to these avian creatures. In Callis' *Raven and Cake* (1980), a raven swoops downward from the left of the composition in a somewhat Hitchcockian fashion. Gallagher's *Bird Portraits* superimposes images of various bird species atop the faces of individual subjects in vintage portrait photographs.

These instances of reflection bond our connection and relationship to these creatures of the sky. They embody many of our traits and embed themselves within the tales of our cultures.



Jo Ann Callis, *Raven and Cake*, 1980



James Gallagher, *Untitled*, 2015

Del Cielo will be on view at
ROSEGALLERY from 30 Sept. - 25 Nov. 2023

Reception on Saturday 30 Sept. | 2 - 5PM

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