

Christophe Guye Galerie

Stephen Gill – The Pillar

15 July – 8 September 2024

Christophe Guye Galerie is pleased to announce the third solo exhibition of English photographer Stephen Gill (*1971, Bristol, England). This online exhibition in our virtual gallery features all works from the series "The Pillar", created between 2015 and 2019.

‘Beyond his fascination with birds and animals, Stephen Gill’s practice is driven largely by a desire to connect with his immediate surroundings – from his longing to engage with the hidden wildlife that surrounds his home in rural Sweden, to the years he spent cycling through Hackney Wick, scouring its vast markets and narrow towpaths. It even goes back to his childhood, and his initial obsession with collecting insects and pond life to inspect under his microscope. “My hobby morphed into what I do for a living,” he reflects. “Making this new work took me right back to those early years, as if completing a full circle.”

The Pillar is the latest of Gill’s 20 self-published photobooks and follows on from Night Procession, for which he used a lo-fi motion sensor camera to photograph wild animals as they roamed the night. Similarly for The Pillar, Gill set up a camera in a nearby farm, opposite a pillar of wood. He knew birds were up there, and hoped to funnel them down from the sky.

To his delight, it worked. “It was like magic!” he says. From a small tree sparrow to a magnificent golden eagle, for over four years bird after bird descended onto the pillar, clenching their claws around the weathered wood to groom their wings, nurse their young, or simply perch for a little rest. Sometimes the birds landed on top of the camera, creating abstract patterns with their wings, sometimes they stared into the lens, as if posing for a deadpan portrait. In other images they squawk, flap, waggle and pluck, creating offbeat photographs that are chaotic, at times awkward, and often humorous.’

– Text by Marigold Warner

Gill’s photographs are now held in various private and public collections and was exhibited in different international Galleries and Museums such as the London National Portrait Gallery, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Agnès B Collection, the Victoria Miro Gallery, the Sprengel Museum, the Tate Modern, the Centre National de l’Audiovisuel, the Archive of Modern Conflict, the Photographers’ Gallery, the Palais des Beaux Arts, the Leighton House Museum and the Haus der Kunst. Gill had numerous solo exhibitions at festivals such as the Recontres d’Arles, the Toronto Photography Festival and the PhotoEspaña and the Festival Images Vevey.