



## Media Announcement

### Photography by Rory Mulligan Delights Viewers at Grand Central Terminal's Dining Concourse



*American Robin* (2022) and *Gray Catbird with Blueberry* (2021) © Rory Mulligan. Included as part of *Auguries* exhibition presented by MTA Arts & Design at Grand Central Terminal Dining Concourse.

(NEW YORK, NY — December 27, 2023) MTA Arts & Design is pleased to present a selection of works from photographer Rory Mulligan's *Auguries* series throughout the Photography lightboxes in the East and West Dining Concourse at Grand Central Terminal. Twenty images depict birds in unexpected settings, chosen by the artist as both compositional elements and bird-attracting tools.

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Hastings-on-Hudson, New York-based artist Rory Mulligan turned his camera from the wider world to his own backyard. *Auguries* presents images from this ongoing project that capture moments of chance within a carefully constructed stage that combines fabric backdrops and found materials to attract a wide variety of birds. At a time of uncertainty and isolation, the regular departures and arrivals of birds brought the artist a sense of connection and peace.

"Mulligan's intriguing compositions enliven the Dining Concourse with color, pattern, and nature, while offering viewers a moment of reflection during their own travels," said **Sandra Bloodworth, Director, MTA Arts & Design**. "The nearly two dozen images are on view for the enjoyment of those using this lower-level area of Grand Central to relax or access the nearby entrance to Grand Central Madison.

For the artist, birds represent joy, beauty, and grace, but also remind us of the precarity of our natural environment. “This work is a true departure for me in that I have never worked digitally or in color before this and I am grateful to MTA Arts & Design for the opportunity to present this body of work in such an historic location,” said artist **Rory Mulligan**. “The COVID-19 pandemic pushed me, and all of us, to look closer at our immediate surroundings during periods of quarantine. For me, my backyard became a sanctuary and salve in large part because of the birds. They allowed me to find joy and focus in a dark and distressing time. At the same time, birds are fragile harbingers of the state of our ecosystem and push us to consider important issues like climate change.”

Following the National Audubon Society’s guidelines for ethical bird photography, Mulligan uses minimal flash and aims to not interrupt the birds’ natural behavior. He cloaks the camera and tripod in camouflage, working with a moderately long lens, and triggers the camera’s shutter through his phone from a discreet location. The resultant photographs play on the duality of nature through their juxtaposition of organic and artifice, shifting between tableaux-like compositions with seamless backdrops to partial views of the natural environment. Several of the fabrics used further this effect with prints that depict stylized natural motifs.

The exhibition is curated by MTA Arts & Design and the artist. Printing services and materials were generously sponsored by Color Center and DotWorks with installation support by OUTFRONT Media. The photographs will be on view through mid-2024.



*Auguries*, installation view at Grand Central Terminal Dining Concourse. Photo: MTA Arts & Design

## **ABOUT RORY MULLIGAN**

Rory Mulligan (b. 1984, New York) received his MFA in Photography from Yale University and is Assistant Teaching Professor of Art at Drew University in Madison, NJ. Mulligan’s work has been exhibited nationally and internationally and is included in the permanent collections of the Philadelphia Museum of Art and Light Work. Mulligan’s work has been published by J&L Books, Blind Spot, MATTE, Soft Copy and the New York Times Magazine, among others. His writing has appeared in two Aperture books (*The Photographer’s Playbook* and *Photo No-No’s*). Mulligan has been an artist in residence at Light Work (Syracuse, NY) and LMCC’s Art Residency Program on Governor’s Island. He has lectured at Sarah Lawrence College, Yale University, Princeton University, School of the Art Institute Chicago, and the International Center of Photography, among many others. A forthcoming monograph of collected work from 2005 – 2020 is set for a 2024 release.

## **ABOUT MTA ARTS & DESIGN**

MTA Arts & Design encourages the use of public transportation by providing visual and performing arts in the metropolitan New York area. The Percent for Art program is one of the largest and most diverse collections of site-specific public art in the world, with more than 380 commissions by world-famous, mid-career and emerging artists. Arts & Design produces Graphic Arts, Digital Art, photographic Lightbox exhibitions, as well as live musical performances in stations through its Music Under New York (MUSIC) program, and the Poetry in Motion program in collaboration with the Poetry Society of America. It serves the millions of people who rely upon MTA subways and commuter trains and strives to create meaningful connections between sites, neighborhoods, and people.

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