

Audubon's Aviary: The Original Watercolors for The Birds of America

Roberta Olson, The New-York Historical Society



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A national treasure is celebrated in this landmark publication. The Birds of America is a monumental classic, but it has never been explored like this before. This important new volume presents all the dazzling watercolors that Audubon painted for these monumental engravings. We are familiar with the prints engraved by Robert Havell Jr., but Audubon's Aviary illuminates the original masterpieces that were created by Audubon himself and tells the story behind their creation with fresh insights and engaging quotes from his writings. These powerful paintings—all newly photographed using state-of-the-art techniques—possess a startling immediacy, vibrancy, and fluidity that link natural history, art, and a respect for the environment. These watercolors transmit Audubon's devotion to his craft with their inscriptions and layers of media wrought with a miniaturist's attention to detail and their revolutionary compositions, which for the first time in history depicted all the birds life-size. Audubon is considered America's first great watercolorist, introducing innovative approaches developed over a lifetime of study. Even judged alongside today's technology, his dramatic tableaux remain some of the most spectacular natural history documents and visually arresting works of art ever produced.

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