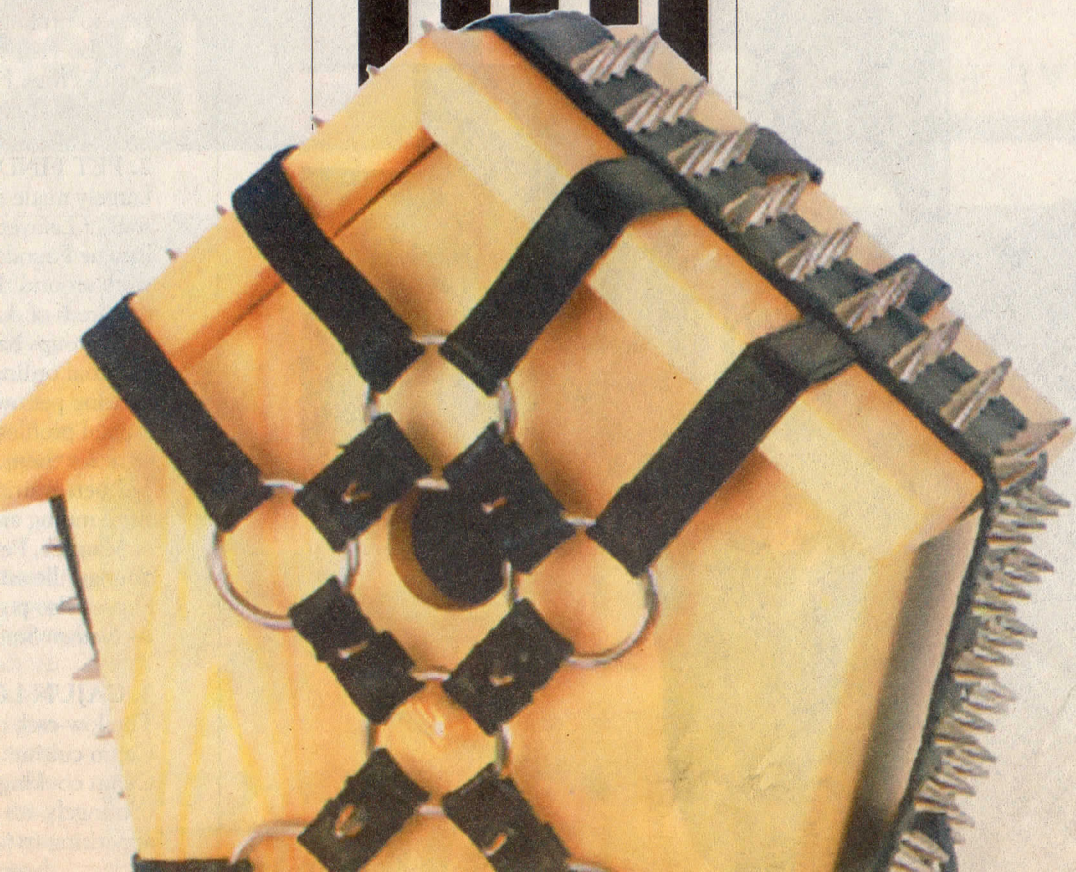


SECTION 2, MAR. 2, 2005

LIVING

IND





Flight Pattern

‘Birdspace’ spreads its wings at the Acadiana Center for the Arts. By Erin Zaunbrecher

More than a century after his death, famed bird artist John James Audubon’s work remains an inspiration to bird-watchers — and contemporary artists.

The exhibit *Birdspace: A Post-Audubon Artists Aviary* recently opened at the Acadiana Center for the Arts, and it’s a testament to Audubon’s lasting legacy. Curated by David S. Rubin of the Contemporary Arts Center in New Orleans, the exhibit is a collection of about 40 bird-themed works of art from artists around the world, including Martha Alf, Hunt Slonem, Wim Delroye and Andrew Young. “The concept of contemporary connections to Audubon seemed fresh and relevant to our part of the world, and we were impressed by the diversity and quality of the work,” says Acadiana Arts Council Executive Director Buddy Palmer. In a case of art imitating life, the exhibit ties in to prime nesting and migratory bird season in Louisiana.

“Great egrets are nesting, and it’s just the beginning of the big show out at Lake Martin,” says Rose Must of the local Wild Birds Unlimited franchise. The shop recently completed its participation in the Great Backyard Bird Count, a data collection project of The Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and the

National Audubon Society that tracks numbers and species of birds in the area. Must says reports of warblers migrating through the area are coming in, and cardinals, bluejays, mockingbirds, brown thrashers, finches and winter hummingbirds can be spotted in back yards across Acadiana.

Indoors at ACA’s main gallery, *Birdspace’s* offerings soar. Life-sized wings made of metal spoons by Les Christensen invite visitors to search for their own flatware pattern, and Amy Jean Porter’s “Birds of North America Misquote Hip-Hop and Sometimes Pause for Reflection” is an eclectic collection of postcard-sized bird prints with words like “dance,” “flirt” and “ghetto” that mimic bird sounds. And a trip to the second floor brings viewers to a second bird exhibit, *Ornithology: Eugene James Martin*, which features the late artist’s whimsical bird drawings mixed with geometric shapes and sharp lines. It’s another example of birds inspiring the imagination to take flight. ■■■

The Acadiana Center for the Arts’ bird exhibits are on display through April 10. For more info, call 233-7060. Admission is \$5, \$3 for students, seniors and members, and free for children 4 and under.