



## ON THE FLY

**A**rare bird himself, John James Audubon (1785–1851) was born on a sugar plantation in Haiti, raised in France, and in 1803 came to America, where soon “Thousands of melodious notes from birds unknown to me urged me to arise and go in pursuit of those beautiful and happy creatures.” For thirty years, he documented American bird life—from the black-bellied plover to the fork-tailed flycatcher—in 474 luminous watercolors (studies for his sumptuous life’s work, *Birds of America*). Collected for the first time in **Audubon’s Aviary** (Skira Rizzoli), these images offer a quiet glimpse of the master at work.—FRANCESCA GILBERTI

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