

HAMILTONS

MARIO TESTINO | GONE WILD

21 November 2023 – 3 February 2024



Acinonyx jubatus, Kenya, 2023 © Mario Testino

Hamiltons is proud to present *'Gone Wild'* featuring exclusive, new work by internationally renowned photographer Mario Testino. Shown at the gallery for the first time, the images feature an array of animals; from lions in Kenya to rare birds in Brazil.

This new series contributes to Testino's ongoing project *'A Beautiful World'* which explores and documents the cultural traditions of people and the natural world from around the globe, Hamiltons presented the first glimpses of Testino's *'A Beautiful World'* in 2019. Whilst Testino has historically been recognised as one of the world's most in-demand commercial and fashion photographers, his life and career's real magnum opus is at its genesis.

Dr Jenifer Allen writes "Mario Testino expands the frontiers of wildlife photography. The locations remain remote: from eagles in Mongolia to zebras in Namibia. Yet Testino pushes the borders of this classic genre far beyond simple documentation. His pictures communicate much more than an animal photographed unawares in its natural habitat.

First, Testino brings his sartorial eye to fauna and fowl. Their habitats have been transformed into ideal, curated sets, shifting between nature and imagination. The birds' feathers recall the singular and extravagant creations of haute couture. *Balearica pavonina*, Brazil, and *Goura cristata*, Brazil, 2022 evoke designer millinery. *Phasianus colchicus*, Brazil, 2022 seem to shimmer in jewel-encrusted coats.

Yet, unlike fashion photographs, these images pit vibrant colours against inky dark backgrounds: gemstones in velvet caskets. Some birds look as if they had stepped out for the evening, only to be captured by paparazzi. The nocturnal surroundings match the birds' tiny black pupils, thus amplifying the many hues glowing around them.

Testino has always taken a painterly approach to photography, which traditionally relied on speed and light. Yet post-production brings photography closer to painting which can be slow and dark while augmenting polychromatic details. The colours in these photographs have been refined much like a painter's palette. Rembrandt's sombreness, Caravaggio's dramatic sets and Manet's backgrounds all come to mind, despite Testino's vastly different subjects.

For Testino, a photograph is not a document but a tool for creating a scenario. For exploring creativity and emotion. What you feel is more important than what species you can identify. If there's a document here, it's a chronicle of Testino's imagination: his own personal AI."

Mario Testino: Gone Wild consists of 17 C-type Fuji Supergloss prints mounted to aluminium. The exhibition will run from **21 November 2023 – 3 February 2024**.

BIOGRAPHY

Regarded as one of the world's most influential fashion and portrait photographers, Mario Testino is responsible for the creation of emblematic images, transmitting emotion and energy in an open and intimate way, to document people all over the world.

Testino's work has been exhibited in museums around the world, including the Helmut Newton Foundation, Berlin (Undressed, 2017) the Shanghai Art Museum (Private View, 2012) and the National Portrait Gallery, London (Portraits, 2002). Testino's most recent body of work is an artistic exploration of cultural identity, part of a wider project to highlight diverse beauty. As he travels the world, Testino reveals what makes culture in each country unique, challenging us to find a more sustainable balance between change and tradition.

More than 17 books of his photography have been published, including *MaRIO DE JANEIRO* Testino, *Kate Moss* by Mario Testino, *Alta Moda and Fina Estampa*. Alongside his 40-year practice as a photographer, Testino has realised a body of work as a creative director, guest editor, art collector, philanthropist, and museum founder in Lima. In recognition of his charity work, Testino was awarded the Legion of Honour of France in 2017, the Order of the British Empire in 2013, and the Grand Cross Order of Merit in Peru in 2014. In October 2016, Testino opened the first Parques Teresita playpark in association with Natalia Vodianova and the Naked Heart Foundation in Cusco, Perú, and the second in January 2019 in Ayacucho, Peru. A third park was opened in March 2023 in Alto Selva Alegre, in Arequipa.

'Gone Wild' is Testino's third exhibition with Hamiltons.

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