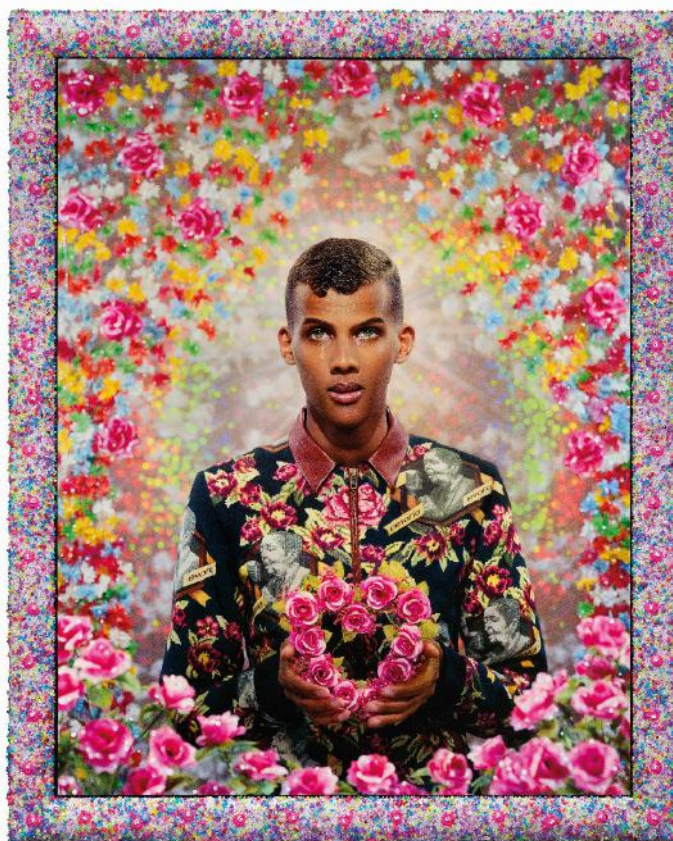


CITÉ DE LA MUSIQUE  
PHILHARMONIE DE PARIS

# Pierre et Gilles: Factory of Idols



*For Ever, 2014 [Stromae]*

**An exhibition at Musée de la musique-Philharmonie de Paris**  
From 20 November 2019 to 23 February 2020



CITÉ DE LA MUSIQUE  
PHILHARMONIE  
DE PARIS

## EXHIBITION INTENT

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Pierre et Gilles need no introduction. Figures of the 1980s, the duo photographed the most famous music and film stars of their time, creating those iconic images that we now often associate with the legendary style of their models.

**Passionate about popular music, the duo has been totally involved in the creation of the exhibition, a musical and visual staging: videos, record covers, personal collection of memorabilia from their studio, the exhibition is an opportunity to reveal the secrets of their style, working like a manufactory of idols.**

### • Between Counter-culture and Classical Art

Strongly influenced by the iconography and structures of classical art, the two artists are following the tradition of **Western portrait history**. **As the holy icons are substituted by pop-idols**, and mysticism of Gregorian chant replaced by the **restlessness of rock concerts**, Pierre et Gilles add something sacred to their iconography, by creating portraits that are almost magical and miraculous; thereby images come alive and become *venerable*.

Influenced by the aesthetics of a certain **American underground counter-culture**, Pierre et Gilles have constructed a musical world where baroque art stands alongside with Hindu iconography, and where time and imagination merge.



From Top to Bottom, view of the exhibition: *80's Juke-box* and *The Disc launch, 1979* [Françoise Hardy]





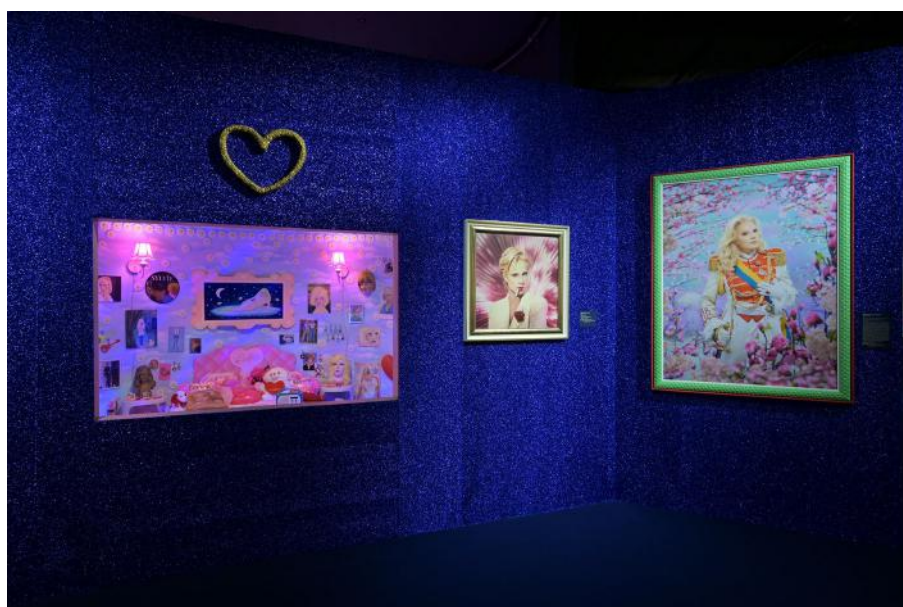
*The palace Years, view of the exhibition*

### • Pop Pilgrimage and Iconoclast Pantheon

From Etienne Daho to Stromae, Sheila to Eddy de Pretto, Sylvie Vartan and including Marilyn Manson, Lio, Michael Jackson, Arielle Dombasle, Claude François and others, Pierre et Gilles have ensured, while **creating this strange pantheon**, a fundamental place for music in their work. With high symbolic potential figures, they allow themselves to explore freely the **sanctity of hit parade popstars**.

### • Exhibiting Pierre et Gilles' Studio Relics

The exhibition shows **the love story that binds the two artists with music**, and aims to present all the icons from the 1960s to current days, leading visitors through a pop pilgrimage where saint figures are placed alongside their relics, liturgical objects and by-products, all stemming from Pierre et Gilles' studio.



*Space dedicated to Sylvie Vartan, view of the exhibition*



## A TRUE MUSICAL AND VISUAL INSTALLATION

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*Sylvie Vartan's room, view of the exhibition*



*Views of Pierre et Gilles' studio*

The exhibition's staging is inspired by the quasi-mystical nature of Pierre et Gilles' work. **Focusing on the concept of idol, in its religious sense, the intention is to highlight the staging and iconography as employed by the two artists.**



*Overview of the chapels, view of the exhibition*

To refer to Pierre et Gilles' relation to music and the links they craft between *star system* and religious symbolism, the exhibition opens with a series of five chapels, each one relative to the cult of a figure.



*Mystic of Pop, Mythologies, view of the exhibition*

A second space repeats the same intent as the first one, in exploring Pierre et Gilles' connection to mythology and cultural syncretism. Visitors are given the opportunity to revisit the mythological influences of the history of Western art under the prism of punk and pop culture and to (re)discover the way Pierre et Gilles play with aesthetic codes from extra-european civilisations and that is the strength of their work: by finding fundamental elements dragged from the visual history of different cultures, they create an iconography with universal symbolism.

The scenography pays very special attention to the structure of sound in the architecture, like in the architectural principles used in places of worship. **The music of these "idols"** is displayed under each photograph-paintings, through a huge juke-box. The visitor can discover one hit per artwork with headphones, employed to immerse the visitor in an individual visual and audio space.



*The Garden of Delights, Dreams and Nightmares, view of the exhibition*

## CURATOR OF THE EXHIBITION

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Art historian and curator, completing a PhD at the Université Paris-Nanterre on the work of Francis Bacon, **Milan Garcin** works in close collaboration with the Francis Bacon MB Art Foundation in Monaco. He has curated numerous exhibitions and, since 2014, has also worked with Jean-Hubert Martin. An active participant in the conception and development of the “Carambolages” exhibition (RMN-Grand Palais, 2016), he has continued this cooperation with several museums in France and around the world. Milan Garcin has also worked on several other major projects, including “Jardins” (RMN-Grand Palais, 2017).

## THE EXHIBITION - A FEW FIGURES

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**145 artworks exhibited and available for the tour including:**

- **83** Paintings-photographs
  - **6** video-clips
  - **83** audio extracts
  - **25** record covers
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- Exhibition surface area: **between 370 m<sup>2</sup>**
  - Exhibition available **from April 2020**

## MUSEE DE LA MUSIQUE / PHILHARMONIE DE PARIS EXHIBITIONS

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As part of the Philharmonie de Paris project, the exhibitions at the Musée de la Musique aim to take fresh approaches in the study of music by exploring the connections between music and other disciplines. “Pierre et Gilles: the Manufacture of Idols” is also the continuation of a cycle of historical exhibitions designed to offer a careful study of the history of visual arts through the prism of musical culture and the artists’ shared practices: “Figures de la Passion” (2001), “L’invention du sentiment” (2002), “Le Ille Reich et la musique” (2004), “Wagner, visions d’artistes” (2007), “Paul Klee, Polyphonies” (2011), “Marc Chagall, Le Triomphe de la Musique” (2015), “Les Musiques de Picasso” (2020).

More recently, the Musée de la musique inaugurated a cycle of exhibitions about the links uniting photography and music. This cycle included “MMM” in 2016 with Martin Parr and Matthieu Chedid, “Daho l’aime pop” in 2017, and “Doisneau et la musique” (4 December 2018 – 28 April 2019).

## LOCATION AND CONTEXT

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### • Cité de la musique-Philharmonie de Paris

Housed in a **remarkable architectural complex** built in north-eastern Paris by Christian de Portzamparc (Cité de la musique, 1995) and Jean Nouvel (Philharmonie, 2015), the Musée de la musique-Philharmonie de Paris defines a new musical complex that brings together:

- an exceptional **programme of concerts** (over 500 concerts per year),
- a **heritage project** combining the Musée de la musique's permanent collection (nearly 7,000 works) and temporary exhibitions that engage with contemporary creation,
- a **policy for music education and transmission** open to all aesthetics and all audiences (10,000 workshops per year).

Le Musée de la Musique-Philharmonie de Paris receives more than **1.2 million visitors per year**. It comprises:

- three concert halls (5,400 seats),
- 3,200 m<sup>2</sup> of exhibition space,
- 1,800 m<sup>2</sup> dedicated to musical education,
- 18 studios and rehearsal rooms,
- a media library.

The site is also home to five orchestras-in-residence: the Orchestre de Paris, the Ensemble intercontemporain, the Arts Florissants, the Orchestre de chambre de Paris and the Orchestre national d'Île de France.



### • Musée de la musique

The Musée national de la musique houses one of the finest collections of instruments in the world and presents a rich programme of temporary exhibitions. The collection includes more than **7,000 instruments and works of art**, of which almost 1,000 are on display in the permanent collection. The museum draws on the expertise of its curators and laboratory to develop and promote its exceptional heritage.





## CONTACTS

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