

TEMPLON



Press release
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PIERRE ET GILLES
THE COLOURS OF TIME
10 November – 30 December 2022



Les gopniks français (autoportrait), 2021
Photograph inkjet-printed on canvas and painted, framed by the artists
161.5 × 112.5 cm, unique work

Galerie Templon has chosen the subtly engaged work of Pierre et Gilles to see out 2022 on the Rue du Grenier Saint-Lazare space in Paris. With *The Colours of Time* exhibition, the couple, famed for their portraits where painting and photography meet, unveil a series full of sensitivity, bearing witness to the contradictions of our time.

In a carefully designed layout, Pierre et Gilles present the works they have produced over the last three years. Their paintings, all unique, are meticulously executed in the intimacy of the studio, using life-size custom-built sets. Pierre directs the initial photo session, with Gilles then undertaking a slow process of hand-painting directly onto the canvas print. The result, an artisanal and ambiguous photographic painting, offers a vision of the world that is both enchanting and disturbing, a universe where the sensuality of colour transfigures each subject.

The exhibition opens with a short series in homage to Ukraine. *The promise* and *The harvests of sorrow* delicately depict young Ukrainians weeping for lost innocence and peace. Opposite them, a masked self-portrait of the artists posing crouched like gopniks invites all of us together to watch over a world in full meltdown.

Their attentive, solemn and unconventional vision is then expressed through a vast gallery of portraits with contrasting atmospheres. Like a newspaper, the exhibition testifies to the turmoil of current events as well as the artists' many encounters and their most visceral concerns. For example, references to studio movies sit alongside a nod to visual artist Hans-Peter Feldmann. They reinvent archetypal characters: the Jean Genet-inspired romantic prisoner, the homeless man with a big heart, the young drug dealer from the suburbs, angelic beggars and nostalgic sailors. Strangers discovered on Instagram rub shoulders with their friends and a few familiar faces, such as actors Fanny Ardant and Tahar Rahim.

In the basement, religious subjects inhabit an underwater climate, where plastic waste from the ocean accompanies the descent into hell of creatures of darkness. Discreetly, unobtrusively, Pierre et Gilles thus evoke many of the issues debated by today's society, from questions of sexual identity to the phenomena of social exclusion, decriminalisation of soft drugs, religious tolerance and global warming. Neither unequivocal illustration nor manifesto, their work invites nuance, humour and questioning in an enchanted celebration of creativity and beauty.

Internationally renowned artists Pierre et Gilles have been producing works together since 1976, creating a world where painting and photography meet. Their art has been the focus of numerous major exhibitions, including a retrospective at the Maison européenne de la photographie in 1996, New York's New Museum in 2000, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Shanghai in 2005, and Jeu de Paume in Paris in 2007. In 2017, a comprehensive retrospective entitled *Clair-obscur* was held at the Brussels Musée d'Ixelles before moving to MuMa in Le Havre. In 2018, they exhibited at the K Museum of Contemporary Art in Seoul. In 2019, two major exhibitions, *La Fabrique des idoles* at the Cité de la Musique - Philharmonie de Paris and *Le goût du cinéma* at the La Malmaison art centre in Cannes, met with spectacular public and critical success. Most recently, in 2022, their work was the subject of the *Troubled Waters* exhibition at the Spritmuseum in Stockholm.

To accompany the exhibition, Editions Galerie Templon is publishing a catalogue with a text by Paul B. Preciado and interview with Edouard Louis.