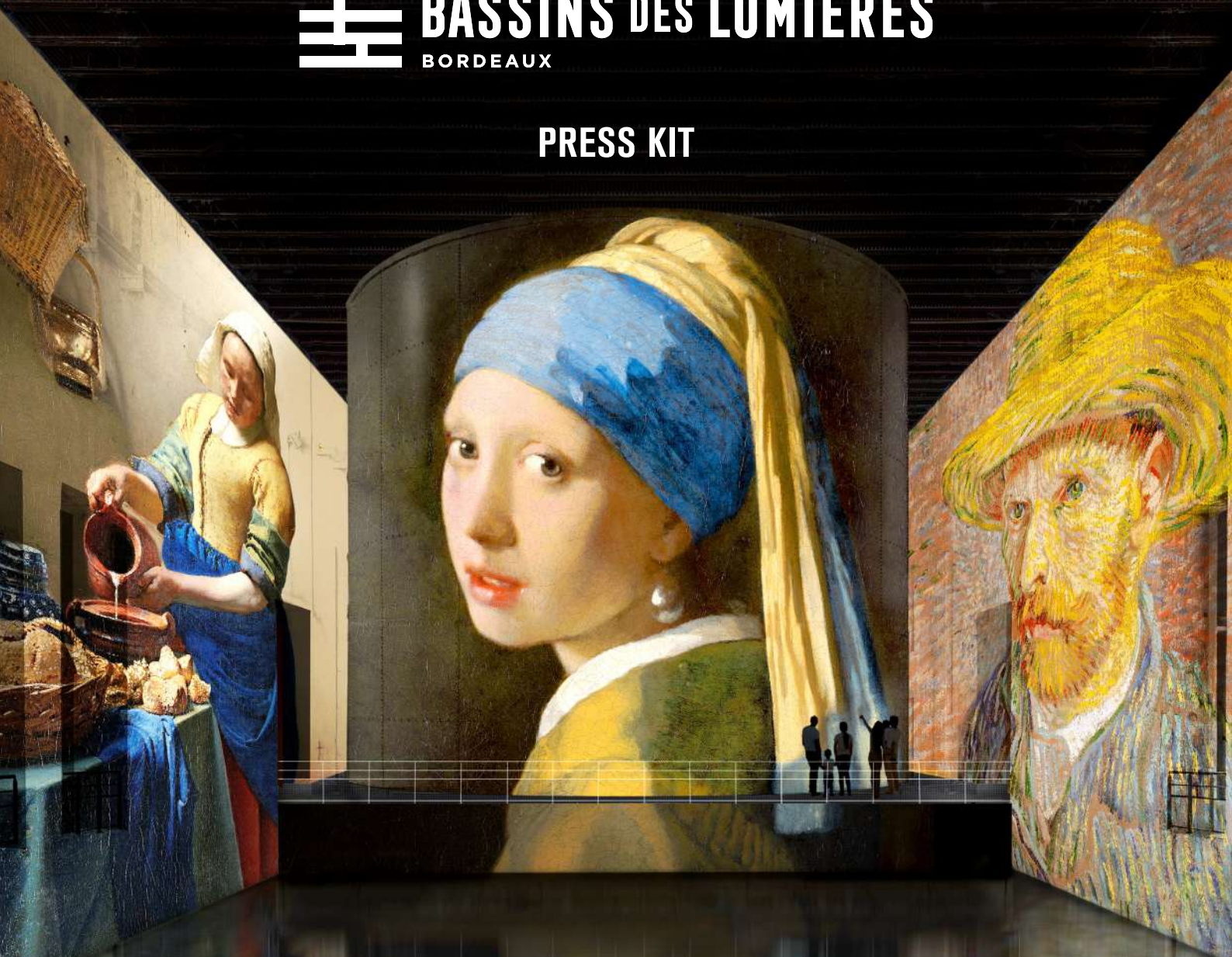


PRESS KIT



FROM VERMEER TO VAN GOGH

THE DUTCH MASTERS

16 FEBRUARY 2024 - 5 JANUARY 2025

ARTISTIC DIRECTION **VIRGINIE MARTIN** STAGING AND ANIMATION **CUTBACK**
MUSIC SUPERVISION AND MIXING **START REC** A **CULTURESPACES DIGITAL®** PRODUCTION

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FROM VERMEER TO VAN GOGH, THE DUTCH MASTERS & MONDRIAN, THE ARCHITECT OF COLOURS

FROM 16 FEBRUARY 2024 TO 5 JANUARY 2025

In 2024, Bassins des Lumières will present two new immersive exhibitions: a long program, 'From Vermeer to Van Gogh, the Dutch masters', and a short program, 'Mondrian, the architect of colours'.

LONG PROGRAM:

From Vermeer to Van Gogh, the Dutch masters

Production: Culturespaces Digital ®

Artistic Direction: Virginie Martin

Staging and video animation: Cutback

Music supervision and mixing: Start Rec

This digital exhibition presents the genius of the painters of the North through a complete immersion in authentic paintings that are faithful representations of nature and its themes. The monumental basins are the perfect setting for a daydream along the Flemish canals. Spectators will explore the reality of daily life, following in the footsteps of the great masters who represented the ordinary in an extraordinary way.

Painting light and atmosphere is the exhibition's main theme. Direct or subdued, cold or warm, the light reveals the facades and the privacy of family homes. Spectators will set sail and berth their boats in the cities and stroll around in Vermeer's world, in which the inhabitants invite us to step into the canvas. Much like a filmmaker, Vermeer chooses what to include inside the frame and creates a world suspended in time. His canvases are like synopses that open the doors to an almost Hitchcockian mystery, in which the spectator becomes a part of the *mise en scène*.

Master of chiaroscuro, Rembrandt encourages introspection. Night falls in the heart of cathedrals, immersing the visitor in a spiritual atmosphere surrounded by biblical themes. An unrivalled portraitist who achieved a powerful realism, his *Night Watch* brings the procession of portraits to a climactic end. From Abraham Blommaert's kingdom of the gods to Hendrick Avercamp's expanses of ice, the seascapes by Hendrick Cornelisz Vroom and Jan Steen's festive tavern scenes, the exhibition plunges visitors into the fascinating world of seventeenth-century Holland.

Van Gogh, a worthy successor to these seventeenth-century painters, takes us under the summer and night skies of the South of France. Using bright colours and imbuing his work with intense emotion, he sculpted the paint and sublimated the landscapes, self-portraits, and still lifes. Like a final colourful bouquet, the spectator is surrounded by nocturnal and dreamlike paintings, losing their way in the stars.

SHORT PROGRAM:**Mondrian, the architect of colours**

Production: Culturespaces Digital ®

Artistic Direction: Virginie Martin

Staging and video animation : Cutback

Music supervision and mixing: Start Rec

“Nature moves me profoundly. Only I paint it in a different manner.” Piet Mondrian

This immersive exhibition presents Mondrian’s iconic works, composed of squares of primary colour, which have long inspired artists of every kind and influenced pop culture. Graphic design, fashion, design, architecture, music... Mondrian created an aesthetic and timeless grammar that opened the way to abstraction.

What lies behind this apparent minimalism and these bright and bold paintings? In an interplay of horizontal and vertical lines and moving from the figurative to the abstract, this immersive exhibition follows the artistic development of the painter, who broke away from traditional painting and immersed himself in visionary painting: Neoplasticism.

Like his life, his art was permeated by the upheavals at the beginning of the twentieth century: the change from candlelight to fluorescent lighting; from Calvinist austerity to the emergence of a modern rhythmic jazz, and from the linear Dutch landscapes to the dizzyingly high skyscrapers in Manhattan... Mondrian’s life is illustrated by these major opposing dynamics, which, once expressed on the canvas, find a perfect equilibrium, that is magnified by the monumental basins of Bassins des Lumières.

Naturalistic, Fauve, Pointillist, Cubist, Abstract... each period is gradually freed of the superfluous in order to express ‘general beauty’ in painting. This immersive experience, divided into five sections, retraces the path to visual simplification: the contrast of the Dutch sunsets, the power of colour that broke away from realism, the dynamics created by the lines that became rigid, the proportion of the surfaces in his Parisian studio, and the boundless energy of his work in New York.

ARTISTIC PROJECT TEAM

Culturespaces Digital

The entity Culturespaces Digital ®, created by Culturespaces for its digital art centres, has three activities:

- Culturespaces Digital Design, responsible for designing and creating digital art centres.
- Culturespaces Digital Tech, which coordinates the use of cutting-edge technologies for the presentation of digital exhibitions with optimal sound and image quality.
- Culturespaces Digital Studio, responsible for producing diverse digital exhibitions: long-, short-, and special-format traditional, modern, and contemporary immersive digital exhibitions.

Virginie Martin

As a digital artist and architect, Virginie Martin explores the continual interaction between people and large scale images. For more than ten years, she has been creating video mappings, digital scenographies, and immersive exhibitions.

She has collaborated on various shows and installations in France (the Grand Palais in Paris, the Nîmes Amphitheatre, the Hôtel de Caumont in Aix-en-Provence, the Musée de la Renaissance in Ecouen, the Cathédrale d'Orléans, the Château de Maintenon, etc) and abroad (the Big-O Show in South Korea, the Fiesta de Luz in San Luis Potosí, Mexico, Bonjour India Bhargal in India, The Saga in San Antonio in the USA, Medellin Amor in Colombia).

Cutback

Founded in 2007 by Romain Perussel, Thomas Bellenger, and Grégory Lecourt, Cutback Live is one of the foremost French video scenography studios. Cutback has been collaborating with Culturespaces for several years in order to produce spectacular images that completely immerse visitors in the world of the artists it highlights.

Start-Rec

Start-Rec is a music production agency, that creates for brands a unique and coherent musical universe that brings visual projects to life. Convinced that sound is an essential component of human emotion and that it governs the relationship between brands and individuals, Start-Rec has specialized in the design of premium, meaningful and emotional sonorous objects.

The soundtrack was entirely created by Start-Rec.



'FROM VERMEER TO VAN GOGH, THE DUTCH MASTERS' ITINERAY

Prologue

The exhibition begins with a calm sea. In the distance, behind the dense fog, the spectator can see urban panoramas dominated by a low sky laden with clouds. The Dutch masters of the Golden Age invite people to discover their land surrounded by nature, where the sea meets the linear skylines of the cities, broken by several windmills and steeples. Leyden, Haarlem, Delft... These cities's school in the United Provinces saw the emergence of some of the greatest artists of the seventeenth century.

Vermeer's famous *View of Delft* draws the visitor into the city, through one of the painter's rare landscape paintings, in which the light illuminates the colourful facades, which later captivated Camille Pissarro and Marcel Proust. The stroll continues in the cities, in which the visitor walks along brick facades with their colourful shutters, discovering the towns-people and their daily chores in the rear courtyards, characteristic of Dutch architecture. The spectator comes to a halt before the façade of Vermeer's *Little Street*, over which night gradually settles.



Johannes Vermeer, *View of Delft*, c. 1660-1661, oil on canvas, 96.5 x 115.7 cm, Mauritshuis, The Hague
© Mauritshuis, The Hague

Dutch society

Behind the brick facade of Vermeer's *Little Street*, the city awakens and comes to life, revealing the residents captured in their everyday activities. Framed within the windows, the inhabitants share their intimacy. Busy ladies, servants, dealers, scholars, and doctors painted from direct observation are revealed, just like a photography of a familiar scene. Johannes Vermeer, Gabriel Metsu, Frans van Mieris, and Pieter de Hooch, the specialists in genre painting, mirrored a prosperous and serene society, inviting visitors to immerse themselves in a moral and austere way of life. The sun gradually rises and the silvery light seeps in the quietness of the interiors, in which each detail and object actively engages the visitor in a potential narrative.

The Northern artists produced many works on similar themes and travelled to observe the ones of their colleagues. They compared their canvases forming a great network of artists, which took the theme of intimate domestic scenes even further, attaining a form of perfection in the seventeenth century.



Gabriel Metsu, *Man Writing a Letter*, 1664-1666, oil on wood panel, 52.5 x 40.2 cm, National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin © akg-images



Johannes Vermeer, *Little street*, c. 1658, oil on canvas, 54.3 x 44 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Photo: Rijksmuseum - CC0 1.0

Vermeer and the genre scene

Behind the heavy curtains, Johannes Vermeer invites the visitor into the heart of an intimate domestic scene. Surrounded by a world of silence and contemplation, the visitor becomes an indispensable part of the composition. Genre painting was a pictorial theme perfected by the master of light, who observed everyday life and presented a precious and refined interpretation of his subjects, within a cinematic vision. The scene takes place in minimalist and contemplative interiors, conceived as veritable stage sets flooded by the painter's light. The presence of the windows lets the outside world enter these confined scenes where his female figures, such as *The Milkmaid* and *The Lacemaker*, are thoroughly engaged in their painstaking tasks. Freed from superficial details, in a hazy atmosphere, Vermeer represents the invisible through domestic activity, inviting the visitor to imagine the narrative that will unlock the mystery.

Through his brilliant use of colour, the artist paints the drapery and reflections: the light skims the faces and highlights the subjects with dramatic tension, using an unprecedented technique. *Girl With a Pearl Earring* exerts a fascinating power of attraction with its yellow paired with ultramarine blue, the artist's signature colours that Van Gogh would later admire in his writings.



Johannes Vermeer, *The Art of Painting*, 1666-1668, oil on canvas, 120 x 100 cm, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Wien, Photo : akg-images



Johannes Vermeer, *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, 1665, oil on canvas, 44.5 x 39 cm, Mauritshuis, La Haye, Photo: Mauritshuis, The Hague

The art of music

The fourth art was a recurrent theme in genre painting. The refined atmosphere in Vermeer's works and the hedonistic one in Gerrit van Honthorst's paintings allow the visitor to interact in a music lesson, attend a concert or join a duo. Typical of seventeenth-century bourgeois upbringings, the studious atmosphere of the female players of virginals, lutes, and violas da gamba is highlighted by Vermeer's enhanced representation. To the viewer's imagination, this leaves traces of romance that can be read in the subjects' facial expressions. Being a music lover, the lid of the virginal in Vermeer's *The Music Lesson* bears the inscription 'musica laetitiae comes medicina dolorum', which means 'Music is the companion of joy, the medicine for sorrow'.

After this cosy atmosphere, the mood becomes lighter amongst the twirling feathers and the conniving cupids, in the concert scenes by Gerrit van Honthorst. The painting conveys the pleasure of joining the colourful festivities, in which the music resonates with great exultation. Influenced by Caravaggio's chiaroscuro, he then invites the visitor to night-time candlelit scenes, with the festive musicians painted by Frans Hals and Hendrick ter Brugghen.



Gerrit van Honthorst, *Musical Group on a Balcony*, 1622, oil on panel, 309.9 x 216.4 cm, J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, photo: digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program

The faith

The exhibition continues with a stroll in churches, inviting reflection and promoting spiritual healing. Freed from religious repression in the seventeenth century, the United Provinces was a land in which there was freedom of worship, with all faiths represented. Vermeer, who converted to Catholicism, painted what is considered to be his last work: *Allegory of Faith*. The Faith is embodied by a female figure who rules the world, in an interior with a black and white checkerboard floor on which are scattered Christian symbols such as the apple and the snake.

Very different from the Baroque style that prevailed in Catholic Europe, the Calvinist church promoted sobriety and architectural simplicity. Emmanuel de Witte and Hendrick Cornelisz Vilet painted whitewashed church interiors, devoid of any decoration, that show the quest for austerity with an absence of decorative elements.

The natural light creates a sensation of realism and highlights the volumes by accentuating the contrasts of full and empty spaces. Night gradually falls over the church's interior, and Rembrandt - the absolute master of chiaroscuro - highlights the biblical episodes in divine apparitions.



Johannes Vermeer, *Allegory of the Catholic Faith*, c. 1670-1672, oil on canvas, 114.3 x 88.9 cm, The Friedsam Collection, Bequest of Michael Friedsam, 1931, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York - CC0 1.0

The portrait

The portrait was a pictorial genre that prevailed during the Dutch Golden Age. In an earthy and warm palette, Rembrandt explored the light and dark contrasts, textures and tones. In a solemn atmosphere dominated by brown tones, Rembrandt focused on capturing facial expressions and emotions highlighted by light. Precursor of the 'selfie', he observed himself in the mirror, studied his facial expressions, and closely examined the details of ageing skin, an expression wrinkle, or the tenuous lightness of a strand of hair. Inspired by his engraving work, in contrast with characteristically smooth seventeenth-century painting, he 'carved' his face in the paint, painting himself without embellishment and without artifice, imbuing his extensive pictorial autobiography with truth. The works are revealed 'under a magnifying glass', and scaled to match the size of the place, so that one can observe the reflection of passing time in his self-portraits.

The gallery of self-portraits is replaced by *The Night Watch*, which is brought to life. This group portrait of Amsterdam's militia is distinguished by a convincing asymmetrical composition, which creates a sense of movement towards the viewers as they observe the civic guards in a great state of bustle and confusion amongst the lances and rifles. In this work, the faint light introduced by Rembrandt to enhance the narrative makes it a masterpiece of chiaroscuro.



Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Night Watch*, 1642, oil on canvas, 379.5 x 453.5 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam
Photo: Rijksmuseum - CC0 1.0

The Feast of the gods

Abraham Bloemaert, the founder of the Utrecht School, invites the viewer to a banquet of the gods, from which emerge huge voluptuous and brightly coloured figures from mythological scenes.

The atmosphere then becomes more feminine with Rembrandt's works: he painted the goddesses Flora, Danae, Athena and Artemis with human faces. They are represented in a highly intimate manner and with sincerity, enveloped in a soft and warm light.

The Feast of the Gods by Cornelis van Poelenburgh, whose master was none other than Abraham Bloemaert, invites the visitor to 'climb into the heavens' and sit at a large divine table in the clouds, suspended in the sky.



Cornelis van Poelenburgh, *Council of the Gods*, 1630, oil on copper, 38 x 49 cm, Mauritshuis, La Haye, credit photo: akg-images



Rembrandt van Rijn, *Flora*, 1634, oil on canvas 125 x 101 cm, The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
Photo : akg-images

A popular saga

Natural settings appeared and became a genre of its own in seventeenth-century Dutch paintings. Jan van Goyen and Jacob van Ruisdael set the scene for a bucolic stroll through calm and peaceful landscapes with windmills and lowlands, in which the cloud-filled skies dominate the compositions and imbue the works with a unique northern atmosphere. In this pastoral setting in the Dutch hinterlands, the animal painters Paulus Potter and Melchior d'Hondecoeter produced works of real interest with their detailed and realistic depictions of farm and farmyard scenes.

While the Dutch countryside in the Golden Age appears on the walls, Jan Steen invites the viewer to view village festivals, family gatherings, lively tavern scenes, and the joyful peasants and bourgeois characters sitting around tables with an abundance of food made by the protagonists of the works of Gerrit Dou. The masters depicted a festive society, which invites the viewer to join in the festivities.



Jan Steen, *Beware of Luxury*, 1663, oil on canvas, 105 cm x 145.5 cm, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Wien
© Luisa Ricciarini / Bridgeman Images

Winter scenes

An icy wind whips up the snowflakes that are swirling in the air and covers in white the roofs of the cottages and churches, the rotors of the windmills, and the ships' masts. Winter sets in on the polders, the lakes, and frozen canals, which now provide the inhabitants with a veritable rink. Amongst the Dutch, ice skating was the main festive winter activity. The whole population put on their skates and had fun in the open air playing kolf (the forerunner to ice hockey) or riding sledges on the ice.

Jacob van Ruisdael's paintings of deserted landscapes and Hendrick Avercamp's paintings of crowded ones contributed to the popularity surge of this theme of winter scenes in the seventeenth century. Indeed, during this time, the fascination with nature and depicting weather conditions was brought to the forefront and reached a peak.



Hendrick Avercamp, *Winter Landscape with Skaters*, c. 1608, oil on panel, 77.3 x 131.9 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam
© Rijksmuseum - CC0 1.0

The conquest of the seas

Towards the end of the seventeenth century, the Dutch fleet dominated global maritime trade and the world map developed thanks to some of Europe's most remarkable mathematicians and astronomers and their mastery of cartography. *The Astronomer* and *The Geographer*, two scientists depicted by Vermeer, open up the horizon and invite the visitor to set sail for the high seas.

In a nation of sea-hardened sailors, the Dutch sailed against wind and tide on a choppy sea, plunged into the tumult of the storms, showing the wild and untamed nature in the paintings by Ludolf Backhuysen and Willem van de Velde the Younger. The country also waged sea battles, painted by Hendrick Cornelisz Vroom, in particular against the Spanish, and its English rivals who wanted to halt the country's maritime expansion into the Atlantic.

The powerful Dutch empire that extended from Brazil to the islands of Indonesia (including the port of Amsterdam, which became the world's most urban and affluent city) gave its inhabitants a sense of prosperity and abundance, as attested by the objects of curiosity and exotic fruits of the *Stilleven* (still lifes).



Willem van de Velde the Younger, *A Ship on the High Seas Caught by a Squall*, known as *'The Gust'*, c. 1680, oil on canvas, 77 x 63.5 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam
© Rijksmuseum - CC0 1.0

Stilleven

In a world of slow contemplation, there is an abundance of luxury collectibles in the Stilleven, sorts of still lifes that celebrated the existing social order and its values under the calming effect of movement that was quietly arrested under the brush of the Dutch masters. The dining room decor is illuminated by a ray of light that brings to life the gleaming engraved silverware and the exotic fruits. They were painted in a manner that enhances their palatability, making the viewer dream about a potential feast. In a veritable quest for realism, Willem Claesz Heda experimented the effects of light on the volumes, the harmonies and contrasts of colours, and the relief and texture of objects of varying materials, visible in his works that are anchored in the present.

To celebrate the vibrant nature found in Dutch painting, Rachel Ruysch's exotic flowers invade the interior of the home with their colourful blooms, like a final bouquet that brought the golden century to an end.



Rachel Ruysch, *Still Life with Flowers on a Marble Tabletop*, 1716, oil on canvas, 48.5 x 39.5 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Photo: Rijksmuseum - CC0 1.0

Van Gogh, a journey into colour

As a worthy heir of the landscapes, still lifes, and portraiture of the Dutch masters of the Golden Age, Vincent van Gogh invites the visitor to leave Holland and follow him on a journey from Paris to Provence, revealing his perception of the colours inspired by his immediate environment.

Leaving behind the realism of the flowers painted in the Golden Age of Dutch art, the visitor discovers the visionary master's organic and vivid paint strokes, which, through the floral motifs and self-portraits, give the exhibition a contemporary touch, enhanced by the use of complementary colours which became a key element of Van Gogh's pictorial language.

The Parisian scene encouraged Van Gogh to continue with his study of colour and give up the dark and muted tones he had used. The first stop on the journey into colour reveals the artist's painted works, from Paris to Auvers-sur-Oise, under the silvery light of northern France, which lightened the artist's palette.

The journey continues in the footsteps of the painter, whose work was then scarred with the heat of the Midi, revealing the powerful rays of sunlight that further brightened his color range. Orange, ochre, red, olive green, and lavender... nature is depicted with the colours that inspired the artist's masterpieces. In the wheat fields, the last sunrays take the visitors into a Mediterranean siesta that leads to a dreamlike starry night. Immersed in an oneiric whirlwind by disorientating swirls of colour, the visitors end their journey with their heads in the stars.



Vincent van Gogh, *The Starry Night*, 1889, oil on canvas, 73.7 x 92.1 cm, Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest (by exchange), Museum of Modern Art, New York, Photo: Bridgeman Images



Vincent van Gogh, *The Meridian*, 1889-1890, oil on canvas, 73 x 91 cm, musée d'Orsay, Paris, Photo: © Frank Buffettrille. All rights reserved 2022 / Bridgeman Images

SOUNDTRACK 'FROM VERMEER TO VAN GOGH, THE DUTCH MASTERS'

13 Pieces for Piano, Op. 76: II. Etude - Ólafur Arnalds - Göran Söllscher ; Jian Wang

Father Is Not Having It - Nitin Sawhney

Alcina, HWV 34 / Act II: "Ah, mio cor" - Haendel - Magdalena Kožená, Andrea Marcon, Venice Baroque Orchestra

Pieces for Clavecin, First Book 1746: 6. L'Aimable (Gracieux) - Christophe Rousset

6.6 Gigue - Ben Chappell, Katherine Jenkinson, Peter Gregson, Reinoud Ford, Richard Harwood, Tim Lowe

Benedictus - Christian Forshaw, Voces8

You're Not Meant to Be Here - Andrew Hewitt

Romeo and Juliet, Op. 64: No. 13 Dance of the Knights - Prokofiev - Mark Ermler, Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden

Lakmé 'The Flowers Duet' - *Delibes* - Anthony Inglis, Katherine Jenkins, Kiri Te Kanawa, Philharmonia Orchestra

There will be hope - Hania Rani

Glassworks: Opening - Reworked by Christian Badzura - Christian Badzura, Philip Glass, Sigg String Quartet, Vikingur Olafsson

Guillaume Tell Overture - Rossini - Antonio de Almeida, Moscow Symphony Orchestra, Edvard Shakhnazarian

Svefn-g-englar - Sigur Ros

Baroque Harpsichord and Strings - Rafael Krux

Pyramid Song - John Lubbock, Radiohead

Feeling Good - Nina Simone

Outro - M83

SOUNDTRACK 'MONDRIAN, THE ARCHITECT OF COLOURS'

Brot - Ólafur Arnalds

Madagascar - Sofiane Pamart

Sophora Japonica - Rone (Arrangement: Start Rec.
Cello: Mathilde Sternat)

Unsquare Dance - The Dave Brubeck Quartet

The Birth Of A Band - Quincy Jones

It Don't Mean a Thing - Thelonious Monk



Simulation of the immersive exhibition 'Mondrian, the architect of colours'
© Cutback / Culturespaces Digital

CONTEMPORARY CREATION 'FOREIGN NATURE'

Production: Culturespaces Digital ®

Direction & Design: Julius Horsthuis

Music: Ben Lukas Boysen

In 'Foreign Nature', Julius Horsthuis employs computer generated fractals to create a universe where mathematics and art coalesce seamlessly, where the secular and the spiritual harmonize, where the differences between the organic and the artificial, the macro and the micro all blend into a strange and unseen universe.

Organized in two parts, visitors travel first through mysterious industrial and mechanical landscapes - made of endless spaceships moving into space or multilayered church-looking structures - and then into enigmatic organic alien-like landscapes and forms. From a mutating vegetal cathedral to a breathing hybrid organic-machine heart, it is easy to see in these worlds familiar forms that are part of our existence or have shaped our fantasies and dreams. The music of Ben Lukas Boysen made specifically for the show accompanies visitors in this journey, meshing these extraordinary views with a thrilling and spiritual touch.

"My kind of art can be compared with the art of a photographer, a cinematographer or a documentary maker, it is showing something that exists, like the fractal exists. I didn't create it, I didn't come up with it, I found it. And I'm trying to show that journey of discovery and that is where the creative part comes in." – Julius Horsthuis

Julius Horstuis

Born in 1980 in The Netherlands, Julius Horsthuis is a digital artist known for his extensive use of fractals. His creations have been showcased in notable films and series like the Academy Award-winning *Manchester by the Sea* (2016), *Koning van Katoren* (2012) and *Guillermo del Toro's Cabinet of Curiosities* (2022), as well as at various music and art festivals such as Coachella Music and Arts Festival, IDFA, Art Futura, and the SAT Symposium in Montreal.

Ben Lukas Boysen

Composer, producer and sound designer. With several albums to his credit, often using the alias HECQ, Ben Lukas Boysen specializes in crafting custom sound designs for films, commercials, video games, and installations. In 2011, he made his debut in film scoring with *Restive*, followed by the release of his first solo album in 2013. He received acclaim for his award-winning score in 2016 for the Sony Playstation game, *Everything*.



© Julius Horsthuis

CONTEMPORARY CREATION 'KAZE, TALES OF THE WIND'

Production: Culturespaces Digital ®

Direction and design: Niels Prayer

Music: Niels Prayer

Kaze (かせ - the wind in Japanese) is a ten-minute immersive digital art project that plunges us into the heart of a colorful world in pursuit of a flying bird. Immersion and exhilaration will be at the heart of this experience.

At the bottom of his cage, the bird **Hi** ひ (flame in Japanese) hopes to one day reunite with his kind. He must take off and search for them wherever the wind leads him.

As the last one held captive after all his peers had already escaped, he will embark on the trail of his two brothers, **Konoha** このは (bird with shades of tree leaves) and **Mizu** みず (bird with water hues). The birds' past presence is evoked in the form of spirit-birds. Through scenes assembled in a single long take, he wanders across the world of wind and air, up to the ending where everyone manages to return to the Tree House, far, high up in the skies.

His journey takes him to discover villages of floating windmills, encounter herds of kites, weather an electric storm, or peacefully soar among lantern nebulae as night falls.

Niels Prayer is a French director, motion designer, and music composer.

Throughout his career, he has focused on exploration and finding new ways to tell stories and create images. A hiking and camping enthusiast, the themes of large rural spaces and our relation with the world resonate through all his visual and audio work. The planet and its nature, its people and encounters are an endless source of wonderment and enchantment. As a musician and classical composer by training, he has made it one of his priorities to try and set his sounds and music to images in order to give each of his works a unique quality. In recent years, he has had the chance to work on diverse projects that have given him a great experience, ranging from advertising, video clips, and long and short films to children's books, while varying and combining techniques, in both abstract 3D motion design, FX 3D effects and 2D digital illustration (vector graphics).

Music

The musical piece 'Kaze - Orchestral Suite' is an original ten-minute-long orchestral composition designed to be halfway between a classical symphony movement and film music.



© Niels Prayer

BASSINS DES LUMIÈRES, A DIGITAL ART CENTRE MANAGED BY CULTURESPACES

Established by Culturespaces, the Bassins des Lumières, located in Bordeaux's former submarine base, holds monumental immersive exhibitions devoted to major artists in the history of art and contemporary artists and today's major themes, such as the conquest of space and comic strips. The venue opened on the 10th of June 2020 and is the largest digital art centre in the world, representing 3 times the surface area of the Carrières des Lumières in Les Baux-de-Provence and 5 times the size of the Atelier des Lumières in Paris.

Culturespaces, founded in 1990 by Bruno Monnier, is the leading private operator in the management and promotion of historical monuments, museums, and art centres. Since 2012, Culturespaces has also become a pioneer in the creation of digital art centres and immersive digital exhibitions.

With CULTURESPACES DIGITAL®, Culturespaces works with teams and has expertise, in France and worldwide, that encompasses the design and creation of digital art centres. It has technological expertise for holding exhibitions, the production and cataloguing of immersive digital exhibitions, and the presentation of the works of classical, modern, and contemporary artists.

Digital art centres:

- Carrières des Lumières, Les Baux-de-Provence (since 2012)
- Atelier des Lumières, Paris (since 2018)
- Bunker des Lumières, Jeju (since 2018)
- Bassins des Lumières, Bordeaux (since 2020)
- Hall des Lumières, New York (since 2022)
- Fabrique des Lumières, Amsterdam (since 2022)
- Théâtre des Lumières, Seoul (since 2022)
- Phoenix des Lumières, Dortmund (since 2023)
- Port des Lumières, Hambourg (opening in 2024)

CULTURE FOR CHILDREN

The 'Immersion in art' programme is a national project developed by Culture for Children that aims to facilitate access to an Artistic and Cultural Education, by exploring the potential of immersive digital art as a medium for art. Every year in France, 7,000 children between the ages of five and twelve take part in the programme.

The project's educational and creative content is developed in connection with the immersive digital exhibitions held in three digital art centres: Atelier des Lumières in Paris, Carrières des Lumières in Les Baux-de-Provence, and Bassins des Lumières in Bordeaux.

Composed of several parts, 'Immersion in Art' enables children to discover an artist and his world in an original way. Hence, the educational and creative workshops created by Culture for Children and the discovery of an immersive digital art centre provide children with an opportunity to apprehend new artistic media through a unique cultural itinerary.

To tackle the inequalities seen in accessing art and heritage, in 2009, **Culture for Children** (ex-Culturespaces Foundation) began creating and launching educational programmes for children affected by illness, disability or social deprivation. These programmes enable them to enjoy unique artistic and cultural experiences to pique their interest and help them grow and thrive.

Every year in France, almost 13,000 children aged 5-12 participate in our fun, educational programmes, organised in collaboration with around ten exceptional cultural sites and local social and educational stakeholders. Our programmes form a truly creative journey, organised in several stages by our external mediators who intervene during class time or outside school hours. By boosting awareness of culture, art and heritage in an inclusive and engaging manner, Culture for Children combines solidarity with creativity. Created more than ten years ago with the primary goal of encouraging the social integration of young people through culture, today Culture for Children is one of the leading French players in the area of artistic and cultural education for vulnerable children.

Culture for Children includes each year:

- 4 regions in which educational programmes are run
- 5 educational and cultural programmes
- 800 teaching workshops run by our mediators
- More than 500 partner institutions (schools, hospitals, social facilities etc)
- 13 000 children given access to culture



© Culture for children (2022) - C. de la Motte Rouge



Contact

Nadège Béglé,
nadege.begle@culturespaces.com
+ 33 (0)1 56 59 01 70

BRUNO MONNIER, FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF CULTURESPACES



30 years dedicated to historic monuments, museums, traditional and digital exhibitions. Creator of digital art centres.

With degrees from Sciences Po Paris, Université Paris II Assas and an MBA from HEC, art-loving Bruno Monnier joined the French Ministry of Culture in 1986 as project leader on the Patrimoine 2000 commission and to help reorganise the Château de Versailles. He left the ministry in 1988 to create Culturespaces, a company inspired by the British model, under which most monuments and museums are managed by private organisations. Culturespaces started out by advising regional authorities, private owners and public establishments on how to promote and manage their monuments and museums.

In 1992, the Académie des Beaux-Arts asked him to manage the Ephrussi de Rothschild Villa in Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat, whose gardens he had renovated. In 1996, the Institut de France entrusted him with the management of the Jacquemart-André museum in Paris and its exhibitions. Other authorities signed public service delegation contracts for the management of monuments, museums and exhibitions. He was ultimately managing 15 establishments with 450 employees, directing major temporary exhibitions and organising live shows and concerts.

Bruno Monnier created the Culturespaces Foundation in 2009 whose mission is to encourage access to art and heritage and to fight the cultural exclusion of certain children suffering from illness, disabilities or made vulnerable by poverty or social exclusion. The Culturespaces Foundation has become the independent fund of endowment Culture for Children. It currently welcomes over 13,000 children each year to the establishments managed by Culturespaces.

In 2012, Bruno Monnier opened Carrières des Lumières in Les Baux-de-Provence for Culturespaces; it is now the region's most visited cultural site. He created a new cultural venue in Aix-en-Provence in 2013: Hôtel de Caumont. After an exemplary restoration project and the creation of new gardens, he turned the site into an art centre to host famous temporary exhibitions.

In 2015, he came up with the 21st century museum for Culturespaces using works of art and music supported by digital technology. He decided to create Atelier des Lumières, his first digital art centre, in a former foundry in the 11th arrondissement of Paris. Atelier des Lumières was inaugurated in 2018 and welcomed more 5 million visitors since. Then, in 2020, he created Bassins des Lumières in the submarine base in Bordeaux, which is the world's largest immersive digital art centre. International development continued with the 2018 opening of Bunker des Lumières in Jeju (South Korea), and Infinity des Lumières in Dubai in 2021. Three new digital art centres opened in 2022 in Amsterdam, New York and Seoul. Two digital art centres open in Germany, in 2023 in Dortmund and in Hambourg in 2024.

VISUALS AVAILABLE FOR THE PRESS



Johannes Vermeer, *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, 1665, oil on canvas, 44.5 x 39 cm, Mauritshuis, The Hague, Photo: Mauritshuis, The Hague



Johannes Vermeer, *The Art of Painting*, 1666-1668, oil on canvas, 120 x 100 cm, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Wien, Photo: akg-images



Gerrit van Honthorst, *Musical Group on a Balcony*, 1622, oil on panel, 309.9 x 216.4 cm, J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, Photo: digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program



Rachel Ruysch, *Still Life with Flowers on a Marble Tabletop*, 1716, oil on canvas, 48.5 x 39.5 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Photo: Rijksmuseum - CC0 1.0



Gabriel Metsu, *Man Writing a Letter*, 1664-1666, oil on panel, 52.5 x 40.2 cm, National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin © akg-images



Willem van de Velde the elder, *A Ship on the High Seas Caught by a Squall, known as 'The Gust'*, c. 1680, oil on canvas, 77 x 63.5 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam © Rijksmuseum - CC0 1.0



Johannes Vermeer, *The Little Street*, c. 1658, oil on canvas, 54.3 x 44 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Photo: Rijksmuseum - CC0 1.0



Johannes Vermeer, *Allegory of the Catholic Faith*, c. 1670-1672, oil on canvas, 114.3 x 88.9 cm, The Friedsam Collection, Bequest of Michael Friedsam, 1931, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York - CC0 1.0



Rembrandt van Rijn, *Flora*, 1634, oil on canvas, 125 x 101 cm, The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, Photo : akg-images



Jan Steen, *Beware of Luxury*, 1663, oil on canvas, 105 cm x 145.5 cm, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Wien © Luisa Ricciarini / Bridgeman Images



Cornelis van Poelenburch, *Council of the Gods*, 1630, oil on copper, 38 x 49 cm, Mauritshuis, The Hague, Credit photo: akg-images



Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Night Watch*, 1642, oil on canvas, 379.5 x 453.5 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Photo: Rijksmuseum - CC0 1.0



Johannes Vermeer, *View of Delft*, c. 1660-1661, oil on canvas, 96.5 x 115.7 cm, Mauritshuis, The Hague © Mauritshuis, The Hague



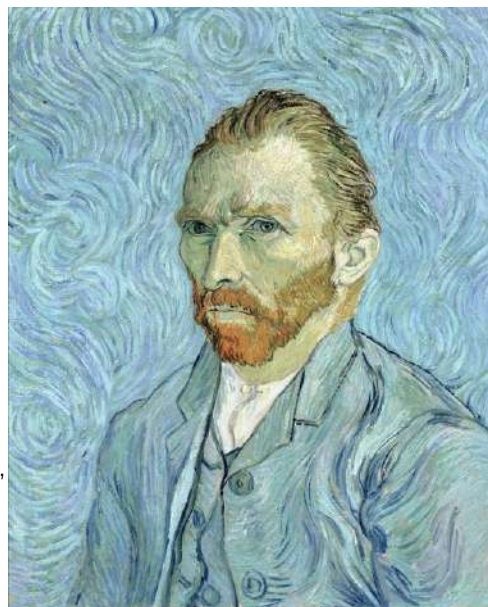
Vincent van Gogh, *The Starry Night*, 1889, oil on canvas, 73.7 x 92.1 cm, Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest (by exchange), Museum of Modern Art, New York, Photo: Bridgeman Images



Vincent van Gogh, *The Meridian*, 1889-1890, oil on canvas, 73 x 91 cm, musée d'Orsay, Paris, Photo: © Frank Buffettrille. All rights reserved 2023 / Bridgeman Images



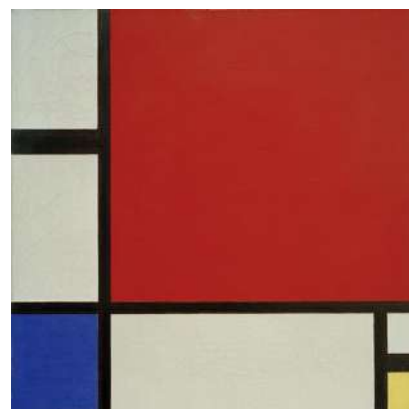
Vincent van Gogh, *Self-portrait with straw hat*, 1887, oil on canvas, 40,6 x 31,8 cm, Gift of Mme Adélaïde Milton de Groot (1876-1967), 1967, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York © CC0 1.0 Universal/ www.metmuseum.org



Vincent van Gogh, *Self-portrait*, 1889, oil on canvas, 65 x 54,2 cm, Gift of Paul and Marguerite Gachet, Dr. Gachet's children, 1949, musée d'Orsay, Paris, Photo: Bridgeman Images



Hendrick Avercamp, *Winter Landscape with Skaters*, c. 1608, oil on panel, 77.3 x 131.9 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam © Rijksmuseum - CC0 1.0



Piet Mondrian, *Composition with Red, Blue and Yellow*, 1930, oil on canvas, 45 x 45 cm, Donated by Alfred Roth, 1987, Kunsthaus Zürich, Photo: akg-images

Credit for all the visuals below: Photograph of the immersive exhibition 'From Vermeer to Van Gogh, the Dutch masters' © Culturespaces / Vincent Pinson



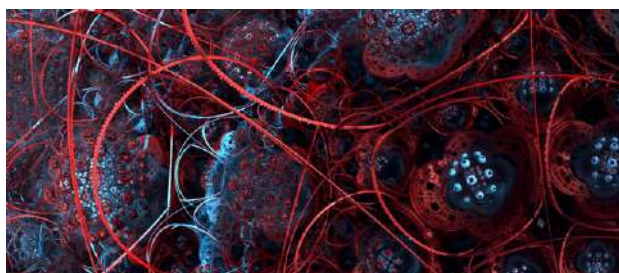
Credit for all the 4 visuals below: Photograph of the immersive exhibition 'From Vermeer to Van Gogh, the Dutch masters' © Culturespaces / Vincent Pinson



Simulation of the immersive exhibition 'Mondrian, the architect of colours' © Cutback / Culturespaces Digital



© Niels Prayer



© Julius Horsthuis



© Julius Horsthuis

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Access

Base sous-marine de Bordeaux (submarine base) - Impasse Brown de Colstoun, 33 300 Bordeaux

By road

A10, then the A630/E5/E606 bypass. Take exit 4 'Zone Industrielle Blanquefort, Bordeaux-Nord'. Proceed down Boulevard Aliénor d'Aquitaine, take a left at Place de Latule, then immediately a right turn into Boulevard Alfred Daney. Continue for 30 metres down Boulevard Alfred Daney, and the Base sous-marine (submarine base) is on your right.

There are some free parking spaces, but they are often taken. It is worth booking your parking space online so that you can enjoy your visit without any difficulties.

By public transport

From the city centre (Quinconces stop):

Tram C - direction Blanquefort or 'Parc des expos', Ravezie stop

Then bus no. 9 - direction Brandenburg, stop 'Base sous-marine'

Opening times

From 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Late openings until 7 p.m., 8 p.m. or 9 p.m. depending on day or season. Find all the details on www.bassins-lumieres.com

Last admission 1 hour and 15 min before the venue closes. The immersive exhibitions are projected continuously. Book your tickets online on: www.bassins-lumieres.com

Rates

Full rate: €15

Senior rate: €14 (over 65 years old)

Reduced rate: €12,50 (students, job-seekers, teachers, person accompanying persons with disabilities, upon presentation of a valid proof of entitlement)

Youth rate: €9 (6-25 ans)

Family rate: €40 (2 adults + 2 children)

Free admission for children under the age of 6, disability card holders, journalists, lecturer guides (upon presentation of a valid proof of entitlement)

Press Contact

Agence Claudine Colin Communication

Colleen Guerinet / Tel: + 33 (0)1 42 72 60 01/ colleen@claudinecolin.com

Web

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