



January 2018



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Avec le soutien de


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#ExpoMandelbaum

Stéphane Mandelbaum
Arthur Rimbaud, 1980
Stylo-bille sur papier, 50 x 70 cm
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Dist. RMN-GP
Collection Arieh Mandelbaum

PRESS RELEASE

STÉPHANE MANDELBAUM

6 MARCH – 20 MAY 2019

GALERIE D'ART GRAPHIQUE, LEVEL 4

Next March sees the opening at the Centre Pompidou of an exhibition dedicated to Stéphane Mandelbaum (1961–1986), one of the most disruptive figures of the 1980s art scene. Through around 100 artworks, this monograph outlines, in story form, the eventful fate of the young Belgian artist, who was assassinated at the age of just 25.

In the Mandelbaum family, art was a natural form of expression: Arié, Stéphane's father, was a well-known painter, while his mother, Pili, was a talented illustrator. The young Stéphane quickly embraced this discipline as a way of dealing with his dyslexia and showed early signs of artistic talent. He studied at the Watermael-Boitsfort Academy of Art and then, in 1979, at the school of plastic and visual arts in Uccle, where he was introduced to engraving.

His graphic work is testament to both his classical training and the complex issues he had with writing. The classic style of his major portraits is distorted by written words, insults and quotations, which intrude on the margins.

For this artist, who was fascinated by Rimbaud, images and words are like choral singing, while his small, everyday sketches, which are more abstract and succinct, constitute a type of logbook. Stéphane Mandelbaum's extension of artistic references and association with art brut now makes his work seem oddly contemporary, in its ability to transcend genres.

VERY POWERFUL SUBJECTS

The son of a Jewish father and Armenian mother, the artist questioned his Judaism from his earliest works. He produced portraits of his grandfather Szulim, who introduced him to Yiddish, distorted symbols, depicted high-ranking Nazis, and collected names and insults that were carefully outlined in Hebrew characters. In many of his drawings he also reproduced extracts from the 1975 book *Souvenirs obscure d'un juif polonais né en France* (Dim memories of a Polish Jew born in France), whose author, Pierre Goldman, was also the subject of several portraits.

The 20 or so portraits that Stéphane Mandelbaum produced of Pier Paolo Pasolini reveal his fascination for the universe of the latter's films and their fifteenth-century art aesthetic. At the same time, he embraced the filmmaker's avowed wish to create **work whose ambiguity would constantly confound the viewer.**

Similarly, from reading David Sylvester's interviews with Francis Bacon, he took on board the British artist's affirmation of the need to "disfigure the image to make it fully visible". His admiration for Bacon led him to write to the painter, who did not reply, and then to try to compete with him, by copying not only his subjects but also his sources of photographic inspiration.

FROM FICTION TO REALITY

The artist dedicated his first exhibition, at the Galerie Colmant in Brussels in 1985, to his father and to a notorious pimp that he had never actually met. The large drawings exhibited were shocking in the precise and detached treatment of their subject – explicit sexual scenes. But the images were equally provocative in how they combined invention (he found inspiration for his subjects in pornographic magazines, the cinema and Japanese engravings) and reality, in that it was possible to recognise, in the turn of a face, the sinister look of a client or a jaded prostitute from the Mambo Club. His drawings evoke a dark universe swirling with moral, sexual and identity taboos. **His fictional lives would soon cross over to the realm of the actual,** as Stéphane Mandelbaum began to focus less on art and, instead, consort with criminals.

The circumstances surrounding the Belgian artist's death remain unclear. In January 1987, his body was found on waste ground in the suburb of Namur. His name was linked to various robberies, most notably that of a Modigliani painting.

Following a disagreement with his partner, Stéphane Mandelbaum was assassinated by one of his accomplices, leaving behind his drawings as witnesses of his internal demons.

The exhibition will travel to the **Jewish Museum of Belgium from 14 June to 22 September 2019.**

PRATICAL INFORMATION

PRESS VISIT

TUESDAY, MARCH 5, 2019
11AM - 1PM

L'EXPOSITION

CURATOR

Anne Montfort, Curator, Galerie d'art graphique, Musée national d'art moderne
Assistée de **Macha Daniel**, conservation officer, Musée national d'art moderne

Production Manager : **Bruno Veret**

ADMISSION AND PRICES

Centre Pompidou, 75191 Paris cedex 04

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Access: metro Hôtel de Ville and Rambuteau, RER Châtelet-Les-Halles.

Opening times: every day from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., except Tuesdays and May 1st.

Admission: €14, reduced price €11

Free for those under 18. Young people under 26*, teachers and students at schools of art, drama, dance and music and members of the Maison des artistes may visit the Museum for free and buy tickets for exhibitions at the concessionary rate.

Free admission for Centre Pompidou members.

Home printable tickets: centrepompidou.fr

* Nationals of Member States of the EU or the European Economic Area aged 18–25.
Valid the same day for the Musée National d'Art Moderne and all exhibitions.

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GALERIE 0, LEVEL 4

HARRY SHUNK

JANOS KENDER
27 FEBRUARY – 27 MAY 2019
GALERIE DE PHOTOGRAPHIES,
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JOS HOUWELING

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