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PIERRE ET GILLES:

Double Je, 1976-2007

Taschen £29.99, 460 pages

French duo Pierre et Gilles create highly stylised, hand-painted photographic portraits. Pierre Commy takes the photos. His partner, both in art and in life, Gilles Blanchard embellishes them with paint. This year they celebrate 30 years of collaboration with a major retrospective in Paris and the publication of this book.

With influences as diverse as baroque painting, religious iconography and homoeroticism, their subjects take on the roles of Hindu gods, Catholic saints, camp sailors and glamorous *femmes fatales*. A use of kitsch props and their signature candy-coloured palette convey their sense of humour.

Pierre et Gilles question ideas of identity and narcissism. Their 1991 portrait of a Madonna weeping oversized, jewel-like tears is steeped in ambiguity. Part pop pin-up, part holy icon, their model is given an identity that exudes both power and vulnerability.

Claire Holland