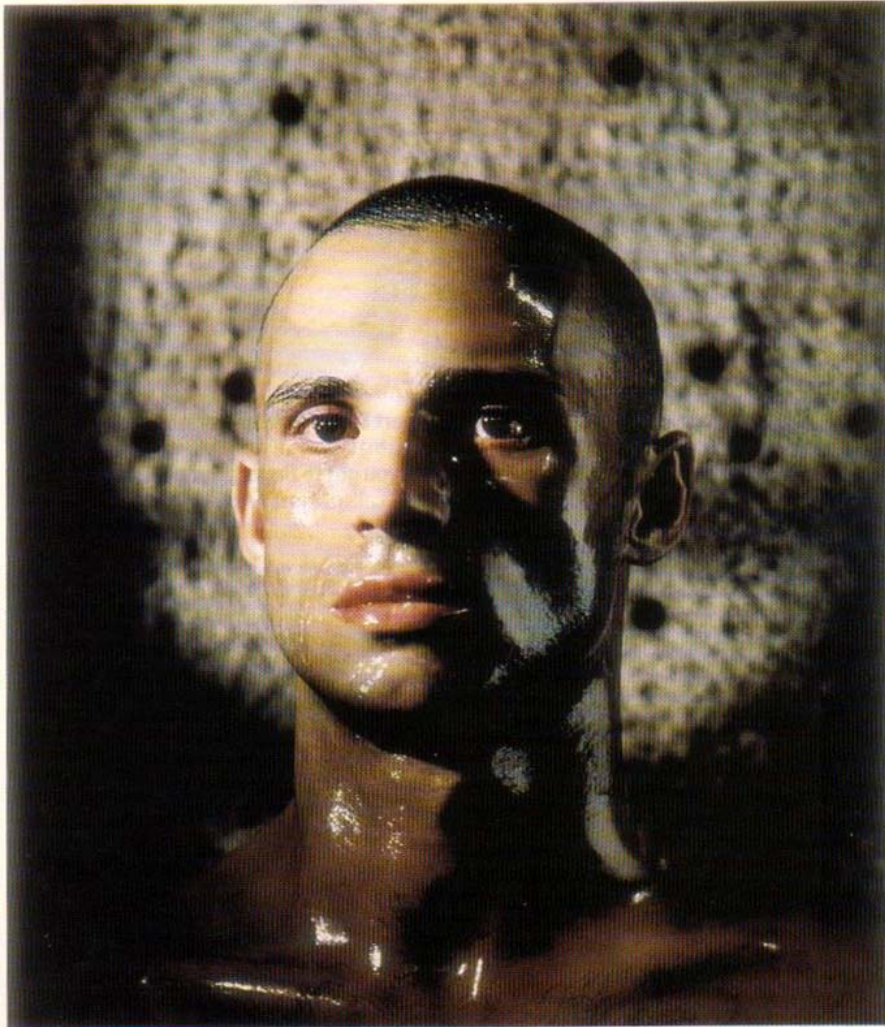


front: the mix



L'aveu by Pierre et Gilles, 2003, 71 cm x 61.4 cm, C-print

The Kitsch Is Back

PIERRE ET GILLES RETURN IN A GLITZY, GENDER-BENDING PHOTO ARCHIVE.

Critic and historian Paul Ardenne describes Pierre Comoy and Gilles Blanchard as "close cousins of jewelers," purveyors of strange yet sophisticated visual gems. If the 300 deliberately overstated photo-paintings in his retrospective volume, *Pierre et Gilles: Double Je, 1976-2007* (Taschen, \$49.99), are precious, then the book's introduction—an illustrated time line of the French duo's impressive 30-year career—is priceless. Ardenne encapsulates their lives in an exhaustive scrapbook, amassing key pieces from their oeuvre, silly photo-booth portraits, party pics with celebrities, and shots of the shimmering and kitschy spectacle of the artists' home studio. He even throws in the condom wrapper they designed for the city hall of Paris in the early '90s. This glossy gallery—of ads, video stills, album art, and magazine covers—evokes a homoerotic, hyperbolic utopia, where contrasting idols comically merge. Saints and mythical figures become fashionistas and pop-culture icons, while well-endowed beefcakes and celebrities—including Siouxsie Sioux (right)—are depicted as timeless deities. **JASON LAMPHIER**



Dans la Nuit—Siouxsie by Pierre et Gilles, 1997, 80 x 40 cm, C-print