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New Blockbuster Paris Exhibition Celebrates Michael Jackson

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David LaChapelle GRAND PALAIS

Fresh from London, 'Michaelmania' has arrived at Paris as one of the most anticipated exhibitions of the year: "Michael Jackson: On The Wall" just opened at the Grand Palais, to the joy of the iconic singer's fans around the world.

Organized by the National Portrait Gallery of London and produced in Paris by the Meeting of National Museums - Grand Palais, with the cooperation of the Michael Jackson Estate, the show is an exploration of the cultural impact and artistic influence of Michael Jackson's personality and work in the field of contemporary art from the 1980s to today.

Many artists have been drawn to the late King of Pop, as an inspiration, a tragic figure and a fascinating enigma.



Equestrian-Portrait-of-King-Philip-II-2009 Kehinde-Wiley GRAND PALAIS

"Michael Jackson: On the Wall" is a nod to "Off The Wall," his fifth solo album, produced by Quincy Jones in 1979. "On the cover, the 'King of Pop'- the skin still dark but the nose already redone - posed in a tuxedo leaning against a brick wall, the blinding smile of optimism," explains *Le Point*. "The exhibition that the Grand Palais is proposing today recognizes that the dapper young man from "Off the Wall" is no longer, but he still lives... hooked on the wall."



Michael Jackson by Andy Warhol 1984. The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh; Founding Collection, Contribution © The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc./Licensed by Adapp, Paris, 2018GRAND PALAIS

The exhibition "includes works that reflect on what Michael Jackson meant to his fans, his place in African-American culture, the way he manipulated fame — and the way fame manipulated him," *The Guardian* wrote.

The show, which had a stint at the National Portrait Gallery in London from June to October 2018, and will be held at the Bundeskunsthalle in Bonn from March to July 2019 and at the Espoo Museum of Modern Art in Finland from August to January 2020, literally presents the superstar as an art object through more than 100 contemporary artworks including paintings, drawings, sculpture, photography, video and performances.



KAWS, Michael Jackson portrait for Interview Magazine Septembre 2009 Photo © Farzad Owrang GRAND PALAIS

"Michael Jackson is one of the most influential cultural figures of the 20th century, and his legacy continues into the 21st century," the curators explain. "Although he has always been considered as a reference in the world of music, video clips, dance and fashion, his impact on contemporary art has never been discussed and never made object of an international exhibition like this one."



In memory of Michael Jackson by Yan Pei Ming 1958–2009 , Galleria Massimo De Carlo and Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac © Yan Pei-Ming/Photo André Morin GRAND PALAIS

For the organizers of the exhibit, the legacy of Michael Jackson is more alive than ever, nearly 10 years after his death: His record sales, which now exceed one billion, continue to increase; his videos are still watched; and his many fans remain faithful. His influence and fame do not falter, and the issues he has raised as a social phenomenon, especially from the point of view of identity, race and celebrity, are still relevant today.

In addition to smashing all sales' records, winning numerous awards, participating in a multitude of philanthropic actions, and breaking down many cultural barriers, Michael Jackson is also one of the most represented personalities in the visual arts. Since Andy Warhol used his image in 1982, many other contemporary artists, from different generations and in different countries, have done the same.



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For the first time, the "Michael Jackson: On the Wall" exhibition assembles the works of more than 40 of these artists, from public and private collections around the world, and new ones created especially for the occasion by artists including Rita Ackerman, Dara Birnbaum, Candice Breitz, Marvin Gaye Chetwynd, Njideka Akunyili Crosby, Mark Flood, Isa Genzken, Maggi Hambling, David Hammons, Lyle Ashton Harris, Jonathan Horowitz, Gary Hume, Rashid Johnson, Isaac Julien, David LaChapelle, Louise Lawler, Klara Liden, Glenn Ligon, Paul McCarthy, Rodney McMillian, Dawn Mellor, Lorraine O'Grady, Opie Catherine, Yan Pei Ming, Paul Pfeiffer, Grayson Perry, Faith Ringgold, Donald Urquhart, Kehinde Wiley, Hank Willis Thomas, Andy Warhol and Jordan Wolfson.

Michael Jackson: On The Wall will be open until February 14, 2019.