Press kit

PRIX PIERRE DAIX 2026

Arnauld Pierre

Machines célibataires.
La fabrique du posthumain

2026 PIERRE DAIX BURSARY

James Horton

Pinault Collection

Table of Contents

1 **Prix Pierre Daix 2026**
The book
Biography of Arnauld Pierre
Interview with the author
Previous winners

7 **2026 Pierre Daix Bursary**
Presentation
Biography of James Horton

9 **Members of the jury**

10 **Pinault Collection**
The collector
The museums
The programming at large
The artist's residency

Pinault Collection
Communications Director
Thomas Aillagon
taillagon@pinaultcollection.com

Claudine Colin Communication
Aristide Pluvinage
aristide.pluvinage@finnpartners.com
T +33 (0)1 42 72 60 01

The Prix Pierre Daix is awarded to Arnauld Pierre

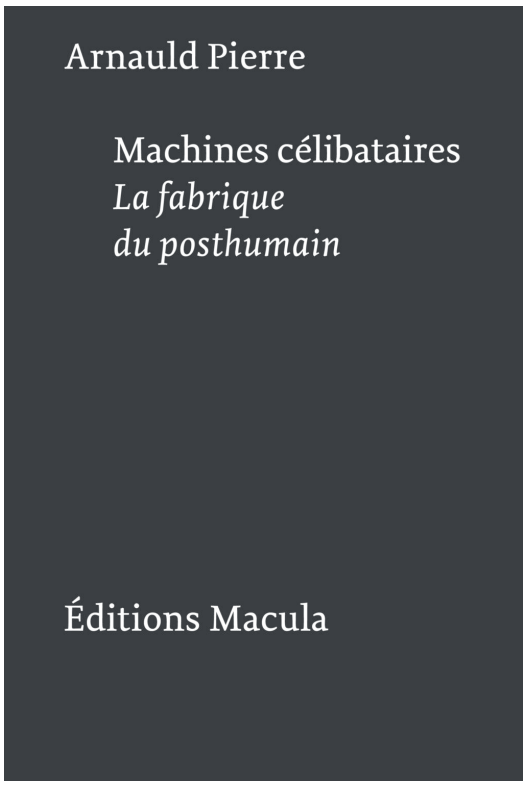
The Pinault Collection is pleased to announce that the Prix Pierre Daix is awarded this year to Arnauld Pierre for his book *Machines célibataires. La fabrique du posthumain*, published in May 2026 by Éditions Macula as part of its "Patte d'oie" series.

The Prix Pierre Daix was created by François Pinault in 2015 in memory of his friend, French writer and art historian Pierre Daix, who died in 2014. A militant, resistant free spirit and major intellectual figure of his time, **Pierre Daix** was a specialist in twentieth-century art and author of several works that shed considerable light on the artistic movements in which he had taken an interest.

Each year, the Prix Pierre Daix is awarded for a book on modern and contemporary art. On this its tenth anniversary, the prize was increased to €15,000.

The jury, which is composed of ten figures from the world of art and academia, has awarded the prize for the book *Machines célibataires. La fabrique du posthumain* by Arnauld Pierre. Already noted in 2023 for his book on moiré, this author, a specialist in the art of the 1960s and 1970s has focused here on the technological superhuman in art and visual culture, a theme that resonates directly with the pervasiveness of artificial intelligence in our present. He has compiled a kind of archaeology that goes from artist to artist, starting with Duchamp's *The Bride* as the archetype of the Virgin Mother. His particularly ambitious and exacting approach looks at both modern and contemporary art. Illustrated with a remarkable visual and documentary apparatus, and nourished with literary, anthropological, cinematographic, and advertising references, this work deconstructs the myths of the posthuman through an erudite line of thinking and a powerful personal vision. Stimulating and accessible to a broad readership, it fully exemplifies the spirit of the Prix Pierre Daix through its able combination of intellectual rigour, reading pleasure, and social relevance.

L’ouvrage



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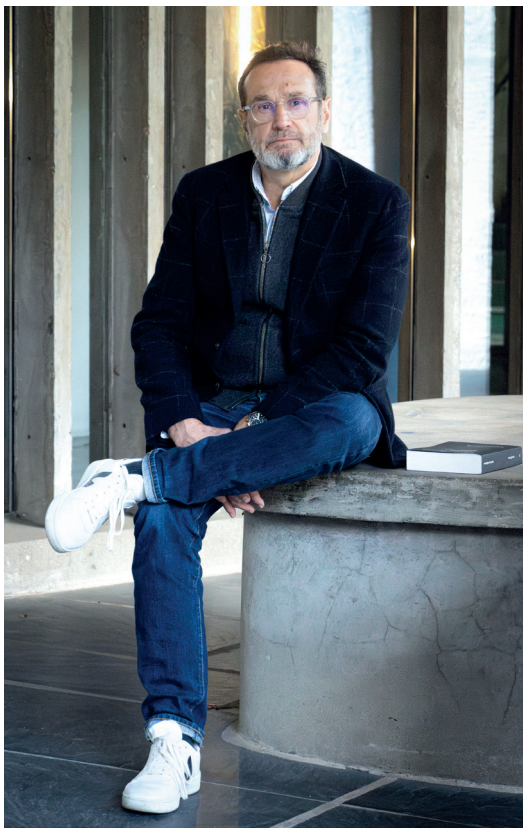
Marcel Duchamp’s Bachelor Machines quickly broke free from their author to become a modern myth that blends art, sexuality, and technology. Associated with sterility and the refusal to procreate, they nevertheless do not rule out other forms of reproduction through fantasies of autogenesis and artificial procreation, in which science and technology become able to create superior beings and establish a world unblemished by any creation. An entire vision of filiation surrounds the *Bachelor Machines*, as shown by the large family of children born without a mother to mechanical parents that arose in twentieth century avant-garde movements, from Futurism to Dadaism, Surrealism, and Pop Art, leading up to the interest in the post-human in contemporary art.

At the intersection of the history of art and of ideas, and of the “scientific-marvellous” and science fiction, Arnauld Pierre dissects the origin myths of a humanity hybridised with its machines and examines, through its artistic manifestations, the advent of a technological Übermensch, an augmented, amplified post-human that takes pride in having been fabricated rather than engendered. In this richly illustrated work, which features almost 280 images, the author delves into the mechanisms underlying this recurrent desire to be better than human, which manifests itself par excellence in what is now termed transhumanism.

***Machines célibataires. La fabrique du posthumain*, Éditions Macula, “Patte d’oie”, May 2026, 520 p., €44**

Founded in 1980, Éditions Macula specialises in art historical research, publishing classic works in this field as well as the work of contemporary French and international scholars. For the last several years, Macula has been directed by Véronique Yersin, who, together with the directors of this series, have expanded the catalogue to include literature, photography, coffee table books, and cinema. Macula assigns great importance to the critical apparatuses that accompany texts, and to the quality of the design and printing of their books.

Biography of Arnauld Pierre



© Alice JL Pierre

Arnauld Pierre (b. 1967) is Professor of Art History at the Sorbonne and a research fellow at the Centre André-Chastel. His doctoral dissertation concerned the work of American sculptor Alexander Calder. He is the Vice-President of the Picabia Committee, which, from 2014 to 2022, published the four volumes of the artist's catalogue raisonné, all of which he contributed to. He has also written an essay on this artist, titled *Francis Picabia. La peinture sans aura*, published in 2002 by Gallimard.

A specialist in abstraction, the scientific history and world view of avant-garde movements and their repercussions on contemporary art, he has published several works on this subject, including *L'Abstraction* with Pascal Rousseau (Citadelles & Mazenod, 2021); *Maternités cosmiques. La recherche des origines, de Kupka à Kubrick* (Hazan, 2010); *Futur antérieur. Art contemporain et rétrocipation*, (M19, 2012); and *Magic Moirés. Gerald Oster et l'art des moirages* (Macula, 2022). A member since 2001 of the editorial board of *Cahiers du Musée national d'art moderne*, where he has published many texts, he also edited, together with Pierre Denan and Michel Gauthier, *20/27. Revue de textes critiques sur l'art* (2006-2011).

Arnauld Pierre has also worked extensively on Op art and Kinetic art, including texts and exhibitions such as *L'Œil-moteur. Art optique et cinétique. 1950-1975* (Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Strasbourg, 2005), as well as the retrospectives *Nicolas Schöffer* (Museum of Modern Art, Villeneuve-d'Ascq, 2018) and *Vasarely. Le partage des formes* (with Michel Gauthier, Centre Pompidou, 2019). He is currently working on the imaginary worlds of cyborgs and posthumans, as testified to by his latest book, *Machines célibataires. La fabrique du posthumain* (Macula, 2026).

Interview with the author

How would you define this notion of "posthumanity", which you have related to the idea of "fabrication" in the title of your book?

The posthuman is the desired horizon – even fervently so – that many have set for humanity, from technologists to thinkers, art critics, and perhaps even some artists. The idea is that this will resolve all the conflicts inherent to the human condition and all the existential perils caused by our destructive activities. Posthumanism advocates for an ascensional fusion with machines, or even a regressive merging with animals, plants, and the earth. It is always an issue of finding a way out for a humanity that has cornered itself through its own mistakes. I myself have always been interested in the first approach, which involves the technological transhuman and the cyborg. I have tried to show that the fascination for the cyborg state, which began to peak in at least the 1990s, is an ideological construct and fabrication that dates back to the history of avant-garde movements and their fantasy-laden view of information from the industrial era.

You use Marcel Duchamp's *Bachelor Machines* as your starting point, which form the lower part of The Large Glass (1923). How does this iconic work in art history address correspondences between creation, sexuality, and technology?

I began this history not just with Duchamp, but also with the interpretation that Michel Carrouges, an author close to André Breton and to Surrealism, gave to the Duchampian trope of bachelor machines and *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even*, also known as *The Large Glass*. Carrouges considered this work as a totem of modern times, in the anthropological sense of the term: as a structure that explains the mythical ascendancy of humanity, in which our natural Great Ancestors are replaced by mechanical entities because, in the world that humanity has fashioned for itself, it is these machines that dominate humanity's mental and cultural representations. From that, the bachelor mythology is – with a considerable dose of irony – recombined with sexuality and technology to describe the advent of a superhumanity engendered by its own machines, of which Duchamp's *Bride* is the primordial Virgin Mother.

The book's visual apparatus draws on a broad range of disciplines, from visual arts to cinema and literature. How did you source these documents, and how do they serve the structure of your research?

My explorations of this mythology come from materials accumulated over years of readings and observations of art and visual culture in fields that have interested me, at first without my having a precise vision of things. Over time, enough revelations followed on one another that I was finally able to make sense of some of these longstanding obsessions. This includes Picabia's series titled *Girl Born without a Mother,* and more recently, the way that this bachelor mythology is also clearly reflected in the narrative and visual structure of films like Alex Garland's *Ex-Machina* (2014). And in drawing on a constantly increasing range of materials, the interpretation I developed became more and more systematically applicable, which proved its relevance. The connections became easier to make, the lines of descent became more obvious, and the common thread grew ever more distinct, from Futurism to Dadaism, Surrealism, Pop Art and on to contemporary art.

What was the experience of researching and writing this book like?

It was indeed an increasingly fluid immersion in a subject whose wealth I could not even conceive of at the outset. Writing organised and revealed a meaning that became more and more obvious.

How do you think this "transhumanist" vision resonates with our era?

The moment in time we are living through is singularly open to the promises of the transhumanist sphere, which vows that it will produce a technological Übermensch, an augmented, amplified posthuman who has been regenerated and rendered fully adaptable to the industrial, capitalist matrix that gives rise to it. So, exploring the myth of these bachelor machines involves, among other things, constructing an archaeology of this transhumanist transcendence and endowing oneself with the means to examine it with the necessary critical and political distance.

Interview conducted by Maxime Gasnier, October 2026

Previous winners of the Prix Pierre Daix

2025: Elvan Zabunyan
Réunir les bouts du monde. Art, histoire, esclavage en mémoire
(B42, “Culture” series)

2024: Éric de Chassey
Donner à voir. Images de Birkenau, du Sonderkommando à Gerhard Richter
(Gallimard, “Art et artistes“ series)

2023: Paula Barreiro López
Compagnons de lutte. Avant-garde et critique d’art en Espagne pendant le franquisme
(Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l’homme)

2022: Jérémie Koering
Les iconophages. Une histoire de l’ingestion des images
(Actes Sud, “Les Apparences“ series)

2021 : Germain Viatte
L’envers de la médaille
(L’Atelier contemporain)

2020: Pascal Rousseau
Hypnose. Art et hypnotisme de Messmer à nos jours
(ENSBA-Musée des Beaux-arts de Nantes)

2019: Rémi Labrusse
Préhistoire. L’envers du temps
(Hazan, “Beaux Arts“ series)

2018: Pierre Wat
Pérégrinations. Paysages entre nature et histoire
(Hazan, “Beaux Arts“ series)

2017: Elisabeth Lebovici
Ce que le sida m’a fait. Art et activisme à la fin du xxe siècle
(JRP Ringier and La maison rouge — Fondation Antoine de Galbert)

2016: Maurice Fréchuret
Effacer. Paradoxe d’un geste artistique
(Les Presses du réel)

2015: Yve-Alain Bois
Ellsworth Kelly. Catalogue raisonné of paintings and sculpture, 1940-1953, Volume 1
(Cahiers d’art)
& Marie-Anne Lescourret (ex æquo)
Aby Warburg ou la tentation du regard
(Hazan, “Beaux Arts“ series)

The Pierre Daix Bursary is awarded to James Horton

Created in 2025 by François Pinault on the occasion of the tenth-year anniversary of the Prix Pierre Daix, the Pierre Daix Bursary supports the writing of young art historians. Following on the awarding of the first edition to Clara Royer, this year's Bursary is awarded to the scholar James Horton.

As an extension of the prize of the same name, the **Pierre Daix Bursary** honours excellence in art historical research focusing on contemporary creation. It highlights innovative research from a historical, theoretical, or critical standpoint, and it seeks to bring forward new perspectives advanced by young scholars under the age of 35. This €5,000 fellowship is awarded once a year, during the ceremony for the Prix Pierre Daix. Candidates for this fellowship are nominated by members of the jury from among works noted during the year.

The jury is awarding the Pierre Daix Bursary to the young art historian **James Horton**, who is interested in text-image practices, as well as the international movement of countercultures. He is currently a fellow at INHA, the French National Art History Institute, where he conducts his research within the program "Minority Objects: Artefacts, Performances and Images of Sexual Minorities and Gender", directed by Damien Delille.

Biography of James Horton



Photo: Athénaïs Castanet © INHA, 2026

James Horton (b. 1991 in London) is a contemporary art historian, exhibition curator, and translator. He holds his doctorate from École Normale Supérieure de Paris, and he is an associate member of IHMC, the French Institute of Modern and Contemporary History. His research focuses on intermediality, cultural transfer, and translation, and the intersection of artistic and editorial practices with the issues of gender and sexuality. In 2025, he co-curated the exhibition *ECHO DELAY REVERB: art américain, pensées francophones* at the Palais de Tokyo. In 2026, he was academic advisor to the exhibition Underground! La presse alternative des années 1970 en France at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. In October 2026, he became a postdoctoral fellow at INHA as part of the "Minority Objects" project. In 2027, together with Pascaline Morincôme, he will be a resident at Villa Albertine, where he will conduct research on American artist Ann Wilson.

Members of the jury

The jury for the Prix Pierre Daix and the Pierre Daix Bursary is chaired by Emma Lavigne, General Director and General Curator of the Pinault Collection.

Laure Adler
Journalist and author

Jean-Louis Andral
Art historian and critic, Director of the Musée Picasso d'Antibes

Martin Bethenod
Director of Cnap and Chairman of the Art Criticism Archives

Nathalie Bondil
Art historian, Director of the new department of the museum and exhibitions at the Arab World Institute

Jean-Pierre Criqui
Curator of the contemporary collections, National Museum of Modern Art / Centre Pompidou, editor-in-chief of the *Cahiers du Musée national d'art moderne*

Cécile Debray
Art historian, Director of the Musée Picasso, Paris

Donatien Grau
Historian of French art and literature, critic, and writer

Christophe Ono-dit-Biot
Adjunct Editorial Director of the weekly magazine *Le Point*, writer

Bruno Racine
Director of Palazzo Grassi—Punta della Dogana, writer

Pascal Rousseau
Historian of modern and contemporary art, recipient of the Prix Pierre Daix in 2020

Pinault Collection

The collector
An art lover through and through, François Pinault is one of the most important collectors of contemporary art in the world. The collection he has assembled over the last almost fifty years comprises more than 10,000 works ranging from the art of the 1960s to the present day. His cultural ambition is to share his passion for the art of his time with as many people as possible. He distinguishes himself for his sustainable commitment to artists and his incessant exploration of new domains of creation. Since 2006, François Pinault has focused on three cultural activities in particular: museums, a programme of exhibitions held at large, and initiatives to support artists and promote the history of modern and contemporary art.

The museums
The museums began with three exceptional sites in Venice: Palazzo Grassi, acquired in 2005 and inaugurated in 2006, the Punta della Dogana, which opened in 2009, and the Teatrino, which opened in 2013. In May 2021, the Pinault Collection opened its new museum at the Bourse de Commerce in Paris with its inaugural exhibition Ouverture. These four sites were restored and developed by Pritzker Prize-winning Japanese architect Tadao Ando. In the three museums, works from the Pinault Collection are exhibited in routinely changing solo and thematic group exhibitions. All the exhibitions actively involve artists who are invited to create works on site or on the basis of a specific commission. The museum's significant amount of cultural and educational programming also includes partnerships with local and international institutions and universities.

The programming at large
Beyond Venice and Paris, works from the collection are now regularly included in exhibitions across the world: from Paris to Moscow, Monaco, Seoul, Lille, Dinard, Dunkerque, Essen, Stockholm, Rennes, Beirut, and Marseilles. Upon request from public and private institutions the world over, the Pinault Collection also has an ongoing policy of lending its works and making joint acquisitions with other major actors in the field of contemporary art.

The Lens residency
Located in a former rectory that was redeveloped by Lucie Niney and Thibault Marca from the studio NeM, the Pinault Collection's artist's residency was inaugurated in December 2015. As a place to live and work, it provides time and space for artistic practice in a site that is well-suited for creating things. Residents are chosen by a selection committee that include representatives from the Pinault Collection, the Hauts-de France Regional Office of Cultural Affairs, the Grand Large FRAC Regional Contemporary Art Foundation, the Le Fresnoy School for Contemporary Art, the Louvre Lens, and the Lille Art Museum, or LaM.

The Prix Pierre Daix
François Pinault created the Prix Pierre Daix in 2015 in homage to his friend, the historian Pierre Daix, who passed away in 2014, to honour a work of modern or contemporary art history each year. The Prix Pierre Daix has already been awarded to Elvan Zabunyan (2025), Éric de Chassey (2024), Paula Barreiro López (2023), Jérémie Koering (2022), Germain Viatte (2021), Rémi Labrusse (2019), Pierre Wat (2018), Elisabeth Lebovici (2017), Maurice Fréruchet (2016), and to Yve-Alain Bois and Marie-Anne Lescourret (2015).

Pinault
Collection