

Press Release – Paris, 5 July 2021

Pernod Ricard Carte Blanche 2021

Resilient *convivialité* at the heart of Olivier Culmann’s artistic voyage

For more than 10 years, Pernod Ricard has been entrusting its annual Carte Blanche artistic campaign to an internationally renowned photographer. This year, Pernod Ricard wanted to pay special tribute to those who bring to life the cafés, bars and restaurants throughout France. Although very badly affected by the pandemic, they have, each on their own scale, maintained a social connection with their local communities. And because Covid had declared war on *convivialité*, they became the first defenders of this value that flavour to our lives.

French photographer Olivier Culmann, from the Tendance Floue collective, has been chosen to portray those who have strived, in spite of everything, to bring to life moments of togetherness and to tell the story of this “resilient” conviviality.



Ten personal experiences have been photographed across France, in ten small towns and large cities. Passionate entrepreneurs or people who have moved to the country in search of a better life – all had in common a desire to share and to withstand the pandemic.

These are the stories and the people, as well as the places full of life that Olivier Culmann captures in a photographic mural spanning several chapters. With his off-beat humour, sense of detail and expertise, he plays with the rules and the different types of popular photography, in the noble sense of the word: “photo booth”, “postcard”, “posed portrait”, “team photo” and “architectural or documentary photography”. He also pays tribute to the men and women who have made these human stories possible – local representatives, suppliers, residents and employees of Pernod Ricard France.

In Rennes, the owners of the restaurant “Les Bricoles”, Nicolas and Bruno, and their wives Alexandra and Astrid, have been committed to supporting their traditional suppliers by creating a delicatessen in the city centre, thereby helping their partners’ businesses to keep going. Elsewhere, there are those who have brought back a little *convivialité* to deserted rural communities, by creating or reopening cafés that had disappeared and offering numerous other services. In partnership with *1000 Cafés*, Pernod Ricard has taken action to help support these venues that form the backbone of life in these small local communities. As has Yannick, a Parisian who has chosen to change career path by opening the café in Montgesty, hundreds of miles away from his former domestic services company.

Every café is a community that comes together, a place that brings back to life locally a little of this *convivialité* that the entire country – the entire world – has been deprived of so for so long. Pernod Ricard had a duty to pay tribute to them. Never before has unity been so strong between the *raison d’être* of a Group that has been a flag bearer for *convivialité* and the hopes of all French people to share a *true* moment of togetherness, the natural setting for which are all the bars, pubs, bistros and restaurants.

The 2021 campaign designed by Olivier Culmann will be unveiled in full in the pages of Pernod Ricard’s upcoming Annual Report and presented to the general public at the unmissable photography exhibition, Paris Photo, which will take place from 11 to 14 November 2021 at the pop-up Grand Palais.



Olivier Culmann biography

Olivier Culmann has been a photographer since 1992 and a member of the Tendance Floue collective since 1996.

His work features the recurrent themes of free will and social conditioning. Sitting astride both the absurd and the trivial, his work analyses with razor sharpness the subject of our everyday lives and our relationship with images. Constantly homing in on these – and our own – obsessions, he carries us along with his humour and his art of storytelling.

In the 1990s, he visited several countries to photograph *Les Mondes de l'Ecole*, a work on educational institutions, and the subjection and rebellion that are born there.

His work questions both the existence and absence of choice. With *Une Vie de Poulet*, this approach blends humour still more overtly into the narrative. His move in the early 2000s into medium format was vital as he sought to alter distance. In the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, he completed the work *Autour, New York 2001-2002*, in the city. This series is focused on those who witnessed the aftermath of the devastation, both Americans and tourists who had come to see the ruins of the World Trade Center. The expressions captured by the photographer here function as a mirror of our own shock in response to the tragedy. Next, he began watching TV viewers in several parts of the world in which he chose to live, an observation of our state of mind and body in response to the reflections of the world filtered by screens. The *Watching TV* series represents a stage in his meta-theatre work based on the gaze.

The author of several books including *Les Mondes de l'Ecole* (Marval, 2001), written in collaboration with photographer Mat Jacob, *Une Vie de Poulet* (Filigranes, 2001), *Watching TV* (Textuel, 2011) and *The Others* (Xavier Barral, 2015), he regularly exhibits around the world and has received several accolades including the *Villa Médicis Hors les Murs* grant (1997), the *SCAM Roger Pic* Prize (2003), *World Press Photo* (2008) and the *Prix Niépce* (2017).

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