

PEUGEOT DESIGN LAB

POUR

Pleyel

THE PIANO OF THE FUTURE /

PEUGEOT DESIGN LAB FOR PLEYEL

*THE PIANO MANUFACTURER PLEYEL AND PEUGEOT DESIGN LAB UNVEIL
A PIANO THAT OVERTURNS THE CONVENTIONS OF THE MUSIC WORLD.*

THE FRUIT OF AN EXTRAORDINARY COLLABORATION

Launched on 12 June 2012 in Paris, Peugeot Design Lab is a Global Brand Design studio whose vocation is the design of non-automotive products, services and experiences for the Peugeot brand & external clients in all business sectors. Peugeot Design Lab was born under the impetus of the new Peugeot corporate identity in 2010 with a dedicated team formed following multiple solicitations from outside companies. Comprising around ten designers from the motor industry, trained from the start both in the development of extremely complex objects and specialising in the creation and application of Brand Identity, Peugeot Design Lab simultaneously develops products and brands in multiple worlds. And the first object has just changed the conventions of the music world.

In 2011 with its wealth of experience and driven by one of its designer/pianists, Peugeot Design Lab approached the piano manufacturer Pleyel with the idea of creating an extremely innovative product.

«This approach matches the life of Pleyel over the last ten years, explains Hubert Martigny, Managing Director of Maison Pleyel, in its desire to be open to design to the contemporary world. Moreover, Peugeot and Pleyel are both two hundred year old companies with a similar philosophy».

After having created remarkable pianos with Andrée Putman, Michele De Lucchi and Hilton McConnico, Pleyel agreed to take up the challenge put forward by Peugeot Design Lab. With a wide experience of working in *Global Brand Design*, the designers at the studio absorbed themselves in the history and know-how of the manufacturer Pleyel, with the objective of finding common DNA and creating a unique piano that best expresses the talents of both companies: mixing century old traditional craftsmanship with the latest automotive technologies. For Cathal Loughnane, the Head of Peugeot Design Lab, «the objective was above all to be innovative, the goal was to develop an object that neither Peugeot nor Pleyel could create independently».

One and a half years later, this shared adventure ends with one of the biggest technical and visual innovations in the history of the piano.

AN AVANT-GARDE

PIANO

The final development of this piano of the future required months of research, study and tests carried out by the designers together with a team of engineers technicians, and acoustic engineers from both companies. The objective was above all to retain Pleyel's high sound quality, simultaneously subtle, coloured, with powerful bass and scintillating treble, harmonised on the timbre. It was also necessary to retain its unique touch. «Changing the action and the design of the piano must not only guarantee identical Pleyel quality, explains Hubert Martigny, but also deliver a significant & remarkable step forward».

A PIANO WITH LOWERED ACTION FOR AN UNEQUALLED ACOUSTIC AND VISUAL QUALITY

This baby grand's first major innovation is the lowering of the mechanics in order to align the pianos cover and keyboard. «This is one of the biggest innovations in the contemporary history of the piano» notes Cathal Loughnane, who notes two exceptional properties of the instrument:

For the first time in the history of the piano, the audience can see the artist play from any viewing angle. This shows off the pianist's hands and creates a higher level of interaction with the audience.

Also for the first time, the pianist hears the sound of their instrument with a level of quality never previously attained. The lowered action no longer inhibits the sound projection, which consequently becomes immediate. «For the first time in my life, I truly hear the sound of the piano» reports Yves Henry, concert pianist, Professor at the Conservatoire de Paris – CNSMDP and CRR, charged with testing the instrument.

A NEW OPENING SYSTEM

Working with Pleyel's engineers, Peugeot Design Lab has done away with the traditional piano lid prop by coming up with a self-supporting lid mechanism that can be raised with one hand, an idea borrowed directly from a cars tailgate. With this component out of the way, one can freely admire the piano's mechanism in action.

A CANTILEVER LEG

The traditional three piano legs are replaced by a single cantilever leg with all the elegance of a suspension bridge. This original innovation, borrowed from the world of architecture, creates a surprising levitation effect by offering the sight of a mechanism, supposedly heavy, floating above the stage. It confers exceptional visual lightness to what is traditionally one of the heaviest instruments in the musical world.

AN ULTRA-FINE MUSIC SHEET SUPPORT

With the same interest of not altering the performance in a concert and the lightness of the instrument, the Peugeot Design Lab team created a sheet music support of unequalled finesse, invisible and perfectly integrated into the piano once closed.

A STRUCTURE IN CARBON FIBRE

Although the body of the piano and the soundboard are made of wood, which reacts best to sound, the lid and the leg have been made of carbon fibre for its properties of lightness and also of sound projection. Although the central frame is made of steel so that it can support the weight, the leg has also been created in carbon fibre, and filled with expanded foam to eliminate any sound box effect and best control all of the sound components.

THE COMBINATION OF TECHNICAL VIRTUOSITY AND A NEW DESIGN LANGUAGE

Even though the piano retains its black lacquer finish one of the classic cues of the piano world, Peugeot Design Lab has completely revisited the instrument by endeavouring to change all of the traditional conventions, as regards volume, ergonomics and construction. The studio has created a design language that rewrites the visual conventions of what a piano should look like, suggesting dynamism, lightness and an effect of levitation. The designers then gave it a sculpture, quality and sophistication of surface taken from the world of the automobile. In this way, its soft and structured silhouette takes the look of the streamlined hull of a competition sailing boat. A truly sculptured surface with an aerodynamic look, the piano has a slender appearance, resolutely revolutionary.

«We do not do style for the sake of style, explains Gilles Vidal, Peugeot's Director of Styling. Nothing is free in this project and the innovations we have brought have to be understood. This instrument is not a concept but a real product which involves an exchange of know-how between the design studio and its client».

THE PLAYERS IN THE PROJECT

PLEYEL

Founded in 1807, the Manufacture des Pianos Pleyel is one of 1000 businesses referred to as an «Entreprise du Patrimoine vivant» (Living Heritage Company). It is the oldest manufacturer of pianos in the world and the only one in France dedicated exclusively to the manufacture of high quality grand pianos. Since 2000, Pleyel has made and produced a collection of exceptional pianos, underlining ten years of modernity, creation and collaboration with designers, artists and contractor-decorators who are reinventing the shapes, materials and colours of this timeless instrument.

Located in Saint Denis, on the edge of Paris, Pleyel has an exceptional site grouping together some twenty skills and trades around string instruments, quality cabinet making, varnishing, lacquering and musical instrument making, as well as an integrated design office equipped with the latest digital technology, assuring perfect control of the whole production process, from conception to final assembly.

Pleyel also employs its craftsmanship & know-how in the manufacture of exceptional contemporary furniture. In this way, Pleyel gives birth to tailored projects, by special orders as a contractor or editor, for businesses, interior designers, decorators, as well as for individual private customers.

PEUGEOT DESIGN LAB

With the wealth of knowledge that comes from 200 years of industrial creation and 120 years of automobile manufacture, Peugeot launched in Paris on 12 June 2012 the Peugeot Design Lab, a design studio that opens for the first time its doors to external clients from outside the motor industry.

It is a *Global Brand Design* studio whose objective is to develop strong and coherent brand strategies and identities. Its main mission is the design of products, services and experiences for external clients from all non-automotive sectors

Gilles Vidal, Peugeot director of Styling

Gilles Vidal, 39, a graduate of the Art Center College of Design at Vevey (Switzerland), joined the PSA Peugeot Citroën Group in 1996. For 11 years he contributed towards the renewal of the Group's designs. Since 2010, he has been the Peugeot Director of Style.

He worked on the definition of the new Peugeot corporate identity presented in 2010, with the SR1 concept car which inspired in particular the lines of the 208, launched in March 2012.

Cathal Loughnane, head of Peugeot Design Lab

Cathal Loughnane, 35, a designer of Irish nationality, qualified as an engineer at the Dublin Institute Of Technology (Bolton ST).

He became the manager of the studio after spending 10 years working on design for the PSA Group's marques (interior design and concept cars). He reports to Gilles Vidal, Peugeot's director of Design.

Find Information at www.pleyel.fr

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