


Imaginary Friends

17 March – 2 July 2023

An exhibition organised and produced by the Fundació Joan Miró
A project curated by Martina Millà and Patrick Ronse

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IMAGE	CREDITS
<p>A gang of baby polar bears play, fight, nap and explore the first room in <i>Imaginary Friends</i>. They occupy a space between fantasy and reality, frozen in their various poses, giving the impression they could come to life at any moment. The bears do not have their usual white fur but have sprouted fluorescent feathers that cover their bodies. In this installation, Paola Pivi plays with dislocation and hybridisation; she recasts the planet's largest land-based carnivores and turns them into bright creatures with plumage from another world. Pivi's bears embody the elemental contradictions of her artistic vision: they are surreal and realistic, whimsical and threatening, cuddly and intimidating.</p> 	<p>Paola Pivi <i>We Are the Baby Gang</i>, 2019 Polyurethane foam, plastic and feathers Variable dimensions Galerie Emmanuel Perrotin, Paris Photo: Davide Camesasca © Fundació Joan Miró, 2023</p>

Bedtime is one those moments that mark children's daily routine. It is the gateway into the world of dreams, often with a story to show us the path, but it also the crack through which our earliest fears creep. With a totally new mural, entitled *Avec plaisir*, the artist Kasper Bosmans recreates the atmosphere of a bedroom and suggests night-time experiences between fantasy and darkness that reveal themselves as we are dropping off to sleep (or when sleep takes us).



Kasper Bosmans
Avec plaisir [With
 Pleasure], 2023
 Mural. Mixed media
 340 x 1,531 cm
 Owned by the artist
 © Fundació Joan Miró,
 2023

In her installation for *Imaginary Friends*, Apfelbaum takes as her starting point a book dating from 1963, *The Potential of Woman*, the proceedings of a symposium at which the aim was to study women's liberation, while completely ignoring the approaches and demands of feminism in the 1960s. More than fifty years on, Apfelbaum has appropriated with irony the title of the book and its graphic image – featuring a flattened and stylised vision of a female figure – to illustrate the historical and contemporary aspects of equality.



Polly Apfelbaum
The Potential of Women,
 2019
 Wool dyed and woven by
 hand
 1 x 1,341 x 335.28 cm
 (four parts)
 Belvedere 21. Gift of the
 artist. Courtesy of Frith
 Street Gallery (London),
 Alexander Gray Associates
 (New York) and Nächst St.
 Stephan Rosemarie
 Schwarzwälder (Vienna)

Apfelbaum's installation adapted for *Imaginary Friends* includes fourteen lithographs from Joan Miró's *Àlbum 13*, held in the Fundació Joan Miró's collection. She has chosen them because of the connection between the playful and at the same time serious imagery of the face found in both *The Potential of Women* and in Miró's works. Apfelbaum has placed a table for drawing on in the middle of the installation, the idea being that visitors will be able to complete her work with drawings.

Joan Miró
Àlbum 13 litografies
 [Album Thirteen
 Lithographs], 1948
 14 lithographs
 Diverse dimensions
 Fundació Joan Miró,
 Barcelona
 © Successió Miró, 2023



The *Democracy Game*, displayed in *Imaginary Friends*, consists of six tables with sliding puzzles on the tabletop. Visitors are invited to play with the puzzles to try to form the official flags of six African countries (Chad, Angola, Algeria, Senegal, the Seychelles and Morocco). The flags, which are square rather than the usual rectangular shape, are broken apart and reconfigured as the public interacts with them. According to the artist Meschac Gaba, this action reveals the complexity of democracy and the difficulties of building free and autonomous nations.

Meschac Gaba
Democracy Game, 1999
 Six painted wooden tables
 78.5 x 90 x 90 cm each
 Friends of SMAK
 Collection, Ghent
 Photo: Davide Camesasca
 © Fundació Joan Miró,
 2023

Afra Eisma uses craft techniques to explore personal stories through intimate, immersive installations made of fabrics, sculptures and ceramic objects. Her works are inspired by imaginary characters that intertwine sensoriality and sensuality with a deliberate insouciance that is not without mystery. In *Imaginary Friends*, Eisma is showing her works *Whisper Rattle*, *Dribble Crackle* (2022) and *Bloom Passage* (2022), together with a new carpet created especially for this exhibition. Together, they are entitled *Tails Tell Tales*. Visitors who wish to can take off their shoes and walk on the large piece on the ground, sit down on it and feel at home among the artist's imaginary friends.



Afra Eisma

Tails Tell Tales, 2022
Wire, support, glazed ceramic, terracotta, fabric, foam, wood
No Man's Art Gallery
Artist's assistant: Alejandra López Martínez
Unofficial head of the alien fashion department: Nadie Borggreve
Photo: Davide Camesasca
© Fundació Joan Miró, 2023

Arranged as if in a living room, a huge red vinyl sofa and armchair occupy the centre of the next space in the exhibition. Visitors are invited to enter this extravagant space that calls to mind *Alice Through the Looking Glass* and to reimagine the domestic interior: to sit on the outsize furnishings, to use the enormous remote control and to zap through the videos by the artist herself on the huge television screen. The artist Pipilotti Rist changes the scale of objects in order to examine the functioning of observation and the perceptions that arise from it. Within this disproportionate space, every visitor can feel the dizziness suffered by children in a world not made to their size. The installation points to Peter Pan Syndrome, a concept deriving from pop-psychology used to describe adults who refuse to grow up in relation to certain aspects.



Pipilotti Rist

Das Zimmer (The Room), 1994
Sofa, armchair, standard lamp, picture, television set and remote control
Variable dimensions
Courtesy of the artist, Hauser & Wirth and Luhring Augustine
Photo: Davide Camesasca
© Fundació Joan Miró, 2023

It cannot be seen and it is the only element that fills every last corner of the foundation's rooms. For many years now, the artist Martin Creed has been making the invisible visible, in this case air, based on one of his simple yet profoundly reflective acts: filling the exhibition space with balloons. *Half the Air in a Given Space* is an installation made up of a sea of coloured balloons that visitors have to cross. As we move about inside the work, we become part of it. This physical experience often connects the visitor with the joy of childhood, but also with underlying feelings of claustrophobia and fear.



Martin Creed

Work No. 1513: Half the Air in a Given Space, 2013
 Orange Balloons
 66.04 cm each
 Variable dimensions
 Private collection
 Photo: Davide Camesasca
 © Fundació Joan Miró, 2023

There are games that spontaneously arise from free exploration and others that are played according to rules, a playful regulatory framework that imposes imaginative or provocative conditions on the consensus of reality. Players submit to them in order to create an alternative experience together in the belief that limits stimulate another type of creativity. In his *One Minute Sculptures* series, the artist Erwin Wurm invites visitors to become part of a sculpture. They receive precise instructions regarding the pose they are to adopt using various objects available to them on a pedestal: stretch out on a number of tennis balls and remain balanced horizontally; elegantly share a giant sweater between two people. And, as the title indicates, they face the challenge of maintaining that position for one minute.



Erwin Wurm

One Minute Sculptures, 1997
 Video, sound, 47 min
 Atelier Erwin Wurm

Untitled, Double, 2002
 Plinth, sweater, drawing with instructions
 15 x 130 x 100 cm / 20 x 150 x 100 cm (plinth)
 Atelier Erwin Wurm

Modified Social Bench for Venice #04 has been installed in the Olive Tree Patio at the Fundació Joan Miró. Its surprising, extravagant and playful forms turn the museum's central courtyard into a place where visitors can have fun, find inspiration and interact. In establishing a dialogue between the work, the user and their immediate environment, Hein invites spectators to contribute to completing the piece; thus he pushes the public into a physical activation of the work. Hein's benches transform their surroundings into places of social activity that foster communication between their users. Consequently, they are part of a fun game based on an intervention with a simple and evocative design that generates informal and imaginative encounters.



Jeppe Hein
Modified Social Bench for Venice #04, 2019
Powder-coated aluminium
151 x 784 x 337 cm
Jeppe Hein Studio
Photo: Davide Camesasca
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