

Joan Miró. The Poetry of Everyday Life

An exhibition co-organised by Fundació Joan Miró and Hong Kong Museum of Art
3 March – 28 June 2023
Hong Kong

Press release

The Fundació Joan Miró and Hong Kong Museum of Art present *Joan Miró. The Poetry of Everyday Life*.

The exhibition reflects the intimate creative relationship that the artist established with objects of everyday use as well as the public commitment that his artistic project achieved.

The exhibition features 90 works by Joan Miró between 3 March and 28 June 2023, among which are paintings, sculptures, drawings, objects and textile artworks.

The works travelling to Hong Kong include his major triptych *Fireworks*, which has only very rarely been seen outside the Fundació Joan Miró.

*'Each grain of dust contains the soul of something marvellous.
But in order to understand it, we have to recover the religious
and magical sense of things that belong to primitive peoples.'*

Joan Miró, 1937

Barcelona, 2 March 2023. The exhibition *Joan Miró. The Poetry of Everyday Life* reveals the artist's relationship – lasting throughout his career – with elements of nature and everyday life. At the same time, it highlights a new way to perceive art based on Miró's capacity to discover poetic possibilities in the simplest of objects. The project highlights the great importance of everyday objects in the creation of sculptures, paintings, drawings and Miró's textile art, leading to the social commitment of the artist and his work of freedom in times of oppression through the technique of lithographic printing.

The selection of works on display at the Hong Kong Museum of Art is a journey through all Miró's production, revealing his desire for experimentation and to go beyond the limits of painting. The artist achieved this through the practice of various artistic techniques at his disposal, including objects drawn from nature and popular culture that have become universal despite their simplicity and essential nature. In employing them, Miró had no hesitation in flouting the conventions of pictorial tradition by experimenting with unorthodox media and creative processes.

This project was presented in 2017 in Stockholm, where it featured works only from Miró's later years, but it has been expanded with the incorporation of works from the late 1920s. The exhibition features 90 works by Joan Miró, among which are paintings, sculptures, drawings, objects and textile artworks. It also includes two photos by French photographer Claude Gaspari and two films by the Catalan directors Pere Portabella and Francesc Català-Roca.

The exhibition is divided into five sections based around the artist's relationship with what he perceived as everyday. In the first section, called *The Object*, he used everyday objects as the starting point for his sculptures and paintings. In his quest to go beyond painting, objects served as a stimulus for Miró's creativity as an artist. A napkin, a hatbox, a detergent bottle, a stone and a pumpkin are just some of the elements observed by the artist that inspired poetic interpretation. Either directly or indirectly, objects were a source of inspiration for him – first as represented objects and, later on, under the influence of Surrealism, replacing representation. The use of physical objects in his pieces as an integral part of reality also fuelled his desire to collect them; in fact, once they were in his studios, they became essential to him for creating a favourable atmosphere in which to work. Miró used objects to challenge the meaning of painting, which in turn led him to experiment with unusual materials instead of using more conventional media.

The second section, entitled *Poetry and Matter*, presents a selection of artworks that transgress the boundaries of traditional painting; Miró attached great importance to the media and materials he used without prejudice. All these repurposed, anti-pictorial elements were visually approached from their purest essence and transformed into art objects. The materiality that they represent stands on its own, expressing itself in a poetic manner. Miró explored new processes and materials alien to art, as he continued to challenge traditional painting and reject its illusionistic role.

In the third section of the exhibition, *Folk Art*, visitors will find two *sobreteixims*, works made with a base of jute and hemp weave to which all kinds of objects are attached, making the pieces three-dimensional, in combination with pictorial gesture and occasionally the controlled action of fire. With these pieces, the artist set out to highlight the material purity of the work, showing it as an integral part of the reality he sought to represent. Folk art was an important source of inspiration for Miró throughout his entire lifetime. It appealed to him because of its collective nature and the way artisans work, with no other aim than to create objects that adapt to the human body and to their

intended use. What is unique about these objects is that, not having to fulfil other purposes, they tend to be pared down to their bare essentials, and thus can be remarkably similar even if coming from very different cultures. That was precisely one of the aspects of folk art that Miró found most captivating: an object, no matter how local, could also be universal. Miró considered that a work of art, as with folk art, must be a part of people's lives, and he believed that its nature must not be the product of an intellectual act, but rather of an authentic expression.

The fourth section of the exhibition, *Poster Art*, turns to the medium of the poster to focus on Miró's support of social, cultural and humanitarian causes. Collaborating with artisans gave this printmaking technique a human, purely craft-based character that was particularly appealing to him. Moreover, the fact that his production could be serialised allowed multiple copies of each piece to reach many people, thus democratising the work of art itself. The outspoken social, political and cultural commitment that Miró expressed in his posters became part of the artist's legacy. With his effort, he honed the opportunity offered by art for him to voice not only his own concerns, but also those of ordinary people who did not have access to a legitimate platform from which to express themselves openly.

Miró's involvement in producing works for public spaces materialised in the form of ceramic murals and sculpture. Most of these pieces were conceived from the outset by considering the possibility of their enlargement and return to nature. At the same time, Miró thought about working his pieces into architecture, with the clear aim of ennobling the cities we live in. After the end of the Second World War, the artist felt a growing urge to produce works for public spaces that would merge with the surrounding architecture and landscape, imagining cities that could fulfil the needs of modern society, where works of art would have a widespread presence in buildings, parks and gardens.

The last section, *Public Art*, is devoted to Miró's intervention in Barcelona's public space in collaboration with the young architects from Studio PER in 1969. It is focused on Joan Miró's interest in public art by showing three additional pieces. Miró presented in this work the opposite of the figure of the artist as viewed from the perspective of traditional painting. In collaboration with the young architects from Studio PER, Miró painted on the building's windows in a graffiti-like style. Following the artist's wishes, the piece was destroyed at the end of the exhibition, prompting debates about its commercial value and the possibility of it being preserved. The ensuing controversy among the public was precisely part of everyday life, and therefore integrated the work into society at an almost unconscious level. Today, the preliminary drawing, sketched across several pages ripped out from a notebook, the film by Pere Portabella, and the photographs taken at the time are the only remaining visual records of the making, culmination and destruction of this action in a public space.

Joan Miró. The Poetry of Everyday Life concludes with a section that features contemporary artworks from local artists GayBird and Leelee Chan, as well as works from the collection of the Hong Kong Museum of Art by Hong Kong and Eastern artists that pay tribute to Joan Miró, such as Zao Wou-ki, Wu Guanzhong, Luis Chan and Ha Bik-chuen.

Joan Miró

A man rooted in his land, an artist of international reach

Barcelona, Spain, 1893 – Palma, Spain, 1983

Joan Miró was born in Barcelona in 1893, but the emotional landscapes that shaped him as a person and artist were principally those of Mont-roig, Paris and Mallorca, and later those of New York and Japan. The small town of Mont-roig in the Baix Camp region of Catalonia was a counterpoint to the intellectual ferment of his life with the surrealist poets in 1920s Paris, and to the stimulus of discovering Abstract Expressionism in New York in the 1940s. Sometime later, during the Second World War, Joan Miró returned from exile in France and settled in Palma de Mallorca, which became his refuge and workplace, and where his friend Josep Lluís Sert designed the studio of his dreams.

Miró's attachment to the landscape of initially Mont-roig and then Mallorca was crucial in his work. His connection to the land and his interest in everyday objects and the natural environment formed the backdrop to some of his technical and formal research. Miró avoided academicism in his constant quest for a pure, global art that could not be classified under any specific movement. Self-contained in his manners and public expressions, it is through art that Joan Miró showed his rebelliousness and a strong sensitivity to the political and social events around him. These conflicting forces led him to create a unique and extremely personal language that makes him one of the most influential artists of the 20th century.

About Fundació Joan Miró

The Fundació Joan Miró was set up by the artist himself and opened its doors to the public in 1975. It contains a unique collection of Joan Miró's work, his personal library and an archive with all his preliminary sketches, making it a landmark centre for research, dissemination and promotion of the artist's work and legacy.

Since its opening as the first museum in Barcelona devoted to modern and contemporary art, the Fundació Joan Miró has shared the artist's work and his legacy with the world. With the support of public and private institutions, it has promoted and run international projects and numerous temporary exhibitions. It has also backed Espai 13, one of the first venues devoted to emerging artists and curators, and an active educational space concentrating on promoting creativity and a better understanding of modern and contemporary artistic practices.

About Hong Kong Museum of Art (HKMoA)

Established in 1962, the Hong Kong Museum of Art is the first public art museum in the city, now custodian of an art collection of over 18,800 items, representing the unique cultural legacy of Hong Kong's connection across the globe. By curating a wide world of contrasts, from old to new, Chinese to Western, local to international, with a Hong Kong viewpoint, it aspires to refreshing ways of looking at tradition and making art relevant to everyone in order to create new experiences and understanding.

For more information, please contact

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Selection of images for the media

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Images available at [Joan Miró. The Poetry of Everyday Life](#)

SECTION 1 The Object

Joan Miró

Personage (with Umbrella)

Replica from 1973

c. 1931

Wood, dry leaves and umbrella

230 x 136.5 x 159 cm

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona

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SECTION 1 The Object

Joan Miró

Painting

Peinture

1936

Oil, tar, casein and sand on Masonite

78 x 108 cm

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona. Gift of David Fernández Miró

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SECTION 1 The Object

Joan Miró

Femmes, oiseaux

Women, Birds

1973

Acrylic, oil and wax crayon on tarpaulin

302 x 257 cm

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona. Gift of Pilar Juncosa de Miró

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SECTION 2 Poetry and Matter

Joan Miró

L'Horloge du vent

The Wind Clock

1967

Bronze

50.5 x 30.2 x 16.3 cm

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SECTION 2 Poetry and Matter

Joan Miró

Burnt Canvas 1

1973

Acrylic on canvas cut and burnt

130 x 195 cm

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SECTION 3 Folk Art

Joan Miró

Sobreteixim 6

1972

Acrylic, string and wool on wall hanging woven by Josep

Royo

140 x 187 cm

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SECTION 4 Poster Art

Joan Miró

Aidez l'Espagne

Help Spain

1937

Stencil

31 x 24.3 cm

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona

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