

# COOLT

## 'Furries' for a 'queer' childhood

Argentina's Ad Minoliti imagines a childhood on the fringes of binarisms in 'Furry Tales', her installation at La Casa Encendida in Madrid.

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What to do when you are received by two furries at an exhibition?

Perhaps the strangeness produced by these games of humans pretending to be hairy beasts only works for the adult eye. All the prejudices of sexualization of these identities disappear in the eyes of the child, who finds in the beast that receives you a mask free of certain prejudices that adult faces do carry.

The exhibition is Furry Tales, the immersive installation by Ad Minoliti (Buenos Aires, 1980) that can be visited at La Casa Encendida in Madrid until March 27 . The show is part of the Fantastic Interior cycle , which is curated by Rafa Barber Cortell and which brings together four proposals by different artists whose nexus is intimacy, self-care and the construction of subjectivity. In short, works that revolve around the inner world, a sphere associated with the vulnerable and intimate, but which is also infected by the political, and which acquires new readings in times of hyperconnection.

For his proposal, the first of the cycle, Minoliti rescues elements from his stuffed Biosfera Peluche / Biosphere

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Plush, an installation that has passed through the BALTIC Center for Contemporary Art in Newcastle and the Museum of Modern Art in Buenos Aires. It is clear in the trajectory of this author that queer theory can be used for artistic deconstruction. Her training in the field of painting, always multicolored and geometric, refers to the domestic design of the seventies and eighties, which for her becomes a technique to intervene in immersive spaces.



“My art is queer , although it is not classifiable with what is labeled as queer or feminist art,” explains Minoliti in an interview with COOLT. “I am interested in the dissolution of technical and conceptual borders, especially within the heteronormative context of Western culture and our tendency to divide the entire world into categories. With this goal, any type of art can be part of my universe, I am not going to limit myself to one technique or class”.

Upon entering Furry Tales we immerse ourselves in a space of friendly forms that escape from patriarchal references and point towards fusion and flexibility beyond the binary. By contrast, the show makes clear that childhood as we know it is profoundly political, marked by capitalist productivity and phallic paranoia, and that it denies infantile subjects authority over their own bodies.

What the installation proposes is a space for authentic play and enjoyment made up of an alternative forest to the one in the story of Little Red Riding Hood. In this parallel version the protagonist is CAP and on his journey he meets Lobe. They are not enemies, because their reality flees from violence. On the contrary, out of curiosity they decide to meet without imposed moralities. Their friendship is narrated on the walls of the space with a fotonovela with actions from a performance by Hapi Hapi and Marcus Massalami.

These two characters are embodied in two furies , whose design is the work of Feli Quispe and pays homage to the Argentine artist Susy Shock. But these transspecies animals do not appear as fetishes of adult sexualizations, but here they constitute a queer vindication of the new savage that Minoliti imagines. The soft, the tender and the childish are thus autonomous protagonists.

All this should not be confused with innocence, explains Minoliti: “Innocence does not interest me, I think it is used against minors, against their rights of access to health, education and autonomy. Tenderness does interest me and, more than anything, childhood as a quality generally assigned in our society to an age group but also

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to anyone who loses sovereignty over their body (thinking about the phrase ‘they treat him like a child’), reading about the fascist claims of ‘not with our children’ to deny comprehensive sexual education, as if people were the property of the reproducers. Modernity and our contemporary practice still disdain minor related issues, tenderness is frowned upon by the intelligentsia, the school and the academy”.



If one thinks about the differences in the vision of the furry as a child or an adult, one can wonder if Furry Tales raises the possibility of regression for some adults. Nothing further, says Minoliti: “I don’t believe in linear time, it’s not about returning to a state of purity or anything like that. I think the notion of lost time responds to capitalist guilt for quantifying and classifying”.

Evidently, within the space, CAP and Lobe’s story is striking, in which violence is conspicuous by its absence. It always seemed the essence of that story, but Minoliti explains that the violence of the original story is the criminalization of the forest and the wolf. The classic story would be a disciplinary story and the morals that are projected on minors are important for the patriarchal system.



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We are now entering the philosophical field by addressing the different visions of furry . When Minoliti is asked if she is not worried that some adult will see the furies charged with sexual nuances, she answers that she is even more concerned about Catholic schools, that the digital network already shows that there are sexual nuances in everything and fetishisms of all kinds. “The furry in my work is the stuffed toy as a theory, the animated characters and antispeciesism. Like Zootopia without the police. There are many values and directions, as well as in cosplay and drag , community feelings, where in fact many minors participate in furry conventions ” .



“The age division of society is cultural, and childhood is not monolithic,” summarizes the artist, who highlights that the installation she has devised allows resignifying the enormous white cube that La Casa Encendida represents, with its misogynistic and racist connotations.

In short, an exhibition that, pretending not to want to know anything about ages or genders, refers us to a public mirror to transform the reflection of individual intimacy. A room that can transport us back in time, and that works as a practical and performative pillar for theories that seek to flee from binary constructions and point out the subtle violence against childhood.