

# CREATIVE BOOM

## Ad Minoliti transforms Tate St Ives into a colourful, experimental biosphere

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21 JUNE 2022



Argentinian artist Ad Minoliti has taken over the walls of Tate St Ives with their first UK solo exhibition, titled *Biosfera Peluche / Biosphere Plush*. Drawing on the legacy of geometric abstraction in Latin America, the show creates a playful, colourful environment which immerses visitors in an alternate universe.

From now until 30 October 2022, the interactive show sees Ad do away with conventional approaches to gallery space. Rather than being confined to frames and canvasses, the colourful work in this exhibition takes up entire walls and runs down along the floor. *Biosfera Peluche / Biosphere Plush* turns Tate St Ives into an imagined world that merges ideas around modern art, social justice, internet subcultures, and science fact and fiction.

As its name suggests, the exhibition uses Biosphere 2 as its starting point. For those not in the know, Biosphere 2 was the world's largest Earth science experiment. Launched in the Arizona desert in 1984, it saw eight people live in airtight domes to determine whether humans could create and sustain life in artificial environments such as space stations.

For Ad, though, Biosphere was of interest because it highlighted the colonial and capitalist intentions of space

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exploration. And given how Ad's work is also shaped by feminist and queer thought, it's no surprise that the project also highlighted to them the perpetuation of patriarchal and monocultural society.



Biosfera Peluche / Biosphere Plush is a subversion of the ideals that flourished in Biosphere 2. Ad's experimental station values identities, experiences and abstract forms above all else, manifested by gigantic colourful murals and other installations such as a set of human-sized Furry mannequins.



“Inside the imagined biosphere, new works from the artist’s Fables (Butterfly and Flowers) series use colour and shape to deconstruct gender roles,” explains Tate St Ives in a statement. “These are shown alongside works from Minoliti’s Space Playset series, often called ‘cyborg paintings’ due to their origins as spray-painted images that are digitally manipulated, printed, and then overpainted by hand.”

Elsewhere the space is also inhabited by hybrid creatures who reference cartoons and other contemporary subcultures which are popular online. Named “Furries”, these human-sized avatars have non-binary names and wear clothing designed by Ad and collaborator Lam Hoi Sin.

“Bringing together ideas from queer and feminist theory, animalism and childhood, Minoliti further encourages

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viewers to think beyond the categorisations we make between things – male and female, terrestrial and alien, art and everyday life.”



Another focal point of the exhibition is Minoliti's Feminist School of Painting. This anti-school of art sees the gallery space become an active classroom; only in these experimental sessions are feminist and queer theories at the core of the lesson plan. “Through discussion and practical art activities, visitors are invited to participate in rebuilding a new world which focuses on generosity and cooperation.” It sounds more fun than double maths.



Originally produced by BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, where it was curated by Irene Aristizábal, Biosfera Peluche / Biosphere Plush has been creatively adapted for Tate St Ives in collaboration with Anne Barlow and Giles Jackson.

If you want to immerse yourself in Ad's progressive biosphere, you have until 30 October to go down to the gallery. Entry is free for members, or you can book online to secure your visit.