

miffy & friends

21 November 2020 – 14 March 2021



Design icon turns 65 and heads to Brisbane

Captivating children and adults alike for over 65 years, the iconic figure of Miffy features in a major exhibition opening in Brisbane this November. QUT Art Museum launches *miffy & friends* on 21 November, bringing the work of Dutch illustrator, Dick Bruna to Australia for the first time.

The exhibition places Miffy alongside the work of seven of Australia's most exciting contemporary artists who find the ideas encapsulated in Bruna's figure of Miffy as inspiration for their own artistic practice.

First created by Bruna (1927-2017) as a bedtime story for his son in 1955, the little white bunny, or *nijntje* as she is known in Dutch, has evolved from her life as a children's book character into a globally-recognised and universally loved design icon.

miffy & friends presents original drawings and illustrations loaned from Dick Bruna's estate, Mercis bv in Amsterdam, to explore his aesthetic influences and, in turn, how he has influenced generations of artists.

While deceptively simple, the character of Miffy is grounded in the ideas of 20th century avant-garde art, reflecting ideas of abstractionism and colour theory. With her pared back details and purity of line, Miffy embodies a universal language of minimalism. Who would have thought that something as simple as two dots for eyes and a cross for a mouth would hold such cultural sway over generations?

The inclusion of work by Stephen Bird, Sadie Chandler, Nadia Hernández, Carla McRae, Nell, Brian Robinson, and Vipoo Srivilasa, representing some of the biggest talent in contemporary art at the moment, firmly places the exhibition within an Australian context.

Exhibition curator and QUT Art Museum Gallery Director, Vanessa Van Ooyen comments that *miffy & friends* is a celebration of people coming together to share in the joys of art:

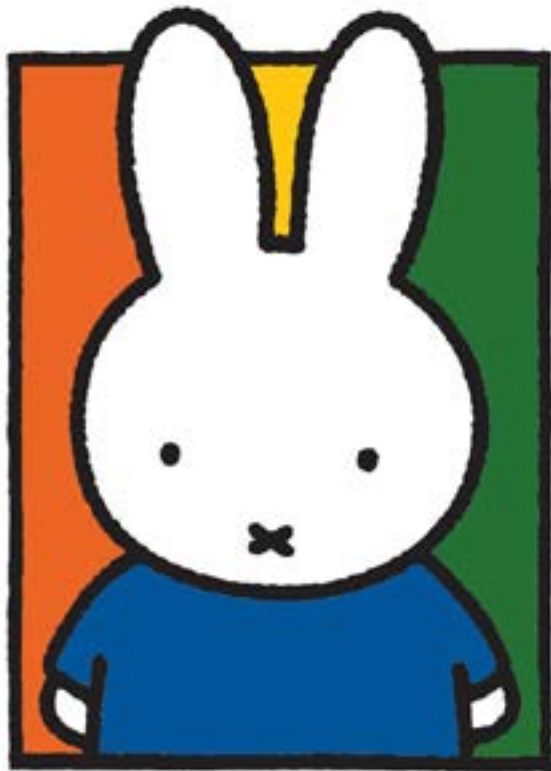
“Miffy perfectly captures the Dutch concept of *gezelligheid*, which isn’t a word easily translated into English but is about a feeling, of coming together with loved ones and a general ‘togetherness’ that gives people a sense of belonging and mutual understanding.”

Mercis bv’s Marja Kerkhof, who worked with Dick Bruna for 22 years, states:

“I think one of the secrets of his work and its universal appeal is the whole idea of family, friends and relationships, which is the basis of his work. He always said, ‘Your childhood is like your luggage, and if that starts well, that’s a real present for the rest of your life.’ I think that is really what you feel.”

The exhibition is sure to delight Miffy fans and instil a love of art in audiences of all ages, making a lasting impression on all who cross her path. QUT Art Museum is honoured to share the timeless simplicity of *miffy & friends* in Brisbane this summer.

miffy & friends premieres at QUT Art Museum in November 2020, and will travel to Bunjil Place, Melbourne (VIC) in 2021.



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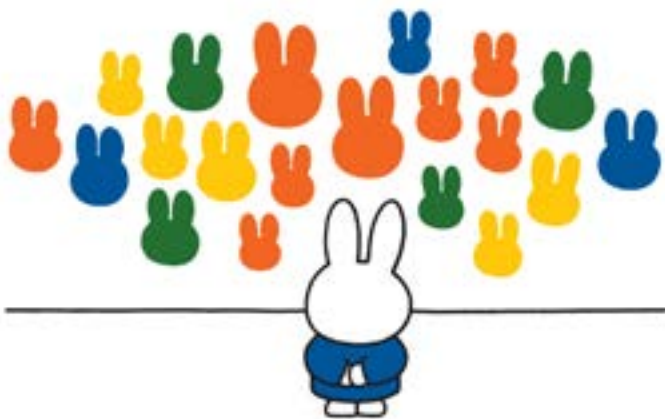
65 | years of
miffy



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AUSTRALIAN ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

STEPHEN BIRD remains aloof from any artist pigeon-hole. In production, process and materiality, his work belongs to the domain of craft, while the subversive content keeps this category at arm's length. Making his home and a significant international reputation from Sydney, the British/Australian artist works with both paint and clay and has also undertaken site-specific sculpture commissions.

SADIE CHANDLER's works are inspired by childhood memories of toys and cartoons and blended with references to formalism, minimalism and art history. Made with heavy outlines and elemental forms that appear humorous and decorative, the Melbourne-based artist's works are serious, silly, sophisticated and elegant at the same time.

NADIA HERNÁNDEZ is a Sydney-based artist whose practice is informed by the current political climate of her home country and diasporic experience as a Venezuelan woman living abroad. Using objects of personal and cultural significance, her work speaks to the concept of protest and resistance through banners, sound, paintings and paper constructions as a means of expressing solidarity and sharing stories.

CARLA MCRAE balances detail and simplicity to bring observations of the everyday into a graphic, often abstracted realm. Bright colour, bold forms and fine lines define the Melbourne-based artist's minimal, distilled imagery through drawing, digital illustration, sculpture, installation, murals and publications. With her playful sensitivity to form and open narratives, Carla's multidisciplinary work seeks out feelings of hope, joy and optimism.

NELL creates dramatic, humorous and overall idiosyncratic works, transforming an eclectic range of materials ranging from the sacred to the popular; historic to the mundane. Living and working in Sydney, her multifarious output incorporates sculpture, ceramics, painting, performance and installation. Key themes that permeate her practice include rock'n'roll, spirituality, philosophy, sex, rebirth and mortality.

BRIAN ROBINSON has become known for his printmaking, sculpture and public art in which he uses a variety of techniques to produce bold, innovative and distinctive works. Born on Waiben, an island of the Torres Strait islands, and now Cairns-based, his artworks present an intoxicating worldview. Graphic prints and contemporary sculptures read as episodes in an intriguing narrative, revealing the strong tradition of storytelling within his family and his community.

VIPOOSRIVILASA works predominantly in ceramics, creating contemporary porcelain sculptures, vessels and figures to transmit a universal message about cross-cultural experiences. Based in Melbourne, his works explore similarities between the cultures of his native home, Thailand and his adoptive home, Australia. His work is a playful blend of historical, figurative and decorative art practices with a healthy dose of contemporary culture.

nijntje danst



dick bruna

ABOUT QUT ART MUSEUM

QUT Art Museum is a leading University Art Museum and one of Queensland's premier visual art institutions. Situated in one of the CBD's most attractive locations on the Brisbane River and adjacent to the City Botanic Gardens, it is in an enviable position as well as having the gifts of thought leadership, academic excellence and innovation at its fingertips.

We seek not only to contribute to the cultural vibrancy of Brisbane and Queensland, but also to the cultural vitality of the nation. Our gallery environments are inclusive, friendly and unintimidating so that everyone in our community has the opportunity to participate in exhibitions and programs that expand inquisitive minds through an experiential learning environment.

MEDIA CONTACT

For media interviews with Mercis bv representatives; the Australian artists; QUT Art Museum Gallery Director, Vanessa Van Ooyen; or for high-resolution images, please contact:

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EXHIBITION & TOUR

QUT Art Museum, 21 November 2020 – 14 March 2021
Travelling to Bunjil Place, Melbourne (VIC) in 2021



2 George Street, Brisbane

www.artmuseum.qut.edu.au

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Tues–Fri 10am–5pm, Sat–Sun 12pm–4pm FREE

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