

Don Quixote

A Madman’s Tale, a Tale Worth Laughing At

From 15<sup>th</sup> October 2025 to 30<sup>th</sup> March 2026  
Mucem – J4 building, ground floor (500 m²)

- Curatorship

Scientific Advisors

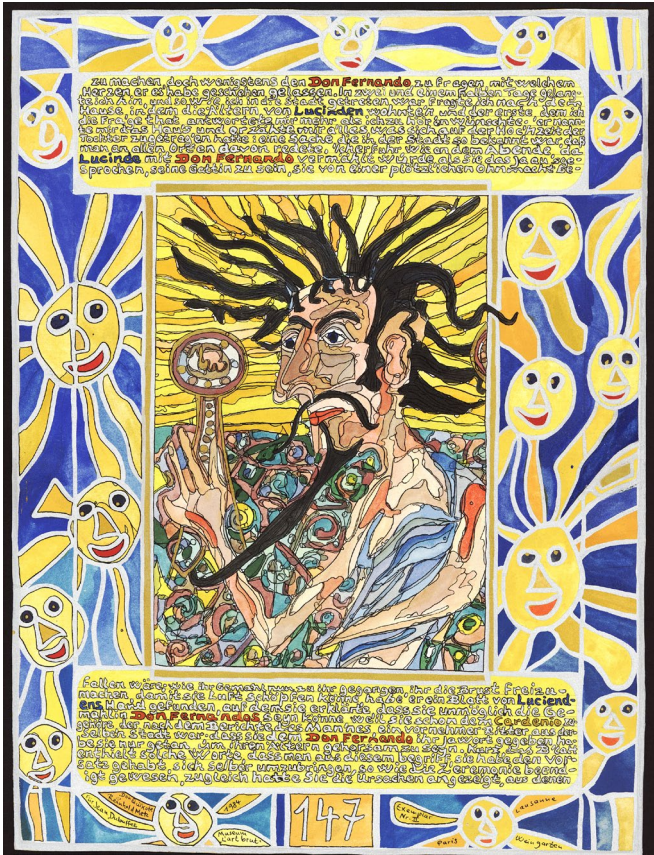
Scenography

Graphic design
- Aude Fanlo, Head of the Research and Teaching Department, Mucem  
Hélia Paukner, Heritage Curator, Head of the Contemporary Art Section, Mucem

Jean-Raymond Fanlo, professor at Aix-Marseille University, Renaissance literature specialist, translator of *Don Quixote* (Le Livre de poche – The pocket book), 2010, Laure Bataillon Classic Prize, 2015) José Manuel Lucia Megías, philologist and writer, professor at the Complutense University of Madrid, expert on Cervantes and the history of his illustrations.

Atelier Maciej Fiszer

Bastien Morin



Reinhold Metz, *El ingenioso hidalgo don Quixote de la Mancha* (p. 147), between 1983 and 1984.  
Watercolour, lacquer and Indian ink on paper, 53.5 × 39.5 cm  
Lausanne, Collection de l'Art Brut. © Collection de l'Art Brut, Lausanne:  
photograph: Claudina Garcia, Digitisation Studio, City of Lausanne

After honouring Jean Genet, Jean Giono and Gustave Flaubert, the Mucem continues its literary journey by celebrating a hero born in Spain, whose tale travelled far and wide until it became a legend: Don Quixote.

In 1605, Miguel de Cervantes created a character who believes himself a knight-errant in a book where he is little more than an antihero. Like an old man returned to childhood, he acts out the tales born of his imagination both “for real” and “for fun”. With his loyal Sancho by his side, he sets out to rescue the oppressed who never called for help and princesses no one else can see. One declaims lofty, antiquated speeches, the other answers with endless chains of proverbs. Together they ride into parodic battles, while the author revels in clever reflections on fiction and on himself.

And yet, over the span of four centuries, the tremors of this laughter, whether mischievous or dizzying, have absorbed the disquiet of modernity: the romantic pursuit of an impossible ideal, metaphysical solitude, the shifting play of illusion and disillusion, and the quiet heroism of failure. In contrast, the exhibition offers an original approach by returning to the comic, unruly and popular dimensions of the work, as well as to its boundless presence across the most diverse artistic forms and within everyday culture. It invites visitors to rediscover history itself through some of its episodes, following a path rich in variety and surprises. Consciously out of step with time, in the image of its hero, the exhibition brings together just over two hundred pieces of varied origin and period. Beginning with the Mucem’s own collections, where Don Quixote appears on magic lanterns, engravings, trade cards and playing cards, it also presents editorial and artistic masterpieces, thanks to an exceptional partnership with the National Library of Spain and the support of many distinguished lenders, both in France and abroad. Interpretations of the novel by major artists such as Charles Antoine Coypel, Francisco de Goya, Honoré Daumier, Gustave Doré, Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dali and Antonio Saura will thus converse with popular song, cinema, theatre and puppet props and costumes, comic strips, folk imagery and everyday objects. The literary material will be placed in dialogue with the cultures of the Renaissance and the Spanish Golden Age, as well as with the novel’s contemporary legacy.

Cervantes's hero still kindles the imagination of present day artists. From Gérard Garouste's gouaches, created to accompany the *Don Quixote* published by Diane de Selliers, to Abraham Poincheval's recent performance, crossing the Breton countryside clad in armour, from Pilar Albarracín's spectacular and burlesque installation to Cristina García Roderó's photographs that transfigure the splendour of Spanish folk festivals, the exhibition will unveil the richness of contemporary visions cast upon Don Quixote.

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