

## ***Paola Pivi: You started it...I finish it***

21 May 2014

NGV International | 28 May – 31 August 2014



A sleuth of giant, fluorescent and feathered free-spirited polar bears will greet visitors to the National Gallery of Victoria's Federation Court this winter in a major suite of new sculptural works by Italian artist Paola Pivi.

*Paola Pivi: You started it...I finish it* is an installation encompassing eight life-size sculptures of bears, adorned with neon-coloured feathers. These flamboyant figures adopt various attitudes and guises, playfully occupying the space of Federation Court, greeting visitors, posing and frolicking: one bear leaps from a balcony; others approach each other as if to dance, or engage in deep philosophical conversation, whilst others recline in joyful, carefree abandon.

Sculpted from urethane foam and adorned with psychedelic plumage, Pivi's carefully modeled figures are each accorded a distinct personality and body language. Together they create a marvellous, enigmatic scene – of baroque excess and surreal desire, recalling fables and fairytales, dreams and allegories, where unexpected forms become strangely familiar and the pleasure principle prevails.

Tony Ellwood, Director, NGV, said: "Federation Court will surprise and delight visitors this winter with the whimsical sculptures of Paola Pivi. As an adjunct to our Melbourne Winter Masterpieces exhibition, *Italian Masterpieces from Spain's Royal Court, Museo del Prado*, it provides an opportunity for visitors to view a broad selection of Italian art from the traditional to the contemporary."

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# NGV NEWS

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*You started it...I finish it* continues Pivi's characteristic playfulness, her interest in narrative, myth and rumour, and the creation of indelible images which echo in the imagination. As with much of her work, *You started it...I finish it* also invokes an animistic, other-worldly spiritual wonder, coupled with a deep concern about the vulnerability of the natural world.

*Paola Pivi: You started it...I finish it* is the latest instalment of a series of commissions by leading international artists for Federation Court and will be on display in Federation Court at NGV International from 28 May to 31 August 2014. Open 10am–5pm daily, free.

This installation is generously supported by the Loti & Victor Smorgon Fund. The NGV also acknowledges the support of Michael Buxton.



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## PAOLA PIVI BIOGRAPHY

Paola Pivi (b. 1971 in Milan, Italy) is an Italian artist who generally lives and works in Anchorage, Alaska, but over the past years has also worked in India. Pivi's work encompasses a bold and breathtaking array of material forms, including sculpture, photography and performance, with a number of her works involving dramatic scenographies featuring live animals and people.

Pivi's work is marked by visionary images and bold yet simple gestures – the arrangement of white animals in a landscape, the upturning of a truck, the floating of a donkey in a boat, the flight of goldfish across the Tasman Sea – to create miraculous and anarchic works of great charm, abundance and poetic significance.

Paola Pivi is represented by Galerie Perrotin, Paris, New York and Hong Kong, and Massimo De Carlo, Milan and London with whom she holds regular individual exhibitions. She has presented major solo projects and survey exhibitions in leading museums and galleries internationally including, most recently, Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam, 2013; Public Art Fund, New York, 2012; Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai, 2012; and Castello di Rivoli, Turin, 2012.

Paola Pivi has been the subject of numerous public commissions, including Frieze Art Fair, London, 2003; Nicola Trussardi Foundation, Milan, 2006; and Tate Modern, London, 2009. In 1999, Pivi was awarded the *Golden Lion Award* for the Best National Pavilion (together with 4 other artists) at the Venice Biennale.

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Image captions:

First page: **Paola Pivi** Italian 1971– View of the exhibition *OK, you are better than me, so what?* Galerie Perrotin, New York, 18 September–26 October, 2013 © Paola Pivi, courtesy Galerie Perrotin

Photo: Guillaume Zicarelli

This page: **Paola Pivi** Italian 1971– *It's not fair* 2013 (detail) from *OK, you are better than me, so what?* urethane foam, plastic, feathers 122.0 x 245.0 x 64.0 cm © Paola Pivi, courtesy Galerie Perrotin

Photo: Guillaume Zicarelli