

EXHIBITION AT THE CCCB

# GRAPHIC

# CONSELLA TELLA TION

YOUNG WOMEN AUTHORS  
OF AVANT-GARDE  
COMICS

2.12.2022 – 14.5.2023

A production of

**CCCB** Centre de Cultura  
Contemporània  
de Barcelona

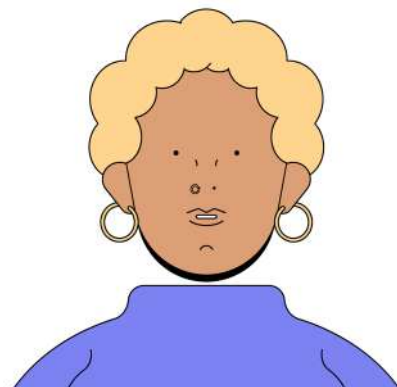
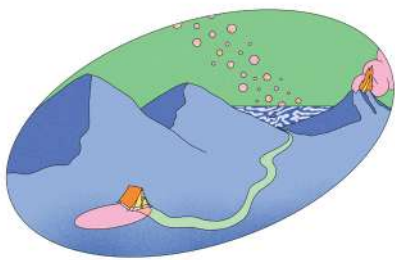
The CCCB is a consortium formed by

 Diputació  
Barcelona

 Ajuntament  
de Barcelona

More information

[cccb.org](http://cccb.org)  
#CòmicCCCB



# GRAPHIC CONSTELLATION

Young female authors of avant-garde comics

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## Technical details

### Dates

1 December 2022 - 14 May 2023

### Space

Exhibition Hall 3 (800 m<sup>2</sup>)

### Curator

Montserrat Terrones

### Project Director

Jordi Costa, Head of Exhibitions at CCCB  
(jcosta@cccb.org)

### Touring

Carlota Broggi  
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### Exhibition Design

Anna Alcubierre (espai\_e)

### Exhibition's Graphic Design

Todojunto

### Production

Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona (CCCB)

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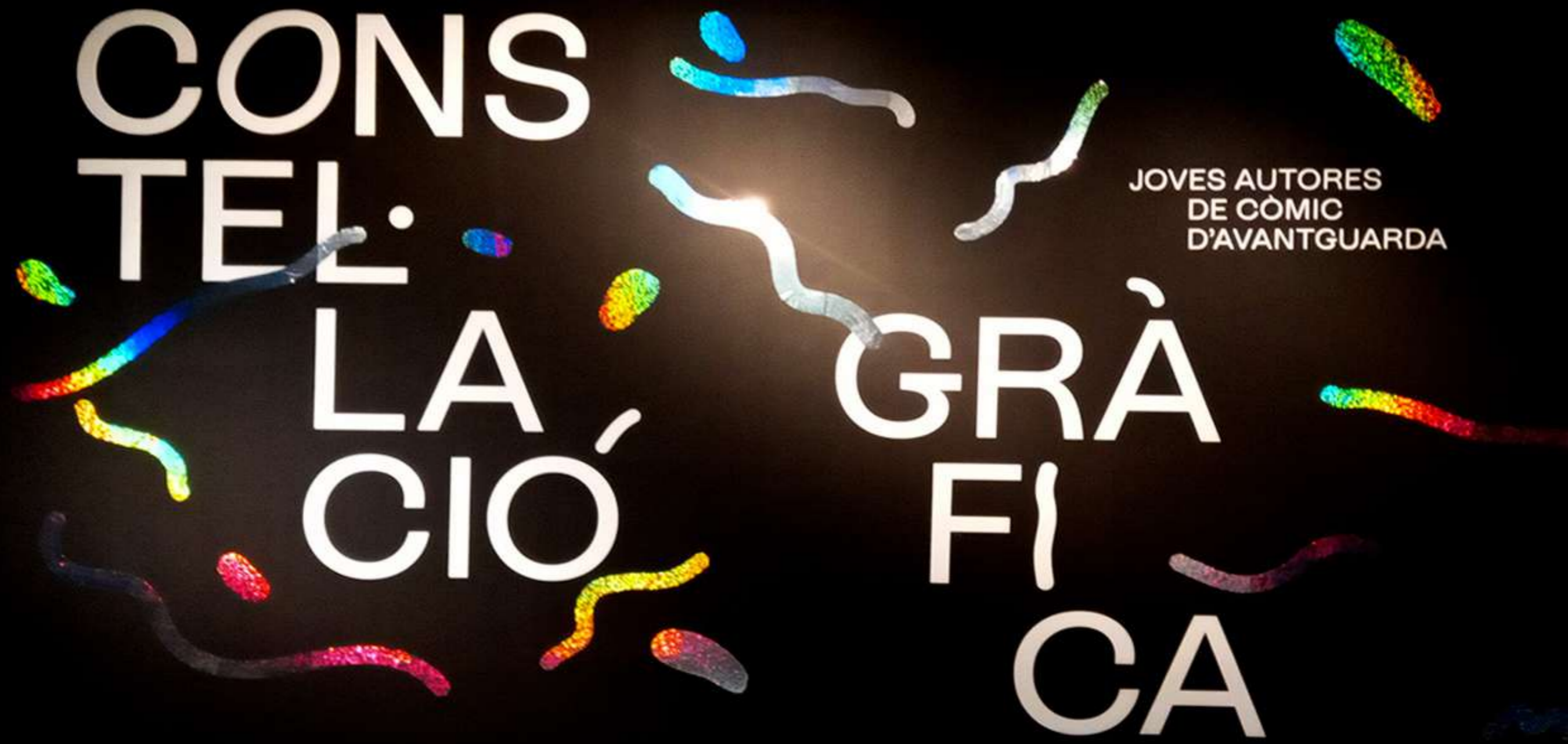
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DE CÒMIC  
D'AVANTGUARDA







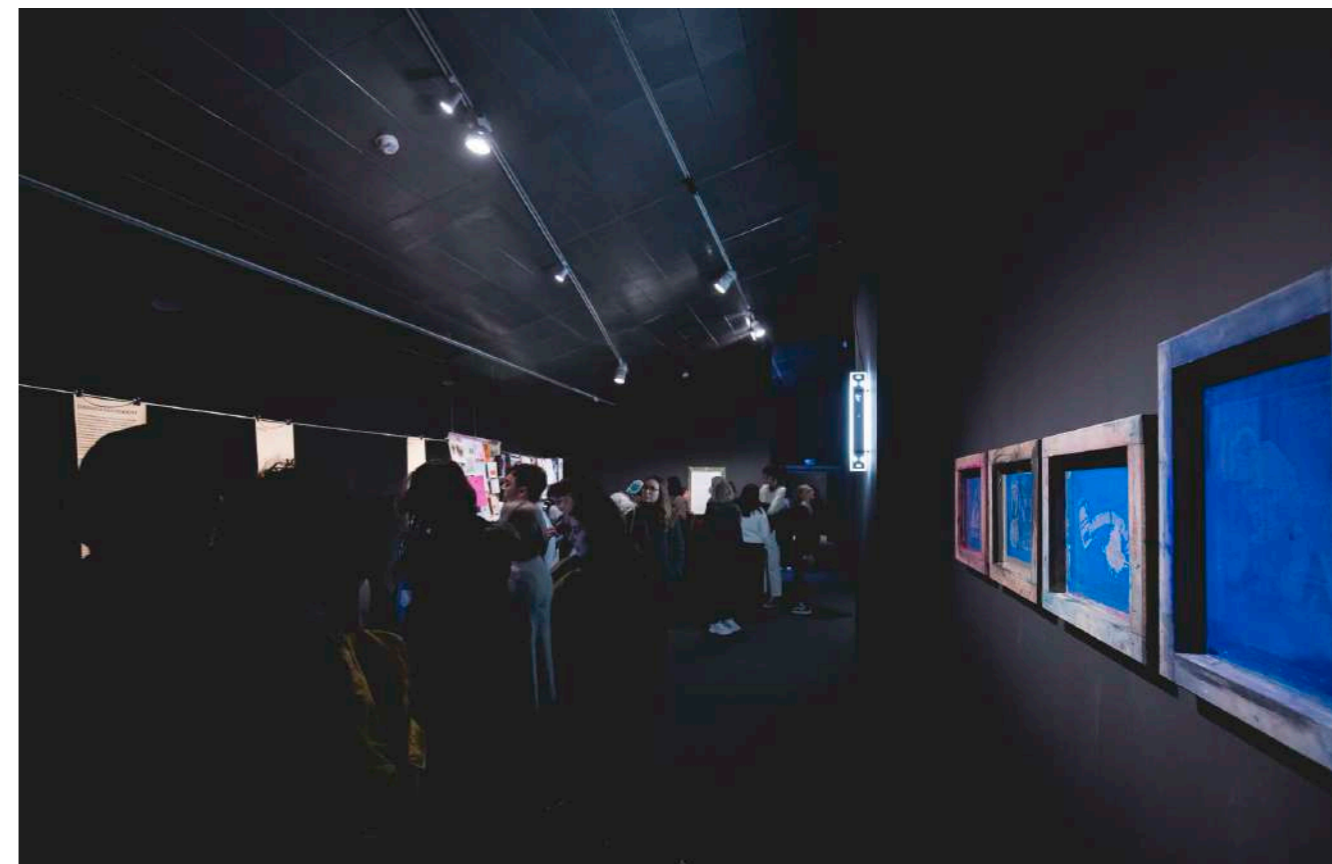
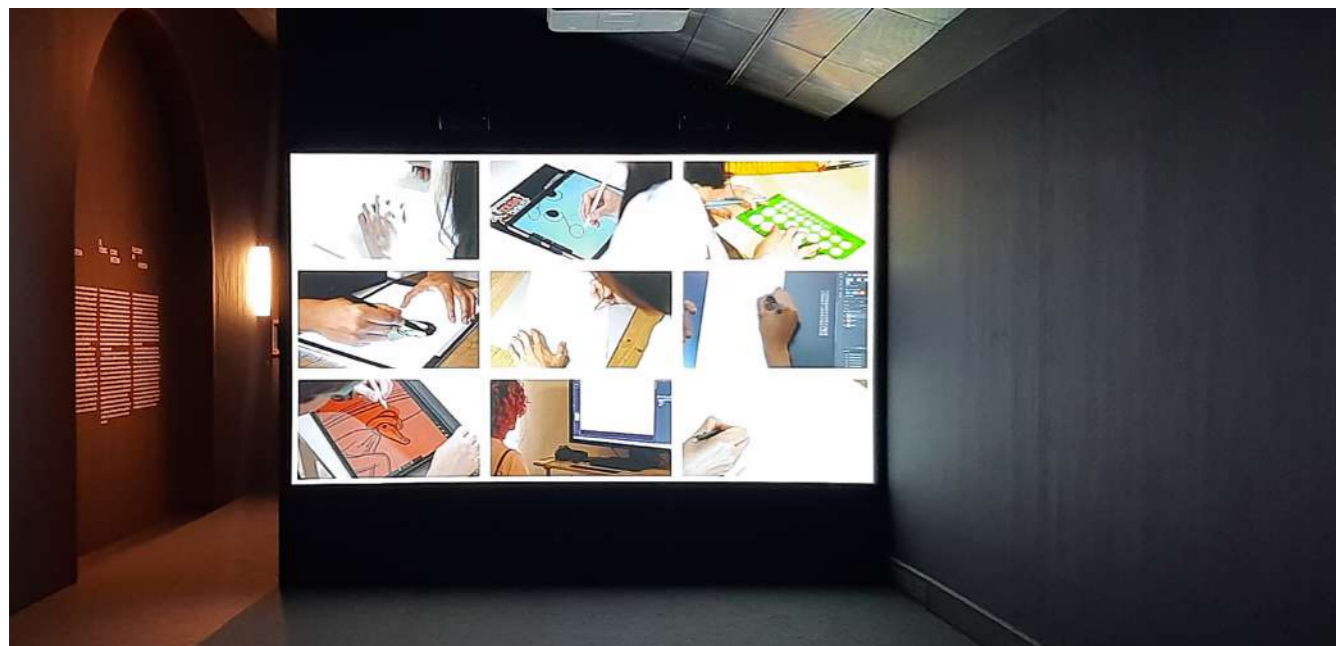
# PRESENTATION

# INTRODUCTION

A constellation is a group of stars that shine in the sky at night and suggest a certain harmony, a beguiling pattern, when viewed from Earth. In imitation of an ancient civilisation looking at the firmament in search of answers about the future, we might perhaps wonder what we are foretold by the forms and singularity of the stars that make up the constellation that is the focus of this exhibition. Their names are Bàrbara Alca, Marta Cartu, Genie Espinosa, Ana Galvañ, Nadia Hafid, Conxita Herrero, María Medem, Miriampersand and Roberta Vázquez. They are not heavenly bodies, but comic writers who, through their conceptual and aesthetic concerns, have strengthened a creative fellowship in which it is possible to read the radiant present of the experimental comic in our country and intuit some of its possible futures.

It would perhaps be presumptuous to speak of them as a generation, yet they all share the same critical view of the instabilities, uncertainties and perplexities of millennials. Nor can we regard them as an artistic movement, as their individual singularities are so powerful that they prevail over their common traits, their shared interests and aesthetic similarities. What is clear is that the fact that their radical proposals have coincided in time and place points to the wealth and diversity of a creative moment in a medium that still seems to be struggling for cultural validation in certain spaces.

A clear vocation to transform established languages into radical avant-garde proposals and a disenchanting vision of reality and of the dysfunctions in contemporary society reveal the unity between a diversity of registers that extends from the most motley variations of genre art to proposals that include poetic abstraction. This exhibition has invited these nine women authors to think outside the page, to invade the exhibition space using various resources, but without losing sight of the essence of their medium, sequential narration in (drawn) images. They have answered the invitation to intoxicate others with comics – and not just to display comics – in the rooms of this exhibition by creating nine new installations.



# 1. THE COMIC AS A SYSTEM

Much has changed in the Spanish cultural and professional landscape of comics since the boom of the 1980s that filled newsstands with new publications, led to the professionalisation of a whole generation of authors forged in the underground, fostered the proliferation of specialist shops, seduced new readers and media and made the creation of institutional comic fairs a meaningful proposition. The nine artists who feature in this exhibition emerged in the midst of a new ecosystem that encouraged aesthetic dissidence and the questioning of commonplaces and established forms of expression, although professional stability remains a distant professional horizon.

The numerous self-publishing fairs such as GRAF, Gutter Fest, Tenderete, KBOOM! and Libros Mutantes offer an alternative to more generalist events and present the ideal context for building supportive networks, establishing a direct dialogue with the public and arranging signings and professional agreements. Printers specialising in self-publishing and bookshops particularly open to proposals that defy convention make it possible for the energy of these individual landmarks to establish a fully normalised continuity. Lastly, the appearance of new publishing houses and imprints with an affinity for more audacious proposals creates a permeability between the artisanal scene and the professional space – with all that this entails in terms of popularity and circulation – that alters the old protocols on gaining admission to the industry.

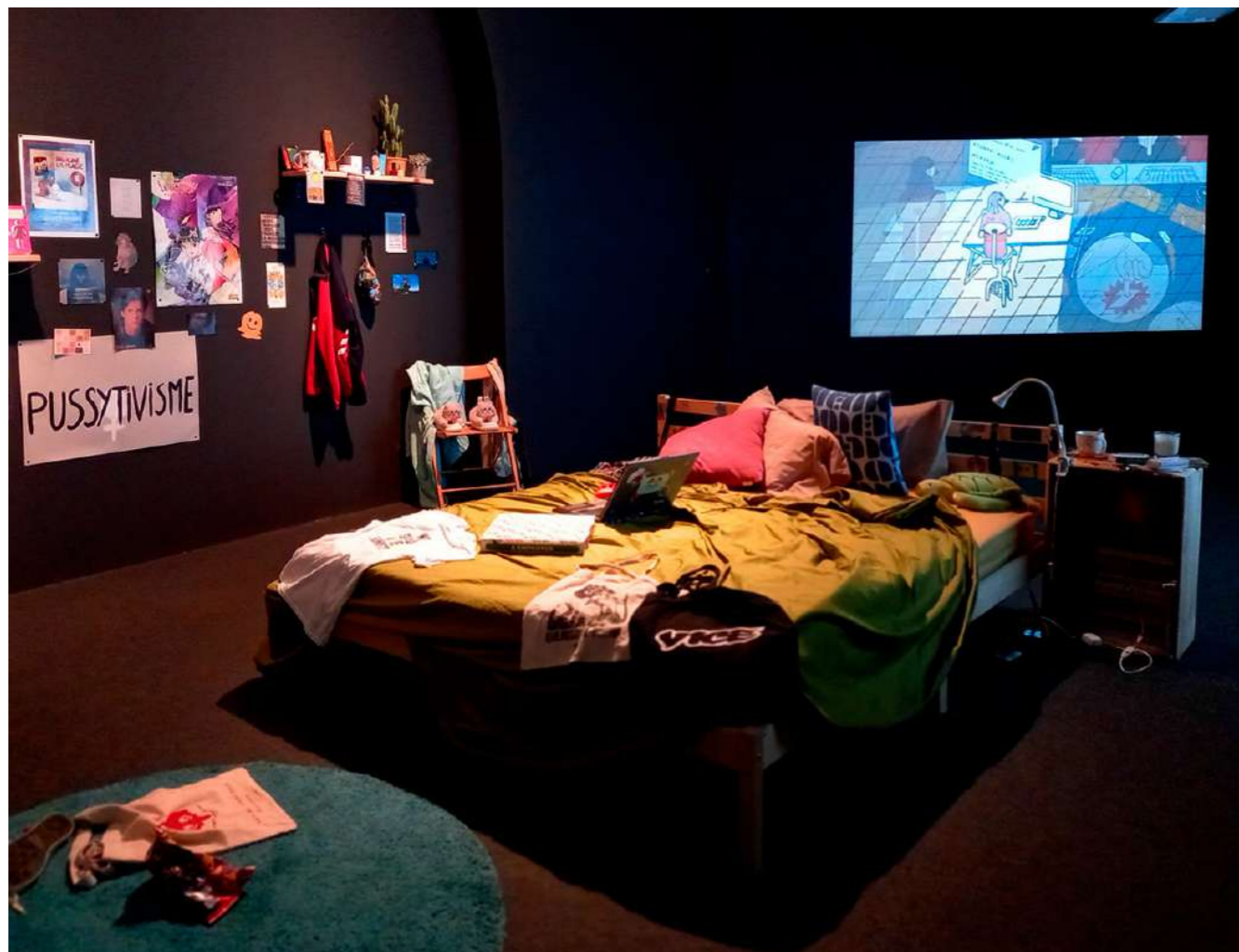
The local reverberations of some of the transformations that have taken place in the medium at an international level have also contributed to a paradigm shift that has shaped new ways of reading and creating comics. In the United States, a second generation of indie comics resulted in almost every writer becoming responsible for their own comic book mastheads, which graced the covers of some of the seminal works of the turn of the century. When manga arrived en masse, with its wide-ranging registers and tones and its particular visual codes, it captivated a large female readership, seduced by a medium in which the male gaze had predominated. In addition, the millennial sensibility has found in authors such as Dash Shaw, Marjane Satrapi, Lisa Hanawalt and Simon Hanselmann voices that appealed more directly to it.





## 2. MILLENNIALS: A GENERATION IN DISPUTE

In recent years, the concept of the 'millennial generation' has become a political battleground. At issue is a series of clichés and stereotypes (the snowflake, cry-baby, narcissistic generation addicted to social media), as well as a political and economic interpretation of the precarity and structural insecurity in which people born between the early 1980s and mid-90s find themselves. If they cannot buy property, is it because they don't make the necessary effort or because they have been through a never-ending economic crisis? If they do not have children, is it because they are into polyamory on Tinder or because they do not have either the means or the stability to even think about it? The outcome has been that many of the cultural products created by millennials take sides in the dispute by defining themselves generationally. Tiredness, malaise and insecurity are no longer seen as a personal and individual problem but are instead addressed as a situation arising from structural injustice. The digital world understood as an intangible space of freedom and creativity is also becoming a thing of the past: technology embodies the neoliberal imperative of hyperproductivity and has erased the distinction between public and private life, turning life into one long working day.



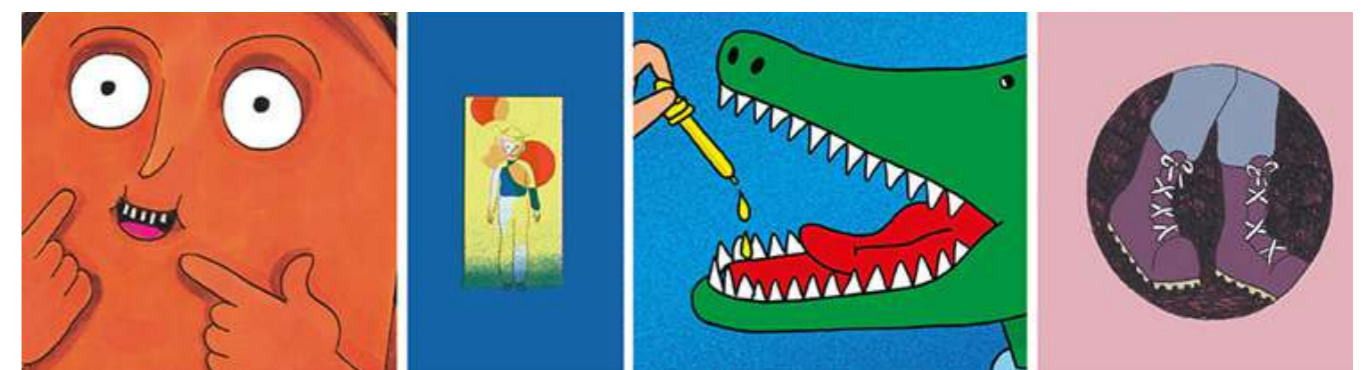
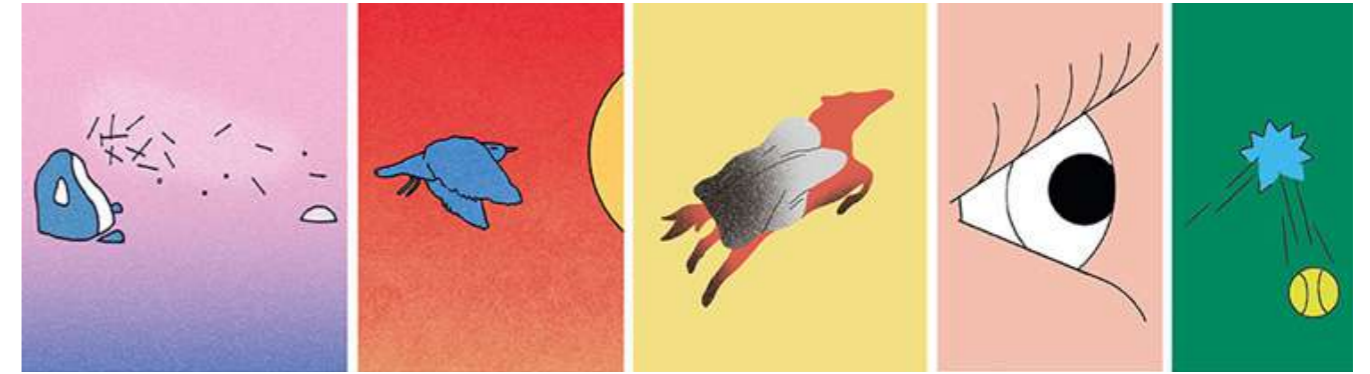
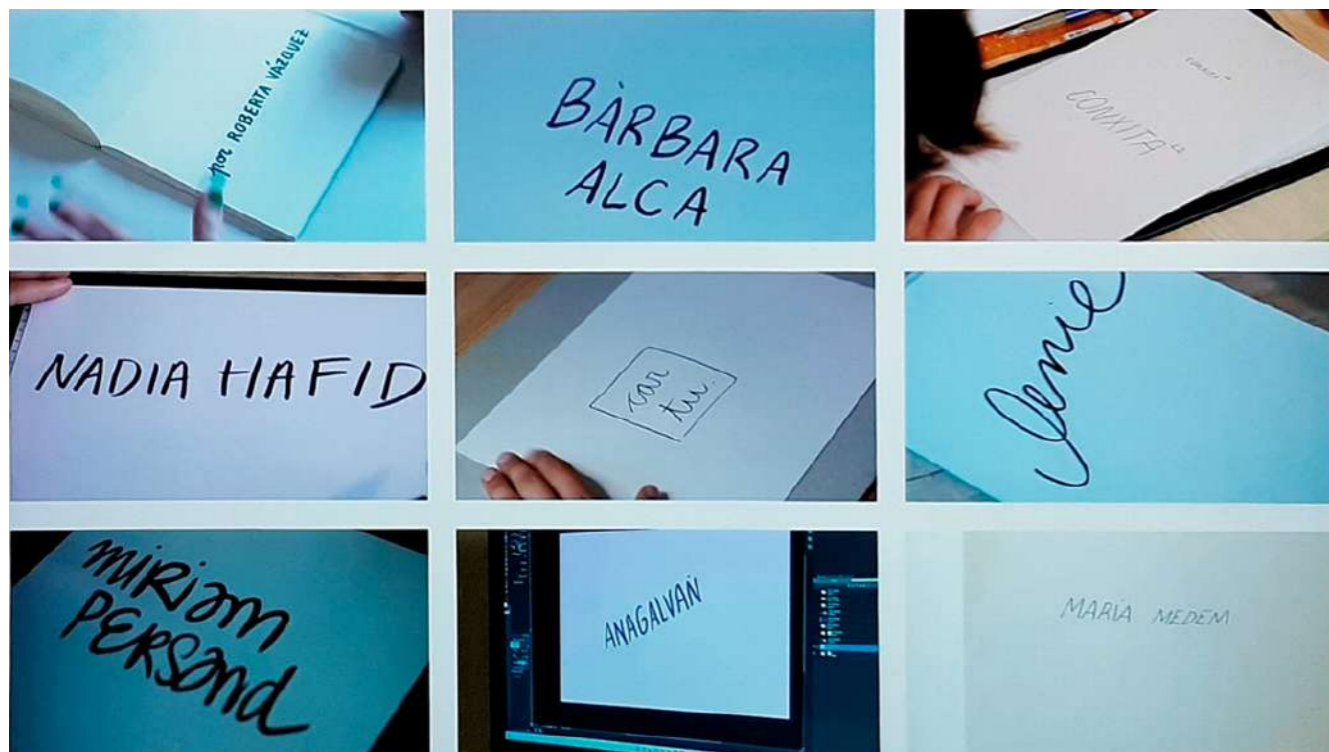


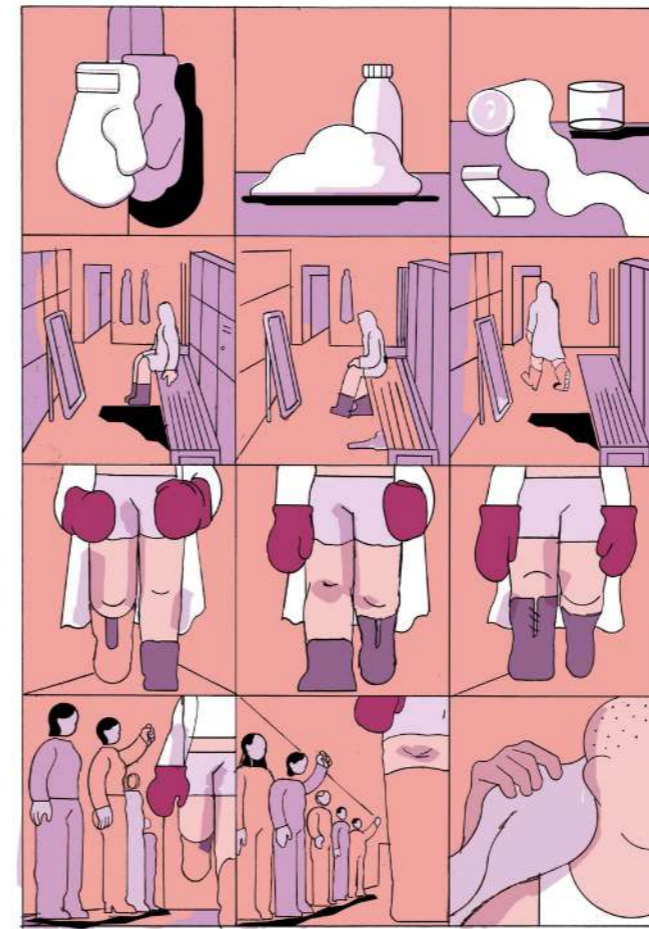
# THE SELECTION OF AUTHORS

**Bàrbara Alca, Marta Cartu, Genie Espinosa, Ana Galvañ, Nadia Hafid, Conxita Herrero, María Medem, MiramPersand and Roberta Vázquez** make up a constellation of young female authors who share points of connection despite having very defined and individualised works. Each one of them expresses in her own way the points of conflict in today's society, always with a personal discourse and an experimental will. Some share themes, others a similar conception of what the use of colour should be, others choose to prioritise page composition and there are some who have resorted to an updating of narrative tropes that have formed part of universal culture since time immemorial.

Here is a list of the selection criteria for the authors who form part of the exhibition:

- Born after 1980.
- Have at least one monographic comic published by a professional publishing house before the opening of the exhibition.
- Are the authors of both the story and the drawings of the published monographic comic.
- Have developed a self-conscious graphic piece that is personal and innovative, and which equals or exceeds the weight of the narrative in the work as a whole.
- Have built work that shows a desire to experiment.

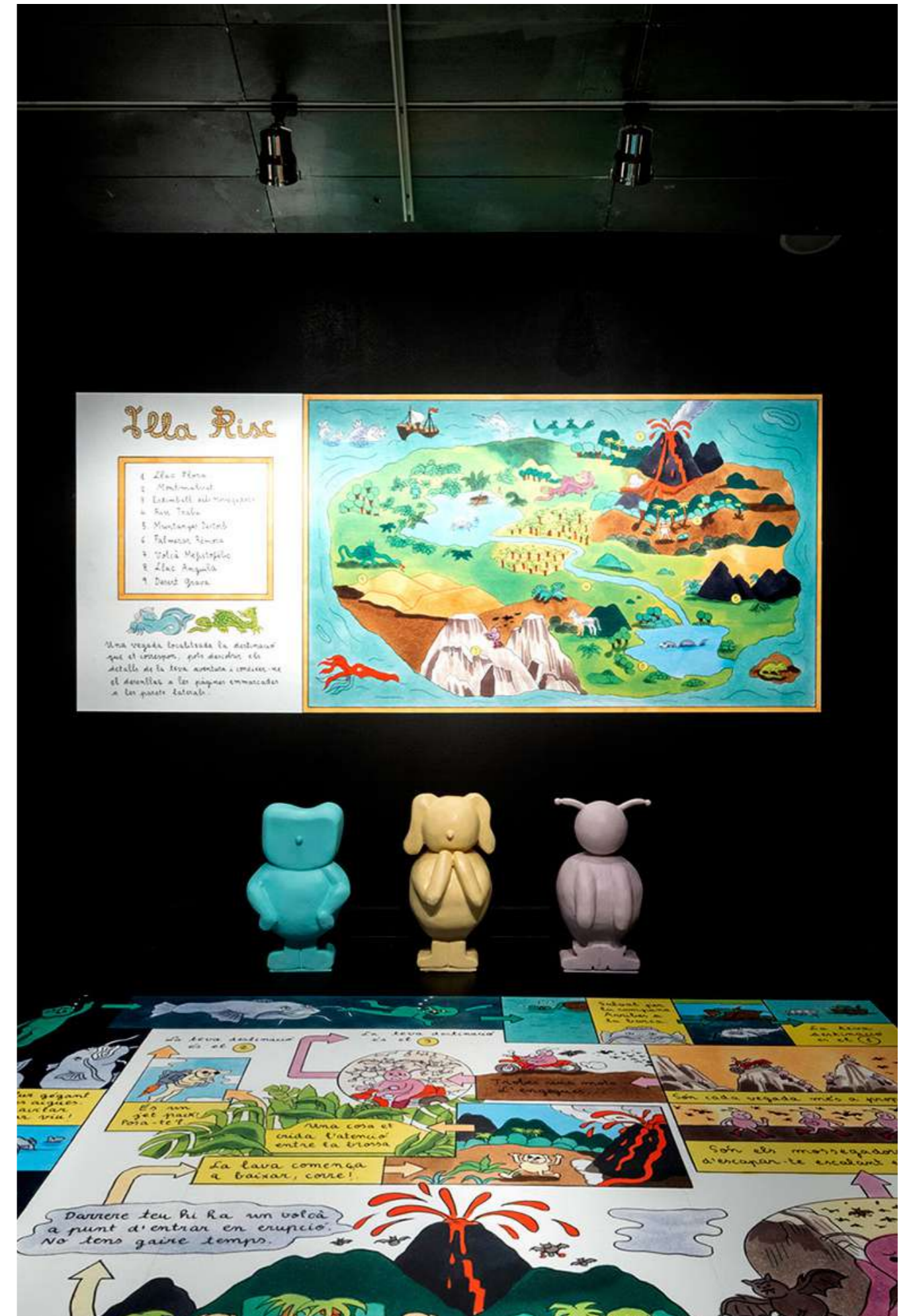




# ROBERTA VÁZQUEZ

Using a style that draws on the sources of the underground tradition but which cannibalises pop icons from her generational era in the manner of fan art, Roberta Vázquez has turned biting humour into a hallmark of her work and a tool with which she formulates a scathing reading of the fluid society and financial uncertainty that condition millennials' lives.

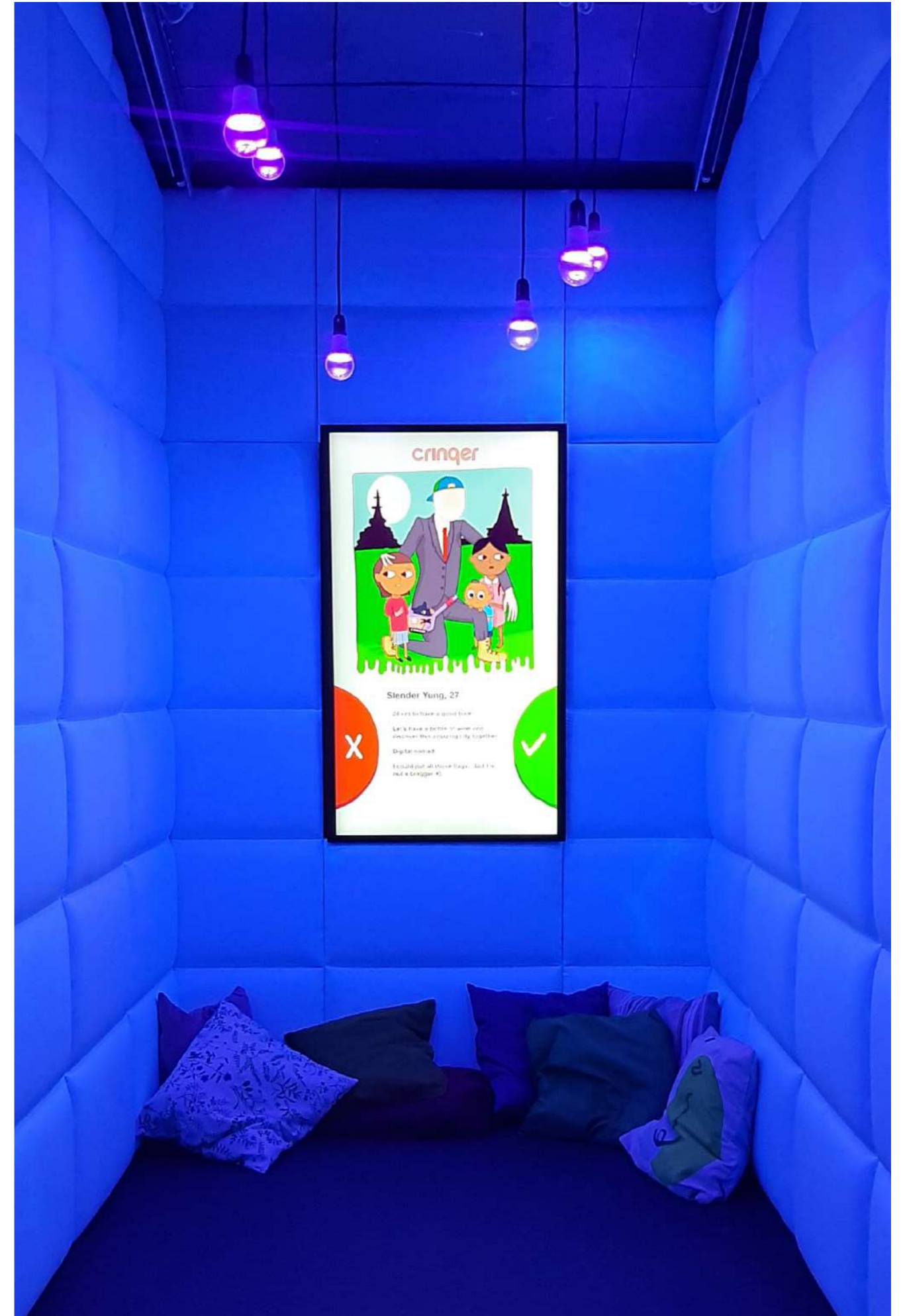
A militant supporter of self-publishing due to her combative convictions concerning the artisanal spirit of the craft, Vázquez has produced the bulk of her work in this format, which allows her to explore different registers and more freely express a political discourse. Her Instagram account has also provided her with stimuli for experimentation and has become a testing ground in which the limits of the platform – a maximum of ten panels in a square format – have spurred her into upholding scrolling as a useful new tool for reading a comic strip. Vázquez, the author of the regular series *Mugre debajo del sofá* (Filth under the Sofa), permeated by cannabinoid humour, has also worked with recurring characters such as the anthropomorphic foodstuffs Pepperony Boy, Pement and Dunkilda, unstable individuals she created inspired by old objects and toys. In *¡Socorro!* (Help!), her first work not self-published, the forceful humorous register allows her to present extremely stark realities: the loss of stability, constant exposure and the contamination of personal life by corporate productivity criteria are the origin of the rise in anxiety and depression among a young population also vulnerable to the dangers of the egotistical and narcissistic culture of social media.



# BÀRBARA ALCA

Pizza Chica, a girl with a slice of the famous food from Naples for a face, operates as Bàrbara Alca's alter ego in a work that had been brewing in the realm of self-publishing before it reached the professional market. Werewolves, vampires, elves and anthropomorphic animals complete a cast of characters who address, through the prism of trash irony, the shortfalls and disappointments faced by a generation suffering from a precarity that has become an existential condition and in which uncertainties over employment and relationships fill the entire horizon. With its autobiographical backdrop, Alca's work focuses on everyday, minor situations that reveal her to be extremely knowledgeable of the mechanics of the new television comedy. The clear line that defines her characters and the aesthetic keys that retain the pleasant hues of books for children are in explosive contrast with her merciless and acerbic gaze at the situations she addresses. Auteur animation of the 1990s is another obvious source of inspiration for an artist who has also tried her hand at moving drawings.

*Pizza Chica y las lloronas* (Pizza Girl and the Cry-Babies), Bàrbara Alca's impressive debut piece in the professional market, stems from her growing interest in the new relational dynamics mediated by technology, which she turns her attention to again in *Rate Date*, one of her latest fanzines. Interpersonal relationships turned into transactions and the experience of feeling like a commodity in the marketplace of romance make the intimate sphere an ideological battleground.

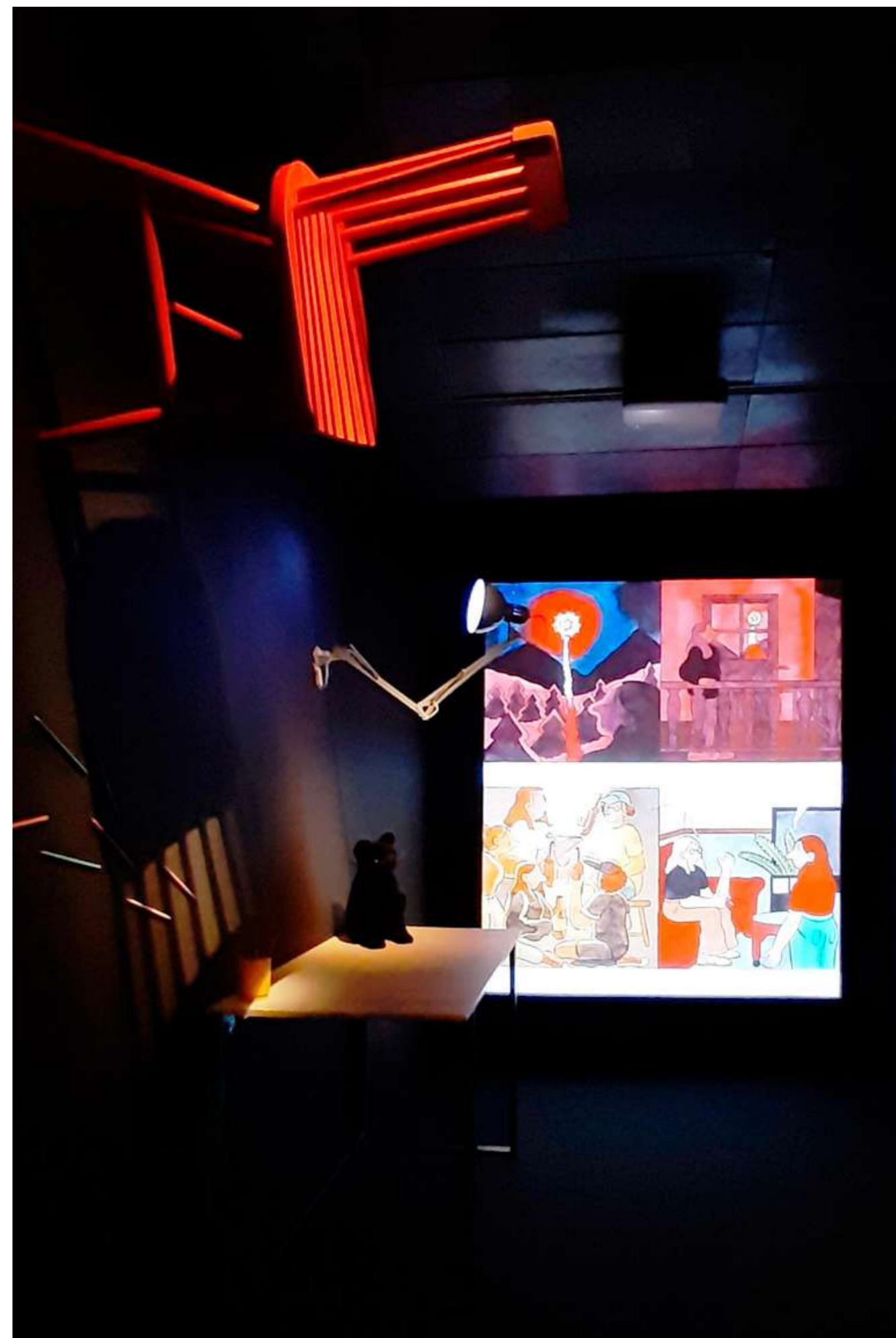


# CONXITA HERRERO

Conxita Herrero, who only became interested in comics when she was eighteen, is self-taught, as a result of which her work deals with the traditional codes of the medium in a ground-breaking, almost subversive way. Her avant-garde attitude stems from the freedom of action enjoyed by someone who approaches a language from the outside and who sees no need to respect any kind of tradition. Stories with digressions that drift so far from the main plot that it disappears from view and thought bubbles with content exiled beyond the margins of the panel are clear evidence of a creative self-determination that seems constantly to come up with unexpected stylistic solutions.

Herrero has produced a vast body of work in the field of self-publishing, though the comic strip represents just a small part of her extensive oeuvre, in which poetry, collage, graphics, songs and a varied array of registers sustain a discourse of the self that also runs through the pages of her seminal *Gran bola de helado* (Big Scoop of Ice Cream). A character – one we recognise as the artist herself in essence – that is the protagonist of this collection of microstories that reflect states of mind and private thoughts. The discourse suggests rather than makes explicit and the influence of the language of poetry is plain to see.

Intimacy and subjectivity are the twin cores of a discourse that often emphasises failings in communication and which succeeds in extracting gold from the painstaking description of insignificant everyday actions. A watercolour artist with a delicate line, Herrero, together with her brother, has also created the cult indie duo Tronco.



# NADIA HAFID

Family relationships, life on the outskirts, immigration, the handling of frustration and rage, working-class consciousness and the buried inequalities and violence of neoliberal society are some of the everyday themes subjected in Nadia Hafid's work to the shock treatment of a formalism that swings between a distancing effect and increasing subtlety.

Even though the minimalism is intended to erase signs of authorship in the works, this is precisely one of the hallmarks of Hafid's oeuvre. The pages are constructed using basic geometrical structures and shapes that appear repeatedly, often in monochrome, and become the mainstay of the composition. The colours are very flat and the line is highly visible in an extremely subtractive approach that, nevertheless, reinforces the author's humanist and political gaze.

The sense of tragedy that runs through stories such as *El buen padre* (The Good Father) and *Chacales* (Jackals), which could easily fall into melodramatic excess, is heightened by the indirect narration of the tensest moments and by the emotional restraint imposed in the narrative tone. The skilful treatment of narrative time is another fundamental trait of Hafid's work.



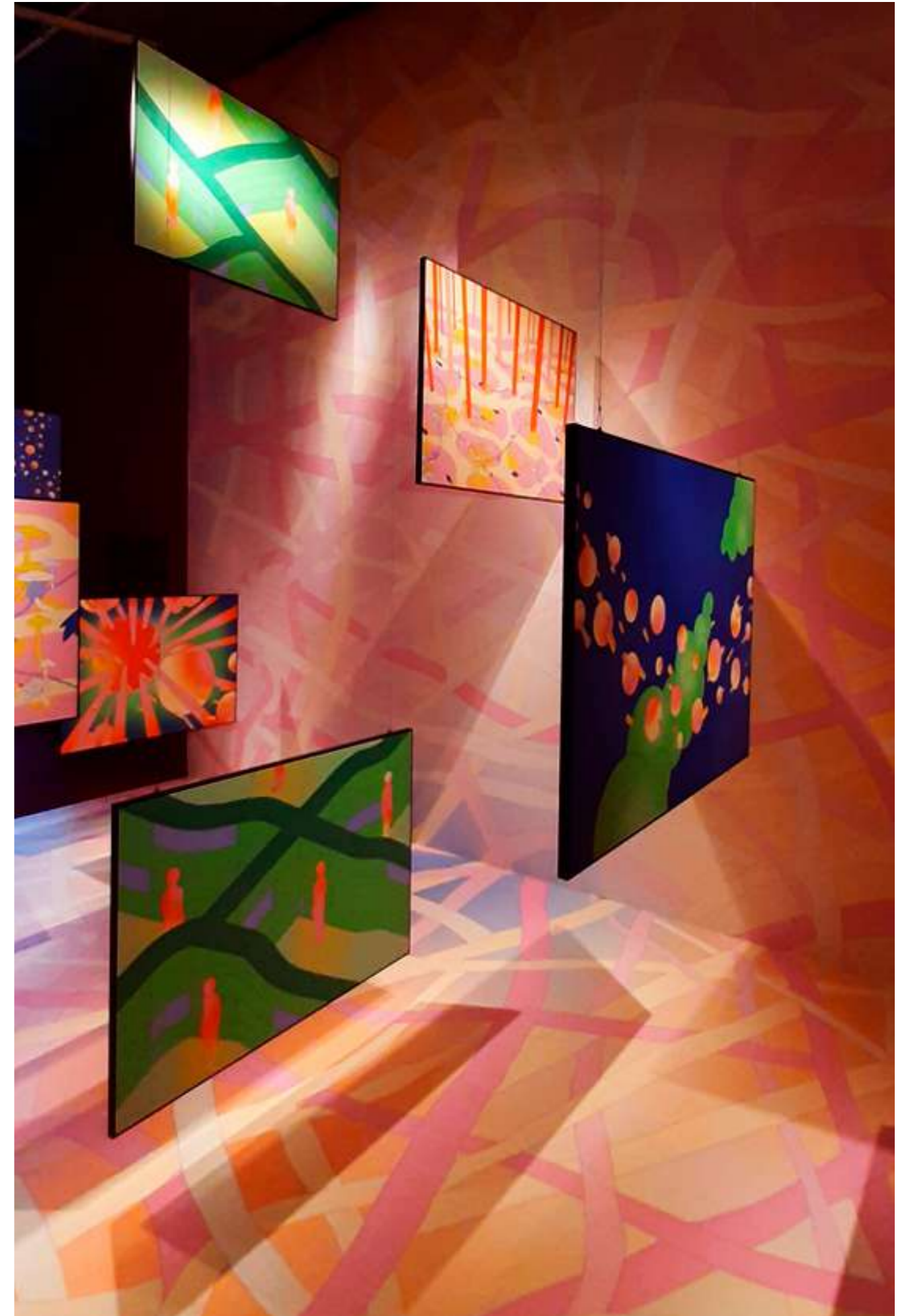


# MARTA CARTU

Close in her early work to the graphic style of Jeffrey Brown, Marta Cartu has increasingly approached the challenges of a conceptual comic with her eyes fixed on the codes and forms of contemporary art. The result is a highly individual and extremely thoughtful oeuvre in which formal research is inseparable from meditation on notions and problems that are central to the present-day, such as identity, competitiveness and the demands we make of ourselves, the arbitrary nature of gender roles, utopian aspects and the dystopian potential of the new technologies and the slavery that comes with holding down more than one job.

Parallel to her self-published works – each of which is a singular object in which background, form and material engage in a dialogue – the author has grown increasingly keen to expand the expressive keys of the comic by making forays into the most unexpected ambits: performance, installation art and even pottery, which in her hands has become a support for concise sequential narratives.

The ambivalent relationship with technology – a communication tool and at the same time a potential instrument of exploitation – is the inspiration for a radical challenge to the conventional forms of the comic strip in *Hola Siri*, which plays with the concepts of hypertext and hyperconnectivity, inviting the reader to take an active role in generating the story.

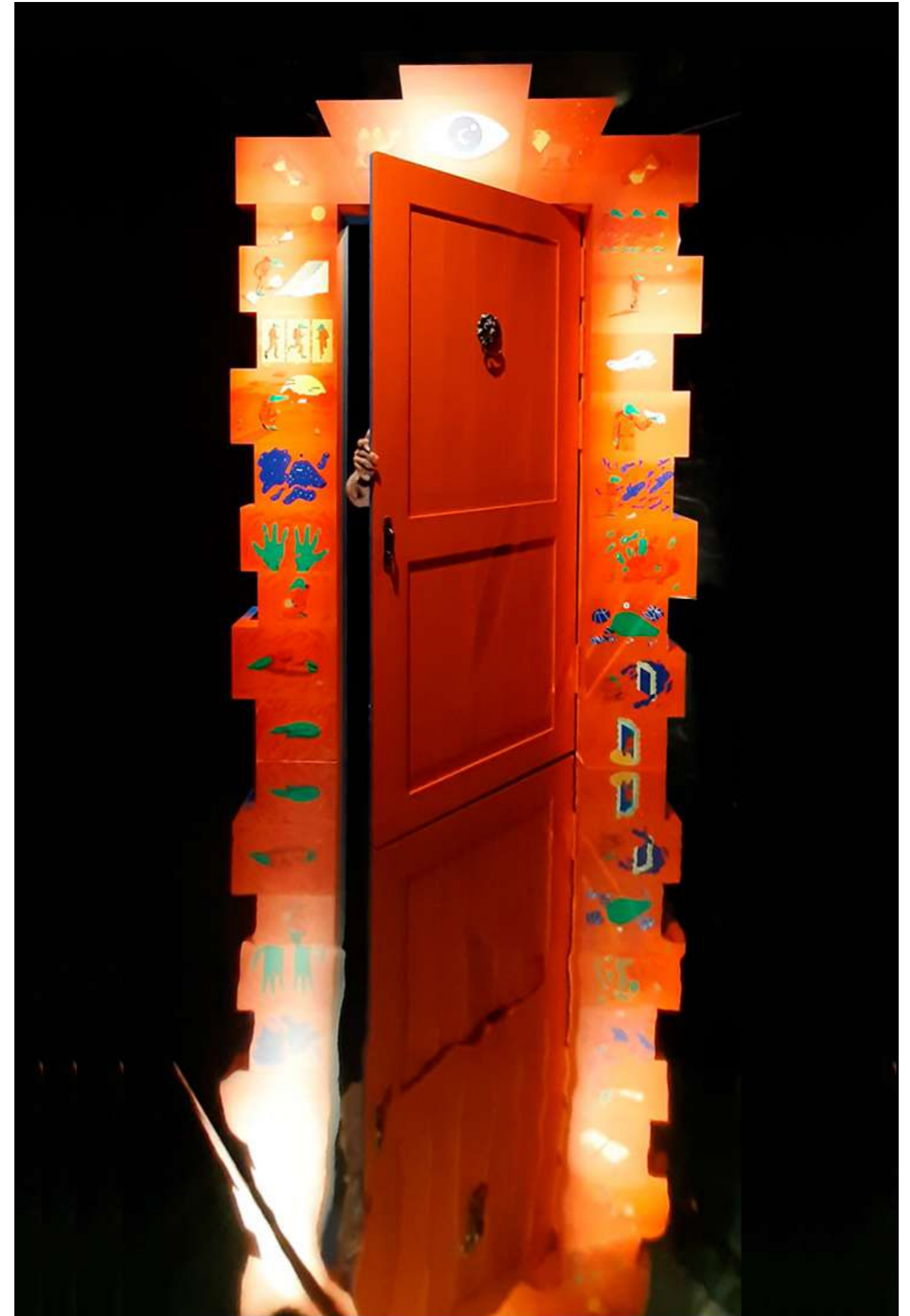


# MIRIAMPERSAND

In Miriampersand's imaginary, philosophy, architecture, esotericism, psychedelia and even car design make up her particular mythology that stems from personal experiences such as rootlessness and anxiety and ends up delving into the seductiveness of the extremely enigmatic power of images. The author, with a long career as an illustrator behind her, has arrived at a stylistic identity characterised by her palette of bright colours combined in a garish manner that creates an effect of visual dislocation, heightened by the recurring presence of anthropomorphic animals such as mutant crocodiles and rodents.

Her long-form comics – *Animal Party*, published under the name Míriam Muñoz, and *Internet sublime* – reveal the sweeping transformations that have taken place in her use of narrative and her formal approaches. Whereas *Animal Party* opted for explicitly autobiographical keys and a shaky, deliberately naïve line, *Internet sublime* explores the dystopian tale, combining referents from Foucault to Buckminster Fuller and using a polymorphic iconography that blends assorted elements and plays with the unstable nature of the fabric of reality.

In series of illustrations such as *Rites of Passage* and *Adoration*, Miriampersand presents a subtly cryptic approach to imaginary lands that seem to be waiting for our gaze to unleash their narrative potential.

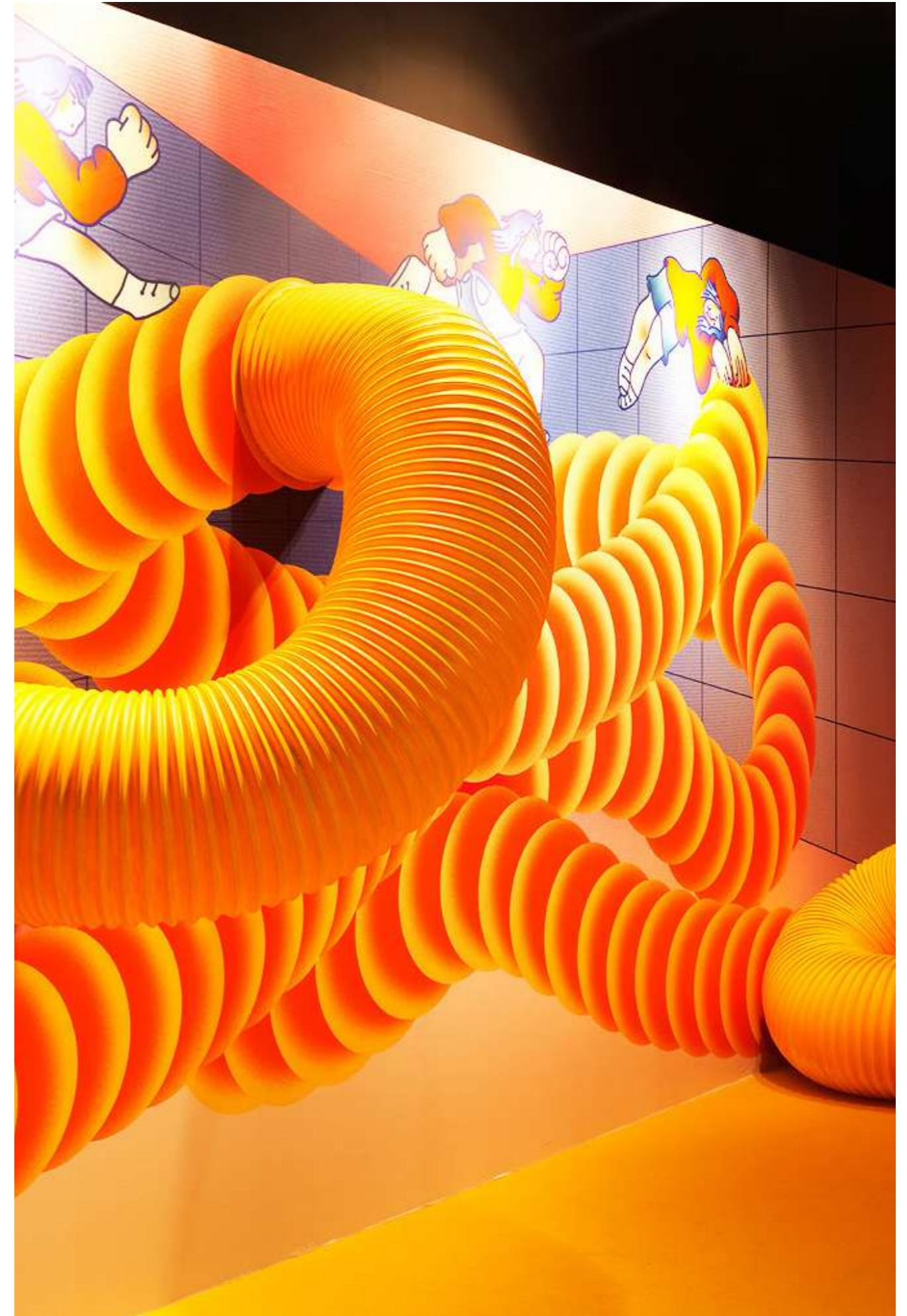


# GENIE ESPINOSA

Genie Espinosa's characters, with their rounded, rotund figures, which can be interpreted as an expression of resolute support for non-normative bodies, have introduced explosive urban energy with touches of girl power into the comic. This self-same spirit is to be found in her poster works, her street art murals and her imaginative, colourful clothing designs that convey echoes of the street and neighbourhoods on the urban fringes in the sophistication of a new form of glamour.

It is in Genie Espinosa's work, in the compositional solutions, the contortions of the volumes, the kinetic figures and the characters' expressions, that the influence of manga is most evident, though her style has evolved to increasingly extreme forms that contain echoes of the new television animation and the abstract comic.

*Hoops*, the author's longest and most ambitious work, is set in a future in which men have disappeared and are no longer necessary for the survival of the species. However, this is not the central plot line of a story in which bullying, the empowering portrayal of characters with functional diversity and the sisterhood consisting of a group of teenage girls anchor the outpouring of eccentricities and the explosions of vivid colours in a moving emotional truth and a palpable tenderness.



# ANA GALVAÑ

The veteran of the group, Ana Galvañ is a leading figure in the Spanish avant-garde comic scene due in equal measure to the influence of her body of creative work and to her role as the driving force behind networks that raise awareness of avant-garde artists. Her Tik Tok Comics platform, founded in 2013, was a crucial virtual hub for a new generation of creators who were shunning established codes. The name of the initiative was not an anticipation of the now famous social network, but a tribute to the sci-fi novel *Tik-Tok* by John Sladek, published in 1983. Tris Tras has taken over today from Tik Tok Comics on Instagram, Twitter and Tumblr.

A keen reader of speculative fiction, Galvañ has built a personal universe in which the compositional and chromatic influence of Russian Constructivism and a cold and disaffected narrative foster a dystopian reading of reality. Her works reverse some of the archetypes and narrative constants in the genre, from robotic figures to corporate dehumanisation and including interstellar camps and the hazards of virtual worlds.

Following her collection of short stories *Pulse Enter para continuar* (Press Enter to Continue), *Tarde en McBurger's* (Afternoon at McBurger's) presents a fascinating narrative puzzle around a story of female friendship set in a future in which fast-food restaurants are able to give time travel trips to customers as prizes. The well-known maxim that science fiction is not a toolkit for preparing the future but for diagnosing the neuroses of the present is exemplified to perfection by Galvañ, but without any hint of inertia.



# MARÍA MEDEM

María Medem's work tends towards abstraction and is based on elements that are more poetic than narrative, as she delves into what she calls 'concise aesthetics', a formal approach that requires a very specific and essentialist treatment of line, colour and text. Some of her pieces contain no verbal expression, relying instead on the eloquence of images that weave an unreal, almost dreamlike atmosphere and endow it with a powerful symbolic charge. The artist seeks ambiguity and to portray loneliness, reflecting the sense of estrangement that the reader perceives in some of the characters adrift in the middle of landscapes in which the force of the natural elements is heightened. Small panels highlight micro-actions in the page layout, expressing a language of her own that is the outcome of an intense process of paring down to the bone and of tremendous creative control.

The work of photographers such as Atín Aya, Cristina García Rodero and Ramón Masats, the rhythms of flamenco, the evocative power of popular folk songs, the ritualised narrative time of Japanese filmmakers like Yasujiro Ozu and Akira Kurosawa and the landscapes of Andalusia are just some of the varied influences that have inspired the line of an author who has seen some of her works published directly in international collections and by foreign press and print studios such as the Dutch Terry Bleu and the French Studio Fidèle.

In *Cenit* (Zenith), her first long-form work, Medem talks about dreaming, oblivion and sleep-walking through two characters who go over the uncertainties of the nights under a burning sun that contemplates them like a mute deity. *Por culpa de una flor* (A Flower Is to Blame), soon to be published, is a veritable tour de force that features all the author's stylistic constants, now developed into new extremes of stylisation.

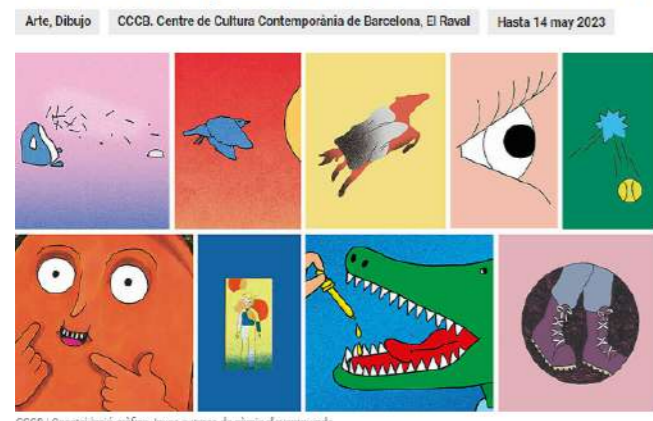




# PRESS REVIEWS

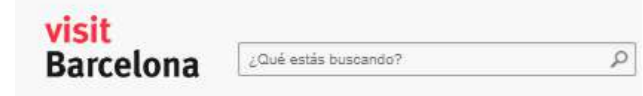


## Constelación gráfica. Jóvenes autoras de cómic de vanguardia



### Time Out dice

Las nueve autoras que llenarán las salas del CCCB con sus historias gráficas han roto los esquemas del cómic, cuestionando esta disciplina y experimentando en el estilo y en la narrativa. Todas ellas tienen lenguajes distintos, registros estéticos y referentes culturales muy diversos, pero comparten una mirada crítica y humorista hacia la realidad que las rodea. Los mundos gráficos de Bárbara Alca, Marta Cartu, Genie Espinosa, Ana Galvañ, Nadia Hafid, Conxita Herrero, María Medem, Miriampersand y Roberta Vázquez se reunirán en 9 instalaciones creadas expresamente por las artistas para esta exposición.



GUÍA PRÁCTICA GASTRONOMÍA Y VINOS COMPRAS QUÉ VISITAR QUÉ HACER

Qué hacer / Agenda / Exposiciones / Constelación gráfica. Jóvenes autoras de cómic de vanguardia - CC



## Constelación gráfica. Jóvenes autoras de cómic de vanguardia - CCCB -

Exposiciones

02/12/2022 - 14/05/2023

Nueve autoras jóvenes, nacidas en los años noventa, son las protagonistas de esta exposición que explora el lenguaje del cómic de la generación milenial. Sus obras reflejan la incertidumbre, entendida como un nuevo modelo vital que se plasma en un pesimismo resignado y que contrasta con el color y vitalidad del aspecto visual, heredero del diseño gráfico y la ilustración. La ansiedad, la frustración o la incomunicación pese a vivir en una sociedad hiperconectada son sus temas recurrentes y con **Constelación gráfica** podremos recorrer el universo de las autoras y los cambios que han modificado radicalmente el sistema del cómic en el ámbito nacional.

## LA VANGUARDIA

ARTE Y ARTES

### El cómic merece atención

De la gran muestra de CaixaForum a la creación del Centre del Còmic M



Micharmut. Una página del cómic 'Rue 13 Babilonia. El espermatozoide kolosal', historieta del álbun valenciano (.)

JUAN BUFILL 12/12/2022 06:00

Este otoño abundan las exposiciones de cómic en centros de arte españoles prestigiosos y habitualmente reservados a otras artes plásticas como la pintura o la escultura. Es difícil saber si se trata de una coincidencia o de una tendencia significativa, pero lo cierto es que el CCCB expone *Constelación gráfica. Jóvenes autoras de cómic de vanguardia* (hasta el 14 de mayo de 2023), el Círculo de Bellas Artes de Madrid *Hergé. The exhibition* (hasta el 19 de febrero) y en CaixaForum Barcelona se puede visitar hasta el próximo 15 de enero la muy recomendable y apabullante muestra *Còmic. Sueños e historia*, que se estrenó en Madrid y visitará otras ciudades españolas. Con unas 350 obras –300 de ellas dibujos originales– precisa unas cuatro horas de visita.

## «Constelación gráfica» Exposición de Jóvenes autoras de cómic de vanguardia



Inicio • Eventos en Barcelona • Constelación gráfica. Jóvenes autoras de cómic de vanguardia

## Constelación gráfica. Jóvenes autoras de cómic de vanguardia

Tipo de evento: Exposiciones



EL PAÍS

### Precarias, irónicas, vanguardistas: la revolución de las autoras de cómic invade el CCCB



La autora Bárbara Alca, con una de las obras que forma parte de la exposición y realizada en colaboración con el colectivo de ilustración 'Los Camareros de la Espinosa'. Constelación gráfica, CCCB



De las nueve autoras que entra 'Constelación gráfica'. De izquierda a derecha: Marta Cartu, Miriampersand, Ana Galvañ, Genie Espinosa, Bárbara Alca, Conxita Herrero, Conxita Medem, Nadia Hafid y Roberta Vázquez

### La disputa milenial

La muestra cuenta con una sala titulada "Milenial: una generación en disputa", en la que el filósofo y periodista Eudald Espluga reflexiona sobre "el campo de batalla político" en torno a los tópicos que rodean a esta generación, esa que comúnmente es etiquetada como generación de cristal, llorona, narcisista y adicta a las redes sociales.



Cultura

## Obras de una 'constelación' de autoras de cómic de vanguardia en Barcelona

ABC Cultura

## 'Constelación gráfica': las autoras de cómic de vanguardia hacen historia (e historieta) en el CCCB

Una exposición reúne obras e instalaciones de Ana Galvañ, Nadia Hafid, María Medem y Genie Espinosa, entre otras, y reivindica el «esplendoroso presente» de la historieta experimental



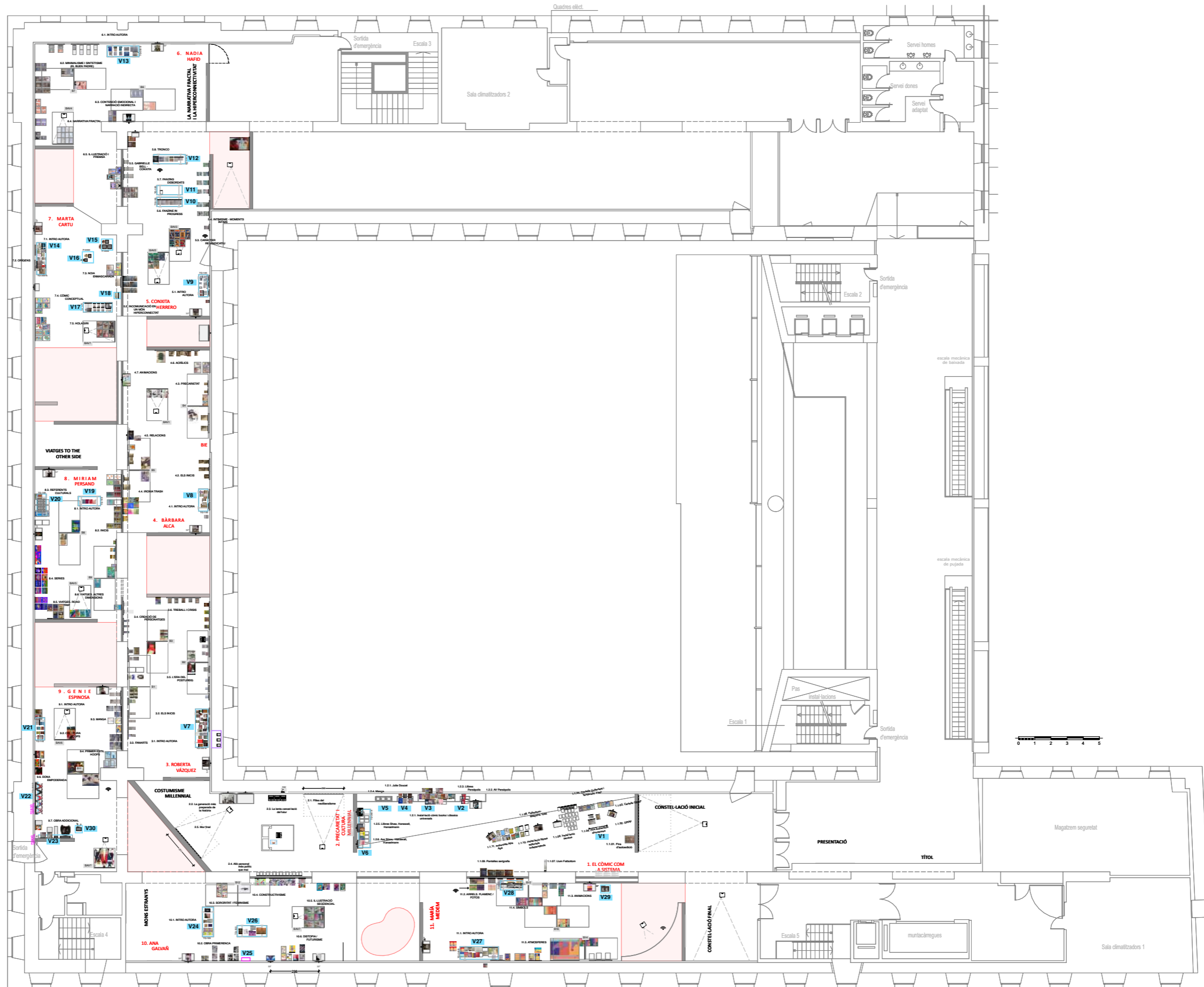
## Cómic 'Constelación gráfica', jóvenes autoras de cómic de vanguardia exponen en Barcelona

Barbara Alca, Marta Cartu, Genie Espinosa, Ana Galvañ y Nadia Hafid exponen su obras. También Conxita Herrero, María Medem, Miriampersand y Roberta Vázquez

01/12/2022 15:23 hora Por RTVE-MEFE



# MAP OF THE EXHIBITION





# THE EXHIBITION IN NUMBERS



**800** m<sup>2</sup>

More than **650** items

**9** artists

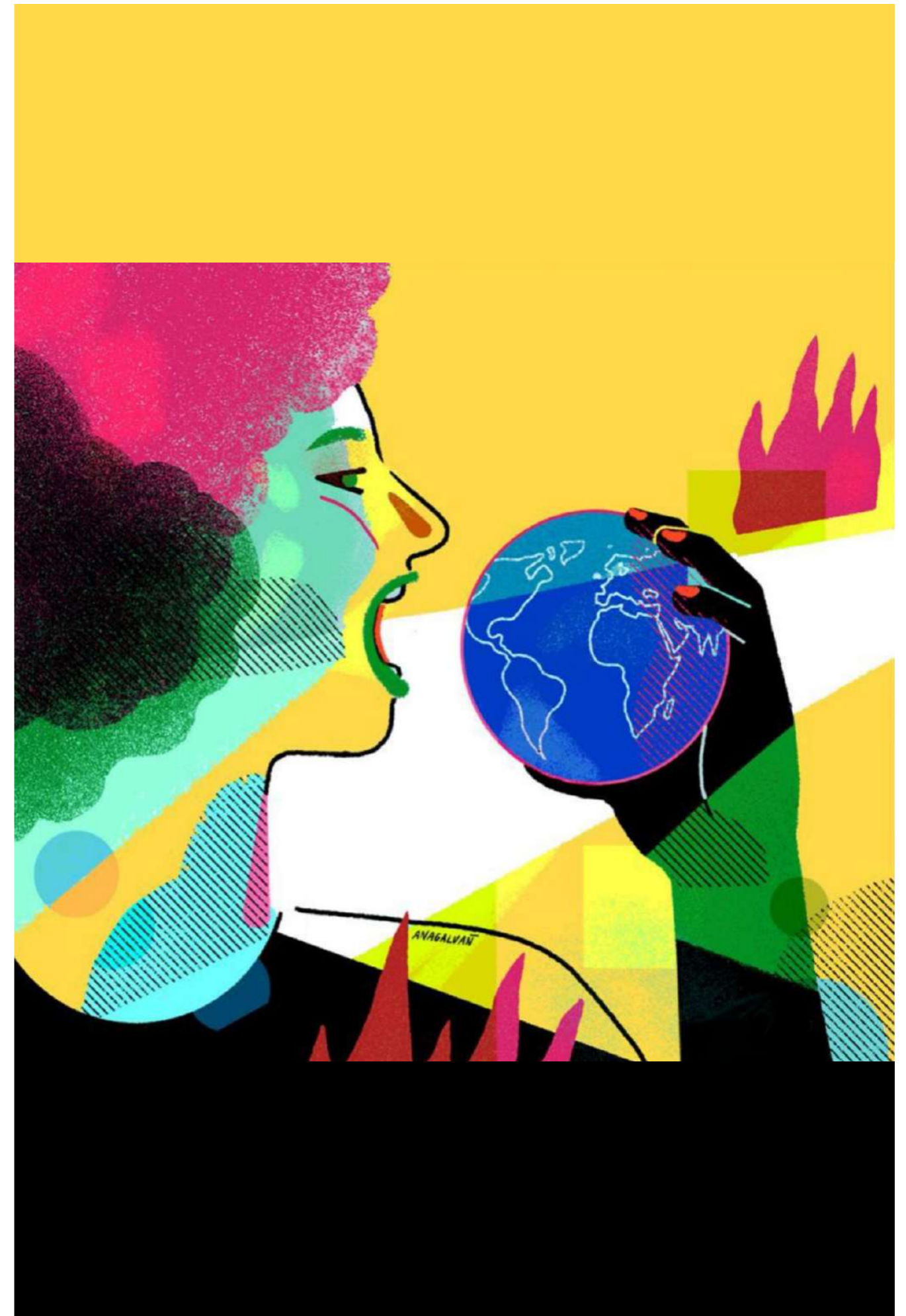
**11** new production works

**15** landers

**47** audiovisuals

**13** interviews

**500** books and fanzine



YOUNG WOMEN AUTHORS  
OF AVANT-GARDE  
COMICS

# GRAPHIC CONSTELLATION

