

A  
TOUTE  
ÉPREUVE

**Éluard,  
Cramer, Miró –**  
‘À toute  
épreuve’,  
more than a book

**Fundació Joan Miró** \*  Barcelona

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## Introduction



Aerial view of the Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona. Photo: Pere Pratdesaba

### The Fundació Joan Miró

The Fundació Joan Miró was created by Miró himself, at first principally with works from his own private collection, with a desire to set up an internationally recognised centre in Barcelona for Miró scholarship and contemporary art research, and to disseminate the collection. The Fundació opened to the public on 10 June 1975 and has since become a dynamic centre in which Joan Miró's work coexists with cutting-edge contemporary art.

With an interdisciplinary approach, the Fundació organises temporary exhibitions of 20th and 21st century artists, as well as academic activities and projects in collaboration with other institutions and organisations. Through its exhibition and educational programmes, the Fundació Joan Miró explores lines of research linked to the work of Miró and to contemporary art.

The Fundació is located in a building designed by Josep Lluís Sert, making it one of the few museums anywhere in the world in which the complicity between artist and architect underpins the dialogue between the works and the space that houses them.



## Éluard, Cramer, Miró – ‘À toute épreuve’, more than a book

### Summary of the Exhibition

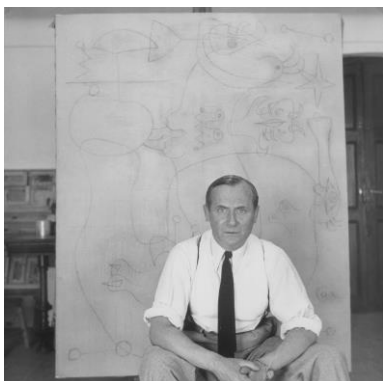


Photo by Joaquim Gomis: *Joan Miró*, 1944

© Hereus de Joaquim Gomis. Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona

The collaboration between Joan Miró, the poet Paul Éluard and the publisher G erald Cramer to create their 1958 edition of  luard's *  toute  preuve* produced what is agreed to be the most important of Mir 's artist's books, indeed one of the most beautiful yet startling artist's books of the 20th Century. The poems were the product of events of nearly thirty years earlier, in 1929-30, that have passed into Surrealist myth, when Salvador Dal  took erotic and imaginative possession of the poet's wife Gala as his 'femme visible'.

They appeared first, published by Andr  Breton's  ditions surr alistes, printed on a single card which could be folded and unfolded, hardly a book at all. Working in intense 'team' sessions,  luard, Cramer and Mir  re-imagined it as an entirely new object, a polychromatic 'sculpture' as much as a book, in Mir 's opinion, the poems sparsely distributed across over forty page openings illuminated by the brilliant colour of the painter's woodcuts. It was  luard, looking back to St phane Mallarm 's poem 'Un coup de d s jamais n'abolira le hasard', who decided to re-distribute the lines of his poems across the page so as to leave white spaces eloquent enough to demand a response from the painter as well as new readings of his accumulations of words. It was Mir , looking back to Gauguin and Japanese print-making, who decided on the labour intensive practice of woodcutting in pursuit of a book as sculpture.

For the first time, this exhibition will show, as a frieze of verbal and visual images, the book in its entirety, alongside revelatory material produced in maquettes by the painter, poet and publisher working together as they imagined the book, as well as groupings of the woods (matrices), each one carved by Mir , from which the book was printed under the charge of the master printer Jacques Fr lout of the Atelier Lacour re in Paris.

As many as seven woods were on occasion needed to print a single woodcut, and each is itself a relief sculpture, made up of carved and whittled pieces of wood fixed to wooden planks, a practice learned from the Japanese. The Fundació Joan Miró in Barcelona has half the woods produced, allowing a selection of woods for particular images to be assembled.

Six maquettes for the book survive altogether, three of them in the foundation. Two of those in Barcelona bring together early layouts of the poems by Éluard and Cramer, the printed texts stuck to the maquette pages, along with copy drawings of Miró's early ideas for animating the white spaces left for him. The third and latest of them is both as much an object inviting touch and as much a book filled with colour as the published book; it is, in fact, the maquette from which Miró worked carving the woods, with the help of the Barcelona printer Enric Tormo, before working with Frélaut to print the woodcuts. These are not copy drawings: Miró himself brushed and drew with great immediacy these studies; it is Miró's own maquette. What makes it so special is the way it was put together. Cramer and Éluard first had the poems typographically laid out and printed, then stuck them to the pages of the maquette, before Miró developed his ideas, initially on the page, then, as he changed them, in sometimes two or more layers of papier collé, one idea stuck over another. Because it is unbound, something approaching half of the page openings in Miró's maquette can be displayed, and they can be displayed in direct relation to the page openings of the book for which they are the studies.

The book alone, shown in its entirety, makes a thrilling impact. Showing the woods with it, brings out its sculptural character as nothing else could. Showing the maquettes amounts to an invitation into the very process of imagining the book. It allows entry into at least some of the stages through which the dialogue between poet, publisher and painter was kept alive and the idea of the book came into being, through to the final and most visually exhilarating of them. This exhibition takes viewers into the imagining and making of *À toute épreuve*, as it gives them the book to experience for themselves, page opening by page opening.

Christopher Green, exhibition curator

## Curator Biography

**Christopher Green** is Professor Emeritus of Art History at the Courtauld Institute of Art in London and a member of the British Academy. Green has been one of the experts in the Joan Miró International Research Group, part of the Miró Chair, since it was established in 2014.

Since the year 2000, he has organised and co-curated: *Henri Rousseau: Jungles in Paris* (Tate Modern, London, 2005 and Grand Palais, Paris, 2006); *Living Things: Picasso Figure - Still Life* (Museu Picasso, Barcelona, 2008); *Modern Antiquity: Picasso, de Chirico, Léger, Picabia* (The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, 2011 and Musée Picasso, Antibes, 2011); *Mondrian and Nicholson: In Parallel* (Courtauld Gallery, London, 2012); and *Cubism and War. The Crystal in the Flame* (Museu Picasso, Barcelona, 2016).

His key publications include *Cubism and its Enemies: Modern Movements and Reaction in French Art, 1916-1928* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1987), awarded the Mitchell 20th Century Art History Prize; *Art in France, 1900-1940* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2000) and *Picasso: Architecture and Vertigo* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2005).

He is currently resident researcher at the Leonard A. Lauder Research Center at The Metropolitan Museum of Art of New York.

## Content of the Exhibition

Paul Éluard

### **À toute épreuve**

1930

Copy of the original book with a handwritten dedication on the cover, in ink, from Paul Éluard to Joan Miró, dated 1947

Print and fountain pen ink on paper

11 x 7 cm

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona

FJM 13461



Paul Éluard, Joan Miró

### **À toute épreuve**

1958

4 copies of the artist's book, each one containing 80 woodcuts by Joan Miró and texts by Paul Éluard

34 x 26.1 x 4.5 cm (book)

34.7 x 27.17 x 5.2 cm (case)

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, and private collection

FJM 6824, 6825, 6826 and E29



Joan Miró

### **Miró's Maquette**

1949

Original maquette of 86 pages, of different types of paper and several sizes, most of which are joined in pairs with paper adhesive tape forming folds. All the pages, including the cover, contain illustrations by Joan Miró on both sides.

Watercolour, gouache, wax pencil, graphite pencil, coloured pencil, India ink, woodcut and collage on paper

33.1 x 25 x 4.5 cm

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona

FJM 12579-12632



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**À toute épreuve. Unnumbered maquette**

c. 1949

Maquette of 29 pages, without a cover. Contains the poems of Paul Éluard, typewritten on glued paper cutouts, tracings of Joan Miró's drawings and notes by an unknown hand.

Typewriter ink, tracings, graphite pencil and collage on paper

32.5 x 25 x 1.5 cm

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona

FJM 12536-12577



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**À toute épreuve. Maquette V**

c. 1949

Maquette of 28 pages, with a cover. Contains the poems of Paul Éluard, typewritten on glued paper cutouts, tracings of Joan Miró's drawings and handwritten notes by Paul Éluard and other authors.

Typewriter ink, tracings, graphite pencil, colour pencil and fountain pen ink on paper

34 x 25 x 1.5 cm

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona

FJM 12497-12535



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Joan Miró

**Element of a woodcut heightened by hand**

1958

Woodcut and gouache on paper

32.2 x 50 cm

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona

FJM 13564





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Joan Miró

**À toute épreuve. Woods**

Undated

31 cherry woods carved and ink-stained,  
stuck onto a pine block and 6 box woods

32.8 x 25 cm

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona

FJM 9707, 9710-9716, 9720-9726,

9738-9745, 9749-9753, 9755,

9765, 9767, 9770-9771, 9774,

9775, 9778 and 12360



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Joan Miró

**Poster for the exhibition of the book  
À toute épreuve at Galerie  
Berggruen & Cie, Paris,  
25 April - 17 May**

1958

Woodcut

52 x 38 cm

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona

FJM 6548



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Douglas Cooper

**Joan Miró. Bois gravés pour un  
poème de Paul Éluard**

1958

Brochure published on the occasion of the  
exhibition of the book *À toute épreuve* at

Galerie Berggruen & Cie, Paris

22 x 11.5 x 0.7 cm

Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona

FJM 18100



## Supporting Materials for the Exhibition

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### **Texts**

A catalogue text will be provided, in addition to the texts for the exhibition space, written by Christopher Green, the curator of the exhibition.

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### **Photographs by Joaquim Gomis**

Photographs of the artist, the atmosphere in his studio and his work process will be also available.

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### **Audio-visual materials**

'À toute épreuve', more than a book. Film specially produced on the occasion of the exhibition with the curator's and the Fundació Joan Miró specialists' comments. Available upon request.

Language: English, Catalan

Subtitles: English

Duration: 21'

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### **Educational Activities**

Optionally, the exhibition can be complemented with an educational activity or workshop organised by the Fundació Joan Miró's Education Department.

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## Exhibition Requirements

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### Duration

2 months

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### Required Space

250 m<sup>2</sup> approximately (50 m<sup>2</sup> of which must be vitrines)

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### Display Specifications

All the materials must be displayed in showcases and under required lighting conditions due to their fragility. The pages of the book and the Miró's maquette should be exhibited together in the same vitrine.

- **Regarding the *À toute épreuve* book:**

To be able to show all the pages that make up the artist's book, that is the front and the back of the 80 woodcuts, it is necessary to pull apart 4 copies of the same book. Therefore, the exhibition will show 1 complete book formed by mixing the pages of the 4 books.

- **Regarding the Miró's maquette:**

As some of the pages are stuck on some other and Miró worked in both front and back, not all the pages from this maquette could be shown.

- **Regarding the unnumbered maquette and maquette V:**

The exhibition of both maquettes help to reinforce a global vision of the work process that the artist and his collaborators followed. Depending on the available space, they could be partially shown, displaying only some of their pages.

- **Regarding the woodcuts:**

They could be all displayed hanging on the wall composing different groups (see first image on page 12). If you consider that this display could be too dangerous for the works safety, you could also show them inside vitrines.

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## Useful Information

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### Total of Works

48

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### Description

1 copy of the original book, 4 copies of the artist's book, 3 original maquettes, 37 woods, 1 engraving, 1 poster, 1 exhibition catalogue.

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### Insurance Value

2.494.750,00 €

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### The following costs are not included:

- Loan fee
  - Packing
  - Shipping
  - Insurance
  - Couriers
  - Exhibition installation
  - High-resolution digital photographs of the works
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## À toute épreuve in Barcelona

Sample of the exhibition installation at the Fundació Joan Miró

[↪ Watch presentation video](#)



Views of the exhibition installation at the Fundació Joan Miró, 2017. Photo: Pere Pratdesaba





Views of the exhibition installation at the Fundació Joan Miró, 2017. Photo: Pere Pratdesaba

**Fundació Joan Miró** ✱  Barcelona

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