



# WELCOME TO THE DREAMHOUSE!

A POSTMODERN INTERIOR BY MARLOES AND WIKKE  
**GRONINGER MUSEUM**



# WELCOME TO THE DREAMHOUSE!

This booklet provides more information about a few works in each room that represent key aspects of the Groninger Museum's collection. The collection's foundations were laid by Frans Haks, who served as director from 1978 to 1995 and made the museum famous far beyond the Dutch borders.

Scan the QR code on the back cover (and at the end of the exhibition) for details of all the exhibited works from the collection.

This booklet also contains an activity or question for each room which will help you to look more closely at the objects. These add an element of playfulness and depth to engage with postmodernism, where "anything goes".

For each room of the postmodern house, a design sketch by Marloes and Wikke is included here. As you'll notice, the actual galleries look different in reality.

# FOYER

A photograph of a room interior, likely a foyer. In the center is a window with a view of a sunset or sunrise over a city skyline. The window is flanked by colorful, patterned curtains. To the right of the window is a green cabinet with two drawers. On the wall to the right of the cabinet are three small framed pictures. A long, yellow, curved object, possibly a sculpture or a piece of furniture, leans against the wall. The floor is covered with a patterned rug.

## ACTIVITY

### Dramatic scenes

Several photographs by the Occhiomagico studio are on display in the foyer. The description can be found on one of the following pages.

- Choose one and imagine it's a still image from a film. The action has momentarily paused. In your mind's eye, start the film rolling again. What happens next?



## RENÉ DANIËLS

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***Mr North Sea (The Architect)*, 1984; long-term loan  
by private owner**

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He welcomes us to the museum with open arms. Or maybe he's just saying "Who knows?" René Daniëls' paintings rarely have a fixed meaning. Daniëls likes to play games with words and images; his paintings, rendered in a colourful, sketchy style, always leave viewers guessing. This work appears to be a self-portrait. In the early 1980s Daniëls was the most prominent Dutch representative of what was then known as the new painting.



## MIMMO PALADINO

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*Untitled, 1979; purchased in 1979*

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Mimmo Paladino's work was first exhibited at the Groninger Museum in 1980, alongside that of a few other young Italian artists. Then-director Frans Haks strove to bring the latest international art trends to the museum as quickly as he could. Many of the new painters drew inspiration from art history, and Paladino was no exception. Looking at this large abstract painting, you might not realise it was inspired by religious frescoes. But Paladino was concerned less with depicting a particular story and more with conveying a feeling.



## ALESSANDRO MENDINI

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***Kandissi sofa, 1980, purchased in 2015 with support from the Friends of the Groninger Museum***

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Alessandro Mendini was one of design's chief innovators in the 1980s. He and the museum's director at the time, Frans Haks, quickly formed a special bond, and they came up with the idea for the current building together. Mendini designed this sofa while a member of the Milan design collective Studio Alchimia. Alchimia opposed industrially produced design and chose to make furniture in a more traditional way, turning out colourful pieces rich in imagination and decorative touches. The name Kandissi refers to the Russian abstract painter Wassily Kandinsky.



## STUDIO DI FOTOGRAFIA OCCHIOMAGICO

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***John Hejduk, 1983, purchased in 1988***

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This photograph comes from a series of cover images made for *Domus*, a Milan-based architecture, design and art magazine. Alessandro Mendini served as its editor for several years. He commissioned the Occhiomagico photography studio to create portraits of artists and architects. With their collage-like character, the images serve as a prime example of how postmodern art and design often brought together elements from multiple sources. John Hejduk is the American architect of the famous *Wall House #2*, which stands beside the Hoornsemeer lake in Groningen



# DINING ROOM

## ACTIVITY

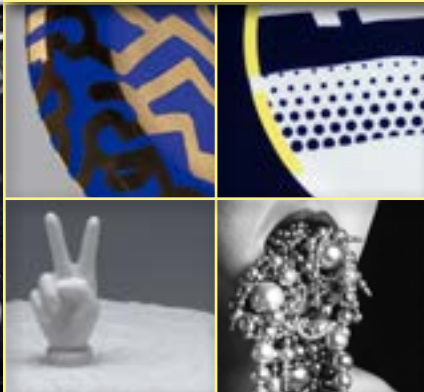
### A tasty traditional Haring

Works by a number of famous artists are on display in the dining room.

Can you recognise which ones these details come from?

Which artists produced these works?

**Studio Job / Keith Haring /  
Erwin Olaf / Roy vLichtenstein**





## ALDO ROSSI

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***La cupola*, 1988, espresso maker for Alessi, purchased in 1999**

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Beginning in the 1980s, the Alessi company of Italy achieved success by making postmodern design accessible to the general public. Alessi broke ground by asking leading architects to design household objects such as crockery and kitchen utensils. One example (of many dozens in the Groninger Museum's collection) is Aldo Rossi's *La Cupola*. Rossi (the architect of the Bonnefanten museum in Maastricht) took inspiration for his espresso maker from the characteristic cupolas seen on Italian churches.



## ZAHA HADID

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***Beam*, 1988, cup and saucer for Swid Powell, purchased in 1993**

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Alessi's counterpart in the US was the New York-based Swid Powell company. The cup and saucer on the table (if you can spot them in the jumble!) were designed by Zaha Hadid. She was one of five architects invited by Frans Haks to design a pavilion for Groningen's city centre for the 1990 exhibition *What a Wonderful World*. Hadid's pavilion was the first of her designs to actually be built; she went on to become world-famous. Today the structure resides in a business park in the Dutch town of Appingedam.



## ERWIN OLAF

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***Pearls (Sabine), 1986, purchased in 1988***

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Too much luxury makes you sick! Could that be the message Erwin Olaf intended to convey here? The music and lifestyle magazine *Vinyl* commissioned this photograph for an article about jewellery. Its blend of exuberance and an almost classical simplicity is characteristic of Olaf's early studio work. He would confine himself to the use of a square format, a solid black background, and often a single lamp, which brought out exquisite tones in the bare skin depicted in the black-and-white images.



## STUDIO JOB

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***Paper Chandelier, 2005, for Moooi, long-term loan by the artist***

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The most eye-catching object in the dining room is probably the chandelier by Studio Job, one of the younger design firms whose work the museum has collected since 2001. The enormous fixture is made of lacquered cardboard in separate pieces that can easily be assembled and disassembled. That came in handy during the installation of this exhibition, when the chandelier turned out to be a few centimetres too large for the space. With Studio Job's permission, the piece underwent a minor one-time modification.

# BEDROOM 1

## ACTIVITY

### Dreams and nightmares

- Which work of art in this room could make you daydream?
- Which one could give you nightmares?



## ROBERT KUSHNER

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***Aïda*, 1979, purchased in 1987 with support from  
the Vereniging Rembrandt**

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In the late 1970s Robert Kushner was part of the Pattern and Decoration movement in the United States. These artists worked primarily with textiles and decorative patterns, then regarded by large parts of the art world as “feminine” and “inferior”. They questioned traditional gender roles. Frans Haks was one of a very few Dutch museum directors to embrace the movement enthusiastically (although, curiously, he purchased no work by any of its female members). *Aïda* refers to Verdi’s opera of the same name, which is set in ancient Egypt.



## TEUN HOCKS

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***Untitled, 1986, purchased in 1987***

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The figure who repeatedly appears in Teun Hocks' photographic works could be characterised as a plodding antihero, forever alone in the world, tragicomic and melancholy. Hocks built his own sets and took the photographs using a self-timer. He then made large prints in soft black-and-white tones and coloured them with thinned oil paint. In this way he created his own hybrid of theatre, photography and painting. Hocks' work was first exhibited at the Groninger Museum in 1986, in *Fotografia Buffa – Geënceneerde fotografie in Nederland* (Fotografia Buffa: Staged Photography in the Netherlands).





## MICHELE DE LUCCHI

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***Kristall*, side table for Memphis, 1981, purchased in 1990**

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Michele De Lucchi was one of the founders of the Memphis design collective. This side table was part of its first collection, launched in 1981 in Milan to great fanfare. The group's work is characterised by the use of lacquered wood and laminate printed with decorative patterns. Pieces of Memphis furniture are more than just functional objects; they resemble beings that live in their owners' houses. The group disbanded in 1987, and in 1989 the Groninger Museum staged a large survey exhibition of its work.



## ETTORE SOTTASS

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***Ashoka*, 1981, lamp for Memphis, purchased in 1990**

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Every Memphis design has a name. The group's own name was chosen spontaneously at its first meeting, where someone played the Bob Dylan song "Stuck Inside of Mobile with the Memphis Blues Again". The name Memphis is shared by the capital of ancient Egypt and the US city famous for being Elvis Presley's birthplace. Ettore Sottsass, a key member of the group, lived in India in the early 1960s, and his experiences there influenced his designs. *Ashoka* is named after a Buddhist emperor of ancient India. The Memphis group's cultural sources of inspiration were as richly contrasting as the materials they used.

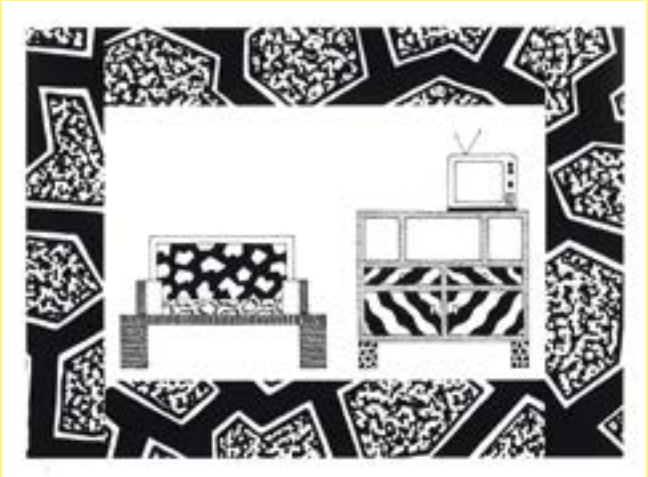
# HALL

A 3D architectural rendering of a museum hall. The hall features a long, narrow carpet with a black and white leopard print pattern. On either side of the carpet, there are glass display cases containing various objects, including vases and small figurines. Stanchions with black ropes are placed along the carpet to guide visitors. The walls are white and have several framed pictures or paintings. At the end of the hall, there is a set of stairs leading up to a platform. The overall lighting is bright and even.

## ACTIVITY

Pick some flowers

- Choose one of the vases and take a good look at it.
- Which flowers do you think would go best with it?



## NATHALIE DU PASQUIER

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***Interior Study, 1983, purchased in 1992***

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Nathalie Du Pasquier was the youngest member of the Memphis collective and one of its few women. Her early work consists mainly of decorative patterns which were applied to furniture, lamps, curtain fabrics, carpets, jewellery and clothing. They were inspired by Du Pasquier's travels in Africa. Although the use of multiple colours characterises her work and that of the entire Memphis group, Du Pasquier produced this series of interior study screen prints in black and white. They seem to function primarily as studies in light-dark relationships, with colour to be added at a later stage.

Note: Owing to the light sensitivity of the paper, these prints will be replaced by similar works after three months.



## KEITH HARING

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***Untitled, 1982, purchased in 1989***

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Frans Haks once said he had recognised the quality of Keith Haring's work too late. By then, the artist's large paintings had become prohibitively expensive. But Haring wanted to make art for everyone. His drawing style, with its universal appeal, is as recognisable on a condom wrapper as it is on a metres-high mural. Merchandise (which Haring sold in his Pop Shop) and editions, like this series of screen prints, are as essential to his oeuvre as are his unique works of art.

Note: Owing to the light sensitivity of the paper, these prints will be replaced by similar works after three months.

# BEDROOM 2 WITH WALK-IN CLOSET

A photograph of a walk-in closet with vibrant red walls. On the left, a white dresser with a square mirror is visible. To the right, a white metal closet rack holds several items of clothing, including a bright red dress, a white dress, and a rack of colorful striped shirts. A red chair is partially visible in the foreground. The floor is covered with a red carpet and a patterned rug.

## ACTIVITY

**You are what you wear**

- Look at the walk-in closet and imagine what kind of person the owner of these clothes might be.
- Which of these garments would you want to wear?



## RHONDA ZWILLINGER

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***The City That Never Sleeps, 1984, purchased in 1987***

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Rhonda Zwillinger used beads, sequins, glitter and shiny stones to decorate the objects she surrounded herself with in everyday life. She played with ideas of art and kitsch, real and fake, and stereotypical notions of feminine and masculine aesthetics. Zwillinger was one of the stars of New York's East Village art scene in the early 1980s. Countless rebellious young artists settled in the neighbourhood, then a seedy and dangerous place, and started alternative galleries. The scene that arose out of their do-it-yourself mentality was so lively and creative, the art establishment was forced to take notice.



## ETTORE SOTTASS

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***Tartar*, 1985, console table for Memphis, purchased in 1990**

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However revolutionary designers may be, it's difficult to bring innovative design to the market without businesses that are open to change and experimentation. Mendini and Sottsass both collaborated fruitfully with a number of large and small manufacturers. A strong tradition of this type of partnership existed in Italy. The Alessi company is mentioned in the dining room; another example is Abet Laminati. The laminate producer sponsored both Alchimia and Memphis in their early stages. Who, after seeing the *Tartar* table, would suspect that serious designers had once dismissed laminate as tacky and cheap?





## NATHALIE DU PASQUIER

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***Nergal, 1985, brooch for Acme, gift of John Veldkamp, 1994***

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You might call this series of Acme brooches Memphis in miniature. The small US company, based first in Los Angeles and later in Hawaii, mainly made pins and jewellery in cloisonné enamel. Following a meeting between Sottsass and Acme's owners, all the Memphis members designed pins for the company, in line with their international aspirations for the group. The Groninger Museum deemed them outstanding examples of wearable design, along with Memphis- and Mendini-print neckties and Keith Haring's buttons.



## MARGA WEIMANS

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**outfit from the *Aerial* collection, 2013, purchased in 2014 with support from the Mondriaan Fund**

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The Groninger Museum had not yet begun acquiring fashion in the 1980s; the garments that fill the walk-in closet of this postmodern house come from a collection assembled later. They include pieces by Marga Weimans, who draws inspiration from her Surinamese background, afrofuturism, architecture, and digital technology. Her *Aerial* series uses graphic prints of aerial photographs, apartment buildings, interiors, and a woman with a child. (The clothes on the racks unfortunately cannot be viewed up close. Think of this section as a sneak preview of a possible future collection exhibition!)

# SALON

## ACTIVITY

### Postmodern bingo

- Can you spot some hallmarks of postmodern style in this room? See if you can check off a full row. Bingo!

<b>BRIGHT COLOURS</b>	<b>PASTEL COLOURS PAIRED WITH BLACK OR METAL</b>	<b>GEOMETRIC SHAPES</b>	<b>MIXED MATERIALS</b>
<b>IRONIC OR HUMOROUS DESIGN</b>	<b>ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS APPLIED TO FURNITURE</b>	<b>COLLAGELIKE DESIGN</b>	<b>GRAPHIC PRINTS (ZIGZAG, STRIPES, DOTS)</b>
<b>FUTURISTIC STYLE</b>	<b>POP ART OR KITSCH ELEMENTS</b>	<b>BLACK- AND-WHITE CHECKERBOARD PATTERN</b>	<b>TOYLIKE APPEARANCE</b>
<b>REFLECTIVE SURFACES</b>	<b>NON- FUNCTIONAL OBJECTS</b>	<b>OBJECTS THAT RESEMBLE OTHER OBJECTS</b>	<b>INSPIRATION FROM MASS MEDIA</b>



## ALESSANDRO MENDINI

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***Interno di un interno*, 1990, purchased in 1992**

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Mendini first used a dot pattern in 1978, on *Poltrona di Proust*. The iconic postmodern armchair became his most famous design. He went on to use dots in other projects, including the decoration of the Groninger Museum. In *Interno di un interno* (literally “interior of an interior”) he applies the pattern to an entire room. Mendini wanted to envelop all the objects in a kind of mist, so they would appear lighter and less palpable, as in a room seen in a dream.



## THOMAS LANIGAN-SCHMIDT

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*Panis Angelicus*, 1970-1987, purchased in 1987

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Thomas Lanigan-Schmidt was part of the Pattern and Decoration movement (along with Robert Kushner, mentioned in bedroom 1). This installation is a home altar, a small baroque chapel made from cheap materials. The gilt is actually aluminium foil. Lanigan-Schmidt's work is marked by contrasts, with shiny, kitschy materials that evoke folk art, forms that reference different cultures and art from the past, and a religious aspect. Frans Haks was thrilled to encounter this artist who, like himself, had had a Catholic upbringing, was openly gay, and defied the dominant forces in the art world with his taste for exuberant aesthetics.



## MASANORI UMEDA

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***Tawaraya*, 1981, sitting and sleeping furniture object for Memphis, purchased in 2003**

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Precisely at the centre of this house sits a piece of furniture designed by Masanori Umeda, a Japanese Memphis member, to resemble a boxing ring. It is a room in itself, with dimensions equalling four and a half tatami (traditional Japanese mats of a fixed size), formerly the minimum size for a living space in Japan. *Tawaraya* is an object for sleeping as well as sitting. Umeda, who was impressed by how passionately Italians could engage in debate, also referred to the piece as an arena for intellectual combat.



## MICHA KLEIN

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***Paradise*, 1993, purchased in 1994 with support from the Mondriaan Fund**

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At art school in the 1980s, Micha Klein began experimenting with an early version of what was then known as a home computer (specifically, a Commodore Amiga). The first person in the Netherlands to graduate with a computer graphics degree, he went on to become a video jockey and international sensation with his visual programming for acid house parties. *Paradise* is part of a series of works inspired by video games and the visual language of flower power. Klein called the series “superslick”; he wanted to make it accessible for as many people as possible.

# STUDY



## ACTIVITY

### The art of study

- Think about the atmosphere in this room.
- Could you learn here?
- Why, or why not?





## MAARTEN BAAS

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***Smoke Carlton*, 2017, purchased with support from  
the Mondriaan Fund**

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The black furniture in this study was designed by Maarten Baas. Or rather, it was made by others and then partially burned by him. A few pieces, including this bookcase by Ettore Sottsass, are 20th-century design classics (an undamaged version is on view in the salon). Baas treated the scorched objects with transparent epoxy to make them sturdy enough to be used as originally intended. Some people find this way of working shocking; others see beauty in renewal through partial destruction: a phoenix rising from its own ashes.



## **ANSELM KIEFER**

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***Ways of Worldly Wisdom: Arminius's Battle, 1980, long-term loan from the Sanders Collection***

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The title of Kiefer's work refers to the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest, in which the Cherusci, led by Arminius, destroyed three Roman legions in the year 9 CE. From then on, the Germanic tribes remained independent. Over the centuries, Arminius came to be viewed as the liberator of Germany. The people Kiefer portrays here are philosophers, writers, artists and political figures who referred to the battle in their work. The story became tainted after the Second World War because the Nazis had used it for propaganda purposes. Kiefer reminds us of this piece of history.



## SIGMAR POLKE

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***Untitled (Dr Bonn), 1978, purchased in 1980***

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Sigmar Polke painted this work at a time when West Germany was transfixed by the far-left terrorist group known as the Red Army Faction. It shows a cartoon of a faceless man (perhaps an official; Bonn was the West German capital) who seems about to shoot himself with a slingshot. On the wall are the faces of the terrorists Andreas Baader and Jan-Carl Raspe, as seen on wanted posters. The image is painted on checked wool fabric. Polke often combined images and materials of disparate origins. His work calls forth more questions than it answers.



## ANTON CORBIJN

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***David Bowie (The Elephant Man 1980), 1980, purchased in 1990***

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Anton Corbijn won fame for his coarse-grained black-and-white photographs of pop stars and other celebrities, often depicted in unusual poses and settings. Here, David Bowie is photographed in a Chicago theatre where he was playing the title role in *The Elephant Man*. Probably no other pop musician has undergone as many metamorphoses as Bowie. With the ever-changing styles, gender roles and personas he adopted on and off stage, he can be considered a postmodernist par excellence. (As it happens, Bowie owned a large collection of Memphis design; it was auctioned off in London after his death.)

# CHILDREN'S ROOM



## ACTIVITY

### Palace of fun

- Is there anything in this room you would like to have at home?
- Which ones would you not want in your house?
- What would you bring from home if you were staying here as a guest?



## BLADE

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***Come On In*, 1983, purchased in 1984**

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The Groninger Museum (along with the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam) was one of the first museums in the world to take graffiti seriously as an art form. It staged the exhibition *Graffiti: Ten Writers from New York* in 1984 and purchased work by most of the participating artists. Blade (Steven Ogburn) was regarded as one of the “graffiti kings”. In his youth he reportedly illegally decorated 5,000 trains with his large “pieces” (paintings made with spray cans). *Come On In* was one of his first paintings on canvas.



## ROBERT COMBAS

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***Self-Portrait*, 1981, gift of H. de Groot, 1981**

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Robert Combas was one of the *Vier jonge Fransen* – four young French artists – whose work appeared in a 1983 exhibition of that name. His *Self-Portrait* shows a fierce-looking, punkish young man painted on a ragged scrap of cardboard. The work was a protest against Combas' art school course, from which he would be expelled. The image does not much resemble the artist; it is more of a universal portrait of a young generation critical of an achievement-oriented society, obsessed with punk music and comics, and searching for its place in the world with a degree of desperation.



## BODYS ISEK KINGELEZ

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***The Scientific Center of Hospitalisation the SIDA, 1991,  
purchased in 1992***

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The 1989 Paris exhibition *Magiciens de la terre* (Magicians of the Earth) was one of the first major shows in which art by contemporary “Western” and “non-Western” artists was exhibited together. Frans Haks was deeply impressed and subsequently bought work by a number of African and Aboriginal Australian artists. The models of Bodys Isek Kingelez, from the Democratic Republic of Congo, evoke postmodern architecture. They were a reaction to colonial buildings in the artist’s home country (known at the time of his birth as the Belgian Congo), which he equated with corruption and oppression. His imaginative models showed his vision of a better world.





## JAIME HAYON EN NIENTKE KLUNDER

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***American Château: New York is Miami Cabinet, 2009,  
purchased in 2018 with support from the VriendenLoterij***

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This cabinet comprises part of *American Château*, a joint project by the Spanish designer Jaime Hayon and his partner, the Dutch artist Nienke Klunder. In this series of works they aimed to combine a sense of luxury and beautiful materials with historical elements, plus a satirical touch (the hot dog rocking chair in this room is part of the same series). The cabinet's name refers to dual sources of inspiration: the skyscrapers of New York and the pastel-hued art deco architecture of Miami.

# GARDEN



## ACTIVITY

### Prize or prop?

Along with numerous museum pieces, this exhibition contains quite a few odds and ends (stage props).

- Find five objects in the garden that aren't museum pieces.



## ANDY WARHOL

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***Flowers*, 1970, purchased in 1999 with support from MK Castelein and GE Castelein-Buiskool**

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Andy Warhol based this series of screen prints on a colour photograph he found in a magazine. He created a black-and-white copy and produced a hand-coloured series from it. The creator of the original image, the nature photographer Patricia Caulfield, successfully sued Warhol for using it without permission. At the time Warhol often used photographs from media sources, but he based later prints and paintings on images he took himself. He never made a secret of wanting to make lots of money; he considered business success an elevated art form.



## **RICCARDO DALISI**

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***Untitled, ca. 1971-1974, purchased in 1990***

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Before the heyday of the Alchimia and Memphis design collectives in Milan, other Italian groups were producing what was known at the time as “radical design”. They were focused less on design innovation per se than on how production processes could help to make society better. One group active in the early 1970s was Global Tools, whose members included Mendini, Sottsass, and Riccardo Dalisi. This papier-mâché chair was the result of a project in Naples in which Dalisi worked with poor schoolchildren to make furniture out of cheap materials.



## PHILIPPE STARCK

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***Napoléon, 1999, stool/table for Kartell, gift of Jos Holtkamp, 2022***

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Is Philippe Starck's garden gnome stool an example of art or kitsch? Mendini was fascinated by the phenomenon of kitsch as early as the 1970s and even wrote an ode to it. "Kitsch is applied art and is adapted to everyone and to everyday life," he declared. He described it as irrepressible, ubiquitous, inviting, and something one might as well embrace. Philippe Starck would undoubtedly agree.



## JAIME HAYON

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### ***Green Chicken, 2013, purchased in 2013***

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Jaime Hayon's designs exude fun. When he had a major solo show at the Groninger Museum in 2013, he named it *Funtastico*. In the photograph for the exhibition poster, he posed atop this green "rocking chicken" wearing a whimsical helmet. The museum has collected a number of Hayon's works (some of which can be seen elsewhere in this exhibition), and he designed the building's Info Centre and Atelier.

