

## Marianna Simnett, *The Bird Game* (2019)

Solo exhibition: *My Broken Animal* | Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem | 16 November 2019 – 23 February 2020

Screening: LCMF | *Witchy Methodologies* | Ambika P3, London | 15th December 2019

Solo exhibition: *The Bird Game* | Waddesdon Manor, Buckinghamshire | Spring 2020

Solo screening: *The Bird Game* + Q&A | LAB RATS | Kunsthalle Zurich | 23rd January 2020

Solo exhibition: *CREATURE* | IMA, Brisbane | 22 February – 15 April 2020

Group exhibition: *The Dreamers* | 58th October Salon | Belgrade Biennial | September – November 2020



"What is a Crow anyway?  
Crows are people that did bad things."

Film and Video Umbrella is delighted to announce a new production by acclaimed artist Marianna Simnett: *The Bird Game*. A wicked contemporary fable, *The Bird Game* follows six innocent children in a sequence of deranged games, coaxed into a secluded mansion by a loquacious, bloodthirsty crow. The prize? To transform into a bird and never have to sleep again.

*The Bird Game* mixes parts of *Sleeping Beauty*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and avian sleep research into a witch's brew. Avian studies show birds' remarkable ability to retain high levels of cognition on little to no sleep against harsh ecological conditions. The film decentralises the human, turning instead towards a bird who punishes children without remorse. Crow may be a villain but she is also an enchantress, a masterful storyteller and, in her climactic retelling of how she became a bird, a strange and scarred kind of heroine. Also featured in this hellish tale of childhood and transformation are a wolf-haunted lullaby, dirty Disney costumes, eels, and an enucleated eyeball.

Directed by Marianna Simnett, co-written by Marianna Simnett & Charlie Fox, produced by Sophie Neave, shot on 16mm by Robbie Ryan, BSC, starring Joanne Whalley as 'Crow', music by Oliver Coates, and performed by live birds and children at Waddesdon Manor.

Produced by Film and Video Umbrella, the film has been commissioned to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the opening in 1869 of the Evelina Children's Hospital by Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild, the builder of Waddesdon Manor. Co-commissioned by the Rothschild Foundation, the Frans Hals Museum and Film and Video Umbrella.

[See full selection of images here](#)

Please use maximum 4 images per publication. For interview requests, contact Ellen O'Donohue Oddy  
ellen@fvu.co.uk | 02074077755

## Listings information

Solo exhibition: Marianna Simnett, *My Broken Animal*  
Location: Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem  
Dates: 16 November 2019 – 23 February 2020  
Opening Times: Tuesday – Saturday 11am–5pm / Sundays: 12-5pm  
Admission: Adults €16.00 / Ages 19 - 24: €8.00 / Under 19: free  
Website: [www.franshalsmuseum.nl](http://www.franshalsmuseum.nl)  
Social media: #thebirdgame

Screening: LCMF, *Witchy Methodologies*  
Location: Ambika P3, London  
Dates: 15th December 2019  
Website: [www.lcmf.co.uk](http://www.lcmf.co.uk)

Solo exhibition: Marianna Simnett, *The Bird Game*  
Location: Waddesdon Manor  
Dates: Spring 2020  
Website: [www.waddesdon.org.uk](http://www.waddesdon.org.uk)  
Social media: #thebirdgame

Solo screening: Marianna Simnett, *The Bird Game* + Q&A  
Exhibition: LAB RATS  
Location: Kunsthalle Zurich  
Dates: 23rd January 2020  
Website: [www.kunsthallezurich.ch/en](http://www.kunsthallezurich.ch/en)  
Social media: #thebirdgame

Solo exhibition: Marianna Simnett, *CREATURE*  
Location: IMA, Brisbane  
Dates: 22 February – 15 April 2020  
Website: [www.ima.org.au](http://www.ima.org.au)  
Social media: #thebirdgame

Group exhibition: *The Dreamers* (curated by Andrea Baccin, Ilaria Marotta)  
Location: 58th October Salon | Belgrade Biennial, Belgrade  
Dates: September – November 2020  
Opening: 18 September 2020

## Notes to editors

[Press images here](#)

Please use maximum 4 images per publication.

Image credit: Marianna Simnett, *The Bird Game* (film still), 2019. Courtesy the artist, FVU, the Rothschild Foundation and Frans Hals Museum

Project credit: *The Bird Game* (2019) by Marianna Simnett. Produced by Film and Video Umbrella. Co-commissioned by the Rothschild Foundation, Frans Hals Museum, and Film and Video Umbrella. FVU is supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England.

Marianna Simnett is a London-based artist, challenging how bodies are perceived and imagined. Solo exhibitions include the forthcoming Frans Hals Museum, Amsterdam (2019) and Kunsthalle Zürich (2019) as well as Copenhagen Contemporary (2019); FACT, Liverpool (2019); the New Museum, New York (2018); Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt (2018); Zabłudowicz Collection, London (2018); Matt's Gallery, London (2017); Seventeen Gallery, New York and London (2016). Recent group exhibitions include Sadie Coles, London (2019); Schinkel Pavillon, Berlin (2019); Tai Kwun Contemporary, Hong Kong (2019); the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (2019).

Film and Video Umbrella commissions, curates, produces and presents artists' moving-image works that are staged in collaboration with galleries and other cultural partners. Since the late 1980s, FVU has been at the forefront of this vibrant and expanding area of practice, promoting innovation through its support of some of the most exciting figures on the contemporary scene. During this time, the organisation has commissioned and produced nearly 200 different artists' projects, ranging from ambitious multi-screen installations to shorter film and video pieces, as well as numerous online commissions.

[www.fvu.co.uk](http://www.fvu.co.uk)

The Rothschild Foundation continues the philanthropic tradition of the Rothschild family and their longstanding support of arts and heritage. Central to the Foundation's vision is an on-going commitment to Waddesdon Manor, one of the last remaining 19th century Rothschild houses. Waddesdon and its unique setting inspires the Foundation's policy areas which are explored and developed through grant-making, major initiatives and the promotion of thought leadership and convening. Collaboration and partnerships are an important element of the Foundation's work, engaging with a wide variety of academic, cultural, environmental, social and educational institutions, as well as other philanthropic foundations and charities.  
[www.rothschildfoundation.org.uk](http://www.rothschildfoundation.org.uk)

Waddesdon Manor was built at the end of the 19th century by Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild in the style of a French early 16th-century château. Baron Ferdinand was an inspired collector and the house was designed to showcase his exceptional collection of French 18th-century furniture, Sèvres porcelain, English portraits and other decorative arts. Waddesdon was bequeathed to the National Trust and opened to the public in 1959. It is supported by the Rothschild Foundation.  
[www.waddesdon.org.uk](http://www.waddesdon.org.uk)

The Frans Hals Museum boasts a captivating collection of paintings by 'housemaster' Frans Hals and other Old Masters from the 16th and 17th centuries. Yet, it is also home to contemporary, cutting-edge artworks. With a thought-provoking mix of old and new and modern presentations, the museum challenges visitors to look at art from a different perspective and see more as a consequence.  
[www.franshalsmuseum.nl](http://www.franshalsmuseum.nl)

