



The Formentera Council Office of Culture welcomes to the island ***La Baralla de les Meravelles***. With a title twisted off the Catalan word for the *naipes*

and roughly translated as “the deck of marvels”, the exhibition from

Ramon Pérez Carrió

opens today as part of the Sant Jordi activities programme. An opening attended by the artist is scheduled for 8.00pm in the old town hall (Ajuntament Vell). It is the first time the exhibit stops in Formentera, though the island features as one of the four suits that comprise the deck of playing cards. The show will run from April 18-24 in the municipal gallery (Sala d'Exposicions) before relocating to the La Caixa gallery for a stint from April 27-May 7.

The collection is composed of 42 gouaches that Pérez has crafted in the colourist tradition. *El Llibre de les Meravelles*

, from universal Majorcan thinker Ramon Llull was a spur for the idea, as were the culture, history and alchemy of the four Balearic islands. The paintings resemble the 40-card *naipes*

deck with two notable jokers thrown in: Llull himself and the famously-hermitic abbot turned saint Felix of Rhuy. Each one of four suits represents a different island of the Balearic archipelago. Clubs stand in for Menorca, gold coins for Mallorca, cups for Eivissa and swords for Formentera. What is more, each number from one to ten coincides with the books that constitute

El Llibre de les Meravelles

(
Llibre dels Elements, dels Metalls, del Cel, de les Plantes, de les Bèsties, de l'Infern, del Paradís, de l'Home, dels Àngels i de Déu
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The symbolism of the images relies on a blend of history, tradition, mythology and the immense cultural wealth of the unique geological and geographic traits of the Mediterranean corridor. Pérez draws on inspiration from the gnostic, alchemistic and cabalistic iconography of the thirteenth century humanist sage's medieval codices. The paintings in *La Baralla* are also an unmistakeable nod to art history and the Platonic thought that Llull emboldened during his lifetime.

Ramon Llull christened his philosophic technique “Art”, so it is no great surprise that “plastic” is often used to interpret his work. Llull fathered the idea of a language based on binary code, as well as the Lullian wheel and the tree-shaped conceptual diagram. He is also responsible for putting forward the first postulations about play-inciting areas of the brain and something he called “the art of finding marvels”, a technique that included crafting mosaics of possibilities capable of leading us to understanding and absolute knowledge.

In 2003 Fundació Baleària commissioned Ramon Pérez Carrió for this project and offered a luxury-format of *La Baralla* for the maiden voyage of the transport company's Ramon Llull fast ferry. The originals were displayed in Terminal Drassanes of the Barcelona port before embarking on an art tour of the Balearics. Hoisted aboard a freighter called Illa de Botafoc, the collection made its way across the ports of our island community. In 2004, when the foundation launched Fundació “Baleària-4 Illes”, a reduced version of the deck was rolled out and the originals were placed on permanent exhibition in Cura, Mallorca, in a hall which is dedicated to Llull inside the Santa Mkaria monastery. Both of the two editions of the card decks are now out of print.

Llull is considered the father of cult Catalan prose. History recognises him for the lexical solutions he found for describing philosophical ideas in a language still short on resources. That explains why the exhibit has been employed by a poets' encounter called *Un mar de paraules*, a gathering of vocational Catalan hikers and as a background for spaces like Espai Comunicacional Ramon Llull, which symbolises regional unity. With the sea travel connections it offers, the Baleària company makes communication possible between territories that share a language and culture. The company's foundation, Fundació Baleària, has also signed on to commemorate the seventh centennial anniversary of Llull's death with the dissemination of *La Baralla de les Meravelles*

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<http://www.ramonperezcarrio.com/?serie=baralla-de-les-meravelles>

<http://ramonperezcarrio.blogspot.com.es/2015/10/exposicio-baralla-de-les-meravelles-39.html>