

POOL & MARIANELA

An artistic duo consisting of Rita Marianela Perelli (San Nicolás de los Arroyos, Argentina, 1979) and Emiliano “Pool” Paolini (Arroyo Seco, Argentina, 1983)

Marianela earned a degree in Fashion Design from the Institute of Visual Communication in Rosario and a BFA, with a specialty in sculpture, from the National University of Rosario.

Pool graduated from the Rosario School of Design with a degree in Graphic Design while pursuing his career as a self-taught artist. The

two met in 2009, and in 2011 they created **Pool & Marianela** as an artistic identity and trademark.

They have exhibited at galleries in Europe, Argentina, the United States and around the world, most notably at La Luz de Jesus Gallery in Los Angeles, and their work has been featured in prestigious international media such as *El Mundo*, *The New York Times*, *Le Monde*, *Hi-Fructose Magazine*, BBC, etc. Their long list of celebrity fans includes soccer star Diego Maradona, Rock & Roll Hall of Fame inductees Steve Jones (Sex Pistols) and Marky Ramone (Ramones), and film directors Álex de la Iglesia (800 Bullets), Andrés Muschietti (Stephen King’s *It*), and Kevin Smith (Clerks).

The duo started out on the emerging art circuits in Buenos Aires, and in 2014 they created *Barbie, the Plastic Religion*, a collection of 33 Barbie and Ken dolls (©Mattel) dressed up as the most important deities of various religions, like the figurines sold in *santería* shops. Their aim was twofold: to modernize the standard of beauty of religious imagery, and to draw attention to the commodification and “privatization” of faith.

The images went viral on social media and were picked up by the BBC, and the debate rapidly spread across the globe: people in India, China, the United States, Peru, Argentina and Australia expressed dismay and intolerance, threatened and harassed the artists, and even forced the cancellation of an exhibition planned for October of that year. The BBC compared their work to the León Ferrari controversy. Pool & Marianela decided to lie low for a time, and one year later the show opened at **Popa Galería** in La Boca, Buenos Aires, where it again attracted the notice of the international media but was well received.

In 2016, Mattel and the **Musée des Arts Décoratifs** in Paris invited them to participate in a tribute to the famous iconic Barbie doll and the artists who have used it in their work, exhibiting alongside pieces by Andy Warhol, Mark Ryden and other legends. The museum acquired the piece *Barbie Santa Genoveva* [Saint Genevieve Barbie] to add to its vast collection. That same year, Pool & Marianela were granted an audience with **Pope Francis** and presented him with their *Barbie Virgen de Luján* [Our Lady of Luján Barbie], now owned by the **Holy See**.

POOL & MARIANELA

In 2018 they returned to Los Angeles with *Kidstianism* (religion as perceived by millennial children), featuring a life-sized Jesus cake which again stirred controversy both in the United States and back home in Argentina where Buenos Aires' Culture Minister, Enrique Avogadro was photographed on video eating a slice of the cake at the **FACA Art Fair** prompting censure by the Archbishop, Cardinal Mario Poli, who wrote a scathing critique in a letter to the Argentine government.

Pool & Marianela also appeared in the group show *Shopping* at the **Haifa Museum of Art** in Israel and exhibited *Plastic Religion* at **La Fiambrera Art Gallery** in November, where it remained on display for ten months before moving to **Gallery 30 South** in Pasadena, CA for a two-month exhibition in December 2019 and January 2020. This is their third exhibition with curator Matt Kennedy.

SELECT PRESS

- “Controversy for Religious Barbie and Ken in Argentina,”
– 09/19/14 BBC World, by Ignacio de los Reyes
- “Yup, this is a Barbie and Ken version of Jesus and the Virgin Mary,”
– 09/22/14 Metro UK, by Hannah Gale
- “Barbie’s latest profession angers Italian Catholic bishops,”
– 09/26/14 NCR, by Josephine McKenna
- “See the Most Controversial Depictions of Jesus in Art,”
– 12/23/14 Artnet, by Jake Brodsky
- “The exhibition of the ‘Barbie-saints’ ignites controversy in Argentina,”
– 10/13/15 CNN Spanish, by CNN World editorial staff
- “Barbie’s new Virgin Mary look angers Catholics in Argentina,”
– 10/15/15, The Independent (UK), Raquel Leon
- “Controversial religious Barbie doll exhibition opens in Buenos Aires,”
– 10/21/15 The Guardian, by Vanessa Bell
- “Pool & Marianela show ‘Plastic Religion’ Heads to La Luz de Jesus Gallery”
– 12/02/16, HiFructose, by Andy Smith
- “Pool y Marianela Discuss Their ‘Barbie, The Plastic Religion,’”
– 12/27/16, Birth Movies Death, by Kalyn Corrigan
- “Christians outraged over life-sized Jesus Christ cake with red velvet stigmata wounds,”
– 05/29/18 Newsweek, by Shane Croucher
- “This Life-Sized Jesus Christ Cake Has Ignited a Firestorm Among Christians,”
– 05/30/18 Faithwire, by Lindsay Elizabeth
- “Argentine Politician Forced to Apologize for Eating Piece of Bloody, Jesus-Shaped Cake,”
– 05/31/18 Vice, by Jalisa Castrodale
- “The Creators of the controversial ‘Edible Christ’ speak,”
– 06/02/18 Perfil, by Augustín Jamele
- “Argentinian artist duo enrage Catholics with Bloody Jesus Cake,”
– 06/07/18 Frieze Magazine, by editorial staff
- “The Plastic Religion by Pool & Marianela,”
– 11/30/18 Lamono Magazine, by editorial staff