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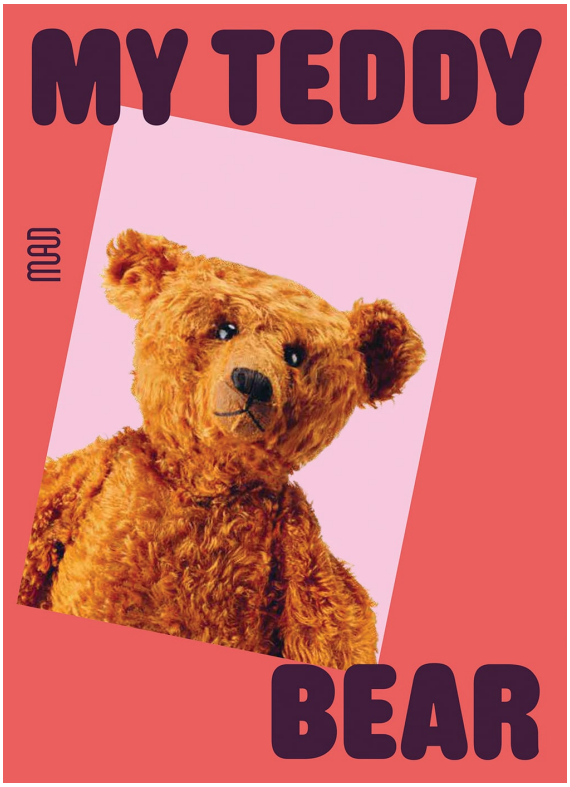

My Teddy Bear

Edited by Anne Monier

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- Three essays tracing the history of the teddy bear since its creation in 1902
- Two scientific essays by a curator and a historian, specialists in prehistory and bears
- Rich iconography, featuring a number of full-page teddy bears
- Accompanies the exhibition *My Teddy Bear* at Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, from December 4th 2024 to June 22nd 2025

The immense popularity of the teddy bear, now in every child's bedroom, hides a paradox: how did this ferocious, wild animal came to symbolize childhood?

The teddy bear was born at the same time in two different places. In 1902, the toy was invented in the United States in reference to Theodore Roosevelt – hence its Anglo-Saxon name, Teddy's bear, which became teddy-bear. In Germany the same year, Margarete Steiff marketed her first teddy bear created from needle cushions. It was a resounding success in Europe and America. The first examples in mohair and wood straw were heavy and rigid. However, the teddy bear has softened and mellowed. It has incorporated bright or pastel colors, in order to become a cuddly toy, the transitional object studied and theorized by pediatrician Donald Winnicott. Thanks to Winnie the Pooh, Michka and Paddington, the bear now reigns over a whole menagerie of stuffed animals as well as children's fiction. More surprisingly, the bear is also a favorite of fashion designers who do not hesitate to revisit him. Today, through the figures of the panda and the polar bear, the bear is the symbol of climate change and endangered species.

Through five essays and three thematic notebooks, this catalog traces the history of the teddy bear, from its first steps to its transformations and successes. It also questions our relationship with bears since Antiquity. Finally, the rich iconography offers a wide range of old and more recent teddy bears, compared with man's representations of bears over the centuries.

Curator and editor: **Anne Monier Vanryb**, curator in the Musée des Arts décoratifs, toy collections, modern and contemporary department. **Michel Pastoureau**, archivist paleographer, historian. **Catherine Schwab** and Elena Paillet, curators specializing in archeology. **Hélène Valotteau**. **Sophie Lemahieu**, curators in the Fashion and Textiles Department, Musée des Arts décoratifs.

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