

# Hard Lines



Buildings, Design and Urban  
Planning in Barcelona (1949–1974)  
Exhibition at the former  
headquarters of the Gustavo Gili  
publishing company  
3 February – 2 July 2023

In 1985, Carles Martí and Xavier Monteys published an article they called “La línea dura” [The Hard Line], as an introduction to the farewell issue of *2C* magazine. The text presented the work of a group of architects – Hannes Meyer, Hans Wittwer, Mart Stam, Johannes Duiker and Evan Owen Williams, among others – who, in the 1930s, within the modern movement, prioritized construction problems over aesthetic justifications. Martí and Monteys even coined a new category to refer to these authors and their work, which they called “the radical wing of rationalism”.

Paraphrasing the title of that article, we might posit that, between 1949 and 1974, a series of projects were developed in Barcelona from the fields of architecture, design and urban planning that, seen in retrospect, constitute “hard lines” with respect to the hegemonic tendencies of each period, a kind of tradition that has not always been recognized – perhaps pending recovery in the future – and that displays three essential traits: attempting to open the disciplines to new collective uses and paradigms in order to evolve the formal rhetoric of each moment;

moving away from the idea of design as a simple theoretical methodology and turning it into a tool for understanding and improving the public sphere; and addressing citizen conflict without the use of corporative formulas, pre-formatted models or standardizing solutions.

This exhibition compiles a total of 29 case studies, arranged chronologically and reconstructed through documents, texts and images, which in most cases are being shown for the first time in the context of an exhibition.

*Hard Lines: Buildings, Design and Urban Planning in Barcelona (1949-1974)* begins and ends with the same concern for the housing and living conditions of the local working classes – in other words, it begins with the competition “Affordable Housing in Barcelona 1949” and ends with the publication, in 1974, of the Counter Plan for La Ribera, developed by the Urbanism Laboratory of Barcelona (LUB), which defended neighbourhood objections to the official expert/political plan for restructuring the city’s coastal area.

The exhibition is complemented by an itinerary through five different

spaces (duly indicated by signage) that corresponded to the Gustavo Gili publishing house, which helps us to understand the building’s original architectural morphology.

Finally, a selection of images of the building, taken by Francesc Català-Roca at the time of its construction and opening, are on display. This photographic report, together with the images by the photographer included in each of the case studies, form a series of more than a 100 photographs that are part of the commemorative acts to celebrate the centenary of his birth.

# 01.

## Ideas Competition on the Issue of Affordable Housing in Barcelona, 1949

Winning team: Francesc Mitjans, Antoni de Moragas, Ramon Tort, Antoni Perpinyà, Josep Antoni Balcells and Josep Maria Sostres

Organizer: COACB (Architects' Association of Catalonia and the Balearic Islands)

Jury: Pedro Cendoya Oscoz (Dirección General de Arquitectura); Manuel de Solà-Morales i de Roselló (COACB); Buenaventura Bassegoda Musté (Barcelona School of Architecture (ETSAB)); Adolf Florensa Ferrer (Barcelona City Council); Francisco de P. Nebot Torrens (Housing Administration); José María Ayxelá Tarrats (Provincial Civil Government); José Feliu Gusiñé (Chamber of Urban Property); José María Segarra Solsona (architect nominated by the competition participants)

Prizes: 1st - 30,000 pesetas; 2nd - 15,000 pesetas; 3rd - 10,000 pesetas

On 13 January 1949, the Architects' Association of Catalonia and the Balearic Islands convened an ideas competition to address the problem of affordable housing in Barcelona. The winning team centred around Francesc Mitjans, along with Josep Antoni Balcells, Antoni de Moragas, Antoni Perpinyà, Josep Maria Sostres and Ramon Tort. It was the first time since the GATPAC that the major Catalan architects came together to take on an issue of enormous social importance.

While preparing their proposal, they participated in the 5th National Assembly of Architects, which was held in Barcelona, Palma de Mallorca and Valencia from 10-17 March 1949. One of the topics discussed at that meeting was the need for comprehensive urban planning for the Spanish State that would provide solutions for the housing needs of the popular classes. During that 5th Assembly, an exhibition of contemporary Ibero-American architecture took place in the Saló del Tinell in Barcelona. At the Llotja de Valencia, where the Assembly ended, Gio Ponti gave a lecture on architectural modernity that fascinated the attendees. Just days before, on 7 March at the Ateneu Barcelonès, the Italian architect Alberto Sartoris gave a talk called "Le Founti della Nuova Architettura", as part of a lecture series organized by the COAC, the aim of which

was to explore the new currents in European architecture and urban planning.

The winning proposal analysed the situation of housing for workers based on a complete economic and sociological study, almost without positing any architectural solutions. The project contained a series of floor plans with different distributions for various types of houses as a foundation for calculating surface areas in relation to prices, financing, rents, necessary land, etc.

This investigation led the Barcelona City Council and other official entities to set in motion the creation of two large complexes for workers' housing during the 1950s: the Congrès Eucaristic housing and, later, the Montbau estate.

The competition and the 5th National Assembly of Architects planted the seed for the emergence of Grup R in 1951.

# 02.

## Grup R, 1952-1961

Grup R was formed on 21 August 1951. Its members were Oriol Bohigas, Joaquim Gili, Josep Maria Martorell, Antoni de Moragas, Josep Pratmarsó and Josep Maria Sostres, along with José Antonio Coderch and Manuel Valls, who left the group two years later. Josep Antoni Balcells, Francesc Bassó, Guillermo Giráldez and Manuel Ribas joined later in 1953. Finally, new members from 1958 included Pau Monguío and Francesc Vayreda.

The group's activity began in 1952 and ended in 1961 when it was dissolved. Over those 10 years, they organized four exhibitions and promoted currents of thought that were aligned with the concerns of contemporary artists and critics. Above all, they assumed a leading role in the formation of architectural and design culture in Catalonia, through the direction of the COAC and the FAD and from the magazine *Cuadernos de Arquitectura*.

Grup R's first exhibition opened on 6 December 1952 at Galerías Laietanes, displaying work by the group's members. The second exhibition was held in 1954 and focused on the construction industry at that time. The third, in 1955, gathered the projects designed by students from Barcelona and Madrid for a competition organized by Grup R in response to two different briefs: an enclosure for elephants at a zoo and an all-male residence hall for a university town. In 1957, the members of the group participated in the 4th São Paulo Biennial. The fourth and final exhibition was held on 31 May 1958, which coincided with the closure of the

Galerias Laietanes. On display were projects by numerous architects based in Madrid, who were specially invited for the event, such as Alejandro de la Sota, Miguel Fisac, Javier Carvajal and Rafael García de Castro, among others. Different proposals by the group's members were also exhibited. One week before the opening of this exhibition, from 30 April to 26 May 1958, the course "Economy and Urban Planning" was held, with the collaboration of the Chair of Political Economy and Public Finance at the Faculty of Law of the University of Barcelona.

The following projects were selected, each of which has a QR that connects to the respective explanatory texts:

- Josep Maria Sostres: Moratiel House (1955-1957) and Iranzo House (1955-1957)
- Antoni de Moragas: Hotel Park (1950-1953) and renovation of the F  mina Cinema (1951)
- Javier Carvajal and Rafael Garc  a de Castro: University of Barcelona Business School (1955-1961)
- Oriol Bohigas and Josep Maria Martorell: Urban Block on carrer Pallars (1955-1959)

The headquarters of the Gustavo Gili publishing company (1954-1961), designed by Francesc Bass   and Joaquim Gili, was given its own space on the top floor.

### 03.

## Housing for the Workers' Cooperative La Maquinista (Los Pescadores), 1951-1953

Architects: Jos   Antonio Coderch de Sentmenat and Manuel Valls

Location: Pla  a del Llagut, 1-11

The building is a social housing complex for fishermen, located in the Barceloneta neighbourhood on the site of the former San Fernando Barracks. The complex is generated by the aggregation of a T-shaped module that includes three units. This aggregation results in a large block with a ground floor and five stories above it – with an area equivalent to four traditional neighbourhood blocks – open to the south, which generates a public green space inside. Because this aggregation module orients the unit perpendicular to the interior of the square, it is subdivided into

eight other sub-spaces where we find the accesses to 10 of the 11 stairwells.

The T-shaped module is comprised of two symmetrical houses and one perpendicular toward the square. The floor plan is based on a geometric system formed by walls rotated at 45   which respond to structural, constructive and distributive needs. The units are designed following a rigid distribution framework, divided into a day area and a night area, while ensuring independence among the units and privacy. In the case of the bedrooms that look out directly onto the public spaces, a series of screen-elements are designed to orient the openings of these rooms at an angle with respect to the street, avoiding direct visual contact with the buildings opposite them. These elements, finished in white stucco, stand out in elevation due to the contrast with the other structural walls in exposed brick.

The interior square, called Pla  a del Llagut, becomes a green space and is equipped with playgrounds, as well as street furniture.

Andrea Palomino, *Docomomo*

### 04.

## Congr  s Eucar  stic Housing, 1952-1962

Architects: Josep Maria Soteras, Carlos Marques and Antoni Pineda

Location: Pl. del Congr  s Eucar  stic, s/n

On the occasion of the International Eucharistic Congress of 1952, the Bishop of Barcelona launched a request for funding to put together the capital to build houses that would help to address the critical lack of housing in Barcelona. Government cooperation was obtained in the form of a mortgage to cover 40% of the costs, interest-free and repayable over 50 years, along with cooperation from local savings banks, which offered a mortgage for another 40%, at 4% interest and repayable over 20 years. As a result, individual contributions could be cut down to 20%, payable upon occupation. The government loan has now been replaced by a direct subsidy of 30,000 pesetas per unit, given fulfilment of the conditions stipulated in the Law on "Limited Income: Subsidies". When the apartments are sold at cost, the funds from the initial capital are redirected into new developments, thus ensuring the ongoing construction activity of the institution.

The main activity of this institution has been concentrated in the suburb north of Barcelona known as Can Ros, but which has now been given the popular name “Congrés Housing”. The plot covers a total of 16.5 hectares. Between 1953 and 1962, 2,719 housing units were built, including housing for concierges, 306 shops with adjacent housing and 27 storehouses, two nurseries for 500 children, two single-gender secondary schools – one for boys and one for girls, each for about 800 to 1,000 students, a healthcare centre, a small residence for young workers, the parish church, a small football pitch, and various play areas for children. To finance the buildings for public services, all the commercial properties were sold by the institute at their market value. This kept the initial funds free for the construction only of blocks of flats. Currently the total population residing there is around 17,000 people, which results in a density of more than 1,000 inhabitants per Ha.

*Cuadernos de arquitectura*, no. 61, 1965, pp. 17-21

## 05. New Apartments in the Attic of La Pedrera, 1953-1955

Architect: F.J. Barba-Corsini  
Location: Passeig de Gràcia, 92

The attic space of La Pedrera was used as storage for useless junk and it was an actual rats’ nest when I was commissioned to come up with a solution that would allow it to be incorporated into the useful and profitable part of the building.

The structure is simple and very interesting. The roof sits directly on a series of parabolic arches that serve as partitions spaced about 80 cm apart. The keystones are connected by brick nerves that follow catenary lines.

The approach was logical: passageways around the large central courtyard give access to the different units, which take advantage of the height of the undulating ceilings in the interior by means of mezzanines forming “duplexes”.

### Guiding Principle

In the design, the real drawing board was the floor, in keeping with a determination to defend “architectural honesty both in the structure and in the materials”, preferring the simplest solutions, even at the cost of perfection in the finishes. I clung to this idea to eschew the decorative and baroque styles that came at me from all angles, as is to be

expected, in an environment of exuberant forms, rejecting the use of manufactured materials from industries that are not present in our country.

*Cuadernos de arquitectura*, no. 22, 1955, pp. 47-49

## 06. Competition “Pro dignificación del hogar popular”, 1954

Winner: Antoni Moragas  
Organizers: FAD and the National Housing Institute

In 1954, the FAD (Foment de les Arts Decoratives), in conjunction with the National Housing Institute, held a competition called “Pro dignificación del hogar popular” [In favour of dignifying popular housing]. The aim purpose not only to create alternative to the housing products being consumed by the bourgeoisie, but also to address the problem of housing for the working classes and its furnishings.

Antoni de Moragas won first prize with a 49-piece system in which “each user can design their own furniture like playing with a simple Meccano construction set,” according to the author’s own words. The system was based on a construction made from calibrated steel tubing and wood, two materials easily found on the market at the time. His proposal was included within a normalizing line of work, which permitted large constructions at a low cost regardless of where they would be installed, during a moment of duality between modern and traditionalist currents.

## 07. Canteen Building at the Seat Factory, 1953-1956

Architects: César Ortiz-Echagüe, Manuel Barbero  
and Rafael de la Joya

Location: Passeig de la Zona Franca, s/n

### Approach

The Sociedad Española de Automóviles de Turismo, S.A., which produces light-duty automobiles in Spain, built a canteen for its staff at the Barcelona factory in keeping with Spanish social legislation. An area of land at the extreme



southwest of the factory was chosen as the location. It was the only site not affected by the plan for future expansions that would surround the factory in the near future. The terrain was completely horizontal, made up of rubble piled up in order to raise the ground level, since this area of Barcelona is sometimes affected by flooding.

#### Programme

The canteen was meant to have the capacity to serve meals to 1,600 workers, 300 administrative employees and 100 technicians. There will be two successive shifts; thus, the surface can be reduced by half in the dining rooms, but not in the kitchen. The kitchen must be capable of preparing full hot meals for all the diners. There must be easy communication between the kitchen and dining rooms with large openings that allow quick service. There should be enough space so that, at any given time, one of the dining rooms can be transformed into a small showroom and lunch can be served in the event of receiving a group of visitors to the factory. The number of toilets and changing rooms must be sufficient, taking into account those already existing in other parts of the factory.

*Cuadernos de arquitectura*, no. 28, 1956, pp. 8-13

## 08. Futbol Club Barcelona Stadium, 1954-1957

Architects: Francesc Mitjans in collaboration  
with Josep Soteras and Llorenç García-Barbón

Location: Travessera de les Corts. Avinguda  
de Joan XXIII

The Futbol Club Barcelona, with an eye to the constant growth in the numbers of its spectators, decided to build ample installations and annexes. The stadium designed for the club, with a capacity for 150,000 spectators, is one of the largest in the world.

It is built entirely of reinforced concrete, as is customary in this type of building, and is the foundation for a construction that rises to nearly 40 meters in height. In order to provide easy access to the different sections, this structure is “inserted” into the site by lowering the ground level, thus situation the access from the exterior at an intermediate height, which reduces the average vertical displacement for spectators’ to reach their seats. Further

supporting this measure of reducing vertical routes is the access to the different stands on the east and west side via long ramps, which make the ascent more comfortable. In the case of the covered seating areas, this allows for crossings of pedestrians and vehicles at different heights. There are many indoor stairways; especially in the north and south seating sections, they support the difficult operation of making it possible for spectators to exit the stadium comfortably and efficiently.

The main stands are covered by a very bold counter-weighted canopy with a large overhang which gives off a fascinating impression of lightness. It is held from above by a line of braces and supported by the porticoes of the overall structure of the stands, to which it is attached only by the structure’s vertical elements, further emphasizing its impressive profile.

*Cuadernos de arquitectura*, no. 21, 1955, pp. 2-4

## 09. United States Department of Agriculture Pavilion, 1956

Architects: Lanfranco Bombelli and Peter G. Harnden

Location: Pl. de l’Univers, s/n

Among the main attractions at the Barcelona Trade Fair, held in June 1956, was this pavilion made with from a tubular metallic structure and a wood and glass façade. Inside it, tractors of different types and multiple electrical appliances were on display, along with raw materials that were scarce in Spain at that time, such as cotton, tobacco and rice, among others. There were also fashion shows and cooking demonstrations, all presided over by huge photographs of the Statue of Liberty, the Brooklyn Bridge, pressure cookers and ice cream makers. At the entrance to the pavilion, above the long lines of visitors and visible from many points in the city, a gigantic American flag was waving 30 metres in the air.

This temporary building was part of the wave of liberalization in the 1950s, which allowed the Franco dictatorship to benefit from the Marshall Plan promoted by the US government to reactivate the European economy and establish advantageous trade agreements. An office was opened in Berlin and later in Paris with the aim of disseminating the benefits of the plan. It was directed by the architect Peter G. Harnden, who surrounded himself with

designers, illustrators and set designers, as well as other architects such as Lanfranco Bombelli. The team launched a dozen informative exhibitions, with an obvious political purpose, that toured 400 European cities.

When the Marshall Plan ended in 1951 Harnden and Bombelli continued to receive commissions from other American departments hoping to enter European commercial and industrial markets. This included the pavilions commissioned by the US Department of Agriculture for the Barcelona Trade Fair in 1956 and 1957, and the one installed at the International Fair in the Campo de Madrid in 1959. Using the language of modern architecture, these constructions showed the efficiency of prefabricated assemblies and the possibilities of advertising.

## 10. School Architecture by MBM, 1956-1974

School architecture forms one of the most outstanding chapters in MBM's extensive career. Fostered by a close relationship with Artur Martorell, father of Josep Maria Martorell and one of the main promoters of educational renewal in Catalonia, their first commissions were the result of relationships with various professionals in the sector and with new teaching methods. At the same time, MBM thoroughly investigated the international avant-garde in the field of school architecture, acquiring a very broad set of references in the English, American and Northern European traditions.

We could divide the school designs carried out over the course of almost 30 years into three periods. The first, between 1956 and 1960, would include the secondary schools in Amposta (1955-1957) and Sabiñánigo (1955-1958), for which Martorell and Bohigas collaborated with Joaquim Gili and Francesc Bassó, as well as five primary schools organized by the National School Construction Plan, and which included the schools Ramiro Ledesma (1956-1958), Antoni Parera (1957-1958), Sant Antoni Maria Claret (1957-1958), Timbaler del Bruc (1957-1958) and Baró de Viver (1957-1977), as well as three schools in Terrassa (1956-1960), with the participation of Josep Pratmarsó. The second period, after David Mackay joined the studio, would span from 1961 to 1972. It would include the Sant Gregori school in Sabadell (1961), the Garbí school in Esplugues de Llobregat (1962-1967) and the schools in Pineda de Mar (1967-1969), Vilanova i la Geltrú (1968-1971) and Montbau (1969). The third and final

period, between 1972 and 1979, would include two schools: Thau (1972-1974) and Costa i Llobera (1976-1979).

These educational facilities were published widely in various national and international outlets, becoming pioneers and benchmarks for the development of school architecture.

## 11. University of Barcelona, Faculty of Law, 1958

Architects: Pedro López Iñigo, Guillermo Giráldez  
Dávila and Xavier Subías Fages

Location: Avinguda Diagonal, 684 (Zona Universitària)  
Construction company: Sala Amat, S.A.

Description of the building

The building's floor plan is divided into two large sections:

1. the area that houses the teaching activities and
2. the area that contains the representative and administrative functions and study spaces.

The first comprises two parallel rectangular volumes, slightly stepped and separated by three interior open courtyards. Their structure, same as throughout the building, is rolled steel; the floor plan consists of an alternation of single modules (6.20 × 3.84 m) and double modules (12.40 × 3.84 m). The latter correspond to the classrooms and the former to the circulation areas.

On the ground floor, the south-facing classroom areas is occupied by a large connecting space that houses the entry hall and the students' lounge. From here, there are two staircases that connect to the first floor, where there are six classrooms – three with a capacity for 150 students and three for 90 – and the open corridors that lead to three more classrooms with a capacity for 225 students. Below, on the semi-basement floor, there is a classroom intended for written exams and there are restrooms for students of both sexes along with various other spaces.

The second section, structurally independent from the first, is built using a modular structure with dimensions of 6.20 × 5.76 meters in plan for each module. On the ground floor of this section are the dean's office and the teachers' lounge, the administrative offices, the cafeteria, the chapel and, juxtaposed with an independent structure, the event hall.

*Cuadernos de arquitectura*, no. 35, 1956, p. 19-20



## 12. Montbau Estate, 1958-1964

Architects: Guillermo Giráldez Dávila, Pedro López Iñigo, Xavier Subías Fages (first sector) / Manuel Baldrich, Antonio Bonet Castellana, Pedro López Iñigo, Josep Maria Soteras (second sector) / Agustí Bosch (third sector)

The Montbau estate is the result of a commission to develop the land located between the Serra de Collserola, the Montbau stream (now carrer de l'Arquitectura) and the Duran stream (now carrer de l'Harmonia) and what is now the Ronda de Dalt. This commission was awarded at the end of 1957. The first stone was laid in 1958 and the neighbourhood was eventually inaugurated in 1962, taking advantage of a visit from Franco.

It was an era of change in international architecture. The era of the International Congresses of Modern Architecture, the CIAM, is over, and the era of Team X meetings is beginning. In short, the functionalist and hygienist idea of urban planning based on zoning of the land, greenery and space, is replaced by planning based on association, identity and flexibility, in which the relationship between residents must be taken into account: in streets, squares and neighbourhoods.

The Montbau brief is proof of an interest in quality work on the part of the recently appointed mayor of Barcelona, Josep Maria de Porcioles, and a group of young architects, Xavier Subías, Guillermo Giráldez and Pedro López Iñigo, who had recently participated in the construction of an experimental neighbourhood in Madrid. The brief stipulated a relationship between the housing designs and the new technologies and execution times.

The Montbau project was divided into three phases, which were based on the initial plan from 1958, following the logistics of the site's orography. The edges of the first phase were defined by the Collserola mountain range, the Montbau stream and the Pomaret stream (between what is now carrer de l'Arquitectura and carrer de la Poesia); the second phase extended from the Pomaret stream to the Duran stream (now carrer de la Poesia and carrer de l'Harmonia); and the third phase was located on the Collserola hillside.

The first is from 1958, the second from 1961 and the third from 1964. Despite the short span of time between them, the design solutions are very different, as a result of the changing ideas in architecture and urban planning that emerged in the international sphere.

Fernando Marzá, *Montbau 1958-1964. Entre Arquitectura i Harmonia*, curator's introduction for the exhibition of the same name held at the COAC (22.04 - 03.07.2021).

## 13. “Pequeños Congresos” [Small Conferences], 1959-1968

Small conferences: 14-16 November 1959 - Madrid / 30 April - 2 May 1960 - Barcelona / 15-17 October 1960 - San Sebastián / 9-11 October 1961 - Córdoba / 19-21 April 1963 - Costa del Sol (Sevilla, Arcos, Jerez and Vejer - Algeciras, Torremolinos and Marbella) / 6-8 December 1963 - Tarragona / 3-5 December 1965 - Segovia y Toledo / 4-7 May 1967 - Tarragona / 7-10 December 1967 - Portugal / 11-13 October 1968 - Vitoria

The Small Conferences, held throughout the Iberian Peninsula over the course of nearly a decade, between 1959 and 1968, brought together a few dozen Spanish architects, more or less annually, to discuss the problems they were facing during a critical period in the history of modern architecture.

In the context of Spanish architecture, the Small Conferences began two decades after the Civil War, and a decade since the gap left by Spanish modern architecture during the post-war period had begun to close. The meetings brought together two generations of architects from Barcelona, Madrid, and San Sebastián. For the Madrid group, the meetings simply offered a format for the construction of a critical discourse. But for the Barcelona group they represented the possibility of a return to the tradition of the Modern Movement, a genealogical line that had been interrupted by the war.

Dozens of Spanish architects, anywhere from 50 to 100, would meet to tour and discuss works of contemporary architecture, and later – especially starting with the fourth meeting – to discuss specific problems, organized by theme, such as affordable housing, the problem of urban planning directed at tourism, the rehabilitation of historic city centres, etc.

At that time, the ideologues behind the meetings began to invite guest speakers, often international personalities, turning the sessions into an active platform for Spanish architectural debate in the 1960s and incorporating some prominent figures from the international scene, such as George Candilis (Tarragona, 1963), Giancarlo de Carlo (Segovia, 1965), Aldo Rossi (Tarragona, 1967), Peter Eisenman and Vittorio Gregotti (Vitoria, 1968).

Nuno Correia: “Los Pequeños Congresos, 1959-1968. Tras los pasos del Team X”, in Josep M. Rovira, Enrique Granell and Carolina B. García (eds.): *Destino Barcelona, 1911-1991. Arquitectos, viajes e intercambios*, Fundación Arquia, Barcelona, 2018, pp. 207-219.

## 14. Hispano Olivetti Building, 1960-1964

Architects: Ludovico Barbiano di Belgiojoso,  
Enrico Peressutti and Ernesto Nathan Rogers,  
in collaboration with Josep Soteras

Location: Ronda de la Universitat, 18

The building is located on a plot on Ronda de la Universitat between carrer Balmes and Plaça Catalunya.

Its purpose is to house the services corresponding to the general management of COMERCIAL MECANOGRÁFICA, S.A. (representative of Hispano Olivetti, S.A.), as well as those corresponding to the organization's Barcelona branch; it serves our city and its area of influence. At the same time, taking advantage of the commercial importance of the street where it is located, the area on the ground floor adjacent to the façade is used to display the company's products.

The building is composed of two volumes, the main one facing Ronda de la Universitat, made up of thirteen floors plus a volume above for building services. An auxiliary construction is located in the interior of the city block. This second volume is subdivided into three floors arranged at intermediate levels with respect to the main volume, in order to facilitate the layout of the ramps for vehicle access to the building's lower level and the parking areas. The overall structure uses supports and girders made from reinforced concrete and reinforced brick floor structures. The section of the columns that remains visible was the object of a careful study in order to obtain a form that, while fulfilling the precise mechanical requirements, would provide the desired slenderness and appearance.

The size of the girders and other hidden elements of the structure complies with the functions of the loads and the load-bearing capacity, and with the conditions required for the accommodation of the central air conditioning installation.

The floor plans indicate a clearly differentiated area for services, comprising the lifts, the staircase, the lobby and the restrooms; the rest is dedicated to office space. A rigorous modulation of the office space, using modules of 0.90 × 0.90, allows for creating separations by means of removable partitions. As a result, the space can easily be organized in keeping with the needs of each of the services located there.

The special orientation of the building, together with the fact that both façades are designed with metallic window frames and glazing throughout, made it necessary to install a "brise-soleil" on the south-facing façade, to protect the

personnel in the work stations adjacent to that façade from direct sunlight. At the same time, it does not obstruct the contribution of natural light to the interior areas of the floors.

*Cuadernos de arquitectura*, no. 57, 1964, pp. 20-26

## 15. Design in the Sixties: Organization of the Sector, Pedagogy, Industry and Dissemination

The field of design developed solidly in the Catalan context during the 1960s. There was an existing fertile tradition of production and associations, although it had faced multiple historical setbacks and difficulties in consolidation.

This development can be seen in four simultaneous but clearly differentiated areas, which characterize the evolution of the discipline throughout the period. On the one hand, there is what we could call an attempt at organizing within the sector, exemplified by the founding of the ADI-FAD (Industrial Designers' Association) in 1960, building on the precedent of the IDIB (Industrial Design Institute of Barcelona), which was established in 1957, and the ADG-FAD (Association of Art Directors and Graphic Designers) in 1961. Both entities were registered with the FAD (now called Fostering Arts and Design), an association initiated by artisans and architects in 1903. In 1958, the FAD Awards for Architecture and Interior Design were created; in 1961, the Delta Awards for Product Design began to be held, inspired by the Italian Delta Awards given out in Milan; and, in 1964, the first Laus Awards for Graphic Design and Visual Communication took place. At the same time, the field of design in Barcelona actively participated in the construction of associative networks on an international scale. The ADI-FAD, for example, was accepted as a member of the ICSID (International Council of Societies of Industrial Design) during its second assembly, which took place in Venice in 1961; André Ricard was elected vice president of the ICSID during its third conference in Paris, in 1962; and during that same year, the ADG-FAD participated in the creation of the ICOGRADA (International Council of Graphic Design Associations) in London. Additionally, an important development took place in the field of pedagogy, the main consequence of which was the birth of Elisava in 1961, the first design school in Spain, and then EINA in 1967, which emerged as the result of an ideological split from the former. Likewise, there were a series

of business initiatives in which design played a leading role in the industrial mechanics. Three paradigmatic cases are: the Geigy pharmaceutical laboratories, where Yves Zimmermann served as art director beginning in 1961 and where the employees included the designer Toni Miserachs, among others; the corporate publications released by the printing company Industrias Gráficas Francisco Casamajó, also under the direction of Zimmermann beginning in 1966; and, finally, the GRIS store (1969) founded by the designers Carles Riart and José Juan Bigas Luna. Finally, throughout the decade, there was an ongoing task of disseminating and communicating design from very diverse approaches and formats, spanning everything from architecture and interior design magazines to product catalogues and materials for trade fairs. Due to their singular nature, we have included in this section the writings by Manuel Vázquez Montalbán for the magazine *Hogares modernos* under the pseudonym *Jack el Decorador* [Jack the Decorator] (1969-1972), which offer a sort of sociological report on a Barcelona that was leaning into new urban and consumer rituals.

In the field of architecture, it was evident how design was entering the realm of joint theoretical reflection. Examples include issue number 43 of *Cuadernos de arquitectura* (1961), which included three articles by André Ricard, Santiago Pey and Rafael Marquina inviting architects to rethink the discipline; or the texts “Diseñar para un público o contra un público” [Designing for an Audience or against an Audience] by Oriol Bohigas, in issue number 45 (1961) of the same magazine, and “El culto al objeto” [The Cult of the Object] by Antoni de Moragas, in issue number 46 (1961), in which two seminal authors from the 1950s took the reins in writing essays on design, confronting the theorists of the younger generation. At the helm of *Cuadernos de arquitectura*, between 1961 and 1966 Pey and Marquina launched a real challenge to the so-called “artisanal inertia”, in pursuit of a recognition of design as an autonomous, professionalized and industrial practice.

## 16. Ciutat Meridiana Greyhound Track, 1962-1963

Architects: Antonio Bonet Castellana  
and Josep Puig Torné

Location: carrer Concepción Arenal, 165-185

This construction consists of two floors, in the form of a parabolic segment in which the top floor is the larger of the two. They are two concentric parabolas with a difference in their

foci of about two metres. The structure is made of steel, which adds slenderness and lightness in the lines. A central row of columns serves as the element of maximum resistance, supporting the floor and roof beams. The columns are formed by two UPN 30 profiles, closed by steel plates. Two more rows of columns, one on each side of the central row, help to support the floor beams. The roof beams, as stated above, are supported by the central line of columns, preventing any rocking movement with braces working as tensors, tying these beams to the floor beams. As for the horizontal bracing, it is afforded by the purlins, open-web composite beams, which are triangular in section.

All the structural elements are made up of simple elements – laminated profiles – either stand-alone or composite, except for the roof beams, which are solid.

The parabola is divided into a number of approximately equal parts, and the alignments of the bays are defined by joining each one of the points with the focus.

*Cuadernos de arquitectura*, no. 57, 1964, pp. 7-9

## 17. Housing, Johann Sebastian Bach / Francesc Pérez-Cabrero, 1962-1965

Architects: Ricardo Bofill Taller de Arquitectura  
and Emili Bofill

Location: carrer Johann Sebastian Bach, 2-4

This seven-story building stands in a typical residential neighbourhood in Barcelona. It has two differentiated entrances that open onto carrer Johann Sebastian Bach and carrer Francesc Pérez Cabrero, respectively; the curvature of the façade helps to define the circular form of Plaça Sant Gregori Taumaturg. The existence of the two entrances responds to the need to house two different programmes within a single construction. The programme that was required for the section corresponding to carrer Francesc Pérez Cabrero included 21 low income units; for carrer de Johann Sebastian Bach, in contrast, the demand was for 12 luxury units and a penthouse designed to suit the owner’s tastes. The change in the programme can be seen in the degree of detail with which both the interior spaces and the public areas were designed.

The construction of the building continues in the tradition of Catalan craftsmanship. One example of this is the

stratification of the façade in horizontal strips – in line with the local Modernism – joined by the two brick side walls, acting as a lattice that facilitate ventilation and lighting for the units' service areas. By adding a setback to the top section of the façade, the aim was to create balconies with chimneys and railings that would evoke the famous Catalan architect Antoni Gaudí. The internal staircase was built using a system of Catalan vaults.

The space on the ground floor is divided among commercial premises, building lobbies and accesses to the underground car park. The transparency in the entrance lobbies to the two units on the ground floor is intended to facilitate the transition between public and private spaces, between the street and the residences.

The importance of the design of this building as a whole lies in the continuity of the façade on two different streets and in the solution adopted for the penthouse. Thus, the series of setbacks gives rise to a series of gardens, balconies and terraces, including a swimming pool, all components of a well-studied system that creates a private and secluded oasis in the middle of the city.

Bartomeu Cruells (ed): *Ricardo Bofill. Taller de Arquitectura*, ed. Gustavo Gili, Barcelona 1998, pp. 23-25

## 18. Offices And Workshops for *El Noticiero Universal*, 1963-1965

Architect: Josep Maria Sostres  
Location: carrer Roger de Llúria, 35

Sostres' designs lend themselves to a precise typological grouping: houses in the mountains, hotels, houses along the Mediterranean coast. For its part, the office and workshop building for *El Noticiero Universal* on carrer Roger de Llúria constitutes a unique experience in Sostres's work, both for the programme and for the construction system and because of its location in the centre of Barcelona.

The project is an expansion of the newspaper's old premises through the annexation of a new building, built on the adjoining lot, with a façade measuring some 8 metres. The small size of the intervention and the apparent neutrality of its configuration make *El Noticiero* a less than spectacular architecture; there is nothing flashy about it. A first glance may provide the image of a silent building, passively integrated into the surrounding landscape.

Its public significance, on the other hand, has not coincided with those characteristics. The year it was finished, 1965, it won the FAD prize for architecture, awarded annually by the association Fostering Arts and Design to the most significant work carried out in Barcelona. Subsequently, the *El Noticiero* building came to be considered an important episode in modern architecture in Barcelona, and although it would not be accurate to say that it created a school, it became a precise reference for many.

Finally, another noteworthy aspect refers to its construction. A grid of guiderails is installed above the floor structures so that the loads from the workshop machinery remain evenly distributed. Plastic pieces are installed at the support points to dampen the intense vibrations. The façades are independent from the rest of the structure: the rear façade is a curtain wall; the one facing the street is made of brick, with the bricks installed vertically and adequately reinforced. Where appropriate, the opaque elements are replaced by openings. The cladding, in plaques of stone from Figueres, is attached by means of clamps. The result is pertinent in technical terms, but it also demonstrates the high degree of conceptuality and rigor with which Sostres addresses the resolution of details.

*2C Construcción de la ciudad*, no. 4, August 1975, p. 45

## 19. Banca Catalana Building, 1965-1968

Architects: Josep Maria Fargas and Enric Tous  
Location: Passeig de Gràcia, 84

When the architects Enrique Tous and Jose Maria Fargas won the restricted competition organized by Banca Catalana with their modulated façade – just a simple façade and nothing more, at the time – there can be no doubt, in view of the results they obtained, that they were unaffected by the concern which, perhaps for anyone else, might have arisen from leaving pending the integration of that façade with the complex building it would eventually close off. In all certainty they had already broached that question, and the problem had been incorporated implicitly into their design, with the double significance of its two sides.

The exterior, the quintessential façade, emblematic, aesthetically focused, conceptually similar to the architecture of the Eixample, the only apparent feature characteristic



of a building located mid-block between party walls, is a fabulous envelope, rather than a subtle and transparent enclosure. The interior side, on the other hand, is functional and exact, to the point that what might be hastily interpreted as spatially elementary or intuited as insufficient for regulating the interior-exterior spatial process, takes on the precise consistency of clear definition.

The process is developed in three stages: the central core, the peripheral areas, and the envelope. Among them, the envelope gives rise to the originality of the spatial treatment, beginning by recognizing the paradox of focusing precisely on the two-dimensional geometry of a plane. And yet, this is the case because the projection towards the outside is contained by the surprising environmental predominance of opacities with respect to the large glazed openings, which never reach beyond the condition of mere necessary openings.

It is necessary to reiterate that what might seem wasteful and excessively transparent when seen from the outside is transformed into moderation and restraint inside, by virtue of the different functions required from the envelope: continuity, a suction effect, “free entry” so to speak, in the first case; and shelter, intimacy, proportionate openings, in the second.

Ángel Serrano Freixas: “Un edificio diseñado”,  
*Cuadernos de arquitectura*, no. 70, 1967, pp. 24-29

## 20. “Les Escales Park” Residential Complex, 1967-1973

Architects: Josep Lluís Sert (Sert, Jackson & Associates)  
in collaboration with Josep Anglada, Daniel Gelabert  
and José Ribas

Location: carrer Sor Eulàlia de Anzizu, 46

The building pulls its façade back from the street line, aiming to generate a membrane of greenery that serves as perimeter protection for the entire built complex. The pre-existing vegetation on the site, made up of 100-year-old pines and firs, is highlighted; it is maintained and helps shelter the building from the street and outside noise.

The height difference on the site is mitigated by platforms that incorporate the programme for the complex. The lowest level is occupied by the car park. Logically supported by a system of concrete walls and diaphragm walls, this

element serves as the base for the entire building. Above it are the ground floor and common outdoor spaces. Finally, the building spreads across eight floors that contain three duplexes, a simplex and an accessible terrace.

Access to the building is provided by a gently descending ramp that connects the street level with the glazed gallery around the perimeter. This gallery defines the interior of the ground floor and connects the five vertical cores of the building. The ramp must also cross over a pool of water that surrounds the building and softens its rough encounter with the ground.

Regarding the typology of the dwellings, Sert relies on familiar solutions, drawing on the Le Corbusier's modern duplex. The arrangement designed by the architect situates the day use rooms on the lower floor. The living room, facing south, is given a double-height ceiling and opens onto a terrace, also with a double height; all these spaces are small in size. The design makes direct references to earlier architecture from the Modern Movement: Le Corbusier's Pavilion de l'Esprit Nouveau and his Immeubles-Villas, for example.

This interior design extends into the exterior in the form of a façade that is composed using a rhythm of volumes and voids, light and shadow that determines the true essence and aesthetics of the building. The bedrooms are located on the upper floor.

The garden is carried over onto the terraces, rising in section and turning the entire building into a vertical forest – perhaps one of the first – from the 20th century.

In 1974 the building received the FAD Award for Architecture.

Mónica Soto Albó, *Docomomo*

## 21. Òrim, Otro. Joan Miró Exhibition and Mural at the Architects' Association of Catalonia (COAC), 1968-1969

Authors: Studio PER (Pep Bonet, Cristian Cirici,  
Lluís Clotet and Óscar Tusquets), with contributions  
from Joan Miró and América Sánchez

Location: Plaça Nova, 5

The exhibition held at the headquarters of the Architects' Association of Catalonia and the Balearic Islands was



intended to offer a vision of Miró's work that departed from the sugar-coated and infantile interpretation presented by state-sanctioned media. The discourse was structured by a clear linear argument that consisted of three parts.

The first (A) was dedicated to his formative years and made references through documents, projections and paintings to the literary, artistic, cinematographic and cultural world that characterized the avant-garde movements that influenced him.

The second (B) intended to express the violent rupture caused by the Spanish Civil War, and it was installed on the stairway that connected the two floors. The narrow and uncomfortable space was lined with large panels, like in the rest of the exhibition, onto which a documentary film of war scenes was projected on repeat, interspersed with photographs of Miró's paintings. The deafening noise of the shelling and the distorted images that repeated, reflected by mirrors, created an unsettling atmosphere.

In the final part (C) the artist's recent work was contrasted with the prevailing cultural environment. It was organized inside a zigzagging corridor that contained references to Miró's work, and through a series of windows the pieces could be compared with monumentalism, rhetoric, kitsch and advertising.

The exhibition extended into the street with a huge temporary mural that Miró painted in black using a broom, overlapping a series of lines in primary colours painted by the members of Studio PER.

Lluís Clotet, *arquitecturacatalana.cat*

## 22.

### Flash-Flash Restaurant, 1969-1970

Architects: Federico Correa and Alfonso Milá  
Location: carrer de la Granada del Penedès, 25

The result of a collaboration between the architects Federico Correa and Alfonso Milá and the photographer Leopoldo Pomés, together with Karin Leiz and Cecilia Santo Domingo, Flash-Flash was intended to offer a modern and casual alternative to the luxury restaurants of the time and the old dark, baroque dining rooms. It was designed as a bright restaurant with different levels, long sofas and Formica tables, adding a sophisticated touch to the idea of fast food, which was still unprecedented in Spain at the time.

Reproductions of Pomés's photographs showing a reporter dressed in black and in multiple poses, at almost life-size, decorated the walls. These images, along with the logo designed by Francesc Daniel, soon became a symbol of the place.

The idea was to create a space with flexible hours, discreet and casual, where the decoration drew on pop influences, visible in the grey marbled rubber on the floor and in the lighting in the restrooms. The main focus of the menu was a varied selection of omelettes, although other possibilities were added shortly after it opened.

## 23.

### Magazine *Documentos* *de Comunicación Visual*, 1970

Direction and concept: Yves Zimmermann  
in collaboration with Toni Miserachs, Francesc Casamajó, Antonio Redondo, Ferran Cartes, Francesc Vila-Abadal and Carme Giralt

Graphic design: Yves Zimmermann and Pérez Sánchez  
(América Sánchez)

Production: Industrias Gráficas Francisco Casamajó

This pioneering magazine is absolutely crucial to understanding design criticism in Catalonia during the 1970s. It was published by Industrias Gráficas Francisco Casamajó, for whom Zimmermann had previously conceived the corporate identity, in addition to various publications related to their business catalogue.

Although only six issues were published, from January to September 1970, *Documentos de Comunicación Visual* summed up the aspirations and concerns that had captured the attention of a segment of the local design scene, those who were most attuned to international authors and trends.

In that sense, the magazine's direct correlate can be found in *Neue Grafik / New Graphic Design / Graphisme actuel*, published in Zurich between 1958 and 1965 by Josef Müller-Brockmann, together with Richard Paul Lohse, Hans Neuburg and Carlo Vivarelli (LMNV). Precisely the Swiss School, also referred to as the "International Style", and specifically the strict faction of designers from Zurich, became a major point of reference for Zimmermann, along with the productions of the Department of Visual Communication at the Hochschule für Gestaltung in Ulm (1953-1968), founded by Inge Aicher-Scholl, Max Bill and Otl Aicher.

A notable feature of this publication was its openness to relevant collaborators in the field of design and other disciplines, such as Will Burtin, Alexandre Cirici, Xavier Miserachs, Ernesto García Camarero, Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, David Victoroff, Salvador Giner and José Agustín Goytisolo, among others.

Finally, it is worth highlighting a different editorial project developed by Zimmermann beginning in 1979, and which picked up on some of the lines of work apparent in *Documentos*. We are referring to the emblematic “Colección Comunicación Visual” [Visual Communication Collection] published by Gustavo Gili, an authentic library of classics, for which seminal authors such as Tomás Maldonado, Bruno Munari, Donis A. Dondis, Otl Aicher, Adrian Frutiger and Wucius Wong were translated into Spanish for the first time.

## 24. Metalarte, 1965-1974

After founding the family factory Construcciones Riera, Antonio Riera Clariana created a metalworking workshop in 1932, which he called Metall Arts, to respond to the most complex commissions he was receiving from the architects of the time.

After the Civil War, under the direction of his sons, Carlos and Antonio Riera Cortés, Metall Arts began producing and marketing its own housewares and lamps, the first of which, released in 1942, was called *No. 1*.

During the 1950s, at the height of the Scandinavian design frenzy, Antonio Riera Cortés travelled to northern Europe, importing many of the ideas he discovered there into the national market.

In 1965, following a decade during which it became a benchmark in the lighting industry, the company opened a 7,000 m<sup>2</sup> headquarters in Sant Joan Despí. In addition, it changed its name to Metalarte and introduced a corporate identity designed by Josep Baqués.

The first lamp with a recognized author produced by Metalarte was George W. Hansen's *Swing Arm*, released in the late sixties, which immediately became a bestseller. A few years later, in 1970, another lamp that became legendary was released on the market: *Tatu*, designed by a young André Ricard. His extensive collaboration completely transformed the company, which turned away from the exclusive production of its own models to become a true design publisher. Evidence of this is the famous *Calder* lamp by Enric Franch, from 1974, the first piece designed in Spain to become part of the permanent collection at the MoMA.

## 25. Walden 7, 1970

Authors: Taller de Arquitectura: Ricardo Bofill, Anna Bofill, Salvador Clotas, Peter Hodgkinson, Ramón Collado, Joan Malagarriga, Manuel Núñez Yanowsky, Dolors Rocamora, Serena Vergano and José Agustín Goytisolo

Location: Carretera Reial, 106, Sant Just Desvern

The project is situated on a plot measuring 45,000 square metres, on the site of the former Samson cement factory.

The construction incorporated the maximum area of land in its interior, but on two scales: firstly, a large scale that situated the buildings around the perimeter, enclosing a large central plaza, and secondly, a smaller scale in which the construction incorporated public space in the form of interior plazas and avenues.

Of this complex, only the main building was constructed, which was christened Walden 7. This building occupies 5,250 square metres of land and comprises 1,100 modules of 5.3 × 5.3 × 2.50 metres and 16 floors of constant height.

The basic cell of the building is a 5.30 × 5.30 × 5.30 metre cube, through one side of which all the installations networks pass. Each basic cell comprises two housing modules, and the dwellings have one, two, three or four modules, depending on the occupants' requirements.

These sections are the result of variations in a model section, the result of symmetry. The model section is constructed by applying a travelling movement to one cell of the building. This displacement moves through three axes in a single vertical plane: one oblique, one vertical and one oblique in the opposite direction.

These displacements of the basic cell produce a gap that is used as a hallway leading to the dwelling. On the lower levels, the gaps are produced in the interior and, on the upper levels, on the exterior. The differing symmetries of this element provide the basis for the building's configuration. The criterion of arrangement is organisation around five monumental courtyards, one in the centre with four at its vertices. The central courtyard accommodates all the vertical communications.

The building's circulation is completed by walkways that join the nucleus of lifts in the central courtyard to the perimeter passages described.

These communal spaces between the floors are, however, exclusively communication spaces, the size of which makes them unsuitable for use as communal spaces for

relation, which necessarily takes place on the ground floor or the roof of the building. However, unlike the discontinuous roof in Reus that moves in circular fashion around the building, the occupants have to go up to the flat roof of the Walden building on purpose.

Walden 7 is a building that, for the layout of its dwellings, could have been a city in space, or even for its large plazas, like those on the ground floor and the roof, but it lacks spaces and services in the intermediate areas. Conversely, its lovely outline, the monumental courtyards on the ground floor and the walk-over terrace remind us of Gaudí's Pedrera.

Fernando Marzá and Neus Moyano: "Walden 7: Taller de Arquitectura" *Quaderns d'arquitectura i urbanisme*, no. 244, 2004, pp. 18-53

## 26. Frègoli Building, 1972-1975

Architect: Esteve Bonell

Location: carrer Madrazo, 54-56

The programme for the Frègoli building includes a total of 22 duplex-type dwellings of about 86 m<sup>2</sup> each, several commercial spaces on the ground floor and two in the basement.

Initially, the latter were intended for the creation of a theatre, due to the architect's relationship with Joan Brossa and inspired by their shared reverence for the quick-change artist Leopoldo Frègoli.

Ultimately, the building regulations did not allow it, and the idea had to be scrapped.

This group of houses was Esteve Bonell's first project after earning his degree. He not only made a name for himself with it, but it also became a declaration of principles against the Brutalist tendencies that had characterized so many of the projects that had been built by renowned Barcelona firms up to that point.

Bonell sought a greater degree of abstraction by using white architecture, simple rectangular volumes and a minimal and highly refined typology, in a duplex format, which followed the European trends of the twenties and thirties. In that sense, the Frègoli building announced the concept of a (re)start. An attempt to demonstrate that some of the avenues taken by modern rationalist architecture were still open and were worth exploring.

Mònica Soto, *Docomomo*

## 27. Centre For Urbanism Studies (CEU), 1972-1977

The Centre for Urbanism Studies (CEU) was created at the beginning of 1972. A small number of people gathered together under this name for the purpose of debating urban policy issues, producing critical documents that presented an alternative to the urban planning under the Francoist regime, and supporting urban social movements. It was never legalized as an organization. The founders were a group of young professionals (Jordi Borja, Marçal Tarragó, Lluís Brau, etc.) who had been dismissed from the Barcelona City Council at the end of 1971 following the publication of the work, of which they were the principal authors, "La Gran Barcelona", first in *Construcció, Arquitectura, Urbanismo* (CAU, 1971), the magazine of the Technical Architects' Association, and later as a book. This publication, one of the first comprehensive criticisms of Barcelona's urban policy, had a significant impact, and was even picked up by the media. It was a report on Barcelona's urban planning, based on rigorous urban, demographic and socio-economic documentation and drawing on a democratic, left-wing political position in support of social movements and citizen movements.

The CEU was founded amid an atmosphere of organizations, professionals and journals that were questioning the urban planning in Barcelona. But it proposed going one step further: it was not only a question of developing a critical perspective on the situation, but of intervening more directly in the struggles of the new movements that were beginning to organize to make demands regarding urban planning, public spaces, urban transport, and social facilities for neighbourhoods.

The core founders of the CEU – Jordi Borja (sociologist and geographer), Lluís Brau (architect), Carles Teixidor (architect) and Marçal Tarragó (economist) – had professional ties to Bandera Roja. Later, beginning in 1974, when Bandera Roja joined the United Socialist Party of Catalonia (PSUC), other professionals were brought in, many of them coming from the PSUC or with ties to it: Ricard Boix, Quim Clusa, Pau Verrié, Joan Alemany, Albert Broggi, Manuel Herce, Alfons Rodríguez Bayraguet, etc. From the outset, there were many other collaborators, professionals who studied social movements or were direct participants in them.

Joan Alemany and Pau Verrié: "CEU-CEUMT (1972-1982). Moviments socials, polítiques urbanes, ajuntaments democràtics", *Barcelona Quaderns d'Història*, no. 27, Barcelona 2021, pp. 189-193

## 28. Vinçon, BD and Mobles 114, 1972-1973

At the end of the 1950s the Amat family acquired the company Regalos Hugo Vinçon, founded in 1934 and housed in a large space on Passeig de Gràcia. Starting in 1967, it began a new phase based on innovation, not only with respect to the product catalogue, which branched out into the incipient industry of design objects for the contemporary house, but also with window dressings that extended beyond the purely commercial sphere, and with the production of a graphic language that was unprecedented at the time. For more than four decades, until it closed its doors in 2015, Vinçon was an inevitable point of reference, and even a stereotyped image, of Barcelona-based design. In 1973, Fernando Amat recovered a space within the store that had been, in the early 20th century, the studio of the painter Ramón Casas. It marked the birth of the Sala Vinçon, which, especially in its early days and through 1983, became a meeting point for artists, designers, painters and photographers, an “institution before institutionalization”. The exhibitions, classes and workshops held there stirred the pot of the cultural landscape of late-Francoism in Barcelona.

BD was founded in 1972, when a group of young architects who worked together under the name Studio PER – Pep Bonet, Cristian Cirici, Lluís Clotet, Óscar Tusquets and Mireia Riera, who had joined as an interior designer – decided to create a company for the purpose of producing and selling furniture and objects for their architectural projects. Initially, they had ties to the famous Boccaccio nightclub and its promoter, Oriol Regàs, who had also created a record label, Boccaccio Records, and a film production company, Boccaccio Films. Although it only lasted six months, Boccaccio Design, which would later become Barcelona Design (BD), presented some very daring proposals, along with reissues of historical pieces by Charles Rennie Mackintosh and Giuseppe Terragni, and designs by international figures like Álvaro Siza and Ettore Sottsass. From that time forward, BD became a benchmark company that has been able to work with the most outstanding designers over its 50 years of existence.

Mobles 114 was created in 1973 by JM Massana, JM Tremoleda and Mariano Ferrer. The first two had previously founded the “Equip de disseny” [Design Team] in 1968 with Jordi Domènech and Francesc Miravittles. The company began as a furniture store and interior design studio that produced the initial designs developed by its owners. They soon began a solid career producing pieces by other

designers, including Carles Riart and, later, over the course of their career, Isamo Noguchi, Enzo Mari, Miguel Milá and Josep Torres Clavé, among many others.

A noteworthy precedent of these initiatives was Snark Design (1970), founded by Santiago Roqueta, which became the first producer of design furniture in Barcelona, and which was responsible for recovering and re-releasing pieces by Rietveld, Balla, Hoffmann and Dalí.

## 29. A Counter Plan for La Ribera, the Beginning of a Resolute Research Effort

The Urbanism Laboratory of Barcelona (LUB)<sup>1</sup> was founded in the academic year 1968/69 on the initiative of the new head of the urban planning department, Manuel de Solà-Morales (1939-2012). He dedicated his efforts to improving the teaching of urban planning at ETSAB, but soon also became involved in the lively debates taking place in Barcelona. The first major public impact involved taking a critical stance – alongside neighbourhood associations and professional associations – against a plan for the general restructuring of the coastal area, known as the Plan for La Ribera, which was being developed, spearheaded by industrialists who owned the former factories there.

The official expert/political option explicitly ignored a huge district which, in addition to industrial buildings, was full of centuries-old urban fabric, including the Poble Nou neighbourhood. Given the risk of widespread demolition, the LUB drew up a *Counter Plan* (1971)<sup>2</sup> to show that there were multiple urban structures, often valuable ones, that did not deserve to be wiped out.

The Counter Plan stated that in order to transform the coastal areas, (this goal was not called into question), what was required was not a single macro urban planning project. Instead, ad-hoc answers could be found, section by section, identifying the existing mosaic and proposing transformation processes. In a way, that is what is finally

<sup>1</sup> The LUB was founded at the Barcelona School of Architecture (ETSAB) in the 1968/69 academic year, and since 2009 it has been a research group recognized by the Generalitat de Catalunya. [www.lub.upc.edu](http://www.lub.upc.edu)

<sup>2</sup> Manuel de Solà-Morales, Joan Busquets, Miquel Domingo, Antonio Font, José Luís Gómez Ordóñez are the authors of the book *Barcelona. Remodelación Capitalista O Desarrollo Urbano En El Sector De La Ribera Oriental*. Editorial Gustavo Gili. Barcelona 1974, in which the project was published.

happening. Barcelona has seen a radical transformation of its seafront since the 1980s, but it has taken place through progressive actions of varying sizes responding to a diverse and fragmentary logic, which the LUB anticipated with the Counter Plan.

Since then and over the course of more than 50 years, scores of students have participated in the laboratory's initiatives, and many professors have carried out their research there. Its continuity as a research group (2009), with over 100 publications, has contributed to making architects more aware of the urban impact of their work. The LUB gives the teaching at the School of Architecture its own personality on the international scene.

LUB 2022: Josep Parcerisa, Maria Rubert, Carles Crosas, Julián Galindo, Eulàlia Gómez, Àlvaro Clua

## EXHIBITION

Hard Lines:  
Buildings, Design and  
Urban Planning in Barcelona  
(1949-1974)

From 3 February  
to 2 July 2023

*Organized by*  
Culture Institute of Barcelona  
Architects' Association  
of Catalonia

*Production*  
Open Centre for Architecture  
La Virreina Centre de la Imatge

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