The Modernist Visual and Plastic Arts in the Catalan-speaking Lands

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ABSTRACT

Studies on Catalan Modernism got underway shortly before the Spanish Civil War but did not become widespread until about 1950, when the books Modernismo y modernistas by J.-F. Ràfols and El arte modernista catalán by A. Cirici Pellicer were published. Substantial biographies of Gaudí appeared from the start but some considerable time was to pass before in-depth studies of most of the key figures of Catalan Modernist Art were undertaken. In 1969 a major official exhibition was devoted to Modernism and in the 1970s there was an outburst of research into Modernism in fields including art and literature. In the 1980s major exhibitions on Modernism began to the staged in countries such as England, Japan and Sweden and were boosted by the presence of the names of Gaudi himself or the young Picasso, both of whom arose from the core of Modernism. Monographs with catalogues raisonnés have appeared on various Modernist painters: Anglada-Camarasa (1981), Santiago Rusiñol (1995) and Ramon Casas (1999), while new overall exhibitions have been dedicated to Catalan Modernism (1990) and Valencian Modernism (1997). Between 2002 and 2004, knowledge about Catalan Modernism and its background was condensed into five volumes comprising contributions from some eighty specialists.

Key words: Modern Style, Modernism, Art Nouveau, Catalan art

For fifty years and more, Modernism has been one of the most widely studied and fiercely debated features of Catalan art. The reason is undoubtedly that it was precisely through Modernism that Catalan art recovered the prominence it had lost virtually since the 15th century. Hence the enthusiasm it has aroused, not merely within the Catalan-speaking lands but abroad as well, for scholars interested in the movement have emerged in places far removed from the area where Modernist art was produced, such as the United States, France, Japan and Italy.

Whenever we Catalans discuss Modernism before an international audience, the first thing we must do is to point out that the concept is untranslatable: it must on no account be confused with what the Anglo-Saxon world calls ‘Modernism’, but nor does it correspond − as is often said, for purposes of simplification − to what is termed Modern Style or Art Nouveau outside Catalonia. Modernism was an attitude taken up in the last two decades of the 19th century − some prolong the period into the first decade of the 20th century − by a series of Catalan writers, artists and musicians who were conscious of the fact that Catalonia was in need of cultural modernization. The exponents of the visual and plastic arts who are studied in the works we will comment on here interpreted this modernization in different ways − not through a single style, in other words, but through as many styles as were able to convey the idea of modernity they pursued.

Modernism is the name given by a generation of intellectuals and artists to their determination to keep up with the times, to create literary and artistic works that were not only well crafted but a clear manifestation of their concern for modernity. The principal new European trends, such as Impressionism, Symbolism, post-Impressionism, Art Nouveau and all its variants, provided the models, but they were adapted to the personality of each individual Catalan artist who followed along the same paths. Some of these artists − notably architects of the stature of Antoni Gaudi and Lluís Domènech i Montaner − achieved such totally original creations that it is superfluous to look for many outside sources.

However it must also be pointed out − because otherwise the full complexity of the issue cannot be grasped − that once the movement’s heyday was over − around 1910...

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it can be considered complete —, the next generation of Catalans developed a growing aversion to Modernism and its fruits and it spent a good forty years in Purgatory. During this time the Modernists were defended only for old times’ sake, or out of friendship. Not until the aftermath of the Civil War did this very distinctive cultural phenomenon gradually become an object of study and respect.

Josep F. Ràfols, a non-practising architect who engaged primarily in teaching and research into history and art, was the first to revive interest in Modernism. As early as 1928 he had written the first biography of Gaudí, and after the war he brought out a first small volume on Modernist art. This volume ultimately evolved into Modernismo y modernistas (1949), the first major book to be published on the movement as a whole. At the same period the writer Josep Pla reinstated the figure of Santiago Rusiñol, viewed as an outstanding personality, however, rather than a leader of Modernism. The publisher of Pla’s book, Alberto Puig Palau, himself a collector of art works from the period, may well have played a part in the resurgence of the Modernist era. The role of Rafael Benet in the revival of the Modernist period was also of some significance. Benet, a leading art critic and gifted painter from before the Civil War, contributed much valuable information about the art of the Modernist generation both before and after the conflict. A young critic named Alexandre Cirici, who was to exert considerable influence in the future, was already tackling the pivotal theme of Picasso’s Modernist works with considerable insight, though not always with sufficient documentary rigour. The same qualities and shortcomings were to mark his approach to Gargallo and Barcelona many years later.

Ràfols’ great book on Modernism resembled a long essay, but two years later another major study by Alexandre Cirici appeared, El arte modernista catalán. This time Cirici had looked up numerous sources and cited them properly in a substantial critical apparatus. Thus in no time at all Modernism had ceased being an object of scorn and was becoming a stage in the history of Catalan culture which had already warranted two extensive and authoritative monographs. Both Ràfols and Cirici approached Modernism from the broad perspective mentioned above, rather than considering it merely the Catalan version of Art Nouveau. This latter view was to predominate later on, but more as an attempt at simplification than as a veritable theory.

In Madrid Bernardino de Pantorba set about producing a quite useful biography of the prolific painter Eliseu Meifrèn (1942), a member of the initial L’Avenç group. Owing to the complexity of the artist’s life and work, however, the biography remained an isolated attempt that merely outlined the topic.
In 1954 an exhibition in Barcelona was devoted to Els Quatre Gats, the tavern that became the Modernist cenacle’s magical meeting place. The initiative once more came from Puig Palau and it proved unexpectedly popular, with visitors queuing up to discover this fascinating era in Catalonia’s cultural history. The catalogue, by Rafael Benet, an author we mentioned earlier, became another major milestone in the discovery of Modernism. At about the same time (1955) a book by the daughter of Santiago Rusiñol – undoubtedly the most popular figure of Catalan Modernism, alongside Gaudí – yielded some important family testimony about the artist. Mario Verdaguer’s perspicacious and vital memoirs of Barcelona in the Modernism age were also published, again by Puig Palau, providing abundant information from a man who had observed Els Quatre Gats at close quarters.

It was also during those years that specific attention began to be paid to Ramon Casas. Ràfols published monographs about him and a first major official retrospective was held under the curatorship of the archeologist, medieval historian and art critic Alberto del Castillo. The substantial text Castillo wrote for the exhibition was one of the first major biographical studies of the painter. Isidre Nonell also received his first official retrospective, while another was devoted to the sketcher and decorator Joaquim Renart, whose role in the art world of the period was more important than might appear. Both exhibitions were the upshot of the quite deliberate task of cultural reconstruction carried out – discreetly but very efficiently – by Joan Ainaud de Lasarte, the director general of the art museums of Barcelona and secretary of the Junta de Museus. Both bodies were inevitably part of the Francoist government apparatus but, under the management of persons of Ainaud’s stature and sensibility, were prevented from lapsing into trivialization and distortion. The first great international effort to reassess the ‘artistic sources’ of the 20th century took place in 1961. It warrants a mention here because Catalan Modernism was included, on a modest scale, with references to works by Gaudí, Isidre Nonell and Picasso, during his Catalan period. Compared to the stress laid on coetaneous art from France, Germany or England, it was not much, but it was more than had been customary up till then. Europe was becoming interested in the Catalan Picasso too: Anthony Blunt – the historian of the British royal family’s art collections, who was later unmasked as a famous spy – contributed substantially to the discovery of the young Picasso, as did Pierre Daix.

Meanwhile in Catalonia itself the poet Josep Palau i Fabre was beginning to publish monographs on Picasso’s Catalan period.

During the next phase Modernist architecture began to draw attention. Joan Bergós, an architect who had known Gaudí well, published a couple of very enlightening monographs about him, while Puig Boada, another architect who in his youth had taken part in an informal discussion group that included Gaudí, issued a study of the Sagrada Familia, which was republished several times in later years. Other foreign scholars were following the example of Sweeney and Sert by studying Gaudí: the Italians Roberto Pane and Lara V. Masini, for instance, each published a book about him. Enric Casanelles, the active secretary of the Amics de Gaudí, brought out a stimulating essay about him in 1965, and in 1967 another of the genius’s unofficial disciples, Cèsar Martinelli, published a very complete monograph about him. Then came a major study by Prévost and Descharnes, inspired by Salvador Dalí who, before the Civil War, had been the first to defend Gaudí and Art Nouveau in general in his own characteristic style, using photographs by Man Ray. Included in this work was an earlier text by the essayist Francesc Pujols, whom Dalí always greatly admired. The reinstatement of another great figure of Modernist architecture, Lluís Domènech i Montaner, began with a special issue of the journal Cuadernos de arquitectura which was devoted to him in 1963. It contained texts by various authors, some new, some well-established, notably one by Oriol Bohigas. Enric Jardi wrote a biography of Josep Puig i Cadafalch encompassing all his three facets: the architect, the politician and the man of learning.

Oriol Bohigas himself was the author of the first major work devoted to Modernist architecture as a whole, which appeared in 1969. It contained photographs by Leopoldo Pomés and achieved a wide readership. Several editions in a more economical format came out later and these contained a small amount of information on Valencia. Bohigas’ book played a role in the strictly architectural field equivalent to the one the works of Ràfols and Cirici had played in the study and dissemination of Catalan Modernism generally. The same year Ramon Planes brought out a very substantial work about the decisive contribution of his home town of Sitges to the development of Modernism.

Figure 2. Primera Comunió (First Communion, 1897), bronze by Josep Llimona (Barcelona, Museu Nacional d’Art de Catalunya).
In 1969 a major exhibition entitled *El Modernismo en España* was held in Madrid and Barcelona. The initiative came from Joan Ainaud de Lasarte. With over six hundred and fifty exhibits, it provided an overwhelming demonstration of the importance of Modernist art and a powerful stimulus towards continued research into the movement.35

By then interest was beginning to be displayed in Modernism – notably Modernist architecture – in Valencia. Works on the subject were published by Tomás Llorens,36 Eduardo Mangada,37 Salvador Aldana,38 Immaculada Aguilar,39 and Irene Garcia Antón.40 In the midst of that same period – in 1973 – the key work on the topic appeared. Significantly enough the author, Trinidad Simó, asked Joan Fuster to write the prologue.41,42 The prime researcher into Modernist visual and plastic arts in Valencia was Miguel Ángel Catalá Gorgues.43 A book by Miquel Seguí, issued two years later, performed the same function in the Balearic Islands.44 Modernist architecture in Catalonia was also studied in the 1970s,45 and small concentrations of Modernist buildings outside Barcelona came in for attention.46

A small book published by the Carulla-Font family in 1973 for use as a Christmas gift was devoted to Lluís Domènech i Montaner. The text was by various authors, with a section on architecture by Oriol Bohigas, and it proved quite a useful monograph.47 The following year the Catalan architects’ association, the Col·legi d’Arquitectes, published a work on Jujol with contributions from Salvador Tarragó and J.M. Jujol junior, among others.48

In the late 1960s and 1970s there was an upsurge of interest in other forms of Modernist art, apart from architecture. Enric Jardí published a series of books purportedly aimed at the general public but which nevertheless yielded considerable information about core aspects and personages of Modernism and post-Modernism.49 The collected works of the main post-Modernist painters – Nonell, Mir and Canals – went on show in well documented exhibitions prepared with rigorous criteria by historians with an academic background.50 Other painters...
and sculptors belonging to the Modernist circle were studied in some depth: Josep Triadó, the Llimona brothers, Néstor Martín Fernández de la Torre, and the ceramist Antoni Serra. In 1975 I myself published a book that concentrated on the closing phase of Modernism, during which the originality of Catalan painters and sculptors attained its height, and christened this period with the name of post-Modernism. And Palau i Fabre, leaving aside his general studies on Picasso, tackled a very far-reaching, detailed monograph on the artist himself, which was to extend far beyond his Catalan period.

In 1973 Eduard Valenti Fiol wrote a book focussing on literary Modernism but which also constituted an outstanding contribution to the study of Modernism as a whole and included numerous references of use to the art historian. A new book embracing all the facets of Modernism—architecture, literature, sculpture, painting, music and the decorative arts—appeared in 1976 and was later republished. The title was *Modernismo en Cataluña* and the editor José M. Infiesta. Its weak point, perhaps, was that it constituted a string of chapters by different authors rather than a coherent overview, but it contributed many new data and showed that Modernism was now a theme of interest to a wider audience. That same year a book devoted primarily to Modernism in Girona came out, but it was written from the viewpoint of literature.

The applied arts were also arousing interest: Josep Mainar published an overall study of Catalan furniture which devoted considerable space to Modernism, and Eliseu Trinc, a French professor whose parents were from La Franja and who had attended the courses for foreign students given by the IEC (Institut d’Estudis Catalans), published his thesis on Modernist graphic arts in 1977. The book became a benchmark work in the field from then on and turned its author into one of the foremost authorities on Catalan Modernist art. Victoria Salom published a very thoroughly researched and ground-breaking study that was a summary of the memoir she had written for her bachelor’s degree. It concerned a topic frequently omitted from bibliographies: Modernist posters. Moreover, not only art but art criticism as well was beginning to attract attention.

Catalan Modernism was also becoming the subject of academic research in the United States. George R. Collins of Columbia University gave a considerable boost to studies of Gaudí and Catalan architecture and art generally through his work in setting up the Catalan Archive of Art and Architecture. Documents belonging to the builder Rafael Guastavino are among the materials deposited there. Several specialists emerged from this group: they include Rosemarie Bletter, who studied Josep Vilaseca; Judith Rohrer who, as we will see, has specialized in Puig i Cadafalch, and Phyllis Braff. Two doctoral theses—one by Marilyn McCully (Yale, 1975), another ex-student of the IEC’s courses for foreigners, the other by Joseph Philip Cervera (Berkeley, 1976)—opened up new perspectives in America, as is shown by the exhibition on Els 4 Gats held at Princeton in 1978, with McCully herself as curator.

Catalan Modernism was also becoming better known in Germany but here the approach was very different, for the discovery was the outcome of the militant Catalan Weeks staged in Berlin in 1978 as part of a deliberate political operation spearheaded by the Catalanophile professor Til Steegman.

Interest in Modernism and post-Modernism gained momentum in the 1980s. A few foreigners wrote monographs on the topic, though most were published in Catalonia; at an exhibition in Sabadell, which was more remarkable than it seemed, Symbolism in Catalan art went on show and was described in a catalogue; and half of the seventh volume of *Història de l’Art Català*, published by Edicions 62, concerned itself solely with Modernist art and included many of the contributions on the movement made in recent years. Another general work published at that time but written years earlier contained a highly enlightening but little known chapter on Modernism by Marçal Olivar. In this elderly humanist and unobtrusive mentor presented his own version of Modernism, enriching it with knowledge that only he possessed, the fruit of a curiosity which always drove him to delve deeply into things.

In 1982 an interdisciplinary and somewhat controversial symposium was held: the Col·loqui Internacional sobre el Modernisme. The acts came out six years later. Barcelona City Council’s Área d’Urbanisme published its catalogue of the architectural heritage, which of course included data sheets on Modernist buildings with plentiful references.

The GRACMON, a research group specializing in Modernism and Noucentism headed by Professor Mireia Freixa, was set up at the University of Barcelona in 1986. In 2001 it was recognized as a ‘consolidated group’...
and has given rise to several doctoral theses and publications. Attempts were made, not for the first time, to view Modernism, which was a basically Catalan movement, within the overall context of Spain, because the word Modernism was applied at the same period in Spanish-speaking Spain to various aspects of modernity, primarily in literary circles, though it could be extrapolated to the visual and plastic arts as well. Some of these attempts were confined to architecture and the decorative arts, however, rather than referring to the arts in general. Some also sought to apply the term Modernism to all the new international art of the period. Publishing houses that catered to the general public were already planning works for widespread dissemination, such as the one published by the Mendoza brothers in 1989.

In the 1980s Catalan art was again a topic of interest outside Catalonia and Catalan Modernism was well represented at exhibitions held abroad or was even the main attraction. Each one generated a catalogue. The highly ambitious Homage to Barcelona, staged in London in 1985 and again in Japan in 1987, was one example. Another was Modernismen i Katalonien, held in Stockholm in 1989. Closer to home, the graphic arts of the Basque Country and Catalonia were brought face to face at an exhibition held in the Basque Country. This decade was especially propitious to the cult of Gaudí: a book containing his scattered writings was published and an exhaustive catalogue of his drawings appeared. In Japan he was already arousing keen interest; in Spain Carlos Flores made an in-depth study of his work, comparing him to his outstanding disciple and collaborator Josep M. Jujol; and Joan Bassegoda published a book that assembled further documentation about him. Bassegoda was also the author of the ‘scenario’ for a major Gaudí exhibition organized by the Fundació Caixa de Pensions in 1984.

A few books on Domènech i Montaner appeared which, though short, contained fresh contributions. An unexpected documentary study of one of his main buildings, the Palau de la Música, came out, and a major retrospective made a public reassessment of the personage. Similar developments occurred at about the same time with regard to the third great Catalan Modernist architect, Josep Puig i Cadafalch. Interest continued to be shown in clusters of Catalan Modernist architecture outside Barcelona, in cities such as Terrassa, Tortosa, Vic, Sabadell and La Garriga. Stained glass, an applied art that was used to especially brilliant effect in architecture, began to be studied in publications accessible to the general public which put its spectacular achievements to good advantage. Metal constructions manufactured at Can Torras, a key feature of many buildings from the period, were examined from a constructional and entrepreneurial perspective. Manuel García Martín – a researcher from outside academe who had already produced a few volumes about Modernist buildings for a large company, Catalana de Gas, which used them as sumptuous Christ-
By the nineties Catalan Modernism – once virtually unknown elsewhere in the world – was so famous that besides appearing frequently in general works from abroad, it also began to be the subject of specialized works aimed at the general public in other lands, and paperback handbooks on the subject were multiplying fast. Any exhaustive treatment of such publications would require long lists of bibliography and this is certainly not the place for that. I refer the reader instead to a very detailed work by Eliseu Trenc, who updated his own study from thirty years earlier by making a highly systematic and complete review of the bibliography which is inevitably more extensive than this can be. The historical, social and artistic backcloth to the Modernist period was studied at a conference entitled Escoita Espanya that marked the centenary of the 1898 crisis. The acts were subsequently published.

Mention should be made of the Catàleg de monuments i conjunts històrico-artístics de Catalunya (1990), a catalogue of the buildings declared national monuments, which arose from the work carried out by the Servei del Patrimoni Arquitectònic de Catalunya. This tool, which is of the utmost interest, naturally includes those Modernist buildings which were officially considered the most important. A less scholarly and more thoughtful and literary approach was taken by the writer Oriol Pi de Cabanyes in his survey of several Catalan Modernist houses, skilfully illustrated by the photographer Toni Catany.

Another major exhibition on Modernism, organized in 1990 by the Barcelona Cultural Olympiad, ushered in the nineties. The very extensive catalogue it left behind featured contributions from numerous specialists which helped update earlier monographs on the movement as a whole. At the same time the organizers launched another exhibition entitled El Quadrat d’Or (1990) devoted exclusively to Modernist architecture in the core of Barcelona’s Eixample district. Albert Garcia Espuche, who has conducted intensive research into the urban history of Barcelona, was responsible for both the exhibition and the catalogue.

Meanwhile another research team – Raquel Lacuesta and Antoni González, who had enlarged and revised the classical catalogue by Oriol Bohigas years before – brought out a similar guide covering not just Barcelona but the whole of Catalonia. An exhibition held in 1993 reviewed the history and significance of the Cercle Artístic de Sant Lluc and another at the MNAC (Museu Nacional d’Art de Catalunya) highlighted the role played by Catalan Modernism in the revival of interest in El Greco. An exhibition at the Museu Salvador Vilaseca in Reus highlighted that city’s status as Catalonia’s second
largest city at the turn of the century. It was backed up by an excellent catalogue, in which art was well represented. Other exhibitions in which Modernism played a prominent or leading role were staged abroad in the early 1990s in collaboration with the Generalitat: one visited three Japanese cities, while another, held at the Fondazione Giorgio Cini in Venice, aroused much comment throughout Italy and generated quite a large printed catalogue. A further showing outside Catalonia took place in Santillana del Mar and was entitled Arquitectura modernista. Domènec i Montaner. Jujol.

New perspectives on Gaudí were afforded by two essays that appeared in the early nineties: Conrad Kent and Dennis Prindle published Hacia la Arquitectura de un Paraíso (1992), on the Parc Güell, and Juan-José Lahuerta gave a less 'hagiographical' and more politically orientated vision of the great architect in Antoni Gaudí: 1885-1926. Arquitectura, ideología y política. Gaudí was becoming an increasingly appealing topic both in Catalonia and elsewhere. In a monograph published by the Diputación de Barcelona and entitled El Palau Güell – which was also attractive to the non-specialist reader – various authors undertook an in-depth study of the building named in the title (1990). The Cátedra Gaudí at the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya published Aproximación a Gaudí (1992) in Madrid. The same body contributed to the publication in Italy of Idee per l’architettura, a collection of the Catalan architect’s own writings and thoughts (1995).

Other Modernist architects came in for study. An exhibition and its catalogue were devoted the Bassegoda family of architects and builders, for instance, and a substantial monograph by Joan Tarrús and Narcís Comadira – Rafael Masó arquitecte noucentista – dealt with an architect who, though sometimes considered a Modernist, should really be viewed as a Noucentist with a distinct personality influenced by the Viennese Sezession. Other substantial monographs were devoted to Muncunill and Cèsar Martinell, and short books appeared on Josep Maria Jujol and Enric Sagnier. This was a period that saw the publication of many works devoted to specific buildings from the Modernist era: El Palau de Justícia de Barcelona (about the Barcelona law courts designed by Enric Sagnier and Josep Domènech Estapà), El cementiri de Lloret de Mar (about the cemetery of Lloret de Mar, which contains works by several architects and even more sculptors); Els edificis de la Caixa d’Estalvis de Sabadell (about bank buildings designed by Jeroni Martorell). The unflagging Garcia Martín provided still more original data in L’Hospital de Sant Pau (1990) and Fonda de España (1991, on two buildings by Domènech and Montaner), Comillas modernista (1993, on Comillas [Santander] where numerous works by Catalan Modernists are located), and Paisatge d’Astorga (1994, about Astorga [León], which has a bishop’s palace built by Gaudí). Many more Catalan towns and cities, among them Olot, Manresa and Iguálad, developed an interest in studying their own Modernist heritage. A monograph on the Cercle del Liceu in Barcelona, published in 1991, undertook an overall study of the organization and the works of art housed in its headquarters – most of which are Modernist – and also touched on the topic of architecture. Some important monographs on Modernist painters appeared in the nineties. One, a very thorough and enlightening study of Santiago Rusiñol by Josep de C. Laplana, contained the first catalogue raisonné of his paintings but surprisingly enough had no illustrations. The papers given at a conference on Rusiñol held in Paris – some new, others already in circulation – were also published. The Museu de Vilafranca had awarded a prize to a research monograph by Isabel Coll, also on Rusiñol which was published some years afterwards. Later still the author herself brought out an enlarged and well illustrated version. Exhibitions focussing on Rusiñol’s paintings were held in Valencia, Corunna, Pamplona and Girona. A study that concentrated on Ramon Casas’ portrayal of women appeared. Even more important was the publication of a monograph which sought – at long last – to arrange the documentation sheets on all his paintings into a catalogue raisonné. Francesc Miralles commenced his research into Joaquim Mir with a monograph dealing solely with the period the painter spent in Tarragona.
which was later published, on Francesc Gimeno, a front-ranking painter of the Modernist period who was not, however, strictly a Modernist.159

Another highly ambitious work on a Modernist painter was written by Juan San Nicolás on Darío de Regoyos. Regoyos was not a Catalan but he was closely associated with Catalan Modernism and lived and died in Barcelona. Though unfortunately only the first volume of this work was published, it has remained the prime reference work on this Catabrian artist, who had been a leading figure of the new Belgian school of painting.160 A large tome was devoted to another great Modernist painter, Eliseu Meirà. It was the first work about him to appear since the 1940s but it contained too little text and the illustrations, despite their technical quality, were not always well chosen.161 Another handsomely published book on Ramon Casas had the same failings but was nevertheless greeted by some as the great monograph that painter lacked.162

A smaller but substantial and very well illustrated monograph on the versatile Adrià Gual was issued by the Diputació de Barcelona. It contained items by several authors, each dealing with one of his many activities.163 Other artists were rescued from oblivion: the first, modest exhibition on Aleix Clapés was held in Vilassar de Dalt;164 the first monograph was published on the most gifted female Catalan painter of her generation, Llúisa Vidal;165 the post-Modernist painter Pere Ysbern was studied for the first time in adequate depth;166 and the work of his close friend, the sculptor Emili Fontbona, was put on show for the first time and studied by the Museu Frederic Marès.167

Various initiatives to do with the work of Anglada-Camarasa and Mir were launched. An exhibition mounted by the Madrid delegation of the Generalitat focussed on Anglada-Camarasa’s Parisian period;168 another, held in Manresa, concentrated on the paintings he did at Montserrat during the Civil War;169 and in Majorca an exhibition examined his relationship with the Gran Hotel de Palma, a Modernist building which had had close links to art at various stages in its existence.170 The curators of the first two exhibitions were Francesc Fontbona and Francesc Miralles.

Several banks organized exhibitions devoted to Joaquim Mir: a selection of his works went on show in Madrid,171 and two more exhibitions in Palma de Mallorca dealt respectively with the decisive period he spent in the Camp de Tarragona region172 and with a more limited selection of his output.173 Teresa Camps was the curator for all three. An exhibition staged in Madrid with support from the Banc de Sabadell made a small contribution to knowledge about Ramon Pichot, a personality who has been little studied, despite his importance.174 In Girona an exhibition was devoted to Prudenci Bertrana, who was both a painter and a writer.175

Those were years marked by frequent exhibitions all over Spain about the leading figures of Modernist art: the works of Casas went on show in several cities176 and in Madrid the Fundació MAPFRE drew attention to the work of Gosé, without the collaboration of the MNAC strangely enough, but with that of the Museu Morera in Lleida.177 An accumulative study of data on Symbolist painting throughout Spain was published in Granada.178

Accounts of the lives of artists from the Modernist period – such as Pidelaserra, Cusachs and Maillol (1991) – continued to appear in a dynamic series of small-format biographies entitled “Gent Nostra”.179 Some fairly ambitious exhibitions began to be staged about certain interesting but minor artists, such as the tormented painter and writer Hortensi Güell, the delightful painter Laura Albéniz, or the Symbolist photographer Pia Janini.180 A biography of the painter, decorator, collector and man of the world Olguer Junyent came out in 1994.181 The following year a very well documented work, with excellent illustrations, dealt with certain aspects of the world-famous mural painter Josep Maria Sert.182

The Caixa del Penedès launched a series of exhibitions on artists including the Llimona family (1991) and Lambert Escaler (1992), which brought to light some noteworthy documentation, though they were staged with very limited means and the catalogues were too brief.

Catalan public museums made several contributions to knowledge about the pictorial art of the Modernist period: charcoal portraits by Ramon Casas were almost exhaustively compiled and studied in 1995 by the MNAC,183 which also staged the first showing of selected works by Nicolau Raurich (1996),184 and organized an exhibition on Rusiñol (1997),185 the Museu Picasso, which was continually producing research-based exhibitions on the great artist, dedicated one to his early landscapes, another to his relationship with Els 4 Gats, and yet another to his formative years.186

Outside the field of painting, a broad selection of the large collection of drawings assembled by the Modernist art critic and writer Raimon Casellas was shown by the MNAC in 1992 in both Barcelona and Madrid. For the purposes of the exhibition, much of the collection, which is

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Figure 7. *Petó de mare* (A mother’s kiss, 1898), marble sculpture by Eusebi Arnau (Barcelona, Fundació “la Caixa”).
housed at the MNAC itself, was studied. The same museum held an exhibition about the cabinet maker Gaspar Homar (1998), under the curatorship of Maria Àngels Fontdevila. Two savings banks staged exhibitions of bookplates: *Ex-libris modernistes* (1996), organized by the Fundació “La Caixa” in Palma de Mallorca and curated by Joan Lluís de Yebra, and *Cent anys d’ex-libris del Modernisme a l’actualitat*, organized by the Caixa de Sabadell under the curatorship of Francesc Orenes (1997).

The theme of graphic illustration was studied in some depth in Valencia while Alacant was the scene of a large interdisciplinary exhibition that included art from the Modernist period. The organizer of the latter event, the Caja de Ahorros del Mediterráneo, has undoubtedly been the prime instigator of the diffusion of Modernism in Valencia, working primarily through the Casa-Museu Modernista de Novelda: it has restored the unusual building itself, built up a good specialized library there, and nurtured understanding of Modernism in the Valencian Country by holding courses and exhibitions there periodically. The most extensive overview of Valencian Modernism was offered by an exhibition staged at the Centre Cultural La Beneficència in Valencia in 1997.

In 1993 the Fundació “la Caixa” inaugurated its new headquarters in Majorca in the former Gran Hotel, an outstanding Modernist building designed by Domènech i Montaner which houses a permanent exhibition of works by Anglada-Camarasa owned by the foundation itself. A Catalan collection of posters, many of which are from the Masriera family’s long tradition, was also published, situating him against the backcloth of the Masriera family’s long tradition.

In 1995 the publication of a unique document – the diary of Joaquim Renart – got underway. Though Renart began writing his voluminous *Diari* in 1918, after the Modernist period was over, it offers the unparalleled testimony of an artist who lived Modernism to the full and afterwards maintained such prestige and moral authority that he earned unanimous respect. His diary was thousands of pages long and six volumes of extraordinary first-hand testimony have appeared to date.

The Institut d’Estudis Catalans funded and published lists of the catalogues of exhibitions held in Catalonia, including those that took place during the Modernist period. These catalogues constitute a practical and hitherto unexpected tool for researchers.

By 2000 Modernism was viewed as a fully consolidated artistic – and cultural – movement and could even be said to enjoy a certain degree of veritable popularity. Proof of this was the project launched by a publishing house within the orbit of Enciclopèdia Catalana, Edicions L’Isard, which realized that the topic was sufficiently attractive to the man in the street for an extensive, lavishly illustrated work covering all its different dimensions to be successfully launched. The outcome was the five-volume *El Modernisme*, edited by Francesc Fontbona. Most of the eighty or so authors who took part were the leading specialists in the aspects dealt with – many have already been mentioned in this article – and they summarized their own previous studies, often enriching them with new data. Though the spotlight was on art and architecture, other aspects of Modernism (literature, music, drama and the cinema) were also covered. Considerable attention was even paid to other coetaneous forms of ‘modernism’, such as religious modernism. These in fact had little to do with the great cultural movement but, since the name and time frame were the same, they had to be dealt with for purposes of clarification and to avoid terminological confusion.

“Puig i Cadafalch Year” was celebrated in 2001 and a well illustrated biography of the architect appeared as well as other more specialized monographs. The numerous events and publications that marked “Gaudí Year” in 2002 gave an additional boost to his already vast popularity. One book, which contained a respectable synthesis but added little that was new, actually became an international best-seller. Later the bibliography on Gaudi was further expanded as international publishing houses brought out large-format books aimed at the general public. Special studies were also devoted to Domènech i Montaner and Josep Puig i Cadafalch. The proclamation of 2006 as “Rusiñol Year” had positive effects on the diffusion of that artist’s works. Jeroni Granell, a architect of wide-ranging talents and one of the most significant Catalan Modernist stained-glass artists, is being studied in depth by Núria Gil Farré. The very meticulous researcher Raquel Lacuesta has recently joined the ranks of specialists in Rafael Masó and acted as curator of an exhibition about him held in 2006.

A quarter of a century after the publication of his previ-
ous study of Modernist architecture in the Balearic Islands, Miquel Seguí produced an extended and updated version. Works of some note were also published on specific regions, including that of Girona, and on cities such as La Garriga, Terrassa, Esplugues de Llobregat and Tortosa.

New exhibitions on Modernist artists and other aspects of the movement have been staged recently by public museums. The MNAC organized exhibitions on Nonell (2000), Casas (2001) and Pidelaserra (2002), in cooperation with the Fundación Cultural MAPFRE Vida from Madrid. The latter foundation mounted exhibitions of its own on Anglada-Camarasa (2002) and Mir (2004). All the corresponding catalogues contain original contributions. Other exhibitions staged by the MNAC include Jujol dissenyador (2002) – which attracted much attention from the media – and Les arts industrials als cartells modernistes (2002). The Museu Diocesà in Barcelona organized an exhibition on Els 4 Gats, which brought to light certain previously unknown materials.

The major exhibition Paris-Barcelone 1888-1937, organized by the Museu Picasso in conjunction with the French Réunion des Musées Nationaux, was an outstanding international contribution. This encounter between French and Catalan art from Modernism to the Avant-garde went on show at the Grand Palais in Paris in 2002 and gave rise to a large catalogue containing articles by the foremost specialists. Another event staged in Paris was a conference at which four national schools of architecture from the Modernist period – one of them being the Catalan school – were discussed. The acts were published. In the United States Catalan Modernism occupied a prominent position in an exhibition held in New Mexico and was the prime focus of attention at another exhibition prepared well in advance by the Museum of Cleveland. This same exhibition – slightly whittled down – produced a greater impact, however, at its later showing at the Metropolitan Museum in New York. In Italy two different exhibitions of Catalan paintings, which included Modernist works, took place in Brescia and Cremona (in 2002 and 2003), and in 2007 the exhibition Barcelona 1900 was staged to great acclaim in Amsterdam.

A noteworthy exhibition on Catalan Modernism took place in Madrid, with Javier Tusell as the curator (2000), and helped to make the movement better known in Spain. A similar exhibition was staged in Vitoria-Gasteiz in 2002. An exhibition in Granada analysed Rusiñol’s relationship with that city. A selection of Meifrèn’s works – documented by Elvira Sánchez Gimeno and more thorough than earlier approaches to the same painter – went on show in Valencia and Ibercaja offered a very acceptable selection of Nonell’s works in Saragossa.

The Museu d’Olot undertook an extensive exhibition on the sculptor Miquel Blay, the Museu de Terrassa organ-
ized a showing of Modernist applied arts;\(^{235}\) the IVAM in Valencia devoted an exhibition to the sculptor Pau Gargallo;\(^{236}\) the city of Ripollet staged another on the painter Andreu Solà i Vidal, one of Casas’ companions in Paris;\(^{237}\) and yet another exhibition, held by the Caixa de Tarragona under the patronage of the Museu d’Art Modern de Tarragona, was devoted to the unusual sculptor Carles Manf\(^{238}\) on the basis of a recent monograph about him.\(^{239}\) The Fundació “la Caixa” presented an exhibition on Anglada-Camarasa and his entourage.\(^{240}\) Un segle de paisatgisme a les Illes Balears was the title of an exhibition that went on show at Es Baluard in Palma (Majorca) in 2007 and included, not only Modernists from Majorca, but others from Catalonia who had stayed on the island.\(^{241}\)

More monographs continued to appear. Isabel Marín, for instance, conducted the first study of the Cercle Artístic de Barcelona, a body that was part and parcel of Modernism.\(^{242}\) Often however, the topics were more specialized: examples include the catalogue Carme Illa drew up of the largest known collection of bookplates in Catalonia,\(^{243}\) a study of Anglada-Camarasa and his close relationship to Argentina,\(^{244}\) the catalogue raisonné of the same painter’s drawings,\(^{245}\) a volume by Jordi A. Carbonell on Joaquim Vancells,\(^{246}\) or Isabel Marín’s concise study of Eusebi Arnau,\(^{247}\) which was a summary of her doctoral thesis. Marín also published a book on Arnau as a medal-list.\(^{248}\) Input from other scholars who joined in the research into Anglada-Camarasa brought new perspectives.\(^{249}\) The first monographs were written about such highly characteristic Art Nouveau artists as Gaspar Camps and Lambert Escaler.\(^{250}\) A new monograph on Rusiñol by P. Laplana warrants special mention, since it included a – long overdue – illustrated and enlarged catalogue raisonné of his works.\(^{251}\) Just before this, Vinyet Panyella had published a fat volume on Rusiñol which was more in the style of an essay,\(^{252}\) while a book based on research about the same versatile artist had come out in Poland.\(^{253}\) Subsidiary aspects of Modernism, such as Wagner’s influence on the visual arts, were also studied during this phase.\(^{254}\)

Thus since the mid-20th century Modernism has become a topic of the utmost interest. This is undoubtedly due to widespread awareness that Modernism was the first great Catalan style of modern times, and indeed virtually the first style since the 15th century that rescued Catalan culture from provincialism, enabled it to take off, and placed it – to an increasing extent – in the international orbit.

**Notes and References**

[1] The term Modernism and all its derivatives, including post-Modernism, are used throughout this article in the sense defined in the following paragraph by the author.


[6] Josep Pla. Rusiñol y su tiempo. Barna, Barcelona 1942. Pla also pays attention to other figures from the Modernist period such as Mir in El pintor Joaquín Mir. Destino, Barcelona 1944, though his vision, of course, is more that of a portrait artist than that of a scholar.


[41] Joan Fuster (1902-1992) was a Valencian writer who actively defended the cultural and linguistic unity of the Catalan-speaking lands.


[56] Josep Palau i Fabré. Picasso vivent (1881-1907). Polígrafa, Barcelona 1980. Another two information-packed volumes were yet to appear, covering the life and work of Picasso, who was now an international figure, up till 1926.

[57] Eduard Valenti Fiol. El primer modernismo literario catalán y sus fundamentos ideológicos. Ediciones Ariel, Esplugues de Llobregat 1973. Though its repercussions on the field of art were slighter, we must also refer to another book – Joan Lluís Marfany. Aspectes del Modernisme. Curial Barcelona 1975 – which made a major contribution to the assessment of the Modernist movement in general.


[61] La Franja is the name given to the Catalan-speaking part of Aragon.


[71] Art i modernitat als països catalans. Katalanische...


[78] Noucentisme was the dominant current in Catalan art immediately after the Modernist period, from approximately 1911 onwards.


[93] Joan BASSEGOUDA I NONELL. Lluís Domènech i Montaner. Gent Nostra, Edicions de Nou Art Thor, Barcelona 1980; and Consol BANCHELLS. Sant Pau. Hospital Modernista. Edicions de Nou Art Thor, Barcelona 1988. The author of the latter study was to play an important role, notably in the diffusion of Modernist decorative arts, through other publications and initiatives.


[95] Catalogue of the exhibition Lluís Domènech i Montaner i el director d’orquestra. Fundació Caixa de Barcelona, Barcelona 1989-90, written by Lluís Domènech i GIBRALTIN, Lourdes FIGUERAS i BURRULL, Roser DOMENECH i AMADÓ.


[100] These included Manuel García-Martín. La casa Lleó Morera. Catalana de Gas, Barcelona 1988, in addition to the studies mentioned in previous notes.


[129] Albert Garcia Espuche. El Quadrat d’Or. Centre de la Barcelona modernista. Olimpiada Cultural-Lunwerg, Barcelona 1990. In addition to this catalogue, an extremely useful guide to a selection of buildings was published under the title El Quadrat d’Or. 150 cases al centre de la Barcelona modernista. Guía. Olimpiada Cultural – Ajuntament de Barcelona 1990. The authors, Garcia Espuche himself, Santi Barjau and Teresa Navas, drew on an exhaustive study by Lluís Aragó. The Olimpiada Cultural S.A. – chaired by the mayor of Barcelona, with the participation of the Spanish Olympic Committee, the Generalitat, COOB92, and the Spanish Ministry of Culture – promoted an exhibition entitled L’artista al seu taller (1990), devoted to the magnificent portraits of artists by the Modernist photographer Francesc Serra i Dimas.


[140] Col·legi d’Arquitectes de Catalunya / Lunwerg Editores, Girona-Barcelona 1996.


[143] Joan Bassegoda Nonell. Gent Nostra. Jujol, Labor, Barcelona 1990. An exhibition on Jujol was held in Paris that same year: Josep Maria Jujol ar- chitecte. 1879-1949, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris 1990. Nor was this the only international initiative devoted to Jujol.


[146] Rosa Alcoy. El cementiri de Lloret de Mar. Inda-
[184] Nicolau Raurich 1871-1945. Visions mediterrànies. Editorial Ausa, Barcelona-Sabadell 1996. The curator of this exhibition was Teresa Moreno, who had written her doctoral thesis on Raurich.

In exhibitions such as *Pintors i escultors amics de Gaudí*. The catalogue, which bears the same title, was published by Fundació Francisco Godia. Barcelona 2002.


[206] In exhibitions such as *Pintors i escultors amics de Gaudí*. The catalogue, which bears the same title, was published by Fundació Francisco Godia. Barcelona 2002.


[256] Teresa-M. Sala. La Casa Busquets. Una història del moble i la decoració del modernisme al déco a Barcelona. Memoria Artium, Barcelona-Girona-Lleida 2006. This was the fruit of a doctoral thesis, which had been condensed by the author herself into a brief monograph published in 1989.


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