

» Press kit

21 May 2026

TEMPORARY EXHIBITION

'Seny i rauxa. An account of Catalan Architecture

From 22 May to 6 September 2026. Disseny Hub Barcelona



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INTRODUCTION:

Seny i rauxa. An account of Catalan Architecture, an exhibition showcasing **the best of Catalan architecture from the past 150 years**, will be on at the Disseny Hub Barcelona (DHub) from **22 May to 6 September 2026**. The exhibition, curated and designed by architects Carme Ribas, Victòria Garriga and Joan Roig, has retrieved hundreds of pieces from the storehouses and archives where they are often stowed out of sight and **uses them to invite visitors to discover a continuous, uninterrupted arc** from the founding of the Barcelona Architecture School in 1875 until today, beyond styles or historical periods.

At a time when architecture is viewed as a globalised phenomenon, the show questions whether there are any telltale traits of Berenguer de Montagut or Pere Blai, master builders of Santa Maria del Mar and the new façade of the Palau de la Generalitat, respectively, that resonate in more recent projects by Domènech i Montaner, MBM or Harquitectes.

In searching for the **characteristics that may constitute the fundamental traits of the Catalan character and how they have influenced the definition of the country's architecture**, beyond physical and economic considerations, Ribas, Garriga and Roig draw from thinkers that have examined this question in the past, such as **Jaume Vicens Vives, Gabriel Ferrater Mora** and, in the realm of architecture, **Alexandre Cirici Pellicer**. Of all the concepts outlined by these thinkers, the exhibition focuses on the **dichotomy of *seny* and *rauxa*** (common sense and impulsiveness), two sides of the same essence, as the starting point for a more in-depth exploration of the hallmarks of recent architecture and the connections—with contrasts and similarities—between various contributions from the past century and a half.

Groupings, symmetries and antagonisms

The show avoids chronological and stylistic interpretations and **presents the pieces by groupings, symmetries and antagonisms**—always with the dichotomy of *seny* and *rauxa* in the background—as a system for exploring the hallmarks of Catalan architecture. It thus traces connections that lead to a revision of the established canon.

A strictly size-based system was used to organise the pieces. It starts with the smallest and works its way to the large projects in the following order: **dwelling, houses, tenement houses, buildings, streets, the old city, the new city and the region**. These areas are closely intertwined and therefore not isolated from one another; rather, they often echo one another.

Rather than filling the exhibition with data and explanations, this layout seeks to **encourage visitors themselves to find the relationships between the projects**, looking beyond periods or stylistic considerations **to discover the features that can be defined as the hallmarks** of Catalan architecture.

In short, the goal is to spark reflections on the question asked at the beginning: Can we say that there is a continuous, uninterrupted, consistent arc in Catalan architecture?



Left: Restaurant Il Giardinetto, F. Correa and A. Milà. Perspective in colour (sketch). Barcelona, c. 1973.

Correa i Milà, Arquitectes collection at the COAC Historical Archives

Right: Guimaguas Barcelona. Test + Guillermo Santomà. In collaboration with: Jesús Carmona, Katia Llabata, Lluís Tantiña, Adriana Cella and Carles Pinyol. Developer: Guimaguas. Barcelona, 2003. Photograph: Gregori Civera

Architectural materials and artworks

With **more than five hundred pieces**, the exhibition brings together architectural materials such as sketches, blueprints, scale models and photographs. The show also **seeks to showcase women architects** from this past century and a half, often hidden behind men's names, to give them the credit they have today.

It also includes **artworks and design pieces**, offering an innovative perspective that connects the artistic legacy with the legacy of architecture, expressive movements and social dynamics. The artists that appear in the exhibition include **Ramon Casas, Pere Torné i Esquius, Joaquim Vayreda, Joaquim Sunyer, Joan Miró, Pablo Picasso, Antoni Muntadas** and **Fina Miralles**.

The exhibition layout consists of a continuous sequence of **documents running along the walls** through all the areas. In the centre, scale models, furniture, lights, **unique pieces and several *objets d'art*** are placed on tables and pedestals to engage in dialogue with the wall displays. To complete the narrative, the show also includes a **selection of publications**—books and magazines—which have supported the reflection on this period of Catalan architecture, in addition to a table by the entrance with **nineteen original sketches**.

The museum design seeks to **showcase the architectural materials**. A half-open curtain gives way to a red room full of pieces presented in frames with the aim of elevating the status of sketches and blueprints.



Left: Batlló chair. Antoni Gaudí i Cornet. Barcelona, 1904. Museu del Disseny-DHub. MADB 136986. Photograph: Estudio Rafael Vargas

Right: GATCPAC (Group of Catalan Architects and Technicians for the Progress of Contemporary Architecture) chair. Barcelona, 1936. Donated by Mobles 114. Museu del Disseny-DHub. MADB 135387. Photograph: Estudio Rafael Vargas

International exposure

Seny i rauxa. An account of Catalan Architecture, part of the **Barcelona 2026 World Capital of Architecture** programme, can be seen in DHub's Space A in a room measuring 900 square metres next to where part of the International Union of Architects' (UIA) **World Congress of Architects** will be held from 28 June to 2 July, making this the ideal time and place to project Catalan architecture to the rest of the world.

The exhibition is a DHub production supported by the **Ministry of Culture** through **Barcelona Cultural and Scientific Capital** and sponsored by **Technal, LAMP, GEZE** and **Iris Ceramica Group**. It includes pieces from the **Architects' Association of Catalonia (COAC)**, the **Jujol Archive**, the **Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia**, the **Catalan National Art Museum (MNAC)**, **MACBA**, the **Sagrada Família**, the **Miró Foundation**, **Barcelona School of Architecture – Gaudí Chair**, the **Vallès School of Architecture – Model Workshop** and the **Museu del Disseny - DHub**.

AREAS

1- ROOMS

Rooms are, in essence, the spaces where our private lives play out, though sometimes they also become spaces where we project a certain image of ourselves to the outside world.

This section explores bedrooms, the most personal rooms in a home, and living rooms, which express the relationship between our inner worlds and the outside world. It also looks at transitional spaces and the symbolic role of fireplaces.

Key themes include rural traditions and the new bourgeoisie's desire to present themselves to others.

Beds themselves range from clearly functional designs to lavish, even dreamlike styles.

Although most rooms had horizontal layouts, vertical space was added to create more room for self-expression.

The use of local materials, such as ceramics, is found in both austere and opulent styles. Craftsmanship and small-scale industry also feature prominently, as in the case of ironwork and woodwork.



Left:

Photograph of Antoni Gaudí's bedroom.

Ferran. Barcelona, c. 1926.

© Ferran, image collection, COAC Historical Archive

Right:

Photograph of the interior of Casa Correa by architects F. Correa and A. Milà.

O. Maspons. Cadaqués, 1963.

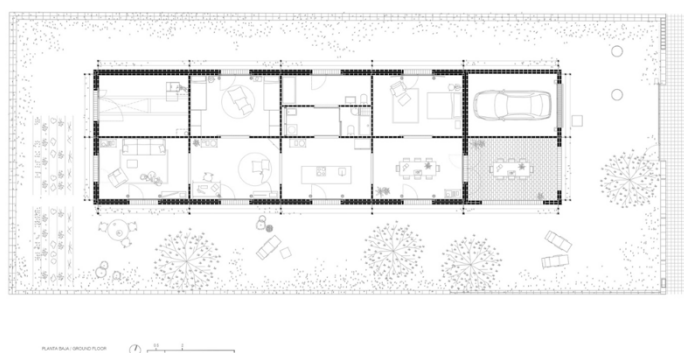
© O. Maspons photograph collection, COAC Historical Archives

2- HOUSES

The personality of each house reflects the influence of its client or resident, working in harmony with the architect, both in the way private life is organised and how they present themselves outwardly. The relationship with the land—whether imposing upon it or integrating with it—is a recurring theme across the works presented. Beyond the land itself, each project also reveals a strong sense of place, evident in both seaside and mountain houses.

Geometric awareness is another constant, both in the interior layout and in the delimitation of each plot of land, sometimes expressed through axonometric projections.

Avoiding a cookie-cutter approach, the houses on display reinterpret, reshape and evolve traditional homes, from inward-looking rural farmhouses to seaside dwellings. Their external appearance incorporates styles and symbols that sometimes play with tradition through imaginary ties, while also aligning with foreign models.



Left:
Blueprint of Casa Ugalde, José Antonio Coderch.
Caldetes, 1951.
Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía

Right:
Blueprint of Casa 219.
H Arquitectes: David Lorente Ibáñez, Josep Ricart Ulldemolins, Xavier Ros Majó and Roger Tudó Galí

3- TENEMENT HOUSES

Tenement houses, or collective dwellings, bring us to the topic of urban environments, as these buildings are the foundation of our towns, villages and cities.

Location is crucial: from houses sharing party walls and corner houses to larger housing blocks and more.

The arrangement of rooms are grouped is another essential aspect of these projects, ranging from rectangular grids to more organic layouts. Homes where each room is adapted to its intended use coexist alongside others that take a more neutral, flexible approach.

Orientation is also typically considered. Efforts to capture sunlight and provide good views lead to interesting geometric manoeuvres.

As in other areas, there are similarities in the use of local materials and in the design of the façades. Shutters and balconies are recurring features, serving both functional and aesthetic purposes.

The way each building meets the ground, that is, its direct contact with public spaces, shapes the layout of each street.



Left:
Casa Jenara López.
Josep Lluís Sert, 1930-1931.
Photograph: Antonio Navarro Wijkmark.
Disseny Hub Barcelona

Right:
Can Bruixa tenement
Mora, Piñón and Viaplana.
Photograph: Antonio Navarro Wijkmark.
Disseny Hub Barcelona

4- BUILDINGS

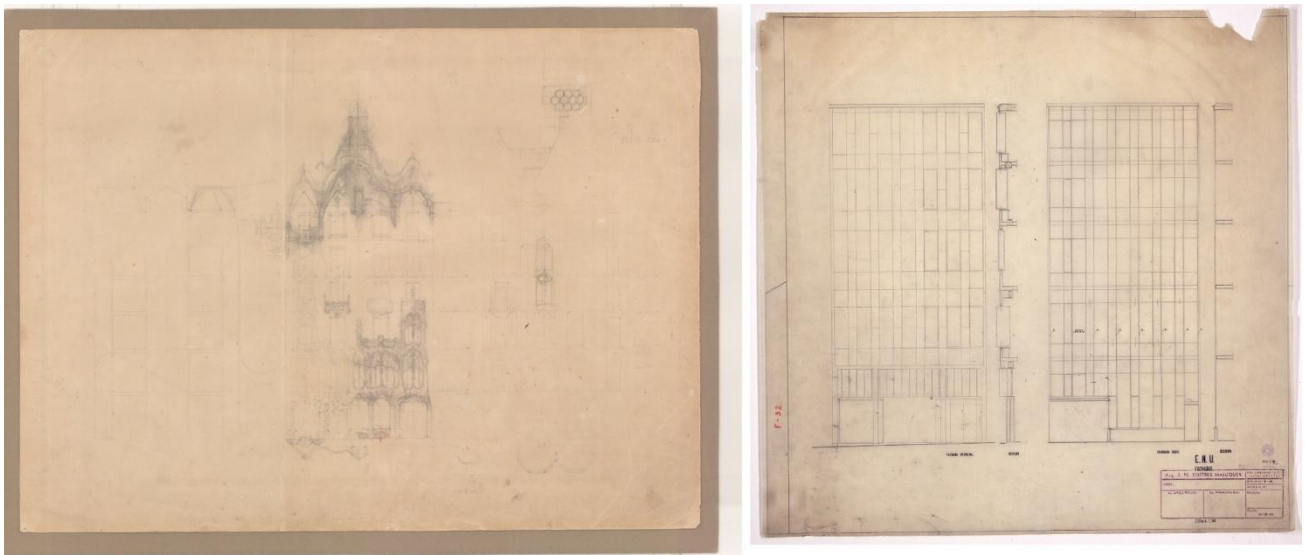
This area explores non-residential buildings, including industrial buildings, iconic buildings, facilities (a concept that emerged during this period) and religious buildings.

While most are found in urban areas, rural and remote examples are also included.

Given their significance for the community, these buildings often aim to stand out—through their height, shape, façade design or integration with public space, sometimes even becoming a part of that space.

The pairings and groupings shown here are based not on type but on use, shape, material or meaning. We find sets of ‘towers’ and agricultural or industrial buildings, as well as façades that mirror each other.

This area shows how inherited architecture—pre-existing buildings—has been adapted and given a second life.



Left:

Elevation of Casa Batlló

Antoni Gaudí.

ETSAB- Gaudí Chair Archives. Barcelona Technical School of Architecture. Polytechnic University of Catalonia (UPC)

Right:

Building for the *Noticiero Universal*

J.M. Sostres.

Elevations of the front and back façades.

Barcelona, 1964.

© J. M. Sostres. Sostres Maluquer collection, COAC Historical Archives

5- STREETS

Streets—and, by extension, squares—are the quintessential public spaces. They structure and sustain community life and social connections.

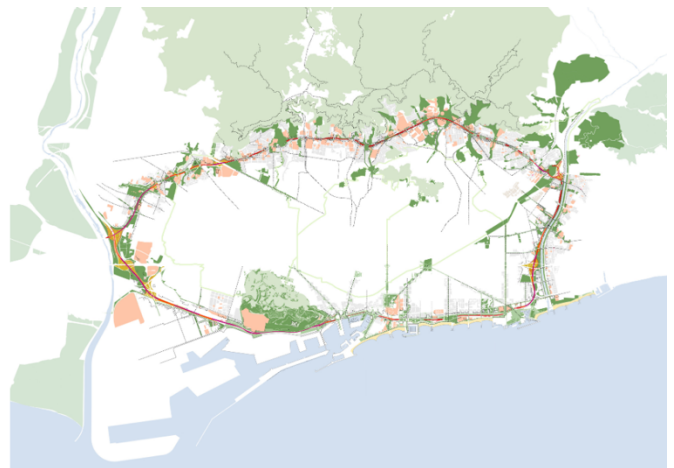
They are also the arteries providing all the infrastructure needed to live in buildings and get around any neighbourhood.

Over these 150 years, despite the major changes in our surrounding environment, including lifestyle changes and mobility considerations, streets and public spaces in Catalonia continue to play an essential role in our cities and are viewed as design objects themselves.

Some of the projects presented emphasise function—providing services—while others emphasise the social nature of these spaces. These concepts have become intertwined, giving rise to groupings based on analogy.



Left:
Map of Barcelona's green hubs
Photograph: Barcelona City Council



Right:
Barcelona ring roads
Photograph: Barcelona Regional

6- CITIES OF THE PAST

The cities we've inherited have undergone numerous reinterpretations throughout history. While some projects aimed to refound historical cities, others pursued redevelopment or carefully targeted interventions in certain spaces.

Sometimes a series of projects is carried out within a single area, as we see along Barcelona's seafront and in its old city (Ciutat Vella).

Although some continuity is evident, there is also a striking contrast between the theoretical ambition of certain projects and the restraint and realism of others.

The role of public spaces and the conceptualisation of new facilities helped to drive transformation and led to such projects being known as 'urban projects' rather than 'urban planning projects', placing the emphasis on the architectural perspective.

New buildings were often designed with direct connections to outdoor public spaces.





Top to bottom:

GATCPAC. Macià Plan

Diorama.

Barcelona, 1934.

GATCPAC collection, COAC Historical Archives

Volumetric layout of the 'Del Liceu al Seminari' project

Layout.

Studio PER: L. Clotet, O. Tusquets.

Studio PER, Clotet i Tusquets, Arquitectes collection, COAC Historical Archives

Mercat de Santa Caterina

Sky photomontage.

Enric Miralles and Benedetta Tagliabue.

Image courtesy of Miralles Tagliabue EMBT Architects

7- NEW CITIES

New neighbourhoods, residential areas and buildings, as well as mathematical approaches, were at the heart of urban expansion and construction from scratch. Unlike in 'Cities of the Past', the focus here was not on reworking existing urban areas, but on building afresh on previously undeveloped land or farmland.

Geometry played a pivotal role in defining layouts, juxtapositions and overlapping spaces, as well as the very logic of the new buildings.

Some drew from tradition, others were more utopian and still others combined both approaches in a single space.

The interactions and contrasts between them are apparent in these projects and those seen in other areas.



Barcelona. Eixample and interior reform of Barcelona

Facsimile of the original map of Barcelona's Eixample by Ildefons Cerdà Sunyé, held at the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, Madrid.

Ildefons Cerdà Sunyé. (2009).

AHCB map collection. Reg. 22757



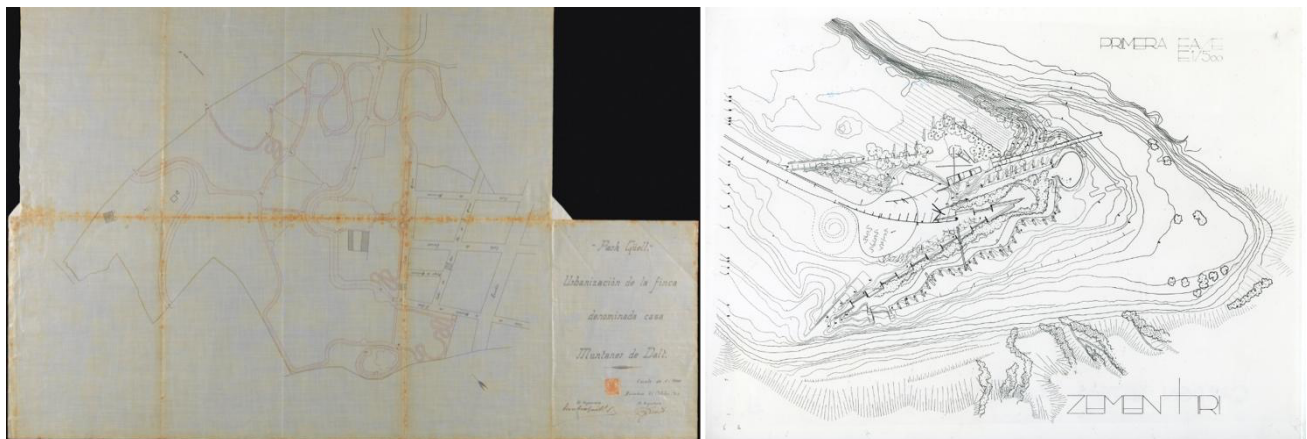
Map of the expansion ('*eixample*') project for the city of Barcelona
Antoni Rovira Trias. (1859).
AHCB map collection. Reg. 02990

8- THE LAND

Topographic work is a recurring element in all the examples featured here. Beyond a renewed appreciation for traditional terraced landscapes, there was interest in moving soil (through excavation and mounding) as a kind of ancestral, artistic way of reshaping the land.

This topographic reworking shapes routes that became part of the project. The 'passeig', a kind of avenue that translates as 'boulevard', became an element of urban life through various tools. Agricultural traditions feature prominently. We see this in the layout of vegetation, in rainwater and run-off treatment systems and in the embankments with reinterpretations of traditional stone walls. Sometimes the approach was more restrained, while other times it was highly expressive.

The presence of rural elements both contrasts with and complements the emerging image of an affluent bourgeoisie looking beyond the country's borders. At the same time, there are strong resonances with the world of art, as seen in the temporary and permanent projects extremely reminiscent of the concept known as 'land art'.



Left:

'Muntanya pelada' (Bare mountain), plot of land that became Park Güell
Layout.

Antoni Gaudí i Cornet.

Contemporary Municipal Archives of Barcelona.

AQ12|Fo-2882/1904

Right:

Map of the cemetery of Igualada

Enric Miralles and Carme Pinós.

Image courtesy of Miralles Tagliabue EMBT Architects

THE CURATORS:CARME RIBAS

An architect with a degree from the Barcelona Technical School of Architecture and a diploma in Landscape Architecture,

Carme Ribas started working at Barcelona City Council as a member of the Urban Projects Service, where she was involved in several projects to transform public spaces between 1980 and 1987.

She has been a professor of Architectural Projects at the Barcelona Technical School of Architecture since 1986, where she has also taught classes in the master's degree programme in Landscape Architecture.

She shared a professional studio with Pere Joan Ravetllat between 1985 and 2017. Together they designed a variety of projects and works, including housing, urban transformations, facilities and public spaces, including the expansion and renovation of Barcelona's Sant Antoni Market. Her work has been published in various local and international magazines.

Between 2017 and 2025, she directed the Besòs Consortium, a local organisation made up of the Badalona, Barcelona, Montcada i Reixac, Sant Adrià de Besòs and Santa Coloma de Gramenet City Councils, which seeks consistency in public policy across these cities. As part of the Consortium, she worked on the 'Manifesta 15' biennial, adapting the Turbines Building at Tres Xemeneies in Sant Adrià de Besòs to serve as the venue for this event.

As a co-curator of the exhibition 'The New Realists' at Barcelona's DHub, she received the 'City of Barcelona Award 2023' along with her fellow curators Victòria Garriga and Joan Roig.

VICTÒRIA GARRIGA

Architect, urban planner and museologist. Founding partner of AV62arquitectos in 1996. She has twenty years of experience in the development of interior design, architecture and urban planning projects, with a particular interest in the design and conceptualisation of exhibitions and cultural promotion projects.

An important part of her activity and interests in recent years has focused on projects of urban, cultural and social regeneration in developing countries or in post-conflict contexts.

She has been a visiting professor and lecturer at several schools of architecture and design in Spain and abroad, including in Iraq, the United States, Cuba and Mozambique.

She has worked for museums and cultural institutions such as the Museo Reina Sofía, the Museu Picasso Barcelona, the Museo Picasso Málaga, the CCCB, the Museum of History of Barcelona, the

Bilbao Fine Arts Museum, Casa Asia, Casa Árabe, the Fundació Tàpies, the Fundació Miró, the Cristóbal Balenciaga Museum and the “la Caixa” Foundation.

She is a board member of the FAC (Contemporary Architecture Foundation of Córdoba).

JOAN ROIG

Joan Roig earned his degree in architecture from the Barcelona Technical School of Architecture, ETSAB, in 1981. That same year, he and Enric Batlle Durany joined forces to become Batlleiroig.

Since then, they have undertaken many projects in the fields of construction, landscaping and planning, always from the perspective of the landscape and nature, with a commitment to the environment and involvement in the search for solutions to address our planet’s climate emergency. He has taught Architectural Projects classes at the Barcelona Technical School of Architecture since 1984, as well as in the Landscape Architecture master’s degree programme at the Polytechnic University of Catalonia (UPC) and the Barcelona School of Agriculture (ESAB).

Roig has been a guest professor at many international universities and the director of the BIArch (Barcelona Institute of Architecture), and has served on the panels of both local and international competitions—European, Biennial de Arquitectura Española, European Biennial of Landscape Architecture. In a consulting role, he has served as the Culture representative for the Barcelona district of the Official Architects’ Association of Catalonia, a consultant for the ‘Mixta’ collection published by Gustavo Gili and a member of the Barcelona City Council Architecture Committee.

His book *Nuevos puentes* was published by GG, and his many opinion articles can be found in trade magazines, including *El Croquis*, *Arquitectura Viva*, *Topos*, *Cuadernos* and *Domus*.

In the field of public engagement, he has curated several architecture and design exhibitions, including the following:

- ‘Batlle i Roig, 30 anys, 15+15’, Official Architects’ Association of Barcelona—Picasso Space (2011). Curated with Enric Batlle.
- ‘Das Gesetz der Landschaft’. Academy of Arts, Berlin (2009). Curated with Enric Batlle.
- ‘Farming the Life’. 15th Architecture Biennial – La Biennale di Venecia – Central Pavilion (2016). Curated with Joan Batlle.
- ‘Miralles. A quarts de quatre’, History Museum – Saló del Tinell, Barcelona (May to September 2020). Curated with Benedetta Tagliabue, spearheaded by the Enric Miralles Foundation with the support of Barcelona City Council and the Government of Catalonia.
- ‘Miralles. Perpetuum Mobile’, DHub, Barcelona (May to August 2021). Curated with Benedetta Tagliabue, spearheaded by the Enric Miralles Foundation with the support of Barcelona City Council and the Government of Catalonia.
- ‘Els nous realistes’, DHub, Barcelona (October 2023 to January 2024). Curated with Carme Ribas, this exhibition won the 2023 City of Barcelona Award.

BOOK:

The exhibition book, *Seny i rauxa*, seeks to serve as a tool for **understanding Catalan architecture** through the buildings, documents, images, sketches, blueprints and publications that helped to build the story. The publication suggests an interpretation **based on the dichotomy of seny and rauxa**, viewed as two sides of the same way of thinking and designing. Just as in the exhibition, **the works are showed in pairs or constellations** as a strategy that fosters comparisons and sheds light on aspects such as materials, geometry, shapes, relationship with the place and the symbolic significance of architecture.

It is not only a catalogue of works but **also a proposal for a cultural, critical interpretation** of what may define a Catalan architectural tradition and how it has transformed over time. It includes a selection of seminal pieces by key figures such as **Alexandre Cirici, Jaume Vicens Vives, Josep Ferrater Mora, José Antonio Coderch, Oriol Bohigas, Helio Piñón, Ignasi de Solà-Morales, Josep Quetglas, Xavier Monteys and Àngela Molina**, thus combining critical thinking and the exhibition's narrative.



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Price: €18

RELATED ACTIVITIES:

As part of the exhibition, the DHub has prepared a series of related activities that reflect on Catalan architecture, including the catalogue launch on 9 June, featuring the participation of the three exhibition curators and a conversation between Àngela Molina and Xavier Monteys. Furthermore, on 18 June there will be a panel discussion on the thesis of the exhibition, bringing together architects from different generations.

High-quality images for the media available at:

<https://eicub.net/share/service/publicSite?node=workspace://SpacesStore/3dfc0f2b-6fd3-4797-b635-8b966b8a4333>

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From 21 May to 6 September 2026. Disseny Hub Barcelona

Official opening: 21 May at 6.30 pm

Prices

General admission: €6

Concessions: €4

Combined general admission for temporary exhibitions: €8

Combined discounted admission for temporary exhibitions: €5

Combined general admission: €9.20 (includes admission to the permanent exhibitions and temporary exhibitions)

Combined discounted admission: €6.20 (includes admission to the permanent exhibitions and temporary exhibitions)