

>> Press release

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From 22 May to 6 September 2026. Disseny Hub Barcelona (DHub)

DHub showcases the essence of Catalan architecture from the past 150 years in *‘Seny i rauxa’*

- The exhibition invites visitors to discover a continuous, uninterrupted arc from the founding of the Architecture School in 1875 until today, beyond styles or historical periods, and to identify the hallmarks based on more than five hundred pieces organised by associations and contrasts.
- The selection of pieces includes both architectural materials—sketches, blueprints, scale models and photographs—and artworks and design pieces—paintings, sculptures and furniture—with an innovative perspective that connects the artistic and architectural legacy with expressive movements and social dynamics.
- ‘Seny i rauxa. An account of Catalan Architecture’, curated by Carme Ribas, Victòria Garriga and Joan Roig, will be on from 22 May to 6 September at Space A at the Disseny Hub Barcelona—next to the site where part of the World Congress of Architects will be held—as part of the programme of events for Barcelona 2026, World Capital of Architecture.



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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.



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

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?

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**.

Beyond the exhibition: catalogue and related activities

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.

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.

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