

*Modernisme*

TOWARD THE DESIGN CULTURE

— *Exhibition* —



**PRESS KIT**

## 0. INTRODUCTION

Barcelona Design Museum, within the scope of its historical collections, dedicates an exhibition reading the collection in terms of "culture of design".

The exhibition focuses on modernisme (catalan modernism) as the beginning of the culture of design, frames it in the European context and highlights the links and uniqueness of the Catalan case. The exhibition will provide a new interpretation of modernism based on the leading role played by the decorative and applied arts, crafts and industry.

Focused on the great modernist splendor of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it continues to show the link between modernism and noucentisme and its vindication of the artisan tradition. After Art Deco, it reaches the rationalism and modernity of Mediterranean roots of the GATCPAC, very critical of modernisme but sensitive to craftsmanship and gateway to modern design.

CONTENTS: Decorative Arts. Product design. Ceramics. Archives.

CURATORS: Mireia Freixa, Pilar Vélez

NUMBER OF PIECES: 372

SURFACE: 357 m<sup>2</sup>

SPACE: 2nd floor

PRICES: General ticket: 6 € Reduced ticket: 4 €

## 1. Modernisme: toward the design culture

Modernisme (Art Nouveau), synonymous with the will of modernity and cultural regeneration, is currently one of the main poles of international attraction in Barcelona and one of the most popular artistic styles. The Museu del Disseny (Design Museum) wants to offer a reading in the “keys to design,” that is, rethinking objects from the idea, production techniques and materials, to promotion, dissemination and function, with design understood as a process that spans from concept to use and even disuse.

The exhibition focuses on Modernisme as the beginning of design culture, frames it in the European context and highlights the links and singularity of the Catalan case. Because unlike other places in Europe, there was no contradiction between craft and industry in Catalonia and they knew how to marry tradition and modernity, looking to the future without renouncing historical legacy.

After the great modernist splendor at the beginning of the twentieth century and the subsequent rejection of Noucentisme (twentieth centuryism), which alternatively consolidated some cultural proposals of the modernists, the revival of Modernisme arrived in the middle of the twentieth century.

Meanwhile, the link between popular local tradition, vindicated by Noucentisme, and the outbreak of modern Mediterranean-based design in the hands of GATCPAC (Group of Catalan Architects and Technicians for the Progress of Contemporary Architecture) had taken place. Moreover, this new path branched into another one: the traditional craft techniques in the hands of visual artists found a new way of contemporary expression that continues today.

A second resurgence of Modernisme from the sixties to now, through both the history of art and heritage as well as from design, has led to the international diffusion and recognition of certain modernist objects as “design classics.”

All in all, Modernisme, a key movement in understanding contemporary Catalan culture, can be recognized as the inaugural moment of design culture, which began with the artistic industries, still far from the modern concept of design, yet already based on some aspects that play a key role in it.

## **2. THE EXHIBITION AREAS**

### **1. Modernisme, an Attitude and Long Road**

“Modernisme” is synonymous with the will to modernize a culture and to integrate into Europe. The Universal Exhibition of 1888, the first international event organized by the city of Barcelona, is considered the gateway to Europe and modernity, as well as the start date of the movement.

The desire for modernity, driven by intellectuals and artists, defended culture as a regenerative instrument to overcome a local and backward atmosphere, focusing on Europe. At the same time, overcoming it, it looked to the past, as the Renaixença (Renaissance) had done, a romantic cultural movement that had recovered native roots. Looking to the future without yielding to historical legacy constituted the singularity of Modernisme, the beginning of a long road toward modernity and at the same time the cradle of political Catalanism.

The year 1888 ushered in moments that historicisms characterize as the First Modernisme, until around 1900 when international Art Nouveau was added, which advocated art for art's sake and nature as a model, and became known as full Modernisme. The last stage of Modernisme, a prelude to Noucentisme and precursor of rationalism, was influenced by the Viennese Secession, in fact a language also Art Nouveau.

#### **1.1 First Modernisme, the final review of historicism**

The period between 1888 and 1900 can be called First Modernisme. Catalan architects, followed by industrialists, made a late-blooming recreation of historicist models, especially the neo-Gothic, clearly defined by Josep Puig i Cadafalch as a “national” architecture. It is a free and creative recreation of the medieval styles that would bring these architects to also accept elements typical of other historical languages and other cultures, always, however, with an archaic and historicist vibe.

A result of this context are the “talking” objects, signs of a characteristic will strongly represented by the new ruling classes. Artistic industries provided housing with all kinds of applied elements and decorative objects, a reflection of their clients' ideals.





Saint George Bench

**José Ribas e hijos**

Barcelona, c. 1895 304.5 x 185 x 69 cm Walnut carved and gilded. Fabric stamped and pegged, trimming. Paint stenciled on cloth, imitating tapestry (panels with painted scenes) with metal applications

MADB 138.918

## 1.2 “Art Nouveau” Modernisme

Around 1898, the first wave of the Art Nouveau style began to be seen in Barcelona, already visible at the 4th Exhibition of Fine Arts and Artistic Industries. In 1900, the spread of Art Nouveau at the Universal Exhibition of Paris entailed a change of direction. Architects and industrialists were influenced by this new style, inspired by nature and the organic, curving forms that were, mostly, practiced as one more kind of eclecticism, without forgetting the usual styles.

The most committed architects and industrialists made a more original and modern interpretation, but from tradition. The desire to marry this paradox, between the roots of tradition and Art Nouveau cosmopolitanism, is what gives Catalan architecture and Modernisme’s decorative arts such high levels of originality.



Armchair

**Joan Busquets i Jané**  
(1874-1949)

Barcelona, 1902

Carved ash wood, upholstery with warp fillet base and embroidered iris series with application of silk and trimming

MADB 138.664

## 1.3 The last attitude, a move toward Noucentisme

The look toward popular art and the interest in artistic crafts for a national art as a reflection of a culture of its own, beyond the recovery that Modernisme had already made, is the defining feature of the step toward Noucentisme in the fields of architecture and decorative arts.

The traditional Catalan home is the reference for architects and craftsmen, from Barcelona and from other places in Catalonia, such as Girona or Vic, who, well aware of Central European secessionist movements, introduce a formal renewal while creating their own modern style, yet without forgetting the roots. The *Escola Superior de Belles Oficis* (Graduate School of Fine Trades), founded in 1914, is a reflection of the social aims sponsored by the government of the *Mancomunitat* (Commonwealth).



Frame

**Rafael Masó i Valentí (1880-1935)**  
**Miquel Pratmans**, cabinetmaker  
**Nonito Cadenas i Caballer (1876-1930)**, locksmith and blacksmith

Girona, c. 1906

Chestnut wood and embossed wrought iron

MDB 1.326

## 2. Art Industries, the New Culture of Design: Project, Production, Diffusion and Consumption

Industrialization laid the foundations of design culture. In Catalonia, artistic industries thrived, dedicated to the production of consumer goods especially in the service of home decoration.

Artistic industries are synonymous with modernization: of technical modernization in innovative workshops with import machinery and new professional practices; and of aesthetic modernization, as they overcome historicisms and make nature the main model without forgetting the past. Likewise, a new way of disseminating the products is also opened. Commercial advertising is created thanks to new graphic reproduction procedures and the marketing and promotional exhibitions that are organized. A new model of workshop is also born, one for manufacturing and marketing, for both serial production and singular pieces. At the same time, the figure of the project designer or industrial designer, as they were called, appears as well as the new art director. In this context, a new commercial concept is also born, the *art object* as a selling point, because art ennobles the industry.



Publicity Panel  
*Brosa. Golds and Paint*

**Victor Brosa i Sangerman** (1852-1920)  
 Barcelona, 1896

Wood chiselled, gilded, polychromed and with pastillage

Originally from the Fine Arts and Art Industries Exhibition,  
 Barcelona 1896

MADB 1.889

## 2.1 Exhibitions, diffusion vehicle for art industries

After the Universal Exposition in 1888, the Barcelona City Council decided to organize a new type of exhibition that would blend fine arts and art industries. Despite certain conflicts and changes of pace, from 1892 to 1898, art and industry could show, separately or together, their progress. The city council reserved the right to acquire exhibited objects so that they could become part of the newly created municipal museums. In 1894, following the first Exhibition of Art Industries in 1892, a group of industrialists created the Center for Decorative Arts. Through their large exhibition held in 1895 as well as through their magazine, *El Arte Decorativo* (1894-1896), they pursued development and protectionist measures from the Spain government.



Exhibitor

*Third International Exhibition of Decorative Arts of Monza*

**Mateu Culell i Aznar** (1879-1943)  
**Esteva y Cia. Barcelona**, producer

Barcelona, 1911-1912  
 Oak wood with applications of gilded stucco and glass.  
 Lead pencil and gouache on paper for designs

MADB 69.685

## 2.2 The rise of reproductions: art available to everyone, from the museum to the living room

One of the reasons for the success of art reproductions was their value for social representation, since new reproductive techniques, such as electroplating — obtaining metallic objects through electrolysis — allowed the middle classes to possess decorative objects until then in the hands of only a few. Industrial advances allowed revolutionary changes in production, and art reached a wider audience.

In the meantime, throughout Europe, reproduction museums were born — in Barcelona in 1891 — created with the desire to educate the public, as much for the industrialists, as a stimulus and model, as for the public at large. The Barcelona City Council acquired for the museum some of the reproductions presented at the both the art industry and fine art exhibitions.

## 3. The Grand Protagonist of Modernisme: decorative and applied arts

Modernisme became a reality in the decorative and applied arts, understood in its dual sense, as an ornamental object or applied to architecture. In the same way as in other countries, like Great Britain, old craft techniques were recovered. But in Catalonia this process was not achieved by rejecting the manufactured objects in order to make visible local values imbued with a cosmopolitan spirit. For this reason, the subsidiary construction industries as well as all the ones specializing in ornamental products worked hard to renovate their designs, often with the participation of draftsmen and architects of prestige.

The art industries experienced spectacular development. One can speak of mixed manufacturing forms with industrial products completed by hand or artisanal products distributed by a modern commercial system. As a result, there is also a valuation of standardized products without detriment to the appreciation of the singular item.



Architectural ornament from the Palau de la Música

**Lluís Domènech i Montaner** (1850-1923) **Mario Maragliano i Navone**, producer

Barcelona, c. 1907  
Glazed ceramic, painted and cemented iron

MDB 1.327

### 3.1 The furniture arts

Furniture is the main protagonist of the art industries, contributing to a unitary vision for all the arts. On the other hand, its functional design brings it closer to the principles of Art Nouveau. Highlights include the

likes of Gaudí, marquetry, characteristic of Homar, and pyrography, distinctive of Busquets, but also used by Ribas, all longstanding traditional techniques in Catalonia.

Marquetry gave color to the furniture, lending different shades to the wood, while pyrography consisted of drawing decorative motifs with a reddish finish, almost electric, to later color them with watercolor and varnish. In addition, metals, marbles and glass were used to enrich it. At the same time, parquet floors endowed warmth to the interior.



#### Cabinet

**Joan Busquets i Jané** (1874-1949)

**Eusebi Busquets i Conill** (1872-1962), carving **Antoni Fons**, metal applications, forging **Aureli Tolosa i Alsina**, painter **Gaietà Vilaplana i Sarrado**, gilder **Serralleria Mañach**, safe **Cunill**, leather interior

Barcelona, 1898

Carved walnut, sycamore and cedar. Wrought iron, rounded brass and engraved steel with metal applications, tempera paints on parchment on the outside of the furniture piece and oil paints on wood on the inside

Originally from the Fine Arts and Art Industries Exhibition, Barcelona 1898

MADB 8.694

### 3.2 Wall and floor coverings

The facades of buildings and interiors are covered with colorful floral designs as if it were a skin. For floors, a popular covering was hydraulic tiles, a new technique resulting from the molding and pressing of hydraulic cement pieces with a final pigmented layer, made by numerous workshops in Catalonia. Walls, on the other hand, were covered with ceramic tiles, a material that also offered great hygienic advantages. Ceramic tile mosaic was also used — for which Homar's workshop was renowned, incorporating porcelain pieces from Serra — and its derivative, the *trencadís*, made with irregular pieces. Innovative derivative techniques were crystalline tiles, finished with a fine layer of glass that allowed ornamentation to be seen on a layer of cement, as well as those of cardboard with chromolithograph relief.



*Crystallic tile*

**Oliva Hermanos**, producer

Barcelona, c. 1905

Hydraulic cement and glass

Donation Bastardes Mestre Family, 2019

### 3.3 Metalwork

Wrought iron is an old Catalan artisan technique, thriving even during Modernisme. Santiago Rusiñol, too, promoted the collection of it with the pieces that he gathered together at the Cau Ferrat in Sitges. With industrialization, new resources were incorporated through the automation of basic processes, such as trimming, drilling, stamping and, above all, welding. At the same time, companies such as Ballarín S.A. — partners of Josep Puig i Cadafalch — introduced modern marketing systems.

However, despite wrought iron being the technique most identified with Modernisme, metallurgy also uses other materials such as cast iron, brass or artistic foundry in bronze, which were used to both manufacture objects as well as to adorn pieces of furniture.



*Title of master locksmith of Ricard Cabot i Fita*

**Josep Vilaseca i Casanovas** (1848-1910)

Barcelona, c. 1891

Wrought iron, printed paper and manuscript

Museu Frederic Marès. Barcelona MFMS-12.977

### 3.4 Stained glass art

Stained glass experienced extraordinary development as a result of its application to home interior, beyond temples where, it goes without saying, the trade was never lost. The technique of stained glass is essentially an artisanal process, but it takes advantage of new systems for glass manufacturing and the serial fabrication of pieces molded from an array, or the incorporation of imported glass. Stand outs were A. Rigalt y Cía, then Rigalt, Granell y Cía.

New techniques included trichromy or the superposition of three plates of primary colors, executed by the Amigó workshop in Gaudí's projects. Another great innovation was *cloisonné*, which Frederic Vidal Puig learned in London in 1899. Tiny spherical pieces of colored glass arranged in alveoli (small cavities) delimited by fine metal walls and all sealed between two glass plates, were applied on doors, furniture, etc.



Stained glass design  
**Rigalt, Granell y Cia.**

Barcelona, 1903-1923  
Pen and watercolor on paper

Donation Teresa Granell i Carbonell, 2015

MDB. Rigalt i Granell Collection

### 3.5 The art object

Modernisme raises decorative objects to the category of art objects. The art itself is a commercial promotion of the workshops, because it ennobles the industry and is legitimizing of the bourgeois status. The images that have come from modernist interiors show them full of ceramic, bronze or glass objects.

Present all around are ceramic art, artistic foundries or salon bronzes, jewelry and art jewels, of very high quality material and technique, and the work of craftsmen who retained and excelled in the old processes and brought new experimentation derived from industry. It is the beginning of a path that will lead us to recognize the splendor of decorative arts in Catalonia from Modernisme to Art Deco.





*Vase of the Orange Trees*

**Antoni Serra i Fiter** (1869-1932)  
**Fàbrica de Porcellanes i Gres d'Art. Barcelona**, producer  
Barcelona, 1907

Porcelain glazed, polychromated and gilded

Originally from the Fine Arts and Art Industries Exhibition,  
Barcelona 1907  
MCB1.576

### **3.6 Fabrics and embroideries**

If furniture is the main protagonist of modernista interiors, then silk or velvet upholstery, generally of Catalan manufacture and often embroidered or with applications which gave them color and comfort, played a decisive role. But the daily wear and tear and new tastes forced people to swap out their upholstery, and so many of the original ones have not been preserved.

Domestic dress was full of handmade lace — “legitimate”, they said — with the pillow or needle as woman’s work, until the arrival of widespread machine sewing in which Catalonia also excelled. Pillow needlepoint inspired a network of sewers, who worked at their homes, and distributors, who delivered the orders. Exhibitions, such as the one held in Arenys de Munt in 1906, were good showcases.





Standard Orfeó Barcelonès

**Bonaventura Llauradó**, design **Mariano Mas**, **Jaume Brugarolas**, chopping and drawing **Singers of the Orfeó Barcelonès**, embroidery **Julià Vinyoles**, **R. Oliva de Dolcet**, **Francisco Arenas**, **Narciso Vendrell**, trimmings, **Pere Serra/ La Providència i altres**, velvets and silks, **Costa y Ponces**, flagpole

Barcelona, 1904  
Embroidered fabric with trimming

Museu d'Història de Barcelona-MUHBA Donation of The Orfeó Barcelonès.

MHCB 42.005

### 3.7 Bookbinding techniques

The graphic arts achieved great advances in Catalonia since the mid-nineteenth century. Bookbinding benefited from industrial innovation and at the same time regained old techniques such as leather embossing, a specialty in which Josep Roca i Alemany, a professor at the Institute of Women's Culture, excelled. These advances entailed a great deal of diffusion in the domestic sphere, although they also had a presence in the exhibitions and survived during the nineteenth century.

Toward 1880 the first industrial binding was still based on the manual preparation of bronze matrices that were stamped in mechanical presses. The publishers replaced the covers of lamb leather with ones of cloth on cardboard in relief with golden adornments. By 1890, photoengraving was introduced, which accelerated industrial production and eventually led to the disappearance of bronze engravers.

### 3.8 Gaudí as designer

Gaudí's personality as a designer cannot be separated from his work as an architect. In fact, his first productions are objects, such as the work desk that he describes in his writings as a youth or the display case for the Comella glove company at the Universal Exhibition of Paris in 1878. He sought industrializable solutions (furniture, handles, etc.), anticipating serious production processes that would arrive in workshops, but without ever forgetting innovations in design and artisanal printing.

Faithful to the teachings of Viollet-le-Duc, he argued that the ornament was that which gave "character" or "style" to architecture, that is to say, that which endowed its symbolic content. In this way, he went beyond historical styles, pushing to the extreme the idea that form follows function, creating designs of "organic"

objects that contoured the shapes of the human body and have been seen as the precursor of ergonomics.



Door

**Antoni Gaudí i Cornet (1852-1926)**  
**Casas i Bardés Workshop**, producer

Barcelona, 1906  
Carved ash wood

Originally from Casa Batlló, Barcelona

Loan Gaudí Chair CGEX 0001

#### 4. The Bourgeois Home, Symbol of a Societal Ideal

The modernist bourgeois home is a symbol of the ideal of the new industrial society, full of contradictions. This new class acquires other habits present in the organization of everyday life. The dwellings differentiate between representation space, a reflection of social prestige, and that of family life, where the prevailing criterion is comfort, a characteristic of modernity. Light and air, as the urban planner Cerdà had defended, but also comfort and luxury.

Decorative objects imported from Europe or locally produced, affordable to a larger audience, are examples of Art Nouveau decorativism or *fin de siècle*. Art objects filled with flowers and symbolic nymphs were advertised and sold in specialized stores. Also, “Viennese furniture” or curved wood, imported or local, was very popular and integrated into the most intimate areas of the home.

But Modernisme went from being a regenerationist movement to being a “modern” style, reaching wider layers of society. Anonymous objects of everyday use filled the display cases of homes while Modernisme was already rejected by the noucentists.



Medallion

**Antoni Gaudí i Cornet** (1852-1926)  
**Fill de Jaume Pujol i Bausis**, producer

Barcelona, c. 1904

Mixed lime, sand and cement mortar with trencadís tiles

Originally from Park Güell, Barcelona Loan Gaudí Chair CGEX 0026

##### 4.1 The center of the bourgeois home: the dining room

This dining room, an example from a historicist group from the end of the 19th century, was designed in 1892 by Jeroni Granell i Manresa (1867- 1931) for his house, after obtaining the title of architect and just before his wedding with Elvira Bartomeu i Baró.



Sideboard from the home of Jeroni Granell i Manresa

**Jeroni Granell i Manresa** (1867-1931)

Barcelona, 1892

Melis pinewood, painted tiles, white marble, brass trim and iron screws  
Bequest Victòria Cantavella, 2019. Museu del Disseny de Barcelona

MDB 10.242

## 4.2 Anonymous Modernisme

With the twentieth century underway, Modernisme became a “modern” and popular style, especially visible in the dissemination of decorative and utilitarian Art Nouveau objects, particularly in the production of affordable furniture, such as the models proposed by the repertory *El ebanista moderno* (c. 1906).



Cruet

France?, c. 1900

Alpaca tin and acid-etched glass

Private Collection

## 4.3 Local and imported bibelots

Images from the era show us modernist interiors full of decorative objects. Creations from all over Europe arrived in Catalonia through local representatives, who sold them in specialized stores. Local sculpture and ceramic workshops also created a large number of widely sold Art Nouveau objects and bibelots.



Vase

**Émile Gallé** (1846-1904)  
Nancy, 1904-1914

Mold-blown glass, bent and acid-etched

Bequest María Abrate, 1986

MADB 123.132

## 5. The Art of Twentieth Century and the Discredit of Modernisme

While Modernisme had been forged in the intellectual and artistic circles with a desire to modernize a culture and integrate into Europe, Noucentisme (twentieth century-ism) despite defaming Modernisme and nineteenth-century individualism, fulfilled with its institutionalizing aims some of the cultural proposals of the Modernists.

Such is the case with the artistic industries, artistic trades or fine trades, as they were called, which established a connection between the two movements and continued to trace the path of design culture, making clear the social value of art. The objective was to work for the national identity, for a Catalan art with Mediterranean roots that embellished the city through the good practice of the fine trades. In today's words, put design to work for identity.

In spite of everything, Gaudí, and especially the large Sagrada Família construction company, coincided with the dominant ideology of noucentist catalanism, which Torras i Bages had defined in *La tradició catalana* in 1892, reissued, though, in 1906.

### 5.1 L'Escola Superior de Belles Oficis (1914) and the “job well done”

If Modernisme had focused on a bourgeois elite, then Noucentisme — during the *Mancomunitat* (Commonwealth), but also during the times of the Republic — proposed the creation of a new country structure based on culture. The creation of the Escola Superior de Belles Oficis (Graduate School of Fine Trades) in 1914 is a fine example.

“Make beautiful the useful” or integrate art into society to improve the life of the poor was the goal of Joaquim Folch i Torres, a key name in noucentist culture. Conscious of its social value, he carried out an innovative pedagogical project, comparable to other European ones supporting artistic trades, which was built upon the pedagogy of Francesc d’A. Galí and which sought to make such ideas a reality.

Arts of the earth (ceramics, pitcher making), wood (carpentry, cabinetmaking and carving), fabric (upholstery, fabric, lace, embroidery, stamping), leather (embossing) and gardening arts were the main specialties.

## 5.2 From Noucentism to the Civil War: tradition, Art Deco and avant-garde

While critics of decorativism and ornamentation arose throughout Europe, in Catalonia Noucentism replaced the world imported from the North with the Mediterranean culture of Greek heritage. But new French influences soon introduced Art Deco modernity, the “false modern,” as those opposed to its virtuous and purely formal decorativism called it, living together with its other fine trade vernaculars.

The first avant-gardes did not take long to challenge modern decorative art, noucentist or Art Deco, dismissing everything that was not standardized. Rationalism came from the hand of the GATCPAC (Group of Catalan Architects and Technicians for the Progress of Contemporary Architecture) and the concept of decoration was replaced by interior design. The culture of design advanced in a new context where tradition, modernity and avant-garde lived together, while Gaudí was defended by Dalí and the Surrealists.



**Folding screen *The Creation***

**Francesc d'Assis Galí (1880-1965)**  
**Ramon Sarsanedas Oriol (1896-1987), lacquerer**

Barcelona, 1929

Japanese lacquer, urushi, on plywood and inlaid with gold, mother-of-pearl and eggshell

MADB 135.344-0



**Foot lamp**

**Santiago Marco i Urrutia (1885-1949) Lluís Bracons i Sunyer (1892-1961), lacquerer**

Barcelona, 1922

Lacquered wood inlaid with eggshell and mother-of-pearl

Originally from the International Furniture Exhibition, Barcelona, 1923 Acquisition, 1932

MDB 25

### 5.3 Noucentist affirmation of anonymous and popular design

Noucentisme also revalued traditional crafts and revived techniques and materials. But its collective orientation, guided by the desire to improve people's lives, led it to pursue the simplicity of anonymous and popular design. This explains the taste for simple furniture such as the traditional rush seat chair, inspiring proposals for dignified interiors, at low cost.

In 1923, at the International Furniture and Interior Decoration Exhibition, an international furniture and decoration competition for the modest home was convened, a good example of raising awareness about workers' living conditions and housing around Europe. The Foment de les Arts Decoratives (Advancement of Decorative Arts) participated with the motto "For the beauty of the humble home."

### 5.4 The simplicity of popular craftsmanship in modern design

With the conviction that maximum beauty was the result of maximum simplicity, as the critic Rafael Benet asserted, the traditional, popular and anonymous rush seat chair, brought back by the noucentists, far from historicisms, placed value on popular art as a foundation of modernity. Rationalism and avant-garde of the 1930s, with a more open view, had to contribute to the introduction of the Mediterranean spirit in design, as demonstrated by the furniture and interior design of the GATCPAC. The armchair for the Pavilion of the Republic at the International Exhibition of 1937, in Paris, has become its most notable icon.



*Armchair Model GATCPAC*

**GATCPAC, Group of Catalan Architects and Technicians for the Progress of Contemporary Architecture MIDVA (Furniture and Decoration of the Current Home), producer**

Barcelona, 1936

Oak wood and cord

Donation Bonaventura Bassegoda Hugas, 2002

MADB 136.816

### 5.5 Artisanal techniques at the service of art: designer art

The progressive appearance of design in the second quarter of the 20th century coincides with a fact that rocked the art world: the borders between the arts disappear and artists feel free to experiment with all of them.

While the design world refuses added ornamentation and opts for serial industrial production, the fine trades become a new path of experimentation, beyond its utilitarian aspect. It is the explosive moment for

name-brand arts, called “designer art”: art ceramics, art glass, art jewels... All these paths are cultivated by creators, often reviving and adapting craft techniques in unique works. This path arrives at the present, a time when design is redefining new paths and the borders between design, craft and art is melting away.

The Museu del Disseny conserves remarkable collections, especially of the fire arts — ceramics, glass and enamel — which correspond to new artistic expressions, a symbiosis between artisanal tradition and artistic creation by prominent names, from Picasso and Miró to present artists.

## 6. The Recovery of Gaudí and Modernisme

In the years after the Spanish Civil War, the image of Gaudí and the Sagrada Família survived as a possibility of keeping Catalanism alive in a manner tolerated by the Franco regime. In this environment, in 1952, the Friends of Gaudí Association was created, which organized an exhibition at Tinell Hall in 1956, the same date on which the Gaudí Chair of the Graduate School of Architecture was also founded. Later, in 1963 the Gaudí House-Museum was inaugurated at Park Güell.

Gaudí’s international recognition came when MOMA dedicated an exhibition to him in 1957, after overcoming the reluctance of museum directors, who defended the modern spirit. The promoter was Columbia professor Georges R. Collins, founder of Friends of Gaudí USA, who had discovered him at the Tinell exhibition. At the same time, the architect Kenji Imai of Waseda University promoted the Japanese section. In 1967, the book *The Sources of Modern Architecture and Design* by Nikolaus Pevsner argued that the free and functional forms of Art Nouveau were in the origins of modern design. Such efforts generated the recovery of Art Nouveau and the great figures such as Guimard, Horta, Mackintosh and also Gaudí and Modernisme.

### 6.1 Art history and legacy affirm Modernisme

The patrimonial value of Modernisme was highlighted very early in art and architecture history. Josep-Francesc Ràfols, the first biographer of Gaudí (1928), was the one who defined it as a cultural movement in *El arte modernista en Barcelona* (1943) and *Modernismo y modernistas* (1949), followed by Alexandre Cirici’s art critique in *El arte modernista catalán* (1951). Shortly afterwards, Nikolaus Pevsner’s book —*The Sources of Modern Architecture and Design*— provoked new studies, led by Oriol Bohigas’s *Arquitectura modernista* (1968), with photographs by Leopold Pomés.

Barcelona museums, then directed then by Joan Ainaud of Lasarte, began the collections of modernist heritage as a result of the celebration of two exhibitions, “Artes suntuarias del Modernismo catalán” (1964) and “El modernismo en España” (1969). Later, the organization of large shows such as “El modernisme” (1990), during the Cultural Olympiad, or events such as the Gaudí Year (2002), have helped keep the interest in the movement alive.

### 6.3 An international trend: the psychedelic style and Pop style

Graphic design was a leader in the recovery of the appetite for Art Nouveau and Modernisme, thanks to the attraction of popular images of the graphic past. Pop, Neoliberty, psychedelic art and the culture of the



masses of the 1960s and 1970s discovered the curving forms and the calligraphic typography of Art Nouveau, which they saw as a clear opposition to the rationalism defended by the definers of the modernity.

At the same time, the group known as *Gauche Divine* (Divine Left), hailing from the enlightened and cosmopolitan bourgeoisie, closely linked to the Catalan cultural industry, emerged in Barcelona. Through the iconic logo of the Bocaccio nightclub (1967-1985) on Muntaner Street and the advertising graphics of the movie *Tuset Street*, Art Nouveau was resounding, being spread by the Pop movement, and became fashionable again in Europe.

#### 6.4 “Design classics”: a second opportunity for Modernisme ...

Art Nouveau design — and also the modernist — has been discovered, reconsidered and extolled by contemporary design. Since the sixties, the reissue of emblematic pieces by Mackintosh, Guimard and Hofmann has turned these elements into “design classics.” Must one be reminded that some objects like curved wooden furniture, Escofet pavements, Masriera jewels, as well as emblematic pieces by Peter Behrens did not stop producing.

In Barcelona, Bd Ediciones de Diseño collected the testimony of Bigas Luna in the seventies, which until 1973 had sold some re-issues of Gaudí in the store Gris, and in 1976 it re-issued Gaudí’s first works of furniture. Some typically decorative Art Nouveau objects by Lambert Escaler or Dionís Renart were also re-issued.

In short, emblematic pieces by Gaudí, Jujol and others, joined the “great classics” of international design, a concept that is both a selling point and a cultural distinction, which elevates the value of design to that of a work of art.



*Woman's Head and Mirror*

**Lambert Escaler i Milà** (1874-1957)

**BD Ediciones de Diseño, SA**, 1974-2007, producer

Barcelona, 1901-1903. 1974 Edition

Hand finished and polished polyester. Pink mirror

Private Collection



Peephole and door handle of the Casa Calvet. *BD Art Editions Collection*

**Antoni Gaudí i Cornet** (1852-1926)

**BD Ediciones de Diseño, SA**, 1978-2007, producer **BD Barcelona Design**, after 2007, producer

Barcelona, 1902. 2020 Edition

Brass casting

Donation BD Barcelona Design, 2020  
MDB 12.539

Donació BD Barcelona Design, 2020  
MDB 12.539 i 12.540



*Chair Batlló*

**Antoni Gaudí i Cornet** (1852-1926)

**Casas i Bardés Workshop**, Barcelona, c. 1904, producer  
**BD Ediciones de Diseño, SA**, 1976-2007, producer

Barcelona, c. 1904. 2005 Edition

Cut oak wood

MADB 136.986



*Table Jujol 1920*

**Josep Maria Jujol i Gibert** (1879-1949) **Mobles 114**, after 2019, producer

Barcelona, 1920-1927. 2019 Edition

Oak wood

Donation Mobles 114, 2019

MDB 12.074



Brooch

**Lluís Masriera i Rosés** (1872-1958)

Barcelona, c. 1908. Bagués Masriera Edition, 2020

Chiseled gold, diamonds, pearls, enamel and *plique-à-jour* enamel

Bagués Masriera Collection



Pendant

**Lluís Masriera i Rosés** (1872-1958) **Masriera Hermanos**, producer

Barcelona, c. 1908

Chiseled gold, diamonds, pearls, enamel and *plique-à-jour* enamel

Masriera Hermanos y Joaquín Carreras Catalog, vol.2, num. 1818

Bagués Masriera Collection

## 7. Reflection: the Second Triumph of Modernisme

Into the third decade of the 21st century, Modernisme has become one of the main cultural and tourist attractions of Barcelona. The years when modernist objects were once considered as bad taste are forgotten in the attic and the talk about demolishing the Palau de la Música Catalana of Domènech i Montaner continued ... until 1997 when it was declared a part of world heritage by UNESCO!

We are witnessing a process of “museumization” of the Art Nouveau European cities, and Barcelona is an emblematic case. While design produces high quality replicas and the arts are inspired by curving forms or artisan techniques such as *trencadís*, tourism has developed its merchandise halfway between quality garments and mass production kitsch.

It should be possible to find a middle point that supports the pleasure of culture and tourism as well as the good of our cities and heritage. Hopefully the new circumstances post Covid-19 will help us to achieve this.

PRESS IMAGES:

**MODERNISME, CAP A LA CULTURA DEL DISSENY**

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**1.Modernisme, an Attitude and Long Road**



Bench

Attributed to **Gaspar Homar i Mesquida** (1870-1955)

Barcelona, c. 1905

340 x 180.5 x 58 cm Walnut carved, turned, molded and stained. Pine in the seat structure

Originally from the Casa Lleó Morera, Barcelona

Purchase, 1969 MADB 106.055



Saint George Bench

**José Ribas e hijos**

Barcelona, c. 1895 304.5 x 185 x 69 cm Walnut carved and gilded. Fabric stamped and pegged, trimming. Paint stenciled on cloth, imitating tapestry (panels with painted scenes) with metal applications

Purchase, 2014 MADB 138.918



Vestibule on the first floor of Casa Lleó Morera, with a bench attributed to G. Homar

Fundació Institut Amatller d'Art Hispànic. Arxiu Mas



Armchair

**Joan Busquets i Jané**  
(1874-1949)

Barcelona, 1902

Carved ash wood, upholstery with warp fillet base and embroidered iris series with application of silk and trimming

Purchase, 2009 MADB 138.664



Panel

*Mother of God of Montserrat*

**Gaspar Homar i Mesquida** (1870-1955) **Josep Pey i Farriol** (1875-1956)

Barcelona, c.1902

Mahogany with marquetry and bronze applications

Museu Frederic Marès. Barcelona

MFMS-234



Coat rack

**Antoni Gaudí i Cornet**  
(1852-1926)

**Casas i Bardés Workshop**, producer

Barcelona, 1899-1901

Oak wood carved and turned with iron tape

From Casa Calvet, Barcelona

Loan Gaudí Chair CGEX 0022



Angels from a fireplace in the Casa Lleó Morera in Barcelona

**Josep Pey i Farriol** (1875-1956)  
**Joan Carreras i Farré**, embosser

Barcelona, 1905 126 x 50 cm, each Embossed copper

From Casa Lleó Morera, Barcelona

MADB 71.792-3



Angel decorations on the fireplace, 1905

Centre Excursionista de Catalunya Photographic Archive



Frame

Rafael Masó i Valentí (1880-1935)

Miquel Pratmans, cabinetmaker

Nonito Cadenas i Caballer (1876-1930), locksmith and blacksmith

Girona, c. 1906

Chestnut wood and embossed wrought iron

MDB 1.326

## 2. Art Industries, the New Culture of Design: Project, Production, Diffusion and Consumption



Publicity Panel  
*Brosa. Golds and Paint*

**Víctor Brosa i Sangerman** (1852-1920)  
Barcelona, 1896

Wood chiselled, gilded, polychromed and with pastillage

Originally from the Fine Arts and Art Industries Exhibition,  
Barcelona 1896

MADB 1.889



Exhibitor

*Third International Exhibition of Decorative Arts of Monza*

**Mateu Culell i Aznar** (1879-1943)  
**Esteva y Cía. Barcelona**, producer

Barcelona, 1911-1912  
Oak wood with applications of gilded stucco and glass.  
Lead pencil and gouache on paper for designs

MADB 69.685



Commercial catalogue  
*Pavimentos artísticos Escofet y Cía. S. en C. Album No 6*

**Escofet y Cía. S. en C.**  
Barcelona, 1900 (1st. ed.)

Donation Escofet 1886 S.A., 2020

MDB. Escofet 1886 Collection



Design of the decoration of the Gaspar Homar store

**Sebastià Junyent Sans** (1865-1908)





**Josep Pey i Farriol**, painter (1875-1956)

Barcelona, 1899

Watercolor and pencil on paper

Donation Magdala Pey Casanovas, 2020 MDB. Josep Pey Collection

### **3. The Grand Protagonist of Modernisme:decorative and applied arts**



Lleó Morera House' main floor salon with furniture with marquetry, designed by Josep Pey

Fundació Institut Amatller d'Art Hispànic. Arxiu Mas



Marquetry designs for the furniture of the Lleó Morera House

**Josep Pey i Farriol** (1875-1956)

Barcelona, 1905

Graphite and gouache on paper

Donation Magdala Pey Casanovas, 2020 MDB. Josep Pey Collection



Cabinet

**Joan Busquets i Jané** (1874-1949)

**Eusebi Busquets i Conill** (1872-1962), carving **Antoni Fons**, metal applications, forging **Aureli Tolosa i Alsina**, painter **Gaietà Vilaplana i Sarrado**, gilder **Serralleria Mañach**, safe **Cunill**, leather interior

Barcelona, 1898

Carved walnut, sycamore and cedar. Wrought iron, rounded brass and engraved steel with metal applications, tempera paints on parchment on the outside of the furniture piece and oil paints on wood on the inside. Originally from the Fine Arts and Art Industries Exhibition, Barcelona 1898

MADB 8.694





Bedside table

**Joan Busquets i Jané (1874-1949) Antoni Fons, brass**

Barcelona, 1902

Ash wood carved, molded and pyrographed. Brass handles and pink marble top

MADB 138.668



Side table

**José Ribas Anguera (1866-1909)**

**J. Ribas, producer**

Barcelona, 1904

Bronze structure, marble and mahogany tops

Private Collection Pepe Ribas



Door lintel

**Antoni Gaudí i Cornet (1852-1926)**  
**Casas i Bardés Workshop, producer**

Barcelona, 1906  
Carved ash wood

Originally from Casa Batlló, Barcelona

Loan Gaudí Chair CGEX 0003



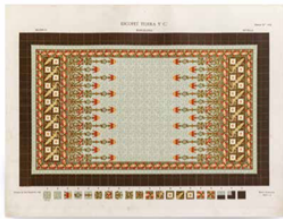
Pavement stencils  
*The Lizard and the Flower Pavimentos artísticos Escofet y Cia. Album No 6*

**Lluís Domènech i Montaner** (1850-1923) **Escofet, Tejera y Cia., S. en C.**, producer

Barcelona, 1900

Donation

Escofet 1886 SA, 2020 MDB 12.543



*Crystallic tile*

**Oliva Hermanos**, producer

Barcelona, c. 1905

Hydraulic cement and glass



*Tile*

**Fábrica Nacional de Azulejos de Imitación Hermenegildo Miralles**, producer

Barcelona, 1892  
Chromolithography on embossed paper National Exhibition of Artistic Industries and International Reproductions, Barcelona 1892

Donation Hermenegildo Miralles, 1892

MCB 142.127



*Wall light*

**Lluís Domènech i Montaner** (1850-1923) **Juncosa y Terrida**, producer  
Barcelona, c. 1907

Blown and marked glass

Originally from the Palau de la Música Catalana, Barcelona Purchase, 2017

MDB 1.328





Architectural ornament from the Palau de la Música

**Lluís Domènech i Montaner** (1850-1923) **Mario Maragliano i Navone**, producer

Barcelona, c. 1907  
Glazed ceramic, painted and cemented iron

MDB 1.327



Skirting board designs

**Mateu Culell i Aznar** (1879-1943)

Barcelona, 1905-1920  
Lead pencil and gouache on cut and glued paper

Donation Margarita Culell, 1960

MADB 69.636, 69.648, 69.654



Decorations to apply on mosaic

**Josep Pey i Farriol** (1875-1956) **Joan Carreras i Farré** (1860-1907), sculptor

**Fàbrica de Porcellanes i Gres d'Art. Barcelona**, producer

Barcelona, 1905 Molded and glazed porcelain

Donation Magdala Pey Casanovas, 2020

MDB12.521



Title of master locksmith of Ricard Cabot i Fita

**Josep Vilaseca i Casanovas** (1848-1910)  
Barcelona, c. 1891

Wrought iron, printed paper and manuscript

Museu Frederic Marès. Barcelona MFMS-12.977



Stained glass design for the house at Iradier Street, 35,  
Barcelona  
**Rigalt, Granell y Cia.**

Barcelona, c. 1912

Pen, watercolor and gouache on paper

Donation Teresa Granell i Carbonell, 2015

MDB. Rigalt i Granell Collection



Stained glass design  
**Rigalt, Granell y Cia.**

Barcelona, 1903-1923

Pen and watercolor on paper

Donation Teresa Granell i Carbonell, 2015

MDB. Rigalt i Granell Collection



*Vase of the Orange Trees*

**Antoni Serra i Fiter** (1869-1932)  
**Fàbrica de Porcellanes i Gres d'Art. Barcelona,**  
producer  
Barcelona, 1907

Porcelain glazed, polychromated and gilded

Originally from the Fine Arts and Art Industries Exhibition,  
Barcelona 1907

MCB1.576



*Vase of the Muses*

**Josep Pey i Farriol** (1875-1956)  
**Antoni Serra i Fiter** (1869-1932), ceramicist  
**Fàbrica de Porcellanes i Gres d'Art. Barcelona,**  
producer

Barcelona, 1907

Porcelain glazed and polychromated

Originally from the Fine Arts and Art Industries Exhibition,  
Barcelona 1907

MCB 1.578



*Pitcher of the Quatre Gats*

**Fayans Català**, producer

Sabadell, 1897

Ceramic enamelled and decorated in blue

MCB 155.017



*Mirror Beauty*

**Lambert Escaler i Milà** (1874-1957)

**Fundición Artística Masriera y Campins**, smelter

Barcelona, 1903-1906

Cast bronze and mirror

Private Collection



*Standard Orfeo Barcelonès*

**Bonaventura Llauradó**, design **Mariano Mas**, **Jaume Brugarolas**, chopping and drawing **Singers of the Orfeo Barcelonès**, embroidery **Julià Vinyoles**, **R. Oliva de Dolcet**, **Francisco Arenas**, **Narciso Vendrell**, trimmings, **Pere Serra/ La Providència i altres**, velvets and silks, **Costa y Ponces**, flagpole

Barcelona, 1904

Embroidered fabric with trimming

Museu d'Història de Barcelona-MUHBA Donation of The Orfeo Barcelonès.

MHCB 42.005



Magazine

*El Consultor de los Bordados*, num. 20

**Bardem, Ribas y Ferrer**, publisher

Barcelona, June 15, 1906

MDB



Magazine cover

*La Ilustración Artística*

**Josep Pascó i Mensa** (1855-1910)

**Josep Roca i Alemany** (1865-1937), engraver

Barcelona, 1891

Fabric on cardboard printed with bronze and gold matrix

MDB 9.524



Corners

1900-1905

Silver-plated brass

MDB 12.087-12.088



Door

**Antoni Gaudí i Cornet** (1852-1926)

**Casas i Bardés Workshop**, producer

Barcelona, 1906

Carved ash wood

Originally from Casa Batlló, Barcelona

Loan Gaudí Chair CGEX 0001



## 4. The Bourgeois Home, Symbol of a Societal Ideal



Medallion

**Antoni Gaudí i Cornet** (1852-1926)  
**Fill de Jaume Pujol i Bausis**, producer

Barcelona, c. 1904

Mixed lime, sand and cement mortar with trencadís tiles

Originally from Park Güell, Barcelona Loan Gaudí Chair  
CGEX 0026



Sideboard from the home of Jeroni Granell i Manresa

**Jeroni Granell i Manresa** (1867-1931)

Barcelona, 1892

Melis pinewood, painted tiles, white marble, brass trim  
and iron screws  
Bequest Victòria Cantavella, 2019. Museu del Disseny de  
Barcelona

MDB 10.242



Vase

**Émile Gallé** (1846-1904)  
Nancy, 1904-1914

Mold-blown glass, bent and acid-etched

Bequest Maria Abrate, 1986

MADB 123.132



Painted Paper

*The Iris and Narcissus*

United Kingdom, c. 1905

Stencil stamped

MDB 4.824-1



Bust *Roses*

**Ch. Déposé**, producer

France, 1902

Painted terracotta

Donation Solà Pou Family, 1967

MADB 71.764



Lectern

France (?), c. 1905

Carved walnut wood

Originally from Casa de l'Ardiaca, Barcelona

Cession Museum of Barcelona History, 1990

MADB 11.058



Cruet

France?, c. 1900

Alpaca tin and acid-etched glass

Private Collection



## 5. The Art of Twentieth Century and the Discredit of Modernisme



*Birds Plate*

**Ramon Sunyer i Clarà (1889-1963)**

Barcelona, 1918

Embossed silver

Originally from the Art Exhibition, Barcelona, 1918

MADB 1.586



*Brooch*

**Jaume Mercadé i Queralt (1887-1967)**

Barcelona, c. 1930

Silver, silver-gilt, blue enamel, pearls and aquamarine

MDB 1.430



*Dressing table mirror*

**Jaume Mercadé i Queralt (1887-1967)**

Barcelona, 1925-1930

Silver-plated structure on marble base, opaline on light and beveled mirror

MADB 138.645



*Foot lamp*

**Santiago Marco i Urrutia (1885-1949) Lluís Bracons i Sunyer (1892-1961), lacquerer**

Barcelona, 1922

Lacquered wood inlaid with eggshell and mother-of-pearl

Originally from the International Furniture Exhibition, Barcelona, 1923 Acquisition, 1932

MDB 25



*Folding screen **The Creation***

**Francesc d'Assís Galí (1880-1965)**  
**Ramon Sarsanedas Oriol (1896-1987), lacquerer**

Barcelona, 1929

Japanese lacquer, urushi, on plywood and inlaid with gold, mother-of-pearl and eggshell

MADB 135.344-0



*Armchair **Model GATCPAC***

**GATCPAC, Group of Catalan Architects and Technicians for the Progress of Contemporary Architecture**  
**MIDVA (Furniture and Decoration of the Current Home), producer**

Barcelona, 1936

Oak wood and cord

Donation Bonaventura Bassegoda Hugas, 2002

MADB 136.816

## 6. The Recovery of Gaudí and Modernisme



*Tile*

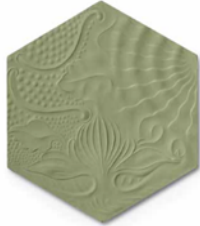
**Rafael Masó i Valentí (1880-1935)**  
**La Gabarra Faiances Emporitanes, producer**

La Bisbal d'Empordà, 1915-1916. 2005 Edition

Glazed and enameled ceramic

Originals at the Athenea building, Girona

MADB 138.369-138.37



#### Hydraulic Tiles

**Antoni Gaudí i Cornet** (1852-1926)  
**Hijo de E.F. Escofet SA**, producer  
**Escofet 1886 SA**, producer

Tiles

Barcelona, c. 1906. Edition grey 1961 and Edition green 1997  
Cement

Originals at the Casa Milà, Barcelona Donation Escofet 1886 SA, 2004

MADB 136.942-136.943



#### Coat rack from the Casa Calvet. *BD Art Editions Collection*

**Antoni Gaudí i Cornet** (1852-1926)  
**Casas i Bardés Workshop, Barcelona**, 1900-1901,  
producer **BD Barcelona Design**, after 2019, producer

Barcelona, 1900-1901. 2020 Edition

Carved and turned oak wood, wrought iron

Donation BD Barcelona Design, 2020

MDB 12.542



#### Table *Jujol 1920*

**Josep Maria Jujol i Gibert** (1879-1949) **Mobles 114**,  
after 2019, producer

Barcelona, 1920-1927. 2019 Edition

Oak wood

Donation Mobles 114, 2019

MDB 12.074



*Chair Batlló*

**Antoni Gaudí i Cornet** (1852-1926)  
**Casas i Bardés Workshop**, Barcelona, c. 1904, producer  
**BD Ediciones de Diseño, SA**, 1976-2007, producer

Barcelona, c. 1904. 2005 Edition

Cut oak wood

MADB 136.986



*Office chair of Mr. Calvet*

**Antoni Gaudí i Cornet** (1852-1926)  
**Casas i Bardés Workshop**, 1900-1901, producer  
**Unknown workshop**, c. 1967, producer

Barcelona, 1900-1901. c. 1967 Edition

Cut oak wood

Loan Gaudí Chair. CGEX 0021



*Woman's Head and Mirror*

**Lambert Escaler i Milà** (1874-1957)  
**BD Ediciones de Diseño, SA**, 1974-2007, producer

Barcelona, 1901-1903. 1974 Edition

Hand finished and polished polyester. Pink mirror

Private Collection



Peephole and door handle of the Casa Calvet. *BD Art Editions Collection*

**Antoni Gaudí i Cornet** (1852-1926)

**BD Ediciones de Diseño, SA**, 1978-2007, producer **BD Barcelona Design**, after 2007, producer

Barcelona, 1902. 2020 Edition

Brass casting

Donation BD Barcelona Design, 2020  
MDB 12.539 and 12.540



Pendant

**Lluís Masriera i Rosés** (1872-1958) **Masriera Hermanos**, producer

Barcelona, c. 1908

Chiseled gold, diamonds, pearls, enamel and *plique-à-jour* enamel

Masriera Hermanos y Joaquín Carreras Catalog, vol.2,  
num. 1818  
Bagués Masriera Collection

Brooch

**Lluís Masriera i Rosés** (1872-1958)

Barcelona, c. 1908. Bagués Masriera Edition, 2020

Chiseled gold, diamonds, pearls, enamel and *plique-à-jour* enamel

Bagués Masriera Collection

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