

**Exhibition:** FROM GAUDÍ TO PICASSO  
IVAM Institut Valencià d'Art Modern  
March 15<sup>th</sup> – June 27<sup>th</sup> 2010

**Curators:** Tomàs Llorens and Boye Llorens

**Advisor:** Daniel Giralt- Miracle

**Sponsor :** 

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Modernism is, undoubtedly, one of the most interesting aspects of the modernization process that deeply changed European art during the fin-de-siècle period. This movement left an important mark on all art expressions, from music to painting, from graphic arts and architecture to poetry and theatre.

*From Gaudí to Picasso* focuses on Catalan art and pays attention to the early works of Picasso and Julio González. These two artists developed their careers during the Modernism period and came to occupy an important position in the history of 20<sup>th</sup> century painting and sculpture. However, there is an exception with Gaudí, whose figure is essential to appreciate Modernism. Hence, the exhibition gives special consideration to Julio González and Joan González, and analyses themes such as Casas and Rusiñol, painters of modern life; Symbolism in Catalonia; the Gaudí phenomenon; Mir and Anglada Camarasa; Nonell and Misérabilisme; Picasso and the Catalan community in Paris; the classicist inflection; and the end of Modernism.

The 125 works that the exhibition compiles come from different museums, foundations, state and private entities, and private collectors, such as the MNAC, Museu Picasso, Museu de Montserrat, the Real Càtedra Gaudí from the UPC, Fundació Caixa Catalunya, Junta Constructora del Temple de la Sagrada Família, the Masaveu Collection, the Cau Ferrat de Sitges Collection, Fundación Francisco Godia, Reina Sofía Museum, the Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection, the El Prado Museum, and the IVAM, among others. The catalogue of the exhibition includes the works on display and texts by Daniel Giralt-Miracle, Francesc Fontbona, Mercé Doñate, Marilyn McCully, Tomàs Llorens and Boye Llorens.

Catalan modernism was a short but intense cultural movement: its splendour lasted around twenty years, from the second half of the 1880 decade to the second half or the end of the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was an intense movement that left a deep mark in collective memory and was registered in all the manifestations of Spanish and

Catalan cultural history of the contemporary age. One of the reasons is found in the association of the movement with the names of two universal artists, Gaudí and Picasso.

The importance of architecture and the decorative arts in the image of Modernism is a natural consequence of the kind of economic and social changes of the time when it took place. The urban development of the city of Barcelona had a great influence on the origin of the movement, determined the sociocultural framework, and contributed to it with many of its contents. Catalan society, which had been industrialised in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, especially in the Restoration period, was a key factor in that process because of the growing role of the city like a national and international centre of commerce and communications, and because of the attraction that the city had on labour, who moved to Barcelona from the rest of Spain, making possible the industrial growth and development.

With the second generation the exhibition shows the influence of the spiritualist wave on the development of Modernism. Associated with the activity in the Cercle Artístic Sant Lluc, which Gaudí belonged to, this trend rejected materialist progress and the kind of positivism that inspired the Belle Epoque, and exploited the resources of Symbolism, which extended from Northern Europe, to create a more distinctive image of Modernism.

The third and last period of Modernism was performed by a series of young artists (Mir, Anglada, González, Sunyer, Nonell, Picasso...), a generation that grew up, already in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, adopting a position in which there was not any influence of the 19<sup>th</sup> century enthusiasm for modern life that had originated the modernist movement. Modernism could be regarded as the expression of a social crisis that took on European and, especially and more distinctively, Spanish and Catalan social life.

Modernist enthusiasm faded away quickly in Barcelona along the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This decline had an impact on the artists of the second modernist generation, and influenced their eventual and future contributions to the avant-gardes of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The great figure in those years was, undoubtedly, Picasso. Around him we find other young artists like Hugué, Canals, Sunyer, and the brothers Joan and Julio González. They all lived in Paris and were known in the artistic media of the capital of France as “la bande catalane”.

The last great modernist painter was Nonell. Belonging to the same generation as Picasso and Julio González, his work represents the clearest manifestation of misérabilisme with a synthetic language that is combined with early European Expressionism. This theme is shared by other artists and is essential in the blue period that would place Picasso in the avant-gardes.

At the end of the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there was a deep change in sensitiveness that moved towards Classicism and constituted a clear division with Modernism. This shift determined the substitution of Modernism by Noucentisme as the general trend in Catalan culture in the first years of the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

To complement the exhibition, the IVAM has organised the didactic workshop ‘From Gaudí to Picasso’, which will take place from March 15<sup>th</sup> to June 27<sup>th</sup>.