

PAISATGE
BVISUALCE

A Catalan
Landscape
of Contemporary
Artists & Curators

PAISATGE

A Catalan
Landscape
of Contemporary
Artists & Curators

This publication is an initiative promoted by the Institut Ramon Llull
and edited by Edicions del Núvol.

© Edicions del Núvol, 2024
Published by Núvol, el digital de cultura
c/ Pau Claris, 147, 1^{er} 1^a 08009 Barcelona
info@nuvol.com
nuvol.com

© of the introductory texts and the curator profiles:
Montse Frisach, Joan Burdeus, Mercè Mas Malagarriga,
Helena Moreno and Bernat Puigtobella

© of the artist profiles: each curator

Design and layout: Laia Serch Muni
Editorial coordination: Marta Sistach
English translation: Graham Thomson
Printed at QPprint

Sources of quotations:

Harald Szeemann. Identity Kit, February 1980
Joanna Warsza: "Joanna Warsza on Why Every Museum Deserves
a Playground". Interview by Nika Dubrovsky. *Art Review*, 2024
Boris Groys and Perejaume: *In An Open Field. Contemporary cultural practices*.
Barcelona: Arcàdia/Institut Ramon Llull, 2024
[Eng. trans. by Graham Thomson]
Laurence Rassel: CuMMA PAPERS #16. *We Were Saying What If...*
An Interview with Laurence Rassel by Henna Harri and Nora Sternfeld

Foreword

Manifesta, the European Nomadic Biennial, is celebrating its fifteenth iteration in Barcelona. The programme, which aims to foster significant social change, includes an extensive roster of local and international participants. This publication, which has been promoted by Institut Ramon Llull, is conceived with the aim of broadening the scope of Manifesta 15 beyond Barcelona and its metropolitan area to bring to the fore other curators and artists who work in the Catalan context and well deserve attention.

The digital magazine *Núvol* offers here an expanded view of the arts in the Catalan cultural field by way of curators who present their vision of their craft and of artistic practices within the local ecosystem. We have conducted a survey of fifteen curators, born between 1957 and 1996, most of them independent, each of whom has recommended and written about two artists who, while not taking part in Manifesta 15, are well worth knowing. Of these two artists, one is an emerging creative talent and the other an established presence. To situate this *paisatge* ('landscape' in Catalan) in context, we begin with an article by Montse Frisach on the artistic ecosystem in Catalonia and a reflection by Joan Burdeus on the rebellious tradition of modernity that has shaped Catalan contemporary art.

Bernat Puigtobella, Editor

To curate without empire

Joan Burdeus

In Catalan, the terms *comissari* and *curador* are used interchangeably to refer to what is known in English as a curator. With *comissari* carrying a suggestion of a colonial official or police commissioner, to choose one word or the other is to emphasise one of the two contradictory aspects of the practice: the irreducibly order-imposing and authoritarian or the altruistic and caring/curing. In the context of contemporary art, which makes much of its defiance of authority and is exercised by the ethics and politics of care, the great majority of *comissaris* would prefer to be *curadors*.

Today, when the world of contemporary art is salivating for anything that smells local, Catalan curators find themselves in an unusual frontier space in Europe, and a particularly fertile one at that. The reasons for the rise of localism in recent times are well-known and perfectly coherent: before the advent of globalisation, power was in the hands of nation-states and empires that sought to expand and impose their identity on the rest of the world, and as a result anti-imperialist criticism was levelled in the name of universal utopias. But history ended rather differently than had been expected and power has settled in a global sphere of market and technology that seems impossible to control democratically: economic globalism without political universalism. It is hardly surprising that contemporary art

curators who are heirs to the radical tradition of modernity should react to this globalist status quo with a strong penchant for the local. Inscripting local practices and local artworks in the global circuit, artists and curators swim against the tide of false universalisms that operate both inside and outside the museum and open a space in which to criticise these.

In Europe, what this has meant in practice is that curators from the old nation-states and powerful empires have flocked to the Global South in search of alternative localisms to oppose to Western colonialism. And while many of these gestures are interesting and legitimate, too often we see how the art of this South tends to be presented as a bid to abolish modernity, which, on even the most cursory reflection, can immediately be seen as no less totalitarian and precritical than the precritical totalitarisms that are supposedly being critiqued.

Catalonia, a nation without a state that has not had a modern empire, has striven to be modern and to assert itself as such. As Perejaume, one of the most important contemporary Catalan artists, says, Catalonia has been a ‘tubercle’ that has struggled to survive between two ‘radiant’ states: France, with the Sun King, and Spain, with an empire on which the sun never set. However, from this ‘potato full of eyes’ that is Catalonia there has always sprouted a synthesis between the old and the new: the rebellious tradition of modernity that defies modern totalitarisms without wishing to sink back into atavism; a way of doing things that has been a constant in the thread that unites Gaudí, Miró, Tàpies and more. When the Catalan poet Maria Mercè Marçal dedicates a line of verse to her daughter —‘For you I want to be nation without an empire’— she is rightly claiming the middle way of a universal yet locally rooted freedom; a space of one’s own to emancipate oneself alongside others without wanting to impose on them. And what are the catalogues of contemporary art exhibitions if not declarations of independence by small nations without empire?

Brief dispatch from the art front

Montse Frisach

Contemporary artistic practices in Catalonia address issues such as the climate and social crises, decolonialism, narrative autobiography, sexual identity, the relationship between the space and the body, the recovery of historical memory, care, and the celebration of techniques historically downgraded as minor and linked to women, such as textile art. And while these areas of interest are connected to international trends, often through participatory practices and the expanded arts, traditional disciplines also persist.

How do the artists connect with the public? Catalonia, a territory that is not a sovereign state as such, has articulated an art ecosystem as a mix of the public and the private sectors, an ecosystem that started out with an evident lack of infrastructure but is today, despite budgetary insufficiencies, a fully consolidated system. The public museums, associated with one another in several overlapping networks, are currently engaged in redefining their social role, re-reading their

collections, and promoting exchanges with one another. In Barcelona, in addition to the two major public museums – the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (MNAC) and the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA) – there is a great diversity of contents on offer in the numerous public and private exhibition centres that regularly show contemporary art, such as Fabra i Coats, Fundació Vila Casas, CaixaForum, La Capella, and Arts Santa Mònica. Of note outside the capital are the Museu Morera in Lleida and the Museu d'Art Modern in Tarragona. The single-artist centres dedicated to the great names of 20th century Catalan art – notably the Picasso Museum, the Fundació Joan Miró, the Tàpies Museum and the Dalí Theatre-Museum – have also been decisive in the dissemination of local and international art.

At the same time, Catalonia's Public System of Visual Arts Entities supports some thirty contemporary art centres across the country, such as Bòlit in Girona, La Panera in Lleida and ACVIC in Vic, and in addition to hosting exhibitions these often generate in-house projects. Other important links in the chain of artistic production are the various creation factories and residence spaces, all with a strong commitment to interdisciplinarity, such as La Escocesa, Homesession and Hangar in Barcelona, L'Estruch in Sabadell, and the Roca Umbert in Granollers.

Mention should also be made of the vitality of the photography scene in Catalonia, as represented by dynamic, dedicated ventures such as La Virreina Centre de la Imatge, the Foto Colectania foundation and the Fundación MAPFRE's KBr centre, all in Barcelona, and a healthy number of festivals, such as Art Photo Bcn, Lumínic in Sant Cugat, Panoràmic in Granollers and SCAN in Tarragona.

In addition, with around 150 establishments throughout the country, and despite the downturn in collecting since 2008, the private gallery sector is steadfast in its dissemination of art, regularly organising events for the general public such as Barcelona Gallery Weekend, Art Nou and Setmana de l'Art. If it is true that there is no truly major art fair, there are well-established international competitions such as Loop, dedicated to video art, and Swab, which specialises in up-and-coming artists.



Pilar Parcerisas

Manresa, 1957

Pilar Parcerisas has a PhD in Art History. She has curated more than sixty exhibitions and worked in all the major disciplines and formats: physical works; multimedia installations; documentary, performative, photographic, videographic and textual formats and more. For Parcerisas, the purpose of curating is 'to fix the supports on which contemporary art rests through the creative proposals of the artists so that these can gradually be incorporated into the history of art'. In her curatorial work she is particularly concerned with 'the concept of the exhibition and its visual and/or plastic narrative, to ensure that it can communicate well and be legible to all audiences'. Among her exhibition projects she highlights *Ideas and Attitudes. The Conceptual Art in Catalonia* (1992), *Dalí. Elective Affinities* (2004), and *Illuminations. Visionary Catalonia* (2009). Parcerisas took part in a curatorial seminar with Harald Szeemann, 'creator of the concept of curatorship for art in the 20th century' and curator of the exhibitions that have marked Parcerisas most deeply, such as the Joseph Beuys anthology (1993-94) or the 1997 Lyon Biennale. For art to flourish, Parcerisas believes it must 'educate the sensibility and the sense of play and create a society with criteria, that is open to the unknown and cultivates intuition and creativity in the world of work'. At the same time, the artist must be able 'to make work that explains itself as much as possible, that does not rely on a lot of cryptic texts to be understood and that, be it poetic or narrative, the keys to understanding it are clear'. She presents here the artists Joan Rabascall and Daniela Ortiz.

Joan Rabascall

Barcelona, 1935



Joan Rabascall is one of the Catalan artists whose work has enjoyed international projection since he moved to Paris in 1962, where he connected with the new artistic currents in the city: Pop art, sociological art and conceptual art. He experienced the events of May 1968 and, with Miralda, Benet Rossell and Jaume Xifra, was one of the group that Pierre Restany called *Les Catalans de Paris*. He has been one of the artists most critical of consumer society, the mass media, Francoist Spain and television as a manipulator of consciousness. He explicitly denounced the tourist and cultural policies of the dictatorship and has also challenged the teaching and practice of painting based on manuals.

Daniela Ortiz

Cusco, Peru, 1985



Daniela Ortiz is an artist and activist of Peruvian origin who works in painting, photography, performance and video. She was trained in Peru and at the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Barcelona, a city in which she lived for thirteen years at a time when critical discourses on immigration, racism, gender issues and colonialism and decolonisation were at their height. From a position of conceptual formalism she has denounced colonial, capitalist and patriarchal power and exposed the system of migration control in Spain and Europe. Her voice in the media was strong enough to provoke a reaction from certain extremist groups opposed to such discourse and, feeling threatened, in 2020 she decided to return to the country of her birth.



Conxita Oliver

Barcelona, 1957

Conxita Oliver is a historian, art critic and curator. She is dedicated above all to the recovery of artists forgotten by historiography and to the rereading of trends and movements so as to champion past generations and accord them the place they deserve. For Oliver, 'curating is simply one of the ways of looking, re-reading, explaining, expressing and creating conceptual discourses and visual stories with scientific content drawn from documentary sources, and always at the service of the real needs of the past and the present'. She regards curating as 'an exchange relationship', one that must involve the artist and the coordination and design teams, because creating an exhibition is 'a collective work'. Of note among the shows she has curated are *Antoni Tàpies. Intervened Bronzes. 1987-1989* at the Museu de Valls (2024) and *Another Art. Informalism in Catalonia. 1956-1966* (with Joan Gil Gregorio), at the Museu d'Art de Girona (2023-2024). She believes that for art to flourish we need 'transversal structures and systematic public policies to support artistic creation'. For Oliver, 'the artist has to generate a critical and participatory agora in which art becomes a requirement for personal growth'. She admires the curator and art historian Rosa Martínez, who was co-director of the Venice Biennale in 2005 and 'has won international acclaim for her innovative approach to curating art exhibitions over more than 30 years'. She presents here the artists Jordi Tolosa and Mar Arza.

Jordi Tolosa

Badalona, 1956



Image, content and word have attained an indissociable communion in the work of Jordi Tolosa. He is the creator of installations and sculptures that turn the gaze towards the interior of the human subject and his or her relationship with the universe. Energy as a source, thought as a spring and nature as a regenerator engage together in a relationship of intersections to arrive at the outer limit of interior situations. Eminently autobiographical, his research becomes a meditation on the passage of time and the concept of the self in relation to language (culture) and image (landscape). Steel, iron, aluminium, glass, silicone, photography, video, light, sound... all act expressively. With limited expressive resources, he manages to break away from individual memory to connect with the universal.

Mar Arza

Castelló, 1976



Since her first beginnings, Mar Arza has made use of the materiality of the word and the text to create objects, sculptural works and installations through which she reflects on language and makes of it a malleable raw material. Using pages from books she meticulously dissects texts, sentences and words by erasing them, cutting them out or incorporating them into new volumetric realities to construct a new narrative. Lifted out of their original context, the words acquire new connotations, be it conceptually, verbally or plastically. She has recently explored motherhood, fertility and the female body in an iconographic approach to ancestral forms through which to continue to exercise space and memory.



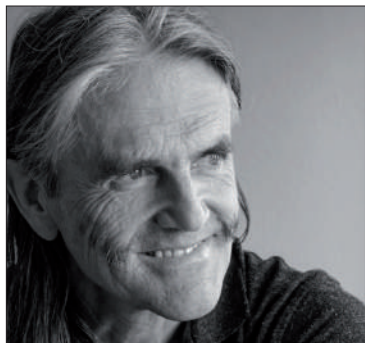
Martí Peran

Mataró, 1961

Martí Peran is an art critic, curator and professor of Art Theory at the University of Barcelona, and co-director of the curatorial training platform On Mediation. Peran points to the increase in formal training in the field that has established the curator as ‘a crucial actor in the consolidation of the Art System but at the price of serving dominant narratives’ and considers that the less ‘formatted’ curators are the ones generating the most interesting projects. In his work he addresses ‘the crisis of the modern project, the transformations of life scenarios, the dubious roles that art plays in these transformations, the need to conjugate time in playful ways and the urgency to rummage tools with which to think life in another way’. He has worked in various exhibition formats but identifies strongly with the essay model. Of his projects, he highlights *General Indisposition. Essay on fatigue* (Fabra i Coats, 2016) and *The idiot* (Bòlit, Girona, 2024) since in both cases the exhibition was complemented with an essay. He values the work of artist curators such as Nemesio Antúnez or Marcel Broodthaers and has been much influenced by exhibitions that have shaped his vision of curating: ‘A tiny project in an unlikely space or a striking take on canonical art.’ The artist’s connection with the public ‘must be channelled through trust in their abilities to share and co-produce strangeness in the sphere of the sensible, political and ethical’. He presents here the artists Perejaume and Jaume Plarch.

Perejaume

Sant Pol de Mar, 1957



© Martín García

When Perejaume asks his work if it wants to be exhibited, it tends to say no. Here's the solution: *Stop making an exhibition* (MACBA, 1999) given that, *Oh Perejaume, if you saw the mass of artworks around you, you wouldn't make any more!* (La Pedrera, 2011). The culture of excess that repeats everything has become an excess of culture. All the countless works want to be present and multiply everywhere forever. There are so many of and for all kinds that no one can take care of them. Perhaps we could try to shut up and listen harder to things that are already saying plenty (*Hearism*), but there are also ways to undo. First of all, a renaissance and, instead of bringing things and places into the practice of art —the whole procession of forms of representation— turn it around and take artworks out to places so as to keep them as they really are. Parading an altarpiece or painting a painting returning to Olot is not ethnographic localism but a way of 'keeping on the land the perfection of the land'.

Jaume Pitarch

Barcelona, 1963



In the work of Jaume Pitarch, the point of balance has nothing to do with the weighing up that promises unanimity. On the contrary, what indicates an exact equilibrium is the purest paradox: the coexistence of two opposite extremes which for all their antagonism remain complete and dependent on each other. Balance is not a synthesis that cancels the opposition between differences but simply the materialising of that opposition. That is why the balance is not classical but baroque, sophisticated, and the product of an exacting artifice. Equilibriums: bringing something into view requires a cleansing of such magnitude that the dust it raises in fact conceals it. Just as washing one's hands can evoke ignominy (*Aleppo Soap*, 2014-16) and lies ensure the stability of an apparently aseptic ecosystem (*Pinocho*, 2005).

«The
collection
is a part of
a collective
memory,
whose
utopian
content we
should always
question»

Harald Szeemann



© Roberto Ruiz

Frederic Montornés

Sitges, 1963

Frederic Montornés studied Art History and trained as an independent curator of exhibitions at the *École du Magasin* in Grenoble. On his return from France he curated *Espai 13* at the *Fundació Joan Miró* for three consecutive years. He came to curating by discarding everything that did not interest him in art and has worked as an independent curator since 1990. For him, the function of the curator is ‘the same as when Harald Szeemann first professionalised this role in the late 60s: to conceive and carry out exhibitions of interest to the artists and to the people running the space, to the public and to the curator’. By ‘exhibitions of interest’ he means ‘those proposals that emerge outside of commercial and tendentious interests and respond to genuine needs’. The curator’s relationship with the artists must be based on responsibility, honesty and sincerity. Among the exhibitions that have marked him are *Slip of the Tongue*, curated by the artist Danh Vo at the 2015 Venice Biennale, and *Warehouse: The Place of the Invisible* (2019), curated by María Bolaños at the *Museo Nacional de Escultura* in Valladolid. He is convinced that ‘art emerges in any country regardless of the conditions, be they good, adverse, lethal or extraordinary’ and that the main challenge for artists is that ‘someone will stop in front of what they have made, stay for more than three seconds and start to wonder about the nature of what is happening to them, or not’. He presents here the artists Ramon Guillén Balmes and David Bestué.

Ramon Guillén Balmes

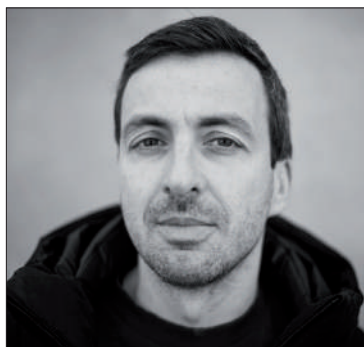
Barcelona, 1952-2001



Ramon Guillén Balmes is an artist who died too young, whose work stands out for its individuality and honesty. Although he trained as a draftsman, it is in his sculptural practice that we understand his approach as one of the best ways to relate to the other. Out of all his oeuvre, Montornés highlights the works grouped under the name *Models of use*, a series generated from proposals the artist made to people very close to him or invitations from friends and acquaintances to create a work that would help them fulfil a desire or fill a void. From this starting point the artist made something the size of the person requesting it that enabled them to make possible a utopia. He tended to work with materials such as white felt and wood.

David Bestué

Barcelona, 1980



David Bestué is an artist whose work, while condensing a careful, rigorous, serious and well-articulated process of research, succeeds in making visible a quality of great value in art that can only rarely be appreciated: imagination. His interpretations of what he finds around him are often a kind of miscellany combining the data obtained from his research, personal experiences, the desire to show the thing from unimaginable angles, the need to break the logic of imposed narratives and the ability to suggest that any point of view on anything is always possible if it is grounded and not just a castle in the air or any old fantasy.

© Laia Serch



© Agus Izquierdo

Montse Badia

Barcelona, 1965

Montse Badia is an independent curator and co-founder and director of the digital platform A*DESK. She studied Art History at the University of Barcelona and took part in the De Appel Curatorial Program in Amsterdam. She works in museums and art centres, independent venues and interventions in the public space, online and in print publications. Among her curatorial projects, *Screens and Pastilles* at ADN Platform (2019) and the *Geysers* program at the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (MNAC) (2022-2024) stand out. Badia believes that the function of the curator is 'to explore issues that are relevant to understanding the world and also to accompany artists in their processes of research and production, and be good interlocutors with the institutions'. In her work she addresses topics such as 'the standardisation in which we live, the loss of rights and the analysis of the past to understand the present'. One of her benchmarks in curating is Valentín Roma, 'for the way in which he approaches subjects of great importance and works with and from the context, without being exclusively local'. Badia believes that for art to flourish it needs 'a good, uncomplicated cultural fabric, one that gives space to artists and cultural professionals to develop projects and create networks of exchange at the local, national and international levels'. For her, 'the artist is someone who questions things, who looks at them from new perspectives and is receptive to tendencies in society, not to replicate them but to situate her —or himself in a shared present'. She presents here the artists Núria Güell and Enric Farrés-Duran.

Núria Güell

Vidreles, 1981



© Arnau Bach

Núria Güell views her artistic practice as ‘a socially and politically necessary practice in which the cultural fact and the established are put into play’. Her work process starts with the research and analysis of data and situations, continues with the framing of questions and results in a proposal for action with real impact. She digs deep into issues that create friction while pointing to the legal interstices through which abuses of power or unjust conditions occur: the heritage as the object of illegal actions, financial dynamics linked to tax evasion, immigration laws, the fiscal privileges of the Catholic church, or the working conditions of artists, among others.

Enric Farrés Duran

Palafrugell, 1983



© P. Ardid

Enric Farrés Duran is a teller of stories in which reality and fiction meet and are modified. His work starts from research, coincidences, fortuitous encounters and the possibility of making connections between different places, objects, circumstances and temporalities. His projects may take the form of installations, objects, guided tours or publications. A couple of examples: *In Order To Find, You Must First Learn To Hide* (2018), a catalogue that is embodied by the artist himself, in the manner of the characters in the novel *Fahrenheit 451*; *Glasses with Museum Glass to Showcase the World* (2023), spectacles with special safety glass that questions the mechanisms of the gaze and the normativity associated with art.



© Adriana López Sanfeliu

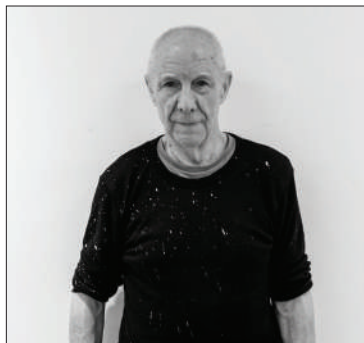
Carles Guerra

Amposta, 1965

Carles Guerra is an art critic, teacher and researcher. He has held executive posts at MACBA, at La Virreina Centre de la Imatge and the Fundació Antoni Tàpies and has curated major exhibitions of artists such as Perejaume, Joaquim Jordà, Ahlam Shibli, Ariella Aïsha Azoulay, Allan Sekula and Harun Farocki. Guerra trained to be an artist at the University of Barcelona, with no intention of becoming a professional curator. 'I started in this by accident, when «curator» wasn't even recognised as a category, and I still wonder if I really want this title,' he says. He sees the function of the curator as that of a mediator, engaging with the more unorthodox artistic practices and transforming them into an essay-like display. According to Guerra, whose guiding lights are curators such as Ute Eskildsen and Catherine David, there is no reason why contemporary art should not be popular. 'You need to work hard to socialise what often comes across as a solipsistic statement.' He recently curated a series of four major exhibitions dedicated to Francesc Tosquelles (1912-1994), a mind-blowing radical Catalan psychiatrist. 'I'm interested in things that pose a challenge for the logic of the exhibition, translating practices that were not intended to end up in the museum, such as transforming what was experienced in psychiatric institutions to make it the subject of a debate. I want the exhibition to be a catalyst for research and to bring out something that was not evident in the objects that make it up.' He presents here the artists Pere Noguera and Patricia Dauder.

Pere Noguera

La Bisbal d'Empordà, 1941



© Adolf Alcañiz

I am passionate about the work of Pere Noguera because his output cries out that we stop labelling it with terms such as Arte Povera and Conceptual Art. All that is nothing but noise that sets him apart from the more local aspects that give his work the soundest character. Spattered mud that evokes climate catastrophe, photocopies that endlessly repeat poor images, minimal actions and accumulations of found objects that together make an assemblage of striking proportions. This is the gist of what he does. In fact, Pere Noguera's most fully achieved work is his own studio, an old cork factory where floor by floor he creates a composting of heterogeneous materials. There you will find a body of work that refuses to be classed as art but is now too big for a museum to swallow.

Patricia Dauder

Barcelona, 1973



© Quintas fotografías

I like Patricia Dauder because she is an artist stubbornly committed to slowness, which is precisely where the power of her work comes from. She works along the blurred bounds between cinema, painting and sculpture. Rather than generating artworks, I would say that her pieces are the remnants of a persistent erosion. I would even go so far as to see them as the result of a process of degeneration, be it of the materials or of the original forms. She often seems to me like a reincarnation of Agnes Martin, returned from the afterlife to tell us that her work is now more necessary than ever. Patricia Dauder lays her hand on the sore spot of the art system, not in a sensationalist way, but understanding it as an ecosystem integrated in the dynamics, sometimes imperceptible, of climatology.

«I believe that
play is a political
category, which
allows us to
come together
with and despite
our differences»

Joanna Warsza



© Laia Serch

Antònia Folguera

Lleida, 1973

Antònia Folguera defines herself as a multimedia adventurer. She studied film, video and television production and directing, and interactive web design and programming, but thinks of herself as self-taught. A curator of festivals, conferences, podcasts and radio shows, her work moves across the terrains of digital art and culture, communication and electronic music. She has curated Sónar+D, Sónar Festival's creative technologies conference, and is a member of the curatorial teams of Eufònic Festival and STRP (Eindhoven, Netherlands). She is also a co-founder of XRCB (Barcelona Community Radio Network), a community-based ethical and techno-political podcasting and streaming platform which (among other things) prototypes and researches the radio of the future. She involves herself in curating to share with others the things that fascinate her and believes that the function of the curator is to open up new themes, works, artists and ideas, designing different formats (concerts, conferences, exhibitions, podcasts, books...) and connecting different people and different worlds. She cites as a reference Pedro Soler, curator of the most technological aspect of Sónar from the late 90s to the mid 2000s. Of the many projects she has worked on she makes special mention of XRCB, the Co-vision initiative she is carrying out at Eufònic—in which the natural heritage connects with digital art— and her curating for Sónar+D Lisbon in 2022. She presents here the artists Playmodes and Andrea Badia.

Playmodes

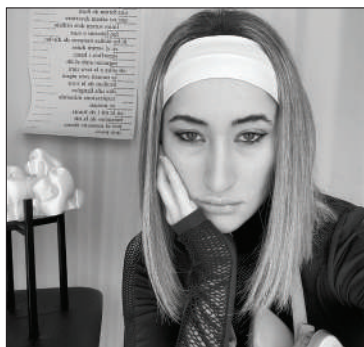
Since 2006



Playmodes is an audio-visual research studio founded by Eloi Maduell (1975) and Santi Vilanova (1980). Trained in the fields of graphic design, musical composition and computer engineering, this duo of digital artisans made a name for themselves as part of the veteran collective Telenoika, working in video mapping when the technique was within reach of a select few. They work in large-format experiences such as immersive light installations, sculptural mechanisms, kinetic engines, stage sets or multimedia concerts, in which the limits to what can be done with the different technologies used in digital art are pushed to the edge: mechatronics, lasers, generative art, algorithms... Playmodes is one of the most internationally acclaimed audio-visual studios in Catalonia.

Andrea Badia

Barcelona, 1996



Andrea Badia is an experimental media artist. Trained in graphic design and digital art, she works in the hybrid zone between the digital and the physical, exploring different ways of fashioning virtualised realities. She gives physical substance to digital figures and forms, with the aim of moving all that is contained in the two dimensions of the screen into the physical world, and invites us to visit her virtual imaginary via the physicality of our own bodies. Badia has worked with Ontologies Feministas as part of a residency in Tik Tok, courtesy of El Mèdol art centre (Tarragona), and has shown her work in numerous collective exhibitions: Fabra i Coats art centre, Sónar+D, Llum, and the indie film festival L'Alternativa. She is one to watch.



© Laia Serch

Alexandra Laudo

Barcelona, 1978

Alexandra Laudo has an MA in Visual Arts Administration from New York University and has participated in the CuratorLab curatorial education course under the direction of Joanna Warsza. She has worked at the Museu Tàpies, and has been a freelance curator since 2012, exploring themes such as the history of the gaze, the study of time and the policies that regulate it, narrative, story, and the use of text and orality in artistic practice. For some years now she has included performativity and oral narrative in her curatorial practice, believing as she does that the curator ‘must create meanings and construct sense by means of relationships, both between works of arts and between these works and their context and tradition’. Of her work, special mention should be made of the performative lecture *An Intellectual History of the Clock* as well as of *To Lean on an Oblique Sunbeam* (2020), an expanded writing project in chapters that was posted online at sunrise and taken down at sunset. When she works with artists, she aims to follow up on all of their work: ‘They are long-term relationships, with moments of more or less continuity and intensity.’ Laudo is committed to curating as being collective in nature, in contrast to the model of the ‘star curator’, and believes that if art is to flourish there must be policies which make it clear that art and culture are ‘central elements of life’: ‘But the most important thing is for all this to be framed in a more general radical movement of decommodification and deceleration of life.’ She presents here the artists Lúa Coderch and Martí Madaula.

Lúa Coderch

Iquitos, Peru, 1982



Lúa Coderch's work denotes intelligence, sophisticated humour, and lucid and sensitive thinking about life and human existence. She makes videos, installations, sound pieces and performances, she has a highly developed sense of space and of the exhibition mechanism. Her practice is centred on an interest in narrativity and the object, and engages themes that almost always relate to personal and historical narratives and the social construction of subjectivity. She has work in major contemporary art museums such as MACBA (Barcelona) and MUSAC (León) and has exhibited in spaces such as the Fabra i Coats contemporary art centre, the Fundació Joan Miró, CentroCentro (Madrid), MUAC (Mexico City) and SMART (Netherlands).

Martí Madaula

Sabadell, 1996



© Olivier Collet

A central aspect of Martí Madaula's artistic practice, which is deployed in videos, publications, performances and installations, is the articulation of narratives in which writing and images are combined. Madaula focuses on everyday life, the construction of bonds, intimacy and affect, and engages these from a fine sensibility with a deeply personal poetics and an emphatic attention to what is simple but profound. His first film, *The Living Wardrobe*, premiered at the Visions du Réel festival (2024); his book *Com conquerir l'espai* [How to conquer space] was published in 2020, and he has shown in La Capella (Barcelona), the Museu d'Art de Sabadell, SITE 280 Gallery (Chicago), and the UGent astronomical observatory (Ghent), among other spaces.



© Violeta Mayoral

Oriol Fontdevila

Manresa, 1978

Oriol Fontdevila is a curator and researcher in art. He is the author of the essay *El arte de la mediación* (consonni, 2018) and is working on a PhD thesis about the Manifesta biennial. He curated the Catalan Collateral Event in the 2022 Venice Biennale and has been a member of the curatorial team of the European project *Performing the Museum*. He has curated exhibitions at Hauser & Wirth Menorca, at the Fundació Joan Miró, and at the Fundació Antoni Tàpies, where he collaborated with Laurence Rassel, whose legacy he champions for helping us understand the art institution as a common space. For Fontdevila, the function of the curator is ‘to fight against predictability and the collectivising of uncertainty’. As he sees it, there is a need for a general perception of art as an everyday practice, with all the complexity inherent in the one and the other. In his projects, the concept of situated practice serves him as a benchmark for working from local specificity while questioning the role of the exhibition in the production of universals. He is concerned about art as a space for dialogue and transformation. ‘I don’t always have the opportunity to embrace it in my work with the intensity that I would like, due to my own inability and the limitations of the artistic and institutional environment.’ He presents here the artists Javier Peñafiel and Mercedes Pimiento.

Javier Peñafiel

Zaragoza, 1964



Javier Peñafiel describes himself as ‘a draughtsman who uses voices, at times a scribe’, so much so that he no longer sees a difference between writing and drawing in that they translate each other. All of this comes to us in books and sketchbooks amplified by multimedia collage and dramatised talks (*confedramas*). The performance he did at the Museum of Funeral Carriages in Barcelona, *Perfecting Death*, was a turning point. In his critique of the institutional art system, Peñafiel also denounces endogamy. ‘We are left with no audience, we are our audience because of mediocre, lazy practices.’ *Never Again an Absent Audience*, a work that resulted from his involvement in the curatorial practice seminar *On Mediation*, is priceless. He is the definitive anti-referent of his own generation. Everything about Peñafiel is contrary, including himself. A machine for generating uncertain thought. His *confedramas* are like visits to an oracle.

Mercedes Pimiento

Seville, 1990



With Mercedes Pimiento I was struck by her *Less than Container Load* at the Nogueras Blanchard gallery, and by how she works with the lack of difference between mould and counter-mould with the delicate piece she showed at the Joan Prats gallery, *Hole in the Ground*. In a way, she revives the debate about the non-specificity of sculpture in the 60s-70s (as in the *Eccentric Abstraction* show curated by Lucy Lippard) without renouncing art’s potential to create a radically different thought. What interests me about her work is its updating of the concept of the negative, which she relates to infrastructural conditions, a key issue of our time for the production of habitat, critical thinking and life in common.

«Today
'the exhibition
curator' —unlike
the Internet
user— retains the
privilege of being
a form giver
and not merely a
content provider»

Boris Groys



© Roberto Ruiz

Rosa Lleó

Barcelona, 1980

Rosa Lleó founded The Green Parrot in 2014, an organisation dedicated to accompanying and showing the work of visual artists which set out to create a space in Barcelona for exhibition and dialogue with local and international agents. For Lleó, who has an MFA in Curating from Goldsmiths, University of London, the work of the curator should consist not so much in the custody and conservation of an object as in caring for the artists and sensitive engagement with the concepts and materials with which they work. She particularly values the work of certain current curators in re-reading collections from contemporary perspectives, less colonial and less patriarchal. Of note among her recent projects is *Reenchantments*, a re-reading of the MuEC museum of ethnology and world cultures in Barcelona, which has involved significant research and negotiation with the museum's collections. She believes that if art is to flourish there must be, first and foremost, peace and freedom of expression. In the Catalan context she favours 'disengaging from the local political agenda, encouraging and facilitating the conditions for patronage and establishing an agile and proactive plan for international connections'. She feels that when connecting with the public, 'the artist must function not only at a conceptual or theoretical level but also at an aesthetic, sensorial, sensual level'. In her writing and curating she seeks to 'encourage a poetic gaze, with a close and sincere language that can foster different ways of seeing and thinking about the world'. She presents here the artists Daniel Steegmann Mangrané and Agnes Essonti.

Daniel Steegmann Mangrané

Barcelona, 1977



© Teresa Estrada

I curated a small solo show of Daniel Steegmann Mangrané's work in the first space of The Green Parrot in the Gothic quarter in 2016, when he already had a long international trajectory but very little in Barcelona. This year he has had an impeccable exhibition at MACBA with several installations and videos that create an idea of cosmology and of a personal perspective, with the rainforest and its non-human inhabitants as protagonists. The twenty years he lived in Rio de Janeiro helped him develop a unique practice quite different from the Catalan context, with a balance between spatial experience of physical and sensory pleasure and the subtlety of concepts from contemporary anthropology that suggest possibilities for our world system.

Agnes Essonti

Barcelona, 1996



I worked with Agnes Essonti for a rereading of objects in the collection of the MuEC museum of ethnology and world cultures. She is a multidisciplinary artist who works in an intuitive and delicate way on her condition, between a system of European rationalism and African cosmologies with values such as spirituality and ancestry. Her diasporic identity and her body have been the locus from which to work, always in a poetic and plastic way based on videos or performances. Photography has been her main medium, but she also works on the relational aspect of food and ritual. She is a member of the Mango & Okra collective, which works from the stories and cultures of food as a site of resistance and pleasure.



© Albert Malet

Albert Mercadé

Barcelona, 1981

Albert Mercadé is a historian, art critic and independent curator who is currently president of the ACCA association of Catalan art critics, artistic director of the Fundació Arranz-Bravo, and commissioner of the L'Hospitalet cultural district. For Mercadé, curating is 'a journey back and forth into the depth of the artist's soul', and he sees this task as centred on 'distinguishing the most singular aspects; selecting those works that show and demonstrate; devising a concept that narrates the exhibition, setting this in relation to a context and communicating it to the wider society'. Of note among the shows he has curated is *Our Garden Needs Its Flowers. Flows and narratives in the cultural district of L'Hospitalet* (2021, with David Armengol). Mercadé believes that for art to flourish there is a need to 'divert to it some of the money allocated to the digital world in the name of culture in order to achieve a minimally civilised structure'. He considers that contemporary artists 'essentially feel that the challenge is not to connect with the public but with themselves' and adds that 'if this intimate communication is without concessions, social communication comes about by itself'. An exhibition that has marked him in a special way is *Live In Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form*, curated by Harald Szeemann at the Kunsthalle Bern in 1969, because it 'represented Conceptual Art with ideas and actions'. He particularly admires the curator Frederic Montornés, because he brings together the three qualities that a curator must have: 'sensitivity, discursive ability, and critical spirit'. He presents here the artists Jordi Colomer and Alba Mayol Curci.

Jordi Colomer

Barcelona, 1962



© Miquel Coll

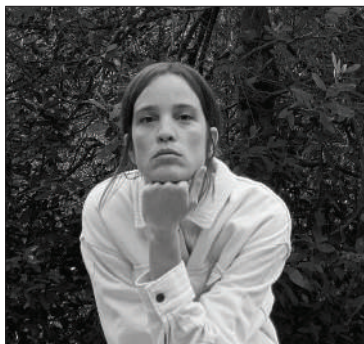
Jordi Colomer works in the fields of sculpture and installation, photography and video art. Having studied both Fine Art and Architecture, he has also worked as a scenographer and many of his actions put the habitual uses of architecture and urban space to the test. His interdisciplinary project seeks to be a nomadic, utopian, collaborative, cosmopolitan art, close to local communities and critical of society. The result is a body of work in which he experiments with the sound, motion and volume of objects in space and above all reflects on the situation of the viewer in the exhibition setting. His themes are the city, nomadism, the peripheral, popular imagination, humour, community, provisionality, fiction, and utopia.

Alba Mayol Curci

Barcelona, 1979



Alba Mayol is a writer and visual artist. Her work explores the possibilities of permeability between text and image. She has exhibited at the Fundació Joan Miró and Arts Santa Mònica. Her art begins with writing and drawing, understood as primary actions that orbit around atmospheric places, and this also allows her to work with words and matter on the margins of the dominant discourses. The means with which Mayol materialises her artistic sensibility and activism are written language, ceramics, drawing, video, photography, lines of reflection on subjectivity, consciousness, form, touch, and sensation in nature and language as opportunities for fluid existences.



Anna Manubens

Barcelona, 1984

Anna Manubens is director at Hangar, a centre for artistic research and production in Barcelona. Previously, she was Head of Public Programmes at CAPC Bordeaux, before which, she was an independent curator and producer with a preference for hybrid roles at the intersection between writing, research, public programming, institutional analysis and curating. One of the projects she launched at Hangar is *InfraMaintenance*, which sets out to explore how infrastructures govern collective interaction and life. Manubens starts from the conviction that ‘infrastructures are applied ideologies and govern more, or more effectively, than ideologies. This means that political dissent should not so much be articulated in ever more sophisticated discourse but rather by setting practical forms to intervene the functioning of infrastructures, whether architectural, institutional, bureaucratic, legal or technological. This intervention is what we have been calling “maintenance”, a task that we take up as a form of political intervention that encompasses both care and technique and enables us to update, repair or even dismantle infrastructures.’ For Manubens, the challenge faced by the artist is not so much the fantasized-as-spontaneous connection with the public—in the framework of the current attention economy and quantitative value system—as the relationship they manage to establish with the community that is concerned by, that participates in or has a stake in what the artist is doing. Thereby, the work moves forward within the public sphere more like a shock wave, perhaps slower, but more robust and meaningful. She presents here Sara Manubens and Francesc Ruiz.

Francesc Ruiz

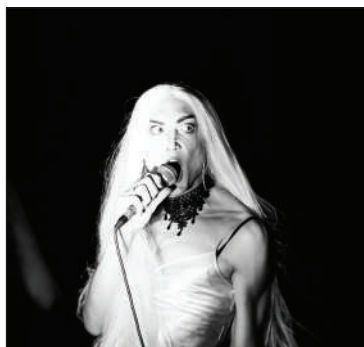
Barcelona, 1971



Francesc Ruiz explores the sites of expression of printed capitalism —the press, comics, pornographic illustration or large-format digital printing— to construct other worlds, be it from the production of informational architectures such as kiosks, specialist bookshops or shopping streets, all focused on the distribution of deviated materials and content; outlining the elements for a possible queer logistics that, by infiltrating the supply chain, could generate a poetics that would allow us to confront the dance of capital. The infrastructural concern inherent to Ruiz's practice is also evident in his reflections on the articulation of the artistic context, its economies, its logistics and its areas of tension at a local and international level.

Sara Manubens

Barcelona, 1989



© Victoriano, KVS

Sara Manubens is an artist, choreographer and transvestite. Her latest stage work, *Symphony of the Seas* (2024), culminates with stubborn insistence a process that she has been developing in a fragmentary but interconnected form in different instantiations, both artistic and educational. Sara addresses the experience of the trans feminine body by bringing together two tools, two epistemic frameworks, of practice and of life. Two different approaches to performativity: transvestite identity and the scenographic-choreographic mechanism that constitutes her professional background. From this intersection she illuminates a dramaturgy and way of appearing on stage, as well as a series of observations which she sets out in her *Independent Manifesto for a Transvestite Performativity*.

«What if the
exhibition site
was conceived as
a laboratory,
or collectively,
in public?»»

Laurence Rassel



© Oriol Gracià

Marc Navarro

Deltebre, 1984

Marc Navarro is a curator and writer based in Berlin. He approaches curating from its most essential function, namely ‘guaranteeing the conditions needed to make something happen’. His path started through writing: ‘Before I started curating, I wrote texts for artists. This undoubtedly had an impact on my way of understanding artistic practices and on my practice as a curator, which is closely linked to writing and editing’. To connect with the public, ‘artists must find a way to communicate their own work without falling into an exercise of pedagogy. Institutions often ask that communication between the artist and the public be as effective and fast as possible, but art needs sometimes a different time and a different model of attention’. Navarro is interested in generating contexts of cohabitation for practices that we do not necessarily perceive as aligned. This includes promoting intergenerational dialogue, shunning the idea of an artist’s trajectory as linear and progressive, and opening up the closed compartments that condition the study of these practices. In his contact with artists he maintains long-term relationships and takes on different roles: writing, accompanying or curating. ‘I work with the artists as if it were a sustained long-lasting dialogue that does not necessarily have a public character,’ says Navarro. He believes that, today, it is necessary to do a thorough and committed work so art and curatorship does not merely become a way of producing ‘content’. He presents here the artists Mari Chordà and Victor Ruiz Colomer.

Mari Chordà

Amposta, 1942



© Xavi Lozano / WhiteHorse

The recent exhibitions that the Museu d'Art Modern in Tarragona and MACBA have dedicated to Mari Chordà offer a panoramic view of the work of an artist who is key to understanding the development of artistic practices and feminist thought in the context of late Francoism and later Democratic Transition. Her work embraces sculpture, painting and drawing, but she also has a rich poetic vein, as evidenced in books such as *No com un so* (2022). In addition, Chordà was a prime mover in the launch of art spaces Lo Llar (Amposta) and LaSal (Barcelona), pioneering initiatives and hubs of political and cultural agitation. Chordà's work finds its driving forces in sexuality, motherhood and pleasure —and pleasure, as she claims, is subversive.

Victor Ruiz Colomer

Barcelona, 1993



interview, the solo exhibition of work by Victor Ruiz Colomer at fluent (Santander) last March, confirmed the artist's interest in the sculptural object and in spatial practices. On that occasion, Ruiz Colomer transformed the exhibition space by means of precise forceful gestures and gave the architecture a performative character. The intervention played with our perception and at the same time offered strategies to blur the limits of the exhibition as such. As well as his personal projects, Ruiz Colomer is also at the head of the FOC space in L'Hospitalet de Llobregat with a programme that welcomes the work of local and foreign artists and collectives.



© Sandra Calvo

Maria Canelles

Barcelona, 1988

Maria Canelles works in content curation as artistic co-director of the Fundació Joan Brossa, where she has created the PIC curatorial research programme, which each year generates a professional commission for three artists to develop a research and curatorial project. She is interested in exploring 'the potential of the artistic, literary and performative legacies of the avant-garde to generate perplexity and, above all, to continue to inspire contemporary creators even today'. Joan Brossa was a poet and artist who, starting from the poetic text, set out to relate to the rest of the world through radical experimentation, and Canelles also feels very comfortable working from poetry and the textual arts towards the rest of the artistic disciplines. She believes that 'the job of the curator is still today to put together a story. Exhibitions are fictive artefacts that work within their own parameters; we should not confuse them with objective knowledge or discourses that have to do with the truth'. Of the current formats, she is particularly interested in the more participatory ones that do not differentiate the public programme from the exhibition or even rotate the hierarchies between these two languages. She believes that for art to flourish 'all areas of knowledge in society must be united so that art is not just a closed circle. To this end, university research, artistic creation and production, exhibition institutions and even media and educational centres ought to work on art as an indisputable part of human existence'. She presents here Pilar Aymerich and Mar Reykjavik.

Pilar Aymerich

Barcelona, 1943



© Josep M. Cortina

Pilar Aymerich is a long-established Catalan photographer who specialises in photojournalism and portraits. After first studying dramatic art in Barcelona and London she switched to photography in Paris, beginning her career in the late 1960s and becoming an indispensable testimonial voice for understanding social movements such as anti-Francoism, the Transition in Spain or feminist movements. Also very significant is her extensive production of portraits amounting to more than 400 subjects, many of whom have been included in subsequent series over the years. The depth of study and the serenity of these portraits are balanced by action shots that bear witness to decisive periods in the country's contemporary history.

Mar Reykjavik

Sagunt, 1995



Mar Reykjavik studied Fine Arts in Valencia and specialised in the moving image, installation and action. Her artistic proposition is based on the contemporary image, which she manipulates and resignifies. She believes that at present the image can only be saved by the body. Her poetic essays are articulated in the overlap between action, video and installation. She works from a notion of expanded cinema which embraces the body and the object, where text is not always in evidence, but metaphor is almost always present, along with a fine irony that may even turn to laughter. Her work has been shown in Madrid and Barcelona, as well as at Spazio Franco in Palermo, SupermarketArtFair in Stockholm, the Recoleta in Buenos Aires and IAC in Lyon.



© Pep Herrero

Marta Sesé

Lleida, 1992

Marta Sesé works and researches from the practice of curatorship, publishing and art criticism. She has written for various publications specialising in contemporary art and curated exhibitions in galleries and other institutions. She is currently the editorial coordinator of MACBA and writes in different magazines specialising in contemporary culture. She co-directs the Higo Mental project, together with Ricardo Pérez-Hita. Her practice revolves around 'the critical review of the imaginaries, resistance to an aesthetic and experiential homogenisation of temporalities and their links to the matter and construction of forms of belonging'. She believes that the curator must be able to 'set collective dialogues in motion, question narratives, establish poetic and conceptual relationships, and be a listening point for artists'. Of special note among her exhibitions are the David Bestué solo show *City of Sand* at Fabra i Coats contemporary art centre in 2023, and the collective *A Different Disorder*, currently at La Capella. She believes that her relationship with the artists arises from 'shared motivations, which make it possible to establish bonds of trust and not of instrumentality'. For her, the great challenge facing the artist is that 'she or he must take individual responsibility for the connections with the public'. For art to flourish in a country, 'it is necessary to provide contexts of stability, an institutional network that caters to artists in all phases of their career, and better media attention'. She presents here the artists Lucía C. Pino and Helena Vinent.

Lucía C. Pino

Valencia, 1977



The practice of Lucía C. Pino investigates sculpture through different artistic media, understanding language and matter in terms of their performative dimension, rewriting material links and proposing unexpected couplings. Both the materiality and the images or iconographies she proposes are linked to sensuality, desire and pleasure as a sensitive power. In this sense, a transfeminist, queer and class sensibility converge in her sculptural practice, in many cases resulting in sculptures understood as living, hybrid bodies in terms typical of science fiction which invite us to think about other possible and desirable natures. The transmutation of matter and erotic desire are inherent elements in her practice.

Helena Vinent

Barcelona, 1988



Helena Vinent is an artist, researcher and activist who is interested in the production of imaginaries that subvert the functional norms of bodies, approaching the conception of the human, posthuman and infrahuman from her position as a disabled and deaf person. Her artistic practice, which is often posited in the form of installation, encompassing video, photography, text and sculpture, brings us closer to crip-queer discourses by means of elements such as subtitles, noise, prosthesis, error, misunderstanding, the politics of body control or identity-based alliances, in an oeuvre pervaded by her life experience and with an urgency that stems not only from the themes it addresses but also from the sophistication with which it explores artistic languages.

«Artworks, once created, obey their instinct of conservation by badgering us to give them presence»

Perejaume

Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana: Artists from the Catalan context

Antoni Tàpies (1923-2012)
Aurèlia Muñoz (1925-2011)
Moisès Villèlia (1928-1994)
Magda Bolumar (1936)
Antoni Miralda (1942)
Fina Miralles (1950)
Nora Ancarola (1955)
Domènec (1962)
Massa Salvatge & Lluç Mayol (collective; 1970)
Carlos Bunga (1976)
Alba G. Corral (1977)
Tania Safura Adam (1979)
Rosa Tharrats & Gabriel Ventura (1983; 1988)
Lola Lasurt (1983)
Mónica Rikić (1986)
Ariadna Guiteras & Diversorium (1986)
Matías Daporta (1987)
Eva Fàbregas (1988)
Clàudia Pagès (1990)
Tornen a les esquelles (collective)
La Casa dels Futurs (collective)
Jokkoo & cantdefine.me (collective)
OJO estudio (collective)
Transductores (collective)

For more information: manifesta15.org/participants

Arxiu Artistes

Arxiu Artistes (arxiuartistes.cat) is a project promoted by the Institut Ramon Llull and coordinated by the digital magazine A*Desk. It is an information and dissemination service with a vocation to gather, catalogue and promote Catalan contemporary artistic production. Through a database in constant revision and expansion, Arxiu Artistes is a search tool for professionals, curators and institutions in this country and around the world. The site, published in Catalan, Spanish and English, offers easy access to a range of information sources and a plural and inclusive overview. It also allows more specific search following one or several criteria, which may be combined.



You can access to the site
using the QR code

Institut Ramon Llull

The Institut Ramon Llull is the public institution responsible for promoting Catalan language and culture internationally. The Institut represents a cultural and linguistic community of more than 10 million people who participate actively in global events and conversations through arts, literature and knowledge exchange. Through constant dialogue with the world, it builds networks of mutual understanding, recognition, and collaboration. The Institut is a consortium formed by the Government of Catalonia, the Government of the Balearic Islands, Barcelona City Council and Palma City Council. Headquartered in Barcelona, also has offices in Berlin, London, New York and Paris.



You can access to the site
using the QR code

Summary

- 3 Foreword

- 4 To curate without empire, by Joan Burdeus
- 6 Brief dispatch from the art front, by Montse Frisach

- 8 Pilar Parcerisas
- 10 Conxita Oliver
- 12 Martí Peran
- 16 Frederic Montornés
- 18 Montse Badia
- 20 Carles Guerra
- 24 Antònia Folguera
- 26 Alexandra Laudo
- 28 Oriol Fontdevila
- 32 Rosa Lleó
- 34 Albert Mercadé
- 36 Anna Manubens
- 40 Marc Navarro
- 42 Maria Canelles
- 44 Marta Sesé

- 48 Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana:
Artists from the Catalan context
- 49 Arxiu Artistes
- 50 Institut Ramon Llull

Promoted by



Edited by

