

2010-2025

ARCHITECTURE IN BARCELONA

The quiet revolution

Architecture has always been a means by which power expresses itself and demonstrates its strength. Religious powers have done so by building magnificent places of worship, empires by constructing palaces and castles, and multinationals by commissioning impressive headquarters. They've all hired the most prestigious architects of each era to create striking designs that make it very clear who's in charge or who's the most powerful.

This was also the goal of the so-called "iconic" architecture of the early 21st century, in many cases created by well-known architects and often with designs as banal as they are original and poorly connected with their immediate surroundings: namely to impress, but also to ensure acceptance by the public authorities (what harm the "Guggenheim effect" did in this respect!) and to increase the value of the investment. Such designs are conceived from a speculative basis, not from the perspective of the user, the focus being on achieving maximum economic return rather than making those who'll be using the architecture any happier.

However, with the global financial crisis and the bursting of the real estate bubble in 2008, this global phenomenon came to a halt.

With public authorities short of funds, citizens mortgaged up to the hilt (the Platform for People Affected by Mortgages or PAH in Spanish was founded in 2009) and also outraged (the 15-M Movement, or "Revolt of the Indignant", erupted in 2011), and investors out of the picture, a return to common sense became imperative. It was necessary to move from spectacle to realism, from excess to the essential.

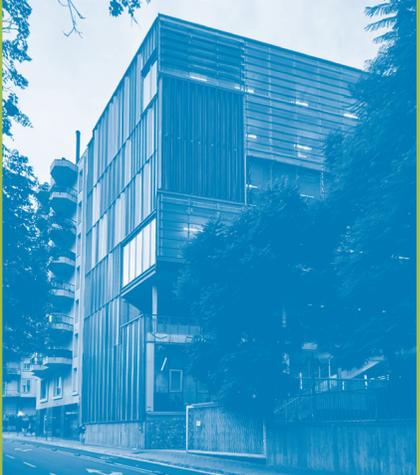
The new scenario forced politicians and architects to rethink the way a city is designed and architecture is carried out. Projects were needed that put people at the centre, that create pleasant, welcoming and functional spaces, that value pre-existing elements, that seek the minimum of environmental impact and maximum energy efficiency and that, finally, reclaim the meaning of "creating city" by taking into account the context in which the architecture is situated.

This situation also forced a large number of architects to rethink how they approach the profession and to incorporate the participation of future users and co-creation as essential components when defining projects.

During these years, and in relation to the climate emergency, there has also been a serious shift towards renaturalising cities. The aim is both to promote the abundant presence of greenery in the city in order to alleviate the "heat island" effect and also to "calm" the city and gain spaces for walking, socialising, resting and playing, at the same time as reducing the air and noise pollution.

Finally, non-equity housing cooperatives have also started to emerge as a result of the lack of public housing, the inaction of the authorities and excessive price rises in the private housing market. Such organisations also propose new forms of cohabitation and, above all, of everyone living in a community.

This map-guide therefore highlights the new proposals that have emerged in architectural and urban design in response to the various crises: financial, ecological and housing.



PASSEIG DE SANT JOAN

Between Diagonal and Arc de Triomf
Lola Domènech. 2011 + 2014

LA SECA. JOAN BROSSA FOUNDATION

Flassaders, 40
Meritxell Inaraja. 2011

TORRE JÚLIA

Via Favència, 348-350
Pau Vidal, Sergi Pons and Ricard Galiana. 2011

Premi Ciutat de Barcelona 2011

FABRA I COATS FACTORY

Sant Adrià, 20.
Recinte Fabra i Coats
Manuel Ruisánchez and Francesc Bacardit (BAMMP)

Premi Ciutat de Barcelona 2012

COLLAGE BUILDING. TERESA PÀMIÉS CULTURAL CENTRE

LIBRARY ESQUERRA DE L'EIXAMPLE - AGUSTÍ CENTELLES, CIVIC CENTRE URGELL AND EL ROURE NURSERY SCHOOL

Urgell, 145
Victor Rahola and Jorge Vidal. 2012

EL BORN (MUHBA)

Pl. Comercial
Enric Sòria and Rafael de Cáceres (architectural project), BOPBAA and Varis Arquitectes (museography and interior design). 2013

Premi Ciutat de Barcelona 2013

AREA AROUND EL BORN MARKET

Pl. Comercial + Comerç + Fusina + Ribera
Vora. 2013 + 2019

Premi Ciutat de Barcelona 2013

URÀNIA VILLA

Saragossa, 29
Sumo. 2014

REHABILITATION OF THE ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUN BATTERIES

Turó de la Rovira
Imma Jansana and Jordi Romero. 2014

European Prize for Urban Public Space 2012

LIBRARY SANT GERVASI - JOAN MARAGALL

Sant Gervasi de Cassoles, 85
BCQ. 2014

Premi Ciutat de Barcelona 2014

SKATE PARK MAR BELLA

Av. Litoral, 106
SCOB. 2014

CIVIC CENTRE BARÓ DE VIVER

Quito, 8-10
Territori24. 2014

ALCHEMIKA FACILITIES

Indústria, 295
Oliveras Boix. 2015

ELBORN UNDERGROUND STATIONS

MERCABARNA, PARC LOGÍSTIC AND EUROPA-FIRA

Line 9
Garcés-de Seta-Bonet Arquitectes. 2015

FAD Award Interior Design 2016

SALA BECKETT THEATRE

Pere IV, 228
Flores i Prats. 2016

Premi Ciutat de Barcelona 2016

CRISTALLERIES PLANELL

Doctor Ibáñez, 38
HAarquitectes. 2016

HOUSING BLOCK «110 ROOMS»

Provença, 203
Maio. 2016

RAMBLA DE SANTS. ELEVATED GARDENS OF SANTS

Sants
Ana Molino and Sergi Godia. 2016

APROP HOUSING BLOCK, CIUTAT VELLA

Nou de Sant Francesc, 10
Straddle3. 2018

CENTRE OF COMMUNITY LIFE, TRINITAT VELLA

Via Favència, 399 + Ctra. de Ribes
HazArquitectura. 2018

LLEIALTAT SANTS ENCA COMMUNITY CENTRE

Olzinelles, 31
HAarquitectes. 2017

Premi Ciutat de Barcelona 2017

NEST CITY LAB

Àlaba, 100
apocapoc bcn + slowUp (Sandra Martín Lara). 2017

GARDENS OF DOCTOR PLA I ARMENJOL

Av. Mare de Déu de Montserrat, 132
Espai LUR. 2017

INDUSTRIAL STUDIOS

Ramon Turró, 168-170
Núria Salvadó and Josep Anglès. 2017

LA BORDA, COOPERATIVE HOUSING PROJECT

Constitució, 85-89
Lacol. 2018

Premi Ciutat de Barcelona 2018

Mies van der Rohe Award Emerging Category 2022

ANTÒNIA VILÀS GARDENS

Balboa, 36 + Ginebra, 43
Beatriz Borque and Miquel Mariné. 2018

OLIVA ARTÉS (MUHBA)

Espronceda, 142-146
BAAS (Jordi Badia). 2020

ALI BEI HOUSING BLOCK

Ali Bei, 100-102
Pau Vidal. 2020

ALI BEI HOUSING BLOCK

Ali Bei, 100-102
Pau Vidal. 2020

ALI BEI HOUSING BLOCK

Ali Bei, 100-102
Pau Vidal. 2020

ALI BEI HOUSING BLOCK

Ali Bei, 100-102
Pau Vidal. 2020

ALI BEI HOUSING BLOCK

Ali Bei, 100-102
Pau Vidal. 2020

TURÓ DE LA PEIRA SPORTS CENTRE

Sant Iscle, 50
Anna Noguera and Javier Fernández. 2019

Premi Ciutat de Barcelona 2019

SUBSIDISED HOUSING FABRA I COATS

Sant Adrià, 20.
Recinte Fabra i Coats
Roldán + Berengué. 2019

LA COMUNAL. COOPERATIVE SPACE

Riera d'Escuder, 38 + En Blanco + Tenor Magini
Lacol. 2019

CARRER CRISTÓBAL DE MOURA

Between Bac de Roda and Provençals and between Josep Pla and Maresme
Barcelona City Council. 2019 + 2025

LA CHALMETA, COOPERATIVE HOUSING PROJECT

Ulldecona, 26
Pau Vidal + Vivas Arquitectos. 2021

LA MAR BELLA SCHOOL

Pl. Sant Bernat Calbó, 2
Sumo. 2021

GRÀCIA FAB LAB

Perill, 8
Oliveras Boix. 2019

HOUSING BLOCK FOR 4 FRIENDS

Pujades, 251
Lola Domènech, Lussi Studio and Lussi + Partner AG. 2019

KÀLIDA CENTRE

Hospital de Sant Pau
EMBT (Benedetta Tagliabue). 2019

GABRIEL GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ LIBRARY

Treball, 219
Suma Arquitectura. 2022

Premi Ciutat de Barcelona 2022

Mies van der Rohe Award 2024

CIRERERS, COOPERATIVE HOUSING PROJECT

Pla dels Cirerers, 2-4
Celobert. 2022

PLAÇA SÓLLER AND LA BÒBILA CENTRE

Pl. Sòller
Barrio Peaire. 2021-2022

EMERGENCY SHELTER FOR THE HOMELESS

Císter, 20
Vivas Arquitectos. 2023

Profession Award. Architecture Awards 2024 (Spanish College of Architects, CSCAE)

CAMP DEL FERRO MUNICIPAL SPORTS CENTRE

Pl. Albert Badia i Mur, 1
AIA + Barceló Balanzó + Gustau Gili. 2020

LA BALMA, COOPERATIVE HOUSING PROJECT

Espronceda, 131
Lacol + La Boqueria. 2021

«ENTEGRA» OFFICE BLOCK

Tànger, 73 + Badajo
Batlle i Roig. 2022

EIXAMPLE GREEN AREAS ("SUPERBLOCK")

Consell de Cent + Girona + Rocafort + Comte Bbrrell
Various studios. 2023

FIRE BRIGADE TOWER

Parc de Bombers Vall d'Hebron.
Coll i Alentorn, 5
Carles Enrich. 2023

GABRIEL GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ LIBRARY

Treball, 219
Suma Arquitectura. 2022

Premi Ciutat de Barcelona 2022

Mies van der Rohe Award 2024

CIRERERS, COOPERATIVE HOUSING PROJECT

Pla dels Cirerers, 2-4
Celobert. 2022

PLAÇA SÓLLER AND LA BÒBILA CENTRE

Pl. Sòller
Barrio Peaire. 2021-2022

EMERGENCY SHELTER FOR THE HOMELESS

Císter, 20
Vivas Arquitectos. 2023

Profession Award. Architecture Awards 2024 (Spanish College of Architects, CSCAE)

OFFICE BLOCK

Pallars, 180
BAAS (Jordi Badia). 2022

AREA AROUND REC COMTAL

Pl. Primer de Maig, s/n
Carles Enrich. 2022

SUBSIDISED HOUSING BLOCK

Ulldecona + Cal Cisó + Pontils
Coll-Leclerc and Josep Miàs. 2022

GARDENS OF CA L'ARANYÓ

Carrer Roc Boronat + Tànger + Ciutat de Granada
Victor Rahola and Jorge Vidal. 2022

«ENTEGRA» OFFICE BLOCK

Tànger, 73 + Badajo
Batlle i Roig. 2022

EIXAMPLE GREEN AREAS ("SUPERBLOCK")

Consell de Cent + Girona + Rocafort + Comte Bbrrell
Various studios. 2023

FIRE BRIGADE TOWER

Parc de Bombers Vall d'Hebron.
Coll i Alentorn, 5
Carles Enrich. 2023

GABRIEL GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ LIBRARY

Treball, 219
Suma Arquitectura. 2022

Premi Ciutat de Barcelona 2022

Mies van der Rohe Award 2024

CIRERERS, COOPERATIVE HOUSING PROJECT

Pla dels Cirerers, 2-4
Celobert. 2022

PLAÇA SÓLLER AND LA BÒBILA CENTRE

Pl. Sòller
Barrio Peaire. 2021-2022

EMERGENCY SHELTER FOR THE HOMELESS

Císter, 20
Vivas Arquitectos. 2023

Profession Award. Architecture Awards 2024 (Spanish College of Architects, CSCAE)

BLOC4BCN. COOPERATIVE SPACE

Constitució, 19.
Recinte Can Batlló
Vicenç Benítez. 2023

First Prize Edifici 18, 2025

SWITCH. NEW SIMON HEADQUARTERS

Sancho de Àvila, 66
B720 (Fermín Vázquez). 2023

SERIES OF HOUSING "ILLA GLÒRIES"

Pl. de les Glòries + Gran Via + Castillejos + Encants vells + Àlaba
Various architects (Cierito Estudio y Franc Lonch + Bayona-Valero, Cantallops-Vicente, Ensenyat-Tarrida y Haz Arquitectura + Vivas Arquitectos + Pau Vidal + SV60 Cerdón + Liñan Arquitectos). 2024

VALL D'HEBRON RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Pg. Vall d'Hebron, 129
BAAS (Jordi Badia) + Espinet/Ubach. 2024

FAD Award 2025

SUBSIDISED HOUSING BLOCK "GREENH@USE"

Veneçuela, 96-106 + Agricultura
Peris + Toral and Jaime Pastor. 2024

LCI BARCELONA 22@ CAMPUS

Àlaba, 124
Circular Studio. 2024

OFFICE BLOCK

Lluç, 122
BAAS (Jordi Badia). 2025

LES GLÒRIES PARK

Pl. de les Glòries Catalanes
Ana Coello and Agence Ter. (Underway)

Premi Ciutat de Barcelona 2025

OFFICE BLOCK

Lluç, 122
BAAS (Jordi Badia). 2025

LES GLÒRIES PARK

Pl. de les Glòries Catalanes
Ana Coello and Agence Ter. (Underway)

Premi Ciutat de Barcelona 2025

OFFICE BLOCK

Lluç, 122
BAAS (Jordi Badia). 2025

LES GLÒRIES PARK

Pl. de les Glòries Catalanes
Ana Coello and Agence Ter. (Underway)

Premi Ciutat de Barcelona 2025

LES GLÒRIES PARK

Pl. de les Glòries Catalanes
Ana Coello and Agence Ter. (Underway)

Premi Ciutat de Barcelona 2025

THE 2008 FINANCIAL CRISIS AS A TURNING POINT

In the architectural landscape of Catalonia, the 2008 financial crisis represented a watershed. After a decade of colossal construction, the exorbitant urbanisation of land and unbridled speculation, the sector came to a sudden halt and was forced to take a hard look at itself.

Many firms had to lay off staff. The large architecture studios tried to secure commissions abroad to sustain their turnover and the teams they'd set up. Smaller ones had to close down. And a large number of architecture students ended up moving abroad as soon as they finished their degrees, given the almost zero opportunities offered by the local market. The College of Architects also had to cut back on its activities, staff and number of branches.

Within this context, a large part of the sector tried to reclaim the social values of urban planning and architectural practice that had been sidelined in previous years. In fact, the 2008 financial crisis also revealed the significant crisis in values.

It's no coincidence that, in those years, even before the crisis, collectives emerged that questioned the prevailing model of recent times and championed another way of practising architecture: from the bottom up, community-based, with a gender perspective, and in which the participation and involvement of an empowered citizenry are essential: Straddle3 (1998), Collectiu Punt 6 (2004), El globus vermell (2009), Raons (2009), Lacol (2009), Equal Saree (2010), Voltes (2013), etc.

At the same time, the most conventional architectural practice abandoned the previous period's iconic gestures, imposing an expressiveness that stems from "doing more with less" (a departure from Mies's "less is more"), from precision in construction, material sensitivity, the effective management of resources (financial and energy), contextual relations and a focus on future users.

NEW URBAN POLICIES

During this period, the urban policies promoted by Barcelona Council, especially during the eight years the "Barcelona en Comú" party was in power (2015–2023), tended to promote a more equitable, accessible, diverse, sustainable and resilient city.

The city's first "Neighbourhood Plan" was launched in 2016, with the aim of reducing inequalities by means of comprehensive action in those areas with the greatest urban and social shortcomings. The initiative prioritises public spaces and facilities in this transformation.

At the same time, the "Right to Housing Plan 2016–2025" was launched to tackle the emergency in this area. This includes an increase in the amount of public rented accommodation, as well as facilities to help the establishment of non-equity housing cooperatives.

Urban mobility has also been rearranged: introducing an orthogonal bus network, promoting the cycle lane network, creating pedestrian areas within the Cerdà grid and setting up superblocks in various neighbourhoods.

Finally, the "Play in Public Space Plan" was developed, whose aim is to calm and renaturalise the city. This included the launch of the "Let's Protect Our Schools" programme, the creation of green areas with a wider variety of spaces, and avenues transformed into green corridors to ensure the continuity of biodiversity.

Residents were consulted via participatory processes before carrying out many of these projects. This significant boost to citizen involvement includes the digital sphere with the creation, in 2016, of *decidim.barcelona*, the Council's online participation platform. This allows for hybrid processes (in-person and virtual) that make it easier for many more people to participate and ensures transparency and traceability.

Ultimately, the crisis brought about a shift in perspective that now places people at the centre, as active subjects in "creating city" and as the recipients of urban policies aimed at their well-being.

URBAN RENATURALISATION IN THE FACE OF CLIMATE CHANGE

The global average temperature has already risen by approximately 1.5°C compared to the pre-industrial era. And the average sea level has risen by nearly 20 cm since the beginning of the 20th century, at a rate that has accelerated from 2 mm/year to 4.5 mm/year in the past decade.

Meanwhile, in Barcelona the "heat island" effect (the accumulation of heat from materials such as asphalt and concrete) means that the average temperature in the city centre is between 2.5 and 7.0°C higher than in the suburbs or large green areas.

Given these circumstances, Barcelona, one of the cities with the least green space in Europe (less than 7 m² of green per inhabitant), has developed a "Climate Plan" (2018). One of its priorities is to expand the green infrastructure by creating more parks and gardens, planting trees and plant species that are able to withstand the "new" Mediterranean climate, promoting green roofs, etc. The Plan also includes the creation of climate refuges or shelters in public facilities and the construction of rainwater tanks to mitigate the risk of flooding and make use of the water collected for public irrigation.

In this map-guide we highlight nearly fifteen public space projects, many of which include a significant commitment to increasing greenery and biodiversity. Moreover, other projects include green corridors that connect various parks and gardens, allowing biodiversity to spread more easily throughout the urban area. However, we've also included some projects that, given their location and context, aim to increase the diversity of uses of public space, such as skateparks, or to highlight the history of the site, like Plaça Comercial, opposite El Born, and the rehabilitation of the anti-aircraft batteries from the Spanish Civil War.

RECOVER, REHABILITATE, RECONDITION AND REUSE

Construction is one of the industries with the greatest impact on the environment: it consumes up to 60% of all raw materials extracted from the Earth and is responsible for 23% of the world's air pollution, 40% of drinking water pollution and 50% of the waste that ends up in landfill. All this at a time when the data on the irreversibility of climate change are overwhelming - and when globalisation is leading to the homogenisation of cities, with the same franchise stores everywhere and identical architecture in every corner of the planet.

The first point makes us aware of the importance of the built environment and its impact on an already wounded terrestrial ecosystem. The second makes us question who we are and where we come from, and encourages us to preserve built heritage as a testament to our past.

Consequently, recovering, rehabilitating, reconditioning and reusing existing buildings becomes an essential option that not only reduces environmental impact and optimises resources but also preserves architectural heritage as an essential component in the identity of a neighbourhood.

Ultimately, opting to rehabilitate rather than build from scratch is not merely a technical or economic decision but also an ethical and environmental one. It's a way of rethinking how we inhabit the world whilst seeking to respect the planet's limits and build a more sustainable future.

It's no coincidence, then, that the selection of projects in this map-guide includes about fifteen that are rehabilitations of what used to be industrial buildings, workshops, workers' cooperatives and markets. This is a current trend, in many cases taken up belatedly by the authorities after years of protests and demands by local residents.

NON-EQUITY CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING

The aim of this model is to support people's right to housing through collective organisations that provide decent, affordable housing for people grouped into cooperatives who, together, decide how they want to live and therefore what the architectural project must address.

The model has two main features. On the one hand, the housing is owned collectively through the cooperative and, on the other, members are granted an indefinite right to use the housing by means of an initial fee and a monthly lease payment. As a result, whilst avoiding speculation and preventing individual profit, this approach also helps to achieve stable housing as a basis for developing a long-term, neighbourhood-rooted life project.

It's therefore a model that, through self-management (i.e. the active involvement of residents in decision-making), aims to transform society by promoting a solidarity-based, sustainable economy that prioritises the well-being and care of people and the environment, as well as a relationship with the territory.

Architecturally, the overall layout of buildings for non-equity cooperative housing typically encourages contact between residents, usually including both communal spaces that complement the individual residences (lounges and games rooms, guest rooms, a laundry, etc.) and spaces for local neighbourhood organisations. Furthermore, this innovation in terms of the housing model is often combined with innovations in the construction and architecture.

In Catalonia, this approach has been promoted and developed since the beginning of the 21st century by organisations such as Sostre Cívic and La Dinamo, drawing on examples from countries like Denmark, Switzerland and Uruguay, where the model is widespread.

THREE EXHIBITIONS THAT DEFINE THE PERIOD

The period covered by this map-guide is exemplified and explained perfectly by three exhibitions: "Matèria sensible: joves arquitectes catalans" (2010), "Vogadors" (2012) and "Els nous realistes" (2023). These titles clearly reference the main features that define the architects chosen and the architecture of the period: sensitive, realistic and forward-looking but without forgetting the past. An architecture with more sense than passion, with more rigour than frivolity.

The first two, "Matèria sensible" and "Vogadors", were conceived while the country was still suffering the direct effects of the financial crisis but they were able to anticipate the direction architecture would take in the years that followed. Both showcase projects by young Catalan and Balearic architects who, even before the crisis hit, were committed to an approach and a way of approaching and practising the profession that centres on people, place, economic constraints and energy efficiency. In this respect, they could be seen as foundational manifestos for a generation and a moment.

"Els nous realistes", on the other hand, was conceived when this generation and their approach had become fully established and it presents a broader selection. It's therefore a comprehensive compendium that acts as a mirror to definitively consolidate what the first two exhibitions began to hint at and which time has since confirmed.

Matèria sensible: joves arquitectes catalans (Sensitive Matter: Young Catalan Architects)

- **Curated by:** Pere Buil, Carles Càmaras and Joan Vitòria, 2010
- **Locations:** Lisbon (2010), A Coruña (2010), Berlin (2011), Barcelona (2012)

Vogadors (Architectural Powers. Catalan & Balearic Threads)

- **Curated by:** Jordi Badia and Félix Arranz, 2012
- **Locations:** Venice (2012), Barcelona (2013), Toulouse (2013), Strasbourg (2014), Ljubljana (2014), Carcassonne (2015)

Els nous realistes (The New Realists)

- **Curated by:** Carme Ribas and Joan Roig, 2023
- **Locations:** Barcelona (2023)
- **Premi Ciutat de Barcelona 2023**



2010-2025 ARCHITECTURE IN BARCELONA

The quiet revolution

Cooperative housing buildings under usufruct

In operation

- A Princesa49 (J.B. Encarnación, A.Martín, D. Molina, 2018)
- (24) La Borda (Lacol, 2018)
- B La Diversa (2019)
- (39) La Balma (Lacol + La Boqueria, 2021)
- (40) La Chalmeta (Pau Vidal + Vivas Arquitectos, 2021)
- (46) Cirerers (Celobert, 2022)
- C La Xarxaire (La Mar d'arquitectes, 2023)
- D La Morada (Lacol, 2024)

Under construction (2025)

- E Sostrac (Lacol)
- F Empriu (Lacol)
- G La Domèstika (Lacol)
- H Torrent Viu (Celobert)
- I Can 70 (Peris+Torà)
- J Ruderal (Voltes + Celobert)
- K Abril (Lacol)
- L Ca l'Ordit (Pau Vidal + Vivas Arquitectos)
- M La Regadora (Arqbag + Poma Arquitectura)

In project (2025)

- N La Corrala
- O La Xarxaire (2)
- P La Bombeta
- Q Vida cooperativa
- R Aiguablava 74
- S La 111

- Green axes
- Green axes in the planning stage

