A black and white portrait of a middle-aged man with short, dark hair, smiling slightly. He is wearing a dark suit, a white shirt, and a dark tie. He is standing with his hands at his sides. The background is a light-colored wall with some faint, sketchy drawings of figures.

FUNDACIÓ
XAVIER NOGUÉS

Xavier Nogués

CECÍLIA VIDAL MAYNOU

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Xavier Nogués

(1873-1941)

Cecília Vidal Maynou

Xavier Nogués

(1873-1941)

Joan Ainaud de Lasarte

Josep M. Cadena

Jacint Berenguer

Francesc Fontbona

Joan-Francesc Ainaud

Oriol Bohigas

Sandra Moliner

Ricard Pedreira

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FUNDACIÓ
XAVIER NOGUÉS

For more information about the Foundation and the life and work of Xavier Nogués you can visit the website: **www.xaviernogues.org**

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For ISABEL ESCALADA SÀRRIA,
without whom this book would not have been possible.

Authors

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► **Joan Francesc Ainaud** (Barcelona, 1964). Historian and art critic. Patron of the Fundació Xavier Nogués, he is currently director of the art consultancy company ArtisPlus. He has published extensively and lectured in Europe and the United States. He has curated exhibitions and worked as a consultant on museum projects and initiatives promoting historic and artistic heritage. He has worked as an advisor and coordinator on major publications and produced and directed a number of films.

► **Oriol Bohigas** (Barcelona, 1925). Doctor of architecture and member of MBM Arquitectes. Chair of composition (1971) and director (1977-80) of the Escola Tècnica Superior de Barcelona (ETSAB). Director of planning (1980-84) and councillor for culture (1991-94) at Barcelona City Council. President of the Fundació Miró (1981-88), president of Edicions 62 (1975-99), president of the Ateneu Barcelonès, academician at the Accademia Nazionale di San Luca, Rome, (1981) Doctor Honoris Causa from Darmstadt and Santander Universities. Honorary fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) and honorary fellow of the American Institute of Architects (AIA). He has written numerous books and articles for newspapers and journals in Spain and abroad.

► **Sandra Moliner Nuño** (Barcelona, 1973). Doctor of architecture with her thesis *Un viaje en el tiempo: el Poble Espanyol de Montjuïc*. She has been a freelance architect since the year 2000 and a lecturer in architectural graphic expression at the Escola Tècnica Superior d'Arquitectura de La Salle (ETSALS) since 2002, where she has been in charge of the international group, and the Escola Tècnica Superior d'Arquitectura del Vallès (ETSAV) run by the Polytechnic University of Catalonia (UPC), since the academic year 2009-2010. Member of the Fundació Xavier Nogués since 2018.

► **Ricard Pedreira** is patron of the Fundació Xavier Nogués and was a theatre director and actor. He trained at the Escola d'Art Dramàtic Adrià Gual, Barcelona and the Piccolo Teatro, Milan. For seven years he was part of the management team at the Teatre Lliure de Barcelona. He currently lectures at the Autonomous University of Barcelona and still works in the theatre in an artistic and production capacity.

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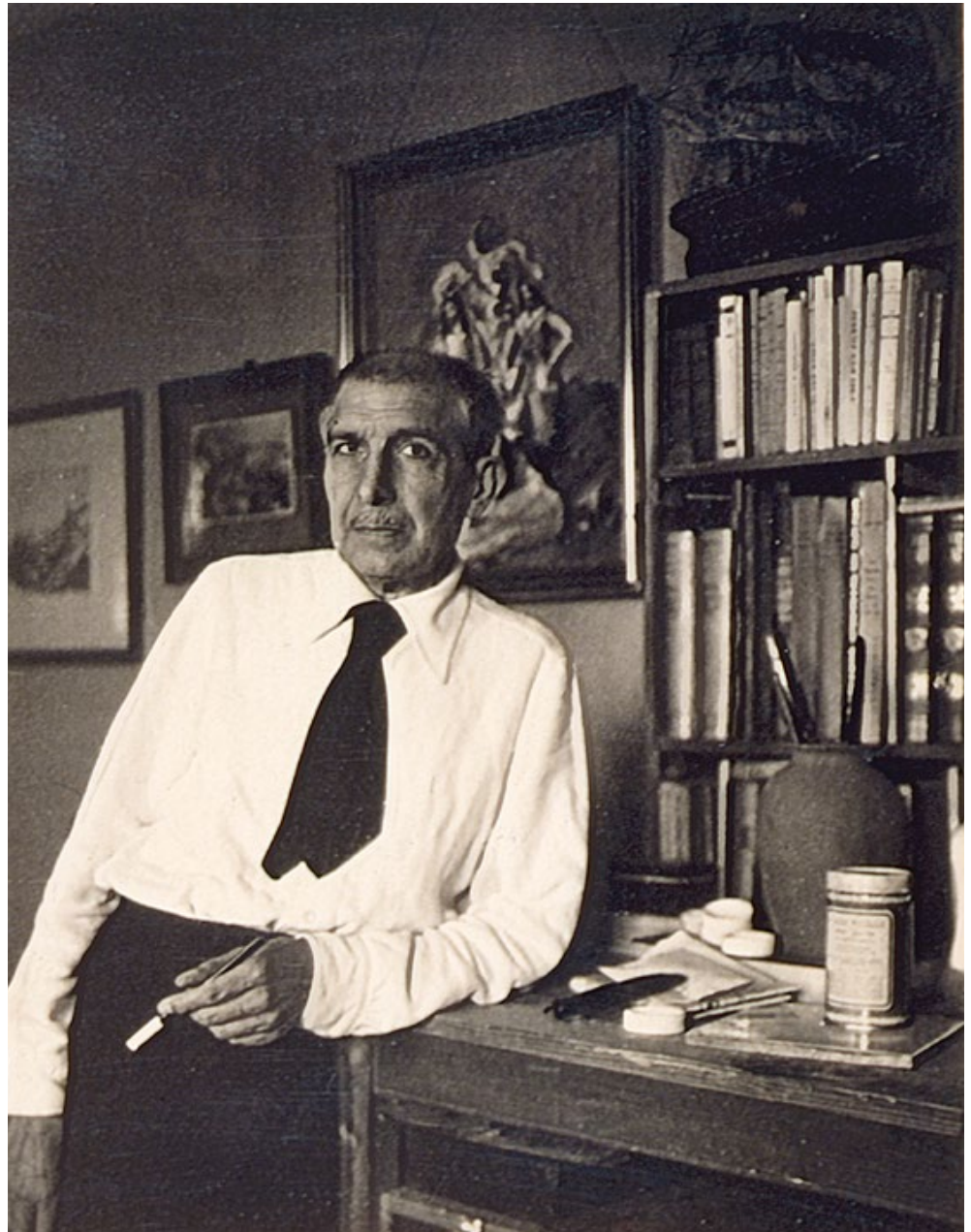
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► Xavier Nogués c. 1933-1935
in his Barcelona studio at 115,
Passeig de Gràcia..

Introductory Remarks

In 1990, or thereabouts, the then promoters and members of the board of trustees of the Fundació Xavier Nogués, Joan Ainaud de Lasarte, Raimon Noguera de Guzmán, Josep Pedreira and Ramon Gonzalez (now sadly deceased), together with the patrons August Testor, Oriol Bohigas and Jordi Curós, proposed, as a founding act, the publication of a book dedicated to the life and work of Xavier Nogués. The project was given the go ahead, and the then president, Mr Ainaud, wrote the foreword to the book. However, it was subsequently put on hold until a later date, despite everyone's best efforts.

Now we are fortunate enough to be able to revive the project and, by way of a tribute, we would like to put on record the interest the above individuals showed in the publication of the book you are now holding.

We would also like to thank Joaquim Horta for the painstaking care taken with the initial project and the new patrons who have worked on the current one.

JOSEP M. CADENA

President, Fundació Xavier Nogués



■
Nogués, c. 1895.

The Beginnings

As the writer Salvador Espriu acknowledged, “Cecília Vidal is the person who came to know the most about Isabel Escalada and, through her, Nogués the man, and his body of work.”

In autumn 1967, Nogués’ widow, Isabel Escalada, asked me to organise an inventory of her collections of her husband’s work. I chose the conservator and director of the Department of Drawings and Prints of the *Museus Municipals d’Art de Barcelona*, Cecília Vidal, to undertake the task. Initially she dedicated two mornings a week to the project but, from January 1968, this was reduced to one due to Isabel’s poor health. Cecília also spent many afternoons with Isabel and I saw this for myself when I encountered them both at the *Hospital de la Creu Roja*. Their relationship endured in Barcelona and La Garriga until Isabel Escalada died on 5th December 1968, with Dolors Permanyer de Testor and Xavier Nogués’ faithful companion, Pilar Blanc, at her bedside. The professional dealings and mutual affection between Cecília and Isabel led the former to wonder whether Isabel had given her an overly idealised view of Xavier Nogués. In order to find out, she compared Isabel’s version with first-hand accounts from everyone who had known Xavier Nogués in person, including artists, friends and family members, which she wrote down with patience and affection. The results of her research fully confirmed what Isabel had told her.

Cecília Vidal first came across Xavier Nogués’ work in 1966, during the preparatory stages for a major retrospective due to be held in March and April 1967. Following Isabel Escalada’s death, she continued writing the catalogue for the exhibition of works from Isabel’s bequest to the *Museus d’Art de Barcelona* (March 1972), a biographical summary about Xavier Nogués published on 9th June 1973 by *DESTINO*, and a detailed bibliography of the artist for an exhibition

at the Saló del Tinell as part of the children's and young adult literature fair, the Saló del Llibre Infantil i Juvenil. In June 1979, she supervised the facsimile edition of the thirty lithographs and sixteen variants of Nogués' lithographic output. Cecília Vidal had initially asked Salvador Espriu to write a preface for this edition but such was his enthusiasm for the subject that he ended up writing an entire book. It was published by Edicions 62 to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the publishing house.

The publication of the lecture *Xavier Nogués, gravador*, given in Encamp (Andorra) in 1991, is the last of Cecília Vidal's publications about the artist to date. However, she has been involved in many more activities associated with the artist through her work as secretary of the Fundació Xavier Nogués. Before the foundation was officially constituted, and following the advice and guidance of the notary Raimon Noguera, Cecília Vidal and Isabel Escalada's other trusted confidants contributed to raising a small, yet solid, amount of capital that would provide initial funding for the foundation. One of its most noteworthy achievements was the publication of a new edition of *La Catalunya pintoresca* in 1990, with a painstakingly compiled bibliographic catalogue. It is the culmination of Isabel Escalada's initiative, begun in 1950, with the publication of *50 ninots*, which featured full-scale reproductions of the original drawings.

Before this, Cecília Vidal – who is both historian and artist – had shown an interest in the fired enamelled glass produced by Xavier Nogués and Ricard Crespo. As a result of her endeavours, the Fundació Xavier Nogués was able to purchase from America the original drawings used on the glass. This compilation of drawings and the subsequent discovery of an important, previously unseen work – the vast skylight at the Seix family house in Pallejà – formed the basis of her doctoral thesis which she defended at Barcelona University's Faculty of Fine Arts in 1989. The drawings also form one of the main sections of this book.

Cecília Vidal has also researched extensively in other areas. Her contact with the Salvat-Papasseit-Eluterio family has given her an insight into the human and personal integrity of the poet Joan Salvat, who was one of the first publishers of books featuring illustrations by Xavier Nogués, as Rafael Benet remembered years ago.

Nogués' work as an engraver was the subject of a wonderful study by Jaume Pla in 1960, carried out with the cooperation of Isabel Escalada, and based on the meticulous inventories drawn up by Nogués and published by Joan Teixidor in 1945. There were two engravings missing from Xavier Nogués' list but Cecília Vidal refused to be discouraged. Not only did she find the two missing works, she also came across two unknown prints and a variant that Nogués himself had overlooked when he was writing his inventory.

We can find all these and much more in this book. As Cecília Vidal's colleagues at the Fundació Xavier Nogués, we celebrate this achievement, along with many others who will learn to love the artist and his work now and in the future.

JOAN AINAUD DE LASARTE
(Barcelona, 1919-1995)



NOVEMBRE

I va morir. En Quinze acabava d'engolir l'última castanya i començava el primer panellet quan el cridaren. Hi correu amb la boca plena encara, sense poguer treure's les paraules de la boca. S'agenollà al capsal del llet i prengué entre les seves, les mans d'ella, glassades i com fetes amb sarments.

La Terra va parlar-li com segueix:

—Mon tendre, mon ardent, mon carinyós espòs: adeu, fins a mai més!... Jo sé bé el meu destí. Com els humans, he de resucitar, per a trobar-me promptement amb un fill teu, qui em farà sa muller, i del qual tindrè nous fills, com els teus, tendres i sucosos. No has fet ni bé ni mal, estimat Quinze. Reb la benedicció d'una pobre agonitzant.

Aquí, un badall.

En Quinze va plorar perllongadament; un dia, dos, una setmana encara. Després notà que a la seva difunta se li descomposava la fesomia, i ell s'enfilà a les muntanyes alteroses, i allí copsà la neu blanca com flors de l'ametller.

I la cobrí amb ella, i de dia encengué un sol cobert amb núvols allargassats i tenues, i de nit, una lluna vermella a l'eixir i després esblaimada, com si cada volta fos sorpresa per l'espectacle d'aquell cadavre.

En Quinze, després, tornà a plorar; els rius anaren plens de llàgrimes, i les mars amb prou feines podien engolir-les.

El dia de Sant Andreu hi hagué pluja, neu i fret; un company d'En Quinze el convidà a la festa major del barri de Palomar. Allí jogaren a bones i a males, i perderen vintiuana pessetes. A Sant Andreu ne saben.



1 dill. Tots-Sants.	16 dim. S. Rufi.
2 dim. Commemoració dels Difunts.	17 dim. Sta. Gertrudis.
3 dim. S. Valentí.	18 dij. S. Maxim.
4 dij. S. Carles Borromeu.	19 div. Sta. Isabel, reina.
5 div. S. Zacaries.	20 dis. S. Felix de Valois.
6 dis. S. Sever.	21 diu. La Presentació de Ntra. Sra.
7 diu. S. Florenci.	22 dill. Sta. Cecília.
8 dill. S. Armeigol.	23 dim. S. Climent, papa.
9 dim. El Patr. de Ntra. Sra.	24 dim. S. Joan de la Creu.
10 dim. S. Andreu Avell.	25 dij. Sta. Caterina.
11 dij. Sts. Martí i Millà.	26 div. Les noces de la Verge
12 div. S. Didac d'Alcalà.	27 dis. S. Primitiu.
13 dis. S. Estanislau de K.	28 diu. S. Gregori III, papa
14 diu. S. Serapi.	S. Sadurid.
15 dill. S. Eugeni.	S. Andreu.



Introduction

THE FUNDACIÓ XAVIER NOGUÉS, AN ESSENTIAL TOOL FOR PRESERVING AND DISSEMINATING THE ARTIST'S WORK

Throughout his life, Xavier Nogués never courted recognition and honours. Nevertheless, in his later years he may have felt concerned about the fate of his artistic legacy. He had endured the ravages of the Spanish Civil War, and the immediate post-war period was a bad time for Catalan artists who, like him, produced a type of art that was disparaged and pejoratively referred to as “Frenchified”. To quote Rafael Benet, these were the years when pseudo-academic painting, known in Catalan as *pintura de l'estraperlo*, triumphed. As Cecília Vidal has pointed out, this explains why, during his final period, Nogués focused his attention on etchings and drypoint engravings – techniques that require a great deal of thought, attention and abstraction – maybe with the intention of escaping this new and strange way of living.

When Xavier Nogués died at the beginning of 1941, without descendants, the responsibility, and the resulting task of taking care of his legacy fell to his widow, Isabel Escalada. This is a common concern for artists and their families whose main focus is the future and preservation of a body of work stemming from a lifetime devoted to art.

Although the law has put in place an institution, known as a foundation – which serves such a purpose –, it also requires, among other things, a series of elements, or basic requirements, to achieve the artist's aims when it comes to preserving their work for the future.

The first of these is the human element. No artist's foundation can move forward without family members, friends, followers or admirers of their work

Illustration for Ramon Reventos *Història d'en Quinze*. 1915 Almanac. L'Esquella de la Torratxa.

who are willing to work together to preserve and disseminate their legacy. The ongoing nature of this undertaking occurs because there is a sufficiently powerful human capital that works over time to ensure the aims of the foundation are met.

The economic element is the second basic requirement. Every foundation requires sufficient funding to cover the goals it has set itself. In this regard, and using the right criterion, the current Justice Department of the Catalan government will not approve the setting up of any entity that lacks the adequate financial means to achieve its goals.

Nogués' widow, Isabel Escalada – a strongheaded, foresighted woman – was able to combine both elements. Firstly, she surrounded herself with the right people who loved her husband's work and were willing to collaborate on preserving such an important artistic legacy as his. This is why she asked the then general director of the Museu d'Art de Barcelona, Joan Ainaud de Lasarte, to organise an inventory of the works in her possession. In autumn 1967, the art historian Cecília Vidal, who was then working in the Department of Drawings and Prints at these museums, began working on the project. The commission led to a mutual rapport between the two and an understanding of Xavier Nogués' work that became stronger over time. It was only curtailed by Isabel's death the following year.

The notary Raimon Noguera was also a key figure in the life of Nogués' widow. He had a great sensitivity for all things related to art, as was shown by his decisive role in setting up the Fundació Miró, the Fundació Pau Casals and the Museu Picasso in Barcelona, among other contributions to the world of culture. Noguera advised Isabel Escalada that the best way of preserving her husband's work would be to set up a foundation to look after his artistic legacy in the future.

Unfortunately, when he gave her this advice, Isabel was in poor health and she was well aware that, in her current condition, she would be unable to carry

out a project of this scale in person. Faced with the inevitable, Noguera suggested that, when she made her will, she should name a series of trusted heirs who she could entrust wholeheartedly with setting up the eagerly awaited foundation and ensure it had sufficient funds for the project to go ahead.

The will was drawn up on 16th October 1968 and in this public document, which was authorised by the same notary Raimon Noguera, Isabel Escalada named as her trusted heirs the six members of her closest circle she was most fond of. As they came from different fields, she believed that each one of them could bring different skills to the enterprise that would prove beneficial to the future foundation. The six chosen beneficiaries were the previously mentioned art historian Cecília Vidal, an expert on Xavier Nogués' work, who had provided her with the most valued support – on a personal level too – at the end of her life; the painter Jordi Curós, an avowed admirer of Nogués' work for many years; the architect Oriol Bohigas, who Xavier and Isabel had established a friendship with at the height of the Spanish Civil War; the publisher and writer Josep Pedreira, who was married to a niece of Xavier Nogués' first wife, Teresa Lostau; Ramon González, the godson of Joan Nogués, the artist's elder brother; and August Testor, a distant relative of the Nogués family.

Isabel Escalada succumbed to her illness at her Barcelona home in the Jardins de Gràcia on 5th December that same year, less than two months after making her last will and testament. Over the coming months, her trusted heirs, following the advice of the notary Noguera, made the application for probate. Probate was granted on 28th November 1969 with the execution of the deeds containing the inventory of Isabel Escalada's estate and the setting up of the Fundació Xavier Nogués, in accordance with her wishes.

The deeds in question were authorised by the notary Lluís Roca-Sastre and show the foresightedness of Nogués' widow and her trusted heirs in endowing the

foundation with sufficient funds to ensure it could fulfil its objectives. All the movable and immovable assets Isabel Escalada left when she died went towards creating the new foundation. The deeds also stipulated the setting up of the first board of trustees comprising the six designated heirs, as well as the director of the Museu d'Art de Barcelona, Joan Ainaud de Lasarte, and the notary Raimon Noguera, who were named president and vice-president of the new governing body. The appointments further underpin the close relationship they had with Isabel until her death that led to the creation of the foundation they valued so highly.

Since then, and throughout its fifty-year history, the Fundació Xavier Nogués has organised a series of activities with the aim of keeping the artist's memory alive.

They are proof of the important role Xavier Nogues' eponymous foundation has played in bringing his work to a wider audience and there is no doubt that it will continue to provide an essential tool for preserving and disseminating his artistic legacy in the future.

JACINT BERENGUER I CASAL

ISABEL

The Fundació Xavier Nogués would not have been possible without his second wife Isabel's determination and love for the man, and admiration for the artist.

Widowed at the age of 36, she tenaciously devoted the rest of her life to keeping her husband's memory alive, raising awareness of his extraordinary work – which the Franco regime had deliberately, but unsuccessfully, tried to destroy for so many years – and rescuing it from oblivion.

Isabel Escalada Sàrria, daughter of Nicanor and Eleuteria, was born in Tauste in the province of Zaragoza, on 18th June 1904. In 1906, the entire family, comprising her parents, their four sons and three daughters, moved to Barcelona, where Nicanor, a civil guard, had been posted. Following his death, they moved back to Tauste in 1911, where Eleuteria died shortly afterwards. Then aged 11, Isabel, together with her brothers, who were still underage, were placed in the care of their married elder brother. He treated them so badly that the two younger sisters were admitted to the charitable institution run by the Little Sisters of the Poor in Barcelona, where they helped the nuns care for the elderly in need, while they learned the art of dressmaking. Making quality clothing for a number of the city's select haute couture boutiques was one of the institution's main activities and sources of income.

Isabel met the painter Ricard Canals at the age of 19, through his wife Benedetta Bianco who was a client of the prestigious fashion house Isabel made dresses for. He happened to be with her at a fashion show and was captivated by the girl's attractive figure and suggested she earn some extra money by posing for him. Shortly afterwards, Canals, a good friend of Nogués, who was in the throes of a

deep depression following the recent death of his wife Teresa and had stopped painting, introduced him to Isabel and let her model for him as a way of encouraging him to leave the house and start working again.

Although not a great beauty, Isabel had a magnificent figure and a smile that gave her a special charm. She was also loyal, intelligent, kind and full of life and this is why Canals thought that her company would be beneficial to Nogués at that time.

Among many other things, Isabel confided in me about her first meeting with Nogués and what happened the first time she went to his studio to pose for him.

Dressed all in black, with a serious demeanour and without uttering a word, he sat her on a chair and told her how he wanted her to pose. Almost hidden behind his easel he didn't speak again until he told her it was time to take a break. He remained behind the easel, saying nothing. Isabel didn't know what to do so she began walking tentatively around the studio looking at the things around her. On a shelf in a corner she saw a portrait of a young woman. To break the silence, Isabel asked him who the pretty young lady was. Without moving from behind his easel, Nogués answered curtly that it was his wife who had recently passed away.

Mortified at her indiscretion, Isabel returned to her chair in silence until the end of the session. The following day, when she arrived at the studio, she brought with her a posy of flowers and placed them in a glass of water next to Teresa's portrait before sitting down.

Years later, when they were already married, Nogués confessed to Isabel that this delicate gesture had touched him so much that he had begun to take an interest in her life and situation. He educated her and taught her to read and write in Catalan and Spanish and how to behave in polite society. The natural intelligence of his pupil did the rest.

Isabel's naivety – she was only 19 – together with her open and cheerful disposition, kind heartedness and demeanour, as well as her great respect and admiration for the artist, were the reasons why they came to love each other tenderly until they cemented their relationship. Nogués took some time to decide on their betrothal due to the significant age difference between them.

On 1st April 1931, Isabel became his second wife. Although from a humble background, she possessed a natural intelligence and an innate intuition and sensibility for art, nurtured by spending time with Nogués. This made her an expert in distinguishing between and valuing true works of art. Her enthusiasm for her husband's work was such that she became a collector of specific prints which Nogués added to, as a token of his affection. He would place them in a separate folder, which he humorously named “the widow's folder”. Isabel never asked him for artist's proofs of the engravings he had made.

After she was widowed, she spent the rest of her life living modestly in order to preserve Nogués' heritage intact. This meant that, after her death, a foundation could be set up to keep alive the memory of her beloved “Xavierot”, as she called him. She often said that she had only stopped seeing him, but not loving him.

From 1960 onwards, Isabel, who was beginning to have health problems, became concerned about the preservation of her husband's works in her possession.

She read up on the matter and told her friends of her desire to preserve Nogués' memory and works. She then made several donations of engravings, including one to the Museu del Castell de la Geltrú (at the time a section of the Biblioteca Museu Balaguer de Vilanova). This triggered a great deal of enthusiasm among the people in charge of the museum who welcomed the fact that it might benefit from further donations in the future.

As it happened, neither the donation made on 27th February 1960 nor the subsequent bequest left by Isabel in 1969 attained the importance that Enric C.

Ricart (an engraver and friend of the Nogués') and the patron of the board of friends of the Museu Balaguer de Vilanova, had dreamt of for their museum. Unfortunately for Vilanova – as Ricart so rightly says in a letter to a friend on the board, dated 27th February 1969 – Joan Ainaud de Lasarte, general director of the Museus Municipals d'Art de Barcelona, and an unconditional admirer of Nogués' work, expressed a firm interest in purchasing all the engravings missing from the collection held at the department of prints of the Museu d'Art Modern in Barcelona.

This was a decisive moment for Isabel, who considered his offer more suitable for her intended purpose as it would bring her husband's work to a wider audience. She decided to donate her legacy to the Museu d'Art Modern. Eventually her perseverance paid off way beyond her expectations. Following several conversations between Isabel and Joan Ainaud, that latter undertook to organise the first major exhibition as a tribute to Xavier Nogués. This extraordinary retrospective, held at the Palau de la Virreina in Barcelona in March and April 1967, enjoyed great success.

Isabel died on 5th December 1968. On 25th January 1969, her bequest was finally transferred to the Museu Municipal d'Art Modern in Barcelona.

The Fundació Xavier Nogués was constituted on 28th November 1969. It was the utmost desire and *raison d'être* of Isabel, who devoted all her life to her beloved and admired "Xavierot".

In March 1972, the legacy of Nogués widow, Isabel Escalada, comprising paintings, drawings, engravings, ceramics and original enamelled glassware by the artist, together with personal documents, photographs, correspondence and a series of original drawings by his artist-friends, was exhibited at the Palau de la Virreina in Barcelona.

In February 1973, to mark the centenary of Nogués' birth, the Fundació Nogués held its first official act by holding a call for entries for an engraving com-

petition for young artists. The winner was awarded a study grant. The works submitted were exhibited at the Palau de la Virreina.

Since then, the Fundació Nogués has worked tirelessly to raise the profile of the visual arts and help artists, as Isabel expressly requested, in memory of her husband.

CECÍLIA VIDAL MAYNOU

XAVIER NOGUÉS





Introduction

CECÍLIA VIDAL MAYNOU

Xavier Nogués was, and remains, one of the best-loved artists among connoisseurs and the public at large, despite the fact that his works haven't been widely shown.

From 1909, the year he began to provide illustrations for the satirical magazine *PAPITU*, under the pseudonym "Babel", Nogués cultivated, with rigour and great professionalism, a number of pictorial techniques at which he excelled.

Initially, his amusing cartoon figures brought him to the attention of a broad cross-section of society. However, an in-depth look at the rest of his work shows him to be one of the most interesting figures of Catalan art in the first half of the 20th century.

Nogués' work is extraordinary in every sense. One of the good things about it is that it has raised the level of art forms that have traditionally been considered "minor", such as the applied arts. This is a misleading and debatable concept, particularly when they are only considered minor art forms when produced by pure artisans.

It is clear that Nogués isn't a painter in the vein of Isidre Nonell or Joaquim Mir as he favours the use of the

line over colour. He builds his pictures by seeking out the form, unlike painters who use the strength of the brushstroke and the magic of colour. It was this sense of the drawing, which could be termed architectural, that enabled him to create great works using a variety of techniques and procedures. When we study the illustrators of his day, we discover he was one of the best. He ranks first among the engravers and is an excellent muralist. The same is true for the other disciplines he cultivated.

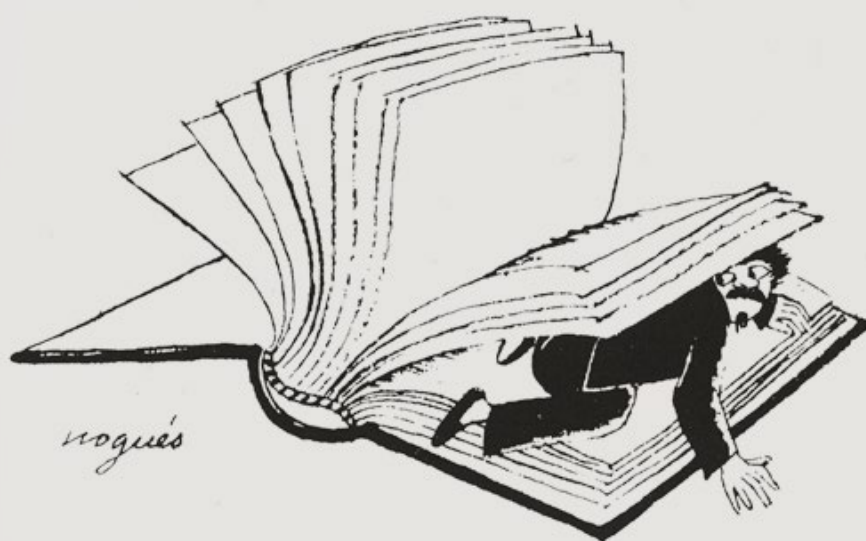
Given the multi-faceted nature of Nogués' works, it would be absolutely impossible to provide an in-depth analysis of them in this book. They are all worthy of serious study in their own right. Instead, we will attempt to provide an overview of his rich and varied body of work made using different techniques and procedures, highlighting the best known as well as the less well known, and conclude with his works made using an extremely ancient technique: fired enamelled glass. All lovers of art and beauty will be interested in the revival of fired enamelling, which will give them an added insight into Nogués' life and work, particularly if we take into account the current rejection of, and disdain for, everything considered crafts or process, as well as the overarching desire for originality brought

about by a lack of skill and preparation at all levels, even in the most industrialised processes.

The artisan of yesterday has made way for the designer who, to a large extent, has forgotten the need to bring know how and skill to their art. This is a decisive and constant factor in all periods of history, which is clearly shown in the greatest achievements of the ancient civilisations.

Artists should apply this knowledge to the requirements

of the day. To attain excellence, they need good training and the right language when it comes to expressing what they want to say. This is the spirit that pervades Nogués' work. He had an in-depth knowledge of his craft, was skilled in every technique and was fully devoted to art, sparing no effort or sacrifice. He became one of the leading figures of the Catalan cultural movement, *noucentisme*, which reflected an epoch and a region that based its ideals on a love of the land and work well done.



Family Background

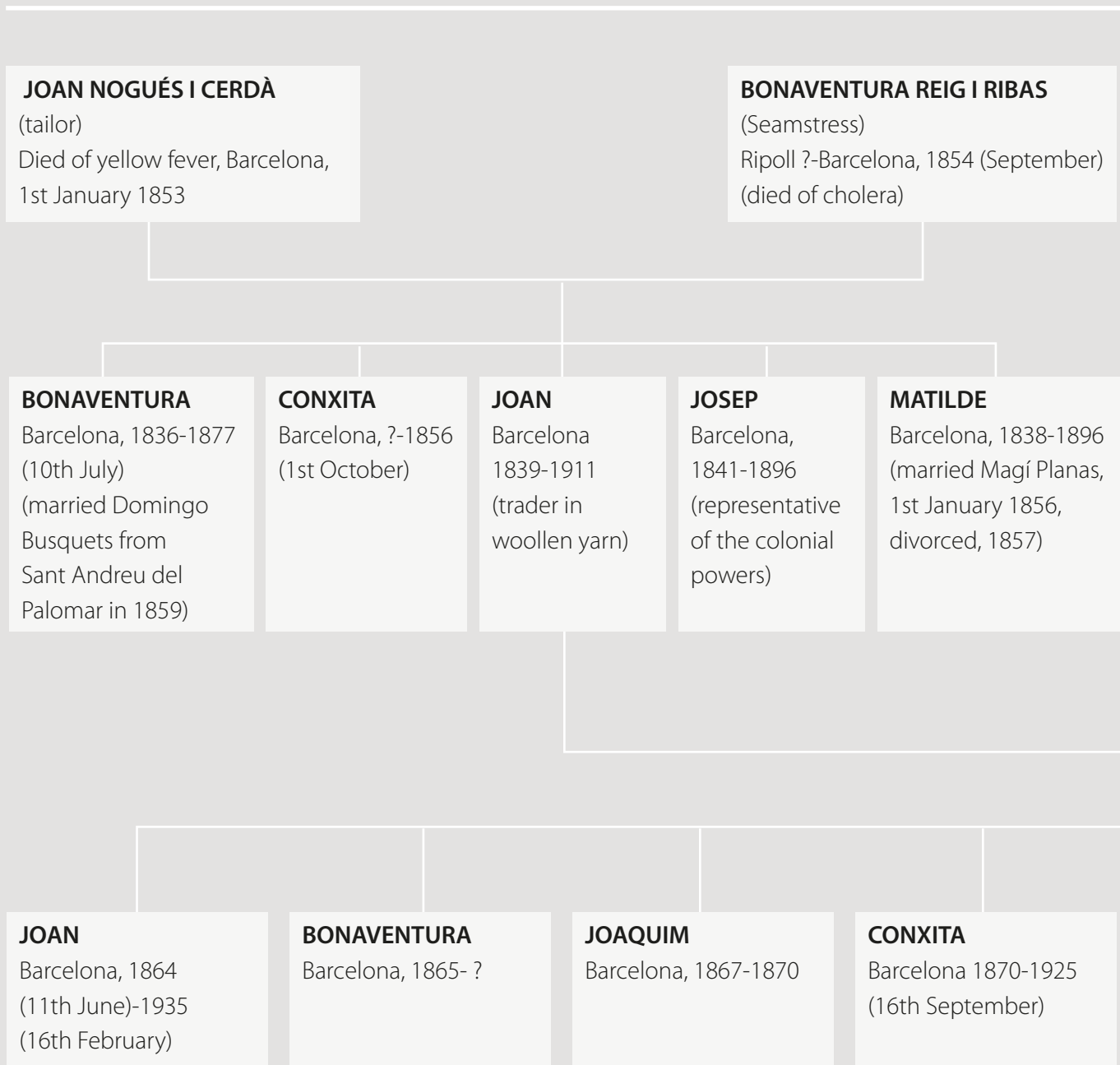
The first records we have of a member of Nogués' family date from 1749. A tailor by trade, based in Barcelona, we presume he was the artist's great-grandfather or great uncle, although we are unable to confirm this due to a lack of documentation. However, we can say with certainty that his grandfather was Xavier Nogués i Cerdà. Born in Barcelona, he was a naval tailor with a shop at 8, Carrer de les Panses, almost on the corner of Carrer de Canvis Vells. He lived on the premises with his wife, Bonaventura Reig i Ribas, who hailed from Ripoll. Both of them died very young: Xavier from yellow fever, on 1st January 1853, and Bonaventura from cholera in September the following year. Joan's brother, Josep Nogués Cerdà, who was also a tailor, continued running the business and caring for his five orphaned nephews and nieces – Conxita, Bonaventura, Matilde, Joan and Josep – who were still minors.

On 3rd March 1860, Joan Nogués i Reig (1839-1911), a bachelor tailor, married Francesca Casas i Grau in the parish of Santa Maria del Mar. Born in 1839, and orphaned at the age of 14, he learnt the art of tailoring from his uncle and guardian, following in his family's naval tailoring business founded by his great-grandparents. Later, when he was already married and had children, he went into the woollen yarn business and became an associate of Tintoré Rovira i Taberner, a business that later became Comercial Taberner, Carles Toldrà i Manant.

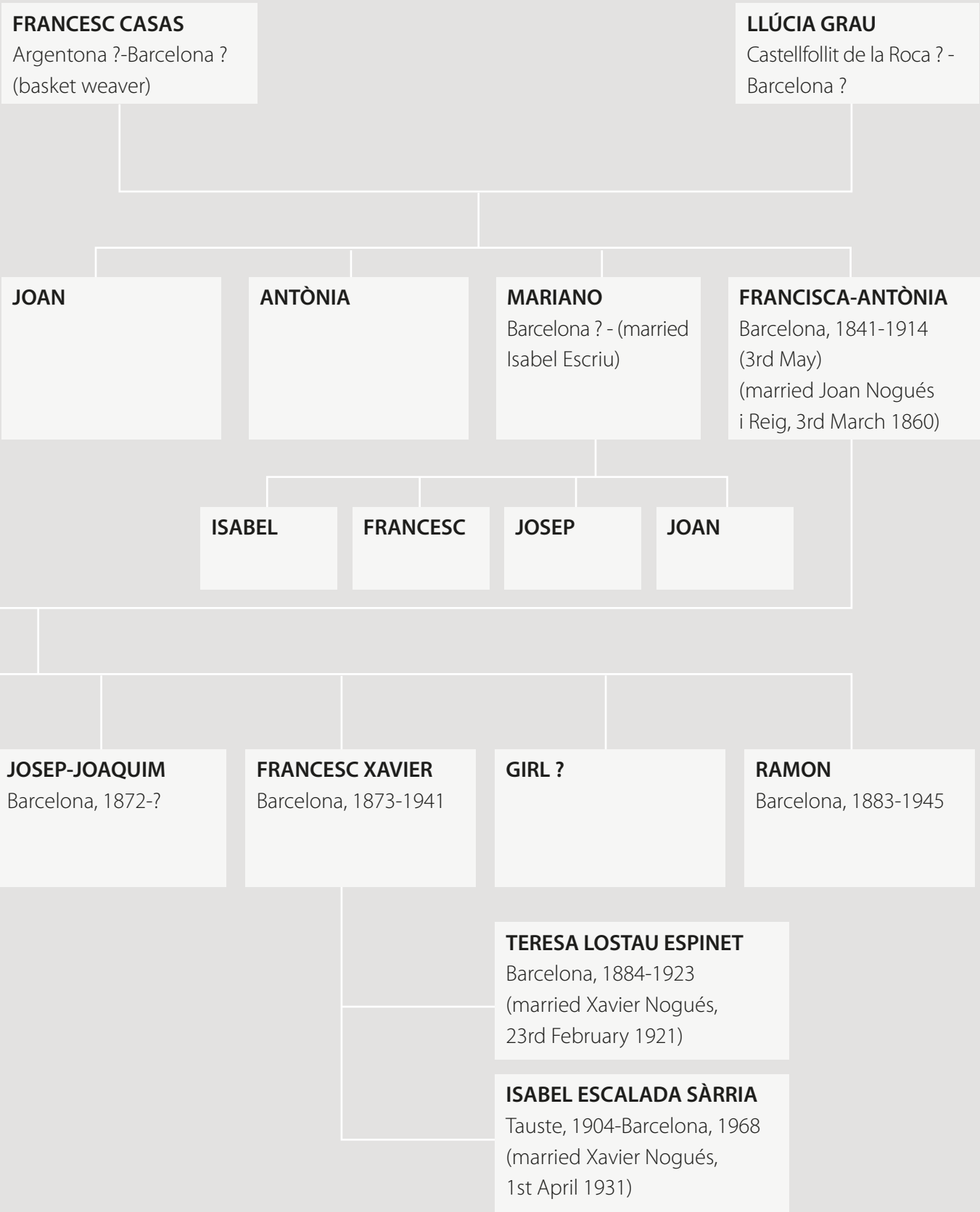
Joan Nogués outlived his four siblings and, at the age of fifty-seven, became the sole beneficiary of a modest family inheritance: the tailor's shop, a house on Carrer de Sant Jeroni and a house on Carrer del Pom d'Or, which was expropriated by the city council in 1908 as it was on the site of the Via Laietana widening project.

His bride, Francesca (1841-1914), was also an orphan and still a minor when she married. The daughter of Francesc Casas, a basket weaver from Argentona,

PATERNAL LINEAGE



MATERNAL LINEAGE





► Xavier Nogués (back row, second on the right) and his brother Ramon (front row, fifth on the right) c. 1885-1886.



Joan Nogués and Francesca Casas, Nogués' parents.

and Llúcia Grau from Castellfollit de la Roca, she was the youngest of the couple's four children. Her elder brother, Marià, continued working in the family business at the shop on Carrer de Sombrerers. He was married to Isabel Escriu, and one of his children, Joanet Casas, who was considered the artist of the family, introduced Nogués to the world of art.

The only thing we know about Nogués' mother is that, like so many women of her day, she devoted her life to her husband and children who survived her.

Joan and Francesca's marriage lasted fifty-one years. They had eight children: Joan, Bonaventura, Joaquim, Conxita, Josep-Joaquim, Francesc Xavier (later the artist Xavier Nogués), a baby girl who died shortly after she was born, and Ramon. Only four of them survived: three boys and a girl. Xavier Nogués' parents were comfortably off due to the personal efforts of his father and an inheritance from his family.

The final provisions in the will of Xavier Nogués' father, Joan, make interesting reading. By force of circumstance it fell to him to give advice about, supervise, organise and fulfil the final wishes of the siblings who had predeceased him. The



D ABOVE, the Nogués siblings: Joan, Conxita, Xavier and Ramon.

ABOVE RIGHT, Xavier Nogués.



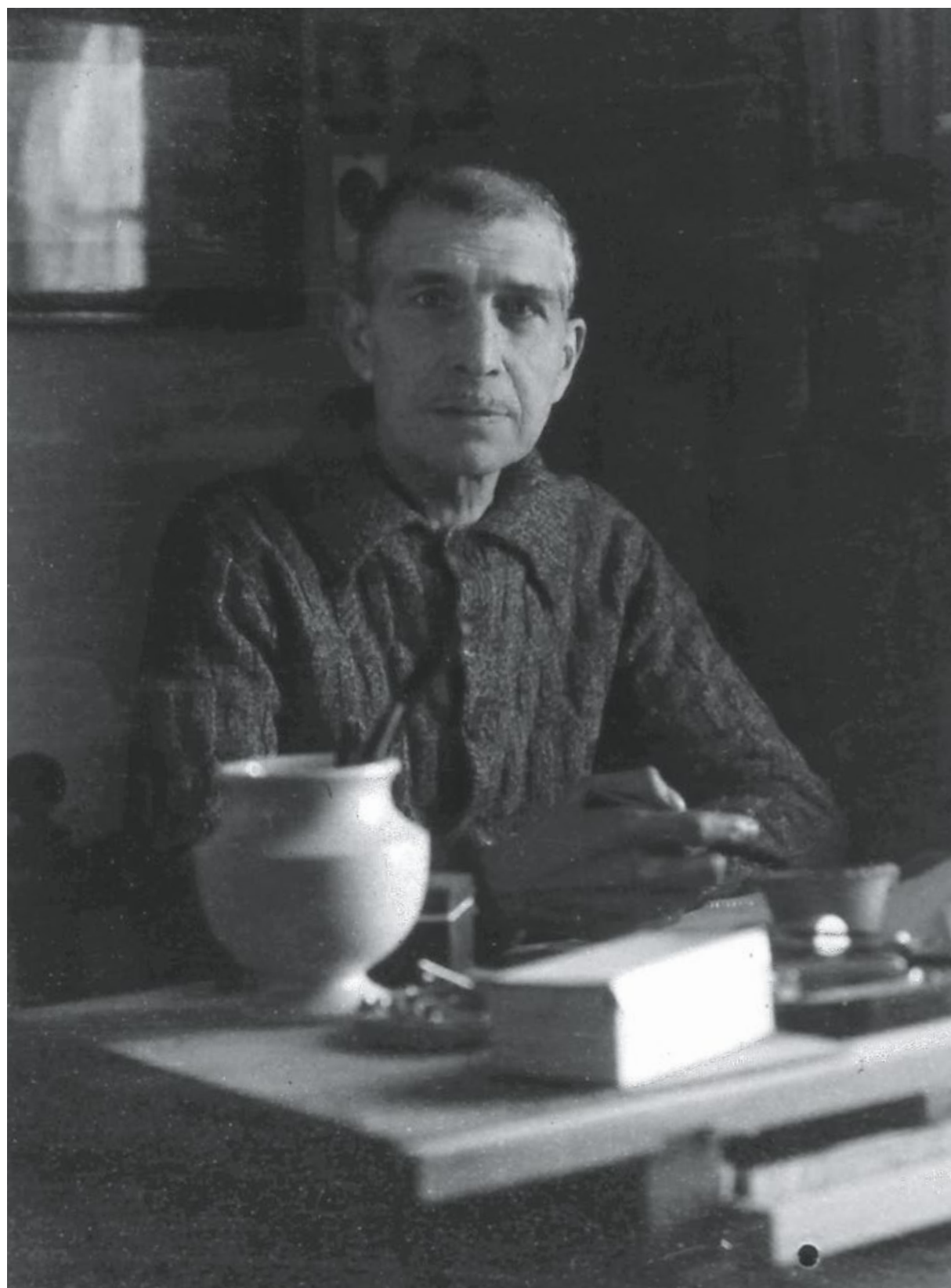
will gives several pieces of advice, which stemmed from his own unhappy experiences. There is no doubt that his actions were influenced by the example of his uncle and guardian, an honest and caring man. Joan was serious, practical, energetic and strict and advised his children and heirs to live in peace and harmony. Their inheritance was not to be divided up equally but shared out according to the specific needs and abilities of each child. This shows how much he cared about the children he considered less well off: Conxita, the only girl, and Francesc Xavier, the artist who was beginning to gain a name for himself having just turned thirty-eight. However his relative success didn't provide enough money to live on, and, in his father's eyes, had no future. In his will, Nogués' father went on to say that, if for any reason the siblings failed to reach an understanding, he urged them not to go to court and said it would be better to seek advice from three female friends of the family about ways of settling their differences. This would avoid any unpleasantness and wasting money and their love for one another would remain intact. I am going into such detail to make it easier to understand the father's position and why he acted as he did. Although he wasn't entirely in favour of his



Joan Nogués Reig and Francisca Casas Grau with their children, Joan, Conxita, Xavier and Ramon.

son being an artist, he accepted it, and its consequences (more than likely at his wife's request). "At home, you'll never be short of food on the table, but you'll have to work." This gruff exterior vanishes when it comes to the moment of truth. Rather than being annoyed, Nogués' father is really worried about the future of his artist-son and that is why he hints to his other children, whose careers were well on track, that they should show consideration for, and protect the ones whose position was less secure.

This explains why Nogués was able to overcome the difficulties endured in the early stages of his career. He wasn't forced to leave the family home where the father was a much-respected figure, and also had an innate skill for negotiating, getting on with and showing goodwill towards all his children. Nogués was clearly unhappy with the situation, but he was never humiliated, rejected or despised by his father or siblings. The love of his family, and his mother's in particular, together with their understanding and support, gave him the strength to keep fighting to achieve his goals.



The Man

Although Isabel Escalada often told me what Nogués, the man, was like, I couldn't describe him better than Feliu Elias (Joan Sacs). With four masterly sentences he produces such an accurate and complete portrait that I couldn't attempt to improve on it.

If you want to gain an insight into what Xavier Nogués was like as a person – his demeanour, character and physical appearance – you need look no further than Feliu Elias' vivid, faithful and accurate description.

He says: *“He’s rather tall; neither fat nor thin, white and pale like a Creole Pierrot: small blue eyes [or, according to Isabel, more like grey], a big mouth and nose, thinning hair. Today, on his fifty-second birthday, he has grey hair that is a little patchy. [Photographs of him as a young man show that he had thick black hair...] Slanting across the bridge of his nose we see the marks left by stitches that are a constant reminder. [A sabre blow he received during riots on Carrer Casp around 1901.] This humourist cuts a tragic, pessimistic figure.”*

And he goes on: *“He’s an honest man, healthy, happy; he’s a contented man and a great humourist; he’s a man who is passionate about all the ideals nature places within his grasp and intelligence; he’s gentle, somewhat weak, he speaks softly but in a jovial tone; he’s always got something to say; he’s refined, cultured, generous... and one can guess that injustice must be one of his cruellest pains.”*

His second wife, Isabel, who I was lucky enough to have long conversations with, is the person who gave me the greatest understanding of what Nogués, the man, was like. She was very much in love with him. Although I never doubted her words, I assumed she must have been creating an idealised image of him, as she had never stopped loving and admiring him. Later on, when I spoke to the friends and people who knew him, I could see Isabel wasn't exaggerating. Nogués was kind and caring, with great willpower but elegant manners, honest and loyal. In short,

 Nogués in his Barcelona studio at 115, Passeig de Gràcia, c. 1939.



LEFT

Teachers from the Escola de Paisatge d'Olot, with their families, 1935-1936.

RIGHT

Isabel and Nogués on their wedding day with their brothers Joan and Ramon.



he was a charming, exceptional man. According to her he wasn't physically handsome in the traditional sense, but he was an interesting man who was extremely attractive to women, a true gentleman who drew people to him with his exquisite tact, sense of humour and finesse. Although Isabel went on to add that he always managed to get his own way.

Feliu Elias also mentions this facet of his personality in a letter written to Nogués from Paris, dated 16th February 1912, in which he says: “[...] *you have such powers of persuasion that it's impossible to deny you anything. However, if you were to lose them, you should know that your talent and tact would be enough for everyone to bow to your wishes.*”

In his book, *La nueva España*, Gabriel García Maroto gives a brief portrait of Nogués and his work as a pensions assessor and acquisitions adviser to the Comité de Acción Artística that was part of the fine arts commission, the Comisaría de Bellas Artes, in Madrid, although there are no official records of this post. I am quoting an excerpt here because it gives a good account of his character and shows, if nothing else, that García Maroto actually knew him: “*Javier Nogués. This refined Catalan fulfils all his duties. He is well known for his work as an etcher, cartoonist, subtle painter, but not so well known, if at all, as a connoisseur, a sampler of modern painting. Ironic, quiet, sure of himself, with a penetrating gaze, he knows how to distinguish between*



► Nogués with his siblings Joan and Conxita in the tethered balloon at the 1888 Barcelona Universal Exhibition.



Joan Llimona, Xavier Nogués, Domènec Carles and Iu Pascual. Olot, 1933-1935.

what might be and what will never be. His clearheadedness means he is entrusted with purchases, authorising private exhibitions and deciding which artists are worthy of a pension. And he fulfils his duties with a scrupulousness that verges on exaggeration, always serene and a cartoonist whose humour is never caustic. There can be no doubt at all about Nogués' scrupulousness and sense of fairness when doing his job. Nogués always worked in this frame of mind in every area of his life.

The Madrid critic José Francés, who was closely connected to the art world, and Catalan artists in particular, had the opportunity to meet Canals and Nogués in 1929 and 1930. He once told Joan Ainaud that, although he felt most drawn to Canals' art, he found Nogués superior and more groundbreaking in his depictions of the human figure.

Manuel Hugué, "Manolo", wrote to Nogués from Caldes in 1933: "[...] *rest assured, I am happy to be counted among your friends.*" During his illness, Salvat-



Manuel Humbert
and Xavier Nogués, c. 1925.

Papasseit wrote letters to him from the two sanatoriums where he had been admitted. They were wonderful letters that only a poet could write to a true friend. In one of the books he dedicated to him, we can read: *“To Xavier Nogués, a friend first and a brother second.”*

In a letter Manuel Humbert sent to Nogués from Paris, dated 16th November 1921, he says, among other things: *“During all the ups and downs of recent years you have been my confidant, my counsellor and my moral and material helper, so you won’t be surprised that I still have more to tell you about what’s on my mind.”* Manuel Humbert was a man of few words who I had the opportunity to meet. When I asked him what Nogués was like, he replied, tersely but in a heartfelt manner: *“He was a true gentleman, a good friend and a great artist.”* Josep Aragay, as befitted his open, spontaneous temperament, told me, in reply to the same question, thousands of things in an instant, all of them good: *“A colossus of an artist, a*



Isabel Escalada and Xavier Nogués at the private view of his last exhibition of engravings at the Galeries Syra, December 1940.



The writer Josep Lleonart and Nogués at the Galeries Syra, December 1940.

great man who was a friend to his friends, with a great finesse, a good person first and foremost, and great fun.”

I have only encountered one other similar case where everyone agreed that a person embodied all kinds of positive qualities. I am referring to Salvador Espriu, who I asked to write the preface to the book of Nogués’ hitherto unseen lithographs, *LITOGRAFIES DE NOGUÉS*. It was published again to mark the twentieth anniversary of Edicions 62, and this time included the complete text Salvador Espriu had sent me. When I analysed this curious phenomenon of popular devotion, I believed I had found the cause. Both Xavier Nogués and Salvador Espriu were men of an incorruptible honesty who would always give the best of themselves no matter what. However, fundamentally, they both had a great respect for everything and everyone; a respect returned many times over through the admiration of everyone lucky enough to have made their acquaintance.



The Artist

Like few other artists, Nogués had a gift for noticing what others didn't usually see: a skill closely linked to the act of creating, because the true creator finds elements worth considering in the smallest things. These observational skills – to repeat what Joan Sacs wrote about Nogués – led the writer Josep Pla to say: *“I don't know if there is anyone in this country comparable to him as an observer of the everyday lives of the men and women of his time. I don't believe there was anyone from Nogués' generation, in the fields of literature, the theatre and the visual arts, who equalled him as an observer.”* Pla later said that Nogués was not only a formidable intuitive person, he was also an unfulfilled intuitive person; one of those who tried to find what lay beneath, and find the basis of what they had suddenly seen, noting that, *“Nogués was above almost all the artists of his time,”* and going on to add that *“the origin of Nogués' subject matter was the exercise of human justice.”*

Nogués' first and finest biographer, Joan Sacs, considered him *“[...] one of the most focused artists, at a time when Cézanne was at the height of his success, who brought consistency and realism to his works, inherently primitive in taste, with minute attention to detail, and neat in temperament.”* This is why, sensing that Nogués' art was taking the same direction as the latest trends on the Parisian art scene in the period around 1910 to 1912, Feliu Elias advised his friend to return to Paris if he wanted *“glory and profit”*. In a letter to Nogués from the French capital, Pau Gargallo also encouraged him, saying that *“The artists who make money in Barcelona, make twice as much over here.”*

Writing in the weekly magazine *ESPAÑA* about Nogués' first solo show at the Ateneo de Madrid in April 1917, Juan de la Encina shares Feliu Elias' opinion when he says: *“We feel he is an ardent ‘Cézannist’. Just study how he draws and his composition. It is essentially geometric. Look at the extreme simplicity of the lines, and the way each stroke can be reduced approximately to the curves studied scientifically in*

■ Nogués in his third-floor studio at 18, Carrer Alt de Sant Pere, c. 1921.



Entrance to Carrer Pom d'Or, demolished for the widening of the Via Laietana.

geometry. The sense of rhythm is one of this Catalan artist's major qualities." On page 237 of issue 48 of the journal *La Revista*, our artists – including Torres-García, Feliu Elias, Francesc d'A. Galí and Nogués himself – offer their thoughts on the art being made in Paris, tying in with the Exhibition of French Art held at the Palau de Belles Arts in Barcelona that opened on 16th June that same year. Nogués' concept and knowledge of the fine arts make such interesting reading that his thoughts are worth reprinting here: *"French art is classical in spirit. This is why the instigators of the impressionist renewal drew on Spanish painting, giving it a new twist. You only have to look at the works by Renoir and Monet at the Exhibition of French Art to see clear signs of a connection between them and 17th-century Spanish painting. One may say, therefore, that, with impressionism, the French have seen the world via a hole through which others haven't seen it yet. The value of French art must*

be taken into account from now on. Those who wish to begin another renewal must inevitably use it as a foundation for their work. Hence, we can say that Italy, Spain and France represent the three great historic moments in painting. We must nevertheless recognise that the impressionist artists, particularly the landscape painters, broke up the way of seeing things through their famous divisionism. This was detrimental and newcomers to the field of painting have finally realised this, reacting strongly towards structure. This is the dominant trend today in France, but the French are not the only ones to have contributed to it; people of great value from other countries have done so too. The art movement in Paris is not only made up of French people. What once happened in Athens – where people flocked from every shore of the Mediterranean and created Greek art together – is now happening in Paris. Now, everyone is making their way to Paris and, over there, as my friend Humbert says, there are setbacks, and new art arises from these setbacks that then spreads throughout the world. Although we haven't seen this exhibition at the Palau de Belles Arts, Catalan artists will also have been influenced by French art due to a spiritual affinity and because nobody escapes its



influence: friends don't escape it because they seek it out, and enemies don't escape it because they carry it with them when they least realise it."

Francesc Pujols was another unconditional admirer of Nogués' work. With his funny, poetic and peculiar way of expressing himself he says that:

"Xavier Nogués has the salty tang of the neighbourhood [of Santa Maria del Mar], a saltiness that infuses the lines of his drawings, as if the life he imbues them with were the salt of the sea into which he sinks his teeth, happier than a dog with a bone [...]. Nogués' first observations of real life are as clear as a bell. It is as if he were viewing the world through a hole, because his visions are as clear and detailed as those of a person looking through a keyhole. [...] we could say that he is one of the artists – Catalan or non-Catalan – who have striven the most to find the vital artistic element of painting [...] because he has got to the very heart of the artistic concept, shaking it up and twisting it to wring the most out of it and trampling on it at times to squeeze out the juice that fuels works of art. This is why we can present Nogués as one of the figures who will endure in the history of this struggle."

► Nogués' studio in his flat on Passeig de Gràcia, Barcelona.

In the section dedicated to Nogués in his book *Mi salón de otoño* (ORS, 1924), Eugeni d'Ors states that the artist has two sources of inspiration: one that could be termed classical and another Gothic. The founder of the Catalan cultural movement, *noucentisme*, for whom Nogués produced an extraordinary etching to illustrate his novel *La Ben Plantada*, Ors gives the following analysis of his work: *"In addition to its intrinsic beauty, the page is further enhanced by the fact that it brings together the two sides of Nogués, whose different sources of inspiration we have just separated. The semi-veiled woman is in the purest Hellenic tradition: an elegant, draped figure. The monstrous figures clad in different attire, who are mocking or throwing stones at her, are the offspring of the Gothic Nogués' fantasy caricatures [...]. Here is Tanagra, standing among a group of gesticulating grotesques."* And when Ors describes the murals that decorate the drawing room of the collector Lluís Plandiura he says: *"When he completes this work, it will mark an important date in the history of art in our country. It is as if here he were completing a cycle that decorators could term 'Robinsonian'; namely, the tendency to innovate completely that has invaded several manifestations of contemporary life for so long, obeying a false demand for originality."* And he adds: *"His inspiration is closely intertwined with Catalan types of baroque art [...]. The invention with the greatest finesse can be seen in the drawings on the multiple panels. Here, tradition goes back further than the baroque and, in its strongly localised accent, connects with other trends stemming from the most springlike and joyful period of the Renaissance."*

Nogués is the artist who balances the popular (the anecdote) with the profound (intention, meaning, emotion), form and substance. This makes him a classic. He said that he liked taking his subject matter and models from his surroundings. He worked slowly as he needed to meditate on, and take his time over his creations. He left nothing to chance. He tried to solve the problems on paper first. He liked things to be sure and precise, without wavering. He felt more of a cartoonist and engraver than an easel painter. He believed that painting should be worthy of the other elements that accompanied its adornments, which required a wealth of materials and painstaking technique. He felt a true passion for the noble and fine arts and crafts as the greatest exponents and highest representations of human intelligence. He always used the visible or invisible line to build his compositions, shifting between the decorative and realistic. Nogués required himself to paint with a solidly structured, tonally abstract, composition, far removed



► Nogués and Marià Pidelaserra at the Acadèmia Borrell, c. 1893.

from the anecdote, or what we understand as illustration. He pursued, and was successful in, capturing life, timelessness, the true meaning of things, art.

Juan de la Encina, the aforementioned art critic who reported on Nogués' first solo exhibition in Madrid in April 1917, says, quite rightly, that his work, in addition to its technique, is imbued with a noble decorative sense and says, in reference to his etchings: "*We can imagine them transposed to his mural paintings, and as such, in our opinion, they wouldn't lose anything. We do not know whether Nogués has done this type of painting. Of course, we would venture to say that if he did he would not fail. This means that Nogués has conceived them on a large scale.*" Juan de la Encina's comments couldn't have been more apposite, or premonitory, as, at the time he was writing, Nogués had completed a mural in the basement café, El Celler, at the Barcelona art gallery, Galeries Laietanes, but had yet to embark on the drawing room project for Lluís Plandiura, which he would commence at the end of the same year.

Nogués only gained recognition in early middle age, but it is clear that many years of study and sacrifice lay behind the success he achieved around 1909 and 1910. Very few of the many works Nogués must have made in his early period have survived.

His first oil paintings on record date from the period between 1891 and 1895.

The *Auca de l'Aplec de Sant Medir* (Scenes from the Gathering of Sant Medir) dates from 1899. It was followed by ten smaller works he submitted to the International Postcard Competition organised by F. Clarà i Cia. In 1902, he drew a portrait of his mother. A landscape painting, *Paisatge*, dated 1903, is dedicated to his cousin Pep Casas.

A small oil painting of men bathing and an illustration for Lucian of Samosata's *Dialogues of the Courtesans* published in the magazine *Joventut*, a poster advertising a brand of biscuits and four more oil paintings, one of them painted in Paris, date from the following year. The masthead illustrating his friend Rafael Nogueras Oller's magazine *Poti-Poti* and the decorated pottery commissioned by Antoni Serra are from 1906.

In 1907 and 1908, he produced four illustrations for the magazine *Hojas Selectas*. Also dated 1908 is the banner at the top of the parchment scroll naming Apel·les Mestres a master troubadour, or Mestre en Gai Saber in Catalan, at the poetry competition, the Jocs Florals. Mestres was also awarded the Golden Viola



Domènech Carles and Nogués at the Galeries Laietanes, c. 1919-1920.



Teresa Lostau,
Nogués' first wife.



ABOVE:
Nogués and Isabel Escalada,
1924.

BELOW:
Nogués and Isabel in Olot,
1935.

prize at the festival that same year. The oil painting *Mariner* (Sailor), which bears the dedication “Al amic Serra” (to my friend Serra) closes the cycle.

The language Nogués later came to master is present in these early works, despite his struggles to manifest and express himself fully. At the time, although he found sustenance in his creative imagination, his lack of technical skill was the greatest hindrance to bringing his works to fruition.

His characters seem to be desperately trying to escape the straitjacket of the strict, disciplined and realistic drawing techniques he had inherited from his art training.

However, although these works are relatively unaccomplished, they already bear the hallmarks of those he produced from 1910 onwards. The figures are stylised, with the exception of the ones in the *Auca de l'Aplec de Sant Medir* (Scenes from the Gathering of Sant Medir), in which the square format of the vignettes forces him to make them more solid. However, their poses are always more measured, elegant and the composition is balanced, well judged and well constructed. The subject matter always revolves around everyday life: a theme he went on to repeat and hone to perfection. The young woman, whom he respects and admires, and the attitude and demeanour of the man in particular, represent human beings as the measure of all things. These works from his early period clearly show simplicity and sincerity: essential qualities of Nogués' entire body of work.

Until 1909, Nogués' work was in a lethargic state. It could be said that he was undergoing a metamorphosis and, although there only appear to be slight indications of this, there are hints of an intense, deep-seated transformation that burst forth from September 1909 onwards with his contributions to *Papitu*. The fact that he was drawing constantly and more spontaneously and practising the engraving techniques he had just begun learning with Furnó, were, for him, the perfect exercises that would trigger and hasten this wealth of ideas that had hitherto lain dormant waiting for the time they could come to life and take form and colour.

One day, as if all at once, his depictions of the Three Graces, the goddess Pomona and the elegant woman, the abovementioned *Ben Plantada*, full of grace and harmony, appeared naturally as if waking from a dream.

This final triumph was, quite naturally, accompanied by great joy: the joy of freedom. And the characters escaped happily from his fingers without having time for anything other than making way for his new creations which were vying

with one another to be born. Examples include the illustrations made from 1914 onwards and preserved forever in what was to be *LA CATALUNYA PINTORESCA*, or the tempera murals decorating the walls of the basement café, *El Cellar*, at the *Galeries Laietanes* in 1915.

The restfulness and reflection apparent in the mural in the *Plandiura* drawing room followed in the wake of this initial burst of creativity. Nogués began working on the project in 1919 but it wasn't completed until 1927. During this time, he produced numerous important works that, in some way, distracted him from the job he had taken on. He wanted the mural to be perfect and spared no effort, or time or dedication, in achieving this aim.

Towards 1920, Nogués' art becomes purer and more refined. We can see this transition clearly in the glazed ceramic frieze that decorates the façade of the co-operative winery, the *Celler Cooperatiu de Pinell de Brai*, which he created with his first wife, *Teresa Lostau*. The frieze is 45.5 metres long and 80 centimetres high and the figures depicted adopt a more relaxed pose. This evolution stems from the *Plandiura* drawing room project. Other outstanding works from the same period include the glazed ceramic panels at the restaurant *Can Culleretes*, the paintings in the *Crespo* family house and the preparatory drawings for his fired enamelled glassware. The murals in the mayor's office at *Barcelona City Hall* mark the end of this third period.

Nogués stopped painting as a result of the hiatus of the Spanish Civil War, although he took it up again, albeit less assiduously, from 1939 until his death.

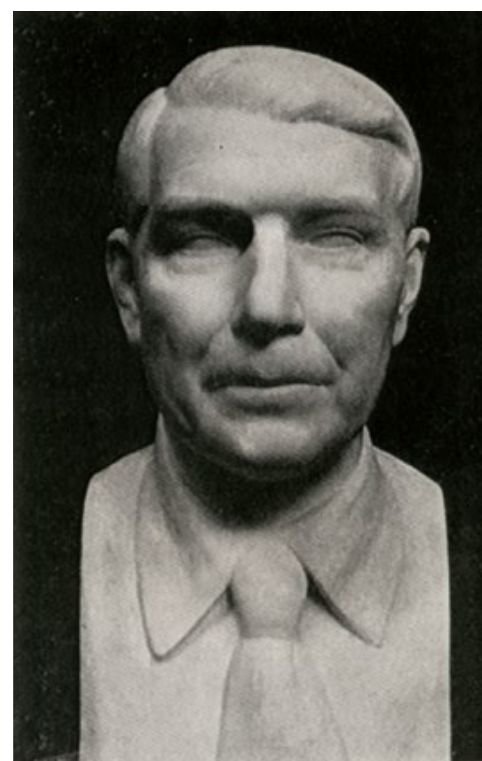
From 1934 onwards, and throughout the war, Nogués dedicated himself entirely to teaching, giving classes in intaglio techniques and lithography at the *Escola Superior de Paisatge d'Olot*. His own output was restricted to drawings, sketches and studies from nature, as well as engraving, a technique he never stopped using.

This final period was steeped in nostalgia for Nogués. He focused his attention on etchings and drypoint engravings: techniques that require a great deal of thought, attention and abstraction. Nogués threw himself heart and soul into his work, perhaps with the deliberate intention of escaping this new and strange way of living in which his only consolation was the memory of beautiful moments in the past now gone forever.

There is little point in comparing and looking for the possible influences of other artists on Nogués' work. The great masters who came before us only leave an



Isabel Escalada at the retrospective exhibition about Xavier Nogués at the *Palau de la Virreina*, Barcelona, in 1967.



Bust of Nogués by *Josep Dunyach*.

imprint and have an influence on those who are not good enough as artists; the ones who only learn the “recipe” or “manner”. Works created like this are usually technically accomplished, but superficial, because they are neither personal nor heartfelt. The works by the great masters affect true artists in a different way. They find an affinity in what is similar to them. The work of the masters is the stimulus that encourages them to pursue their ideal and, eventually, a lesson, not a solution. The strength works of art convey to them is related to *content*, and never *form*.

Although it is true that Nogués doesn’t fall into the category of genius, we know he is a good, genuine artist and, as a result, has his own strength, language and forms of expression.

Taking his artistic preferences as a basis, I would venture to say that Nogués shared an affinity with – rather than being influenced by – three great masters. I base this assertion on three postcards Nogués pinned to his studio wall, which remained there for years.

These simple, old sepia postcards are reproductions of *The Parasol* by Goya (1746-1828), *The Kermis* by Pieter Bruegel (1525-1569), and *Saint Genevieve Watching Over Paris* by Puvis de Chavannes (1824-1898).

When brought together and properly analysed, the works by these three great masters, which, at first sight, and individually, may seem different to us, in terms of concept, style and the eras in which they were conceived and made, give us a new and surprisingly coherent view, while we find them rendered fluently, simply and in a balanced way in Nogués’ work. It could be said that the essence of our artist also makes up the main virtues of these three great masters.

What Eugeni d’Ors says about Nogués’ etching of *La Ben Plantada* – a classical figure surrounded by Gothic grotesques – is nothing but the meaning we find in bringing together these three striking individualities that Nogués shares and expresses through his personal way of seeing, understanding and experimenting.

Nogués brings together, balances and measures not in the “manner” but in the “meaning” we find in Goya’s strong and powerful material; in the joyful, yet ordered, sense of Bruegel; and the graceful spirituality of Puvis de Chavannes.

We can also add the links Feliu Elias established between the constructive sense of Cézanne’s work and Nogués’.

In his book *Xavier Nogués, caricaturista i pintor*, when he talks about the much-remarked on influence of Goya, Rafael Benet says he finds fewer crossovers



Postcard, 1902.

than affinities. He goes on to say that, if any comparison is to be made, it would be with the Berlin artist, George Grosz, although he concludes that the latter's work is more anecdotal and excessively caustic. However, Benet finally rules out these influences because, as he quite rightly says, Nogués is a pure artist.

The fact is, in order to define an artist's work, or to define anything, we choose and compare qualities that are clearly shown by, or seen in other artists or works. That doesn't mean the artist has imitated them or been influenced by them. Nogués has enough talent, skill and personality to give us the best of himself, despite the fact that, initially, he found it hard to find his symbols, language and, in this case, the right images. We could add the endless array of articles written by a variety of prestigious authors pondering on his genuine, unpretentious art. Nevertheless, we wouldn't claim it was more wonderful than it already is.

The great lesson to be drawn from his work is, above and beyond everything, honesty, closely followed by patience, perseverance, a desire to challenge himself, and the courage and faith that always spurred him on, even in the most difficult moments, to achieve his aims. Nogués is what his friend Francesc Labarta termed an exemplary artist, which, in the end, is much more difficult than being a great artist. This is because being exemplary has in its favour a series of extremely rare qualities, such as balance, which, throughout history, we only find in a handful of artists.

THE WORK



Drawings





Home Dret
(Man Standing).
Soft varnish, 1932.

The Cartoonist and Caricaturist who Helped Us Find Ourselves as a People

JOSEP M. CADENA

Xavier Nogués was a Catalan of integrity and a well-rounded artist. This book, prepared with such dedication and efficiency by Cecília Vidal, provides ample proof of this. And, with her characteristic kindness, she wanted all the members of the foundation that was set up to ensure Nogués' name endures – and who worked with her on the project – to contribute by writing introductions to its different chapters. I am particularly delighted to introduce the one looking at Nogués the cartoonist. This is because, without detracting from his other facets, I have always thought that his great creativity was revealed to its fullest extent when, with pen in hand, he drew his playful caricatures. They reflect, with conviction, a series of ideas and concepts that go beyond the subjects he had been asked to illustrate on the cheap paper of humorous magazines and the even-cheaper paper of the press, with a touch of humour about, always serious, current events.

I am writing this in 2010, sixty-nine years after Xavier Nogués' death and one hundred and thirty-seven years after his birth. I never had the opportunity to meet him but I am now older (seventy-four) than he was when he died. And I mention this to make a state-

ment that is, for me, categorical, incontestable and irrefutable: Xavier Nogués' drawings, which hark back to an age he only glimpsed briefly – I refer specifically to the ones in *L'humor a la Barcelona del vuitcents*, a book published by the cultural services of the Catalan government's Department of Culture in 1938, towards the end of the Spanish Civil War – are so splendid because they are so closely rooted to a land that has never died and still reflect life there, even today.

Going further back in time, we were unable to see the Xavier Nogués who often used the pseudonym “Babel” in his contributions to the magazines *Papitu*, *L'Esquella de la Torratxa*, *Picarol*, *Revista Nova* and *Cuca Fera* and the newspaper *La Publicidad*, or purchase Xavier Nogués by Francesc Pujols when *50 ninots* came out, the blue notebook Feliu Elias dedicated to him under the nom de plume “Joan Sacs”, the Catalan alphabet Salvat-Papasseit asked him to write, or the books he illustrated for Jaume Bofill i Mates – who wrote under the name “Guerau de Liost” – , Josep Carner and Joan Oliver “Pere Quart”. Because we were mere infants when they came into the world and Nogués was nearing the end of his life, we were unaware of the existence of

the earlier publications, such as *La Catalunya pintoresca*, *El sombrero de tres picos*, and many other works, such as his etchings, drypoint engravings, lithographs, linocuts and posters. We didn't know about them because the hammer blow we received at the end of the Spanish Civil War sought to eradicate everything: our culture tree and any other green shoots that attempted to sprout on the newly grafted branches the new regime wanted to bear a fruit that was different to our taste. And although it was terrible for everyone, and they could do nothing to avoid it, I came to the conclusion that I could gradually recover, to as great an extent as possible, and using no specific system, what belonged to everyone. And as the selection had been made in its day, his works from the later, gloomier period gave us the opportunity to find – sometimes at random, sometimes by chance – a trail of clues which we could follow to make our own personal composition of place through a fresh pair of eyes. This is what happened to me, luckily, with Xavier Nogués and his work in the press, books and art in general.

It may seem strange, or even arbitrary, but I came across Xavier Nogués after reading Albert Llanas' book of humorous rhymes, *Una grossa de pensaments en vers*, as part of an edition with illustrations by Modest Urgell. Expressions such as “Podrà aquest món donar voltes, / però sempre la Quaresma / seguirà al Carnestoltes” (The world may keep turning / but at Lent / it will follow the carnival king), “Portant el cor a la mà / tothom el massegarrà” (If you wear your heart on your sleeve / everyone will bite it), “Val més tamboret comprat / que no pas sofà llogat” (Better to own a stool / than rent a sofa), “No hi ha res més divertit / com passar la nit al llit” (There's nothing more fun / than

spending the night in bed) or - to conclude - “Si tens matxo mossegair / no badis mirant enlaira” (If you have a mule that bites / don't get distracted and look up in the air), seemed to have a logical continuation in the titles “Setze jutges” (Sixteen judges) and “A can Garlanda” (House of chaos), that were followed up by “Veure un ase volar” (See an ass fly) and “Escampar la boira” (The outing), which I found in a second edition of *La Catalunya pintoresca* (1933), made up, like the first, of “5 sections with 10 engravings, each one with a text by Francesc Pujols” and published by Antoni López-Llausàs' bookshop, Catalònia. It is worth mentioning that it contains a short text by Xavier Nogués, in which he says, “in view of the failure of its first outing (meaning edition), which the author put his heart and soul into.” This contradicts what “Joan Sacs” wrote about the first edition: “it was so successful that it sold out straightaway”. Whichever of these statements is true, *La Catalunya pintoresca* – the successor of the drawings published in the magazine *Revista Nova* – was republished several times over the years in official and clandestine editions. The definitive one, compiled by Cecília Vidal for the Fundació Nogués, sold out and – as a result of her endeavours and mine (I assisted her) – any remaining copies were distributed free of charge to the museums in Catalonia that, in our humble opinion, may have been interested in the subject.

I still recall, some time later, browsing a second-hand bookshop and finding the edition of *50 ninots* with a foreword by Ramon Reventós “Moni”, published by Salvat-Papasseit and printed by López Llausàs in 1922. It contains fifty skilfully executed caricatures showing how Catalans behaved, accompanied by common Cat-

alan expressions (which were later forbidden by others) such as “passi-ho be tingui” (good day to you), “en-raonant la gent s’enten” (people understand one another by talking things through), “tranquil·litat i bons aliments” (take it easy), “portar un duro a la butxaca” (to have a penny in your pocket), or “fugi, home, fugi” (get away with you, man). Not to mention the priceless “Parlem-ne” (Let’s talk about it) uttered by the man who sees his wife leaving him on a horse with her lover, or “bona amistat no te preu” (a good friendship is priceless) to describe two drunken men with their arms around each other’s shoulders to stop themselves falling over, who are heading to the city in search of a bed. The meticulous poet and publisher Josep Pedreira, a member of our foundation until his death, published a second edition in 1950 as part of his Ossa Menor collection. It is now as hard to find as the first edition.

I would also like to add that I was doubly impressed when I purchased the 1915 almanac of the satirical magazine *L’Esquella de la Torratxa* and the volume of the same weekly dated 1912. I bought them in this order, as a keen collector of the publication and works by Xavier Nogués. The almanac, with its full-colour cover featuring a drawing by Ricard Canals of a naked woman sitting on a cathedral gargoyle, had an unsigned, full-page frontispiece and a border and repeated *culs de lampe*, or tailpieces, to frame twelve of Nogués’ drawings – the last one signed “Babel” – about the months of the year. They illustrated the *Història d’en Quinze* by Ramon Reventós. In 1912, sumptuously bound in red and gilded boards engraved by Josep Triadó, there was a special issue on the theme of sloth, illustrated by the cartoonist Apa (LET, no. 1731, 1-3-1912). Xavier

Nogués published (p. 152) his sensational drawing entitled “Precocitat” (Precociousness) in full colour in the same edition. He signed it “Babel” and it is on display in our art museum as part of the Partagàs bequest. You may know that the drawing depicts a working family – a man, his wife, daughter and son – taking a break somewhere on the outskirts of the city. The father asks his son “And you, lad, what do you want to be when you grow up?” and the boy answers, “A penitent, because they only work one day a year!” What a wonderful riposte! Because the penitents wear conical hoods on their heads and only work one day a year, during the Maundy Thursday procession.

This drawing was reproduced in the two-thousandth edition of *L’Esquella de la Torratxa*, (LET, 27-4-1917, p. 324) one of the finest in its long history. It was reprinted in a smaller format with a shortened text “When I grow up I want to be a penitent.”

There are so many cartoons by Xavier Nogués I could mention. They all bear witness to his skill as a humourist in his drawings and most of his texts. In the case of the latter, and as was customary at the time, his friends and colleagues – who were perfectly in tune with Nogués and just as focused as he was on producing good work – helped him summarise and find the right expression.

In order to gain the maximum benefit from its different chapters, the entire book merits careful reading. However, in my opinion, the following one about drawing and Nogués’ activities most closely related to the medium, is one of the best and the one that will show us why he was such an outstanding artist.



Drawings

Nogués is known, first and foremost, as a cartoonist and caricaturist. He was, without a shadow of a doubt, one of the best.

He studied at a time when drawing was considered an absolutely essential discipline for artists and artisans. Like his fellow students at the Martínez Altés and the Pere Borrell academies, he came to master what the great painters had traditionally tried to instil into their young followers, although not without effort.

The few surviving drawings from his early period show how he applied the rules and advice of his teachers and, still adhering to discipline, and, as yet, unskilled, fought desperately to escape the strict, cold academic straitjacket that was stifling him. Made between 1898 and 1908 they are a far cry from the ones published in *Papitu* at the end of 1909. Nevertheless, we can already see subjects and poses that would be repeated in all his compositions.

Nogués' prolific output as a cartoonist and caricaturist can be divided into different periods. The first, drawing from life, includes his self-portrait and a number of family portraits, as well as studies of female nudes and preparatory drawings for paintings. None of the academic drawings made while he was studying survives.

The second period, devoted to illustrations, includes a variety of media, from posters, advertisements and leaflets to books and, his best-known and most prolific work: his regular contributions to the magazines of the day.

Nogués continued to produce figure drawings throughout his career, and they were always part of his practice, however, he wasn't keen on drawings of this kind and this explains why there are fewer finished works in this genre than illustrations.

However, he produced a number of portraits throughout his life. The first, of his mother, dates from 1902. It was followed by a portrait of his second wife, Isa-

► *El somnia truites*
(The Daydreamer).
La Catalunya pintoresca, 1919.



Drawings for the *Auca de l'Aplec de Sant Medir* (Scenes from the Gathering of Sant Medir). 1899.

bel, from 1927, one of Fanny Pérez Angelon, one of the painter Sebastià Congost and several studies of female figures made in 1940. Some of them are preparatory studies for subsequent paintings. From his sojourn in Olot we find several studies of female nudes from life-drawing classes, although they are more like technical exercises than creative drawings.

From the first period, we also find fifty-seven studies and sketches of figures and animals, made at the country house, Mas Cadevall, in the village of Torn (Olot). The property belonged to Dr Figueras, who was married to a cousin of the sculptor Josep Llimona and was Iu Pascual's brother-in-law. The house was used by the teachers and students from the landscape painting school, the *Escola Superior de Paisatge d'Olot*, as a location for drawing from nature. Nogués used these studies in a number of oil paintings, including *La migdiada* (The Nap), *La cobla* (The Band), *Excursionistes* (Ramblers) and *El palc* (The Theatre Box). The latter was left unfinished.

Nogués considered observation and nature-drawing exercises as a discipline and an excellent practice that he always recommended to his students. However he never took them up academically. Instead, he made an articulated figure with wire that he could put in the desired positions to achieve the right movement and proportions for each of the imaginary figures in his compositions.

His way of drawing was extremely neat and ordered. The strokes of the pencil – usually graphite (lead) or charcoal (Conté) – are light, fine and slightly wavy, as if he were hardly touching or pressing down on the paper. This is why, despite being carefully structured, his drawings give an impression of delicacy, which is enhanced by the shading he achieves by subtly blending out the edges to create volume.

Nogués normally used small-sized Canson paper, no bigger than 35 x 50 cm, for this type of drawing.



Illustrations

Nogués truly excelled as an illustrator and this was due to the influence of foreign magazines such as *Le Rire*, *L'Assiette au Beurre*, *Simplicissimus* and *Jugend*. They served as inspiration for a series of high-quality publications in Catalonia, such as *Papitu*, *Picarol*, *Revista Nova* and *Vell i Nou*, which were an initiative of Santiago Segura. These magazines brought to prominence some of the young – and not so young – artists who would meet at the Faianç Català gallery, and the Galeries Laietanes. The group founded the arts association, Les Arts i Els Artistes, in 1910, which made a key contribution to shaping the Catalan art movement known as *noucentisme*.

Nogués was one of the most outstanding illustrators who worked on these extraordinary, high-quality magazines which, sadly, have never been revived. Through his contributions, he gained a reputation as a great and wonderful illustrator that endures today.

He earned this well-deserved fame from his illustrations for *Papitu*, produced under the pseudonym “Babel”. This collaboration played a vital role in bringing his art to life. From this moment on, his work continued its unstoppable ascent, filling the pages of books, magazines and other publications with wonderful drawings. *Papitu* also made him particularly popular with the public, who could see and appreciate his skill in producing such lively and sensitive illustrations. His first drawings illustrating popular Catalan sayings soon appeared in the *Revista Nova*. Francesc Pujols, who was very knowledgeable about the region and what made its people tick, suggested the subject matter and wrote the accompanying texts. Due to the enthusiasm of Joan Sacs and the booksellers Salvat-Papasseit, they were compiled and published in a book entitled *La Catalunya pintoresca* in

■
Auca de l'Aplec de Sant Medir.
1899.

1919. The book achieved extraordinary success and, in 1933, the bookshop Catàlonia published a second edition with a preface by Nogués. In 1947, the publishing house Millà produced a third edition, with a short, prophetic introduction by Joan Sacs “[...] *From time to time, Catalans will republish this Catalunya pintoresca, which lampoons the grotesque traits of our people; until the day we are all perfect.*” And this proved to be the case as, in 1990, the Fundació Xavier Nogués published the sixth edition of this book, which, as Francesc Fontbona quite rightly said, is the masterpiece of critical *noucentisme*.

Returning to Nogués’ work as an illustrator, he went on to produce a Catalan alphabet for children, *Abecedari català per a nens*, his famous book of caricatures, *50 ninots*, and a series of books which delighted his readers. The grace and vivacity of his extraordinary, highly likeable “*ninots*” may have dazzled his admirers to such an extent that his illustrations partly eclipsed his many other, less well-known facets as an artist, which have been relegated to the background.

The process he followed in most of his illustrations consisted of drawing an outline in lead pencil and going over it with an ink pen or a paintbrush dipped in Indian ink. He altered, corrected and covered up the parts of the drawing he wasn’t satisfied with using white gouache and redrew them. If he wanted to correct larger areas, he attached another piece of paper of the same quality (he nearly always worked on Canson paper) and drew on top of it. Illustrators frequently used this system as it meant that they didn’t have to repeat the entire drawing and they gained precious time, as there was always a tight deadline for submitting the originals to the editors. Nogués made so many illustrations and drawings for advertisements that they are almost impossible to count. Their whereabouts is currently unknown. However, we have listed the publications he worked on, or that published his drawings.



Retaule del vici (Altarpiece of Vice).
Papitu, 1910.

*La víctima: Ara sí que m'hi
assemblo al meu retrat
cubista (The Victim: Now I
Look Like my Cubist Portrait).*
Revista Nova, 1914.



*Popular types:
El senyor Canons
(Mr Canons).*
Revista Nova, 1914.





► Illustration for the book *Joan Barroer* by Carles Riba. Ed. Muntanola, 1917.



*Combregrar amb
Rodes de Molí*
(Telling Tall Stories
to the Crowd). 1919.



L'esgarria cries
(The Party Pooper).
El gat dels frares (The Joker).
La Catalunya pintoresca, 1919.



Illustrations for
Diálogos de cortesanas,
Lucian of Samosata.
Revista Joventut,
Barcelona, 7/1/1904.

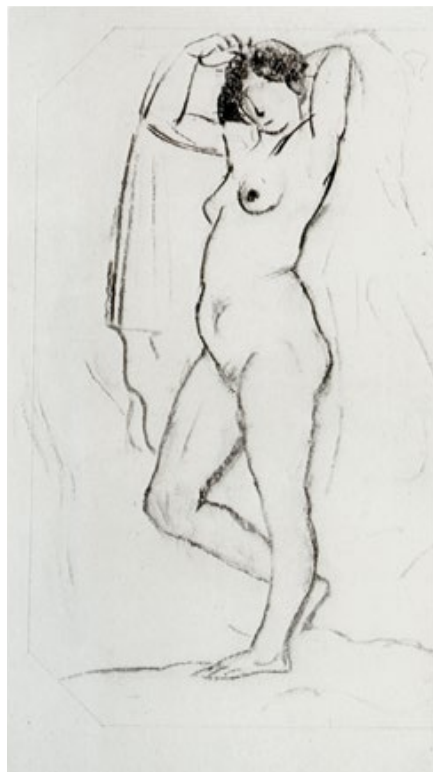
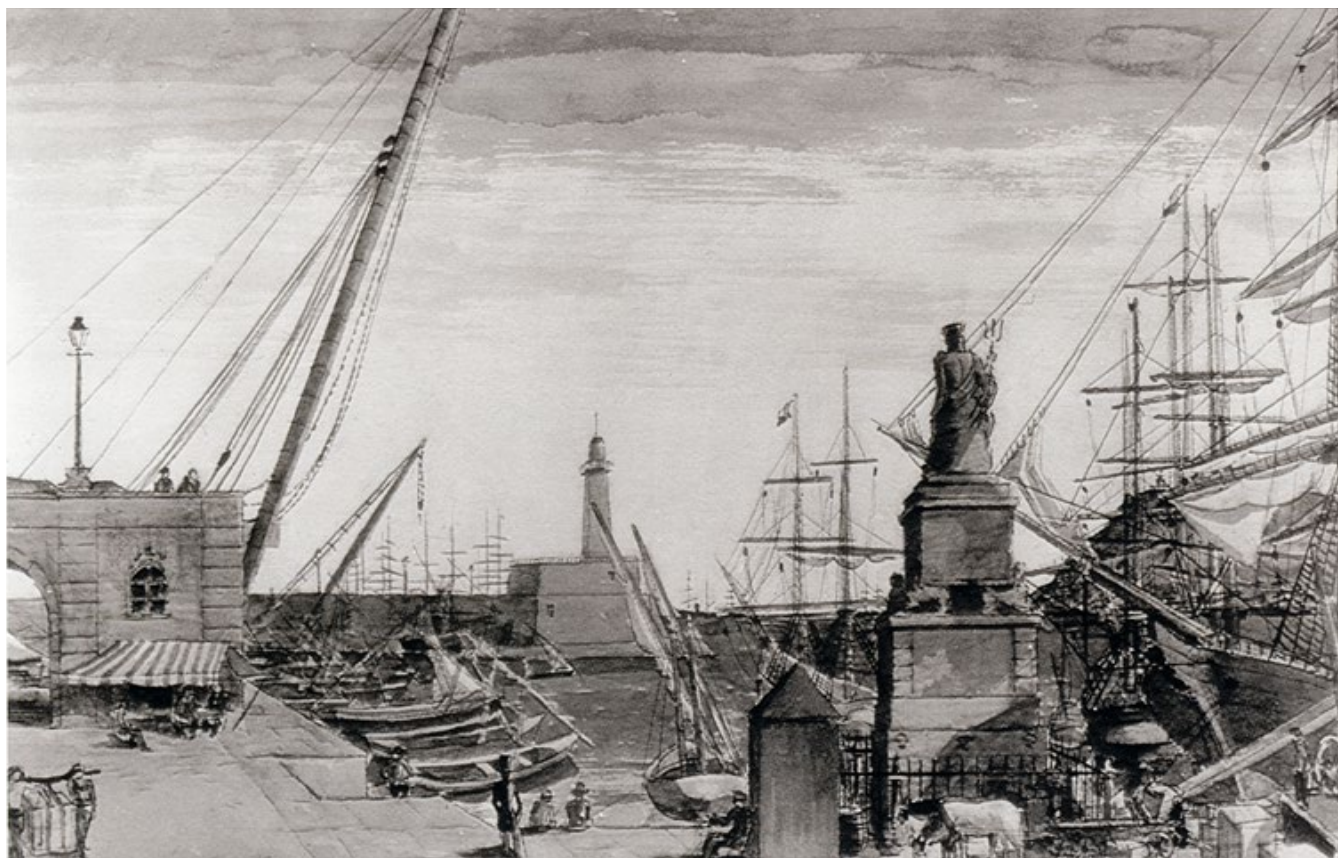


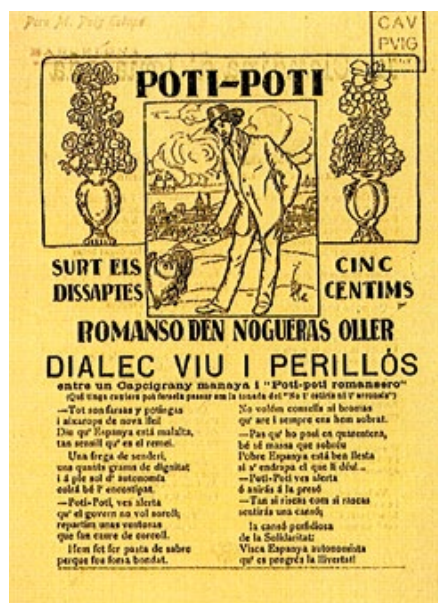
Figure drawings.
1921-1923.



► *L'antic port de Barcelona* (The Old Port of Barcelona).
Watercolour, 1934.

► *L'antic Born* (The Old Born District)
Watercolour, 1934.





Periodicals

1902-1903

Mercurio. *Revista Comercial Hispano-Americana*. Monthly magazine. Published by Casa Comisionista J. Puigdollers-Macia Sociedad en Comandita.

On 4th March 1902, it published Nogués' first advertisements and his first three known illustrations for Artur Masriera's short story "Luchas del día" (no. 18, 4th May 1903).

1904

Joventut. Weekly magazine.

Printed by: Fidel Giró. Barcelona.

The magazine came out on 15th February 1890.

The last issue was published on 31st December 1906.

The magazine featured Nogués' illustration for the Spanish translation of Lucian of Samosata's *Dialogues of the Courtesans*. No. 7, January 1904, p. 12.

1906

Poti-Poti. Weekly magazine featuring popular verse.

Editor: Rafael Nogueras Oller. Lithographs: Ramon Riera. Barcelona. (Only five issues were published.)

Nogués drew the masthead of each edition in ink. It featured a traditional border framing the figure of the young poet Nogueras Oller and was made to look like a woodcut.

1907-1908

Hojas Selectas. Biblioteca Salvat. Monthly magazine. Barcelona.

It published two illustrations by Nogués for the short story "La coja de las muñecas" and two more for "Al fin mujer".

1908-1910

Papitu. Weekly magazine.

Editor and owner: Feliu Elias. Barcelona.

During its initial phase, *Papitu* was one of the finest magazines ever produced in Catalonia and comparable to the ones from Europe, in terms of its writers and illustrators. Its first editor was founder Feliu Elias (who contributed drawings under the name “Apa” and wrote under the nom de plume Joan Sacs). The first issue came out on 25th November 1908, and was printed by Joaquim Horta, who also contributed to keeping the publication afloat. The last issue from the initial phase (it later changed editors) was published in December 1910.

The editor’s office was frequented by all the contributors who held meetings in the evening chaired by “Apa”, who dreamt of, and managed to create an artistic satirical magazine that shone a light on the prevailing pomposity and decadence of the day.

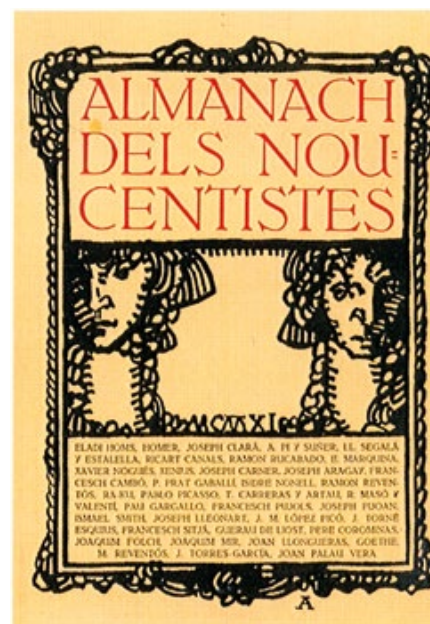
Màrius Aguilar was editor-in-chief and its writers were Feliu Elias, “Apa”, Francesc Pujols, Ramon Reventós, Josep Carner and Eugeni d’Ors. Pere Ynglada, Ismael Smith, Ricard Canals, Josep Aragay, Manuel Humbert, Isidre Nonell, Iu Pascual, Xavier Nogués, Francesc Labarta, Marià Pidelaserra, Pau Gargallo and many others, who opposed the academic aesthetic, illustrated the texts with wonderful drawings.

During the initial phase of *Papitu* (1908-1910), Nogués became known for filling the pages of the magazine with his amusing and beautiful drawings accompanied by humorous texts by Francesc Pujols, Joan Sacs and Ramon Reventós, to the delight of its readers. Nogués’ first drawing was published in issue 41, on 7th September 1909, and signed with his surname, as were all his subsequent drawings until issue 54, which came out on 8th December. He first used the pseudonym “Babel” in issue 56, which was published on 22nd December the same year.

1911

Almanach dels Noucentistes. Published by Joaquim Horta. Barcelona. (Print run of 150 numbered copies.)

This is the most representative work of the Catalan cultural movement, *noucentisme*. It had a print run of 150 editions that were not intended for sale. The finest artists of the day contributed to the *Almanach* and Joaquim Horta won gold medals at the exhibitions in London



(1913) and Leipzig (1914). These earned him his reputation as the foremost printer of the *noucentista* period.

1912

Picarol. Humorous magazine. Barcelona.

Editors: Xavier Nogués and Josep Aragay.

Nogués not only worked as an illustrator for different magazines of the day, he also became joint editor of one titled *Picarol* with Aragay.

Unfortunately, like nearly all the publications of the day, it had a short, albeit glorious life. Everyone agreed it was one of the magazines of the highest artistic quality, and this is the reason why it didn't remain in print. Only six issues were published, the first on 10th February 1912 and the last on 16th March that same year.

1912-1917

L'Esquella de la Torratxa. Barcelona.

Editor: Antoni López.

The finest artists and draughtsmen of the late 19th and early 20th centuries worked on the magazine.

Nogués was also a contributor, although not on a regular basis. His most outstanding illustrations were published in the special issue dedicated to sloth published on 1st March 1912 and the ones accompanying the twelve short chapters of Ramon Reventós' story "La història d'en Quinze", a biographical summary of the year published in the almanac of *L'Esquella de la Torratxa* in 1915. Nogués made a series of drawings alluding to each month of the year, set inside an extraordinary border comprising human figures, fruit and animals, and two standard bearers on horseback.

1914-1917

Revista Nova. Fortnightly art journal. Barcelona.

Editors: Feliu Elias and Xavier Nogués, first and second phase.

This journal, published by Santiago Segura, first came out on 11th April 1914. It covered all the art trends, both ancient and modern. It

filled the void left by *L'Avenç*, *Catalònia*, *Juventut* and *Pèl & Ploma*. It was run by Joan Sacs (Feliu Elias), in association with Xavier Nogués, Ramon Reventós, Francesc Pujols, Cristòfor de Domènech, Alexandre Plana, Francesc Quer, Josep M. López-Picó, Carles Soldevila and other contributors.

The drawings Nogués contributed included the fourteen originals and variants that were later gathered in a book entitled *La Catalunya pintoresca*.

In spite of its quality, *Revista Nova* only remained in print for a year. The last issue was published on 5th November 1914. On 5th May 1916, it was revived for a second period, this time in a slightly larger format. Nogués, together with Canals, Humbert, Colom, Labarta and other artists, produced a number of illustrations, including three of only five lino cuts he produced. On 7th January 1917, *Revista Nova* closed its doors for good.

1915-1918

Iberia. Barcelona.

Editor: Claudi Ametlla.

Nogués produced his only-known only caricatures on military themes for this magazine.

1915-1921

Vell i Nou. Fortnightly art journal. Barcelona.

Editor: Romà Jori.

Nogués' association with *Vell i Nou* lasted from the magazine's inception, in 1915, until 1921. The numerous illustrations are basically *culs de lampe*, or tailpieces, ornamental motifs, borders, friezes and, above all, advertisements. The latter appear on the final pages and are unsigned. Nogués never dismissed these small commissions. In fact, he seemed to have fun doing them, particularly those that referred to advertising in general, rather than a specific product, such as the well-known "If you don't advertise, you won't sell. Do you hear?"



Doncs, si senyors. Aquest pillastre, — perquè així ens ho fa dir-ho, — ha fet indignar justament la enorme patuleia de característics subjectes que li van al darrera — a cops d'escombra els uns, a gambades precursoras d'espatèc els altres, — per mor d'haver pispat de la secció de llibreria dels Salvat-Papasseit a Galeríes Laietanes (*) precisament un exemplar del primer fascicle de *La Catalunya Plintoresca* d'En Xavier Nogués, (fascicle que vostès ja han adquirit o que tenen el propòsit de fer-ho deseguida) justament quan està agotant-se i una generació immensa invadia la botiga, fent cua un rera l'altre i aprofitant la gran demanadissa. — El mal és que el jutge, que trobarà que és home de bon gust, i prou espavilat, no el condemnarà a sis quinzenes seguides, que això demanen aquets senyors per tan espaventable delictè, sinó que li donarà els calès que valia el fascicle primer, i demanarà que l'hi subscriuin, i li portint àdhuc els que segueixin al mateix Palau de Justícia.

(*) Corts Catalanes, 613.

Vell i Nou. Year 5, no. 90.
Barcelona 1st May 1919.
Reproduced p. 176

1917

Cuca Fera. Satirical weekly. Barcelona.

Editor: Josep Pugès i Guitart.

It was first published on 10th April 1917 and remained in print until 8th August that same year. Nogués only worked on the first five issues. He signed his drawings with the letter *B* for “Babel”. Aragay, Junceda, Colom, Apa, Labarta and Canals also worked on the magazine.

1917-1919

Un Enemic del Poble. Barcelona.

Editor and writer: Joan Salvat-Papasseit.

Nogués illustrated the last two issues (17 and 18).

1918

La Publicidad. Barcelona.

Editor: Romà Jori and Amadeu Hurtado.

Issue 13,972, published on 24th February 1918, features three drawings accompanying the article “Las elecciones de hoy”, dedicated to the Spanish general election.

1918

La columna de Foc. Editor: Salvador Torrell.

Printed by: La Fleca. Reus.

This publication features texts and illustrations already published in *Un Enemic del Poble*. It launched in 1918 and the last issue was published in May 1920.

1918-1936

D’Ací i D’Allà. Monthly magazine.

Editor: Ignasi Folch i Torres. Ed. Catalana.

From 1930 onwards, Nogués drew advertisements for the fashion house Badia, as well as the covers for other issues of the magazine.

1919

L’Instant. Fortnightly magazine.

Published by Joaquim Horta. Barcelona-Paris.

Nogués illustrated all of issue 4 in the magazine’s second year, on 30th September 1919.

1919-1920

Terramar. Fortnightly art, literature and sport magazine. Sitges.

Editor: Josep Carbonell i Gener.

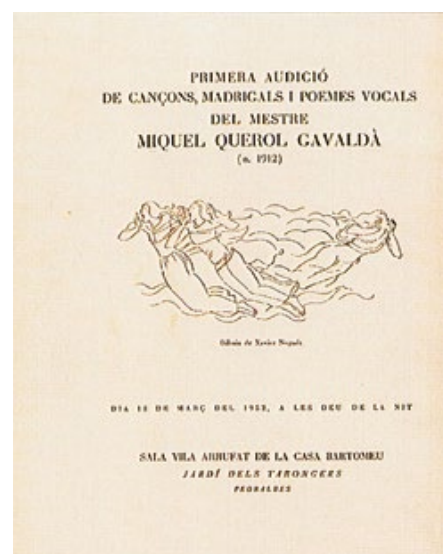
He produced a number of illustrations.

1921-1923

Catalunya Literària. Barcelona.

Editor: Antoni Ollé Bertran.

He produced a number of illustrations.





1921-1923

La mainada. Children's weekly. Barcelona.

Editor: Joan Laguia i Lliteras.

It was first published on 10th June 1921 and only remained in print for two years. La Mainada published two calendars: one for 1922 and another for 1923, with illustrations by Nogués.

1924-1934

L'Abella d'or. Editor: Lluís Bertran i Pijoan. Barcelona.

Printed by Altés. Nogués'

Drawings are featured in several issues of this magazine.

1927

Fulls Musicals. Monthly magazine for members, published by the Associació de Música «da Camera», Barcelona. Many editions had illustrations by Nogués.

1928

Jordi. Children's weekly. Barcelona.

Editor: Melcior Font.

It launched on 23rd February but only twenty-five issues were published, the last one on 9th August 1928. Nogués only worked on the first issue.

1929-1931

Mirador. Art and literature weekly. Barcelona.

It featured several illustrations by Nogués for an unpublished short story by Miquel Llor (5th February 1931, p. 4).

1932

El Be Negre. Satirical weekly. Barcelona.

Editor: J.M. Planas. Publisher: Màrius Gifreda. Art director: Valentí Castanys.

This publication was in print from 23rd June 1931 until 19th July 1936.

Nogués drew the cover of the only almanac published by *El Be Negre* in 1932.

1935

Butlletí de la Cambra Mercantil. J. Cabré Gelabert. Barcelona.

Nogués illustrated the covers for each of the twelve issues of the newsletter with allegories of the months of the year.

Pamphlets and Printed Matter

Nogués excelled at illustrating printed matter, although it wasn't his main speciality. Currently much sought after by collectors, examples include the wine list from the basement café, El Celler, at the Galeries Laietanes, the booklet for the restaurant and deli, the Casa Pince, and the guide to the Poble Espanyol.

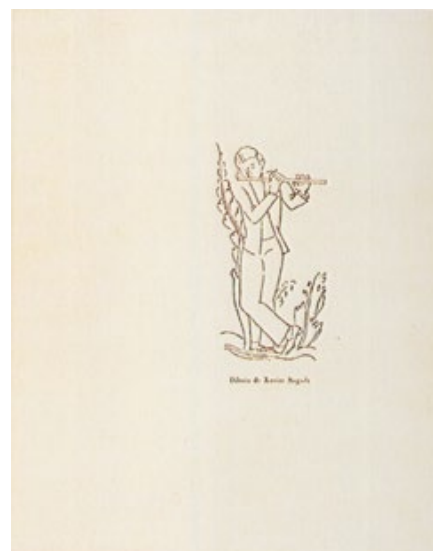
1899

Auca de l'Aplec de Sant Medir (Scenes from the Gathering of Sant Medir). Text by Josep Lleonart. Litografia Riera. Barcelona.

This work features Nogués first-known drawings. Commissioned by the lithographer Ramon Riera, it features verses by Josep Lleonart and vignettes by the young Nogués, who despite his lack of skill, depicts the same themes and symbols he would repeat throughout his work.

1902

Series of ten postcards submitted to the International Postcard Competition sponsored by the fizzy-drinks' manufacturer, F. Clarà i Cia. We found out about them from a short newsletter published by the same manufacturer reporting the results of the competition that named Nogués first runner up for the series entitled *Tothom* (Everyone). The judging panel was made up of Josep Llimona, Josep Cusachs, Modest Urgell and Modest Teixidor. Despite the tight deadline, thirty-four col-



lections were submitted totalling three hundred and forty works. Joan Vallhonrat won first prize, Gaietà Cornet came second and Francesc Labarta was second runner up.

1910

Nogués drew the official seal for the arts association Les Arts i Els Artistes.

1913-1914

Casa Pince. He illustrated the wine list and food menu for this restaurant and deli on the corner of Carrer Ferran and Carrer Rauric. It was published by Talleres de Artes Gráficas Henrich y Cía. Barcelona.

1914

Sheet of twenty coupons entitled “Socors a la vaga forçosa. Barcelona 1914” published in support of workers who were victims of an industrial lockout. It features original drawings by different artists. Three-colour prints sold at five cents each. Nogués drew four of the vignettes.

1915

Wine list for the basement café, El Cellar, at the Galeries Laietanes. Oli-va de Vilanova Impressor. Barcelona. (We have found three editions.)

Nogués also drew a double-sided poster measuring 50 x 70 cm for the wine list which the Cellar used as advertising, as well as the drinks “bill” Santiago Segura gave his customers.

1920

He drew the masthead for the printed leaflet for the Escoles Catalanes Prat de la Riba. Districts IV and X.

1921-1922

Four drawings and two borders in different versions were used to illustrate fifteen concerts in twenty-two programmes for the Associació de Música «da Camera», for the season from 27th October to 9th June. Barcelona.

1922

List of members of the Associació de Música «da Camera». Barcelona.

1929

Guía del Pueblo Español. Barcelona International Exhibition. First edition. (Several editions in different languages.)

Fold-out booklet advertising the visitor attraction, the Poble Espanyol. (Several editions in different languages.)

Vignette depicting the Poble Espanyol.

Project for a tourist brochure featuring two maps: one of Spain, done in watercolour, and another of Catalonia in lead pencil (both unfinished). The project, which never came to fruition, was intended for an edition of travel itineraries, sea and land routes made especially for visitors to the 1929 International Exhibition.

1930

Guía del Pueblo Español. Junta de Museos I.G. Seix y Barral Hnos. S.A. Barcelona. Fourth edition (in different languages.)

1936

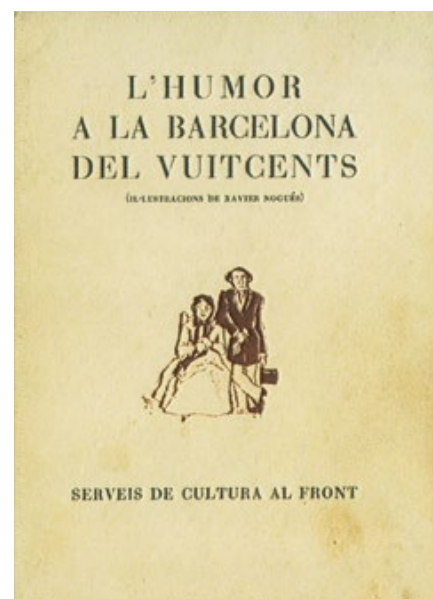
Programme. Concert by the violinist Costa. 8th March. Barcelona. 1936.

1939

Programme. Concert by the violinist Costa. 29th October. Barcelona. 1939.

Book Illustrations

Nogués produced a number of drawings, decorative motifs and small illustrations for a number of books, including the cover for *La Ben Plantada* by Eugeni d'Ors, and short stories and novels by other au-





Book cover
Peripecies, Joan Barroer.
Editorial Muntanola, 1917.

thors, as well as vignettes depicting sailing ships, commissioned by the poet Salvat Papasseit which he used as the logotype for his publishing house.

In addition to these simpler works, Nogués also produced a small, albeit important, number of illustrated books.

The drawings for these books were made using the same technique and process as some of his magazine illustrations: pen and Indian ink on Canson paper.

Below is a chronological list of all the books illustrated by Nogués. Although they are all worthy of merit, we will only comment on the most important or most popular.

1912

Eugeni d'Ors. *La Ben Plantada*. Etching on the front cover made specially for this edition. Barcelona. (Four editions.)

1917

Carles Riba. *Peripècies de Joan Matusser*. Editorial Muntanola, S.A. Barcelona. (First edition in Catalan.)

Carles Riba. *Juan Destructor*. Editorial Muntanola, S.A. Barcelona. (First edition in Spanish.)

Carles Riba. *Peripècies de Joan Barroer*. Editorial Muntanola, S.A. Barcelona. (Second edition in Catalan.)

Carles Riba. *Juan Destructor*. Editorial Muntanola, S.A. Barcelona. (Second edition in Spanish.)

This children's story was the first book illustrated by Nogués. Published in Catalan and Spanish, it was the first in a planned collection entitled *Sis Joans*, which, unfortunately, never came to fruition.

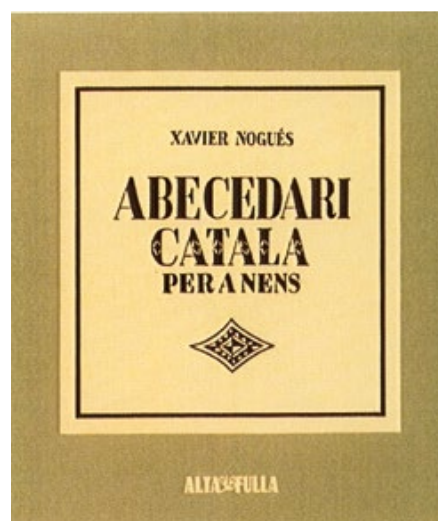
1919

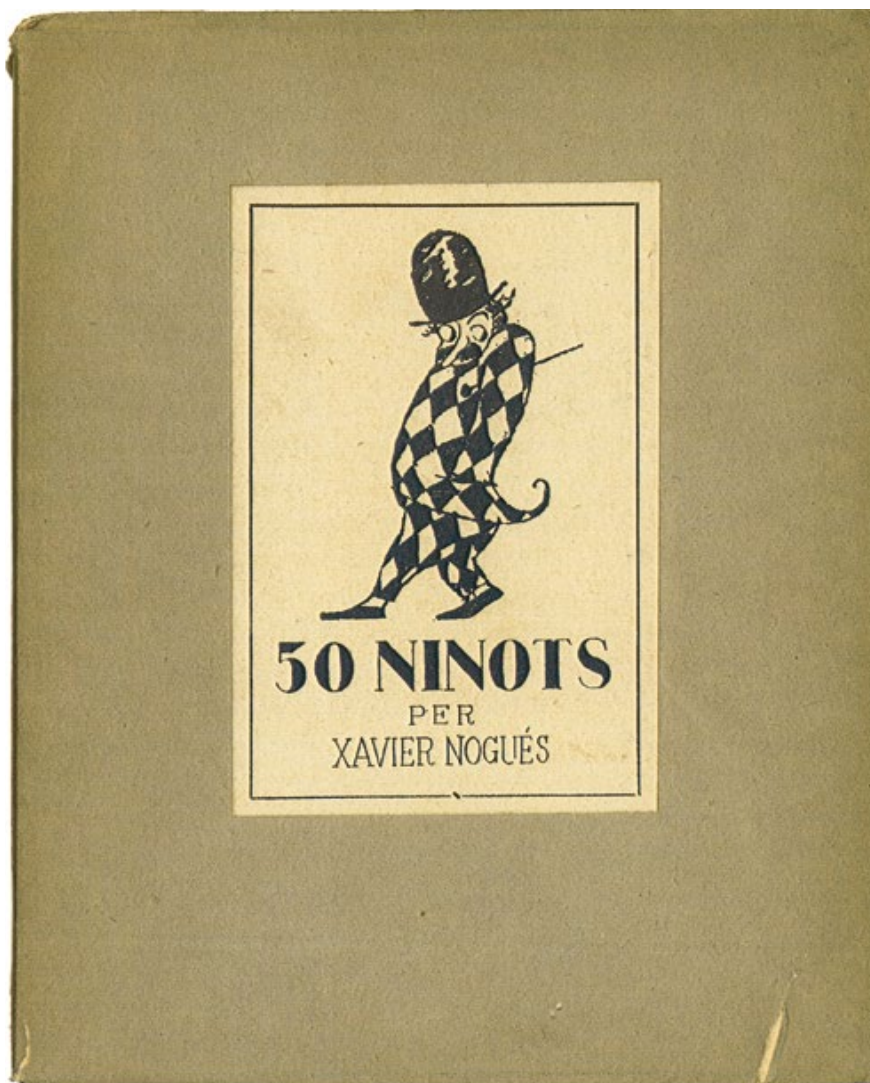
Xavier Nogués. *La Catalunya pintoresca*. Three sections with ten engravings and one section with twenty engravings with texts by Francesc Pujols and a preface by Joan Sacs. Salvat-Papasseit Llibreters. Barcelona. (First edition.)

There have been six editions of this book to date, the last one a facsimile published by the Fundació Xavier Nogués. Fourteen of the fifty drawings in the book had been published in the magazine *Revista Nova* five years before the first edition came out. This means that *La Catalunya pintoresca* was produced with the express purpose of gathering together these drawings. Together with Xènius' *La Ben Plantada* and the *Almanach dels Noucentistes*, it became one of the key works of *noucentisme*.

1920

Josep Carner. *El país de los tontos. Cuento servio*. Editorial Muntanola, S.A. Barcelona. (First edition.)





First edition of *50 ninots*.
Editorial Salvat-Papasseit, 1922.

Xavier Nogués. *Abecedari català per a nens*. (With a short foreword by Pompeu Fabra.) Llibreria Nacional Catalana, Salvat-Papasseit. Barcelona. (First edition.)

1922

Xavier Nogués. *50 ninots*. (Preface by Ramon Reventós.) Salvat-Papasseit Llibreters. Barcelona. (First edition.)

1927

Guerau de Liost. *Sàtires*. Edicions de la Revista de Poesia. Barcelona. (First edition.)

1928

Josep Carner. *El giravolt de maig*. Edicions La Mirada. Sabadell. (First edition.)

Nogués' set and costume designs for this Catalan comic opera were used to illustrate a booklet published for its premiere at the Palau de la Música Catalana, on the evening of 22nd May.

Cristòfor de Domènech. *L'oci d'un filòsof*. J. Horta. Barcelona. (First and second edition.)

1933

Xavier Nogués. *La Catalunya pintoresca*. (Texts by Francesc Pujols. Preface by Xavier Nogués.) Llibreria Catalònia. Barcelona. (Second edition.)

1934

Pedro Antonio de Alarcón. *El sombrero de tres picos*. Ed. La Cometa-Gustavo Gili Editor. Barcelona, 1934 (numbered bibliophile edition.)

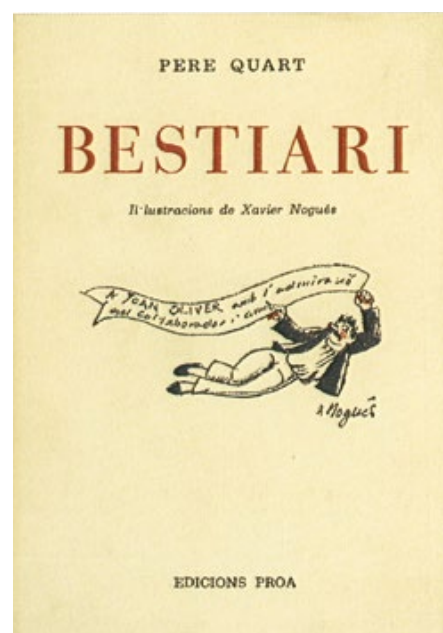
1937

Pere Quart. *Bestiari*. Generalitat de Catalunya, Departament de Cultura. Sabadell. (First edition.)

Xavier Nogués. *XXX Litografies*. Preface by Carles Riba. Published by the Escola Superior de Paisatge d'Olot, with the thirty original lithographs by Nogués, and Carles Riba's firm signature under his preface. Printed at the school's engraving workshop. Single edition.

1938

L'humor a la Barcelona del vuitcents. Antologia. Generalitat de Catalunya, Departament de Cultura. Barcelona. (First edition.) *Quaderns del Front de Cultura* collection. Part of a collection created with the express intention of keeping people entertained at a difficult period in our history. As ever, Nogués, kept a smile on people's faces with his amusing, spirited drawings.



1941

Juan Timoneda. *El Patrañuelo*. Editorial Emporium. Madrid. (First edition.)

Nogués was unable to complete the illustrations for this book before his death 1941. Nevertheless, it was published later that year with the finished illustrations and the incomplete ones he had just started working on.

1949

L'humor a la Barcelona del noucents. Anthology and selection by Miquel Llor with a preface by Francesc Pujols. Aymà Editor. Barcelona. (First edition.)

The book was published eight years after Nogués' death with unpublished illustrations made for this anthology between 1938 and 1939. It was originally intended for publication as part of the *Quaderns de Cultura al Front* collection, but this wasn't possible due to the outcome of the Spanish Civil War.

Posters

Both Joan Sacs (Feliu Elias) and Rafael Benet describe a series of film posters printed for Pathé in two or three colours, or in full colour, by the printers Henrich y Cía. They were designed by Nogués between 1910 and 1912. According to Jordi Ainaud, the painter Vidal i Rolland once told him that, when he and Nogués were short of money, they would paint the posters advertising the films being screened at the Cinema Capitol, which was nicknamed "Can Pistoles". We assume they were painted directly onto the area inside the frames above the entrance canopy. They were ephemeral works and were destroyed after the film had finished its run. Nevertheless, regardless of whether they were prints or originals painted in situ, Vidal i Rolland's comments have led us to conclude that they were produced earlier than Joan Sacs and Rafael Benet reported. It is logical to assume that they were painted be-



Poster advertising the book *Abecedari català per a nens* (never printed). Pen and watercolour, 1920.

tween 1906 and 1909, when Nogués would undertake any work that came his way to earn a few pence and to avoid having to ask his family for help. He would have been thirty-four or thirty-six at the time and had left his full-time job to devote himself fully to art. The same was true for Vidal i Rolland, who was aged seventeen or eighteen. At the time, they had both joined a group of young painters, interior decorators and students who were working under the supervision of Aleix Clapés on the ceiling decorations of La Pedrera. Another reason to question the dates suggested by Joan Sacs and Rafael Benet stems from the fact that, between 1910 and 1912, Nogués was enjoying success as a contributor to the magazine *Papitu*, and this allowed him to take on



more rewarding commissions. This meant that he wouldn't have had to paint cinema posters, which were considered inferior art works, and known, in Catalan artists' slang as "mamarratxos" (monstrosities).

Be that as it may, even though Nogués was never a professional poster artist, we have traced several of his works in the genre. The first one we know of dates from early 1899 and is entitled *Tranquil·litat i bons aliments*, a Catalan expression meaning "take it easy". It was entered for the competition for posters advertising the Vilanova Carnival, organised by, and held at the café Els Quatre Gats. The poster is thought to have won one of the runner-up prizes. Nogués submitted another poster in 1902 to advertise the Barcelona summer festival, the Festes de la Mercè, organised by Barcelona City Council under the slogan *Barraques i cavallets* (festival huts and hobby horses), and he is reported to have won second prize. The poster has never been found.

Another poster painted towards the end of 1904 was commissioned by the biscuit manufacturers Viñas y Cía., and printed by Henrich y Cía. We know of a copy in the Carulla collection. Nogués made an etching on the subject of the Three Graces for the poster advertising Iu Pascual's exhibition. He later cut down the plate so he could use the composition as an engraving, altering and reworking the design, as was his custom. Jaume Pla's book about Nogués' engravings features the definitive version of this etching, which is dated 1912. However, the exhibition poster, created at the behest of his friend Iu Pascual, indicates that it was made in early 1913. In 1916, Nogués made a lino cut for the exhibition by the association Les Arts i Els Artistes held at the Asociación de Artistas Vascos in Bilbao, which opened on 15th November that year. This is his only known poster made using this technique.

In 1920, he designed the poster advertising his children's alphabet, *Abecedari català per a nens*. The poster was never printed and, in 1970, the original drawing was donated to the collections of Barcelona's municipal museums as part of the bequest of Nogués' widow, Isabel Escalada.

In late 1923, the poster was used to advertise the ball organised by the Reial Cercle Artístic to commemorate the first one held in 1869.

The poster was published by Seix Barral Hnos. On 13th February 1926, Nogués designed the poster for the Reial Cercle Artístic carnival ball, which he signed with his pseudonym “Babel”. On 11th October 1928, he produced the poster advertising the Poble Espanyol, a Barcelona visitor attraction featuring full-scale replicas of major Spanish landmarks. The original poster was printed by Seix Barral and reprinted between 1985 and 1995 as part of an advertising campaign marking a new phase in the history of the Poble Espanyol.

In April 1932, Nogués made several drawings on semi-printed posters for the drawing festival, the Fira del Dibuix, held in the Jardins de Soler i Rovirosa on Barcelona’s Passeig de Gràcia. Two of these are now part of the collections of the Department of Drawings and Prints of the Museu Nacional d’Art de Catalunya (MNAC). They were used as advertising at the different stands that were taking part. We don’t know if he designed other posters and, if so, their whereabouts are unknown. In 1935, he designed the poster advertising the only violin recital given by Francesc Costa at Barcelona’s Palau de la Música Catalana in February that year as part of a special season of concerts. Two versions have been discovered showing the musician standing upright playing the violin. This drawing was used for other posters and programmes for later concerts.

These are all Nogués’ poster designs that we have been able to locate. However, others may come to light over time.



Prints





A Devotion to Engraving

CECÍLIA VIDAL MAYNOU

Towards 1890, Xavier Nogués' cousin, Joanet Casas, introduced him to the technique of copperplate engraving. Casas was older and more experienced than Nogués and he taught him the “secrets” of the artists' and artisans' techniques. Nogués furthered his knowledge at the lithography studio of his friend Ramon Riera.

Nogués almost certainly made test engravings at the time but no record of them survives. However, we know that Goya's engravings, which he saw on a trip to Madrid in 1896, had a deep impact on him and influenced his work as an engraver.

His first visit to the French capital in 1901, and another in 1903 – when he was considering moving to the city – , also contributed to his interest in engraving. While there, he saw prints and engravings by the impressionists. They reflected French artists' growing interest in engraving, which came to light at the First Impressionist Exhibition held in 1876.

In Paris, Nogués, visited exhibitions and his friends' workshops, and became acquainted with the work of

painters dedicated to investigating and studying the techniques and procedures of Japanese engraving, which were then in vogue. This gave him a first-hand glimpse of the events that had revolutionised and transformed not only copperplate engravings and lithography, but the concept of the traditional art of European engraving.

Artists such as Degas, in particular, and others like Camille Pissarro and Paul Gauguin, were testing, combining and experimenting in order to achieve new textures and solutions, but they didn't take into account the purity of traditional procedures. Many other techniques became fashionable, including monotype and intaglio prints made using the *à la poupée* and *camaïeu* methods.

Many other Catalan artists, who were then living in Paris, witnessed the resurgence of these techniques. Among their number were Isidre Nonell, Ricard Canals, Joaquim Sunyer, Pau Roig and Picasso, and they all shared an enthusiasm for, and an interest in, engravings. Some of them, like Nonell and Picasso, used specific processes in their drawings – such as lithographic varnishes and inks – to imitate copperplate engravings, a technique known today as mixed media.

■
Café. Drypoint, 1934.

The pure techniques so jealously guarded by artisan engravers, had been freed of their rigour and were now available to artists who rescued them from the purely mechanical servitude of reproduction in order to enrich their language. It is important to add, however, that this extraordinary progress in copperplate engraving, with new, excellent, yet cost-effective printing techniques, led to a decline in the use of traditional engraving techniques.

Nogués had a love of ancient skills and traditions and was drawn to rigorous processes. He enjoyed struggling to master techniques and was interested in the purity of the engraver's "craft", convinced that it was a medium he could use to express himself freely. His art did the rest.

On his return to Barcelona, between 1905 and 1906, we know he produced engravings but we can't confirm if they were in large or small quantities. He waited until 1909 to study the technique in earnest at Joaquim Furnó i Abad's studio.

The master engraver was seventy-six years old at the time and had long-standing experience and skill. He had studied at the Barcelona art school, the Escola de Llotja, and in Paris, where he studied between 1861 and 1864 to hone his die-engraving skills, which he used in medal making. His perseverance and excellent knowledge allowed him to introduce the technique of direct engraving to the die-engraving technique. On his return to Barcelona, having won many prizes and distinctions, the master engraver contributed to furthering people's knowledge of engraving through his

work as a teacher, instilling his enthusiasm and know-how into the few artists of the day who were interested in this speciality.

Alexandre de Riquer was one of their number, followed by Nogués, who dedicated himself to engraving, without interruption, throughout his life.

Although Nogués is considered excellent at drawing, we should bear in mind that almost all his solo exhibitions, the first of them held in Madrid in 1917, were dedicated to engraving. Other artists, including Nonell, Junceda, Ramon de Capmany, Joaquim Sunyer, Pau Roig, Francesc Domingo, Manuel Humbert, Josep Aragay, Josep Granyer and Grau Sala, also experimented with this technique, but none of them applied themselves so assiduously.

From 1916 onwards, Nogués taught engraving to a number of his artist friends at his studio. He was often heard to say, "*You learn through practice.*" However, his first full-time teaching role came later, when he joined the landscape school, the Escola Superior de Paisatge d'Olot, in 1933, at the invitation of its director Iu Pascual. He taught copperplate engraving there until after the Spanish Civil War and also taught lithography from 1935.

Engraving is one of the techniques in which drawing is all but essential, given the difficulty and labour-intensive nature of the process. This is why it appeals to only a small number of artists, and explains why most of the jobs involved in the engraving process are done by skilled artisans in specialised workshops, thereby freeing the artist from such an onerous task. Never-



La Ben Plantada
(The Elegant Woman).
Etching and aquatint, 1912.

theless, it must be said that if the artist not only works on the plate but is also responsible for inking up, this lends the engraving a special warmth not found in those made by professionals, coldly and “soullessly”, no matter how perfectly executed they are. Moreover, the artist should be present to make any corrections and supervise the entire printing process.

Nogués produced all his engravings himself at the makeshift studio he set up at his home. He printed

them on a press loaned to him by his friend and fellow engraver Ramon Batlle Gordó, who he met at Furnó’s studio on Passeig de Sant Joan in Barcelona. Battle supervised the print run of Nogués’ final etchings. As always it was a small, limited edition of between ten to twelve prints. However, Nogués always made the artist’s proof and the entire printing process was carried out under his scrupulous gaze.



▀ *Les tres gràcies* (The Three Graces). First version. Etching and aquatint, c. 1912.

Engravings

In Catalonia, copperplate engraving was considered inferior to the industrial arts and the work of skilled artisans – despite the precedent set by Fortuny (Reus, 1832-Rome, 1874) and his immediate followers, including Alexandre de Riquer (Calaf, 1856-Palma de Mallorca, 1920) and Josep Triadó (Barcelona, 1870-1929) – making it an underappreciated technique among most artists.

Nogués made an important contribution to engraving precisely because he took such a serious interest in the medium and dedicated himself to it wholeheartedly.

Nogués is not only an outstanding member of the small group of artists who devoted themselves to the art of engraving throughout their careers, he can be considered one of the finest Catalan engravers of the first half of the 20th century. Proof of this lies in the fact that seven of Nogués nine solo exhibitions held between 1917 and 1940 were dedicated solely to engraving, and that many of the group shows he took part in only featured his engravings.

Although we know little about Nogués' first engravings, we can say with certainty that he was introduced to this technique by his cousin, Joanet Casas, with whom he also painted his first landscapes and learnt how to prepare oil paints. He made wonderful discoveries about procedures and techniques which he experimented with in his cousin and teacher's Barcelona studio located on the rooftop of a house on the corner of Carrer Tallers (today number 45) and Carrer Ramel·leres, where he also produced his first etchings and drypoint engravings. From 1895 to 1897, Nogués worked as an assistant in the studio of his friend Ramon Riera, a lithographer by trade, who had a shop on Carrer Bilbao (today Via Laietana) in exchange for the use of a small studio space. Here he became familiar with, and explored in depth, the secrets of lithography. In this studio he drew and printed his first-known work, the *Auca de Sant Medir* (Scenes from the Gathering



■ *L'ombrel·la* (The Parasol).
 Etching and aquatint,
 First, second
 and third stage, 1917.

of Sant Medir), as well as small pamphlets, such as *Romanços del Poti-Poti*. In 1903, during his short stay in Paris, he was able to see and acquire knowledge of several Japanese printing and engraving techniques that were currently in vogue among most young artists.

A few years later, Nogués decided to learn, in depth, all the secrets of copper-plate engraving. He was so demanding of himself when it came to his work that he attended the studio of Joaquim Furnó i Abad (1832-1918), the leading figure in the renaissance of the graphic arts in Catalonia through his work as a copper-plate engraver and teacher.

Nogués made his first-known engravings between 1909 and 1910. In his magnificent study of Xavier Nogués' engravings (PLA PALLEJÀ, 1960), Jaume Pla only mentions *Jugadors de cartes* (Card Players) but adds that its whereabouts are unknown. After the publication of the first edition, the engraving was found, together with four more – *Mariners* (Sailors), *Dues dones* (Two Women), *Refugiats* (Refugees) and *Pagès* (Farmer) – which were reproduced in the second edition published by the Fundació Xavier Nogués in 2009.

The fact that Nogués painstakingly recorded the titles of his engravings and the year they were produced in a notebook, made it easier to catalogue and locate them afterwards. In 1945, Joan Teixidor used Nogués' notes to produce his "Notas para un inventario de la obra de Xavier Nogués", which was published in the *Anales y Boletín de los Museos de Arte de Barcelona*. The engraving entitled *El desmenjat* (The Disdainful Man), dated 1910, is the first on the list.

The female figures that start to feature in Nogués' engravings some time between 1912 and 1913 show an increasing mastery of composition and technique and are the same as the ones depicted in the murals in the Plandiura drawing room. Particularly noteworthy are the first and second versions of his extraor-



■
L'endolada
(The Mourning Woman).
Etching and aquatint,
First and second stage, 1917.



dinary etching *Les tres gràcies* (The Three Graces), *La passejada* (The Stroll), *L'ombrel·la* (The Parasol), *El vent* (The Wind) and, in particular, *La Ben Plantada* (The Elegant Woman), where we see, in embryonic form, the characters that later appeared in his drawings for *La Catalunya pintoresca*, one of the masterpieces of the Catalan cultural movement, *noucentisme*.

Nogués held his first solo exhibition at the Ateneo de Madrid from 16th to 30th April 1917, where he presented twenty-five engravings. The show brought him his first success outside Catalonia, as from 1910 he had only shown his engravings alongside different groups of Barcelona-based artists at exhibitions or-



ganised by the association Les Arts i els Artistes. Issue 118 of the weekly magazine *España*, published on 26th April, features a self-caricature by Nogués, one of his five only known lino cuts. It served as a masthead for Juan de la Encina's review of the exhibition, where Nogués showed a series of etchings that had already been exhibited in Barcelona, along with nine new ones made especially for the exhibition at the beginning of the year. They were entitled *Cazador de gorriones* (Sparrow Hunter), *Vallvidrera, Verbena* (Street Party), *La enlutada y sus amigos* (The Mourning Woman and her Friends), *La Sombrilla* (The Parasol), *La pita* (The Agave Plant), *Paisaje de la costa* (Coastal Landscape), *La cometa* (The Kite) and

► *La sortija* (The Ring).
Etching and aquatint,
First and second stage, 1917.

Matrimoni del bracet
(Married Couple Arm in Arm).
Lithograph, 1937.

Precaució
(Precaution)
Lithograph, 1937.



Cabeza de mujer joven (Head of a Young Woman). Fired with enthusiasm, the Madrid-based critic comments extensively on the works, pointing out that the etchings are “to our taste, the finest we have seen in Madrid,” and later states that “[...] the Catalan Xavier Nogués belongs to the generation of engravers who are, first and foremost, artists. To him, engraving is not a means to an end but a simple means of expression. His aesthetic emotion is paramount and his technique as an engraver is the perfect medium to express this. We do not believe that etchings are Nogués’ only way of expressing his aesthetic emotion about life [...] And, to conclude, a couple of words about technique. Xavier Nogués engraves with skill.”

Nogués improved on his superb skill as a copperplate engraver throughout his life. After the Spanish Civil War, and shortly before his death, the Galerías Syra held an exhibition of etchings he had made in 1940. The exhibition ran from 5th to 20th December 1940 that same year, and provided ample proof why this technique best shows his development as an artist.

There is no doubt that engravings and murals are the two mediums that reveal Nogués’ value as an artist. They are both techniques and processes that require great discipline and a mastery of drawing: qualities Nogués had in spades.



Cafè, copa i puro
(Coffee, Brandy and a Cigar).
Lithograph, 1937.

From 1910 until 1940 (he died on 28th January 1941), Nogués produced one hundred and five engravings, not to mention lithographs. Fully devoted to the copperplate technique, he engraved directly onto the bare plate (drypoint) or onto a grounded plate (etching and aquatint) and achieved extraordinary works with these techniques.

Nogués probably used the drypoint technique because of its simplicity and similarity to drawing. The main advantage of this technique is that it is quick and the image is engraved directly onto the plate. However, there are also difficult aspects to the technique insofar as you need to be able to draw well to create a drypoint print because the pure line can't fall back on shading that can often disguise mistakes.

Etching, a slower, more cerebral technique, and aquatint, one of the most laborious but the preferred technique among painters were the most widely used by Nogués.

We only know of one soft varnish, or mezzotint, etching by Nogués. It may well be the case that he wasn't completely satisfied with the result, which was very similar to a lithograph, and he didn't pursue it.

He didn't produce woodcuts as he found it difficult to cut into the wood (box is one of the hardest) because of the congenital arthritis in the thumb of his right hand.



Ensopits (Bored). Variant.
Lithograph, 1937.

Nogués tried his hand at lino cuts, which gave similar results, but his rigorous and honest personality meant that he only produced five prints using this technique: the poster advertising the exhibition held by the association Les Arts i els Artistes in Bilbao in 1916; three that were featured in issues 35 and 40 of *Revista Nova* that same year; and the one he produced, in 1917, for the cover of the catalogue of his first exhibition of engravings in Madrid.

However, he must have found lithography really easy because he was so good at drawing. He became a supreme master of this technique, and we know he produced thirty original lithographs and sixteen variants, the latter retouched and redrawn directly onto the original plates.

This is another characteristic of Nogués' working method and practice. Many of his etchings have been altered and areas rubbed out, some of them with astonishing skill. Nogués undoubtedly learned the secrets of mastering this technique and the extreme skill it required from Furnó, as they are more akin to a studio process rather than an artist's technique: you need a lot of patience and extraordinary skill as an engraver because it is a difficult and time-consuming task. According to Manuel Humbert, when Nogués said he wanted to alter a plate because



Ensopits (Bored).
Lithograph, 1937.



Encaixada
(Handshake).
Lithograph, 1937.



■
Males notícies
(Bad News).
Etching, 1937.

Pagès
(Farmer).
Etching, 1928-1929.

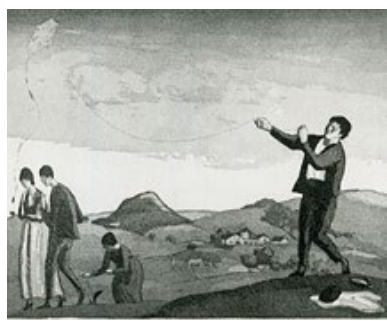
Refugiats
(Refugees).
Etching and aquatint,
1938-1939.

he wasn't pleased with the result, everybody told him to let it go, and that it would be better to start from scratch as it wasn't worth spending so much time over it. Nogués took no notice of them, because he actually enjoyed "fighting" with the plate and, eventually, getting his own way.

Technically speaking, Nogués' engravings are characterised by tightly packed, yet fine and delicate, lines. This is why we sometimes see the occasional ink blotch, or *crevé*. However, when this occurred, Nogués burnished the plate again and re-drew the area in question. The final result is a painstakingly crafted engraving which, contrary to what one might expect, is enriched by a subtle and exquisite spectrum of greys.

With regard to the composition, Nogués makes no distinction between engravings and illustrations. He always plays with large areas of black, white and grey that he distributes skilfully, and later adds lines, or Arabesques, sensitively, to create the figures, landscapes or the pure, simple, solidly structured ornamentations. This gives the works the peculiar characteristic of combining gracefulness and rigour.

Also worth mentioning are the extraordinary etchings – thirty-one in all – that illustrated the 1934 bibliophile edition of Pedro Antonio de Alarcón's *El sombrero de tres picos*, published by Gustau Gili's Edicions La Cometa. Gili had a wonderful, one-off edition, printed on Japanese paper, which also features all the original preparatory drawings for the illustrations, the four original engraved copper plates, and a hitherto unseen drawing – a self-portrait of the artist – together with the same series of engravings printed in sanguine ink on Japanese paper, and another in black ink on Chinese paper, bound in two volumes (texts and series of engravings). In addition to this one-off edition, the ten volumes for specially selected recipients and fifteen for the people who worked on the project,



there was print run of twenty-three numbered copies on Arches paper with the watermark of Edicions La Cometa, designed specifically for this edition.

In 1916, long before Nogués began teaching copperplate engraving at the Escola d'Olot, he had given private classes at his home. His students included Teresa Lostau, Lola Anglada and Juli Vinyoles. We know, from his former student Manuel Visà, that he taught a group of young artists some time between 1932 and 1933 and, according to him, Nogués would always tell them “I can teach you how to make engravings but I can’t teach you how to sell them.”

There is a particularly interesting piece of information in Gabriel García Maroto’s book *La nueva España, 1930. Resumen de la vida artística española desde el año 1927 hasta hoy* (Editorial Biblos. Madrid, 1930) regarding the period spanning 1930 to 1931, which says that Nogués held two important posts at the time. The first was as a teacher of engraving, etching and lithography at the Escuela de Bellas Artes y Oficios Artísticos (in Madrid?). He was put forward for the job by the then director of the school, the sculptor Angel Ferrant, who also proposed Joaquim Sunyer to teach painting and Pau Gargallo to teach sculpture. Having checked out the facts, we encountered many difficulties and contradictions when confirming this information. García Maroto also says that Nogués worked as a pensions assessor and acquisitions adviser for the Comité de Acción Artística that was part of the fine arts commission, the Comisaría de Bellas Artes in Madrid. We have tried to ascertain whether this information is true but can find no records of him having held these posts. Moreover, Nogués’ widow, Isabel Escalada, never mentioned these activities to me.

Having gone through Àngel Ferrant’s biography, and asked some of his students, I have come to the conclusion that, although Nogués may have worked as an acquisitions adviser, and decided who should be awarded a pension by the Comité de Acción Artística, he never taught at the school in Madrid, as García

► *Pomona.*
Etching and aquatint, 1919.

L'estel
(The Kite).
Etching and aquatint, 1917.

Concert.
Etching, 1937.



Europa. Homes gossos
(Europa. Dog Men).
Drypoint and aquatint, 1938.

Maroto states. Although Nogués visited the capital he never actually lived there, and this would have been essential if he had taught engraving at the school. We assume that these suggested appointments, including Àngel Ferrant's, never came to fruition, for the simple reason that the restructuring of the school proposed during the Berenguer government (1930-1931) must have been in the planning stages and never happened. This is perhaps the most logical explanation, as no other information about the matter has come to light.

Lithographs and the Escola Superior de Paisatge d'Olot

Iu Pascual had to wait almost nineteen years for approval to be granted for his proposed reorganisation of the Escola Menor de Belles Arts d'Olot. Pascual had been director of the school since 1915 and his long-desired project, which he had asked Girona Provincial Council and Olot Council to consider so many times, finally came to fruition in 1934. His dream was fulfilled when Olot Council, with



Caçadors
(Hunters).
Drypoint, 1937.

the support of the Catalan government's Department of Culture, finally set up a specialised fine arts school under the name Escola Superior de Paisatge. The project was officially approved on 8th September.

Iu Pascual organised an art course in the summer of 1933 as a trial run for the launch of the school the following year. The subjects taught were drawing, painting, lithography and engraving techniques. Pascual invited Nogués to teach on the course due to his expertise in printing techniques and, together with his fellow artists, Francesc Labarta, Joan Colom and Pere Créixams and their families, he, and his wife, spent the summer in Olot.

Isabel told me about the great enthusiasm for the project: working together, with little money, everyone pulled together to prepare the room for the engraving classes. She said that she, and Iu Pascual's wife, Maria Llimona, made partitions from cotton sheets to achieve uniform light distribution and minimise glare so people could work comfortably. The school ran official courses on a permanent basis from 1934 until early 1939.

Classes at the summer school were held every day, each one lasting two hours. The painting classes specialised in still lifes, landscapes and life modelling and

were initially taught by Iu Pascual, Francesc Labarta and Joan Colom. Iu Pascual, Francesc Labarta, Joan Colom, Pere Créixams and Xavier Nogués taught drawing, and classes commenced at 8am sharp and finished at noon.

Pere Créixams taught lithography and monotype printing from 6 to 9pm and Xavier Nogués taught copperplate engraving. Pere Créixams continued to teach these subjects at the school until halfway through the 1934/1935 academic year. Nogués took over from him the following year. It goes without saying that these daytime activities had a recreational side. After class, students and teachers would get together and hold debates at the school. Francesc Labarta, who taught until he was well into his 80s, continued the custom with his students at the Escola Superior de Belles Arts de Sant Jordi in Barcelona.

When the Spanish Civil War broke out Nogués and his wife – who had been dividing their time between Olot and Barcelona from 1933 to 1935 – moved permanently to Olot and remained there until the war ended.

During this period, Nogués continued to teach but he also produced his lithographs: thirty lithographs plus sixteen variants. Although Jaume Pla mentions them, unfortunately he didn't carry out an in-depth study of these works. Only Joan Teixidor describes the thirty lithographs made in 1937 and says Nogués produced five complete series, without specifying anything else. The sixteen variants were found as a result of research into these series. Isabel told us that one of the collections had been given to someone called Carreño España when he had paid an official visit to the school, but she was unable to enlighten us about who he was.

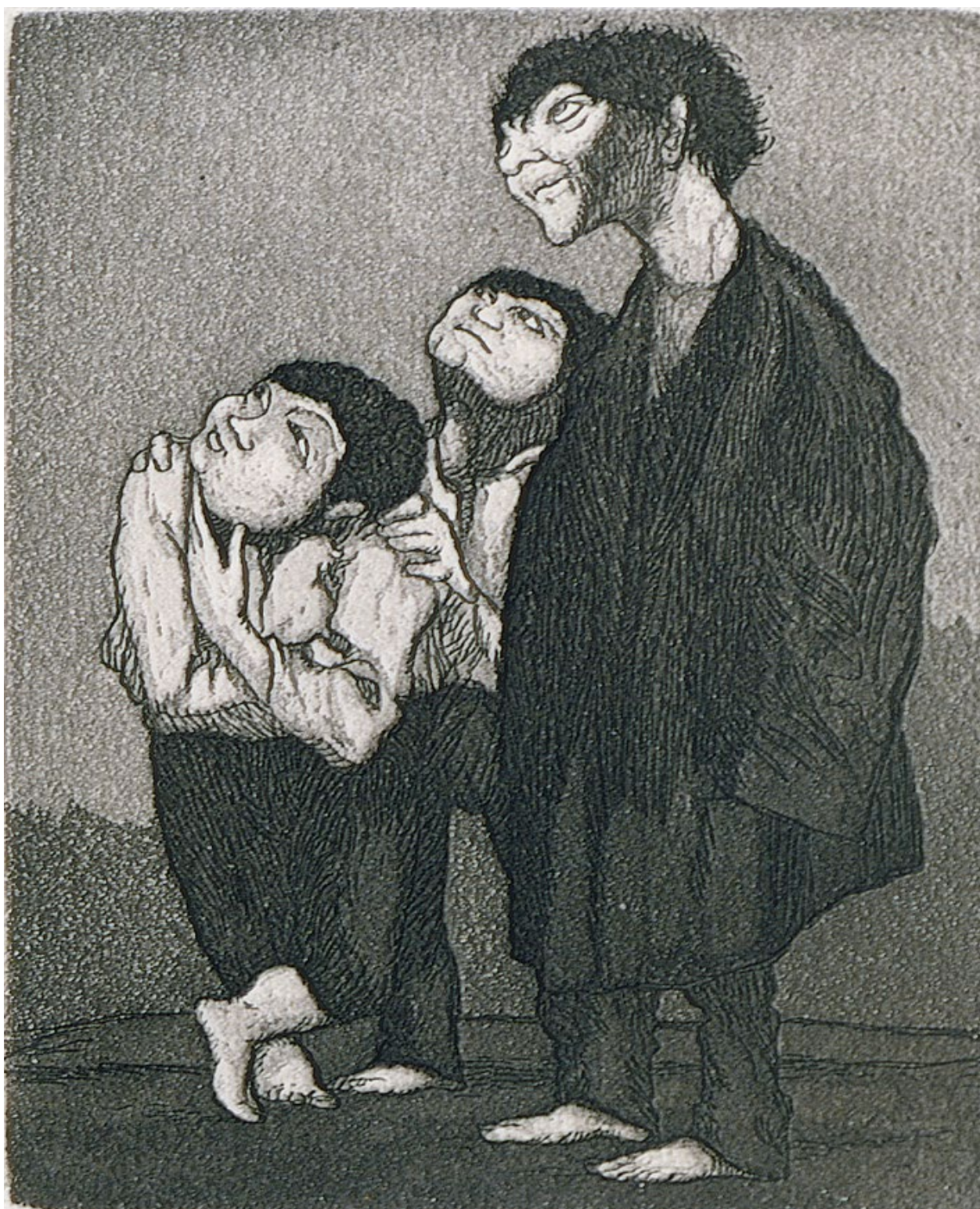
The fact that Isabel gave us a small notebook she had been keeping with notes by Nogués about lithographic techniques which he used to draw up formulas as a guide for his students, meant that the short form that accompanied the facsimile edition of the thirty lithographs and the sixteen unpublished variants could be published in 1979, for the first time on the presses of the Escola de les Arts del Llibre de Barcelona, with a preface by the poet Salvador Espriu. Espriu was so enthusiastic about Nogués' work that, in addition to his preface, he ended up writing Nogués' biography. This second edition of *Litografies* was published in 1982 to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the publishers Edicions 62. Entitled *Sobre Xavier Nogués i la seva circumstància*, it featured Espriu's complete biography.



▀ *Jugadors de cartes* (Card Players). Etching and aquatint, 1909.



► *Mainada* (The Brood). Etching and aquatint, 1910.



► *Els nanos* (The Lads). Etching and aquatint, 1910.



► *Pescadors* (Fishermen). Etching and aquatint, 1906-1909.



► *El desmenjat* (The Disdainful Man). Etching and aquatint, 1910.



► Besalú. Etching, 1921.

During our research into the production of the first edition of *Litografies* on the presses of the Escola de les Arts del Llibre, we discovered that one of these first five collections had been used to hurriedly assemble a single-edition album as a gift from the Catalan government's Ministry of Information to José Carreño España, the cultural attaché of the sub-secretariat of the Spanish Ministry of Information in Madrid, during his official visit to the Escola Superior de Paisatge d'Olot in December 1937.

We discovered that this single edition had a preface by Carles Riba entitled "Ninots d'en Xavier Nogués" – a reference to his famous caricatures – written specifically for the occasion. It was later published in the journal *Cuadernos de la Casa de Cultura* (Madrid, May 1938, pp. 65 and 66). The preface was printed at the



school in sepia ink and consisted of two columns, one in Catalan and the other in Spanish. The headings, lettrines and the signature heading (where Carles Riba later wrote his signature) were painted by hand in vermilion, perhaps because of a shortage of capital letters with the same typeface. The binder Emili Brugalla bound the volume in greenish-black shagreen goat skin. We know that the cover was originally inlaid with an enamel medallion featuring the coat of arms of Catalonia. It was lost at a later date but traces of it remain.

Four albums of thirty copies each were subsequently made of the thirty lithographs and sixteen variants. The collector Santiago Espona purchased one of them from Nogués' widow, which is currently part of the collections of the Biblioteca General de Catalunya. Lluís Plandiura and Joaquim Mir bought two and

► *Xàfec* (Downpour).
Etching, 1934.



► Engravings illustrating *El sombrero de tres picos* by Pedro Antonio de Alarcón, published by Gustavo Gili, Barcelona, 1934.





Dues noies (Two Girls).
Etching, c. 1906-1909.

Isabel kept the fourth, plus sixteen variants which ended up at the Department of Prints of Barcelona's municipal museums. We have been unable to locate Plandiura's album but we know that Mir's son took his album apart to sell the individual lithographs.

I would like to add an interesting anecdote Josep Selva Vives told me about Nogués' work as a lithographer. For many years, Selva Vives was an administrator at the Museu d'Art Modern in Barcelona, and, by late 1936, was part of the team

headed by the museum director Joaquim Folch i Torras, that also included chief restorer Manuel Grau, Pere Bohigas Tarragó and other civil servants who had been posted to Olot to safeguard Catalonia's valuable art works, many of which were stored inside the church of Sant Esteve in the town throughout the Spanish Civil War. Selva tells us that he had the opportunity, and privilege, to spend time at the school where he saw classes being taught and debates being held. He also saw Nogués producing his lithographs and printing the proofs for a copy of a landscape by the Catalan painter Marià Vayreda, which he had been commissioned to do. It was printed on a 50 cent note that was legal tender throughout the civil war.

Some of Nogués' students from that period – among them Ramon Barnadas, Miquel Roca, Sebastià Congost, Xavier Vinyoles and Josep Pujol – still recalled his patience and the clarity of his explanations. His method basically consisted of practice, and he gave demonstrations of every stage of the engraving and printing process. Afterwards, each student would work on their plate or stone, while he kept a watchful eye and cleared up any questions they had. We know that teachers, as well as students, attended these classes where they produced drawings, paintings and engravings. This extraordinary atmosphere, so carefully created by Pascual, vanished at the end of the Spanish Civil War. The school, which had attracted large numbers of students, stood practically empty because the boys were enlisting at an increasingly younger age. Nevertheless, the school remained open, despite a shortage of supplies and the sad fact that the classes were being suspended. The teachers never stopped working there and Nogués continued to produce a large number of engravings, as well as series of preparatory drawings from life for a series of oils he painted throughout this period until March 1939, when the war ended and the new regime ordered the closure of the school.



Etchings illustrating *El sombrero de tres picos* by Pedro Antonio de Alarcón, published by Gustavo Gili, Barcelona, 1934.

Paintings





Xavier Nogués, Painter

FRANCESC FONTBONA

Xavier Nogués is remembered for his extraordinary etchings, but he is known, first and foremost, for his biting yet constructive, popular yet wise, satirical drawings, that made him one of the most representative artists of the Catalan cultural movement *noucentisme*: a critical *noucentisme* that didn't swallow the naïve idealism of many of the typical *noucentista* artists and writers. He was certainly at the forefront of this network that gave shape and substance to the most representative art of the cultured Catalonia of the early 20th century. Nogués also produced large-scale paintings, in the form of murals, with an equally big personality. However, Nogués wasn't keen to show off his skills as a painter. Only two of the ten solo exhibitions held during his lifetime – 1905 and 1935 – were dedicated to painting, whereas he held five exhibitions of engravings and three showcasing his fired enamelled glass.

When Nogués was still a very young man, many of his artist contemporaries had taken part in several exhibitions, but he was still unknown. Feliu Elias and Rafael Benet say that his illustrations were featured in

the handmade magazine *Il Tiberio*, which was produced by his friends and fellow students at the Acadèmia Borrell to keep Pere Ysern up to date with current events while he was studying in Rome between 1896 and 1898, but we can find no evidence to substantiate their claim.

The first time Nogués hung a painting at a conventional exhibition was, to the best of my knowledge, in 1900 in Olot: a city he later established close links with. The Olot Regional Exhibition of Fine Arts and Art Industries, featured just one of his works: a landscape. We know nothing else about the painting, except for the fact that he wanted to sell it for 250 pesetas. I can't confirm if he achieved his aim.

Nogués was twenty-seven years of age at the time and it seems strange that the young artist hadn't exhibited more widely. He had discovered Goya at the Prado in Madrid in 1896. By this time he had finished his studies – first at the Barcelona art academy run by Martínez Altés, where he studied alongside Isidre Nonell, and then at Pere Borrell's academy, where he met lifelong friends Marià Pidelaserra, Emili Fontbona and Pere Ysern i Alié– which he had subsidised by working at the tool and machinery shop Can Damians.

▶ *Noi amb bata blava* (Boy in a Blue Smock).
Oil on canvas, 1940.

Three of his friends from Borrell's academy lived in Paris from 1899 to 1901, and this must have encouraged Nogués to visit the city. He travelled there in 1901, with Francesc Sardà Ladico and Alexandre de Cabanyes. He is known to have painted some scenes of the suburbs during his trip, but his Parisian sojourn may have resulted in him being sidelined by Catalan art galleries. He liked Paris so much that he returned in 1903. He was a keen attendee of the Colarossi and Vity academies in Montparnasse where many other Catalan artists had studied and taught. When I asked Cabanyes, who was nearly one hundred years of age at the time, what he and Nogués got up to in Paris, he could only remember the pleasurable sessions with young female neighbours who would perform erotic dances against the light behind a sheet placed like a screen across the windows of their attic rooms. They watched, enraptured, as the girls moved from attic to attic before they all spent the evening together, either in the girls' room or theirs. Maybe that's why his generation spoke so much about art that was always on the move.

During this formative period, Nogués' only works seen in public – apart from the painting displayed at the exhibition in Olot – were the *Auca de l'Aplec de Sant Medir* (Scenes from the Gathering of Sant Medir), and two poster designs: one entered for the poster competition for Vilanova Carnival in January and February 1899, and one for the Barcelona summer festival, the Festes de la Mercè, in August 1902. He didn't win but his submissions met with some success. He won one of the runner-up prizes for the Vilanova Carnival poster entitled *Tranquil·litat i bons*

aliments, a Catalan expression meaning “take it easy”, and won second prize – or first mention – at the Barcelona competition with *Barraques i cavallets* (festival huts and hobby horses), a composition that a critic of the time described as a popular scene inspired by English poster artists – we don't know which ones he was referring to – with an attractive use of colour.

In May 1902, Nogués had joined a new artists' collective at the Ateneu Barcelonès, organised by Art i Pàtria, a shortlived, but ambitious, interdisciplinary group of young artists. Nogués contributed some sketches of maritime scenes. During his first-known period as a painter he produced some harbour scenes. We don't know the exact date they were painted and may never be able to establish it.

Nogués didn't exhibit again until April 1905, at the famous exhibition hosted by the Sala Parés in Barcelona and organised by his friends and fellow students from Borrell's academy – Fontbona, Pidelaserra and Ysern – together with Joaquim Torres-García and Sebastià Junyer Vidal. They wanted to make an impact rather than become a long-standing group and went by the name of the Associació de Pintors i Escultors Catalans. Nogués submitted four paintings for the show: *Dansanta*, *Noia* (Girl), *Paisatge de Vallvidrera* (Vallvidrera Landscape) and *Gent a casa* (Homebodies). We only have the critics' reviews to base ourselves on as the whereabouts of the works are currently unknown, except for the landscape, which may be the one belonging to the Fundació Xavier Nogués now on display at the Museu d'Olot.

The critics gave a great deal of coverage to the exhibition, but the defiant, challenging attitude of these young, ambitious artists, who were rebelling against the apathy shown by the Catalan art scene, planned the exhibition as a reaction against them and some critics reacted harshly to this kind of insolence. Pidelaserra and Torres-García received the most attention but Nogués less so, although the critics of his work agreed on the quality of *Gent a casa* – now sadly lost – and the Vallvidrera landscape, albeit to a lesser extent. Miguel Sarmiento, who wrote in *La Tribuna* and Eugeni d’Ors – then in the early stages of his career, who went under the nom de plume of Octavi de Romeu – writing in *El Poble Català* gave the most positive reviews of Nogués’ work at the time. Ors said that “The painter of the *Dansanta*, *Noia* and *Gent a casa*, has the makings of a great artist. His art is naïve and burning with sincerity. Moreover, his works take on serenely classical airs, quite naturally, unintentionally and effortlessly. The relationship between the figures and the background of the painting, *Gent a casa*, reminds us of the immortal works in museums. And the profound and stringent conciseness of those paintings creates poems of overwhelming subtlety.” If Nogués had known that the then-unknown critic who wrote these words would become a revered theoretician he certainly wouldn’t have waited so long to recover his self-esteem.

This wasn’t a good time for art in Catalonia. Art nouveau painting had been eclipsed or, rather, become stagnant: its foremost exponents continued to paint, but with more professionalism than curiosity and without the creative spark that had placed them at the forefront of young Catalan painters ten years earlier.

And the new trend that became known as *noucentisme* was not yet fully formed when the six artists held their vindictory exhibition at the Sala Parés.

At the time, the young painters who had begun to carve out a reputation as original artists, including Mir, Nonell, Pichot and Pidelaserra, had not fully found their place in the region’s arts scene. The works they exhibited became the cornerstones of a new era of Catalan painting, but they would have to wait some time before a new wave swept them into port as the old wave was just rolling back at the time.

Nogués, along with Iu Pascual and Teresa Lostau – who became his first wife –, had to eke out a living as an assistant to the solitary and misanthropic art nouveau painter Aleix Clapés, helping paint the murals in the hall of the amazing building La Pedrera that Antoni Gaudí was just finishing on Passeig de Gràcia. The building had been commissioned by Perico Milà i Camps, Roser Segimon’s new husband. Nogués considered the mural a non-creative project as it consisted of enlarging the compositions Clapés would send him. The experience would certainly have helped him hone his technique and would prove useful years later when he embarked on the murals, which I will touch on later, where his personality truly shines out. In any event, this unrewarding period under Clapés’ orders familiarised Nogués with the production of large-scale murals. This was a totally different concept to easel painting that many painters would never dare to attempt due to a lack of practice or, if they did, would be resounding failures as their composition had to be approached in a radically dif-

ferent manner to the way one would approach a canvas on an easel.

We know a great deal about Nogués' background as a creative painter. In 1905 he was in the town of Banyoles where he painted landscapes like the one on display at the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (MNAC). This peaceful and well-structured painting comes from the Plandiura collection. The painting, *Sardana*, depicting the Catalan folk dance of the same name, dates from 1907, also during his Banyoles sojourn. It is a very mature, rhythmic work with a complex composition, close in concept to the paintings on the same theme Ramon Pichot had been exhibiting periodically in Paris since 1903. However, while Pichot's works, with their soft brushstrokes, owed more to the impressionist school, Nogués' paintings tied in more with Cézanne's constructivism and the Nabis' synthesis of nature into metaphors and symbols.

Mariner (Sailor), which Nogués painted in 1908 for the ceramicist Serra, is another fine example of his work from this period. It still hangs in the studio of Serra's descendants in Hospitalet de Llobregat. The painting depicts a popular figure, devoid of any clichéd or folkloric traits. He is quite the opposite to similar figures that so many Spanish artists of the day painted to official acclaim. Dressed in sober attire, Nogués' sailor stands erect. He looks calm and collected and has a serious, thoughtful expression. The sea and rocks behind him are simply sketched with no definition of detail. The picture clearly foreshadows the balanced depictions of popular culture by the *noucentista* artists a few years later.

The upturn in Nogués' career went hand in hand with the launch of the magazine *Papitu* by the great painter, cartoonist, art critic and friend, Feliu Elias. From 1909, he contributed some extraordinary satirical cartoons under the pseudonym "Babel". Nogués was one of the artists who embarked on a long desert crossing but eventually reached the other side. Not everyone could say the same.

Nogués was a member of the group *Les Arts i els Artistes*, albeit not an assiduous one. The group was one of the leading lights of the *noucentista* period and dictated the Catalan artistic canon of the day. In February and March 1911, Nogués exhibited works with this group at the *Faianç Català* gallery, in Barcelona. This was a drawing exhibition so there were no paintings by Nogués on display.

Although Nogués became most popular for his satirical cartoons in illustrated journals, he also produced a series of humorous paintings that can be considered among his finest works. These are the tempera murals he painted in the basement café, *El Cellar*, at the *Galeries Laietanes* in 1915. The gallery had become Barcelona's main centre for exhibiting art in Barcelona at the time. The *Sala Parés* was in the doldrums and the *Galeries Laietanes* now hosted the most dynamic artists, without pursuing the minority, avant-garde tone of the unusual exhibitions held at the recently founded *Galeries Dalmau*. After Santiago Segura had set up the *Galeries Laietanes* and the *Faianç Català*, both galleries exhibited works by the most representative *noucentista* artists, as well as iconic figures of the past who were still practising, such as Ramon Casas and Enric Galwey.

The murals at the Galeries Laietanes decorated the walls of the basement café, El Celler, where artists and intellectuals would gather. Nogués painted them in an overtly satirical and caricaturesque vein, and the fact that it was a cellar led him to focus most of his themes on fortified wines and spirits. All kinds of little men wearing felt or top hats, many of them with bushy beards, are shown sitting round a table knocking back drinks – some of them large ones –, drinking from spouted decanters and bottles, raising a toast, singing or snoozing. In the larger compositions, there are arches that are vaguely Tuscan in style, opening onto an idealised vista of Catalonia, with its good-humoured hunter, child with a kite, courting couple and people walking in an azure Mediterranean landscape. Some of these wonderfully executed caricatures drawn onto the walls are coloured only in blue with the occasional touches of wine red, whereas some are in full colour. The murals are rendered with sure brushstrokes where even the trickles of paint play a role in the composition, as if they were there by chance but have been skilfully used. These murals were removed from the walls on the initiative of the art historian and then gallery owner Josep Gudiol and most of them are on display at the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (MNAC). The remaining fragments are in private collections. Nogués' basement murals seem to have been a test bed for the famous series of Indian ink drawings he later produced for *La Catalunya pintoresca* and *50 ninots*.

However, the murals had little in common with the easel paintings Nogués produced when he found the time. These paintings were serious and perfectly com-

posed, whereas the murals in El Celler were deeply humorous and made with broad, swift brushstrokes. Both paths were an equally genuine part of Xavier Nogués' personality as an artist: he is a total artist who touches on all kinds of techniques and knows how to create in the absence and presence of satire.

He also painted some other murals for Santiago Segura, alongside Manuel Humbert, for his antiques shop, La Basílica, in the former canonry, the Casa dels Canonges, on Carrer de la Pietat in Barcelona. The name of the shop may have suggested the subject matter: the lives of the saints. He painted the murals in 1916 but they had a short life span. In 1924 the decorative arts association, the Foment de les Arts Decoratives, moved into the building and, paradoxically, the murals were painted over as part of the new decor.

As a mature landscape painter – following his sojourn in Banyoles when he painted new landscapes and scenes (1921, MNAC) – Nogués mainly chose panoramas with a large human presence, either direct or indirect: in other words, with people or with houses made by people. His view of the seaside town of Tossa dated 1921 (Museu Balaguer, Vilanova i la Geltrú) is a good example. Two landscapes of Tarragona, dating from 1926, became part of Victoria González's collection. They are now on display at the Museu Victor Balaguer in Vilanova i la Geltrú, where they are catalogued as “Llegat 1956” (Legacy 1956).

Nogués painted some of these landscapes while he was looking for exteriors – to use the cinematic term – for one of his large mural projects: the drawing

room in Lluís Plandiura's Barcelona home at 6, Carrer de Ribera. Lluís Plandiura was a sugar magnate and one of Catalonia's foremost collectors in the first half of the 20th century. As a young man he had amassed an impressive collection of art nouveau posters from around the world – now on display at the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (MNAC) – but, later in life, he collected Romanesque pieces and the finest works by the Catalan painters of his day. Many of these painters became his personal friends and protégés and ended up at the forefront of the canon of modern Catalan painting, precisely because of Plandiura's role as the official arbiter of taste in the Catalonia of the post-*noucentista* era. Plandiura's artistic taste marked a watershed in the Catalonia of his day, with the result that the artists in his collection at the time were seen by many as the “good ones” and others were considered by many as the “bad ones”, or simply didn't exist. It is important to add that, for Plandiura, neither *pompiers* nor avant-garde artists were on his radar: the collector's canon was tacitly defined by the core members of the group Les Arts i els Artistes.

Although the murals in the Plandiura drawing room were never on public view, they were considered a kind of Sistine Chapel of the Catalan artistic and cultural movement, *noucentisme*. Nogués won the mural commission in 1916 and he painted it in tempera between 1917 and 1927. The different panels depict famous Catalan popular songs: *El bon mariner* (The Good Sailor), *El bon caçador* (The Good Hunter), *Blancaflor* (Blancheflor), *La dama d'Aragó* (The Lady from Aragon) and *La filla del carmesí* (Carmesí's Daughter). There are also smaller panels evoking important places, such as Tarra-

gona and Tossa, and ornamental elements that complete the decorations in the room, which other artists and artisans closely associated with *noucentisme* also worked on. They bear all the hallmarks of *noucentisme*.

In the middle of the 1920s, Nogués painted very little and focused more on the decorative arts and working on the project for the Spanish Village, or Poble Espanyol, on Montjuïc. He also produced other pictorial works for the historic dioramas shown at the 1929 Barcelona International Exhibition. In 1927, he had painted some ceiling frescoes in the drawing room of his friend, Ricard Crespo, a glass artist who Nogués had worked with on many occasions. In 1930, he painted four panels – now dispersed – for the Cafè de la Rambla, showing allegorical figures on the Barcelona boulevard from which the café took its name.

One of Nogués' most important works, in its own right and because of its location, is the mural in the office of the mayor of Barcelona. During the tenure of Mayor Roig i Bergadà there was already a mural by Dionís Baixeras, but under the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera the compositions fell into disrepute due to their overly modern subject matter, depicting workers, and were taken down and put in storage. Nogués was invited to paint a series of new murals in 1928, or thereabouts, when Darius Rumeu, Baron of Viver, was mayor. His art collection already contained a number of watercolour sketches that he wanted to feature in the murals. According to Llorens Artigas, Nogués made the sketches for the project during a trip to Paris in 1930 and painted the murals in his Barcelona workshop. The murals were completed and put in

place in 1933, during Jaume Aiguader's mayorship and were a perfect body of work, with just the right levels of balance and symbolism.

The subjects of the mural are *L'esperit de la ciutat* (The Spirit of the City), *La gràcia* (Grace), *La força* (Strength), *La puixança* (Power), *L'americà* (The American) and *El senyor Esteve* (Mr Esteve). The initial project also included a ceiling than never went beyond the preparatory stages. In these sketches, Nogués looked outside the Barcelona settings he had been commissioned to depict and included in his compositions not only everyday citizens but also eminent Catalans, including Count Arnau, the people who went to make their fortune in the Americas, popular songs and references to the mountains. There is a certain amount of confusion regarding the titles of the different panels and they vary according to different sources. If we are to believe the news reports of the day, according to the newspaper *La Vanguardia*, the panel entitled *La Barcelona material* was fitted on the last day of 1931 and it reported that the panel *Barcelona spiritual* would be fitted shortly afterwards. Nevertheless, when this panel was installed at the beginning of April 1932, the same newspaper stated that the earlier panel was *La Catalunya espiritual*, and that the recently fitted panel was called *La Catalunya material*. *La Vanguardia* published pictures of two of the other panels in May 1938 and gave them the title *Elogi del senyor Esteve* (In Praise of Mr Esteve) and *L'aventurer i el capità* (The Adventurer and the Captain).

The decoration of the mayor of Barcelona's office is Nogués' most ambitious work and achieves a person-

al classicism and highly successful thematic structure. Perhaps the need to avoid irony, which was such a frequent aspect of Nogués' work but was deemed inappropriate in such a solemn context, led him to focus on another concept for these murals. They best reveal Nogués' qualities as a total artist and, curiously enough, also show that he was an artist who, politically speaking, was willing "to compromise", as he was awarded the commission by the city council when the country was ruled by a monarchy and a dictatorship, and completed it when a republican and pro-Catalan council was in power. It appears that both mayors identified with the project Nogués submitted to them.

When Nogués finished his commission for the mayor's office in 1933, he began working on a large mural at the Hotel Colón in Barcelona, with Manuel Humbert. A scene depicts one of the artistic and literary gatherings hosted by the collector Lluís Plandiura, attended by some of the most representative visual artists of the day, who worked in the figurative, classical style Plandiura liked so much. This led Eugeni d'Ors to name this period in Catalan art "Mr Plandiura's era".

This large-scale group portrait, rendered in oils, shows the artists gathered around the table after lunch. In his trademark humorous vein, Nogués portrays some twenty people with a slightly caricaturesque air. They include Nogués himself, Josep Maria Xiró, Olaguer Junyent, Domènec Carles, Francesc Labarta, Jaume Mercadé, Miquel Utrillo, Manuel Humbert and Alexandre de Cabanyes. Most of the group were painters, although some had also distinguished themselves in other fields. Josep Dunyach and Enric Casanovas were

sculptors; Pere Ynglada was a great cartoonist; Jaume Llongueras was an interior decorator; and others were dedicated to different activities within the world of the visual arts: Quim Borralleres, Rossend Ribas, Porta, Alexandre Riera, Ricardo González Byass, and Plandiura himself, who is portrayed with his back half turned. Nogués and Humbert left an empty place at the table next to him in memory of Ricard Canals, who was what could be called Plandiura's "court painter" and had died a short time ago. Only Xiró, a painter who had started his career as a committed symbolist and moved on to academic painting, is an unlikely presence among the others in the scene.

Unfortunately, the mural disappeared at the start of the Spanish Civil War in 1936. According to Rafael Benet it was destroyed by the republican militia who subjected it to rounds of machine gun fire after confusing the depiction of the group of artists having a good time with an ostentatious gathering of the bourgeoisie. Two other panels were also lost, one depicting a café in the 1830s and another of a bar in 1934.

Nogués' work as a muralist ended with the three panels he painted for Plandiura at his home in La Garriga between 1934 and 1936. They depict the summer, the grape harvest, fishing and hunting and, although they are accomplished works, they don't have the impact or structural composition of the artist's other murals.

During this period, Nogués' easel paintings were more central than ever to his pictorial output. Rafael Benet stressed the influence of the Swiss artist Felix Vallotton Sovint on the paintings Nogués was pro-

ducing at that time, however, it was by no means a determining factor in his work. Nogués' later easel paintings, particularly those from the 1930s, include clear and precise still lifes, which give the nod to those painted by his friend, Feliu Elias, but are devoid of his vehement realism.

Nogués had produced very few still lifes until this period when we find locusts, fish, birds and flowers powerfully rendered by the artist. While Nogués and Elias – who shared similarities with each other as painters and in their theory of art – both had links to magic realism, we should emphasise the fact that the former was more concerned with the magic side of the concept and the latter with the purely realist side. Benet catalogued seventeen oils of this kind, only one of which predates 1915.

Conversely, Nogués' compositions with figures – despite having attracted attention previously – now entered their most important decade. Nogués had established close ties with Olot, a typically Catalan town with its fairs, markets, popular festivals and balls, performances of the circle dance, the *sardana*, hikers and even a bullring, which he had been painting there since 1933. These compositions usually feature large crowds, but far from being hedonistic, like the ones portrayed by Ricard Opisso – which had become famous at the time through his drawings in the popular satirical press – they are ordered groups of people, almost welded together, who are enjoying themselves sensibly but not without humour. Together they form a true mosaic of society. Nogués, unwittingly or not, offers us a metaphor for the Catalan people, rooted in

the land, who are organised, even in their leisure time, and positive and friendly.

It is important to point out that Nogués was an urban artist, a Barcelonian, who had had the opportunity of living and working in the county of La Garrotxa. He had the same idealised view of the county and rural life often found among city dwellers. This view chimed with the *noucentista* artists' and writers' ideal of an atavistic Catalonia that they sought to interpret as "civilised". Curiously enough, this orderly rural view of their region bears striking similarities to Aurelio Arteta's and the Arrue brothers' depictions of the Basque Country, done at the same time as Nogués' paintings of groups in Catalonia.

Even during the Spanish Civil War, Nogués' paintings give little indication of the tragic situation of the region. In Olot, the conflict still seemed far away and life there – which Nogués drew inspiration from – was peaceful, just as it had been in previous years. An exception was *Els refugiats* (The Refugees), from 1939 (private collection), which shows the problems arising from the disastrous conclusion of the war. However, in his subsequent oils, painted between 1939 and 1940 – the year before his death – the fairs, markets, *sardana* dances continue as they always did, as if the artist were reluctant to admit that this arcadian life to which he had clung was finally over.



► *Cap de noia* (Girl's Head). Oil on canvas.
Unfinished work, 1940.



en plein air

Norman

Easel Paintings

Nogués was probably least prolific as an easel painter.

Joan Teixidor (TEIXIDOR, 1945b) says that he painted seventy-five small oils between 1904 and 1940.

Rafael Benet (BENET, 1949) mentions eighty-one oil paintings. Twenty-one of these are in the collections of the Museu d'Art Modern in Barcelona, and most of them come from Plandiura's acquisition and the bequests of Santiago Espona, in 1958, and Isabel Escalada, in 1969. These don't include the four projects for historical paintings that, despite being done in oils, can't be classified as easel paintings. The same is true of the four panels he painted for the Cafè de La Rambla. We know that Nogués had previously produced a good number of paintings, but their whereabouts are unknown, either because they are lost or are part of undiscovered private collections.

The wonderful retrospective exhibition organised by Barcelona City Council and held at the Palau de la Virreina in March and April 1967, featured fifty-one oils from the eighty-one mentioned by Benet. We have currently located eighty-five paintings by Nogués.

Nogués' oil paintings bear the hallmarks of his other works: neatness and delicacy. Although we have mentioned this before, we should also add that Nogués had more of a sense of line than colour.

He applied thin layers of paint to his oils on card and wood (he produced few oils on canvas) but made a subtle use of colour. This is perhaps why people at the time, who were accustomed to paintings by Nonell and Mir, described his work as poor or unaccomplished in a pictorial sense, without taking into account that the amount of paint used had nothing to do with quality. Nevertheless, even Nogués considered himself more of a cartoonist than a painter. Proof of this lies in the fact that he never held a solo show of his paintings, although he did take part in numerous group exhibitions.

■ *Paisatge de tarda. Banyoles*
(Evening Landscape. Banyoles).
Oil, c. 1903-1904.

The first one we know about is the Olot Regional Exhibition of Fine Arts and Art Industries held in Olot from 15th August to 15th September 1900. Organised by the Institut Olotí de les Arts, les Ciències i les Indústries Artístiques, which had been founded in 1898, the exhibition was an extraordinary success. It featured one hundred and sixty artists and the section dedicated to different county painters featured the finest exponents of the day from Olot, including Berga i Boada, Marià Vayreda and Miquel Blay. Other well-known Catalan artists from outside the region also took part, including Antoni Utrillo, Joan Llaverias and Josep M. Tamburini. Joanet Casas and Xavier Nogués were cousins with close family ties to La Garrotxa and this, along with the widespread coverage given to the event, prompted them to take part. The latter submitted an oil painting entitled *Paisatge* (Landscape). It is listed as work number 196 in the exhibition catalogue and is valued by Nogués at 250 pesetas. Due to the success achieved in 1903, a second exhibition was held but, despite the large number of artists who took part, it didn't have the same impact as the first.

Nogués didn't participate in another exhibition in Olot until 1915.

We said earlier that the first oils Nogués painted from life, or in his cousin's studio, seem to have been lost forever. However, he used this technique to produce his earliest works that span the period 1903 to 1907. This was the time when he learned how to prepare his paints with pigments – coloured earth that he and his cousin would fill their pockets with when they went out to paint landscapes – and linseed oil, which they branded “Mòlts a braç” (“hand-ground” in Catalan), referring to the fact that they were home made.

Nogués' earliest-known oil depicts male bathers on the beach and is rendered with small touches of colour. We can deduce that it dates from between 1903 and 1904.

In addition to the twenty landscapes from Nogués' early period mentioned by Benet, there are countless works he painted of the outskirts of Barcelona on Sunday mornings with his cousin, who headed the group of fellow students from Martínez Altés' and Pere Borrell's academies, which was later nicknamed the “Colla del safrà” (the saffron group).

Nogués' earliest works also include eight oil paintings, most of them landscapes of Banyoles. We should also add the four works shown at the controversial exhibition held at the Sala Parés on 1st April 1905: *Dansanta*, *Noia* (Girl), *Gent de casa* (Homebodies) and *Paisatge de Vallvidrera* (Vallvidrera Landscape) which are listed as numbers 9 and 12 in the catalogue.



Detail of *Sardanes a Banyoles* (Sardana Dancing in Banyoles). 1907.



Envelat
(Ball).
Oil on canvas, 1933.



Fira d'Olot
(Olot Fair).
Oil on canvas, 1936.

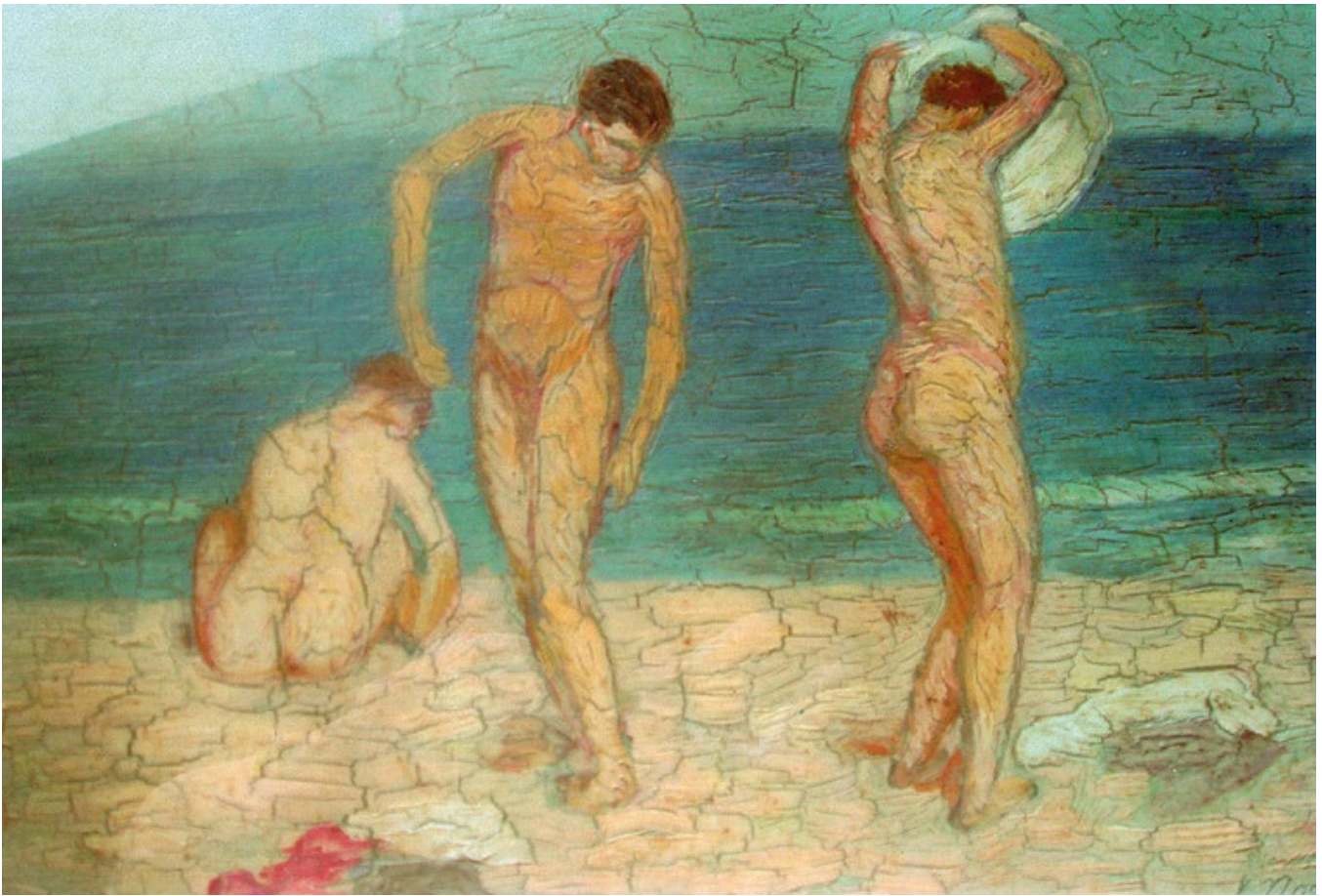
The group comprised the friends Pidelaserra, Junyer i Vidal, Pere Ysern, Joaquim Torres García and the sculptor Emili Fontbona, who were former members of the Associació de Pintors i Escultors Catalans, better known as Art i Pàtria. Their work wasn't well received by the critics, with the exception of a young Eugeni d'Ors, who wrote the following about Nogués in *El Poble Català* (8th April 1905): "*His work has all the qualities of a great artist. His art is naive and burning with sincerity.*" The lukewarm reception, however, contributed to the general disenchantment of the members of the group and it eventually broke up. Some of them, including Pidelaserra, stopped painting for many years. He had shown nine works at the exhibition and the young Plandiura bought one of them to encourage him to continue. However, the failure of a previous exhibition at the Ateneu in 1903, led Pidelaserra to withdraw from the arts scene until 1928. Nevertheless his friendship with Nogués endured and they never lost touch. Torres-García exhibited the largest number of works – seventeen in total – at the Sala Parés exhibition. Nogués, like his fellow painters, was extremely disappointed at the way the exhibition was received but not to the same extent as Pidelassera and the sculptor Fontbona, who had presented five sculptures. He stopped going to his studio for a while and would spend the mornings alone on a boat, reading or watching the clouds, or taking solitary walks with his friend Pidelaserra.

According to the date in the right-hand corner of the landscape of Banyoles it was painted in 1905. However, Joaquim Teixidor says it was painted in 1921. It must be said that it has a great similarity to the two landscapes painted in 1921 during Nogués' honeymoon. The magnificent *Sardanes a Banyoles* (Sardana Dancing in Banyoles) was painted in 1907 and *Mariner* (Sailor), which bears the dedication "A l'amic Serra" (to my friend Serra), is dated 1908.

Nogués' first-known still life dates from 1915, the year he painted *Port de Barcelona* (Port of Barcelona). The still life theme was repeated again, particularly from 1932 and intermittently until 1940.

In 1921, when Nogués and his first wife Teresa Lostau travelled to Banyoles on their honeymoon, he painted some more landscapes and local scenes of the county. He was so enamoured of its open-air markets, fairs, gatherings and balls – typical customs of the land to which he had been connected since childhood – that he returned to this theme over and over again.

In a letter written to Francesc Pujols from Banyoles on 24th September 1921, Nogués mentions a series of quickly painted sketches: "*If I had the time I would*



■
Homes a la platja
(Men on the Beach).
Oil on board, 1904.

paint a local farmer, even though he is losing the picturesque air once lent him by his suit and typical red hat. Now he goes to market on his bicycle and a street in Banyoles has as little character as a street in Sant Feliu de Llobregat. The setting hasn't changed, and never will, even if the farmers wore frock coats. The day before yesterday I went to a gathering where people were dancing the sardana. The way they moved together, raising and lowering their hands, was truly pitiful."

The only two portraits by Nogués found to date are of Miss Miró and Ricard Crespo's daughters, Cèlia and her sister "Pin". They are dated 1921 and 1924 respectively.

The portrait of Miss Miró was shown at an exhibition during the year it was painted, and Francesc Pujols made the following comments about the work: "Nogués, who, until now, has wholeheartedly devoted himself to black and white drawings, and hasn't painted for many years, presents himself this year without the mask of caricature and the etcher's burin, which have earned him his current fame, to emerge unexpectedly with the portrait of a girl that is worth every peseta and has



► *Retrat de la senyoreta Miró* (Portrait of Miss Miró). Oil on canvas, 1921.



■
*Paisatge de Banyoles
amb tres figures*
(Banyoles Landscape
with Three Figures).
Oil on cardboard, 1921.

surprised everyone, not just because it represents something new in his career as an artist, but because of the captivating vision that is so ethereal and refined, right down to the last brushstroke, painted without any thick daubs and with little paint, so that the colour couldn't be more fresh, clear, and simple, its myriad transparencies achieved by applying the paintbrush to the canvas in just the right measure. Nogués doesn't rework the brushstrokes as if the colour were a bed and the effect he creates in such heartfelt painting is as clear and pure as a jet of water, so much so that we could say that the viewer could feel as if they were seated near a fountain, and the people walking in front of it look like they were queuing up to fill the well of admiration that all of us who love painting for what it is, what it is worth and what it represents carry inside."



The following paintings of anonymous sitters could also be included in the portrait category: *Mariner* (Sailor) dated 1908, *Noi amb bata blava* (Boy in a Blue Smock) and *Dos nois i un barco* (Two Boys and a Boat), both dated 1940.

Nogués spent increasing amounts of time in Olot from 1932 onwards, and he was there on an almost permanent basis during the Spanish Civil War. This allowed him to produce a series of small paintings on a variety of themes, most of them depicting popular customs, dated between 1933 and 1936. He also painted a number of still lifes, from 1937, at the height of the civil war, until about 1940. They revealed no major changes in style or subject matter.

▀
Llac de Banyoles
(Banyoles Lake).
Oil on cardboard, 1905.



► *Paisatge de Banyoles* (Banyoles Landscape). Oil, 1904.



► *Suburbi de París* (Parisian Suburb). Oil, 1904.



▀
La terrassa
(The Terrace).
J. Llorens Artigas, Conxa
and Cèlia and "Pin" Crespo
playing parcheesi.
Oil on wood, 1933.

We have only found one painting made between 1937 and 1939: *Refugiats* (Refugees). Together with the etching with the same title, made that same year, it subtly references the tragic times Catalonia was living through. Other engravings, including *Segle XX* (20th Century, 1936) *Males notícies* (Bad News, 1937) and *L'ànima d'en Rosegacebes*, (The Soul of the Bogeyman, 1940) clearly refer – not without irony – to the disaster of the recent defeat. The painting *Refugiats* depicts the sad sight of a woman carrying a child in her arms. Nogués may have



witnessed a scene of this type as Olot was a stopping off place for the constant stream of exiles who had to pass through the town to reach the French border.

Despite the apparent calm reflected in Nogués' work at the time, at their home in Plaça Clarà, Nogués and his wife were extremely worried and anxious about the situation of their family and friends in Barcelona. They included well-known artists and writers, such as Joan Oliver and Xavier Benguerel, who spent a brief sojourn with them. There, partaking of ersatz tobacco and coffee, they discussed the latest news from the front and wished their friends and acquaintances the very best. Isabel used to say that they would spare no effort in finding provisions to share out among the friends and family members who came from Barcelona in search of food. In 1938, Xavier Benguerel wrote about this brief sojourn at Nogués' house in the magazine *Meridià* and the artist's love of the county. He

► *Natura morta* (Still Life).
J. Berenguer Collection.
Oil on canvas, 1935.

El firal d'Olot
(Olot Fairground).
Oil on wood, 1934.



remembers what Nogués said during a walk, when he drew the outline of a curve with a stick, as if he were seeking to frame the landscape: “*If you could only live for a single autumn in this land, you would stay in Olot forever or you would die of homesickness,*” and referring to painting “*Everything is here, can’t you see?*”

Nogués’ technique, or manner of painting, consisted of drawing, carefully and schematically, in charcoal without barely making a mark on the canvas or cardboard. Afterwards, he dusted off the excess charcoal to avoid contaminating the colours he was going to use. Finally, he began working from one corner of the surface, beginning with the darkest colour, and painted gradually until the work was complete. This peculiar manner of working, which we can see particularly in his last unfinished painting, may be related to the fact that he was accustomed to the engraving technique that required him to think about the tonal values and chiaroscuro. Nogués applied the engraver’s discipline and effort, which works by pre-empting the results, to all his other techniques.



El balcó

(The Balcony).

In the background we can see the little gardens, the "jardinetes", on Passeig de Gràcia. Oil on canvas, 1934.



Murals

Nogués first forays into mural painting spanned the years 1904 to 1906, when he was working under the orders of Aleix Clapés on the ceiling decorations for the lobbies and inner courtyards of the Casa Milà, the Gaudí landmark popularly known as La Pedrera. Although the project didn't give free rein to his creativity, it proved to be a good learning experience, giving Nogués the opportunity to observe others at work and work directly with this technique and process.

Studies carried out on the state of repair of the Casa Milà murals when they were due to be restored revealed that they were painted with oil and glue (casein and egg) mixed with a preparation of hydraulic lime and river sand.

The murals consisted of semi-abstract interpretations of classical works of art, painted in large sections in subtle pastel shades and monochrome tones. They were based on the project drawn up by Gaudí's friend and associate, Aleix Clapés, who suggested Nogués decorate his building.

Nogués' participation in these decorations provided a tool that would allow him to fully master a technique that he would later use to produce some of his finest works of art. Indeed, Nogués' murals can be considered one of the major contributions to Catalan art in the first half of the 20th century. Nearly all his murals were painted in tempera using the same process. The blue paintings in the basement café, El Cellar, were the only exception and appear to have been executed more spontaneously, directly onto the wall.

We know that Nogués took great pains over each of his compositions. He conceived them as a whole, beginning with a preparatory painting in colour which, if the subject matter required it, was usually brought to the site and put in place like an architectural drawing. This was particularly the case of the compositions featuring urban landscapes, such as the square and the surrounding buildings in the background of the panel *La dama d'Aragó* (The Lady from Aragon) in the Plandiura drawing room.

► *El bon mariner*
(The Good Sailor).
Mural. Saló Plandiura,
c. 1919-1927.

“Blanca flor” title of the popular Catalan folk song which inspired Nogués’ composition of one of the wall panels in the Plandiura dining room, 1927.



Afterwards Nogués would make a charcoal drawing on tracing paper – onto which he sometimes ruled lines beforehand – of each of the figures, or the entire group, according to the dimensions established in each composition. He would then go over them in Conté pencil. Finally, he traced the drawing on to the wall. This is how the polychrome murals in El Cellar at the Galeries Laietanes were painted, as well as the ones in the Plandiura drawing room, the mayor of Barcelona’s office, the Plandiura family’s house in La Garriga and the dining room in the Crespo’s house.

Nogués also devised a number of projects for murals that unfortunately never came to fruition. They included the meeting room at the Banco Vitalicio, which featured allegories of the four seasons, and an initial project for the mayor’s office featuring Our Lady of Mercy. It consisted of a preparatory sketch that Nogués’ widow gave shortly before her death to the priest Manuel Trens i Ribas, the then director of Barcelona’s diocesan museum, the Museu Diocesà.

The Galeries Laietanes

The Galeries Laietanes stood at number 613 on Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes and were, in fact, an extension, or subsidiary of the Faianç Català gallery, which had been founded in 1891 by the ceramicist Marià Burguès (Sabadell, 1851-1932). His nephew, Santiago Segura, later took over as director and created an extraordinary artistic hub that brought together the entire output of the Catalan artists of the day. The gallery was in direct competition with Josep Dalmau's, which showcased younger, more avant-garde artists. The Galeries Laietanes remained open until late 1958. I still recall the sensation of stepping inside its large gallery spaces that were then almost empty and in semi-darkness. The dusty old floorboards, with their distinctive woody smell, would creak under your feet. It hadn't always been this way. People who had visited the gallery when the Faianç Català was still in existence told me that you entered through a large door. Next to it was an eye-catching, art nouveau ceramic panel decorated with an allegorical figure by Josep Lluís Pellicer. It was set inside a frame formed by twisted iron moulding, made by Pellicer's cousin, Concor-di González, who was the father of Juli and Joan González. The sign was replaced by a panel of tiles decorated by Nogués when the new gallery was being built in 1915. The panel featured the coat of arms of Barcelona and the name of the gallery in Spanish (Galerías Layetanas). The drawing was also used as a letter heading and for other printed matter produced by the gallery.

Segura put his bookshop and publishers right by the entrance to the new gallery. It was run by the Salvat-Papasseit brothers. One of the brothers was the poet Joan Salvat-Papasseit and he supervised the different editions of books and publications of magazines that were produced there. Later on, the poet's wife, Carmen Monasterio, took over the running of the bookshop.

At the back of the shop was a small, dark room which was used as an office. Every afternoon it would host a gathering for the artists who exhibited regularly at the

Panel from the blue series that decorated El Celler at the Galeries Laietanes, 1915-1916.





■ Frieze for El Celler at the Galeries Laietanes (polychrome series), 1915-1916.

gallery, and other intellectuals, including Carles Riba, Josep M. López-Picó and Joaquim Folguera, who were the editors of *La Revista*. The sculptor Manolo Hugué also attended occasionally when he came to town from Arenys de Munt.

The paintings in El Celler

In 1915, or thereabouts, Santiago Segura came up with the idea of creating a more pleasant place where the artists who came to his gallery, as well as the friends of the gallery and its customers, could meet without being disturbed.

In order to inject some life into the basement and make it more cheerful, Nogués was commissioned to decorate the only area that had enough room for people to gather comfortably. He took the utmost care with the project, from the walls, the sink and the lampshades – made from simple green glass bottles – to the banister finial, which featured a drunken man, based on a drawing by Nogués and carved by Josep Granyer.

Once again, Segura succeeded in all aspects of the project, from the idea of El Celler to the artist he chose to decorate the space.

El Celler was one of the cosiest and most charming places in Barcelona, and became the temple and inner sanctum of the *noucentista* group, who met here to discuss the issues of the day, plan magazines and exhibitions, work and enjoy themselves as much as they could. We could say that El Celler served the same purpose as the café Els Quatre Gats for Catalonia's art-nouveau, or *modernista*, artists.

Quite logically, wine was the most suitable subject for a cellar bar. Nogués imbued the basement with all the charm and mystery of a primitive grotto where his spirited, cheerful decorations brightened up the lives of the most downcast and jaded customers.

El Celler had an L-shaped floor plan and was reached by two wooden staircases: one leading to the kitchen, or red room (which was seldom used), and another leading to the dining room, or grand blue room, which featured the banister finial we mentioned earlier.

Nogués painted eight caricatures, four glasses of wine and a geometric motif on each step of the kitchen staircase and decorated the wooden panel that served as a banister for the dining room staircase in such a way that it resembled a balustrade.

The blue murals on the walls in the rectangular dining room featured a composition of arches underpinned by columns framing a landscape with a flock of birds flying across it, and characters, including a hunter with his dog.

In the dining room there was a large oblong panel featuring a jolly group of men seated around a hostelry table. At the time Romà Jori suggested Nogués make a ceramic panel as it would be more durable than the murals which could suffer the effects of the damp and general wear and tear over the years. Nogués didn't make the panel, but, years later, his tiles for the frieze on the façade of the cooperative winery, the Celler Cooperatiu de Pinell de Brai, featured a group of hunters seated round a table and is strongly reminiscent of the composition at El Celler.

The murals in the kitchen, or red room, were painted in full colour and featured dados and phylacteries as well as caricatures of drunks. They featured inscriptions translated by the scholar Lluís Deztany – the pseudonym of Lluís Faraudo i de Saint-Germain (Barcelona, 1867-1948) – from the anonymous 14th-century Catalan book, *Libre de Tres*. In the kitchen there was also the sink framed by twenty of the first tiles decorated by Nogués.

El Celler at the Galeries Laietanes was a hive of activity for a number of years and achieved great success as a lively, and controversial, meeting point.

It hosted important events, ranging from the meetings by the *modernista* patriarchs, Casas i Rusiñol, to the testimonial suppers, the most noteworthy being the one for Picasso in 1917, and another held the same year to mark the opening ceremony for the Exhibition of French Art. El Celler was also the headquarters of the association Les Arts i els Artistes and hosted all their events.

La carn fa carn, e lo pa fa pança / més lo vi mena la dança (Catalan popular saying similar to Eat, Drink and Be Merry).

Panel from the polychrome series, El Celler.



Following Segura's death, the Galeries Laietanes continued to be an important meeting place, but El Celler became less and less busy attracting fewer and fewer people.

Later on, the Spanish Civil War put an end to the gatherings of artists and intellectuals, many of whom had to leave Barcelona, either voluntarily or by force.

Segura's widow, Maria Cladellas, continued to run the gallery until 1939 or 1940, but nothing was the same. The business underwent a major refit when it was purchased by Cebrià Pagès, a textile manufacturer from Sabadell and a collector of antique glass. The gallery interior was converted into a series of separate rooms where the mediocre paintings produced during the post-Civil War years were shown.

When Josep M. Gudiol returned from America he became Pagès' business partner and was appointed director of the gallery. His intention was to make the gallery a showcase for works by the young painters of the day and he bought paintings by Tàpies, Tarrats, Ponç and others, with the aim of making the Galeries Laietanes a hub for avant-garde art.

Over the years, El Celler had become a store room for the gallery and was piled high with objects. It now had to be cleaned and decluttered. The decision was taken to remove the tempera murals – thirty-nine in all – as well as the banisters and other small panels, to save them from the damp conditions and to



*Caçador i família
d'excursionistes*
(Hunter and Family of Hikers).
Blue series, El Celler,
1915-1916.

prevent them from being destroyed and forgotten. This was around 1945. Although the large number of pieces in storage interfered with the work, the paintings were removed quickly and, fortunately, were saved. Ramon Gudiol and Andreu Esturiol were in charge of their removal and subsequent restoration. However, the ceiling friezes, a number of phylacteries and the railings on one of the staircases were in such a poor state of repair due to the damp and neglect over the years, that they couldn't be salvaged.

All the paintings were put on sale on 4th October 1947 at the Sala Parés. Many of the panels were acquired by the Museus Municipals d'Art and deposited at the Museu d'Art Modern: fifteen from the blue series; four large-scale ones in full colour; ten small-format works; and a vertical panel from the red series. Another of the large full-colour panels ended up in a private collection. The large panel of the drunken men seated round a table painted in bluish tones became part of the Gudiol collection, and other smaller fragments have turned up private collections.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to know with certainty how many panels from El Celler survived. Many of them, particularly the small compositions with figures, may have been split up when they were being restored.

The drunken men, musicians and ornamental motifs featured in the *Auca de l'Aplec de Sant Medir* (Scene from the Gathering of Sant Medir) also appear in the



Panel from the blue series that decorated El Celler at the Galeries Laietanes.

delightful mural compositions, and the tiles around the sink in El Celler. They were later repeated in Nogués' decorations on the ceramic frieze at the winery, the Celler Cooperatiu de Pinell de Brai, and his fired enamelled glassware in particular. What is particularly striking about the murals in El Celler is the major difference in the technical procedures between the paintings from the blue series and the red series.

We know that Nogués loved quality work. He said that he never left anything to chance and that is why the swiftness of execution of the blue paintings in El Celler comes as such a surprise. This may have had more to do with his haste to finish them than his working methods and processes.

There are two aspects of the blue paintings that are unworthy of Nogués' skill as a painter: the fact that he didn't "take the time" and had to apply his brush directly, using glue tempera, and the lively, spontaneous strokes on a pre-prepared white background, with the result that, from time to time, the occasional trickle of cobalt blue paint escaped his deft brushstrokes. This is in stark contrast to the red series of murals that decorate the other room in El Celler, which are much more painstakingly worked.

It may well be that Nogués had begun working on his murals at a leisurely pace and, when he was halfway through, Segura had asked him to hurry up in order to meet the deadline for the opening of the café. Whatever the reason, the decorations in El Celler marked the beginning of a period full of promise that would be fulfilled later and would earn Nogués the title of the finest Catalan muralist of the 20th century, following the tradition of the old masters, such as Pau Rigalt and Francesc Pla “El Vigatà”, who had ennobled this discipline in previous centuries. Nogués also designed the wine list for El Celler. It was printed in February 1916 and featured beautiful drawings that were also used on the handbills advertising the café. Santiago Segura also wanted to have the drawings rendered in fired glass enamels by Ricard Crespo on the café’s glassware and crockery.



Small panel,
polychrome series.

La Basílica

At the end of 1916, Segura purchased two of the canonries on Carrer de la Pietat that were under threat of demolition as part of the old town redevelopment project. In addition to rescuing two old buildings that lent character and charm to the Gothic Quarter, Segura also saw their potential as the ideal setting for an antiques business that would attract a select clientele of art and culture lovers.

In order to make the best use of the buildings, Segura appointed his friend Miquel Utrillo to oversee their refurbishment. Utrillo had already worked on creating Cau Ferrat and the Palau Mar i Cel in Sitges, and there could have been nobody better suited to the task, which he performed with intelligence and exquisite good taste.

Utrillo preserved the original coffered ceilings and red tiling and one of the building soon became a small museum exhibiting works of art, mostly on religious themes. This explains why it was called La Basílica.

Segura, who was so proud of El Celler, also wanted to have fresco paintings on the walls of the porticoed courtyard leading into the new shop. This time he decided to commission Manuel Humbert with the designs. Humbert worked alongside Nogués who painted his designs on the walls.

La Basílica was a short-lived enterprise and this is why the paintings didn't survive. The three or four photographs published in the news section of the magazine *Vell i Nou*, along with a short article, are the only records of these works.

Initially, Humbert's preparatory paintings on cardboard depicting episodes in the lives of the saints, with Saint Eulàlia as the centrepiece, were to be painted by Nogués. Nevertheless, the proposed theme must have met with a lukewarm reception as the article in *Vell i Nou* (1916) reads: "At La Basílica, Nogués will paint scenes of the Corpus Christi procession, which are so typical of Barcelona."

Just imagine how graceful and dynamic these frescos would have been if they had come to fruition. However, it was not to be: perhaps because someone had thought that a procession painted by Nogués would be out of keeping with the solemnity of the setting, or because the artist must have been busy at the time and was unable to undertake the commission. That being said, the next issue of *Vell i Nou* (VELL I NOU, 1916) reports that work on La Basílica is making good progress and that "eventually, Nogués decided not to paint the scenes from the end of the Corpus Christi procession. Instead, he and Humbert, painted the beautiful frescos featuring scenes from the lives of the saints, in the spacious rooms of the mansion."

Either way, when La Basílica opened (*La Veu de Catalunya*, 1916) it displayed frescos painted by both friends. In the 1930s they also painted the group of friends who would meet at the Hotel Colón, who went by the name of the *Penya del Colón*. The painting was destroyed in 1936. The press of the day make no mention of the opening party or, rather, the two parties held in quick succession at La Basílica. The first was a private event for friends, and the second was for customers, the press and acquaintances. Francesc Pujols (BLADÉ DESUMVILA, 1967) mentions, among other things, the first opening party, which was attended by just thirty friends. As befitting such a setting, they organised a sumptuous procession behind closed doors: a kind of moving exhibition of religious art. Everyone, except for Segura, wore rich dalmatics, chasubles, stoles and skull caps, and carried candelabras, censers and chalices. Pujols says that he dressed from head to toe in bishop's regalia. Once this solemn ceremony had ended, the opening party commenced with a considerable number of guests and ended with a great feast.

We know nothing more about La Basílica except that it was open for little more than a year. Segura died in 1918 and the shop closed its doors for good.

The Plandiura drawing room

Issue 43 of the magazine *Vell i Nou*, published on 15th May 1917, tells us that: “Lluís Plandiura has commissioned Xavier Nogués to decorate one of the rooms in his house.” Francesc Pujols also tells us about his role in Plandiura’s decisions (BLADÉ DESUMVILA, 1967), as he advised him to invite Nogués to undertake the project.

From a very young age, and throughout his life, Plandiura amassed a very important art collection. Many of the works were acquired at different periods by the *Museus Municipals d’Art de Barcelona*, the forerunners of the current *Museu Nacional d’Art de Catalunya*. The collection, comprising more than 3,000 copies of journals and magazines, as well as a 6,000-volume library, also contained a series of works representing the finest modern art by contemporary artists, most of them friends of his. Plandiura wanted to do justice to these wonderful treasures and display them inside his house – a five-storey building at number 6, Carrer de la Ribera – where he ran his business and the office founded by his father.

Lluís Plandiura’s house and museum was decorated by Jaume Llongueras and Xavier Nogués in collaboration with Francesc Galí.

Nogués decorated the entrance and reception room, and was responsible for the layout of the collections of paintings and sculptures in the drawing room. Nogués designed everything, from the general structure of the room right down to the smallest decorative details on the walls, as well as the marble, mosaics, doors, furniture, chairs and the upholstery for the sofa.

Nogués didn’t begin the murals until early December 1919. He worked in collaboration with Alfons

Decorative figure from one of the four superimposed arches inside the Plandiura drawing room.
Oil on canvas, 1919.





▸ Lobby of the Plandiura house, 1917.

Aldofreu and Teresa Lostau, his devoted assistant and admirer, who was to become his first wife in 1921.

Nogués completed the tempera murals at the beginning of 1927. The ceiling panels were the first ones he completed and feature depictions of the sun, the moon, the morning and dusk. He finished the wall murals last.

The decorations bear the unmistakable hallmark of Catalan identity inherent to the *noucentista* movement. Although they took almost nine years to complete, the finished works reveal no major changes in the artist's process. This is because he usually made preparatory studies which he kept until he had completed his projects to ensure they retained the unity and harmony that were the trademarks of his art. Nevertheless, we do detect slight differences in his working methods in the composition of the central ceiling panel, which was the first one he painted. Exacting as ever, Nogués asked for the scaffolding to be re-erected so that he could make small alterations. Isabel Escalada told the anecdote that, in order to be able to paint more comfortably, Nogués put a mattress on the scaffolding platform, where he would paint lying down. He told Plandiura that it was a really comfortable system and it was a pity that he had discovered it so late in the day. Plandiura laughed and said it was lucky as, instead of taking nine years to complete, it would have taken twenty. Nevertheless, Plandiura was delighted with the room. King Alfonso XIII and Le Corbusier were among the eminent guests who admired Nogués' paintings after visiting Plandiura's magnificent collection of ancient and modern art.

Nogués depicted the months of the year on the scotias around the edges of the ceiling and the four seasons on the oblong wall panels. He drew inspiration from old



Preparatory study for the decoration of the Plandiura drawing room, 1917.



▸ Drawing room at Lluís Plandiura's house in Barcelona, 1919-1927.



El bon caçador (The Good Hunter).
Mural. Saló Plandiura,
c. 1919-1927



Preparatory drawing for the central figure of the mural
Elogi del senyor Esteve (In Praise of Mr Esteve) in the mayor's
office, Barcelona City Hall, 1930-1931.

and popular Catalan folk songs to decorate the large panels: *La dama d'Aragó* (The Lady from Aragon), *El bon caçador* (The Good Hunter), *La filla del carmesí* (Carmesí's Daughter), *El bon mariner* (The Good Sailor) and *Blancaflor* (Blanche-flor).

The small skirting panels featured a number of landscapes, including Banyoles lake (so closely associated with Nogués' childhood memories), Tossa de Mar, Blanes (the home town of Lluís Plandiura's mother), La Garriga (the home town of Plandiura's father), a view of Barcelona from Montjuïc, and the four main cathedrals in Catalonia.

We find Nogués' and his associates' signatures one on of the skirting panels behind the big sofa. There, on the phylactery motif framing two birds, we can read: "Planned and executed by Xavier Nogués in collaboration with Teresa Lostau and Artur Aldofreu." The date, 1927, is in Roman numerals and has been placed at the bottom of the composition in the centre.

Nogués' widow, Isabel Escalada, told me that she had to watch helplessly as Nogués tore up countless drawings, studies and preparatory sketches for the decoration of this room. Years later, the few drawings that had survived, including a number of figure drawings, became part of the important bequest given to the *Museus Municipals d'Art de Barcelona* in memory of Xavier Nogués after Isabel's death at the end of 1968.

The Plandiura drawing room was admired by eminent personalities from Spain and abroad. In October 1928 it was featured in issue 2 of the *Gasetta de les Arts* in a special report about Plandiura's collection. It was the only publication that, luckily, left a record of one of Nogués' most beautiful murals.

Since Plandiura's death, the drawing room has only been open to visitors on a handful of occasions. Few people have been privileged enough to enjoy the murals, which are one of the key achievements of Nogués' career as a muralist.

In 1970, or thereabouts, rumours were circulating that the murals were going to be put on sale. In order to preserve the works as a whole, and to ensure they didn't meet the same fate as Mir's paintings at the Casa Trinxet, the vice-chair of the *Fundació Xavier Nogués*, Raimon Noguera de Guzmán, asked the then mayor of Barcelona, José María Porcioles, if the city council would be interested in purchasing the murals. The mayor was enthused by the idea as the city council was refurbishing the *Palauet Albéniz* at the time and the murals would have been a marvellous addition to its majestic rooms.

However, as it turned out, Plandiura's heirs didn't want to part with them.

Unfortunately there are no current publications that document and show in detail the work Nogués created for the enjoyment and delight of its owners and occasional visitors.

The mayor's office

The restoration and refurbishment of the rooms inside Barcelona City Hall commenced in 1922 and really gained momentum in 1924 when the preparatory work began for the new city layout in anticipation of the 1929 Barcelona International Exhibition. However, work on the mayor's office didn't begin in earnest until 1928. The mayor had to welcome the corporations, delegations and other bodies from Spain and abroad who were beginning to arrive in the city for the exhibition and this prompted the council to decorate this room.

In 1929, the then mayor of Barcelona, the Baron of Viver, commissioned Nogués to decorate his office on Plandiura's recommendation. Sert was commissioned to paint the murals in the Hall of Chronicles, and Canals undertook the ceiling in the Hall of Municipal Commissions.

Nogués produced the four colour sketches for the decoration of the mayor's office while he was on a trip to Paris with his wife, Isabel, and Miquel Utrillo. These sketches, which were owned by the Baron of Viver, were put on sale in February 1964.

Nogués painted the originals on his return to Barcelona at the studio in his flat at 115, Passeig de Gràcia.

Llorens Artigas (LLORENS ARTIGAS 1933-1934) tells us that decoration should be a necessity rather than a luxury and goes on to say that Nogués' murals "[...] will withstand all criticism because they make you feel good, the laws of composition have been respected and the decoration is restful," and concludes that: "these murals pay

Elogi del senyor Esteve
(In Praise of Mr Esteve).
Mural in the mayor's office,
Barcelona City Hall.
Oil on canvas, 1931-1933.





► Project for the mural painting *Puixança de Barcelona* (Barcelona's Power) in the mayor's office, Barcelona City Hall. Oil on cardboard, 1931.



► *Puixança de Barcelona*. Mural in the mayor's office, Barcelona City Hall. Oil on canvas, 1931-1933.

La cançó popular
(Popular Song).
Wall panel in the mayor's
office, Barcelona City Hall.
Oil on canvas, 1931-1933.



a great tribute to the people who have built the Barcelona of today.” The paintings in the mayor’s office are, indeed, a tribute to the Barcelona of our grandparents who strove to make it great and prosperous, not just materially but artistically and spiritually.

The themes chosen by Nogués for the four panels are allegories for the 19th-century Catalan revival movement, the *Renaixença*. One of them is in praise of Mr Esteve, the prototypical, level-headed and thrifty Barcelonian, who contributed to the resurgence of his city; the Catalan adventurers, known as “indianos”, who made their fortune in the Americas and the Indies and the ship’s captain; allegories for the trade links then being established between the Americas and Barcelona; Barcelona’s power, symbolised by industry; transport represented

by Mercury and Fame; and great inventions such as Monturiol's submarine, *Ictineo*; and, lastly, Catalonia's spiritual renaissance, with its arts, literature, music and traditions.

These panels alternate with other decorative figures and motifs, forming a wonderful ensemble. The murals are done in oils, the colours are light and in pastel shades and the composition well balanced. Nogués made a gouache study for the ceiling decoration, which never came to fruition. It featured the figures of Our Lady of Mercy, Saint George (Sant Jordi), Saint Eulàlia and Saint Francis, surrounded by angels. As we mentioned earlier, Nogués' widow bequeathed them to Barcelona's diocesan museum, the Museu Diocesà, shortly before her death.

Before embarking on his paintings, Nogués usually made preparatory studies in charcoal and Conté pencil on tracing paper. Fortunately, he didn't destroy them and he donated twenty-one of the best to the Museu Municipals d'Art in December 1933.

Like no other artist of his day, Nogués captured in these murals the universal value of his origins in a series of characters he had seen and encountered as a child in the old streets of Barcelona when it was still a provincial backwater, hemmed in by the walls that he saw demolished in 1887 when he was aged fourteen.

The Barcelona "Indiana" – shown in the guise of a bourgeois lady, who looks on in wonder as Barcelona is unveiled as a cosmopolitan city as a result of the 1888 Universal Exhibition –, came back to life through Nogués' murals in the mayor's office, on the occasion of another major exhibition that was also a key event for Catalan trade, industry, arts and culture.

The dining room in the Crespo's house

The Crespos lived at the foot of Mount Montjuïc, on Carrer de Morabos, on the corner of Carrer Montfart, where the mirror factory, Espejos Murguía, was located. Their home was on a first floor above the factory but had a separate entrance.

Decorated with simple good taste, the best part of the building was the terrace that Conxa, the mistress of the house, had filled with plants and flowers. There, particularly in summer, the family and friends would meet, and eat rice



► Preparatory drawing for *El Convidat* (The Guest), 1927.

Figure of *El Convidat* on the lintel above the dining room door at the Crespo's house. Tempera painting, 1927.

dishes and snails. People would paint, play parcheesi and talk about everything. They would even set off balloons and rockets during the midsummer celebrations of Sant Joan and Sant Pere. It was here that the group came up with the idea and subject matter for a film entitled *Planys d'un ànec enamorat* (A Lovesick Duck's Lament).

Cèlia, the Crespo's eldest daughter, told me that Nogués not only appeared at the start of the film as the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer lion, he also played the role of an ambassador. His wife, Isabel, played the ambassador's wife and she (Cèlia) was the ambassador's daughter, hopelessly in love with a young musician, played by Josep Llorens Artigas. In despair about the father's refusal to give her hand in marriage, the musician elopes with his beloved. In one of the final scenes, frantic and enraged about his daughter's abduction, Nogués gnaws in desperation at one of the giant plant pots that still decorate the balustrades in front of the Palau Nacional on Montjuïc, which was under construction at the time. The building was used as the ambassador's residence and all the interiors and exteriors were filmed here. I mention this anecdote as proof of what can be achieved during gatherings of friends and artists which throw up a plethora of ideas that are nearly always carried out with enthusiasm.

For many years, Isabel and Xavier Nogués visited the Crespo's home every Sunday to work and spend the day, except when they were travelling around Spain carrying out research for the Poble Espanyol. They were later joined by their friends who were working on the 1929 International Exhibition project. Artists and intellectuals visited their home, among them Manuel Humbert, Feliu Elias, Josep M. Sert, Llorens Artigas, Pau Gargallo, the scholar Marçal Olivar, and the musician Monturiol, the nephew of the inventor of the submarine *Ictineo*.

Nogués decorated the walls of the Crespo's dining room as a token of friendship. Cèlia told me that they built him a kind of high chair so he could work more comfortably. When Nogués had finished painting he would deliver a sermon to the assembled guests while they waited for the rice to cook. Seated around a table, they would be in stitches.

Nogués made a series of preparatory drawings for the eight murals on tracing paper and then traced them onto the wall. Rather than follow any specific theme, the designs were more decorative in style and revealed the influence of art déco.

The motifs were painted onto a golden ochre background with pastel shades achieved through the tempera technique. On the lintel of the door leading into the dining room, Nogués painted a figure he named “El Convidat” (“the guest” in Catalan): a young man standing almost facing us with a bunch of flowers in his hand. The drawing was taken from the drunks series that decorated his fired enamelled glassware. In this case, he swapped the bottle of wine for the bunch of flowers.

Another motif is of a courting couple and, on another lintel, we find one of Nogués’ ships with its sails unfurled and the figures of dandies seated on either side.

Nogués signed, dated and dedicated the panel depicting a still life, with fish and fruit, surrounded by a phylactery. Miquel Utrillo wrote the caption in Latin specifically for this panel.

The colour, as always, is extremely delicate and applied with the greatest of care. The Crespo family kept all Nogués’ preparatory drawings, as well as the paintings, for many years. However, in 1950, Conxa Domènec, Ricard Crespo’s widow decided, with a heavy heart, to sell off the house that was so full of memories and where she had enjoyed so many good times, to move to Mexico, where her two daughters had been living since the start of the Spanish Civil War.

Cèlia told me that her mother arrived in Mexico with everything but the kitchen sink. She had brought all the contents of the house with her, except for the murals, which she had asked Ramon Gudiol to remove. At the time, he charged her eight thousand pesetas for removing the murals from the wall, mounting them on stretchers and transporting them. These paintings, which were exported as household effects, were returned to Barcelona around 1974 or 1975, where they were snapped up by Joan Anton Maragall. He displayed them and put them on sale at the Sala Parés, together with a series of etchings as part of the same lot. We don’t know whose collections they eventually ended up in. This was a pity because, as a result, the paintings were dispersed, thereby bypassing the original intention of preserving them and keeping them together. After all, this was the main reason for their long journey by sea and land.

La Garriga

Between 1934 and 1936, Plandiura decided to refurbish his family home in La Garriga. He commissioned Llongueras to do the overall decoration and, as was to be expected, he asked Nogués to decorate the dining room.

On the three available sections of the wall, which included the panel behind the dining room door, Nogués depicted the following themes: *La fruita* (Fruit), *Les flors* (Flowers), *La pesca* (Fishing) and *La caça* (Hunting).

In terms of subject matter and style, the monochrome paintings, in sepia tones, closely resemble Nogués' easel paintings spanning the period 1935 to 1939.

When the Plandiura family sold the house, the murals were removed from the walls and their whereabouts are currently unknown.

Café de la Rambla (1925)

Nogués painted four wooden panels in oils, measuring 90 x 40 cm, for the now-defunct Café de la Rambla, signing them with the letter "N". Although they are not murals in the strict sense of the word, they are worth mentioning for the original way they decorated the walls of the café. At the end of the Spanish Civil War, the café changed hands but fortunately the paintings were saved and ended up in private collections. This is why they are little known to the public at large. The café opened in 1925 on the corner of Carrer Canuda and La Rambla, near the Ateneu Barceloní.

Each panel features a female figure representing one of the four sections of Barcelona's famous boulevard: the Rambla de Canaletes, the Rambla de les Flors, the Rambla dels Estudis and the Rambla de Santa Mònica. The panels were exhibited at the major retrospective exhibition dedicated to Xavier Nogués held at the Palau de la Virreina in Barcelona in April and May 1967.

The “Bodega” in the Hotel Colón (1933)

In his book, *Xavier Nogués, caricaturista y pintor*, Rafael Benet mentions three oil paintings that decorated the “Bodega”: one of the salons at the prestigious Hotel Colón that stood on the corner of Plaça de Catalunya and Passeig de Gràcia. This huge art-nouveau style building that opened in 1902, housed Barcelona’s most upmarket café and restaurant. It was extended and remodelled over the years. In 1918, redecorated in the *noucentista* style, it was renamed the Gran Café Colón. It was still a favourite haunt of Barcelona’s high society and a meeting point for many groups of intellectuals and artists.

Around 1920, Lluís Plandiura, a patron and president of some of Barcelona’s foremost cultural institutions, founded his own circle of artist friends. Xavier Nogués and Manuel Humbert worked together on one of the three large panels mentioned above, painting their self-portraits and the portraits of the other members, including Mompou, Mercadé, Casanovas and Dunyac. They were depicted seated around their president. The hotel was severely damaged during the Spanish Civil War by the “heavy-handed” militia and the three paintings were destroyed deliberately by machine-gun fire. After the war, the hotel underwent major changes at the hands of the new regime.

The three original paintings by Nogués were the abovementioned portrait *La Penya Colón* (The Colón Circle), who were also known as Plandiura’s circle, which decorated one of the dining rooms in the hotel restaurant and grill, and two that hung on the walls of the bar depicting an 1830s café with card players and the counter of a bar in 1934.

Benet tells us that only one of Nogués’ preparatory drawings for Plandiura’s circle survives, although its whereabouts are unknown, along with two preparatory sketches in oil on cardboard for the other two panels. Nogués said that he had depicted himself as the barman in the second.

Ceramics





Ceramics and High Art

JOAN-FRANCESC AINAUD

Far from being a minor aspect of his work, Xavier Nogués' ceramic decorations were some of his finest creations, although he didn't produce them as regularly as his drawings and engravings.

Although Nogués' murals in El Cellar at the Galeries Laietanes are considered his masterpiece (or, at least, one of his breakthrough achievements), his decorated tiles around the sink in the larder are also particularly outstanding. "In a few years' time," an anonymous columnist of the day predicted, "*the tiles and ceramics painted by Nogués will be sought after like veritable jewels. He began painting these tiles inside a cellar. One day, we encountered Nogués, paintbrush in hand, painting the first tile that Francesc Quer would take away with him for firing. [...] This single tile ended up as a series of twenty, until there were enough to tile around the sink. As the tiles are made from hard-wearing material, and as the murals inside the cellar could easily be destroyed by damp and with the passing of time, we asked Xavier Nogués to make a ceramic panel to decorate the hostelry that would be more durable and more permanent. It would be unforgivable to deprive posterity of a masterpiece of Catalan art.*"¹ His wish was finally achieved in the ceramic frieze Nogués produced two years later for the cooperative winery, the Cellar Cooperatiu de Pinell de Brai.

Also worth mentioning is the key role Nogués played in the rebirth of Catalonia's great ceramic tra-

dition. He was a highly valued associate of Francesc Quer's who could "*express the image of popular Catalan life with an artistic spirit and healthy humour only comparable to the work of the great masters. And this hint of good humour joins with a decorative sense. And when he applies it to ceramics, with such richness of quality and colour, they become works of art of the highest value.*"²

Nogués' iconography and drawings on ceramics also feature that almost ungraspable symbiosis of balance, neatness, critical spirit, humour, measuredness and lyricism, that Joan Ainaud de Lasarte³ pointed out. Because Xavier Nogués was certainly "*the most spiritual of our humourists [...] the most austere of all artists. His simplicity goes hand in hand with grace. There is nothing more devoid of decoration than his compositions; but nothing more balanced either.*"⁴ This explains the greatness of his drawings on ceramics, which are essential and austere; a "*genius without jarring qualities, without pointless pomposity, without petulance*"⁵ always associated with high art.

1. "Les caves: decoracions d'En Nogués", *Vell i Nou*, Year II, no. 39, 15th December 1916, p. 314.

2. "Ceràmica decorada per en Xavier Nogués", *Vell i Nou*, Year II, no. 33, 15th September 1916, p. 194.

3. Joan Ainaud de Lasarte, "Xavier Nogués com a dibuixant i gravador", *Ariel*, Year I, Barcelona, November-December 1947, no. 13, p. 105.

4. Romà Jori, "Gravats d'en Nogués", *Vell i Nou*, Year II, no. 24, 30th April 1916, p. 9.

5. Joan Ainaud de Lasarte, "Xavier Nogués com a dibuixant i gravador", *Ariel*, Year I, Barcelona, November-December 1947, no. 13, p. 106.



Detail. Dish, 1915-1917

Ceramics

Nogués' work as a ceramic decorator and his fired enamelled glassware have never been catalogued or studied in depth. The only attempts to examine these techniques can be found in Rafael Benet's book, *Xavier Nogués*, and in the catalogue for the major retrospective on Xavier Nogués, organised by Barcelona City Council and held in March and April 1967.

Although we won't provide a comprehensive analysis of Nogués decorated ceramics, we will, at least, attempt to list the number of pieces known to date and provide an overview of his work as a ceramic decorator, given that he produced a series of remarkable works in this field that were widely acclaimed.

Xavier Nogués' work as a ceramic decorator can be divided into two main groups: ceramic objects and decorated tiles. The latter were initially exhibited and sold at the *Faianç Català* gallery and led to a series of important commissions for large ceramic panels.

As far as the first group is concerned, it is hard to say with certainty how many pieces he produced. We have currently located fifty-nine ceramic objects by Nogués, but we know that, in addition to the plates and vases he decorated for the Riera cake shops, he painted many more.

In issues 33 and 51 of the magazine *VELL I NOU*, published in 1916 and 1917, Romà Jori and J.M. Junoy describe the excellent qualities of these objects that were being snapped up by collectors, connoisseurs and friends.

As a rule, the theme of these early pieces was the human body, particularly the female form. The figures were depicted alone or in twos, and framed by a landscape, or floral or geometric borders. Nearly all of them have a common characteristic: the predominant use of blue. Nogués' caricatures (apart from the ones featured on the tiles) only began to appear on his ceramic objects from 1923

Figurot (Figure),
ceramic tile,
c. 1923-1924.

Col·legues (Friends),
ceramic tile,
c. 1923-1924.



to 1930, the years when he went back to using a variety of colours last seen in his early pieces dating from 1906.

Nogués produced all his polychrome works in collaboration with three great ceramicists: Antoni Serra, around 1906; Francesc Quer, from 1915 to 1925; and Josep Llorens Artigas, from 1930 to 1935.

Antoni Serra i Fiter, who put down his paintbrushes to devote himself fully to ceramics, was the first ceramicist who, at the end of the Catalan art nouveau, or *modernista*, period, introduced new materials and techniques to our part of the world, including stoneware, refractory clay and porcelain. Newly arrived from Olot, he set up his studio in Barcelona's Poblenou district and began working with artists of the calibre of Josep Pey and Juli Vallmitjana, who were later joined by the young Pau Gargallo, Ismael Smith and Xavier Nogués, among others.

This small group of painters and sculptors showed the same interest in ceramics as Casas and Rusiñol, and produced a series of tiles entitled *Els progressos moderns*. They updated the traditional tiles depicting trades and occupations, although their contribution to this field was no more than an attempt to reappraise a technique that had been at the service of art in the past.

Antoni Serra, who later taught at the Escola Superior de Bells Oficis, set up in 1914 by the Commonwealth of Catalonia, known as the Mancomunitat, and run by Francesc d'A. Galí, specialised in high-fire porcelain. He also produced pots made using the low-fire muffle technique, which involves applying the decoration to a layer of glaze previously fired at a low temperature (850°C). Xavier Nogués

used this process to decorate the first pieces he made at Antoni Serra's pottery, Porcellana i Gres d'Art, in 1906 or thereabouts.

The polychrome decorations of these early pieces, three of which (two vases and a jug) are on display at Barcelona's ceramics museum, the Museu de Ceràmica, are strongly reminiscent of the figures featured in his early engravings produced in 1910.

Although the pots Nogués made in collaboration with Antoni Serra are of the highest quality, he didn't dedicate himself fully to ceramic decoration until 1916 under the instructions of Francesc Quer, an experienced ceramicist and glass enameller, who specialised in majolica and glazes and taught a subject known as the Arts of the Earth at the Escola Superior de Bells Oficis.

To date, we have located thirteen vases decorated in collaboration with Quer. These do not include the three porcelain vases he made with Serra, the seven stoneware ones made with Llorens Artigas, two large jugs, a small jug, nine plates, three ashtrays, a tray, a jam pot and twenty-nine tiles featuring caricatures, often including the drunken men, which are a motif he repeated in his fired enamelled glassware.

Most of the pieces are signed with an *N.* and some also have Quer's maker's mark – a hand – although there are others that feature a rhombus or a top hat. Joan Ainaud de Lasarte told us that the hand wasn't only the manufacturer's mark; it was also a play on words, combining the Catalan for hand – “ma” – with Santa Magdalena (Saint Mary Magdalene), as a tribute to the patron saint of Esplugues de Llobregat, the town where Francesc Quer lived and had his workshop. We don't know what the rhombus and top hat allude to, but can assume it must be something similar. It is also worth noting that the same marks appear on all the ceramic pieces decorated by Nogués' first wife, Teresa Lostau, in collaboration with Quer.

Quer had trained in the workshop of the father of the ceramicist Marià Burguès, Santiago Segura's uncle and the founder of the Faianç Català gallery. He completed his studies and honed his technique in Paris, Valencia and Rio de Janeiro. In 1920, while he was teaching at the Escola Superior de Bells Oficis, he ran the kilns at the Pujol i Bausis pottery in Esplugues del Llobregat. The dictatorship instated in 1923 resulted in the closure of the Escola de Bells Oficis and the sacking of all the staff. This, together with the financial ruin resulting from his research into a new kind of stoneware, led Quer to accept the post of manager of an industrial pottery in Lisbon in 1926.



► Nogués decorating a vase, c. 1917-1919.



Ceramic sign at the entrance to the Galeries Laietanes at 613, Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes, Barcelona, c. 1916-1917.

Ceramic panel, c. 1923.

Nogués forged a great friendship with Quer and, aided by his invaluable technical skill, produced his finest pots with him, between 1924 and 1925. All the ceramics he produced at this time are undeniable works of art that Nogués imbued with all the vibrant charm and gracefulness we also find in the finest antique Catalan popular ceramics.

Quer died shortly after moving to Lisbon and Nogués stopped working as a ceramic decorator until 1930. From then, until 1935, he worked sporadically in collaboration with the ceramicist and art critic Josep Llorens Artigas, who had trained at the Barcelona fine arts school, the Llotja, and the Escola Superior de Belles Arts. He was one of the founders of the Barcelona-based art movement, the Agrupació Courbet, and later devoted himself to teaching.

Although they were good friends and had a mutual admiration for each other, Xavier Nogués and Llorens Artigas produced few ceramic pieces together. We have only come across seven polychrome stoneware pots, dated between 1930 and 1935, some of them depicting local festivities. The main reasons seem to be that Nogués was spending long periods of time in Olot, and Llorens Artigas was travelling extensively abroad and finally settled in Paris.

We also know that, at the end of the 1930s, Nogués decorated one or two ceramic pieces with the technical assistance of Josep Roig Ginestós, a ceramicist who had a studio in the Poble Espanyol in Barcelona.

The tiles in El Cellar

Santiago Segura commissioned Nogués to paint the murals in the basement café, El Cellar, at the Galeries Laietanes. While he was working on the project, in 1915, he also painted twenty Valencia-pottery tiles that he placed around the sink, like a panel, in the tiny larder kitchen. It appears that Nogués painted the first tiles as test pieces, almost as a *divertissement*, in situ, at El Cellar, with advice from Francesc Quer, who took them away with him after he had finished and fired them in the kiln at his studio in Esplugues.

These twenty tiles featuring Nogués' trademark characters were perhaps inspired by the antique tiles depicting trades and occupations. They also marked

the beginning of his later, large-scale works, in which Santiago Segura is bound to have played an important role. As an art connoisseur, and in view of their success, he commissioned Nogués to produce a series which he put on sale at the Faianç Català gallery. Nogués also made the panel advertising the Galeries Laietanes. It featured the Barcelona coat of arms and was also used as a letter heading and for other printed matter, as well as the cover of the gallery visitors' book. After Nogués had produced his first series of tiles, the interior designer Jaume Llongueras commissioned him to decorate the first of the cake shops set up by Esteve Riera.

Esteve Riera's cake shops

Esteve Riera hailed from the village of Sant Antoni de Vilamajor and moved to Barcelona to set up a cake shop on Carrer Tallers. His business was such a success that, in a short space of time, he opened another at 131, Rambla de Canaletes. It soon became famous for its cakes and sweet treats and its Vienna rolls in particular. When Riera died in 1915, his sons, Josep, Artur and Albert, carried on the business, opening another shop in 1917 or 1918 at number 129 on the Rambla. Jaume Llongueras was commissioned to design the interior and he created furnishings and fittings inspired by the Catalan cultural renaissance movement, the *Renaixement*, coupled with ceramics decorated by Aragay, Humbert and Nogués. The latter also painted ten ceramic panels, the largest comprising one hundred and forty-four tiles featuring a basket containing ears of wheat and flowers with two bread baskets on either side surrounded by a border. In 1920, the shop won the prize awarded every year by Barcelona City Council to the city's best shop. The series of vases, dishes and plates painted by Nogués, as well as the ceramic murals, are considered the finest he ever produced.

The Rieras opened another cake shop, sometime between the end of 1922 and the beginning of 1923, this time at 307 and 309, Carrer Mallorca. It was also decorated by Jaume Llongueras and Nogués worked on the project with the assistance of his first wife, Teresa Lostau, who sadly died from tuberculosis in July that year. Nogués' decorated plates, dishes and vases were completed this time by a ceramic panel, depicting the figure of Saint Honoratus, the patron saint of bakers and pastry chefs.



Pots by Francesc Quer decorated by Nogués, 1917-1919.



Vases by Antoni Serra
decorated by Nogués,
1906-1910.

Pinell de Brai

This ceramic frieze is arguably Nogués' best-known work and the one he produced with the most enthusiasm. Unfortunately, he didn't live long enough to see it put in place and died believing that it had been destroyed during the Spanish Civil War.

In 1918, Cèsar Martinell, who was then aged thirty, won the commission from the board of the local farmers' union to build the winery and oil press for the Celler Cooperatiu de Pinell de Brai. Due to a lack of budgetary constraints, he was asked to design a special building that would be truly unique. Martinell created one of the most beautiful agricultural buildings in Catalonia, which became known as the "cathedral of wine". He tells us (*DESTINO*, no. 1272, 23rd December 1961) that he thought of decorating the exterior of his building with Nogués' tiles after visiting the basement bar, El Celler, at the Galeries Laietanes, where he was entranced by the tiles and murals Nogués had produced, drawing inspiration from the subject of wine. Martinell says that he not only admired the style of the decoration and the characters depicted, but he also saw clearly that they would be a classy replacement for his original idea of using a simple frieze with a blue and white chequerboard motif. With Nogués' artistry, the frieze could be transformed into wonderful scenes showing the production of olive oil and wine, and would brighten up his building.



▶ The Celler Cooperatiu de Pinell de Brai, 1920-1921.

▶ Ceramic frieze above the door decorated by Nogués. Pinell de Brai, 1920-1921.



Ceramic panel that is part
of the ceramic frieze
at Pinell de Brai,
1920-1921.



Ceramic panel. The date
1917 refers to the year the
cooperative union, the Junta
del Sindicat Cooperatiu
Agrícola de Pinell de Brai,
was founded.





In the same article, Martinell went on to say that the enthusiasm triggered by this idea was suddenly tempered by the fact that the cost of the frieze might exceed the initial budget. He was reluctant to tell Nogués but he eventually arranged a meeting with him and told him that he feared the project would be financially unviable.

From the very outset, Nogués had been so enthused by the idea of the frieze that he asked Martinell to give him a few days to look at the numbers. The result was so favourable that a delighted Martinell immediately told the board of Pinell de Brai who readily agreed.

The story behind the production of the frieze, along with the circumstances that made it possible, particularly those concerning its installation, are unusual enough to warrant a brief mention. The fact that it had survived intact is precisely because the frieze couldn't be put in place at the time. We mentioned earlier that Nogués died believing that it had been destroyed because Pinell de Brai suffered severe damage during the Spanish Civil War.

While the building was being constructed, the board was experiencing financial difficulties, to such an extent that it decided to dispense with any elements that could be considered accessories. These included the ceramic frieze.

Martinell was so keen on the idea, and didn't want to forego the frieze, so he told the board that it couldn't be cancelled because the tiles had already been painted and were about to be fired. This wasn't altogether true.

Once the tiles had been fired, Nogués drew a plan to scale showing the position of each tile, which he numbered carefully and kept, waiting for the day they would be put in place. The tiles were carefully packaged and placed in wooden boxes and hidden away in the basement of the building, in a hole under the grape hoppers. It was considered unwise at the time to fit the tiles due to the straitened

▶ A scene from the grape harvest that decorates the ceramic frieze at the Celler Cooperatiu de Pinell de Brai, 1920-1921.

Preparatory drawing for the ceramic frieze at Pinell de Brai showing olives being pressed, 1920-1921.



Different scenes from the grape harvest that decorate the ceramic frieze at the Celler Cooperatiu de Pinell de Brai, 1920-1921.

circumstances and restrictions being endured by the board of the union which resulted in building work being halted. The tiles remained hidden for a few years until the outbreak of the civil war. After the war, Martinell wondered what had happened to the tiles as they had vanished without a trace. Nobody could come up with an answer, but they were eventually found and fitted in 1949, eight years after Nogués' death.

When the frieze was being installed, the builders were unaware of Nogués' painstaking notes numbering the tiles individually and his elevation plan of the façade where they were to be placed. Nevertheless, only one of the panels (the one

depicting women with olive branches at the entrance) was put in the wrong place. Some of the tiles had to be remade as they were broken while they were being fitted.

As we mentioned earlier, the tiles depict the production of olive oil and wine, a subject that Nogués was particularly fond of and revisited throughout his life. On the panel above the door on the main façade that leads into the oil press (one of the panels that was put in a different place when it was being fitted), we see oil, as a source of food and energy at the service of man both day and night, symbolised by a bird and a bat. The scenes depicting the harvest and the pressing of olives are on the side of the building where the cooperative oil press stands. On the other side, where the winery is situated, we see a plethora of scenes referring to the grape harvest with the typical group of drunken men, celebrations around a fountain, hunters having lunch and a procession of his caricaturesque figures. The frieze is 45.5 m long and 80 cm high. Two panels were added measuring 1.80 x 1.80 m and another measuring 2.4 x 6 m.

On his own initiative, Nogués produced three more small panels with ornamental borders inside which he wrote, in his distinctive handwriting, Catalan sayings about the countryside and vineyards. They were to be used to decorate one of the side doors of the building. He also produced a second version of the panel depicting hunters, which he presented to the young architect as a gift.

Cèsar Martinell told me of the great pleasure it gave him to see Nogués at work. He said that while he was painting he would give a running commentary about what the characters he was painting were thinking and saying, with his subtle sense of humour.

Gandesa, Verdú and other ceramic panels

The frieze at Pinell de Brai resulted in other less-important works. They were also commissioned by Cèsar Martinell, who, delighted with the small panels with Catalan sayings added by Nogués, placed them on the different agricultural buildings he was constructing at the time in the county of the Camp de Tarragona.

Despite being semi-mass produced, due to the repetitive ornamental border motif, these small panels are graceful and of good quality. Nogués' distinctive



A scene from the grape harvest that decorates the ceramic frieze at the Celler Cooperatiu de Pinell de Brai, 1920-1921.



Dish, 1915-1917.

lettering is set inside blue and ochre borders reminiscent of the ones he drew for the advertisements in the magazine *Vell i Nou*.

There were four in the porch and kitchen of Nogués' widow's house in La Garriga with the sayings: "Qui té verema i no té cup, té la meitat del vi perdut" (If you have grapes but no treading vat, half your wine will go to waste), "El bon vi no necessita ram" (Good wine speaks for itself), "La unió fa la força" (There is strength in numbers) and "De mica en mica s'omple la pica" (All things come to those who wait).

Other ceramic panels commissioned by Cèsar Martinell include the one on the façade of the Gandesa winery. It measured 2 x 4 m and was destroyed during the Spanish Civil War. Only the preparatory gouache sketch for the project survives and currently belongs to Cèsar Martinell's descendants.



We will also mention in passing the panel, also destroyed during the war, at the entrance to the farmers' union building inside Verdú castle. Martinell converted the basement into an oil press.

Finally, we must mention the panel for Mr and Mrs Guarro's house in Sarrià, produced around 1923, and the panel above the door of Dr Lluís Domingo's house in Alcover, where Nogués painted the owner's initials and a hand with an eye in its palm: an ancient allegory for the medical profession. It is also important to mention that all the panels were produced with the invaluable collaboration of Nogués' first wife, Teresa.

Plates, A. Riera collection, 1922.

Can Culleretes

Can Culleretes was a typical, popular 19th-century chocolatiers on Barcelona's Carrer Quintana. The shop was purchased by Tito Regàs in 1890 and he later converted it into a restaurant. The first report of the remodelling of the premises appeared in the news section of the magazine VELL I NOU in 1923. It says that Miquel Regàs, a businessman, has decided to refurbish the restaurant and former chocolatiers inherited from his father and has commissioned Jaume Llongueras and Xavier Nogués to carry

General view of the dining room on the ground floor of Can Culleretes, Barcelona, 1923.



Dining room at Can Culleretes, Carrer Quintana, Barcelona, 1923.





out the project, because he needed a delicate touch, which to use his actual words “*would not diminish the sweet perfume and spirit of Barcelona that imbues the premises.*”

Jaume Llongueras worked on the first-floor salon (where christenings were to be held) and decorated it with 18th-century tiles in different shades of blue. Nogués decorated the large salon on the ground floor, where he fitted nineteen tile panels around the lower half of the wall.

There were nine panels, made up of thirty-five tiles, measuring 65 x 91 cm; four, consisting of fifteen tiles, measuring 65 x 39 cm; and six small panels of five tiles each, measuring 65 x 13 cm. On the larger panels, Nogués depicted his classic scenes of people eating, fishing, hunting, playing blind man’s buff and dancing the *sardana*, as well as seascapes, mountain landscapes and celebrations around fountains. On the four medium-sized panels he painted delicate female figures laden with flowers and fruit and set inside a decorative border. The six small panels featured floral motifs. Nogués was assisted by Quer in this last project and was paid 3,075 pesetas, according to the signed receipt dated 13th October 1923.

La gallina cega
(Blind Man’s Buff),
Ceramic panel,
Can Culleretes, 1923..



Can Culleretes remained open throughout the Spanish Civil War, although the Regàs family went abroad. After the war, Miquel Regàs returned and took over his restaurant again on the express condition that all the profits would go to the city's hoteliers and chefs. Before this, Regàs had removed the panels that had been the jewel in the crown of the time-honoured and popular chocolatiers and restaurant. Although it has been transferred to different owners on several occasions, it is still called Can Culleretes today.

Fortunately, the panels decorated by Nogués survived following their purchase from Regàs in 1955 by Barcelona's ceramics museum, the Museu de Ceràmica. In 1967, they were exhibited for the first time at the Xavier Nogués retrospective organised by Barcelona City Council.



PREVIOUS PAGE

ABOVE

L'esmorzar (Breakfast).

Ceramic panel,
Can Culleretes, 1923.

BELOW

Dinar al camp
(Lunch in the Countryside).

La sardana (The Sardana Dance)



La pesca (Fishing).

Ceramic panel,
Can Culleretes, 1923.



La caça
(The Hunt).
Ceramic panel, Can
Culleretes, 1923.



Projects and other ceramic panels

Nogués devised his last ceramic panel projects from 1929 onwards. Although we have records of many of them, we can't say with certainty if they ever came to fruition. In spite of this, we have mentioned them below.

The decoration of Mrs Victòria González's dressing room and bathroom is one of Nogués' least-known projects. We don't know about its current state or if it still exists. However, Nogués' widow often mentioned it and, according to her – and we have no reason to doubt it – it was made with exquisite taste. The tiles, in subtle pearl grey, were made specifically to match the rest of the colour scheme and design. Nogués decorated the rooms with dados and motifs of flowers and figures.

He also produced the ceramic decorations for Santiago Segura's tombstone that framed the epitaph Francesc Pujols had dedicated to the founder of the Galeries Laietanes. Its whereabouts are currently unknown.

Another project that never got beyond the planning stages was a sundial. We haven't been able to locate the preparatory drawings, with the exception of one that is in a private collection.

In 1929, Nogués produced four sketches for the decoration of the customs house in La Jonquera. These were dimensional drawings of a wall showing the

distribution of the ceramic panels featuring two maps: one of Spain and another of Catalonia. They were drawn in lead pencil and green and pink crayon.

There was also a second map of Spain with the names of the provinces hand-written onto tracing paper in lead pencil. Another map of Spain, showing the Arch of Berà, the Sagrada Família, the palace on Montjuïc and people dancing the *sardana*, superimposed onto the Catalan regions, was drawn with lead pencil and blue crayon onto kraft paper. The last one is a map of Catalonia and the Balearic Islands traced in lead pencil onto tissue paper.



Santa Clotilde

The last of Nogués' major ceramic projects consisted of a large panel for the entrance hall to the Santa Clotilde mansion on Boadella beach in Lloret de Mar. The owner, Raül de Roviralta i Astoul, was a doctor and collector who specialised in miniature ships.

The fact that the panel was to be located in a luxurious private summer residence outside Barcelona, set among gardens and woodland, overlooking the sea, meant that most admirers of Nogués' work were unaware of the project. Only the owner's small circle of friends were lucky enough to see it.

All we know is that, in 1922 or thereabouts, Domènec Carles won the commission to decorate this extraordinary residence and in 1933 asked Nogués to produce the ceramic panel. At the owner's behest, he painted an allegory of the saint the property is named after.

Antoni Serra took photographs of the panel before it was fitted. It was so big that it had to be photographed in sections and we don't know if Serra was able to take a complete shot of the work.

We can't say with certainty if the photographs have survived, but it is highly likely that they have, given the fact that the Serra archive is so well organised.

This work concludes the chapter about Xavier Nogués the ceramic decorator.

Applied Arts





Artists and Artisans

CECÍLIA VIDAL MAYNOU

Art deco emerged in the 1920s, reaching its zenith at the International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts in Paris in 1925.

In Catalonia, art deco was assimilated and adapted to the consciousness of a collective ideal, in the political and cultural realm, with the firm desire to build a region with a style of its own, rooted in the creative strength of tradition, which couldn't and wouldn't remain stuck in the past.

The new aesthetic embraced and extolled the virtues of the arts and crafts adding the prefix “Bell” (the Catalan for beautiful), to show that it could capture the spiritual essence of art. This situation brought about, and strengthened, the creation and development of two of Barcelona's leading institutions dedicated to the training of artists and artisans.

The Foment de les Arts Decoratives (FAD) was set up in 1903 as the successor to the Fomento de las Artes Aplicadas a la Industria, and the Asociación Artístico Arqueológica, which was founded in 1877. Both associations were set up by industrialists and workers,

with the shared aim of improving the culture and skills of artisans. In 1892, Barcelona City Council organised the first official National Exhibition of Art Industries and the International Exhibition of Reproductions. These exhibitions were held every two years until 1898.

The Escola Superior de Belles Oficis, run by Barcelona Provincial Council, was set up in 1914. Its syllabus was inspired by the courses offered at Francesc A. Galí's art academy and Esteve Monegal's project for a school for artisans. The school became a model institution in every sense and trained an entire generation of skilled professionals and specialised workers.

Santiago Marco i Urrutia was one of the prime movers behind this collective effort. He was the president of FAD from 1922 until 1949, as well as an enthusiastic creator and organiser of a number of exhibitions in Spain and abroad, which provided a showcase for Catalan artists to show off their skills. Their participation in the International Exhibition of Decorative Arts, organised by the French government in 1925, was put in jeopardy due to the delays, complications and inconveniences caused by Spanish government red tape. This meant that there wasn't enough time to

► *Abecedari català per a nens*
(Catalan Alphabet for Children), 1920.

pack the work properly, transport it, unload it and display it correctly. Bearing in mind that none of the exhibitors had enough private resources to present their works in a way that would do them justice, Marco, on behalf of FAD, offered his services as a private entity to supervise, group together and distribute the works by the artists and artisans who wanted to take part. Through his efforts and professionalism, Marco organised and decorated the Catalan pavilion, earning extraordinary plaudits for the competitors. This is borne out by the number of prizes won, the sales figures and praise from the international press.

The accomplished master ceramicists, Antoni Serra i Fiter and Francesc Quer i Selves, made major innovations and introduced new techniques, procedures and materials. They taught and guided all the artists and artisans attending the Escola Superior de Belles Oficis in the secrets of the craft. The artist, educator and member of the education committee, Francesc d'A. Galí i Fabra, was the driving force behind this outstanding school, and was its director until it closed in 1924. His wonderful report about the art education the school was to provide and its syllabus, couldn't be clearer: "[...] *The students should be armed with dynamic educational training coupled with a strong and fine sense of spirituality. After all, if we are unable to create artists we must train excellent artisans.*" Indeed, Galí, did nothing more than bring to fruition a noble ideal that reflected the ethos of his private academy founded in 1906. Here he educated and guided most of the artists who, soon afterwards, became teachers at the recently opened school and became widely known for their solid technical skill and excellent qualities.

The syllabus of the school, which was part of an organisation called the Catalan Industrial University, gave a great deal of importance to manual work, technical processes and knowledge of materials. Courses were split into four major specialities: Arts of the Garden (floriculture), Arts of the Earth (chemistry and ceramics), Arts of Woodworking (architecture, carpentry, marquetry) and Arts of Metalworking (silver-smithing and goldsmithing).

The Arts of the Earth consisted of ceramics used as cladding, pottery (china, porcelain, stoneware), stained glass and enamelling.

Training in each speciality consisted of a foundation course and three further academic terms.

Each speciality had subjects in common, such as drawing, sculpture, general and specialised art history, descriptive geometry and rendering shadows. From time to time, the students' projects were selected to be exhibited at a number of group and official exhibitions, including the 1920 Salon d'Automne in Paris, the 1921 Lisbon Exhibition and the 1923 International Fine Arts Exhibition in Paris.

The faculty comprised the director, Francesc d'A. Galí; the secretary and ceramics teacher, Josep Llorens Artigas; the sculpture teacher, Pau Gargallo; the ceramics teachers, Josep Aragay and Josep Ugarte; the ceramics and glass teachers, Antoni Serra and Francesc Quer; the architecture and woodwork teachers, Ramon Reventós and Joan Bergós; the engineering teachers, Feliu Elias and Antoni Torroja; the garden-

ing teachers, Ramon Oliveras and Josep Galí; the art history teacher, Joaquim Folch i Torras; and the drawing teacher, Antoni Gelabert.

With teachers of such high calibre, it comes as no surprise that our artists' and artisans' participation at the 1925 International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts in Paris – despite the fact that they had to improvise – gave Catalonia extraordinary international prestige and recognition, and was an unprecedented success. FAD was the worthy

recipient of the grand prize for the organisation and decoration of the ensemble. The individual exhibitors won three grand prizes, three diplomas of honour, twenty-one gold medals, seventeen silver medals, eight bronze medals, one honourable mention and a grand prize awarded to Lluís Masriera for his models of the stage sets created for his theatre troupe, the Companyia Belluguet. They were displayed in the FAD section. Xavier Nogués and Ricard Crespo won a gold medal each for their wonderful fired enamelled glassware.



Applied Arts

This chapter brings together a number of pieces and a series of projects as well as other works whose whereabouts remain unknown. Most were included in the projects Nogués produced for the exhibitions organised by the Foment de les Arts Decoratives (FAD) from 1923 until 1929, the International Furniture and Interior Design Exhibition, held at the end of 1923, and, in particular, the 1925 International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts in Paris and the 1929 Barcelona International Exhibition.

The International Furniture and Interior Design Exhibition was divided into three large sections: the furniture industry, interior design and an overview. The idea was to create a harmonious ensemble that would feature all the objects and accessories that complemented the decoration of the rooms and furniture.

In 1922, the French government issued the call for entries for the International Exhibition in Paris that was held in 1925. The Catalan representatives of the decorative arts made a great contribution due to the intervention of FAD, and its president Santiago Marco in particular, and the quality of the artists, who won many of the prizes, including Nogués and Crespo who were recognised for their fired enamelled glassware.

FAD was a successful participant in the 1929 Barcelona International Exhibition with a group show of the highest quality. According to the press of the day, architecturally speaking the building hosting the exhibition didn't live up to the most advanced aesthetic ideas of the time, and had no outstanding features, compared with the pavilions of other countries like Germany. Nevertheless, the works exhibited by the group of artists created the most complete display of modern art, both in terms of its arrangement and perfection.

Nogués took part in these exhibitions, alongside Llongueras and Crespo. He devised all kinds of projects, some of which never saw the light, and others whose

Set of cutlery designed by Xavier Nogués and made by Jaume Mercadè



whereabouts are unknown. He designed a set of silver cutlery for the 1923 International Furniture Exhibition, which was made by Jaume Mercadé and currently belongs to a private collection in Barcelona. He also produced sketches for a cutlery project featuring the figures of a boy and a girl, drawn in lead pencil on Canson and tracing paper. They were donated to the Department of Drawings and Prints of the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (MNAC) in 1970 as part of the Isabel Escalada bequest.

There was also a series of eight drawings, six of them on tracing paper. They feature compositions of figures and musical instruments intended to decorate a piano. The project didn't come to fruition.

We also know that Nogués designed pieces of furniture but we haven't been able to locate them. Isabel told us about a table and a sketch he made for its marquetry inlay. The whereabouts of a water-colour sketch for the upholstery of a three-piece suite are also unknown. It was to be made using the petit point technique and featured the themes of the four seasons. We haven't been able to locate the three-piece suite either.

In addition to the fired enamelled glassware, which we will describe later, in the field of the applied arts Nogués also produced a fan painted in gouache on Japan paper on the theme of love. It was transferred to the Museus Municipals d'Art de Barcelona in 1969 as part of Isabel Escalada's bequest, together with other works.

According to Francesc Pujols, Plandiura commissioned a sculpture from Nogués but the project was never realised. However, throughout his life he designed a number of sculptures that were carved by Josep Granyer. These included the drunken man which was used as a banister finial in the basement café El Celler, at the Galeries Laietanes in 1915, and the bronze figures of a hunter, a bear and a lioness made in 1932. Between 1933 and 1935, or

- *La dama del ventall* (The Lady with the Fan).
L'home del paraigua (The Man with the Umbrella).
Nogués-Josep Granyer, 1937.



*Banister finial in El Celler at the
Galerias Laietana.*



Caçador (Hunter).
Bronze figure carved
by J. Granyer from a drawing
by Nogués, c. 1935.

thereabouts, Nogués drew two amusing caricatures, one of a young lady with a fan and another of a gentleman wearing a top hat and leaning on an umbrella. They were made for a series of figurines he intended to produce commercially. Granyer carved the figurines, which were decorated in different ways and made from different materials. There was an edition in glazed ceramics (17.5 cm) and one made in polychrome porcelain (15 cm).

Around 1920, Nogués produced a small piece of enamel work to experiment with a technique he was totally unfamiliar with. We know that he made this first, somewhat unaccomplished attempt, with the jeweller Sunyer, who had worked with other artists, including Lola Anglada.

Nogués wasn't very happy with the result but his fiancée, Teresa Lostau, persuaded him to put it in a gold and silver mount he had also designed and which was made by Sunyer. The oval enamel was decorated with a wicker basket filled with flowers on a plain Prussian blue background. It was undated and unsigned and bore no inscription. Isabel kept it for many years but she dispensed with it towards the end of her life.

The jewellery Xavier Nogués designed between 1925 and 1931 consisted of a series of ivory medallions set in gold mounts with gold and silver clasps. These were one-off pieces produced especially for Isabel and were made by Jaume Mercadé. They were part of Isabel's bequest to the Museu Municipals d'Art in 1969.

That said, Nogués main contribution to the decorative arts was the extraordinary fired enamelled glassware he produced with the invaluable technical assistance of his friend Ricard Crespo.



► Gold and silver clasp designed by Nogués and made by Jaume Mercadé, c. 1925.



► *L'Amor (Love)*. Fan, gouache on Japan paper, c. 1937-1938.



Enamelled Glass

When Nogués began exploring the fired enamelled glass technique he did it with the know-how that only experience brings to every good professional. He observed and studied the essential characteristics of the pieces on which he was to make his mark. He also studied the right Arabesques that would match each form and took into account all the colours required to enrich the surface, without making it disappear. However, as we study these apparently simple and unpretentious works, we see that there was, in fact, nothing simple or insignificant about them.

Nogués was as respectful in his approach to enamelled glass techniques as he was to the other processes he used in the rest of his works. Nogués and Crespo's glassware is so special because of its simplicity and the fact that they treated each object as a veritable work of art.

The secret of the enamelled glassware produced by the two friends lies in the perfect marriage between art and technique. All the work Crespo produced before his association with Nogués is technically perfect but lacks that vital spark given by the spirited gracefulness of Nogués' drawings.

Josep Llorens Artigas (a gifted ceramicist and writer) talks of the "happy miracle" – a fitting expression he applies to the collaboration between Xavier Nogués and Ricard Crespo – in the creation of what he calls "the wonderful glass" (LLORENS ARTIGAS, 1924), and we couldn't agree more.

The work by the two friends, in each of their specialities, is so extraordinary because it is the product and synthesis of two perfections. Ricard Crespo's merit lies in the fact that he created vitreous enamels that faithfully adapted to the colours Nogués had chosen, and calculated the exact firing times for the pieces. A joint effort, with no clash of egos, that was a model example of what team work should be in order to achieve authentic and beautiful objects of low and high art.

Isard (Chamois). Central section from one of the side panels of the skylight at the Seix family house, 1927-1928.



Nogués and Crespo, 1923.

The fired enamelled glassware produced by Nogués may not have had much impact because it consisted of small, simple pieces, which were treated with a lack of respect because they were in constant use. The fact that the glasses painted by Nogués were everyday items that were easily broken meant that his skill as a glass enameller – which was praised and recognised by everyone in its day – faded into the background over the years, particularly due to the simplicity and fragility of the material used.

That said, the importance of this little-known side of Nogués' work was confirmed by his masterpiece: the vast skylight at the Seix family house in Pallejà, which is sadly destined to disappear if the local authorities don't intervene. This work is one of Nogués' essential large-scale works, due to its size, its intended purpose and artistic value.

We can't talk about the enamelled glassware without mentioning how it came about. Santiago Segura commissioned Crespo to produce his first enamelled glass with drawings by Nogués for the glasses used in El Celler at the Galeries Laietanes. Crespo had been pursuing Nogués for some time to persuade him to work



with him. There is no doubt that without the insistence and input of Segura, a man of brilliant ideas, we wouldn't have been able to enjoy this wonderful glassware today.

The first enamelled glasses were decorated with Nogués' drawings for the wine list at El Celler. He didn't make a direct contribution to these pieces and that is why Crespo left them all unsigned. When they were remade for different commissions he began to number them with Nogués' approval and to keep a record of the objects.

There is a vast difference between the early enamelled glasses and the ones made in collaboration with Nogués. The ones made expressly for El Celler are made of rather thick standard glass. The figures are outlined in black grisaille that gives a solidity to the drawing and makes the characters less charming and dynamic.

These early pieces, most of them unsigned, also use a range of colours that is completely different to Nogués' trademark delicate shades and the later fired enamelled glassware.



▶ *L'aplec de Sant Medir*
(The Gathering of Sant Medir). Fruit bowl. One-off piece, 1926.

La gallina cega
(Blind Man's Buff). Vase, 1924.

L'amistat (Friendship).
Bomboniere, 1924.

The drawings from the wine list for El Cellar provided subject matter for a long period time. Crespo even used them to decorate the lampshade in his dining room, which was made from eight rectangular pieces of opaline glass.

This, coupled with the fact that Crespo exhibited three pieces of glass – two glasses from El Cellar and a vase – at the 1923 International Furniture and Interior Design Exhibition organised by the Foment de les Arts Decoratives, was decisive for Nogués.

Nogués first glassware was so successful that he decided to carry out new projects spurred on by his friends and admirers. Santiago Segura had already died when Nogués drew his first caricatures of drunks.

It is clear that Segura had a powerful, yet benign influence on Nogués. He was certainly the person who encouraged him to investigate new paths that led him to create important works. We only have to look at his illustrations for REVISTA NOVA, which, under the general title of LA CATALUNYA PINTORESCA, brought Nogués public recognition. The murals in El Cellar, the ones in the Plandiura drawing room and the mayor of Barcelona's office, along with the tiles in El Cellar, were the precursors of the decoration of Esteve Riera's cake shops and, the pinnacle of his achievements, the ceramic frieze at the Cellar Cooperatiu de Pinell de Brai and Can Culleretes. With his precise and balanced vision of art and business, Santiago Segura saw, before anyone else, Nogués' endless potential and spurred him on to new adventures. Something similar occurred with his glassware, although Segura didn't live long enough to see it.

The themes and elements Nogués used from this time to decorate the enamelled glass recurred in all his works. His highly personal use of language and the repeated symbols are now transformed by this fragile and transparent material.

Nogués and Crespo's success with their enamelled glassware and the commissions that kept coming in, meant they had to think seriously about an order or system to follow so they could continue production on a regular basis, without this affecting each other's work.

Early every Sunday morning, Xavier Nogués and Isabel would visit the Crespo's house where they would work and spend some leisure time.

Nogués would draw and paint on paper and glass, assisted by Crespo's wife, Conxa Domènech, while Crespo prepared the enamels and supervised the kiln and firings. Isabel, who was a very good cook, contributed by making lunch.



La primavera (Spring).
Mirror, 1928.



D
 Sant Jordi
 (Saint George).
 Medallion, 1924-1928.

Praise from his friends, together with the quality of the work, gradually encouraged Nogués to hold a solo exhibition. The first of his three exhibitions of enamelled glass opened at 5pm on Saturday 6th December 1924. It featured eighty-three glasses, twenty-seven of them one-off pieces. The other fifty-six comprised nine sets of six glasses each. The sets, which people bought from Nogués and Crespo and asked them to make, included wine, water, liqueur, dessert and champagne glasses and featured Nogués' trademark caricatures of drunks, female nudes and picturesque figures and swaggerers, who he nicknamed "figurots i finolis" (exaggerated figures and poseurs). As we said earlier, we can't say with certainty how many series Nogués and Crespo produced, although some of the glasses we have found are numbered but never beyond the number ten.

The critics of the day gave a favourable reception to the glasses. Although considered a minor artwork, they were highly prized by people of discerning and refined taste. Nogués' exhibition with Crespo's technical collaboration, was considered the zenith of the revival of Catalan glasswork due to the technical and artistic perfection of the work on display and the fact that it could easily compare and compete with the highest-quality pieces being produced abroad.

Rafael Benet lavished praise on the work, and described the glasses on display at the exhibition as being of impeccable quality. Writing in the magazine *LA MÀ TRENCADA* (1924) about this first exhibition at the Galeries Laietanes, Josep Llorens Artigas highlights the good taste and delicate simplicity of the materials transformed into precious matter and lists the excellent qualities, leaving the reader in no doubt about the treasures within their grasp, and to ensure such wonders could endure by making the public aware of them. He also wondered if the city, and, by extension, the whole of Catalonia would give them the welcome they deserved. He wanted the public to be lenient because he foresaw exquisite, new flowerings of the work that he hoped would overwhelm the Barcelonians' sensibilities and spirit. He describes with enthusiasm the artistic and technical concepts behind each piece of work, and finds no imperfections or details left to chance. He says: "*None of the enamels is crude or over-fired, there are no bubbles in the enamel, or trickles or dry patches. The opaque blacks achieve a soft and delicate velvety sheen of the kind that has never been seen before in Barcelona. The opacity and transparency of each of the enamels is used to highlight*



■ *Sant Jordi*
 (Saint George).
 Medallion, 1924-1928.

and reinforce their character. This lends the ensemble an overall harmony through the sagacious distribution of smooth and enamelled spaces. The perfection in the extremely faithful renditions of Nogués' drawings gives wondrous results and they lose not an ounce of their extraordinary aesthetic qualities; quite the contrary, in fact."

We can be sure that Llorens Artigas is being totally sincere and objective in his enthusiastic appraisal of their work in his article. Aside from his friendship with, and admiration for Nogués and Crespo, his judgement is completely reliable, because he is another true artist with a thorough grounding in his craft and skills. His extraordinary knowledge gives extra credence to his words in praise of his friends' pieces, which he describes as wonderful jewels.

We should also remember that the exhibition was held at a time when the revival of the crafts movement in Catalonia was being promoted and viewed as a



Preparatory drawing for a set of six decorated glasses, 1929.

L'arrossada
(The Rice Party).
Part of a set of six glasses, 1929.

Excursionistes
(Ramblers).
Part of a set of six glasses, 1929.



necessity and challenge for the progress of Catalan culture, art and industry. This ideal made a fundamental contribution to the extraordinary success of the Catalan exhibitors at the 1925 International Exhibition of Decorative Arts in Paris, where Nogués and Crespo showed their fired glazed glassware.

The second exhibition of enamelled glass opened on Saturday 13th March 1926 at the Galeries Laietanes. This time the artists presented seventy-seven pieces, twenty-seven of them one-off editions. Some had already been shown at the 1924 exhibition, such as the series entitled *La selva verge* (The Virgin Forest) and two stem glasses featuring the Three Graces. And, of course, no exhibition would have been complete without the caricatures of drunks, exaggerated figures, poseurs and female nudes that were so popular with the public.

Nogués and Crespo's final exhibition was also held at the Galeries Laietanes. It opened at 5pm on Saturday 14th April 1928. They were joined by Manuel Humbert who, like Oleguer Junyent, Feliu Elias and other artist friends, had experimented with fired enamelled glassware techniques. Although the glasswork they produced was highly commendable, it has to be said that it never attained the importance of Nogués and Crespo's collaborations. This is because it was produced in smaller quantities and was restricted to sporadic commissions that didn't reach the wider public. Nogués presented fifty-four glass pieces at the exhi-



bition. These included two opaline-glass panels, with drawings from *La Catalunya pintoresca*: *A cal sogre* (At the Father-in-Law's) and *Anar amb peus de plom* (Tread Warily). The first is currently on display at the Museu de les Arts Decoratives in Barcelona as part of Nogués' widow's bequest, and the second is in a private collection. Nogués also showed his series of commemorative glasses and four mirrors that he produced several times. Nine of the fifty-four pieces were one-off editions. Manuel Humbert presented eight one-off pieces and a collection of six champagne glasses.

The three catalogues published for the three enamelled glass exhibitions give us an insight into the works Nogués and Crespo produced and how their output evolved. First-hand accounts from the Crespo's eldest daughter, Cèlia, revealed that they made other pieces of glassware to order, such as the trophy cup for the Delmir de Caralt ski race, or the post-wedding-supper glasses for Jacint Reventós. They were also commissioned to produce glasses for Josep M. Sert, Santiago Espona, Lluís Plandiura and other collectors and private individuals. We don't know how many commissions Nogués and Crespo received and some of the surviving pieces must have been stored away or forgotten. This was the case of the skylight that we have been lucky enough to "rediscover" in the grand entrance hall of the former Coll mansion in Pallejà, currently owned by

► *A fet i amagar*
(Hide and Seek).
Part of a set of six glasses,
1929.

L'ombrel·la
(The Parasol).
Part of a set of six glasses,
1929.



Preparatory drawings for a set of six glasses, 1924-1928.

the Seix family. Although it has suffered some damage and has been neglected over the years, it remains in a good state of repair. Nevertheless, the skylight runs the risk of being lost forever if the necessary measures aren't taken. This surprisingly vast work (4.26 x 2.71 x 1.10 m) is the most important example of Nogués' fired enamelled glasswork found to date. Rafael Benet (BENET, 1949) mentions it in passing when describing Nogués' enamelled glass, but the fact that he makes no specific comments about it, or what it looks like, leads us to think that he may never have seen it.

In 1967, we were able to see the photograph of a glass panel featuring a bird hunter and his dog at the Nogués retrospective exhibition. It was very similar to the figure of the hunter on the panel, *La caça* (The Hunt) at Can Culleretes.

Following countless attempts we eventually had the satisfaction of finding this extraordinary piece, and would never have imagined it was so important.

The former Coll estate stands among woodland in Pallejà. The inventory of ancient houses and farmhouses in Pallejà in 1600, or thereabouts (they are currently semi-ruined or have been rebuilt from scratch) includes two farmhouses once owned by Miquel Coll, and two more called the Antic Coll, which is also the name of the path leading to the houses. It would appear that the house currently owned by the Seix family was one of these four buildings. Over the years, the

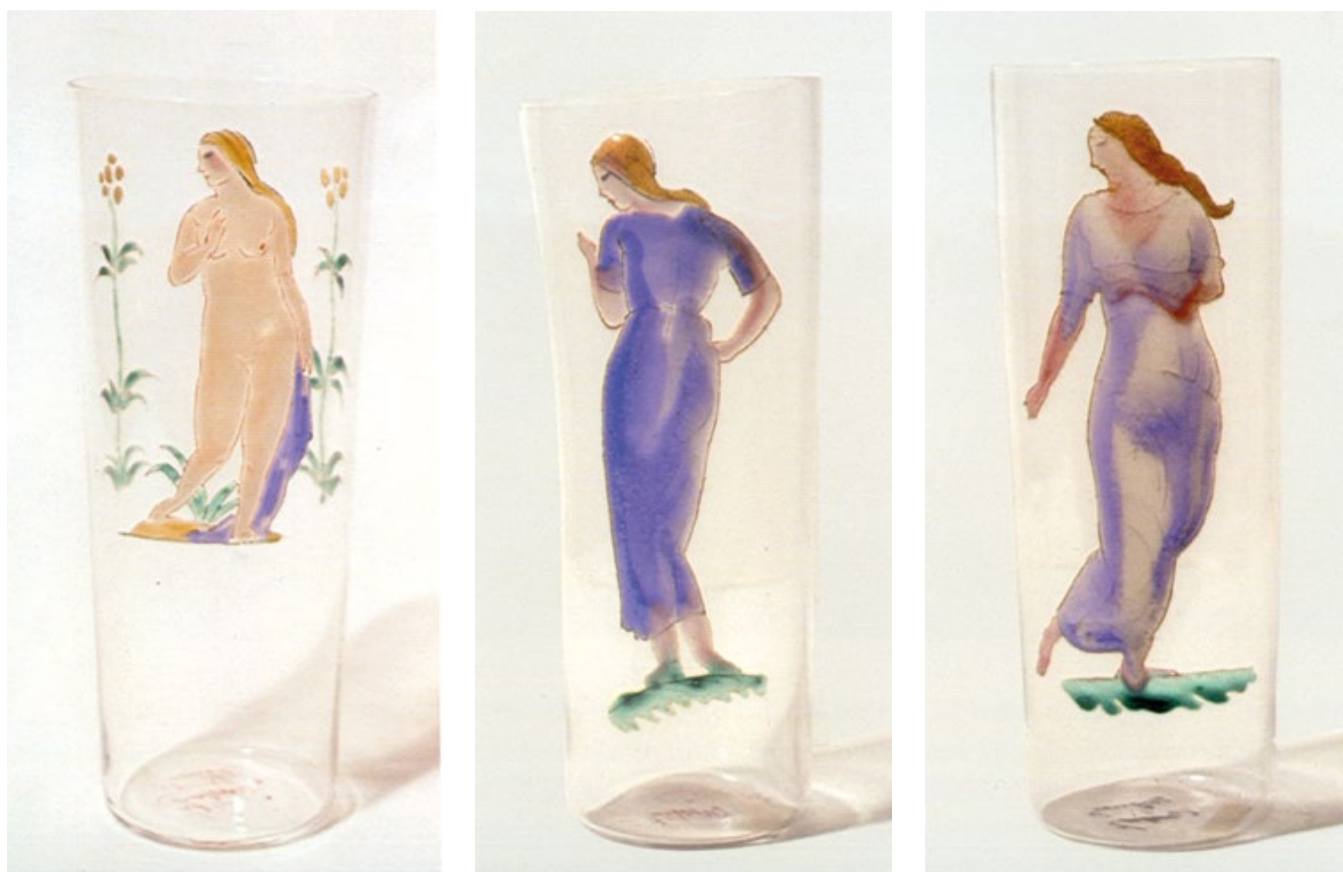


D *Noia nua amb un mantell blau*
(Naked Girl with a Blue Shawl).
Part of a set of six glasses,
1924-1928.

Noia nua pentinant-se
(Naked Girl Brushing her Hair).
Part of a set of six glasses,
1924-1928.

Noia amb un vel a la mà
(Girl Holding a Veil),
1924-1928.

Nu femení
(Female Nude).
Part of a set of six glasses,
1924-1928.



► *Nu femení* (Female Nude).
Part of a set of six glasses.
A variant of another set that
doesn't have a garland of
flowers on the sides,
1924-1928.

Series of six champagne
glasses with female figures,
1924-1928.

house has been remodelled and refurbished many times but we can still find traces of the original building, particularly in the stables and the cellar roof. In 1888, the house became the property of the current owners' grandparents who had it redesigned and rebuilt, almost from scratch, by the architect, J. Feu. He remodelled the building and created a new façade, which fully reflected the art nouveau style in vogue at the time. The skylight was fitted as part of this project and was, of course, also in the art nouveau style. We don't know why it was damaged, maybe one of the tall trees surrounding the house fell onto it. The fact is, between 1927 and 1928, the architect Antoni Fisas, who had been asked to refurbish the house and take care of its upkeep, invited Nogués and Crespo to rebuild the skylight from scratch.

The skylight is currently in a neglected state. This is a pity because, in the long run, there'll be a price to pay. The large entrance hall is painted cobalt blue and the unpolished pink granite staircase has a magnificent art-nouveau wrought-iron banister. Light enters through the vast skylight painted by Nogués and

fire-enamelled by Crespo. Nogués brought richness and colour to the noble architecture through his highly distinctive iconography. Crespo chose thick and hard-wearing etched glass for the project, as befitted the site. The sheets were mounted and secured onto an iron support or housing. Each pane was further reinforced by a square leaded latticework structure, measuring 15 x 15 cm, to ensure the maximum protection of the glass. We see the figure of the hunter and his dog in the foreground of the rectangular central panel, and an agave tree and a village in the background. The composition is framed by a floral border, which is, in turn, set inside another geometric border that also surrounds the side panels that measure 4.26 m. The side panels are decorated with chamois goats surrounded by birds in the countryside. This motif is repeated symmetrically on either side. Two of the side panels, measuring 2.71 m, feature two ships with their sails unfurled in the wind.

Now that we have discussed the fired enamelled works we will now go on to talk about the person who brought his know-how, and did his utmost to ensure Nogués' projects saw the light of day. Ricard Crespo Boquera was born in Cambrils in 1891 and was the fifth of seven brothers. His father, Lambert Crespo, died very young, when Ricard was only nine. His mother, Dolors Boquera, had to look after her children on her own and, the year his father died, Ricard went to work for Rigalt i Granell, one of Barcelona's most prestigious glass studios.

Crespo served a full apprenticeship as a glassworker and became skilled in every aspect of the craft. At the same time he studied fine arts, which he also had a gift for. At Rigalt i Granell's studios he learned how to decorate cut and engraved glass. At the Escola Superior de Bells Oficis he studied the technique of fired enamelled glass with Francesc Quer, as well as other processes. He would later use these in his interior design projects. After completing his apprenticeship and art training he went to work for the glassmakers and mirror manufacturers, Espejos Murguía S.A, where he was eventually appointed art director. Murguía's glasswork was so exquisite in taste and so perfect that the company was soon in competition with Rigalt i Granell. The latter had produced nearly all the projects designed by Catalan art nouveau, or *modernista*, artists, who used stained glass widely in their projects, particularly interiors, and Murguía took up the baton, producing the designs by *noucentista* artists who, throughout the art-deco period, produced glasswork, mirrors and light and water features.



La pesca (Fishing). Goes with a plate decorated with birds. One-off piece, 1924.



Amor (Love).
Goes with a plate decorated
with rhombuses.
One-off piece, 1924.

Amor (Love).
Back of the one-off piece
that goes with the plate
decorated with rhombuses,
1924.

Due to its well-earned prestige, Espejos Murguía, won important commissions, such as the creation of the decorative glass elements for the 1929 International Exhibition. Crespo worked with the engineer Carles Buigas on the illuminated fountain and the asparagus-shaped light columns on Passeig Maria Cristina on Montjuïc. He subsequently received many important private commissions for projects of the same kind.

In addition to his work at the glass factory, Ricard Crespo was particularly interested in fired enamelled glass. He began to make test pieces and carry out experiments with his wife, based on what he had been taught by Francesc Quer.

He initially produced a series of glasses and goblets as well as several medallions on flat glass that he later adapted to doors and windows for private commissions.

Crespo was a person of great artistic sensitivity and was aware that, although technically perfect, his glasswork was lifeless. He was smitten with Nogués' work and, following a series of conversations with Segura, the latter commissioned him



to produce a series of enamelled glasses featuring the caricatures from the El Celler wine list that Nogués had recently drawn. Crespo was so enthused by the results that he asked Nogués to make some preparatory drawings so he could produce more enamelled glassware. However, he had to wait eight years before he got his way. Despite the success achieved by the glasses made for El Celler, Nogués decided not to make drawings specifically for decorating glass until 1923. In 1922, Crespo offered his studio to Nogués and other friends, including Manuel Humbert, Josep M. Junoy and Feliu Elias, so they could experiment in situ with the fired enamelled glass technique. Nogués was inspired.

This marked the beginning of a model collaboration combining art and technique. Nogués and Crespo's glasswork was produced at Crespo's studio and always on a Sunday.

Crespo prepared the coloured enamels and supervised the kilns where the pieces were being fired. Conxa, his wife, applied the colours – which were num-

Front and back of a water glass decorated with the figures of three female dancers, 1924-1928.

El Paradís perdut
(Paradise Lost).
Vase. One-off piece, 1928.



bered – onto the glass. Nogués gave instructions and drew and painted his designs onto the glass. When the enamel had dried, Crespo fired the glassware in a muffle kiln. First he used a wood-fired kiln but he replaced it with an electric one and then an oil-fired kiln, which he had invented. However, in the end, he returned to an electric version.

The one-off pieces sold for 300 and 500 pesetas each but Nogués said they were far too expensive. He didn't have a head for business and only charged 125 pesetas for an engraving. Some of the pieces were damaged during firing so Crespo –, who had strong business acumen –, decided the price. He was responsible for the technical side of things and had to cover costs resulting from any misfired pieces. Crespo only sold glassware that was free from defects and the rest, which had imperfections either in terms of colour, or was misshapen due to over-firing, was salvaged by friends.

Crespo also enamelled glass for Manuel Humbert. However, Humbert's work in this field wasn't as prolific or as important as Xavier Nogués'.

Feliu Elias also produced drawings for enamelled glassware, which was made by his brother Francesc Elias and the rest by Crespo. Oleguer Junyent, who had designed the stained-glass windows for the Barcelona opera house's private members' club, the Cercle del Liceu, that were made by the master glazier A. Bordalba, also drew several designs for fired enamelled glass pieces, which were



► *El Paradís perdut*
(Paradise Lost).
Vase. One-off piece, 1928.

produced by Crespo. Cèlia Crespo vaguely remembered a set of glasses her father had made for the Catalan politician Francesc Cambó, but she wasn't sure if they were the Oleguer Junyent originals. Fortunately, we found two of them, featuring Junyent's designs, in the Guardans collection. They were part of the bespoke tableware produced for Cambó's yacht *Catalonia*. Junyent was a personal friend of Cambó's as well his artistic adviser and the only artist who accompanied him on his cruises.



► *Lo pa fa pança i lo vi mena la dança* (Catalan popular saying similar to Eat, Drink and Be Merry). Series of glasses based on drawings from the wine list for El Celler at the Galeries Laietanes, 1916-1918.

Tres menes hi ha de vi, fresc e fi e fort (Catalan popular saying similar to Good Wine Makes Good Cheer). Series of glasses based on drawings from the wine list for El Celler at the Galeries Laietanes, 1916-1918.

With the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, the Crespos stopped painting on glass. In an interview Crespo said that it was “for fear of breakages”, a comment that reveals his extraordinary sense of humour. Sadly, the war marked the beginning of hard times for Crespo and his family. He was worried about his young daughters who fled to France and then to Mexico and had no news of them for a long time. Espejos Murguía became a collective and Crespo was subsequently imprisoned, albeit briefly, after being reported by one of the company’s employees.

After the war, the entire workforce at Espejos Murguía demanded Crespo be reinstated as art director and he resumed his post. However, he didn’t live long afterwards and died in 1949. Crespo’s wife, Concepció Domènech i Colls, who was known to everyone as Conxa, was born in Barcelona on 12th April 1892 and died in Mexico on 27th May 1956.

Concepció Domènech met Ricard Crespo when she was skating at the ice rink El Globo and married him in 1915. They had two daughters: Cèlia and Pilar. Conxa had been a seamstress and never studied drawing or painting. However, like many girls who worked at glass-enamelling studios, she became an accomplished drawer and painter, reproducing designs with painstaking care, albeit mechanically. She also washed and prepared the pieces, painting the enamels inside the lines of the drawing, according to the colour specified in the drawing on paper. She had enamelled the glassware produced by her husband before he began working with Nogués.

Preparatory drawings for enamelled glass

As we mentioned earlier, Nogués’ first pieces of fired enamelled glassware decorated by Ricard Crespo were based on the drawings he had produced for the El Celler menu in 1915.

There were seventeen drawings in total, done in pen and Indian ink on Canson paper. They were filled in with touches of white gouache and vermilion. The Crespo family kept the drawings and the youngest daughter, Pilar, inherited them when the family assets were being shared out following Conxa’s death. Pilar lived in Mexico and, when she died in 1977, we lost all trace of the drawings.

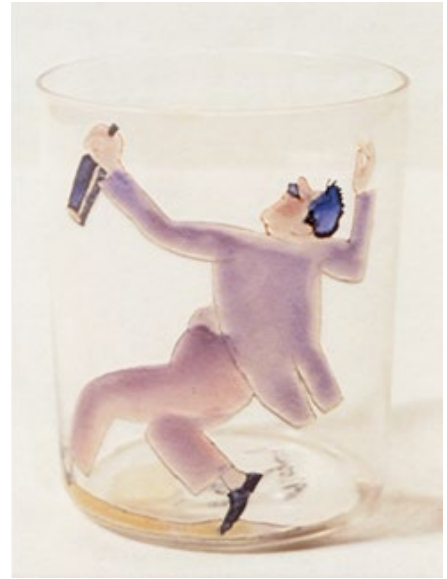


► Preparatory drawing for the glass featuring the drunken man, 1924-1928. Nogués also used this drawing for the figure of the guest, which is part of the mural at the Crespo's house.

Borratxet amb barret de copa
(Drunk in a Top Hat). Part of a set of six small glasses, 1924-1928.

Borratxet (The Drunk), 1924-1928.

Borratxet fent tentines (Staggering Drunk). Part of a set of six small glasses, 1924-1928.



► *Vinater al costat d'un pou*
(Wine Maker by a Well).
Part of a set of six glasses
on the theme "Teetotallers",
c. 1924-1928.

Part of the same set of six
glasses.

Part of a set of six glasses
on the theme of "Drunks",
1924-1928.

The largest set consists of two hundred and fifty-three preparatory drawings Nogués made for enamelled glass projects. They are currently part of the collection of the Department of Drawings and Prints at the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (MNAC). The entire series was purchased from Nogués' widow, Isabel Escalada, in June 1967, by the Museus Municipals d'Art, after they had been shown at the Xavier Nogués retrospective at the Palau de la Virreina in Barcelona, held in March and April that same year.

Most of these projects for decorating glass comprise sets of six drawings on a specific theme. Most of them were intended for glasses or goblets that were sold or given away in sets of six. Other drawings were made for single, one-off pieces.

Nogués also produced drawings for mirrors, plates, fruit bowls and medallions. We can't say with certainty how many pieces in these series were made, but the ones featuring his caricatures of drunks were perhaps repeated most frequently due to their popularity with the public. According to the Crespo's eldest daughter, Cèlia, there were other drawings that were never used. There are two simple reasons why there is such a lack of precision when it comes to cataloguing the works: firstly, neither Nogués (strangely, because he was very thorough in all his affairs) nor Crespo kept a strict record of the series they made; secondly, the material was so delicate that it was easily destroyed by a bad firing or resulted in many of the pieces being broken through use over the years.

The Department of Drawings and Prints at the MNAC has another twenty-two drawings of the same characteristics. These were part of a lot the Fundació Xavier Nogués purchased from Cèlia Crespo de Sanz on 17th October 1980.

We have also located five further drawings in a private collection. Four of them, featuring four female figures symbolising the four seasons, were used as decorations for a small jug, and the fifth depicted a circus scene.

Nogués' drawings encompass a wide variety of themes ranging from his caricatures of drunks – short chubby or lanky men, with long moustaches, staggering along, often wearing striped or checked trousers and jackets – to his delicate naked or clothed female figures. He also drew female dancers or couples dancing, musicians, circus scenes and all kinds of compositions featuring figures and landscapes, fishermen, hunters, birds, flowers, friezes, ships and other motifs for commemorative pieces.

It is highly likely that these were Nogués' only preparatory drawings for enamelled glass. We have reached this conclusion because Nogués' widow and Conxa Crespo – who took her collection with her when she emigrated to Mexico – were, to the best of our knowledge, the only people to have kept the drawings.

The preparatory drawings were cut into semi-circles and had handwritten notes in lead pencil specifying the numbers and letters for each colour of the enamels to be used. They were placed inside the glasses so the drawing could be traced onto the surface. The drawings are truly delightful and of excellent quality



► *Parella de borratxets* (Drunken Couple). Part of a set of fortified-wine glasses, 1924-1928.



► *Escenes de circ*
(Circus Scenes).
This glass goes with a plate
decorated with the same
border. One-off piece,
1924-1928.

with the corresponding colour of the enamel. Nogués always used clean, delicate colours, with a predominance of greyish blues, greens and mauves with the occasional splash of bright yellow and vermilion that lend the drawings a particularly joyous and festive feel.

The preparatory drawings also feature the delicate figures of girls full of distinction and femininity that Nogués had produced over the years. They are the same ones that appear in his engravings and the ones that gaze down at us from the murals in the Plandiura drawing room and the tiled panels at Can Culleretes. The little men and dandies on the fired enamelled glassware remind us of Nogués'

and we can only assume that the main reason they were never put on sale was because there are marks on them and areas that must have got wet.

The two hundred and eighty drawings found to date were done in lead pencil and watercolour between 1923 and 1930. Most of them are on Canson paper except for a few which were done on tracing paper. As we said earlier, most of the drawings were cut into semi-circles so the drawing would fit inside the glass. The paper was secured by a conical block of wood or piece of cardboard, or a bag of sand, that held the paper in place while the drawing was being traced. The body was drawn in grey grisaille and the hands and faces in reddish-brown grisaille. Once the grisaille had dried the outline was filled in



much-loved characters that appeared in magazines and books. The compositions in each of the vignettes for his scenes from the gathering of Sant Medir, one of his earliest works, are recreated in the depictions of gatherings around fountains that decorate and brighten up the fragile glasses, goblets, fruit bowls and mirrors.

Just like his finest works, the compositions on these seemingly simple, fired enamelled glass pieces are well constructed. The shades of colour are just right and delicately applied and the lines are pure. Nothing is lacking and nothing is in excess. These are the minor – yet splendid and wise – works of an artist who has come to fully master his art and who can adapt to any object or medium.

► *Escenes de circ*
(Circus Scenes).
One-off piece, c. 1928.



► *A cal sogre* (At the Father-in-Law's). Variant of a drawing with the same title in *La Catalunya pintoresca*. Fired enamelled opaline glass. One-off piece, 1928.



► *Anar amb peus de plom* (Tread Warily). Variant of a drawing with the same title in *La Catalunya pintoresca*. Fired enamelled opaline glass. One-off piece, 1928.



▸ Section of one of the skylight panels at the Seix family house, 1927-1928.



► Skylight in the hall of the Seix family house, 1927-1928.

OVERLEAF

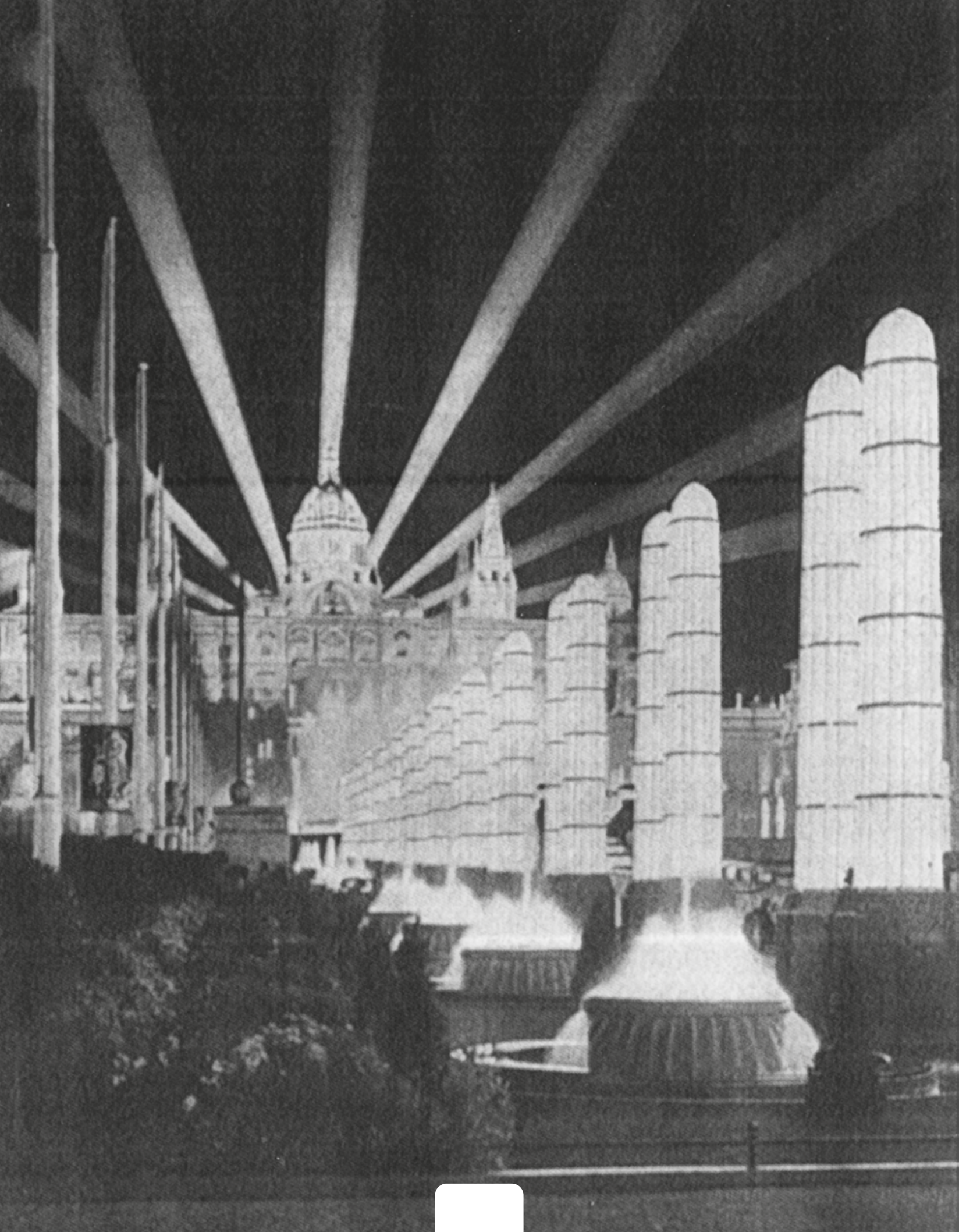
► Skylight in the Seix family house. 1927-1928.





The Poble Espanyol





The Poble Espanyol on Montjuïc

ORIOl BOHIGAS

We don't know exactly who had the idea of building the Poble Espanyol for the 1929 Barcelona International Exhibition. It is sure to have come about as an imitation of similar attractions built for a number of world fairs of the time, which usually showcased the crafts and architectural traditions of the country where they were being held so that tourists could enjoy them and buy some of the products. In Barcelona, instead of entrusting an advertiser or set designer with the task, someone thought of giving the responsibility to an enlightened, culturally committed team, made up of the architects Ramon Reventós and Francesc Folguera, the painter Xavier Nogués, and the critic and promoter of the arts, Miguel Utrillo, who was probably one of the prime movers behind the idea: three radical members of the *noucentista* movement and an activist who was still influenced by the roots of art nouveau, and its Catalan offshoot,

modernisme. As a result of the team's professional expertise, the Poble Espanyol took on another cultural dimension and wasn't just a shop window; it was also the result of a comprehensive study of the quality of the spaces in our towns and cities and the features of traditional vernacular architecture.

The four members of the team embarked on serious research into the drawings and illustrations held in archives and went on field trips to gather information that would enable them to build accurate replicas: drawings of the floor layouts and elevations, perspectives, photographs of details, measurements and samples of materials and textures. The stylistically eclectic interpretations and combinations were intended to create a new village, with streets and squares that were recognisable urban units. The tiny Vall-de-roures town hall was enlarged and became the grand building that is the focal point of the main square, the Plaça Major. The team added a flight of stairs from a convent in Oriola, and the coffered ceiling, in the great hall, was from the high-court building in Valencia. The façades of the buildings around the square reproduce fragments of buildings from Sangüesa, Burgo de

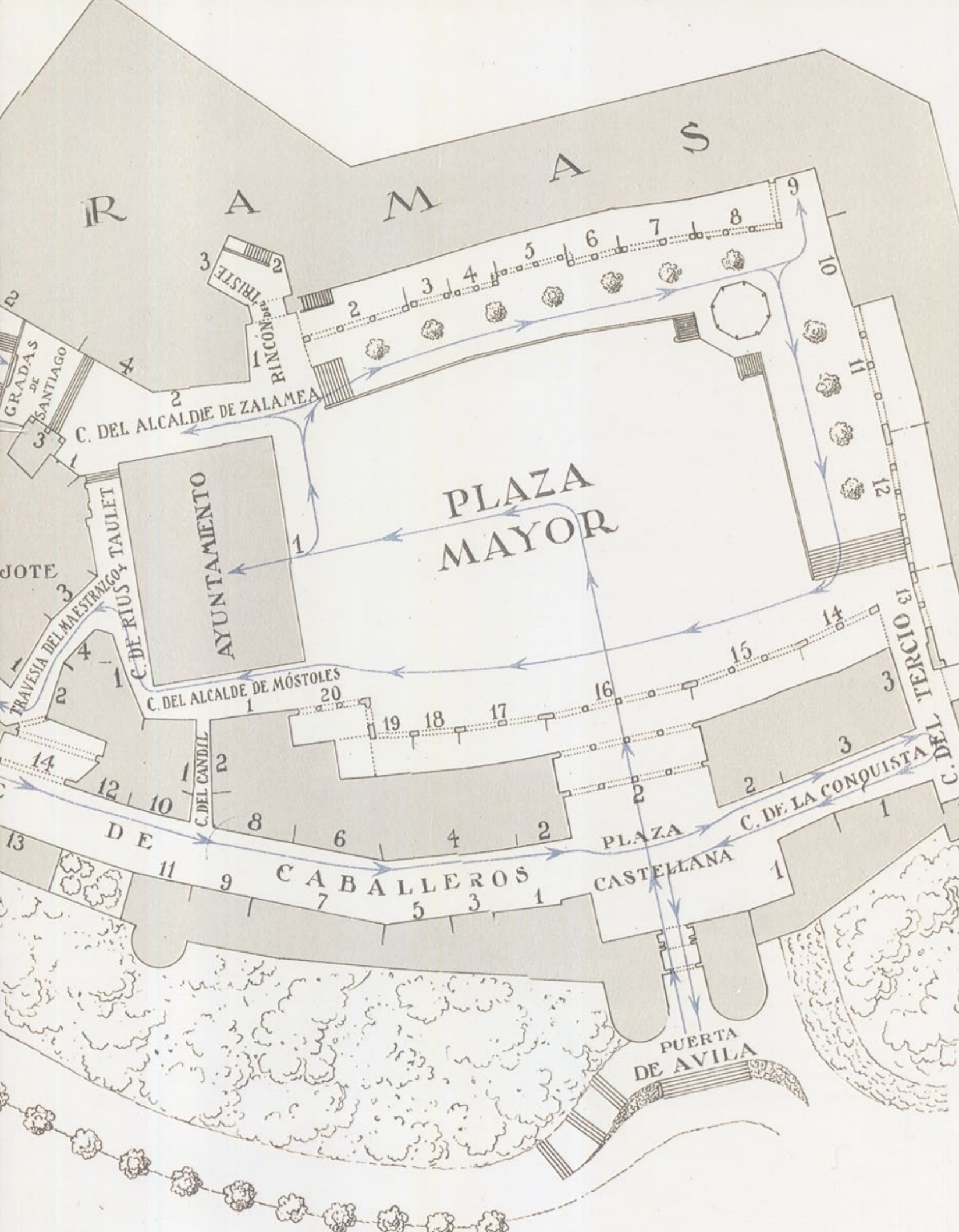
Lighting on Avinguda de Maria Cristina and the Palau Nacional on Montjuïc during the 1929 Barcelona International Exhibition.

Osma, Aranda de Duero, Santillana del Mar, Navalcarnero and Montblanc. At the top of the replica of the Santiago de Compostela steps is an interpretation of the Carmelite church in Alcañiz. The Romanesque monastery is based on the floor plan of the church of Sant Sebastià de Vallmajor, and features the façade of the church of Santa Maria de Porqueres and the cloisters in the monastery of Sant Benet de Bages.

All these materials, and their interpretation as temporary structures, like fragile film sets, could well have become a ridiculous cacophony, an over-the-top display of bad taste for mass tourism. But this wasn't the case: the public and many respected critics of the day greeted the Poble Espanyol with enthusiasm and, instead of it being demolished after the exhibition had closed, it has survived to the present day quite effectively and even formed the basis of certain cultural debates. The main reason for this is that the resulting image isn't a mere anecdote from an architectural catalogue, but a showcase for a complex urban structure found in most of our towns that still affirms the validity of a readable system of streets, squares, gardens, houses and monuments, like a manifesto in favour of the expressive quality and social value of public space. In the 1960s, the Poble Espanyol was used, indirectly, and in almost metaphorical terms, as the starting point for a critique of the town planning imposed by the rationalist avant-gardes, where road systems and architectural blocks had abandoned their traditional role of defining and prioritising public space, to adapt themselves to an anti-urban functional classification.

At the Poble Espanyol, the successful design of public space can be interpreted as a more deliberate and committed urban manifesto than the original idea of a theatrical setting at an exhibition.

Nevertheless, there is another value that explains the interest aroused by the Poble Espanyol: the pictorial quality of the ensemble; the successful choice of landmarks and how they are put together, and finely tuned elegant views. And I am sure that the hand of Xavier Nogués can be seen in these aspects due to his extraordinary artistic sensibilities and knowledge of urban landscapes. It is impossible to know exactly which role each member of the group of experts played in the project. This is because, apparently, they all worked together, extemporaneously, led by the same documentation process and occasional discoveries. It is more than likely that the two architects called the shots when it came to drawing up the plans for the buildings and the general layout of the Poble Espanyol and that Nogués and Utrillo, in addition to dealing with the ornamental work, brought with them a concern for the landscape or, put another way, the aesthetic and, more specifically, the pictorial values of the ensemble. This leads us to discuss a recurring theme in the current polemic on architecture and town planning: the social value of aesthetics in the urban layout and the appropriate intervention of artists, not just involving bringing their work to the project, but in its overall concept, from the very beginning. This is the step that will lead us from the much argued about "inclusion of the arts" to "the city as a work of art".



Itinerario. En principio se presentará en las
poblaciones cerradas por un cuadrado

ESTELLA

Barcelona.

Blanes.

Girona. Girona. Baisas. Porquera. Berastin Olot

San Juan Abadesas, Camporodol, San Juan, Ripoll

Vida, Sta. Eugenia, Baradell, Rupit

Moya, Batsereny, Lluvia, Cerdona, Sobrona

Barceloneta

Antona de Segre. Bataguer, Merida, Guarnite, Benabarre,

Esam, El Grado, Barkant, Alquezar, Lascellas,

Muerta, Jaca, Tangier.

Pamplona, Roncesvalles, Pamplona.

Estella, Vitoria, Bilbao, Amorsheta, Bilbao

Pantales, Donostia, Altamira, Pantaleona.

Oviedo, Luarca, Castropol, Vegades, Ribades, Barreiros,

Mondouedo, Villalba, Baamonde, La Comuna

Pantaleo de Compostela, Padron, Villagarcía, Cambados,

Pontevedra, Ponte Caldelas, Mondariz, Ribadavia, Ponferrada.

Astorga, Valencia, Punta de la Estrella (bif), Lamora.

Lamora, Goro, Gordizillas, Salamanca

Salamanca, Alba de Tormes, Pernaranda, Avila.

Avila, Villacastin, Segovia, Madrid.

Toledo, Salamanca, Navalmoral, Trujillo.

Caerres, Merida, Almirez, Galana, Madrid.

Madrid, Alcala, Guadalupe, Alcala del Pinar, Sigüenza.

Sigüenza, Alcala, Medinaceli, Calatayud, Daroca.

Bermej, Valencia, Sagunto, Villanueva, Alcala de Chisques

Vinaroz, Cas, Valencia, Morella, Valderrivas.

Alcaniz, Calaceite, Gandera, Reus, Sitges.

Barcelona

Total: 33 etapas (presentando 32)



Xavier Nogués and the Poble Espanyol

■ SANDRA MOLINER

(Before) the Poble Espanyol

I am not exactly sure when the friendship between Xavier Nogués and Ramon Reventós began, but I know it lasted for the rest of their lives. The relationship between the cartoonist, caricaturist, engraver, ceramicist, interior decorator and painter, and the architect was certainly forged during the planning and building of the Poble Espanyol on Montjuïc for the 1929 Barcelona International Exhibition.

In 1926 they were appointed by Lluís Plandiura (the royal commissioner for the Universal Exhibition) to become part of the team of four creators of the forthcoming Poble Espanyol, together with the multi-faceted Miquel Utrillo i Morlius (engineer, promotor of the arts, painter and art critic) and the architect Francesc Folguera. None of the appointments was a chance occurrence. In one way or another, the individuals were all part of the artistic and professional milieu that was transforming Mount Montjuïc.

Until that time, Utrillo was the representative for a building firm that was working on the Miramar development, also on Montjuïc. The architects Francesc Folguera and Ramon Reventós had been friends since their student days. They met up later in a professional capacity when they were working on the building projects on Montjuïc. While he was overseeing one of these projects, Ramon Reventós met Miquel Utrillo who was working as a representative of the building firm in charge of construction work. Miquel Utrillo and Xavier Nogués had a close friendship with Lluís Plandiura. The four of them made up a team that each of them fitted into perfectly, like the pieces of a jigsaw, to develop a project that kept on growing.

(During) the Poble Espanyol

We all know the Poble Espanyol was built for the 1929 Barcelona International Exhibition. Perhaps less well known is the fact that the team of designers and architects went on a series of field trips around Spain between 1927 and 1928, taking hundreds of photographs and making notes and drawings in notebooks.

■ Utrillo's itinerary.

These notebooks, together with the postal correspondence sent during the trips, were rediscovered in 2009. This was the first time they had been seen for more than eighty years.

The team made three long field trips between 1927 and 1928, supplemented by shorter ones between April and October 1928 to check measurements and take photos of particular features of the buildings. The first trip, lasting thirty-one days, was more widely documented: it took place from 2nd September to 2nd October 1927, during which time the team visited Catalonia, Aragon, Navarre, the Basque Country, Cantabria, Asturias, Galicia, Castile and Leon, Madrid, Castile-La Mancha, Extremadura and Valencia. They embarked on the second trip shortly afterwards. It lasted twelve days, from 9th to 20th November 1927, and took in parts of Catalonia and Aragon.

The third trip, this time to Andalusia, took place in May 1928, when building work on the Poble Espanyol was already under way. This was the first time the team had visited the region and was prompted by a visit by King Alfonso XIII to Barcelona on 29th August 1928. When he enquired how building work on the exhibition site, and the Poble Espanyol in particular, was progressing, he asked which buildings from Andalusia were going to be included. When he learnt that there were none (this was in order to avoid any competition with the Ibero-American Exhibition in Seville being held that same year) he told the organisers that he wanted the region to be featured. Andalusia, together with Murcia and the Balearic Islands, were the only regions the team hadn't yet visited for the project.

We can be certain that the team forged a firm friendship on their trips around Spain. The tone and content of the postal correspondence that has come to light confirms this. Their experiences during these trips meant that it couldn't be any other way. Their expeditions were filled with moments they would remember for the rest of their lives, including the inclement weather and the fact that the Hispano Suiza they were travelling in kept breaking down. In other words, although the trips were key events in their lives that enabled them to develop the project for the Poble Espanyol so successfully, they weren't exactly pleasurable, comfortable and peaceful. We should remember that, at the time, the Spanish road network in no way resembled the one we have today and the accommodation available was by no means luxurious. The team had to make do with what was available and often some of the places they stayed in didn't meet the minimum standards of hygiene and comfort.

Nevertheless, before each trip, Miquel Utrillo would draw up an exhaustive plan tracing the routes through the towns and villages that were part of their schedule and where they could spend the night. It was by no means a random adventure, but rather a precisely drawn up working plan which made the work they were going to do more effective.

The team proved to have qualities and skills that complemented one another, both in terms of their professional contributions from their fields of expertise, as well as on the personal side, with regard to their character and ways of doing things. This meant that, during the trips, the tasks were shared out according to the skills of each team member.



► Sharing out the work in a village.

Miquel Utrillo was the secretary and PR during the trips. He was the perfect fit in view of his previous travel experience and was well acquainted with the roads and the people. Meanwhile, Nogués and Reventós devoted themselves to immortalising in drawings the things they saw along the way. Folguera was the main photographer of the group, although he shared the task with Reventós.

Xavier Nogués, pencil in hand, drew everything he saw, particularly the outlines of the towns and villages the team drove through. He introduced the use of shadow and made notes of the colours based on the colour chart he had drawn up.

It is important to stop to consider the theme of colour as it was always one of Nogués' obsessions. He always used colour charts and pentagrams he had created himself. If the colour didn't turn out as he had wished in his works, he remixed the colour.

It is easy to conclude, therefore, that these colour palettes were the same ones Nogués used during his trips through Spain. They were certainly extremely useful as, at the time, photographs were in black and white and this meant it was difficult to record this information. This explains why there are notes about colour in Nogués' and Reventós' notebooks, referring to the number in their corresponding colour range. From

the very outset, Nogués ruled out the use of watercolours (as initially envisaged), as the first test he made revealed that the technique was too slow for the speed they were expected to work at.

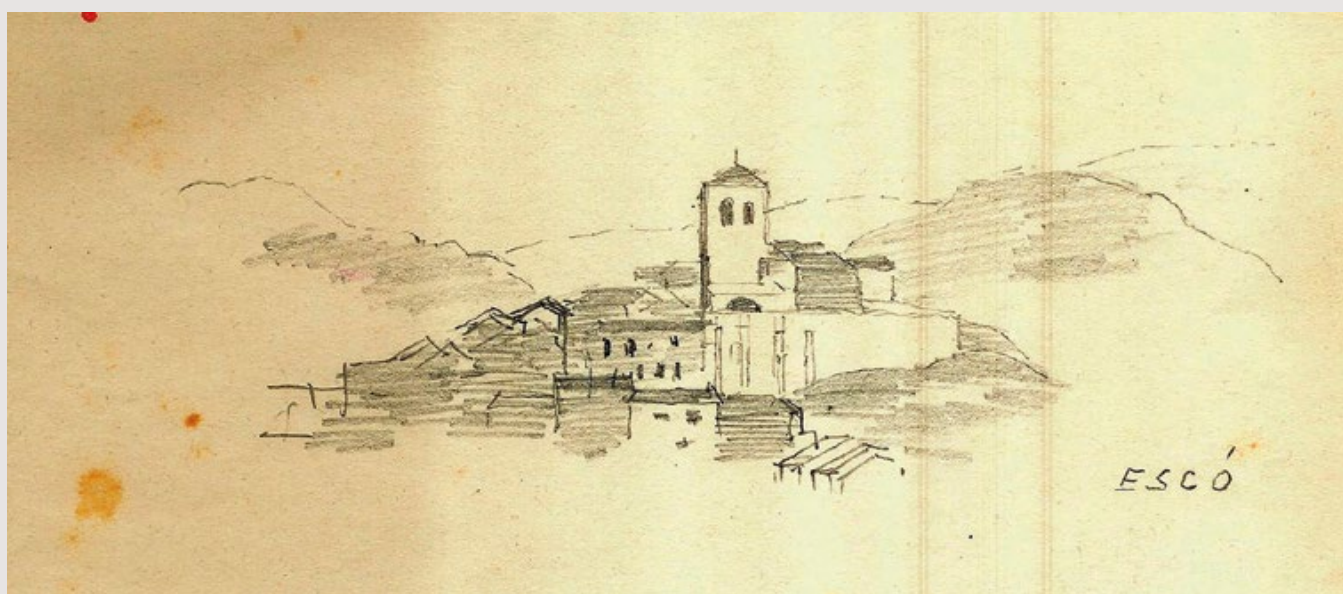
In a letter Miquel Utrillo sent to Plandiura from Zamora on 21st September 1927, he talks about the use of Nogués' colour chart to identify the range of colours in the buildings being photographed. In order to decide on the exact shade, they voted on the one they thought was closest to the colour of the buildings and landmarks. Here is the handwritten text of the letter:

La Fira
 Fol del Ajuntament
 21 + 22 + 32
~~de taxes~~ les parts taxes
 Fira al
 40 mes
 gris i brut
 Aquest també es
 el to general de la
 població a les parts
 soltes
 A les parts urba-
 nes donem el
 40 ~~com es deu~~
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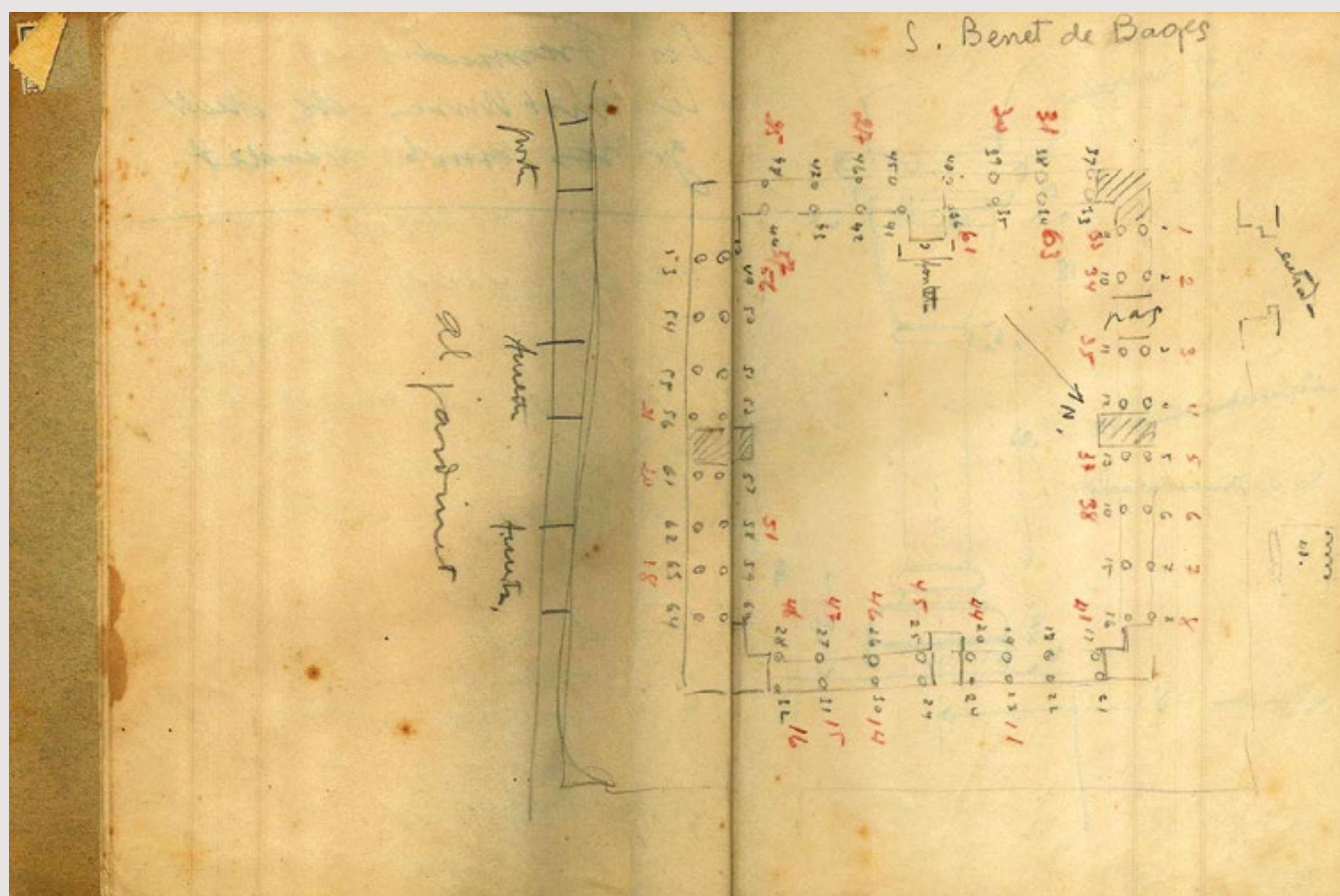
■ Note about colour. Xavier Nogués' handwriting.

"I am sure the work will be extremely productive or, in other words, will contribute greatly to making the Poble Espanyol a model, particularly if we avoid those matters that are too overtly architectural. Nogués (in his painstaking fashion) has created colour palettes and we vote on the shade that most closely resembles the landmark. Thus the Segovia aqueduct has no hints of chocolate brown or café au lait. It is number n3 20, which is a granite grey (igneous rock). We measure the importance of what we have seen on a scale of 0 to 10 and, indeed, we have seen quite a few 10s..."

As we mentioned earlier, Nogués and Reventós were entrusted with the task of making drawings in the notebooks. However, as we will see below, they had very different styles. At this point, I will digress briefly to mention the fact that we knew the notebooks existed but nobody had ever seen them. While I was doing my research into the Poble Espanyol, I moved heaven and earth to find them thinking that they may turn up in Xavier Nogués' personal archive, as I hadn't found them elsewhere. I then spoke to Cecilia Vidal, who confirmed that the notebooks hadn't survived and, and if they had and had been in Nogués' possession, it was highly likely that they had been burned during the Spanish Civil War. When I was about to give them up as lost, in 2009, during an interview with Ramón Reventós' son at his office (which had also been his father's) they turned up in the drawer of the desk Reventós had used at the end of his life among other documents about the Poble Espanyol. I then realised I had come across material that was invaluable to my research.



► Drawing by Xavier Nogués made during the trip.

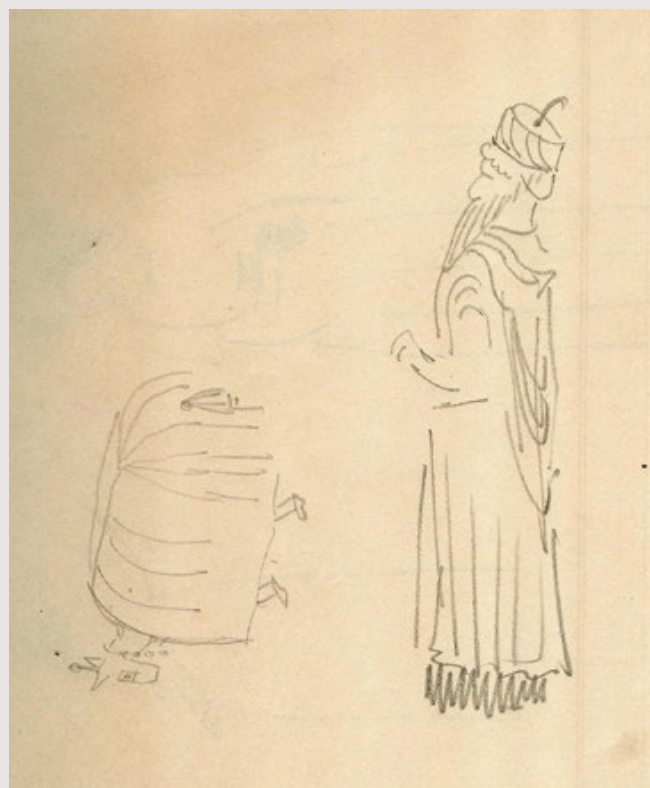


► Drawing by Ramón Reventós made during the trip.

There are five notebooks in all and, after studying them in detail, I detected two distinct types of handwriting and lettering. Years later, during an interview with two of the people who had been closest to the artists – Cecília Vidal and Ramón Reventós' son – they confirmed that they matched the lettering and drawing style of Nogués and Reventós. This seems to confirm the hypothesis that Nogués and Reventós passed the notebook to one another as suited them best, according to their availability, as the trips were made at lightning speed. Both were accomplished graphic artists and perfectly in tune with each other.

In the notebooks, we can see Nogués' easily recognisable trademark lettering, with its broad, casual strokes. Nogués' drawings also reveal his characteristic traits through the use of shadows. They are more in the landscape style. Reventós' drawing style is more "architectural". Many of his drawings are ground plan sketches, elevations and cross-sections of buildings and details. He included measurements, took notes about the arrangement of the blocks of stone or other materials, as well as details of the capitals.

It is also extremely interesting to see the pages of these notebooks filled with made-up characters wearing clothing that was too over the top to have been worn by the actual people the group may have encountered on the highways and byways. At the time, Xavier Nogués had been commissioned to design the costumes and sets for the operetta *El giravolt de maig* (The May Somersault), which premiered at the Palau de la Música Catalana in November 1928. This leads us to think that these may have been preliminary



► Preliminary sketches by Nogués for his costume designs.

sketches that Nogués was making based on the ideas that came into his head during the trip.

A day out

The postcards and letters the four members of the team sent to their families, friends and, in the main, to Plandiura, who was in charge of the group and supervising the work, have enabled us to reconstruct each of the trips and give us a clear idea of how each of the field trips was organised.

They got up early every day. Nogués, the earliest riser, woke at 5am and the rest of the team joined him around 6am and they all had breakfast at 9am.

The work was very well planned. At the towns and villages they only stopped in briefly, Nogués made sketches of the outlines of the buildings while Folguera and Reventós, their cameras at the ready, chose the correct bend in the road to take the photograph from, while Utrillo took notes about the picturesque aspects and tourist attractions.

They took a different approach to the towns and villages they considered important. In these cases, they split into two teams with one architect and painter in each. Armed with a camera and notebook, they would head off to take photographs and make notes about all the points of interest. An hour later, they would meet up in the main square to exchange impressions about what they had seen.

Once they considered that they had explored the town or village thoroughly, the four members of the group visited it again in the order suggested by Utrillo. This is because he knew the canons and official representatives who may have arranged the visit for him.

At the end of the tour, having gathered all the material, the group classified it according to its potential suitability for inclusion in the Poble Espanyol. This is why they established a scale of 0 to 10 to evaluate each of their discoveries. If they gave it the top score in a unanimous vote it became an official landmark at the Poble Espanyol.

During the day, in addition to the field trips, there was a large amount of work to get through: the group had to organise papers and the information gathered, send postcards, contact acquaintances of Utrillo's, phone hotels, find a place for breakfast, and many other things besides. There wasn't a moment's respite, to such an extent that they ended up sleeping in the car, where there was little room for the four of them and their belongings.

The group sent postcards to their friends and family almost on a daily basis. They would write them while they were travelling, sometimes when the car was moving. In the case of the postcards sent to Plandiura, they were often signed by all four members of the team. As far as lunch was concerned, they ate on the hoof during the journey.

When the group reached the hotel where they were going to spend the night, they unloaded all the equip-



Postcard dated 20th September 1927, signed by all four and sent to Plandiura from Medina del Campo (Valladolid). The first part was written by Xavier Nogués and the second by Miquel Utrillo.

ment, including a typewriter, and took a well-earned break. They also used their time to send telegrams and write or type letters providing more detailed information for the exhibition organisers, particularly Plandiura, to keep them abreast of how their research was progressing and the discoveries they were making.

At the end of the day, they went for dinner and retired to bed as early as possible to replenish their energy. In this case, as described in a letter sent to Plandiura on 11th September 1927, Nogués was the first. He would go to bed at 10am, albeit reluctantly.

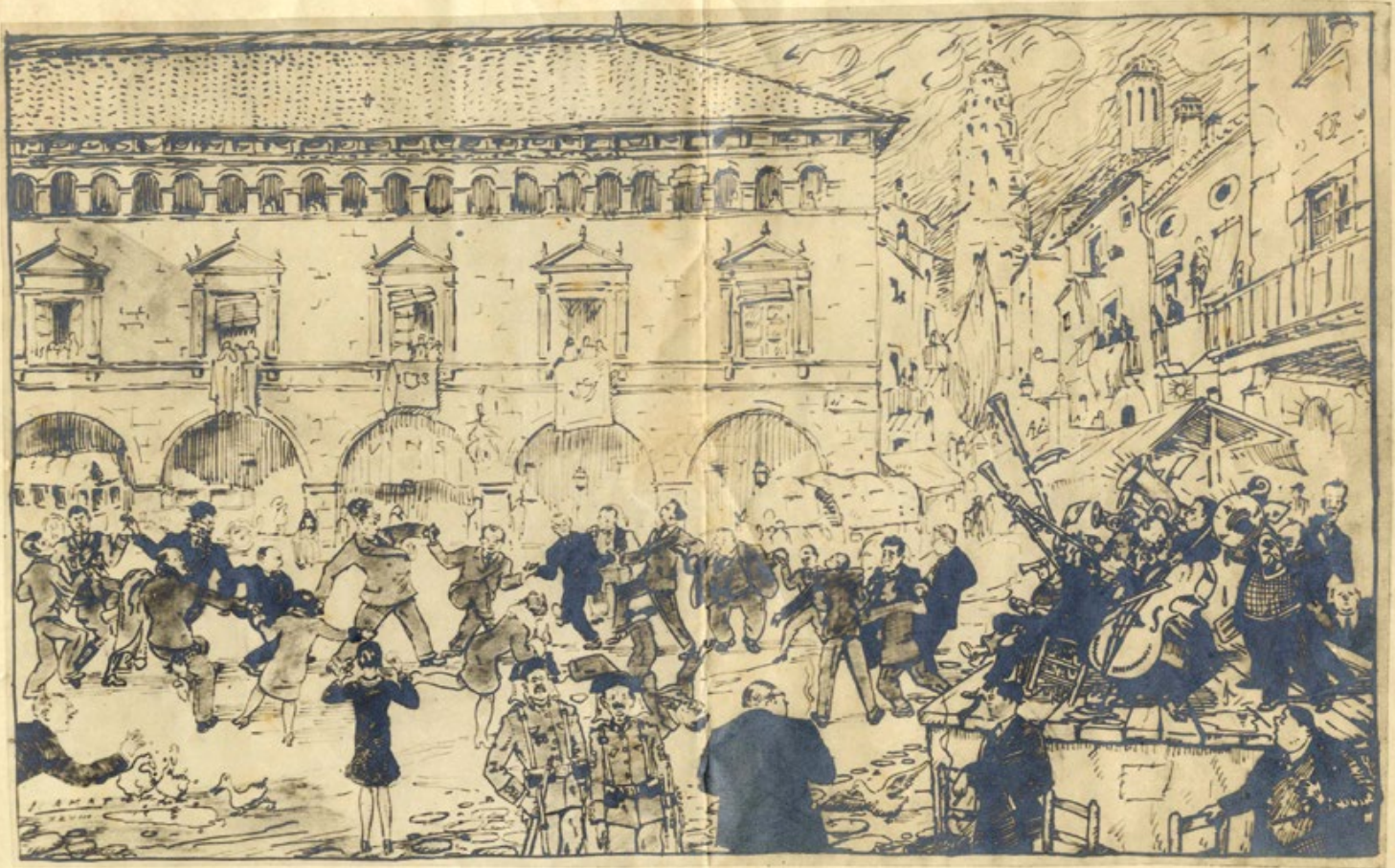
“[...] it’s heartwarming to see Nogués rise at 5 in the morning, breakfast at 9, have a bite to eat for lunch, have dinner and retire to bed at 10 (he sighs about it, but he does it). [...] My colleagues are really enjoying themselves, so much so that Folguera even forgot to go to Mass today.”

(Excerpt from the letter sent to Plandiura on 11th September 1927).

After the Poble Espanyol

The Barcelona International Exhibition opened at 11am on Sunday 19th May 1929 and closed on 15th January 1930. It received many official visits from eminent figures, including the king, the head of the government, ministers, representatives from other countries and all the provinces of Spain. During one of their visits to the exhibition, the king of Spain and his children attended the opening ceremony for the Poble Espanyol on 21st May 1929. The executive committee of the exhibition named Xavier Nogués mayor of the Poble Espanyol, Utrillo, secretary and Folguera and Reventós, architects.

The Poble Espanyol was due to be demolished after the exhibition had closed as it had been designed as a temporary structure with a clear objective. However,



► Drawing of people dancing the *sardana* in the main square of the Poble Espanyol.

people kept coming up with reasons to preserve it. The fact was the Poble Espanyol was the result of a team effort carried out with enthusiasm, knowledge and great rigour, and this led the course of its destiny to change.

Years later, we believe that it was Nogués and Reventós who worked until the very end to ensure the Poble Espanyol would survive. Reventós did so from his post as chief architect at Barcelona City Council's

Cultural Building Conservation Service, and Nogués as the mayor of the Poble Espanyol. A letter from Xavier Nogués to Reventós, which was found in the same desk drawer as the notebooks, reveals his concerns about preserving all the material they had compiled for the Poble Espanyol. The letter reads:

My dear Reventós,

First of all, I send you my warmest wishes and my apologies for bothering you with an old matter.

Bon amic Reventós,
 Primerament els desitjo moltes felicitats i perdoni que el destorbi parlant-li de coses antigues.
 Pel Juliol del any 36 va quedar interrompuda aquella feina que feiem amb el material que varem arreplegar referent al Poble Espanyol de Montjuic, quina part mes agradable era aquell rato que semblava continuació d'aquella bona amistat i camaraderia fundada l'any 1928 d'agradable memoria.
 Are be, que n'havem de fer de tot aquell be de Deu de cixés i de proves fotografiques?
 Avui precisament que he dedicat el matí a remenar per casa fins que he lograt caçar una rata que s'en havia ficat al pis, i que ha resultat que s'havia allotjat en una caixa que hi guardava tot lo que feia referencia al Poble Espanyol, ha passat per les meves mans tot el paquetam de fotos que el "topolino" ja comensava a rosegar.
 Jo ting moltes ganes de veure-l, avants que tot pel gust de veure-l, a seques, i de passada Vosté em diria que n'havem de fer de tot aquella paqueteria.
 També voldria, si no l'hi fes nosa, dedicar-li un gravat que vostè triaria al seu gust.
 Espero tenir l'ocasió de dar-li una bona estreta de ma.
 La enhorabona per a vostè i Senyora de la nostra part i el saluda afectuosament.

XNogués

► Xavier Nogués' letter to Reventós.

In July 1936, the work we were engaged in, sorting through all the material we had gathered about the Poble Espanyol on Montjuïc, was interrupted. It was a wonderful time that seemed to continue the good

friendship and camaraderie of pleasant memory forged in 1928.

Now, what are we to do with all those snapshots and photographic tests?

Today I devoted the morning to rummaging around the house until I managed to catch a rat that had entered the flat and taken up residence in a box where I keep everything about the Poble Espanyol. I fished out the pile of photos that "ratty" had begun gnawing away at. I'd really like to see you, more than anything just for the pleasure of seeing you and so you can tell me, once and for all, what we should do with this pile of papers.

I would, if you didn't mind, also like to dedicate to you a print of your choice. I look forward to greeting you with a firm handshake.

Our warmest wishes to you and your wife.

Affectionately,

XNogués.

Nogués' letter to Reventós is clear proof of the existence of the snapshots and photographic tests (and maybe the notebooks) and his intention to do something with them. We are not exactly sure what happened to them but the two friends may have kept them and Nogués handed over all the information he had about the Poble Espanyol to his friend for safekeeping.

As we can see, after Ramon Reventós had taken part in the Poble Espanyol project, he stayed in touch with Xavier Nogués, and they forged a firm friendship that was to endure for the rest of their lives. The letters they wrote to each other, together with the notebooks with drawings signed by Nogués that lined the walls of Reventós' office, are proof of this.

Years later, Ramón Reventós described with great affection what his friend, Xavier Nogués, was like, in an unpublished document written towards the end of his life:

Nogués was a serious but friendly person; it would have been impossible to find anyone more caring and kind than him. He had a very keen sense of humour; he was always gentle and bore no malice towards anyone or ever behaved in an underhand way. His health was poor and he had a delicate stomach. Perhaps his liver wasn't working properly. Because of his health, he went through a bad spell and his doctor recommended he leave Barcelona and move to Calella de Palafrugell, a coastal town in the Empordà. After he had spent a month there staying in a guest house where he was well cared for and

had his meals provided, his landlady would say to his visitors: "See how he has improved; I know he still looks a bit yellow, but now it's a pretty yellow! A cheerful yellow!"

Nogués' anecdotes always remind us of the captions to his cartoons, maybe because he told them in his own inimitable style or because they are inextricably linked to his work. One such example is the story he told about a neighbour who lived on the same floor as him at Carrer de Pom d'Or who never remembered the wine until she had cooked dinner and laid the table. One day, when Nogués was entering the block, he encountered the neighbour running down the stairs from her flat. It was spitting with rain so he offered her his umbrella. The neighbour replied: "No thanks, I've already got the bottle!"



**EXPOSICIÓN
INTERNACIONAL
DE BARCELONA 1929
"PUEBLO ESPAÑOL"**

An Ideal Village

The idea of building the Poble Espanyol was highly controversial and much commented on at the time. The project was discussed in articles in a series of magazines but they didn't mention how it had come about.

This showcase of Spanish architecture was so successful that we felt that it was essential to trace its origins and find out who had come up with the idea. We would even venture to say that the Poble Espanyol was one of the most important attractions at the 1929 International Exhibition (indeed, it still is, despite the damage currently being done to the site).

The fact is, without the team made up of Francesc Folguera, Xavier Nogués, Ramon Reventós and Miquel Utrillo, the Poble Espanyol may never have become what it is today and no one would have coveted the honour of having been its chief architects.

According to Reventós, when the Marquis of Foronda (Mariano de Foronda y González-Bravo) and the president and secretary of the executive committee of the exhibition, Joaquim Muntaner, commissioned the team to work on the project, following the recommendation of Lluís Plandiura, they were given a model featuring a large central square with an imposing church that was reached by a flight of steps. Enthused by the possibilities of the idea, Utrillo, Nogués, Reventós and Folguera set to work straightaway.

The first thing they did was to embark on a field trip guided by Utrillo who was well-acquainted with every corner of Spain, although the other members of the team had a rough idea of what they were going to do.

In a letter from Utrillo to Lluís Plandiura – who was then a voting member on the executive committee of the International Exhibition due to be held in Barcelona in 1929 – dated 22nd July 1927, he wrote about the need to go on a trip

First version of the poster advertising the Poble Espanyol, original by Xavier Nogués.



Two snapshots of the road trip around Spain. Utrillo, Reventós, Nogués and Folguera, the architects of the Poble Espanyol, 1928.

around Spain to select the buildings, take measurements and make notes and drawings of the most interesting aspects of each town and village. He suggested renting an omnibus that would make it easier to transport the large amount of equipment they needed, and would be more useful and economical. They could even use it as a base and camp out in the woods on hot evenings.



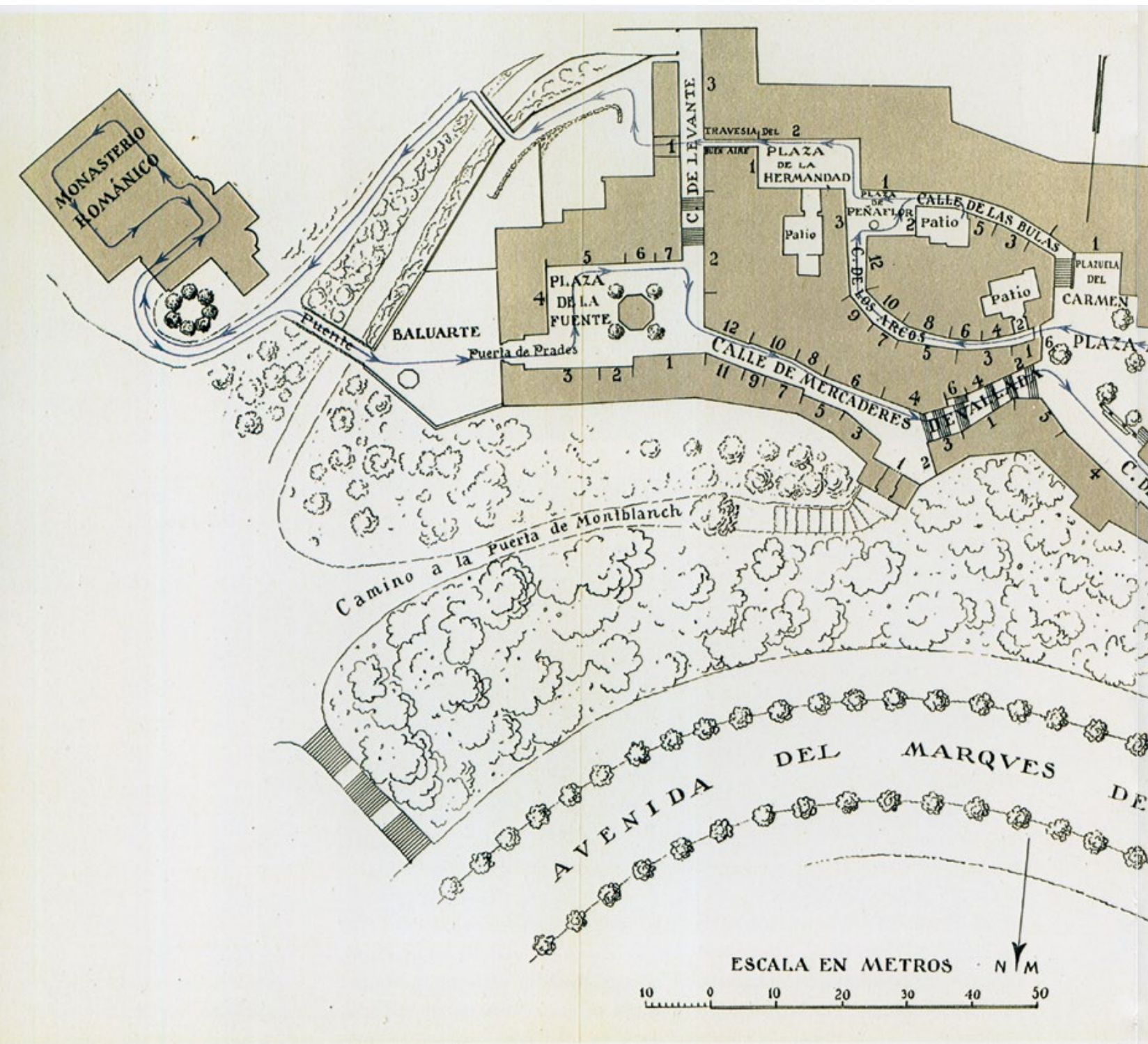
Utrillo went on to suggest that they should produce a poster they could put on the side of the bus to advertise “... *the 1929 Barcelona Exhibition, Art in Spain or the Spanish Village*” as they drove along. This means of transport meant that they could carry a projector on board and show slides or films of Barcelona and Catalonia’s iconic sights every night, for fifteen or thirty minutes, at the community centres, town halls, theatres, libraries, squares and public spaces in the most important towns they went through, handing out advertising leaflets if necessary. He ended by saying that the entire group was in agreement but... “*if you don’t think it’s a good idea, forget I even mentioned it. Yours sincerely. M. Utrillo.*”

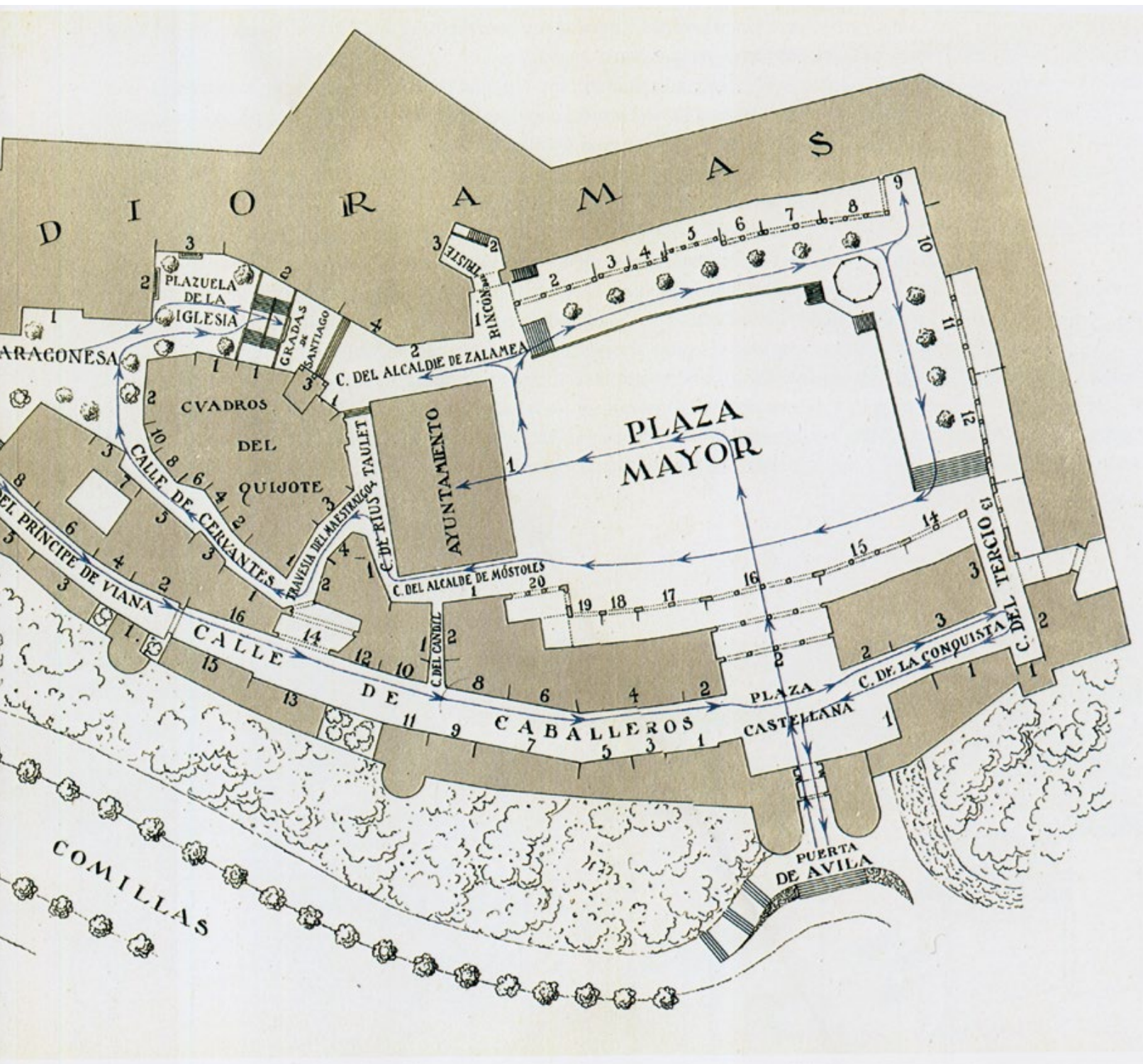
The trip was approved by the committee on 13th May 1927, but the team ended up travelling in a brand-new, chauffeur-driven Hispano Suiza, provided by Plandiura. In spite of this, the car proved to be a real headache as it kept breaking down. First they visited north and north-east Spain followed by Castile, Valencia, Aragon and Catalonia.

Isabel, who was soon to become Nogués’ second wife, told me that the car caused quite a stir, particularly in the small villages they drove through where it was mobbed and followed by groups of youngsters and elderly men who were intrigued by this new invention. She also mentioned that you would often see the four friends dressed in overalls drawing, taking photographs and making notes about everything they saw, gathering the materials that Utrillo and Nogués would use to build the definitive plasticine model of the Poble Espanyol. In 1928, they

■ Nogués, Utrillo and Reventós.

Nogués with a friend.





► Plan showing the layout of the Poble Espanyol, c. 1928-1929.

embarked on a second trip to eastern and southern Spain, although, initially, they hadn't intended to include any Andalusian landmarks to avoid detracting from the Ibero-American Exhibition in Seville that was also being prepared. However, when King Alfonso XIII saw the detailed project he mentioned that no region could be excluded from a true Spanish village.

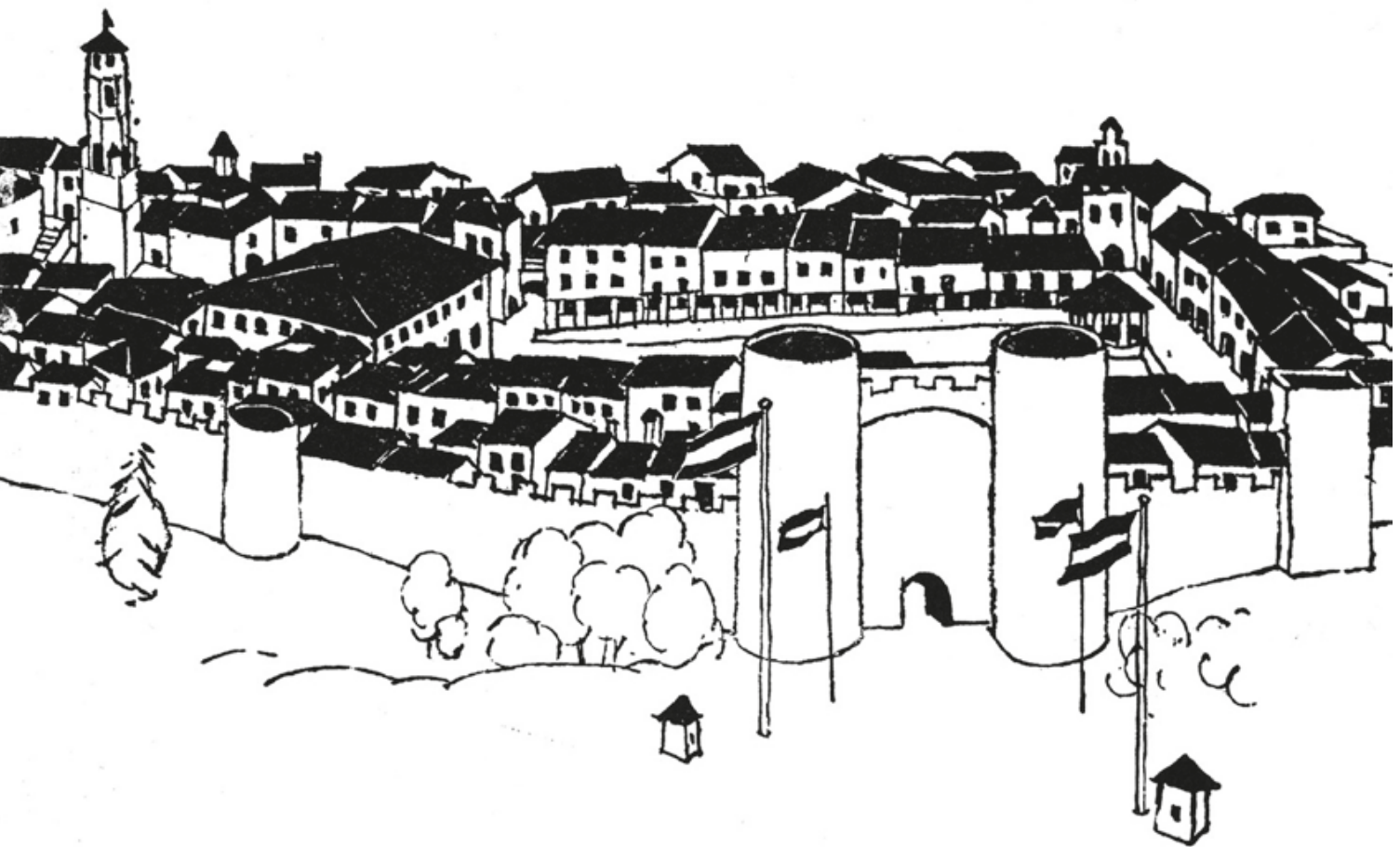
The efforts they put into the project were infinitely more laborious and difficult than the building work that began in the middle of May 1928 with the clearing of the site where the village was to be built. The team went on a third trip, lasting twenty-five days, and a shorter one to gather more information. They are said to have visited one thousand six hundred towns and villages: an extraordinary achievement given the poor conditions of the roads at the time.

Nogués imagined, with an artist's sensibilities, an ideal village like the ones featured in the backgrounds of his paintings and murals, thereby giving the Poble Espanyol the right proportions and balance to create a harmonious whole and



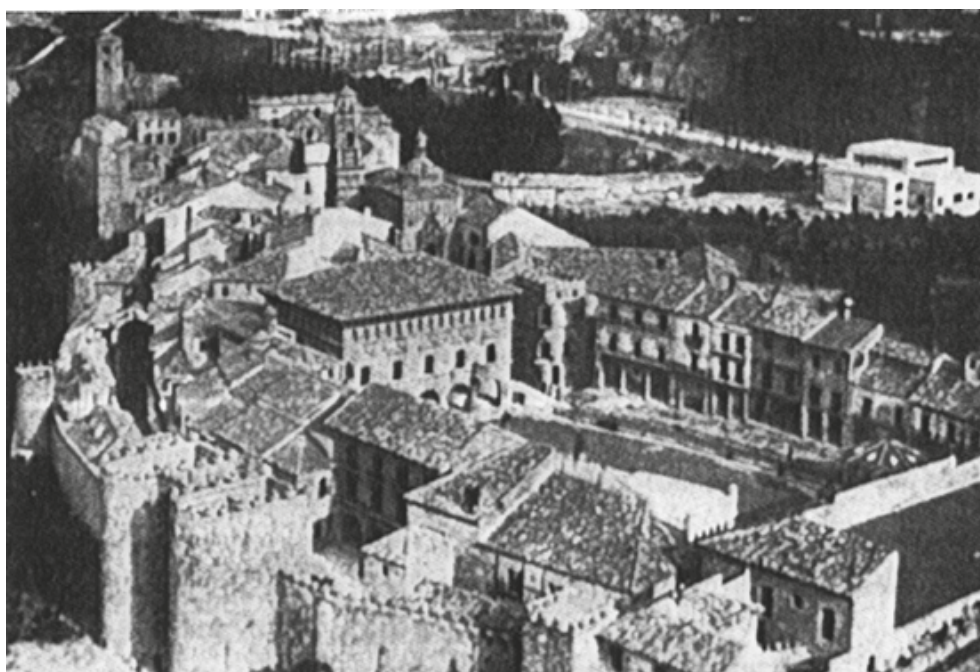
► Panoramic view of the Poble Espanyol.
Illustration by Nogués for the Poble Espanyol guidebook, 1929.

imbue every corner with an authentic feel. During the trip, Nogués took notes and created colour charts for every house and building. With his innate skill for discovering the beauty of things, Utrillo guided the group and chose the best places, ensembles, buildings, doors and architectural details in each of the towns and villages they visited. The professionalism of the architects Reventós – who was entrusted with finding the best solutions to the architectural challenges – and Folguera – who took photographs of the buildings and their surroundings – helped the rest of the team in the extremely difficult task of creating a coherent, harmonious whole and reducing, enlarging and placing each of the chosen buildings in the right setting. They made a beautiful dream come true through their mutual respect for one another and wholehearted dedication and enthusiasm for a project that, in Nogués' own words, if they had been wealthy, they not only would have worked on without being paid, but would have donated money to bring it to fruition.





Start of building work
at the Poble Espanyol.



General view of
the main square at
the Poble Espanyol, 1929.

It is impressive to see the vast number of folders filled with notebooks, drawings, photographs, plans, elevations, measurements, sketches of models and letters for the project.

Building work on the Poble Espanyol began with a visit by the topographers who had been asked to study the site that had been carefully cleared by the gardeners from the Municipal Parks and Gardens Department. Oriented east-west, the site covered an area of 23,000 m² and had an 820 m perimeter. A boundary wall was built around most of the site.

The first buildings to go up were the site offices where the draughtsmen and designers worked, under the orders of Ignasi Vicente, the chief coordinator of this department. He drew up the daily rota for the workforce who were, in turn, supervised by Reventós and Folguera. We shouldn't forget that the project was made possible due to the efforts of the amazing team of specialist workers. Their work was overseen by Nogués, who was responsible for the artistic side of the project. This may be the reason why he was elected mayor of the Poble Espanyol, with Utrillo as municipal secretary.

Nogués' professionalism was such that he visited the Poble Espanyol every day, keeping a close eye on how work was progressing, dispensing advice and getting involved whenever necessary.

In an article published at the time we find the following observation: *"Let us just say that, during the hectic building phase, the intelligent dictatorship, the 'enlightened despotism' of the painter Xavier Nogués, mayor of the Poble Espanyol, prevailed."* Nogués' exacting nature when it came to art and skilfully executed work came to the fore, once again, in the Poble Espanyol project. He had the sculptural panels he considered unacceptable destroyed and remade as many times as necessary and altered the colours that didn't match time and time again. These colours were mixed with the cement used to create the artificial stone blocks to make them look less ugly and eradicate the characteristic grey colour of the material. The system in-



ABOVE:

One of the beautiful spots inside the Poble Espanyol, 1929.

BELOW:

Poble Espanyol, Carrer de Príncipe de Viana, 1929.



Nogués, Plandiura
and the chauffeur.

volved making moulds from old stones and giving them the right colour based on the colour palette Nogués had devised.

The Poble Espanyol was built entirely from these pre-cast cement blocks. Even the bricks on the façades of the buildings in the Aragonese quarter are made of cement.

Plaster was another of the materials used. Teams of plasterers created the coffered ceilings, canopies and galleries that were then painted, varnished and stuccoed to create stunning replicas of wood.

Such was the desire to create a project that looked like the real thing, exports of old tiles to America – which commanded high prices – were halted and the remaining stocks were used to provide the eight hundred thousand tiles that were needed. If they had used new ones they wouldn't have fitted in with the rest of the ensemble. The industrial engineer, Joan de Lasarte, was entrusted with installing the electric lighting, with great care being taken to conceal the cables.

The first buildings were constructed in the central square and were replicas of houses in Riaza (Segovia). A copy of Vall-de-Roures town hall (Teruel) was the main landmark in the square.

The relentless pace of the building work, which allowed no let-up, meant that the Poble Espanyol was completed in an astonishing time scale of one year. The enthusiasm of each and every member of the team also played a decisive role in its success.

The press of the day considered the Poble Espanyol to be one of the crowning achievements of the 1929 International Exhibition. However, there can be no doubt that the real achievement was the open and intelligent vision of the organisers, who put true artists in charge of the teams who carried out the building work. This meant that this compendium of architecture was of a particularly high calibre and never resorted to local clichés or vulgar stereotypes.

The gardens on Montjuïc

From 1924 until 1929, Nogués had a busy schedule as a result of the building work for the International Exhibition.

In addition to his historic dioramas, the *Quadres Històrics*, he also worked with Labarta on the interior decoration of the throne room at the Palau Nacional.



► Amusement park at the 1929 International Exhibition, now the site of La Foixarda.

He worked hard and with great success in creating the Poble Espanyol, and also designed the poster, the logo and the guidebook. Less well known is Nogués' work as an artistic advisor, alongside Joaquim Llancó and Lluís Plandiura, in choosing the sculptures to embellish the gardens in Montjuïc Park, which were landscaped by Nicolau M. Rubió i Tudurí, director of the Public Parks and Trees Department. It is important to add, however, that the minister, Francesc Cambó,

Passeig de Maria Cristina.
Nogués, Folguera and
Reventós shortly before the
1929 International
Exhibition opened.



had commissioned Jean Claude Nicolas Forestier to design the first landscaping phase on the hill in 1915. Forestier also supervised and planned the gardens for the forthcoming International Exhibition, with the assistance of his student Rubió i Tudurí. He worked on the project until 1922 when he resigned as a result of the instatement of the Primo de Rivera dictatorship.

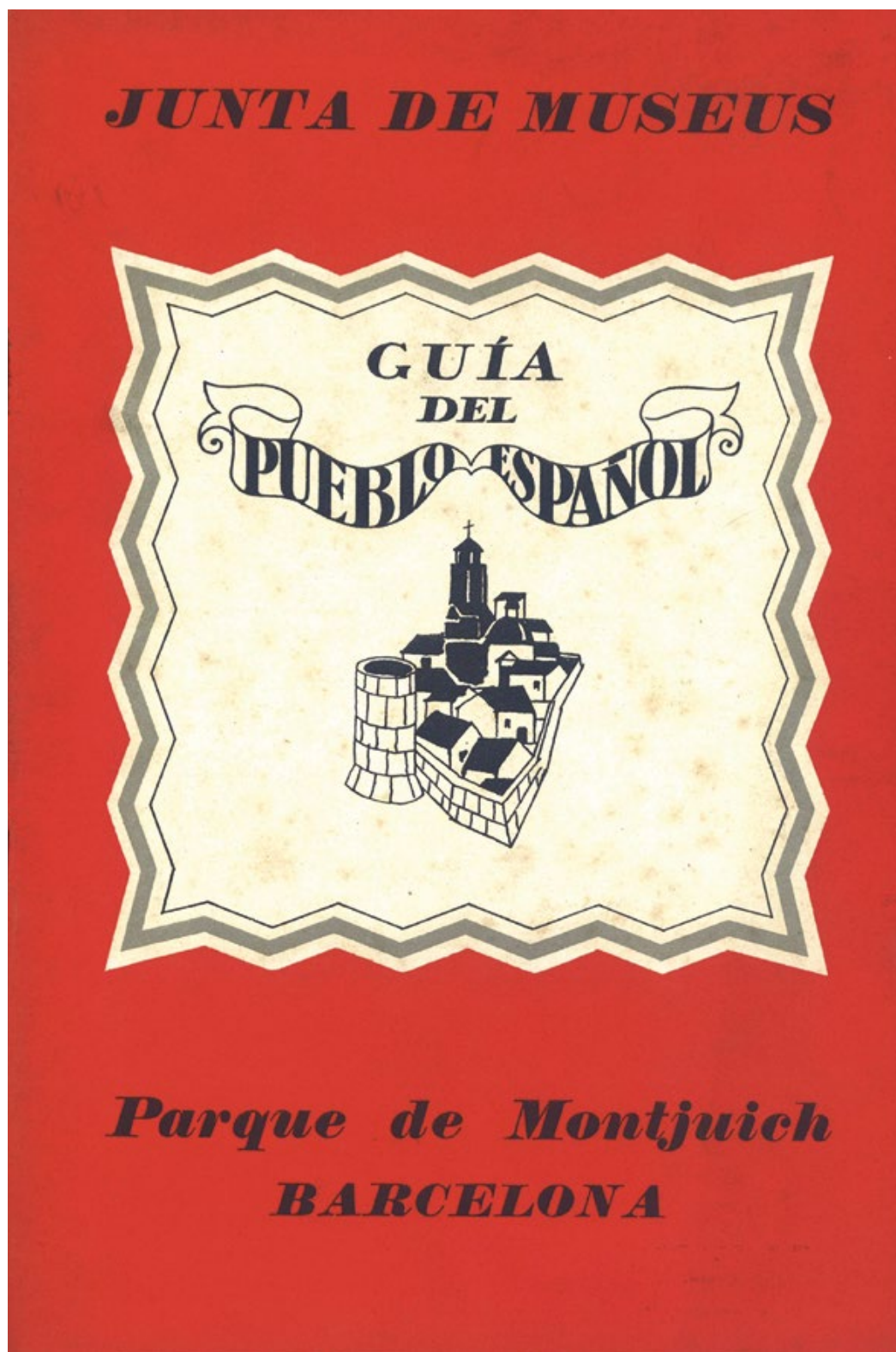
Nicolau M. Rubió i Tudurí was then entrusted with the task of finishing any outstanding work on the park and gardens. In fact, Forestier's former pupil, who was a great admirer of his work, managed to have him reinstated and it was Forestier who designed the parterres, water jets, and light columns on Avinguda de Maria Cristina. The gardens on Montjuïc, which are in such a sorry state today, were painstakingly laid out in the traditional manner (a tradition that had been sidelined since the late 19th century), and recreated the old-style Mediterranean gardens that bore a human imprint rather than resembling a wilderness. To quote Rubió i Tudurí, "*it was nothing more than a fruit orchard and a vegetable garden, made from beech trees, the continuation of a domesticated landscape.*" Forestier described it as "*the refinement of agriculture.*" The layout, like all gardens based on allotments, was mostly geometric, and box trees and cypresses, ideal varieties for this type of structure, were used.



Visitors to the exhibition, 1929.

Given that no classical Mediterranean garden would have been complete without sculptures, small monuments, terraces, fountains and water jets, the executive committee of the exhibition realised it was necessary to hire people who understood art and decoration to choose the most suitable elements. On 31st December 1927, the committee, in accordance with the agreement of the 24th of the same month, appointed a team headed by Lluís Plandiura and Joaquim Llançó, who were voting members, together with Rubió i Tudurí, director of the Public Parks and Trees Department, and Xavier Nogués, as artistic advisor, to study the report and list of sculptures to be purchased for Montjuïc Park to embellish all its avenues, squares and hidden corners.

One of Nogués' proposals has come to light through a series of handwritten notes with the names of the sculptors in the margins. They include the Oslé brothers, Dunyach, Llimona, Rebull, Gargallo, Ferrant, Borrell, Viladomat and Jou. He also noted down the price of each sculpture and marked its future location on the plan.



► Poble Espanyol guidebook illustrated by Xavier Nogués, 1929.



► Poster advertising the Poble Espanyol designed by Xavier Nogués, 1929.

Set and Costume Designs and Dioramas





Xavier Nogués and the Theatre

RICARD PEDREIRA

On 27th October 1928, the comic operetta, *El giravolt de maig* (The May Somersault), received its premiere at Barcelona's Palau de la Música Catalana. It was set to music by maestro Eduard Toldrà (who also conducted the orchestra) and the libretto was by the poet Josep Carner.

The plot centres on an encounter between a former dancer and an ex-seminary student on a spring night at a travellers' inn in 18th-century Catalonia.

Nogués was invited to design the stage sets and costumes. This tied in with the widespread trend of commissioning fine artists to create sets and costumes that took place systematically in the first half of the 20th century. This phenomenon was prompted, in most cases, by a desire for renewal in our country and beyond its borders. Artists of the calibre of Bonnard, Toulouse-Lautrec, Munch, Bakst, Sert, Picasso and Miró, as well as Joan Amat, Lola Anglada, Emili Bosch Roger, Ramon Calsina, Antoni Clavé and Emili Grau Sala, made vital contributions to a variety of theatre productions, ballets and operas.

Nogués designed a typical Catalan interior: the entrance hall of an inn with a huge fireplace, a door

opening on to a balcony and doors at the sides. The walls were whitewashed and, on one of them, there was a shelf with the image of a saint and, above it, a permanently lit lantern. The decor was completed with pottery, a table and a high-backed bench. According to the leading expert in the artist's work, Cecília Vidal, "*With this simple design, Nogués recalled the cool and shady entrance halls typical of the old houses in Banyoles, where, as a child, he would hide among the barrels in the cellar and the piles of partially husked corn cobs.*"

The costumes for the characters reflect 18th-century fashions and show the influence of the early 20th-century Catalan cultural movement, *noucentisme*, with their elegant, understated style. Rosaura's costumes are the only ones reminiscent of the baroque era. The designs for Perot de l'Armentera and Corvetó are different from the others and more closely resemble Nogués' expressionist illustrations for *50 ninots*.

Xavier Nogués' costumes were made by the Casa Paquita and the sets painted and built by the stage designers Brunet i Pous.

The Casa Paquita was one of Barcelona's most prestigious dressmakers, tailors and costumiers. It specialised in making and hiring theatre costumes and was involved in most of the fashionable operettas and revues of the day. It was run by the brothers Leocadio and Antonio López. They were the sons of Paquita, the founder of the eponymous businesses located on the first floor of number 9, Carrer de la Unió.

The Casa Paquita also made the costumes for the historic dioramas, the *Quadres Històrics*, for the 1929 Exhibition, which we will discuss later.

We know that the wigs worn by Rosaura (Mercè Plan-tada) and Golferic (Emili Vendrell) were made by Pi-lar Damaret, who worked for the Casa Paquita and the Teatre Novetats.

The stage designers, Brunet i Pous, created the sets. The partnership consisted of the painter and accomplished watercolour artist, Frederic Bonet i Fita, who had studied under Soler i Rovirosa at the Barcelona art school, La Llotja. He was the most artistically accomplished member of the team and was entrusted with painting the perspectives. Antoni Pous i Palau, who had also trained at La Llotja with Soler i Rovirosa, took care of the technical side of things and was his partner's right-hand man.

They set up their first workshop on Barcelona's Carrer Ample at the former headquarters of the comedy society, El Niu Guerrer. Not long afterwards, they moved to Carrer de Llull, where their workshop soon became an important centre for training a new generation of groundbreaking stage and set designers.

Francesc Pou i Vila, who joined the team at Brunet i Pous, worked as an assistant set painter on *El giravolt de maig* and, following the deaths of Bonet i Fita and Pous i Palau, he ran the workshop on Carrer Llull and recreated the sets for subsequent productions of the operetta from memory.

Joan Teixidor drew parallels between the works of the poet, Josep Carner, and Nogués, particularly in their “*clear desire to domesticate humour and set the right tone.*” Cecília Vidal adds, “*Truth be told, the irony, neatness and grace, be they through words, sounds or deftness of line, are part of the same way of feeling and loving, marked by the firm desire to work for an ideal.*”

There are no records of Nogués' work as a set designer, but the six original designs he painted for the costumes in gouache on beige paper have survived. They are all signed.

This is Nogués' only known venture into the world of the performing arts.

The dioramas for the 1929 Barcelona Universal Exhibition

Xavier Nogués' contributions to the dioramas depicting key events in the history of Spain, known as the *Cuadros Históricos*, could be included in the category of set and costume designs. They were put on display at the Palau Nacional on Montjuïc during the 1929 Barcelona International Exhibition and were intended to have an informative and educational purpose.

Several artists of the day were commissioned to paint the dioramas, which were produced in the large units that were part of the municipal workshops on Carrer Lleida in Barcelona. On 7th September 1929, they began to be transferred to the galleries of the Palau Nacional. They received large numbers of visitors during the exhibition and were widely commented on.

Francesc Labarta produced five sketches on the following themes: “Recceswinth and the consecration of the church of San Juan Bautista in Baños”, “Almanzor, August 1002”, “Alfonso X the Wise”, “The Duke of Alba and Quevedo on the steps of San Felipe”.

Francesc d’Assís Galí created the dioramas depicting “Romantic painting”, “James I the Conqueror”, “Friar Luís de León” and “The 18th-century charter”.

Ricard Canals was entrusted with painting “El Cid, 11th century”, “King Peter of Castile”, “4th April 1367”, “Charles V in Yuste”, and “Meeting with Francis Borgia”.

Oleguer Junyent painted “The Catholic monarchs receiving Columbus in Barcelona, April 1493”.

And Xavier Nogués painted the scenes “King Alfonso V entering Naples” and “The opening ceremony for the first railway line in Spain running from Mataró to Barcelona, 1848”.

Nogués’ two dioramas were moulded in plaster by Josep Granyer, who had worked with him on several occasions. Nogués also produced two preparatory oil sketches for two dioramas that never came to fruition: “The Romantics” and “The Coming of the First Railway in Spain to Mataró”.

Nevertheless, according to the documents available, and as we have already said, if we compare Xavier Nogués’ preparatory sketches with the completed dioramas, we can see that, although they are perfectly acceptable, they have lost all their vivacity and warmth. Changes were made to the compositions. For instance, the station arches in the diorama “The opening ceremony for the first railway line in Spain running from Mataró to Barcelona, 1848”, were turned into stained-glass windows, and the pose and proportion of the figures in the diorama “King Alfonso X entering Naples” were altered, meaning that the final result suffered and much of the artist’s trademark style was lost.

The four projects mentioned were painted in oil on cardboard measuring 50 x 61cm, 29 x 50 cm and 36.5 x 55.5 cm, and were found in the files containing the documents for the 1929 Barcelona International Exhibition. These documents were originally kept in the archives of the Museus Municipals d’Art.

EL GIRAVOLT DE MAIG

JOSÉ CARNER
EDUARDO TOLDRÀ



"CANÇONS VELLES I NOVES"

Set and Costume Designs

El giravolt de maig

Although Xavier Nogués didn't dedicate himself fully to set and costume designs, his chance collaboration on *El giravolt de maig*, prompted him to experiment with this genre, as a token of friendship and as a personal challenge. This was the first opera in Catalan and it marked the pinnacle of the Catalan cultural movement *noucentisme*. It had a libretto by Josep Carner and music by Eduard Toldrà. However, it is important to point out that the collaboration came about due to the enthusiastic support and coordination of Manuel Clausells i Vilasaló. Until that time, he had been an almost unknown figure. Clausells was a friend and admirer of the three artists, who, at the time, was general secretary of the Associació de Música de Cambra de Barcelona and founder of the Concerts Blaus, which hosted performances and organised intimate soirées for concertgoers. He had also founded the association Cançons Velles i Noves.

The poet, Josep Carner, was part of the Spanish diplomatic corps and was living in Le Havre where he had been posted as consul. He travelled frequently abroad and on one of his trips to Barcelona on 23rd January 1927, Clausells invited him to one of his Concerts Blaus, as part of a season dedicated to poets and musicians. On this occasion, Carner recited his poems and Toldrà premiered two songs.

In his biography *Eduard Toldrà, Música*, Manuel Capdevila says that, after the concert, Clausells mentioned to the two friends that he would be interested in the poet and musician working on a project together. Carner told him that the idea had crossed his mind on a number of occasions.

Clausells was thrilled and his enthusiasm was so contagious that he persuaded the friends to work together. He coordinated the project, smoothed out any



D Jovita, Rosaura and Golferic.

problems and clarified any questions to ensure it came to a successful conclusion. This is how, at the end of the concert, the commitment to produce a work together was agreed on.

Toldrà heard nothing more from Carner until the beginning of August that same year, when he received the libretto for *El giravolt de maig*, with the dedication “To Eduard Toldrà, at the beginning of a long collaboration”. An enthusiastic Toldrà wrote to Clausells from Cantallops, where he was spending the summer: “Carner’s libretto has captivated me. It is fine and noble, of great clarity, and funny too.” By June 1928, Toldrà had completed his score.

Nogués took on the job of designing the sets and costumes for *El giravolt de maig* as a result of his friendship with the three men. He had known Carner for some time. In 1920, he had done the illustrations for his short story, *El país de los tontos*, published by Muntanyola. Nogués knew Toldrà as he and his first wife, Teresa Lostau, were members of the Associació de Música de Cambra, and had attended his concerts. He knew Clausells, because, since 1921, he had been commissioning him to do the illustrations for the programmes for the concerts hosted by the Associació de Música de Cambra. At the beginning of August 1928, Clausells asked Nogués to design the sets and costumes for *El giravolt de maig*, and the artist was so pleased with the commission that he presented Clausells with the original drawings for the costumes.



In a letter dated 6th September 1928, Toldrà wrote to Clausells: *“I am happy with the progress being made by Xavier Nogués. If you see him, could you remind him of the subtle observation made by Mercè Plantada, regarding the colour of her costume. Do you remember? Rosaura says that red is the colour that suits her best and which she prefers.”*

In Nogués’ original drawing he had painted the leading lady’s costume an elegant shade of green. However, we don’t know the colour of the one the singer wore on the day of the premiere.

El giravolt de maig, a comic operetta in one act, premiered on the evening of 27th October 1928 at the Palau de la Música Catalana. It is set in a run-down inn on the royal highway and tells the story of an unsettling spring night that plays havoc with the desires of all its characters, particularly those of a young gentleman – a seminary student playing truant – and a young lady – a dancer – who, for a moment, is attracted to the delights of convent life. Throughout the opera, the characters are entranced as if in a dream, but, at daybreak, things revert to normal and they go their separate ways.

The performers at the premiere were: Mercè Plantada, Concepció Callao, Emili Vendrell, Conrad Giral, Joan Barrabés, Valentí Capdevila and Francesc Torra. Maestro Toldrà conducted the orchestra and the production was directed by Enrique Giménez. Xavier Nogués designed the costumes, which were made by

► Marcó, Corbetó and Perot de l’Armentera.

the Casa Paquita, and the sets, which were produced by the stage designers, Brunet i Pous.

The first performance of *El giravolt de maig* was introduced by Carles Soldevila who gave a brief talk entitled *Josep Carner and the Muses*. The second, and final, performance, took place five days later, on the evening of 1st November. Josep Carner gave a talk before the performance entitled *Operatic Wings*. In view of the success achieved, two further performances were held at the now-defunct Teatre Novetats and it was also staged in different towns in Catalonia.

At the dinner held at the Hotel Colón to celebrate the two performances at the Palau de la Música and to say goodbye to Carner because he was going back to Le Havre where he lived at the time, Carner said a few words of thanks on his and Toldrà's behalf. He praised the latter for his music saying that it was admirably close to his verses which, to use his actual words, "*have captivated me.*" He also mentioned Nogués' designs, highlighting the sumptuous colours of the costumes that were in perfect harmony with the understated colours of the stage set that served as a complementary backdrop. He ended by mentioning the actors' performances, returning to Carner's speech: "*They are, truly, just as I had dreamt they would be [...]. I would never have thought that these delightful figures would have emerged from my soul and come to life.*"

The critics were unanimous: Carner had written a work of fine and delicious irony and, made an important attempt to bring balance and measure to the theatre, as befitted the *noucentista* ideal.

Toldrà composed a score that was inspired by and faithfully adapted to Carner's work based on the same concept.

With his contribution to *El giravolt de maig*, Nogués further reinforced this same ideal.

When he referred to Carner and Nogués, Joan Teixidor drew parallels between their works, particularly in their "*clear desire to domesticate humour and set the right tone.*" And there's no denying the fact that irony, neatness and grace, be they through words, sounds or deftness of line, are part of the same way of feeling and loving, marked by the firm desire to work for an ideal.

At the end of the year, a few months before the premiere, the theatre collection produced by Edicions La Mirada in Sabadell published *El giravolt de maig*, prefaced by Carner's words: "*The May somersault / glorified by gentle music / by /*



Programme from the premiere of *El giravolt de maig*, 1928.

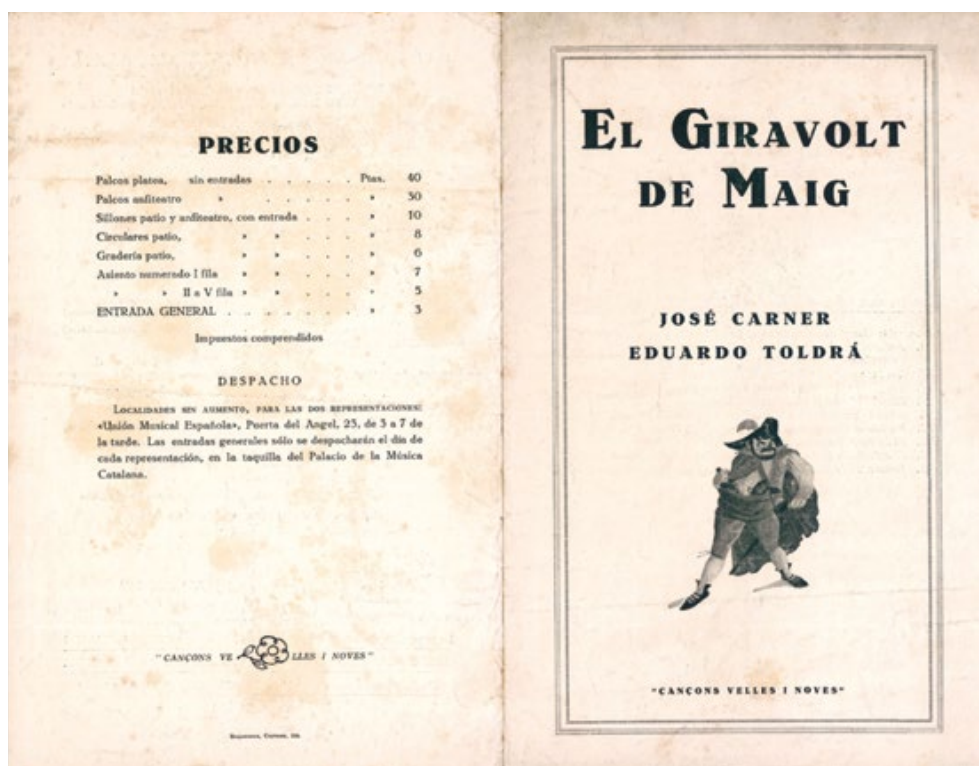
Maestro Eduard Toldrà / was premiered / at the Palau de la Música Catalana / on 27th October MCMXXVIII / and sung by/

- »Mercè Plantada (Rosaura)
- »Concepció Callao (Innkeeper)
- »Emili Vendrell (Golferic)
- »Conrad Giralt (Perot de l'Armentera)
- »J. Barrabés (Marcó)
- »V. Capdevila (Corretó)
- »F. Torra (Voice of a shepherd)».

Below it is a reproduction of Nogués' portrait of Carner, a description of the characters and the clarification: "*They were drawn, exactly like this, by Xavier Nogués.*" This was followed by reproductions of each of the artist's delightful original drawings.

On 5th and 14th December 1958, to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Palau de la Música Catalana, and thirty years after its premiere, *El giravolt de maig* was restaged, as a tribute to the original authors, artists, performers and the promot-

Programme from
the premiere of
El giravolt de maig, 1928.



ers at the time: Francesc Martí and Manuel Clausells. This time, the performers were M. Rosa Barbany, Anna Ricci, Gaietà Renom, Manuel Ausensi, Bartomeu Bardagí and Joan Josep Escoto. Maestro Eduard Toldrà conducted the orchestra and the production was directed by Pau Garsaball.

Following this performance at the Palau de la Música, *El giravolt de maig* was staged a number of times, most notably on 19th October 1964 as part of the 2nd International Music Festival, and in two concert performances on 13th and 14th May 1972.

El giravolt de maig was premiered in Madrid on 19th April 1955 at the Teatro Español. The third gala performance held in the Spanish capital that same year was organised by the Ateneo de Madrid in association with the broadcasts by Radio Nacional de España from the Madrid opera house, the Teatro Real.

During the 1947-1948 season, the Barcelona opera house, the Gran Teatre del Liceu, staged three performances, the first of them on 13th January. The theatre hosted three more as part of the 1962-1963 season commencing on 11th December. The opera was performed again at the Gran Teatre del Liceu on 12th, 17th and 19th January 1978, shortly before the fiftieth anniversary of its premiere. To

mark the occasion, the Fundació Xavier Nogués published a booklet that was distributed with the programme. The hall of mirrors in the opera house staged an exhibition of documents about the genesis of the opera, including the correspondence between Carner and Toldrà, as well as photographs signed by the singers showing the costumes and stage sets on the night of the premiere.

Francesc Pou i Vila designed the sets for the 1978 performances. The costumes, although similar the originals, were not based on Nogués' original designs.

Although none of Nogués' sketches and preparatory drawings for *El giravolt de maig* are thought to have survived, we know that they depicted typical Catalan interiors, based on Carner's instructions: the entrance hall of an inn with a huge fireplace, a door opening on to a balcony and doors at the sides. The walls were whitewashed and, on one of them, there was a shelf with the image of a saint and, above it, a permanently lit lantern. The decor was completed with pottery, a table and a high-backed bench. With this simple design, Nogués recalled the cool and shady entrance halls typical of the old houses in Banyoles, where, as a child, he would hide among the barrels in the cellar and the piles of partially husked corn cobs. It must be said, however, that the set design brought a series of problems, such as the proportions, which were difficult to reproduce on a large scale. This meant that the initial project lost much of its charm and gracefulness because the artist didn't paint the sets himself. The perspective that brought the sets to life was to the detriment of the warmth, depth and mystery of the original sketches.

Nogués wasn't involved in the final stages (the same occurred with the dioramas). If we think about his personality, we might conclude that he wasn't too satisfied with the end result.

The costumes for the characters reflect 18th-century fashions and show the influence of the early 20th-century Catalan cultural movement, *noucentisme*, with their understated, elegant style

Nogués painted the six original designs for the costumes in gouache on beige paper. They are all signed.

After Clausells' death, his widow gave Maestro Toldrà the originals. He had them framed together on a background of red damask silk. This was proof of the high esteem they had for each other.

It is important to add that we have discovered six more costume designs. They were copies of Nogués' originals that were made to give to the costumiers

and pattern cutters at the Casa Paquita to prevent the originals from being lost or damaged.

This opera is Nogués' only known foray into the world of entertainment.

Dioramas: Quadres històrics

The 1929 Barcelona International Exhibition had been planned for many years but took some time to come to fruition. Nevertheless, the exhibition site and its attractions were built in record time. Fully aware of the great and ambitious challenge facing them, the city council and the organisers did their utmost and spared no efforts or resources, particularly when it came to the builders and labourers who worked night and day. The fact that Seville was holding its own great exhibition at almost the same time may have spurred on both cities in their natural desire to compete with each other. Be that as it may, both events were resounding successes.

The project for the Barcelona exhibition was so ambitious and large in scale that some of the projects suffered as a result. The least important were completed in a hurry or left half-done. This was the case of the dioramas depicting key events in the history of Spain, known as the *quadres històrics*.

A number of well-known artists were commissioned to work on these historic tableaux and their projects are listed at the end of the catalogue and guide, *El arte en España*, published for the exhibition. We have been unable to ascertain if the subject matter was imposed by the council or if it was chosen by the artists. The idea was to create scenes depicting important events in the history of Spain, in an educational and informative manner, and to make them as spectacular as possible.

We know that Francesc Labarta produced five sketches. Francesc d'Assis Galí and Ricard Canals submitted four each and Oleguer Junyent provided one. Xavier Nogués made four although two of them were never made into dioramas.

After the sketches had been completed, the second stage involved qualified sculptors modelling the figures featured in each tableau. However, the last-minute rush to finish the project, coupled with the fact that the artists were busy with other, more important work, meant that, to save time, the figures in the dioramas had to



■ *The king of Aragon, Alfonso the Magnanimous, entering Naples.*
Oil on wood, 1928.



■ Life-size diorama depicting the king of Aragon, Alfonso the Magnanimous, entering Naples, on display at the 1929 Barcelona International Exhibition.

be mould-cast by specialists using life models, rather than sculpted. Although the end result was perfectly acceptable, the works lost all their vibrancy and harmony, particularly as far as the composition of each of the scenes was concerned.

On 7th September 1929, the historic tableaux dioramas began to be transferred to the galleries of the Palau Nacional. They attracted large numbers of visitors during the exhibition and were widely commented on.

Xavier Nogués produced the sketches for the dioramas entitled “King Alfonso V entering Naples” and “The opening ceremony for the first railway line in Spain running from Mataró to Barcelona, 1848”.

The opening ceremony for the first railway line in Spain running from Mataró to Barcelona, 1848.
Oil on cardboard, 1929.



Life-size diorama depicting the opening ceremony for the first railway line in Spain, on display at the 1929 Barcelona International Exhibition.



It is important to point out that there is no introduction to the dioramas in the catalogue and guide *El arte en España* but their titles are listed alongside a brief summary of each one. In the case of Xavier Nogués, however, only the title is given.



Nevertheless, the subject matter of his two projects – especially the one about the railway – is so clear it doesn't warrant an explanation. However, if it weren't for the original projects that have been preserved and the photographs of the dioramas published in the magazines of the day, we wouldn't know what they looked like. These documents also show the major differences between Nogués' designs and those by other artists, and the end result. This may have had a lot to do with the tight schedule and the fact that he was working against the clock.

We'll now look at this aspect in a little more detail. Lluís Iglesias, the then head of the Department of Reproductions at Barcelona City Hall, was entrusted with supervising the dioramas. He told us that Manuel Grau, who later became the head of the Restoration Department at the *Museus Municipals d'Art*, was appointed general manager of the workshops where people toiled day and night to produce the works for the 1929 exhibition. They included carpentry and reproductions.

At the workshops on Carrer Lleida, Lluís Iglesias supervised the casting process for each of the models featured in each of the historic tableaux. Mr Iglesias told me that they were so short of time that direct moulds were taken from the life

► *The coming of the first railway in Spain to Mataró.* Oil painting for a diorama that was never realised, 1928.



► *The Romantics.*
Oil on cardboard, 1928.

The project was never completed.

models they hired to portray each character. The costumiers from the Casa Paqueta also worked at the same workshop, cutting the patterns for the period costumes from flannel. Once the costumes had been sewn together they were fitted to the models. Their hair, eyes, nose and mouth were protected and coated in a layer of oil and they were then sprayed with shellac to ensure the costumes kept their shape and wouldn't be crushed while they were being cast using plaster of Paris.

Once the models wearing their costumes had been released from the moulds, the sculptors and technicians – most of them fine arts and crafts students – made the reverse mould which they went over, retouched and finished off under the supervision of the artists who had designed the diorama.

The sculptors supervising the casting process included Josep Granyer, Vicente Antón, Pasqual Valien and Lluís Iglesias. With the help of their assistants, they took on the most intricate tasks, including touching up and modelling the faces and hands.

We know that Nogués painted two more designs for dioramas in addition to the two that were sculpted by Josep Granyer. One of them was dedicated to the romantic era and the other to the coming of the railway to Mataró. The two projects were never realised.

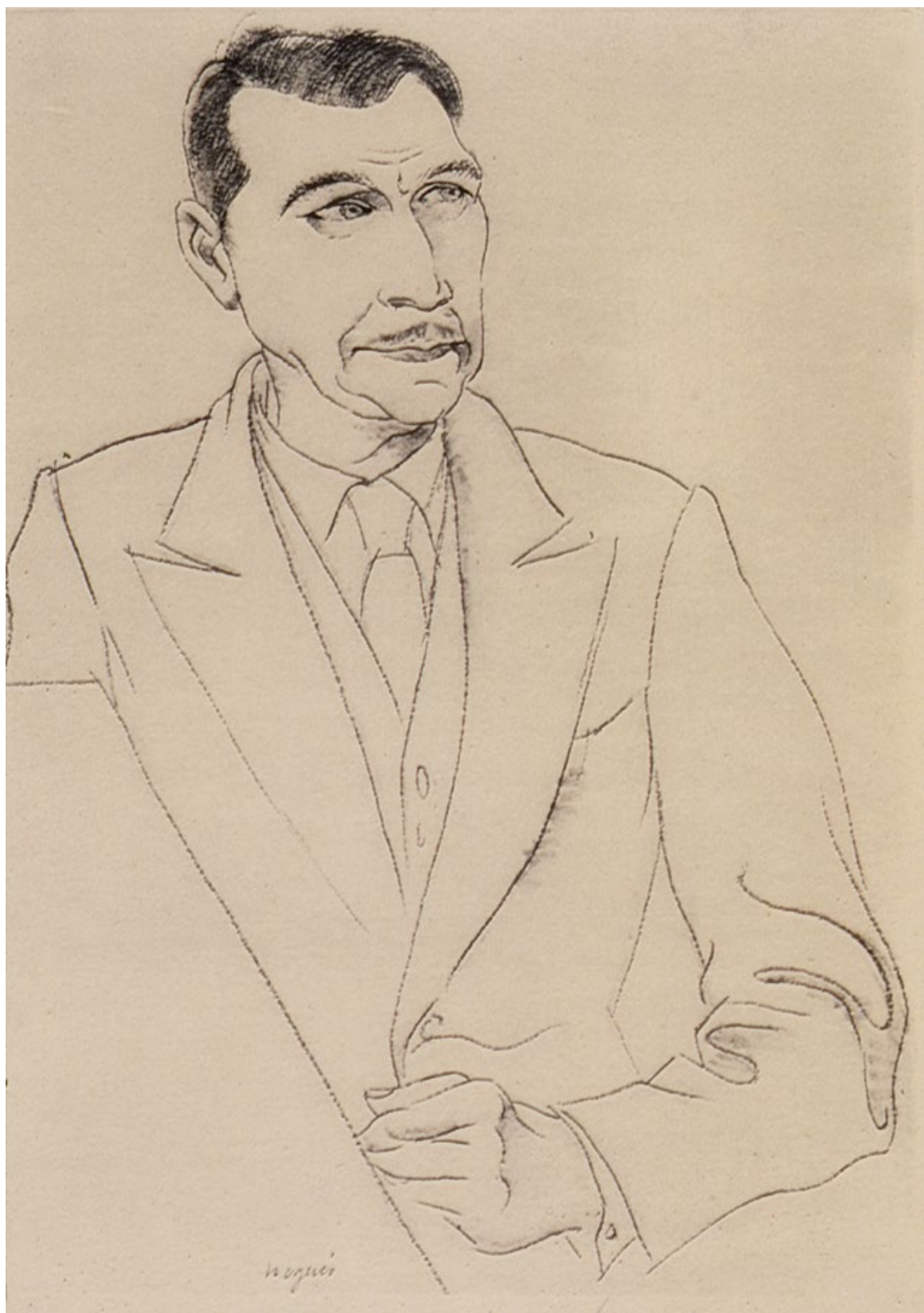
Furthermore, if we compare Nogués' original projects with the finished dioramas, we will see that the alterations made in terms of the composition – such as the station arches transformed into stained-glass windows, and the pose and proportion of the figures (we mentioned earlier that the figures were cast from life models) – affected the ensemble. Nogués' four designs were painted in oil on cardboard and are part of the collections of the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (MNAC). They come from the files containing the documents for the 1929 Barcelona International Exhibition, which were originally kept in the archives of the Museus Municipals d'Art.

Rafael Benet's catalogue on Xavier Nogués' work only features the projects for the opening ceremony of the first railway line in Spain and King Alfonso V entering Naples. He makes no mention of the other two.

Despite the fact that Nogués only made a modest contribution to the field of set design that had little impact, it revealed his interest and curiosity in every manifestation of the arts.



Detail from the king of Aragon, Alfonso the Magnanimous, entering Naples



Biographical Summary

*In this biographical summary about Nogués' life, the superscript numbers next to people's names refer to the notes section at the end of this book.

1873

Francesc Xavier Nogués i Casas, the fifth child of Joan Nogués and Francesca Casas, was born at midnight on a cold and rainy 18th February in a fourth-floor flat at 77 and 79, Carrer d'Escudellers in Barcelona (currently 29, Carrer d'Avinyó).

His birth was registered at 4pm on 20th February and he was christened Francesc Xavier, Domènec, Ramon on 23rd April at the church of La Mercè. His godparents were his elder brother, Joan, and his aunt, Matilde Nogués i Reig.

Nogués was born into a typical well-to-do family of the day: a very strict, stern businessman father, and a sweet and gentle mother who devoted herself to the household chores, her husband and their eight children, only four of whom survived.

Nogués came into the world six days after the short-lived Republic was proclaimed with Estanislau Figueras i de Moragas as its president. This was a time

when anarchism and socialism were gaining ground and the country was beginning to suffer the problems that would lead to the crisis culminating in the disastrous wars in Cuba and the Philippines.

1877-1878

During this period, the Nogués family spent the summers in Banyoles, at a property called Can Gomis, and in the Barcelona suburb of Horta, in a one-storey house at number 114, on the road from Sant Genís dels Agudells. The artist's father had bought the property in 1872 and it had a large water tank and a garden with iron railings around it. Nogués' second wife, Isabel Escalada,¹ said that he always had wonderful memories of his first contact with nature.

Descriptions of Nogués from the time suggest that he was an introverted but strong-willed child. Nogués' home life during his childhood was tinged with sadness due to the successive deaths of two of his brothers. One of them, Joan, tragically drowned in Banyoles lake where the family had gone to enjoy a few days' rest and relaxation.

1880

At the beginning of the year, the family moved to number 7, Carrer del Pom d'Or. The property had two shops on the ground floor with four flats above them. The building was then owned by Nogués' godmother and aunt, who lived in the fourth-floor flat. His bachelor uncle, Josep Nogués,² lived on the first floor.

Isabel used to say that, at the time, her husband was a quiet, sensitive boy prone to daydreaming but very observant. One of the things he remembered throughout his life were his visits with his uncles Josep and Magí³ to the family friend and neighbour, Antoni de Bofarull.⁴ The young Nogués fell in love with the personality of this man of letters and his comfortable yet dark and mysterious house, with its large library-cum-sitting room, and would spend hours gaping at all the wonders he saw. He was particularly fascinated by an Italian madonna covered by a veil displayed inside a glass cabinet and was wont to say that he became obsessed with the image. He also remembered with nostalgia the antics he and the other children in his street would get up to in their neighbourhood of Santa Maria, which was full of wonderful nooks and crannies with interior courtyards and old mansions.

1886

At the age of thirteen, Nogués, had grown bored with his studies after being treated unfairly by one of his teachers. In spite of all his father's attempts to persuade him to continue attending the school on Carrer d'Escudellers, Nogués didn't give in, and, strong-willed as ever, got his own way. After issuing all kinds of warnings and threats, his father eventually set him to work.

His first job was as a carpenter's apprentice at a neighbour's workshop. The experience was designed to make him realise the difference between work and studying and his father thought it would make him go back to school.

Nogués was so enthused by his discovery of the carpenter's trade that his father decided to have him apprenticed to Can Damians, where the hard work involved would, in theory, teach him a lesson.

1888

At the age of fifteen, Nogués joined the bronze foundry, boiler makers and warehouse for machinery and religious silverware, run by Alexandre Damians i Rovira. The business had a workshop at number 2, Carrer Obradors, and a shop on Carrer Escudellers. (The firm won a gold and silver medal at the Barcelona Universal Exhibition held that same year).

During his apprenticeship, Nogués learned to solve problems, one of the characteristic traits of his personality. If his father had ever entertained the notion that the job would make him stop being so stubborn, he couldn't have been more wrong. Although apprentices at the time had to perform the most thankless and unpleasant tasks, Nogués remained steadfast and determined.

1889

After serving a year's apprenticeship, Nogués found a way out of this drudgery but without compromising his position: he would begin working as an assistant draughtsman on designs for machinery. He asked his father for permission to enrol in drawing classes to hone his skills.

The fact that Nogués' cousin, Joanet Casas,⁵ who was older than him, was attending evening classes at Martínez Altés' ⁶ drawing academy was the reason why his father agreed to grant him permission. At the academy he met Isidre Nonell,⁷ with whom, in addition to copying plaster moulds, he would go out on the town. The atmosphere made him happy, particularly when he used to visit the outskirts of Barcelona to paint landscapes every Sunday with his cousin Joanet and his other classmates.

1890

Nogués continued working at Can Damians as a draughtsman, but only in the mornings. He now had more free time to attend classes at the Martínez Altés and Pere Borrell⁸ academies. The latter was located in the building currently home to the Ramblers' Association of Catalonia, on Carrer Paradís. With his cousin Joanet he learnt the rudiments of pictorial techniques and procedures.

1891-1895

We have little information about these years. We do know about a series of landscapes painted while Nogués was staying in Banyoles with his cousin. They both had family there and Nogués' parents would often visit, particularly after 1870, because his brother who had drowned in the lake was buried in the cemetery of Santa Maria del Turers. It was during this period that Nogués met Marià Pidelaserra¹⁰ who was also part of the group of friends from the Acadèmia Martínez Altés led by Joanet Casas, who would take them on painting trips to the outskirts of Barcelona on Sunday. They formed the core of the group later known as the "Colla del Safrà" (the saffron group).⁹

1896

Nogués' bachelor uncle, Josep Nogués, died in June. His aunt and godmother, Matilde Nogués, passed away two months later.

After the legal formalities regarding the inheritance had been completed, Nogués' father took him to Madrid in an attempt to persuade him to join the family firm. Nogués agreed, more than anything else because he wanted to visit the Prado Museum. This was a decisive moment for the artist who, after seeing Goya's work, decided to give up his job as a draughtsman for good to devote himself fully to art.

1897

Nogués stopped studying under Martínez Altés but he continued at the Acadèmia Borrell. He used to sit in on the gatherings of the artistic circle formed by Marià Pidelaserra,¹⁰ with whom he remained firm friends throughout his life, the sculptor Emili Fontbona,¹¹ Josep Víctor Solà i Andreu,¹² Gaietà Cornet,¹³ Sebastià Junyer,¹⁴ Josep Lleonart,¹⁵ Cristòfor de Domènech,¹⁶ Ramon Riera¹⁷ and Pere Ysern.¹⁸ They would meet in a tavern on Carrer de l'Hospital called El Rovell de l'Ou – from which the group took its name – and in the back room of Ramon Riera's lithography workshop at 207, Carrer de Bilbao, now the Via Laietana, where they produced a magazine entitled *IL TIBERIO*.¹⁹ It featured all kinds of reports on the latest artistic and cultural events in Barcelona which were accompanied by copious original illustrations by all the members of the group of friends. They would send the magazine to Pere Ysern, who had been studying painting in Italy for a year. "Il Tiberio" was Ysern's nickname.

1899

Between January and February, Nogués entered the competition to design a poster for carnival and won one of the runner-up prizes for a submission entitled *Tranquil·litat i bons aliments*, a Catalan expression meaning “take it easy”. He worked with Francesc Sardà i Làdico,²⁰ at Pidelaserra’s studio on Carrer de Muntaner while he was away on a trip to Paris.

The amusing *Auca de l’aplec de sant Medir* (Scenes from the Gathering of Sant Medir), with texts by Josep Lleonart, also dates from this year. It was commissioned and printed by the lithographer Ramon Riera.

1900

Nogués’ friend Riera let him work in a makeshift workshop on the mezzanine platform at his printing works on Carrer de Bilbao.

Together with his cousin, Nogués took part in the Olot Regional Exhibition of Fine Arts and Art Industries held in Olot from 15th August to 15th September. It had been organised by the Institut Olotí de les Arts, les Ciències i les Indústries Artístiques, which had been founded in 1898, with the aim of giving people a knowledge of the arts, literature, sciences and society in order to contribute to disseminating the noble expansion of the spirit. The exhibition was an extraordinary success and featured important artists of the calibre of Josep Berga i Boix²¹ and Marià Vayreda.²²

1901

Nogués made his first trip to Paris. This brief sojourn in the art capital must have been particularly significant to him but we know little about it. However, we can assume that, given his character, Nogués made the

most of it, observing and learning from everything around him.

1902

Nogués returned to Barcelona at the beginning of the year. In February, he was injured by a sabre blow in one of the riots that were a frequent occurrence in Barcelona at the time and culminated in a general strike. On 4th March, one of his drawings advertising Joan Giralt Laporta’s glass factory was published in the monthly journal MERCURIO. REVISTA COMERCIAL HISPANO-AMERICANA, which would feature other commercial drawings by Nogués until 1903. In April, he took part in the International Postcard Competition, sponsored by the fizzy-drinks’ manufacturer, F. Clarà i Cia. The judging panel, made up of Josep Llimona,²³ Josep Cusachs,²⁴ Modest Urgell²⁵ and Modest Teixidor,²⁶ awarded him one of the runner-up prizes for his collection of ten postcards entitled *Tothom* (Everyone). These kinds of competitions were very popular with young artists as, in addition to serving as a launch pad for their work, they gave them the opportunity to earn some money and the prestige of winning a prize. That same year, together with Fontbona, who was back from Paris, Nogués moved into a new studio on Carrer Gran de Gràcia. Shortly afterwards, they moved to Carrer Comtal. Nogués entered the competition to design a poster for Barcelona’s summer festival, the Festes de la Mercè, and won second prize with *Barraques i cavallets* (festival huts and hobby horses). We can assume that Nogués would have been pleased to win these prizes and his family must have been delighted with the successes of their artist son. He exhibited some maritime scenes at the

Ateneu Barcelonès with the group Art i Pàtria.²⁷ He also painted a postcard for the raffle organised by the Cercle Artístic de Sant Lluc. At the end of the year he painted a portrait of his mother.

1903

On 4th May, Nogués had three drawings published in issue 18 of *MERCURIO. REVISTA COMERCIAL HISPANO-AMERICANA* illustrating Artur Masriera's²⁸ short story "Luchas del día". He took part in the Olot Regional Exhibition of Fine Arts and Art Industries for the second time. During a short stay in Banyoles, he painted *Paisatge de tarda* (Autumn Landscape), which was dedicated to "My cousin Pep Casas". He went on a second trip to Paris, where he intended to move permanently, and shared a studio at 60, Boulevard Saint-Germain with his friend Alexandre de Cabanyes.²⁹

1904

He was still in Paris at the beginning of the year. In the evenings he attended the Académie Colarossi, which had been founded in the second half of the 19th century by the Neapolitan sculptor. It was known as the Grande Chaumière, and was located at 73, Rue de Notre-Dame-des-Champs. According to Feliu Elias, it was one of the most advanced and, to a certain extent, freest, and best of the revolutionary academies. Here Nogués met Anglada-Camarasa,³⁰ Castelucho³¹ and the sculptor Injalbert.³² He attended the daily lectures at the Académie Vity on the Boulevard Montparnasse. During a trip along the Seine and Marne with Pere Ysern and Francesc Madolell,³³ they suffered a serious accident that put their lives in danger. Nogués returned to Bar-

celona and enjoyed a short stay in Banyoles. On 7th January one of his illustrations for the Spanish edition of Lucian of Samosata's³⁴ *Dialogues of the Courtesans* was published in the magazine *JOVENTUT*. Also dating from the same year are the four oils, one entitled *Suburbi de París* (Parisian Suburb), and the three landscapes painted in Banyoles (Miró collection), and a poster advertising the biscuit brand Viñas y Cia. He worked with Sardà and Làdico at Pidelaserra's studio on Carrer de Muntaner, where many of the team who produced the magazine *IL TIBERIO* would meet. They decided to hold their first group exhibition.

1905

The private view of the exhibition by the remaining members of the group, the Associació de Pintors i Escultors Catalans, was held on Saturday 1st April at the Sala Parés. Only Pidelaserra, Junyer i Vidal, Ysern, Torres-García,³⁵ the sculptor Fontbona and Nogués took part. The exhibition caused some controversy and received harsh and unfavourable reviews from the art critics. This led to the general disenchantment of all the members of the group and its eventual break up. Nogués showed four oil paintings, *Dansanta*, *Noia* (Girl), *Gent a casa* (Homebodies) and *Paisatge de Vallvidrera* (Vallvidrera Landscape), which are numbered 9-12 in the catalogue.

1906

In March, Nogués exhibited three landscapes at the Sala Parés. He illustrated the masthead for a series of verses for the magazine *POTI-POTI* about current topics of the day, with texts by the poet Rafael Nogueras Oller.³⁶ The magazine was published by Riera and

only five issues were produced. Nogués also decorated porcelain vases for Antoni Serra's pottery, Manufactura de Porcellana i Gres d'Art.³⁷ This was, arguably, one of the lowest points in Nogués' career. To eke out a living, he and Torres-García spent three years working for Aleix Clapés³⁸ decorating the interiors of the Casa Milà, which is popularly known as La Pedrera. While Nogués was working there, he met Iu Pascual³⁹ and Teresa Lostau Espinet,⁴⁰ who later became his associate and wife. He also met Antoni Vidal i Rolland⁴¹ and Jaume Llongueras⁴², and they remained firm friends throughout their lives.

1907

Two illustrations by Nogués for the short story *La coja de las muñecas* appeared in the magazine HOJAS SELECTAS (vol. VI, pp. 50 and 542), published by Salvat. He spent a few days in Banyoles, where he painted two landscapes and *Sardanes a Banyoles* (Sardana Dancing in Banyoles).

1908

The family home on Carrer del Pom d'Or was expropriated for demolition as part of the remodelling of the Via Laietana and the family moved to a flat on Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes on the corner of Carrer Bailèn and Plaça de Tetuan.

In April the committee of the poetry competition, the Jocs Florals, commissioned Nogués to design the banner for the parchment scroll awarded in May that year to Apel·les Mestres⁴³ naming him a master troubadour, or Mestre en Gai Saber in Catalan. Nogués painted three scenes in gouache. The first featured a troubadour, the second (central) one depicted

a landscape of Mediterranean pines and, the third two farmers sporting the typical red Catalan *barretina* cap sitting in the middle of a wood. Above the composition, there is a triptych of four cherubs that remind us of his later designs for the mayor of Barcelona's office. Nogués also produced the oil painting *Mariner* (Sailor), which bears the dedication "Al amic Serra" (to my friend Serra), and two illustrations for the short story "Al fin mujer", published in the magazine HOJAS SELECTAS (vol. VII, pp. 592 and 596).

1909

He studied engraving techniques at Joaquim Furnó's studio⁴⁴ with Manuel Humbert.⁴⁵ In September that year, he began working for the satirical magazine PAPITU that had been founded by Feliu Elias⁴⁶ on 25th November 1908. The first drawing signed under his pseudonym "Babel" appeared in issue 56, published on 22nd December. Nogués had a workshop on Carrer de Girona and produced his first known etchings: *Jugadors de cartes* (Card Players), *Dues dones* (Two Women) and *Mariners* (Sailors).

1910

Nogués painted cinema posters for Pathé (typeface Enrich i Cia.) together with Vidal i Rolland. He joined the group founded by Francesc Pujols,⁴⁷ known as Les Arts i els Artistes,⁴⁸ which met at the Café Continental. From 30th April to 31st May he exhibited at the 1st Les Arts i els Artistes Salon held in the shop of the Faianç Català gallery. Two musical and two literary soirées were held during the exhibition and the profits went towards the acquisition of works. According to the press of the day, they were intended to become part of the collection of

a future modern art museum in Barcelona. The arts section of the 9th June issue of the newspaper LA VEU (p. 3) reported that the city council had purchased several works exhibited at the salon to decorate its rooms. These included an etching by Nogués entitled *L'Home que Planta* (The Disdainful Man). Joaquim Folch i Torres⁴⁹ mentioned this etching, and others exhibited by Nogués, in the arts section of the 26th May issue of LA VEU DE CATALUNYA: “some etchings by Nogués, a little-known young artist, attract our attention because of the truly special vision they reveal.”

1911

The 2nd Les Arts i els Artistes Salon was held at the Faianç Català gallery from 25th February to 12th March. The exhibition was dedicated to the recently deceased Isidre Nonell and Nogués showed five engravings: *Noies i cànirs* (Girls and Drinking Vessels), *Els jugadors* (The Players), *Les criatures* (The Little Girls), *El repos* (Rest), *El diumenge* (Sunday) and three drawings. Writing in the arts section of LA VEU DE CATALUNYA, Joaquim Folch i Torres discussed the exhibition and Nogués, describing him as: “a novel artist who we have been following for some time along the misty paths that have led him to an expressive ideal that is beginning to show itself, today, at this salon, in all its magnificent maturity. An exquisite art that is essentially decorative yet profoundly spiritual.”

Joan Nogués i Reig, the artist's father, died on 19th April, shortly after seeing the first professional successes achieved by the son who had caused him such concern.

On 15th November, along with Manuel Humbert and Josep Aragay,⁵⁰ Nogués stopped contributing to

PAPITU, due to the changes made by the new owner and editor. His last drawing appeared in issue 155. He worked on the famous *Almanach dels Noucentistes*, published by Joaquim Horta.⁵¹

1912

The first issue of the satirical magazine PICAROL, which was owned by Santiago Segura,⁵² and run by Nogués and Aragay, was published on 10th February. It became renowned for the quality of its illustrations but, unfortunately, only six issues were produced, the last on 16th March.

Nogués worked on a special issue of l'ESQUELLA DE LA TORRATXA, devoted to sloth, published on 1st March. He moved into a new workshop on Carrer de Provença. During this period, he made his third trip to Paris. He also produced six etchings: *Les tres gràcies* (The Three Graces), *Home i gos* (Man and Dog), *Repòs* (Rest), *Pomona*, *Passeig* (Stroll), and the one used to illustrate the cover of Eugeni d'Ors's⁵³ novel, *La Ben Plantada*. The illustrations for the menu published for the restaurant and delicatessen, Casa Pince, which was on the corner of Carrer Ferran and Carrer Rauric, are also thought to date from this year.

1913

On 10th January, he took part in the 4th Les Arts i els Artistes Salon. Writing about the exhibition in the arts section of LA VEU DE CATALUNYA, Folch i Torres said that Torres-García and Xavier Nogués represented the school of harmony through their forms. He mentioned that, with every passing day, Nogués acquired “what his simple yet severe art needs.” On 27th February, he made an original etching, a variant

of the Three Graces. It was produced as a limited edition poster advertising Iu Pascual's exhibition then being held at the Faianç Català gallery. He also produced the etching *El berenar a la barca* (A Bite to Eat on the Boat) and *La passejada* (The Stroll).

1914

The new fortnightly journal REVISTA NOVA was published on 11th April. It was dedicated to modern, ancient and Oriental art and run by Feliu Elias and Xavier Nogués. The latter also produced numerous illustrations, vignettes and advertisements for the publication. Santiago Segura was the owner. This year Nogués was one of the artists selected to produce four original drawings for sheets of coupons to be sold at five cents each in support of the victims of an industrial lockout.

His mother, Francesca Casas i Grau, died on 3rd May.

1915

In April, he donated one of his works to a raffle organised by the French to raise funds for the victims and people injured in the Great War. He showed sixteen drawings at the *New Catalan Art* exhibition held at the Centre Català in Sabadell from 1st to 15th August. Fourteen of them had already been published in REVISTA NOVA. The drawings exhibited were *Lladres i serenos* (Thieves and Nightwatchmen), *Carnestoltes* (Carnival), *Retaule del vici* (Altarpiece of Vice), *Setze jutges mengen fetge d'un penjat* (Sixteen Judges Eating a Hanged Man's Liver – a well-known Catalan rhyme and tongue-twister), *Una olla de grills* (Pandemonium), *L'ànima d'en Rosegacebes* (The Spirit of the Bogeyman), *L'hereu Escampa* (The Heir Sneaks Off), *El perdonavides* (The

Bully), *A l'aranya estiracabells* (The Scramble), *A can Garlanda* (House of Chaos), *A can Taps* (House of Chaos), *El somia-truites* (The Daydreamer), *El gata moixa* (The Sly One), *El noi tendre* (The Tender Boy), *L'esgarriacries* (The Party Pooper), *A can Patiràs* (At Home with the Worriers). All these drawings, which are numbered 34-39 in the exhibition catalogue, were later published in a book entitled *La Catalunya pintoresca*, which became one of Nogués' best-known works and earned him widespread recognition. In August, the journal VELL I NOU, which Nogués worked on from time to time, announced the opening of the Art Vell i Nou galleries, owned by Santiago Segura. The name was soon changed to Galeries Laietanes.⁵⁴ The gallery opened on 23rd September with an exhibition of works from the Lluís Plandiura⁵⁵ collection. It was held in three stages: from 23rd September to 30th October; 30th October to 6th November; and 6th November to 14th December. Santiago Segura commissioned Nogués to decorate the basement café at the gallery, El Celler, where friends and clients would meet to discuss the issues of the day. El Celler also hosted tributes, presentations, parties and dinners. Nogués decorated El Celler with thirty-nine tempera murals. Nogués' illustrations for *Història d'en Quinze* by Ramon Reventós⁵⁶ were published in the December issue of the almanac L'ESQUELLA DE LA TORRATXA. The oil paintings *Port de Barcelona* (Port of Barcelona), a still life and a landscape also date from this period.

When Francesc Pujols (PUJOLS, "XAVIER NOGUÉS", 1915), discusses the Barcelona art scene and its artists, he points out that many of them were intending to go to Paris to try their luck. We don't know if the reason Nogués only visited for short periods of

time was because he had bad memories of his second stay or wasn't driven enough.

1916

Working in collaboration with Francesc Quer,⁵⁷ Nogués decorated ceramics. They first produced twenty tiles as test pieces which were used to decorate the panel around the sink in the kitchen of El Celler at the Galeries Laietanes. They subsequently produced numerous pieces, including vases, plates and ashtrays, which they signed, or inscribed with different marks and symbols.

The wine list for El Celler was published in February and featured a cover and delightful vignettes that were later used to decorate the glassware at El Celler. Segura asked Ricard Crespo⁵⁸ to enamel the glasses and goblets. The sculptor Josep Granyer⁵⁹ carved the figure of a drunken man based on a drawing by Nogués, which was used as a banister finial on one of the staircases at El Celler.

Les Arts i els Artistes held their tenth exhibition in Barcelona from 1st to 14th May. Nogués showed fifteen engravings: *Els tres nanos* (The Three Lads), *L'home i el gos* (The Man and the Dog), *Diumenge* (Sunday), *El repòs* (Rest), *El passeig* (The Walk), *Les tres gràcies* (The Three Graces), *La passejada* (The Stroll), *El berenar a la barca* (A Bite to Eat on the Boat), *La migdiada* (The Nap), *El vent* (The Wind), *La taverna* (The Tavern), *La Foradada* (thought to be a misspelling of *La Fontada*, or the Celebration around the Fountain), *Montjuïc*, *Les tres gràcies* (poster for Iu Pascual) and *La Ben Plantada* (The Elegant Woman), which was used as the cover for Eugeni d'Ors novel. When describing the works, Francesc Pujols, said they

were a “*tremendous success, because they are proof of the concentrated vision of someone who can find the character of things in an astonishing way and knows how to fix their expression once and for all.*”

The exhibition of works by the association Les Arts i Els Artistes opened at the Asociación de Artistas Vascos in Bilbao, on 15th November. Nogués showed six engravings, this time titled in Spanish instead of Catalan: *La taberna* (The Tavern), *La gira* (The Stroll), *Montjuïc*, *El viento* (The Wind), *La siesta* (The Nap) and *Las tres gracias* (The Three Graces). Nogués also produced a lino cut for the poster advertising the exhibition. He gave private classes in copperplate engraving techniques. He was a contributor to LA PUBLICIDAD and worked on the second incarnation of REVISTA NOVA, which published three of the four lino cuts he made. In collaboration with Humbert, he decorated La Basílica, an antique shop owned by Santiago Segura at number 4, Carrer de la Pietat. He painted scenes from the lives of Saint George, Saint Francis of Assisi and Saint Eulàlia. He produced the etchings *L'atzavara* (The Agave Plant), *La fontada* (The Celebration around the Fountain), *La taverna* (The Tavern), *Migdiada* (The Nap) and *El vent* (The Wind).

1917

On 10th April, Nogués and Aragay set up the new satirical magazine CUCA FERA, in collaboration with Feliu Elias, Ricard Canals,⁶⁰ Francesc Labarta⁶¹ and other artists. The last issue was published on 8th August. In issue 118 of the weekly magazine ESPAÑA, published on 26th April, a caricature by Nogués was used as the masthead for Juan de la Encina's⁶² review of his exhibition being held from 16th to 30th April at

the Ateneo de Madrid. This was the first of his solo shows and it featured twenty-five engravings. They included some of the etchings he had exhibited previously along with nine new ones he had made at the beginning of the year: *Cazador de gorriones* (Sparrow Hunter), *Vallvidrera*, *Verbena* (Street Party), *La enlutada y sus amigos* (The Mourning Woman and her Friends), *La Sombrilla* (The Parasol), *La pita* (The Agave Plant), *Paisaje de la costa* (Coastal Landscape), *La cometa* (The Kite) and *Cabeza de mujer joven* (Head of a Young Woman). The Madrid critic gave a comprehensive and favourable review of the exhibition which sums up Nogués' work perfectly. The cover of the catalogue featured one of only five lino cuts Nogués ever made.

An exhibition of Xavier Nogués' etchings opened at the Galeries Laietanes on 19th May and featured twelve of the engravings he had shown in Madrid. In the 16th June issue of the journal *LA REVISTA* (no. 48, p. 237) Torres-García, Feliu Elias, Francesc d'A. Galí⁶³ and Nogués himself offered their thoughts on the art being made in Paris, tying in with the Exhibition of French Art held at the Palau de Belles Arts in Barcelona. On 25th June, Santiago Segura hosted a testimonial supper for Picasso⁶⁴ who had just donated his painting *Arlequin* (Harlequin) to the Museu d'Art de Barcelona. The supper was held in the basement café El Celler at the Galeries Laietanes and all the members of the association Les Arts i els Artistes attended. The Biblioteca General d'Història de l'Art has an album containing the signatures of everyone present at the supper.

This year Nogués also produced the illustrations for Carles Riba's⁶⁵ original short story, *Les peripècies d'en Joan Barroer*, which was published by Muntañola.

Francesc Pujols suggested to Plandiura – who was refurbishing his house on Carrer de la Ribera – that he should commission Nogués to decorate the hallway, the room housing his collections and the drawing room.

1918

From 1914 to 1918, Nogués produced political caricatures for the newspaper

LA PUBLICIDAD, under the pseudonym “Babel”. The almanac *LA REVISTA* published a number of advertisements drawn by Nogués. He also produced illustrations for Salvat-Papasseit's⁶⁶ magazine *UN ENEMIC DEL POBLE*, which were reprinted in 1920 in the magazine *LA COLUMNA DE FOC*, which was produced in Reus, alongside works by local artists. Nogués also exhibited six drawings at the 1st Autumn Salon organised by the Associació d'Amics de les Arts: *L'espantamones* (The Monkey Scarer), *Fer la llei* (Imposing their Opinion), *L'hereu Escampa* (The Heir Sneaks Off), *Anar amb peus de plom* (Tread Warily), *El mercat de Calaf* (Calaf Market) and *El set-ciències* (The Know-All), that would later be published in *La Catalunya pintoresca*.

Santiago Segura died in Valencia on 7th October. In November 1923, his remains were moved to the new cemetery in Barcelona for reburial. Nogués designed his tombstone and Francesc Pujols wrote the epitaph.

1919

Nogués exhibited several drawings from the series *LA CATALUNYA PINTORESCA* at the group show held by the art collective, the Agrupació Courbet,⁶⁷ at the Galeries Laietanes. The first edition of the prints was

published soon afterwards. It comprised three sections with ten engravings and a fourth with twenty engravings, making fifty engravings reproducing all the drawings that had been published in REVISTA NOVA. Francesc Pujols wrote the texts for the drawings and Joan Sacs wrote the preface. It was published by Salvat-Papasseit Llibreters.

Nogués' illustrations also appeared in issues 1 and 4 of the fortnightly magazine L'INSTANT. He produced more engravings, among them two landscapes of Tossa de Mar, inspired by his stay in the coastal town during the last fortnight in September. According to the letters he wrote to Francesc Pujols (28th September) he was quite happy there, although he was missing his friends' company. At the end of the year he began work on the decoration of the Plandiura drawing room in collaboration with Teresa Lostau and Artur Aldofreu.⁶⁸ It became one of Nogués' major works and is decorated with large panels depicting popular Catalan folk songs. The skirting panels feature the cathedrals of Girona, Barcelona, Tarragona and Lleida, and Catalan landscapes. Nogués didn't complete the project until 1927.

1920

Cèsar Martinell⁶⁹ invited Nogués to decorate the walls of the cooperative winery, the Celler Cooperatiu de Pinell de Brai. With the assistance of his first wife, Teresa Lostau, he began to paint the tiles that would form the exterior frieze. The project was completed in 1921, but the tiles weren't fitted until 1949, due to the financial crisis the cooperative union was going through and the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936.

Nogués drew the illustrations for the short story *El país dels tontos*, by Josep Carner,⁷⁰ which was published by Muntañola.

The Llibreria Nacional Catalana Salvat-Papasseit published the children's alphabet, *L'abecedari català per a nens*, and Nogués did the drawings. The book had a preface by Pompeu Fabra.⁷¹

Nogués took part in this year's art exhibition with a portrait of Miss E.M., which Pujols describes as "worth every peseta and [which has] has surprised everyone." From 15th October to 12th December he took part in the Salon d'Automne at the Grand Palais off the Champs Élysées in Paris, with eight etchings entitled: *Les amies* (The Friends), *Le chasseur de moineaux* (Sparrow Hunter), *Le cerf-volant* (The Kite), *Repos* (Rest), *L'auberge* (The Inn), *Sur l'herbe* (On the Grass), *L'agave* (The Agave Plant) and *La fête* (The Party). They have catalogue numbers 2,568-2,575.

1921

Xavier Nogués married Teresa Lostau on 20th January at the church of the Puríssima Concepció in Barcelona. The witnesses were Marià Pidelaserra and Ignasi Dublé i Barceló.⁷² They spent their honeymoon in Banyoles, Besalú, Olot and Caldes de Malavella. In February they travelled to Paris where they visited the family of Juli González⁷³ (Juli's sisters were very good friends of Teresa's). Nogués encouraged González to take part in the drawing exhibition organised by the association Les Arts i els Artistes that was due to be held in April. On their return to Barcelona, the newly-weds moved into the old workshop on Carrer de Provença and rented a flat at 18, Carrer de Sant Pere

Més Alt, which they used as a studio. Nogués painted a fired enamelled medallion for Teresa, which was inlaid with silver and gold by the jeweller Ramon Sunyer.⁷⁴

After Nogués had completed the friezes for the wine cooperative at Pinell de Brai, Cèsar Martinell commissioned him to paint a series of ceramic panels with farming proverbs to decorate the interiors of other buildings. Some of the most important were the panels from the Gandesa winery and the farmers' union of Sant Pere Claver in Verdú, which are now lost.

In April, the association Les Arts i els Artistes held a drawing exhibition at the Galeries Laietanes. Nogués had been appointed chair of the association on 25th January and, as he hadn't exhibited for some time, he was the featured artist. He showed fifty wonderful drawings that were the highlight of the exhibition – according to Francesc Pujol's account in *LA PUBLICIDAD* –, and the best works of all those on show, according to the other critics.

On 24th June, the Barcelona Municipal Exhibitions Board gave Nogués his own gallery space at the city's Art Exhibition where he showed three oil paintings – *Mariner* (Sailor), *Paisatge de Banyoles* (Banyoles Landscape) and *Sardana* – and thirty-five etchings.

He worked on the children's weekly *LA MAINADA*. From 24th September he and Teresa were in Olot, Banyoles and Besalú painting landscapes.

From 1st to 30th November, Nogués showed his work at the Exhibition of Catalan Art organised by the Sociedade Nacional de Belas Artes in Lisbon. A series of cultural events hosted by Catalan intellectuals were held to tie in with the exhibition. The illus-

trated catalogue in Portuguese was printed in Barcelona. Nogués is featured in the section “Desenhos e gravuras” (Designs and Engravings). He is listed in the catalogue as number 106 but the works he exhibited are not mentioned. Manuel Clausells⁷⁵ commissioned him to do the drawings for the four covers and decorative borders of the programmes for the 1921-1922 season of concerts hosted by the Associació de Música “da Camera” de Barcelona.

1922

On 7th January, Nogués took part in the group exhibition organised by the Associació Amics de les Arts at the Galeries Laietanes. Salvat-Papasseit published the book *50 ninots*, with a foreword by Ramon Reventós. Nogués painted a panel of one hundred and forty-four tiles to decorate Esteve Riera's cake shop on the Rambla dels Estudis. He was assisted by his wife Teresa, who decorated a number of ceramic plates and vases with popular designs.

In June, Nogués donated a series of works to be sold at the exhibition and auction organised by Les Arts i els Artistes at the Galeries Laietanes in support of the Russian people. Among the drawings included we have been able to locate the ones entitled *Portar les calces* (Wearing the Trousers), *Fer tronar i ploure* (Causing a Commotion) and *Treure foc pels queixals* (Foaming at the Mouth), which were purchased by the collector Rossend Partagàs.⁷⁶

Nogués and Teresa, who was now in delicate health, spent the summer in Banyoles. As was customary, they stayed at Ca l'Oliveras Planells, better known as Can Ramon Flaquer, which belonged to old friends of Nogués' parents.

From 30th September to 29th October, Nogués exhibited two etchings at the group exhibition of Catalan art, *Tentoonstelling van Katalaansche Kunst*, in Amsterdam.

In the autumn, he began his correspondence with Salvat-Papasseit who had been in poor health and was convalescing at La Fuenfría sanatorium in Cercedilla, and was later transferred to the Coma Armada sanatorium in the Eastern Pyrenees. Plandiura helped him financially with Nogués' assistance.

1923

Nogués entered the oil painting *Tarda de diumenge* (Sunday Afternoon) for the painting competition "Plandiura", held in 1922 and 1923 at the Galeries Laietanes in Barcelona. He produced nineteen tile panels to decorate the chocolaters, Can Culleretes, on Carrer Quintana.

His wife and associate Teresa Lostau Espinet died on 12th July.

Nogués was heartbroken by his wife's death and Ricard Canals tried his best to raise his spirits. He introduced him to his young model Isabel Escalada Sàrrria as a way of encouraging him to start painting again and giving him a reason to go to his studio every day. Isabel later became the artist's second wife.

On 11th October, he produced a poster published by Seix Barral Hnos. S.A. to advertise the ball organised by the Reial Cercle Artístic to commemorate the first one held in 1869.

From 12th to 22nd December, he took part in the Opening Exhibition of the Season, a group show at the Galeries Dalmau.⁷⁷

1924

He began the series of preparatory drawings to decorate sets of fired enamelled glassware produced in collaboration with Ricard and Conxa Crespo. The association Les Arts i els Artistes held an exhibition at the Galeries Dalmau from 16th to 31st May. Nogués exhibited an etching. Pau Gargallo,⁷⁸ who also took part, showed his magnificent sculpture of Nogués, among other works.

From 20th November to 5th December, Nogués exhibited twelve engravings at the bookshop Catalònia, on the Ronda de Sant Pere.

On 15th December, he and Crespo held the first exhibition of their fired enamelled glassware at the Galeries Laietanes.

Salvat-Papasseit, the poet who considered himself "*a friend first and a brother second*" died. Nogués remained at his bedside until he passed away.

1925

The International Exhibition of Decorative Arts opened in the spring in Paris. The intervention of Santiago Marco,⁷⁹ the president of the Barcelona decorative arts association, FAD, ensured the Catalan contribution was – in the words of the press of the day – copious, beautiful, perfect and modern, full of professional honesty and skill. Nogués and Crespo exhibited their fired enamelled glassware and won two gold medals.

1926

On 13th February, Nogués designed a poster for the carnival ball organised by the Reial Cercle Artístic, which he signed with the pseudonym "Babel".

From 13th to 26th March, the Galeries Laietanes held the second exhibition of Nogués and Crespo's fired enamelled glassware. Twenty-seven of the seventy-seven pieces presented were one-off editions. Nogués also produced the landscape work *Paisatge de Tarragona*.

On 18th May, Nogués was appointed modern art advisor, along with Ricard Canals and Francesc d'A. Galí, by the executive committee that was preparing the International Exhibition due to be held in Barcelona in 1929.

1927

Ángel Ferrant,⁸⁰ the then director of the Escuela de Bellas Artes y Oficios Artísticos in Madrid, invited Nogués to teach engraving, etching and lithography at the school, taking advantage of the fact that he was working for the Comité de Acción Artística as a pensions assessor and acquisitions adviser. We discovered this fact about Nogués through Gabriel García Maroto⁸¹ in his book *La nueva España* in which he also gives us a brief character sketch of the artist.

In September, Nogués, Miquel Utrillo,⁸² Francesc Folguera⁸³ and Ramon Reventós⁸⁴ went on their first field trip to the north of Spain to carry out research for the soon-to-be-built Barcelona visitor attraction, the Poble Espanyol. They also stopped off in Banyoles with Utrillo in an attempt to copy the main doorway of the church of Santa Maria de Porqueres for the Poble Espanyol.

From the beginning of the year until 1929, Nogués was kept very busy with projects for the International Exhibition. Nogués, Joaquim Llançó⁸⁵ and Nicolau M. Rubió i Tudurí⁸⁶ were put in charge of se-

lecting the sculptures to embellish the gardens in Montjuïc Park.

In October, Nogués and the team embarked on their second field trip, this time to the centre of Spain, to carry out more research for the Poble Espanyol project. Nogués illustrated Guerau de Liost's⁸⁷ book, *Sàtires*, and decorated the dining room at Ricard and Conxa Crespo's house.

On 31st December, Xavier Nogués and Francesc Labarta were made art advisers for the Palau Nacional project. The halls were to be decorated by Manuel Humbert, Josep Obiols⁸⁸ Francesc d'A. Galí and other artists. Nogués painted one of the murals in the throne room.

1928

From 17th to 25th January, Nogués exhibited his original drawings for Guerau de Liost's *Sàtires* at the bookshop Catalònia. According to the press they were being sold at affordable prices.

On 14th April, Nogués, Manuel Humbert and Crespo exhibited their fired enamelled glassware at the Galeries Laietanes.

In the autumn, he and Crespo collaborated on their most important work made with this technique: the skylight measuring 2.71 x 4.46 m in the hall of the Seix family house in Pallejà.

On 10th May, he travelled to the south of Spain and Portugal with Utrillo and the architects Folguera and Reventós, to carry out more research for the Poble Espanyol. He also went on a short break to Paris.

He showed an etching at the group exhibition at the cultural association, the Orfeó de Sants, and illustrated Cristòfor de Domènech's book, *L'oci d'un filòsof*.

On 11th October he completed the poster advertising the Poble Espanyol that was published by Seix Barral.

In November the operetta *El giravolt de maig* (The May Somersault) with a libretto by Josep Carner and music by Eduard Toldrà⁸⁹ was premiered at the Palau de la Música Catalana. Nogués designed the costumes and sets. He also drew a portrait of Josep Carner, which was reproduced in the booklet published by Edicions La Mirada. He worked on the children's weekly, JORDI.

1929

He drew the illustrations for the guidebook to the Poble Espanyol and a vignette advertising the visitor attraction. He worked with Granyer on two dioramas, or historical tableaux, for the International Exhibition: *King Alfonso V entering Naples* and *The opening ceremony for the first railway line in Spain running from Mataró to Barcelona, 1848*.

The solemn opening ceremony for the Barcelona International Exhibition took place at noon on Sunday 19th May and was attended by the king. The executive committee of the exhibition named Xavier Nogués mayor of the Poble Espanyol, Utrillo, secretary and Folguera and Reventós, architects.

He and Crespo took part in the exhibition *Gathering of Barcelona Artists. A Collective Display of Art and Comfort in the Modern Home*, which was held as part of the International Exhibition. On this occasion, Nogués drew a new version of *Mercat de Calaf*, (Calaf Market) taken from *La Catalunya pintoresca* that was used on the screen made by the lacquerer Enriqueta Benigani.⁹⁰ The special issue of the maga-

zine ARTS I BELLS OFICIS, published in December by the Foment de les Arts Decoratives (FAD), discussed this exhibition, describing it as “*a great collective showcase of the skills of our forebears, although with independent criteria, being, as it is, the most successful and complete manifestation of modern art shown at the exhibition.*”

At the end of the year, Nogués made two trips to Paris with Isabel, who was soon to become his wife. The second trip was on 6th December. While he was in Paris, he still had time to work on the project for the murals, ceiling and panels above the doors in the mayor of Barcelona's office, which depicted Catalonia's growth as a commercial, industrial, literary and artistic powerhouse.

He joined the board of Les Arts i els Artistes and designed the association's seal. This was a very busy year for Nogués who had won many commissions for the International Exhibition project.

In October, the magazine D'ACÍ D'ALLÀ reproduced his oil painting *Mariner* (Sailor) on its cover.

1930

Nogués travelled to Paris. According to a letter he wrote to Utrillo, he was accompanied by Plandiura and Llongueras.

He painted the four panels featuring allegories of La Rambla, that decorated the now-vanished Cafè de les Rambles. He produced two etchings and seven drypoint engravings. This was the first time he had used the latter technique. From his home, he also began teaching copperplate engraving classes to a group of young artists who were interested in this technique.

1931

His friend Ricard Canals died on 7th February.

He presented three preparatory drawings of his decorations of the mayor's office at the Spring Exhibition. On 1st April he married Isabel Escalada at the church of Sant Pere de les Puel·les. His friends Jaume Llongueras and Marià Pidelaserra were witnesses at the ceremony. The couple moved into the third-floor apartment and studio at 18, Carrer Sant Pere Més Alt, which Nogués had been renting for some time. Shortly afterwards, they moved to a fifth-floor flat at 115, Passeig de Gràcia.

In July, the Cercle Artístic de Sant Lluc published the call for entries for the Humorists' Salon that was to be held in September and October at the Sala Parés. The works were to be selected by a panel of judges headed by Lluís Serrahima.⁹¹ Nogués was a member of the panel.

Nogués began painting the mural panels for the mayor of Barcelona's office in oil on canvas. From 26th September to 9th October he exhibited thirty-eight engravings at the gallery La Pinacoteca. He also showed eight engravings at a touring group exhibition of Catalan painters that visited different cities in the east of the United States. It began in September in Springfield (Missouri), and ended in New York in January 1932.

He drew the front and back covers for the 1932 almanac produced by the magazine *EL BE NEGRE*.

1932

The group exhibition of Catalan painters closed at the Brooklyn Museum in New York.

Nogués was named treasurer by the Municipal Art Board.

Nogués produced a number of original drawings for the semi-printed posters advertising the drawing festival, the Fira del Dibuix, held in April in the Jardins de Soler i Rovirosa. The event was organised by the Galeries Syra, which took care of selling his drawings. At the Spring Exhibition, held as part of the Montjuïc Salon at the Palau Nacional from 22nd May to 3rd July, he showed three preparatory drawings for the murals in the mayor of Barcelona's office. They were displayed in the "Watercolours, Drawings and Engravings" section.

On 8th June, he was named permanent member of the Reial Acadèmia de Belles Arts de Sant Jordi in Barcelona. He gave private copperplate engraving classes. He spent a few days in Olot at the house of his friend Iu Pascual, who discussed a project for a series of summer courses he wanted to run at the Escola Menor de Belles Arts, of which he was director.

Every autumn the Associació de Música "da Camera" de Barcelona would invite Catalan artists to illustrate its programmes for the coming season. This year, Nogués was invited to contribute and twelve of his illustrations were reproduced on the covers of the twelve programmes for the 1932-1933 concert season.

1933

He took part in the group exhibition *Modern Catalan Art* held from 14th January to 10th February at the Galerie d'Art A. Vecht in Amsterdam, where he showed the etchings *La taverna* (The Tavern), *La lecture* (Reading) and *La terrasse* (The Terrace).

From 20th May to 2nd July, he presented three drawings at the Spring Exhibition organised by the Montjuïc Salon and held in the Screening Hall on the

International Exhibition site. He exhibited five drawings at the Humorists' Salon organised by the Associació d'Humoristes de Barcelona, and held at the Galeria Emporium in Plaça de la Cucurulla in Barcelona.

In early August, he travelled to Olot to teach copperplate engraving classes at Iu Pascual's school, as part of a pilot summer school. Nogués and his wife stayed at the Hotel del Parc during this time.

He painted the large work in oils, *La penya del Colón* (The Colón Circle) with Manuel Humbert. It hung in the great dining room and bar, La Brasserie, at the now-defunct Hotel Colón in Plaça de Catalunya. This painting, along with two others, depicting Barcelona café scenes in 1830 and 1934, was destroyed in 1936.

Nogués made the large ceramic panel for the entrance hall of the Santa Clotilde mansion, owned by Raül de Roviralta,⁹² which stood between Lloret de Mar and Santa Cristina. The mansion was decorated by Domènech Carles.⁹³

1934

Nogués painted a series of watercolours featuring 19th-century urban landscapes – *El Born* (The District of El Born), *L'antic port de Barcelona* (The Old Port of Barcelona) and *L'estació de ferrocarril* (The Railway Station) – to decorate Plandiura's office and he began the murals for the dining room in his family home in La Garriga. The murals depicted fishing, hunting, the summer and the grape harvest and weren't completed until 1936. He drew and produced the engravings to illustrate Pedro Antonio de Alarcón's⁹⁴ book *El sombrero de tres picos*.

From 26th May to 8th June, he exhibited three drawings at the 2nd Humorists' Salon, organised by

the Associació d'Humoristes de Barcelona at the Galeries Syra.

From 9th to 22nd June he exhibited a series of twenty engravings and seven illustrations for the book *El sombrero de tres picos* at the Galeries Syra. At the end of the month, Isabel and Nogués travelled to Olot where he was due to teach at the summer school. Iu Pascual had asked the local authorities on many occasions to grant his school official status and change its name from the Escola Menor de Belles Arts to the Escola Superior de Paisatge. Finally, on 8th September, the Catalan government's Department of Culture approved the new project and the Escola Superior de Paisatge was born. The classes at the soon-to-be-renamed school began in July and ran until November. Nogués taught copperplate engraving as he had done the previous year. Nogués and his wife rented an apartment on the first floor of Can Carlets, on the corner of Plaça Clarà and Carrer Panyó. It was frequented by all the artists and intellectuals visiting Olot at the time. At the annual festival of El Frigolet, held in the woods of Les Estunes in Porqueres de Banyoles, Nogués painted *Aplec* (Gathering), which is part of the Plandiura collection.

From 23rd December to 7th January, Edicions La Cometa held an exhibition of bibliophile books, illustrated by different artists, at the art gallery in the bookshop Catalònia. They included Nogués' magnificent engravings for Alarcón's *El sombrero de tres picos*. His friend Pau Gargallo died.

1935

At the beginning of the year, Nogués designed the poster advertising the only violin recital given by

Francesc Costa⁹⁵ at Barcelona's Palau de la Música Catalana on 10th February as part of a special season of concerts. This drawing was used for other posters and programmes for subsequent recitals and concerts by the famous violinist.

From 14th to 26th April he exhibited forty etchings at the Centre de Lectura in Reus. From 6th to 19th April he showed seventeen paintings at La Pinacoteca in Barcelona. He presented *Natura morta* (Still Life) at the Spring Exhibition held as part of the Montjuïc Salon from 19th May to 7th July. He decorated the stoneware jugs made by Llorens Artigas⁹⁶ and painted five still lifes. He drew the figures for the hunter, lioness and bear that Josep Granyer would later cast in bronze. He spent the summer in Olot, where he continued teaching his engraving classes. He drew the illustrations for the covers of the Barcelona BUTLLETÍ DE LA CAMBRA MERCANTIL, which featured allegories of the twelve months of the year.

1936

In May and June, the Foment de les Arts Decoratives organised the 1st Artist-Decorators Salon inside the dome of the Teatre Coliseum. Nogués exhibited four preparatory designs for a set of chairs to be exhibited on the interior decorator Jaume Llongueras' stand, in a space entitled *Boudoir*.

Nogués and his wife would spend nearly six months in Olot when he taught his engraving classes at the Escola Superior de Paisatge d'Olot in 1933 and 1934. However, following the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, they moved there permanently, only returning to Barcelona from time to time.

The Sala Parés ended the season with its now-traditional exhibition of works by its group of painters. It featured a number of engravings by Nogués.

1937

Nogués drew the illustrations for Joan Oliver's⁹⁷ *Bestiari*, which was published by the Catalan government. On 17th December, he was appointed senior professor in etching and lithography techniques at the Escola Superior de Paisatge d'Olot by the Catalan government's Department of Culture. The presses of the school printed five collections of lithographs, each one of them made up of a series of thirty. One of them was bound as an album and presented to José Carreño España, the cultural attaché of the sub-secretariat of the Spanish Ministry of Information in Madrid, during his official visit to the Escola Superior de Paisatge d'Olot.

On 17th August, the Catalan government awarded Nogués the Isidre Nonell painting prize for his oil painting *Mercat* (Market). The prize money was 5,000 pesetas. He designed the figures *La dama del ventall* (The Lady with the Fan) and *L'home del paraigua* (The Man with the Umbrella), which were sculpted and made into porcelain and ceramic figurines decorated by Josep Granyer.

Nogués was one of the artists selected to take part in the exhibition *Spain in Mexico. Catalan Artists from 1937 in Support of the Victims of Fascism*. It was organised by the Catalan government but didn't take place. Most of the catalogues, which had already been printed, were seized and destroyed but luckily a few copies survived, one of which we have been able to consult.

1938

Nogués won the first Fortuny prize that had been introduced by the Catalan government. He illustrated the anthologies *L'humor a la Barcelona del vuitcents*, published by the Catalan government's Department of Culture, and *L'humor a la Barcelona del noucents*, which wasn't published until seventeen years later by Editorial Aymà.

He painted a number of oils and made eight etchings and one drypoint engraving: *Nit* (Night), *La pipa* (The Pipe), *Metge rural* (Rural Doctor), *Pagès* (Farmer), *Cavall apocalíptic* (Horse of the Apocalypse), *Pagès* (single proof), *Home gos* (Dog Man), *Refugiats* (Refugees) and *Europa xx* (Europe 20th Century).

In November, although he was still living in Olot, where he continued to teach copperplate engraving, he submitted three engravings to the exhibition of drawings and engravings organised by the Catalan government and Barcelona City Council, held in the Casal de la Cultura at 14, Plaça de Catalunya.

Nogués much-loved friend from his youth, Emili Fontbona, died.

1939

In February and March he showed five engravings at the *Exhibition of Mediterranean Drawings, Watercolours and Engravings. 1839-1939* at the Museo de Arte Mod-

erno in Madrid. In Olot, Nogués produced countless drawings and studies from nature that he would later use in his oil paintings. The school was practically deserted as most of the young students had been enlisted to fight. After the Spanish Civil War had ended, the Catalan government, which had subsidised the school, was abolished. However, it remained open until March when Olot Council agreed to restructure the school and give it back its original name, the Escola Menor de Belles Arts i Oficis

1940

Nogués and Isabel returned to Barcelona, where he continued to paint, draw and produce engravings. He was quoted as saying, "*If I were unable to do this, I might as well shoot myself.*" He became increasingly withdrawn and worked tirelessly on his engravings.

His final exhibition opened on 1st December at the Galerías Syra. He started work on the illustrations for Joan Timoneda's⁹⁸ book *El patrañuelo*, although without much enthusiasm. The illustrations remained unfinished but were published posthumously in 1941, by the Madrid publishing house, La Rosa de Piedra.

1941

He died in the evening of 27th January at his home at 115, Passeig de Gràcia.

Biographical Notes

1 • Matilde Nogués i Reig

(Barcelona, 1838-1896)

The Nogués-Reigs' third daughter, Nogués' father's eldest sister and Nogués' aunt and godmother.

2 • Josep Nogués i Reig

(Barcelona, 1841-1896)

Nogués' father's younger brother. He was a businessman and representative of the colonial powers. He died a bachelor.

3 • Magí Planas i Clavell

(Barcelona, 1840-?)

Pasta maker. He married Matilde Nogués i Reig in 1856 but they were divorced at the end of 1857. He remained in touch with the Nogués family, particularly with his brother-in-law Josep. He appeared as a witness on many family documents, even after he had separated from his wife.

4 • Antoni Bofarull i de Brocà.

(Reus, 1821-Barcelona, 1892)

Scholar, historian, poet, novelist and playwright. One of the key figures behind the Catalan cultural revival,

the *Renaixença*. In 1854, he wrote an article in the *DIARIO DE BARCELONA* calling for the revival of the poetry festival, the Jocs Florals, which he became president of in 1865. He was a member of the *Acadèmia de Bones Lletres de Barcelona* and organised and made an inventory of its archive. For sixteen years he was in charge of the *Arxiu de la Corona d'Aragó*. In addition to his work as a historian, translator and writer, he was also editor of the satirical newspaper *EL HONGO* (1841). He was a friend of the Nogués family, and Josep Nogués and Magí Planas in particular.

5 • Joanet Casas i Escriu

(Barcelona, c. 1868-?)

Painter and engraver. Nogués' first cousin. He trained at the *Acadèmia Arts on Carrer de Petritxol* and afterwards at the *Martínez Altés* and *Pere Borrell* academies. He had a great aptitude for the arts and divided his time between painting and working in his family's basket-weaving business. He was older than his fellow classmates and set up the small group that used to travel to the outskirts of Barcelona on Sunday mornings to paint landscapes. The group grew in number

and became well established, earning the nickname the “Colla del Safrà” (the saffron group).

6 • Gabriel Martínez Altés

(Falset, 1858-Barcelona, 1940)

Painter and drawing and painting teacher. He studied art in Paris and, after returning to Barcelona in 1886, he set up a drawing academy on the fourth floor of a house in Plaça de Santa Anna. During its early years, nearly all the artists of the day stepped through its doors.

7 • Isidre Nonell i Monturiol

(Barcelona, 1873-1911)

Painter. He trained at the Josep Miravent and Martínez Altés academies, at Lluís Graner’s workshop and, finally, at the Barcelona art school, the Escola de Llotja. While he was studying at the Acadèmia Martínez Altés – where he was admired for his caricatures of well-known personalities of the day – he met Nogués, and they would have a lot of fun together. With his fellow classmates, he was a member of the group of plein air painters, led by Joanet Casas, that used to visit the outskirts of Barcelona every Sunday to paint landscapes. Nonell moved to the town of Boí and made several trips to Paris, where he presented his paintings depicting people affected by cretinism. When he returned to Barcelona in 1898, he began painting gypsy women, devoid of any folkloric imagery. Between 1906 and 1907, Nonell’s work began to shift from its gloomier, darker tones towards brighter, lighter colours. He joined the magazine *PAPITU* as an illustrator, signing his drawings with the pseudonyms “Josué” and “Noé” (Joshua and Noah).

At the magazine he also met up again with Nogués and many friends from his student days. He died very young, just when he was beginning to enjoy some success.

8 • Pere Borrell del Caso

(Puigcerdà, 1835-Barcelona, 1910)

Painter and drawing and painting teacher. His works focused on religious themes and he won several prizes in competitions around Spain. Many students, who went on to become renowned artists, studied at his academy.

9 • La Colla del Safrà or Colla Sant Martí

Group of plein air painters made up of students, most of them trained at the Martínez i Altés and Pere Borrell del Caso academies. Every Sunday, they would travel to the outskirts of Barcelona, often to the village of Sant Martí de Provençals, and paint landscapes. Initially, Joanet Casas i Escriu, the oldest of the group of young artists who were then aged between 14 and 18, was the leader. Over the years the members became well-known. They included Isidre Nonell, Marià Pidelaserra, Xavier Nogués and Ricard Canals who were later joined by Joaquim Mir, Ramon Pichot, Adrià Gual and Juli Vallmitjana. The group took its name from the saffron yellow its members used in their paintings (“safrà” is the Catalan for saffron).

10 • Marià Pidelaserra i Brias

(Barcelona, 1877-1946)

Painter. He trained at the Barcelona art school, La Llotja, and the Martínez Altés and Pere Borrell academies. He was a great friend of Nogués who he had met

at the Acadèmia Martínez Altés. He was a key member of the group known as El Rovell d'Ou, and wrote the reviews of the exhibitions held in Barcelona in the handmade magazine *IL TIBERIO* under the nom de plume "Tupi". After visiting Paris he took part in a number of solo exhibitions. However the failure of one held at the Sala Parés in 1905 made him decide to give up painting to go into his father's business making chemical products. Nogués and Pidelaserra had known each other since they were fourteen and their friendship endured. Nogués even persuaded him to produce the occasional illustration for the magazine *PAPITU*. In 1929, or thereabouts, he started painting and exhibiting again.

11 • Emili Fontbona i Ventosa

(Barcelona, 1879-1938)

Sculptor. He trained at La Llotja, the Acadèmia Borrell and as an assistant to the sculptors Eduard Pagès, Eusebi Arnau and Antoni Gaudí. In 1898, he travelled to Paris, returning to Barcelona in 1902. He was a member of the group El Rovell d'Ou and a contributor to the magazine *IL TIBERIO*. He was deeply affected by the failure of the group exhibition held at the Sala Parés in 1905. In 1906 he suffered a mental breakdown and gave up sculpture. He is considered one of the best-loved friends of Nogués' youth.

12 • Josep Víctor Solà i Andreu

(Barcelona, 1878-1960)

Painter. A pupil of Francesc Miralles and Pere Borrell del Caso, he was a member of the group El Rovell d'Ou and a contributor to the handmade magazine *IL TIBERIO*.

13 • Gaietà Cornet i Palau

(Barcelona, 1878-1945)

Engineer, cartoonist and caricaturist. He trained at the Acadèmia Borrell and was a member of the group El Rovell d'Ou. He drew caricatures for *IL TIBERIO* long before he became known as an excellent caricaturist in nearly all the children's publications of the day, most importantly *EN PATUFET*.

14 • Sebastià Junyer i Vidal

(Castelló d'Empúries, 1878-Barcelona, 1966)

Painter and collector. He studied at La Llotja and the Acadèmia Borrell and was a member of the group El Rovell d'Ou. He took part in the group exhibition at the Sala Parés in 1905. He specialised in landscape painting but gave it up when he inherited a textile mill and had to take on the job of manager.

15 • Josep Lleonart i Maragall

(Barcelona, 1880-1951)

Scholar, translator and poet. He was the nephew of the poet Joan Maragall who encouraged him to follow his vocation. He studied in Germany and taught literature classes and worked on many publications of the day. He wrote the rhyming captions for the vignettes in one of Xavier Nogués' earliest known works, *L'AUCA DE SANT MEDIR* (The Gathering of Sant Medir). Lleonart i Maragall and Nogués remained firm friends throughout their lives.

16 • Cristòfor de Domènech

(Barcelona, 1878-1927)

Writer. The son of a wealthy family, he studied literature and philosophy. He wrote a number of books in

Spanish and Catalan, many of them unpublished. His treatise *L'oci d'un filòsof* has illustrations by Nogués.

17 • Ramon Riera i Moliner

(Barcelona, 1875-1937)

Draughtsman and lithographer. He studied at the Acadèmia Borrell. He was friends with all the painters and scholars of his day and was a member of the group El Rovell d'Ou, which also met in the back room of his lithography workshop on Carrer de Bilbao. The handmade, and lavishly illustrated fortnightly magazine, IL TIBERIO, was produced here. Riera i Moliner was the inspiration behind the magazine as well as its co-founder. The group used to send it to their fellow classmate Pere Ysern who was studying in Rome at the time. Riera launched many initiatives involving the group. He was responsible for the publication of Nogués' first works, the *Auca de Sant Medir*, and the magazine POTI-POTI. From 1894 to 1898, he took part in the fine arts exhibitions held in Barcelona.

18 • Pere Ysern Alié

(Barcelona, 1877-1946)

Painter. He trained at the Barcelona art school, the Escola de Llotja, and was a member of the group El Rovell d'Ou. While he was studying in Rome, his friends used to send him the magazine, IL TIBERIO, to keep him up to date with what was happening on the Barcelona cultural and arts scene. Shortly after returning to Barcelona, he moved to Paris. However, he would visit Barcelona every year to take part in the official exhibitions for which he won a number of medals and distinctions.

19 • Il Tiberio

The title of a truly unique magazine. Several issues were produced dedicated to various members of the group El Rovell d'Ou. The magazine, which came out every fortnight, was made possible thanks to the lithographer Ramon Riera. The first issue consisted of thirty-seven unique sections, each one hand-painted and illustrated. The magazine was produced so the group could send it to their friend Pere Ysern – who they nicknamed “Tiberio” – to keep him up to date with the latest happenings on Barcelona's cultural and arts scene while he was studying in Rome. Pidelaserra, Junyent, Cornet and Fontbona were in charge of a specific section of the magazine and played a more active role in writing the articles and producing the drawings and watercolours that illustrated its pages. Other members of the group occasionally took part. The first issue was completed on 15th November 1896. Some of the sections were more than forty-six pages long. The magazine was in quarto format (27.5 x 22 cm), except for one that was half this size. When Ysern returned to Barcelona, he gave Riera all the issues he had received while he was in Rome. Riera kept them for many years and they are now part of the collections of the Biblioteca Nacional de Catalunya. The Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (MNAC) has another copy of the magazine. As we said earlier, there were other issues of the magazine dedicated to other members of the group, including Josep V. Solà i Andreu, on 19th March 1898 to mark his saint's day, and Gaietà Cornet, on 7th August 1898, also his saint's day. The latter consisted of a single volume of thirty-two sections of twenty pages each. It had a zinc cover that had been engraved, painted and treated

with a special protective coating, signed by R. Riera Moliner. We can assume that the other editors of the magazine continued this custom. We know of the existence of two other copies, one of them with wooden covers in the shape of a painter's palette. Unfortunately, we don't know their whereabouts or who they were dedicated to. However, we can say, with all certainty, that the one dedicated to Ysern is the most important, both in terms of the number of sections, the extraordinary illustrations – some of which have even been embossed with gold glitter – and the fact that it was the first in this unique handmade collection.

20 • Francesc Sardà i Làdico

(Barcelona, 1877-1911)

Lawyer, painter and draughtsman. He studied at the Escola de Llotja with Laureà Barrau and Lluís Graner. After completing his studies, he went to Madrid to study Velázquez's works, and then to Paris where he frequented different academies. He specialised in portraiture and book and magazine illustrations.

21 • Josep Berga i Boix

(La Pinya-la Garrotxa, 1837-Olot, 1914)

Painter, writer and educator. A dedicated teacher, he ran the private painting academy, the Centre Artístic, for painters in and around Olot. In 1869 he was refused the post of director of the Escola Menor de Belles Arts d'Olot due to his Carlist ideology. He was eventually appointed to the post in 1877 and remained director until 1914. Everybody called him "Avi Berga" (Grandpa Berga), and his excellent work as an educator gave impetus and popularity to the renowned school in Olot. He wrote a number of novels

depicting everyday life, short stories and tales. He worked on a number of important magazines of the day.

22 • Marià Vayreda i Vila

(Olot, 1853-Barcelona, 1903)

Painter and writer. He went into voluntary exile in France for political reasons and studied in Paris. On his return to Barcelona in 1877, he taught for a year at the Escola de Belles Arts, before moving permanently to Olot. There he founded and ran the renowned business, L'Art Cristià, which produced religious art and images. As a painter, he specialised in the human figure and produced numerous works with his brother Joaquim. He was the author of a great many short stories and novels and worked on a number of publications. He was the promoter, president and leading light behind the Olot Regional Exhibition of Fine Arts and Art Industries, held in Olot in 1900. He died before the second regional exhibition took place in 1903.

23 • Josep Llimona i Bruguera

(Barcelona, 1864-1934)

Sculptor. He trained at La Llotja where he was awarded a stipend to study in Rome. He took part in many exhibitions in Spain and abroad where he won prizes and accolades. He held important posts in the art world, including the presidency of the museum board, the Junta de Museus de Barcelona. With his brother, the painter Joan Llimona, he founded the Cercle Artístic de Sant Lluç. He is considered one of the foremost sculptors of the Catalan art nouveau, or *modernista*, period, although he is more closely associated with the later *noucentista* movement.

24 • Josep Cusachs i Cusachs

(Montpellier, 1851-Barcelona, 1908)

Soldier and painter. He trained for a career in the military and attained the rank of artillery captain. He retired in 1882, having been appointed commander, to devote himself to his true calling: painting. He studied under Simó Gómez in Barcelona and Edouard Détaillé in Paris and specialised in equestrian and military themes.

25 • Modest Urgell i Inglada

(Barcelona, 1839-1919)

Painter and comic playwright. He studied under Ramon Martí i Alsina at the art school, the Escola de Llotja, and completed his studies in Paris. He wrote texts and plays and signed his drawings and the albums *DIARI D'UNA GITANETA* with the pseudonym “Katúfol”. He exhibited regularly at the Barcelona gallery, the Sala Parés, from its inception in 1877. He won major prizes and medals and achieved great success among the Madrid nobility. Nevertheless, the fact that he was refused admission to the art academy, the Reial Acadèmia Catalana de Belles Arts de Sant Jordi, due to an ongoing feud with Milà i Fontanals, cast a pall over the final years of his life.

26 • Modest Teixidor i Torres

(Barcelona, 1854-1927)

Painter. He was the son of the painter, Josep Teixidor i Busquets, and brother of the watercolourist, Pepeta Teixidor, who specialised in floral themes. He trained at the Escola de Llotja and in Paris and was known for his portraits, paintings of scenes from everyday life and landscapes. He took part in numerous exhibi-

tions in Spain and abroad, winning a number of prizes, including the 1921 Masriera award.

27 • Art i Pàtria

A group of artists, initially known as the Associació de Pintors i Escultors Catalans, comprising the painters Marià Pidelaserra, Pere Ysern, Joaquim Torres Garcia, Gaietà Cornet, Sebastià Junyer Vidal and the sculptors Emili Fontbona and the brothers Miquel and Lluçia Oslé.

28 • Artur Masriera i Colomer

(Barcelona, 1860-1929)

Writer, poet and historian. He was a member of the famous Masriera family of artists. A doctor of law, senior secondary-school teacher, humanist and translator. He was named master troubadour, Mestre en Gai Saber, in 1905, and contributed to a number of publications of the day, as well as writing and publishing numerous books. He was in charge of the literature section of the *Enciclopedia Espasa*.

29 • Alexandre de Cabanyes i Marquès

(Barcelona, 1877-Vilanova i la Geltrú, 1972)

Painter. The son of a well-to-do family, he trained in Barcelona under Josep Sugrañes i Florit. He was a regular at the café Els Quatre Gats and went to Madrid to further his studies. He lived in Paris and Munich and specialised in painting landscapes and sea scenes.

30 • Ermengol (Hermen) Anglada i Camarasa

(Barcelona, 1872-Mallorca, 1959)

Painter and engraver. He studied at the Barcelona art school, the Escola de Llotja, and Moragas' academy.

He later travelled to Paris, where he achieved great success. He lived there until the outbreak of the First World War forced him to leave. He went to Mallorca where he settled permanently.

31 • **Claudi Castelucho i Diana**

(Barcelona, 1870-Paris, 1927)

Painter. Drawing and painting teacher. He studied under Antoni Caba at the Escola de Llotja and moved to Paris where he lived for the rest of his life. He studied at Whistler's prestigious art school in Paris where he became associate professor. He later taught drawing and painting at the Académie Colarossi, better known as the Grande Chaumière.

32 • **Jean Antoine Injalbert**

(Beziers, 1845-Paris, 1933)

Sculptor. He trained in Paris and won prizes at a number of exhibitions, most importantly the grand prize at the 1889 Paris Universal Exhibition.

33 • **Francesc Madolell**

Interior decorator. He was a friend of Pere Ysern, who he met in Paris when he was furthering his studies. We only know about him because Joan Sacs mentions him in his biography of Nogués.

34 • **Lucian of Samosata**

(Samosata, Commagene, Greece, 120 AD-Egypt, 190 AD)

Rhetorician and philosopher named after the ancient Syrian city by the Euphrates. He wrote a number of eloquent, sophist texts. He travelled throughout Greece, Italy and Asia Minor.

35 • **Joaquim Torres-García**

(Montevideo, 1875-1949)

Painter, art theorist and drawing and painting teacher. He studied art in Barcelona and was a member of the group that exhibited at the Sala Parés in 1905. He was one of the leading lights of the cultural movement, *noucentisme*, and founded an art school in Barcelona. His subsequent stays in Paris and New York, where he worked with prominent groups of abstract artists, led to a shift in his style towards abstract constructivism. He became a keen proponent of the movement and introduced it to a number of countries and cities in Latin America, particularly Montevideo, where he made his permanent home and devoted himself fully to teaching.

36 • **Rafael Nogueras Oller**

(Barcelona, 1880-1949)

Writer. He was a friend and member of the group El Rovell d'Ou. His socially engaged writings didn't prevent him from setting up the satirical magazine *POTI POTI*, which had illustrations by Nogués. In his later years, he wrote a series of operettas and was a contributor to several newspapers of the day.

37 • **Antoni Serra i Fiter**

(Barcelona, 1869-1932)

Painter and ceramicist. As a young man he was a water-colourist but soon gave it up to devote himself fully to ceramics. After working and studying abroad, he settled in Olot and moved shortly afterwards to Barcelona. He excelled at producing high-fire porcelain, and won major prizes for his work. He taught at the Escola de Bells Oficis that had been set up by the

Commonwealth of Catalonia, the Mancomunitat. Josep Pey, Ismael Smith and Xavier Nogués were among his students and associates. In 1928 he settled in Cornellà where he set up a ceramics studio which is still run by his descendants today.

38 • Aleix Clapés i Puig

(Vilassar de d'Alt, 1846-Barcelona, 1920)

Painter and interior decorator. He trained in Reus and at the Barcelona art school, the Escola de Llotja, and studied mural painting techniques in Rome. He was a friend and associate of Gaudí's and worked on many of his buildings, including the Palau Güell and the Casa Milà (La Pedrera).

39 • Iu Pascual i Rodés

(Vilanova i la Geltrú, 1883-Riudarenes, La Selva, 1949).

Painter and landscapist. He was a painting teacher and composed music for the traditional Catalan circle dance, the *sardana*. He studied in Barcelona under the painter Joan Llimona. In 1906, he met Nogués while he was working on the decoration of La Pedrera. From 9th February 1915, when he was appointed director of the Escola Menor de Belles Arts d'Olot (which was renamed the Escola Superior de Paisatge in 1934) after being selected in a competitive exam, he transformed it into one of the most prestigious schools in Catalonia. In 1933, he invited Nogués to give classes in copperplate engraving as part of a pilot summer school. The classes were given official government recognition in 1934 and ran until 1939. Iu Pascual was the promoter of the association Les Arts i els Artistes and was one of Nogués' best and oldest friends.

40 • Teresa Lostau i Espinet

(Barcelona, 1884-1923)

Painter. She studied at the Escola de Llotja where she met Manolita Piña (who later became Torres-García's wife), Lola Anglada and Juli González's sisters, Lola and Pilar, with whom she became firm friends. She met Nogués in 1906 when he started working on decorating the ceiling and painting the murals at La Pedrera under the orders of Aleix Clapés. She took part in a number of group exhibitions and in early 1914 taught drawing and painting at the interior design school Torres-García had founded in Sarrià the year before. From 1917 onwards, she worked with Xavier Nogués on the murals in the Plandiura drawing room. She assisted Nogués in his other commissions, including decorating the ceramic details for Esteve Riera's cake shops and the ceramic frieze on the façade of the wine cooperative, the Cooperativa Agrícola de Pinell de Brai. In 1921 Teresa became the artist's wife. She died of tuberculosis on 12th July 1923.

41 • Antoni Vidal Rolland

(Barcelona, 1889-1970)

He studied under José Ruíz Blasco (Picasso's father) and Aleix Clapés at the Escola de Llotja and embarked on a career as a sculptor. Shortly afterwards, he submitted some paintings to the International Art Exhibition held in Barcelona in 1911. He told Mr Ainaud de Lasarte that he had met Nogués when he was painting posters advertising the films at the Cinema Capitol, on the Rambla de Canaletes in Barcelona. Despite their age difference, they remained good friends.

42 • Jaume Llongueras i Badia

(Barcelona, 1883-1955)

Painter, illustrator and interior decorator. He studied at the Barcelona art school, the Escola de Llotja, and worked under the orders of Gaudí on the Sagrada Família, La Pedrera and the project for the stained-glass windows at Mallorca Cathedral. Having established a reputation as an interior decorator, he worked on numerous projects, most importantly Lluís Plan-diura's homes in Barcelona and La Garriga, the restaurant Can Culleretes, Barcelona City Hall, the Palauet Albèiz and the little convent of Pedralbes, which he never saw completed. He had been friends with Nogués since 1904 and they worked together on many of the above projects.

43 • Apel·les Mestres i Oñós

(Barcelona, 1854-1936)

Cartoonist, musician, poet and gardener. He had studied at the Escola de Llotja and began working as a cartoonist for the *L'ESQUELLA DE LA TORRATXA* and *LA CAMPANA DE GRÀCIA*. He wrote numerous books of poetry, biographies, short stories, legends and plays, which he illustrated himself. Among the most important are *Liliana* and *La Casa Vella*. He also wrote a large number of popular songs. As a gardener, he bred a giant hydrangea, which earned him the nickname "the hydrangea king".

44 • Joaquim Furnó i Abad

(Barcelona, 1832-1918)

He trained at the Escola de Llotja from 1861 to 1863-1864 and worked in Paris where he studied intaglio printing techniques for medal making. He introduced

the direct-engraving technique to the process. He made a medal of Isabella II and was appointed engraver to the Royal Chamber. His most important works include the portraits illustrating Castelar's book, *La Revolución Religiosa*. He was given teaching posts at the Acadèmia de Belles Arts, where he taught copperplate engraving, and the Institut Català de les Arts del Llibre, where he taught embossing. Most of the finest engravers stepped through the doors of his workshop on Passeig de Sant Joan, where he taught copperplate engraving techniques until 1917. The renaissance of the graphic arts in Catalonia was largely due to him.

45 • Manuel Humbert i Esteve

(Barcelona, 1890-1975)

Cartoonist, painter and illustrator. He trained at the Escola de Llotja and the Acadèmia Galí. From a very young age, he worked on several magazines and publications, including *EL PAPITU*, where he met Nogués. Shortly afterwards, they both took engraving classes at Joaquim Furnó's studio. Despite their age difference, they forged a close friendship, although Humbert lived in Paris for many years. Unfortunately much of the interesting correspondence between Humbert and Nogués was destroyed during the Spanish Civil War. In April 1928, he and Nogués exhibited their fired enamelled glassware at the Galeries Laietanes.

46 • Feliu Elias i Bracons (pseudonyms, "Joan Sacs" and "Apa")

(Barcelona, 1878-1948)

Painter, caricaturist, writer, biographer and writer of art treatises. An erudite writer, he signed his art re-

views with the pseudonym “Joan Sacs” and his caricatures “Apa”. He worked on many publications, contributing articles and drawings. He was the founder and editor of many of them. In 1919, the French government awarded him the Légion d’Honneur. Carles Soldevila described him as a pure, competent and incorruptible doctrinarian, “*the Robespierre of art criticism.*”

He and Nogués were great friends and admired each other’s work.

47 • Francesc Pujols i Morgades

(Barcelona, 1882-Martorell, 1962)

Philosopher, poet and journalist. At the young age of twenty-one, he won the Flor Natural prize at the poetry festival, the Jocs Florals, held in Barcelona in 1903. He was a member of the circle that frequented the café Els Quatre Gats and other arts societies. His writings on philosophy remain unpublished, but he is well known for his work as a chronicler of the arts, writer, editor and contributor to many magazines and journals of the day, as well as for his jokes and anecdotes. He was a friend and unconditional admirer of Nogués and wrote numerous articles about him. He was one of his first biographers.

48 • Les Arts i els Artistes

Name of the association founded in Barcelona in 1910, inspired by Iu Pascual’s idea of bringing together painters and sculptors in a group that was opposed to the academic trends still prevalent in Barcelona. Although it was a difficult enterprise to bring to fruition due to the marked individuality of the artists, Iu Pascual’s willpower and efforts led to its success and

established its aim to protect and disseminate the arts. The association was home to the finest artists of the day who would gather at the Cafè Continental or Galeries Laietanes. Francesc Pujols was its secretary and spokesperson and its ideology was to extol a nationalism that was Mediterranean in spirit, as well as order, proportion, effort and continuity. The new group was supported by top-level politicians and this led it to be recognised by the official corporations who were majority members on the city council’s museum board, the Junta de Museus, and the committees in charge of organising exhibitions. This work of renewal resulted in all kinds of exhibitions, lectures and publications, fostering an interest in collecting and creativity that soon resulted in the creation of the Museu d’Art Modern de Catalunya.

49 • Joaquim Folch i Torres

(Barcelona, 1886-Badalona, 1963)

Writer, art critic and museologist. He was a contributor to, as well as the founder and editor of numerous magazines. He had studied drawing, ironsmithing, aesthetics and art theory. These skills proved extremely useful when he was appointed director of the Department of Medieval and Modern Art at the Museus Municipals de Barcelona.

50 • Josep Aragay i Blanchard

(Barcelona, 1890-Breda, 1973)

Painter, cartoonist and ceramicist. He studied under Francesc Galí and travelled to Italy to complete his studies. He was a contributor to several humorous magazines. He was a founder member of the association Les Arts i els Artistes and was one of the leading

figures of the cultural movement, *noucentisme*. Aragay, together with Humbert, was one of Nogués' best friends, in spite of their age difference. During the first incarnation of the magazine, *PAPITU*, the three friends were inseparable. Aragay told us that they went to see the first Charlie Chaplin film together during its Barcelona premiere.

51 • Joaquim Horta de Boadella

(Barcelona, 1878-1956)

Typographer and printer. In 1893 he took up an apprenticeship with Marià Alegret, and then began working at Josep Cunill's printworks. He completed his professional training in Paris, returning to Barcelona in 1901. He set up his own business in 1905 and it became one of the most prestigious printworks in Barcelona.

52 • Santiago Segura i Brugués

(Sabadell, 1879-Valencia, 1918)

Antiquarian, art dealer and promoter of the arts. He was the nephew of the ceramicist Marià Brugués who hailed from the town of Sabadell. He was the owner of the *Faianç Català* gallery, the *Galeries Laietanes* and *La Basílica*, which sold art objects and hosted exhibitions. During his short life, Segura founded and financed the country's finest art journals, including *REVISTA NOVA*, *VELL I NOU* and many other publications. He was a keen patron of the arts and encouraged young artists and creators. He travelled through Spain and abroad with his art adviser, Miquel Utrillo, in search of works of art and antiques. Segura often said to his friends that he didn't understand business without the pleasure of risk, a statement that encapsulates his character as a dealer, creator and artist.

53 • Eugeni d'Ors i Rovira

(Barcelona, 1881-Vilanova i la Geltrú, 1954)

Writer and philosopher. He studied law and was a contributor to several magazines of the day. He frequented the *café*, *Els Quatre Gats*, and the *Cercle Artístic de Sant Lluc*. He produced drawings that he signed *O.R* ("Octavi Romeu"), a pseudonym he also used in his writings, along with "Xènius". He was the author of *Glossari*, a series of chronicles published in *LA VEU DE CATALUNYA*, as well as a political and cultural commentator. In the summer of 1911 he published the different instalments that made up *LA BEN PLANTADA*, which was published as a book the following year, with a cover featuring Xavier Nogués' etching of the same name. He was the founder of the aesthetic doctrine he named *noucentisme*, and had a decisive influence on the work of many artists of the day. He worked tirelessly in the field of culture, organised courses, and promoted art and culture in Catalonia. He was forced to resign from his post as director of the Catalan government's Public Education Department due to ideological differences with government officials. In January 1923 he moved to Madrid where he continued his work promoting art and culture.

54 • Galeries Laietanes

Gallery and antique shop set up in Barcelona by Santiago Segura in 1915. A subsidiary of the *Faianç Català* gallery, the *Galeries Laietanes* were run by Segura's wife, Maria Cladellas, who continued at the helm of the business after she was widowed, with the same spirit. The gallery stood at number 613 on *Gran Via de les Corts Catalanes*, and hosted important exhibitions and numerous cultural events. After the Spanish

Civil War, the Galeries Laietanes were taken over by a manufacturer from Sabadell. Josep Gudiol i Ricart took over the gallery in 1947 with the aim of making it a centre for avant-garde art. It hosted a number of exhibitions and the October Salons. In 1958, the Galeries Laietanes closed their doors for ever.

Nogués' murals in its famous basement café, El Cellar, where clients and friends of the gallery would meet, were removed and restored by Gudiol in 1947. They were sold to Antoni Maragall from the Sala Parés who offered them to the Museu d'Art Modern. The museum purchased nearly all the panels and most of the large ones. The rest were acquired by private collectors.

55 • Lluís Plandiura i Pou

(Barcelona, 1882-1956)

Industrialist, art collector and patron. He was drawn to art at a very young age and briefly attended classes at the Acadèmia Galí. He began to collect posters and by the age of nineteen had assembled an extraordinary selection. In 1901, they were exhibited at the Cercle Artístic de Sant Lluc and subsequently acquired by the Museus Municipals d'Art. Although Plandiura didn't follow his calling as a painter and devoted himself entirely to business, he never stopped collecting works of art or frequenting his artist friends. Having made his fortune in the sugar trade, he was able to afford important works of art. He became a patron to his friends and held important positions at some of Barcelona's foremost cultural institutions, most importantly as a member of the executive committee of the 1929 Barcelona International Exhibition. This allowed him to pick the ideal team to create the visitor attraction, the

Poble Espanyol, and commission the best artists of the day to work on the decorative elements and buildings for the exhibition. Many of the pieces from his collections are on display at the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, the MNAC. For many years, Plandiura was president of the circle that met at the Hotel Colón, known as the "Penya del Colón", which attracted some of the best artists of the day.

56 • Ramon Reventós i Bordoy, "Moni"

(Barcelona, 1882-1923)

Writer. He was a contributor to numerous publications of the day, including ARTE JOVEN, EL POBLE CATALÀ, PÈL & PLOMA, L'ESQUELLA DE LA TORRATXA, PAPITU, LA PATRIA, REVISTA NOVA, LA MAINADA, D'ACÍ D'ALLÀ. He wrote the foreword to the first edition of Xavier Nogués' *50 ninots*.

57 • Francesc Quer i Selves

(Sabadell, 1858-Lisbon, 1933)

Ceramicist. He began his training at the studio of the father of Marià Burguès i Serra, who had founded the Faianç Català in Sabadell in 1897 and was Santiago Segura's uncle.

He went on to work for other ceramicists to hone his craft and gain experience. He completed his training in Paris, Valencia and Rio de Janeiro. On his return to Barcelona he joined the teaching staff at the Escola de Bells Oficis that had been set up by the Commonwealth of Catalonia, the Mancomunitat de Catalunya. He taught a subject called Arts of the Earth and trained many well-known potters and ceramicists. His research into a new kind of stoneware ruined him financially and he left the country for Lisbon where he set

up and managed a series of industrial potteries. He worked on most of the ceramic pieces decorated by Nogués, who he introduced to this technique.

58 • Ricard Crespo Boquera

(Cambrils, Baix Camp, 1981-Barcelona, 1949)

The fifth of seven brothers who lost their father at a very young age. At the age of nine Crespo was apprenticed to one of Barcelona's oldest and most prestigious glass studios, Can Rigalt i Granell. He went on to study at the Escola de Bells Oficis, with Francesc Quer and Llorens Artigas. He was eventually made art director at Espejos Murguía S.A., the company that made all the glasswork for the 1929 Barcelona Universal Exhibition. He also worked with Buigas on the illuminated fountain and the asparagus-shaped light columns on Passeig de Maria Cristina. He set up and supervised the installation of the kilns and equipment at the glassmaking studio on Carrer Caballeros in the Poble Espanyol, where visitors could enjoy demonstrations of this ancient technique.

Thanks to Crespo's tenacity, professionalism and help, Nogués decided to decorate enamelled glass.

59 • Josep Granyer i Giralt

(Barcelona, 1899-1983)

Sculptor, draughtsman and engraver. He trained at the Barcelona art school, the Escola de Llotja, and worked with Nogués on a number of works, such as the figure of drunken man that he sculpted into the banister finial on the staircase in the basement café, El Cellar, the sculptures of the bear, the hunter and the lioness, and the figures that were part of the dioramas Nogués designed for the 1929 Barcelona Inter-

national Exhibition. In 1933, Granyer sculpted the figurines of the lady with the fan and the man with the umbrella, based on drawings by Nogués.

60 • Ricard Canals i Llambí

(Barcelona, 1876-1931)

Painter. In 1893 he and Nogués enrolled at the Barcelona art school, the Escola de Llotja. In 1896, the two friends travelled to Caldes de Boí and in 1897 they visited Paris where Nonell was exhibiting his paintings of people suffering from cretinism that had a great impact on the public. At this time, Canals began working on his paintings of Spanish customs. Canals was a member of the "Colla del Safrà" (saffron group) and one of the founders of the association Les Arts i els Artistes. He was one of Nogués' most loyal and devoted friends.

61 • Francesc Labarta i Planas

(Barcelona, 1883-1963)

Painter, interior designer and educator. He studied under his father, the painter Lluís Labarta i Grané, and Soler i Rovirosa, Pascó, Pellicer, Más i Fondevila and Anglada Camarasa. He provided illustrations for PAPIU, L'ESQUELLA DE LA TORRATXA, CUCA FERA, FOYER and other satirical magazines, under the pseudonym "Lata". He was a member of the association Les Arts i els Artistes. He dedicated his career to interior design and teaching. He was appointed to the teaching staff at the Escola de Paisatge d'Olot and, like Nogués, spent the entire Spanish Civil War in the town. When he returned to Barcelona he continued teaching at the Escola d'Arts i Oficis Artístics and Escola de Belles Arts de Sant Jordi, where he trained numerous artists.

62 • Ricardo Gutiérrez Abascal (pseudonyms, “Juan de la Encina” and “Silvio Lago”)

(Bilbao, 1883-Mexico, 1964)

Novelist, playwright, journalist, writer of treatises and art critic. He studied humanities at Heidelberg University. He began working on different Spanish and foreign magazines just after completing his secondary education. He achieved great popularity as a contributor to *LA ESFERA* under the pseudonym “Silvio Lago”. He wrote novels and plays and in 1915 joined the editorial team at the magazine *ESPAÑA*, while still working for other Madrid-based journals and newspapers, such as *SOL* and *LA VOZ*. His career as an art critic led him to be admitted to the Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando. In 1931 he was appointed director of the Museo de Arte Moderno in Madrid, and was involved in safeguarding works from the Prado, which were taken to Switzerland during the Spanish Civil War. After the war he went into exile in Mexico where he taught classes at the National University until his retirement. He wrote numerous monographs and books on art.

63 • Francesc d’Assís Galí i Fabra

(Barcelona, 1880-1965)

Painter, draughtsman and educator. He studied architecture at the Acadèmia Hoyo in Barcelona and then at the Escola de Llotja. He was just twenty-six when he set up his prestigious art academy on Carrer de la Cucurulla in Barcelona where he taught drawing in an innovative and original way. Many important artists of the day trained there. From 1915 until 1924, he ran the Escola Superior de Belles Arts that had been set up by the Commonwealth of Catalonia, the Man-

comunitat. The school closed in 1924 following the instatement of Primo de Rivera’s dictatorship.

64 • Pablo Ruíz i Picasso

(Malaga, 1881-Mougins, 1973)

Painter, draughtsman, engraver, ceramicist and sculptor. He studied art at the Escola de Llotja in Barcelona, where his father was a teacher. He frequented the café, Els Quatre Gats, and other artistic circles in the city, until he left for Paris. In June 1917, he visited Barcelona and Santiago Segura hosted a testimonial supper in his honour at the basement café, El Cellar, at the Galeries Laietanes. All the invited artists signed the book of honour, with Picasso at the top of the list. He wrote the inscription “... *Visca Catalunya i els meus amics*” (Long live Catalonia and my friends). During the supper, Utrillo organised a collection to raise funds to buy the painting *Arlequin* (Harlequin) and donate it to the Museu de Belles Arts de Barcelona (*LA PUBLICIDAD*, Barcelona, 17th July 1917). The donation didn’t take place until November 1918.

65 • Carles Riba i Bracons

(Barcelona, 1893-1959)

Writer, humanist, poet and translator. He studied law and literature and obtained his doctorate in 1938. In 1911, he won the Flor Natural prize at the poetry festival, the Jocs Florals, in Girona. He devoted his life to teaching and taught at the librarians’ school, the Escola de Bibliotecaries. He was professor of Greek at the Fundació Bernat Metge and the Autonomous University and vice-president of the Institució de les Lletres Catalanes. He went into exile in France where he lived until 1943. He wrote numerous books of short stories and some children’s books, including *Les*

Aventures d'en Perro Marrasquí and *Els Sis Joans*, which were illustrated by Nogués.

66 • Joan Salvat-Papasseit

(Barcelona, 1894-1924)

Writer, poet and journalist. Together with his brother, he produced a number of publications and directed the publishers, the Llibreria Nacional Catalana. Santiago Segura gave them permission to run a bookshop, Salvat Llibreters, which was in the entrance hall of his gallery, the Galeries Laietanes. Nogués was one of the poet's best friends. As Plandiura's intermediary, he was in charge of administrating the fees to pay the sanatorium where Salvat had been admitted, and took care of his mother, wife and children. As a token of gratitude, Salvat dedicated his poem "Bodegom" to Nogués, which was included in his book *Poemes en ondes hertzianes* and the collection *Ossa Menor*. Nogués was with his friend at the end of his life and closed his eyes after he had died.

67 • Agrupació Coubert

Founded in 1918, the group was only active for a year. It was made up of the youngest *noucentista* painters and was, to some extent, the forerunner of the Catalan avant-garde art movement. Its members were Josep Francesc Ràfols, Josep Llorens i Artigas, Enric C. Ricart, Joan Miró, Francesc Domingo, Rafael Benet, Josep Togores, Josep Obiols and Joaquim Torres-García.

68 • Artur Aldofreu

(Barcelona, first quarter of the 20th century)

Painter and interior decorator. He trained at the Barcelona art school, the Escola de Llotja, and specialised in landscapes and seascapes. He was a professional

interior decorator by career. He worked with Xavier Nogués and Teresa Lostau on the decoration of the Plandiura drawing room.

69 • Cèsar Martinell

(Valls, 1888-Barcelona, 1973)

Architect, restorer of buildings and writer. He studied in Barcelona and Madrid. He specialised in building wineries and farmers' cooperatives and worked on a number of publications. He also wrote books and biographies. He invited Nogués to collaborate on the decorations of the cooperative winery, the Cooperativa de Pinell de Brai, which was nicknamed the "cathedral of wine" and was one of his finest works. Nogués also produced a series of small tiled panels on wine-related themes to decorate other buildings Martinell had designed.

70 • Josep Carner i Puig-Oriol

(Barcelona, 1884-Brussels, 1970)

Writer, poet and journalist. At the age of fourteen he won the first prize in the poetry competition organised by the magazine ATLÀNTIDA. He worked on numerous periodicals and magazines. In 1910, the panel of the poetry competition, the Jocs Florals de Barcelona, named him a master troubadour, or Mestre en Gai Saber in Catalan. He sat the exams to join the consular corps, as a representative of Spain in Genoa, Costa Rica, Le Havre and Hendaye. His literary works are among the crowning achievements of the Catalan cultural movement, *noucentisme*. They include the libretto for the operetta, *El giravolt de maig* (The May Somersault), set to music by Maestro Toldrà. Nogués designed the costumes and sets.

71 • Pompeu Fabra i Poc

(Barcelona, 1868-Prada de Conflent, 1948)

Chemical engineer, grammarian and lexicographer. He taught at the engineering school, the Escuela de Ingenieros, in Bilbao. His fondness for studying the Catalan language and concern for its grammar and the way it was written, prompted him to take part in the 1st Congress of the Catalan Language – in a self-taught capacity – held in Barcelona in 1906. The prestige he achieved led him to become a Catalan teacher, university professor and president of the Institut d'Estudis Catalans. His guidelines in favour of the standardisation of the language are still in force today.

72 • Ignasi Dublé i Barceló

We only know he was a friend of the family of Nogués' wife, Teresa Lostau, and was a witness at their wedding.

73 • Juli González i Pellicer

(Barcelona, 1876-Arcueil, Paris, 1942)

Painter and sculptor. He trained at his father's workshop with his siblings Joan, Pilar and Lola, and at the Barcelona art school, the Escola de Llotja. After the death of their father, the family moved to Paris. To help the family financially, the sisters worked as dress-makers at some of the city's top fashion houses. After the death of his eldest brother, Juli devoted himself to sculpture and established a reputation as one of the finest sculptors of the 20th century. In 1921 Nogués, who had just married Teresa Lostau, went on honeymoon to Paris and visited Juli González's family, because Juli's sisters were very good friends of Teresa's. Nogués took advantage of the visit to ask Juli to take

part in the exhibition being organised by Les Arts i els Artistes in 1923. He exhibited two repoussé bronze masks and two paintings. This was the last Barcelona exhibition González took part in while he was alive.

74 • Ramon Sunyer i Clarà

(Barcelona, 1889-1963)

Jeweller and silversmith. The son of a dynasty of silversmiths, he learnt his trade with his father and completed his training at the school run by Francesc d'A. Galí. He took part in numerous exhibitions, most importantly the International Exhibition of Decorative Arts in Paris in 1925, the Artists' Salon held at the 1920 Barcelona International Exhibition, the 1936 Milan Triennale and the 3rd Barcelona Biennale of Latin American Art held in 1955, the year the decorative arts association, FAD, held a retrospective exhibition – "Fifty Years of Silversmithing" – in his honour.

75 • Manuel Clausells i Vilasaló

(Barcelona, 9th May 1889-8th October 1936)

He lost his father at a very young age and was educated at the Escolania de Nostra Senyora de la Mercè. At the age of seventeen, he was offered an unpaid internship at the company run by the industrialist Damià Mateu i Plà. He eventually became his advisor, right-hand man and legal representative. Clausells was self-taught and had an extensive musical training. His passion for music led him to be one of the cofounders of the Associació de Música de Cambra de Barcelona. He was also general secretary of the association from 1918-1919 until his death. He founded the Concerts Blaus, an intimate concert series, and the Associació Cançons Velles i Noves, which

was dedicated to baroque and modern music. He also organised jazz sessions, literary gatherings and poetry competitions.

76 • **Rossend Partagàs i Lluch**

(Barcelona, 1888-1945)

Lawyer, industrialist and collector. A friend of artists and art critics, he was a keen collector of paintings, coins, bibliophile editions and, in particular, drawings. When he died, his extraordinary collection of sculptures, oil paintings and drawings – comprising six hundred and ninety works in total – was bequeathed to the *Museus Municipals d'Art*.

77 • **Galleries Dalmau**

Gallery founded by the painter, restorer and art dealer Josep Dalmau i Rafel (1867–1937). Originally situated on Carrer del Pi, it later moved to Portaferriça, and, eventually, to Passeig de Gràcia, where it remained until 1930, the year its owner was appointed art director to the bookshop Catalonia. The Galleries Dalmau earned great renown for their eclecticism and pioneering vision that introduced avant-garde art to Barcelona. The gallery hosted the first exhibitions of cubist art, new Polish art, Swedish painting, Catalan abstract art and shows by the Catalan evolutionists, as well as Picabia, Miró, Dalí, and the groundbreaking group of architects, the GATCPAC. Dalmau also published booklets and magazines, including *391*, which was the mouthpiece for the dadaist movement. He also launched the *Associació d'Artistes Independents*, and wrote its manifesto. The association broke up due to the Spanish Civil War.

78 • **Pau Gargallo i Catalán**

(Maella, 1881-Reus, 1934)

Sculptor. He studied in Eusebi Arnau's studio and at the Barcelona art school, the *Escola de Llotja*, where he was taught by Venanci Vallmitjana. He worked on the decoration of the Hospital de la Santa Creu i Sant Pau and the interiors of the Palau de la Música Catalana (1905-1908). He was a member of the association *Les Arts i els Artistes* and travelled frequently to Paris where he lived from 1923 until 1934. Gargallo sculpted a wonderful portrait of Nogués.

79 • **Santiago Marco i Urrútia**

(Tarragona, 1885-Barcelona, 1949)

Interior decorator and designer. He studied at the *Escola de Llotja*, and, as a young man, worked at Agustí Rigalt's glassmaking studio studying glass enamelling techniques. He travelled to Mexico and, on his return to Barcelona, he went to work for the prestigious furniture maker, Francesc Vidal. By 1920, or thereabouts, he was a fully fledged, self-employed interior designer. As president of the decorative arts association, the *Foment de les Arts Decoratives (FAD)*, he organised and supervised a number of group exhibitions of decorative art from Spain and abroad, which were an extraordinary success. As a member of the *Patronat de les Arts Decoratives*, in 1928, he was instrumental in setting up the *Escola d'Arts Sumptuàries*, which later became the art school, the *Escola Massana*. He was awarded the *Légion d'Honneur*, among other distinctions. He also published a number of books on decoration and design.

80 • **Ángel Ferrant**

(Madrid, 1891-1961)

Sculptor and educator. He was the son of the painter Angel Ferrant and studied at the Escuela de Artes y Oficios in Madrid, and then at the Escuela de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, also in the Spanish capital. He travelled in Belgium, Italy and Germany and lived for a time in Paris. He began his career as an art teacher in 1918, giving classes in Galicia, Barcelona and Madrid, where he moved in 1934 and lived until his death.

81 • **Gabriel García Maroto**

(Solana, Ciudad Real, 1889-Mexico, 1969))

Painter, draughtsman, engraver, lithographer and art critic. He studied in Madrid, where he soon held his first exhibition to great acclaim. As an art critic, he wrote numerous articles in several magazines, including *LA GACETA LITERARIA*. In his book, *La nueva España*. 1927-1930, he outlined the project for an interesting and new restructuring regime for art education, which reached the planning stages in Madrid in late 1928 and early 1929 during the short-lived Berenguer government. The project never came to fruition for political reasons.

82 • **Miquel Utrillo i Morlius**

(Barcelona, 1862-Sitges, 1934).

Draughtsman, painter, art critic and promoter of the arts. He was one of the founders of the magazines *PÈL & PLOMA* and *FORMA*. An inseparable friend of Santiago Rusiñol and Ramon Casas, he was a leading light in Catalonia's home-grown art nouveau movement, *modernisme*. He was Santiago Segura's friend and artistic adviser, and travelled with him round Spain in

search of works of art and antiques to sell at the Fàianç Català gallery. From 1915, he organised the exhibitions held at the Galeries Laietanes. From 1927, he played an important role in the projects for the 1929 Barcelona International Exhibition, particularly the design and building of the Poble Espanyol. The executive committee of the exhibition later appointed him secretary of the visitor attraction.

83 • **Francesc Folguera i Grassi**

(Barcelona, 1891-1960)

Architect. His most important works included the now-vanished Teatre Circ Olympia in Barcelona and the Poble Espanyol on Montjuïc, built for the 1929 Barcelona International Exhibition, which he worked on with Ramon Reventós, Nogués and Utrillo. One of his most personal and distinctive buildings is the Casa de Sant Jordi at the junction of Carrer Casp and Carrer Pau Claris in Barcelona. He published a number of technical and educational handbooks.

84 • **Ramon Reventós i Farrarons**

(Barcelona, 1893-1976)

Architect. A pupil of Francesc d'A. Galí, he studied at the Escola d'Arquitectes de Barcelona where he graduated in 1917. That same year, he began teaching carpentry and architecture at the Escola Superior de Bells Oficis. He was appointed to work on a number of projects for the 1929 Barcelona Universal Exhibition, including the brick towers that flank the entrance to Avinguda de Maria Cristina and the Poble Espanyol, which he worked on with Francesc Folguera in collaboration with Xavier Nogués and Miquel Utrillo.

85 • Joaquim Llançó i Figa

(Navata, Alt Empordà, 1887-Barcelona, 1968)

He studied civil engineering in Madrid and held important official positions, including deputy mayor responsible for public works and town planning at Barcelona City Council. He was also a member of the 1929 Barcelona International Exhibition permanent committee, responsible for building work.

86 • Nicolau M. Rubió i Tuduri

(Maó, 1891-Barcelona, 1981)

Architect, town planner, garden designer and writer. He studied in Barcelona and graduated in 1916. He studied under Francesc d'A. Galí and Jean Forestier, specialising in landscape architecture with the latter. He taught this subject at the Escola Superior de Belles Arts and was director of the Barcelona Public Gardens Department. For the 1929 International Exhibition, he worked with his teacher Forestier organising the layout and landscaping of Montjuïc Park. He built the hotels in Plaça Espanya and held different posts in the different departments that had been set up for the exhibition. He worked on a number of magazines of the day in his specialist areas, and also published short stories, novels and travel books.

87 • Jaume Bofill i Mates (nom de plume “Guerau de Liost”)

(Olot, 1878-Barcelona, 1933)

Lawyer, politician, orator, journalist, scholar and poet. He was a councillor on Barcelona City Council and earned a reputation for his honesty. He served as a minister during the Commonwealth of Catalonia, the Mancomunitat de Catalunya, and held a number of

posts, with the spirit of service to the city always uppermost in his mind. He wrote many of his literary works under the nom de plume “Guerau de Liost”. They have been translated into different languages. Xavier Nogués provided wonderful illustrations for his book *Sàtires*.

88 • Josep Obiols i Palau

(Barcelona, 1894-1967)

Painter. He trained at Torres-García's art school, the Escola de Decoració. From 1923, he began to specialise in mural painting. His most important ones include the murals in the central hall of Barcelona's main post office and the tympana in the Palau Nacional de Montjuïc. He painted landscapes and still lifes, and was particularly accomplished at painting subjects that appealed to children. He also illustrated posters, books and magazines.

89 • Eduard Toldrà

(Barcelona, 1895-1962)

Violinist, composer and conductor. His many works include *El giravolt de maig* (The May Somersault), which premiered at the Palau de la Música Catalana on 25th October 1928. This comic operetta, with a libretto by Josep Carner, was one of the major successes of musical theatre in Catalonia. Nogués designed the sets and costumes.

90 • Enriqueta Benigani (Enriqueta Pascual Benigani)

(Barcelona, 1905-1969)

Painter and interior decorator, specialising in lacquering techniques. She was the wife of Lluís Bracons, who taught her the technique he had studied in Paris,

and became his assistant. Enriqueta won the gold medal for her panel dedicated to Saint George at the International Exhibition of Decorative Arts held in Paris in 1925. Her screen, replicating Xavier Nogués' original drawing of Calaf market, won her the gold medal at the 1929 Barcelona International Exhibition.

91 • Lluís Serrahima

(Barcelona, 1870-1951)

Lawyer. He was president of the Cercle Artístic de Sant Lluç, the bank, the Caixa de Pensions, and a member and dean of the board of the Lawyers' Association.

92 • Raül Roviralta i Astoul

(Paris, 1891-Brazil, ?)

Doctor and collector. He graduated in medicine in Barcelona in 1915, specialising in paediatrics. He was an adviser on the welfare board of the Catalan government. He amassed an important collection of miniature ships and other works of art. In 1951, Pope XII named him Marquis of Santa Clotilde de Roviralta after his estate, Santa Clotilde, on Boadella beach in Lloret de Mar.

93 • Domènech Carles i Rosich

(Barcelona, 1888-Olot, 1962)

Self-taught painter. From 1910 to 1913 he studied at a number of Parisian academies and held exhibitions in Barcelona and abroad. He specialised in interior decoration and worked on a few, yet nonetheless important, commissions, including the Santa Clotilde estate owned by Dr. Roviralta. He wrote letters from Paris for LA VEU DE CATALUNYA and in 1944 published his memoir, *Memorias de un pintor*.

94 • Pedro Antonio de Alarcón

(Guadix, 1833-Madrid, 1891)

Scholar and journalist. His prolific literary output included *El sombrero de tres picos* (1874), a depiction of popular Spanish customs later set to music by Manuel de Falla. Nogués produced magnificent original etchings for the bibliophile edition of the book published in 1934 by Gustau Gili's Edicions La Cometa.

95 • Francesc Costa i Carrera

(Barcelona, 1891-1959)

Violinist. Trained at the Conservatori de Barcelona, he continued his studies in Brussels. In 1914, he made his debut as a soloist with Enric Granados. A friend of artists and intellectuals, his special physique made him an excellent model for painters and sculptors. He was depicted on Nogués' poster for one of his concerts.

96 • Josep Llorens Artigas (nom de plume, "Joan Fidel")

(Barcelona, 1892-1980)

Ceramicist, educator and art critic. He studied at the Barcelona art school, the Escola de Llotja, and at the Escola Superior de Bells Oficis run by Francesc d'A. Galí. He also frequented the Cercle Artístic de Sant Lluç. He was a founder member of the Agrupació Courbet and made a vital contribution to modern ceramics. He later taught ceramics as part of the course known as the Arts of the Earth at the Escola de Bells Oficis. He won numerous prizes and distinctions at home and abroad throughout his life. He worked with artists such as Braque, Joan Miró and Xavier Nogués. He wrote a number of articles and art reviews under the nom de plume "Joan Fidel" that were published in

the magazines of the day. He wrote several books on ceramic techniques.

97 • Joan Oliver i Sallarés (nom de plume, “Pere Quart”)

(Sabadell, 1899-Barcelona, 1988)

Writer and poet. He was a contributor to, and editor of numerous publications and magazines. Together with Francesc Trabal, he was editor-in-chief of the publications LA MIRADA and the INSTITUCIÓ DE LES LLETRES printed in Sabadell. He went into exile in 1939, and lived in Chile from 1940 to 1947. On his return to Barcelona, he worked on the magazines

DESTINO and SERRA D'OR. He signed nearly all his poetic output under the nom de plume “Pere Quart”. Xavier Nogués illustrated his *Bestiari*.

98 • Joan Timoneda

(Valencia, c.1518-1583)

Bookseller, writer and poet. He is considered one of the founders of Spanish theatre. Nogués was working on the illustrations for Timoneda's book, *El Patrañuelo*, at the time of his death and some of the drawings were left unfinished. The Madrid publishers, Editorial Emporium, published the book with Nogués' illustrations in 1941.

Exhibitions

Solo exhibitions

1917

- Madrid. *Exhibition of Etchings. Xavier Nogués*. Ateneo. 16th-30th April. The cover of the catalogue features a lino cut by Xavier Nogués.
- Barcelona. *Exhibition of Etchings by Xavier Nogués*. Galeries Laietanes. 19th May.

1924

- Barcelona. *Exhibition of 12 Engravings*. Galeries Catalònia. 20th November-5th December.

1928

- Barcelona. *Drawings*. Galeries Catalònia. 17th-25th January.

1931

- Barcelona. *38 Engravings*. La Pinacoteca. 26th September-9th October.

1934

- Reus. *40 Engravings*. Centre de Lectura. 14th-26th April.
- Barcelona. *Xavier Nogués exhibits 20 engravings and seven illustrations for the Sombrero de Tres Picos*. Galeries Syra. 9th-22nd June.

1935

- Barcelona. *17 paintings by Xavier Nogués*. La Pinacoteca. 6th-19th April.

1940

- Barcelona. *Exhibition of Engravings by Xavier Nogués*. Galeries Syra. 5th-20th December.

Group exhibitions

1900

- Olot. Olot Regional Exhibition of Fine Arts and Art Industries. 15th August-15th September.

1902

- Barcelona. Grand International Postcard Competition. Organised by F. Clarà i Cia. April, n.d.
- Barcelona. Poster Competition for the Festes de la Mercè. Barcelona City Council, n.d.
- Barcelona. Art i Pàtria. Ateneu. May, n.d.

1903

- Olot. Olot Regional Exhibition of Fine Arts and Art Industries, n.d.

1905

- Barcelona. *Fontbona, Juñer-Vidal, Nogués, Pidelaserra, Torres-García, Ysern and Alié*. Can Parés. 1st-13th April.

1910

- Barcelona. 1st Les Arts i els Artistes Salon. Faianç Català. 30th April-31st May.

1911

- Barcelona. 2nd Les Arts i els Artistes Salon. Faianç Català, 25th February-12th March.
- Barcelona. Sala Parés, December.

1912

- Barcelona. 3rd Les Arts i els Artistes Salon. Faianç Català, n.d

1913

- Barcelona. 4th Les Arts i els Artistes Salon. Faianç Català, n.d

1914

- Barcelona. *Les Arts i els Artistes Exhibition*. Galeries Laietanes. 16th-31st May.

1915

- Barcelona. *A raffle to raise funds for the victims and people injured in the Great War*, n.d.
- Sabadell. *New Catalan Art Exhibition*. Centre Català de Sabadell. 1st-15th August.
- Barcelona. *Plandiura Collection*. Galeries Vell i Nou (Galeries Laietanes). 23rd September-30th October / 30th October-6th November / 6th November-14th December.

1916

- Barcelona. Les Arts i els Artistes Salon. 1st-14th May.
- Bilbao. *Barcelona Art and Artists*. Asociación de Artistas Vascos. 15th November.

1918

- Barcelona. 1st Autumn Salon. Associació Amics de les Arts. Desembre, n.d.

1919

- Barcelona. *Agrupació Courbet*. Galeries Laietanes, n.d.

1920

- Barcelona. *Art Exhibition*. Junta Municipal d'Exposicions. 23rd April-15th June.
- Paris. Salon d'Automne. Grand Palais des Champs-Élysées. 15th October-12th December.

1921

- Barcelona. *Exhibition of Drawings Organised by the Associació de Les Arts i els Artistes*. Galeries Laietanes. April, n.d.
- Barcelona. *Art Exhibition*. Junta Municipal d'Exposicions. Palau Nacional. 24th June
- Barcelona. *Auction Exhibition*. Organised by Les Arts i els Artistes in support of the Russian people. Galeries Laietanes. June, n.d.
- Lisbon. *Exhibition of Catalan Art*. Sociedade Nacional de Bellas Artes. 1st-30th November

1922

- Barcelona. 3rd Autumn Salon. Associació Amics de les Arts. Galeries Laietanes. 7th January.
- Amsterdam. *Tentoonstelling van Katalaans che Kunst*. Maatschappif “Arti et Amiciae”. 30th September-29th October

1922-1923

- Barcelona. *Exhibition of Paintings for the Plandiura Competition*. Galeries Laietanes. 27th January-8th February.

1923

- Barcelona. Opening Exhibition of the Season. Galeries Dalmau. 13th-22nd December.
- Barcelona. International Exhibition of Furniture and Interior Design. Foment de les Arts decoratives.

1924

- Barcelona. *Les Arts i els Artistes*. Galeries Dalmau. 16th-31st May.
- Barcelona. *Enamelled Glass by Ricard Crespo. Originals by Xavier Nogués*. Galeries Laietanes, 16th-19th December.

1925

- Paris. International Exhibition of Decorative Arts. Catalan Section. Grand Palais. Spring, n.d.

1926

- Barcelona. *Enamelled Glass by Ricard Crespo. Originals by Xavier Nogués*. Galeries Laeitanes. 13th-26th March

1928

- Barcelona. *Art Exhibition*. Orfeó de Sants. 24th-31st August.
- Barcelona. *Enamelled Glass by Ricard Crespo. Originals by Xavier Nogués and Manuel Humbert*. Galeries Laietanes. 14th April.

1929

- Barcelona. *Exhibition of Decorative Arts*. Foment de les Arts Decoratives, n.d.
- Barcelona. *Gathering of Barcelona Artists. A Collective Display of Art and Comfort in the Modern Home*, n.d.

1931

- Barcelona. Spring Exhibition. Montjuïc Salon (Palau Nacional), n.d.
- Springfield (Missouri). *Modern Catalan Painting*. College Art Association, State Teachers College. September (five-month-long touring exhibition of a number of U.S. cities).
- New York. *Modern Catalan Painting*. College Art Association, State Teachers College, Brooklyn Museum. January, n.d. (five-month-long touring exhibition of several U.S. cities).
- Barcelona. Drawing Fair. Sponsored by the Catalan government, the Generalitat de Catalunya, and Barcelona City Council (Galeries Syra). Jardins Soler i Rovirosa (Passeig de Gràcia, Gran Via, Rambla de Catalunya). 4th-11th June.
- Barcelona. Spring Exhibition. Montjuïc Salon (Palau Nacional). 20th May-2nd July.
- Tarragona. *Rosa Vera Collection*. Escuela-Taller de Arte de l'Excma. Diputació, n.d.
- Barcelona. *Engravings*. La Pinacoteca. 26th September-9th October.

1932

- Barcelona. Spring Exhibition. Montjuïc Salon. Palau Nacional. Three drawings. Studies for a decorative panel. 22nd May-3rd July.

- Barcelona. Drawing Fair. Syra. Drawings, n.d.

1933

- Amsterdam. *Modern Catalan Art*. Galerie d'Art A. Vecht. 14th January-10th February.
- Barcelona. 1st Humorists' Salon. Organised by the Associació d'Humoristes de Barcelona. Galeria Emporium, n.d.
- Barcelona. *Table-dressing Exhibition*. Foment de les Arts Decoratives. Palau Planàs. December, n.d.

1934

- Barcelona. 2nd Humorists' Salon. Organised by the Associació d'Humoristes de Barcelona. Galeries Syra. 26th May-8th June.
- Barcelona. *Exhibition of Bibliophile Books*. Edicions La Cometa Galeries d'Art de la Llibreria Catalònia. 23rd December-7th January.
- Barcelona. Spring Exhibition. Montjuïc Salon (Palau Nacional). 19th May-7th July.

1935

- Barcelona. *Paintings*. La Pinacoteca. 6th-19th April.
- Reus. *Engravings*. Centre de lectura de Reus. 14th-26th April.
- Barcelona. Spring Exhibition. Modern Art Salon. 1935 Montjuïc Salon. 19th May-7th July.

1936

- Barcelona. Artist-Decorators Salon. Foment de les Arts Decoratives. Dome of the Teatro Coliseum. May-June.

1937

- Barcelona. *Spain in Mexico. Catalan Artists from 1937 in Support of the Victims of Fascism*. Generalitat de Catalunya. Although the exhibition never took place, a catalogue was printed. Most copies were destroyed but we know that a few survived and, luckily for us, one has come to light.

1938

- Barcelona. *1938 Exhibition of Drawings and Engravings*. Junta d'Exposicions d'Art de Barcelona. Sala d'Exposicions del Casal de la Cultura. Plaça de Catalunya. 10th-26th November.

1939

- Madrid. *Exhibition of Mediterranean Drawings, Watercolours and Engravings. 1839-1939*. Museo de Arte Moderno. February-March.

1940

- Madrid. *Exhibition of Mediterranean Drawings, Watercolours and Engravings. 1839-1939*. Museo de Arte Moderno. February-March.

Posthumous exhibitions

1941

- Barcelona. *62 Engravings, Etchings and Drypoints*. Syra. 1st-14th December.

1944

- Barcelona. *50 Drawings by Xavier Nogués*. La Pinacoteca. 23rd September-6th October.

1947

- Barcelona. *Paintings for El Celler*, Sala Parés. 4th-16th October.

1951

- Barcelona. *Xavier Nogués*. Galeries Syra. 8th December.

1964

- Barcelona. *Xavier Nogués' Work in the Second Plandiura Collection*. Sala Parés. 15th-27th February.

1967

- Barcelona. *Retrospective and Homage to Xavier Nogués*. Barcelona City Council. Museos de Arte. Palau de la Virreina. March-April.

1972

- Barcelona. *Exhibition of the Bequest of Xavier Nogués' Widow, Isabel Escalada*. Barcelona City Council. Museos de Arte. Palau de la Virreina. March.

1976

- Barcelona. *Xavier Nogués Exhibition (1873-1941)*. XVI Semana Nacional del Libro Infantil y Juvenil. INLE El Tinell. December.

1978

- Barcelona. Xavier Nogués Stand. III Fira del Dibuix. Rambla de Catalunya. 19th-26th April.
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