

ENGLISH

English translation by **David Cemlyn-Jones**

The continuous form

THE MENDELSON EFFECT

Miguel Ángel Baldellou

The final years of the century seem to symmetrically reproduce the doubts and tensions of the first. Successive events have raised concerns about the possibility of establishing at least a stable, if not definitive, canon for architecture and other arts. However, the old disjunctive between reason and emotion, determined to keep the poles of our discursive capability separate, has continued to fashion presumably irreconcilable factions. In recent times, undoubtedly driven by the success of some emblematic work that has been extensively disseminated, some architectural works and architects seem to be gaining prominent positions, at least in the specialised press. It is these who have most excited popular imagination about the notion of a masterpiece or a unique genius.

The economic bonanza of the wealthiest nations, the instrumental possibilities of virtual reproduction and technology at the service of architecture, seem to objectively uphold the most exasperating formalisation. To what extent our collective Western ignorance exposes the end of millenium syndrome, is something that we will certainly not be able to calculate. But perhaps it can serve as a justification for the fear before the end; not for the uninterrupted search on the part of architects for the until recently almost chaotic, complex forms, but for urgent evaluation, uncritical overvaluation, and from it the reopening of an ostensible discussion on architectural form, whose ultimate aim may probably be the achievement of power and its possible cause.

Architecture has been summoned to set in motion the greatest possible number of special effects to attempt an intrinsically contradictory double game. On the one hand to surprise, and on the other to continue surprising. If surprise plays in favour of the first, in time it will turn against the second.

Architectural form is also the vehicle of its own pragmatic, symbolic, ideological and technical essence. It tends to express itself. The triumphant moments of "anonymous but cultured" architecture can also be seen as a parenthesis in a continuous succession of searches and discoveries that we label as expressionism, surrealism, symbolism or other similar terms, always alluding, however, to its supposed quality of irrationality or uncontrolled reason. Still, we could think exactly the opposite. Having assigned "reason" to what is accepted by the West's cultural inertia, or at least the most easily assessed, the rest remains, that is to say almost everything that is attributed to the dark world of feeling, of dreams, of visions, of desire and of Utopias.

The history of architecture can be explained, although obliquely, as a struggle

to make one pole prevail over another, reason or emotion. However, great Architecture is definitely nothing more than the search for a balanced fusion between these, or other, opposites. Clearly the capacity, and the possibility, of establishing even circumstantially this fusion, comes very infrequently to very few people. The dominant system imposes a pole for the sake of convenience as opposed to the freedom that seems to want to subvert it, transgressing the imposed or superimposed limits. The advance of architecture has been driven frequently by rebel creators whose ideas were anomalous in their period, and being regarded as oddities or incomprehensible extravagances were hidden away in quarantine with their creators. To periodically recover what have definitely been architectural revolutionary methods - once its most pressing danger point has been passed - is a very healthy mental practice, even if it risks converting reflection into support for an "anything goes" attitude.

For this reason, we propose to observe how form continues despite everything, shaping reason from sentiment. It has never been any other way. And from this viewpoint, to focus on how form tends to be continuous, not limited, expanding and generating in the time of its perception dynamic, intelligible, and spatial sequences. If Clark justified the exclusion of Spain from his pan-European vision of culture, he was also demonstrating a certain perplexity derived from the acceptance of his predominantly logical construction.

In this way, he dismissed, as did so many other distinguished official thinkers, mixtures as being contaminating. By confusing preferences for facts, these become so deformed as to be unrecognisable. At the risk of irritating the guardians of official culture once more, we will go over certain particularly interesting points of our particular contribution to that trend that intended to construct form itself, not because of itself, into a universal movement.

If it is true that we could consider Mendelsohn as the key person in Europe who synthesized form with reason in the 1920s, it is no less true that he was not the only one, nor the first, nor the last. Joining him were a magnificent group of architects who gave momentum to the real avant garde that went beyond the visionary. Before him, though not necessarily predecessors were other of our architects (especially Gaudí). Interesting personalities emerged in Spain later, although they were not his legitimate heirs. I have already mentioned, but in a different context, the Jujol of the 1923 casa Planells, and the examples of Eusa, and the unavoidable Fernandez Shaw. But there was also a very

extensive succession of Mendelsohn converts, not all totally convinced fans.

In any case, it is true that there are levels of influence. Just as we can recognise in Goya or Unamuno a typically Spanish background without having to scratch too deeply, rather accepting it in a somewhat lighter tone insofar that it does not accept dictates, we encounter in a frivolous or indifferent attitude towards these artists an escape route through which it is possible to laugh, poke fun at, or show indifference, although what really matters to us has been done very seriously. This non-tragic, nor cynical attitude, possibly reflects a way of being, rooted in the popular subconscious that manifests its experience as wisdom, as a way of life.

Transferred to the practice of architecture, we have insisted previously in denominating this latent tone a profession that can dodge the obstacles of the course with the least risk and compromise, knowing that the scene will change again.

Applied to the influence of Mendelsohn it should be understood that this emerged from certain images produced by the architect that impressed Spaniards of the 1920s and 30s, although it had been acclaimed generically by everyone.

There was no need to understand the internal cohesion of those signs, nor the logical response to a technical circumstance that made them possible, nor the rigour of a discourse that was ignored. There was not attempt to search for the causes to assimilate the effects, nor to emulate the proposals of the avant garde. It was merely a question of using efficient and available solutions, transferred from context at the least opportunity. The excuse could be a contest for bringing a work up to date, or a corner with which to round off an image with lexical particles distinguished in images stored as unquestionable repertoire. If several morphological, typological or symbolic circumstances emerge, even if these concepts were unknown, translated in terms of the form, of function or of the dominant group of a site, a choral response was inevitable.

We could comb for, in what I have elsewhere called "real rationalism", the expansion of this effect. This was developed in some cases in a prompt form, in others, the longest, it lasted barely a decade.

However, it nearly always meant an improvement in results because on being installed it acted against a composing method based on finite structures. It introduced horizontality and with it dynamism that questioned the presence of the vertical stabilising axis. Some architects entered in conflict and tried, with the devices of academic eclecticism learned at college, to introduce the anti-monumental variant of the formal continuum, of the enveloping surface in their formal and mental structures from which the limits of the level were dissolved in a suggestive flight that was haptic as it was optic.

Obviously, the ability to explore in depth

the possibilities of Mendelsohn expression would have required interiorisation, impossible from the, not lesser but different, level of training of architects, or the emergence of techniques not available to us. Maybe for this reason the appropriation was superficial and why its dissemination was so wide. Maybe because of all this, Mendelsohn himself was avoided by avant garde architects and their most conspicuous followers who had still not found their definitive form. Mendelsohn presented them too soon, like Gaudí and with the same effect. This was the eternal dilemma of theory facing formulaic intuition which probably led to Giedion's exclusion from the official avant garde.

Among us, perhaps no one was capable of appropriating his images with as much efficiency as Gutierrez Soto was to do later, in his own way, of course. And this was done out of context, separated from ideas and beliefs. It is difficult to deny influences when confronting his work. Just as it is difficult as to determine the elements that sustain it. Because Gutierrez Soto was incapable of producing "a Mendelsohn" like the Capitol of the Gran Via. When Mendelsohn began to change direction in his images at the beginning of the 1930s, the perfect conditions emerged for the implantation of this message, at the Carrion contest, although now with diminished content. It was no longer a subversive plan and signalled the triumph of a new situation (a passing one, although this was not realised at the time).

Rather than interpret the obvious, Gutierrez Soto followed Mendelsohn's development from a distance and used him in successive stages.

There were certainly many more architects influenced by the German master. Not so much directly, as through some of his international disciples. In this sense, it would be interesting to find among the post-war, the post-Wright generation of Americans liberties that would be much less explicable without Mendelsohn. I refer again to Eero Saarinen, perhaps the best link in the complex European-American relationship. His sadly short life prevents us from observing a development that undoubtedly would have been most interesting. Some of the more recent examples seem to point in a direction already implicitly indicated in Mendelsohn's American work. However, I seem to detect a sufficient methodological incoherence to assert a doubtful relationship. The Nordic variant that recurs in Pietila, Sharoun, Bohm, Eiermann and other builders seems more approximate. Perhaps through these architects, or even in previous ones, some of our architects have found the sources with which to satiate a thirst that seems to have affected those who have endured the long trek through a desert and dogma. We are not confronting a mirage. Oases exist, even if their waters are often polluted. ■

Extract of the original

Josep Maria Jujol, 1999

Carlos Flores

José Maria Jujol y Gibert was born in Tarragona in 1879 and died in Barcelona in May, 1949, a few months before his 70th birthday. In a chronological list Jujol comes between Frank Lloyd Wright and José Hoffman - about 10 years his senior - and Walter Gropius, four years his junior. Regarding Gaudi, the difference was of 27 years, more or less that which exists between one generation and the next. In 1906, the master reached an age that exactly doubled that of his disciple, 54 and 27 years, respectively. Anyway, as I have shown in other articles, at least from the academic year of 1904-05, a certain professional relationship had been established between the two men. The period from 1905 to 1912 was to be the most productive and most intense.

To evaluate the outstanding part that Jujol played in European architecture and art, the work that he carried out as an independent architect must be considered - and especially that completed in the 1908-1928 period - but also, and in no lesser measure, his performance as the most personal and freest of all collaborators who contributed to the master's work. His professional and cultural training followed three basic stages: first of all at Barcelona's Architecture School; then the interest he had shown from a very young age in what has come to be called the humanities; and finally, the intense and continuous contact he maintained with his admired master Gaudi.

Gaudi and Jujol's mutual understanding was reinforced by a series of affinities that they established between themselves on the human level. Above all Gaudi hated vanity and arrogance, especially when these defects were accompanied, as they usually were, by a dull mind. Jujol's personal modesty, his lack of personal social pretensions, fitted perfectly with the fully mature Gaudi who Jujol knew. A deep religious feeling, lived from day to day, was another of their many common links - like their backgrounds and unconcern for economic matters. The fact that neither formed a family was another shared circumstance that allowed them to devote their minds and bodies to a profession for which they felt a vocation and unlimited affection. (Gaudi remained a bachelor all his life and Jujol only married after the death of the master at almost 50).

Another point worth noting to have a better picture of their Campo de Tarragona origins is the geographic element that in Gaudi's case meant an inexplicable, almost infallible, guarantee of talent for any artistic activity.

Jujol's emergence as a collaborator of Gaudi started before the former finished his studies and is evident and documented in works like the Batlló and Milá houses, the Güell Park, and restoration works in the Palma de Mallorca cathedral. But the presence of the young assistant undoubtedly had another influence - perhaps difficult to pinpoint and demonstrate, but definitely decisive - on the development that can be observed in Gaudi's architecture around the years of his meeting with Jujol. Thus one can talk

of a Gaudi before and after his meeting Jujol.

An objective appraisal of Gaudi's work reveals the presence of real genius, but also of a man deeply rooted in his time, especially in regards to details - designs, paintings, finishings, and everything that make up architecture. In regard to these details, Gaudi never managed to go beyond what could be considered a certain Victorianism, an identification with currents and fashions close in some way to the plastic of William Morris and his Arts and Crafts group, for example. From his association with Jujol, Gaudi's works in which the latter was involved in a notable and direct way - the Batlló and Milá houses, the undulating bank and the pillared hall of the Güell Park - overcame such Victorianism and not just because of the significance of Jujol's specific contributions, but because the ensemble was based on the absolute coherence of Jujol and Gaudi's effort.

At the same time and through the work he did in addition to his collaborations with Gaudi, Jujol's personality developed into one of the most spontaneous and free in all contemporary European art. His demonstrated ability for facial expression made it possible to immediately and directly see everything he was thinking. Gaudi, on the other hand, had a more reflective, organised and systematic mind; his final decisions were usually the result of logical reasoning, initiated from the very moment of confronting a problem and followed through until a solution, he judged to be correct, was reached. Perhaps because he lacked Jujol's exceptional ability for any kind of plastic expression, Gaudi sought relief in geometry and structure as reliable points of departure. Many of his most original creations - prior to the Batlló house - were frequently based on laws of mechanics and/or in a geometric rationalisation of form, while many more immediate and spontaneous decisions are at the origin of the greater part of his work. If Jujol's methodological approach seems to flee from a disciplined and controlled systemization, Gaudi, on the other hand, gave an indication of his method with his famous statement "originality is to return to the origin", a way of facing any problem from its beginning or root, as though it was the first time that such questions were confronted leading to a rational and logical discussion that would continue until the most appropriate solution was reached. While Gaudi's work contains this rationalising, continued and disciplined effort, Jujol's appears to be the result of a much more immediate, spontaneous and even uninhibited process. This absence of strict self-control - evidence of the artistic licence so frequent in Jujol's work - possibly could have influenced the master's methods that, in the case of Batlló and especially Milá, is free of a good part of the hurried tendencies and compulsions of a rationalising order that in a generalised way dominated his production.

Jujol's hand can be clearly discerned in

several details of the Batlló house, in the ceramic decoration of the Güell Park's large bench and in the pillared hall's soffits, as well as in the exterior railings of the Pedrera (with the exception of the two wide wrought-iron entrance gates), in some of the owners' (the Milá-Segimons) pieces of furniture, in the design of iron fittings and most particularly in the three-dimensional finishing of roofs or ceilings made with plaster. In all of these works, Jujol always acted under the master's instructions and supervision; but according to many accounts, Gaudi wanted his assistant to have the highest degree of freedom, giving free range to his powerful and inexhaustible creative capacity.

Although the various specific contributions that Jujol produced in his collaboration with Gaudi should be considered as complementary and subordinate to the architecture, such works were never a kind of superimposed decoration, as some have seen them, but representative of an essential part, forming an inseparable whole, which the German word *gesamtkunstwerk* (work of total art) defines perfectly.

Jujol contributed to this *gesamtkunstwerk* that Gaudi established in all his output and which after the Gaudi-Jujol meeting, and this must be stressed, reached forms of expression that until then were missing from the master's work.

In the same way, Jujol sought and achieved this *gesamtkunstwerk* in his own works as an independent architect; in some cases in respect to the work as a whole; in others, in those partial, even minimum, aspects for which his involvement was required, it would be appropriate here to describe the type of client who consulted Jujol; almost exclusively humble farmers, parish priests and industries and businesses of modest means. In Gaudi's case they were mainly leading society figures, aristocrats, bishops, financial magnates and leading industrialists.

And while Gaudi received orders to construct entire, major buildings, Jujol's services were solicited for small-scale inexpensive works, and frequently for just partial, minimum jobs for already existing works. It should also be underlined that while Gaudi - an undisputed great master surrounded by admiring and adoring collaborators - could let his assistants do some parts of his work, Jujol was always solely responsible for his, personally taking care of every detail (only helped by workers and indispensable skilled labourers) because he himself had to paint and sculpture, form and place coatings and mosaics, handle metals, and so on. Everything needed for his works to express, both interiorly and externally, that mysterious world that the architect contains within himself. Given the low budget on which Jujol relied, only by making use of his talents as a painter, a sculptor, a metal worker, mosaic designer, and designer of the most diverse furniture and objects, and bearing in mind that he would never be paid for such works, was it possible to complete constructions in which every little detail is unique, especially created for the occasion and in perfect harmony with the whole work.

To evaluate the full importance of the architectural and plastic universe that Jujol embodied it is necessary to be aware of his anticipatory ability, his facility for discovering

new formal worlds, for experimentation in aesthetic areas never before approached.

At the time that Jujol was closely associated with Gaudi, he started out his own activities as an independent professional with some very significant works, ranging from the reform of the Tarragona Workers Association Theatre (1908) to the construction of the store selling Mañach products (1911), a Barcelona company producing locks and safes. Between these two projects, Jujol began the construction of a small, isolated house, Torre San Salvador (1909), located on the outskirts of Barcelona.

The Tarragona Workers Association Theatre was built over several years, suffering numerous interruptions, problems and finally its forced and definite abandonment. For this reason, Jujol's magical and personal world emerges for the first time, his taste for creating for the sake of creating, that unbridled impulse that made the final outcome unpredictable, even for himself. His baroque-tending graphicness, the leit motiv in the treatment of interior surfaces and sometimes exteriors, was a sort of suggestive action "giving satisfaction to the hand" that covered interior walls or exterior fronts with graffiti or paint, like an unmistakable indelible card.

The Mañach store, however, does not consist only of the original interior and colour treatment that, "in the way sauces are mixed and rockets explode" as Jujol wished, dominate it, but is also a good demonstration of the architect's knowledge of how to handle bulk externally with that freedom that was inseparable from his work.

The three five-year periods from 1911, the year of the Mañach store, to 1926, when the Montserrat Sanctuary in the town of Montferri (Tarragona) was begun, were the most intense and creatively productive for Jujol. In this period and the years of 1913, 1914 and 1915 in which he took no time off, he embarked on three of his most significant constructions: the Torre de la Creu and the Bofarull and Negre houses. The first and last were located in the town of S. Joan Despí, very close to Barcelona. The Bofarull was set in a very small country village, part of the Tarragona municipality. All three works contain the same powerful creative momentum. For each, disparate and extreme methods have been adopted that are dazzling in form, texture and colour. The Torre de la Creu is a volumetric and spatial elevation on a base of a hemitrope of five cylindrical bodies, covered with small parabolic domes and grouping two houses that the architect planned and constructed ex-novo. There are important reforms inside and outside Bofarull and Negre. The stairway in both is the central piece that articulates the surrounding spaces. In the first, Jujol prolonged the existing stairway, extending it on two floors and designing a unique balustrade that starts out from the ground floor as a unifying element. A dynamic well-space in an ascendant direction is created - the bulk of the tower is outside - brightened by colour and light that comes from a lamp area situated under the pyramidal tip of the ceiling; a watch tower-space with Dadaistic components and scattered objects, such as a wine jug and a peasant's pot, that together with

the avant garde significance reveal his rustic roots and popular tradition. The pyramidal ceiling is crowned by an odd and very large copper-coated angel-weather vane designed by the architect.

The stairway is also a key item in the Negre house. There is upward tension here, although less powerful. The image of an angel hanging from a white background and surrounded by an ocean of blues and a swirl of crosspieces is the polarising factor here, not the light. (And on the façade, like a balcony, an incredible and monumental coach). The most fantastic and esoteric of Jujol's universe, his most radical and explosive plastic message, is present to a high degree in these two works in which shapes and colours, as attractive as they are disturbing, impress visitors with impacts that are hard to forget.

Returning to the Mañach construction, the presence of completely unexplored territories of expression that were new even for Jujol should be noted in his *Talleres* (1916). One was the series of scuba suit-chandeliers, aligned on the ceiling, like beings emerging from a strange spacecraft. The other was what were meant to be the counterweights, or pinnacles, in bare brick factories, interplaying plastically with the effects of levels in recess and in projection, somewhat in the style of Mies in his monument to Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxembourg, produced 10 years later. For the Mañach factory, Jujol designed some pieces of furniture and especially a stand-up lamp with three bulbs in which the atmosphere of *Star Wars* or any of the *Star Trek* series that had still to be produced then seem to be anticipated through absolutely disparate forms in respect to those of the "scuba suits".

In 1918 Jujol started the small church of Vistabella just as his prodigiously productive decade was ending, a period during which his most brilliant creations took shape. At that time the architect was at the height of his expressive and technical form.

In the Mañach factory and in the roofs of the Torre de la Creu (also called the Ous, or the eggs, because of the small domes on top), Jujol had allowed his imagination to extend to structural systems. In Vistabella and Montferri, structures gained maximum protagonism, each representing the essential and basic element for their plastic formalisation.

In both, the architect started out with an ordered and regular surface that was also simple and imaginative, as a means of easily acquiring a systemised structural form. This aspect was even more pronounced in Montferri in whose construction he also used his own prefabricated system with only a small number of different pieces. It should be noted that Jujol's preference for simple surfaces of total geometric regularity, or almost total regularity, featured in practically all his work. It occurred, however, that he would thus achieve an imaginative manifestation of such power that the final exuberant and almost overwhelming result would conceal that geometric regularity taken as the point of departure.

The case of the Montserrat Sanctuary in Montferri (1926), an assignment he was to

receive almost a decade later, begins with a similar type of structural question as to the use again of the fan-vaulting Gothic basement, whether by introducing parabolic arches with the difference that here the complete structure is more complicated, with a stellate Islamic-style vault emerging including multiple intercrossings; or whether to cut costs by employing pieces of prefabricated in situ lightened concrete instead of brick. A large triangular piece of the same material and made in the same way as the previous pieces with the centre hollowed out in the form of a heart, was used as a means of closing hollows, providing a variety of glass-stained window options.

The fact that the temple was dedicated to Our Lady of Montserrat, the patron saint of Catalonia, led Jujol to lay out the ensemble volumetrically as a complex grouping of very steep small vaults, evoking the mountain of Montserrat close to Barcelona.

The extremely small sized Vistabella and Montferri churches clearly demonstrate that the limited economic means of Jujol's clients did not lead to any disadvantage in the development of all his capabilities. In works like the Mañach store or the Negre and de la Creu houses it might have been true that a bigger budget would have contributed to higher architectural and artistic levels, think of the grandeur that churches would have presented - in structural and aesthetic terms - if much greater funds had been available. Think, too, of works like the Workers Association Theatre, the Bofarull and Fortuny houses in Pallaresos, the Planells house in Barcelona, and so forth, that were unfinished, definitely interrupted by the lack of their sponsors' resources.

One of the last works constructed by Jujol was the residential building on Barcelona's Avenida Diagonal, the Planells house, with the plan dated November, 1923, and completed several years later, no longer in accordance with the architect's wishes nor showing the least respect for the part that remained to be done. After two or three proposals in the purest Jujol baroque style, the final version was pronouncedly sober in form, similar in a certain way to what some fashionable avant garde European architects - we could refer to part of Scharoun or Mendelsohn's output - were producing, or about to produce, at the that time.

Just on reaching the age of 50, Jujol completed his last major work in terms of size and significance. This was the monumental fountain constructed in Barcelona's Plaza de España, the broad urban space that served as a gateway to the 1929 Universal Exhibition. This fountain, although of a certain baroque conventionality, achieves undoubted greatness and elegance through Jujol's valuable touches in various details.

During the next 20 years, there were several reasons why Jujol dispersed his efforts in numerous lesser works - at times as a simple designer or draughtsman - in which, however, the stamp of his inexhaustible creativity was always evident. ■

Extract of the original

The architecture of Víctor Eusa

Fernando Tabuenca

Some medium-sized cities still exist in which it is possible to identify the architecture through the work of a single architect. This is the case of Pamplona and Víctor Eusa (1894-1990), or at least had been so until recently when the considerable expansion of the city and the disrepair or reform of many of the architect's works diluted his mark on the urban scene.

Víctor Eusa is to Pamplona what Dudok was to Hilversum. The reference is not casual, because Dudok was one of Eusa's most admired masters despite their differences. Both their commitments to responsible town planning helps to understand the similarity.

Education and academic career (1915-1936)

Víctor Eusa Razquin, born on Pamplona's calle Estafeta in 1894, completed his studies in Madrid's School of Architecture. His colleagues were quick to recognise that he was one of the most gifted students. His class of 1920 was a generation in transition, educated in the prevailing teachings of the École des Beaux Arts, but already convinced of the need for change and stimulated by isolated teachers like Anasagasti. For them, however, Le Corbusier was only a quack or a showman. Eusa's vision was directed towards Vienna, to the Sezesion and the "great master Wagner", as architecture with a capital A was still not appreciated without being burdened with the ornate, and he limited himself to seeking new forms of expression, removed from the classical order.

Eusa's deep-rooted convictions acquired in the historic moment of his education as an architect were to influence his entire later work. His academic training was to serve him well, however, when just after he graduated he and Saturnino Ulargui won the contest for the construction of San Sebastian's Gran Kursaal Casino. It was built on the spot where Rafael Moneo is constructing today the new Palace of Congresses following the Kursaal's demolition in the 1970s. The bases for the contest expressly imposed the "French style", a somewhat vague concept. And Eusa did it with a flourish: columns and pilasters with Ionic and Corinthian capitals, entablaments, parapets, festoons and so on are all gathered in the Kursaal, striving for an air of refinement and luxury very typical of those gay 1920s. However, Sezesion details are not lacking as in the iron and glass canopy over the entrance.

The academic substratum of Eusa's training was always latent in his works and was to be reflected especially in the composition of the ground plans of his buildings.

Viennese and oriental influences (1922-1927)

From 1922 after his participation in San Sebastian's Gran Kursaal, Víctor Eusa began to seek his own architectural language of expression. His point of departure, as already

mentioned, was the Viennese school. Wagner and his disciples Hoffmann and Olbrich marked out the path to follow. His architecture did not create a total break with previous tradition, but rather an evolution that was to guarantee his social success.

In Eusa's first works, classic traditional repertoire was adapted with flexibility to the new demands of construction, although it was still subject to rigid creative plans. He assimilated a taste for plain and geometric decoration from the Viennese school, as opposed to the round and statuesque forms of classicism. Later he would admire the value of polychromy in contrast to classicist monochromatism.

In April 1923, Víctor Eusa embarked on an extensive voyage of the Mediterranean. This journey would widen his knowledge of Turkey, the Middle East and Egypt. He returned very impressed with Arab architecture, and this influence would feature strongly in his later work.

The Viennese influence in interior decorations is clearly visible in the altarpiece of the Casa de Misericordia church that is reminiscent of Gustav Klimt's piece for Wagner's Steinhof church.

Art-deco expressionism (1928-1932)

Eusa's search throughout the decade of 1920 for a renovating and personal architectural language was to crystallise about 1928 in a geometric expressionism, characterised by the combined use of bare concrete, red brick (sometimes yellow) and plastering, usually painted in white. With this language he was to complete his best known buildings, earlier cited as characteristic of a good part of Pamplona's Ensanche.

A connection between Eusa's work and that of Frank Lloyd Wright has also been pointed to, although the former denied knowledge of the work of the American master. In our opinion, this connection was made through Dutch architecture, that he did know very well as he had visited Holland on several occasions. The influence of Wright's work on that country is well known following the publication of his first works in the Berlin Wasmuth edition (1910), Berlage's journey to America and the release of the monographical issue of the *Wendingen* magazine in 1924. Of the Dutch, Eusa particularly admired the work of Dudok, as already mentioned and whom he often quoted.

As to the motives that inspired Eusa's creative imagination, a common factor to all expressionism is that it must be guided by a superior ideal. In the case of many European expressionist phenomena, this ideal was Socialist Utopia. In Eusa's case, given his educational and social-economic background, this ideal could not be anything but religious. Catholicism is a constant concept in all his work and it takes on a symbolic function. The recurring theme of the cross is derived from it as

a central theme or as a reiterated element in complex geometric compositions.

Another feature common to many expressionist works is the tendency towards monumentalism. In Eusa's case we can also note this inclination, limited at times by the dimensional reality of his work.

The art-deco expressionism of the 1920s, a legacy of the Arts & Crafts and Art Nouveau, although moving towards new kinds of formal expressionism, shares the concern for the decorative arts that gave its name to the movement. Eusa was not detached from this trend that was already visible in his early work, in the furniture designed for the Vasco-Navarra, the railings of the Casa Aizpín that anticipated his later evolution, and in so many more examples. Apart from a few exceptions he continued to occupy himself with the design of all the decorative elements of his buildings. With iron he forged railings and balustrades for balconies and stairways. With glass, glaziers and lamps, such as the already mentioned lamps of the Eslava Casino. He also paid attention to the furniture of his public buildings.

Development to rationalist forms (1932-1936)

Eusa never felt attracted by the rationalist movement. Like many other architects of his generation he looked with distrust on the achievements of the Bauhaus and Le Corbusier that he attributed to their propagandistic activity. The severe austerity of rationalism did not appeal either to Eusa's intuitive plastic temperament and his need for decorative expression.

On the other hand, his cultural isolation in a provincial city and his remoteness from any theoretic stand prevented him from feeling attracted to the social and economic aspects of rationalism. Despite his friendship with García Mercadal, whom he visited during the latter's stay in Rome, he had no contact with the GATEPAC.

In spite of everything, a certain evolution in Eusa's work towards rationalist forms and approaches, without abandoning expressionism, could be noted from the 1930s.

Regionalism

Eusa felt very strongly the presence of the place as influencing factor in his architecture and this also explained his disinterest in "international architecture". Thus, he would apply a regionalist dressing to almost all his isolated constructions or those buried in rural settings in the Pyrenees foothills of Navarra and Guipúzcoa, including the suburban single family residences on the outskirts of Pamplona. His regionalism was expressed in a neo-Basque style that freely combined the elements of popular architecture of these zones in which asymmetry predominated in the composition of floors and elevations. Another characteristic is the fragmentary use of materials. Stone masonry, red front-view brick and whitewashed surfaces were combined in a haphazard manner, intermingling in the façades and avoiding defined limits, thus alluding to a supposed spontaneity of construction. All this

produced a picturesque impression.

In Ribera de Navarra, Eusa's architecture is characterised by the use of the yellow brick of the region, even though it is used with great expressionist feeling, which is reminiscent of Mudéjar architecture, also present in that region. The general composition is again more rigid and geometrical. The great majority of these works were completed at a very late stage.

Periods at the service of municipal and provincial service

A few months after the start of the war, the pro-nationalist architect Serapio Esparza, designer of Pamplona's Ensanche plan, was dismissed from his position as municipal architect. Víctor Eusa replaced him, taking over in June 1937.

In 1940, Víctor Eusa was invited by the Mussolini government, together with several Italian architects, to carry out a study for a funeral tower, church and Capuchin convent in Zaragoza, destined to be a pantheon for Italians killed in the Spanish Civil War. Eusa's project

was accepted and its execution was to occupy him for the next five years until the political situation in Italy at the end of the world war forced him to conclude the work, reducing the height of the tower by almost 30 metres and eliminating other details.

Shortly after leaving his post as Pamplona's municipal architect, he was appointed provincial architect by the regional Navarra administration. He would remain in the position for 16 years from 1945 to 1962, carrying out a large number of works and building reforms of provincial administrative buildings.

At the beginning of the 1970s, on reaching 80, he finally gave up professional activity. This did not prevent him from drawing for several years more, and he produced sketches and perspectives of projects that bubbled in his imagination, always full of ideas.

The productive life of Víctor Eusa ended in 1990, leaving behind an architectural legacy that his city, Pamplona, will for ever be grateful.

Extract of the original

Casto Fernández-Shaw and the endless expressionist adventure of a navigator of the future

María Cristina García Pérez and Félix Cabrero Garrido

It can be stated without any doubt, and with very few exceptions, that Casto Fernández-Shaw was throughout his life an expressionist architect, in the broadest meaning of the term. But to understand his particular inclusion in such a stylistic bracket an appropriate introduction should be presented about his constant and definite position in relation to the modernist movement, or Art Nouveau (and its followers). This is viewed by most critics as the clearest precedent of expressionism in the history of art and particularly of architecture.

CF-S was interested in Modernism's position regarding antiquated 19th century eclecticism and historicism, and how it incorporated new materials and technological advances; how it integrated ideas from all arts in the Arts & Crafts tradition (that in his case resulted from reading W. Morris and J. Ruskin), and how it viewed buildings as works of total art. But all his attitudes were dominated by a fervent opposition to decorative excess.

During that inter-war period through which the history of European architecture was passing, CF-S's temperament made it easy for him to coincide with the idea of Le Corbusier that geometric forms are primary, economic and, at the same time, beautiful. They satisfy our intellect through mathematics, establishing an equivalence between architecture and engineering aesthetics; and, like with Le Corbusier, they subjugate images of the car, airplane and steamship. As J.A. Fernández reminds us, CF-S was in love with geometry, mathematics, and an admirer of engineers and machines. And in his

anti-ornamental aspirations, in 1928 he would accuse rationalist architecture of modernist deviations that could endanger its timelessness.

However, his determination in the search for new formal directions in architecture and engineering that would be in tune with the new times, together with his poetic stamp and passionate nature, made him feel strongly the influence of architects like E. Mendelsohn; and although he vindicated Perret and Gropius, his mind frequently evoked the pregnant image of Einstein's observatory that linked him to Gaudí through the appearance in the tower of "a way of using different spaces from the usual" that "makes one think of an architecture of mass in which the evenness of his modelling brings us closer to the forms of Nature".

But CF-S's "positivist optimism" and his faith in "the pursuit of happiness through technique" did not give him that accommodating and middle class character into which the turn of the century philosophy had been become, in the opinion of M. De Michel. And it was a fact that Spain was detached from Europe on many levels, including from the upheavals of the First World War, although its echoes and respective alliances reached the classrooms, as the pro-ally CF-S recalled. Thus, his expressionist mood was a shout of rebellion, "of opposition", but never a rejection of the principles of progress, because in his country a revolution was always pending. Expression of temperament and instinct, the transposition of feelings, yes, but in the sense of total creative freedom, of a free spirit, to which J.A. Fernández Ordóñez refers.

Consequently, he included the progress that science and technique provided him in many of his works that served as a journey to centre of his very being. In the case of architecture, the words of Vlaminck are not so applicable: "Science kills painting", and for CF-S it was a form of nourishing his architectural boldness, his struggle against building conventions.

His plans for lighthouses and towers are exponents of such beliefs. Thus, he said of the Colón Lighthouse (1929): "The exterior will be a display of modern construction and the interior a work of art and feeling... I foresee that by giving life to this project... the emotion felt by viewers will be very intense." Despite using round and geometric forms, his treatment tends to dissolve temporal space; the frequently double screw; light and movement; materials like glass, aluminium and stainless steel; and even water, all serve him at times at times as fleeting means in his combination of "a harmonious symphony".

All his projects, and especially the Colón Lighthouse, underscore other structural and symbolic expressionist aspects. ("The lighthouse symbolised the spiral of genius that moves from the earthly to the inaccessible, and when... it should turn... it would recall... the roundness of the world.") And, of course, there are a number of theatrical aspects. So, in the Hispanidad Lighthouse (1953), dramatic force is derived by combining one stage setting in the landscape, the pure sensuality of form and spiral iconography. And in the Espectáculo Tower (1942) all the materials, their colour and texture, the dissolving elements themselves, were placed above all the objects that create the stage for the show.

The uncontained expressive power of the first years, bloated by a certain romanticism common to painters that start out in the expressionist movement, would soon impregnate, as we have seen, the consubstantial discipline and sobriety of nearly all his work. But his temporary romanticism would always move him towards a constant commitment with the avant garde.

The Jándula dam is an emblematic work, fully identified with expressionist sentiment. It was regarded by CF-S as the best of his production and he used "new forms of architectural engineering" in it. Few works such as this illustrate the technological-engineering and scientific-structural components so wrapped in a language brimming with expression that is vigorous and casual, tempestuously imaginative, filtered in a most elegant formalisation that is approximate to "land-art", rushing into a fine and abrupt setting with the stone slope cascading in "an expressionist metaphor of water turning into architecture," to quote J. Sobrino once more. The unusual and brilliant solution of grating the plant into the wall of the dam derives from all the implantations of his consubstantial poetic-expressive inspiration, starting with his first unswerving faith in the avant garde and the future. And he creates the paradox of achieving the impossible: so that the accord of the mass in a harmonious symphony or environmental sweetness, as managed in a lateral vision or bird's eye view, is transmuted into waves of overwhelming power ready to explode in the

water, in the various perspectives from the base of the dam. Thus the dramatics of the setting, without denying the beauty of the new architectural forms, is stunning: the curves take on greater intensity and the tidy geometry becomes harsher, in the way that M. Denis used to refer in the *Occidente* magazine to Gauguin's influence on expressionist painters.

The once again brilliant design of the Retiro Residences shows, from a mere pragmatic need, a wall treated as a breakwater that does not lead however to the extenuation of the swimmer-spectator, in one of the most skillful responses of Spanish rational-expressionism. This displays, in the words of P. Moleón, "his capacity to integrate into architecture the throb, the vital pulsating rhythm of a city in constant movement and of a period undergoing permanent change".

Regarding the Coliseum's façade facing the Gran Vía, a building that could belong to other stylistic sections like skyscrapers, the American dream or the heroic rhetoric of futurism do not obviate expressionist nuances interpreted in different tones and keys. His lateral foreshortening displays a rich chiaroscuro exchange between the almost invisible offsets of the different frontal levels and the equally subtle vertical offsets, marked by the nerves of the structure, with which it intended unsuccessfully to simulate a never installed great cascade of light, that simply made it a subtle stone cascade. Without denying the influences of the building presented by Saarinen at the Chicago Tribune contest (1923) nor the "aesthetic-stylist" result of the façade noted by Gutiérrez Cabrero, the Jandula's toned-down echoes are obvious.

It is in the interior of the Coliseum cinema that CF-S's expressionist vein comes out most forcibly, recalling the stage setting institutionalised by Mendelsohn rhetoric and the example of his Berlin Cinema Universum (1926-28). The Gran Vía complex of houses, offices and entertainment centres is a living museum of modern architecture; and in the interior the magic areas of the halls emerge with eloquent and dramatic fluidity like one of the most brilliant expressionist statements of Madrid architecture: dynamic curves and the bulks of projecting dress circles in gentle waves; the suspended dome from which the circular form of its handsome chandelier hangs, a gigantic eye that submerges the audience in an almost sphere-shaped microworld of forms and beckoning vacuums like an enormous womb. Only the real existence of space surpasses his intuitive knowledge amongst so many evocations to the countryside of modern cultures that emerge from the expressionist avant gardes of the century's first decades.

The Spanish Civil War and the Second World War deeply affected CF-S and his family, stirring feelings of anguish that are usually common to the various languages of the expressionist movement and that in Europe appeared during the Great War of 1914. In the final years of the 1930s and in the next decade he abandoned his natural tendency for the joy of living, turning gloomy and his cry of protest against barbarity and destruction becoming almost fatalist. This mood is reflected in a broad

spectrum of fantastic works, summed up in the tunnel end of the Sumo Hacedor. The survival that he defended in his aerial and anti-aerial architecture is a transcription of his own struggle for survival in those terrible years that broke his faith in progress and mankind, a figure erased from his representations. And he would certainly have agreed with the words of H. Bahr: "We no longer live; we have lived. We no longer have freedom... man has been deprived of his soul; nature has been deprived of man... Such a sepulchral silence has never reined in the world. Man was never so small... And here is the cry of desperation..."

The scientific-technological-futurist component was to be added to the inspiration of natural morphologies and theories of origin; the shape of the egg (that he used in shelters, hangars or monumental cenotaphs) is transmuted into variants of the Bulbos building that he developed even in later plans for helicopter airports; the Caracol building, based on that "armour-plated" insect, generates a thousand images and evocations of an animal, vegetable, geological or atmospheric sort, undoubtedly disguised by the powerful individuality of Casto imagination that, in turn, brings to mind a good deal of expressionist iconography arising from architects such as Taut and Finsterlin, Steiner, Haring and even Gaudí, but also writers like Scheebart or Lovecraft.

Above all, mention must be made of a very important group of works that pertain to the most profound part of the functional-rationalist movement and that were begun in 1927. These are precisely his very famous and paradigmatic Porto Pi automobile service station in Madrid. In all of them, however, a strong expressionist impregnation, in the sense of the transmission of emotions that go beyond architecture itself, can be noted. In the same petrol station, the bare aesthetic-stylistic transposition of naval and aeronautic constructions are transmuted into an expressive game, where structural experimentalism and symbolism interact equally.

In 1929 he accentuated expressionist nuances in his design for the airport of Barajas, the culminating work of this group together with the already mentioned houses facing the Retiro. Again symbolic aeronautical connotations, added to those of birds, meet with his ideas about engineering and aerodynamic architecture, moulded into inseparable forms and structures, appropriate for the transpositioning of some levels to others or some enclosures to the next, without the solution of continuity in a spatial concept that then had no comparison in Spanish architecture.

The final chronological element in this group is the Barajas service station (1958-60), a natural cross between Porto Pi and the airport, where a fully intense and also sober expressionism and one of containment, now removed from stated theories of rationalism, appeases. The frontal elevation resembles an eagle about to initiate its flight and with its wings extended in an elegant motion that is unable to conceal its uncontainable power, while the treatment of the side walls of the tower-trunk conjures up an image of the bird-plane. The floor is shaped by a graceful and harmonising set of subtle

curves and the almost ethereal canopy (now savagely replaced) introduces an interplay of chiaroscuros tinged by the intense strokes from the multiple points of entry for light.

CF-S's ability to give life and eloquence to the most inanimate objects is even noticeable in his most uninspired works, thus regarded because of his decision (free or forced) to convert them into exponents of a doctrine, whether the strict pre-war functionalism or the eclecticism imposed in Spain in the 1940s and 1950s. And so in small discreet buildings like the residential block in Madrid's calle Ofelia Nieto (1935-41) or the Villaconejos cinema (1965-67) of cubist-constructivist style, he altered the perception of scale and proportions through a few steps that break the gentleness of the virtual mass mould, achieving an almost crude treatment of the angular and projected bodies in a dramatisation that goes to the limit of the composition. The images of M. van der Rohe's monument to Rosa Luxembourg or Wright's House of the Cascade, admired by CF-S, come to mind. These "projecting bodies of great originality and constructional value" that give his housing projects "great expressive power", as P. Barreiro observed, emerge with different treatments in nearly all his "architecture without style", even though they attain their highest levels in the mentioned examples.

In his Madrid eclectic residential buildings he resorted equally to the strong expression of angles or corner houses in formal treatments related to expressionist dynamism, according to the subtle interplays between entrances and exits or between curved concave-convex counterpositions.

It is difficult to find any CF-S work that lacks expressionist nuances or traces; for this reason we do not wish to avoid reference to those that could appear more detached in this sense, inasmuch as they are largely subordinate to his technological-industrial side. These concern his numerous plans for radial garages whose cold prototypes are gripped by an expressionist atmosphere from placing them in a concrete location that disguises them with theatrical resources, chiaroscuros of deep entrances, shadows thrown from the projecting ribs of the general roof, simple interplays of contrasting curves, transparent round shapes and light token curves.

If there is one aspect in which expressionist tendencies and essences converge, it is in the theatrical emphasis of the means of representation. Thus we can talk of a pregnant graphicness as an omen of the disruptive and pronouncedly dramatic inconformity that looms on the horizon with an avant garde determination that appears and disappears throughout the 20th century. In the Casto aesthetics of the means of representation, we should understand above all the relevance of his surprising scaled model-sculptures, rare objects in which expressionist tones abound and which CF-S modelled as ideal transpositions of a world of images that places us at a higher plastic threshold than that of the mere condition of building representations. Also, many of his sketches and water colours contain a graphicness of undeniable expressionist tone.

The placement of a building in its surrounding fills it with drama and the lines that shape it give it a receptive visual power of an interior world that is about to explode.

CF-S's neo-expressionist statement in his brilliant design for the Madrid Opera Theatre (1963), evoking Poelzig and even Gropius, once again approaches Mendelsohn, but loses its subtlety in the contest project for the Spanish pavilion in the 1965 New York International Fair where it merged the futurist line with certain formal exacerbations in an emphatic and almost "luminescent" cylindrical body.

In his four powerful "levers", he additionally developed some of the form tested in his second plan for General Motors, although he gave them a monumental-theatrical transposition that detached them from the model to grant them their own life.

But the Opera Theatre embodied the recovery of the vigorous line, of exuberant vitality, the undulating slope of the Jándula dam, as well as the suggestions of the almost organic-naturalist temple of Sumo Hacedor, chords that rise from the full lyricism of the imposing and almost sensual mass resounding in its cylindrical drums, without affecting the formal rotundity and the passionate murmur of the expression.

And finally, the Congress Palace project on Madrid's Castellana avenue, which he entered for the contest held in 1965 when he was nearly 70. This work, unlike any previous one, but which paradoxically contained many of his characteristic features, summarised all the anxieties that nourished his architect-inventor spirit and, surely, is one of the greatest intensity in his theatrical conception. Again, a round geometric form, isolated in the urban context and resolved in the technological aspect, that breaks up delicately from the effects of the created illumination and the texture of the chosen materials. This project, one of J.D. Fullaondo's favourites, should be considered as the best tribute to CF-S's unique expressionist feeling, that feeling which A. Capitel doubted whether it was premature or overdue in such an "impossible and primitive Spanish vanguard", but "capable of demonstrating the banality of conventional architecture and cities".

Perhaps the sculpture of the man in the Palace of Congresses that should serve at same time as a symbol, might be the double of CF-S's ego, proclaiming to the world its capacity for surprise and brilliance. It aroused in him the incessant discoveries of science produced since the dawn of the 20th century, that drove him in often suicidal determination to shape forms deriving from this new sensitivity. A sensitivity that he considered should modify the perception of art, based on the new vision of the world available to those who would wish to look not just to the future, but only to the impressive present. Perhaps for this reason he would proclaim to the world, this world of his which Pérez Arroyo describes as a country "filled with constructive tradition and anchored in recalcitrant stagnation", the lack of understanding he received during a professional life of 50 years. ■

Extract of the original