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# **INDUSTRIAL DESIGN IN SPAIN**

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Barcelona Centro de Diseno

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University of Barcelona, Spain

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Valladolid, Spain

All the authors and publications mentioned in the bibliography have been of great value to me in my research and will provide further sources of information for readers studying the subject more deeply.

Every effort has been made to acknowledge each piece of information individually in the text and I apologise in advance to anyone who recognises a phrase or illustration which they originated and which I have used inadvertently without acknowledgement.

Finally, thanks to all those individuals or concerns that have in one way or another affected, influenced or contributed to the work in this dissertation. My thanks also to Polyprint Ltd. for typing this project.

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*To My Mother and Father*

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## INTRODUCTION

The history of industrial design in Spain is admittedly short. It is a story of scarcely 39 years, which is becoming more and more dominant in the world today. Although still in its infancy, it still has much to offer. It is now on the point of making its mark on the world in the 1990's.

I decided to write this thesis because of the lack of information and poor understanding of the situation of industrial design in Spain. I have worked in Spain on a number of occasions, the last of which was during spring and summer of 1988 with a design consultancy in Barcelona. Having worked in the field of industrial design in Spain I saw that industrial design is far more active in the country than it appears.

For almost 50 years Spain had been hidden by the shadow of Franco's rule. The country was an unknown entity to the rest of Europe. Now it has become quite the opposite. Today it is a country invested with a distinctive creativity. Spain's commercial activities suffered greatly because of the isolation imposed on the country by Franco. Under his rule Spanish manufacturers were encouraged to copy products which had been commercially successful in other European countries. Innovative design was practically non-existent in Spain.

Before the Spanish Civil War, Barcelona was the country's cosmopolitan centre for art and design which spawned artists such as Gaudi and Dali. During the war, Barcelona was the stronghold of the Republicans who fought against Franco's fascist army. When the country fell under the regime of Franco on the 28th March, 1939 Barcelona was punished for being the last Republican stronghold. Almost all development of art and culture were restricted.

However, since Franco's rule Barcelona has quickly climbed back up the ladder to re-establish its reputation as a cosmopolitan centre for art and design, with the rest of Spain following in its footsteps. Today Barcelona is the centre of industrial design in Spain. It is not surprising that today it is the Spanish capital of creativity.

The entry of Spain into the EC in 1986 has had a huge change in the attitude to industrial design in the country. This move has forced all manufacturers, big or small, to replan their commercial situation in their now non-complacent country. With export and import competition the manufacturers faced the possibility of being driven out of business. It has not been easy to make such a change. Many companies have done so, new ones more so than older companies. Some manufacturers still feel

that changing the nature and quality of their products is too much of a risk. They continue to copy goods from other countries. The others see the necessity of developing new products. This has put a new type of demand on the services of the industrial designer.

Parallel with this, the new democracy, created after Franco's death, got rid of the restrictions which had been imposed on the development of Spanish industrial design. Spanish industrialists realise that the quality and cost of their goods must better those of the same nature produced in other countries in order to maintain a firm foothold in the market.

The new surge in activity in all aspects of design in Spain increased even further in 1988 with the official announcement of the Single European Act. (Basically the aim of this act, which comes into effect in 1992, is to create a single market without trade barriers between the countries of the European Community). The designers and industrialists are under even more pressure than before as they begin to understand the implications that Europe, without market barrier limitations, will have in 1992. The Spaniards see 1992 as the year when their country will be offered to the world on a plate. It is in this year that the Olympic Games will be held in Barcelona.

To understand the situation of industrial design in Spain it is necessary to understand the history of its development and the struggle that it has gone through during this century. The essay also looks at design and its designers in Spain today. The aim of the essay is to give an overview of industrial design and its history in Spain.



## CHAPTER 1

# THE BIRTH OF SPANISH INDUSTRIAL DESIGN

It is not possible to put an accurate date on the beginning of industrial design in Spain, as is the case worldwide. It has been mentioned that it began in Spain 39 years ago. It is more correct to say that it became recognised by a group of people who saw that it was a skill separate from all others. In reality industrial design had been practiced long before the subject was given a definition. In Spain, as with the rest of the world, the creation of objects and determination of their form had been based on a "trial and error" method. Products were perfected using the experience of centuries of work. Method of determination of form changed. Instead of emerging from trial and error, form and function had to derive from calculation. This saw the birth of the Industrial Revolution. Only with difficulty, however, could a man designing from calculations achieve the same standard as that of a craftsman who had the experience of centuries of finetuning in craftwork.

Around the turn of the nineteenth century critics and artists began to notice a general decline in craftsmanship caused by the Industrial Revolution. They hated the very sight of cheap and tawdry machine-made imitations of ornaments which once had had a meaning and a nobility of its own. Men like John Ruskin and William Morris dreamt of a reform of the arts and crafts. They wanted to replace cheap mass-production by conscientious and meaningful handiwork. This proved impossible because under modern conditions this type of work was considered to be the greatest of luxuries. Artists in Spain, as in the rest of the world, longed for a new type of art based on a new feeling for design and for the inherent potential in each material. It was this banner of new art, raised in the last ten years of the 19th century that became known as Art Nouveau.

About the middle of the 18th century, following the destructive occupation of the French, Spanish industry lobbied for the creation of an organisation to promote artistic education. The Junta de Comercio de Barcelona (The Board of Commerce of Barcelona) set up the Escuela de Nobles Artes (The School of Noble arts) to produce designers of printed calicos. This school constituted the nucleus of the future Llotja School where the emergence of Spanish art of the 19th century and first 30 years of the 20th century began.

With forms and structures of a craft-based origin, inspired by wood engravings and embroidery, the students of the Llotja were those who cultivated the first steps towards industrial design in Spain with their drawings and designs for printed calicos.

In 1888 the Universal Exhibition was held in Barcelona. The exhibition was broken into sections, one of which was for the Industrial Arts. This section was seen as being dedicated to imitations of traditional objects of Rococo and Medieval style. The exhibition included imitation ceramics in glass, paper which imitated stained glass windows and even imitation leather made from cardboard. This was another stepping stone along the path to the development of Spanish industrial design.

The arts and crafts movement soon extended all over Europe. It was introduced into Spain during the modernist period by L'Avenc, a group of Spanish modernists. However, parallel with this came a more progressive way of thinking related to industrial aesthetics. Gaudi (1852-1976) was one of those who worked towards the resurrection of traditional crafts while at the same time proudly using industrial structures made from iron and steel. The split between culture and new technology that was revealed by this contradiction was quite a sensitive issue in Spain at the beginning of the 20th century. In 1900 an article was published in 'Joventut' (Youth), a Catalan magazine, which referred to two leading industrialists at the time, Escofet and Tejera: "They know clearly that industrial art must be taken as seriously as the art of painting a picture or sculpturing a figure. Industrial thought has set in. The valuable traditional relationship between utilitarianism and traditional crafts has been turned upside down".

#### **GATCPAC**

In 1929 the Barcelona Chair, designed by Miss Van der Rohe, had quite an impact in Barcelona itself and brought with it a greater interest in design. Along with this the simultaneous influences of the "new spirit" (Alexandre Cirici) and of the Bauhaus arrived. In the same year a group of architects, which included Josep Luis Sert, Rodriguez Arias and Josep Torres Clave, held an exhibiton of their work in the Dalman Galeries in Barcelona. The following year the same group founded an organisation called GATCPAC, whose initials in English mean 'Catalonian Group of artists, Architects and Technologists for the advance of Contemporary Architecture. This organisation took on the role of promoting what was considered as contemporary art, architecture and design. It concentrated on designing furniture and promoted the designs of its members as well as the designs of Brandt, Breuer and Aalto. Seven years after the founding of GATCPAC, the Spanish Civil War began. In the same year, 1936, a number of students from the School of Architecture in Barcelona began to take steps in organising the Escuela Nueva Unificado (New Unified School) which was inspired to a large extent by the Bauhaus style of teaching. Its aims and structure were



published in Barcelona. However, the loss of Catalonia in the Civil War crippled what architects and designers say could have been the continuation in Spain of the Bauhaus which had been destroyed by the Nazis. GATCPAC also came to an end in 1939 as it was no longer officially recognised by the new Franco regime. The further development of industrial design had suffered an early blow.

#### THE POST WAR RESURRECTION

Between 1939 and 1951 Catalonia lived through a period of genocidal culture, caused by Franco's rule. Industrial design was radically prohibited by the Franco regime as it was believed to be outside the national interest. Some members of GATCPAC had been killed during the war, others were exiled. The new society created by the war ignored anything which was similar to or could be associated with GATCPAC.

Alexandre Cirici (1914-1983) was one of those who was involved in trying to set up the new school in Barcelona and had been sent into exile as a result of the war. He did, however, manage to return from exile and in 1946 he published an article, in a clandestine Catalan magazine called *Ariel*. The article basically reaffirmed the importance of the need to 'develop products'. He also set about finding out if any of the pre-civil war design spirit still existed. He joined up with Ramon Marinello who was a member of a pre-war design group called ADLAN which was dedicated to the design of furniture. It was in 1951 that the 'Grupo R' was founded. The new organisation promoted the development of industrial design products only. It was set up by Antoni de Moragas, along with Cirici and a few others who were primarily architects with a desire to design products. However, only the very rich could afford such products at the time.



The 1920s were a time of great change for the world. The United States had just won the war, and the country was in a state of euphoria. The economy was booming, and people were living in a state of optimism. The 1920s were a time of great change for the world. The United States had just won the war, and the country was in a state of euphoria. The economy was booming, and people were living in a state of optimism. The 1920s were a time of great change for the world. The United States had just won the war, and the country was in a state of euphoria. The economy was booming, and people were living in a state of optimism.

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## CHAPTER 2

# NEW CONTACT WITH THE WORLD

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In 1955 news arrived in Barcelona that the Hochschule fur Gestaltung Foundation in Ulm, directed by Max Bill, had the intention of continuing the work of the Bauhaus, as a group of Spaniards had tried to do in Barcelona in 1936. As Spain was still slightly isolated from the rest of the world, being 'au fait' with the international design situation was not easy. However, the Spaniards heard about events such as the dispute between Max Bill and Tomas Maldonado (1922-) over the curriculum at the famous school at Ulm which was eventually won by Maldonado. During this time Maldonado's writings in German on planning, design and technical education became largely admired throughout Europe.

In the 1980's Spanish designers became concerned when they became aware of the highly imaginative standard of design which was being produced by the Italians, British and Scandinavians. They knew that they were lagging behind these countries in the standard of their design. They saw the birth of the Italian Vespa (1948), the furniture of Gio Ponti (1892-1979) and the Fiat 600 car designed by Dante Giacosa (1905-). It was in 1956 that Andre Ricard, now considered to be the father of Spanish Industrial Design (see section on Spanish designers) travelled to New York where he met the world's "No. 1" in styling, Raymond Loewy. It was this meeting with Loewy which saw the birth of Spanish industrial design as we know it today. (Refer to Chapter 4 Andre Ricard).

To this new atmosphere, Gio Ponti, Italian architect, designer and educator, and best known as the founder of one of the most widely read international design journals, Domus, came to Barcelona in 1957 to attend a meeting which was for people interested in industrial design. It was decided at the meeting that a Barcelona Institute of Industrial Design would be created. It was agreed that Antoni de Moragas (1907-1981) would be president of the new institute known as the IDIB (Fundacion Instituto de Diseno Industrial de Barcelona). In September 1959, Ricard was invited to be present as a representative of the Catalonian people at the first congressional assembly of the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design, held in Stockholm in Sweden. Although the Franco regime still remained a threat to such organisations as the IDIB. The IDIB did, however, manage to continue its activities. Sending Ricard to Stockholm, despite the intervention of the Francoists was a triumph for the IDIB.

Also in 1959, Alexandre Cirici managed to set up a design school which became known as the FAD School of Art and offered diplomas in industrial, graphic and interior design. Its teaching methods were based on those of the original Bauhaus and the new school in Ulm. Emphasis in the school was on a knowledge of form and function and a knowledge of materials and processing techniques.

In 1960 the IDIB had to give up its fight for existence. It was unable to survive the tight restrictions imposed on it by the Franco regime. It was in fact only the name 'IDIB' that had died because those involved in the IDIB founded a new association under the disguise of FAD and called it ADIFAD (the Industrial Design Association of FAD). On the 15th March, 1960 they began their activities with Moragas as president, Cirici as vice-president, Pau Monguio as secretary, Juli Schmid as vice-secretary, Ermengol Passola as treasurer and Andre Ricard, Oriol Bohigas, Marinello and Albert Bastardas as committee members.

#### ACTIVITIES OF ADIFAD

At the assembly congress of the ICSID held in Venice in 1961, ADIFAD was accepted as a full member. It began its activities by taking part in the design exhibition of CINI and soon afterwards organised an exhibition of German design in Barcelona which was followed by another which exhibited Braun products. From then on its basic activity was the awarding of prizes for well designed products. These prizes, illustrated below, which change from year to year, are still awarded today and are known as the Deltas de Oro and Deltas de Plata.

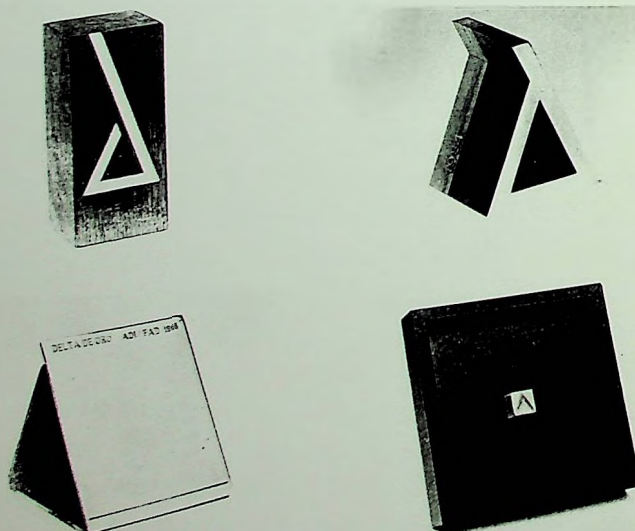


Fig.1 Premios Deltas



Other activities included the exhibition of products at their own stand at trade fairs and exhibitions and active participation in international exhibitions and congresses.

In 1962 it held a meeting for the directive committee of ICSID in Barcelona. The following year it participated at an industrial design exhibition held in the Louvre in Paris. During the 60's it invited names such as Max Bill, John Reid and Benetto to act as international judges at the Deltas de Oro competitions. Two years later, in collaboration with the Colegio de Arquitectos, it created the Industrial Design Information Centre (DICI) which was a permanent industrial design exhibition of productions designed and developed in Spain.

During this period, Elisava, a new design school was well under way. (See section on design schools). In 1970 a new period began for ADIFAD when it moved to a new location where it also held its permanent industrial design exhibition (DICI). There was also a change in the granting of the Delta prizes. They were no longer granted to designs which were linked to artistic tradition but to those which were more technical such as video terminals, stereo units, etc. It also began granting prizes to students from Elisava and Eina which are discussed further on. It organised more exhibitions at home and abroad as well as minicongresses on themes such as experimental design, materials, etc. Another important step forward was the meeting of the General Assembly of the ICSID in Barcelona and the holding of the 7th Congress in Ibiza in the Balearic Islands.

In 1973 a group of designers from ADIFAD set up the Barcelona Centro de Diseno (BCD). It was set up as a foundation which became officially recognised in 1976. The fundamental aims of the BCD were to elevate the level of design in Spain culturally as well as socioeconomically to help improve the quality of life. Today it is financially supported by the Ministry for Industry and Technology of Spain's Socialist Government under the rule of Felipe Gonzalez. This is a far cry from the treatment that Franco imposed on design, whilst in power. The government approves of anything such as industrial design which will develop the country's industrial standard to a level which can compete on an international level. Today in Spain, the BCD is the most important centre which offers computer aided design and computer aided manufacturing facilities. It is also recognised as a member of the ICSID. Now situated in the Paseo de Gracia in the heart of Barcelona, it is Spain's most up-to-date design centre. The emphasis on design promotion at the moment is enormous as 1992 is less than three years away. The BCD is attempting to educate Spanish companies to be "wholly designed and market led". (Design Jan 1988)



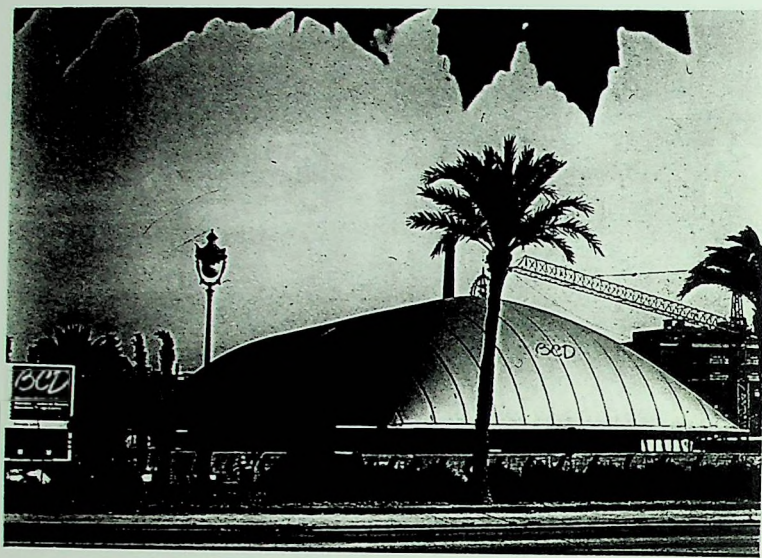


Fig 2. Barcelona Centro de Diseno (1973 - 1976)

## CHAPTER 3

# DESIGN SCHOOLS IN BARCELONA

Not surprisingly the only schools to teach industrial design in Spain are based in Barcelona. In 1961 the FAD School of Art was used as a base for a new design school called Elisava. It was founded as part of the Cultural Institution of Catalonia (CIC). When it began, Elisava was administered by Albert Rafols, Federico Cottea, Miguel Mila and Alexandre Cirici. The influence of the CIC at the time was such that the school had to maintain a formalistic rational line of teaching. This caused a split in the views of those running the school. As a result of this its professors left Elisava. From the split the Eina school was born in 1964 and Albert Rafols became the president.

Elisava offered courses in Industrial Design, Graphic and Interior Design as well as in Workshop Skills. Today, each of these courses is still three years in duration. The academic requirements for the courses require students to have passed the COU examinations (Leaving Certificate/A Levels equivalent). It also offers a three year course in elementary design for those who do not have COU. Elisava puts forward its objectives as being those which give its students an integral knowledge of design, sufficient to work in the design profession, by means of scientific and practical studies of all design problems. Today the school is totally self-financed.

As mentioned, the Eina school was born as a result of a split in Elisava, caused by a dispute in teaching methods. Eina was set up and financed by the professors who left Elisava along with the help of some private companies. At present Eina offers courses in Industrial Design, Interior Design, Graphic Design and Art studies. Industrial design was offered as a course when Eina began. However, it was not taught at the school for a few years after it began, as there was a low demand for the course. This, however, changed in 1985, when the course was reintroduced to meet the demands of the new upsurge of interest in industrial design in Spain.

When it began, Eina based its teachings on the theory of form as taught in the Bauhaus. While relying on these basic methods, it has continued to evolve making sure that it keeps up with the advances made in today's design teaching methods. In the past it has organised seminars on Umberto Eco, Dorfler and Colombo. It has also organised international seminars which have concentrated on interdisciplinary relationships. Similarly to Elisava, the courses offered are three years in duration. Students can elect to study subjects from more than one of the disciplines offered. This will give them a less specialised knowledge of design but will, however, give them a more general knowledge of the subject. Eina does not receive any official subsidisation and survives on the fees of the students to maintain its functions.

In 1985 a new design school was set up in Barcelona to concentrate on teaching industrial and graphic design. Although still in its infancy, the new Barcelona School of Design is well on the way to becoming the most important Spanish design school today. It was set up to meet the needs of the growing Spanish industry, much of which is centered in Barcelona. Both the industrial and graphic design courses offered are three years in duration. The first year is common to both courses and concentrates on materials and techniques common to all areas of design. In the second year of the course the students specialise in either one of the two disciplines. The final year of the course is spent on the development of a design project under the direction of the college tutors. Whilst working in Spain I spoke to a number of professional industrial designers. These designers feel that the standard of the schools is not high enough when compared with those on an international level. Guillermo Capdevila of Capdevila and Associates believes that the industrial design standard of students from Ireland and England is higher than that of Spanish students. Jose Maria Martinez Serra, deputy of the SEAT design team also shares the same opinion. Others will employ non-Spanish nationals whom they feel have a better design education if they can manage to deal with the problem of the work permit which foreigners must have in order to work in Spain. This is highly discouraged by the socialist government who reluctantly give out work permits especially as there is a high rate of unemployment in the country. In 1992 this will pose a problem to Spanish design students as they will be facing competition from non-Spanish nationals wanting to work in Spain who will no longer need a work-permit to do so.



During the twentieth century, the Spanish design scene was characterized by a series of movements and individual designers who sought to create a new identity for the country. The early years of the century were marked by the influence of the avant-garde movements, such as the *Ultraísmo* and *El Estetismo*, which sought to break with the traditional academicism and introduce new forms and materials. The 1920s and 1930s saw the rise of the *Modernismo* movement, which drew inspiration from the Arts and Crafts movement and the Bauhaus, emphasizing the integration of art and design. This period also saw the emergence of the *Escuela de Valencia* and the *Escuela de Barcelona*, which played a crucial role in the development of the Spanish design identity. The 1940s and 1950s were characterized by the influence of the *Escuela de Madrid*, which sought to create a new design language that was both modern and rooted in Spanish tradition. The 1960s and 1970s saw the rise of the *Escuela de Valencia* and the *Escuela de Barcelona*, which continued to explore the relationship between art and design. The 1980s and 1990s saw the emergence of the *Escuela de Madrid*, which sought to create a new design language that was both modern and rooted in Spanish tradition. The 2000s and 2010s saw the rise of the *Escuela de Valencia* and the *Escuela de Barcelona*, which continued to explore the relationship between art and design.

## CHAPTER 4

# SPANISH DESIGNERS

During the twentieth century, the Spanish design scene was characterized by a series of movements and individual designers who sought to create a new identity for the country. The early years of the century were marked by the influence of the avant-garde movements, such as the *Ultraísmo* and *El Estetismo*, which sought to break with the traditional academicism and introduce new forms and materials. The 1920s and 1930s saw the rise of the *Modernismo* movement, which drew inspiration from the Arts and Crafts movement and the Bauhaus, emphasizing the integration of art and design. This period also saw the emergence of the *Escuela de Valencia* and the *Escuela de Barcelona*, which played a crucial role in the development of the Spanish design identity. The 1940s and 1950s were characterized by the influence of the *Escuela de Madrid*, which sought to create a new design language that was both modern and rooted in Spanish tradition. The 1960s and 1970s saw the rise of the *Escuela de Valencia* and the *Escuela de Barcelona*, which continued to explore the relationship between art and design. The 1980s and 1990s saw the emergence of the *Escuela de Madrid*, which sought to create a new design language that was both modern and rooted in Spanish tradition. The 2000s and 2010s saw the rise of the *Escuela de Valencia* and the *Escuela de Barcelona*, which continued to explore the relationship between art and design.



Spain's recent industrial resurgence has opened the door for many Spanish industrial designers, most of whom are based in Barcelona. Most of today's Spanish designers are interdisciplinary. Furniture is still the most frequently designed product, although designers such as Jose Miguel Reig of Mil 30 have recognised the flood in the furniture market and are putting an emphasis on non-furniture type products such as computers, machines, etc. As yet Spanish industrial designers are uncontaminated by the crushing homogeneity which exists elsewhere and which makes the shop windows, bars, furniture, paintings and products, such as are found in London, at times barely distinguishable from those of New York, Paris or Tokyo. (Design Jan. 1988). In Barcelona industrial design is losing its rare profession image. In Madrid for example this is not the case. Most of the industries in Madrid or in cities outside Catalonia use the services of the Barcelona designers. Josep Llusca and Quod, two of the country's top design consultancies, are based in Barcelona. The most successful design consultancy, Capdevila and Associates, is based near Bilbao in the Basque country. The next section discusses some of Spain's top designers and their work to give an overview of the design situation in Spain today.

### Josep Llusca

Born in Barcelona in 1948, Llusca is a designer whose work is immediately identifiable by its style.

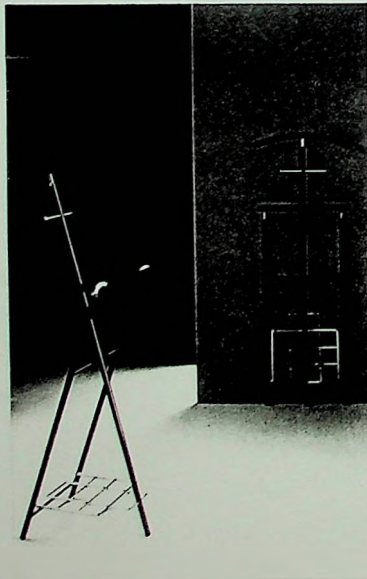
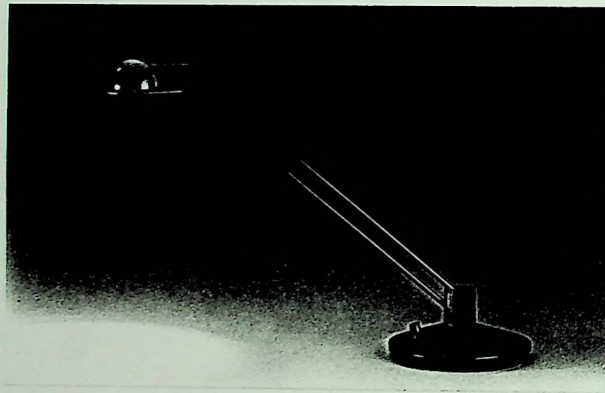


Fig. 3 Galan de Noche "Gigoto", 1986 (Clothes Hanger)

He was educated at the Eina School of Design and later won a scholarship to the Ecole des Arts et Matiers de Montreal in Canada. He then spent a period of time working in New York. When he returned to Barcelona he was commissioned to design lamps for a state owned company which specialised in lighting technology. One year later in 1974 he had won the Delta de Oro prize (ADIFAD) with one of his designs and a little later was awarded first prize in a National Packaging competition.

One of Llusca's main clients is Fagor, a Spanish company that manufactures domestic goods. Llusca designed a ranged of 12 products which were launched on the market in 1988, all of which are expected to take a large part of the Spanish domestic goods market.

His slick lighting designs such as that seen below are famous in many European countries.



**Fig. 4 Lampara Anade, 1985**

Llusca likes to experiment with all classes of materials and design and has a special liking for hi-tech materials. With furniture, for example, he likes to mix traditional craft materials, such as marble, glass and wood with high carbon steel, aluminium, gold and silver. His Lampara Luna is an example of this type of combination of materials.

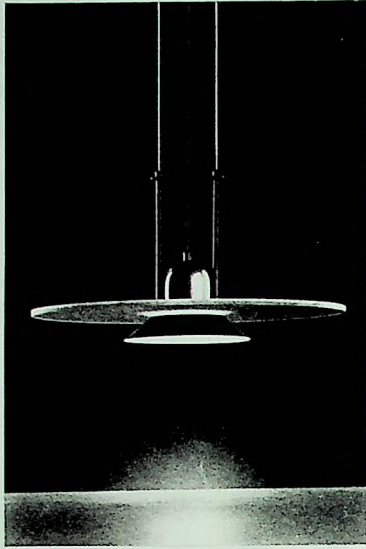


Fig. 5 Lampara Luna, 1985

It is unfortunate that the photograph is unable to convey the impression that the lamp imposes on one who looks at it. On seeing this lamp in 3-D one can understand Llusca's style even better. One can see the heaviness of the blue marble and the weightlessness of the aluminium which says everything about his style. Llusca's style is very similar to that of some Italian designers. This is evident if we compare Llusca's Lampara Luna with Marco Zanini's (1952) Tubo Table Lamp (below).

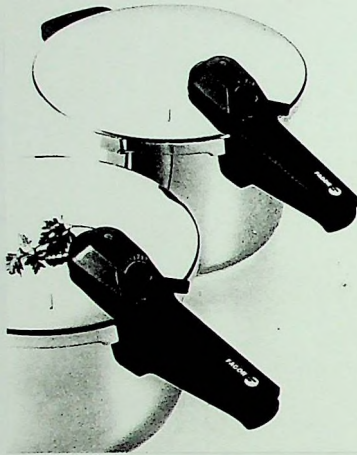


Fig. 6 Tubo Table Lamp, 1988



The colours and use of materials are almost identical.

Llusca's speciality is working with complex mechanisms, a quality which many designers do not have. Most of what he makes has moving parts. For example the height of the Lumpara Luna can be adjusted. The high pressure cooking pot which he designed for Fagor in 1984 is another example of this.



**Fig. 7 High Pressure Cooker, 1984**

Each year Llusca temporarily employs design students in his studio. In Spain it is quite common for design students to work in the design field whilst studying at a design college. He believes that students should have the chance to develop their skills. He believes that for Barcelona to be able to compete on the same level as Milan that industrial designs must be promoted in as many ways as possible, both officially and unofficially. By his own definition Llusca is a Multidisciplinary Designer. (Diseno Barcelona).

## Fernando Amat & Vincon

Today in Spain, Fernando Amat, born in 1941, is one of the most revered names in Spanish design. He owns the famous shop, Vincon, a landmark in Barcelona, where one can go and see a range of 7000 products, many of which have been designed in Spain. Vincon is 20 metres from Amat's home which is an apartment in Gaudi's Casa Mila.



Fig. 8 Gaudi's Casa Mila - Fernando Amat's Home

Vincon's stock of 7000 products ranges from smartly designed pen knives to avant garde coffee tables. Amat personally selects all the goods to be displayed and sold in his shop. His criterion for selecting the products is simple. In his own words he says, "it must be well designed". Amat will also display products developed by Spanish designers, which have not yet reached the market. He offers a guarantee on all products sold in the shop. "If for example we sell a paella pan on which the rice should not stick, and it does stick, we return the money to the buyer and revise the feasibility of having this product on sale in the shop". (El Diseno En Espana).

Amat believes that Italian design only excels Spanish design in its age and its association with companies such as Olivetti.

As we know, the Civil war and Franco restricted the development of industrial design in the country. However, had it not been for the Civil War Vincon, as we know it today, might never have existed. Its history goes back 55 years.

Amat's father was an agent in a company created in 1934 by Enrique Levi and Hugo Vincon which imported and sold fine German porcelain. Due to the disastrous state of the country during the Civil War the business folded. Levi, a Jew, left Barcelona and moved to New York. After the Civil War in 1940 Vincon and Amat formed a partnership to try and restart the old business. The business was restarted in a small establishment in the Paseo de Gracia. The new shop had three entrances, one was used as a gift shop, the second was used as an exhibition room and the third as offices and a storeroom. In 1955 Fernando Amat entered the business. Two years later Vincon sold his share in the business to Amat's family.

In 1967 the business began to put an emphasis on selecting products on the basis of careful analysis, taking into consideration the market demand. Little did Fernando Amat and his father know that the move was to launch the shop into the world of industrial design. From that point on the business began to expand. In 1972 they opened "Detras" (Spanish for behind) a popular goods only shop, which was situated behind Vincon. In 1985 the area of the shop was increased to 2000 m<sup>2</sup>. Today in 1989 the shop and Amat are considered to be vital links in the development of Spanish industrial design. He is now hailed as Spain's answer to Terence Conran for having identified, provided for, and thereby increasing the market, for Spanish designed goods.



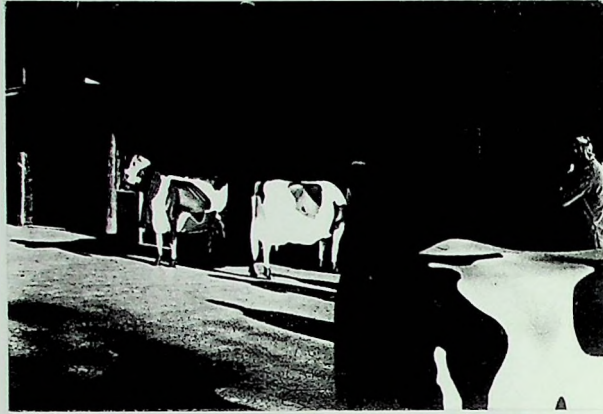


Fig. 9 Street Promotion for Vincon, Christmas 1978

## Ramon Benedito

Born in 1946 Ramon Benedito is considered a hi-tech designer among the Spanish. He is not a furniture architect nor a creator of domestic objects. What distinguishes him is his specialisation in complex industrial products. He designs laboratory equipment for the optics industry and other items of equipment such as the bevelling machine seen below.

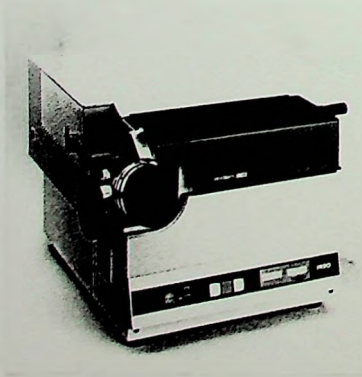


Fig. 10 Bevelling Machine, 1985



In 1972 he qualified from the Elisava design school in Barcelona. His first design job was with a company that made transformers. In 1989 he designed an acoustic screen for one of the few Spanish companies, Ureta, which produces Hi-Fi products (see below). This product became very successful in Spain and has earned him many other contracts with companies in the electronic sector.

Benedito likes to explore the world of new innovative design. The development of new contemporary design ideas is a favourite pastime of his.



Fig. 11 Acoustic Screen, 1980

An example of his work along these lines is Nexus which has been described as "being a single artefact, half bed, half couch, dotted with little red lights and covered in a very soft but tear resistant material, which should be used as a pleasure piece of furniture, where one can practice all the possibilities of Kamasutra". (Diseno Barcelona).

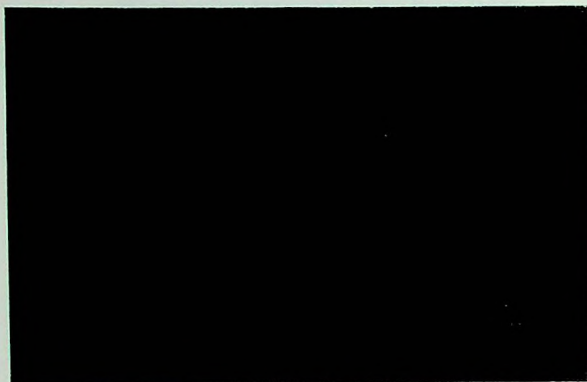


Fig. 12 Nexus, 1984

At present he is exploring the field of edible design and is working on the "Chip", 'a sweet with a memory and an aphrodisiac taste' (Diseno Barcelona). He has won prizes for his ideas, in some of which, Italian innovationists have taken great interest. Benedito can be described as a solid, fun and fast designer who brings his personal optimism into his products in which he attempts to announce the future. The only thing he dislikes personally in design is the "kryptonite of bad taste" (Diseno Barcelona).

## Javier Mariscal

Mariscal is Spain's most inventive designer. It has been said that it was the designer Pepe Cortes who changed his impossible designs to reality, that it was Fernando Amat who introduced Mariscal's work in Vincon and that it was Ettore Sottsass who opened the door to success for him.

Born in Valencia in 1950 he was a frustrated arts and philosophy student. He is now a versatile artist who does everything from designing products to drawing cartoons. Soon after Mariscal first began to design he joined up with Pepe Cortes. It was this

move that sent Mariscal off on his road to success. The first thing they designed together was a range of furniture called Muebles Muy Formales followed by another range in 1981 called Muebles Amoraless.

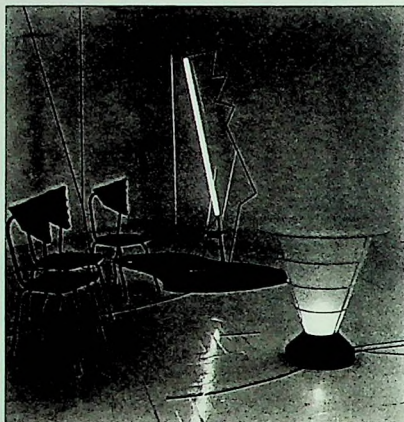


Fig. 13 Muebles Amoraless, 1981

It was these Muebles Amoraless that captured the heart of Ettore Sottsass. Sottsass was so charmed and fascinated with the furniture that he allowed them to become part of the Memphis team. Mariscal has continued to design various items of furniture such as the following lamp.

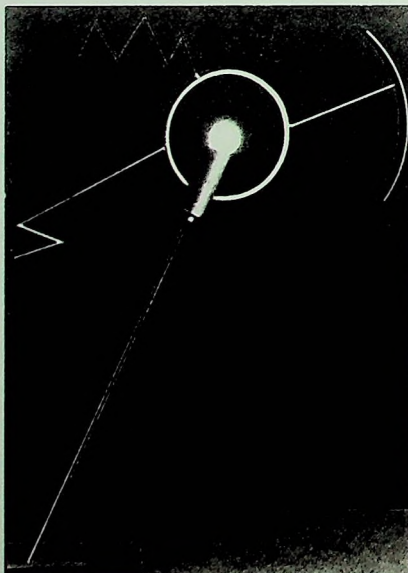


Fig. 14 Lampara Valencia, 1983



His work has been exhibited in New York, Los Angeles, Paris and Milan. If Franco were alive today and still governing the country, Mariscal would probably be his number one enemy in design. In the summer of 1988 Mariscal publicly insulted the Spanish Government as he felt there was not enough emphasis on the development of contemporary design. It was so serious at the time that Mariscal had to leave the country. Below we can see another example of his contemporary style which many find hard to accept. It is a bar designed and built in Valencia in 1988.

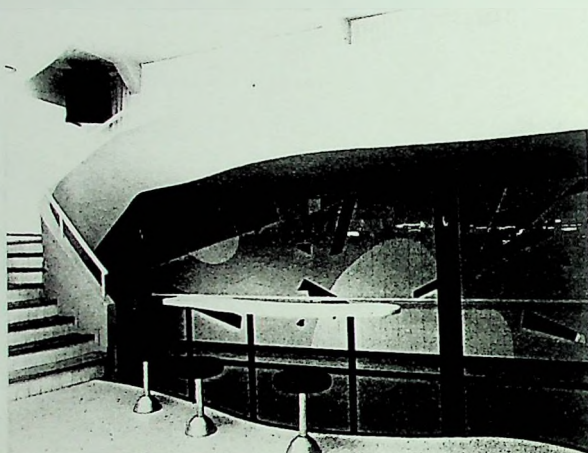


Fig. 15 Bar Duplex, 1988

Mariscal does not consider himself an industrial designer but an "equilibrist". He calls himself a "creativist" and an "artist". He believes that the term "industrial designer" is too bombastic. He prefers the sound of "artist" (El Diseno Espana), which he feels is much more discrete.

He is still fascinated by Art Nouveau and Art Deco. His design, styling and methods are developed in an instinctive manner. Too much thinking before designing is one of his pet hates. He greatly dislikes design which is super rational, very industrial and over obsessed with the straight line.

Mariscal sees the importance that 1992 will have for Spain, from an industrial point of view, although he would like to see a larger swing towards contemporary design and away from the "civil servant style of design". (Diseno Barcelona) still practiced by



some designers and companies. In 1992 the entire world will become familiar with part of his work, for it is he who has designed a most controversial olympic mascot for the Olympic Games to be held in Barcelona of that year.

## Andre Ricard

Ricard was educated in France, Switzerland and England. The story of how Ricard became interested in industrial design is rather interesting.

Born in 1929, Ricard had worked with his brother in Barcelona making ceramic goods. However, he was not happy with what he was doing. Whilst reading a French magazine in the early 1950's one day he saw an advertisement for a book called "Never Leave Well Enough Alone" written by a man he knew nothing about, Raymond Loewy. This book incidently has been translated to Spanish and is titled "Lo Feo No Vende" which literally means "The Ugly Does Not Sell". He bought the book and was fascinated by what he had read. He was convinced that industrial design was a profession which would suit him. He was so taken by the book that he wrote to Loewy and was even more surprised when Loewy wrote back to him recommending a number of books that he should read to become more au fait with the subject of industrial design. Ricard was only 22 years old at the time.

Four years later in 1956, Ricard had occasion to travel to New York to do some work for his father. He took advantage of the situation and went to see Loewy, by whom he was very well received. He was convinced further still about taking up industrial design as a profession when he saw Loewy's "stunning office" full of "stunning girls". (El Diseno en Espana).

When he returned to Spain he designed a washing machine, the first of its kind in Spain which worked on a bellows principle which agitated the clothes. He also designed a range of dishware and other similar products for some industrialist friends.

One day he read in the newspaper about the existence of the Fundacion Institute de Diseno Industrial de Barcelona (IDIB). He got in contact with the president of the foundation, Antoni de Moragas. Ricard said that when he started designing just over 30 years age, he felt like "Robinson Crusoe on a deserted island when, one day, he saw footsteps on the sand". (Diseno Barcelona). He went to find out to whom "did these

footsteps belong". They were those of Moragas and Oriol Bohigas, an architect with an interest in industrial design. Ricard, Moragas and Bohigas were facing the same dilemma together. As designers they were being ignored by society. The IDIB did not survive the pressures of the Franco regime. This sparked off the founding of ADIFAD (see section on New Contact with the World). Ricard believes that today, thanks to ADIFAD, industrial design in Spain is alive and kicking. (Diseno Barcelona).

He is now recognised as an ordered, disciplined and cultured designer. He has designed hundreds of objects during his career such as the Tatu Lamps (1972) and the Quorum Bottle for Puig (1984).

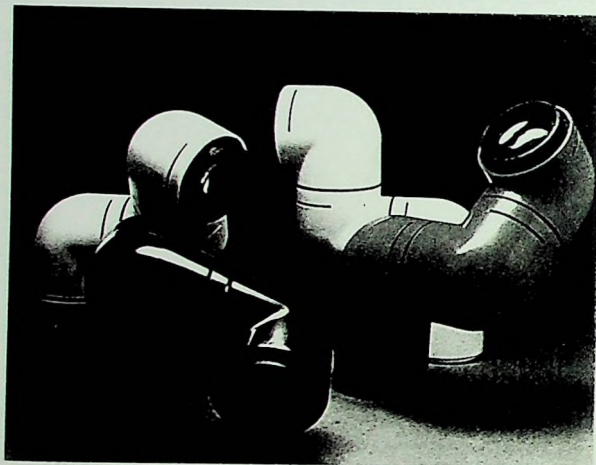


Fig. 16 Tatu Lamps, 1972



Fig. 17 Envase Quorum, 1984

His design style is elegant and rational. Today he is probably the most widely respected designer in Spain. His contribution to the development of industrial design has been so great that he is now considered one of the "Fathers of Spanish Industrial Design". (Las Noticias - TVE (Televisión Española)).

### A Spanish Identity

Spanish industrial design does not yet have an identity. We should, however, begin to see the emergence of such an identity in the 1990's. It is designers such as Mariscal that will create such an identity with products such as his Trampoline Chair (1986) for which he took the Premio Delta de Plata award in the same year.

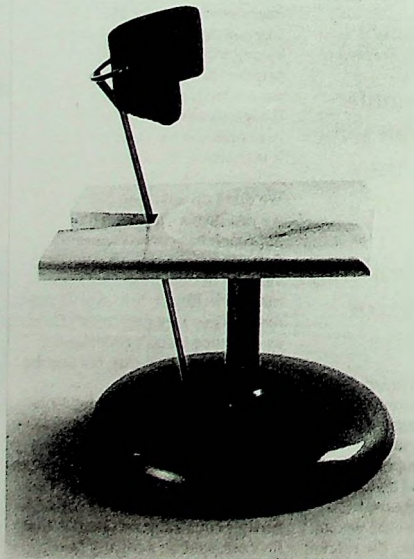


Fig. 18 Trampoline Chair (1986)



Designers in all parts of Spain are striving to create a design identity for the country. The SEAT design team, headed by Jose Maria Martinez Serra is an example of this. The team has tried to create a car which has a Spanish and "Mediterranean" (Design Jan. 1988) appearance to it. The result was the SEAT Ibiza car. The Ibiza's highly individual styling has already won it a great deal of praise.



Fig. 19 SEAT Ibiza

In 1985 Guillermo Capdevilla in the Basque region of Spain designed the first ever cordless iron for SOLAC, Spain's leading manufacturer of domestic goods.

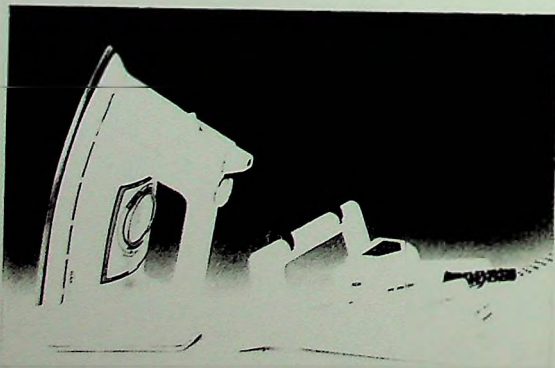


Fig. 20 Cordless Iron (1985)



The product has been so successful on the Spanish market in terms of sales that SOLAC have now gained lucrative subcontracted deals with Krupps and Philips. This is an example of another product which may help in establishing an identity for Spanish industrial design.

Although many of Spain's designers revolted against the elaborate and decorative styling popularised by architects such as Gaudi, Mariscal believes that soon we will see a resurgence of interest in this Spanish style. This could become one of the hallmarks of a Spanish design identity.

The attitude of manufacturers towards designers in Spain is one of mixed feelings. As mentioned previously the emphasis in Spain at the moment is on promoting industrial design to a level where it becomes recognised as an important service available to manufacturers of products. Mai Felip Hasselbarth, director of design promotion at the BCD believes that the reason that some manufacturers are afraid of designers is partly due to the designers themselves. He says that there is too much contemporary furniture being developed just for arts sake. To the industrialist this type of furniture is a non-profit-making type of product in mass product terms. There is too much of a gap between, for example, Mariscal's design and that of Ricard. There needs to be something between the two to slowly draw manufacturers into believing that designers such as Mariscal who are explosive and prolific in their work, are going to be those who will give Spanish made products a Spanish identity.

The first of these is the fact that the world is not a homogeneous whole. It is made up of many different parts, each with its own characteristics and needs. This is why it is so important to have a good understanding of the world and its people. The second is the fact that the world is constantly changing. New ideas and technologies are being developed all the time, and this is leading to a rapid pace of change. The third is the fact that the world is becoming more and more interconnected. People from different parts of the world are now living and working together, and this is leading to a greater understanding of each other and a more peaceful world.

## CONCLUSION

It is clear that design activity in Spain has suddenly exploded. All over Spain the media is bursting with information on the subject. The newspapers explain how industrial design is a "species of life saver of Spain's industries in the light of the new challenge posed by Spain's entrance into the European Community and indeed 1992."

With the emergence of designers such as Mariscal and Llusca the eruption of design students with degrees from the design schools and the interest and desire to be 'with it' is really causing a stir in Spain. In Barcelona, especially, it has become highly trendy to be involved in any aspect of design whether it be fashion or industry. Something more serious and radical is in motion. Industrial design in Spain has at last equalled the cultural personality and political talent of a modern progressive society.

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by *Walter H. Harty*

London, 1914

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