

THE BARCELONA-NEW YORK CHAIR

THE FUTURE ACTIVITIES OF THE CHAIR WILL CENTRE MORE AND MORE ROUND THE FIELD OF URBAN CULTURE. IN THIS RESPECT, WE EXPECT TO COLLABORATE IN THE EXHIBITION "GAUDÍ", TO BE HELD FROM FEBRUARY TO MAY 1987 AT THE COOPER HEWETT GALLERY IN NEW YORK.



JORDI LLOVET COORDINATOR OF THE CHAIR



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The Barcelona-New York chair was founded in December 1982 as a result of an agreement by the Barcelona city council, the University of Barcelona and New York University (NYU). The initiative came from the present member of the European parliament, Xavier Rubert de Ventós, who at once received the public support of the city council –Pasqual Maragall was already mayor– and the two universities –Antoni M. Badia i Margarit for Barcelona and John Brademmas for New York– as well as the financial support of the Barcelona city council and the *Caixa d'Estalvis de Catalunya* (an important Catalan savings-bank) until the year 1986.

The idea of this chair was, and is, to promote in Barcelona the values of the

best culture of New York, and especially those of the intellectual classes, and to "export" Catalan culture to New York in so far as it could be considered of universal interest.

To this end, the organizers of the chair –in the first two years Josep Subirós, at present coordinator of culture of the city council; since 1985 Jordi Llovet, lecturer at the faculty of languages in the University of Barcelona– started by encouraging the teaching of Catalan in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at NYU, and immediately went on to widen this teaching by providing a permanent post for a second– and third-year lecturer there. Mary Ann Newman, a New York specialist in the subject, took charge of the teaching of Catalan, and a series of Barcelona lectu-

rers, initially from the field of language, visited NYU as from the Michaelmas term of 1983-84. Josep Subirós himself gave a course on politics and culture in twentieth century Catalonia; Dr. Martí de Riquer and Dr. Jordi Llovet lectured on Catalan chivalric literature and Catalan *Noucentiste* poetry respectively; later, NYU invited specialists in literature and town-planning, such as Lluís Izquierdo, Eugenio Trias, Maria Rubert and Manuel Solà-Morales.

But the scope of the chair was not to be limited to the activities of the Catalans in New York. From autumn 1984, NYU literary specialists came to Barcelona where they gave courses of varying length: John A. Coleman gave a course on the validity to this day of the Cervantine form in the English and Ameri-



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can novel; Quentin Anderson –an exception, being from Columbia University– spoke on the subject of liberal thinking in the North American novel of the nineteenth century, and Arthur Williamson, Assistant Dean at the NYU Faculty of Arts and Science, lectured on the philosophy of science. Further developments followed: Barcelona's cosmopolitan nature made it in-

evitable that the chair should open itself up to urban culture in general, rather than restricting itself to the university. Taking a new, broader vision of our exchange, we in Barcelona planned a series of activities under the general heading of "Culture and City" for the academic year 1985-86. Patricia Snyder, film director and specialist in American cinema, gave a course on



"Film-making in New York" at our faculty of history, at the same time as a series of films by the latest generation of New York film-makers was shown at the *Filmoteca Nacional*. This project was a great success. In spring 1986, the seminar "Four cities, four cultures" started, with the participation of Susan Sontag, Richard Sennett, Carl E. Schorske and Ricard Bofill, in collaboration with the *Col·legi d'Arquitectes de Catalunya*.

Future activities, then, will centre more and more round the field of urban culture. In this respect, we expect to collaborate in the exhibition "Gaudí", to be held from February to May 1987 at the Cooper Hewitt gallery in New York, and which will bring a team of five speakers to the city, among them Ricard Bofill, Ignasi de Solà Morales and Judith Rohrer, who will speak at the Spanish Institute, in Park Avenue.

We have also started to prepare a big exhibition, with a parallel course of lectures, on "Jewish Culture in Catalonia". This will take place in New York, in the spring of 1988, and in Girona and Barcelona the following summer. To sum up: this chair has established an effective cultural link between Barcelona and New York, and has brought the two cities together, not only from the point of view of the language spoken in each, but more especially from the point of view of what in universal terms we call "urban culture".