

INSTITUTIONS

THE JOAN MIRÓ CENTRE

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MIRÓ WANTED THE CITY WHERE HE WAS BORN TO HAVE A PERMANENT EXHIBITION OF HIS ARTISTIC CREATION, WHICH WOULD BE AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC.

The Joan Miró Foundation, in Barcelona, is a centre of modern art which was created by the painter whose name it bears. Miró wanted the city where he was born to have a permanent exhibition of his artistic creation which would be available to students and the general public. At the same time, he wished to offer his country a centre where citizens could come into direct contact with the important creations of the artistic avant-garde of the twentieth century, and where young people could see their creative vocation stimulated.

With a group of friends from Barcelona, Miró began his project in 1971, asking the architect Josep Lluís Sert, an old friend of his, to design a building for the Foundation. The Barcelona city council agreed to collaborate in the project, and generously donated the land chosen by Miró and Sert in the park of Montjuïc, at the same time contributing to the expenses of the construction of the building. The council also agreed to place the collection of works which Miró had given to the city of Barcelona in the Foundation. At the present time, the council still collaborates closely with the Miró Centre, and in fact, when the artist died at the end of 1983, it took on the job of guaranteeing the continuity of the Centre, in this way paying permanent homage to the life and work of the great Barcelona artist.

The Foundation first opened its doors to the public on June 10, 1975. From that moment its activity has been constant and intense. It has continued combining the two main streams of this activity. On the one hand the Centre is dedicated to the study and diffusion of the work of Joan Miró. It conserves an important stock, donated by the artist himself, of paintings, sculpture, graphic works and drawings. The Centre regularly presents exhibitions of Miró's works, whether from those donated by him, as is the case every summer, or in anthological exhibitions. These latter exhibitions include works from all over the world, as in the great exhibition "Miró: the twenties. The mutation of Reality", which was presented on the occasion of the artist's nintieth birthday. On the other hand, the Foundation

is a centre which is designed to promote and encourage modern art. Seasonal exhibitions of well-known artists are combined with shows by young artists and with activities in the fields of music, video or photography, as well as with conferences and seminars on subjects of present-day artistic interest. Among the temporary exhibitions have been those on specialized subjects, such as the ones



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dedicated to the Bauhaus, the Russian Avant-Garde, or the one entitled "Olfactory Suggestions". Among the outstanding monographic exhibitions are those devoted to Henry Moore, Max Ernst, Marcel Duchamp, Paul Klee, Joaquín Torres-García, Kurt Schwitters, Antoni Tàpies, Francis Bacon, Antonio Saura, Joseph Cornell, Robert Rauschenberg, Anthony Caro and Eduardo Chillida.

The building for the Centre was designed by Josep Lluís Sert, who was Dean of the School of Architecture at Harvard, and who had already designed the building of the Maeght Foundation of Saint Paul de Vence. The building has already proved to be ideally suited to carry out the objectives of the Centre. The rooms, dominated by order, moderation and light, favour receptivity and contemplation. The exhibition rooms manage to achieve the difficult balance

between emphasizing the works of art on show and not overpowering them. The architecture is important, but it does not impose itself on the works of art; instead, it helps them to be seen. The courtyards and terraces are very pleasant, with a strong Mediterranean atmosphere, and with the olive and carob trees as emblems. The Centre also has an auditorium, a library specialized in modern art, and a wide range of services.

In the engravings archives of the Centre are preserved almost all the graphic works of Joan Miró—about 1,500 pieces—and a very important collection of almost 5,000 drawings which enable us to penetrate more deeply into the creative process of the artist. The Centre's collections also include more than a hundred paintings, and over a hundred sculptures, which are on show as often at other art galleries around the world as they are at the Foundation.

During its first decade, the Centre had to alternate dedicating its rooms to Miró's works with putting on temporary exhibitions. Miró did not want to make the Foundation into his mausoleum, and he always placed emphasis on paying attention to new forms of expression, and to important innovating movements in present-day art. However, after its founder died, the Centre considered it important to pay permanent homage to the works and style of Miró, by having a large number of pieces from its own stock on display at all times. At the same time, the Centre wishes to remain faithful to Joan Miró's wish by ever increasing its initiative and activity in the field of modern art. In order to achieve these ends, the Centre has decided to go ahead with the enlargement of the building, which will increase the areas for exhibition, and improve the structure of the services provided (offices, bookshop, snack-bar, storerooms). This extension is to be completed in August of 1987, and will make the Centre the ideal size to fulfill the objectives it has set itself. At the same time, the city of Barcelona, which is preparing for the Olympics of 1992, will see realized the full potential of one of its emblematic institutions which is of major international importance. ■