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Barcelona

Catalan Design

**New Designers** 

#### Raquel Pelta

"In Barcelona, design is a standardised activity that is fully integrated with the international trends of our time."

Design historian. Professor at the University of Barcelona and the ELISAVA Escola Superior de Disseny i Enginyeria de Barcelona. Member of the consolidated GRACMON research group.

Zero Emission

# Generation X and new emerging designers: a snapshot

This article presents the first conclusions of a more extensive research project that is being carried out on *Sistema Diseño de Barcelona*. From the late 1980s to date, Barcelona design has been welcoming new designers who, albeit having inherited both our modern and postmodern ideas, have contributed a number of conceptual and formal approaches different to those of their predecessors, mainly because they are immersed in extremely relevant social phenomena such as productive system transformations, globalisation, the impact of new technologies and, in particular, the Internet's potential.<sup>2</sup>

In the early 1990s, amidst preparations for the Olympic Games, Barcelona was under the spotlight of international experts in the field of design. This can be inferred from comments made in 1991 by François Burkhardt: "Barcelona will know how to provide itself with a renovating scheme based on the awakening of regionalist feelings, technological progress and international economic expansion. With the political momentum, it will know how to ensure an emancipating, culturally-renovating scheme. Here is where professional design finds its source and the spirit of its 'new designs'. [...] It will be at these 'advanced' cities, such as Liverpool, Berlin, Lyon, Milan and Barcelona, where institutions

will be born to promote research, education, social and economic development, but also the cultural evolution that is closely linked to the latter fields. [...] Once again, the interest of those who seek the renewal of design in Spain are turning toward her [Barcelona]. Due to its traditional exchanges with major cities, Barcelona will be linked to the flow of the *avant-garde* movements, enriching them with its contributions from late 19th-century Catalan modernism to the newest, present-day designs".<sup>3</sup>

Albeit lengthy, this quote highlights how the terms "renovation", "innovation", "expansion", etc. were associated with a city that, during that period, was experiencing significant changes in its physiog-

<sup>1</sup> This article presents certain findings of the research carried out with the GRACMON group at the University of Barcelona for the project El Sistema Diseño de Barcelona: Visualización y Genealogía Histórica. This research project was carried out between October 2006 and September 2009, funded by the Ministry of Science and Innovation (National Plan for R&D). Although the project has been completed, research is still ongoing.

<sup>2</sup> The designers mentioned in this article are only a few among the many professionals currently established in Barcelona, whose work is also notable and interesting. However, because there are so many of them-with the Terminal B database counting more than 2,600, without including everyone-, I was forced to make a selection. This selection has been based on criteria such as media projection, presence at exhibits and international events and public recognition of their work.

<sup>3</sup> Burkhardt, F. "Introducción", in Capella, J.; Larrea, Q. Nuevo Diseño Español. Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 1991, p. 11.

nomy and was at a propitious moment to give visibility to many of the initiatives implemented several decades earlier.

And we would need to remember that, already in the mid-1950s, there were a number of Catalan architects, artists and graphic designers who firmly believed that design was an essential part of a political and social change that, at some point, would end Franco's dictatorship. Emerging from this conviction were Grup R<sup>4</sup>, for example, as well as the first associations of designers<sup>5</sup>, which soon after became international organisations such as the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (ICSID).

André Ricard has referred on several occasions to that stage and also to a generation of designers (his own) whose members felt they were "some sort of flag-bearers, something like the apostles of a new religion", whose mission was "to convert artists and industries... And to change the way of being of our environment. There was a force of conviction, of total conviction, that what we were proposing was "the best news ever".6

With works characterised by their inevitably strong will, with functionalism as their guiding post and ideals linked to the Modern Movement, after Franco's death, this generation managed to gain true social and, above all, institutional recognition, not only within the spheres of Catalan and Spanish design, but also internationally.

- 4 Among other activities, Grup R undertook to make the work of some of the most prominent figures of global design known in Spain.
- 5 The ADIFAD (*Agrupación de Diseño Industrial en el Fomento de las Artes Decorativas* Industrial Design Group at the Institute for the Promotion of Decorative Arts) started its activities in March 1960. A year later, the Grafistas Agrupación FAD (Group of Graphic Designers of the FAD), later the ADG-FAD, was founded.
- 6 Ricard, A. André Ricard diseñador: conversaciones con José Corredor-Matheos. Barcelona: Ediciones del Serbal, 1994, p. 35.
- 7 Each edition was held between April and May, and was developed under a unique slogan.

## The birth of a new generation of designers

Precisely in this international scenario, significant transformations were occurring due both to structural changes experienced by industrial production and the emergence of a new generation of designers who questioned the paradigms of modern design.

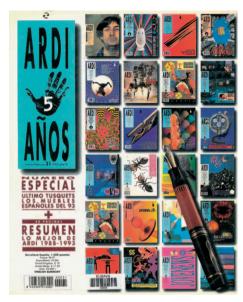
However, despite the discipline's ideological crisis, the 1980s were one of the happiest decades for Barcelona design, as under the framework of a democratic nation its designers found the opportunity to deal with crucial aspects such as the new distribution of territory, Spain's entry into the European Community (1986), the creation of new public services, the need for companies to become more competitive and the preparations for the 1992 Olympic Games.

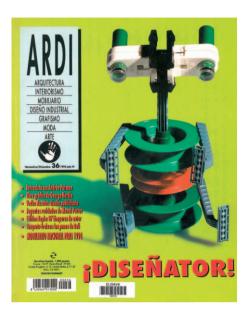
Shortly after, during the 1990s, Barcelona designers participated in Catalan and Spanish design exhibits and worked for internationally prestigious companies. Some examples of this include Josep Lluscà, who, in addition to receiving awards abroad, designed for Cassina, Flos, WMF, Rosenthal and Driade, among other companies; or Javier Mariscal, who, apart from collaborating with Memphis since the mid-1980s, also received commissions from Japan, Sweden, United States, Great Britain and Italy.

Also contributing to the projection of these and other designers was, without a doubt, the existence of an institutional fabric capable of generating mechanisms that added visibility to Catalan design, in general, and to Barcelona design, in particular. The BCD (Barcelona Centre de Disseny – Barcelona Centre of Design), the General Government and the Town Hall of Barcelona combined efforts both to promote participation in international fairs and to organise exhibits, such as Design in Catalonia (1988), Barcelona Emerging Design (1989), Catalonia, New York: Design, Arts & Fashion (1990) and Barcelona Creation (1990), among other examples.

The biennial event called *Primavera del Diseño*<sup>7</sup> was launched in 1991, showcasing Barcelona and international design through 2001, with showings dedicated to Ettore Sottsass, Achille Castiglioni and







▲ Ardi, Num. 1 (1988), 31 (1993), 36 (1993)

Ron Arad, to mention just a few of the most relevant international participants.

This is the environment under which new designers – which could be termed "Generation X" due to their chronological coincidence with the generation labelled thus by sociologists – took their first steps and whose professional beginnings coincide almost exactly with the birth (1988) and disappearance (1993) of *Ardi*, a publication directed by Juli Capella and Quim Larrea and edited by Grupo Z. This magazine organised the "*Jovenews*" selection, which, published as a monograph in 1991 (no. 22) and accompanied by a travelling exhibition, served as a launching pad for many of today's widely recognised professionals.

Some of them had already been boosted thanks to another event: the *Bienal de Barcelona*. *Jóvenes creadores europeos*. Held in 1989, this event gave

birth to some of the names that later took off, such as Josep Bagà, Andreu Balius, Albert Cano and Pablo Martín, among other graphic designers.

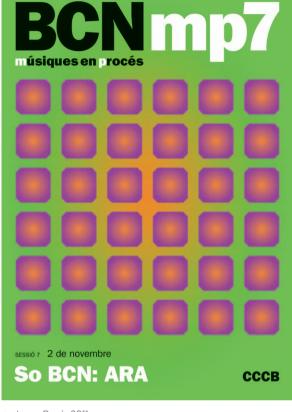
But the early 1990s were not easy times, as while other ways of conceiving the discipline were starting to make way, an economic crisis that severely affected the development of design was also growing stronger. Thus, young designers found only the last hints of the design boom and faced a feeling of uncertainty that would last almost until the end of the decade.

#### References, education and projection

Tired of "always seeing the same names" on the pages of publications, exhibits, awards, and events of all kinds, a group of these young people started to prefer non-Spanish references, among other reasons because they considered that design in Spain echoed ideas that had already been outgrown<sup>8</sup>. In this manner, new Barcelona designers followed Dutch group Droog Design (a revelation at the 1993 International Furniture Fair of Milan), because

<sup>8</sup> Comments from the interviews conducted by the author of this article.





▲ Eumogràfic, 1999

▲ Josep Bagà, 2011

they represented a simple way of designing, which although very different from modern simplicity, was less elitist and more "authentic" than that of their predecessors.<sup>9</sup>

But Droog was not the only benchmark for young industrial designers. Martín Azúa, for example names Enzo Mari among those he has followed closely for his interest in the cultural component of the design, and Ezio Manzini, for his ideas on the relationship between object and subject and the need to develop environmental sensitivity.

Just as had happened during the previous decade, graphic designers continued to pay attention to Anglo design, in particular to Neville Brody (Great

Britain) and David Carson (United States), while the last wave of Swiss and Dutch design continued to make itself felt.<sup>10</sup>

On the education front, it should be noted that, as compared to former generations, the number of self-taught designers has declined, with practically all of them having studied at design schools<sup>11</sup> or college schools of fine arts.<sup>12</sup> Some of them even continued their education away from Spain. As such, Anna Mir (originally from Valencia) and Emili Padrós completed a Master's Degree at Central Saint Martins in London, David Torrents and Nuria Coll won the Erasmus scholarship and Marina Company worked abroad for a while.



▲ David Torrents, 2006

Educated in traditional schools, all of them have experienced the transformations undergone by the field of design as a result of the incorporation of new technologies, but they have also been immersed in the Modern Movement crisis, also reflected in the approaches used by the educational centres where they studied.

One example of this was Elisava, a school that began to shift its pedagogical orientation in 1986 toward "a broader interpretation of the meaning of modernity", in the words of Enric Bricall, who was fully aware of the fact that the convictions of rationalism had broken down, making it "increasingly difficult to continue transmitting a vision, a history and a practice of design that provided a discourse that was not quite sufficient to sustain critical and concrete reflection of projectual activity".<sup>13</sup>

In his opinion, however, this marked the beginning of a period of debate and fruitful dialogue that would transform (and later did transform) Elisava into a scenario that was more open to contemporary sensitivities.

As such, those who began to study at this and other Barcelona schools in the late 1980s found academic approaches geared toward breaching the boundaries between disciplines, encouraging experimentation and even self-expression and contemplating the role of designers as socio-cultural agents

- 9 Martí Guixé, Martín Azúa, Ana Mir, Emili Padrós and Curro Claret are good examples of Droog's influence in Barcelona. Over time, Droog has collaborated with some of them, Guixé and Azúa, for example.
- 10 Examples include the work of Gráfica (Pablo Martín and Fernando Gutiérrez at the time), Actar, Eumo Gráfic and David Torrents.
- 11 A few examples of graphic designers include Daniel Ayuso, Andreu Balius, Josep Bagà, Albert Cano, Lidia Carrasco, Eulalia Coma, Marina Company, David Espluga, Mariona García, Enric Jardí, David Lorente, Sonsoles Llorens, Eduardo Manso, Pablo Martín, Laura Meseguer, Rober Pallàs, Marc Panero, Joan Carles P. Casasín, Ramón Prat, David Ruiz, Marc Salinas and Astrid Stavro. Examples of industrial designers include Curro Claret, Nuria Coll, Joaquim d'Espona, Oriol Guimerá, Jaime Hayón, Martí Guixé and Emili Padrós.
- 12 This is the case with Martín Azúa, Ana Mir, Rosa Povedano and David Torrents. More specifically, Torrents studied this career while also attending Elisava.
- 13 Bricall, E. "Elisava, continuity of a renewed presence" in Temes de Disseny. The culture of design, step by step. The Elisava school's is 35 years old. No. 13 (1996), p. 34-52. [Consultation: May 30, 2010]. Available at: http://tdd.elisava.net/coleccion/13/bricall-en. Bricall was the director of the Elisava School from 1986 until his death in 1998.



▲ Martin Azúa. *Basic House 02*, 1999. MoMA Collection, New York. (© Daniel Riera)

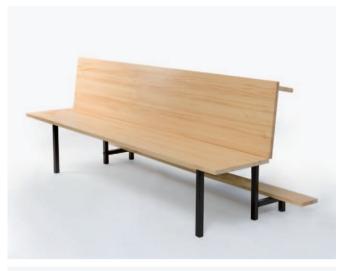
who were able to develop easily between critical and creative forms aligned with a broad view of the task of designing.

Perhaps this is why the decade of 2000 has witnessed how Ana Mir and Emili Padrós (Emiliana Design), Öscar Guayabero or Martín Azúa, among others, became exhibit curators with a "thesis-like" discourse within their "generational" positioning as designers, while they and others–although not as commonly or abundantly–published articles in books, catalogues and specialised magazines or directly created them.<sup>14</sup>

Another aspect worth noting is the internationalisation of many Generation X members, largely due to a greater knowledge of the English language, which has allowed them to contact and collaborate with foreign designers and companies.

Being a travelling generation, their international projection has been favoured by greater, Internetenabled capabilities to access and share information. Their work has been spread through general and specialised publications – Spanish and foreign – but they have also had institutional support, as they have taken part in international exhibits organised both by the Catalan Government and the Central Government of Spain. Respected and recognised, their collaboration with foreign firms is now customary and some of their designs have even become a part of the funds of institutions as prestigious as the MoMA (Museum of Modern Art).<sup>15</sup>

They were further boosted in Barcelona by galleries opened between the late 1980s and 2000, such as H<sub>2</sub>O (1989), La Santa (1993), Ego Gallery (1998) and Ras (1998), which were open to diverse and unconventional design proposals. In the 2000s, other galleries have been inaugurated, such as Montana Shop & Gallery (2004), Vallery (2006, store-gallery of the Vasava graphic design studio) and, more recently, Otrascosas de Villarrosás (2009, belonging to the Villarrosás agency). In most cases, these exhibit spaces have been characterised by hosting projects that would be difficult to classify within graphic or industrial design when understood as activities aimed at serial production projects.





▲ Curro Claret. Bench-bed, 2010

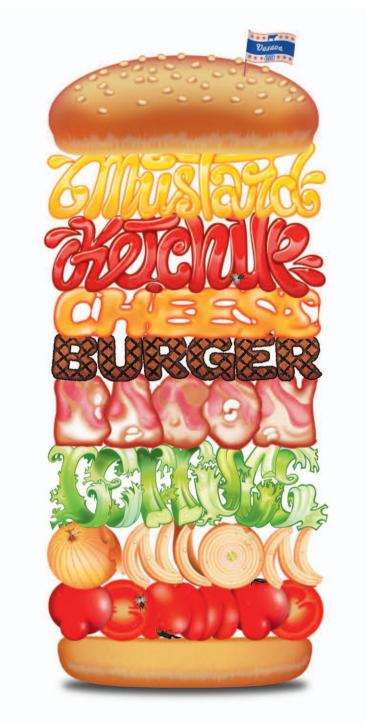
- 14 Such was the case of the magazine *Grrr*, which started being published in 1994. The phenomenon of designers as authors of texts is not new, as evidenced by the books and articles written by Enric Satué or André Ricard prior to the dates mentioned.
- 15 As examples, we have the Casa Básica of Martín Azúa, the prototypes of H!Bye Pills of Martí Guixé and the Hot Box video of Emiliana.
  - As regards exhibits, of all those involving Barcelonese designers whose career began in the 1990s, *Futur Compost, el diseño en Barcelona* was perhaps the one that served the most as their media springboard. The exhibit opened in 1999, at the Palau de la Virreina, with Quim Larrea as curator.

However, this positioning of Barcelona galleries is not new, as it is in line with what has been done in other countries for over two decades, where we can find spaces (the Galerie Kreo of Paris, for example) that market pieces produced in runs of 20 copies at the most or dedicated to issuing such copies on demand.

## Ideas and positions: Between simplicity and designers as authors

While industrial design professionals of the 1970s and 1980s were involved in the modernisation of Catalan design, it could be said that those who have been consolidating themselves over the 1990s and 2000s have other types of concerns that respond to a scenario marked by the emergence of new technologies and the transformations undergone by the productive system, largely due to the process of globalisation and the advancement of emerging economies. In the words of Oscar Guayabero: "Young designers are becoming a sort of post-industrial craftsmen, self-producing their own pieces in small series. Straying away from set moulds, luxurious materials and sophisticated finishes, they surrender to conceptualism to nurture the objects of their content that, on the one hand, replaces the measly finishing of pieces and, on the other hand, is consistent with their way of viewing the creation of objects".16

Indeed, many designers have been aware of the fact that, on many occasions, what they were creating were not pieces for serial production but rather objects to trigger reflection, question industrial objects or challenge restrictions imposed by the culture of design itself, a perspective that is a consequence of the notoriety achieved by certain concepts of post-modern design. As discussed in a text about *Casa Niu* (Nest House), designed by Martín Azúa:



▲ Vasava, Hamburger, 2007

<sup>16</sup> Guayabero, Ö. "Do we really need to design any more chairs?" in *Nexus*, No. 34 (2005), p. 40-45.

During the last decade of the 20th century and the early years of the 21st century, designers who studied at schools of design have been increasingly familiar with experimentation and have begun to dissolve disciplinary borders. Many of their proposals are questions more than solutions to problems, connecting them with the environment of art. The result of their work has a clearly marked conceptual character, being not only a functional but also a plastic object that incorporates reflections on our society and its values, on design and its limits. We also find concerns regarding sustainability and demanding an active and participatory role from potential users, who had so far been reduced to mere consumers.<sup>17</sup>

From these lines, we can infer that these designers have questioned three of the principles that have been instrumental to design since the mid-20th century: the resolution of problems, the neutrality of designers and the differentiation between art and design.

But, returning to the making of products in limited series (one of the lines followed by many current designers) or single-piece productions (as prototypes), this has led to a narrower gap between designers and craftsmen, in whose hands production, conceptualisation and design came together, or artists, who create unique pieces or small print runs. We need to point out, however, that even though limited series are a reflection of a way to un-

derstand design, on numerous occasions it has responded to the difficulty of getting into the productive system, as their proposals have not been easily understood by either manufacturers or the market. Hence, the paradox remains: while their projection in the media has been remarkable – with their work appearing in newspaper supplements and mass printed decoration magazines, for example – their access to and acceptance by the business world has been difficult and slow, occurring only within very specific circles.<sup>18</sup>

What these designers have in common is a somewhat sober spirit, consistent with the re-emergence, in some areas of design – and not only in Barcelona – of values such as simplicity<sup>19</sup> and sustainability. As an example of this stance, we can quote the words of Gerard Moliné<sup>20</sup> and Martín Azúa: "In designing our products, we work with the simplex concept. Objects are a trigger for relationships between people; a well-designed product generates positive behaviours. The simplex concept is always a value for us; it refers to an attitude that appreciates things for what they are and not for what they seem to be".<sup>21</sup>

And the point is that, precisely some of the issues raised by these and other designers of the same generation are related to the need to reflect on the role of designers in a world overloaded with objects.

For their part, graphic designers have had somewhat different interests and one might say that, in general, they have been somewhat less "experimen-

- 17 See Educació visual i plàstica a través de l'art contemporani. [Consultation: May 20, 2010]. Available at: http://www.xtec.cat/-evalero6/pdf/azuamoline1.pdf The original text is in Catalan. The author of this article translated it into Spanish.
- 18 In general, the industrial designers mentioned here work for cultural institutions, because some of them have strayed away from industrial design to work on exhibit design or have preferred to work for companies that have always maintained a close relationship with design, such as Metalarte or Nani Marquina. As mentioned earlier, this article does not include all of the Generation X designers of Barcelona, as there is an important sector that from the very beginning has been designing for the business world, whether through design firms or for direct clients.
- 19 The value of simplicity, however, is understood differently than the meaning given to it by the Modern Movement, as rather than being about removing ornaments and eliminating superfluous elements, it is more about creating simple objects that, in times of hyper-consumption, highlight the desire of their owners to be selective and their ability to choose what they do and do not need to have.
- 20 Moliné might be better placed within the generation of "new emerging designers", but I am including him here because he has shared a study with Martín Azúa and the words quoted here represent the viewpoint of both of them.
- 21 Gerard M. and Azúa, M. [online]. [Consultation: May 30, 2007]. Available at: http://www.azuamoline.com This page no longer exists.

tal" than their industrial colleagues. In this sense, it must be said that the theories of structuralism and deconstruction, which triumphed and marked new trends in the English-speaking world, barely made their way to Barcelona – and even less so to the rest of Spain – although its forms did reach these lands, manifesting belatedly toward 1996, just when their decline and the return to simplicity had begun abroad.

It should be noted, however, that some designers, such as the members of the Bis [dixit], Espai Gráfic or Typerware studios, had already started to inquire into "deconstructive" design before the middle of the decade, making interesting proposals that focused especially on the experimental use of typography and in one specific case – Typerware – on typography design.<sup>22</sup>

However, one of the reflections of post-modern approaches among Barcelona graphic designers has been the emergence of a good number of self-commissioned projects, along the lines of broadly understanding designers as authors. The Vasava study illustrates this well, not only for creating the aforementioned Vallery gallery, but also for producing its own publications.<sup>23</sup>

# The entire world as the limit. Brief discussion on the generation of "new emerging designers"

Although given its chronological proximity, it is still too soon to make an in-depth analysis of the work of designers who have been joining the workforce since the mid-2000s, we can provide a first, schematic description.

Born in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, younger designers have studied at schools of design and engineering and at college schools of fine arts, communication, etc., being taught, in many cases, by their immediate predecessors, who have habitually been present at educational institutions, at least since the late 1990s.

While the previous generation began to incorporate computer technology into their work, these new designers have grown up right along with it and have assimilated it as something that is completely natural, since it is now included in the curricula of all educational centres.

Because of their youth perhaps, they still lack significant institutional support. However, they have achieved remarkable international projection thanks to the broadcasting capabilities of the Internet through social networks, virtual communities and sites that allow them to display their *portfolios*, such as Behance, Carbonmade or Domestika, as well as technologies and platforms that facilitate collaborative practices.

For the generation of "new emerging designers", the Internet is an immense showcase that allows them to display their work and make contact with any other point on the planet, but also to manage their own reputation independently from traditional media, as well as keep abreast of the latest trends.

They speak English – or at least they are able to read it well –, they travel on a regular basis thanks to low-cost flights and they create their own means for promoting themselves by exploiting the aforementioned social networks. Perhaps this is why it is meaningful that they have chosen Barcelona as their "base of operations", even though they have lived abroad or are planning to work for some time

<sup>22</sup> Especially relevant is that, in Spain, the largest concentration of typography designers is found in Barcelona, many of whom have also achieved international recognition. Among top typographers, we can highlight Andreu Balius, Íñigo Jerez, Eduardo Manso (of Argentinean origin but established in Barcelona), Laura Meseguer, Joan Carles P. Casasín and Marc Salinas. Younger designers include Pilar Cano, Ivan Castro (devoted more to calligraphy) and Jordi Embodas.

<sup>23</sup> Born from these approaches were the magazine *Evolutive*, the book-magazine *Evophat* and later, the "Place" project, that materialised into a travelling exhibition and the publication of two inter-related books.







▲ Álex Trochut. Arcade Fire poster process. 2010

in other places around the world. Although critical of urban proposals and what, in their opinion, has been the conversion of the Catalan capital into an increasingly tourism-oriented city, they feel comfortable here, and above all, they do not need to go elsewhere to get better work, as the new technologies allow them to receive and send orders practically without ever needing to leave the comfort of their own homes.

However, while they have easily integrated into on-line social networks, as mentioned earlier, most of them remain separated from traditional corporate organisations. Therefore, few belong to associations and are often leery about them, because they perceive these associations as elitist and uncon-

cerned with the actual situation of the younger generation. While this critical perspective is not exclusive of this generation – as all generations have had their own –, perhaps the difference lies in that their more immediate predecessors entered the FAD, for example, to organise youth groups such as the X-FAD (an interdisciplinary group made up of young members), while they have preferred to stay on the sidelines and become members of other types of groups of a more informal nature.

Most of these designers have not yet reached their 30s, but some have already received prizes and national and international awards. As such, Alex Trochut and Marta Cerdà, for example, were the winners of the 2008 Art Directors Club Young Guns Award, which recognises the talent of designers aged 30 or less in a competition involving young people from all over the world.<sup>24</sup>

Regarding their way of viewing design, one could say that they are eclectic, as they do not hesitate to look into the past, borrow elements from other arts and crafts, work with computers or by hand and shift from the simplest to the most complex aesthetics. In response to the pro and con arguments related to the discussion on the place of personal style that occurred during the 1990s, a good number of them clearly chose to have a unique and characteristic style. In fact, they have consciously sought out such a personal style by understanding that, in a world where competition is no longer found solely in one's immediate neighbourhood, there is a need for some sort of a distinguishing element that will make them stand out from the rest in the eyes of clients.

In the field of graphic design, the younger generation has taken advantage of the roads toward self-expression opened up by post-modern design. Among many other examples, we could quote the illustrations that Iván Bravo displayed on his website under the label of "personal", some of the posters designed by the above-mentioned Alex Trochut (for sale at the on-line store of his own website) or experimental typographies such as "Reid" by Albert Trulls or "Básico Typeface" by Serse Rodríguez, which respond to their own personal concerns.

Some of these manifestations are of such great visual complexity and baroqueness that they demonstrate that, in Barcelona, as well as in other places around the world, maximalism is a trend that has been fully established at least since the mid-2000s.

But not everything is neo-baroque, as, in addition to these proposals, a good part of the younger

crowd has been rather inclined toward simplicity, aligned with "older" Swiss and Dutch designs, which have made a strong comeback since the mid-1990s. Such is the case of Folch Studio, Mucho, Toormix, Hey, Anaïs Esmerado and Miquel Polidano, for example.

With regard to industrial design, new professionals have not renounced to some of the recurring ideas of their predecessors – experimentation, the importance of emotion, the broadening of the concept of functionality, an interest in crafts etc. – but have been quicker than them in finding a balance with the productive system and entering the market, quite possibly because these predecessors have been paving the way for them over the past 20 years.

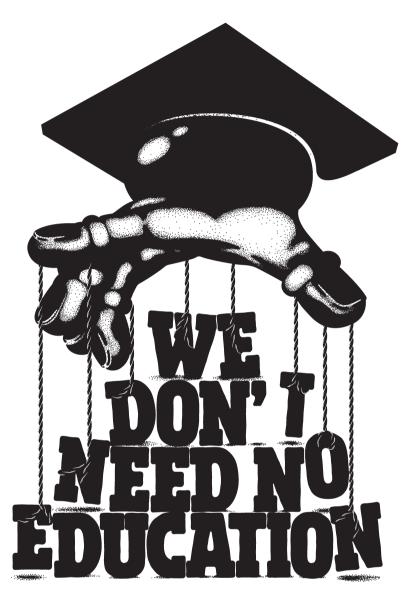
Furthermore, most of them like to share and collaborate with other designers and studios, and many of them have not stopped having social concerns, reflecting what is going on in other places where there is an ever-growing interest in sustainability. And, although sustainable design projects are still not commonplace, it must be said that, in a climate of greater responsiveness on the part of companies, they have begun to make headway.

#### By way of conclusion

As a conclusion, one might say that whether they belong to Generation X or to the group of "new emerging designers", the truth is that the work of professionals from both groups demonstrates that, in Barcelona, design is a standardised activity that is fully integrated with the international trends of our time.

Where are they headed? Making predictions is not easy, especially when faced with a panorama of structural crisis and globalisation, but there are signs that seem to indicate that we are entering a new process of expanding competencies but, above all, of questioning the role of designers in our society.

<sup>24</sup> As stated on their website, "ADC Young Guns honours the vanguard of creative professionals who let loose their imaginations, shattering conventions and breaking boundaries with a dash of brilliance and personal flair". [Consultation: July 28, 2010]. Available at: http://www.adcyoungguns.org/about/



▲ Marta Cerdà. Self Project. 2009