



Exhibition «Margaret Michaelis.
Photography, the Avant-garde and Politics in the Barcelona of the Republic»
19/01/1999 - 07/03/1999

The curators of the exhibition documented in this catalogue, Juan José Lahuerta, a leading expert in the architecture and art of the years between the wars, and Jordana Mendelson, give us the opportunity of discovering an Austrian photographer, Margaret Michaelis, who—despite having produced a major body of her work in Republican Barcelona, in close contact with the GATCPAC, a group who were a decisive presence in the cultural life of the time—has gone unnoticed by all those who are experts in the period. Until now that is.

Margaret Michaelis trained in Berlin in the late twenties and early thirties, and closely followed the breakthroughs made by New Photography. She left an imprint of modernity on everything she did, in her wanderings around the poor neighbourhoods of Barcelona, particularly the area known as the Barrio Chino, in her reportages about war, as well as her views of the work of the architects who were members of the GATCPAC—for a time her studio was in a building by Sert— and her work in advertising, some of which was published in *D'Ací i D'Allà*.

The vicissitudes of Spain's history, and those of the photographer's own personal history, partly explain the unfair neglect which has obscured her name. Indeed, in 1933, like so many other Jewish artists from Central Europe, Margaret Michaelis, who was linked to the anarchist press, was forced to flee Nazism. Following the period spent in Barcelona, she set off on her wanderings again at the end of 1937, stopping off first in Paris, Poland and London, and then on to Australia in 1939, where she received a great many commissions. A year after her death, her archive was donated to the Australian National Gallery. We would like to express our grateful thanks to the Gallery, and to the Historic Archive of the Architects Association of Catalonia, without whose help this exhibition would not have been possible.

This is the first time the IVAM, which gave the first impulse to the exhibition, and the CCCB have worked together.

For the IVAM, where photography and architecture have been represented right from the beginning, this exhibition brings these two media together, as they were brought together in the pages of *AC*, and represents a further exploration of the origins of modernity and the recovery of landmark names who, owing to circumstances, have not received the recognition they deserve until today. For the CCCB, where reflections on the city play a central role, the exhibition represents a new opportunity to express a commitment to Barcelona, and to the area around the Centre: an area which this artist explored with her Leica, and to which she now returns symbolically six decades later.

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