



An Expanding Universe

If we were to base ourselves only on events, *Gaudí Universe* would be a totally finite one. His world of relationships was very limited. Throughout his entire life only once did he venture outside of Spain: a visit to Carcassonne to see the work of Viollet-le-Duc. But appearances can be deceptive. Had we been able to travel to the inside of Gaudí's home, we would have discovered his library: with its door thrown wide open to the world, it offers the start of the trail through *Gaudí Universe*, from the Pre-Raphaelites to Wagnerian stage sets. This journey of discovery into the artist's intimate sphere to find a universe that to all outward appearances did not exist, has been made by Juan José Lahuerta in his work to build the narrative thread behind this exhibition. The result is a reconstruction of Gaudí's mental universe, in other words, of all that fed his creative impulse and of works that were influenced by his imaginative creations.

For the first time—and possibly the last—this exhibition brings together works that provided a stimulus for Gaudí's architectural imagination and later works that show the signs of Gaudí's influence. Situated between these is his workshop: the place where the architect's dreams took on material form. Here, contact through books is no longer the dominant note, being replaced by similarities generated through practice. Gaudí never visited Rodin's studio. Yet the ways in which architect and sculptor worked had a great deal in common.

Gaudí Universe runs, therefore, through the entire length of European contemporary culture. Its roots lie in the endeavours of a group of the nineteenth century artists to delve into the human condition's darker territories (those bordering death) or to construct the complete work of art as a culmination of mankind's impassioned urge to create. Its trail can be traced across the major creative movements of the twentieth century, as part of a play on influences and visions that cannot yet be assumed to be over. The solitary and singular figure of Gaudí can be taken as a point of departure for another reading of contemporary creation. Some time ago, certain voices argued that it was all over, as if he had been the extravagant author of a strange experiment that had come to absolute completion. And yet, we find, *Gaudí Universe* continues to expand.