



## The eyes of the writer

«Literatures of Exile» adopts a writer's viewpoint in order to explain exile: an experience so universal yet, at the same time, so personal; so radical, yet so normal. We could say that we have placed the camera inside the eyes of the writer; and we have looked through these eyes at the places, the landscapes, the people and other writers, in order to construct a small imaginary exile.

Many literatures have experienced exile and this exhibition addresses this diversity. By looking at exile through the Catalan writers who were part of one of the great diasporas of the last century, following the Republican defeat in the Spanish Civil War, we use them, their works and their memory as a way of approaching the other exiles and other literatures they encounter, or with which they share the difficult task of starting again after a long and undesired journey into exile. The experience of exile is so strong that it clearly marks— has an impact on—the literary works of the writers who have endured it. And it multiplies the referents of their imagination. There is often a permanent interplay of departure and return, of mutual insemination, between the referents we carry in our suitcases and the things we keep adding to our new lives. This explains why the suitcase is the most frequently recurring symbol of exile: the suitcase represents what is salvaged from the shipwreck, those few possessions we take with us when we leave everything behind, but also the possibility or hope of return. There is always something of a provisional state of mind about exile.

The places of exile form the linking thread of this exhibition: the departure from Barcelona, the house in Agullana, the last stopping place before departing the country, the concentration camps in the south of France and, afterwards, the lands of dispersal: Bierville, Roissy, Paris, Valparaiso, Veracruz, Mexico, Santiago de Chile, Buenos Aires. Places of meeting and separation, new frameworks to adapt to and to adopt. The exhibition follows in the writers' footsteps in order to visit the host cities, so that the interplay of memory and imagination can in some way continue. Cities that, in some cases, have also taken the opposite route: the escape route that has often had Barcelona as its destination. Mexico, Santiago and Buenos Aires play a central role in 20th-century Catalan literature. This is because of their influence on those they gave refuge to, and also because of the presence of their writers among us. These things contaminate, and leave their mark.

Exile through the experience of its writers doesn't just seek to be a choral exercise, but a meeting in the common space of literatures, where writers leave the imprint of their singular perception of the world, and where this everyman's land, which is universal literature, is woven. In order to build this imaginary place, we have called on four different gazes: that of the critic (Julià Guillamon), that of the film maker (Joaquim Jordà), that of the artist (Francesc Abad), and that of the architect (the Mezien practice), and asked them all to try to see things through the eyes and through the gaze of the writer. It's a game: every gaze is unrepeatable. Literature allows us to engage in the exercise of trying to reconstruct the gaze, while knowing perfectly well that reconstruction is a translation. Transmitting an experience that is forged between cultures—the one we carry with us, and those cultures that compel us to empathise with them—is one such form of translation, and of establishing communication protocols. This is what we have set out to achieve through the eyes of the writer.