EXHIBITION TOURING DOSSIER

Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona

Archivo Bolaño. 1977-2003

A CCCB production with the participation of the Casa del Lector and the collaboration of the Instituto Cervantes

Bolaño Archive. 1977-2003
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1. INTRODUCTION
Roberto Bolaño (Santiago de Chile 1953 – Barcelona 2003) is one of the most important writers of recent decades. His books have become an indisputable reference point for all lovers of literature. This exhibition aims to pay tribute to his work on the tenth anniversary of his death, while also offering a first exploration of his personal archive. Immersion in the mass of exercise books, note-books, handwritten and typed manuscripts, letters, books and photographs that Bolaño conserved over the course of his lifetime is suggestive in itself of a great game of detective-style investigation. An open case where reader-detectives can contrast their discoveries, while at the same time opening paths to provide new views of an as yet unknown territory.

The exhibition is structured into three creative periods, each linked to one of the places where Bolaño lived subsequent to his arrival in Catalonia in 1977: Barcelona, Girona and Blanes. The itinerary reveals a creative chronology that complements the publication dates of his books, offering new clues to the origins and expansion of a unique literary universe.

The exhibition is complemented by a catalogue that includes valuable contributions, such as those from Javier Cercas, Barbara Epler, Patricia Espinosa, Olvido García Valdés, A.G. Porta and Enrique Vila-Matas, as well as explaining the concepts that structure the script and illustrate the exhibits displayed with comprehensive references.
Detectives lost in the dark city.
I heard their moans.
I heard their footsteps in the Teen Theater.
A voice coming on like an arrow.
Shadows of cafés and parks,
Adolescent hangouts.
Detectives who stare at
Their open palms,
Destiny stained by their own blood.
And you can’t even recall
Where the wound was,
The faces you once loved,
The woman who saved your life.


Poets of Troy
Nothing that could have been yours
Exists any more
Not temples not gardens
Not poetry
You are free
Admirable poets of Troy


Mexico, 1975 / © Heirs of Roberto Bolaño
Barcelona, Carrer Tallers, c. 1979 / © Heirs of Roberto Bolaño
Blanes. 1998 / © Heirs of Roberto Bolaño
The visit to the exhibition is conceived as a detective-style investigation. The reader-visitor is the police officer or detective subjected to a series of tests and games, which are not devoid of humour and irony. In the formalisation of the itinerary layout, priority is given to the kaleidoscope metaphor, to which the author himself refers in different passages of his books. The same scene with different characters, the same characters in different scenes.

How to recognize a work of art? How to separate it, even if just for a moment, from its critical apparatus, its exegetes, its tireless plagiarizers, its belittlers, its final lonely fate? Easy. Let it be translated. Let its translator be far from brilliant. Rip pages from it at random. Leave it lying in an attic. If after all of this a kid comes along and reads it, and after reading it makes it his own, and is faithful to it (or unfaithful, whichever) and reinterprets it and accompanies it on its voyage to the edge, and both are enriched and the kid adds an ounce of value to its original value, then we have something before us, a machine or a book, capable of speaking to all human beings: not a plowed field but a mountain, not the image of a dark forest but the dark forest, not a flock of birds but the Nightingale.

Translation is an Anvil / 1998-2003 / Between Parentheses
The singularity of the exhibition, beyond the thematic focus, the innovative museographic fabric and the dialogue with the visitor, is the presentation of previously unseen material from the Archive of the Heirs of Roberto Bolaño. Novels, stories, poems and diverse writings, notebooks and exercise books, correspondence, family photographs, magazines and fanzines, his personal library, strategy games, all the interviews he gave, and other valuable materials that will allow more in-depth knowledge of Bolaño’s creative universe and contribute to an increasingly free and fruitful reading of his work.
Until late 2005, all the materials from Roberto Bolaño’s personal archive were kept in boxes in line with the arrangement that Roberto himself had orchestrated. It was not until early 2006 that work to order and classify all the documentation that makes up the Bolaño Archive was begun.

The main criterion for classification was that of keeping the order in which Roberto organised his papers: folders with a title, without a title, recycled from other works, piles of papers lacking any specific order, boxes full of notebooks, magazines, press cuttings and/or compilations of works stapled together giving form to possible books. The numbering of the different files responds to the criterion described, which was always complicated, in the attempt to number the materials by genres, but at the same time it has contributed valuable information on Roberto’s creative process.

The first task was to put all the material into files, numbering it, while creating a computer document where all the documentation is described, to give a first global view of the contents of the Archive. The next steps involved identifying the unpublished materials, beginning the task of scanning the documents and the compilation in computer format, classifying them by year, of all the interviews that Roberto had kept.

There is still much work remaining to be done: as yet there has been no ordering of his unpublished poetry, of the family photographs, of his music cassettes and CDs, nor the detailed analysis of the correspondence and in-depth evaluation of the unpublished texts. In this respect, it is worth highlighting that of the 14,374 pages that make up the originals section, those unpublished include 26 stories, four novels, poetry, drafts, letters and life writings. Moreover, in electronic format, of a total of 24,000 pages, those unpublished represent some 300 pages: 200 of narrative and 100 of poetry. Ultimately, the material exhibited in Bolaño Archive 1977-2003 offers a first approach to the contents of the personal archive of Roberto Bolaño.
Biographical Notes

1953. Roberto Bolaño Ávalos, son of Victoria Ávalos Flores, teacher, and León Bolaño Carné, truck driver, is born on 28 April in Santiago de Chile. He spends his childhood in Viña del Mar, Quilpué, Cauquenes and Los Angeles.

1968. The family moves to Mexico City where Roberto Bolaño spends the best years of his adolescence. At the age of fifteen he decides to drop out of school and devote himself to reading and his vocation as a writer.

1973. He sets out on a long journey through Latin America. He reaches Chile with the idea of supporting Salvador Allende’s government just a few months before Augusto Pinochet’s military coup. He is arrested on his way to Concepción but is released after eight days thanks to a chance encounter in the detention centre with two policemen who were classmates from his schooldays.

1975. On his return to Mexico City, he founds the Infrarealist Movement together with Mario Santiago, Bruno Montané and other Mexican poets.

1976. Public Reading in the Gandhi bookshop of the first Infrarealist Manifesto “Déjelo todo nuevamente” (Give It All up Again), of which Bolaño is sole author. His first book of poems Reinventar el amor (Reinventing Love) is published. He works on an anthology of young Latin American poets, Muchachos desnudos bajo el arcoíris de fuego (Naked Boys under the Rainbow of Fire), which is eventually published in 1979 by which time he is residing in Barcelona.

1977. He arrives in Barcelona. After a brief stay in a flat in Gran Vía, he moves into a studio in calle Tallers. In these years of the Spanish transition from dictatorship to democracy he begins a close friendship with Antoni García Porta with whom he is to write Consejos de un discípulo de Morrison a un fanático de Joyce (Tips from a Disciple of Morrison to a Fan of Joyce), which wins the 1984 Anthropos Literary Fiction Prize and represents Bolaño’s European publishing debut as a novelist.

1980. He moves to Girona, where his sister Salomé and her husband live. He works during the summer as a night watchman in the Estrella de Mar campsite in Castelldefels.


1983. He wins third prize in the Second Alfambra Award offered by the Valencia City Council for his story “El contorno del ojo” (Outline of the Eye). Second prize goes to the Argentine writer Antonio Di Benedetto. This twist of fate gives rise to his story “Sensini”, which is awarded the City of San Sebastian Prize in 1997.
1985. He moves to Blanes where his mother has a costume jewellery shop. When Carolina López starts working in the Blanes Council they take up permanent residence in the town.

1990. His son Lautaro is born.

1992. He is diagnosed as having a serious liver disorder. This year he is awarded the Talavera de la Reina (Madrid) Council “Rafael Morales” Poetry Prize for his *Fragmentos de la Universidad Desconocida* (Fragments of the Unknown University) and the City of Toledo Prize for the novel *La senda de los elefantes* (The Elephant Track), which is published some years later with the title *Monseur Pain*.


1994. He is awarded the City of Irún Prize for Literature with *Los perros románticos* (The Romantic Dogs). Thenceforth he devotes himself exclusively to literature, leaving behind him the many non-literary jobs he has done to date (dishwasher, campsite night watchman, costume jewellery salesman, et cetera).

1996. He publishes *La literatura nazi en América* (Nazi Literature in the Americas) and *Estrella distante* (Distant Star), after which he presents his publisher with one new manuscript per year.

1997. He publishes the volume of short stories *Llamadas telefónicas* (Phone Calls), for which he receives the Municipality of Santiago de Chile Prize.


2001. His daughter Alexandra is born. Bolaño is always very protective of his children “my only homeland”. He dedicates many of his books to them and to Carolina López.

2003. He dies on 14 July. Some days later, his ashes are scattered in the bay of Blanes, in accordance with his explicit wish.

2. EXHIBITION LAYOUT
2. Exhibition layout
Roberto Bolaño reached Barcelona in 1977, coinciding with the transition from the Franco regime to democracy. He arrived in a city charged with a special effervescence and enjoying newfound social freedoms. Bolaño settled into a flat on Carrer Tallers, surviving through precarious jobs, but also developing an intensive literary activity. He wrote poems, narratives and life diaries telling of his experiences as an immigrant in District V.

In the same way in which Melville's whaling ship were his Yale College and his Harvard for Ishmael, for Bolaño Barcelona became one of the *lecture halls* of the Unknown University. These were the years of haste, dreams and hunger, of a learning in which it was necessary to persevere and write and read, in search of the "numerous destinations" of someone who only thinks and lives in literature and for literature.
In 1980, Roberto Bolaño moved to Girona, where he developed a large part of the material he had already written as well as his ideas on the style and structure of what were to be his first narratives and novels. This was a period of isolation where the writer tried out his techniques of text fragmentation and assembly, while simultaneously cultivating his passion for strategy games.

It was the long autumn in Girona: Bolaño tried to get his work published and presented his stories for municipal prizes, while “ringing in the kaleidoscope, like an echo, are the voices of all those he used to be, and this he calls his patience”. A creating patience where literature for people in love, nomads and losers was incubated. A revolutionary literature whose destiny was still unlikely.
Roberto Bolaño arrived in Blanes in the summer of 1985 to close the cycle of all his “numerous extra-literary jobs”. In this coastal town, whose geography he had already imagined following the tracks of Juan Marsé’s Pijoaparte, Bolaño consolidated his literary universe with an extraordinary output of novels, tales and poems that would finally confirm him as one of the most original writers of the new world literature.

In his small studio, on Carrer del Lloro, a fiendish oeuvre grew where readers become police, poets become detectives and the history of Latin America and Europe acts as a backdrop to a perturbing tale that questions the meaning of the world that we have created. It is the legacy of an apostate who has explored the abyss while never ceasing to play. And it is also a call to continue exploring the enigma of literature, its future, encoded in that fiction that we call “reality”, and in the reality of the fictions that fight against death, indifference and immobility.
3. TECHNICAL DETAILS
The Bolaño Archive exhibition is organised based on the presentation of original documents, many of them previously unpublished: manuscripts, exercise books, typescripts; as well as family photographs and a digital archive, an interactive point of consultation of all the interviews that Roberto Bolaño gave.

**CCCB floorspace:**
800m2 (at CCCB - minimum floorspace required 500m2)

**Type of material exhibited:**
465 items: 210 original documents and facsimiles of handwritten documents; 110 photographs, most previously unpublished, 6 personal objects and objects of documentary reference linked to his writings, 50 books and/or first edition or collector’s magazines, 63 books for consultation of the numerous translations of Bolaño’s work, 9 audiovisuals and an interactive with access to the register of 180 interviews given by the writer.

**Necessary furniture:**
Tables – display cases, backlit light boxes, Lab tables with surface lined for documentation materials from Bolaño himself, tensioned canvas structures, shelves – display case (see attached plans).

**Audiovisual equipment necessary:**
7 video projections; 5 TFT screens and 1 audio point.
## Number of display cases and documents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Display cases</th>
<th>Quantity of documents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Prologue</td>
<td>170 x 58 cm</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Unknown University</td>
<td>220 x 58 cm</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>170 x 58 cm</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>70 x 70 cm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inside the Kaleidoscope</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>200 x 60 cm</td>
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<td></td>
<td>170 x 58 cm</td>
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<td>70 x 70 cm</td>
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<td></td>
<td>60 x 60 cm</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>220 x 65 cm</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Visitor from the Future</td>
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<td></td>
<td>46 x 86 cm</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>75 x 46 cm</td>
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<tr>
<td>LAB Table Inside the Kaleidoscope</td>
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<td>LAB Table The Visitor from the Future</td>
<td>220 x 50 cm</td>
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</table>
Audiovisuals
PROLOGUE / Reference Imagery: the Tlatelolco Massacre (Mexico City, 1968) and the fall of Salvador Allende due to a coup (Santiago de Chile, 1973).

4:3 / rear-screen projection, projector SANYO PDG DWL 2500 (ANGULAR) and PLEXTOR media player with self-amplified speakers with subwoofers, to project onto a screen (tensioned fabric) with approximate measurements 180x135(h) cm.

Concept of reversible landscape that can be seen both on entering and leaving the exhibition. Contains fragments of the films Tlatelolco: las claves de la masacre [Tlateloloco: The Keys of the Massacre], canalaesidejulio (2005); Última decisión de Salvador Allende, 11 de septiembre de 1973 [Salvador Allende's Last Decision, 11 September 1973], Patricio Henríquez (1998); Triumph des Willens [Triumph of the Will], Leni Riefenstahl (1935).

Duration 1' 36"

BARCELONA / A Long and Slow University
16:9 / Projector MITSUBISHI 1550 XL and PLEXTOR media player with amplifier and two speakers to project on a screen (wall) with approximate measurements 280x158(h) cm.

Animated audiovisual inspired by poems from The Unknown University.

Duration 4'

BARCELONA / Places in Barcelona Close to Bolaño
16:9 / Projector MITSUBISHI 1550 XL and PLEXTOR media player with amplifier and two speakers to project on a screen (wall) with approximate measurements 280x158(h) cm.

Projection of an apparently still image that includes unexpected movement details. Shows the studio at Carrer Tallers 45, the Bar Céntrico at Carrer Ramelleres on the corner with Carrer Tallers, the Granja Parisienne milk bar on Carrer Tallers, the house on Carrer Junta de Comerç.

BARCELONA / Creative Freedom
16:9 / NEOVO 19" screen and PLEXTOR media player with two headsets.

Animated video projection (also promotional news).

BARCELONA / Interactive Interviews
Lenovo Think Centre Touch Screen M90z 0800 (TFT 23” screen/monitor) with two pairs of earphones.

Interactive that allows access to documents of nearly 180 interviews that Bolaño gave.

BARCELONA / Voodoo Chile by Jimmi Hendrix
MP3 music player – without control for visitors – and earphones with wall support linked to a display case.

GERONA / Inside the Kaleidoscope
16:9 / EPSON (ANGULAR) projector and PLEXTOR media player with amplifier and two speakers to project onto a screen (wall) with approximate measurements 280x158(h) cm.

Animated audiovisual inspired by Prosa del otoño en Gerona.

Duration 5'
GIRONA / Places in Girona Close to Bolaño
16:9 / MITSUBISHI 1550 XL projector and PLEXTOR media player with amplifier and two speakers to project onto a screen (wall) with approximate measurements 280x158(h) cm. Projection of an apparently still image that includes unexpected movement details. Features the house at Carrer Caputxins 29, the Rambla de la Llibertat, the Stone Bridge and the Iron Bridge.

GERONA / Interactive Interviews
Lenovo Think Centre touch screen M90z 0800 (23” TFT monitor/screen) with two pairs of headphones. Interactive that allows access to documents of nearly 180 interviews given by Bolaño.

BLANES / Places in Blanes Close to Bolaño
16:9 / MITSUBISHI 1550 XL projector and PLEXTOR media player with amplifier and two speakers to project on a screen (wall) with approximate measurements 280x158(h) cm. Projection of an apparently still image that includes unexpected movement details. Features the studio on Carrer del Lloro, the Jocker Jocs shop on Passatge Bellair, the Café Terrassans on Pas-seig de Dintre, the costume jewellery shop on the corner of Cristòfor Colom and Lluís Companys, the house on Carrer Racó d’en Portes, and the S’Abanell Restaurant on the seafront.

BLANES / Distant Star
4:3 / LG 192 freestanding 19” screen with PLEXTOR media player and earphones – without control by visitors. Animated audiovisual inspired by the second chapter of Distant Star. Duration 2’ 44”

BLANES / Bolaño X Bolaño
4:3 / 20” freestanding screen with PLEXTOR media player and two sets of earphones (without control by visitors. Documentary audiovisual with fragments of the interview given for the programme La belleza de pensar, Canal 13, Santiago de Chile, 1999. Duration 11’ 30”

(bis) BLANES / Bolaño X Bolaño
4:3 / 20” freestanding screen with PLEXTOR media player and two sets of earphones - without control by visitors. Documentary audiovisual with fragments of the interview given for the programme La belleza de pensar, Canal 13, Santiago de Chile, 1999. Duration 11’ 30”

EPILOGUE / The Visitor from the Future
16:9 / rear-screen projection, MITSUBISHI ANGULAR projector and PLEXTOR media player with amplifier and four speakers. Projection of animated audiovisual onto screen (tensioned fabric) with approximate measurements 347x195(h) cm. Duration 9’ 15”
Items
KOSMOPOLIS 2013. THE AMPLIFIED LITERATURE FEST

Coinciding with the exhibition ‘Bolaño Archive 1977-2003’, Kosmopolis (from 14 to 16 March) has programmed a poetic performance, a discussion, a chat on the theatrical adaptation of the work 2666, a staged reading of El policía de las ratas and the pre-premiere of the film Il futuro, based on Una novelita lumpen by Bolaño.

Bolaño on Stage
Thursday 14 March  8.30 p.m. – CCCB Theatre (in Spanish)

Dramatists Alex Rigola and Pablo Ley will explain the process of theatre adaptation of the Roberto Bolaño novel 2666, a work of great narrative complexity that they converted into a play for theatre in five acts. In addition, they will offer a first staged reading of El policía de las ratas, a Bolaño text also adapted by Alex Rigola and performed by Andreu Benito and Joan Carreras.

Bolaño: The Gestation of a Myth
Friday 15 March, 6.30 p.m. - Hall CCCB

Round table with the participation of A. G. Porta, Pere Gimferrer, Jaume Vallcorba and Jorge Herralde, a writer and three publishers with whom Roberto Bolaño maintained a close personal relationship. The table will be moderated by Juan Antonio Masoliver Ródenas. They will talk about the relationship between his life and his work and in what sense this relationship has contributed to the gestation of a myth, fed by his Chilean, Mexican and Catalan roots, as well as his vision of writing as a continuous process that only death could interrupt.

Pages Written on Jacob’s Ladder
Friday 15 March, 8 p.m. - CCCB Theatre

Poetry recital by poet Olvido Garcia Valdés with the musical accompaniment of composer and performer Chefa Alonso (soprano saxophone and percussion). The recital, whose title is taken from an article
by Roberto Bolaño, is a dialogue between the poems of Olvido García Valdés and those of Bolaño, and aims to be a tribute to the poet on the tenth anniversary of his death.

**Pre-premiere of Il futuro, with the presence of its director,**
**Alicia Scherson**
**Thursday 14 March, 10.30 p.m. – CCCB Theatre**

Literature is the central theme of the Alpha Channel and one of the main events at this edition is the pre-premiere of the film Il futuro, by Alicia Scherson (Chile, 1974), based on the work Una novela/lump by Roberto Bolaño. The Chilean writer is one of the protagonists in 2013 at the CCCB which is devoting an exhibition to him: ‘Bolaño Archive. 1977-2003’.

**EDUCATIONAL PROPOSAL: THE CREATIVE PROCESS OF ROBERTO BOLAÑO**

1. **Roberto Bolaño in the classroom.** Educational materials for work in the classroom that link the contents of the exhibition with curriculum subjects. This material has been produced by the Bolaño Universe Work Group, attached to the La Selva II Educational Resources Centre, and working within the Education Department’s Area Training Plan 2012-2013. We will gradually release more information during the course of the exhibition at the CCCB and, at the end of May we will offer a presentation of the totality and of some experiences from educational centres.

2. **Writing workshop.** The activity is developed over three phases: In the first, we explore the Bolaño Archive to extract the keys of his process of creation. The educator will give the opportune indications and guidance and show, based on a selection of manuscripts, the close relationship between the life of Bolaño and his literary work, the importance of enigmas, games and humour in his poetry and novels, and the most prominent characteristics of his creative process. In the second, we propose a reading of short autobiographical texts, one on Bolaño and two on writers that he admired: Nicanor Parra and Jorge Luis Borges, as well as the Proust Questionnaire, which Bolaño
responded to a Chilean newspaper in the year 2000. We will finalize this phase with the viewing of the documentary Bolaño cercano, by director Erik Haasnoot (2008), in which Vila-Matas talks about his friend.

The third and final phase proposes the specific writing exercise: a self-portrait of the pupil or an imaginary portrait of Roberto Bolaño, material which will form part of the exhibition project.

3. Publications within cccbeducacio.org. Our virtual platform allows sharing of the work of pupils with the educational and cultural community. We are interested in your work!

4. Special visits for teaching staff (by request)
With the participation of students from Latin America, through the Latin America-Europe Cultural Ring.
It is necessary to pre-book with the Education Service: seducatiu@cccb.org or telephone 933 064 135 from Tuesday to Friday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Workshop price: €3 per pupil (minimum 10 pupils).

More information on http://www.cccbeducacio.org/es
5. Catalogue

Languages: Catalan with English translation / Spanish with English translation
176 pages
50 images in b/w and colour
17 x 24 cm
Publication: CCCB and Communication Department of Barcelona Provincial Council
Texts by: Juan Insua, Valerie Miles, A.G. Porta, Enrique Vila-Matas, Javier Cercas, Patrícia Espinosa, Olvido García Valdés, Bárbara Epler
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