

Series of Conferences

# Prepared for the edge of the abyss. Català-Roca open to thought.

Directed by Laura Terré

**KBr**

Fundación **MAPFRE**

Barcelona Photo Center



**100**

Francesc  
Català-Roca

Eng

This series of three lectures pays tribute to Francesc Català-Roca (Valls, 1922 – Barcelona, 1998) on the centenary of his birth. Son of the photographer and theorist Pere Català Pic, Català-Roca's work maintained the avant-garde spirit that had practically disappeared during Franco's regime, paving the way for a new generation.

*Dates*  
**From Tuesday February  
28<sup>th</sup> to Thursday March  
2<sup>nd</sup> 2023**

*Time*  
**7.00 pm**

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Francesc Català-Roca made lived reality the starting point for education, reflection, and learning. We are used to seeing a reduced reality, he said. We must expand it. This cycle of three talks offers the opportunity to broaden our knowledge and deepen our understanding of the work of this great photographer, teacher to a whole generation, under the generative gaze of thinkers of our time. He is a figure that we must reconsider, rethink and share with younger generations. The cycle seeks to open paths of thought, creation and language, starting from a rich photographic archive. We are invited to contemplate the archive through creative readings that will bring us to the edge of an abyss, in the words of Enrique Vila-Matas, beyond clichés and mere description.

As Català-Roca understood, in the language of photography it is necessary for the observer to complete the meaning of the image with their own particular reading and from their own experience, rooted in their culture and time. In this spirit, the lecture cycle features contemporary voices, drawn from different fields, who approach the work of Català-Roca in an open format. They are invited to analyze and play, as necessary, with the images in a non-academic and creative manner, drawing from their experiences as well as their artistic and aesthetic interests.

The aim of this cycle is to ensure that the photographic work of Francesc Català-Roca is the point of departure for the chosen speakers to propose interpretations and express their thoughts in a creative game. In this way the photography of Català-Roca becomes an open body of work, in movement, and in dialogue with the contemporary world.

**28.02  
2023**     **CritTeam**  
**(Eugenia López Reus and Miguel Jaime)**  
***Revealing the Other. A playful review***  
***of Francesc Català-Roca's***  
***creative universe***

In person and online

*Revealing the Other* is CritTeam's proposal for exploring Francesc Català-Roca's architectural photography. To do so, we revisit his most iconic images, review his portfolio and activate his creative universe in a playful way. We start from a very clear premise: thanks to his images many of us discovered the best of Catalan architecture of the second half of the 20th century. The underlying objective of our proposal is to transcend the art-profession dichotomy that still today clouds the recognition deserved by those who should undoubtedly be considered European architectural photographers, and in this way continue to learn from their work. Let it not escape anyone that, as always when it comes to revealing the other, it is inevitable to reveal ourselves at the same time, and that here we only explore images of buildings.

**CritTeam** is an artistic and research duo comprising Eugenia López Reus and Miguel Jaime, who explore relationships between art, design and culture. Both hold PhDs in Architecture from ETSAB/UPC and work with photography, collage, drawing and video. They have exhibited, researched and taught in Europe, America, the Middle East and Asia. Their latest work, "The Grid", an artistic intervention in the Pabellón de Barcelona, uses photographs and drawings of the pavilion to criticize the very idea of representation.

**01.03  
2023**     **Aurora Fernández Polanco**  
***Francesc Català-Roca: les franges***  
***and the demon of analogy***

In person and online

Despite being known as one of the greatest chroniclers of everyday life, this proposal begins with images (in particular, photographs from the 1950s) that show how Català-Roca assimilated the avant-garde teachings of the 1930s related to montage, analogy, and the random correspondences between things. We will thus pursue the idea of *les franges*, the fringes: of the places, the sensibilities, the official and the private, the countryside and the city, of high culture and the popular. What happens in "the in between" will make his "humanist" gaze grab the attention of those who notice his wink, offering them a breath of fresh air in the suffocating era of the dictatorship.

**Aurora Fernández Polanco** is a professor of the Theory and History of Contemporary Art at the Complutense University of Madrid. She has been the principal investigator of several R&D projects on *Critical Visualities and the rewriting of narratives*. She is editor of the magazine *Re-visiones* <http://re-visiones.imaginarrar.net/>. Her publications and projected curated include, *Pensar la imagen/Pensar con las imágenes* (Ed.), Salamanca, Delirio, 2014. *Image(s), mon amour. Rabih Mroue*, CA2M, 2013-14. *Mireia Sentis, Fotografia*, Barcelona, Arts Santa Mònica, 2009; *Crítica visual del saber solitario*, Bilbao, Consonni, 2019.

**02.03  
2023**     **Javier Pérez Andújar**  
***One Francoism oppresses delicately,***  
***the other oppresses normally***

In person and online

Black marketeers, street vendors, marines walking around, road sweepers wearing peaked caps, skyscrapers more in name than in height, a patchwork of plots, gleaming alleys and avenues, opera nights and movie days, fairground fortune tellers, elegant ladies, carriages and buses, shoeshine boys, American orchestras, dancers and marionette sellers... These are images captured during the early 1950s in Madrid and Barcelona. They all occur simultaneously, but not indistinctly, because the two cities are torn apart by the cruelest days of the dictatorship with their own iconography, with their own particular plasticity. Franco's disarmament is about to begin, but life still remains in the shadows. In the photos of those days we can see how Català-Roca revealed the personal wounds of the two cities, while exposing the dialogue of rivalry and mutual understanding that had been secretly established between them..

**Javier Pérez Andújar** (Sant Adrià de Besòs, 1965). A graduate in Hispanic Philology from the University of Barcelona, he has worked for the *Ara* newspaper and the radio program *A vivir que son dos días* (Cadena SER). He previously contributed to the television programs *Saló de lectura* (BTV) and *L'hora del lector* (TV3). He is the author of the books *Paseos con mi madre*, *La noche fenomenal* and *El año del Búfalo* (2021 Heralde Novel Prize). He received the City of Barcelona Media Award in 2014.

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