The Architect Beyond the Building (Barcelona, 11-14 Nov 26)

Barcelona, Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, Nov 11–14, 2026
Registration deadline: Nov 9, 2026

Mariangels Fondevila, Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya

The Architect Beyond the Building: Design and the Decorative Arts.
The ICOM Design 2026 Annual Conference will take place in Barcelona, in a particularly significant year for the city. Designated World Capital of Architecture, Barcelona is also commemorating the centenary of the death of Antoni Gaudí, whose work has left a lasting mark on the city's built landscape and cultural identity. Gaudí's practice provides a particularly stimulating starting point for this reflection, as it challenges the boundaries between architecture, design, craftsmanship and the decorative arts.

The conference, «The Architect Beyond the Building: Design and the Decorative Arts», will be held at the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya (MNAC) and will explore the figure of the architect beyond the role traditionally associated with architectural and urban planning projects. Bringing together leading researchers, curators and museum professionals, the conference examines architectural practice from the perspectives of design, craftsmanship and the intimate scale. It also addresses the broad range of creative outputs developed by architects both within the framework of building projects and beyond them, including furniture, ceramics, jewellery, graphic design, curatorship and exhibition design, as well as interior design and architectural ornamentation.

The conference explores these multidisciplinary practices beyond the scale of the building, addressing projects, creative processes, materials, photography and artistic influences in diverse geographical and cultural contexts around the world.

Program

Wednesday, November 11

08.45 h–09.15 h Registration at conference desk (Main entrance of the Museum)

09.15 h–09.30 h Welcome Remarks
Pepe Serra, Director, Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya Mariàngels Fondevila, Conference Convener, Board Member ICOM Design, MNAC. Shoshana Resnikoff, Chair ICOM Design, Milwaukee Art Museum, Wisconsin, USA

Theme 1: The Architect and the Total Work of Art: From the Spoon to the City
Moderator: Shoshana Resnikoff, Chair of ICOM Design, Milwaukee Art Museum, Wisconsin, USA

09.30 h Keynote lecture: Carme Pigem, RCR Arquitectes, Illation

10.00 h Wendy Kaplan, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA): From Table to Town: Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin's Total Design

10.15 h Lucie Vlčková, Museum of decorative arts in Prague: The Relationship between Design and Architecture in Czech Cubism

10.30 h Robin H. Prater, The Lutyens Trust America: Edwin Lutyens at Every Scale: Geometry, Craftsmanship, and Wit

Discussion

Coffee Break

11.20 h Marissa Hershon, Ca' d'Zan, The John & Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, Florida: Rediscovering Earl Purdy: Architectural Renderer, Printmaker and Watercolorist

11.35 h Nicholas Oddy, Glasgow School of Art: Charles Rennie Mackintosh, 78 Derngate and Bassett Lowke. Almost an Identity

11.50 h Virginia Rigney, Visual Art, Canberra Museum and Gallery, Australia: Enrico Taglietti: From the spoon to the city. A life in design

Discussion

Break

Moderator: Denise Hagströmer, Board Member ICOM Design National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design,
Oslo, Norway

12.30 h Alessandro Munari, Cleto Munari associati srl ICC, Vicenza: Jewelry by Architects & Everyday Objects: An Inside Perspective

12.45 h Eloise Donnelly, Historic Furniture & Decorative Arts Houses of Parliament, London: Heritage Collections: Building for a new kind of World: Crafting the House of Commons Chamber 1943-1950

13.00 h Leena Svinhufvud, Architecture & Design Museum Helsinki: The architect and the total work of art-Finish cases deconstructed

Discussion

13.30 h–15.00 h Lunch (Absis MNAC restaurant)

15.00 h Keynote lecture: Paolo Sustersic, Elisava-Barcelona School of Design and Engineering, UVic-UCC: The Architect beyond the Building: Design and Decorative Arts. A perspective from Barcelona

15.30 h General Assembly ICOM Design

16.30 h Optional visit to the MNAC collection

18.30 h Drinks, reception and visit to Gaudí's Palau Güell, one of Antoni Gaudí's earliest major works, showcasing his distinctive approach to expressive space, craftsmanship, and symbolic ornament in Barcelona's historic quarter

Thursday, November 12

Theme 2: Displaying Architecture: The Making of Exhibition Displays
Moderator: Paola Cordera, Board Member ICOM Design, Politecnico di Milano

09.00 h Marco Magni, M. Cristina Rizzello, Guicciardini & Magni Architetti, Florence, Architectures of Display: Three Exhibition Projects between History, Design and Cultural Memory

09.15 h Guida Ferrari Collados, Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya: Displaying Architecture, or Architecture of Displaying. A historical approach, 1920-1950

09.30 h Sergey Marinichev, Moscow Transport Museum, The Architect's Identity at an Intimate Scale: Konstantin Melnikov's Garage for Trucks in Moscow and Its Reinvention as a Transport Museum

09.45 h Laura Martínez de Guereñu, IE University: Building Exhibitions by Lilly Reich: "My real heart ... belongs to building"

Discussion

Coffee Break

10.40 h Margaret Connors McQuade, Museum of the City of New York: Objects as Architecture: Recreating New York's Revolutionary World in Occupied City

10.55 h Gabrielle Tonneguzi, Iuav University of Venice: L'arte del porgere: Museum, House, and Shop in Italian architecture, 1930s-1950

11.10 h Leticia Sastre Sánchez, Associate Deputy Director of State Museums. Spanish Ministry of Culture: The 'Home Environments and Domestic Appliances' Exhibition, 1960

Discussion

Break

Moderator: Sarah Chasse, Board Member, ICOM Design, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, USA

12.00 h Noemi Espinosa, Hispanic Society NY: The Spanish Kitchen at the Hispanic Society Museum and Library (HSM&L)

12.15 h Taeyoung Deborah Ban, Museum of Craft Art Seoul, Korea: Beyond Display: Crafting Museum Architecture at the Intimate Scale

12.30 h Becca Goodrum, The Kirkland at the Denver Art Museum: From Gesamtkunstwerk to Curated Interior: Recontextualizing Architect-Designed Decorative Arts in a Museum

Discussion

13.00 h - 14:30 h Lunch (Absis MNAC restaurant)

Theme 3: Reviving traditions, material culture and identity
Moderator: Cristina Jiménez Peralta, Board Member, ICOM Design, Independent Designer and Heritage Professional, Amsterdam

14.30 h Komal Buttar, Lahore Museum, Pakistan: From Monument to Museum: Blue Tilework, Craftsmanship, and Architectural Memory in the Islamic Collection of Lahore Museum

14.45 h Sandrine Fritz Maupetit, PhD Student, Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes (EPHE-PSL), Paris. Alexandre Sandier (1843-1917), an architect at the artistic direction of the National Manufactory of Sèvres

15.00 h Jordi Falgàs, Rafael Masó Foundation in Girona: Rafael Masó between Craft Tradition and Industrial Production

Discussion

16.15 h Optional visit to the Fundació Joan Miró. Designed by Josep Lluís Sert, it is conceived as a dialogue between art, architecture, light, and the Mediterranean landscape. Visit to the temporary exhibition Charlotte Perriand: Free to Rethink the World

18.00 h Optional visit to Casa Batlló, by Antoni Gaudí, and Casa Amatller, by Josep Puig i Cadafalch: two jewels of Catalan Modernisme and paradigms of the revival of the decorative arts as an integral part of architecture
Dinner at La Pedrera restaurant

Friday, November 13

Theme 4: Case Studies. Collections and Museum Practices
Moderator: Melissa Rinne, Vice-Chair of ICOM Design, Kyoto National Museum, Japan

09.00 h Roser Cambray, Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya: Photographing Design: Architecture, Interiors, and
Applied Arts through the Photography Collection at the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya

09.15 h Thomas Szolwinski, Museum of Wisconsin Art: Fabrication as Design-Historical Inquiry: Realizing Frank Lloyd Wright's Furniture Designs

09.30 h Frida Rosenberg, the Swedish Centre for Architecture and Design (ArkDes): The interior City: Swedish Churches as Urban interiors in the Postwar Era

09.45 h Radomíra Sedláková, Architecture historian and curator, Prague: Letters and architecture

10.00 h Virgine Mamet, Musées royaus des BeauxArts de Bruxelles: Tapta: Textiles in Architecture

10.15 h Discussion and concluding remarks

12.00 h Optional visit to the Sagrada Família, an unmistakable icon of the city of Barcelona, envisioned by Gaudí.

13.30 h Lunch

15.00 h Optional visit to the Palau de la Música Catalana, designed by Lluís Domènech i Montaner. A landmark of Catalan Modernisme, conceived as a Gesamtkunstwerk (total work of art) and recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

16.00 h Architectural Walk through the Gothic Quarter, from Santa Caterina Market to Santa Maria del Mar, a masterpiece of Catalan Gothic architecture, known for its luminous stained-glass windows and harmonious proportions.

17.30 h Optional visit to the Barcelona Design Museum (DHub), located in the renewed Plaça de les Glòries. Barcelona's leading hub for design and creative industries, home to the Design Museum and its renowned collections of graphic design, product design, fashion, and decorative arts

Saturday, Novembre 14
Post Conference

09.00 h Coach departure from Plaça Espanya

09.45 h Visit to Casa Gomis – La Ricarda, designed by architect Antoni Bonet Castellana. El Prat de Llobregat (Barcelona)

11.30 h Exploring the artistic and architectural heritage of Sitges through the Museu del Cau Ferrat, the studio of Catalan artist Santiago Rusiñol, and the Palau de Maricel, created by Miquel Utrillo for American patron and art collector Charles Deering

13.00 h Lunch

16.00 h Visit to Torre de la Creu, an original work by Josep Maria Jujol in Sant Joan Despí, followed by a visit to Villa Andrea in Barcelona, designed by Óscar Tusquets Blanca, one of today's most renowned architects and designers

19.30 h End of tour

Tickets
Conference Fee: 130 €
The registration fee includes: Access to all three days of conference sessions, guided visits and architectural
tours, lunches and coffee breaks at the museum
Post-Conference Excursion Fee: 60 €

Accomodation
A limited number of single rooms have been reserved at: Hotel Actual (C. Rosselló 238), until 3rd November at 138€/night (individual room) and 171 € double room + tourist tax 7.70 € per night,

including a breakfast. For reservations, please email to info@hotelactual.com giving the reference number 6160 to get these rates.

Membership requirements
Please note that all participants must be individual members or representatives of institutional members of ICOM Design at the time of the conference. Accompanying guests and other interested ICOM members will be welcome, subject to space availability. Find more information about how to become a member of ICOM and ICOM Design here: https://icom.museum/en/get-involved

For any questions relating to ICOM Design, please email: secretary.design@icom.museum
For any questions relating to the conference, please email: ICOM-DESIGN-2026@museunacional.cat

Reference:
CONF: The Architect Beyond the Building (Barcelona, 11-14 Nov 26). In: ArtHist.net, Oct 27, 2026 (accessed Nov 24, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/54748>.