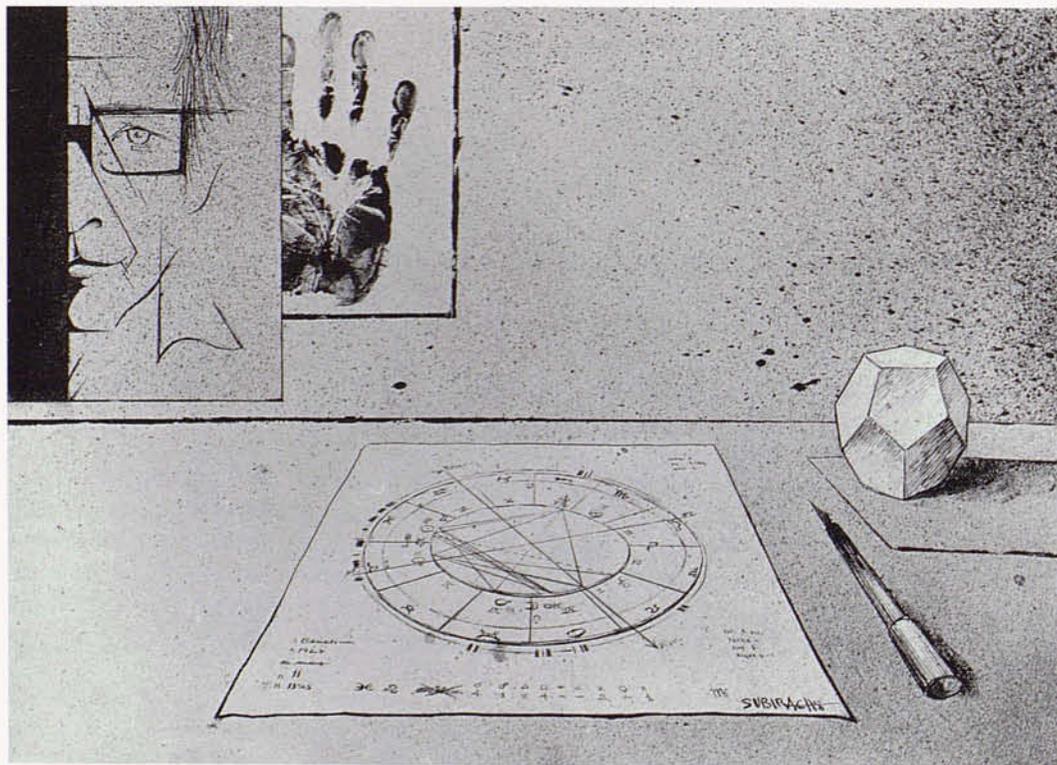


SUBIRACHS

FORT THE LAST FEW MONTHS, SUBIRACHS HAS BEEN WORKING ON THE SCULPTURES OF GAUDI'S SAGRADA FAMÍLIA, TO BE PRECISE, ON THE FACADE REPRESENTING THE PASSION. GAUDI LEFT THE FAÇADE OF THE NATIVITY COMPLETED, BUT NOT THAT OF THE PASSION. THEREFORE, THE SCULPTOR'S WORK WILL FORM AN INDEPENDENT PART OF THE "CATHEDRAL OF THE POOR".

LENA BALAGUER ART CRITIC



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Two years ago, the sculptor Josep M. Subirachs held an exhibition in Paris, consisting of sculptures and drawings. He attaches great importance to drawing because "it's on paper that the idea is really expressed, sculpture is nothing more than drawing in space".

Josep M. Subirachs (b. Barcelona, 1927) studied sculpture within the Mediterraneanist movement, first at the *Escola Superior de Belles Arts*, in Barcelona, and later with Enric Casanovas. It was a time characterized by the fullness of his shapes and by his staticism and which lasted until 1950. During his development, he schematized and deformed his figures, in an approach to a more expressionist period. A grant made it possible for him to travel to Paris and later to Belgium and central Europe, where he came in contact with the work of J. Gonzalez, H. Moore, A. Pevsner and others.

From this time on, he was to endow his chiselled figures with a powerful dramatism, giving special importance to the play of positive and negative, of concave and convex.

In 1957, with his sculpture for the *Jardins Mundet*, he began an abstract period. In it he consolidated two factors: form and material. Concrete and iron became his basic materials, although he still worked with clay, wood and stone. His study and investigation of form was linked to his materials, with their textures and qualities. About this time he produced his series of projections and hollows, dealing with full and empty space. All this time, his work was following a definite direction, once more approaching a figurative style; an example of this is his monument to Narcís Monturiol (1963).

The sculptor himself describes his last period as being one of "(...) a new figurativeness, some have spoken of realism, but that's not the way I see it, because in my work I don't try to represent reality so much as to express abstract ideas."

The recreation of the artistic past, especially the Classical period and that of the *Renaixença*, and his interest in modern sculpture form the basis of his work.

He claims to be an artist who goes "(...)



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against the mainstream. I consider myself a sculptor because time is short and, for that reason, I've had to choose. I'm interested in the whole of the world of plastic arts, and especially the cinema, which feeds me".

The artist feels a close attachment to the poet Salvador Espriu, and has illustrated several of his books; "I think perhaps we're both sad artists, tragic, both born before the Civil War".

J. M. Subirachs's latest work is characterized by the juxtaposition of male and female elements, with some of the bodies he sculpts taking on an androgynous appearance.

When asked about his considerable public work, the work in the streets, he says he does not know how to classify it because "(...) the artist does a bit of everything. I did the bronze door of the archives of the Crown of Aragon and also some ceramic work for a Barcelona car-park. I've done a bit of everything. When all's said and done, I've always got some monument on my hands".

For the last few months, he has been working on the sculptures of Gaudí's *Sagrada Família*, to be precise, on the façade representing the Passion. Gaudí left the façade of the Nativity completed, but not that of the Passion. Therefore, the sculptor's work will form an independent part of the "Cathedral of the Poor".

In 1982, J. M. Subirachs received the Sant Jordi medal from the *Generalitat de Catalunya*. He has built many public monuments since 1957, when he carried out the sculpture at the entrance to the *Jardins Mundet*—the first abstract work of art to appear in the streets of Barcelona—and in the last five years he has been responsible for the monument to the *Generalitat* (1982), in Cervera, the monuments to Kavafis, in Ciutat de Mallorca (1983), the one dedicated to the Olympics, in Lausanne, and that built in memory of President Macià, in Vilanova i La Geltrú. In 1984 he completed the monument in memory of Pau Casals, in El Vendrell, and was awarded the Barcelona University medal for his contribution to Catalan art. ●

