



[ Hiroshi Teshigahara film: ch.14 – Güell Pavilions ]

**Welcome** to The Architecture of Antoni Gaudí.

**Please make sure** you have received the **handouts** & make sure **cell phone is off**. My name is **Matthew Schlueb**, **registered architect**, practicing for two decades.

**How many have taken one of my previous classes?**

This one has a **similar format** and I may **reference past class material**, but you will **not need any past experience with architecture** to follow along.

**For those of you taking one of my classes for the first time**, did you sign up because this was **a class on architecture?**

...**a class on Gaudí?**

...**a class involving Barcelona?**

...some **other reason?**

**Gaudí stands at the transition** of the **Victorian eclecticism of the 19th century** and the **Industrial Age of the modern era**. In Gaudí we find **the Master Builder** in complete **command of his craft**, an **immense body and scope of work**, and a fruitful **imagination and creativity of sculptural and structural designs**, second to none in the history of architecture.

This is my **4th year teaching** in the Osher program and this course that will examine **a single architect**, my **personal favorite**, will enable us **to get into a deeper level** of detail **not typically afforded** in an academic setting – we are in for **a real treat**.

This course will primarily follow **Gaudí's life and works chronologically**, however, I have organized the five lectures into **five essential points**, some **thematic**, some **pivotal moments in his development**. I idea is to present **a master level survey**, that you will come away with a **strong overview** and **feel for his work** and as a **person**.

**Thankyou** for taking this course, a **pleasure for me to present** this material to you. I **welcome your feedback to improve** the class, as this is **primarily for your benefit**.



“Many and small are the towns around Poblet. If its **restoration** is to be undertaken, the workers employed should definitely **live in the monastery**, inhabiting the ancient buildings and workshops. There they would form the basis for the establishment of **a community**: once the work was over, a house and a parcel of land could be given either **free or at a low price to each of the families**, and they would establish a permanent town on the edge of the monastery.

The restoration must not go beyond the confines of Poblet; that is, **all of the objects, artistic or otherwise, which need to be constructed must be made within the monastery walls**, calling in artists to take charge of the work and inviting them to stay on with their families; therefore **craftsmen must be sought** whose social position allows for an easy change of domicile, so the various elements necessary to establish a town can be gathered together.

**A general store could be set up at the monastery's expense where the workers could stock up on the things they need.** The goods would be bought at wholesale prices and sold retail to the community, benefiting the monastery which would thus regain half the day's wages in profits.

**A café could be established where the people would come together** and grow to love the nascent town; it would also attract neighbors from nearby towns to gather in the monastery on holidays. Poblet houses many notable artistic beauties which will be destroyed by the inflexible hands of time unless someone comes to their aid, and there are many treasures to be found scattered throughout the various towns of the province of Tarragona which must be returned to the monastery in the course of restoration. These would attract a large number of artists interested in studying the Renaissance genius which is so well illustrated in Poblet, and they would doubtless establish their homes there, thus increasing the size of the rapidly developing town.”

Passage from plans developed by Gaudí to **restore the site of a 13th century Roman ruins**, the **Poblet Monastery**, in the region he grew up outside Reus, Tarragona. Along with two friends, at the **age of 15 in 1867**, they explored the ruins and hatched this plan for **a self-sustained, artist community**, which they set out to create.

These are photos of that Monastery, which like **Le Corbusier** in the next century that visited a monastery at an impressionable age, this ruin **established Gaudí's interest in architecture**. The **ruins laid structures bare**, so he could **see how buildings were constructed**, revealing the bones of architecture.

In this we see several hallmarks that will carry through his entire career:

1. A space defined by a series of arches, in particular **pointed Gothic arches** of a **parabolic** shape. Notice the delicacy created drawn to a **narrow base, top heavy**.
2. An interest in a **workers community**, one **made of artisans**. Gaudí would always have a **sympathy for the working class**, honest labor. He loved to work with talented artisans, always promoting their interests, **considering himself an artisan**.
3. Believed that **materials and labor should be locally sourced**, to **preserve the local traditions**, the essence of a culture.
4. Finally, most importantly, they set out to restore the ruins, a noble purpose. Metaphorically, Poblet foreshadows what will embody his greatest works, the **restoration of the people**, their **Catalan culture** under the thumb of the Spaniards, their **traditional handmade crafts** overtaken by a new industrial age, and the **Catholic Church** dissolving by the rise of science and a growing atheism.



Following the **restoration of the Spanish monarchy in 1875**, there was a period of political stability, the bourgeoisie of Barcelona enjoyed **major growth of business and a great accumulation of wealth**. Barcelona was a modern, cosmopolitan city, its perimeter enlarging with a new expansion, absorbing the industrial towns around it, becoming a vast center with a very dense population.

Paralleling Pittsburgh during the industrial steel days, Barcelona was the largest industrial city in Spain, black chimneys in the suburbs, restaurants and bookshops on the boulevards, gardens and sails at the sea port – Barcelona was **a European city with an urge and delirium for construction**.



It was in this moment, that Gaudí found himself completing his studies in architecture, **obtaining his license as an architect**. There was an abundance of money and speculation, circulating in the air, creating a **demand for luxury**, for culture and art, a new aesthetic for consumption. Yet, in all of these new constructions, there is **a poverty in their decorations**, in this great opportunity there has not been a flourishing of new art, the bourgeoisie sought the creation of an art of their own.



A **new kind of liberal artist, supported not by the institutions and academies, but by the market created by the bourgeoisie**. It was out of this, at the end of the 19th century, that the **Modernista** arose. Not just a proponent of a new modernism, but more importantly, **a socialite, living the lifestyle of luxury and excess** of this new bourgeois class of industrialists. Although Gaudí came from a modest family, as a young professional now living in Barcelona, he learned very quickly the lesson of **how to exploit minimum resources to maximum effect**, masquerading as a dandy.

In 1878, the year Gaudí graduated, **Lluís Domènech y Montaner** in his In Search of a National Architecture, argued for **an erudite and uninhibited eclecticism**. By the end of the century, **Catalan Modernisme** promoted all things modern, an eclecticism that accepted everything new simply because it was new, in favor of a new vitalism.



1:30

One of those eclectic styles popular at the time was the **Mudéjar**, an historical **synthesis of the Christian and Muslim civilizations that combined in the origins of Spanish culture**. It was the most authentic and original Spanish contribution to Western art, which Gaudí studied extensively in the libraries during his schooling. And now, for the first time in history, with **books publishing photographs** of faraway architectural monuments, replacing the less detailed illustrations of old.

“Examination of the photographs of the Alhambra, observing that the columns, which are small in diameter; are shortened, elongating the capital by means of moldings in the shaft; I believe in the application of colors especially on the base in order to leave a short length of shaft. Idem in the different rooms to support vaults, **small columns that enlarge the room** or member affording play for the imagination as in Gothic dossierets (blocks resting atop a column).”



“Idem the bands that are superimposed, whose **lines are inverse directions**, so that if the interior follows the motif or pattern in the direction of longitude, the exterior follows the latitude; this latter done by the Arabic inscriptions.” This is a passage written by Gaudí on Ornamentation in his journals, in response to Domènech’s article.

This new art found inspiration in the rich Catalan history, a medieval past of great maritime power, expeditions to the Orient and the Greek empire. A history that was suppressed by the disuse of the vernacular language in cultural contexts and lack of patronage among the nobility neglecting the Crown of Aragon, after the royal **marriage of Ferdinand (of Aragon) to Isabella of Castile in 1474**. However, a romantic movement called the **Renaixença** (Ren-eye-sen-sha) beginning in the early 19th century, was attempting to **restore Catalan heritage through a renaissance of the language and culture, beginning with poetry** and eventually branching out into the other arts. During this time, a series of poetry contests, called **Jocs florals**, were revived to celebrate the Catalan language and culture.



1:40

On May 6, 1877 a special prize was given to **Jacint Verdaguer** for his Catalan poem **L’Atlàntida**, describing the **wanderings of Heracles** in the Iberian Peninsula, the sinking of Atlantis, the creation of the Mediterranean Sea, and the discovery of the Americas by Columbus, giving legitimacy to Catalan’s place in European history. By **historicizing these myths, history and the present are made mythic**, the poem stirring much patriotic enthusiasm. Layered with **symbolism and naturalism**, Gaudí found an endless source of inspiration, to inform an architecture in reviving a long lost Catalan nation.



[ castell (cas-tay): human tower, originating in 18th century Tarragona ]

As stated by **Joan Maragall**, a leading poet of the Renaixença (Ren-eye-sen-sha),  
 “The elements that **define a nation** are, in order: **territory, race, language, law, art.**”



The nation is, in consequence, a **spiritual principle**, a kind of moral state that takes hold of men, molding and working them.



A Catalan race whose being is **consubstantial with the land itself** and mythical poetry, **imbuing national spirit with transcendental tones**,



“the soul of a people is the **universal soul that springs up from a soil.**”

1:45



In 1878, education completed, Gaudí received his architect certification at age 26, he then joined a cooperative textile colony, **La Obrera Mataronense cooperative**, pursuing his dream inspired by the Poblet Monastery a decade earlier:

**A workable human unity which would vitalize each of the elements of the whole and transcend them.**

He designed **workers housing** (1878), as well as **machinery sheds**, such as this one for bleaching the fabrics, with his **first parabolic arch**, of **exposed wood** (1883).

[ 10 MINUTE BREAK ]

## Casa Vicens (1883-1888)



Once licensed, in 1878 Gaudí received his first commission from an industrialist that manufactured tiles, his only **stipulation was to utilize his tiles**.

In addition to the tiles, he used a variety of materials, including the novel use of **stone laid bare, exposed as a finish material**.

Painted tiles, **full tiles** as unit of measure.

**Detail increasing vertically**, progress up, top heavy.

**Voided corners**.

Roof minaret projects with full tiles, sizes reduce to cover pointed domed surface.

**Metalwork wrought and cast in combination**.

Interior painted **nature motifs** of flora and fauna.

**Mocárabe vaulting** in smoking room, an Islamic honeycomb/stalactite vaulting.

**Mechanical innovation**: wire web fountain, misting water, rainbow effects.

**Bóvedas tabicadas (partitioned vaults) concealed** with decoration.

**Dimensional cardboard decorations**.

**Japanese screens**.

**Parabolic garden feature** in rear yard.



## El Capricho (1883-85)

Commissioned by Máximo Díaz de Quijano, brother-in-law of the Marquis de Comillas. **Designed and built, sight unseen**.



L'Art Arabe d'après les Monuments du Kaire (1877 book)

Egyptian style minaret, with **roof suspended floating** atop narrow metal columns.

**Dimensional ceramic tiles** and **stone carvings**.



### Güell Estate stables, gatehouse, dragon gate (1884-87)

Around 1860, **Joan Güell** acquired 30 hectares of agricultural land in what is now the upper part of Barcelona, building a grand country house designed by **Joan Martorell**, Gaudí's mentor. In 1883, **Eusebi Güell** extended the estate purchasing adjoining properties, taking on improvements with the construction of a boundary wall, gatehouses and stables in 1884. This country house, after the death of Joan Güell in 1872, became the retreat of Eusebi and his wife's family the Lópezs – the first Marquis de Comillas, as well as their personal priest Jacint Verdaguer, who wrote parts of the L'Atlàntida poem on the estate.



In the gardens, Gaudí designed a small fountain not far from the house, with a bust of Heracles and a wrought iron spout in the form of a dragon, pouring into a basin whose overflow is channeled down the four stripes of the Catalan flag. The dragon was **a duel metaphor** for the **Greek Ladon guardian of the Golden Apples** in the Garden of Hesperides and the **Catalan dragon defeated by St. George**, thereby **linking the Catalan heritage with Greek antiquity**.



The **dragon in chains** on the gate hanging from a tall brick pillar, topped with an **orange tree made of antimony**, is a literal representation of a passage from L'Atlàntida, the **Güell estate transformed into the Garden of Hesperides**, just at the moment Heracles has vanquished Ladon and the **daughters of Hesper have been turned into trees: willows, poplars and elms**, the species of their metamorphosis planted in the garden. In the dragon's claws, tongue, and tail, the **constellations of Hercules and Draco**.





The dragon gate is a monument for Güell's brother-in-law, the Marquis who died the year before, the symbolism programmed by Verdaguer, author of L'Atlàntida. Yet a monument **subtle in metaphor**, only the family would fully appreciate. In the tradition of **hermeneutics and the language of emblems**, the dragon gate reveals **certain things on an immediate level**, but **conceals or veils others**, the pleasure of recognizing these, possessing what is not explicit, **excluding the uninitiated**, is what **unites the family and determines its distinction**. And, this privacy, was kept, Güell never disclosed the true significance of the gate.

Veiled, basic elements of culture are made more private, radically personal and **autobiographical**. A **form of possession**, beyond the symbolic objects, to an inner meaning of its own. As in the fountain, subtle meanings are overlaid on more common metaphors. For example, embossed in the sheet iron of the gate, in the stone crest, in the ceramic, is found a multitude of white roses, a variety known in Catalan as Satalia, used by Verdaguer to refer to the Virgin of Montserrat, Mary. The garden is a closed retreat, the gate a veiled emblem.