

The Architecture of Antoni Gaudí

Fall Semester 2019 (Langley Hall, room A224)
Instructor: Matthew Schlueb

Lecture 4: Warped Edibles

Partis Pris:

Edible: Industrialist seeking to diversify their investments turn to real estate development making architecture a commodity, architect's work becomes merchandise to be consumed.

Modernista: New breed of architects, the taste makers, with a bohemian theory of l'art pour l'art, contempt for bourgeoisie, moving beyond traditional roles of building planning into elements traditionally left to craftsman: railings, grilles, doorknobs...

Rovellón mushroom: Gastronomically the most positive soft-factor of Catalan mysticism. Architecture soft and hairy.

The Block of Discord: Architecture of manic forms, anthropomorphic compositions, facades deformed by owner's mood, side by side maximizing eclectic effect, viewed as paintings in a salon exhibition.

Restoration: Restoring Catalan culture under the Castilian rule, restoring Catholic Church dissolving by rise of science and atheism, restoring tradition of handmade crafts overtaken by new industrial materials and machine manufacturing.

Warped: **Conforming to imposed form disregarding inherent properties**, homeowner adopting Modernista's tastes, discorded comforts by decorations and furnishings created by the Modernista's hand.

"When masons build a wall, they place two plumb uprights and string a line between them horizontally. If one of the uprights goes out of plumb, which happens much more often than you may think, the masons, believing that they are building a flat wall, are in fact making a paraboloid. We have gone directly and deliberately to this form and seeing its beauty and the possibilities that it offers, we have also used it for the vaults."

Casa Calvet (1898-1900)

Leitmotifs:

Baroque curve of the parapet and balconies repeated as waves on the Mediterranean Sea.

Múrgulas mushroom as a corbelled support for projecting gallery window, expressing owner's interest as amateur mycologist.

Naturalistic flora and fauna carvings in stone on elevation, **following the work on the Nativity Façade of the Sagrada Família**.

Chairs made anatomic, arms and legs resembling bones, **from lifelike realism by casting human form for Nativity Façade**.

Park Güell Gatehouses (1900-1903)

Leitmotifs:

Gatehouses as gingerbread house in the forest, hallucinatory fairytale trap, simultaneously edible and cannibal architecture, subject, decoration, structure, function all fused together into a cohesive sculptural composition.

Amanita muscaria mushroom as a red chimney cap with white spots, **venting aromatic incense pollenating the park grounds**.

Bóvedas tabicadas brickwork formed hyperbolic paraboloid roof structure, covered in tiny shards of trencadís mosaic tile.

Miralles Gate (1901-1902)

Leitmotifs:

Lines made freehand, **relaxed as if formed by the elements** rather than man, no longer ruled, mechanical, geometric.

Casa Batlló (1904-1906)

Leitmotifs:

Architecture as oneiric and symbolic, layering of metaphors and myths into multitude of readings simultaneously: Montserrat topped with four-armed cross, waves of Mediterranean Sea washing up mosaic shells on the beach, mythic dragon atop pile of skulls and bones, slayed by King Jaume I's lance, Venetian carnival masks surrounded by multi-colored glass confetti.

Soft architecture of amorphous surfaces, liquefaction removing tectonic qualities of the materials, fluidity of form.

Chairs lost intrinsic properties of wood, as if clay warped by the body weight sitting, seat surface deformed, legs buckling, stiffness of wood giving way to softness of molded clay, **life breathed into the chair by capturing a gesture**, creator's hand.

Casa Milà (1906-1910)

Leitmotifs:

Continuous undulating lines, layered on elevation, turning the corner, as a total sculptural form without precedent.

Grid of columns supporting floor slabs, leaving interior and exterior walls non-loadbearing and flexible to arrangement.

Blunted carving of non-specific rose, the ideal frozen at the very moment of becoming, **abstraction from literal castings**.

Colonia Güell Crypt (1908-1914)

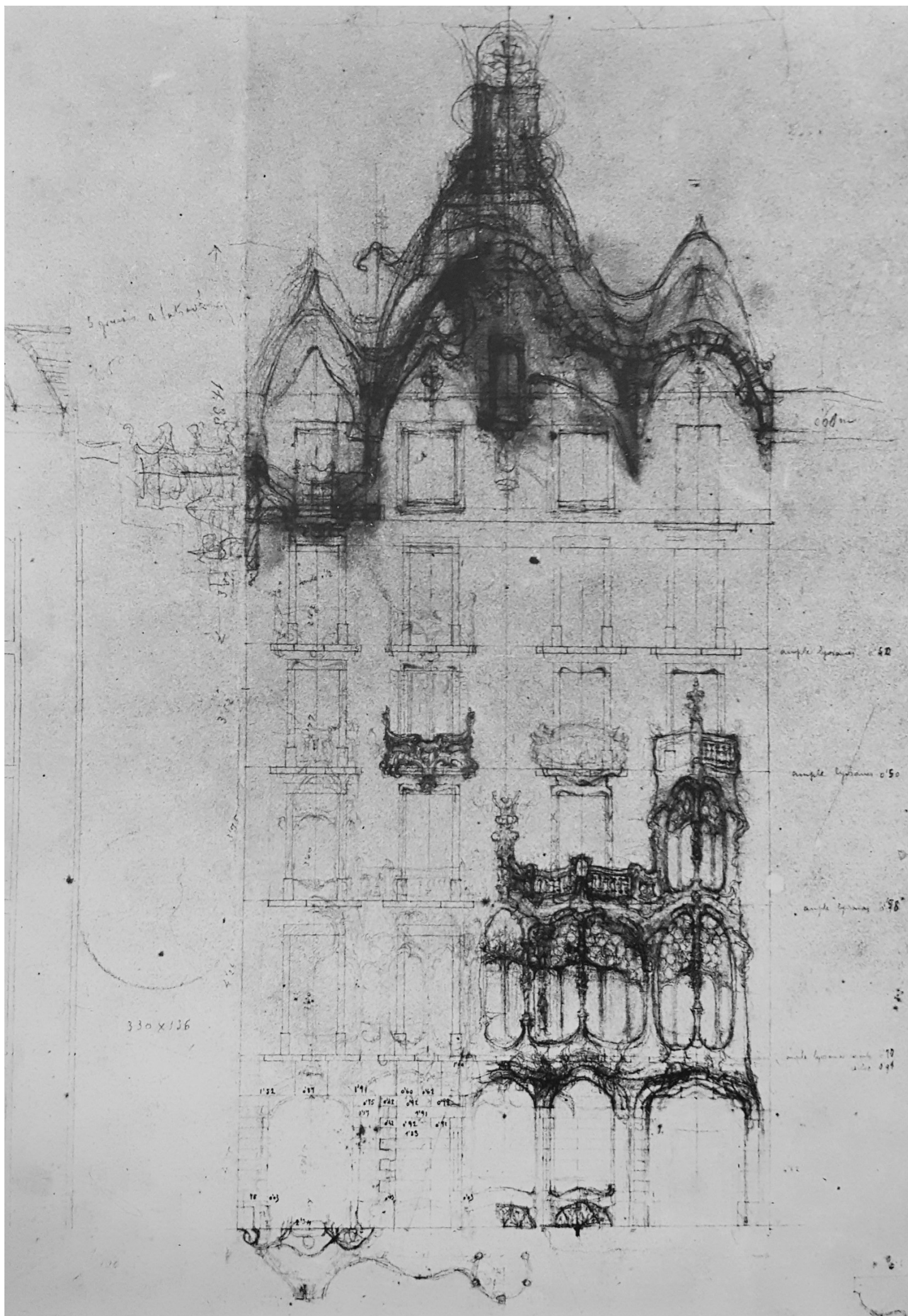
Leitmotifs:

Vaulting inverted from concave to convex, sagging between supporting elements, accentuating the visual weight of gravity, **most vulnerable center of span marked with St. Andrew's Cross as reassurance** from the patron saint of the church.

Sagrada Família Schools (1909)

Leitmotifs:

Irregular undulating hyperbolic paraboloid roof and walls, **by the simplest means: straight rafters and central beam**, with concave and convex bóvedas tabicadas brickwork spanning between.



Casa Batlló front elevation study sketch, drawn by Antoni Gaudí, 1904.
 Note the **softening of the façade** along the left cornice, responding to neighboring Casa Amatller façade.