

MESTRES. MODERN ARCHITECTURE
IN THE REGION OF VALENCIA

Jose Fernández-Llebrez Muñoz



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Foreword

INSTITUTIONAL TEXTS

Ximo Puig
President of the Generalitat Valenciana

The architecture from Valencia in the second half of the 20th century offers a significant number of architectural works of great interest and a good deal of them owe to the creative genius of a group of architects who deservedly have received the title of *Mestres*.

In 1990, the Valencia Regional Architects' Association (COACV) brought this distinction into being to recognize these great names, underscore the value of their trajectories, and delve further into the study of their work. Since then, every two years, the list is extended to make way for a new *Mestre* who has also left a great legacy in this land.

We know their work very well because it is part of our everyday built environment. We have studied in classrooms that have projected it, have strolled down the seafront promenades they conceived, have looked out of the windows they drew decades back, or have simply admired, day in and day out, the silhouettes of the buildings they traced out. Together with some emblematic works, they have left many others on a human scale destined to accompany our everyday existence, at work or at leisure, in spaces to be lived in and enjoyed. Some of their works originally triggered controversy. During the dark days during which they were conceived, these new airs met with incomprehension in part of the society that resisted accepting change and clung to the past. For all the *Mestres*, it must have been hard and risky to stray from the beaten path and venture out into a new language of architecture breaking through established clichés and aspiring to connect to the most advanced currents abroad.

They were able to do that, and just for that they deserve their title as *Mestres*.

They all contributed during very difficult years for our society to renewing architectural language of towns and cities and their mark can be clearly seen on our streets, not only in the buildings that they planned, but also in the work of new generations of architects who furthered the avenues they opened up in our Region.

Deeper knowledge of their work should be attained, of the great legacy they spread across our geography that deserves to be better appreciated, conserved and spread. This is why a volume like this, giving us a closer look at these architects and their work and the designs they ably saw to fruition, Across these pages, we can appreciate the traits they have in common and also, very specially, we can get a close glimpse of the elements that make them stand apart, of the characteristics they explain what makes them unique.

This book encourages us to recognize an overview of well-done works, to value the effort, creativity and originality and pay tribute to a group of *Mestres* who left a great mark on the Region of Valencia. I would like to encourage everyone reading these pages to delve further into the knowledge of the *Mestres*' work and thus further appreciate that great architectural heritage they have left us. And lastly, I would like to congratulate the authors of the texts this book comprises as they have shown us many more interesting aspects of these great architects' work.

As the Dean of the Universidad Europea de Valencia, being able to introduce a book that is the result of thorough, rigorous research stands as a manifest evidence of the values that one takes on with one's position. If we add that this publication comes from a great teaching professional who continues to demonstrate a commitment to the universality of knowledge, the importance of multi-disciplinary research and the transfer of knowledge and its social impact, then it is evident that this edition enhances those values and the essence of the three missions of the university and its education.

In addition, the three-dimensional connection with the immediate surroundings, with their architecture, with the profession represented by the Valencia Regional Architects' Association, and, for course, by the *Mestres*, the exemplary architects whom we all want to continue admiring, exponentially compounds the benefit and attractiveness of their work that we have before us.

This research focuses on the significance of Valencia and the ability it has shown in architecture over many years, intertwining the heart of the mind, with creation, with art and with the perspective that architects have of their cities and their surroundings.

Research in architecture means to undertake surprising work so that both for the research team and for those who benefit from and enjoy its results, can further their knowledge. Knowledge transfer is key to universities and, when its fruits are borne, a vision of society can be transformed. The authors of this research offer us many lessons to bear in mind. It is true that they explicitly mention the dearth of female role models, which drives us to strive to make diversity real in university schools and in STEAM schools,

and thus to invest in a future that enriches the system. Nevertheless, this reading leads us to learn not only a good deal about structures, but also about people, role models, emotions and values. It invites us to rigorously study how to pave the way in this profession, to learn and re-learn and reach one's own conclusions.

With its four dimensions, the Universidad Europea's academic model fosters the creation of research ecosystems whose methodologies ensure that our students, guided by great professors, participate in the challenges from beginning to end and that they move on to evaluate. The intellectual dimension promotes practical research enabling multidisciplinary teams to obtain results like those published here. The professional dimension facilitates the involvement of professionals in university life by raising all sorts of questions and concerns springing from everyday life. These questions find their answers in solutions provided thanks to this research work. The international dimension is present because it is there in our way of thinking, of perceiving the world and in knowing the *Mestres* reaction to it. Lastly comes that ethical and social dimension of learning which, when applied congruously and responsibly, can change the world.

Many are the surprises that we will find in this publication. Some will allow us to bolster the role architecture plays, its ability to bring about solutions and combine beauty, art with needs. We discover these *Mestres* who are so necessary now in the 21st century and, at the same time, we bolster researchers like the PhD architect Jose Fernández-Llebrez Muñoz, who, exercising leadership, rigour and resilience, work so that others can learn about everything these researchers have delved into and produced.

THIRTY YEARS OF *MESTRES VALENCIANS D'ARQUITECTURA*

Luis Sendra Mengual

Dean of the Valencia Regional Architects' Association (COACV)

This story began thirty years ago, when the Board of Governors at the Valencia Regional Architects' Association (COACV) decided to create the Architecture Awards and instate the *Mestre Valencià d'Arquitectura* Prize.

In hindsight, this proves to have been a wise decision. It has paved the way for greater recognition of the profession and the careers and work of Valencia's architects by showcasing their most significant contributions to culture, society and the city during the period in which they lived.

Fourteen architects have been awarded the prize, including Luis Gay, Francisco Muñoz Llorens, Juan José Estellés, Juan Antonio García Solera, Emilio Giménez Julián and Rafael Contel. Their work represents some of the most emblematic creations of a timeless architecture designed and built during the second half of the 20th century.

Each *Mestre Valencià d'Arquitectura* was chosen in a transparent, open process whereby candidacies were submitted and endorsed and winners were selected on the basis of their merits and skills.

As a privileged spokesperson for Valencia's architects, I would like to emphasise the importance for successive generations of colleagues of the first *Mestre* in the 1990-1992 awards: Miguel Colomina Barberá, professor of Architectural Design and former Director of the Valencia School of Architecture.

In most instances, recognition of the *Mestres'* innovation, talent and exquisite architectural output by the local architectural community has been reaffirmed by awards they were conferred by other respected institutions from around the world.

We are proud that the Iberian DoCoMoMo Register includes extraordinary works by many of the *Mestres*: Miguel Colomina (Water board), Fernando Mantínez García-Ordóñez (Guadalaviar school), Vicente Valls (Antonio Rueda residential complex), Rafael Tamarit ('Hermanos Lladró' building), Miguel Prades (La Panderola apartaments), Juan Guardiola (Vistamar building), and so forth.

It would be remiss of me not to mention Antonio Escario, a scholar from San Carlos, whose first architectural project in the capital of La Mancha, the San Felipe Neri oratory, went on to form part of the exhibition curated by Pritzker prize winner Rem Koolhaas at the 2014 Venice Biennale.

The Architects' Association is now honouring its commitment to bring to life this publication, encompassing much of the organisation's recent history and showcasing these architects' lives.

When Jose Fernández-Llebarez Muñoz, our colleague and professor by the Universidad Europea de Valencia (UEV), presented his research project based on the *Mestres Valencià d'Arquitectura* awards in autumn 2019, we wanted to help make it possible by providing support, promoting the project, seeking partners and disseminating the findings as widely as possible.

Researching and reflecting on historical processes in architecture and in our contemporary architecture in particular is undoubtedly meritworthy. It enhances our understanding of the profession and of the technical and socioeconomic context in which it operates.

As architects and citizens in society, we would be nothing if we failed to consider our individual and collective memory and our architectural heritage

and legacy, not just looking at it, discovering it and enjoying it, but understanding it in its full artistic, functional, architectural and sociological dimension. This meticulous research by Fernández-Llebrecz, with the collaboration of reputed scholars including professors Beatriz Colomina (Princeton University) and José María Lozano Velasco (Valencia School of Architecture, ETSA-UPV), goes some way to achieving this objective.

Disseminating excellence is another important task that must not be overlooked or overshadowed. The *Mestres* Prize was created with the aim of promoting the value of architecture as deeply humanistic, as a collective achievement.

Thirty years on, the quest for excellence is more necessary than ever in a hyperconnected world where communication, information and, above all, visibility have become a compelling goal.

The publication of this research project is underpinned both by professional and academic rigour and by a flexible approach to accommodate for new and future input. In response to the global, digital world we live in, the project goes one step further and encompasses the creation of an online platform about the awards and the best Valencian architecture in recent decades.

As the editor of this feature edition himself has expressed, the digital communication tools used here have the potential to open up new pathways for studying, showcasing and promoting Valencia's contemporary architecture as a whole, moving beyond the individual stories of the *Mestres* and their work.

The research project, which was originally enabled, endorsed and funded by prestigious learning institutions—Universidad Europea de Valencia—and

the regional government—Conselleria d'Innovació, Universitats, Ciència i Societat Digital de la Generalitat Valenciana—is also backed by the Valencia Regional Architects' Association (COACV) with a view to further an initiative spans beyond the project itself to seek continued expansion. The publication has been made possible by the kind support of the Fundación Arquia.

Fernández-Llebrecz's research stands as one of the main documentary sources future scholars exploring the topic to consult, analyse and reflect upon. Further research is vital in order to stimulate new perspectives, critical analyses and open debates reflecting contemporary social, political and cultural issues, such as gender equality, sustainability and the climate crisis.

Behind every *Mestre Valencià d'Arquitectura* is a person dedicated to the gorgeous profession of architecture, pouring their efforts, dedication and passion into their work. Their training and often lengthy careers unfolded in different eras and socioeconomic circumstances, oftentimes difficult and burdensome.

Despite this, every one of the award winners was able to look beyond their immediate context in their work to leave an exemplary architectural legacy for others to draw upon, despite the bewilderment, rejection or stereotypical *meninfotisme* (indifference) commonly displayed by their fellow Valencians. This brings to mind the wise words of the most recent *Mestre*, Vicente Vidal, who in the latest issue of *Revista COACV* discusses the current lack of recognition of architects' unmistakable role as narrators of cities.

Vidal laments the distance and lack of understanding and engagement between the public authorities and architects, viewing both parties as essential in generating productive ideas about the city.

The thirty years of the Valencia Architecture Awards and the *Mestre Valencià d'Arquitectura* have also bolstered the COACV as an organisation seeking to represent and uphold the activities and responsibilities of its members.

The awards keep us focused on our collective commitment to Valencian society and help us to showcase the achievements made in our cities, neighbourhoods, public spaces and residential buildings as a result of our colleagues' combined efforts.

In 2019, this all became manifest when we celebrated the awards' thirtieth anniversary with prominent activities including the production of a documentary and several theme exhibitions. Without the enthusiasm and dedication of the architect's territorial associations in Alicante, Valencia, Castellón and other county offices, none of this would have been possible.

The retrospective on the *Mestres* was set to continue in 2020, but the COVID-19 pandemic brought our personal and professional activity to a halt. Many projects, building work and activities were suspended and others went ahead with certain limitations.

Fortunately, this book is being published in its original format and has not been affected by the public health situation, although numerous questions as to the impacts and consequences of the pandemic on architecture, urban planning and the landscape have been raised for us.

As a professional institution, our mission is to do our utmost to help all our members in these difficult times, which we are sure will pass but not without leaving their mark. The best news will be to be able to hold the 2021 awards as normal and select the fifteenth *Mestre Valencià d'Arquitectura*.

As dean of the Valencia Regional Architects' Association (COACV), I am grateful to the institutions and companies that have joined forces with us to make it possible to complete this study of the lives and work of fourteen contemporary Valencian architects whose names are now part of our rich heritage.

Thanks are also due to Jose Fernández-Llebrez Muñoz, his team, and the fourteen authors who participated in this feature edition and helped to boost recognition of the *Mestre* award both within Spain and around the world.

OUTSTANDING 20th CENTURY CAREERS

Alberto Peñín Ibáñez

Former Dean of the Valencia Regional Architects' Association (COACV)

This publication affords me the opportunity to write about the origins and aims of the *Mestre Valencià d'Arquitectura* distinction which had the opportunity to establish as the COACV's Dean at the end of the 1980s.

In effect, the group of us, colleagues who joined its board between 1985 and 1995, wanted to regenerate the Architects' Association and to underscore both our commitment to the designs in our cities and our collaboration with new democratic institutions while reasserting Valencia's language and specific traits. Spain had recently succeeded in its transition to democracy and this program, we could say, was only natural and to be expected.

First of all, as of 1985, we called a competition for an architecture award in the context of the Architecture Week (initially an Architecture Fortnight), published the biographies of illustrious colleagues, sponsored the artistic cultural magazine Cimal and wound up publishing our own magazine, *Via Arquitectura*. As of 1990, the awards included those members of the Association with a relevant career as *Mestres*, and the magazine devoted a special issue to them. Those COACV Boards gave life to other initiatives that I can touch upon here: a Congress, new bye-laws, geographical subdivisions (comarcas), and associations in each one of the provinces and groupings. I poignantly remember all of those who participated in this venture with gratitude.

Mestre Valencià d'Arquitectura, then, is the Association's "designation of origin", a fortunate expression of recognition to accredit these colleagues from Valencia after a normally long career (though still with us) under the hallmark of quality and which, with its exemplarity, are role models. The first award was called in 1990-1992 and given to Miguel Colomina, seventy-eight years old at the time, professor of Architectural Design and one of the first Directors of the Valencia School

of Architecture (ETSA-UPV). Over the years, this distinction has been granted to an ensemble of excellent architects and, in its 14th edition, was awarded to Vicente Manuel Vidal. All of these *Mestres* can be followed in this publication.

Generally speaking, the awards are given to professionals practicing in the city at that time, and, in certain cases, also complementing their activity by teaching at the new schools of Architecture, initially in Valencia and later in Alicante. They have also been conferred to those who, with great perspective, designed the cities of Alicante and Benidorm. There are, no doubt, other outstanding architects from our Region, not only in this field but also in research and dissemination, in their work with developers or builders, and in administration and governance of architecture and heritage. The time will come to recognize them too.

The first *Mestres* were architects who earned their degrees just after Spain's Civil War, such as Luis Gay, Miguel Colomina, Paco Muñoz, Juan José Estellés, Juan Antonio García Solera and Rafael Contel. Then, having studied well into the 1950s, came Vicente Valls, Fernando Martínez García-Ordóñez, Miguel Prades and Juan Guardiola, all exhibiting great intellectual rigour. Later, added to these, came those who earned their degrees under the new curricula of the 1960s: Emilio Giménez, Antonio Escario, Rafael Tamarit and Vicente Vidal. Many of them had also earned prizes in the calls for awards or were recognized in the DoCoMoMo modern architecture register and undoubtedly stand as examples of Spain's best architecture.

This publication is a very good initiative to enhance their public repercussion. A long road still lies ahead to truly raise awareness of architecture to present-day society suffering from an onslaught of media impact and yet a paucity of knowledge about the quality and contribution of architects like these *Mestres*.

Valencia will be the World Design Capital in 2022. It is a recognition of a great, collective effort, of its society's ingeniousness and panache, or '*ingeni i gràcia*' as it is so-called in Valencia, taken together with its geography and the drive of its industry. Spanning back in time for or six hundred years, this industry has led to the development of ceramics, graphic arts, textiles and furniture whose origins relate the history of this land. We were already World Design Capital in the Valencia's Golden Age. Only that back then, the term design was not used. Oftentimes we are not aware of what we were able to achieve, probably because we can't quite believe it.

These are times of deep-lying change. The 21st century is off to a stagnating start with a worldwide pandemic making us realize the need for global mechanisms for change, and cities are taking their positions as a great laboratory to experiment and generate tests and prototypes. So, it is now more necessary than ever to look behind us and find the

values that generate cities and that we can see in the architectural work of the *Mestres Valencians d'Arquitectura*. These values can help us to rebuild, since in recovering and placing a value on the work of all of these professionals in architecture, their visions, and by extension the city, we must reflect on the importance of observing the successes of our past to design a better future.

Here, taking a cross-cutting approach, we delve into designs able to solve a host of problems, works of the past characterised by a great ability to combine the available techniques and various disciplines needed under the same umbrella, just as the *Mestres* did. This is a reason to truly believe in a job well done.

Excellent design and high-quality architecture share objectives and processes. Any publication which, like this one, helps us to understand these *Mestres'* work stands as a landmark to be mindful of the outstanding examples of how outstanding architecture affords an enhanced built environment.

To Luigi and Álvaro

Introduction

MESTRES: A CHORAL REPRESENTATION

Paradoxically, often what we have closest at hand is what remains the biggest unknown for us. Architecture and research on the subject are no exception. This may be one of the umpteenth consequences of an increasingly globalized world, but perhaps academia could take it upon itself to identify and mitigate the potential imbalances. There are also other complementary lessons to be had in these times. It is hard to conceive of generating knowledge without a contemporary notion of transfer. Optimal transfer enhances proper communication, information and pedagogy, just as disseminating knowledge among the majority enhances plural, universally shared knowledge.

Nevertheless, the current exponential increase of this generated knowledge stands in contrast with the finiteness of our time, often making it unavoidable to choose. In the sphere of architectural culture, this usually translates into highlighting the most relevant and representative works of a broad and particularly productive period, often considered *pioneering* works. What in fact adds value is what has made a change or contributed to the evolution of the discipline, opening the eyes and thoughts of its parties, but also the eyes of others. Yet these examples cannot always be near us, and certainly cannot be near everyone. In principle, having limited time, decisive for instance in regulated teaching, or being swept up by the tide of contributing to or participating in more globally consumed content can foster more peripheral architecture, even despite its quality — and perhaps often because it echoes

previous, far-off doings — may gradually fall into oblivion or may at least remain limited in terms of its prestige and/or dissemination. Caring for what is local is important. Not out of an anachronistic sense of endogamy, but for the sake of sharing it with the rest of the world and elevating it to what is global. As the saying goes, *Global needs local*.

One of the added values of the physical proximity of the examples lies in the very viability of the architectural experience. With the proliferation of media and information platforms affecting our perception of architecture, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that architecture itself and the image of architecture are not exactly the same thing. This holds even more true if we consider that authors such as Juhani Pallasmaa¹ warn that sight is the overly predominant sense in architecture and also argue that there is a general impoverishment of our built surroundings. Although initially addressing the conception and configuration of architectural works, some logical consequences about the architectural values conveyed, consumed and assimilated can be drawn from the critics, particularly in a world where what is visual is increasingly taking the centre stage. In this regard, and given the evidence of the course we are on, it is important to vindicate real or physical contact with good architecture in order to offset potential gradual disaffection, particularly by younger generations of architects, with the rest of its generating principles. By virtue of architecture's haptic nature, this interaction with built works brings with it the perception of a series of stimuli and content

1. Juhani Pallasmaa:
*The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture
and the Senses.*

spanning beyond what is utterly visible—and even beyond what is consciously projected—to enrich our knowledge and sensitive capacity.

Aside from the mention of the intrinsic value of visual culture, by experiencing architectural works, users gain the opportunity to enjoy full appreciation of and fully value a built design, may even compare potential external viewpoints with others that are already familiar. It is no coincidence that fundamental aspects in architecture such as perception of scale, architectural space and materiality eminently depend on a person's interaction with the completed work.

Thus, with limited time and resources, becoming familiar with nearby examples, in addition to benefiting our own architectural culture, offers an accessible or more viable way to enjoy and learn from contact with built work and to rediscover the scarcely known architecture that surrounds us. Therefore, to the extent that all one would need is to know of this architecture's existence and to open their eyes wide, if we ignore this possibility, ultimately we are missing out on an opportunity.

The Mestre Valenciana d'Arquitectura Prize

The basis of this study is the excellent architecture displayed in the works of the fourteen architects that have thus far been distinguished with Official Valencia Regional Architects' Association awards. These awards were first conferred over the final decades of the last century to highlight and promote the best architectural production in the provinces of Alicante, Castellón and Valencia, selected from amongst the contenders by a renowned, prestigious jury.² Since the 1990s, they have also included the *Mestre Valenciana d'Arquitectura* Award for life-long contributions to architecture. The distinction of *Mestre*, as the awardees are usually called, seeks

to highlight the value of the careers that most significantly have contributed to enriching our built environment as well as the profession overall and society in general.

Among the *Mestres* (listed in chronological order according to the year they received their awards) are: Miguel Colomina (1990-1991), Luis Gay (1994-1995), Juan Antonio García Solera (1996), Juan José Estellés (1997-1998), Francisco Muñoz (1999-2000), Miguel Prades (2001-2002), Juan Guardiola (2003-2004), Vicente Valls (2003-2004), Fernando Martínez García-Ordóñez (2005-2006), Emilio Giménez (2007-2009), Antonio Escario (2010-2012), Rafael Contel (2013-2014), Rafael Tamarit (2013-2014) and Vicente M. Vidal (2017-2018). Their careers unfolded over the second half of the 20th century and, as reflected in the final chapters of this publication, are valuable and unique, and yet at the same time (with a special separate mention of the shared award) when analysed chorally, a series of common criteria and values can be identified that are as diverse as they are revealing.

A simple look from a gender perspective brings to light what is most evident and should be highlighted from our contemporary approach. All fourteen *Mestres* are male. Yet the sheer blatancy of this fact could lead it to be overlooked. Naturally, this owes to the social and educational conditions in Spain during the first half of the 20th century when it was nearly impossible for women to access the labour market or, more specifically, highly qualified technical professions. This situation persisted longer in Spain than in the remainder of the West given the Franco dictatorship's political and cultural conditions. Yet in order to reach any conclusions or draw any lessons to enhance and ameliorate the sphere of architecture, and by extension the social sphere in general, i.e. a merit-based society, all of what could

2. These juries have included figures such as Manuel Gallego, Josep Maria Montaner, Luis Fernández-Galiano, Fernando de Terán, Richard Levene, Guillermo Vázquez Consuegra, Manuel de Solá-Morales, Juan Navarro Baldeweg, Emilio Tuñón, Francisco Mangado, Beatriz Matos, Eduardo de Miguel, Luis Moreno Mansilla, Enric Soria, Blanca Lleó, Javier Frechilla, Jesús Aparicio, Celestino García Braña, Josep Llinàs and Ignacio Pedrosa.

3. "Women were latecomers to architecture in Spain compared to other European countries. The first woman architect in Spain, Matilde Ucelay, graduated in 1936 from the Madrid School. At that time, the Spanish university, which had only opened its doors to women in 1912, was overwhelmingly male. [...] only three other women studied architecture with Ucelay before the war, all of them from Madrid [...]. During the following two decades, only five other women studied architecture [...]. During the 1970s, during developmentalism, the number of female university students increased, but the figures remained very low. There were roughly forty women graduates in architecture during the 1960s, then also from the Barcelona School where the first woman graduated in 1964. This situation changed with the gradual suppression of discriminatory legislation, the change in mindsets and the advent of democracy at the end of the 1970s, fostering women's access to employment and the country's public sphere and leading them to practice professions from which they had been blocked" (Yolanda Agudo and Inés Sánchez de Madariaga: "Construyendo un lugar en la profesión. Trayectorias de las arquitectas españolas", pp. 159-160).

be considered the most critical or constraining aspects must be examined.

Naturally, not everything that transpired can be included, nor can there be a complete or quantitative presentation of the entire profession. However, if academia takes as a sample one of the publications that extensively encompasses the period while delving into each specific case, a more detailed gender perspective becomes viable. In the Valencia Region's Register of 20th Century Architecture (*Registro de arquitectura del siglo XX, Comunidad Valenciana*), published in 2002 and directed by Vicente Colomer Sendra, over 719 pages set out in two volumes present more than five hundred architectural designs distributed over the provinces of Alicante, Castellón and Valencia, all classified into the following significant time intervals: 1900-1929, 1930-1939, 1940-1957, 1958-1975 y 1976-2000. The first two periods, together spanning from 1900 to 1939, account for 43 per cent of the total works recorded, all of which were designed by males. This was to be expected given there were extremely few female architects in Spain³ from when Matilde Ucelay⁴ became the first graduate in architecture in 1936 until the 1970s). The next interval (1940-1957) accounts for 12 per cent of all of the works and encompasses most of the *Mestres'* career time lines. Yet there is still no female architect responsible for the many works examined (seventy-six male architects and zero female architects). Likewise, in the subsequent phase (1958-1975), accounting for 10 per cent of the total works in the record, we find no female architects among the designs described (including fifty-seven male architects and zero female architects). Indeed, it is not until the final interval that we can find the first female architect, Cristina Grau, appearing in the record with a work she designed on her own in 1976 in the city of Valencia. Counting her, there are only

seven other female architects in the record, more than half of whom share their authorships of their designs with other male colleagues. All of them created their designs over the last few years of the century, from 1986 onwards. The record certainly does not account for all the female architects, but we are referring to the merits of Carmen Pinós, Lola Alonso, María José Tatay, María Jesús Rodríguez, Lourdes García Sogo, Pepa Balaguer and Beatriz Cubells. Along these lines, and as a corollary to the scarcity of women architects over those decades (owing to the previously described situation), just as there were few women documented as making contributions to built works, the input of female researchers on architecture (with just a few exceptions),⁵ was also limited and basically related to the overall bibliography generated by males over these generations. In no event however, either in terms of writing or of built work, does this refer to the quality of the works involved.

In addition, in connection with the specific biographies of many *Mestres*, a look at the ensemble of their work reveals convergences that allow parallelisms to be drawn among most of their trajectories. For instance, the *Mestres* held positions as technical officials (at times even more than one position, and normally positions of responsibility) in the Public Administration at the time. While it is true that a more in-depth analysis could introduce variables that might indicate the number of years they were tied to any given position, or whether they were designated at discretion or through influence for these positions or earned them through competitive examinations, it is equally true that for many of them these positions often led (to varying extents) to a flow of private professional assignments. Luis Gay was the municipal architect in the towns of Ribarroja del Turia, Onteniente and Segorbe, architect for the Directorate General

4. After she graduated in Madrid, Matilde Ucelay married in 1937 Valencia, where she remained for the duration of the Civil War. Political difficulties led her to be court-martialed and not practice her profession, meaning that her first designs had to be signed by other colleagues who were friends and that she could not be awarded public tenders. (Isabel González de León and Juan Núñez Valdés: "Mujeres pioneras de la arquitectura española", p. 272).

5. Among these exceptions, we can cite the contributions made by Trinidad Simó to architecture and contemporary urban planning, by Carmen Jordá to 20th century architecture in the Region of Valencia, by Pilar de Insausti to Valencian architecture from the second half of the 20th century, and by Inmaculada Aguilar regarding Demetrio Ribes and industrial heritage.

for Devastated Regions, and chief architect of the Housing Section of the Ministry of Housing's Provincial Delegation; Juan Antonio García Solera was architect for the Alicante Provincial Council and honorary architect in the town councils of Jávea, Altea and San Juan; Francisco Muñoz was architect for the Alicante Provincial Delegation for Housing (and was also involved in politics as a town councillor and deputy mayor of the Alicante City Council); Vicente Valls was architect for the Treasury and delegate architect for the Ministry of Education and Science's Technical Bureau in the Levant region; Fernando Martínez García-Ordóñez was chief urban planner for the Valencia city planning technical office; Antonio Escario was architect for the Albacete Provincial Council, architect for the Regional Department of Culture's Technical Unit, presided over the technical presentation of the Provincial Urban Planning Commission and was chief architect for the University of Valencia; and Rafael Contel was municipal architect in Valencia.

Another trait that most of the *Mestres* shared involves their teaching activity over the course of their careers. In fact, with the exception of Fernando Martínez García-Ordóñez, all of those settled in or having ties to Valencia also taught. Most did so at the Valencia School of Architecture (Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura de la Universitat Politècnica de València) established in 1966. At a time when transport and communications were nothing like they are today, distance posed a major difficulty for those who, while interested in academic life, spent their days far from the site of the only School of Architecture that the Region of Valencia had for many years. During Luis Gay's teaching tenure at the Valencia School of Arts and Crafts (*Escuela de Artes y Oficios*), eight other *Mestres* joined Valencia's incipient School of Architecture, many times at the

behest of its founder, Román Jiménez Iranzo, another fundamental player during that period. These professors were Miguel Colomina (who also had had tenure as the school's director), Juan José Estellés, Vicente Valls, Emilio Giménez, Antonio Escario, Rafael Contel, Rafael Tamarit and Vicente Manuel Vidal. Figures from different areas of knowledge, (although most had a background in architectural design) contributed to the school's growth while participating in the training of the first and successive classes of future architects.

A different angle can be examined by looking at the *Mestres'* different dates of birth. The youngest of the group (Rafael Tamarit and Vicente Manuel Vidal) were born in 1939 while the eldest (Luis Gay) was born in 1912, meaning that all were born between the second and fourth decades of the 20th century. Seven of them, exactly half, were born during the 1920s, only two during the decade prior and the other majority during the 1930s. While more detailed information can be drawn by further examining five-year periods, it does not yield any substantial variations. Nearly 50 per cent of the *Mestres* were born between 1920 and 1924, and of the remainder, only two were born prior to that while the rest were born later.

In line with Philip Drew's⁶ well-known definition, put forward in the 1970s, of the third generation of modern architecture,⁷ those born between the two world wars (that is, roughly between 1918 and 1939), all of the *Mestres* (with the exception of Miguel Colomina and Luis Gay who were born just a few years prior) belong to this generation owing to their birth dates. To a great extent due to Spain's own political, social and cultural situation running parallel to those elsewhere for most of the 20th century, several different nuances would undoubtedly need to be made regarding each one of these 14 *Mestres*. The characteristics Drew used for his definition and

6. Philip Drew: *Tercera generación: La significación cambiante de la arquitectura*, p. 32.

7. When speaking of *modern architecture*, we refer "preferably to architecture erected between *art nouveau* and the *avantgarde* designs to the 1960s" (Juan Calduch: *Temas de composición arquitectónica. 1. Modernidad y arquitectura moderna*, p. 14), or to architecture which "from the end of the 19th century spans at least until the last third of the 20th century, and even to the present", and that "would be equivalent to *contemporary architecture* or even to the *Modern Movement*, though the latter has a more limited meaning and often alludes to *avantgarde architecture*". This terminological definition also works to describe the production addressed in this book (developed in its entirety during the 20th century) as compared to other definitions of the expression *modern architecture* that Juan Calduch didactically cites in his book: "In the first definition, the term *modern* is used to refer to architecture encompassing the entire period from the 18th century onwards", while "a second approach considers architecture built from the 18th century until the turning point during the last third of the 19th century, and is thus understood as a counterpoint to *contemporary*" (Juan Calduch: *Temas de composición arquitectónica. 1. Modernidad y arquitectura moderna*, p. 15).

the varying opinions to which Drew's criteria gave rise would warrant their own mention. Nevertheless, familiarity with the work of the fourteen *Mestres* suggests that they were aligned with what Drew considered to be that generation's main task, that is, to carry the torch and face the challenges of modern architecture and have it evolve, "safe and sound" over the course of the 20th century.

Further substantiation and an indication of this shared bond lies in many of the *Mestres'* initial training by leading mentors of modern currents in Spain. With the exception of the youngest of the group (Vicente Manuel Vidal, who studied at the recently established Valencia School of Architecture), all of the *Mestres* studied at the Madrid or Barcelona Schools (certain *Mestres* studied at both), though their fortunes varied in terms of their academic mentors. While the eldest received an education based on academicism, a tradition carried forward by figures such as Francesc Nebot (Director of the Barcelona School from 1940 to 1953), Modesto López Otero (Director of the Madrid School from 1923 to 1955), Leopoldo Torres Balbás and Luis Moya Blanco,⁸ with the onset of the 1950s, the youngest *Mestres* found themselves with a gradually renewed teaching body including architects like Francisco Sáenz de Oíza, Javier Carvajal, Alejandro de la Sota and Antonio Fernández Alba in Madrid, and Josep Maria Sostres, Oriol Bohigas, Federico Correa and Robert Terradas in Barcelona. In any event, by delving into their biographies, it can easily be seen that most were disciples or had been trained at the beginning of their careers under the wings of various architects (often times the same ones), representing a new way of understanding the discipline in tune with the international currents of the time. This had a bearing on *Mestres'* general adhesion to modern architecture.

8. As of the 1950s, Luis Moya began a renewal that distanced him from historicism and brought him closer to modern architecture—though in a very personal sense—, through designs such as the Torrelavega parish church (1957) in Cantabria.

Juan Antonio García Solera was trained by Rafael Fernández Huidobro; Miguel Prades by Francesc Mitjans and Antonio Perpiñá; Juan Guardiola also by Mitjans and Perpiñá as well as Xavier Busquets; Vicente Valls learned from Luis Gutiérrez Soto; Fernando Martínez García-Ordóñez was trained by Miguel Fisac; Emilio Giménez by José Antonio Coderch; Antonio Escario by Fisac and Alejandro de la Sota; Rafael Tamarit also by de la Sota and Julio Cano Lasso; and finally Vicente Manuel Vidal learned as a professor from Alfredo Fluixá and as a PhD student from Rafael Moneo.

By comparing the *Mestres'* graduation dates, conclusions can be drawn in line with those obtained by comparing their birth dates. While this denotes how close or separated they are in generational terms, primarily, through an indirectly indication of when they began their careers, it enables us to take stock of them as a whole and of their choral contribution to modern architecture.

Once again, there is decade; the 1950s when the majority of the *Mestres* overlap in terms of when they began their careers (more towards the second half of the decade) while the rest began fairly evenly distributed over the years prior and subsequent to that decade. As three of the *Mestres* did not begin their careers into well into the 1960s, we cannot compare all of their contributions from the decade prior. Analogously, it would be difficult to find projects for the *Mestres* who began their careers during the 1940s, after thirty or forty years of practice, beyond the 1970s.

One last comparison in fact allows this to be borne out when examining each *Mestre's* own list of outstanding works which are reproduced before their descriptions in the final chapters of this publication. These lists were put together after the experts in the field participating in the various feature chapters

	1910-1919	1920-1929	1930-1939
1. Miguel Colomina	1915		
2. Luis Gay	1912		
3. Juan Antonio García Solera		1924	
4. Juan José Estellés		1920	
5. Francisco Muñoz		1920	
6. Miguel Prades			1930
7. Juan Guardiola		1927	
8. Vicente Valls		1924	
9. Fernando Martínez García-Ordóñez		1922	
10. Emilio Giménez			1932
11. Antonio Escario			1935
12. Rafael Contel		1922	
13. Rafael Tamarit			1939
14. Vicente Manuel Vidal			1939

	1940-1949	1950-1959	1960-1969	1970-1979
1. Miguel Colomina	1944			
2. Luis Gay	1940			
3. Juan Antonio García Solera		1953		
4. Juan José Estellés	1948			
5. Francisco Muñoz	1947			
6. Miguel Prades		1956		
7. Juan Guardiola		1957		
8. Vicente Valls		1951		
9. Fernando Martínez García-Ordóñez		1955		
10. Emilio Giménez		1959		
11. Antonio Escario			1963	
12. Rafael Contel		1954		
13. Rafael Tamarit			1965	
14. Vicente Manuel Vidal				1973

Mestres' dates of birth
by decades

Mestres' graduation dates
by decades

(ranging from authors of biographies to family members to those in charge of architecture archives) had reached a consensus for strategic and operative purposes.

In other words, this publication focuses on dissemination and putting forward a limited number of works reflecting a compendium of different variables in their works (briefs, typologies, scales, technologies, etc.) by applying certain quality standards, but many of the *Mestres* have a great wealth of built works making it inviable to have all of them materialise collectively in this type of choral publication. The lists were limited to some twenty works to allow for the best possible snapshot of each of the *Mestres*' most outstanding and representative works. By comparing these lists, one can see that it is not prior to but rather as of the mid 20th century that the *Mestres* generally fall in line with the third generation of modern architecture. This is specifically and without exceptions reflected in their overall activity in the 1960s and 1970s coinciding with the end of the autarchy period in Spain and a phase of economic growth in the West.

This activity or architectural production is also broadly reflected in nearly all instances the Iberian DoCoMoMo Register. Standing as examples are Miguel Colomina's Júcar River Water Board (Confederación Hidrográfica del Júcar) and his apartment building on the Paseo de la Alameda; Luis Gay's expansion of the Segorbe seminary and his Arrufat building; Juan Antonio García Solera's Vistahermosa complex and his Centro de Estudios Superiores in Alicante; Juan José Estellés' Colegio Mayor de la Presentación y Santo Tomás university residence hall in Villanueva and his Ciudad Ducal housing estate; Miguel Prades' office building on calle Enmedio and his Sol de Llevant single family house; Juan Guardiola's Vistamar and El Galeón buildings;

Vicente Vall's Antonio Rueda residential complex and his Tres Carabelas housing estate; Fernando Martínez García-Ordóñez' Santa María del Mar church and his Guadalaviar school; Emilio Giménez's apartment building on calle Artes Gráficas and his Siena apartments; Antonio Escario's university towers and his Museum of Albacete; Rafel Contel's San José professional school and his Stella Maris building; Rafael Tamarit's Hermanos Lladró building and his Tamarit Maximino House and Vicente Manuel Vidal's Jover factory and his Virgen de los Llanos residential complex.

Modern Architecture in the Region of Valencia

Thus, with the general objective of highlighting the value of modern architecture in the Region of Valencia, and following the updated definition by DoCoMoMo,⁹ the ensemble of the *Mestres*' trajectories provides us with a good sampling—though not the only sampling—of the technical, functional and formal principles as well as those affecting briefs that characterised architecture in our proximity during the interval spanning roughly from 1960 to 1975, giving us a glimpse of modern architecture in Spain as of the end of the autarchy period. The legacy of this ensemble of work has not only contributed to qualifying our built habitat, but has also stood as a close and fundamental example for later generations of architects.

After this introductory chapter on the topic under study and the choral presentation of the fourteen *Mestres*, the publication examines modern architecture—the main trait shared by the *Mestres*—in the Region of Valencia and, as a must, refers to the national and international context, separated into two distinct periods. First is a contextualisation of modern currents up to the 1950s (supported by certain key works by the *Mestres*' forerunners and contemporaries).

9. Though circumscribed to the 1925-1965 period, the DoCoMoMo organization (*Documentación y Conservación de Edificios, Sitios y Barrios del Movimiento Moderno*- Documentation and Conservation of Modern Movement Buildings, Sites and Neighbourhoods) has now expanded its coverage until 1975. It is thus included and showcased in publications such as Daniel Villalobos' *Registro DoCoMoMo Ibérico, 1925-1975. Industria, vivienda y equipamientos*, from 2019, and in the *Estudio y catalogación de 400 edificios de la arquitectura del Movimiento Moderno realizada en España entre 1965 y 1975*, drawn up in 2019 by Carlota Cobos with the collaboration of Cristina Florit based on documentation facilitated by Fundación DoCoMoMo Ibérico's technical committee (thus broadening its catalogue), as commissioned by the Ministry of Culture and Sport's General Sub-directorate for the Instituto del Patrimonio Cultural de España (Spain's cultural heritage institute).

Next, it goes into further detail to address the period of interest after the end of the autarchy period in Spain which, similarly, is described and illustrated through fourteen works, as significant and they are diverse, of each of the *Mestres*. These works are not only selected, analysed and valued because of their interest in strictly architectural terms (or because of their documentary contribution), but rather because of their inherent ability to put forward both shared visions and connections, synergies and relationships contributing to configure a specific notion of their time and their cultural context. Finally, a series of articles written by expert authors in the different *Mestre's* trajectories appears with each description of the fourteen projects chosen and brings us closer to the figures and architectural legacies of each one of the *Mestres*.

As in other spheres, it is known that modern currents in the Region of Valencia did not take hold and were not established all of a sudden. Quite the contrary, for many years they co-existed with other designs—indeed the majority—tied to historicist architecture. Moreover, it was not unusual to find this dichotomy in the trajectory of a single individual architect. This occurred with architects who were ostensibly more academicist yet who, when the characteristics of the project and—perhaps even more so—when the client so permitted, turned to much more contemporary language to experiment with new types of architectural expression.

While in architecture the client has more of a bearing than is often acknowledged, the concerns of users and their interaction with the entire architectural process also pose a determining factor. Along these same lines, naturally, the type of society existing in a given place and at a given time also directly influences the architecture that society produces overall. Stated otherwise, the architectural

language and the architecture developed over the period covered by this publication largely reflects the same Valencian society which in turn generated and consumed it. At least in part, from the first half of the 20th century, this society experienced the need and determination for change that led it, initially, to the understanding that 19th century architecture was outdated, and, as a result, to begin to demand and foster new solutions and forms.

The main landmarks¹⁰ in the Valencian society's history can be explained by its late industrialization at the end of the 19th century, by the Second Republic and failed attempts to secure a regional Statute of Autonomy, by the ongoing debate on the Region's own language and cultural identity, by the Civil War and the consequences of the prevailing side there having ultimately lost, by the lethargy during the period of autarchy until 1958, by the phase of growth (in tourism, industrial development and in population driven by immigration from other regions) during the final years of the Franco Regime, by the transition to democracy and period of modernization, investment and endowment of public goods, by the normalization of democracy and sustained growth, and so forth. While repeatedly the most cultured and well-informed architects captured international trends and locally influenced new architectural codes, what triggered evolution in the discipline must be sought in functional, technical, cultural, political and economic trends in a society that was gradually yet constantly changing, affecting its architects and the users of its architecture alike.

In the final instance, the disposition of certain architects—for instance these 14 *Mestres*—would be key to the gradual introduction of a new way of conceiving and designing architecture based on continuous learning, sensitive observation and a drive to excel. From simply reviewing the

10. A general overview of 20th century historical events in the Region of Valencia from the standpoint of its regional identity within Spanish culture can be consulted in Ferran Archilés i Cardona and Manuel Martí's "Un país tan extraño como cualquier otro: la construcción de la identidad nacional española contemporánea", pp. 245-273.

Mestres' trajectories one can generally gain a good understanding not only of how their productive environments and real property sectors functioned but also of their attentiveness to users, determination to contribute to building an improved urban and social environment, and interest in keeping abreast of developments and enhancing and ameliorating their training. Far from the easy access that we are accustomed to today, at the time subscribing to national or international journals to be in touch with what was happening both in Spain and abroad was most usual. Architects tried to travel in Europe and to the Americas to visit the architecture that

they admired or to nurture themselves with major international exhibitions or even try to establish ties with well-known architects' studios so that they could flesh out their education, collaborate, or even just soak up their good practice. These *Mestres*, reluctant to remain in the past, were undoubtedly geared to the present and the future. These *Mestres*, aligned in their spirit of continuous improvement, strove to put together an architectural legacy that was up to the new needs and aspirations of society in general and of the users of their designs. They stand together as a good mirror in which all of us in the profession can gaze.