

Lecture 1 – Trencadís Mosaic



Welcome to Antoni Gaudí's Influence on the Contemporary Architecture of Barcelona and Bilbao.

Pleasure & Thankyou

Live in interesting times

First time teaching with **Zoom** & with **123 enrolled** (please forgive & patient)

POLL: Signed up Fall Trip? Visited Barcelona/Bilbao? Taken my past class(es)?

Things changed since this class was proposed/accepted > added **Local examples**

Housekeeping Items:

Please add **your name** appears under **Participants** button, to be called on.

Muting everyone (background noise) > **Raise Hand & Chat questions.**

When you Chat a question, please **select Erin Only.**

5 to 10 minute break & 10 to 15 minutes at end for **Q&A**

Syllabus and **Lecture Handouts** available on **Box.** **Email me** if need link.

Roger Humphries Rule: Want to involve everyone in the class,

opportunity to share insights you may have about Gaudi, but when unmuted, **'don't eat too much, know when you have had enough.'**

This way you will make everybody happy, especially me.'

My **5th year teaching in Osher at Pitt,**

Invited to teach for **first time in Osher at CMU** in **July.**

CMU class on Gaudi, **deeper dive into the theory of his work.**

Gaudi my **favorite architecture topic,** this class continuation, **prior not needed.**

Restoration of the Spanish monarchy in **1875**, period of political stability

Bourgeoisie enjoyed **growth of business** and **accumulation of wealth**.

Barcelona: **expanding/absorbing industrial towns** around it, becoming a modern, cosmopolitan center with dense population.

Paralleling Pittsburgh during the industrial steel days, Spain's largest industrial city, 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.

1x

Casa Vicens (1883-1888) After completing education, **1878** Gaudí received his first commission from an **industrialist that manufactured tiles**, house = showroom.

2x

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

3x

Detail increasing vertically, progress up, top heavy. Terminating in roof minaret projecting with full tiles, sizes reduce to cover pointed domed surface.

2x

Voided corners.

1x

Novel use of **stone laid bare, exposed as a finish material**.

Materials and labor should be locally sourced

2x

Metalwork wrought and cast in combination.
 working class, honest labor of talented artisans

3x

Interior painted **nature motifs** of flora and fauna.
Mocárabe vaulting in smoking room, an **Islamic honeycomb/stalactite vaulting**.

1x

Bóvedas tabicadas (partitioned vaults) concealed with **dimensional cardboard decorations**.

Traditional handmade crafts of the Catalan culture.

1x

Mechanical innovation: wire web fountain, misting water, rainbow effects.
 Gaudí responded to visual, but **thought mechanically, how things are assembled, creativity was in the craft of fabrication.**

2x

Japanese screens.

1x

Parabolic garden feature in rear yard.

Leitmotif (recurrent theme): **parabolic form** in every project (growth)

Improvement on the **pointed Gothic arch**, the parabolic shape was a modern, avant-garde form, that Gaudí carried through **every project of 5 decade carrier.**

POLL: More intrigued by Gaudí's exteriors or interiors?

1878 was also the year of **Paris World Fair**, for which Gaudí awarded 2nd place for a glass display cabinet designed for **glove maker Esteve Comella**. However, the cabinet was constructed at **Eudaldo Punti**'s workshop, where he was introduced to **Eusebi Güell** who admired the cabinet at the Fair. Güell was Barcelona's **largest industrialist**, his **factories manufacturing textiles**, **Catalonia's principal product** (Spain was mostly agricultural).

1883 Güell purchased property adjoining his country estate, a retreat for him and his wife's family (López). Six years after their meeting, Gaudí given commission for the construction of a new boundary wall, gatehouses and stables (1884-1887).

9x

Pavellons Güell Dragon Gate (1884-1887)

Manifesto (public declaration): **Trencadís Mosaic** (broken mosaic)

5x

First use of Trencadís Mosaic, **Gaudi's resourcefulness, frugality, creativity**. Parabolic form of **rooftop lantern ventilator (letting in natural light and air)**, tiles must vary in size as tapers to point, **without budget for custom tiles**, **infills** with broken fragments, **conforming** to any shape, **laid with unskilled** labor.

Gaudi's work explores this human trait that will be **needed for our survival** on a **rapidly changing planet**. **By use of discarded, broken, fragmented materials** as **decoration, Gaudi finds redemption, a humility willing to consider all.**

Parti Pris (organizing concept): **resourceful, redemption, restoration** (rebirth)
Restoration of Catalan culture under the Spanish thumb,
Restoration of traditional handmade crafts overtaken by a new industrial age,
Restoration of Catholic Church dissolving from rise science & growing atheism.

6x

Park Güell serpentine bench (1909-1914)

1909 (Tuesday, July 27) **Setmana Tragica** (Tragic Night), Barcelona
 revolutionaries burned schools, convents, churches and religious objects.

Gaudi restored faith with his magnum opus (greatest work) of Trencadis Mosaic.

POLL: Which prefer: Casa Vicens, Dragon Gate stables, Park Güell bench?

7x

Agbar Tower, Barcelona (Jean Nouvel, 2005) 60K glazing tiles, 38 stories

“This is not a tower, a skyscraper, in the American sense. It is a more an emergence, rising singularly in the center of a generally calm city. Unlike slender spires and bell towers that typically pierce the horizons of horizontal cities, this tower is a fluid mass that bursts through the ground like a geyser under permanent, calculated pressure.

The surface of the building evokes water: smooth and continuous, shimmering and transparent, its materials reveal themselves in nuanced shades of color and light. It is architecture of the earth without the heaviness of stone, like a distant echo of old Catalan formal obsessions carried by a mysterious wind off the Monserrat.”

Known as el supositori (“the suppository”)

2x

Inspired by Montserrat, Barcelona's patron saint, Our Lady of Montserrat.

2x

Yann Kersalé lighting design, 4.5K LED circuits 16M colors, "fights ceaselessly against artificial lighting that kills authentic nocturnality and masks the sky" "a passionate fan of chiaroscuro" who loves to plunge viewers into an "abyss" of total darkness to maximize their perception of the surprising narrative fantasies constructed with light.

5x

Bilbao Underground Station (Norman Foster, 1995) Interconnecting underground lines along the banks of the River Nervión.

Escalators emerge under glass canopies which rise out of the street floor with great elegance and smoothness. This is our fin-de-siècle equivalent of the famous entrances to the Paris Métro designed by Guimard a century ago; like those, the Bilbao ones use the most advanced glass technology available to offer an urbane sense of welcome and arrival.

Gaudi's ventilating lantern, parabolic.

2x

Pittsburgh **Gateway Station** (Robert Pfaffman, 2011)

10:45

(10 MINUTE BREAK)

10:55

1x

Ode to Space (Virgil Cantini, 1966); inscribed ‘labore as astras’ (translated: ‘to work toward the stars’); tribute to Chancellor Edward Litchfield, who died in a plane crash in 1965.

7x

Mosaic Tunnel (Virgil Cantini, 1964) handmade glass mosaic tiles set into three dozen concrete panels in walls of pedestrian tunnel under Bigelow Blvd. behind U.S. Steel Tower. Italian born (1919-2009), works with porcelain enamel & steel, Carnegie Tech football student, Pitt faculty and founder of Pitt’s Dept. of Studio Arts.

“I want the **tunnel to be a gallery**, some **place to go through** rather than stay out from. It is not designed to stop you... it is meant to be something you look at while you are walking along”

“The art is supposed to lend a feeling of movement...I want to give an experience of sensing the city – both day and night... gold and silver will shimmer like the lights of the city. They will pick up the lights of the tunnel and give an experience, a point of view.”

One side a cross section of stratified earth, other an abstract cityscape.

“By spacing the mosaics, I hoped to create the idea of a **strata cut into the earth** - the **city growing out of the earth and not bound by a frame**. You visualize the city simultaneously from many points of view.”

“**We will be judged not by monuments we build, but by those we have destroyed**”

(NY Times, 1963 op-ed on razed Penn Station for Madison Square Garden).

In 2017 Young Preservationists Assoc. of Pgh. named it the #1 historic structure in peril and Summer of 2019 was removed for park reconnecting Hill & Downtown.

9x

Iron Eden (John Walter, 2011-2015) In the hollow under Bloomfield Bridge. Mix of stone and brick rubble, reclaimed iron and timbers from Pgh.'s industrial past. Worked on ships as a Merchant Marine in 1974. Created Iron Eden in 1996, reflecting the organic forms of lush green gardens.

6x

Randyland (Randy Gilson, 1996) 'The Happiest Place in Pennsylvania' 40ft. mural, 1920s Parisian red metal chairs, sandbox of plastic animals. His original artwork painted on repurposed doors & discarded materials. Communal lunch hour on picnic tables. Music playing in the air. Free admission, donations welcome for the positive energy absorbed. Neighborhood revitalization (30 years ago).

4x

Articulated Cloud (Ned Kahn, 2004) in collaboration with architects Hank Koning & Julie Eizenberg, "confluence of art & science" (Ned Kahn), illuminating natural forces, 43K square panels individually hinged to steel screen, move in the wind, diffusing sunlight & creating soundscape. Night a shimmering lantern. Inspired by atmospheric physics, geology, astronomy and fluid motion. 'Observatories': artworks that enable observation and interaction with natural processes. Capturing reality, rather than creating an alternative reality. Complex and continually changing systems, the way recurring patterns of behavior emerge when things flow.

5x

Cloud Arbor (Ned Kahn, 2012) Grid 64 stainless steel 32ft. tall, 3inch dia. poles, public fountain creating 20ft. dia. clouds from 1K psi high pressure, 528 vaporizing nozzles. Releasing for 15 seconds, every 10 minutes. Calm conditions, nozzles angled slightly inward, create spherical cloud, spinning and rising in winter, spinning and falling in summer. As wind picks up, cloud distorts, creating a porous environment merging with the atmosphere, blurring boundary between atmosphere and architecture. “It demonstrates the swirling emotion of things we cannot see. It makes them visible. If you step back and look at (clouds), (they’re) incredibly beautiful and interesting. ...and I just want to call people’s attention to it.” (Ned Kahn)

4x

Hull (Ian Brill, 2016) 60ft. length
Pittsburgh Re:New Festival, repurposed, recycled plastic.

POLL: Which prefer: Cantini mosaics, Walter’s terrace, Randy’s park, Kahn’s clouds, Brill’s tunnel?

Q&A