



Joan Miró painting *El Segador* (The Reaper), 1937.
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ART REVOLUTIONARIES

**Homage to the Pavilion
of the Spanish Republic, 1937**

Curated by Juan Manuel Bonet

Mayoral
Consell de Cent 286, Barcelona
23/09/2016-07/01/2017

MAYORAL

“Because I humanely sympathised
with what it represented”,

Joan Miró

Mayoral begins the commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the Pavilion of the Spanish Republic for the International Exposition of Paris, 1937, with a replica of *El Segador* by Joan Miró, his great lost work



Calder with *Mercury Fountain* (1937)
in the Spanish Pavilion at the Paris World's Fair, July 1937.
Herdeg, Hugo Paul (1909-1953) ©Copyright.
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Calder Foundation, New York/Art Resource, NY

The Mayoral art gallery presents “Art revolutionaires”, a museum quality artistic project featuring works by Pablo Picasso, Joan Miró, Alexander Calder and Julio González in Barcelona.

The pieces that will be displayed share a very close link with those that represented the republican artists in 1937, among which stand out: *Pierrot, Bust* (Picasso), *Painting* (Miró), *The Red Base* (Calder) and *Sharp Mask* (González).

The show, the result of a year-long research and document gathering, includes the historical rebirth of the great monumental work by Miró: *El Segador*, which disappeared after the Pavilion was dismantled and will be recreated, in black and white.

Alongside Miró’s mural, the exhibition, with the aim to generate an evocative atmosphere and after an intense work and full of interesting findings and discoveries, includes the recreation of the essence of the Pavilion’s architecture, presents several posters about the Civil War, as well as a video with the Pavilion’s imagery of that time and also it will be playing the Republican music of 1937.

The exhibition, which has been presented first in Paris and now comes to Barcelona, will inaugurate the commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the Exposition Internationale des Arts et des Techniques appliquées à la Vie Moderne, in 1937 in Paris, with the aim of paying tribute to the artists who took place in it. The curator of the show, Juan Manuel Bonet, current director of the Instituto Cervantes in Paris, and former director of the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid, explains: “Everyday there is an increasing awareness that the International Exposition was an exceptional event”. “Art revolutionaries” has had the collaboration of the best experts in the field, as well as the support of the Successió Miró, the Calder Foundation, the Fundació Joan Miró, the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, the University of Barcelona, and the Harvard Library.



Joan Miró at the scaffold in front of *El Segador* (The Reaper), 1937.
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The Spanish Pavilion for the Universal Exposition of Paris, 1937, was created in a period of great turbulence, as Spain was in the midst of a Civil War. For this reason, the Pavilion presented by the Spanish Republican Government became a strategic platform to vindicate the tragic situation the country was going through. The architects who designed the building were Josep Lluís Sert and Luis Lacasa, and José Gaos was the curator of the exhibition. José Gaos counted on the participation of many Spanish artists. Josefina Alix remembers: “In the evenings, after work, all the Spaniards met at the Café de Flore, where long and friendly conversations around Spain, the pavilion and the war took place”. The main artists: Picasso (*Guernica*), Miró (*The Reaper*), Calder (*The Mercury Fountain*) and González (*La Montserrat*) created some of the most relevant pieces in art history. In this regard, Picasso commented: “Maybe, later on, some art historian will prove that my painting has changed because of the war. I myself don’t know”. According to Joan Miró’s grandson, Joan Punyet Miró: “*El Segador* and the *Guernica* seemed political propaganda posters of monumental dimensions. Nobody chose a solid and durable support, because they knew in advance that those works were ephemeral, just to make an impact, and that they would finally disappear together with the pavilion.”

The gallery director, Jordi Mayoral, affirms: “Art revolutionaries” is a commemorative exhibition with elements of highly historical value, as the replica of Miró’s *El Segador*. The memory of this episode is indelible for all those who love art and culture. Therefore, the current exhibition is an enthusiastic and rigorous demonstration of admiration and affection for these brave and committed people who fought for their ideals and their country from their particular trenches: artistic creation.”

LIST OF WORKS

MIRÓ

PICASSO

CALDER

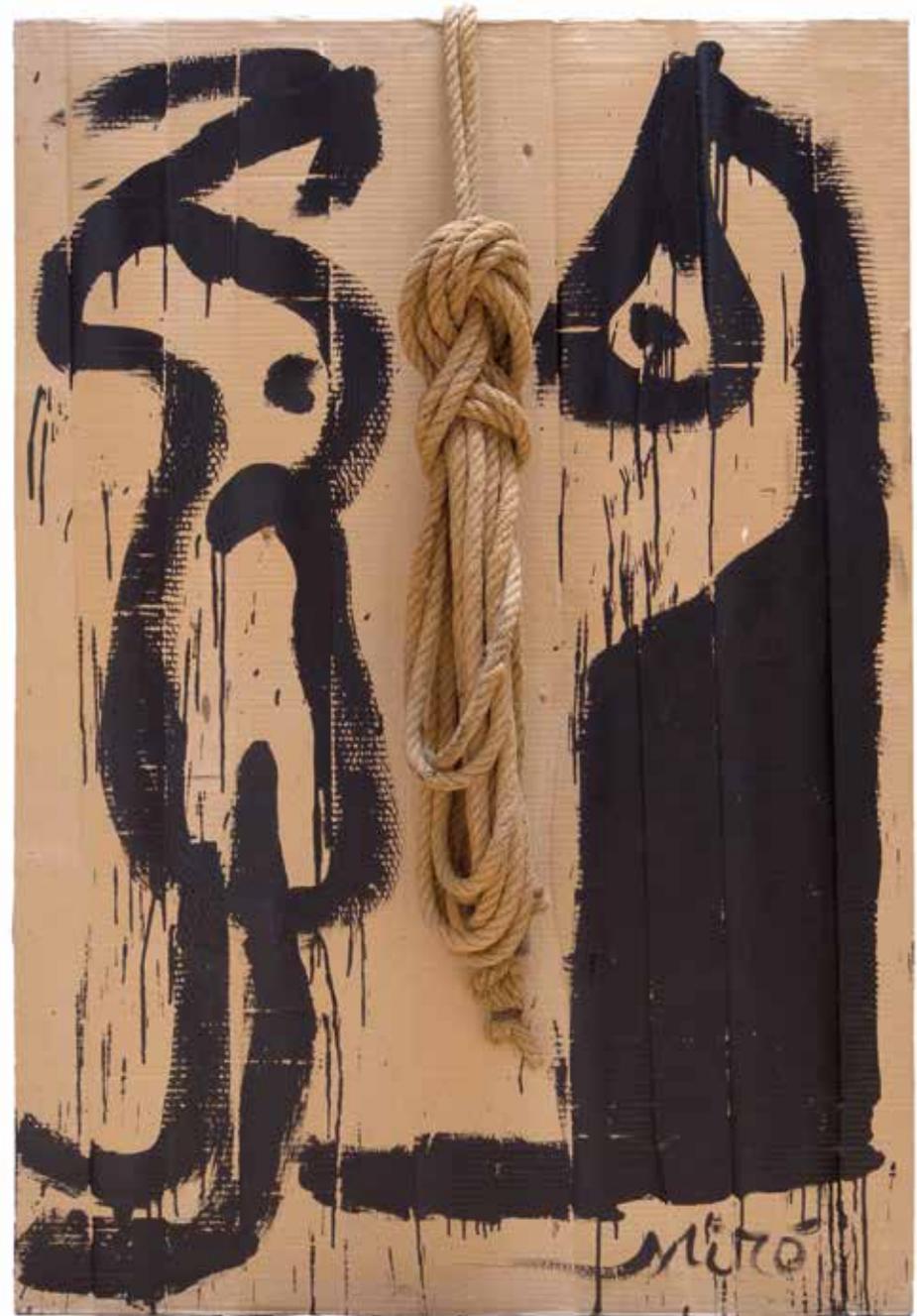
GONZÁLEZ

JOAN MIRÓ
Barcelona, 1893 - Palma, 1983

Painting
(1977)

House paint and rope on corrugated cardboard,
mounted on wood
130 x 90 cm

Pictures courtesy by Mayoral

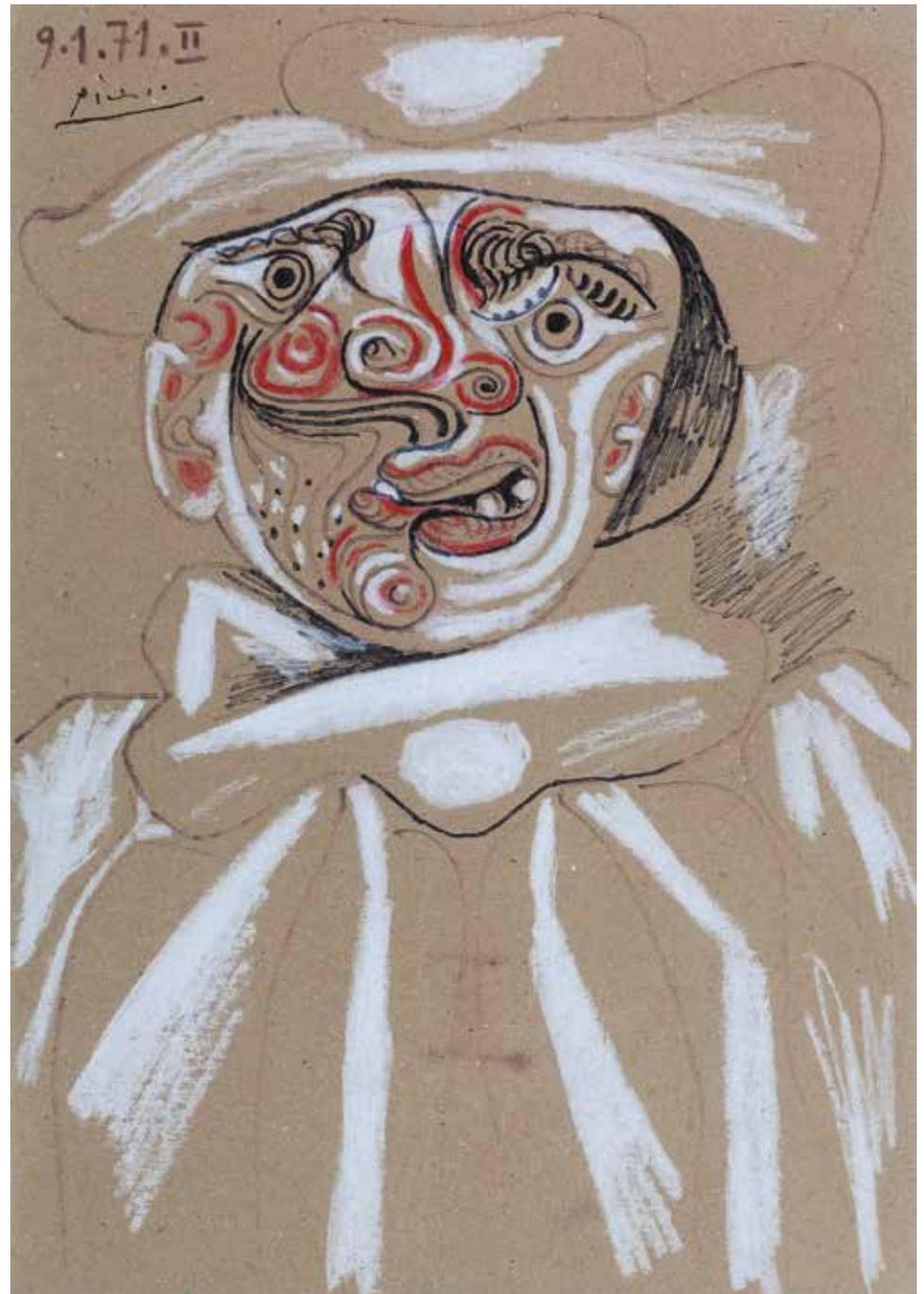


PABLO PICASSO
Málaga, 1881 - Mougins, 1973

Pierrot, Bust
(1971)

Ink and color crayón on cardboard
31 x 21.9 cm

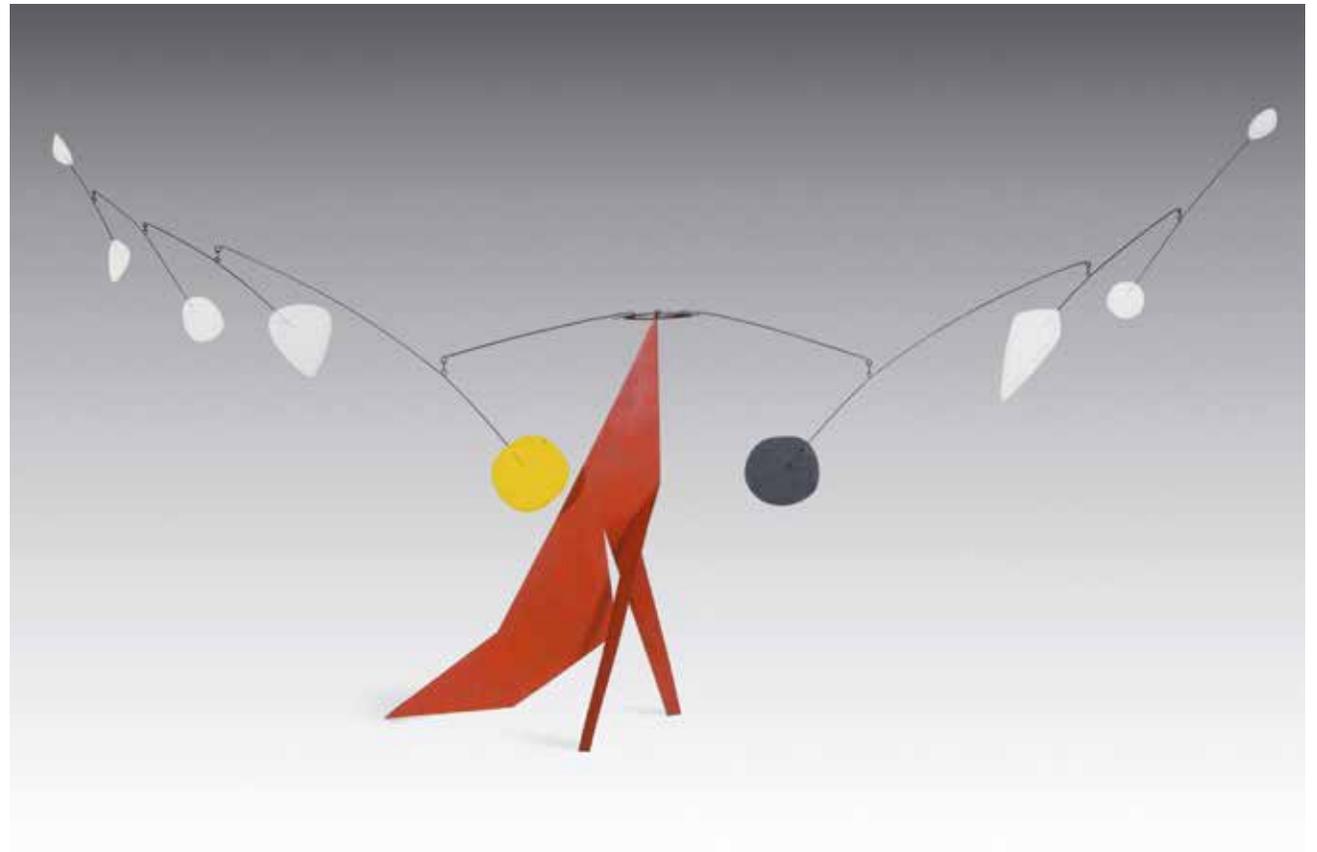
Pictures courtesy by Mayoral



ALEXANDER CALDER
Pensilvania, 1898 - Nova York, 1976

The Red Base
(1969)

Painted metal and wire
98 x 200 x 38.8 cm



Pictures courtesy by Mayoral

JULIO GONZÁLEZ
Barcelona, 1876 - París, 1942

Sharp Mask
(c. 1929-39)

Iron, forged, cut, bent and welded
Edition of 8 plus 5 artist's proofs
26 x 17.5 x 4.3 cm



Pictures courtesy by Mayoral



HISTORICAL CONTEXT GENESIS OF THE SPANISH PAVILION

The 18th of July 1936, the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War not only did momentarily stop all the procedures carried out so far, but what is more important, it changed the whole idea and understanding of the pavilion. From then onwards, the pavilion will aim to be totally consistent with the terrible events the country was going through.

The first Stone of the pavilion was laid on the 27th of February 1937, with the attendance of several foreign dignitaries, besides Luis Araquistáin, the curator, José Gaos, and the two architects of the project: Josep Lluís Sert and Luis Lacasa.



ANALYSIS AND MEANING OF THE SPANISH PAVILION

The Spanish Pavilion, like the rest of pavilions of the International exposition, was a temporary building. It was a modern, diaphanous, rational and flexible structure, in which the predominance of horizontal shapes, far from conveying heaviness, gave a feeling of lightness achieved thanks to the materials used.

One of the most outstanding and praised experiences, and undoubtedly one of the main reasons for the pavilion's success, was its one-way circulation. Thus, the pieces displayed could be comfortably enjoyed and the exhibition space fully used.

The Spanish pavilion was a faithful reflection and example of the country's effort over the last few years, from 1920 until 1937, to keep up with the avant-garde architectures of the rest of Europe. It was a building in the line of Le Corbusier's works, designed according to a very precise purpose.

1. View of the front with staircase to the first floor, Spanish Pavilion, Exposition Universelle, Paris, 1937. ©RMN/François Kollar, © Ministère de la Culture - Médiathèque du Patrimoine, Dist. RMN.

2. Patio and Auditorium of the Spanish Pavilion, at the end the *Guernica* by Picasso and the *Mercury Fountain* by Calder. Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne, Paris, 1937. © Succession Picasso 2016, ©Calder Foundation 2016, ©RMN/François Kollar © Ministère de la Culture - Médiathèque du Patrimoine, Dist. RMN.

MIRÓ OR THE HOMAGE TO FREEDOM

The show includes the historical rebirth of the great monumental work by Miró: *El Segador*, which disappeared after the pavilion was dismantled and will be recreated in black and white on the occasion of this project.

From 1932 to 1936, Miró lived in Spain, alternating his stays in Barcelona with his beloved Mont-roig. It was precisely while staying in Tarragona town, in the summer of 1936, when he heard about the outbreak of the civil war. *Catalan Peasant in Revolt*, also known as *The Reaper*, was the painting with which Miró took part in the pavilion of the Spanish Republic.

Ever since then, though, such an extraordinary work has not been disseminated nor studied because it was lost or destroyed after the dismantling of the pavilion. The mural was expressly painted for the Spanish pavilion it was created in situ by Miró and was formed by six Celotex panels of various sizes, and its special dimensions made it unlike any conventional painting.



El Segador (The Reaper) by Joan Miró at the Pavilion of the Spanish Republic, Paris, 1937, © Successió Miró, 2016. Successió Miró Archives.

PABLO PICASSO. THE *GUERNICA*, A UNIVERSAL SYMBOL

The contribution of Picasso as Spanish artist in the pavilion, besides being crucial, was also the most numerous in quantity of pieces. Thus, together with the *Guernica*, he presented an important sample of his plastic works, as well as some etchings. The sculptures featured in the Spanish pavilion were: *Head of a Woman*, *Woman with a Vase*, *Bust of a Woman* and *Woman*.

About just a month away from the opening of the Paris International Exhibition, the world learned of a tragic event: the 26th of April 1937 the Nazis made a devastating bombing foray that lasted for almost three hours and fifteen minutes over Guernica, the sacred city of the Basque country. Guernica was completely destroyed. The tragedy moved world public opinion, and at that instant Picasso knew what would be the subject of his mural for the pavilion.

ALEXANDER CALDER AND HIS *MERCURY FOUNTAIN*

The relationship of Calder with Spanish colleagues goes back to the late 1920s in Paris. When the time came to build the pavilion, he did not hesitate to offer his collaboration. He explained it thus himself: "Because of the International Exhibition in Paris, I went one day with my friend Miró to see the place where the Spanish pavilion was to be erected and where he had to make a great painting. I found Josep Lluís Sert, the architect of the pavilion. When I saw what was going on in the pavilion, which had Picasso's *Guernica*, I offered my services immediately for anything he might need. Sert was against my participation, as obviously I wasn't Spanish, but when he later received a fountain from Almadén and had to value (the properties), of the mercury it pumped, he contacted me and asked for help." Calder solved the problem in a brilliant and original way, and from that moment on his participation became indispensable.



The *Guernica* by Picasso and the *Mercury Fountain* by Calder at the Spanish Pavilion, Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne, Paris, 1937. © Succession Picasso 2016, ©Calder Foundation 2016, ©RMN/Baranger © Ministère de la Culture - Médiathèque du Patrimoine, Dist. RMN.

JULIO GONZÁLEZ

José Gaos, representative of the Spanish Government and curator of the exhibition, quickly understood the importance of Julio González's participation in the visual arts section of the pavilion.

The Montserrat of the pavilion was a maternity figure. The reason why he chose this subject matter for the pavilion goes beyond merely aesthetic reasons. *The peasant*, "pagès", is the symbol par excellence of the Catalan people. Its image represents the deep-rooted essences of the Catalan land. She becomes the symbol of that hurt Catalonia that remains united in spite of everything.



Picasso, Sert and Miró, © Successió Miró, 2016. Successió Miró Archives.

THE ARCHITECTS JOSEP LLUÍS SERT AND LUIS LACASA

Sert was, together with such renowned architects as Clavé or Subirana, the soul of the Catalan avant-garde. The doctrines of Le Corbusier exerted a deep influence on the works created by Sert during this period, especially on the Spanish Pavilion, where his master's teachings appear clearly reflected.

Luis Lacasa was above all an urban planner and a great theoretician. His starting point was the social role of architecture. He opted for a practical, useful and realist kind of work, according to the needs of society and the city.

About Mayoral

Mayoral, founded in 1989, is a gallery specialised in modern and post-war art of Barcelona, focusing on the period 1930-1975.

The main artists we present are Miró, Dalí and Picasso and, at the same time, we also defend and foster the founders of the Catalan avant-garde group “Dau al Set”: Ponç, Brossa, Tharrats, Cuixart and Tàpies, as well as other great artists related to Barcelona, like Calder and Chillida.

We stage exhibitions of the artists we present, curated and organised in collaboration with the foundations, associations and families of the artists, who work to safeguard their legacies. The exhibitions, which are the result of a process of research, include: talks, guided visits with experts and educational activities.

The gallery operates on an international scale through its presence in many prestigious art fairs, and has contact with the most important collectors, galleries and museums, such as the MoMA, the Museo Picasso of Barcelona, the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza and the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia (MNCARS).

Mayoral is also a patron of the Fundació Joan Miró in Barcelona.

Curated by:

Juan Manuel Bonet

Writer and art critic. Former Director of the art centre IVAM in Valencia and of the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid. Author of the *Diccionario de las Vanguardias en España* (1907-1936). He is the current director of the Instituto Cervantes in París.

Other collaborators

Josefina Alix

Art historian, curator of the exhibition “Pabellón Español 1937. Exposición Internacional de París” (Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 1987).

Fernando Martín

Contemporary art professor at the University of Seville, and author of the first book on the Spanish Pavilion: *El pabellón español de la Exposición Universal de París en 1937*.

Joan Punyet Miró

Art historian, curator, writer, poet and performance artist. Joan Punyet Miró is Managing Director of the Successió Miró, as well as vice-president of the Association for the Defense of Miró's Oeuvre (ADOM), and Patron of the Fundació Miró de Barcelona, of the Fundació Pilar i Joan Miró in Mallorca and the recently created Fundació Mas-Miró, Mont-roig.

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