

The Relevance of Gaudi's Work in the Architectural Context: bold, passion and creativity

Maria Aparecida Santana Camargo¹, Mariela Camargo Masutti²

¹Department of Sociocultural Practices and Social Development - Master's Degree, University of Cruz Alta, Doctor of Education (University of Bells River Valley), Av. General Osório, n. 915, 2nd floor, Centro, CEP: 98005-150, Cruz Alta, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil.

²Department of Architecture, University of Cruz Alta, Master in Civil Engineering (Federal University of Santa Maria), Av. General Osório, n. 915, 2nd floor, Centro, CEP: 98005-150, Cruz Alta, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil.

Abstract— *In this qualitative text, with a theoretical and empirical nature, we set out to make an initial reflection on the aesthetic and architectural dimension of the work of one of the most inventive Spanish creators. It is the work of Antoni Gaudi, renowned Catalan architect, artist and designer whose production impresses with boldness, imagination and sensitivity, which broadened the understanding of architecture and engineering. The passage through Barcelona, Spain, on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, is such a remarkable experience that it makes it a must-stop for travelers. The Gaudian Architecture is basically inspired by the study of nature, since Gaudi, as a boy, constantly observed and learned from the lessons that he offered him.*

Keywords— *Art Nouveau, Design, Engineering, Patrimony.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In this qualitative text, with a theoretical and empirical nature, we set out to make an initial reflection on the aesthetic and architectural dimension of the work of one of the most inventive Spanish creators. It is the work of Antoni Gaudi, renowned Catalan architect, artist and designer whose production impresses with boldness, imagination and sensitivity, which broadened the understanding of architecture and engineering.

He imagined a thing and also knew how to make reality. In addition, this could be because it was one of the few architects who associated much with the creation of artisans, and as he knew of sculptor, blacksmith, carpenter or other things, he could explain to men that he worked with him, as he had to do it. Tortuga that had to be supported by a column, that arch in the shape of a palm that mosaic echo of ceramics that wanted to place in those fantastic tan buildings that it constructed (Durán, 2003, p. 4).

The passage through Barcelona, Spain, on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, is such a remarkable experience that it makes it a must-stop for travelers. Each year the city is flooded with students and tourists from all over the place, seeking to know the particular world in which Gaudi articulated each element in his compositions.

Antoni Placid Gaudi i Cornet was born in Reus, a town in the Spanish province of Tarragona, having lived from 1852 to 1926 in the splendor of modernism. Throughout

his life, he was criticized by some and praised by others, creating his own style, in which it is possible to observe the fusion of the neo-Gothic with the organic forms of art nouveau. All his designs were very bold for the time they were built: the early twentieth century. Probably this is one of the many reasons why such projects have marked the history of architecture and, at the same time, are considered World Heritage. For those who have a very technical and methodical view of architecture, to know and become familiar with Gaudi's work, he sees it through another bias: that of artistic creation, intensely predominant in the work of the architect.

He studied at the Barcelona School of Architecture since 1868, graduating ten years later. Gaudi has done works in different cities such as Astorga, Leon, Santander and Mallorca. However, in this explanation we will discuss only some works built in the city of Barcelona, our object of study, which we visited, on two (2) occasions, more specifically, in 2004 and 2015.

II. THE GAUDI PATHS

Along the Paths of Gaudi Understanding the richness, plasticity, sinuosity and sensuality of the forms and elements that are part of the work in question are challenges that its author proposes. The Gaudian Architecture is basically inspired by the study of nature, since Gaudi, as a boy, constantly observed and learned from the lessons that he offered him. As Durán (2003, p. 2)

reports, “from so much walking around the countryside and contemplating it all you realize that the naturalness of the farm is solved and the problems that arise in your buildings. Therefore, I intended to convert into architecture what life has shown me.”

Gaudi justifies the use of flora and fauna by stating, “This tree next to my studio is my master” (Armengol, 2001, p. 49). From the study and observation of nature, especially that characteristic of Catalonia, new forms were derived that had never been used before in architecture.

Look at House Batlló, with its spectacular architecture, which is very close to House Milà and opposite the charming Hotel Majestic, at Passeig de Gracia, 68. Known as “House de Los Huesos” because of its façade-like elements (Figure 01), this was the first large work completed by Gaudi in 1906. Its owners were fabric makers and commissioned Gaudi to renovate the facade of the old six-story building, originally dating from 1877.

To renovate the roof, Gaudi was inspired by the color and texture of a dragon's leather, as emphasized by Crippa (2007, p. 65), “the asymmetrical zoomorphic crest of the weave, with a marked vertical development, recoiled from the dragon's wing and is lined with bricks-scales of color-glazed ceramic that oscillate from yellow to blue, passing through the green”. Thus, this roof acquired the design of geometric shapes and a greenish tone. The columns of the façade were filled with ceramic motifs with very colorful floral motifs. Some say balcony balconies resemble masks; others clearly identify skulls, bones and joints as elements of façade composition.

Besides House Batlló, House Milà, also called “La Pedrera”, also deserves to be visited. This building is a highlight on Barcelona's central streets, located on Passeig de Gracia, 92, right next to House Batlló. It does not even have a straight wall, they are all curvy and tortuous, a boldness by the standards of the time, being one of the examples of Gaudi's free imagination, also known as the architect of curves.

Considered a World Heritage Site, House Milà haunted it is time for its boldness and originality. Commissioned to overshadow all the major works in the neighborhood, Gaudi was given an unlimited budget to complete this residential building, which allowed the architect not to skimp on creativity and innovation. It was built between 1906 and 1912, being one of Gaudi's last projects before he began to dedicate himself exclusively to the Holy Family Church.



Fig. 1: “Los Huesos” house

Facade of Batlló House, 2004.

The iron frame design of the main door was inspired by the tortoiseshell designs (Figure 02). Another innovation in this portal was a ramp, which allowed the carriages of the time to lead their masters straight from the street to the interior area of the house. The entire undulating facade is a challenge to structural balance, like many of the architect's works. Visiting the interiors of this House-Museum it is possible to admire the furniture and crockery designed by Gaudi himself, because “Gaudi dedicated himself so much to the construction of his buildings that in this case even designed the furniture” (Durán, 2003, p. 8).

As for Park Güell, a park built between 1900 and 1914, the aesthetic richness of the colorful mosaics and the shards of tiles that make up its buildings is already worth a walk. On the colorful, winding bench made of small fragments of enameled pottery, you can sit and enjoy the view of the city, including the Mediterranean Sea.

Enthusiastic about Ebenezer Howard's views on garden cities, Eusebi Güell entrusted his friend Gaudi, who began to work enthusiastically, with the task of making a prototype on a ten-acre property of his own. The idea was to make a garden city for the bourgeois families of

Barcelona, with houses mingling with gardens, squares and trees, where children could play and adults walk, read or rest. By 1914, however, only two residences had been built in the park.

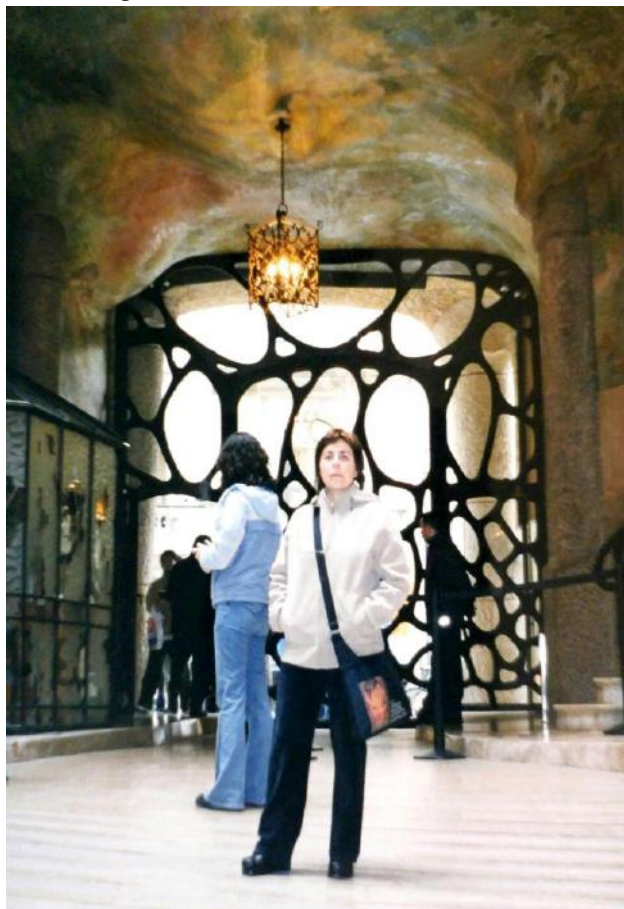


Fig. 2: "La Pedrera"

Inside House Milà, next to the access portal, 2004.

It is believed that the original project had 40 houses, but due to the almost non-existent commercial interest, Güell eventually sold the site to the municipality of Barcelona, inaugurating it as an urban park in subsequent years. Inside the park is the house museum, where Gaudi came to live for twenty years with his father and niece and where are exposed part of the drawings and furniture that belonged to the architect. Everything in this park is amazing and inventive.

A staircase adorned by Gaudi's iconic and well-known salamander (Figure 03), also seen by many as a dragon in the lookout position, gives access to the Hall of One Hundred Columns, home to 86 six-meter high Doric columns. On these pillars stands the Gran Circular Square, or Oval Square, open and paving-free place that houses the winding bench and one of the most beautiful views of Barcelona.

"The sloping columns of the outer boundary of this room support an architrave that will merge into an

exceptional dialogue with the square bench sinusoid," adds Güell (1994, p.107). Always concerned with preserving nature, it is relevant to bring here Durán's contribution (2003, p. 14):

There is an aspect of this construction that allows us to understand something better the way of proceeding of this man. In the place from which the church's ladder had to be created, it created a pin that was then centenary, hurt Gaudi a lot to think that it had to cut y, as it was so natural, I preferred to divert the ladder before cutting a tree that since so many years ago he was in that place.

In 1984, the park was listed by UNESCO and considered a Cultural Heritage of Humanity, when it was also included in the site "Works of Antoni Gaudi", which has seven monuments built by the architect, all in Barcelona. These include the Güell Palace and House Milà, also listed in 1984; and Vicens House, the Nativity Facade and crypt of the Holy Family, House Batlló and the Güell Colony Crypt, all taken in 2005. For Carmel-Arthur (2000, p. 51):

Great artists often have precursors and then followers. Gaudi is an exception. His performance in the history of architecture can be seen as a genius-reserved hiatus, endowed with a very particular method and style. Gaudi used string, mirrors and small lead weights to create the models of what would be essential works of Modernism such as House Batlló, House Milà, Park Güell and the famous Holy Family Temple.

The Holy Family Temple, Gaudi's masterpiece that cannot be left out of the traveler's art-and-architecture itinerary, began to be erected in 1882 by architect Villar, with the structure of a neo-Gothic church. The task of completing it was entrusted to Gaudi in 1883, then 31, considered the greatest exponent of Spanish modernism. Gaudi then introduced numerous modifications, imprinting on them his personal and avant-garde style. He dedicated about forty years to the fabulous project, with eighteen towers surrounding the ships.

Each of the eighteen towers would represent one member of the Holy Family: Christ (represented in the highest tower), Our Lady, St. Joseph, the Three Kings and the Twelve Apostles. Of Gaudi's works, this building is the

most crowded, it is the grandest building, even though it is still an unfinished church. Gaudi worked intensely on this work for twenty years, living in seclusion on it during the last years of his life. However, his project was so grand that when he died, only one of the eighteen towers was completed. At present, many others are ready. The design and design of the Holy Family Temple has been so significant that it is still being built and restored to this day as it is considered the postcard of the city of Barcelona.



Fig. 3: "The Salamander"

Next to the Park Güell Salamander, 2015.

This is the most peculiar church anyone has ever seen. Even incomplete, it is a majestic temple, unique and impressive not only for its grandeur, but for the rich details of its shapes and elements. It is an essentially original building, which does not come from any architectural tradition. Highlight for the abundant plant ornamentation, the columns of the three great facades of the Nativity, Glory and the Passion, and the towers that offer city views for those willing to climb the four hundred steps of the spiral-shaped stone staircase. An important detail: once you start the climb you can no longer go back or give up, because its steps are narrow, so that only one person per step. Although you can rest and stop every hundred steps, there is breath! On one side is the ladder to go up, and only on the other side is the ladder to go down. Nevertheless, nowadays there is also the option of climbing to the top by a lift.



Fig. 4: "A Majestic Temple"

Nativity Façade, 2015.

The temple was designed with three facades, the Facade of the Nativity (Figure 04), almost completed by Gaudi still in life, is like a huge crib with all the scenes of the birth of Jesus. For Gaudi, this would be the façade that would arouse the dazzle of the public and urge people to continue their work.

There are over thirty different classes of plants, plus the Tree of Life, high on the porch, which symbolizes the legacy left by Jesus. In addition, the less ornate Passion Facade, begun in 1954, depicts the suffering of Christ in the crucifixion; and the Facade of Glory, considered the main one, started in 2002 and which refers to the ascension to God, the resurrection. Although Gaudi was well aware that he would not have completed the stone temple he had designed, he wanted it to represent the body of investigations, discoveries, and reflections he had made throughout his life. When asked when the temple would end, he would reply: "my client is in no hurry" (Armengol, 2001, p. 63). Gaudi referred to the Creator, for he was very religious.

"Want to know where I found my model?" - Once asked visitors to his studio. "See a right tree; it supports the branches, these the twigs and these the leaves. In addition, each part grows harmoniously and miraculously, since the artist, who is God, created them." In the main nave of the Holy Family is a veritable forest of columns, branching upwards (Zerbst, 1993, p.30).



Fig. 5: "A Forest of Columns"

Columns inside the Holy Family, 2015.

The Holy Family Church, Gaudi's obsession, will probably still take some time to complete. There is a forecast for 2026, but not even many of those currently responsible for the work expect to be able to complete the project. Counting on public contributions; Engineers, architects and their teams are still there with their cranes and cranes, continuing construction in accordance with Gaudi's original design. It is interesting, above all, to analyze that the construction has been evolving over the years, both the techniques and the materials. New technologies were allied with the construction of the Holy Family. The teams responsible for the continuity of the work have always, however, taken special care: not to commit "false witness". That is, the visible difference of textures and materials present in this building is intentional, so as not to mislead the public eye as to what was built by Gaudi and what is still being built today. This is an important feature when it comes to historic buildings.

Considered a recluse genius, who used to sleep only four hours a night, he died at 74, hit by a tram, next to his masterpiece. What some natives of Barcelona comment to this day is that the great artist was admiring his work now it was run over. Rumors like this one make up a series of urban legends surrounding Gaudi's life and work. According to Carmel-Arthur (2000, p. 10), "his injuries disfigured him to the point of not recognizing him or giving him the emergency treatment he needed." The author (2000, p. 53) further reports that "Gaudi's end was the end of someone who embarked on a project greater

than one life, even the life of a genius." Gaudi's dedication to the temple was such that his remains are today in a crypt inside the church.

In 1982, Pope John Paul II visited the work, and Le Corbusier, another icon of architecture, after visiting it in 1927, declared that Gaudi was the great builder of the twentieth century, as Gaudi himself would have prophetically said about the temple: "He will sell people from all over the world to admire him" (Armengol, 2001, p. 61). In the basement of the church, in the area reserved for the museum, it is not without reason that scholars of the colossal architecture of the temple exhibit their innumerable studies, floor plans, projects, models and photographs. There are also the original models of the temple, as made by Gaudi and his assistants. In addition, in a specially prepared room, you can contemplate some of Gaudi's sketches and drawings, as vandals destroyed much during the Spanish Civil War. In November 2010, Pope Benedict XVI gave the church the status of the Basilica.

III. CONCLUSION

It is essential to observe the influence and repercussion that these works continue to exert on the work of contemporary artists, designers and architects. The merit of these creations is their asymmetrical, winding, and irregular and, why not say, surprising, unusual, fascinating forms. We deduce from these considerations that Gaudi was a pioneer who changed the architectural paradigm prevailing until then. However, by his unique method and style, "Gaudi's work was not always well understood and when he built his houses and had my critics and buildings such as La Pedrera, for example, he received all kinds of criticism, including daily jokes in and out. Those who mock each other" (Durán, 2003, p. 25).

In this way, many jokes, debauchery, and derogatory jokes were directed at Gaudi, belittling him. In addition, its style was often considered loaded, with excess of ornaments. However, time has helped put things in its place, and the vast majority of his works in contemporary times are officially recognized as World Heritage. And, according to Carmel-Arthur (2000, p. 11), "[...] Gaudi's work was brought to the fore throughout the world during Barcelona's extensive urban renewal for the 1992 Olympics and the awarding of the city of Medal of the Royal Institute of British Architects in March 1999. Similarly, as Armengol (2001, p. 62) reports:

In Paris, in 1961, in the exhibition "The origins of the twentieth century", the values of Gaudi that had been understood in 1910 were recognized. In Italy, in England, in

the Netherlands, in Germany or in New Zealand, as In the whole world, the originality of Gaudi is considered today as the highest exponent of the art of all times.

In this sense, visiting Barcelona, the capital of Catalonia and checking in loco the follies and daring that Gaudi realized in the early twentieth century, led us to reflect and discuss about his work and its reflection for posterity, impressions that resulted in the present text. In short, we can say that Gaudi's unique, strange and bold creations, with their strength and creativity, will continue to impress the thousands of tourists who visit Barcelona annually to learn about its architectural legacy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

An acknowledgement section may be presented after the conclusion, if desired.

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