

*Landscapes of Repair: the Role of Photography and  
Film in Documenting the Legacy of Modern and  
Contemporary Architecture and Public Spaces*



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## THEORETICAL PAPERS

## **Icarian Archive (1987–1992)**

### **A Reinterpretation of a Photographic Collection**

*Martí Llorens and Rebecca Mutell*

#### **Summary**

Barcelona's nomination as the host city for the 1992 Olympic Games led to significant urban redevelopment in the city. One of these projects involved the transformation of the waterfront of the Poblenou neighborhood; Avinguda d'Icària (Icaria Avenue) structured this area, which was characterized by factories, workshops, and railway tracks. This is where a new residential neighborhood, the Olympic Village, was built. The scale and impact —both physical and social— of this project made it comparable to other major transformations such as the 1888 Universal Exposition, the opening of Via Laietana that began in 1908, or the 1929 Universal Exposition.

In July 1987 the demolition of the Icaria neighborhood began. In this construction zone, Martí Llorens began a creative photographic project using a pinhole camera, a camera in which the lens is replaced by a tiny hole. Soon after, this project led him to document, with conventional photographic equipment, the construction of the new neighborhood until 1992.

Almost forty years have passed since the beginning of the demolitions in Poblenou. The relationship we have with photography today is very different from the one we had at the end of the 20th century, as are the links created with everything seen and imagined through it. Now, by digitizing and viewing on screen the photographs of what we now call the Icarian Archive, an interesting and fruitful transversal re-reading is generated that endows these images with new meanings. Having lost their physical nature, it seems that these photographs demand to be approached and interpreted from other parameters. Our relationship with all of them seems to have changed and, of course, also with the city they show. The need to recontextualize and reinterpret their contents in different layers, creating new links, is an essential part of this article.

Keywords: City, urban landscape, archive, photography, memory.

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**Marti Llorens** (Barcelona, 1962) holds a BA in Fine Arts (Image) from the University of Barcelona and an MA in Theory and History of Architecture from the Polytechnic University of Catalonia. He is a photographer specializing in the documentation of architectural, engineering, and urban projects. In 2017, he co-founded Factoria Heliogràfica with Rebecca Mutell, a cultural association devoted to research on the origins and early history of photography. His artistic and research practice examines the relationships between time, territory, memory, and image, and has been exhibited and published internationally since 1988. His personal work explores time, memory, and territory, with projects such as Poblenuu, which received second prize at the European Photography Award (Berlin, 1991). Interested in the origins of photography, in 2015 he co-directed the restoration and research of the Daguerre–Giroux photographic equipment, with which the first photograph in Spain was taken in 1839. He is co-editor of the essay *Buscando lo imposible. Una antología de textos sobre el origen de la fotografía* (University of Navarra Museum, 2024). His work is part of public and private collections.

**Rebecca Mutell** (Aranda de Duero, 1980) holds a PhD in Fine Arts from the University of Barcelona and received the Extraordinary Doctoral Award for her dissertation *Catching the Light: Origin and Materiality of Photography*. She is a lecturer and researcher at BAU, Centre Universitari d'Arts i Disseny (UVic-UCC), where she is a member of the GREDITS research group and serves as Head of Department. She currently co-directs Factoria Heliogràfica with Marti Llorens. Her research focuses on the phenomenology of the photographic image and its technical and iconological precedents, and her work has been exhibited and published internationally.

## A city in transit

At the end of June 1986, the Barcelona City Council approved the Special Urban Development Plan for Barcelona's seafront, in the area of Paseo de Carlos I and Avinguda de I cària, proposed by MBM, the architectural firm formed by Josep Maria Martorell, Oriol Bohigas, David Mackay and Albert Puigdomènech. In October of that year, Barcelona was chosen to host the 1992 Olympic Games. Since the beginning of the 20th century, Barcelona had already presented its candidacy on four occasions and now it had won the bid competing with Paris, Brisbane, Belgrade, Birmingham and Amsterdam (Jiménez 2016).

Since 1979, with the first democratic municipal elections, Barcelona's new municipal policy had oriented the transformation of the city through specific interventions at the neighborhood level and in certain urban spaces. During this legislature there were two mayors; the first was Narcís Serra and from 1982, Pasqual Maragall, when Serra became a minister in the Spanish government. Soon it was decided to carry out projects on a larger scale. In this regard, it is important to bear in mind that from 1980, Bohigas was delegate of the Urban Planning area of the Barcelona City Council and from 1984, he held the position of Councilor for Urban Planning. These new projects, of metropolitan scope, were boosted with the Olympic nomination in 1986 and were located in four areas; the Valle Hebron, the Olympic Ring of Montjuïc, the Diagonal and the Olympic Village. The Special Plan proposed by MBM was developed on the seafront of Poblenuu and planned the construction of a new residential neighborhood that during the Olympic Games would serve to house the athletes. MBM architects described the territory to be transformed:

The area where it was decided to build the Olympic Village was an industrial zone with obsolete facilities and uses. It was separated from the city and the sea by two railroad tracks that were impassable barriers and at the same time generated physical degradation of the environment. The beaches had become an accumulation of debris and industrial detritus. The streets followed the layout of the Cerdà Plan, but had lost their continuity and, therefore, their urban significance. There was an accumulation of unbalanced uses: the Mercat del Peix (Fish Market) converted into a car depot, the barracks in the process of being vacated, a sewage treatment plant, the municipal warehouses, the women's prison, new school facilities that anticipated the transformation of the neighborhood and, above all, an anarchically superimposed traffic of trucks, using Icaria Avenue almost as a segregated road. It was a kind of urban void and, therefore, an ideal place to make a thorough renovation, implementing the first modern neighborhood by the sea, which, from the beginning, we began to call Nova Icaria (Martorell et al. 1991, 11).

The new urban planning project did not contemplate the conservation of any of the existing buildings so that, at the end of the demolition work, about two hundred buildings and fourteen streets had disappeared. The tracks of the Marina railway branch, the initial section of the first railroad built in Spain in 1848, had also been erected. By the end of 1989, the area was a huge site, with only the large brick chimney of the Folch factory still standing.



It was not the first time that large-scale demolition operations had been undertaken in Barcelona; in the first half of the 18th century a large part of the old Ribera district was razed to the ground to build the Citadel fortress, and at the beginning of the 20th century, the opening of the Via Layetana through the historic center of the city destroyed around six hundred properties.

[Fig. 1-2]

© Martí Llorens. View from Barceloneta of the Icaria neighborhood and the Folch factory chimney. In March 1986 and June 1988 after the demolitions. Icarian Archive / Factoria Heliogràfica collection

Before the demolitions began, the Archaeological Activities Service of the Barcelona City Council proposed to the Monumental Heritage Protection Service to carry out a documentation and cataloguing work of the sector in order to keep a record of the buildings affected by the demolitions. The program was negotiated with the company Vila Olímpica SA (VOSA) created by the State administration and the Barcelona City Council at the end of 1986, which assumed the expenses for the formation of a technical team of historians and architects and the contracting of different technical image services for filming and photography. This work, which includes an extensive documentation of photographs and plans, is entitled *Estudi històric-arquitectònic del sector Avinguda Icaria-Paseo Carles I. Poblenou*. Barcelona (Historical architectural study of the sector Avinguda Icaria-Paseo Carles I) and that today is deposited in the Arxiu Municipal del Districte de Sant Martí (Municipal Archive of the Sant Martí District) Between 1986 and 1992 and commissioned by the municipal company Holding Olímpico SA (HOLSA), the Barcelona production company Clara Films made a film record of all the infrastructure works carried out during this period, creating a visual archive of nearly three thousand hours of footage that, at the end of 2022, was ceded in its entirety to the Arxiu Municipal de Barcelona. In 1990, in the middle of the construction phase and just after the demolitions, the Arxiu Històric de Poblenou (Poblenou Historical Archive) published a small publication entitled *Nou viatge a Icaria* (A new travel to Icaria) (Arranz et al. 1990) that included texts and photographs by various authors on the history of the Icaria neighborhood and its most important manufacturing facilities. Curiously, Barcelona City Council did not appear in the list of collaborating entities, which included the Department of Territorial Policy and Public Works of the Generalitat de Catalunya, the paint company Industrias Titan, which had its factory in a street parallel to Avinguda Icaria, and the bank La Caixa.

### ***Icaria, from a non-place to a new neighborhood***

The Icaria neighborhood was characterized by the railroad tracks, the level crossing, the industrial buildings and their chimneys, the warehouses and the final bed of the Bogatell flowing into the sea after passing under the railroad tracks in a rather inhospitable area that, for decades, was systematically used as an affordable rubble dump. There were few residential buildings. Its relative proximity to the port facilities and the construction of a freight railway station in the early twentieth century, had facilitated the establishment of factories, warehouses and workshops of all kinds from the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Among the best known were: Foret, dedicated to pharmaceuticals, Ford Motor Ibérica, to the automotive industry, Escofet and Fortuny, to mosaics and pavements, Folch and Albiñana, which throughout its history housed from an alcohol distillery and an ice factory to a blown glass workshop, the Crédito & Docks warehouses, the El Progreso flour mill, the Pau Soler wine warehouse, the Basseda company dedicated to the refining and bottling of oil. On the sea side, the neighborhood of Icaria had been flanked since the late nineteenth century by the Somorrostro. In this popular and precarious neighborhood of shacks that the sea flooded when a storm arose, in 1918 the famous flamenco singer and dancer Carmen Amaya was born.

The Somorrostro stretched from the grounds of the old Gas Lebón factory to the Bogatell. On the occasion of military maneuvers which, presided over by Franco, included the landing of troops, the Somorrostro was completely demolished in mid-1966 and its inhabitants rehoused in Sant Roc, a neighborhood under construction in the nearby city of Badalona (Carnicer y Grimal 2016). That same year, driven by a group of large companies, some of them owners of facilities in this sector such as Motor Ibérica, Foret and Crédito & Docks, the so-called Plan de la Ribera came into being. In 1968, Mayor José María de Porcioles –the Francoist mayor who held this position for the longest period of time– approved the plan, which had already been joined by other large companies, as well as some banks and savings banks that saw the possibility of a fabulous real estate business. In 1971, this project was publicly presented under the name of Sector Marítimo Oriental. However, opposition to this plan of clear speculative intent was massive; the work of those affected by the expropriations and that of several civic and professional associations, including the College of Architects, finally managed to stop its realization.



During the 1970s, the Subway reached Avinguda Icària with the Ribera station, the current Ciutadella-Vila Olímpica of Line 4. On the land that had occupied the old Docks Barracks, a Wastewater Treatment Plant was built, which discharged into the nearby Bogatell riverbed, and right next to it, the Parc de Maquinaria de l'Ajuntament (City Hall Machinery Park) which, among other technical facilities, housed the Oficina Tècnica d'Imatge (Technical Image Office). This office, equipped with a film projection room and a complete photographic laboratory, generated an important photographic archive related to the monitoring of public works in Barcelona. By then, some large companies had already left Avinguda de Icària, such as the chemical company Foret, whose star product was hydrogen peroxide. At the end of this decade, the Icària neighborhood

[Fig. 3]

© Martí Llorens. Train running on the Ramal Marina, Bogatell section. February 1986. Icarian Archive / Factoria Heliogràfica collection

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was still characterized by workshops and industrial buildings that, in very different states of use and conservation, had been coexisting for more than a century with the railroad tracks and the level crossing of the coastal train that, since the previous decade, could be circumvented thanks to a two-lane metal bridge for traffic and a squalid metal footbridge for pedestrians.

The Passeig de Carlos I –currently Carrer de la Marina– did not reach the intersection with Avinguda d'Icària because its last stretch, a wasteland turned into an improvised parking lot, was interrupted by the tracks of the Glòries railway branch, on the other side of the Carretera del Bisbe, a curved street that followed the line of an old rural road from the 18th century. Precisely at this intersection was one of the auxiliary facilities of the historical Estació de França that were essential for the steam locomotives; the turntable, the water tanks and the docks for loading coal. Just across the tracks on the Glòries branch was the Mercat Central del Peix (Central Fish Market) a building constructed in 1931 which, after 1983, became a municipal depot for repossessed or abandoned vehicles. By then, no more than three hundred people lived in the Icària neighborhood, since in 1978 all the tenement houses between Sant Pol and Vallgorguina streets had been demolished. Also, as it had been for a long time, the Avinguda d'Icària was completely flooded if it rained more than it should have...

It was in this territory where, between 1987 and 1992, the Olympic Village and other important urban infrastructures were built.



[Fig. 4]

© Martí Llorens. Entrance to the Motor Ibérica factory on Avinguda d'Icària. September 1988. Icarian Archive / Factoria Heliogràfica collection

## **Icaria and utopia**

Icaria was the imaginary island where the French philosopher and utopian socialist Étienne Cabet set the action of his philosophical account, *Voyage en Icarie* published in 1840. Cabet borrowed this idea from the English thinker, theologian, politician and humanist Thomas More. In his well-known work *Utopia* published in 1516, he recounts the organization of an ideal society based on a nation in the form of an island of the same name. More used the word *utopia* which derives from the Greek οὐ (not) and τόπος (place) and literally means non-place. Although as historian and urbanist Lewis Mumford points out in his *History of Utopias*, he could also have taken it from the Greek word *eutopia* meaning, the good place.

For a long time, Utopia has been another name for the unreal and the impossible. We tend to confront utopia with the world, when in fact it is utopias that make the world tolerable for us [...] (Mumford 2015, 23)

It is in this ideal of the non-place or the good place, where Cabet lays the foundations of his society with communist principles. Together with other Icarians, he decided to found different utopian settlements in order to create a new society. The Icarian movement believed that the society was free, which meant that it would not be imposed on anyone. In 1848, in an article entitled, *Let's Go to America*, Cabet called upon his followers to create an Icarian Communist Republic in the United States. After countless vicissitudes, the project failed completely and Cabet, exhausted and embittered by frustrations and hardships, died at the age of 68 of a stroke. In 1881, in the Californian town of Cloverdale, some followers of Cabet's ideology founded Icaria Speranza, although it was dissolved five years later. Curiously, it was in July 1989, the year in which most of the demolitions on Icaria Avenue were completed, when a commemorative plaque was placed on the site of the school of what was the last Icarian community (Wikipedia, *la enciclopedia libre* 2024, «Icarianos»).



[Fig. 5]

Marble plaque recovered from the facade of the Motor Ibérica factory before its demolition. Icarian Archive / Factoria Heliográfica collection.

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The Icarian project was also echoed in the workers' and libertarian movement in Barcelona. The inventor and activist Narcís Monturiol, in 1847 founded the weekly *La Fraternidad* with the intention of spreading Cabet's ideology. It seems that a group of Catalanian Cabetans created an Icarian community in the territory that today corresponds to the Poblenou neighborhood, the name by which a concentration of houses built to the south of the neighboring municipality of Sant Martí de Provençals began to be known from the decade of 1840–50. In 1855, when the demolition of the walls of Barcelona had already begun, the engineer Ildefons Cerdà drew up a topographical plan of the outskirts of the city. It seems that it is in this plan where the name of Icaria appears for the first time, with those of La Llacuna, Clot and Camp de l'Arpa. Icaria, the closest to the sea, indicates in this plan a group of small buildings grouped around the sector currently occupied by the streets of Taulat, Marià Aguiló and Pere IV. Cerdà, a man of progressive ideas, may have named this small neighborhood of Sant Martí de Provençals in a clear allusion to this community. It was possibly for this reason that the Paseo del Cementerio – which from the first quarter of the 19th century began in the upper part of the Barceloneta neighborhood and ended at the Poblenou Cemetery – became known as *Avinguda de Icària* from 1916 onwards.



[Fig. 6]

© Martí Llorens. Railway buildings on *Avinguda d'Icària*. During the civil war, it was here where the rebel troops were detained by the forces loyal to the Republic. February 1989. Icarian Archive / Factoria Heliogràfica collection.

The name of Icaria was kept until 1937 when, in the middle of the civil war, it was changed to Avinguda de la Revolució Social. At the end of the war, it recovered the name of Icaria, although ten years later it changed its name again, this time to Avinguda Capitàn López Varela, one of the officers who rose up against the Republic on the morning of July 19, 1936 in Barcelona. From the Docks Barracks at Avinguda Icaria 170, Lopez Varela went out to the street with three artillery batteries. Advancing along the avenue, he met with the hard opposition of the Guardia de Asalto, the police force of the government of the Republic, and the anarchist militias, engaging in a fierce combat in which he was seriously wounded. At the end of the day, the military rebellion in Barcelona had failed. Tried in a summary court-martial, López Varela was shot the following month in the castle of Montjuic along with three other rebel officers. Precisely in Poblenou, a working-class neighborhood with a large number of members of the anarchist union CNT, most of its leaders belonging to the Nosotros group, among whom were Francisco Ascaso, Joan García Oliver and Buenaventura Durruti, had their homes. During the war, the neighborhood of Icaria was also a target of fascist bombing and there were no less than five air-raid shelters in the same avenue<sup>1</sup>.

With the death of General Franco in 1975 and the arrival of democratic city councils, in 1978 the avenue recovered the name of Icaria. The urban reform of the Olympic Village started in 1987 meant the disappearance of a large part of this avenue and the section that remained at the height of the Barceloneta, changed its name to Carrer del Doctor Aiguadé. Currently, Avinguda Icaria maintains its original layout only in the section that goes from the Poblenou Cemetery to Carrer de la Marina through the Vila Olímpica neighborhood.

## **The Photography in Transit**

August 2025 marks 186 years since the technical process of the daguerreotype, the first technically and commercially operational photographic process, was made public at a packed session of the Academy of Sciences in Paris. That same year the first photograph was taken in Spain; a daguerreotype obtained by the engraver Ramon Alabern i Moles in the Pla de Palau in Barcelona. Remembering this first photograph in which two buildings appeared and of which nowadays, only its description remains, it seems appropriate to point out that Barcelona is the third of the five most photographed cities in the world, being surpassed only by Rome and New York (Nuñez 2024).

In 1975, the engineer Steven J. Sasson developed the first prototype of a digital camera at the request of the Eastman Kodak Company, where he had started working two years earlier. He patented it three years later, but it wasn't until the 2000s that the digital camera began its true rollout at both the professional and amateur levels. In 2012, Kodak filed for bankruptcy.

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed study on the civil war in Barcelona with a great profusion of plans and images, see: (Cardona y Esteban i Cano 2009)

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AgfaPhoto, a German manufacturer of photographic paper, film and lab supplies since 1867 had filed for receivership in 2005, just three years before Polaroid announced the end of film manufacturing for its cameras.

The Internet was created in the mid-1960s from a project proposed by the U.S. Department of Defense with the idea of implementing a new communication network. Later, researchers and scientists began to require their respective institutions to connect to this network in order to exchange information. It was only in 1993, in parallel with the growing advance of the personal computer, that the World Wide Web appeared, the network accessible to all as we know it today. Today, more than two-thirds of the world's population is connected to this communication network.

Marketed by Apple, the iPhone, a cell phone with a 2-megapixel camera and various Internet services, was launched in 2007. Today, neither professional photographers nor the general public can conceive or imagine photography without the Internet. And it is logical, because if we think about it, digital photography without the existence of the Internet makes no sense, since in both cases we are talking about the same technological essence.

The digital technique has transmuted the photographic medium at a speed and to a degree never before seen, to such an extent that some theorists, such as the professor of architecture, art and multimedia sciences William J. Mitchell, already spoke of post-photography in 1994 (Mitchell 1994). In the same way that has happened with the city, we will see how the relationship we have with photography today is very different from the one we had with it only a decade ago. In the same way, we might think that the links we create with everything seen and imagined through it are also being transformed. Possibly, our understanding of photography as a means of documentation or as a means of creation is also oscillating.

Photography in the 19th and 20th centuries had a physical support resulting from a chemical process whose result was an artifact that refers us to something fabricated or constructed, of a material and limited nature. The photography of the 21st century can do without any physical support for its visualization, since it is the result of a digital process. The immateriality of these images, among other things, translates into their capacity –apparently infinite– to be reproduced –cloned– and disseminated automatically and immediately.

The new position in which digital technology has placed us should make us reflect on our new relationship with photography and, by extension, with everything we represent and know through it. In this regard, it seems to me fruitful and increasingly necessary to make every effort to suggest and trace a new collection of looks and transversal considerations about the origin and the first stage of the photographic medium that can help us define our position with respect to photographic representation (Llorens y Mutell 2024). This will, should lead us to explore and

reflect from our 21st century digital environment, about the materiality of photography and its vocation of perdurability, understanding a photograph as a technological artifact and instrument of knowledge. We believe that from this approach, the re-reading of the Icarian Archive that now occupies us, serves us perfectly as a subject of study.

### **Traces of a territory in transit**

When the demolitions began in August 1987, Llorens started a photographic project of creation in this former industrial sector. It was this photographic self-commission that, soon after, also led him to document for five years all the Architecture and Engineering projects coordinated by Vila Olímpica SA, VOSA, a municipal company established in December 1986. Obviously, both the personal project and the professional assignment were carried out with chemical photography equipment. For the former, he resorted to a pinhole camera, essentially a camera obscura in which the optics are replaced by a tiny hole the size of a pin. As a negative, this self-built camera used 18x24 cm black and white photographic paper. The low photosensitivity of this material and the low light passing through the pinhole allowed exposure times of several minutes in full summer sun. For the documentary assignment he worked with a complete 35 mm equipment that, in order to cover the different purposes for which the graphic material was intended, he used simultaneously color negative, black and white negative and slide. This archive is made up of some 26,000 color images, 17,000 black and white images and around 15,000 slides documenting the development of the different construction projects from the summer of 1987 to September 1992; the demolitions, the Ronda Litoral, the marina, the burying of the railway, the network of sewage collectors, the urbanization and construction of the whole sector, etc.



[Fig. 7]

© Marti Llorens. Black and white paper prints and slides from the Icarian archive. Icarian Archive / Factoria Heliogràfica collection.

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The creation project was developed from the summer of 1987 to the summer of 1989, precisely during the time when the demolitions took place, and very few photographs were taken after this period. Thus, of the nearly 450 negatives on paper taken during this period, only half a dozen shows images of the construction process. Unlike the photographs obtained with 35 mm photographic equipment, the pinhole camera offered the possibility of fragmenting the total exposure time –always a few minutes– into two or three parts over a much longer period of time. On some occasions, this long exposure, fragmented at intervals, made it possible to reconstruct the image of the structures that were being demolished at that moment as transparent and permanent surfaces. The soft-focus characteristic of the pinhole image, the contact printing from a paper negative and the toning and dyeing of the final copy, also help to underline in all these images the idea of definitive transit.

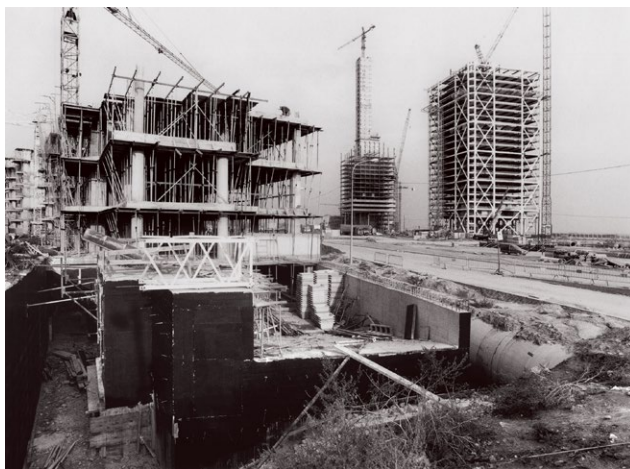


In 1991 and under the generic title of Poblenu Series, a selection of these photographs made at the request of the photographer, theorist and artist, Joan Fontcuberta, was presented to the European Photography Award held in Berlin. The work received the second prize, which marked the beginning of a long series of exhibitions. In his book *El beso de Judas. Fotografía y verdad*, Fontcuberta included it in a chapter entitled *La ciudad fantasma*. Regarding the photographs showing the buildings and factories being demolished, the author points out;

[Fig. 8]

© Martí Llorens. Pinhole camera on *Avinguda d'Icària* in front of a residential building being demolished. March 1988. Icarian Archive / Factoria Heliogràfica collection.

It is true that the photographs of Martí Llorens do not speak to us of the class struggle, obviously, nor of the yearnings and injustices that those walls sheltered. Perhaps the naked photograph is not suitable for describing certain abstract issues, which only an evocative use of language would bring us closer to. But, in any case, this was not the purpose behind the images of "[reference removed to maintain the integrity of the review process]": they only wanted to tell us about the attachment to a territory felt as their own that was imminently going to cease to be so; they told us about the proximity with which an environmental and human cataclysm was experienced; they told us, finally, about the feeling of shock and grief of an entire community (Fontcuberta 1997, 97).



It is true that the essence of this photographic project lies in the reflection –and the reaction– about time and the memory of a very close territory that, it is known, is about to disappear completely. However, almost forty years after I started it, the review of the photographs taken during that period gives me a glimpse of something else. And the fact is that, today, it seems clear that this place has not only disappeared materially, since both the city revealed in those photographs and the very idea of photography of that period appear to us now, quite distant and exotic.

[Fig. 9]

© Martí Llorens. Residential building, Hotel Arts and Mapfre Tower under construction. November 1990. Icarian Archive / Factoria Heliográfica collection.

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The major works carried out in the five years prior to 1992 not only transformed the city materially. In the field of urban planning, the much studied and much debated Barcelona model was forged during that period (Navas Perrone 2016). It is clear that neither the inhabitants of Barcelona, nor the millions of people who visit it every year, now conceive or imagine it in the same way as they did in the early 1990s. For example, both locals and foreigners of thirty years ago would have been surprised by the current tension caused today in a part of Barcelona's citizens by the predatory symbiosis established by tourist overcrowding and urban speculation, one of the results of which is a growing process of gentrification that, fueled by real estate speculation, makes housing no longer affordable for many Barcelonans. It should not be forgotten that pre-Olympic Barcelona was not a world-class tourist destination and, consequently, was not an advantageous target for investment funds. Surely, some of the factory buildings that were demolished without further contemplation in the Icaria neighborhood would now be included in the heritage list and rehabilitated by the administration to convert them into public facilities.



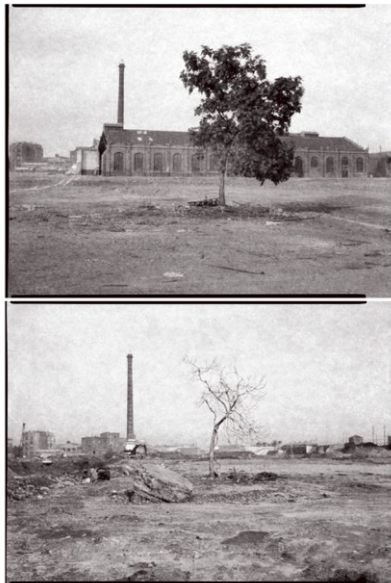
This time lag leads us to rethink and revisit, from the 21st century, both the essence and the formal development of all the photographic material generated during that period. The truth is that by now displaying the photographic copies or the original contact sheets on a large table, this archive can also be seen as a working material in movement and open, as a delicate game of juxtaposition and combination of pieces. We believe that this new approach to the archive

[Fig. 10]

© Martí Llorens. The Ronda Litoral under construction. In the background, an old chimney next to the mouth of the Bogatell sewer. August 1988. Icarian Archive / Factoria Heliogràfica collection.

would allow us to turn it –as Didi-Huberman points out when talking about his huge personal file of texts and images– into a dialectic machine or a machine of dialogues that would help us to generate a more exploratory, more personal and more heuristic reading of all its contents. We find very pertinent what Huberman points out in the catalog of an exhibition entitled Tables de montage. Regarder, Recueillir, Raconter. which deals precisely with his archive and his work methodology:

The archives tell the story –in bits and pieces– of how time begins again, differentiates itself and invents us. All in a perpetual state of displacement. If roots emerge from archives, it is not because history must be understood from a single place of origin or "source": it is precisely because roots insist on moving everywhere, on escaping, on disappearing into the earth, only to re-emerge where they are no longer expected (Didi-Huberman y Herré 2023, 127).



[Fig. 11]

© Martí Llorens. Industrial building and chimney of the Folch factory, photographed from the southwest. Diptych made with the pinhole camera. 1987. Icarian Archive / Factoria Heliogràfica collection.

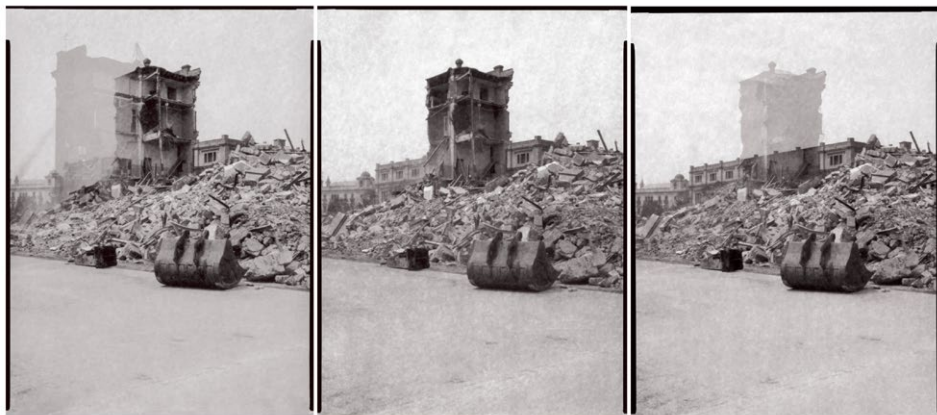
## THEORETICAL PAPERS

The reinterpretation and visibilization of the Icarian Archive imply a broader and transversal re-reading that contextualizes and interrelates the material generated during that period. And not only photographic. During the demolition phase, while taking photographs with the pinhole camera, Llorens had the opportunity to access the factories, warehouses and buildings immediately before their disappearance. These spaces had been abandoned, some for only a few weeks and others for years. Without having any specific objective at the time, he found and saved materials of a very different nature. Thus, he found a large number of photographs and letters that, scattered around a trunk, tell us a part of the history of a Menorcan family from the late nineteenth century to the forties of the twentieth century. In another place, in his original folder, he found almost complete collection of sheets of the sewage project of Barcelona drafted by the engineer Pedro García Faria in the late nineteenth century. In other buildings, there were also plans for the renovation of some of the factories, industrial plans for the construction of various parts and machinery and a large amount of municipal documentation from the civil war period, recording the various municipal interventions relating both to the religious buildings set on fire during the early days of the revolution and to the construction of new air-raid shelters. As for the objects, among others, he recovered a hoist with the engraved initials of Credito & Docks of Barcelona, a bottle of milk with the initials of the anarchist union CNT and even three solid cannon shells of the eighteenth century...

Now, all this collection of old photographs, plans, documents and disparate objects are presented as fragments of a place that has disappeared. But all the photographs taken at that time have also been transfigured into light and fragmentary traces of a place that no longer exists. Having lost the original location of all of them, only their materiality and their persistence in time make their encounter with the present possible. We believe that now, their re-reading, cataloguing and visibilization, correspond in a certain way to an archaeological experience understood as a memory practice that compiles and connects past and present from isolated physical fragments. That is why we are now working on the creation of a new website that, as a visual container of the Icarian Archive, can function as a receiver/emitter, modulating certain images related both to the different materials recovered in that place –photographs, plans, objects...– and to the documentary and creative photographs generated in that period with the aim of revealing, of making new meanings visible. This disoccultation will be carried out fundamentally by imagining and establishing new links between all these images. In this way, we believe that we will be able to extract other visual memories of the disappeared neighborhood of Icaria and the current neighborhood of the Olympic Village that until now, have remained hidden.

By way of epilogue, and referring to the photographic collection that represents the vertebral column of the Icarian Archive, we cannot fail to subscribe to a reflection on his own work by Stephen Berkman, North American photographer and artist who develops his projects using photographic processes from the 19th century:

The writer Thomas Pynchon said, "You know what a miracle is? It is another world's intrusion into this one." I aspire to create work that transports one into a realm of the imagination, a real and direct experience. Each photograph acts like a portal into another world. I am fascinated with the idea that as soon as an image is taken that world almost immediately vanishes. The real value of a photograph is often not known until 40 or 50 years down the road. The more the world being depicted vanishes, the more interesting the photographs become because the resonance of time is added (Hirsch 2012).



[Fig. 12]

© Martí Llorens. Demolition of the old railway building 'Servicio Eléctrico' in Avinguda d'Icària 6-8. Triptych made with the pinhole camera. 1989. Icarian Archive / Factoria Heliogràfica collection.

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