

MANIFESTA 15

Barcelona Metropolitana 2024

Final Report



MANIFESTA15
Barcelona
Metropolitana
2024

The Three Chimneys alongside the Besòs River



The Collserola mountain range



The Casa Gomis gardens alongside the Llobregrat Delta



Final Report

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Introduction

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Hedwig Fijen

Director and Founder of the
International Foundation Manifesta
and Director of Manifesta 15
Barcelona Metropolitana

Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana in Short

Manifesta was thrilled to welcome so many people – more than 290,000 visits during the 77 days of the biennial – to our latest, and 15th edition, which took place in the city of Barcelona and its metropolitan region in the autumn of 2024. In this final report, we analyse what Manifesta 15 brought to the region and how it helped to create an alternative view of cultural decentralisation.

Founded in the early 1990s, Manifesta has been at the forefront of mapping Europe's ever-changing cultural DNA. With deep roots in producing and sharing thought-provoking urban interventions and artistic programmes in extraordinary industrial and heritage spaces, Manifesta has pro-actively evolved over the course of our history to become a multilayered and inclusive instrument of civic and artistic transformation and engagement.

Our 15th edition, which ran for twelve weeks from the 8th of September to the 24th of November 2024, may well have been our most ambitious. A Call to Action for eco-social transformation, this decentralised biennial had the largest geographical scope in Manifesta's history, unfolding across 16 remarkable historical and industrial heritage venues that channel the past, present and future of Barcelona and 11 municipalities in the Metropolitan region: Badalona, Cornellà de Llobregat, El Prat de Llobregat, Granollers, L'Hospitalet de Llobregat, Mataró, Sabadell, Sant Adrià de Besòs, Santa Coloma de Gramenet, Sant Cugat del Vallès and Terrassa.

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Hedwig Fijen, Director of Manifesta, and Ada Colau, previous Mayor of Barcelona, meeting in 2020

When, in 2020, Barcelona City Council, under the previous Mayor, Ada Colau, invited Manifesta to host an edition in the metropolitan region, the municipality's overarching questions were: 'How can Manifesta transgress the natural boundaries of the city – the mountains, the rivers and the sea?' and 'How can Manifesta help create an alternative, integrated cultural ecosystem that links the municipalities in the metropolitan region with one another instead of with Barcelona's historic core?' The first question was informed by a desire to reimagine the relationship between the natural and the built environments at a time when the effects of climate change were viscerally felt in Catalonia during the state of emergency resulting from an extended period of drought. The second question was informed by the fact that most of the roughly 5.3 million residents of the metropolitan region have very little access to culture in their local area and have a contested relationship to Barcelona's historic centre which is visited by more than 15 million tourists per year.

After exploring the territory, while appraising Barcelona's bid, Manifesta 15 decided to focus the new edition on a "Call to Action" for eco-social transformation and implement an alternative decentralised model for cultural venues in the metropolitan region. In order to achieve this, the team and myself, together with the First Creative Mediator, Sergio Pardo López, drafted a conceptual framework on how urbanism, the arts and culture could set new parameters, analysing the complex

problems of our times: from decolonialisation to climate change, from socio-ecological transformation to access to culture, and how to practically translate some of these issues into an alternative structure with participatory projects. This framework resulted in three thematic and geographic clusters: *Balancing Conflicts* (Llobregat Delta), *Cure and Care* (Collserola massif towards Vallès) and *Imagining Futures* (Besòs River and its surroundings). These clusters provided the thematic framework for the rest of the biennial in terms of both the research programme and the decentralising of the venues across a larger metropolitan region. In this edition, instead of starting the pre-biennial research period by inviting an international architectural studio to provide an urban vision, we appointed 10 local and international researchers, comprising both collectives and individuals, who also contributed to the setting-up of the biennial's framework.

The Manifesta 15 team was a remarkable group of 50 full-time workers, mainly from Catalonia, who continue to work within the local cultural scene. Breaking away from the classic top-down curatorial model, we committed ourselves to creating a more democratic, reflective approach, emphasising collaborative processes tailored to the distinguishing features of Barcelona and its metropolitan region. This commitment was reflected in the structure of the Manifesta 15 programme, which was organised in these three clusters with designs informed by local realities.



2020 press conference announcing Barcelona to becoming the Host City of Manifesta 15

To develop the artistic programme, for the first time in its history, Manifesta brought in 11 artistic representatives, one from each of the 11 municipalities taking part in this edition alongside the city of Barcelona, to work together with the Manifesta team and the Second Creative Mediator, Filipa Oliveira. This collaborative effort resulted in the selection of 92 international and local participants who presented multidisciplinary work that engaged with and reimaged how we relate to one another and the natural resources in our midst.

Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana featured a dynamic programme of site-specific and time-based works, installed in underused and post-industrial architectural landmarks across the metropolitan region. The symbolic heart of the biennial was the former Gustavo Gili publishing house, where archival projects illuminated often unheard or overlooked stories from the region's past – generating fresh perspectives and ideas for Barcelona's future.

In addition to the striking Gustavo Gili building, other emblematic venues included the former industrial power plant the Three Chimneys in Sant Adrià de Besòs, and the modernist Casa Gomis in El Prat de Llobregat – among the most compelling sites explored during the 77 days the biennial was open to the public.

Manifesta 15 was not a static event. To amplify the geographical presence of Manifesta in each metropolitan city, a special nomadic mobile touring structure, called the Mobile Venue, was created to visit each municipality with a specially curated programme for the local residents and the cultural community. The focus shifted from one week to the next as the spotlight fell on each municipality. During these Focus Weeks, the stellar contributions of the Manifesta 15 Artistic Representatives were on full display. These representatives were acting as cultural stakeholders from each municipality. Facilitating grassroots ownership, the representatives situated the biennial in their cities by organising Manifesta 15+, a programme of performances and happenings celebrating cultural excellence in Barcelona and the metropolitan region.

A Call to Action

Manifesta 15 set out to mark the beginning of something transformative – carried forward by the groups and individuals with whom we collaborated, from local residents to community leaders. Together, we can build alternative networks that support eco-social transition and foster critical reflection. Manifesta 15 aspired to serve as merely an incubator for this change.

This is the biennial’s core mission: not merely to visualise ideologies and poetic representations, but to catalyse a series of concrete Calls to Action that will shape the future of the metropolitan region. The key points are as follows:

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- The need to reinforce long-term investments in the cultural sector within the metropolitan region.
 - To ensure that art is not regarded as merely a hobby but recognised as a potential economic driver.
 - To develop initiatives that enable residents to fully experience and enjoy the full expanse of their municipalities, such as projects in Barcelona aimed at connecting the two rivers. In the coming months, Manifesta 15 will host a *Bicicletada* (bike ride) from river to river.

- To establish safe spaces that celebrate diversity and foster connection, especially in cultural settings and in public life, with a special focus on marginalised groups.
 - To invest in a green, interconnected mobility infrastructure across the region.
 - To strengthen educational projects that cultivate an appreciation of our natural environments, while re-evaluating which historical pedagogical tools should inform contemporary education.
 - To safeguard heritage buildings for public use, with the ambition to reclaim public spaces for the communities that helped create them.
 - To support diverse institutions and cultural practices in recognising our rivers, seas, mountains, trees, and species as legal entities, granting them rights as non-human actors.
 - To fund and provide access to cultural practitioners dedicated to archival research of overlooked histories and repressed genealogies, such as those showcased here today.
 - To rediscover the concept of the ‘Commons’ as a space of hope.
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Conclusions

Analysing the impact of the biennial on the decentralisation of culture proposed by Manifesta 15 and the visitors experience, the data collected by GESOP for the independent public survey commissioned from the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (see page 198), revealed the following interesting facts.

- The analysis of visitor origin indicates that Manifesta 15 primarily attracted residents of the Barcelona Metropolitan Region (BMR), representing 85.4% of the total audience.
- On average, each biennial visitor attended 3.8 venues, which means that they travelled from their own metropolitan location to at least two or three other locations.
- 91.2 % of Manifesta 15 visitors were very or quite satisfied with their experience at Manifesta 15, with the highest praise going to the venues support staff, the overall comfort of the venues and the ticket price.
- Among residents of the Barcelona metropolitan region, 68.9% stated that their interest in art and culture and the history of their region increased after visiting Manifesta 15. Moreover, 60% believed the legacy of Manifesta 15 for the region could be the greater awareness of the need for cultural decentralisation, while 55% identified increased support for the cultural sector and 50% highlighted

a sense of growing social cohesion within the project and their municipalities and the need for ecological transition.

- Of the total public investment of €6,711,513 which was allocated in Catalonia, visitors contributed a total of €12,116,086, resulting in a Return on Investment (ROI) of 1.8 times the original commitment made by the public partners. In other words, for every euro invested by the public partners, €1.8052 circulated in the metropolitan region in the form of visitor spending.

In this study, we reflect on how culture catalyses positive change, crafting narratives that inspire and guide us towards the unknown.

Manifesta 15 was focused on advancing decentralisation, and the goal here is to determine how Manifesta 15 functioned as a catalyst for the decentralisation of Barcelona's cultural ecosystem. In this report, we explore the material and immaterial legacy of this edition.

The main results were:

- Manifesta 15 successfully engaged a diverse range of voices and communities – a significant achievement, especially given the short two-year preparation period in comparison to benchmarks set by other biennials and large-scale events.
- The decentralised programming was a success, with cultural activities from both local and

international participants and the commissioning of 4 archive presentations directly related to local communities and their histories.

- The symbolic opening of three of the most prominent venues, namely the private villa Casa Gomis, the former Gustavo Gili publishing house, and the Three Chimneys decommissioned thermal powerplant in Sant Adrià de Besòs.
- While a long-term legacy was not established across all 16 venues, the sustainable use of the three main sites – the Three Chimneys, Casa Gomis, and the Gustavo Gili building – was prioritised. Following Manifesta 15, these venues have been successfully transformed into long-term cultural spaces. As a temporary event, Manifesta 15 functions as an incubator for change; however, ensuring its sustainable ongoing impact requires continued support from local administrations, a need that is emphasised from the outset.
- By encouraging audiences to explore cultural spaces beyond the urban centre, Manifesta 15 has proven to be an effective catalyst for cultural mobility.
- Most visitors to Manifesta 15 reported a positive experience in terms of accessibility, the programme of events, the unique selection of venues, and the welcoming and well-prepared staff who effectively mediated the exhibitions. However, mobility between the different venues proved challenging.

- Manifesta 15 significantly contributed to the building-up of capacity among young Catalan cultural producers interested in working in an international context. It provided professional training and employment for over 50 full-time staff members for more than a year and a half, as well as engaging more than 200 support staff and volunteers.
- Some of the newly commissioned works were successfully presented after Manifesta 15 in other cultural contexts, exhibitions and biennials, and some artists and other participants were invited to undertake other major new commissions.
- As a European brand, Manifesta 15 was able to commission Tania Safura Adam to compose an exhibition about the African Diaspora in Catalonia and placed this pressing thematic into a local and international context.
- Manifesta 15 placed significant emphasis on recycling and repurposing the materials used in the exhibition projects, infrastructure and outdoor signage, and donated more than €157,241 worth of these materials to various Catalan organisations, thereby minimising waste and giving the material a second life.
- Manifesta 15 organised a closing debate on the 23rd of November 2024 in which professionals discussed the long-term legacy of the biennial, with a focus on the future use and transformation of the Three Chimneys, Gustavo Gili and Casa Gomis.

Manifesta 15's emphasis on the vital importance of securing and preserving the future of some of the key venues as cultural sites resulted in the purchase of Casa Gomis for €7.2 million by the Spanish Ministry of Culture for conversion into an ecological and cultural centre. Additionally, the archive of Escolles en Lluita by Anaïs Florin were donated to the Roquetes historical archive. Two months after Manifesta 15 closed, it was announced that the architectural studios Garcés de Seta Bonet and Marvel Architects won the pitch to transform the Three Chimneys into a multimedia cultural hub called Catalunya Media City, a dynamic new space for the production and experience of media arts and technology.



Dates and events



78

Days

8th of September —
24th of November
2024

Professional
Preview Days:

5th, 6th and 7th of
September 2024



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Cities

Badalona
Barcelona
Cornellà de Llobregat
El Prat de Llobregat
L'Hospitalet de Llobregat
Granollers
Mataró
Sabadell
Sant Adrià de Besòs
Sant Cugat del Vallès
Santa Coloma de Gramenet
Terrassa

16

Venues



33

Exhibitions



95

Events



291,336

Number of visits



5.3M

Residents in metropolitan
region

Participants



92

Participants

Participants
(%)

39

Local

61

International

Works
(%)

58

New commissions

42

Existing works



46

Female



36

Male



18

Collectives

Participant
Profiles
(%)

During a Manifesta 15 event, over 250 former workers of the Three Chimneys in Sant Adrià de Besòs reunited for the first time in decades.



TROS FUTUROS
LES O BELLOS?



During the pre-biennial phase of Manifesta 15, a map displaying the results of participant research is viewed by visitors at the former Gustavo Gili publishing house

Ágapē event led by Paisanaje and the Manifesta 15
Education Department at Casa Gomis



Pre-Biennial Research

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Artistic Team

Under the guidance of the Biennial's Director, an Artistic Team was formed including Manifesta 15's Creative Mediators, the Manifesta 15 team and 11 Artistic Representatives from the different cities of the metropolitan region and external specialists such as the composers of the newly commissioned archives.

Hedwig Fijen, Manifesta 15 Director

Sergio Pardo, First Creative Mediator

Filipa Oliveira, Second Creative Mediator

Tania Safura Adam, Archival Presentation

Germán Labrador, Archival Presentation

Ariadna Amat Garcia, Artistic Representative Badalona

Óscar Abril Ascaso, Artistic Representative Sabadell

Penélope Cañizares Bellido, Artistic Representative Cornellà de Llobregat

Cristina Castells Tort, Artistic Representative El Prat de Llobregat

Andreu Dengra Carayol, Artistic Representative Sant Cugat del Vallès

Joan González Cano, Artistic Representative Santa Coloma de Gramenet

David Linares Ramos, Artistic Representative Sant Adrià de Besòs

Mireia Mascarell Llosa, Artistic Representative L'Hospitalet de Llobregat

Raquel Morcillo García, Artistic Representative Granollers

Anna Mas Danés, Artistic Representative Granollers

Gisel Noè, Artistic Representative Mataró

Imma Vilches, Artistic Representative Terrassa

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MANIFESTA 15 Barcelona

8.09



MANIFESTA

 Generalitat
de Catalunya

Pre-Biennial Research: Producing Knowledge Collectively

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Manifesta, the Nomadic European Biennial, is renowned for its innovative approach to addressing emergent global issues by way of their social ramifications in combination with art and architecture, with a focus on investigating and rethinking the urban and metropolitan environment. Manifesta 15 explored urgent concerns such as the influence of climate change, social inequalities and economic injustices on our individual lives and how artistic practices can help us cope with these changes.

This fifteenth edition was characterised by a collective approach to developing a clear structure for the pre-biennial research and the exploration of the Catalan territory. The research process began in the summer of 2021, when Manifesta started mapping the metropolitan region. Given that Barcelona has already been the subject of numerous urban studies, Manifesta 15 kicked off by creating a so-called conceptual framework based on expectations workshops, interviews and meetings with both professionals and non-professionals as well as social and cultural associations as an alternative to the traditional architectural and urban study commissioned in previous Manifesta to map and rethink the territory. As part of this process, Manifesta 15 invited a group of ten international and local collectives to work together with the team on a holistic mapping of how to transcend the natural boundaries of the city of Barcelona. These ten individuals and collectives – Anaïs Florin, Arquitectes de Capçalera, Diversorium, Elmo Vermijs, Embassy of the North Sea, Inland / Paisanaje, Lara Schnitger and Erika Sprey, Massa Salvatge with Lluç Mayol, On-Trade-Off and radio SLUMBER – were commissioned by the Director and the Education Department of Manifesta 15 to conduct a far more interdisciplinary research, in and among pedagogical, artistic, urban and ecological approaches. They worked together closely with the biennial team from April to December 2023, all deeply embedding themselves in one of the Manifesta 15 topics such as social injustice, global warming, water purification, CO₂ reduction and the role that art and architecture might play in envisaging solutions for these ecological issues in a regional Catalan context.

In addition to appointing the collectives for the site-specific research, Manifesta 15 appointed the First Creative Mediator, Spanish architect Sergio Pardo López, Director of the Percent for Art programme at the City of New York's Department of Cultural Affairs, who was tasked with critically analysing the extensive existing urban studies available in Catalonia and translating these to an up-to date research over the past four decades about

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how to engage with the territory and with pressing issues such as the climate and water supply in the metropolitan region.

The research involved collaboration between grassroots and international stakeholders with diverse areas of expertise, from artists and ecologists to pedagogues, urban planners and, in particular, neighbourhood groups and community representatives in twelve cities in the metropolitan region. This was a long-term intensive body of work which prepared the ground for the subsequent collaborations with the neighbourhoods, citizens and associations that helped us shape the biennial. This process also introduced innovative and emerging ways of drawing attention to the urgent problems Catalonia is facing in terms of drought, floods and the climate crisis in general, identifying key ecological and social transformations needed within the region.

In this way, Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana established a new tool and a research framework for the production of social and ecological knowledge, driven by actions and interventions carried out by these ten research participants across the metropolitan region of Barcelona. The investigation focused on specific thematics and geographical components in three interconnected areas identified by the Manifesta 15 team as compatible with the biennial's goal of investigating how the city can reach out beyond its natural boundaries and what sort of cultural infrastructure can be set up in these three areas which were identified along the Besòs River, in the Llobregat Delta, and in the Collserola hills. The ten participants, who were selected for their transgressive experimental work in interdisciplinary fields such as art, science, law, architecture, human rights, activism, and pedagogy, played a crucial role in shaping the project. Some of the projects incorporated a communal team, such as *Parliaments of Trees* by Dutch biologist and artist Elmo Vermijs, which brought together academic researchers, dendrologists and legal advisors to investigate how to launch a law suit against the authorities on behalf of a group of trees being killed by pollution.

By navigating the city of Barcelona and the metropolitan region in a collective and communal manner, Manifesta 15 decentralised its knowledge production and organisational methodology, creating a highly effective tool for the development of more democratic curatorial models.

The collective pre-biennial research resulted in the setting up of a laboratory space in the headquarters of the Gustavo Gili publishing house, where the research and interventions were discussed with the participants and associations produced the formulation of a Manifesta 15 conceptual framework, which identified not only thematic focus points, collaborating partners, venues and the three main subjects to be addressed but also alternative story lines and forms of intervention, collaboration, activation and co-production for the region. This framework established a network of hubs for interdisciplinary ecological thinking and cultural production across the twelve metropolitan districts, establishing a bottom-up way of working, first listening to local protagonists and conferring with citizens' associations before implementing initiatives in the final concept of Manifesta 15 concept.

The socio-ecological imperative of thematically connecting the twelve towns and municipalities and cities became increasingly urgent, particularly when Catalonia declared a state of emergency in January 2024 in response to three years of drought and rapidly declining water levels in the reservoirs. In his regional analysis, Manifesta 15's first Creative Mediator, Sergio Pardo López, emphasised the environmental impact on society and the potential of cultural practitioners and the biennial to foster positive change, based on the delivery framework and the concept of Manifesta 15:

- The health of our democracies hinges largely on how we nurture, activate, and articulate our connection to the environment. This allows us to anticipate pressing demographic and environmental changes in our globalised world. To achieve this, we need new dynamics, innovations, and a kind of 'grounded activism' that can demand legislative changes.
- Without a vibrant space in which people and nature connect – the public space of the city – it is impossible to spark cultural processes for change. Can we, as citizens, promote these changes or, at the very least, participate actively in a new legislative framework through transformative socio-climatic actions?
- It often feels as if the sense of 'caring for another' has faded. When did our human nature stop acting in this way? It likely happened over many decades, amidst accelerating changes in every aspect of our lives, while everything became standardised: language, consumption, housing, land commodification, and the dissolution of traditional city boundaries. The logic of change dictates our emotions, making us believe nothing can be different. Social democracies are crumbling, the welfare state is weakening, and this is linked to the challenges democracies face.

Pre-biennial research along the Llobregat Delta

‘For the first time, and having been hosted by cities including Marseille, Zurich, Palermo and Prishtina, Manifesta is covering a territory that goes beyond the city limits, turning the metropolitan region of Barcelona into a canvas and theme for contemporary artistic creation, which accompanies and underlines the metropolitan reality of Barcelona’.

Jaume Collboni, Mayor of Barcelona



The ten selected collectives and individuals and the titles of their projects were:

Anaïs Florin

We will remember what you learned

The main focus of Anaïs Florin's research was Escoles en Lluita (Schools in Struggle), a grassroots movement in favour of public education in Barcelona which was active in the last phase of the dictatorship and the first years of the so-called democratic transition, which led the neighbourhood and workers' movement struggles to usher in a new kind of education radically different from that endorsed by Franco. Through direct action, presence in the streets, numerous expressions of solidarity and the assembly as a decision-making body, Escoles en Lluita fought for mandatory basic public education and a stronger political implication on the part of civil society and against financial speculation in the neighbourhoods. Anaïs Florin's project continued to develop during the biennial. She further expanded the research into Escoles en Lluita's archive, collecting as much documentary material as she could find from private individuals, local institutions and schools, all of which she digitised and printed. The project concluded with the donation of this material to Arxiu Roquetes, as a way to keep the collective memory of the Escoles en Lluita alive and together in one place.

Arquitectes de Capçalera

A Manifesto(a) for the Elderly

As a part of their pre-biennial research for Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana, at the end of June 2023 Arquitectes de Capçalera conducted site-specific research in Sant Adrià de Besòs, mapping all the different elements in the vulnerability studies of the neighbourhood in which the Three Chimneys are located. Here, social vulnerability is especially acute among the elderly. As life expectancy lengthens, our cities and homes are proving to be ill-equipped to meet the needs of this section of the population. To address these challenges, Arquitectes de Capçalera (AC) decided to focus their research on this particularly vulnerable group. The implementation of the AC methodology enabled the production of experiential, living cartographies of the elderly, leading to the proposal of a series of participatory actions bringing groups of students into contact with elderly citizens and addressing topics such as active memory, care, climate shelters and accessibility. At the end of the academic year, they organised a public presentation and debate where they set out their diagnosis and explained their proposals to the local residents who took part in the research, to the managers of the Social Rights and Sustainable Territory departments of Sant Adrià de Besòs Town Council, and to the representatives of the residents' associations of the two neighbourhoods analysed.

Diversorium

The Vil·la Joana Archives Re-reading Club

The Escola d'Educació Especial Vil·la Joana (Vil·la Joana Special Education School), established by Barcelona City Council in the early twentieth century, marked a milestone in making public education open and accessible for children with diverse abilities. Founding members of Diversorium, a project that aims to explore the cultural and social meaning of difference through new ways of cooperation, interaction and connection between people, conducted research visits to the Vil·la Joana Museum and School. During these visits, interviews were carried out with key figures including the school's head teacher and the museum archivist about the motivations and needs that led Barcelona City Council to create the innovative school 'for the abnormal' in over a hundred years ago. This institution was inspired by progressive educational approaches such as Montessori and Waldorf, among other methodologies and practices. The Vil·la Joana Archives Re-Reading Club was born out of this concern. Proposed by Diversorium together with the artist Jaume Ferrete, the club organised meetings with intellectually diverse participants. The open format differed from the directed activities in which the participants are typically invited to take part. During the meetings, they were able to engage independently and collectively with the pedagogical, diagnostic and scientific-technical documents produced by the centre, imagining their possible future.

Elmo Vermijs

Collserola: When trees have standing

As a part of his pre-biennial research, Elmo Vermijs talked to the trees in the woodlands and forests of the Barcelona metropolitan region to open up a dialogue with and about the legal position of trees in toxic environments. His research looked into new ways of giving them a platform in a world where non-human voices are too often ignored. This project is part of his multi-year research study in which through various case studies, (tree and forest) scientists, (environmental) lawyers and artists look at how trees, forests and their ecosystems can be given a (legally) equitable voice in society and hold to account those who threaten them.

Embassy of the North Sea

El Llobregat: The salt mountain, invasive species and the dead river

As part of their mission to give our seas and rivers their own voice, Embassy of the North Sea looked into the physical, speculative and spiritual relations of the human and non-human inhabitants of the Llobregat Delta, within the Barcelona metropolitan region, to find the inner voice of a river that has a lot to say. This research took them up the course of the Llobregat to the salt mine at Sallent. As a visualisation of the research into the impact of the salt mountain on its environment, in December 2023, the Embassy of the North Sea raised a scaled-down salt mountain in the courtyard of the historic Gustavo Gili publishing house as an art intervention that subsequently formed part of the exhibition *The Ocean Speaks. New ecologies and new economies of the seas* in the Barcelona Design Museum-DHub.



Anaïs Florin, *We will remember what you learned*
 Massa Salvatge and Lluç Mayol, *Heartbeats of a small printing press*



INLAND / Paisanaje, *Banquet for Collserola*
 Lara Schnitger and Erika Sprey, *A threefold cord is not quickly broken*



INLAND / Paisanaje

Banquet for Collserola

INLAND / Paisanaje looked into the unique pedagogical approach of the 1925 model of the Escola de Bosc, an innovative institution which immersed its students in natural environments, and one of the first progressive, open-air schools to be set up in Barcelona, as a part of their research for Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana. The collective's attention was captured by a regular practice at the Escola de Bosc: the weekly preparation of the school's lunch menus by the students themselves. On learning of this process of involving students in food preparation, the collective initiated discussions and collaborations with various stakeholders and organisations in the city, all of which have a common interest in sustainable food, horticulture and education.

Lara Schnitger and Erika Sprey

A threefold cord is not quickly broken

Researching the topic of ecofeminism, Lara Schnitger and Erika Sprey came together for the pre-biennial research of Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana. As a part of their research, they collaborated in investigating the role of women democracy over the last 100 years in the textile industry in Catalonia and shone a light on the local ecofeminist movements in Sant Adrià de Besòs while delving into the rich archives of these women's movements of the past. During their research, they visited many of the grassroots collectives active in Barcelona and talked with their members, in places such as Ca la Dona, a benchmark association for feminist movements in Catalonia, and Sindillar, an association that welcomes female immigrants from all walks of life, mostly working in the care sector.

Massa Salvatge and Lluç Mayol

Heartbeats of a small printing press

Massa Salvatge is a collective from Valencia which, together with Lluç Mayol, concentrated their investigation for Manifesta 15 on studying the methodology of a historic teachers' collective from Lleida called Batec. In the first decades of the twentieth century, this collective saw schools as affording an opportunity to change society. They were also influential in importing pedagogical ideas, such as those of Célestin Freinet, who pioneered the practice of printing in schools because he considered self-publishing to be an invaluable resource for giving students a sense of empowerment.

On-Trade-Off

(In)visible Energies of Besòs

On-Trade-Off is an international artistic collective based in Africa and Europe which works on the contemporary dimensions of questioning the Earth's raw materials and their crucial relations with energy. For Manifesta 15, this collective explored the reliance of technological innovation on natural resources. Their research focused on energy, postcolonialism and the past and present of the Besòs industrial area. Its complex local history notwithstanding, the issues in play in the Besòs area speak to our current epoch at large. In unearthing and revealing these (in)visible realities, On-Trade-Off sought to contribute to a more just society, in which accountability and responsibility are fully present, giving the necessary space to all the inhabitants of the metropolitan region. The idea of *(In)visible Energies* served as an overarching concept that could branch out into three different focus areas: (in)visible human bodies, (in)visible energy transformation processes, and the subsequent (in)visible pollution resulting from energy production and waste treatment technologies.

radio SLUMBER

Watery Mutant Awakes

The radio SLUMBER soundtrack serves as a diverse collection of incantations and songs – aural spells and mantras to protect the female body and spirit amid the tumultuous currents of existence. Their research was oriented towards learning from and highlighting how marginalised cultural practitioners in Barcelona work on solidarity and connectivity among and across communities. The collective exploration navigated the intricate web of shared affinities and backgrounds, converging at the undeniable struggles embedded in diasporic histories.

Vertical banners by Lara Schnitger and Erika Sprey
installed at the former publishing house Gustavo Gili.

STITCH
&
BITCH

THE
FUTURE
IS
ANCESTRAL

REVOLUTIONARY
(M)OTHERHOODS
TO
THE FRONT!

MATERIA
ORGANICA

MICRO
ORGANISMOS

MINERALES

Conceptual Framework

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‘I think Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana has made us better culturally as a civil society. It was born as a transformative cultural project for the city. We have to put into practice this project and this reality into practice on a daily basis in this city.’

Ángela Molina, Art critic

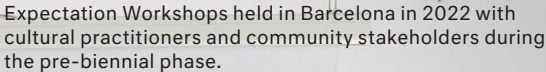
Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana 2024 addressed the challenge of expanding from a city-focused perspective to a regional scale, encompassing a population of more than five million people. In its commitment to showcase the value of developing a de-centralised and collaborative cultural and arts infrastructure, Manifesta 15 engaged with a collaborative regional approach by integrating artistic and ecological narratives within historical landmarks to create an alternative model of broadly accessible cultural production, which visitors would embrace. During 2023, pre-biennial research, conducted across the Metropolitan region by ten specially commissioned local and international researchers and artistic collectives,* led to the identification of site-specific urgencies linked to thematic components. These themes included growth and degrowth, environmental stewardship, and healing and repair, together with the ecological and related social justice transformations necessary within the interconnected geographical nodes mapped by the Manifesta 15 team. The outcome of this research resulted from a unique bottom-up interdisciplinary and collaborative process, which involved workshops, community programmes, scientific investigations, and archival studies on diverse topics ranging from historical pedagogical movements to eco-feminism and biodiversity.

Building on the collective pre-biennial research described above, the concept for the Manifesta 15 programme was developed around three thematic clusters in the metropolitan region. The nodes of the Besòs river, the Llobregat delta and Collserola were identified as focal points for the artistic research practices of Manifesta 15. These areas stood out due to particularities that distinguished them from the broader metropolitan territory. They represent geographical boundaries of the city, and are sites where significant urban transformations are underway – transformations that will define the way of life for future generations. The definition of these clusters as the working territory for Manifesta 15 revealed an urgent need to discuss accessible mobility between the metropolitan municipalities and the possible ways to transgress Barcelona’s natural boundaries of mountains, rivers and sea to explore different models of interconnectedness within the Metropolitan region.

In this context, renowned architects, artists, researchers and urbanists participated in this edition, focusing on the region’s potential for a decentralised structure of natural resources and mobility networks. Manifesta 15 aimed to act as a catalyst for positive change, using urban interventions such as the Bicicletada in November 2024 and artistic interventions such as CHOI+SHINE’s *Urchins and Wings* (X-205) by Niels Albers to identify and address how culture can help implement awareness for social and ecological transformation and expansion of a de-centralised infrastructure. The model also served to encourage joint cultural collaborations and programming across the municipalities, showcasing the value of a de-centralised approach in the arts. In parallel, Manifesta 15 also aimed to amplify underrepresented topics, perspectives and historical narratives through grassroots initiatives.

* Anaïs Florin, Arquitectes de Capçalera, Diversorium, Elmo Vermijs, Embassy of the North Sea, Inland/Paisanaje, Lara Schnitger and Erika Sprey, Massa Salvatge with Lluç Mayol, On-Trade-Off and radio SLUMBER.

55



Over the past four editions, Manifesta has been transformed from a purely artistic project into an incubator for new cultural models and social-ecological change. Through the creation of new decentralised processes – both in a geographical sense and in terms of creative mediation – the biennial also placed a strong emphasis on developing and implementing more democratic collaborations and processes such as expectations workshops, citizens assemblies and public programmes with local associations. This approach has had a positive impact on the inclusion of diverse voices and has left a strong legacy for the future of the biennial. These democratic models created a more collaborative mediation structure within the conceptualisation of the edition.

Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana took place in multiple municipalities, with multiple voices and multiple venues

The three different locations – Besòs, Llobregat and Collserola – were transformed into expansive ‘worktables’ for artists and collectives in Manifesta 15. These nodes represented a deliberate choice to engage with the urgent challenges and contemporary debates shaping the future of cities. Specifically, the nodes allowed an investigation of themes such as the immediate climate emergency, as well as the reactivation of emancipatory social movements, like collectivism and eco-feminism.

Besòs and Llobregat, aligned by rivers and gazing towards the Vallès and the ‘lung’ of the metropolis – the Collserola mountain range – offered a unique canvas for exploring solutions to pressing socio-environmental challenges. This commitment to an often overlooked periphery was at the heart of Manifesta 15, highlighting the struggles and potential of medium-sized cities facing global issues such as climate change, economic disparities and neocolonial practices.

The Manifesta 15 clusters brought together projects at multiple venues in multiple municipalities around the three leading themes of the biennial: *Imagining Futures*, *Cure and Care* and *Balancing Conflicts*. The journey of each cluster commenced at an exceptional historical venue which symbolised its overarching theme. The monumental Three Chimneys, located on the coastline between Barcelona, Sant Adrià de Besòs and Badalona, hosted the departure point for the theme of *Imagining Futures*; the Monastery of Sant Cugat del Vallès represented the spiritual aspect with *Cure and Care*; and, finally, the Casa Gomis and its fragile position epitomised the *Balancing Conflicts* cluster.

Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana Clusters

1

Cluster *Imagining Futures*

Main venue: The Three Chimneys

THE INDUSTRIAL RUIN AS A SPACE FOR IMAGINATION AND TRANSFORMATION

Context and history

The Besòs axis includes the municipalities of Badalona, Montcada i Reixac, Sant Adrià de Besòs, Santa Coloma de Gramenet and the Barcelona districts of Nou Barris, Sant Andreu and Sant Martí. This territory is located along the lower basin of the Besòs River, from the gorge formed by the Coastal Range to its delta plain and mouth at the sea.

Currently, one million people live in this area, corresponding to 30% of the population of the metropolitan area of Barcelona and 12% of the whole of Catalonia. With an area of more than 80 km² and different neighbourhoods, Besòs constitutes the most complex and diverse social landscape in all of Catalonia. The lack of an integrated vision of the territory, aggravated by a long history of disorderly urban growth, has made Besòs a fragmented territory, without a defined urban development project.

Historically, Besòs has suffered from the persistence of high levels of urban vulnerability in certain neighbourhoods, recently aggravated by the impact of the economic crisis and the lack of investment in relation to other metropolitan areas: it concentrates 16 of the 25 most vulnerable neighbourhoods. The existence of processes of exclusion and social segregation has traditionally made it a stigmatised territory.

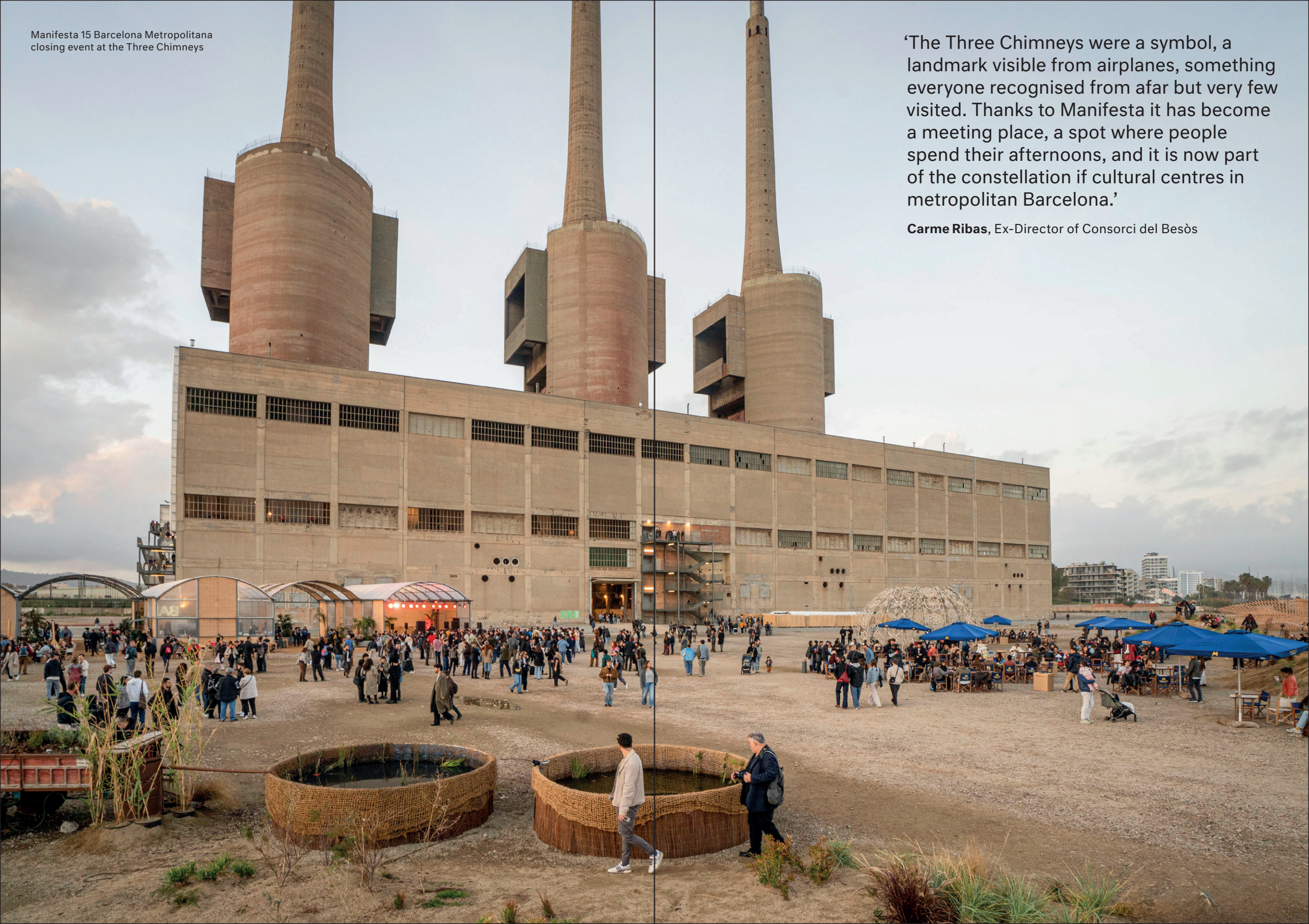
However, today's Besòs is an area with great potential for the future, due to its centrality and accessibility concerning the great metropolitan region of Barcelona and its potential to become a productive and knowledge corridor, a welcoming space where diversity can be transformed into wealth.

The Besòs is key in accessing Barcelona from the Maresme and Vallès, and today it constitutes the main entry and exit corridor of the city to the north, which translates into a large concentration of road and railway structures of high strategic value.

The existence of processes of social segregation has been a scourge that has been intensified by decades of industrial dumping in the bed of the Besòs river, its delta and the coastline adjacent to its beaches. An industry whose symbol is silhouetted on the Barcelona horizon by the Three Chimneys of Sant Adrià. The old thermal power plant made it possible to stream

‘The Three Chimneys were a symbol, a landmark visible from airplanes, something everyone recognised from afar but very few visited. Thanks to Manifesta it has become a meeting place, a spot where people spend their afternoons, and it is now part of the constellation of cultural centres in metropolitan Barcelona.’

Carme Ribas, Ex-Director of Consorci del Besòs



electricity to the entire metropolitan region. ‘The Factory’, as many residents called it, achieved a production capacity exceptional in thermal power plants of the time, comparable to that of a nuclear power plant. An industrial triumph with its consequent collateral damage, that concrete giant, now a symbol of the Barcelona skyline, punished the communities living in its vicinity residents for decades. The Factory had a very serious impact on the environment which led to the declaration of Sant Adrià as a ‘contaminated atmospheric zone’ in 1983. And it was Sant Adrià that suffered the greatest impact, as the municipality that rehoused people from much of the slum property in Barcelona, incinerated the waste from the greater metropolitan area and boasted the largest sewage treatment plant in Europe.

New relational use

Stretched out before the Three Chimneys is a 2 kilometre stretch of coastline. Here, the now outdated ‘sun and beach’ tourism model offers an opportunity for revitalisation. Envision a new neighbourhood brimming with social housing, diverse economic activity, and a delta park revitalising the river. At its heart lies a post-industrial ruin, awaiting a transformation infused with new purpose and meaning.

This revitalisation, together with the nature and history of the region of the Besòs, demands new models built around people’s capacity to energise urban spaces and thus to offer an alternative way of imagining futures. It is also a chance to confront Barcelona’s colonial past, intertwined with the boom years of the textile industries – highly polluting businesses whose wealthy owners like to proclaim their ‘philanthropy’, although their fortunes were firmly founded on the slave trade. While seemingly a thing of the past, this legacy quietly persists in exploitative labour practices and neocolonial consumption patterns, often disregarding basic human rights.

The Three Chimneys being the focal point of the Manifesta 15 cluster *Imagining Futures* allowed an exploration of urban and social regeneration within the vast space vacated by the industrial power infrastructure. Embracing creative and transformative eco-social approaches in coastal spaces can strengthen the indisputable value of the Mediterranean for Catalonia’s residents while promoting initiatives that leverage sustainability, a blue economy, enhanced habitability and greater openness and accessibility to the sea.

Cluster Cure and Care

Main venue: The Monastery of Sant Cugat del Vallès

**THE GREAT LUNG OF THE CITY:
AN INCUBATOR IN WHICH TO CARE AND BE CARED FOR**

Context and history

The Collserola massif forms part of the central sector of the Catalan Coastal Range. The limits are precise: to the east it ends at the Besòs river; to the west, at the Llobregat river; the streams of Sant Cugat and Rubí bound it to the north-west, and the plain of Barcelona, to the south. Known as the metropolitan Central Park, it is ringed by nine municipalities, with almost two million inhabitants living in its 190 km² of urban areas and receives 3.5 million visitors annually.

Collserola was declared a natural park in 2010: its almost 8,300 hectares constitute a fundamental system for the ecological functioning of this matrix of open spaces in the metropolis. In addition, it is a huge space of proximity that provides the city with numerous ecosystem services, and at the same time is a major centre of biodiversity that is home to some 940 species of animals. 66% of its surface is protected habitat. Thanks to the ecosystem processes it hosts, Collserola is a reservoir of health and natural cycles, which substantially improve the quality of life of the citizens of the metropolitan area.

Nature as symbolic capital

Collserola and the area of Vallès stand apart from other metropolitan open spaces in their unique juxtaposition of ecological significance and social use. They possess a unique identity in the local geography, having become an irreplaceable space for social use and contact with nature, as well as playing a vital role in the city’s health and metabolic processes, functioning as its lungs and filtration system. The Monastery of Sant Cugat, with its historic symbol of spirituality, caring, giving and reflection, was the principal venue for the theme *Cure and Care*.

Sant Cugat del Vallès: Monestir de Sant Cugat

The Monastery of Sant Cugat is a Benedictine Abbey that was founded in the ninth century. Completed in the fourteenth century, it is one of the most significant monasteries in the region, with Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque elements. It became an epicentre of power and culture in the eleventh century, when the monks lived in accordance with the Benedictine lifestyle while also managing extensive properties in the area. The most notable feature of the complex is a Romanesque cloister which dates from the twelfth century and houses the Museum of Sant Cugat. With a length of more than 30 metres, it has a square plan, with semi-circular arches supported by pairs of columns notable for their finely carved capitals.



Cluster *Balancing Conflicts*

Main venue: Casa Gomis (La Ricarda)

SUSTAINABILITY OR MODERNISATION?

Context and history

The Llobregat Delta area, in which part of the city of Barcelona, El Prat and L'Hospitalet are situated, is an inseparable part of the central urban continuum of the metropolis, as well as of the Delta, understood as a geographical and environmental unit. Like all the major deltas of the Mediterranean, it has tremendous ecological value. For centuries, the delta was occupied by large tracts of wetlands, which were subject to frequent flooding.

Starting in the sixteenth century, areas of the marsh began to be drained and rainfed crops were introduced. In the nineteenth century, irrigation canals were dug. The demolition of Barcelona's old city walls between 1853 and 1873, with the rapid occupation of the Eixample and the growing industrialisation of the area, to which new communication infrastructures such as the railway were added, accentuated the proto-industrialisation of the delta. An airfield was established in 1916 and a free port two years later. The port of Barcelona and El Prat Airport are the two poles that have conditioned the territorial and economic development of the delta environment and, by extension, of the great metropolis. These transport nodes show the social conflict generated by the expansion of these infrastructures within the natural environment.

An area of great environmental value

Today the city of Barcelona is fully committed to the ongoing regeneration of its urban model, which incorporates the challenges of the future in a densely built area, one that urgently has to address the improvement of what already exists: people's health, the aging of the population and buildings, access to decent housing, socio-spatial justice, the change in mobility, the tourism monoculture, urban metabolism and, above all, the pressure to deal with the climate emergency. In this sense, the Delta del Llobregat is paradigmatic: it has suffered the irreversible replacement of natural spaces (wetlands, vacant lots, and other habitats, along with the communities that inhabited them) by infrastructures and urbanised areas, so that its environmental balance has been distorted.

Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana put into play these casuistries, which so often lead to a false dilemma between sustainability and modernisation. Artists and groups from different backgrounds have made these confrontations visible and proposed alternative sustainable solutions for the environment without neglecting the need to modernise the key urban infrastructures that allow us to connect with the rest of the world. There is an urgent imperative to make visible the fact that any transformation

in this area, by virtue of its condition as an integral and habitable part of the metropolitan city, requires sustainability and the correction of the dysfunctions of the current models that ignore ecological criteria.

Metropolitan Barcelona is redefining its relationship with the sea through multiple projects to regain a territory that was boldly reconfigured during the 1980s, but has increasingly been subjected to great pressure from the property market and the tourist industry. A process that derives from the enormous success that the city achieved then and is today trying to recover, not only from the social perspective of the neighbourhoods, but also from an environmental approach to the ever greater climate emergency.

In the Llobregat, large-scale economic and ecological issues collide, presenting challenges on a national level. The debate revolves around navigating very diverse interests. First, in terms of infrastructure, balancing plans for expansion of the airport and port with preserving fragile wetlands. Second, on land use, reconciling the resilient agricultural park with the economic engine of the free trade zone and the international airport.

These projects flash-heated and politicised the discussions, prompting a re-evaluation of our urban model in a global context. The debate goes beyond the relatively abstract threats of neocolonialism to delve deep into the specific realities of consumption and the implications for our nation and planet.

Two key points in this paradigm shift are the deltas of the two rivers, the Llobregat and the Besòs, which flank the city, and have for so long been channelled and intensely pressured by the multiple development plans competing for the valuable adjoining land. At the epicentre of this territory, a jewel of architecture and landscaping of the modern movement survives and continues to capitalise on this fascinating debate: La Ricarda or Casa Gomis.

Casa Gomis

Linking to the theme of *Balancing Conflicts*, Casa Gomis, a privately owned villa in El Prat de Llobregat, surrounded by wetlands with a wide variety of biodiversity and birdlife, is the subject of an ongoing dialogue concerning the expansion of industry and the protection of the natural environment, and of the house itself – until very recently in danger of being demolished as part of the extension plans for Barcelona's El Prat airport. Built between 1947 and 1963 by the renowned architect Antoni Bonet Castellana in close collaboration with its owners, Inés Bertrand Mata and Ricardo Gomis Serdañons, the house follows the principles of Rationalist architecture, known in Northern Europe as Modernism, and was declared a Cultural Asset of National Interest in 2021. It sits in the natural landscape, reflecting the tension between human development and the preservation of nature.

‘I think Manifesta 15 has been very important not just for showing our home, which was already well-known as Casa Gomis La Ricarda, but also because Manifesta has provided a significant metropolitan perspective on buildings and spaces that were underused and largely unknown’.

Beatriz Gomis, former co-owner of the Casa Gomis

Casa Gomis, one of the leading venues of Manifesta 15



PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES WITHIN MANIFESTA 15 BARCELONA METROPOLITANA

Expectation Workshops

Manifesta's Expectation Workshops are of essential part of the pre-biennial process in each edition. On the 15th, 16th and 21st of June 2022, Expectation Workshops were held in the Casa de l'Aigua in Trinitat Vella, a historic water elevation station in Barcelona that is now open to the public and hosts permanent and temporary interventions and exhibitions.

The intention of these workshops was to engage and collaborate with the artistic, cultural and civic communities of Barcelona and the Metropolitan region during the pre-biennial process. The approach of these workshops was open and participatory, and the aim was to ensure that the Manifesta 15 team was aware of the views of different community stakeholders with regard to cultural policy and what they expected and hoped for from Manifesta, creating a space for mutual recognition and a dialogue that was ultimately to lead to the development of the biennial programme in 2024. The main question asked was how culture could play a part in the eco-social transition and if a model of decentralisation could function in Barcelona Metropolitana.

Together, cultural producers, representatives from the municipalities, stakeholders and members of the Manifesta 15 team drew a map with which to collectively build a metropolitan biennial.

Manifesta 15 Metropolitan Assembly: Process and results

The coincidence in time (2024) and in the Barcelona metropolitan region of two major events – the Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana Biennial and the European Capital of Democracy (ECoD) – and the roll-out of the metropolitan strategic plan for a city of five million inhabitants, Compromís Metropolità 2030, had created the perfect setting for the teams working on Manifesta 15, ECoD and the Pla Estratègic Metropolità de Barcelona (PEMB) to work together to set up a pilot deliberative process: the Manifesta 15 Metropolitan Assembly.

The peculiarity (and complexity) of the project also arose from the fact that there were no precedents for a deliberative process that includes 60 people from the cultural sphere at metropolitan level, with all the differences between regions, profiles and fields of cultural action.

What were the goals of this deliberative process in relation to the question of how Manifesta 15 might play a role in creating a decentralised cultural landscape?

- To take advantage of the transformational potential of culture in the broadest sense to pose and attempt to answer a specific question: *'How can we democratically, collectively drive a culture that contributes to a decentralised landscape of cultural venues and help with the eco-social*

transition in the context of the Barcelona metropolitan region?' in the knowledge that cultural policies and agents can help us move towards a more sustainable environmental and social model.

- To turn the result of this deliberative process involving 60 people from different municipalities within the metropolis into a Declaration that – in the voice of those taking part in the assembly – included the goals, policies and measures necessary to answer this question.
- To conduct a first pilot experiment in metropolitan governance, in the form of a deliberative assembly, as a means of boosting public participation in the metropolis and together meeting the challenges of a decentralised cultural landscape for the future (such as the eco-social transition) while at the same time serving as a model for future bottom-up experiments in metropolitan cultural governance in other areas.

The results of this process were fundamental in developing bottom-up initiatives in the framework of Manifesta 15 and came to form a declaration, which was agreed upon by the participants in the citizens assembly and voted on during the final session in May 2024.

DECLARATION

The attendees invited to the Manifesta 15 Metropolitan Assembly were sixty people from a wide variety of municipalities, cultures, identities, community affiliations and occupations. We expressed an interest in being part of the process, but were selected at random to ensure maximum diversity in the group. During the Assembly we noted two very important aspects: firstly, the complementary nature of visions and experiences between territories, together with a considerable capacity for collective diagnosis and potential proposals to address the challenges in the metropolitan region, its municipalities and beyond; and secondly, that despite the diversity mentioned above, this Assembly was not sufficiently representative of the groups and communities that coexist in the different municipalities from which we all come.

Having recognised the deliberative capacity, the potential for proposals and the value of this Assembly as a space of open governance, we would encourage those responsible to carry on organising further experiments of this kind, placing greater emphasis on an enhanced presence of people from groups that are often under-represented.

Over three days in March and May 2024, an intensive, stimulating, insufficient but inspiring time, we diagnosed, analysed, shared, proposed and deliberated about *how to democratically, collectively drive a culture that contributes to the eco-social transition*, and we did so in the framework of the metropolitan context that unites the territories from which we come.

Having completed our work as a deliberative assembly, **we declare:**

1

Culture is a fundamental right of every one of the people who live in our communities. Because *learning about and enjoying* culture enhances us as individuals and adds to our knowledge and our critical spirit. Because *engaging* in culture enables us to discover talents, to have a voice and to work together to construct our territory. Because *driving* culture allows us to exercise our right for the society in which we live to embrace narratives that represent what we believe in, the way we see or want to see the world.

In the context of an acute climate emergency, it is essential for culture to play a role in promoting structural, imaginary and social changes that contribute to ensuring the possibility of ecological – rather than anthropo-centric – welfare and balance for both present and future generations.

2

At this time, while we note the wealth of cultural collectives, actions and processes in our territories, we believe that neither of these two principles is in a position to be fully implemented, and that to do this calls for determined policies, strategies and actions to put us on track to achieve the following:

A culture for everybody, democratically governed and constructed in a plural, collaborative fashion

Venues, initiatives and cultural groups need to be built up and valued in a distributed, accessible way throughout the region: in the neighbourhoods of our towns and cities and in the different municipalities of our metropolitan region. This calls for a fair redistribution of resources, and it is advisable to set up joint initiatives between territories and essential to rebalance recognition of grassroots culture in relation to large-scale productions.

Recognition is also needed for all forms of culture and the cultural realities of our region as members of our culture, and for diversity in all its forms to have a real, visible space in productions that reach the population.

To achieve this, finally, it is essential that power relations, i.e. decision-making, management, setting priorities, and assessing cultural policies and events, are approached in a democratic way to include institutions, the cultural fabric, associations and the public. We therefore see participatory bodies (such as councils, tables or assemblies) as advisable, provided they are well-structured and continue over time, while calling for control of the actions of monopolistic or centralising cultural lobbies and practices.

A recognised, appreciated culture with an empowering voice

The situation of professionals in art and culture is highly precarious. We were aware of this and have seen it in the conversations between territories, and it is both possible and necessary to take steps towards a proper recognition of the world of art and culture in economic and occupational terms. From a statute for artists and other professionals in the world of culture and the arts, to improved funding for culture: whether to support creative processes or to improve paperwork, among other possible examples.

But the world of art and culture also needs to be recognised in symbolic and social terms, to further a recognition of the importance of culture in people's lives if they are to be full and fair. Therefore, the role of both education and communication is crucial. In terms of education, we need to make culture and art cut across all the different educational strata (starting with schools), and this can only be done with funding and initiatives. And with regard to communication, we must ensure that information can circulate through decentralised, capillary channels, while fostering the construction of imaginary frameworks to generate hope and create transformational scenarios.

A sustainable and environmentally transformational culture

Global habits exceed the planet's capacity for regeneration, and cultural events contribute to this overload. Global proposals for degrowth chime with the need to control and reduce large-scale productions, big cultural events (with a highly polluting profile) in favour of more local productions. Also, to implement measures to reduce the impact of events, devise protocols, ways of monitoring them and lines of cultural policies that prioritise the reduction of environmental impact.

At the same time, culture has to play its part in constructing imaginary frameworks and possibilities, offering visions from existing experiments and desirable scenarios to work towards. That is to say, helping to create a *culture of sustainability and eco-social justice*.

3

We realise that constructing these new realities is complex, and will be a process that must begin today but can only bear fruit in the medium and long term. This is why we are convinced that this must not depend on a single entity, but on the involvement of many agents: the communities and institutions in our territories, the social fabric, ourselves and the groups to which we belong.

We consider that ideally all these agents should coordinate and be governed in a transversal, democratic way, and we therefore argue that experiments such as this Assembly should carry on at inter-municipal level, while building up spaces for diverse participation at the local level.

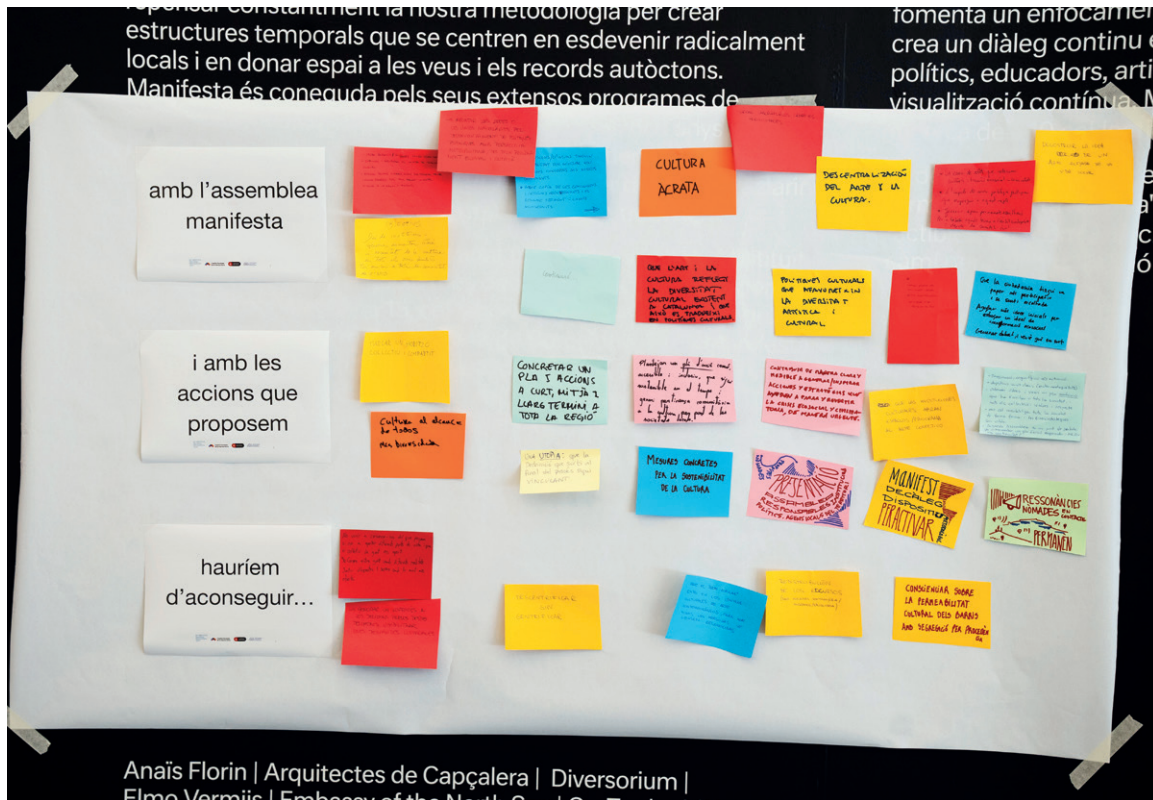
We also realise that what we propose in this Declaration does not depend on one or two brilliant measures, but on a series of steps that must be coordinated and sustained over time. We have sketched out a set of measures we see as priorities, and invite you all to read, bear in mind, adhere to and try to put into practice those you consider appropriate to your territory, and suggest others if necessary; but do not miss the opportunity and the urgent need to build them collectively.

Because if we believe that culture is a right for all, in our region there are millions of people who do not have guaranteed access to it, either now or in the future. And if we believe it is essential for culture to help to make possible a habitable, healthy and equitable metropolis in the future, today the climate emergency forces us to begin an urgent eco-social transition. Therefore, it is essential for us to organise and work together.



74

Manifesta 15 Metropolitan Assembly sessions in the Gustavo Gili



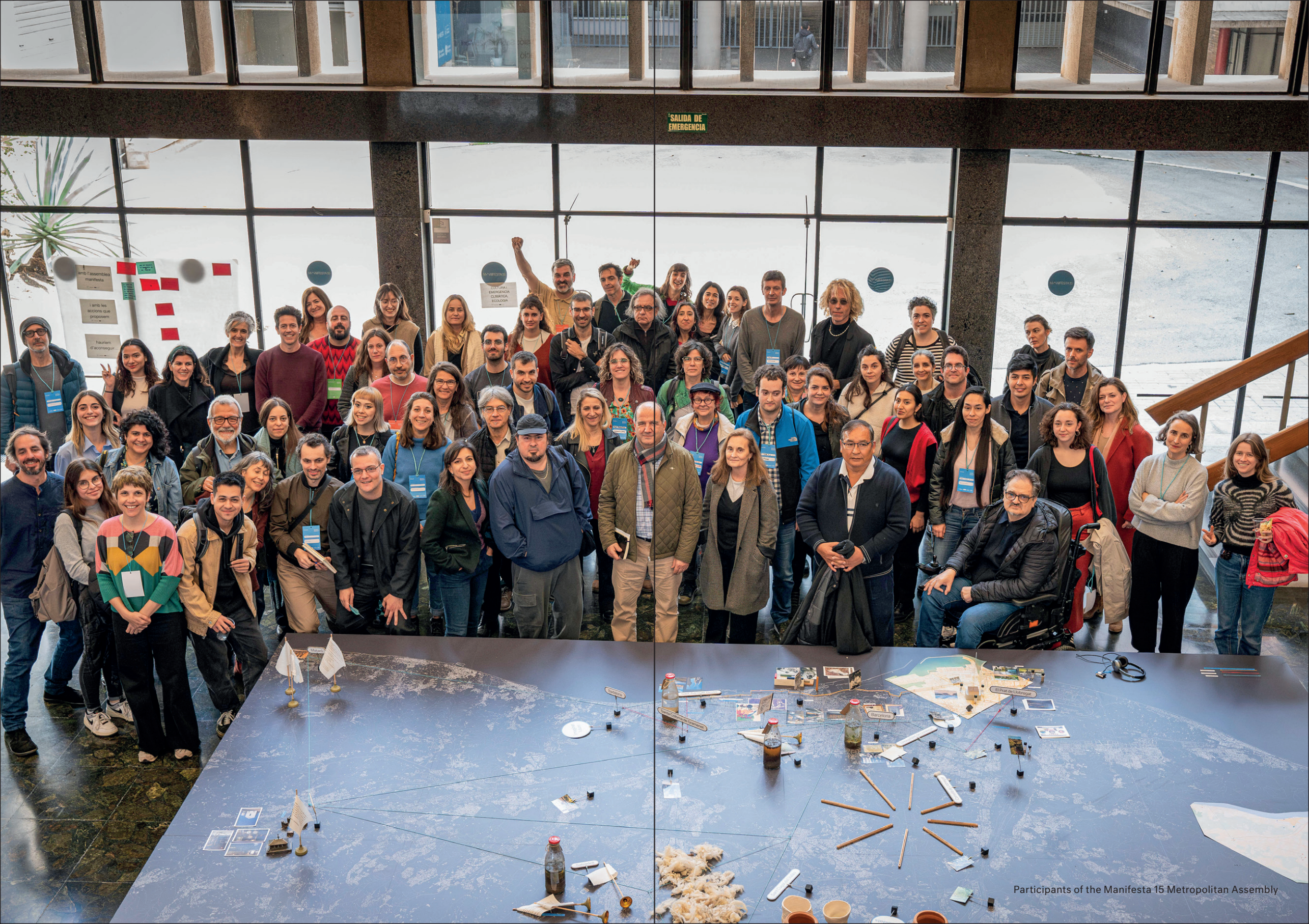
Anaïs Florin | Arquitectes de Capçalera | Diversorium |
Elmo Vermijs | Embassy of the North Sea |



Manifesta 15 Metropolitan Assembly sessions in the Gustavo Gili

75





Participants of the Manifesta 15 Metropolitan Assembly

Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana Biennial Programme

Venues and Participants

80

‘A team member picked me up from the airport and I was taken to the Three Chimneys. From that moment I found the team to be so engaged and thoughtful as I developed my contribution. As I am very slow in developing my ideas, I appreciated the patient ongoing dialogue with Hedwig, Filipa and everyone else, including other Manifesta 15 artists such as Claudia Pagès, Kiluanji Henda and Maja Escher. All of it was crucial in developing a response to the site and context, which I believed could have power and simplicity. I am very thankful to the whole group.’

Asad Raza, Manifesta 15 Participant

Venues

This decentralised edition of Manifesta has the largest geographical scope in the biennial’s history, unfolding across 16 remarkable venues which channel the past, present and future of a more eco-social Barcelona and 11 cities in the metropolitan region: Badalona, Cornellà de Llobregat, El Prat de Llobregat, Granollers, L’Hospitalet, Mataró, Sabadell, Sant Adrià de Besòs, Santa Coloma de Gramenet, Sant Cugat del Vallès and Terrassa.

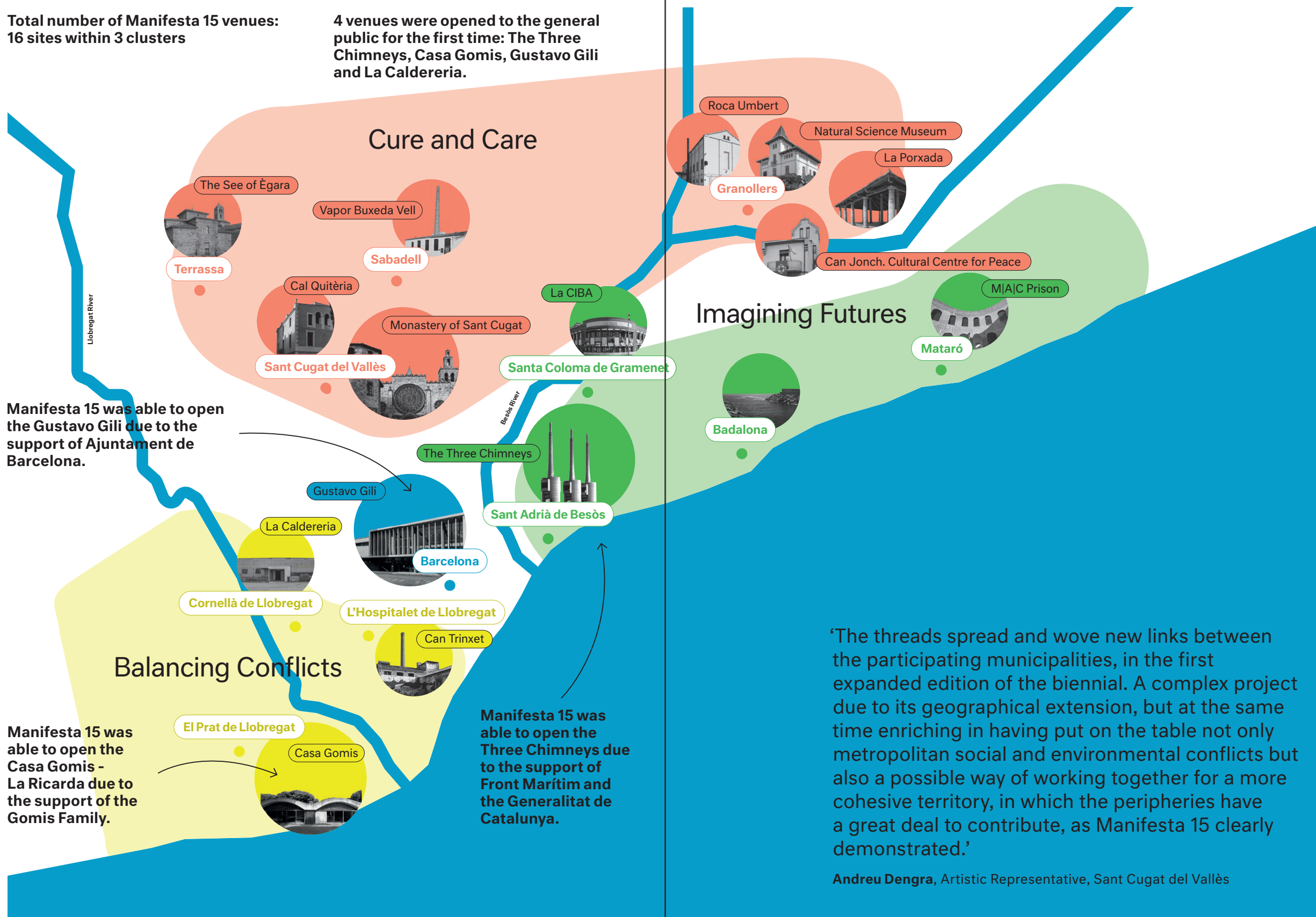
Participants

For the selection of participants, Manifesta 15 prioritised those whose practices intersected with ecological and climate justice, community engagement, and radical pedagogical approaches, with a multitude of backgrounds and expertise to create site-specific projects and time-based artistic interventions. In addition, in order to ensure a strong relationship with the local reality, Manifesta 15 invited a broad array of local initiatives to apply to the Open Call and to think beyond the realm of traditional visual art formats to tackle issues ranging from urban development and decolonisation to social inclusion and the climate transition – issues that can create a positive impact for local communities. A local and international jury reviewed all the applications and selected the 10 projects that were integrated into the main biennial programme. The other participants were chosen by the Artistic Team, in response to a new decentralised and more collaborative curatorial model. Out of 92 participants, 58% either created newly commissioned work or adapted projects especially for the biennial. In addition, in line with Manifesta 15’s commitment to promoting local perspectives, 39% of the participants were local.

81

Total number of Manifesta 15 venues:
16 sites within 3 clusters

4 venues were opened to the general public for the first time: The Three Chimneys, Casa Gomis, Gustavo Gili and La Caldereria.



‘The threads spread and wove new links between the participating municipalities, in the first expanded edition of the biennial. A complex project due to its geographical extension, but at the same time enriching in having put on the table not only metropolitan social and environmental conflicts but also a possible way of working together for a more cohesive territory, in which the peripheries have a great deal to contribute, as Manifesta 15 clearly demonstrated.’

Andreu Dengra, Artistic Representative, Sant Cugat del Vallès



BARCELONA

The former Gustavo Gili publishing house

The former Gustavo Gili publishing house exemplifies the Catalan architecture of the 1950s. Centrally located in the Eixample, the building was designed by Joaquim Gili and Francesc Bassó (members of Grup R) and was used for its original purpose until 2016. Under its auspices, seminal publications on various topics, including visual culture and architecture, were prepared for widespread public release. Following the acceptance of its Bid, Barcelona City Council temporarily allocated the building to Manifesta 15 for use as its headquarters and as a living laboratory for the pre-biennial research process. During the biennial, the Gustavo Gili was a hive of activity, hosting three archival presentations, artistic interventions, public programmes, a pop-up branch of the Llibreria Finestres bookshop and many more activities.

Participants in this venue:

Anaïs Florin
Agnes Essonti Luque
Germán Labrador Méndez
Lorenzo Sandoval
Fernando Sánchez Castillo
Lara Schnitger
Claudia Pagès
Tania Safura Adam
Daniela Ortiz & Xose Quiroga
Massa Salvatge & Lluc Mayol
Diversorium & Ariadna Guiteras
Paisanaje
Tornen les esquelles
Transductores

Balancing Conflicts

EL PRAT DE LLOBREGAT

Casa Gomis

Casa Gomis, situated on a stretch of land known as La Ricarda, is a Modernist villa designed by Antoni Bonet Castellana for Ricardo Gomis Serdañons and his wife Inés Bertrand Mata. Built between 1949 and 1963, the residential property has a storied past and, up until Manifesta 15, had an uncertain future. While it was still functioning as a private home, it doubled as an alternative cultural centre during the Franco dictatorship. During this time, a who's-who of Catalan cultural figures and groups not only spent time at the property but also created and presented work there. Notably, many of the regular guests were prominent stakeholders in the struggle against Franco's dictatorship, advocating for a democratic transition. Today, the progressive principles that the property promotes architecturally, and for which its residents and guests advocated in varied ways, are imperilled. This is because Casa Gomis is in the Llobregat Delta Nature Reserve, which borders the Barcelona-El Prat Airport. Both the reserve and the property are liable to destruction if the forces lobbying for the airport to be expanded succeed. During Manifesta 15, Casa Gomis was a home for artistic perspectives on sustainability and modernisation. The works by the 23 participants presented at the main venue for the *Balancing Conflicts* cluster probed eco-social transformations while engaging

with such topics as growth, degrowth and environmental stewardship.

Participants in this venue:

Larry Achiampong
Anca Benera & Arnold Estefan
Annette Barcelo
Magda Bolumar Chertó
Chiara Camoni
Manuel Chavajay
Embassy of the North Sea
Gözde İlkin
Lola Lasurt
Ira Lupu
Ana Mendieta
Fina Miralles
Paisanaje
Carlos Pérez Siquier
Ruta Putramentaiz
Enrique Ramírez
Felipe Romero Beltrán
Lin May Saeed
Antoni Tàpies
Elmo Vermijs
Moisés Villèlia

L'HOSPITALET DE LLOBREGAT

Can Trinxet

Can Trinxet is a former textile factory. Inaugurated in 1890, it was the foremost complex of its kind in L'Hospitalet de Llobregat, a city known for its industrial heritage. Owing to its importance as a centre for manufacturing, the city's population boomed in the 20th century, as workers from across Spain and beyond moved there in search of gainful employment. While its industrial base has since withered, the city – often referred to as “L'Hospitalet” or “L'H” – is still the second largest municipality in the metropolitan region. Today, Can Gras is the only part of the textile factory that remains, testifying to the clout of an industry that was a socio-economic juggernaut and whose spectre continues to loom over the region. Here, where

women's labour was fundamental, but also quite invisible, Manifesta 15 invited Binta Diaw to present a monumental adaptation of her work *Dià s p o r a*. Against this backdrop, the installation relates to the history of textile manufacturing in Barcelona, and particularly its links to the slave trade.

Participant in this venue:

Binta Diaw

CORNELLÀ DE LLOBREGAT

La Caldereria

La Caldereria has gone through multiple iterations since its founding in 1910. The factory first produced motors, subsequently became a global centre for railway equipment and now functions as a hangar and workspace for municipal brigades. Located in Cornellà de Llobregat, an industrial town that has undergone major redevelopment in recent years, the factory's presence raises the question of how to use what industry has been passed down while pursuing environmental and social justice. Here, Manifesta 15 presents a multimedia installation by Katja Novitskova, which considers how humankind monitors nature via technological apparatuses – and to what end.

Participant in this venue:

Katja Novitskova

Cure and Care

SANT CUGAT DEL VALLÈS

Monastery of Sant Cugat

The Monastery of Sant Cugat, which was founded in the 9th century and completed in the 14th, combines Romanesque,

Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque elements. With its eclectic architectural styles, the monastery epitomises how the metropolitan region has been a cultural crossroads since time immemorial. The monastery became an epicentre of power and culture in the 11th century, when its monks lived according to the Benedictine tradition and managed an extensive domain. During Manifesta 15, the still-functioning spiritual sanctuary was the main venue for the biennial's *Cure and Care* cluster. The work of the 14 participants presented here stands for the importance of caring for ourselves, for each other and for the natural environment. It also addresses different forms of spirituality, with a particular focus on work that dissents from patriarchal and occidental narratives, amplifying the voices of women, traditional healers and ancestral spirits while prioritising a respect for nature and promoting more-than-human care practices.

Participants in this venue:

Dana Awartani
José Bedia
Bea Bonafini
Fanja Bouts
Judy Chicago
Simone Fattal
Marie-Claire Messouma
Manlanbien
Diana Policarpo
radio SLUMBER
Mónica Rikić
Marianna Simnett
Buhlebezwe Siwani
Martin Toloku
Wu Tsang

Cal Quitèria

Cal Quitèria, a 19th-century country house in Sant Cugat, now hosts the Grau-Garriga Centre for Contemporary Textile Art. A pivotal centre

for contemporary textile art in the metropolitan region, this cultural institution perpetuates the Catalan artist Josep Grau-Garriga's commitment to promoting an art form whose expressive possibilities were fully embraced by the Catalan Tapestry School.

Nora Ancarola presents a newly commissioned project that takes the form of a collective exploration of the town of Ripollet's fragile urban plan. Bringing together an array of approaches and voices from the community, *#lamevaripollet* is simultaneously an archival space that collects the concerns of citizens, a reflectional video installation about a lost ecosystem, and a prospective game space that stimulates performative activation by the audience. This project is a feminist geographical and poetical analysis of a town seen from a female perspective. In *#lamevaripollet*, Ancarola amplifies the voices of women from three different generations who have been working to improve and care for the living conditions of their town. *#lamevaripollet* celebrates their resilience, concerns, yearnings and expectations of a better future.

Participant in this venue:

Nora Ancarola

SABADELL

Vapor Buxeda Vell

Vapor Buxeda Vell was founded by the Buxeda brothers in 1852 and exemplifies Sabadell's outsize contributions to the Industrial Revolution. Colloquially referred to as 'Can Buxeda', the textile factory ran on electricity generated on site with its own steam engine. In this venue, Manifesta 15 presents work by three participants that engages with

female labour, textile manufacturing, colonialism and their Catalan relations, evoking how underrepresented communities can (re)claim metropolitan narratives.

Participants in this venue:

Jonathas de Andrade
Lamin Fofana
Tanja Smeets

TERRASSA

The See of Ègara

Dating from the 5th century, the See of Ègara – an episcopal archaeological complex – is an exemplary landmark for the ecclesiastical, cultural and architectural heritage of Catalonia. The three most prominent features of the complex are the Cathedral of St. Mary and the Churches of St. Michael and St. Peter, whose respective pictorial decorations are exceedingly rare. Moving between the See's buildings, the profound evolutions that humanity has experienced across the ages are brought into sharp relief. At the heart of the complex, Manifesta 15 presents work by six participants which channels old and new forms of spirituality, with special emphasis on healing practices, rituals, post-colonial and post-human narratives and their material projections.

Participants in this venue:

Seyni Awa Camara
Marcos Kueh
Ana Mendieta
Antoni Miralda
Buhlebezwe Siwani
Tanja Smeets

GRANOLLERS

Roca Umbert. Fàbrica de les Arts

Roca Umbert is a former textile factory whose first looms were installed in 1904. The

factory grew steadily during the industrialisation and consolidation of the Catalan textile sector before closing in 2001. Starting in 2003, the factory has been incrementally transformed; in the years that followed, a library as well as an arts and culture centre have been established on the site. The factory is also the setting for various special events, including the Panoràmic Festival, which, together with Manifesta 15, commissioned the Spanish artist Alba G. Corral to create a site-specific installation for *La Tèrmica* – the factory's thermal station.

Participant in this venue:

Alba G. Corral

La Porxada

La Porxada (The Porch) is on Plaça Gran, the main square in the old town of Granollers. The structure, which dates from the 16th century, has 15 columns standing on a slightly elevated stone platform and a hipped roof adorned with green glazed tiles. Originally used as a corn exchange, in modern and contemporary times the structure has hosted a fresh produce market and frequent cultural events. On the 31st of May, 1938, during the Spanish Civil War, *La Porxada* was damaged in a bombing raid by Italian aircraft which caused great destruction and loss of life. The rebuilt structure embodies the resilience of local residents in the face of divisive forces.

Participant in this venue:

Félix Blume

Natural Science Museum

The Natural Science Museum of Granollers focuses on geology, botany, palaeontology and zoology, connecting the

realms of nature and culture. The museum consists of two buildings – La Tela, a Catalan Art Nouveau house, and a contemporary annex – plus an integrated garden. It has a permanent collection and research library and hosts temporary exhibitions on a regular basis. Part of Manifesta 15's *Cure and Care* cluster, the work of the three participants presented here envisions collaborative and symbiotic relations between humans, more-than-human entities and the environment.

Participants in this venue:

Hugo Canoilas
Eva Chettle
Jonathas de Andrade

Can Jonch

The Can Jonch Cultural Centre for Peace was established in 2008 – the 70th anniversary of the bombing of Granollers during the Spanish Civil War. The centre, located in a Catalan Art Nouveau house, serves as both an exhibition venue and a resource hub for human rights work. In its garden, an oak tree grows – a symbol of freedom and perseverance that descends from the iconic Tree of Guernica. Under this sacred tree, Manifesta 15 presents a video installation by MASBEDO, which engages with how memory is constructed.

Participant in this venue:

MASBEDO

Imagining Futures

SANT ADRIÀ DE BESÒS

The Three Chimneys

The Three Chimneys loom large on the Barcelona skyline. Erected in the 1970s, they were part of a thermal power station that generated electricity

for the metropolitan region before ceasing to function in 2011. Colloquially referred to as the 'Sagrada Família of the workers' or the 'Sagrada Família of electricity', the Three Chimneys have been idle since the industrial facility closed and are thus an exceptionally appropriate main venue for the Manifesta 15 *Imagining Futures* cluster. Opened to the public for the first time during the biennial, they speak to the challenges and opportunities of urban and social regeneration within the vast spaces vacated by industry. Due to their location where the Besòs River meets the sea, they also promise to serve a key role in the eco-social transition. In turn, the work presented herein – a large proportion of which is new commissions – queries systems of extraction and exploitation while exploring utopian logics, blue economies and more-than-human worlds, among other topics. Ensuring that local perspectives are at the forefront of the Three Chimneys' adaptation, Manifesta 15 also presents an *in situ* archival presentation about local histories, struggles and communities connected to the factory, spotlighting the expertise and experiences of Besòs residents.

Participants in this venue:

Niels Albers
Carlos Bunga
Carolina Caycedo
Julian Charrière
CHOI+SHINE Architects
Claire Fontaine
Jeremy Deller
Maja Escher
Alexandra Daisy Ginsberg
Institute for Postnatural Studies & Juan Pablo Pacheco Bejarano
Jokkoo & cantdefine.me
Nnena Kalu
Kiluanji Kia Henda
Aurèlia Muñoz
Mike Nelson

OJO Estudio
Asad Raza
Diana Scherer
Ugo Schiavi
Emilija Škarnulytė
Dziga Vertov

SANTA COLOMA DE GRAMENET

La CIBA

Opened in 2020, La CIBA is an exemplary public facility by and for the women of Santa Coloma de Gramenet. Empowering women to be independent in all aspects of their lives, this feminist hub for innovation hosts workshops and training sessions in addition to providing accessible spaces for co-creation and free expression. The work of the two participants presented in La CIBA during Manifesta 15 furthers La CIBA's mission, be it through a reading and performative experience of the Besòs River or the summoning of ancestral feminist deities.

Participants in this venue:

Chiara Camoni
Rosa Tharrats and Gabriel Ventura

MATARÓ

M|A|C Prison

Designed by Elies Rogent, Mataró Prison was constructed in 1863 and was the first in Spain to adopt the panopticon model, cementing its significance in the history of carceral architecture in the country. It housed many political prisoners in Francoist Spain before it was closed in 1967. In 2022, the building was transformed from a centre for repression into a space for cultural freedom, becoming the home of Mataró Art Contemporani (M|A|C) – a contemporary art centre. During Manifesta 15, the building hosts four video

installations produced by the Han Nefkens Foundation and site-specific work created by the Catalan artists Domènec and Eva Fàbregas commissioned by M|A|C.

Participants in this venue:

Korakrit Arunanondchai
Martha Atienza
Priyageetha Dia
Domènec
Eva Fàbregas
Maya Watanabe

REGION

Participants presenting across the region

The Manifesta 15 programme extended beyond the 12 municipalities and 16 venues. Work by the following participants was presented across the region, strengthening ties between the diverse range of artistic and cultural expressions present in the region.

Tornen les esquelles
Transductores
La Casa dels Futurs
Matías Daporta
Institute for Postnatural Studies and Juan Pablo Pacheco Bejarano
Lara Schnitger



Katja Novitskova, *Pattern of Activation (random forest)*
La Caldereria



Alba G. Corral, *Les petites Coses*
Roca Umbert. Fàbrica de les Arts



Asad Raza, *Prehension*
The Three Chimneys

Archival Presentations

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‘Being part of this incredible journey has been more than just a professional experience – it’s been a deeply meaningful chapter that I’ll always carry with me. Working alongside such talented, dedicated and inspiring people has taught me so much, and I feel honoured to have contributed to a project that stands for creativity, collaboration and cultural dialogue in my city.’

Claudia Noble, Manifesta 15 team member

Manifesta 15 took the initiative of mapping the historical and socio-cultural context of the Catalan region by commissioning a series of much-needed archival presentations, three of which were organised in the former Gustavo Gili publishing house in the Eixample neighbourhood of Barcelona and the fourth in the Three Chimneys in Sant Adrià de Besòs.

The presentations collectively formed the historical and contextual foundation underpinning this edition of the biennial and connecting the event to the deeper tissues of local society and delving into stories that have previously been underseen, underheard or repressed.

The presentations in the Gustavo Gili building surveyed Barcelona’s democratic evolution from the early 1800s until today, the Black African Diaspora experience in the metropolitan region, and Catalan radical pedagogical situations in historical perspective. The first, conceptualised by Germán Labrador Méndez, a scholar of Modern and Contemporary Spain who is on the faculty at Princeton University, assumed the form of an ‘archive-library’, and focused on Barcelona’s democratic and cultural evolution from the 17th century to the post-Franco period. The second, conceptualised by Tania Safura Adam, a curator, researcher and founder of Radio Africa, focused on Black life in the metropolitan region, making visible previously unseen archives to forge collective memories. The final archive, conceptualised by the Manifesta 15 Education and Mediation Department, showcased artistic research into the archives of five radical pedagogical approaches in 20th century Catalonia.

Filled with original and interpretative materials, these presentations critically (re)evaluated customs, movements and methodologies that have been historically overlooked, underappreciated or repressed. While each presentation had its own narrative and could be engaged with individually, the audience was invited to make connections between them. Taken as a whole, the presentations illuminated the region’s nuanced trajectory and offered versatile historical insights for confronting today’s most pressing challenges. Each archive was highly original; notably, their organisers invited artists and collectives to participate in the archives’ construction, public programme and interpretation, thereby bolstering their resonance with a broad public.

The presentation at the Three Chimneys, *Memory of the Smoke*, was commissioned by the director of Manifesta 15 to ensure that the history of the Three Chimneys was contextualised within the democratic and ecological struggles for rights led by female protesters and male workers. It traced the social and industrial heritage of Sant Adrià de Besòs, paying tribute to residents’ long-standing fight for equitable living conditions, while emphasising that their aspirations must be prioritised in the repurposing of the iconic thermal power plant.

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Escola de passats

Escola de passats consisted of an archive of historical experiences, both aesthetic and political in nature, situated in metropolitan Barcelona and articulated through six key historical passages – from the colonial origins of industrial capitalism to the current eco-social crisis (1820-2024). In the face of a history of the city and the region understood as an accumulation of progress, beauty and modernity, a question arose about the costs and limits of such accumulation, as well as the barriers – of class, gender, race, origin, visibility and voice – that explain how historical and present-day Barcelona works.

In this presentation, the past was summoned as a democratic laboratory, compiled into an archive of utopian imaginations, from which to project desirable collective futures. On this occasion, a solidary experimental constellation of texts, images and artifacts was brought together, in which other forms of common life and other histories of the city and region were presented, those of subaltern, countercultural or simply forgotten collectives, communities and worlds. Aesthetics of protests here included different types of artistic and documentary materials, as well as newly commissioned work by Fernando Sánchez Castillo, in the intersection between critical interrogation and historical utopia. They allowed us not only to understand participatory forms of resistance to capital, the authoritarian state and fascism, but also to reconstruct moments and places where the radical democratisation of knowledge, rights and resources – such as work, energy, desire or political imagination – was possible.

Black Archives: Fragments of an Anti-Colonial Metropolis

Black Archives: Fragments of an Anti-Colonial Metropolis was a presentation that reflected on how we forge collective memories and circulate knowledge about and among populations when they live on the margins and do not form part of the narrative or representation of a city or region, much less its projection, since their lives have been silenced and made invisible. In a present in which the echoes of the past are unceasing and subjugation is no longer sustainable, lives begin to emerge, and the archive, in its multiple formats, constitutes the materiality necessary to construct history, becoming the indisputable testimony that aspires to break the silence of the past and foster other ways of imagining the future.

This is the story of Barcelona's Black communities, constantly silenced, but present for centuries in the metropolis, and more visibly so as a result of the immigration process in the post-Franco period. The materiality of their considerable legacies has faded, either because nothing has been written down or because the documentary evidence exists in the form of scattered fragments that need to be retrieved, compiled and rewritten.

This presentation was an exercise in history and writing that strove to weave together the collective memory by drawing collectively sometimes disparate fragments scattered across the political, associative, cultural and domestic

spectrums; fragments that operate in the border zones between the informal and the formal, the lawful and the illicit, the chaotic and the ordered. Together, they constituted a materiality in the framework of 'Black Spain: Journey towards blackness in space-time,' a laboratory led by Tania Safura Adam which reflects on the Black diaspora experience. Over the course of three years, an eclectic repository of microhistories, documents, artistic works, images, sound and film recordings and hitherto invisible archives, as well as books, comics, photographs, albums, videos and magazines, has been generated.

Corresponding to the Manifesta 15 conceptual framework, the presentation was structured in three areas: *Cure and Care*, *Imagining Futures*, and *Balancing Conflicts*, each of which focused on a particular aspect of Black existence in this part of the world. The first area consisted of a historiographical and testimonial rereading of the metropolis. The second reinforced the idea of a Black archive under construction that breaks with unilateral historicity, shaping an unexpected social and intellectual memory, and the third filled the gaps and silences in the racist and colonial narrative of the city and its past, as well as connecting the spheres in which confrontations arise and affect quotidian, artistic and political practices.

As part of the exhibition *Black Archives: Fragments of an Anti-Colonial Metropolis*, curator Tania Safura Adam organised a series of guided visits and discussions examining how we construct collective memories and share knowledge about communities that in many cases live on society's margins. These tours and conversations acted as a meaningful complement to the exhibition, piecing together a broader collective memory from diverse and sometimes fragmented perspectives. Numerous collectives contributed invaluable insights to this unique project, helping to bring visibility to these often-overlooked narratives.

The exhibition and the research were made into a publication by Manifesta 15 and Tania Safura Adam entitled *Black Archives: Fragments of an Anti-Colonial Metropolis* (see page 194).

Fora per fer escola. Radical practices from Catalan pedagogies

Fora per fer escola is a collaborative research project that shaped the Manifesta 15 Education and Mediation Programme. In the original Catalan, the title has multiple connotations: taking education outdoors, setting precedents and being dismissed – or even exiled – for creating a school.

The presentation sprang from the research that Manifesta 15 commissioned several Spanish collectives and artists to conduct into progressive, twentieth-century Catalan pedagogical situations: *Escola de Bosc* (Forest School, founded 1914), *Escola del Mar* (School of the Sea, founded 1921), *Escola Vil·la Joana* (founded 1921), *Batec teachers' collective* (1930s), and *Escoles en Lluita* (Schools in Struggle, late 1970s).

Through artistic research, mediation, public programming and professional networking, *Fora per fer escola* shone light on ideas and practices capable of meaningfully contributing to the pedagogical and eco-social transformations

that are necessary today. These included, but were not limited to: food sovereignty, inclusive spaces, nature as pedagogy, solidarity networks and the collective memory of the social struggle for public education. The research that informed the archival presentation also led to the creation of a platform for practising educators known as Teachers' Camps, which were initiated in the metropolitan region. The project also included a publication titled *Fora per fer escola*, which consolidated and contextualised the research and was distributed to educational organisations in Catalonia.

For more information on the project and its activations, see page 152.

Memory of the Smoke. Eco-social conflicts in sacrifice zones

'Sacrifice zones' refer to areas whose population and surroundings suffer severe, sustained damage caused by industrial activity, exemplified here by the Three Chimneys in Sant Adrià de Besòs. The chimneys, the hulking masses of iron and concrete and the electricity pylons, have provided continued sustenance while all the time posing a huge environmental and social threat at a great cost.

To reflect on this, Manifesta 15 organised a place of meeting and engagement at the Three Chimneys, which resulted in the creation of a memory room, as well as a programme of activities that was rolled out by a network of local people. Both initiatives – the room and the programme – were deeply interconnected, driven by a collective desire to call on residents to join forces in contemplating the past and constructing the future.

All this engagement and research culminated in a newly commissioned exhibition composed and produced by Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana and the Observatori de la Vida Quotidiana (OVQ), *Memory of the Smoke: Eco-Social Conflicts in Sacrifice Zones*. Located on the second floor of the iconic Three Chimneys in Sant Adrià de Besòs, it explored the concept of 'sacrifice zones'. Focusing on Sant Adrià de Besòs, where industrial activity has caused environmental harm yet fostered a strong community identity, the exhibition celebrated grassroots movements advocating for environmental preservation, social justice and urban regeneration.

The exhibition was articulated in three sections. 'The Thermal Power Station, inconclusive poem' explored how the industrial landscape of Sant Adrià had a significant physical and social impact on this place, expressing the struggles, sacrifices and victories of the working class. 'The Jara Photography Workshop' showcased the results of a pioneering workshop for primary school pupils at the Jara School in La Mina neighbourhood between 1985 and 1990. Conceived and run by the teachers José María Escalona and Ana Quintín, the workshop had various pedagogical and artistic goals, including the study of images as a means of expression and the fostering of critical thinking and autonomy as well as the creation of materials based on the connection with the local community. Finally, the third section, 'Gregal, School of Mutual Support', delved into the activities led by anti-capitalist neighbourhood organisation Gregal Cooperative, one of the

leading socio-political entities in the Besòs-Maresme area. Having started in 1961 as a school, in due course the cooperative became the first organised environmental group in Spain. Gregal currently runs a social canteen, which provides many people in need with a daily hot meal.

Along with the exhibition, a programme of activities created in collaboration with local residents and organisations was set up under the title *Conversations at the Factory*. Highlights included discussions about the 1966 women-led protests against industrial soot and debates on the environmental and urban challenges in Sant Adrià.

In addition, on the 10th of October 2024, Manifesta 15, in collaboration with the Residents' Association of the Sant Joan Baptista neighbourhood of Sant Adrià de Besòs, hosted a gathering of former workers from the Three Chimneys of Sant Adrià at the venue. Over 250 former workers, together with their families, attended this impactful event, which began with a floral offering at the entrance.

During the gathering, three former workers shared poignant memories of their experiences working on the site, followed by a visit to the exhibition *Memory of the Smoke*. The event concluded with a toast, attended by Filo Cañete, the Mayor of Sant Adrià de Besòs, shared by all those present.

One of the most moving moments was the reading of the poem 'Yo soy yo y mis compañeros' [I am me and my co-workers] by an anonymous author, a tribute to a former worker who lost his life for his commitment to trade unionism.

The programme around *Memory of the Smoke* concluded on the 23rd of November 2024 with a collective reading of Javier Pérez Andújar's novel *Paseos con mi madre*. Participants explored the essence of the Besòs Delta, highlighting its shared history and culture. This event provided a fitting conclusion to the programme and the exhibition archive.

Clearly a much-needed archival intervention, *Memory of the Smoke* was one of the most rewarding and successful projects within Manifesta 15 and one that we hope will continue to be presented to the public in the near future.

Tania Safura Adam, *Arxius Negres* installation
Former Gustavo Gili publishing house



Germán Labrador, *Escola de Passats* installation.
Former Gustavo Gili publishing house

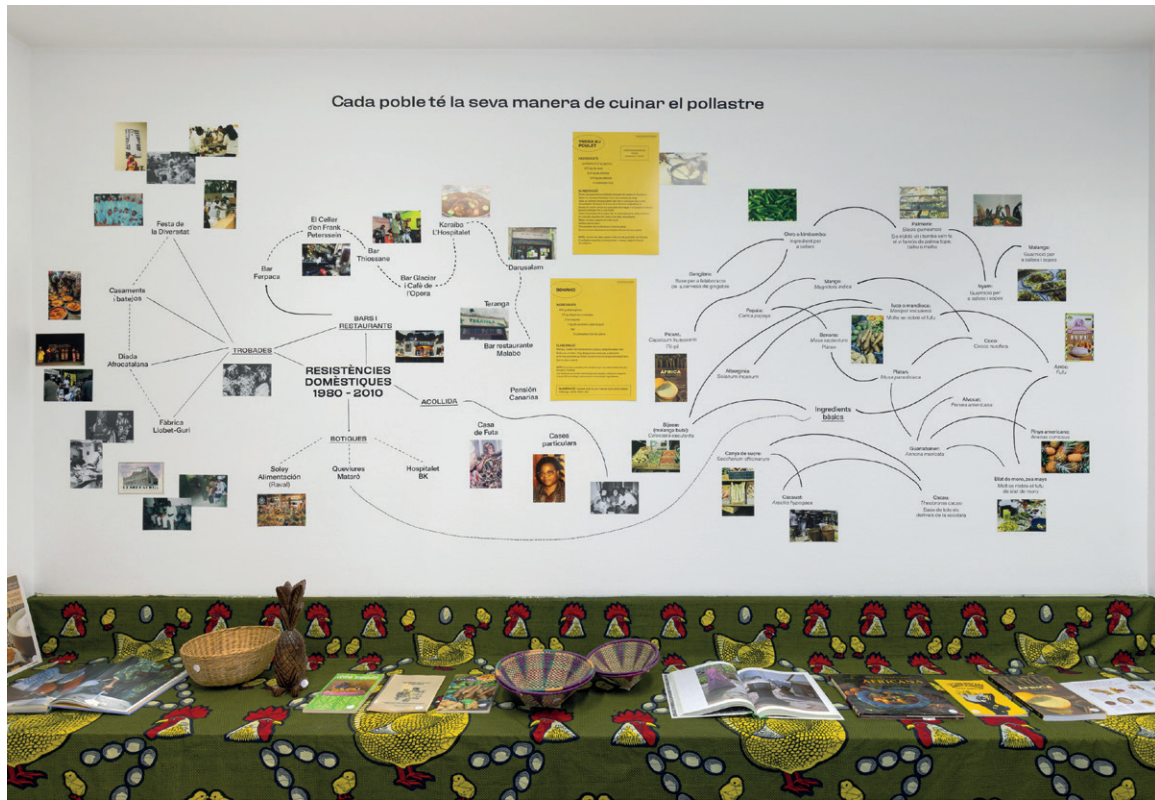




106 *Fora per fer Escola* archival presentation at the former Gustavo Gili publishing house
Arxius Negres presentation at the former Gustavo Gili publishing house



Arxius Negres presentation at the former Gustavo Gili publishing house 107





Selection of Interdisciplinary and Participatory Projects

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‘During Manifesta 15, I was able to present my installation *Essaim* [Swarm] in a public space, in *La Porxada* district of Granollers. It was a unique opportunity for the work to break free from the constraints of the museum and its four walls, allowing the sounds of the bees that make up the sound installation to be heard by everyone, not just contemporary art lovers but local people, children, and tourists passing by. It was a constructive experience for me, one that will resonate in my future projects and exhibitions.’

Félix Blume, Manifesta 15 participant

Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana is based on a participatory, bottom-up methodology with the aim of ensuring that the project is deeply interwoven with the tissues of local society, infrastructure and complex common concerns. That is why the artistic and socio-ecological proposals of artists are executed in deep engagement with the various participatory projects around the territory and with the local communities involved in shaping, complementing and extending the Manifesta 15 programme and its audience to issues that really matter.

Manifesta 15 Eco-social projects

Embassy of the North Sea

Not Illegal Fishing Competition

As part of their pre-biennial research for Manifesta 15, the international collective Embassy of the North Sea studied the impact of pollution, desalination and the introduction of non-native species on the wetlands and rivers of Barcelona, focusing their research on the voices of non-human actors and their relation to the natural and urban environment of the Llobregat Delta. In this context, from the 11th to the 14th of July, 2024, they organised the ‘Not Illegal Fishing Competition’ in the Llobregat River.

The competition addressed issues of care and responsibility for non-human actors in our urban ecosystem. The first day was designed to engage local children, around ten years old, many of whom had never been near the river and were fascinated by the creatures they discovered. Other local residents, such as a woman working for an organisation monitoring the quality of Barcelona’s drinking water, took the opportunity to learn more about the Llobregat. This event helped connect people to the river, whose beauty and conflicts were showcased in the Embassy of the North Sea’s installation for Manifesta 15 in Casa Gomis and in the Museum of Design-DHub exhibition *The Ocean Speaks. New ecologies and new economies of the seas*.

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Tornen les esquelles

C.A.LL (camí amb llana)

The Catalan textile art collective Tornen les esquelles creates participatory actions that bring together local communities, cultural practitioners and shepherds, all of whom share a commitment to stewarding the Collserola Natural Park, Barcelona's green lung. For Manifesta 15, Tornen les esquelles symbolically reactivated an ancient transhumance route on which shepherds brought their sheep and goats between the mountains and the sea, with the aim of one day reconnecting them with the metropolis. During the workshop, participants together wove a tapestry with wool from local flocks, which was then put on show at the headquarters of Manifesta 15 at the former Gustavo Gili publishing house.

Manifesta 15 Urban projects

Bicicletada

Manifesta 15 hosted 'De riu a riu' (From river to river), a collective bike ride on the 9th of November that brought together almost 700 cyclists in a celebration of sustainable mobility and safer citywide connectivity along the metropolitan coast. This was a singular opportunity to cycle from river to river, crossing the Port of Barcelona and part of the city's metropolitan coastline, with the aim of connecting the Besòs and Llobregat rivers and passing through the neighbourhoods of La Marina and Ciutat Vella. This initiative promoted sustainable mobility and an environment in which citizens were able to enjoy safe and accessible public spaces, while also highlighting some of the opportunities these offer the city.

Starting from the former bed of the Llobregat River, the cycle ride made its way through the currently restricted area of the Port (which opened its gates especially for Manifesta 15), giving participants the chance to explore this off-limits space and to reconnect with their coastline. The route continued along the Barcelona coastline, highlighting the need to address the existing disconnect between the two rivers, and ended at the Three Chimneys in Sant Adrià de Besòs, one of the main venues of Manifesta 15.

Local press covering the event celebrated the diversity of the participants and expressed the hope that it might result in a wider conversation on the need to address the lack of connection between the two rivers and to catalyse meaningful change.

'De Riu a Riu' was run in collaboration with local organisations such as Biciclot and the Bicicleta Club de Catalunya (BACC) and was made possible with the support of Zona Franca, the Port of Barcelona and the city councils of Barcelona and Sant Adrià de Besòs.



Embassy of the North Sea, Not Illegal Fishing Competition
Tornen les esquelles, C.A.LL (camí de llana)





Manifesta 15 Community-based projects

Gendered Anti-Gypsyism and Cultural Appropriation of Romani Music Congress

Opening of the temporary Flamenco Pop Museum

On the 17th and 18th of October 2024, the Voces Gitanas organised the 2nd Congress on Gendered Anti-Gypsyism in the La Mina neighbourhood. In the framework of this congress, from Tuesday the 15th to Sunday the 20th of October 2024, a pop-up Flamenco Pop Museum, curated by Cathy Claret, was set up in the lobby of the Turbines hall at the Three Chimneys in Sant Adrià de Besòs, along with a series of cultural activities and concerts followed by a popular dinner and drinks for participants. This event was a great success among the visiting audience and the local communities.

Jokkoo & cantdefine.me

Sonido Invisible

Sonido Invisible consisted of a two-channel audio-visual installation created in collaboration with the communities who collect and recycle metal in Barcelona – communities which are denied their basic human right to work and housing on arrival in Europe, and many of whose members hail from the African diaspora.

Manifesta 15 Participatory projects

A major proportion of the artworks were presented site specifically and made by participants during Manifesta 15 in close collaboration with local stakeholders from a diverse group of Catalan communities, strengthening ties between the wide range of expressions of art and culture in the region. These participatory projects constituted one of the backbones of the biennial's programme. A few examples are briefly described:

CHOI+SHINE's collective crochet activity

Urchins

This artistic project, a substantial structure crafted from iron and crocheted rope, drew inspiration from the skeleton of a sea urchin and from how fishing communities have worked with these traditional tools and techniques and helped Jin Choi recreate these patterns into an artistic piece. The work was conceived as a tribute to Barcelona's heritage of textiles and fishing, with a particular emphasis on the historical struggles of the women of Sant Adrià de Besòs to improve working conditions and protect the environment. *Urchins* was crafted in La Mina by 120 local participants from across the region, in an endeavour of great patience, tenacity and teamwork over an extended period.

Lara Schnitger

Women's work is Never Done, Banderes per la Gran Barcelona

On receiving a commission from Manifesta 15, Lara Schnitger created a decentralised installation in collaboration with Xarxa de Dones Cosidores, a women's sewing collective. The installation consisted of narrative banners that finally gave real projection to the voice to the women of metropolitan Barcelona, who have long been kept quiet. These banners were strung like skirts around several smokestacks or chimneys across the region in an array of metropolitan cities. The women participated in the making of the banners and decided which phrases to proclaim following a series of workshops. The installation built upon the stories (personal and collective) of local women and their communities and intertwined these with the work of the textile industry – dyeing, bleaching, spinning and pressing.

Binta Diaw

Dj à s p o r a

The Italian-Senegalese artist Binta Diaw summoned up the tradition of hair braiding among African women caught up in the Atlantic slave trade in creating her monumental installation, for which she invited members of the African diaspora in L'Hospitalet de Llobregat to weave together long braids of synthetic hair. As they worked, the participants shared personal histories from the past and present, developing solidarity.



CHOI+SHINE's collective crochet activity, *Urchins*

Manifesta 15 Mobile Venue

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To symbolise the growing need for interconnectedness and mobility among the metropolitan cities, Manifesta 15, for the first time in the biennial's history, created a mobile structure designed and built by students of the Institute for Advanced Architecture of Catalonia (IAAC), which hosted a programme linking the 11 participating metropolitan cities. Programmed by Manifesta 15 and the local municipalities, this nomadic travelling space, constructed with a firm emphasis on sustainable methods and entitled the Manifesta 15 Mobile Venue, was installed as the home base in the main square of each municipality during the biennial's Focus Weeks, providing a versatile open-air platform for various activities such as educational initiatives, Family Days, workshops, mediated tours, talks and performances.

The Manifesta 15 Mobile Venue also reflects the fundamental values that the biennial promotes, such as environmental responsibility in the eco-social transition by using sustainable, recycled materials, as well as developing the concepts of mobility and decentralisation through its innovative design. This approach not only fulfilled the practical functions of connecting the different municipalities but also served to actively involve residents in the cultural activities of their region. Celebratory moments marked the beginning of each Focus Week with a diverse array of performances, talks and presentations.

Manifesta 15 Focus Weeks were a complementary Manifesta 15 programme that highlighted each participating municipality for a week, giving each one an additional opportunity to showcase its cultural strengths.

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Facts and figures



6,878

Visitors of the Mobile Venue

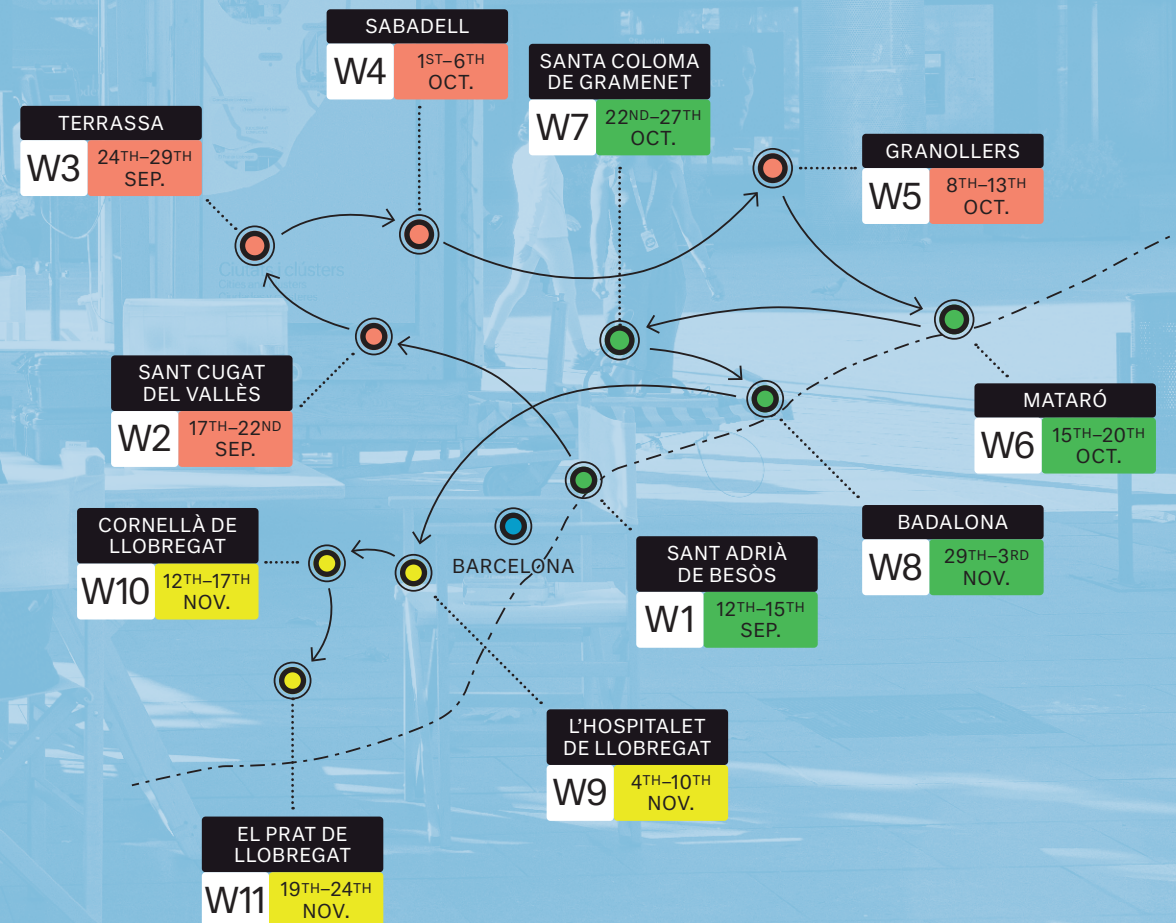


98

Focus Week Events
in Mobile Venue

158

Total Focus Week
Events



Itinerary of the Mobile Venue



126

The Three Chimneys, Sant Adrià de Besòs
Mataró



Sant Adrià de Besòs
Sabadell

127





MANIFESTA 15

MANIFESTA
Sant Adrià de Besòs
08/09 - 20/09/2024
Seu itinerari
Mòdul Venut
Sede Sineru
15
manifesta.org

4.09 - 15.09.2024
Sant Adrià de Besòs
Descobreix la Focus Week de
Sant Adrià de Besòs del 4 al 15 de
setembre
Descobreix la Focus Week de
Sant Adrià de Besòs del 4 al 15 de
setembre
Descobreix la Focus Week de
Sant Adrià de Besòs del 4 al 15 de
setembre

Manifesta 15+ Participants and Programme

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‘Congratulations on another impressive project, which I suppose was also one of the more complicated Manifestas, at least in terms of logistics. Like the other iterations we have covered, I enjoyed it very much for, once again, getting to know locations that only open to the public thanks to Manifesta 15 and for re/discovering artistic work in these unusual settings.’

Maria Pallier, Director of Metropolis, RTVE

The Manifesta 15+ programme was an independent programme in response to the invitation for Manifesta 15 to work in each participating municipality. The programme presented and celebrated the cultural infrastructure of each of the metropolitan cities while also extending the offer of additional cultural activities during the days of the biennial to both international and regional audiences. This interdisciplinary programme was conceptualised and executed by the Manifesta 15 Artistic Representatives of the metropolitan municipalities creating an interdisciplinary set of local activities, mostly consisting of exhibitions, screenings, talks, music performances, concerts, workshops and tours at the most vibrant locations, such as markets, libraries and local shops.

The biggest success of the Manifesta 15+ programme was the direct involvement of the 11 local Artistic Representatives and their commitment to creating this project together with a large number of local artists and collectives. Each Manifesta 15+ project had its own local audiences and focus moments, which made this Manifesta 15 initiative living proof that the activation of the local community can be achieved. An example of a celebrated and well-attended weekend programme during a Focus Week was the one in L'Hospitalet, which culminated in a series of Flamenco performances and dances organised by artist Pedro G. Romero.

The Manifesta 15+ programme took shape in different ways in relation to the cultural identity and social configuration of each municipality. The programming was richly varied, both in artistic disciplines and in formats, involving numerous proposals and agents in an intergenerational way. In some municipalities the proposals were more closely linked to an existing exhibition, performing-arts or audio-visual programme, which functioned as a common thread throughout the biennial and connected the biennial themes of *Balancing Conflicts*, *Cure and Care* and *Imagining Futures*. This was so in Sabadell, with the exhibition project *Gris Plom. Visual Arts in Sabadell 1960-2024*; in Badalona, with the programme *The Gate: The Frontiers of the future. Sharing the future at the intersection of Science, Technology, Art and Society*; in Terrassa, with the performing arts festival *TNT* (Terrassa Noves Tendències); and in Cornellà de Llobregat, with the audio-visual festival *Concèntrica: Mirades fora d'òrbita*.

Other municipalities, such as Sant Cugat del Vallès, Granollers and L'Hospitalet, engaged a high level of local community participation through guided tours, bicycle routes, collaborative ventures with educational institutions and live music with links to the territory, among other proposals. Other municipalities, such as El Prat de Llobregat, Mataró and Sant Adrià de Besòs, presented activities, exhibitions and visits showcasing the value of their industrial, historical and cultural heritage and their natural wealth.

In conclusion, the Manifesta 15+ programme was a positive initiative, in that it allowed local visitors to get involved with culture in their cities through exhibitions, activations, mediated activities at the Mobile Venue, such as family workshops and Focus Weeks walks and much more. The municipalities were strongly proactive and took advantage of the context of the biennial to activate and make known their own roster of venues (from museums to educational centres).

It is worth noting that connections have been formed between local artistic and cultural agents and their metropolitan colleagues, suggesting that these relationships are likely to persist beyond the duration of Manifesta. The work of the Artistic Representatives has facilitated the creation of a collaborative learning environment, fostering connections among the representatives themselves and with the Manifesta team (both local and international). This cooperation extends beyond the boundaries of their respective departments and municipalities.

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MANIFESTA 15+



32

Exhibitions, lasting between a few days and three months



95

Events



30

New and existing venues



+300

Participants and artists collaborating in Manifesta 15+



33,195

Visits were made to the Manifesta 15+ programme

Participants

BADALONA

Absure 2000
Agnès Rodon Galceran
Albert Rodon Canyelles
Ballet Sílvia Pallisera
Compañía Toni Ortiz
Daniela Zyman
Germán Bartolomé
Glòria Tormo
James Wescoat
JM Codina
Joana Demestre
Josep M. Camí
Júlia Fritz
Llorenç Garcia
Louis Ward
Marta Carreté
Olafur Eliasson
Oriol Saulea
Paula Piedad
Pep Bou
Ramon M. Teixidó
Santi Serratosa
Sheila Kennedy
Sonia Ferrer

CORNELLÀ DE LLOBREGAT

Auri Alos
Bàrbara Fluxá
David Tejedor
Elena Bajo
Ivó Valdivielso
Joana Moll
Jordi Rocosa
Luna Bengoechea
Núria Montclús
Rosa Lendinez
Sergio Blanco
Silvia Iruela Lacuesta
Xavi Esteban

EL PRAT DE LLOBREGAT

Carolyn Steel
Elisabet Martínez-Sancho
Esin Aydemir
Indraneel Joshi
Laura Guimarães
Maria Luiza Gomes Torres
Nicolas Rotta
Renata Gomes
Santiago Sepulveda

Selma García Sanz
Soham Bhanushali

GRANOLLERS

Alba G. Corral
Boris Mikhaïlov
Jordi Homar
Marta Ros
Núria Güell
Thania Petersen

L'HOSPITALET DE LLOBREGAT

15+1
Alba Haro
Albert Mercadé
Aldo Urbano
Alex Palacín
Alfredo Lagos
Ana Brenes
Antonio Montesinos
Arnau Boces
Bàrbara Sánchez Barroso
Biel Llinàs
Blanca del Río
Christina Schultz
Comissió de Festes de Bellvitge
Constantino Molina
Costi El Chato
Diego Tamenilli
Ela Ela Teatre
Élan D'Orphium
Enric Casasses
Enric Farrés
Escuela de la Tani
Estel Boada
Eva Fàbregas
Fase
Flamenco Queer
Germán Portal
Gidla Love
Gonzalo Elvira
Hermanos Cobo
Irene Bou
Isabel Bassas
Isla_666666
Jeleton
Joana Capela
Joaquín el Duende
Karorosa Murutipure
La Corcoles
La Flauta dolça
La Moreno

La Muerte
Lady Braga
Lara Fluxà
Laura Llaneli
Laura Marchal
Lolo
Los Pelos tiene barba
Lucila
Marc Herrero
Marc Larré
Marc Vives
Marco de Ana
María García Ruiz
María Jerez
María Mira
María Pleguezuelos
Marikarmenfree
Mario Santamaría
Marla Jacarilla
Nele Feys
Nuria Gómez Gabriel
Nuria Martín
Patricia Chomon
Pau Mira
Pedro G. Romero
Pere Llobera
Perrate
Pilar Cruz Ramón
Plaudite Teatre
Rafel Bianchi
Ricard Gutiérrez
Roberto Ruiz
Salamina
Samuel Labadie
Silvia Antolín
Skamot Diabolik
Sofia Zunino
Sosaku
The Julandrones
Trama 34
Valeria Mata
Víctor Jaenada
Xavi Rodríguez
YiLong Li +1 Campeón
ZA!
Zaida Trallero

MATARÓ

Alejo Palacios
Alicia Gimeno
Ana García
Anna Aluart
Anna Fradera
Bruno Ollé

Carla Aledo
Carme Garolera
Clara Ballesta
Clara Esperalba
Cori Mercadé
Dani Montlleó
Dusa Jesih
Edu Novellas
Enric Punsola
Fernando Daza
Guillermo García Cruz
Joan Hernández Pijuan
Joanpere Massana
Joaquim Chancho
Josep M. Codina
Josep Serra
Laia Arnau
Laura Iniesta
Manolo Ballesteros
Manuel Blázquez
Manuel M. Romero
Mikel Jaso
Miquel Vila
Pere Fradera
Pol Pintó, Riera i Aragó
Pol Ponsarnau
Russel Tyler
Rut Pla del Rio
Ruth Morán
Xavier Arenós

SABADELL

Agustí Puig
Alejandro Robles
Ana García Pineda
Anna Dot
Ariadna Albareda
Assumpció Oristrell
Benet Ferrer
Bestué-Vives
Brut Ediciones
Càndida Bracons
Carla Núñez Hernández
Claudio Zulian
Col·lectiu Oblique
DACS
Daniel Moreno Roldán
Estel Boada
Fina Miralles
Francisc Bordas
Francisco Guijosa (Eme Rock)

Frank Trobok
Gerard Torres
Guillem Celada
Helena Guillén
Isidre Manils
Ivan Merino
Joan Carreras
Joaquín Jara
Josep Gerona
Josep Madaula
Júlia Franco Álvarez
Laia Estruch
Les Salonnières
Llorenç Ugas Dubreuil
Marc Sala Armengol
Maria Bosch
Max Pérez
Nati Ayala
Neus Segalés
Oriol Enguany
Oriol Vilapuig
Paula Perarnau Vallès
Pep Sallés
Ramiro Fernández
Roberte Piqueras
Rosa Borrell
Sitesize (Joan Vilapuig-Elvira Pujol)
Teresa Pampalona
Toni Marquès
Xavier Ristol

SANT ADRIÀ DE BESÒS

Kamchatka

SANT CUGAT DEL VALLÈS

Associació Familiars de Malalts d'Alzheimer
Berta Navarro
Clara Nubiola
Daniela Duarte
Deqlive
Dj Cool Claxon
Escola l'Olivera
Ignacio García Sánchez
INS Angeleta Ferrer
José Antonio Delgado
Julia Coelho
Juliana Frontin
Marta Fàbregas
Paula Artés

radio SLUMBER
Renan Araujo
Salva G. Ojeda
Societat Coral 'El Vallès'
Teo Vázquez
Uncommon

SANTA COLOMA DE GRAMENET

Adela Gallardo
Andrés Bolancer
BesArt Project
Carlos del Hoyo
Carmen Serrano
Daniel Salinas
Iván Bolancer
Jairo Ríos
José Antonio Flores
José Ramón Alvarado
Manuel Habreu
Melisa Rodríguez
Merche Molero
Mihoko Ono
Montserrat Quiles
Núria Castro
Sinergia (Dani Marín i Anna Torres)
Zulema Galeano

TERRASSA

27 Lletres
Anna Taratiel
Associació Arketip
Bakoom
Cecília Coca
Col·lectiu Liminal
Diego del Pozo
Diego Marchante
Gabriel Verderi
Helena Laguna Bastante
Ignacio Llamas
Irene Pérez
Laia Estruch
Laura Carreras Daura
Montse Carreño
Pau Gurpegui
Paulo Cacaís
Raquel Muñoz
Rita Chaos
Rosanna Fontanet
Rose Present
Tomamor
Txuma Sánchez

Manifesta 15+ exhibitions

SANT CUGAT DEL VALLÈS

D(ó)na Oportunitat. Art as a tool for social transformation, Casa de Cultura, Sant Cugat del Vallès.

Machines, roulettes, tricks and traps, Cal Quitèria, Sant Cugat del Vallès.

Vitality: an attitude. Exhibition on intergenerational artistic project, Ajuntament de Sant Cugat. Espai Àgora (OAC), Sant Cugat del Vallès.

TERRASSA

The Image Factory, Sala Muncunill, Terrassa.

The place is always new, Sala Muncunill, Terrassa.

MOAT3, Sala Muncunill, Terrassa.

The nature of the walls (Cycle The third landscape), Sala Muncunill, Terrassa.

Invisible things: displaced archives (Cicle Permafrost. Reclaiming images. An LGBTBI archive in Terrassa), Sala Muncunill, Terrassa.

Mutacions 3d music lab, Metropoli of immersive arts, Museu Tèxtil de Terrassa, Terrassa.

54 Jokers, Sala Muncunill, Terrassa.

The well, Castell Cartoixa de Vallparadís, Terrassa.

Maternities, Castell Cartoixa de Vallparadís, Terrassa.

SABADELL

Gris plom / Eix 1 and 2. Esdevenir art, Museu d'Art de Sabadell, Sabadell.

Gris plom / Eix 3. Esdevenir ciutat, Acadèmia de Belles Arts de Sabadell, Sabadell.

Emerging art Sabadell. Special anniversary, Acadèmia de Belles Arts de Sabadell, Sabadell.

Gris plom / Eix 4. Esdevenir postindustrial, L'Estruch, Fàbrica de creació de les arts en viu, Sabadell.

Òxid de plom. Exhibition of emerging visual arts sabadellenques, Galeria SIS, Sabadell.

GRANOLLERS

Panoràmic, Roca Umbert. Fàbrica de les Arts. Granollers.

MATARÓ

Mataró, capital of the dot genre, Museu de Mataró. Can Marfà Gènere de Punt, Mataró.

Collective: Imaginant futurs, La Múndia, Mataró.

Demoprint. #thisisnotanexposició, Taller dels Edus, Mataró.

Bassat Collection. Works of the XXI century (II), Nau Gaudí - Col·lecció Bassat, Mataró.

SANTA COLOMA DE GRAMENET

Imagining futures. 8th Santa Coloma de Gramenet Art Biennial, Centre d'Art Contemporani Can Sisteré, Santa Coloma de Gramenet.

BADALONA

El Gran Mantell, Centre Cultural El Carme: Sala Josep Uclés, Badalona.

Només tenim un planeta. Pensant el futur a través de l'art. Agnès Rodon, Espai Betúlia, Badalona.

Territorial Agency: Oceans in Transformation. A project commissioned by TBA21-Academy / Exhibition in the framework of the project The Gate: Frontiers of the Future. Sharing the future at the intersection of Science, Technology, Art and Society. Fundación Épica La Fura dels Baus, Badalona.
Imaginar futurs, Local Pompeu Fabra, Badalona.

L'HOSPITALET DE LLOBREGAT

Ver llover, Centre d'Art Tecla Sala, L'Hospitalet de Llobregat.

CORNELLÀ DE LLOBREGAT

La Cosa del Pantano #2: crítica(s) y poética(s) desde la aberración, Concèntrica Factory, Cornellà de Llobregat.

Jordi Rocosa. Vestiges of a post-industrial archeology by Isaac Cañizares, Nau 'La Post Industrial Zona Creativa', Cornellà de Llobregat.

EL PRAT DE LLOBREGAT

Convocatòria /Unzip Arts Visuals 2024, La Capsa, El Prat de Llobregat.

Climate Justice from the Peripheries, Local dels Espigoladors, El Prat de Llobregat.





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Focus Week events of Badalona
Focus Week events of L'Hospitalet de Llobregat



Focus Week events of L'Hospitalet de Llobregat

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Production and Programming

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Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana, running for 12 weeks from the 8th of September to the 24th of November, 2024, became the largest scale enterprise of the production department in Manifesta's history. This extra-large edition, focused on 'A Call to Action' for eco-social transformation, included activities and exhibitions in 12 cities and 16 venues all over the metropolitan region. Moreover, for the pre-biennial research phase 10 collectives and researchers were invited to create the conceptual framework together with the Manifesta 15 team. For this endeavour a team of more than 12 full-time colleagues worked for 12 to 18 months to secure and condition the venues, set up the necessary infrastructure and logistics, facilitate the mobility system for visitors and produce and install more than 40 newly commissioned works, over 50 loans and existing works and an extensive public programme both in the metropolitan cities and in the Manifesta 15 mobile venue. The participatory and bottom-up approach of the project had a huge impact on the time the team had to dedicate to the different projects to foster trust between the communities and the organisation, especially in projects such as *Memories of Smoke*. Other challenges were the projects taking place in multiple cities and in public space, such as Lara Schnitger's interventions in 12 industrial heritage chimneys, La Casa dels Futurs circus puppet shows in the public squares of three different municipalities, or the participatory projects of Tornen les esquelles and the urchins made in collaboration with Jin Choi & Thomas Shine.

The decentralisation of culture has been one of the most important goals and achievements of the biennial and caused the project to unfold across the largest geographical scope in its history, with remarkable venues and active involvement in each of the 12 participating municipalities: Barcelona, Badalona, Cornellà de Llobregat, El Prat de Llobregat, Granollers, L'Hospitalet de Llobregat, Mataró, Sabadell, Sant Adrià de Besòs, Santa Coloma de Gramenet, Sant Cugat del Vallès and Terrassa. For this, an increase of €2,000,000 on the global basic budget of the edition was necessary.

The Generalitat de Catalunya invested a total of €1,900,000 for the transformation of the of iconic Three Chimneys turbine hall into a safe, visitor-friendly and accessible venue in Sant Adrià de Besòs. The total budget dedicated to the artistic programme and production of the biennial was €3,200,000.

Manifesta 15 was organised in three clusters, which were thematic and geographic: *Balancing Conflicts* (Llobregat Delta), *Cure and Care* (Collserola massif towards Vallès) and *Imagining Futures* (Besòs River and its surrounding area). In these clusters, whose designs were deeply informed by local realities, over 90 participants presented multidisciplinary work that engaged with and reimaged how we relate to one another and to the natural resources around us.

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Each of the three clusters had a main venue, together with a fourth at the former Gustavo Gili printing house, which acted as the headquarters of Manifesta 15 and the main venue in the centre of Barcelona. The Gustavo Gili building hosted the offices of the organisation and 3 archival exhibitions: *Black Archives: Fragments of an Anti-Colonial Metropolis*, curated by Tania Safura Adam; *Escola de passats*, curated by Germán Labrador, consisting of an archive of historical experiences, both aesthetic and political, from the colonial origins of industrial capitalism to the current eco-social crisis (1820-2024); and *Fora per fer escola. Radical practices from Catalan pedagogies*, on ideas and practices that can meaningfully contribute to the pedagogical and eco-social transformations that are necessary today. An architect was specifically commissioned to design the set-up of the archive materials and to support the Manifesta 15 production team in the production of the exhibition and acquisition of furniture.

The Three Chimneys was the main venue of the Besòs cluster and the largest of the biennial. Manifesta, with the support of the Consorci del Besòs and the Generalitat, opened the building to the public for the first time. This immense industrial heritage site in the only unregenerated stretch of the Catalan coast was the perfect place to shed light on the historical significance of the working-class resistance in the area and urban regeneration in general, as well as to critically reflect on the eco-social transformation of the city of Barcelona. Providing a decentralised alternative cultural infrastructure, the site was visited by a very large number of visitors, over 117,000, 90% of whom were from the Barcelona metropolitan region and the majority of which were not art professionals or people that do not often participate cultural events. Moreover, more than 60 local residents, activists and associations were actively involved in the design and development of the project *Memories of Smoke*. The project aimed to make visible the working-class history and environmental conflicts of Sant Adrià de Besòs with an exhibition and a public programme. Participatory workshops, interviews with former workers and the creation of a collective archival exhibition constructed a shared narrative about the industrial past of the area and its consequences in the present.

The size and conditions of the building as well as the huge abandoned wasteland around it made the transformation of the site a major challenge for the production team. Overcoming the limitations of time and budget and the administrative difficulties, the production department successfully implemented a complete exhibition with specially commissioned site-specific works inside the building and a fully fledged service and public programme infrastructure outside. Implementation of all the services in this and other venues was very conscious of issues of recycling, ecology and climate change. For example, all the temporary toilets were dry, the wastewater from the bar was captured, cleaned through plant filtering and re-used, and 85% of the materials were repurposed, with whatever could not be re-used being recycled.

An important legacy of Manifesta 15 was that the strong local and international focus on the Casa Gomis, the main venue of the Llobregat cluster in the protected wetlands of the river and threatened by the extension of the airport, led Spain's Ministry of Culture to decide to acquire the architecturally listed building after Manifesta 15's closing and announced that it will be converted into an artistic and ecological centre.

In the context of the eco-social transformation and the 'Call to Action', Manifesta 15 developed several projects which prove that exhibition-making can instigate social change and promote awareness of major ecological issues. For instance, the *Bicicletada* cycling event, with almost 700 participants, manifested local citizens' call to open the city to the south along the coastline. The local collective Tornen les esqueselles recovered an ancient grazing path that historically connected the Collserola hills, the city and the sea, and with it the shepherds' collective memories. Linking symbolic and practical actions, their intervention in Manifesta 15 reopened the path and brought to the present traditional knowledge related to the wool and grazing at risk of being lost. Diversorium organised a series of meetings in which intellectually diverse participants analysed the systems that label and isolate children who do not fit the 'normal' educational standards, questioning the notion and the systems of inclusiveness. After conducting their research, Diversorium and artist Ariadna Guiteras created a welcoming and restful space for all bodies. The fishing competition organised by the collective Embassy of the North Sea, whose practice champions the rights of nature, saw several groups engage with the Llobregat river and its ecology, learning about the state of the river and collecting data and opening a discussion around invasive and native species and the role of human intervention in the ecosystem.



A Largely Distorted yet Surprisingly Ordered Map of Regular Irregularities: A Dense Description of The Present Day History of The Future, Fanja Bouts. Monastery of Sant Cugat

Recycle and Reuse

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One of the challenges that Manifesta 15 faced is the ecological impact of the construction of temporary infrastructures, in use only for the duration of the biennial, contributing to waste and environmental harm. In light of this, Manifesta 15 placed significant emphasis on establishing a protocol for recycling and reusing materials used in the exhibitions, as well as for furniture and office supplies.

Following the conclusion of the biennial, Manifesta 15 donated €157,241 worth of materials, including exhibition items, office supplies, furniture, hardware and textiles, to various Catalan organisations. Notable recipients included the Catalan Fundació Formació i Treball, which repurposed the wooden structure from Niels Albers' work to build beds; the Escola del Mar, which put the deckchairs to good use; and the Catalan Rizomes festival, which received the greenhouse structure by OJO Studio. Additional donations included vests and T-shirts to the Xarxa de Dones Cosidores and office supplies, hardware and furniture to the artist-led organisation and residency space La Escocesa, among other initiatives.

The goal was to minimise waste and give the materials used in the biennial a second life, ensuring that the positive impact of Manifesta 15 would extend well beyond its closing.

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‘For the upcoming edition of Rizomes 2025, and in collaboration with Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana, we have decided to repurpose some of the furniture and infrastructure originally designed by OJO Estudio for the Three Chimneys, one of the main venues of Manifesta 15 in 2024. In keeping with our commitment to hosting a 100% sustainable festival, we are embracing the challenge of recovering and reinterpreting this ‘waste’ as a base material. The aim is to use these resources to create all the structures needed for the next Rizomes 2025 from scratch.’

Rizomes Festival



Education and Mediation Programme

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‘The fact of exercising these functions from a diversity of artistic perspectives and approaches rather than strictly academic ones has favoured a more integral, complex and emotional interpretation by the spectators and/or participants in the different actions that have been carried out.’

Sergi Diaz, Director of the programme to improve arts in Education, Generalitat de Catalunya

Manifesta’s Education and Mediation programme emerges from collaborative research with local actors, exploring overlooked aspects of educational and cultural histories that help to connect and engage with the complexities of the local context and envisioning together alternative future scenarios. The goal of this specific part of Manifesta 15 was to address the complexities of the current multi-crisis context, not through nostalgia, but by engaging with pedagogical genealogies that remain highly relevant today.

How Research Evolves into Programming

The initial stage of the Education team’s research takes place in parallel with the conceptualisation of the Framework of the biennial by the Director, the Manifesta 15 team and the investigative work of the First Creative Mediator in the first period of the pre-biennial research. During this process we explore how the themes of the biennial can resonate with local (micro)stories and can instigate collaborative processes, such as the commitment to decentralising cultural infrastructures and to eco-social transition. The education research is an open process, an adventure, and as such does not have strict parameters or predefined outputs. It anchors itself in conversations and gradually evolves into gatherings, actions, publications and programmes, which go beyond traditional institutional boundaries. These can be described as educational, curatorial, research or artistic, yet they are always developed through a collaborative process between the Manifesta team and local communities and in shared ownership with all the involved parties.

Fora per fer escola is an overarching initiative that embodies the Education programme of Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana. It originates from the themes and concepts that emerged during the pre-biennial research and connects to the ambition of Manifesta to explore and investigate untold stories, histories and genealogies such as the commissioning of four archives as the basic foundation of the 15th edition. Exploring the local resonances of these contemporary issues brought us to a shared focal point: education. And more precisely to the question: ‘How have we been educated?’ Consequently, our project focused on exploring and reflecting on radical and progressive pedagogical experiences within the context of the region’s socio-ecological transformation, tracing these developments in Catalonia over more than a hundred years. These experiences remained a source of inspiration for ways of living and being together, both historically and in the present.

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In this conceptual context or framework, defined during the pre-biennial research period in 2023, we were interested in drawing into critical dialogue a series of ideas and movements that have been developing across Europe and beyond. This started with conversations and in drawing parallels between two emblematic cases: Hertica school house in Prishtina (the Host City of Manifesta 14) and the groundbreaking Escola del Mar in Barcelona. Both alternative schools that were attacked and burned because they were symbols of freedom and progressivism, representing the importance of education as a space for social and political resilience.

Research carried out by the Manifesta 15 team into the archives of the *Escola del Mar* revealed a much more complex constellation of schools, movements, pedagogies and educators, which viewed education as a driving force for social renewal. We therefore focused on four key cases from the 1910s to the 1970s that connected and addressed the central socio-ecological and decentralisation topics and themes of the biennial: Escola de Bosc, the Escola d'Educació Especial Vil·la Joana, the Batec teachers' collective, and the activist movement Escoles en Lluita. As part of the pre-biennial research methodology of working with artistic research collectives instead of inviting an urbanist to draft an urban vision, at the initiative of the director of Manifesta, it was decided to turn to artistic practices as the methodology for the Education research.

This process was developed in collaboration with various local parties and agents, and included artistic research, mediation, public programming, publications, methodological frameworks, professional networks and other tools for generating knowledge and critical thought. Artistic and pedagogical practices, together with community knowledge, were equally central to the programme. Educators, artists, and local residents engaged in dialogues that respected each other's practices and spaces, enriching one another's perspectives in the process.

Four Spanish artists and collectives were invited to explore (existing) archives of the pedagogical situations mentioned above. These artists and collectives were selected based on their site-specific collaborative and research-oriented practices, which align both thematically and politically with the histories addressed. Each participant had the freedom to identify their focus and approach the research in their own manner. The process began with mapping and tracking the materials that remain from the pedagogical archives. It then explored how this knowledge could be reactivated and shared with various collectives and communities – such as the Arxiu Històric Roquetes Nou Barris, the Escola Parc del Guinardó and others – in different situations across the metropolitan area of Barcelona. The activation of the research led to the production of a series of artistic projects presented a year later in the main biennial programme. These education-related projects were integrated in the entire process, which took one year: research, public activations and artistic creation.

This initial methodology of *research > activation > artistic work* served as the foundational structure that each artist and collective modified and adapted according to their needs when approaching their working process.

This approach led to various alterations that enriched our understanding of artistic practice as a generator of collective thought and action. This model of collective democratic and decentralised curation was central in this edition of Manifesta and also served as the foundation for the artistic team behind the main programme of the biennial, and as such it proved quite an unconventional model in the international biennial landscape.

The education programme as a site of knowledge production

This research, encompassing work conducted both prior to and during the biennial, highlighted the critical role of imagination as a research tool. Imagination enhances self-awareness and initiates a transformative process in the researcher, reshaping their perspective as they engage with the process. The research demonstrated the inseparability of the subject and object of study. Beginning almost a year before the biennial and continuing beyond its conclusion, reflections and insights have been systematically documented for broader use. This specific Manifesta approach highlights the internal research methodology as a legitimate space for knowledge production, rather than merely functioning as a supplementary component of the exhibition programme. In doing so, it introduces a new layer of content that results in meaningful dialogue between the education and mediation department with the rest of the biennial process.

The research took shape in various ways, with one of its most visible manifestations for the general public being an archival exhibition titled *Fora per fer escola. Radical Practices from Catalan Pedagogies*. This exhibition was held at the former headquarters of Gustavo Gili publishing house in Barcelona and brought together proposals from the collectives and artists involved in the project — Anaïs Florin, Diversorium, Paisanaje and Massa Salvatge with Lluc Mayol. It also featured historical and contemporary material sourced from both personal and institutional archives and documentary collections. Translating this research into exhibition proposals underscored the complexities inherent in presenting processes that are still ongoing, challenging traditional notions of the exhibition format, in a similar way to the other Manifesta 15 archival presentations: *Arxiu Negres* and *Escola de passats* in the Gustavo Gili building, and *Memory of the Smoke* in the Three Chimneys.

One of these challenges was how to integrate historical archives without fetishising their presence. To emphasise the connection between artistic research and contemporary issues, copies, reprints and non-original documents were used, minimising the aura traditionally associated with historical materials. Another challenge was managing the interaction between the projects and the exhibition space, extending beyond the conventional boundaries of the exhibition logic, both physically and temporally, with actions occurring before, during and after the exhibition itself.

Diversorium's research, for example, critically examined the accessibility and habitability of exhibition spaces. Despite the limitations of the hosting institution, their effort fostered a collaborative learning process. Diverso-

rium's proposal, developed alongside Barcelona-based artist Ariadna Guiteras, served as both a gathering point and a venue for hosting activities throughout the biennial. Similarly, Anaïs Florin's research transformed her exhibition space into a meeting point for individuals connected to her case study, *Escoles en Lluïta*, effectively turning it into an extension of her artistic practice.

At the outset of the educational research, we anticipated the creation of a specific publication to represent, document, and systematically investigate and share our knowledge about the histories of the schools we researched. However, an exhibition and public programme were not initially planned. These initiatives emerged as part of the decision to use the former Gustavo Gili publishing house building as the physical heart of the biennial, presenting there the three archives: *Fora per fer escola*, *Arxius Negres* and *Escola de passats*.

For example, in the process of artistic research, we identified a clear need to engage with educators, individuals whose range of daily practices was the focus of our study. In line with that need, we initiated a series of Teachers' Camps – gatherings organised in a discussion and workshop format that led to the creation of the Manifesta Pedagogical Oracle, a play-centred resource for teachers to complement the publication *Fora per fer escola*. This publication is a unique project, as the first publication in English to explore this subject and the valuable connection between these radical pedagogical ideas and their legacy for Catalonia, as well as their valuable and often unknown spread and influence around the world.

The development of the research into the Batec teachers' collective and Escola del Mar prompted us to initiate two programmes during the biennial period: a Territorial Working Group and a series of workshops in collaboration with Centre de la Platja, a municipal centre focused on environmental education and ocean literacy. Inspired by the format of a solidarity network practiced by Batec, monthly meetings of the Territorial Working group provided a platform for municipal officials in culture, education and social affairs in the Barcelona metropolitan region to share challenges and critical reflections on cultural participation and inclusion. Sara Torres-Vega's research on the Escola del Mar arose as a critique of human-centred pedagogy that led us to address ideas of multi-species ecosystems in an open-air programme of talks and workshops, 'What do sea creatures know about pedagogy?', at Somorrostro beach in Barcelona. These workshops, held at the Centre de la Platja, created unconventional learning spaces on Barcelona's Somorrostro beach, echoing the innovative methodologies of the Escola del Mar's early years. Collaborating artists shifted their practices toward social learning spaces, blending pedagogical and artistic perspectives and forming a heterogeneous learning community.

The Manifesta 15 education and mediation public programme kept growing and morphing in response to the developments in the biennial research process, providing space for collective reflections in situ. This approach is not very frequently pursued in the institutional or biennial setting, due to a general lack of flexibility in funding and programme planning. However, this

responsive engagement was essential for reflecting on and understanding our biennial programme, especially once the biennial was open, not only as a site of representation, but a space of ongoing transformation. The Education and Mediation programme of Manifesta 15 challenged the traditional programming models of cultural spaces and museums, which tend to focus on activities aimed at specific audiences based on age or other social factors under labels like education, mediation or community projects (which usually relegate them to secondary importance). Instead, the Manifesta 15 programme relied on elaborated research and collaborative knowledge processes, emphasising the wealth of educational and exploratory roles these spaces can and should fulfil and underscored the enduring notion of education and its significance as a vital site for knowledge production.

'Fora per fer Escola' is an initiative that has managed to capture the attention of today's society. It highlights the invaluable work of invisible teachers who, through their professionalism and wisdom, succeeded in creating a better and fairer society.

You have helped us to raise awareness about teachers from the Terres de Lleida region who were trained at the Escola Normal de Lleida, which is now preserved by the Archive and Document Management of the University of Lleida. This is not only a documentary heritage but also an intangible heritage, which, through the project you have carried out, is being spread throughout society.'

Pepita Raventós, Archivist and Documentation Manager at the University of Lleida

'What do sea creatures know about pedagogy?',
a series of workshops as a part of the Manifesta 15 Education Programme



Artistic projects

Paisanaje / Escola de Bosc

Inaugurated in 1914 in Barcelona, the Escola de Bosc was the result of a municipal initiative inspired by republican educational movements. Led by the pedagogue Rosa Sensat, this secular Catalan public institution prioritised outdoor education and students' holistic wellbeing. The Paisanaje collective explores the Escola de Bosc's unique approach to cooking and dining, which were integral to its educational and social agenda. Their research centres on the Collserola hills, an eco-social hub in Barcelona that serves as the metropolitan region's 'green lung' and is home to many agro-ecological farming and shepherding initiatives. With *Agápē*, Paisanaje extends and applies their research to contemporary Catalan school canteens, raising awareness among today's students of the impact of different consumption habits and food production chains.

In this way, a recipe found in the 100 year-old notebooks from the former Escola de Bosc was recreated by students from a present-day school. Through this exercise, a pedagogical resource was developed, with which to reflect on the value chains within the food industry, serving as the school programme of the biennial.

Massa Salvatge and Lluç Mayol / Batec

Batec (heartbeat) was a teachers' collective which was active in the province of Lleida, Catalonia, from 1930 to 1936. The collective functioned as a decentralised support network of and for educators working in rural areas. In dialogue with one another, Batec's members explored and experimented with the Freinet pedagogical method, which emphasises the importance of students expressing themselves freely, especially through the publication and distribution of school magazines. Massa Salvatge and Lluç Mayol conducted research into the collective's publishing practice and its female members who were persecuted or forced into exile during the Spanish Civil War and throughout Franco's dictatorship.

In doing so, they carried out the collaborative project 'Batecs d'una premsa menuda' (heartbeats of a small press), developing a printing press that they then lent to various schools in the Vallès area. The use of this new old tool effectively connected all the students participating in the project and created a mutual support network among the teaching staff, reinforcing the idea of the educational community while recovering the Batec spirit.

Diversorium / Escola Vil·la Joana

The Escola Vil·la Joana was founded by Barcelona City Council in 1917. Located in the Collserola mountain range, it was the city's first public school exclusively for deaf and blind students.

On the basis of the research programme led by Diversorium, a crip and queer temporary gathering space for all bodies created by Antonio Centeno, María Oliver and Verónica Valentini, 'The Vil·la Joana Archives Re-reading Club' was organised together with Jaume Ferrete. The club aimed to collectively explore the pedagogical and technical documents from the centre's archives. After conducting their research, Diversorium invited the artist Ariadna Guiteras to create a welcoming and restful space, inspired by Diversorium's research into Vil·la Joana. The space that she then made draws on feminist science fiction, which is known for its use of organic, adaptive, and embracing elements, and the particular architecture of the current Vil·la Joana school.

Anaïs Florin / Escoles en Lluita

Escoles en Lluita (Schools in Struggle) emerged in Barcelona in 1976-77, during the early years of the democratic transition after Franco's dictatorship. With a membership comprising educators, students, political activists, intellectuals and artists, this grassroots movement advocated for high-quality public education and struggled against exploitation in disadvantaged neighbourhoods along the Besòs River.

For her project *We will remember what you learned*, the artist Anaïs Florin created a dedicated archive about Escoles en Lluita. The archive brings together a variety of materials, including photographs, press clippings, posters, magazines and other documents, many of which were previously unpublished, all of which she digitised and printed. To compile this archive, the artist visited institutional and self-managed archives in Barcelona and conducted interviews with former teachers, students and directors from the schools that participated in the movement. The project concluded with the donation of this material to Arxiu Històric Roquetes Nou Barris, as a way of keeping the collective memory of the Escoles en Lluita alive and together in one place.



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Mediated tour at Casa Gomis
Mediation Training day



Family Workshop at the Three Chimneys
Students using a 'Little Printing Press', an initiative by Massa Salvatge

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Glossary

Archive Workshops

The politics of archiving, cooking and urban planning in the metropolitan region of Barcelona are seemingly unrelated, yet they are present in one way or another in the various exhibition projects hosted in the building of the former Gustavo Gili publishing house: *Black Archives. Fragments of an Anti-Colonial Metropolis*, *Escola de Passats: Barcelona and the Radical Political Imagination* and *Fora per fer Escola: Radical Practices from Catalan Pedagogies*. This series of workshops aimed to establish links between the three presentations of archives to generate new narratives to accompany our visit to Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana.

Exhibition

'Fora per fer escola. Radical Practices from Catalan Pedagogies'

Through artistic research, mediation, public programming and professional networking, the exhibition 'Fora per fer escola' took place at the former Gustavo Gili publishing house. It shed light on ideas and practices that could meaningfully contribute to the pedagogical and eco-social transformations that are necessary today. These included, but were not limited to: food sovereignty, inclusive spaces, nature as pedagogy, solidarity networks and the collective memory of the social struggle for public education. The participants in the exhibition were Massa Salvatge with Lluç Mayol, Anaïs Florin, the Paisanaje collective and Diversorium in collaboration with Ariadna Guiteras.

Family programme

'The Factory of Futures' and 'Wandering tales'

Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana offered a Family Programme both in the Mobile Venue and in the Three Chimneys. Led by the mediation team, every weekend during the biennial families with children from 5 years old explored some of the proposals within the Three Chimneys and the Mobile Venue. Families were invited to envision the futures we desire, with landscapes and the beings that inhabit them. To bring these worlds to life, participants created a city and its narratives to activate these possible worlds.

Between the 8th of September and the 24th of November almost 900 participants enjoyed the Family Programme.

Focus Week Mediation Programme

Focus Week Walks

The Focus Week Walks consisted of a series of routes designed specifically for each municipality by the mediation team with the aim of exploring the programme and the venues of the Biennial – both from Manifesta 15 and Manifesta 15+ – through a narrative fully rooted in the local reality. By means of a walk through various points of interest in the specific municipality,

the aim was to open a dialogue on the relation between the reality of each territory and the artistic proposals of Manifesta 15.

More than 200 people joined the Focus Week Walks in both Catalan and English.

Workshop 'Interconnected: A Radio Relay'

In this intergenerational workshop participants explored the city soundscape. During each Manifesta's Focus Weeks, a new audio track was recorded in the area and added to the playlist. The project engaged with citizens in the 11 participating metropolitan cities, inviting residents to share memories and local knowledge with visitors to Manifesta's programme. The audio collage was broadcast from the mobile venue through a transmitter. The workshop was led by the mediation team and designed in collaboration with Hannah Kemp-Welch, a London-based sound artist.

Mediated Tours

The Mediated Tours led by the 12 mediators added a new layer of content to the exhibition in the Three Chimneys, Casa Gomis, Sant Cugat Monastery and the former Gustavo Gili publishing house. More than 12,000 visitors explored local realities and histories from ecological, social and political perspectives in 166 open tours, 268 pre-booked tours for groups and 396 school tours.

Manifesta 15 Mediators Team

The Manifesta 15 mediators team consisted of a group of 12 people with different nationalities and professional backgrounds. In engaging with more than 12,000 visitors, they refuted the idea of transferring 'objective' knowledge or opinion from a more informed guide to a less informed audience. After a collective agreement on how mediation in Manifesta 15 was to be, the mediators designed and implemented tours and workshops from different critical approaches – such as feminism or anti-colonialism – and in dialogue with the topics of Manifesta 15.

Publication

Fora per fer escola. Radical Practices from Catalan Pedagogies

As part of the education programme, this publication set out to vindicate, contextualise and highlight the progressive pedagogical heritage of Catalonia from the early 20th century. Structured in three parts, the publication, edited by Renata Cervetto, provides historical and theoretical contextualisation connecting those practices with the rest of Europe and Latin America, artistic research by the artists and cultural agents involved in *Fora per fer escola*, and a methodological resource tailored for teachers and educators entitled *Pedagogical Oracle*.

Publication

Pedagogical Oracle

This publication is a pedagogical resource that is part of the *Fora per fer escola* programme. It was developed by the Manifesta 15 Education and Mediation team, Alba Oller – a mediator, lecturer in Didactics of Expression at the University of Alicante and member of the Massa Salvatge collective – and 73 teachers who participated in the Teachers' Camps. *Pedagogical Oracle* conveys a collective reflection on contemporary teaching practices and the political responsibility of education, while strengthening teachers' support networks.

Symposium

'Teaching community, learning collectively, being a network'

Manifesta 15 in collaboration with the Museu Picasso organised a three-day Symposium around topics that emerged from the research programme *Fora per fer escola*. In the face of a rise in the presence of right-wing ideologies across Europe, ecological and health crises, and the neoliberalisation of education, the programme explored what can be learned from the ideas of the earlier educational movements that emerged in similar historical contexts and what remains of their political agenda today. The programme included talks by Nora Sternfeld, Pablo Martínez and Carmen Agulló, and conversations with the participants in the *Fora per fer escola* programme.

School programme

Manifesta 15 offered free mediated activities for primary and secondary schools at the Three Chimneys (Sant Adrià del Besòs), Casa Gomis (El Prat de Llobregat), Sant Cugat monastery (Sant Cugat del Vallès) and the former Gustavo Gili publishing house (Barcelona). Primary and secondary schools had been reached through various programmes and stakeholders such as the Catalan government (Generalitat de Catalunya), regional administration (Diputació de Barcelona) and municipal councils that have been part of Manifesta 15.

Thanks to the school mediation programme, Manifesta 15 reached 100 schools and almost 6,000 students.

Teachers' Camp

Inspired by the Batec collective, the Teachers' Camps constituted a process of reflection and joint creation within the metropolitan region's teaching community, organised in three different get-togethers during the pre-biennial period.

73 teachers joined the meetings.

Territorial Working Group

This initiative of the Education and Mediation department of Manifesta 15 was created as an opportunity for professional exchange between municipal heads of culture, education and social affairs of the Barcelona metropolitan region. In coherence with the idea of articulated work between municipalities on a metropolitan scale, it aimed to promote cooperation between the region's municipalities and institutions during the biennial and forge a long-term link. At the same time, in light of the professional roles involved, it was configured as a space for the exchange of knowledge and for self-training among peers. The six sessions that took place were designed based on the interests expressed by the participants.

'What do sea creatures know about pedagogy?'

This engaging and thought-provoking five-session programme was inspired by the experimental origins of the Escola del Mar. Each session was led by an expert, bringing a particular perspective to the intersection of education, ecology, technology and community in the Centre de la Platja. The programme of workshops consisted of:

'Active Hydro-listening' led by Yuri Tuma from the Institute for Postnatural Studies

'Exhuming a Sea' led by Sara Torres-Vega

'Mapping through the Senses' led by Carole Diop

'Holes in the Beach' led by TAKK

'My Nanny was a Computer' led by Mónica Rikić

100 participants took part in the programme.



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Preview Days at Casa Gomis with Second Creative Mediator Filipa Oliveira and Manifesta 15 Participants Embassy of the North Sea Education Symposium in the Gustavo Gili



'What do sea creatures know about pedagogy?', a series of workshops as a part of the Manifesta 15 Education Programme

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Challenges of the mediation practice

Manifesta's Mediation programme has historically understood itself as a collective encounter in which people would be able to engage with each other as owners of authentic experiences and knowledge. This ambition is radically opposed to the idea of simply transferring 'objective' knowledge from a more informed and in some cases commercial guide to a less informed audience: in contrast, in Manifesta we aim to enrich the biennial narratives in dialogue with the audiences' knowledges and create a real dialogue or discourse. In each edition, Manifesta explores existing practices and histories in the fields of cultural mediation, knowledge production and education, in collaboration with a team of mediators, who are hired and trained locally.

Barcelona and its metropolitan region are an urban space in which the practice of mediation in cultural institutions has benefitted from a great diversity of highly experienced agents and a long history of professional practices and struggles. When Manifesta 15 started to design the desired composition for its mediation team, we were looking for a diverse group with multiple, interdisciplinary experiences and critical perspectives, and for this reason Manifesta 15 chose to prioritise the selection of mediators with a range of professional, academic and cultural backgrounds rather than recruiting candidates with well-established professional profile in the field of mediation. Hiring the team of mediators well in advance of the biennial's opening was essential, too, in giving Manifesta 15 time to create shared experiences and mental space for mutual learning among the mediators.

This further entailed identifying a hiring format with temporary contracts that were both fair for the workers and sustainable for the institution. All this in a particularly critical context and with an alternative model for artistic mediators in museums and other cultural centres in Catalonia, quite unlike what was usually experienced by mediators at that time.

In February 2024, 19 mediators from the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía were dismissed after the museum found that there had been an error in the new tendering documents for the renewal of the mediation service and that the tendering could not be extended or recommenced within a period of several months, despite it having been a structural service of the museum since 2011.¹ This instance shows how little progress has been made in the contractual models affecting cultural mediators in museums and art centres in the Spanish context since the support staff and educators strikes in 2017 at Fundació Miró, CCCB, Museu del Disseny, Monestir de Pedralbes, Fundació Tàpies, Arxiu Històric de Barcelona, Museu de la Música, Fabra i Coats and MACBA – all of these facilities operating with the same external company.

The contracting of education and mediation staff has historically been a constant battle for cultural management in the Spanish context, where most of the relevant cultural facilities operate under public procurement policies.² This makes direct labour contracting impossible – due to the impossibility of creating public-sector jobs – and results in either subcontracting or the creation of commercial contracts. In light of the above, the direct hiring of a Manifesta 15 team of 12 mediators on four-month part-time contracts during 2024, before the start of the biennial, was a deliberate choice of Manifesta 15 and exceptional in the Catalan context.³

The selected Manifesta 15 mediators had diverse origins and professional backgrounds⁴ in visual and performing arts, social and political sciences and education and literature, as well as expertise in several thematic areas of relevance to Manifesta 15, such as feminism, decolonial perspective, urbanism and ecological activism and citizens participation. This is quite different from the profile being applied by other institutions and meant that the Manifesta 15 mediators were more knowledgeable, more engaged in the topics Manifesta 15 was addressing, and better equipped with interesting conversational material to start a real discussion, according to the results of the public survey.⁵

Throughout the Manifesta 15 mediators training we offered a collective learning process in which mediators could challenge and enrich each other's ideas, methodologies and knowledges. The main aim of this process was to develop a collective and multi-layered site-specific approach to mediation, learning from professionals, artists and other team members involved in the development of the biennial.

The training also addressed the topics of specific interest – such as social ecological transition, decentralisation of cultural infrastructure and the reclaiming of public space or alternative archival models – in the biennial programme through a collective research process based on meetings with artists and other agents, visits to the venues and other relevant spaces, gatherings with Manifesta 15 team members, discussion groups, readings and individual research. The idea was to create a continuous process of learning combining these research-based activities with practical exercises in mediation while aligning teamwork. However, day-to-day contingencies meant that it was not always possible to sustain these collective continuous learning spaces once the biennial opened.

Despite this limitation, a rich exchange of knowledge and strategies was generated around the daily mediation practice, continuously fine-tuning the individual approaches. At the same time, the mediators were able to progressively incorporate discourse, information and feedback from the different types of audiences, thus leading to a significant enrichment of the biennial's narratives. The experience is that in the process of mediating groups the learning method is reciprocal, with both mediator and audiences inspiring each other.

1_ <https://www.elsaltodiario.com/laboral/museo-reina-sofia-error-sinservicio-mediacion-cultural-despido-19-trabajadores>

2_ Under Spanish law, anyone engaged under a commercial contract must be registered as a self-employed worker, with the consequent high cost that this entails. In addition, such contracts

must not exceed a certain rate of payment, unless they fall within the terms of the law of artistic exceptionality – which is difficult to prove for most professional profiles – or are limited to very specific assignments that can be resolved with a minor contract. This makes it almost impossible to stabilise projects and teams.

3_ During the period before the opening, the contract was for a smaller number of hours, and its distribution was flexible. Some intensive weekends were used for the training. This allowed the team members to continue with their respective occupations until the biennial, when the contract was extended to 28 hours per week.

4_ Of the 12 people on the team, 5 mediators were Latin American, 6 had diverse European origins and one was Palestinian-Canadian. Two mediators were of Catalan origin, and two were Valencian, one of whom is also Guinean.

5_ See Public Survey on p. 198.

Creating a mediation team capable of responding to the demands of an organisation with the scale and complexity of Manifesta 15 is not without tensions. To collectively create a way of mediating and a programme including research, design and implementation of activities would have required more time to share strategies and information, to consolidate learning, and at the same time to respond to the needs of the biennial in terms of the number of visitors engaged in mediation. The temporary nature of the 77-day biennial imposed its limitations, not least on what can be expected from outreach. Even though Manifesta 15 surpassed our targets, conducting almost 900 mediated tours, there was not enough time to thoroughly explore and further develop other formats of mediation, 'slower' formats that would engage with fewer people but in a more impactful way. If we had known this in advance, we would have been able to conduct more tours, but due to the limited capacity this was the maximum estimate.

Collective debriefs after the closure of the Manifesta 15 biennial were an important phase of the collaboration with the mediation team. These sessions brought into focus particular aspects, with discussion of the transformative potential of mediation, contractual frameworks, tiredness, political sensitivities around mediation practice and other more specific points. We believe that these discussions will not only be taken into consideration for future editions of the biennial but will also make the experiences of the current team of Manifesta 15 mediators available to the decentralised institutions of Barcelona Metropolitana and by extension to many other grassroots social and cultural spaces.



Education workshop with Manifesta 15 Participant Diversorium



Conclusions

Since its inception, the Education and Mediation Programme of Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana has aimed to build alliances and establish meaningful precedents within Barcelona's professional and cultural landscape. Through various formats, the programme has created platforms for engagement, developed educational resources, explored unknown archives and promoted diverse artistic practices, striving to reach and resonate with all kinds of audiences. The total reach of the Education and Mediation programme was over 16,000 participants. Of these, 6,000 took part in mediated tours, 6,000 participated in school tours, 1,000 were involved in the *Fora per fer Escola* pre-biennial programme, and 3,000 attended activities such as workshops, symposiums, talks, and more.

While quantitative results hold undeniable proven valuable, it is equally important to reflect on what will endure from the collaborative processes and initiatives born out of this biennial programme which was open to the public for 77 days in 2024. For example, one interesting legacy is that some of the educational research projects initiated by participating artists and collectives will continue beyond the biennial. For instance, *Agápē* will be carried forward at Paisanaje's space in Madrid, the CAR (Centre for Rural Engagement), where ongoing collaboration with two local schools is already underway. In Catalonia, the educational resource developed for this project will be distributed to schools in the Collserola area via the cooperative Fundesplai and to schools in Barcelona through the Escoles + Sostenibles network.

Similarly, Anaïs Florin's project, *We Will Remember What You Learned*, secured the conservation of its rich pedagogical historical archive by transferring it to the Roquetes-Nou Barris Historical Archive. This transfer makes the material widely accessible for the first time, serving both the local community and researchers interested in the area's history. This initiative aligns with Manifesta 15's broader commitment to the preservation and dissemination of research archives, such as *Arxiu Negres* and *Escola de passats*, and to exploring potential future uses of spaces such as the former headquarters of the Gustavo Gili publishing house. Additionally, the site-specific installation created for the façade of the Roquetes-Nou Barris Historical Archive during the Biennial's final days is to remain there, as a lasting legacy for the space and its community.

The pillows from the Diversorium's inclusive space, part of Ariadna Guiteras' artwork, have found new homes in exhibitions and public spaces, at the Museum of Modern Art in Tarragona and in Amsterdam clubs, where they feature in BODY – queer parties for all bodies.

Fora per fer escola: Radical Practices from Catalan Pedagogies has opened a vibrant channel of research into Catalan pedagogies. This initiative resonated strongly within professional communities, encouraging further exploration of their influence on contemporary educational models. It has fostered interdisciplinary collaborations with artists and other stakeholders, while delving deeper into the historical, social, and cultural contexts that shaped these practices. As a testament to this impact, the Museu Picasso in

Barcelona used our collaboration in the Manifesta 15 education symposium *Teaching Community, Learning Collective, Being Network* to strengthen ties with local and regional Catalan educators. This proclaimed collaboration led to the establishment of permanent working groups for teachers and the creation of a new seminar series, to be hosted at the Picasso museum.

We believe that maintaining the activation of the Territorial Working Group is crucial to building on the biennial momentum.

Although informal connections among participants persist, institutional support is needed to sustain the network's coordinated efforts. Over the course of 2024, this Catalan group initiated by Manifesta 15 has facilitated inter-municipal collaborations and projects, setting a valuable precedent for strengthening regional educational connections. Ensuring the network's longevity would provide an enduring platform for sharing resources, ideas, and methodologies among the region's diverse cultural agents and spaces, an urgently needed initiative signalled by Manifesta 15.

Lastly, the mediation model implemented by the developed mediators team working within the biennial for 77 days in 2024 has consistently stood out as one of Manifesta's most transformative legacies. Mediators possess a unique, multi-layered and open perspective on the concept of the biennial, shaped by their critical engagement with participating artists, curators, local team, stakeholders and visitors. The experiences and practices developed by the Manifesta 15 Mediation team – and indeed by the entire Education and Mediation team – will undoubtedly influence and enrich their future professional endeavours, carrying forward the programme's commitment to self-reflection, collaboration and shared agency.

Fundraising and Finances

Business and Governance

Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana’s total budget came to €9.2 million, including €865,219 secured in commercial income, €475,149 in grants and €7,941,513 from public funders. The main funders were Barcelona City Council (€5.2 million) as co-initiator, the Diputació de Barcelona (€1.2 million), the Generalitat de Catalunya (€1 million) and the Spanish Ministry of Culture (€500,000). In addition, the Generalitat de Catalunya invested €1,900,000 directly into the transformation of the Three Chimneys.

Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitan was established as an independent foundation in 2022 which was overseen by a board of 9 members. This board consisted of a mix of international and Catalan experts and policy makers. In May 2024, 90% of the Catalan Board members were changed as a result of Barcelona City Council elections. This change had an impact on the development of the project, with some delays in reaching important decisions due to the tight schedule before the opening of the biennial. Moreover, during the same year there were also changes in the Generalitat, the Spanish Government and the European Parliament.

The Foundation employed 50 full-time employees in Barcelona, all of whom were based in Catalonia and worked on the programme for an average of 16 months until the end of Manifesta 15. The Foundation also employed 48 support staff for three months to work at six different venues and engaged more than 50 volunteers who participated for different periods of the time during the biennial.

The Foundation Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana will conclude all of its activities in June 2025 after which the foundation will be dissolved by the end of 2025.

Fundraising and Finances

For each edition of Manifesta, the Development department fundraises for participant projects, programme elements and the biennial as a whole. The initial target for sponsorship and grants for Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana was €1 million. The development team faced a major challenge in securing sponsors, due to the strong competition from other events taking place in Barcelona in the same year, especially the America’s Cup, and the limited support received from public funders to link and partner with potential regional or national sponsors. The team finally secured €475,149 in grants, by focusing on funding the artistic and educational programmes of Manifesta 15 biennial, the main areas of expertise. This financial input was much lower than in previous editions of Manifesta and for the first time the Biennial did not have any commercial sponsorship.

The Development department, with the help of the management and production teams, reached out to many companies, funding organisations and grants and succeeded in recruiting 15 programme partners who supported the artistic projects of the programme, some of whom were long-term partners of Manifesta. A selection of partners who supported an array of artistic projects are detailed below:

AMMODO awarded a generous grant of €100,000 and, with the support of the IFM Board in Amsterdam, gave an extra €50,000 for the overall participation of Carlos Bunga, Maja Escher, Lara Schnitger, Binta Diaw, Kiluanji Kia Henda, Katja Novitskova, Bea Bonafini, Chiara Camoni, Marcos Kueh, Marie-Claire Messouma Manlanbien, Martin Toluku, Claudia Pagès, Carolina Caycedo and Lola Lasurt.

Fundación Daniel y Nina Carasso supported with €50,000 the newly commissioned work of the participant Binta Diaw, the project The Memory of Smoke. Ecosocial conflicts in sacrifice zones, and the site-specific Education and Mediation Programme of Manifesta 15 at Centre de la Platja, ‘What do sea creatures know about pedagogy?’.

The Directorate-General for the Arts of the Ministry of Culture of Portugal, with €45,521, to support the work of the following Portuguese participants: Carlos Bunga, Hugo Canoilas, Diana Policarpo and Maja Escher.

Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, with €15,000, supported the Portuguese participation of Carlos Bunga, Maja Escher, Hugo Canoilas and Diana Policarpo.

The Dutch Mondriaan Fund, a loyal funder of Manifesta since its origins, supported the Dutch participation in the biennial, with €40,000, as did the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Spain, with €15,000, including projects by Embassy of the North Sea, Niels Albers, Diana Scherer, Lara Schnitger, Tanja Smeets and Elmo Vermijs.

The Italian Fondazione In Between Art Film supported with €31,943.79 the projects of MASBEDO and Jonathas de Andrade.

Phileas – The Austrian Office for Contemporary Art, supported radio SLUMBER’s project with €10,000

The Ministry of the Arts, Culture, Civil Service and Sport of Austria (BMKÖS), with €10,000, supported the participation of Hui Ye, as member of radio SLUMBER collective. The Austrian participation was also supported by the Austrian Cultural Forum in Madrid, which with €1,000, guaranteed the participation of Anca Benera & Arnold Estefan.

Pro Helvetia - Fondation suisse pour la culture supported with €13,587 the participation of Julian Charrière.

ifa – Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen supported with €10,000 the projects of Asad Raza and Clara Sukyoung Yo, a member of the radio SLUMBER collective.

Trampoline Association granted €4,958.68 to French artists and collectives such as Ugo Schiavi, Félix Blume, Claire Fontaine and Marie Claire Messouma Manlanbien.

Ripollet Town Council supported the work of Nora Ancarola with €15,000

The Ministry of Culture of Nord Rhein Westphalia, as a supporter of Manifesta 16 in Ruhr, donated €20,000 for an opening reception for 400 people in the Royal Palace of Pedralbes in Barcelona.

The Manifesta 15 Public Survey was financed by La Caixa Foundation with €48,400. The independent evaluation of the overall impact of Manifesta 15 was conducted by the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC) and the GESOP Research Institute, with the support of Fundació La Caixa. The evaluation relies on quantitative (1905 public survey respondents) and qualitative analysis based on public surveys, focus groups and interviews.

Acción Cultural Española, AC/E supported with €4,000 the attendance of a Ukrainian Delegation at the Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana Preview Days (from the 5th of September to the 7th of September 2024). Their attendance fostered dialogue and shared commitment to promoting cultural exchange and innovation.

The Development team also created 11 local in-kind agreements with an estimated worth of up to €160,000, which supported the biennial programme with products and services in beverages and food, furniture, mobility, hospitality, venues, communication and marketing. Collaboration agreements were established with the following institutions and companies: Front Marítim, The Social Hub, Diplocat, Urbidermis, Moritz, Auara, Vilajuïga, Suntory Beverage, Syra Coffee, Dos Déus Vermouth, Moventis, A Bike Rental, Cooltra, Simon and Freixenet.

The public-private consortium Catalonia International contributed €40,000 to support two international press trips to Barcelona: the Reconnaissance Press Trip, which hosted 20 journalists, and the Press Trip for Preview Days, which welcomed 45 journalists. The funding covered flight tickets, accommodation, and other on-site expenses during their stay.

Ticketing

Manifesta 15 decided to implement an entrance fee of €15, similar in concept to a voucher, for access to the three main venues, which could be used by visitors for the full duration of the biennial as many times as they wished. The strategy behind this rather complex ticketing system was to make the price accessible for different target groups (with discounts and free tickets for students, the retired, etc), also to give value to the programme, to manage capacities in certain venues (such as Casa Gomis), and to be able to collect data from the visitors’ profiles. Thanks to the revenue from ticket sales, the Foundation was able to secure a substantial commercial revenue of €862,250.

Revenue was also raised from different experience packages designed to allow companies to offer their customers, employees and partners a tailor-made experience. In total, 221 experiences worth €8,537.88 and bulk tickets worth €3,816 were sold.

The Foundation obtained during the first quarter of 2025 a successful ruling from the Tax administration and confirmation of the decision to establish the exemption of VAT on ticket sales and the recovery of VAT against the merchandise and sponsorship income.

Marketing, Communications, Publications and Audience Development

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‘Manifesta 15 has solid foundations. Something you demonstrated during the months it took place in and around our city. You highlighted necessary debates which I am sure will shape the way society needs to resolve sustainability, our memory and our debts with colonisation or the way we take care of the vulnerable. That is, in its essence, the role of culture and art: to challenge the status quo, to ask ourselves ‘can we do better?’

Sergi Vicente, former director of BTV

General Strategy

The principal objective of the Marketing and Communications Department of Manifesta 15 was to engage with and focus primarily on a broad and varied regional audience, ensuring that residents from Barcelona and its metropolitan region would travel outside of their own cities and (re)discover their region and its cultural wealth. The devised strategy was created to target local and regional residents and introduce to them to largely unknown venues and locations linked to the architectural, religious and industrial heritage of Catalonia. A strategy was put in place to showcase, for regional audiences, how decentralisation of culture is possible in Catalonia, and how culture can be an incubator for socio-ecological transformation, without drawing more international visitors or tourists to Barcelona, already a problematic issue due to overtourism. For those international visitors drawn to Manifesta 15, our goal was to tell the story of an alternative metropolitan Barcelona, one which transgresses its natural boundaries to showcase a different dynamism, history and reality than those of the touristic La Rambla. These goals were successfully achieved through cross marketing actions, the activation of the entire media landscape, a trilingual communication strategy including website, social media, digital and physical campaigns across all 12 Host Cities, activation events for a broad public and a focus on publications, which promoted, contextualised and visualised Manifesta 15’s research and programme. The Manifesta 15 team believes that the core targets of the strategy mentioned above were successfully implemented by way of high regional audience participation, an impressive local, regional and international press coverage, ongoing and growing engagement with digital communication channels and an exceptionally high level of visitor satisfaction with all aspects of the programme.

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Audiences

To build Manifesta 15’s audiences before the biennial opened, it was essential to create a variety of local partnerships and cross-marketing actions to ground this base. Events were organised throughout 2023 and the first quarter of 2024 with prominent local events such as *48h Open House Barcelona*, *Loop Festival*, *Asian Film Festival Barcelona* and *La Mercè*. An array of talks about the creative sector were organised with one of Manifesta 15’s programme collaborators, The Social Hub Barcelona, engaging an audience of creatives and entrepreneurs. During the biennial, in the most prominent and spectacular venues – such as Gustavo Gili, Casa Gomis and Three Chimneys – aside from the artistic and education public programme, events were organised by the marketing department with prominent local cultural organisations. A spectacular classical music evening entitled *Arc d’Iris* was organised on the top floor of the Three Chimneys in collaboration with the renowned theatre group La Fura dels Baus, the composer Marc Migó and L’Orquestra del Reial Cercle Artístic de Barcelona, drawing an audience of classical music and theatre enthusiasts. A free event was organised during the closing weekend on the site of the Three Chimneys in collaboration with the agency Lexa Services and four queer music collectives



Arc d'Iris by La Fura dels Baus and the composer Marc Migó and L'Orquestra del Reial Cercle Artístic de Barcelona



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Manifesta 15 Closing Event organised
in collaboration with Lexa Services



(LATINEO M8NSE, MARICXS, Me Siento Extraña and MUSA) welcoming an audience of 2000+ young members of the electronic music, dance and queer community. The marketing department also invited a range of local content creators with substantial online communities for two special events, *The Inside Look*, at Casa Gomis and at the Three Chimneys, attracting more than 20 digital creators who shared their visits on their different channels with their community members. The department also did activations outside of Manifesta 15 venues such as organising 'Manifesta 15 corners' in five different libraries in Barcelona (Agustí Centelles, Biblioteca García Márquez, Francesca Bonnemaison, Fort Pienc and Trinitat Vella), which presented a selection of Manifesta 15 content-related books and Manifesta 15 publications. Certain libraries also hosted Manifesta 15 participant activities, such as a crochet workshop and session at Biblioteca i Espai Cultural Font de la Mina in La Mina and an activation by Rosa Tharrats and Gabriel Ventura in the library in Santa Coloma de Gramenet. Through our collaboration with the Libraries of Barcelona, we were included twice in their newsletter, sent out to more than 528,940 individuals in Barcelona to invite them to use the special Manifesta discount for library card holders, and ran a competition for free tickets. Manifesta 15 also worked with Apropa Cultura, a social initiative offering a wide range of shows and cultural activities at accessible prices for people with disability or at risk of social exclusion. During the biennial, Manifesta 15 hosted 99 groups with a total of 1,201 people in different social vulnerably groups.

The publication department was also part of the art book fair Arts Libris and organised a book launch and vermouth afternoon at the MACBA where all the four Manifesta 15 publications were presented. These events and activations organised by the Marketing and Communication department, not to mention the Official Opening Celebration which welcomed 2500 people to the Three Chimneys, drew an array of audiences from music lovers to cultural enthusiasts. These events increased brand visibility, which was a remarkable success for Manifesta as a brand previously unknown to the broader public in Catalonia.

Manifesta 15 visual identity

As with each edition of Manifesta, a local design studio was invited to create the visual identity for the edition. The visual identity was designed by a Barcelona-based studio, Domestic Data Streamers, and used as its departure point navigation elements linked to a map of the territory. From a complex initial design and the selection of striking iconic venues, the main design elements shifted to using the four leading venues. Most notably, it was clear that the department's strongest communication tool was the spectacular Three Chimneys. Located in Sant Adrià de Besòs, these chimneys, never opened before to the general public, would definitely arouse curiosity and excitement in everyone from Barcelona and the neighbouring municipalities, as a constant recognised point of reference for all, yet previously impossible to enter. These leading venues such as Casa Comis in the Llobregat delta and the Sant Cugat Monastery were then paired with

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their 'cluster colour' as a code to their geographical location. The visual identity was distinctively recognisable, bold and accessible for all to digest as it appeared across the 12 municipalities, and as much as the budget would allow on this extra-large scale of the metropolitan region.

Campaigns, signage & wayfinding

Outdoor digital and print Manifesta 15 campaigns were spread across the entire region and were visible in all 12 municipalities: Badalona, Barcelona, Cornellà de Llobregat, El Prat de Llobregat, Granollers, L'Hospitalet de Llobregat, Mataró, Sabadell, Sant Adrià de Besòs, Santa Coloma de Gramenet, Sant Cugat del Vallès and Terrassa. The department collaborated with the communications departments of all the metropolitan municipalities to secure as many advertisement outlets as possible in the best locations in each one. A long process of negotiation between Manifesta 15 and the municipalities resulted in large scale visibility. It proved more complex to secure a campaign in the city of Barcelona as the City Council had limited resources for this and was concerned that the vast majority of Manifesta 15's activations took place outside of the city. Nevertheless, in the lead up to the biennial and throughout its duration, Manifesta 15's outdoor campaign was visible across the metropolitan region. Wayfinding was put in place across each municipality to help the audience navigate from the central bus/tram or train station and create a distinct parcours in each city. Lastly, public transport providers, as the most encouraging form of transport, played a large role in the promotion and visibility of Manifesta 15. A fruitful collaboration with the national train service Renfe, who branded themselves as the 'Train of Culture' (*Tren de la Cultura*), hugely amplified Manifesta 15's reach, with branded head rests, ticket competitions, social media activations and on-board digital visibility across the metropolitan region for three months. Additionally, collaborations were set up with all the other local public transport companies, including the wrapping of an entire tram running between Barcelona and Sant Adrià, a Ferrocarrils de la Generalitat de Catalunya train from Barcelona to Sant Cugat and beyond, and the backs of an array of Moventis busses travelling as far as Mataró. The support and dedication of these partners resulted in Manifesta 15 reaching far across the region with a limited budget of only €50,000. This hugely successful branding of Manifesta 15 through partnership with public transport was key to visualising the presence of Manifesta 15 in the metropolitan region for 12 weeks in 2024.

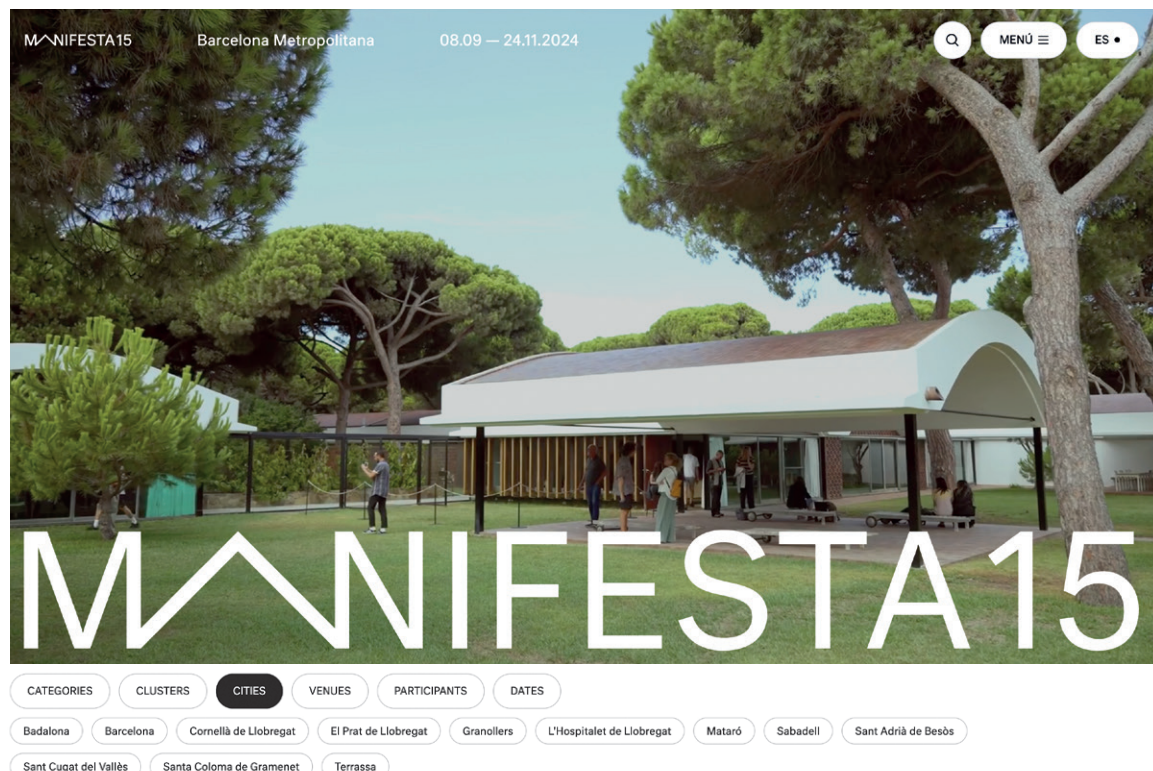
Website & Social Media

An edition-specific website was launched in 2023 to accommodate the complex structure and workings of the 15th edition, including a map integration and more than 560 events. Manifesta 15's website manifesta15.org received more than 373,724 visits in 2024, with 47,739 visits in the week of the opening and 24,942 weekly visits during the biennial, showcasing a constant engagement with the biennial and its programme. Social media platforms, specifically Instagram, were essential to disseminating



Tram in Barcelona wrapped with Manifesta 15 branding
Promotional flags for Manifesta 15





Website of the Manifesta 15: <http://www.manifesta15.org>

Opening Press Conference of Manifesta 15



Manifesta 15's key messages and programme. As in each edition of the biennial, the department had to build up a local following, while retaining the communities formed in the previous editions. Manifesta's social media engagement grew by a substantial amount in the lead up and during the biennial period, with an increase of 36,200 followers of the Manifesta 15 instagram account in 2024 to a total of 91,352, of whom 65.7% were women and 17.7% were based in Barcelona. Due to the ever-growing digital marketing landscape and its potential, Manifesta 15 implemented a major digital campaign with a local marketing agency, Nordia, which reached 1,393,034 local people and generated 6,419,703 impressions.

Press

The foundations of Manifesta 15's press strategy was already in place in 2022, as key Catalan and Spanish journalists were invited to Manifesta 14 Prishtina to become acquainted with the nature of the nomadic biennial, its methodology and its management. This network grew substantially as soon as a team was established in Barcelona early in 2023. The multiple changes across municipal, provincial, regional and national government significantly hindered Manifesta 15's engagement with journalists physically, as press conferences were not permitted throughout 2023 due to elections. Nevertheless, the team was able to build the press network across Catalonia and create a great sense of anticipation for the biennial. In February 2024, Manifesta 15 organised a pre-biennial or *reconnaissance* trip for a group of leading international media to show them parts of the region, introduce them to leading stakeholders and give them a behind-the-scenes glimpse of the venues. Local journalists also joined a part of this press itinerary, as we opened the Three Chimneys and gave them an exclusive tour. All majority TV stations and especially Betevé and 3Cat were keen to collaborate with Manifesta 15 and create special narratives and storylines for their audiences. The RTVE programme and loyal Manifesta follower Metropolis also made a TV documentary about the edition. Despite the obstacles, more than 1,049 articles about Manifesta 15 were published by local, national and international press since 2020, mostly addressing the socio-ecological transition and the issue of de-centralisation of cultural infrastructure, which was the major focus of the local press coverage throughout the biennial. During the biennial, 284 international press articles and reviews, 357 Catalan press articles and 214 Spanish press articles and reviews were published. 5 documentaries were made about Manifesta 15 (1 German, 1 French, 1 Spanish and 2 Catalan). Manifesta 15 organised 3 press conferences and 2 press trips for 140 journalists. 254 journalists and 1402 professionals attended the preview days.

Press Quotes

'In a world in which, it is said, the future has been cancelled, art moves us to think the unthinkable, to imagine a better world beyond the trumpets of the apocalypse, to negotiate an eco-social future beyond a city model linked to fossil culture. This is the lesson of Manifesta, and we must take advantage of it!'

Jordi Martí, Secretary of State for Culture, Spanish Government.
Article from *La Vanguardia*

'Those who are curious enough to embark on such an adventure will – even if they only visit a few places – be able to take a revealing look behind the tourist façade of Barcelona. The metropolitan area provides plenty of food for thought on problems and issues of urban and regional development that are also on the agenda elsewhere.'

Diane Artus, *BauNetz*

'This edition's will to turn our gaze to the peripheries is, thankfully, non-exhaustive; this show is not about asking everyone to go everywhere. Rather, by embedding itself within atomised local social and ecological infrastructures, the project activates art as a mediating factor to enable both critical engagement and, hopefully, sustained change.'

Louisa Elderton, *Artnet*

'In its 15th edition, Manifesta in the metropolitan region around Barcelona manages to address urgent ecological and social issues in more than just the wall texts.'

It is the artistic works themselves that search for answers and, in combination with local history, grow into a biennial worth seeing.

This year's Manifesta is many of the things it has promised so often: a vision for urban development, a platform for urgent social discourse – and, above all, an exhibition that can negotiate all of this through art.'

Maximilian Lehner, *Parnass*

'Replacing the skyline of Barcelona, with the Sagrada Familia and the Jean Nouvel Tower, with that of three monumental chimneys, of fascinating industrial memory, converting a former power plant into a cultural space, is a vision, an ambition, that looks directly at the Tate Modern in London with its Turbine Hall or the MAAT in Lisbon.'

Francesca Pini, *Corriere della Sera*

'The three main venues – each a legendary space that was until now practically inaccessible to visitors or locals – define a core idea that creates a powerful and satisfactory story. Two rivers, the Llobregat and the Besòs, act as huge geographical parentheses bracketing the city's vast contradictions and disparities, highlighting the social and economic tensions and contradictions that literally built the very Barcelona we know today.'

Javier Montes, *Artforum*

'Manifesta is first and foremost a method: starting with the initial dialogue, a whole network of meetings and exchanges with local communities is woven to revisit the past, identify needs and question the cultural and urbanistic dynamics of a city. Once this scan of a territory's problems has been established, the structure orchestrates a tailor-made art trail, auscultating the spirit and possibilities of the place through the poetry of contemporary works.'

Emmanuelle Jardonnet, *Le Monde*



Publications

Publications are a key means of properly documenting and representing the context, research and final programmes of each edition of Manifesta. Manifesta 15 published four books in three separate languages, English, Catalan and Spanish, a total of 12 different volumes, designed by Spread. The publications were on sale at the majority of Manifesta 15's venues, at leading bookshops throughout the region and in prominent museum shops such as at MACBA and the CCCB. The publications are part of the tangible legacy of Manifesta 15 and an essential tool to explain Manifesta 15's role in the region. The publications published for the 15th edition were:

Fora per fer Escola. Radical practices from Catalan pedagogies, which includes a specially produced Pedagogical Oracle in the form of a toolkit for local teachers and educators. This publication was produced together with the Education and Mediation department of Manifesta 15 in a print run of 1,500 copies.

Barcelona, beyond the walls which presented the crucial pre-biennial research process and the projects implemented across the metropolitan region by 10 selected collectives which led to the conceptualisation of the framework of this edition. This publication also had a print run of 1,500 copies.

The main Manifesta 15 catalogue, which included all of the works by the 92 participants and was published a month and a half after the opening in mid-October 2024. This publication is mostly of value to professionals and those visitors who want to have a visible memory of the exhibitions and presentations. This publication had a print run of 2,000 copies.

For the general audience, Manifesta 15 produced a special publication in three languages, *Manifesta 15 Guide*, which mapped out the different venues, how to get there, municipality, mobility, hospitality and leisure information, including where to eat and what to do in each municipality. This very popular guide had a print run of 3,000 copies.

In addition to the publications for the biennial, an additional publication will be presented in 2025 entitled *Black Archives: Fragments of an Anti-Colonial Metropolis*. This is being produced in collaboration with curator and writer Tania Safura Adam and is intended as a testimony to the materials and artifacts exhibited in the archive exhibition *Arxius Negres* during Manifesta 15, at the former Gustavo Gili publishing house. It will be the first publication in Spanish, English and Catalan to delve into the forgotten and overlooked histories of the members of the Black Diaspora communities of the metropolitan region. Texts by Kathleen Ferrier, Chair of the Dutch UNESCO Commission, and the Director of Manifesta 15 Hedwig Fijen will present how this research is positioned within the international debate.



Fora per fer escola publication

Pedagogical Oracle toolkit



Pre-biennial research publication



Manifesta 15 publication



Manifesta 15 Black Archives publication



Manifesta 15 Guide



196 Institutional representatives who participated in the opening press conference of Manifesta 15
Former Mayor Ada Colau writing the text for the installation by Manifesta 15 participant Larry Achiampong



197 Mayor of Barcelona, Jaume Collboni and Director of Manifesta, Hedwig Fijen during the opening Press Conference of Manifesta 15
Ernest Urtasun, the Spanish Minister of Culture at the Opening of Manifesta 15



Public Survey Summary

The Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana Evaluation and Impact Analysis Project is a research initiative focused on evaluating the economic, social and cultural impacts of the Manifesta 15 Biennial in Barcelona. It assesses the biennial’s reception and impact, relevance and influence on various stakeholders, including the public, artists, and local communities in both a qualitative and a quantitative manner. The research is an independent analysis conducted by the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, from data collected by GESOP, and made possible by La Caixa Foundation.

Research goals include:

- assessing the social, cultural and economic impact of the event
- amplifying Barcelona’s cultural potential and socio-ecological diversity as stated in the original Bid submitted by the city of Barcelona
- observing how Manifesta 15 has investigated the topic of decentralisation in the regional cultural landscape as stipulated in the Bid
- understanding the visitor profile and visitors’ perceptions of the Biennial and evaluating the effectiveness of marketing and communication strategies.

The Manifesta 15 Public Survey reflects the quantitative part of the analysis and is based on a well-executed survey of 1901 personal interviews, conducted between October and November 2024 during the biennial with Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana visitors at several places and venues.

The Manifesta 15 Public Survey Conclusions

- Strong attendance: From the 8th of September until the 24th of November, 2024, the Biennial programme attracted 291,336 visits.
- On average each biennial visitor attended three separate venues, which meant that each visitor travelled from their metropolitan home to at least one or two other municipalities, thereby demonstrating that Manifesta 15 encouraged local residents to explore the metropolitan region and to engage with the decentralisation of cultural activities and explore thier own and their region’s wealth of cultural and heritage venues.
- Visitors were predominantly from the Barcelona Metropolitan Region (85.4%), with 4.8% coming from the rest of Spain and 9.8% from outside Spain, mainly from Germany (18.3%), Italy (17.6%), and the Netherlands (15.0%). In other words, 90.2% were regional and national visitors and 9.8% were international, highlighting that Manifesta 15 achieved one of its main aims, which was to engage with both regional and local audiences.

Visitor Profile & Perceptions

- The survey showed that 56.3% of visitors were women, 41.7% were men, and 1.1% identified as non-binary. 73.8% were employed, 18% were retired, and 3.1% were students.
- 69% of the visitors were not professionals linked to the artistic, cultural or creative fields, meaning that Manifesta 15 managed to reach out to mainly non-professional audiences

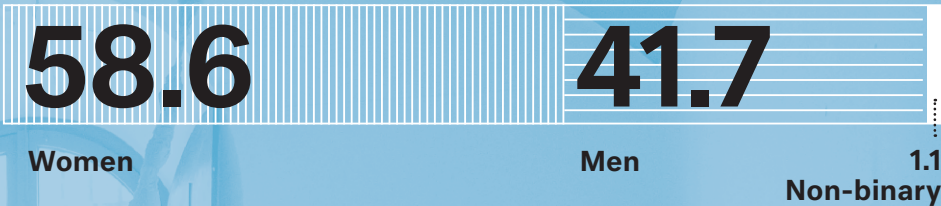
- 92.7% of the visitors had never heard of Manifesta before or had never attended a previous edition of Manifesta. This made it clear that Manifesta 15 built up a broad new audience base.
- Visitors strongly agreed that Manifesta 15 venues have high symbolic value (4.61 out of 5) and that Manifesta 15 highlights the urgency of cultural decentralisation in the Metropolitan Region (4.21 out of 5).
- 91.2% of visitors were very or quite satisfied with their experience at Manifesta 15. The aspects with the highest satisfaction ratings were support from venue staff (4.38 out of 5), the overall comfort of the venues (4.24 out of 5), and the ticket price (4.23 out of 5).
- Among residents of the Barcelona Metropolitan Region, 68.9% stated that their interest in arts, culture, and the history of their region increased after visiting Manifesta 15. Moreover, 60% believed the legacy of Manifesta 15 for the region may be a heightened awareness of the need for cultural decentralisation, while 55% identified increased support for the cultural sector and 50% highlighted awareness of social cohesion and ecological transition.

Economic Impact and ROI

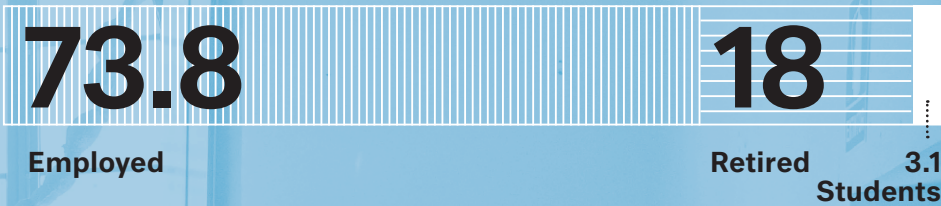
- The estimated total economic impact on the metropolitan region of Barcelona as a consequence of Manifesta 15 is €12,625,851. This includes the direct effect of €6,567,912, attributed to the Biennial’s own expenditure in Catalonia, and an indirect effect of €6,057,939, generated through spending by visitors from outside the Metropolitan Region of Barcelona who came specifically for Manifesta 15.
- For every euro invested by the public administration, €1.8052 circulated in the Metropolitan Region of Barcelona through visitor spending at Manifesta 15 this means that the ROI is 1.8 times the budget investment of the public partners in Catalonia.

Visitors Profile & Perceptions

Genre (%)



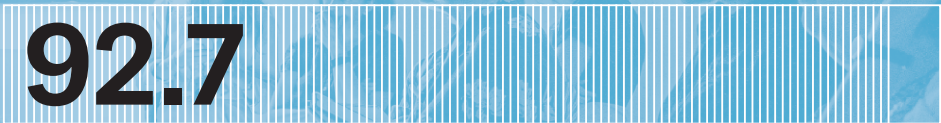
Occupation (%)



Occupation (%)



New audience (%)



Satisfaction experience (out of 5)



Support from venue staff



Overall comfort of the venues



Ticket price

Economic impact

ROI



Times the budget investment



Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana Legacy

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‘It was a pleasure to support and contribute to the success of Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana. The experience of working together on this ambitious project has been incredibly rewarding. The success of Manifesta 15 is testimony to the hard work and dedication of everyone involved, and we are grateful for the opportunity to have been part of it.’

Arantxa Ribot, Pedagogue and Doctor in Education

Closing Debate: ‘Imagining the Future: What’s Next?’

On the 23rd of November 2024, the closing debate of Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana took place at the headquarters of the biennial, the former Gustavo Gili publishing house. The debate, a traditional feature at the closure of the biennial, brought together a diverse group of professionals, including local experts on culture and architecture, politicians, stakeholders, and opinion leaders, to discuss the legacy and future of three of the most prominent venues that had been selected for the event: The Three Chimneys in Sant Adrià de Besòs, Casa Gomis in El Prat de Llobregat and the former Gustavo Gili publishing house in Barcelona

These venues, each with its own unique history and set of challenges, were central to the success of Manifesta 15. However, despite their great potential as public cultural spaces, all face uncertain futures. The discussions highlighted the importance of preserving these sites as hubs for cultural activity and social resistance. It was concluded that the future of these venues should be shaped through a participatory process, ensuring that they remain publicly accessible and continue to serve as symbols of eco-social transition, as they did during the biennial.

The key conclusions from the three sessions are as follows:

Session about Casa Gomis - La Ricarda in El Prat de Llobregat

Moderator: **Miquel Molina**, Deputy Director of *La Vanguardia*

- The house as a symbol of resistance against mass tourism represented by the airport.
- Protection, conservation and maintenance of the house in its original site.
- Ensuring sustainable ownership.
- Accessibility at all times.
- A focus of cultural, ecological and political activity, as well as resistance and a laboratory in the fields of architecture, ecology, culture and activism.

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Session about the former headquarters of the Gustavo Gili publishing house in Barcelona

Moderator: **Daniel Granados**, Cultural Rights Delegate at the Diputació de Barcelona.

- Becoming a new cultural facility accessible for everyone, addressing specific challenges: inequality and diversity at all levels (cultural, economic, social) and the climate emergency.
- Establishing alternative models of institution which foster new forms of governance, making them more open and transparent, rethinking the role of the public administration and its relationship with citizens.
- Creating a new cultural and curatorial facility with experimental and transdisciplinary programming.
- Continuing the experience of the archives programmed by Manifesta 15, conceived not only as repositories of material but as living archives linked to participation and research.

Session about the Three Chimneys in Sant Adrià de Besòs

Moderator: **Carme Ribas**, Ex-Director of Consorci del Besòs

- Maintaining the accessibility of the Three Chimneys as proved during Manifesta 15 and incorporating a bottom-up participatory approach to programming and content development.
- Integrating the 'Memory of the Smoke' archive as a permanent feature in any programme, expanding this and generating a study programme on memory that is not static but a dynamic exhibition/space/programme.
- Valuing the history and socio-cultural heritage of the site, especially for local communities.
- Using the site as a continuous example of the social and climate emergency.
- Ensuring public access through open calls and creating a laboratory for artistic experimentation.
- Collaborating closely with other cultural spaces in the city centre and metropolitan area, leveraging the opportunities presented by the forthcoming World Capital of Architecture Barcelona 2026.

Since the closure of the biennial, several developments have highlighted the transformative legacy of Manifesta 15 as a catalyst for social and ecological change.

Purchase of Casa Gomis

In January 2025, less than two months after Manifesta 15 closed, the Spanish Ministry of Culture acquired Casa Gomis for €7.2 millions, securing its preservation as a cultural centre. Casa Gomis was selected for the biennial to highlight the imminent threat of its demolition due to the proposed expansion of Barcelona El Prat Airport, and to emphasise the need to protect the surrounding natural environment from industrial encroachment, which was successfully achieved by the acquisition. In May, the Spanish Ministry of Culture announced that the management of Casa Gomis had been entrusted to the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya.

Archival Handover by Anaïs Florin

On the 12th of December 2024, the official handover of the Escoles en Lluita archive took place at the Historical Archive of Roquetes-Nou Barris. This project, developed in 2023 by the participant Anaïs Florin as part of the exhibition *Fora per fer escola*, highlights a movement that emerged in Barcelona between 1976 and 1977 during the democratic transition to fight for quality public education in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods along the Besòs River. The archive, which includes photographs, press clippings, posters, and previously unpublished documents, will be made accessible to the public.

Black Archives: From exhibition to publication

The Black Archives presentation commissioned by Manifesta 15 has led to the first publication of this extensive collection, now being distributed globally. It has sparked a critical discussion of which African diaspora histories are being told and archived, and by which museums in Catalonia.

Sant Adrià reopened the Platja del Litoral at the Three Chimneys

The City Council of Sant Adrià has received authorisation from the Catalan Waste Agency (ARC) to reopen the beach after completing environmental recovery work.

Flamenco Pop Museum travels

After opening for the first time during Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana, Flamenco Pop Museum curated by Cathy Claret is travelling to different venues, such as Castellón Prison, and talks are under way to make it the first official Flamenco Pop Museum in Europe.

Immaterial legacy of Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana

Manifesta 15 promoted an alternative cultural Barcelona, shifting the focus away from central institutions and museums. It showcased a strong interest in expanding attention to regional heritage, encouraging Barcelona's citizens to engage more deeply with their region.

Manifesta 15 proved that archival exhibitions as part of a pre-biennial research can be a successful instrument with which to critically analyse alternative and untold historical perspectives.

The network created by Manifesta 15 among the different municipalities has planted the seed for potential future collaborations between them.

Manifesta 15 opened the discussion about the de-centralisation of the cultural infrastructure and the implementation of some of the issues and call to action raised at the Opening Press Conference on the 5th of September 2024.

39% of the artists were Catalan and had the chance to present their work in front of an international audience of professionals.

Talent development: Manifesta 15 aimed to strengthen the cultural ecosystem by engaging young people in formal and informal educational settings, such as the 11 mediators, and giving both young professionals and trainees opportunities in all aspects of the organisation and programmes of Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana.



'Imagining the Future: What's Next?', debate held on the closing weekend of Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana to discuss the future of key venues.



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During Manifesta 15, local bookstore Finestres opened a pop-up shop in the former publishing house Gustavo Gili where publications from participants were sold



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Official handover from Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana to Manifesta 16 Ruhr 2026 took place at the Gustavo Gili during the closing weekend. Pau González from the Diputació de Barcelona, along with Eva Sòria and Maria Elena Amat from the Ajuntament de Barcelona, formally presented the handover to Dr. Frank Dudda, President of the Supervisory Board of Manifesta 16, in the presence of the Director of Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana, Hedwig Fijen.

Organisation

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Each edition of Manifesta is developed in collaboration with local host city initiators and implemented by the International Foundation Manifesta, the organization's permanent body based in Amsterdam. This foundation brings together a team of experienced cultural producers who have worked across multiple European host cities.

For every new edition, Manifesta establishes an independent legal entity that is fully autonomous and legally responsible for delivering that specific edition. In the case of Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana, a not-for-profit foundation was created with equal representation from both the City of Barcelona and the Manifesta headquarters in Amsterdam.

Each edition is delivered by a team of up to 50 full-time staff, comprising both international professionals and local experts – 90% of whom, in this edition, are of Catalan origin. The organisation operates from its permanent offices in Amsterdam as well as from a temporary headquarters established for two years in Barcelona, housed in the former Gustavo Gili Publishing House.

The permanent team of Manifesta provides the backbone to the governance, management, execution and structure of the European Nomadic Biennial. At the same time, Manifesta 15 Foundation is liable for a perfect execution of the program and the management of the budget.

For each edition of Manifesta, the permanent team is responsible for conceptualising the biennial's framework, selecting creative mediators, and implementing site-specific production, communication, and business models in collaboration with a range of local and regional stakeholders, as well as the Host City's partners. The Manifesta team works on-site in the Host City for extended periods to foster synergy between their international experience and local expertise. This approach ensures that knowledge is not only shared but also embedded – leaving a lasting legacy within the team and establishing best practices within the Host City.

Hedwig Fijen is the Founding Director of Manifesta and the Director of Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana. Fijen is in charge of all aspects of the Manifesta organisation including the selection of Host Cities for the biennial, thematic content and the curatorial selection. The final artistic direction, the urban vision and the development of the concept of the Creative Mediators is her responsibility.

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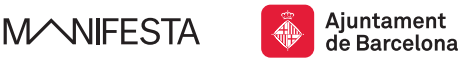
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Celebrating the 30 years anniversary of Manifesta
at the Catalan pavilion in Venice during the 60th edition
of the Venice Biennial Art Exhibition in 2024



Manifesta, the European Nomadic Biennial, relocates to a new city every two years. The 15th edition was the largest in the biennial's history, and took place in Barcelona and 11 neighbouring cities in the metropolitan region from the 8th of September until the 24th of November 2024.

This final report analyses and evaluates how Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana came together, and how its contextual and historical foundations were collectively formed. It documents the wide range of projects and their impact, relating these to the critical appraisals of visitors as investigated in the public survey. In this study, we reflect on how culture catalyses positive change, crafting narratives that inspire and guide us towards the unknown.



MANIFESTA

