



# CASA

MULTIMEDIA MARKET GUIDE  
SPAIN

CIRCUS AND STREET ARTS CIRCUITS

# CASA

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**TEXTS:** Aida Pallares, Mike Ribalta, La Central del Circ, Department of Culture-Generalitat de Catalunya / **TESTIMONIALS:** Jordi Aspa and Bet Miralta, Oriol Martí, Joan Morros, Mercè Saumell, Jordi Sellas, Xavier Urbano, Ada Vilaró / **TRANSLATOR:** Chris Boswell / **EDITOR:** John Ellingsworth / **FACILITATOR** of the CASA programmes: Yohann Floch / **GRAPHIC DESIGN:** Marine Hadjès-Glatard / **COVER PICTURE:** Kamchâtka © Jesús Vilamajó / **PICTURES:** P. 4-5 Circus Company “eia” © Ben Hopper; P. 6 Escarlata Circus © Josep Guindo; P. 6 Open rehearsal La Veronal @FiraTàrraga; P. 8 Jordi Sellas © Martí E. Berenguer; P. 10 La Industrial Teatrera © Jesús Vilamajó; P. 12 Joan Morros © Martí E. Berenguer; P. 12 Los Galindos © Martí E. Berenguer; P. 14 Animal Religion © Martí E. Berenguer; P. 16 Xavier Urbano © Martí E. Berenguer; P. 16 Joan Català © Martí E. Berenguer; P. 18 La Central del Circ © Rosa Colell / La Central del Circ; P. 20 Mercè Saumell © Martí E. Berenguer; P. 20 La Central del Circ © Irene Soler; P. Ada Vilaró © Martí E. Berenguer; P. 24-25 Leandre © Martí E. Berenguer; P. 26 Oriol Martí © Martí E. Berenguer; P. 29 La Fura dels Baus © GOL

# SHORT HISTORY AND OVERVIEW OF THE CIRCUS AND STREET ARTS

The first examples of street theatre in Catalonia in the 20<sup>th</sup> century are found in the time of the Spanish Civil War with the Guerrillas del Teatro, small wandering groups who performed didactic and propagandistic material without literary pretension.

Years later, towards the end of Franco's dictatorship in the 1960s, people began to retake the public spaces, and theatre shows, mime and street festivals were reborn. However, it was not until the 1970s, coinciding with the rise of the 'Third Theatre' in Europe, that we saw the appearance of a search for new forms of expression.

The leading company was Comediants, created by Joan Font in 1971. Their theatre took the medieval tradition of carnival, popular festival and play, and mixed it with a wide range of techniques including music, circus and fireworks. Comediants managed to renew the imagery of folklore and the custom of appealing to the audience.

There was also a boom in companies and creators who took the street as their venue. There were acts like La Cubana and La Fura dels Baus, pioneers of a way of relating to public spaces and audiences, and creators like Carles Santos and Albert Vidal, geniuses of performance who filled festival works with an ironic and political discourse.

In 1981, Tàrraga town council commissioned Comediants to create the Fira de Teatre al Carrer. This now draws some 147,000 spectators each year. Other festivals, like Al Carrer (Viladecans), La Fira Mediterrània in Manresa, and Festus in Torelló, appeared over the following decades. Other companies came into being including Sémola Teatre, Xarxa Teatre, Sarruga, Artristras, and, recently, Obskené, Fadunito, and Insectotròpics. There are currently over seventy active street theatre companies in Catalonia.





The circus also underwent a marked renewal during the 1970s with the appearance of groups like La Tràgica or the Circ Cric with Tortell Poltrona. Other companies, like Los Galindos, the Germans Totó or Petit Circ de Carrer, also came into being and festivals dedicated to the circus arts soon began to appear. These included one in La Bisbal, the International Clown Festival of Cornellà, and the Trapezi festival in Reus. Despite the lack of resources, schools and organisations were also born, such as the Rogelio Rivel Circus School, the Ateneu Popular 9 Barris, or, in 2004, the Association of Circus Professionals of Catalonia. The ACPC is an independent private entity whose purpose is to promote the circus in the country's cultural, social and economic life.

Moreover, in 2008 the Catalan administration began the First Integral Plan for the Circus to discover the needs of the sector and promote its growth. Despite this, there is still a shortage of venues and, according to the circus schools, a need for greater public and private financing.

In 2015, the Street Arts Platform was born. Its aim was to bring all the street theatre festivals, fairs and shows together under one umbrella organisation. However, Catalonia still lacks a good exhibition circuit and the festivals have ended up taking on the role that the theatre schools should fulfil.





## JORDI ASPA & BET MIRALTA, FOUNDERS AND ARTISTS, ESCARLATA CIRCUS

**What are the most important challenges for circus/street arts in your country, particularly when it comes to marketing and audience development?**

When the circus or street arts place themselves in the service of capitalism and play the same commercial games, they lose their meaning and function. Shaking up public spaces, taking poetry to the street, and remembering for once that the street is not only a place to consume, we can also find food for our souls and minds. In short, these are political acts, like all events humans produce. The important thing is the act of sharing and participating in the street spontaneously, and finding other meanings to our presence as human beings.



# PUBLIC POLICIES AND SUPPORT SCHEMES

Cultural policy is decentralised in Spain, and so the highest responsibility for public cultural policy in Catalonia is the Catalan government. However, Catalan companies and creators can also compete for grants offered by central government institutions through the National Institute of Performing Arts and Music (INAEM).

The Department of Culture of the Generalitat de Catalunya works to promote Catalan culture in the fields of creation, production, distribution and exhibition in each of the cultural sectors (the performing arts, music, audiovisual arts, the visual arts, literature and digital culture). In order to do so, it is committed to substantially changing the ways it envisages public cultural policy by adopting an outlook that recognises the hybridisation of the performing arts in a changing reality where artistic disciplines and sectors tend to cooperate and mix more and more.

As the country's fundamental creative motors, the street arts and circus are included in the public policies of support for the performing arts, in the short, medium and long terms, with a clear aim: to promote their growth and consolidation. Examples are the three Integral Plans for the performing arts (circus, dance and family theatre), and multi-year agreements with lines of support for artistic production and specific support for the centres of creation so that artists from circus and street arts, among others, can enjoy time and resources to experiment.

The second important aspect to highlight is the consolidation and organisation of a network of the five strategic markets in Catalonia, with work focused on employment contracting and the professionalisation of the sector. These five markets are FiraTàrrrega, Trapezi, Mostra d'Igualada, Fira Mediterrània and Sismògraf; all are related to circus and street arts, and all

have become authentic platforms for exhibition and sales which guarantee professionals a stable place where they can present their projects. They are also now nationally and internationally recognised meeting places.

The development of the circus and street arts takes place in close cooperation with public administrations and a wide network of other entities and independent professionals. Regarding circus, since 2006 the institutions have worked jointly with the Association of Circus Professionals of Catalonia in order to consolidate the sector and enable it to grow and take its place on the international stage. For the street arts, the creation in 2015 of the Platform of Street Arts, which brings together the festivals, fairs and shows whose main line of programming is in street arts, has brought a new cohesion to the sector through dialogue with creators, artistic companies, promoters and associations.

The aim for the future is to continue these public policies to strengthen the street arts and circus in cultural, social and economic life.



JORDI SELLAS I FERRÉS,  
GENERAL DIRECTOR CREATION  
& CULTURAL COMPANIES,  
DEPT. OF CULTURE, GENERALITAT  
DE CATALUNYA (2013-2016)

**What are the most important challenges for circus/ street arts in your country, particularly when it comes to marketing and audience development?**

The creation of high quality employment and the participation of the general public are the two main driving forces behind the growth and consolidation of street arts and circus in the fields of marketing and audience development. Creating the necessary conditions for growth means promoting solid

support mechanisms, generating more opportunities for participation in cultural life by increasing the number of shows programmed, consolidating stable venues, and increasing the number of contracts offered to professionals.



# FESTIVALS AND VENUES PROGRAMMING CIRCUS AND STREET ARTS

According to the Department of Culture of the Catalan Government, the Platform of Street Arts, and the APCC (Associació de Professionals de Circ de Catalunya), Catalonia currently has around sixty festivals and venues programming circus and street arts.

These include twenty circus festivals, seven street arts festivals, six performing arts fairs with the presence of circus and street arts, and six performing arts festivals with circus and street arts. 70% of these are in Barcelona province, followed in order by Girona, Tarragona and Lleida.

The two leading fairs are **FiraTàrrega** (street arts) and **Trapezi** (circus). The most notable festivals include the international festival of **Teatre i Animació Al Carrer** in Viladecans for its age; the Mercè Arts de Carrer in Barcelona, for its size; or the **Fira de Circ al Carrer** in La Bisbal de L'Empordà, for its growing popularity.

Regarding venues for circus, the official register is eight venues and around twenty installations with a circus presence. These numbers include creation centres like the **Ateneu 9 Barris** and residences like **La Central del Circ** or La Vela in Vilanova i la Geltrú. There are also performing arts centres, such as the **CAET**, and venues, including public and privately owned theatres, that occasionally include circus in their programmes. Among these are Sant Cugat del Vallès [www.tasantcugat.cat](http://www.tasantcugat.cat), the **Antic Teatre**, or the **Sala Hiroshima**, as well as large venues like the **Teatre Lliure**, the **Teatre Nacional de Catalunya**, and the **Auditori** that can programme or produce one large show per season.



Outside this category, there are municipal programmes that always include some street arts shows – especially for local festivals – or small-format circus shows in indoor venues that do not require specific technical installation.

Some examples:

## FiraTàrrrega

This international market for performing arts is held in Tàrrrega on the second weekend of September. It is a great showcase of what is going on in the performing arts, with special emphasis on street arts. Its main objectives are to accompany and promote emergent artists, encourage training, and generate strategic alliances to develop transnational street arts circuits or productions.

[firatarrega.com](http://firatarrega.com)

## Festival Escena Poblenou

A festival of contemporary stage arts that programmes around five large projects: Embrions, which gives support to the most embryonic moment of the creation process; Escena +DONES, with support for women in the arts; and the three strands of Education and Community, Territory, and Residences to support artistic creation. Their purpose is to enhance the artistic fabric of the Poblenou neighbourhood and the city of Barcelona, while maintaining an international outlook and reach.

[escenapoblenou.com](http://escenapoblenou.com)

## City of Barcelona

Within the cultural programming of the city of Barcelona, the street arts and circus have various windows open to the public. Two of the main events are the Cavalcade of the Magi (5<sup>th</sup> January) which has become a great parade of the performing arts, and the local festival La Mercè in September which has an extensive programme of street arts, traditional culture and circus.

[barcelona.cat](http://barcelona.cat)



JOAN MORROS TORNÉ, COORDINATOR,  
"EL GALLINER" CULTURAL ASSOCIATION  
& PROGRAMMER, TEATRE KURSAAL

*What are the most important challenges for circus/street arts in your country, particularly when it comes to marketing and audience development?*

There is a double challenge: on the one hand to get the programmers of performing arts venues to decide once and for all to regularly programme circus shows; on the other, to get the audience to respond positively to these proposals. That would enable the creation of a regular circuit or network of theatres where circus companies could present their performances.



# CIRCUS AND STREET ARTS COMPANIES CURRENTLY WORKING IN THE COUNTRY

According to data from the Department of Culture of the Generalitat, from FiraTàrrrega, and from the 2015 directories of companies produced by the Ramon Llull Institute and the l'Associació de Professionals del Circ de Catalunya, Catalonia has around a hundred active street arts and circus companies.

The street arts cover all the professional companies in theatre, dance, music, clown, animation, installation, object or visual arts, who, with greater or lesser regularity, have used public spaces as their performance venue.

Regarding circus, the data gathered by the Department of Culture indicates that, in 2014, there were 1894 performances by circus companies of 94 shows, 70% of which took place in Catalonia, 12.5% in the rest of Spain, and 17% abroad.

Some examples:

## Joan Català

A curious observer interested in the visual arts and in movement in which the body and/or objects are the communicators, Joan Català studied visual arts and circus in different schools. He also trained in contemporary dance, physical theatre and clown. He has been working with renowned dance and circus companies since 2005. In 2012, he started to develop his own perspective on the performing arts, focused on street and urban landscapes. The result is his first creation, *Pelat*, which premiered at the 2013 FiraTàrrrega and has since been seen in many international festivals.

[joancatala.pro](http://joancatala.pro)





## Animal Religion

One of the most ambitious companies in the current scene, Animal Religion is the collaborative effort of Niklas Blomberg (FI) and Quim Girón (ES), both graduates from the University of Dance and Circus in Stockholm who made their name in 2013 with the show *Indomador*. Since then they have created three shows for which animals are the starting point and inspiration: *Chicken legz*, a site-specific show of circus and movement, and then *Tauromàquia* and *Sifonòfor*, large-format shows co-produced with the Auditori of Barcelona. Among their awards, we can highlight the audience award at FiraTàrraga 2014 for Chicken legz and the Gran Premi BBVA Zirkòlika 2015 award for Sifonòfor.

[animalreligion.com](http://animalreligion.com)

## Companyia La Tal

One of the all-time classic Catalan street arts companies, La Tal began its professional career in 1986. International renown came in 1993 with *Carrilló*, and since then the company has focused on the creation of visual shows which include a great deal of interaction with the audience. Over years of professional experience, La Tal has taken shows to many places in Europe, as well as to prestigious international festivals. Their latest creation is *The incredible box*, first performed in 2013 at the Kleines Fest in Hanover, and the winner of the award for best show at the Kulturbörse Freiburg 2015.

[cialatal.com](http://cialatal.com)

## Kamchàtka

An international reference point for new dramaturgy in street theatre, *Kamchàtka* arose from a meeting between a group of artists of various nationalities / artistic disciplines, who had come to Adrián Schvarszstein's workshop to study techniques of improvisation in the street in relation to the question of immigration. The result was Kamchàtka, first performed in March 2007. After that, there was a tour of over 300 performances in 25 countries, and the company set about making a trilogy of pieces on immigration. *Habitaculum* was premiered in 2010, and in 2014 the cycle was completed with *Fugit*. With only four shows, Kamchàtka has become a model for modern street theatre for its dramatic use of public space and the people who inhabit it.

[kamchatka.cat](http://kamchatka.cat)



## XAVIER URBANO, COMMUNICATION, ATENEU POPULAR 9 BARRIS

**What are the most important challenges for circus/street arts in your country, particularly when it comes to marketing and audience development?**

One of the ongoing challenges we face is how to consolidate circus as an artistic discipline among all the others programmed in the theatres and venues of Catalonia. Doing that will help to open new venues to the artistic language that is taking shape and developing here. If there are no venues available, the artists who have trained here move away, and if there is nowhere to train, we will never manage to consolidate an artistic circuit rooted in our own area.



# EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Providing training in circus and street arts is one of the unresolved matters in the sector in Catalonia. Despite the historical importance of these fields, there have been no efforts to promote specific educational policies, nor are these disciplines included in the programmes of leading theatre schools such as Barcelona provincial council's Theatre Institute or the Eòlia – Conservatory of Dramatic Arts (to name but one leading public and one private centre). However, there are exceptions that are worth mentioning:

## Circus School Rogelio Rivel

Since 1990, Catalonia has had a circus school with international prestige, the Centre de les Arts del Circ Rogelio Rivel. This project is supported and recognised on the European level as a member of FEDEC (the European Federation of Professional Circus Schools) as a preparatory and professional school for training in circus arts.

In 2014, the Catalan administration, fulfilling its commitment in the Integral Circus Plan, asked the Catalan National Council for Culture and Arts (CoNCA) to produce a series of studies on circus training in Catalonia to collect all the basic data on the sector.

On 2 June 2015, the Generalitat de Catalunya, the Catalan administration, approved the creation of a qualification for experts in circus 'animation' as a form of professional training in the circus arts. These studies, unique in Spain, qualify the students to carry out animation activities (for instance, leading community workshops), to perform in public with non-specialised circus acts, or to collaborate with artists of a higher level, with standards that ensure quality and safety.

[escolacircrr.com](http://escolacircrr.com)







## La Central del Circ

The Central del Circ also has a programme dedicated to providing ongoing training for circus professionals to enable them to develop the skills they require without having to move abroad. The current programme is divided into two strands: intensive courses and study weekends, taught by such prestigious professionals as Peter Jasko, Claudio Stellato, and Roberto Olivan. This programme is complemented by meetings of disciplines or cycles of talks.

[lacentraldelcerc.cat](http://lacentraldelcerc.cat)

## Postgraduate studies in Street Arts Creation

There is only one degree-level course in street arts: the Postgraduate studies in Street Arts Creation, promoted by FiraTàrrrega and the University of Lleida. These studies are a pioneering educational initiative with an international scope, intended to train street arts professionals in creation for public space. The programme combines theoretical and practical modules and is intended for professionals in the sector as well as directors, playwrights, actors, cultural managers or urban designers interested in the city as a space with multiple artistic possibilities. Although some of the contents are dedicated to theoretical aspects, it is a fundamentally practical experience – an immersion in the discipline based on participation in student-run projects, collective projects and external projects.

[www.firatarrega.cat/formacio/postgrau](http://www.firatarrega.cat/formacio/postgrau)

MERCÈ SAUMELL, HEAD OF CULTURAL  
SERVICES AND PROFESSOR,  
INSTITUT DEL TEATRE  
DE LA DIPUTACIÓ DE BARCELONA

What do you see as the most important task of your organisation in the circus/street arts in your country?

As a teaching institution in the EEES (Espai Superior d'Educació Europea), we should develop programmes in street arts and circus at degree and postgraduate levels. It is important for us to organise higher education workshops linked to these fields; to actively participate in conferences and seminars; to form part of joint degrees offered in collaboration with other European institutions; and to promote processes of creation and research (doctoral theses, accredited research, etc) in street arts and circus.



# CREATION AND RESIDENCY CENTRES

There are currently five large centres of creation in Catalonia that are specialised in circus and street theatre.

In circus, the oldest is the Ateneu Popular 9 Barris, a public community-run sociocultural centre that was set up in 1977. The Ateneu carries out cultural, educational and social activities, and, for the last twenty years, has acted as a centre of creation for established professional companies related to the circus. Each year, a company is selected to prepare a show that is preformed in the winter and often goes on tour around Catalonia. In 1995, Ca l'Estruch in Sabadell came into being. This is a very multidisciplinary centre of artistic production and creation that has been run by the Circ La Vela Centre for Creation and Production since 2014.

In 1999, in parallel with the founding of the Rogelio Rivel school, the Rogelio Rivel Centre de les Arts del Circ was also created as a place for meeting, training and exchange, dedicated to training and creation in the circus arts. Finally, there is the Central del Circ, a place for creation, research, rehearsal, and ongoing training for circus arts professionals, promoted by the APCC (the Association of Circus Professionals of Catalonia) since 2011. This is a space for creation, residence and training, and a platform for emerging artists.

The network of residences is completed with a dozen smaller places scattered around the country, like the Circoteca (Valls), the Tub d'Assaig 7,70 (Terrassa) or Roca Umbert, and Fàbrica de les Arts (Granollers), among others. The circus is also present in the network of Fàbriques de Creació of Barcelona city council.

The only large place for creation and residence in the street arts in Catalonia is in Tàrrrega (Lleida), promoted by FiraTàrrrega as part of the Support for Creation programme. This is a centre without its own home, as the residencies are done in different places around town to finish the creations in public spaces.

This entire network of residences is in response to calls in the past from artists and festivals for well-equipped places with good conditions to facilitate high quality artistic research and creation.

ADA VILARÓ I CASALS,  
MULTIDISCIPLINARY ARTIST,  
CIA. ADA VILARÓ & ARTISTIC  
DIRECTOR, FESTIVAL  
OF CONTEMPORARY CREATION  
ESCENA POBLENOU

What are the most important challenges for circus/ street art in your country and specifically when it comes to audience and marketing development?

Continue to give support to creation and multidisciplinary research in street arts, as well as promoting projects that have a direct relation to, and affect the structure of, the territory and generate a sense of community there. Empower the street arts as references for social transformation. Regarding the development of the market, continue generating national and international networks and circuits of creation, presentation and reflection.



# ADVOCACY AGENCIES AND PROFESSIONAL INFORMATION PROVIDERS

The two main public entities responsible for promoting Catalan culture abroad are the Catalan Institute for the Cultural Companies (ICEC) and the Institut Ramon Llull (IRL), both attached to the Catalan Ministry of Culture. The ICEC is in charge of supporting private initiatives in the cultural field and one of its goals is to promote the development of cultural companies, encourage domestic cultural consumption, and collaborate in exporting cultural products.

## Creative Catalonia

To boost cultural exports it created Creative Catalonia, a platform hosted by the ICEC's Market Development Department to increase the accessibility of Catalan cultural and creative companies for international markets. Via its network of offices around Europe (Barcelona, Berlin, Brussels, London and Paris) it works on a variety of lines of project funding, connecting, mentoring, advocating and promoting Catalan companies and strengthening their presence at international fairs and events. Creative Catalonia acts as a strong catalyst to foster Catalan cultural and creative companies worldwide.

## Institut Ramon Llull

The other main advocacy agency is the IRL, a public body founded with the purpose of promoting Catalan language and Catalan cultural production. It ensures that artists from Catalonia are present in outstanding programmes of international contemporary creation, through agreements with institutions, international shows, art centres and museums. It works to ensure that Catalan culture is present at world famous festivals and fairs, and takes part in key cultural events in different areas of creation in strategic cities. It also promotes exchanges between the local and international creative sectors by organising visits to Catalonia for foreign professionals.







## Acción Cultural Española

The third agency that promotes cultural reach is Acción Cultural Española (AC/E). This agency supports the Spanish cultural sector, both in the different fields of culture and in new modes of production and distribution for the creative industries. The PICE programme is structured with two lines of support: grants for visitors, and mobility grants for artists and professionals.

The two main associations that unite the sectors of street arts and circus act as advocacy agencies and focus on relaying information. The Associació de Professionals del Circ a Catalunya (APCC) represents all the different branches of Catalan circus professionals. Its purpose is to bring together the different sectors of the Catalan circus to promote, disseminate and standardise this performing art in all its forms, placing it among the other performing arts as an inherent cultural fact. To promote the street arts sector in Catalonia, in 2015 seventeen festivals launched the Platform of Street Arts (PAC). Some of the main goals of this new association are to promote and communicate street performance activity within Catalonia, to facilitate mobility and co-production agreements, and to give visibility to the social values of the street arts and bring these to new audiences.

### ORIOl MARTÍ SAMBOLA, PRESIDENT, PLATAFORMA D'ARTS DE CARRER

**What do you see as the most important task of your organisation in the circus/street arts in your country?**

Our first priority, and the basis for all our work, is supporting communication and joint mapping in order to bring visibility to the many kinds of street arts happening throughout the year and all over Catalonia. Communicating clearly and in a coordinated way brings respect to the sector. Alongside this work, we host and share both discussions and resources. Finally, we work to develop the street arts as a subject of study, with links to universities, journalists, scholars and historians.



# CASE STUDIES OF THREE SUCCESSFUL AUDIENCE AND MARKET DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

## La Central del Circ

La Central del Circ is a creative space that makes resources available for the training, practice and continued education of circus professionals. It was created in 2008 with the mission of supporting the circus arts and accompanying artistic projects in the areas of creation, management, production and dissemination; encouraging the development of circus arts and its creators; and generating synergy with other arts and promoting interrelationships through local, national and international networks. In its eight years of existence, it has become a point of reference for the sector, on both the local and international levels, being one of the few spaces in Europe with appropriate conditions for almost all circus disciplines.

The Central del Circ works in tandem with many organisations at the local and international level to enable the mobility of the artist and the exchange of experiences between professionals in different contexts. This has enabled the centre to become a privileged intermediary between Catalan and Spanish circus and other European institutions.

[lacentraldelcerc.cat](http://lacentraldelcerc.cat)

## Support for Creation Programme

The Support for Creation Programme appeared in 2011 as a response to a shared need: among the creators, it was a need for venues where they could produce street arts in comfort; for FiraTàrrrega, it was to support those companies committed to creation within public venues; and for the people of Tàrrrega, it was to participate actively in the creative processes of their town's festival.

The project is based on three conceptual pillars: laboratories for creation, creative residences, and transnational productions. The laboratories are dedicated to the most restless artists; the residences are for established companies who want to move out of their comfort zone and attempt the street; and the international productions are designed to generate meetings between Catalan and foreign creators. Over five editions, the programme has hosted a varied collection of artistic profiles, and has adapted to the specific circumstances and needs of each project.

The open rehearsals which are the endpoint of most residences have become a creative pitch for the media, programmers and institutions, and are a parallel activity for the town's cultural programme during the spring and summer.

[firatarrega.com](http://firatarrega.com)

## La Fura dels Baus

La Fura dels Baus is one of the most dynamic and prolific Catalan companies. It was founded in 1979 by Marcel·lí Antúnez, Carles Padrissa and Pere Tàntinyà, joined shortly after by Pep Gatell, Jordi Arús, Àlex Ollé, Jürgen Müller, Hansel Cereza and Miki Espuma. Many of them are still working as artistic directors.

The company arose from the street theatre world, with shows created collectively. Their first shows, in the 1980s – pieces like *Accions* (1984), *Suix o Suix* (1985) and *Tiermon* (1988) – were characterised by a new, post-industrial aesthetic with elements of rock, performance and neo-circus. This became known as the 'Furan language', a term that has been used since then to describe their work.

Evolving with the times, in the 1990s the company moved into the fields of written drama, digital theatre, contemporary theatre and opera. Their music was updated and the references became more literary: *Noun* (1990), *Manes* (1995), and *Faust 3.0* (1998). Simultaneously, they began a new line of creation covering corporate events.

Nowadays, the company has become a large organisation that works simultaneously on performing arts projects, opera, cinema, music and large events all around the world.

[lafura.com](http://lafura.com)







**CASA** is a new European support programme designed by five arts organisations to equip professionals from the contemporary circus and outdoor creation sectors to work and cooperate internationally, raising their ambition and capacity to work at international level.

This brochure focuses on the particular cultural context providing information and analysis of cultural policies, cultural infrastructures and local artistic realities.

[www.casa-circuits.eu](http://www.casa-circuits.eu)

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