

Library novelties and news

OPEN SOURCE LANGUAGE VERSION > [CATALÀ](#)

Diccionari tèxtil llaner.

Referències il·lustrades

[Wool textile dictionary. Illustrated references]

Sabadell History Museum.

ISBN 978-84-87221-29-3

■ Roser Enrich Gregori

This book illustrates the results that can be achieved when a museum — in this case the Sabadell History Museum — establishes collaborative ties with civil society, with the agents who have played a direct role in the very historical processes that its exhibits reflect. Since 2004, the Museum has worked with a *grup de teòrics*, a group of former wool industry professionals from Sabadell with specific expertise in textile theory and techniques. Their involvement in the sector makes them the ideal witnesses to the city's primary economic activity: the manufacturing of wool fabrics, which has been at the heart of life in Sabadell for more than 150 years.

In order to transmit its knowledge to the uninitiated, and to leave a legacy for the coming generations, the group of experts decided to compile a dictionary of *living samples*, in which descriptions of hundreds of fabric samples are displayed alongside the corresponding images. This initial idea became the *Diccionari tèxtil llaner* [Wool textile dictionary], whose two volumes — on *llaneria* (woollen goods, for ladies' clothing) and on *panyeria* (drapery, for men's clothing) — bring together and document the many fabrics present in the sample books conserved at the Sabadell History Museum, all of them produced by companies in the city and independently catalogued by the group of industry experts.

The book we are concerned with here, *Diccionari tèxtil llaner. Referències il·lustrades* [Wool textile dictionary. Illustrated references], reissues the two volumes in a single publication.

The book starts by describing the central role of the wool textile industry in the history of



Sabadell, from the mid-nineteenth century to the last decades of the twentieth century. We are told how important the sample books were for gaining a competitive edge over rival firms, hence the great care that was taken to preserve and document them correctly. The authors refer to the extensive collection of textile sample books from local manufacturers — more than 4,000 volumes — that are conserved at the Museum, and mention the efforts to catalogue this

Library novelties and news

enormous selection of textiles that have been in progress since 2004, led by the group of experts. We then learn about the motivations for creating the dictionary and the groundwork that had to be done to discuss and agree on a series of coherent terms to be used in the cataloguing process. Finally, the authors chart the various factors that have a bearing on the name given to each woollen fabric.

The book reproduces in its exact form the original dictionary compiled by the group of experts: the first page contains drawings of the

three basic weaves — plain, twill and satin — and is followed by the photographs of 225 samples, each displayed next to the name of the fabric and a close-up image that allows readers to appreciate the finer detail of the weave. The final section is an index of the samples.

The initiative launched by the Sabadell History Museum, to publish this dictionary of *living samples*, gives enthusiasts and specialists a work of reference of unique characteristics, without which the knowledge of its content would be restricted to the confines of the Museum itself. ■

Library novelties and news

OPEN SOURCE LANGUAGE VERSION > [CATALÀ](#)

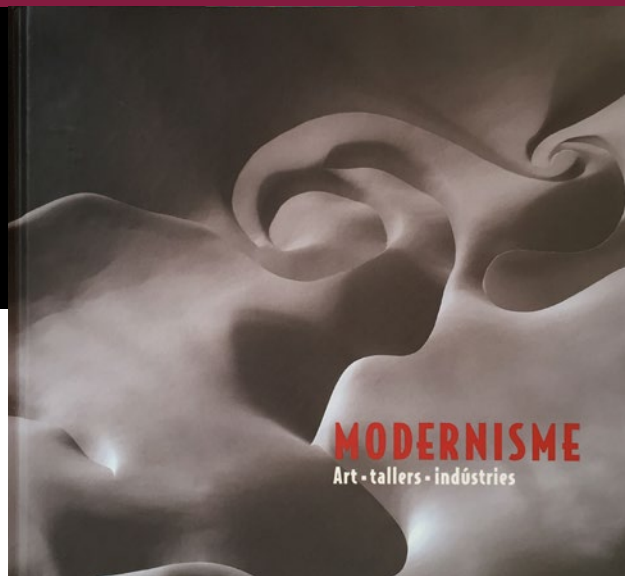
Modernisme Art-workshops-industries

■ **Neus Ribas**

On 7 October 2015 the exhibition 'Modernisme. Art-workshop-industries' opened at the Fundació Catalunya-La Pedrera. Curated by Mireia Freixa, the exhibition reinterprets Catalan *modernisme* as a phenomenon that reached outside the disciplinary boundaries of art history, considering it in the context of the work carried out by a wealth of workshops, industries and artisans who produced many of the decorative items and materials that adorned the homes of the Catalan bourgeoisie at the turn of the twentieth century.

The catalogue combines articles on general aspects of *modernisme*, written by experts like Mireia Freixa, Pilar Vélez and Teresa-M. Sala, with more specific pieces on the various decorative materials represented in the exhibition: glass, ceramics, wood, iron and, of course, textiles.

The article by Laura Casal-Valls, *Modernisme i modernismes en les arts de l'agulla*, focuses on the renewal that *modernisme* brought to home furnishings and fashion, particularly for women. Like other currents that influenced the decorative arts, *modernisme* imposed a new aesthetic language that was reflected in the domestic environment, and sheets, table cloths,



blinds, curtains and any number of other items were designed to match the new furniture of the period's bourgeois homes. This required considerable skill, and *Casa Castells*, in Arenys de Mar, is a particularly good example of a workshop dedicated to the hand-crafting of lace for home decoration.

In the world of fashion, prestigious *couturières* such as Joana Valls, Maria Molist and Madame Renaud, whose creations were intended for the wealthy Catalan elite, were met with new stores like *El Siglo*, *El Barato* or *El Àguila* that brought about a democratisation of the sector, making fashion accessible to the middle classes. The work of the era's great designers could rightly be considered artistic, creating clothes that were truly unique, such as the examples in the catalogue of the Poiret-style dress and coat, both by Renaud & Cie, which are conserved at the CDMT in Terrassa. ■

Library novelties and news

OPEN SOURCE LANGUAGE VERSION > [CATALÀ](#)

Impressions du Soleil Levant. 150 ans de relations Alsace-Japon

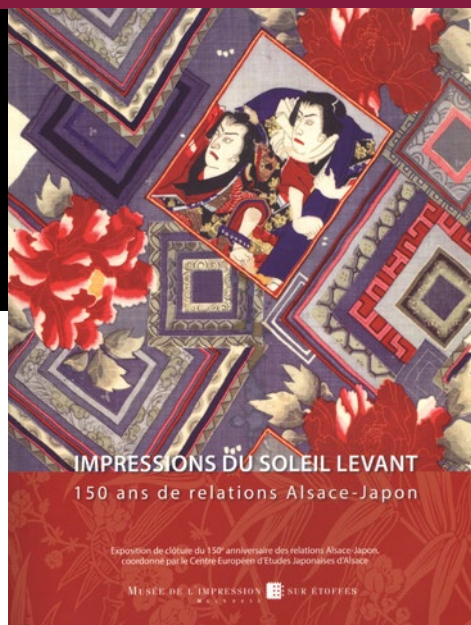
Exhibition catalogue
Musée de l'Impression sur Étoffes de Mulhouse

ISBN: 978-2-36701-047-2

■ Assumpta Dangla

The catalogue commemorates the 150th anniversary of the formal establishment of friendly relations between Japan and Alsace, one of the first regions in Europe to engage directly with Japan in the second half of the nineteenth century. As early as 1863 merchants from Osaka had made their first commercial forays into Europe with a view to establishing a manufacturing base for the Japanese market, which demanded the most advanced techniques of the time. The products were, above all, woollen muslins for kimonos and winter-weight dresses, and the new relationship would last for many years, leaving a profound impression on the European economy and the arts in general. The catalogue presents the earliest Alsatian textiles that introduced a European public to the world of Japanese decorative forms, novel designs that played a role in the birth of both Impressionism and Modernism.

The catalogue is primarily didactic, presenting a carefully chosen selection of pieces from the museum's permanent collections, the Société Industrielle de Mulhouse, the Cabinet des Estampes et des Dessins (Strasbourg), the Musée Unterlinden and the Bibliothèque Humaniste de Colmar, and from a variety of other institutions and private collectors. These are structured in three blocks. The catalogue opens with an overview of the European taste for exoticism and Japonism, describing the influence of private collections of paintings and decorative arts that were put together in the era. It continues with a study of the Japanese influence on Alsatian printed fabrics, and the first iconographic decorative themes: naturalism, characteristic



Japanising motifs (geishas, samurais, *cloissonnés*, etc.) and minimalism. It is interesting to see how Alsatian designers, particularly in Mulhouse, 'translated' the Japanese artistic language for European tastes, producing fabrics of a particular visual richness. There is also a marked minimalist current running through the work, giving it a distinctly modern feel. In the third section, we find the many and diverse sources of inspiration for these novel textiles, chiefly magazines and books on the decorative arts devoted to the Japanese style.

Moving away from the formal aspects of the exhibition, the catalogue concludes with a reflection on the influence that Alsace and Japan had on one another, looking at the fabrics produced in France, the flourishing of the export market, and the competition brought by the new textile industry in Japan and the impact it had in the West. The team of the Musée de l'Impression sur Étoffes has painted a broad picture of this long-standing, intensely productive and mutually beneficial relationship between Japan and Alsace. Though concise, the catalogue contains a wealth of notes that bring the reader closer to fabrics that marked a new trend in European textiles and whose influence is still evident in art today, with a language that continues to speak through contemporary design. ■