

# BOOKS ON JOAN MIRÓ



IN DISCUSSING THE BOOKS DEVOTED EXCLUSIVELY TO THE WORK OF JOAN MIRÓ, IT BECOMES DIFFICULT TO MAKE AN IMPARTIAL SELECTION BECAUSE OF THE HIGH QUALITY OF MOST OF WHAT HAS BEEN WRITTEN ABOUT THE ARTIST. THE FIRST WORK DEVOTED TO HIM APPEARED IN TOKYO (JAPAN) IN 1940.

TERESA MARTÍ I ARMENGOL LIBRARIAN. FUNDACIÓ JOAN MIRÓ IN BARCELONA

One frequently reads or hears that the literature on Miró is vast, and so it is, in general terms –that is, taking into account everything that has been written about him. But if we concentrate on the monographs, we need only compare the number of books that exist on artists of a similar standing –Picasso and Dalí are the obvious examples– to see that there are in fact more of these than there are books on Miró. This can be put down to two main factors: first of all, the very complexity of Miró's work makes any analysis a very difficult task; and secondly, the artist's private life was so discreet

and disinclined to excesses that it has never attracted much attention as a subject. But while the number of books devoted to the artist is relatively small, it's also true to say that it becomes difficult to make an impartial selection because of the high quality of most of what has been written.

It was at the end of the first decade of this century that the first articles on Joan Miró appeared, published in different magazines and newspapers in Europe and the United States, though the first monograph on the artist, written by Shūzo Takiguchi and published in Tokyo (1), only appeared in 1940. It's

interesting to note that even at such an early stage interest in the work of Miró had spread beyond the limits of the Western world. In Catalonia, two books appeared in 1949, the first to be published here: *Miró y la imaginación*, by Alexandre Cirici (2), and *Joan Miró*, by Juan Eduardo Cirlot (3). In the first of these Cirici studies the artist's stylistic evolution, while Cirlot's work, in which the author analyses the innermost essence of Miró's work, was one of the first critical studies to be published on the painter.

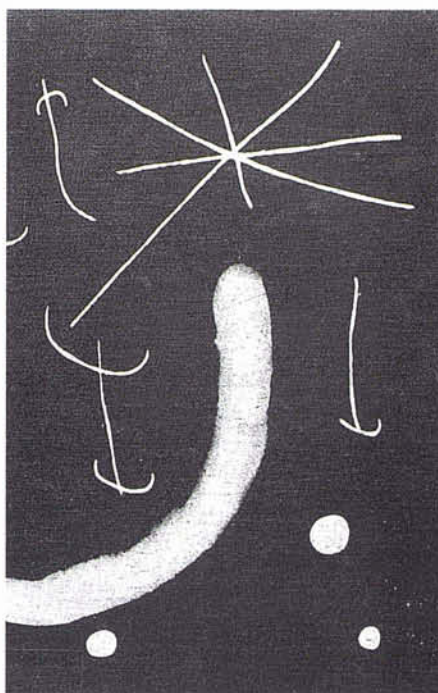
In 1961, Jacques Dupin's *Miró* (4) was published in Paris, one of the most im-

## JOAN MIRÓ

Selected Writings and  
Interviews

Edited by Margit Rowell

EDITION BY MARGIT ROWELL, BOSTON, 1986



MIRÓ, BY JACQUES DUPIN, PARIS, 1961

portant books for the study, analysis and understanding of Miró, and the first *catalogue raisonné* of his pictorial work. Alongside the systematic work of classifying the many pieces already in existence at the time, Dupin, a personal friend of the artist, provides a comprehensive view of his personal and artistic development. The author's dissection –so to speak– of the different works reveals the fundamental characteristics that make Miró the great artist he is. The works listed belong to the period from 1914 to 1961. The second part of this work is to be published soon, and will lead up to 1983, the year of the artist's death.

In 1970, Roland Penrose, also a personal friend of Miró, wrote a study (5) in which he analyses his signic and symbolic world and the influence poetry had on him as a source of creation. In this work Penrose stresses one of the basic aspects of Miró's creative world: the importance of the tangible world as a way to achieve transcendence.

The book *Joan Miró* (6), by Rosa Maria Malet, the present director of the Fun-

dació Joan Miró in Barcelona, is an accurate and concise account of the different periods in the life and work of Miró. Written in a clear and comprehensible style, this monograph is a use-introduction to the work of the artist. In the books mentioned so far, the authors give a general view of the painter's life and work, but there are also essential books that analyse specific aspects of his artistic career, compendiums of his work outside the field of painting and systematic collections of writings.

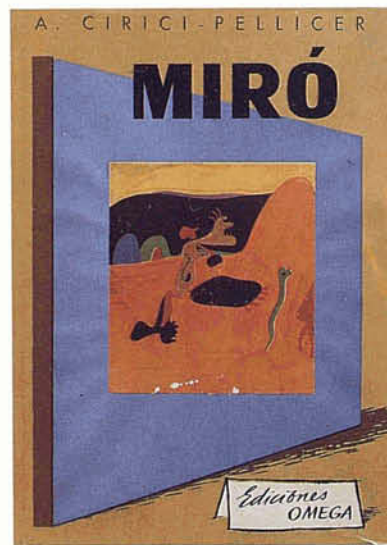
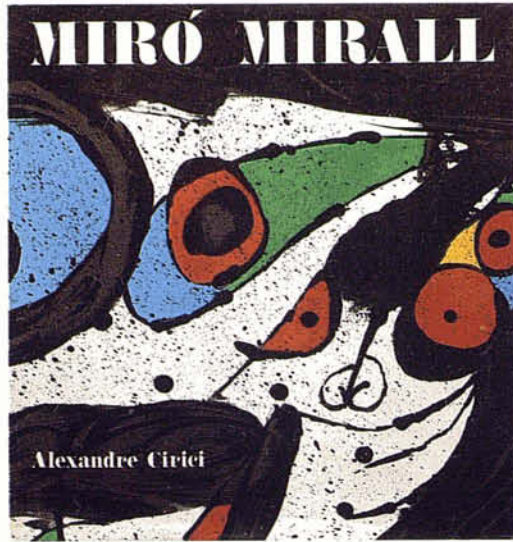
Under the heading of analytical books, we have Margit Rowell's *Joan Miró: Peinture = Poesie* (7), which looks at Miró's poetical world. The book contains two texts already published and written with a three-year interval between them. Both, however, speak of Miró's profound relationship with poetry. In the first text, which appeared in 1969, the author studies the poetic side of the artist's pictorial work, while in the second she analyses Miró's direct use of visual poetry in some of his canvases. The final conclusion of Rowell's

thesis takes us back to Miró's fantastic words, "Painting and poetry are made as love is made; an exchange of blood, a full embrace, without caution, without protection".

Alexandre Cirici, in his book *Miró Mirall* (8), published in Barcelona in 1977, is another important study, this time from the standpoint of the sociology of art. In his book, Cirici considers the influence the period had on the artist and vice-versa –that is, Miró's influence on the age he lived in. The author makes a remarkable analysis of the language the artist uses in his work, a language whose understanding is fundamental to a full, in-depth comprehension of his paintings.

Pere Gimferrer published *Miró, colpir sense nafra* (9) in 1978. This fascinating book takes us inside Miró's universe and points out the importance of such varied elements as objects, poetry, signs and symbols, nature, etc., which play a central part in his artistic creation.

With such a multidisciplinary subject as Joan Miró, we need also to look at



books on those aspects of the artist which fall outside his pictorial work. One example are the two works published by Maeght on Miró's sculpture and ceramics. The first, by Alain Jouffroy and Joan Teixidor (10), takes us through the fascinating world of his sculptures, with a well documented and illustrated selection. The second, by José Pierre and José Corredor-Matheos (11), is a study of the fruitful partnership between Miró and Artigas in the world of ceramics.

A useful aid to research into any artist is the book that systematically lists and documents the greatest number of works. In this respect, the six volumes of *Miró litographe*, published between 1972 and 1992 and written by various

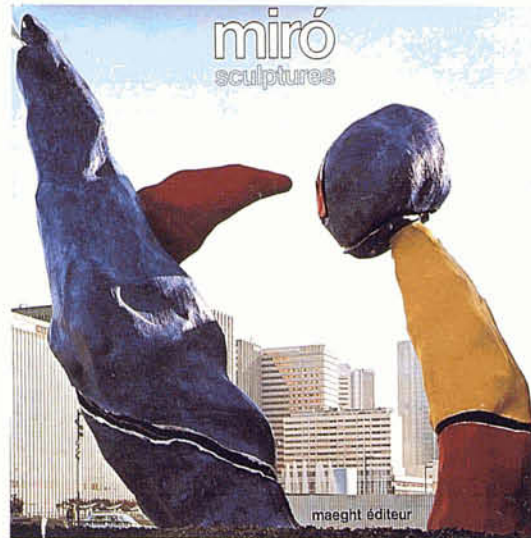
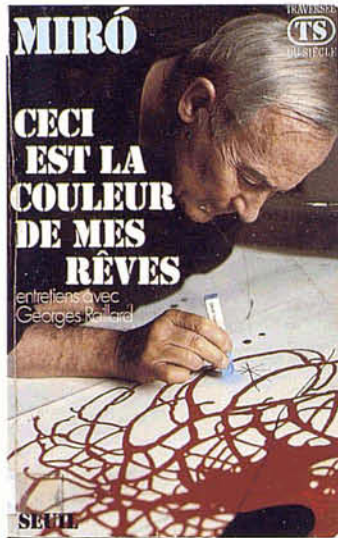
authors, are essential to the study of Miró's lithography. The three volumes by Jacques Dupin on Miró's printmaking, published by Daniel Lelong in Paris with the title *Miró graveur* (12), also help in the understanding of his extensive graphic work.

Alongside his painting, sculpture, ceramics, graphics, etc., Miró had important connections with the world of publishing through his illustrations of the work of his poet friends. This is why Patrick Cramer's *catalogue raisonné* of Joan Miró's books, published by the author in 1989 (13), is a magnificent instrument of work which reveals yet another aspect of Miró's creative adventure.

Quite a different type of book is Victò-

ria Combalia's *El descubrimiento de Miró: Miró y sus críticos, 1918-1929* (14), which shows, through the reproduction of various articles published during this period, that Miró's early artistic work was better understood and appreciated than had been thought. The book is well researched and depicts the critics of the time as well informed and active.

Before ending, there are two more books that need to be mentioned, very different one from the other, but in which we hear the voice of Joan Miró himself. One is the collection of conversations between George Raillard and Joan Miró in the book *Ceci est la couleur de mes rêves* (15), and the other is Margit Rowell's *Joan Miró: Selected*



writings and interviews (16). The first is a decidedly unique account in which, in the course of a friendly conversation, Joan Miró reveals the keys to his artistic creation. In the second, which is fully documented, Margit Rowell brings out Joan Miró's personality through the letters he wrote to his friends, the interviews he gave and his own writings. As we can see, there is a wide variety of books available and for anyone who reads them their quality shows itself as the best aid to the understanding of the work and personality of this fascinating artist Joan Miró.

Notes.

1. TAKIGUCHI, Shūzo. *Miró*. Tokyo: Atelier, 1940.

2. CIRICI, Alexandre. *Miró y la imaginación*. Barcelona: Omega, 1949.

3. CIRLOT, Juan Eduardo. *Joan Miró*. Barcelona: Cobalto, 1949.

4. DUPIN, Jacques. *Miró*. Paris: Flammarion, 1961.

5. PENROSE, Roland. *Miró*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1970. Barcelona: Daimon, 1976.

6. MALET, Rosa M. *Joan Miró*. Barcelona: Polígrafa, 1983.

7. ROWELL, Margit. *Joan Miró: Peinture=poésie*. Paris: Editions de la Différence, 1976.

8. CIRICI, Alexandre. *Miró-Mirall*. Barcelona: Polígrafa, 1977.

9. GIMFERRER, Pere. *Miró, colpir sense nafra*. Barcelona: Polígrafa, 1978.

10. JOUFFROY, Alain; TEIXIDOR,

Joan. *Miró sculptures*. Paris: Maeght, 1973.

11. PIERRE, José; CORREDOR-MATHEOS, José. *Céramiques de Miró et Artigas*. Paris: Maeght, 1974.

12. DUPIN, Jacques. *Miró graveur*. Paris: Daniel Lelong, 1984.

13. CRAMER, Patrick. *Joan Miró: Catalogue raisonné des livres illustrés*. Geneva: Patrick Cramer, 1989.

14. COMBALIA, Victòria. *El descubrimiento de Miró: Miró y sus críticos, 1918-1929*. Barcelona: Destino, 1990.

15. RAILLARD, Georges. *Joan Miró: Ceci est la couleur de mes rêves*. Paris: Seuil, 1977.

16. ROWELL, Margit. *Joan Miró: Selected writings and interviews*. Boston: G.K. Hall Co., 1986. ■