

# ENGLISH



## JOSEP MARIA CORREDOR, FROM HOME TO EUROPE

A hundred years after his birth in Girona, and 32 years after his death in Perpignan, Josep Maria Corredor is coming home. This homecoming began in 1991 when there was a street named after him in Girona's Montilivi district. That same year, the magazine *Revista de Girona* dedicated a special feature to the Girona-born writer and activist. However, it was during the centenary of his birth in 1912 that Josep Maria Corredor really became the focus of attention: there was an international symposium, a tribute concert, the republication of his *Converses amb Pau Casals* (Conversations with Casals), the publication of *Contra la valoració de la mediocritat* (Against the Celebration of Mediocrity), and, now, this exhibition, to mark his definitive return to Girona as one of the most important Catalan essayists of the second half of the 20th century and a key figure among Catalans who went into exile in the south of France, being a strong advocate for a *Catalanism* that was modern, Republican and pro-European.

### GIRONA - MADRID - BARCELONA (1912-1939)

Josep Maria Corredor was born on 3 June 1912 in a street called Pascual i Prats. With the advent of the Republic, he joined the circle of progressive intellectuals in the city and began his first collaborations with the press. After graduating from the Escola Normal de Mestres, he moved to Madrid and then to Barcelona to study Philosophy. He was a student of José Ortega y Gasset and Joaquim Xirau, and during the military uprising in 1936, he was forced to interrupt his studies and join the front.

### MONTPELLIER (1939-1945)

In 1939, following the defeat of the Republican army, Josep Maria Corredor went into exile in Montpellier, staying at the Residència d'Intel·lectuals (House of Intellectuals), where he met Antoni Rovira i Virgili, Pompeu Fabra, Carles Riba and other young Republicans. He enrolled at the university where he was able to finish his studies. He obtained his doctorate, entitling his thesis *Joan Maragall: un Esprit mediterrani* (Joan Maragall: A Mediterranean Spirit). The publication of the thesis in French brought him to the attention of many Catalan and Spanish intellectuals, from Josep Carner to Azorín.

### PERPIGNAN (1946-1981)

After the Second World War, Corredor took up permanent residence in Perpignan, where he died on 29 September 1981. During his time in the city, he taught at Liceu Aragó and, later, at the university. At the same time, he maintained a prolific level of intellectual activity: he published books in Catalan and numerous articles in exile publications as well as in Catalonia-based media. During the first years of Democratic Transition in Spain, Corredor continued to live in France, from where he worked as a schools inspector covering the province of Girona.

### PRADES

In the late 1940s, Corredor began to spend time with Pau Casals in Prades. They worked together on a number of cultural initiatives and Corredor became the musician's personal secretary. Casals trusted him completely and, in 1955, their close relationship resulted in the publication of a book that was to become well known throughout the world, *Conversations avec Pablo Casals: souvenirs et opinions d'un musicien* (Conversations with Pablo Casals: Memories and Opinions of a Musician).

## COLLIOURE

From February 1939, the remains of the poet Antonio Machado had rested in a niche in the cemetery at Collioure, awaiting a final resting place. In 1957, Josep Maria Corredor decided to act, publishing the article *Un grand poète attend son tombeau* (A Great Poet Awaits His Tomb), in *Le Figaro Littéraire* in Paris. The article was the impetus for an international campaign to raise money to build a tomb for the poet.

## FROM GENEVA TO THE WORLD

In 1954, Corredor agreed to work as an interpreter for a United Nations conference in Geneva. What was meant to be a temporary job turned into a new contract every summer for the next 25 years. Corredor travelled to Austria, Denmark, Iran and Egypt. Through his work, he met people like Julio Cortázar, María Zambrano and Eduardo Mendoza to name a few.

## HIS NON-RETURN

From the 1960s onwards, keen to have an impact on the social and cultural life of Catalonia, Corredor began to work with Catalan press organisations and to focus his efforts in two areas: eradicate historical distortions in the years prior to the Spanish Civil War, and to help preserve the Catalan language.

## ***CONVERSES SOBRE UNES CONVERSES*** **(CONVERSATIONS ABOUT CONVERSATIONS)**

Pep Admetlla

In 2012, to mark the centenary of the birth of Josep Maria Corredor (Girona, 1912 – Perpignan, 1981), Edicions de la Ela Geminada republished Corredor's most widely read book, *Converses amb Pau Casals* (Conversations with Casals). The book, which has been translated for publication in 14 different countries, has not been republished in Catalan since 1974.

An original drawing by Pep Admetlla was used for the front cover of the book. At the same time he was drawing the original illustration, the artist produced a series of 52 other drawings that were also used as front covers. This series of drawings is an extension of the reflection that began with the original illustration (which appears on the commercial edition of the book) and forms a 'dialogue' with the themes discussed in Corredor's book. Hence, these were *Converses sobre unes converses* (Conversations about Conversations).

This exhibition provides the opportunity to appreciate these 52 unique book covers as a set. The coherent and well-contemplated collection represents a beautiful edition of Josep Maria Corredor's book for bibliophiles, where each copy, while different, engages in a kind of dialogue with the others, creating one unique set.

Note: The 52 covers are available in digital form via this link:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/9ufavn84y7k4sq3/4fyAycwFFB>

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Tuesday to Saturday, 10.30 to 17.30 h  
(From may to september Tuesday to Saturday, 10.30 to 18.30 h)  
Sundays and bank holidays, 10.30 to 13.30 h  
Closed on non-bank holiday Mondays

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