

ENRIE MIRALLES

Enrie Miralles is a Spanish architect and designer. He has worked for several years in the field of architecture and design, and has been involved in a number of projects, including the design of the new headquarters for the Spanish Ministry of Culture.

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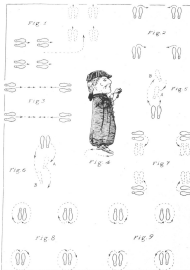
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SECTIONS FILLED WITH TREES, PEOPLE, JOY AND GIANTS

Eva Prats



The cemetery in Igualada, the paseos in Reus and the pergolas in Avenida Icaria are full sections. These are projects that seek density. They are contained within themselves again and again. They are divided up into paths and are themselves paths. Trees are planted among other trees. The relationships established by this text will fill them even more.

A Description of the Sections

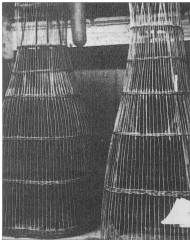
At Igualada, an operation of hollowing out took place. A carved section marks the limit of the work and, at the same time, incorporates the cemetery into the landscape. The walls of this section are the width of burial niches. The paseos in Reus and Avenida Icaria are urban promenades, with blocks of flats on either side, pavements, traffic lanes and a central island walkway. In Reus, two rows of established plane trees occupy the edges of the central walkway. In Avenida Icaria, a main sewer runs underneath, reducing the potential for planting trees. Of the three sections, one was carved out, another was already existing, and Avenida Icaria was a set of data.

The Filling Up of the Sections

We can describe a full section in three layers. The first layer starts on the ground and ends above our heads. It is the layer occupied by tree trunks and the lower part of lamp posts, two elements which are both obstacles and companions to our walks. In the cemetery this layer is especially developed. The pavement is made out of waste and sedimented materials – wooden sleepers and pebbles. Changes on the surface catch the eye of those who stroll, head down, in the cemetery. When darkness comes, lamps light these changes.

The second layer is the thinnest of the three. It is placed over our heads, and usually coincides with the height at which branches are allowed to grow in the city. In the paseos of Reus, this layer gave rise to the *barretina*-shaped roofs that mark the street crossings and a café terrace. In Avenida Icaria, it produced huge hats made of steel plates. These are perforated: from below, they appear as squat chimneys framing the pergolas and the facades. There are eight hats, spread over the walkway at a height of two-and-a-half metres.

The third layer develops within the tree tops. In the cemetery, the interior of the section is planted with trees. The tree tops jut out of the excavated area, reproducing, at a certain height, the hollowed-out volume of earth. In Reus, this layer was made denser with more planting. New groups of trees will add their tops to those of the existing planes, providing the walkway with a rhythm of light–shade–light. This is also the layer of the lamp tops, which are formed by the crossing of three poles and a brace. In Avenida Icaria, the pergolas occupy this volume and incorporate some newly planted evergreen oaks. The pergolas also contain lights, which readily evoke kites.



FROM ABOVE: Dance of an 'old midget' at the Patum celebration in Berga; Structure of two giants. OPPOSITE: Avenida Icaria, Barcelona.

Filling Up with Trees

The walkway is occupied. In the cemetery, trees attend the visitors. In Reus, the promenade is filled first with trees and then with people. Avenida Icaria is filled with construc-



and a few trees, awaiting the arrival of people. Our steps mark out the distance between the trunks.

There is an equivalence between trees and people. Trees locate public spaces for the inhabitants of the city. They appear in squares and promenades; they project the necessary shade to rest, walk, wait in... They are also inhabitants. In many schools, children learn to plant trees once a year, either within the school grounds or on the streets. A relationship is thus established between the growth of a tree and that of a person. Both require a process of nurture.

In their development, trees follow annual cycles. Each spring brings a renewal of their appearance. This is probably the one big advantage they have over us. Some of the yearly cycles coincide with public holidays.

Filling Up with People: Avenida Icaria

Avenida Icaria is one of the 'inland' streets of the Olympic Village, an extension of the city built for the Games. The old coastal cemetery marks one end of the avenue: the cemetery extension at the other end links the Olympic Village to the city. During the Games, hordes of people climbed Montjuïc mountain to reach the stadium: the athletes were housed in the Village. What then happened in Avenida Icaria?

From the centre of the avenue, the pergolas waited for people to show up in the windows and on the balconies. The wooden boards altered the perception of the facades, overlapping and defining bands of colour similar to the bands in the flags of each participating country. The street filled up even more with the noise of the enthusiastic crowds. In moments of joy, hats were thrown up in the air, and for a few brief seconds they would fly.

Pergolas in Procession: Avenida Icaria

Let us now follow Avenida Icaria from the cemetery to the city. The pergolas adopt an increasingly vertical position, and the boards which initially formed flat surfaces rise high above our heads in a balancing act. The promenade under the pergolas grows in tension. The pergolas form a long procession moving towards the city. They are at the same time *pallia*, monstrances and participants.

The Pergolas Join the Giants: Avenida Icaria

Each year, on the 24th of September, giants take to the streets of Barcelona. Their itinerary through the city is fixed. You can choose to cross paths with them or to ignore them. The apparition lasts only a few brief hours.

The pergolas would become flags and *pallia* if the giants were to parade down Avenida Icaria. Their unwieldy dimensions are in keeping with the clumsy movements of the giants, who can only advance forward or rotate. The people carrying the giants' structures need to rest often. The poles of the pergolas set down a pattern for the rests. While walking under the pergolas, the giant-headed figures could make use of the steel hats. The giants would reach the height of the wooden boards, and they would meet in the more open areas of the promenade to perform their dances.

Note

1 The *barretina* is the hat traditionally worn by Catalan peasants. Its shape resembles that of a sock.



FROM ABOVE: Easter Sunday procession at Josepets, Barcelona; Female giant on Avenida Icaria;
OPPOSITE: The giant and the pergola.

