

Process In Full View

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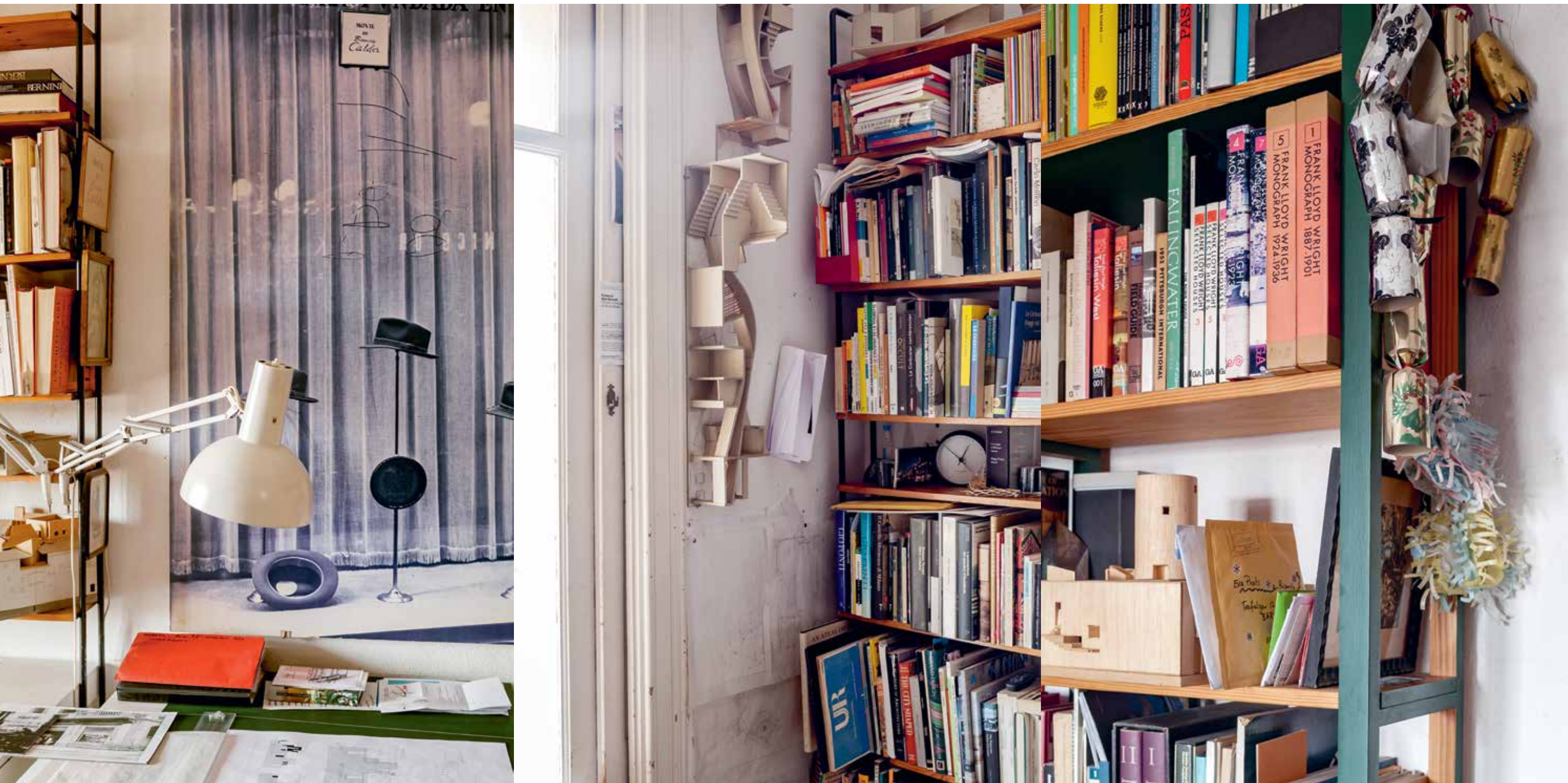
This book seeks to communicate what is essential about our work: the time we spend doing and making things, the process.

It explains how we work, and our approach can be seen by looking at our studio. The physical space has books, papers, models, molds, dragons, virgins and hats, everything that forms part of the daily evolution of the ideas contained in the projects. Our studio is a workshop where the world of building mixes with the world of education, of friends, visitors, and colleagues; it is somewhere able to hold all the drawings created over all these years, all the time it has taken to draw them.

The book reflects the visible studio, and it also hints at what lies just beyond the reach of vision. A non-systematic book without breaks, or white walls, or flat roofs, or smooth floors; where the figures go back centuries and where there is only

one topic, the one that absorbs us: the process that is filtered through the papers and the books; the process that includes wonder and surprise, the unexpected, the mysterious and the undecipherable, things which this book cannot contain.

This book reveals the materials of different periods and projects, the layers that have been building up on the walls, ceilings and tables over these past fifteen years, like traces of projects that have filled the rooms. These photographs by Adrià Goula become tableaux that describe the time that has gathered on the surfaces, the accumulation of materials that mix dreams with ordinary details.

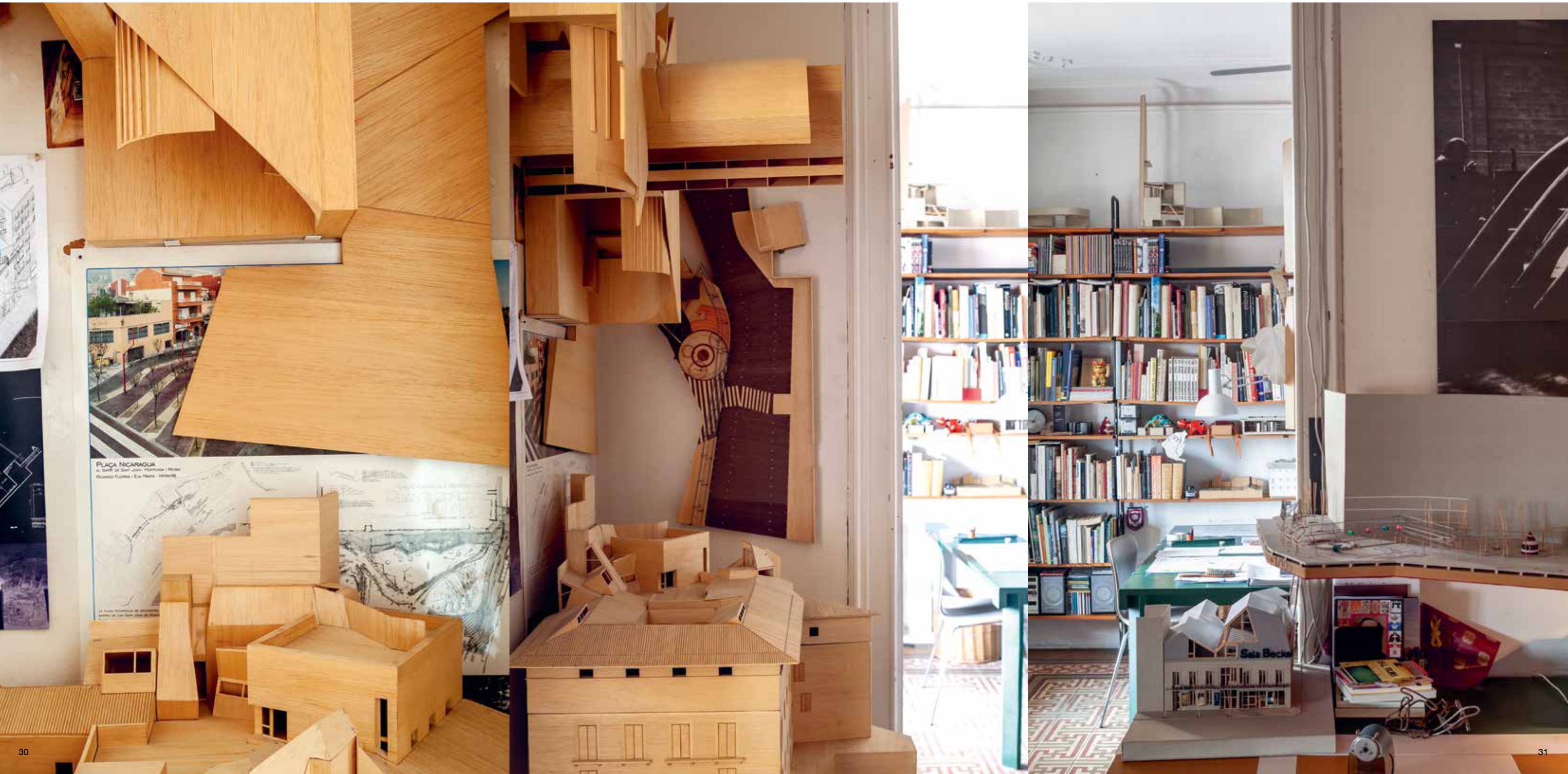


This book is the opportunity to gather together and present the material with which we make things, not appraising it through the transitive prism of inspiration, which makes it always for or from something, but instead recognizing its material quality, as a thing, identical at any juncture of a project. A work is always the sum of all the materials produced during its conception, so that it can be explained with each one of these materials.

By placing the process at the center, we bring our work closer to procedural art; our friendship with certain artists friends therefore forms part of this book. One can see the shared feeling with which their work influences our own in many collaborations; their gazes have changed the direction of how the ideas have evolved. Meanwhile, the work of the various photographers with whom we have collaborated has brought back projects to the studio so that they can rejoin the process of the projects. Their work has helped us view the finished product not as an ending, but as material proof of ideas that will keep on changing.

The book is a container of processes, without a beginning or an end, a trunk that, when opened up, on any of its sides, invites you to participate in a conversation that moves in no direction, either forward or backward, based on the material produced in the studio on a daily basis. These documents have helped focus the attention of a dialogue at the time of developing the projects, and are the work of several pairs of hands. Frank Stahl, Els van Meerbeek, Jonny Pugh, Jorge Casajús and Oriol Valls, among many others, have made it possible for the studio to give continuity to a work that is partially on view in these pages.

Since 1998, the year in which we founded our studio, we have focused on developing the ideas and interests behind each project, gradually defining our approach which, instead of trying to provide solutions, seeks to research the possibilities opened up by these subjects. But this research has always been linked to the responsibility for making and constructing; to an interest for projects to be carried out and built. We choose to research the reflexive, material aspect of the built work, attaching importance to the making of things as a way of finding that rhythm which does not depend on the effect of causality, of the commission, of the circumstance. Therefore, for all these years, the most important thing has been the continuous and uninterrupted experience of planning and building projects, with the freedom of interpretation offered by the built project.



From the first pages, we have mixed things up with the elements of drawing. Initially with Enric Miralles and then in our own studio, we learned to increasingly trust in drawing as the discipline which enables us to incorporate, in a single plan, the multiple dimensions of reality. The contact with the plans lies at the heart of our work, and therefore they are reproduced here amid the models and the works, the drawing with the thought process behind it, with the materials that it produces itself along with the construction.

As a tool for observing and recording time, drawing has taught us to superimpose different periods within a single document, making them coexist, and therefore throughout this book we have included works in old buildings with drawings that insert new lives within the old ones, projects that arise out of those that came before. Transforming some things into others, drawings and then works do not offer a glimpse of what existed before and what happened next, but instead show a continuous thought process that goes backward and forward in time, erasing physical and temporal distances. In fact, including the Museum of the Mills, the Casal Balaguer, the Providencia House and the Sala Beckett-Obrador Internacional de Dramaturgia in the book makes it possible to understand an evolution in the understanding and in our perspective on the rehabilitation of buildings, the pleasure we take in mixing together all the periods of the lives that could have inhabited them—an essential part of our project process.

The Plaza Pio XII and Building 111, both projects with strong participation from the local community, gave us the opportunity to discover whether we were capable of incorporating a wide range of voices into a single plan. By adopting this method of working, promoting an inclusive form of architecture that can include a wide variety of opinions and knowledge, drawing has given us the freedom to fit all these aspects onto the same sheet of paper.

The book also refers occasionally to university workshops, held in Barcelona and other cities. These are opportunities for us to transfer some of our studio research to the classroom setting, in an effort to connect these two worlds. During the process of looking for exercises to bring these interests closer to the students, we have had to view the topics objectively, in order to ensure everyone, students and teachers alike, are able to join in the same discussion.

All of these academic experiences share a common working method: drawing by hand as a means of making mental progress in full view of other people. In this sense, school desks are similar to our studio tables, where drawing is a tool that allows doubt to enter, that makes visible the difficulties of moving forward; at the same time, this method enables progress, precisely because these difficulties are on view.

By including such a wide variety of data in our drawings, we have become used to moving closer to the thoughts surrounding them: once a problem has been fixed, the next stage is almost to forget about the purpose of your work, as a type of distraction. Then you return to the problem. But there is an element of distraction, of erratic thought, that makes it possible to take leaps in unexpected directions, incorporating the different aspects that make up a single reality. This work, which allows interruptions by accepting detours, is the subject of this book. Apart from the drawings that synthesize and evolve them, the projects appear in these pages accompanied by this surrounding world, parallel distractions with which they have coexisted.

