

Josep Renau: an artist, intellectual and creator radically committed to politics and culture

Josep Renau was born in Valencia in 1907 and showed his rebellion early in his career by refusing the traditional aesthetic. During the Spanish Civil War, as general director of Fine Arts he played a fundamental role in rescuing and preserving the works of the Prado Museum and other institutions threatened by the fascist bombings. After the war he had to leave Spain, and he spent the bulk of his career in exile. He moved to Mexico City and then to East Berlin, where he died in 1982.

His creative work, consisting of posters and large murals, is marked by an innovative language with a clear political purpose, a bold use of photomontage, and a clear social commitment. The life and works of Josep Renau can help us understand much of the violent and turbulent 20th century.

DL B 15907-2019

PRICE
€3

OPENING HOURS
March to October, Tuesday to Sunday and public holidays, from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. You can enter the exhibition rooms up to 30 minutes before closing time. Closed on Mondays, except public holidays.

OPEN DAYS
• First Sunday of each month.
• Every Sunday afternoon, from 3:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. On open days, access to the exhibition rooms is free. No audio guides are available on open days.

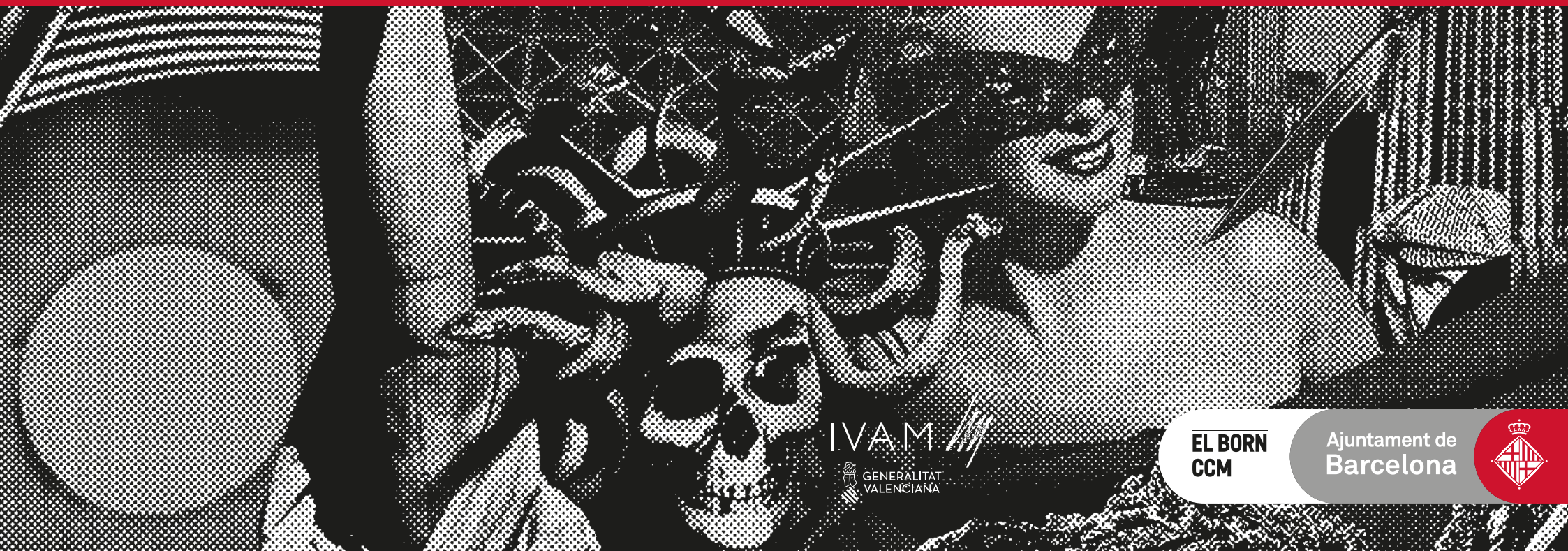
GUIDED TOUR
Visit the website. Bookings: reserveselbornccm@eicub.net or 93 256 68 50.

ACCESSIBILITY
Accessibility equipment available for people with reduced mobility. Resources and support services for access to the information and content of El Born CCM for people with hearing or visual impairment.

Exhibition in El Born CCM / 13.06.2019 - 13.10.2019

RENAU

THE FIGHT FOR A NEW CULTURE



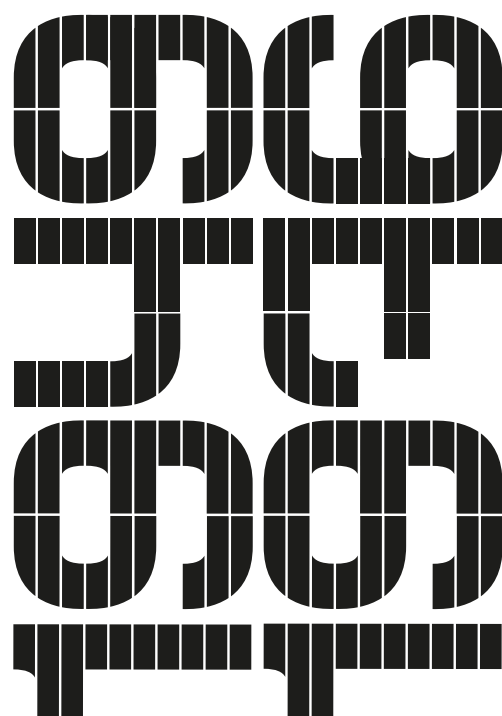
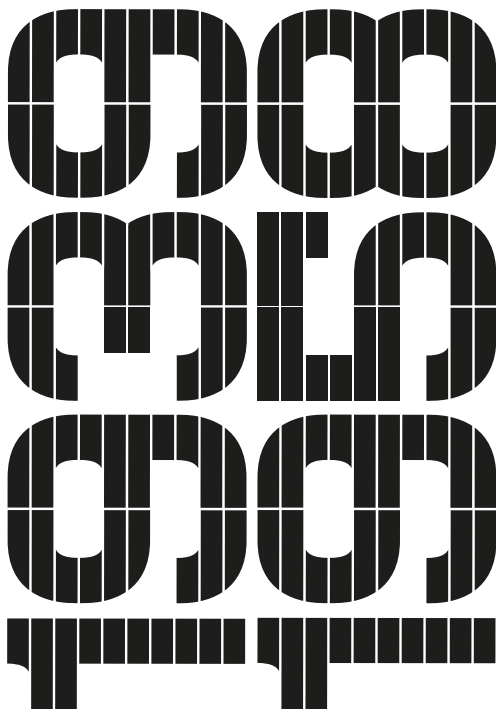
EXILE IN MEXICO

After the civil war, Renau chose to go into exile. After a period of confinement in the French concentration camp of Argelès-sur-Mer, in June 1939 he arrived in the capital of Mexico with his wife, the painter Manuela Ballester, and two children. Exiled far from his country, like so many others in his situation Renau experienced months of uncertainty. The international context also offered little hope, with the rise of Nazism and the outbreak of World War II (1939-1945). His contact with muralist David Alfaro Siqueiros tempered the bitterness and loneliness of this early period. Renau's stay in Mexico lasted twenty years, during which time he strengthened his communist principles and became involved in the conflicts of Mexican society.



THE FORGING OF AN ARTIST. FROM THE BEGINNINGS TO THE CIVIL WAR

The first stage of the artistic production of Josep Renau was closely linked to the art deco aesthetics of the time: he followed the trend to use simplified forms with flat inks and often frivolous subjects. In 1928 he presented his work in Madrid, where he achieved great public success. Soon, however, he began to structure his political thinking, and in 1931 he joined the Spanish Communist Party. The 1930s were a time of ideological confrontation: the proclamation of the Second Republic (1931), the coup d'état by Francisco Franco (1936) and the outbreak of the civil war, followed by the repression of those on the losing side. Renau used his work as a propaganda tool at the service of Republican values and the fight against fascism.



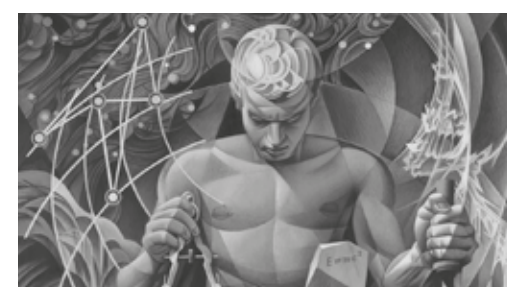
«THE AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE»

The American Way of Life is a series of photomontages in which Renau criticized the mercantilist values of the consumer society and the fascination that it arouses. It combines fragments of American show culture with aspects of American politics, amid the warlike rhetoric of the Cold War. Renau also dealt with issues such as racism and the marginalization of African Americans, imperialism, and the reification of women. Formally, the work uses techniques close to advertising, with intense colours, opposed visual spaces and optical distortions. Renau worked on it in Mexico and East Germany between 1949 and 1976, and it is his best-known and most groundbreaking work in formal composition.



THE YEARS BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN AND THE END

Renau left Mexico in 1958 after suffering two accidents (or possibly attacks) on leaving his studio. He moved to East Berlin, where he developed a political art at the service of the communist state. During his time in Berlin, he worked in public television and created murals for the cities of Halle-Neustadt and Erfurt in order to communicate the scientific and technical revolution to all citizens. In addition to his political work, in the last years of his life he also focused on a series of female nudes. On the death of Franco in 1976, he returned to Spain after 37 years of exile but was unable to settle in Valencia. He died in Berlin in 1982.



el GOMISARIO, Merisio de muerito góicito por muer

PCNOM 36

