PUBLIC SPACE AND MEMORY

Núria Ricart (ed.)
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Reclaiming Memory. Historical Memory Itinerary of Les Corts District, Barcelona

Núria Ricart¹

Well into the twenty-first century, we coexist in Barcelona in a public space of construction, destruction and recovery, overlaid with layers of memory. (Remesar, Ricart; 2014) This dynamic is very evident in districts such as Les Corts, in the western part of the Barcelona plain, where two of the most significant monuments of Franco’s dictatorship have been completely removed from the public space: one dedicated to José Antonio Primo de Rivera, inaugurated in 1964 and demolished in 2009, and the other in homage to the fallen, built in 1953 and taken down in 2005. Both sites still lack a new project that could provide, from a democratic position, justification for those belated removals, almost forty years after the dictator’s death.

¹ CR POLIS – GRC, arte, ciudad, sociedad (Universitat de Barcelona).
Les Corts was originally an independent municipality, autonomous between 1836 and 1897, the year in which Barcelona began its annexation policy. As a predominantly agricultural area, it was dedicated, at the time, to growing cereals. It underwent gradual suburban expansion, although it should be noted that the population density is, and has always been, very low when compared with the Barcelona that spread under the *Ensanche* expansion plan devised by Ildefons Cerdà (1859). Another late-nineteenth century feature is the introduction of the textile industry and major facilities that operated at an intermunicipal level, such as the psychiatric hospital and the Maternity Complex.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, with Les Corts already a part of larger Barcelona, urban development led to the creation of Avenida Diagonal, the first stadium of Futbol Club Barcelona, and the San Ramón neighbourhood.

However, it was mainly during Franco’s dictatorship when the district acquired its current structure and urban density. Particularly important in this long and intense period were the development of the Zona Universitaria campus, at the western end of Avenida Diagonal; the development of the La Mercè neighbourhood and Pedralbes,
with housing for the wealthier classes; the arrangement of Plaza Pío XII y María Cristina as a venue for the Eucharistic Congress of 1952; and finally the construction of the first urban ring road. While Les Corts underwent urban development as one of the areas of real and social power linked to the regime, its appearance was still rather varied throughout the 1950s and 1960s, with clusters of shacks scattered around its territory, in particular those in the areas of María Cristina and Camp Nou.

During the dictatorship, Les Corts housed several facilities whose reach went far beyond the local level, such as the residence for army officers and the women’s prison, which, along with Las Ventas prison in Madrid, was one of the most important in all of Spain. These two and the Cuartel del Bruc military barracks at the southern end of Avenida Diagonal - from 1939 to 1976 called Avenida del Generalísimo – complete the trio of facilities that determined a concentration of military power and repression during Franco’s dictatorship.

Major state projects for monuments appeared alongside these infrastructures forming the embodiment of power. This became the perfect place to house the symbolic works and rituals of the dictatorship. (Cirici; 1977) Several monuments were added to the two newly built ones mentioned above. One was Héroes de Espinosa de los Monter
os, erected in 1955 in tribute to the men who fought in one of the epic battles of the Spanish Civil War, and another the monolith dedicated to the Condor Legion, inaugurated with Nazi paraphernalia in 1941, during World War II, and torn down in 1980.

All these sites have been disfigured by citizens and the heritage management policies carried out by the City Council since the arrival of democracy in 1979. (Remesar, Ricart; 2014) Added to this is the character of the district: a business hub, a residential area for middle and upper classes and home to the institution and the most-visited museum in Catalonia of the Futbol Club Barcelona.

As with any urban area, Les Corts is much more than a collection of memories, firmly founded on historical events along with testimonies, experiences and images. (Harvey) Even so, this is the area where we can understand the development of dictatorial power over almost forty years, paying attention to the means and infrastructures of repression, forms of ideological control and the construction of places for ritual and symbolic events. (Cirici: 1977) The development over forty years of what could be considered a network – more or less designed – of the embodiment of power.

There is a growing interest in the study of places of memory, their identification and legitimisation:

These places of memory are, fundamentally, the last remnants of a memory awareness which has barely managed to survive in a historical era that reclaims memory because it feels memory has abandoned it [...] Places of memory have their foundations in the sensation that there is no spontaneous memory, that we should deliberately create archives, maintain anniversaries, organise celebrations, give praise and draw up laws since these are no longer natural activities. (Nora: 1989, p.15)

In the case of Les Corts District, places of memory can take on the shape of a route, as a means of communication not only of a single site, but of a network of spaces intrinsically linked to a certain historical period. This was the context for the project for a historical memory itinerary in Les Corts. Begun in 2011, the project was run by the CR POLIS research centre and the master’s degree in Urban Design offered by the University of Barcelona in collaboration with the Association for Culture and Memory (Asociació Acme) and the European Observatory of Memories (EUROM). Supervisors were Antoni Remesar and Nuria Ricart on behalf of CR POLIS, and Jordi Guixé for EUROM and Acme. Presented to the public in January 2013, it was met with an enthusiastic response and made a great impact.²

Taking into account the scope of the idea and the study of other examples in Barcelona and beyond, where places of memory have been signposted and dignified, the project was given a double entry into the public space. One is physical, provided with the amount of texture Lefebvre would require (Lefebvre, 1971, p.76) so that communication can take place in an urban context using the city’s own language. The other is virtual, as a memorial, with all the required historical information, documentation and records accessible online, enabling a layer-by-layer understanding of the evolution of the territory. This includes things of interest, such as information on Barcelona public art, publicly accessible since 2004 on the bcn.cat/artpublic website and via a smartphone application since 2013. Another example, strongly characterised by making available historical data and its geo-referenced information, is the memoriacbcn.cat project, which can be accessed from the sites of memory themselves. This has been promoted by Barcelona City Council and the Conèixer Història Association since 2013.
The project aims to interweave the physical and virtual elements. The physical elements in the public space, ranging from iconic items to artistic or monumental objects, have greater or lesser referential ability to convey the defining features and identity of a specific place of memory. The online information and documentation is meant to reduce interference from the number of signs in the urban context. A hybrid solution in the form of an info-totem has been applied in some very specific places of memory, such as the Maternity Complex.

While the dissemination of virtual content and the provision of access to it have already become a part of heritage and culture management – and are becoming more and more preeminent – it is essential to also consider the relevance of the influence of historical information found in the physical form in the territory. Both channels of communication and representation are increasingly ambivalent and necessary.

The project puts forward an urban itinerary of 15 sites in Les Corts District, which were symbols of the Second Spanish Republic (1931-1939), the Civil War (1936-1939), the Franco era (1939-1975) and the transition to democracy (1975-1981), and which are now being reinterpreted from the critical point of view of the present. Along the itinerary, the spaces where public art, iconography or architecture itself were erected as the image or physical representation of an authoritarian system are signposted and contextualised through various initiatives. (Fisas et al. 2012)

The project delves more deeply particularly in those places where demolitions were carried out without a new design being offered, which resulted in sites without memory (Ricart, 2012) at present completely expressionless. This is the case of the old monuments to José Antonio Primo de Rivera and to the fallen, and of the women’s prison. For these, design projects for urban planning and public art were drawn up with the intention of, firstly, dignifying the sites as public spaces, and secondly, making the sites visible and giving them iconographic expression according to their role during Franco’s regime.

The itinerary’s design stage involved:

- identifying places of memory,
- the logo for the itinerary,
- the elements that identify each place of memory,
- the info-totems for specific places along the route,
- artistic and public space initiatives for those spaces without memory,
- a webpage interface as a prototype to store and revitalise content,
- a leaflet with the itinerary description.
A study was made on the use of applications to download audiovisual content to mobile devices. The identification elements at the sites were to incorporate Quick Response (QR) codes to give access to the site’s history in writing (text files), visually (image galleries) and in sound (podcasts). Recognizing that to remember what happened there and the significance of a place, a symbol or an occurrence is an essential exercise towards comprehending the present and being able to understand the past, as it makes visible the memory that our constructed surroundings have been burying. (Fisas et al., 2012)

A proposal was made for the identification elements of the places of memory to be installed in the pavement, using transparent resin blocks measuring 40 by 40 cm, to fit in with Barcelona’s concrete paving stones. The itinerary logo, made of steel and embedded in the blocks, would be clearly visible. The aim is to identify places in a subtle yet attractive way, using the right size for small and medium-scale settings. On the other hand, thought was given to the need to install “totem-type” information panels to more emphatically identify places such as the Maternity Complex, whose scale requires larger elements that enable clearer labelling of the territorial and chronological intricacies of the place of memory as part of the itinerary.
The itinerary marks several places along the stretch of the main artery, Avenida Diagonal, from Plaza Francesc Macià to the Cuartel del Bruc military barracks. The thoroughfare itself, one of the most important in the city, is also a place of memory: in 1936, troops taking part in the military uprising marched from the barracks to Plaza
Cataluña. In 1938, along the section near Palau de Pedralbes, at the time the seat of the republican government, the International Brigades marched down the avenue prior to leaving the country, and the republican army, to its own devices. The official street index is a record of the nature of this space. In his 1859 Ensanche expansion project, city planner Ildefons Cerdà named the thoroughfare Avenida Diagonal, in reference to the angle cutting through the orthogonal grid of the new district. During the Second Spanish Republic it was named Avenida 14 de April. In the years of the dictatorship it was denominated Avenida del Generalísimo. With the return of democracy, the avenue recovered its original name.

The first place marked on the itinerary is in present-day Paseo Josep Tarradellas, very close to Plaza Francesc Macià. Between 1964 and 2009 it was the site of the monument dedicated to José Antonio Primo de Rivera, designed by the architect Jordi Estrany and with reliefs by the sculptor Jordi Puiggalí (no. 1 on the itinerary). The work was built for the thirtieth anniversary of the creation of the far-right Falange Española party. In 1981, in the democratic period, the City Council removed the shield with symbols of the dictatorship which was highly visible at the top of the central monolith, but it wasn’t until 2009, almost 30 years after this first move, when the whole monument was torn down. The decision was very surprising since the monument had been given a C:C (not to be demolished) classification for cultural heritage protection. The decision did not involve an appropriate public space project. In 2014, five years on, the site was in a sorry state of abandonment.³ (Remesar and Ricart, 2014)

The site was to be marked as one of the 15 spaces on the Les Corts historical memory itinerary through the installation of a resin plaque in the pavement. Also, given its present state of abandonment, a design was made for a complete remodelling of

³ The destruction of dictatorship monuments has been studied by Gamboni (1997) and Rocha (2006).
the site (Rios et al. 2012) involving the creation of a slight change of level in the area where the monument used to stand. This is with a longitudinal ridge, opposing the volume of the former monument (which stood transversally on the avenue), whose edge, like a timeline, produces a new reading of memory. The idea is for the line to allow explanations of the most significant events that occurred there after the inauguration of the monument. This information is to be combined with the changes in the street name since it was built, as registered in the official index of streets.

The design proposes using reddish, unpolished corten steel for the timeline and the edges of the ridge. For heightened contrast, grey asphalt is to be used for the rest of the pavement. The lower area will feature a subtle reminder of the outline of the old monument, using a corten steel profile to mark the perimeter of what once stood there. On either side of the avenue a line of black locust trees (Robinia pseudoacacia) is foreseen to frame the space and enhance the linearity of the avenue which at present is fully blocked.

Fig. 14: Renderings of the design for the former monument to Jose Antonio Primo de Rivera (Rios, Castillo, Duarte, Gutiérrez, Künzler, Tobón - master’s degree in Urban Design, 2011-2012. Supervisors: Remesar, Ricart (CR POLIS); Guixé (EUROM - Acme). Itinerary site no.1.
The itinerary continues along Avenida Diagonal with a stop at one of the most used signs of the regime, a plaque marking viviendas de protección oficial – subsidised housing – built under Franco’s administration (no. 2 on the itinerary). Clearly visible on the plaque is the fascist symbolism of the Yoke and Arrows along with the words Instituto Nacional de la Vivienda (National Housing Institute). Though the city of Barcelona has promoted the removal of all Franco symbols – from 2007 based on the Historical Memory Law – today there are still several plaques attached to buildings throughout the city because the decision to remove them must be taken by the association of property owners of each building.

**Fig. 15:** Photomontage highlighting the typical symbols of the National Housing Institute. This example is attached to the building at 493, Avenida Diagonal. Source: Authors. On the occasion of the exhibition Ruta de la Memoria Histórica de Les Corts (January 2013). Site no.2 on the itinerary.

**Fig. 16:** Image of Monumento a los Héroes de Espinosa de los Monteros, in the square now dedicated to Prat de la Riba. Source: Archivo Huertas-Fabre (CR POLIS). Site no. 3 on the itinerary.

On Avenida de Sarrià, at the junction of Gran Via de Carlos III, is the site of the former Monumento a los Héroes de Espinosa de los Monteros (no. 3 on the itinerary). By J. Puigdollers, this was erected in 1955 as a tribute to the Catalans who fought alongside Franco’s forces and were killed during the Civil War. It featured a naked man standing to attention with his left arm holding the Spanish flag. In 1979, the site was
renamed and dedicated to Prat de la Riba and the monument was taken down. In 1999, a statue by Andreu Alfaro was installed, dedicated to the President of the Man-
comunidad de Cataluña (an institution grouping Catalonia’s four provincial adminis-
trations).

Fig. 17: Aerial view of the Fútbol Club Barcelona stadium in Les Corts (1930-1936). Source: Josep Maria Sagarra, Pau Lluís Torrents. Arxiu Fotogràfic de Barcelona. Site no. 4 on the itinerary.

Fig. 18: Aerial view of the new Fútbol Club Barcelona stadium (Camp Nou, 1961). Source: Arxiu Municipal del Districte de les Corts. Site no. 13 on the itinerary.

The next site is where the first stadium of the Fútbol Club Barcelona used to stand. Opened in 1922, it was known as el Campo de Les Corts (Site no. 4). Since the dicta-
torship of Primo de Rivera (1923-1930), the football club had been a symbol of Catalan resistance against the central power, maintaining its identity during the Civil War, when Franco’s soldiers killed the club’s chairman, Josep Sunyol, and bombed its head-
quarters. The postwar period led to social, cultural and economic crises. They adapt-
ed to the new regime and managed to grow thanks to the brilliant player Kubala. In the 1950s, the growing number of members made it possible to build Camp Nou in 1957 (no. 13). It was designed by García-Barbón, Mitjans and Soteras Mauri, with funding from land speculation following the rezoning procedure of the old football stadium. This planning development was carried out with the acquiescence of the dictator (published on 23 September 1965 in the official state gazette: BOE, decree 2735/1965).

On the site of the former football ground we now find a sheet of black marble with an inscription in memory of the location. Once installed in the new premises, club membership shot up which, paradoxically, was not accompanied by sporting success-
es. In a period of large-scale migration that saw many people move to Catalonia, Barça became a medium of integration into Catalan society. When Agustí Montal i Costa
was chairman of the club, a policy of Catalanisation was instituted, defying the limits imposed by Franco’s dictatorship. At the same time, the club presented Francisco Franco with two gold and diamond medals. The first in 1971, in appreciation of the dictator’s support for the construction of the Palau Blaugrana and Palau de Gel – the football stadium and the ice rink; the second in 1974, on the 75th anniversary of the club.

We now reach Plaza de María Cristina, a site with strong ideological significance. Here we find the residence for army officers (no. 5), built in the late 1950s on private land that had been ceded to the army in 1939 for military use. At present, there is still a portrait in oil of the Caudillo inside the building.

Nearby is the site where the monolith dedicated to the Condor Legion was erected (no. 6). Financed by the Nazi Government in 1941, it was erected in honour of the German aviators who, as a sign of support and goodwill towards Franco’s army, bombed the town of Guernika on 26 April 1937. A symbol of recognition for the German Embassy’s support of Franco’s forces during the Spanish Civil War, the memorial had an inscription in German and the phrase Muertos por Dios y por España (Fallen for God and for Spain). In his inauguration speech, Alfredo Kindelán, Captain General of the fourth region stated:

At a time when the wings of the Reich are covered in glory, I wish to state our admiration for and remembrance of the heroes whose memory is perpetuated with this stone plaque. Convey to the Führer of Imperial Germany, how much we admire that army and its aviation. (La Vanguardia newspaper archives)
In 1946, PSUC activists bombed the monument, but it was quickly rebuilt. After the return of democracy, in 1980, the monolith was removed from the public space. It was the first demolition planned by the City Council after the first municipal elections of the new democracy. (Huertas and Fabre, 2004)

Another nearby site on the itinerary is marked as one of the most important penitentiary institutions of the postwar period; the women’s prison of Les Corts (no. 7). Located on the outskirts of the city on the road from Les Corts to Sarrià, it became a prison in 1936, although the bloodiest events took place between 1939 and 1955. During this period, thousands of women and children were crowded together there, and eleven prisoners were executed at the other end of Barcelona, at El Campo de La Bota.

Changes in land use and the consolidation of the area as an administrative, commercial and business centre have turned it into a hub of activity that is completely oblivious to the events that took place there at an earlier stage. More specifically, the plot where the prison building used to stand is now occupied by one of the El Corte Ingles department stores. The area that was taken up by the prison’s vegetable plots and the fountain now has residential buildings and office blocks. Today there are no pre-existing elements that bear witness to the past. The social and political oblivion this prison has faded into has also meant the oblivion of the vindication of the memory of the women incarcerated there and what they were put through.

Fig. 21: Temporary public space of memory for the Women’s Prison of Les Corts. Citizen participation process http://blocs.lescorts.cc/presodedones. Site no. 7 on the itinerary.

This was why a series of design projects was carried out to promote a monument dedicated to these victims of reprisal during Franco’s regime. All the proposed designs make use of an abstract language, but aim to be intelligible, taking shape through images and texts that explain the historical meaning of the monument. This level of communication is not only important for the victims and their relatives but also for those citizens who have daily contact with this work of public art. (Young: 1994)

In 2013, at the request of the residents’ association of Les Corts, the students’ projects were presented. After that, it began a citizen participation process related with the recovery of this memory. (Ricart, Guixe, 2015)

The next site of memory is in Plaza Pio XII (site no. 8), which was laid out in 1951 after the demolition of a shanty town that had been built during the postwar area. The square was to be the venue for the most important ceremony of the 1952 International Eucharistic Congress, a massively attended Catholic event in Barcelona. An immense altar, designed by the architect Josep Soleras, built for the event and dismantled after the Congress, is today considered an important work of ephemeral art (Fig.23). On the death of Pope Pius XII in 1958, Julián Río Sierra received a commission to create a sculpture in his honour (unveiled in 1961). The sculpture has two elements: a white limestone monolith representing a cassock, and a contrasting cross-shaped crosier of weathered bronze. (Huertas, Fabre, 2004)
The 1952 Eucharistic Congress boosted the urban development of the Zona Universitaria (site no. 10). In 1958, courses began at the Faculty of Law, a symbol of modern architecture and the conception of an advanced postwar Barcelona, designed by Guillermo Giráldez, Pedro López and Xavier Subias. It is the second building of what went on to become a large inter-university campus.

In the same area is the Maternity Complex (site no. 9), built between 1889 and 1898 by the Barcelona Provincial Council as a maternity hospital and a home for abandoned children, serving the province of Barcelona. The charity project was extended over the following decades. In 1928, the architect Josep Goday designed the Pavelló Blau, a building with a distinctly modern character, intended for the care of married mothers. The construction proved to be long and complicated, with work completed at the end of 1940 and the official opening taking place two years later, on 17 September 1942. In line with the general situation throughout the country, there were no major improvements to charity institutions during the postwar period. Economic difficulties of the time meant funding had to be sought from private donors and only minor renovation and maintenance could be carried out. In November 1953, the first stone was laid of the last building in the complex, the Pavelló Cambó, an extension of the ward for young children, built thanks to the legacy of Francesc Cambó. The Provincial Council architect Manuel Baldrich i Tibau took charge of the design of this structure which was to fit exactly between two existing buildings, closing off the complex along the side running parallel to the street Travessera de Les Corts. The building was officially inaugurated on 25 June 1957.
The eleventh site on the itinerary is the Palacio Real or Palacio de Pedralbes, the residence of the Spanish Royal family on their visits to Barcelona between 1919 and 1931. During the Second Republic, it passed into the hands of Barcelona City Council, who used it to house the Museum of Decorative Arts (1932) and transformed the garden into a public park. The palace was the last seat of the Republican Government before they went into exile in 1939. During Franco’s regime, the palace became the residence of the head of state and upon the return of democracy, once again became the Museum of Decorative Arts.
From the time the palace was constructed, there was a semicircular developed area opposite the main entrance, on the other side of Avenida Diagonal. It became the site of the monument to the fallen (site no. 12), made in 1953 by the sculptor Josep Clarà, and the architects Adolf Florensa and Josep Vilaseca. It was part of a general postwar move that was promoted under the slogan “celebrating ten years of peace”, which involved projects for monuments and plaques, in every city and village, paying tribute to those on Franco’s side who had died in the Civil War. These monuments generally had the inscription, “Fallen for God and for Spain”.

Despite its modest budget, the work was designed as a monumental structure matching the importance of the site: along the thoroughfare entering the city from the rest of the peninsula, and standing opposite Palacio de Pedralbes, Franco’s residence. The design proposal included a semicircular colonnade to frame a sculpture featuring two males, one standing supporting the other, his fallen comrade. In addition there were a few bodies of water to heighten the sense of depth of the scene.
The work suffered organised attacks from the very beginning. On 18 May 1972, the Front d’Alliberament Català, a clandestine political group, damaged the monument, which thereupon was the object of a redress event attended by the francoist mayor Porcioles. Two years later, an anarchist group carried out another attack on the monument, which was followed by another redress event on 26 January 1974, in the presence of the authorities and important figures singing Cara al Sol, the anthem of the Falange organisation, their arms raised in the fascist salute (Fig. 27). Finally, after the anti-fascist platform of Barcelona damaged the monument on 1 June 2001, it was taken down (Fig.32).

It was because the pro-independence group Maulets had placed banners in opposition to the Spanish army, a few hours before the attack, that the El Periódico de Cataluña newspaper identified them as the perpetrators on 2 June. On Thursday, 28 July 2005, with the statue already gone, demolition work began on the colonnade. The City Council planned to convert the site into

[...] a civic meeting point, with a design by the architect Helio Piñón which includes a five-metre-high glass prism and an irregular slab of stone with steel profiles which reflect the sunlight during the day and are lit at night with a fibre-optic installation. (Huertas, Fabre, 2004; Español, 2003)
The project was not executed: instead, flowerbeds were laid out and trees were planted along the perimeter of the disappeared monument. In 2013, the site was named Plaza de Ramón María Roca. By covering the site, the main achievement was the creation of an area that is completely oblivious to its history.

This lack of memory is the context for the design project “Fallen Monument”. (Ballesteros et al. 2012) The aim is to make the currently hidden history of the monument visible in the public space, installing vinyl panels at the main public transport nodes that connect the area. An illustrated timeline, whose title makes reference to the ancient monument, to mediate between the gaze of the citizen, the public transport user, and the place, devoid of content.
On 19 July 1936, the troops which took part in the military uprising set off from the Cuartel del Bruc military barracks (site no. 14). From Avenida Diagonal (then named Avenida 14 April), they moved further and further into the streets of Barcelona, where they were awaited by makeshift barricades set up by the working population, men and women, and even soldiers that remained loyal to the republican government. Barcelona became a battlefield and the insurgent troops were defeated in 32 hours. But the military uprising had begun: a bloody foretaste of the beginning of the Civil War. At present, the Cuartel del Bruc continues to fulfil its military function, but the façades no longer display any Francoist symbols.

Fig. 34: Monumento Caído. Design project for site no. 12 on the itinerary. (Ballesteros, B., Campos, P., Mao, Y., Mejía - master's degree in Urban Design, 2012. Supervisors: Remesar, Ricart (CR POLIS); Guixé (EUROM - Acme).

Fig. 35: View of Cuartel del Bruc (1934). Source: Arxiu Fotogràfic de Barcelona. Site no.14 on the itinerary.
The last stop on the itinerary is at Cervantes Park, located on land that was cut through by the Estela, the stream which drained the water coming down from the peak of Sant Pere Màrtir. The park is in a triangular plot bounded by the last stretch of Avenida Diagonal, Avenida Esplugues and Calle de Manuel Ballbé. Lluís Ruidor i Carrol, the chief architect of the parks and gardens department from 1939 to 1967, made the landscaping design for the park in 1965. He defined two different types of landscaping for the surface of over nine hectares, although the heart of this park is the rose garden, which boasts approximately 220 varieties of roses, the result of the relocation and expansion of the Amargós rose garden on Montjuïc mountain.

> Conclusions

The city has achieved the category of a huge and complex palimpsest on which the present is built, a present which is remarkable or ordinary, sensitive or indifferent to the past. The force of the present can allow forgetfulness towards the city and the occurrences in it, an unintended neglect of facts, places and people. On the other hand, it may boost the mythification of the past, suspending the present in pursuit of idealising history.

The destruction of art related to Franco’s dictatorship in Barcelona lies at the base of the Historical Memory Itinerary of Les Corts district, which promotes a mixture of two related strategies; differentiating between the construction of new public art projects (fixing memory in the public space) and memorials (which can be developed in TIC platforms). (Remesar, Ricart; 2014) New technologies offer the explanation, significance and appreciation of places of memory. In some cases, due to their preponderance, these places should include public art as monuments to link their use and form to the events that took place in their contemporary history.

Historical memory is synonymous with conflict, even today, almost forty years after the death of the dictator. Therefore, it is our duty to continue to work to prevent the conflict being misrepresented, hidden or distorted. We must delve into those sites to dig up the layers of history. We must understand the symbolic dimension of our heritage, of the place, of the built or effaced object, in order to inform, clarify, explain, reveal, vindicate, etc., as ways to dignify democracy, citizenship and public space now and for the future.


Florensa, A.; Vilaseca, J. (1950), *Memoria del Proyecto de Monumento a los Caídos* (General Archives of the Administration, Madrid).


Law 52/2007, of 26 December, which recognises and extends rights and establishes measures in favour of those who were persecuted or suffered violence during the civil war and the dictatorship.


Permanyer, Lluís, “Un lugar a prueba del ingenio popular”, in La Vanguardia, 24 February 2011, Barcelona.


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