

AURÈLIA MUÑOZ

Beings



View of Room 2: *Knotted Sculptures*. Photography: Fátima Sanz

DATES: 29 April 2026 – 7 September 2026

LOCATION: Nouvel Building, Room 0

ORGANISERS: The Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía and MACBA, Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona

CURATORS: Fundació EINA, under the scientific management of Manuel Cirauqui, with Rosa Lleó and Sílvia Ventosa, manager of the Aurèlia Muñoz Archive

COORDINATED BY: Soledad Liaño, with the assistance of Cristina Díez

Aurèlia Muñoz. Beings



Aurèlia Muñoz with her artwork *Macra I*, 1969

The exhibition *Beings* is the most ambitious retrospective to date on artist **Aurèlia Muñoz (Barcelona, 1926–2011)**, a pivotal figure in the revitalisation of twentieth-century European textile sculpture. **Coinciding with the hundredth anniversary of the artist's birth**, the show, on view in the Museo Reina Sofía from 29 April to 7 September 2026 and at MACBA from 5 November, surveys **every period from Aurèlia Muñoz's career, the series she made and the techniques and materials she used from the 1950s to the early twenty-first century**. The show is organised jointly by the Museo Reina Sofía and MACBA, the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, and curated by [Fundació EINA](#) via its einaidea platform, under the scientific management of **Manuel Cirauqui**, alongside **Rosa Lleó** and the artist's daughter **Sílvia Ventosa**, who manages the Aurèlia Muñoz Archive.

The exhibition spans the fifty years of the Catalan artist's creative **universe by way of more than 150 works, many previously unexhibited, particularly her drawings**, which reveal in some instances the roots of her creative process, while others are works in their own right. These drawings, on view for the first time, already contain the beings, the entities, that run right through her work, as well as the forms which would give rise to large-scale installations. In addition to these never-before-seen works, which reveal the hitherto unknown sides of Aurèlia's work and are now exposed to light through the research of the show's curatorial team, **the exhibition includes her most emblematic pieces**, over sixty stitched, knotted or woven sculptures and works, made from jute, sisal and cotton, many of them large scale. For instance, on display are her **embroidery pieces** from the 1960s, in a reinvention of painting, her large-scale knotted macramé sculptures from the 1970s, which leave the wall behind to take on three dimensions as beings, and the *Bird-Kites* or *Aerostatos* from the 1980s — aerodynamic mobile structures inspired by her love of origami, sailing and the machines of Leonardo da Vinci — born out of a search for lightness and spatial thought that would continue throughout her career. It is this search that led her to undertake her works with

paper pulp, which she made herself from linen fibres and cotton to create sculptures, many of which are suspended in the air, taking the form of **aerial books, mobiles and oceanic forms**: anemones, algae and jellyfish she arranged in transparent methacrylate cases. It is worth noting that some of the large works are conserved in private collections in Spain and other countries and have not previously been displayed as part of exhibitions or been on view in museums, for instance the monumental works *Palmera* (Palm Tree, 1974) and *Homenaje a Jerónimo Bosco* (Homage to Hieronymus Bosch, 1971), making their display a valuable opportunity for visitors.

Also displayed in the exhibition is a careful selection of objects and works from the artist's **personal archive**, including letters, maquettes, project notebooks and photographs — objects that reveal her systematic and organised way of working. From the 1970s Aurèlia Muñoz worked in a professional studio in which she produced, documented and archived with the help of photographers and assistants such as Josefina Salazar, “a woman with knowledge in her hands”, as the curators stress, and who accompanied the artist from 1959 until her death in 2011.

Muñoz's work, based on continued investigation and experimentation, **transcends textile art rooted in crafts**, bound tightly to the tapestry, lending it a sculptural and architectural dimension related to the concept of **being**, a being that extends beyond organic and non-organic, animate or inanimate, animal or plant, abstract or figurative nature.

This concept of *being* forms the title of the exhibition because it is the **guiding thread**, according to Manuel Cirauqui, scientific manager of the Fundació EINA and the show's co-curator: “The concept applies to every piece because Aurèlia Muñoz, in addition to creating a series with this name in the 1970s, contemplates all her works as hybrid beings, without gender, and with a sentient presence, a soul, as a sensitive being. As entities, ultimately”.



Aurèlia Muñoz, *Ens místic* (Mystical Being), 1977.

Macramé with sisal and jute rope dyed by the artist (300 x 250 x 120 cm). MACBA Collection. Loan from the Government of Catalonia. National Collection of Art. Formerly Salvador Riera Collection. Photograph: Àlex Moltó



Aurèlia Muñoz, *Homenatge a Mondrian* (Homage to Mondrian), 1987. Handmade paper collage dyed by the artist. Methacrylate case (88 x 73 x 5 cm). Museo Reina Sofía

After her repeated participation in the Lausanne International Tapestry Biennial and her involvement with the **Nouvelle Tapisserie international movement in Europe** and **Fiber Art** in the English-speaking world, Aurèlia Muñoz's practice flowed beyond and transcended any handicraft label. With her presence-laden textile bodies, plant architectures and suspended fabrics, she not only renovated the technique but also transformed material into thought. According to the show's co-curator **Sílvia Ventosa**, the artist's daughter and manager of the Aurèlia Muñoz Archive: "Aurèlia was a person who ran a mile from labels. 'Always follow the most difficult path', that was one of her favourite phrases, and in a time of Franco and misogyny, **she sought the freedom of a bird in flight**, like her works".

Rosa Lleó, another member of the curatorial team, has carried out, with Sílvia Ventosa, an extensive process of study and recovery to shed light on the multiple objects in Aurèlia's studio which reflect her world and working method: "We've spent almost two years opening drawers, selecting, reconstructing papers, notes, to finally breathe life into **original maquettes such as the *Bird-Kite* works, on view for the first time** in this show and a demonstration of how Aurèlia worked on her pieces as projects — first drawing them, and later giving them volume on a maquette, before projecting them in scale".

The exhibition *Aurèlia Muñoz. Beings* sets out to discover new perspectives on this creative world, an "Aurèlian cosmology" inhabited by **genderless, plural figures that challenge binarism, personages straddling the human and the animal and living in an interspecies space**. Her works foreshadowed concerns which resonate today: the relationship with the environment, human existence, and that of non-human beings, and the dialogue between the ancestral and the contemporary.

The show unfolds across six floors on Floor 0 of the Nouvel Building, bedding into open spaces where the works speak to each other in a natural, unembellished, non-theatrical setting.

Most of the pieces on display hail from the **Aurèlia Muñoz Archive**, the collection of **Sant Cugat Town Council** and the **Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya** (MNAC), while four of the works in the show are part of the **Museo Reina Sofía Collections**. There are also works from **MACBA, MoMA** and private lenders. Consequently, the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía would like to offer its heartfelt appreciation to the **Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya** for its invaluable collaboration in the exhibition with the generous loan of works from its collection, the result of a donation from the Aurèlia Muñoz Archive.

In conjunction with the show, a **catalogue**, jointly edited by the Museo Reina Sofía and MACBA, has been published, while the Museo Reina Sofía's **Public Programmes** Department has organised an Inaugural Conversation on 28 April at 7pm in the Reina's Cinema theatre with curators Manuel Cirauqui, Rosa Lleó and Sílvia Ventosa, and a **Study Session** on the work of Aurèlia Muñoz, held on 10 June in the Museo's Auditorium 200.

Routes through the Galleries

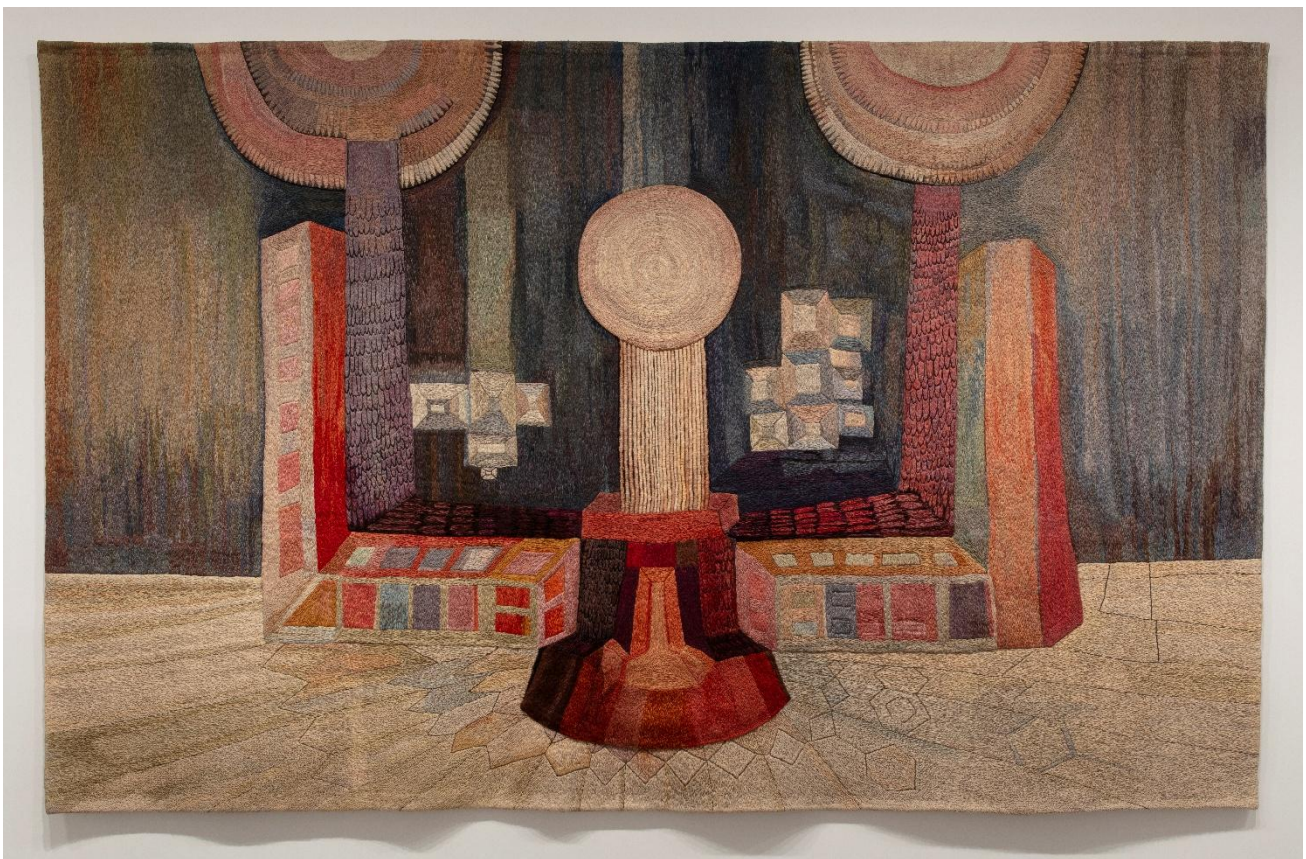
In the introductory gallery to the show, we encounter sixteen photographic documents which formally acknowledge the creative dialogue Aurèlia Muñoz engaged in with other professionals. Throughout her career, Muñoz worked with numerous photographers — including Lluís Casals, Montse Faixat, Ángeles Moral, Francesc Català-Roca and Rocco Ricci, and those represented in this room, for instance Josep Gri, Pau Barceló, Ferrán Freixa and Josep Ventosa — to professionally document her works and process, as well as her studio practice. These images, which lead us into Aurèlia's world, highlight, through their scenography, aspects of her works and maquettes which prefigure modes of exhibition and publication in her work and point to remarkable angles and dimensions.

Room 1. Embroidery, Installations, Prints

Aurèlia Muñoz was a **self-taught and intuitive** artist who embarked on her **artistic training at a relatively late stage**. Her first textile works date back to 1958 and are prints and oil paintings on burlap fabric. At the age of thirty-three, in 1959, she enrolled at the Escuela Massana in Barcelona, where she began to explore textile techniques, studying **embroidery** in museums and cathedrals — during a visit to Girona Cathedral the *Tapiz de la Creación* (Tapestry of Creation, c. XI–XII) would have a profound impact on her. She studied the traditional embroidery technique of *acu pictae*, or needle painting, popular embroidery, and ancestral textile techniques such as Pre-Columbian traditions, identifying their contemporary frames of reference in the modernist and Surrealist avant-garde works of Miró, Magritte, Gaudí, Klee and Torres García. This is reflected in her first artistic manifestations, comprehending drawings, painting, collages, assemblages and printed fabrics.

In the early stages of her career, in the 1950s and 1960s, she started to work on mural tapestries, as defined by the Nouvelle Tapisserie movement, in contrast to three-dimensional, spatial tapestries, which could be encircled, and site-specific tapestries, which allow the work to be penetrated. In her eagerness to overhaul the traditional wall-hanging tapestry, Aurèlia Muñoz sought to lend her work a **sculptural dimension** and employed **materials that differed** from the traditional use of wool, such as horsehair, linen and sisal, in addition to other non-textile elements like acrylic thread and even industrial materials – leather, stone, wood, metal, plastic. In 1965 she took part, for the first time, in the Second Lausanne International Tapestry Biennial with the only embroidered piece in the show, *Construcción abstracta* (Abstract Construction, 1965), an embroidered wool piece on jute burlap and with dimensions of 260 x 315 cm.

In her embroidery works, Aurèlia Muñoz **reinvented painting** with stitches resembling brushstrokes, working on large-scale fabrics with elements inspired by Renaissance tapestries, and bearing the **mythological figures, interspecies personages and non-defined gender** that run through her entire career.



Aurèlia Muñoz, *Homage to Jerónimo Bosco*, 1971. Wool and cotton embroidery on jute burlap (300 x 475 cm). Collection Provinciehuis Noord-Brabant, 's-Hertogenbosch. Photograph: Fátima Sanz

In this first room we encounter large-scale works such as *Àngel còsmic* (Cosmic Angel, 1966), combining medieval techniques and a modern concept, and *Homenaje a Jerónimo Bosco* (Homage to Hieronymus Bosch, 1971), an embroidered tapestry on 300 x 475 cm burlap fabric – commissioned by architect Hugh Aart Maaskant for the new building of the North Brabant Provincial Council building in the Netherlands – which is displayed for the first

time in an exhibition. The latter of these two works reflects Muñoz's **great fascination** with the fantastical personages and landscapes of **Hieronymus Bosch** (c. 1450–1515). To execute the work, the artist had a team of assistants working simultaneously on the tapestry's different fragments, which, once finished, were joined by embroidering their seams. This work is situated at a pivotal time of transition between her mural tapestries and three-dimensional macramé sculptures. During these years she also created **collages** and **assemblages**, also on view in the room, mixing old fabrics with mirrors, frames, paper and wood.

Displayed in this first room alongside her embroidery works, now embedded and recognised in her oeuvre, are a series of **drawings** from the same period, the 1960s, from **MNAC in Barcelona**, encompassing similar motifs to those present in her tapestries. There are also six drawings made in ink on paper and comprising a world populated with ambiguous beings — animals, humanoids, robots — which reveal her different influences and anticipate her mounting interest in space. Drawings, which Aurèlia Muñoz always felt she had a flair for, permeate her work from beginning to end. Moreover, the show brings together a selection of **unseen works in pen, Indian ink and watercolour** on paperboard and notebooks that are also on view in Rooms 3 and 4 of the exhibition, particularly in the latter of the two rooms.

Room 2. Knotted Sculptures



Aurèlia Muñoz, *Águila Beix* (Brown Eagle), 1977. Macramé with hand-dyed sisal and jute yarn (182,9 x 396,2 x 381 cm). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Committee on Architecture and Design Funds, 2018. Photograph: Fátima Sanz

At the end of the 1960s Muñoz moved away from embroidery and towards **macramé**, an ancient artisan technique and a **channel of sculptural expression**, to explore volume and knotted space.

Macramé knots afforded her the chance to leave the wall behind to build **three-dimensional spatial tapestries**, abstract sculptural forms with no support. She chose cord knots as a base element and initiated the

knotted sculptures that would bring her international recognition, with many of these pieces monumental, suspended in air, and each with a tone linked to a material (jute, sisal, cotton). These sculptures, which she called structured rigid works, include *Macra Tótem* (Macra Totem, 1969) and *Homenaje a Gaudí* (Homage to Gaudí, 1969), and transformable

flexible works, such as *Macra Vegetal* (Plant Macra, 1973), a four-metre-high sculpture with which she participated at the Sixth Lausanne International Tapestry Biennial. This category also features her emblematic series *Entes* (Beings, 1976–1978), formations she presented as plural works with different macramé planes and suspended in the air, forming collective beings such as *Ens comunitari* (Community Being, 1976) and *Ens social* (Social Being, 1976), spiritual beings like *Ens místic* (Mystical Being, 1977) and *Ens historic* (Historical Being, 1976), and natural beings such as *Àguila beix* (Brown Eagle, 1977), conceived as a large bird flying over the earth. This last work, which belongs to The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York and converses with the different bird figures that traverse the artist's trajectory, is made with unthreaded natural jute yarn, as obtained from the plant, combined with sisal twine to make up the inner structure. **The Beings concept**, which lends this exhibition its title, references not only this series but also the **collectiveness of bodies that are woven, embroidered and drawn** by Aurèlia Muñoz and recurrently appear in her oeuvre.

On view in this room is also *Ondulacions* (Undulations, 1974), selected for the Eighth Lausanne Biennial in 1977. The work, **evoking the movements of waves in the sea** and inviting spectators to move around it and become immersed, is part of the Museo Reina Sofía Collections. The piece was made with nylon rope for boat mooring and is noteworthy for its technical complexity owing to its size (240 x 240 x 240 cm) and given that the front and back have the same visual value.

For such works, the artist carried out **a complex working process** that involved drawing the work on a smaller scale, creating patterns, paring down, imparting volume, creating a maquette, photographing, projecting a large scale onto a wall, copying and executing these patterns to scale before mounting or assembling the work — often with the help of engineers and architects she worked with. Also displayed in this exhibition space are other large-scale works such as *Redes Vegetales* (Plant Networks, 1973), made up of vines in a site-specific tapestry which could originally be penetrated, and *Palmera* (1974), a sisal twine macramé woven by the artist and also with pebbles; a work measuring 486 x 265 x 280 cm and an example of her **profound sensibility towards nature**: trees, stones, birds, fish, that which she considered to be her vital rights. The work was a commission by architect Daniel Gelabert and is displayed for the first time in this show.



Maquettes or «macramé-miniaturas». Photograph: Fátima Sanz

Room 3. Archive. Processes and Contexts



Aurèlia Muñoz, Maquette for *Ondulaciones*, 1974. Linen paper and threads, methacrylate case (22 x 23 x 22). Museo Reina Sofía, Madrid

In the third room visitors encounter some of the **most novel elements** of the show, those which help us to explore with a fresh gaze the work of Aurèlia Muñoz through numerous **unseen materials conserved in her Archive**. The materials range from personal collections to maquettes, sketches and photographs of her works and exhibitions, for instance her show at the Palacio de Cristal in Madrid's Retiro Park in 1982, which manifests the variety of resources she used, her gaze opened to the world and her outstanding ability to organise and plan. In some cases, Muñoz made paper, thread and fabric maquettes on

wooden structures which she used as a testing ground to study joins and systems of suspension. In the show we can also see, **for the first time**, some of her fragile and brittle *Bird-Kites* maquettes, reconstructed from documentation and photographs from MACBA's conservation and restoration studio; works which have come to life through extensive research conducted by the curatorial team. The pieces stand out for their ambition and technical complexity, and to design them Muñoz employed tools in closer proximity to architecture than fine arts, projecting volumes and suspension lines adapted to spaces where her works would be shown. There are also objects from her private collection which originate from traditional arts such as basketry and pottery, and traditional clothing and fabrics, a constant source of inspiration for her which fed into many of her embroidered and macramé works.

Muñoz's interest in documenting processes appears both in the works she exhibited at different solo and collective shows and in the way in which she recorded her work in the studio. This can be appreciated in the manuscripts conserved in her Archive and writings for lectures and classes, all of which reflect her vocation for teaching. By way of these elements we discover a **meticulous artist highly committed to her work**, an artist who

travelled down a difficult path marked by dictatorship, sexism and a distinct lack of support for art, particularly art made by women.

Room 4. *Aérostatos*. Between Bird and Kite

In the evolution of Aurèlia Muñoz's volumetric works the **dimension of space** held increasingly greater sway, where weaving becomes a medium for revealing, modifying or "bending" a space. Thus, technical and material aspects came to occupy a central position in her work and maintained a constant dialogue with architectural relations and the interaction of forces with the constructed space.

Consequently, ten years after making her first three-dimensional work, she began, in 1979, to work on a much lighter and more flexible and mobile series of works she would call ***Pájaros-cometa o Aérostatos (Bird-Kites or Aérostatos)***, a series at the heart of her work in the early 1980s. The large-scale pieces largely echo her penchant for making the origami birds and paper animals of her youth, the art of sailing, and even the experimental machines of Leonardo da Vinci. As with her macramé pieces, the artist created different types of sail-like forms: static, transformable and dynamic, with the last of these inspired by wind-driven forms of kites or boat sails. To fasten them to the ceiling, Muñoz often used linen threads she used to hang white cotton tarpaulins, and occasionally wild silk, finished with flat seams used in shirt-making. These were articulated with aluminium stays and lead weights, which vertically tautened the works to define their final form and adapt them to the architecture of a particular place.

These flying sculptures, referring at once to the lightness of birds and other winged beings, are raised in space above viewers' heads, claiming a space of freedom and, to some degree, transcendence, as evoked in the double meaning of the Catalan word *estel*, which translates as both *kite* and *star*. **This aerial medium**, and later aquatic medium, would become one of the great motifs of her art-making, developing in parallel to an early awareness of humans' impact on the Earth's ecosystems. A selection of *Bird-Kites* was at the centre, in 1982, of an ambitious installation at the **Palacio de Cristal in Madrid's Retiro Park**, a space of exceptional scale and light, as part of a retrospective organised by Spain's Ministry of Culture. They were also exhibited a year later, in 1983, at the Eleventh Lausanne International Tapestry Biennial with the title *Aérostates*, where they were presented as a flock of birds suspended on a monumental staircase in the emblematic Palais de Rumine.

In this fourth room of the exhibition survey, four of these **flying sculptures** can be observed up high by the public, with three of them large scale: *S1, Homenatge a Leonardo da Vinci* (Homage to Leonardo da Vinci, 1982) and *Ocell estel B1 (Bird-Kite B1)* [1981–1982] — more than six metres wide — from the Sant Cugat Town Council's Textile Art and Contemporary Tapestry Collection, and *B3* (1981), from the Juan Várez Collection. They are joined by *Ocell*

estel S2 (Bird-Kite, S2) [1982], a soaring sculpture in a smaller scale, made from wild silk fabric and part of the Aurèlia Muñoz Archive.



Aurèlia Muñoz, *Ocell estel B1* [Comet Bird B1] (1981-1982). Cotton fabric and cords, rods and metal rings (150 x 690 x 250 cm). Collection of Contemporary Textile Art and Tapestry, Sant Cugat City Council, Barcelona. Photograph: Fátima Sanz

Drawing as a Parallel Practice

These *Bird-Kites* share the room with a major set of **drawings**, a medium Aurèlia Muñoz employed throughout her career. From an early stage, the artist was interested in this technique, which she believed she was sufficiently skilled in to consider working in the medium professionally, as demonstrated in her *Diario de mi vida* (Diary of My Life, 1944–1949). Retrospectively, this exhibition unfurls a broad selection of these drawings, the importance of which bear witness to the artist’s mental and cultural world. Most of them were executed using black pen, Indian ink colours and watercolours on white paperboard or notebook pages and were produced chiefly across the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. They are presented here, after being **previously unexhibited**, following extensive research work conducted by the show’s curatorial team.

Drawing would often be the **origin and base of each project** and was understood as a process of prior reflection on space, materials, techniques and forms. In 1964 she made some notes in this regard in the text *Autoexamen* (Self-Examination), where she confessed: “Drawing anticipates the work in many respects. Like the thought before the action [...]. The perfect balance would be to closely coordinate action [and] thought”. Therefore, these

pieces can be read in parallel to large installation projects, especially the *Bird-Kites*, which the artist often sketched in her notebooks. Aware of their visual force, these project notebooks would be often considered by the artist as art objects in their own right and, equally, she granted many of her drawings **full autonomy as a medium of creative expression**.



Aurèlia Muñoz, *Untitled*, 1979. India ink and colored pencil on paper (37 x 29 cm). MACBA Collection. MACBA Foundation. Work acquired thanks to Agrolímen. Photograph: Fátima Sanz

In her texts for this exhibition catalogue, Rosa Lleó points to **three different types** in Aurèlia Muñoz's drawings: the first, developed during the 1960s, is characterised by being serialised and signed work, in which imagined personages and compositions appear; the second takes the form of an essay developing towards abstraction, yet still understood as a work in itself; and the third, and equally important, appears habitually linked to the project idea, like a sketch, and the drawings are often in notebooks and unsigned. Most of them have no title but appear alongside technical notes or phrases which are descriptive to a greater or lesser degree, for instance “a bird-like figure looking for living space” or “a textured figure woven by an irrational machine”, fertile ground for a psychoanalytical reading of her graphic work.

The most prolific period in her drawings was in the **1960s**, when she assembled a major corpus with an increasingly personal vocabulary she would sign but rarely exhibit. The compositions, largely complex, are inhabited by ambiguous, interdependent and constantly transforming beings — animals, personages, robots, humanoid beings, often revealing her divergent sources of inspiration: from medieval bestiaries and the arcades of Romanesque Art to Surrealism, particularly the anthropomorphic beings of Joan Miró and Paul Klee, to images of the popular culture of the time, to her concern with a spatial dimension, to which she would gradually give greater prominence.

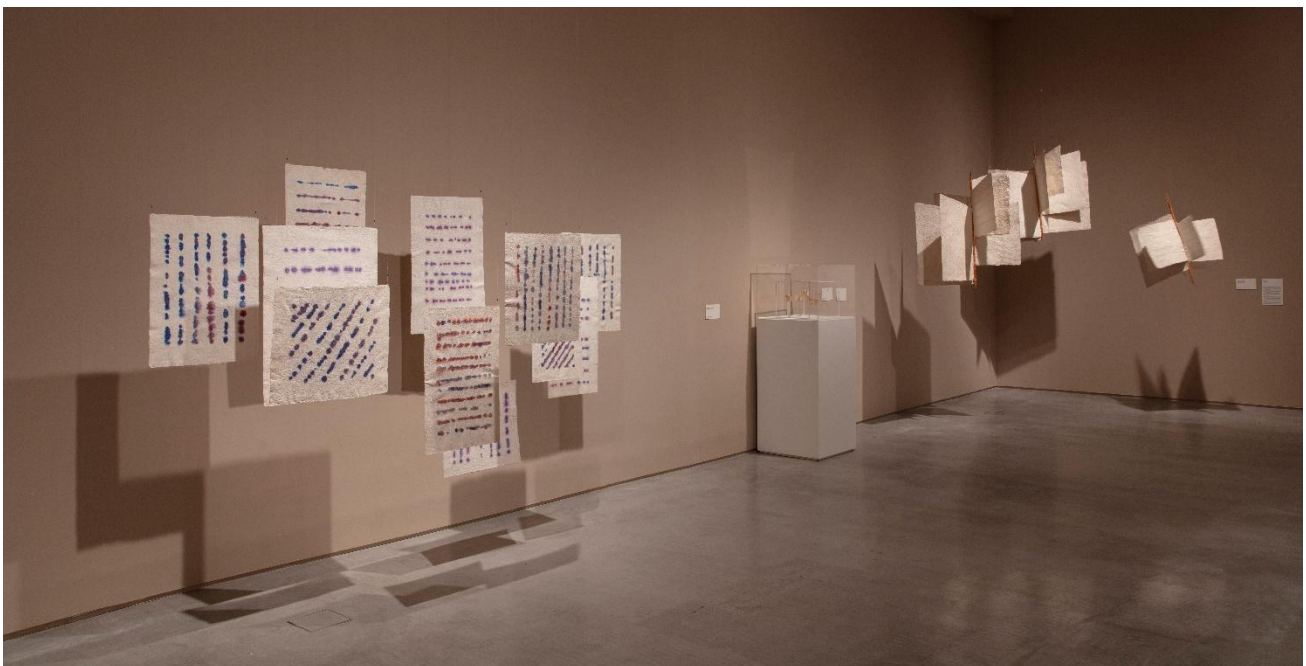
In the 1970s and 1980s a new period of creativity in her graphic art opened to reveal her tireless material and conceptual investigations. It was in the **1970s** when Muñoz's large macramé pieces began to gain recognition and thus many of the drawings from the period are sketches for her large-scale textile installations and are peppered with notes and mostly unsigned. In the same decade they moved from the multiple personages populating her

graphic world in the 1960s to an investigation into space, open to the constant transformations of living beings.

From 1979 she would once again produce numerous drawings, signed, which moved from the figurative and the abstract, and with personages once again, but this time more angular and machine-like, and with clear references to winged robots or books. Frequently manifested in these **1980s works** are spatial games similar to origamis, folds or ribbons, which in the evolution of her work and research on planes would fold out towards the form of the book or the khipu – which are given prominence in the following room.

Room 5. From the Book-Object to the Aerial Book

In Aurèlia Muñoz's evolution towards lightness, already manifested in her *Bird-Kites* and her fascination with drawing, and as a widely recognised and established artist, she started to explore, from 1978, **making paper by hand**, which would feature centrally in the last three decades of her creative output. With professor and artist Thomas P. Pupkiewicz, a pioneer of Paper Art, Muñoz learned techniques to prepare, size and dye paper at the Cleveland Institute of Art (USA) and participated at the International Biennale of Paper Art in Durèn in 1986 and 1988. Further, the origin of this material ran in parallel to textiles: both come from water and the plant world, and in this case linen fibre and cotton broken down and ground with water to make a pulp.



En primer plano: *Jeroglific* [Jeroglífico], 1988. Papel hecho a mano y teñido por la artista (300 x 160 x 125 cm). Colección Mariano Yera. Al fondo: Libros aéreos (1985-1987). Fotografía: Fátima Sanz

In this mature period and in parallel, her drawings would manifest a **renewed interest in space**, in the folds and bends of the paper plane, taking on the form of ribbons or elements

of origami, which would evolve into new beings in **book format** and would become the *leitmotif* of her practice from that time on. The book had been a key element during her life and intellectual travels, not only as a source of knowledge, but also for its nature as an object, for its materiality. The beginnings of these books still had the presence of birds, as evinced in the production of her early **Aerial Books** from 1985 onwards, three of them represented in this room: *Llibre aeri blanc I* and *Llibre aeri blanc II* (White Aerial Book I-II), both from 1985 and made with handmade paper and wooden rods, and *Llibre blanc amb petxines* (White Book with Shells) [1987], which incorporated “little pieces of shells encrusted in such a way as to recall the knotted writing of braille”. Her sheets of white paper, which she made by hand from the 1980s onwards, are situated in the wake of her *Bird-Kites* and even some of her large macramé works with winged forms, in search of the “living spaces” Rosa Lleó refers to in the exhibition catalogue. Also in the room is a representation of her **book mock-ups** — some related to her aerial books — such as *Llibre 2* (Book 2, 2009), the latest work by the artist in this exhibition, and *Llibre de la llum* (Book of Light) [2000], which shows the progression of her work towards increasingly fragile, subtle and light forms which appear to explore the idea of transcending matter.

The artist’s desire to explore the **fusion between sculpture and writing** led her to experiment with new endeavours, such as the installation *Jeroglífic* (Hieroglyph) [1988] from the Mariano Yera Collection, made up of hanging paper sheets which bear the signs of abstract writing. By the same token, after successive trips to different parts of Latin America — Mexico and Brazil — Muñoz’s admiration for some of the productions and techniques from Amazon and pre-Columbian cultures was reinforced, and most notably includes the **kipu**, an ancestral object based on a system of knots and cords employed to record, log and transmit information on the oral culture of the Inca Empire. The khipus also propelled her interest in writing as a code that could be transferred to sculpture, creating from that juncture the *Book-Khipus* (1980–1984), for instance *Llibre quipu blanc* (White Khipu Book) [1981], exhibited for the first time with its pages folded out, where her interests in the knot as gesture, paper as medium and language as material converge, and which, to a certain extent, connect with some of her paper sculptures related to the marine environment.

Room 6. Oceanic Forms

The sea, constantly present in Mediterranean landscape and imagery, would be hugely enticing for the artist throughout her career, and in the early 1970s Muñoz would start to become interested in the **marine ecosystem** and traditional fishing tackle, even learning the technique of the women net menders of Blanes, which she would later use in some of her works in that decade. Along with aerial environment, recurrent in her previous works, her interest in the oceanic environment would reflect the artist’s environmental concerns — an environment she would come to know closely and intimately through one of her great

passions, **diving**, which she would do regularly in the summertime in Cala Morell in Menorca.

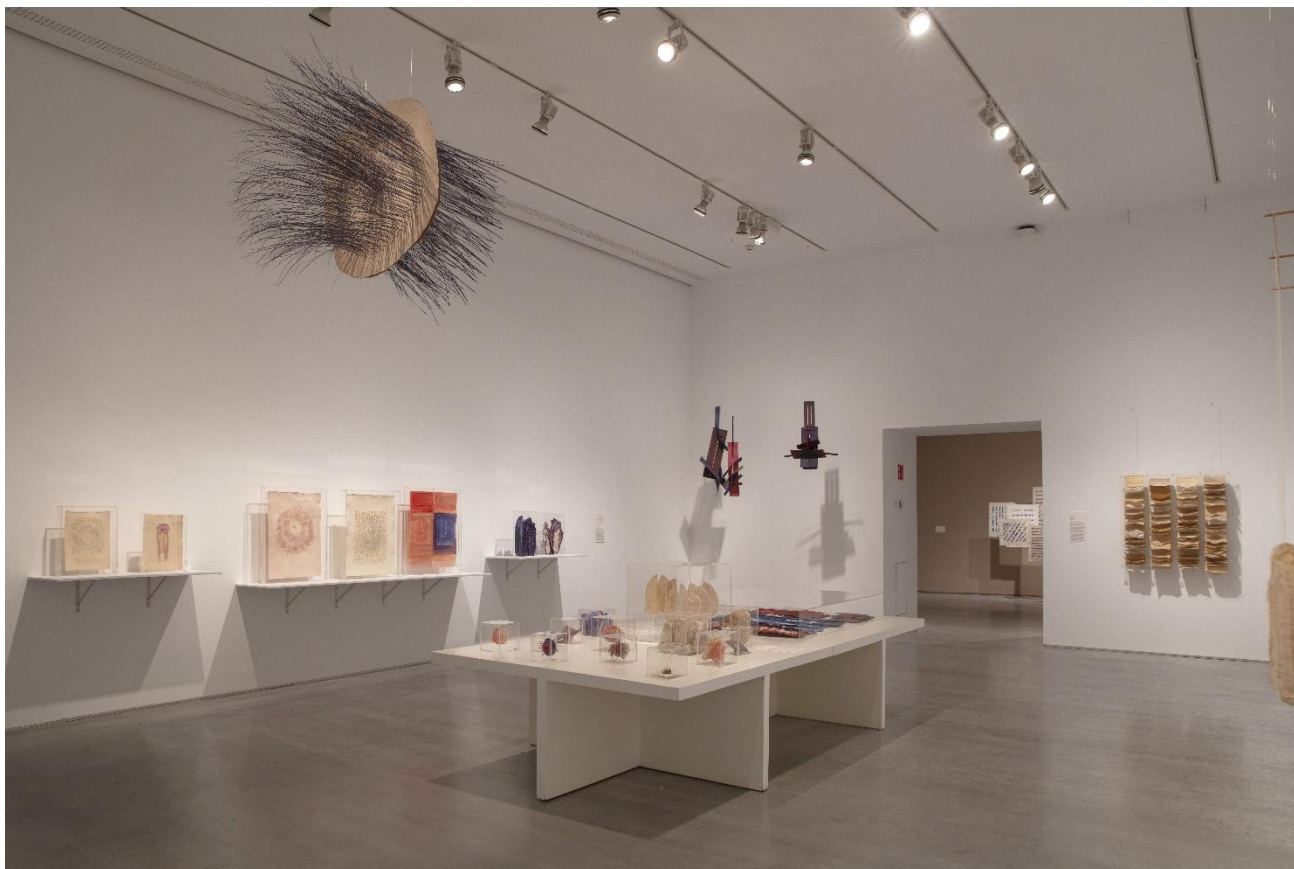
Accordingly, in the 1980s and 1990s the artist's cosmology expanded with the creation of a whole series of marine beings, made on **handmade paper** and referring to reeds, anemones, algae, scales and conch shells — even some of her books were adorned with shells and oceanic forms and worked as weights in her paper sculptures. In these “**marine techniques**”, as American theorist Melody Jue, a proponent of hydrofeminism, calls them, the artist approached her work as a “water practice”, a medium in which cotton and linen fibres are worked into the pulp that becomes paper paste. With this medium she also used ink baths, dyes and pourings — she decorated paper strips by dyeing not painting them — techniques which together enabled this material to take on any form and colour.

This ensemble of works has a smaller scale and central to them is a sense of fragment, a sense of belonging to a larger and more unfathomable ensemble, yet also with an interdependence between species. The pieces that belong to the form of **seaweed** often appear to be leaves from the green macroalgae *Caulerpa prolifera*, a species native to the Mediterranean. On view in the room are also some of the best examples of these, for instance *Algues liles* (Lilac Algae) [1985] and *Algues blaves amb cargols* (Blue Algae with Sea Snails) [1986], all made on handmade paper dyed by the artist in vibrant colours and encased in transparent methacrylate cubes which customarily appear in her work and evoke a fish tank.

Further, her series *Anémonas* (**Anemones**, 1990–2007) combines the technique of paper-making with the weaving technique, with paper working as a loom which captures the tentacle threads of these hybrid beings. With plant-like animals the artist found a varied source of inspiration that would frequently appear in her creations in this period, such as *Anemone rosa amb petxines II* [Pink Anemone with Shells II] (1991) and *Anemone blava amb fils roses* (Blue Anemone with Pink Threads) [2003]. In the same cabinet viewers can contemplate how this rich aquatic world spread across other Muñoz typologies, for instance the **book** in *Llibre volador* (Flying Book, 2005). In close proximity to her anemone compositions are her **mandalas**, for example *Mandala blanca amb plomes petites* (White Mandala with Small Feathers) (1988) or the variant that is her delicate marine **butterfly** *Papallona aquática* (Aquatic Butterfly, 1986).

In this central space we also encounter other **marine beings** associated with her paper works: snail shells in *Cargol en equilibri* (Balancing Snail) [2007], the centre of which seems to emanate from a life source that unfolds in space, and the carapace of a sea urchin in *Paper plegat a l'espai* (Paper Folded in Space) [2007], both found among the artist's later works displayed in this show. A good example of the chromatic evolution in Muñoz's practice can be seen in the selection of **work materials** in another central cabinet in the room, where

the white of thick handmade paper sheets from previous periods contrasts with the layers of vibrant colours from the more organic works in this last period.



View of Room 6: *Oceanic Forms*. Photograph: Fátima Sanz

Also represented in one of the entrances to this space is her series **Washi** (1984–1992), with two works: *Washi* (1984) and *Washi morat* (Purple Washi) (1992), stemming from her interest in the Orient, and particularly Japan, leading Muñoz to study the paper tradition of this country, specifically the Japanese technique of handmade papermaking. This sphere also includes a typology that characterises this later period: **mobiles**, which denote another side of her investigations into the forms and volumes of paper sculpture, represented in *Mòbil cubista M#4* (Cubist Mobile M#4) and *Mòbil cubista M#11* (Cubist Mobile M#11), both from 1988, and *Mòbil* (Mobile) from 1990. These works are constructed as a species of flying beings made with different-coloured sheets of paper, in which straight angles are prevalent and which, as Sílvia Ventosa asserts, “are pieces that recall the personages of Torres García dancing in space, suspended in the moving air”.

Her **exploration of lightness** gives rise to works such as *El sol blau* (The Blue Sun) [1995], which occupies the room’s aerial space, *El mar blanc* (The White Sea), a 2026 recreation of the original work from 1986, and *La pluja* (Rain) [1992], all from the Aurèlia Muñoz Archive, with the artist continuing her work on the poetic of **suspension**, relief and texture, once again with the natural environment as her point of reference. And her unique *Homenaje a Mondrian* (Homage to Mondrian, 1987), a collage of dyed paper joined in four parts and

suspended in a case — subtly evoking the geometric compositions of the avant-garde artist — and part of the Museo Reina Sofía Collections.

Muñoz's exploration of paper as a sculptural medium and her fascination with oceanic forms would remain until the end of her life.

Catalogue, Inaugural Conversation and Other Activities

In conjunction with the show, which coincides with the hundredth anniversary of the artist's birth, a catalogue, co-edited by the Museo Reina Sofía and MACBA, has been published and features texts by Manuel Cirauqui, Rosa Lleó, Sílvia Ventosa Muñoz, Ana María Ramo Affonso and Melody Jue. Furthermore, the Museo Reina Sofía's **Public Programmes** Department has organised an **Inaugural Conversation** at 7pm on 28 April in the Museo's Cinema theatre, with curators Manuel Cirauqui, Rosa Lleó and Sílvia Ventosa. In addition, **Study Sessions** on Aurèlia Muñoz's work will take place on 10 June in the Museo's Auditorium 200, while its Education Area will conduct **in-gallery mediation** during the exhibition and will hold an **art workshop** on the artist's practice, within the project *Making Is Knowing*.

About Aurèlia Muñoz



Aurèlia Muñoz at her studio

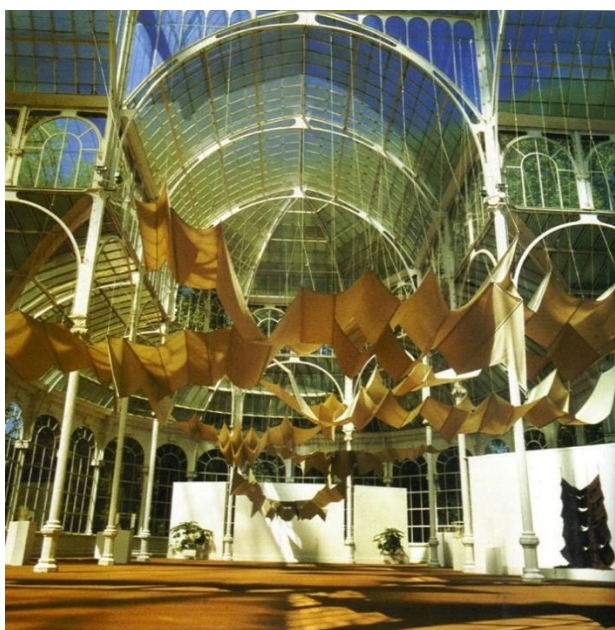
Aurèlia Muñoz was born in Barcelona in 1926. The eldest of three children, she was educated in a school that followed the Montessori method, and from an early age she took an interest in drawing and painting. She married at twenty-two and soon had her first child, in 1949. In 1957 she had her second child, Sílvia Ventosa Muñoz, who today manages the Aurèlia Muñoz Archive. Due to health issues, she remained at home, in the domestic sphere,

where her creative talents began to take root. In 1950 she started to experiment with traditional techniques such as **embroidery** and patchwork, but with an avant-garde slant.

At the age of thirty-three she enrolled at the Escuela Massana, where she started to explore and investigate textile techniques from Romanesque and Gothic Art (such as the *Tapiz de la*

Creación [Tapestry of Creation] in Girona Cathedral and the *Bayeux Tapestry*). Her first works were two-dimensional and often explored religious themes.

Muñoz's regular participation at the Lausanne International Tapestry Biennial in Switzerland, the biggest event in the world in this discipline, connected her to the **Nouvelle Tapisserie** movement, and she forged friendships with figures such as Magdalena Abakanowicz. In 1967 she broke her leg, an accident that would subsequently condition her career. During her convalescence she learned how to do basic **macramé** knots with an aunt, and in 1969 moved away definitively from the tapestry plane to work with macramé and knotting, transforming fabric into structures with volume. She removed her tapestries from the wall to create large three-dimensional structures and transformable pieces made from sisal, jute and cotton, for instance the acclaimed series *Entes* (Beings, 1976). In the 1970s, inspired by the designs of Leonardo da Vinci, she developed large-scale works such as *Cometa anclado* (Anchored Kite) and her ***Pájaros-cometa* (Bird-Kites)** or "aérostatos", which elevated textile to the category of a spatial sculpture.



Aurèlia Muñoz exhibition at the Palacio de Cristal in Madrid's Retiro Park (1982)

Muñoz tirelessly explored natural fibres (jute, sisal, cotton) and expanded her artistic language towards **handmade paper** and the **book-object**. Her work, fusing the geometry of Gaudí with profound spirituality, was honoured with the Silver Medal of the City of Paris (1968) and the Creu de Sant Jordi from the Government of Catalonia (1993). Her pieces are part of the permanent collections of significant museum institutions such as **MoMA** (New York), the **Museo Reina Sofía** (Madrid), **MNAC** and **MACBA** (Barcelona), and the **Art Institute of Chicago**, and her work has participated in **major solo and collective shows** throughout her career, most notably at different editions of the Lausanne International Tapestry Biennial

— where she presented her work for the first time in 1965 — an event that connected her to the Nouvelle Tapisserie movement and to critics, gallerists and artists that would be key to her future trajectory. Other landmarks came from her participation at the Twelfth São Paulo Biennial in 1973, as part of Spain's representation, and the retrospective organised in 1982 by Spain's Ministry of Culture, which was held at the Palacio de Cristal in Madrid, in addition to numerous collective exhibitions related to the Nouvelle Tapisserie movement and Fiber Art and Paper Art in many countries across North America, Europe and Asia. The most recent exhibitions of her work, in 2020 and 2025, notably include a show at the Galería José

de la Mano in Madrid, and *Aurèlia Muñoz. Taller aéreo* (Aurèlia Muñoz. Aerial Atelier, 2023), curated by the Fundació Eina with the support of the Aurèlia Muñoz Archive for the Centre Grau-Garriga d'Art Tèxtil Contemporani de Sant Cugat (Barcelona). Aurèlia Muñoz died aged eighty-four on 9 June 2011 in Barcelona.

About the Curators: Manuel Cirauqui, Rosa Lleó and Sílvia Ventosa

The exhibition is curated by Fundació EINA through its einaidea platform, under the scientific management of **Manuel Cirauqui**, with the collaboration of **Rosa Lleó** and **Sílvia Ventosa**, who manages the Aurèlia Muñoz Archive.

Manuel Cirauqui is a curator, writer and the director of einaidea, a platform from Fundació EINA (Barcelona) that works to create artistic projects, programmes intensive studies and serves as a curatorial office. In dialogue with the Aurèlia Muñoz Archive, einaidea has organised the exhibition *Aurèlia Muñoz. Beings* (2026), a show for which Cirauqui oversees its scientific management, and *Aurèlia Muñoz. Taller aeri* (Aurèlia Muñoz. Aerial Atelier, 2023), held at the Centro Grau-Garriga de Arte Textil Contemporáneo de Sant Cugat del Vallès (Barcelona). Cirauqui's career also notably includes his role as a curator at the Museo Guggenheim Bilbao, where he organised the exhibitions *Artes de la Tierra* (Arts of the Earth, 2025); *June Crespo. Vascular* (2024); *Secciones/Intersecciones: La vida material* (Sections/Intersections: Material Life, 2022); *El arte y el espacio* (Art and Space, 2017); and *Anni Albers. Tocar la vista* (Anni Albers. Touching Vision, 2017), among numerous others. Notable among his other curatorial projects are collaborations with the Museo Tamayo (Mexico), Dia Art Foundation (New York) and Jeu de Paume (Paris).

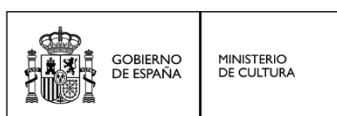
Rosa Lleó is a curator and founder of the non-profit organisation The Green Parrot (Barcelona) — which she directed from 2014 to 2023 — a benchmark space in Barcelona devoted to producing exhibitions and publications and organising residencies and workshops with visual artists. She was also a curator and research fellow with the einaidea platform from 2023 to 2025, working on numerous projects, including the exhibition *Beings* (2026) centred on artist Aurèlia Muñoz in the Museo Reina Sofía and Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA). She has independently curated exhibitions such as *Reencantamientos. Artistas en las colecciones etnológicas* (2024) at the Museu Etnològic i de Cultures del Món (Barcelona); *La plaga, el provecho* (2024), by Eulàlia Rovira and Adrian Schindler at the Centro Cultural de España (Mexico City); and *YWY, La Androide*, by Isadora Neves Marques at CA2M (Móstoles, Madrid), *1646* (The Hague) and CaixaForum (Barcelona). She is currently putting together a solo show on artist Regina de Miguel for the Institut Valencià d'Art Modern (IVAM).

Sílvia Ventosa Muñoz manages the Aurèlia Muñoz Archive, where she directs processes to document, classify and research the artist's work. Her responsibilities are key to projecting Aurèlia Muñoz's legacy, and she supervises the conservation and mounting of installations

in major state and international museums. With a career spanning more than four decades in the museum sphere of Barcelona, she has held managerial positions at the Museu del Disseny de Barcelona (DHub) (2008 and 2023), the Museu de les Arts Decoratives (2000–2008), the Museu Etnològic de Barcelona (1985–1990 and 1994–2000) and the Museu d'Arts, Indústries i Tradicions Populars (1982–1985). She has curated ten shows specialised in the anthropology of fashion, history, photography and the work of Aurèlia Muñoz and has worked in projects centred on textile techniques via the ARPA Collective.

Madrid, 28 April 2026

The exhibition is organised by the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía and MACBA, the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona



MUSEU
D'ART CONTEMPORANI
DE BARCELONA

Press material:



For further information

PRESS DEPARTMENT

MUSEO REINA SOFÍA

prensa@museoreinasofia.es

(+34) 91 774 10 05 / 10 36

www.museoreinasofia.es/prensa

