

CAPDEVILA

JOIERS I ARGENTERS
A LA CIUTAT
DE BARCELONA
DES DE 1905





Joaquim Capdevila Meya and Manuel Capdevila Massana at the workshop at Carrer Dr. Dou in Barcelona, 1929.

CAPDEVILA: A CENTURY OF LIFE IN CATALONIA

Certainly, the collective work that Editorial Alcides of Barcelona published in 1960 by the title of *Un segle de vida catalana* (A Century of Life in Catalonia) set a precedent, because for the first time since the civil war, what had been the social and political life of our country over the course of a century was reviewed.

Hence, it was not surprising that this book came to mind when I thought of the centenary of the founding of the Capdevila Jewellery enterprise that is now being celebrated, because this

family establishment has also written a remarkable page of our history over the past one hundred years. Over the years, the jewellery made by the Capdevila craftsmen has become an important part of people's everyday lives, whether as personal ornaments, institutional distinctions or religious and household pieces.

Since 1905, the Capdevila establishment has set the pace of our jewellery trade.

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The four generations of Capdevila jewellers and silversmiths have created a poetic language that has been and well-received by Catalan society

Manuel
Capdevila Massana
Necklace.
*Silver and river
pebbles.*



Joaquim
Capdevila Meya
Pendant.
*Green gold,
pearls and
amethyst.*



been understood and well-received by Catalan society, which has embraced their jewellery. It is jewellery where austerity, refinement and symbolic richness predominate, and it is above all characterised by the family's innovative spirit, which has consolidated its style over the years.

Joaquim Capdevila Meya (1876-1959) lived to see the end of the guild tradition and everything that the *Llibres de passanties*

(apprentice books containing project drawings) represented, to confront a new era, the transition between Modernism (Art Nouveau) and Noucentisme (a return to classical ideals in the early 20th century) that lent the trades greater freedom of expression, turning the jeweller's trade into a liberal professional.

Manuel Capdevila Massana (1910), who studied under Francesc d'A. Galí, understood jewellery as a field of research and renewal in technical and material aspects, and he therefore placed the trade at the service of art, linking the jewellery craft to avant-garde movements and renewing teaching with his open training techniques.

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wellery has become less sumptuous and decorative
and much more artistic and anthropological*

Joaquim Capdevila Gaya (1944) brought the spirit of the new artistic trends to the jewellery object, from essentialist minimalism to pop art gesturality. He has internationalised production, increasingly distancing himself from ostentation and placing himself at the service of culture and taste. And Manel Capdevila Coral (1973), the latest link in the chain, creates innovative artwork in the goldsmith



Joaquim
Capdevila Gaya
Gold, opal and oil
paint.

tradition: still lifes, found objects, portable constructions, etc.

The Capdevilas have allowed jewellery to become a discipline fully integrated in the fine arts.

Without forgoing the high standards of the trade, it has become less sumptuous and decorative and much more artistic and anthropological.

Through them and all of those who have shared their workshop, fine craftsmanship has ceased to be a lesser or applied art to become a frontrunner, an art of the greatest necessity, a terrain for plastic and sensorial exploration, a sign and symbol of each historical circumstance.

Daniel Giralt-Miracle
*Reial Acadèmia de Ciències
i Arts de Barcelona*



Manel
Capdevila Coral
Brooch.
Gold and rough diamond.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS HAVE PASSED QUICKLY...

Generations in Transit

In 1905, Artur Roig Casanoves and, later, Joaquim Capdevila Meya set up a jewellery workshop at Carrer de Guàrdia 7, 2nd floor. As they gradually prospered, new needs arose. In 1917, they moved to Carrer del Doctor Dou 4, mezzanine, and in 1941 to Carrer de la Diputació 276, mezzanine. In the meantime, Manuel Capdevila Massana had joined the jewellery workshop's team in 1924 and later directed it, namely from 1939 to 1970. During this time, the first workshop with a shop at street level opened (in 1944 at Carrer Pau Claris 129) and by 1958, a second workshop was opened at Via Augusta 80 in order to carry out the large-format goldsmith pieces for the Basilica of Montserrat.

The shop at Carrer Pau Claris was enlarged and renovated in 1960 by the interior designer, Enric Cluselles, a follower of Santiago Marco.

In 1964, Joaquim Capdevila Gaya joined the jewellery team and in 1970, he took over from his father, giving the company a new name: Capdevila Joiers i Argenters a la Ciutat de Barcelona.

Manel Capdevila Coral entered the workshop in 1990, and ten years later, he took over from the previous generation, becoming the director.

In order to offer an establishment more in keeping with the times, the company moved to Carrer Consell de Cent 320 in the year 2000; the new shop, exhibition space and workshop was designed by the interior designer, Antoni Casadesús.

The Total Workshop

Over the course of 100 years, a great many pieces have been created, ranging from jewellery, silver and goldsmith pieces and household and religious items. Whether jewellery with precious gemstones or emblematic jewellery made with river pebbles, this establishment has always had a great sensibility for materials. The workshop has not only created unique pieces that have been displayed at international exhibits on contemporary jewellery, but has also restored antique pieces.

Through its teamwork spirit, present in all processes from project studies to customer service and the creation of the pieces themselves, the firm has enthusiastically promoted jewellers, silversmiths, draftsmen, sculptors, chasers, engravers, enamellers, lacquerers, gemmologists, embossers and casters, among other professionals.

Friends and Customers

Relations and shared experiences in close symbiosis with friends and customers have been driving forces over the course of these one hundred years. Such incentive has become manifest in individual orders, in the shop's collections and in the independent artistic exploration involved in creating designer jewellery.

There has often been enriching collaboration, a shared friendship and creativity with such poets and writers as Eugeni d'Ors, Josep Pla, Joan Perucho, Jordi Sarsanedas, Miquel Martí i Pol, David Jou, Zeneida Sardà, Narcís Comadira, Jaume Subirana and Joan Argenté, among many other significant creators of the 20th century.

The prestige attained has also allowed Capdevila Jewellers to produce for all sorts of associations and institutions, both public and private.

Exhibitions and Awards

Over the past 100 years, the Capdevila jewellers have participated in numerous national and international exhibitions, their works being present at some of the most significant exhibits of the 20th century relating to avant-garde and contemporary jewellery, as, for instance:

Salon d'Automne, Paris (1938); Goldsmiths' Hall V&A, London (1961); Norishalle, Nuremberg (1971); The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo (1984); and Museum für Gestaltung, Zurich (2000). The establishment's international prestige has been confirmed on various occasions, including the Gold Medal it was awarded by the State of Bavaria in 1968. Diverse creations by the Capdevilas form part of private and public collections around the world, some of the most significant being the Schmuckmuseum in Pforzheim, Germany, the Museu de les Arts Decoratives in Barcelona and the National Museum in Edinburgh.

On numerous occasions, the artistic work of the Capdevila jewellers has won them awards and distinctions from various institutions in recognition of their professional careers, such as the Medalla al Merit Artistic (Medal of Artistic Merit) from the Ayuntamiento de Barcelona (Barcelona City Council) and the Creu de Sant Jordi (Cross of Saint George) from the Generalitat de Catalunya (Autonomous Government of Catalonia).



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