



LLL institut
ramon llull

CATALAN FICTION 2020

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Institut Ramon Llull

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Foreword

Institut Ramon Llull

This is an outstanding moment for Catalan literature. An exceptionally fine tradition, the seductiveness of modernity and a curiosity about other literatures are all to be found amongst its current strengths, which are further bolstered by a well-established and vibrant publishing industry and the efficient work of literary agents.

Including some new voices but also well established authors, this booklet presents a selection of 10 fiction books recently published in Catalan. This list reflects a variety of trends, topics and genres: award-winning novels, detailed and intimate stories, a lot of sense of humor, warm and genuine voices that talk about female strength, friendship, crimes, history, freedom...10 outstanding books that reflect the richness and the power of Catalan literature today.

As a public institution devoted to extending the reach of Catalan language and culture, the Institut Ramon Llull provides aid to authors, translators, publishers and literary agents with the aim of ensuring that Catalan literature is translated, published and read abroad. It is our belief that in times of (Covid-related) uncertainty the Institut Ramon Llull must persist in its task and continue supporting the publishing professionals to guarantee that good books are on our side against common challenges.

Along with this exciting overview of the lively scene of Catalan literary fiction, the booklet also presents information on the Llull Services & Grants directed at the international publishing sector.

We trust you will find our authors engaging and our services valuable.

SEBASTIÀ ALZAMORA

Kings of the World

Reis del món



Proa, 2020
594 pages

FOREIGN RIGHTS CONTACT:

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Under Cover Literary Agents

What are the odds that two giant figures of the tumultuous twentieth century would hail from the same tiny town of Santa Margalida? And that their trajectories would be so different yet they would maintain a relationship throughout their lives? This is the improbable yet real premise that sparked *Kings of the World*: the thread that linked those Joans—March and Mascaró—the former a multimillionaire banker to Franco and the latter a world-renowned Sanskrit scholar. March the broker for a bribe from Churchill, and Mascaró the translator into English of the *Bhagavad Gita*. Both men were, in their own way, searching for freedom: March sought it through money, Mascaró through knowledge and love. Both believed that evil was a result of human stupidity, but March saw in war an opportunity for profit.

Alzamora takes the amazing intersecting biographies of these two “great” men, and fashions an intricate realist novel primarily narrated by Emili Tremulles, March’s right-hand man at the bank, and Kathleen Ellis, wife of Mascaró and mother to his fraternal twins. The book recreates at length a conversation between the two men in midlife, where they discuss humanity’s greatest ethical conundrums, each defending his beliefs and justifying his actions. Alzamora lays bare how brilliance—which both men had in spades—was still subject to morality, as he poses the question of what success (financial, spiritual ...) truly means.

The incredible story of two men named Joan from a small village in Majorca, who both left a mark on the world but from diametrically opposed angles



Sebastià Alzamora is a novelist and poet from Lluçmajor, Majorca. He is the author of more than a dozen books, which have earned him such prestigious awards as the Carles Riba, the Josep Pla, the *Serra d'Or*, and the Sant Jordi, among others, and been translated into seven languages..

SELECTED WORKS

FICTION

La malcontenta
(*The Disconsolate Woman*)
Proa, 2015

Crim de sang
(*Blood Crime*)
Proa, 2012

Rights sold to:
Turbine Forlaget (Danish)
Soho Press (English)
Actes Sud (French)
Marcos y Marcos (Italian)
Marginesy (Polish)

Miracle a Lluçmajor
(*Miracle at Lluçmajor*)
Proa, 2010

Rights sold to:
Marcos y Marcos (Italian)

La pell i la princesa
(*The Skin and the Princess*)
Destino, 2005

Rights sold to:
Éditions Métailié (French)
Marcos y Marcos (Italian)
Quidnovi (Portuguese)
Destino (Spanish)

POETRY

La netedat
(*Cleanliness*)
Proa, 2018

La part visible
(*The Visible Part*)
Proa, 2009

Mula morta
(*Dead Mule*)
Proa, 2001

Rights sold to:
DVD Ediciones (Spanish)

MANUEL BAIXAULI

Unknown

Ignot



Mateu is a middle-aged painter whom success has eluded. An exhibition leads to a job offer illustrating articles by an enigmatic writer named Crisòstom, who may be an undiscovered genius, or perhaps merely a plagiarist. Mateu’s pursuit of Crisòstom and his work will lead him down strange, spiraling paths, to an island surrounded by black ink that houses archives of Absurd Accidents, Massacres and Genocides, and a Slush Pile of failed writing. Along the way he meets a patron who is writing a Worldwide Dictionary of Unrecognized Genius.

What place do painting and literature have in the 21st century? For whom is art created? Does it have the power to save an artist’s soul, or destroy it? Is obscurity a gift, success a curse? Adroitly, Baixauli—one of the finest prosaists on Catalan literature—leads us into a morass of eight-hundred-page novels, trick mirrors, creators and curators in midlife and beyond, grappling with big questions in this fragmented, non-linear narrative that reads like a quiet mystery.

Edicions del Periscopi, 2020
256 pages

FOREIGN RIGHTS CONTACT:

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SalmaiaLit

A stimulating, oneiric novel that explores the nature of artistic talent, the meaning of genius, and how success can be a trap that guarantees failure



Manuel Baixauli is a painter and writer from Sueca, Valencia. This is his sixth book, which closes a trilogy populated by artists begun with *L'home manuscrit* and *La cinquena planta*. His novels have earned him the Crexells Prize and the Valencian Critics' Award, among others.

SELECTED WORKS

FICTION

Espiral
(*Spiral*)

Columna, 1998

Verso
(*Verse*)

Bromera, 2002

L'home manuscrit
(*MANuscript*)

Proa, 2007

Rights sold to:

Atmosphere Libri (Italian)

La cinquena planta
(*The Fifth Floor*)

Proa, 2014

Ningú no ens espera
(*No One Waits for Us*)

Edicions del Periscopi, 2016

EVA BALTASAR

Boulder

Boulder



Club Editor, 2020
145 pages

RIGHTS SOLD TO:

Literatura Random House (Spanish)
Nottetempo (Italian)

FOREIGN RIGHTS CONTACT:

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When we first meet “Boulder” she has left her native Barcelona and is working as a cook on a merchant ship in the Sea of Chiloè, enjoying a fabulous freedom. She feels able to renounce anything in order to escape the prison of a life mapped out according to some cookie-cutter storyline. Onboard, she lets herself be carried along, riding out the perfect wave. Then she meets a woman in port, Samsa, who will give her her weighty nickname and lead her to Reykjavik to begin a more conventional existence. Boulder is immediately uncomfortable with her new life on land, and as the years pass, she is confronted with Samsa’s desire to have a child. She begrudgingly accepts Samsa’s “monstrous” new project, which colonizes everything and exiles Boulder.

Told entirely through Boulder’s perspective, with high-impact poetic descriptions and in such a way that readers will be drawn into her inexorable, excruciating decision-making process, often returning to reread and savor the harsh beauty of her musings. This is a sometimes startlingly honest look at what it means to be true to oneself as a woman, the consequences of the choices we make, and an exploration of what we do for love.

Are adults the opposite of birds, losing interest in shiny things? Is long-term love and family a cage of one's own making?



Eva Baltasar has published ten poetry collections, which have earned her many awards including the 2008 Miquel de Palol, the 2011 Benet Ribas, and the 2016 Gabriel Ferrater. *Boulder* is the second novel in a trilogy, the follow-up to her highly successful debut as a novelist.

SELECTED WORKS

FICTION

Permagel
(*Permafrost*)

Club Editor, 2018

Rights sold to:

And Other Stories (English)

Verdier (French)

Kalandraka (Galician)

Nottetempo (Italian)

Confluencias (Portuguese)

Literatura Random House
(Spanish)

POETRY

Invertida
(*Inverted*)

Leonard Muntaner, 2017

Neutre
(*Neutral*)

Bromera, 2017

Animals d'hivern
(*Winter animals*)

Edicions 62, 2016

Vida limitada
(*Vita Brevis*)

Món de Llibres, 2013

*Poemes d'una
embarassada*
(*Poems of a Pregnant
Woman*)

Pagès, 2012

MAX BESORA

The Fake Muse

La musa fingida



Males Herbes, 2020
190 pages

RIGHTS SOLD TO:

Orciny Press (Spanish)

FOREIGN RIGHTS CONTACT:

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MB Agencia Literaria on behalf of
Males Herbes

Be warned, the Valley of the Bronx is a dangerous place: a vampire kills a man at the cinema for chomping popcorn too loudly; a very well-read mutant hamster is defending animal rights; a mad scientist's cure for alopecia turns him into a raging gorilla; at the Pompeu Fabra Meat Market the butchers could turn you into sausage if your order isn't placed in grammatically prescribed language. And Mandyjane is out for revenge over her father's years of sexual violence.

This excessive, surreal, grotesque foray into a hyperviolent, hypersexual world employs extreme language; readers should expect more coprophagia than commas. Its splatterpunk adventures question our normalization of violence as much as its myriad registers question our linguistic normalization. And Mandyjane is also the fake muse of a writer named Max Besora, who naively believes literature to be the last space of freedom where he can say whatever he feels like saying, however Mandyjane will soon disabuse him of that.

Holla dis book iz da fake muze itz cubber iz orang an itz sodiak sine is skorpio skorpios r intens seckschual en unafraid ta blaze a nu trail



Max Besora's publications escape easy categorization but have already earned him the XLIV Benet Ribas Prize for Poetry and the 2017 City of Barcelona Prize for Novel, and even include a hybrid essay on trap music. He recently completed his PhD with a thesis on the campus novel.

SELECTED WORKS

FICTION

Vulcano

LaBreu Edicions, 2011

*La tècnica meravellosa
(The Marvelous Technique)*

Editorial Males Herbes, 2014

*Aventures i desventures
de l'insòlit i admirable Joan
Orpí, conquistador i fundador
de la Nova Catalunya
(Adventures and
Misadventures of the Unusual
and Admirable Joan Orpí,
Conqueror and Founder of
the New Catalonia)*

Editorial Males Herbes, 2017

Rights sold to:

Open Letter (English)

NON FICTION

*Trapologia
(Trapology)*

Ara Llibres, 2018

POETRY

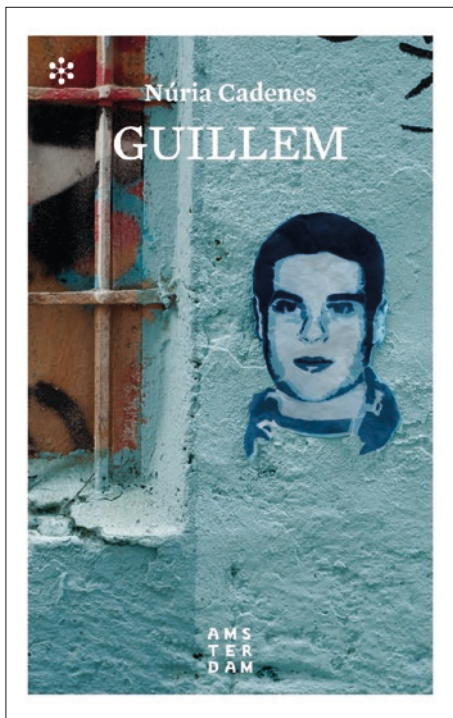
*L'espectre electromagnètic
(The Electromagnetic
Spectrum)*

Pagès Editors, 2009

NÚRIA CADENES

Guillem

Guillem



Guillem Agulló was a competitive swimmer and an ardent antifascist and antiracist, and was eighteen years old when he was stabbed to death. Twenty-seven years later, this novel tells the story not only of his life and his murder, but how the case laid bare the vestiges of fascism within the Spanish police, judicial system, press, and society. Despite calumnies, obfuscation, and a horrific smear campaign, Guillem lives on as a symbol of freedom.

Núria Cadenes engages a restrained, pared-down style in her bare-bones novelization that employs many voices to reflect the crime's wide-ranging consequences. Interspersed are actual quotes from the author's interviews of Guillem's parents and older sister Betlem, and fragments of documents such as police reports, the trial, and media coverage, brought together to create a powerful narrative of a family who refuses to give in to hate and a page-turner of a novel.

Amsterdam, 2020
184 pages

FOREIGN RIGHTS CONTACT:

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Asterisc Agents

A novel based on the 1993 murder of a young antifascist activist by Valencian Neo-Nazis that marked a generation



Núria Cadenes was born in Barcelona and now lives in Valencia, where she works as a bookseller and contributes to various news media such as *Vilaweb* and *El Temps*. Her earliest books come out of her experience as a political prisoner, and her fiction has earned her the 2009 Valencian Critics' Prize and the 2016 Crims de Tinta Award.

SELECTED WORKS

FICTION

Cartes de la presó
(*Letters from Prison*)
Eliseu Climent, 1990

L'Ovidi
(*Ovid*)
Eliseu Climent, 2002

El banquer
(*The Banker*)
Edicions de 1984, 2013

Rights sold to:
Entreambos, 2018 (Spanish)

Tota la veritat
(*The Whole Truth*)
La Magrana, 2016

Secundaris
(*Supporting Actors*)
Comanegra, 2018

MARIA CLIMENT HUGUET

Gina

Gina



Flashbacks to languid childhood days spent in the Delta of the Ebro River, study abroad in Paris, and her early adulthood in Barcelona are the settings for Gina’s reflections on how she can mature into an emotional bubble of solitude and self-love, and not waste the time she’s been given. These musings are brought into sharp focus when she is diagnosed with multiple sclerosis and must decide whether she wants to be a mother, quickly, before the window closes.

Her detailed and intimate first-person account of her personal growth is written in the dialect of the Delta, and interspersed with letters—mostly never sent—to an idealized friend, and dialogues—actual and imagined—with her therapist. It is this warm, searching, genuine voice that pulls us along in Gina’s journey of self-discovery, as if the story were being told to us by a dear friend, whose resilience and sense of humor lead us gently along our own path of self-reflection, in turn.

L’Altra Editorial, 2019
184 pages

RIGHTS SOLD TO:

Alfaguara (Spanish)

FOREIGN RIGHTS CONTACT:

Laura Palomares
l.palomares@agenciabalcels.com
Carmen Balcells Agency

A confessional novel that focuses on that watershed moment when Gina realizes that life is not a dress rehearsal

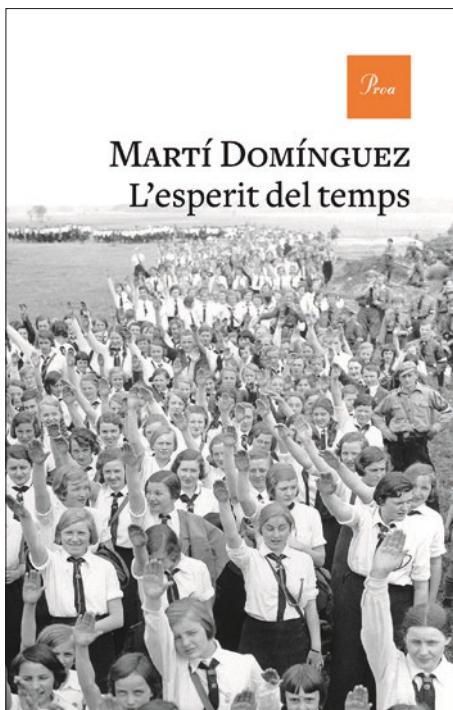


Maria Climent was born in Amposta, in the Ebro Delta wetlands. She is a literary translator who also runs her own copywriting agency. She is a regular contributor to the on-line literary magazine *Catorze.cat*, with a popular weekly column entitled *Basorèxia*. *Gina* is her first novel, which was also published in Spanish in her own translation.

MARTÍ DOMÍNGUEZ

The Spirit of the Times

L'esperit del temps



Proa, 2019
431 pages

RIGHTS SOLD TO:
Destino (Spanish)

FOREIGN RIGHTS CONTACT:
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Planeta

We meet Konrad Lorenz in 1944, in a Russian prison camp, forced at gunpoint to write his denazification confession. The Austrian doctor describes his joyful embrace of the Reich annexation and how his work in favor of eugenics and against miscegenation began to open up doors for him professionally. He explains that he was swept up in the *Zeitgeist*—who was he to go against the great minds of his day such as Heidegger and Kant? After all, Goethe said that the perfect man was he who took advantage of his moment. Lorenz begins working at a Lebensborn, a breeding center for the Aryan race, with “nurses” there to be impregnated by the SS, and stolen Polish children in process of Germanization.

The doctor tells his life story with impeccable composure, and Domínguez’s highly readable work is buttressed by intense research, allowing us to grasp not only the vastness of the horrors committed in the name of science but also the vastness of the impunity and complicity. There was little resistance, and following the war, few obstacles to rejoining the university and official ranks. A novel of ideas that shows—through the eyes of an erudite, relatable narrator—how easy it is for a “normal” person to gradually embrace the spirit of the times, offering us a warning in today’s political climate.

A fictional memoir of a convinced Nazi doctor who went on to win the Nobel Prize offers a riveting perspective on scientific complicity with Hitler’s regime



Martí Domínguez is a biologist and a journalist, and professor of journalism at the Universitat de València. He is also the director of the popular science magazine *Mètode*, for which he was awarded the Catalan National Journalism Prize. His novels have also earned him numerous prizes, including the Crexells, the Prudenci Betrana, and the Josep Pla. *The Spirit of the Times* won the most recent Òmnium Prize for Best Catalan Book of the Year.

SELECTED WORKS

FICTION

L'assassí que estimava els llibres
(*The Murderer who Loved Books*)
Proa, 2017

La sega
(*The Harvest*)
Proa, 2016

El retorn de Voltaire
(*Voltaire's Return*)
Destino, 2007

Rights sold to:
Destino (Spanish)

El secret de Goethe
(*Goethe's Secret*)
Edicions 62, 1999

Les confidències del comte Buffon
(*The Diaries of the Count of Buffon*)
3i4 Edicions, 1997

Rights sold to:
Península (Spanish)

NON-FICTION

El somni de Lucreci.
Una història de la llibertat de pensament
(*Lucretius's Dream. A History of Freedom of Thought*)
Proa, 2013

CARLOTA GURT

We'll Ride all Night

Cavalcarem tota la nit



Solitude, desire, loneliness, aging, and fear are some of the themes that emerge in this sophisticated, nimble debut. In it we meet a man who lost his nose in an accident and cannot escape the weight of others' gazes, and an elderly woman intent on literally erasing herself, a recent widower who sets out to prune his fig tree, a nine-year-old girl who stumbles across a secret between her father and her uncle, among others. Metaphors seem to come to life, such as an enigmatic tunnel a couple dares to enter, and water abounds in various forms.

The collection's polyphony of voices encompass the young and the old, men and women, third person and first. The language is precise and lyrical, and reads with palpable pleasure. These thirteen stories, with their overtones of slightly jaded fairy tales, work together to confront the nature of time and mortality, and investigate the courage that requires.

Proa, 2020
192 pages

FOREIGN RIGHTS CONTACT:

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Asterisc Agents

An award-winning baker's dozen of richly resonant short stories that straddle the real and the surreal



Carlota Gurt is a literary translator from German into Catalan. She has earned degrees from the Universitat de Vic, the UOC, the Universitat Autònoma, and the Ramon Llull University. She worked for over a decade in production for the performing arts with La Fura dels Baus and Temporada Alta. This story collection, her first book, earned her the 2019 Mercè Rodoreda Prize.

CESC MARTÍNEZ

Trace a Perimeter

Traça un perímetre



Anagrama, 2019
255 pages

FOREIGN RIGHTS CONTACT:

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Indent Agency on behalf of Anagrama

This ambitiously structured book begins in the eighties, as a coming-of-age story in an anonymous working-class neighborhood that is no longer countryside but not yet city, with four teenagers searching for a bit of poetry in their marginal lives, looking to transcend their circumstances, to create their own stories beyond the limits of the official narrative. As they gain awareness of the social order through their experimentation with sex, drugs, and an atlas, they also see the high price some pay for their non-conformity, including insanity and exile. A couple of those teenagers, now adults, will take us on a journey deep into liminal spaces, along transitory passages of migration, through tunnels and labyrinths, across several continents, to slippery precarious borderlands, until finally even the place names have been lost along with the very notion of periphery.

Three interludes link the movements together as the very borders of the known world gradually melt, along with the distinction between fact and fiction. The characters in these four stories document their various voyages as they discover—and construct—their place in the world; here language is both passport and contraband.

This postmodern wormhole of a novel crosses frontiers and pushes myriad political, personal, and ethical boundaries



Cesc Martínez (Manresa) has published a collection of flash fiction and prose experiments, poetry, and journalism on the theater and performance scene, while also working as a translator and editor. This is his second novel.

SELECTED WORKS

FICTION

Bits

(Bits)

Editorial Emboscall, 2001

Opi i Sardines

(Opium and Sardines)

La Magrana, 2011

GEMMA RUIZ PALÀ

Wenling's Place

Ca la Wenling



Gemma Ruiz Palà returns with another vindication of female strength: this time through the winsome friendship between a forty-something Catalan documentary filmmaker, who models her red nails on Simone de Beauvoir's, and her regular manicurist Wenling, a Chinese immigrant from Qingtian, in the Zhejiang Province. The setting of their friendship, the Yang Salon, is both a microcosm of society, and a place where women let their hair down, literally and figuratively. A place of shared secrets, support, and empathy.

Over the years, the narrator grows closer to Wenling and her family, leading her to a greater understanding of what it takes to make a life in a new country and of what it means to be/become a Catalan. Told in a thoughtful first person interspersed with conversations from a range of salon customers, Ruiz Palà displays her gifted ear for dialogue, and her open mind and heart.

Proa, 2020
328 pages

RIGHTS SOLD TO:
Destino (Spanish)

FOREIGN RIGHTS CONTACT:
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txell@mbagencialiteraria.es
MB Agencia Literaria

**A novel set in beauty salon that poses the question:
how we can get a manicure without even saying hello to
the woman doing our nails?**

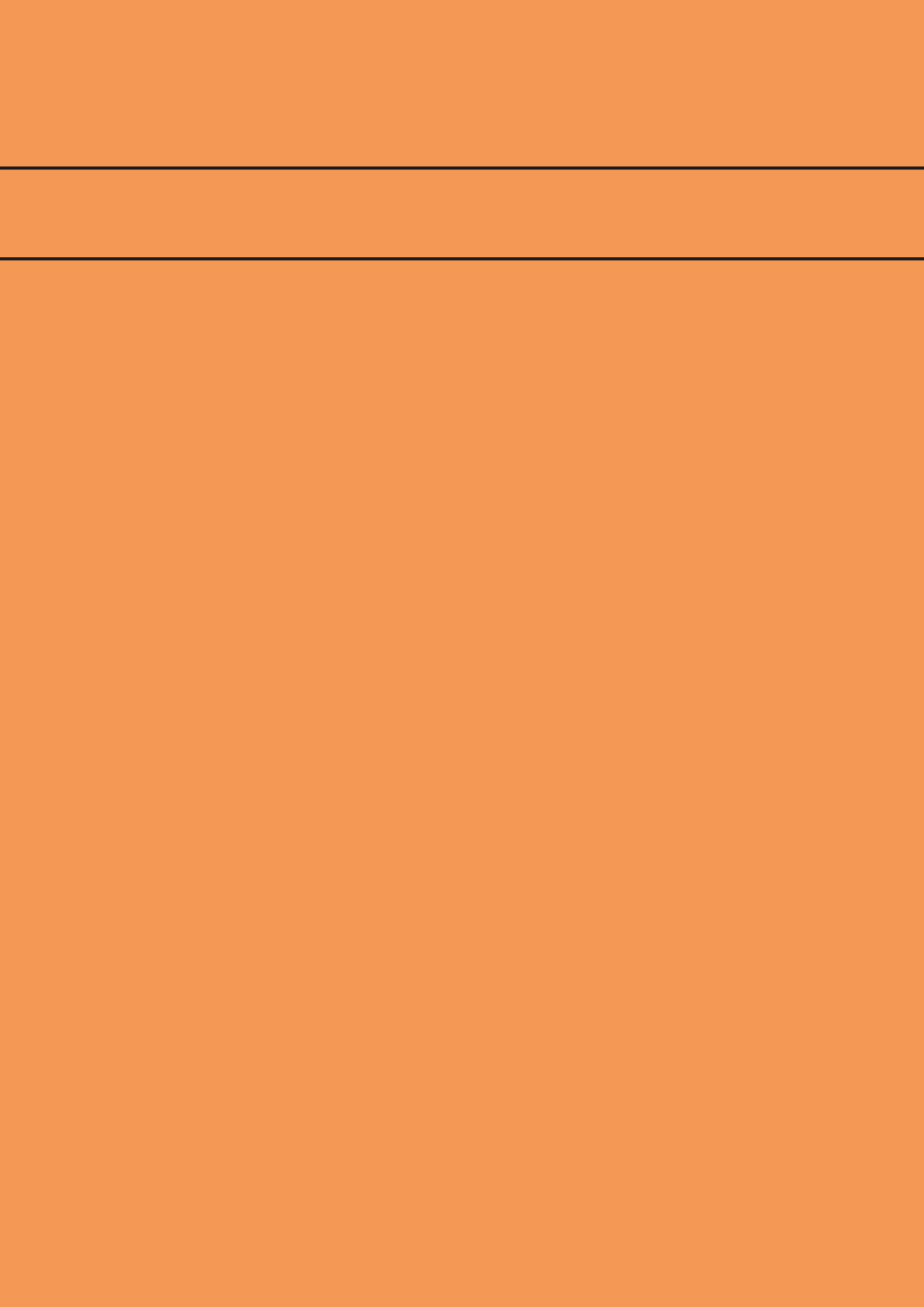


Gemma Ruiz Palà is a journalist from Sabadell with more than twenty years of experience working the arts and culture beat for Catalan public television. This is the follow-up to her best-selling debut novel *Argelagues*.

SELECTED WORKS

FICTION

Argelagues
(*Gorses*)
Proa, 2016





Grants

LITERATURE TRANSLATION

Grants for the translation of Catalan literature: fiction, non-fiction, children's and YA books, poetry, theatre and graphic novels.

Recipients: Publishers.

LITERATURE PROMOTION

Grants to promote abroad Catalan literature (fiction, non-fiction, children's and YA books, poetry, theatre and graphic novels), including participation in international literary festivals and presentations and promotional plans for works in translation.

Recipients: Publishers, Literary Events Organizers.

ILLUSTRATED BOOKS

Grants for the publication abroad of illustrated books by illustrators settled in Catalonia or the Balearic Islands.

Recipients: Publishers.

SAMPLES & BOOKLETS

Grants to translate samples of works written in Catalan to produce booklets for promotional purposes.

Recipients: Catalan Publishers, Literary Agencies.

TRANSLATORS IN RESIDENCY

Grants for translators working on translations from Catalan to stay from two to six weeks in Catalonia.

Recipients: Translators.

TRAVEL FOR WRITERS AND ILLUSTRATORS

Grants for writers and illustrators to finance travel costs to carry out literary activities, to which they have been invited.

Recipients: Writers in Catalan and illustrators with at least two books originally published in Catalan.



Llull Fellowship

Every year the Institut Ramon Llull organises its fellowship aimed at international publishers and agents. It takes place in Barcelona in September, during the Setmana del Llibre en Català (Catalan Book Week Festival).

First launched in 2007, when Catalan Culture was Guest of Honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair, the project was designed to foster the translation of Catalan works into other languages and their introduction into new markets. Since then, over 173 professionals from 32 countries have participated in this fellowship.

The programme aims to provide the participants (10 focused on Fiction, 8 on children's & YA books) with a more in-depth perspective on Catalan literature and the Catalan Publishing sector as well as to build networks among Catalan and international publishing houses and literary agencies.

For five days, the fellowship offers a schedule of professional 30' meetings with Catalan publishers and agents selected in accordance with the participant's catalogues. The programme also features introductory sessions on Catalan literature; an overview of the Catalan literary publishing world; informal meetings with writers, illustrators, translators and journalists; and visits to emblematic bookstores and illustration schools. Both groups of participants, either focused on Fiction or on children's & YA books, enjoy a customised set of activities related to their interests.

The Institut Ramon Llull covers travel, accommodation and expenses related to the fellowship programme.

The application to the Llull Fellowship can be sent during March and April. The exact dates of the call can be checked on our website (www.llull.cat).

Other Services and Latest News

The Institut Ramon Llull promotes networking between international publishers and agents and the Catalan publishing sector. We will be pleased to put publishing professionals in touch with Catalan authors, publishers or agents.

The Llull also provides information about the translation of Catalan literature through two databases:

TRAC

www.llull.cat/trac: to find out what works of Catalan literature have been translated.

TRADUCAT

www.llull.cat/traducats: to browse the profile and contacts of literary translators from Catalan to other languages.

PAPER LLULL

www.llull.cat/en

Institut Ramon Llull continues to develop its communication, broadening horizons and fulfilling the needs of both its potential audience and the specialist community that makes up its educational, literary, artistic and prescriptive network. This is the driving force behind the Paper Llull, a new communication initiative in digital magazine format with specific content on all the disciplines covered by Institut Ramon Llull.

If you wish to be informed about our different grants calls and the latest news, you can subscribe to one of our newsletters addressed to translators, publishers and festival programmers via literature@llull.cat.



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