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The Politics of Absence and Archival Authority: Nicanor Vázquez I Ubach (1861–1930) And the Foundation for A Catalogue Raisonné

Yilun Li, Eulàlia Polls

Universitat de Barcelona

Abstract

Nicanor Vázquez i Ubach (1861–1930) embodies a structural case of historiographical erasure within Catalan Modernisme, stemming from his pivotal 15-year displacement to Argentina (1912–1927). This research, developed under the auspices of the Universitat Rovira i Virgili and based on the analysis of Francesc Fontbona, leverages unprecedented access to the Heir's Private Collection and the archival deposits at the Biblioteca de Catalunya (BNC) and the MNAC. We move beyond a biographical account, arguing that Vázquez's omission resulted from a national-centric canon that privileged sedentary artists and actively failed to integrate diasporic production. The paper provides a decolonial critique, analyzing the formal quality and thematic continuity of Vázquez's graphic work—from Barcelona's industrial scenes and ports (e.g., B038, Taller de Fundición) to Buenos Aires' gauchos and landscapes (e.g., A054, Campesino en Paisaje). By establishing the high rigor of his realist technique, we demonstrate that his invisibility is a systemic failure, not an artistic one. Crucially, this study establishes the definitive framework, methodology, and cataloguing codes for the artist's forthcoming Catalogue Raisonné, confirming his rightful place as an essential master of the transatlantic Modern movement and paving the way for his full institutional rehabilitation in Catalonia.

Keywords: Catalan Modernism Transatlantic Art History Historiographical Erasure Nicanor Vázquez i Ubach ; Decolonial Critique

