



## Quick pic(k)s

Four art shows on now

**1. Mike Swaney: Zulu Voodoo Buddha Guru**

Iguapop Gallery  
Until October 31st  
[www.iguapop.net](http://www.iguapop.net)

**2. Janelle Lynch: Riu Llobregat**

3 Punts Galeria  
Until November 7th  
[www.3punts.com](http://www.3punts.com)

**3. Trabajos de Campo**

Fundación Foto Colectania  
Until January 16th, 2010  
[www.colectania.es](http://www.colectania.es)

**4. Elegancia y minimalismo**

Museo de Cerámica  
October 2nd to January 30th, 2010  
[www.museoceramica.bcn.es](http://www.museoceramica.bcn.es)

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defons Cerdà © Fons Cerdà Urbs i Territori (Institut d'Estudis Territorials)



## The DNA of modern Barcelona

BARCELONA IS HOSTING A YEAR CELEBRATING ILDEFONS CERDÀ, THE DESIGNER OF THE EIXAMPLE. BY ALEXANDER MCSPADDEN

**T**here was the year of Gaudí in 2002, the year of Dalí in 2004, the year of Picasso in 2006 and now it's the year of Cerdà. While Ildefons Cerdà may not be a name familiar to many, his visionary masterpiece, the Eixample district, revolutionised the discipline of city planning and transformed the daily life of Barcelona's residents.

At the onset of the industrial revolution at the beginning of the 19th century, Barcelona suffered from severe overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, a poor transportation network and heavy pollution—there was simply no room for growth and development. After many years of this situation, a royal order in 1858 finally 'freed' the city, allowing for the demolition of its medieval walls and giving it permission to develop the surrounding area (over twice the size of Ciutat Vella). The city government awarded the design of the extension (*eixample*) to the architect Antoni Rovira i Trias, but the central government in Madrid imposed Cerdà's plan on the populace. Cerdà's innovative design envisioned a rationalised open city, with a grid of wide streets whose principal element were blocks of dwellings with internal landscaped courtyards and street corners cut on a 45-degree angle to facilitate traffic. Although Cerdà based his design on giving the city a framework and infrastructure for future orderly growth, his plan was never embraced by the contemporary Catalan elite, and he passed away in financial ruin and obscurity in 1879.

Now, 150 years after his plan was approved, Barcelona is celebrating Cerdà's engineering talent and visionary thinking with a programme of exhibitions, urban itineraries and conferences on Cerdà and his transformative design. The first major exhibition, 'Cerdà and the Barcelona Diputation', provides the biographical and historical context for understanding Cerdà's technocratic approach towards planning. The 'Reality vs. Project' show opening later this month takes a contemporary look at the plan, reinterpreting it to see how it is still transforming the present-day form of the city. Hence, the Cerdà Year offers more than just a tribute to an unsung city hero, but also the opportunity to reflect on and debate the Barcelona of the future.

**Any Cerdà**

Various venues  
Until June 2010  
[www.anycerda.org](http://www.anycerda.org)