



The new National Art Museum of Catalonia will cover more than 40,000 square metres and house more than 235,000 works of art

# Art Museum to open in 2005

*Delays in financing, planning have prolonged the length of the project to more than 16 years*

After 16 years of problems with planning and financing, the National Art Museum of Catalonia has entered the final phase of renovation that, according to director Eduard Carbonell, should be completed by the end of the year.

One of the main aims of the project is to provide a home for works currently scattered throughout Catalonia. In addition, the new museum will aim to be a research centre with a 125,000-volume research library incorporated into the main facility.

Carbonell reiterated his commitment to have the renovation finished by the end of the year, saying "The only thing left is to finish the garden work of the exterior area, which could be finished later".

The new site will house 235,000 works of art, 125,000 volumes of library material within a 40,000-metre building site.

The new facility, costing more than 122 million euros, has been jointly financed by the Spanish Government, the Catalan government and the Barcelona city council.

Visitors to the new museum will be able to see works spanning 10 centuries of Catalan art

A newly completed area will include rooms designated for photography, engravings and antique coins, as well as works from the collections from the Thyssen i Cambó Foundation. It will also house famous works such as Fortuny's *La Batalla de Tetuan*.

On the ground floor there will be rooms dedicated to Roman and Gothic art, as well as works from the Renaissance and Baroque periods.

On the first floor there will be a collection of Spanish paintings from the Golden Age, including works by Rivera and Velázquez, as well as Catalan paintings from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, including works by Viladomat, Francesc Pla Duran, and el Vigatà.

The first attempt to convert the National Palace into a museum was in 1988, and it has taken sixteen years to reach the last phase.

The Oval room and a temporary exposition room were inaugurated in 1992.

In 1995 the Roman art section was opened, and in 1997 the Gothic art section was opened.

The only thing remaining to be installed are works of modern art. Works from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have already been put into place.

There will also be a restaurant located in the museum with impressive views of the city.

All in all it appears that the new National Art Museum should turn out to be much more than a museum.



## 125,000-volume library

The picture shows the current state of the Modern Art Museum's library, which will open to a view of the Palauet Albéniz.

Visitors to the museum will be able to consult more than 120,000 specialised art books, around 3,000 magazines, 15,000 press clippings, and 35,000 art catalogues.

The aim of the library is to centralise documents related to 10 centuries of Catalan art and make the museum a major research centre.



## 40,000 square metres

Of the 40,000 total square metres that the new museum covers, 12,000 square metres will be used for both permanent and temporary exhibitions.

The remaining space will be for offices, workshops, depositories and archives.

The museum has been in construction for more than 16 years and will house more than 235,000 works of art when it is completed before next year.

## A history of politics, delays and cost overruns

The main difficulty that the Museum of Modern Art project has had during its 16-year history has involved its financing.

Three government bodies—the Spanish government, the Catalan government and the Barcelona city council—have between them each financed a third of the total cost of the renovation project.

The first phase, completed in 1992 cost 50 million euros. The second phase, completed in 1997 required 11 million euros and the current and final phase is expected to run in excess of 40 million euros.