

EDITORIAL

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GOLDEN LIONS

In May 2017, Emmanuel Macron was elected President of the French Republic. He is 39 years old, has never been elected by universal suffrage and, three years earlier, he was completely unknown to the general public. In May 2016, the Spanish pavilion won the Golden Lion at the Venice Architecture Biennale. This is awarded to the best national contribution to the event at every edition.

What do this incredible ascent of a political figure and the tribute made at an event that is restricted to a fraction of the international cultural scene have in common? Both cases illustrate a process of "creative destruction", borrowing the term used in economics. We are not yet done with studies explaining the rise of Emmanuel Macron, but one thing is certain: he won over his electors partly by promising to revive France by rejecting the standard two-party division. As he takes up his presidency, he brings an end to a declining political world. As for the *Unfinished* exhibition organized by Iñaki Carnicero and Carlos Quintáns a year ago, far from offering a bleak vision of Spanish architecture, it highlighted a production resulting from the transformation of a state of crisis into positive action.

Those affected by the downturn will argue that only few have escaped the slump. This is probably true, but when they do, they do it with such style! Even though the cosmopolitan Bjarke Ingels was predicted as the favourite for the 2017 Pritzker Prize, was it not awarded to RCR practice (Rafael Aranda, Carme Pigem and Ramón Vilalta) last March, a pure product of Olot in Catalonia? When the architects of a country in which the construction market is struggling to find a second wind win the Nobel Prize of architecture, it is, all things being equal, as unexpected as the renewal of the French political stage.

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