



Hortense Bégué was born in 1890 in Caubous in the Hautes-Pyrénées. In around 1909 she moved to Paris where she trained as a sculptor, a minority choice among artists who were aiming to make art their profession. Although at first she worked with the human figure, she soon came to specialise in animalism, for which she would be recognised throughout her career.

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md'A Museu d'Art de Girona
Generalitat de Catalunya
Departament de Cultura



Forma part de: **XARXA MUSEUS D'ART DE CATALUNYA**

ENG

LAGAR/ BÉGUÉ

ELS ANYS CATALANS
(1915-1918)

TEMPORAL EXHIBITION
From 23 October 2021 to 6 March 2022

Museu d'Art de Girona
Àmbit 3

Celso Lagar. *The Train from France*, 1915. Oil on canvas, 70 x 89 cm. Museu d'Art de Girona. reg. no. 138.725. On deposit from the Generalitat de Catalunya. National Art Collection

Unknown author. Celso Lagar and Hortense Bégué photographed at the Galerie Percier (Paris) on the occasion of the joint exhibition held in 1923. Celso Lagar Archive

Celso Lagar, whose first artistic vocation was sculpture, was born in 1891 in Ciudad Rodrigo (Salamanca), where he underwent his initial training. In 1907 he moved to Madrid to work as a cabinetmaker and attend evening classes at the School of Arts and Crafts. There he met the sculptor from Olot, Miquel Blay, who advised him to go to Paris to study. He arrived in the French capital in 1911 with a grant from the town council of his hometown. There he had his first solo exhibition in 1913 and met the sculptor Hortense Bégué, who would be his partner from then on.

The couple formed by the artists **Celso Lagar** (Ciudad Rodrigo, 1891 - Seville, 1966) and **Hortense Bégué** (Caubous, 1890 - Paris, 1957) arrived in Barcelona in late 1914 or early 1915, having come from Paris fleeing the outbreak of World War I. This marked the beginning of a three-year period in which they set up home in Catalonia, although they also spent time in Paris, Madrid, Bilbao and Galicia. During this time they held several exhibitions, published drawings in some of the most important magazines of the time and became involved in Catalan artistic life.



H. Bégué. *Polar Bears*, 1932. Ink and gouache on paper, 19 x 23.5 cm. Private collection / C. Lagar. *The Labourer*, c. 1915. Pencil and watercolour on paper, 22.5 x 31 cm. Jordi Masó Bru Collection

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Catalogue of Exposició Celso Lagar-Pintures, acuarel·les: Quatre escultures de Mme. Bagué, Galeries Dalmau, Barcelona, 1915. 20 x 14 cm. Ajuntament de Girona. Arxiu i Biblioteca Rafael i Maria Teresa Santos Torroella / H. Bégué. *Female head*, 1913. Patinated plaster. 43 cm (height). Private collection

1915

Barcelona

In February 1915, shortly after arriving in Catalonia, Lagar and Bégué held an exhibition at the Galeries Dalmau in Barcelona, a gallery known for its audacious commitment to avant-garde artistic languages. Bégué, perhaps exhibiting for the first time, presented four sculptures featuring female figures. Lagar, who had recently moved away from sculpture to devote himself to painting, made his debut in that field with sixty works.

The 1915 exhibition catalogue contained a short text by Lagar in which he defined “Planism”, an avant-garde artistic movement that he romoted and of which he was the only practitioner.

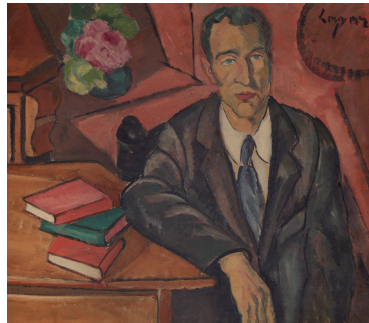


C. Lagar. *The Green Bottle* or *Parisian Interior*, 1914-1915. Oil on canvas, 38.3 x 46.2 cm. Private collection



Girona

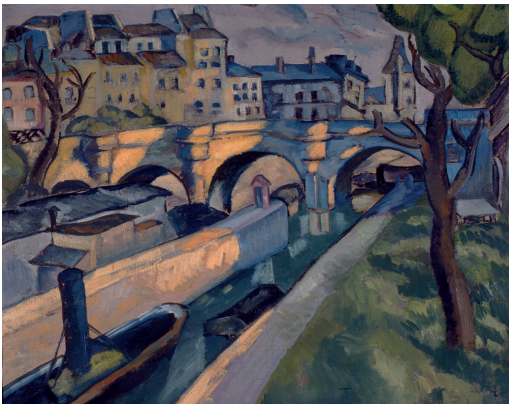
On 18 March 1915, Lagar and Bégué arrived in Girona for a six-week stay, probably thanks to the mediation of the Girona writer Xavier Monsalvatje. The reason was to prepare an exhibition in the Athenea Rooms. In Girona, Lagar painted a series of oils and watercolours that are among his most successful landscapes. Bégué modelled at least one clay bust, which she would show in mid-May 1915 in Barcelona in a joint exhibition with Lagar at the La Cantonada Rooms.



C. Lagar. *Sant Daniel Path*, 1915-1916. Watercolour and ink on paper, 31 x 21.5 cm . Private collection / C. Lagar. *Portrait of Xavier Monsalvatje*, c. 1915. Oil on canvas, 58 x 67 cm . Collection of the architect Xavier Montsalvatge

Paris

Lagar and Bégué lived in Paris between 1915 and 1916. Lagar held at least one exhibition there, and his friendship with the Italian painter Amedeo Modigliani intensified.



C. Lagar. *View of the Seine*, 1915-1916. Oil on canvas, 65 x 81 cm. Museo de Arte Moderno y Contemporáneo de Santander y Cantabria

1916

Blanes - Barcelona

In the summer of 1916, having passed through Girona on their return from Paris, Lagar and Bégué spent time in Blanes. This is attested by several works painted at the time. Lagar also published some drawings in the magazine *Revista Nova* and, at the end of September, inaugurated an important solo exhibition at the Galeries Laietanes in Barcelona. He presented landscapes, including those painted in Girona, still lifes and portraits of a constructive nature, as well as an avant-garde work, *Study of Light for Planism*, in the Planist style he had created. The exhibition was well received by the press and his talent and ability for innovation were recognised.



C. Lagar. *Blanes Landscape*, 1916. Oil on canvas, 66 x 80 cm. Francisco Marcos Collection, Salamanca



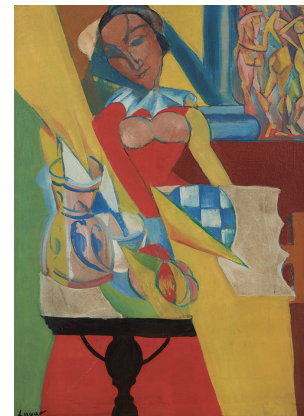
C. Lagar. *Summer in Blanes*, 1916. Oil on canvas, 64 x 49 cm. Francisco Marcos Collection, Salamanca / C. Lagar. *Pastoral*, c. 1916. Oil on canvas, 80.5 x 65 cm. Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, Barcelona



1917

Barcelona

In June 1917, Lagar and Bégué returned to Barcelona, where he exhibited again at the Galeries Laietanes. From this moment on, the couple would interact with the most representative of the small group of avant-garde artists in Catalonia. They included the Uruguayan painters Rafael Barradas and Joaquín Torres-García and probably Joan Miró; as well as the poets and art critics Joan Salvat-Papasseit, Josep M. Junoy and Vicenç Solé de Sojo. In contact with the most avant-garde environments of Catalan art, Lagar took a step forward in consolidating his movement. In the exhibition at the Galeries Laietanes in April 1918, the last one he held in Catalonia, he dedicated a specific section to Planism. Bégué also took part in this exhibition with a selection of animal drawings and sculptures, including the small bronze sculpture *Bear*.



C. Lagar. *Nude*, c. 1918. Oil on canvas, 100 x 73 cm. Private collection / C. Lagar. *Reflection in Conical Form*, 1917-1918. Oil on canvas, 99 x 69 cm. Private collection



H. Bégué. *Bear* or *Bear Cub*, c. 1917. Bronze, burnished patina, 10 x 17 x 6 cm. Private collection

1918

Madrid - Bilbao

Most of the works Lagar and Bégué presented at the Galeries Laietanes were seen again in the exhibition they held at the Ateneo de Madrid in November 1918.

In September 1918, Lagar exhibited in Bilbao and would return in April 1919, in his last exhibition in Spain before his death. It would have been at that time that he painted *Bilbao Port*, a synthesis and culmination of his most experimental period.



C. Lagar. *Bilbao Port*, c. 1918. Oil on canvas, 60 x 78 cm. Museo de Bellas Artes de Bilbao

Paris

In mid-1919 the couple returned permanently to Paris. Lagar left Paris behind to focus on the landscape and the world of street fairs, while Bégué would continue to work on animal figures. The remnants of the Catalan years would be diluted in the work of both artists.

However, they maintained a constant artistic activity until World War II, after which their health declined. Bégué's death in 1957 was undoubtedly a turning point for Lagar, who soon after was admitted to the Sainte-Anne psychiatric hospital, although in 1962 he was able to return to Spain with his family. He died in Seville in 1966.