

Felanitx - Es Sindicat (ES)

RELEARNING COEXISTENCE

Introduction

For thousands of years, climate and local resources guided architectural planning: humans studied, understood, and, most importantly, engaged with them. **People weren't against their environment; they were part of it, knowing how to live in harmony with it.** It was the norm to come together to find solutions—whether it was gathering rainwater for the village or addressing the challenges of extreme temperatures. **Problems were shared,** and people **worked together**, using nature, knowledge, and awareness to find solutions.

With the advent of technology, people no longer needed their neighbors. Machines and the internet have become 'practical solutions' to common problems, addressed individually, while simultaneously replacing personal relationships.

Over the decades, this shift has led to an increasingly **individualistic society**, where people have withdrawn from the **social ecosystem**, becoming more isolated, relying on technology, and growing more **driven by intolerance**. Many now prefer living in a virtual world rather than the real one, **losing touch with the natural ecosystem** as well.

Climate change and human behavior are the symptoms, not the disease. The real issue is the alienation of humanity from both social and natural ecosystems.

EL MODELO ES SINDICAT

During a site visit, we had the privilege of speaking with two of the building's last workers. They shared that the building was constructed by the same workers "with a bucket and a shovel." One worker, with a voice full of emotion, said, "We were a family."

Es Sindicat was the product of a deeply cohesive society, in profound connection with their territory, working together on a shared vision. It is a prime example of modern vernacular architecture where human and natural forces worked in unison. The community built Es Sindicat in unity—whether constructing the "wine cathedral" using new concrete technology, or building the traditional vineyard terraces with local marés stone.

Yesterday, **Es Sindicat represented a balanced, intricate composition of human, environmental, and material resources, created by a strong community and helping that same community to flourish.**

So, what can Es Sindicat offer today to renew the union between social and natural ecosystems, following its past?

What choices can be made to resource Es Sindicat in order to resource society? How can architecture be more welcoming and genuinely friendly?

As a cultural center, Es Sindicat has the potential to play a transformative role in reimagining the way we coexist—not just between nature and humanity, but also among humans themselves.

Es Sindicat is a place where individuals reconnect with both the environment and each other through **shared open-air public spaces and common activities** linked to the territory and its discovery.

The cathedral and its surroundings become a spatial framework for collective identity—a **friendly and genuine environment** where cultural expression, social interaction, and civic life converge. It is not merely a container for events, but a **catalyst for community**—embodying memory, nurturing creativity, and fostering participation, while **inviting people to reconnect with nature.**

At the same time, its **spatial organization** is intentionally **open and adaptable**, **encouraging free and intuitive engagement** with the space, and **cultivating a sense of openness and belonging.**

Local associations, residents, volunteers, and former workers, all dedicated to welcoming the new, play a vital role in **the transmission of memory and heritage.** Through their efforts, they ensure that the stories of the past are passed down, allowing newcomers to connect with the history, culture, and traditions of the community, **fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation** for the land and its people. The transmission is envisioned through the creation of spaces that encourage the organisation of traditional public events, concerts, like the amphitheatres, community bar, educational garden and open-air(e) pavilion.

Visitors and tourists are now encouraged to move beyond traditional consumption-based tourism and to truly **discover a new land, while simultaneously feeling at home and accepted.**

The seasonal residence plays a crucial role in fostering deep cultural exchange. Creatives from around the world are given the opportunity to connect with the local culture and reinterpret it through art, offering them a unique perspective and a fresh way of seeing the world.

Landscape and architectural choices were guided towards a genuine, purified design—one that utilizes local resources and remains unobtrusive to technology. The proposal aims to **unveil the soul of**

the place preserving its original character. It focuses on uncovering and **sharing the local savoir-faire of the past.**

The interventions are made thoughtfully to align with this direction, such as the discreet openings in the media library's tanks and the selective use of electricity, limited to specific areas of the cathedral (residences, community bar, open-air pavilion). **Natural light and ventilation** are allowed to function as they once did, fostering a closer connection between humans and nature while **encouraging more natural life rhythms**, with the sun dictating when the workday should end or when a former productive space, now a museum, should close.

Furthermore, the new interventions are crafted to **harmonize** with the existing architectural language, ensuring they respect the site's logic without imposing on it or, worse, replicating it.

Tuesday.

7:00 AM

It was a cool June morning, and the sky above Felanitx was turning a pale blue, lightly brightened by the first rays of the sun. It was 7 o'clock, and everyone was still asleep, except for Andreu, who was slowly walking along El Carrer del Call. From his home, he was heading as usual to the Cristal café. He was an old man, with a face marked by time and experience, but with a lively gaze that betrayed an insatiable curiosity for his land. Andreu, who as a young man had worked at the historic Es Sindicat cooperative, knew every corner of the old factory, which had once been the beating heart of the local economy.

"Andreu, it's 7 in the morning. On time as always! Same breakfast?" asked the young bartender Miquel. Andreu nodded, slowly removing his hat with a habitual and slow movement. "Make the coffee nice and strong, because today will be an intense day!" he exclaimed, smiling to himself.

"Are you setting up the exhibition?" asked Miquel, placing the ceramic cup on the counter.

"Yes, the guys have finished the sculptures, and today we'll start setting them up on the bridges of the cathedral. The exhibition will open next week. Stop by to say hello!" replied Andreu, his eyes shining with pride.

Andreu left the café and continued walking toward Passeig de n'Ernest Mestre, retracing the path he used to take when he was young to reach the old cooperative. He nostalgically remembered the morning chats with his friends. That walk hadn't changed in fifty years. He was heading toward the Estació Enològica, trying to remember the sound of the Ramal, the old railway that connected Felanitx to Palma. Now, in its place, a dense forest occupied the area, but a wide avenue followed the traces of the long-gone tracks.

Andreu continued his walk among the dense trees, stopping in front of the cathedral, far enough to see the whole facade but close enough to capture every detail with his eyes. The reconstruction of the

Felanitx - Es Sindicat (ES)

RELEARNING COEXISTENCE

facade hadn't changed its features, and Andreu, as he always said, felt as though the cathedral had never closed its doors. He crossed the productive courtyard, following the trees which were beginning to bear fruit, and thought: "Marta will be happy! With all these apples, she'll fill the bar with cakes and jams!"

As he approached the large central portal with its keys, he noticed from afar, under the large pink pepper tree, a girl with a camera. It was Julia, a young English tourist, on vacation in Mallorca to discover the beauty of the island. She loved excursions off the beaten path, away from the crowded beaches, and had heard about the cooperative from an old souvenir vendor. "A unique place," he had told her, "with a story worth discovering." So, armed with curiosity and a travel guide, she found herself at the gates in the productive garden, sitting in the shade of the trees.

Andreu, approaching the girl with a playful demeanor, said: "Are you here to interview Mr. Es Sindicat? We're always waiting for visitors!"

Julia, getting up from the ground, introduced herself: "I arrived in Felanitx last night. This is the first thing I've heard about, and it intrigued me. I was told the museum opens with the sunrise, so I came here early."

Andreu, proudly, replied: "That's right! They've renovated the whole building, but the soul is still the same." He paused for a moment, showing a hint of nostalgia. Julia asked: "Did they make wine here, right?"

Andreu nodded, his face lighting up with the memory. "Yes, exactly. We used to make wine here, which was exported all over the island, to Spain, and even to France! And not just wine, there were parties, stories of men and women who worked hard, but with passion. My heart is still tied to this place."

At that moment, Julia began taking some photos, trying to capture the beauty of the facade, standing tall with Sa Mola behind it. Seeing Julia's interest, Andreu decided to tell her something that wasn't in her travel guide.

"In the golden days of the cooperative," began Andreu, "everyone knew each other. Every bottle that came out of here was a piece of us and our land. But thirty years ago, the cooperative closed, and a lot of people moved to Portocolom. There's a lot of work in tourism there. But even today, Es Sindicat lives in the hearts of those saw it grow. Like me."

Julia, moved, looked at the old building with new eyes. It wasn't just an old factory. It was a symbol of passion, work, and community.

Andreu, with a loud voice and jangling keys, said: "I'd better hurry now! The cathedral doors don't open on their own!" Julia, smiling, asked: "Before I leave, could you tell me what the wine path is and how I can find it?"

Andreu stopped, then said to the young girl: "Ah! The wine path! But... but you can't start from here, young lady! You can start from Sa Mola or El Calvari, but not from here! This is the exit. I suggest you start from El Calvari, though. The whole hill is marked by dry stone walls of the terraces where grapes were once grown. The path goes to the Ermita del Calvari church with its large staircase and its viewpoint. You're lucky because the weather's great today, the sky is clear! From there, you'll even see El Salvador. Along the way, you can also visit the Convento Bella Vista."

"Once you come down from Es Calvari, I suggest you visit the historic center, the old church, and its fountain in Plaça de Font de Santa Margalida. Everything is built from marès stone. **The land really gave us everything here. Between forests and quarries... between land and sun. It's as if the city itself came from the earth.**"

Andreu paused, then continued: "So it's important that you go to Sa Mola, the hill that witnessed the extraction of marès stone with its countless caves among the garriga and the Aleppo pines that grow strong and undisturbed. Here, nature has reclaimed its rights once the land stopped being cultivated and the stones stopped being extracted. You'll also find dry stone walls here, marking the memory of this period, and like hanging gardens, they flow along the slopes of Sa Mola, guiding now the rainwater to the cathedral. I recommend visiting the quarry right behind Sa Mola. It's still in operation, but I don't think it'll be for much longer."

Julia looked at him enthusiastically and asked: "A long route, but Es Sindicat?"

Andreu smiled at her: "You mean the cathedral? It will be the terraces of Sa Mola that lead you to the building. Just like the grapes once did. Follow the terraces and the stone walls."

Julia asked: "So, the entrance to the museum isn't in this courtyard?"

Andreu laughed: "No, no, no! The entrance to the museum is located on the terrace of the old docks. Up there!" Andreu pointed decisively with his finger. "The museum-graphic path follows the original path of

wine production, just as it was made for almost half a century. That's where it gets its name."

Julia looked at him excitedly: "**A reverse museum route!**"

Andreu looked at her in silence, then said: "**It just a matter of perspective.**" After a short pause, he said, "As I was saying, I'd better hurry now! If Marta arrives and I haven't opened the doors yet, she'll never let me hear the end of it! When you come by this afternoon, know that there's a concert at the Sa Mola amphitheater! Not to be missed! The guys worked like mad! Enjoy your walk, and see you tonight!"

"Careful! Slowly! Jordi, take it easy! Sloooooowly!!! Watch out for the steps, go down slowly... Ok, put it there..."

Jordi, a bit overwhelmed by the situation, stopped to look at Lukas and the sculptures he was trying to transport. "Lukas, what... what are these sculptures made of?"

Lukas, wiping his forehead with an exasperated gesture, responded with a smile. "Don't start now! Gloria, Ines, and I worked like crazy! The challenge was to use all the materials left over from the building's reconstruction." He looked around the apartment and sighed. "I should tidy up a bit here. I've scattered stuff everywhere in this apartment."

Jordi, observing the messy environment, laughed: "You could start by making the bed. And maybe take the underwear hanging from the balcony down! That would be a great start... for all of us..."

Lukas laughed and replied: "Laugh, laugh... the residency is almost over, and you'll see how much you'll miss me and my chaos." He paused and added with a nostalgic smile: "Wow. These eight weeks flew by when I think about it. It feels like yesterday when the residency started and I couldn't speak the language very well, meeting the other artists! What a night. That's when you and I met!"

Jordi nodded, smiling. "Ah yes! I put up the decorations for the improv show organized at the bar. You participated too. You were terrible!" Laughing, he continued: "This is why we are friends now" Then he changed the subject, curious. "Oh, but tell me, is it true that the wing of the building was originally meant for bottling?"

Jordi, with a more serious expression, replied: "Certainly! But also the residency where you're living and the pavilion. Nut they were built in different periods. The wing with the community bar had to undergo some pretty significant structural reinforcements. I was talking to Andreu the other day. The roof was about to collapse and had been temporarily reinforced before the work started. Now, it's the arched walls that hold it up. Their shape reminds me of the fermentation tanks in the central nave."

Lukas, taking a sip from the water bottle, pointed at the apartment. "And here? What about this place?"

Jordi explained: "The interiors were redone. Half of the wing didn't even have a floor. They built the partition walls and the large vertical windows for the apartments following the rhythm of the facade facing the main courtyard."

Lukas, intrigued, asked: "And the arched stone walls?"

Felanitx - Es Sindicat (ES)

RELEARNING COEXISTENCE

Jordi replied: "They built those to support the new roof. It used to be an asbestos sheet, and they had to replace it. Just like the roof of the old pressure room." Lukas made a curious expression. "And they did it in glass?" Jordi answered: "Yes and no. It's solar glass. The electricity powers the apartments, the shared kitchen, and the pavilion. There are quite a few electrical outlets among the bushes so people can work." Lukas looked around with interest: "I've never used so much light in here. The sun sets so late, and I have the south-facing window, the facade towards the pavilion is entirely glazed, and even the roof..." Lukas paused for a moment, reflecting. "The apartments remind me of the old tanks in the media library. The soft light..." Lukas took another pause. He nostalgically remembered the sleepless nights, sitting on the floor of his second-floor apartment, watching the stars and the moon through the skylight. Jordi, noticing the nostalgia in Lukas's pauses, smiled and replied: "For me, the pavilion reminds me of the arches in the main nave." Lukas nodded, reflecting on what had been said. "...The vocabulary used recalls it... the series of vertical planes that divide the space, the perspective that unfolds arch by arch... I really liked the photo exhibition they organized in there, by the way." Jordi smiled and responded: "I remember well, I helped hang the photos on the metal trusses." Lukas, standing up, said: "Alright. We'll soon be done here because we've got a lot of sculptures to transport! Where are Ines and Gloria waiting for us?" Jordi replied calmly: "I told them to wait for us in front of the main door, at the museum's exit." Lukas, with a teasing tone, responded: "You mean the entrance?" Jordi smiled, playing along. "No. The exit." Lukas chuckled and added: "Incredible. Sometimes, to grasp the soul of things, you have to look at them in reverse." Jordi, with an enigmatic smile, replied: **"It's just a matter of perspective."**

Meanwhile, Maria, who had been a barista at Charla, the community bar, for years, took advantage of the time to exchange a few words with the artists. "Girls, you've done an amazing job with those sculptures!" said Maria with a smile of approval. Gloria and Ines exchanged a satisfied glance. Then Ines, with a more thoughtful tone, said: "What a beautiful day. It's a shame the residency is coming to an end. I came here to escape the chaos of the city, and now I don't want to leave. The other

day, I learned how to make compost!" Andreu, approaching, smiled affectionately. "You can come back anytime you want. There are many artistic programs here!" Gloria, looking at the environment she was about to leave, said with a touch of nostalgia: "This is the first time I've lived on my own, away from my parents. I was terrified of being alone, and I never imagined I'd meet so many people in such a short time." Maria, with a smile, commented: "There's new people every day around here! What's the name of the bartender who comes in the afternoon?" Andreu replied: "Miquel!" Maria added with her usual determined tone: "Well, Miquel never had the time to come by here, and today he'll help set up the sculptures on the walkways." Andreu replied, "Actually, he'll stop by to say just hello..." Maria, ignoring Andreu's comment, said: "Exactly! There's work for everyone here! We all help each other!" Ines, with an eager smile, looked out the door. "Ah, perfect! We could really use some help. Gloria! Lukas and Jordi are coming out of the porch. It's time to go!"

3:00 PM

It was afternoon when Julia, having spent the morning at Calvari and in the city center, arrived at the cathedral. She was slowly descending the terraces between the aromatic herbs of the garriga, walking calmly as she made her way to the entrance. Crossing the threshold, a patio opened in front of her, with cypress trees rising above the roof. A cool, humid breeze filled the colonnade, accompanied by a background sound, as if a liquid were flowing. Julia continued, moving from one room to the next, following the old steps of the wine production process. "How strange this sound is. I thought production stopped thirty years ago!" she thought. But as she continued, she reached the passerelle in the pressing hall. The machines had been restored and were now in motion. "Maybe this is what they meant by the heart of the cathedral," she reflected to herself. The restored machines were now used to collect rainwater, from the terraces of Sa Mola and the roofs. Passing between the filtration tanks, the water flowed into barrels through the *tolvas*. From the passerelle, Julia saw people downstairs moving the barrels filled with water. She continued her path, trying to follow their movements with her eyes, when she arrived at the *nave d'ampliació*, built during Es Sindicat's economic growth period. Once, this was where the wine fermentation took place; now, it was a fully restored

exhibition hall.

Julia followed the walls and photographs. Some works by local artists were on display, while in the adjacent room, a group of people was painting quietly, with light coming in, in bands through the small openings under the roof. Walking toward the central nave, she continued with interest and curiosity, watching the volunteers' movements and wondering where they were taking the barrels of rainwater.

Julia finally entered the main nave and felt as though she was losing her breath.

The space was immense, with strong light coming through the upper openings, fully illuminating the space.

She lowered her gaze to the reconstructed wooden bridges that floated above the main nave's fermentation tanks. Julia walked slowly, following the large side wall of the nave, and smiled when she saw Andreu in the center of the hall, directing the group installing the exhibition, watching over his tanks with the careful eye of someone who had seen this place grow, first as a worker and then as a guardian of memory.

Julia looked to the right and saw people transferring the water into the large tanks. Andreu stopped and watched them with emotion.

Julia lingered for a long moment, captivated by the way the light illuminated the space evenly. "Now I understand why the museum opens and closes according to the rhythm of the sun," she thought to herself, while letting herself be enveloped by the beauty of the place, its history, and its serenity.

Just then, Andreu called her. "Julia! Did you do the tour? Did you like it?"

Julia smiled shyly, her face illuminated by satisfaction. "Yes! Very much!" she replied enthusiastically. Then, looking at the tanks and the works on display, she added, "Every corner here tells a story, like a living testimony of what has been."

Andreu paused for a moment, reflecting, looking at Julia with a mysterious smile, and then said, "Julia, let's meet at the entrance of the mediateca. I want to show you something."

Julia, having exited the museum, walked toward the porch. She moved along the rhythmic facade of the residences, following the old cart path that connected Sa Mola and Felanitx, rediscovering a lost connection. Her gaze entered the pavilion through each archway. Someone was drawing, someone was writing. Someone sat in the shade of a tree with their eyes closed. Children were playing ball. She reflected on how the space changes and adapts, following the passage of time. She arrived at the two amphitheatres that opened in front of her, each facing a different horizon. They were like two eyes looking in opposite directions, but together, they told the story of a single place that had seen the world around it grow and change. Those amphitheatres, once large metal tanks, had been transformed. The tanks, now gone, had given way to spaces that spoke of a new use without forgetting their origins.

She reached the entrance to the mediateca, but Andreu had not yet arrived. She decided to take advantage of the moment

Felanitx - Es Sindicat (ES)

RELEARNING COEXISTENCE

to peek into the secret garden of the patio, which she had glimpsed from above at the entrance of the museum. It was a hidden corner that retained a certain quietude. She walked around the little garden, following the colonnades, and just at that moment, a voice pulled her away from her thoughts.

"Hi! Julia, right? I'm Lukas. Did you get lost?" asked Lukas, who was also in the patio.

Julia turned, smiling. "Nice to meet you, Lukas! Oh, no! I was just looking at the patio. I'm waiting for Andreu."

Lukas laughed and nodded. "The guardian of the cathedral!"

Andreu, with his deliberate yet slow pace, was walking gently on the stones of the old wagon path, a corridor that had been buried for years. "Lukas! We're heading to the mediateca. I want to show Julia something. Do you want to come with us?"

Lukas, always enthusiastic, quickly responded: "Gladly! I spent hours inside among the art books. It's a magnificent place."

The three of them set off together. Andreu, followed by Julia and Lukas, walked down the long corridor, then turned right. With a friendly gesture, he pointed to the staircase that led up to the exhibition hall. "Up there is the permanent exhibition and some works by local artists that you've surely seen before," Andreu said to Julia. "Did you notice the holes in the floor?" A few more steps, and they arrived at a narrow opening, tall up to the ceiling, which gave access to the rooms of the mediateca. The zenithal light slid gently over the surfaces through the holes in the ceiling, which, like skylights, created soft light patterns, emphasizing the divisions between the different compartments.

Julia looked around, stood at the center of the door, and observed the succession of openings that, like in a mirror, opened one after the other, binding the space together like a thread that connected the past with the present.

She touched the raw concrete walls with one hand, marked by the openings that once had a specific function. Every crack, every mark told the story of labor that now seemed distant, but that somehow remained alive in the architecture itself. Andreu watched her, as if every gesture of Julia brought something to light that he had never seen so intensely before.

"Once, those holes were used for extracting fermented wine. The skylight," Andreu said, pointing to the spot where the light filtered naturally, "was used to let it drain inside." His tone was filled with memory, as if the room itself, so full of stories, was taking him back in time.

Andreu, with a nostalgic smile, looked around and added: "We spent hours emptying the barrels into these tanks, and I never would've thought that one day I'd be reading a book in here."

He stopped and gestured toward a protrusion, like a shelf, that ran along all the walls at the same height. "There were two tanks here, one on top of the other, and that's the old floor that separated them. **Only part of this floor has been preserved to tell the story of a unique space that doesn't forget its past.**"

Julia, fascinated by the contrast between the ancient and the modern, looked carefully at the place, trying to understand it while feeling a deep connection with the architecture of the place. Then she said, "Yes, it's as if everything has found its place, as if time decided to take a pause." Andreu smiled, satisfied that Julia had grasped the meaning of the place. "Exactly," he said, **"here, time doesn't pass."** They continued their visit of the tanks, and once outside the building, Andreu said, "What do you say we grab a bite to eat?" and they all headed toward the Charla, the community bar.

8:00 PM

The sun was about to set, painting the sky with warm shades of orange and pink, while the atmosphere grew more vibrant with the imminent performance.

Everything was nearly ready. Jordi, with a satisfied look, watched as people arrived, spotting Julia among the crowd. "Look, Andreu, how many people! There's Julia too! Maybe we should place the performance on the central stage and use the two amphitheatres. What do you think?"

Andreu, with his attentive gaze, took a moment to reflect. "Good idea! Do you need help? I'll go get someone, stay here." And without waiting for a response, he set off with purposeful steps toward the bar.

"Maria! Has Arnau arrived? I saw he was on the schedule for tonight. We need help at the amphitheater." Andreu called, entering the bar.

Maria, smiling and working behind the counter, looked up. "Too many people?" she asked, with an understanding expression.

"Exactly. We need to move the stage. We never learn from our mistakes. When you see him, tell him to run over there, please. Jordi's waiting for him. Now, Maria, sorry, but I have to hurry. I have something to do." Andreu replied with a calm smile, though a bit tired.

Maria, with a heart full of compassion,

gently replied, "Of course, Andreu."

Andreu stepped out into the courtyard and paused for a moment, looking at the cathedral's facade before entering.

The sun was beginning to set over the tanks, huge and powerful in their stillness, and over the displayed works. The golden reflections drew soft shadows on the surfaces. It felt as though every corner had been designed to welcome the daylight, as if the **rhythm of the sun was the very soul of the place.**

In the silence, Julia spotted Andreu just after the threshold of the large wooden door, and she gathered her courage. She approached respectfully, her heart beating faster than usual. She had a question that had been tormenting her all day, something that felt like a knot inside, and she finally decided to ask it. With a delicate voice, she inquired, "But... Es Sindicat and the cathedral, are they the same thing?" Andreu, with a thoughtful expression, shifted his gaze from the tanks to the ceiling, as if searching for the right words in the silence that surrounded him. Then, finally, he spoke.

"Es Sindicat lives through and brings to life everything you've encountered today in this place. It's the roots, the history, the people, the land, the new and the old arrivals. Es Sindicat is a feeling of belonging. It's not tangible."

Andreu paused briefly, as if catching his breath and trying to convey an emotion that went beyond words. With a gentle gesture, he touched the walls of the building, as if caressing them.

"These walls are the cathedral" he paused again, and with a lump in his throat, he placed his hand over his chest. "Es Sindicat, it's all of us. With these walls."

Then Andreu, with a slight yet determined smile, said, "Julia, now excuse me, but I need to do something."

Andreu continued alone. He went to the second floor, letting himself be guided by the golden landscape that slowly unfolded behind the triforiums. Never tired of observing it.

Just in time, and like every evening, he stopped at the great nave, letting his gaze slip past the tanks.

And, as every evening, he remained there in silence for a while.

Holding the keys in his pocket.

Waiting.

