

# National Craft Award

Josep Maria Pascual Arnella



PASQUAL ARNELLA  
EXCLUSIVE PAPER PASTE TECHNIQUES



# The family company and the traditional toys

## 1892-1939 First generation

Our story starts when our great-grandfather, **Amador Pascual**, was working in "**Cal Penas**", a paper mache rocking horses factory that, together with dolls, were the first **industrial toys** that the kids used to play with.

Some years later, Amador acquired a business in Terrassa, founding the **Rocking Horses Factory Amador Pascual**. In the 1935, he moved the production to **Barberà del Vallès**. He died four years later, in 1939.

## 1939-1983 Second Generation

Amador's eldest son, **Ramón Pascual**, came back from the Spanish Civil War and found the workshop dismantled, despite everything, he carried on with the family business, overcoming troubles and progressing steadily.

In 1955, **Ramon Pascual and Francisco Penas joined up**, the new company was named "**Juguetes Laumar**" and it became the **most important rocking horses factory in Spain**. In 1962, Mr. Penas retired from the business donating his rights to Ramon Pascual, but times were changing and an unprecedented recession was approaching.



Amador Pascual, 1913



Cal Penas factory, 1925



Salvador Cardellach factory, 1920



Julian Lasierra molding a horse, 1973



Ramon Pascual painting, 1973



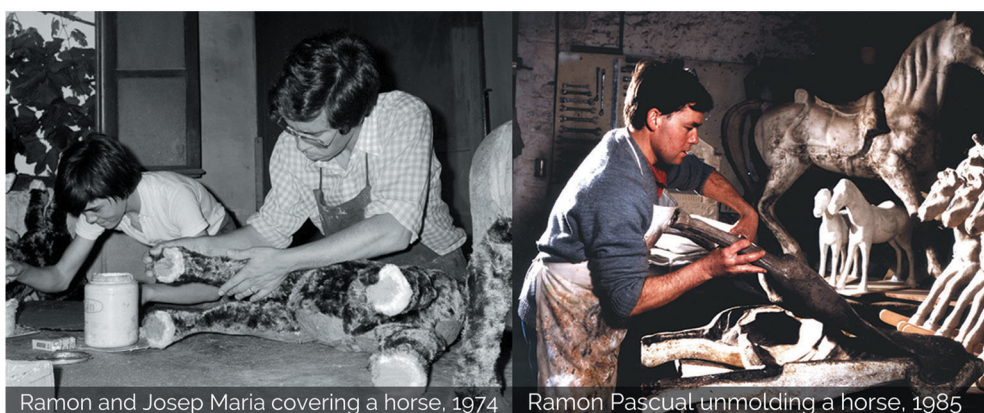
# The fall and the product crisis; the phone call and the invention

1960-1983 Josep Maria Pascual, third generation.

In 1960, **Josep Maria Pascual** joined the family business coinciding with a product crisis caused by a **paradigm change**, the rocking horse gave way to the electromechanical toys, **paper mache was replaced by plastic**. Those were hard times; a visit to the *Paris Toys Trade Show*, showed them new trends to juggle with the new challenges; they started **covering** the horses with felt and other fabrics, they survived a bit more thanks to a new customer, **Prenatal**.

In June 1975, Josep Maria received a **phone call that changed everything**; "The caller was the secretary of *Exin-Lines Bros S.A.* (a big toys company). I was captivated by the overwhelming opportunities there were from just a simple artisan whose trade was slowly diminishing; they wanted decorative volumes and mock-ups for their brands; *Madelman* (articulated action toys) and *Ibertren* (model trains) ... were in no way handmade...but I would have all the human, financial and technical resources of the corporation to investigate"

This challenge boosted the already existing creative vein of Josep Maria Pascual, with hard work and analysis, he **invented a paper pulp moulding revolutionary process**. He founded *Formex* to supply the huge *Exin* demand that lasted some years until it suffered their own crisis.



Ramon and Josep Maria covering a horse, 1974

Ramon Pascual unmolding a horse, 1985



Covered paper mache models with fabrics, 1975

# Coming back to the family business. The Craftwork and the new productive process

1983-2009 Josep M<sup>a</sup> and Ramon Pascual, an effective brotherhood.

In 1983, during a *Craftworks Exhibition* in Barcelona, they met and revealed to some paper Mache craftsmen, the possibilities that the new system offered compared with the hand-made traditional process; the **word of mouth** had an immediate effect.

From then, both the Catalan and Spanish paper mache sector experimented an **exponential growth**, Pasqual Arnella became a national reference and moved to a **new industrial unit** to absorb the demand. The **brother's synergy** and ideology of fair play to our clientele was key for a long-lasting success.

In 1986 Josep Maria Pascual received the *Master Craftsman Diploma*, recognizing the technical mastery as a *Paper Mache Handler* and the merits acquired due to the proven expertise and contribution to the profession exercised.



Venetian masks, Arlequí Màscares



Promotional figure, Hugo Dax



Paper mache theater and puppets



"Hooper", Josep Cardona "Nona"



# New exploring fields. Exportation and growth.

**1996-2016 Straight to the 125 years history with the fourth generation**

By the middle 90's, new ways to apply the paper paste technique were drawn, due to the participation of *European Trade Shows*, Pasqual Arnella started contacting with the **fashion and funeral sectors**; developing busts and torsos, display forms, decoration props, biodegradable urns...all made out of **paper paste**, 100 % recyclable, 100% sustainable.

In 2007, **Martí Pascual**, Josep Maria's son and fourth generation, joined the business coinciding with the well-known **recession**. In 2009, Josep Maria Pascual retired from the company, the team changed to an **uncle-nephew duo**.

Nowadays, Pasqual Arnella has recovered from the crisis while getting used to the new times. The shop equipment and funeral sector accumulate to around 80% of the business and the **exportation rate to Europe and USA is closer to 50%**, working with important firms like *Original Buff*, *Ben Sherman*, *Tous*, *Mango* and *Adidas* among others.

The present year, **Claudia Pascual**, Ramon Pascual's daughter, has entered the partnership and we continue to look forward to the future with good expectations, we continue to count on the **enterprising investigative spirit of Josep Maria Pascual**.



Hearts for *Tous* windows. DPS Production

Giant dice for *Mango*

Head display for *Buff*, Igualada

Bust Form. *Ben Sherman*, London





*The craftwork profession is like biology;  
evolving, choosing the best strategy,  
for the end product prosperity, but:  
only the craftsman has a conscious project.*

***-Josep Maria Pascual Arnella***

C/ Capcir, 22  
08211 Castellar del Vallès  
BARCELONA  
Tel. +34 937 471 090  
[info@pasqualarnella.com](mailto:info@pasqualarnella.com)

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[www.pasqualarnella.com](http://www.pasqualarnella.com)