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# Narrating the Archipelago: The Aesthetics and Politics of Balearic and Canary Island Graphic Art

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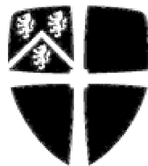
A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy



Durham University

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2025

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*Some translations from Spanish, Mallorquí, Canarian Dialect, French, and Catalan in this thesis have been carried out for the benefit of readers.*

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# Introduction

This thesis conducts the first critical analysis of the aesthetics and politics of thus far understudied comics, cartoons, vignettes, illustrations, and longform visual narratives drawn, printed, and displayed across the Balearic and Canary Islands during the mid-twentieth and the early twenty-first centuries. It examines the work of artists and curators across four different pivotal moments: the mid-Francoist regime (1950–1975), the transitional period (1971–1983), the tourism boom (2006–2025), and the graphic revival (2011–2025). Whilst approaching these materials together as a corpus of graphic art, the thesis compares and contrasts how they cultivate distinct poetic graphic aesthetics which invoke the archipelagic politics of mobility.

Engaging with the Balearic and Canary Islands in this thesis, I deliberately choose to participate in a wider effort to decontinentalise Spain. I do so by approaching their graphic landscapes as comprised of nodes within a porous and interconnected archipelagic network which both engages with and exceeds the bounds of the nation-state with which they share one limb of relations. The thesis also opens up their broader relations in so doing. On the one hand, this involves discussing differences, similarities, and relations between Balearic and Canary Island artists. On the other hand, this also implicates expanding on Balearic and Canary Island linkages to Africa, the Caribbean, Northern Europe, and the Philippines. In no sense does this seek to establish a universal reading, rather a critical approach which may open up new avenues for studies of other archipelagic relations in other graphic corpora which may follow. By maintaining that scope, this thesis offers a situated reading that may be adapted, tested, and expanded through subsequent work on many other islands. Thus, the approach taken throughout not only positions Balearic and Canary Island graphic artworks within Hispanic

Studies, but also underscores the viability of exploring how archipelagic aesthetics and politics in graphic artworks might unsettle implicit theoretical hierarchies.

By placing Balearic and Canary Island graphic landscapes at the centre of my analysis, in this thesis I intervene against a longstanding tendency within Spanish Studies to privilege peninsular perspectives, implicitly reinforcing narratives of coherence and dominance centred around the nation-state. There are a range of other grounds of inquiry which might further stem from this thesis, for example, by exploring even more closely linkages with Puerto Rico, Cuba, Cape Verde, Venezuela, Corsica, Sardinia, the Azores or with other South Asian islands also implicated in the cycles of exchange to which the materials discussed here are related. Similarly, further work may be carried on whether comparable dynamics emerge in other autonomous regions of Spain, where cultural production has likewise often negotiated between regional self-definition and forms of recognition beyond the national centre. Such comparative extensions represent productive avenues that are explored in places in this thesis, but they are not its core remit. Rather, my approach to attending to relations to other sites and regions always ties back to departures from the Balearic and Canarian Islands and the specific historical, linguistic, and cultural formations in which their graphic landscapes are implicated. The reasoning for this choice lies in the need to closely read materials which, thus far, have been marginalised in Hispanic Studies, Island Studies, and studies of Visual Cultures and yet, which, as I discuss, stand to make significant contributions to those fields. To examine a wide range of graphic artwork from Tenerife, Fuerteventura, Gran Canaria, Lanzarote, La Palma, La Gomera, El Hierro, La Graciosa, Mallorca, Menorca, Eivissa, and Formentera thinking with their myriad of archipelagic relations across a seventy-five-year period already constitutes a substantial corpus. Given the relative lack of sustained critical attention afforded to the graphic art of these islands, maintaining this scope allows the thesis to offer the depth of analysis that such material has not previously received. This is only more relevant as this thesis is the first

extended comparative study devoted specifically to the graphic art of the Balearic and Canary Islands, looking at those works as themselves manifesting an insular condition which is both interconnected and yet in no sense universalizable or even, at times, similar.

A key facet of the understanding of insularity in this thesis stems from how it unpacks the ways that the distinct Balearic and Canary Island graphic artworks discussed throughout appose with Glissant's thought. That derives from discussing how such works are both sites for the representation disconnection or rupture and also reflecting on the politics of mobility and immobility. In this way, I conceptualise of these works as embodying Glissantian archipelagic insularities. Glissant's writing, in his *Poetics of Relation*, unfurls from the insular site as a place of departure. His work discusses the politics that surround a range of insular spaces, including boats, seas, and physical islands. Glissant navigates how these are experienced by people who are simultaneously immobilised and yet also mobile as they are transported, reshaped, and rearticulated across the world. This takes on both a historic and metaphoric function, as from the experience of insularity in Glissant exudes "knowledge of Relation within the Whole" (*Poetics of Relation* 8). That is to say, from his insular sites stems archipelagic thinking ('Conversation with Édouard Glissant aboard the Queen Mary II' 2).

Throughout, I pose that the politics of archipelagic thinking is especially prominent in graphic artworks from across the Balearic and Canary Islands created and exhibited between 1950 and 2025. That politics runs parallel to those underpinned by an understanding of mobility not simply as movement between fixed points, but as a process shaped by stoppage, access, and control, in which, as Mimi Sheller puts it, "islanders dwell thanks to many different kinds of coming and going, pausing and waiting, producing a choreography of uneven spatialities and temporalities" ('Island Futures' 17). Such mobilities, as this thesis shows, intersect with the politics of democracy, race, economics, landscape and culture.

Building on those frames, this thesis demonstrates how artists from across the Balearic and Canary Islands have represented a Glissantian politics of mobility in their graphic art to render their homes both as sites of political contestation and as crossroads of multiple trajectories surrounding migration, tourism, inequity, state repression, and coloniality. It traces how those artists' distinct practices are shaped by interrelations with the Mediterranean, the Atlantic, Europe, and Africa, and how they have presented their work to question, disrupt, and reconfigure hegemonic narratives that treat their homes as mythologised sites of origin and exile.

Tracing frames around the archipelagic networks to which I refer, this thesis shows how Balearic and Canary Island graphic artists between 1950 and 2025 have challenged peninsular-centric understandings and conceptions of static insularity. This gestures towards an interrogation of Eurocentric hierarchies and logics of imposition, as I argue that the archipelagic politics of graphic artworks from across the Balearic and Canary Islands unsettles binary notions of centre and periphery and challenges transatlantic frameworks that have too often relegated the diverse islands of these distinct places to the margins of both cultural discourse and critical discussions in Hispanic Studies.

The title *Narrating the Archipelago* has been chosen in order to attend to how very different visual works from across a range of islands participate in the telling of cultural and political histories without necessarily relying on linear storytelling. It highlights how this thesis discusses narrative as distributed across images, across time, and across sites of production and reception. In that turn, I conceptualise of the archipelago, whilst a singular term, as inherently constituted of multiple constituent parts and relations, much as the geographic archipelago is made up of numerous islands. This approach allows the thesis to bring aesthetic analysis into dialogue with questions of temporality and meaning-making, showing how Balearic and Canary Island graphic artists have not simply depicted singular islands, but have contributed

to ongoing processes of narrating them, processes that are multiple, contested, and continually in motion

*Encounter*

This thesis stems from one specific moment on a *guagua* (local bus) travelling through the Municipio de Yaiza (Yaiza municipality) on the southernmost part of Lanzarote, whilst heading towards an *Instituto de Educación Secundaria* (Secondary School) (henceforth, *IES*) on a British Council placement. School days for teaching staff began at seven o'clock and living two hours' commute away from the *IES* involved habitually carrying a laptop loaded with reading. At half past six in the morning, as dawn broke over the African sky, two distinct yet resonant works, drawn in a stark black-and-white line style, faced each other on the open computer screen. To the left, a *Twitter* feed featuring the work of Pau Rodríguez "Pau" Jiménez-Bravo (Mallorca, 1972–). To the right, a copy of *La Provincia* (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 2000–) with an illustration by artist José Luis "Padylla" Padilla Morilla (Gran Canaria, 1976–). Despite differences in medium, context, and intention, these shared a common motif: the vessel. Pau's was a *vaixell* (small boat) framing parents and a child departing from Mallorca in search of a life elsewhere because of increasingly poor living conditions (FIG 1.18). Padylla's vessel was a *cayuco* (small boat), once used by Maghrebi fishers, now carrying a range of migrants to the Canary Islands' shores (FIG 1.15). These images, drawn from disparate islands separated by 2090 kilometres, converged on that bus travelling up the spine of Lanzarote. They framed not idyllic tropes surrounding tropical island chains, but instead presented insular spaces characterised by vacuousness, breakage, mobility and immobility. In those, the inadequacies of using national or regional framings to contain the resonances of different histories underpinning life in Mallorca and Gran Canaria were evident. Neither work fits into a mapping of a unified Spain with cultures and histories that are confined to its borders,

nor do they reflect on rooted identarian logics stemming from islands that are characterised by isolation. From this encounter, four critical questions emerge. First, what underpins the aesthetics of these works, and of the vessels depicted within them? Second, what do graphic artworks from across the Balearic and Canary Islands, when placed in dialogue, reveal about the limitations of framing insular experiences through identarian logics that hinge on notions of bounded regions or nations? Third, how do these works open up alternative models of belonging or identification? Finally, how can graphic artworks from across different Balearic and Canary Islands, which are distinct though resonant, be read in ways that expose and challenge disciplinary and epistemological hegemonies?

*Graphic Art*

This thesis addresses its central questions through the close examination of the aesthetics and politics of archipelagic mobility in selected works of graphic art, including singular editorial illustrations, caricatures of political and cultural figures, vignettes, multi-panelled comics, zines, longer-form graphic histories, and pieces published as hardback graphic books. I have chosen these pieces according to four principal criteria: first, the extent to which they exemplify the archipelagic aesthetics and politics that structure this study; second, their interrelation with other works, traditions, and visual discourses; third, their significance within the periodisation of Canary and Balearic graphic production; and fourth, their formal qualities as graphic texts.

Across Canary and Balearic Islands, graphic art has occupied a range of distinct but interconnected position within wider cultural production. In the Canary Islands, Franck González argues in *El humor gráfico en Canarias: apuntes para una historia* (1808–1998) that graphic forms combining image and text can be traced back to early codices between 1404 and 1808 (25). However, he notes that it is only in the later nineteenth century that graphic art

attained widespread circulation through the Canary Island printed press, particularly in newspapers such as *El Látigo* (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria) and *El Surráigo* (Santa Cruz de Tenerife), which regularly published single-panelled cartoons and caricature on their pages throughout the 1880s. At the turn of the twentieth century, *Gente Nueva* (Santa Cruz de Tenerife, 1899–1901) carried on the tradition started by these two earlier periodicals, presenting the first recognisably Canarian comic strips, including work by Diego Crosa y Costa (Santa Cruz de Tenerife 1869–1942) and Manuel Verdugo (Manila, 1877–1951, La Laguna). González situates these within an "Edad de oro" spanning 1899–1920. From this point, newspapers such as *La Provincia* and *Diario de Las Palmas* continue these traditions up to the Civil War, before production is disrupted by censorship in the 1930s. Across these outlets, graphic practices were not marginal or purely popular forms, but part of a broader press cultural landscape in which artists move between illustration, satire, and other media. Crosa y Costa and Verdugo are now both as well remembered as poets as they are as graphic artists. In that sense, as González argues, they form the origins of a Canary Island tradition of linking graphic art to wider modernist and avant-garde currents, including connections to literature, architecture, and the visual arts, and to movements such as Magical Realism and Surrealism (139).

In the Balearic Islands, graphic landscapes developed along a different but related axis, shaped strongly by linguistic and cultural proximity to Catalonia. Balearic cartooning participated, especially in the twentieth century, in broader Catalan-language visual culture circulating between the islands and the mainland. As Galo Molina Roig notes, the idea of Mallorca as culturally isolated cannot be sustained given the extent of its press networks in the 1920s–1930s, particularly in outlets such as *Última Hora* (Mallorca). These networks enabled both the circulation of international cartoons and sustained collaboration with Barcelona-based artists. As Molina Roig argues,

> sha de dir que novament cau el mite de laïllament de Mallorca... En el cas de Barcelona és encara més exagerat degut a la quantitat de dibuixants de la Ciutat Comtal que aporten el seu treball als diversos diaris illencs. (61)
>
> (It must be said that the myth of Mallorca's isolation is once again dispelled... In Barcelona's case, it is even more exaggerated due to the number of cartoonists from the Catalan city who contribute their work to the various island newspapers.)

At the same time, insularity also continued to shape pan-Balearic practices. Balearic graphic artists on each island, in their production historically, Molina Roig argues, fluctuated between regional belonging and specific island conditions, navigating issues surrounding economic marginality and debates over cultural autonomy.

In both the Balearic and Canary Islands, González and Molina Roig concur that Graphic landscapes were sharply interrupted by the Civil War, which destroyed many of the networks developed in the 1920s and 1930s. The postwar period was then defined by censorship and repression, including the imprisonment of artists. Where political satire was concerned, the interruption was longer, with meaningful re-emergence delayed until the democratic transition. The Spanish Civil War and the subsequent repression of the press under the Francoist dictatorship curtailed many of the spaces in which Balearic and Canary Island graphic art had previously flourished, leading to a fragmentation of established practices and networks. In this sense, pre-1950s Balearic and Canary Island graphic landscapes were both distinctly structured by three overlapping conditions: artistic experimentation, entanglement with mobile histories, and persistent negotiation with censorship and subversion. Moreover, their landscapes have

been shaped not by distinct trajectories of comic art, caricature or avant-garde experimentation seen as separate, but instead, as intertwined.

Considering their intertwinements, the methodology of selection of the pieces of work that I focus on follows the thesis's wider structure. Chapter 1 begins with works that correspond to more conventional or recognisable representations of the Balearic and Canary Islands, before turning to some of the most prominent artists who contest and reconfigure those imaginaries. Subsequent chapters trace the origins of the themes and concerns developed by these artists, examine the wider trajectories and proliferations that emerged from them, and finally consider points of convergence between Balearic and Canary Island production: the shared threads that connect these archipelagos, as well as the new directions in which their graphic cultures are moving.

Two facets unite the works with which this thesis engages, as much as they divide them. First, they are brought together for their use of the visual language of the symbol, which I take to constitute the key building block of graphic pieces, tracing this from Scott McCloud's work in *Understanding Comics*. I centrally relate how the graphic artworks in this thesis embody the mechanism McCloud describes in *Understanding Comics*, where works invite readers to project themselves into the graphic language of the symbol (36).

Second, these works are joined by their engagement with the interaction between text and image; where text functions not only to title a work, but also to accompany it in an additive manner. The works discussed in this thesis all engage with how the image works to enhance the quality of text, be that on a website, in a newspaper, in a book, or in an exhibition hall. Unpacking this, I trace out the limits of graphic art, expanding on Hillary Chute's view that "Comics is a word-and-image form in which words and images create unsynthesized narrative tracks; that is to say, it is not an illustrative form in which each is redundant of the other" (108). Tracing graphic art means to move even further than this, and to think with graphic materials

and how they interact with text, not only within the panel, but also around it, and act in relation to it.

Situating graphic art, I note that, as stated by Katherine Roeder as early as 2008, "[c]omic scholarship continues to struggle with issues of nomenclature" (6), and this continues today. In that vein, this thesis does not concern itself with the term "graphic novel". Seeking to negate hierarchies in cultural production, from the outset I recognise the ways that this term seeks to break "comic books and their mass-cultural associations [fostering] a high-low dynamic within a field that is already marginalized and fighting for aesthetic approval" (Roeder 6). However, in this thesis, I do not seek to present the graphic works I engage with in that manner, their aesthetic approval is a matter for their readerships, not often for the artist, and that itself is a constantly shifting body. Pieces in this thesis once seen as ephemera now are collectors' items, some were reproduced tens of thousands of times in daily newspapers, and now only small fragments of them remain. In a distinct thread, Will Eisner's term "sequential art" does not easily apply here either, since the majority of works engaged with in this thesis do not contain multiple sequential panels, nor are they explicitly concerned with gutters or page turns in all cases.

If not derived from an engagement in logics of "high" and "low" culture, as in the case of Katherine Roeder's writing in 2008, where might graphic art be sited in this thesis? On the one hand, the rationale for viewing the wide range of works I engage with as graphic art stems from how artists and curators themselves rarely confine their practice to a single genre or style. This is exemplified in the way that figures such as Rafael Vaquer i Palmer (Palma de Mallorca, 1957–), as discussed in Chapter 3, moved with ease from drawing adult vignettes in the pan-Catalan counter-cultural review *Butifarra!* in 1975 to publishing the 1981 children's graphic narrative *Història de les Balears en còmic* (*History of the Balearic Islands in Comic*); in the way that Josep (Pep[e]) Roig Gómez (Palma de Mallorca, 1947–), discussed in Chapter 2,

shifted from drawing comics featuring American tropes of Cowboys and Indians in the late-1950s to publishing political satire in Palma-based outlet *Última Hora* (1893–); or in how Carolina "Almost" Bonino Moreno (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 1983–), discussed in Chapter 4, has moved between drawing deeply satirical caricatures to producing illustrations that humanise mobile travellers. Capturing how these graphic artists work with plasticity, crossing formats and aesthetics, requires a frame wide enough to follow them.

In another way, by treating its selected works as graphic art, rather than as *humor gráfico* (Spanish) or *humor gràfic* (Catalan/Mallorquí), this thesis also moves beyond the tendency to frame them as ephemeral cartoons or as forms of diversionary humour, an approach that often privileges reception over the conditions of their production. This, further engages with Roeder on the way that "[t]he classification "comic art," for example, is problematic because it carries the implication that humor is an essential component of the work." (6).

Rather than privileging the ephemeral or humorous nature of graphic art, treating materials as diversionary or marginal, in this thesis, I think of them, in Chris Ware's terms, as "a possible metaphor for memory and recollection" ('Introduction', xxii). I depart from the idea, as Hillary Chute puts it, that graphic art can constitute "largely a hand-drawn form that registers the subjective bodily mark on the page; its marks are an index of the body, and its form lends its pages the intimacy of a diary" ('Comics Form and Narrating Lives' 112). In this phraseology, what she sets out is a recognition that comics have a diagrammatic capacity to render otherwise difficult-to-express realities and sensations. Whilst discussing that subjective intimacy, this thesis simultaneously situates graphic art within a broader analytical framework that accounts for the material and social processes through which these works are made, circulated, and reinterpreted over time. I appose this approach to graphic art to that discussed by Bryan Cameron and Rhiannon McGlade, thinking of Visual Print Media and foregrounding "form, social impact and the creative and collective practices involved in production" (177).

Approaching the pieces in this thesis as graphic art involves discussing not only their visual and textual content in response to a certain space, time, or moment, but also in relation to the mobile archipelagic networks of influence and cultural contexts that underpin both their creation and their afterlives. Rather than isolating works as finished or self-contained objects, as some previous studies of *humor gráfico* have done, framing works in a context of graphic art production foregrounds processes such as drafting, publication, circulation, and reuse. In doing so, in this thesis, I highlight how meaning is generated across multiple stages and locations, and how graphic works continue to evolve through their movement between contexts as archipelagic materials in their own right.

Approaching graphic art in this thesis, I combine three interrelated processes. First, I analyse formal aesthetic qualities: layout, framing, gutters, repetition, space, use of line, and colour, treating these as epistemic strategies rather than stylistic choices. Doing that, I draw on Shiamin Kwa's notion of thinking with "communication between surfaces [which] are freighted with meaning" (31) when exploring how graphic artworks function. Then, second, I situate pieces in the times and places of their production and circulation by tracing networks of collaboration, publication, and exhibition. Through that, I underscore the mobility that underpins the circulation of a wide range of graphic artworks. Finally, I relate these ideas to the politics and histories of specific islands. This approach allows for a reading of the diverse graphic artworks that this thesis discusses as linked to specific practices and choices, rather than as bounded objects within national or disciplinary categories. This foregrounds notions of breaking and linkage, mobility and immobility in a way that seeks to resist tendencies to isolate works from across different Balearic and Canary Islands or to totalise them as if they come from unified island chains.

The decision to focus on graphic art, rather than film, literature, or theatre, follows from the particular formal and historical capacities that its range of media has encapsulated within

the Canary and Balearic Islands. Graphic art has occupied a distinctive position across the islands of these archipelagos as a mode of cultural production able to move between journalism, satire, popular culture, political commentary, and artistic experimentation. As I highlight, it has circulated through newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, exhibitions, and small-scale independent publication, allowing it to register everyday political pressures and local debates with a speed and accessibility less available to many other forms. At the same time, its combination of image and text makes it especially suited to representing questions of mobility, fragmentation, insularity, and spatial relation that are central to this thesis. The juxtaposition of panels, the arrangement of page space, and the visual negotiation between separation and connection offer formal resources through which archipelagic experience can be articulated with particular clarity.

This emphasis does not suggest that film, literature, or theatre are of lesser significance to Canary or Balearic cultural history. Rather, for this thesis, graphic art provides a corpus in which aesthetic form and political intervention frequently coincide in especially visible ways. In doing so, it enables this thesis to trace how archipelagic identities are imagined, contested, and reworked not only through narrative content, but through visual form, modes of publication, and patterns of circulation. The study of graphic art therefore offers a productive means of addressing the wider concerns of the thesis while remaining attentive to a medium that has often received less sustained critical attention than neighbouring cultural forms.

The decision to focus on graphic art in this thesis also rests on its particular capacity to make cultural processes visible at the level of both form and circulation. As a medium that combines image and text within spatially organised surfaces, graphic art offers a way of thinking through relationships between figures, places, and ideas, rather than simply representing them. This is especially valuable in the study of the Balearic and Canary Islands, where cultural history is shaped by movement, fragmentation, and uneven forms of visibility.

Graphic works do not merely depict these dynamics; they are structured by them, using devices such as juxtaposition, framing, and interruption to register discontinuities that might otherwise be difficult to articulate.

This mobility is matched by a corresponding immediacy. As discussed earlier, graphic works are often produced in close temporal proximity to the events, discourses, and atmospheres with which they engage. Caricatures, illustrations, and comics can respond rapidly to political developments or social tensions, capturing the texture of a moment as it unfolds. This responsiveness does not reduce them to fleeting commentary; rather, it positions them as records of how cultural meanings are actively negotiated in the present. Their apparent ephemerality is precisely what allows them to preserve traces of uncertainty, contradiction, and affect that more retrospective forms of cultural production may smooth over.

Yet, I also conceptualise that the value of graphic art lies not only in its responsiveness or its circulation, but in its formal capacity to hold together multiple temporalities and perspectives. Through repetition, fragmentation, and the interplay of presence and absence, graphic works can stage encounters between past and present, local and global, fixed and mobile. In the context of the islands, this enables a mode of analysis that resists both isolation and homogenisation. Rather than treating the Balearic and Canary Islands as coherent cultural units, graphic art reveals them as sites of ongoing negotiation, where identities and histories are continually reworked. By attending to these formal and material qualities, this thesis positions graphic art as a medium that does not simply reflect cultural history but actively participates in its construction. It provides a means of tracing how meanings are produced, circulated, and contested across different scales, offering a way to engage with insular contexts that remains attentive to both specificity and connection.

*Archipelagic Thinking*

To catalyse the way that this thesis seeks to break isolations and totalities whilst examining key graphic artworks from across the Balearic and Canary Islands, I touch on an epistemological framework dedicated to the same aim. Édouard Glissant's archipelagic thinking especially speaks directly to this. I seek not to take archipelagic thinking to be applicable to works from across the Balearic and Canary Islands in direct equivalence here. Rather, Glissant provides a launchpad for my discussions, offering a language through which to articulate how tracing the mobilities underpinning those works unsettles hegemonic understandings and calls into question established disciplinary logics.

Engaging with Glissant, a vital starting point is his concept of the archipelago, which he develops to explore the cultural and philosophical histories of the Caribbean. Writing from Martinique, as Glissant thinks with the archipelago, he starts in an Antillean exteriority of France, at once treated as isolated and marginal whilst constantly negotiating cultural mediation, with his reference points stemming from across the globe. Glissant's writing resonates with the ways Balearic and Canary Islands have been presented visually in hegemonic media, as we will see in Chapter 1, even if the comparison with Martinique is not direct. Each of these places has been perceived as marginal in relation to France, Spain, the Americas, and Europe, when in actuality, they are marked by interconnections which extend far beyond their shared attachment to singular states or regions.

To those ends, when this thesis speaks of narrating the archipelago, rather than the rendering of the history of a singular specific place, it does so in a deliberately expanded sense that moves beyond narrative as a strictly literary or sequential form. On the one hand, the archipelago is not approached as a singular, bounded unit, but as an expansive and shifting network: a set of relations, crossings, and disjunctions that resist reduction to a unified whole. The use of the term here is therefore not totalising, but heuristic. It signals a way of thinking

across the Balearic and Canary Islands relationally, as interconnected sites whose histories and cultural productions echo, intersect, and diverge. In this sense, thinking with these spaces as an archipelago names a mode of connection rather than a fixed geography, foregrounding plurality, unevenness, and openness over coherence or unity.

On the other hand, drawing and narrating in this thesis does not refer solely to the presence of linear storytelling or sequentiality. Rather, it describes the processes through which meaning is structured, unfolded, and made legible across visual forms, much as it is in the creation of graphic art. Although not all the works examined in this thesis are sequential, they nonetheless participate in drawing narrative practices through their organisation of space, their deployment of visual motifs, and their positioning within broader contexts of circulation and reception. A single vignette or illustration, this thesis argues, can condense a narrative moment, imply before-and-after temporalities, or gesture towards wider social and political dynamics. Drawn narrative, in this sense, is not confined to sequence but emerges through framing, juxtaposition, and reference.

Taking these steps whilst tracing archipelagic thinking is where the relationship between the aesthetic and the narrative becomes productive rather than oppositional. The aesthetic choices made by artists, composition, line, colour, scale, and the absences and mobilities are not merely formal, I argue. Rather, I underscore how they structure how viewers apprehend time, space, and relation. From this, I trace how aesthetic strategies can suggest archipelagic movement or stasis, continuity or rupture, proximity or distance, thereby shaping implicit narratives about insular forms and their place within wider worlds. Even in ostensibly static images, I argue that narrative operates through what is shown, what is omitted, and how elements are arranged, inviting viewers to reconstruct or imagine the conditions surrounding the scene.

When I explore the resonances of thinking with the archipelago in this thesis, I note that this was never conceived of as purely confined to Martinique. Rather, writing of it, Glissant set out his view that, "[t]he whole world is becoming archipelagic and becoming creolized" (194). As Richard Scholar surmises, in this phrase "Glissant connects the two processes he says the whole world is undergoing by twinning them here as the main verbs of his sentence" (33). Moreover, as Scholar in turn states, "[a]rchipelagic thinking embraces a vision of humanity as a diverse totality or what Glissant (2005: 76), quoting Montaigne (1992: III.2 ('Du repentir'), 805), calls 'la forme entière de l'humaine condition' ['the entire form of the human condition']" (33). Articulating that vision, Glissant's writing does not seek to yield objective or universal truths when thinking archipelagically. He characterises it instead as "the thought of the attempt, of the intuitive temptation, which could be apposed to continental-thoughts, which would first be system-thoughts" (*Poetics of Relation* 45). Continental thought constitutes that which

> makes us think that we see the world as a bloc, taken wholesale, all-at-once, as a sort of imposing synthesis, just as we can see, through the window of an airplane, the configurations of landscapes or mountainous surfaces. (45)

Departing from it, Glissant argues that "[w]ith archipelagic thinking, we know the rivers' rocks, without a doubt even the smallest ones" (45). In this statement, he captures three key ideas regarding archipelagic thought: its specificity, its relationality, and its opaqueness, all of which resonate with the poetic aesthetics of graphic art and the politics of mobility. This turn from a distant, totalising vantage point to an immersed, partial engagement shifts the terms of knowledge from abstract synthesis to a situated encounter, thereby foregrounding the particular

(the individual rock), its embeddedness within a wider system (the river), and the irreducible incompleteness of any attempt to grasp it in full.

With regards to specificity, rather than aspiring towards essentialism, as I engage with archipelagic thinking in this thesis, I examine specific aspects within graphic materials: the individual rocks of the river. I think of these pieces both as materials, but also as nodes within wider networks. To do that, I explore the aesthetics of graphic artworks from across the Balearic and Canary Islands in key moments whilst analysing the distinct characteristics of pieces within their setting of creation and first appearance in public life, be that in the press, at exhibition, or elsewhere. Second, I consider how the rock exists as part of the river, thinking with its relationality. Within that frame, as I explore specific pieces of artwork created and disseminated between 1950 and 2025, I read how they interact with other materials and practices, resonating with the tracing of a politics of mobility. This features in Chapters 2 and 4 of this thesis, which explore how artists have presented their work as rooted in their experiences and homes whilst also exhibiting it across their archipelagos and beyond, in places such as Madrid, Cuba, and the Philippines. The last aspect in archipelagic thinking that this thesis engages with is opaqueness, a type of poetics and a political commitment. In Glissant's phraseology in the *Poetics of Relation*, this is traced in the way that by navigating the river, we unpick the continental frame's generalisation, and, because of that, we also never conceptualise the river's full extents, nor can we compare it to another in a generalising sense. As Dominique Brebion argues,

> Opacity for Glissant is a means of sustaining resistance, of promoting relation and maintaining diversity, and thereby refusing incorporation into hierarchical systems of knowing that by their nature tend to prioritize the traditional centers of power. (106)

This stands against what Glissant asserts is the basis of "understanding" within Western thought, underpinned by a requirement for transparency that is demanded of "the Other" (*Poetics of Relation* 192), something then used to compare, judge and reduce their experiences. Drawing towards opaqueness, this thesis traces how graphic artists from across the Balearic and Canary Islands interrogate the exoticising gaze, articulate dissent against impositions from peninsular-centric governments, and to navigate both with and against identarian pivots in their insular homes.

When this thesis uses the term insularity, it does not refer to a romanticised notion of island life, nor to ideas of otherness or isolation that have long-shaped external representations of island spaces, a facet I discuss throughout. Instead, it denotes the condition of belonging to, or being of, an island: a material, lived, and relational experience that is structured by particular geographies while remaining open to wider connections. In this sense, insularity is not a marker of closure, but rather a term used to facilitate the apprehension of place as constituted through both attachment and movement.

Understanding insularity in these terms allows for a more precise engagement with the tensions that underpin island life. To belong to an island is to inhabit a space that is at once bounded and porous, where limits, geographical, political, or economic, are acutely felt, yet continually negotiated through circulation, exchange, and outward projection. These tensions manifest in multiple ways: between rootedness and departure, visibility and marginalisation, autonomy and dependency. They are not resolved but persist as structuring conditions that shape cultural production and lived experience alike.

Throughout the thesis, these tensions are drawn out through the analysis of graphic works that both reflect and reconfigure insular realities. I argue that artists engage with the condition of being of an island not by presenting it as fixed or self-contained, but by exploring

its contradictions: as a site of constraint and possibility, of enclosure and connection. Insularity thus becomes a productive analytical lens, one that foregrounds the complexities of belonging without reducing it to either isolation or idealisation.

Historically, tracing those ideas, island studies scholarship has long been shaped by a tension between two interpretative impulses: on the one hand, a tendency to treat islands as naturally bounded, self-contained units, and on the other, a recognition of their deep entanglement within wider regional and global networks. Beth Greenborough notes that historically, scholarship had regularly discussed the island-as-laboratory model. In this model, insularity had been assumed to produce coherence, stability, and relative isolation, with islands being viewed as laboratories of evolutionary, scientific, climactic or cultural development, spaces where distinct forms, species and identities only emerge because of their separation from continental dynamics. However, this manner of thinking has been increasingly challenged.

Island studies scholarship has called into question a bias towards either physical or metaphoric aspects of islands, arguing that "human encounters with physical space [islands] are always already managed by our position in linguistic and cultural systems of representation" (Fletcher, 19). A key step away from that is marked by the move towards thinking with the archipelago. As of 2011, Elaine Stratford et al. argued that in "the field of island studies, the archipelago remains one of the least examined metageographical concepts" (118). Nonetheless, once in its infancy, nowadays there is a growing interest in thinking with the archipelago in order to step beyond

> [c]ertain limitations [which] arise from the persistent consideration of two common relations of islands in the humanities and social sciences: land and sea, and island and

> continent/mainland. What remains largely absent or silent are ways of being, knowing and doing—ontologies, epistemologies and methods—that illuminate island spaces as inter-related, mutually constituted and co-constructed: as island and island. (Stratford et al 113)

In turn, Jonathan Pugh argued as early as 2013 that

> [b]y developing the conceptual tools of the archipelago, island studies scholars, including Stratford et al. (2011), are generating a framework that will be particularly appealing to those of us who are already receptive to tropes of transfiguration rather than repetition, who find binaries and dichotomies too cut and dry, and for whom cross-currents and sea-changes are more appropriate tropes than those of periphery/centre, mainland/island. The concept of the archipelago gives us another reason why we should not only think about, but with, islands. (20)

Thinking with this concept, as Glissant does, builds upon a burgeoning range of island studies scholarship identified by Pugh in 2013, and challenges the epistemological habit of using insularity as shorthand for isolation, always placing insularity within broader spatial and historical systems of the archipelago cohered not as a single unit, but instead as a multiplicity of nodes. This shift has destabilised the reading of insularity as closed or separate by insisting that real islands that inhabitants call home have rarely, if ever, functioned in such neatly bounded ways.

When this thesis refers to home, it does not invoke a fixed, bounded, or exclusively inward-looking space. Rather, home is understood as a dynamic and relational site: one that is

continually produced through movement, encounter, and negotiation. In the context of the Balearic and Canary Islands, as I argue throughout, home is not reducible to a stable point of origin or a singular identity tied to territory. Instead, it emerges through lived archipelagic politics and aesthetics, through the circulation of people, images, and ideas, and is shaped as much by outward connections as by local attachments. To speak of home, then, is to speak of a process rather than a condition.

Thinking with this archipelagic conception of the home of graphic artworks aligns with the notion of the "small places" (Suzanne Césaire, *The Great Camouflage* 40), viewed not from a continental perspective or seen through a totalising synthesis, but, rather, as places of vantage, returned to and connected with, a "multiple body and a radiating a lived example" (*Poetic Intention* 147). In other words, this thesis thinks not of insular graphic production or of the islands it comes from as marginal or peripheral, but instead as sites of heightened density, where global mobilities and networks meet and are mediated in particularly visible ways. Insular graphic materials, too often conceptualised as peripheral, I argue, offer a vantage point from which broader dynamics, tourism, migration, economic dependency, cultural exchange, can be apprehended in a concentrated form. The smallness of the graphic works discussed in this thesis does not imply limitation; rather, it underscores their capacity to register and refract wider archipelagic processes, making them analytically generative. In this sense, the idea of the home island for archipelagic graphic artists, as a small place, becomes a locus of interaction, where the local and the global are in constant dialogue.

Conceptualising of Balearic and Canary Island insular graphic artworks in this way resists their reduction to an exclusionary or static category. It frames artists, materials, and spaces not as defined by exclusion or rootedness, belonging only to those who can claim origin or permanence, but also as those that are continually reconfigured through presence, absence, and mobility. The graphic works examined in this thesis frequently stage this tension, depicting

home as something that can be left, returned to, imagined differently, or contested. Through these representations, home appears as both materially grounded and conceptually open: a site where identities are negotiated rather than secured. This is something particularly drawn out in the latter chapters of this thesis.

Thinking with, rather than applying Glissantian thought around these small places, this thesis navigates a structure of four chapters whilst analysing the shifting aesthetics and politics of pieces of graphic art from across the Balearic and Canary Islands in specific times and places. Doing that, it does not aim to provide a comprehensive history: such work, up until the early 2000s, has been undertaken by scholars including Franck González and Sebastià Serra Busquets, whose breadth studies *El humor gráfico en Canarias: Apuntes para una historia (1808–1998)* (*Graphic Humour in the Canary Islands: Notes for a History*) and *L'humor gràfic a la premsa diària de Mallorca en el temps present* (*Graphic Humour in the Mallorcan Daily Press in Present Times*) are engaged with throughout.

*Chapters*

This thesis spans across four chapters, which are not determined by a continuous chronological progression, but by the material, spatial, and artistic archipelagic politics and aesthetics that link them. Rather than offering a linear account of graphic production across the Balearic and Canary Islands, this structure follows the trajectories of practices, forms, and ideas as they emerge, circulate, and are reconfigured across different moments. In doing so, it adopts an archipelagic logic: privileging connection, recurrence, and relation over temporal completeness. The chapters are therefore organised around four interrelated points: today's graphic archipelagos, where they stem from, where they went, and where they might be going, each of which captures distinct configuration of aesthetic and political concerns while remaining in dialogue with the others.

This approach leads my selective engagement with the historical record. By structuring the analysis in this way, the thesis foregrounds how graphic art operates across time through processes of reuse, citation, and reinterpretation. Contemporary works are read not as isolated outputs, but as nodes within longer trajectories that extend back to mid-twentieth-century practices and forward into speculative futures. Similarly, earlier materials are not treated as closed historical artefacts, but as active components within ongoing networks of meaning-making. This enables a mode of analysis that moves between moments without collapsing them into a single narrative, attending instead to how specific aesthetic strategies and political concerns reappear under different conditions.

Chapter 1 articulates the critical importance of the interrelated terms that structure the arguments of the thesis: hegemonic perceptions and the politics of mobility. Unpackaging these notions, it discusses how the Balearic and Canary Islands have been jointly framed as static, exotic, and peripheral in hegemonic imaginations. Then, it explores how artists have contested those framings by producing alternative aesthetic and political narratives. The chapter situates its analyses historically by highlighting how those narratives arise in artists' responses to experiences of overtourism, socio-economic crisis, and migration between 2008 and 2025. I begin by examining hegemonic views of the Balearic and Canary Islands, following the dissonance between projections of timeless tourist paradises and lived realities of islanders. Search engine images provide an entry point for this, and I discuss how they have jointly flattened the Balearic and Canary Islands into consumable, picturesque places. Tracing this framing exposes the political weight of the aesthetics of the hegemonic imaginary surrounding the islands, which both erases histories and marginalises residents.

The chapter then turns to graphic works by the aforementioned Pau published in Mallorca, the cover of the pan-Balearic review *Tot Inclòs: Danys i consequences del turisme a les nostres illes* (*All Inclusive: Damage and consequences of tourism on our islands*) (Palma

de Mallorca, 2015–) and the production of Canary Island artists Padylla, Juan Jesús "Morgan" Verdú Medina (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 1963–), and Carolina "Almost" Bonino Moreno (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 1983–) circulated online and in Canary Island presses. It highlights how a range of works confront the distortions seen in the search engine images by rendering visible the inequities produced by economic crises alongside the contested politics of the movement of people from both North Africa and Northern Europe. In this analysis, Glissant's notion of the static "burning beach" (*Poetics of Relation* 205) is a central touchstone as I explore how artists frame their islands as sites of crisis and disorientation. By situating Glissant alongside their archipelagic practices, the chapter in turn shows how the artists depart from this static image equally. I trace how they use the aesthetics and politics of mobility to destabilise hegemonic perceptions of islanders as trapped or marginal and I explore how their works frame their homes as spaces of circulation, relation, and contestation. In so doing, the chapter establishes what hegemonic views of the Balearic and Canary Islands are and how artists have challenged those in distinct ways. This lays the groundwork for the broader thesis: exploring how graphic artists have presented their homes as not merely exoticised or crisis-bound peripheralities, but as nexuses of cultural production that denaturalise conventional understandings of inequity, marginality, and mobility.

Chapter 2 retraces the origins of the politics of archipelagic mobility within the graphic art discussed in Chapter 1 to the earliest discursive intensifications created across the Balearic and Canary Islands in the twentieth century. It does so by asking how and why different artists from Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Santa Cruz de Tenerife and Palma de Mallorca moved from drawing work that aligned with the requirements of the regime to creating pieces that openly encouraged readers to dissent from it and to look outwards. This chapter is longer due to its focus on establishing the historical and conceptual foundations of the thesis, tracing the evolution of specific Balearic and Canary Island graphic practices across multiple decades,

regions, and artists to contextualise the aesthetic and political understandings explored in what follows it.

The chapter begins with a pivotal moment between 1970 and 1974 when Gran Canarian artist Faustino "Pastino" García Márquez (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 1944–) and Mallorcan Pep Roig used cartographic vignettes as a vehicle for commentary on the position of their homes by exerting their difference from what they conceived as a static peninsular-centric Spanish regime. Through that, I elaborate how these artists invited their distinct readerships to look outwards by highlighting the faux-isolationist tendencies of Francoist politics. I then compare these pieces to production created less than twenty years beforehand examining works published by Marí (Mariano) Benejam "Benejam" i Ferrer (Ciutadella, Menorca, 1890–Barcelona, Catalonia, 1975) in the mid-1950s, which employed the style demanded by the regime. I examine this work's focus on Castilian-centric unity, its privileging of whiteness, and its perpetuation of colonial structures especially.

Following these analyses, the chapter returns to 1950, examining the simultaneous re-emergence of novel graphic practices across Mallorca, Gran Canaria, and Tenerife after a relative nadir in production following the 1936–1939 Civil War. I first examine how Pedro Quetglas "Xam" Ferrer (Palma de Mallorca, 1915–2001), Harry Gordon Beuster (Santa Cruz de Tenerife, 1931–2010) and Rafael "Rafaely" Bethencourt (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 1933–1982) created graphic works that celebrated the unique histories of their cities, Palma de Mallorca, Santa Cruz de Tenerife, and Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. Then, moving towards 1963, I show how production in these places shifted beyond the city to engage pan-insular realities by depicting a range of landscapes, examining magazines *Mujeres en la Isla* (*Women on the Island*) (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 1953–1964), *El Conduto* (*The Conduit*) (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 1955–1974), and *Lluc* (*Luke*) (Escorca, Mallorca, 1921–). Here, I ask what it meant for authors and readerships to inhabit the spaces depicted in these publications,

focusing on works leading up to 1968. Thus, I delve into how, over fifteen years, a range of graphic artists moved from exploring localised realities to exploring mobilities across spaces.

Tracing the trajectories of pan-insular graphic mobilities, the chapter next considers how artists responded to Minister for Information and Tourism Manuel Fraga Iribarne’s censorship reforms between 1962 and 1968. On the one hand, I analyse how Canary Island artists, led by Luis León Lasa (Alcalá, Philippines, 1890–Madrid, Spain, 1986), circulated their work through exhibitions and other sites, reshaping their forms of expression in the process. On the other, I also explore graphic trajectories of dissent, generated using spatial frames. From these analyses, two key insights emerge. First, that between 1950 and 1972 graphic artists across the Philippines, Mallorca, Menorca, Gran Canaria, Tenerife, and Lanzarote developed practices that encouraged audiences to view their work as mediating across multiple spaces. Second, these artists used their personas and practices strategically to navigate censorship constraints. Ultimately, the chapter argues that graphic practices across the Balearic and Canary Islands during this period unsettle the perception of Franco-era visual landscapes as stagnant, demonstrating that the aesthetics and politics of mobility were central to artists’ interventions.

Chapter 3 builds from Chapter 2 by examining the end of the regime and the transition to democracy, and by tracing how these political shifts shaped changes in the production and consumption of graphic art. It departs from Rosi Song’s view that Spain’s transition, and its afterlives, have been centrally marked by disconnection (*Lost in Transition: Constructing Memory in Contemporary Spain*). Building on this perspective, the chapter delves into how disconnections appear in a range of types of works from across the Balearic and Canary Islands created between 1971 and 1983. It contends that artists from different islands in both archipelagos reflected on disconnections to articulate their places both within and beyond Spain, both historically and contemporaneously. To draw this out, I begin with the period between 1971 and 1978, focusing on pieces in the pan-Catalan satirical magazine *Butifarra!*

(*Cutting Sleaves! / Sausage!*) (Barcelona, 1975–1987) alongside the work of Pastino in the Canary Islands. I argue that their vignettes suggest that the transition reinforced a disconnect between the islands and the centralised Spanish state. Yet, I also note that these artists did not just turn inward in response to that. Rather, I discuss how, during the 1980s, practitioners increasingly sought to fill spaces left by disconnection from the Spanish state by seeking to re-connect the pasts and presents of their island homes. Out of this moment emerged a distinct genre: the graphic history. Moving beyond the immediacy of the vignette, the chapter draws out understandings surrounding that genre by examining the 1981 work *Història de les Illes Balears en Còmic* (*History of the Balearic Islands in Comic*) alongside 1983's *La otra... historia de Canarias* (*The Other… History of the Canary Islands*). These texts, I propose, were both reflective and forward-looking, with mobility at their core. The chapter concludes by summarising how, from 1971 to 1983, the artists thinking about identarian pivots across the Balearic and Canary Islands whilst creating these works developed a progressively sharper awareness of their historical and contemporary pan-insular similarities and disconnections, whilst also problematising how those pivots today are read.

Finally, Chapter 4 builds upon conclusions from Chapter 3 by exploring how historic and contemporary graphic production from across the Balearic and Canary Islands has intersected since 2011. I open this discussion by showing how graphic artists today draw upon, respond to, and reinterpret cartooning from the 1950s to the 1980s. This engagement, I argue, is not simply nostalgic. Rather, I underscore how it reshapes contemporary aesthetic and political practices. Underscoring that, I demonstrate that graphic art from these earlier decades has continued to inform creative production since 2011. In analysing contemporary works and their interfaces with pieces from the mid-twentieth century, I pay particular attention to how earlier artists have been incorporated by those working in the last fifteen years into exhibitions, highlighting their role in linking past and present. I also think through the notion through the

politics of mobility and that of the thread. Following from that, the chapter concludes with a reflection upon the exhibition of Francesc "Max" Capdevila Gisbert's (Barcelona, 1956–) 2018 longform graphic work *Rey Carbón* (*Carbon / Coal King*) at the *Santa Cruz Cómic* Festival in 2024. I argue that this work's trajectory to the festival, and content from it exhibited there, exemplifies how graphic art from across the Balearic and Canary Islands transcends narratives of marginality, constituting instead a network of mobilities, and potentially future threads: practices forged in fractured and interconnected politics and aesthetics which deliberately resist any claim to universality.

This non-linear organisation reflects the broader methodological commitment of the thesis: to think with the archipelago as a set of relations rather than a bounded sequence. In particular, the relative absence of the 1980s and 1990s as sustained focal points in this thesis is not indicative of their lack of importance, but reflects the way in which the thesis traces lines of influence and resonance rather than adhering to decade-by-decade coverage. The key developments of the transition period are addressed where they directly inform the emergence of graphic histories and the articulation of disconnection as an aesthetic and political concern. However, the subsequent decades are approached more obliquely, as periods through which earlier practices were consolidated, circulated, and, in some cases, attenuated, before being reactivated in the twenty-first century. To foreground them in equal measure would risk imposing a false continuity that runs counter to the thesis's emphasis on ruptures, and uneven temporalities.

By following the movements of graphic practices across spaces and times, this thesis thus identifies patterns of connection and disjunction that would be obscured within a strictly chronological framework. The resulting structure mirrors the dynamics it seeks to analyse, foregrounding mobility, fragmentation, and recurrence as central to understanding graphic art

production across the Balearic and Canary Islands, and the interrelations between production in the 1950, 1970s, 1980s, and today.

*Contributions*

By foregrounding analyses rooted in the politics of mobility and, later the notion of the thread, this thesis demonstrates that graphic artworks from the Balearic and Canary Islands are not confined by national or disciplinary boundaries. Instead, it shows how these works reconfigure relationships between place, politics, and culture. In doing so, it argues that reading Balearic and Canary Island graphic art from the 1950s to the present can destabilise fixed hierarchies and open new pathways for understanding cultural and political belonging. Building on this foundation, the thesis makes a series of interrelated contributions.

First, this thesis contributes to Island Studies, and specifically, to studies of visual representations of insular imaginaries. Chapter 1 opens with that by exploring how Balearic and Canary Island graphic artists interrogate representations of islands in the twenty-first century. In doing so, it engages with John Gillis's argument that, from religious Edens and political utopias to odysseys and exiles, thinkers have not only written about islands but have also thought with them to narrativize Western discourses and histories. In *Islands of the Mind*, Gillis traces the evolution of islands from mythic realms in ancient civilizations to symbols of isolation and paradise in the modern era, showing how figures such as Odysseus, Caliban, and Robinson Crusoe have embodied the human fascination with islands and reflected broader themes of identity, exile, and utopia. He suggests that islands are nexuses of dispute, where realities collide and values are tested. Drawing on that, this thesis reveals how such imaginaries have been both reified, through colonial, tourist-centric, and online representations, and departed from in graphic materials created and circulated across the Balearic and Canary Islands. These materials, it shows, are at once beholden to, and capable of liberating their

readers from, discourses linked to the West's recent history of colonising and mythicising insular spaces.

This feeds into the second contribution of this thesis, which is sited in Hispanic Studies. A prevalent overarching view surrounding studies of the many languages, literatures, and cultures which exist within the territorial bounds of the Spanish state within Hispanic Studies remains aligned to that identified by Diego Muro and Alejandro Quiroga, who suggest that "a pervasive feature in contemporary Spanish history is the dialectical relationship between the Spanish nation and the peripheral nations" based on "Stein Rokkan's centre-periphery paradigm" (18). José Álvarez Junco takes a view that these "central and peripheral nationalisms are relatively recent phenomena" (34), whilst being an exponent of the significance of their key roles during the nineteenth century. Nonetheless, he also suggested in 2002 that

> [i]t should be underlined that in the last 25 years this factor has apparently disappeared [...] Spain is no longer an underdeveloped country, and specifically Madrid is no longer the underdeveloped region where the political center is located, confronted with two industrialized peripheral areas. (34)

The extent to which this remains the case, especially in the wake of the 2016 Catalan constitutional crisis, and amid the renewed visibility of so-called "peripheral" nationalisms across Spain, remains questionable. These nationalisms have deep historical roots extending well before 2016's resurgence, as Álvarez Junco also clearly argues (13). Yet, outside the Basque Country and Catalonia, to which he refers, other "peripheral" settings across Spain have received comparatively little scholarly attention. The emergence of Balearic and Canarian expressions of difference within the Spanish state warrants particular focus. These trajectories

are distinct from one another and from better-studied nationalist movements, which have historically attracted far greater academic interest. Moreover, being islands shaped by trade and migration, they also share close links to spaces beyond the fixed bounds of Spain: the Atlantic, the Mediterranean, Europe, Africa, Latin America, and the Pacific.

The emergence of Balearic and Canarian expressions of difference within the Spanish state warrants particular focus because each archipelago occupies a distinct geopolitical, cultural, and historical position that unsettles any unified understanding of "Spain" as a coherent national formation. While often grouped together as insular peripheries, the Balearic and Canary Islands articulate difference through divergent trajectories that demand to be read in their specificity rather than subsumed into a shared category. In the case of the Balearic Islands, expressions of difference have been closely tied to questions of language, regional identity, and cultural affiliation and disaffiliation in relation to both the Iberian Peninsula and a broader Catalan-speaking sphere. Joan Ramon Resina has highlighted how Catalan cultural production complicates the centralising tendencies of the Spanish state, and this dynamic is inflected in the Balearic Islands in even more unique ways, as I draw out across Chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis especially, by the islands' own negotiations of insularity, tourism, and cultural autonomy. The Balearic Islands occupy an ambiguous position: geographically proximate to the Iberian Peninsula and deeply entangled in Mediterranean circulations, yet often framed as peripheral within national imaginaries. This has produced forms of cultural expression that oscillate between alignment with Catalan traditions and the assertion of distinct insular identities, particularly in response to the pressures of mass tourism and economic restructuring since the mid-twentieth century.

By contrast, the Canary Islands' expressions of difference are shaped by their Atlantic positioning and their relations with Africa, Latin America, and Spain's colonial imaginaries. This archipelago of distinct islands has been placed in recent history as a site of transcultural

exchange, where identity is negotiated through ongoing processes of migration, diaspora, and geopolitical marginalisation. As Nilo Palenzuela has argued,

> hay tantas convergencias entre los insulares como con cualquier otro ciudadano del mundo, quizás, eso sí, existen las mismas ganas de salir pitando de las condiciones históricas que asfixian la creación [...] Está lejos de mí [...] la idea de que las islas son mucho más que puntos geodésicos en relación con otros tantos puntos (12)
>
> (There are just as many points of convergence among islanders as there are with any other citizen of the world; perhaps, that said, there is the same urge to make a break for it from the historical conditions that stifle creativity [...] Far be it from me [...] to suggest that islands are much more than mere geodetic points in relation to so many other points)

Instead, he argues that they are "'uno-más, uno de tantos'" (14).

Moreover, as discussed throughout, the Canary Islands' distance from the European mainland, geographical, cultural, and historical, has often led to their representation as exoticised or exceptional within Spanish discourse, a tendency that artists and cultural producers have both engaged with and resisted. Their work frequently foregrounds themes of mobility, border regimes, and postcolonial critique, reflecting the islands' position as a frontier space within contemporary migration routes between Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa and Europe.

Engaging with these distinct contexts also aligns with broader theoretical interventions that challenge the dominance of continental and nation-centred frameworks. There is a vital need for expanding on how islands can be understood as relational spaces, shaped by networks

of connection rather than isolation.[1] Building on such approaches, this thesis treats the Balearic and Canary Islands not as interchangeable peripheries, but as differentiated sites through which to examine how cultural production both reflects and reconfigures the uneven geographies of the Spanish state.

Focusing on these archipelagos in their specificity thus enables a more nuanced account of how expressions of difference emerge, not only in opposition to centralised power, but through distinct configurations of language, history, and mobility. In doing so, it contributes to a rethinking of Spanish cultural studies that moves beyond peninsular bias, foregrounding instead the plural, contested, and relational nature of cultural production across its insular spaces.

A growing interest in Spain as a nation of regions intersects with the attention given to it as a transatlantic space, conceived as a spoke in a migratory and cultural dialogue, both with the state's former colonies and, increasingly, the United States. Within Hispanic Studies, this perspective has been reflected in recent work such as *Transatlantic Studies: Latin America, Iberia, and Africa*, a volume of thirty-five essays whose objective is

> to make the case for an understanding of transatlantic cultural history over the last two centuries that transcends national and linguistic boundaries, as well as traditional academic configurations, focusing instead on the continuities and fractures between Latin America, the Iberian Peninsula, and Spanish-and Portuguese-speaking Africa. (1)

[1] This cue is visible throughout island studies scholarship following 2007, especially typified in writings around Godfrey Baldacchino's *A World of Islands: An Island Studies Reader*, which grounds a notion of moving on from the "situation where the subject matter – the island, or the islander – becomes a "looked at" reference group" (2), towards a position where islands "more readily as revictualling stations for ideas on the condition of nature, humankind or simply of ideas for their own sake" (17), where we seek to reclaim a "fragmented (continental) narrative of the many islands of the world can be profitably replaced by a reclaiming, pan-archipelagic script of 'a world of islands'" (17).

This volume, spanning a historical period that its editors, Cecilia Enjuto-Rangel, Sebastiaan Faber, Pedro García-Caro, and Robert Patrick Newcomb define as "the postcolonial period, that is, the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries" (1), sets out with bold ambitions.[2] MHowever, pivoting towards Transatlantic Studies leaves many sites under-theorised: particularly those that do not fall neatly on either of the two shores of the Atlantic, conceived of as a barrier rather than a conduit for mobility. The Atlantic Canary Islands, for example, feature in only one of the volume's thirty-five essays. Equally, despite the presence of scholars specialising in the Mediterranean, that space scarcely enters the conversation. Whilst Transatlantic Studies offers appealing perspectives for an age of trans-global air travel, where a six-hour flight from peninsular Iberia to the eastern United States is taken as routine, its emphasis on hub-and-spoke models risks undervaluing historical experiences shaped by slower, more dispersed circulations across islands and open ocean spaces.

As Francisco-J. Hernández Adrián has highlighted in *On Tropical Grounds: Avant-garde and Surrealism in the Insular Atlantic*, views of Hispanic spaces conceived as spokes in a two-sided transatlantic dialogue often obscure more complex, less fixed cultural landscapes. Tracing this in his book, he frames spaces as constituted by what Richard Rosa identifies as "a dynamic of insular and cosmopolitan interconnectedness where modes of non-European relation resonate across the archipelagic and littoral spaces of the modern Atlantic" (in Hernández Adrián, *On Tropical Grounds* xx). In that way, in *On Tropical Grounds*, Hernández Adrián resists framings of Hispanic spaces as extensions of a peninsular core or as points in a binary transatlantic axis, instead discussing their cultural production through an archipelagic logic of insular and cosmopolitan interconnectedness. This thesis traces how that frame is

[2] Many residents of Equatorial Guinea, Cuba, the Philippines, and other former Spanish colonies might question whether colonisation had in any meaningful sense ended during this period.

relevant for conceptualising and comparing Balearic and Canarian graphic practices. I elucidate how work from across the distinct islands that make up these places must be read as cultural sites with distinct visual languages which emerge from the tension between immobility (insular isolation, marginalisation) and mobility (tourism, migration, transatlantic exchange), positioning them as nodes in broader, non-linear networks of relation. In doing so, the thesis extends Hernández Adrián's conceptual move into the study of graphic art, drawing on the vitality of his approach to the ways that insular practices unsettle metropolitan and transatlantic binaries that dominate Hispanic Studies.

Whilst the Balearic and Canary Islands have occupied central positions in Spain's material and imaginary history, being among the first sites outside the Peninsula colonised by medieval Iberians and acting as points of departure for figures ranging from crusaders to conquistadors, Columbus to the Caudillo, the perspectives of their residents remain marginal within Hispanic Studies. This marginality is only further entrenched in studies of their graphic art, which rarely features beyond passing reference at comics fairs in Barcelona, Madrid, or Valencia. Graphic production from across the Balearic and Canarian archipelagos is thus treated as peripheral, disconnected, or beyond the scope of graphic art narratives centred around Spain. These works do not fit neatly into the binary of Madrid versus Barcelona, nor into narratives of Iberian history, nor into models of the transatlantic. A central question of this thesis is therefore: how can the different graphic practices of the Balearic and Canary Islands be studied without being reduced to marginal appendages of graphic landscapes framed solely within the bounds of the Spanish state?

Addressing that question requires moving beyond frameworks that map Spain's graphic production in terms of centres and peripheries. This approach builds on critical interventions in studies of Spanish frontiers (Doubleday and Vizcaya, 2008) and on Ann Davies' *Spanish Spaces*, wherein she argues that Spain is "at its most reductive a specific geographical area

bounded by France, Portugal, the Atlantic and the Mediterranean but… an entity constantly in the process of becoming through the subjects that express their desires through the landscapes" (166). Whilst Davies usefully attends to the logics of subjectivity surrounding the Spanish state, her geographical framing excludes Africa, Latin America, Asia, and the broader Mediterranean context. These limits are especially visible in the Balearic and Canary Islands.

Hence, whilst analysing graphic artworks produced and disseminated within the Spanish state, this thesis highlights how artists move beyond those frames without taking the nation as an ideological centre. Instead, it demonstrates how the work of artists from Formentera, Eivissa, Mallorca, Menorca, Lanzarote, Fuerteventura, Gran Canaria, Tenerife, La Palma, La Gomera, and El Hierro resists such centralities. By thinking of each of these islands as a spoke in an interconnected web, rather than as outposts of the Spanish mainland, this thesis elucidates how distinct works of graphic art respond to networks, circulations, and connections that stretch well beyond national borders. Building from this premise, I ask whether the study of graphic artworks created across the Balearic and Canary Islands can be situated beyond the logic of the nation-state, viewing these territories as simultaneously inside and outside its bounds. I propose that these islands be approached through archipelagic thinking, taking their insularity as a vantage point from which to explore cultural, historical, and graphic production in a way that both engages with Spain and exceeds it. Building from this premise, I ask whether the study of graphic artworks created across the Balearic and Canary Islands can be situated beyond the logic of the nation-state, viewing these territories as simultaneously inside and outside its bounds. I propose that these islands be approached through archipelagic thinking, taking insularity not as a condition of isolation or entrapment, but as a relational vantage point shaped by movement, exchange, and uneven connection. In this sense, "insular" does not denote closure; rather, it foregrounds how these spaces are constituted through flows of people, images, and ideas that both engage with Spain and exceed it. This frame, I argue, allows the

graphic production of the Balearic and Canary Islands to be understood in terms of mobility, circulation, and interaction, and, in so doing, demonstrates its significant potential to revitalise approaches to Hispanic Studies.

# Chapter 1:

# Beaches, Boats & Crises: Aesthetics and Politics of Graphic Erasure and Immobility (2006–2025)

This chapter examines the aesthetic and political tensions which underpin early twenty-first century graphic representations of the Balearic and Canary Islands. It addresses how the many constituent islands that make up these two diverse regions can be analysed in comparison and how graphic narratives from them have challenged hegemonic imaginaries which hinge on notions of immobilising exoticisation and crisis. I begin by exploring how Balearic and Canary Island shores have been jointly exoticised, treated as little more than sites of sun, sea, sand, and relaxation. I then consider how Pau Rodríguez "Pau" Jiménez-Bravo (Mallorca, 1972–) on Mallorca, and José Luis "Padylla" Padilla Morilla (Gran Canaria, 1976–), Juan Jesús "Morgan" Verdú Medina (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 1963–), and Carolina Bonino Moreno (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 1983–) on Gran Canaria interrogate those exotic imaginaries in both convergent and divergent ways. Through that, the chapter opens up how this range of graphic artists from across these distinct islands have invoked the politics of archipelagic mobility in their work, setting out the key frame which runs throughout this thesis.

## Images of Erasure: The Island of Continental Thought

For the 5.35 billion users of the internet today, the use of a search engine constitutes one of the first points of departure for any mode of inquiry. As William Dutton notes, "across

the world, people from almost all sectors of society are using the Internet for a variety of purposes, from everyday life and work to local, strategic and global issues" (1). When inputting the terms "Balearic Island graphic art" into *Google.com*, the most prevalent results are pieces such as 'Balearic Islands Travel Print' (FIG 1.1), 'Balearic Islands Travel Print Wall Décor' (FIG 1.2), and 'Balearic Islands Beach Travel Poster' (FIG 1.3). The Mediterranean coasts in these works are almost exclusively viewed from the shore. They have pristine sandy beaches, which are framed by exotic palms and clear blue skies peppered with fluffy white cumulus clouds. Small yachts and boats regularly feature across those seascapes, beckoning the viewer towards the gently lapping waves. Conversely, the presence of heavy shipping carrying the 15.4 million tonnes of cargo handled by Balearic ports (in 2022) is notably absent.[3] The creators of these imagined spaces paint them digitally in complementary colours with defined lines. Palettes of pastel beige, pink, and green are used to shade the land, whilst the ocean features in a gradient of turquoise and blue sprawling into the distance before meeting an optimistically bright azure sky. Images of the Balearic Islands and the Canary Islands yielded here are visually indistinguishable without accompanying text. Results yielded when searching "Canary Island Graphic Art", as seen in 'Canary Islands Traditional Travel Print' (FIG 1.4), 'Lanzarote Canary Islands Travel Artwork Print' (FIG 1.5), and 'Lanzarote Canary Islands Travel Artwork Print' (FIG 1.6), share many features with FIGs 1.1–1.3. In FIGs 1.4–1.6 vivid greens are marked with pure whites, soft oranges, and flowing blues in complementary tones similar to those found in FIGs 1.1–1.3.

FIGs 1.1–1.6 are in one way, ubiquitous, yet this relies on a significant erasure: the removal of identifiable features from the actual islands they purport to represent. In FIGs 1.1–1.3, there is little correspondence with the real landscapes of the Balearic Islands. The inland

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[3] According to Richard Ullyett "Ports of the Balearic Islands Handled 15.42 Mn Tons of Cargo, up +12%" in that year" (n.p.).

plains of Menorca, the *Serra de Tramuntana* mountains of Mallorca, and the sandbars of Ibiza and Formentera are absent. The feature in FIG 1.1 may be inspired by the Mallorcan *Es Pontàs* arch, though it appears rotated and reattached inaccurately. Similarly, renderings of the Canary Islands in FIGs 1.4–1.6 omit the characteristic grey-blues and beiges of the archipelago. The image of 'Lanzarote' (FIG 1.5) excludes volcanic rock, vernacular architecture, and low shrubbery, instead depicting white sand and deciduous plants. FIG 1.6, identifiable as Tenerife through the presence of the Pico del Teide, presents unspoilt landscapes and empty beaches, whilst FIG 1.4 abstracts the island further, showing flower meadows, cypress trees, and terracotta roofs more reminiscent of the Italian Riviera than the Canaries. The archipelago's volcanic peaks appear only in pale blue, serving as a backdrop to calm, idealised compositions of sun, sand, and sea. FIGs 1.1–1.6 do not only lack clear specificity; these works are also marked by the absence of any representation of the actual inhabitants of the Balearic Islands and Canary Islands. FIGs 1.1–1.6 do not include the medieval architecture of Palma de Mallorca, the factories of Manacor, the road network that slices through Arrecife, nor the bustling harbour of Santa Cruz de Tenerife. Instead, these works are unpolluted by any significant human inhabitation. These erasures apparently confirm Peter Hay's view that "so powerful is the metaphorical idea of the island that it can be deployed in the absence of even the slightest reference to the reality of islands" (30). In this, Hay refers to a form of "islandness" that operates less as a strictly geographical condition, and more as a highly flexible symbolic construct. Hay's references to islands, much like those in FIGs 1.1-1.6, are repeatedly invoked by writers, artists, and political thinkers as a means of articulating psychological states such as isolation or introspection, as well as broader political and cultural conditions including insularity and nationalism, often without any substantive engagement with actual island contexts. In this process, the metaphor effectively overwrites reality: rather than acknowledging the complexity of islands as sites of connection, mobility, and historical

entanglement, shaped by trade, migration, and empire, representations tend to reduce them to bounded, self-contained spaces. Such simplification facilitates a form of erasure, obscuring lived realities including economic dependency, colonial legacies, and cultural hybridity. Moreover, these constructions frequently reveal more about mainland imaginaries than about island life itself, with the island functioning as a projection surface for desires of escape, purity, experimentation, or containment.

The erasure in FIGs 1.1–1.6 reinforces the islands' detachment from the wider world. This emerges, on the one hand, through the absence of external influence. There are no manufactured goods, aircraft, or signs of globalisation in these works. They present spaces in which the movement of people and resources appears negated. On the other hand, detachment is also reified through the viewers' perspective. In FIGs 1.1, 1.2, 1,4, and 1,6, the viewer is positioned in a foreground partially enclosed by foliage, gazing toward distant shorelines and cliff-faces that stretch to the horizon. This distancing is intensified by the marketing of these works as domestic décor, designed to hang on white walls and laminate floors, as shown in FIGs 1.1–1.2 and 1.4–1.6. Taken together, these images frame the Balearic and Canary Islands as isolated sites, divorced from the pressures of urban life.

FIGs 1.1–1.6 follow the tourist image of islands developed in the early twentieth century. As Richard Sharpley notes, these spaces are "associated with notions of remoteness, separateness, difference and the exotic, they are the stuff of romance and adventure, of fantasy and escape, of 'otherness'" (167). This builds on a long history of tropical island images, which, David Harrison observes, "have figured prominently in Western culture for centuries and have long been regarded with ambivalence" (97). That ambivalence comes from the difference between these idealised images and the real lives of island residents: they present "a series of established images [of tropical islands] that seem much at variance with the multiple realities experienced by island residents" (Harrison 97). As he argues, the image of tropical islands

range "from that of romantic and idyllic havens, offering escape and redemption from a busy world" (10). That reference (as also discussed in Chapter 3) relates to images that even predate Western colonialism, reaching as far back as the literature of ancient Greece, Rome and even Southern India." (10). Furthermore, as Richard Grove argues, Greek writers, for instance, wrote of the "idyllic and lush conditions of the Isles of the Hesperides ... at a time when some of the Greek islands were still much better forested than the mainland" (21). In contemporaneous terms, in Chapter 2, I discuss the perpetuation of such images in the twenty-first century, referring to tourism posters created under the Francoist regime (seen in FIGs 2.19, 2.20 and 2.22). The visual language in these posters is directly shared with that in FIGs 1.1-1.16. They use flat line, bright colour, tropical landscapes. Presentations of escape and difference correlated in parallel to those first earlier images that Harrison references.

Such tropical island images are shaped through a process of exoticisation in which, Mary Lawlor argues,

> [a] figure is cast as foreign, not in the concrete sense of belonging to a foreign country or ethnic group, but in the phenomenological and ethical sense of being "other" […], considered an object of interest and contemplation for the viewing subject, who presumably represents a cultural norm. (n.p.)

Glissant, too, frames how island spaces, cast as foreign others, such as those in FIGs 1.1–1.6, can be conceived in *Philosophie de la Relation: Poésie en étendue* (*Philosophy of Relation: Poetry in Extension*). As noted earlier, he refers to islands, considered through "[c]ontinental thought [which] makes us think that we see the world as a bloc, taken wholesale, all at once, as a sort of imposing synthesis, just as we can see, through the window of an

airplane, the configurations of landscapes or mountainous surfaces" (Glissant in Michael Weirdorn, 3). Glissant's writing, stemming from the Antilles, resonates with the visual language of FIGs 1.1–1.6, which present homogenised sites where insular specificity is treated as a marginal concern. These images render the Canary and Balearic Islands as sites where travellers will see generic tropical views, flattening difference into consumable scenery rather than any connection to unique insular histories or cultures. The prevailing politics in FIGs 1.1–1.6 is one of imposition, where aesthetic enjoyment takes precedence. These works are built upon reducing Balearic and Canarian islands into homogeneous static locations which can be viewed and enjoyed from a distance. To these ends, the images in FIGs 1.1–1.6 correlate to those of the Glissantian burning beach. As he writes, that is a place "now without cover, without surprises, like a prisoner. Strolling tourists spread their towels on it. [...] Not a single big wave to distract you from the pleasure of lethargy" (*Poetics of Relation* 205). This burning beach, much like those seen in FIGs 1.1–1.6, is stripped of its complexities, reduced to an ordered, predictable space for passive enjoyment. It is a static space where "[o]rder and comfort have timidly returned" (*Poetics of Relation* 205), free of disruptions and stripped of surprise. The politics which underpins that burning beach, correlates with Sheller's framing of the kinopolitics of "slowness [...], acceleration, blockages, stoppage, friction [...] and coerced movements" (*Mobility Justice* 3). That kinopolitics correlates with the generation of hierarchical structures of power, reflected in the way that the islands depicted in FIGs 1.1–1.6 are treated as little more than static margins.

## Drawing Back: The Insular Graphic Frame

Residents of both the Balearic and Canary Islands engaged with a range of strategies to challenge the framing of their homes as tropicalised exotic sites, as seen in FIGs 1.1–1.6. In public life, since 2014, this has taken the form of public protests addressing regional inequality

and overtourism, both linked to these islands' positioning as tourist destinations, brought along by the exotic place-branding of them across northwestern Europe especially. On Mallorca, Menorca, and Ibiza, street demonstrations have occurred regularly since 2014, with notable protests during the European Union tourism ministers' summit in October 2023 and further intensifications in June 2024. Similar concerns have surfaced in the Canary Islands. On Gran Canaria, Tenerife, La Palma, and Lanzarote, economic precarity, housing shortages, and environmental degradation, issues connected to overtourism, sparked the *20A* movement in April 2024. This heterogeneous movement drew an estimated 100,000 participants across the Canary Islands and inspired solidarity protests in Donostia-San Sebastián, Palma de Mallorca, Dubrovnik, and Venice. Around these public protests, a range of graphic artists have reflected on the key topics referenced at them: inequity, marginalisation, and social, cultural, and economic immobility. Across the Balearic Islands, that appears in work for the publication *Tot Inclòs: Danys i consequences del turisme a les nostres illes* (*All Inclusive: Damage and consequences of tourism on our islands*) (Palma de Mallorca, 2015–) (henceforth *Tot Inclòs)* and in Pau Jimenez Bravo's 'Pau per Tots' ('Pau for all') series. In the Canary Islands, it is evident in the work of José Luis Padilla 'Padylla' Morilla's (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 1976–) vignettes. Each of these has interrogated the exoticised imagery of FIGs 1.1–1.6 whilst engaging in a new form of politics, that of reflecting on the notion of crisis: a rolling set of moments characterised by the politics of immobility and stagnation. .

*Balearic Immobilities: Tot inclòs and Pau Jiménez-Bravo*

The use of editorial graphic art to challenge exoticisation is exemplified by work published in the activistic review *Tot inclòs*, which addresses the social and environmental consequences of tourism across the Balearic Islands. The 2015 edition, which accompanied a Barcelona exhibition, featured a cover graphic (FIG 1.7) drawn with defined lines in a style

reminiscent of the New Valencian School. In its margins, the work on this cover depicts everyday life on the islands. It presents high-rise buildings fronting a road crowded with cars, a traffic jam in the foreground, brightly dressed tourists, and a packed beach. Planes and helicopters leave contrails across the blue sky above, framing a city which is static, as implied by the immobile vehicles, yet which is geared entirely towards servicing mobile tourists. At the centre of the work, a poster billboard presents a contrasting image: a calm rocky bay with lush green foliage clinging to cliffs above pristine blue water under an open sky. The cover highlights the disparity between the idealised, marketable image of the islands and the chaotic reality of the urban environment in which it is placed. It equally shows how tourism imagery functions primarily as a tool to attract visitors and generate financial capital. Mercè Picornell argues that the view within the panel seeks to challenge the limitations of the rectangular frame of the postcard, a type of image which also inspired FIGs 1.1–1.6. As she states,

> [t]he space of the postcard is always limited to what its rectangular plane can contain and its symbolic function, which aims to summarise a unique gaze or experience. The subversive manifestations discussed here challenge these limits in two different senses: a) through what we could refer to as the revelation of the off camera (drawing on a cinematographic comparison); and b) through the critical use of the verbal anchorage of the iconic image. (298)

She poses that in the cover of *Tot inclòs* (FIG 1.7) "[t]he former use can be found clearly" (298), but she elaborates less on the identification of the "critical use of the verbal anchorage of the iconic image" (298). This aspect is also critical in FIG 1.7. Underneath, the billboard is given an added subheading with the term "Die Balearen" ("The Balearics"). The use of German writing on the cover of this Balearic Catalan magazine references the construction of hierarchic

politics surrounding the central image's aesthetic projection. It marks out the billboard panel's imagery as exclusively aimed towards mobile Northern European tourists of whom over 6.5 million visited the Balearic Islands in 2015 (Euroweekly, n.p.). Conversely, this linguistic choice also implicitly excludes the vast majority of Balearic, Catalan, or Spanish speaking islanders. The billboard renders an idyllic view of the majority of resident islanders' own home as literally inaccessible to them. Simultaneously, in the 2015 *Tot inclòs* cover, the artist forces readers to encounter the reality of the Balearic Islands today: one inundated by pollution, overcrowding, and increasing precarity, in which the mobilities of residents are clearly limited.

Another approach to the issues of overcrowding, immobility, and precarity across the Balearic Islands can be found in the work of Pau. Particularly relevant are pieces which formed part of his 'Pau per tots' series published five years before the *Tot inclòs* cover.[4] In 'Pau per tots', the artist reflects upon permutations of a socio-environmental crisis across Mallorca whilst disrupting the touristic imagery seen in FIGs 1.1–1.6. This can be seen in 'Socorro' ('Help') (FIG 1.8) and 'Masificación' ('Overcrowding') (FIG 1.9), pieces first printed in the Palma-based press outlet *Diario de Mallorca* before later re-circulation online following 2020.[5] In 'Socorro', Pau draws a grey-shaded line-drawn image of two halves. In the mid-backdrop, he represents a mass of people, implied to be foreign tourists, organised like an invading force

[4] A native of Mallorca, Pau had his initial foray into graphic art in fanzines such as *Tinta Escampa* and *GRUNT*. In 1995, in collaboration with Xabi Uriz and Daniel Martín Peixe, he embarked on the creation of his own fanzine, *Escápula Comics*. Subsequently, he extended his contributions across Spain with publications like *El Víbora* and *¡Dibus!*, and further afield in France and Belgium, including in *Spirou*. For a span of thirteen years, Jiménez-Bravo also held the position of editorial cartoonist for the dailies: *Diario de Mallorca* and *Mallorca Zeitung*. His prolific output has encompassed a range of series, notably *Las cansiones de OSSIFAR* and *El oriquen de todas las cosas*. His illustrations also found an international audience through his contributions to the *Je Dessine* collection, published by French publishing house Vigot during the period spanning from 2008 to 2011.

[5] This outlet, part of Editorial Prensa Ibérica, with offices in Palma, Inca and Manacor, has a long history of publishing graphic artists, and has continued that tradition well into its modernisation as a centrist, politically independent paper.

storming the beaches of Palma de Mallorca in boxy military-style landing craft. They depart from towering cruise ships with fourteen decks which completely blot out the skyline. In reality, these are six decks shorter than the real vessels which regularly dock on the islands, such as the *Ariva*, a P&O Cruises ship which berths in Palma throughout the summer. As they charge up the beaches, the tourists' vociferous demands, "¡Queremos ver la catedral o como se llame este sitio, hacer pis y comprar souvenirs fabricados en China!" ("We want to see the Cathedral or whatever that place is called, to piss, and to buy souvenirs made in China!"), are presented as a cacophony of consumerism. This echoes across the space created by the opposition between sea and beach in Pau's work as the tourists charge towards the *Muralla de la ciudad* (City walls), upon which an entrapped group of different characters exclaim "SOCORROOO!!!" ("HELLPPP!!!"). In this work, the artist depicts two groups of people who occupy Mallorca: residents, who are identified through their entrapment, and tourists, designated by their mobility and their ability to subsume the island under the sheer mass of their numbers. In this work, a paradigm of "uneven accessibility" of resource and afforded mobility is created (Sheller, *Mobility Justice* 138). The work presents "kinetic elites", who have privileged access to spaces, and an apparent "mobility poor" (Sheller, 'Why the Green New Deal Needs Mobility Justice' n.p.), whose ability to move is constrained. In 'Socorro', tourists represent those kinetic elites: figures who arrive en masse, overwhelming the island with unrestricted movement and consuming both its resources and landscape. Meanwhile, the residents trapped behind the medieval walls represent the mobility poor, constrained in their ability to control or resist the influx, with their space subsumed by tourism. The outcomes of the invasion of tourists in 'Socorro' are further reflected on in earlier work from 'Pau per tots', such as 'Masificación', a piece first published by Pau in 2010 in the *Diario de Mallorca* and later re-published on social media platform *X* (formerly *Twitter*) in 2023. In this image, Pau further reflects on the way that the sheer number of people arriving not only on Mallorca, but

across the Balearic Islands more broadly, has generated a situation in which humans have begun to fill every element of the natural world. Here, he presents a lush coast split from the ocean with hordes of people acting as a littoral barrier, blocking access to nature and clogging up the scene.

In 'Socorro' and 'Masificación', Pau's work moves away from the idea that Joaquín Valdivielso and Joan Moranta identify, that "[c]riticising tourism has historically been taboo in Spanish society" (1878), whilst fitting with the reality that "[i]n the Balearic Islands, however, criticism has always accompanied the evolution of tourism expansion and its different boom and bust cycles" (1878). Pau's comment "¿No será que sobran turistas?" ("Do we not have enough tourists?") in 'Masificación' marks him as part of a trajectory that is not only commenting on overtourism, but also tracing a trend whereby "there has been a shift towards a criticism of overtourism with the term "degrowth" coming to the fore" (Valdivielso and Moranta 1878). In a similar fashion, it may also be read as articulating what Alejandro Armas-Díaz et al. call "[t]he right to nature" (639), something they identify as a growing demand across Mallorca and Tenerife.

Presenting Mallorca faced with a crisis of overtourism, a space besieged, with its inhabitants suspended, screaming for help, due to a seemingly relentless onslaught of visitors, Pau's work incites not only political but also affective reflection on the strains that mass tourism has created between 2010 and the mid-2020s. His pieces in 'Pau per tots' can thus be read to engage with what Guillem Colom-Montero has identified in other graphic production from the 2010s, which

> represent the advent of mass tourism on the island as the trigger of a sudden, comprehensive, unexpected and polarizing episode of social change that has profoundly transformed the sociocultural tissue of Mallorcan society and the island's landscape and

> territory [which] suggest[s] the possibility that the experience of [t]he space of the postcard is always limited to what its rectangular plane can contain and its symbolic function, which aims to summarise a unique gaze or experience. The subversive manifestations discussed here challenge these limits in two different senses: a) through what we could refer to as the revelation of the off camera (drawing on a cinematographic comparison); and b) through the critical use of the verbal anchorage of the iconic image. (298)

This cultural trauma is caused not simply by the arrival of visitors, but by the restructuring of everyday life around the tourist economy: the displacement of local communities through rising housing costs, the casualisation and seasonalisation of labour, the commodification of language and tradition for external consumption, and the erosion of social continuity as neighbourhoods are remade to serve transient populations rather than residents. At the same time, the geography of the island is reconfigured through overdevelopment, environmental degradation, congestion, and the conversion of shared spaces into marketable leisure zones.

The humour in Pau's images of the tourist-inundated Balearic coast offers relief from the trauma for islanders. Using the hyperbolised representation of faceless masses of tourists offers, as Robert Stebbins puts it, "momentary humorous respites from the seriousness or lengthy concentration on a collective task commonly found in certain spheres of daily life" (95). That is also echoed in another work from 'Pau per tots' (FIG 1.14). In this image, sketched figures stand on a street corner surrounded by parked cars, remarking, "¿Y hoy qué? ¿No nos pasan a tinta? […] Creo que es por la crisis" ("And today what? They won't ink us in? […] I think it's because of the crisis"). This piece encapsulates the function of Pau's work, which he

literally sees as interrogating the otherwise stratifying disruption created by a crisis of overtourism in his home of Mallorca.

*Canary Island Immobilities, José Luis "Padylla" Padilla Morilla*

An attempt to provide humorous relief whilst interrogating the visual language surrounding the exotic tourist island is also present in the later work of Gran Canarian graphic artist José Luis 'Padylla' Padilla Morilla, whose pieces share significant thematic overlaps with those of Pau.[6] That is central to 'Da igual cuando la leas' ('It does not matter when you read it') (FIG 1.10), a piece published in *La Provincia* in June 2020.[7] In this work, also circulated on his blog, *Twitter* (*X*), and *Facebook* profiles, the artist centres an anthropomorphised representation of the Canary Islands, rendered as a topographical map in the shape of a box. This character is depicted by Padylla occupying an abstract space against a blank white background. Its human features consist of an exasperated expression and an arm raised as if to

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[6] The nephew of notable painter Nicolás Massieu y Matos, Padylla is a self-taught cartoonist, whose work heavily features across the region's political discourse. His first caricature was published in *La Gaceta de Las Palmas* in 1995, and in 2009 he began to work as editorial cartoonist for *La Opinión de Tenerife* and later for *La Provincia* and *El Día,* where he prints the majority of his work. As noted when he exhibited his work in the Canary Island parliament, "[Padylla] se ha convertido en uno de los humoristas gráficos más reconocibles del archipiélago" (In Anon *Parlamento de Canarias* n.p.) and, according to Gustavo Matos, President of the Cabildo de Las Palmas, "no hay debate en el Parlamento de Canarias en que no salga una viñeta de Padylla para ilustrar el asunto, algo que resulta del todo revolucionario" (In Anon *Parlamento de Canarias* n.p.). Padylla's work has received local and international recognition online on American-owned social media platforms such as *Facebook* and *X* (formerly *Twitter*) especially. His production regularly receives interactions from viewers from across Spain, with his reach even extending to Venezuela.

[7] This newspaper, first founded as part of the Editorial Prensa Canaria (later rebranded Editorial Prensa Ibérica in 1978), has maintained a liberal, politically centrist stance since the transition to democracy, whilst also engaging a soft regionalist editorial line, describing itself as "garantía de periodismo riguroso, veraz, plural y cercano, elaborado con visión atlántica y contrastado compromiso con las demandas, aspiraciones y retos de los canarios" ("guarantee of rigorous, truthful, pluralistic and accessible journalism, produced with an Atlantic vision and a proven commitment to the demands, aspirations and challenges of the Canary Islanders") (Antonio Cacereño, 'La Provincia/DLP' n.p.).

wipe its brow in despair. In the speech box to the right of this figure, the artist places the Canary Island dialectic phrase "Se me fue el baifo" ("I've lost it"), "después de la última crisis [...] se me olvidó diversificar el modelo económico!" ("After the last crisis [...] I forgot to diversify my economic model"). He then completes the piece with his own comment in the subheading: "Da igual en qué crisis leas esta viñeta" ("It does not matter in which crisis you read this cartoon"). In this framing, the comment that Padylla makes on the impact of "el modelo económico" ("the economic model") upon the Canary Islands is particularly significant. It incites reflection around the origins of discourses surrounding the post-2008 period, which was marked by the intensification of references to economic crisis predominantly in reporting by national press outlets following crashes in the housing and tourism markets.[8] Specifically, 'Da igual cuando la leas' interacts with the cultural outcomes of the 2008 economic recession, which Jorge Catalá-Carrasco refers to as "neoliberal expulsions" ('Neoliberal Expulsions, Crisis, and Graphic Reportage in Spanish Comics' 172).[9] Padylla's rendering of economic crisis provides a moment of comic respite regarding the serious challenges faced by Canary Islanders in the face of neoliberal expulsions.

Padylla's piece is not only retrospective, it also foreshadows crises to come, implying that "da igual" ("it does not matter") where or when it is read. In that way, his narrative surrounding crisis suggests that it does not implicate a moment of change; instead, it relates to a recurrent cycle. That outlook on crisis in the Canary Islands also appears in Padylla's other works, which link crises across the islands to issues surrounding overtourism, much like Pau. One example is 'Un futuro más torcido que la torre de PISA' ('A future more crooked than the

[8] In 2008, unemployment in the region was 17%, spiking to 33% in 2014, before slowly reducing more recently according to the OECD in 2012 (n.p.) and statista in 2022 (n.p.).

[9] These have occurred in Spain as the outcome of a process following 2008, when core structures of Spain's economy were reshaped by the advent of the recession, triggered following the collapse of the US mortgage market and, in turn, the pan-European stock market crash, leading to significant growths in unemployment and social deprivation.

Tower of PISA') (FIG 1.13), published in 2019. The image depicts a secondary school pupil balancing a stack of books into a precarious tower, rather than reading them in preparation for the *PISA* (*Programa para la Evaluación Internacional de los Estudiantes* (Programme for International Student Assessment)) exam taken across Spain. The subheading reveals a double play: the student stacks the books like a leaning tower (recalling that in Pisa, Italy) not for study, but as training for his future job as a waiter. This is reinforced by his pose, with one hand holding the books like a tray and the other carrying a napkin. The image implies that for Padylla, the Canary Island socio-economic landscape shaped by crisis does not offer young people bright prospects. Instead, it confines them to precarious futures working in the service industry to support a tourism-centric economy, which is often seasonal, with little room for alternative pathways through education or innovation. From Padylla's perspective, crisis in the Canary Islands is not a temporary state but a perpetual process that immobilises residents.

This idea of perpetual crisis in the Canary Islands is also resonant in 'Da igual cuando la leas' to regular readers of Padylla because of his use of a key visual anchorage: the box, a recurring device in his satirical works. He also employs this box in 'Canarias en el recuadro' ('Canary Islands in the Box') (FIG 1.11) and 'Sobre el REF balear' ('Regarding the Balearic Economic and Fiscal Regime') (FIG 1.12). Created in 2016 during the Catalan independence crisis, 'Canarias en el recuadro' depicts the isles through the eyes of conservative *Partido Popular* (Popular Party) Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy. He exclaims, "¡Canarias también se quiere ir de España! ¡Mira por dónde van ya!" ("The Canary Islands also want to leave Spain! Look at how far they have gone!"), as he stares at a map that places the islands far from the Peninsula. This cartoon satirises both Rajoy's misconception that the Canary Islands belong on the same latitude as the Balearic Islands (as they are often rendered on geographic maps of Spain), invoking the interchangeable logics underpinning FIGs 1.1–1.6, and the actual distance that separates Canary Islanders from mainland Spaniards in times of political crisis.

Padylla later reused the box in a different way in 'Sobre el REF balear'. This piece depicts *Coalición Canaria* (Canarian Coalition) (henceforce *CC*) leader and Canary Island Premier Fernando Clavijo Batlle in discussion with *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (Spanish Socialist Workers' Party) (henceforth *PSOE)* Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez over the latter's decision to cede to the Balearic Islands a similar fiscal regime to that offered to the Canary Islands, which have a special economic status enshrined in both Spanish and EU law due to their insular and outermost-region status. Here, Padylla again boxes the two archipelagos: labelling them "lejos" ("far") and "cerca" ("close") in order to satirise how Spain's central government reduces the Canary and Balearic Islands to arbitrary blocs, especially in moments of crisis. Across these examples, responding to the Catalan Constitutional Crisis of 2017 and ongoing *PSOE-CC* tensions in the 2020s, Padylla consistently represents the Balearic and Canary Islands as relegated to the margins of the frame. In so doing, he satirises the perception that these island regions, themselves treated as blocs with no internal heterogeneity, have been indistinguishable in times of crisis. He jokes that the distinction between them lies not in the specific cultures or histories of their constituent islands, but, instead, in the boxes drawn around them by peninsular politicians. Padylla's works expose a double process: the reductive frames used to conceptualise his home, and its simultaneous entrapment in perpetual crisis because of that.

Comparing Pau and Padylla's vignettes, we can distinguish between the realities faced by Balearic and Canary islanders between 2008 and 2025 when navigating crises. Pau's work from 2009 onwards constructs a narrative surrounding his home framed as a space in the throes of a crisis created by mass tourism from outside. Thus, his work presents a kinopolitics which enables wealthy mobile tourists to immobilise Balearic islanders. This narrative reflects an early version of a key attitude towards overtourism observed after 2014: rejecting not only tourism itself but also tourists as individuals, in a vein similar to that seen in other cities in the

*Països Catalans*, such as Barcelona and Valencia in recent protests throughout the 2020s. Conversely, Padylla's rendering of the Canary Islands in the 2020s centres on crises as externally imposed phenomena, which are explicitly identified as stemming from the choices of the peninsular-centric Spanish state. He takes less issue explicitly with tourists as individuals having caused those crises, and, instead, focuses attention on decisions made by politicians, whilst remonstrating how his home has been immobilised in perpetual crisis. Padylla's work fits within more recent Canary Island movements, such as *20A*, which have marked themselves as not explicitly anti-tourist but, rather, which have sought to challenge the structures behind tourism imposed from the mainland Spanish government.

Despite these differences, there are important commonalities between Pau and Padylla's production, both of which directly recall the power structures found in the 2015 *Tot inclòs* cover. Most centrally, their work openly challenges the idyllic reading of the static islands in FIGs 1.1–1.6. Through disrupting the "insipid façade" (Glissant, *Poetics of Relation* 205) of the exoticised island, each invites readers to "rediscover the ardor of a land" (*Poetics of Relation* 205). Examining their work, as Glissant writes, "I see the mockery of the image, and I do not see it. I catch the quivering of this beach by surprise, this beach where visitors exclaim how beautiful! How typical!" (*Poetics of Relation* 205). That is to say, these works capture how, underneath the tourist image, there is a fervent resistance being generated to it.

Despite their capturing of resistance, nonetheless, the *Tot inclòs* cover, Padylla, and Pau equally portray the Balearic and Canary Islands as immobilising sites for their residents. Padylla's islands seemingly remain trapped in the box, or at a distance, Pau's images entrap islanders against a rushing mass of blank faces, and the 2015 *Tot inclòs* cover depicts residents' mobilities limited. Depicting the realities of immobility for island residents, these pieces reflect how, beneath sun-soaked images of mere tourist destinations disseminated by the search engine, the Balearic and Canary Islands can emerge within the imaginary of the artists who

work in them as sites of political and aesthetic contention. In one sense, they render a sort of "critical insularity" (180) which refuses the idealised tropical isle, as Hernández Adrián puts it. The *Tot inclòs* cover, Padylla and Pau assert islands as "spaces of the real" (Hernández Adrián, 'Islands, Images, Imaginaries' 180), framing a transition from the realm of the fantastic of images and imaginaries, towards spaces with grounded presence. Yet, alongside that, these renderings could also be read to pivot towards what Catalá-Carrasco identifies as "point[ing] toward the emergence of a new historical consciousness of living in perpetual crisis" (172) that "represent[s] the ruthless face of an inhumane system that has lost empathy toward "the others." ('Neoliberal Expulsions, Crisis, and Graphic Reportage in Spanish Comics' 182). This form of crisis is quite distinct from that theorised by Colin Hay, who refers to crisis as "a moment of decisive intervention and not merely a moment of fragmentation, dislocation or destruction […] a moment of transformation - a moment in which it is recognised that a decisive intervention can, and indeed must, be made" (317). Instead, it conforms to Rosalind Williams' theorisation, that crisis is "no longer a turning point in history but an immanent condition of history, part of its 'normal' working, indistinguishable from its own aftermath" (30).

Moving away from the visual language of the exotic island and into one of perpetual crisis, these works, thus, might be read to reassert systems in which islanders remain entrapped, immobile, and powerless. Nonetheless, in what follows, I draw out how these works have also invoked novel mobilities which trace away from notions of entrapment in static space. These mobilities figure within "a certain *poiesis* [which] is shared by comics and poetry through message condensation and the use of metaphor and metonymy in page compositions that evince the relevance of materiality and the reader's involvement in turning the page" (Catalá Carrasco et al., 5) and resonate with those found within a Glissantian poetics: those of the more subversive mobile spaces generated by uncertainty and immobilisation, in which novel epistemologies are generated.

## Reframing Immobility

How do residents depart from the immobility generated through viewing the Balearic and Canary Islands as jointly having continental exoticisation imposed upon them or as being enthralled in perpetual crises? How are islanders' perspectives reasserted at a time when imaginaries surrounding their homes seem to render entrapment? These questions are core to Glissant's work, which navigates multiple frames to examine them. As Michael Dash notes,

> [o]ne of the prevailing features of [Glissant's] thought is the importance of precarious insularity in the face of the certitude of continental mass. In Glissant's view, continental masses were destined to be fissured by archipelagos and broken into multiple islands. ('Remembering Edouard Glissant' 672)

According to Glissant, to interrogate imaginaries surrounding spaces which are marred by stratifying continental logics surrounding them is also to speak about that which lies underneath and around their margins. Within his *Poetics of Relation*, the burning beach he writes about is a setting bordered by a range of other landscapes. Glissant refers to the "mangrove" (*Poetics of Relation* 205) that fronts the burning beach: a space that plays both a literal and metaphorical role in the unravelling of his thought. This mangrove stands in for what he conceives of as an insular space stratified by rhizomatic thought. It is constituted of intertwined tree roots and histories, with which the culture of his island, Martinique, shares structural affinity. In Glissantian thought, such a rhizome "is the principle behind what I call the Poetics of Relation, in which each and every identity is extended through a relationship with the Other" (*Poetics of Relation* 11).

Glissant contends that the burning beach of the island imposed on through continental frames is generated by the destruction of the mangrove: the erasure of dense, entangled coastal ecologies that both materially and symbolically sustain insular life, replacing them with exposed, legible, and commodifiable landscapes. This destruction by forces associated with developmentalism generates the "Antilles Cheap" of that burning beach (*Poetics of Relation* 205). In such destruction, continental thought, which seeks to stratify, expose, and immobilise, tears up the rhizomes of insular culture. That destruction is central in FIGs 1.1–1.6. However, for Glissant, the tearing up of those rhizomes does not necessarily inherently beget a landscape of perpetual imposition or immobility. Rather, Glissant suggests that underlying the destruction associated with the burning beach is "some subterranean (submarine) force repressed what northern volcanoes supplied, [a] dis-appearance-a dis-appearing-in which the depths of the volcano circulate" (*Poetics of Relation* 205). In this phraseology, Glissant's claim is at once epistemic and cultural. It signals a movement away from "northern" continental thinking, associated with the imperial nations of the North Atlantic, with regimes of classification, control, and erasure, and towards what lies beneath: the submerged, latent, and generative archipelagic forces that persist despite such impositions. What is foregrounded here is not resistance, but a different mode of relation, a form of subversive mobility that operates below the level of visibility, beyond the reach of systems that seek to fix, delimit, and immobilise.

Subversive mobilities feature heavily in works created by Canary Island artist Padylla and also in those of two of his colleagues, Carolina Bonino Moreno and J. Morgan. Such mobilities are inscribed in aesthetic terms and are directly implicated in the archipelagic politics these artists in turn invoke. This can be seen in three of their works (FIGs 1.15–1.17). These pieces were disseminated across a range of outlets, with Padylla publishing in Las Palmas-based outlet *La Provincia*, Morgan in pan-Canarian paper *Canarias 7*, and Bonino Moreno sharing on *Facebook*, *Twitter* (*X*), and *Instagram*. In FIGs 1.15–1.17, those three practitioners

depict vessels which are constituted as mobile spaces where a range of meanings are freighted. In Morgan's piece ('Morgan 19-09-21'), the vessel is a small object, located in the centre of the frame. It is viewed from a distance, drawn in desaturated green and black, a dark, foreboding, unnatural form that traverses the sea. Padylla's vessel ('Padylla 13-07-08'), to an extent, shares some similarities with Morgan's, also being a diminutive, black-and-white, cartoonish object. Carolina's vessel in 'A la mar no le importan tus razones, tu color o tus ideas, no discrimina' ('The sea does not care about your reasons, your colour or your ideas, it does not discriminate') is a small upturned white and black wooden boat, the likes of which can be encountered abandoned across the small port towns of the Canary Islands. All these vessels are correlated to real objects: ships which carry people travelling from North Africa across the sea in irregular migration, the quantity of which have grown significantly since 2014's migration crisis caused by the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings. In that way, these vessels are freighted with meaning, typifying sites where the politics of mobility and immobility are contested.

It is not only in the Canary Islands that we find such vessels drawn as mobile sites freighted with meanings. Pau also draws upon the image of the vessel set in the Balearic Islands, without any clear reference to its origin as a symbol related to the migration of people from Northern Africa, and well before its wider popularisation in the context seen in the Canary Islands. This is present in his August 2006 work, FIG 1.18, part of his 'Pau per tots' series. In the centre of that piece, Pau recasts Balearic Islanders boarding a boat in a journey of migration. A small child asks "Papá, Mamá ¿Adónde Vamos?" ("Dad, Mum, where are we going?") whilst a female character at the front of the ship remarks "¡En pos de un mundo mejor! ¡Donde la educación sea de verdad gratuita!" ("In search of a better world! Where education is truly free"). Whilst the vessel sets out to here, Pau remarks on a position that his Balearic islanders share with the range of others who set out to wrest the seas in search of a better life. He frames

a departure from the island, the embrace of mobility, as an opportunity to gain further opportunities elsewhere.

Padylla, Bonino Moreno, Morgan, and Pau's works centrally humanise the people who travel in the vessels they depict. They ask readers to see people boarding small boats as fellow travellers in an increasingly mobile world. In that way, these pieces deconstruct hierarchical understandings surrounding migration to and from the Balearic and Canary Islands. From one angle, depicting these vessels captures subversive mobilities, which Erik Cohen, Scott Cohen, and Xiang Li argue are "a class of mobilities, with typically staged movements, deploying diverse practices to subvert the defenses of mobilities regimes, by which they are perceived to various degrees as illicit, illegal, or criminal" (117).[10] In another way, these are also subversive mobilities driven by desperation, as a result of conflict and resource inequity, themselves precedented by inequitable movements of resources and people.

It is not only at sea that subversive mobilities are framed by Padylla, Bonino Moreno, Morgan, and Pau. Padylla reflected on this idea thematically in a different setting, as seen in FIG 1.19, a piece he disseminated following 2016. In this work, he draws a set of buildings surrounded by a tall fence and gate. This site is identified as a *CIE* (*Centro de Internamiento de Extranjeros* (Immigration Internment Centre)), with signage reading, "Inmigrante, no huyas: Te garantizamos que en este *CIE* vulneramos menos derechos humanos que en tu país" ("Immigrant, do not flee: We guarantee that in this internment centre we infringe on fewer human rights than in your country"). Immediately, this is a space associated with immobilisation. It is situated detached, in a lightly coloured, barren landscape with no identifiable features or location. At its centre, tall green fences and blue gates surrounding the

[10] This is especially fitting in the Canary Islands, where, as of the 2019 *Estadística del Padrón Continuo* (Statistics from the Permanent Residency Register), only 72.1% of the resident population were second-generation Canary Islanders, and 19.4% of residents were foreign-born.

site are reminiscent of those found in other territories within the bounds of the Spanish state that also take on an insular function due to their isolation from Africa by defined borders: Ceuta and Melilla.[11] Padylla implies that the *CIE* is a place where mobile migrants can be interred by the Spanish state, where their mobility can be stripped, and where their basic human rights might be abused. It is a space associated with restricted movement, a place where those who attempt to cross borders, yet are denied that right by forces beyond their control, can be immobilised. By depicting the *CIE* in this way, Padylla invites islanders to share an intense discomfort regarding how their fellow travellers are treated, particularly because its framing echoes the depiction of the insular Canary Islands trapped in the box seen in his other works.

Publishing in Mallorca, Pau uses similar visual language to that employed by Padylla when depicting his *CIE* to also reflect on the immobilisation of island residents. This can be seen in one of his untitled April 2021 pieces from the 'Pau per tots' series (FIG 1.20). In that work, disseminated in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, he draws a map of his home island. Pau's Mallorca is depicted alone at sea, with Menorca, Ibiza, and Formentera nowhere to be seen. It is dominated by one key feature: a fence designed to entrap a group of people, much like Padylla's *CIE*. This Mallorca shares similarities with the vessels drawn by Padylla and Morgan in FIGs 1.15 and 1.17. It is filled to the brim with small bodies, who seem to lose all individuality whilst suspended at sea. Pau's Mallorca is a blank vessel adrift in the ocean, which becomes a backdrop against which a multitude of anonymous, featureless figures are scattered, each assuming various poses. These figures are subcategorised in two ways. On the exterior of the island, a group of individuals is labelled as tourists. They are afforded the ability to travel around Mallorca and along the coasts: they wander, dip their feet into the sea, and stare outwards or towards each other. In the interior of the island, a border fence is erected, and

[11] There is a great deal of scope to further discuss insularity in these spaces. Whilst outside the bounds and scope of this project, this could form a significant line of research in the future.

within this, characters wearing masks are imprisoned. Designated as inhabitants, they are seemingly voiceless due to the masks they wear. They are immobilised, unable to leave because of the surrounding border fence, which they rest their hands upon whilst facing outwards, as if wishing to escape to the sea.

We could read FIGs 1.19 and 1.20, alongside FIGs 1.15–1.18, as rendering entrapment, perpetual immobility, and crisis. However, we also note a double-fold to that, in the way that the vessels depicted at sea in these works are not depicted in mimetic terms. That lack of mimesis converts these vessels into cultural symbols: "motivated mappings between external form and cognitive meaning, used for both the private evocation of and the public externalization of those meanings" (Omar Lizardo, 200–203).[12] The outcome of this is to create "a vacuum, into which our identity and awareness are pulled… an empty shell that we inhabit which enables us to travel into another realm. We do not just observe the cartoon, we become it!" (36), as McCloud argues. By not using clear figurative features, the artists invite readers to project themselves into the symbols here, and thus, to reflect on the precarity and exposure faced by those who travel upon them. Taking that process as central, FIGs 1.15-1.20 cannot be understood as just depicting the arrival of people to the Balearic or Canary Islands' shores, or the entrapment of people within them. They do not play the same role as press photographs which depict those who arrive on small boats as migrant outsiders, or newspaper headlines which present people trapped in stratified social hierarchies as stagnant. Rather, the artists convert their graphic vessels in FIGs 1.15–1.20 into spaces which incite reflection on mobilities and immobilities.

[12] Martí Domínguez, Felip Pineda, and Anna Mateu have already articulated the point that "there was an interesting and meaningful conceptual evolution regarding the image of the immigrant boat. This situation resulted in argumentatively effective visual analogies, metaphors and metonymies which evolved all along this period, making this boat a cultural symbol of our time" (810).

Satire is central to this subversion as Padylla, Bonino Moreno, Morgan, and Pau unsettle the viewer's expectations and disrupt familiar hierarchies. Irony sharpens this critique, particularly in works such as the *CIE* illustration. The dissonance between the reassuring tone of the text and the oppressive visual framing of the detention centre produces a critical tension. This gap between what is said and what is shown invites readers to question the legitimacy of institutional narratives, revealing how language can obscure or justify forms of control and exclusion. Here, the subversive potential of graphic art as a medium lies in making visible what is otherwise normalised or concealed.

Additionally, the formal properties of graphic art, its use of panels, borders, and spatial organisation, allows these artists to stage mobility and immobility simultaneously. Movement is suggested through repetition, directionality, or sequencing, while containment can be emphasised through enclosing frames, fences, or boxed compositions. In Padylla's work, the visual echo between the fenced *CIE* and earlier boxed depictions of the islands creates a relational critique: it suggests that the logic of containment applied to migrants is not entirely separate from the ways in which insular spaces themselves are imagined and governed. This formal parallel encourages readers to draw connections across different scales of mobility and restriction. This subversive archipelagic aesthetics and politics does not confront continental thought directly; rather, it unsettles it by highlighting the presence of those who circulate, connect, and reconfigure relations. In this sense, subversive mobility becomes both a metaphor and a method.

By including subversion, these works do not solely lament entrapment, they also incite reflection. In FIG 1.20, Pau encourages islanders not to accept their immobilisation as an inevitable consequence of perpetual crisis, but rather to question why they are denied mobility. In so doing, readers note that the only figurative part of Pau's work is the only element that is mobile in it: the bag of money in the top right of the image. This bag, designated as "the

proceeds of tourism" is stolen away in the claws of an eagle (possibly an allusion to the Francoist Spanish imperial eagle), prompting reflection on the realities of the economic model of the Balearic Islands in the 2020 Covid-19 crisis, where island residents were placed in a vulnerable position whilst wealth was extracted from tourism. The same applies to Padylla's FIG 1.15, which renders a mobility that is non-hierarchical. This is why the individuals in Padylla's vessel highlight that their greatest challenge in crossing the sea is not its barriers, but "incomprensión" ("incomprehension") upon their arrival, as he turns back to the reader the question of how they view the erection of borders in the North Atlantic.

These works gain resonance where, even within the constraints of forced immobility, alternative forms of movement emerge. Within a mobility justice framework, this creates a mobile, "socially produced shared space" (Sheller, *Mobility Justice* 160), "outside of capitalism, and beyond or beneath the limits of national borders" (Sheller, *Mobility Justice* 169). Reading FIGs 1.15–1.20 produces the outcomes that Raphaël Lauro identifies as a predominance of "decentered words and perspectives, refusing the fantasy of Unity to promote a world in motion" (96). This invites readers to step away from the language of the exotic and move towards real experiences.

Such mobility is identified by Barbara Gfoellner, Gabriele Pisarz-Ramirez, and Alexandra Ganser as that which "enables us to recalibrate our knowledge, comprehension, and sensitivities concerning submerged and unexpected sociocultural archipelagic entanglements that are themselves mobile formations" (76).[13] It challenges the impositions placed upon islands from within national borders or by faceless continentalities. Its existence suggests that situating the Balearic and Canary Islands under such impositions does not leave islanders

[13] I take from Glissant this terminology of "departure", referring to "the moment when one consents not to be a single being and attempts to be many beings at the same time." ('Conversation with Édouard Glissant aboard the Queen Mary II' 2).

perpetually without agency. Instead, this mobile force in Padylla, Bonino Moreno, Morgan, and Pau's graphic works, creates the possibility for islanders to imagine spaces that are not contingent upon the hegemonic expectations of continental thought, which render them immobile. It resists fixed epistemes and operates through multiple, disruptive movements, highlighting how individuals are not merely trapped by resources or geography, but are also capable of navigating these structures through collective identification.

We see this reflected, for instance, in a work created by Bonino Moreno in November 2022, titled 'Sociedad fallida, descripción gráfica' ('Failed Society, Graphic Description') (FIG 1.21), which depicts a similar subversive mobility to those seen in FIGs 1.15–1.20. Unusually for Bonino Moreno, this piece includes a mesh of pinks, blues, and greys digitally painted in a style resembling watercolour. Its backdrop is another great hulking vessel: a towering, semi-triangular metal unit that sits unnaturally upon crudely drawn waves. This is adapted from a photograph taken in November 2022 of the hull of the *Alithini II*, an oil and chemical tanker that had docked at the port of Las Palmas. In the foreground of her composition, Bonino Moreno draws attention immediately to two sets of words scrawled across the insular ship. The first, "polizones" ("stowaways"), is written in grey, awkwardly drawn in an almost childlike fashion, with an irregular red cross over it. On the right, a second word is added: "personas" ("people"). Tracing the thick black arrow to which this term refers, we notice three small, white characters perching on the rudder of the behemoth, just above the sea. According to press reports at the time, these individuals had travelled from Lagos, Nigeria, to Las Palmas de Gran Canaria on the bow of the ship. Perched on the *Alithini II*, they are depicted by Bonino Moreno in the underbelly of the global economic system and suspended upon the insular space: trapped atop a larger hulking form, looking out to sea. In FIG 1.21, Bonino Moreno's *Alithini II* presents a space where passengers are identified not as "polizones" but as "personas," asserting their humanity, their mobility, and their presence.

Such a shift, centralising the notions of mobility and presence, implies a willingness to engage in dialogue, collaboration, and the exchange of ideas across borders. It recognises that knowledge and identification are not monolithic entities but multifaceted, evolving concepts, enriched by the contributions of diverse voices and experiences. This constitutes an effort to embrace ways of knowledge creation that emphasise pluralities and treat individuals as capable of movement, defying expectations and the structures imposed upon them.

Examining Padylla, Bonino Moreno, Morgan, and Pau's works since 2006 emphasises that mobility is not solely about physical movement but also about resisting the limitations imposed by structures of power. To think with FIGs 1.15–21 is to depart completely from the perception of the insular space seen in FIGs 1.1–1.6. In FIGs 1.15–1.21, the insular space, whether Mallorca's shores, Ceuta's borders, or the bow of a ship, becomes a site of struggle against unjust immobilisation. Across their graphic art, these island-based practitioners make their audiences comprehend that the subjects in their works are individuals who are not merely trapped in crisis but are actively engaged in navigating and responding to it. This leads readers to confront the immobilisations linked to crisis with critical proximity, regarding crisis as "a fundamentally reflexive concept that bridges our traditional distinctions between objective phenomena and normative experience, and whose very usage implies the active participation of those involved in it" (Brian Milstein 141). Thereby, I argue that graphic artworks reposition the Balearic and Canary Islands not within tourism-centric or crisis-centric narratives, but instead well outside their bounds, as sites of subversive mobility.

Reading the tensions between representations yielded by the search engine, which differ so significantly, both artistically and politically, the works created by Padylla, Bonino Moreno, Morgan, and Pau, raises key critical questions: for example, how did such a conceptualisation of the politics of mobility emerge in the distinct corpora of Balearic and Canary Island graphic art? What historical precedents inform its current manifestations? In what follows, I look back

to three key periods that were fundamental for shaping mobile archipelagic graphic art today: the mid-Francoist regime of 1950–1959, experiences of mobility between 1959–1974, and the transitional period between 1972–1983. In Chapters 2 and 3, I address these questions by tracing the presence of the archipelagic politics of mobility in earlier graphic art from across the Balearic and Canary Islands.

# Chapter 2: A Poetics of Shorelines: Graphic Mobilities under the Francoist Dictatorship (1950–1974)

"The archipelagos of the Mediterranean must encounter the archipelagos of Asia, and the archipelago of the Antilles."

('The Archipelago Conversations, an excerpt - Interview with Édouard Glissant', n.p.)

This chapter traces the origins of the archipelagic politics of mobility that underpin the graphic artworks examined in Chapter 1. It locates the distinct origins of these invocations in different artistic developments across the Balearic and Canary Islands between 1953 and 1974, each formulated to negotiate and resist the immobilising logics of the Francoist regime. To exemplify that, I begin by analysing two key works produced in the early 1970s by Pep "Pep[e]" Roig Gomez (Palma de Mallorca, 1947–) and Faustino "Pastino" García Márquez (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 1944–), underscoring how these employed archipelagic mobilities to invite readers to introspect on perceived peninsular centrality and prescriptive hierarchical politics. I then compare these two artists' works to earlier pieces from the mid-1950s that depicted Spain's extra-peninsular territories as passive appendages easily imposed upon by the regime's hegemonic logics. Asking what links this range of production, the chapter explores how artists from across the Balearic and Canary Islands working in the printed press, illustration, and magazines moved from producing images that tacitly aligned with Francoist politics to creating works that actively unsettled it. This transformation, I show, reflected not only dissent against the dictatorship's exaltation of a eurocentric *Hispanidad* (Spanishness),

but also an engagement with new forms of circulation enabled by migration and transglobal travel. Exploring such realities involves unpackaging how artists navigated uneven geographies of movement and stasis that both constrained and enabled their production. Tracing that, the chapter hence establishes how Balearic and Canary Island graphic artists between 1953 and 1974 articulated double fold experiences which still resonate today that are born of censorship and marginality, and yet are simultaneously shaped by flows of people, carefully crafted empty images, and political and cultural changes.

## 1970–1974: Archipelagic Mappings of Dissent

In the wake of the Spínola coup d'état in Portugal in 1974, Mallorcan graphic artist Josep "Pep(e)" Roig Gomez published his 'Nuevo mapa político de Europa' ('New Political Map of Europe') (FIG 1.2.1) in the Mallorcan-based pan-Balearic outlet *Última Hora*. Roig had begun contributing to this newspaper at the age of twenty-three and later went on to become its editor-in-chief. His 1970 piece traces a direct line between the Portuguese coup and the Spanish political transition. As the artist relayed in an interview, the original version of the work "fue destruido, creo, por el intencionado incendio en los archivos de *Última Hora* [que] ocurrió una noche de 1981, poco antes del frustrado intento de Golpe de Estado, con asalto y secuestro en las Cortes por parte de la Guardia Civil." (Appendix: 'Interview with Pep Roig 9 July 2024') ("It was destroyed, I believe, by the deliberate fire in the *Última Hora* archives [which] occurred one night in 1981, shortly before the failed coup attempt, with an assault and kidnapping in the Cortes by the Civil Guard."). The piece contains a redrawn cartographical representation of the Iberian Peninsula, Western Europe, Africa, and the Balearic Islands, depicted as four distinct spaces. Roig uses those spaces to reflect on the peninsular-centric politics of the regime (1939–1975). First, he renders peninsular Portugal as a politically and culturally mobile space, tearing its Iberian geographical mass from the west of the Iberian

Peninsula and relocating it into the Bay of Biscay, in close proximity to the north-western European coastline. This relocation of a newly mobile Portugal is contrasted against the immobile positioning of peninsular Spain by Roig. He draws this territory with thick borders, placing the name of its capital, Madrid, haphazardly atop its centre in untidy text that disrupts the panel's flow. Roig depicts the peninsular-centric Spanish state not as a diverse national community, but as a territory dominated by the regime based in its capital, something he further underscores by omitting the territories occupied by the nation at the time: Ceuta and Melilla, the Canary Islands, Equatorial Guinea, and the Spanish Sahara. In this simple gesture, Roig implies that, unlike the mobile post-coup Portugal, the peninsular-centric Spanish state in 1970 had become fundamentally disconnected from Europe and from its own overseas territories. By centring the state's disconnection at the turn of 1970, Roig's work refutes the politics of the Francoist regime. This is reinforced through his inclusion of a crudely written signature that reads "Pepe," belligerently following the requirements of self-censorship imposed by the 1966 Press Act by signing the Castilian form of his name, Josep. His work rejects the continued assertion by the regime that the Spanish state was born of a "unity of destination in the universal" (3), owing to its singular Castilian-centric Hispanic identity, inspired by the views of José Antonio Primo de Rivera in his 1933 *Discurso en el Teatro de la Comedia* (*Discourse in the Comedy Theatre*).

Having commented on the vitality of Portugal's mobility and the Spanish state's static isolation, Roig then adds depictions of the coast of North Africa and, most crucially, the coasts of the Balearic Islands. In contrast to the gestural use of ink to draw the Peninsula, Roig carefully outlines each of the isles, which he draws together without hierarchical preference at an enlarged scale, situated amidst the Mediterranean Sea. In the map, Roig's home appears as an archipelago at a crossroads between Europe, Spain, the Mediterranean, and Africa. He

presents it as a site that extends beyond the homogenising politics of Spanish unity generated by the regime.

At the turn of 1970, Roig's work aligns with a form of mobility that openly questions static peninsular-centric logics. The image does not put at its heart Portugal, Europe, or the Spanish state. Instead, the most important contingent element is the empty Mediterranean Sea. Roig invites his Balearic Island readership to reach out toward and think with this archipelagic space. The map does not demand that viewers search, for instance, for a cultural proximity with Catalonia or any other peninsular-centric zone. The space that Roig leaves for Balearic Islanders to explore is not prescriptive; rather, it is born of a poetics of the uncertain and unknowable.

In 1972, as Roig's 'Nuevo mapa político de Europa' was awaiting publication, some 2150 kilometres away from the shores of Mallorca, a remarkably similar work was created by Gran Canarian practitioner Pastino. Titled 'Europa, 10 – España, 1' ('Europe, 10 – Spain, 1') (FIG 2.2),[14] this piece was printed on a full page in the radical Canary Island journal *Sansofé* (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria 1969–1989). Pastino begins this work similarly to Pep Roig. He draws a cartographic map of Europe angled from the bottom up. As the reader looks at this

[14] Márquez remains a significant figure in the cultural landscape of the Canary Islands. An architect with specialism in urban planning, he worked at the *Escuela de Arquitectura de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria* (School of Architecture of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria) during transitional period between 1973 and 1977 before moving to the *Unidad Técinca de Educación* (Technical Education Unit) between 1976 and 1990. He has since held posts ranging from Director of Urban (1993–1995) planning and Director of Sustainable Development and Climate Change (2007) at the *Consejería autonómica de Polítical Territorial* (Regional Ministry for Territorial Policy). He has also authored numerous articles in newspapers across the Canary Islands and published multiple works including his *Ensayo sobre Historia de Canarias* (*Essay on the History of the Canary Islands*) (1978), *La arquitectura popular en el Archipiélago Canario* (*Traditional architecture in the Canary Islands*) (1987) and *Los lenguajes de la arquitectura* (*The languages of architecture*) (2001), as co-editor. Marquez's career as a graphic artist ran concurrently with this range of postings, under the pseudonym 'Pastino'. Particularly notable was his work under the Francoist dictatorship in Eduardo Millares Sall's *El Conduto*, his production from 1970-1973 disseminated in the radical political journal *Sansofé* and his 1978 publication of a selection of humorous works titled *Sin magua*.

map, they gaze from the Atlantic coast across peninsular Spain and up to northwestern Europe. Toward the top right corner of the first panel, near Andorra, they encounter a group of small characters, four figures, who speak in various languages. One comments in English, "Oh, very typical," whilst the others affirm with "Oui" ("Yes") and "Ja" ("Yes"). The final character adds, "Torna a sorrento" ("Return to Sorrento"), referencing the 1894 Neapolitan folk song *Torna a Surriento* by Ernesto De Curtis, which pleads with the listener not to depart. Below this assembly of characters, a sign in Spanish reads: "Precaución: a 500 kms. Obras: nueva solución al problema europeo" ("Caution: in 500 kms. Work: new solution to the European problem"). This sign alludes to the actions of a small figure on the Spanish Peninsula just above it. Armed with a pickaxe, he cuts through the Pyrenees mountains, attempting to dig a trench from the Mediterranean coast in Catalonia to the North Atlantic coast of the Basque Country, converting the peninsular Spanish state into a detached insular space.

In this mapping, Pastino's work invites a multi-layered readerly reflection regarding the Spanish state's trajectory at the turn of 1972, which he incites his Canary Island readership to reflect upon. The titling of the work, 'Europa, 10 – España, 1', literally refers to the planned growth of the European Economic Community from six to ten members, following invitations to Denmark, Ireland, Norway and the United Kingdom to join it.[15] The regime had applied to enter that same union in 1962, with its request being rejected unanimously in 1964 owing to its status as a non-democratic dictatorship.[16] This title also evokes a football score: Spain, 1, Europe, 10, implying the dominance of a united Europe over a disconnected and isolated Spanish state, using tropes drawn from popular sports humour. Within this play on the football

[15] Norway rejected this invitation following its referendum on 25 September 1972, hence the group only acceding the invitation of the other three nations in 1973.

[16] Owing to that intricacy, during this moment in history French Guiana, Guadeloupe, Martinique and Réunion, were thus deemed to be integral parts of Europe, whilst Spain remained firmly ostracised from it.

score, Pastino, much like Roig, underscores the absurdity of the peninsular regime's attempt to isolate itself from Europe, disconnecting geographically and culturally from its nearest neighbours.

Below the work's title, Pastino invites readers to reflect on why the peninsular-centric Spanish regime in 1972 rejected closer relations with other Europeans. He includes a character who asks in a dialectic tone, mixing Spanish and English: "¿y si probáramos a ser menos different?" ("and what if we tried to be less different?"). Another character, raising a hand in rejection, responds by quoting the ecclesiastical Latin Vulgate, the rebuke of Christ to Satan: "¡Vade retro, Satanás!" ("Begone, Satan!"). The rationale behind this florid rejection is established in the subsequent panel, in which two figures walk into the distance. One comments to the other: "Y digo yo ¿de qué vale ganar toda Europa, si pierdes las esencias de la raza?" ("And I say, what is the value of getting all of Europe, if you lose the essence of your race/root?"). This dialogue sets out three key elements: first, the inclination of Canary Islanders to seek closer relations with places beyond the bounds of Spain; second, the unequivocal refutation elicited from the regime in response to such views; and third, a challenge to the incongruity of "esencias de la raza," intrinsically linked to the state's essentialist myth of Castilian-centric unity.

Pastino's Canary Island audience is centrally situated within the narrative in 'Nuevo mapa político de Europa', despite never appearing obvious to the regime's censor. The character advocating for cultural proximity and exchange, trying to be "menos different" to those outside the Spanish state, is identifiable as a Canary Islander through his clothing. He wears a wide hat associated with the trope of the *mago* (a rural inhabitant of the islands), also depicted by Pastino's contemporaneous colleagues Eduardo "Cho Juaá" Millares Sall (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 1924–1992), Rafael "Rafaely" Bethencourt, and Manolo Millares (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 1926–Madrid, 1972), as seen in FIG 2.3. Conversely, the figure

with whom Pastino's islander speaks does not wear such attire. His identification is instead linked to his words, marking him as a representative of the regime, someone fixated on the concept of "raza," an essentialised distinctiveness that rejects mixing.

Underscoring the absurdity inherent in the notion of "esencias de la raza," Pastino's panels above and below contrast two conceptions of insularity. The regime's understanding of what it means to be insular, to dig a trench separating the Spanish Peninsula from Europe and become inward-facing, singular, and disconnected, is set against a Canary Island perspective on insularity, expressed by the *mago*, who yearns for connection. Like Roig, Pastino uses this contrast to advocate for a paradigm shift that denatures the idea of the island as disconnected or static, instead promoting a model of mobile insularity. He underscores the value of mobility constituted by islanders, inviting readers to reflect on the Canary Islands' historical connections to global trade networks since the 1500s, rather than merely to the peninsular Spanish state, itself a contingent space to Europe. Contrasting these insularities, Pastino presents a clear contention to his Canary Island readers: would they prefer to obsess over "esencias de la raza" as the peninsular regime does, becoming disconnected from all that lies in close proximity? Or do they seek to be "menos different" and thereby reap the benefits of connection? To strive toward being "menos different," as Pastino poses to his readership, is to play, to explore, and to parse. It is to engage with a form of thought that extends beyond the prescriptive bounds of a peninsular regime seeking isolation, reaching instead toward those who are linguistically and culturally different in order to refine the construction of novel identarian frames.

Both Pastino and Roig's works, which move beyond Spanish unity, might seem unexpected under a dictatorship reputed for its insistence on enforcing unifying maxims and for its apparent strict control of the press. According to Jordi Cornellà-Detrell, "foreign ideas

were perceived as a potential threat to the moral and social fabric of the country" (n.p.).[17] Equally, Begoña Zalbidea Bengoa notes that, at the time these works were published (in the early 1970s), "the imposed Franco ideology penetrated daily into almost every part of Spain" (156).[18] Despite such expectations, these artists lead readers to reflect on the incongruities of the regime's cultural politics within their living memory. They demonstrate how critique of the regime was generated satirically by artists across the Balearic and Canary Islands in different ways: Roig interrogated the logics of the state, whilst Pastino invited the mixing of people. In both cases, these artists presented an inverse immobilisation, in which the islands reposition the Peninsula, contrasting with FIGs 1–6 (seen in Chapter 1), where the continental perspective stratified the islands.

In the works they produced between 1970 and 1974, both Roig and Pastino, albeit in distinct ways, reveal how the Spanish peninsular regime's continental thinking, with its emphasis on singular unity in the face of heterogeneity, isolates itself. By depicting a Peninsula that looks inward rather than outward, these artists lead readers to the same conclusion: a Peninsula detached from the world must also be detached from the islands it controls. Consequently, the artists encourage reflection on how the Spanish state must grant the islands autonomy to manage their own distinct mobilities, charting courses separate from both the

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[17] As Richard Gunther and José Montero note, "clashes between political ideologies, or the basic nature of parliamentary democracy could not be openly discussed with specific reference to Spain" in this period, though "press coverage of elections or parliamentary struggles in Italy, France or Britain was relatively free from censorship, and thus could be used to teach Spaniards about the underpinnings of democratic politics" (12).

[18] This was mainly related to the press environment, in which "newspapers which were dependent on the government co-existed with others which were privately owned. But if the former had no freedom of expression, the latter did not either. They were equally affected by the instructions given by the government in defense of its interests" (Zalbidea Bengoa, 156), and where "chistes gráficos publicados, […] se encontraba[n] sometid[os] a la represión y a la censura" ("published cartoons […] were subject to repression and censorship") (Peñamarin, 355), generating an environment that, as Stanley Black notes, was dominated by "the mood of fear and petty vindictiveness that was felt throughout Spain" (15).

impositions of the Spanish government and from each other. Rather than advocating the homogeneity of the "universal Spaniard" or any rooted identity, these artists offer an open archipelagic poetics in a novel thinking space.

In aesthetic and political terms, Roig and Pastino's production between 1970 and 1974 contrasts with that created by practitioners less than two decades prior. Hardly a dissident, Roig's earliest outputs included work for editions of *Yuki el temerario* (*Yuki the Daredevil*) (Valencia, 1958–1978), a narrative involving adventures between Indigenous American Indians and white Cowboys, disseminated by *Editorial Valenciana* (FIG 2.5).[19] Roig was by no means alone in scarcely depicting his island home in his early work. Though Pastino was only eleven years old in 1950, production by his later colleagues from the Canary Islands followed a similar trend at this time. In the printed press, little graphic art circulated that traced the aesthetics and politics, later seen in Pastino's work between the end of the Spanish Civil War in 1939 and the early 1950s. Even the run of the review *Tenerife Gráfico: Revista del Archipiélago* (*Graphic Tenerife: The Archipelago's Review*), for example, contained more photographs than representations of the Canarian archipelago in the form of graphic art.[20]

This is not to suggest that readers were disengaged from graphic art depicting other insular territories of the Spanish state between 1939 and the early 1950s. For many, this period is remembered as one of the most prolific in graphic production; Gonzalo Torres Pastor, for

[19] *Yuki* was a 20-page magazine aimed at young adult audiences, designating itself a "Revista para los jóvenes" ("Mazagine for young people") on its covers. It was sized 17x24cm with a colour cover and black and white internal. It featured as its main character a stylised American Indian named "Yuki" and drew heavily upon Hollywood-centric noble savage tropes, depicting his various adventures in a style that recalled American superhero comics of its time. Liza Black elaborates on these in *Picturing Indians: Native Americans in Film, 1941-1960.*

[20] There are some examples of graphic art in the form of *dibujos* [drawings] in this work, and some of its covers, though clearly designed in a fashion approved by the Francoist censor, do contain interesting examples of intermediality between graphic design and photography. Unfortunately, many of these are unattributed. The covers of these works certainly ought to be revisited in later research.

example, has identified it as "[l]a edad de oro del cuaderno" ("the golden age for the booklet") (51). Tracing from that, the most prevalent forms of graphic art from 1939 until the early 1950s were children's comics and cartoons.[21] One of the most widely circulated contributions to this broad genre by an artist from outside the Iberian Peninsula was *Las aventuras de Eustaquio Morcillón y Babalí* (*The Adventures of Eustaquio Morcillón and Babalí*), a recurrent cartoon strip published by the Barcelonan outlet *TBO* from 1946 onwards (FIGs 2.6–2.8). This strip was drawn by Menorcan-born artist Marí (Mariano) Benejam "Benejam" i Ferrer (Ciutadella, Menorca 1890–Barcelona, 1975) in collaboration with Joaquín Buigas i Garriga (Barcelona, 1886–1963) and others.[22]

As shown in FIGs 2.6–2.8, the core plots of *Eustaquio Morcillón (y Babalí)* follow a Castilian-speaking, white European protagonist, Morcillón, who uses his rifle or other weapons to shoot or trap ferocious wild animals in an unspecified Sub-Saharan African setting. This landscape is implied to be Spanish-occupied territory, possibly on the islands of Bioko, Corisco, Great Elobey (*Elobey Grande*), Little Elobey (*Elobey Chico*), Annobón, or on the Equatoguinean mainland. The strips unfold through evenly spaced panels with clear

[21] The title of the most famous of these, Barcelonan *TBO* (1917-1998), an outlet published for boys and circulated nationally, became a byword for printed magazine comic-style graphic art. The term *tebeo* was later even recognised by the Real Academia Española in 1968 These children's comics were generally circulated in thin paper magazines or as supplements. The success of this genre arose during the late 1940s and early 1950s. As part of a programme of dampening regional dissent across the nation, the Francoist regime had carried out a consolidation of Spain's graphic art industries under the tacit hegemonic control of its centralised institutions. The geographical centralisation of those industries enabled nationally circulated peninsular children's cartooning and comics to boom. With the regime's support, by the end of the 1940s, outlets and presses, such as *Bruguera*, *Editorial Germán Plaza*, *Editorial Marco, Editorial Valenciana,* and *Ediciones Toray* had all become prolific established printing houses around institutionally controlled settings within Barcelona, Valencia, and Madrid especially.

[22] Benejam was a Menorcan-born artist who moved to Barcelona in his youth. *Eustaquio Morcillón* (*y Babalí*) was part of a range of work he produced, including that surrounding the character *Melitón Pérez*, which was published in *Pocholo* and *TBO* from 1936 onwards, and his strip *La familia Ulises*, a piece of *costumbrismo* (costumbrism) published from 1941 onwards which focused on the comedic daily life of a middle-class family.

sequentiality, producing an easily readable graphic narrative for younger audiences. This accessibility also characterises the drawing style: Morcillón is rendered minimally, using conservative lines, block colours, and simple facial expressions. His design aligns with what McCloud terms "meaning-focused" aesthetics (53), in which the simplified figure becomes "a vacuum, into which [the reader's] identity and awareness are pulled [...] an empty shell that [the reader] inhabit[s] and which enables [the reader] to travel into another realm" (36).

Morcillón's appearance is carefully tailored to encourage identification, particularly among young boys, for whom he serves as a role model. On the covers of *TBO*, he appears in bright blue trousers, military boots, a red shirt, and a pith helmet, carrying a short wooden-stocked rifle or shotgun, items widely familiar in Spain during the 1950s, whether from shooting games or rural life. These visual cues invite recognition with the character by readers. More specifically, through this design, Morcillón becomes a figure onto whom the strip's implied young male readers could project themselves, enabling them to participate vicariously in adventures beyond the Iberian Peninsula, to hunt exotic beasts, and to embody the values he represents. This raises a series of key questions: what kind of character is Morcillón? What values does he embody? And how does he engage with spaces beyond the bounds of the Iberian Peninsula? These questions are best addressed by examining his interactions with the other figures in the strip.

Alongside the protagonist, *Eustaquio Morcillón (y Babalí)* introduces a range of side characters. Benejam's designs for these figures, most prominently Babalí, Morcillón's servant, draw heavily on contemporaneous caricatural traditions that perpetuated dehumanising racialisations of people of Sub-Saharan African origin. These characters are rendered with distended limbs, exaggerated facial features, and a uniform print-black skin tone. Their speech is conveyed in dialectal versions of Spanish, and their narrative function is repeatedly to prove incapable of dealing with the challenges posed by the wild animals around them. In FIG 2.7,

for instance, the side characters are unable to confront the beasts that surround them, instead deferring to Morcillón, who they praise for taking decisive action to trap or kill the creatures. By contrast, Morcillón is depicted as a confident, mobile Castilian-speaker, endowed both with the knowledge to resolve problems and the ability to command the loyalty of others.

These dynamics position the non-European figures as foils, primarily deployed to generate humour through incongruity and superiority humour. This is exemplified in FIG 2.6, where Babalí flees in fear whilst Morcillón calmly takes aim at a lion he hunts. Across the strip, Babalí, like other side characters, is portrayed as cowardly, fearful, or foolish: behaviours that underscore his dependence on the protagonist and invite humorous reactions from the reader. His role is essentially menial: he carries objects, follows orders, or acts as a comic distraction during Morcillón's hunts, as seen in the central panels of FIG 2.7. Moreover, he is consistently shown to be grateful for Morcillón's violent interventions. After Morcillón slays a beast in FIG 2.7, for example, Babalí and the other side characters celebrate him as a leader, seating him on a throne and dancing in his honour.

For the implied readership, the pleasure of *Eustaquio Morcillón (y Babalí)* lies in its constructed hierarchy: the European hunter is elevated through the subjugation of the racialised side characters, and the reader is invited to share in that superiority. The strip thus builds upon longstanding tropes in Spanish literature of depicting non-Castilian characters as submissive, sentimental, or deficient, a trope that reaffirms the authority of the protagonist. In *Eustaquio Morcillón (y Babalí)*, these characters function as idealised colonial subjects, shaped by what Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle call "a sort of textual unconscious" (207) surrounding their racialised identifications.

Whilst exalting his Castilian-speaking protagonist and demeaning those not identified as peninsular Spaniards, in *Eustaquio Morcillón (y Babalí)* Benejam completely omits facets that reflect his own heritage from outside the Iberian Peninsula, specifically, in a small town in

Menorca. The work generates an epistemological hierarchy, treating non-Castilian individuals living in exoticised spaces as lesser characters: culturally immobile, peripheral, and in need of guidance or imposition from mobile, powerful Spaniards at the peninsular centre. Benejam's exaltation of Morcillón, a violent Castilian protagonist, correlates directly with the regime's interest in asserting the superiority of its central "Hispanidad" whilst seeking to "re-establish itself as a country with global impact" (Louie Dean Valencia-García 167), both through its projection of colonial power over Spanish-occupied overseas territories and in its policy towards Latin America. *Eustaquio Morcillón (y Babalí)* thus conforms to what Jordi Manzanares and Manuel Barrero identify regarding pieces published in *TBO* from this period, that "se mantuvo inmutable en su oferta de pifias y ocurrencias y fiel a los dos grandes valores de la nueva moral nacional: el ejército y la iglesia" ("it remained steadfast in its offering of blunders and witticisms and faithful to the two great values of the new national morality: the army and the church") (n.p.).[23]

[23] Why might Benejam's production have conformed generally to the hegemonic disseminations of the Francoist regime, especially in the wake of 1952? This may have been especially catalysed by two factors: its central position and the risk of censorship against it. First, it is worthy of note that Benejam was being published in *TBO*, often on the front cover or in a particularly prominent position, by Bruguera, the largest of the outfits disseminating comics from the Iberian Peninsula in 1952. Second, it is worth accounting for that Benejam was publishing in the wake of the Ministry for Information and Tourism taking control of the application of censorship in 1951, which, as Rhiannon McGlade notes, "brought a new scrutiny to the content of children's publications" ('Dissenting Voices? Controlling Children's Comics under Franco' 7). The censors' requirements to submit work for approval, and the perceived of fear of reprisals, notably hampered the practitioners' ability to produce work at pace, and this limited graphic art's perceived viability for publication. Across Spain, particularly in predominantly Catalan-speaking regions, as observed respectively by McGlade, these restrictions forced many artists into exile. Similarly, according to Europe Comics, "[c]ensorship, low prices and a lack of job opportunities led to the massive migration of Spanish artists to France and South America at the beginning of the 1950s" (n.p). In the wake of that, the ministry established a dedicated *Junta Asesora de la Prensa* Infantil (Advisory Board for the Children's Press) in 1952, and "[t]o ensure compliance, dedicated officials were tasked with overseeing moral content." ('Children's Cartoons' 7). The outcome of this was that "Benejam played down the existence of any political critique" (10) in his work, as identified by Román Gubern.

A direct equation, naturally, cannot be drawn between the treatment of Equatorial Guinea in *Eustaquio Morcillón (y Babalí)* and the treatment of the Balearic and Canary Islands, with the former subjected to explicitly colonial structures under Francoism shaped by overtly racist logics. Nonetheless, Benejam's work illustrates how an artist of Menorcan heritage felt compelled to embrace Francoist policy, emphasising Castilian-centric unity, stereotyping, and the containment of difference. This contrasts sharply with the work of Pastino and Roig in the 1970s, which foregrounded aesthetic experimentation and actively engaged with debates on autonomy, political pluralism, and social critique. Between 1970 and 1974, these artists deliberately opposed the logics of what they viewed as an immobile Peninsula, constructing a poetics that exceeded and resisted the regime's cultural politics. By contrast, Benejam's 1950s comics perpetuate the hierarchical logic of Francoism, representing territories beyond the Peninsula's bounds through lenses of exoticisation, inferiority, and peripherality.

The mobility depicted in Benejam's work is that of the colonial figure, whose ultimate aim is to reify structures of control, prescriptively treating those subjected to them as hierarchically inferior and those who impose them as superior. Glissant identifies this as an arrow-like mobility, oriented entirely toward a final goal of settlement and colonisation. This is something he describes as,

> invading nomadism, that of the Huns, for example, or the Conquistadors, whose goal was to conquer lands by exterminating their occupants. Neither prudent nor circular nomadism, it spares no effect. It is an absolute forward projection: an arrowlike nomadism […] a devastating desire for settlement. (*Poetics of Relation* 12)

This contrasts sharply with the mobilities articulated by Roig, only two decades later. Comparing the works of Roig, Pastino, and Benejam raises a key question: what occurred between 1950 and 1974 to produce a shift in attitudes among creators depicting territories outside the Iberian Peninsula in their graphic art? What prompted the aesthetic and political transformations that moved their production beyond the hegemonies of the regime? To date, scholarship has not critically engaged with Balearic and Canary Island graphic artists during this period whilst considering these questions. Filling this lacuna, in what follows, I examine how graphic art across the Balearic and Canary Islands developed after 1950, coming to represent sites beyond the Iberian Peninsula not as peripheral, but as spaces shaped by archipelagic poetics. In doing so, I focus less on organised movements or overtly political interventions, and more on small, localised, apolitical actions and creative processes engaged in by individual artists. Through this lens, I trace similarities and divergences in graphic genealogies across the islands, whilst interrogating the factors that drove the aesthetic and political shifts in their approaches during key moments after 1950.

## 1950: A Moment of Shift

Exploring the origins of the archipelagic politics found in graphic art during the mid-Francoist dictatorship (1950–1975) requires tracing the movements of artists across diverse geographies, from the Philippines to North America to Gran Canaria, or from Mallorca to Barcelona to Stockholm. Central to these archipelagic mappings are material and thematic trajectories, which artists from different islands navigated in distinct ways. Yet, several key areas of overlap emerge across these paths. Tracing those, in what follows, I examine two periods. First, I consider the production of localised images that remained illegible within the homogenising cultural discourses of the regime between 1950 and 1959. Then, I highlight how travel, return, and the reification of dissenting personas became central to graphic practices

across the Balearic and Canary Islands from 1959 to 1970. All of this, I argue, was underpinned by trajectories developing towards an archipelagic politics, which traces back to the discussion stemming from Chapter 1.

Throughout the 1940s and early 1950s, the Canary Islands remained shaped by a combination of geographic distance from the Iberian Peninsula and the strong administrative and ideological pressures of the Franco regime. Economically, the archipelago was still marked by relative and dependency, with underdevelopment limited industrial infrastructure and a growing but unevenly regulated tourism sector beginning to emerge in the later 1950s. Politically and culturally, public expression was constrained by censorship and institutional control, although regime-controlled press outlets provided partial spaces in which regional particularities, social tensions, and subtle forms of satire could be articulated. As González highlights, even under the threat of being deemed “rojos” and sent to concentration camps, some artists continued to practice (302), yet, as he equally notes, “Si duras fueron las condiciones impuestas a los agentes de la cultura [during the war, postwar] no menores fueron sus consecuencias para su soporte, la prensia diaria” (309). At the same time, migration, particularly to the Caribbean, Latin America and mainland Spain, continued to structure social life, reinforcing a sense of outward orientation that would later become significant in cultural production.

Similarly, the Balearic Islands in the 1950s were experiencing the early intensification of tourism, particularly in Mallorca, which began to reshape both the economic base and the visual imagination of the archipelago. Under Francoism, the islands were presented as a site of orderly, depoliticised leisure, a framing that sat uneasily alongside efforts to maintain Catalan linguistic and historical traditions in more restricted forms. Cultural life was thus characterised by a tension between folkloric life, often encouraged for touristic consumption, and quieter intellectual or artistic practices that preserved insular-specific cultures through literature,

illustration, and historical writing, especially concentrated around the church, which, for the most part, served as a key conduit for the preservation of Balearic-Catalan languages, and the cultures which surrounded them. As in the Canary Islands, movement, whether through internal migration, exile, or travel, played a key role in shaping artistic and intellectual networks, contributing to a growing awareness of the islands as spaces defined by circulation as much as by territorial fixity.

*Vanguard Spaces: Rafael Bethencourt and Harry Beuster*

In examining how graphic artists from the Balearic and Canary Islands represented their experiences in the early-1950s, one focal point is Gran Canaria and, particularly, the work of one of its most prolific creators: Rafael “Rafaely” Bethencourt López.[24] As we will explore with reference to the later trajectory of his work in Chapter 4, Rafaely’s legacy within the graphic avant-garde is remembered in iconic terms by members of the artistic communities across the Canary Islands today. Of his early works, one of the most notable is ‘¡Ese muchacho juega mucho con su cabeza!’ (‘That guy plays a lot with his head’) (FIG 2.9),[25] a piece of sports

[24] Rafaely was born in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria in 1933. A self-taught muralist and caricature artist during his youth, the breadth of his production was described in his obituary published in *La Provincia* in 1982: El signo de lo diverso amparaba la obra de Rafaely desde el óleo - composiciones abstractas de sentido final y simbólico - hasta el dibujo, la caricatura y la acuarela, sin que esta versatilidad desvirtuara en absoluto la recia personalidad del artista, siempre presente en todas las manifestaciones de su espíritu creador (Francisco Puñal Suárez n.p). The artist’s first forays in graphic art, printed in *El Eco de Canarias*, were well-received and enabled him to join the Escuela de Arte Luján Pérez (The Luján Pérez Art School) in 1956. During these later years, he became a key figure within Canary Island artistic avant-garde communities. He co-founded the *Grupo espacio* (Space Group) and played a key role in the *Agrupación Canaria de Caricaturistas Personales de Vanguardia* (Canarian Association of Avant-Garde Caricaturists), whilst also exhibiting caricature and his abstract canvas art extensively between the 1952 and 1982.[24] Remembered by associates as a child of the Second Republic, and a pro-democratic advocate throughout his life and work, Bethencourt died in 1982 on the night of the first national electoral victory of the *PSOE* (Puñal Suárez, n.p).

[25] Rafaely was one of many graphic art artists were thus drawn to Sports Humour because it provided regular weekly or monthly work through which a practitioner could generate an income, even though,

humour which was published in April 1954 in Las Palmas based outlet *Deportes: Seminario de los martes* (*Sports: Tuesday Weekly*).[26] This piece, drawn with simple caricatural lines and light shading, ideal for rapid, low-cost printing, was originally placed at the bottom left of the page of the review, seemingly as a humorous diversion. It, initially, might be read to depict a relatively simple interaction: a character on the right gestures to a character on the left, whilst a subtitle underneath employs a pun, stating, "¡Ese muchacho juega mucho con su cabeza!" ("That guy plays a lot with his head"). On one level, this mocks the character's lack of participation in the game of football, with him being seated at a desk, absorbed in his book, and presumably focused on regulations. The humour also derives from the incongruity of a player sitting on the pitch, the exaggerated appearance of his hair and expression, and the pun on the word "juega" ("he plays"), which refers both to literally playing football and to playing with ideas.

It might first be concluded that this piece constitutes little more than an apolitical humorous diversion, due to its relatively ubiquitous incongruity humour. Yet, such a reading overlooks the context of its publication and circulation across the Canary Islands after 1954 and the reflections it encourages regarding relations with peninsular Spanish authorities during that period. One of the most notable features of Rafaely's work is the use of text. The first phrase in FIG 2.9, "Primero Vencedor" ("First Winner"), served as the tagline of the comic strip, repeated throughout alongside the author's signature. A similar use of this phrase can be

as the artist admitted "no le gustaba el fútbol, ni [lo] entendía" ("He didn't like football, nor did he understand it") according to his son (Cited in Marcos Álvarez Morice, n.p).

[26] Sources differ on where this piece was first published. Its re-dissemination in 2021 by *rafaely.com,* a group which maintains the archive of the artist, suggested it was first published in April 1954 in *El Eco de Canarias*, however, considering that *El Eco de Canarias* did not see its first publication until after its split from *Falange* in 1963, as Margarita Díaz-Andreu, Gloria Mora and Jordi Cortadella noted (360), this seems unfeasible. It is more likely this was first published, judging from the page description, in the review *Deportes: Seminario de Los Martes* (*Sports: Tuesday* Weekly) according to my research in *Jable*, the archive at the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria.

found in FIG 2.10, another piece published by Rafaely in *Deportes: Seminario de los martes* (*Sports: Tuesday Weekly*) around 1954.

The second phrase, “No gracias; fumo Krüger” (“No thanks, I smoke Krüger”), also features in both FIGs 2.9 and 2.10 and is significant. Zoilo López notes in *Kiosko Insular* (2018) that this refers to the tagline of an early twentieth-century Canary Island tobacco brand launched by *Eufemiano Fuentes Cabrera*, named “Krüger” (n.p.). Rafaely’s appropriation of this phrase celebrates the distinctive warping of Spanish within the Canary Island dialect, a linguistic play informed by the archipelago’s historical global connections dating back to the eighteenth century. The phrasing “No gracias” mirrors the English “No thanks” in place of the Castilian “No, gracias”, whilst the name “Krüger” derives from the nineteenth-century Transvaal leader Paul Krüger, who, according to José L. Jiménez, frequently passed through Canary Island ports on his journeys to the United Kingdom (n.p.). Playing with this phrase, Rafaely’s text embodies a Glissantian ethos: “I can change through exchanging with others, without losing or diluting my sense of self” (‘The Archipelago Conversations, an excerpt — Interview with Édouard Glissant’ n.p.).

“No gracias, Fumo Krüger” is not the only Canary Island dialectic phrase employed in Rafaely’s work. This is also found in FIG 2.10, where the use of dialectic terms such as “pa” (“for”) and “refere” (“referee”) are humorously placed into the mouth of an intoxicated Canarian man who holds an almost empty bottle whilst speaking to a female figure, who stands in the centre of the frame and scolds him. That figure jokingly comments that he bought the bottle to throw at the referee. The warping of Castilian through Bethencourt’s use of the Canarian dialect may at first appear to function primarily as a source of incongruity-based humour in his 1954 pieces. The unexpected deployment of seemingly colloquial terms within the printed press, where linguistic register was generally expected to remain formal, could provoke amusement by inviting “the enjoyment of something that violates ordinary mental

patterns and expectations" (John Morreall, 120). Yet, this linguistic play achieves more than merely humorous enjoyment. Through these phrases, Rafaely also invites Canary Island readers to participate in the creation of an in-group, reified through shared linguistic culture.[27] In that way, comprehension of the work's humour encourages engagement in a pan-Canarian cultural identification inaccessible to peninsular Castilian-speakers. The use of dialectal terms actively resists the imposition of Castilian language. In the context of increased Francoist efforts to eradicate local dialects through education and cultural programmes, this constitutes a subtle form of dissent.

As Manuel Moreno Alcauce identifies, linguistic politics in Spain under Franco constituted the nation being "a multilingual country where a subtractive bilingualism has overtaken and eliminated other major languages (Catalan, Galician and Euskera), […] the result of the political imposition during Franco's dictatorship of the policy of 'one country, one language', which made Castilian Spanish the only official language spoken for over 36 years" (30). Moreover, as Bernadette O'Rourke further notes, "In the early years of the Franco dictatorship (1939-75), the use of languages other than Castilian Spanish was prohibited from all areas of public life and penalties were imposed on anyone who disobeyed" (178). Of note equally, as Henry Miller and Kate Miller argue, is that in this context in Spain "Language is a crucial feature of national and personal identity. Where Nationality is contested or controlled a particular language may be promoted or prohibited and the language of instruction is often informed by a 'national' political agenda." (113)

Reifications of dissent in Bethencourt's sports humour equally extend beyond linguistic strategies to include coded visual elements. This is central to the design of the kits worn by the players on the right in FIG 2.9, which echo the mid-twentieth-century colours of the local team

[27] McGlade has commented on a similar phenomenon in Catalan Cartooning in the same period in *Catalan Cartoons*.

*Unión Deportiva Las Palmas* (Las Palmas Sports Union) before their switch to the now-iconic blue and yellow designs. By depicting these kits, Rafaely generates a form of superiority humour: Las Palmas-based readers, identifying with the character in the local kit, are invited to mock the opposing player, treated as a generic outsider associated with the Spanish national league. In doing this, Bethencourt constructs a Las Palmas-centric identification positioned against an anonymous outsider, potentially linked to peninsular Spain or even to another island. This visual coding inscribes a subtle dissenting narrative that unpicks the homogenising cultural and political discourses of the regime, using local sports identity as a vessel.

The creation of a frame distinct from that imposed by the peninsular-centric state is also linked to a marked disdain for authority and those who read, set, or enforce regulations in Rafaely's work. This is evident in FIG 2.9, where authority is associated with the character on the left, seated at a table, whose obsession with regulations becomes the target of mockery. Similarly, in FIG 2.10, authority is implied through the reference to the referee, at whom the identifiably drunk Canarian character on the left panel declares that he had intended to throw a bottle. Even the phrase "No gracias; fumo Krüger" had become associated with such dismissiveness by 1953, being popularised by Radio Club Tenerife and *Radio Juventud de Canarias* (Canary Island Youth Radio) as a Canary Island dialectical colloquialism used in response to any question or demand deemed unworthy of attention. Reading this form of impoliteness aligns with María Bernal's observation that expressions used for mockery or insult can produce "an affiliative social effect, strengthening feelings of solidarity within a group and of closeness between interlocutors" (781). Had such dissent, and its codification within Rafaely's work, appeared in a more heavily censored genre in 1954, it would almost certainly have been perceived as politically subversive and subject to regime censorship.

Rafaely was not alone in reproducing Canary Island cultural realities in his work during the 1950s. He was also joined by Harry Gordon Beuster (Santa Cruz de Tenerife, 1931–2010).

Beuster was an active painter and graphic artist, working in Tenerife during the 1950s. In his work, he reflects on how graphic art and artists could be conceptualised as part of a network of practice spanning across the Canary Islands. This was related, for instance, in his 1955 piece, 'Beuster en el banquillo de los acusados' ('Beuster on the bench of the accused') (FIG 2.11).

Franck González argues that in this work, Beuster depicts "tintes de testimonio de una sociedad que no acaba de despegarse de determinados lastres del pasado" ("signs of a society that has not yet managed to shake off certain burdens from the past") (438). Yet, alongside this, the artist captures the thriving network of graphic artists who were beginning to work in myriad ways across the Canary Islands, many of whom met in Beuster's home city of Santa Cruz de Tenerife. At the centre of the piece, Beuster portrays himself sitting in the front row of a trial, dressed in a striped prisoner's uniform and surrounded by caricatures of significant regional figures, from political writers to journalists and artists. The work purports to depict his trial for a disregard of unfigurative, abstract art.

Beuster employs a range of caricatural techniques in creating this piece, not aiming for mimetic representation but instead drawing abstract, semi-figurative forms. Falangist journalist Rufo Gamazo Rico (Villalons, Zamora, 1923 – Madrid, 2014), director of the Santa Cruz outlet *El Día* from 1953 to 1958, stands directly behind Beuster, rendered sympathetically with soft, rounded facial features and his hand raised against the prosecution. Opposite, Julio Tovar (Güines, Cuba, 1921– Cruz de Tenerife, 1965), the poet and journalist who founded the *Gaceta Semanal de las Artes* in 1954 is drawn geometrically, with rounded and triangular eyes, giving him an almost inhuman appearance. Surrounding them, other figures gesture in shock and awe. Through this composition, Beuster highlights the diversity of the artistic and journalistic networks spanning across Tenerife and the broader Canary Islands during the 1950s. The piece captures an explosion of techniques, figures, and intersecting realities suspended in action: hands raised, expressions exaggerated, and the limits of production challenged and reshaped.

It presents to readers a network of Canary Island practices as a site of both aesthetic experimentation and political contention.

*Mallorcan Graphic Rebirths: Xam and the Latz*

During the period when Rafaely and Beuster were active, artists on Mallorca were likewise exploring ways to move beyond the hegemonies of the authoritarian regime through graphic art, developing distinct approaches in the process. A key figure in this context during the 1950s was the Mallorcan Pedro Quetglas "Xam" Ferrer. In examining his work, two questions guide the analysis: first, what characterises Xam's graphic art after 1950? And second, how does this Mallorcan's production compare and contrast with contemporary works from the Canary Islands?

Xam studied at the *Escuela de Artes Aplicadas y Oficios Artisticos, Palma* (School of Applied Arts and Artisanal Crafts, Palma) between 1929 and 1933, creating his first works in the weekly outlet *Foc i Fum* (*Fire and Smoke*).[28] At the turn of 1950, after a hiatus, in the wake of the Spanish Civil War, he began to revisit graphic production not only for commercial ends, but also whilst focusing on its aesthetic and political possibilities. As Alejandro Ysasi Alonso notes,

> Tras un reposado aprendizaje y dominio técnico en el campo del dibujo, cartel y grabado, se introduce en un nuevo método para expresarse, la pintura. La exposición de xilografías celebrada en 1950 en Madrid le ofrece la seguridad, tras ardua

[28] As early as the 1930s, he had been experimenting with graphic forms. The artist first exhibited his graphic art in 1932, with this being reproduced in Mallorcan-based outlet *Última Hora* under the pseudonym "Xam". This was followed by exhibitions at the Casa Boscana and publications in *El Día: periódico de la mañana*.

> meditación, para entrar en la nueva técnica. Xam pinta de un modo revolucionario dentro del contexto marginal mallorquín. (65)
>
> (After a period of quiet learning and technical mastery in the fields of drawing, poster design and engraving, he entered into a new method of expression: painting. The woodcut exhibition held in Madrid in 1950 gave him the confidence, after much reflection, to embark on this new technique. Xam painted in a revolutionary style within the marginal context of Mallorca.)

Engaging with the possibilities of introducing painted colour to his graphic work, Ysasi Alonso argues that Xam's pieces "se adscriben a un realismo mágico" ("are associated with magical realism") (66). This is evident in his 1950 work *Gallos* (*Chickens*) (FIG 2.12), exhibited at the first Hispanoamerican Biennale, which shares compositional similarities with an earlier version he had created in black ink. Central to both versions are two figurative characters, a pair of chickens. In the coloured version, these are rendered in rich reds and blues set against a yellow and green background, evoking rural landscapes typical of the larger islands of Mallorca and Menorca. The work retains strong graphic iconography, with pronounced and deliberate linework reminiscent of Xam's earlier caricatural and ink print pieces. This work functions symbolically, which, as McCloud has argued, constitutes the fundamental language of graphic expression, standing in for "any image used to represent a person, place, thing or idea" (26–27).

The two whimsical characters at the centre of *Gallos* function as dreamlike symbols. Their rendering bears notable affinities with the work of artist Joan Miró, who moved to Xam's home city of Palma in 1956. Xam himself acknowledged that the work was "enraizada en la

creatividad que tiene la obra de Miró" ("rooted in the creativity found in Miró's work") (Ysasi Alonso 66). Parallels can be drawn between Xam's depiction of the green sky and Miró's *Le Gentleman* (1924), as well as in the treatment of the sun and moon, reminiscent of Miró's lithographs. These conventions extend beyond mere aesthetic influence, the political undertones of FIG 2.12 converse with those in Miró's oeuvre equally. The two birds marching through the rural Balearic landscape, each sporting a red crest, evoke Miró's Catalan peasants wearing the red Phrygian cap seen in *The Hunter* (1924) and *Head of a Catalan Peasant* (1925). Like peasants, Xam's birds are figures rooted in the land, emerging from the earth. By depicting these Mallorcan peasants, Xam draws on a history present in Miró's work, which traced the Phrygian cap's political resonance tracing back to the Reapers' War of 1640–1659. Imbued with this historical weight, Xam's birds may be read, as Sophie Howarth notes of Miró's work, as "a symbol of nationalism [...] probably included [by Miró] as a response to the Spanish government's suppression of Catalan nationalism and specifically the Catalan language at the time" (n.p.). In this way, Xam's depiction of Mallorcan birds participates in a generating pan-Catalan relations, drawing upon these historical and political references within his artistic process. By joining his Mallorcan characters with cultural markers from the Catalan Peninsula in a deliberate blending, he enacts a subtle refusal to be legible within the homogenising cultural discourses of the regime. This reflects a political process akin to that found in Rafaely's sports humour, even though Xam and Rafaely's work are aesthetically distinct.

Xam's graphic rendering of Mallorca during the 1950s was not solely designed in relation to the Catalan mainland. He also depicted parts of Mallorca as distinct sites imbued with creative vitality, as can be seen in his work on the menu cards for the Latz restaurant (FIG 2.14). In his depiction of this restaurant, which opened on 8 October 1954, Xam frames it as a tiny door beneath a green-and-white awning, with a small sign protruding to the right. Cobblestone streets wind around it, and buildings far taller than the restaurant stretch skyward.

The venue is suspended within a patch of white, which makes it stand out from the sepia tones surrounding it, akin to the way an island emerges from the sea. By situating the restaurant in this way, Xam encourages readers to reflect on the value of this space, which becomes an almost insular site, as a place of both aesthetic and political significance. As Ysasi Alonso notes, during this period the Latz became an important location for artists and thinkers from across Europe who had taken up residence in Palma, Mallorca's capital. Representing it, Xam reflects on his level of pride regarding

> este lugar de encuentro de diversos personajes, desde Errol Flynn a Robert Graves y Joan Miró. El negocio era regentado por Peter Gerlach, amigo y gran admirador de la obra de Xam, quien diseña la carta del restaurante, de la que se conserva copia y decora con frescos las paredes de su interior. (Ysasi Alonso 69)
>
> (this meeting place for diverse characters, from Errol Flynn to Robert Graves and Joan Miró. The business was run by Peter Gerlach, a friend and great admirer of Xam's work, who designed the restaurant's menu, a copy of which is preserved, and decorated the interior walls with frescoes.)

Read in this vein, Xam's work depicting the Latz fulfils a role much like that played by Beuster's FIG 2.11. By rendering this small site of confluence, which was so central to his home, around which a unique tapestry of cultural production was created, he celebrates how the artistic landscape of Mallorca, despite the legacies of the cultural repression of the regime, remained a heterogeneous space full of encounters. This is also reflected in the depiction of

people dancing in the street, in apparent defiance of the Francoist "will to control mobility" (Alejandro Pérez-Olivares, 128) in public spaces, especially in the post-Civil War period.

Equally noteworthy in the Latz restaurant card is the manner in which Xam renders the insular restaurant. The physical location, standing in for the city of Palma and drawn in line, occupies a relatively small section of the panel. Relegated to a tiny cover and a pair of closed doors, it hangs off the right-hand side of a far larger building constructed in a Romanesque style. That building is an imposing form totalling six storeys with tall windows, sharp brickwork, and Baroque architectural features, all rendered in precise detail by the artist. However, it is not the grand building that first captures the reader's attention, but the Latz, located to the right of centre. On one level, the Latz encapsulates what Ysasi Alonso terms "el contexto marginal mallorquín" ("the marginal Mallorcan context") (65). Much like the island of Mallorca, this restaurant is a tiny space appendaged onto a seemingly far larger construction. Yet Xam's work implies that it is this seemingly marginal space that holds greater value than the looming Romanesque structure beside it. His piece prompts readers to reflect upon the vitality that this small insular place offers, and to consider the extent to which the grand and imposing hegemonic presence of a larger regime, embodied in the building to the left in this instance, offers value.

Comparing graphic artworks created by Xam, Beuster, and Rafaely during the 1950s, particular note should be made of the aesthetic differences between them. Xam's *Gallos* verges on the painterly, whilst Rafaely's work navigates the bounds of caricatural sports humour. Beuster's scene plays only on the edges of the figurative, caricaturing real figures, whereas Xam's has already departed towards Miró's abstraction and the language of symbols. Nonetheless, these works share a key facet. A central feature in each of them is how they do not present Balearic and Canary Island spaces as peripheries in relation to Madrid or Castile, as the regime demanded. Instead, we encounter depictions of these as sites of vitality.

Aesthetically, works from these island chains share few connections, yet we find important commonalities across them politically and aesthetically underpinned by an embrace of local rootedness.

## 1959-1972: Travels and Mobilities

A key facet that distinguishes the graphic works of Xam, Beuster, and Rafaely in the 1950s from those of Pastino and Roig in the 1970s is the formulation of the politics within them. In the former cases, each artist focuses on their specific locales. The subtleties in Rafaely's work can only be read in Las Palmas; Beuster's is only comprehensible to those familiar with Santa Cruz's milieu; Xam's is situated exclusively in the spaces surrounding Mallorca and Menorca. Whilst capturing the creative abundance of certain parts of Tenerife, Gran Canaria, and Mallorca graphically, these works do not necessarily prompt engagement beyond their shores. Their creators concentrate on presenting their homes as concrete places around which rooted identities are built and reshaped. Whilst these works may have encouraged readers in Las Palmas, Santa Cruz, and Palma to reflect on the value of their islands, they had not yet articulated the politics that Roig and Millares Sall had generated by the 1970s.

### *Graphic Landscapes in the wake of 1959*

What did artists engage with between 1959 and 1972 that led them to move towards the aesthetics and politics of archipelagic mobility? In what follows, I explore this by examining how practitioners engaged with two key archipelagic turns between 1959 and 1972, situating their graphic art not only within their own islands but also as inviting interconnection with spaces and thought outside them. First, I discuss how they incorporated spaces created by the

impositions of the Francoist regime into their works. Then, I explore how they engaged in processes of mobility that reshaped their artistic production's politics and aesthetics.

McGlade argues that the 1960s saw a "sense of lethargy developing towards graphic humour in Madrid, with little being offered to revitalize or compete with the increasingly stale *La Cordoniz*" (*Catalan Cartoons* 172). However, this could not be further from the truth in graphic production from across the Balearic and Canary Islands during this period, which innovated in several different ways. Specifically, I trace different beginnings of that innovation to depictions of landscapes from Gran Canaria and Mallorca at different points, where analogous, though unconnected, trends originate.

In the Canary Islands, the innovative depiction of landscapes in graphic art around the late-1950s is exemplified in *Mujeres en la isla*. Directed by María Teresa Prats de Laplace and Esperanza Vernetta de Quevedo, this outlet began its publication run as a women's supplement in the *Diario de Las Palmas* in November 1953. From 1955, it acquired editorial independence, continuing until a double issue published in November–December 1964. Especially notable in the review's creation was its use of graphic work both within and on its covers. An important designer for the review was Virginia García Solalinde. Opening her career exhibiting at the *I Exposición de Humoristas Canarios* (First Exhibition of Canarian Humourists) in 1944, she began contributing to *Mujeres en la isla* around 1958, writing travel articles and designing its Christmas covers that year. Her earlier work included a variety of floral graphic designs, alongside a section titled 'La Gran Prueba' on novels, writing, and literature. She also included articles on items such as a report on a concert by the singer Victoria de los Ángeles in Barcelona.

Solalinde's work played a key role in inciting readerly engagement with the review. This is exemplified by her graphic rendering of an insular landscape as a space for reflection on the cover of the April 1959 edition of *Mujeres en la isla*, seen in a two-page piece titled 'El

Risco' ('The Cliff') (FIG 2.15). In this piece, the artist includes two panels on the front and back pages, in which she encourages the reader not to read from top right to left but rather from the bottom up. She achieves this through the placement of a greater density of buildings, particularly in the middle of the panels.[29] As they gaze at 'El Risco', Solalinde invites readers to navigate a densely packed group of vernacular buildings clinging to a hillside, exploring the narrow streets and houses with darkened windows of this insular village. Within it, we find small, isolated palms, and in the backdrop, flowing volcanic forms. This landscape is composed of multiple graphic planes. Of note is the use of verticality and vernacular architecture in its construction. In a style resonating with the thought of Lanzarotean artist César Manrique, the work celebrates the visual language of the vernacular Canary Island village, rather than the buildings of the city, "a type of architecture which responds in absolutely no way to the climate and the beauty of its mountainscape" (n.p.), as Manrique wrote in *Falange* on 21 April 1957. In turn, the piece invites the reader to participate in the narrative of the Canary Island landscape, taking it as a space for reflection, rather than as a prescriptive space, or as one that is marginal.

Rather than deriving from the tradition of landscape painting, Solalinde's hand-drawn works share a closer resemblance to other forms of line illustration. 'El Risco' shares its coherence of readerly engagement with Solalinde's Christmas edition cover for *Mujeres en la isla*, published in 1958. As evident in covers held at the Museo Canario in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, tactile interactions with these pieces did not merely involve looking at covers; the artist also applied paint and brush to fill in her flowers, as shown in FIGs 2.17A–C (an original is also preserved in FIG 2.17D).

By 1958, Solalinde's graphic art was no longer a mere diversion, as Rafaely's work had been perceived earlier in the 1950s. Rather, it was deemed worthy of the front cover, of

[29] A similar frontpage in 1960 by Miró Maniou also bears this title.

publication, and of re-dissemination, fundamentally, of multiple interpretations. Her work employs a graphic style that invites tactile intimacy, stratifying a heterogeneous "communication between surfaces [which] are freighted with meaning" (Kwa, 31). When the reader encounters her production, multiple frames of relation come into play: the tactile thin paper held whilst viewing the work, the insular spaces rendered upon it in ink, and the reader's own preconceptions all interact in an intimate moment.

Such a graphic rendering of a landscape as an intimate, tactile space for reflection is not only present on Gran Canaria following 1958. An interest in what that landscape rendered graphically could offer to readers is similarly reflected in a completely different context on Mallorca in illustration. This is evident in pieces published for *Lluc*, a Catalan-language review disseminated in Palma de Mallorca. Founded in 1921 by missionaries from the Monestir de Lluc (St Luke's Monastery) under the title *Lluch* as a bilingual review in Spanish and Catalan, this review was renamed *Lluc* during its transition to a monolingual Catalan run in 1962.

Working towards 1970, *Lluc* was directed by Cristòfol Veny Melià and journalist Gabriel Fuster i Mayans, as noted by Gabriel Seguí i Trobat. He comments that throughout the 1970s Lluc "acompanya les esperances suscitades per l'agonia de la dictadura i per les primeres passes de la democracia" ("accompanies the hopes raised by the agony of the dictatorship and the first steps towards democracy") (6). Yet, in the period prior to this, *Lluc* also played a key role in shaping thinking surrounding Mallorca. As Seguí i Trobat relates,

> des de l'any 1972 se mostra aquesta visió problemàtica del món illenc. Ens explica com *Lluc*, a partir d'aquesta data, va oferir una visió de la realitat allunyada de la perspectiva aproblemàtica i lírica que l'havia impregnat en el passat presentant-se com a defensora d'un plantejament crític amb la realitat a tots els nivells. La revista *Lluc* esdevindrà,

doncs, una plataforma molt important de difusió d'una visió crítica de la realitat illenca del moment. (24)

(Since 1972, a problematic vision of the island world has been shown. *Lluc*, from that date on, offered a vision of reality far removed from the unproblematic and lyrical perspective that had permeated it in the past, presenting itself as a defender of a critical approach to reality at all levels. The *Lluc* magazine therefore became a very important platform for disseminating a critical vision of the island reality of the moment.)

Graphic works played a pivotal role in *Lluc*'s encouragement of its readers to engage with the island landscape as a site for reflection, and to think critically about Mallorca's realities. This is exemplified in a 1963 piece by Biel Vallés incorporated alongside an article by Miquel Gayá titled 'Déu vos guard' ('God bless you.') (FIG 2.17). That work, on page 93 of *Lluc*'s 505th edition, renders a view from a window in the form of an illustration. On one level, 'Déu vos guard' can be read as responding directly to Gayá's text above the illustration, which asks, "¿No seran aquests Cursets una ajuda eficacíssima en la transformación actual de la Eglésia? ¿Podria, algú, ignorar encara, avui, aquest moviment de Vesperit cristià dels nostres dies?" ("Won't these Cursets be a very effective aid in the current transformation of the Church? Could anyone still ignore, today, this movement of Christian Vespers of our days?") (90). Vallés' work might be seen to invite contemplation of that question in an additive manner, as the reader is encouraged to gaze out from the room in which they are situated towards the town that the artist renders in the distance.

Yet, more important than its accompaniment to the text and equally central to Vallés' piece is how it does that. At the heart of this piece is the threshold. This is present across three

planes: foreground, middle ground, and background. Employing the threshold, Vallés asks the reader to reflect on the landscape, much like Solalinde does on the cover of *Mujeres en la isla*. In the piece, the reader is placed in a single moment, standing in a darkened room with the shade enveloping it rendered in thick pencil strokes. The foreground is dominated by a table, upon which stand a spilled bottle and a half-empty glass. As the reader's gaze moves towards the middle ground, the artist presents a windowsill, upon which rest the dying leaves of a plant in a small pot. Finally, as we look through that window into the background, the artist confronts readers with a cliff-face and distant houses drawn with darkened windows.

These spaces, in one sense, are entirely disconnected, the spilled wine and dying plant symbolising a tension at the centre of the work: something lost and unable to be recovered. Yet, equally, of note is the interconnectedness of each of the planes in this work. In its line-drawn composition, each frame, foreground, middle ground, and background, acts as an island does in an archipelago. As the reader's gaze shifts between these planes, we are invited to conceive of distinct relations between each, the outside coming in whilst the inside remains distant from it. This scene portrays a village in which the reader is situated in a state of change. It asks the reader to consider what lies behind the hill, what, despite the spilled wine and the confinement of the window frame, exists beyond. It demands that they question not what the alienating island of the present constitutes, but rather what future reflections could be cohered within the Mallorcan landscape, should readers depart from the window frame and step out across the hills and into the town.

A key distinction between Vallés' work and Solalinde's covers traces back to the sources from which each draws. Vallés' work stems not directly from line drawing, but from the rich history of landscape painting and the window view. Despite these distinct origins, both Vallés and Solalinde's works centralise the way the reader engages with a graphic rendering of an insular landscape full of spaces for reflection. They incite readers to think about their islands

as points of departure, as a "Nouvelle région du monde" ("A new region of the world"), which, Tina Peil and Michael Wiedorn note, "does not need to be a physical space" but rather one "conflict [and] transforming both literally and figuratively by our consciousness of its past, present and future" ('Introduction: Poetics of Space - Archipelagos & Wanderings' n.p.). By centrally focusing on simplicity of line and form, Vallés and Solalinde's landscapes are both designed to be affective. Whether travelling through Vallés' thresholds or the verticality of 'El Risco', as readers turn the tactile page and trace the lines and the gaps, these pieces invite them to meet in the middle of a plane of meaning. The white spaces between the lines in these works places that the reader is invited to impose themselves upon. This fosters a relation between reader and work in which they are compelled to fill in the white spaces. Rather than relying on figurative images, FIGs 2.15–2.17 present insular landscapes as spaces for reflection that prove more powerful than complex works crowded with moving images or oversaturated scenes. Despite belonging to different genres of graphic art and emerging from distinct contexts, both artists depict small places waiting to be filled and inhabited.

*Ruptures and Relation? Aesthetics post-1960*

How the Balearic Islands were inhabited and what tensions underpinned their landscapes, as seen in Vallés' work, was reflected on in graphic terms in *Lluc*'s January 1968 edition. On page 16, the editors centre a piece of work titled 'Serra mamerra' ('Mammering Saw') (FIG 2.21), signed by Melillan-born artist, and later resident of Palma Pere Martínez Pavia (Melilla, 1927– Palma de Mallorca, 2020) under the pseudonym "Pavia". Unlike 'Déu vos guard' (FIG 2.16), Pavia's work is central to the page, taking up more than four fifths of its content. Accompanying a short story by Antònia Vincens titled 'Serra mamerra', it depicts a slumped over human form leaning against a backdrop that appears to be either a window or an antique doorway. The character could be situated in any Balearic town, city, or village.

Drawing from the text, we can identify him as an aged islander standing in the street of his residence, who hums the popular Mallorcan folk tune “Serra serra serrador” (“Saw, saw, the saw-er”) whilst being taunted by a younger boy. The figure is depicted in an abstract sketched style, a hunched over rounded form that contrasts with the sharp linearity of the backdrop he leans against. His back rises and is enveloped in shadow rendered through repeated linework run over and over, his gaunt face leaning onto his bent left hand that rests atop a walking stick, whilst his right-hand grasps that same feature to stabilise his body. His eyes are sunken, and the expression of his mouth cut through by a line that slices across the top of the piece. The use of negative space in this work is notable, with tone, hues or shading replaced by bold swerving linework.

In ‘Serra mamerra’, Pavia invites the reader to dissect the figure in its centre, a Mallorcan islander. As the poem recounts how he hums a song carried orally by a generation that, it is implied, are now being lost, Pavia’s piece provides an apposition to the earlier work by Vallés, and yet, poses similar questions. It depicts a Balearic inhabitant trapped at a moment of potential loss. He is an islander that seems to be fading away through the forgetting of oral traditions. Yet, alongside that, the work simultaneously begs a question: if this old man, hunched and slowly fading, is to be lost, and if his song, a traditional folk tune, is to be mocked, to fade to obscurity, then what will replace him? In that sense, ‘Serra mamerra’ renders the inhabitants of the Balearic Islands at a moment of rupture, of the Mallorcan islander slipping out of the frame as he slowly retreats away. It goes beyond Xam’s work depicting a space or a rootedness, instead posing the insular space as one which must be filled.

What causes that rupture? ‘Serra mamerra’ has a particular intersection with a different trope of visuality surrounding the representation of the Balearic Islands at the advent of the 1960s, that found in tourism imagery. As Colom-Montero notes, Díaz-Plaja stated in 1972 that the 1960s were “un decenio de histeria” (“a decade of hysteria”) (‘Mass tourism as cultural

trauma' 53). We can see this when comparing 'Serra Mammera' to 'Winter in Mallorca (Spain)' (FIG 2.22), another graphic piece created in the 1960s and disseminated across the region. In this work by Carlos Puntis Nebot (Palma de Mallorca, 1912–2001), the Mallorca depicted is different from the location in which Pavia's forlorn old man sits. In the background, a sea painted in the style of Italian futurism stretches out, the shining rocks and cliffs of the island reflecting in graduated shades over the water in a fashion that renders dynamism. Two small gestures of white depict yachts carried by the wind around this visually striking coastline. This is a definitive island of the future, different to those rendered by Vallés and Pavia. The foreground of FIG 2.22 differs from the background, depicting two key elements. First, to the left, a thermometer, reading off a temperature over 20 degrees, and to the right, a sunbather in red swimsuit, lying on what appears to be a lounger. Below, the text implores the viewer: "Winter in Mallorca (Spain)", playing upon the duality of the imperative and adverbial tone in the English articulation of this phrase. Quite distinctly from the work of Pavia, the character in FIG 2.22 is not one with much care for the culture of the isle they inhabit. Rather, they are enthralled by the enjoyment of the Mediterranean sun, sea, and sand. Beneath that double-imposition, the culture of the Balearic Island is rendered irrelevant as the greatest appeal of Mallorca is its beaches and its warm temperature. Pavia's 'Serra mamerra', responding to the rendering of the island in images such as FIG 2.22, encapsulates how its presentation of a forward-looking island ideal for tourists are in a process of departing from the realities of Mallorca. It captures the last glimpses of a culture that is not being creolised, but rather, removed.

That scene of the islander slowly fading out of the frame during the 1960s is in no sense exclusive to the Balearic Islands. Work by Gran Canarian artist Eduardo 'Millares Sall (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 1924–1992) after 1960 captures a similar presentation of the islander slipping away. For instance, this can be seen in '¿Usté no sabe que así no se puede ir por la

calle?' ('Don't you know that you can't walk down the street like that?') (FIG 2.18). This work was produced as part of Millares Sall's *Humor Isleño* (*Island Humour*) series and published in the regional paper *El Diario de Las Palmas*, receiving circulation not only in Gran Canaria, but across the Canary Islands. Much like other production from the late 1950s Canary Islands (see Franck González) '¿Usté no sabe que así no se puede ir por la calle?' depicts two trope characters: the *Guardia* (Guard) and the *Guiri* (Northern European Foreigner). These two figures inhabit a similar setting to the scene rendered in 'El Risco' by Solalinde. Millares Sall's work could be set in any Canary Island space, judging by the similarly line-drawn black and white depiction of a relatively ubiquitous vernacular wooden door, a street corner, lamp, and building in the background. It recalls quotidian life in Gran Canaria during the late 1950s and early 1960s, when the newly created morality police (linked to the *Guardia*) would approach and challenge inappropriately dressed visitors, especially on beaches in urban areas.

Exploring Gran Canarian public space and who inhabits it, it is especially notable in this piece how Millares Sall draws the Guiri, the character in the right of the frame. Stylistically, he seems misplaced compared to the other character in the scene, a member of either the *Guardia Civil* (Civil Guard) or *Guardia Municipal* (Municipal Guard). The officer wears a fitted uniform and rigid hat, his linear design in keeping with similarly linear elements, such as the door and the wall. Conversely, the *Guiri* disrupts the order of the scene. He is bare-chested and shoeless, with a rounded jaunty body shape and typically Northern European body hair on show, wearing only shorts, glasses, and a floppy hat with a flower upon it in a fashion reminiscent of that of a clown.

Initially, we might perceive that this piece satirically caricatures the Guiri, using his appearance as part of an incongruity humour, with his misplaced appearance being amusing to the reader. It could even be argued that he is constructed as a non-local other. Caricaturing the *Guiri* thus may seem to generate a dichotomous power relationship which places the implied

reader in a superior position compared to that of this outsider. We may posit that this othering of the visitor, as Anna Triandafyllidou argues, "serves in overcoming […] crisis" (603). Hence, the piece could also be interpreted to reify the formation of group identity, through a process which "unites the people in front of a common enemy, reminding them 'who we are' and emphasizing that 'we are different and unique'" (603).

Yet, such a conclusion rests on the assumption that Millares Sall's work was produced and circulated in a context where the politics of public space in the Canary Islands were subsumed into a broader Spanish identity, itself structured around oppositional binaries between a rooted self and an unrooted other. Shifting away from this, a very different reading of '¿Usté no sabe que así no se puede ir por la calle?' emerges. Of first note, when tracing that is how Millares Sall links the *Guiri* to an appetite for the exotic.[30] With his incongruous clothing, he is precisely the sort of character we might expect to exclaim, "[H]ow beautiful! How typical!", a figure sold in the Canary Islands as an "Antilles Cheap" (Glissant, *Poetics of Relation* 205). Millares Sall's *Guiri*, in his hunger for the exotic, is clearly naïve, as conveyed through his broken Spanish: "Mi no comprende" ["I no understand"]. In this turn, Millares Sall reveals how the *Guiri* is less an active creator of exoticisation, and more a subscriber to the broader system of it imposed upon Gran Canaria.

The behaviour of the *Guardia* reveals the origins of that exoticisation. Notably, the appearance and attitude of the *Guiri* are condoned by the *Guardia*. In his speech, we read: "¿Usté no sabe que así no se puede ir por la calle? […] ¡Aah, perdone! Usté es extranjero. Siga, siga" ("Don't you know that you can't walk down the street like that? […] Oh, sorry! You're a foreigner. Carry on, carry on"). In this exchange, the expectation of the exotic informing the appearance of the *Guiri* are shown by Millares Sall to be informed by the attitudes of Francoist

[30] This draws on the aesthetics of the "Antilles Cheap" (*Poetics of Relation* 205) as discussed by Glissant, as elaborated with reference to the notion of the burning beach in Chapter 1.

authorities, which frequently promoted the Canary Islands as an exotic tourist destination through graphic posters. Examples include those created for advertising campaigns such as FIG 2.19 and FIG 2.20. These posters depict the islands with bright colours and imagery of sun, sea, sand, palms, and a pin-up girl, motifs still echoed in the 2020s, as seen in the pieces discussed in Chapter 1 (FIGs 1–6). In FIG 2.18, the flowers on the clothing of the *Guiri*, his expectation of sun and sand implied in his shirtless, shoeless state, and the perceived photographability of the Canary Islands as a destination, signalled by the camera slung over his shoulder, all recall the exoticising visual language of FIGs 2.19 and 2.20. Through these details, Millares Sall reveals that both the *Guiri* and the *Guardia* are implicated in a totalitarian impulse to insert the exotic into the heart of the Canary Islands, or, as Ryan Conrath argues, "a coherent and self-same project across the discontinuities of time and space, where difference is neutralized in favor of linearity and totality" (*Between Images* 150). Given that these characters share a conception of the exotic island, the question arises: where does the insular resident fit into this?

Visibly, there is no character in Millares Sall's piece who represents a Canary Islander, as the *Guardia* himself concedes, "[…] así no se puede ir por la calle". Through the invisibility of the resident islander, the artist is thereby able to highlight the mechanism through which the regime wields its hegemonic control over the Canary Islands, by drawing distinct lines of permissibility for both the outsider (the *Guiri*), and the insular resident. This underscores the incongruity of the regime's opening up to tourism during the 1950s, which offered mobility to transnational visitors from Northern Europe, who were permitted to dress or behave in a certain way so long as their nomadism remained arrow-like, demanding the exotic whilst separating it from the continued repression of Canary Islanders' cultural expression and pluralism. The islander is written out of Gran Canaria in Millares Sall's work for this reason. He renders public

space in the Canary Islands not as a site they are welcome to inhabit, nor as one in which they are afforded mobility or representation.

By centring the different realities which Balearic and Canary islanders faced as their homes were subsumed by visualities of exoticisation through the 1960s, Millares Sall and Pavia render a politics similar to that seen in Chapter 1, where "still the swamp resists" and is tied to "the dis-appearance—a dis-appearing—in which the depths of the volcano circulate" (Glissant, *Poetics of Relation* 205). Their works invite Balearic and Canary islanders, in distinct ways, to consider what politics still do, and could, exist across their island chains as the 1960s progressed. They ask where Balearic and Canary islanders fit in a changing world. Moving from Xam and Rafaely's inward-facing works, Solalinde, Vallés, Millares Sall, and Pavia centralise space. They highlight how islanders who depart from the frame do not lose their agency and they incite reflection on what might be done to afford them mobility in the face of attempts by the regime to deprive them of it.

## Exiles, Travel, Mobilities

The prevalence of depictions of islanders departing from public spaces in works across the Balearic and Canary Islands between 1959 and 1968 is, in part, related to the way that artists across these island chains increasingly occupied positions of lesser prominence in the printed press during the same period. Millares Sall's practices exemplifies this trend. During the 1960s, he began to focus less on publishing contentious works, such as that seen in '¿Usté no sabe que así no se puede ir por la calle?', in the *Diario de Las Palmas*. Instead, he concentrated on compiling older pieces of *Humor Isleño* into a short book (published in 1969), as well as publishing under multiple pseudonyms other than "Cho Juaá". A similar trend can be observed in *Lluc*, which, between its 505th and 562nd editions, spanning 1963 to 1968, featured graphic

works primarily as small drawings and increasingly included reprinted photography in place of original illustrations.

The divergence between graphic art and the printed press during the 1960s was, in no small part, related to the regime's imposition of changing constraints upon comics and cartooning across the Spanish state. Throughout the 1960s, the most significant of these were shifts in censorship. Though laws governing freedom of the press had been most stringent from the 1930s until the late 1950s, the Francoist Minister for Information and Tourism Manuel Fraga Iribane reconfigured these regulations at the advent of the 1960s. As McGlade notes, this included provisions that explicitly altered the censorship of printed cartoons and comics, building upon a trend that had already placed "increasing pressure on cartoonists towards self-censure" established in legislation passed as early as 1956 ('Dissenting Voices? Controlling Children's Comics under Franco' 8).

The reforms, colloquially known as the *Ley Fraga* (Fraga's Law), were characterised by the regime as part of a process of liberalisation. Retrospectively, however, Guillermo Sanz Gallego observes that "the new law was in fact a legal hoax allowing the regime to maintain repression under the guise of a revised policy" (172). The de jure changes instituted by Fraga effectively shifted the de facto dynamics of censorship across presses. This was achieved through the implementation of a semi-devolved three-strike system, whereby outlets were expected to self-censor or face significant reprisals. As McGlade notes, "[w]hile Fraga spoke of liberal freedoms, and even had revised legal documentation to back this up, as Serrano Súñer remarked, it was not law itself but its interpretation that became the most important issue" (*Catalan Cartoons* 175). Under these reforms, the topics available for discussion in presses were strictly controlled, not only through direct censorship but also through the expectation that practitioners self-censor, even as a perception of openness was maintained. The psychological pressures of this extra responsibility, combined with the increased vulnerability

to serious prosecution, “resulted in many feeling that the old system was preferable” (McGlade *Catalan Cartoons* 175).

The outcomes of a changing press environment and the ruptures that ensued from it were particularly pronounced for graphic artists working across the Canary Islands during the 1960s. It drove a diversification in the ways that they both created and disseminated their work. Between 1962 and 1968, that diversification was most evident in the way that artists increasingly engaged with groups and associations. For Canary Island practitioners the most important of these during the 1960s was the *Agrupación Vanguardista Hispana de Caricaturistas Personales* (Association of Hispanic Vanguard Caricaturists) (henceforth (*AVHCP*). Founded in 1954, the *AVHCP* brought together a range of graphic artists from across Spain, including Paco Martínez (Tenerife, 1907–1990), Beuster, Rafaely, and Eduardo Millares Sall. One of the most significant islanders in the group was its leader, Luis León Lasa (1890–1986). Born in Alcalá, a municipality in the Spanish-occupied Philippines, Lasa held dual Spanish and Filipino citizenship and worked transnationally throughout his life. During his early career, he travelled extensively between the Philippines and multiple regions of Spain, caricaturing key political and cultural figures and presenting numerous collections throughout the 1930s, including his most prominent, compiled in 1938.

Lasa regularly reflected on his travels in his work, which trace errant journeys across the globe. As Conrath notes, such travel “seeks meaning, identity, and solidarity not in particular places but rather in their accumulation and continuity, or more precisely in the spaces between them” (Between Images 148). This is visible in his 1938 piece ‘La diosa quimera’ (FIG 2.23), chosen as a cover for his most notable caricature compendium. The aesthetics and politics of travel across spaces are reflected both in the title of this work, invoking the Chimera goddess, a mythical hybrid, and in its use of colour and line. Soft blues, pinks, greens, and yellows intertwine lightly across the piece, forming a figure that defies conventional uses of

shadow and light and imbuing the piece with a dynamic, flowing energy. Elements refuse to remain fixed in a single location, fading, flowing, and merging like waves in the sea. The work implies a departure from fixed forms and a willingness to embrace fluidity and multiplicity. Its dynamic interplay of colour and line evokes movement and the continuous negotiation between spaces, where elements resist being rooted to any one place.

As reflected in 'La diosa quimera', Lasa was an errant artist, constantly on the move, never settling into a single rooted place or identity. His early practice pushed the bounds of what was accepted as caricature across transnational contexts during the 1930s in multiple ways. He used vibrant colour and novel methods such as multi-dimensionality and collage employing a range of materials to add multiple textural layers to his pieces. His work was often highly charged in its gestures. This can be seen in his caricature of Filipino politician Manuel Quezon, created in 1936 (FIG 2.24), which is now on display at the Quezon Memorial Shrine. Quezon (1878–1944) was a Filipino leader and statesperson and, during his government, he focused on military defence, agrarian reform, and infrastructure development, whilst often relying heavily on US support in those sectors.[31]

Lasa portrays Quezon in his caricature through the medium of carved blocks. His Quezon is a portly figure in a white colonial uniform with a sickly face, slick back dark hair, and a comedically large red nose. In his round hand the president grasps at a brown phallic item that might either be a trumpet or a whip, recognisable as a symbol of seized power. Lasa places Quezon in an abstract space. The president is located atop the colours of the flag of the

[31] Born in Baler, Philippines, he was a key figure in the islands' independence struggle. His political career began with his election to the Philippine Assembly in 1907, followed by an appointment as resident commissioner to the US Congress, where he advocated for Philippine autonomy. His efforts culminated in the Jones Act of 1916, in which the Philippines were ceded greater de jure self-governance. Quezon became the president of the Philippines Senate in 1916, consolidating power within the *Nacionalista* Party by 1922. He championed the Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934 in collaboration with the American occupiers of his home, paving the way for Philippine independence, and was then elected as the first president of the Philippine Commonwealth in 1935.

Philippines and is then attached to a dark background. Looming clouds are then fixed above him. Using these elements, Lasa satirises Quezon taking power over his home country. He invites readers to reflect on the President's apparent control, shown through the whip, whilst interrogating his colonial appearance, asking the viewer to question why he stands upon the flag of the newly independent nation in a white suit and hat. The work subtly implicates a criticism of Quezon's lack of connection with the many realities lived across the Philippine archipelago, depicting a seizure of power through his continuing ties with colonial powers, especially the USA. Nonetheless, Lasa is subtle in his depiction of these facets when compared to overtly propagandistic forms caricature was associated with during the 1930s. He bridges between the expectations of nineteenth-century caricatures, using enlarged symbolic features, and elements of twentieth-century satirical artistic modernism, combining abstract aesthetics. He thus creates a radically novel form of work for its time which defies expectations of form, material, colour, and treatment of subject matter.

Following a hiatus in the wake of the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939), Lasa's reputation for his caricatural style enabled him to integrate himself into multiple networks of artists spanning across Spain in the 1940s. Within those networks he masterminded the promotion of a range of exhibitions.[32] Then, by the 1950s, taking initiative to continue building links between artists and institutions across Europe, Asia and the Americas, he organised a range of events to promote his own caricatural work whilst maintaining relationships between multiple graphic artists, including José María Martín (in Barcelona) and Francisco González (in Santander).

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[32] These events were first conceived of during the earlier twentieth century, with the first "Exposiciones de Humoristas" appearing in 1907, and the first exhibition (titled as a "Salon") being launched in 1914 by José Francés, referred to by Lasa as the "creador de la caricatura moderna Española", as noted in José Carlos Delgado Gómez (361).

Owing to censorship, the advent of the 1960s established the perfect conditions for the intensification of the importance of Lasa's exhibitions for Canary Island graphic artists especially, who moved towards them in response to an increasingly difficult environment in the local press. This was catalysed by the fact that, at this stage, Millares Sall, Paco Martínez, Rafaely, and Beuster had already attained a certain level of exposure for their work, and all had access to the funds to begin to contribute to exhibiting beyond their homes. These artists could also now travel rapidly due to the recent development in regular air travel from Gran Canaria and Tenerife to the Peninsula. Coordinating exhibitions, the *AVHCP* did not merely focus on larger cities within the bounds of Spain, such as Madrid, Valencia, or Barcelona. Rather, the most substantial events the group held were set up both in the Canary Islands and transnationally. These included, most notably, the *I Exposición Internacional Homenaje a Picasso* (First International Exhibition in Homage to Picasso), held first in a small-scale event in Santa Cruz de Tenerife (1961), then at scale in Madrid (1962) and Barcelona (1963). This was followed by the *Exposición de Caricaturas de la Agrupación Hispana de Caricaturistas Personales* (Exhibition of Caricatures by the Hispanic Group of Personal Cartoonists), held at the Universidad de Santo Tomás de Aquino in Manilla (1963), then shortly after at the Galería Wiott (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria) and the Círculo de Amistad XII de enero (Santa Cruz de Tenerife). These exhibitions came to a head with the *I Salón Humorista de Canarias* (First Canary Island Humourist Exhibition), held at the Museo Canario (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria) and the *Exposición de Caricaturas Bayfo de Oro* (The Golden Goatherd Caricatures Exhibition), held at the Sala de arte el Cenobio (The Cenobio art hall) (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria), both in 1968.[33] The outcomes of this latter exhibition for Canarian graphic artists were most apparent in *El Eco de Canarias* (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, 1963–1983) in March

[33] The invitations sent for this are seen in FIG.25.

1968 (FIG 2.25).[34] This coverage shows the aesthetics and politics of works artists were displaying at these events. It also underscores the role that exhibitions played in changing the perceptions of Canary Island graphic artists during this period both locally and transnationally. The first element which confronts the reader of *El Eco de Canarias* is the range of published images of works that Canary Island artists presented at exhibitions throughout the 1960s. These comprised caricatures of a series of individuals. In the left panel, the editors feature Eduardo Millares drawn by Beuster and "Barrera" by Rafaely. Then, in the bottom panel, Geraldine Chaplin, by Paco Martínez, Rey Saud (King Saud) signed Cho Juaá (Millares Sall) and Jacinto Benavente by José Morales Clavijo (1910–1978). Finally, on the right, placed in a rectangular column, the editors include a piece by Millares Sall of President Kennedy. The Canary Island artists' choices to depict an American-born actress (who, would later work with Pedro Almodóvar amongst others), the Saudi King (who had recently visited Spain under the Eisenhower doctrine), a notable liberal dramatist, and a US President, leads the reader to understand that their events were not merely small provincial shows. On the contrary, this frames how their exhibitions laid at the heart of a matrix of realities. The depiction of Kennedy by Millares Sall is especially significant, as it sparks questions surrounding the extent to which these Canarian artists had begun to develop an affinity to the ongoings in the Americas that maybe even superseded their interest in the Iberian Peninsula. This was apposed with a growing number of Canarian artists becoming increasingly popular in the United States, least of all Lanzarotean islander César Manrique, for instance, who developed close relationships with the American avant-garde during this period. It thus ferments an excitement surrounding the renewed link their work offered to their Canary Island readerships. It enables the reader to feel

[34] An image of this paper can be found in FIG.26.

closer to transnational experiences that supplanted those of increasingly static graphic art and press discourses within the bounds of the Spanish state.

The works at the Cenobio event also highlight how the styles used by Canary Island graphic artists changed whilst they created work for exhibitions. The caricatures they presented at these exhibitions were comprised of abstract geometric forms, quite different from what might be expected of traditional caricature. They stage political figures who appear dark, rectangular, and blocky, whilst artistic icons are imbued with flowing features and dynamic forms. In so doing, these caricatures capture iconic figures in ways that invite readers to interrogate their substance and character. The designs here differ markedly from those that Millares Sall and Rafaely, for instance, incorporated into their cartoons for the daily press. The caricatures created for exhibitions go further in their use of principles such as economy of line, multi-perspectival flatness, and fragmentation, whilst conveying messages about their subjects without relying on text.

Examining the pieces presented at the Cenobio art hall in *El Eco de Canarias*, the reader is left with a perception of the importance of these artists and their exhibitions. The act of placing them alongside, and on equal terms to, figures of transnational significance both culturally and politically (such as Kennedy and the Saudi King) imbues the artists with a comparative status. It is for this reason that the editors of *El Eco de Canarias* dedicated a full page to the Cenobio exhibition, incorporating multiple pieces of work, an article by Rafaely, coverage from a dedicated correspondent, and an interview. Unlike during the 1950s, when published graphic art was being incorporated in the margins of the printed press, often located on the third or fifth pages, on this occasion it merits full-page coverage. No longer does the reader perceive this work as little more than diversionary humour at the end of a page of serious reading; instead, the artists themselves are framed as the centre of attention.

This perception is rendered more impactful when we consider how, in this coverage, the artists are designated as part of a unique genre, “Caricatura Canaria” (“Canarian Caricature”). This was drawn out most clearly in statements made by Lasa in *El Día*. As he surmised, and as cited in a 1961 article,

> El humorismo es una especial de lubrificante de la realidad negra de todos los días… - Paco Martínez dispara una buena pregunta: ¿El continental es mejor humorista que el insular?. - No, al contrario. Observen ustedes que los ingleses, los cubanos, los filipinos, los japoneses, etc. son buenos caricaturistas. Hay factores de aislamiento, de concentración y de independencia que contribuyen a que el isleño vea la vida con ojos de humorista” … -¿Dónde ha encontrado a los mejores caricaturistas del mundo? -En España, concretamente, en Tenerife. Tienen ustedes a Martínez, Beuster, Niebla, Galarza, Millares, Clavijo, Casanova y el decano Mesa, que ocupan lugar de honor en la caricatura mundial. […] en las más diversas partes del mundo… -¿Cuál es el hijo más robusto de la Agrupación de caricaturistas? -Sin la menor duda, la canaria. Tenerife está en la vanguardia nacional (esto no lo digo aquí, sino en todos partes). Después le sigue la de Santander -¿Influye la serenidad y la lejanía de las Islas en el sentido del humor de sus hombres? -La causa yo no la sé, pero para mí la caricatura es cosa de volcanes e islas. (In Alfonso García Ramos, ‘Habla Luis de Lasa. Las islas y los volcanes, buena tierra para la caricatura’ n.p.).

> (Humour is a special lubricant for the grim reality of everyday life... Paco Martínez asks a good question: Are mainlanders better comedians than islanders? No, quite the contrary. Just look at the English, Cubans, Filipinos, Japanese, etc. They are all good cartoonists. There are factors of isolation, concentration and independence that

> contribute to islanders seeing life through the eyes of a humorist [...] Where have you found the best cartoonists in the world? In Spain, specifically in Tenerife. You have Martínez, Beuster, Niebla, Galarza, Millares, Clavijo, Casanova and the dean Mesa, who occupy a place of honour in the world of caricature. [...] in the most diverse parts of the world... Which is the strongest branch of the Caricaturists' Association? Without a doubt, the Canarian one. Tenerife is at the national forefront (I do not just say this here, but everywhere). It is followed by Santander […] Does the serenity and remoteness of the islands influence the sense of humour of its people? I do not know the reason, but for me, cartooning is a matter of volcanoes and islands.)

Here, Lasa's comments underscore how Canary Island artists had moved significantly away from reflecting realities in specific cities whilst working in the margins of more important contexts in the 1950s. Instead, he makes it clear that, at exhibitions, artists from across the Canary Islands, imbued with creative vigour by their unique backgrounds, were an integral part of an archipelagic network shaped by novel politics and aesthetics. Of note is his statement "yo no la sé, pero para mí la caricatura es cosa de volcanes e islas" ("I do not know, but for me, cartoons are all about volcanoes and islands"). Underscoring two key elements that feed the appeal of caricature as an insular form, here Lasa muses on the role Canarian graphic art played in exhibitions. For him, work by artists from across the Canary Islands was rendered as a nexus point; borne from a territory not characterised by its isolation. It was also characterised by a vulcanicity, being an elemental explosive force which departs from the islands. This force is both destructive to what once was, to the tropes of the past, and yet also creates new beginnings and new realities. Such a framing of Canary Island graphic art holds true in the Cenobio coverage in *El Eco de Canarias* and shaped its editorial perspective. The coverage in this outlet highlights the growing cultural significance that graphic art by Canary Island artists attained

between 1962 and 1968 across national, regional, and transnational scales. Alongside the broader work exhibited, it shows how graphic artists, departing from the supposedly marginal insular spaces of the Canary Islands, embarked on the creation of new territories, reframing thinking about the value of graphic art and challenging the exaltation of rooted, stagnant peninsular production found in national outlets of the time. For Canary islanders in the 1960s, this outward-looking process was in no way mutually exclusive from the reification of an insular identarian pivot. As Domingo Pérez Minik argues, the identity of islanders moving towards the 1980s was becoming one that centred around notions of travel, circulation, and return, and, perhaps more significantly, one that does not conceive of binary distinctions between local, regional, transregional, national, and transnational contexts. He states, "Canario […] Con esta palabra somos capaces de expresar asimismo la existencia de un baile de compás binario" ("Canarian […] With that word we are capable of expressing at the same time an existence dancing upon a binary rhythm") (3).

Throughout the 1960s, Millares Sall, Paco Martínez, Beuster and Rafaely also began to attain an iconic status which surrounded their personas on a local scale by engaging with different mobilities as they exhibited across the globe. In 1968, for example, following multiple exhibitions, Rafaely was referred to as "El personaje más popular de la semana" ("The most popular person of the week") on the cover of *El Eco de Canarias* on 8 March of that year. The artists' perceived significance, which began affording them an iconic status, was similarly reflected in the way that their personas and works were captured outside of graphic art, for instance, in the context of photography during this period. We can see this in the ways that artists such as Rafaely were photographed during the 1960s. Through the medium of photography, Rafaely ceases to appear as a merely peripheral contributor, instead becoming an iconic figure in his own right. For instance, this can be seen in FIG 2.26, where he is photographed surrounded by an array of smaller framed caricatures alongside a larger mural-

style portrait, depicted with a halo, which occupies the space of a wall.[35] This confers to Rafaely, as an implied character, a positioning a stand-in for the growing influence of graphic artists, and more generally, the importance of Canary Island graphic art as a genre-grouping which places its practitioners as ideal interlocutors across both local realities and transnational spaces. This is also reflected on in a piece published by Millares Sall on the front of his review, *El Conduto*, where he assumes the persona of Cho Juaá to caricature Paco Martinez (FIG 2.27). In this portrayal, Martinez, recognized as "El Genuio" ("The Genuine"), is celebrated for his triumph in the "Gran Premio Internacional de Caricatura" (Grand International Prize for Caricature) in Montreal, Canada. In this representation, Millares Sall draws his colleague with clear linear features, a smiling expression, and a distinctive moustache. Martinez is depicted in an iconic guise, standing in as an ideal Canary Island artist who marks an era of reconnection between the islands and the globe, moving away from the autarky purported by Francoist politics towards transnational encounters. Martinez, a sort of character, is favoured for being internationally recognized, as articulated by Rafaely in his accompanying text.

Within this moment, heterogeneous relations shaped the interactions among these artists and the public. Figures such as Rafaely, Martínez, and Millares Sall, were now perceived as mobile travellers, moving to and from exhibitions across the world and connecting with other figures of transnational significance. The choices they made in engaging with groups and presenting at exhibitions, as well as the ways these choices were received, stood at odds with the expectations that continental thinking imposed upon islanders. Refusing to be confined by notions of isolating insularity, Canary Island graphic artists of this period reframed their insular position as one oriented outward toward the world. The turn to exhibitions, compelled by

[35] This is particularly surprising in the context of 1960s Catholic Spain, where association with such an image still tested the politics of the sayable, since depicting an individual as equivalent to a saint risked contravening the sensibilities of the hegemonic influence over censors especially.

censorship that forced Canary Island artists into a form of exile from the press, became a means to reposition themselves and their insular homes within a matrix of transnational realities.

*Island Movements within the Press*

The outcomes of the experience of mobility for Canary Islanders whilst exhibiting was something that they rapidly brought home with them. Mobility became not only a physical facet in their experiences, but also something they reflected on epistemologically and thematically in their work's aesthetics and politics. We can see this in a piece by Eduardo Millares Sall, published as part of the *Humor Isleño* series around 1969 (FIG 2.28). In that work, political dynamics within Gran Canaria, framing how islanders distinguished themselves from hegemonic landscapes established by a regime which sought to promote unity and totality, take on a central role. FIG 2.28 centres on Millares Sall's drawing of a skeletal figure gesturing towards a field adorned with crosses which sits in front of an island chain. On one level, the text within the piece revolves around a pun on "“por” aquí – todos somos “más”" ("“around”" here – we are all “additional”"). However, beyond the linguistic play, it also explores the position of the cartoonist and the islander in relation to totalising logics. A closer examination of the skeletal figure and the crosses prompts the reader to discern that the symbols represent graves, rather than mere plus signs. Millares Sall seems to imply to his readership that they can either continue to join in with the regime's totality, which might ultimately lead to eventual death, or they can consider the alternative, rotating their perspective, and looking towards the other islands on the horizon, in the same way that Canary Island graphic artists had done throughout the 1960s.

The Balearic Islands similarly saw a mobility of practitioners during the late 1960s and early 1970s. This was typified in the trajectory of Ramon Cavaller Garcia (Ciutadella, 1939–). Born and educated in Menorca, in 1964 he relocated to Stockholm, Sweden, where he later

became a professor of Catalan and Spanish. During this period, he contributed to cultural exchange between Catalonia, the Balearic Islands, and Sweden through his translations and adaptations. Notably, he authored illustrations for the *Rondaies Mallorquines* (*Mallorcan Folktales*) series, developed Catalan teaching methods, and created theatrical adaptations for children. During the 1960s and 1970s, Cavaller's mobility reflected both his wide-ranging ambition and his need to evade a shifting political climate in Francoist Spain, leading him to also spend periods in the United States and Rome. In Italy, he worked on set panels for films, including during the production of Fellini's *Satyricon*, before returning to Sweden. He also maintained a constant writing relationship with *Lluc*, and, most importantly, would circulate drawings and comics for its editions. In edition 609 of *Lluc* in December 1971, Cavaller was dedicated a full page of "Burots" ("Doodles") (FIG 2.27). On that page, he included a remarkably similar scene to that found in the work of Canary Island artist Millares Sall. His piece pivots around a small figure located in the background to the right of the page. He stands on a stage, softly shaded, with a down-beaten expression on his face. Above his head, hangs an arrow, facing to the right, and, slightly behind that is a noose. Next to him, there is a figure also with an arrow above his head facing left, holding the central character's arms behind his back. In front of this scene there are nine figures with gaunt expressions, whose arrows all face to the left. At the head of the mass, a character with his hand raised states, "Tenim raó perqué som més" ("We are right because we are more"). This piece, notably, uses written Catalan language to pose open questions about a society in which difference was not regarded as acceptable, but as punishable. It invites the pan-Balearic reader of *Lluc* to read their language, to consider which character they are in the piece, and what the stakes are of challenging the hegemony of the regime's politics. This work moves beyond placing the island landscape as a site of contemplation as Vallés had earlier in *Lluc*. Rather, it leads readers to think of the ruptures arising from the politics of the regime, and opportunities to trace away from those.

Cavaller and Millares Sall's trajectories and works trace two distinct genealogies of graphic art, shaped by shifting local and national conditions throughout the 1960s and 1970s. While emerging from different insular contexts, both practitioners respond to the pressures of the late Francoist period, adapting their visual languages to negotiate censorship, circulation, and the limits imposed on expression. By 1972, their practices exemplify how graphic artists in the Balearic and Canary Islands were not only able to articulate forms of localised dissent, rooted in their immediate social and political environments, but also able to extend beyond the ideological and spatial constraints enforced by the regime.

This outward movement is evident both formally and materially, as artworks begin to gesture beyond the confines of the local, engaging broader audiences and referencing wider political imaginaries, while their modes of circulation, through exhibitions, print networks, and translocal exchanges, further exceed insular and state-imposed boundaries. In this sense, their production anticipates and helps to frame the developments seen in the work of Pastino and Roig, whose later pieces make this dynamic more explicit. Together, these trajectories demonstrate how graphic art functioned as a medium through which artists could simultaneously register the pressures of the regime and explore possibilities for thinking, and moving, beyond it. Comparing these pieces evidences how, between 1950 and 1974, Balearic and Canary Island artists engaged with significant shifts in the ways that they created their work, moving towards a poetics built around prominent transcendence of borders. In that setting, as we have seen, this moved beyond hegemonic expectations, fostering novel reflections amongst readers who were navigating ever-changing insular cultural landscapes. Graphic art from across the Balearic and Canary Islands between 1950 and 1974 opened spaces left by censorship, reflected on the possibilities that underlay a move away from locality, and invited readers in the islands to navigate their own paths beyond the constraints of the hegemonic regime. Ultimately, the pivot towards engagements with a mobile archipelagic

poetics which occurred separately, though in an analogous way, in the landscapes of graphic art across the Balearic and Canary Islands between 1950 and 1974, was shaped by these islands' connections to broader networks of mobility and politics of dissent. Through those mechanisms, artists from both these island chains generated errant Glissantian engagements. They rendered new depths, which

> navigate a path beneath the sea in the west and the ocean in the east and that, though we are separated, each in our own Plantation, the now green balls and chains have rolled beneath from one island to the next [weaving shared] rivers that we shall open up when it is our time and where we shall take our boat. (Glissant *Poetics of Relation* 206)

# Chapter 3: Transitions, Connections, Conversations(1971–1983)

"Let's remember together, from all the coasts of these seas! Memory is an archipelago."

(Glissant, Une nouvelle région du monde, 161).

This chapter traces how the politics of archipelagic mobility articulated by Pastino, Solalinde, Rafaely, and Millares Sall in the Canary Islands, resonating with those explored by Xam, Vallés, Cavaller, and Roig in the Balearic Islands, were taken up by later artists who guided readers through the social, political, and cultural shifts of 1972–1983. It analyses how artists from the Balearic and Canary Islands reflected on what underpinned those novel changes. It begins with works by Pastino in the Canary Islands and by artists from the countercultural review *Butifarra!* (1972–1978) that engaged directly with experiences of the early transition, before turning to graphic histories created between 1978 and 1983 that projected pan-insular pasts and futures in response to the Spanish state's new democratic narratives. In doing so, the chapter elucidates how Balearic and Canary Island graphic artists navigated connections and disconnections across Iberia, Europe, Africa, the Caribbean, the Mediterranean, and Latin America as they guided diverse readerships through the uncertainties of transition.

As Song notes in *Lost in Transition: Constructing Memory in Contemporary Spain*, the multiple experiences of transition have been continually relived and re-consumed, shaping cultural and political narratives across the Spanish state. For Song, the transition remains relevant precisely because it connects to the uncertain present of younger generations, making it a story of "failed communication and missed connections" (192). Much scholarship has

explored the representation of these dynamics in graphic art, often framing comics and caricature as reflections of Spain's "high politics" (Martin, 173) and, as Gerardo Vilches argues, as a medium that "brings us closer to the social debate surrounding the transition" and helps us "better understand how this political change came about" (286–87). Whilst redeeming, this focus, centred largely on Madrid, has left reflections from the Balearic and Canary Islands understudied. Given that artists from across the many islands that make up these regions were already moving beyond peninsular discourses before the transition, this absence is significant. Accordingly, this chapter also seeks to fill this lacuna, offering a reading of the multiple transitions that graphic artists explored across the Balearic and Canary Islands between 1972 and 1983 which move beyond the bounds of the Spanish state, and closing by discussing their resonances today.

## Connections, Disconnections, Eruptions: Teneguía-71, 'La agencia de publicidad' and 'La cosa laboral'

In his article 'Breve historia de la transición desde Canarias' ('A brief history of the transition from the Canary Islands'), José Manuel Pérez Lorenzo identifies 1978 as a pivotal year for the Canary Islands in terms of political and cultural change, during which they navigated "[u]n real decreto de marzo de 1978 [que] «aprueba el régimen preautonómico» [que] instituye la Junta de Canarias, a la misma vez que una ponencia ad hoc continúa en Madrid con la redacción de la Constitución del reino" (93) ("[A] royal decree of March 1978 [which] 'approves the pre-autonomous regime' [which] establishes the Canary Islands Regional Government, whilst at the same time an ad hoc committee continues in Madrid with the drafting of the Constitution of the Kingdom"). He states that this bolstered the perception that

> [c]on el cambio de siglo, el discurso dominante de que la «Constitución del consenso» nos ha proporcionado el más largo periodo de paz, prosperidad y estabilidad en libertad contrasta con el de quienes no dudan en cuestionar un texto que […] en puntos esenciales de su articulado, «consagra privilegios, santifica abusos y perpetúas injusticias», y en consecuencia demandan su reforma, sin descartar la radical apertura de un proceso constituyente. (Pérez Lorenzo 98)
>
> (With the turn of the century, the dominant discourse that the 'Consensus Constitution' has provided us with the longest period of peace, prosperity, and stability in freedom contrasts with that of those who do not hesitate to question a text that [...] in essential points of its articles, 'enshrines privileges, sanctifies abuses, and perpetuates injustices,' and consequently demand its reform, without ruling out the radical opening of a constituent process.)

This was traced by graphic artists in the printed press. To those ends, in 1978, Gran Canaria-based artist Pastino underscored tensions in what the transition to democracy had yielded for his home. Before the death of Franco, Pastino had regularly explored contentious relations between the regime and Canary Islanders (as discussed earlier in Chapter 2). Amid the Spanish state's transition to democracy, such explorations only intensified. In 1978, these were central to a work he created titled 'Teneguía-71' (FIG 3.1), which he published in *Sansofé*, a radical review with regionalist sympathies. In this piece, Pastino employs a sequential narrative comprised of four distinct panels. Central to that is a clear temporal and spatial frame as 'Teneguía-71' bridges between two moments: its setting, in 1971, and the date of its publication

in 1978. The work thus explicitly spans across the Spanish state's transition to democracy, tracing Pastino's sentiments throughout it. Reading this full-page work, which combines tropes of the editorial cartoon and the sequential comic, the artist invites readers to begin at the top. Here, he places two volcanic islands depicted in black against a clear sky and narrow strait. Any reader familiar with the Canary Islands can easily pick out the Pico del Teide in the silhouette cast by the farthest island, identifying it clearly as Tenerife. This assures readers that the closer island is La Palma. Pastino does not present an imagined view of two exotic insular spaces here. Rather, his work is located in the Canary Islands at a specific time.

The two islands that Pastino includes in 'Teneguía-71' are characters in their own right. The relationship between them is one of contrast between young and old, with a building eruption expected at any moment. Tenerife remarks, "Ay, juventud impaciente y alborotadora" ("Oh, impatient and rowdy youth") in a slightly patronising tone, whilst La Palma, the geologically younger island, responds, "¡Si a mí me dejaran…!" ("If they would just let me!"), as molten lava bubbles from the spout of the Teneguía volcano, a cinder cone on the island's southern tip. The panels which follow this first frame function as a prologue for what is to come after the title of the piece, "Teneguía-71". Working from the right downwards, Pastino introduces the reader to different scenes, moving sequentially. First, they are confronted with a newsreader on a television set in a blank panel full of text which assumes an additive function, in the sense that the verbal content does not merely accompany the image but expands and directs its meaning, shaping how the reader interprets the scene by overlaying it with an authoritative, explanatory voice. It identifies that what Pastino is showing readers was a broadcast on 28 October 1971, taking place two days into the eruption of La Palma's Teneguía volcano. The comment made by the newsreader, who is adorned with dopey eyes and reading from a script, appears to be a simple one: "Nos ocurre un nuevo slogan turístico. Venga a Canarias, donde hasta los volcanes son inofensivos" ("We have thought of a new tourism

slogan. Come to the Canary Islands, where even the volcanoes are harmless”).[36] In this comment, the newsreader reiterates the common trope of presenting the Canary Islands as little more than a tourist site which can be easily anesthetised.

The next scene offers a contrast with that panel. Here, Pastino situates a character below the news set who peers up at it, creating a continuity of content. This figure stands wearing a myriad of items that the newsreader does not: a pointed wide rimmed black hat and a dark *fajín* (sash) around his waist. He holds a club in his hand and repeats the phrase “¡No me tiente, no me tiente!” (“Do not tempt me, do not tempt me”). His clothing is associated with the *Traje de mago* (vernacular Canary Island dress), whilst his club is one commonly found in comic art depicting Indigenous Guanche people.[37] That lower character serves a role similar to that of the Canary Islanders discussed in Pastino and Millares Sall’s earlier work: he is an insular resident who confronts the impositions placed upon him by the Spanish state. As the only character explicitly tied to the Canary Islands, this figure becomes the focal point for reader identification.

The fourth and final panel that Pastino presents in ‘Teneguía-71’ is towards the bottom right. In an image inspired by photographs circulated in the printed and televised press during

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[36] The reference point for this image may well have been Carlos Arias Navarro’s speech ‘Españoles... Franco ha muerto’ on 20 November 1975 (RTVE, ‘Franco ha muerto’): the characters’ pose and sunken appearance certainly seems to directly reminisce that in some fashion, possibly further reifying the satire.

[37] This is a broad sash worn around the waist as part of vernacular dress known as the *Traje de mago, Traje típico, or Traje tradicional,* which, “en la actualidad un elemento ornamental, aún así es la última prenda que se abandona del traje tradicional” (“Currently an ornamental element, it is still the last garment to be abandoned from traditional dress”) (‘Fedac: faja o fajín’ n.p.). According to Noa Real García and Alfonso Ruiz Rallo, this piece of dress especially became prevalent in media around the 1920s. I discuss later the significance of the representation of this type of character, though I concur with the view that it cannot be taken in isolation, but rather, as Fernando Estévez González argues, that this character-type is closely interfaced with representations of “magos, turistas e inmigrantes”, (“Peasants, Tourists and Immigrants”) being closely related to “procesos identitarios en Canarias” (“identarian processes in the Canary Islands”) (146).

1971,[38] Pastino depicts the Teneguía volcano erupting violently, spewing a plume of molten liquid from its crater whilst volcanic bombs fly far into the night sky and explode like fireworks. A small character, possibly a tourist, comments on the matter: "¡¡¡Como estén celebrando lo de China, me van a oír!!!" ("It is like they are celebrating that Chinese thing, they will hear from me!!!"). The tension between this panel and the one to its left is clear, with the newsreader's comments shown to have been completely incongruous by the loud, explosive eruption which he had played down before.

The build-up and response to the volcanic eruption in the 'Tenguía-71' allegorises an experience of the period surrounding the transition to democracy between 1971 and 1978. The piece suggests that the eruption, spanning the transitional period and symbolising the shift from Francoist dictatorship to constitutional monarchy, marked an outpouring of relief. Pastino celebrates, in part, the apparent freedom to voice dissent that this transition seemed to promise, as well as the eruption in the public sphere of ideas that had long simmered beneath the surface during the closing years of the regime which it seemed to enable. Yet, simultaneously, 'Teneguía-71' also recriminates against a continuation of a key tension throughout this period, depicting the interaction with the newsreader, who continues to impose reductive views upon the Canary Islands that accentuate a perception of it as a passive tourist site: somewhere "inofensivo" ("inoffensive"). Pastino presents the transitional period as one of missed political opportunities, with the phrase "¡Si a mí me dejaran…!" ("If they would just let me…!") capturing a desire for real change from the Canary Islands that is yet to be realised.

The question of the extent to which the transition to democracy was characterised by rupture or change was also central to the work of a group of Balearic Island artists at the same point as Pastino's work. Publishing in the pan-Catalan counter-cultural review *Butifarra!,*

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[38] This was recorded for posterity in the 1971 RTVE documentary *La erupción del Teneguía: Diario de un volcán* (*The Eruption of Teneguía: Diary of a Volcano*).

Josep Alfons López i Tufet (Lérida, 1950–), Francesc Capdevila "Max" Gisbert (Barcelona, 1956–), and Rafel "Vaquer" Vaquer i Palmer (Palma de Mallorca, 1957–), all artists with close links to Mallorca, also reflected on the transitional period, how it was experienced across the Balearic Islands and, more broadly, across the Catalan regions between 1977 and 1978. This is reflected in their work 'La agencia de publicidad' ('The Agency of Publicity/The Advertising Agency') (FIG 3.2).[39] That piece, published in the Castilian-language *Primera época* (First Period) of *Butifarra!* questions the extent to which the transition to democracy had changed dynamics in the pan-Spanish media especially. In it, the artists depict a group of figures arranged from left to right. They each draw different characters, including an elderly man wearing overalls, an older woman, a character of Vaquer's design called Johnny Roqueta, a middle-aged woman, and a child. Several of these characters are identified as Balearic Islanders. Johnny Roqueta, for instance, was directly inspired by Vaquer's encounters in Manacor (Mallorca), as he noted in an interview with the *Diario de Mallorca* in 2013 (In Lourdes Durán, 'Origen-Johnny-Roqueta' n.p.). The figures in the lineup of these characters are pushed over like dominoes by an anthropomorphised television, a character depicted with a malicious intent, its threatening sharp teeth and malevolent grin expressing the enjoyment it derives from toppling a myriad of individuals who are smaller than it. Above this scene, the

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[39] Alfons López, originally from Lerida, Spain, began his involvement with comic production in the late 1970s. To date, he has collaborated on notable series such as *Atasco Star*, *Acción Directa*, and *Pepa*. López's influence extends throughout Europe, with his work appearing in publications such as *TBO*, *Rambla*, and *Cimoc* in Spain, as well as in magazines across France, Italy, and Germany. A regular collaborator with López was Francesc Capdevila Gisbert, better known as his pseudonym "Max". Max's work includes that in introducing characters such Gustavo, Peter Pank, and Bardín. Upon relocating to Mallorca in 1984, his artistic style underwent a transformation, embracing mythological and fantastical themes. His production exhibits a diverse range of influences, from Yves Chaland to Chris Ware. By 1993 Max was working independently of the industry and has continued to be active as an artist and creator, most recently publishing *Qué* in 2022, which was recognized with the Finestres award for comic books in the Catalan language. In the *Butifarra!* team, these two artists were joined by Rafel Vaquer. During the 1970s, Vaquer's artistic focus especially centred around Mallorca, with his character Johnny Roqueta becoming a symbolic figure representing the counter-cultural narratives the island had become associated with at that time.

title ‘La agencia de publicidad’ is a double pun. On the one hand, it identifies the television character as standing in for publicity agencies. On the other hand, it also centres the key theme of the work: the question of how much control publics outside Madrid had over Spain’s centralised televised press. Depicting this interaction alongside text which reads “la imagen de marca, […] el estereotipo […] y… los medios de comunicación […] sé fuerte” (“The brand image […] the stereotype […] and… the media […] stay strong”), the artists underscore how nationally disseminated press narratives during Spain’s transition to democracy marginalised a wider range of voices. They depict a hegemonic landscape in which television media, nationalised under the banner of the *Organismo Autónomo Radio Televisión Española* (Spanish Radio and Television Authority) until 1980, was used by the central transitional government led by Adolfo Suárez González (1932–2014) to impose hegemonic ways of thinking upon them and their readerships. This constituted promoting consensus politics, the silencing of regional dissent, and the framing of democratic transition as a smooth, unified process that foreclosed alternative political imaginaries, a process identified by Ramón Resina in *Disremembering Transition* as “evolutionary tale of the organic, linear growth of self-same being called Spain” (8).

To some extent, Pastino and the *Butifarra!* team present key distinctions in their attitudes towards the Spanish state’s transition to democracy. Pastino presents a double fold transition. Depicting an eruption from a youthful volcano in ‘Teneguía-71’, on the one hand, he implies that the transition might provide relief for Canary Islanders from the repression of the regime. Yet, on the other, he also notes the risk of that being quashed or restricted by peninsular media. Conversely, the pan-Catalan artists publishing in *Butifarra!* indicate that the transition opened little more than a reiteration of the crushing force of the hegemony of the Spanish state attempting to impose itself upon a range of other voices.

Despite the differences between their perspectives, Pastino and the *Butifarra!* artists share a key commonality: they present a view of the Spanish state's transition to democracy in graphic art not solely as being informed by what Wayne Martin refers to as "the trends of the high politics of the Spanish state" (173). In 'Teneguía-71' Pastino captures a wide period and a broad sentiment of dissent against attitudes towards the Canary Islands from outside them. Similarly, in 'La agencia de publicidad' Max, Alfons López, and Vaquer broadly take issue with television coverage from a perspective which focuses on its hegemonic structuring, without ever explicitly referencing any particular television programme or organisation. These works extend a trend found in the earlier work of Pastino and Roig, stopping short of providing prescriptive guidance to readers in identarian terms. Rather, they depict the transition as being stratified by tension between centralised discourse and distinct experiences, fronting hegemonic television media against insular graphic dissent. In that way, the dissenting perspectives of Pastino, Vaquer, Alfons López and Max indicate that understandings regarding the "legend of the natural transition" (8), identified by Ramon Resina, were subject to challenge, not just in its wake, but throughout the whole transitional period.

A key aspect of 'Teneguía-71' and 'La agencia de publicidad' is not only their content, but also the way they were presented and encountered by their readers. Published in *Sansofé* and *Butifarra!* respectively, these pieces are positioned so that readers encounter them as part of a continuous flow of visual narratives rather than as interruptions within a newspaper or magazine page. They are distinct from the works explored in Chapters 1 and 2 of this thesis, which were located in between large bodies of written text either on websites or in the printed press. In that way, 'Teneguía-71' and 'La agencia de publicidad' works do not invite the reader to slow down their gaze in the same way as a picture nestled within a paragraph does, and thus, they resonate with a youthful hope for a kinetic, faster-paced shift in the way that media, and more broadly, cultural life, was consumed. Nonetheless, they do not direct that energy towards

anything other than the rejection of the actions of the Spanish state. They leave spaces for Balearic and Canary islanders as they view them, and in those spaces, questions are opened around what the transitional moment held as it progressed onward.

## Graphic Histories: Novel Identarian Pivots?

Writing of the empty spaces that the Spanish state's transition to democracy had generated across the Balearic Islands, in 1976 José Teófilo Menchero Dueñas stated, in his article 'Las Baleares, en busca de su nueva identidad' ('The Balearic Islands, in search of their new identity'), that

> Las Baleares, en efecto, parecen vibrar al día con la crisis de transición de todo el Estado, pero al mismo tiempo viven - o se disponen a ello-, una transición particular. Buscan, por decirlo con una expresión muy en boga, su propia identidad -o, mejor, una nueva Identidad - en distintos conceptos. (2)
>
> (The Balearic Islands seem to be vibrating in tune with the crisis of transition affecting the whole of Spain, but at the same time they are undergoing - or preparing for - a particular transition of their own. They are seeking, to use a very fashionable expression, their own identity - or rather, a new identity - in different concepts.)

In this short passage, Menchero Dueñas surmises two key ideas when engaging the conception of a search for a "propia identidad" across the Balearic Islands during the transition to democracy. This notion is internally contentious. In one way, it constitutes a political gesture toward rootedness: a search for a unified narrative of origin or history over which residents, of

what was then not an amalgamated island chain but an archipelago of localised identities, might claim ownership. This could be read as a turn away from archipelagic politics: an appeal for a coherent identity imagined as existing prior to Balearic relations with the peninsular-centric Spanish state, and thus to move towards an essentialised root that rejects what lies beyond the islands' shores when they are viewed jointly under a single homogenous landscape. Yet, another aspect of this pivot is underpinned by the notion of "una nueva identidad" shaped by a level of uncertainty in a fashion less fixed to any specific root. In what follows, I trace how artists moved away from the fixed and towards an archipelagic politics of identity, one less interested in rooted histories, and more focussed towards dynamism and the mixing of peoples and cultures. I then ask whether the same is true for Canary Islanders, and I call into question whether, when thinking with archipelagic production, we can speak of transitional graphic art from these distinct island chains following 1978 as narrating "la crisis de transición de todo el Estado" ("the transitional crisis of the whole state") (Menchero Dueñas, 2), and instead emphasise the unique experiences of distinct islanders in response to very different historical, cultural, and political realities. I then conclude by posing the open questions as to what the resonances of that are, and what emptiness that experience has left in identarian terms.

As the Spanish state's transition to democracy came to a climax at the turn of 1981, with Suárez's resignation in January followed by the 23-F Coup d'etat, graphic artists played a central role in feeding and reframing appetites for identarian pivots across the Balearic Islands towards a "transición particular" (Menchero Dueñas, 2). This was brought to the fore through the creation of graphic pieces that sought to centre the unique histories of each of the Balearic Islands, whilst also presenting those as part of a collective narrative.[40] The most significant

[40] Across Spain, Ian MacInnes highlights that during the late 1970s-1980s, the "historieta de historia" [History Comic] (48) had become an increasingly prevalent form of sequential graphic art, which he notes came to a head with the creation of works such as *El Cid* (1971-1984) by Antonio Hernández Palacios.

work which contended with that was a graphic history published by Saco Roto in 1981. Titled *Història de les Balears en còmic* (henceforth *Història*), this A4 sized hard-covered work, which contained a range of interlinked comics, was designed and drawn by a team from *Butifarra!* including Joan Aliu Puig (Palafrugell, Girona, 1950–2019), who took charge of the documentation process and subsequent script, alongside the aforementioned artists Alfons López and Vaquer. The stated goals of this graphic history are set out in its prologue, written by the Mallorcan poet Jaume Vidal Alcover (Manacor, Mallorca, 1923–Barcelona, 1991), who was, at the time, a member of the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Tarragona. In his introduction to *Història*, Vidal relates how it aimed to tell the history of the Balearic Islands, framed together as an archipelago, in a manner that was accessible to younger audiences, whilst also offering a light-hearted commentary on contemporary life amid the period of transition.

When *Història de les Balears en comic* was being brought together, it formed part of a broader set of pan-Balearic cultural and intellectual initiatives in the late-1970s that had already begun to articulate similar questions of identity, historical continuity, and institutional belonging. In the early Transition period, journals such as *Mayurqa*, published by the faculty of philosophy at the University of Palma provided important platforms for historians, philologists, and cultural critics seeking to reassess the islands' past through more explicitly regional frameworks, often foregrounding linguistic Catalanisation and re-evaluations of medieval and early modern Balearic history. These interventions were accompanied by the work of Josep Maria Llompart, whose essays and editorial activity during the 1970s were central to the recovery and institutionalisation of Catalan-language culture in Mallorca, and by the poetry of Miquel Bauçà, which repeatedly returned to questions of insularity, displacement, and the psychological texture of peripheral existence. At the same time, cultural production linked to theatre and popular performance, including groups such as Teatre Principal de Palma, contributed to a renewed interest in staging Balearic history and social experience for local

audiences, often blending historical allegory with contemporary political reflection. In visual culture, exhibitions and illustrated publications emerging in Mallorca and Ibiza increasingly turned to archival material, folk imagery, and representations of tourism to interrogate the islands' shifting economic and cultural conditions.

*Història* differs significantly from the illustrations, vignettes, sequential comics, and caricatures discussed in this thesis thus far. Reading it involves searching in a library or bookshop, rather than encountering it in a press setting. As Trevor Getz notes with regards to the reading of other Graphic Histories, this involves "intentional interpretive engagement with the past within a comics medium that features narrative storytelling built on juxtaposed units of images and text, demarcated by notional or drawn boundaries" (160). Specifically, those reading *Història* also differed significantly from those engaging with the illustrations, vignettes, and caricatures we have discussed in Chapter 2, mainly in terms of their age. The readership of *Història* was mostly composed of younger people aged between seven and eighteen, for whom Spain's transition to democracy had not registered as the novel rupture from dictatorship that it represented for older generations, but rather as an unquestioned fact. Lacking prior orientation towards how their homes had been conceived before the 1970s, this impressionable audience encountered the work not as a re-interpretation of history, but as their first opportunity to read about and learn historical narratives. What confronts readers as they turn to the first page of *Història* is their own positioning in relation to historical narrative and the spaces across which it unfolds. The question of participation is posed from the outset: even before engaging with images and prose, readers are confronted with how they will be situated within an unfolding history, and from which perspective they are expected to engage with it. Will they serve as passive observers, merely witnessing the events as they unfold? Or will they find themselves playing a role in shaping the trajectory of the historical narrative? Who will they identify with in the work, who will they travel with, and who will they come up against?

These initial questions set the stage for the reader's entire experience with any work but are especially crucial in the graphic history.

Recognising the importance of participation from the outset, in *Història* the *Butifarra!* team quickly invite their implied reader to not only be a passive viewer of the text, but also an active participant. Their work is presented in a glossy-paged authoritative format through a narrative centred around three characters. First, two young Catalan-speaking children, a boy and a girl, who are designed to invite the identification of the implied readership.[41] The mechanism for this is similar to other children's comics, as discussed in Chapter 2. Both figures are drawn in simple colour, with rounded, friendly features. They are symbols upon whom the implied reader is welcome to impose themself. At the start of the piece, these characters become interlocutors with an anthropomorphised androgenous olive tree in the grounds of Bellver Castle on Mallorca, which literally bursts into life on page 6.[42] As the tree introduces itself, it begins to recount the history of Balearic Islands. This is not a continental narrative of an invading arrow-like nomadism, resonating with what Glissant calls "a devastating desire for settlement" (*Poetics of Relation* 12) set out by those who seek to conquer territory purely to render it static, controlled, or colonised. Rather, it introduces its young readers to the way that they are about to engage in a story of how the tree has "vistes tantes durant sa meva larga vida, i de tots colors!" ("seen so much throughout my long life, and in all the colours") (7).

[41] The value of the gendering of both these characters itself is worthy of note: rejecting a perception that existed in public life across Spain in the 1970s that history particularly ought to be a discipline dominated by patriarchal men.

[42] This site itself is situated as a significant location in the history of the Balearic Isles. First built in the fourteenth century for King James II of Mallorca, Kings of Mallorca, it transitioned into a military prison spanning the eighteenth to the mid-twentieth century. Under the Second republic, in 1931, it was gifted to the city of Palma and converted into a museum in 1932. More recently, it saw a refitting into a history museum following the fall of the Francoist dictatorship in 1976. Much like the text, this site itself thus is a location that in many senses encapsulates the political changes on the island of Mallorca in its various uses.

As it continues to recount how it will tell the history of the Balearic Islands, a thought bubble emerges alongside the tree featuring an array of characters. These include a Carthaginian slinger, positioned at the top right, followed by the Roman occupiers of the isles, a warrior from the Islamic Taifa of Mallorca, the Aragonese Catalan-speaking King Jaume I, Phoenician dancers with castanets, and a woman adorned in a traditional *vestit de pages* (Peasant dress). This procession of historical figures continues until it reaches a figure kicking a ball, clad in the red and purple hues reminiscent of either a Real Club Deportivo Mallorca or Spanish National football kit. Through this interweaved set of images involving a range of figures, *Història* establishes that the history of the Balearic Islands is not marked by a single cultural narrative that readers must trace to understand their own origins. Instead, it asks readers to be prepared to meet a heterogeneous tale of numerous travellers from across the Mediterranean Sea each encountered on Mallorca, Menorca, Ibiza, and Formentera in distinct ways. Following from that, the tree does not expand a view of a pan-Balearic history that is a triumphant narrative. Instead, it states, "ai, filleta meva, pensa que no és igual una història que una rondalla, perquè s'hist-òria no sempre s'acaba bé nis és fetes són massa sovint agradables…" ("Oh, my little girl, remember that a story is not the same as a fable, because stories do not always end well, nor are their endings often pleasant...") (6). Where the readers are placed in this narrative and who they will relate to in it is a question that is left open at the start of this work.

Examined in the context of transitional identarian pivots occurring across the bounds of the Spanish state, the positioning of *Història* is significant. Whereas, as Scott Greer argues in *Nationalism and Self-Government*, identarian shifts in nearby mainland Catalonia were grounded in linguistic revival and political demands for a unified autonomy explicitly distinguished from that around it, the frame presented in *Història* offers a different angle. It is less focused on separatism and more attuned to the historical heterogeneity of the Balearic

Islands. By situating the readers alongside a series of characters who have all left their marks on the islands in its earliest pages, this graphic history invites an understanding of the Balearic Islands as fluid and relational rather than fixed or monolithic. The work does not set out to narrativize the grounds of a singular pan-Balearic identity by stressing inherent linguistic and cultural difference from the rest of the Spanish state. Instead, it foregrounds a long history of interaction with diverse peoples and empires. The tree in *Història* becomes an apt metaphor for that, an ideal character to guide its telling of history, rooted yet wide-ranging, symbolising an identarian pivot that is both grounded and inherently open tAo change, shaped by a continual process of becoming within an ever-changing landscape.

Set against broader patterns of autonomous self-articulation in late twentieth-century Spain, this distinction becomes more suggestive. As Greer notes, in peninsular Catalonia especially, the consolidation of regional identity often depended upon establishing a clearly bounded cultural essence, whether through language, historical grievance, or claims to political singularity, before projecting that identity outward in search of wider legitimacy. That especially traced with Catalan links towards France and Italy, yet remained sited within a notion of exclusive, linguistic-centred pan-Catalan culture. *Història* proceeds differently. Rather than first stabilising the Balearic Islands as a coherent national subject, it presents the archipelago as internally plural and historically sedimented from the outset. Its engagement with identity is therefore not premised on rootedness, but on accumulation, encounter, and uneven coexistence. This does not preclude regional affirmation; rather, it reframes it. What is affirmed is less a unitary Balearic essence than the capacity of the islands to hold multiple inheritances in tension. In that respect, the work suggests an identarian model shaped by archipelagic conditions, where belonging emerges through relation, circulation, and layered temporalities rather than through the sharper binaries that structured some mainland nationalist discourses.

Between 1971 and 1978, questions similar to those posed across the Balearic Islands were also gaining traction in the Canary Islands in a movement known as *conciencia canaria* (Canarian consciousness). As Pedro Fernaud stated, this political identarian pivot, led by Canary Island academics, writers, and artists from a myriad of cultural and political backgrounds, was intimately connected with initiatives such as the publication of the first textbook on the history of the archipelago: *Natura y cultura de las Islas Canarias* (*Nature and Culture of the Canary Islands*), which was published in 1978. This wider process was also accompanied by the revival of cultural journals such as Tagoror and Sansofé, which revisited indigenous memory, local history, and contemporary political questions; by the growing prominence of writers such as Pedro Lezcano and Manuel Padorno, whose work framed the islands through Atlantic, social, and migratory perspectives; and by the interventions of César Manrique, whose environmental projects articulated a modern island identity grounded in landscape and resistance to uncontrolled tourism. Taken together, these developments suggest that late-Franco and Transition-era Canarian self-definition was being shaped not only through formal politics, but through a broader cultural effort to rethink the archipelago's past, spatial orientation, and future place within and beyond the Spanish state.[43]

José Alcaraz Abellán and Hilario Rodríguez Marrero comment that the creation of this work was born of a wider process which aimed to focus islanders towards one goal: "[que] «conozcan, se identifiquen, respeten y defiendan la Geografía, la Historia, las Costumbres e Instituciones de nuestras islas...». En otras palabras, y aunque no se diga «explícitamente», se intenta fomentar la Conciencia de lo propio: lo Canario" ([that] "they know, identify with, respect and defend the geography, history, customs and institutions of our islands...". In other words, although it is not stated "explicitly", the aim is to foster awareness of what is unique to

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[43] This was directed by Pedro Hernández (San Juan de la Rambla, Tenerife, 1941), a key figure in the *conciencia canaria*.

the Canary Islands: Canarian identity") (38). Graphic practitioners in the Canary Islands sought to explicitly contend with ideas of *conciencia canaria* by publishing sequential narratives that engaged with what it meant to think of "lo propio" ("their own"). To those ends, in 1983, Luis Ortega Abraham (Santa Cruz de La Palma, 1949–) and Julio Padrón Cabrera (El Hierro, 1949–) published the first graphic history of the Canary Islands: *La otra… historia de Canarias* (*The Other… History of the Canary Islands*) (henceforth, *La otra…*).[44] The starting point for this narrative is distinct from that found across *Història*. These practitioners' history of the Canary Islands begins with an exploration of the relationship between classical Europe and the isles, referring to Roman and Greek island imaginaries regarding the insular archipelago.[45] On page 24 of *La otra…*, the reader is inducted from the top panel, reading, "Canarias, es uno de los mitos más hermosos de la antigüedad. Griegos y romanos situaron en ellas el jardín de las hespérides" ("The Canary Islands, it is one of the most beautiful myths of antiquity. The Greeks and Romans placed the Garden of the Hesperides in them") (24). Moving down the page, the artists then place a group of rotund caricatures of classical figures. Two characters wearing togas with hair made of laurels lounge to the left, another is located to the right bearing a helmet and armour reminiscent of those commonly associated with depictions of soldiers of Greco-Roman antiquity.[46] From these figures emerge thought bubbles filled with imagination. To the

[44] Julio Padrón Cabrera is an artist and illustrator known for his published works in the Canary Islands. Born in Venezuela, he studied drawing in Caracas and earned a degree in Fine Arts from the University of La Laguna. Now based in Tenerife, he works as a technical and advertising illustrator. In addition to creating oil paintings and designs. Luis Ortega Abraham, born in Santa Cruz de La Palma, is a distinguished Canarian writer, journalist, and playwright. Starting his career in journalism with *Diario de Avisos*, he also contributed to *El Día* and *La Tarde* in Tenerife, later expanding into radio and television, where he served as the director of news at TVEC. Ortega Abraham has authored novels, short stories, poetry, and plays that delve into Canarian identity and history. His notable works include *Migajas* (1973), *Las lentas meditaciones de Gaudencia Arrafán* (1979), and *Doña Lola la del pelo azul* (1982).

[45] They could be read in reference to writings of Pliny, who references a group of Atlantic islands with fertile soil, moderate weather, dogs, large lizards and fruit in his work.

[46] The artists notably seem to refuse to offer any cultural specificity to these depictions, perhaps an example of the dynamic of the homogenising impositions they make upon the Canary Islands being

farthest left, one dreams of reclining on a beach and basking in the sun, referencing the perception of the Canary Islands as an idyllic retreat for relaxation and tranquillity. In the centre, another character is depicted harvesting from a tree, specifically one rumoured to bestow immortality which sits at the heart of the garden of Hesperides. On the right, a soldier imagines carrying off a smiling woman with a floral afro hairstyle, a short skirt, and exaggerated features. He goes on to gaze upon her body, re-rendered as that of an exposed classical statue, exclaiming, "¡Por Zeus! Son las ¡manzanas de Hércules!" ("By Zeus! They are the apples of Hercules!") (24), an objectifying sexual innuendo regarding the female figure's exposed chest.[47]

Through these panels, as a starting point, Ortega and Padrón illustrate how classical euro-centric mythicizations that extended well into the 1980s treated the Canary Islands as a place from which pleasure could be obtained, be that from relaxation, harvest, or erotic stimulation. These references also trace from those in the writings of Pliny the Elder regarding Gran Canaria, an island where, "they all have an abundant supply of fruit and of birds of every kind, Canaria also abounds in palm-groves bearing dates and in conifers; that in addition to this there is a large supply of honey, and also papyrus grows in the rivers, and sheet-fish" (Pliny *Natural History Book VI* 491). The artists' reflection equally resonates with a function identified by Gillis, departing from the conception that "the West […] not only thinks about islands, but thinks with them" (1), in the sense that islands have featured throughout narratives ranging as early as the *Odyssey* and *Iliad*, through to stories of Atlantis, Thomas More's *Utopia*,

reversed to satirical effect. Here, the classical myth is itself deemed worthy of no more cultural significance than their own impositions upon the islands at the time of the works' creation.

[47] This innuendo has been common throughout writings in the west, with the apples also being associated with tokens of love or commonly framed as a sort of erotic forbidden fruit.

and *Robinson Crusoe*, all of which trace key periods of western narrative-crafting surrounding the origins of its states, identities, political cultures and imperial aspirations.

As Godfrey Baldacchino and Eric Clark have emphasised, for thinkers in Northern Europe, "Islands allure imagination, thought and affect" ('Islanding cultural geographies' 129), in turn functioning as spaces that are imagined to provide ideal settings for stories of abundance, isolation, conquest, and alterity depending on the needs of those representing them. As discussed since Chapter 1, such framings are rarely neutral: they are implicated in following histories of colonialism and knowledge production. The persistence of tropes of fertility, natural plenitude, and timelessness in descriptions of the Canary Islands, from antiquity through to modern tourist imaginaries, typifies how these discursive patterns endure, even as their contexts shift.

At the same time, Island studies scholarship has increasingly stressed that islands are not passive recipients of such projections, but active sites of negotiation and reinterpretation. The notion of thinking with islands has been extended to emphasise relationality, mobility, and the ways in which insular spaces unsettle continental assumptions of boundedness and coherence. It is precisely this tension in projection that Ortega and Padrón exploit in their graphic history. By invoking and then undermining inherited myths, they expose the instability of the imaginaries that have long defined the Canary Islands. The addition of secondary panels, in which characters' expectations are frustrated or overturned, operates as a visual critique of these inherited narratives.

In their graphic history Ortega and Padrón refrain from validating island myths by assigning them any correspondence to reality. Instead, they complicate the euro-centric imaginary surrounding the Canary Islands, adding secondary panels in which the various characters' dreams are shattered. The bearded figure in the centre of page 24 is incapacitated by the fruit that he harvests from his tree, with bananas depicted orbiting his disoriented head.

Alongside him, the soldier to the right is drawn sunburnt and exposed, inviting the reader to enjoy the humorous juxtaposition between his malformed backside and the classical beauty of the statuesque figure he gazes upon. The incapacitated figure overwhelmed by fruit and the sunburnt soldier do not simply provide comic relief; they enact a dismantling of the fantasy of effortless abundance and idyllic beauty. In doing so, the artists align with a broader critical impulse within island studies: to reveal how islands have been imagined, and to disrupt those imaginaries by reasserting complexity, materiality, and contradiction.

This opening passage of *La otra…* differs from that in *Història* in several ways. A first clear distinction between these works is stylistic: Ortega and Padrón's graphic designs are more adult in their presentation. *La otra…* uses black and white panels that mimic those found in earlier press cartooning and incorporates elements of nudity, exaggerated violence, and unfiltered satire. In contrast, in *Història*, the *Butifarra!* team step away from the style of cartooning found in their broader practice. Instead, they offer a more accessible entry point for readers printed in vibrant colour, with humour designed for younger audiences, such as the use of slapstick designs of one character shooting another with a slingshot, for instance. In historiographical terms, too, the opening of *Història* is more suitable for younger audiences with limited prior knowledge of tropes surrounding the representations of their insular homes. Meanwhile, *La otra…* presupposes an audience that is already familiar with ways that the history of the Canary Islands had been presented before 1983 by directly addressing the euro-centric imaginations that had permeated in narratives surrounding them up to that point.

The absence of reference to euro-centric myths surrounding the Balearic Islands in *Història* could be attributed to the islands' geographic proximity to Classical Europe, which positioned the archipelago within a cultural and economic sphere that has long shared more direct and continuous interaction with the continent. However, the *Butifarra!* team do not imply that this geographical closeness necessarily equates to the isles being culturally or politically

constituent to Europe throughout their history. As *Història* continues, the artists present a playfully ambiguous engagement between Europeans and Balearic islanders. Central to this are a series of jests. For instance, we see these on page 10 of the work, with the first appearance of a recurring sarcastic phrase, "Es sa crisi" ("It's a crisis"). This phrase is used throughout *Història*, being central in the narration of the relationship between residents of the Balearic archipelago and those seeking to exert control over it. It is repeated as a commentary on how islanders have continually navigated around impositions from Europe. For instance, on page 10, the phrase "es sa crisi" is employed alongside panels which reference how Balearic sailors used cunning to outwit mariners from the eastern Mediterranean who sought to control trade around the islands during classical antiquity. On that page, the artists write, "el poble balear és mariner, pero no pot competir amb els navegants grecis I fenicis […] per sobreviure els balears es dediquen a la pirateria" ("The Balearic people are sailors, but they cannot compete with the great Greek and Phoenician navigators [...] to survive the Balearic Islanders dedicate themselves to piracy") (10). They accompany that with a depiction of a young Balearic sailor raiding a burning Greek ship and sneaking away with its cargo with a grin spread across his face. Later, on page 60, that character reappears in a section referring to the early Francoist period. This time, he uses this same cunning to sneak supplies past a pair of Guardia Civil soldiers in the dead of night, again, repeating the phrase "es sa crisi" (60) as he outwits another attempt by a continental force to restrict his mobility.

On page 11 the *Butifarra!* team's use of the jest follows the trajectory of *translatio imperii* (the medieval concept that implies the transfer of supreme power from Rome to Greece to Spain), depicting interactions between Balearic islanders and the Roman empire. These interactions begin with the portrayal of a Balearic slinger, a renowned auxiliary within the forces of the Carthaginian empire. The *Butifarra!* team narrate how this character emerged as a formidable adversary to the Romans, triumphing over them in three decisive battles in the

Punic wars: at Trebia, Trasimene, and Cannae. In depicting the outcomes of those battles, the reader is invited to find humour in the image of a Roman solider wearing heavy armour whose condition slowly deteriorates after multiple defeats by the slinger until he is finally left bruised and dumbfounded. It is only after delivering these defeats that the artists narrate how "finalment […] els mallorquins varen preferir l'alianca amb Roma" ("finally [...] the Mallorcans preferred the alliance with Rome") (12). In what follows, even when Roman control is established over the Mallorca, that soldier retains his beaten-up appearance and is left speaking in broken Catalan.[48]

Each time jests reappear in *Història de les Balears en comic* they follow a similar format which presents a key idea to its young readers: that the Balearic islanders have been consistently defined by their ability to deftly negate impositions upon them from continental Europe. Incorporating this dissent directed against the continent across times, *Història* has resonances with Fernand Braudel's conception of the Mediterranean, which José Luis Venegas refers to as "a displaced geopolitical space, out of step with capitalist centers since the sixteenth century" (or maybe before) "and as [a] site of alternative understandings of modernity" (532), something which they certainly seem to play upon.

At the outset, *Història* and *La otra…* have key differences which reflect the unique cultural and historical landscapes of each archipelago. The Canary Islands' greater geographic distance from Europe is linked to the choice in *La otra…* to address long-standing exoticizing myths related to distance. Meanwhile, in *Història*, the authors proceed from a context of geographic proximity to the European continent, focusing on the tension between mobile islanders navigating around external influence, a dynamic that has historically been more direct

[48] The slinger's ability to control relations with the continental Romans equally subverts historiographical beliefs surrounding romanization, a hegemonic discursive trait centred on euro-centric epistemological supremacy which "presupposed that the imposition of 'civilized' standards [by Rome] on subject peoples was morally justified and practically beneficial" (Dennis Harding 203).

and continuous. Despite their differences, in terms of situating their reader in the question of where history can be read from, *Història* and *La otra…* do share a key commonality. Both works draw their readers to note differences between continental European expectations and Balearic and Canary Island realities. Rather than privileging pre-eminent European accounts, *Història* and *La otra…* extol a critically dense non-hierarchical relation between distinct realities that resist continental impositions. They draw their readers to find humour in those differences, and to reflect on how euro-centric understandings imposed on their insular homes ought to be evaded. These works, in turn, resonate with references in the work of Glissant, who exposes how euro-centric epistemological systems are "anxiously determined to cling to their conception of a world in which they dominate and control" rather than "a world in which one is, quite simply, one agrees to be, with and among others" (*Poetics of Relation* 128). *Història* and *La otra…* disrupt that, instead inducting readers into a privileging of heterogeneity, where moments of cultural clash, rupture, and shift are prioritised, rather than stories of arrow-like continuity. The narratives in both *Història* and *La otra…* position the reader as both a passive and active participant in the stories of these very different island chains, enabling them to choose their allegiances to the various figures throughout at their own discretion.

*Iberian Relations and Disrupted Unities: Indigenous and Islamic Isles*

Departing from a playful, complex relation with Europe, in *Història*, the onset of closer relations between Balearic Islanders and people explicitly deemed to be from geographic Iberia, rather than the Mediterranean to the east (in the case of Phoenicians, Classical Greeks and Romans), first begins with the arrival of Islamic people from Al-Andalus on the archipelago. The young characters on the right of the frame on page 18 respond to this with active excitement. That moment is associated with the landing of Isam al-Hawlani (عصام الخولاني) in 902 by the *Butifarra!* team. As he arrives, Al-Hawlani is portrayed in a comic

manner, carrying not a sword of conquest but rather an umbrella and sunglasses alongside his shield. He is followed by an entourage of people carrying luggage, all of whom are greeted by an insular resident. This character, depicted smoking a cigarette and looking backwards in a slightly scornful manner, asks, “I voltors d’on sortiu?” (“And where do you come from?”) Al-Hawlani’s response is a pun: “Venim D’alà”, meaning either “We come from over there”, referring to the now long-established peninsular Emirate of Córdoba (قُرطُبَة إمَارَةُ), or “We come from Allah”, referring to their Islamic faith. The arrival of Al-Hawlani and his entourage to the Balearic Islands is drawn in *Història* in a style that is not dissimilar from that of the arrival of the Talaiotic culture 1700 years earlier, as depicted on page 9. In both cases, a leading protagonist steps off a ship in the backdrop, with the scene adorned by a yellow banner above identifying the year of this figure’s arrival.

In the subsequent panels that depict the establishment of Iberian rule across the Balearic Islands, the *Butifarra!* team represent the seemingly peaceful life in the isles under Islamic leadership, presenting three panels spanning pages 18 and 19 which are visually almost identical. In these, the artists depict a field of crops tended to by a figure to the right, above which various occurrences are relayed in text. As the panels narrate the changes in the politics of the Caliphate of Cordoba, the establishment of the Taifa of Mallorca, and the later installation of Ibn Aglab al-Murtada (أغلب بن المرتضى الله عبد), the governor of the archipelago who became an independent emir in 1076, the *Butifarra!* team highlight how the landscape of the isles themselves seemed subject to little change. Islamic rule across the Balearic Islands is framed as one of apparent quotidian reality in *Història de les Balears en còmic*. This is hardly a time of violence or conquest; instead, it is portrayed as the first time in which stratified, organised, civil society is established across the archipelago. This is further reinforced by the *Butifarra!* to readers on page 22. Here, they draw a full-page panel with an explanatory function, depicting a town perched upon a clifftop filled with figures. In this settlement, the

artists construct the first example of institutional hierarchy across the Balearic Isles. Starting at the bottom, they draw those in servitude, the majority of whom are described as Christians. Then, they work up towards the insular "poble autòcton" ("Indigenous people"), dedicated to agriculture on Mallorca and animal-raising on Menorca. Finally, the artists continue to the upper classes, those committed to commerce, alongside the emir, an authority who was "encarregat de dirigir les ratzies contra els cristians" ("in charge of directing the raids against Christians") (22).[49] In these panels, the *Butifarra!* team position Islamic rule not as an imposed or outside force, but as a crucial influence in shaping a cohesive hierarchical society across the isles.

The social order associated with Islam in *Història de les Balears en còmic* is disrupted by peninsular Christians, who, half-way through page 19, are depicted leading the first raids against the isles. With these Christians comes a wave of violence, driven first by commercial gains. A character in one panel comments to another during a conversation about ensuring that silk threads arrive at his shop. In the next panel, that same character charges through the streets of Ibiza, crying, "per les vetes-i-fils!!" ("Let's go get the threads!!") (19). Around him buildings burn and men, women, children, and animals all flee the oncoming Christian onslaught. Of note in these pages is the lack of apparent narrative of peninsular Chistian, or Spanish-centric exceptionalism, which, as Ian MacInnes has noted, is marked in other contemporaneous graphic histories, such as Antonio Hernández Palacios' *El Cid* series, first published in 1971. *Història de les Balears en còmic*, for its part, does not portray the heroic peninsular Christian fighting against orientalised, violent, terrifying foes; instead, it depicts those Christians as avaricious instigators of conflict cutting down and robbing civilians.

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[49] In many senses, this depiction conforms to those of the feudal mode of production, one "characterized by a complex unity. The immediate producer - the peasant - was united to the means of production - the soil - by a specific social relationship" (Perry Anderson 147).

The depiction of relations between peninsular Christians and insular Muslims in *Història* diverges significantly from framing Christianity as the defining cultural identity of all Balearic Islanders, as had been expected under the regime, which centred maxims of unity under Castilian Catholicism, as earlier discussed in Chapter 1. Moreover, presenting Christians in the late medieval Balearic Islands as violent invaders and Muslims as builders of civil society, the *Butifarra!* team disrupt common historiographical narratives of the 1970s and 1980s. They draw attention to the fluidity of kinetic religious and cultural encounters, both violent and non-violent, that informed the shaping of insular identities across the Balearic late-medieval period.

The Islamic-centric narrative in *Història* intervenes at a time when other regions of Spain were also looking towards the history of the Islamic Mediterranean in different ways. Venegas records that, during the late 1970s and early 1980s, writers in peninsular Andalusia were also reflecting on their Mediterranean history, creating anti-colonial works that rejected Spanish colonisation of North African territory and peninsular-centric hegemony whilst exerting a unique Andalusian identity. These writers sought to reframe Mediterranean identity in a process referred to as *andalucismo* (Andalusianism). As Venegas notes,

> early *andalucismo* promoted a wider Mediterranean community extending from Cordoba to Damascus, but opposed Spain's colonial presence in Morocco. Despite its anticolonial dimension, this modern revival of medieval al-Andalus was not envisioned as a network of comparable material and ethnic locations that could encourage lateral movements of people, capital, and ideas (532).

In contrast to this, the *Butifarra!* team promotes a certain level of affinity towards Islam, the predominant religion in Northern Africa during the 1970s and 1980s, as foundational for civil society across the Balearic Islands. Unlike the Andalusian writers who aimed to incorporate parts of the Islamic Mediterranean into Andalusian identity in a constrained way, the *Butifarra!* team assert a more radical approach that does not rely on symbolic inclusion, but, rather, reframes the historical agency and legitimacy of including pluri-religious people into the history of the Balearic Islands.

Framing that, *Història de les Balears en còmic* significantly departs from views common across the Spanish state at the time of its creation, such as those of Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz, who, Jilian Hillgarth notes, "maintained an essential unity and continuity in Spanish history, [of] an "Iberian man" engaged in a "long adventure, the-Reconquest and Repopulation of the national land, from Pelayo's [victory at] Covadonga (in 722) to the conquest of Granada (in 1492)" (26), as for Sánchez-Albornoz, all Spaniards were "heirs to a common tradition, and at any given period of medieval history shared a common historical experience" (in Hillgarth 26). In that way, the *Butifarra!* team invite readers to openly interrogate the conception that "[t]he quest for unity, whether achieved or not, is the characteristic theme of medieval Hispanic history" (Hillgarth, 26).

In *La otra…*, Ortega and Padrón also interrogate contemporaneous historiographical narratives during the 1970s and 1980s, by focusing on the Canary Islands' pre-Hispanic history and on islanders' later encounters with peninsular Christian forces in the Atlantic. To do this, they centre on the 1402–1405 *Conquista señorial* (The Nobility's Conquest) of Lanzarote, El Hierro, and Fuerteventura, the 1405–1450 *Conquista señorial castellana* of La Gomera, (The Castilian Nobility's Conquest) and the 1478–1496 *Conquista realenga* of La Palma, Gran Canaria, and Tenerife (The Royal Conquest), led by Castilian-sponsored forces who invaded the Canary Islands during the fifteenth century. Narrativizing this moment, Ortega and Padrón

begin in 1402, depicting the arrival of Jean de Bethencourt (1362-1425) and Gadifer de la Sall (1340-1415) on the island of Lanzarote. They present these characters' presence as launched by "posibilidades turísticas" ("touristic possibilities") (26), including depictions of them landing on the beaches of the island on large wooden ships under a basking sun. These characters greet the *maxo* islanders (inhabitants of Fuerteventura and Lanzarote) by playing games of cards whilst drinking wine and eating cheese alongside them. Accompanying this event, on the same page, the artists include a scene reminiscent of that still played out some five hundred years later, with tourists wearing flowery clothing, remarking about the islands' renowned Malvasia wine whilst being provided camel tours around the Timanfaya National Park by an Indigenous islander who dons sunglasses and a cheeky grin. In these interactions, initially, the relationships between the Castilian forces, wearing either armour or floral outfits associated with tourism, and the *maxo* Canary Islanders, depicted in goat fur clothes with long beards, could be read as one of relative peace, even *convivencia* (coexistence).

Yet, as they look more closely at these panels, the reader is invited to notice that Ortega and Padrón also hint at a deeper underlying tension within such interactions. The apparently friendly relations between the *maxos* and the Castilian forces in the above panel of page 26 are also underpinned by a looming threat. The Iberian character in the centre of the image holds in his hands the image of a knife, whilst a card with a skull is tucked behind his back. These references to the Castilian forces holding in their metaphorical hands (of cards) the ability to exert violence is then followed up in the second set of panels by Ortega and Padrón. Beneath the veneer of humour, on page 28 of *La otra…* they force the reader to confront the stark reality of violence that Castilian forces later enacted against islanders as they occupied the rest of the Canarian archipelago between 1402 and 1496. At the top of that page, they place an Indigenous Canary Island character gazing down a pair of binoculars towards the advancing army of Castilian forces armed with spears and helmets whilst his fellow islanders attempt to fight them

back in a futile effort with sticks and stones. He wryly comments, "No me gustan nada estos turistas…" ("I do not like these tourists at all…) (28). Colonising Castilian forces here, supposed tourists, are revealed by Ortega and Padrón to be instigators of conflict who rarely have positive intentions. Read in relation to the events during the early 1980s, a time when Canary Island artists and activists such as César Manrique were leading campaigns to limit the impacts of tourism and the over-development across the islands, this constitutes a notable parallel across times. Incorporating the depiction of Castilian forces as tourists, the artists imply to the reader that peninsular imposition is a force associated with significant risk and potential violence. Referencing this, Ortega and Padrón directly draw parallels between tourism and the process of colonisation, warning of the significant dangers both may carry for Canary Island inhabitants if they are not cautious.

Following on, in the second panel on page 28 of *La otra…*, travelling through the gutter across time and space, Ortega and Padrón depict how a conflict between Castilian forces and islanders could have started, as two soldiers march into the scene, confronting an Indigenous parent sat embracing his apparent partner, accompanied by their child. One comments to the other, "Abre bien los ojos ¡Que es peligroso!" ("Pay attention, he is dangerous!") (28), even though the parents pose no apparent threat, and are, instead, lazing around a fire with food cooking. Those same Castilian characters, on the other hand, notably drag with them another figure, whose eyes are blackened over. The relationship between implied Canary Islanders and these ruthless Castilian forces at this crucial juncture, around the point of the origin of early modernity, is depicted as characterised by one key element: violence.[50]

[50] Perhaps more concerningly, looking at this piece, we also note its ahistorical nature, which is key to its significance. Tours around Timanfaya in the fifteenth century, as any Canarian reader would be aware, were an impossibility, least of all because the eruptions that created the volcanic park as it is known today would not occur until 1730. This indicates that the inclusion of this panel is placed in a way to incite reflection in the reader that the 'tourism' of the 1400s, potentially, is still thematically present in the present.

Alongside depicting violence against Indigenous islanders, Ortega and Padrón also shed light on the presence of figures rarely depicted in pre-1970s histories of the Canary Islands. For example, on page 36, they depict three characters working in a sugar-cane field and one, an Indigenous person, warns a character, who is lying on the floor, that he needs to continue to work. That character, depicted with black skin, cynically comments, "sí, pa que otro chupe la caña ducle" ("Yeah, so that someone else can suck on the sweet cane") (36). In this interaction, the artists are unflinching in their depiction of the conditions to which many of the islands' inhabitants were subjected during the wake of the fifteenth century: those of a colonial economy. Presenting this, Ortega and Padrón compel the reader to shift their view away from the notion that the territory of the contemporaneous Spanish state was removed from phenomena such as slavery or coloniality. Instead, they prompt reflection upon the way that this chapter in history unfolded in Canary Island territory, which the Spanish state had deemed as integral to its bounds by the 1980s.[51] In the 1980s, at a time when Spain was seeking to sever perceived linkages between the Canary Islands and its African colonies in Equatorial Guinea (decolonised in 1968) and Western Sahara (decolonised in 1975), which might have been seen as a pivot effectively distancing legacies of colonialism and enslavement, this shift underscores that such a departure is ultimately impossible.

Presenting violent histories shaped by Castilian actions, Ortega and Padrón's narrative differs significantly from that common in other Spanish graphic histories during the 1980s. They do not draw the triumphant victory of the Spaniard over the Indigenous, as seen in other cartoons, such as *El Cid*, in which, Braeden Jones argues that,

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[51] These, I would pose, are correlated to subtly hinting to islanders their position in the plantation and neo-plantation, something that is iterated and re-iterated by Glissant according to Guillermina de Ferrari as "a concept metaphor for a society suspended in a space devoid of legal or transcendental meaning other than that which is continuously being generated out of what I provisionally call 'an aleatory togetherness.' As a metaphor for unharmonious cohabitation" (190).

> [b]y relying on the idea of the project of conquest and colonization as an adventure partaken by those with wanderlust in their hearts, the Spanish comics allow a Spanish reader to identify with conquistadors as relatable, if fallible, individuals. These Spaniards, while following the instructions of poor leaders like Columbus and Cortés, were at their hearts good people who were like sixteenth century cowboys, looking for the margins and the freedom of the frontier (80).

Nor does *La otra…* erase the realities of violence of the Spanish invasion of the Canary Islands, venturing into what Braeden Jones also notes with regards to depictions of the Americas as the "representation of a benign conquest in the promotional paratext - the idea of the violent, blood-soaked conquest of the Americas simplified down to a 'descubrimiento' and an 'encuentro' between two peoples" (38).

Reading Iberian relations established *Història de les Balears en còmic* and *La otra…*, we encounter two narratives that are, again, unlinked in content. On the one hand, across the Balearic Islands, the *Butifarra!* team depict relations with Iberians creating heterogeneous tensions between destructive Christians and societally stratifying Muslims. On the other, in the Canary Islands, Ortega and Padrón navigate a tale of violent conquest and ensuing colonisation. Nonetheless, in taking scenes of raids and coloniality as points of departure, both *Història de les Balears en còmic* and *La otra…* share a commonality in how they elucidate that Christian Iberian invasions of the Balearic and Canary Islands were characterised by unquantifiable and unthinking violence. Ortega and Padrón and the *Butifarra!* team imply that the emergence of relations with Iberia in their island chains was not borne of intellectual progress or coexistence, but rather by the clash of swords and steel against islanders. These artists suggest that opportunities for non-hierarchical engagement of any form were eradicated by invading

Spanish nomads across the Balearic Islands and Canary Islands at different stages, and that they crushed all in their path, like Conquistadors, "whose goal was to conquer lands by exterminating their occupants" (*Poetics of Relation* 12), as Glissant identified.

Representing these realities, as the *Butifarra!* team and Ortega and Padrón do, engages with the writing of an anti-history. In light of the Francoist regime's efforts to suppress regional identities and enforce a unified Spanish nationalism, and in the wake of spaces left in the transitional period highlighted by the earlier work of artists such as Pastino and the *Butifarra!* team, engaging an anti-history through their work by depicting the images of the destruction in relations between the Spanish state and the Balearic and Canary Islands' histories, both the *Butifarra!* team and Ortega and Padrón invite contemporary readers to think about what other routes the Balearic Islands and Canary Islands took in the wake of impositions from the peninsula. As Mildred Mortimer comments, whilst framing an ""anti-history" (a history that has been falsified or remains missing) into an authentic historical presentation, Glissant refuses simplistic or artificial synthesis and emphasizes the complexity, contradictions, and opacity of his Caribbean heritage. He not only seeks historical truth but a language and style with which to express rupture, dispossession, and alienation." (65).

In light of the regime's sustained imposition on the Canary and Balearic Islands, characterised by political repression, violence against dissenters, and overt censorship, this content conveys one clear element for readers: humorous relief. That relief in *Història de les Balears en còmic* and *La otra…* offers a coping mechanism for readers, providing a way to process the weight of historical trauma and ongoing marginalisation of their island homes under the regime. Relief humour also allows the *Butifarra!* team and Ortega and Padrón to introduce readers to complex historical violences in a way that is accessible and resonant, making space for reflection on the absurdity and tragedy of recent violences also experienced by Balearic Islanders and Canary Islanders without overwhelming the reader. Even today, these works

retain that function. The narratives in *Història de les Balears en còmic, La otra…* seem even more pertinent in the 2020s as they redress views on the outcomes of colonisation at a time far in advance of academic discussions surrounding the decolonisation of curricula. They also directly refute more recent twenty-first century retellings of the history of the Spanish state by parties erasing the role of violence in the colonisation its territories and instead referring to the so-called "Historia que hicimos juntos" ("The history we made together") (FIG 3.4).

*Establishing New Order?*

What followed the establishment of violent relations between the forebearers of the Spanish state and inhabitants of the Balearic and Canary Islands? How might islanders move past that? In *Història de les Balears en còmic*, the *Butifarra!* team began to address these questions with reference to a key character: King Jaume I. Through Jaume, the artists' narrative of self and other with regards to the Balearic Islands shifts. His depiction, initially, is one located at the edge of the margin, as he watches over the victory of the peninsular Christians against Almohad forces on page 21 of *Història de les Balears en còmic*. He stands, at a young age similar to that of the implied reader, pondering "tinc la lleugera impressió que el meu futur es a Mallorca i Valencia" ("I have the slight impression that my future is in Mallorca and Valencia") (21). Depicting Jaume at this young age serves to position the reader in a similar role to him: as a figure through whom a new political alignment might be imagined and established.

On page 23 of *Història de les Balears en còmic*, the adult Jaume is seen as part of an Aragonese fleet, which departs from the mainland in 1229. The *Butifarra!* team invite the reader to immediately find humour surrounding this departure, drawing into a contemporaneous joke with a bride and groom joining the invading force on their ships and remarking, "¿La galera de Mallorca si us plau?" ("The Galley for Mallorca please?") (23), a

reference to the 1950 Honeymoon in Mallorca campaign, first launched by the island's tourist board with a series of graphic posters by Simón Muñoz Lemaur (FIG 3.5). As these people depart, they are marked out, importantly, not as peninsular Castilians, but rather of an Aragonese Catalan-speaking lineage. Their arrival, in turn, is depicted in a different way to the earlier Christian raids. Their ships are shown bouncing across the sea toward Mallorca's Santa Ponça, with the *Butifarra!* team describing their arrival as coming "després d'una travessia molt accidentada" ("after a very bumpy journey") on page 23, due to strong winds that forced the fleet to redirect southward along the island. When the ships arrive, a fierce battle immediately breaks out. From that, stems a contested narrative, with two kings killed, and a siege of three months depicted by the *Butifarra!* team in a full-scale battle scene. Masses of soldiers are drawn involved, climbing ladders onto defences erected by Mallorcan Muslims as projectiles fly across the screen. A fire burns in the city in the background and masses of soldiers blur into a single body. Importantly, this siege is not framed as one borne of reconquest by a unified Spanish bloc; rather, it is one that links the Balearic Islands and the king who is today identified as one of the earliest creators of the vernacular Catalan. In the panel below, as Jaume I marches into Palma de Mallorca, flanked by a photographer and a myriad of characters, the ensign worn by both him and his horse that of the Crown of Aragon. The artists of *Història de les Balears en còmic* imply that from Jaume I, an important pan-Catalan figure, a significant historical moment originates: the establishment of the first links between Catalonia and the Balearic Islands, a relationship which eludes Castilian-centric narratives of medieval history.

Jaume I's conquest continues to be a key touchstone for multiple events which follow in *Història de les Balears en còmic.* From his lineage, a separate narrative begins on page 30, where the *Butifarra!* team depict the family tree of the house of Mallorca, rendered as a genealogical flow which links Mallorca and Aragon under joint, if separate, pan-Catalan lineage. Before that, the *Butifarra!* team also highlight a new section in history, this time not

of conquest (with a yellow banner), but instead of the creation of an insular-centred re-mapping. To that end, on page 26 they depict the 1276 division of territories between Pedro III of Aragón and Jaume II of Mallorca (Jaume I's successors), centred around a map of the *Països Catalans*, drawing on the framing popularised following the publication of Joan Fuster's 1962 work *Nosaltres, els Valencians* (*We, the Valencians*). This shares significant overlaps with a 1962 map held at the *Institut Cartogràfic i Geològic de Catalunya* (Cartographic and Geological Institute of Catalonia) (FIG 3.3), the first edition of which was clandestinely published by the *Llibreria Ballester* which was censored by Francoist authorities before 1975.

Within their map, the *Butifarra!* team invite their readership to note the exertion of insular difference from the Peninsula, again, using a *burla* of sorts. On it, in orange they render the relationship between Mallorcan ruler Jaume II's "Regne de Mallorca" (holding all of the Balearic Islands, Montpellier, and Rosello), and peninsular leader Pedro III's Catalan holdings (stretching from Rosello down to Guardamar) in red under the "Corona D'Aragó" ("Crown of Aragaon") (26). As the peninsular figure brashly demands, "¡¡De genollons!! Ret vassallatge al més gran dels reis!!" (On your knees!! Bow to the greatest of kings!!"), Jaume II responds, "¿Apa "tio" no "te'enrolles", "vale"?" ("Come on "dude" do not "get carried away", "okay"?"). In a style unexpected for a piece of children's didactic literature, this is accompanied by Jaume II, who represents the Balearic kingdoms, swearing at Pedro III. In this interaction, the *Butifarra!* team encapsulate a dual understanding about the Balearic Islands which spans across time, with their placement being simultaneously tied to the Catalan-speaking *Països Catalans* on the Peninsula, depicted openly in their map, and yet, also, exerting their own political claim that is distinct from that.

On the one hand, this narrative diverges significantly from the Castilian-centric perspective, or the view of the isles, in this key period of institution-building, as beholden to the whims of Leon or Castille, Toledo or Madrid. This section concludes with another re-

rendered example of insular society, reminiscent of that drawn of the Islamic society previously. Here, the artists portray Christian kings, Jewish people, Muslim people, and slaves, in a configuration that establishes the position of the isles as both linked to the narrative of the Iberian Peninsula and yet also outside it. More than that, this equally marks the islands out as deserving of their own genealogical autonomy distinct from that of the other *Països Catalans*, stemming from the foundation of the crown in Mallorca in 1231. In the 1980s, this supported the position of the Balearic Inter-Island General Council (established in 1978) as it worked towards the 1983 Statute of Autonomy and the later 1986 Language Standardization Law of the Balearic Islands, differentiated from other similar initiatives in the *Països Catalans* during that period. In aligning their historical narrative alongside these contemporary developments, the *Butifarra!* team participate in a larger gesture that acknowledges both their connection to and distinction from peninsular Catalan identities in other parts of the *Països Catalans*. They suggest that the history of the Balearics is best understood through fluid, trans-territorial connections, rather than rigid nationalist frameworks oriented towards the Peninsula.

It is not only in *Història de les Balears en còmic* where ideas of identarian origins become sites of play for insular graphic artists as their narrative continues. In the wake of colonisation, there is a noticeable shift within the narrative of Ortega and Padrón's work: one towards institutions. In a style reminiscent of that seen in the *Butifarra!* team's depiction of the unifying role of Jaume I in *Història de les Balears en còmic*, in Ortega and Padrón's work, as the seventeenth century begins, the artists start to shed light on the key roles played by several actors in establishing systems of governance that helped islanders to move past those acts. Within that, the artists draw attention to the splitting of the Canary Islands into two provinces (Las Palmas and Santa Cruz), presenting the complex administrative and political structures that began to shape the Canary Island landscape under its colonisation. How is that governance embodied? Most notably, in the depiction of the King of Spain, Phillip II, the first monarch to

be referred to usually by this title. In representing this global monarch, Ortega and Padrón combine design elements from two works, a piece by a Netherlandish artist Antonis Mor from 1557, showing Phillip on the battlefield holding the baton of command and a 1573 portrait by Sofonisba Anguissola. They combine key aspects of these representations in their depiction of the king. He holds in his hands a baton of command, a symbol of his power, and yet wears the clothing of a statesperson. He gazes towards the reader, greeting us as an embodiment of a new form of relation between Spain and the Canary Islands, one of relative cooperation under a single ruler. Phillip watches over the scene of justice, embodying the establishment of systems of law and parity across the islands. For these alternative artists, there is a clear amount of deference given to this new leader. The king, it appears, is a figure capable of bringing good between the issues of the past, and the institutions of the present.

Why do both *Història de les Balears en còmic* and *La otra…* depict institutions surrounding monarchs so centrally in this way? In part, this must have been related to the implications of doing so during the late-1970s and early 1980s. Referring to the creation of institutions around a monarchic system in the wake of violence enacted by regimes upon the Canary Islands and Balearic Islands becomes a route through which the artists can comment on the most recent transition in their time. This occurrence is especially timely considering that a consequence of the new political order established by the 1978 Constitution was a renewed interest in earlier constitutional models, particularly those from the two centuries of Habsburg rule. Post-1978 Spain, structured as a nation of autonomous communities, required a redefinition of their relationship with the central government in Madrid.

Within that context, the renewed visibility of regional institutions across Spain was accompanied by attempts in several autonomous communities to imagine political belonging through frameworks not wholly contained by Madrid. In Catalonia, debates over restored self-government were frequently tied to Barcelona's presentation as a European civic and cultural

centre, situating Catalan autonomy within wider continental networks. In the Basque Country, the re-establishment of regional institutions after dictatorship coincided with efforts to place Basque political and cultural distinctiveness in dialogue with international models of industrial modernity, labour politics, and contemporary art. In Galicia, the recovery of autonomous structures was often articulated through Atlantic reference points, invoking migration routes, maritime exchange, and proximity to Portugal as alternatives to Castilian centrality. Read against these wider developments, the attention given in *Història de les Balears en còmic* and *La otra…* to courts, councils, and monarchic administrations appears especially pointed. Their focus on earlier institutional formations does not simply look backwards; it also speaks to a contemporary moment in which the historical depth, legitimacy, and possible futures of devolved governance were being actively reconsidered. This new dynamic drew comparisons to pre-1700 Spain, before Bourbon rule was imposed, when significant self-governance was exercised under the king's authority. In Habsburg Spain, the monarch was seen as the sovereign of each individual territory, respecting their distinct identities, customs, laws, and traditions. Their works reflect significant changes in the historiography of their time, in which, as John Elliot comments, "The structure and problems of the *monarquía* in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries thus acquired a new actuality in the post-Franco era" (369). Taking this as a departure, both Ortega and Padrón and the *Butifarra!* team's interventions in 1981 and 1983 (respectively), when the Spanish state had just reinstituted the monarchy, could even be read as propagandising the aftermaths of transition. The artists' normalisation of institutional transition under the lineage of Jaume I and Phillip II interpolates from the advents of modernity into the 1970s and 1980s.

*Global Outlooks: Archipelagic Networks*

What did the wake of the transitional moment hold for the Canary Islands and Balearic Islands historically? And what might that indicate surrounding future trajectories for islanders in the identarian pivots of the 1980s? Departing from the creation of early modern institutions, the trajectory to come for the Canary Islands becomes central in *La otra…*. If we draw parallels between the dictatorship and the period of colonisation, and the establishment of institutions with the Spanish state's transition to democracy, we can see the period that follows it as one in which the artists project forward their desires regarding how a new pan-Canary Island identity might be cohered in the wake of transition. Central to establishing that trajectory is allusion to islands' growing position within a network of travel and return as the narrative progresses towards the eighteenth century. An illustrative example of this in *La otra…* can be found in Ortega and Padrón's presentation of the travels of Jean de Bethencourt, whose journey to Guatemala exemplifies Canary Islanders' reach beyond their immediate geographic boundaries in their history. This is also joined by visual humour referencing the travel of Canary Islanders to the Americas. That notion of Canary Islands venturing to the Americas and disseminating their influence across these distant lands underscores the Canary Islands' role as a bridge between continents. It highlights the islands' significance as a node in the intricate web of global connections that emerged during the early modern period. This is a narrative that centres the Canary Islands in a way that moves away from notions of centre or periphery and, rather, towards ideas of creolisation, of mobility and reach and return. These depictions shift towards what Elliot calls, "moving away from the traditional compartmentalization between histories of Spain and the Indies towards a history that integrates the two sides of the Spanish Atlantic" (370). The outcomes of that narrative are, in turn, reflected on page 41, where Ortega and Padrón depict the outcome of the early modern period in the Canary Islands as characterised by a mixing of cultures as they depict a ball filled with different individuals blurring into each

other, producing a peculiar scene in which a Catalan peasant walks towards the panel, commenting, "Visca Canarias" ("Long live the Canary Islands") in Balearic Catalan. This is also reflected at the end of the text in a panel depicting a range of Canary Islanders of different backgrounds all standing together singing in harmony "Canarias es possible" ("The Canary Islands are possible").

The notion of cultural mixing and cultural erasure in the artists' depiction of the early modern period reflects the link between this historical epoch and the time of the publication of *La otra…*. It suggests that the legacy of the early modern period continues to influence the contemporary identities of Canary Islanders and invites the reader to comprehend how the interplay between different cultures, histories, and narratives had shaped the islands' politics in the lead up to the 1980s. When viewed through the lens of 1978-1983, these depictions of cultural mixing tracing back to early modernity serve as an anchor for future pan-Canary Island identity formation. Ortega and Padrón use this historical period as a source of inspiration and reflection, drawing from its narratives to inform their ideas about what lies ahead for the Canary Islands in terms of their relation to each other and, more broadly, to the world by tying the writing of history and its parallels into a means of projecting potential futures. Their representation of history transcends a simple historical account; it becomes a dynamic narrative surrounding the location of pan-Canary Island identity in and across multiple spaces.

*La otra…* thus presents a key narrative concept in its telling of history: creolisation. Here, the concept of *conciencia canaria* frames how the Canary Islands, strategically located as a bridge between Europe, Africa, and the Americas, became a site of intercultural contact that gave rise to a complex social order by the 1980s. The work implies that the islands did not simply inherit their identities from the Iberian Peninsula but were engaged in a process of cultural exchange that set them apart. This process, Ortega and Padrón imply, had created a pan-Canary Island society marked by multi-layered fluidity and adaptability, capable of

negotiating the intersections between tradition and modernity, autonomy and unity, and global connections.

At the same time as this pivot towards the global in a mixed Canary Island society became present in the Canary Islands, across the seas, the *Butifarra!* team also presented a similar idea in *Història de les Balears en còmic*, taking place around the period following 1874, referred to as "La Restauració" ("The Restauration"). Depicting this event on page 54 of their work, the *Butifarra!* team start by openly representing how Balearic Island trade unions and, more generally, political protest, disappeared with the collapse of the First Spanish Republic and the restauration of Alfonso XII as king of Spain. Yet, alongside this political upheaval, the artists also highlight the technical and scientific progress of the islands following the restauration of the monarchy. As they turn the page, the reader encounters the construction of the first railways and the *Ferrocarril de Mallorca* (Mallorcan Railway) between Palma and Inca, where a steam train laden with goods comes flying over the horizon. There is a certain scepticism regarding this sudden progress as the *Butifarra!* team depict this train running towards a character tied to the tracks, who states, "Jo només volia dir que se sciences avancen" ("I just wanted to say that science advances") whilst two others comment, "Al manco estarem unes quants pagines sense sentir-ho" ("We'll probably be a few pages without hearing about it"). This moment is later linked to another multi-panelled page, closing with the "la nova constitució és aprovada l'any 1978. A les Balears es establert el consell general, institució autonòmica heretada de l'antic gran i general Consell, instaurat pels successors de Jaume I" ("The new constitution was approved in 1978. In the Balearic Islands, the General Council was established, an autonomous institution inherited from the old Great and General Council, established by the successors of James I"). The artists pair this, at the top right, with the image of islanders dressed like those in Vaquer's 'La cosa laboral', who reappear whilst holding up a sign reading "Volem s'estatut" ("We want the statute"). Signalling the end of their work, the

artists close with the Balearic Islands being unified less by their culturally shared realities, and more by their political struggle as they proceed towards the future. The text ends with the setting sun, and the tree commenting, "aixi s'historia de ses nostres illes s'acaba aquí […] ninets s'historia continua cada día en temps no s'atura […] he de reconèixer que de vegades m'agrada xerrar" ("This is how the history of our islands ends here [...] children, history continues every day in time it does not stop [...] I have to admit that sometimes I like to chat") (62). As *Història de les Balears en còmic* closes, the tree stares at the reader, the implication being, as the sun sets, that now that the islands' history has been told, its young inhabitants can live on into the future.

The two insular graphic histories discussed in this chapter reveal two distinct modes of politics. In the Canary Islands, *La otra…* reveals a *conciencia canaria* hinging on shared heritage, influenced by a mix of African, Latin American, and European ties. This work sets out to form around a broader cultural consciousness, emphasising archipelagic perspectives that span across spaces. In contrast, in *Història de les Balears en còmic*, pan-Balearic insular identity is depicted as rooted in pan-Catalan language and cultural preservation, reinforced by linguistic and historical ties. However, despite these differences, both *Història de les Balears en còmic* and *La otra…* have a great deal in common. In both works, readers engage in broader historical discourse beyond the confines of the Spanish state, a salient facet in their relationship with the concept of forgetting. The authors of them do not centre their narratives on forgetting in the context of legal silences, as discussed by Alfons Aragoneses (175); rather, they play on the vitality, connections and disconnections, tearing and weaving in order to revitalise and reconstruct a heterogeneous history of their archipelagos. They shed light on the ways in which graphic art can serve as a medium through which they can denature simplistic concepts of time and highlight that elements lost in transition are not merely phenomena of the past; they continue to be relevant today. It is for that reason that across both *Història de les Balears en*

*còmic* and *La otra…*, the artists also include a variety of twentieth century items within their history writing. The *Butifarra!* team, for instance, include bus stops in the Talaiotic era, phones in early modernity, and planes flying through scenes of conquest. Meanwhile, the artists of *La otra… historia de Canarias* depict a modern ferry meeting Christopher Columbus or tourism around Timanfaya 300 years before its eruption. All these aspects do not draw away from the telling of history in these works, instead, they humorously imply the relevance of its subjectivities and its humanity. Through these elements, only includable in graphic art which already invites the reader to suspend disbelief, these two texts suggest that to understand history, readers need to refocus their efforts away from studying grand theoretical moments in discourse and instead return to the particularities of experiences. Centrally, *Història de les Balears en còmic* and *La otra…* each engaged in what Joe Sacco terms "informed imagination" (xii), a delicate balance between fact and fiction where both the works' creators and their subjects become immersed in writing history, not strictly as it happened, but as it can be understood. In these works, graphic history moves beyond simply recounting explicit facts; it also creates an interface through which fragmented moments are brought together. The historian interprets these moments, the artist animates them into comic form with flow, meaning, and motion, and the reader, in turn, brings their own interpretations, imposing their own constructions on the works and the characters within them. More than mere chronicles of dates, facts, and events, these graphic histories invited readers to participate in synthesising meaning, using the comic to bridge image and text and filling in gaps within the narrative.

Inviting distinct readings of their insular histories, at the time of their creation *Història de les Balears en còmic* and *La otra…* fundamentally emphasised connectivity, advocating for a collective remembrance, echoing Glissant's assertion: “Let's remember together, from all the coasts of these seas! Memory is an archipelago.” (‘Une nouvelle région’ 163). In these narratives, the linear progression of history is interrogated. As Glissant observes, “[i]t is not

certain that the time of History leads to confluences any faster or more certainly than the diffracted times in which the histories of populations are scattered and call out to one another" (*Poetics of Relation* 163). These works did not embody a fixed historical trajectory but rather reflect an ongoing process of change and transformation. As Jeff Humphries elucidates in the introduction to Glissant's *The Collected Poems*, they speak to a history "which is always moving and changing even though it is in the past; what is past is never finished, what is done is never complete, what has been lost is always present, and the apparently fixed events of History are subsumed in a perpetual dance of changes" (xxv). They carried out a process much like that explored by Glissant in his early writings, which "engages in the process of reinterpreting history and filling in the gaps; he uses a subversive figure to reclaim a history that has been denied, denigrated, falsified", as Mortimer argues (67). They rendered histories of collective memory, "tracing subversion and rebellion to their clouded origins, [through which a character] becomes aware that historical discourse is relative, discontinuous, contradictory, opaque" (Mortimer, 67).

Closing on heterogeneous history-writing, *Història de les Balears en còmic* and *La otra…* recentre on the creation of a memory unified in diversity, in which a more entire history of subjectivities, rather than that of conquest, victory or established cultural hegemony, is acknowledged. In a Glissantian frame, these works move away from memory as merely being one of trauma or of arrow-like nomadism. Rather, *Història de les Balears en còmic* and *La otra…* imply that a future is possible in these distinct islands because they reframe the recent subjective experiences in the frames of the past. What unifies these graphic histories from two completely different island chains, is that they resist impositions and expectations in a double-fold. First, by reconnecting readers with histories themselves, moving from opposition to the politics of assimilation by exerting "the need to recapture but also transcend a vanished unrecorded history", by fermenting a "mode of imaginary […] a sense of cultural identity"

emerging out of the struggle against a "present governing order of discourse and its related episteme of a global order of knowledge" (Wynter, 638).[52] On another level, however, these insular histories are framed not in a way that looks inward, rendering insularity as isolating, or in a Glissantian sense, rooted, but rather, as situating islands within global networks, global routes.

## Novel Directions: Empty Spaces

The graphic art from across the Balearic and Canary Islands that we have explored in this chapter, both in the form of graphic histories and graphic humour, framed the period between 1972 and 1983 not only as marked by discontinuity, but also as facilitating navigations extending beyond the confines of controlled the political change associated with a transition experienced in a levelled format across the Spanish State. These works demand a move away from perceiving graphic art produced across the Spanish state during the transitional period as informed by a single movement of Madrid-centric blocs and parties that culminated with the election of the *PSOE* in 1982. Rather, they reveal a transitional period across the Balearic and Canary Islands which forged new relationships and revived historic ones in very distinct ways.

Reading these works today, for many readers from across the Balearic and Canary Islands, might be an exercise in revisiting the transitional period through the lens of distinct perspectives linked to their time. However, equally, the open question can be posed as to whether these texts carry the immediacy they once had when read today. These works cannot be abstracted from their creation during a double-fold transition, in which different islands were grappling with their relationships to the Spanish state whilst simultaneously navigating their

[52] A way to think about this idea is related in the writing of Glissant, as he also frames how his own home, the Antilles, is subject to conditions imposed from peninsular Europe.

own identitarian pivots. Doing that, inevitably, these works created their own silences, exclusions, and simplifications, which reflect both the challenges and limitations of representing complex pan-insular identities within a unified transitional framework. Thus, in their attempt to fill historical and cultural lacunae, these works have also created new voids today, leaving unresolved questions about the multiplicity of identities and perspectives. For that reason, reading these graphic pieces today can also feel vacuous. These texts, which initially sought to assert and solidify pan-insular identities, could be deemed to have not fully achieved their objectives. Instead, they seem to have become artifacts that occupy bookshelves which once captured a specific moment across the Balearic and Canary Islands but now feel largely disconnected from the identities they intended to affirm. In attempting to cement unified identarian pivots at their times, they might be read as removed from the current conversations and dynamics across those island chains, ultimately leaving a legacy that is as much about absence as it is about presence. For contemporary readers, we can ask whether these texts evoke an era of burgeoning regional identity and cultural experimentation, or do they feel broken, residing on bookshelves as historical artifacts rather than active conveyors of identity? Do they serve as relics that preserve or idealise pan-Balearic or pan-Canary Island identitarian pivots? They leave as many questions as answers when read today. Yet, from those questions stems a key poetics, that of the archipelagic thread, an unrooted form of thinking about politics, culture, and identities.

This critical ambivalence also provides a useful point of departure for thinking about how these materials have subsequently been reactivated, rather than simply archived or superseded, within contemporary graphic practices. If, as suggested above, these works can appear at once foundational and incomplete when read today, then it is precisely this condition, of partial resolution, interruption, and residual openness, that later practitioners have returned to as a productive site of engagement. Rather than treating the graphic production of the 1950–

1981 period as a closed transitional episode, contemporary artists and collectives increasingly approach it as a repertoire of fragments, motifs, and unfinished propositions that can be reworked in new institutional and aesthetic contexts.

Tracing that thread, the following chapter shifts attention away from the historical moment of production towards the afterlives of these works within post-2011 practice. It considers how artists have revisited earlier Balearic and Canary Island graphic materials not in order to stabilise their meanings, but to reinsert them into ongoing and mobile configurations of exchange, circulation, and reinterpretation. In doing so, it situates contemporary graphic practice as a space in which the gaps and silences identified above are not resolved, but actively re-staged as part of new archipelagic forms of thinking and making.

# Chapter 4:

# Reframing the Graphic Archipelago

# (2011–2025)

"Pero cristiano, ¡si me dijeron que usté había muerto! … Mire, seña Almost, a usté le engañaron, yo vivo en la risa de todos los canarios"

("But Christian, they told me you had died! … Look Ms Almost, they deceived you, I live in the laughter of all Canary Islanders")

(Carolina Bonino Moreno, 2024)

In this chapter, I examine how practitioners since 2011 have presented not only their art but also their graphic practices as part of ongoing and mobile dialogues, rather than as reflections of discrete moments or places, as discussed in previous chapters. I focus on how contemporary artists associated with the pan-Balearic *Clúster de còmic i nous mèdia* (Comics and New Media Cluster), the Canarian association *Se nos fue el baifo* ("We've Lost It"), and the *Fundación CINE+CÓMICS* (Film+Comics Foundation) have positioned mobility, across both time and geography, as central to their engagement with the graphic practices developed between 1950 and 2025. I open by considering a series of post-2011 exhibitions in which artists displayed their work alongside that of predecessors and interlocutors, inviting audiences to view graphic art as part of dynamic networks that span across space and time. I then turn to the Mallorcan artist Francesc "Max" Capdevila Gisbert, whose projects, shown at the 2024 Santa Cruz Cómic Festival in Tenerife, embody the intersections of movement and interruption that characterise contemporary Balearic and Canary Island graphic practices. I argue that embodies the overlap of threads formed of gaps and mobilities which will shape the distinct futures of

graphic art from across the Balearic and Canary Islands, reflecting the politics of mobility shared across the many distinct places that make up this vast corpus, despite its many distinct contexts.

## Exhibiting across Times and Spaces

Since 2011, practitioners from different groups across the Balearic and Canary Islands have presented their graphic work as parsing across distinct locations and times without becoming universal. This process of re-engagement begins to take clearer shape from the mid-2000s onwards, when graphic art across both archipelagos can no longer be understood solely through subversive satire or oppositional commentary, as discussed in Chapter 1. In the Canary Islands, there is a discernible resurgence of interest in graphic production as a cultural form in its own right, reflected in press coverage and the gradual consolidation of comics as a recognised medium of artistic and academic attention. Newspapers and cultural supplements increasingly revisit earlier Canarian graphic traditions, while new platforms and festivals situate comics within wider debates on visual culture, heritage, and identity.

In the Balearic Islands, a comparable but distinct dynamic emerges. Renewed attention to graphic art is increasingly shaped through sustained engagement with Catalan cultural production, reflecting linguistic proximity and established publishing networks centred in Barcelona. At the same time, this referentiality is not only external; it is accompanied by a growing body of locally produced work that articulates Balearic-specific perspectives within, and at times against, these broader Catalan frameworks. In both cases, the post-2011 period has been marked a moment in which graphic art begins to reassert itself not only as a vehicle for commentary, but as a medium through which questions of regional identity, cultural circulation, and historical memory are actively reconfigured.

In the Balearic Islands, one of the most prominent of these groups has been the Mallorcan-based *Clúster de còmic i nous media*, established in 2011. Later in the decade, similar organisations gained prominence across the Canary Islands. In 2018, the *Asociación 'Se nos fue el baifo'* was founded in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, alongside the *Fundación CINÉ+COMICS* in Santa Cruz de Tenerife. A key facet of the work of the practitioners, journalists, curators, and researchers who form part of these organisations has been the revival of exhibiting graphic art in universities, art galleries, and cultural centres. Most prominently, across the Balearic Islands, the Cluster has taken over from the *Associació d'amics i víctimes del còmic* (Association of Friends and Victims of the Comic) in organising the pan-insular Còmic Nostrum festival alongside smaller exhibitions in art galleries, whilst the Canary Island groups have both run a range of events spanning from specific exhibitions across universities and cultural centres, through to the annual *Santa Cruz Cómic* festival.

As discussed in Chapter 2, practitioners began exhibiting caricatures and political satire between 1950 to 1983 to gain visibility and build connections within broader transnational networks of graphic artists. Continuing that thread, since 2011, artists from the pan-Balearic Cluster and the Canary Island groups have also used exhibitions of works created post-2011 and pre-1983 to reshape how their graphic art has been consumed, disseminated, and produced. These exhibitions create spaces for artists to reach diverse audiences of different ages and backgrounds whilst encouraging viewers to engage with their work through sustained attention and reflection. Exhibitions also engage with intermediality. As Catalá-Carrasco et al. argue, this is a process by which "comics may undergo intermedial adaptations, from paper to public space, which reveal new affordances and update semiotic resources that are socially agreed upon and determined according to specific cultures for the creation of meaning" ('Intermediality: Genetics and Enrichment of the Language of Comics' 8). The intermedial shift plays a key role in how distinct graphic artworks have been read by different audiences at

exhibitions, opening up dialogues between past and present and allowing them to examine how political issues and aesthetic practices intersect across both time and space.

*Humor gràfic i premsa a les Illes Balears: Exhibiting Threads*

A recent event that foregrounded the intermedial relationship between post-2011 and pre-1983 graphic art took place in 2017 at the Casal Solleric gallery in Palma de Mallorca. Titled *Humor gràfic i premsa a les Illes Balears* (Graphic Humour and the Press across the Balearic Islands) (henceforth *Humor gràfic i premsa*), this exhibition revisited techniques employed by practitioners between 1950 and 1974. It was led by Rafel "Vaquer" Vaquer i Palmer in collaboration with a number of other artists. Vaquer described the exhibition as creating "una antología de los precursores del sector acompañados de 'grandes glorias actuales'" ("an anthology of the precursors of the sector accompanied by the 'greatest recent glories'") ('El Casal Solleric recorre la historia del humor gráfico en la prensa de Baleares' n.p.). The event's curatorial team achieved this by mounting the works they exhibited onto large display boards which they then affixed to the interior walls of the building.

The construction of a graphic anthology at the 2017 Casal Solleric exhibition was especially evident in the work of Josep "Pep(e)" Roig (FIG 4.1). On Roig's display board in the main hall, positioned on the far left, viewers encountered a piece titled 'Humor y grúa' (FIG 4.1A) ('Humour and Crane'). This was his first piece of published graphic art, originally printed on 19 March 1970 in *Última Hora*. The work appeared on the board on a yellowed page digitally clipped from the newspaper, blown up, and mounted. It features two women, drawn in black lines, speaking about a recently installed crane in central Palma de Mallorca.[53] Both characters face away from the viewer, dressed entirely in black shawls. One remarks, "Lo que

[53] An image of that crane can be seen in FIG 4.2.

yo creo, Doña Eolísa, es que eso de la grúa, no es más que un castigo del cielo" ("What I believe, Doña Eolísa, is that this crane business is nothing more than punishment from heaven / for the sky"). In 1970, readers might have interpreted Roig's piece as a comment on the rapid development undergoing across the coasts of the Balearic Islands. The phrase "castigo del cielo" plays on an intentional ambiguity. To the regime's press censors it could seem benign, referring to, "a punishment from heaven". However, Roig's Mallorcan audience would also read this phrase as referring to a punishment from outside: an external force imposed upon the islands in the form of developmentalism sponsored by the regime. Revisiting Roig's commentary, the curators positioned 'Humor y grúa' as part of a continuous narrative extending over more than 45 years. Its salience shows that Roig's graphic humour from the 1970s remains highly relevant for contemporary Balearic Islanders, who still grapple with the consequences of overdevelopment. His work appears not as ephemeral but as resonating across time and space.

The inclusion of 'Humor y grúa' on Roig's board at the Casal Solleric exhibition marked out the origin point for aesthetic and political threads in the artist's production. These threads are constituted of both mobilities and yet also gaps: they link, and yet, they also evidence breakage. Next to it, a work titled 'No sé qué pasa que lo veo todo negro' ('I do not know what's wrong, but I see everything as black'), was also presented. This work includes another scribbled black representation, much like that of the two women in 'Humor y grúa'. That drawing is an unfigurative caricature of Roig's own head. It can only be identified when compared to other auto-caricatures, such as those which Roig printed in *Última Hora* in March 2015, celebrating 45 years of his work for the outlet ('Humor gráfico de Pep Roig: 19 de marzo de 1970- 19 de marzo de 2015, 45 años de nada'). This piece was placed above two red squares in differing shades. Beneath it, Roig's signature "Pepe", was included in white, framing the phrase "TODO NEGRO" ("ALL BLACK") in bold, black capitals. This turn of phrase invites

viewers to read his work through the lens of poetically shaped black humour. As André Breton defined in 1940, black humour "allows one to brush reality aside when it gets too distressing" (213), whilst resisting demands for transparency, control, or straightforward interpretation. Roig extends this black humour across six further panels on the board. In these panels, the artist depicts grotesque figures with large pockets: a group of wealthy politicians drawn in insipid colours with sunken eyes and gnashing teeth. These figures recite a range of phrases directed at young people "y tú ¿ya sabes de qué te gustaría estar parado cuando seas mayor?" ("and you, do you know in what you would like to be unemployed when you are older?"). "Así que eres joven con estudios y muy bien preparado? ¿y adónde piensas emigrar?" ("So you are young, educated and very well prepared? And where are you planning to emigrate to?"). In drawing these figures, Roig portrays a long history of inequity created by the powerful and wealthy and satirises their logics of control. His work never offers a simple resolution, instead exposing the tensions that these figures embody. Taken together, these pieces resist interpretive mastery and the easy gaze, leaving the audience in discomfort or complicity.

Below the six panels, in the far-right corner, Roig also adds a small untitled piece with two characters carrying rubbish bags and the caption, "Al décimocuarto, Dios creó a los políticos" ("On the fourteenth day, God created politicians"). Next to it appears the hand of God with the words, "¡Creced y multiplicaros!" ("Be fruitful and multiply"). Roig closes the sequence by placing the response "¿ha dicho creced y aprovecharos? es lo que he entendido" ("Did he say be fruitful and take advantage? That is what I understood") in the mouths of the figures below. In this image, the artist condenses the thread running through his work from 1970 to 2025, framing his trajectory of dissent against Spain's political elite which spans across his long career in the printed press.

Similarly intertwined political and aesthetic threads, constituted of both gaps and mobilities, also appeared across the exhibited work of Francesc "Max" Capdevila Gisbert at

the Casal Solleric in 2017. Max has lived in Palma de Mallorca since 1984 and he has become an adoptive islander. At the exhibition, his board centrally presented a piece containing three figures: a bedraggled man in a suit, a young boy in a striped shirt, and a woman in a black jacket with a white t-shirt (FIG 4.4). He draws them with contrasting black and white lines chained to a towering stack, comprised of a television, a set of speakers, a computer, a camera, and a pile of books, which dwarfs them in size. With the television off, the books closed, and the computer screen dark, Max invites viewers to consider how graphic humour can offer an escape beyond these forms of media, which he suggests risk becoming all-consuming. In turn, his work at Casal Solleric challenges the idea of graphic production as a low or ephemeral form of art, and, instead, celebrates its enduring vitality, recalling earlier pieces such as 'La agencia de publicidad' ('The Agency of Publicity' / 'The Advertising Agency'), discussed in Chapter 3.

The idea of pan-Balearic cartooning offering a source of dissent and method of revitalising perspectives also appears in the event's promotional material (FIG 4.3). These featured a piece of Pedro Quetglas "Xam" Ferrer's graphic humour from 1934. This piece contains three figures. On the right, a looming character fills the page, dressed in sports clothes that could be a rugby or football kit. His muscular form is rendered in thick black lines. To his left stands a tiny person in profile with stick-like limbs. However, this piece does more than contrast a powerful figure with a weak one. Xam finishes it by adding a small dog urinating on the larger figure's shoe. Through this act, the artist satirises the self-importance of those who define themselves as the powerful, having the dog take the piss (make mockery) of them. This work typifies the threads that bring together the diverse forms of graphic material exhibited at the Casal Solleric: tracing out how artists from across the Balearic Islands in different times have challenged simplistic hierarchies of understanding and generated satirical work that exalts their position as underdogs of a sort.

Framing a trajectory of dissent across different panels and artists, the curatorial team of *Humor gràfic i premsa*, led by Vaquer, presented the work it exhibited as more than just commentary on passing political moments. Rather, the exhibition, carefully selecting materials and highlighting trajectories, drew out political and aesthetic linkages in graphic pieces created from between 1934 and 1983 and works published as recently as 2017. The exhibition moved beyond a Balearic cultural landscape which, as Colom-Montero argued in 2019, had become burdened by cultural trauma (49). This "burden" is often understood in relation to the pressures of overtourism, which has reshaped the Balearic Islands economically, spatially, and symbolically. This follows how mass tourism has not only transformed the physical environment but has also imposed reductive imaginaries of the islands as consumable leisure spaces, flattening cultural specificity into a marketable image of sun, sea, and escape.

The exhibition, however, resists this logic of consumption and complicates the idea of a singular, overwhelmed insular identity. Rather than presenting the Balearic Islands as culturally exhausted or consumed by external pressures, it highlights processes of continuity, adaptation, and internal dialogue. It frames the islands' graphic landscapes not being "consumed" by tourism or external forces but rather, as actively producing, reframing, and contesting the meanings imposed upon them. Graphic humour, as presented here, becomes a medium through which these tensions are both expressed and reworked, revealing an insular culture that is not only resilient to burden, but generative from it.

In addition, as noted in the event write-up by the Mallorcan media agency Gestión Ocho, of which Vaquer is a member, the works by Xam, Roig, and Max, alongside others at Casal Solleric, traced,

> una tradición reconocida en las islas, [...] una especialidad periodística compleja que implica una gran capacidad de síntesis mezclada con la densidad de una crónica o

> artículo de opinión. Es un trabajo que alberga diferentes sensibilidades, donde confluyen componentes ideológicos, de lenguaje y estéticos que hacen que tenga seguidores tan fieles o más que los editorialistas literarios [con] los diferentes formatos, como la tira cómica, el chiste o la caricatura (n.p.).

> (a recognised tradition on the islands, […] a complex journalistic speciality that requires a great capacity for synthesis combined with the density of a chronicle or opinion piece. A job that encompasses different sensibilities, bringing together ideological, linguistic and aesthetic components that make it as popular as, if not more so than, literary editorialists [with] different formats, such as comic strips, jokes or caricatures)

In turn, this exhibition underscored that key connections and similarities in this corpus form threads that flow across panels created and shared at different moments, sometimes weeks, months, or years apart.

Exhibitions such as *Humor gràfic i premsa* have strengthened public interest in comic art across the Balearic Islands since 2017 and helped re-position artists from Mallorca, Formentera, Menorca, and Eivissa within growing comics networks. This was evident at the *Còmic Nostrum* 2024 (Our Comics 2024) festival hosted in Palma de Mallorca in October 2024. The festival built on the legacy of earlier exhibitions by framing how the Balearic Islands have become a key hub for graphic art production. Nonetheless, it did not present the islands as exclusive or inward facing. With the curatorial team defining a range of work as *nostrum* (ours), rather, the 2024 festival became a site of encounters, bringing together artists from different spaces and embracing diverse formats of graphic storytelling.

Prominently, the 2024 festival centred graphic storytelling from the Balearic Islands. For instance, it featured contributions from Vincent Ferrer, editor of *ADN: La primera revista de còmic a Formentera* [*ADN: The First Comic Magazine in Formentera*], the only continuously published fanzine of its kind across the Balearic Islands. Originally launched in 1985 and relaunched in 2020 ('El cómic ADN regresa 20 años después con el apoyo de Formentera' n.p.) by the Formentera-based Col·lectiu ADN and Espai F, *ADN* mimics the aesthetics of underground zines from the 1970s–1990s. Inside the relaunch of *ADN*, the editors incorporate "cómic, poesía, il-lustració, cultural popular" ["comic, poetry, illustration, popular culture"] (*Tebeosfera* 'ADN' n.p.), all written in Balearic Catalan dialects. Inside its covers, following countercultural zine traditions, the publication's artists explore absurdity and the surreal whilst using clear line work, wide gaps, and minimal shading. Juan Moreno's *El Tècnic* (FIG 4.6) typifies this style, depicting ships and fish floating in the air, barren landscapes, and strange characters rendered in the yellows and blues of a sand-banked island which could either be Eivissa or Formentera. *ADN*'s approach and status as a zine of significant artistic quality earned it selection as the primary representative of Balearic cartooning at May 2024's *Salón de Cómic de Barcelona* (Barcelona Comic Fair) and a prominent place at the 2024 *Còmic Nostrum* festival.

The post-2020 relaunch of *ADN* positioned the publication as a deliberately anti-commercial intervention within Balearic comics culture, embracing collaborative experimentation, vernacular expression, and insular self-representation. *ADN* positions itself not as an entertainment commodity but as a cultural artefact aligned with zine and countercultural traditions. This oppositional stance is reinforced by the magazine's structure. Rather than centring a single author, recurring protagonist, or marketable serial narrative, the relaunched *ADN* assembles short works by a wide range of contributors, including Vicent Ferrer, Guillem Marí, Juan Moreno, Neus Costa Mayans, Paula Tikas, Alfredo Boto, Joan

Escandell, Santiago Colomar, and Pilar Mena. Such plurality transforms the publication into a collective platform for Formenteran and wider Balearic artistic production. *ADN* functions less as a conventional comics title and more akin to a cultural forum, in which multiple voices participate in the articulation of narratives.

Creating their content, the range of artists involved in *ADN* mobilises formal diversity in order to contest reductive logics. Titles such as *Planeta letal*, *Murlock*, and *Tòngh tòngh* evoke science-fictional, absurdist, or playful registers, while *Vidres*, *La cita*, and *Mina* employ quieter, intimate and realist concerns. At the same time, works such as *Sa puta Posidònia* and *Armes, lluita i resistència a Formentera* reveal a clear investment in ecological and political commentary. The former draws on colloquial language and invokes the Posidonia seagrass emblematic of the Balearic marine environment, thereby grounding itself in specifically local environmental anxieties. The latter explicitly references struggle and resistance, indicating that the magazine also serves as a repository for political memory.

The zine's reimagining is especially visible in its recurrent surrealism. Rather than reproducing the Balearics as idyllic postcard landscapes, *ADN* repeatedly renders recognisable island spaces uncanny through dream logic, improbable juxtapositions, and estranged bodies. Juan Moreno's *El Tècnic* exemplifies this: floating ships and airborne fish disrupt its maritime spatial logic, while barren terrain evokes the seasonal emptiness and depopulation often obscured by tourist imaginaries. The unnaturally heightened yellows and blues simultaneously invoke and distort the expected palette of Mediterranean sand, sea, and sky. Such imagery articulates a central tension of insular modernity: the coexistence of intense local specificity with experiences of alienation, instability, and dislocation. Its content privileges sparse layouts, clear line work, broad areas of negative space, and restrained shading, producing an aesthetic that appears intentionally handmade and resistant to the polished visual codes of mass-market

comics. This formal economy shifts emphasis away from plot-driven spectacle and towards atmosphere, symbolism, and interpretive openness.

The broader significance of the relaunch of *ADN* lies in the fact that this defiantly local and anti-commercial project has secured a range of recognition. *ADN*'s selection as the principal representative of Balearic cartooning at the 2024 *Salón del Cómic de Barcelo na*, and its prominent presence at *Còmic Nostrum*, evidence how it now circulates within the wider Catalan and Spanish comics field. More than that, *ADN* also is marked out as reaching, much like other exhibited work, across time and spaces. Its approach is exemplified in its 2020 edition's cover (FIG 4.5A). This fronts a piece depicting a young woman wearing a "Formentera 85" shirt, holding an American-made M16 rifle, and standing among the ruins of a town, with the warning: "Les autoritats adverteixen que llegir ADN és perjudicial per a la salut pública" ["The authorities warn that reading ADN is harmful to public health"]. This piece uses simple colours and a ligne claire style, first popularised by Franco-Belgian artists such as Hergé in *Tintin*, joining this with content more appropriate for adult audiences, such as the inclusion of the gun, the adult character, and the image of a ruined town.

That frontpage consciously recalls the original *ADN* cover from 1985, establishing an explicit dialogue between past and present. The 1985 cover (4.5B), produced to announce the first comic publication in Formentera, similarly centres on a figure standing in rubble and debris. The black-and-white illustration shows a masked man in military clothing and a gas mask depicted holding a similar M16 rifle, surrounded by ruined objects, damaged buildings, and the visible detritus of local media culture, including a discarded copy of the *Diario de Ibiza*. Signed by Juan Moreno, the drawing frames comic production on the island through a dystopian visual vocabulary of collapse, conflict, and destruction. Rather than presenting comics as escapist entertainment, the inaugural *ADN* positioned the medium as oppositional and politically charged. The rags of local paper, the *Diario de Ibiza*, only further exacerbates

that, tracing a tension much like that discussed in the work of the *Butifarra!* artists in the same period in Chapter 3. The recurrence of these themes in 2020 stages that the newer cover is not merely referencing a past publication, but consciously reviving a local language of graphic dissent.

Nonetheless, the substitution of the original masked male figure with a young woman wearing a “Formentera 85” shirt transforms the past into something embodied and transmissible. The choice of gender here is significant. The earlier cover is no longer simply remembered; it is worn, inhabited, and reinterpreted by a new generation, a generation not just of men obsessed with violence or post-apocalyptic fantasy, but now of a much more gender-diverse and politically diverse group of zine artists. This shift is significant. It traces how the Formenteran zine culture *ADN* reflects is not inherited passively as archival, but actively reoccupied and reshaped in the present. What survives from the 1980s is therefore less a fixed aesthetic than an ethos of irreverence, experimentation, and resistance. The female protagonist signals renewal rather than imitation, indicating that contemporary insular creators can claim continuity with earlier scenes while reformulating them through new identities and sensibilities.

In this sense, the 2020 *ADN* cover stages a distinctly intertemporal politics of place. By invoking the visual memory of the 1985 issue, it asserts that comic culture in Formentera and the wider Balearics possesses its own lineage, rather than emerging belatedly in imitation of metropolitan centres of Spanish production. At the same time, the ruined landscape common to both covers converts debris into possibility: from the fragments of marginal or forgotten scenes emerges a renewed figure of authorship carrying visible traces of the past. The image thus links roots and routes simultaneously: roots in an alternative insular history of underground comics, and routes toward future cultural production grounded in that remembered past. *ADN*’s 2020 cover therefore becomes more than an act of homage, it is a

claim that the islands are sites where memory and innovation meet to generate distinctive cultural futures.

Ferrer and other *ADN* practitioners were also joined at the 2024 *Còmic Nostrum* festival by Enric Pujadas and Antoni Marimon, who presented works from *Balears: Abans i ara* (Palma de Mallorca, 2010–) [*Balearic Islands: Then and Now*], a Catalan-language comic run published by Dolmen Editorial. This series retells a range of histories, from stories about the first inhabitants of Menorca (#2 *La Cultura Talaiòtica* [*The Talaiotic Culture*]), through the Christian invasion of Mallorca (#7 *La conquesta de Jaume I* [*The Conquest of James I*]), to tales of seventeenth-century pirates setting out from Eivissa (#10 *Bandolers, pirates i xuetes. Els segles XVI i XVII* [*Bandits, Pirates and Swindlers. The 16th and 17th Centuries*]). These texts adopt a naturalistic style, consistent line weights, and light shading, recalling Franco-Belgian work such as Jacques Martin's *Les aventures de Jhen* (1984–2000). Their rounded characters and narrative detail also continues the threads first set out by artists from *Butifarra*! in *Història de les Illes Balears en Còmic* [*History of the Balearic Islands in Comic*] (1981), though focusing more on individual character stories than the broader historical overview of the earlier work.

Alongside pieces rooted in historically consistent pan-Balearic traditions, the 2024 Mallorca festival opened outward to collaborations with a range of international and peninsular artists. The Danish cartoonist Karla Paloma, based in Berlin, brought her collection *Rates* (Alpha Decay, 2024), a compendium of bold, expressive works whose DIY aesthetic recalls the energy of underground zine culture. In dialogue with this, Aragonese author Sara Soler presented *Us* (Astiberri, 2021) and *Temporada de Brujas* [*Season of the Witch*] (Astiberri, 2023), works that combine intimate, fluid linework with vibrant fantasy to explore questions of gender, identity, and transformation. These explorations of subjectivity were complemented by César Sebastián's *Ronson* (Autsaider, 2023), a memoir lauded for its sharp editorial

precision and expressive caricature, whilst Alba Mora, editor of Alpha Cómic, extended the scope of the event speaking about her curatorial and publishing practice, connecting comics to wider literary currents. Meanwhile, Galician artist Roberta Vázquez brought a different register of humour and critique, with *Socorro!* (Apa Apa, 2019) and *Casa Desastre* (Blackie Books, 2024) combining playful aesthetics with sharp social observation. Together with the exhibition 'Quino y la música' ['Quino and Music'], celebrating sixty years of Argentinian character Mafalda, these contributions established the festival not as a closed celebration, but as a site of encounter where local traditions were put in productive conversation with wider currents. Through its range of collaborations, *Còmic Nostrum* 2024 exhibited the intertwined threads that exist across the Balearic Islands' graphic landscapes and positioned those in dialogue with production from across the globe. It did not frame comics that were *nostrum* (ours) as inward-looking but rather showcased a network of intersecting practices. It fostered relations across the islands and beyond through discussions conducted in Balearic Catalan, Castilian, and English and highlighted graphic mobility across space, much as the 2017 Casal Solleric exhibition had highlighted mobility across time.

*To the Canary Islands, and Beyond*

Graphic mobility has also shaped Canary Island narratives about graphic art in the first quarter of the twenty-first century. This was evident when practitioners from the Asociación 'Se nos fue el baifo' exhibited at the University of Alcalá de Henares' Instituto Quevedo de Humor (Quevedo Institute for Humour Studies) in 2022. By displaying their work in Alcalá, the birthplace of reputed humourist Miguel de Cervantes (1547–1616) and the site of study of Francisco de Quevedo, who the institute is named after (1580–1645), the artists brought their perspectives into the symbolic heart of Spain's humour discourse. At their Alcalá exhibition, these artists did not merely conform to simplistic expectations, presenting tropical islands or

images of tourist-filled beaches. Instead, they highlighted social, economic, and political realities unique to the Canary Islands. Presenting these themes allowed members of the Association to position themselves as locally grounded whilst questioning hierarchies and assumptions around Spain's self-image and exposing viewers, many of whom may never have learnt about the realities experienced by Canary Island residents, to everyday life across the archipelago.

In their introductory text for the Instituto Quevedo exhibition, the curatorial team noted that it showcased work by a range of distinct creators, calling it

> una exposición colectiva dedicada, como su propio nombre indica, al humor canario, en la que varios humoristas gráficos de esta comunidad autónoma española muestran algunas de sus obras más destacadas y sus diferentes puntos de vista en diversos temas: actualidad, política, medioambiente. ('Se nos fue el baifo. Humor gráfico canario' n.p.)
>
> (a collective exhibition dedicated, as its name suggests, to Canarian humour, in which several cartoonists from this Spanish autonomous community display some of their most outstanding works and their different points of view on various topics: current affairs, politics, the environment).

As viewers entered, they encountered two large white main halls connected by a ramp, displaying seventeen sets of three works by each artist. Including caricatures and vignettes, these were not arranged sequentially. Their layout avoided an arborescent structure as the curation placed artists from different generations and styles side by side. The exhibition explored themes from experiences of womanhood and disability to political and regional

inequity. Its structure reflected the artists' own methods, drawing inspiration not from linear sequences but from encounters. This engages with how, Morgan, for example, described his process, being shaped by "[i]nmediatez en el acceso a infinidad de canales y vías para acceder a la información, e inmediatez a la hora de enviar tu viñeta a la redacción (en mi caso, directamente a talleres)" ["immediacy in accessing countless channels and ways to gather information, and immediacy in sending your cartoon to the editorial office (in my case, directly to the workshops)"] (Interview 10.10.2022 2). Néstor Damaso del Pino echoed this view, emphasising that his work is influenced by momentary encounters rather than sequential engagements:

> hoy en día, por la información inmediata que se comparte por las redes sociales y distintos medios de prensa y gráficos a nivel mundial, la información que nos llega es muy rápida. Cualquier suceso desde la otra cara del mundo, la tenemos en nuestros ordenadores, nuestras vidas, en cuestión de segundos influyendo considerablemente (Interview 04.10.2022 1).
>
> (Today, due to the immediacy of information shared through social media and various press and graphic outlets worldwide, the information we receive travels very quickly. Any event from the other side of the world reaches our computers and our lives within seconds, exerting considerable influence).

At the heart of the 'Exposición 'Se nos fue el baifo': Humor gráfico canario', viewers encountered reflections on the shifting position of the Canary Islands over time. These

reflections engaged both the islands' relationship with the Iberian Peninsula and with Africa, a continent only sixty-two miles from the shores of Lanzarote, the easternmost isle.

Such relationships were central to the exhibited work of Eduardo 'Cho Juaá' Millares Sall and José Luis 'Padylla' Padilla Morilla at Alcalá, whose pieces were displayed side by side on the right wall of the main hall. Specifically, the curators foregrounded Millares Sall's *La marcha de Hassan* (FIG 4.7, centre right), which draws attention to connections between the Canary Islands and Africa in the 1970s. The piece, initially, responded to the *Marcha Verde* (Green March), a mass demonstration launched by King Hassan II of Morocco in November 1975, during which around 350,000 Moroccans entered Spanish-occupied Western Sahara. This event marked the beginning of Morocco taking control of the coastal regions from the native Saharawi people, whose land had been colonised by Spain since 1884.

Millares Sall's work invites reflection on the tense position of Canary Islanders in relation to these geopolitical shifts, highlighting both proximity and vulnerability. At the centre of the frame, signing as his character 'Cho Juaá', Millares Sall caricatures Hassan II in straight black line, wearing a fez, with an uplifted hand and a flat expression. The King addresses a crowd of older male figures, who stand to the back right with downcast faces. Below the drawing, Millares Sall adds a handwritten note in pencil: "…y ahora daremos un pequeño paseo por el Sahara y cuando estamos dentro, decimos que nos duelen las piernas…" ("…and now we'll take a little walk through the Sahara and, once inside, claim our legs hurt…"). The piece satirises the Moroccan King's ambivalence toward the Spanish state and the nature of the Green March, highlighting the organisers' ability to occupy Spanish territory without armed conflict. It equally critiques Spain's central government, portraying the nation as unprepared to defend its territories. By commenting on Hassan II's passive control of previously Spanish-held land, Millares Sall prompts viewers to consider a broader issue: if a non-aggressive force could easily

take Western Sahara, how effectively could Spain protect the Canary Islands, another African holding after 1975?

The question of Spain's relationship with the Canary Islands and their orientation towards North Africa also appears in the piece displayed next to Millares Sall's work at the Alcalá exhibition: a 2021 work by Padylla (FIG 4.8A). Titled 'Los récords de la crisis migratoria' ('Looking the Other Way'), it draws on a Google Maps image of the Iberian Peninsula, North Africa, and the Canary Islands. Padylla frames the isles in the bottom of the frame surrounded by tiny boats that dwarf them in terms of size, being drawn as a larger clustered mass that pens the islands in. He contrasts these small islands with the massive forms of peninsular Spain and the West African coast, situating them at the edge of the panel. At the same time as the scene plays out on the isles, on the mainland, Padylla draws a group of *PSOE* politicians staring north towards Europe, ignoring challenges linked to migration from North Africa to the Canary Islands. Their "Los récords de la crisis migratoria" recall Spain's political inaction when Morocco occupied Western Sahara in 1976. In that way, placing Padylla's work alongside Millares Sall's framed for a predominantly peninsular audience the twentieth and twenty-first-century political dynamics active across the Canary Islands: their position within the Spanish state, subject to its policies, and yet often overlooked by its authorities.

Another aspect of the exhibition was its presentation of a long-standing Canary Island tradition: caricature. In Alcalá, caricature was centrally deployed to demonstrate how Canary Island artists have never confined themselves to their own shores but have consistently reached out to depict figures who travelled across the globe. Exemplifying that, in the display of Millares Sall's work, alongside 'La marcha de Hassan', the curators also included a 1982 caricature of Pope John Paul II by Millares Sall, produced in praise of his first papal visit to Spain. Millares Sall renders the Pope with a soft, furrowed brow and closed eyes, using his characteristic straight black lines. Below this hung another caricature, this time of Mary Teresa

Bojaxhiu, or Mother Teresa (Saint Teresa of Calcutta), created shortly after her 1985 UN address. This Albanian-born nun, famous for her charitable work in India, appears in her white cotton sari edged with three blue stripes, meeting the viewer with a steady gaze.

Millares Sall's works were complemented by caricatures from Rafael 'Rafaely' Bethencourt López (FIG 4.9), produced before 1982, and by Néstor Dámaso del Pino (FIG 4.10), produced after 2011. Two key pieces of Rafaely's work, again engaging with prominent figures, were his caricatures of sculptor Abraham Cárdenes and philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre. On the one hand, the artist's caricature of Abraham Cárdenes blends human features with abstract forms, exaggerating his hair into cloud-like shapes and moving away from conventional realism. On the other, his 1965 caricature of Jean-Paul Sartre employs geometric minimalism: exaggerating the eyes and using pared-down lines to capture personality through subtle distortion.

The exhibition drew a clear line from such works to those of Néstor Dámaso del Pino, who has, in turn, continued to expand the language of caricature whilst also celebrating international figures. Néstor's portrait of Russian French composer Igor Stravinsky, displayed at the top left of his section, uses bold lines, sharp angles, and strong geometric forms. Exaggerated features, a large circular eye, a nose shaped like a bass clef, echo Stravinsky's complex musical structures. Black lines against a stark white background disrupt the conventions of portraiture, whilst the angular, fragmented composition evokes the energy and tension of *The Rite of Spring* or *The Firebird*. Next to this hung a stylised portrait of Josefina de la Torre, Canary Island poet, novelist, actor, and member of the Generation of '27, as well as a relative of Eduardo Millares Sall. Here, Néstor highlights her insular roots through the blue, white, and yellow of the Canary Islands flag, placing her within a wider lineage of islanders such as Benito Pérez Galdós, who travelled and shaped cultural life across Spain and beyond.

Taken together, these pieces reveal how Canary Island artists across generations have used caricature not to imitate, but instead to probe style and form, bending conventions to produce novel interpretations whilst paying homage to those who travel across the globe. In that way, the Alcalá exhibition underscored that these artists are more than satirists. It instead suggests that their work has engaged multiple disciplines, reflected on global currents, and consistently combined local specificity with international outlooks. In doing so, the exhibition presented Canary Island graphic art not merely as experimentation or humour, but as tracing a history of mobility.

Those ideas were also explored in graphic terms by Canary Island artists at an exhibition of the 1950-1982 work of artist Rafael Bethencourt transported across the Canary Islands in 2023. This exhibition, titled *Rafaely 40 años después* (Rafaely 40 Years Later), explored Rafaely's prolific humour, his work to search for a Canary Island identity, and how these issues related to Spain's broader national narratives (Casa Museo Tomás Morales n.p.). Alongside that, the event not only displayed Rafaely's historic works but also featured responses from pan-insular artists belonging to the *Asociación 'Se nos fue el baifo'*. These artists reflected on Rafaely's life, appearance, and legacy, presenting him both as an iconic figure and as a subject of caricature. For example, Padylla contributed a striking ink marker caricature (FIG 4.11) inspired by Spanish electoral poster conventions. In it, Rafaely appears against a backdrop of geometric shapes referencing his style, with a pen and brush symbolising his dual practice as painter and graphic artist. Padylla added the slogan "Por un país abstracto y moderno" ("For an abstract and modern country") alongside a personal note, "con profunda admiración" ("with deep admiration"), blending homage with caricature. Other artists, such as Carolina Bonino Moreno (FIG 4.12) and Irene Morales (FIG 4.13), engaged playfully with Rafaely's depictions of women. Morales inserts herself into Rafaely's boat, fending off a male

merman with a bat, meanwhile Bonino Moreno places her character at the centre of a cast of exaggerated female figures, creating a tender and humorous dialogue with his work.

By re-appropriating iconic imagery from the past, these works celebrated Rafaely whilst also extending his artistic world and highlighting the continuity of it in pan-Canarian graphic production. The exhibition presented Rafaely not only as a historical figure but as an active source of inspiration for contemporary Canary Island graphic art. In doing so, it traced regional artistic threads, lines of influence connecting past and present creators, whilst also engaging broader questions of humour, identity, and cultural modernity. The exhibition positioned pan-insular visual traditions as both rooted and dynamically evolving, showing how artists draw on historical reference to comment on contemporary social and cultural issues today.

The *Rafaely 40 años después* exhibition does more than show how contemporary members of the *Asociación 'Se nos fue el Baifo'* view a single artist. It also shows how they situate their own work, and that of their predecessors, within a narrative of an avant-garde that did not emerge directly from the logics of industrial modernity but rather navigated them to foster complex interactions spanning multiple sites and extending across time. The exhibition resists treating the Canary Island avant-garde as something to be exalted or mythologised. Instead, it presents its legacy both satirically and affectionately, incorporating images dating back to the 1950s without suggesting uncritical revival. Like the Alcalá exhibition, *Rafaely 40 años después* imagines an afterlife for past artists through an association that carries forward their name. Its members, by their own admission, declare "Se nos fue el baifo" ("We have lost it"), signalling both continuity and playful self-awareness.

Taken together, across exhibitions of Balearic and Canary Island graphic art since 2011, artists, practitioners, and curators have centrally weaved poetic threads that spread across times and spaces. In the Balearic Islands, those threads have been shaped through trajectories of

satirising the powerful and exalting the value of what might be called the "small places" (Suzanne Césaire, *The Great Camouflage* 40), viewed not from a continental perspective or seen through a totalising synthesis, but, rather, as Glissant articulates them, as places of vantage, returned to and connected with, a "multiple body and a radiating a lived example" (*Poetic Intention* 147). These small places which the Balearic cartoonists conceive are both sites where experiences of insularity compel a gaze beyond any peninsula's centrality and loci which incorporate influences from around the world into what is 'Nostrum'. In a similar fashion, since 2011, exhibitions across the Canary Islands have fostered dialogues between past and present. Together, these parallel yet intersecting currents laid the groundwork for more explicit crossings of Balearic and Canary Island practices, which became particularly visible at *Santa Cruz Cómic* 2024.

## Crossing Threads: Max at *Santa Cruz Cómic*

Today, the threads weaving across Balearic and Canary Island graphic landscapes are less separated than they were historically. In 2024, the crossing of those threads became a defining feature of the *Santa Cruz Cómic* festival, a celebration of graphic art that, as Barrero observed, ensured "el cómic ha estado presente en la vida de los canarios de una manera constante y festiva" ("comics have been present in the lives of Canary Islanders in a constant and festive way") ('La Movida de Santa Cruz. Un salón persistente' n.p.). Now in its eleventh iteration, the festival invited Mallorca-based cartoonist Max, renowned for his "capacidad de experimentar, de innovar, de explorar nuevos caminos dentro de la narrativa secuencial que han ampliado los límites de lo que se puede contar en un comic" ("capacity to experiment, innovate, and explore new paths within sequential narrative that have expanded the limits of what can be told in a comic") ('Max. Siglo XXI' n.p.), to design the 2024 promotional cover (FIG 4.14).

Max's panel depicts multiple encounters that reflect the festival's content and the threads that underpinned it. On its left stands Nieve, a character inspired by a 12-metre-high statue located on Avenida de los Majuelos in Santa Cruz designed by Czech-German artist Jirí Dokoupil. That absurd figure, famously both despised and adored by residents of Tincer, appears in defined block colours dropping its brush and bucket hat and glancing over the shoulder of another figure. This second character, Carbón, originates from Max's 2018 work *Rey Carbón*. He marches across the panel, absorbed in a comic book. Both figures cast long, dark shadows over the flat, sandy terrain beneath a bright blue sky, framed by green palms. They loom monumentally over a tiny orange car, which has just pulled up to the right, honking in protest. Through this composition, Max evokes Tenerife's subtropical climate but avoids the familiar imagery of the island's lapping tourist seas. Instead, by introducing oversized figures, playful shifts of scale, and visual disruptions of the everyday, he centres local specificity whilst simultaneously situating the work within broader comic traditions.

Foregrounding Rey Carbón, a character brought from the Balearic Islands, and drawing attention from Nieve, a figure standing in for the fringes of Santa Cruz, Max's work presents a scene of incongruities: a snowman on a beach, a dark figure casting a shadow on a summer's day, and the sudden encounter of trans-territorial comic art landscapes. Yet, the image also captures the excitement of those encounters. He encapsulates the festival's goal, which "[cuenta] con la visita de grandes artistas nacionales que participarán en charlas y sesiones de firmas, un concurso de Cosplay y una gala K-pop" ("features visits from major national artists who will participate in talks and signing sessions, a Cosplay contest, and a K-pop gala") ('Santa Cruz Cómic concentra sus actividades presenciales entre el 24 y el 27 de octubre alrededor de la plaza del Príncipe' n.p.).

Alongside designing promotional materials for *Santa Cruz Cómic* 2024, Max also presented his work in an exhibition titled *Max. Siglo XXI* (Max 21$^{st}$ Century). Held at the Museo

Municipal de Bellas Artes (Museum of Fine Arts) in Santa Cruz between 3 and 30 October 2024, the exhibition positioned his work both as a journey to the Canary Islands and a temporal transfer into the twenty-first century. As Francisco Pomares reported on the festival, "parece que empieza a contar con un emplazamiento definido después de llevar cuatro años reinventando el formato", aclarando que "primero se debió a la crisis sanitaria y, después, a la falta de una sala de referencia". ('Santa Cruz inaugura tres de las exposiciones del Salón Internacional del Cómic de Tenerife' n.p.) ("he seems to be beginning to have a defined position after four years of reinventing the format, first due to the health crisis and then due to the lack of a reference room"). Curated in a format familiar to most viewers from the Balearic and Canary Islands, around the walls and in display cases, Max's work at 'Max. Siglo XXI' constituted a living archive stretching from the 1970s to the 2020s. The archive included editions of the Barcelona-based countercultural magazine *El Víbora*, promotional pieces for the Barcelona Museu del Còmic (Barcelona Comic Museum), and materials for the national *Día del Cómic* 2023 advertising campaign ('Santa Cruz inaugura con Max, Juan Álvarez y Laura Pérez Vernetti las exposiciones del Salón Internacional del Cómic de Tenerife' n.p.). Most prominent were seven panels from Max's most recent work, *Rey Carbón*. Their curation celebrated the piece, which embodies how multiple threads of graphic art have spanned across the Balearic and Canary Islands between 1950 and the present.

Max's *Rey Carbón* opens on a blank white page with lines printed in Times New Roman. At its opening, we read,

> Viejo Rey Carbón era un alegre cabrón
>
> Y un viejo cabrón era el alegre Rey Carbón
>
> El hombre pidió su pipa, el hombre pidió su carrete

Y tirando del hilo se encerró en el retrete

¡Oh, menudo cabrón el viejo y alegre Rey Carbón!

(Old King Coal was a merry bastard,

And a merry bastard was old King Coal.

The man asked for his pipe, the man asked for his reel,

And pulling on the thread, he locked himself in the loo.

Oh, what a bastard the old and merry King Coal was!)

Consisting of one stanza with an AABBA rhyming structure, this poem begins with two lines with a slight inversion between the terms "Carbón" (Translatable as "Coal") and "Cabrón" (Translatable as "Bastard"), creating a chiasmus. Then, in its fourth line, the poem builds to a humorous climax before an emphatic, refrain-like ending on line five. Above the folkish poem at the opening of *Rey Carbón*, appears the titular protagonist, the Coal King himself, with one eye staring at the reader. This figure is drawn in a style that even recalls that used by Pavia, a darkened human form drawn exclusively with the use of thick black line. He stands holding two items: a pipe and a thread, just returned from his "retrete" ("toilet") (as the poem recounts). Those two items are hardly insignificant in Max's drawing. The pipe recalls that in René Magritte's 1929 *The Treachery of Images*, which played upon the gap between words and reality, whilst the thread recalls the destiny of the fates in classical mythology. On the back of the work, that thread is referred to by Max as also being a reference to "la palabra latina *filum*" ("the latin world thread") drawn from "la fábula de Plinio" ("Pliny's fable"), referring to the fable of the crow and the pitcher, a story of the persistence of a crow. Any reader of Max's work expecting a simple, folkloric, mono-vocal comic, is instead inducted through this panel

into the realities of what they are about to encounter: a journey into the poetics of image and narrative interacting in an insular graphic space. This speaks to the notion of intermediality and navigates “a certain *poiesis* [which] is shared by comics and poetry through message condensation and the use of metaphor and metonymy in page compositions that evince the relevance of materiality and the reader’s involvement in turning the page” (Catalá Carrasco et al., ‘Introduction: Intermediality: Genetics and Enrichment of the Language of Comics’ 5). The relation between image and narrative, even in this opening panel, speaks to Max’s comment to RTVE that “El cómic es un arte mestizo, no un pura sangre” (“the comic is a mixed art, not one of pure blood”) (‘'Paseo astral', la última genialidad del dibujante Max’ n.p.).

On the page that follows, the opening panel in *Rey Carbón*, Max then includes the printing details, dedications noting the support of the Institut d’estudis baleàrics (Institute of Balearic Studies) and the *Govern de Illes Balears Conselleria cultura participació i esports* (Government of the Balearic Islands, Ministry for Culture, Participation and E-Sports), next to a quote from Gottfried Keller translated from his 1864 works *The People of Seldwyla*: “Tíeso y callado como un fósforo” (“Stiff and Silent as a Matchstick”). Including that quote from those nineteenth-century Swiss fictional stories, which revolve around ideas of obsession and extreme self-indulgence, Max, again, primes the reader. What do they expect as they open the next page? Perhaps a folkloric narrative? Perhaps a tale of Swiss mountain villages? Perhaps a deeper dive into ideas of excess and fixation?

The following page refuses to resolve these expectations. Instead, it presents a stark black-and-white image of a character Max had already introduced in *¡Oh Diabólica Ficción!*, a collection of metafictional stories that probe the nature of storytelling and artistic creation, tracing a writer who wrestles with his own work until fiction itself takes on a life of its own. Across the two subsequent pages, this character, shown in six panels, picks up a thread and begins to reel it steadily across the page. This unconventional opening signals at once that *Rey*

*Carbón* will defy conventional expectations of the comic or graphic novel. It inaugurates a work that unfolds as a form of poetic graphic art, even disrupting the conventions of proper printing order. These opening pages point towards what Max himself described as one of his final ambitions: to create “un cómic sin palabras” (“a comic without words”) (Max in Jordi Barcia n.p.).

As the narrative continues, the character from *¡Oh Diabólica Ficción!* reels in the thread with increasing force. By page eleven, the panels pan to the right, revealing a line stretched across the page like a horizon. Within that line, an insular form gradually emerges, first glimpsed from a distance before expanding into an archipelago as island follows island. On page twelve, the thread suddenly snaps, yet on page thirteen the islands persist, pressing closer towards the reader. By page fifteen, Max captions the image with a single word, “Filiforme” (“filiform”), rendering into language the thread-like texture of his own drawing. Following this subtitle, the insular spaces in Max’s central frame are enclosed by the black lines of a panel. Within it, a white figure emerges from the fluid and begins to march across the scene, climbing a mountain before tumbling from it on page thirty-two. By page thirty-four, this figure, its texture now evocative of snow, is retrieved by Rey Carbón, who resides in a cave at the mountain’s base. After Carbón props the figure upright in a static pose, the narrative shifts from page forty onwards into a sequence depicting Carbón’s crow hunt: he traps their heads with cones and then cooks them. The next pivotal moment comes on page fifty-two, when Carbón realises that, in the firelight, the static white figure casts a shadow. This directly inverts Plato’s allegory of the cave: here, the character who inhabits the “real” external world becomes captivated by the dark shapes flickering on the wall. Around the edge of this shadow, Carbón begins to draw. By page sixty-three, however, he grows weary of the white figure, knocking it aside and abandoning reality for the seduction of the image. Finally, on page seventy-one, Carbón discards the figure entirely, leaving only its outline: a perfect arced gap.

That gap becomes all-consuming for Rey Carbón. Its perfect arc is replicated again on pages seventy-seven to seventy-eight, alongside the second title in the work: "Grutescos" ("Grotesques"). In this section, Carbón next adds a single open eye to the white figure's outline, and begins to draw, and draw, and draw. This action lasts for six pages, until a range of stick forms are revealed: images of Carbón's continued hunts for birds, which he depicts himself entrapping and killing. Briefly breaking to smoke from his pipe, Carbón does not stop there. Next the character goes back into the snow, intent on capturing more and more crows, which he skewers and cooks, each time adding to his masterpiece of line-drawn forms on the walls. The subheading that follows this reads "Conbar eyr". In this section, Josep Oliver argues that

> el autor se permite un destello de genialidad para experimentar primero en el territorio del puro cómic abstracto y luego en el del nonsense literario a través del collage, su alternativa visual (129).
>
> (The author allows himself a flash of genius to experiment first in the realm of pure abstract comics and then in that of literary nonsense through collage, his visual alternative.)

In 'Conbar eyr', readers encounter spreading smoke rising from the fires where Carbón cooks the birds. On the following page, Max depicts a naturalistic machine, complete with dials and a chimney, into which Rey Carbón feeds a dark substance. The machine releases smoke into the sky, causing the crows to fall from it. This smoke gradually engulfs the panels until the page turns entirely black, from which a cloud emerges, tethered by a thread. At this moment, the character from *¡Oh Diabólica Ficción!* reappears, dragging the smoke towards a vast

building: an opera house. Here the subheading *"Teatrillo"* ("Little Theatre") appears, and the *diablo* stages the story of Rey Carbón. This scene unfolds against a coloured backdrop, accompanied by the work's only textual dialogue, presented in singsong form and marked by musical notes. As the song concludes, the character is abruptly pulled from the stage, as though yanked by a thread. The work closes with one idea: "Se trata, pues, de leer a través de historias subyacentes que contienen huellas, huellas que en ellas mismas son lecturas y relecturas de otras huellas, bajo las cuales se sitúa una especie de acto primigenio de impresión o de marcaje" (n.p.) ("It relates to, well, to reading through sublimated narratives which contain holes, holes which in themselves are readings and re-readings of other holes, under which there is situated a type of primordial act of impression or marking"). In this quotation, attributed to Tom McCarthy, Max surmises a key notion that has run throughout this thesis: that his graphic work is not prescriptive, but, instead, centrally shaped by its gaps, by a dense archipelagic poetics of images that create a comic presented as literal threads, themselves, made up as much by spaces as by the blackness of the ink. These threads, culminating in Max's invitation to Santa Cruz de Tenerife, are central to the narrative of what graphic images represent. They are poetic and reflective, never static but mobile, dynamic forms that transcend physical boundaries. They function across gaps of space, time, and material, mobile and yet poetically simple. Their mobility and poetic quality are precisely what makes Max's presence in the Canary Islands so significant. His work in that context illuminates how Balearic and Canary Island graphic insularities are exhibited, circulated, and transformed. His presence itself testifies to the fact that these insularities are never confined but continually shifting, redefining intersections of culture, identity, and place.

Max's invitation to *Santa Cruz Cómic* exemplifies two clear trajectories within archipelagic graphic art. First, it represents a temporal pivot: a return across time that brings the techniques of past Balearic and Canary Island graphic art into the twenty-first century.

Second, it marks a geographic pivot: the bringing together of two archipelagos not as peninsular peripheries but as interlinked and conversational island chains. At Santa Cruz Cómic, these sites are presented as simultaneously particular and global, echoing the "mobilities paradigm" outlined by Sheller and Urry, which "emphasizes that all places are tied into at least thin networks of connections that stretch beyond each such place and mean that nowhere can be an 'island'". Islanders, as Sheller adds, dwell "thanks to many different kinds of coming and going, pausing and waiting, producing a choreography of uneven spatialities and temporalities" (*Island Futures* 17).

Since 2011, Balearic and Canary Island artists have used the threads that interweave their practice to frame their work, and that of their predecessors, as bodies of production that exceed mere responsiveness to political realities or cultural trends. By engaging with graphic art created and circulated across diverse sites, they have built rhizomatic genealogies of mobile insular graphic culture. In the 2020s, these genealogies converge not only notionally, through shared experiences of insularity, but also physically and materially, as artists exhibit across each other's territories. These encounters align with Song's proposal that we can "recreate conditions that facilitate the possibility of experiencing the past in the present through affect, intimate connection, or as an extension of one's self or one's current circumstances" (3).

The overlapping threads of the 2020s invite us to think of Balearic and Canary Island graphic landscapes as part of a world of many worlds, centring interactions between diverse modes of artistic creation and exhibition. In doing so, they surface epistemological and methodological flows, those visible through meetings, and those still submerged. Approached this way, these graphic landscapes resist expectations of cultural coherence based on fixed, rooted identities tied to static territories and nation-states. Instead, they embrace a Glissantian turn towards the idea that "[t]o unify means to dissolve" ('The Archipelago Conversations', n.p.). Even if the Balearic and Canary Islands drift apart once again, the encounters of the 2020s

suggest that they will continue to trace overlapping threads despite the spaces that divide them. These encounters are not inward-facing, ephemeral, or bound by the erasures of tourism-centred media or the relentless cycles of crisis. Rather, they signal that the future trajectories of artists across these archipelagos will be increasingly shaped by a determination to participate in mobile cultural conversations that extend across territories.

# Conclusions

“Unity is sub-marine”

(Edward Kamau Brathwaite ‘Caribbean Man in Space and Time’ 1)

Reflecting on the epistemological vitality of the burgeoning field of Island Studies, in 2008, Baldacchino posed the following questions:

> If island(er)s are hybrid, glocal, shifting, defiantly unstable, and inherently undefinable, how then do we address and temper the enthusiasm to preserve their essence, their sense of place, however flexible it may be? How can island studies manage this “nervous duality” (Baldacchino 2005, 248): defending, even celebrating, an ‘inside’ that is resentful of what is felt to be an overbearing ‘outside’; when the outside is essential for island(er) survival, its representation, its very identity? (‘Studying islands: on whose terms?’ 56)

The discussion of the aesthetics and politics underpinning Balearic and Canary Island graphic artworks offers a response to Baldacchino’s question that aligns with his view that the “insider/outsider distinction does not work all that well when it comes to islands” (36). As we have seen, graphic pieces from across these many islands are “disgusted by the offhandedness assumed by any presumption of superiority” (Glissant, *Poetics of Relation* 200) in the way that they undermine frames that impose hierarchy or closure and replace notions of “inside” or “outside” with gaps, mobilities, and threads. The pieces this thesis has discussed reject the temptation to stabilise identity, origin, or influence into singular, linear forms; instead,

remaining attuned to how gaps, mobilities, immobilities, and threads emerge and dissolve across works, artists, times, and places. To those ends, in the four chapters of this thesis, we have seen how Balearic and Canary Island graphic practices do not offer up objects to be categorised within rigid binaries, but, instead, generate an evolving, sometimes contradictory poetics.

Chapter 1 established foundational questions that guided this thesis by introducing how contemporary graphic artists from across the Balearic and Canary Islands have generated the poetics of the gap and invited their audiences to reflect on questions surrounding mobility and immobility in response to hegemonic conceptions of their homes as static marginal sites. It opened by examining how, since 2011, the Balearic and Canary Islands have been framed as spaces of aesthetic and political stagnation, simultaneously exoticised, relegated to the periphery, and depicted in states of perpetual crisis. The chapter then introduced how graphic artists from across the Balearic and Canary Islands have moved beyond such conceptualisations, touching on Glissant's notion of burning beach as a critical frame. It evidenced how works created by islanders such as Pau, Padylla, Bonino Moreno and Morgan, between 2011 and 2025, rendered their homes as sites embedded in networks of constrained movement and controlled exchange. A key facet stemming from this chapter is how, in different ways, these artists' pieces open questions by positioning their island chains as equivalent to the vessels they draw, inviting understandings of them as sites of both fluidity and fixedness. That allows for an introspection upon tensions around different forms of migration, exploitation, and inequity. Such graphic materials tend to Baldacchino's contention by reframing immobile conceptions of insular "insides" and "outsides", presenting Balearic and Canary Island spaces as dynamic sites of negotiation: speaking not only to notions of hybridity, but also, of rupture and dissent.

Chapters 2 and 3 retraced the origins of the poetics and the politics of archipelagic mobility discussed in Chapter 1 and analysed their historic inscriptions and re-inscriptions. In those chapters, I focused on graphic art from across the Balearic and Canary Islands created and disseminated between 1950 and 1983. Across key moments under the dictatorship and during the period around the transition to democracy, the chapters explored how distinct graphic corpuses from the Balearic and Canary Islands traced fine lines between introspection and extrospection. Graphic artists from across the islands of these two archipelagos, ranging from satirical cartoonists to sports humourists, writers of graphic histories through to illustrators of magazines, undermined any reading of their work through a rigidly dualistic lens here. In these chapters we see how those artists created pieces which trace out nexuses of relational mobility. From those tracings, multiple political and aesthetic threads stemmed, overlapped and diverged. A key point emerging from reading of the graphic materials in Chapters 2 and 3 is the importance of thinking through the different permutations of connections and disconnections when discussing graphic art from across the Balearic and Canary Islands. As the chapters establish, these shape dialogues across times and spaces that were fundamental for the creation of eruptive graphic landscapes, for inscriptions of dissent, and for attempts to navigate novel identarian pivots.

At the end of Chapter 3, I asked whether the passing of time prompts us to reconsider the continued resonance of the works discussed in the opening chapters of this thesis. I centrally asked if they are set to retain their potency, or risk becoming bounded historical artefacts: prescriptive and inelastic? Addressing that question, Chapter 4 examined how contemporary Balearic and Canary Island artists have re-engaged with earlier graphic practices, treating them not as static or nostalgic reference-points, but as active elements which shape evolving artistic dialogues. By examining the period from 2011 to 2025 as a pivotal moment for reconsidering the legacies of earlier graphic production created between 1950 and 1983, the chapter

underscored how contemporary artists have revisited, reinterpreted, and directly responded to the graphic work of previous generations. From the networks of production and dissemination studied in this chapter, I argue that we can trace how graphic practices from the Balearic and Canary Islands, meeting in Santa Cruz in 2024 or in Mallorca in 2021, do not constitute closed sites, but rather generative spaces where overlapping threads are negotiated, intertwined, weaved, and can be unpicked just as easily.

From the analyses across the chapters in this thesis, several key understandings have unfurled regarding the overlaps and distinctions between graphic art from across the Balearic and Canary Islands created and disseminated between 1950 and 2025. These understandings serve both to situate this work within critical discourse and to demonstrate how it opens new pathways for research on graphic representations of dynamics of mobility, formulations of resistance to exoticising discourses, and questions of migration, history, and space.

A first key understanding stemming from this thesis regards how the Balearic and Canary Island graphic artefacts examined in it are tied to geographic spaces. It shows that, whilst being disseminated under intensely specific circumstances, artists resist framing their works' geographic positioning as structuring entrapment or stagnation. Chapters 1–4, in different ways, have thus shown how Balearic and Canary Island artists resist conceptions of their works as self-contained or defined solely by what lies "inside". Nor do they portray their island homes as endangered by globalisation, the incursion of the nebulously defined "outside", as Baldacchino puts it. In that way, the comics, cartoons, vignettes, and long-form narratives we have analysed across this thesis have mobilised fluctuating insular positions that challenge logics of centres or peripheries and conceptions of binary transatlantic dialogues.

Bearing that in mind tends to the opening question established regarding what graphic artworks from across the Balearic and Canary Islands, when placed in dialogue, reveal about the limitations of framing insular experiences through identarian logics that hinge on notions

of bounded regions or nations. Responding to that, this thesis proposes that artists from across the Balearic and Canary Islands have not cohered rooted identities in opposition to a supposed centre, but instead that they have navigated a model which decentres the logics underpinning conceptions of geographical marginality, prompting the question: where is the margin if the centre lies wherever I am situated, and if that location is itself constantly shifting.

Second, this thesis has also implicated that the works examined in it cannot be conceptualised as responding solely to the conditions of the time of their creation but, instead, as tearing ruptures in the logics of mono-directional temporally based narratives. This tends to the key question posed in the introduction as to how graphic artworks from across different Balearic and Canary Islands, which are distinct though resonant, can be read in ways that expose and challenge disciplinary and epistemological hegemonies. A key facet of this is understanding how graphic artworks we have discussed in this thesis create narratives of pages not turned sequentially but, rather, read by missing chunks, returning, flipping, pausing, and revisiting, much like the process engaged with by readers of the comic. After all, in what other artform is it so common to linger on a group of disjoined pages not for their temporal sequentiality, but for their aesthetics? Building on that, this thesis does not focus on revision or sedimentation, but instead on understanding graphic interactions across time as generative processes which can provoke both artistic and critical innovation. It highlights a need to be concerned less with the continued relevance of identitarian formulations we might find in pieces and more with the capacity of the works themselves to prompt novel reflections when unbounded from their contexts of creation.

As Glissant approaches Caribbean history through rhizomatic thinking, seeing it as a mangrove of intertwining roots rather than a singular arborescent tree, so too does this thesis lay out how the Balearic and Canary Island artworks materially unfold across multiple spatial and temporal dimensions. This figures in how the graphic artists create comics, cartoons,

vignettes and long-form narratives which offer vital sites from which further critical discussion might be stimulated. As much as comic narratives themselves, the overlaps of threads stemming from 1950–1983 with those explored between 2006 and 2025 navigated across the thesis indicate that graphic art from across the Balearic and Canary Islands frames not only spaces for memory but also sites of future possibility. Through highlighting that, the chapters of this thesis establish a new route to engage in the kaleidoscopic memories that comics can open up, which Cameron and McGlade refer to in their writings on the *Politics of Dissent in Visual Print Media*.

A key insight joining the temporal and spatial inscriptions explored in this thesis arises from a specific conceptualisation of the works in it not being connected genealogically, but, instead, like the threads seen in Max's *Rey Carbón*. Such threads do not flow like film but, again, like comics, through panels, ruptures, regime changes, and unpredictable moments of encounter. This fragmented logic is evident in the choices artists make in negating triumphant histories of conquerors and heroes. That is particularly visible in the ways that the *Història de les Balears en còmic* invoked Islamic rule, in Millares Sall's reflections on the Moroccan invasion of Western Sahara, in Roig's gaze toward Portugal, and in how Pau and the *Se nos fue el baifo* artists respond to the small boat. Reading these, in turn, has shaped the thesis' exploration of how artists, curators, and exhibitors from across the Balearic and Canary Islands weave threads that are at once opaque in their specificity and open in their relationality. Whether through the movement of visual art from print culture into gallery spaces, or through deliberate refusals of peninsular dominance, the practices examined here show how such threads resist the constraints of bordered or bounded identities.

Bearing in mind the above, the final question to revisit in this conclusion is that of whether graphic artworks from across different Balearic and Canary Islands might resonate together in future critical readings. Bearing in mind their broken stops, unclear interchanges

and disconnections, I propose that the artefacts studied in this thesis are best understood as related in the *chaos-monde*: constituted of small encounters, re-appraisals, and mediations which stand, according to Glissant,

> [a]gainst those who deal out generalizing lessons. Against ideology content with its own company. Against petty local masters. Against an intolerant, nationalist seclusion. Against those who erect borders. Those obsessed with military power. Those who are the repositories of the collective consciousness. The mouthpieces (*Poetics of Relation* 201)

The pieces studied here, taken together and related to Glissant's idea that "to unify is to dissolve" ('Archipelago Conversations' 69), must be understood not as forming a stable, coherent network, be that national or transoceanic, but as operating through patterns of connection and disconnection. They come into relation under shared historical and material conditions, yet do not cohere into a single, unified framework; instead, they diverge, overlap, and at times remain in tension with one another.

As works composed of fragments, of populated and unpopulated panels, they reflect and reproduce this unevenness. They should therefore be read as part of a broader, entangled cartography, one that is defined less by continuity than by contradiction, asymmetry, and ongoing processes of negotiation. Graphic artworks from across the Balearic and Canary Islands register divergent aesthetic and political practices. They offer both reflections on particularities and, read in comparison, also provide critical insights into how cultural production navigates a world defined not by stable national identities or singular readings. Through studying graphic art from across the Balearic and Canary Islands jointly, we can begin

to imagine new conceptual geographies applicable as much for Hispanic Studies as they are for Comic Studies: geographies shaped not by uniformity, transnationality, or centre and periphery. This does not just decentralise the concept of focusing cultural studies around singular nation-states; it revisits the foundations of its myths, offering an approach towards a constellation of graphic artworks where politics are forged and unmade through movement, encounter, and negotiation rather than fixed territorial boundaries.

Stemming from that, this thesis stands at the crossroads of Visual Cultures, Hispanic Studies, and Island Studies, yet it remains firmly anchored in the graphic landscapes of the Balearic and Canary Islands. The works discussed in it shed light on how insularities are not marginal or peripheral sites bounded by the logics of the nation-state, but spaces where cultural memory, political dissent, and artistic experimentation converge. By tracing how graphic artists negotiated those notions, this thesis has shown how their work complicates our sense of Spain's modern history, and how, in doing so, it offers a renewed framework for thinking about graphic art as a practice at once localised and transoceanic, apt for a world in which notions of the nation, globality, universality and globalism, are proving increasingly frayed.

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# Appendices

# Appendix 1: Figures

**FIG 1.1: 'Balearic Islands Travel Print'**

Anon. "Balearic Islands Travel Print Balearic Islands Poster Art Decor Landscape Art Balearic Islands Spain Wall Art for Balearic Islands Gift Art", *Etsy,* n.d. https://tinyurl.com/t7e4mw8r. Accessed 10.10.2023.

**FIG 1.2 'Balearic Islands Travel Print Wall Décor'**

Anon. "Balearic Islands Travel Print Wall Decor Home Living Decor Balearic Islands Illustration Travel Poster Gift for Balearic Islands Spain." *Etsy,* n.d. https://tinyurl.com/5bnm9ruw. Accessed 10.10.2023.

**FIG 1.3 'Balearic Islands Beach Travel Poster'**

Anon. "Balearic Islands Beach Travel Poster." *Zazzle,* n.d. https://www.zazzle.co.uk/balearic_islands_beach_travel_poster-190540600082258849?rf=238054246627829079&tc=Cj0KCQjwoeemBhCfARIsADR2QCuAsYLgSWD71k4D0s-Nlx90-THmtNs8LI1UtBLqcWLA0029TEAnJQcaArMrEALw_wcB&utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=uk_shoppi&trchd=true Accessed 15.10.2023.

**FIG 1.4 'Canary Islands Traditional Travel Print'**

Anon. "Canary Islands traditional travel print - Spain, Canary Islands poster, Birthday gift, Wedding present, Custom Text, Personalised Gift." *Etsy,* n.d. https://tinyurl.com/scwkfpay Accessed 15.10.2023.

**FIG 1.5 'Lanzarote Canary Islands Travel Artwork Print'**

Anon. "Lanzarote Canary Islands Travel Artwork Print." *2sistersuk.com,* n.d. https://www.2sistersuk.com/2-sisters-signwriting-design-shop/lanzarote-canary-islands-travel-artwork-print Accessed 15.10.2023.

**FIG 1.6 'Tenerife Travel Print'**

Anon. "Tenerife travel print - Spain, Travel prints, Birthday gift, Wedding present, Custom Text, Personalised Gift." *Etsy*, n.d. https://www.etsy.com/uk/listing/1231785741/tenerife-travel-print-spain-travel?gpla=1&gao=1&&utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=shopping_uk_en_gb_- Accessed 18.10.2023.

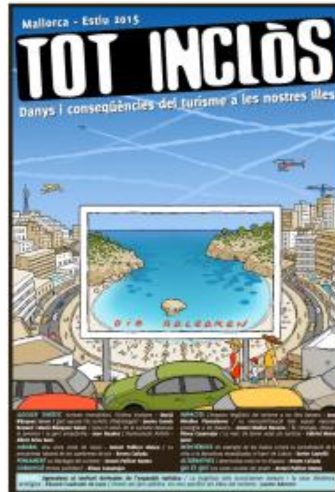



**FIG 1.7 *Tot inclòs*, 2015**

Anon, *Tot Inclòs: Danys i consequences del turisme a les nostres illes*, 2015. https://totinclos.noblogs.org/ Accessed 18.10.2023

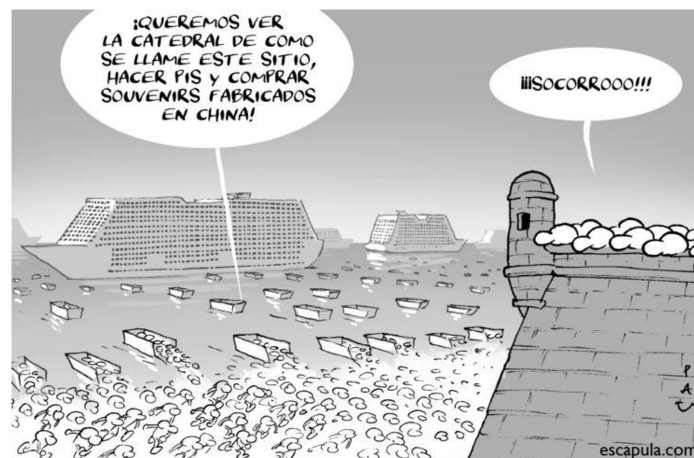



**FIG 1.8 'Socorro'**

Jimenez Bravo, Pau 'Pau'. "Pau Per Tots." *Twitter*, 14 June 2021. https://twitter.com/Pau_Escapula/status/1404427424486592517/photo/1 Accessed 10.10.2023.

**FIG 1.9 'Masificación'**

Jimenez Bravo, Pau 'Pau'. "Pau Per Tots." *Diario de Mallorca*, 5 January 2010 https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=739733934823080&set=ecnf.100064373426500&_rdr Accessed 27.08.2025.

**FIG 1.10 'Da igual cuando la leas'**

**Padilla Morilla, José Luis 'Padylla'. "Da igual cuando la leas." *La Provincia*, 7 June 2020** https://www.facebook.com/laprovincia.es/posts/humor-mira-aqu%C3%AD-las-vi%C3%B1etas-de-padylla-y-montecruz-para-este-domingo/10158373707252829/ 27.08.2025

**FIG 1.11 'Canarias en el recuadro'**

Padilla Morilla, José Luis 'Padylla'. "Canarias en el recuadro." *La Provincia*, 6 October 2017. https://www.facebook.com/laprovincia.es/photos/a.10150111072492829/10155730355972829/?_rdr Accessed 16.10.2024

**FIG 1.12 'Sobre el REF balear'**

Padilla Morilla, José Luis 'Padylla'. "Sobre el REF balear." *Facebook,* 25 February 2019. https://www.facebook.com/padylla/photos/pb.100050638892632.-2207520000/10158125265019638/?type=3 Accessed 18.10.2023.

**FIG 1.13 'Un futuro más torcido que la torre de PISA'**

Padilla Morilla, José Luis 'Padylla'. "Un futuro más torcido que la torre de PISA." *Facebook*, 4 December 2019. https://www.facebook.com/padylla/photos/pb.100050638892632.-2207520000/10158980204349638/?type=3 Accessed 18.10.2023

**FIG 1.14 'Pau per tots'**

Jimenez Bravo, Pau 'Pau'. "Pau Per Tots." *Humorprensa*, n.d. http://humorprensa.com/Vinetistas/Pau.html Accessed 10.10.2023

**FIG 1.15 'Padylla 13/07/08'**

Padilla Morilla, José Luis 'Padylla'. "Padylla: 13/07/08." *Flickr*, 13 July 2008. https://www.flickr.com/photos/20715928@N02/2665660336/ Accessed 18.10.2023.

**FIG 1.16 'A la mar no le importan tus razones, tu color o tus ideas, no discrimina.'**

Bonino Moreno, Carolina 'Almost_a_diary'. "A la mar no le importan tus razones, tu color o tus ideas, no discrimina'. *Instagram*, 18 August 2022. https://www.instagram.com/p/ChZM8r1DkYc/ Accessed 15.10.2023.

**FIG 1.17 'Morgan 19-09-21'**

Verdu Medina, Juan Jesus 'Morgan'. "19-09-21." 19 September 2021. Reproduced from artists' collection.

**FIG 1.18 'Pau per tots 27-08-2006'**

Jimenez Bravo, Pau 'Pau'. "2006-08-27."

2006-08-27.jpg (630×371) (escapula.com) Accessed 18.10.2023.

**FIG 1.19 'Padylla'**

Padilla Morilla, José Luis 'Padylla'. "Padylla" *Google Blogs*, n.d. https://blogger.googleusercontent.com/img/b/R29vZ2xl/AVvXsEg8LH-T0Jg6xthZBpBtjtqcGBSWB0DHCFmG3EYxTZ72rlqFu7Js87z9CxbGL_pGMipyn9mJ8ztOQ9Vzw6gTsGS5cvPhTnxj4pFz_ymPa95OJWHI9m4NXaj_kQMWOnqATHi6gGfWNg/s1600/padylla+2.jpg Accessed 18.10.2023.

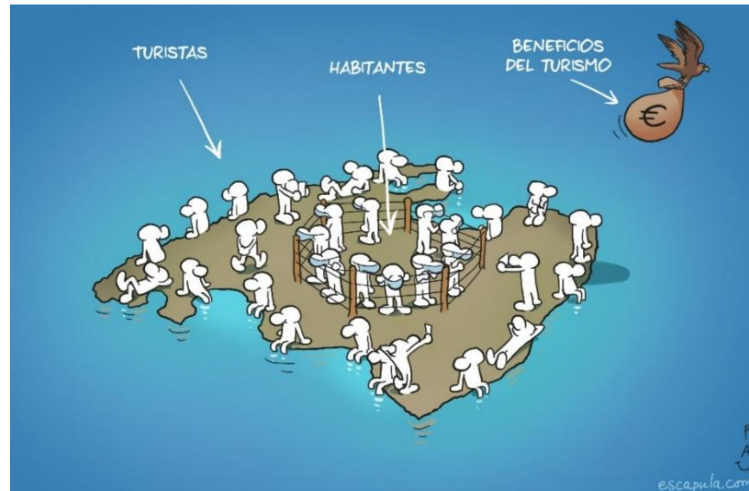



**FIG 1.20 'Pau per Tots 2021-04-01'**

Jimenez Bravo, Pau 'Pau'. "2021-04-01." *Twitter*, 6 April 2021. https://x.com/Pau_Escapula/status/1379472183353876481?s=20 Accessed 10.10.2023.

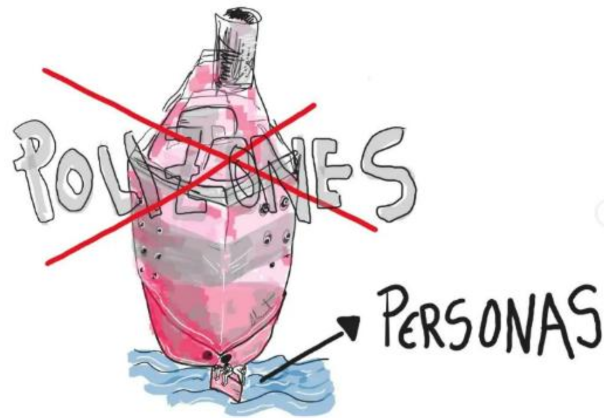



**FIG 1.21 ‘Sociedad fallida, descripción gráfica.’**

Bonino Moreno, Carolina ‘Almost_a_diary’, *La Provincia*, 29 November 2022. “Sociedad fallida, descripción gráfica.” *Instagram*, 29 November 2022. https://www.instagram.com/p/ChZM8r1DkYc/ Accessed 15.10.2023

**FIG 2.1 ‘Nuevo Mapa Político de Europa’**

Roig, Josep ‘Pepe’. “Nuevo Mapa Político de Europa.” *Última Hora*, 1974. Reproduced in Roig, Josep. *Pep. 30 anys de feina a Última Hora,* 2000.

**FIG 2.2 'Europa, 10 – España, 1.'**

Faustino 'Pastino' García Márquez. 'Europa, 10 – España, 1.' *Sansofé*, 1972. https://jable.ulpgc.es/viewer.vm?id=137718&page=15 Accessed 11 February 2025

**FIG 2.3 'Tanto Monta, Monta Tanto'**

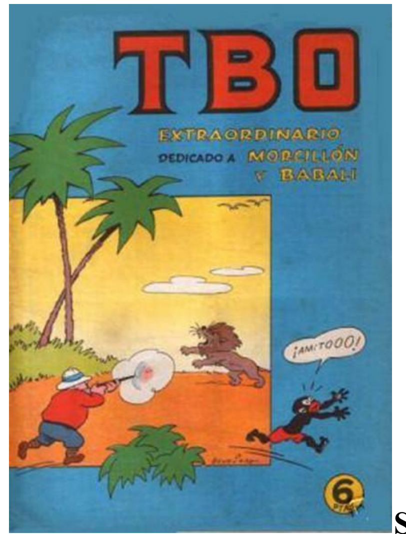
Millares Sall, Eduardo 'Cho Juaá'. "Tanto Monta, Monta Tanto." *El Conduto*, Diario de Las Palmas, 1970. https://jable.ulpgc.es/ Accessed 10.10.2023.

**FIG 2.4 'Nixon'**

Millares Sall, Eduardo 'Cho Juaá'. "Tanto Monta, Monta Tanto." *El Conduto*, Diario de Las Palmas, 1972. https://jable.ulpgc.es/ Accessed 16.05.2024.

**FIG 2.5 'La Gran Victoria', *Yuki El Temerario***

Roig, Josep 'Pepe'. "La Gran Victoria." *Yuki el temerario*, 1961. https://www.tebeosfera.com/numeros/yuki_el_temerario_1958_valenciana_98.html. Accessed 07.10.2023.




S

**FIG 2.6 ‘Extraordinario dedicado a Morcillón y Babalí’**

Ferrer, Benejam ‘Benejam’. “Extraordinario dedicado a Morcillón y Babalí.” *TBO*, 1952. https://www.tebeosfera.com/numeros/tbo_1952_tbo_buigas_estivill_y_vina_extra_66.html Accessed 12.10.2023

**FIG 2.7 ‘Como fue exterminado el devorahombres de Samoraki’**

Ferrer, Benejam ‘Benejam’. “Como fue exterminado el devorahombres de Samoraki.” *TBO*, 1949. https://eccarteycoleccionismo.com/art/8822-aventuras_de_eustaquio_morcillon___como_fue_exterminado_el_devorahombres_de_samboraki Accessed 12.10.2023.

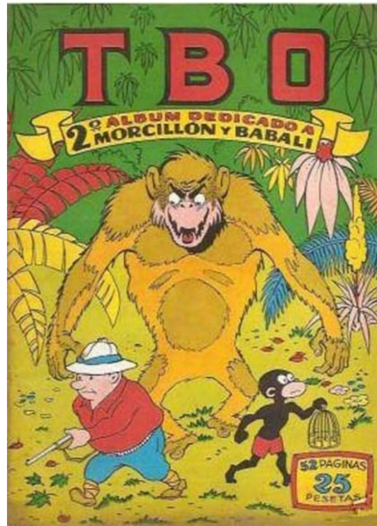



**FIG 2.8 '2a Album dedicado a Morcillón y Babali'**

Ferrer, Benejam 'Benejam'. "2a Album dedicado a Morcillón y Babali." *TBO*, 1952. https://www.tebeosfera.com/numeros/tbo_1952_tbo_buigas_estivill_y_vina_extra_38.html Accessed 12.10.2023.

**FIG 2.9 Viñeta de Rafaely en el periódico local "El Eco de Canarias", de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (Islas Canarias) el 20 abril 1954**

Bethencourt, Rafael 'Rafaely'. "No 87." *Deportes: Seminario de los martes*, 20 April 1954. Reproduced on 'Rafaely', *Facebook*, 3 November 2021. https://www.facebook.com/Rafaely-117182907591/photos/10158298098397592 Accessed 10.10.2023.

**FIG 2.10 'Las viñetas de Rafael Bethencourt'**

Bethencourt, Rafael 'Rafaely'. "Las viñetas de Rafael Bethencourt'." *Deportes: Seminario de los martes*, 1954. Reproduced in 'Se nos fue el Baifo', *Twitter*, 16 November 2021. https://twitter.com/senosfuelbaifo/status/1460590084969873409?s=20&t=wziawokgIZiZmtdQ2OJlqw Accessed 10.10.2023

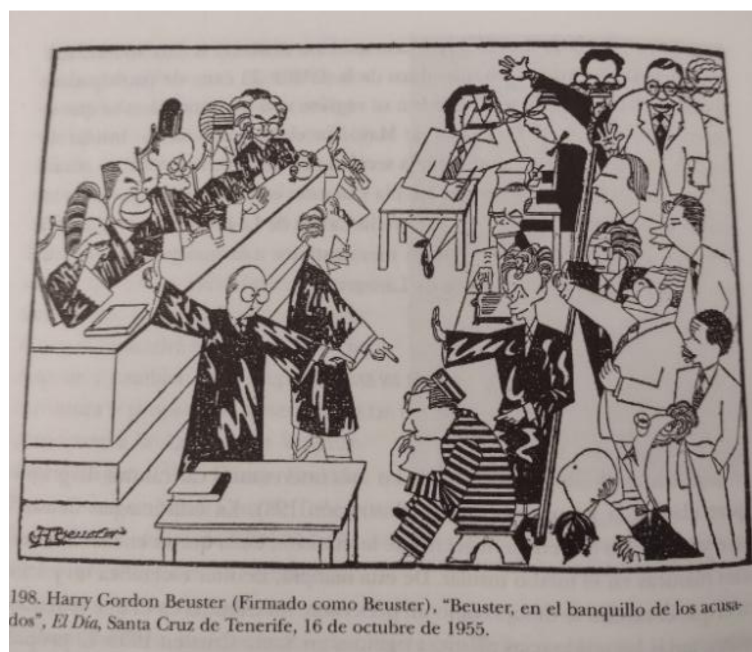



**FIG 2.11 'Beuster en el banquillo de los acusados'**

Beuster, Harry Gordon 'Harry Beuster'. "Beuster en el banquillo de los acusados." 16 October 1955. Reproduced in González, Franck. *El humor gráfico en Canarias*. Cabildo de Gran Canaria, 2003, p.348.

**FIG 2.12 *Gallos***

Ferrer, Pedro Quetglas 'Xam'. "*Gallos*." 1951. Reproduced in Ysasi Alonso, Alejandro *La obra gráfica (estampas y matrices) de Pedro Quetglas Ferrer "Xam" (1915-2001): La riqueza de un patrimonio*, Palma, Universitat de les Illes Balears, 2014.

**Fig 2.13 *Litografia Original V, 1975***

Miró, Joan. 'Litografia Original V, 1975' Reproduced in *Queneau, Miro Lithographe II, 1952-1963*. Retrieved from *Artsy.net,* https://www.artsy.net/artwork/joan-miro-litografia-original-v-1 Accessed 17.05.2024.

**FIG 2.14 "Latz Restaurante"**

Ferrer, Pedro Quetglas 'Xam'. "Latz Restaurante." c1954-1962. Reproduced in Ysasi Alonso, Alejandro *La obra gráfica (estampas y matrices) de Pedro Quetglas Ferrer "Xam" (1915-2001): La riqueza de un patrimonio*, Palma, Universitat de les Illes Balears, 2014, p.69.

**FIG 2.15 'El Risco'**

Solalinde, Virginia. 'El Risco.' *Mujeres en la isla*, 1959.

https://jable.ulpgc.es/viewer.vm?id=54045 Accessed 17.05.2024.

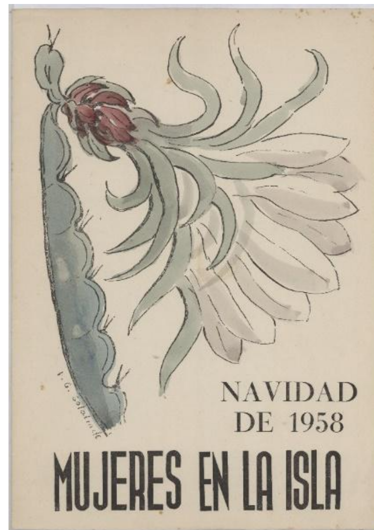



**FIG 2.16 A**

Solalinde, Virginia. 'Untitled.' *Mujeres en la isla*, 1958.

https://jable.ulpgc.es/viewer.vm?id=53825 Accessed 17.05.2024

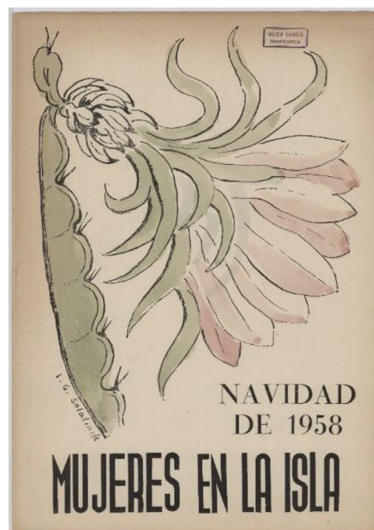



**FIG 2.16 B**

Solalinde, Virginia. 'Untitled.' *Mujeres en la isla*, 1958.

https://jable.ulpgc.es/viewer.vm?id=53825 Accessed 17.05.2024

**FIG 2.16 C**

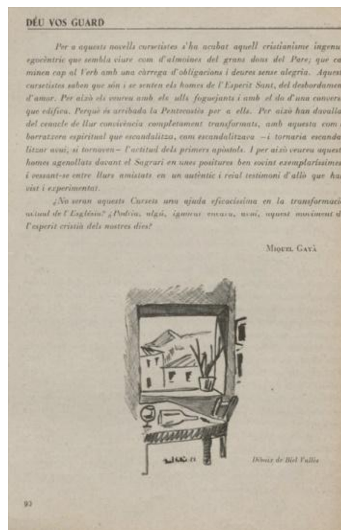
Solalinde, Virginia. ‘Untitled.’ *Mujeres en la isla*, 1958.

https://jable.ulpgc.es/viewer.vm?id=53825 Accessed 17.05.2024.

**FIG 2.16 D**

Solalinde, Virginia. ‘Untitled.’ *Mujeres en la isla*, 1958.

https://jable.ulpgc.es/viewer.vm?id=54890&page=2 Accessed 17.05.2024.



DÉU VOS GUARD

*Per a aquests novells cursetistes s'ha acabat aquell cristianisme ingenu i egocèntric que sembla viure com d'almoines del grans dons del Pare; que caminen cap al Verb amb una càrrega d'obligacions i deures sense alegria. Aquests cursetistes saben que són i se senten els homes de l'Esperit Sant, del desbordament d'amor. Per això els veureu amb els ulls foguejants i amb el do d'una conversa que edifica. Perquè és arribada la Pentecostès per a ells. Per això han davallat del cenacle de llur consciència completament transformats, amb aquesta com a borratxera espiritual que escandalitza, com escandalitzava —i tornaria escandalitzar avui, si tornaven— l'actitud dels primers apòstols. I per això veureu aquests homes agenollats davant el Sagrari en unes positures ben sovint exemplaríssimes, i vessant-se entre llurs amistats en un autèntic i reial testimoni d'allò que han vist i experimentat.*

*¿No seran aquests Cursets una ajuda eficacíssima en la transformació actual de l'Església? ¿Podria, algú, ignorar encara, avui, aquest moviment de l'esperit cristià dels nostres dies?*

Miquel Gayà

*Dibuix de Biel Vallès*

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**FIG 2.17 'Déu vos guard'**

Vallès, Biel Josep. "Déu vos guard." *Lluc*, no.505, March 1963.

**FIG 2.18 ¿*Usté* no sabe que así no puede ir por la calle?**

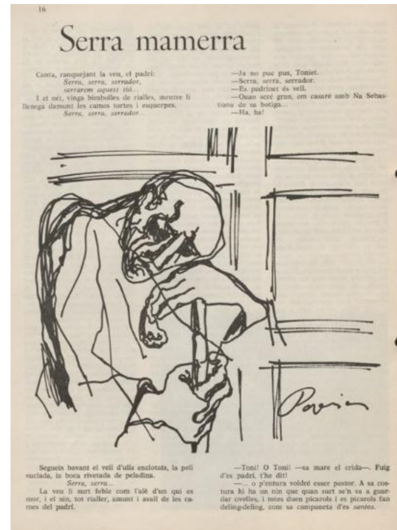
Millares Sall, Eduardo 'Cho Juaá'. "¿Usté no sabe que así no se puede ir por la calle?" "Humor Isleño", *El Diario de Las Palmas*, 1957-1968. Reproduced in Millares Sall, Eduardo. *Humor Isleño*, 1969. https://www.bienmesabe.org/noticia/2013/Noviembre/cho-juaa Accessed 05.08.2023.

**FIG 2.19 'The Canary Islands'**

Anon. "The Canary Islands." *Iberia: Air Lines of Spain*, Rasgo Jerez Industrial, c1950. https://a.1stdibscdn.com/original-vintage-poster-canary-islands-fly-iberia-airlines-spain-holiday-travel-for-sale/1121189/f_246026421626970417111/24602642_master.jpg?width=520. Accessed 07.10.2023.

**FIG 2.20 'Tenerife, Primavera Eterna**

Davo, Juan. "Tenerife, Primavera Eterna." c1945-1950. https://www.dpvintageposters.com/posters/travel-destination/spain/tenerife-primavera-etera-original-spanish-travel-island_13904. Accessed 07.10.2023.



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Serra mamerra

Canta, ranquejant la veu, el padrí:
*Serra, serra, serrador,*
*serrarem aquest niò...*
I el nét, vinga bimbolles de rialles, mentre li llenega damunt les cames tortes i esquerpes.
*Serra, serra, serrador...*

—Ja no puc pus, Toniet.
—Serra, serra, serrador.
—Es padrinet és vell.
—Quan seré gran, em casaré amb Na Sebastiana de sa botiga...
—Ha, ha!

Pavia

Segueix bavant el vell d'ulls enclotats, la pell xuclada, la boca rivetada de peladina.
*Serra, serra...*
La veu li surt feble com l'alè d'un qui es mor, i el nin, tot rialler, amunt i avall de les cames del padrí.

—Toni! O Toni! —sa mare el crida—. Fuig d'es padrí, t'he dit!
—... o p'entura voldré esser pastor. A sa costura hi ha un nin que quan surt se'n va a guardar ovelles, i totes duen picarols i es picarols fan deling-deling, com sa campaneta d'es santos.

**FIG 2.21 'Serra mamerra'**

Pavia, Pere "Serra mamera." *Lluc*, no.562, January 1968.

**FIG 2.22 'Winter in Mallorca (Spain)'**

Carlos Puntis. "Winter in Mallorca (Spain)." c1960 [1st Ed. c1930-1936], *Fomento del Turismo*, https://a.1stdibscdn.com/carlos-puntis-nebot-prints-works-on-paper-original-vintage-travel-poster-winter-in-Mallorca-spain-carlos-puntis-art-deco-for-sale-picture-4/a_436/a_142905721713283640828/PT3989c_master.jpg?width=768 Accessed 11 February 2025.

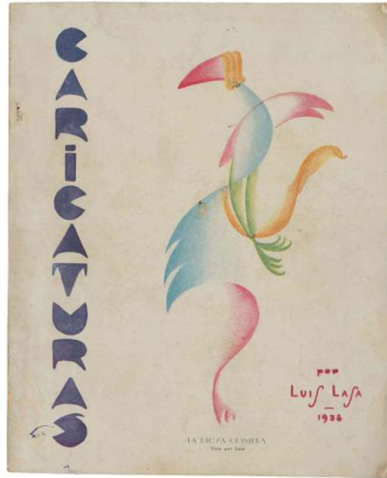



**FIG 2.23 'La diosa quimera'**

Lasa, Luis Léon. "La diosa Quimera." *Caricaturas*, Ayala Corporation, 1938 https://www.filipinaslibrary.org.ph/biblio/50216/. Accessed 12.10.2023.

**FIG 2.24 'Quezon'**

Lasa, Luis Léon. "Quezon." 1936. Reproduced by Quezon Memorial Shrine, Quezon City: The Art and Artists of the Museo ni Manuel Quezon. https://lakansining.wordpress.com/2020/08/06/quezon-memorial-shrine-quezon-city-the-art-and-artists-of-the-museo-ni-manuel-quezon/. Accessed 12.10.2023.

El humor se ha asomado a la exposición de "El Cenobio"

Entre los artistas representados, Manolo Vila, nuevo valor de la caricatura canaria

Caricatura de vanguardia

Por RAFAELY

Mañana, exposición de dibujos de Sol Panera

AVISO



**FIG 2.25 'El Humor se ha asomado a la exposición de *El Cenobio*'**

Vila, Manolo et al. "El Humor se ha asomado a la exposición de *El Cenobio*." *El Eco de Canarias*, 1968. https://jable.ulpgc.es/. Accessed 07.10.2023.

**FIG 2.26 'Rafael Bethencourt 1956'**

Anon. "Rafaely observando su autocaricatura, expuesta en su primera Exposición de Caricaturas en el Club Marino de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria en 1956." 1956. Reproduced by *Rafaely.com*. n.d https://www.rafaely.com/caricaturas/. Accessed 07.10.2023.

L'ESGLÉSIA QUE NAVEGA A MALLORCA



**FIG 2.27 'Humor 28'**

Cavaller, Ramon. "Humor." *Lluc*, no.623, 1973.

EL CONDUTO
ENTULLO P'A TOA LA SEMANA
Suplemento humorístico de Diario de Las Palmas al cuido de Cho - Juaá
AÑO III Sábado, 6 febrero, 1971 Núm. 128



¿QUE HACE ESTE SIGNO "POR" AQUI, CUANDO TODOS SOMOS "MAS"...?

**FIG 2.28**

Millares Sall, Eduardo. 'Que hace este signo "por" aquí, cuando todos somos "mas"', *El Conduto*, no.128, 1971.

**FIG 3.1 'Teneguia 71'**

Millares Sall, Eduardo 'Pastino'. "Teneguia 71." *Planas de Poesia*, 1978. Reproduced in González, Franck. *El Humor Gráfico En Canarias,* Cabildo de Gran Canaria, 2003.

**FIG 3.2 'La agencia de publicidad'**

Alfons López, Francesc Capdevila 'Max' Gisbert, and Rafel Vaquer i Palmer. 'La agencia de publicidad' *¡Butifarra!* 1978. Reproduced from Nuez Fernández. 'L'humor gràfic de 1978 se'n fotia del consens de la Constitució', in *El Diario de Mallorca*, 2018. https://www.diariodemallorca.es/opinion/2018/01/17/l-humor-grafic-1978-n-3281488.html. Accessed 07.10.2023.

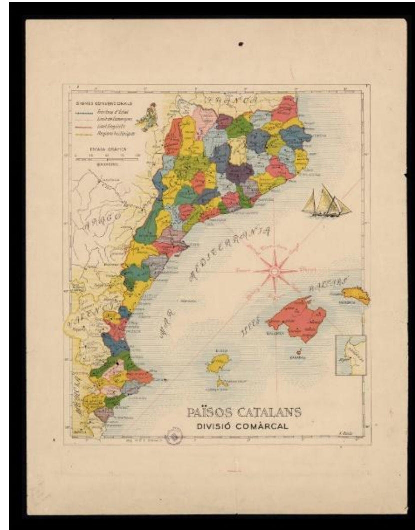



**FIG 3.3. ‘Països catalans: divisió comarcal’**

A. Bescós. “Països catalans: divisió comarcal.” *Llibreria Ballester*, 1962. https://cartotecadigital.icgc.cat/digital/collection/catalunya/id/1276/ Accessed 15.11.2024

**FIG 3.4 ‘La Historia que hicimos juntos’**

Anon. “La Historia que hicimos juntos.” *Vox*, 2022. https://www.voxespana.es/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/viva-22-historia-hicimos-juntos.jpg Accessed 10.07.2023.

**FIG 3.5 ‘Luna de Miel en Mallorca’**

Simón Muñoz Lemaur, “Luna de Miel en Mallorca”, *Fomento de Turismo de Mallorca*, 1949.
https://encrypted-tbn2.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcRhvkOMkNYuumH9s-7K__UEE9122DyfTGC-xRn_2md4T-pfMRX_ Accessed 15.11.2024

**FIG 4.1 ‘Pepe’**

Roig, Pepe. “Pepe”, *Humor gràfic i premsa a les Illes Balears*, 2017.
https://img.europapress.es/fotoweb/fotonoticia_20171114194144_1200.jpg Accessed 12.10.2025.

**FIG 4.1A ‘Humor y Grúa’**

Humor y grúa:

(Un amable lector ha hecho llegar a esta Redacción una serie de retazos humorísticos en torno a la nueva grúa municipal. Por su chispa de actualidad —que no por menospreciar los servicios que para la ciudad supone la grúa— reproducimos el dibujo de las dos beatas que atribuyen a un castigo del cielo la presencia de la grúa en las cuatro calles ciudadanas)

Roig, Pepe. “Pepe”, *Humor gràfic i premsa a les Illes Balears*, 2017.
https://img.europapress.es/fotoweb/fotonoticia_20171114194144_1200.jpg
Accessed 12.10.2025

**FIG 4.2 ‘Souvenir Book/Buch’**

Gillam, Tony. “Souvenir Book/Buch”, 1970. Reproduced in *The Chess Player*, Nottingham: 1971.

https://chessbookchats.blogspot.com/2020/11/bobby-fischers-final-tournament-palma.html
Accessed 12.02.2025.

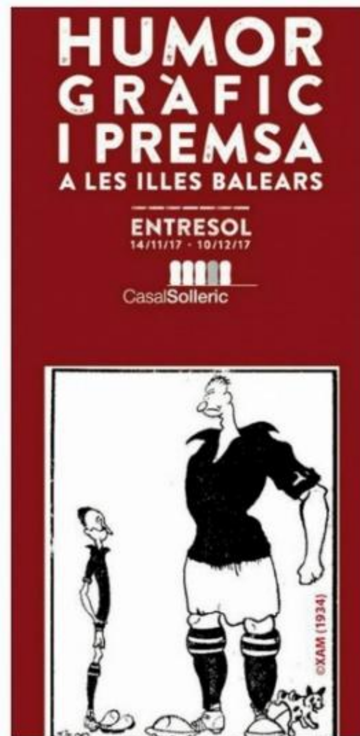



**FIG 4.3 'Humor gràfic i premsa a les Illes Balears'**

Anon. "Humor gràfic i premsa a les Illes Balears", *Humor gràfic i premsa a les Illes Balears*, 2017. https://www.comicmallorca.com/ca/2017/11/humor-grafic-i-prensa-al-casal-solleric-de-palma/ Accessed 12.02.2025.

**FIG 4.4 'Max'**

Capdevila Gisbert, Francesc "Max", *Humor gràfic i premsa a les Illes Balears*, 2017. https://revista.tebeosfera.com/autores/capdevila_gisbert_francesc.html Accessed 12.02.2025.

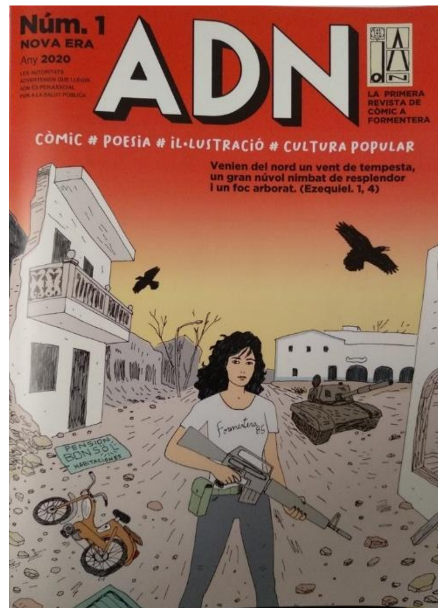



**FIG 4.5A '*ADN*: Núm 1'**

Colectiv *ADN*, "*ADN*: Núm 1", 2020.
https://i1.whakoom.com/large/38/31/a18b6a2525634cee922a22706e5bde83.jpg Accessed 12.02.2025

Formentera

# Presentado el primer cómic realizado en la isla

Coincidiendo con las fiestas de San Francisco Javier en la tarde del pasado martes se llevó a efecto la presentación de la revista de cómics "A D N". Este cómic está exclusivamente realizado en Formentera y sus autores son Pep Morna, Juan Moreno, Vicent Ferrer, Vicent Escandell y Luis Moreno.

*Lorenzo Vidal*

Para la publicación de "A D N" se ha contado con el patrocinio del Patronato Municipal de Cultura, que desde el primer momento se ha mostrado dispuesto a apoyar la hasta ahora insólita idea de editar una revista de esta índole en Formentera.

Tal y como se adivina en el texto de presentación de esta publicación, lo primero que uno se pregunta cuando se tiene el número uno de "A D N" en las manos es qué es el significado de estas siglas o letras. Según se explica en esa presentación corresponden a Ácido Desoxirribonucleico, que es una molécula propia de todo organismo vivo. Es la última etapa química que precede a la aparición de la vida. El original planteamiento de que si no existiese ADN no habría vida y por lo tanto, no se habría creado la revista.

A pesar de su modestia inicial, la incuestionable calidad del conjunto que presenta el número uno de esta revista, con unos dibujos de gran categoría y una imaginación fuera de lo común hace presagiar un brillante futuro a la continuación de "A D N".



**FIG 4.5B ‘*ADN*: Núm 1’**

Colectiv *ADN*, “*ADN*: Núm 1”, 1985.

https://scontent.flhr10-2.fna.fbcdn.net/v/t1.6435-9/87392129_117318246525404_7662122893291028480_n.jpg?_nc_cat=107&ccb=1-7&_nc_sid=7b2446&_nc_ohc=boN9JBl_uOAQ7kNvwE_9upT&_nc_oc=Adq5AyBktEY0bD4kehJapRuYYwDjFr3ACsWr52z3FkKoHFSoiLr579jdFMp-wqbqT9M&_nc_zt=23

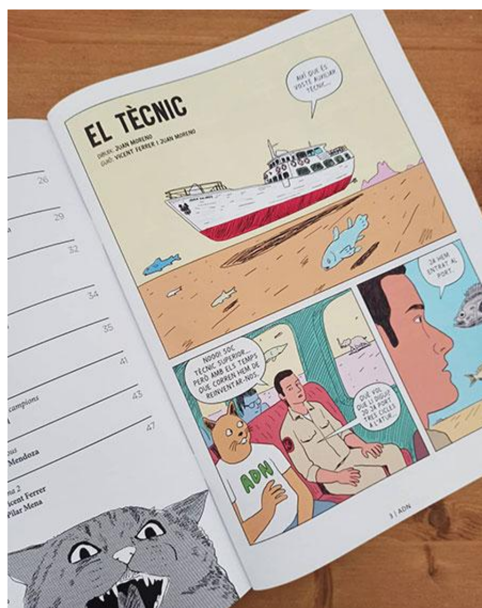


**FIG 4.6 '*ADN*: Núm 1'**

Moreno, Juan, "El Tecnic", *ADN,* 2021.

https://www.comicmallorca.com/es/2021/05/nuevas-historietas-de-juan-moreno-en-la-revista-adn/ Accessed 12.02.2025.

**FIG 4.7 'Cho Juaá'**

Millares Sall, Eduardo, "Untitled", *Se nos fue el baifo: Humor gráfico canario*, 2022.

**FIG 4.8 'Padylla'**

Padilla Morilla, José Luis, "Untitled", *Se nos fue el baifo: Humor gráfico canario*, 2022.

**FIG 4.8A 'Padylla'**

Padilla Morilla, José Luis, "Los récords de la crisis migratoria",

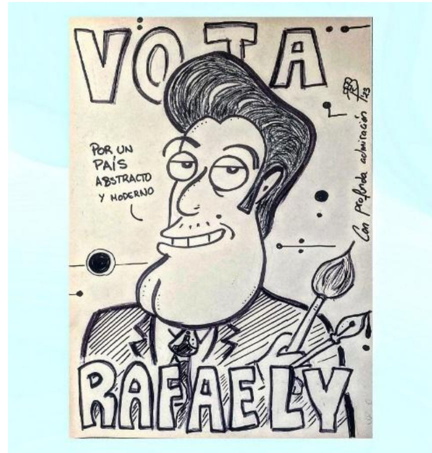
https://x.com/Padylla/status/1315920229973790726

**4.9 'Rafaely'**

Bethencourt López, Rafael, "Untitled", *Se nos fue el baifo: Humor gráfico canario*, 2022.

**4.10 'Néstor'**

Damaso del Pino, Néstor, "Untitled", *Se nos fue el baifo: Humor gráfico canario*, 2022.




**4.11 ‘Rafaely’**

Padilla Morilla, José Luis, “Rafaely”, *Rafaely, 40 años después¸* 2023. https://scontent-lhr6-1.xx.fbcdn.net/v/t39.30808-6/369243833_790357273098907_6040381251734987118_n.jpg?_nc_cat=109&ccb=1-7&_nc_sid=833d8c&_nc_ohc=3PdvE3YpWyAQ7kNvgH6FfWy&_nc_oc=Adhm3AtQH5j6SOTETSnflWCOjEId8dqLu_WVAVpzU-abttqBWCWKQbkQjhsmh8xmDqCtygiBT46LejHelavyyPUd&_nc_zt=23&_nc_ht=scontent-lhr6-1.xx&_nc_gid=A3mekEQ6zNKJRPzORDqfnE9&oh=00_AYARujp-36Mn154KBN7u7k6ZQGOLKiTP-JWLKUZyfs8qNw&oe=67B2CA10
Accessed 12.02.2025

**4.12 'Sin titulo'**

Bonino Moreno, Carolina 'Sin titulo', *Rafaely, 40 años después*¸ 2023.
https://scontent-lhr8-1.xx.fbcdn.net/v/t39.30808-6/366356417_784775850323716_2117250874193265687_n.jpg?_nc_cat=111&ccb=1-7&_nc_sid=127cfc&_nc_ohc=CjEP8BFUNVYQ7kNvgGf8fKp&_nc_oc=AdifV6WabMB5iSXOg4-pHk4G8hNh791SvJJm1d30VecdIXvGsr9Gx1tIO2NGUXYue1YG1tKRml7yxD7Kxar5IjQF&_nc_zt=23&_nc_ht=scontent-lhr8-1.xx&_nc_gid=AFybackcPA1yr9hg6Nt5W-e&oh=00_AYAJRnrgwdXksOt6mxIEsU5jbjGtbchP9RVJeDBRHv2K7g&oe=67B2D7BC
Accessed 12.02.2025

**4.13 'Sin titulo'**

Morales, Irene, 'Sin titulo', *Rafaely, 40 años después*¸ 2023.
https://tinyurl.com/yt3uyusw Accessed 12.02.2025

**4.14 Max, Santa Cruz Cómic**

Capdevila Gisbert, Francesc, "Santa Cruz Cómic", *Santa Cruz Cómic*. https://lens.usercontent.google.com/image?vsrid=CKaf3Kv6_____wEQAhgBIiRkNzljNTI3ZC1kYTUzLTQ2NzAtOTA2NS01Y2QzNjIzOGE0ZWE&gsessionid=7PPA9NwA2aTNGP90bW46SPH8eZa9H1ODj2IxyeJ1i3W204FxtlDhkw Accessed 12.02.2025.

# Appendix 2: Interviews

*Spanish Version: Interview with Néstor Damaso del Pino, 4 October 2022*

RSD: ¿Cómo se definiría usted dentro del panorama del humor gráfico?

NdP: Pues de forma sencilla diría que soy un caricaturista-retratista autodidacta canario, que intenta transmitir su pasión principalmente en los personajes culturales de distintas épocas y países, de forma amable y sin caer en la burla fácil; empleando, en muchas ocasiones, la simbología. La línea junto a arriesgados vértices es el nexo principal de los trabajos que realizo intentando alcanzar la belleza de lo simple. Como diría uno de los humoristas gráficos canarios actuales, Suso (Juan Jesús) Verdú, Morgan: "Afilar el lápiz en un honor y una servidumbre".

RSD: Para usted ¿cuáles son las características más importantes del humor gráfico?

NdP: Haciendo una separación inicial dentro del humor gráfico general (viñeta de texto, viñeta sin texto y caricatura), en lo concerniente a las viñetas (pudiendo ser incluso tiras cómicas), se necesita tener sensibilidad siendo "termómetro" de los asuntos sociales, políticos, económicos dentro de un entorno espacial (ya sea local, regional o global), y teniendo la habilidad suficiente para después de recabar información, poder transmitirlo de forma sencilla al receptor, cualidad indispensable.

RSD: ¿Cuáles son las fuentes que le inspiran a crear una viñeta? ¿Cómo influyen en su trabajo?

NdP: Con respecto a las caricaturas, distinto a lo que entendemos por viñetas, es la curiosidad por poner rostro a personajes de otras épocas que hemos escuchado desde niños y se han ido ampliando con los años, y que de alguna forma añoramos o, simplemente, nos han llamado la

atención en algún momento de nuestra vida. Todo ello es, y como objetivo final, intentando tratar de revivirlos para que no caigan en el olvido, a través de nuevas líneas y formas amparadas en la creatividad, mi divertimento. El entorno es un tópico, pues dependiendo donde nazcas desarrollarás tu creatividad y la forma en la que te expresas.

RSD: En cuanto a la evolución de las tecnologías digitales y los cambios en la prensa, ¿ha cambiado su método de trabajo o su modo de dibujar? ¿En qué aspecto?

NdP: No, sigo el método tradicional de lápiz y goma. Las tabletas digitales, aun teniendo varias, no me han llamado la atención lo suficiente para hacer el salto evolutivo casi obligado. No creo que lo haga. Me siento cómodo con la frescura e imperfección de la impronta que produce el contacto directo del lápiz con la hoja de papel. A pesar de los avances tecnológicos que producen una calidad visual de excelencia, no deberíamos abandonar el método tradicional.

RSD: ¿Qué papel desempeñan los idiomas y/o el uso de los dialectos en su obra?

NdP: Al carecer de texto mis caricaturas, no los suelo emplear. Solo utilizo simbología para ayudar a reconocer al personaje, en la mayoría de las ocasiones como idioma universal.

RSD: ¿Cree que su lugar de residencia o la región de donde proviene influye en su humor gráfico? ¿De qué manera? ¿O en qué sentido?

NdP: Tanto en la manera de expresarte, comunicarte como en las influencias gráficas de los maestros predecesores de tu entorno nos influye, y esta disciplina artística no iba a ser menos. A pesar de existir un humor gráfico generalizado, reconocido en cualquier parte del planeta, y que por supuesto nos alcanza siempre, tenemos que reconocer que hoy en día, por la información inmediata que se comparte por las redes sociales y distintos medios de prensa y

gráficos a nivel mundial, la información que nos llega es muy rápida. Cualquier suceso desde la otra cara del mundo, la tenemos en nuestros ordenadores, nuestras vidas, en cuestión de segundos influyendo considerablemente. Una de las características que hemos podido constatar los humoristas gráficos a nivel internacional, es que lo que pasa en la otra parte del planeta, suele ser muy parecido en otras regiones, pues las necesidades básicas de la población en general, no difiere. Todos tenemos las mismas necesidades e inquietudes vivamos donde vivamos, y todo ello se traslada al papel de manera gráfica en forma de humor.

RSD: En su opinión ¿quién es el público principal de sus viñetas?

NdP: Son todos los públicos, en general. Los más pequeños porque implica divertimento para ellos observar nuevas líneas de los personajes universales que ellos consideran graciosos por sus formas distintas a la realidad, culturizándoles a la vez casi sin darse cuenta; y el público adulto, por acercarse a personajes que quizás les recuerdan a una infancia observando los rostros distorsionados buscándole parecido (hay que reconocer que se trata de un recreo visual), abriendo las puertas a seguir formándose, donde intento revivir a muchas personalidades intentando que no caigan en el olvido. Todo lo que nos suena de algo queremos buscarle un sentido. Tenemos la necesidad de conocer con más profundidad lo que nos rodea. Propio de la curiosidad humana desde que el mundo es mundo.

RSD: ¿Según Ud., en qué se diferencia el humor gráfico del pasado con el de ahora? Las viñetas y los dibujos, ¿desempeñan el mismo papel que en el pasado? ¿Es distinto o similar?

NdP: Se cuenta lo que acontece en un espacio temporal, y principalmente lo que cambia es la forma de expresarlo en el estilo gráfico empleado con los distintos matices propios de cada autor. Los contemporáneos de cada época solían parecerse gráficamente entre ellos. Las viñetas

en el pasado siglo eran tal vez más elaboradas, con más elementos. Hoy en día, con las prisas y el exceso de información a modo de bombardeo informativo que recibimos, nos hemos obligado a expresarnos más rápidamente, en mucho de los casos simplificando, y combinando con el humor gráfico más elaborado, en otras ocasiones dependiendo de cada autor, para desempeñar su labor informativa a modo de crítica en forma de genialidad.

Siempre ha habido censura a la hora de expresar lo cotidiano. Antes, los autores, perdían la vida y hoy pierden los trabajos, cuando no la vida también.

RSD: ¿Qué cuestiones históricas informan su trabajo? ¿Cómo reflexiona usted sobre las cuestiones históricas que han influido la vida política o cultural?

NdP: Mi experiencia, como caricaturista retratista, no viñetista, trata principalmente de revivir a los personajes históricos relevantes. como he comentado antes, con nuevas formas gráficas, añadiendo información que invite a recabar información sobre ellos. Lo que antes hablaba sobre "abrir el apetito" por la curiosidad que genera.

RSD: ¿Hay límites en el humor? ¿Ha tenido alguna vez algún problema con una viñeta en este sentido, o incluso a nivel político?

NdP: No debería haber límites en la sociedad tal como la conocemos, pero nos enfrentamos a otras personas y culturas. Ahí estribaría la eterna pregunta: ¿Dónde termina mi libertad comienza la del otro? ¿Sí o no? Siempre existirán problemas al respecto.

La libertad de expresión es un tema muy tratado en los foros y congresos actuales de caricaturistas, y se ha llegado a la conclusión que no la tenemos. Hoy en día los que trabajan para prensa, medios escritos, el poder se ha trasladado a la dirección de las redacciones, implicando que te tienes que someter a los dictámenes de los superiores jerárquicos. O comes

o no comes, pues depende y mucho del "color político" de la prensa donde trabajes, al fin y al cabo, quien vive del salario del contratante de prensa, se debe a ellos. En mi caso no tengo ese problema, pues no realizo ni caricaturas políticas ni religiosas que puedan perturbar a otros públicos. Mi enfoque es cultural y me salva de la quema que, si sufren muchos compañeros, algunos de ellos amenazados de muerte.

RSD: ¿Cree que el humor gráfico influye en la vida política? ¿Hasta qué punto cree que su humor gráfico, y la obra de sus colegas desafía a su audiencia o a quienes ocupan posiciones de poder?

NdP: Por supuesto que influye por el poder que ejerce sobre las personas, ciudadanos. Los políticos son conocedores de ese poder, ya que cada vez los medios, también ligados con el poder político-económico, limitan más a los humoristas gráficos en sus medios. La prensa está absolutamente politizada. De ahí, cada vez son menos los humoristas, viñetistas, que trabajan para los medios escritos. No es solo algo regional, es una tendencia completamente globalizada.

RSD: ¿Cree que el humor gráfico tiene cabida en los contextos académicos? ¿Cómo cree que debe estudiarse su obra?

NdP: Pienso que sí, y siempre deberíamos dar nuevas perspectivas gráficas renovadoras. No solo lo que a título personal pueda aportar. Cualquier humorista gráfico tiene cabida, pues ayudaría a la reflexión tan necesaria. La imagen es fundamental, ahora y siempre. Diría, incluso que ahora más que nunca por la rapidez en la que vivimos.

RSD: Desde su punto de vista, ¿qué depara el futuro para el humor gráfico?

NdP: Siendo un lenguaje de expresión, diría que hasta casi vital, a pesar de los frenos que han puesto los poderes económicos, políticos y religiosos a lo largo de la historia (ya que en muchas ocasiones se cuenta la realidad tan molesta para algunos), si no es por uno será contada gráficamente por otro humorista. Siempre estará presente el humor gráfico mientras sigamos pisando esta tierra los humanos. Hablamos de un elemento comunicador y de empatía necesario para poner voz a los sin voz, en la mayoría de las ocasiones. El humor gráfico se le había tachado siempre como un arte de segunda, al contrario de lo que se piensa actualmente, afortunadamente, pudiéndose contemplar cada vez más obras en lugares museísticos. La evolución dentro del humor gráfico, no solo como nivel estético artístico, se hace cada vez más necesaria por la rapidez en la información, el exceso de información escrita y la escasez de tiempo del que carecemos.

*English Version: Interview with Néstor Damaso del Pino, 4 October 2022*

RSD: How would you define yourself within the world of graphic humour?

NdP: To put it simply, I would say that I am a self-taught cartoonist and portrait artist from the Canary Islands who tries to convey his passion mainly through drawing cultural figures from different eras and countries, in a friendly way and without resorting to easy mockery, often using symbolism. The line, together with [the use of] risky angles, is the main link in the work I do, trying to achieve the beauty of simplicity. As one of the current Canarian cartoonists, Suso (Juan Jesús) Verdú, Morgan, would say: "Sharpening the pencil is an honour and a servitude".

RSD: What do you think are the most important characteristics of graphic humour?

NdP: Making an initial distinction within graphic humour in general (text cartoons, cartoons without text and caricatures), with regard to cartoons (which can even be comic strips), you need to be sensitive and act as a thermometer of social, political and economic issues within a specific environment (whether local, regional or global), and have the ability, after gathering information, to convey it in a simple way to the recipient, which is an essential quality.

RSD: What are the sources that inspire you to create a cartoon? How do they influence your work?

NdP: With regard to caricatures, unlike what we understand as cartoons, it is the curiosity to put a face to characters from other eras who we have heard about since childhood, and who have grown over the years, and who we somehow long for, or who have simply caught our attention at some point in our lives. All of this is, as a final goal, an attempt to revive them so

that they are not forgotten, through new lines and forms protected by creativity, for my amusement. The environment is a cliché, because depending on where you are born, you will develop your creativity and the way you express yourself.

RSD: Regarding the evolution of digital technologies and changes in the press, has your working method or drawing style changed? In what way?

NdP: No, I still use the traditional method of pencil and eraser. Even though I have several digital tablets, they have not caught my attention enough to make the almost obligatory evolutionary leap. I do not think I will. I feel comfortable with the freshness and imperfection of the mark made by the direct contact of the pencil with the sheet of paper. Despite technological advances that produce excellent visual quality, we should not abandon the traditional method.

RSD: What role do languages and/or the use of dialects play in your work?

NdP: As my cartoons have no text, I do not usually use them. I only use symbols to help identify the character, in most cases as a universal language.

RSD: Do you think that where you live or the region you come from influences your graphic humour? In what way? Or in what sense?

NdP: Both the way you express yourself and communicate and the graphic influences of the masters who came before you in your environment influence us, and this artistic discipline is no exception. Despite the existence of a more general graphic humour, recognised anywhere on the planet, and which of course always reaches us, we have to recognise that today, due to

the immediate information shared by social networks and various media outlets worldwide, the information that reaches us does so very quickly. Any event on the other side of the world is available on our computers and in our lives in a matter of seconds, influencing us considerably. One of the characteristics that we cartoonists have noticed internationally is that what happens on the other side of the planet is often very similar in other regions, as the basic needs of the general populace do not differ. We all have the same needs and concerns wherever we live, and all of this is transferred to paper in a graphic form of humour.

RSD: In your opinion, who is the main audience for your cartoons?

NdP: All audiences, in general. Children, because they enjoy seeing new images drawn of universal characters that they find funny due to their unrealistic forms, educating them at the same time almost without them realising it; and adults, because they can relate to characters that perhaps remind them of their childhood as they observe the distorted faces, looking for similarities (it must be acknowledged that this is a visual recreation), opening the doors to further reflection, where I try to revive many personalities so that they are not forgotten. We want to find meaning in everything that is familiar to us. We have a need to know more about what surrounds us. This has been part of human curiosity since the beginning of time.

RSD: In your opinion, how does graphic humour today differ from that of the past? Do cartoons and drawings play the same role as they did in the past? Is it different or similar?

NdP: They tell the story of what is happening in a given time, and the main difference is the way it is expressed in the graphic style used, with the different nuances of each author. The contemporaries of each era tended to resemble each other graphically. Cartoons in the last century were perhaps more elaborate, with more elements. Today, with the rush and excess of

information in the form of an information bombardment that we receive, we have forced ourselves to express ourselves more quickly, in many cases simplifying and combining with more elaborate graphic humour, on other occasions depending on each author to carry out their informative work as criticism in the form of genius.

There has always been censorship when it comes to expressing everyday life. In the past, authors lost their lives, and today they lose their jobs, if not their lives as well.

RSD: What historical issues inform your work? How do you reflect on historical issues that have influenced political or cultural life?

NdP: My experience as a portrait cartoonist, not a cartoonist, is mainly about bringing relevant historical figures back to life. As I mentioned before, I do this using new graphic forms and adding information that encourages people to find out more about them. This is what I was talking about earlier when I said it “whets the appetite” for curiosity.

RSD: Are there limits to humour? Have you ever had any problems with a cartoon in this regard, or even at a political level?

NdP: There should be no limits in society as we know it, but we are confronted with other people and cultures. That is where the eternal question lies: where does my freedom end and someone else’s begin? Yes or no? There will always be problems in this regard.

Freedom of expression is a hot topic in today’s cartoonists’ forums and conferences, and the conclusion has been reached that we do not have it. Nowadays, for those who work for the press and print media, power has shifted to editorial management, meaning that you have to submit to the dictates of your superiors. You either eat or you do not, because it depends a lot

on the "political leanings" of the press where you work. At the end of the day, those who live off the salary of the press contractor are indebted to them. In my case, I do not have that problem, as I do not produce political or religious cartoons that might upset other audiences. My focus is cultural, which saves me from the trouble that many of my colleagues suffer, some of whom have received death threats.

RSD: Do you think that graphic humour influences political life? To what extent do you think that your graphic humour, and the work of your colleagues, challenges your audience or those in positions of power?

NdP: Of course it influences them because of the power it wields over people, over citizens. Politicians are aware of this power, as the media, which is also linked to political and economic power, increasingly limits cartoonists in their media. The press is completely politicised. As a result, there are fewer and fewer cartoonists working for the written media. This is not just a regional phenomenon, it is a completely globalised trend.

RSD: Do you think graphic humour has a place in academic contexts? How do you think your work should be studied?

NdP: I think so, and we should always provide new and innovative graphic perspectives. Not just what I can contribute on a personal level. Any graphic humourist has a place, as they would contribute to much-needed reflection. Images are fundamental, now and always. I would even say that now more than ever, given the fast pace of life.

RSD: From your point of view, what does the future hold for graphic humour?

NdP: As a language of expression, I would say that it is almost vital, despite the obstacles that economic, political and religious powers have placed in its way throughout history (since it often tells a reality that is so uncomfortable for some), if it is not told by one humourist, it will be told graphically by another. Cartoon humour will always be present as long as humans continue to walk this earth. We are talking about an element of communication and empathy that is necessary to give a voice to the voiceless, in most cases. Graphic humour had always been dismissed as a second-rate art form, contrary to what is currently thought, fortunately, with more and more works being displayed in museums. The evolution of graphic humour, not only in terms of its aesthetic and artistic value, is becoming increasingly necessary due to the speed of information, the excess of written information and the lack of time we have.

*Spanish Version: Interview with Carolina Bonino Moreno, 4 October 2022*

RSD: ¿Cómo se definiría usted dentro del panorama del humor gráfico?

CBM: Mi estilo es gamberro, impaciente e imperfecto.

RSD: ¿Para usted ¿cuáles son las características más importantes del humor gráfico?

CBM: El humor gráfico ha representado un estado de rebeldía y resistencia contra el status quo, para criticar y exponer inconformidades ante una situación cualquiera. Para ello nos servimos mayoritariamente del uso de la ironía, el sarcasmo y la exageración, y plasmamos estos valores en la viñeta, tira o historieta, para enfatizar esa disconformidad, casi gamberra. El humor gráfico es un fenómeno socio discursivo, y viene de la mano de la capacidad humana de reír y pensar, como actividades esenciales del ser humano.

RSD: ¿Cuáles son las fuentes que le inspiran a crear una viñeta? ¿Cómo influyen en su trabajo??

CBM: La mayor fuente de inspiración es la vida, incesante, que ofrece a diario nuevos motivos susceptibles de ser extrapolados a una viñeta. Desde acontecimientos globales o las cotidianidades más nimias, cualquier suceso que genere un estímulo de curiosidad, queja, crítica o celebración. Después, inconscientemente, uno mediante su propio estilo es el resultado de todas las influencias que interiorizó hasta que se desarrolló la propia técnica.

RSD: En cuanto a la evolución de las tecnologías digitales y los cambios en la prensa, ¿ha cambiado su método de trabajo o su modo de dibujar? ¿En qué aspecto?

CBM: Negar las facilidades que nos brindan las nuevas herramientas tecnológicas sería de románticos empedernidos, y debo reconocer que lo fui durante un tiempo. Sin duda es una herramienta que ayuda al desempeño técnico, y acelera la realización de la viñeta, especialmente a la hora de convertir formatos y borrar algún trazo específico sin perjudicar el resto del dibujo. Y aún así, a pesar de todas las maravillas que pueden hacerse con fondos, capas y efectos, definitivamente la gran ventaja de dibujar con tableta gráfica es no tener que andar borrando los restos de goma por la mesa y el suelo.

RSD: ¿Qué papel desempeñan los idiomas y/o el uso de los dialectos en su obra?

CBM: Respecto al dialecto o usos comunes del lenguaje, dentro de la intención comunicativa, la cuestión expresiva y la apelativa son las que mejor encajan en el terreno del humor. A través de ellas expresamos un estado de ánimo o tratamos de influir en el receptor, lo que es una de las más frecuentes claves del mensaje humorístico: el efecto que se busca es causar en el receptor cuando éste recibe la gracia, el chiste. A estas competencias comunicativas y lingüísticas hay que añadirles una competencia cultural y sociocultural. Habrá estructuras del gag imperceptibles para alguien que no se maneje con la jerga o expresiones típicas locales, que resultarán casi otro idioma, aunque puedan intuirse. Hablamos de canarismos en mi caso, de los que me sirvo en ocasiones, una especie de "humor de situación". Al mismo tiempo, idiomas como la lengua inglesa permiten la universalidad de ciertas expresiones que unifican un modo de decir algo en concreto, palabras que aunque no se domine el idioma de origen de la misma, se entiende a la perfección. Suelen ser palabrotas, tan maltratadas por el buenismo dialéctico y que son sin embargo tan neurológicamente beneficiosas resultan a nivel de expresión. Las palabras están a nuestro servicio, y no al revés.

RSD: ¿Cree que su lugar de residencia o la región de donde proviene influye en su humor gráfico? ¿De qué manera? ¿O en qué sentido?

CBM: Sin duda. La cuestión de la insularidad con todas sus ventajas e inconvenientes, desde los temas que tratas hasta la forma en la que lo expresas, como comentaba en la cuestión previa.

Internet ha favorecido la cuestión de visibilidad pero se mantiene el problema de la distancia que hace imposible la asistencia continuada a eventos del gremio o a la organización más repetida en centros neurálgicos artísticos en otros ambientes diferentes al que pueda ofrecer la propia isla.

RSD: En su opinión ¿quién es el público principal de sus viñetas?

CBM: Yo diría que mi público oscila entre los 18 y los 65. Diría que es un perfil de persona curiosa, al que le gusta reflexionar y reír.

RSD: ¿Según Ud., en qué se diferencia el humor gráfico del pasado con el de ahora? Las viñetas y los dibujos, ¿desempeñan el mismo papel que en el pasado? ¿Es distinto o similar?

CBM: Diría que sigue existiendo una resistencia de viñetistas que defienden el purismo de la intención del humor gráfico que es el pensamiento crítico como particularidad del género y no pasan por el aro de la tendencia social, tenemos un caso claro en los viñetistas de *Charlie Hebdo*, por ejemplo, y las nefastas repercusiones que sufrieron por desempeñar su labor de viñetistas, describiendo saritamente un entorno y tocando temas tan absolutamente tabú como la religión. O los repetidos secuestros de la revista *El Jueves*.

En pleno siglo XXI efectivamente hay cuestiones sobre las que no se puede dibujar.

Pero los viñetistas de hoy se enfrentan a elementos que censuran más allá de la censura entendida como tal: lo políticamente correcto, el movimiento woke, la política de la

cancelación o el ofendidísimo...resulta irónico que pareciera que hay que tener más cuidado con lo que se dibuja ahora que en otras épocas. Y así lo ampara nuestra flamante y vigente Ley Mordaza, sin ir más lejos.

RSD: ¿Qué cuestiones históricas informan su trabajo? ¿Cómo reflexiona usted sobre las cuestiones históricas que han influido la vida política o cultural?

CBM: No trato cuestiones históricas más allá de las relacionadas con temas que nos ocupen también el presente. Aún así, no dibujo sobre lo que no tengo una opinión formada.

RSD: ¿Hay límites en el humor? ¿Ha tenido alguna vez algún problema con una viñeta en este sentido, o incluso a nivel político?

CBM: No. El límite es el contexto. Se aprecia claramente en el contenido de los monólogos de Stand Up estadounidense, por ejemplo la cómica Sarah Silverman: si aíslas una de sus bromas puedes pensar que se está riendo del Holocausto, pero si escuchas el monólogo entero y sabes que ella es judía, entonces funciona. Yo entiendo que una persona que pertenezca a una minoría pueda entender que no exista mala intención en un chiste y reírse con el. El humor cumple una función pacificadora especialmente en esos terrenos que nadie, por lo general, quiere pisar.

Igualmente me parecería una dictadura horripilante el pretender que se estableciera el humor blanco como único tipo de humor, porque si todos tenemos una personalidad creativa inherente única e intransferible, y esa creatividad se expresa de maneras tan diferentes como personalidades creativas existan, más irreverentes, más polémicos, más discretos o conciliadores, debería entenderse que lógicamente, por tanto, no todos tenemos la misma visión y por lo tanto no lo expresaremos igual.

Tengo una viñeta que reza "Que te ofenda no significa que tengas razón", porque por encima de priorizar si es censurable, debemos tener en cuenta la prerrogativa de que también es consumible, o no: libertad de consumo, si no te gusta, simplemente, pasa de largo.

RSD: ¿Cree que el humor gráfico influye en la vida política? ¿Hasta qué punto cree que su humor gráfico, y la obra de sus colegas desafía a su audiencia o a quienes ocupan posiciones de poder?

CBM: Si la historia siempre se repite, como explicaba Marx, en el caso del humor gráfico lo hace siempre como farsa, y muchas de las viñetas siguen siendo igual de válidas para expresar lo que muchos ciudadanos aún piensan de la situación política y económica en su día a día. Padylla, viñetista de prensa y compañero de Se nos fue el Baifo, dice siempre: "el día que un político me felicite por mi trabajo, lo estaré haciendo mal".

RSD: ¿Cree que el humor gráfico tiene cabida en los contextos académicos? ¿Cómo cree que debe estudiarse su obra?

CBM: El humor es esencial para el ser humano y es de lo más universal que tenemos. Y el humor gráfico es importante para la comunicación, para la enseñanza, para la medicina, para las relaciones humanas, por lo tanto, hay que acercarlo a las aulas, en los institutos, y ojalá algún día se conforme un título propio universitario, porque es ésta una profesión particularmente autodidacta.

*English Version: Interview with Carolina Bonino Moreno, 4 October 2022*

RSD: How would you define yourself within the world of graphic humour?

CBM: My style is mischievous, impatient, and imperfect.

RSD: What do you think are the most important characteristics of graphic humour?

CBM: Graphic humour has represented a sense of rebellion and resistance against the status quo, criticising and exposing dissatisfaction with any given situation. To do this, we mainly use irony, sarcasm and exaggeration, and we capture these values in cartoons, comic strips or comic books to emphasise that almost rebellious dissent. Graphic humour is a socio-discursive phenomenon and goes hand in hand with the human capacity to laugh and think, as essential human activities.

RSD: What are the sources that inspire you to create a cartoon? How do they influence your work?

CBM: The greatest source of inspiration is life itself, which is incessant, and offers new motifs every day that can be extrapolated into a cartoon. From global events to the most trivial everyday occurrences, any event that generates curiosity, complaint, criticism or celebration. Then, unconsciously, your own style is the result of all the influences that one has internalised until your own technique has developed.

RSD: Regarding the evolution of digital technologies and changes in the press, has your working method or drawing style changed? In what way?

CBM: To deny the advantages offered by new technological tools would be the stuff of die-hard romantics, and I must admit that I was one for a while. It is undoubtedly a tool that aids technical performance and speeds up the creation of cartoons, especially when it comes to converting formats and erasing specific strokes without damaging the rest of the drawing. And yet, despite all the wonders that can be achieved with backgrounds, layers and effects, the great advantage of drawing with a graphics tablet is definitely not having to clean up eraser crumbs from the table and floor.

RSD: What role do languages and/or the use of dialects play in your work?

CBM: With regard to dialect or common language usage, within the communicative intention, expressive and appealing elements are those that best fit the field of humour. Through them, we express a mood or try to influence the recipient, which is one of the most frequent keys to humorous messages: the desired effect is to cause the recipient to laugh when they hear the joke. In addition to these communicative and linguistic skills, cultural and sociocultural skills must also be taken into account. There will be gag structures that are imperceptible to someone who is not familiar with local slang or expressions, which will be almost like another language, even though they can be intuited. In my case, we are talking about Canarian expressions, which I sometimes use, a kind of "situational humour". At the same time, languages such as English allow for the universality of certain expressions that unify a way of saying something specific, words that, even if you do not master the language of origin, are perfectly understood. These are usually swear words, so mistreated by dialectical political correctness and yet so

neurologically beneficial in terms of expression. Words are at our service, not the other way around.

RSD: Do you think that where you live or the region you come from influences your graphic humour? In what way? Or in what sense?

CBM: Without a doubt. The issue of insularity, with all its advantages and disadvantages, from the topics you deal with to the way you express them, as I mentioned in the previous question.

The internet has helped with visibility, but the problem of distance remains, making it impossible to attend trade events or the most frequent gatherings in artistic hubs in environments other than those offered by the island itself.

RSD: In your opinion, who is the main audience for your cartoons?

CBM: I would say that my audience ranges from 18 to 65 years old. I would say that they are curious people who like to reflect and laugh.

RSD: In your opinion, how does the graphic humour of the past differ from that of today? Do cartoons and drawings play the same role as in the past? Is it different or similar?

CBM: I would say that there is still resistance from cartoonists who defend the purism of the intention of graphic humour, which holds critical thinking as a particularity of the genre, and which does not bow to social trends. We have a clear example of this in the cartoonists of *Charlie Hebdo*, for example, and the dire repercussions they suffered for doing their job as

cartoonists, satirically describing an environment and touching on such absolutely taboo subjects as religion. Or the repeated seizures of *El Jueves* magazine.

In the twenty-first century, there are indeed issues that cannot be drawn.

But today's cartoonists face elements that censor beyond censorship as such: political correctness, the woke movement, cancel culture, and the deeply offended... It is ironic that it seems we have to be more careful about what we draw now than in other eras. And this is protected by our brand new Gag Law, without going any further…

RSD: What historical issues inform your work? How do you reflect on historical issues that have influenced political or cultural life?

CBM: I do not deal with historical issues beyond those related to topics that also concern us in the present. Even so, I do not draw on anything I do not have a formed opinion about.

RSD: Are there limits to humour? Have you ever had any problems with a cartoon in this regard, or even at the political level?

CBM: No. The limit is the context. This can be clearly seen in the content of American stand-up monologues, for example by comedian Sarah Silverman: if you isolate one of her jokes, you might think she is laughing at the Holocaust, but if you listen to the whole monologue and know that she is Jewish, then it works. I understand that a person who belongs to a minority can understand that there is no malicious intent in a joke and laugh along with it. Humour serves a peace-making function, especially in those areas that no one generally wants to tread on.

Similarly, I would find it horrifyingly dictatorial to try to establish clean humour as the only type of humour, because if we all have a unique and non-transferable inherent creative personality, and that creativity is expressed in as many different ways as there are creative personalities, some more irreverent, some more controversial, some more discreet or conciliatory, it should be understood that, logically, we do not all have the same vision and therefore we will not express it in the same way.

I have a cartoon that says, "Just because it offends you does not mean you are right", because above and beyond prioritising whether it is reprehensible, we must take into account the prerogative that it is also consumable, or not: freedom of consumption. If you do not like it, simply move on.

RSD: Do you think that graphic humour influences political life? To what extent do you think that your graphic humour, and the work of your colleagues, challenges your audience or those in positions of power?

CBM: If history always repeats itself, as Marx explained, in the case of graphic humour it always does so as farce, and many of the cartoons are still just as valid in expressing what many citizens still think about the political and economic situation in their daily lives. Padylla (José Luis Padilla Morilla), a press cartoonist and colleague at *Se nos fue el Baifo*, always says: "The day a politician congratulates me on my work, I will be doing it wrong".

RSD: Do you think graphic humour has a place in academic contexts? How do you think your work should be studied?

CBM: Humour is essential to human beings and is one of the most universal things we have. Graphic humour is important for communication, teaching, medicine and human relations, so it should be brought into classrooms and secondary schools, and hopefully one day it will become a university degree subject, because it is a particularly self-taught profession.

*Spanish Version: Interview with Juan Jesús Verdú Medina, 10 October 2022*

RSD: ¿Cómo se definiría usted dentro del panorama del humor gráfico?

JJVM: Soy muy afortunado. Es todo un privilegio mantener la confianza del diario donde publico mis viñetas de prensa y de las instituciones o empresas que demandan mis ilustraciones para campañas de divulgación o sensibilización en materia de medio ambiente, salud pública, accesibilidad e inclusión social, violencia machista, etc. Al mismo tiempo, el compromiso de mantener una viñeta de prensa diaria durante más de treinta años, constituye una servidumbre que tratas de afrontar con humildad y conciencia de su función periodística y social.

Me defino como un trabajador del humor gráfico que tiene el enorme privilegio de dedicarse a esta rara y estimulante profesión.

RSD: ¿Para usted ¿cuáles son las características más importantes del humor gráfico?

JJVM: Como he comentado antes, realizo muchos trabajos diferentes que tienen como denominador común el dibujo humorístico. En el humor gráfico en concreto, y en la viñeta de prensa especialmente, considero que la elocuencia a la hora de enfocar los temas que abordas es lo principal. Si el humor gráfico fuera un medicamento, su principio activo sería la ironía, que cada autor/a mezclará con una pizca de mordacidad y atrevimiento, una buena capa de sensatez y una gran dosis de sentido común. El resultado final se sirve a modo de síntesis, donde la imagen y el texto se funden para provocar en los lectores que interpretan la viñeta eso que podría llamarse "sonrisa mental".

Es importante destacar que la viñeta de humor gráfico no siempre es un chiste. Soy partidario de que lo sea con frecuencia, porque en un mar de noticias desalentadoras, los lectores agradecen una chispa de gracia que ponga algo de cordura en este desconchabado mundo

cuando leen un periódico impreso o su edición digital. En ocasiones, porque la temática así lo requiere, la viñeta puede ser una manifestación de repulsa, una reivindicación, una llamada de atención a la cordura… Hay viñetas que no llevan texto alguno y toda su fuerza narrativa reside en la imagen. Se conocen como "viñetas mudas" (pero pueden decir muchas cosas sin palabras).

RSD: ¿Cuáles son las fuentes que le inspiran a crear una viñeta? ¿Cómo influyen en su trabajo?

JJVM: El humor gráfico es trasgresor y subversivo por naturaleza. Se alimenta frecuentemente de los sinsentidos, las injusticias, los abusos y las corruptelas de nuestra sociedad y, muy especialmente, de sus dirigentes. Su carácter transgresor radica en su misión de arrancar con descaro las máscaras de nuestro particular carnaval social, destapando sin pudor sus vergüenzas y debilidades. Quizás, por esta razón, siempre está presente en los cíclicos debates sobre la pertenencia de ponerle límites o de criminalizar su osadía. En torno a la viñeta de humor gráfico siempre habrá una pléyade de ofendidos e indignados. Asumo que mi trabajo consiste en asomarme cada día a la ventana de la actualidad para interpretarla con humor. Cierto es que, en numerosas ocasiones, no me gusta lo que veo, pero elaboro mi reflexión desde mi propio entendimiento y la conciencia de practicar cada día un ejercicio de libertad de expresión que valoro enormemente como expresión de libertad.

RSD: En cuanto a la evolución de las tecnologías digitales y los cambios en la prensa, ¿ha cambiado su método de trabajo o su modo de dibujar? ¿En qué aspecto?

JJVM: No cabe duda que la tecnología ha cambiado muchas cosas, para bien en su mayor parte. Comencé mi colaboración periodística allá por los inicios de 1983, cuando aún internet y los medios digitales eran un sueño futurista. Creo que la principal aportación al humor gráfico es

la inmediatez. Inmediatez en el acceso a infinidad de canales y vías para acceder a la información, e inmediatez a la hora de enviar tu viñeta a la redacción (en mi caso, directamente a talleres). Ambas circunstancias han mejorado notablemente que la viñeta pueda tomarle el pulso a la actualidad más inmediata.

RSD: ¿Qué papel desempeñan los idiomas y/o el uso de los dialectos en su obra?

JJVM: El lenguaje es sumamente importante en el humor. La polisemia, el sentido literal, la contradicción, el eufemismo y la exageración son recursos humorísticos que tienen que ver con el uso de la lengua. En la viñeta de humor gráfico, el texto puede ser determinante. Las variantes y expresiones dialectales (el léxico del español de Canarias, en este caso) están presentes en mi obra. Además de la sátira social y política, me gusta mucho la sátira cotidiana que hace humor del acontecer diario de la gente. Dentro de esta sátira cotidiana se encuentra el humor costumbrista, que en Canarias ha tenido una especial relevancia (con autores como Eduardo Millares, Cho Juáa) por su potente arraigo al referirse humorísticamente a las tradiciones populares, el modo de vida y la forma de expresarse de los canarios.

RSD: ¿Cree que su lugar de residencia o la región de donde proviene influye en su humor gráfico? ¿De qué manera? ¿O en qué sentido?

JJVM: El humor siempre está vinculado al contexto. Sin él es muy difícil su comprensión. Esto explicaría el motivo por el que nos resulta difícil comprender el humor de otras épocas o de otras culturas. El humor gráfico que se hace en Canarias está muy vinculado a su contexto social y cultural. La lejanía con respecto al resto del país, su posición geográfica y la influencia de América, África y Europa configuran su propia idiosincrasia. Estoy convencido de que estas circunstancias, unidas al hecho insular, otorgan particularidades al humor gráfico canario.

RSD: En su opinión ¿quién es el público principal de sus viñetas?

La viñeta de prensa es un género periodístico y su público está vinculado a quienes mantienen el hábito de bucear en la prensa, en sus distintos formatos actuales, para mantenerse informados (aunque esta circunstancia se vea comprometida, en ocasiones, por la renuncia que muchos medios han hecho a favor del activismo ideológico en detrimento de la información objetiva y contrastada). La irrupción de los medios digitales no ha cambiado mucho esta realidad sociológica y la mayoría de los consumidores de viñeta de prensa siguen concentrándose en el intervalo de edad que va de los 35 y los 60 años.

RSD: ¿Según Ud., en qué se diferencia el humor gráfico del pasado con el de ahora? Las viñetas y los dibujos, ¿desempeñan el mismo papel que en el pasado? ¿Es distinto o similar?

JJVM: Antes apunté que el humor está necesariamente vinculado al contexto, que no solo le da soporte sino que es el detonante de sus temáticas. Creo que su función social (como generador de conciencia social a través de su análisis crítico) y periodística (estimular la opinión de los lectores sobre los temas que aborda) siguen siendo las mismas. Lo que ha cambiado es el lenguaje y la perspectiva humorística desde la que se mira. Ejemplos de esta evolución de lenguaje y perspectiva son consecuencia de muchos cambios sociales que afectan al contexto (el papel de la mujer en la sociedad y la conquista de sus derechos; la sensibilidad hacia la diversidad y la discapacidad; el lenguaje más inclusivo; los derechos humanos; la multiculturalidad que se hace más presente; la globalización…)

RSD: ¿Cree que el humor gráfico tiene cabida en los contextos académicos? ¿Cómo cree que debe estudiarse su obra?

JJVM: La viñeta de prensa es un género periodístico reconocible y reconocido. En numerosas facultades de ciencias de la información está presente como objeto de estudio. Creo que la primera Universidad española en tener una cátedra dedicada al humor gráfico es la de Alcalá de Henares, cuya Fundación General se dedica al estudio y difusión de este género. El Instituto Quevedo de las Artes del Humor, dependiente de esta Fundación, mantiene una intense actividad académica y divulgativa.

*English Version: Interview with Juan Jesús Verdú Medina, 10 October 2022*

RSD: How would you define yourself within the world of graphic humour?

JJVM: I am very fortunate. It is a real privilege to have the trust of the newspaper where I publish my cartoons and of the institutions and companies that commission my illustrations for awareness campaigns on issues such as the environment, public health, accessibility and social inclusion, gender-based violence, etc. At the same time, the commitment to produce a daily cartoon for more than thirty years is a responsibility that you try to approach with humility and an awareness of its journalistic and social function.

I see myself as a cartoonist who has the enormous privilege of dedicating himself to this rare and stimulating profession.

RSD: What do you consider to be the most important characteristics of graphic humour?

JJVM: As I mentioned earlier, I do many different types of work that have humorous drawing as their common denominator. In graphic humour in particular, and in press cartoons especially, I believe that eloquence in approaching the topics you deal with is the most important thing. If graphic humour were a medicine, its active ingredient would be irony, which each author would mix with a pinch of biting wit and daring, a good dose of sensibility and a large dose of common sense. The end result is served up as a synthesis, where the image and text merge to provoke what could be called an "inside smile" in readers who interpret the cartoon.

It is important to note that a cartoon is not always a joke. I am in favour of it often being one because, in a sea of discouraging news, readers appreciate a spark of humour that brings some sanity to this crazy world when they read a printed newspaper or its digital edition. Sometimes, because the subject matter requires it, the cartoon can be an expression of revulsion, a vindication, a call for sanity... There are cartoons that have no text at all and their entire narrative force lies in the image. They are known as “silent cartoons” (but they can say a lot without words).

RSD: What are the sources that inspire you to create a cartoon? How do they influence your work?

JJVM: Graphic humour is transgressive and subversive by nature. It often feeds on the nonsense, injustices, abuses and corruption of our society and, especially, its leaders. Its transgressive nature lies in its mission to brazenly tear off the masks of our particular social carnival, shamelessly exposing its shame and weaknesses. Perhaps for this reason, it is always present in the cyclical debates about whether to limit it or criminalise its audacity. There will always be a host of offended and indignant people around cartoon humour. I assume that my job is to look out of the window of current affairs every day and interpret it with humour. It is true that, on numerous occasions, I do not like what I see, but I develop my reflections based on my own understanding and the awareness that I am practising freedom of expression every day, which I greatly value as an expression of liberty.

RSD: Regarding the evolution of digital technologies and changes in the press, has your working method or drawing style changed? In what way?

JJVM: There is no doubt that technology has changed many things, mostly for the better. I began my journalistic collaborations back in early 1983, when the internet and digital media were still a futuristic dream. I think the main contribution to graphic humour is immediacy. Immediacy in accessing countless channels and ways to access information, and immediacy in sending your cartoon to the editorial office (in my case, directly to workshops). Both circumstances have significantly improved the ability of cartoons to take the pulse of the most immediate current events.

RSD: What role do languages and/or the use of dialects play in your work?

JJVM: Language is extremely important in humour. Polysemy, literal meaning, contradiction, euphemism and exaggeration are humorous devices that have to do with the use of language. In cartoon humour, the text can be decisive. Dialectal variants and expressions (the lexicon of Canarian Spanish, in this case) are present in my work. In addition to social and political satire, I really like everyday satire that makes humour out of people's daily lives. Within this everyday satire is traditional humour, which has been particularly important in the Canary Islands (with authors such as Eduardo Millares and Cho Juáa) due to its strong roots in humorously referring to popular traditions, the way of life and the way of expressing oneself in the Canary Islands.

RSD: Do you think that where you live or the region you come from influences your graphic humour? In what way? Or in what sense?

JJVM: Humour is always linked to context. Without it, it is very difficult to understand. This would explain why we find it difficult to understand humour from other eras or other cultures. The graphic humour produced in the Canary Islands is closely linked to its social and cultural context. Its remoteness from the rest of the country, its geographical position and the influence

of America, Africa and Europe shape its own idiosyncrasies. I am convinced that these circumstances, together with the fact that it is an island, give Canarian graphic humour its particular characteristics.

RSD: In your opinion, who is the main audience for your cartoons?

Press cartoons are a journalistic genre and their audience is linked to those who maintain the habit of delving into the press, in its various current formats, to keep themselves informed (although this circumstance is sometimes compromised by the fact that many media outlets have given up in favour of ideological activism to the detriment of objective and verified information). The emergence of digital media has not changed this sociological reality much, and most consumers of press cartoons continue to be concentrated in the 35–60 age range.

RSD: In your opinion, how does graphic humour today differ from that of the past? Do cartoons and drawings play the same role as they did in the past? Is it different or similar?

JJVM: Earlier, I pointed out that humour is necessarily linked to context, which not only supports it but also triggers its themes. I believe that its social function (as a generator of social awareness through critical analysis) and journalistic function (stimulating readers' opinions on the issues it addresses) remain the same. What has changed is the language and the humorous perspective from which it is viewed. Examples of this evolution in language and perspective are the result of many social changes that affect the context (the role of women in society and the conquest of their rights; sensitivity towards diversity and disability; more inclusive language; human rights; increasing multiculturalism; globalisation, etc.).

RSD: Do you think graphic humour has a place in academic contexts? How do you think your work should be studied?

JJVM: The press cartoon is a recognisable and recognised journalistic genre. It is studied in numerous information science faculties. I believe that the first Spanish university to have a chair dedicated to graphic humour is the University of Alcalá de Henares, whose General Foundation is dedicated to the study and dissemination of this genre. The Quevedo Institute of the Arts of Humour, which is part of this Foundation, maintains an intense academic and educational activity.

*Spanish Version: Interview with Pep Roig, 9 July 2024*

**Excerpted Version:**

RSD: Estimado Pep, Me dirijo a usted debido al papel significativo que ha desempeñado como artista y humorista contemporáneo, y me gustaría preguntarle sobre una obra que creo que es suya y que fue reeditada en un artículo de Sebastia Serra Busquets de 2007. Me preguntaba si podría pedirle más detalles sobre la obra, cómo llegó a crearla y dónde/cuándo se publicó. He adjuntado una versión de la obra a este mensaje.

PR: Mi dibujo se publicó en el diario *Última Hora* de Palma, Mallorca, en el que trabajo desde 1970. El motivo no es otro que el Golpe de Estado, protagonizado por el general Espínola en 1974, en Portugal. que derrocó la dictadura. Entonces, España seguía gobernada por el dictador general Francisco Franco. De ahí que se me ocurrió situar físicamente Portugal en zona democrática europea, fuera de los regímenes ultraderechistas. No dispongo del dibujo original, pues fue destruido, creo, por el intencionado incendio en los archivos de "Última Hora" ocurrió una noche de 1981, poco antes del frustrado intento de golpe de Estado, con asalto y secuestro en las Cortes por parte de la Guardia Civil.

*English Version: Interview with Pep Roig, 9 July 2024*

**Excerpted Version:**

RSD: Dear Pep, I am writing to you because of the significant role you have played as a contemporary artist and humourist, and I would like to ask you about a work that I believe is yours and that was republished in an article by Sebastia Serra Busquets in 2007. I was wondering if you could provide me with more details about the work, how you came to create it, and where/when it was published. I have attached a version of the work to this message.

PR: My drawing was published in the newspaper *Última Hora* in Palma, Mallorca, where I have worked since 1970. The subject is none other than the coup d'état led by General Espínola in Portugal in 1974, which overthrew the dictatorship. At that time, Spain was still ruled by the dictator General Francisco Franco. That is why I decided to physically place Portugal in the democratic European zone, outside the far-right regimes. I no longer have the original drawing, as it was destroyed, I believe, by the deliberate fire in the archives of Última Hora one night in 1981, shortly before the failed coup attempt, with the assault and kidnapping in the Cortes by the Civil Guard.