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The Making of Visual Arts Policy and Artistic Advocacy in Late Francoist Spain

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

History

by

Taylor Gray

Committee in charge:

Professor Pamela Radcliff, Chair
Professor Frank Biess
Professor Rachel Klein
Professor Patrick Patterson
Professor John Welchman

2022

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University of California San Diego

2022

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND GLOSSARY

AAA	Asociación de Artistas Actuales
AAP	Asociación de Artistas Plásticos
ABCA	Academia Breve de Crítica de Arte, a group of high-society appreciators of the visual arts founded by Eugenio d'Ors, in existence between 1943-1954
ANSIBA	Agrupación Nacional Sindical de Bellas Artes: National Syndical Group of Fine Arts, an artists' association of the Movimiento
APSA	Promotora de Actividades Plásticas, S.A., the successor group to the AAP, when the association was registered as a public-limited company between 1972-1977
Célula de Pintores	Painters' Cell, a group of painters of the clandestine Spanish Communist Party, whose members would be the first promoters of the AAP
<i>dirección</i>	The faculty-comprised administrative body of the Escuela Superior de Bellas Artes
ESBA	Escuela Superior de Bellas Artes
ICH	Instituto de Cultura Hispánica
LGE	Ley General de Educación: General Education Law
MIT	Ministerio de Información y Turismo: Ministry of Information and Tourism
Movimiento	The name of the singular political party allowed during the Franco dictatorship. Originally named the Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las J.O.N.S., after 1945, the Falange name was largely abandoned in favor of 'the Movement'
Nacionales	Shorthand for the Exposiciones Nacionales de Bellas Artes, or the National Exhibition of Fine Arts
PCE	Partido Comunista de España: Spanish Communist Party
RABASF	Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando: Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando

SAPV	Sección de Artes Plásticas y Audiovisuales, the name of the department within the General Directorate of Information of the MIT headed by Carlos Areán
Transition	Refers to Spain's transition to democracy between late 1975, after Franco's death, and December 1978, when the Spanish people approved a new Spanish constitution.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Making of Visual Arts Policy and Artistic Advocacy in Late Francoist Spain

by

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Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California San Diego, 2022

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This dissertation interrogates the relationship between state and civil society through the making of visual arts policy in Franco's Spain between the late 1950s and the late 1970s. Using a rich base of archival sources, it explores the relationships and interactions between members of the regime's arts apparatus and members of Spain's artistic community and demonstrates how these affected the shape of the country's domestic artistic life. The regime's top-down attempts to command cultural life and unwillingness to democratize its artistic endeavors did not override

artists' bottom-up efforts to create the kind of artistic environment in which they wanted to live. By examining case studies of artists, art students, and gallerists in moments of conflict with members of the regime's arts apparatus, I trace the evolution of their collective disillusionment with the regime, while also offering detailed accounts of individual protagonists on all sides. My emphasis on the growth of what I call 'artistic advocacy' allows me to demonstrate the numerous ways in which members of the artistic community pushed for artistic pluralism and autonomy. Furthermore, I recognize a heretofore unstudied group with respect to Spanish social movements – visual artists – and to add them to the body of scholarship on the politicization of actors who came to undermine the regime's vision and authority.

In framing the history of Spanish domestic art policy not as a regime-only endeavor, but rather as the result of the regime's relationship with civil society, I challenge the dominant scholarly narratives that portray the regime's cultural policy either as one of 'repression,' resulting in a "cultural desert," or one of 'liberalization,' in which regime figures slackened control over artistic affairs. Rather, I demonstrate that neither interpretation accurately captures the dynamic in which the arts apparatus saw itself as facilitating and cultivating artistic life, albeit blind to its own lack of legitimacy. In analyzing the complex and fraught interactions between regime figures and members of Spain's visual arts community, and tracing Spaniards' awareness of the regime's contradictions, I reveal a new angle to understanding the increasingly fragmented political culture of late Francoism.

Introduction

This dissertation explores the relationship between state and civil society through the making of visual arts policy in Franco's Spain between the late 1950s and the late 1970s. While policy making in any area is assumed to be wholly under the purview of the state or its affiliated institutions, I maintain throughout this work the importance of understanding the development of late Francoist art policy as the product of the numerous interactions between members of the arts apparatus of the regime and members of Spain's civilian artistic community. While recognizing that political elites in Franco's Spain wielded significant power and resources, the regime was far from exercising a totalitarian will over Spanish society. Throughout the dissertation, I highlight the ideas, artistic products, campaigns, manifestos, and organizing by artists, gallerists, and art students that demonstrated the very real limits on the ability of the Francoist arts apparatus to dictate artistic priorities with unchecked license.

This study is as much about the arts apparatus as it is about an emergent civil society because it identifies and analyzes the dynamic that emerged as a result of their many interactions in a struggle to define the form, function, and role of the artistic life of the country. Not only the purview of politically active dissidents, members of Spain's artistic community adopted a stance on a spectrum of activity that I have defined as 'artistic advocacy,' which allows for political activism at one extreme, while situating the desire for a basic livelihood at the other. While artists were becoming more aware and organized in response to their circumstances and sought to promulgate an approach to the visual arts quite different from that of the arts apparatus over the course of the two decades treated here, figures within the Francoist state were facing the ramifications of having failed to articulate a future political, social, and cultural project. The reforms of the arts apparatus fell flat as they continually eschewed the one major component that

artists demanded: to be given a greater role in determining their artistic, educational, and professional circumstances. That each side espoused a vision that was incompatible with the other, however, was itself a fact that those involved would recognize only incrementally from the late 1950s.

A study about art and politics in Franco's Spain necessarily has to set the record straight with respect to the many assumptions made about the nature of Francoist state power. The longevity of the nearly forty-year-long rightwing dictatorship of Francisco Franco has led to a still polarized climate in which is difficult for one to make any claims about the nature of the regime that someone else does not consider controversial – or just plain wrong. The violent way in which the dictatorial regime emerged – through the Spanish Civil War fought between 1936 and 1939 won by Franco's rebel Nationalists against those who supported the Republic – and the subsequent insistence that the *Nuevo Estado* it created was to be forged without decadent and morally corrupting influences led many to see immediate associations with Mussolini's Italy and Hitler's Germany. Early opponents of Franco proclaimed their aversion to this 'fascist' rule. Even before the Spanish Civil War had ended, Franco's supporters brandished right-arm salutes, sang songs of the Falange (the Spanish fascist party), and proclaimed the need to defeat the 'reds.' New legislation in the early years of the regime took cues from Mussolini's Italy, for example, in adopting an Italian Fascist style Labor Charter and other statutes that called for the state's overarching control over the press and association. It is therefore only natural to assume that in his new position of head of state, Franco, as an all-powerful dictator installed important men to head up significant and powerful cultural apparatuses that advanced a Francoist art ideologically motivated by the new tenets of the regime. Given the prevalence of censorship of the written word, purges of anyone deemed too ideologically committed to the former republic,

and the desire of the victorious Nationalists to create Spain in their image, it seems that we could look at the Francoist cultural policy at this time and see such stark similarities to the other right-wing non-democratic regimes. With respect to official policy of the visual arts, however, most likenesses were rather superficial and those that were not proved short-lived.

Furthermore, the most common assumptions about art under dictatorship in the twentieth-century European context often have been conditioned by totalitarian regimes, whether Fascist, Nazi, or Stalinist. Each of these dictatorships used art to serve the political and ideological mission of the ruling regime. For example, as part their attempt to forge an official art of the Third Reich, Nazi cultural officials famously banned modern art by 1936 and discredited it with accusations of “degeneracy.”¹ Only art deemed sufficiently Aryan, that glorified the German *Volk*, and projected biological and military potency was supported by the Nazi regime. Francoist cultural policy was distinct, too, from that of the Soviet Union, where cultural functionaries famously adopted Socialist Realism as the official art of the state in 1934. The genre was maintained as the sole permissible mode of artistic production, meant to project idealized images of healthy, hardworking laborers and peasants in service to the socialist state.² Despite the radical differences in each political project, one art historian has even claimed a functional similarity in the art produced by all totalitarian political systems.³ On an organizational level, Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, and the Soviet Union required membership in an official artists’ union in order to

¹ According to this worldview, modern art (despite its varied forms, genres, and origins) emerged from non-Aryan origins and was part of a Jewish plot to inject into culture sickly, decadent, and grotesque images. The year was offered as a turning point by Jonathan Petropoulos, *Art as Politics in the Third Reich* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 51-52.

² Artists living in the Soviet Union could and did create art that did not uphold Socialist Realism. Such artwork, however, would not have been sanctioned by the official artists’ union. For an understanding of the art not sanctioned by the Soviet authorities, see John Berger, *Art and Revolution: Ernst Neizvestny and the Role of the Artist in the U.S.S.R.* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1969), and Igor Golomshtok, “Unofficial Art in the Soviet Union,” in *Soviet Art in Exile*, eds. Igor Golomshtok and Alexander Glezer (New York: Random House, 1977).

³ Igor Golomstock, *Totalitarian Art in the Soviet Union, the Third Reich, Fascist Italy and the People’s Republic of China*, trans. Robert Chandler (New York and London: Overlook Duckworth, 2011).

legally contract work, and comprehensive bureaucracies came close to touching every aspect of cultural production.

The Francoist case is fundamentally different from these aforementioned examples, even when aspiring to some of their features. Dating even from its earliest years, while members of the Francoist arts apparatus certainly knew and understood that art and aesthetics could communicate important messages, their efforts to aestheticize Francoist politics were generally piecemeal, and seldom consolidated. There is evidence that early Francoist cultural officials may have wanted to create some sort of official state-led artists' syndicate, although nothing of the sort was ever realized.⁴ Additionally, there were some aesthetic trends that began during the Spanish Civil War which attempted to celebrate the new regime: portraits of Franco on horseback, images praising Catholic Spain and denigrating the Spain of the "reds," and even some surrealist images created by old-guard Spanish *falangistas*, such as José Romero Escassi and José Caballero. Despite these early artistic stirrings in support of the regime, however, none of these trends – nor any combination of them – was molded into an enduring art for the new regime.⁵ Ultimately, the Franco regime was not able to structure Spanish art around clear political and ideological premises in its first decade, nor was there ever top-down pressure from the highest echelons of the State to do so. Thus, not only were there significant differences between the Francoist case and these other examples even when all existed contemporaneously,

⁴ Ángel Llorente Hernández, *Arte e ideología en el franquismo (1936-1951)* (Madrid: Visor, 1995), 106. In July of 1940, a branch of the Ministry of Education announced the creation of a directory of artists, which was supposedly obligatory. While the *Boletín Oficial del Estado* of July 19, 1940 does confirm the Ministry's announcement about its creation, I have never seen any evidence that such a registry existed. Even if it was created, there is no evidence that it was ever utilized in any way by regime officials to award contracts or confer special status. In later decades, there were various instances in which an entity aspired to be an official artists' union of some sort, although at no point did membership in any group confer status or access to official contracts.

⁵ This is a central argument for Llorente Hernández found throughout *Arte e ideología*, although stated explicitly in his short Introduction, 17-18.

but the decidedly non-totalitarian nature of Francoist art policy would continue as the twentieth century moved into its second half.

Insofar as visual arts policy was a priority of the Francoist state at all, it mattered only from the point of view of cultural diplomacy and international relations. A department within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as an affiliated body known as the Instituto de Cultura Hispánica (ICH), were in charge of cultural affairs abroad. By the 1950s, when an increasing number of the regime's cultural officials started to envisage the ways in art could be used at the service of the Spanish state, modern Spanish art was shown to international audiences as an advertisement of the country's artistic freedom. Aesthetically progressive artwork was utilized as a stand-in for political liberalization and meant to dissociate and downplay Spain's political reality. Thus, like other dictatorial art policies, the Francoist cultural apparatus articulated an aspirational vision, but unlike them, it was not used to define and augment the regime's political and ideological foundations, rather it was an attempt to obscure them.

Whereas officials of the arts apparatus considered art policy in the service of foreign policy at least somewhat deserving of attention, domestic art policy throughout the first half of the Franco era was largely an afterthought, consisting primarily of inherited traditions packaged in Francoist rhetoric. A single conference dedicated to the arts domestically occurred in the first decade of the new dictatorship, with scant attention to long-range planning or an attempt to establish overarching objectives.⁶ What we can consider to be the domestic arts apparatus was actually a set of several offices located within different ministries (about which I will go into much greater detail in Chapter 1). The lack of a unitary office necessarily meant that there could

⁶ The events of the single conference of arts officials took place in May 1945 and was known as the *II Congreso de Bellas Artes*. The meeting's proceedings have been recorded as: *Congreso de Bellas Artes celebrado en el Círculo de Bellas Artes de Madrid, 22-28 mayo de 1945. Memoria redactada por las secretarías del congreso* (Madrid, 1945).

be multiple agendas at any given time, and when ill-defined duties overlapped, competition ensued between the different directorates; most often, there was simply no attempt at coordination. It was a realm of government deemed important enough to subsist, but not deemed significant enough by Franco and his cabinet to necessitate being reworked into a new unified organ of the state nor to be infused with new funds. While there had been proponents over the years in support of creating a centralized ministry of culture, the political will was never present to do so.⁷ Despite the strict censorship of the written word in Franco's Spain, there was no comparable process applied to the visual arts. Furthermore, another key feature of visual arts policy in Franco's Spain was that with almost no long-range planning during any period, its objectives were largely the result of a bureaucrat's decision to try something out, on the one hand, or were the result of working through a challenge or responding to a longstanding problem, on the other. In other words, without long-term objectives to guide the arts or cultural institutions toward pre-established end goals, domestic cultural policy assumed a rather *ad hoc* nature in which individual bureaucrats were free to dictate its terms.

So why then is it worthwhile to study an area of policy making that was so far down the ladder of the state's priorities? It is precisely this top-down neglect and formal lack of censorship that allows the realm of the visual arts to represent such a valuable lens into regime-civil society relations. The lack of attention toward fomenting a vibrant art scene at home allowed for the visual arts to represent a contested terrain in which competing visions vied to create it; artists' initiatives and bureaucrats' trial-run experiments abounded in this relatively undefined area. This struggle to define, promote, and advance the visual arts during the late Francoist years and the

⁷ Talk of forming something approximating a centralized ministry of culture was indeed present at the *II Congreso de Bellas Artes*. The suggestion would be broached several times over the course of the Francoist years. For this first instance see: *Congreso de Bellas Artes*, 107-109.

ways in which members of the arts apparatus and members of Spain's artistic community interacted with one another tell us so much about each of their respective worldviews, while also allowing us to see the dynamic created as a result of their negotiations, interactions, and collaborations. Thus, I argue that art production and art policy were conditioned by a dynamic that emerged from both top-down and bottom-up sources. What this means is that the direction that the visual arts took in Spain was partially conditioned as we have come to expect from an authoritarian regime – dictated and decided by regime figures from the top down. Although, as I demonstrate, Spain's arts community likewise pushed the development of art and arts initiatives both because of and despite the official policy making of the arts apparatus.

My focus on the relations between the state and civil society – and not on just one or the other – allows me to make new contributions to both the scholarship about the nature of the regime and that of civil society. With respect to the regime, most scholars not directly engaged with a specific official entity simply write about the apparatus of the Franco dictatorship as a monolithic bloc. As will become evident, parsing the structure of the regime and understanding not only the functions of individual departments but also the significant roles played by individual members of the apparatus is crucial for making sense of the ways in which 'the regime' functioned. With little exception, the other very few studies that treat Spanish art policy during the Francoist period have either focused only on a single governmental entity, or have been primarily interested in the situation from the point of view of artists or critics.⁸ While I also sometimes refer to 'the regime' to mean the Francoist state, I have aimed to be as precise as

⁸ The exception is Mónica Núñez Laiseca's *Arte y política en la España del desarrollismo (1962-1968)* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2006). While María Dolores Jiménez-Blanco wrote a groundbreaking book about Spanish art policy, her study has taken as its lens a single institution in the form of the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Madrid and its predecessor and successor museums. See her *Arte y Estado en la España del siglo XX* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1989). For an example of art policy/production being driven by art criticism, see: Paula Barreiro López, *Avant-garde art and Criticism in Francoist Spain* (Liverpool: University of Liverpool Press, 2017).

possible in specifying governmental or party offices, departments, and individuals when it matters.

With respect to the scholarship of civil society, Spanish visual artists have yet to be included into it in a way that traces how they as a group navigated the vicissitudes of the Franco regime's decision making over the course of the entirety of the late Franco period. When mentioned at all, visual artists have been cited as individuals among groups of intellectuals who partook in oppositional political activism. For example, in 1962 intellectuals started to publish what became known later as the 'collective letters' in which protest statements would be directed to top government figures calling out political injustices and the lack of civil rights in the country.⁹ Visual artists Antonio Saura, Manolo Millares, Juan Genovés, and Pablo Serrano frequently signed these letters. Thus, because these visual artists were ascribing to these larger political campaigns, they are often acknowledged correctly as members of a growing opposition movement. Looking only as these cases, however, belies how visual artists navigated living under Francoism – not only as members of the political opposition – and negates their collective role in the shaping of art policy.

What has been heretofore little recognized is the level of cohesion achieved by Spanish artists *as artists* throughout the late Francoist period. What we see when we look closely at the case of Franco's Spain is that the specific political and cultural circumstances faced by Spanish visual artists not only ensured their entrance into a growing civil society, but also prompted the formation into a Madrid-based social movement right around 1970.¹⁰ While Spanish visual

⁹ Pere Ysàs, *Disidencia y subversión: La lucha del régimen franquista por su supervivencia, 1960-1975* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2004), 49-61.

¹⁰ There has been very little scholarship on this phenomenon to date. The two exceptions are: Juan Albarrán Diego, "Lo profesional es político: Trabajo artístico, movimientos sociales y militancia política en el último franquismo," *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma. Serie VII*. 3 (2015): 245-271; Isabel García García, *Tiempo de estrategias: La Asociación de Artistas Plásticos y el arte comprometido español en los setenta* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2016).

artists did not have to contend with formal censorship in Franco's Spain, this circumstance is not to deny that the dictatorial context had a constraining impact on their lives or even on the arts as a whole. The lack of regime attention to the visual arts domestically created an atmosphere in which the new generation of artists coming of age in the 1950s found themselves desirous of everything from better quality paints and access to art supplies to more social protections and professional opportunities. This same atmosphere, devoid of full freedom of association, also meant that while other segments of society would have had no real channels to come together until regime policies allowed for such in the mid 1960s, visual artists were at something of an advantage because they could come together to form groups without obstacle. The informal nature of artists' groups was not a realm of group activity with which the regime concerned itself, especially as artists' groupings were rarely attempts to organize into formal associations until the late 1960s.¹¹ While of course in any context artists sharing an aesthetic project have come together, Franco's Spain created the conditions in which artists first felt a necessity to band together in support of their own non-mainstream aesthetic projects, and later, in pursuit of better educational and professional opportunities.

What developed among artists, gallerists, and art students was a sense of what I call 'artistic advocacy.' I define this concept as the steps taken by artists in the belief that they deserve a role in determining their own educational and professional opportunities. I conceive of 'advocacy' as a wide spectrum of activity, in which 'activism' is situated at one extreme and the desire for a basic livelihood at the other. Both up-and-coming and well-established professional visual artists as of the late 1950s not only created art, but issued manifestos, authored publications, gave talks, hosted events, and did whatever they could to spur the beginnings of the

¹¹ One exception that I discuss in Chapter 2 is the Asociación de Artistas Actuales (AAA) of Barcelona, which formed in the 1950s.

kind of artistic milieu they wanted to see within Spain's borders. Even artists who never joined a distinct grouping still often found belonging in well-defined artistic communities, especially via the art galleries that represented them (as I will demonstrate in Chapter 4).

The conversion of artists into self-advocates should be a familiar pattern to scholars of civil society and social movements.¹² In the Spanish context, studies have expanded beyond only discussing the contributions of the groups from which traditional anti-Francoist opposition has come (workers, students, Catholic groups, regional nationalist groups) to include Spaniards who mobilized within their professions (school teachers, journalists, and labor lawyers) and neighborhood and family associations in the making of civic engagement and democratic practice.¹³ These studies have astutely and importantly demonstrated how the demands of civil society – and the ways in which people organized themselves democratically – cannot be left out of the story of the late Francoist years and the Transition. Spanish artists and art students fit the aforementioned pattern. They, too, made decisions democratically through assemblies, meetings, and direct voting. Moreover, the artists I discuss also articulated a democratic worldview of art (and some even sought the eradication of the traditional art market itself), demanding that it should not be created only for competitions, nor should it serve art dealers or the regime. Underlying all artists' and art students' claims by the late 1960s was the demand for the ample and direct participation of artists themselves in their own education and professionalization.

In order to analyze these interactions, I have benefitted from a rich base of never-utilized archival sources that provide the points of view of both key offices and figures within the arts

¹² For the pioneering study that articulated the concept of civil society as it applied to Franco's Spain see: Víctor M. Pérez-Díaz, *The Return of Civil Society: The Emergence of Democratic Spain* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).

¹³ Carmen Castro Torres, *La prensa en la transición Española, 1966-1978* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2010); Tamar Groves, *Teachers and the Struggle for Democracy in Spain, 1970-1985* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Pamela Radcliff, *Making Democratic Citizens in Spain: Civil Society and the Popular Origins of the Transitions, 1960-1978* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

apparatus as well as the papers and publications of artists, an art school, and private art galleries.¹⁴ Paying attention to both the regime and artists equally has allowed me to see the intrigue and debates behind the scenes of all sides, shedding new light on what we thought we knew about regime-artist relations and how officials of the arts apparatus and artists conceived of one another.

In arguing both for a new way to approach the study of the relationship between state and civil society, as well as the unique lens that the realm of the visual arts offers specifically, I also necessarily weigh in on a longstanding debate about the nature of the Franco regime. Different from scholarly explanations of the nature of the Franco regime that subscribe to the dictatorship's continued repression on the one hand, or its liberalization on the other, I argue that neither of these concepts gets at the root of the complex interactions that were taking place.

Historiographical Debates

There has been significant debate over whether or not the Franco regime should be credited for the political and economic decisions that led to Spain's very rapid economic development which took off after the late 1950s. Given the very dramatic socio-economic changes that occurred over the course of the almost forty-year-long dictatorship, scholars have necessarily asked what role the regime had in the shift from the first decade of dictatorship, often known as the "years of hunger," toward the latter decade, in which the Spanish economy

¹⁴ Honing in on specific details of governmental protagonists was made possible because of the Franco-era government records of the Ministries of Education and Information and Tourism housed at the Archivo General de la Administración (AGA). The papers of one key bureaucrat, Florentino Pérez Embid, kept within the main archive of the Universidad de Navarra (UNAG), provided key insights in the General Directorate of Information at its founding in 1951, when he was at its head, as well as the artistic turmoil of the late 1960s, when he was the director general of Fine Arts. Two records repositories within Spain's state-run Reina Sofia Museum – their research library and their Central Archive – each held a plethora of records collections pertaining to private galleries, arts associations, and artists. The records held by the Archivo del Decano de la Facultad de Bellas Artes (ADFBA) of the Complutense University of Madrid retained correspondence and meeting minutes from the faculty members and students of its predecessor institution, the Escuela Superior de Bellas Artes of Madrid.

experienced what has been called an “economic miracle.”¹⁵ While few would deny the massive political repression against the defeated of the Spanish Civil War in the forms of physical punishment, purges, and the attempted erasure of Republican society, not to mention the difficult economic situation created by a strict policy of economic autarky in the dictatorship’s first decade, the fact remained that Spaniards’ standard of living was much higher by the 1960s. In attempting to evaluate the role of the regime itself in this transformation, one group of scholars understands the early repression as having been so pervasive as to have permeated the entirety of the dictatorship.¹⁶ According to this point of view, any social changes that accompanied the uneven economic development (largely keeping the poor in poverty) did not remove the regime’s extant repressive structures; any supposed changes were just cosmetic.

Another view stipulates that the regime pragmatically adapted to ensure its own survival by shedding the process of economic autarky, having had no choice later but to respond to the social and cultural changes wrought by economic development. Among those who see the second half of the regime as fundamentally different from the first, those who subscribe to sociologist Juan Linz’s mid-1960s definition of an “authoritarian regime” necessarily allow for the regime to have exercised a “limited, not responsible, pluralism.”¹⁷ This stance argues that the regime liberalized somewhat, as its repression had become more selective. While Linz’s formulation and those who follow it have been criticized for characterizing the regime as too politically lenient, the subsequent response to it has nevertheless opened the floodgates to allow

¹⁵ The debate is explained in Chapter 12, “Economic, Social and Cultural Transformation, 1930s-1970s,” in Pamela Radcliff, *Modern Spain: 1808 to the Present* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017).

¹⁶ Michael Richards, *A Time of Silence: Civil War and the Culture of Repression in Franco’s Spain, 1936-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

¹⁷ Juan J. Linz, “An Authoritarian Regime: Spain,” in Eric Allardt and Yrjö Littunen, eds., *Cleavages, Ideologies and Party Strategies: Contributions to Comparative Political Sociology* (Helsinki: Westermarck Society, 1964), 291-341.

for scholarly interpretations that recognize economic, social, and political change within the dictatorship, while not necessarily agreeing that the regime liberalized.¹⁸

It should be no surprise then that a similar version of this so-called ‘repression versus liberalization’ debate exists in the realm of Spain’s cultural life. Until the twenty-first century, an understanding of the place of arts and culture in Franco’s Spain had been profoundly influenced by the myth of the dictatorship being a cultural desert. Spanish intellectual José Luis Abellán coined the phrase “*páramo cultural*” (“cultural wasteland”) in 1971 to refer to the supposedly culturally devoid state of Franco’s Spain during the period from late 1930s until about 1960, although he was not the originator of the idea itself.¹⁹ The sources of the myth arose among the Spanish exiles of the Spanish Civil War, who denied the possibility that those remaining in Spain could produce politically and artistically uncompromised work under the shadow of what they considered an oppressive fascism. But the regime itself also contributed to this narrative in its early years, proud to cultivate the image of having rid itself of liberal democracy and any of its perceived cultural products. While the myth certainly had its detractors,²⁰ the idea persisted throughout the Transition. For example, the unapologetically anti-Francoist curators of the Spanish contribution to the 1976 Venice Biennial, Valeriano Bozal and Tomás Llorens, sought to portray the development of avant-garde art that had developed during the years of the dictatorship as the direct result of the artistic dissidence dating from the avant-garde activity

¹⁸ The debate about the nature of the Franco regime is explained in detail in the Introduction of Nigel Townson, ed., *Spain Transformed: The Late Franco Dictatorship, 1959-1975* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

¹⁹ José Luis Abellán. *La cultura en España: Ensayo para un diagnóstico* (Madrid: Cuadernos para el Diálogo, 1971).

²⁰ Philosopher Julián Marías famously rebutted Abellán. Julián Marías, “La vegetación del páramo,” in *La devolución de España: segunda parte de la España real* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1978), 185-192. Lest anyone criticize Marías’ seemingly soft stance on the Franco regime’s repression in the cultural sphere, Juan Pablo Fusi informs his readers that Marías spent May through August of 1939 incarcerated for fighting for the Republican army during the Spanish Civil War, had his doctoral dissertation refused, and was prohibited by the regime from teaching at the university level. See Fusi, *Espacios de libertad: la cultura española y la recuperación de la democracia (c.1960 - c.1990)* (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 2015), note on pages 17-18.

during the Spanish Civil War.²¹ Seeking to tell a story about the development of Spanish art that left the regime out entirely, the organizers opted for a counter-narrative to the regime's self-congratulatory tale of an inherently Spanish, self-contained avant-garde with roots in the 17th century. In addition, Spain's first government overseeing the Transition would also celebrate artists whom they believed were representative of democratic culture and anti-Francoism,²² thus inadvertently keeping a version of the myth of cultural desert alive.

Despite the prevalence of the myth of the *páramo cultural*, the passage of time reduced the stigma attached to the appreciation of the cultural products of the Franco era, engendering new, innovative scholarship that calls into question the much-neglected art history of the period. Today few would contend that Franco's Spain was a true cultural desert; new generations of scholars have evaluated the Franco years without recourse to the premise of a cultural wasteland.²³ One important contribution, for example, has traced the existence of liberal thought that managed to survive, albeit timidly, throughout the dictatorship in spaces such as independent publishing houses and private groups – often facilitated by one-time regime supporters.²⁴ It has

²¹ The chosen artists were meant to show a trajectory from the avant-garde art of the Spanish Republican period (such as Óscar Domínguez, Pablo Picasso, and Josep Renau, among others) to those working in later decades who carried with them the same commitment to anti-Francoism (such as Eduardo Arroyo, Alberto Corazón, Juan Genovés, Agustín Ibarrola, Antonio Saura, Eusebio Sempere, Antoni Tàpies, Equipo 57, Manolo Millares, Estampa Popular and the Grup de Treball, among others). Barreiro discusses the Spanish contribution to the 1976 Venice Biennial in her “Epilogue” to *Avant-garde art and Criticism in Francoist Spain*, 293-308. The catalog for the exhibition itself is Valeriano Bozal and Tomás Llorens, et al., *España: Vanguardia artística y realidad social* (Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 1976).

²² Giulia Quaggio, *La cultura en transición: Reconciliación y política cultural en España, 1976-1986* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2014). See especially Chapter 4, “El rescate del pasado.”

²³ Coming after the generation of scholars who themselves were living and writing during the Transition who started the conversation, the next wave of scholars includes (but is not limited to) Miguel Cabañas Bravo, Julián Díaz Sánchez, Ángel Llorente Hernández, and María Dolores Jiménez-Blanco. An even more recent wave of scholarship has been more directly willing to investigate the arts during the 1940s, which until recently and because of the legacy of the cultural desert myth had been the most neglected decade: Paula Barreiro López, Noemí de Haro, María Rosón, and Óscar Chaves. The exhibition entitled *Campo cerrado: Arte y poder en la posguerra española, 1939-1953*, held at the Reina Sofía Museum in 2016 and curated by art historian María Dolores Jiménez-Blanco was itself proof of this recent renewed exploration of the visual arts during early Francoist Spain.

²⁴ Jordi Gracia, *Estado y cultura: El despertar de una conciencia crítica bajo el franquismo, 1940-1962* (Barcelona: Editorial Anagrama, 2006); Juan Pablo Fusi, *Un siglo de España: La cultura* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 1999).

been difficult to dispel the old myth entirely, however, especially as it did not so much as disappear as shapeshift into a version of the ‘repression versus liberalization’ debate related to the regime’s role in cultural production. If the cultural products of the Franco years weren’t devoid of either substance or even quality, then the question becomes: to whom do we give credit for the artistic products of Franco’s Spain? In other words, does the regime itself deserve any credit for the success of Spanish artists?

This debate about the cultural realm has been staged between those who prioritize some version of the *páramo cultural* and those who believe that the regime’s arts apparatus progressively, if unevenly, loosened its grip over cultural affairs. Among those who argue for liberalization, few would give the regime explicit credit. For example, historian Juan Pablo Fusi argues that the era of Manuel Fraga as minister of Information and Tourism inaugurated a “timid liberalization,” which allowed a strain of submerged-but-not-dead liberal thought to resurface. For Fusi, that Spanish artists and intellectuals articulated a culture independent from the official Francoist one in the 1960s was instrumental in Spain’s rapid democratization after Franco’s death.²⁵ According to this interpretation, while the regime did relax policies, it is artists and intellectuals, not regime figures, who should be given the credit for pushing an independent line of thought.

Among those advocating for the ‘liberalization’ model, a minority view suggests that the regime relaxed censorship with few if any reservations. Espousing this interpretation, journalist Jeremy Treglown argued in his controversial 2013 book that in the years since the end of Francoism, those on the losing side of the Spanish Civil War had so successfully cemented the interpretation of Francoist Spain’s ‘cultural desert’ that it had become impossible to

²⁵ Fusi, *Un siglo de España*, 132-133.

acknowledge the innovative and impressive cultural products, artists, writers, and filmmakers that existed therein. For the most part, he saw regime figures as purposely helping to promote Spanish art and artists.²⁶ While not an apologist for the Franco regime, Treglown's point of view coincides most closely with that of former regime arts officials, who have in the decades since spoken out in support of the decisions they made to support the arts in Spain.²⁷ Since few unquestioningly adopt the former regime's narrative, the majority of those who see some degree of top-down liberalization describe the regime as having given artists and intellectuals more freedoms, not anticipating a breach in their official cultural hegemony.

Other scholars and commentators reject the idea that the regime effectively liberalized cultural policies. The most common evidence for these claims cites the continued censorship of the written word (even after the Press Law of 1966 eradicated pre-publication censorship), as well as arbitrary arrests, and the consistent monitoring of meetings, exhibitions, and associational activities.²⁸ In general, this position maintains that artists and authors did good work to continue to push beyond the limitations of the regime, despite facing both formal and informal suppression. Thus, on an underlying level the original debate has been resolved because scholars have recognized the valuable artistic production that emerged *during* the authoritarian regime. The new debate – the extent to which regime figures were *responsible for* this cultural output –

²⁶ Jeremy Treglown *Franco's Crypt: Spanish Culture and Memory since 1936* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013). Treglown's starting point appears to assume that all of his readers are in the 'cultural desert' camp. Thus, he provides many examples of visual art production during the Franco years (Chapter 5 "Art's Abstractions") to show that Spain was not, in fact, a cultural wasteland. The problem with this interpretation is that just because the Franco regime supported modern art is not itself evidence of artistic freedom.

²⁷ For example, Luis González Robles had given many interviews over the decades defending his decisions. For one example from 1993, see Chapter 2 ("Entrevista a Luis González Robles") in Jorge Luis Marzo, *¿Puedo hablarle con libertad, excelencia? Arte y poder en España desde 1950* (Murcia: Cendeac, 2010), 141-158.

²⁸ Eduardo Ruiz Bautista ed., *Tiempo de censura: La represión Editorial durante el franquismo* (Gijón: Ediciones Trea, 2008). Chapters 2 and 3, both authored by Bautista, and Chapter 4 by Javier Muñoz Soro, give a chronological overview of press and literary censorship from the beginning to end of the Franco dictatorship.

largely portrays artists and intellectuals as having been particularly good at taking advantage of the moments in which they seemed to have room for maneuver.

Among the scholars who argue that regime repression was a given, not all see Spain's artists as having been democratizing agents. Jorge Luis Marzo, for example, is critical of self-proclaimed "oppositional" artists (especially the *informalistas*), reproaching them for not having done more to express open resistance to the regime. He describes artists, scholars, and critics as opportunists who told themselves a series of excuses to exonerate themselves from having collaborated with the regime in the 1950s.²⁹ Marzo underscores that many Spanish artists who came to be recognized as anti-regime figures had, in fact, benefitted handsomely from regime patronage when it suited them, only to deny or downplay such connections later.³⁰

In sum, we are left with a rather polarized historiography in which the most extreme positions are quite irreconcilable. While claims about a "cultural desert" have been mostly debunked, scholars still have a difficult time reconciling where and how to position the regime itself and how much credit, if any, to give it for Spanish artistic production.

Conceptual Tools and Methods

In order to truly understand the visual art production and policy of late Francoist Spain, the most fruitful paths of analysis evaluate the opportunities and decisions of artists without assuming they had only opportunistic motives. Given the regime's longevity, we cannot expect artists to have lived in a vacuum and to have had no contact with the regime's cultural policy. It

²⁹ Marzo summarized what he believes are the five most common excuses: 1) that avant-garde art was really an "anti-Francoist Trojan horse"; 2) that artists needed opportunities to work just like everyone else; 3) that Francoist figures liberalized purposefully to let the avant-garde in; 4) that the power of art itself was sufficient to communicate new values; and 5) that artists engaged with the Spanish citizenry in meaningful ways. Jorge Luis Marzo and Patricia Mayayo, *Arte en España (1939-2015): ideas, prácticas, políticas* (Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra, 2015), 239-245.

³⁰ This is a point Marzo makes explicit in *¿Puedo hablarle...*, 115-131.

also helps to look more closely at the role of Francoist political elites and institutions in order to assess the shape of late Francoist socio-political change, as some scholars have done in very recent years.³¹ In addition to looking to the pressure applied to the regime by the political opposition, studies should also seek to understand the increasingly divided dictatorship which had ceased to formulate a future political project. In the case of art policy specifically, applying this methodology means taking seriously as actors the figures of the arts apparatus who by the last few years of the dictatorship ceased to agree on a consolidated vision.

By looking at key moments of conflict between the members of the arts apparatus of the regime, artists, art students, and gallerists, it becomes clear that neither ‘liberalization’ nor ‘repression’ can fully explain regime behavior with regard to the making of visual arts policy. I show that while the regime routinely attempted to have the final word about the direction of the visual arts, ‘repression’ does not accurately describe an environment in which the arts apparatus did not exercise any formal prohibitions on artistic production. Likewise, the paradigm of ‘liberalization’ fails adequately to account for the regime’s actions, because arts bureaucrats never democratized their processes nor the make-up of their events, and would only enact reforms on their own terms. For most of its existence, the regime wanted to see itself as able to manage artists, students, and gallerists without the need to police them. From the regime’s point of view, its willingness to listen to artists’ demands about arts promotion, curricular reorganization, and exhibition reform demonstrated its efforts to accommodate civil society. While the authoritarian dictatorship’s leaders only allowed for a rather limited civil society lacking in full liberal freedoms, most artists and gallerists thought the regime’s arts apparatus

³¹ I delve into a discussion of this viewpoint in much more detail in Chapter 1. This new wave of scholarship is embodied by the work in the following volume: Miguel Ángel Ruiz Carnicer, ed., *From Franco to Freedom: The Roots of the Transition to Democracy in Spain, 1962-1982* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2019).

was more intransigent than outright repressive for most of the 1960s. Also important to note is that there was an evolution in the relationship between the artistic community and the figures of the arts apparatus from the late 1950s until the end of the Franco era.

In this dissertation, I confront the distinctiveness and complexity of the Spanish case by consistently returning to explain the dynamic of contestation between all figures, which may be characterized into four periods. While they largely fall outside the chronological scope of the dissertation except to provide contextualization, the first two periods (1939-1950 and 1951-1957) are characterized by a governmental neglect of the arts and an attention to art as international cultural diplomacy, respectively. It was in the latter of these two periods that figures across the entire fragmented arts apparatus came to an understanding in support of certain genres of modern art, which they started to promote with increasingly regularity. The bulk of the content within the dissertation leads with the third period, which covers the years from 1957 until 1968. These years encompass a very formative period in which Spanish artists and the arts apparatus continued to formulate their relationship to one another. This was a period in which the arts apparatus' successful bet on a genre of art known as Informalismo catapulted it into being an official art. Artists' awareness of the kinds of artistic and professional circumstances that they wanted for themselves started to be articulated in this period. As the arts apparatus started to figure out what it would look like to have an internationally recognized art scene, artists continued to demand opportunities for the arts domestically. This period was one of artists' collaboration in official events, but also one in which they started to see that their participation – or lack thereof – was bound up in a greater meaning. Lastly, a final period between the late 1960s until Spain's formal transition to democracy in 1978, characterizes the period of the crisis of the regime. This is a period in which the regime attempted to exercise the most overt and

direct control over civilians in response to its loss of legitimacy in the eyes of civil society. The fractured nature of the arts apparatus led to policies in which an artist could be celebrated in one instance, while simultaneously marked as a political danger. While the regime as a whole adopted a hardline position and gravitated toward a greater reliance on surveillance and policing, the artists and art critics who found themselves caught up in it were targeted for their overtly political activities, not their artistic ones. This claim is evidenced by the fact that artists were not targeted for their art, even when subject matter was uncontrovertibly critical of the regime. Importantly, the repression that existed at this time was the symptom not the cause of the problem. Increased policing was a feature of the crisis of the regime that had developed no other ways of coping with the lack of popular legitimacy than to root out narrowly-defined examples of ‘dissidence’ and ‘subversion.’³² As I will show, such methods were often incredibly ineffective at quelling exactly the kind of activity the state wanted to stop.

On the other side of the divide, this dissertation seeks to explicate civil society as it pertains to members of Spain’s artistic community: artists, art students, and also the groupings of people who formed around private art galleries. The concept of civil society itself has been theorized in different ways to encompass a wide spectrum of social formulations. All agree to it being a realm of activity that is not the government nor private life where ordinary people come together to engage in some aspect of public affairs. The classic liberal view of civil society is willing to include economic activity independent of the state in this definition, and also the activities of individuals.³³ At the other extreme, scholars of social movements prefer to count in

³² Ysàs, *Disidencia y subversión*.

³³ Sociologist Víctor Pérez-Díaz, who pioneered the concept of civil society with respect to what it looked like in Franco’s Spain, defines it as “social institutions such as markets and voluntary associations and a public sphere which are outside the direct control, in a full or mitigated sense, of the state.” Pérez-Díaz, *The Return of Civil Society*, 57.

their definitions only those groups whose activities turned into defined political opposition, and exclude activities of the market.

I endorse a definition that prioritizes above all else the ability for people to come together legally and publicly, where they exist in a realm that is autonomous from private economic interests and wholly independent of the state. I do not consider the market as a relevant contributor to civil society, nor do I require defined political opposition as an outcome either.³⁴ As it turns out, both the art market and political opposition will make an appearance in late Francoist Spain, but they are not the salient features that allowed for the creation of Spanish civil society in the first place.

Members of Spain's artistic communities each at different times organized around two distinct axes of civil society activity both 1) to form networks of solidarity with one another and 2) to attempt to enact change in official arts policies thereby widening the scope of public discourse. In what can be understood as the first case – “horizontal” organizing – artistic advocacy took the form of artists seeking one another out in spaces free from regime control or oversight. Such group formations occurred as artists found each other to advance new aesthetic or professional projects. In the second category, “vertical” organizing and advocacy was prevalent among artists and art students when promulgating campaigns of non-participation in official artistic events or when taking their demands to regime superiors in their attempts to influence official policies and norms by 1970.³⁵

³⁴ I do not believe that full ideological commitment to a goal is necessary for ‘civil society,’ as some level of participation may come about naturally and intrinsically. The formulation that characterizes the participation of civil society, as “somewhere between a coherent ideology and unconscious behavior” strikes me as a valuable one. Radcliff, *Making Democratic Citizens in Spain*, 10.

³⁵ The categorization of these two directional axes comes from a discussion of differing kinds of citizenship. See: Birte Siim, *Gender and Citizenship: Politics and Agency in France, Britain and Denmark* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) and has been applied to Spanish civil society in Pamela Radcliff, “Social Movements, Democratic Transition, and Citizenship: Spain in the 1970s” in *Performing Citizenship: Social Movements around the Globe*, ed. Inbal Ofer and Tamar Groves (New York: Routledge, 2016), 18.

Where, then, do private art galleries fit into Spanish civil society? I see the art galleries as being first and foremost sites of community-building, and thus important to the story of “horizontal” artistic advocacy, with their function as businesses of the art market as secondary. While I am willing to concede that profits earned by financially-successful private galleries did enable them to gain autonomy from the state, I still see this factor as being less important to civil society formation. Furthermore, I would argue that private art galleries in the context of Franco’s Spain should be included in the definition of ‘civil society’ of even those who would discount the market entirely.

The communities of artists who formed around art galleries and the kinds of activities and initiatives they promulgated are not dissimilar from the civic organizations most traditionally identified with civil society: parent-teacher groups, neighborhood associations, or defined social movements. As I demonstrate in Chapters 3 and 4, the collectives that formed around art galleries, even traditional commercial ones, coalesced primarily around a commitment to artistic advocacy.³⁶ While the needs and wants of Spain’s visual artists may not be initially recognized as ‘public affairs,’ I would argue that the kinds of projects around which the galleries’ communities formed showed a great attention to the betterment of artists’ social standing and educational and professional circumstances. Artistic communities sprang up first simply as groups with shared aesthetic tastes, and later around the Galería Juana Mordó and the Galería Redor (just to name two examples). In the first case, while the gallery did function as a typical instrument of the art market, artists flocked around gallerist Juana Mordó primarily because of

³⁶ With regard to the need to have autonomy from the private sector (and, of course, state institutions also), the communities of artists, arts appreciators, art critics and gallerists that would form around given galleries were not primarily unified around the gallery as a business. I am not describing people who worked at an art gallery and only associated with one another because they were co-workers, nor would I count artists who only called the gallery home because that was where they went to pick up a paycheck.

her ability to create a veritable artistic community. The artistic community that formed around the countercultural, non-commercial Galería Redor was equally strong, but was formed by artists who sought an alternative venue for experimental art practice in the form of early conceptual art and printmaking; in this case, the gallery's function of the business of the art market was nil. With a shared sense of art galleries as spaces for artists – not art dealers – the gallery and its artists formed into a printmaking collective in which the purposefully meager profits were funneled into the gallery-run workshop. Both the Galería Juana Mordó and the Redor carved out spaces of autonomy from officialdom.

Given the context of the dictatorial regime that limited opportunities for formal association, the communities that sprang up around art galleries were actually, without trying to, well positioned to have what in the regime's eyes would have been legitimate reasons to come together (exhibitions, meetings, projects of one or another member, etc.), thus encouraging the formation and growth of these communities in the first place. In other words, in a setting with no limits to freedom of association, art galleries are more likely to retain a primary role as a commercial establishment of the art market, as artists would be free to join other groupings, associations, and formal unions. In the context of Franco's Spain, however, the existence of the gallery provided a way for a community to form without the need for further legal recourse, cementing their status primarily as sites of civic formation.³⁷

An increasingly prevalent form of artistic advocacy in Franco's Spain was for an artist or group to undertake a campaign of non-participation in official regime exhibitions. What started

³⁷ Whereas a group of artists who wanted to file as a professional association, the Asociación de Artistas Plásticos, would have its petition denied, the independent communities that formed around art galleries would have no such legal hurdles to cross; from the regime's point of view, such relationships would have either been considered formal business dealings, or they would not have been recognized at all as something they had the legal purview with which to interfere – at least not until an MIT report of 1972 indicated such spaces as questionable.

with a few individual artists in the wake of the international biennials of the 1950s would grow into large campaigns in the 1970s.³⁸ While the number of those abstaining from official events for political reasons throughout much of the 1960s numbered anywhere from in the single digits to two dozen, those routinely doing so – such as Antoni Tàpies, Antonio Saura, and Manolo Millares – had sizeable influence on the artistic community who noted their absences. By the late 1960s, when a new wave of artistic mobilization started anew, these early abstainers were primed to exercise and articulate their position to inaugurate campaigns that would attract hundreds of participating artists. Thus, despite the fact that there was not a mass exodus from official Spanish cultural life at the start of the 1960s, there was still enough of an underlying shift in the ways artists thought about the regime that it is fair to characterize the decade as that in which visual artists started to question the benefit of participating in official shows and events.

Of course, not all Spanish artists were suspicious of the regime's motives. Many artists, especially in the late 1950s and early 1960s, appreciated that the regime took any interest at all in contemporary artists whether or not they saw the state as using their art for its own foreign policy goals.³⁹ Interestingly, from the point of view of artist-regime relations, even among those artists who had started to abstain, all but a very few continued to retain cordial, and even friendly, relations with regime figures.⁴⁰ In some cases, an artist would decide to abstain from a traveling

³⁸ While in the dissertation I write specifically about the campaigns of non-participation encouraged by the AAP in Madrid in 1970, these were far from the only instances of this practice. For example, in December of 1976, when artists discovered that an exhibition set to take place in Lanzarote had been financed by the local branch of the Movimiento, artists immediately withdrew their artworks. “Documentación relativa a la retirada de varios artistas del Certamen Internacional de Artistas Plásticos Castillo de San José (Lanzarote),” Box 867, Folder 9, Archivo Arenillas, Archivo Central, MNCARS.

³⁹ For example, painter Amalia Avia expressed appreciation in retrospect for the work of official curator Luis González Robles in the promotion of Spanish art abroad. She also wrote about being avowedly against the regime, and the anti-regime political activities of her artist husband, Lucio Muñoz. In other words, these two beliefs were not mutually exclusive. See: Amalia Avia, *De puertas adentro* (Barcelona: Taurus, 2020), 239-240 and Chapter 29, “La gran familia artística y la oposición al régimen”.

⁴⁰ For example, in a letter from artist Rafael Canogar to Carlos Areán from the end of 1962, the former wrote to his “dear friend” to explain that while he was not interested in participating in any of the latter’s group exhibitions, he nevertheless thanked him for his very important work, even promising to send along one of his drawings for Areán’s

international exhibition, while still agreeing to a domestic retrospective – the latter being perceived as not overtly promotional for the regime in the same way as the former. In many cases, it appears that an understood norm permeated the culture in which an artist who reluctantly agreed to participate in an official exhibition would soon find themselves as the subject of a new book or article about their work. It is the existence of this relatively elusive category of artists' actions – when we cannot firmly assign to an artist a definitive stance toward the regime – that has continually encouraged scholarly and popular opinion to see Franco-era artists as opportunists. As I will demonstrate throughout the dissertation, however, Spain's artistic community, while far from being a unified bloc, supported artistic and professional pluralism, better opportunities for art domestically, and more of their own involvement in official artistic affairs. Such goals did not align with those of either the arts apparatus or the Francoist state.

Chapter Overview

In order to demonstrate, describe, and analyze the many interactions between all relevant figures, chapters are arranged thematically, and events are portrayed chronologically within each. While Chapters 1 and 2 take as their primary subjects the arts apparatus and artists, respectively, all subsequent chapters have set out to show the relationship between them.

I set the stage in Chapter 1 by detailing how the diffuse structure of the arts apparatus affected its making of art policy. Like others who have argued for a more nuanced understanding of the Franco regime, I show why this approach is necessary for examining the composition of the decentralized arts apparatus, as it allows a valuable lens into how certain departments

personal collection. Letter from Rafael Canogar to Carlos Areán, undated [but likely from November or December of 1962], Box 17973, Folder: Año 1962 (artes plásticas y audiovisuales), (03)49.3, AGA.

pioneered particular initiatives, often at the behest of just a few individual protagonists. The arts apparatus experienced an evolution in its ideas about the role art was meant to play for Franco's Spain. The first decade of the regime saw a neglect of art policy, followed by a decade in which art, and especially modern art, was envisaged by officials of the arts apparatus as a valuable tool of international cultural diplomacy. It is during the 1950s that the various departments of the arts apparatus came to understand and appreciate modern art by ascribing to it a set of interpretations that fit the Francoist worldview. After 1957, the arts apparatus started to pay more attention to the arts domestically, although never in a way that democratized to allow artists more of a say in their own affairs. The final period I identify, beginning with the internal crisis of the regime in 1969, saw a fractured art policy incapable of convincing artists it had their best interests in mind.

Chapter 2 analyzes the wave of new groups of artists that formed in response to the perceived lack of artistic opportunity in the late 1950s. The authoritarian milieu created the conditions that made it desirable for artists to band together for reasons of art production and a greater sense of solidarity. Artists' own coming together in civil society should be seen as a parallel process to that of the arts apparatus, who at the exact same time was coming to terms with its own visual arts policy. Looking into the histories and artistic worldviews of Equipo 57, the Parpalló group, and El Paso shows how each sought to instill in Spanish art new avant-garde techniques that bore a social commitment, an interpretation the regime chose to ignore. In the face of a regime only timidly supportive of modern art in the 1950s, the trajectory of Spanish art would change with official curator Luis González Robles's support of Informalismo, making the genre, for a time, the officially-backed art of the Spanish state. This decision would have important ramifications for the very direction of Spanish art itself, not to mention Spanish artists' mobilization. The same conditions that caused groups of artists to band together in the late 1950s

still existed when the Asociación de Artistas Plásticos (AAP) was founded in Madrid a decade later, this time well-equipped not only to support artistic creation, but also to act as a professional advocate for Spanish artists. In sum, this chapter explains how artists became a collective actor that became strong enough to influence artistic production and art policy.

Chapters 3 and 4 each treat different aspects of the role of private art galleries in Franco's Spain. Together, they show how the Ministry of Information and Tourism's view of art galleries changed from seeing them as potential allies in promoting Spanish art to seeing them as sites of oppositional political activism. In Chapter 3, I analyze how policy changes within the Ministry of Information and Tourism in the autumn of 1962 made private art galleries a new object of official attention. Regime bureaucrat Carlos Areán's plans to forge collaborations between his office and private art galleries, such as the Galería René Metras, underscores the attempt to keep artists within the regime's reach. The unsuccessful outcome of these plans makes the case for the increasing divide between the General Directorate of Information's vision of what it wanted out of Spain's artists and the opportunities that artists actually desired. Chapter 4 hones in on private art galleries as sites of a diverse civil society, with special attention to the Galería Mordó and the Galería Redor, both of Madrid. While vibrant artistic communities had formed around art galleries, the regime's uneven application of its own policies meant to root out dissident political activity undermined its own efforts to do so.

Chapter 5 analyzes a successful moment of mass artistic protest that did the most to undermine the regime's legitimacy. In response to decades of declining interest among Spain's artistic community toward the recurrent National Exhibition of Fine Arts, the General Directorate of Fine Arts finally undertook a reform of the official exhibition-cum-contest in the late 1960s. While the arts apparatus's own decision-making in this matter is illustrative of

authoritarian politics, artists' reactions to the reform show a moment of peak artistic mobilization under the Asociación de Artistas Plásticos, who urged artists' non-participation, successfully becoming at that point a social movement. The regime's continued attempts to make changes to the exhibition signaled the ineffectiveness of their reforms as much as their direct admissions of failure.

Lastly, the Escuela Superior de Bellas Artes of Madrid is the setting of Chapter 6. The chapter analyzes the complex dynamic between students, faculty members, and the higher-ups of the General Directorate of Fine Arts. Adding to the scholarship of Spain's student movement, I reveal how the budgetary neglect of the General Directorate of Fine Arts and its continued broken promises fueled student demands about both pragmatic and pedagogical concerns. When the move to a school building and new legislation in the late 1960s failed to deliver on the regime's promises, the AAP provided guidance to its student members, providing them with the wherewithal and resources to demand substantial changes to the form and function of their education that would outlive the association's presence. Faculty members likewise faced their own process of disillusionment with the regime over the perpetually postponed legislation to integrate the school into the university system.

In sum, the chapters that make up this dissertation give substance to our understanding of why the making of art policy in late Francoist Spain was such a fraught and multi-directional process. Because looking to the paradigms of 'liberalization' and 'repression' are not helpful in defining regime behavior with regard to the making of visual arts policy, the regime's domestic art policy is best understood as having been guided by a paternalistic, sanctimonious, and hierarchical authoritarianism, not willing or capable of letting artists and art students have more of a say in their own affairs. Members of the arts apparatus failed to fully grasp that they were

the origin of the artistic community's shift away from official artistic life. The regime's arts apparatus did try to adapt at various moments, but only when it deemed that not doing so was detrimental to its own legitimacy or survival. After decades of neglect on the one hand, and authoritarian conformity on the other, by the last years of the dictatorship such behaviors revealed to Spain's artistic community the art apparatus's fundamental incapacity toward any level of democratization. From the drive that encouraged groups of Spanish artists to find community in each other and in private art galleries, to the organizing a decade later of the AAP, the figures of Spain's artistic community failed to find legitimacy in the arts apparatus of the Franco regime. This dissertation is the attempt to make that process legible.

Chapter 1 – The Arts Apparatus of the Franco Regime

The decentralized structure of the arts apparatus of the Franco regime was itself a telling indicator of how the dictatorship's top members thought of the role of the visual arts in Spain. This is to say, they did not confer upon the arts much importance in the grand scheme of things. Not organized under a centralized ministry of culture, or even a unitary general directorate within a larger body, the several offices, departments, and agencies that we can identify as having overseen the visual arts were quite dispersed among the state, party, and Spain's royal academies. The upper echelon of the Franco regime cannot be blamed entirely for this structure because much of it had been inherited from the Second Republic. As one decade of the Francoist dictatorship moved into the next, however, the arts apparatus of the regime would become more – not less – complicated with the addition of both the Ministry of Information and Tourism (MIT) as well as greater attention to cultural matters by the singular Francoist political party, the Movimiento. In other words, not only was there no attempt at the consolidation of offices related to the arts, culture, publishing, and censorship, but moreover, there remained throughout the entirety of the dictatorship an utter lack of political will and interest to do so. Bureaucrats of the arts apparatus seemed unaware that the diffuse structure itself was a major factor complicating the direction and oversight of cultural matters.

It seems that the Francoist state should have wanted to consolidate its cultural affairs, especially when the brand-new regime's restructuring of the governmental apparatus was a given in the late 1930s and early 1940s. As an anti-democratic authoritarian regime, surely funneling all aspects of cultural affairs into a single centralized ministry or department would have made sense for dictating and enforcing policy, budgeting monies, and concentrating expertise. That the regime did not do this can be chalked up both to the fact that the government's priorities were

elsewhere, but also to the structural rigidities built into the system. It was not as though top regime figures shot down suggestions to consolidate offices into a ministry of culture, but rather, it does not seem that it occurred to anyone in power that any such restructuring should happen in the first place. This is also not to say that cultural bureaucrats felt their work free of obstacles and problems. Perpetual underfunding and a lack of standardization and professionalization was a problem throughout. At times, a lack of clear boundaries caused tensions, and at others, differing agendas simply caused confusion and led to the schizophrenic application of policy. On the flipside, the diffuse configuration was conducive to the emergence of individual bureaucrats' pet projects and initiatives. For both of these reasons, the decentralization of the arts apparatus was fundamental to the making of art policy, and explains its shape, however seemingly incongruous. Thus, while there was an overarching bureaucratic and hierarchical inflexibility to the Franco regime, this is not to deny any changes within its governmental bodies or priorities; there was an evolution to the arts apparatus over time, especially as individual protagonists experimented with a new reform or initiative.

The primary goal of this chapter is to identify, map, and describe the arts apparatus of the Franco regime, showing its evolution throughout the entirety of the dictatorship. There is more to this purpose than meets the eye. While mapping the genealogy of the arts apparatus certainly fulfills the basic function of providing detailed background information, the rationale behind it comes from the place of wanting to institute a necessary corrective. Even among other studies of cultural and art policy in Spain, there has been very little attempt to understand the composition of the arts apparatus and its primary figures. A major part of this may be owed to the fact that cultural policy as a whole has often taken a back seat to economic policy and studies of political administration in scholars' analyses. In addition, given that the arts apparatus of the Franco

dictatorship was actually various departments spread across multiple ministries and party offices, documenting the history of the cultural bureaucracy of the regime is also much more complicated than a matter of tracing the history of a singular organization. Within the realm of the visual arts specifically, another complicating factor in getting to better understand the arts apparatus has been a disinterest in doing so by those who believe that paying attention to the regime is the same as celebrating it. On the one hand, many leftist artists, scholars, and intellectuals have been content to consider ‘the regime’ in the singular, as a monolithic entity, in which one bureaucrat was the same as the next, or assume that all regime figures acted in unison primarily as agents of political repression. On the other hand, some scholars have seemed reluctant to point out that the dictatorship evolved, as though acknowledging its change over time somehow also lends credibility to the position of Francoist apologists, who often argue that the regime developed toward democracy as a purposeful plan.¹ The reality, however, is far more interesting, nuanced, and complicated than these opinions and experiences suggest. As I will make clear in this chapter and throughout the dissertation, while there is absolutely truth to the fact that bureaucrats similar in education, age, and ideological stance could be thought of as a distinct grouping, the simple fact that they would share a similar profile on paper did not mean that all were exactly alike. Ultimately, a very small grouping of individuals, almost all men, would exercise control over Spain’s art policy, and taking the time to see how they operated allows us to better understand the nature of the late Francoist regime. I also highlight throughout my analysis the many reasons why we should understand the arts apparatus as failing to be representative of either of the dominant ‘liberalization’ or ‘repression’ interpretive paradigms.

¹ I have explained in the Introduction the entire panorama of positions as being related to the original ‘cultural desert’ debate and its recent iterations. The first position has been one adopted by many Spanish artists-in-exile, and even some contemporary scholars such as Jorge Luis Marzo, and the latter position is often articulated by scholars of social movements who have been largely reluctant to pay any attention to the regime or its protagonists at all.

While it may seem initially contradictory to everything I have claimed so far, I also want to argue that despite the decentralized nature of the arts apparatus, there were some key ways in which the various entities were unified. We should still understand them to share fundamental structural similarities, paternalistic attitudes about the regime's role in the visual arts, and aesthetic preferences. For example, built into the structure of arguably all Francoist bureaucracy was a sense of paternalism and hierarchy. The various departments shared an underlying set of assumptions about the visual arts premised on the need to always ask one's superior for permission to proceed, which meant that a rather small number of figures overall decided the majority of decisions. Many of the same upper-level government bureaucrats would circulate from a top position in one ministry to that of another – namely Florentino Pérez Embid, Alfredo Sánchez Bella, Luis González Robles, and Carlos Areán – while lower-level bureaucrats in the arts tended to stay within the same department, if not the same position, for their entire careers. That even seemingly small decisions needed the approval of a superior to change an aspect of an established process meant that what might have been solved quickly and easily often turned into a prolonged ordeal. The delays that resulted then typically meant that the arts apparatus found it difficult to respond to challenges quickly. Low pay and the consistent lack of enough funds was also a perpetual problem and a factor that dissuaded figures from taking action, and discouraged reform more generally. Thus, not only did most government officials not want to be bothered to expend the effort needed to enact changes, but even when they did, it meant that change was often slow and incremental or came as the result of what was deemed to have reached the level of an emergency. The persistence of penury, rigidity, and hierarchy prevented most government officials from being able to see outside of the constraints that the system set for them, which

meant that even when the political will *did exist* to enact reform, bureaucrats perceived even tiny changes as much more substantial than they actually were.

Furthermore, official aesthetic preferences were premised on which styles of art brought the most prestige to the regime internationally. Thus, a relatively homogenous set of aesthetic tastes coalesced over the years, which stripped various art movements from their natural origins, and reinscribed them with altered or new ones. Figures of the arts apparatus took cues from early twentieth-century intellectual traditions, mixed them with contemporary interpretations by artists and art critics to identify and define certain art movements with qualities that fit within the Francoist worldview.

There are many instances in which it will be important to appreciate the jurisdictional differences between different departments so as to explain moments of conflict, contradiction, or competition. That said, on the whole, there are enough shared premises among cultural bureaucrats about the role that arts and culture should play, independent of which department one belonged to, that we may still recognize an ‘arts apparatus’ in the singular. When it matters, I have made it clear exactly to whom or to which entity I refer. This attention to detail with regard to the various individuals and offices that made up the arts apparatus is consistent with a new trend in the scholarship of *franquismo* more generally, which strives to interrogate internal regime dynamics, conflicts, and reforms.

Dissecting the Franco Regime

There has been a new trend in the historical scholarship of the late Franco regime to pay more attention than ever before to internal regime dynamics in order to more accurately characterize the nature of the regime. Building off of long-established, but under-studied moments of governmental and party re-organization, these scholars have sought to explicate

moments of fracture and conflict within the regime. What has already been established is that the Franco regime experienced an internal political crisis from 1969, which was largely the result of the lack of a unified political project, the reasons for which had originated decades prior. Not only was the regime from its very beginning made up of several so-called “families” of the dictatorship (monarchists, Catholics, Falangists, Carlists, the military, and certain economic elites), each of which had particular interests and agendas, but moreover, there were also issues that divided the “families” themselves. The existence of these various factions has made the late Francoist political milieu particularly complicated, and an area of renewed scholarly interest, which has centered around two main trends: 1) to emphasize precisely what this lack of unity looked like throughout the late Francoist period, especially dating from a large governmental reorganization in 1957; and 2) the various ways in which the regime’s own internal reforms triggered unexpected consequences.

While different case studies naturally have their own particularities, promising suppositions have started to consolidate toward a few chief conclusions. For example, we know that disagreement between different socio-political groupings within the dictatorship only furthered internal conflict, but now we are starting to understand these groupings as having more overlap and less defined boundaries, and also seeing more clearly the issues that divided members of a given “family.” Additionally, other case studies have started to show how regime institutions ended up inadvertently pushing onetime supporters away with continued unfulfilled or empty promises.² Among both trends, scholars have determined that none of the various

² As an example of the former, see: Nicolás Sesma Landrín, “Paving *the Way* for the Transition? The Administrative Reform of the late 1950s,” in *From Franco to Freedom*, ed. Miguel Ángel Ruiz Carnicer (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2019), 175-207. For the latter, see: Miguel Ángel Ruiz Carnicer, et al. *Una juventud en tiempo de dictadura: El Servicio Universitario del Trabajo (SUT) 1950-1969* (Madrid: Los Libros de La Catarata, 2021), and Claudio Hernández Burgos, “The Dismantling of Spanish ‘Fascism’: Socio-Political Attitudes during the Late Franco Dictatorship (1962-76),” in *From Franco to Freedom*, ed. Miguel Ángel Ruiz Carnicer (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2019), 208-230.

groupings of the Franco regime was able to fundamentally reform itself toward democracy, as underscored by the fact that the various messages emanating from all official sectors were failing to resonate with ever greater segments of Spanish society. While certainly not all turned into political militants, increasing numbers of Spaniards failed to find legitimacy in the regime in its final years. Thus, this branch of scholarship does not negate the role of these disillusioned individuals and groups of dissidents outside the regime, but rather seeks to contextualize such external challenges to the dictatorship alongside the regime's own internal ones.

What has also been established was the extent to which two distinct political cultures existed within late Francoism. Even before the Spanish Civil War was won, the various "families" in support of Franco and his Nationalist rebels were unified under the banner of the pre-existing *Falange* party, expanded in scope and goals to become a unitary political party encompassing all who supported the new dictatorship. These various groupings were arguably at their most unified in the early years of the dictatorship, but it did not take long before the consolidation of the regime only served to highlight differences between their competing agendas. By the late 1950s, while there had been more than only a duality, two rather distinct primary political cultures had emerged, each with their own worldview of Francoism.

One of these groupings formed around the original utopian project of the Falange, which had its origins as a fascist party from before the Spanish Civil War. The Falange's early beliefs were classically fascist, in that its adherents were desirous of a new Spanish modernity (based on an invented, glorified past), and believed in mobilizing the population to achieve such ends. The party was adopted and adapted by Franco to become *the* party of the Franco regime, although amplified to encompass other groupings as well, as reflected in the full name of the party itself.³

³ When the Falange Española de las J.O.N.S. was instated in early 1934, it was itself a merger between two distinct pre-existing groups: the Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista (J.O.N.S.) and the Falange. In April of 1937,

Furthermore, especially after 1945 (with the defeat of the Axis powers in the Second World War) the party shed even more of its early program, forms, and symbols – hence, for example, the shift to calling the party the Movimiento (the Movement). Thus, while under Franco, the Falange is best understood as a coalition of various “families,” and not all of its members endorsed the party’s pre-war fascist tenets, there was still always an underlying dimension to Falange/Movimiento programs, campaigns, and projects that retained the party’s original ethos, especially as many leading *falangistas* with top positions in the state had been among the party’s earliest members. Thus, while any Francoist supporter was likely to be a card-carrying member of the party, within this larger grouping, there was an elite of true believers, who continued to promote an attitude and belief in anti-democratic mobilization.

The second major grouping around which a political project would develop was around the Catholic Church. In the early years of the dictatorship, this position took on a moralizing bent, set on cleansing Spain of its atheistic elements, and wanting to reinscribe Catholicism over all aspects of daily life. In the early years of the dictatorship, this worldview coexisted alongside the projected Falangist utopia, and was itself a position that encompassed multiple groupings (lay Catholics, clergy, monarchists, etc.). By the late 1950s, this once relatively harmonious worldview would start to fracture as Catholics themselves evolved into distinct positions. At this same time, one grouping in particular came to shed much of its original ideological weight, although still believed in the authoritarian system of government and in the value of Catholicism in guiding political life, and would come to support efficient bureaucracy and economic development. By the late 1950s, these so-called ‘technocrats,’ most of whom were affiliated with

Franco’s righthand man, Ramón Serrano Suñer, expanded the party whose name was changed into the Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las J.O.N.S., to account for the addition of the Carlist *requetés* and other Catholic groups.

the Catholic sect of Opus Dei, would be the most numerous front-runners in terms of advancing a direction for the regime.⁴

Also recognized as a key moment with respect to internal regime dynamics, a governmental reorganization in 1957 conferred power to the technocrats who gained the leadership of key ministries and oversight of economic policy, at the expense of the Falange, who lost a few cabinet positions. Both political projects continued to coexist, however, each articulating a different vision of the regime. While the Falangists wanted to encourage Spaniards' active participation in its institutions, the technocrats stressed the importance of a professionalization and streamlining of the governmental apparatus. Thus, scholars agree that this new balance of entities within the ruling coalition caused tensions and was responsible for the Movimiento's adoption of new measures in order to attempt to stay relevant among sectors of the population. As one author has pointed out, however, and as will become evident in later chapters of this dissertation, neither position should be seen as a monolithic entity, as there was more cooperation and exchange between them than typically recognized, in addition to individuals whose allegiances were to both.⁵ This pattern is also relevant to figures of the arts apparatus.

By 1969, the political crisis of the regime was the result of a hardening of the division between these once ardent supporters of the dictatorship. The division, however, did not split exclusively along the Falangist/technocratic line, as often assumed. Instead, the division was

⁴ The competing nationalist projects have been articulated by Ismael Saz Campos, *España contra España: Los nacionalismos franquistas* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2003). A nice summary of these "utopian" projects is provided by Javier Muñoz Soro, "Public Opinion and Political Culture in a Post-Fascist Dictatorship (1957-77)," in *From Franco to Freedom: The Roots of the Transition to Democracy in Spain, 1962-1982*, ed. Miguel Ángel Ruiz Carnicer (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2019), 102-104.

⁵ Nicolás Sesma Landrín argues that it is difficult to regard either of these groupings as a monolithic bloc, and stresses that what we see in retrospect as two competing political projects was not yet apparent in 1957. Sesma Landrín, "Paving *the Way* for the Transition?," 175-207.

between those in favor of serious political reform and those, known as the “bunker,” who were not, with members of the various “families” spread out across both positions.⁶ Under the leadership of Franco’s right-hand man, Admiral Luís Carrero Blanco,⁷ the “bunker” won out as of 1969. The forced adoption of this hardline position arguably served to further exacerbate internal tensions, rather than funnel them into a clear direction. The period after 1969, and lasting even after Franco’s death, is a time of the regime’s return to more repressive measures. Even just a brief glimpse at the names of those heading each ministry in the first half of the 1970s, for example, reveals the frequent turnover of personnel, hardly in a position long enough to push any new measures through, never mind promulgate any change. Thus, the increasingly violent responses of the various state’s security and policing apparatuses were directed against the increasing levels of popular mobilization, but this was also a last-ditch effort of a regime that was too divided to articulate any other plan of action that would have required actual coordination and planning. Ultimately, the demise of the Franco regime is best understood not only as the result of bottom-up mobilization (as has often been emphasized), but also this internal crisis.

Thus, this scholarly interpretation of how we should understand the nature of political change in late Francoist Spain – as the result of both of internal and external challenges – has guided my approach to analyzing the top-down and bottom-up nature of policy making related to the visual arts in Spain. With respect to the visual arts specifically, the pattern holds – we can understand visual arts policy making as a story of the combined social mobilization and the efforts of those in Spain’s artistic community who articulated their own vision for the visual arts,

⁶ Muñoz Soro, “Public Opinion and Political Culture...,” 106.

⁷ As Franco’s health was in decline, Carrero Blanco was officially appointed as head of government (prime minister) in June 1973. He was famously assassinated by the Basque nationalist ETA group in December of that same year.

but their success was partially the result of the regime's internal conflicts and changes from within, which created the spaces, almost always inadvertently, for civil society and social movements to be able to form. Furthermore, the arts apparatus failed to define a future for the visual arts, which when coupled with botched reforms and empty promises, only served to instill a sense of injustice to many who just wanted to be able to live and work with the expectation of basic educational and professional guarantees.

The Evolution of the Francoist Arts Apparatus

The lack of a single centralized ministry or department in charge of cultural affairs was itself a defining feature of art policy in Franco's Spain. Different offices in charge of the visual arts emanated from distinct ministries and institutions with inherently different agendas, a reality that allowed many competing interests and initiatives to coexist. It was also a system that awarded individual figures prominent roles; many cultural bureaucrats would serve the Spanish state for their entire careers, often outlasting the Transition. Over the course of the nearly four decades of the Franco dictatorship, the following entities would play a role in some aspect of policy making related to the visual arts: the General Directorate of Fine Arts within the Ministry of Education, the General Directorate of Information within the Ministry of Information and Tourism, the General Directorate of Cultural Relations with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Instituto de Cultura Hispánica (ICH), the four seats of Spain's Royal Academy of Fine Arts, and even distinct offices within the Falange/Movimiento.

The story of how these entities articulated art policy at home is best understood as being divided around four main periods: 1) 1939-1950, the era of government neglect of the arts, 2) 1951-1957, which saw the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its related entities at the forefront of art policy, 3) a period from 1957 until 1968, in which the regime tried to cement its relationship

with modern art, and lastly 3), the period from 1969 until 1978, which saw the crisis of the regime and inability to articulate a vision for the artistic life of the country.

1939-1950

The period between 1939 and 1950 is best characterized by the regime's neglect of the arts. At the formal installation of the Franco regime in 1939, the relevant entities in charge of art policy domestically were the General Directorate of Fine Arts of the Ministry of Education, in charge of the public-facing nationwide cultural policy of institutions (museums, monuments, and libraries), a Vice-secretariat of Population Education (VEP) housed within the Falange and later Education in charge of censorship,⁸ and Spain's four Royal Academies of Fine Arts.

Even allowing for the consolidation throughout the decade, it is fair to say that the regime did little else than rebuild the very basic structure of formal artistic life and had no real plan or unified vision of what role the visual arts was meant to play.⁹ Even with the drastic disruptions caused by the Spanish Civil War, including, of course, the death, jailing, purging, and exiling of Spaniards who were intellectuals and artists,¹⁰ one of the ways in which any semblance of cultural life resumed in the 1940s was that the regime relied on preexisting institutions, especially the General Directorate of Fine Arts and the royal academies. Thus, when we look at the numbers of working art critics, or Spanish artists affiliated with Spain's upper level art schools, for example, we see that these positions experienced lesser turn-over than often

⁸ The history of the early censorship offices of the Franco regime has a complicated trajectory. What first started in 1938 as an entity under Franco's wartime Ministry of the Interior then passed in 1941 to the Falange, where it was known as the Vicesecretaría de Educación Popular (VEP). In 1945, the VEP was said to have disbanded, but actually was incorporated wholesale as the Undersecretariat of Popular Education into the Ministry of Education, before being transferred in 1951 into the newly-created Ministry of Information and Tourism.

⁹ Ángel Llorente Hernández, *Arte e ideología en el franquismo (1936-1951)* (Madrid: Visor, 1995).

¹⁰ One source has created lists of these artists (broadly defined) who left Spain and went into exile, were executed (or died in captivity), or who were purged from their positions. Jorge Luis Marzo and Patricia Mayayo, *Arte en España (1939-2015): ideas, prácticas, políticas* (Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra, 2015), 61-65.

assumed, ensuring continuity in the official artistic apparatuses.¹¹ Thus, while the formal structures of official state-led cultural life were relatively unchanged, this is not to deny that the sudden disruption to the work of the first wave of avant-garde artists had deep-seated, drastic, and irrevocable ramifications for the development of modern art movements in Spain.

While leading figures within the General Directorate would make moves to ensure the department's leadership over certain aspects of art policy in the Francoist period, the shape and format of this office retained the structure and duties from its founding in 1915. The office's duties, led by a director general, were organized around four main areas: 1) the promotion and development of the fine arts in the form of art museums, exhibitions, and festivals, including the recurrent *Exposiciones Nacionales de Bellas Artes*; 2) overseeing upper-level artistic education in the form of the *Escuelas Superiores de Bellas Artes* (ESBAs) and also those of *Artes y Oficios* (the upper-level fine arts and applied arts schools, respectively), and music conservatories; 3) the preservation and promulgation of national monuments; and 4) the management of archives, libraries, and archeological museums.

Key also to the artistic life of the 1940s were the four seats of Spain's Royal Academy of Fine Arts, in Madrid, Barcelona, Sevilla, and Valencia, each created in earlier centuries, and once wedded to the Spanish crown. Known for upholding traditionalist values in the arts, members of these institutions during the Francoist period would remain against any kind of artistic modernization campaigns. As many members of the royal academies were also faculty members at Spain's official upper-level art schools, their anti-modernist preferences would continue to influence the development of Spain's national artistic panorama. From the 1940s the General Directorate of Fine Arts would do its best to wrest oversight from the areas where

¹¹ Llorente Hernández, *Arte e ideología en el franquismo*, 142, 176, and 223.

members of the royal academies once held sway (e.g. the judging panels of the National Exhibition of Fine Arts), although never eliminating their role outright in national artistic life.

While members of Spain's arts apparatus certainly knew and understood that art and aesthetics could communicate important messages, their efforts to aestheticize Francoist politics were never unified. There were certainly some aesthetic trends that began as early as the Spanish Civil War which attempted to celebrate the new regime: portraits of Franco on horseback, images praising Catholic Spain while denigrating the Spain of the "reds" [*“rojos”*], and even some surrealist imagery created by old guard Spanish fascists. In line with the theory of fascist revolution, some ardent *falangistas* sought a new and dramatic modern art for a new Spain, and despite articulating such ideas visually and in writing, such declarations never came close to defining a regime-led art policy. But despite early artistic ferment in support of the regime, none of these trends – nor any combination of them – was molded into an enduring art of the new regime.¹² And while a few new trends in modern art would reemerge in Spain by the late 1940s, the overall artistic panorama was one in which landscape paintings, still-lives, and portraits were in the majority.

The largely hands-off attitude at this time and lack of an 'official' art meant that artists and gallerists were largely free to explore various genres, styles, and inspirations without interference. The regime looked to initiatives and locales in the private sector as able to pick up the slack of what it did and could not provide. In this sense, Spanish artists in the first half of the regime moved either in or near official circles willingly or because they were the only font of opportunities – for the most part, regime figures and artists had largely cooperative, uncomplicated relationships.

¹² This is a central argument for Llorente Hernández in *Arte e ideología en el franquismo*, expressed throughout this monograph, but stated explicitly in his short Introduction, 17-18.

1951-1957

This period was a formative one for the arts apparatus with respect to coming to terms with how best to understand the role of the visual arts within the Spanish state. While all entities of the arts apparatus would start to become more active in their respective activities, this era saw the General Directorate of Cultural Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as a related office called the Instituto de Cultura Hispánica (ICH), in charge of the majority of the big artistic developments of the period. By the 1950s, while the regime as a whole was still rather neglectful of maintaining a rigorous art policy, individual bureaucrats and artists (and groups of artists) did start to push for a more variegated artistic panorama. The first stirrings of the official acceptance of modern art began in the early 1950s, in response to the first new post-Spanish Civil War art movements which emerged around 1947-48. During the first part of the 1950s, in the realm of foreign policy, the ICH undertook the sponsorship of three large international exhibitions (the so-named *Bienales Hispanoamericanas de Arte*) meant to sponsor the best artwork of what the Hispanic world had to offer, including also Portugal, Brazil, the Philippines, the United States, and Canada.¹³ The first *Bienal Hispanoamericana del Arte*, held in Madrid in 1951 under Alfredo Sánchez Bella, was noted for its inclusion of works of modern art, and what has been recognized in retrospect as the state's abandonment to shape its own Francoist art.¹⁴ In addition to sponsoring two more *Bienales* (in Havana in 1953 and in Barcelona in 1955), the ICH also organized the First Conference of Abstract Art (*Primer Congreso Internacional de Arte*

¹³ The ICH was technically autonomous, but in practice was dependent on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

¹⁴ For many of the artists mentioned in this dissertation, the Hispano-American Biennial in 1951 was the first large international exhibition in which their artworks were featured. This is true of R. Canogar, M. Millares, M. Rivera, and A. Suárez, who would come to be members of El Paso, but also fellow Madrid-based artist F. Farreras, and Catalan artists J. J. Tharrats, A. Tàpies, M. Cuixart, and J. Ponç. Miguel Cabañas Bravo, *La política artística del franquismo: el hito de la Bienal Hispano-Americana de Arte* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1996), 211-230.

Abstracto) in Santander in the summer of 1953, accompanied by an art exhibition, which was the first major regime-sponsored event to openly support the development of abstract art.¹⁵

Thus, while aesthetic tastes were coalescing toward certain varieties of modern art in the interest of cultural diplomacy, there was also evidence of an appreciation of modern art domestically owing largely to one man who was well situated as official patron. Architect José Luis Fernández del Amo was the director of the Madrid-based Museum of Contemporary Art, an entity under the Ministry of Education, between 1952-1958.¹⁶ One of the initiatives he engendered was to have an art exhibition space, the Sala Negra, dedicated to temporary exhibitions of modern art. Fernández del Amo, in addition to working closely at the museum with art critics José María Moreno Galván and Cirilo Popovici, was also personal friends with many artists who worked with him to promote the museum abroad.¹⁷ It is evident from their relationships that artists did not really envisage Fernández del Amo as a member of the official arts apparatus in the way they did others; they saw him as one of the few figures at this time who was interested in promoting the visual arts within the country. While artists recognized ICH initiatives as being different from what Fernández del Amo was trying to build, it's clear that this was not yet a time when Spanish artists saw any potential conflicts of interest in boosting regime-led projects. In an attempt to characterize the relationship between artists and regime

¹⁵ The various lectures given at the conference were compiled into the following volume: *El arte abstracto y sus problemas* (Madrid: Ediciones Cultura Hispánica, 1956).

¹⁶ María Dolores Jiménez-Blanco, *Arte y Estado en la España del siglo XX* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1989), 69-111.

¹⁷ There are several letters conserved within the collection of the Library and Documentation Centre (BDC) of the MNCARS in which Spanish artists in the early and mid 1950s wrote to colleagues and friends in other parts of Spain and abroad seeking support for the museum and soliciting works for exhibitions under the initiative of Fernández del Amo. For example, there is a series of letters from Eusebio Sempere to Fernández del Amo from 1957: RESERVA 2280, RESERVA 2281, and RESERVA 2282. Luis González Robles and José María Moreno Galván also traveled to Paris in the summer of 1956 to try to get Spanish artists living there to have more involvement with the museum. See: "Informe para tratar de incorporar a las actividades del Museo de Arte Contemporáneo a todos los grupos de artistas españoles de París," July 7, 1956, RESERVA 2851.

figures in this decade, historian and politician Javier Tusell explained that this was a time in which it had not yet occurred to artists to refuse regime patronage, nor was it yet a formal regime policy to integrate artists politically within it.¹⁸

Independent of some individual detractors, this time period saw the tide turn toward the appreciation of modern art, and especially the Spanish variant of Art Informel known as Informalismo. It was for the aforementioned events of the ICH that the first official public speeches came out in favor of artistic renovation. The ideas of officials such as then minister of Education Joaquín Ruiz Giménez, and art critics to the likes of Rafael Santos Torroella, Ricardo Gullón, Luis Felipe Vivanco, Miguel Sánchez Camargo, and Juan Antonio Gaya Nuño reiterated the positive qualities of new trends in Spanish modern art by likening them to the latest interpretation of Spain's artistic tradition. Art critics started to make the argument that abstract expressionist art was not incompatible with tradition, religious purity, nor even an innate sense of Spanishness.¹⁹

Whether these figures realized their intellectual debts or not, their ideas were influenced by philosophers José Ortega y Gasset and Eugenio d'Ors, each of whom had articulated, in prior decades, ideas that explained modern art as a natural outcome of Spain's cultural development.²⁰

¹⁸ Javier Tusell, "Política y cultura en los cincuenta," *Del Surrealismo al Informalismo. Arte de los 50 en Madrid* (Madrid: Comunidad de Madrid, Consejería de Cultura, Dirección General de Patrimonio Cultural), Sala de Exposiciones de la Comunidad de Madrid, 9 mayo – 14 julio 1991, 40-41.

¹⁹ I am indebted to the comprehensive work of art historian Julián Díaz Sánchez, wherein he shows how, for a time, Informalismo became the official art of *franquismo*. His work is instrumental to explaining how various positions coalesced into the official position on modern art adopted over the course of the 1950s by the arts apparatus. See his *La idea de arte abstracto en la España de Franco* (Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra, 2013). As just one of many examples, art critic José María Moreno Galván described Informalismo throughout the 1950s as both universal and Spanish by arguing that the genre was part of the "contemporary spirit," but formed under "Spanish conditions." José María Moreno Galván, "La realidad de España y la realidad de un Informalismo español," *Papeles de Son Armadans* 37 (April 1959): 117-128.

²⁰ Of the same generation and concerned with Spain's ability to produce art and culture in the early twentieth century, both d'Ors and Ortega y Gasset espoused theories in the 1910s and 1920s that sought to explain Spain's role in cultural and artistic creation. D'Ors saw art as being separate from politics, which meant that he explained new artistic developments as being autonomous developments. At the same time, d'Ors also saw all art as being a product of tradition – he believed that all art had an origin in either "the Classic" or "the Baroque" – thus providing

In the case of the former, abstract expressionism was seen as less “dehumanized” than geometric abstraction, and in the case of the latter, a belief that all art emanated from traditional origins made it easier to divorce art movements from their historical context. Thus, Spanish cultural officials of the 1950s started to see the new modern art being created in Spain at this time as not new at all, but rather as a return to tradition that drew upon inherently Spanish sentiments.

What this ideological hodgepodge also meant was that there was no one figure responsible for the creation of the state’s adopted narratives about modern art. In many instances, for example, the ideas that Spanish artists themselves had started to express also contributed to the growing theoretical corpus about abstract and modern art, in which the most pliable ideas gained ground among art critics and regime arts bureaucrats. Where the regime’s arts apparatus was able to imbue art with meanings the artists had not intended, such ideas were still often built from some kernel of an artist’s original idea.²¹ For all of the potential stumbling blocks about the

a way to interpret new art as a historical constant. Also, as the head of the Academia Breve Crítica de Arte, a salon-style grouping of individuals who hosted annual art exhibitions that began in 1942, d’Ors’ ideas were instrumental in establishing a way of explaining and interpreting art during the early Franco period. Several of Ortega y Gasset’s ideas likewise proved helpful for the official support of Informalismo. Ortega y Gasset famously defended modernism in his “The Dehumanization of Art” (1925), whereby he sought to explain nonrepresentational art to a general public who believed that the lack of human figures was an affront to art’s function to communicate. After the Spanish Civil War, cultural figures in Spain interpreted the ideas from this essay to mean that the more decorative the abstract art, the more ‘dehumanized’ it was, leading to the idea that abstract expressionism was better suited to represent human emotion than geometric abstraction. Furthermore, Ortega y Gasset believed that great artists appeared spontaneously by generation, an idea adopted by art critics and officials in the 1950s to explain what they saw as the sudden appearance of a new generation of *informalistas*. See Díaz Sánchez’s first chapter “Sobre la cultura artística de posguerra” in *La idea de arte abstracto...*, 21-60.

²¹ The regime’s ability to create a positive narrative about the genre of Informalismo, for example, seems almost impossible when we take consider how the genre’s artists characterized their artistic philosophies and artworks, and also when we note the origins of Art Informel, the starting point for the Spanish variety of the genre. The Grupo El Paso (to be discussed in detail in Chapter 2) was founded around the premise that Spain had been experiencing an acute artistic crisis, especially due to the lack of opportunities provided by a regime that paid the visual arts no mind. The artists who comprised this group saw themselves as promulgating an artistic genre that was fundamentally anti-establishment. Additionally, the genre of Surrealism was not only the inspiration but also the starting point for many of the artists of Informalismo, and as a leading style of the first Spanish avant-garde before the Spanish Civil War, was seen by the arts apparatus as a corrupted art style of the “reds.” It was also tainted as a left-wing movement because of André Breton’s flirtations with Communism and later anarchism.

origins and inspirations of certain art pieces and movements that officials needed to overcome, it ultimately did not prove difficult to create new official narratives.²²

In sum, figures of the arts apparatus were starting to identify and articulate their understanding of art toward a favorable interpretation of modern art, while young Spanish artists were largely appreciative for any such attention that would start to generate more opportunities.

1957-1968

Nineteen-fifty-seven represents a watershed year, both in the political and artistic life of Franco's Spain. Changes in the governmental apparatus inaugurated an era of the so-called technocrats, a new generation of university educated, Opus Dei-affiliated bureaucrats who sought to increase the efficiency of government bureaucracy and liberalize the Spanish economy. It is indisputable that their changes in economic policy would formally end Spain's period of financial autarky with the Stabilization Plan of 1959, thereby entering the country into global capitalist markets and inaugurating what is called the period of *desarrollismo*, or developmentalism. What resulted was a period of high rates of economic growth, albeit distributed unevenly among the population. While a new organ of the state, the Ministry of Information and Tourism, was created back in 1951, it would be during this period that departments within this entity would start to assert itself more forcefully in the domestic artistic life the country. It was as of this time that the importance of the General Directorate of Fine Arts of the Ministry of Education and the General Directorate of Information of the MIT would start

²² For example, in order to make the genre of Informalismo compatible with the Francoist worldview, the arts apparatus needed to divorce the genre from its surrealist origins and inspiration, to make the international art movement seem inherently Spanish, and to deny the group nature of the movement in Spain. According to the new official narrative, Informalismo was inspired by Cubism, and the artworks of Velázquez and Goya, which gave the genre new origins and made it seem particularly Spanish at the same time. The group dynamics of the genre were easily overcome because Informalismo was the Spanish variant of Art Informel, which as it emerged in France after the Second World War, was an individual pursuit.

to have more of a role in the direction that the visual arts took, while the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would take a back seat to the making of art policy.

On the arts front, 1957 marks a turning point for both art policy and art production. In this year, the arts apparatus cemented its use of modern, abstract art in the pursuit of using it as an instrument of foreign policy. It also happens to be the year in which a new wave of groups of artists emerged and started to demand better professional opportunities and a higher status in Spanish society (the subject of the next chapter). It was at this same time that artists started to recognize a distinction between ‘official’ exhibitions and those coming from private sources. Unlike the role of “the patron state” in Fascist Italy, which simultaneously supported multiple genres of art,²³ the arts apparatus of the Franco regime latched onto just one: Informalismo. Luis González Robles, in his role as what was essentially head curator for the General Directorate of Cultural Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, decided to show overwhelming state support for Informalismo when he organized the Spanish contribution to the São Paulo and Venice Biennials, in 1957 and 1958 respectively. After the international notoriety accorded to these Spanish artists during and after these international exhibitions, Informalismo, for a time, effectively became the official art of the Spanish state.

While international success initially seemed to be an argument against the regime’s bureaucratic neglect of the arts, it did not take long for artists to see that such accolades did not translate to regime attention toward the domestic art scene. An increasing number of artists started to take notice of the gap between promises and reality. Beginning in 1959, a numerically small but internationally known segment of Spanish artists would start to question what it meant to have such specialized regime attention, and would refuse to participate in official arts

²³ Marla Susan Stone, *The Patron State: Culture & Politics in Fascist Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

exhibitions. Additionally, the regime's adoption of really just one genre created what art critics were calling "the crisis of Informalismo" by mid 1962.²⁴ The official imprimatur of Informalismo suddenly created a glut of artworks in this style, since every acolyte figured that was the genre they needed to adopt to earn accolades by the regime. In response, even some original practitioners of the style rejected the idea that the regime should use them for its own political ends, and started to experiment with other genres (mostly realist styles or forms of geometric abstraction), thereby changing the course of Spanish art itself in response to regime policy.

Also as of 1957, the Movimiento also proved more active in cultural affairs. For example, this year saw the founding of the National Delegation of Organizations [Delegación Nacional de Organizaciones (DNO)], within which the Education and Culture Service would publish several magazines and newspapers related to the arts and culture in Spain, and even pioneer its own arts exhibition-cum-contest, the *Certamen Nacional de Artes Plásticas*, that looked suspiciously analogous to the state-run National Exhibition of Fine Arts.²⁵ In 1963, from within the Movimiento's syndical structure, a new group was founded called the Agrupación Nacional Sindical de Bellas Artes (ANSIBA). It was an attempt to organize visual artists into a formal professional association according to the Movimiento's vertical syndicalist system.²⁶ While these initiatives never seemed to gain significant footing in the cultural life of the country, that they

²⁴ Mónica Núñez Laiseca, *Arte y política en la España del desarrollismo (1962-1968)* (Madrid: CSIC, 2006), 29.

²⁵ When the Franco regime's state apparatus was undergoing its governmental reorganization in 1957, the Movimiento likewise re-organized itself in a way that no longer sought to create a parallel structure to that of the state, but nevertheless became more organized around mobilizing and organizing Spaniards. Sesma Landrín, "Paving the Way for the Transition?," 183. When the first *Certamen Nacional de Artes Plásticas* took place at the end of 1962, an article written by Areán appeared in the Madrid Atheneum's own magazine explaining that this new arts exhibition-cum-contest of the Movimiento was planned with the collaboration in its national phase of the Ministries of Education and Information and Tourism. "Primer Certamen Nacional de Artes Plásticas," *La Estafeta Literaria* 254, (December 1962): F-G.

²⁶ While exact membership rolls remain elusive, despite ANSIBA's goals of growing large to become akin to a formal artists' union of the regime, I see no evidence that this group ever reached more than a few dozen members.

were attempts at fomenting artistic life domestically, points to the Movimiento's continued attempts at this time to stay relevant and continue to mobilize the population.

By the early 1960s, as more artists started to pull away from official events, it would be the segment of the regime's arts apparatus affiliated with the decade-old Ministry of Information and Tourism (MIT) that started to consider what it might do to attract artists back to the fold. While the figures of the arts apparatus for their part largely took the evidence that some individual Spanish artists had become known internationally as evidence that they were doing no wrong and that no *major* reforms were needed, they nevertheless started to look toward more ways of entering the world of the arts in the private sector, namely, via art galleries and working to form friendly relationships with artists. Members of the arts apparatus also courted some Spanish artists who had taken a somewhat ambivalent stance in how they felt about the regime, including some artists who had started to openly express oppositional views.²⁷

While the MIT, composed of two general directorates which gave the ministry its name, was founded in the summer of 1951, there was little direct intersection with the visual arts within this first decade. The General Directorate of Information had been created from a number of formerly disparate departments from distinct ministries, with the aim of obtaining a better grasp over the collection and dissemination of information.²⁸ Having inherited pre-existing

²⁷ Scholars have offered valuable interpretations of the inclusion of oppositional artists into the realm of official cultural life. For example, art historian Mónica Núñez Laiseca has characterized the official art policy of the Franco regime during the years between 1962 and 1968 as being comprised of an unspoken pact between regime figures and artists in which the former would allow oppositional artists into its fold as long as they did not go out of their way to provoke the regime. This interpretation, a kind of informal "don't ask, don't tell" agreement, worked because even oppositional artists and art critics would not want to forego all official patronage. Another scholar, Paula Barreiro López, believes that the regime only included such oppositional artists under the assumption that they could control the narrative about them, but also to demonstrate to the outside world its ability to tolerate dissent. Núñez Laiseca, *Arte y política...*, 27; Paula Barreiro López, *Avant-garde Art and Criticism in Francoist Spain* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2017), 114.

²⁸ The General Directorate of Information was originally named the General Directorate of Propaganda, a name that lasted only a year. A major component of this new directorate was a department that originated as the Vicesecretaría de Educación Popular (VEP) of the Falange, and then later the Ministry of Education. Despite these moves, many of the same employees retained their jobs and most functions remained the same. In addition to the VEP, other

departments whose purviews were that of censoring materials and creating festivals and publications that endorsed a particular pro-regime image, the early years of the General Directorate of Information were likewise heavily informed by ensuring that events and publications subscribed to upholding the National Catholicism and the anti-Communism of the regime. In terms of setting a cultural agenda, the General Directorate hosted events and exhibitions at some cultural centers (including the Atheneums in Barcelona and Madrid), sponsored regional festivals, and published various collections of books and pamphlets. In order to undertake these initiatives, the General Directorate was given a budget that official reports consistently derided as being several times too small, in addition to lacking personnel to study, plan, and coordinate the directorate's undertakings. In a report from 1958 meant to review the totality of activities undertaken by the General Directorate since its founding, the authors described in detail the need to take on a "program of expansion and intensification of propaganda," seeking more personnel and an aspirational annual budget of almost sixty-five million pesetas, a figure fifty-five million pesetas over its existing allocation.²⁹ Furthermore, without naming anyone in particular, the report's authors mentioned specifically that they were openly including even oppositional "new artists" into their fold "so as to avoid their expatriation or that they should become puppets for anti-Spanish campaigns."³⁰ Such statements underscore the MIT's attitude, even as early as 1958, that it not only wanted to become more active in

departments rolled over into Information were Actos Públicos, mainly in charge of religious festivals, and a large wing in charge of publishing.

²⁹ "Plan de extensión de la propaganda política" Ministerio de Información y Turismo, Dirección General de Información, undated (but would be from late 1958), 003/115/112, Fondo Florentino Pérez Embid (FPE), Universidad de Navarra Archivo General (UNAG). Reference to the program of expansion appears on page 13, while the budget is listed on pages 25-27.

³⁰ "Al mismo tiempo ha permitido tener dentro de la política cultural del Régimen a la totalidad moral de los nuevos artistas, evitando su expatriación o que se convirtieran en juguetes de campañas antiespañolas." Ibid., 6.

cultural policy, but furthermore that any endeavors toward this end should include artists of all political leanings in order to stem their exodus and prevent anti-regime attitudes from forming.

The General Directorate of Information's hoped-for expansion would arrive with the appointment of Manuel Fraga Iribarne as minister of the MIT in July 1962.³¹ Typically, the policy initiatives for which Fraga is mentioned have to do with his role toward the development of tourism in Spain, his creation in November 1962 of the Oficina de Enlace (liaison office), a new inter-ministerial body created nominally to ease communication between the various Francoist governmental ministries,³² and his promulgation of the 1966 Press Law, which abolished pre-publication censorship.³³ Fraga's other major policy changes of late 1962, namely a totally reorganized General Directorate of Information, however, have not received scholarly attention despite their unparalleled importance in understanding the MIT's mission at this time to enter more profoundly into the private sector and forge connections with other governmental departments on the national, regional, and local levels. Furthermore, the individuals Fraga would

³¹ Fraga was a lawyer by training, although his early positions with the regime throughout the 1950s had educational and cultural purviews. For example, he had served as the general secretary for the Instituto de Cultura Hispánica (ICH) as of 1951, and had also worked in a similar role for the Consejo Nacional de Educación between 1953 and 1955, and between 1955 and 1958, he worked in yet another similar role (*secretario general técnico*) for the Ministry of Education. All of these roles made him particularly attuned to cultural policy writ large.

³² The files of the Oficina de Enlace, later called the Gabinete de Enlace, are held at the AGA, and are carefully catalogued by personal or organization name. It should be understood as an information gathering branch, not one of law enforcement. The office's employees started dossiers on any person or group thought to be engaged in anti-Francoist activity, especially ties to communism and other supposedly subversive activities, and could then be sent to law enforcement upon request. We know that the Brigadas de Investigación Político-Social, essentially a police force for political crimes, made frequent use of these files.

³³ This law replaced a prior press law from 1938, which required all written products to pass through a censorship board for approval to be published. The 1966 law, sometimes even referred to as the "Fraga Law," put the onus on publishers themselves to monitor content. MIT employees working as censors would scan a sampling of published books *ex post facto* and if found to having had violated any terms, would subject publishers to fines. While there are debates about the whether the new law was actually more or less repressive than the prior one, the abolition of pre-publication censorship undoubtedly allowed for more anti-regime voices to make their way to a greater audience. Authors supporting the idea that the 1966 Press Law created an opening for new ideas to be shared are: Barreiro López, *Avant-garde Art and Criticism...*, 103; and Cristina Palomares, "New Political Mentalities in the Tardofranquismo," in *Spain Transformed: The Late Franco Dictatorship, 1959-75*, ed. Nigel Townson (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 123. A more critical view of the law that sees it as having been repressive may be found in the various chapters within Eduardo Ruiz Bautista, ed. *Tiempo de censura: La represión editorial durante el franquismo* (Gijón: Ediciones Trea, 2008).

bring into the ministry under his tenure would prove to be significant actors in the making of art policy, and they too have received little scholarly attention.

With the reshuffling that became official just three months later in October, the new published goals of the General Directorate of Information were designed with “the noble task of raising the cultural level of the Spanish people.”³⁴ In order to accomplish this, the decree stipulated that the directorate would take on “editorial work” that would have to be “compatible with the position and protection required of private initiatives in this field, have to become better coordinated with other official publications, and must initiate and develop campaigns aimed at increasing popular culture, seeking for such campaigns *the collaboration of other public and private entities.*”³⁵ The six extant departments were consolidated into only three sub-directorates: an Office of the General Secretary, that of Dissemination, and that of Popular Culture.³⁶ This new structure signaled a much larger emphasis on the General Directorate’s entry into Spain’s cultural life writ large. For example, the Sub-directorate of Dissemination was tasked mainly with producing publications, with special mention in the decree toward “knowing the state...of intellectual and artistic environments,” while that of Popular Culture was directed “to collaborate with artistic, literary, and scientific centers, and help them fulfill their goals; to promote popular education through cultural activities in coordination with likeminded public and private institutions.”³⁷ In the realm of the visual arts specifically, while these policy directives did take

³⁴ “...la noble tarea de elevar el nivel cultural del pueblo español.” Decreto 2621, *BOE*, no. 257, October 26, 1962.

³⁵ “En este sentido, ha de llevar a cabo una labor editorial compatible con la orientación y protección que requiera en este campo la iniciativa privada, ha de procurar la coordinación con las restantes publicaciones oficiales, y ha de iniciar y desenvolver campañas dirigidas al incremento de la cultura popular, recabando para ellas la colaboración de otras entidades públicas y privadas.” *Ibid.* Emphasis mine.

³⁶ Prior to the re-structuring, there had been six departments within the General Directorate of Information: General Affairs, Publications, Public Events, Cultural Events, Book Inspection, and Photography.

³⁷ “...conocer el estado...de los ambientes intelectuales y artísticos,” and “...colaborar con Centros artísticos, literarios y científicos y prestarles ayuda para el cumplimiento de sus fines; fomentar la educación popular mediante actividades culturales, en coordinación con la Instituciones públicas y privadas que trabajen con la misma finalidad.” *Ibid.*

the form of more involvement than before with the other governmental branches at the national and local levels, most novel would be the direct attempts at collaboration with private art galleries (the subject of Chapter 3).

While knowledge of the underlying structural changes to the General Directorate of Information is crucial to understanding its policy changes of the early 1960s, there are also several individual actors whose professional goals would have just as important of an impact on the making of art policy. Despite the temptation to see all members of the Franco regime as alike, the individual agency of certain protagonists would indeed shape the larger directives into specific key initiatives, tailored to their strengths. As a key contemporaneous example resigning all regime figures into a single category, art critic and political radical José María Moreno Galván wrote an article that appeared in an anti-Francoist journal in June of 1965 criticizing Fraga and his coterie for their collective blind obedience to authority.³⁸ Even accounting for his critical tone, Moreno Galván correctly identified the new members of the Francoist political class – this “Fraga generation” – as educated, not ideologically wedded to Francoist doctrine, and committed to capitalist economic development. Many of these figures, Moreno Galván correctly alleged, had embraced the opportunity to ascend to power when the majority of the earlier

³⁸ The Editorial Ruedo Ibérico was a publishing house founded in the second half of 1961 by exiled Spanish dissidents in Paris (José Martínez Guerricabeitia (Pres) with the following members Elena Romo Baquedano, Ramón Viladas Monsonis, Vicente Girbau-León, and Nicolás Sánchez Albornoz). In addition to this twice monthly journal which began in 1965, Ruedo Ibérico also published monographs that would otherwise have been prohibited by Spanish censors, such as those by Hispanists Gerald Brenan and Hugh Thomas. In artistic circles, Ruedo Ibérico is known because many of its publications incorporated artworks by Spanish artists such as Antonio Saura, Manolo Millares, and Juan Genovés among many others. As for Moreno Galván, he had joined the Falange in 1935 and had even won a scholarship from the party in 1956 to travel. Also in the mid-1950s, he worked as an advisor to José Luis Fernández del Amo, director of the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo between 1952 and 1958. When Fernández del Amo was dismissed from the museum, Moreno Galván also left and started up his own art gallery, the Galería Darro. Dating from the 1950s, he was an established art critic, and then even while continuing to write for mainstream publications, was also a clandestine member of the Spanish Communist Party. Over the course of the 1960s and 1970s, he would often be targeted by police for participating in events that were not sanctioned, and would be jailed when refusing to pay the fines he had received for his actions. Juan Triguero (pseudonym for José María Moreno Galván), “La generación de Fraga y su destino,” *Cuadernos de Ruedo Ibérico*, no. 1 (June 1965): 5-16.

generation left (or were dismissed from) their leading positions and turned away from Francoism in the wake of the regime's first major crisis of legitimacy: the wave of mass student unrest in 1956 that was the cause of the regime restructuring the following year.³⁹ There is also some truth to the claim that Fraga and those who would come to work in the MIT under him were around the same age, also sharing a similar social and economic profile. Largely born in the 1920s, university educated, and from regions other than Madrid,⁴⁰ many of these figures ended up in the capital around 1950 to take a job with the growing administration, and would serve for decades through Spain's transition to democracy.⁴¹ Despite these similarities, what Moreno Galván was not willing to see, however, was that the members of the Fraga generation were not just a monolithic bloc. It is when we parse the actions and ideas of some members of the arts apparatus, for example, that we see how they do not fit only within the stereotyped narrative of a 1960s Francoist technocrat.

One such figure was Carlos Areán. He would come to hold a dizzying array of roles within the Francoist cultural apparatus and would do much to ensure that the wheels of the cultural machine of Francoism continued to turn throughout a decades-long career. Areán was admitted into the tourism branch of the brand-new Ministry of Information and Tourism (MIT) in 1951. At some point in the mid to late 1950s, with the recommendation of his close friend, Manuel Fraga, then affiliated with the National Education Council as well as the ICH, Areán was brought over from his position as personal secretary to the Director General of Tourism and

³⁹ Moreno Galván named as members of this older generation the *falangistas* Dionisio Ridruejo, Pedro Lain Entralgo, José Luis Aranguren, Luis Felipe Vivanco, Leopoldo Panero, and Luis Rosales. He also cited art gallerist Juana Mordó as being among this group, in the context of sharing their same intellectual circle.

⁴⁰ Fraga and a large number of the individuals who are relevant to the story of cultural policy happened to be from the region of Galicia.

⁴¹ Two of the figures cited by Moreno Galván directly relevant to this story are Fraga's brother-in-law, Carlos Robles Piquer, who was also his director general of Information, and "little Carlos" Areán, who was mocked for his unoriginal and unethical work "for who knows which branch of the ministry of touristization." Ibid., 14.

placed in the General Directorate of Information, at this time under the aegis of Florentino Pérez Embid.⁴²

Given Areán's close personal friendship with Fraga, it is no accident that he found himself at the end of 1962 heading up the brand new Sección de Artes Plásticas y Audiovisuales (Visual and Audiovisual Arts Section; SAPV), a department within a branch of the General Directorate of Information and overseen by Fraga's brother-in-law, Carlos Robles Piquer.⁴³ In addition to the leadership of his own section, he also had executive oversight over the exhibition rooms of the once exclusively member-run Madrid Athenaeum, a position that remained wedded to the ministry as a legacy of the Spanish Civil War.⁴⁴ In these two primary roles, Areán was largely responsible for curating art exhibitions. For the MIT, a large number of the exhibitions he planned would be traveling exhibitions, sent to various regions within Spain and even abroad. For the Athenaeum, Areán was responsible for finding both well-established participants, as well as up-and-coming artists, as each exhibition space at the Athenaeum was scheduled with a different objective in mind.⁴⁵

⁴² In a letter from Fraga to Pérez Embid, the former recommended Areán to the latter's branch of the MIT, highlighting Areán's brilliant writing and knowledge of multiple languages. Pérez Embid replied, saying he would "do everything in his power in favor of your recommended..." See: Letter from Manuel Fraga Iribarne to Florentino Pérez Embid, July 2, 1954, 003/007/406, and Letter from Pérez Embid to Fraga, July 12, 1954, 003/007/424, Fondo FPE, UNAG.

⁴³ That Areán's department was within the Sub-directorate for Popular Culture, and was not higher in the organizational structure of the General Directorate of Information, is important because I would argue that he was especially well placed. He was important enough in the ministry's structure to design and implement projects of which he was in charge, but his office was unimportant enough that he was not necessarily in the spotlight of the uppermost echelon of government. This meant that Areán was left to his own devices, for which he had time for the plethora of other projects in which he was involved.

⁴⁴ The Madrid Athenaeum had been under regime control since the Spanish Civil War. From the Falange, it passed to the control of the Ministry of Education, and as of 1951, it ended up in the hands of the MIT. Because the organization had already existed as a membership organization dating back to the mid-nineteenth century, the cultural organization also continued to retain its own dues-paying members.

⁴⁵ At the time that Areán entered his position at the Madrid Athenaeum, there were two exhibition rooms: the Sala de Santa Catalina, which hosted exhibitions of well-established artists, and the Sala del Prado, in which lesser-known artists applied to have their artworks shown. In early 1964, a third exhibition space known as the *Cacharrería* (crockery shop) would open.

While he was in age and social status clearly a member of the “Fraga generation,”⁴⁶ he supported both Fraga’s technocratic agenda as well as the competing projects of the Movimiento, which had started to multiply in the 1960s. For example, in addition to his primary job, Areán was the first director of the Movimiento’s art gallery, the Sala Amadís, between 1961 and 1969; and it’s clear from correspondence that others who worked under Areán also worked at the gallery.⁴⁷ Areán also was one of the organizers of the Movimiento’s biennial *Certamen Nacional de Artes Plásticas*. Areán is thus further evidence of the difficulties of resigning regime figures to only one of the two competing political projects of the late Franco regime; Areán did not only support the Movimiento’s efforts, he was as involved in them as he was in the leading of his own section.

Beyond role as a curator, Areán was a prolific author and cultural commentator. He contributed articles to arts magazines and newspapers with feverish regularity, and under the aegis of the Madrid Atheneum and the MIT, he would also author dozens of books and exhibition catalogs about art movements and artists.⁴⁸ Additionally, Areán was a leading figure in a large number of artistic endeavors in Madrid and Barcelona, giving lectures and talks,

⁴⁶ Born in Vigo (Galicia) in 1921, Areán was university educated with degrees in law and history. In 1951, Areán obtained his first career job within the tourism branch of the brand-new Ministry of Information and Tourism. Various entries in the *Boletín Oficial del Estado* show Areán’s name appearing on the lists of those to sit for the civil service exams for a few different ministries beginning in 1949. By the end of 1952, he is reported as being “Jefe de Negociado de tercera clase,” something akin to “Bureau Chief, Third Class” of the Cuerpo Técnico Facultativo de Turismo within the MIT. See the *BOE*, Oct 25, 1952. See also: Fernando Mora, “In memoriam: Carlos Areán,” *Correo del arte* 135 (October 1997): 39.

⁴⁷ More about Areán’s relationship with the gallery may be found in: Letter from Carlos Areán to José María Álvarez Romero, September 13, 1963, Box 17973, Folder: 1963, Artes Plásticas y Audiovisuales, Correspondencia A-L, (03)49.3, AGA. In this letter, Areán writes to an employee of the Instituto de Cultura Hispánica, explaining that the Amadís “is an official gallery financed by the Falange, of which I am the artistic advisor.” There is also evidence that Areán’s employee at the MIT, Alicia Henche, also played a major role in the functioning of the Amadís, as explained in a memo from Areán to Robles Piquer dated February 25, 1964. Here Areán also explained that a year prior, before ending up in his department, she had been the director of the Amadís. Box 24480, Folder: Sección de Artes Plásticas y Audiovisuales, Año 1964, (03)49.5, AGA.

⁴⁸ Isabel Cajide, “Breve repaso a la labor artística de la Dirección General de Información,” *Artes* nú. extraordinario, December 1964, 39-40.

serving on judging panels and boards of directors for annual events such as the Barcelona-based *Salón Femenino de Arte Actual*. If the large number of projects in which he was involved is not proof enough, further evidence of his unrelenting work ethic may be found among his correspondence, in which he suggested to his boss that they forego summer vacation.⁴⁹ The massive amount of work that Areán was able to accomplish is made even more unbelievable when taking into account the tiny budget and staff with which Areán worked.⁵⁰

After Fraga's dismissal in 1969, Areán continued to work for the MIT in similar positions, even when its offices were rolled over into the new Ministry of Culture formed in 1977.⁵¹ Areán would also serve a short, but high-profile two-year-long stint as the director of the Museo Español de Arte Contemporáneo (MEAC) when it opened in its new building in Madrid's University City district beginning in 1975. Thus, Areán was a 'regime man' in the true sense of the word; his work touched many different branches and departments of the regime, and he carved out a place for himself in which he was important enough to make decisions, but not so high-profile as to be fired with the wave of government changes of 1969. As I will demonstrate,

⁴⁹ As an illustration of his work ethic, in a July 1963 memo to his boss, Director General Robles Piquer, Areán explained that with all of the upcoming projects in the works, he would not be taking any summer vacation, and hinted that Robles Piquer should agree to the same. Memo from Carlos Areán to Carlos Robles Piquer, July 5, 1963, Box 17974 Folder: Director General de Información, (03)49.3, AGA.

⁵⁰ In a memo from November of 1963, Areán detailed three main reasons that he needed more help with staffing his department: 1) his section published its own collection of art catalogs, with one coming out "every five and a half days"; 2) his staff also mounted all of the art exhibitions associated with festivals all over Spain, and had done 40 just that summer alone, and also another 15 exhibitions "in collaboration with cultural entities"; and 3) for the Atheneum, which "has three exhibition rooms and an average of 18 exhibitions [per season] in two of them and 6 in the third." See Memo from Areán to the Secretario General de Información, November 7, 1962, and Nota de Regimen Interior, November 4, 1963, Box 17974, Folder: Secretario Gral, Notas y Oficios, (03)49.3, AGA.

⁵¹ For example, by 1968, Areán is listed as the head of something called the 'Sección Informativa' of the General Directorate of Popular Culture and Shows, still within the MIT. Detail is listed in Daniel A. Verdú Schumann, "La Sala Amadís, 1961-1975: Arte y/o franquismo," *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma* 3 (2015): 232. Correspondence from 1973 and 1974 lists Areán as being the head of a department of Acción Cultural within the same General Directorate. Box 71/11054, (03)49.21, AGA. Finally, Areán's life and career after his high-profile position heading the MEAC are something of a mystery. We do know, however, that he continued to work for the new Ministry of Culture; as a member of the Asociación Española de Críticos de Arte dating into the 1980s, he was listed in the membership directory as 'técnico' of the Ministry of Culture. See: *I Congreso Nacional de la Asociación Española de Críticos de Arte: estatutos-guía 1983* (Madrid: AECA, 1983), 132.

he was a sincere devotee of idea that the regime as a whole needed to do more to promote the arts in Spain; he saw himself as an educated arbiter of good taste whose opinions and decisions should be valued, rather than as someone who should be listened to simply owing to his position. The flipside of his commitment and self-confidence, however, was that he overwhelmingly tied the value of art to what it would do for Spain, for Fraga, and for the regime. He seemed little interested in art if it were not to be used as an instrument of political power.

Another member of the “Fraga generation” who belies the stereotypes was journalist, gallerist, and government bureaucrat, Isabel Cajide.⁵² Also born in the early 1920s, she moved to Madrid in 1950 where she studied journalism formally, and not long thereafter began her career with the Spanish government in the first of various positions related to cultural affairs where she would remain also through to the other side of the Transition.⁵³ In addition to her primary position with the Ministry of Education, Cajide appears to have been deeply involved in the Women’s Section of the Movimiento.⁵⁴ Cajide was also the director of a private art gallery in Madrid, the Galería El Bosco, for at least some time in the 1960s.⁵⁵ Importantly, she co-founded a magazine dedicated to publicizing the visual arts in Madrid, especially as they related to the

⁵² She was born in Monforte de Lemos in the province of Lugo in Galicia, and she reports having had an interest in the arts from childhood. She attended university in Valladolid, where she found a mentor in art critic Enrique Lafuente Ferrari. All information about Cajide’s life has been taken from an interview she did as a 90 year old, unless otherwise noted. Rosa López Moraleda, “Isabel Cajide: genio y figura...de una crítica de arte,” *Sesenta y más* 324 (2013): 50-53.

⁵³ For the mention of Cajide’s first position see: *BOE*, no. 107, April 17, 1950. In the autumn of 1974, at a time of great reorganization for the cultural offices of the Ministry of Education and Science, Cajide was elected to head the Servicio Especial de Exposiciones, a role she held until 1988.

⁵⁴ For example, she appeared on a summer 1958 list of members of what was to be the newly enlarged advisory committee of the Technical Board of Archives, Libraries, and Museums as the representative for the Women’s Section. *BOE*, no. 207, August 29, 1958.

⁵⁵ Although little is known about Cajide’s role at the helm of an art gallery, this detail is not at all surprising given her unwavering support for private galleries. Cajide was identified explicitly in her role as gallery director when being solicited for a response after having visited the 1966 iteration of the National Exhibition of Fine Arts, although the author mis-spelled her surname as ‘Cagides.’ The other gallery directors interviewed were Julia Sacre (Galería Kreisler), Carmina Abril (Galería Abril), and Amparo Martí (Galería Nebli). See: Francisco Prados de la Plaza, “III Encuesta sobre la Exposición Nacional de Bellas Artes,” *Arriba*, July 5, 1966, 26.

exhibitions and initiatives of private galleries. It is in this arena that Cajide set herself apart from the work of a typical arts bureaucrat and in which we see the difficulty of separating official from private initiatives. Created and edited by Cajide and Belén Landáburu in May of 1961, and run out of the apartment they shared, *Artes* magazine focused on art exhibitions at private art galleries for its decade-long existence.⁵⁶ While both Cajide and Landáburu were active members of the Women's Section of the Movimiento, *Artes* did not have a party affiliation until its final year of publication.⁵⁷

While the exact number of copies printed and read proves elusive, what is indisputable is that the magazine was genuinely popular with about as heterogeneous of a readership as possible. This is made evident by the fact that even well-known artists such as Eusebio Sempere, Gustavo Torner, Manolo Millares, and Luis Gordillo, among others, created artwork especially for the magazine. Among its contributors were counter-cultural figures such as Moreno Galván and official contributors such as Carlos Areán. Articles about oppositional artists, such as Estampa Popular, often appeared alongside write-ups about official initiatives. The magazine took an overall positive take on the arts apparatus, while showing that it could also be critical of individual undertakings, such as the National Exhibition of Fine Art, or the true lack of curricular reform.⁵⁸ Readers also would have noticed, for example, a special attention to the work of Carlos

⁵⁶ Belén Landáburu would go on to become a senator between 1977 and 1979 during the Transition, and thus, is someone about whose life is relatively well known. During Francoist years, Landáburu worked within the uppermost echelon of the Women's Section of the Movimiento. That Landáburu and Cajide lived together and ran the magazine from their apartment was reported in: Magis Iglesias, *Fuimos nosotras: las primeras parlamentarias de la democracia* (Madrid: Penguin Random House Grupo Editorial España, 2019), Ebook.

⁵⁷ The Movimiento sponsored a wide array of magazines, journals, and newspapers, always clearly identified with this affiliation. From everything that we know about the magazine, it was Cajide's independent project until a note appeared in issue no. 114 from February 1971 explaining that: "*Artes* is edited with the collaboration of the National Delegation of Culture...[which] does not interfere in its content nor is responsible for it." I assume that Cajide reached out to the Delegación Nacional seeking operating funds in a last-ditch effort to keep the magazine alive, which they must have provided. It was clearly not enough to keep publication going, however, as the magazine did not survive past December of 1971.

⁵⁸ For example, the positive is portrayed in Isabel Cajide, "Los propósitos y los resultados," *Artes* nú. extraordinario (December 1964): 3, while the criticisms appear in "El problema de la Escuela de San Fernando: Antología de la

Areán and his arts section, who had also been a contributing writer to the magazine from the first.⁵⁹ Despite all odds, *Artes* funneled so many genuinely competing interests into a single publication. It seemed that *Artes*'s ability to chart a path supportive of regime projects, but without being an explicit regime mouthpiece, was enough to appeal to all demographics.⁶⁰ That Cajide would pour so much energy into promoting private art galleries, in addition to leveraging support for regime projects, shows the inability to resign her to only one identity.

1969-1978

This fourth period covers the time from the political crisis of the regime until the country's formal transition to democracy. For the regime as a whole, this period is characterized by both internal and external challenges that served to undermine the legitimacy of the regime. With respect to the arts apparatus in particular, the external challenges in the form of the mobilization of civil society started to push the limits of the General Directorate of Fine Arts and the MIT. At the same time, the late 1960s also saw various administrative changes within the bureaucratic structures of both entities, meant in an attempt to streamline the bureaucracy and professionalize services. While there was little direct conflict between the various arts apparatuses at the time, if anything, the opposite problem was created in which their respective duties and agendas became so disconnected from one another that such divergent paths led to a rather disjointed and contradictory art policy. Whereas in the prior period, the MIT had made a

prensa de Madrid," *Artes*, 79 (Nov 1966), 45-46. Other examples of critiques appear as source materials in Chapters 5 and 6.

⁵⁹ "La labor artística del Ministerio de Información y Turismo," *Artes* 42 (October 23, 1963): 16; Isabel Cajide, "Breve repaso a la labor artística de la Dirección General de Información," *Artes* nú. extraordinario (December 1964): 39-40.

⁶⁰ Perhaps the factor that unified so many disparate readers was that the magazine put so much emphasis in promoting the visual arts in Spain to a domestic audience. There seemed to be a collective sigh of relief that finally an arts scene was arriving whether it emerged because of official organs or due to the efforts of artists and gallerists themselves. All readers seemed to be able to get what they needed, even though so many points of view were represented.

big push toward promulgating its own artistic activities, in this period, there is little new to report about the artistic offices of this ministry. On the other hand, the explicit division between which of the MIT's departments dealt specifically with the arts and artists became more blurry, as state security forces started to pay more attention to the activities of the artists, art critics, and galleries that it deemed to be politically threatening. For its part, the General Directorate of Fine Arts is the department in this period that would do the most to try to reform, and its initiatives would prove the most directly relevant to the shape of domestic art policy in these last years of the dictatorship.

With the crisis of the regime apparent as of 1969, and Carrero Blanco's forced adoption of the hardline "bunker" position, Fraga was dismissed from the MIT and replaced with Alfredo Sánchez Bella. The former head of the ICH was brought in to put an end to Fraga's so-called *aperturista* ("opened-up") policies, in which he was asked to reverse what hardliners saw as seven years of over-permissiveness.⁶¹ While appointing a new head of the MIT was meant to signal the onslaught of a new Francoist worldview, the ministry's major reorganization of January 1968 while Fraga was still in office failed to remove other high-ranking figures from their positions. While changes to the MIT's structure appeared comprehensive – the former General Directorates of Tourism and Information were scrapped entirely and several new ones were established – really what had been sub-departments had just been elevated, and many personnel remained in their positions. For example, the new General Directorate of Popular Culture and Entertainment had been a sub-division within the General Directorate of

⁶¹ There is debate over whether or not Sánchez Bella was actually more ideologically aligned with his predecessor than he was with the standard "bunker" position. Either way, he satisfied the hardliner position long enough to last in the position for four years – an eternity during this crisis period. While many of the policies initiated under Sánchez Bella would inform MIT policies for the remainder of the dictatorship, he would fill the role until June of 1973, followed by a string of five more ministers until the MIT was dismantled in July of 1977.

Information. Carlos Robles Piquer moved from heading up Information to overseeing Popular Culture, with Areán still overseeing his own office therein. It's clear that Robles Piquer and Areán continued to arrange traveling exhibitions for the MIT, although no notable activities of this new general directorate stand out as having had a major impact on the direction of art policy at this time.

On the other hand, the General Directorate of Fine Arts as of the late 1960s would promulgate both internal restructuring as well as reforms meant to affect its public-facing institutions. At the very end of 1968, for example, the directorate undertook a restructuring, marking as priorities the professionalization of the museums it oversaw, the standardization of its exhibition policies, and the updating and certification of the curricula of its art schools, and in October 1974, the Ministry of Education further consolidated the duties of Fine Arts and Archives and Libraries into a new department.⁶² As part of the changes inaugurated by this initial reorganization, a new office, that of the Curator of Exhibitions (*Comisaría General de Exposiciones*), was created to oversee the curatorial affairs of the entire directorate. One anomaly of the head curator position was that it was bureaucratically wedded to the directorship of Madrid's official state-run museum of modern art (MEAC).⁶³ Demonstrating yet another example of how firmly embedded certain individuals were into the arts apparatus, none other than Luis González Robles was appointed into this position between 1969 and 1974, and Carlos Areán served in the role between 1975 and 1977.

While these internal changes went largely unnoticed by the public, the General Directorate of Fine Arts undertook other outward-facing reforms that would raise the ire of

⁶² See Decreto 3002, *BOE*, December 9, 1968 and Decreto 2993 *BOE*, October 30, 1974. In the case of the latter reform, the new office created was the General Directorate of Artistic and Cultural Patrimony.

⁶³ While this dual position had been called for initially, it was supposed to be temporary. In the end, however, the directorship of the MEAC was never separated from the 'Curator' position. Jiménez-Blanco, *Arte y Estado...*, 132.

Spain's artistic community. Opus Dei technocrat Florentino Pérez Embid, the first head of the MIT's General Directorate of Information for much of the 1950s, served in the position of director general of Fine Arts between 1968 and his death in December 1974. While he was in the position, the directorate undertook what they believed to be a comprehensive reform of the National Exhibition of Fine Art (the subject of Chapter 5) and was in the process of considering curricular reform of Spain's upper-level art schools, not to mention the fallout that came when Madrid's brand-new school building opened with several major malfunctions (treated in Chapter 6). While there would likely have been a reaction by the citizenry to lackluster conditions in any case, the pretense of reform and then faulty execution thereof opened the floodgates to artists' and art students' mobilization that took the General Directorate unawares. As I will detail in later chapters, such campaigns would call into question the legitimacy of the authorities. While the General Directorate of Fine Arts largely proceeded along a path that tried to mitigate the most vehement of the unrest, it did not act to repress the activities of Spanish artists and art students.

The activities of the MIT during the early 1970s responded quite directly to the mass unrest of several segments of Spanish society at the end of the 1960s, in which artists were one such grouping. One example that demonstrates the MIT's shifting priorities in this later period toward censorship and surveillance is entailed in the kind of reports it authored at this time. In April of 1972 unnamed authors issued a short report called *Tendencias conflictivas en cultura popular (Problem Trends in Popular Culture)*, in which officials expressed concern about the increasing levels of dissent among intellectuals and visual artists, listing the names of those deemed troublesome to the regime.⁶⁴ The report blamed Fraga directly for laxity of his

⁶⁴ Directly relevant to the visual arts was a list of eight painters (Francisco Álvarez, Francisco Cortijo, Chumi Chumez [José María Castrillo], Juan Genovés, Daniel Gil, Josep Guinovart, Manuel Millares, and Antonio Saura), and then within a longer list of intellectuals, the names of art critics Vicente Aguilera Cerni, Ángel Crespo, Fernando Chueca, José María Moreno Galván, and sculptor Pablo Serrano appeared.

ensorship policies and portrayed an atmosphere in which anti-regime personalities and ideas had completely infiltrated intellectual and artistic life. For example, “rooms for displaying paintings” (*salas de pintura*) were purportedly being used for hosting meetings of political dissidents and more evidence of anti-regime themes within artworks as well as anti-regime exhibitions were cited.⁶⁵

It is notable that these authors identified the fine arts as being an area of popular culture featuring “problem trends,” especially since the visual arts had always been absent from any kind of formal censorship process. The MIT’s real problem, then, was how to enforce, monitor, or control the visual arts – an area over which no pre-existing inspection mechanisms existed. The MIT had no real structure or aptitude for, nor even a direct interest in trying to evaluate paintings, sculptures, prints, or art installations. But one thing they could do was start to pay more attention to the locales in which artists and their circles gathered, especially in the form of private art galleries, where the regime was convinced oppositional political organizing was taking place (treated in Chapter 4). As I will demonstrate, however, even this renewed attention to members of the artistic community did not lend itself to a blanket policy of repression, as regime officials proved routinely inept and uneven in how it tried to police the artists and gallerists it often (wrongly) believed were engaged in oppositional activities.

The problem from the point of view of articulating a relatively uniform art policy during a time of inter-regime crisis was that the MIT’s new emphasis on cracking down on artists and intellectuals did not filter down to actually preventing those it had deemed as problems from continuing to receive attention and patronage from the General Directorate of Fine Arts. For

⁶⁵ *Tendencias conflictivas en cultura popular*, MIT report dated April 1972, reproduced in full in the appendix of: Pere Ysàs, *Disidencia y subversión: La lucha del régimen franquista por su supervivencia, 1960-1975* (Barcelona, Crítica, 2004), 237-249.

example, being politically suspect was not enough to prohibit those who were authors, such as Moreno Galván or Aguilera Cerni, from publishing regularly, nor did it disqualify Pablo Serrano from being invited to sit on the judges' panel for the 1968 iteration of the Nacionales, or from being offered a large state-sponsored artistic retrospective in February 1973. Manolo Millares was honored with posthumous retrospective at the state's Museum of Contemporary Art in 1975. Thus, an art policy that celebrated an artist in official cultural life while concurrently marking one as a political danger was a consistent feature during this final period of the dictatorship.

Conclusion

The structure of the late Francoist arts apparatus itself was an important facet of the regime's policy making in the visual arts. The very fragmented structure of the arts apparatus itself corresponds to the overall lack of attention that the regime's *Superioridad* (Franco and the cabinet of ministers) lent to arts and culture in the regime in the first place. While the regime wanted to be able to oversee and direct the arts, it also did not put a lot of time and energy into fomenting these opportunities – especially not domestically. It also did not go out of its way to create a unitary cultural department, even though such an entity would have arguably allowed the authoritarian state to exercise better control over visual artists and their cultural products. Francoist arts bureaucrats – at least in their official roles – treated art as a political instrument, important only as evidence of the country's supposed full political freedoms.

Being simultaneously bound by certain structural realities (overall neglect from the absolute top, a strict bureaucratic hierarchy, and a propensity to circulate the same figures among top positions) while also being comprised of jurisdictionally separate entities allows for the unique mixture of an agreed upon overall way of proceeding, albeit with a lot of contradictions and conflicts along the way. The new scholarly approaches that have sought to attain a better

understanding of the nature of late Francoism have provided a worthwhile guide that have allowed me to interrogate the complexity of the arts apparatus.

What we are able to perceive in retrospect is that, collectively, the Francoist arts apparatus was structured in such a way so as to make it inherently unable to react effectively to what it perceived as threats to its legitimacy. As regime figures each individually believed that they were helpful and accommodating to the artistic community, they were unable to anticipate artists' upset and disenchantment. When we look at specific individual cases, we can see that no branch of the arts apparatus liberalized, as every move that officials argued was for artists' benefit was actually carefully crafted to retain power, and repression was not the guiding motive for policies either. Additionally, by taking the approach that I have taken throughout this dissertation – to evaluate both internal regime dynamics and external challenges – we are able to understand how both art policy and art production were consistently shaped by both members of the arts apparatus and civilians of the visual arts community. One key example that shows how the bottom-up and top-down narratives coalesced is with the regime's official understanding of the artistic genre of Informalismo, not to mention many of the official arts initiatives of the period between 1951 and 1957. When Luis González Robles officially bet on Informalismo in the late 1950s, this decision would ultimately be strong enough to discredit the artistic genre among many of Spain's artists, setting off a subsequent two-decade-long process whereby Spain's artistic community would come to understand that the arts apparatus had a fundamentally different understanding of the role that the visual arts was meant to play in the artistic life of the country. It is now to this important development that we turn.

Chapter 2 – “*Un necesario fenómeno de agrupación*”: Groups of Artists and Artists’ Associations in Franco’s Spain

Over the course of the 1950s the Franco regime’s arts apparatus would make room for modern art as a concerted part of its official cultural programming. But even before the regime could count among its accolades major wins for Spanish art within the international arena, this time period also saw a parallel process of the emergence of a plethora of new groups of artists who each sought in their own way to renovate Spain’s national artistic panorama. When in 1961 Valencian art theorist and critic Vicente Aguilera Cerni reflected back on the history of the Grupo Parpalló that he had helped to create, he recognized 1957 as a decisive year for what he called “new Spanish art,” remarking on the “necessary phenomenon to form groups.”¹ This necessity that pushed likeminded Spanish artists together emerged from a new generation of Spanish artists’ collective desire to share their aesthetic and ideological concerns about art within an overall milieu with few artistic opportunities. While the late 1950s represented a time when the number of independent groups and private venues was indeed growing, the state was still responsible for most of the exhibitions, scholarships, and opportunities to have artwork presented abroad. Spanish artists at this time had no qualms participating in official exhibitions, but these opportunities alone did not represent the kind of artistic life that Spanish artists desired.

Spanish artists of the late 1950s banded together to create the kind of artistic reality they wanted to see in the world. Forming around both aesthetic interests and in the service of pragmatic projects, Spanish artists and arts purveyors wanted the regime to pay more attention to them, allowing artists more opportunities to exhibit their artwork, but also wanted to be able to

¹ Vicente Aguilera Cerni wrote these words in the text that appeared in the catalog for the Grupo Parpalló’s final exhibition in February 1961 at the Sala Mateu in Valencia. See: Grupo Parpalló, *A Don Diego Velázquez de Silva*, Sala Mateu, February 1961, quoted in Pablo Ramírez, *Grupo Parpalló, 1956-1961: 50é aniversari* (Valencia: Generalitat Valenciana, 2006), 38.

promulgate and receive backing for their own projects. In terms of aesthetic trends, what materialized in Spanish artistic life in 1957 were the emergence of three modes of artistic expression, each wedded to a set of theoretical principles about art's role in society: a new trend toward abstract expressionism (Informalismo), another that contemplated geometric abstraction, and a movement toward social realism.² With respect to pragmatic matters, artists also banded together to accomplish specific professional goals, such as to establish an annual arts event or to found a museum, as we will see with the case of the Asociación de Artistas Actuales (AAA) of Barcelona. But because attempting to reinvigorate the entire national artistic panorama with novel artistic endeavors was quite a large task in the face of a slowly-changing official arts scene, many artists felt the need to do this together in groups. The same impetus that drove artists of the historic avant-gardes of the period before, during, and after the First World War to work in groups – to produce new work distinct from mainstream trends – likewise existed in Franco's Spain from the beginning.³ Groups of artists in Franco's Spain, as I will demonstrate, did more than only create art – they authored collective manifestos, gave talks, articulated new theories, and tried to spur an environment that could encourage others' art production as well. While artists as a group have not been recognized as a distinct grouping within Spanish civil society, this chapter makes the case for their inclusion. As I will demonstrate, beyond more informal groupings, artists' associations would likewise come to fill a necessity in giving artists a voice in asserting certain professional demands, a trend that would never dissipate throughout the dictatorship.

² Valeriano Bozal, *Historia de la pintura y la escultura del siglo XX en España, vol. II 1940-2010* (Madrid: La balsa de Medusa, 2013), 169-173.

³ While artistic life of the 1940s is outside of the scope of this chapter, the last few years of the decade have been recognized as the time in which a first wave of groups of modern artists emerged in Franco's Spain – including but not limited to Dau al set, Pórtico, and the Altamira school.

What Spain's artists of the late 1950s certainly did not anticipate was that the arts apparatus of the regime was likewise coming to solidify its own artistic tastes. Right at the time when this new generation of artists started to demand national attention, Luis González Robles, head curator for the General Directorate of Cultural Relations within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, would back the Spanish abstract expressionist genre of Informalismo at the 1957 *IV Bienal de São Paulo* and the 1958 *XXIX Biennale di Venezia*, resulting in various Spanish artists winning awards. In the state-centered and authoritarian environment, what the arts apparatus of the regime decided had huge ramifications for the development of both art practice and policy, and González's Robles' selections of the late 1950s would end up affecting the path taken by new artistic movements and proposed projects for decades to come. Official state support of Informalismo – which made the genre for a time the official art of the Spanish state – would prove to inaugurate a period in which Spanish artists would have no choice but question their relationship to the regime.

This chapter treats the “necessary phenomenon” of the formation of groups of artists and artists' associations in Franco's Spain in which I argue that Spanish artists experienced an evolution of awareness with respect to the relationship that they wanted to have with officialdom. It does not claim to be a survey of all Spanish artists or art movements and trends present during the second half of the Franco dictatorship; for that, there are other quality studies.⁴ Instead, I seek to show that the authoritarian regime created an environment that made it preferable for individuals to find likeminded others in which to make art, advance new social theories of art, and to propose new cultural projects. While my primary focus is on this

⁴ Jorge Luis Marzo and Patricia Mayayo, *Arte en España (1939-2015): Ideas, prácticas, políticas* (Madrid: Cátedra, 2015); Valeriano Bozal, *Arte del siglo XX en España. Pintura y escultura* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1991), 2 vols; Francisco Calvo Serraller, *Enciclopedia del arte español del siglo XX* (Madrid: Mondadori, 1991), 2 vols.

phenomenon from 1957 into the early 1960s, at the end of the chapter, I explain how the arts apparatus's treatment of art and artists during this period had ramifications for both the direction of the visual arts in Spain as well as the shape of artists' associations. Specifically, as the regime's vision for what the visual arts was meant to achieve hardened, artists' aesthetic preferences shifted away from Informalismo toward various forms of realism. Additionally, the same lack of institutional support still existed in the late 1960s to spur the creation of the Madrid-based Asociación de Artistas Plásticos (AAP), which organized hundreds of artists and successfully countered official initiatives to the extent that it inaugurated a social movement. With artists and the regime responding to one another, what resulted was a dynamic in which the confluence of top-down and bottom-up forces created a contested terrain of art production that was neither autonomous nor completely controlled.

Artists as Political Actors: The Making of a Social Movement

Like other segments of Spanish society, artists also were among the numbers of individuals entering a growing civil society in the late Francoist period. Made possible by the confluence of both a favorable opportunity structure and the presence of social capital, artists as a category should be recognized for their role in spurring a more pluralistic vision for the visual arts in Spain, and perhaps even had a head-start over other social groupings.⁵ Like other groups, artists' initial motives for becoming more involved in public affairs – in this case, educational

⁵ Scholars typically begin their discussion of the growth of civil society in the mid-1960s, when new regime policies allowed for new associations to form legally. As I demonstrate, groups of artists experienced their own timeline, and had the opportunity to form even earlier because as informal groups of artists, there was no expectation that they needed to structure themselves under the rubric of a formal association. Such groups, however, should still be considered under this framework of 'associationism' due to their much more comprehensive agenda than only art production. The explanation of how a favorable opportunity structure and social capital converge to create the spaces for collective action in the context of Franco's Spain is explained in: Pamela Radcliff, "Social Movements, Democratic Transition, and Citizenship: Spain in the 1970s," in *Performing Citizenship: Social Movements around the Globe*, eds. Inbal Ofer and Tamar Groves (New York: Routledge, 2016), 13-17.

and professional matters – was driven by pragmatic desires. Also like other groups of civil society, by the 1970s, artists ended up adopting a more oppositional stance against the arts apparatus that had moved beyond only the need to solve concrete problems, with some even converted into political dissidents against the regime itself. One group in particular, the Asociación de Artistas Plásticos (AAP) of Madrid would successfully funnel artists' energies into a social movement by 1970. Just because this course toward more organized mobilization took the path it did, however, does not mean that artists' early civil society formations should be discounted as 'less serious' forms of artistic advocacy. To the contrary, as I will demonstrate, even early artists' groupings were crucially important for calling into question the official narrative of what role artists were meant to play, without which more oppositional activity would have been impossible.

Throughout the dissertation, I define civil society as the realm of citizen activity in which people are able to come together legally and publicly, where they exist in a realm that is autonomous from private economic interests and wholly independent of the state. We should understand this activity as taking place along two main axes, both "horizontal" and "vertical." The first axis encompasses activity in which people sought each other out to form networks of solidarity. In the second case, people formed to enact change in official policies, thereby widening the scope of public discourse. In this chapter, I explain how artists' groups and associations would take up space on both of these axes of civil society, which underscores the wide scope of their artistic advocacy.

So, where then do social movements fit onto this plane? I envisage Spanish artists as having moved beyond regular civil society activity into what we can define as a distinct social movement with the AAP's multi-pronged campaign against the National Exhibition of Fine Arts

in the spring and summer of 1970. This formulation – of understanding social movements as a possible outgrowth of civil society – is in line with what others have argued with respect to how civil society created the space for social movements to form with respect to neighborhood associations, school teachers, and intellectuals.⁶ By this time, the AAP’s activities on the “vertical” axis had reached such an organized and sustained oppositional stance as to warrant what social movement scholar Sidney Tarrow has identified as the key “empirical properties” of social movements, namely that people facing a collective challenge, with a common purpose coordinated efforts and formed bonds of social solidarity in order to confront authorities in a sustained way.⁷ As I demonstrate, the campaigns of the AAP would borrow from what had been done by other oppositional groups. Studies about organized opposition to the regime point to the trifecta of workers, students, and various nationalist groups as the primary protagonists.⁸ Historian Pere Ysàs has demonstrated how the workers’ movement set in place the patterns (work stoppages, assemblies, protests, and sit-ins) in which other groups, such as regular citizens via neighborhood associations and students, followed in order to challenge the authoritarianism of the regime.⁹ The quest for more autonomy over artistic affairs ended up attracting hundreds of artists beyond only members of the political opposition to the regime, but AAP leaders knew

⁶ Pamela Radcliff, *Making Democratic Citizens in Spain: Civil Society and the Popular Origins of the Transition, 1960-1978* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Tamar Groves., *Teachers and the Struggle for Democracy in Spain, 1970-1985* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). Also, Pere Ysàs, in describing the regime’s reaction to intellectuals, ends up describing many of the latter’s actions: Pere Ysàs, *Disidencia y subversión: La lucha del régimen franquista por su supervivencia, 1960-1975* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2004).

⁷ What Tarrow calls “contentious politics” is basically the first key ingredient of a social movement. He defines this as what occurs when ordinary people join forces to confront opponents, but the ability to sustain such political activity is really what cements it into a social movement. Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

⁸ The first two were cemented in the now classic work: José María Maravall, *Dictatorship and Political Dissent: Workers and Students in Franco’s Spain* (London: Tavistock, 1978).

⁹ Pere Ysàs, “¿Una Sociedad pasiva? Actitudes, activismo y conflictividad social en el franquismo tardío.” *Ayer* 68, no. 4 (2007): 31-57.

how to channel artists' complaints and demands to expertly undermine the regime's vision and authority.

The set of circumstances that allowed artists to start to come together when they did – the favorable opportunity structure – was caused by an arts apparatus that had no formal prohibitions on art production (including an attitude that did not prohibit groups of artists from forming), that at the same time, had started to see the benefit of modern art to advance the image of Spain abroad as a free society. This attitude tolerant of artists coming together represents one set of factors. In terms of social capital, the social and cultural networks that make mobilization possible, a new generation of artists had reached a point in which they wanted to come together because they felt it a cultural and professional necessity. Throughout the 1960s, well-known artists, gallerists, and art critics used their art, venues, and voices to continue to espouse the desire for a more pluralist vision for the arts that sought their own inclusion into official decision making. At the same time, these same figures did not waste time in creating their own opportunities and artistic milieu when the arts apparatus remained largely unresponsive. Social capital also took the form of expertise in political activism. For example, an artists' group within the clandestine Spanish Communist Party (PCE) was the spark that would give life to the AAP. Not only were such figures able to offer the leadership that came from formal anti-Francoist political organizing, but they also articulated the message that the lack of regime follow-through on its promises was a feature, not a bug, of Francoism.

Despite fitting the pattern perfectly, artists have not been recognized as a distinct grouping of civil society. With little exception, within these groupings, artists, when mentioned at all, have been lumped in with intellectuals.¹⁰ While visual artists participated in larger

¹⁰ The two exceptions to this pattern are Juan Albarrán Diego, “Lo profesional es político: Trabajo artístico, movimientos sociales y militancia política en el último franquismo,” *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma. Serie VII*. 3 (2015):

movements in which intellectuals as a grouping were the protagonists, including signing what became known as the ‘collective letters’ directed to Francoist officials expressing disapproval of official policies and practices throughout the 1960s, what has been underappreciated have been their actions to address specific artistic concerns. Visual artists as active members of civil society signed statements and manifestos, staged exhibitions, engineered sit-ins, engaged the press, and promulgated campaigns of non-participation to advocate for both their livelihoods and their freedom of expression. The first stirrings of what such artists would seek to achieve began in the artists’ groups of the late 1950s.

Debate over artists’ autonomous agency in civil society has hinged on the question of how the aesthetic genres to which artists subscribed have been portrayed by scholars, and specifically which kind of art was really sufficiently oppositional toward the regime. While all of these groups that emerged around 1957 each claimed to have formed to undertake the problem of how to renovate the Spanish arts scene, whether or not these groups accomplished this feat is something often discussed. The fact that the regime latched onto the art of Informalismo has been used by scholars to call into question whether or not the genre can be taken seriously as an autonomous one. One influential opinion dating back from the early 1980s, for example, has denied that the El Paso group produced a new, prescient art that managed to capture the *Zeitgeist* of the time. Rather, these artists are portrayed as having been simply the product of a plan that had been in the making from the early 1950s by the arts apparatus. This point of view sees the artists of El Paso as having been particularly adept at working with the regime opportunistically so as to ensure their own success.¹¹ This point of view has continued under a similar argument of

245-271; and Isabel García García, *Tiempo de estrategias: La Asociación de Artistas Plásticos y el arte comprometido español en los setenta* (Madrid: CSIC, 2016).

¹¹ Gabriel Ureña, *Las vanguardias artísticas en la postguerra española: 1940-1959* (Madrid, Ediciones Istmo, 1982), 166-168.

opportunism, claiming that these artists should have done more to speak out against the regime, if they were as oppositional as they claimed.¹² If, as this position asserts, Informalismo was ‘regime art,’ then another layer of discussion – dating back to the period itself – has attempted to make arguments for why geometric abstraction and/or the various forms of realism that emerged from the late 1950s should be seen instead as more properly fitting a true oppositional objective.

On the other hand, the defenders of Informalismo’s autonomy argue that the artists of El Paso set out to promulgate an art that they believed would represent a new, modern art for Spain that was meant to challenge the boundaries of the country’s visual arts panorama. This position also argues that the artists of Informalismo cannot be faulted for the fact that the regime latched onto their art and that, furthermore, they should not be blamed for participating to represent Spain in large international arts contests at a time when there were few other opportunities. Even if these artists could be accused of a very open cooperation (for detractors, ‘opportunism’) at the beginning, is this really a problem if in the end they had not renounced their principles?¹³

My argument falls in this second camp. As I will demonstrate throughout this chapter, the groups of artists of the late 1950s each were genuinely attempting to create new artistic projects that they believed would push boundaries and open new avenues of aesthetic research. They wanted the arts apparatus to notice them, because they wanted the regime to see the intrinsic value in the visual arts; they had no idea which exact position the regime would take, and no one in any of the groups anticipated becoming the immediate object of regime attention.

Furthermore, even the distinction itself between what art was “official” and that which was being

¹² Jorge Luis Marzo, “Arte moderno y franquismo. Los orígenes conservadores de la vanguardia y de la política artística en España,” *¿Puedo hablarle con libertad, excelencia? Arte y poder en España desde 1950* (Murcia: Cendeac, 2010), 31-139.

¹³ Michelle Vergniolle Delalle, *La palabra en silencio: Pintura y oposición bajo el franquismo* (Valencia: Publicacions de la Universitat de València, 2008), 158. It is on this page that the author poses the question about opportunism specifically, although her position in defense of Informalismo as an autonomous and oppositional art is present throughout the book.

supported independent of regime support was still taking shape. There had to take place an evolution among artists, critics, and gallerists of seeing the regime's art policy as a political instrument, especially as the arts apparatus of the regime itself was consistently unsure as to its next steps, trying one thing after another to see what would bring more prestige to Spain internationally. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the transformation of Informalismo from avant-garde into official art was itself a complex constructed narrative that took into account – and shifted – a multitude of ideas.

The First Artists' Groups and Associations of the Late 1950s

Many of the Spanish artists inclined toward non-academic styles as of the 1950s, and who would become known internationally in the 1960s, shared common biographical traits. Adopting the common pattern to name Spanish intellectuals according to their generation, art critic Vicente Aguilera Cerni referred to the modern artists of his own generation as “the children of 1936,” given their young ages at the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War.¹⁴ Many such artists were born in the mid-1920s or early 1930s, were either self-taught or had studied at one of Spain's few official art schools, and had spent time abroad (the most common destination being Paris), after which they settled in the Spanish cities of Madrid, Barcelona, or Valencia. Most of these artists started exhibiting their works as of the early to mid-1950s, at a mixture of private art galleries, the various official atheneums, and in state-led exhibitions such as the *Bienales Hispanoamericanas* or the National Exhibition of Fine Art. If chance allowed, artists would contract with an international gallery, typically in Paris, London, or New York, opening doors to opportunities throughout Europe and the globe.

¹⁴ This phrase, “*hijos de '36*,” was often used by Aguilera Cerni, although it was originally coined by *falangista* Pedro Laín Entralgo. Díaz Sánchez, *La idea de arte abstracto*, 111.

By the late 1950s, this generation of artists felt an urge to form into groups so that they could challenge the conservative visual arts milieu with their new approaches and styles of painting. At this time, two new directions of the visual arts in Spain were each versions of abstract art and they were both being promulgated by groupings of artists rather than individuals. One was a geometric abstraction inspired by Constructivism and Neoplasticism, and the other was a form of abstract expressionism characterized by the use of dark colors, unconventional materials, and improvisation, known throughout Europe as Art Informel. While Equipo 57 was an example of the former, El Paso represented the Spanish version of Informel, known as Informalismo. A third group, the Grupo Parpalló, represented artists working in various genres. While it was more theoretically aligned with Equipo 57 than it was with El Paso, in neither of its two phases did it reach a strict stylistic consensus. Far from adopting a nonchalant stance, each of these groups formulated theoretical premises put forth in manifestos and statements, establishing how certain artistic aesthetic approaches, pictorial languages, and organizational practices were meant to achieve specific goals with respect to better integrating the artist into society. While the individuals of El Paso painted rough lines and dark colors to explore representations of pure human emotion, the collective Equipo 57's heavily theorized examinations of color and shape sought to develop new relationships of form. Along with the more stylistically heterogeneous Parpalló, each of these groups saw themselves as taking a much-needed step to advance a languishing Spanish art. Lastly, we shall see how the sudden presence of new art was also taken up in Barcelona by the Asociación de Artistas Actuales (AAA) at this same period. The AAA's existence not only demonstrated the restricted nature of associationism in Spain at this time, but also how, despite that obstacle, its members attempted to work with the official arts apparatus to try to achieve its goal of opening a new contemporary art museum.

In each of the examples to follow, the artists began by articulating their projects and hoping for official support. In an environment in which the state had taken little interest in fomenting the visual arts, these groups hoped to gain the state as patron. They were coming from a milieu, however, in which the arts apparatus had only very recently started to pay more attention to new artistic movements and projects. Each of the groups had to come to an understanding of whether or not officialdom would be helpful in serving the interests of the visual arts.

Grupo Parpalló

When the Grupo Parpalló (1956–1961) formed in late October 1956 in Valencia, it was comprised of a rather stylistically heterogeneous group of artists who coalesced around the idea that Spanish art – especially Valencian art – should be reinvigorated. The group served as the connective-tissue between various Spanish artists, decorators, and architects who had a connection with Valencia from the mid-1950s who, while not based around a single cohesive style, unified under their collective rejection of academic art. In existence until the summer of 1961, Parpalló experienced two rather distinct phases: one before and one after the summer of 1959. Group members would come to understand that art should articulate a social commitment, and with that goal in mind, sought a deeper connection with international art movements as well as attempted to recuperate artistic trends from before the Spanish Civil War.¹⁵ Despite the fact that several members of Parpalló went on later to become rather vocal opponents of the regime, it should be no surprise that the group had official origins in that all of its original members had met because of their affiliation with Valencia's Instituto Iberoamericano, a regional branch of the

¹⁵ Marzo and Mayayo, *Arte en España*, 192.

national ICH. It is even possible that the Valencian center, not the artists themselves, instigated the creation of the group in the first place.¹⁶

One of the group's founding members, art critic Vicente Aguilera Cerni, was Parpalló's leading theoretician and the only individual to be part of the group from beginning to end. He is credited with being the instigator of this artistic renovation as well as the font from which several other movements and ideas important to Spanish art history would emanate. Relevant to this chapter in particular is the group's attempt in the late 1950s and early 1960s to create and define a socially-committed art meant to challenge the status quo. While Parpalló and Aguilera Cerni would not be successful in this venture in the ways they thought, this opportunity to think through the ideal role of art and one's position within society would ultimately prove fecund as these ideas would develop and take on new lives in the 1960s.

At its founding meeting on October 23, 1956, the group was comprised of Aguilera Cerni and 16 others, although the group would grow as big as two dozen a year later with a subsequent ebb and flow of members.¹⁷ Until 1959, when Aguilera Cerni would essentially reinvent the group beyond recognition, Parpalló is best understood as a large collective of rather loosely-linked individual artists, architects, and decorators who would come together to host exhibitions and publish *Arte Vivo*, a self-financed publication that in its first phase served as a newsletter. Perhaps it was precisely because of the group's first rather vague postulates published in an open letter espousing the renovation of "weak Valencian artistic life" among any "who feel the importance of art as enrichment of the emotional experience" that many artists and cultural

¹⁶ Ramírez, *Grupo Parpalló*, 16.

¹⁷ Parpalló's founding members were: Agustín Albalat, José Marcelo Benedito, José Esteve Edo, Amadeo Gabino, Juan Genovés Manolo Gil, Jacinta Gil, Víctor Manuel Gimeno, Joaquín Michavila, Salvador Montesa, Nassio, Vicente Pastor Pla, Ramón Pérez Esteve, Francisco Pérez Pizarro, Luis Prades Perona, and Juan de Ribera Berenguer.

figures could see themselves in Parpalló's mission.¹⁸ The group never made any claims of being united by a common shared style, method, or theory; in fact, statements in exhibition catalogs and within *Arte Vivo* candidly referenced the artists' aesthetic differences, explaining that their commonality was "the freedom to search."¹⁹ The group continued to emphasize its status as an experimental endeavor, first set out in the "Open letter," in which continued work and the sharing of ideas would eventually coalesce into cohesive "doctrinal principles."²⁰

Despite being in the context of an authoritarian regime, Parpalló's gatherings naturally gravitated toward democratic formats that opened a forum for new ideas. In particular, the group's membership – comprised of painters, sculptors, decorators, and architects – adopted a wholistic and integrative attitude toward showing how different art forms were meant to contribute to one another. In the context of Franco's Spain, the emphasis on the integration of the arts was rather remarkable, given the official tone of regime-led endeavors in which various art forms were extremely compartmentalized.²¹

What may be understood in retrospect as a preparatory period was only able to function for so long with such a large slate of heterogenous members and without a deeper ideological underpinning to unify them in some way. For about a year and half from December 1956, this loose collective hosted a total of five exhibitions together, all held in institutional spaces.²²

¹⁸ "Carta abierta del Grupo Parpalló," December 1, 1956. This letter was originally published in two Valencian dailies (*Levante* and *Las Provincias*), reproduced in Ramírez, *Grupo Parpalló*, 57.

¹⁹ "...la libertad para la búsqueda." Grupo Parpalló, "Editorial," *Arte Vivo*, tercera entrega, December 1957.

²⁰ "Carta abierta..." in Ramírez, *Grupo Parpalló*, 57.

²¹ One clear example of this compartmentalization was in how the National Exhibition of Fine Arts was organized by genre and did not allow group contributions. See Chapter 5 for a discussion of this nationwide state-run visual arts biennial.

²² Ateneo Mercantil de Valencia (December 1956); Instituto Francés de Barcelona (May 1957); Diputación de Valencia (July 1957); Ateneo de Madrid (January 1958); and the Centro de Estudios Norteamericanos de Valencia (June 1958).

During this time, Parpalló was still linked to the Instituto Iberoamericano of Valencia, which if nothing else, appears to have at least provided the artists an institutional home.²³

From the summer of 1958 and lasting for a year, the Grupo Parpalló experienced a period of crisis. During this time, the group took a hiatus from organizing exhibitions, and geared activity toward professionalization and total reorganization.²⁴ Parpalló worked to free itself of the Instituto Iberoamericano and transformed *Arte Vivo* from a short newsletter into a proper magazine, including contributions from international collaborators such as Frank Lloyd Wright, Victor Vasarely, and Max Bense, among others.²⁵ Throughout 1959, a few new members joined Parpalló, although Aguilera Cerni and a few faithful collaborators removed most of the membership citing their absenteeism as the reason, after which several others resigned voluntarily over this decision.²⁶ In this second phase of the group, Aguilera Cerni was joined by fellow art critic Antonio Giménez Pericás and a more compact group of artists (sculptor Andreu Alfaro, painters Doro Balaguer, Monjalés, and Eusebio Sempere, the decorator José Martínez Peris, and architects Juan José Estellés and Pablo Navarro) who consolidated their style into one based around abstraction with a social commitment.

The new iteration of Parpalló saw this smaller consolidated group interrogate how artistic integration, cooperation, and solidarity could coalesce into an effective approach toward the creation of socially-conscious art. Early writings by Aguilera Cerni and Giménez Pericás called for collective teamwork, which was envisioned to be the defining feature of this new phase.

When Parpalló reappeared with an exhibition at the recently-renovated Sala Gaspar of Barcelona

²³ “Editorial” *Arte Vivo*, cuarta entrega, July 1958. In this short opening note, the author (most likely Aguilera Cerni), asserted that the Instituto Iberoamericano de Valencia was Parpalló’s only source of aid, although no mention is made of what form this took.

²⁴ Ramírez, *Grupo Parpalló*, 27.

²⁵ *Ibid.* In this second phrase, Grupo Parpalló only published four issues of *Arte Vivo*, after which publication ceased at the end of 1959.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 29.

at the beginning of the exhibition season in 1959, it seemed as though this collective drive might take off. While most of the contributions were individual, the group had advanced a single collective project entitled *Proyecto para un monumento al mediterráneo* (1959).²⁷ In the end, the appeals toward collective work and a consolidation of style remained unheeded as group members continued to work individually. While all Parpalló artists adopted abstraction, this included both geometric and expressionist variants, which were typically considered distinct genres, each with divergent origins and objectives.

Aguilera Cerni's ideas about the fact that art should communicate a social commitment was not antithetical to support for the regime's arts apparatus, at least not yet in mid-1959. In what ended up being its final issue, Parpalló's magazine of July-August 1959 was dedicated to "international awards for new Spanish art," as around a dozen Spaniards, including Aguilera Cerni, had recently won awards at major international events and from renowned arts institutions.²⁸ While Joan Miró had recently won an award from the Guggenheim, Spaniards had also fared very well in recent international art biennials in Alexandria (Alvaro Delgado, Eudaldo Serra, Francisco Torres Monsó, and José Vento), São Paulo (Modesto Cuixart and Jorge de Oteiza), in addition to Venice (Antonio Tàpies, Eduardo Chillida, and Aguilera Cerni).²⁹ The members of Parpalló saw these victories as the group effort of a "large minority," meaning the young generation of up-and-coming artists, but also the General Directorate of Cultural Relations

²⁷ This project consisted of eventually installing a sinuous, undulating abstract sculpture by Andreu Alfaro that would appear to be floating in a body of water, and would appear different from multiple points of view. The sculpture was meant to evoke an emotional reaction in the viewer, asking one to contemplate human contributions to natural space. In the end, this project only ever existed on paper.

²⁸ José Martínez Peris, "Dedicatoria," Parpalló nú. 4 (July-August 1959), s/p. This final issue of *Arte Vivo* contains a note that the magazine was, as of this issue, to be called *Parpalló*, although no further issues were ever published. Also on the cover below the date was a note that indicated that this magazine had not actually been issued until the summer of 1960.

²⁹ In addition to those visual artists and art critics named here, several Spanish architects had also recently received major honors: La Joya, Barbero and Ortiz Echagüe (Reynolds Prize), Carvajal and García de Paredes (Milan Triennial), Molezún and Corrales (Brussels Exhibition).

and its head curator, Luis González Robles. For those who know of Aguilera Cerni only from his later projects from the mid-1960s, this sincere nod to the state and its efforts would seem surprising, although it supports my claim that groups of artists throughout the 1950s experienced an evolution in their thinking about what official patronage would look like once the arts apparatus actually started to direct more attention to this new wave of art; it was not clear until later what ramifications would come out of the regime's promotion of Spanish art abroad.

While still working specifically with Grupo Parpalló, Aguilera Cerni was also occupied in theorizing a larger artistic movement into which it and other groups of artists would fit. While even he could not have predicted what form it would take, it's evident that he envisaged an artists' collective of some kind, prescient enough to influence visual artists from multiple genres. Thus, in order to understand Parpalló's aspirations, it is also necessary to delve more deeply into Aguilera Cerni's idea in early 1959 of '*el arte además*,'³⁰ a short-lived moniker for what would become known as Arte Normativo (1959-1961). The idea behind this movement was that artists who practiced it would be staking a claim in favor of art serving a social and moral mission, following in the path set by Neoplasticism, Constructivism, and the Bauhaus.³¹ Aguilera Cerni arranged for a first exhibition of this new movement at the Ateneo Mercantil of Valencia in March 1960 (*Primera exposición conjunta de arte normativo español*) featuring not only the works of Grupo Parpalló, but also Equipo 57, Equipo Córdoba, Manuel Calvo, and José María de Labra. While Arte Normativo would face an ideological fracture around the issue of how much art could be an agent of social transformation,³² Aguilera Cerni had attempted to connect Parpalló with other likeminded individuals and groups of artists in a united front, as a testament

³⁰ "Primero discurso afirmativo-negativo de Arte Vivo" *Arte Vivo*, nú. 1 (segunda época), January-February 1959.

³¹ Ramírez, *Grupo Parpalló*, 32.

³² The divide between Aguilera Cerni and Parpalló on one hand, and José María Moreno Galván and Equipo 57 on the other, is described in detail in Marzo and Mayayo, *Arte en España*, 223-226.

to the fact that a new generation of artists sought artistic renovation with a social commitment. Reflecting a couple of years later on the dissolution of Parpalló and Arte Normativo, Aguilera Cerni saw the movement's failure as the result of having prematurely raised questions (e.g. the social value of experimental art and the predicament of working as a group) without having interrogated the underlying social and political structures.³³ As I will demonstrate later in the chapter, Aguilera's continued theorizing about art and its social function eventually would come to have important ramifications for collective art practice in the early- and mid-1960s.

Equipo 57

Like the Grupo Parpalló, Equipo 57 (1957–1962) also aspired to create a socially-conscious art. Although unlike the Valencians, the artists of Equipo 57 would go a step further to work collectively to develop a theoretically precise style of geometric abstraction. Taking their collective stance seriously, Equipo 57 denounced the individualism of the artist, and members saw the art they created as a reaction against Art Informel. Furthermore, Equipo 57 saw itself as a research team, in which its experimental work with color fields and undulating shapes was itself a way for artists to truly engage with society and build unity, a necessary feature without which it would be impossible to defend their professional interests. While lasting almost five years until 1962, the collective would make an impression on Aguilera Cerni, who had included Equipo 57 into his first and only Arte Normativo exhibition in 1960.

Taking the year of their formation as part of their name, Equipo 57 was formed in Paris by a group of Spanish artists residing there temporarily. An exhibition at the Rond Pont café in the French capital in June 1957 turned this informal association of four Spanish artists (Juan Serrano and José Duarte from Cordoba, Augustín Ibarrola from Bilbao, and Ángel Duarte from

³³ Vicente Aguilera Cerni, *Panorama del nuevo arte español* (Madrid: Ediciones Guadarrama, 1966), 217-218, as quoted in Ramírez, *Grupo Parpalló*, 35.

Cáceres) into an entity. At this first exhibition, the artists issued a manifesto – the first of several written declarations – railing against the standard art market by targeting galleries, critics, and art dealers specifically, as well as decrying Parisian salons.³⁴ Before leaving Paris, the group was discovered by gallerist Denise René who arranged for a showing of the group’s work in her own gallery only a month after the group’s inaugural exhibition and would become a dedicated supporter for years to come. After the artists of Equipo 57 moved to Cordoba in the fall of 1957, the group grew beyond its original four members, incorporating Juan Cuenca, Danish painter Hansen Thorkild, and for a short while, Néstor Basterrechea. There were also other artists present who worked alongside Equipo 57 but never joined.

More than just a group of artists framed around a set of shared aesthetic preferences toward geometric abstraction, Equipo 57 would less than a year after its founding transform into a group that undertook collective art practice.³⁵ The artists would work collectively on a single canvas, and artworks were signed as a group. By utilizing the word *equipo* (literally meaning ‘team’), the group distinguished itself from a loose assemblage of artists, to indicate that all members were integral to the creation of its art. Inspired by Constructivism and the Bauhaus, Equipo 57 articulated a position diametrically opposed to the individualism of the artist. When the artist was considered a ‘genius,’ they argued, not only did this separate him from an understanding of societal concerns, but also resulted in his solitude.³⁶ This belief in the importance of collective work was also the reason that Equipo 57 shared an extreme distaste for Informel, seeing it as too individualistic, commercial, and lacking in intellectual rigor.³⁷

³⁴ The text of this first manifesto, which had been written originally in French, has been reproduced in Spanish and English translations in *Equipo 57* (Madrid: MNCARS, 1993), 152-157.

³⁵ Through connections with Danish artists in Paris (Richard Mortensen and Hansen Thorkild), members of Equipo 57 as well as other likeminded Spanish artists would spend between February and May 1958 in Denmark where the artists formulated their collective method.

³⁶ Llorente Hernández, “Equipo 57” in *Equipo 57*, MNCARS catalog, 54.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 56.

Interestingly, the group was around to see Informel take hold in Spain, first with a 1957 exhibition entitled *Otro Arte* (put on by José Luis Fernández del Amo of the official Museum of Contemporary Art), and also with the official attention toward the El Paso group of artists in the large international exhibitions of the late 1950s. As they witnessed the Franco regime appropriate Informalismo for its own ends, Equipo 57 grew increasingly critical toward this Spanish version of the genre.³⁸ A general antipathy toward Informalismo, however, should not be taken as a declaration of war against the Grupo El Paso, as correspondence between the two groups hinted at possible cooperation, albeit a relationship that never came to fruition.³⁹ It seems that by 1961, and as a result of discussions with Vicente Aguilera Cerni, Equipo 57 softened its position toward Informalismo, seeing it as altogether less ideological.⁴⁰

Throughout their collective existence, Equipo 57 took very seriously the need to theorize plastic space. The first chance in which outside observers would have been able to see Equipo 57's artwork coincided with the group's first exhibition in Spain. Held in November of 1957 at the Sala Negra, the art exhibition space that started to showcase modern art of the Museum of Contemporary Art, this week-long exhibition was meant as a tribute to Danish artist Richard Mortensen. Present at this exhibition was an artistic manifesto entitled "The Interactivity of Plastic Space" ("La interactividad del espacio plástico"), the group's first attempt to consolidate its ideas about artistic theory since its formation in Paris. According to Equipo 57, this 'interactivity' was based upon the constant dynamic interaction of the elements of the artwork, depicted in the manifesto with instructive sketches. What resulted from the large swaths of

³⁸ Jacopo Galimberti, *Individuals against Individualism: Art Collectives in Western Europe (1956-1969)* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2017), 77.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 80. Equipo 57 wrote a letter to El Paso on August 18, 1958, which has been reprinted in José Lebrero Stals, ed., *Equipo 57* (Madrid: Turner, 2007), 66.

⁴⁰ Llorente Hernández, "Equipo 57," 56.

colorful shapes that touched one another was not just an abstract composition, but rather a dynamism in the way the forms approached one another. Unlike other forms of geometric abstraction such as Op-art, at this stage of their explorations, the artists of Equipo 57 did not want to use shapes to create a fictitious space with optical illusions as in the work of progenitor Victor Vasarely. Instead, members of Equipo 57 wanted the solid-colored shapes on the canvas to create their own dynamic relationships by “the creation of zones of maximum and minimum activity, spatial pressures, passages and channels of suction, repercussions, currents...”⁴¹ The artists saw their paintings not as compositions, but rather autonomous structures. Over time, the group’s aesthetic would shift to appear more like those present in Kinetic Art and Op-art, although the artists always considered their focus to be different from these other genres.

Equipo 57’s researches moved from only painting to include architecture and design. While the former was only theoretical – they never intended their plans to inform actual building projects – the latter, especially the design of chairs, was informed by the need of some of the members to earn an income. At the group’s May 1960 exhibition at Madrid’s Galería Darro, they issued the “Second manifesto on interactivity,” in which many of the group’s abiding principles still remained valid, although there was more attention toward finding “plastic solutions applicable to objects of daily use to urban life.”⁴² As with Parpalló’s attention toward the integration of the arts, Equipo 57 had undertaken such explorations, although they considered design and artistic creation two separate threads, rather than trying to merge the two.

Equipo 57 continually made known their aversion to art that was created only to respond to commercial interests rather than in response to true societal needs. This is why the group often

⁴¹ “Interactivity of Plastic Space,” November 1957, as reproduced in *Equipo 57*, MNCARS catalog, 156.

⁴² Equipo 57, untitled statement (although recognized as Equipo 57’s second manifesto), dated May 1960, as reproduced in Imma Julián and Antoni Tàpies, *Diálogo sobre arte, cultura y sociedad* (Barcelona: Icaria, 1977), 159-160.

harped on commercial establishments, namely art galleries. Never straying from the stance that art should not be a money-making endeavor, and certainly not for those not responsible for its creation, Equipo 57 articulated the following:

We consider that as long as the necessary conditions for a total integration of the plastic arts in material life remain unfulfilled, our only weapon against the present situation is to refuse to enter the little chapels of the “dealers,” antiques experts, collectors of abstract, concrete, or informal butterflies: the leaders and creators, in short, of the sclerosis in which we find the plastic arts.⁴³

As evidenced by the examples of its art shows held in museums and art galleries, Equipo 57's bark was bigger than its bite with respect to its attitude toward formal exhibitions and the art world. Clearly while the members of Equipo 57 did not want to perpetuate the structures that they believed limited artists' actions, the group was nevertheless eager to have opportunities to show their work; they would have seven exhibitions exclusive to their artwork before breaking up, four of which were at art galleries, as well as have work shown in exhibitions with other artists of geometric abstraction.⁴⁴ There is even a possibility, however small, that the artwork of Equipo 57 would have been entered into official exhibitions abroad, as it seems González Robles considered the group's works for the 1961 São Paulo Biennial, but was reluctant to host pieces signed collectively. When he proposed sending only the works of an individual artist from within the group, Equipo 57 refused to participate.⁴⁵ It is likely that the members of Equipo 57

⁴³ “Consideramos que mientras no se realicen las condiciones necesarias para una total integración de las artes plásticas a la vida material, nuestra única arma de defensa contra la actual situación es negarnos a entrar en las capillitas de los “marchans”, anticuarios de arte, coleccionistas de mariposas abstractas, concretas o informales, dirigentes y creadores, en definitiva, de la esclerosis en que se encuentran las artes plásticas.” Ibid., 160.

⁴⁴ In chronological order, Equipo 57's solo exhibitions were as follows: Denise René Gallery (Paris, July 1957); Sala Negra of the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo (Madrid, November 1957); Thorwaldsens Museum (Copenhagen, April 1958); Club Urbis (Madrid, April 1959); Sala Darro (Madrid, May 1960); Sala Céspedes of the Círculo de Amistad (Córdoba, May 1961); and the Susanne Bollag Gallery (Zurich, March-April 1962). With respect to joint exhibitions with other artists, Equipo 57 had work included in *Réalités Nouvelles. Nouvelles réalités* (Paris, 1958); *Art construit d'aujourd'hui* (Paris and Brussels, 1959 and 1960); *Konkrete Kunst* (Zurich, 1960); and *Konstruktivisten* (Leverkusen, 1962). Equipo 57's artwork also featured in both domestic and foreign exhibitions after the group had broken up.

⁴⁵ Galimberti, *Individuals against Individualism*, 82-83.

reconciled their exhibitions with their insistence on making art accessible; their artworks were for sale, but at prices much lower than what artworks at gallery shows typically cost. During a May 1960 exhibition at Madrid's Galería Darro, directed by art critic José María Moreno Galván, Equipo 57's manifesto explained that the collective put artworks "at the reach of everyone, at cost price" – gouaches would cost 500 pesetas, oil paintings 3,000, and murals were listed at 11,000 pesetas (roughly 8, 50, and 180 U.S. dollars, respectively).

A number of factors led to the breakup of Equipo 57 in 1962, but the decision by the artists to move on to other projects was ultimately related to their belief of the need for a visual language better able to communicate unambiguous messages in the face of increased political repression by the regime. Equipo 57 had been operating under the conditions of physical distance as Agustín Ibarrola and Ángel Duarte had returned to Paris in 1959 – although group members continued to participate collectively, sending sketches back and forth through the mail. The physical distance perhaps could have been overcome, but it was clear that the fallout from the regime's support of Informalismo had forced these artists by the early 1960s to reconsider their *raison d'être*. As with the afterlives of the members of Grupo Parpalló, Ibarrola, José Duarte, and Juan Serrano would likewise eschew their commitment to abstraction to join the emerging social realist movements, in this case, the unambiguously oppositional Estampa Popular.⁴⁶ Ibarrola and Pericás would also enter into direct political opposition to the regime, in which both would be jailed for activities related to the miners' strike in Asturias in June of 1962.⁴⁷

Grupo El Paso

⁴⁶ When Ibarrola returned to Spain in 1961, he set up a printmakers' workshop in the Basque Country. José Duarte, Serrano, and the members of another group called Equipo Cordoba established Estampa Popular in Cordoba.

⁴⁷ Ibarrola was a member of the clandestine Spanish Communist Party and also helped in the early 1960s to launch the Comisiones Obreras, provisional commissions of workers in which founding members took advantage of a loophole that allowed for collective bargaining. He would be imprisoned again between 1967 and 1969 for this work.

Of the three groups of artists profiled here, the Grupo El Paso of Madrid (1957–1960) was that which would most directly intersect with the making of Spanish art policy. Formed in February 1957 around the appreciation of the kind of abstract expressionism popular in Paris and the United States after the Second World War, the artists of El Paso set out to reinvigorate Spanish art inspired by the decade-old genre of Art Informel. Until their disbanding in May of 1960, the members of El Paso created artwork that they believed was the ultimate rejection of academic painting: non-figurative in its subject matter, created in an improvised fashion, dark in pigment and rough in textures, and humble in use of common materials. What the group could not have anticipated was that after Spain’s international successes at the Biennials of 1957 in São Paulo and 1958 in Venice, its members’ artwork would come to be given top billing by the Franco regime’s arts apparatus as a key exemplar of the new modern Spanish art. The members of El Paso were, thus, forced to come to terms with what kind of relationship they would have with the regime.

The El Paso group took Art Informel, a genre known for its praise of individual creators, and transformed it into a group pursuit. The term ‘Art Informel’ was coined by French art critic Michel Tapié in his 1952 book *Un art autre*, whereby he was trying to characterize a type of postwar European art that was informed by spontaneity, gestural forms, and the irrational. Tapié believed that this “art of another kind” represented a radical break with the past, as such artists eschewed attention to formal elements in pursuit of what he saw as a truer expressiveness based instead on raw emotion, feeling, and intuition. Quite dismissive of group efforts, inherent in Tapié’s theory was also his praise of the role of the authentic creator, who would be challenged by immature and cowardly followers attempting to stifle his creative wisdom.⁴⁸ Represented by

⁴⁸ Galimberti, *Individuals against Individualism*, 26.

the postwar art of Karl Appel, Jean Fautrier, and Jean Dubuffet among others, Art Informel was characterized by an abstract expressionism of muted colors – browns, tans, and ochres – and in line with Tapié’s theory, was recognized as a style employed by daring individuals who defended artistic creativity and rules-breaking against more academic styles. Akin to existentialism, the importance of individuality emanated from the idea that in the chaotic postwar universe, it was more important than ever before to assert one’s own creative agency. Given the bold styles of its various protagonists and the symbolism of a movement that asserted its revolutionary status and personal artistic freedom, it is no wonder that the artists of El Paso found inspiration in Art Informel.

Just like with the Grupo Parpalló and Equipo 57, the artists who would come to form El Paso likewise pursued a way to reinvigorate the arts scene in Francoist Spain, seeking strength in numbers. As the “*hijos de ‘36*,” those who would come to form El Paso were each starting to exhibit their artworks in the early 1950s both at official and private venues.⁴⁹ All except Manolo Millares had spent time in Paris independently before each settling in Madrid in the mid-1950s when, fortuitously, each artist had pivoted toward Art Informel, or as it was called in Spanish, Informalismo.⁵⁰ Attracted by the materiality of this genre, each of the future El Paso’s painters,

⁴⁹ Many had entered artworks into the ICH-sponsored first *Bienal Hispanoamericana de Arte* (1951) in Madrid and in the *III Bienal* (1955) held in Barcelona, and had also participated in the 1953 *Congreso de Arte Abstracto*. Private art galleries played hosts to some of these early efforts, especially Madrid’s Galería Fernando Fe, which had hosted individual exhibitions of the works of Luis Feito and Rafael Canogar, and the Galería Buchholz, which had sponsored exhibitions for Antonio Saura and Antonio Suárez. In 1953, Antonio Saura had held a lead role in organizing the *Arte fantástico* exhibition at the Galería Clan, even authoring an essay within the exhibition catalog.

⁵⁰ For more about the artists’ similar trajectories, see: Juan Ángel López Manzanares, “La gestación de un lenguaje: los orígenes de “El Paso”,” in *El Ojo del Huracán*, eds. Jaime Brihuega Sierra and Ángel Llorente (Córdoba: Fundación Provincial de Artes Plásticas Rafael Botí, Universidad de Córdoba, Cajasol Fundación, 2008), 117-133.

With respect to ‘Informalismo,’ the term had most likely first been used as the translation of ‘Informel,’ but then entered the lexicon in the 1950s to refer also to the Spanish version of this genre as more Iberian artists started to employ it. In a 1957 book, art critic Juan Eduardo Cirlot included Spanish artists among the genre’s already recognized names. Informalismo in Spain had two major clusters in the late 1950s: Barcelona and Madrid. There were some individual practitioners of Informalismo in Madrid not affiliated with El Paso, such as Lucio Muñoz, Francisco Ferreras, Manuel Mampaso, and Gerardo Rueda. In Barcelona, Informalismo remained an individual

for example, had adopted a simplification of color and incorporated unconventional materials.⁵¹ Recognizing this commonality, in February 1957 Antonio Saura brought together Luis Feito, Manolo Millares, Rafael Canogar, artist couple Pablo Serrano and Juana Francés, Antonio Suárez, Manuel Rivera, and art critics José Ayllón and Manuel Conde. While Serrano, Francés, Suárez, and Rivera would leave the group already by the summer of 1957, after this point membership remained mostly stable.⁵² While the artists' founding manifesto acknowledged their intention to welcome all "artistic manifestations," in actuality an appreciation of Informel did represent the unifying thread. Unlike Equipo 57, the artists of El Paso never aspired to undertake artworks as a collective. The importance of individuality to the original tenets of Art Informal similarly permeated El Paso's Informalismo, although the artists felt that forming into a group to explore shared theoretical and aesthetic foundations was precisely that which endowed them with artistic freedom. Given the context of the Franco dictatorship, El Paso's artists seemed to intuit that they would be able to more effectively wield the power and resources necessary to effect artistic renovation together rather than separately.

Also similar to Grupo Parpalló and Equipo 57, the El Paso group was likewise ambitious in what it wanted to accomplish, seeing itself as responsible for more than just the creation of artwork. Art critic José Ayllón, Saura, and Millares were those mainly responsible for much of the Grupo El Paso's theoretical content over its three years of existence, although the group's

pursuit, characterized by the artworks of Tàpies, Tharrats, Cuixart, and Guinovart. Although before adopting Informalismo, all but the latter had been in the group *Dau al set* together. See: Juan Eduardo Cirlot, *El arte otro: Informalismo en la escultura y pintura más recientes* (Barcelona: Editorial Seix Barral, 1957).

⁵¹ Víctor Nieto Alcaide, "El color de El Paso," in *En el tiempo de El Paso* (Madrid: Ayuntamiento de Madrid, 2002), 69. For example, Manolo Millares became known for his *arpilleras* (paintings on burlap sackcloth), and Manuel Rivera for his metal screens and wires.

⁵² The four core members of El Paso are recognized as Saura, Millares, Feito, and Canogar. In 1958, sculptor Martín Chirino and painter Manuel Viola would join the group, and in early 1959, Conde would leave and Rivera would re-join. For membership and exhibition details of the group see: "Apéndice I – Cronología de las actividades de «El Paso»,” in Laurence Toussaint, *«El Paso» y el arte abstracto en España* (Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra, 1983), 153-157.

initial manifesto of February 1957 is credited to Ayllón.⁵³ As with the Grupo Parpalló's first open letter, there was little mention at this stage of a theoretical premise for what the group's art was meant to achieve. Instead, Ayllón focused primarily on describing the role of the group as arts purveyor, explaining that it wanted to arrange showings of artwork, organize annual exhibitions, maintain a salon, and produce publications. While not all of these objectives would be met, El Paso and its members did take seriously its mission to create not only art, but opportunities for art. For example, El Paso sponsored events, such as the 'Week of Abstract Art' between March 7-15, 1958 in tandem with Fernández del Amo in the Sala Negra highlighting sculptures, ceramics, and paintings of others, which also included talks, film screenings, and an homage to Joan Miró. In addition, the group produced its own eponymous newsletter, with sixteen regular issues and two longer bulletins (referred to by the group as *cartas*) issued between April of 1957 and May 1960, which in spite of their short format provided readers with news of group exhibitions, recent arts publications, and occasionally shared the artists' theoretical ideas.

Like the Grupo Parpalló and Equipo 57, the artists of El Paso saw a pressing need to reinvigorate the arts in Spain, although a certain sense of moral obligation would set them apart. When El Paso issued its second manifesto already in the summer of 1957, the group made clear that it:

[I]ntends to create an environment that allows the free development of art and of the artist, and will fight to overcome the acute crisis that Spain is going through in the field of the visual arts (its causes: the lack of museums and collectors, the absence of a responsible criticism, the radical separation between the different artistic activities, the artificial solution of artistic emigration, etc.).⁵⁴

⁵³ José Ayllón, "Manifiesto" February 1957, as reproduced in Toussaint, «*El Paso*», 15, 19-20. The manifesto was signed by all ten founding members.

⁵⁴ "...crear un ambiente que permita el libre desenvolvimiento del arte y del artista, y luchará por superar la aguda crisis por la que atraviesa España en el campo de las artes visuales (sus causas: la falta de museos y de coleccionistas, la ausencia de una crítica responsable, la radical separación entre las diferentes actividades artísticas,

Whereas for Equipo 57 the problem was money-grubbing art dealers and artists' individualist stances, for El Paso the problem amounted to a dearth of opportunities for non-academic art. Parpalló formed around the idea that artists from Valencia should reinvigorate the region's artistic traditions, and El Paso also believed it important to find a way to build off of Spain's past artistic heritage. All groups believed in the integration of the arts, as El Paso's first manifesto stressed collaboration with "[w]riters, filmmakers, musicians, and architects" with the goal of the "development of multiple possibilities that lie buried in an atmosphere in which the plastic arts have been passed over."⁵⁵ Where El Paso diverged from the others in their prescription was that they saw the work they were undertaking – to create a revolutionary art – as a moral imperative.⁵⁶

So, what made El Paso's art revolutionary? What did it mean that artistic creation was being driven a moral imperative? In one of his most comprehensive essays about the nature of El Paso's work, "Espacio y gesto," Antonio Saura explained the nature of Informalismo as the "reflection of a desire for absolute reality where there is no possible separation between inner world and outer world, substance and spirit, space and gesture."⁵⁷ Saura believed Informalismo to be revolutionary because he saw it as an art form that was willing to break all of the traditional

la artificial solución de la emigración artística, etc.)" "Manifiesto" *El Paso* 3, summer 1957, as reproduced in Toussaint, «*El Paso*», 194.

⁵⁵ "Escritores, cineastas, músicos y arquitectos..." and "...el desarrollo de tantas posibilidades que yacen enterradas en una atmósfera plásticamente superada." José Ayllón "Manifiesto," in Toussaint, «*El Paso*», 15.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ "...el reflejo de una ansia de realidad absoluta donde no quepa separación posible entre mundo interior y mundo exterior, materia y espíritu, espacio y gesto." Antonio Saura, "Espacio y gesto," *Papeles de Son Armadans* 37 (April 1959): 55. Before being printed in this journal run by controversial Spanish writer Camilo José Cela, this essay was likely written to be given as a lecture during the Week of Abstract Art that the group had organized in March of 1958, thus forming a consistent set of ideas that Saura shared over the years when discussing his art. That this lecture was published in this issue of *Papeles*, dedicated in its entirety to El Paso, establishes it as a part of the group's foundational doctrine. In addition to Saura's piece, this issue featured writings of all other group members, a copy of the group's second manifesto, including also essays by other art critics such as Vicente Aguilera Cerni, José María Moreno Galván, and original drawings by El Paso artists and even sketches by Picasso. Antonio Saura designed the cover.

rules of form, space, and structure, thus “propos[ing] a return to zero.” Informalismo was “a state of purity and total innocence in front of the canvas.”⁵⁸ It is as though Saura believed that this most drastic art, only one that sought to begin a new tradition, would be powerful enough in the context of a dictatorship that supported traditional, academic art to supersede these long-established conventions. In the context of Franco’s Spain, Informalismo was meant also to be a tool to express the lack of opportunity – a way for artists to cry out and express their frustration.⁵⁹ That the artists felt this sense of the pressing need for a collective outcry, hence the moral imperative, was what drove their search for an art that broke all boundaries.

The artists of El Paso quickly found themselves at the center of several opportunities. As with all artists at this time, the artists of El Paso had throughout the 1950s participated in exhibitions sponsored by private galleries and governmental entities. El Paso’s first public showing as a group was at Madrid’s Galería Buchholz in April 1957, featuring all of the artists who had signed the first manifesto,⁶⁰ although very shortly thereafter, Canogar, Feito, Millares and Saura were invited to participate in an official exhibition called *Otro Arte*, which opened in the Sala Negra of Madrid’s Museo Nacional de Arte Contemporáneo. Alongside works by big names like De Kooning, Pollock, and Fautrier, this exhibition tried to cement Spanish Informalismo into the larger trajectory of Art Informel. The ability to gather all of these works of art was made possible because of Fernández del Amo’s collaborations with private art galleries, namely the Stadler in Paris and the Sala Gaspar in Barcelona.⁶¹ The biggest break for some of El

⁵⁸ “...un estado de pureza y de inocencia total frente al cuadro.” Saura, “Espacio y gesto,” *Papeles*, 58.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 62-63.

⁶⁰ Toussaint, «*El Paso*», 37.

⁶¹ A similar version of *Otro Arte* had first opened in Barcelona’s Sala Gaspar earlier in the year. Afterward, many of the artworks made their way to the Sala Negra in Madrid for this iteration curated by MNAC director José Luis Fernández del Amo. Many of the works from the non-Spanish artists that appeared in this exhibition had been loaned by the Stadler Gallery of Paris, at the time headed by art critic Michel Tapié, who had coined the phrase “the other art.” The version of this exhibition in Madrid counted with the artworks of twenty-eight artists: Karel Appel, Camille Bryen, Alberto Burri, Claire Falkenstein, Ruth Francken, Rene Guisette, Philippe Hosiasson, Toshimitsu

Paso's artists was undoubtedly when Luis González Robles elected for the Spanish contribution to the 1957 São Paulo Biennial artworks by Millares, Feito, Rivera, in addition to sculptures by Oteiza, paintings by Tàpies and Cuixart. Of these, only Oteiza walked away with an award – the top prize for sculpture – but the MOMA ended up purchasing works by Millares and Rivera upon seeing them represented in Brazil.⁶² As with the Grupo Parpalló's enthusiastic reaction toward González Robles's efforts to finally put forth new Spanish art, in early 1958 El Paso's stance toward the arts apparatus of the regime was likewise one of appreciation.⁶³ When González Robles chose the works of nineteen artists for the *XXIX Biennale di Venezia*, he bet very heavily on abstraction, with all but three artists classified as such.⁶⁴ Including the works of Feito, Canogar, Millares, Saura, Suárez and Rivera, El Paso (and its former artists) were well-represented. While none of the El Paso artists won a prize, as with the prior year's São Paulo contest, the artists' presence still garnered them international attention. Millares and Rivera were signed by the Pierre Matisse Gallery of New York City, and the gallerist prepared an exhibition for the whole group – *Four Spanish Painters* – to open at the end of March 1960.

It was after inclusion into these major international arts events that the members of El Paso had to confront what it meant to be the objects of global attention – as well as that of the arts apparatus of the Franco regime. Over the course of 1959, most of the exhibitions of the El Paso artists took place at private art galleries. When El Paso celebrated their second anniversary

Imai, Paul Jenkins, Georges Mathieu, Jean-Paul Riopelle, Francis Salles, Iaroslav Serpan, Antoni Tàpies, Jean Fautrier, Wilhelm Wessel, Hisao Domoto, Willem de Kooning, Jackson Pollock, Mark Tobey, Wolfgang Wols, Laszlo Fugedy, J.J. Tharrats, Juan Vila Casas, Rafael Canogar, Luis Feito, Manolo Millares, and Antonio Saura.

⁶² Toussaint, «*El Paso*», 44.

⁶³ A. Toro (pseudonym of Antonio Saura), "Certámenes internacionales," *Carta de El Paso*, suplemento 2, March 1958, replicated in full in Toussaint, «*El Paso*», 212-214.

⁶⁴ Artists chosen for the exhibition were grouped among the following categories: "Figurative expressionism," (the only non-abstract category featuring Pancho Cossío, G. Ortega Muñoz, and J. Guinovart), "Romantic abstraction," "Dramatic abstraction," and "Geometric abstraction." It should be noted, however, that despite the name given to this last category, the included artists were F. Farreras, M. Mampaso, A. Povedano, and Manuel Rivera, all of whom were recognized as artists of Informalismo.

with an exhibition at the newly-renovated Sala Gaspar of Barcelona in January 1959, the group received a boost when Joan Miró visited the exhibition.⁶⁵ In June, El Paso was given an end-of-season exhibition by gallerist Juana Mordó at the Galería Biosca at a time when the artists were at a new height of popularity. Because of Mordó, the Galería Biosca essentially became El Paso's new institutional home, and continued to support each of the individual artists with exhibitions even after the group's disbanding in May of 1960. This relationship between Mordó and the El Paso artists would become another crucial conduit for the creation of artistic community, as they formed longstanding professional friendships that would continue when Mordó opened her own gallery in 1964 (see Chapter 4). But the event that gave pause to the members of El Paso was when Luis González Robles contacted the members of El Paso to be included, along with Tàpies and others, in a May 1959 exhibition (*13 peintres espagnols actuels*) to be held at the Museum of Decorative Arts in Paris. Tàpies and the El Paso artists refused to participate, believing that they were only being included as part of González Robles' maximalist approach of including as many popular Spanish artists as possible, rather than making concerted decisions based on subject matter and genre. While in the end Tàpies remained steadfast in his refusal, the artists of El Paso (Saura, Millares, Feito, Rivera, and Canogar) changed their mind and did participate.⁶⁶ This exhibition marked a turning point, however, because after this date, the El Paso artists claimed that they would no longer participate in any official exhibitions. In addition, the tensions caused between members about their response to the state was likely a major factor in the group's dissolution, as alluded to in their own final newsletter.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Toussaint, «*El Paso*», 62-64. Although at this time Chirino and Viola were members of the group, the exhibition had already been planned beforehand and only featured the works of Feito, Millares, Saura, and Canogar.

⁶⁶ Toussaint, «*El Paso*», 67-68. In the end, artworks by Pablo Palazuelo replaced those of Tàpies.

⁶⁷ “Última comunicación,” *El Paso* 16, May 1960, in Toussaint, «*El Paso*», 257-259. The final paragraph of this statement announcing their dissolution reads: “Y en la imposibilidad de llevar a cabo esta nueva etapa (por razones de compatibilidad de criterios no necesarios de exponer aquí), los componentes de EL PASO han decidido terminar

The Asociación de Artistas Actuales of Barcelona

When the Agrupación de Artistas Actuales was founded in Barcelona in March of 1956, its members sought to advocate on behalf of artists. The group's objectives were to establish a deeper contact between artists and to represent them in their artistic and professional pursuits.⁶⁸ Such goals first took the form of establishing an annual art exhibition – the Salón de Mayo – the first of which took place in 1957 and lasted until 1970.⁶⁹ The Agrupación, which had started to call itself the Asociación de Artistas Actuales (AAA), also took up the decade-long goal of wanting to create a contemporary art museum for the city of Barcelona.⁷⁰ Initial talks with city officials and the head of Barcelona's Board of Museums [Junta de Museos], Juan Ainaud de Lasarte, seemed promising, although despite the AAA's insistence, the project stalled.⁷¹ Before long, by May of 1959, a subset of eight members of the AAA, including its president at the time, Cesáreo Rodríguez-Aguilera, came together to form a public limited company [*sociedad anónima* (abbreviated S.A.)] of shareholders for the creation of the new contemporary art

su labor conjunta dentro de la comunidad española para continuar de un modo independiente del desarrollo de su obra.”

⁶⁸ “Estatutos de la Agrupación de Artistas Actuales,” 1956, Folder: MACB59-67_AAA_01, Collection: Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Barcelona (1959-1967), Centre d'Estudis i Documentació, MACBA, Barcelona.

⁶⁹ There had been in Barcelona a group of artists and critics grouped underneath patron Víctor M. de Imbert who hosted a series of annual art exhibitions between 1948-1957 known as the Salones de Octubre. When the AAA established their annual exhibitions, they saw themselves as filling the gap left by the end of the Salones de Octubre. The AAA even attempted in 1959 to host another series of annual exhibitions meant to directly continue the October salons, but after a single attempt, the group found it too difficult to support both. See Jaume Vidal Oliveras “Los Salones de Octubre en Barcelona (1948-1957)” in *Tránsitos: artistas españoles antes y después de la Guerra civil* (Madrid: Caja Madrid Fundación, 1999): 93-122.

⁷⁰ To establish a contemporary art museum for the city of Barcelona had first been a goal of a group of artists and art critics called Club 49, with the number denoting the year of formation. While their efforts were frustrated, some of the club's members would be part of the AAA's efforts. Cesáreo Rodríguez-Aguilera, “Historia del Museo de Arte Contemporáneo en Barcelona” *Europa de actualidades, artes y letras*, no. 499, December 1962, 16-17.

⁷¹ Barcelona's Board of Museums was an entity that had been created in the late nineteenth century, comprised of officials from the both the provincial and city governments to oversee local museums. As it was an official body recognized by the Francoist administration, Barcelona's museums were not beholden to the General Directorate of Fine Arts, which theoretically should have endowed the province more autonomy over its local museum-related decisions. In practice, however, the Board of Museums faced consistent criticism both from internal sources, who found duties to be duplicative among city and provincial officials, and from external sources who believed the board to be negligent. “Notas sobre los orígenes y la creación del Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Barcelona,” 1962, Folder: MACB59-67_MACB_FGM_12, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Barcelona (1959-1967), CED, MACBA.

museum.⁷² Without the avenue available yet to establish a formal association – as opened in 1963 and 1964 by the Movimiento and the Ministry of the Interior, respectively – the S.A.’s new shareholders believed that this formal designation was a way for them to demonstrate their dedication to the project to city, provincial, and national authorities while at the same time giving them legal recourse to meet.⁷³

In many ways, even before it existed, a new contemporary art museum for the city of Barcelona seemed predisposed to succeed. Members of the S.A. were well-established cultural figures in the city of Barcelona who had the support of a great number of artists; the museum’s director was to be Alexandre Cirici Pellicer, who had been the first president of the AAA, and its secretary, Cesáreo Rodríguez-Aguilera. Its organizers envisioned the museum as more than simply a building for the display of artworks, but rather also a site of arts promotion featuring talks, conferences, and film screenings – a configuration that attracted many cultural figures beyond only visual arts circles. Through the selling of shares in order to create the S.A., monies had been invested into the project, and many artworks had been donated by artists at the mere suggestion of the new museum. A private arts center with which Cirici Pellicer was affiliated, the Fomento de las Artes Decorativas, ceded the museum the use of some of its space, allowing it to occupy on a temporary basis the dome of its building, the Coliseum Theater. While the members of the S.A. had hoped to secure a permanent site before opening the museum, they assumed that with the momentum gained by operating, surely a viable option would come to the fore.

⁷² In addition to Rodríguez-Aguilera, the other members were Maria del Carmen de Pallejá y Ricart, Javier Busquets Sindreu, Jorge Farreró Aviá, Juan Ramón Masoliver Martínez, Miguel Lerín Seguí, Gustavo Gili Esteve, and Alejandro Cirici Pellicer. This initial group was soon after joined by Juan Prats and Gustavo Camps.

⁷³ “Nota para don Andrés Brugués Llovera sobre la necesidad de crear en Barcelona de un museo de arte contemporáneo,” May 9, 1966, Folder: MACB59-67_MACB_PB_02, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Barcelona (1959-1967), CED, MACBA.

When Barcelona's Museum of Contemporary Art was inaugurated on June 21, 1960, it represented a real triumph of artistic organizing and group effort. The opening exhibition featured a wide array of artworks featuring the likes of Catalan artists popular in the 1920s and 1930s, with works by Miró, Tàpies, Ferrant, and even with the contributions of some *madrileños* such as Rafael Canogar and Antonio Saura.⁷⁴ Despite one well-known artist's disappointment,⁷⁵ organizers' attempts to simultaneously plan temporary exhibitions and events while also continuing to build the permanent collection showed an impressive collective determination. By December 1962, the museum had amassed a permanent collection of more than one hundred works of art, almost exclusively donated by artists.

As expected, the museum generated positive momentum, although the issue of finding a permanent site still loomed large over its organizers. After initial talks with the city government had gone nowhere, the organizers turned to figures in Catalonia's provincial level government (*Diputació*), who provided earnest declarations of support to them. Unfortunately, this encouragement did not cement itself in a solution before the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo was forced to leave its temporary home in early 1963. Not willing to give up, and continuing to work closely with the *Diputació*, the members of the S.A. tried for the next couple of years to find another site for the museum, but seeing their options foreclosed, decided to dissolve in November 1965.⁷⁶ While eventually the museum's administration worked out a deal in which many of the artworks themselves were incorporated into the Museo Balaguer de Villanueva y

⁷⁴ A. Cirici-Pellicer, "Nuevo museo de arte contemporáneo," *Gran Via*, no. 472, June 18, 1960, 14.

⁷⁵ Antoni Tàpies explained that his wife had given one of his artworks to the new museum. Upon visiting, he found the exhibition not well assembled, so he took his artwork back after the inauguration. Julián, *Diálogo sobre arte*, 78.

⁷⁶ The provincial government did secure from the Ministry of Education official permission to open a contemporary art museum which would have been considered an official museum of the state, a decision published in the *BOE*, no. 292, December 7, 1966. But, by the time of this approval, the provincial government failed to follow up to bring the museum to fruition. These details have been reported in: "El Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Villanueva y Geltrú: Nota Resumen," undated, Folder: MACB59-67_BMVB_07, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Barcelona (1959-1967), CED, MACBA.

Geltrú in 1967, it was a bittersweet ending for those who had tried so hard to establish an independent entity dedicated exclusively to contemporary art.⁷⁷

So why did this initiative fail despite such dedicated organizers and the support of most of Barcelona's artistic community? Beyond dedication and support, there are yet other factors that seem to indicate that the project would have been successful. For one, the AAA and the museum's organizers held no objection to working with whichever official entity would help them. Approaching first the city government of Barcelona, then that of the province, then the national level, members of the S.A. were more than willing to cooperate with these governmental bodies, even allowing them the top positions in the museum's administration and oversight.⁷⁸ In addition, the members of the S.A. had done all of the leg work, and believed that they were ultimately doing the city of Barcelona a favor by handing it a new contemporary art museum on a silver platter. Beyond only Barcelona's cultural set, many such figures throughout Spain wanted to see the museum succeed; included among the S.A.'s already very influential Barcelona shareholders was high-profile cultural bureaucrat, Luis González Robles.⁷⁹

Even at the time, there did not seem to be very many convincing arguments against the museum. For example, art critic Rafael Santos Torroella wrote against the AAA's efforts to establish the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, claiming that the project was not only ill-founded, but also duplicative, since Barcelona was already home to an art museum, the Museo de Arte

⁷⁷ The contemporary art section of the Museo Balaguer de Villanueva y Geltrú featuring the artworks of the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo would open its doors in March of 1969, but the agreement to do so had been reached in 1967.

⁷⁸ "Nota para don Andrés Brugués Llovera sobre la necesidad de crear en Barcelona de un museo de arte contemporáneo," May 9, 1966, Folder: MACB59-67_MACB_PB_02. On page 6 of this memo, Rodríguez-Aguilera explained to the official from the Diputación that the provincial government would be able to have full oversight over the proposed museum, including the ability to name its director and assistant director.

⁷⁹ Acta no. 3 de la Junta General Extraordinaria de Accionistas, December 2, 1960, Libro de Actas, Folder: MACB59-67_MACB_FGM_09. During this meeting of the S.A., the full list of shareholders appeared. Included also on this list is the name of future art gallery owner René Metras.

Moderno.⁸⁰ He also called into question the need for a *museum* of contemporary art, as he believed art so recently created was best exhibited by galleries.⁸¹ While these arguments seemed ridiculous to Rodríguez-Aguilera at the time, and did not hold up well to any real scrutiny, they were nevertheless the position advanced by Barcelona's head of the Junta de Museos, Juan Ainaud de Lasarte, who as early as 1956 had expressed his reservations, and for reasons he never explicated further, was against the project.⁸²

Ultimately, Barcelona's Museum of Contemporary Art was never given the institutional support needed to survive, and this is why the promising endeavor failed. The most likely explanation for this lack of backing was that regime officials in Madrid did not want the capital's singular official Museum of Contemporary Art to have competition.⁸³ In addition, another obstacle appears to have been that city officials in Barcelona gave their imprimatur for the new Picasso Museum to flourish at the expense of a project deemed less important.⁸⁴ What is clear is that the quest to open a contemporary art museum put the city government and the Junta de Museos under the spotlight, leading others to call into question its overall functioning. The fact that an independent Museo de Arte Contemporáneo never opened was not forgotten, and even

⁸⁰ Despite what the name sounds like in Spanish, "*moderno*" actually refers to the *early* modern period, and not modern art.

⁸¹ See Rafael Santos Torroella, "En torno a un nuevo Museo de Arte Contemporáneo" parts I and II, published in *El Noticiero Universal* on April 17, 1963 (p. 15) and April 24, 1963 (p. 14), respectively.

⁸² During a meeting of the Junta de Museos of Barcelona on June 9, 1960, the board members questioned the use of the word 'museum' to characterize the AAA's proposal, believing that its "commercial activities" were contrary to the purpose of a museum. Meeting minutes of the Junta de Museos de Barcelona, June 9, 1960, File: ANC1-715-T-842, Collection of the Junta de Museos de Catalunya, Arxiu Nacional de Catalunya. Also, in summarizing to the provincial official the history of all of the previous attempts to work with the city government, Rodríguez-Aguilera mentioned Ainaud de Lasarte's initial reluctance to support the museum in his "Nota para don Andrés Brugués Llovera sobre la necesidad de crear en Barcelona de un museo de arte contemporáneo," dated May 9, 1966, Folder: MACB59-67_MACB_PB_02. Later, Ainaud de Lasarte's responses closely matched Santos Torroella's arguments in Antonio Figueruelo "¿Guerra de museos en Barcelona?," *El Noticiero Universal*, April 24, 1963, 15.

⁸³ Marzo y Mayayo, *Arte en España*, 247.

⁸⁴ The project to open a museum dedicated to Picasso took place when art collector Jaume Sabartés made a grand donation the city. When the site opened in 1963, it was in the very site first suggested by the AAA for its own museum. María Dolores Jiménez-Blanco, *El coleccionismo de arte en España: Una aproximación desde su historia y su contexto* (Barcelona: Fundación Arte y Mecenazgo, 2013), 71.

cited publicly by a new generation as the primary example indicative of all of the deficiencies of Ainaud de Lasarte and the Board of Museums.⁸⁵

The AAA represents a good example of the way in which a growing civil society tried to promulgate a set of artistic interests, meant to widen the sphere of artistic opportunity. That the association's Museo de Arte Contemporáneo had everything going for it and still did not succeed despite many years of concerted attempts to work with city, provincial, and national authorities signals that an influential member of the arts apparatus in Madrid did not want a competing project. And although it doesn't take an authoritarian context for projects of competing interests to be perpetually sidelined, in the context of Franco's Spain, the forced demise of a well-organized, ardently supported project only served to alienate the artistic community and make its members more questioning of officials' motives.

How should we interpret the emergence of all of these artists groups in the late 1950s? Ultimately, the period of the late 1950s until the early 1960s was a time of drastic ferment in Spain's arts community. While the arts apparatus had started to support more modern art in the early- to mid-1950s, it had not articulated a clear program for the visual arts. The opportunities were few, and artists' felt a pressing desire to join together to make the kind of art scene they wanted to see. Given the rigid atmosphere guided by authoritarian dictatorship, artists and art purveyors sought out other likeminded individuals to promulgate projects collectively. As groups that had no prohibitions on their ability to gather, nor were their primary motives guided by the art market, these artists and arts purveyors espoused a pluralistic vision for what the visual arts could be, thereby widening the scope of what was possible aesthetically and professionally.

⁸⁵ A roundtable discussion was called by a group known as the Joven Cámara entitled "La problemática de los museos de arte de Barcelona" in March of 1971, in which they directed their upset at what they saw as negligence and mishandling by Ainaud de Lasarte. Reported in the regularly-occurring column called "Cartas de Sempronio" in *Destino*, March 27, 1971, 60.

Their formation demonstrates the push for autonomous initiatives that cemented these artists' and purveyors' status as members of civil society. Despite their differences, the Grupo Parpalló, Equipo 57, and El Paso all had similar strivings to ensure that they could live in a place that would support the development of contemporary art. While each group had a different interpretation of which kind of art would be the best to spark Spain's artistic renovation, in the end their goals to create a socially-committed art, and to experiment with the integration of the arts, were more similar than different.

Furthermore, there was more of an attitude of collaboration, even if not outright partnership, between groups than is often recognized, exposing the beginning of broader networks. For example, even as early as 1956, Manolo Millares and Vicente Aguilera Cerni had, with Fernández del Amo, organized the *I Salón Nacional de Arte No Figurativo* in Valencia.⁸⁶ Aguilera Cerni, despite being personally more supportive of geometric abstraction than abstract impressionism wrote articles in support of El Paso on several occasions, and Antonio Saura had written articles for Parpalló's *Arte Vivo*.⁸⁷ Likewise, as already mentioned, Aguilera Cerni's *Arte Normativo* exhibition of 1960 had included the artists of his own Group Parpalló, but also Equipo 57, believing the groups to be likeminded enough in their dedication that art should advance a social commitment. It is possible that without such explicit state intervention, these groups would have continued to explore their various forms of abstraction, and given all of the groups' desires to spur opportunity and collaboration, it seems likely they would have gone on to sponsor joint initiatives. When the arts apparatus fingered Informalismo as the new art of the

⁸⁶ López Manzanares, *El ojo del huracán*, 126.

⁸⁷ See, for example: Vicente Aguilera Cerni, "El problema social en el arte abstracto," *Papeles de Son Armadans* 37 (April 1959): 98-111; and Antonio Saura, "La lección de Sao Paulo," *Arte Vivo* (December 1957).

state, however, this decision would not only affect the work of the artists profiled here, it would also set in motion a dramatic change in the development of the arts in late Francoist Spain.

Likewise, the case of the Asociación de Artistas Actuales demonstrates the desire of artists to work closely with art critics and purveyors to create their own artistic reality. Their example of how to find a way to legally associate in the context of a dictatorial setting would prove to offer an enduring option for fledgling associations later, while the demise of their project, despite such efforts to the contrary, hints at the difficulty of inaugurating new projects in the authoritarian setting.

Toward a More Oppositional Art and Organizing: The Artists' Groups and Associations of the 1960s

A new era in Spanish artists' relationship with the regime was provoked by the so-called "crisis of Informalismo" in the mid-1960s, the move to more confrontational artistic genres, and artists' continued sense that the arts apparatus would not honor their requests. The overarching trend of this period was of artists moving away from the official narratives told by the arts apparatus. The regime's support of Informalismo of the late 1950s attracted one segment of Spanish artists to the genre while repelling others. What art critics were calling by the mid-1960s the "crisis of Informalismo" was essentially a dual process. On the one hand, new practitioners were attracted to the style as they sought to tailor their art toward the tastes that they believed would make them more attractive to official patronage, while on the other hand, many of the initial artists of the style felt a revulsion for the way that the arts apparatus had so easily co-opted it. The problem was that the first group's eager adherence to the genre caused a glut of new artworks of Informalismo that were devoid of any genuine theoretical premise, and while there was no singular moment of the latter group's abandonment of the genre, it was clear that the revolutionary power these artists once ascribed to their work had dissipated as the regime had

proved able to use their art for its own political ends. Either way, artists all over Spain as of the early 1960s had started to turn away from Informalismo and had no choice but to evaluate what they wanted their relationship with the regime to be. Over the course of the early 1960s, new ideas about art would resonate with Spanish creators in all fields; novelists, visual artists, and playwrights all gravitated toward various forms of social realism. There was a renewed sense among Spanish cultural figures that art should have a social function, able to reach wider audiences via unambiguous representations. In the visual arts, artists were sensitive to new trends emerging elsewhere that had started to move away from abstract art; in particular, the new possibilities that Pop Art afforded resonated with an artistic population that was seeking new modes of clear communication. Furthermore, groupings of visual artists who were committed to ensuring that the regime could in no way find their art politically expedient started to promulgate artwork unambiguously critical of the regime. Thus, the new genres of art coming out of Spain from the mid-1960s found a way to blend the communicability of Pop Art, while incorporating social critique.

When the Asociación de Artistas Plásticos (AAP) was founded in the late 1960s, it was sensitive to these new artistic priorities, although it did not seek to direct visual arts' aesthetic trajectories. Rather, the AAP sought to unite all artists at all levels under a single umbrella, taking as their focus the fight for artists' professional and educational interests in the broadest sense. Whereas the artists' groups of the 1950s each formed around a specific vision, the founders of the AAP believed it was necessary to organize and mobilize artists as members of a shared vocation within the authoritarian atmosphere that continued to neglect the domestic art scene. The association's argument for its own existence represents a compelling case for the fact that while artists in the prior decade had done much to foment their own opportunities, they still

did not have many professional protections nor had a say in official artistic life. The example of the AAP in its quest for legal recognition also highlights the Franco regime's barriers to the development of an unencumbered civil society. As with context of the late 1950s, the artists and arts associations profiled in this section tell us equally about the nature of the Francoist arts apparatus and how these citizen-propelled initiatives provided important alternatives to cultural officialdom.

New Art Movements: Crónica de la realidad and Juan Genovés

A novel artistic movement built around a new philosophy of art would emerge in Spain in 1964 that responded directly to the “crisis of Informalismo.” Art critic Vicente Aguilera Cerni continued to funnel some of the ideas that had informed his short-lived Arte Normativo into a new movement which he dubbed ‘Crónica de la realidad’ in 1964. More than a single group of artists, Crónica represented a new outlook on art that would be able to “provide solutions to the moral and practical crisis of contemporary art.”⁸⁸ Many of the artists who first got their start in Parpalló, and who had once been included in Arte Normativo, would come to embrace the principles of Crónica de la realidad, either becoming directly affiliated with the movement itself, or would join one of the theoretically similar groupings of socially-committed printmakers, known as Estampa Popular.⁸⁹ Art critics Cesáreo Rodríguez-Aguilera and Alexandre Cirici Pellicer, both leading members of Barcelona's Asociación de Artistas Actuales (AAA), would come to champion Crónica's early efforts.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ “...aportar soluciones a la crisis moral y práctica del arte contemporáneo.” Aguilera Cerni, “La temporada trae dos manifiestos: “5.º Forma” y “Crónica de la realidad”” *Artes* 71 (October 23, 1965), 31.

⁸⁹ The first group that started calling itself Estampa Popular formed in 1959 in Madrid. Later, related groups also part of Estampa Popular formed in Sevilla, Valencia, Córdoba, Vizcaya, and Catalonia. While Estampa Popular was not exactly the same as Crónica de la realidad, both were formed out of a similar set of ideas, and some artists who participated in one also were members of the other, especially in Valencia. See Noemí de Haro, *Grabadores contra el franquismo* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2010).

⁹⁰ Both are mentioned by Aguilera Cerni as early supporters. “La temporada trae,” *Artes*, 26-27.

Crónica de la realidad put a strong emphasis on collective art practice, although individual artists would also endorse the movement's principles, which in all cases prioritized a sense of objectivity and clear articulation of forms. Inspired by the earlier work and philosophy of Equipo 57, Aguilera Cerni was likewise guided by a critical approach to Spanish art, society, and politics that saw great value in "returning to artistic activity its rank as a constructive laboratory and creator of visual values in the struggle toward a better culture than the current one."⁹¹ The art produced under this rubric was realist in style, often borrowing from the aesthetics of Pop Art, although always subverting recognizable figures and objects from Spanish art history, American pop culture, and the mass media rather than championing them. The two collectives under this umbrella, Equipo Crónica (1964-1981) and Equipo Realidad (1966-1976), and individual artists Juan Genovés (former Parpalló member) and Rafael Canogar (former member of El Paso), were emblematic of this movement's emphasis on new social realist aesthetics ever more critical of the regime's authoritarianism.

Juan Genovés found in Crónica de la realidad an apt model for what he believed artwork needed to be in response to life under dictatorship: controversial, critical, and openly oppositional. Genovés's artworks dating from 1964 often presented a series of images together to tell a story, to be viewed as one would read a graphic novel – a trademark of Crónica de la realidad. Both in his artwork and his personal life, Genoves pushed boundaries. In the first case, his artwork hauntingly depicted the story of attempted escape or capture. In his personal life, Genovés had started to build up a résumé of anti-regime activities.⁹² Unlike several other of

⁹¹ "...devolver a la actividad artística su rango como laboratorio constructivo y configurador de los valores visuales en la lucha hacia una cultura mejor que la actual." Ibid., 30.

⁹² Genovés harbored sympathies to the clandestine Spanish Communist Party and participated in some of its political acts. Having signed a 1962 open letter denouncing Francoist state repression against miners in Asturias, as well as the state execution of Spanish Communist Julián Grimau the following year, he was one of the many flagged by the regime at this time for his overt political activities. In 1964, Genovés was one of about sixty Spanish artists who refused to participate in an official art exhibition, *XXV Años de Arte Español*, organized as part of the regime's self-

Spain's most internationally renowned artists at the time who had started to refuse to participate in official artistic endeavors, Genovés seemed to relish in the fact that without compromising either the form or function of his artwork, he was still invited to participate in the regime's official exhibitions.

The General Directorate of Fine Arts sponsored an October 1965 solo exhibition of Genovés's newest artworks.⁹³ Visitors were so eager to see the thirty-two works on display that the number of daily visitors was as large as the opening night crowd for many other exhibitions.⁹⁴ The media gave this exhibition considerable attention, with even the conservative *ABC* newspaper devoting its cover to the show. The short write-up therein described the artworks as "so dramatic as to disturb the unsuspecting viewer," but did not elaborate on the works themselves.⁹⁵ The exhibition featured two stylistically different categories of artworks: a group of photo-realistic serialized paintings showing crowds from afar fleeing, and a second grouping of collages using materials such as clothing and fabrics, depicting human figures at the moment of arrest.⁹⁶ Associated with the first category, the painting *La fuga* (The Escape) (1965) directs the viewer to an image of fleeing masses as seen through a scope, hinting at the view through a

congratulatory celebration of 'Twenty-Five Years of Peace,' referring to the period since the end of the Spanish Civil War.

⁹³ As one had to submit a formal application to solicit the exhibition rooms of the General Directorate of Fine Arts, that of Juan Genovés is located in the following folder: Sala de Exposiciones 1966-66, Sí; Box 886, (03)110, AGA. Of course, the application does not guarantee that arrangements were not made in advance. One art historian comments that Genovés was offered the exhibition by regime curator Luis González Robles after the artist had agreed to withdraw from participating in a Parisian art exhibition made up of Spanish dissidents in 1961. See Paula Barreiro López, *Avant-garde Art and Criticism in Francoist Spain* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2017), 115, note 120.

⁹⁴ Joaquín de la Puente, "Juan Genovés, "Crónica de la Realidad", Acontecimiento," *Artes* no. 72 (November 23, 1965): 11.

⁹⁵ "...tan dramática que desasosiegan al espectador desprevenido." The issue of *ABC* in question is "Arte y artistas: Genovés," *ABC*, October 27, 1965, cover, 19-20. The magazine *Artes*, for example, also dedicated a lot of attention to both *Crónica de la realidad* and Genovés, with a reprinting of the movement's manifesto (no. 71, October 23, 1965, pp. 25-32), an article about the Genovés exhibition (no. 72, November 23, 1965, pp. 11-15), and an interview between magazine founder Isabel Cajide and Genovés (no. 72, November 23, 1965, pp. 34-35).

⁹⁶ *Genovés* (Madrid: Dirección General de Bellas Artes, 1965), exhibition catalogue.

sniper's rangefinder. At just under three feet square in size, and painted in various grays, Genovés successfully evoked a haunting sense of fear about who the next target would be. Part of the second category of Genovés' artworks, *Contra la pared* (Against the Wall) depicts two figures seen only from behind, holding their hands in the air at the moment of arrest. The fabric and clothing that Genovés had affixed to the canvas gave the figures a sense of depth and material reality. While Genovés never explicitly specified the inspiration behind the subjects he portrayed, it would have been clear to most of the exhibition's visitors that his artwork denounced what he envisaged as the police state in which he lived.

Genovés's attitude of explicit contestation with the regime does not encapsulate every Spanish artist's path, but it does provide one high-profile example of how Spanish artists at large customized (and adapted to) a new artistic current that not only pushed against Informalismo by trying to create its opposite, but also boldly articulated a new way of advancing a socially-committed art practice. The Crónica movement provided a path forward for all of its visual artists to contemplate how they – with a greater relative freedom to create compared to other cultural producers – could interrogate and criticize the dictatorship's myths about itself. By 1967, for example, the works of Rafael Canogar employed a similar aesthetic and depicted similar themes to those of Genovés: rowdy crowds, police beatings, and figures in protest with fists raised in the air. Equipo Crónica and Equipo Realidad each employed a Pop aesthetic, used bright colors and recognizable images from the media or Spanish art history to tell a story. In the case of each of these collectives, such images were utilized to criticize nationalist clichés and authoritarian practices.⁹⁷ While artists, in groups and individually, were moving in droves away from abstraction toward various forms of realism, some Spanish artists were looking for ways to

⁹⁷ Noemí de Haro-García and Julián Díaz-Sánchez, "Artistic Dissidence under Francoism: The Subversion of the Cliché," *Bulletin of Spanish Studies* XCI: 5 (2014): 735-754.

demonstrate this social commitment to art, not through art practice, but rather through artistic advocacy in the associational milieu.

As to the debate described earlier in this chapter, the actions of artists from the mid-1960s have caused their critics to proclaim their supposed opportunism. The interpretation that portrays this generation of artists as opportunists, however, rightly points out the instances in which *after* proclaiming a stance of non-participation with the regime, some artists still took advantage of official opportunities. Even Tàpies, first to abstain, sent lithographs for the benefit of cultural bureaucrat Carlos Areán's official international traveling exhibition, *Arte no imitativo en España*, set to open in 1963.⁹⁸ Or, such authors point to Genovés to ask why he would have agreed to the General Directorate's 1965 exhibition of his work, or why Rafael Canogar agreed to the official retrospective of his work in 1972. There is no denying that some Spanish artists, even oppositional ones, did still collaborate in official events. But as I have demonstrated, even accounting for these examples, the overarching trend was of artists moving away from the narratives of artistic officialdom, and of letting the arts apparatus know that they no longer supported their worldview. Ultimately, the collective revulsion toward the regime's vision would prove to be a successful response, independent of the individual, sporadic moments of collaboration.

A New Level of Associationism: The Asociación de Artistas Plásticos

Building on the discrete groups of the late 1950s, the Asociación de Artistas Plásticos (AAP) claimed to advocate for visual artists as a collective whole. The formation of the AAP thus marked an important moment of the consolidation of artists' collective agency in the by now burgeoning civil society. Concerned with securing professional opportunities and educational

⁹⁸ See Chapter 3 of this dissertation for a more in-depth discussion of this exhibition and the role of Carlos Areán.

reform, labor rights (e.g. society security and unemployment benefits), and intellectual property rights for visual artists, the AAP's worldview was premised on the idea that visual artists should be given a place in society, without which they would not be able to fulfill their responsibilities to create socially-conscious and accessible art. The first rumblings of forming an artists' association came as an initiative of the then clandestine Spanish Communist Party [Partido Comunista de España; PCE] and its so-named Célula de Pintores as of 1968. The Célula had been created as part of a strategy of the PCE to attract a wider array of party sympathizers beyond traditional workers and Marxist scholars.⁹⁹ Célula participants and artists Federico (Tino) Calabuig, Eduardo Arenillas, Gerardo Aparicio, Alberto Corazón, Valeriano Bozal, Juan Montero, María Montero, Angiola Bonanni, Ángel Aragonés, Francisco Escalada and Juan Ripollés decided they would begin by hosting assemblies in May and June of 1969 at Madrid's Escuela Superior de Bellas Artes (ESBA) in an attempt to gauge interest with respect to forming a proper artists' association.¹⁰⁰ The assemblies attracted students, faculty, and also professional artists to the likes of Juan Genovés, Manuel Hernández Mompó, Lucio Muñoz, Ángel Orcajo, Eusebio Sempere, and Salvador Victoria, resulting in a core group of a couple dozen members. Out of these assemblies, members worked immediately to form thematic working groups that were formally recognized as of February 1970, such as the Function of Art in Society Committee, the Education Committee, the Art Dissemination Committee, the Economic Studies Committee concerned with labor rights, and the Management Committee, the group that would look into the possibilities of forming as a proper association.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Albarrán, "Lo profesional es político," 249-250.

¹⁰⁰ Arenillas, Aparicio, and Bonanni were ESBA students and likely instrumental in selecting the auditorium of their relatively new school building as the site of their meetings, although the intention was always to attract artists at all levels.

¹⁰¹ García García, *Tiempo de estrategias*, 29.

By early 1970 the various working groups had already set many wheels in motion only to immediately face a large obstacle. Having decided to form as the Asociación de Artistas Plásticos, the Management Committee had made a formal application to the Ministry of the Interior, while at the same time another committee had started to draw up a proposal for a new event to replace the biennial National Exhibition of Fine Arts, and the Education Committee funneled their energies into advocating for a more up-to-date curriculum and better working conditions for students in their new-yet-dysfunctional school building. By February 1970, the AAP found out that their application to form as an association had been denied, even as members had been in meetings with the head of the General Directorate of Fine Arts, Florentino Pérez Embid, to talk about the future of the National Exhibition of Fine Arts. While the AAP immediately appealed the negative decision, members were reasonably concerned with how best to proceed given the ambiguities of their legal status as they awaited a final ruling.¹⁰²

Given the presence of PCE members among the AAP, used to having to function clandestinely, it may be supposed that the AAP members themselves had planned all along to simply continue operations pending what was likely to be the state's denial of their application, albeit perhaps in an underground manner. The evidence shows, however, that the AAP took the denial very seriously and worked to cleverly leverage all legal loopholes to continue to operate, rather than eschew the ruling. A legal advisor by the name of Pedro Moreno attended a meeting on February 22, 1970 explaining to the group that because of the denial, any AAP meeting held with the explicit purpose of trying to form the association would be illegal, as would the

¹⁰² The administration denied the AAP's petition because they claimed there was already an association for visual artists to join. From within the Movimiento's official syndical structure, there existed as of 1963 the Agrupación Nacional Sindical de Bellas Artes (ANSIBA). There was also a socially and artistically conservative Association of Painters and Sculptors that existed from 1910, and featured a membership closely tied to Spain's Royal Academy of Fine Arts. Resoluciones adoptadas en la nueva reunión de la comisión, meeting minutes from February 18, 1969, Arch. RC 56, Archivo Redor-Calabuig, Biblioteca y Centro de Documentación (BCD), Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (MNCARS).

collection of monies for said purpose, despite the fact that the AAP had a lawful right to appeal the decision.¹⁰³ Over the next few months, AAP members contemplated re-submitting their application to the only other legal avenue for associations to form – via the Movimiento – or to re-write new bylaws and re-submit an application to Interior under a different name.¹⁰⁴ While the first suggestion was roundly rejected due to fears that the Movimiento would retain too much control, it appears that the AAP rejected the second suggestion also, as no undertaking was ever made on that front. Despite the challenges posed by rejection, denied entities were not actually prohibited from any and all meetings, so the AAP took advantage of a rule that allowed them to apply to host a singular general assembly.¹⁰⁵ AAP members then cleverly used the excuse of mailing invitations for the general assembly to also include a comprehensive survey, prefaced with a statement about the fledgling association and its objectives, soliciting artists’ opinions about their education, professional opportunities, the need for an artists’ association, feelings about commercial art galleries, thoughts about the National Exhibition of Fine Arts, and overall feeling about their place in society.¹⁰⁶ For many not affiliated with the AAP, this survey-letter represented the group’s entry into the consciousness of artists beyond Madrid.

¹⁰³ Informe de la reunión intercomisiones del martes 22 de febrero 1970, Arch. RC 62, Archivo Redor-Calabuig, MNCARS.

¹⁰⁴ Informe de la Reunión Intercomisiones celebrada 18 Abril 70 and Informe de la Reunión de Intercomisiones, 8 Mayo 1970, both located in Box 867, Folder 1, Archivo Arenillas, Archivo Central, MNCARS.

¹⁰⁵ The general assembly met on March 17, 1970, in which the main topic of discussion was the artists’ upset at the recently-released official announcement of the new structure for the National Exhibition of Fine Arts, in which they believed that their suggestions had been adopted in only the most superficial ways. This important meeting would essentially kickoff the public campaign of non-participation against the National Exhibition and other official arts events. “Texto leído en Asamblea General del 17 de marzo 1970,” Arch. RC 105, Archivo Redor-Calabuig, MNCARS.

¹⁰⁶ Comisión Promotora de la Asociación de Artistas Plásticos de Madrid, *Informe y encuesta* (Madrid: 1970). Copies of the survey (Depósito Legal M 4335-1970) are rare. The BNE has two copies, and the Library and Documentation Center of the MNCARS has an incomplete version with the first five pages missing, found under the title ‘Cuestionario.’ Arch. RC 99, Archivo Redor-Calabuig, MNCARS. García explained that the survey responses have not been preserved (31). So, while we do not know how artists responded, that the AAP continued to direct its attention toward many of the early objectives mentioned this survey tells us that enough artists believed the AAP’s initial mission.

The AAP was incredibly active and prolific in its first few years of existence (as will become evident and discussed more thoroughly in Chapters 5 and 6). It turned out that rallying artists against regime cultural policies and practices deemed ineffectual, unfair, and unhelpful was a powerful motivator to engage hundreds of artists throughout Spain who finally felt as though they had a conduit for their complaints and frustrations. All the while, the AAP joined other associations that existed in the semi-legal category of not having been approved, awaiting the decision to their appeal, which organizers had to know would be unsuccessful. Paradoxically, of course, the AAP was arguably at its strongest and proved most effective precisely when the administration deemed it had neither the need nor right to exist.

Despite different origins and goals, the AAP followed a similar path to that of the AAA when its members decided that there was a need for their association to be formally constituted in some way. As with the approach adopted by Barcelona association more than a decade prior, the AAP filed paperwork to be legally constituted as a *sociedad anónima*, and as of June 30, 1972, the AAP became known as the Promotora de Actividades Plásticas, S.A., which they abbreviated as APSA.¹⁰⁷ Following the same rationale, members wanted some legal designation to show their serious intentions, as well as a legal reason to continue to meet. In some ways, the APSA was basically the same organization as its predecessor. The group had never wavered from its initial set of beliefs about the arts as a non-competitive, non-hierarchical affair in which artists – not bureaucrats – should be making the decisions about the visual arts. On the other hand, with the new phase inaugurated by the APSA, there was more of a reluctance to inaugurate large head-on campaigns against the regime, and more of an attempt toward the creation, dissemination, and display of various kinds of artwork – especially prints – and with community

¹⁰⁷ García García, *Tiempo de estrategias*, 81; Albarrán, “Lo profesional es político,” 251.

engagement. For example, the APSA became involved in promoting community arts events in conjunction with neighborhood associations, such as the collective painting of murals, as well as the creation of open workshops, free and accessible to all. This was also a time of increased involvement with the AIAP of UNESCO, and events planned to finance APSA members' involvement therein.¹⁰⁸

It would be wrong, however, to take this new direction as evidence of a decreased politicization, as the APSA continued to make public its discontents with officialdom, albeit via frequent, short-term mobilizations rather than long-term campaigns. For the APSA had never abandoned the goals of seeking the full freedoms of expression, speech, and association and political liberties, which they made clear by instigating sit-ins at the Prado Museum after the arrest of prominent art critics and artists.¹⁰⁹ Their demands included the ability to form as a union, to establish basic professional rights for artists, and moreover, to have a say in the official artistic panorama of the state, including all levels of education and the functioning of the Museum of Contemporary Art.¹¹⁰ The group that began as the AAP would be active until the late 1980s, becoming a legally recognized association only in August 1977.¹¹¹

Over more than two decades, the AAP transformed itself from an illegal association into an established professional group whose artists would attempt to direct mainstream Spanish

¹⁰⁸ For example, in December of 1972, the APSA held an art exhibition at Madrid's Galería Internacional de Arte with more than eighty artists participating. This was the first exhibition in which the group listed itself as being the 'Spanish committee' of UNESCO's International Association of Plastic Artists. The whole purpose of the exhibition was to raise funds to pay the members' dues in the international association. An exhibition was held for the same reason again at Madrid's Galería Vandrés in May of 1974. García García, *Tiempo de estrategias*, 83.

¹⁰⁹ For example, the APSA arranged a sit-in in March of 1976 over the arrest of artists Juan Genovés and Rafael Muyor as their predecessor group had done in November 1970 over the arrest of art critic José María Moreno Galván.

¹¹⁰ "Reivindicaciones fundamentales del sector de artes plásticas," 1974, Box 875, Folder 10, Archivo Arenillas, Archivo Central, MNCARS, as reproduced in García García, *Tiempo de estrategias*, 87.

¹¹¹ With legalization as an association, the APSA changed its name once again to the Asociación Sindical de Artistas Plásticos (ASAP), which itself was a short-lived phase. In February of 1979, the ASAP was configured into the Confederación Sindical de Artistas Plásticos (CSAP), which as its name implies was a coalition of various visual artists' associations from throughout Spain.

cultural programming as of the late 1970s. The jump from being the underdogs to cultural frontrunners, however, should not imply that with the Transition all of the AAP's original objectives had been achieved. If anything, it was quite the opposite; many of the same issues of concern for the AAP in the late 1960s were still present in the 1980s despite the different political regime. While longstanding members of the association seemed initially to make headway as trusted artistic advisors to the brand-new minister of Culture, Pío Cabanillas, in 1977 (and the spate of short-lived successors who followed until 1982), in the end, the artists found that their repeated calls for decentralization and democratization of the cultural bureaucracy, new arts curricula, the creation of more informal workshops, the organization of more exhibitions on artists' terms, and various professional labor considerations never ceased.¹¹² Despite the belief among its leadership that the organization had never fully realized its goals, however, it would be wrong to conclude that the AAP made no difference to the visual arts panorama in Spain. The AAP's early advocacy, and sustained commitment to what Tarrow called "contentious politics," demonstrated to the regime through their successful boycotts, protests, and campaigns that Spanish artists failed to find legitimacy in the Francoist arts apparatus.

Conclusion

In parallel with the turning point in the regime's art policy, the late 1950s was also a time of the formation of groups of artists and associations who strove to reinvigorate the arts in Spain. As of 1957, the three new groups of young artists that emerged – the Grupo Parpalló, Equipo 57, and El Paso – each believed that forming as a group would better equip them with the tools to

¹¹² See Chapter 4 of García García, "El epílogo de otra década," *Tiempo de estrategias*, 195-217. While I have been unable to find a definitive end date for the successor association to the AAP, it seems their last major public effort was to arrange for and participate in the XII General Assembly of the AIAP in 1989, and the organization likely disbanded a few years later.

create art in their environment, which was devoid of the kinds of opportunities they wanted to see. Beyond only the creation of art, each of these groups also believed in the need for a collective presence, to issue manifestos, host events, and to make the visual arts more accessible to society at large. This was the same attitude that inspired the Asociación de Artistas Actuales (AAA) of Barcelona to conceive and open the Museum of Contemporary Art in the Catalan capital. While these initial groups were promising, their small-scale initiatives were dwarfed by the state's power to shape artistic preferences. Without a plurality of opportunities for artists in these years, the authoritarian state's artistic preferences exercised a particularly strong influence over which styles, initiatives, and institutions would be prized – or not. Thus, once the regime had solidified its choice of Informalismo as the artistic genre it advanced at large international arts biennials, such a decision put artists in a position in which they suddenly had to decide the relationship they wanted to have with the arts apparatus. Furthermore, the regime's unwillingness to back the AAA's museum shows what this top-down influence looked like in terms of its ability to dictate which cultural institutions survived.

In retrospect, this dynamic that existed between artists and the art apparatus of the late 1950s is evident, although at the time, it's important to emphasize that both the state and artists were each developing their relationship to one another. A recognition of this process helps to explain why these groups of artists initially assumed that their abstract artwork would be a powerful statement of autonomy within a dictatorship that, up until that point, had favored academic art. The arts apparatus made it clear by 1958 that it would utilize abstract expressionist pieces to further its particular image of a non-authoritarian, modern Spain rife with ample artistic prowess, although they had not anticipated the artists' and art critics' backlash against what became seen as this new official art of the state. This decision to back Informalismo had deep

and widespread reverberations that bore critical and oppositional artistic movements, caused artists to abstain from regime events and exhibitions, and ultimately worked to erode support for official art endeavors among a large number of Spain's most well-known artists of this period.

By the mid-1960s, while not all Spanish artists had become political opponents of the regime, there was more of an awareness among them that the arts apparatus had an agenda and that artists needed to defend their collective autonomy. The regime's aesthetic preferences pushed Spanish modern art itself away from abstract expressionism and toward various forms of realism with a social message. Aguilera Cerni's *Crónica de la realidad* and its practitioners were emblematic of this shift toward identifiable symbols, images, and titles that interrogated the role that art should play in an authoritarian regime. In parallel to visual artists showing their independence in driving the development of modern art, the Asociación de Artistas Plásticos formed as a stronger collective voice to provide visual artists with the professional rights lacking in Franco's Spain. The AAP, from its nascent beginnings in 1969, was quite remarkable for the heterogeneity of its membership and the success of its undertakings. Despite being a project that came out of an initiative of the Spanish Communist Party, when waging campaigns or issuing manifestos the group could count on the support of hundreds of artists throughout Spain and helped unite an artistic community that was forming in opposition to the arts apparatus of the regime. The remaining chapters in this dissertation each demonstrate an aspect of the art community-arts apparatus relations as of the 1960s. Through various bureaucrats and official directorates, we see how the multifaceted arts apparatus of the regime would continue to contemplate changes to its art policy, while at the same time, artists, gallerists, and art students would articulate their own, often competing, demands.

Chapter 3 – Art Galleries in Franco’s Spain (I): State and Private Collaborations

Scholars of the arts and culture in Spain have often recognized the important role of art galleries in Spanish cultural life. With regard to the Francoist period, studies have made mention that the private arts sector played a role in reinvigorating the arts in Spain.¹ Especially at the start of the early Francoist period, when in the 1940s there were few artistic opportunities of any kind, regime figures and artists alike identified the handful of private art galleries that promoted the development of new art styles as venues instrumental in helping the country recover a sense of artistic life. Despite the utter lack of an art market in the immediate post-Spanish Civil War period in Madrid, a few new galleries would open in the capital city, making ends meet as arts supply, furniture, or decorations shops, and would be important conduits for introducing up-and-coming artists to a wider audience. Both recognized at the time and in retrospect, private art galleries in Spanish cities throughout the Francoist period were responsible for launching the careers of many artists, and would invariably introduce to the regime’s arts officials artists worth their attention. But beyond the histories of the galleries themselves and their role in the making of Spain’s artists, there is yet another reason to pay attention to these private exhibition spaces: for their role in the making of Spanish art policy.

The goal of this chapter is to explain the changing attitudes of the regime toward the private sector in the period between 1957 and 1968. During this period, the various institutions of the Spanish state would start to pay more attention to the businesses of the private sector as something to be studied, to emulate, and ultimately, sites that should fall under their official

¹ As a textbook for art, Jorge Luís Marzo and Patricia’s Mayayo’s *Arte en España (1939-2015): Ideas, Prácticas, Políticas* (Madrid: Cátedra, 2015) does an excellent job of mentioning relevant galleries throughout, although given its general focus, it necessarily does not delve deeply into specific galleries’ histories. Paula Barreiro López, *Avant-garde Art and Criticism in Francoist Spain* (Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2017), 52, credits private institutions and especially art galleries as having been the conduits to ensure that elements of the pre-Spanish Civil War avant-garde survived.

purview in some capacity. This new attitude is a development we can see clearly when zooming in to look at the ways in which the arts apparatus attempted to forge collaborations with private art galleries, the result of a policy inaugurated by Manuel Fraga Iribarne with his appointment as minister of Information and Tourism in 1962. In order to demonstrate what this shift actually looked like to those who experienced it, I begin by explaining regime-private gallery relations during the first two decades of the dictatorship before 1957, and will then turn to the different dynamic that existed after that time. Throughout the first half of the Franco regime, private art galleries made their own agenda and were separate from regime consideration. Galleries could still exist as magnets for regime attention and be the sites in which members of the arts apparatus were involved in artistic projects, but regime figures did not meddle in gallery affairs or try to dictate terms. In the case of a gallery with which regime figures had many indirect connections, as we will see with the case of the Galería Biosca and the Academia Breve Crítica de Arte that it hosted, there was no attempt to funnel the projects of the gallery into official ones. Furthermore, even in the case of more countercultural galleries with agendas that were quite distinct from the mainstream cultural conformity of the early Francoist period, such as the Clan and the Buchholz, the regime found no interest in exploiting their resources, nor in policing their activities. These self-proclaimed avant-garde galleries became sites in which artistic communities started to form around the appreciation of new modern art. While in later periods the arts apparatus will see these kinds of sites as deserving of their attention, in this early period, they simply saw private galleries as allies in helping to foment national artistic life.

The moves to open the Spanish economy as the result of the governmental reorganization that seated technocrats in top economic positions as of 1957 would unleash important cash flows that would be observed throughout the following decade in the form of an increase in small

business ownership. In the art world, these changes would make it possible for private art galleries to become financially viable for the first time under dictatorship. While a true gallery “boom” would not take place until more than a decade later, the 1960s was nevertheless the decade in which we observe an increasing number of galleries open to meet a more vibrant arts scene, which was itself spurred by the both independent artist-driven initiatives and the increased regime attention toward modern art in the 1950s. The most decisive change in official attitudes, however, came as of the late 1950s and early 1960s, when a few high-profile Spanish artists started to refuse participation in state-led arts exhibitions and events, which necessarily reinvigorated private art galleries with a sense of untapped potential. In sum, artists’ presence underscored the importance of private galleries. In response, the Ministry of Information and Tourism (MIT) decided to do something about it.

In response to the need to ensure that Spanish artists would continue to collaborate with the arts apparatus, a new set of policies emanating from the MIT would seek to enter the private art world. As described in Chapter 1, with his arrival, Fraga would inaugurate a series of cultural policies directed at the regime’s relationship with the cultural institutions of the private sector in the autumn of 1962. As a direct result of these new dictates, art critic and MIT bureaucrat Carlos Areán would start to formulate relationships with private art galleries in a way never done before. What this meant was twofold: on the one hand, various arts bureaucrats of the regime started to pay more attention to the visual arts domestically overall, and on the other hand, they sought deeper relationships with private gallerists and individual artists. Thus, the ability of private art galleries to dictate their own terms and maintain an existence separate from regime life would be called into question in the early 1960s. For reasons that will become evident over the course of this chapter and the following one, however, private art galleries would be able to

exercise a large amount of autonomy throughout the period from 1957 and 1968, even accounting for the new MIT policy directives.

Through these regime-private collaborations, we learn that the General Directorate of Information of the MIT saw such institutions as crucial centers of arts promotion and as trendsetters that would be able to serve as effective interlocutors between themselves and artists. More than just nameless, faceless representatives, I also show how individual protagonists (namely art critic and official art bureaucrat Carlos Areán and gallerist René Metras) were instrumental to shaping the direction of the MIT's new cultural policies. Despite the policy initiatives that would call for more regime integration into the private sector, the campaign to collaborate with private galleries was short-lived, lasting only about a year and a half, from late 1962 into mid-1964. The arts apparatus gained the most from these collaborations, benefiting from the use of a gallerist's planned exhibition and an artist's works to which it might not otherwise have had access, leaving few apparent benefits to the private gallery. Even after these short-lived and fitful attempts to forge collaborations had tapered off, the regime still envisaged private art galleries as being well-positioned to reach artists and to identify new trends just as ably – if not more so – than it was able to do.

Discussing the evolution of the relationship between the arts apparatus and private art galleries naturally calls into question how to characterize the role of these private institutions in the story of the making of art policy and artistic advocacy. How to classify private art galleries is complicated, albeit not impossible, for two main reasons. First, art gallerists thought of themselves and their work in the period after 1957 differently from how regime bureaucrats thought of their purpose. Not dissimilar from the artists' groups and associations of the 1950s, private art gallerists throughout the entirety of the Franco dictatorship largely wanted to provide

a forum to share, promote, and elevate the art that they cared about. Especially if a certain genre was particularly popular at a given moment, the private sector could respond to host an exhibition rather immediately. On the other hand, the arts apparatus conceived of the galleries rather opportunistically, as a conduit to the people and art they wanted to have at their fingertips. While art gallerists did not see themselves as being in direct competition with the arts apparatus, the arts apparatus envisaged private art galleries as their rival: magnets that were able to attract artists in a way they could not. The second difficulty of characterization is that art galleries themselves could hold a dual function as both sites of community formation and as institutions of the private sector that sought to foment and develop the arts in Spain. In both cases, however, a private gallery as a revenue generator is not the most salient trait. While obviously a private gallery's ability to be financially successful is not completely irrelevant – many galleries opened and then closed because of their inability to make ends meet – galleries' capacity to earn a profit was not what attracted regime attention to them, nor was it the feature that made them sites of civil society and community formation. In this chapter, I am particularly interested in evaluating the role of art galleries as private institutions that sought to promote and disseminate the arts, and to explore why this feature that had been a fundamental part of the private arts sector all along was increasingly seen by the arts apparatus as a problem.

In retrospect, reevaluating regime-gallery relations of the early 1960s demonstrates a period of contested terrain over who would get to dictate art production and promotion: the arts apparatus or the private civilians of the arts community. As the arts apparatus tried to edge its way into the private sector's cultural life, its protagonists started to recognize that the process would not be seamless. The authoritarian structures shaping the regime's everyday dealings proved extremely rigid when compared with the private sector's ability to adapt, which made the

processes that the arts apparatus needed to follow rather incompatible with the private sector. In addition, during the Fraga years neither the MIT nor any other organ of the state instituted a repressive apparatus to make it mandatory for private galleries to comply with regime requests. Even in the authoritarian context, the private sector remained independent. Thus, despite the state's desire to enter more forcefully into the private art world, the rigidity of the bureaucratic structures paired with the lack of a repressive apparatus to make private businesses comply meant that private art galleries were able to maintain a large amount of autonomy in late Francoist Spain. The following chapter will continue the story of regime-gallery relations in the period after 1969, which will show both that official attitudes toward private art galleries would transform into seeing them as politically dangerous, while also detailing that attempts to control them were ineffectual.

This chapter has been built by marrying the records collections of the cultural offices of the MIT with relevant materials pertaining to art galleries in Spain (published institutional histories, supplemented where available with archival collections and accounts from the press) to reveal a heretofore unexplored aspect of late Francoist art policy: regime-gallery relations.² In the few scholarly works treating the art galleries of the Francoist period specifically, scholars have contributed a wealth of information toward our understanding of art galleries' role in the

² In the first case, the records of cultural offices of the MIT have been found at the Archivo General de la Administración (AGA), the Spanish state archive of the Francoist period. In the latter case, I have counted on the information of post-dictatorship exhibition catalogs, gallery histories, popular magazine and newspaper articles, and published personal recollections from a gallerist's family members, former colleagues, and friends. In the case of the Galería Biosca, the archival collection of the gallery is held within the Library and Documentation Centre of the MNCARS. Other sources include: Aurora Fernández Polanco, "Las galerías de arte en el Madrid de Postguerra," *Villa de Madrid* 97-98 (1988): 5-27; Paloma Alarcó "Historia de las galerías de arte y los espacios oficiales de exposiciones," in Vázquez de Parga, Ana (cur.), *Del surrealismo al informalismo: Arte de los 50 en Madrid*, exh. cat., Sala de Exposiciones de la Comunidad de Madrid (Madrid: Comunidad de Madrid, 1991), 204-85; J. F. Yvars and Margaret Metras, *René Metras, 1926-1984: Reconstruir los sueños* (Barcelona: Àmbit Servicios Editoriales, 2008); María del Carmen Briones Brú, "René Metras, un hombre de nuestro tiempo. Galería René Metras y la vanguardia estética en Barcelona," *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma, Serie VII*, 25 (2012): 373-394; Javier Tusell and Álvaro Martínez-Novillo, *Cincuenta años de arte: Galería Biosca, 1940-1990* (Madrid: Turner, 1991).

development of art collecting and promotion of the arts in Spain, or in articulating the history of a given gallery, but as their authors have had other research questions in mind, they have not explored regime-gallery relations.³ As I demonstrate, the fact that the arts apparatus found galleries so important to their own artistic agenda makes them a necessary component to understanding official art policy.

Regime-Gallery Relations in the Early Francoist Period

The relationship that the regime had with private cultural institutions in the early Francoist period may be characterized by the private arts sector largely setting its own agenda. On the one hand, there was no office of the arts apparatus tasked with monitoring Spain's private sector cultural life. Even as of the mid-1940s, the top members of Spain's arts apparatus simply saw a need to strengthen its own state structures, without a sense that they needed to pay attention to the private sector's cultural life beyond wishing that cultural patronage was stronger.⁴ On the other hand, with the break in Spanish cultural life caused by the Spanish Civil War, the various offices that made up Spain's arts apparatus envisaged any private sector attempts to emerge in the early years of the regime as either neutral or valuable, able to supplement the limited number of official cultural opportunities.

³ Ana García-Sípido, "Juana Mordó (marchante de arte)" (PhD diss., UNED Madrid, 1989); Amaya Henar Hernández González, "Un nuevo concepto de coleccionismo en España (1940-1960)" (PhD diss., CEU – Universidad San Pablo, 2016); Jaume Vidal Oliveras, *Galerismo en Barcelona, 1877-2013: El sistema, el arte, la ciudad* (Madrid: Ministerio de Educación, Cultura, y Deporte, 2013).

⁴ During the *II Congreso de Bellas Artes* held at the *Círculo de Bellas Artes* of Madrid in May of 1945, all of Spain's most important cultural figures, including the minister of Education and the director general of Fine Arts, met to discuss the country's cultural needs. Architect Pedro Muguruza spoke about the need to reinvigorate cultural patronage (*mecenazgo*) in the form of private donors who would sponsor artists and/or cultural events. Other than his talk, all other topics discussed pertained to the state's needs, including reforms and the desire to have some kind of artists' guild or union. The proceedings of the week-long conference have been published as: *Congreso de Bellas Artes celebrado en el Círculo de Bellas Artes de Madrid, 22-28 mayo de 1945. Memoria redactada por las secretarías del congreso* (Madrid, 1945).

In the 1940s, galleries were re-established, but unevenly across the major cities. While the post-Spanish Civil War private art gallery scene in Barcelona experienced a boom between 1941 and 1947, attributed to the need to hide black-market money made during the war in tangible goods such as art, Madrid's artistic landscape lacked the pomp and intrigue of the Catalan capital.⁵ In the 1940s, there were an estimated twenty or so locales in Madrid in which one could view art on display, including both state-run and private sites. Some of these private spaces dated from the nineteenth century, such as the Galería Vilches and the Sala Macarrón, the latter of which also worked as an agency that transported art abroad and domestically. Most of the privately-owned galleries maintained a traditionalist bent and displayed and sold older artworks rather than that of up-and-coming artists.⁶ A handful of new galleries would open in the 1940s, although a relevant feature of all of these spaces was that they were not financially viable as private businesses of the art market. All of these galleries adopted a model that had been seen in the prior century in Barcelona with the Salón Parés⁷; they functioned primarily as arts supply, antiquity, or bookstores with a room for exhibitions rather than as professional sites primarily for the display of artworks. While none of these businesses tried to hide the fact that they were art exhibition spaces, it's in doubt as to whether people not interested in art would have even known them as such. Other exhibition spaces were part of longstanding cultural organizations, each fitting somewhere on the scale between private and public, such as the Círculo de Bellas Artes, the Asociación de los Amigos del Arte, the Asociación de la Prensa, the Asociación de Escritores y Artistas, the Madrid Atheneum, and even the Palace Hotel. In the purely state-run realm, governmental organs such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs maintained an exhibition space, and

⁵ Vidal, *Galerismo en Barcelona*, 71.

⁶ Fernández Polanco, "Las galerías de arte..." 8.

⁷ Vidal, *Galerismo en Barcelona*, 33.

the Ministry of Education oversaw the Museo de Arte Moderno, the Prado Museum, and two so-called “palaces” located in the Retiro Park in which exhibitions were often held.

It is the few galleries that established themselves anew in this period that sought to really make their mark in becoming artistic authorities that best exemplify regime-gallery relations in this period. While the arts apparatus had no formal ties to any art galleries that opened in the 1940s, this is not to say that they maintained no important interactions with them. The Galería Biosca, known for its “temperate modernity” (*modernidad templada*) would become known for its balance between the sponsoring of crowd-pleasing, largely uncontroversial artworks that sought to bolster the careers of pre-established Spanish artists, and the occasional inclusion of exhibitions of new, emerging artists.⁸ It was an independent private gallery that focused on mainstream aesthetic tastes, and yet, it is an example that demonstrates how difficult it was to completely separate where official interests ended and where private gallery activities began. Among those who would become involved in the salon-style group of art critics known as the Academia Breve Crítica de Arte (ABCA) were cultural bureaucrats, former government officials, and foreign ambassadors. The Galería Buchholz would likewise also occasionally play home to ABCA exhibitions despite its place further from the mainstream tastes of cultural officials. Despite its ties to the ABCA, the director of the Buchholz saw himself as promoting the kind of art that would receive no attention otherwise. Lastly, I mention the Galería Clan, which has very little to do with officialdom at all, but it is emblematic of a counter-cultural space that saw itself as promoting the art that the regime would not. The Clan provided the first example of a gallery-bookstore-publisher that opened anew in Franco’s Spain; it sought to be more than just a gallery or bookstore, and saw itself as responsible for the cultural promotion for Spain’s newest

⁸ This phrase was used by authors in describing the Galería Biosca’s expository preferences by 1951, in showing the works of Benjamín Palencia and Daniel Vázquez Díaz. Tusell and Martínez-Novillo, *Cincuenta años de arte*, 78.

modern artists. In all of these cases, independent of what kind of art or activities they sponsored, the regime at large seemed to look on these spaces as alike. On the other hand, artists and members of the civilian arts community saw a real difference between say, the Clan, as a place free of all regime intervention, and the Biosca, which they recognized as having connections to the official agenda.

The Galería Biosca

The Galería Biosca fit well within the early Francoist cultural milieu and would, without realizing it, end up setting set the tone for how a gallery would operate in early Francoist Spain. When Aurelio Biosca Torres opened his art gallery on November 15, 1940 on the Calle Génova in Madrid, he relied on the model he knew would provide his business with relative financial security: connecting the exhibition space to a store selling furniture and decorations.⁹ The gallerist stuck to what he knew best, and many of those featured in the first few years of operation were established Catalan artists who were well known enough in artistic circles to attract visitors, but not so radical as to attract negative attention. Some of the first artists to have the gallery as their institutional home were José Clará, Eduardo Vicente, Francisco Domingo, Gabriel Amat, Antonio Gómez Cano, Pedro Bueno, and Jose Antonio Caicoya.¹⁰ Throughout the 1940s, the Biosca's exhibition openings would be attended by high-ranking regime figures in all areas of government, often pictured on the cultural pages of newspapers smiling while meeting the artist. Such public displays of regime endorsement mirrored Franco's regular attendance at the inaugurations of the biennially-occurring National Exhibitions of Fine Arts. Thus, even as a

⁹ Biosca opened his gallery in a building that before the Spanish Civil War had been his brother's car dealership. He started his career as an art dealer at the Galería Badrinas of Barcelona. In 1933, he relocated to Madrid with the intention of opening his own gallery, but was unable to do so before the Spanish Civil War broke out. Tusell and Martínez-Novillo, *Cincuenta años de arte*, 12-20.

¹⁰ *Un decenio de arte moderno, 1940-50* (Madrid: Galería Biosca, 1951). Exhibition catalogue.

private entity, the Galería Biosca's art openings received similar treatment to the large state-led celebrations of the visual arts. While the Biosca's exhibition opening-nights were largely well attended and written up positively in the press, on ordinary days, the gallery rarely had visitors and hardly any sold artworks.¹¹ Thus, while both artistic patrons, artists, and the regime believed the gallery to be a worthwhile cultural endeavor, the business survived as one selling decorative arts objects, not as a business of the art market.

While exact knowledge of the extent to which Biosca made it a goal to secure artistic patronage proves elusive, it is evident that Biosca intuited the need to find a secure source of financial backing, or some entity or individual whose title or influence would lend further credibility to the gallery. Beyond forging connections with Spanish artists in the normal order of business, and smiling for the press cameras at inaugurations with figures of the administration, Biosca sought to build networks by inviting important art critics to serve as honorary board members of retrospective exhibitions.¹² The gallerist's most substantive collaboration was with Eugenio d'Ors, an essayist, philosopher, and art critic who had been Franco's first Director General of Fine Arts in 1938 and 1939. While the fact that d'Ors voluntarily resigned from his position with the new Nationalist apparatus made him somewhat suspect in the eyes of the regime, he had nevertheless retained some important offices that left him very well connected to both government officialdom and Falange Party circles.¹³

¹¹ Tusell and Martínez-Novillo, *Cincuenta años de arte*, 34-35.

¹² Biosca, for example, invited then secretary of the Instituto de España, Eugenio d'Ors, and the director of Madrid's Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando, the Conde de Romanones, to serve as honorary members for a retrospective exhibition to honor late painter Aureliano Beruete. Letter from Eugenio d'Ors to Aurelio Biosca, dated January 10, 1941, Arch. BCA 1, Archivo Galería Biosca: album 1940-1941, Archivo Biosca, MNCARS.

¹³ D'Ors had relocated to Madrid from Barcelona in the early 1920s, and later spent time in Paris as Spain's representative of the Institución Internacional de Cooperación Intelectual for the decade between 1927 and 1937. Upon his return to Spain in the middle of wartime, d'Ors worked to help Franco's Nationalists reorganize cultural institutions. In addition to his short-lived work as director general, d'Ors also helped to form the Instituto de España, an umbrella organization that united Spain's various royal academies, with which he remained affiliated until his death as its *secretario perpetuo*. He was also on the Board of Directors of the Museo del Arte Moderno, the Prado,

Biosca became a collaborator with d'Ors in 1942, when the latter founded the Academia Breve de Crítica de Arte (or ABCA), a group of high-society and well-connected art critics, art historians, and art lovers, who met periodically to stage annual exhibitions via a model that sought a return to salon culture.¹⁴ Many of the original members of the ABCA were also board members of official Spanish institutions, such as the Museo de Arte Moderno or the Royal Academy of Fine Art.¹⁵ Biosca was not himself a member of the ABCA, but his gallery became the primary host site of many of the group's exhibitions – occasionally sharing with the Museo and Arte Moderno and the Galería Buchholz.

While the Biosca became known as a gallery in which one could see modern art on display, its ties to important figures meant that the gallery was always seen as mainstream. The first ABCA exhibition was a tribute to nineteenth-century painter Isidro Nonell in May of 1942, and the group started to exhibit more regularly in June 1943, with the first instance of what was known as the “Salons of the Eleven.” Such events, so named because each ABCA member would pick a work of art to appear on display, became staples of Madrid's art world until 1954, the year of d'Ors' death and the end of the ABCA. Notable in this time for being one of the only venues in which one could see modern art, the 1947 Salon of the Eleven featured a collection of non-figurative canvasses of Modesto Ciruelos, an incredibly early date for a work of abstract art to be shown in a public setting in Spain. After 1949, the annual Salon displayed the works of the

and the Museo de Reproducciones Artísticas, and he was a member of the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando.

¹⁴ For a full history of the ABCA see: Manuel Sánchez-Camargo, *Historia de la Academia Breve de Crítica de Arte: Homenaje a Eugenio d'Ors* (Madrid: Langa, 1963).

¹⁵ The original eleven members were d'Ors, José María Alfaro (VP of the board of directors of the Museo de Arte Moderno), Eduardo Lloset Marañón (director of the Museo de Arte Moderno), art critic and future gallerist Enrique Azcoaga, critic José Camón Aznar, and Luis Felipe Vivanco (future president of the board of directors of the Museo Nacional de Arte Contemporáneo), Yakishiro Suma (the Japanese ambassador), Alberto Zarega Fombona (the Venezuelan ambassador), Carlos Blanco Soler, María Blanchard (the Countess of Campo-Alange), and José Eugenio de Baviera y Borbón (the nephew of Spain's former King Alfonso XIII). María Dolores Jiménez-Blanco Carrillo de Albornoz, *Arte y Estado en la España del siglo XX* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1989), 49.

first new generation of Spain's abstractionists, such as Antoni Tàpies, Antonio Saura, Eduardo Chillida, Manolo Millares, Modest Cuixart and Jorge de Oteiza, as well as works by Joan Miró and Salvador Dalí.¹⁶ Thus, through the ABCA and its important, well-connected, and regime-affiliated membership, the Galería Biosca became cemented as an important artistic home for Madrid's cultural life, and one of the only places in the city in which one could see modern art.

In the 1950s, the Galería Biosca continued to be a locale of prestige among Madrid's cultural set apart from its affiliation with the ABCA. The gallery, for example, became a sort of semi-permanent home for the artists who came to be known as the Escuela de Madrid (Madrid School), a group who had been institutionally supported by the state via their inclusion in the official Instituto de Cultura Hispánica's large *Primera Bienal Hispanoamericana del Arte* in 1951, with at least two of the group's forefathers winning top prizes.¹⁷ 1953 saw a highly publicized exhibition of the works of Antoni Tàpies, which established the gallery as a place that could attract Spain's best young artists. That these artists, who had recently been included in regime-led exhibitions, were closely linked to the Biosca again served to cement the idea that the gallery would serve as an institutional home for quality Spanish art, supplementing the regime's cultural activities.

The Other Modern Art Galleries of the Early Francoist Period: The Clan and Buchholz

Opting to focus exclusively on recently-created modern art, the Clan and the Buchholz galleries, both dating from 1945, sought to distance themselves from the mainstream stance of the Galería Biosca. Both cultivated loyal communities of artists and art appreciators who would come to see each of these spaces as an artistic refuge. As with most private art galleries of the

¹⁶ Gabriel Ureña, *Las vanguardias artísticas en la postguerra española, 1940-1959* (Madrid: Ediciones Istmo, 1982), 42-43.

¹⁷ Benjamín Palencia won the top prize at the *Bienal*, with Daniel Vázquez Díaz taking home the top prize in the 'painting' category. Tusell and Martínez Novillo, *Cincuenta años de arte*, 78.

1940s, neither the Clan nor Buchholz would be able to survive as only exhibition spaces, and both locales also operated as bookstores. And despite the Buchholz's reputation as anti-establishment in every sense of the word, as with the Biosca, the gallery still served as the site for some of the ABCA's events. Of the private art galleries that opened in Madrid in the 1940s, the Clan was that which did the most to create a space free of regime structures and personalities.

German art dealer Karl Buchholz opened the Galería Buchholz in central Madrid in December of 1945 as a joint bookstore and gallery. His controversial ties to the Nazi Party did not appear to prevent him from operating, nor did they prevent artists from wanting to collaborate with the gallery.¹⁸ Like the Biosca, the Buchholz too had ties to the ABCA, in this case through the group's secretary, Enrique Azcoaga, who until 1951, was the artistic director of the gallery. Buchholz himself is noted as saying that his gallery was meant to encourage those artists who would otherwise not have been brought into the commercial fold.¹⁹ The gallery was also able to cement new identities for artists. For example, when a loosely affiliated but stylistically different group of artists sought to have an exhibition together at the gallery in late 1945, Buchholz named them the Escuela de Madrid, and the name stuck.²⁰ Among that group, artist José Guerrero had his first solo exhibition at the Buchholz in 1950, after which he left to live in the United States, where he would become a renowned abstract expressionist. While the

¹⁸ Before his arrival in Spain, it is a known fact that Buchholz dealt artwork that had been looted by the Nazis, using a gallery location in New York to do so. In 1942, he was expelled from the Reich Chamber for the Visual Arts, but that did not stop him from continuing to operate art galleries all over the world. Interestingly, Buchholz had dealings in New York (during and after the Second World War), Lisbon (where he emigrated and opened a business in 1943), and later Colombia. His gallery and dealings in Madrid have been significantly less studied than these other cases. Jonathan Petropoulos, "Bridges from the Reich: The Importance of Emigré Art Dealers as Reflected in the Case Studies of Curt Valentin and Otto Kallir-Nirenstein," *Kunstgeschichte* (2011), <https://www.kunstgeschichte-ejournal.net/>.

¹⁹ Buchholz made such a comment in an article that appeared in *La Hora* on December 7, 1945, as quoted in: Fernández Polanco, "Las galerías de arte..." 13.

²⁰ This exhibition featured artists Pedro Bueno, Álvaro Delgado, Juana Faure, Eustaquio Fernández de Miranda, Carlos Ferreira, José Guerrero, Luis García-Ochoa, Antonio Lago, Juan Antonio Morales, Pablo Palazuelo, José Planes, and Miguel Pérez Aguilera. Ureña, *Las vanguardias artísticas*, 58-59.

El Paso group would have their first exhibition at the Buchholz in 1957, the group's individual members fared well at the gallery years prior to the group's founding. Antonio Suárez would have an exhibition there in 1950, Antonio Saura's first ever exhibition in Madrid was held at the Buchholz in 1951, and Manolo Millares had an individual exhibition at the gallery in 1954. In addition to the gallery side of the business, the bookstore did more than only sell books, as the space often held poetry readings, attracting many artists and intellectuals until 1967, when the business closed. While the arts apparatus was hardly paying attention to the Buchholz in its first decade of operation, it was working as a successful cultural promoter, finding a way to position itself to cater to mainstream interests, such as the ABCA, all the while really prioritizing what it considered to be the newest avant-garde art coming out of Spain.

The Clan is the gallery at this period most emblematic of how to both foment and promote the arts, while also being a site around which a cultural community would form. From the beginning, surrealist poet Tomás Seral's objective was to attract the avant-garde artists of Surrealism and abstraction when he opened the Galería Clan in Madrid's central Puerta del Sol in 1945.²¹ While the Clan sold books, Seral took this aspect one step further, becoming a publisher of sorts when he collaborated with German painter and Spanish resident Mathias Goeritz to issue a series of books entitled '*Artistas Nuevos*' in 1948, and also entered the world of serial publications. The Clan promoted not only its own initiatives but also Madrid's art scene writ large through a series of newsletters and journals focused on the arts. First, there was the very short-lived two-issue run of *El Punto. Boletín Literario y Artístico*, between December 1948 and early 1949, and then Seral tried again with the *Índice de Artes y Letras*, published between

²¹ Before moving to Madrid, the Aragonese Seral had operated a bookstore with an exhibition room in the region's capital of Zaragoza since 1940.

October 1949 and September 1951.²² That a small, independent gallery would issue its own publications was a huge undertaking in the era of mandatory pre-publication censorship.

While brief, Seral's forays into publishing news and books about artists and the arts is important for two reasons. First, the Clan's function as publishing house made it one of the most important places for artists to gather because it was one of the only venues to see the latest art publications coming from both inside and outside of Spain. Second, the idea that the gallery would seek to influence art beyond its walls by also publicizing arts events throughout Madrid would set the tone for what others should seek to visit, making the gallery into cultural promoter.

The Clan continued to play an important role in the visual arts in 1950s Madrid, both with and without Seral at the helm.²³ The gallery's move to a new, larger location in 1950 allowed the gallery to further expand its exhibition possibilities. In 1953, the gallery hosted a notable exhibition called *Arte Fantástico* featuring works by Miró, Picasso, Tony Stubing, Iván Mosca, Ángel Ferrant, Jorge Oteiza, José Caballero, and the group Dau al Set, among others, for which Antonio Saura wrote the prologue of the exhibition catalogue. The following year saw an exhibition of Matisse drawings as well as an individual exhibition for Basque sculptor Eduardo Chillida, rumored to be the first exhibition of abstract sculpture in Spain.²⁴ In February of 1954, Seral moved to Paris and sold his gallery to a writer previously exiled in Tangier for his link to art smuggling, who is reported to have built a secret room in which blacklisted books were kept.²⁵ Artists have looked back upon the Clan to recall it as a place of artistic freedom, in which

²² *Tomás Seral y Casas: Un galerista en la postguerra*, Centro Cultural del Conde Duque (Madrid: Ayuntamiento de Madrid, 1998), 39-40.

²³ Seral would move to Paris in 1954 to run a gallery there, but returned to Madrid just a couple years later. In 1958, Seral headed up another one of Madrid's already-established gallery-bookstores called the Librería Fernando Fe, which he did until 1962.

²⁴ Alarcó, "Historia de las galerías de arte," 227.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

a cultural community could form.²⁶ The Clan made possible a model in which artists could exhibit works, share ideas, and view the newest publications about art.

In this early period, regime figures saw galleries as useful institutions, able to supplement the state's presence in the arts, but the cultural programming of the arts apparatus and those of private galleries remained separate. While the case of the ABCA was certainly supported by regime members who gave it an official stamp of approval, the project was not officially dictated from a governmental department or office. But taken together, the existence and popularity of the Biosca, the Clan, and the Buchholz, demonstrated to Francoist administrators that Spain could support a vibrant arts scene, thus setting the stage for the early 1960s, when official regime policy would reflect a more direct interest in entering cultural affairs through the desire to collaborate directly with private art galleries.

Regime-Gallery Relations in the Late Francoist Period

Although even the aforementioned art gallerists took seriously their role as the producers and disseminators of art, from the late 1950s, the staff and owners of private art galleries would come to advocate more ardently for the inherent value that their businesses brought to Spain's domestic art scene. Why this happened is twofold. On the one hand, private art galleries could fill a growing yearning of artists of this period, who demanded a more vibrant domestic arts panorama (as I demonstrated in Chapter 2). Despite some artists' accusations of private galleries as only profit-motivated, they nevertheless turned to the private arts sector with more frequency, which would allow them to participate in domestic artistic life in a way that was free of regime input. Private galleries often represented what artists saw as a better option when compared to

²⁶ Two firsthand accounts attest to the Clan's central role as a cultural magnet for intellectuals and artists. See: Emilio Sanz de Soto, "El "Clan", de Tomás Seral: Unos cuantos metros cuadrados de libertad," and Antonio Fernández Molina "Libros y librerías madrileñas," in *Tomas Seral y Casas*.

the regime's exhibitions, although artists' turn toward private galleries was not necessarily ideological, and happened for practical reasons also. For example, private art galleries could make decisions more quickly than regime exhibitions that endured small budgets and many months of advance planning. Also, as demonstrated by the examples of the galleries that existed in the early Francoist period, most galleries were hardly well-off enough to function as traditional commercial establishments in the first place. For those artists who did choose to abstain from regime initiatives for ideological reasons, private galleries represented an ideal way for them to attempt to keep their art within their chosen circles.

On the other hand, gallerists themselves were in a better position than ever before to open such a business. The late 1950s economic reforms away from autarky surely helped open up funds for gallerist-entrepreneurs to make the jump to opening their own spaces, and that such spaces started to be desired by artists gave people interested in this career path more of a reason to do so. Additionally, the kind of promotional work first started on a small scale by Tomás Seral in the prior period proved that an art gallery could not only reflect the art being created, but that it could actually have a role in articulating, promoting, and inventing a more coordinated arts scene. All of these factors made the late 1950s-early 1960s a time in which art gallerists adopted a renewed impetus toward the self-promotion of their work which would continue throughout the latter decade – and even occasionally venture abroad.²⁷

Artes magazine, co-founded by regime bureaucrat Isabel Cajide (introduced in Chapter 1), was instrumental in articulating the vibrancy of national artistic life through the work of art galleries. The magazine focused on publicizing art exhibitions in and around Madrid (and

²⁷ *Artes* magazine, with the cooperation of the Galería Biosca, the Galería Neblí, and the Galería Juana Mordó, worked with the Spanish Embassy in West Germany to host an exhibition of Spanish modern art in Frankfurt in late 1964. "Clausura de una exposición de arte moderno español en Fráncfort," *La Vanguardia Española*, November 27, 1964, 14.

eventually came to include sections for other Spanish cities), with special attention to exhibitions at private galleries. This enthusiasm was paired, however, with an acknowledgement of the work still needed. An editor's note from the first issue of May 1961 explained that the magazine's objective was to provide a listing of every art exhibition in Madrid, a heretofore neglected feat that she sought to rectify. Cajide explained that it was a paradox that at a high point of international recognition of Spanish art abroad, there should be such an inattention to providing such information to Spanish artists domestically.²⁸ As Cajide's words intimate, cultural figures representing all points of view worried that the lack of attention to the arts domestically was going to manifest in artists leaving the country if things continued along the same path. Also in the first issue, critic and former El Paso member, José Ayllón, offered an estimation of how gallery life in Madrid had started to change in the new decade, in which he explained that until recently, galleries had served mainly as rooms that could be rented by artists for a price, and that recent economic development had made it possible to support galleries of specific artistic tendencies. While this overall trend was a positive one, he worried that most of the clientele of Spanish galleries were foreign, which was not going to be enough for the development of a true art market.²⁹ Without a true art market, Spanish artists would have no choice but to seek opportunity elsewhere.

Thus, a number of factors were in the process of coalescing to make the cultural context of the late Franco period uniquely positioned to fix a collective gaze on art galleries. Art gallerists saw themselves as well-positioned to promote and foment the arts domestically, which figures of the arts apparatus would interpret as threatening once artists showed more of a preference for the private galleries than for official exhibitions. Fraga's reorganization of the

²⁸ "La Aventura de una revista de arte," *Artes: Exposiciones, Estudios, Crítica*. no. 1 (May 8, 1961): 3.

²⁹ José Ayllón, "Galería Biosca," *Artes* no. 1 (May 8, 1961): 9, 11.

General Directorate of Information, with the explicit goal of forging ties with private entities, demonstrated that the arts apparatus knew that private art galleries were sites of great artistic potential.

While Fraga himself would have little direct contact in forging ties with private entities, he appointed art critic and regime bureaucrat, Carlos Areán (introduced in Chapter 1), to pioneer the initiative with private art galleries. Despite his active presence and large role vis-à-vis the visual arts in the Franco era arts apparatus, Carlos Areán has received scant mention in studies about art policy in Spain. Furthermore, the extent to which he directed a campaign to work closely with private art galleries has been hitherto completely unexplored.³⁰ On the one hand, the lack of scholarly interest about him mirrors the little attention given by the regime toward the visual arts domestically, especially when compared to Luis González Robles, Areán's counterpart as head curator of foreign exhibitions.³¹ But just because Areán's pursuits did not result in Spanish artists winning prizes at major international arts biennials does not mean that he did not have a major influence in shaping the direction of regime art policy. To the contrary, as a member of the state bureaucracy, participant in Movimiento initiatives, prolific author and cultural commentator, he had the chance to decisively affect the direction of the visual arts. While not all of Areán's initiatives functioned as planned, including his campaign to work with

³⁰ Mónica Núñez Laiseca, *Arte y política en la España del desarrollismo (1962-1968)* (Madrid: CSIC, 2006), 67-69 and 71, mentions Areán and his work to collaborate with other art governmental art departments, and others to mention Areán cite only her. When Areán has been mentioned at all, it has typically been in the context of his role as one of the organizers of the art exhibition component of the 1964 *XXV Años de Paz* campaign designed to celebrate the two-and-a-half decades of peace since the end of the Spanish Civil War. While this event was touted as containing all of Spain's best artists in the official exhibition catalog, about half of the artists who originally agreed to participate dropped out before the inauguration.

³¹ See, for example, the following studies, the first of which offers a positive interpretation of González Robles' work, and the latter which views him as duplicitous: Michelle Vergniolle Delalle, *La palabra en silencio. Pintura y oposición bajo el franquismo* (Valencia: Publicacions de la Universitat de València, 2008), and Jorge Luis Marzo, *¿Puedo hablarle con libertad, excelencia? Arte y poder en España desde 1950* (Murcia: Cendeac, 2010).

private galleries, the artists he supported and the exhibitions he sponsored set the tone for what Spaniards were meant to see, appreciate, and read about the art being created around them.

Areán's campaign to work with private art galleries did not last more than a year and a half, nor did it involve more than half a dozen exhibition houses, but it was nevertheless indicative of the new drive of the Francoist apparatus to insert itself into the private sector. Despite the large amount of work that would be required by the gallery, Areán marketed his state-private collaborations as easy, mutually-beneficial, natural agreements that made common sense, when in actuality they primarily served the Madrid Atheneum, his department, and the MIT. These efforts not only demonstrate the regime's trial-and-error style of policy making in the visual arts, but they also show that Areán believed that by virtue of his position, others would naturally flock to the opportunities he could offer. He assumed that gallery directors and private collectors would open their arms to him.³² Once the collaborations were underway, however, the bureaucratic structures of the state would prove too rigid to accommodate them on a permanent basis. This was a realization that Areán experienced firsthand when confronted with the everyday dealings of the private sector. After the collaborations that he pioneered tapered off, that Areán did not go back to the drawing board with Fraga to rewrite and reissue policies to make collaborations mandatory shows that these officials were not willing to turn to repressive measures to make them happen.

So, what did Areán's state-private collaborations look like? Areán looked to private galleries that he believed had a high enough profile to attract quality artists, and sought to plan

³² Areán's attitude toward the value of private galleries and private collections is best summed up by a comment that he made when being interviewed about his work at the helm of the Atheneum's exhibition rooms in 1963. He very much wanted to arrange a show of the sculptures of Jorge Oteiza, but explained that it would be difficult, given the artist's recent retirement. What would make the exhibition possible, he explained, would be the collaboration of private collectors, and in this case, especially the cooperation of the Huarte family. The implication here was that this would not be difficult to achieve. Jorge Cela Trulock, "Las Salas de Exposiciones del Ateneo de Madrid," *La Estafeta Literaria* no. 272-273, August 17-31, 1963, 62.

upcoming MIT- or Atheneum-sponsored exhibitions using either a gallery's entire exhibition, which would then travel wholesale to the state's designated exhibition space, or Areán would reach out to gallerists to ask them to loan certain artworks, which he would then incorporate into a larger exhibition. Areán would then arrange to pay for the transportation of artworks from the gallery to the new locale, but it does not appear that the state paid directly for the use of the artworks nor that there was any direct financial incentive for galleries. In all cases, even when a gallery had already created its own exhibition catalogue, Areán and his staff would create their own publication associated with the official version of the exhibition (featuring their own introductory essay), although relying almost exclusively on the gallery personnel to provide all other contents. Both the gallerist and Areán would reach out to artists and critics where necessary to drum up support and publicity, although in almost all cases, it was the former who was already in close contact with the artist. In short, the state relied on the gallery to do much of the work.

Areán's simultaneous leadership at the helm of the exhibition rooms of Madrid's Atheneum, the traveling exhibitions of the MIT, and the Sala Amadís meant that he needed to generate many exhibitions, but also that, once planned, he could circulate a similar exhibition among all of these entities.³³ We know that in the period between 1962 and 1964, Areán's known collaborations extended to the Galería René Metras, the Galería Syra, and the Sala Gaspar, all of Barcelona, and the Galería Ivan Spence of Ibiza. With respect to the Sala Gaspar, the gallery owners, cousins Miguel and Juan Gaspar, agreed in the summer of 1963 to pass along two of their exhibitions to the Madrid Atheneum for early 1964: the works of José María de Sucre,

³³ The magazine of the Madrid Atheneum, *La Estafeta Literaria*, is a particularly good source to make these connections. Not only is there an outsized attention to publicizing the exhibitions of the Sala Amadís and the various private galleries with which Areán would collaborate, but there is also an unmistakable connection between the exhibitions that appeared at these galleries and at the Atheneum and as part of the MIT's program. Even a few years later, we know that Areán's 1967 *Nueva Figuración* exhibition for the Amadís toured several Spanish cities as an official exhibition of the MIT. Verdú Schumann, "La Sala Amadís...", 230.

followed by a group exhibition of the works of Picasso, Miró, Clavé, Tharrats, and Vilacasas.³⁴ Areán then entrusted the cousins to make sure to obtain short texts in English and French for the exhibition catalogue, as “they seem more important when they contain articles in several languages.”³⁵ With respect to the Galería Syra, Areán explained to gallerist Montserrat Isern that he wanted her to convince painter Olga Sacharoff to lend four artworks for the large traveling exhibition he was planning entitled *Pintores extranjeros en España* [Foreign Painters in Spain]. In addition, with the Atheneum’s next two exhibition seasons in mind, Areán told Isern that a number of artists the gallery represented interested him, suggesting that the gallerist start to think about which artists’ works may be sent along in the future.³⁶ The Galería Ivan Spence of Ibiza, recently under new ownership by Spence himself, was also approached by Areán as of late 1962, and their correspondence would continue throughout the following year. Areán arranged with Spence to secure not only three artworks each from four of the gallery’s artists for *Pintores extranjeros*, but also for a separate exhibition set to open at the Atheneum in March of 1964 featuring eight foreign artists who lived and worked in Ibiza.³⁷ In all of these cases, the galleries bore the brunt of connecting and scheduling with artists and securing images and texts for the exhibition catalogues.³⁸ While all of these cases established the way Areán worked, it is through

³⁴ Letter from Carlos Areán to Miguel and Juan Gaspar, June 4, 1963, Box 17973, Folder: 1963, Artes Plásticas y Audiovisuales, Correspondencia A-L, (03)49.3, AGA.

³⁵ “...ya que los catálogos parecen más importantes cuando llevan artículos en varias lenguas.” Ibid.

³⁶ Letter from Carlos Antonio Areán to Montserrat Isern, May 9, 1963, Box 17973, Folder: 1963, Artes Plásticas y Audiovisuales, Correspondencia A-L, (03)49.3, AGA. The artists specifically mentioned by Areán were: Rafael Benet, Bosch Roger, Miguel Villá, Mompou, and Ramón Aguilar Moré.

³⁷ A series of several letters between Ivan Spence and Areán, dating from April 11, 1963 until December 21, 1963 may be found in Box 17973, Folder: 1963, Artes Plásticas y Audiovisuales, Correspondencia M-Z, (03)49.3, AGA. The eight artists were Frans Krajcberg, Heinz Trökes, Pierre Dmitrienko, K. F. Dahmen, Douglas Portway, Erwin Bechtold, Bob Munford, and Eric Rutherford.

³⁸ Essentially, all of the duties to which an individual artist (or group of artists) had to agree for a state-run exhibition were with these new collaborative arrangements pushed onto the gallery. The only exception is that with the regime-gallery collaborations, the official entity picked up the cost to transport the artworks. A contract that artists had to sign after having *been invited* to exhibit in the Sala de Santa Catalina of the Madrid Atheneum reveals the many hoops through which they had to jump despite the fact that the invitation was supposed to be an honor. The Atheneum promised the artist an exhibition of at least 11 days, and a monograph about their work, 700 copies

his more involved dealings with one gallery in particular that demonstrate in great detail exactly what was expected, and how and why such collaborations failed to work as planned.

Collaboration with the René Metras Gallery

The first gallery with which Areán strove to form a collaboration was the Galería René Metras of Barcelona. Of French nationality from a family of Lyon silk merchants, Metras (1926-1984) had been established in Catalonia since the early 1940s. Metras was quickly drawn to the art world – rumored to have started collecting artworks at the age of seventeen – and even served as the treasurer for the *Dau al set* journal, named after the group of artists of the same name.³⁹ In the early 1950s, he spent time in both Barcelona and Paris, during which he made connections on both sides of the border with art dealers and artists. While it is not clear exactly which role he played, we know that the regime considered Metras a friend, as he was cited as having been a regular collaborator with the General Directorate of Cultural Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁴⁰ In 1957, at thirty-one years-old, he started to work as an art dealer in Barcelona. At this same time, he and his wife, Teresa, founded and edited an arts and culture magazine, *Correo de las artes*, which lasted until 1962, when the magazine ceased publication due to financial difficulty.⁴¹ Metras was also on the board of directors of the Barcelona’s short-lived Museo de Arte Contemporáneo when it opened in 1960.

of which would be sent to the Atheneum’s mailing list of art critics and gallerists. The artist, in return was responsible for a litany of duties, however. For example, artists had to send their artworks at their own expense in both directions, were responsible for providing the majority of the photos and texts that would appear in the monograph, and artists would have to pay for their own advertising. Lastly, while it was not required, artists were heavily encouraged to give for free an artwork to remain in the Atheneum’s permanent collection. Artists’ contract for the Sala de Santa Catalina of the Madrid Atheneum, 1970, as reproduced in Rocío Viguera Romero, “José Romero Escassi: Legado material e inmaterial. Valoración cultural. Tomo I” (PhD diss., Universidad de Sevilla, 2017), 450-451. While this copy of the document dates from 1970, such rules would have been the same dating back many decades.

³⁹ Yvars, *René Metras*, 17.

⁴⁰ Petition from René Metras and María Teresa Vitaller to the Director General de Prensa (MIT), February 1, 1962, Box 17973, Folder: Año 1962 (artes plásticas y audiovisuales), (03)49.3, AGA.

⁴¹ Briones Brú, “René Metras, un hombre...,” 379.

The Galería Metras's formal inauguration coincided with Areán assuming his new MIT position, although October 1962 is not the origin of their affiliation. While it is impossible to know their first contact, a close professional relationship likely developed because Areán wrote for *Correo de las artes*, with an article appearing as early as the September 1960 issue, after which he appeared as a regular contributor.⁴² Then, in the autumn of 1962, in their new positions as gallerist and department head, the two would share a friendly correspondence that already demonstrated involved conversations with respect to the organization of joint-exhibitions.⁴³ In a memo to his boss, Carlos Robles Piquer, from early 1963, Areán explained that he and Metras had “arrived at a perfect agreement” about their future collaboration, and that given all that Metras was willing to do, the General Directorate of Information should “give all possible support” to the gallery.⁴⁴

After much preparation and some obstacles, Metras opened his gallery on the Consejo de Ciento, no. 331 in October 1962 with an exhibition entitled “Presencia 1945-1962” featuring a bevy of eighteen Spanish and foreign artists.⁴⁵ This first exhibition set the tone for the gallery, demonstrating Metras' close connection to the art world beyond Barcelona's borders, and many of those represented would be the primary grouping of artists represented by the gallery for

⁴² For example, Areán appeared again as author for the magazine in a special June-July 1961 issue, for which he authored an article about artist Eusebio Sempere, a departure from his typical focus on the artists of Informalismo.

⁴³ Letter from Carlos Areán to René Metras, November 7, 1962, Box 17973, Folder: Año 1962 (artes plásticas y audiovisuales), (03)49.3, AGA.

⁴⁴ “Nota sobre mis entrevistas con René Metras,” Memo from Carlos Areán to Carlos Robles Piquer, undated (but would be from early 1963), Box 17973, Folder: 1963, Artes Plásticas y Audiovisuales, Correspondencia M-Z, (03)49.3, AGA.

⁴⁵ Unfortunately, no further information is given as to what such obstacles were. Briones Brú, “René Metras, un hombre...” 382. In Catalan, the street is known as the Consell de Cent. The artists who appeared in the exhibition were: Hans Bischoffhausen, Camille Bryen, Bury, Javier Corberó, Modest Cuixart, Jean-Baptiste Chéreau, Jean Dubuffet, Jean Fautrier, Lucio Fontana, Luis Feito, Ángel Ferrant, Hans Hartung, J. Hernández Pijuan, George Mathieu, Henri Michaux, K.R.H. Sonderborg, Tobey, and Moisés Villalia. There is some discrepancy between later published lists and the list of names that appeared in the very simple exhibition catalog, which provides twenty-four participating artists. This and other exhibition catalogs for the Metras Gallery may be found in a collection of ephemera at the BCD of the MNCARS: EPH 69.

decades. Even early in the gallery's life, Metras would feature exhibitions deemed important in Spain, and given the proximity to the neighboring Sala Gaspar and Galería Belarte, it was not rare for the three galleries to collaborate, such as in the joint exhibition of the latest works of Joan Miró in December of 1964.⁴⁶

Beyond these collaborations among the private galleries, from the very beginning Metras collaborated with Areán, in which a slate of the artists represented in Metras' opening exhibition would have exhibitions at the Madrid Atheneum or in exhibitions of the General Directorate of Information at the end of 1962 and over the course of 1963. For example, Barcelona-based painter Joan Hernández Pijuan, whom Metras is credited with discovering, had been included in the gallery's inaugural exhibition followed by a solo exhibition immediately following from January 9 to February 8 of 1963. Areán then arranged with Metras to have this same exhibition travel to Cordoba to open on May 6. The same can be said for the Metras exhibitions of the works of Jean-Baptiste Chéreau, Modest Cuixart, Luis Feito, Jean Fautrier, George Mathieu, and Lucio Fontana. Areán also arranged for other Metras artists Román Valles, Enrique Tábara, and Serge Bonacase to have exhibitions open at the Atheneum throughout 1963. Essentially, Metras' entire first exhibition season of programming was repurposed by Areán for exhibitions either at the Atheneum or to travel under the aegis of the MIT.

Pintores extranjeros en España

The collaborative exhibition briefly mentioned above deserves special attention because it was one in which Areán placed almost preternatural importance, but it was made possible due to the multi-directional collaboration called for by the MIT's new policy directives. The 1963 exhibition entitled *Pintores extranjeros en España* took the efforts of Areán's section, with

⁴⁶ Yvars, *René Metras*, 58.

collaboration from the Ministry of Education's General Directorate of Fine Arts, Barcelona's Junta Provincial de Museos, the Madrid Atheneum, the Museo Provincial de Palma de Mallorca, the Universidad de Sevilla, the Círculo de la Amistad of Córdoba, as well as the aforementioned Ivan Spence Gallery, Galería Syra, and that of René Metras.⁴⁷ The exhibition opened in Barcelona on April 2, 1963 at the Palacio de la Virreina, and then traveled to Palma de Mallorca, San Sebastián, Bilbao, Alicante, the exhibition rooms of the General Directorate of Fine Arts in Madrid, Cordoba, and was set to visit several locales in France.

As its name implied, the idea behind this traveling exhibition was to showcase the artworks of foreign artists living in Spain. Areán chose twenty-five, all of whom painted in a non-figurative (*no imitativo*) style.⁴⁸ The public-facing materials about the exhibition emphasized the part of the artists' careers that had transpired within Spain's borders, and special attention was made to note those artists who had been living in Spain for more than a decade. For example, for Areán, the artwork of the German-born Will Faber was a major highlight of the exhibition, and that he had been living in Barcelona since 1930 implied that his work developed as it had because of his presence in Spain.⁴⁹ That this panel of foreign abstract artists had willingly made Spain their home (some permanently) was meant to act as the ultimate advertisement of artistic freedom. Artists such as Jean-Baptiste Chéreau and Erwin Bechtold counted among René Metras's artists, and most of the others represented were likewise represented by Spanish galleries. Beyond only these close ties to Spain, private correspondence further demonstrates that Areán based his selections on "those who enjoy the highest

⁴⁷ That this was a highly collaborative exhibition was mentioned explicitly on the inside of the title page of the exhibition catalogue, specific gallery participation was determined through the correspondence. Carlos Antonio Areán, *Pintores extranjeros en España* (Madrid, Publicaciones Españolas, 1963).

⁴⁸ By the time the exhibition had arrived in Madrid, five more artists had been added to the program: Owe Pellsjo, Pic Adrian, Roberta Griffith, Eugenio Kurakin-Goizeuta, and Serge Bonacase. This detail is reported in Carlos Areán's opening essay in: *Pintores extranjeros en España*, Madrid: Dirección General de Bellas Artes, 1963.

⁴⁹ Areán, *Pintores extranjeros en España*, Publicaciones Españolas, chap. 3, II.

international prestige or have contact with some important foreign galleries that can be responsible not only for the dissemination of their artworks, but also incidentally carry out the serious advertising of our current art.”⁵⁰ Thus, while ties to Spain were made out to be the most important feature of these artists, really what counted were their connections with the international art world.

Areán was not shy about expressing that he believed this exhibition represented a new era for Spain as artistic capital. In a letter to Fraga on April 28, 1963, Areán explained that his motivations for organizing the exhibition included its “political interest for the future,” because:

For the first time in our history, Spain is a world center of attraction for artists, and if the influx continues, we will be able to inherit the position that Paris assumed from the Impressionist exhibition of 1874 to the present day. I believe that it is a great success for you in the long run that, with you as minister, Spain has started with your support to unseat France in the leadership of the new European avant-garde.⁵¹

Beyond revealing Areán’s delusions of grandeur, perhaps what is most interesting about this statement is that it is an inverse of what hitherto had been the dominant message. Until this point, there had always been such strong messaging from the ICH or Ministry of Foreign Affairs about head-turning Spanish artists whose works were on display in other parts of the world. With this exhibition, now Areán shifted the emphasis toward showcasing how non-Spanish artists not only made Spain their home, but also that they had done so because it was an ideal place to exercise

⁵⁰ “...aquellos que gozan de un más alto prestigio internacional o que tienen contacto con algunas grandes galerías extranjeras que pueden encargarse no sólo de la difusión de sus obras, sino realizar indirectamente una seria propaganda de nuestro arte actual.” “Informe para el Ilmo. Director General sobre la Exposición “Pintores Extranjeros en España,” undated, Box 17494, Folder: Director General de Información, (03)49.3, AGA. The document is undated, but would have been written in April 1963, not long after the exhibition’s opening in Barcelona.

⁵¹ “La verdadera razón por qué la pensé fue por su interés político para el futuro. Por primera vez en nuestra historia, de [sic] España es un centro mundial de atracción de artistas, y si sigue la afluencia, podremos heredar el puesto que tuvo París desde la exposición impresionista de 1874 hasta nuestros días. Yo creo que a la larga es un gran éxito para ti el que siendo tu Ministro haya comenzado España con tu apoyo a conseguir desbancar a Francia en la dirección de la nueva vanguardia europea.” Letter from Carlos Areán to Manuel Fraga Iribarne, April 28, 1963, Box 17975, Folder: Correspondencia, Pintores Extranjeros, (03)49.3, AGA.

their artistic talents. This new message tried to place the emphasis on Spain's importance domestically as arts capital.

This exhibition was also important in Areán's eyes because it was a key example of what could be accomplished with mass collaboration. While several private galleries had contributed artworks, it was also an opportunity to forge connections with the Ministry of Education via the General Directorate of Fine Arts. Correspondence from December of 1963 revealed, however, that there were tensions present between two departments. When an article in *Artes* profiled the General Directorate of Information's role in the exhibition without mentioning the General Directorate of Fine Arts, supposedly the latter's director general, Gratiano Nieto, complained to Cajide.⁵² Unfortunately for Areán's aspirations of perfect collaborative unity, there is significant evidence that other inter-governmental initiatives in the arts were also fraught with tensions, turning what was supposed to be a frequent practice into only a few jointly-sponsored exhibitions.

How should we understand the private-state collaborations pioneered by the General Directorate of Information through Areán? It was a clever strategy from the regime's point of view. To take a popular gallery's program meant that the state could benefit from someone else's initial planning, someone else's direct personal connections with artists, and furthermore, the cultural cachet that the private gallery's presence inspired. But what would a private gallery derive from its participation in official events? While there may have been some reluctance on the part of a gallerist to eschew regime attention, it seems that such state-private collaborations were initially agreed upon with each party convinced of the good arrangement. In the case of Metras, about whom the most is known, Areán had already been writing for his magazine before

⁵² Memo from Carlos Areán to Carlos Robles Piquer, December 12, 1963, Box 17974, Folder: Director General de Información, (03)49.3, AGA.

either was in their position as of 1962, and Metras had worked with regime projects in the past. It seems likely that Metras saw state collaboration as a boon to his fledgling business. Metras had been established in the art world in general, but having one's own gallery needed a constant stream of funds and a permanent clientele to succeed. Thus, Metras may have decided that early collaboration with the state would help ensure a secure footing in Franco's Spain. Not only were the artists he represented being showcased to a wider audience with the potential for more sales – presumably visitors to the Atheneum could arrange with Metras to purchase one of the works they had seen once the exhibition had finished – but the relationship with the state may have signaled to Metras a long future of state patronage. Additionally, it is clear that Metras and Areán became friends, and beyond working relations, Areán answered personal favors for Metras.⁵³

In the case of galleries with whom Areán had less of a prior connection, such as the Ivan Spence, I think it would be wrong to deny completely any level of wanting to curry favor with the regime, but even in this case, Spence himself seemed happy to collaborate, seeing it as good press that some of the artists he represented would have works shown around a greater array of Spanish cities and abroad in the case of *Pintores extranjeros*. Like Metras, Spence was also brand new in his position, trying to operate a gallery in an improving, but still uncertain art market. Given Areán's already discerning nature about the galleries he would approach, and the short-lived nature of this phase of collaboration, the examples here demonstrate that such collaborations were deemed equally beneficial to both parties – at least initially.

⁵³ Letter from Metras to Areán, October 24, 1963, Box 17973, Folder: 1963, Artes Plásticas y Audiovisuales, Correspondencia M-Z, (03)49.3, AGA, in which he asks Areán to recommend one of his former employees for a job within Malaga's provincial office of the MIT. Areán responded to say that it had been taken care of: Letter from Areán to Metras, November 11, 1963, Box 17973, Folder: 1963, Artes Plásticas y Audiovisuales, Correspondencia M-Z, (03)49.3, AGA.

Perhaps if such regime-private collaborations were deemed by the state to be a resounding success, with Metras, for example, pleading to be let out of such an arrangement, we could conclude that the regime utilized strongarm tactics to keep gallerists in line. What actually happened, however, is that after about only a year and a half of collaboration between Areán and the Galería Rene Metras, this close partnership dissipated with both parties seemingly glad to be free of one another. The state may have had what it believed was a great idea that would make exhibition planning easier, but the opposite appears to have been true. Correspondence between Areán and Metras over the course of 1962 and 1963 reveals a slew of problems large and small and continual headaches on the part of all involved. From Metras' point of view, there was not only an excessive amount of bureaucratic red tape, but also extreme budgetary scrupulousness. In one instance, a Tàpies lithograph from the gallery was lost when it was in the hands of the MIT, and because there was no money left in the budget to acquire artworks, nor would it look good to admit to losing a valuable print, Areán had to concoct a bureaucratically-sanctioned plan to pay Metras back by creating a falsified invoice, paying the gallerist instead for "mounting an exhibition."⁵⁴

Beyond this scenario, the shared correspondence points to the difficulties of merging the relatively flexible private sector with the rigid bureaucratic structures of the regime, especially with regard to the state's printed exhibition materials. After the Hernández Pijuan exhibition at the Galería Metras was to debut as an MIT exhibition held at the Círculo de la Amistad in Cordoba on May 6, 1963, letters from as late as the end of April show Areán pleading with Metras to send the required images and texts for the exhibition catalog, and even the artworks

⁵⁴ The plan is revealed in: Letter from Carlos Areán to René Metras, September 25, 1963, and Letter from René Metras to Carlos Areán, October 16, 1963, both in Box 17973, Folder: 1963, Artes Plásticas y Audiovisuales, Correspondencia M-Z, (03)49.3, AGA.

themselves.⁵⁵ Later in August of this year, Areán became frustrated with Metras for sending along different images than what had previously been decided for the Fautrier exhibition catalog, explaining the nuances of how the budgeting of each catalog had to be undertaken months in advance, foreclosing the possibility of last-minute changes.⁵⁶ Despite these admonitions, late changes and rushed service meant that Areán had to spend 45,000 pesetas on the Fautrier catalog, more than double the budgeted amount.⁵⁷ While it may seem that publishing woes would not be enough to dismantle such a partnership, it appears that it was precisely these pragmatic matters that discouraged future collaborations.

While the alliance between Metras and Areán did not spell the end of all future collaborations the latter would forge with private galleries, it did greatly temper Areán's excitement over what such partnerships would accomplish. After Areán's feverish organizing in 1963, which would carry over into exhibitions that year and into 1964, the level of collaborations with private entities greatly declined, with more one-off individual collaborations, rather than a complete cooption of an entire gallery's season. Even though this aspect of Areán's new approach did not continue as it began, it inaugurated the point after which the MIT and other state entities paid more attention to the arts of the private sector, and started to see galleries as valuable entities who were potential conduits to accessing the artwork it wanted for their own official programming.

Thus, in sum, it is by zooming in on the state-private collaborations inaugurated by Areán that we can make several important conclusions about the regime's changing attitudes with

⁵⁵ Letter from Carlos Areán to Rene Metras, April 22, 1963, Box 17973, Folder: 1963, Artes Plásticas y Audiovisuales, Correspondencia A-L, (03)49.3, AGA.

⁵⁶ Letter from Carlos Areán to René Metras, August 24, 1963, Box 17973, Folder: 1963, Artes Plásticas y Audiovisuales, Correspondencia M-Z, (03)49.3, AGA.

⁵⁷ Letter from Carlos Areán to René Metras, September 9, 1963, Box 17973, Folder: 1963, Artes Plásticas y Audiovisuales, Correspondencia M-Z, (03)49.3, AGA.

respect to the private sector at this time. Very different from the state's hands-off attitude before 1957, the decade or so afterward is characterized by the regime taking more interest in the activities of the private sector. Finding itself increasingly out of touch with what artists wanted, and watching the private sector outdo it in terms of attracting artists, the MIT turned its attention toward creating concrete policy to try to seamlessly slide into relations with private art galleries. It is clear that in the beginning, Areán believed that collaborating with him and his office would be such a benefit to artists and gallerists, that he would not need to do much to incentivize their participation. While some gallerists initially agreed to the collaborations, they clearly started to see that they would not benefit from them. The fact that Areán's collaborations did not last beyond what was essentially a trial period both highlighted the voluntary nature of his arrangements, as well as his overestimation of the extent to which private art galleries would find working with the regime worthwhile. Art galleries were able to keep their autonomy during this period, but it was largely the result of Areán's campaign not working as planned. In other words, galleries did not purposefully sabotage their relationships with Areán's department, but it became clear to all involved that the flexibility of the private sector proved incompatible with the rigidity of the regime's bureaucratic structures. Fraga – and Areán and other MIT officials by extension – did not rule by repression. Instead, they naively believed that others should be honored by their leadership, guidance, and connections.

Conclusion

Private art galleries in early Francoist Spain set the precedent for being cultural promoters, acting as venues for the visual arts that the regime was not in a position to provide. The Galería Biosca established an environment friendly to regime collaboration, publicizing itself as able to take on projects that would also benefit the regime's image. The Galería Clan and

Buchholz, both attracting new talent and avant-garde trends, garnered popularity and showed the regime that it too could benefit from supporting such styles. When Tomás Seral of the Galería Clan entered the world of publishing, he set a model for the promotion of art galleries, done even when there were relatively few exhibition houses.

Beginning in the late 1950s, a new profusion of galleries entered Madrid's art scene, facilitated by the dramatic changes to the state's economic policy. Efforts by private arts galleries to attempt to expand Madrid's art scene coincided with the MIT's governmental reform and the ministry's new policy measures which directly stipulated more collaboration with private entities. Magazines such as *Artes* under Isabel Cajide were there to capture the burgeoning arts scene, while simultaneously documenting the concern that the domestic arts milieu was being left in the dust of the efforts to popularize Spanish artists abroad. Despite initially seeming contradictory, the fact that the magazine was both supportive and critical of regime efforts reveals the deeply intertwined identities of the magazine's authors and contributing artists, but also the interconnectedness of all of the government figures and private civilians involved in the arts during Franco's Spain at this time. Officials and private citizens of the arts community had both come to recognize that the lack of interest in the domestic arts scene by the arts apparatus would likely come to have negative implications for Franco's Spain at large. Representatives from all points of view worried that Spanish artists would emigrate *en masse*, refuse to participate in official arts events, or worse – come to oppose the regime entirely.

Thus, with Fraga at the helm, the MIT promulgated a new emphasis on collaborations and cultural promotion. As the head of his own department, Areán felt the regime needed a way to ensure its continued knowledge of artistic developments, while also making connections with artists and arts purveyors, a facet of the MIT's policy that fit with the ministry's overall interest

in better collecting and disseminating information and intel about individuals and institutions. Areán is the first regime figure who should be given credit for starting to pay more attention to the domestic arts scene, although the multiple roles he played and the very large number of projects with which he was involved demonstrate that he wanted to be able to control and direct the arts, not only innocently champion them. As became clear with his hyperbolic words to Fraga, Areán was on a quest to ensure that Spain was an ideal country in which to create art, meant to compete with Paris. He wanted to show the world that Spain could be a center for the arts, not just an exporter of Spanish artists. But rather than creating a government-sponsored financial support system for private arts venues, or sponsoring truly mutually-beneficial collaborative efforts, the General Directorate of Information called for more incursion into private affairs. The regime wanted to retain the foothold it had once maintained in the world of private arts institutions, when it had been invited in with open arms, and attempted to attract artists back into its initiatives.

When Areán assumed the head of the Sección de Artes Plásticas y Audiovisuales, he was as of October 1962 free to exercise his government-private collaborations, with Barcelona's Galería Metras as his first test case. While such a partnership seemed as though it would be beneficial, it is undeniable that Areán was able to benefit most from the deal. He was able to use Metras' pre-designed exhibitions at the exhibition rooms of the Madrid Atheneum, as well as for the traveling exhibitions of the MIT. Metras does not seem to have gained anything in the end, and it is even possible that the gallerist faced derision by the ever-increasing number of artists who started to withhold their participation in regime events around this time. In addition, the documentary record has shown that the governmental bureaucracy did not allow for easy dealings with private business; the lack of these continuing collaborations revealed that the

regime was too regimented in budget and planning for the world of private galleries. In many ways, then, regime collaborations with private galleries were incompatible. This perhaps explains why so many official figures who worked for galleries did so as a side project or after a government career.⁵⁸

Even though regime-private collaborations did not work as Areán had planned, his campaign still set the tone for how the regime would act toward the private sector from then on – a combination of something to be studied, something to emulate, and something that was up for the taking. Thus, the shift from the early Franco period’s permissiveness to the 1960s intrusion represents an important moment in Spanish cultural and artistic life for two reasons. For the regime, it inaugurated its entry into private artistic life as more than a mere spectator, in which it began to see itself as a domestic cultural promoter. From the point of view of artists and gallerists, they came to recognize the potential of losing the little autonomy they had in the private sector. I pick up this theme in the next chapter, where I trace how as of the late 1960s the regime would come to see art galleries as politically suspect.

⁵⁸ In 1957, for example, the Urbis construction company in Madrid founded an art gallery of the same name, and while it remained a private endeavor, it was first run by ICH curator Luis González Robles. Then, in 1959, members of Opus Dei opened the Galería Neblí, and while it was staffed by figures who had close ties with the government, it was not directly incorporated into an official budget. Secretary of the Museo Nacional de Arte del Siglo XIX, Joaquín de la Puente, opened the Tau Gallery in May of 1955, while Eduardo Lloset, who had been the director of the Museo Nacional de Arte Moderno, directed the Galería Mayer. Alarcó, “Historia de las galerías de arte,” 258 and 263.

Chapter 4 – Art Galleries in Franco’s Spain (II): The Proliferation of Civil Society and Regime Suspicion

In April of 1972, the Ministry of Information and Tourism issued a report called *Tendencias conflictivas en cultura popular (Problem Trends in Popular Culture)* in which officials expressed concern about the increasing levels of dissent among intellectuals and visual artists. Issued at the time of Manuel Fraga’s successor, Alfredo Sánchez Bella, the report’s authors blamed the former for the laxity of his censorship policies and portrayed an atmosphere in which anti-regime personalities and ideas had completely infiltrated intellectual and artistic life. In a section of the report dedicated exclusively to the fine arts, three points were highlighted: 1) that “rooms for displaying paintings” (*salas de pintura*) were being used as spaces for political meetings; 2) that anti-regime topics were showing up in “paintings and other arts”; and 3) that financial support had been given for anti-regime exhibitions. This short list was then followed by the names of eight painters (Francisco Álvarez, Francisco Cortijo, Chumi Chumez [José María Castrillo], Juan Genovés, Daniel Gil, Josep Guinovart, Manuel Millares, and Antonio Saura) and one musician (Luis de Pablo) identified as “problem persons” (*personas conflictivas*).¹ Furthermore, an appendix to the report included a full list of all intellectuals identified as “politically troublesome,” which also included the names of several art critics and curators such as Vicente Aguilera Cerni, Ángel Crespo, Fernando Chueca, José María Moreno Galván, and sculptor Pablo Serrano.²

¹ *Tendencias conflictivas en cultura popular*, MIT report dated April 1972, reproduced in full in the appendix of: Pere Ysàs, *Disidencia y subversión: La lucha del régimen franquista por su supervivencia, 1960-1975* (Barcelona, Crítica, 2004), 242.

² *Ibid.*, 245-247.

This report – less of an example of impressive intel and more a statement of the obvious³ – was indicative of the MIT’s new attitudes toward private art galleries that began to coalesce among regime higher-ups as of the governmental reorganization of October 1969. On the one hand, this report correctly noted that some artists and intellectuals of the early 1970s had started to express their anti-regime ideas more overtly, and that some art galleries were used as spaces for political meetings.⁴ On the other hand, there are many ways in which the report is far less reflective of the actual “problem trends” that represented a challenge to the regime, and much more illustrative of an official narrowly-defined understanding of what political dissidence looked like. In order to understand the shift in the regime’s attitudes from galleries as sites of potential collaboration earlier in the decade, to dens of anti-Francoist organizing by the latter part of the 1960s, it is necessary to explore the growth of private galleries as sites of civil society at this same time. Despite what the regime believed, the artistic advocacy made possible by the communities that formed around art galleries was not exclusively political opposition.

In this chapter, I explore the most conflictive phase of regime-gallery relations during the final period in late Francoist Spain, from 1969 until the late 1970s, characterized by robust civil society mobilization in general and vibrant and wide-ranging artistic advocacy among the Spanish artistic community. Private art galleries, rapidly increasing in number at this time, are an

³ The artists and art critics named in the report were so openly and obviously against the political project of the regime that every member of the arts apparatus would have been able to name them off the top of their heads. For example, by the time this report came out, José María Moreno Galván had been arrested more than once for having given unauthorized talks, for which he received fines that he refused to pay. Antonio Saura and Juan Genovés had each gone out of their way to express their dissatisfaction with the regime on multiple occasions. In other words, it’s not as though Francoist state intelligence forces had worked tirelessly to discover the true identities of political dissidents working secretly against the regime; these figures had outed themselves.

⁴ In fact, beyond only private galleries, even the Madrid and Barcelona Atheneums, still officially under MIT control, were now both listed specifically as places in which “subversive meetings” took place. “V. Centros de Cultura,” *Tendencias conflictivas* in Ysàs, *Disidencia y subversión*, 243.

important part of this story because of the healthy communities that formed around them.⁵ In order to demonstrate the shape and texture of the artistic advocacy emanating from private art galleries, I focus on the Galería Juana Mordó and the Galería Redor of Madrid. At the same time, I map a shifting dynamic that took place within the MIT from the latter half of the Fraga years into the Sánchez Bella period, in which new MIT leaders tried to address what they saw as the problems caused by the laxity of Fraga's policies. Even after Fraga's dismissal, Carlos Robles Piquer and Carlos Areán, for example, retained their positions, although their specific national and regional artistic initiatives faded into the background and are no longer relevant to this story. In other words, this chapter is not about how the arts apparatus of the MIT under the two Carloses continued to craft art policy, but rather it is about how the MIT's overall approach adopted by Sánchez Bella ensured that surveillance, information gathering, and policing started to investigate cultural pursuits in response to continued artistic advocacy.

Lastly, the final goal of this chapter is to explore the political crisis of the regime through the lens of art policy, especially regarding the attempts to monitor the activities of private art galleries. In so doing, we see the pattern that while the regime perceived external actors as the biggest threat to its legitimacy, it was actually an internal lack of coordination, ineffective censorship policies, and an uneven application of them, that really spelled disaster. As the regime ineptly tried to control art galleries' activities by demanding that they were of a strictly commercial nature, another actor emerged in this period – domestic right-wing terrorists – whose attacks on private art galleries and bookstores were waved off as inconsequential by authorities.

⁵ From late 1972 and lasting a year, the Spanish press continually reported on the art gallery "boom" in Madrid. In four years, the number of art galleries in the Spanish capital more than tripled, with approximately 30 art galleries reported in the fall of 1968, and 117 at the same time in 1972. Barcelona also experienced its own gallery "boom." See, for example: "Encuesta: «Boom» artístico en Madrid," *ABC* (suplemento semanal), September 16, 1973, 29-33.; Jacinto López Gorge, "El "boom" de las salas de arte," *La Estafeta Literaria* no. 504, November 15, 1972: 20; and for Barcelona: Jaume Vidal Oliveras, *Galerismo en Barcelona, 1877-2013: El sistema, el arte, la ciudad* (Madrid: Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte, 2013), 131.

The lack of attention to this matter further convinced art gallerists that the state would never have their best interests in mind. Despite being a contentious period with increased scrutiny from the MIT and Francoist state security forces, private art galleries remained sites of diverse civil society important to community formation and artistic experimentation.

Private Art Galleries as Sites of Civil Society in Late Francoist Spain

Private art galleries in Franco's Spain occupy a categorization beyond being only private-sector motors of capitalism in the arts. They were sites around which communities of artists, arts critics, gallerists, and intellectuals were drawn together, and then who used their affiliations with one another to advance the kind of visual arts milieu in which they wanted to live. In fact, galleries' importance as sites of community formation and artistic advocacy is all the more pertinent when taking into account the context of the dictatorial regime that limited opportunities for formal association. As I will demonstrate, it was almost as though art galleries served as de facto artists' associations. Without necessarily even thinking about the associational element initially, people could gather freely at art galleries for much of the years of the dictatorship without question for all of the legitimate reasons associated with such a business: exhibitions, meetings, and projects. What I have seen is the great profusion of artists who found ways to join together initially because of an art gallery, but who would then come together to act in the name of artistic advocacy, by taking steps to articulate their need to have a say in their own educational and professional opportunities and societal standing.

Of course, art galleries had already been places of community formation and arts promotion before the 1960s, as I demonstrated in the last chapter. Even when their numbers were very few in the 1940s, galleries (mainstream and avant-garde alike) started to attract communities of artists, art critics, and art collectors. As I will show throughout this chapter, the

1960s was a crucial decade for the intensification of this kind of community formation, which we can see with the many examples of artists helping one another get new projects off the ground, hosting an exhibition in the wake of a beloved artist's death, staging a sit-in at the Prado Museum, or even trying to widen the aesthetic opportunities for artists by pioneering new forms of conceptual art.

The case studies of the Galería Juana Mordó and the Galería Redor each exemplify a distinct key aspect of the cultivation of artistic advocacy in this final period in late Francoist Spain. The communities that emerged because of the galleries are evidence of a robust civil society, and in both cases, such communities promulgated forms of artistic advocacy that served primarily to build up networks of solidarity. As explained in the Introduction, community-building is a realm of civil society activity that we should envisage as taking place along a “horizontal” axis, in contradistinction to the “vertical” axis of civil society activity that attempts to enact change in the official views and policies of the arts apparatus.⁶ Thus, while the Mordó and Redor are key examples of the former, we shall see that as these communities grew more active, their horizontal lines grew thicker, allowing them to gain height along the vertical axis in that manner. In other words, while the galleries themselves were not the foremost sites of “vertical” advocacy, there nevertheless existed instances of it, and furthermore, many of the artists associated with both of the galleries were members of the Asociación de Artistas Plásticos (AAP), and would engage in “vertical” artistic advocacy through that channel (as will become apparent in the following two chapters).

⁶ The categorization of these two directional axes comes from a discussion of differing kinds of citizenship. See: Birte Siim, *Gender and Citizenship: Politics and Agency in France, Britain and Denmark* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) and has been applied to Spanish civil society in Pamela Radcliff, “Social Movements, Democratic Transition, and Citizenship: Spain in the 1970s” in *Performing Citizenship: Social Movements around the Globe*, ed. Inbal Ofer and Tamar Groves (New York: Routledge, 2016), 18.

The Galería Juana Mordó and the Galería Redor each represented distinct artistic communities, with the former as an example of a traditional gallery that represented well-known artists, while the latter was a counter-cultural experimental art space of then largely unknown figures. Mordó got her start at the Galería Biosca in 1958, and even before she opened her own gallery five and a half years later, represented many of Spain's up-and-coming artists at a time of their increasing renown, including the artists of the El Paso group. Her own eponymously named gallery became a veritable institution in Spain's cultural life with a tight-knit community formed around it. In the case of the person of Juana Mordó, I will also argue that her actions toward convincing artists not to participate in certain official events at least started along the vertical axis. Her story is very directly related to the making of artistic advocacy and art policy in that she nimbly navigated the regime's requests for her artists' participation, carving out the space and setting boundaries that would make it possible for her gallery to retain an extremely high degree of autonomy.

Whereas the case study of the Galería Juana Mordó represents one version of artistic advocacy in modeling how the private sector took it upon itself to cultivate an art world parallel to official initiatives, the story of the Galería Redor will model another. The story of the non-traditional Galería Redor will serve to explicate a new attitude that emerged in the arts in Spain of the late 1960s and early 1970s: one that saw experimental artistic praxis as a direct function of leftist political theory. The Galería Redor was a basement-level counter-cultural space that pioneered experimental, non-hierarchical, and non-commercial art, often with very openly oppositional messages. The Redor's founders saw the gallery as equal parts printmaking workshop and art exhibition space, and while they did not use the project of the gallery itself to directly combat the authoritarian political project of the regime, they were exactly the type of

political dissidents about whom the regime was concerned, even allowing for clandestine political meetings to take place at the gallery. Yet, the gallery flew under the radar of the authorities while other far more innocuous locales were targeted instead.

Despite the fact that Mordó's gallery was traditional in its business practices, and did seek to earn a profit, for reasons that I explain in the Introduction, I subscribe to a definition of civil society that prioritizes the ability to people to gather legally and publicly, in which the private market is not a primary factor. The reasons regime figures and artists were attracted to Mordó was not due to the gallery as a profit-earning business; what officials wanted were Mordó's connections to the very artists they wished would participate in their exhibitions. In the case of the Redor, as will become clear, as a counter-cultural, alternative space, the gallery did not function as a traditional business at all. One a mainstream gallery and the other not, each of these rather different private arts institutions managed to attract artistic communities engaged in artistic advocacy, with a continued belief in the need to create for themselves the kinds of artistic opportunities they wanted to see available.

From Fraga to the “Bunker”: A Turning Point in Art Policy

Art galleries in Franco's Spain were able to retain a fair amount of autonomy from officialdom throughout the dictatorship, although the reasons why are different in the previous periods compared to the one treated in this chapter. As discussed in the previous chapter, until the late 1950s, neither the arts apparatus nor the regime at large demonstrated the desire to have a controlling voice in the activities of art galleries. Then, beginning in the late 1950s, the MIT started to become concerned with the need to continue to attract artists, setting in motion the writing of policies that sought a more direct control in the affairs of the private sector. Even despite the MIT's 1958 policy explaining its willingness to work with oppositional artists to keep

them in the regime's fold, they were nevertheless turning away.⁷ When Carlos Areán's plan failed to consolidate into a longstanding one, galleries went about their activities in the private sector without interference. As of the late 1960s, as I will demonstrate, the regime saw galleries as a lost cause; the MIT and the organs of state security looked on private art galleries as suspect. Under the new leadership, private galleries as a category were no longer seen as valuable cultural contributors, but rather, as politically untrustworthy centers of anti-Francoist proliferation. The act of actually trying to monitor galleries' activities through a new policy of allowing only those of a commercial nature, however, will prove to be counterproductive and ineffectual, leaving galleries still largely autonomous, albeit at greater risk of transgressing the new censorship measures.

In looking closely at the relationship between the state and private art galleries in this final period of the regime, even though the dynamic between the two became more contentious, the upshot is that it still fails to fit the standard narratives of either "liberalization" or "repression." The broad spectrum of artistic advocacy likewise makes it impossible always to characterize an individual or group as being a collaborator or opponent. For example, in the first case, the MIT paid attention to the actions of oppositional artists at this time and believing it was out of other options, opened a new period of censorship in which private art galleries had to apply to host events. Such actions clearly belie the narrative of liberalization – of a regime slowly and incrementally loosening the reins of power. At the same time, however, I will also demonstrate that the ministry's way of applying oversight and control largely mistook the true threats to its legitimacy, and despite renewed repressive measures, was incredibly ineffective in

⁷ "Plan de extensión de la propaganda política" Ministerio de Información y Turismo, Dirección General de Información, undated (but would be from late 1958), 003/115/112, Fondo Florentino Pérez Embid (FPE), Universidad de Navarra Archivo General (UNAG).

quelling precisely the kind of activity that it wanted to stop. After 1969, the regime's overall attempts at repression had become more widespread, but the standard 'repression narrative' also does not capture a setting in which civil society became larger and stronger, not smaller and weaker, and in which even some of the MIT's so-named "problem persons" would be granted regime-sponsored retrospective exhibitions.

While never directly acknowledged by authorities in their correspondence, the MIT's real problem, then, was how to enforce, monitor, or control the visual arts – an area over which no pre-existing inspection mechanisms existed. The MIT had no real structure or aptitude for, nor even a direct interest in trying to evaluate paintings, sculptures, prints, or art installations. But one thing they could do was start to pay more attention to the locales in which artists and their circles gathered especially in the form of private art galleries, where the regime was convinced oppositional political organizing was taking place. While this accusation was not wholly wrong, the problem was that authorities conflated the legitimate activities that galleries sponsored (art openings, poetry readings, and artists' commemorations) with the clandestine political meetings in which the art gallery was just the gathering place. Thus, even if the authorities denied a gallery's art opening from taking place, this did nothing to prevent an unrelated meeting of a clandestine group from occurring the very next day. It is not as though the underground union or illegal political party was going to file an application.

Furthermore, the regime's identification of which artists harbored true anti-regime feelings in the early 1970s was almost cartoonishly obvious. Looking at the visual arts through the lens of popular culture – paying attention to only those artists deemed to have a public following – led the regime to name just a few well-known artists and critics in their 1972 *Tendencias conflictivas* report. But, by the time MIT figures tried to acknowledge these

concerns, there had already taken place large, open acts of artistic organizing in the spring and summer of 1970 (discussed in the following chapter). Thus, with the cat already out of the bag, if the MIT had any hope of containing the threat of politically-active oppositional artists, they were going to have to actually pioneer a form of policing and enforcement that would prevent such artistic advocacy from taking to the streets again, or perhaps prevent the artists on their list from having access to the kind of artistic opportunities they actually wanted to have. The historical record, however, shows that an effective and even system of repression was not applied. For example, being politically suspect was not enough to prohibit those who were authors, such as Moreno Galván or Aguilera Cerni, from continuing to publish regularly, nor did it disqualify Pablo Serrano from being invited to sit on the judges' panel for the 1968 iteration of the National Exhibition of Fine Arts, or from being offered a large state-sponsored artistic retrospective in February 1973. Similarly, Manolo Millares would be honored with posthumous retrospective at the state's Museo de Arte Contemporáneo. An art policy that celebrated an artist in official cultural life while subsequently marking one as a political danger was a consistent feature during this period of late Francoist Spain.

Any one of the following reasons (or combination of them) would explain how these aforementioned artists could both be celebrated and considered politically suspect: 1) the artists and critics were well-known enough and the regime would have been hesitant to take action without being able to pinpoint a direct violation of a law; 2) different branches of the regime were responsible for the enforcement of culture and for the promotion of it (the MIT in the former circumstance, and the Ministry of Education in the latter) and there was no concerted attempt to pioneer a singular plan; and 3) various regime figures did not really know or understand what they could do. What is clear, however, is that the path that the MIT decided

upon – to exercise greater direct control over the activities of art galleries – had very little effect in tamping down on the political activity of dissident artists in this period and served to alienate everyone else.

Gallerist Juana Mordó and the Making of Artistic Advocacy

Gallerist Juana Mordó is just as important to the making of late Francoist art policy as the members of the arts apparatus themselves. Her role at the helm of the Galería Biosca as of 1958 attracted a bevy of Spain's most renowned artists at the time, who would even go on to follow her when she opened her own gallery in 1964, cementing her status as a magnet for Madrid's artistic community. The gallery as a site of a vibrant civil society is certainly one crucial reason to analyze the role of Mordó. There is yet another reason worth looking more deeply into her personal circumstances and professional activities, however, which has to do with Mordó's direct interactions with the arts apparatus. As I will demonstrate, Mordó came to be someone who had no trouble refusing requests from Francoist higher-ups, Minister Fraga included, and by the time of Fraga's dismissal in late 1969, Mordó represented a large number of the internationally-renowned Spanish artists who were the most outspoken against the regime. Even in this period of more direct regime scrutiny of art galleries, and despite the oppositional artists she represented, she would come to promulgate events that posed no problem for her gallery while being denied at others. It is in this way that Mordó and her artists seemed to have supernatural powers that made them impervious to the regime's requests for their attention. Such credentials solidified for Mordó, throughout the Transition and until her death in 1984, the status of leading figure in both private and state arts circles.⁸ Mordó's trajectory was influenced by both pure luck and fortune –

⁸ For example, Mordó was a member of the advisory board ARCO, the international arts festival that would replace the National Exhibition of Fine Arts, she became involved with Spain's first private art gallery association as of

being in the right place at the right time – but also in her ability to cleverly leverage the circumstances in which she found herself. In telling more about Mordó’s history, circumstances, and those of her gallery, I seek to explain how all of these factors converged into making her gallery an important site in the making of art policy and artistic advocacy.

Juana Mordó’s personal life circumstances worked to her benefit in the context of Franco’s Spain. As a foreigner who arrived in Madrid in her forties, a full generation older than the “Fraga generation,” who also had ties to some of Madrid’s institutionally-important intellectuals of the 1950s, Mordó learned to cleverly leverage these facets of her life into a successful career. Born as Jeanne Naar Scialon in April of 1899 into a Sephardic family in what was then the Ottoman city of Salonica (modern day Thessaloniki), Juana was then educated in Paris as a teenager, where she lived with her brother Freddy with whom she was close.⁹ After a very short-lived first marriage in 1917, Juana married Henri Mordó, a man with ties to Catalonia, in 1928, and the couple moved to Berlin, where they likely would have remained if it hadn’t been for the outbreak of the Second World War. As Jews fleeing Nazi rule in 1940, the Mordós were able to enter Switzerland. After her husband’s death of natural causes in 1942, Mordó arrived in Madrid the following year with her mother.¹⁰ While Mordó repeatedly told friends that her move to Spain was to have been a temporary stop, when her mother died in 1944, Mordó

1976, and in 1983 she was awarded Ministry of Culture’s Gold Medal of Fine Arts. She would even operate a second location of her gallery, also in Madrid, between 1975 and 1980.

⁹ Unless otherwise indicated, all details of Mordó’s life have come from Ana García-Sípido, “Juana Mordó (marchante de arte),” (PhD diss., Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, Madrid, 1989).

¹⁰ Supposedly Mordó came to Spain with the intention of staying only a few weeks to take care of paperwork related to her husband’s death. While it does not appear that he ever lived there as an adult, Henri Mordó, also of Sephardic origin, had been born in Catalonia. With or without the Mordó family connection, Spain was not a bad place to land during the Second World War, as wartime neutrality made it a more welcoming place for Jews than many other countries. While I have not been able to confirm the detail, Mordó and her mother may have been stateless at the time that they entered Spain. A law passed in 1948, which granted Spanish citizenship to Sephardic Jews, allowed Mordó to become a Spanish citizen this same year. Additionally, Mordó’s native language was almost definitely Ladino, which would explain how she landed in Spain with perfect *castellano* despite having never studied the language.

decided to stay in the Spanish capital indefinitely. Mordó first found work for Spain's official *Radio Nacional* providing programming in French under the pseudonym Carmen Soler. During these early years, Mordó also began to host salon-style gatherings at her apartment on the Calle Rodríguez San Pedro on Saturday evenings. These soirées introduced Juana to many of the then leading literary figures in Madrid. Mordó also happened to meet future El Paso group poet, José Ayllón, and brothers Carlos and Antonio Saura during a trip to Cuenca during Holy Week of 1952 – the beginning of a long friendship.¹¹ What shifted Mordó's attention to painting and sculpture and further expanded her social circle was working, as of 1953, as the secretary of José Luis Fernández del Amo, then director of the Madrid-based state-run Museo de Arte Contemporáneo and one of the main organizers of the First Conference of Abstract Art held that summer in Santander. She met Falangist cultural figures, such as Pedro Laín Entralgo, Dionisio Ridruejo, Luis Felipe Vivanco, Luis Rosales, and was also friends with Eugenio d'Ors.¹² Also in 1953, Mordó was the president of the inter-departmental *I Exposición Internacional de Escultura al Aire Libre*.¹³ These connections facilitated Mordó's entry into an even larger cultural panorama including the visual arts, with ties to both regime figures and artists.

Juana Mordó's entry into gallery life through the Galería Biosca would have large ramifications for not only her own professional trajectory, but also for that of many Spanish artists. Mordó came to work at the Galería Biosca in September 1958 when recommended to Aurelio Biosca by a fellow salon participant, Nucella Castillejos, Eugenio d'Ors' companion.¹⁴

¹¹ José Ayllón "Nuestra amiga Juana Mordó," in *Juana Mordó: Por el arte* (Madrid: Círculo de Bellas Artes, 1985), 47.

¹² Ayllón, "Nuestra amiga Juana Mordó," 48.

¹³ Mónica Núñez Laiseca, *Arte y política en la España del desarrollismo (1962-1968)* (Madrid: CSIC, 2006), 69.

¹⁴ This origin is offered by Rafael Santos Torroella upon being interviewed at the time of Juana Mordó's death. "Murió Juana Mordó, la galerista de arte que impulsó el grupo El Paso y promovió a la vanguardia estética española," *El País*, March 12, 1984, https://elpais.com/diario/1984/03/13/cultura/447980408_850215.html; then José Ayllón mentions Castillejos in "Nuestra amiga Juana Mordó," 49.

Biosca had been looking for someone who could help turn around his flagging gallery. Despite gallery management not being an area in which Mordó had any training, and initial reluctance on her part, it appears that she adapted quickly to the work.¹⁵

Mordó's relationship as gallerist to the members of the El Paso group (and then its individual artists after the group's disbanding in 1960), was one that would shape not only her entire career, but was also instrumental in kicking off a strong artistic community what would come to attract many other artists as well. The way she is remembered as having decided to support the group, however, hints that Mordó may have arrived at her decision based on pragmatism, rather than a deep abiding drive to support the artwork of her friends. Ayllón recalled that because of his longstanding friendship with Mordó, he had asked her to host an El Paso exhibition at the Biosca at some point during the 1958-59 season, which she refused. Mordó supposedly relented and agreed to an exhibition only when an unnamed person who she deemed of good taste inquired about the group, which prompted her improvised and immediate answer that such an exhibition was in the works. As the regular exhibition season had been already completely booked, however, the El Paso exhibition was held at its very end, in June.¹⁶ While this was not El Paso's first exhibition in Madrid – that was in April 1957 at the Galería Buchholz – it was El Paso's first group exhibition after several of its members had been featured at the 1957 São Paulo Biennial as well as the 1958 Venice Biennial. It was also under Mordó's tenure that the Galería Biosca became financially solvent as an art gallery for the first time since

¹⁵ This detail has been recounted by many who knew Mordó, including José Ayllón and Amalia Avia. It is also explained in: Amaya Henar Hernando González, "Un nuevo concepto de coleccionismo en España (1940-1960)," (PhD diss., Universidad San Pablo – CEU, 2016), 167.

¹⁶ Ayllón, "Nuestra amiga Juana Mordó," 50.

it opened, in which this exhibition made more sales than had occurred during the entire exhibition season.¹⁷

Mordó benefitted from the institutional cachet of the Galería Biosca, while also joining the gallery at a time in which it was open to new artistic trends – or, at least flexible enough that she could inaugurate some new ones. Mordó’s success in transforming the Biosca from a well-established gallery known for its “mild modernity” (*modernidad templada*) to a place that favored the younger generation of artists who were suddenly sweeping international art events by storm gave her considerable leverage as an artistic authority. Mordó also showed more support for women artists, and garnered financial support from new donors.¹⁸ Lucio Muñoz, Manuel Mompó, Gustavo Torner, Fernando Zóbel, Antonio de Lorenzo, Gerardo Rueda, Eusebio Sempere, Enrique Gran, Antonio López, Julio Hernández, Carmen Laffón, and Amalia Avia were brought into the Biosca’s fold.¹⁹ Mordó also continued to promote the works of Biosca artists Francisco Lozano and Francisco “Paco” Farreras, though few other examples of living artists bridged the gap between the two eras of the gallery. The changes to the Biosca’s expository practices under Mordó were not as dramatic as sometimes assumed – the gallery still continued to exhibit much of what it had shown beforehand – although the representation of the large new grouping of the artists of Informalismo is certainly that which attracted attention. In

¹⁷ Whether Mordó was responsible for the gallery’s financial success, or whether this just happens to have taken place by the time she was installed, is still up for debate. At least two sources cite the gallery as still having carried a deficit for much of the 1950s, with only the last few years in the decade as being the time when the gallery no longer only survived by selling furniture and decorations. Javier Tusell and Álvaro Martínez-Novillo, *Cincuenta años de arte: Galería Biosca, 1940-1990* (Madrid: Turner, 1991), 66. Ayllón mentions the large number of sales resulting from the El Paso exhibition in “Nuestra amiga Juana Mordó,” 52.

¹⁸ In addition to the regulars supported by the gallery such as Laffón and Avia, María Eugenia Escrivá’s exhibition inaugurated the 1960-61 exhibition season, Nadia Werba had works shown in October 1961, and women artists also rounded out the end of this season in spring and summer of 1962. With regard to financial support, Mordó instituted an annual arts contest, which first premiered in December of 1959, with sizeable prize money involved, for both a ‘Biosca’ top prize, as well as a ‘Loewe’ honorable mention, named for the prize’s donor. Santiago Arbos Balleste, “Premio Biosca de Pintura 1960,” *ABC* (Madrid), February 23, 1960, 67.

¹⁹ Ayllón, “Nuestra amiga Juana Mordó,” 52.

June of 1960, for example, the Biosca hosted a preview exhibition of the recent works of Spanish artists who had been chosen for a large exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City later that summer. *New Spanish Painting and Sculpture* ran at the MOMA between July 20 and September 28, 1960 featuring fifty-four artworks by sixteen Spanish artists,²⁰ about half of whom Mordó represented at the Biosca. This international attention to so many of the artists represented by Mordó cemented her status as a top gallerist, even though the MOMA exhibition had been in the works prior to the signing of these artists to the Biosca and was planned under the aegis of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by Luis González Robles.²¹

While neither Mordó nor her artists could have anticipated it at the time, the gallerist's decision to open her own gallery would have important ramifications for the consolidation of the artistic community she had started to form. In 1963, tensions between Aurelio Biosca and Mordó over a lack of consensus about the direction of the gallery, and encouragement from her confidants to go it alone, prompted Mordó to contemplate opening her own gallery. According to Ayllón, such frictions were caused by the fact that he, Manolo Millares, Antonio Saura, and Lucio Muñoz had all signed a collective protest letter against the repression of the striking miners in Asturias affirming their new "combative position."²² It seems certain that, independent of her own political leanings, Mordó was committed to continuing to represent these artists, even

²⁰ Frank O'Hara, *New Spanish Painting and Sculpture* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1960). The artists represented were: (painters) Rafael Canogar, Modest Cuixart, Paco Farreras, Luis Feito, Manolo Millares, Lucio Muñoz, Manuel Rivera, Antonio Saura, Antonio Suárez, Antoni Tàpies, Joan Josep Tharrats, and Manuel Viola; (sculptors) Eduardo Chillida, Martín Chirino, Jorge Oteiza, and Pablo Serrano. After premiering in New York, the exhibition traveled to Washington, DC, Columbus, St. Louis, Coral Gables, San Antonio, Chicago, New Orleans, Cincinnati, and ending in Manchester, NH.

²¹ Porter A. McCray, "Acknowledgements," in *New Spanish Painting and Sculpture*, 5. It is worth noting that because this was the era when Spanish artists became ambivalent about participating in official Spanish exhibitions, MOMA leaders and Spanish officials, including Luis González Robles, worked out a plan by which all selections of artists were attributed to the museum figures, downplaying official Spanish government participation. See Díaz Sánchez, *La idea de arte abstracto*, 205.

²² Ayllón, "Nuestra amiga Juana Mordó," 53. For more information about this initial wave of protest letters, see Ysàs, *Disidencia y subversión*, 49-54.

ones who were starting to adopt positions critical of regime actions, while Biosca, given the gallery's history of close-knit ties to the regime, was opposed to these artists' public proclamations. Thus, despite being at retirement age, Mordó forged ahead with this new project, with the encouragement of Ayllón, and artist couple, Lucio Muñoz and Amalia Avia.²³ The new space opened on the Calle Villanueva 7, just a few short blocks north of Madrid's Retiro Park, in an upscale neighborhood that was at this same time starting to see the presence of other art galleries.²⁴ Ayllón served as an artistic advisor to Mordó when the gallery first opened, although before long, a disagreement between them caused him to retreat from the endeavor.²⁵

What also made the opening of her own gallery possible was the ability to continue to represent a slate of Spain's most popular artists. Many of those who had signed with the Biosca under Mordó's leadership would follow her, such as Martín Chirino, Antonio Saura, Manolo Millares, José Guerrero, Fernando Zóbel, Gustavo Torner, Eusebio Sempere, Carmen Laffón, Gerardo Rueda, Antonio López, Julio López Hernández, Lucio Muñoz, Rafael Canogar, and José Luis Fajardo. Even the two women hired as administrative help for Mordó, Esperanza Parada and Esperanza Nuere, would make the jump to the new gallery.²⁶ It is no surprise that Saura, Millares, Muñoz and any others who were taking a more overtly political turn supported Mordó over Biosca, but also stylistically, most of these artists at this period were all abstract artists.²⁷

²³ Avia reports in her autobiography that the conversation to start the new gallery started in her and Lucio's living room. Amalia Avia, *De puertas adentro* (Barcelona: Taurus, 2020), 266.

²⁴ The Galería Eburne, for example, was two blocks away at Calle Villanueva 23, and had opened a mere three days before the Galería Mordó. The opening of Mordó's gallery was made possible because of her alliance with María Luisa Maristany and Ernesto Wuthenow, both of whom were co-owners of the building who made the previous restaurant space affordable for her and put down financial backing for the gallery.

²⁵ In his recounting of the origin of the Galería Juana Mordó, Ayllón left the gallery just a few months after its inauguration because he did not agree with Juana's deal with an unnamed Belgian, who would own or oversee half of the collection of some of the gallery's artists. They had a falling out, but after a few years, resumed contact. See Ayllón, "Nuestra amiga Juana Mordó," 54.

²⁶ Ayllón, "Nuestra amiga Juana Mordó," 53.

²⁷ Amalia Avia was the exception, and she wrote about how she would have preferred to stay affiliated to the Biosca because it was a better fit with her own realist painting style. She moved over to the new gallery with abstractionist

While an exact declaration to this effect proves illusive, there seems to have been a collective consensus that Mordó was going to be better placed than even the well-established Biosca to represent their interests.

As is true also with many of the artists she represented, the way Mordó has been remembered runs the gamut from positive to negative, generous to opportunistic. During her life, Mordó was highly regarded in the media for her role as artistic patron and as someone who went out of her way to renovate the state of the arts in Franco's Spain.²⁸ After the Franco years, Mordó represented a member of the cultural establishment, invited to the table to be a deciding member of Spain's post-dictatorship cultural life. Since her death, however, more voices have called into question the supposed daringness and originality of Mordó's artistic choices and have commented upon Mordó's personality flaws.²⁹ Regarding Mordó's influence on the arts in Spain, one scholar, for example, explained that Mordó's influence had been overblown.³⁰ Inherent in this position is the implication that Mordó only supported young "avant-garde" artists after the

painter husband, Lucio Muñoz, who was committed to staying tied to Mordó. In a move that was negotiated by Mordó herself, Avia went back to the Biosca in 1968. Avia, *De puertas adentro*, 267, 310.

²⁸ As just one example, see: "Juana Mordó representa una inquietud por descubrir nuevos valores artísticos," *Informaciones*, September 22, 1964, 13.

²⁹ With regard to her personal life, a scholar performed interviews with those who were friendly with Mordó, and while they all valued her work overall, they also revealed a side of the gallerist's personality that was meddling, conceited and vain, prone to favoritism, and could be cold towards other women. See interviews in volume II of García-Sípido. For example, the interview with Manuel Rivera described Mordó as overly meddling, concerned with artists' everyday affairs (389), while the interview with Esperanza Parada and Esperanza Nuere, two women who worked with Mordó in administrative positions at the gallery, mentioned these flaws even while clearly respecting their former boss (420). Friend and El Paso member José Ayllón's statements corroborate this difficult part of Mordó's personality, even while simultaneously having many complimentary things to say about her. He described Mordó to be a lucky prophet – somewhat opportunistic and impertinent – quick to learn, but not especially knowledgeable about art. José Ayllón, "Nuestra amiga Juana Mordó," 49.

³⁰ Francisco Calvo Serraller, "Lección de aniversario," in *XXV Aniversario de la Galería Juana Mordó* (Madrid: Círculo de Bellas Artes, 1989), 16-17. The idea that her aesthetic choices were rather safe was an idea reiterated in Jorge Marzo and Patricia Mayayo, *Arte en España (1939-2015): ideas, prácticas, políticas* (Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra, 2015), 260.

regime had already identified such figures to be desirable, opportunistically using them to ride the wave of their popularity.³¹

Independent of one's view of Mordó, what has been little discussed has been the extent to which the Galería Juana Mordó became enough of an institution in Madrid that its existence was relevant to the making of artistic advocacy in Spain whether or not Mordó was opportunistic. Operating in plain sight and representing the artists the regime wished it could win back into its fold, the Galería Juana Mordó carved out for itself a space absent of regime influence. As I will demonstrate in the next section, there is significant evidence that Mordó actively prevented collaborative efforts between her artists and the regime. That she was an outsider who successfully transformed into an insider, an advocate for young internationally recognized artists who pledged non-participation with the regime, but also a target of official collaboration, makes her case as fascinating as it is instrumental to understanding the late Francoist arts milieu. As we shall see, the case of Juana Mordó and her artists transcends the binary between the anti-Francoist art world and that of regime collaborators.

Mordó's Cunning: Securing Artistic Autonomy

The story of a foreign-born, matronly, nearly-retirement-aged savvy art gallerist who defied the arts apparatus at every turn would make a rather satisfactory anti-regime tale. Instead, we shall have to settle for that of a foreign-born, matronly, nearly-retirement-aged savvy art gallerist who carved out the space for herself and her artists to say 'no' to official initiatives, even when deciding that others were worthwhile. While there were moments of selective collaboration with the arts apparatus, Mordó used her age, gender, social standing, and past

³¹ The claims about Spanish artists as opportunists comes from Jorge Marzo, "Arte moderno y franquismo. Los orígenes conservadores de la vanguardia y de la política artística en España," in *¿Puedo hablarle con libertad, excelencia? Arte y poder en España desde 1950* (Murcia, CENDEAC, 2010), 115-129.

regime connections to her advantage to refute participation. In doing so from early in her career as gallerist, she and her artists were able to retain a large degree of autonomy in directing their own artistic affairs throughout the rest of the dictatorship.

There are several scenarios, dating even from before she opened her own gallery, in which the arts apparatus tested Mordó's allegiances. Given Carlos Areán's campaign to work with private galleries, it should be no surprise that his story likewise intersects with Mordó's. The first known instance in which regime figures reached out to the gallerist for assistance was in March of 1963, with regard to a traveling exhibition Carlos Areán was planning of Spanish non-figurative art, *Arte no imitativo en España*, to circulate in major cities of the Nordic countries, such as Copenhagen, Stockholm, and Helsinki. Minister of Information and Tourism, Manuel Fraga Iribarne, wrote to Mordó with a predicament. Carlos Areán's exhibition of abstract artists planned for the Nordic cities was highly collaborative in nature, requiring contributions from artists and gallerists, in addition to works already in the state's collection. For example, gallerist René Metras had lent artworks, and even artist Antoni Tàpies created lithographs especially for the exhibition, despite being the first artist to proclaim a campaign of non-participation with the regime.³² Of the approximately two dozen artists' works originally envisioned as included, Antonio Saura, Manolo Millares, Antonio Suárez, Rafael Canogar,

³² Areán and Tàpies worked out a plan by which the artist would send lithographs for the exhibition, as captured in: Letter from Carlos Areán to Antonio Tàpies, January 24, 1963, Box 17973, Folder: 1963, Artes Plásticas y Audiovisuales, Correspondencia M-Z, (03)49.3, AGA. It is clear that Areán garnered Tàpies' participation by promising publicity for the artist beyond just this one exhibition. For example, Areán authored an article about Tàpies around the same time that the artist agreed to participate in this Nordic exhibition, in which Areán claimed that the Catalan artist was his own generation's Velázquez. Carlos Antonio Areán, "Tàpies," *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos*, no. 156 (December 1962): 385-393.

Francisco “Paco” Farreras, Martín Chirino, Lucio Muñoz, and Manuel Rivera refused to participate.³³ Fraga asked for Mordó’s assistance:

Surely you will understand that an exhibition that claims to be an anthology of Spanish non-figurative art, and in which the cited names are missing, is necessarily incomplete. In view of this, and taking into account that all the artists indicated are more or less directly related to the Biosca Gallery, I beg you to use all of your influence with these artists so that they agree to participate in this exhibition.³⁴

To highlight why participating would be especially worthwhile, Fraga tried to entice Mordó with promises of future sales. He explained that part of the MIT’s new approach was a more widespread diffusion of both foreign and domestic arts events in the media, including television, all of which would surely “open new markets and increase the sales of all the Spanish art galleries.”³⁵ The letter concluded by explaining that Carlos Areán would visit Mordó personally, and that the director general of Information, Carlos Robles Piquer, would also follow up with a telephone call.³⁶

As promised, members of the General Directorate of Information reached out to Juana Mordó to follow up on Fraga’s letter. Just over a week later, Carlos Areán reported the details of his meeting with Mordó in a memo to Robles Piquer. Areán relayed that in response to the minister’s request for her help, Mordó had given an “evasive answer.”³⁷ She requested to speak in-person to Fraga, to be able to explain “her point of view,” which Areán believed was a good

³³ Those who were willing to be included were: Tàpies, Cuixart, Tharrats, Vallés, Feito, and Viola. “Informe para el Ilmo. Sr. Director General sobre la exposición en los países nórdicos,” May 2, 1963, Box 17974, Folder: Director General de Información, (03)49.3, AGA.

³⁴ “Bien comprenderás que una exposición que pretende ser una antología del arte no imitativo español y en la que falten los nombres recién citados, queda necesariamente incompleta. En vista de ello, y teniendo en cuenta que todos los artistas indicados se hallan más o menos directamente relacionados con la Galería Biosca, te ruego que emplees toda tu influencia ante estos artistas para que acepten participar en dicha exposición.” Manuel Fraga Iribarne to Juana Mordó, March 9, 1963, Box 17973, Folder: 1963, Artes Plásticas y Audiovisuales, Correspondencia M-Z, (03)49.3, AGA.

³⁵ “...abrir nuevos mercados e incrementar las ventas de todas las galerías españolas.” Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Memo from Carlos Areán to Carlos Robles Piquer, March 18, 1963, Box 17974, Folder: Director General de Información, (03)49.3, AGA.

idea that could lead to eventual collaboration. For his part, Areán wanted the matter settled; he was impatient to know whether he should add to the exhibition catalog the names of “the painters the Biosca has blocked.”³⁸ Areán also followed up with Mordó again a month later at the end of April, attempting to entice her with the promise of an exclusive exhibition of only her artists’ works to open in Stockholm.³⁹

While, unfortunately, the documentary evidence does not contain any of Mordó’s responses to the various members of the MIT, we know that not only did Mordó not accede to Fraga’s appeal, but she even encouraged the artists’ abstention. Already by April 28, not even a week after Areán’s last attempt to entice Mordó to participate, it had become apparent to Areán that the two artists he would have liked to include most – Antonio Saura and Manolo Millares – would never participate.⁴⁰ Then, in a detailed report written by Areán to Robles Piquer on May 2, the full tale of Mordó’s non-participation was exposed. Areán began by explaining that he had received a letter from geometric abstractionist Eusebio Sempere who, in solidarity with the other artists who had withheld their works, wanted his pieces removed from the Nordic exhibition. At this point, Sempere was the only remaining artist from the Galería Biosca who was participating, which made Areán particularly uncooperative with the artist’s request. Areán explained to Robles Piquer: “[A]s I have to leave tomorrow for Barcelona, I will consider Sempere’s letter not received. Upon my return, I will tell him that it reached me too late.”⁴¹ Blatantly dismissing

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Letter from Carlos Areán to Juana Mordó, April 22, 1963, Box 17973, Folder: 1963, Artes Plásticas y Audiovisuales, Correspondencia M-Z, (03)49.3, AGA.

⁴⁰ Letter from Carlos Areán to Manuel Fraga Iribarne, April 28, 1963, Box 17975, Folder: Correspondencia, Pintores Extranjeros, (03)49.3, AGA.

⁴¹ “...como yo tengo que salir mañana para Barcelona, daré por no recibida la carta de Sempere. A mi regreso le diré que ha llegado a mis manos demasiado tarde.” “Informe para el Ilmo. Sr. Director General sobre la exposición en los países nórdicos,” May 2, 1963, Folder: Director General de Información, Box 17974, (03)49.3, AGA.

Sempere's request, Areán was not willing to lose another artist, especially not to a wavering, last-minute appeal.

Having conferred with other regime figures, Areán then delved into a list of examples to explain what he had learned of Mordó's supposed previous meddling with the arts initiatives of the regime. In an exhibition of Spanish painting organized a few years prior by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to open in the Uruguayan capital of Montevideo, Mordó had purportedly personally visited invited artists, convincing them to send a telegram asking the official organizers to retract their artworks. Additionally, Areán reported that Tàpies had confided to him that Mordó called the artist to try to get him to refuse to participate. These examples led Areán to conclude: "Everything that Mrs. Mordó has said to the minister, to the director general of Tourism Promotion, to you and to me is therefore false."⁴²

So, how then do we explain Mordó's anti-participation stance? Did she feel ideologically committed to her artists' non-participation? Was this all just business, and she was betting that artists perceived as being against an authoritarian regime would sell better? Based on her direct responses to Fraga and Areán with respect to *Arte no imitativo en España*, it seems that Mordó pushed the reason for the artists' non-participation onto the artists themselves. It is very easy to imagine Mordó sitting across from Fraga in his office, maintaining that she had done everything she could, but that her artists would simply not participate. This was not, of course, a complete lie. Saura had been early to abstain, and he, Millares, and Muñoz had as of the prior year started to advocate more ardently against participating in regime events, especially large, international traveling events that were meant to display artistic freedom as evidence of political freedom.

Artist Rafael Canogar wrote to Areán, forthrightly explaining as early as December 1962 that he

⁴² "Todo lo que la señora Mordó le ha dicho al Ministro, al Director General de Difusión del Turismo, a tí y a mi es, por tanto, falso." Ibid.

had no interest in participating in the Nordic exhibition.⁴³ On the other hand, however, Areán had dug up evidence of Mordó's similar stance dating back years prior. This fact hints that this position was one to which Mordó was committed, although it still does not in itself reveal her motivations. So, to whom do we owe for the collective stance of non-participation? How much was this Mordó's directive versus that coming from the artists?

The most plausible excuse is that Mordó had been influenced by her friendships with Ayllón, Saura, and arguably even her regime-insider friends who were tied to Falangist cultural circles (who by this time were precisely those of the Movimiento who had started to move ideologically away from Francoism as of the late 1950s) who convinced her of the importance of being able to retain autonomy from the official arts apparatus. This does not mean that Mordó necessarily harbored anti-regime views, but it does mean that she saw the utility in carving out the space where she and her artists had the ability to make the decisions to participate for themselves. She also likely intuited that there was a window of time in which she needed to assert herself, after which she would lose the opportunity. For Mordó, this would have been good business sense, as she could encourage participation when it seemed truly valuable for her artists' careers, and recommend non-participation if she thought there was something about the way an exhibition was framed so as to hinder them. At the same time, this decision does not seem to have been motivated only by business. For example, Mordó was clearly encouraging artists' abstention when still relatively new at the Biosca, showing that it was a stance she adopted from early in her career as a gallerist, but also her many actions over the years in favor of artistic autonomy reveals a stance that had to be paired with ideological commitment toward such ends.

⁴³ Letter from Rafael Canogar to Carlos Areán, undated [but from late November or early December 1962], Box 17973, Folder: Año 1962 (artes plásticas y audiovisuales), (03)49.3, AGA.

What the arts apparatus thought of Mordó – and which collaborations she did agree to – also unearths yet another layer of how to understand the gallerist. One would think that Areán and the other cultural officials of the MIT would be furious with Juana Mordó, especially after Areán had dug up the fact that the gallerist had a pattern of soliciting artists’ non-participation in official events. She seemed to be singlehandedly steering artists against working with regime projects while leaving open the possibility to Fraga, Robles Piquer, and Areán that she would cooperate. The single biggest problem facing the arts apparatus of the regime was that it was having trouble attracting artists into its exhibitions and programming, and yet, Areán seemed to brush off Mordó’s refusal with little emotion: “In any case, I am not in favor of retaliation, given that in certain aspects and despite everything said, the work of the Biosca Gallery has been beneficial for the dissemination of Spanish art.”⁴⁴ Thus, Areán’s words imply that Mordó’s conniving would be excused because her work as a cultural promoter was to take precedence over these personal dealings.

What was not evident from Areán’s correspondence and what almost definitely accounted for his positive spin on the gallerist was that Areán still found Mordó to be personally helpful to his professional projects. While they had probably already been scheduled for the start of the exhibition season in the fall of 1962 when Areán first took office, or possibly even beforehand, Manolo Millares and Martín Chirino, and Luis Feito, for example, would all have exhibitions at the Madrid Atheneum in late winter of 1963.⁴⁵ It seemed that for Mordó and her

⁴⁴ “De todos modos, yo no soy partidario de que se tomen represalias, dado que en ciertos aspectos y a pesar de todo lo dicho, la labor de la galería Biosca ha sido beneficiosa para la difusión del arte español.” Ibid.

⁴⁵ Millares and Chirino were the invited guests of a single exhibition at the Sala de Santa Catalina of the Madrid Atheneum which took place between February 19 and March 13, 1963, and Feito would follow immediately after. In the monograph written about Millares, a note before the main text about the artists explained that the artworks had been “graciously loaned from the Galería Biosca.” *Millares* (Madrid: Cuadernos del arte del Ateneo de Madrid, 1963). With respect to Feito, he would also have an exhibition at the Galería René Metras in June, signaling a rare instance in which artworks moved from the Atheneum to the gallery, and not the other way around.

artists, what signaled a problem was not *any* collaboration with the arts apparatus, but rather participation in large, travelling international exhibitions which they envisaged as being wholly for propagandistic purposes.⁴⁶ But also what seemed to bother Mordó was the idea that her participation would be a given. Thus, Mordó's non-participation with respect to Areán's Nordic exhibition did not signal to him a total foreclosure of all participation in official events, and knowing Areán, he likely suspected an ability to win the gallerist over with time.

Over the course of the decade from the mid-1960s, Mordó would remain ambivalently suspect in the eyes of the MIT. The single document in Mordó's *Oficina de Enlace* file, dating from not long after she opened her own gallery in March 1964, concluded that: "It has not been possible to confirm whether this woman carries out political activities, although due to her artistic activities she may have had a more or less superficial relationship with individuals with tendencies hostile to the regime."⁴⁷ That this remained the MIT's take on Mordó for her entire career reveals someone who was able to operate cleverly in the context of the regime. The regime knew she was affiliated with "hostile" artists, but they were never quite sure how much to assign her to this camp. The fact that the historical record has similarly kept us guessing of her *exact* motives is likewise further evidence of Mordó's ability to carefully navigate difficult circumstances, finding a way to keep all possibilities open for herself and her artists. There is no evidence that she (or her artists) ever participated in any official exhibitions in which she did not

⁴⁶ The one instance of Mordó's artists' participation that belies the pattern is that several of them were represented in the Spanish Pavilion at the New York World's Fair of 1964-65: Francisco Ferreras, Manuel Hernández Mompó, Lucio Muñoz, Manuel Rivera, Eusebio Sempere, Antonio Suárez, Gustavo Torner, and Fernando Zóbel. *Pintores españoles contemporáneos en la Feria Mundial de Nueva York* (Madrid: Comisaría General de España para la Feria Mundial de Nueva York, 1964). I believe Mordó considered participation acceptable in this instance because there were hundreds of Spanish artists whose artworks rotated through the exhibition over the course of two years, and the art exhibitions within the Spanish Pavilion were just one aspect of a much larger undertaking. As few among many others, Mordó did not consider this occasion as exploitative of *her* artists in particular.

⁴⁷ "No se ha podido concretar que esta mujer desarrolle actividades políticas, aunque por sus actividades artísticas puede haber tenido relación más o menos superficial con individuos de tendencias hostiles al Régimen." Dossier Mordó, Juana, Box 42/8818, Folder 8, AGA.

retain a say in the event's form and structure. And, by 1970, Mordó and her artists were not shy about involving themselves in more directly oppositional activities. When students at Madrid's Escuela Superior de Bellas Artes held their own non-sanctioned art exhibition in defiance of their school's typical annual one, Mordó lent artworks from her gallery to adorn the school's walls. Additionally, many of the Mordó artists – perhaps even Mordó herself – participated in a sit-in at the Prado Museum on November 6, 1970 after art critic José María Moreno Galván was arrested for having given an unsanctioned talk at the University of Madrid. Having been in New York, and thus unable to participate, artist Francisco “Paco” Ferreras wrote to Mordó to explain the following: “I really don't want to lose the special feeling of being a team that we all form with you at the gallery. Through the press here, we found out about the ‘sit-in’ at the Prado Museum and, although from a distance, I felt totally united with the group and regretted my own absence.”⁴⁸ This sense of unity that Ferreras expressed demonstrates that artistic advocacy was also made possible because of the horizontal relations among the artists themselves, to which I will turn now.

Mordó and her Artistic Community: Horizontal Advocacy

Mordó's close ties with artists provide evidence of a tight-knit community in which she emerged as an advocate. Beyond only interpersonal relationships with individual artists, Mordó's active participation in their initiatives outside of her gallery reveals her concern toward artists' ability to exercise autonomy as well as for the domestic art scene writ large. In the first case, letters between Mordó and many of the artists she represented reveal their friendly and candid

⁴⁸ “Por otra parte tampoco me apetece demasiado perder del especial sentimiento de equipo que formamos todos contigo en la galería. Por la prensa de aquí también nos enteramos de la “sentada” en el Museo del Prado y aunque a distancia, me he sentido totalmente unido al grupo y he lamentado mi ausencia.” Letter from Paco (Francisco Ferreras) to Mordó, November 19, 1970, Arch. MOR 26 (25), Archivo Galería Juana Mordó, MNCARS. Emphasis in the original.

professional relationships. Given what was almost always a generational and gender difference, that the mostly male artists often sought advice in some capacity from Mordó also endowed the gallerist with a maternal role. Paco Ferreras wrote Mordó from New York City in early 1964 on at least two occasions after learning that she was to leave the Biosca to open her own gallery to congratulate her on her “liberation,” and to express that while he was very happy for her, the situation put him in the difficult position of needing to choose whether to stay at the Biosca or to follow Mordó to her new gallery.⁴⁹ Upon further reflection, while he didn’t want to give Aurelio Biosca the news until he returned to Madrid, he assured Mordó that he would move to her gallery.⁵⁰ In another instance, artist Eusebio Sempere, who coincided in New York with Ferreras, wrote to Mordó also in January 1964, congratulating her on the opening of her own gallery, and without hesitation explained that she should advise him on whether he would have to arrange with someone to collect his artworks from the Biosca, or whether it would just be taken care of.⁵¹ Remaining at the Biosca was not even in question for Sempere.

Artists also asked Mordó’s advice and sought her help. In the aforementioned letter, Sempere explained that he had been asked to contribute artworks to the Spanish pavilion for the World’s Fair to be held in New York later in 1964, and he wanted Mordó’s opinion as to whether or not he should do so.⁵² In another instance, when an article came out in *Time* in late August

⁴⁹ Ferreras had exhibited at the Biosca for the first time in December 1952, and after other solo and group exhibitions, had become a contracted artist with the Biosca as of 1961. José Hierro, *Ferreras* (Madrid: Galería Juana Mordó, 1976), 201-203; Letter from Paco to Juana Mordó, January 7, 1964, Arch. MOR 26 (22), Archivo Galería Juana Mordó, MNCARS.

⁵⁰ Ferreras did not appear in the Galería Juana Mordó’s inaugural exhibition, and listings of exhibitions at the Galería Biosca reveal Ferreras as still having occasional exhibitions at the Biosca, which means that there was less of a definitive break than originally suggested. Letter from Paco to Juana Mordó, January 19, 1964, Arch. MOR 26 (24), Archivo Galería Juana Mordó, MNCARS.

⁵¹ Letter from Eusebio Sempere to Juana Mordó, January 8, 1964, Arch. MOR 26 (90), Archivo Galería Juana Mordó, MNCARS.

⁵² Here Sempere explained that after having been invited to contribute to the art exhibition that would be staged at the Spanish Pavilion at the World’s Fair, he had not yet answered, wanting to consult with Mordó first. Letter from Eusebio Sempere to Juana Mordó, January 8, 1964, Arch. MOR 26 (90), Archivo Galería Juana Mordó, MNCARS.

1964 about the contribution of Spanish artworks to the World's Fair, Millares wrote to Mordó asking her to act as his advocate; he had not been mentioned in the article and wanted her to say something about this "intolerable injustice."⁵³

Mordó's actions also revealed her as someone who was very involved in the everyday lives of her artists, even in projects not directly related to her gallery. For example, Mordó was an ardent supporter of the private Museo de Arte Abstracto, the pet project of Philippine-born painter and art collector Fernando Zóbel. Not only was Zóbel represented by Mordó, but moreover, the majority of the works Zóbel chose for the museum were works created in the late 1950s and early 1960s by El Paso members, thus being a private permanent collection to pair with Mordó's promotion of many of the same artists.⁵⁴ It was a point of pride among this community that a private initiative, free of regime intervention should eventually become the focus of national and international attention.⁵⁵

The strength of the artistic community that grew up around Mordó would remain into the next decade. Mordó supported her artists throughout the summer 1972 ordeal that grew up around the creation of an outdoor sculpture park in Madrid known as the Museo de Escultura al Aire Libre de la Castellana. A collaboration between some city engineers and artist Eusebio Sempere resulted in the design for an outdoor sculpture park in the area underneath a new

⁵³ Letter from Manolo Millares to Juana Mordó, August 28, 1964, Arch. MOR 26 (57), Archivo Galería Juana Mordó, MNCARS. The article to which Millares referred was "Spanish Painting Today," *Time*, August 28, 1964, 84-89.

⁵⁴ Opened in June 1966 in a medieval-era house perched on a cliff's edge in the town of Cuenca, Zóbel had collaborated closely with artist and town native, Gustavo Torner, with collaboration also from Gerardo Rueda. The Museo de Arte Abstracto was set up to be run by artists, eschewing the standard model by which curators would have the most control over the collection. María Bolaños, "'El futuro empieza hoy': Los comienzos de un pequeño museo moderno," in *La ciudad abstracta: 1966: el nacimiento del Museo de Arte Abstracto Español*, ed. Jordi Teixidor (Cuenca: Museo de Arte Abstracto Español, 2006), 47.

⁵⁵ In a televised interview, reflecting back on the first decade or so of the museum, Antonio Saura made a statement to this effect. Paloma Chamorro, *Programa imágenes. Primera parte de la ampliación del Museo de Arte Abstracto* (Madrid: Televisión Española, 1978).

automobile bridge crossing the central Paseo de la Castellana, one of the city's major north-south avenues, at the Paseo de Eduardo Dato. A slate of artists very well-known at that time, including several represented by Mordó (Sempere himself, Pablo Serrano, Martín Chirino, Gerardo Rueda, and Gustavo Torner), agreed to donate works specially created for the space. A controversy erupted when one of the city's engineers by the name of Alberto del Corral López-Dóriga deemed dangerously heavy the eight-ton, reinforced concrete sculpture created by Eduardo Chillida. This sculpture, entitled *Sirena Varada* [*The Stranded Mermaid*] was set to be hung by cables from the underside of the bridge, and Corral refused to sign off on the hanging.⁵⁶ As the



Figure 1: Juana Mordó visits Chillida at his studio to see *Sirena Varada*. Pictured from left to right (standing in front of the sculpture): art critic José María Ballester, Mordó, Chillida, Pilar Belzunce (wife of Chillida), engineer Julio Martínez Calzón, deputy to the mayor Jesús Suevos, engineer José Antonio Fernández Ordóñez, Eusebio Sempere, and Manuel Rivera. Arch. MOR 2-3 (1), Archivo Galería Juana Mordó, MNCARS.

⁵⁶ Luis Carandell, "La polémica del puente," *Triunfo*, July 22, 1972, 12.

sculpture's placement had already been approved by two other engineers, the artists found this new about-face to be particularly upsetting, as it delayed the inauguration of the sculpture park from June until late July. That this decision was a politically-motivated attempt to prevent the appearance of Chillida's sculpture was immediately considered by all involved.⁵⁷ Mordó and several of the artists were present at both the unveiling and removal of the Chillida sculpture, which was taken in April 1973 to the Joan Miró Foundation in Barcelona.⁵⁸ At one point, several artists authored, signed, and published in the press a statement promising to remove their artworks if Chillida's sculpture was not included as envisioned.⁵⁹ While it is unclear exactly what agreement was reached, the other artists in the end did not retire their sculptures.

In addition to being gallerist, friend, and overall supporter of her artists, Juana Mordó had a history of utilizing her gallery as a venue to support artists or fellow gallerists where the state would not. When a gallerist from Sevilla had been given short shrift by Luis González Robles in 1972, at this time the director of the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Mordó jumped in to offer her gallery as the new venue. Gallerist Juana de Aizpuru from Sevilla had been in conversation with González Robles from the end of 1971 to host an exhibition of young Sevillian artists at the museum in Madrid. Aizpuru was never shy about the fact that this would be a good opportunity to showcase some of the artists her gallery represented in the capital, where she believed she could show *madrileños* that Sevilla, too, had a small but strong group of up-and-coming artists.

⁵⁷ Manuel Quintero, "Cara y Cruz: ¿Seguridad?," *Nuevo Diario*, July 9, 1972.

⁵⁸ "La escultura de Chillida vuela...hacia un nuevo emplazamiento," *Blanco y Negro*, April 14, 1973. In addition to the former and this article, see also the collection of material dedicated to this sculpture park "Museo de Escultura al Aire Libre de la Castellana" in the Archivo Galería Juana Mordó, Arch. MOR 2, MNCARS. Chillida's sculpture was eventually returned to the space envisioned for it – hanging from under the bridge – on September 2, 1978. That it was deemed safe and returned does imply that the refusal to hang the piece was likely a political attempt by then mayor Carlos Arias Navarro to keep Chillida's piece from the sculpture park.

⁵⁹ "Problemas en el museo de escultura al aire libre," *Informaciones*, July 8, 1972, and "Un grupo de artistas se pronuncia en favor de la escultura de Chillida," *Informaciones*, July 15, 1972. The artists' names who appeared in the press were Eusebio Sempere, Rafael Canogar, Antonio Saura, Pablo Serrano, Gustavo Torner, Manolo Millares, Juan Genovés, José Romero Escassi, although the author explains that there were also others.

Other than the fact that the exhibition was consistently pushed back from its originally planned March 1972 opening, all indicators seemed as though the show would still take place. Therefore, it was extremely unexpected when on April 7, 1972, González Robles abruptly changed course. He sent Aizpuru a letter explaining that he had presented *Nueva Pintura Sevillana* [New Sevillian Painting] to the exhibition committee, but that they had determined that the exhibition did not respond to the necessary criteria that the museum set for regional exhibitions, namely that it did not represent a “panorama.” Instead, González Robles maintained, the exhibition could be re-worked to include a larger number of artists with fewer artworks each, and could take place in Madrid in the following exhibition season, or perhaps in Barcelona during the current one.⁶⁰

Aizpuru remained adamant in her responses to González Robles that, despite her honest efforts, she was going to be the one to come out discredited if the exhibition were cancelled, alienating all of her artists in the process.⁶¹ Everything was already too far along to make changes to the artists at this late date; the Sevilla-based iteration of the exhibition was already on the books, the exhibition catalogue had been prepared, and it was already being advertised in the press. Aizpuru said that she wanted to take González Robles up on the suggestion that he had made, which was to have the exhibition go to Barcelona and to simply scrap Madrid.⁶² Aizpuru was upset enough about this situation that she directed her frustration to the director general of Fine Arts, Florentino Pérez Embid. The gallerist hoped that Pérez Embid would help to facilitate an acceptable ending to such an abrupt dismissal of what in Aizpuru’s mind was a fully-formed

⁶⁰ Letter from Luis González Robles to Juana de Aizpuru, April 7, 1972, Box 852, Folder: Pintura Sevillana, (03)110, AGA.

⁶¹ From her point of view, she had already made the best selection of artists possible, and if she were suddenly to announce the need for more artists to participate, she would alienate all involved; those originally invited would feel slighted, and probably no longer wish to participate, and that those invited after the fact would feel as though they were not worthy enough to have been included the first time around. Aizpuru did not want to be made to seem unreliable, unable to book her artists’ shows.

⁶² Letters from Juana de Aizpuru to Luis González Robles, April 11, 1972 and April 19, 1972, Box 852, Folder: Pintura Sevillana, (03)110, AGA.

exhibition for which she had received explicit written permission from the museum's board of directors. Having heard nothing in return from either, Aizpuru lamented the sad end to the "failed exhibition."⁶³ Aizpuru's last piece of correspondence underscored the defeated but cordial tone of so many letter writers to regime figures, explaining that what had taken place was unjust, but that if he needed anything from Sevilla, he could count on her.⁶⁴

When the new 1972-1973 exhibition season premiered in September, the Galería Juana Mordó opened with Aizpuru's exhibition, now entitled *Nueve pintores de Sevilla*. Featuring the works of Teresa Duclós, Francisco Molina, José Ramón Sierra, Juan Suárez, Gerardo Delgado, José Soto, Equipo Múltiple (made up of Francisco Rivas and Juan Manuel Bonet), and an artist known only as Claudio, the show was written up by José María Moreno Galván in *Triunfo*.⁶⁵ Galván explained that the two most prevalent tendencies represented were a return to realism, and the use of geometric forms, following in the path of Sevillian printmaker and member of Estampa Popular, Francisco Cortijo. After leaving the Galería Juana Mordó, the exhibition travelled to Barcelona, hosted there also by a private art gallery, the Galería Adriá. This example demonstrates how Mordó and other gallerists utilized their established status to prop up the work of their peers, especially helping to facilitate a suitable ending to a situation that went ignored by the General Directorate of Fine Arts.

⁶³ Letters from Juana de Aizpuru to Florentino Pérez Embid, May 2, 1972 and May 12, 1972, Box 852, Folder: Pintura Sevillana, (03)110, AGA.

⁶⁴ Letter from Juana de Aizpuru to Luis González Robles, June 5, 1972, Box 852, Folder: Pintura Sevillana, (03)110, AGA.

⁶⁵ José María Moreno Galván, "Arte: Nueve pintores de Sevilla," *Triunfo*, no. 522, September 30, 1972, 47-48.



Figure 2: Juana Mordó surrounded by her artistic community in this undated photo. Pictured from left to right: Rafael Canogar, Lucio Muñoz, Mordó, José Ayllón, and Elvireta Escobio (wife of Manolo Millares). MATERIAL ESPECIAL 6426, Archivo Galería Juana Mordó, MNCARS.

In a striking example of the private art scene's ability to step in quickly to fulfill important functions, Mordó held an exhibition in honor of the recently deceased Manolo Millares in January 1973, two years before the state could organize an official retrospective. Millares had died at the age of forty-six due to complications from a brain tumor in August 1972. Despite Millares' anti-regime stance from the late 1950s, upon his death, his widow and friends, including Juana Mordó, authored a letter to Luis González Robles, explaining that given Millares' high status in Spain, he should be honored with a formal state-sponsored

retrospective.⁶⁶ While an official exhibition of his works would be organized, it was not held until after the new site of the Museo Español de Arte Contemporáneo had opened in the summer of 1975 with Areán as director.⁶⁷ Not only was Mordó not beholden to bureaucratic structures and pre-planned budgets, but moreover, she was supported by the goodwill of the approximately forty artists – the exact community of Spain’s famous artists for whom the arts apparatus yearned – who quickly offered artworks from their personal collections and took whatever measures necessary to ensure the exhibition’s success.⁶⁸

Representing some of Spain’s most internationally renowned artists made Juana Mordó and her gallery an institution in Franco’s Spain and beyond. Mordó found herself able to successfully navigate artistic life in Franco’s Spain even before she owned her own gallery. Her personal and professional circumstances – and her clever exploitation of them – made her well suited to be a paragon of artistic advocacy in Franco’s Spain. Personally, as an older, foreign-born woman – in most instances a full generation older than both her artists and the leading regime figures at the time – she proved lovable and maternal to the former, and non-threatening to the latter. Figures of the arts apparatus also saw Mordó as someone with whom they needed to retain cordial and smooth relations, as they knew that as the gallerist of Spain’s top artists, she was someone upon whom they wanted to be able to call. While they came to learn that she was perhaps more duplicitous than she originally made herself out to be, that they were never sure of her exact political leanings only worked to her advantage to retain autonomy from the arts apparatus. With social ties to leading Falangist intellectuals of the 1950s, many of whom would

⁶⁶ Letter from the Comisión provisional (sic) para la gestión del homenaje a Manolo Millares to Luis González Robles, October 30, 1972, Box 848, Folder: Expo. Homenaje a Manuel Millares, (03)110, AGA.

⁶⁷ *Millares* (Madrid: Publicación del Patronato Nacional de Museos, 1975).

⁶⁸ José María Moreno Galván, “Arte: Homenaje a Millares,” *Triunfo* no. 540, February 3, 1973, 46; “Exposición-homenaje a Millares en la Galería Juana Mordó,” *ABC*, January 19, 1973, 115. The exhibition guide for the event itself is: *Exposición Homenaje a Manolo Millares* (Madrid: Galería Juana Mordó, January 1973).

turn away from the project of the regime, and to artists early to express oppositional attitudes toward the regime, Mordó, even if not an ardent anti-Francoist, certainly became convinced of the value in not simply acceding to every wish of the arts apparatus. That she proved to be supportive of even her most “hostile” artists at a time when not every gallerist would, also hints at her ability to cultivate a vibrant and tight-knit community of artists who more than anything else wanted the ability to create their own artistic universe.

The Galería Redor and Experimental Art Practice

The tight-knit artistic community that formed around Madrid’s Galería Redor united around the idea of a workshop-gallery dedicated to socially-committed printmaking and experimental forms of art. Not dissimilar from the groups of artists formed in 1957 discussed in Chapter 2, those behind the Redor believed that the times called for an intervention in aesthetic practices that could better express artists’ relationship with the public, but also the dictatorial state. In the authoritarian political context, the emergence of the forms of social realism and art designed with unambiguous messages of the mid-1960s was the direct result of the regime’s having latched onto the art of Informalismo. Thus, in Franco’s Spain, the ideological meanings that became inscribed onto artistic genres meant that oppositional artists were always looking for ways to express their beliefs through the form, medium, and subject matter of their artworks. The founders of the Galería Redor would, in addition to the art they created, also subvert the expected norms of the private sector art world by creating an art gallery far from the standard commercial variety. While the individual figures involved with the Redor participated in many forms of “vertical” advocacy (especially through the Asociación de Artistas Plásticos, as will become evident in the following chapter), as a workshop-gallery itself, this space is most relevant to the “horizontal” advocacy of community building and creating a space for oppositional art.

The Galería Redor was founded by Federico “Tino” Calabuig (b. 1939) and Alberto Corazón (b. 1942), both young artists affiliated with the Spanish Communist Party’s Célula de Pintores [Painters’ Cell], and members of the AAP as of 1968 and 1969, respectively.⁶⁹ While their approach was heavily influenced by the Célula’s ideas about the need for art to include a social mission, when they opened their basement-level art workshop in 1969, it was an independent space, unaffiliated with any organizations or political parties. The idea behind the Taller Gráfico Redor [Redor Graphic Arts Workshop] was to experiment with printmaking, especially with screen-printing, a technique that Calabuig claimed was unknown in Spain at the time.⁷⁰ The idea to experiment with different kinds of printmaking had already been gaining currency since the early 1960s, with the groups that carried the Estampa Popular moniker as key exemplars, as the ability to cheaply re-create designs as a form of artistic mass media was seen as key to making art an anti-elitist enterprise.⁷¹ The two collaborators decided to convert part of their space on the Calle Villalar 7 into an art gallery just a year later in October of 1970; Calabuig would assume a greater role than that of Corazón, becoming the gallery’s director. Calabuig recalled wanting a space for artwork that would not have been welcomed into standard commercial galleries.⁷² Beyond simply showing new artwork by young artists, however, Calabuig and Corazón developed a model so distinct from the norm that one journalist even referred to the Redor as a “non-gallery.”⁷³

⁶⁹ Calabuig had been a student of painting at the Escuela Superior de Bellas Artes in Madrid until the mid-1960s, after which he spent some time continuing his art studies in San Francisco, CA before returning to Spain. Corazón was, after university studies in economics and sociology, more known for his work as a graphic designer than explicitly as a printmaker.

⁷⁰ Tino Calabuig, “Extracto de la entrevista realizada por Darío Corbeira y Marcelo Expósito, Madrid, junio de 2004,” in *Desacuerdos 1: Sobre arte, políticas y esfera pública en el Estado español* (Barcelona: Arteleku, MACBA, UNIA, 2005), 134.

⁷¹ Noemi de Haro García, *Grabadores contra el franquismo* (Madrid: CSIC, 2010).

⁷² Calabuig, “Extracto de la entrevista,” 134.

⁷³ Juan Salinas, “Las «no galerías»,” a clipping from an unidentified newspaper, most likely from 1972, from the Archivo Redor-Calabuig, Arch. RC PL12_69 (2), MNCARS.

The first hint that Calabuig and Corazón envisioned something different from the standard commercial space for the sale of art was the gallery's logo: a large black and white design of a nut fastened to the end of a bolt. Harkening to the industrial in art, the space was marked as one of work and experimentation, not of paintings for sale. Furthermore, documents written at the Redor's founding to explain how the gallery-workshop would function leave no doubt about the founders' desire to divorce art from commercialism. A manifesto of sorts establishing the goals of the gallery contained a dozen points situating the Redor among other cultural institutions. The authors claimed forthrightly in their first point that the Redor's "characteristics are not the traditional ones of an art gallery."⁷⁴ Emphasizing the importance of collective work, and seeking for art to reach those typically marginalized from it, Corazón and Calabuig also wanted to expand the definition of art, seeking to host "serious experimental forms difficult to accept in other centers due to their non-marketability...that provide formal and conceptual innovations in the field of art."⁷⁵ Essentially, the Galería Redor was a space in which to explore the democratization of art, as well as its logical boundaries of genre.

The very structure of how the art gallery was financed also belied the model that by 1970 was considered the standard mark of success. While the structure in which a percentage of the sales of artworks themselves was retained by the gallery to pay its expenses, such as with the Galería Juana Mordó, the Galería Redor purposely eschewed this traditional model. Essentially, the gallery was financed by a subscription system in which subscribers would pay a flat rate annually (3,000 pesetas domestically, which was about \$43.00 USD, or \$85.00 for subscribers

⁷⁴ This and the following points are taken from "La Galería Redor pretende," Archivo Redor-Calabuig, Arch. RC 2-1, MNCARS.

⁷⁵ "...a aquellas formas experimentales serias que tienen difícil aceptación en otros centros por su no comerciabilidad y que, sin embargo, pueden aportar innovaciones formales y conceptuales en el campo del arte." Ibid.

abroad), and be sent ten new prints per year.⁷⁶ Forecast for the end of 1972 and into early 1973, subscribers were promised prints each by Calabuig and Corazón, Reimundo Patiño, Alfredo Alcaín, and Faik Hussen, who were all regular collaborators of the gallery-cum-workshop. The collaborating artists were also expected to be subscribers of sorts, although were only expected to pay one-third of the cost, amounting to 1,000 pesetas per year.⁷⁷ The gallery's reported goal was to reach 150 subscribers (which when added to the monies paid by the twelve 'collaborators' would amount to a 462,000 pesetas per year, or about \$6,600), although in 1973, it had only twenty-five subscribers and twelve collaborators. Five of the twenty-five subscribers lived abroad: four in the United States, and one in Italy.⁷⁸

So, how did the Galería Redor maintain even its basic expenses with so little in the way of revenue coming in? Calabuig calculated costs for the Redor as much lesser than the average art gallery. While he estimated that a traditional gallery required about 68,500 pesetas per month to operate, given the typical salaries of its director, secretary, in addition to rent, maintenance, and basic expenses, Calabuig suggested that the Galería Redor only needed 10,050 pesetas per month to operate, in which neither he nor any other gallery staff earned a salary.⁷⁹ It appears that any money left after paying rent and keeping the lights on went toward projects with the greater Madrid community. For example, we know that people from the gallery collaborated with neighborhood associations and sponsored printmaking workshops and exhibitions for children.⁸⁰

The small, experimental gallery was instrumental in pioneering what would have been new, relatively unexplored art forms in Madrid in 1970. Calabuig, who had become more

⁷⁶ "Subscripción Redor," [undated, but would be from late 1972 and 1973], Arch. RC 3-4, Archivo Redor-Calabuig, MNCARS.

⁷⁷ "Colaboradores de la Galería Redor," [undated], Arch. RC 3-3, Archivo Redor-Calabuig, MNCARS.

⁷⁸ "Subscripción Redor," Archivo Redor-Calabuig, Arch RC 3-4, Archivo Redor-Calabuig, MNCARS.

⁷⁹ "Estudio económico funcionamiento de la Galería," [undated], Arch. RC 3-1, Archivo Redor-Calabuig, MNCARS.

⁸⁰ Calabuig, "Extracto de la entrevista," 135; Noemi de Haro, *Grabadores*, 324.

involved not only with printmaking, but also photography, wanted to be able to stage what he would call “an environmental work” featuring sound, projections, and objects – what we would recognize today as an art installation.⁸¹ Such an approach to art as a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, while not novel as an art form *in toto*, was certainly not something that had gained much currency in the Spanish capital at the time; the Redor would have been one of the only – if not *the* only – space to visit an art installation.



Figure 3: Tino Calabuig in his office at the Galería Redor. Undated image. Arch. RC 4 (11), Archivo Redor-Calabuig, MNCARS.

The exploratory nature of the Galería Redor was evinced by its first two exhibitions, which took place in 1971 and featured the art of its two founders: *Leer la imagen* [*To Read the*

⁸¹ “...un trabajo de tipo ambiental...” One art historian has explained that the word “installation” was not yet in use. Pilar Percerisas, *Conceptualismo(s) poéticos, políticos y periféricos* (Madrid: Ediciones Akal, 2007), 286.

Image] by Corazón, followed by *Un recorrido cotidiano* [*A Daily Walk*] by Calabuig. In the former, Corazón featured new screen prints produced on large panels used as curtains, images reproduced from newspapers, purposely enlarged or repeated, and typographic compositions. The images could be violent or disturbing, such as an execution in Bolivia, or guerrilla warriors.⁸² He wanted to instill the idea that viewers should learn to question the images they saw, learning to read them with the same competency one would use to carefully assess a text.⁸³ Corazón wanted visitors to reflect on their own visual illiteracy, especially in the face of so much visual stimuli, coming from television, advertising, and print media. Similarly, Calabuig also wanted visitors to his exhibition to question their basic assumptions about everyday life. Visitors would find themselves passing through and interacting with objects in four main darkened spaces, beginning by walking through a labyrinthine hallway. Throughout one's *recorrido*, a visitor would find himself subjected to unsettling sounds and projected images. In one room, one found two seated mannequin-like figures, a man in front of a typewriter at desk, representing a nameless bureaucrat, and another figure, also seated nearby, with a lightbulb for a head. Also in the room was a refrigerator visitors could open, in which they would find a man's disembodied torso in the main compartment, and his head in the freezer.⁸⁴ Calabuig made it clear that he did not want the spectator to be able to remain passive, as with the majority of art, which he called the "ART OF ISOLATION." By experiencing one's own disconsolate walk, one was meant to understand what he considered the everyday oppression of life under dictatorship.

⁸² Calabuig, "Extracto de la entrevista," 135.

⁸³ Juby Bustamente, "Un proyecto para leer la imagen: autor, Alberto Corazón," *Madrid*, November 5, 1971, 17.

⁸⁴ "Un recorrido cotidiano: exposición de Tino Calabuig," 1971, Arch. RC 24, Archivo Redor-Calabuig, MNCARS. In this collection of documents, Calabuig very clearly explained how the viewer was meant to experience the space, as well as the objects they would see and with which they could interact.



Figure 4: A meeting is celebrated at the Redor during Calabuig's exhibition *Un recorrido cotidiano* in 1971. Calabuig is furthest to the left. Arch. RC 4 (8), Archivo Redor Calabuig, MNCARS.

As demonstrated by the very model the gallery adopted for its functioning, as well as the exhibitions and activities its protagonists undertook, it is clear that Calabuig strove to create a counter-cultural space that would re-make art into a form of communication.⁸⁵ While the gallery was avowedly an alternative space, its artistic activities and printmaking workshops were not in any way clandestine or underground events; exhibitions were openly and publicly written up in the press, and there was no attempt to hide the gallery's events or projects or keep them limited to a select group.⁸⁶ The Galería Redor sponsored a full panel of events until 1974, collaborating

⁸⁵ María Antonia Iglesias, "Por una nueva misión del arte: Tino Calabuig," *Informaciones de las Artes y las Letras*, January 10, 1974, 12.

⁸⁶ For example, in an edited transcript of a round-table discussion that took place in March of 2012 at the MNCARS, Calabuig mentioned that art critic José de Castro Arines of the newspaper *Informaciones* had always written positive

with neighborhood associations in Madrid, continuing exhibitions, including a very high-profile one of the anti-Nazi photomontages of the German artist John Heartfield, after which it essentially ceased activities.⁸⁷ Unlike the large, mainstream community of artists around the Galería Juana Mordó, the grouping that formed around the Redor was much smaller and esoteric, committed to a most purposefully alternative endeavor.

While the MIT and police organs of the state would not have cared much about the alternative artistic stance of the gallery, they would, however, have been concerned with the clandestine political meetings that occasionally took place at the gallery. Calabuig and Corazón's ties to the PCE through its Painters' Cell meant that the gallery had been used on occasion as a meeting place for the provincial committee of the Spanish Communist Party.⁸⁸ Especially given the MIT's newfound campaign against art galleries at this time, it seems that if they had been adept at locating any of Spain's politically dissident artists – other than only the most public – by all metrics, the Galería Redor *should* have made its way onto the regime's watch list. Calabuig recalled, however, that the Galería Redor was never targeted by authorities. Thus, the gallery is a key example of how civil society, in the form of the alternative spaces for pluralistic artistic creation, found spaces to grow in this small experimental art space that was not on the regime's radar. Also, as will become evident in the next section, that the Redor remained under the radar of the regime, despite participating in the exact kinds of activities it was seeking to stop shows the limits to their newfound attempts at monitoring and control.

reviews of the Redor. "Espacios de tránsito: A propósito de Redor y Equipo Comunicación" in Juan Albarrán, ed., *Arte y transición* (Madrid: Brumaria, 2012), 290.

⁸⁷ When the newly named Galería Redor-Canon reopened in 1979, it was under the director of Tino Calabuig's wife, American-born Rosalind Williams, who focused mainly on exhibitions of photography, featuring many of the *movida madrileña's* quintessential artistic names until the gallery closed for good a decade later.

⁸⁸ Calabuig, "Extracto de la entrevista," 134.

The Galería Redor's alternative approach not only probed the role an art gallery should serve, but moreover it suggested that art itself should be reimagined to do a better job of interrogating the problems of living under dictatorship. In the gallery's functioning, while the subscription system was envisioned as a "new" way to make a gallery financially workable, of course, it harkened back to the model developed in the nineteenth century meant to ensure financial viability. The drive also to be an alternative space to host the art that would otherwise not attract the attention of commercial galleries, cited explicitly by Tomás Seral of the Galería Clan and Karl Buchholz of the 1940s, was rearticulated in 1970s by Calabuig and Corazón as a way of rejecting the elitist and regime-approved interpretation of art as competitive, of art's value as primarily a dollar amount. That the gallery actually was a meeting place for clandestine political events made it what should have been, from the regime's point of view, a key site of regime surveillance. That the Redor evaded notice is probably due to the fact that the regime figures would simply not have understood the gallery's alternative mission, nor did it seem to have enough cachet to influence a wide swath of the population. While the Redor freely exercised its counter-cultural mission, the regime's perception of what was dangerous led it to ineffectually target the few galleries that played by their rules.

The Contradictions of Regime Enforcement of "Dangerous" Art Galleries

In line with the attitude prevalent in the *Tendencias conflictivas* report that more direct oversight into *salas de pintura* was needed, is clear that the MIT started to enforce more strict policies for the hosting of events at art galleries at some point in the early 1970s. This is also the same time that private gallerists and bookstore owners started to be threatened by right-wing attacks of domestic terrorism, whose actions seemed to imply that the regime's security and

policing bodies were not going far enough in restricting their activities.⁸⁹ It did not take long for understanding to permeate the artistic community that the attacks were not one-off examples, but rather part of a concerted campaign of extreme right-wing groups, which would indeed continue throughout the decade.⁹⁰ Gallerists wanted police to protect these spaces from further harm, although in an environment in which the authorities found the galleries themselves suspect, such enforcement against domestic terrorism would not arrive. Even without the threat of attacks, the MIT's new directives called for gallerists to file applications to host events, which would only be approved if such events were considered to be of a commercial nature. It is clear, however, that new policies demonstrated a lack of understanding that ineffectually targeted galleries that were simply trying to host artistic and cultural events, while openly allowing nearly identical events at the Galería Juana Mordó. Of course, in addition, a policy that required self-reporting also was ineffectual because anyone wanting to remain under the radar would simply host an event illegally, without bothering to apply for what would surely be denied. These policies only alienated law-abiding gallery owners and managers who suddenly had to contend with being under the microscope for what they envisaged as the normal course of business. Additionally, the

⁸⁹ A series of incidents from 1971 had galleries and bookstores on edge. Early in the morning on October 29, 1971, three different Madrid bookstores, the Librería Antonio Machado, Cultart, and Visor were vandalized, in which each saw its main display window broken, books destroyed, and paint splashed about – and the Machado bookstore had already been subject to two other attacks in the same year. Then, such activities escalated in a high-profile incident a week later at the Galería Theo of Madrid in which Picasso etchings from the *Vollard Suite* series (on loan from a Paris gallery) were vandalized with acid and paint. While the day after the incident the police apprehended the assailants, most of whom were in their twenties, all would be released within two weeks and do not appear to have faced any consequences. “Lamentable acto de gamberrismo” *ABC*, October 30, 1971, 8; Alfredo Semprún, “Veintisiete grabados de Picasso, destrozados en una galería madrileña,” *ABC*, November 6, 1971, 31; José Manuel Sánchez Ron, *Cincuenta años de cultura e investigación en España: La Fundación Juan March (1955-2005)* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2005), 281-286.

⁹⁰ Such attacks did not represent an idle threat, and they unified both those who were personally afraid, and also more traditionalist voices from the art world who found it deplorable that cultural products were the target of these assaults. As a result of the attack at the Galería Theo, art associations and other galleries issued statements repudiating the act, asking for a public condemnation. One such example was a statement issued by the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando. Letter from Federico Sopeña Ibañez to the Director General de Bellas Artes, November 9, 1971, Box 804, Folder: Varios, 1968-1971, (03)110, AGA.

lack of willingness to protect the perceived far-leftist spaces from domestic terrorism served to anger even the traditionalist artistic community. Together, these reasons would be enough to cause a major reassessment of the regime in the eyes of art gallerists.

While the exact process to be followed remains elusive, through the application of a private art gallery – the Librería y Galería de Arte Moira – to host an event, we can discern many important patterns. An application was made by gallerist Carmen Gladys Jerez Camacho to host a series of events between October 10-19, 1973 to pay homage to the recently deceased Chilean diplomat and poet Pablo Neruda, featuring artworks by José Caballero, and the recitation of Neruda poems. Then, on the final day, there would also be an exhibition of artworks of Antonio Saura. In addition to asking permission to host the aforementioned events, Jerez Camacho also explained that “given the threats and attacks directed against various bookstores and galleries” she requested the “protection of the police [*la fuerza de orden público*] during the time that the artworks and manuscripts are on display.”⁹¹

When the authorities of the Jefatura Superior de Policía, within the General Directorate of Security of the Ministry of the Interior made their report on October 5, 1973, they recommended that the event not be allowed citing a series of six reasons.⁹² It was a problem, for example, that the proposed events were of “an evident political character, apart from the normal commercial activity typical of a bookstore and art gallery.”⁹³ Even though Jerez Camacho and the Galería Moira were not deemed in any way politically unsavory, the event was deemed problematic

⁹¹ Document cluster found in file for José Caballero. Box 42/8796, Folder: 03: Caballero, José, (03)107.1 Ministerio de Información y Turismo, Gabinete de Enlace, Dossieres informativos sobre personas, AGA.

⁹² Report of the Jefatura Superior de Policía, of the Dirección General de Seguridad (Ministerio de la Gobernación), October 5, 1973, Box 42/8796, Folder: 03: Caballero, José, (03)107.1 Ministerio de Información y Turismo, Gabinete de Enlace, Dossieres informativos sobre personas, AGA.

⁹³ “...un evidente carácter político, al margen de una normal actividad mercantil propia de una librería y galería de arte.” Ibid.

because of the politics of Neruda, Saura, and Caballero.⁹⁴ Ultimately, the report's author stated, the gallerist could not guarantee that the planned events would remain apolitical. As for Jerez Camacho's request for police protection, the authorities brushed this off, downplaying the severity of the recent spate of attacks, including recent written threats from a group identifying itself as a Spanish National Socialist Party. The report continued by arguing that leftists were ensuring that such attacks were being greatly exaggerated in the press, when in reality "neither by their number nor by their seriousness can they be compared to other terrorist actions carried out by clandestine organizations of a Marxist, anarchist, or separatist character."⁹⁵ On the one hand, the report's author proffered the idea that asking for police protection against "fascist groups" (the words of the report's author, not Jerez Camacho) was essentially a Marxist tactic to undermine the prestige of the regime. On the other hand, the police didn't want to be seen as offering protection to what they assumed was an anti-regime event. Reiterating the declarations from the 1972 MIT report, this petition explained that "for some years now" commercial establishments, such as bookstores and galleries, had been utilized for leftist political ends. Thus, "[i]t would be advisable to...restrict or limit the authorizations to hold meetings or events in these kinds of establishments, which must be limited to a strict commercial activity."⁹⁶

⁹⁴ The report mentioned that Neruda had been a member of the Chilean Communist Party, Saura's "Marxist tendencies" were brought up as well as a long list of *antecedentes* (the word used to refer to one's record of supposed political activity), including the fact that he had signed many of the "collective letters" and had participated in anti-Francoist arts events such as *España Libre* in Italy in 1964. For his part, surrealist artist Caballero had actually been a civil servant for the new Franco regime in the late 1930s and 1940s with the VEP's censorship office. At some point, he became disenchanted with the political project of the regime and became a member of the opposition, signing at least one of the collective letters.

⁹⁵ "...ni por su número ni por su gravedad pueden equipararse a otras acciones terroristas desarrolladas por organizaciones clandestinas de carácter marxista, anarquista o separatista,..." Ibid.

⁹⁶ "Convendría salir al paso...restringir o limitar las autorizaciones para celebrar reuniones o actos en esta clase de establecimientos, que deben mantenerse dentro de una actividad mercantil estricta." Ibid.

This example of Jerez Camacho and the Galería Moira is emblematic of a larger trend of the regime denying gallerists' applications to host events.⁹⁷ Of course, these are only the locales that went through the legal channels and were denied. While of course the very nature of underground activity makes it impossible to quantify, for every application received by well-meaning bookstore owners and gallerists, there were probably several events that took place in which no application was filed at all. The report's authors seemed to imply that Jerez Camacho's application was made to underhandedly get the regime to support a leftist event or to undermine the regime by showing the need for police presence at a peaceful event. It seems unlikely, however, that a gallerist would go through the trouble of making an application just as a form of subtle protest against the state. Similarly, it seems that if Jerez Camacho thought her application would be denied, she would not have applied in the first place, and would have just gone ahead with the event in a clandestine manner where it was unlikely to be discovered.

An illustrative counterexample to the outlawed Neruda homage at the Galería Moira is the one that took place at the Galería Juana Mordó two years prior. Of course, Juana Mordó was free to feature "*personas conflictivas*" without facing interference from the regime; she had made her career out of it. Although, as such artists (Millares, Saura, Guinovart, and Caballero) were being shown at the gallery with the express purpose of selling the artworks, such exhibitions, by the regime's definition, would serve a commercial purpose and thus not be subject to this stipulation. But that did not mean, for example, that Mordó was free from all outside monitoring. Artist José Caballero had been a regular at the Mordó gallery, and had even been one of the

⁹⁷ In June of 1976, an exhibition of a group of artists, *Criada – Setenta y cuatro*, was prohibited from having an exhibition at the Colegio de Arquitectos de Catalunya y Baleares, located on Mallorca. In September of 1976, the Galería Eude of Barcelona was prohibited from hosting an homage to Spanish poet-in-exile, Rafael Alberti, which was to be accompanied by the artworks of around 200 artists. These prohibitions were collected and reported in a folder entitled "Notas informativas sobre actividades culturales: exposiciones, certámenes, festivales, homenajes, etc.," Box 42/9134, (03)107.2, AGA.

artists featured in the gallery's inaugural exhibition. In the 1970s alone, his works had been featured at the gallery on several occasions, in both solo and group exhibitions. In October of 1971, an exhibition of Caballero's artworks was planned as an homage to the then Chilean ambassador in Paris, Neruda. The exhibition was centered around Caballero's new lithographs made exclusively to accompany a book of Neruda's poems entitled *Oceana*, in which some of Caballero's surrealist artworks from 1934 would also be present, as that was the year in which the artist had first formulated a friendship with Neruda.⁹⁸ For a short time, there had even been talk of Neruda himself making a visit to Madrid to appear at the exhibition; the visit did not happen but the Caballero exhibition still went forward. After the inaugural day, a right-wing terrorist group defaced the façade of Mordó's gallery with paint.⁹⁹

Conclusion

This chapter has traced a shifting dynamic of arts apparatus-gallery relations in the final period of late Francoist Spain. On the one hand, private art galleries were loci of a growing civil society throughout the 1960s and early 1970s. On the other, the Ministry of Information and Tourism had started to become increasingly wary of what they recognized as anti-regime activity, with a turning point in late 1969 toward more direct attempts at controlling them. While the period after Fraga's dismissal has long been identified as the period of crisis for the regime, there has been no attempt to explain what this crisis looked like in detail for the artists and gallerists living through it, which this chapter has sought to rectify. The relationship between private galleries and the regime is one that reveals deeply entwined trajectories in which the

⁹⁸ Julián Castedo Moya, "Caballero," *Madrid*, suplemento cultura, October 12, 1971, 4.

⁹⁹ The details of the Caballero exhibition have been reported in Marián Madrigal Neira, *La memoria no es nostalgia: José Caballero* (PhD diss., Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2001), 455-457.

regime's actions only make sense when compared with those of the private galleries and vice versa.

Taken together, the previous chapter and this one demonstrate an underlying shift in the regime's perception of private art galleries from spaces of potential collaboration to hotbeds of political activism, which was directly proportional to the growing communities that formed around the also increasing number of art galleries. As stated, such spaces transformed from being considered valuable arts purveyors and models to emulate, to being the sites of supposedly subversive anti-regime activity. These regime attitudes coincided with a period in which artistic advocacy by artists, art students, and gallerists had started to reach fever pitch; some of these activities were being promulgated by political dissidents, but that they garnered such a following was due to the health of civil society in the form of artistic communities. While the regime expended more effort to try to explicitly control the activities that could be held at art galleries writ large, the examples provided of the Galería Juana Mordó and the Galería Redor demonstrate that a growing civil society was making it impossible for them to do so.

In the first case, the active and connected community of renowned artists who formed around Mordó created a space of autonomy and proved successful at not only turning down the official opportunities they did not want, they also held events that were denied elsewhere. The prestige-status of Mordó's artists as well as her successful exploitation of her personal traits – her age, gender, and connections – endowed her with a degree of power and security that allowed her to operate her gallery free of regime intervention. Additionally, Mordó came to sponsor events and pick up the slack when the regime was unwilling or unable to do so, cementing the gallery as an important cultural touchstone in Franco's Spain. The case of the Galería Redor, begun as a printmaking workshop in 1969, was also important to the creation of artistic

advocacy. Its creators envisioned a non-hierarchical, non-commercial art scene dedicated to creating art with a social message. Those who centered around this gallery-cum-workshop likewise explored the building of an autonomous artistic universe – not only from the arts apparatus, but even from traditional commercial art galleries.

The examples presented in this chapter also point to the limits of the regime's repressive apparatus. While the Galería Juana Mordó flew above the radar, and the Redor below, of course, some galleries such as the Moira were caught in the middle. Thus, while not all art galleries could operate with perfect autonomy in Franco's Spain, it is evident the regime was not able to stop the very activities and opposition that it so badly wanted to quell. The regime's not incorrect assumptions that cultural centers and art exhibition spaces could be anti-regime spaces, drove a set of misguided policies that turned art policy into attempted art *policing*. The state also created an environment conducive to long-lasting rightwing terrorism against private galleries and bookstores, as vandals acted without even trying to hide their political motives for the destruction. The more that galleries were targeted by official and extra-official figures, the more that everyday artists and gallerists saw their actions and beliefs politicized, and the more the artistic community was galvanized into artistic advocacy and, in some cases, direct anti-regime political action. Such mobilization, of course, was exactly what the regime had been trying to avoid.

Chapter 5 – “*Las ya moribundas Nacionales*”: Francoist Reform and Artist Protest of Spain’s National Exhibition of Fine Arts

The clash over the official *Exposiciones Nacionales de Bellas Artes* represents an ideal case study to analyze the state of relations between artists and the arts apparatus during the final phase of the Franco dictatorship. No official regime-run visual arts initiative was the subject of as much criticism and derision in the late Francoist period as the General Directorate of Fine Arts’ *Exposiciones Nacionales de Bellas Artes* (National Exhibitions of Fine Arts), known as the *Nacionales*. Dating from even before the years of the dictatorship, art critics who visited the national arts biennial recognized that the *Nacionales* had ceased to be a representation of the best examples of the new art being created in the country, and had transformed instead into little more than a competition between an insular group seeking to bolster their résumés. By the mid-1960s, the most significant issue according to the General Directorate was that Spain’s most renowned artists failed to participate year after year. Thus, because of Spanish artists’ increasing lack of interest in the *Nacionales*, and due to internal recommendations, the General Directorate of Fine Arts finally decided to undertake a reform of the event in 1968.

When the announcement of the reinvented *Nacionales* appeared in March of 1970, hundreds of artists would mobilize into a fully-fledged social movement around what they considered to be wholly perfunctory reforms. What in an earlier era might have resulted in a few angry letters to the director general, would become in this period a comprehensive and successful campaign of artists’ non-participation, after which the *Nacionales* would never recover. The environment of resilient civil society of the late 1960s and early 1970s allowed the space for the creation of the fledgling Madrid-based *Asociación de Artistas Plásticas* (AAP), the first artists’ association in Spain of the Franco era to seek to advocate for all aspects of artists’ educational and professional concerns. The reform was so unpopular that even the majority of members of

the Movimiento's artists' group, known as ANSIBA, were not in agreement with it. The AAP-driven campaign against the Nacionales would be the largest, best organized, and public example of artistic advocacy of the dictatorship. Artists successfully demonstrated to the state that its programming would amount to nothing without their willing participation.

While the AAP formally instigated its protest in the spring and summer of 1970, it was the result of longstanding tensions between artists and the arts apparatus that had been building for at least the prior decade and a half. While Spanish artists had been pushing since the mid- to late-1950s for a more dynamic domestic visual arts milieu, most of the developments to this end had been promulgated by artists and other civilian figures of the arts community themselves. The General Directorate of Fine Arts had done little to foment new national artistic opportunities, and therefore, when they undertook this public-facing reform, artists from all over Spain were especially eager to learn what form it would take.¹ As we saw with Areán's promulgation of policies toward art galleries, while done in artists' name, this policy shift likewise was undertaken with the objective to ensure that the General Directorate retained full organizational and operational control of the Nacionales.

The rich documentation that exists about the reform of the National Exhibition of Fine Arts from both the point of view of the arts apparatus and the AAP allows an analysis of each side's internal negotiations at a granular level, and also the increasingly contentious interactions they had with one another from the late 1960s into the following decade. It is a situation in which we can see clearly artists' bottom-up efforts to mobilize, and also better understand the nature of the arts apparatus at this time, which promulgated reform without democratic input. Zooming in

¹ Beginning in the late 1960s, the General Directorate would undertake a number of reforms, but most were internal measures to re-structure itself and to professionalize its personnel. Thus, from Spanish artists' point of view, the reform of the Nacionales was *the* reform of this time.

to how each side made decisions, and what each ultimately wanted is reflective of a situation in which each side's worldview had become fundamentally incompatible with the other. There was no longer enough common ground for compromise by the late 1960s for an agreed-upon reformed version of the Nacionales. That this was true, however, was only a fact that Spain's artists recognized. The arts apparatus found itself continually surprised by the AAP's campaign, unclear as to why artists expressed such aversion to their decisions.

The reform of the Nacionales demonstrates an arts apparatus whose objectives were neither to democratize their tight-fisted control over the event, nor one guided by repression. As will become evident, the arts apparatus believed that it could accommodate artists' genuine wishes without relinquishing control. Without confidence in their ability to stealthily reform the Nacionales without artists noticing that it still held the upper hand, the arts apparatus arguably would not have undertaken the reform in the first place. This high degree of overconfident authority was an attitude that the hierarchical, rigid dictatorship produced among seemingly all of its upper-level bureaucrats, but it was arguably also especially prevalent in the Opus Dei technocrat who was the director general of Fine Arts at the time, Florentino Pérez Embid. As the individual whose authority mattered the most to the shape of final decisions surrounding this reform, Pérez Embid's anti-democratic process would alienate all involved; he ceased to make use of the feedback from his own internal advisory committee, and then pushed forward a plan that likely appropriated ideas that had come from Spanish artists, albeit only in a superficial way. It was also this belief in the ultimate success of the official decision-making that made all figures of the arts apparatus wholly unable to envisage a post-reform setting in which artists were not satisfied.

While a few general studies exist to provide an expositional recapitulation of each iteration of the Nacionales, there has been extremely little scholarly attention toward the event at all, including during the Francoist period. Until recently, most of the studies of the Nacionales focused on an era of the event's history before the Francoist years, and the studies that do focus on the era of dictatorship end their studies in (or before) 1968, the last year of the event before the regime's reform.² A second category of literature, equally small, has concentrated upon the history of the Asociación de Artistas Plásticos (AAP), and therefore has told of the association's campaign against the Nacionales during the spring and summer of 1970. These authors are focused on demonstrating the role of the association as an emergent social movement and showing its actions only, and thus, do not engage with the story of the regime's side.³ Thus, even the historiography of the Nacionales either avoids the regime reform entirely, or talks about it only as an example of how the regime continued to exercise repression against artists. This chapter, then, is my attempt to rectify our understanding of the entire process of attempted reform, without which the AAP's success nor the quiet upset of the bureaucrats fails to make sense. The regime's failed last-ditch effort at reform for the 1972 iteration of the Nacionales is particularly illustrative in showing how Spanish artists all over the country, two years after the

² The classic book about the Nacionales was written by Bernardino de Pantorba, first published in 1948, and then, a second edition appeared in 1980, meant to take stock of the remaining years of the event up to 1968. Pantorba's goal was to give a straight reporting of each iteration – how many artworks appeared, what the press reported, and who won awards. See: Bernardino de Pantorba, *Historia y crítica de las Exposiciones Nacionales de Bellas Artes celebradas en España* (Madrid: Jesús Ramón García-Rama, 1980). Picking up on the work of Pantorba, art historian Lola Caparrós Masegosa, has authored the following three monographs of the Nacionales: *Historia y crítica de las exposiciones nacionales de Bellas Artes (1901-1915)* (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 2014); and, *Fomento artístico y sociedad liberal: las exposiciones nacionales de Bellas Artes (1917-1936)* (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 2015), and, *Instituciones artísticas del franquismo: las exposiciones nacionales de Bellas Artes* (Zaragoza: Prensas de Universidad de Zaragoza, 2019). Art historian Ángel Llorente Hernández also wrote about the Nacionales of the early Francoist period in his *Arte e ideología en el franquismo (1936-1951)* (Madrid: Visor, 1995), 140-157.

³ Juan Albarrán Diego, "Lo profesional es político: Trabajo artístico, movimientos sociales y militancia política en el último franquismo," *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma. Serie VII*. 3 (2015): 245-271.; Isabel García García, *Tiempo de estrategias: La Asociación de Artistas Plásticos y el arte comprometido español en los setenta* (Madrid: CSIC, 2016).

AAP's campaign, still failed to find legitimacy in the regime's version of the visual arts to such a large extent that the arts apparatus did not seek to host the Nacionales ever again.

While the demise of the Nacionales is of utmost importance to understanding Francoist art policy and artists' role in shaping it, the artists' campaign against the Nacionales is even more impressive when we consider how few Francoist institutions were abandoned by authorities due to official acknowledgement of failure. In fact, the only other official Francoist entity ended by authorities was the Movimiento-led vertically-organized student syndicate, the Sindicato Español Universitario (SEU), which the party dissolved in 1965 with the acknowledgement that most of its student representatives were trying to use it to push for democratization.⁴ Given the magnitude of this accomplishment, it is surprising how little scholarly attention the regime reform and subsequent artists' campaigns have received.

Lastly, in addition to its relevance to Spanish history, the campaign against the Nacionales was also part of a broader international pattern of artistic non-participation at the same time. In the Francoist milieu specifically, the idea of artistic non-participation in official exhibitions had a precedent when Joan Miró and Pablo Picasso abstained from participating in the Instituto de Cultura Hispánica's 1951 *Primera Bienal Hispanoamericana de Arte*.⁵ Although at the time, this was an isolated example. By the late 1960s, artistic campaigns of non-participation around the world were gaining currency among artists as a viable and successful form of protest. While the exact intellectual debt to this idea in this era remains elusive, it seems that UNESCO's International Association of Plastic Arts (AIAP) was an important source of

⁴ Sergio Rodríguez Tejada, "The anti-Franco student movement's contribution to the return of democracy in Spain," *Espacio, Tiempo y Educación* 2:2 (July-December 2015): 89.

⁵ Miguel Cabañas Bravo, *La política artística del franquismo: El hito de la Bienal Hispano-Americana de Arte* (Madrid: CSIC, 1996), 303-326.

information about artistic boycotts for the AAP.⁶ But even without pinpointing an exact origin of this idea for Spanish artists, a number of conditions in both dictatorial and democratic contexts of the late 1960s pushed artists to consider which tools they had at their disposal if they wanted to express their disagreement with museum officials, state bodies, or biennial organizers. One of the tactics that had proved successful – both in gaining attention and in promulgating change – was when artists who were seen as in-demand withdrew their art or their participation. The AAP was among good company in this age of ramped-up artistic advocacy at the very time they were forming and promulgating their own campaign. For example, many Argentinean artists withdrew their artwork from an exhibition at the National Museum of Fine Arts in Buenos Aires as a way of protesting political censorship in 1968. The Art Workers' Coalition formed in New York City in 1969 when artist Vassilakis Takis removed one of his sculptures from an exhibition at the MOMA because he had not agreed it should appear; the loose coalition formed around the idea that artists should have the right to control the display, reproduction, and maintenance of their work.⁷ Brazilian artists urged their counterparts in cities all over the world to boycott the tenth São Paulo Biennial set to open in September 1969, pointing to their lack of artistic freedom under the repressive ruling military dictatorship.⁸ Members of the Italian Committee of the AIAP, for example, had written a manifesto signed by some of Italy's most prominent cultural figures advocating a campaign of non-participation in the lead-up to the 1970 Venice Biennial

⁶ The AIAP came out of the UNESCO-led International Conference of Plastic Artists, held in Venice in September of 1952 to coincide with the Venice Biennial. Out of this larger group, various committees formed, and three AAP members attended a conference geared toward arts education in May of 1970 in Belgrade. Even before this date, however, materials within the Archivo-Redor Calabuig at the MNCARS Library and Documentation Centre reveal that the AAP was aware of the AIAP and its mission, having retained meeting minutes and agendas of several of the AIAP's earlier meetings. The AAP was clearly interested enough in the AIAP's mission that in 1972, some AAP members formed into the Spanish Committee of the AIAP-UNESCO. García García, *Tiempo de estrategias*, 69-73.

⁷ The former example and this one come from Julia Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers: Radical Practice in the Vietnam War Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), See Chapter 1 and 133-134.

⁸ Claudia Calirman, *Brazilian Art under Dictatorship: Antonio Manuel, Artur Barrio, and Cildo Meireles* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), see especially Chapter 1, "Non à la Biennale de São Paulo."

until the “fascist statutes” that dated from 1938 were rewritten; this was an incident of which we know the AAP was aware.⁹ The socially-conscious artists and art students of Spain found themselves – at this same time – facing what they considered to be a similar set of concerns about the Francoist art apparatus’ control of major art exhibitions in their country.

History and Criticism of the Exposiciones Nacionales de Bellas Artes

As with many of the duties under its purview at the start of the Franco dictatorship, the General Directorate of Fine Arts of the Ministry of Education inherited the Nacionales from before the Spanish Civil War. Begun more than eighty years prior in 1856, the official organizers envisioned the arts contest to be a forum by which the Spanish state could offer artists patronage and build a platform for their success.¹⁰ From the beginning, the biennial event promised an opportunity for the best artists to have their works shown to a large audience, and since the winning artworks became property of the state, it became a way for Spanish authorities to build the country’s official artistic patrimony. With a few exceptions, the Nacionales were held every two years between May and July within what were referred to as the two ‘Palaces’ of the stately Retiro Park in Madrid.¹¹ Until the second decade of the twentieth century, this exhibition-cum-contest was Spain’s premier state-led event for the visual arts, after which some initial criticisms of the event appeared in the press, accusing the event of conservatism. Thus, the structure and format cannot be wholly blamed on the arts apparatus of the Franco dictatorship, although it is

⁹ Documento del Comité Italiano de L’AIAP, undated, Arch. RC 111, Archivo Redor-Calabuig, MNCARS. The statement would have been authored in spring of 1970.

¹⁰ The Nacionales were created by a royal decree of December 28, 1853. Pantorba, *Historia y crítica...*, 23.

¹¹ The Palacio de Velázquez and the Palacio de Cristal were consistently described throughout the Francoist period as in need of repair or renovation. The 1960 iteration of the Nacionales took place in Barcelona, a decision made out of necessity. A 1962 report of the General Directorate of Fine Arts indicates the ‘palaces’ had fallen into disrepair and that during the past two years, steps had been taken to make them suitable again as exhibition spaces. “Directrices de la política seguida por la Dirección General de Bellas Artes, Año 1961 y primer semestre de 1962, y objetivos alcanzados,” pages 17-18, Box 869, (03)110, Archivo General de la Administración (AGA).

also clear that the change to an authoritarian regime certainly did not encourage the type of communication that made the event's reform seem feasible, nor would the event have been a priority immediately after the Spanish Civil War.

Perhaps because they were the first of their kind on the Iberian Peninsula, or because the General Directorate of Fine Arts' event was quickly tied to the prestige of the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando (RABASF), the organizational structure and overall exhibition-cum-contest format of the Nacionales set the stage for a wide array of other official arts events throughout the early twentieth century. For example, the dual exhibition-contest model was applied also to the similarly named Concursos Nacionales de Bellas Artes, created in 1922 as the industrial/applied arts complement to the original Nacionales,¹² as well as the annual art exhibitions at the state-run art schools, the Escuelas Superiores de Bellas Artes (ESBAs). While the General Directorate of Fine Arts of the Ministry of Education oversaw these arts contests, the structure proved enduring for other official entities' arts events, even those that originated in the Francoist period established by the singular political party, the Movimiento.¹³ The format was as follows: submissions were divided into different sections, each category corresponding to a distinct art form (painting, sculpture, printmaking, architecture, with drawing added in 1948), and within each section, an artist could be awarded first, second, or third prize, each in the form of a monetary award. All of the prize-winning works were then acquired by the Ministry for the state's art collection. There was, however, also a hierarchical element to these exhibitions. Artists who had won prizes in earlier iterations could only be considered for prizes in a higher category.¹⁴ From all of the past first-place winners who participated in a given iteration, a panel

¹² *Gaceta de Madrid*, no. 273, September 30, 1922, 1247-1248.

¹³ The Education and Culture Service of the Delegación Nacional de Organizaciones of the Movimiento founded its own Certamen Nacional de Artes Plásticas in 1962.

¹⁴ Caparrós Masegosa, *Instituciones artísticas del franquismo*, 30.

of judges would then vote to select an artist who would be awarded the Medal of Honor: the top prize for the event. It was not rare for this prize to remain vacant, however, because in addition to having a limited pool of candidates, a submission needed to receive the votes of two-thirds of the judges.¹⁵ While officials made amendments to the National Exhibition's bylaws often, changes were minor – such as increasing the amount of prize money, or allowing for another third-place prize to be given in a particular section – and did not affect the structural composition of the event itself.

There was less of a rupture in the Nacionales in the period before and after the Spanish Civil War than has been typically assumed because the traditionalism of the RABASF kept the event tied closely to its own artistic conservatism. The final National Exhibition of the Spanish Republic took place in 1936 under the Ministry of Public Instruction, after which the event's organizers under the new Ministry of Education of the *Nuevo Estado* resumed it again as of 1941. Art historian Ángel Llorente has explained that even despite changes to the bylaws of the Nacionales in the early Francoist period, in which the Ministry of Education attempted to increase state influence over the event, there was still a strong continuity with the earlier period because of the “endogamy” between all of the same individuals with ties to either the RABASF or the ESBA's who were members of the selection and judging panels.¹⁶ One of the ways in which the Ministry of Education's control was manifested, however, was in removing winning artists from having a role in the event. Dating from 1901, prize-winning artists from earlier years' Nacionales were included in voting to elect the panel of judges. Amendments made in the

¹⁵ Before the Francoist period, the recipient of the Medal of Honor was chosen as the result of votes by the award's previous winners. With the 1941 iteration, the panel of judges decided this top honor, as well as all of the other prizes. Within the Francoist period, the spot for Medal of Honor remained vacant in 1941, 1943, 1950, 1952, 1960, 1964, and 1968. Caparrós Masegosa, *Instituciones artísticas del franquismo*, 33-36.

¹⁶ Llorente Hernández, *Arte e ideología en el franquismo*, 141, 156.

bylaws of 1941 and 1948, made it so that the panel of judges would simply be appointed by the Ministry of Education.¹⁷

When the bylaws for the Nacionales were amended in 1952, the changes made reveal the General Directorate's attempt to take steps that they believed would modernize the event. For artists' benefit, the total amount of prize money was increased, the event's organizational committees would be streamlined, and lastly, plans introduced a new facet to the event that they hoped would attract more visitors. In order to drum up more popular support, there was also be an artist guest of honor (or two), invited for a special exhibition to appear alongside the regular arts contest.¹⁸ Critics reviewing the Nacionales also noted an "*aperturismo*" (openness) toward the art on display this year, meaning that some more works of modern art had been chosen.¹⁹ Second, the new statutes created a single Junta Organizadora [organizing committee] to oversee all aspects of planning the event, and the two separate panels (that of selection and judging) were folded into one.²⁰ These changes likely took place when they did for two reasons: Antonio Gallego Burín, as newly appointed director general of Fine Arts, likely wanted to put his own signature stamp on the event, but also one art historian has suggested that the changes were meant to match more closely the organizational structure and display preferences of the ICH's 1951 *Primera Bienal Hispanoamericana de Arte*.²¹ Even though these changes seemed like a

¹⁷ Between 1901 and 1936, the process for choosing members of the panel of judges changed many times, but artists were given more of a voice before the Francoist period. For example, between 1901 and 1915, prior award-winning artists and members of the RABASF voted to elect the panel of judges, and from 1932 to 1936, some judges were elected by artists whose works had been chosen for the current exhibition, while others were appointed by the Ministerio de Instrucción Pública y Bellas Artes. Caparrós Masegosa, *Instituciones artísticas del franquismo*, 20 and note 9.

¹⁸ Caparrós Masegosa, *Instituciones artísticas del franquismo*, 28.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 264.

²⁰ Decreto de 1 de febrero de 1952 por el que se aprueba el Reglamento por el que han de regirse las Exposiciones Nacionales de Bellas Artes, *BOE* no. 48, February 17, 1952.

²¹ Cabañas Bravo, *La política artística del franquismo*, 226-227.

major restructuring at the time to Francoist officials, it is clear that the visual arts public were not convinced that the Nacionales had fundamentally changed.

The Francoist period saw a wave of art critics offer a triumphalist interpretation of what they purported to be Spain's premier visual arts event, although other art critics continued to promulgate the increasingly candid negative criticism of the Nacionales that had already started to emerge before the dictatorship. As early as June 1943, an issue of *Arte y letras* shared the responses of eight artists and critics who had been asked the same five questions regarding that year's National Exhibition. Art critic Enrique Azcoaga's responses were particularly revealing about how people felt almost thirty years before the Nacionales were finally reformed. When asked whether the prizes awarded to artists corresponded "always or almost always" to their popularity, Azcoaga avoided the leading wording of the question to proclaim: "I don't believe very much in 'medals.' The lowly politics that 'holy men' and 'caciques' have been weaving around [the prizes] for a long time has devalued them to a large extent."²² Another response by avid chronicler of the Nacionales, Bernardino de Pantorba, responded to this question with a simple "almost never," explaining that the judges often awarded medals to their friends.²³ While sometimes phrased more diplomatically, all of the other responses acknowledged that the prizes were more of a means of political maneuvering than based on true artistic talent.

That the National Exhibition was something authorities thought about and knew needed reform became evident at a conference related exclusively to the fine arts held in 1945. The presentation given by secretary of the RABASF, José Francés, at the *II Congreso de Bellas Artes* stressed the need to reform the Nacionales. He believed that artists would lose interest in

²² "No creo ni poco ni mucho en las «medallas». La política baja que determinados "santones" y "caciques" vienen tejiendo alrededor de ellas desde hace mucho tiempo, las desvaloriza de manera radical." J. R. "Los críticos de arte opinan sobre la Exposición Nacional," *Arte y letras*, no. 5, June 1, 1943: 9, 17.

²³ *Ibid*, 17.

participating if certain measures were not taken, such as increasing the number of prizes awarded (and, hence, also the chances for an artist to have artwork included in the state's collection) and providing a greater stimulus to earn first prize.²⁴ While amendments to future bylaws reveal that Francés's suggestions were heeded for the most part, such changes would have done nothing to quell the professed favoritism, nor did they appear to actually attract more artists to the event.

Another longstanding criticism of the Nacionales was that the biennial had become only a professional credential. In an article from 1948, art critic Enrique Lafuente Ferrari explained that the Nacionales did not attract the best examples of Spanish art because everyone knew that an award at the biennial had been for decades considered a required part of the application and examination process (*oposiciones*) to be considered for a position with the administration, especially for faculty members of the ESBAAs. Lafuente continued by offering a solution. Believing that the selection and prize juries should be independent of "bureaucratic arbitrariness," he suggested that the Ministry of Education begin the practice of acquiring the artworks it wanted via its other art exhibitions as well, thereby ensuring that the Nacionales alone did not bear the burden of being the primary source of the state's art collection. This suggestion also implied that the Nacionales no longer needed to occupy such a primary role in the artistic life of the country.²⁵

The Nacionales were declining in popularity in any case, but a controversy during the 1954 incidence certainly did nothing to inspire artists' confidence in the functioning of the arts contest. After having been vacant for the past two exhibitions, the Medal of Honor was awarded to the painting *La cuadrilla de Juan Centeno* by the well-regarded septuagenarian painter Daniel

²⁴ *Congreso de Bellas Artes celebrado en el Círculo de Bellas Artes de Madrid, 22-28 mayo de 1945. Memoria redactada por las secretarías del congreso* (Madrid, 1945), 79-85.

²⁵ "...arbitrariedad burocrática." E. Lafuente Ferrari, "Las Exposiciones Nacionales y la vida artística en España," *Arbor* 31-32, VII-VIII 1948: 337-356, as explained in Llorente, *Arte e ideología en el franquismo*, 154.

Vázquez Díaz, who had consistently been one of those eligible for this prize. But this year, about sixty artists signed a letter requesting that the Medal of Honor go instead to invited artist, Hermenegildo Anglada Camarasa, believing that he was the better choice despite being officially ineligible for the award.²⁶ In response, two dozen self-proclaimed young art students and critics jumped at the chance to defend their beloved “maestro” Vázquez Díaz.²⁷ While in the end, the prize committee stood by their original decision to award the top prize to Vázquez Díaz, that they would even consider changing their decision called into question the integrity of the judges, as well as that of the well-established members of the RABASF who had petitioned for Anglada Camarasa. As a result of this debacle, Vázquez Díaz resigned his position within the RABASF, a bold and unorthodox move for a position that once conferred, was intended to be held for life.²⁸ This show of support for Vázquez Díaz also presaged the growing generational discontent among a younger generation of artists and arts professionals who found the opportunities for participation and advancement increasingly hard to come by and the official competition irrelevant to their interests.

While many of the criticisms leveled at the Nacionales were aimed at problems that had existed even before the Francoist period, the longer that the dictatorial arts apparatus failed to enact change, the more that the artistic community wondered why the new regime was not

²⁶ Anglada Camarasa was considered “outside the competition” (“*fuera de concurso*”) because as an invited guest, and not a regular entrant, one was ineligible for prizes. Pantorba, *Historia y crítica...*, 340-341. The letter in support of Anglada Camarasa had appeared in *Madrid*, May 19, 1954, 9.

²⁷ A version of this statement in draft format features the names of 16 artists and critics, some typed, and some handwritten: José Caballero, José María Moreno Galván, Carlos Pascual de Lara, Santiago Galindo Herrero, Francisco Moreno Galván, Antonio Povedano, José Hierro, Aurora Bautista, Manuel Suarez-Caso, Isabel Cajide, Ernesto Salcedo, Jesus de la Serna Gutierrez-Répide, José Rodríguez Alfaro, Venencio Blanco Martín, Agustín Redondela, and Juan Manuel Díaz Caneja. “Carta Abierta al Pintor Vázquez Díaz,” undated, Arch MG 21, Archivo Moreno Galván, MNCARS. The final version of this statement, featuring 24 signatories, was published in *Informaciones*, May 22, 1954.

²⁸ Vázquez Díaz would be reinaugurated into the RABASF on January 15, 1968, just a little more than a year before his death.

addressing obvious problems that had been long identified. Especially in the 1960s, when reviews were overwhelmingly negative about all aspects of the Nacionales, a new generation of art critics could not help but notice the lack of leading Spanish artists who routinely eschewed participation in the biennial. For example, art critic Ángel Crespo explained that it was not even worth asking whether the year's National Exhibition would adequately characterize current Spanish art, because "we already knew beforehand that these contests are not able to represent the reality of our plastic arts." Reiterating a critique articulated in previous decades, Crespo also echoed that it was a known fact that the Nacionales served primarily to "add merits to the files of art faculty."²⁹ Crespo's review in 1964 not only mentioned the lack of relevant artists, but also explained that the artistically-conservative judges were faculty members from the ESBA's, who "awarded artistic tendencies close to their own teachings."³⁰ In order for more balanced judging, well known international artists also should be invited so as to create a less insular body. Venancio Sánchez Marin expressed some optimism, explaining that while the Nacionales were no longer relevant, they were on the cusp of being better.³¹ Unlike someone who had written off the Nacionales altogether, Sánchez Marin expressed a confidence that a few better incentives would encourage proper participation. Because the exhibition was large enough to command attention – discussed in the press and visited by hundreds – he believed of abstaining artists that: "Their absence is no longer justified as before."³² In an article from 1966, young artist Juan Antonio Aguirre openly called that year's National Exhibition a "disaster."³³ What really seemed

²⁹ "...sabíamos ya de antemano que estos certámenes no pueden representar la realidad de nuestras artes plásticas." and "...para añadir méritos a los expedientes de quienes ejercen la docencia artística." Ángel Crespo, "Notas desapasionadas sobre la Exposición Nacional de Bellas Artes," *Artes*, no. 22, 30 June 1962.

³⁰ Ángel Crespo, "La Exposición Nacional de Bellas Artes," *Artes* no. 58, June 23, 1964: 3-5.

³¹ Venancio Sánchez Marin, "Consideraciones sobre el futuro de la Nacional," *Aulas* no. 17-18 (Jul-Aug 1964: 56-57).

³² "Su incomparecencia ya no se justifica como antes." *Ibid.*

³³ Juan Antonio Aguirre, "Exposición Nacional de Bellas Artes 1966," *Artes* no. 77 (June 1966): 21.

to bother Aguirre was the absence of some of Spain's biggest names, denying the exhibition the opportunity of providing a quality representation of contemporary Spanish art: "What has become of the painters we have? Where have Saura, Quirós, Tàpies, Antonio López, Cristiano de Vera, Canogar, Sempere and many others hidden?...The list of those absent in this exhibition would be endless."³⁴ By way of a conclusion, Aguirre explained that the three primary characteristics of the Nacional were its mediocre tone, lack of representativeness, and incomprehensible decisions of the panel of judges. From the point of view of these young critics, Spain's top artistic talents were dismissive about an opportunity that would have been worthwhile if only they participated. These young authors did not yet understand that the artists whose works that they so badly wanted to see were not interested in joining the Nacionales, at least not under the current circumstances that guided their implementation.

For their part, leading figures of the arts apparatus of the 1960s seemed equally befuddled as to why the Nacionales consistently failed to attract Spain's leading artists. From their point of view, artists of all abilities and political leanings should have been persuaded by the increased amount of prize money.³⁵ Arts bureaucrats failed to exercise any introspection or interrogate why Spanish artists would avoid participation in the regime's artistic life. For example, even when members of the Francoist administration found out about *España Libre*, an anti-Francoist art exhibition that took place in several Italian cities in 1964 featuring some of the very artists they wished would participate in the Nacionales, they were irate. Their comments, however, seemed only to concentrate on the fact that Spanish artists should be grateful for all of the patronage that

³⁴ "Qué ha sido de esos pintores que tenemos, dónde se han escondido Saura, Quirós, Tàpies, Antonio López, Cristiano de Vera, Canogar, Sempere, tantos otros...[...]Sería interminable la lista de los que están ausentes en esta manifestación." Ibid., 23.

³⁵ Over the years, the total amount of prize money had been increased. By 1964, for example, the Medal of Honor winner walked away with 150,000 pesetas [approximately \$2,500 USD], over the prior amount of 100,000.

the regime had given to them over the years, claiming to have launched some of their careers.³⁶ All blame was pushed to the artists, who were seen as opportunistically exploiting any opportunity for attention. And since these artists were opportunists – so this logic went – the right combination of incentives would draw them back to the Nacionales. While at least some members of the arts apparatus by this point had to have understood that enticing these artists back toward the Nacionales was a lost cause, the actions of other officials revealed a belief that there was still something they could do to change the artists' minds.

Reforming the Nacionales

The reform of the Nacionales demonstrates key dynamics present into how the General Directorate of Fine Arts made decisions internally. It is also indicative of a longstanding pattern in which Francoist officials undertook a reform or policy change to fix something that was a problem for them, all the while endeavoring to portray the decision as a solution for the public betterment. The same criticisms of the Nacionales that had existed for several decades were still prescient in the late 1960s. While attracting well-known artists back was the top priority, members of the arts apparatus also recognized that certain aspects of the barely-modified century-old bylaws were outdated and that the prizes carried prestige only insofar as they were a credential for public servants of arts education. As I will demonstrate, the process was endowed

³⁶ *España Libre* attracted anti-Francoist Spanish artists who were proud to have their artworks included in what amounted to a counter-exhibition to Spain's official art exhibition for the regime's 1964 *XXV Años de Paz* celebration, which was taking place at the same time as an Italian celebration of anti-Fascism. In a now oft-cited letter from Luis González Robles to José María Alonso Gamo, cultural attaché at the Spanish Embassy in Rome, the former described the participating artists mainly as ungrateful, impudent, and immature because, as he saw it, such artists lived and worked freely in Spain without restriction and with full regime support. The letter dates from July 23, 1964, Box 880, (03)110, AGA, also replicated in De Haro, *Grabadores contra el franquismo*, 220-221. For more about *España Libre*, see also: Mónica Núñez Laiseca, "Los caminos del arte español en Italia: una evocación de la resistencia," in *Caminería hispánica: actas del VI Congreso Internacional Italia-España 2002*, vol. 2, ed. Manuel Criado del Val (Ministerio de Fomento, Centro de Estudios y Experimentación de Obras Públicas, CEDEX, 2004), 737-754; and Paula Barreiro López, *Avant-garde Art and Criticism in Francoist Spain* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2017), 202-205.

with the artifice of democratic procedure – soliciting suggestions from the artistic community and convoking an advisory committee – although all involved understood that final decisions were reserved for General Director Pérez Embid. Also evident is the extent to which most bureaucrats’ and RABASF officials’ suggestions for reform portrayed the usual rigidity and unimaginative thinking so prevalent throughout the dictatorship; while visual artists wanted to tear down the event and start from scratch, most officials suggested what amounted to little more than line edits. Furthermore, the General Directorate of Fine Arts’ reform of the Nacionales was advertised as a way to make the event better for the country’s artists, but in the end, was really meant to be a self-serving solution to their single biggest problem of how to get Spain’s famous artists to participate. Thus, figures of the arts apparatus did not make decisions with the goal to repress artists, but they did naively believe that they could make self-serving decisions seem mutually beneficial – and get away with it. What this pattern also demonstrates is that the arts apparatus had not been experiencing a process of incremental democratization, as no policy measure ever relinquished official control. The final version of the Nacionales that Pérez Embid approved tried to appear as though it was precisely the format for which artists had been clamoring. What for Pérez Embid and the arts apparatus seemed like a major change, however, would not be perceived that way by Spain’s artists.

The Francoist administration first started to take seriously the reform of the Nacionales only in the summer of 1968 when the panel of judges of that year’s occurrence made the proposal to do so.³⁷ The political will to undertake reform also was likely aided by a changing over of several key personnel in the spring, such as the minister of Education and director general of Fine Arts, positions served by José Luis Villar Palasí and Florentino Pérez Embid,

³⁷ The origin of the reform is acknowledged openly in an executive order of the Ministry of Education, dated November 21, 1968. Reported in the *BOE* no. 293, December 6, 1968.

respectively. Lifelong Francoist arts bureaucrat and artist, José Romero Escassi, then general technical secretary within the General Directorate of Fine Arts, wrote a memo dated July 22, 1968, commented upon by his boss, Pérez Embid.³⁸ This document offered a very candid explanation revealing that Escassi was under no illusions as to the lack of interest and outdated nature of the Nacionales.³⁹ After explaining that the applied arts-oriented Concursos Nacionales had in the past few years seen a “notorious rehabilitation” after the office made some changes in the bylaws, including having undertaken better advertising, the National Exhibitions, despite having experienced similar changes, had not rebounded in the same way. Escassi offered the reasons for the continued “anachronistic existence” of the event that may be summarized in the following manner: 1) the artworks did not represent the current nature of national artistic life due to the “absences” (referring, of course, to artists who abstained from the event); 2) despite updating the event’s bylaws over the decades, they continued to represent and respond to criteria from a century ago; 3) artists deemed the prizes not representative because of their validity primarily for bureaucratic and professional reasons; 4) the panel of judges of eighteen members was unruly as it represented such different institutions that it could rarely come to any unanimous decisions;⁴⁰ and 5) the various subcategories into which artworks were divided were

³⁸ “Certámenes Nacionales” Memo, July 22, 1968, 003/143/082, Fondo Florentino Pérez Embid (FPE), Universidad de Navarra Archivo General (hereafter UNAG).

³⁹ José Romero Escassi, known by all as ‘Escassi,’ had worked for the Nationalists even before they had won the Spanish Civil War. In 1938, as a young man in his mid-20s, he took a job working under Dionisio Ridruejo at what was then a ‘plastic arts’ office within the National Press and Propaganda Service, and would eventually be the VEP. He was also an illustrator and artist, and had some of his work appear, for example, in the Falange-led magazine *Vértice*. It is clear that after the VEP’s transfer to the Ministry of Education, he retained his civil servant position and would work for the ministry until retirement. He would take over the position of curator/director of the Madrid Atheneum’s exhibition rooms (immediately after Carlos Areán held this position), and for a short-lived stint in 1974, he was the director of the Museo Español de Arte Contemporáneo (right before Areán held this position). Similar to Areán, Escassi seems to have also had a deep abiding appreciation for modern art and artistic renovation, and it was likely Escassi who allowed Juan Genovés to have his controversial show in the exhibition rooms of the General Directorate of Fine Arts in 1965. See Barreiro López, *Avant-garde Art and Criticism...*, 114, note 119.

⁴⁰ Escassi recounted an example in which this lack of cohesion had led to infighting. For example, a professor from the Escuela Superior de Bellas Artes of Madrid, under the aegis of the same General Directorate as the Nacionales, had his artworks rejected from the Nacional, which presupposed that his artworks did not even have the basic artistic

those determined in the last century, making more difficult the classification of multimodal artworks of the day.

Sensitive to internal regime dynamics, and careful to frame suggestions in a way that he believed they would be noticed, Escassi proposed a number of possible solutions to revamp the Nacionales. Escassi first recommended that the General Directorate do away with the “tainted” Exposiciones Nacionales altogether, instead promulgating only a reinvented version of the Concursos Nacionales, updating its bylaws to allow for a more “modern structure” and increase the prize money awarded. Anticipating that this suggestion would not be a popular one, he promptly changed course to provide another. Escassi’s second suggestion envisioned a scenario in which the reinvented Nacionales would more accurately reflect the high quality of contemporary art because artists would have to be *invited* to participate, and would be allowed to send in as many works as they wanted. In this model, there would be no prizes in the traditional sense, because the state would simply pay fair prices to acquire for its museums the artworks it wanted.⁴¹ Escassi seemed confident that if artists were invited, it would be enough to cajole those otherwise abstaining from official state exhibitions to participate: “It is the case that a considerable number of artists resident in Spain, of recognized worldwide prestige, who have exclusive contracts with foreign galleries (Tàpies, Chillida, Saura, Genovés, etc.) and who do not attend the usual exhibitions on their own initiative would surely do so by invitation.”⁴² Escassi

merit for exhibition, never mind to be a longstanding faculty member of the arts school. The faculty member in this case turned out to be Francisco Núñez de Celis, who complained in a faculty meeting from June 28, 1966 that his rejection was a problem because he was now looked down upon by his students. Libro de Actas, Archivo del Decanato de la Facultad de Bellas Artes, UCM.

⁴¹ “Certámenes Nacionales” Memo, July 22, 1968, 003/143/082, Fondo FPE.

⁴² “Se da el caso de que un número considerable de artistas residentes en España, de reconocido prestigio mundial, que tienen contratos en exclusiva con galerías extranjeras (Tàpies, Chillida, Saura, Genovés, etc.) y que no concurren a los certámenes habituales por propia iniciativa, pero lo harían por invitación seguramente.” Ibid.

ended by saying that in order to attract the best art being made in the world, it was worthwhile to solve “our domestic problem.”

Florentino Pérez Embid’s numbered notes following this typed document reveal that he did take these suggestions seriously, but his musings also disclose a reluctance to stray too far from what he saw as the tried-and-true structure of the event. For example, one of his points indicated that he agreed with making the judging panel smaller, in this case cutting the current size down by half to only nine members. Regarding the awarding of prizes, he contemplated two options. Either the exhibition should feature only invited artists in which traditional prizes were not to be given as Escassi had suggested, or a second option was to follow the current format, but with fewer prizes awarded, in which at least one would still be reserved for a chaired professor of the art school (*catedrático*). This second suggestion demonstrates the large extent to which he was wary of eliminating prizes as a professional credential. Pérez Embid also wrote that the event could maintain still the same distinct subcategories (painting, sculpture, drawing, printmaking, etc.), but would consider “diluting the borders if necessary when faced with new techniques.”⁴³ Pérez Embid’s final notation indicated that the new bylaws should be thought of as a stimulus for contemporary art, meaning that which was being created according to the newest artistic currents and not outdated academic or traditional styles. With these few handwritten comments, the director general of Fine Arts confirmed an outlook in which the overall structure of the event was satisfactory, simply in need of a few changes to foreground contemporary art. This disinclination to diverge too freely from this event’s past structure would come to characterize the nature of the first wave of official discussions to reform the Nacionales.

⁴³ “...pero diluyendo sus fronteras cuando lo exija la presencia de nuevas técnicas.” Ibid.

Beyond only the internal discussion happening within Fine Arts, the end of July 1968 was also a time in which Pérez Embid started to solicit external suggestions toward the biennial's reform. For example, Pérez Embid sent a letter just a day after Escassi's memo was dated, on July 23, 1968, requesting feedback on ways to amend the current bylaws of the Nacionales, which dated from 1964.⁴⁴ While it is not clear exactly to whom this letter was sent nor how broadly Pérez Embid wanted the message to spread that the General Directorate was seeking to reform the Nacionales, we know from the responses that have been retained that the letter was sent to artists and art officials beyond only the members of the Junta Organizadora and the judges' panel of the Nacionales.⁴⁵ The format of most of the responses took the form of line-editing the 1964 bylaws, with suggestions of new wording or what would amount to small changes.⁴⁶ There was not a lot of agreement as to how many members the judging panel should have, nor who should be invited to join, nor exactly how many awards should be given, although none of the suggestions deviated from the idea that a panel of experts needed to award prizes. All wanted to retain the top Medal of Honor, although each suggestion recommended that it should be allowed to go to any participating artist, and not only those who had previously won first place.

Other exemplars, all authored by artists, made known their greater dissatisfaction with the event, seeking deeper structural changes. For example, former El Paso member Manuel Rivera, who had sat on the 1968 National Exhibition's panel of judges, replied politely but straightforwardly to Pérez Embid calling for a total overhaul of the "already dead National

⁴⁴ While technically the last and most recent statutes dated from 1964, this was itself only slightly modified from those of 1952, which represented the biggest change since the 1940s.

⁴⁵ These response letters have been conserved in: Folder: Reforma del Reglamento de las Exposiciones Nacionales de Bellas Artes, 1968-69, Box 703, (03)110, AGA.

⁴⁶ Any of the letters received with suggestions deemed useful by the office of the General Directorate were assigned a letter of the alphabet so as to be referred to later in a report that attempted to summarize all of the responses.

Exhibitions,” explaining that for many years, the event had “ceased to have validity,” for himself and a large number of his colleagues.⁴⁷ Sculptor Pablo Serrano, who had also been a judge in 1968, explained that the event should be split entirely in two, with a separation between past and current art. In order for the latter to be viable, Serrano explained that the reform would need to totally reimagine the bylaws.⁴⁸ Lastly, sculptor José Luis Sánchez likewise expressed that a totally new approach was needed for the Nacionales, explaining that being asked to comment on the currently valid bylaws was “little less than administrative work,” which would “invalidate the possibility of a fundamental reform.”⁴⁹ All of these letters were written seriously, cordially, and tried to impress upon the higher-ups of the General Directorate the need for a comprehensive and wide-ranging rethinking of the Nacionales.

After this initial informal step of soliciting responses, the attempt to reform the Nacionales was formalized in November 1968 with the convening of a twelve-member advisory committee, summoned to evaluate the various suggestions and work together to draft new bylaws for the Nacionales.⁵⁰ Presided over by Director General Pérez Embid, the committee was largely comprised of government bureaucrats, and others already sympathetic to official positions, such as Antonio Campoy, art critic for daily newspaper *ABC*, printmaker Julio Prieto Nespereira, member of ANSIBA, and art historian José Camón Aznar to represent the interests of the

⁴⁷ Manuel Rivera and sculptor Pablo Serrano had been on the judges’ panel of the 1968 Nacionales, appointed by the Ministry of Education in the “free designation” (*libre designación*) category, meaning that they were not present as past prize winners, but simply as the ministry’s designees. It is this letter of Rivera’s that has provided the title phrase: “*las ya moribundas Nacionales*.” Letter from Manuel Rivera to Florentino Pérez Embid, September 24, 1968, Cultura, Box 703, Folder: Reforma del Reglamento del as Exposiciones Nacionales de Bellas Artes, 1968-69, AGA.

⁴⁸ Letter from Pablo Serrano to Florentino Pérez Embid, October 29, 1968, Box 703, Folder: Reforma del Reglamento del as Exposiciones Nacionales de Bellas Artes, 1968-69, (03)110, AGA.

⁴⁹ “...poco menos que administrativa...” and “...invalida la posibilidad de una reforma de fondo...” Letter from José Luis Sánchez to Fernando González, December 9, 1968, Box 703, Folder: Reforma del Reglamento del as Exposiciones Nacionales de Bellas Artes, 1968-69, (03)110, AGA.

⁵⁰ *BOE* no. 293. December 6, 1968. As early as October, the press had announced that the General Directorate of Fine Arts would convene an advisory committee for the reform of the Nacionales. See: “La medalla de honor de la Nacional de Bellas Artes, desierta” in *La Vanguardia Española*, October 10, 1968, 9.

RABASF. Current and former figures of the arts apparatus known as longstanding appreciators of modern art were also present, such as Luis González Robles, José Luis Fernández del Amo, and José Romero Escassi. The only artists present who did not represent official interests were painter Manuel Hernández Mompó and sculptor José Luis Sánchez. As Hernández Mompó and Prieto Nespereira both had just served as members of that year's panel of judges, they were part of the group that had called for the need to undertake reform in the first place.

The composition of the committee itself revealed that Pérez Embid sought to ignore most of the artists' radical suggestions to completely reinvent the Nacionales, and the process of debate was highly restricted. First, it was in a single meeting of June 28, 1969 – with only five members in attendance – that the advisory committee's primary discussion took place. Presided over by Vice President Camón Aznar, the only other committee members present were Julio Prieto Nespereira, ESBA faculty member Manuel López Villaseñor, José Romero Escassi, and acting as secretary was Fernando González Hernández, an employee of the General Directorate – hardly representative of the twelve-person committee.

Second, for this meeting, advisory committee members were provided with several documents to aid them in coming to their conclusions. Pérez Embid already had formulated ideas about the shape and structure of the reformed biennial. One report had amassed all of the suggestions made to the bylaws thus far, which in its very format demonstrated that this process was designed simply to edit pre-existing language. That the process was not designed to reimagine the biennial from the bottom-up is demonstrated, for example, by the fact that the report omitted critical responses such as Rivera's.⁵¹ Advisory committee members were also provided with what was an already-prepared draft of new bylaws, streamlined into twenty-six

⁵¹ "Sugerencias para la Redacción del Nuevo Reglamento de las Exposiciones Nacionales," undated, Folder: Reforma del Reglamento de las Exposiciones Nacionales de Bellas Artes, 1968-69, Box 703, (03)110, AGA.

articles, down from the previous forty-six. Prepared in accordance with Pérez Embid's wishes, the suggested changes therein matched perfectly the vision he had for the Nacionales, clearly outlined in his earlier correspondence.⁵² The first change Pérez Embid wanted to see was a change in the name of the event to the 'Biennials of Contemporary Spanish Art' (*Bienales de Arte Español Contemporáneo*). Second, the event would add the subcategory of 'music' to the already existing painting, sculpture, drawing, engraving, and architecture. Thirdly, the event, rather than having its own semi-permanent organizing committee would be entirely planned by the General Directorate's brand-new office of the Curator of Exhibitions.⁵³ Fourth, each subcategory would be assigned its own panel of judges of five members, each individual to be carefully vetted and appointed by the Ministry of Education. Each panel would be presided over by a member of the RABASF, and would include two artists, a representative from the Escuelas Superiores de Bellas Artes, and an art critic. The written commentary about such changes did not hide the fact that all such measures were proposed as a way to force the Royal Academy of Fine Arts and the Escuelas Superiores to cede even more power to the Ministry, while still allowing these longstanding organizations to have a role.⁵⁴ With respect to prizes, the Medal of Honor would remain, and each section would continue to award a first and second place monetary prize, dispensing with third place, thus greatly reducing the current number of prizes awarded. As with before, such artworks would become property of the Spanish state. While exact monetary

⁵² Other correspondence in this same folder that corroborates the contents of this draft is an internal memo from Pérez Embid to Ramón Falcón, the deputy director of Fine Arts, dated April 17, 1969, and then another dated May 9, 1969 to both Falcón and Fernando González, the secretary of the Advisory Committee. "Proyecto de Decreto por el que se Regula el Nuevo Reglamento de las Bienales de Arte Español Contemporáneo," Folder: Reforma del Reglamento del as Exposiciones Nacionales de Bellas Artes, 1968-69, Box 703, (03)110, AGA.

⁵³ The General Directorate of Fine Arts' Comisaría de exposiciones had been created only just in January 1969 to be the main body in charge of all of its exhibitions.

⁵⁴ "Proyecto de Decreto..." 7.

amounts were still being figured out, Pérez Embid maintained that having fewer prizes overall would ensure larger bounties for each winner as a proposed incentive.

In little over two hours, all five members proceeded to express their dislike for just about every one of the suggested changes put forth in the circulated draft. Essentially, Pérez Embid's suggestions were considered too radical. For example, all rejected the name change of the event, and two members opposed the elimination of the Junta Organizadora.⁵⁵ Rather than decreasing the total number of prizes, committee members sought an *increase*, and they were opposed to having a distinct judging panel for each category. The members also disagreed with the suggestion that music should be included in an event that was meant to pertain to the visual arts only, in which they also wanted the architecture subcategory moved to a different national biennial. The only new suggestion was made by Camón Aznár, who believed that the only way to tackle what he referred to as the “non-attendance...of the majority of the best Spanish artists,” was to create a tripartite event, in which there would continue to be the main event, a second segment would be comprised of contemporary artists whose works would not be considered for prizes, and then a third area for a Spanish or foreign artist whose artworks, although historical, would still have relevance for the time.

Finally, debate was limited by the purely advisory nature of the committee. Throughout this process, committee members were routinely reminded that all final decisions were reserved for Pérez Embid. Not long after this meeting (on July 5), Secretary González Hernández circulated a memo to the advisory committee summarizing both the contents of Pérez Embid's draft bylaws, as well as the main conclusions of the June 28 meeting. The advisory committee was reminded that all that was left in the process was for the director general to draft the

⁵⁵ One of whom was López Villaseñor, himself a longstanding member of the Nacionales' Junta Organizadora.

definitive bylaws for “the National Exhibitions or Biennials of Spanish Contemporary Art,” in which he would consider both this draft and the proposals of the committee, which he reminded them were “not binding.”⁵⁶ It seems that everyone present would have known that the director general had no obligation, nor even inclination, to heed their suggestions, as Pérez Embid had already publicly demonstrated his dismissive attitude toward ideas with which he did not agree in a board meeting about the future of Madrid’s state-run Museo Español de Arte Contemporáneo.⁵⁷

At the same time, Pérez Embid did seem to take the committee’s suggestions seriously. When the General Directorate circulated an updated draft of the bylaws in late September 1969, the document reveals Pérez Embid’s sincere attempt to incorporate the suggestions of the committee. For example, although there was only one set of bylaws, they were meant to cover what were now two separate events: the so-called *Exposiciones Nacionales de Arte Contemporáneo*, and another entitled the *Exposiciones Nacionales de Arquitectura y Artes Decorativas e Industriales*.⁵⁸ Thus, we can see that Pérez Embid did change the name of the exhibition, but heeded the committee’s request for continuity. Additionally, there were more prizes to be awarded than just the two in each category that Pérez Embid preferred, although many fewer prizes than what the previous 1964 bylaws stipulated.⁵⁹ Officially, the office of the Curator of Exhibitions was to oversee the event, although it would be informed by an advisory

⁵⁶ “Ya sólo queda redactar el definitivo Reglamento para las Exposiciones o Bienales de Arte Español Contemporáneo, recogiendo los criterios que indique el Sr. Director General, luego de vistos el Proyecto de reforma y las propuestas de la Comisión Asesora, que desde luego no son vinculantes.” “Nota-Informe sobre la modificación del reglamento de las Exposiciones Nacionales,” July 5, 1969, Box 703, Folder: Reforma del Reglamento de las Exposiciones Nacionales de Bellas Artes, 1968-69, (03)110, AGA.

⁵⁷ María Dolores Jiménez-Blanco, *Arte y Estado en la España del siglo XX* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1989), 135-136.

⁵⁸ Such provisions created a third national event for music, although to be written up in its own decree.

⁵⁹ The 1964 version called for, in addition to a Medal of Honor, 26 total prizes, and 9 in the painting category alone: 2 first place spots, 3 for second place, and 4 for third place, as stipulated in the decree of February 20, 1964 as published in the *BOE*, no. 53, on March 2, 1964. The proposed bylaws still called for a Medal of Honor, but only 4 total prizes in the painting category.

committee, which sounded like the Junta Organizadora by another name. Furthermore, Pérez Embid adopted Camón Aznar's suggestion of having a tripartite Nacionales, which in addition to the regular contest, could include invited contemporary artists as well as other rooms of historic works of art. The director general did not budge on his preference for separate five-person juries for each subcategory, although with respect to the printmaking category he changed the name from '*Grabado*' (which referred to classic printmaking techniques such as engraving and etching) to '*Artes de estampación*,' a broadening that would theoretically allow for more of the relevant artistic techniques in use.

Thus, as we have seen given the procedure followed up to this point, the process was an authoritarian version of what looked on the surface to be a democratic practice, although it was predictable according to what all involved would have come to expect. A committee was formed, but excluded from it were the most radical opinions. When it met, fewer than half its members were present. And, finally, members did not have a representative voice or vote, as Pérez Embid was to make all final decisions. But, in the end, Pérez Embid did heed the suggestions that came out of the limited discussion, and it seems as though that process would have determined the final bylaws to be released to the public. What actually happened, however, belied expectations.

When an official ministerial decree appeared on November 13, 1969 summarizing the major changes to the Nacionales, it was so radically different than any of the plans that had been contemplated to date.⁶⁰ Here it was announced that the former *Exposición Nacional de Bellas Artes* had been reformulated as three separate events, with the one for the visual arts now called the National Exhibition of Contemporary Art (*Exposición Nacional de Arte Contemporáneo*). The most novel announcement, however, would have been that the structure of the supposedly

⁶⁰ Decreto 3022 (November 13, 1969), as published in the *BOE*, no. 293, December 8, 1969.

new National Exhibition had been completely changed from both the advisory committee's suggestions and Pérez Embid's preferred bylaws to describe a two-tiered event in which a series of regional exhibitions were to be held in the spring prior to the nation-wide autumnal iteration of the event.⁶¹ The full text of the bylaws for the new Nacionales would not come out until March of 1970, wherein they would further define and expound upon this new regional/national model.

How, then, might we understand this radical change when no mention of having regional exhibitions had ever come up among the members of the advisory committee? In an environment in which Pérez Embid's ultimate control over the direction of the reform was understood, and in which his committee members' suggestions were "not binding," it is not difficult to assume that his wishes would win out in the end. There was, however, no indicator in any of the planning documents, or even in any of the early written suggestions, that the event should be divided into regional and national segments, and the change is rather unexpected for a process that had otherwise followed such a regimented course up to this point. Something or someone caused Pérez Embid to change his mind toward this dual-part format at some point between late September and November 1969. It appears, then, that this new suggestion came after someone had learned of Pérez Embid's plans released internally after September 1969 (when the work of the committee had ended), and decided to convince him to undertake more widespread change. Within the confines of the narrow-minded bureaucratic process committed to line-editing, a more radical change such as this was so wildly uncharacteristic of the General Directorate of Fine Arts that it does beg the question as to who else had influence in this decision making.

⁶¹ The regional exhibitions were planned for the five cities in which there was an Escuela Superior de Bellas Artes: Barcelona, Bilbao, Sevilla, Valencia, and Madrid.

The Reaction of the Asociación de Artistas Plásticos

One possible source of Pérez Embid's uncharacteristic modification is an artist (or artists) of the Asociación de Artistas Plásticos (AAP), which would issue its own proposal for the Nacionales in early March 1970. As I will establish, while the AAP's formal proposal came much too late to have influenced Pérez Embid's thinking in the fall of 1969, it is probable that Manuel Hernández Mompó, Manuel Rivera, or Pablo Serrano, all of whom would have known about the details of the Nacionales reform and were also involved in the fledgling association, had learned that the event was not going to have been changed substantially, and then tried to bend Pérez Embid's ear about the need for more comprehensive reform at some point in October 1969.⁶² While Pérez Embid had been dismissive of the feedback of Rivera and Serrano from late 1968, it is possible that as early members of a now fast-growing AAP, the director general may have decided it prudent to heed the group and its ideas. Another possibility is that a different high-ranking member of the arts apparatus heard these new ideas directly from the mouths of artists and then convinced Pérez Embid to follow aspects of their propositions.⁶³ Either way, given that the AAP will accuse Pérez Embid and the General Directorate of plagiarism of their plan, it seems likely that some kernel of their ideas was the origin point.

⁶² All three of these artists had served on the panel of judges for the 1968 Nacionales. Manuel Hernández Mompó strikes me as a particularly likely candidate to have tried to convince Pérez Embid of the need to make more widespread changes. Mompó had not been one to abstain from official involvement, and had even entered artworks into earlier iterations of the Nacionales, having won a second-place prize in 1962, and taking home a first-place prize in 1966. Having won this official honor, Mompó had been invited to sit on the panel of judges for the 1968 Nacionales, a duty which he believed would allow him to promulgate reform from the inside. Mompó explained his intentions in an interview that appeared in *Arriba* on July 9, 1966 (pp. 28 and 35), as reported in Caparrós Masegosa, *Instituciones artísticas del franquismo*, 408-409.

⁶³ If anyone from the arts apparatus was a deciding factor in the plan that was finally released for the new Nacionales, Luis González Robles, José Luis Fernández del Amo, and/or José Romero Escassi all come to mind as possible conduits who had contact with many artists over the course of their careers. All three of these men were also members of the 12-person advisory committee convoked to plan the new Nacionales in November of 1968 (although only Escassi was present for the June 28, 1969 meeting), and all would have likely seen drafts of Pérez Embid's revised bylaws in late September 1969.

As I will demonstrate, the members of the various working groups of what would become the AAP were to become extraordinarily vocal about the direction of the Nacionales. Because the AAP was founded by artists and art students who were committed to securing for those of their vocation professional opportunities and educational reform writ large, the reform of the Nacionales was a topic with which even the earliest working groups formed in mid-1969 would concern themselves. From internal discussions toward the end of 1969 and early 1970, the AAP would come to unleash a full-fledged campaign against the new Exposiciones Nacionales de Arte Contemporáneo in the spring and summer of 1970. AAP artists would espouse a worldview that saw art production as inherently non-competitive (and therefore prizes were anathema to their vision), would seek a much greater geographic diversity beyond Madrid, and ultimately would promulgate a plan seeking the democratization of access to the arts that spelled out the need for artists' input in the planning and organization of the event from start to finish. While the event's new official bylaws seemed tailored to a superficial interpretation of these postulates, the General Directorate's plan would adopt none of the substantive measures that would allow for a more artist-centered, non-competitive Nacionales.

The AAP's Artist-Driven Vision and Disagreement with the Reform

The very early founding and activities of the AAP are somewhat fuzzy. What we do know is that the auditorium of Madrid's upper-level art school, the Escuela Superior de Bellas Artes, was used as a site for early meetings during the spring and summer of 1969. Early participants were artists Juan Genovés, Federico "Tino" Calabuig, Alberto Corazón, Francisco Barón, José Luis Montero, Salvador Victoria, Lucio Muñoz, and Manuel Hernández Mompó.⁶⁴ The first meeting minutes from May and June 1969 reveal a structure in which various 'working

⁶⁴ García García, *Tiempo de estrategias*, 27.

groups' were each tasked with different duties, one of which was to try to establish the group as a formal association via the channel opened by the Ministry of the Interior. This attempt to achieve a legalized status was the cause for meetings between AAP members and Pérez Embid, although no hints in the correspondence reveal when the first of these meetings would have taken place, nor how frequently they met. While the suggestion to contribute ideas to the rethinking of the Nacionales must have taken place even earlier, we know that some AAP members had a meeting with Pérez Embid on March 4, 1970, during which he urged them to send as soon as possible their suggestions for the reform. While the AAP members tasked with working on the reform of the Nacionales had clearly already had a draft plan in the works, Pérez Embid's claims of urgency led the group to date their proposal the following day, and then vote in a general assembly to send it along to the director general on March 6.⁶⁵

The AAP's draft proposal for a totally reinvented Nacionales foregrounded artist participation in the event from start to finish. The working group who authored the proposal gave the event the suggested title of *Informativa 70: Bienal de Artes Plásticas*.⁶⁶ Signed by Manuel Hernández Mompó, Manuel Rivera, Pablo Serrano, Juana Francés, Juan Genovés, Eusebio Sempere, Lucio Muñoz, Salvador Victoria, and Rafael Canogar, this draft would not have gone unnoticed. This list of signatures read like a who's-who of visual artists in Spain, and the high profile of the names must have made an impact. This plan advanced the idea of having localized regional exhibitions to take place before any sort of national event, although the document's authors chose nine, rather than only five, Spanish provincial capitals as suggested sites. The

⁶⁵ The dates on which certain events happened, and the call to urgency is reported in: AAP letter to the Director General de Bellas Artes, March 17, 1970, Arch. RC 104. Archivo Redor-Calabuig. MNCARS.

⁶⁶ This draft proposal, dated March 5, 1970, was authored by the Canales de Difusión del Arte of the Comisión promotora of the AAP, and unanimously approved in a general assembly the following day, when it was passed along to Pérez Embid. "Anteproyecto: Informativa 70: Bienal de Artes Plásticas," March 5, 1970. My copy of this document was found at the AGA ((03)110) Box 803), although I found several copies throughout my research: a copy in the Archivo Redor-Calabuig at the MNCARS, and within the Fondo FPE at the UNAG.

proposal also called for the regional exhibitions to take place a full year before the national iteration. Next, the plan called for a single committee, total number of members unspecified, to plan the entire event from start to finish (the organization, selection of artworks, and the staging of the event), in which half of its members were to be chosen by the General Directorate, and the other half to be named by the AAP. Committee members would then tour the sites of the regional exhibitions to select the artists – not artworks – who would be asked to participate in the national biennial with artworks of their own choosing. Thus, even with the General Directorate still given significant decision-making power, chosen artists would ultimately be responsible for which of their artistic products would appear. The AAP’s reimagining of what the Nacionales could be exemplified the kind of approach that Hernández Mompó, Rivera and Serrano had made in their 1968 letters, urging the General Directorate to reinvent the event entirely.

In addition, the AAP’s vision of a non-competitive arts milieu was underscored in its proposal. At no stage of the *Informativa* was a prize or award given. Not at all envisioned as an arts *contest*, the Nacionales-replacement was also supposed to be a site of artistic creation and learning, featuring symposia, talks, film screenings, and workshops. The report stipulated that the event should be very well publicized, and the premises should have an information booth, and a room dedicated to the sale of books, slides, posters, and prints, and a modestly-priced exhibition catalog. Practically speaking, the report’s authors suggested that the event’s budget fund the shipping of artworks and pay for the lodging and transportation costs of those chosen to participate. On its last page, the document’s authors explained their main aim: “[T]o give a greater knowledge of art in our country, making it reach all sectors of our society, for a better understanding of new trends and to be able to give a concrete idea of current art in Spain, giving the exhibition the rank that it deserves, for having the most important participation of our

nation.”⁶⁷ It was no accident that the authors of *Informativa 70* ended by emphasizing the idea that only a proposal that called for artists’ control of the process was going to be successful in attracting all those who had been abstaining from the Nacionales.

Even accounting for the prestige of the artists involved in submitting the plan for *Informativa 70*, and knowing their plan would have made a splash within the office of the General Directorate, the artists must have known on some level that the administration was unlikely to adopt their ideas as stated. On the one hand, it is possible the artists were hopeful to work with Pérez Embid, who had shown a willingness to meet with members of the group. On the other hand, the artists grew up in a system in which they saw decades pass before the reform was even attempted, and based on the fact that there was hardly any genuine artists’ participation in official cultural life, AAP members must have understood that the General Directorate was unlikely to cede control of the event. Furthermore, even if Pérez Embid were to prove to be more reform-minded than his predecessors, all involved understood the usual slow pace and limited scope of governmental reforms. Lastly, as this planning was already taking place in 1970, any new recommendations passed along to the director general, even from famous artists, were unlikely to make any difference to the event’s structure only a few months before the *regionales* were to open.

The full text of the new bylaws of the Exposiciones Nacionales de Arte Contemporáneo, issued on March 12, 1970, revealed an event that still remained extremely wedded to the arts apparatus. Expounding upon the basic skeleton of the regional-national event that had been introduced in the prior year’s November 13 decree, this new document was the first attempt to

⁶⁷ “El fin principal de esta Exposición será dar un mayor conocimiento del Arte en nuestro país, haciéndole llegar a todos los sectores de nuestra sociedad, para la mejor comprensión de las nuevas tendencias y poder dar una idea concreta del arte actual en España, dándole la categoría que esta Exposición merece, por tratarse de la participación más importante de nuestra nación.” Ibid.

list, article by article, the rules and regulations for the event.⁶⁸ While members of the arts apparatus believed they had made drastic and thoroughgoing reforms, the AAP saw only continuity. In each of the five cities to host a regional competition, the official bureaucratic head of the General Directorate of Fine Arts on the provincial level was to oversee his region's judging panel; prizes would still be awarded (first, second, and third place for each artistic category, and then a grand prize), although they would be given at the springtime regional iterations of the event only, with winning artworks sent on to the subsequent national event. The national iteration of the event would take turns rotating between the different cities in which the regional exhibitions would be held; for 1970, this site would be Bilbao. Judges' panels were still to be structured in such a way so as to ensure the Ministry of Education's oversight, as it was still to be the body that approved all representatives on the panel.⁶⁹

That the event retained its prizes and the judges who would award them was particularly objectionable to the AAP. Not only should the panel of judges appointed to select works in the first place be comprised of significant artist representation, but the awarding of prizes at all remained antithetical to the participatory and popular imagining of what the event could and should be. The AAP believed that the prize and judging structure ensured that the event remained elitist as before, therefore precluding any of the so-called reforms from making so much as a small dent in underlying regime-driven structure and format of the event.⁷⁰ To say that the AAP was dissatisfied with the new design of the event would be an understatement.

⁶⁸ Anyone following art news would have known about the publication of these new bylaws within the newsletter of the Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia on March 12, although the text was then published in the *BOE*, no. 73, March 26, 1970.

⁶⁹ For example, it was written that a given locale's provincial head would oversee the panel of judges, which was to contain two art critics, two other appointees of the Ministry's choice, and then each city's ESBA director, as well as the directors of other art museums in the area. See article number 16 of the "Orden de 12 de marzo de 1970 por la que se aprueba el Reglamento de las Exposiciones Nacionales de Arte Contemporáneo," *BOE*, no. 73, March 26, 1970.

⁷⁰ García García, *Tiempo de estrategias*, 60.

The AAP's Campaign Against the Nacionales and the Forging of a Social Movement

In response to the final version of the bylaws, it did not take long for the AAP to decide to organize a campaign to encourage artists throughout the country to boycott the Nacionales. The reaction of Spain's artists would be more vociferous and unified than ever to this end. Not only did they not waste time in responding to Pérez Embid as an initial step, but moreover, the association would wage Spain's largest artist-driven campaign of non-participation to date, ensuring a widespread popular movement in the press and by word of mouth. Only five days after the bylaws' publication of March 12, the AAP held a general assembly with an impressive 300 artists in attendance to discuss and craft a response to them. At this meeting, the artists drew up a letter to Pérez Embid in which they explained their dismay at having received as the only reply to their proposal (*Informativa 70*) the published bylaws, which they argued ignored their proposal's fundamental aspects.⁷¹ Evident to the members of the AAP was that no major planned artistic event would have a chance of success if artists themselves did not have more input into the event, a sentiment they did not hold back: "If an exhibition of fine arts is the exhibition of artworks of the artists, it is essential that we protagonists should participate in its organization and should do so, not in a personal capacity, as has been done so far, but rather representing the wishes and interests of the majority of Spanish visual artists."⁷² The letter's authors explained that they were not going to be able to continue their "friendly collaboration" if the General Directorate rejected their work, and took this opportunity to declare that all of those who signed

⁷¹ Letter from the General Assembly of the AAP to the Director General of Fine Arts, March 17, 1970. Arch. RC 104, Archivo Redor-Calabuig, MNCARS.

⁷² "Si una exposición de Bellas Artes es la exhibición de las obras de los artistas, es elemental que los protagonistas participemos en su organización y lo hagamos, no a título personal, como hasta ahora se ha venido haciendo, sino presentando los deseos e intereses de la mayoría de los artistas plásticos españoles." Ibid.

the letter, all few hundred meeting attendees, refused to participate in the upcoming National Exhibition.

While artists' *absenteeism* from official events was nothing new, their mass *abstention* as a concerted political campaign transformed individual non-participation into a social movement. Many artists who had declined participation in prior Nacionales did so not out of any strong leftist political convictions, but out of a lack of interest or the belief that participation in the event was not worth the expense and effort. The AAP, however, would become an extremely effective driver of abstention with purpose; AAP leaders quickly figured out that they could exploit this opportunity, taking a campaign of non-participation and developing it into an unforgettable public protest in which they would make sure that the General Directorate knew that it no longer held the power in this situation. This announcement of a concerted campaign of hundreds of names, both professionals and amateurs, was not only exactly the kind of reaction the General Directorate would have wanted to avoid, but moreover, it was completely unanticipated by them. While the AAP's response should, indeed, be seen as skillful maneuvering of the situation, the General Directorate's inability to deal adequately with the rising challenges would further exacerbate popular reaction.

Over the months of the spring and summer of 1970, meeting minutes, reports, correspondence, and articles appearing in the press revealed the clear development of a concerted campaign against the regime's control of artistic events, and one scholar has even argued, against the regime itself.⁷³ Minutes of a meeting held on April 20, 1970 of the AAP's Comisión Función del Arte en la Sociedad reported the first order of business as "discussion about the National [Exhibition] of Fine Arts" in which it was agreed to "actualize a protest against the Nacional as it

⁷³ García García, *Tiempo de estrategias*, 62.

is constituted.”⁷⁴ Participants at a May meeting of the AAP’s Intercomisión, a committee made up of a few delegates from all of the different working groups, discussed the slogans approved for protest posters that would be printed and hung: “Art is not competitive”; “No to the Nacional because it is discriminatory”; and “No to the Nacional because it is not free”.⁷⁵ Then in early May 1970, Pérez Embid received word from the General Directorate of Security’s Information Service about a large group of intellectuals and artists who had authored documents being circulated to protest the National Exhibition, inviting their peers to refuse participation in the event.⁷⁶ First asking whether the recipient was in agreement with the functioning of the National Exhibition, the document continued: “Well, now, it will be worse, in spite of the reform. We, a very large group of artists throughout all of Spain, have decided not to participate in the National Exhibition, as our petition for real reform was ignored. If you are in agreement with the majority of artists DON’T SHOW UP.”⁷⁷ Approximately 175 signatures affirmed support of this idea, with the continuing slate of famous artists’ names: Rafael Canogar, Manolo Millares, Manuel Rivera, Pablo Serrano, and Antonio Saura.⁷⁸ Another letter from around the same time was clearly sent to artists and art students in all Spanish provinces explaining that the rigid structure of the Nacionales “affects us all: students and professionals, Basques, Galicians, Catalans,

⁷⁴ “...materializar una protesta contra la Nacional tal y como está constituida...” Meeting minutes of the Comisión Función del Arte en la Sociedad, April 20, 1970, Arch. RC 65, Archivo Redor-Calabuig, MNCARS.

⁷⁵ “El arte no es competitivo”; “No a la Nacional por es discriminatoria”; “No a la Nacional porque no es libre”. Interestingly, also noted is that the slogans “Art is freedom” (“El arte es libertad”) and “Down with official art” (“Abajo el arte oficial”) were rejected by committee members as being “too risky” (“*demasiado comprometidos*”), as it was deemed that it would not be possible to give them to the press or to hang them publicly. “Informe sobre la reunión Inter.” May 1970. Arch. RC 67, Archivo Redor-Calabuig, MNCARS.

⁷⁶ General Directorate of Security Information Service to the Director General of Fine Arts, May 4, 1970, Box 51, Folder 1, Fondo FPE, UNAG.

⁷⁷ “Pues ahora será peor, a pesar de la reforma. Un grupo muy numeroso de artistas de toda España hemos decidido no participar a dicha exposición nacional, ya que nuestra petición de reforma absoluta, no se ha hecho caso. Si estás de acuerdo con esta mayoría de artistas...NO TE PRESENTES.” Artist statement attached to above memo. Ibid. Emphasis in the original.

⁷⁸ Also present, of course, were the signatures of not well-known, but eager, AAP members: Eduardo Arenillas, Gerardo Aparicio, Amalia Avia, Tino Calabuig, and Alberto Corazón.

Valencians, Extremadurans, and Castilians” and called to invite them to make posters and signs to demonstrate against the Nacionales “in any way, orally or in writing, on foot or by car, in front of museums or on the street.”⁷⁹

In the face of these calls for protest, the administration attempted to assuage worry and tried to justify their decisions to other arts professionals. As a result, senior curator for the General Directorate, Luis González Robles, issued a statement responding to the public calls for protest.⁸⁰ In the tone of paternalistic justification, González Robles defended the administration’s purposeful decision to go about reform “little by little,” especially for an important event that had been around for 114 years. For one, he explained that a major objective had been to decentralize the event, although too loose a formulation would lead to chaos, thereby leading the reform committee to look to the locales of the ESBA as natural sites for the regional exhibitions; since the Ministry of Education planned to keep creating new art schools and then link them to local universities, the number of sites would continue to grow. González Robles then reasoned that he too wanted to abolish the prizes altogether, and for that reason, they had been eliminated from the final, national phase, but that in the meantime it was “administratively impossible” to end them altogether this year, because they had been budgeted already. He ended his letter by inviting suggestions, as long as they were to be constructive.

The large extent to which art students were drawn into AAP organizing may be seen as they too became vocal actors in the campaign. In response to the aforementioned statement, Gerardo Aparicio, ESBA Madrid student and representative to the AAP, replied to González

⁷⁹ “...de cualquier forma, oralmente o por escrito, a pie, o en coche, frente a los museos o en la calle...” “Posicionamiento crítico ante las Exposiciones Nacionales,” 1970, Arch. RC 101, Archivo Redor-Calabuig, MNCARS.

⁸⁰ It is not clear whether this letter was issued in the press or mailed to artists whose addresses were on file. Letter from Luis González Robles, dated May 1970, Folder: Expo. Nacional de Arte Contemporáneo de 1.970: Fase Nacional, Box 699, (03)110, AGA.

Robles on May 21, 1970. While Aparicio unconvincingly stated that his letter expressed his own opinion, and not that of the AAP, he proceeded to explicate the reasoning behind the AAP's campaign of non-participation.⁸¹ For one, the exhibition was "not representative at all of Spanish artistic values, whether current or past."⁸² Aparicio described a situation in which, even after the reforms, the biennials were designed to take place almost without artists entirely. The selection process for those to sit on the panel of judges, for example, was done "at the height of anti-democratic bureaucracy," in which academics, whose average age was estimated to be about seventy years old, prevailed.⁸³ Aparicio tried to appeal to González Robles' personal artistic tastes and past role as successful promoter of modern art: "So sad is the situation when the artists who you no doubt consider representative of contemporary Spanish art are the ones who are marginalized."⁸⁴ Aparicio ended by explaining that if artists had not spoken up previously it was because they had not yet channeled their efforts, which they were doing at the present time via the AAP, which (he exaggerated) included the entire student body of the Escuela Superior de Bellas Artes of Madrid.

The AAP would ensure that this rich environment of protest continued throughout the spring and summer. Most likely to clarify what had to date been only short statements, the AAP issued a longer and more detailed manifesto that while undated, must have been made public in early June of 1970. This time, high-profile visual artist Manolo Millares authored the so-called "Open letter from Spanish visual artists" having been signed this time by 400 artists and intellectuals. The statement acknowledged that for the first time Spain's artists were uniting to

⁸¹ Letter from Gerardo Aparicio to Luis González Robles, May 21, 1970, Box 52, Folder 1, Fondo FPE, UNAG.

⁸² "...no es representativa en lo absoluto de los valores artísticos españoles, ya sean actuales o pasados." Ibid.

⁸³ "...a la altura burocrática anti-democrática..." Ibid.

⁸⁴ "Triste es la situación máxime cuando de ella, se hallan marginados los artistas que usted no dudo considerara representativos, de arte plástico español actual." Ibid.

give shape to “a nonexistent cultural and artistic policy” in their proposal for a new Nacionales, which the General Directorate had not only neglected, but moreover, plagiarized.⁸⁵ To claim that the administration was clueless about what artists wanted was a frequent claim; to suggest, however, that it had stolen ideas from the artists was a new accusation in this campaign, and would only be factually accurate if the regional/national model had in fact first been an AAP-driven idea. Otherwise, the same criticisms present from the beginning were advanced here, especially the need to get away from the elite nature of an event that both denied the voices of the artists, and continued to make art competitive. For such reasons, Millares reaffirmed the importance of the campaign of non-participation. On a practical level, this statement also signaled the fact that even the hosting of multiple regional iterations still neglected many regions of Spain. The manifesto ended by explaining that this abstention was just a “first step in achieving the integration of the artist in a future and fair society.”⁸⁶

Millares’ manifesto followed by several pages of signatures was sent directly to the office of the director general with an accompanying explanatory letter, written to further clarify the AAP’s reasons for sponsoring their campaign of non-participation.⁸⁷ The document’s authors reiterated five numbered points, placing new emphasis on a practical matter. There existed in the bylaws an illogical expectation of where artists who wanted to participate in the regional exhibitions were meant to send their artworks: “half of Galicia must go to Bilbao, the other half to Madrid...part of Aragon will go to Barcelona, part to Valencia; [those from] the Canary Islands will send [their artworks] to Madrid. In addition, the artists pay for the shipment of their

⁸⁵ “...una política cultural y artística inexistente...” “Carta abierta de los artistas plásticos españoles,” Box 870, (03)110, AGA, but also reprinted in Mónica Núñez Laiseca, *Arte y política en la España del desarrollismo (1962-1968)* (Madrid: CSIC, 2006), 99 and García García, *Tiempo de estrategias*, 61.

⁸⁶ “...un paso primerizo para conseguir la integración del artista en una sociedad futura y justa.” “Carta abierta...”

⁸⁷ “Informe ampliación a la carta de abstención a las Exposiciones Nacionales de Bellas Artes, presentada por los artistas plásticos al Excmo. Sr. Director General de Bellas Artes,” undated, Arch. RC 103, Archivo Redor-Calabuig, MNCARS.

artworks, their return, and the corresponding import duties.”⁸⁸ Another area of emphasis was showing how the money normally reserved for prizes should be otherwise spent: to make entry to the event free for all, to host daily film screenings, workshops and symposia, and to provide ample advertising. Ending this grievance with a militant tone, the artists explained in their final paragraph: “We firmly believe that the General Directorate should reconsider its proposals and not forget that, as an organ of the administration, it owes its existence to that of the visual artists and not vice versa.”⁸⁹ In this display of surprising ferocity toward the regime, the artists insinuated that their proposals be considered, or else.

If the AAP’s only goal was to encourage artists’ abstention, then they could have ended their campaign in June. With the regional exhibitions already open as of that month, there was nothing else the campaign could achieve on a practical level. For example, the arts apparatus had weathered the storm without having made any last-minute changes at the AAP’s urging, nor was the campaign likely to encourage any more abstention after the regional exhibitions had already opened. With practical deadlines passed, however, now artists were mobilized simply around their distaste of the arts apparatus and its unwillingness to include them in artistic life in general. That the AAP went to the press and continued to make demands demonstrated the extent to which they wanted to drive the point home to the General Directorate that the official version of artistic life could no longer count on artists’ popular support. For example, the AAP gave a press conference on June 9, 1970, ensuring that the contents of the manifesto and accompanying letter would be disseminated widely. Articles about the artists’ campaign of non-participation and their

⁸⁸ “Media Galicia deberá acudir a Bilbao, la otra media a Madrid...; parte de Aragón irá a Barcelona, parte a Valencia; las Canarias enviarán a Madrid, pagando además los artistas los envíos de las obras, su retorno y los correspondientes derechos de importación temporal de estas...” “Informe ampliación a la carta...”

⁸⁹ “Creemos firmemente que la Dirección General debe reconsiderar sus postulados y no olvidar que en tanto órgano de la Administración debe su existencia a la de los Artistas Plásticos y no viceversa.” Ibid.

main reasons for the abstention proliferated in the press.⁹⁰ While an article would appear in a publication of the General Directorate later in the year in an attempt to defend the position of the arts apparatus,⁹¹ the summer news was dominated by AAP's point of view. The proliferation of an alternative space for publishing, opened by Fraga's 1966 Press Law and exploited by civil society, certainly contributed to the success of the AAP's campaign.⁹² In soliciting large amounts of public attention, the AAP was trying to leave no doubt in the eyes of the arts apparatus that artists would prevail.

The AAP's continued interactions with Pérez Embid reveal that even with the campaign in full swing, the same extant dynamic between them continued. Pérez Embid on behalf of the General Directorate would appear willing to entertain suggestions while at the same time, having no intention whatsoever to relinquish control. Members of the AAP met with Pérez Embid on June 16, 1970, after which he wrote to summarize the contents of what had transpired at that morning's meeting with representatives of the group.⁹³ After first soliciting suggestions as to which exhibitions the General Directorate should prepare for the following year, Pérez Embid asked for a "critical analysis" of the 1970 bylaws, including not only the negative critiques, but also the language for "new articles or paragraphs that should be introduced." Lastly, the director general solicited the AAP for a response to his most recent proposals: that for the upcoming

⁹⁰ The date of the press conference was mentioned in Arch. RC 102. Some examples include: Luis Carandell "La Nacional de Bellas Artes: 500 artistas proclaman la abstención," *Triunfo*, from June 20, 1970, pp. 8-9; "Quinientos artistas justifican su abstención: El Comisario de Exposiciones razona el nuevo reglamento," *Arriba*, June 11, 1970; "Exposición Nacional de Bellas Artes: K.O. en el primer "round": el nuevo reglamento provoca la deserción masiva de los artistas," *Pueblo*, June 12, 1970; "Quinientos artistas plásticos no participarán en la Nacional de Bellas Artes," *Madrid*, June 10, 1970: 13.

⁹¹ Joaquín de la Puente, "Las Exposiciones Nacionales, ayer y en 1970," *Bellas Artes* 5 (Nov 1970): 25-28.

⁹² The argument for the unintended consequences of the Press Law and civil society's ability to exploit the opportunity to push a pluralistic alternative to that of the regime are explained in Javier Muñoz Soro, "Public Opinion and Political Culture in a Post-Fascist Dictatorship (1957-77)," in *From Franco to Freedom: The Roots of the Transition to Democracy in Spain, 1962-1982*, ed. Miguel Ángel Ruiz Carnicer (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2019), 114-116.

⁹³ Florentino Pérez Embid to Juan Ignacio Cárdenas, June 16, 1970, Arch. RC 106, Archivo Redor-Calabuig, MNCARS.

autumnal *national* phase, the AAP could suggest artists who would be invited to participate, and second, that a special separate exhibition could be planned that would run concurrently with the National Exhibition.

The director general's invitation for suggestions should be understood as a purposefully obtuse olive branch, demonstrating the General Directorate's nominal willingness to consider suggestions without any actual intent in doing so. Of course, by this point, Pérez Embid knew exactly how the AAP felt about the Nacionales, what their position was, and what kinds of substantive changes they wanted to see. The AAP found the invitation to make suggestions to the administration as a slap in the face. After the June 16 meeting, someone who had been present there, most likely AAP founding member Federico "Tino" Calabuig, issued a report to members recalling the meeting, speculating as to what the administration was really thinking, and lastly, articulating how the association should respond.⁹⁴ The author explained that the arts apparatus must have become alarmed and was starting to realize that their own reforms were a failure. For the time being, the author explained, the administration was still seeking to work with the AAP, rather than simply dismissing cooperation with it altogether. This report's author also mused over what he assumed Pérez Embid was thinking: "He is willing to utilize the reforms that we propose, but I say 'utilize' because throughout the conversation, I arrived at the conclusion that if he wants us to participate, we should do it through him, this is to say, supplying him with ideas, free of charge, but without the decision-making power, nor that of intervention."⁹⁵ For example, the author speculated that Pérez Embid would never concede to creating a panel of judges half

⁹⁴ "Informe sobre la conversación con el Director Gral. de B.A.," undated, Arch. RC 110, Archivo Redor-Calabuig, MNCARS.

⁹⁵ "Que está dispuesto a utilizar las reformas que le proponemos, digo utilizar, porque a lo largo de la conversación llegué a la conclusión de que si bien quiere que participemos, lo hagamos a través de él, es decir proporcionándole ideas, gratuitamente pero sin poder de decisión, ni de intervención." Ibid.

comprised of artists. To avoid being exploited, the author recommended remaining as a united front, and not compromising any of the AAP's fundamental positions; most important was not to provide ideas in which AAP members could be implicated later in providing suggestions for reform that would only be used to reinforce the extant situation.

As with the AAP's first reply to the General Directorate after the new bylaws were published, the organization likewise spared no time in responding to Pérez Embid, who apparently had been surprised at the group's collective formation without a single head.⁹⁶ In a short and biting letter dated June 20, and authored by Mateo Tito, Eduardo Arenillas, Ignacio Iraola, Gómez Perales, and Angiola Bonanni in representation of the AAP, the authors expressed regret that Pérez Embid had not attended their recent assembly, the last before the summer recess, in which they agreed to be in contact with artists throughout Spain about his proposals – hinting at the widespread extent of their organizing.⁹⁷ They reiterated that the association's opinion about the Nacionales had already been articulated in their draft proposal, and invited Pérez Embid to attend a meeting once they re-resumed in the fall.

While both sides were waging a calculated battle, the General Directorate made some missteps that only exacerbated the tense atmosphere, further alienating itself from some of the last well-known artists who would have been willing to collaborate in some capacity with the arts apparatus. For the opening of the national iteration in Bilbao, Pérez Embid had been seeking a high-profile artist whose works could be featured separately, hoping for sculptures by Eduardo Chillida. Correspondence with a contact of Chillida's, Javier de Ybarra, explained that while the sculptor's artworks had already been committed for an exhibition in Zurich in October, he would

⁹⁶ "Reunion de Intercomisiones, 18 de junio de 1970," Box 867, Folder 1, Archivo Arenillas, Archivo Central, MNCARS.

⁹⁷ Letter to the Director General of Fine Arts, June 20, 1970. Arch. RC 108, Archivo Redor-Calabuig, MNCARS.

still send along a piece or two for display.⁹⁸ A week later, Ybarra was forced again to write to Pérez Embid, this time explaining that the sculptor had called him upset because “without checking with him, he had been appointed to the panel of judges for the regional exhibition, a position he did not accept.”⁹⁹ Due to this blunder on the part of the General Directorate, Ybarra informed Pérez Embid that Chillida would no longer provide the sculpture he had previously promised. In his handwritten postscript, Ybarra explained that he managed to prevent Chillida from going to the press about this whole matter. Ybarra’s effort did not matter in the end, however, because as soon as the AAP found out about the General Directorate’s plotting with not only Chillida, but also Pablo Serrano, they utilized their well-practiced tactic of taking this incident to the press.¹⁰⁰

The Movimiento and Others Respond to the Reform

Beyond the vociferous campaign of the AAP, the General Directorate had to face reactions of confusion and refusals of participation from other artists as well. Even likely supporters from other official channels such as the Movimiento’s vertical artists’ syndicate, the Agrupación Nacional Sindical de Bellas Artes, known by its acronym ANSIBA, were displeased both with the group’s official absence from the reform process and the resulting structure of the new Nacionales. Upset at being neglected from the process of reform and not being given a permanent post in the organizational structure of the new version of the exhibition-cum-contest,

⁹⁸ Letter from Javier de Ybarra to Florentino Pérez Embid, June 1, 1970. Box 053, Folder 1, Fondo FPE, UNAG.

⁹⁹ “...porque sin contar con él se le había nombrado del Jurado de la Exposición Regional y que no aceptaba el cargo.” Letter from Javier de Ybarra to Florentino Pérez Embid, June 8, 1970. Box 053, Folder 1, Fondo FPE, UNAG.

¹⁰⁰ Luis Carandell, “La Nacional de Bellas Artes: 500 artistas proclaman la abstención,” *Triunfo*, no. 420, June 20, 1970: 8-9. This article features pictures of both Chillida and Serrano, and makes explicit that they were included on the list of the panel of judges without having been consulted. Mention of the AAP’s surprised reaction at seeing Chillida and Serrano’s name on the judges list, and then confronting the artists personally is recounted in Arch. RC 102, Archivo Redor-Calabuig, MNCARS.

ANSIBA members felt slighted and were divided over whether or not to participate.¹⁰¹ Others, not tied in to other artists' groupings, expressed their individual confusion over how the new structure of the event was meant to affect them. All artists' reactions demonstrate either their dismay or quiet resignation at having been left out of a process made in their name, although undertaken without any popular participation.

The case of ANSIBA is demonstrative of how Pérez Embid made decisions without considering even other official bodies of artists. Neglecting to consider a group that could have offered even a modicum of popular support would turn out to be a poor decision that served to alienate those who, if considered, could have been the reform's biggest supporters. The idea that within the Movimiento's vertical union structure should be a grouping to represent visual artists specifically was first imagined in 1963, and the group became official two years later.¹⁰² This date is consistent with the Movimiento's push to become more relevant in Spaniards' lives, and to continue to find avenues for mobilization after the late 1950s governmental reorganization saw a decline in the party's power at the top echelon of the state apparatus. In line with the Movimiento's idea of establishing corporatist control, the group's bylaws reveal that the union wanted to make itself indispensable to official activities, and seemed to be pushing for the

¹⁰¹ We know, for example, that ANSIBA member Julio Prieto Nespereira had served on the judging panel of the 1968 Nacionales, and he was even a member of the advisory committee to reform the Nacionales, although I do not see any evidence that he was there as a representative of ANSIBA. He appears to have been invited to these roles in in capacity as printmaker (*grabador*), and his membership in ANSIBA was merely incidental.

¹⁰² There had already been a rather disorganized catch-all vertical syndicate known as the Sindicato Nacional de Actividades Diversas, within which there was a branch for arts and crafts (Obra Sindical de Artesanía). At some point in 1963, members pushed for a group for visual artists only. Juan Albarrán Diego, "Lo profesional es político: Trabajo artístico, movimientos sociales y militancia política en el último franquismo," *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma. Serie VII*. 3 (2015): 251.

eventual goal, however unlikely, that all artists who wanted to work in Spain should become a member.¹⁰³

While it would be wrong to ascribe to ANSIBA the same kind of inclusive, democratic participation as that adopted by the AAP, the group's leadership nevertheless believed that artists, not officials, were the should-be protagonists of the Nacionales. (Of course, when ANSIBA leaders mentioned artists, they meant their own group's members.) Unlike the AAP, ANSIBA's official stance was one of support with the formality and structure of the Nacionales. As early as April 1970, the board of directors of ANSIBA wrote to Pérez Embid in reaction to the adapted bylaws, in which the group was not named or included.¹⁰⁴ The memo was not shy to express that the ANSIBA leadership believed that the new bylaws represented not an improvement, but actually a regression of what had already existed. The ability of artists to serve on the panel of judges, for example, had been reduced from what it once was. The amount of prize money was still inferior to what it should be, and finally, the awarding of prizes at the regional exhibitions only detracted from the more serious national event. Throughout the memo, ANSIBA leadership reiterated that it was very much at the General Directorate's disposition, basically begging to be consulted for suggestions before the new Nacionales premiered.

Thus, while the nature of protest emanated from opposite positions, the resulting disappointment of both the ANSIBA and the AAP was similar. Both groups felt as though they had offered suggestions that participating artists actually wanted to see implemented that went completely ignored. Unlike with the AAP, however, in which Pérez Embid showed no sincere attempt at cooperation, the director general reached out to ANSIBA head Álvaro Delgado to

¹⁰³ While there was no mechanism to make Spaniards in any sector join these vertical syndicates during the late Francoist period, the ANSIBA leadership nevertheless envisaged their role as establishing a formal, mandatory artists' union. ANSIBA Estatutos (Madrid: Agrupación Nacional Sindical de Bellas Artes, 1965).

¹⁰⁴ ANSIBA Memo, April 1970. 003/144/090, Fondo FPE, UNAG.

attempt to placate him. For example, in a letter, Pérez Embid offered to enlist one of ANSIBA's governing members to the judges' panel in Madrid, to which Delgado responded declining all ANSIBA participation in the National Exhibition of 1970.¹⁰⁵ Delgado explained that while the board of directors of the association appreciated the invitation, "having been our Board's spokespersons of the disagreement with the current Exhibition's statutes, we estimate with all cordiality, that morally, we should not accept such an offer."¹⁰⁶ Delgado, in a personal handwritten letter to Pérez Embid dated the following month, had to again decline to join the panel of judges, reiterating his position that he thought it best not to get involved as he had spoken out against the new bylaws, prompting the association's subsequent internal disagreements over the National Exhibition.¹⁰⁷ That the director general tried at least twice in writing to appeal to Delgado revealed a sense of disbelief that an organization such as the official artists' union would also decline to participate. Feeling among ANSIBA members did not improve, as even later in the year, the president of ANSIBA's parent organization, Juan García Carrés, wrote directly to Minister Villar Palasí to explain that the group's members were disappointed because the administration had not retained any of its promises, such as providing the group with a subvention. García Carrés explained that this group should be supported, because rather than waging a campaign against the administration, clearly alluding to the AAP, they were choosing purposely this official channel.¹⁰⁸

While the general trend was one of rejection and derision with the design of the supposedly new National Exhibition, occasionally one finds a voice of approval – although not

¹⁰⁵ Letter from Álvaro Delgado to Florentino Pérez Embid, May 21, 1970, Box 52, Folder 1, Fondo FPE, UNAG.

¹⁰⁶ "...habiendo sido portavoces de la disconformidad de la Directiva de esta Asociación, con los Estatutos de la actual convocatoria, estimamos con toda cordialidad, que moralmente no debemos aceptar dicho ofrecimiento." Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Letter from Álvaro Delgado to Florentino Pérez Embid, June 2, 1970, Box 53, Folder 1, Fondo FPE, UNAG.

¹⁰⁸ Juan García Carrés to José Luis Villar Palasí, November 13, 1970, Box 59, Folder 2, Fondo FPE, UNAG.

without its own distinct criticism. Having heard of the protests emanating from “certain Madrid-based artists,” Bilbao based sculptor and potter, Arturo Acebal Idígoras, and painter, A. Santafé Largacha, wrote to Pérez Embid in April of 1970 to express their appreciation of the new bylaws, which dictated that the arts event would take place in their home city. The artists’ message of approval was counterbalanced, however, with their closing sentiment divulging the consistent lack of regime-provided artistic opportunity: “In the provinces, we have always endured an unfair policy of Fine Arts with too much resignation, but with dignity.”¹⁰⁹ In another case, and in terms that substantiate the longstanding criticism of the Nacionales as only useful as a professional credential, a letter from artist and frequent Nacionales entrant, Alberto Duce Vaquero, expressed genuine confusion about how the new bylaws might affect him professionally.¹¹⁰ Duce explained that he had always participated in the Nacionales with the hopes of winning first prize, as that would advance his career in as faculty member at the ESBA. This year, however, now that the prizes no longer existed at the national level, Duce wanted to know what the equivalent accolade would be in the structure of the new Nacionales: “What award or prize of the current Nacionales de Arte Contemporáneo, allows its recipients to present themselves at the examination for chair at the Escuelas Superiores de Bellas Artes?”¹¹¹

The Last Nacionales and the Admission of a Failed Reform: 1970-72

While the regional phase of the 1970 National Exhibition was taking place, there were already reports from within the administration that the attempts at reform had failed. The

¹⁰⁹ “En provincias hemos soportado de siempre una injusta política de Bellas Artes con demasiada resignación, pero con dignidad.” Arturo Acebal and A. Santafé Largacha to Pérez Embid, April 28, 1970, Box 50, Folder 2, Fondo FPE, UNAG.

¹¹⁰ Letter from Alberto Duce Vaquero to Florentino Pérez Embid, May 9, 1970. Box 699, Folder: Exposición Nacional de Arte Contemporáneo. Año 1970. Fases Regionales: Sevilla, Valencia, Madrid, Bilbao, Barcelona, (03)110, AGA.

¹¹¹ “¿Qué galardón o Premio de las actuales Nacionales de Arte Contemporáneo, permite a los poseedores presentarse a las oposiciones de Catedra de las Escuelas Superiores de Bellas Artes?” Ibid.

campaign of non-participation successfully drove the point home to the official arts apparatus that if it failed to listen to Spain's artists, official Spanish art would not be worthy of them. Not only did the General Directorate admit on several occasions to internal sources that the reform had not gone as planned, but the office also made concerted attempts to bypass the new prizes. In the first instance, although still at the stage of a subtle hint to a larger problem, was Pérez Embid's letter sent to the five regional heads on June 5, 1970. Clearly concerned that not enough high-quality artworks appeared, he didn't want the bureaucratic awarding of prizes for efficiency's sake to damage the reputation of the new National Exhibition. The director general reminded his provincial heads of Fine Arts, in no uncertain terms, that only deserving artworks should win prizes, and that it would be perfectly acceptable if the prizes were declared "*desiertos*" (un-awarded), even if it meant that many prize slots remained vacant.¹¹² Around this same time, a judge on the selection committee for the Barcelona iteration, Alberto del Castillo, wrote to Pérez Embid "seriously concerned" about the poor quality of artworks presented: "The exhibition, as it stands, will be a disaster." Without pointing fingers at anyone in particular, Castillo suggested that perhaps not enough special deals had been made or underhanded tactics utilized to encourage the country's renowned artists to participate.¹¹³ Of course, as we have seen, it was not in Pérez Embid's repertoire to twist arms or threaten reprisals. Later, in the postscript of a letter to Luis González Robles in mid-June, Pérez Embid wrote in a beleaguered but still authoritative tone explaining the ultimate goal of undertaking yet another modification of the bylaws. He implied the need to just soldier on through the time that the regional exhibitions were

¹¹² Letter from Florentino Pérez Embid to Iñigo Álvarez de Toledo Mencos, June 5, 1970. Box 053, Folder 1, Fondo FPE, UNAG.

¹¹³ "La exposición, tal como queda, será un fracaso." Letter from Alberto del Castillo to Pérez Embid, June 11, 1970. Box 053, Folder 2, Fondo FPE, UNAG.

open, and then, in the autumn, “take to heart that the national phase is not a piece of crap.”¹¹⁴ At this stage, still with hope that he would be able to convince some of the boycotting artists to participate, Pérez Embid offhandedly mentioned that the General Directorate would probably have to sponsor an “Exposición Informativa 1970,” using the name the AAP gave to their draft plan, to reach those artists who did not want to participate.

The decision to leave prizes vacant was not only an administrative strategy to save face, it was also a tactic utilized by some judges to express non-cooperation with how the event was organized. In Valencia, when members of the panel of judges met on July 20, 1970 to choose the award recipients, they heeded all too well Pérez Embid’s suggestion to only assign prizes if they were truly deserved. Three members of the panel “noting their disagreement with the traditional system of prizes,” abstained from making any selections at all (Vicente Aguilera Cerni, Jose Iranzo (“Anzo”), and Ernesto Contreras Taboada), while other judges (Furió, Lahuerta, Garín, and Lozano) voted for very few of the slots. The *Gran Premio Regional* remained vacant, as with all of the prizes in the painting and sculpture categories. Within ‘Drawing,’ the first place remained vacant, with second place going to Arturo Heras for *Remord posthume*, and third prize to Francisco Baños Martos for *Modulaciones estructurales*. Within ‘Printmaking,’ a second-place prize was awarded to Luis Valdés Canet.¹¹⁵ Lastly, the panel decided unanimously that the money that otherwise would have gone for prizes, would go toward acquisitions of artworks for the Museo de Valencia.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ “...tomar a pecho que la fase nacional no sea una birria...” Letter from Pérez Embid to Luis González Robles, June 15, 1970. Box 053, Folder 2, Fondo FPE, UNAG.

¹¹⁵ The confirmed list of prizes appears in the exhibition catalog: *Exposición Nacional de Arte Contemporáneo, Catálogo General 1970* (Madrid: Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, Dirección General de Bellas Artes, Comisaría General de Exposiciones, 1971).

¹¹⁶ “Acta de la sesión del Jurado de la Fase Regional de Valencia, de la Exposición Nacional de Arte Contemporáneo, correspondiente al día 20 de julio del 1970,” Folder: Exposición Nacional de Arte Contemporáneo. Año 1970. Fases Regionales: Sevilla, Valencia, Madrid, Bilbao, Barcelona; and “Acta de la Sesión celebrada por la

Lasting ramifications of the AAP's non-participation campaign outlived its activities in the spring, summer, and early fall of 1970. After the passage of the 1970 national iteration of the event, the AAP's efforts as arts apparatus watchdog faded away. The association largely moved on, focusing efforts elsewhere to build their own artistic universe, rather than seeking to challenge the regime's official policies. The group hosted its own exhibitions, continued to organize and meet under a precarious legal status until 1972, and at least two founding members, Calabuig and Corazón, poured their energies into their non-traditional art gallery and workshop, the Galería Redor.

The artists' complete disavowal of the administration was matched, however, with the exact opposite reaction of the General Directorate toward the AAP and Spain's artists. In making decisions that completely belied a sincere understanding of the problem of artist non-participation, the General Directorate doubled down on its reforms for the 1972 iteration of the Nacionales. Still following the dual regional-national model, the revised bylaws resembled to an even greater degree the AAP's draft for *Informativa 70*.¹¹⁷ This time around, the process of reform did not even include the pretense of an internal democratic process, as Pérez Embid almost definitely made the decisions on his own or over the course of informal conversations with his second-in-command, Ramón Falcón, or other General Directorate higher-ups such as González Robles. Despite the modifications, which must have seemed significant to the General Directorate, the event still had a hard time shedding its rigid frame of Francoist officialdom. For example, 1972 was the first year ever for which there were no formal prizes given at all, although the monies normally assigned for them were still utilized by the General Directorate to

Junta Superior Calificadora de la Exposición Nacional de Arte Contemporáneo 1970," undated, Folder: Expo. Nacional de Arte Contemporáneo de 1.970: Fase Nacional, Box 699, (03)110, AGA.

¹¹⁷ Orden de 28 de enero de 1972 por la que se aprueba el Reglamento de las Exposiciones Nacionales de Arte Contemporáneo, *BOE*, no. 33, February 8, 1972.

buy works it liked for the state's collection, and still only some works would be chosen to move from the first phase to the second. A new category was created entitled "New Techniques," which would allow for performance art, group projects, found objects, or "happenings," although the event still divided submissions into strict categories. Trying to appeal to the idea that as many artists should be involved as possible, the regional phase was projected to take place in twelve locations, rather than only the five cities home to the ESBAs.¹¹⁸ The structure of the selection panel still did not allow for at least half of its members to be artists, and an advisory committee would be created to determine which works the state should acquire, and for what price. After the summertime regional exhibitions, the national version of the event would open in Madrid in December with 159 artworks in total, with the exhibition then touring the country over the course of 1973.¹¹⁹

As with the admission of failure the last time around, officials' comments in 1972 followed the same pattern, but were even more demonstrative of total failure. In this case, the provincial head of Fine Arts in La Coruña explained that despite efforts "to negotiate with various artists...for their contribution," there was not enough quality artwork submitted by entrants to host a regional exhibition in the Galician city, and they withdrew from the event altogether.¹²⁰ In Granada, so few artworks were submitted that the committee simply accepted all entries.¹²¹ The provincial head of Sevilla explained that they also did not have many artworks to

¹¹⁸ The AAP's "Anteproyecto" had called for "Preinformativas" in nine cities. The twelve cities identified for regional phases were: Barcelona, Bilbao, Granada, La Coruña, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Madrid, Palma de Mallorca, Salamanca, Sevilla, Valencia, Valladolid, and Zaragoza, as reported in Carlos Luaces, "La Administración del Estado: Exposición Nacional de Bellas Artes," *Nuevo Diario*, February 13, 1972, 5.

¹¹⁹ *Exposición Nacional de Arte Contemporáneo, 1972: ilustraciones: catálogo*: Salas de Exposiciones de la Dirección General de Bellas Artes, Madrid, diciembre 1972 (Madrid: Dirección General de Bellas Artes, 1972).

¹²⁰ "...aun se intentó gestionar cerca de diversos artistas...su aportación..." Letter from Manuel Chamoso Lamas (Consejero Provincial de Bellas Artes de La Coruña) to Raul Diez, May 13, 1972, Box 850, Folder: Expo. Nal. Arte Contemporáneo de La Coruña (1972), (03)110, AGA.

¹²¹ Meeting minutes of the Granada regional committee, May 10, 1972, Box 850, Folder: Expo. Nacional de Arte Contemporáneo de Granada (1972), (03)110, AGA.

choose from, explaining that “the least bad were selected,” so as to not have to withdraw from the Nacionales entirely.¹²² Salamanca had nine artworks to contribute, while Granada had nineteen. Furthermore, in a strange move that was made fun of at the time, despite what had been recognized by all as the poor quality of artwork at the 1972 Nacionales, the state had chosen to buy an oddly large proportion of the artworks. One of the reasons offered was that the officials of the Museo Español de Arte Contemporáneo were desperately trying to collect enough artwork to fill the new museum building that was to open in the following year.¹²³ I believe we also cannot discount the General Directorate’s desperation in trying to make their revised Nacionales relevant.

While according to the pattern first established in the middle of the nineteenth century there should have been an iteration of the Nacionales to take place in 1974, one was never organized nor would be again. Still in 1976, at least one member of the arts apparatus continued to contemplate how to reform the bylaws for the Nacionales to get more artists to participate. One of the suggestions was to abolish all prizes, another was to include only invited artists,¹²⁴ and another was to have juries for each subcategory, Pérez Embid’s preferred idea from the late 1960s.¹²⁵ The arts apparatus was still stuck in a revolving door of the same bureaucratic ideas.

Conclusion

Evaluating the General Directorate of Fine Arts’ official reform of the National Exhibition of Fine Arts, and Spanish artists’ subsequent organized reaction to it, sheds light on a

¹²² Letter from José Maria Benjumea (Consejero Provincial de Bellas Artes de Sevilla) to Luis González Robles, June 16, 1972, Box 850, Folder: Expo. Nacional de Arte Contemporáneo de Sevilla (1972), (03)110, AGA.

¹²³ Juan Antonio Gaya Nuño, “El Museo de Arte Contemporáneo. Una broma pesada en Madrid,” *Diario de Barcelona*, September 1, 1974, as reproduced in Jiménez-Blanco, *Arte y Estado*, 297-299.

¹²⁴ Memo dated January 15, 1976, reproduced in Caparrós Masegosa, *Instituciones artísticas del franquismo*, 433-434

¹²⁵ Several documents in folder “Sugerencias para la convocatoria de la Exposición Nacional de BBAA. 1976,” Box 699, (03)110, AGA, detail cultural bureaucrat Antonio Amado’s planning.

number of key aspects of both internal regime dynamics as well as the result of a growing civil society able to mobilize into a social movement. It is a clear moment when artists' bottom-up efforts shaped Spanish domestic art policy irrevocably. The Asociación de Artistas Plásticos (AAP) promulgated a resilient campaign, in which its mobilization reached actors (visual artists, art critics, and art students) who did not all manifestly oppose the dictatorship, but who did come to fundamentally reject the regime's attitude toward artists' muted role in official artistic life. The AAP supported the democratization of access to the arts, including artists' entrance into official artistic life, a greater geographic diversity of arts events, and ultimately envisaged art as something that was non-competitive, something that should not be eligible to "win" anything. With these principles in mind, it makes sense that the AAP took issue with the format and structure of the Nacionales, but also why they felt compelled to issue their own proposal during the period of reform; if ever there was going to be a moment to try to change even one aspect of the General Directorate's programming, it was going to be during one of the only instances of its public-facing reforms. The campaign's success may be attributed to the skill of AAP organizing, whose messages resonated with an artistic community that had become accustomed to promulgating their own projects in the private sector in the face of official neglect toward the visual arts domestically, but also to the misguided responses of the arts apparatus that seemed genuinely confounded that their changes were not popular.

The General Directorate's reform of the Nacionales, and its reluctance to cede power to democratizing forces, provides a window into the regime's internal dynamics and the nature of governance under the dictatorship in its last, most contentious phase. Throughout the process it becomes evident that neither the interpretation that sees the regime as having liberalized, nor that which sees its decision making as the engine of repression, properly explain what happened here.

Pérez Embid's actions reveal a stance that was fundamentally unwilling and unable to democratize. He did not allow artists to have more of a say in affairs, nor did he even take most artists' suggestions into account until he received the first hints that the reform had done nothing to draw artists back toward the Nacionales. On the other hand, Pérez Embid did not promulgate reforms in the spirit of trying to punish artists; he believed he was making changes that they wanted. The dynamic that consistently rears its head, however, is one in which the regime undertook decisions that it tried to portray as serving a segment of the population, all the while undertaking a new policy to solve one of its own problems. First seriously contemplated only in 1968, the reform of the Nacionales arrived as the result of deciding that finally something should be done to address the problem of artists' absenteeism. The timing was influenced by entry onto the scene of Pérez Embid, as well as the minister of Education, each relatively new in their positions and wanting to make their mark by finally undertaking changes to something that had been mocked for decades. Zooming in on the details of exactly how the reform was undertaken allows us to see how Director General Pérez Embid's process was both anti-democratic and dismissive of suggestions that sought to move the event away from its status as an outdated remnant of the past century, such as those of artists Manuel Rivera and Pablo Serrano. It is extremely probable that an artist, likely one affiliated with the AAP, was the origin of Pérez Embid's idea to adopt for the Nacionales the two-part regional-national format. When the final version of the reformed event's bylaws emerged in March of 1970, very shortly after Pérez Embid had solicited the AAP's own proposal, that the new official format followed the letter of AAP suggestions, without adapting to the open, non-competitive spirit of them, only provided the AAP with yet more evidence of the regime's fundamental inability to cater to what Spanish artists wanted.

Led by the AAP, the campaign to boycott the Nacionales was the most successful in the late Francoist period in turning artists' absenteeism into outright and purposeful abstention. In many ways, then, the AAP's campaign was so successful precisely because it exposed for Spanish artists, and arguably the public at large, the truth of the fact that the arts apparatus was never going to democratize or liberalize to the point in which artists would have a genuine say in national artistic life. That the tactics used by organizers also relied upon the classic organizing of the workers' movement and that of clandestine political parties demonstrates the large extent to which the AAP's organizing had extended beyond simple associationism. The group effectively channeled the discontent of hundreds of Spanish artists to show the regime that their so-called reforms would be irrelevant if they did not bother to earnestly consider artists' wishes. A large part of the dynamic that had previously characterized regime-artist relations – the regime's lip service – was unearthed by the AAP for what it really was: a strategy of empty promises, an unwillingness to democratize, and a genuine lack of understanding as to why these facets of their behavior were a problem in the first place. If the regime had simply cancelled the Nacionales, they would have likely died away with little fanfare by contemporary artists, and perhaps the appearance of a few irate columns in the press by former award winners still hoping for the grand prize. The pretense of reform, however, opened the floodgates to a disgruntled, disenchanted, and increasingly well-organized artistic community ready to take matters into their own hands. No artists seemed surprised when the Nacionales died out after one more unsuccessful attempt to host them in 1972.

Chapter 6 – Art Education under Construction: The Case of the Escuela Superior de Bellas Artes of Madrid

When anatomy professor Antonio Fernández Curro resigned from his position as director of the state-run Escuela Superior de Bellas Artes (ESBA) of Madrid on February 11, 1971, he cited in his resignation letter the elements causing the “chaotic situation” that he had once felt compelled to solve when he first assumed the position in November of 1969. According to his account, he had been faced with “an evident divorce between the student population and part of the faculty,” conflicts with and between the school’s hourly staff, insufficient funds toward hiring and payroll, defects with the school building (non-operational elevators, heating, cafeteria, library, and auditorium), and the passage of a new curriculum that remained pending. He was also supposed to be preparing the school for its transition into becoming its own *facultad* at the University of Madrid.¹ As if these difficulties were not enough, Fernández Curro explained that all the while, “a general state of indiscipline” had predominated. Ultimately, he found this confluence of factors “more work than is humanly bearable.”²

Fernández Curro’s letter provides a window into another case study of conflict over art policy in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This chapter delves into the “chaotic situation” at the ESBA Madrid, the result of both long-standing structural problems with regime-controlled art education and an increase in civil society mobilizing, in this case by art students, and later, even faculty members. As in the debate over the Nacionales, the height of conflict surrounding the direction of arts education was likewise occasioned when the promised reforms of the General Directorate of Fine Arts of the Ministry of Education fell flat. Similar to tactics utilized by artists

¹ *Facultad*, or faculty, is the equivalent to a department or school within a larger university.

² “...una situación caótica...un manifiesto divorcio entre la población escolar y parte del profesorado...un estado general de indisciplina.” and “...un trabajo más de lo que humanamente es soportable.” Fernández Curro to the Director General of Fine Arts, February 11, 1971, Salida 2159, Archivo del Decanato de la Facultad de Bellas Artes (hereafter written as ADFBA), Universidad Complutense de Madrid (UCM).

in the last chapter, students and even faculty members will also turn increasingly to the growing independent press to publicize their demands. In this chapter, we see a trend in awareness and radicalization in which the students came to see what they once perceived as individual problems as part of an underlying structural problem with way that Francoist authorities dictated arts education. The case of the ESBA thus represents another case of “vertical” advocacy, but it also shows how the cumulative impact of these demands when paired with faculty members’ increasing frustrations over the years coalesced into the latter experiencing their own timeline of disillusionment, especially over the delays of the conversion of the art school into the university system. For both populations, artistic advocacy grew out of practical and pragmatic concerns, about basic educational and professional guarantees. As I will demonstrate, however, the regime’s inability to address such concerns would result in a shared student and faculty lack of confidence in its ability to govern.

Student mobilization ramped up with the guidance of trusted advisors. That which began independently in the fall of 1966 as a demand for the regular functioning of classes would be funneled by the Asociación de Artistas Plásticos (AAP) beginning during the 1969-1970 school year into a multi-pronged, comprehensive campaign demanding major curricular reforms to art education from the Ministry of Education. With social capital in the form of AAP advising and guidance, students would begin to understand that what they saw as one-time problems were actually part of a deeper underlying top-down inattention toward arts education. Through the process of making demands for an updated curriculum and inclusion in designing the shape of their own education, art students came to see how a lack of concern and rigidity from the top down had created an entire system in need of “radical reconsideration.”³ Quick to understand

³ This phrase comes from the title of a tripartite survey that appeared in the Spanish press. Over the course of March 1971, survey respondents were asked to weigh in about whether they believed Spanish art schools required “simple

that they were more likely to gain concessions from their own school's *dirección* (the board of tenured faculty members who made up the school's leadership) rather than the General Directorate, students increasingly made demands of their faculty members. While a small number of student activists deeply involved with the AAP were certainly important to student mobilization, quotidian issues – especially persistent shortcomings with the new ESBA school building as of its opening in October 1967 – served as a cornerstone for much larger numbers of the student body to also become involved.⁴

In addition to the higher-ups of the General Directorate and the art students, a third protagonist in this story are the faculty members. Their story is significant both because of their own process of disillusionment with officialdom and due to their status as interlocutors between the regime and students. In the first case, faculty members' disenchantment followed a timeline with a later starting point than that of the students, but both groups ended in the same place by the mid-1970s. Faculty mobilization was framed around the perpetual delay of the school's integration into the university system. First articulated in the Ministry of Education's General Education Law [LGE; Ley General de Educación] in August of 1970, the process turned into an almost decade-long affair. Faculty members would adopt their students' strategy of taking demands to the growing independent press, and would stage their own protest, refusing to hold classes until the regime took action.

In the second case, as evidenced by Fernández Curro's resignation letter, the ESBA Madrid's faculty members were often put in a difficult position, attending to student demands

reform, or radical reconsideration." José María Ballester, "Escuelas de Bellas Artes ¿simple reforma o replanteamiento radical?" *Madrid*, March 11, 1971, 17-19; March 18, 1971, 18; and March 25, 1971, 19.

⁴ The importance of everyday issues toward student organizing in Brazil during roughly the same period, in the context of a regime of even more severe state-sponsored violence toward students, is explained in Colin M. Snider, "'Deficient Education,' 'Academic Questions,' and Student Movements: Universities and the Politics of the Everyday in Brazil's Military Dictatorship, 1969-1979," *The Americas* 75, no. 4 (October 2018): 699-732.

while also managing the requests, expectations, and admonitions of their superiors, from whom they often needed permission to act. Faculty were, for the most part, sympathetic to student demands even when they did not grant them, but were at the same time wary of doing anything to cause further student unrest. Written correspondence between the faculty members and bureaucrats of the General Directorate of Fine Arts always seems to convey many layers of communication. While always polite, faculty members always treaded a thin line between wanting to appear competent, while at the same time soliciting help, money, or seeking approval. Permanent faculty members also could be rather protective of the official way of proceeding, and genuinely appreciative of regime efforts. There is evidence that many faculty members were exceedingly dubious of any competing initiatives that they deemed might weaken their position, and as all of them came up through the same educational system in which they were later teaching, they largely proved rather suspicious of too much change.⁵

The case study of the ESBA Madrid and its protagonists illustrates yet another example of the fact that civil society mobilization in the final period of the regime was directly correlated to the arts apparatus's continued attempts to portray their lackluster reforms as something for Spaniards' betterment. In this case, the General Directorate demonstrated a persistent neglect of arts education. As with the case of the artists' demands for the Nacionales, the General Directorate of Fine Arts fundamentally was unable and unwilling to shed its rigid bureaucratic authoritarianism toward the widespread change being demanded. Yet again, the dynamic in regime-civilian relations emerges in which there was neither a clear trajectory of regime-led

⁵ When the director of the Fomento de las Artes y de la Estética (F.A.E.), a privately-owned center of arts education in Madrid, consulted with the General Directorate of Fine Arts to see whether his institution could be deemed an 'escuela superior,' government officials appointed three ESBA Madrid faculty members to tour the site and report back with their assessment. For reasons that did not seem to carry much weight, the report's authors overwhelmingly opposed the F.A.E.'s eligibility, and the site was denied. Report dated February 21, 1969, Salida 1534, ADFBA.

repression nor liberalization. In their relationships with ESBA faculty members, the members of the General Directorate of Fine Arts expressed a willingness to take meetings, settle problems, and offer advice. This appearance of helpfulness, however, did not translate into action. And unlike their inveterate counterparts within the general directorate pertaining to university education, familiar with a constant barrage of student demands and organizing, members of Fine Arts almost seemed to resent that they had to field student and faculty concerns. Quick to suggest applying policies that enforced the letter of the law, such bureaucrats often did not understand the precarious position of faculty members in trying to strike a careful balance in channeling student demands. As characteristic of the regime's nature, they also never even bothered to provide an excuse for why certain bureaucratic actions – such as the art school's merging into the university – should be consistently neglected and postponed.

This case study builds on the rich scholarship of the student movement, while highlighting features specific to art students.⁶ Many scholars of the late Franco dictatorship and the Transition agree that among the groups who did the most to oppose the dictatorship were university students. One in particular has identified students as being one of the groups that presented a real challenge to the dictatorship in the late 1960s, provoking an attitude even among the more reformist of the dictatorship's political class to maintain order at all costs.⁷ We are also reminded that student mobilization, via the ways in which it combined generational unrest, personal concerns, and politics, was uniquely suited to effect a thoroughgoing cultural change by

⁶ José Álvarez Cobelas, *Envenenados de cuerpo y alma: La oposición universitaria al franquismo en Madrid (1939-1970)* (Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 2004); Elena Hernández Sandoica, Miguel Angel Ruiz Carnicer, and Marc Baldó Lacomba, *Estudiantes contra Franco (1939-1975): Oposición política y movilización juvenil* (Madrid: La Esfera de los Libros, 2007); and Gregorio Valdevira, *La oposición estudiantil al franquismo* (Madrid: Editorial Síntesis, 2006).

⁷ Pere Ysàs, *Disidencia y subversión: La lucha del régimen franquista por su supervivencia, 1960-1975* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2004). See especially Chapter 1, “La rebelión de los estudiantes.”

bringing out contradictions in regime promises.⁸ There are also big-picture trends present in all case studies, such as the fact that after 1968 students' main demands centered around dismantling the university administration and the need for serious reform of the curriculum.⁹

There are two main ways in which student organizing at the ESBA Madrid fits within Spain's student movement at large. First, one of the top concerns of the ESBA Madrid students was curricular reform. Like university students all over Spain, ESBA Madrid students found their courses to be outdated and utterly lacking in the kind of training they needed for the future. They would come to demand that the entire structure of their course of study be remade, that new faculty members be hired, that extra-curricular offerings be expanded, and advocate for access to proper equipment, supplies, and spaces in which to work. Second, like university student organizers who relied on a set of tactics developed by the labor movement, ESBA Madrid students had their own leftist advisors in the form of Madrid's AAP, who encouraged them to see their demands as being part of a much larger struggle to elevate the status of the visual arts within Spain.

At the same time, there are unique features that challenge the primary narrative and timeline that has been built up from looking primarily at the mainstream student movement at universities in Madrid and Barcelona.¹⁰ Thus, while understanding the overarching trends and momentous occasions of Spain's university life has certainly helped to make legible aspects of student organizing at the ESBA Madrid (and Spain's other art schools), the distinct history and jurisdictional separateness of the art schools means that it is difficult to situate the student

⁸ Sergio Rodríguez Tejada, "The anti-Franco student movement's contribution to the return of democracy in Spain," *Espacio, Tiempo y Educación* 2, no.2 (July-December 2015): 77-106.

⁹ Isabel García García, *Tiempo de estrategias: La Asociación de Artistas Plásticos y el arte comprometido español en los setenta* (Madrid: CSIC, 2016), 44.

¹⁰ Much of the current scholarship has focused on one university at a time and has organized itself around timelines related to trends in student organizing. Sergio Rodríguez Tejada, "Nuevos estudios sobre el movimiento estudiantil antifranquista" *Ayer* 77, no. 1 (2010): 263-278.

activism of the art schools within the larger student movement in Spain. While Spain's ESBA students certainly drew from tactics of student organizing among university students – campaigns of refusing to attend class, taking demands to the press, organizing events separate from official programming – what we see is a specific emphasis on such students' concerns related to their school and visual arts education.¹¹

The small size of the ESBA Madrid (at its largest under 700 students), its relative geographic isolation, and fact that students' educational concerns were very strongly wedded to their chosen vocation as artists (and new-yet-malfunctioning building) meant that the specific campaigns and organizing of the art students stayed confined mainly within their own community.¹² Additionally, the school was a site for artistic advocacy beyond only student concerns. Its auditorium was the first place in which AAP meetings took place, and was also the site in which hundreds of artists gathered in November 1970 to plan a sit-in at the Prado Museum

¹¹ This chapter is the first work of any length to analyze the history of the ESBA Madrid and to draw out the major features of the student movement there from the late 1960s until the late 1970s with the school's transition to the university system. I have had to construct most of what I know about the ESBA Madrid from a collection of archival documents (held in the Dean's Office of the Facultad de Bellas Artes at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid) and from accounts in the press. I have also benefitted from two short histories of the school, the first published in 1950, and the second existing only in unpublished booklet form at the library of the Facultad: Francisco Esteve Botey, *La Escuela Central de Bellas Artes de San Fernando de Madrid: Apuntes de su historia y resumen de su Plan de Estudios y del Reglamento de Régimen Interior* (Madrid: Escuela Central de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, 1950) and Julio Fuentes Alonso, "Datos para un historial de la Escuela Superior de Bellas Artes de San Fernando de Madrid" (unpublished manuscript, 1982). Lastly, I have been aided by the scholarship of two scholars, each of whom touched on student organizing at the ESBA Madrid in their studies of the AAP: García García, *Tiempo de estrategias*, and Juan Albarrán Diego, "Lo profesional es político: trabajo artístico, movimientos sociales y militancia política en el último franquismo," *Espacio, tiempo y forma. Serie VII, Historia del Arte*, 2015: 245-271.

¹² Total student enrollment hovered around the 300 mark while the school was on the Calle Alcalá. When the new school building opened in the University City, student enrollment was initially around 400 students, inching closer to 500 just a few years later. Several years' enrollment figures are reported on the third page of the "Cuarto Plan de Desarrollo Económico y Social 1976/79," September 1974, Salida 3337, ADFBA. Despite being located near the University of Madrid, the new site of the ESBA was located on what was then the absolute outside fringes of any campus buildings, near only to an upper-level technical school dedicated to architecture, and far enough away from the *facultades* fingered by authorities as the hotbeds of student activism, which themselves were routinely relocated to far-away suburbs. We do know that ESBA Madrid students were aware of student organizing happening at some nearby *facultades* of the University of Madrid, and that at times, some ESBA Madrid students became involved in such. I have pointed out where possible these connections when they matter and how larger events with the university affected the art school.

on behalf of jailed art critic, José María Moreno Galván.¹³ Thus, it is helpful to consider student mobilization at the ESBA Madrid as its own phenomenon that, while it certainly took cues from the student organizing within the university system, does not perfectly map onto the timeline or main events of the mainstream student movement.¹⁴ There is more in common between all of Spain's ESBA students, who we know occasionally met to organize, than there would have been with ESBA students in a given city and their local university population.¹⁵

This chapter is structured chronologically around distinct phases of regime-civil society conflict. After first providing relevant background information about the ESBA's and how art school education came to be shaped in the Francoist period, I then explain the contours of the first stage of student-faculty-regime relations between 1966 and 1969, when student concerns were particular not general, and faculty members largely sympathized with them. At the same time, the faculty *dirección* found itself under the microscope. The chapter then moves to a second period that began as of the beginning of the 1969-1970 school year, characterized by changes in student mobilization from one-off problems toward deeper critiques of Francoist arts education itself under the tutelage of the AAP. A final section analyses student and faculty

¹³ Artist Juan Genovés even recalls his own involvement in the sit-in and its planning in a radio interview from May 18, 2014, although mis-remembering the year as 1971. See “Encierros en el Museo del Prado: Juan Genovés” from the RTVE's radio program *Ayer*: <https://www.rtve.es/play/audios/ayer/ayer-1971-1976-encierros-contra-franquismo-museo-del-prado-juan-genoves-18-05-14/2575485/>.

¹⁴ One way in which we really see the distinction between the ESBA's and the regular public universities is in the organization of scholarship around phases of student organizing in terms of which student groups (clandestine, semi-legal, or legal) were at the forefront. While it's certainly possible that ESBA students became involved in some of these groups (e.g. the Sindicatos Democráticos de Estudiantes (SDEs), the Federación Universitaria Democrática Española (FUDE), the Frente de Liberación Popular (FLP), and then after 1968 the groups that moved underground), membership in these groups did not structure the shape of student organizing at the ESBA Madrid.

¹⁵ ESBA Madrid connections to other ESBA's is something that is only hinted at in the sources. But the little we do know via news articles and the archival correspondence reveals that the issues faced by the ESBA Madrid were closely shared with the other visual arts schools. While it is difficult to know how comprehensive inter-ESBA organizing was, we are aware of instances in which students authored joint statements and faculty members consulted with one another.

mobilization from the start of the 1972-1973 school year until the Transition in 1978. In the middle of this period, student and faculty concerns would once again overlap.

The Escuelas Superiores: Origins, Oversight, and Curriculum

The structural origins of the conflict lay in the organization of arts education in Spain. That is, students and faculty resented that the small network of official state-run fine arts schools, most of which were founded during the Franco regime, was not part of regular university education in Spain. As in the case of the Nacionales, the structural problems were both longstanding and exacerbated by the Franco regime's top-down management. The Escuelas Superiores de Bellas Artes (ESBAs), along with the other arts-oriented educational institutions that had originated from Spain's royal academies in prior centuries, remained jurisdictionally separate from university education.¹⁶ With origins in the eighteenth century and originally affiliated with the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando (RABASF), the ESBA of Madrid was the first of the fine arts schools to open, setting the precedent for the other *escuelas superiores*.¹⁷ Valencia housed the only other *escuela superior* of fine arts, until Sevilla's applied arts school and Barcelona's longstanding fine arts school received the denomination in 1940.¹⁸ Including Madrid, these four became the core of state-run upper level fine arts education during the Francoist period. A fifth ESBA, that of Bilbao, would be created in December 1969.¹⁹

¹⁶ The educational institutions once affiliated with the Royal Academies were the Reales Conservatorios de Música, the Reales Escuelas Superiores de Arte Dramático y Danza, the Escuelas Superiores de Artes Aplicadas y Oficios Artísticos, and a single ceramics school in Madrid. There was a decade in which the fine arts schools were under the jurisdiction of their respective universities from 1857, although this was reversed in 1866. Fuentes Alonso, "Datos para un historial..." 6-7.

¹⁷ The ESBA of Madrid had its beginning in 1726 when a group of artists sought royal support for an arts school. In the 1740s, Fernando VI approved the founding statutes for the school that at that time also offered instruction in architecture and the applied arts. When the monarch created a royal academy of arts in 1752, the pre-existing art school was incorporated therein. Fuentes Alonso, "Datos para un historial..." 3.

¹⁸ Ángel Llorente Hernández, *Arte e ideología en el franquismo (1936-1951)* (Madrid: Visor, 1995), 180.

¹⁹ Order dated December 4, 1969 and published in the *BOE*, December 23, 1969.

While various measures over the course of the nineteenth century had established the education level of the ESBAAs as “higher education” (*enseñanzas superiores*), the schools were not integrated into the university system.²⁰ The *escuelas superiores* spent most of their existence under the aegis of their local royal academy of fine arts, and only by the 1930s with the coming of the Spanish Second Republic was the last of the schools incorporated into the General Directorate of Fine Arts of the Ministry of Public Instruction and Fine Arts.²¹ Because public universities in Spain were subject to their own general directorate, new legislation and reforms written for the universities did not apply to the arts schools, and if extended to them at all retroactively, were considered by students and faculty alike as ill-fitting or piecemeal.

Legislation pertaining to the ESBAAs from the early Francoist period shows the extent to which the administration sought continuity in the curriculum of the earlier period while solidifying the new regime’s control over the schools.²² In the first years of the dictatorship, cultural officials took steps to ensure adherence to the new regime. For example, new legislation was created in 1940 to change the process of *oposiciones*, the entrance exams through which professors were hired, which also made it easier to purge or penalize faculty.²³ Although, compared to other educational institutions, the ESBAAs saw relatively few purges of those the Franco regime deemed politically unreliable, ensuring a continuity not present in many other areas of education.²⁴ With respect to the curriculum, the list of courses taught since the

²⁰ The first attempt to standardize arts education came about in a Royal Decree of 1844, which established three levels of arts education – curricula at the primary school, high school, and university levels. Then, the Moyano Law of 1857, primarily known for its efforts to consolidate and systematize public instruction at all levels, was the first to consider the studies of the official fine arts schools to be “higher education.”

²¹ Llorente Hernández, *Arte e ideología*, 170.

²² Llorente Hernández mentions that the royal academies lost power to departments of the state, but that their individual members were still in seats of power. *Arte e ideología*, 184.

²³ Juan Carlos Arañó Gisbert, *La enseñanza de las bellas artes en España (1844-1980)* (Madrid: Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Facultad de Filosofía y Ciencias de la Educación, Departamento de Didáctica y Organización Escolar, 1988), 320-321.

²⁴ Llorente Hernández, *Arte e ideología*, 176-180.

nineteenth century remained largely the same, with the exception of two new courses added to the curriculum: the required ‘Liturgy and Christian Culture’ and the optional ‘Art Restoration.’²⁵ Later, in September 1942, a decree required that the four ESBA’s adhere to the same curriculum thereby standardizing studies at all four sites.²⁶ As with the regime’s inheritance of the Nacionales, there was little attempt to change the underlying structure of arts education, but there were attempts to ensure that the state had the ultimate oversight.

Continuity in arts education was also prevalent from the early Francoist years into the second half of the dictatorship. By the late Francoist period, the prevailing curriculum (*plan de estudios*) dated from October 1942. While there were minor amendments made in later years affecting students’ requirements for entry, there was very little in the way of curricular change.²⁷ Furthermore, even the changes of October 1942 did not substantially alter what had existed beforehand; course offerings and even particular instructors would have been familiar even to those who had matriculated before the Spanish Civil War. Entry to one of the ESBA’s required passing a multi-session drawing exam, in which students had to depict a statue. Students were supposed to have passed the first three years of high school (*bachillerato*) already, but even this could be superseded by passing a written and oral test on “general cultural matters.”²⁸ Once admitted, a student could undertake a course of study for four or five years – the latter resulting in the title of ‘*Profesor de Dibujo*,’ a degree necessary for going on to teach art at any level. A student could specialize in any of the following artistic mediums: painting, drawing, sculpture,

²⁵ Arañó Gisbert, *La enseñanza de las bellas artes...*, 319.

²⁶ Ministerial decree of September 21, 1942, published in the *BOE*, October 10, 1942.

²⁷ For example, as of 1965, it was established that in order to be eligible for the *profesorado*, one needed to have a high school diploma in hand. Later in 1970, the General Education Law made it so that one needed a high school diploma to enter the ESBA’s at all, unless a prospective student who had passed the entrance examinations had already reached the age of 25. Former ESBA students to Fernández Curro, December 5, 1970, Entrada 2122, ADFBA.

²⁸ Thus, if a prospective student without any high school education passed both exams, they would be eligible to matriculate as long as they were at least 14 years old. Llorente, *Arte e ideología*, 181.

engraving, or art restoration. The first year was a ‘preparatory’ year during which all students, independent of chosen specialty, needed to pass a series of four required courses to be able to move on to the *primer curso*, their first of three years of the specialized course of study. Students who then opted for the optional (but highly recommended) fifth overall year of study would take courses geared toward art pedagogy. That this 1942 course of study fundamentally did not differ from amendments before or after its passage meant that this overall structure and repeating list of offered courses came to represent in the eyes of the students the epitome of a system resistant to change and renovation.

Early Faculty-Student-Regime Disputes

In the mid-1960s, the first public disputes between the students, the faculty, and the arts apparatus would set in motion the patterns prevalent until later in the decade. The disputes – over striking art models and a new building – were largely instigated by students and faculty with the goal of trying to rectify an immediate problem. In the first case, the profound budgetary neglect that had existed from the beginning of the Francoist years²⁹ finally created a crisis of striking employees. In the second case, the new ESBA site, forcibly opened before it was completed, created a situation in which the General Directorate expected normal operations in extraordinary circumstances. In both cases, the problem was the interruption to classes. Neither the students nor the faculty at this time saw themselves as undertaking political protest or making demands

²⁹ Evidence of inadequate budgets comes in the form of a series of signed and dated inventories of the contents of individual professors’ classrooms made in mid-December 1958 which reveal subpar conditions and materials. After Professor Andres Crespi of the Perspective class provided a list of all materials in his classroom, he indicated that “these materials are used by the professors of the Geometric Drawing class, the Drawing Pedagogy class, and that of Decorative Drawing.” Professor of Color (*colorido*), Francisco Soria Aedo, reported that his classroom contained not much other than basic furniture (benches and easels), and that the few other items (two bullfighter’s costumes and a warrior’s helmet) were “deteriorated.” The unidentified professor of the Artistic Anatomy class listed several items on his inventory as objects of his personal property. Lastly, the professor of art restoration, Francisco Núñez Losada, cited having only one each of the following for his entire class: a pair of scissors, a hand saw, a rolling pin, and a flatiron. Inventarios – 1958-1959, Box 198, Archivo Histórico de la Biblioteca de la Facultad de Bellas Artes, UCM.

that were not meant to rectify immediate problems. It was only as of this time that students started to take more initiative than ever before in speaking out publicly about interruptions to their education. We shall also see how faculty members had to carefully navigate acting as interlocutors between students and the leading figures of the General Directorate. While regime figures would end up providing assistance, help was offered only after tensions had reached new heights.

The first signs of public dissatisfaction with arts education appeared in the press in the early 1960s. The most prevalent criticisms were the lack of change in the curriculum and the aging facilities. In an op-ed that appeared in the October 1961 issue of *Artes* magazine, a group identifying themselves only as “young authors” wrote about their desire, in conversations with well-known professional sculptor Pablo Serrano, to reinvigorate arts education. One of the current problems the authors believed necessary to rectify was “the aging of the schools, whose institutions, if they were effective in the old days, are nowadays nothing more than seedbeds of disappointment for those who in unsuspecting goodwill come there looking for light, and, at most, find cemetery candles.”³⁰ As potential solutions, they advocated creating an “arts university” and a “free experimental workshop,” suggestions the likes of which will be reiterated until the end of the Francoist period.

There is also evidence that the arts apparatus was not immune to criticism or feedback. It seemed that when Gratiano Nieto assumed the position of director general of Fine Arts in 1961, he was sympathetic to the type of sentiments expressed above about room for improvement in arts education. In the early years of his tenure, he proved surprisingly candid

³⁰ “...el envejecimiento de los Centros docentes, cuyas instituciones, si fueron eficaces en los viejos tiempos, no son en los actuales más que semilleros de decepciones para los incautos de buena voluntad que se aproximan allí buscando luz y encuentran, a los más, bujías de cementerios.” “Tribuna abierta,” *Artes*, no. 6, 23 October 1961.

about areas where his office could do better, including the “unsustainable economic situation of the faculty,” and the fact that the majority of the educational centers “were incompatible with the minimum standards required from the didactic, hygienic, and educational points of view.”³¹ In another instance, Nieto acknowledged that he understood the ways in which Spain’s approximately 1,200 ESBA students were at an unfair disadvantage when compared with university students.³² Not only were art students ineligible for affiliation with the Colegios Mayores Universitarios, but in subjects other than the visual arts, they were often not up to intellectual snuff, unable “to compete on equal terms with the university students.”³³

I am certain that the director general’s acknowledgements would have been much appreciated by ESBA students and faculty members alike in the early 1960s. They saw in Nieto an advocate who understood the specific difficulties of the art schools not being integrated in the mainstream university system. What is also clear is that Nieto’s awareness did not turn into decisive action, thus eroding potential collaboration and goodwill.

The full extent of the intersection of student upset, faculty frustrations, and attempts to solve such problems with the General Directorate of Fine Arts led to the first major student organizing campaign in the fall of 1966. Nearly all of the 300 ESBA Madrid students met in an assembly on October 19, 1966 to discuss what to do about the impending disruptions to the

³¹ “Directrices de la política seguida por la Dirección General de Bellas Artes, Año 1961 y primer semestre de 1962, y objetivos alcanzados,” page 5, Box 869, untitled folder, (03)110, AGA.

³² “Habló el Director General de Bellas Artes: Sobre residencias y colegios mayores para artistas y estudiantes de bellas artes,” *Artes*, no. 43, November 8, 1963, 15-17. An *Artes* journal editor explained that this text was essentially the transcript of part of a speech Nieto gave during a popular summertime educational program held at the Universidad Internacional Menéndez y Pelayo in Santander.

³³ Theoretically, as of the early Francoist period, all university students were supposed to sign up with a Colegio Mayor, where they were meant to live. As there were never enough spots for all university students, eventually this rule took the form of making it obligatory for university students to nevertheless sign up for an affiliation with one of these centers. Álvarez Cobelas, *Envenenados de cuerpo y alma*, 31-32. ESBA students would finally be allowed this affiliation when a resolution was passed on November 20, 1969, published in the *BOE*, December 10, 1969.; “...no han podido competir en igualdad de condiciones con los alumnos de las Facultades universitarias.” “Habló el Director General de Bellas Artes...,” 15-16.

normal functioning of their classes, set to begin in two days. The most pressing problem was that the art models, hired at 25 pesetas per hour to pose during lessons, declared a strike leaving seven classes cancelled when their demands for a raise were not granted by the school's *dirección*. Not only did they not have the ability to pay the models more, they said, but they would soon find it difficult to afford even the most basic necessities. The students crafted an ultimatum. They voted to send a petition to the minister of Education demanding that the school's budget be increased posthaste, and they declared that if monies were not secured immediately, they would cease to attend classes and demand that the school be closed until a permanent solution be secured.

The students' attitude was revealed to be one that was less about solidarity with the models, and more about wanting to overcome the hurdles blocking the normal functioning of their education. During the assembly, one student remarked that "The only thing we want is to be able to work...If we have to stop attending classes it will not be as a protest movement. If we have to abandon them, it will be due to "forced unemployment," due to the lack of necessary elements for study...which the state, through the school's administration, is obliged to provide us."³⁴ The students considered it a fundamental right to have unhindered access to their education in the form of contact with their instructors, spaces and a schedule in which to work, and affordable art supplies, tools, and equipment; if there was an impediment to this access, students considered such an incontrovertible reason to speak out.

³⁴"Nosotros...lo único que queremos es poder trabajar...Si tenemos que dejar de asistir a las clases no será como expresión de un movimiento de protesta. Si hemos de abandonarlas será por "paro forzoso", por falta de los elementos necesarios para el estudio...y que el Estado, a través de la dirección de la Escuela, está obligado a facilitarnos." Manuel Marlasca Pérez, "¿Tendrá que cerrar la Escuela de Bellas Artes?," *ABC*, October 22, 1966, 86-87.

The detailed exchange between students, faculty, and the regime initiated by the school administration to solve this problem set the stage for the many subsequent interactions between them. The school's *dirección* would reach out to the General Directorate to explain the financial difficulties, which the director general would downplay. Faculty and student attempts to set the record straight led Director General Nieto to become frustrated, causing him to respond by blaming them as being part of the problem. While tensions ran high, Nieto appears to have pulled some strings to have secured the needed funds. Looking at the granular details of these interactions, however, shows not just that these interactions took place, but reveal the intense frustrations and upset of the students and faculty, and the paternalistic arrogance of the man who, at the time of his appointment, had once seemed so keen to rectify such deep-seated issues.

After the student assembly, the school's *dirección* reached out to their primary contact at the General Directorate of Fine Arts, Ramón Falcón, head of the Education and Development Division (Sección de Enseñanza y Fomento de las Bellas Artes), to explain the predicament that the students had laid out. The matter was elevated quickly to Director General Nieto, who both verbally and in writing had started to advise the ESBA faculty on how to proceed, threatening to close the school if a solution could not be found. Faculty members deemed Nieto's suggestions untenable, and the school's director, Luis Alegre, replied respectfully and cautiously in a letter dated October 21, 1966 to explain the reasons why.³⁵

Nieto's ample number of suggestions seemed to imply someone deeply invested in finding a solution, until one actually considered them. One of the two solutions Nieto offered to try to remedy the staffing problem was to pay fewer models overall, but at a higher rate. The faculty expressed doubt that this would be possible, as the reduction in the number of models

³⁵ Report from faculty to Nieto, October 21, 1966, Salida 1045, ADFBA.

would necessarily curtail the number of classes offered, which would never have been acceptable to the students, nor to the foreigners enrolled who sought “precisely this experience with live models.”³⁶ The second option was to utilize funds tied up in an antiquated line-item in the budget (12,720 pesetas), which had many decades prior allowed for the hiring of four permanent art models. As Alegre pointed out, this amount was not much over the 8,640 pesetas needed to hire the usual team of twelve models *for a week*, and certainly not enough for the entire school year. With respect to how to handle the students, the faculty also rejected Nieto’s suggestion to come down hard on them by applying the *Reglamento de Disciplina Escolar Universitaria*, a set of bylaws which included language stripping students who missed too many classes of their right to be enrolled. The faculty not only defended the students’ actions by arguing that they had proceeded respectfully, but also pointed out that simply applying the statutes to try to force student attendance would not solve the financial problems. Ultimately, Alegre explained, the true problem was that the school’s budgetary allocation for basic operational costs (225,000 pesetas annually [approximately \$3,200]) had not been augmented for years. This amount, the faculty emphasized, was not enough to meet the deficit of the models, and failed to account for costs associated with utilities, art materials, and basic maintenance. The letter ended with the faculty asking Nieto how they should proceed.

That the students had started to consider the functioning of their school as a matter under their purview was made evident in not only the holding of their assembly, but also their own letter to Nieto to address the “current precarious situation,” after which the director general agreed to a meeting with two student representatives.³⁷ The students explained that, as a show of

³⁶ “...precisamente estas prácticas de modelos vivos.” Ibid. Emphasis in the original.

³⁷ Many of the details mentioned by the students make it clear that they were thoroughly familiar with the faculty concerns, and well-informed about what was at stake in the present stand-off. For example, the students were very concerned at the possible closure of their school, which they believed was a real possibility due to the rumor (and

good faith, they would agree to the proposition made by Nieto, in which they would resume attending classes – but they politely cautioned that due to the severity of the problem, they would continue their abstention from classes if the budgetary problems were not solved in five days. The students urged Nieto for help to an amicable and speedy solution.

If the polite-but-stern letter by the student representatives did not surprise Nieto, then surely the fact that they went to the mainstream press did. In addition to the report of the student assembly appearing in daily newspaper *ABC*, an extravagantly titled article, “The School of Fine Arts Will Close,” appeared in evening newspaper *Madrid*, which included the details of what had transpired at the meeting between Nieto and the student representatives.³⁸ During the meeting, the director general told the students that his department did not have the funds to resolve the conflict, leaving the students to conclude that their school would close.³⁹ After this incident, Alegre assured Nieto that it was the students’ idea to take their demands to the top, and that the ESBA faculty had nothing to do with it, demonstrating the apprehension of the school administration at being accused of inciting the students.⁴⁰

When Nieto replied, his letter of October 26, 1966 was meant to set the record straight to address all of the claims expressed to date from faculty, students, as well as details reported in the press.⁴¹ Nieto explained that his General Directorate had always gone out of its way to

possible fact) that only 25,000 pesetas remained in the entire budget for the school year. Thus, it is not out of the question that faculty members were the ones to encourage student involvement, believing that the more attention given to the problem, the more that officials would be forced to intercede. Students to Nieto, (officially undated, but likely 19 October 1966), Entrada 985, ADFBA.

³⁸ “La Escuela de Bellas Artes será cerrada,” *Madrid*, October 25, 1966, 10. It is also reported here that it was during this meeting that the students delivered their letter to Nieto.

³⁹ One of the solutions considered for the Madrid students was for them to matriculate in one of the other ESBA, but it appeared the other locations were not in much better shape, with the Barcelona director having come to Madrid to talk about his own school’s financial woes. In any case, the students requested that if the school should close, their 1,600-peseta tuition payment be returned. *Ibid.*, and also reported in P. Vila San-Juan, “Barcelona al día,” *ABC*, October 27, 1966, 71.

⁴⁰ Alegre to Nieto, November 7, 1966, Salida 1010, ADFBA.

⁴¹ Nieto to Alegre, October 26, 1966, Entrada 1021, ADFBA.

resolve the school's problems, even having already applied for a credit to pay the models and other operating costs back in September. Despite acknowledging that he was convinced of the need for a higher budget, his response also insinuated that the *dirección* of the ESBA Madrid had been poor at managing funds and that they underappreciated how much financial support had been granted to the school in recent years. Ultimately, after citing what he believed to be line items in the budget sufficient to cover all costs, he warned the Madrid faculty to proceed with austerity, prioritizing only personnel concerns for the moment, and cautioning against going to the press with false information. Nieto ended his missive by declaring that the school should have enough funds to pay the models at 40 pesetas per hour.

After careful discussion about how to proceed at a faculty meeting, Alegre's response to Nieto was professional, although not without expressive sentiments of frustration.⁴² The faculty thanked Nieto and the entire General Directorate for their support, though they refuted all of the director general's budgetary claims. While some of the figures were accurate, they argued, such monies always pertained to one-time credits rather than line items in the regular operating budget.⁴³ The erosion of the professors' patience showed when they responded to the claim that they should have been acting with austerity. Not only had they "always covered their expenses with a minimum of costs," prioritizing personnel first and foremost, but also they illustrated this point by citing the extreme lengths they had previously gone to make up debts.⁴⁴ The faculty letter continued:

[O]ur administration has been AUSTERE and honest and has adjusted to the circumstances for a long time, eager never to create problems, solving them, as in

⁴² Alegre to Nieto, November 3, 1966, Salida 1047, ADFBA.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁴⁴ For example, the ESBA Madrid spent the entire 1959-60 school year without heating, they declared, and added that faculty had not taken advantage of their bonuses until the 1958-1959 school year (when, implying a dismal sum, the average salary was 1,500 pesetas per month for even the highest level of faculty member (*catedrático*)), so that such extra funds could be funneled into the school's general operating costs. "...cubierto todos los servicios siempre con un mínimo de gastos..." *Ibid.*, 9.

the aforementioned case, from its own pocket; a behavior and facts that surely were unknown by the General Directorate, that we have always kept quiet out of respect.

And in conclusion, this faculty unanimously expressed its grief and its surprise at this recommendation of austerity made to us, since it considers that the administration and the Economic Board of the school always carried out exemplary management in this sense.⁴⁵

At the letter's end, the faculty reiterated that the problem of basic maintenance had been merely postponed, as none of the current funds in-process yet guaranteed enough to pay the models permanently. While no further documentation reveals exactly how the budgetary problem was solved, it is probable that Nieto secured from the Ministry of Education the necessary funds for the ESBA Madrid to finish out its last school year on the Calle Alcalá.

Through this example, we see an instance in which students gathered to make collective demands, and in order to strengthen their case and to try to apply public pressure, took their matter to the press. By framing their demands not as a protest, but as a simple act meant to guarantee the rectification of a problem, the art students tried to make their case in terms of their basic rights as tuition-paying students. For their part, the faculty were the intermediaries trying to navigate the situation, trying to ask for help while at the same time not wanting to appear as having lost control of the situation. That the faculty supported student actions to the director general hints that they too believed that a student strike would be helpful in jolting the General Directorate into action. At the same time, as the faculty's ardent defense of their own austerity made clear, they felt as though they had been kicked while already down. They were writing to

⁴⁵ “[N]uestra administración ha sido AUSTERA y honesta y cómo se acomoda a las circunstancias desde hace mucho tiempo deseosa de no crear problemas nunca, solucionándolos como en el referido caso de su propio bolsillo; actitud y hechos que seguramente no conocía esa Dirección General y que hemos silenciado siempre por decoro. Y como conclusión este Claustro expresó unánimemente su dolor y su sorpresa ante esta recomendación de austeridad en la administración que se nos hace, ya que estima que la Dirección y la Junta económica de la Escuela llevaron siempre a cabo una administración ejemplar en tal sentido.” Ibid., 10. Emphasis in the original.

inform Nieto and the entire directorate of this pressing problem they had been trying to solve, only to be told to punish the students and to stop mismanaging funds. In the end, the General Directorate helped the situation, securing the funds to allow the models to return to work, albeit seemingly with only temporary funds and somewhat reluctantly.

The second conflict revolved around the opening of a new building for the school, which illustrated some of the same dynamic, including the students threatening to strike (articulating their demands in the language of having certain rights by virtue of having paid tuition), the faculty walking a tightrope between both sides, and the General Directorate's downplaying of the problem. Faculty and students would articulate their demands to the press. Also like the first conflict, student and faculty concerns were largely aligned, both feeling as though they were being forced to endure a bad situation through no fault of their own. Different in this instance was the fact that student and faculty frustration formed because of the deflation of their excitement when the new building proved not all it had been guaranteed to be. Finally coming to fruition since having been proposed in 1962, the General Directorate of Fine Arts had planned a new site for the school within Madrid's University City district, to open for the start of the 1967-1968 school year. All had been waiting with eager anticipation for their new school building to open, because promised in addition to the projected state-of-the-art facility was an ample budget and new curriculum.⁴⁶ Student and faculty hopes and contentment rested on the promise of the new building.

Having been delayed already for two weeks, the new ESBA building was still not ready when it was forcibly opened on October 16, 1967. Despite feeling pressure from the General

⁴⁶ "Nueva Escuela de Bellas Artes en la Ciudad Universitaria," *Madrid*, November 4, 1966, 10.

Directorate, the ESBA *dirección* had decided to delay the opening of the school, and thus, the start of the entire school year, because the building had neither electricity nor running water.⁴⁷ When the director general found out about this postponement, his office ordered the building opened despite the uninhabitable conditions. From the mid-October opening, the faculty had tried to keep to a schedule of normal programming, although classes never met with any regularity. As of November 10, students deserted their much-awaited new site *en masse*, calling for the closing of the school until it was ready to re-open with all necessary repairs completed; at some point, the water line had been hooked up, but the building still did not have electricity.

At a special faculty meeting the very next day, it was decided that a small committee would form, led by Alegre and including a student representative and the architect of the building, to write to the General Directorate explaining the gravity of the problem.⁴⁸ In this letter, Alegre explained that the faculty had done everything to ensure as much normality as possible, but given the current conditions, they had failed; without artificial light and heating, the holding of regular classes was impossible.⁴⁹ Reluctant to dole out false promises to the students, and obviously extremely frustrated at being made to pretend all was normal, Alegre, on behalf of the faculty and student body declared that the office of the General Directorate was responsible for the current predicament. Alegre also expressed concern that students would find a sympathetic ear among the nearby university students: “The atmosphere of latent dissatisfaction among our students undoubtedly will find an immediate echo in the other neighboring faculties, which may give rise to serious disturbances and unforeseeable consequences.”⁵⁰ For their part, students

⁴⁷ Meeting minutes of October 11, 1967, Libro de Actas, ADFBA.

⁴⁸ Meeting minutes of November 11, 1967, Libro de Actas, ADFBA.

⁴⁹ Faculty via Alegre to Nieto, November 11, 1967, Salida 1201, ADFBA. This letter made known all of the details that follow about the events of October-November 1967.

⁵⁰ “El ambiente de descontento latente entre nuestros alumnos encontrará sin duda eco inmediato en las otras Facultades vecinas, pudiendo dar lugar a disturbios de grave entidad y consecuencias imprevisibles.” Ibid.

authored their own letter to the director general and to the minister, and announced they would go to the press. As with the last mass strike a year prior, students demanded that the building close and that the school year be put on pause until the building could re-open with full functionality.

As with such interactions the year prior, Nieto's response in this instance likewise downplayed the severity of the problems and claimed to take necessary measures to help. In his reply, Nieto took responsibility only for the "excitement" around the new building, lamenting that the others who should have cared about it most did not. Nieto then pontificated: "[W]hy were classes dismantled at the former school without the assurance that they could begin in the new one? Who authorized this?"⁵¹ He also expressed surprise that faculty should so openly assign to his department blame for the situation: "Who should be responsible for all of this? This General Directorate, according to your letter; a statement that you will easily understand that I have to reject. At the same time, I deeply regret that such should have been recorded in an official document."⁵² Nieto ended his letter by declaring that he had again spoken with an official at the electric company, which he hoped would ensure the immediate, if still temporary, connection of electricity. This response would be humorous if Nieto were not being serious. Faculty members had undoubtedly been told, probably for years, that the new building would be ready for October 1967, not to mention the fact that their underlying deferential attitude certainly does not demonstrate a desire to stir up trouble just for laughs; it is almost certain they had been told from above to plan to convoke the new school year at the new building. Furthermore, that

⁵¹ "¿[P]or qué se desmontaron las clases de la antigua Escuela si no tenía seguridad de que se pudieran comenzar las clases en la nueva? ¿Quién autorizó esto?" Nieto to Alegre, November 14, 1967, Entrada 1170, ADFBA.

⁵² "¿A quién debe hacerse responsable de todo esto? A esta Dirección General, según el escrito de V.S., afirmación que fácilmente comprenderá que tenga que rechazar, al tiempo que lamento profundamente el que haya podido consignarse en un escrito oficial." Ibid.

the director general ordered the start of the school year at the new site despite the inhospitable conditions, and then feigned surprise when faculty members and students complained, demonstrates that he believed it inappropriate to be accused of any offense.

The documentary evidence does not reveal exactly how this issue was resolved nor whether or not students returned immediately to class. It seems that, somehow, faculty members and students reached an agreement, and that classes resumed without too protracted a delay. However, it was not as though problems with the building were immediately solved. Several months later, in April 1968, the building was experiencing water leaks, and lacked a telephone line, a cafeteria, a properly-functioning heating system, a projection screen in the auditorium, and, because even the building's transformer was still not yet up and running, the school had been running on provisional electricity.⁵³

Even excepting the problems with the building, it is evident that many of the other promises meant to accompany the move remained unfulfilled. After the first school year in the new building had ended, Alegre detailed in a statement to the new director general of Fine Arts, Florentino Pérez Embid, the personnel problems that remained to be solved, the majority of which had “g[iven] rise to student movements and unrest.”⁵⁴ At the students' behest, the faculty members agreed to create a joint faculty-student committee to discuss possible solutions to the problems that students had identified with their courses, all of which came back to the fact that more faculty members at all levels were needed (with secure financing or endowments), and that more money was needed to be able to host cultural activities.

⁵³ Letter from Alegre to Pascual Bravo, April 26, 1968, Salida 1347, ADFBA.

⁵⁴ “...dieron origen a movimientos estudiantiles y agitaciones...” Alegre to Pérez Embid, “Nota ampliatoria de la entrevista formulada el día 20 del actual al Ilmo. Sr. Director General de Bellas Artes,” July 1, 1968, Salida 1399, ADFBA.

The school's low budget allocation when coupled with the problems that the school building would continue to experience would remain as major unsolved issues throughout the remainder of the Franco years. These two factors would routinely collide to give cause for the students to protest and boycott their classes. Later, the incredibly slow-moving bureaucratic responses did not change, even when the head of the Division of Construction of the Ministry of Education was enlisted to take care of the most pressing concerns.⁵⁵ Even after the initial slew of problems had been mostly resolved, the building's poor drainage created another need for urgent repair work in several classrooms and the library right for the start of school in 1972, which would cause a new wave of student protest.⁵⁶

These initial moments of faculty and student upset – in the fall of 1966 and 1967 – represent a formative phase of their awareness and the first clues that the new building was not the panacea to the longstanding structural problems. These two instances demonstrate that ESBA Madrid students and faculty had started to advocate for themselves when they believed there were obstacles to their education. In taking to the press and in discussions with the General Directorate, they began by making demands simply to solve immediate crises. Students made it clear that their threats to strike were simply “forced unemployment” due to conditions that made it impossible for them to work, and not a sign of deeper resentments or unrest. Faculty members supported their actions for the most part, trying to appeal to the office of the General Directorate also with a sense of pragmatism, trying to highlight to their superiors the importance of solving these genuine, serious problems in need of the regime's permanent rectification.

From Sporadic to Sustained Mobilization: ESBA Student Organizing, 1969-1972

⁵⁵ Fernández Curro to Estalella y Manso de Zúñiga, November 4, 1970, Salida 2031, ADFBA.

⁵⁶ Pardo Galindo to the Director General de Programación e Inversiones, October 15, 1972, Salida 2794, ADFBA and Pardo Galindo to the Director General de Programación e Inversiones, October 25, 1972, Salida 2808, ADFBA.

The period between the fall of 1969 and the summer of 1972, the student movement at the ESBA Madrid would take on new dimensions. The newly-formed working groups that would eventually coalesce into the Asociación de Artistas Plásticos (AAP) would introduce the students to a broader vision of art reform that would help them translate their specific complaints into more general principles. Members of the AAP's Education Committee, which included ESBA students, would express the desire for thoroughgoing educational reform, and curricular revision in particular. As evidenced even in former Director General Nieto's public statements earlier in the decade, there were many ways in which the education provided by the ESBA was not meeting goals inherent in higher education, leaving students disadvantaged among their university peers. Furthermore, and similar to the Nacionales, there had been no major overarching reform to the structure of arts education since the nineteenth century. Thus, rather than organizing only to address immediate emergencies in the interest of returning to normalcy, in this phase students articulated demands that sought a new normal altogether. As with the AAP's overall outlook as outlined in the previous chapter, the group's vision for the future of arts education stipulated a far more democratically-minded environment in which students would have a say in the shape of their education. From practical matters, such as the scheduling of classes, to pedagogical ones, such as the need to experience the arts as communication not memorization, and the development of a curriculum grounded in art theory and history, ESBA Madrid students would in this period build off of the organizing skills they had already started to develop earlier in the decade, and continue to articulate demands to the General Directorate, to their faculty, and to the press. Students would also continue to show their non-agreement and their upset via the practice of withholding their participation and attendance. Different from before, however, they would occupy the school in the form of their own non-competitive, non-

hierarchical art exhibition in protest to the school's regularly-occurring annual exhibition of student artwork. The students would also prove to keep up their artistic advocacy even after the AAP retreated from direct involvement in the school's affairs. The group's precarious legal status led the AAP to form into the Promotora de Actividades Plásticas, S.A. (abbreviated as APSA) in June of 1972, after which it took a step back from artistic advocacy that was directly confrontational with the authorities.

With respect to faculty-student relations in this period, faculty members, even when sympathetic to student demands, were reluctant to adopt any new policies without proceeding cautiously. Whereas before 1969, faculty members were largely sympathetic to student boycotts done in the interest of solving an immediate issue that they themselves were facing, as soon as the format and structure of education itself was being interrogated, faculty reactions would be more diffuse. Not only were faculty members trying to continue to walk the line of appearing competent to their superiors, but they also felt the need to situate their own authority in the face of student unrest.

At a faculty meeting in mid-January 1969, three ESBA student representatives explicitly broached the subject of curricular reform.⁵⁷ While the students did not indicate exactly which changes they wanted to make, they had convoked their own assembly the previous day, during which attendees expressed interest in being included in the process of writing a new plan of study. Alegre explained that a new curriculum had been sent to the Ministry four years prior, and that that nothing had really come of it. While the ESBA faculty members did not forbid the students from being involved, they failed to provide a definitive response. From the faculty members' point of view, curricular matters were out of even their hands, and given their own

⁵⁷ Meeting minutes of January 18, 1969, Libro de Actas, ADFBA.

lack of response from the Ministry, it seemed unlikely that students' suggestions would make any difference. The faculty, however, underestimated the extent to which students would demand curricular reform from this point forward. As the state of emergency declared on January 24, 1969 forcibly closed Spanish universities until early March in response to a few days of profound student unrest,⁵⁸ the ESBA remained open and life at the ESBA Madrid proceeded with only a small fraction of 'activist' students abstaining from classes.⁵⁹ What is clear is that even the excitement surrounding the state of emergency did not deter ESBA students from continuing to make curricular reform a priority.

With no apparent single incident as provocation, an article appeared in the *Gaceta Universitaria* in April 1969 reporting that Madrid's ESBA students sought educational reforms.⁶⁰ Mentioning some of the same criticisms that appeared in the aforementioned op-ed from earlier in the decade, one of the primary student complaints was that Spain's program of arts education was outdated and outmoded. The five unnamed students interviewed did not utilize this opportunity to address a wider audience only to complain, however, as they advanced their own idea for a new comprehensive plan of study. Because they wanted their program to be taken seriously as university-level education, they demanded not only that their school become a university *facultad*, but also that those entering the school already have a high school diploma. They sought free workshops (*talleres libres*), which unlike structured courses, would provide

⁵⁸ On January 24, 1969, Minister Fraga of the MIT called a state of emergency after university students around Spain had risen up in force against the suspect circumstances of university student Enrique Ruano's death when in police custody. Despite having been initially declared for a period of three months, within five weeks, Spanish universities had reopened, albeit with noticeable police presence. Álvarez Cobelas, *Envenenados de cuerpo y alma*, 273-281.

⁵⁹ Two memos drafted by Alegre from January 28, 1969 and January 31, 1969 allude to the fact that a group of "activist students" had stopped attending class in solidarity with Spain's university students, and tried to urge others to boycott, although Alegre alleges they were not successful. Salida 1511 and Salida 1512, ADFBA.

⁶⁰ José María Izquierdo, "Los alumnos de Bellas Artes buscan reformas" *Gaceta universitaria*, no. 120, April 15, 1969, 10.

more time for experimentation and the learning of new techniques. Along these same lines, the students expressed upset that the structure of their program dictated that the lone end goal was the ‘*Profesor de Dibujo*’ title, the product of an erroneous assumption that failed to consider the many other potential career paths for which they would also be qualified, especially related to the applied arts. That the items mentioned in this article would match so closely to ideas espoused via Madrid’s new fledgling artists’ association hints that those interviewed for this piece had been among the first to become involved.

The involvement of the AAP was a crucial source of social capital for the art students. Not only did the group include members with experience in professional organizing, having come from the *Célula de Pintores* [Painters’ Cell] of the clandestine Spanish Communist Party (PCE), but the group included mostly older artists, both well-known and up-and-coming. Many of these artists had themselves passed through ESBA education, or having eschewed formal arts instruction altogether, had strong opinions about its shortcomings. Second, the founding members of what would become the AAP had hosted some their first informal meetings in the auditorium of the school in the late spring and summer of 1969.⁶¹ Whether involved or not, students clearly knew that there was a group of artists who were starting to organize, into which they were invited. Third, through the AAP’s affiliations with UNESCO’s International Association of Plastic Arts (AIAP), three student representatives of the AAP’s education committee had the opportunity to attend an arts education conference in Belgrade in May of 1970, after which their work to draft a new curriculum would intensify.⁶² As the AAP’s founders had made the reform of visual arts education a major goal, it’s evident that the AAP’s priorities

⁶¹ Then-student Gerardo Aparicio recalled when artist Tino Calabuig came to the ESBA to talk up the association. Albarrán, “Lo profesional es político...,” 248.

⁶² Albarrán, “Lo profesional es político...,” 254; and García García, *Tiempo de estrategias*, 73.

were guiding student artistic advocacy at this time. Some of the known members of the association in these early years who were affiliated with the ESBA were faculty member Manuel Villaseñor, and students Gerardo Aparicio, Eduardo Arenillas, Angiola Bonanni, and Marisa González.⁶³ Thus, the AAP supported a number of initiatives that would make its members more knowledgeable about how arts education in Spain differed from arts education elsewhere, but also about what Spain's artists and art students wanted to see change.⁶⁴ Until about 1972, the Association would continue to be inextricably linked with the ESBA Madrid, attracting to it the students most committed to a radical reform of arts education.

The Education Committee of the AAP, made up of about 15 members in which at least a handful of whom were art students, articulated their complaints with artistic education in Spain, the main arguments of which remained fixed for the entire decade of the 1970s. Even before they knew exactly how they wanted to proceed, one of the AAP's main objectives in its first couple of years was to "[m]aintain a collaboration with the Schools of Fine Arts and other educational centers in order to provide professional experience in the fields of research and artistic production, as well as to investigate together their implications within that environment."⁶⁵ In the summer of 1970, at a peak of AAP organizing, including the major campaign against the National Exhibition of Contemporary Art as discussed in the previous chapter, AAP members

⁶³ García García, *Tiempo de estrategias*, 27.

⁶⁴ The group wrote to art schools in Germany and in London, soliciting more information about their curricula. (Albarrán, "Lo profesional es político...", 254) The 'Comisión Promotora,' one of the AAP's working groups, also developed a survey to be sent to artists all over Spain. One of the survey's sections asked about whether Spanish artists were satisfied with their arts education. Unfortunately, responses to the survey have not been conserved, but we know they were used at the time to set priorities. The survey was published as: Comisión Promotora de la Asociación de Artistas Plásticos de Madrid, *Informe y encuesta* (Madrid: 1970). Copies of the survey (Depósito Legal M 4335-1970) are rare. The BNE has two copies, and the Library and Documentation Center (BCD) of the MNCARS has an incomplete version with the first five pages missing, found under the title 'Cuestionario.' Arch. RC 99, Archivo Redor-Calabuig, MNCARS.

⁶⁵ "Mantener una colaboración con las Escuelas de Bellas Artes y otros centros de enseñanza con el fin de aportar la experiencia profesional en el campo de la investigación y producción artística, así como para investigar conjuntamente sus implicaciones con el medio." Comisión Promotora de la Asociación de Artistas Plásticos de Madrid, *Informe y encuesta*, 2.

reaffirmed their stance to “try to change the school from within.”⁶⁶ While AAP members found a lot lacking, all problems largely stemmed from the fact that the curriculum had been crafted from pedagogical principles from the nineteenth century. Most concerning, from their point of view, was that within the current curriculum prevailed “a lack of intellectual rigor and interest.”⁶⁷ They believed that as long as art history courses simply required memorization, and drawing and painting classes were framed around reproducing a chosen scene, ESBA students were being denied the opportunity to learn to be true artists, cultivate creative instincts, and develop deep humanistic knowledge.

Another major wish for the ESBA articulated by AAP members was that they would be not only schools, but rather genuine centers of learning and communication for the community at large. In a statement by one of the founding AAP members, Tino Calabuig explained that he envisioned the schools as cultural centers with a consistent stream of art exhibitions, lectures, conferences, and the presence of professional artists.⁶⁸ This vision of the schools as lively, inviting, and innovative cultural centers fit within one of the AAP’s crucial outlooks about art: that it should be non-competitive and non-hierarchical.

As of 1970, students were willing to be the disruption to their education with the goal of transforming it. As a result, the 1970-71 school year was characterized by ESBA Madrid students becoming more active than ever before in making demands and taking matters into their own hands. Thus, students started to advocate for the cancelation of the elements of their art

⁶⁶ The central question discussed at this meeting radiated around whether AAP members would try to advance art education more through their own independent workshops or continue to do so from within. Minutes of the Reunión de Intercomisiones, June 25, 1970, Box 867, Folder 1, Archivo Arenillas, Archivo Central, MNCARS.

⁶⁷ This report most likely was written up in late 1970 or early 1971 based on the fact that it refers to the recent passage of the General Education Law that went into effect on August 4, 1970. Independent of exact date, this report helpfully summarizes the committee’s main objectives from its beginning. Untitled and undated report of the AAP’s Comisión de Enseñanza, Box 867, Folder 18.4, Archivo Arenillas, MNCARS Archivo Central.

⁶⁸ Untitled statement by Tino Calabuig, ca. 1970, Arch. RC 88, Archivo Redor-Calabuig, MNCARS.

school experience that they saw as standing in the way of the vision espoused by Calabuig. For example, a group of students demanded doing away with the bureaucratic annual official exhibitions of student artwork. They were also desirous of a class schedule in which most of their courses would take place in the morning, therefore allowing for more free time in which to experience cultural events and workshops in the afternoons and evenings.⁶⁹ The “free” time not spent in classes, the thinking went, would allow students more opportunities to learn what they really needed to from professional artists and/or from each other. In addition to these overarching objectives, students also would continue to react to individual and practical concerns about the ramshackle state of their school building and disruptions to their education because of recurrent art models’ strikes.⁷⁰

Most ambitious was the effort to draft a new curriculum, which was clearly influenced by the AAP agenda through its student representatives. Students who had been demanding a curriculum more sensitive to recent artistic innovations decided to craft their own. Student representatives of the AAP were careful to visit all four of the ESBA sites on several occasions, gathering groups of interested students. What resulted was a short manifesto crafted by students from all ESBA sites, in which they declared: “that the current teaching of fine arts...DOES NOT

⁶⁹ In Spain, the *horario de mañana* (morning schedule) denotes the part of one’s work- or school-day that takes place before 2:30 or 3:00 pm.

⁷⁰ An article published in *Pueblo*, dated 12 February 1970, reported on an art models’ strike at the school, thus demonstrating that this issue had not gone away. The models were seeking a fifty-percent raise in their wages, this time from 50 to 75 pesetas per hour. A letter sent by a group of students to school director Antonio Fernández Curro reported that they were going to join the strike because the art models’ repeated requests for increased pay had not been met. While the models had been on strike since February 6, the majority of the students, some perhaps only irritated by the interruptions in their classes, declared their new solidarity with the strike, explaining their own participation as a last-ditch effort to “speed up the very slow issues with the administration.” (“Paro en la Escuela de Bellas Artes,” *Pueblo*, February 12, 1970.) The art models would continue to advocate for higher pay and a more permanent contract for at least another half decade, as demonstrated in a February 1975 letter from about a dozen models to the short-lived minister of Education, Cruz Martínez Esteruelas. Art models to the minister of Education, February 10, 1975, Salida 3653, ADFBA.

RESPOND to the needs of the society in which we live, nor does it satisfy the artistic, cultural, and human demands of the student.”⁷¹

ESBA students then worked to draft a document articulating a new curriculum for themselves and sent it to the Ministry of Education. Seeking a deeper connection with each other and foundational ideas in the history and theory of art, the students developed a 5-year-long course of study quite distinct from the extant curriculum. Rather than the single shared first year, in the new plan, the first three years would be shared by all students, featuring courses meant to develop humanistic knowledge, art theory and practice, and knowledge of materials and technique. For the last two years of study, students would then break off into their chosen specialty, related either to art pedagogy and education, graphic design, or art history. Perhaps most importantly, all years of study were also meant to be supported by the “free workshops.”⁷²

What this proposed curriculum was meant to achieve was multifarious. Not only would students spend more time together before being broken off into one’s specialty, but also courses would provide a deeper grounding in the theories and ideas present in the sociology and psychology of art, aesthetics, communication, and history. These teachings – when also paired with the last two years of study more attuned to available career paths and followed by free time in which to work within the workshops – was thought to better fit the kind of curriculum present at Spanish universities, becoming part of which was also among the students’ demands.⁷³

Beyond only the curricular demands, the student authors explained that they wanted to be

⁷¹ “...que la actual enseñanza de las Bellas Artes...NO RESPONDE a las necesidades de la sociedad en que vivimos, no satisface las exigencias artísticas, culturales y humanas del estudiante.” Manifiesto de los representantes de las Escuelas Superiores de Bellas Artes de España, undated [probably 1970], Arch. RC 83, Archivo Redor-Calabuig, MNCARS. Emphasis in the original.

⁷² Hacia una nueva orientación de las Escuelas de Bellas Artes (anteproyecto), ca. 1970, Arch. RC 84, Archivo Redor-Calabuig, MNCARS. Another copy of this document, the one actually sent to the Ministry of Education, is conserved at the Archivo General de la Administración (Box 870, (03)110, AGA).

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 3.

included in the governing of their school with respect to the hiring of faculty, a voice in the academic review process, and in the ability to propose new courses.⁷⁴

In line with the students' demand for the free workshops, ESBA Madrid students asked their faculty *dirección* for changes to their regular class schedule that would situate as many classes as possible during the morning hours. Because even the most hopeful students must have been aware that any curricular changes were unlikely to proceed in a timely fashion if at all, students decided to ask the school administration directly for this change that would bring them one step closer to their ideal. Beginning in May of 1970, students from the various artistic concentrations started to make such requests. For example, about 55 students from the third *curso*'s painting and sculpture tracks proposed to the school director that next year's classes be moved to meet only during the mornings.⁷⁵ Unsurprisingly, either at the end of 1970 or first half of 1971, the students learned that their draft curriculum had been rejected by the Ministry, resulting in a two-day-long strike.⁷⁶

The next area in which ESBA students demanded change was in the format of the annual exhibition of student artwork, dictated by the traditional system of administration-sponsored official exhibitions.⁷⁷ Mirroring the large national boycott that the AAP led against the reinvented National Exhibition of Fine Arts during the spring and summer of 1970, and applying

⁷⁴ Ibid., 3.

⁷⁵ Students to Fernández Curro and Faculty, May 14, 1970, Entrada 1814, ADFBA.

⁷⁶ "Información de la AIAP española," undated, Box 867, Folder 4, Archivo Arenillas, Archivo Central, MNCARS. Albarrán ("Lo profesional es político...," 255, note 24) situates the date of the Ministry's rejection of the curriculum in relation to simultaneous larger university protests relating to the dissatisfaction of the General Education Law and believes it was probably 1971. I believe that the student strike probably took place at the end of 1970, and is the "non-attendance" referenced in "Inasistencia a clase en Bellas Artes," December 12, 1970, *ABC*, 32.

⁷⁷ Whether student, amateur, or professional artist, one would have been familiar with the contest-like structure of art exhibitions sponsored by the General Directorate of Fine Arts that dated from the mid-nineteenth century: artists would submit their artwork(s), which had to conform to a specific size and category such as 'painting' or 'sculpture,' and then a pre-publicized amount of prize money would be awarded for the best artworks in each category, which would then become property of the state.

the same model for their own ends, the ESBA Madrid students hosted their own campaign of non-participation in November. Student protesters littered the school with pamphlets and leaflets urging their classmates to boycott that year's student exhibition. In one statement, its authors explained that they were "adopting a stance against the traditional system of exhibitions," which would take the form of their campaign to boycott the exhibition.⁷⁸ They claimed that the rigid format only served to create a useless sense of competition in which the prizes were "false stimuli" that did not make up for true, quality arts education. Then the statement's authors proposed the type of exhibition they would like: "non-competitive, permanent and renewable, totally free for all kinds of students and professionals and without any limitations."⁷⁹ The following month, when the official call was posted announcing the submission period for artworks, the student activists widely distributed their own adulterated version of it, featuring lines of text crossed out and their own ideas written in the margins.⁸⁰

In February of 1971, the student activists managed the one-and-only instance of the kind of exhibition that they desired. There are differing accounts of how long the *Exposición Libre y Permanente* remained on display before the police disassembled it, although it likely lasted about a week.⁸¹ Taking over every available space, students hung artworks all over the walls, and took turns walking the halls to guard them. In addition to only student artwork, student participant Marisa González explained that the *Exposición Libre* had ample support of the professional artists of the AAP who lent artworks.⁸² Additionally, gallerist Juana Mordó contributed artworks

⁷⁸ "...adoptamos una postura crítica y contraria al sistema tradicional de exposiciones..." "Exposición libre y permanente en la Escuela de Bellas Artes," Box 867, Folder 11, Archivo Arenillas, Archivo Central, MNCARS, also replicated in García García, *Tiempo de estrategias*, 48-49.

⁷⁹ "...no competitiva, permanente y renovable, totalmente libre para todo tipo de alumnos y profesionales y sin limitaciones de ninguna clase..." Ibid.

⁸⁰ "Inasistencia a clase en Bellas Artes," *ABC*, December 12, 1970, 32.

⁸¹ Albarrán, "Lo profesional es político..." 260 note 35 and García García, *Tiempo de estrategias*, 51.

⁸² Statement by Marisa González, as reproduced in Albarrán, "Lo profesional es político..." 260.

from some well-known professional artists (Juan Genovés and Lucio Muñoz) represented by her gallery.⁸³ And while it is not clear to what extent other activities took place, events such as film screenings, debates, and lectures had also been planned. The students had also written directly to Director General Pérez Embid, pugnaciously announcing their exhibition while at the same time asking for his support to host such kinds of events in the future.⁸⁴ It is even likely that this unauthorized exhibition was the last straw for the already beleaguered school director, Fernández Curro, when he resigned less than halfway through his three-year term.⁸⁵

The mobilization during the 1970-71 school year yielded what must have seemed to students like a major victory at the time. For the following school year, professional artists – Juan Barjola, Eusebio Sempere, and Paco Nieva – were hired to teach at the ESBA Madrid, although after a single year, their contracts were not renewed.⁸⁶ It is perhaps this victory, coupled with continued guidance from the AAP, that propelled the students to keep up their unrelenting activism during the 1971-72 school year. The school year had hardly begun when students wrote to the director general of Fine Arts and took to the press alleging that there be an investigation into the unusually large number of students who failed their final exams from the previous year.⁸⁷ The new school director, Victoriano Pardo Galindo, not incorrectly recognized the

⁸³ The professional artists listed as having participated are Equipo Crónica, Tino Calabuig, Gerardo Delgado, Manuel Hernández Mompó, Manuel Rivera, Gerardo Rueda, Eusebio Sempere, Gustavo Torner, Eduardo Úrculo, and Salvador Victoria. García García, *Tiempo de estrategias*, 52.

⁸⁴ Students to Director General of Fine Arts, undated, Box 867, Folder 11, Archivo Arenillas, Archivo Central, MNCARS, replicated in its entirety in Anexo 3, García García, *Tiempo de estrategias*, 246-247.

⁸⁵ Having assumed the position of ESBA Madrid director after Luis Alegre Núñez's death in October of 1969, Antonio Fernández Curro was supposed to have remained as the school's director until the fall of 1972. If Fernández Curro did not resign as director after the student *Exposición Libre*, then he did so right beforehand in anticipation of it. Meeting minutes from a faculty meeting of February 6, 1971 seem to imply that the faculty knew the students were planning *something*. The resignation letter itself is: Letter from Fernández Curro to the Director General of Fine Arts, February 11, 1971, Salida 2159, ADFBA.

⁸⁶ Albarrán, "Lo profesional es político..." 260.

⁸⁷ Students to Pardo Galindo, 18 November 1971, Entrada 2524, ADFBA. The copy of this letter to the director general was published as: "Escuela de Bellas Artes: Una cuestión inaplazable," *Madrid*. Suplemento de Educación, November 25, 1971, 4.

influence of “outside elements” on a group of students, and tried to downplay the student organizing to his superiors.⁸⁸ At a student assembly at the end of November, Pardo Galindo invited students who still had concerns to put them in writing for discussion at the next faculty meeting.⁸⁹

When students responded with a detailed letter on December 9, 1971, they made several demands of the *dirección*, big and small, that each in their own way pushed for a greater flexibility of rules regarding scheduling and the availability of resources.⁹⁰ The students demanded that all of the following be put into action before January 1st: 1) a schedule of classes that prioritized the mornings;⁹¹ 2) a faculty whose methods were not anachronistic; 3) a doing away with prizes and grades (leaving only the qualifiers “*apto*” or “*no apto*”); 4) the ability to partake in faculty meetings; 5) open workshops that would occupy currently unutilized rooms in the school; 6) cultural events that students chose; 7) use of the school auditorium and exhibition room; 8) the ability of students in all class years to have access to classes;⁹² and 9) a better-stocked and affordably-priced school art store and cafeteria; and lastly, signaling that there were still items in need of repair, 10) that the school carpenter’s duties be fulfilled.

The reactions of the faculty members to this letter ran the gamut from seeing it as offensive to wanting to ignore it. Before the faculty met to discuss the letter, Pardo Galindo threatened both to dismantle the student delegation and to report any disruptions to the top level

⁸⁸ Pardo Galindo to Falcón, November 23, 1971, Salida 2473; and Pardo Galindo to Pérez Embid, November 23, 1971, Salida 2474, ADFBA.

⁸⁹ Letter from Pardo Galindo to Falcón, December 1, 1971, Salida 2488, ADFBA.

⁹⁰ Students to Pardo Galindo, December 9, 1971, Entrada 2526, ADFBA.

⁹¹ That this was a continued demand either meant that the request first articulated by students in May of 1970 had not come to pass, or that it had, but only applied to a single course and not the entire school’s schedule.

⁹² My understanding of this point is both that matriculated students be able to attend any class as an auditing student and that classrooms be open and available to students when classes were not in session.

of government.⁹³ Pardo Galindo then issued a second announcement to the students the same day explaining that the student letter of the 9th would not be taken into consideration because its tone was “offensive” and because not all student signatures were legible.⁹⁴ That the letter was still introduced and discussed at a faculty meeting, however, implies that Pardo Galindo did not dismiss all demands as valueless. One faculty member in particular believed that while the real rebels had graduated the previous year, those few who remained were just using the letter as an obvious provocation.⁹⁵ Despite the claim to ignore the letter, the evidence suggests that Pardo Galindo acted to the contrary. As a result of their pressure, the students did win at least two of their major demands: a revised class schedule in which almost all courses were taught during the morning, and the creation of a new joint student-faculty committee to choose activities and plan exhibitions.⁹⁶ Furthermore, there are also hints that faculty members allowed exhibitions of student artwork to have a structure more akin to what students wanted, although it’s unclear how many times something like this actually took place, nor does it appear that the faculty ceased to award prizes.⁹⁷

⁹³ Pardo Galindo to students, “A la Delegación de Alumnos de la Escuela Superior de Bellas Artes de S. Fernando. Madrid,” December 15, 1971, Salida 2501, ADFBA.

⁹⁴ Pardo Galindo to students, “Para conocimiento de los alumnos de esta Escuela,” December 15, 1971, Salida 2502, ADFBA.

⁹⁵ Per Pardo Galindo’s word, the student letter was, in fact, addressed at the faculty meeting that took place on December 17, 1971. Within the meeting minutes of this date, faculty members’ reactions have been recorded.

⁹⁶ Pardo Galindo to students, “Para conocimiento de los alumnos de esta Escuela,” January 19, 1972, Salida 2537, ADFBA. This document, communicating the new schedule, indicated that the latest that any class met was 3:00 p.m., and ended by mentioning that the new schedule would go into effect on Monday, January 24. It seems that when these changes to the schedule were made, they were only to last for the rest of the school year. The schedule change appears to have become permanent, however, when Pardo Galindo hosted a series of assemblies before the start of the 1972-73 school year in which “an overwhelming majority” of students from all class years voted for the morning schedule. Letter from Pardo Galindo to Ramón Falcón, October 21, 1972, Salida 2803, ADFBA. With respect to the formation of the new committee, which met for the first time on March 21, 1972, see: “Reunión de la Comisión de Exposiciones,” March 21, 1972, Salida 2620, ADFBA.

⁹⁷ Meeting minutes of June 28, 1973, Libro de Actas, ADFBA. Pardo Galindo referred to the planning of an “*exposición libre de pintura, escultura, dibujo y grabado*” as one of the events to have taken place during the 1972-73 school year, although it seems it may have been cancelled or interrupted due to a student strike.

With the AAP's transition into the APSA in the summer of 1972, and its move away from its most overt phase of "vertical" advocacy, the students would lose their direct contact with the larger world of artistic advocacy. While the association did not stop believing in the need for a drastic reform of arts education, their activities shifted away from rallying students around curricular and societal concerns, and turned toward activities that would earn money so that APSA could continue to operate. Although in many ways, the AAP's Education Committee had achieved its objectives: students had become more aware of the structural reasons that their educational system looked as it did and they became successful at wielding their demands in ways that saw results. Many of the students' initial demands had been answered – the hiring of professional artists as faculty members (albeit temporarily), a new class schedule, more of a say in activities and exhibitions – and presumably as long as these conditions continued, the regular functioning of their classes would proceed.

University Integration “Postponed Indefinitely”: Faculty and Student Interests Realign, 1972-1978

As will become clear, even after the AAP withdrew its direct involvement, the students at the ESBA continued sustained mobilization over the remainder of the decade. The documentary record shows that nary a school year passed at the ESBA Madrid in the remainder of the 1970s without some period of student unrest, protest, or boycott. The period between fall of 1972 and 1978 is also characterized by increasing faculty frustrations around the subject of the school's integration into the University of Madrid. While student and faculty concerns were not one and the same during this time, it is fair to claim that they nevertheless converged once again around how best to encourage the administration to actually promulgate the university integration. In fact, faculty members would undertake their own campaign to attempt to force the regime to act, even relying on many of the tactics employed by their students. Another set of factors that once

again made students and faculty members see eye to eye had to do with a new spate of problems with the school building that yet again threatened the normal functioning of classes. After years of pleading, many of the longstanding problems with the building were addressed only over the course of the 1974-1975 school year and the long-promised university integration would take place only for the start of the 1978-1979 school year.

In addition to continuing to care about curricular matters, students still proved ever vigilant over their educational opportunities and would continue to demand unhindered access to their education. The biggest set of obstacles after 1972 were the continued physical problems with their school building that would affect students' ability to attend classes normally. An unusually rainy summer and fall coupled with the building's poor drainage caused the need for urgent repair work in several classrooms and the library for the start of school in 1972.⁹⁸ Five months later, no repairs had been made, and two large picture windows had broken, and were hanging precariously from their frames over the sculpture workshop below. Pardo Galindo expressed justified worry that the continued problems with the building would "aggravate the dissatisfaction already prevalent among the students."⁹⁹ As predicted, with the building's problems continuing to affect the normal functioning of classes, by April of 1973, a small group of ESBA Madrid students were on strike.¹⁰⁰ At some point, classes were cancelled altogether for

⁹⁸ Pardo Galindo to the Director General de Programación e Inversiones, October 15, 1972, Salida 2794, ADFBA and Pardo Galindo to the Director General de Programación e Inversiones, October 25, 1972, Salida 2808, ADFBA.

⁹⁹ "...agravar el descontento ya reinante entre el alumnado por las deficiencias de la construcción del edificio." Pardo Galindo to the Director General de Programación e Inversiones, February 28, 1973, Salida 2924, ADFBA, and Pardo Galindo to the Director General de Bellas Artes, February 28, 1973, Salida 2925, ADFBA.

¹⁰⁰ It appears it was not only the students who made use of the press. While the tensions were riding high, an article appeared in newspaper *Informaciones* giving a largely favorable report of the ESBA Madrid. Nothing was mentioned here at all about student unrest or protests, with the focus instead on a general report on the state of the school, including quotations from Pardo Galindo and several professors. While the article openly acknowledged that one of the biggest criticisms of the school was that it perpetuated the teaching of an overtly academic art, the professors' statements were used throughout to dispel these accusations. Their statements highlighted the fact that the structure of studies was changing, supposedly to give students more freedom. José Ramón San Juan, "Dicen los profesores: "Aquí no hacemos artistas"," *Informaciones*, March 30, 1973, 27.

a little over month, probably because the majority of student students had stopped attending until repairs were made; classes resumed again on May 4, 1973.¹⁰¹ As with the initial problems at the time of the building's opening in October of 1967, this series too would take many years to fix, and the faculty members were also upset at the state of affairs.¹⁰²

Students also continued to push for a greater say and awareness in their coursework and extra-curricular activities. Not wasting any time in making their demands known, students invited new school director Julio Fuentes Alonso to a so-called 'conversation' (*coloquio*) the day after he assumed his new position in March of 1974.¹⁰³ They demanded to know more about the timeline for the integration of their school into the university system. They also asked to be included in the crafting of the curriculum and included on the economic board of the school. In addition, implying that they still did not have full autonomy in planning events, students demanded the ability to plan cultural events and student assemblies. In March of 1976, faculty members agreed to create a joint faculty-student committee to ensure that any new curriculum advanced to the authorities took account of the demands of both.¹⁰⁴

Demonstrating that they would not allow faculty members to impinge upon rights granted to them previously, in February of 1976, a group of students from the 'engraving' track demanded the resignation of their teacher, Sr. Barrio. Apparently, he would not allow his students into his classroom outside of the appointed class time. Despite the fact that Fuentes Alonso told students that he would ensure their access to the classroom, the students would not

¹⁰¹ Statement dated April 16, 1973, Salida 2963, ADFBA.

¹⁰² Letter from the *Catedrático* of Restoration, Francisco Núñez de Celis, about the unacceptable state of his classroom in October 1973. Because of all the problems, he had already had to spend all of the previous school year in another, inadequate space – but he had not anticipated needing to do so again, as repairs should have been completed before the new school year began. Entrada 3191 bis, ADFBA. Fuentes Alonso to the DG de BBAA, July 4, 1974, Salida 3308, ADFBA. It was only at a faculty meeting from April 29, 1975 that faculty members acknowledged the recent necessary physical improvements to the building.

¹⁰³ Meeting minutes of May 2, 1974, Libro de Actas, ADFBA.

¹⁰⁴ Meeting minutes of March 4, 1975, Libro de Actas, ADFBA.

relent. When student representatives at a faculty meeting demanded Sr. Barrio's resignation, and refused to leave until they did so, faculty members cheekily decided to hold a non-binding vote to show the students that no one else agreed with their position, returning, as expected, not a single vote in favor of Sr. Barrio's dismissal. As the announcement of the vote came down, students listening outside the door were heard shouting, attempting to disrupt the meeting.¹⁰⁵

By the time the new school year was to begin in 1976, student and faculty concerns at this point actually aligned as they once had during the budgetary problems and models' strike of the fall of 1966. This time, both were concerned about the continued broken promises of the ESBA Madrid to become part of the nearby university. That the ESBA's were considered *enseñanzas superiores* without being affiliated with or attached to their respective local universities would become a major point of contention in the late Franco years. Students and faculty alike would come to see their schools as representative of an uneven relationship, in which they lacked all of the benefits of the status of a university *facultad*. It is even possible that this was the first year in which the largest disturbances to the school year were not made by ESBA students, but those who aspired to be. On two separate occasions, about 50 applicants who believed they had been wrongly denied admission to the school occupied a nearby building that had been acquired by the school, but was not yet ready for use.¹⁰⁶ That the promise of the school's conversion from ESBA to Department of Fine Arts would last almost the entire decade of the 1970s would continue to provoke tensions between the students and faculty on one side, and the Ministry of Education and the uppermost echelon of Francoist government, on the other.

¹⁰⁵ Meeting minutes of February 23, 1976, Libro de Actas, ADFBA. At the following faculty meeting held March 4, 1976, a faculty member, Sr. Núñez de Celis, admonished the seven student representatives present that their actions of last time – keeping the faculty for over three hours – would not be tolerated again.

¹⁰⁶ “Segundo encierro de los no admitidos en la Escuela de Bellas Artes,” *ABC*, October 16, 1976, 12; “Tercer día de encierro de los no admitidos en Bellas Artes,” October 16, 1976, *El País*, 21. Acquisition of the new building is also mentioned in Fuentes Alonso, “Datos para un historial...,” 10-11.

The long, drawn-out process eroded faculty members' collective confidence in the regime's ability to govern.

The integration of the school into the University of Madrid was already something desired by most students and faculty throughout the 1960s, and it was arguably why the General Directorate of Fine Arts decided to erect the new building within the University City in the first place. The first piece of legislation to call definitively for ESBA integration into the university system, however, came as part of the August 1970 General Education Law (LGE). Not only would this move have upgraded the status of ESBA faculty members into the university faculty pay and tenure structure, but the hope was also that it would end the bureaucratic neglect of the ESBA's. The move to the university also meant the opportunity for a redesigned visual arts curriculum which would take into account the offerings of university courses in other *facultades*. In other words, rather than fighting a myriad of small battles over salaries and benefits, the sad state of their classrooms, and the subpar budgets of the school, the conversion to university status was envisaged as *the* solution to all of these matters.¹⁰⁷ After the move to the new building had proved to be such a big disappointment, the LGE was held up as the next big hope for true reform.

Antonio Fernández Curro was the director of ESBA Madrid when the LGE was declared, thus it was during his truncated tenure as director that we first observe the faculty excitement-cum-frustration about the prospect of having the ESBA's convert into university departments. In a letter to the rector of the University of Madrid sent very shortly after the LGE was declared, Fernández Curro declared his impatience at the prospect of personally overseeing the transition of the school to a university department, which he saw as a much-desired and long-awaited

¹⁰⁷ Fernández Curro to the Ministro de Hacienda, November 16, 1970, Salida 2060, ADFBA.

triumph.¹⁰⁸ Another letter from Fernández Curro, this time to the minister of Education, also demonstrated that the faculty thought the integration would be a quick process and that the problems faced by the ESBA were serious enough to warrant a speedy transition: “The situation of these schools, Mister Minister, continues to be precarious for faculty members and students, in their means and possibilities for disagreement with each other, and because of their insufficient endowments.”¹⁰⁹

After Fernández Curro’s resignation, the era of school director Victoriano Pardo Galindo may be characterized by his attempts at making sure that when the ESBA was integrated into the university, such a move should also come with a new curriculum adapted to the structure of university education. For example, there were classes proposed for non-majors, a recommended course of study for those seeking a bachelor’s degree in the visual arts, and a further course of study for doctoral students. He and other ESBA directors approved a draft of this new *plan de estudios*, which he thought would speed up the university integration.¹¹⁰ Nothing seemed to help, however, and faculty members wondered whether they were being faced with neglect, mismanagement, or laziness. Frequent changes in government personnel in the early- to mid-1970s also complicated and prolonged what might have otherwise been a more streamlined process.¹¹¹

New ESBA Madrid director, Julio Fuentes Alonso, met with the school faculty in September 1974 to plan for their still unfulfilled university curriculum, as well as overall staffing

¹⁰⁸ Fernández Curro to Rector of the Universidad de Madrid, October 15, 1970, Salida 1999, ADFBA.

¹⁰⁹ “La situación de estas Escuelas, Señor Ministro, sigue siendo precaria en todo su amplio entorno de profesorado y alumnos, medios y posibilidades en desacuerdo entre sí, y dotaciones insuficientes.” Fernández Curro to the minister of Education, December 23, 1970, Salida 2060, ADFBA.

¹¹⁰ Pardo Galindo to Hernández Díaz, May 7, 1971, Salida 2239, ADFBA.

¹¹¹ A July 18, 1972 letter from Pardo Galindo to the rector of the Universidad de Madrid referenced a recent meeting of the ESBA directors with the new director general of Universidades e Investigación to bring him up to date on the proposed curriculum. Salida 2736, ADFBA.

needs for the 29 new courses they had proposed.¹¹² In January of 1975, with some movement having taken place in Sevilla, Fuentes wrote to the new rector of what was now being called the Universidad Complutense de Madrid to bring him up to date on where matters stood with respect to university integration and on the previous inter-ESBA faculty meetings to develop the new curriculum.¹¹³ He explained that it was necessary to “conclude this interim period that favors no one...and harms enormously our five schools” and that not proceeding further meant that the solving of problems had become “postponed indefinitely.”¹¹⁴ Thus, faculty members started to question why their superiors would continue to promise this move that would not only help them personally, but also aid the resolution of the school’s problems at large, only to make no advances whatsoever in making it happen. But at the same time, faculty members were consistently bombarded with contradictory information. For example, an announcement appeared in the August-September 1975 issue of *Bellas Artes*, an official magazine of the General Directorate of Fine Arts, stating that the integration of the ESBA Madrid likely would take place the following school year.¹¹⁵

With every passing year, ESBA Madrid faculty members grew more desperate to become integrated into the university, while at the same time becoming resigned to the fact that it was unlikely to happen. Tensions finally came to a head in September of 1977. Faculty members felt as though they had been left without any recourse when the governmental department under which they fell was moved over to the newly-created Ministry of Culture without the ESBA

¹¹² Comisión de Educación, “Cuarto Plan de Desarrollo Económico y Social,” September 1974, Salida 3337, ADFBA.

¹¹³ The ESBA Sevilla had come under the purview of the local university there in early 1974, although would not be converted into a proper *facultad* until 1978.

¹¹⁴ “...dar por concluido este período de interinidad que a nadie favorece y que a nuestras cinco Escuelas... perjudica enormemente...” and “...aplazados indefinidamente.” Julio Fuentes to Ángel González Álvarez, the Rector of the UCM, January 30, 1975, Salida 3620, ADFBA.

¹¹⁵ “Noticiero nacional,” *Bellas Artes* no. 45 (August – September 1975), 62-63.

integration into their respective universities having been ratified by the Ministry of Education.¹¹⁶ Thus, without any of their direct superiors still located within the Ministry of Education, the worry was that no one was present to finalize the transition.

Rather than wait for a solution, the faculty of the ESBA Madrid instigated their own campaign. They decided they had had enough and were willing to take to the press, engage in a campaign to refuse to start the school year, and ultimately do whatever they could to stimulate popular support. To these ends, the faculty of the ESBA Madrid held a series of almost-daily emergency faculty meetings over the course of September 1977 figuring out how they wanted to proceed. They held large assemblies, threatened to cancel the school's entrance exam, refused to start classes for the upcoming new school year, and they even met with the AAP's successor group, the APSA, to discuss their predicament.¹¹⁷ Taking to the press, 29 faculty members drafted a statement that appeared in *El País* on September 28, 1977 assigning full blame both to the "centralist paternalism" of the Ministry of Education and the utter neglect of the General Directorate of Fine Arts, which they accused of having always put its educational centers dead last, after museums, festivals, exhibitions, and theater.¹¹⁸ While the faculty eventually acquiesced and started to teach classes, probably with a higher-up's continued promises that university integration would still take place, the school year nevertheless opened in late November, almost a month after classes were supposed to have started.¹¹⁹ Finally, in April 1978, a government decree made official the ESBA's integration with the University of Madrid, pending the election of a dean for the new *facultad*.¹²⁰ After about a decade of promises, the 1978-79 school year was

¹¹⁶ As of October 1974, the General Directorate of Fine Arts had been reorganized and renamed the General Directorate of Artistic and Cultural Patrimony.

¹¹⁷ Meeting minutes of September 24, 1977 and September 27, 1977, Libro de Actas, ADFBA.

¹¹⁸ "Situación de emergencia en la Escuela de Bellas Artes de Madrid," *El País*, September 28, 1977, 25.

¹¹⁹ "El día 23 comenzará el curso en Bellas Artes," November 15, 1977, *ABC*, 26.

¹²⁰ Even this last step was fraught with challenges. While longtime ESBA professor Núñez de Celis had been elected as dean, frustrations with the process were enough to make him resign in just a few months. Art historian Joaquín

the first in which the ESBA Madrid opened as the Facultad de Bellas Artes of the Universidad Complutense de Madrid.

Conclusion

This case study of the ESBA Madrid is yet another strong example of the contested nature of civil society-regime relations in late Francoist Spain. The top-down attempts at reform, in this case through the building of a new art school and in assuring the school's transformation into university *facultad*, was met with increasingly sustained civil society mobilization when the promises bound up in these reforms failed to materialize. Underfunded in all areas and perpetually unable to afford its basic staffing needs, consistently saddled with physical problems of the building, and existing in a time of mass student unrest, the ESBA Madrid was always in some way or another under construction. That the ESBA was “higher education,” but without any of this category's benefits, meant that students and faculty alike placed great hope in the prospect that their school would be integrated into the University of Madrid.

With the first public complaints about the shortcomings of art school education emerging in the early 1960s, it would be only in October 1966 that students would first make a public declaration of a strike, in this case to force the hand of the General Directorate of Fine Arts to assure enough financing to the school to pay the art models and attend to basic operational costs. The faculty were largely supportive of the students in this endeavor, as their priorities were aligned around the same goal. While the director general stepped in to aid this immediate problem, it was not without blaming the faculty for their supposed inability to manage funds. Faculty-regime correspondence from this time reveals a lopsided relationship in which the

Gurruchaga was then elected, and served as the first dean of the new *facultad*. Fuentes Alonso, “Datos para un historial...,” 12-14.

former had made many sacrifices over the years, avoiding asking the Directorate for help until the situation was deemed to have reached a crisis.

After an early period of student mobilization to fix one-time problems, the involvement of the Asociación de Artistas Plásticos in the service of improving arts education would push students into a new phase of artistic advocacy at the start of the 1969 school year. During the couple of years under AAP guidance until the summer of 1972, students of the ESBA Madrid would demand a new class timetable, a reinvented curriculum, and a non-competitive structure for art exhibitions, articulating their demands to faculty members, the school director, the director general of Fine Arts, and the minister of Education. Students also went forward with the organization of their own art exhibition, what they called the *Exposición Libre*, demonstrating that if school officials were not going to listen to their demands for a non-hierarchical, non-traditional annual exhibition of student artwork, they were going to put one on anyway. When the curricular changes they had demanded failed to materialize from those within the General Directorate and the Ministry, students made smaller demands of their school's leadership. Eventually securing for themselves a new class schedule, and more involvement in the planning of activities, students started to make incremental changes toward their larger goals. The lack of significant change coming from the very top, however, meant that students came to see their undesirable situation as further conditioned by a regime that would not allow their educational circumstances to change.

Even after direct AAP involvement, student mobilization was strong. Continuing to be vigilant about the scheduling of their classes, access to classrooms, and the ability to have a voice in curricular re-design and the planning of extra-curricular activities, the documentary record shows that students never ceased organizing to achieve such goals. Like faculty members,

students also understood the value inherent in the school's integration into the university system, and it was when both were working toward this goal that faculty were more open to student involvement.

Over the course of the entire late Francoist period, Spanish art students became increasingly involved in the direction of their own arts education and exercised a direct and candid assertiveness toward their teachers, the school's leadership, and the Francoist visual arts administration when they felt that their rights as students had been violated. While the most radical students harboring anti-regime attitudes and displeased with their outmoded arts education may have cultivated their actions motivated by ideological concerns, practical concerns with the state of the building and class schedules proved enduring issues for all students.

For their part, ESBA Madrid faculty members experienced their own evolution of relations with students and their bosses at the General Directorate. While certainly at times becoming frustrated with the student body, school directors were largely sympathetic to their plight. Especially in the last years at the building on the Calle Alcalá and the first few in the University City before 1969, funding and construction problems made the normal functioning of affairs difficult. Both students and faculty wanted to return to normality; thus, sharing the same goal, it was relatively easy to support student demands of regime figures. With AAP involvement, however, and more contestation directed toward the faculty members themselves, they were often put in an even more difficult predicament than before, trying to appear competent to bosses, but authoritative to students. Fernández Curro and Pardo Galindo bore the brunt of student unrest between 1969 and 1972. Faculty relations with their superiors demonstrated an initial deep-seated respect for authority that turned to utter disappointment and

frustration with the administration's lack of concern and attention toward the longstanding promise of university integration. Having been promised and promised again while the Franco regime was still in full force, faculty members had resigned themselves to the fact that it was unlikely to happen. Finally being guaranteed university status for the start of school in the fall of 1977 yet again, the transition failed to take place. But the last straw was when the Transition government's creation of the new Ministry of Culture left the school without a general directorate to which to appeal, finally forcing faculty members to act – taking cues from their own students' organizing.

At first glance, civil society organizing in the form of student mobilization at the ESBA Madrid was successful only insofar as students won for themselves small concessions. But upon deeper reflections, student mobilization would ultimately force faculty members to consider their own position within the Francoist hierarchy, within which, it turned out, they did not have very much power to enact change. Students and faculty alike came to experience a fundamental loss of legitimacy of their political leaders who did so little to serve their genuine interests. In the end, neither the General Directorate of Fine Arts nor the Ministry of Education made any formal legislative changes that faculty or students demanded during the entire decade covered here. Eventually, even ESBA integration into the Complutense University took place only when it seemed as though it was going to be more of a problem not to do it.

Conclusion

The story I have told here about the relationship between Spanish civil society in the form of late Francoist Spain's artistic community and the arts apparatus of the regime deserves a brief epilogue to capture the outcomes of some of its protagonists and institutions before I offer a summation of the main ideas treated in this dissertation. After Francoist Spain's formal transition to democracy occurring over the course of 1976-1978, the country's cultural life was framed both by continuities with and changes from the Francoist period. The move from dictatorial to democratic regime naturally provoked changes in bureaucratic structures. A new Ministry of Culture was founded in July of 1977, finally bringing together the myriad arts apparatus offices under one roof. This consolidation represented the culmination of what some had been calling for since the 1940s.¹ In August 1977 the successor group to the Asociación de Artistas Plásticos (AAP), which from 1972 had been registered as a public-limited company in order to have legal recourse to meet, transformed into the fully-legalized Asociación Sindical de Artistas Plásticos (ASAP). Also in this same year, a new association of art gallerists formed, giving formal shape to private gallerists' professional and commercial practices. In 1978, faculty members' bureaucratic nightmare finally ended when the Escuela Superior de Bellas Artes of Madrid became integrated as *facultad* into the Universidad Complutense de Madrid. In 1980, when a new committee formed to plan the international art exhibition that would come to be known as ARCO – the Spanish government's first attempt to promulgate a major art biennial since the

¹ A conference in May of 1945 - the *II Congreso Nacional de Bellas Artes* – hosted the first forum during the Francoist period for arts officials in the government to discuss the future of art policy. At this venue, many of the problems and issues about the visual arts in Spain that would exist throughout the course of the dictatorship were first introduced here. For example, in one talk, a presenter expressed the desire for a centralized department to deal with all cultural matters. A subsequent conference was planned for 1951, but never took place, and none of the suggestions posed at the 1945 led to substantial reform. *Congreso de Bellas Artes celebrado en el Círculo de Bellas Artes de Madrid, 22-28 mayo de 1945. Memoria redactada por las secretarías del congreso* (Madrid, 1945).

ending of the *Nacionales* in 1972 – gallerists Juana Mordó and Juana de Aizpuru were given leading organizational roles. The newfound freedom of association and many long hoped-for institutional transitions were long overdue.

In addition to these structural administrative transformations, there were changes in the official narrative of Spanish artists and their contributions to Spanish culture. As early as the summer of 1977, the UCD (Unión de Centro Democrático) government under Adolfo Suárez set the stage for future cultural policy by starting to show its support for artists who exemplified a rupture from the cultural policy of the dictatorship, albeit in a way that stripped their artworks and political ideologies of their most radical beliefs. It did not take long for Joan Miró, Antoni Tàpies, Antonio Saura, Rafael Canogar, Luis Feito, Jorge Oteiza, and Equipo Crónica to become “living symbols of the Transition.”² The following year, Eduardo Chillida’s sculpture, *Sirena varada*, was brought back to the place intended for it within the open-air sculpture museum along Madrid’s Paseo de la Castellana.

Despite these changes, there were several continuities with the earlier period that reveal the ingrained nature of the dictatorship on cultural life. In many ways, for example, the visual arts apparatus of *franquismo* persisted. Carlos Areán, Isabel Cajide, Carlos Robles Piquer, and Luis González Robles, and thousands of other bureaucrats at local, provincial, and national levels retained their positions, now under the aegis of the new ministry. Pío Cabanillas Gallas, former minister of Information and Tourism between January 1974 and March 1975, was put in as head of the new Ministry of Culture, the first in a string of five ministers in six years.³ The Movimiento was disbanded in April of 1977, but some of its offices were simply folded into governmental ministries. The October 1977 Amnesty Law ensured that Francoist officials were

² Quaggio, *La cultura en transición*, 224.

³ *Ibid.*, 124-125.

exempt from any potential legal charges, so a purge of Francoist governmental personnel was never carried out.⁴ The installment of a new form of government also did not eliminate the need for artistic advocacy; artists did not find the Transition to be a panacea for their problems. While the artists of the ASAP were taken more seriously by the national cultural officials of the new ministry, these more open channels of communication did not consolidate into a fruitful new partnership, as the government found the association's cultural policies to be too radical.⁵ The new ARCO festival was poorly attended and, for the most part, artists remained reluctant to participate in official state-led exhibitions for about another decade.⁶ The new site of the Museo Español de Arte Contemporáneo that opened in June 1975 (and was the last official inauguration that Franco attended before his death in November of that year), was deemed inadequate almost simultaneous to its opening.⁷ Over the next several years, Spanish artists pushed the state to find a new home for the state's modern art collection, eventually to open in the early 1990s in what is today the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (MNCARS).

These details are not amassed to claim that Francoism never concluded, but they do show how the lengthy dictatorship of almost forty years left indelible craters out from which it took a lot of effort to crawl. The nature of late Francoist Spain was such that it was not impervious to the demands of civil society, but it nevertheless managed to hold onto its dictatorial government, never liberalizing, never permitting citizen involvement that it did not believe it could control, and never admitting it undertook most actions without Spaniards' best interests in mind.

⁴ The flipside of this law is that political prisoners jailed during the Franco years would be released. *Ibid.*, 96.

⁵ García García, *Tiempo de estrategias*, 140.

⁶ I am indebted to art historian Dr. Meggie Morris for more context and information about the early history of ARCO.

⁷ Jiménez-Blanco, *Arte y Estado en la España del siglo XX*, 160-162.

This dissertation has argued that the making of art policy and artistic advocacy were two intertwined processes that together shaped late Francoist Spain's artistic milieu. I have used the relationship between Spanish civil society and the regime to show the precise ways in which the Francoist state exercised its control in everyday life. What we see when we look at the dynamic between them belies the two dominant interpretations of the nature of the Franco regime: that it either ruled mainly through repression, or, on the other hand, that it liberalized. Instead what becomes clear is that the regime never relinquished control or oversight, never opted to allow civilians to determine cultural affairs, and, at best, took only artificial steps in this direction for appearances. When we look at the regime's visual arts policy, we see that it was built to serve the Francoist government's objectives, and was not designed to serve artists and arts professionals. The relative artistic freedom ceded to the visual arts in late Francoist Spain was paired with a regime control that was characteristically authoritarian in that it was very reluctant and even fundamentally unable to cede power to forces calling for democratization. On the other hand, the 'repression narrative' likewise fails to provide an accurate characterization of the arts apparatus and its actions. When we review Carlos Areán's campaign to work with private art galleries, or Florentino Pérez Embid's reform of the *Nacionales*, we see regime higher-ups convinced of the superiority of their ideas. We see the paternalism and overconfidence of their choices. We even see how they refused to take blame for any of their decisions, criticizing others instead. Thus, the self-serving nature of regime arts policy was more the result of sanctimonious dictatorial bureaucratic structures than it was a concerted campaign to stymie the development of Spanish art or to punish Spanish artists. Francoist Spain's arts bureaucrats desired for Spanish art to be great, because they needed it to act as an indication that the dictatorial setting was a vibrant, opportunity-filled place of artistic freedom.

Where and how to situate the art policy of late Francoist Spain when compared to other dictatorships helps to show that it was a relatively anomalous case. There was no attempt in the Francoist case in the late 1930s or early 1940s to drastically reinvent a new cultural bureaucracy as done by Europe's other contemporaneous dictators. When comparing Spanish art policy after the late 1950s to other dictatorships, we also fail to find many similar cases. Socialist countries under the Soviet orbit at least nominally supported Socialist Realism, and even in such countries with more aesthetic pluralism, the ideological ethos toward the creation of the ultimate socialist citizen often prefigured robust (albeit authoritarian) educational and artistic institutions. There are some relevant parallels between the cultural policies of Franco's Spain and those of rightwing military dictatorships in Latin America, all of which touted nationalism, anti-communism, and economic development writ large. But, for example, in the case of the latter, repression was much more arbitrary and severe than in Franco's Spain. Spanish artists did not walk the streets afraid of being shuttled into an anonymous van and 'disappeared' or forced into exile, as was the case, for example, in Brazil.⁸ What we see instead in the case of Franco's Spain from the beginning was a grafting of the state more strongly onto preexisting institutions, and amendments to policies that substituted bureaucrats for artists. Ultimately, the low prestige conceded to the arts overall by the Franco dictatorship would cement it as an area in which artists experienced more freedom than cultural producers and intellectuals whose medium was the written word, and in which bureaucrats of the arts apparatus built art policy in an *ad hoc*, incremental way. The unstructured nature of art policy, when also coupled with the hierarchical structure of power within the regime's governmental apparatus, meant that individual cultural

⁸ The case of the military dictatorship in Brazil between 1964 and 1985, which scholars agree was most repressive between 1968, after the issue of the Institutional Act #5 (AI-5), and 1975, saw the forced and voluntary exile of over 10,000 Brazilians, including many famous artists and intellectuals. Calirman, *Brazilian Art under Dictatorship*.

bureaucrats would assume a lot of power in shaping art policy. There was also room for civil society's artistic advocacy to play a role.

The events of the dissertation begin in 1957, a turning point for the development of art and art policy in Spain. As new groups of modern artists emerged during that year – Parpalló, Equipo 57, and El Paso – the arts apparatus was also in the process of cementing its official artistic tastes. In all cases, artists' statements, manifestos, and open letters showed a commitment to wanting to reinvigorate the visual arts in Franco's Spain. Meanwhile, regime curator Luis González Robles bet on Informalismo as the genre which would bring prestige to Spain internationally, ensuring that it would be, for a time, the official art of the Francoist state. This period, then, is one in which Spanish artists and the arts apparatus were figuring out their relationship to one another. Initially, what seemed as though it would be a mutually-beneficial arrangement was reconsidered by Spanish artists such as Antoni Tàpies and Antonio Saura. In their early abstention from future regime exhibitions, they were the first to proffer that perhaps the regime's vision of the arts was not in the best interest of Spanish artists. We also see how art galleries started at this time to serve a crucial role as sites of civil society formation; they attracted informal groupings of artists who formed into tight-knit communities. Lastly, recognizing the need to keep artists in the regime's fold, the MIT became more active in domestic cultural life, whereby its general directorates sought entrance into the private sector as demonstrated by Areán's short-lived campaign to work with art galleries.

The second turning point is the late 1960s, in which the internal crisis of the regime coincided with greater civil society mobilization. With respect to the arts apparatus in particular, the General Directorate of Fine Arts would undertake a failed reform of the National Exhibition of Fine Arts, and had to deal with the fallout from its new-yet-dysfunctional art school building.

The MIT, although not departments within the arts apparatus, would start to see artists and gallerists as suspect, and attempt to police which events could take place. Unsurprisingly, then, this last period of the regime is when we see the most directly oppositional artistic advocacy: artists transitioned from absentees of official events to active abstainers, and art students started to protest with conviction. The more informal groupings of civil society in the earlier period allowed for the cementing into the formal, semi-legal, Madrid-based Asociación de Artistas Plásticos (AAP). The AAP conceived of a vision of the visual arts as non-competitive, non-hierarchical, and in which artists – not bureaucrats – should be granted decision-making power in official artistic life. AAP leaders served as social capital in the form of advisors, who helped artists and students to comprehend that the neglect of the arts apparatus should be understood as more than a mere annoyance. In fact, the AAP was so successful that they channeled such energies into a social movement; that hundreds of Spanish artists found the association’s message compelling is a testament to the fact that so many had also grown frustrated by the status quo. The AAP-led organizing made known to authorities that their version of artistic life was no longer acceptable to Spanish artists, and bottom-up mobilization occurred even years after the AAP’s step back from organizing in 1972.

It is ultimately this sense of artistic advocacy – in which artists, gallerists, and art students came to believe in their right to determine the direction of their own educational and professional lives – that meant that these artists were not just greedy opportunists who used the regime one minute, only to denounce it the next. Even allowing for individual decisions in which artists or gallerists did work with the regime, as the case of Juana Mordó demonstrates, the overall pattern shows that members of Spain’s artistic community became increasingly disenchanted with an arts apparatus and, for the most part, worked against its interests.

As I have tried to demonstrate throughout this dissertation, members of the Spanish arts community routinely took it upon themselves to forge the kinds of experiences they wanted to have, often eschewing officialdom, first simply because it had little to offer, and later because its worldview ceased to bend to what Spaniards demanded and desired. Ultimately, existing in late Francoist Spain was filled with real and lasting frustrations, limits to one's liberal freedoms, and demanded submission to authority. The regime's consistent underfunding, lack of accountability, and lip service over decades did not go unnoticed by the increasingly robust civil society. It was the arts apparatus' lack of change that did plenty on its own to make artists feel disengaged from official cultural life, and then when it belatedly undertook reforms, bureaucrats consistently underestimated people's ability to see through the veneer of their decision-making. When undertaking what it wrongly believed to be comprehensive reforms in the 1960s after decades of neglect, the arts apparatus sent a clear message to Spain's visual arts community that it did not matter; as long as some of them continued to make art that the rest of the world would notice, the arts apparatus believed it was doing its job. Thus, the regime's loss of popular legitimacy was a function both of the growing civil society that came to challenge it, but also endemic to its very structure and lack of a concerted future vision for the arts.

In sum, art production and art policy in late Francoist Spain represented a contested terrain in which civilians of the visual arts community were one important group within the increasingly vibrant civil society. They advanced autonomous initiatives to create the kind of artistic milieu in which they wanted to live and would come to push directly against certain regime projects at the start of 1970s, forming at the beginning of the decade into a social movement. While it was not evident from the beginning, there was an inherent incompatibility between the Franco regime's worldview which conceived of art primarily as a political

instrument and the artists, gallerists, and students who wanted art to express emotions, communicate messages, and to ultimately mean something to Spanish society. While the artistic community came to notice that its worldview was diverging from that of the arts apparatus, the regime figures themselves seemed hopelessly unaware. Oblivious to the fact that artists were starting to find the continued failed promises and underwhelming reforms more than a passive problem, regime figures blindly followed along the same path despite lacking in popular legitimacy. Thus, the making of art policy and artistic advocacy in late Francoist Spain were two indelibly intertwined processes, although this pattern was something the regime never really came to recognize until it was too late.

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