

50 Years Ago:

The Museum of Contemporary Art of Seville

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1. The Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo, created by the Regional Government of Andalusia in 1990 and housed since 1997 in the restored main wing of the former Carthusian Monastery of Santa María de las Cuevas, is inextricably linked through its collection—and its memory—to the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Sevilla (MACSE) or Museum of Contemporary Art of Seville. Fifty years have passed since Florentino Pérez Embid introduced that first chapter in the history of the CAAC in 1970. As the first director of the MACSE, from 1970 to 1973, it is fitting that I should briefly tell the story of those early years, reviewing some of the works in the museum's initial collection, its activities, and the memories, testimonies and records of that time.

2. Art, architecture and culture in general express the spirit of their time. In contemporary Spain, they also reflect the different stages of Franco's lengthy dictatorship. The peculiar history of that period reached a turning point in the 1960s with the rise of development economics, the bid to attract international mass tourism, and the renewal of the cultural and educational system. The MACSE was merely one humble link in that chain of momentous events. José Luis Villar Palasí was named Minister of Education in April 1968, and in May he appointed Florentino Pérez Embid as Director-General of Fine Arts. At the same time, the ministry established three new public universities in Madrid, Barcelona and Bilbao, created several new faculties and polytechnic institutes, and endowed 200 university chairs. The

daily *Madrid* ran the headline "Villar Palasí: Cultural Revolution". The *White Paper on Education in Spain* was published the following year, and in 1970 the Spanish parliament passed the General Education Act, which remained in force until 1990.

3. Pérez Embid, a "Sevillian from Aracena", as he liked to say, member of the ultra-conservative Opus Dei and the Privy Council of Infante Juan of Spain (father of King Juan Carlos I), acted as the de facto minister of culture long before such a ministry existed. An early promoter of contemporary art in Seville who founded the pioneering Club La Rábida, he was determined to give the city a contemporary art museum. It would be the first state museum of this kind to open since 1953, when Minister Joaquín Ruiz Giménez established a contemporary art centre in Madrid and appointed the architect José Luis Fernández del Amo as its first director. The latter actively promoted new sacred art for the churches of the "colonization villages",¹ and in fact authored many of the finest specimens in those villages, and in 1995 the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía commemorated his legacy with an exhibition titled *José Luis Fernández del Amo. Un proyecto de Museo de Arte Contemporáneo*. The MAC of Madrid, later the MNAC, was formally renamed the Museo Español de Arte Contemporáneo or MEAC (Spanish Museum of Contemporary Art) in November 1968,

¹ [Translator's Note] New agricultural communities created by the National Colonization Institute, an agency established by the Franco regime to repopulate rural areas after the Spanish Civil War.

and Luis González Robles replaced the architect Fernando Chueca Goitia as its director. Pérez Embid also backed the construction of the museum's new home in the Ciudad Universitaria district, designed by architects Jaime López de Asiain and Ángel Díaz Domínguez.

4. The explanatory preamble to the decree that established the MACSE on 24 July 1970 stated, "In recent years, a singular and significant phenomenon of artistic renewal has emerged in Seville and across southern Spain, brilliantly enriching and participating in the latest aesthetic trends." It was decided that the museum would contain the contemporary works then at the Museo de Bellas Artes, and its new home, generously provided by Seville City Council, would be one of the buildings from the 1929 Ibero-American Exhibition, the Mudéjar Pavilion in Plaza de América. Before the decree was enacted, I met Florentino Pérez Embid at the entrance to that pavilion, which was hosting an exhibition of Ortega Muñoz's work at the time. At the urging of Rafael Manzano, who taught my History of Architecture class and later supervised my PhD dissertation, Pérez Embid had decided to offer me the post of director of the new museum, though I was not yet 25 and still a student at the University School of Architecture in Seville. Coincidentally, the year before I had published an article on Aníbal González, the architect who designed the Plaza de América, in the Madrid-based journal *Hogar y Arquitectura*, whose editor-in-chief was Carlos Flores. That year, 1969, also marked the appointment of the recently deceased Antonio Bonet Correa, professor of Hispano-American art history, as director of the Museo de Bellas Artes of Seville, replacing the academic painter Alfonso Grosso who had held that post for more than a quarter of a century. Soon afterwards, from November 1970 to April 1972, Bonet took over *El Correo de las Artes*, the weekly arts section of the daily paper *El Correo de Andalucía*, then edited by José María Javierre. Bonet made it his mission to publicize the latest international trends and promote local art critics,

especially his son Juan Manuel (writing as Juan de Hix) and Quico Rivas (aka Francisco Jordán), but also Gerardo Delgado, José Ramón Sierra and others. In addition, he published insightful commentaries on the early activities of the museum and local galleries such as Juana de Aizpuru and Damas. Bonet's work for *El Correo* gave an important boost to arts journalism in Seville, a field then led by Manuel Olmedo of the *ABC* newspaper and other distinguished cultural reporters.

5. Artistic renewal was the foundation and *raison d'être* of the MACSE, but getting that project off the ground was far from easy. The importance of the 1960s has been recalled on several occasions at both the local (Seville) and regional (Andalusia) levels. To illustrate the point, I will provide three examples. In 1981, Ana Guasch published a four-decade survey of local painting, *40 años de pintura en Sevilla (1940–1980)*, under the aegis of the Provincial Council and Caja San Fernando. In 1998, José María Yñiguez culminated years of research by curating a retrospective of Sevillian abstract painting for Fundación El Monte (*La pintura abstracta sevillana 1966–1982*). And in 2002 the CAAC organized an exhibition titled *Andalucía y la modernidad. Del Equipo 57 a la Generación de los 70*, to which I contributed a catalogue text offering my personal take on the Andalusian contemporary art scene between the late 1950s and the 1970s: "Atisbos de modernidad. Reflexión y rememoranza de la renovación creadora en Andalucía". In the 1960s, I was part of a group of architecture students that included Gerardo Delgado, José Ramón Sierra and Juan Suárez, all destined to become renowned painters.

We were united by our keen interest in artistic and cultural developments, and in Seville we watched as pictorial abstraction struggled to emerge from the interstices of Art Informel and "normative" art, and witnessed the progress of figuration in its lyrical variant (Carmen Laffón) and its expressive, social protest facet (Francisco Cortijo) while keeping a

close eye on the rise of Pop and the new figuration spearheaded by Luis Gordillo. We also saw the materialization of the long-awaited connection between the Spanish and the international scene, effected in Seville by art galleries like La Pasarela, Juana de Aizpuru (who opened her venue at the same time as the museum), and later M-11. Prior to the founding of La Pasarela, I had the extraordinary experience of visiting the 1964 Venice Biennale, where American Pop art was consecrated, and the Milan Triennale, where the *tendenza* was established. And soon we all had a new national point of reference and inspiration: the Museo de Arte Abstracto Español (Museum of Spanish Abstract Art), Fernando Zóbel's pet project in Cuenca.

6. Two factors were essential in planting the seed of the Seville museum and allowing it to thrive. The first was Florentino Pérez Embid's unwavering confidence in and support for the project, despite numerous obstacles, until 1973, when Villar Palasí stepped down as Minister of Education. And the second was teamwork: as director, I relied heavily on the assistance of other people whose talents complemented and often exceeded my own. Ariadna, José María, Eduardo and Fernando were all invaluable, but in particular I must mention two friends and colleagues without whom the museum would not have existed: Paco Molina and José Ramón Sierra, both painters and the latter an architecture student like myself. Some of our notes and rough drafts have survived, records of our three-way meetings and discussions about our aspirations for the museum, its cross-cutting multidisciplinary vision and potential activities, and its future collection, the cornerstone of any museum. Using the possibilities offered by the holdings of the Museo Español de Arte Contemporáneo in Madrid was a very attractive, practical idea, and we even cherished hopes of a possible donation given our excellent relationship with Fernando Zóbel. But the principal course of action had to be, and in fact was, the regular acquisition of pieces for the MACSE by the

Spanish government. We drew up lists of artists who we thought were good candidates for the museum collection; given our budget constraints, they had to be Spaniards that were still active and affordable. In other words, we focused on creative developments in different places across Spain since El Paso (Madrid) and Dau al Set (Barcelona).

7. The museum was supposed to occupy the upper floor of the Mudejar Pavilion, where exhibitions were often held. Although that space ended up being assigned to the Museo de Artes y Costumbres Populares [Museum of Popular Arts and Traditions], the OTAISA architecture studio, to which I had ties, was asked to draw up plans for adapting it to the MACSE's needs. Manuel Trillo de Leyva led a design team that included Aurelio del Pozo, Enrique Haro, José Ramón Sierra and other architects, but Trillo and Sierra signed the plans that were sent to Madrid for approval. The only part of that proposal I have been able to find is José Ramón's drawing of the staircase leading to the upper floor, which has a rather Kahnian air. The plan was shelved because of its elevated cost and the doubts expressed by Seville City Council.

8. A temporary home was found in another building owned by the city: the oval-shaped former church of the Jesuit school of San Hermenegildo, a space recently restored by the architect Félix Hernández which, that February, had been used by the Seville Architects' Association to mount a show about the Exhibition Design group (Confalonieri, Coppola, Grignani, Munari and Tovaglia). When the Jesuits were expelled from Spain in 1767, the school became a military barracks that was later demolished—sparing only the old church—to make way for a new urban hub where both the police and the Francoist Vertical Syndicate had their headquarters, Plaza del 18 de Julio, which the first democratic city council renamed Plaza de la Concordia. Using that location for our cultural activities was a defiance of its autocratic origins,

confirmed when it became the first seat of the Andalusian Parliament from 1985 to 1992, and with the precedent of having housed the very first Spanish parliament, the Cortes Generales, in 1823. San Hermenegildo was the MACSE base of operations between November 1970 and July 1972, although theatrical activities went on until September.

9. Meanwhile, it was decided that the museum's definitive home would be another municipal property, the former Cilla del Cabildo or cathedral chapterhouse, recently vacated by the Compañía Asturiana de Minas, which stood opposite the Archive of the Indies and beside the Real Alcázar. In other words, in the heart of historic Seville. While we were using San Hermenegildo, the plan was to redesign and refurbish the chapterhouse's two floors and turn the rooftop terrace into usable floor space. Once again, we tried to give it a new look with contemporary architecture. José Ramón Sierra drafted plans with a Miesian air, consisting of a diaphanous temporary exhibition space in a raised metal structure resting on piles and set back from the facade, leaving more room to exhibit sculptures. We eagerly presented this idea to Pérez Embid, in the presence of Rafael Manzano, and it was rejected out of hand. We've searched for those plans for years, to no avail. In the end, it was Manzano who did the work, creating an attic under a mansard roof. And when the building behind Calle Miguel de Mañara was acquired to enlarge the museum, Manzano was called in again to design a new structure with a pseudo-monastic facade that opened after my resignation in mid-1973.

Paradoxically, the last temporary exhibition of my tenure was dedicated to the architect Antonio Fernández Alba. Although two vital aspects of our museum project—contemporary architecture and design—were minimized, at least we were able to install Sierra's metal exhibition structure at the entrance to San Hermenegildo (and Santo Tomás), documented in a few surviving photographs. We had to settle for defending these principles in theory and

applying them to exhibition displays and graphic design. Perhaps the most symbolic element was the logo, also created by Sierra, an elongated "c" used on museum stationery, posters, labels and catalogues, as well as a stainless-steel clipboard.

10. A brief recap of those first three years of Seville's Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, reviewing the genesis of its collection and early activities (primarily temporary exhibitions), appeared in an article I published three years after my resignation in a special "Museums of Seville" issue of the Patrimonio Nacional journal *Reales Sitios* in 1976, later reprinted in book format. José Ramón López Rodríguez, who directed the museum from 1986 to 1992, also provided a detailed description of the MACSE in his 2010 book *Historia de los Museos de Andalucía 1500–2000*. The museum presented several in-house productions in its first season, but it also presented several shows produced by the General Commission of Exhibitions (Comisaría General de Exposiciones or CGE) of the Directorate-General of Fine Arts, then run by Luis González Robles. An influential figure at the time, before becoming director of the MEAC González Robles planned the programmes that represented Spain at international exhibitions between 1958 and 1972, including the Venice and São Paulo biennials where Spanish artists met with great success.

11. On 10 November 1970, three and a half months after the founding decree was published, the MACSE made its public debut with an exhibition dedicated to the sculptor Alberto, produced by the CGE and designed by Macua & García Ramos. The catalogue also came from Madrid. We were inspired by the personality of Alberto Sánchez, an artist of republican convictions who had gone into exile in the USSR and who created "plastic sculptures with bird-like qualities", in his own words. That show occupied the oval space of the old church of San Hermenegildo, and in the smaller room of the adjacent building we displayed an initial selection of works from the Museo

de Arte Contemporáneo in Madrid. A few months later (February–March 1971) we mounted an original production with those same pieces in the church, titled *Obras de la vanguardia española 1901–1906*, featuring works by Picasso, Miró, Dalí, Gris, Gargallo, Torres-García, Tàpies, Saura, Millares, Canogar, Feito, Mompó, Zóbel, Rueda, Torner, Rivera, Guerrero and Equipo 57.

Sierra designed a triptych—all that we could afford—with the anagram on one side and collages of the artists on the other. Earlier, at the beginning of the year we had insisted on bringing another extraordinary CGE exhibition to our city, titled *Maestros del arte moderno Italia. Colección Mattioli*. Works never seen before, or after, in Seville, masterpieces by great Italian Futurists like Boccioni, Carrá and Severini, but also by De Chirico and Modigliani—featured on the catalogue cover—and Giorgio Morandi's poignant still lifes, which deeply impressed me and many other viewers. The Mattioli family, who owned the collection, also attended the opening, giving the MACSE some much-needed publicity.

12. But the first season ended abruptly in May 1971. The in-house production *El cómic* aspired to reveal the complex reality of contemporary art. The world of comics, or *tebeos* as they were called in Spain, was an international creative phenomenon and a powerful vehicle of mass communication, appealing to both children and adults. It was the first time that a Spanish public institution had put comic art in the spotlight. To produce the show, we formed a committee that included two young Sevillian experts on the genre, Victoriano González Vila and Pedro Tabernero. Sierra's exhibition design made the most of the available space, creating a dimly lit setting that emphasized the exhibits and the spectacular enlargements, made by the photographers Rafael Moreno and Carlos Ortega with the invaluable assistance of three young Sevillian designers who would soon go abroad to pursue their respective careers: Fernando López, Manuel Martínez and

Santiago Miranda. The show was featured in the local press, particularly *El Correo de las Artes*, and received national coverage from media like *Bang!*, the leading Spanish comic magazine, created in 1968 by the Research Group on Popular and Illustrated Literature. However, it also made waves in conservative Seville society. One evening, just before closing, a young man from a Carlist family convinced a group of children carrying a *cruc de mayo* or “May cross” to take their procession into the exhibition hall, where the lit candles on the float represented a serious fire hazard. But the worst was yet to come. Another citizen sent a letter to the civil governor, complaining that certain images in the Valentina, Jodelle and Saga de Xam comics “aimed to stimulate the imagination of our youth with a provocative and contrived use of eroticism and sexuality”. The letter concluded by informing “Your Excellency that this constitutes a violation of the precepts enshrined, in accordance with natural law, in the laws of our great nation.” On 27 May I received a letter of admonishment from Pérez Embid, saying, “Clearly, this exhibition must end today.” The word “today” was underlined four times. And so the show closed.

13. After the comic exhibition was taken down, San Hermenegildo came to life again with the first theatrical events organized by the MACSE. We began with a performance of *Oratorio* by Teatro Estudio Lebrijano, a company led by Juan Bernabé. The following year, Salvador Távora's troupe La Cuadra staged *Quejío*. Both plays were written by Alfonso Jiménez Romero. Finally, Esperpento presented *Bedtime Story* by Sean O'Casey, with José María Rodríguez Buzón as stage manager, set designs by Juan Ruesga, music by Paco Aguilera, and a cast comprising Mariana Cordero, Antonio Andrés Lapeña, Roberto Quintana and Juan Carlos Sánchez. In other words, the museum welcomed the most important independent theatre companies active at the time.

It also published a modest theatrical newsletter, *Boletín de teatro del Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Sevilla*, which in hindsight has been acknowledged as a valuable record of the institution's ideas. Another newsletter, *Boletín de seminario*, published texts dedicated to modernism.

14. Those early years were productive and thrilling. In September 1971 I was invited to participate in a course on the boundaries of art in our time, organized by Menéndez Pelayo University in Santander and broadcast on Spanish national radio, and the following year the transcripts were published in a special issue of *Tercer programa* magazine. My contribution, “El nuevo museo” [The New Museum], attempted to explain our ideas about the dialectic between the museum as an institution and art in the capitalist industrial age, reflecting on the recommendations of the UNESCO and the ICOM and the thoughts of Benjamin, Corner and Cameron. But the youthful ambitions of our little museum group were also checked by unforeseen difficulties: Antonio Bonet resigned as director of the Museo de Bellas Artes in 1971 and later relocated to Madrid; José Ramón Sierra decided not to continue his involvement with the museum; certain Sevillian artists, friends of mine with whom I had a strong affinity, did not want their works to be included in the new MACSE collection, causing a rift between us; and there was a regrettable conflict with Juana de Aizpuru over the possibility of organizing a show with painters she represented at the MEAC, which ended up being held at private galleries in Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia. To make matters worse, I suffered the same fate as José Ramón and was expelled from the university militia;² as a result, in the final months of 1971—precisely when I was supposed to present my end-of-studies project—I was sent to the Cerro Muriano training camp in Córdoba province, and for all of 1972 I served as a

soldier in a “disciplinary” company stationed at the Menacho Barracks in Badajoz. I had married in 1969, and my first daughter was born in March 1972.

Landline calls, handwritten notes and a few weekend leaves allowed me to alleviate a small portion of the tremendous workload that, in my absence, had fallen to Paco Molina, who was eventually named chief curator. His merits, increased by the growing burden of responsibilities then and in the years to come, made him a peerless and essential figure in the contemporary cultural history of Seville, as Francisco Cortijo’s doctoral thesis clearly demonstrated.

15. The government closure of *El cómic* was a major setback, and the museum needed time to recover. It was also beset by difficulties, the worst being a woeful lack of funds, but it kept on organizing exhibitions and trying to strike a balance between in-house productions and shows prepared in Madrid by the General Commission of Exhibitions. Meanwhile, the museum remained committed to forming its own collection, and works at the Santo Tomás venue continued. Two low-budget exhibitions of graphic work were held at San Hermenegildo: one featuring Spanish artists in December 1971, prepared by Molina, and another of contemporary English prints in March 1972. The catalogue of the latter was printed in Madrid, but the installation took full advantage of our simple system of tubular structures and compartmentalized spaces. The exhibition of works by the sculptor Gargallo, in the smaller gallery, also came with a catalogue. And in the spring of 1972, the main gallery hosted the last show held at San Hermenegildo, *Arte actual valenciano*, a MACSE production supervised by Paco Molina that was supposed to be the first in a series of shows featuring contemporary art from different regions of Spain, such as Catalonia and Málaga, although the rest never materialized. The Valencian show was designed, not as a retrospective of those years, but as a significant sampling of the region’s artistic talent, with works by Alfaro, Anzo, Armengol, Boix, Cillero, Equipo Crónica, Equipo Realidad, Heras, Mompó,

² [Translator’s Note] The university militia was a programme that allowed university students to complete their compulsory military service as non-commissioned officers while continuing their studies.

Sempere, Soria, Teixidor and Yturralde. The catalogue included essays by Tomás Llorens and Vicente Aguilera Cerni, and the installation was designed by Fernando López and Antonio Pérez Escolano. On another level, this exhibition transposed the method used to select works by contemporary Spanish artists that were gradually forming the MACSE collection, whose official presentation took place on 12 July 1972 when the museum inaugurated its new home in the former cathedral chapterhouse.

16. That inauguration was a particularly momentous occasion. The press published a photo of me, a soldier on leave, addressing the city authorities and dignitaries who had ranged themselves beside the project's staunchest promoter and supporter, Florentino Pérez Embid. It was attended by prominent personalities like the mayor, Juan Fernández Rodríguez-García del Busto, who had facilitated the different municipal buildings occupied by the museum; the civil governor, Ramón Muñoz-González y Bernaldo de Quirós, who had forced us to close the *El cómic* exhibition one year earlier; and Julio Coloma Gallegas, Captain General of the 2nd Military Region, who had refused Florentino's request to have me transferred from Badajoz to Seville.

The works that comprised the collection at the time—though their administrative status varied, and other purchase and donations were still in the works—were displayed on the three floors of the museum. We printed a triptych containing basic information about the museum and listing the more than one hundred artists represented in the collection.

Seven months later, in February 1973, we organized an exhibition titled *Adquisiciones recientes* to present the approximately fifty paintings, sculptures, drawings, serial prints and tapestries recently acquired by or gifted to the museum. Some had yet to be officially confirmed but were included with the artists' consent. On this subject, I would like to make two important observations. Firstly, in some cases the bureaucratic and financial hurdles we

encountered during the acquisition process were so daunting that the pieces had to be returned to the authors or galleries, while others ended up in the MEAC collection. If we compare the lists published at the time with the CAAC's current holdings (and the works featured in *Fifty Years Ago*), we can see that many titles are missing, although the original collection did manage to keep several very important pieces: *La escapada* (The Escape) by Canogar, *Jucar XII* by Zóbel, *Cuerpo caído* (Fallen Body) by Millares, *Conde-duque de Olivares* (The Count-Duke of Olivares) by Equipo Crónica, *Movimiento transformable IV* (Convertible Movement V) by Alexanco, *Luna abuela* (Grandmother Moon) by Basterrechea, *Estructura* (Structure) by Yturralde, *Estructura móvil* (Mobile Structure) by Soledad Sevilla, *En la casa de Velázquez* (In the House of Velázquez) by Guerrero and *Gran cabeza* (Large Head) by Gordillo, to name a few.

Secondly, I will reiterate what was said in the short catalogue we published for *Adquisiciones recientes*: "We are compelled to publicly lament the paucity of Sevillian artists in this show, whose representation is far less substantial than we would have wished." However, in later periods of the MACSE's history, and especially after the creation of the CAAC, this institution has managed to assemble a magnificent collection of works from the mid-20th century to the present day in which Sevillian and Andalusian artists have an excellent presence.

17. While work on the new wing in Miguel de Mañara continued, the museum remained active in its new home. When I was discharged in late 1972, the museum had a temporary exhibition on contemporary Japanese calligraphy produced by the CGE. The pieces in the show had been created especially for Spain thanks to an agreement with the Tokyo daily *Mainichi*, a by-product of the partnership with the powerful *Asahi* newspaper which had sponsored a major exhibition of Spanish art in Tokyo and Kyoto in 1970. Fernando Zóbel, an acknowledged expert on oriental calligraphy, gave a lecture in the same

gallery where the works were displayed. In March, once *Adquisiciones recientes* had closed, the museum opened a retrospective of Francisco Mateos, a veteran republican painter born in Seville. The show was produced by the CGE and had a catalogue with an introductory text by the poet José Hierro.

18. While Huelva City Hall was installing an exhibition of figurative art with works on loan from the MACSE collection, at Santo Tomás we prepared what was destined to be my directorial swansong: *Arquitectura de Antonio Fernández Alba*, held in May–June 1973. At last, architecture in the museum—a fulfilled wish to bring this first chapter to a fitting conclusion. At the time, Fernández Alba was one of the most celebrated Spanish architects, known at home and abroad. Associated with the El Paso group in his youth, he is an excellent draughtsman and writer and the only architect to be made a member of the Royal Academy of the Spanish Language. When he was inducted in 2006, his acceptance speech was titled “Words on the Nascent City”. He also enjoyed success as a university lecturer. And his architectural work from the 1960s and 70s—ranging from colonization villages in Andalusia to convents, churches, schools and houses—was greatly admired by young architects and students. We prepared that exhibition with painstaking care, coordinating with the team who would present it first in Pamplona. Our installation, on the ground floor at Santo Tomás, was designed by Guillermo Vázquez Consuegra and Gonzalo Díaz Recasens. And the catalogue was an album with a large number of sketches and preliminary drawings for his projects that we selected at his Madrid studio.

19. Florentino Pérez Embid never wavered in his support for our initiative, despite the many conflicts of those intense, challenging years, in which he gave us constant proof of his friendship. While the Fernández

Alba exhibition was still open, on 11 June 1973, Villar Palasí was replaced as Minister of Education by Julio Rodríguez, who only held the post until 3 January of the following year, two weeks after the ETA bombing that killed President Luis Carrero Blanco. In the midst of those dramatic events, Florentino Pérez Embid was relieved of his duties. Already ill by then, he died months later on 23 December 1974.

When he realized which way the wind was blowing, Florentino clearly warned me that our *modus operandi*, on which the last show had been based, would no longer be viable. Severe budget problems quashed all hope. All I could do was step down, and on 15 June I wrote my letter of resignation. Fifty years later, I still think of him with esteem and gratitude for having made possible that exciting first chapter in the history of this cultural institution, and of my own professional life.

20. The Museo de Arte Contemporáneo went on after my departure. Manuel Rodríguez-Buzón Calle, an excellent person, became its second director, managing to preserve and continue this experiment with his impeccable sense of public-spirited duty. It was he who inaugurated the new premises at Miguel de Mañara, pushed through the pending acquisition cases with greater managerial efficiency than I could muster, and produced some of the exhibitions we had planned.

The museum also faced new challenges, including the loss of its institutional independence. But the return of democracy to Spain and the creation of the Regional Government of Andalusia would bring new opportunities. Luisa López did a splendid job as the last director of the MACSE before the birth of the Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo, which ushered in a new period of cultural growth and progress.

Seville, June 2020