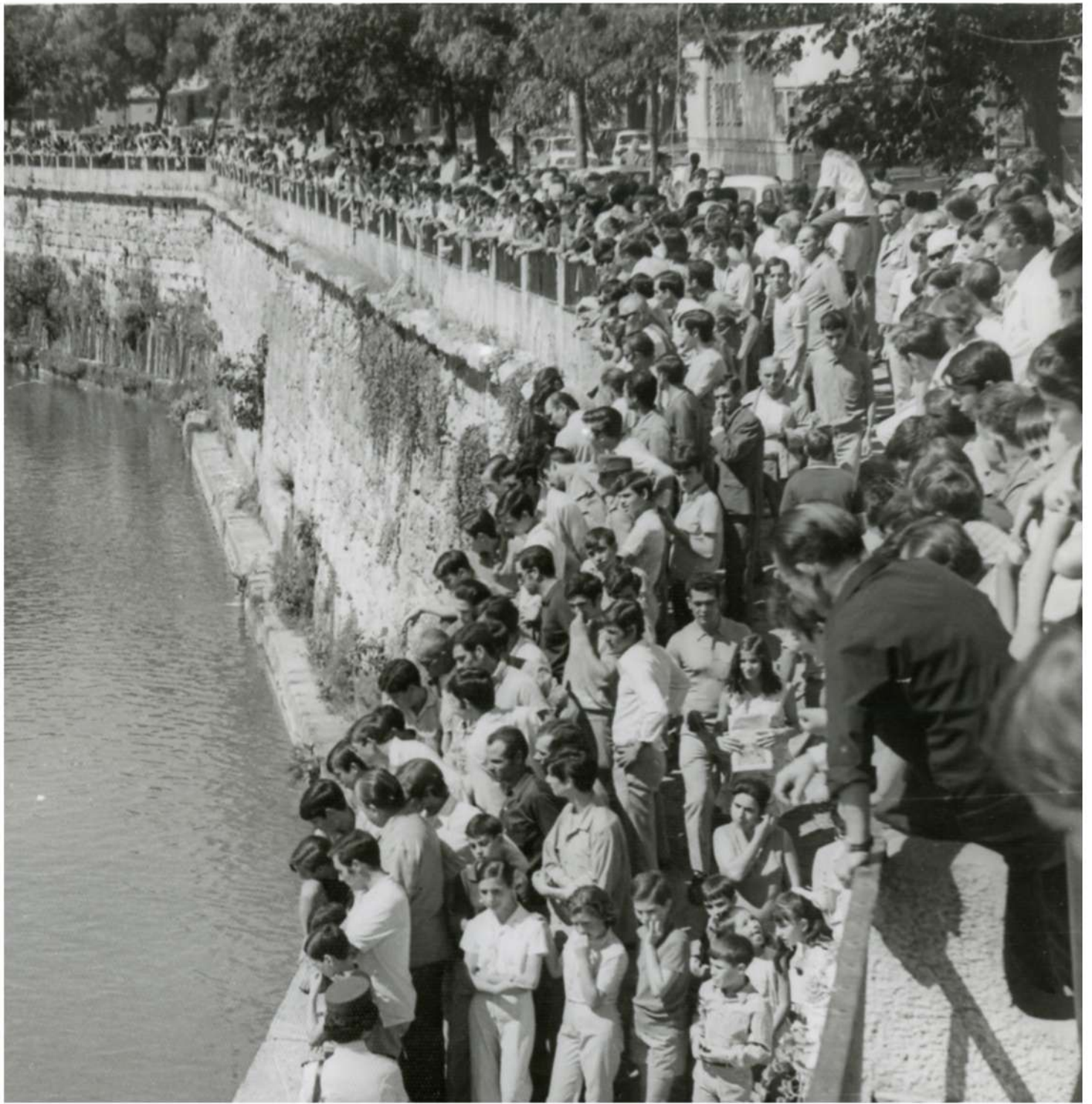




Ladís. Archivo municipal de Córdoba

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CIUDAD DE QUIÉN (Whose City?)

A museum is always something of a UFO: a vessel suspended in time, detached from the logic of everyday life, concerned with preserving the past while striving to reshape the future.

This exhibition, however, seeks to land firmly in the present. The coexistence of works from widely different periods, together with a diversity of styles and disciplines, responds to a single premise: every image is contemporary, for it exists within our own time.

In our attempt to read the city, we approach it in much the same way as we inhabit it: without a clear awareness of the passage of time, assuming that everything has always been there. Amid the routines of daily life, change often goes unnoticed until it has become irreversible.

The Art Centre's tenth anniversary seemed an appropriate moment to bring Córdoba into dialogue with the collection of the Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo. The collection offers a highly specific account of the end of modernity and the emergence of an era that is still searching for a name capable of defining our shared uncertainty. Although it bears a distinctly Andalusian character, it also reflects the rationale that informed many of the art centres and museums established across Spain during the final twenty-five years of the twentieth century: to normalise the condition of cultural and social exceptionalism that had shaped much of the country's recent history, ostensibly recovering a time that had been lost.

Thus, the city becomes overlaid with narratives, latent anxieties and tangible realities that those who visit it may only just begin to discern.

At first glance, the selection of works may appear detached from our own context and our own time. Yet we believe it speaks to circumstances and ways of being that are not exclusive to those of us who live in Córdoba today, but are shared by all who inhabit this planet.

When we began searching for the works and archival materials from Córdoba that would accompany the collection, we imagined they would function as anchor images, rooting it in a specific place and lending it greater depth. The outcome, however, has been quite different. The two dissolve into one another in a process of exchange without hierarchies, occupying a common ground of equality that continues to surprise us.

The exhibition also stems from a desire to understand ourselves as part of the city's southern district, on the other side of the bridge - indeed, of the bridges - from where we look back at Córdoba's monumental serenity. A serenity that can sometimes lead us to forget who we once aspired to be, like one of those relationships in which a person gradually effaces themselves until they are consumed by the other's fire.

We are also on this side of the river, where each May a parallel, joyful city briefly emerges, only to vanish by June: defeated and exhausted, it disappears like the mythical island of San Borondón, until the following year.

In this sense, Ciudad de quién is a museum destined to disappear once the works return to the storeroom or to their respective display cases, only to acquire countless new meanings in response to new neighbours and new places.

Lola Baena & Gilberto González

In house Curators