



**FOTO COLECTANIA**

**ENGLISH**

**LA MOVIDA, A CHRONICLE OF TURMOIL 1978—1988**

**ALBERTO GARCÍA-ALIX, OUKA LEELE, PABLO PÉREZ-  
MÍNGUEZ I MIGUEL TRILLO**

This exhibition brings together the work of four photographers from La Movida, one of the most remarkable and natural movements to arise out of contemporary culture in Spain. It took place in Madrid, mainly, at the beginning of the 1980s.

After several decades of dictatorship and ostracism, Spain's transition involved a new generation fascinated by modernity and new ideas, which arrived via artists in diverse domains: music, fashion, cinema, painting, and photography. The whole city of Madrid was transformed. The streets saw more people at night than during the day. Concert halls such as *El Pentagrama* [The Pentagram] or the legendary *Rock-Ola* turned into neural spaces of the *underground* atmosphere. A large number of fanzines and journals, such as the now cult *La Luna de Madrid* [The moon of Madrid] or *Madrid me mata* [Madrid kills me] carried ideas and positions; Thousands of young people from all over the country regularly followed TV shows that were at the forefront of Europe, such as *La edad de oro* [The golden age] or *La bola de cristal* [The crystal ball] a program which was aimed at children's audience who starred in the multifaceted *Alaska* and that incorporated musical performances of leaders of that time; It was also the moment when Pedro Almodóvar released his first films, using unbridled dialogue and absurd scenarios, filmed no place in particular.

La Movida was a highly publicized phenomenon from the beginning, one that established a myth. But beyond the movement of a generation with a shared ideology, a historic moment was bubbling up. It was optimistic and displayed an eclecticism sometimes seen as narcissistic and trivial. It is worthwhile, however, to look at the phenomenon from a different angle, that of a search for freedom and a claim on self-determination after a long period of stasis. Perhaps the allure of the Madrid Movida, as some of its leading figures claim, can be accounted for as an era in which people encountered each other—or, in the words of Pérez-Mínguez: “Whenever three people share a desire to do something together, a movida is born.”

Alberto García-Alix, Ouka Leele, Pablo Pérez-Mínguez and Miguel Trillo were all members of La Movida. Although they coexisted and crossed each other's paths as they moved in different circles, what is truly remarkable is how each of them experienced and photographed it with unprecedented energy, yet from utterly different angles. The result is a multifaceted look at this movement.

# MIGUEL TRILLO

## Popurri

Miguel Trillo untiringly portrayed the freedom of the street and of young people banding together in tribes based on how they dressed and acted. The perspective of the 1980s, when he used innovative formats like projections, fanzines or photocopies, strengthened the coherence of his trajectory as a photographer.

Miguel Trillo's photos are part of his existence. He photographed Madrid's nightlife when it was teeming with people of his generation. He was near the epicentre of the concert and counter-cultural scene at the time. He says: "Groups always did the same thing on stage, they always played the same role, whether in Paris, Rome, London or Madrid... But in the seating area or the arena, the show was always new."

Trillo puts things in their context: "Newspapers rejected my pictures because they were 'posed', he says, "but galleries didn't want them either because they were too 'easy'. I was interested in exploring symbols, their repetition and their variation. I guess that has to do with my training as a philologist. A word is a picture camouflaged by letters."

"In Madrid I photographed details: a pair of jeans, a bracelet, a hairstyle, the inside of a bar... I wondered why the world of the street—the night and clothes— were considered contemporary art in New York but not in Spain."

### Video

Paloma Chamorro's interview with Miguel Trillo on the Televisión Española show *La edad de oro* [The golden age], July 19, 1983, followed by a clip from the video recording of the "Fotocopias. Madrid-London" exhibition's opening at the Sala Amadís in Madrid, 1983 (length: 7 min 52 s).

### Cibachromes

"It's quite easy to approach the people I photograph. I can tell they want to be. You have to take the fact that they like being photographed into account. They want to be captured in that state of self-satisfaction. We chat and talk, and that creates empathy. I get them set up and frame them as though we're in a small amateur theatre. I improvise the moment and they place their bodies and their gazes. It's a creation based on snippets of reality. You could call it the echo of a one-way trip. The return trip is the picture." Miguel Trillo

### Photocopies

In 1983 Miguel Trillo exhibits in the Amadís Hall of Madrid a series of images of young people in concerts and bars made in Madrid and London. A black plastic background serves as a support to show photocopies in color of the original photos, disorderly arranged and held with colored adhesive tape.

In the words of Miguel Trillo:

“The Amadís show was very punk, in the sense that it was ‘do-it-yourself’. How the photos were displayed had nothing to do with the way fine art photography was regarded and exhibited at the time. The idea of covering the walls with black plastic might have had something to do with the sets of certain concerts.” (...) “I think that, since I was publishing the *Rockocó* fanzine with photocopies of black and white photographs, it made sense exhibiting color photocopies. Canon had just come out with its first color photocopier and I had a flash. It was glitzy and dazzling, innovative and underground at the same time.”

## PABLO PÉREZ-MÍNGUEZ

### *Vale todo*

Pablo Pérez-Mínguez, a pioneer in Spain in various areas of photography, was the great portraitist of Madrid’s Movida. He photographed all its key figures in his studio, which was one of its nerve centres. A creator of ingenious photographic series, his motto “Vale todo” [Everything is Valid] was a reflection of the shocking imagery of his gaze as well as the characters who posed for him. This is how Pérez-Mínguez explains those times:

“In 1981, my recently opened studio was a permanent stage where our own lives were performed every day without a script. We opened at six in the evening and people were constantly coming and going until eleven or midnight. Then we’d scatter and meet again throughout the long Madrid night. Sometimes we’d come back at dawn and start making photos again, even more intensely.”

“Pedro Almodóvar posed naturally and freely in my studio. He was completely uninhibited and enjoyed his morbid comments and incessant provocations. He performed all kinds of characters, improvising the zaniest, most absurd scenes... We also made amateur videos and a photo novel together in my studio and he shot his legendary film, *The Labyrinth of Passions*.”

“We were the children of pop culture and the underground, comics, photo novels and advertising. We were all multitalented gods on our special Olympus, fascinated by popular culture.”

### **Video**

Clip from Pedro Almodóvar’s video recording of a Pablo Pérez-Mínguez photo session in his studio. Madrid, 1982 (length: 8 min 57 s).

### **Photo Rock-Ola**

Alaska, *El instante oportuno* [The right time]. Published in *Pablo Pérez-Mínguez, Mi Movida*.

“It was the end of 1983 and my group, Dinarama, was going to give a concert with the sensational duo Almodóvar and McNamara. The event was on Rock-Ola on New Year’s Eve, so we decided to do a photo session for the poster, the one we put up in the streets to let everybody know about the show. At the same time, Tina Turner had wallpapered the city’s walls with posters of her with two dancers. While posing, we told each other we resembled Tina and her dancers, in other words, a blonde like Fabio and a brunette like Pedro. All of a sudden, we started imitating their poses without caring if anybody would understand the intention. That’s how it happened. Nothing was planned, we seized the instant. We thought, we’re doing this, and that’s it.”

## FOTO-PORO

Pablo Pérez-Mínguez  
*Madrid Foto-Poro*, February-November 1980

“I’d walk up to people (without asking them who they were) and take a flash picture at point-blank range. I did that constantly for six months and when I got tired of it I realized I’d photographed *the whole madridian Movida*: waiters, pimps, go-go dancers, filmmakers, bouncers, managers and swindlers.”

## ALBERTO GARCÍA-ALIX

### “Don’t follow me, I’m lost”

This group of photos bears witness to 10 years in the life of Alberto García-Alix, from 1978 to 1988, an intensely lived period of his youth, portrayed in 35mm. His friends, chaotic times, inner turmoil and search for pleasure and relaxation through drugs can be seen in images evoking his need for adventure, indispensable for creation. García-Alix’s first tattoo said “Don’t follow me, I’m lost”, which perfectly sums up what those years were like for him.

“If anybody can talk about Alberto García-Alix, it’s me. I watched him messing up in those days. His steps were also mine. Perhaps we swapped our shadows. When I’d leave him to go to bed, I was afraid the shadow that followed me was his.”

“That period is so long ago now that I wouldn’t put it past Alberto if he said I twisted everything around. Very few of the friends in these pictures are still alive. Very few. Death could freely choose between those who had a mystical self-destructive streak. Those of us who are still alive haven’t forgotten them. As for me, I lost my shadow to follow Alberto’s. I’ve kept quiet to this day. It’s not just to be his faint-hearted sidekick, much less because of the recognition he says I own him. If I’ve kept quiet about many things I did with him during that decade, it’s because of his photos. It’s weird. I believed in them right from the start and that was the only smart thing I did. Now I know that his images comfort me and reward me for following him. They speak without words of my place with Alberto.”

Fragment of a dialogue between Alberto García-Alix and Xila, his alter ego.

## Video

Short film by Alberto García-Alix, *No hables más de mí* [Don't talk about me anymore], 1984. Produced by TVE for *La Edad de Oro* [The golden age]. (Length: 11 min 30 s).

## OUKA LEELE Domestic Mystique

"I'm Ouka Leele, the creator of domestic mystique. I say this because I think people take my images for social critique, whereas they're actually a sublimation of daily life, of domesticity."

Ouka Leele witnessed the tribulations of artists including Javier Mariscal, Ceesepe, Alberto García-Alix and Pedro Almodóvar. She spent her youth in Barcelona, Madrid and New York. In the early 1980s, she signed her works Ouka Leele, but her real name is Bárbara Allende Gil de Biedma.

Only the extraordinary circumstances of the carefree era of La Movida can explain the freshness and the risk with which this very young artist dared to experiment by using a unique language.

Her dreamlike pictures stem from ideas that slowly grow in her mind. "First I create the image, then the photo," she says. "My camera lets me record something I've already created and serves as a basis for painting it. My work is a mixture of theatre, imagination, painting and photography."

Subjective experience led Ouka Leele to paint her black and white photos with watercolor. "I've never liked color photography," she says. "It's a photo, but it's not reality. To me it seemed like my memories of experience were lost with color photography."

## Video

Clip from the film of the opening of Ouka Leele's 1980 show at Madrid's Redor Gallery (length: 45 s), followed by her 1979 Super 8 film *Peluquería* [Hair Salon] (length: 11 min 45 s).

## HAIR SALON projection

Ouka Leele  
Projection of the *Hair Salon* series, 1978-1980

*Peluquería* [Hair Salon] is a series of surrealistic black and white portraits painted with liquid watercolor. All the subjects wear odd-looking head-coverings. They are Ouka Leele's earliest, and purest, works, which unreservedly won over everybody involved in Madrid's Movida, from ordinary citizens to emerging artists like Almodóvar, who integrated pictures of the photographer into *Labyrinth of Passions*, one of his first films. To make the series, she chose among her friends, artists or people in the street who fascinated her. She would put an item on their heads as a crown. "They're like images of saints, very classic and at the same time very ominous."

# Library Vitrines

## ROCKOCÓ

Miguel Trillo

*Rockocó. Images of Madrid's Pop-Rock Scene, 1980-1984*

In the legendary fanzine *Rockocó*, photographer Miguel Trillo registered the different urban tribes to which Madrid's youth that attended concerts or other kinds of social gatherings between 1980 and 1984 belonged: *mods*, *punks*, techno fans, moderns, leftists, new romantics, rockers, *teddy boys* or *heavies*.

"I thought of *Rockocó* as an album, a map of Madrid's pop music, halfway between narrative and exhibition. I made an atlas. Any photo is in itself a description. By putting them together I made a well-reasoned "text", the script of an urban film about young people having carefree fun."

## Audiovisual Space

Screening of musical performances originally broadcasted live by Televisión Española. The selection is based on the songbook included in José Luis Gallero's book *Sólo se vive una vez: esplendor y ruina de la Movida madrileña* [You only live once: Splendor and decline of the madridian Movida], Ardora Ediciones, 1991.

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