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SOCIAL MEDIA PROMOTION OF ARTISTIC SPACES IN CARABANCHEL (MADRID)

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ABSTRACT

The artists' studios and exhibition spaces that have opened in Carabanchel in the last decade are indicative of the displacement towards the peripheries of several cities that has been precipitated by processes of speculation and gentrification. The efficacy of these dynamics is contingent upon the utilisation of digital communication technologies, particularly those employed for the promotion of content through social media networks. The present research study investigates the context and process of the establishment of the artistic space of Carabanchel. Furthermore, an analysis of the communicative actions carried out through two social media networks, namely Instagram and X, is conducted, and their correlation with other media is examined.

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1. Introduction

Carabanchel has now been configured as the new artistic epicentre of the southern area of Madrid. This transformation has occurred through a gradual and spontaneous process that has been in progress for more than a decade, attracting all the agents of art. The establishment of the artists' community commenced in the early 2010s, with the inauguration of exhibition spaces occurring in subsequent years. These exhibition spaces were utilised to facilitate the execution of marketing strategies, which, in turn, attracted visitors and collectors. Consequently, the artists' community has become the subject of study by critics and researchers within the art world. It has become a prime example of the art world's new artistic epicentre, thus illustrating the prevailing trend of displacement from traditional art spaces, which are typically located in the central districts of cities (where a greater number of historic art heritage is usually concentrated), to the peripheries. This development has resulted in the revitalisation of industrial buildings and working-class residential neighbourhoods.

The phenomenon has been defined in the media as "Carabanchel, chosen as the third best neighbourhood in the world in 2023" (Gil, 2023) and, as Marco (2024) describes it, "a hornet's nest of music venues, residences and alternative spaces and located relatively close to the centre of Madrid". Time Out's headline underscores the significance of artistic endeavours within the neighbourhood, which has been regarded as modest and even traditionally underdeveloped in recent years. The article provides an international perspective, emphasising its emergence as a remarkable phenomenon stemming from artistic and cultural interactions, thereby validating its categorisation as a subject of academic inquiry. The alternative adjective in Marco's description leads to another fundamental defining aspect of the artistic and cultural Carabanchel: namely, the spontaneity and initial distancing from the public authorities, as well as the novelty in the self-management of the various creative spaces in which collaboration and mutual support are a distinguishing feature.

The rapid establishment of artistic entities and cultural venues, along with the effective attraction of audiences within the context of Carabanchel, is attributable to the strategic utilisation of social networks and digital media. This assertion is supported by research conducted in disparate contexts, including diverse geographical locations, diverse sectors, and a range of objectives, as highlighted by Carpio-Jiménez et al. (2024):

> The most prominent medium is social media, which facilitates rapid information transmission. Consequently, having a presence on social media has become imperative for companies, brands, individuals offering products or services, and those wishing to exchange or share information of interest. (Carpio-Jiménez et al., 2024, p. 2).

The objective of the present study is to examine the art galleries situated in Carabanchel, in close proximity to the Opañel and Oporto Metro stations in the area that has the greatest concentration of art (with the 95 Art Gallery being given particular consideration due to its significant importance). Consequently, some art galleries located farther afield, such as Morfo and Lapislázuli, have been omitted from the study. It is nevertheless acknowledged that these galleries may hold significant importance due to their strategic location along a route traversed by many visitors, with the aim of promoting them from Matadero to Carabanchel's artistic epicentre.

1.1. Objectives

The primary objective of the present study is to analyse the context and process of Carabanchel's formation and to relate it to the use of digital communication through the social networks Instagram and X by art galleries. This will involve paying close attention to the interrelationships with other media, both traditional and digital. The present study will provide an up-to-date description that will enable future observations of the changes that occur in communication in relation to its environment and audiences.

In order to achieve this general objective, it is necessary to contextualise Carabanchel, firstly within the broader environment of the city of Madrid, taking into account aspects such as its location, and then to examine other unique factors from a historical, economic, social and cultural perspective, as well as its architectural uniqueness, which have led to its displacement. In order to verify the presence of artistic agents and the activities they currently undertake in digital social media, it is also necessary to examine

these networks. Finally, the relationships of mutual support that exist between the artistic agents themselves, including virtual ones, among themselves or with other institutions, must be highlighted.

2. Methodology

The methodology is founded upon an initial review of primary and secondary bibliographical sources, with the objective of determining fundamental concepts such as peripheral space, cultural districts and neighbourhoods, cultural heritage, industrial architecture, and the revitalisation of spaces through culture, amongst others. For this purpose, the research published by the Art, Architecture and Communication in the Contemporary City Research Group throughout the current century has been particularly useful, especially since 2011, specifically Barrios artísticos y distritos culturales (Eds. Chaves and Tejeda) and the compilations of the proceedings of the Jornadas Arte y Ciudad (Art and City Conference), held since 2007. Of particular interest is the application of Pilar Aumente's theoretical reflections (2021) on collaborative art in cultural districts, both from the point of view of the concentration of art agents and the integration of the spaces, the acceptance of their inhabitants and the collaboration of the public authorities.

A basic approach to the context has been adopted, incorporating historical, geographical, social, economic and cultural data. In this final aspect, it is important to draw attention to the publication Carabanchel es cultura (Sánchez and Nicolás, 2024). The demographic and economic data presented herein have been sourced from primary documents published by the Madrid City Council and other public bodies. In order to approach the artistic phenomenon under investigation in this study, it is essential to undertake a review of newspaper archives. To analyse communication in social media and digital resources on the web, a series of interviews and activities were carried out, and data was collected in order to obtain quantitative data (number of publications, followers, profiles followed, etc.). The Instagram and X (previously Twitter) networks were selected as the elements of study.

The fieldwork and immersion in the space itself are of equal importance. This includes visits to the galleries, parallel activities, conversations with artists, and data collection on the space itself to ascertain whether the information reflected in social media and newspaper articles corresponds to reality.

A process of reflection is initiated to determine the importance of social networks and digital media in the success or failure of an organisation in achieving its objectives. This process is informed by the data collected.

3. Contextualisation and Motivation for Relocation

In order to analyse the activities carried out by the art galleries and artistic collectives in Carabanchel and to understand why the phenomenon in question has taken place, a contextual analysis has been carried out in various aspects divided into three sections that are crucial to understanding Carabanchel: the origins of the district, economic conditions and establishment in the spaces. In the latter, the artistic agents currently active in the district have been enumerated.

3.1. Similarities Between the Carabanchel District and those of the 19th Century

The current district of Carabanchel is the result of the merger with Madrid of the municipalities of Carabanchel Alto and Carabanchel Bajo in 1948 (Ministry of Public Administration, 2008, p. 222). The location of the property is in the southern part of the capital. The municipality's affiliation with the capital was strengthened by its status as the birthplace of its patron saint, San Isidro, and its role as an agricultural hub that supplied the city.

Despite the existence of numerous references to it in art dating back to the late 16th century, it was not until the beginning of the 19th century, as exemplified by Francisco de Goya's costumbrista depictions of the San Isidro meadow and the construction of the Vistalegre palace, which subsequently hosted events for senior officials and a segment of the country's nobility, that Carabanchel acquired cultural significance (Sánchez & Nicolás, 2024).

The cultural activity in Carabanchel commenced in the Contemporary Age, following the acquisition of land by the wealthiest classes at the close of the 18th century (nobility, senior civil servants, etc.). The objective of this acquisition was to transform the land into recreational estates, a decision influenced by its proximity to Madrid, the views of the city, and the area's favourable climate. This inclination is

exemplified by the then young banker and politician, Domingo Cabarrús. In addition to Goya's residence, Quinta del Sordo, Vistalegre, the most renowned estate, assumed a position of particular significance. The development of the estate was the result of the purchase of small plots of land that were converted into an estate. The construction of a country house was initiated by Carlos IV's doctor, Higinio Antonio Llorente. Following the French invasion and various vicissitudes of expropriation and legal proceedings, the property was acquired by Pablo Cabrero Martínez and his wife Josefa Martínez Artó. The couple converted the estate into a public recreational area and named it as we know it today. They paid special attention to the gardens by building fountains, paths that ran through the shady gardens and planting exotic species. Successive interventions and creations promoted by its subsequent owners, the Marquis of Salamanca and María Cristina, resulted in the property becoming a royal estate, with the addition of buildings and cultural activities (Lasso de la Vega, 2004).

The gradual construction of vegetable gardens, houses and mansions by marquises, counts and other illustrious personalities attracted the upper middle classes, who aspired to rise to the nobility, as well as providing a place of recreation and rest. It is important to note the onset of industrial activity in the 20th century, which subsequently became a predominant feature of the district. This development can be attributed to the establishment of soap factories, which were promoted by these bourgeois families. As Lasso de la Vega (2004) describes: As early as the mid-nineteenth century, the area of Carabanchel boasted almost a hundred urban or semi-urban estates, which, in their most basic form, comprised a seasonal residence for the proprietor and an associated garden (p. 747).

3.2. Industrial Consolidation (20th century)

The industrial development of the area surrounding Madrid was facilitated by the removal of all activities deemed harmful and dangerous from the city centre, in accordance with the theoretical principles of urban development that were in force in contemporary industrial cities. This process of urban expansion resulted in the establishment of suburbs on the outskirts of the city, a phenomenon that began in the 18th century. The frequency of communication between the court and the Carabancheles increased significantly following the inauguration of the Madrid-Carabancheles-Leganés railway line in 1878 and the establishment of soap factories. The notion of industrial location is further elaborated upon in this study. The 20th century witnessed the establishment of new factories and the formation of working-class neighbourhoods, contributing to the distinctive character of the current district.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the district underwent significant development, with the construction of various buildings that would come to define its identity. These included the Vistalegre bullring, the Carabanchel Bajo Town Hall, and several churches in the Neo-Mudéjar style, a characteristic of the industrial buildings of the era. Additionally, the Colonia de la Prensa was constructed in the Art Deco style in 1913. Subsequent to this, the Concepción Arenal school was established in 1929, and the construction of housing was initiated due to the significant population increase that occurred during the initial wave of migration in the century. Over the course of these three decades, the population grew from 7,970 inhabitants in 1900 (2,049 in Carabanchel Alto and 5,921 in Carabanchel Bajo) to 36,007 in 1930 (9,065 in Alto and 26,942 in Bajo).

The population was initially composed primarily of military personnel, as a military camp had been established in 1856 and underwent further development between 1911 and 1936 (including the Cuatro Vientos aerodrome). The aerodrome was the site of the so-called 'Carabanchel incident', a protest against the military policy of Manuel Azaña.

From these initial three decades onwards, the present-day district of Carabanchel began to take shape, largely due to the aforementioned migratory wave from rural areas to urban centres. This migration led to the establishment of the Carabancheles as a district with convenient access to public transportation, specifically a tram line, which connected it to the city centre. Furthermore, the opening of a brick and tile factory in the area provided employment opportunities, contributing to the area's development. The strategic positioning of Madrid's slaughterhouse in the outskirts of the capital, in the vicinity of Carabanchel, proved to be a pivotal factor in the subsequent development of the area. This location facilitated the establishment of numerous food and grocery factories, as well as the blacksmiths who were responsible for the maintenance of the carts that facilitated the transportation of goods from rural areas to the slaughterhouse.

The Civil War engendered significant destruction in Carabanchel, with the conflict resulting in significant devastation to the urban landscape. The recovery process was initiated as a component of the restoration strategy devised by the Directorate-General for Devastated Regions. Subsequent to this, the Carabanchel prison (1944), the Gomez Ulla Hospital (1946), various schools and public facilities were inaugurated.

The amalgamation of the Carabancheles and their subsequent incorporation into the municipality of Madrid consolidated during the 1950s. The district that would become the most populous in the capital was connected to the centre by bus lines, and the depots of the Municipal Transport Company (EMT) were installed in Buenavista. The period of Francoism was characterised by significant population growth and the emergence of mechanical workshops, representing a progression from the earlier tradition of cart repair smithies. Following this, the ISO three-wheeled vehicle factory (known as isocarro) was established, along with printing presses and textile factories that featured large architectural spaces adapted to the emerging requirements.

In 1971, the district underwent significant changes with the segregation of Aluche, Campamento and Usera, and the construction of major transport infrastructure, including the connection to the underground in 1981, the Toledo road and the M-40 motorway in 1984. During the democratic period of the 1980s, the Blasco Ibáñez and García Lorca cultural centres were inaugurated. In any case, Carabanchel remained (and would continue to be for decades) a run-down area with various public interventions in a traditionally humble district that continued to receive internal migration from Extremadura and Andalusia in search of work (in 1975, 68% of the inhabitants), where there were areas of shanty towns.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the population experienced a significant increase, once more attributable to immigration, with a notable influx from foreign countries, particularly South America. The population of the original territory of Carabanchel (comprising the two Carabancheles with Usera, Aluche and Campamento) would increase to 710,000 inhabitants if the total population of the aforementioned territory were to be added. This figure would represent almost 22% of the entire population of the municipality of Madrid (according to data from the National Institute of Statistics for 2009). New industrial relocations have taken place during this century, with the creation of the Aguacate industrial estate and other business centres away from the population centre, such as those on Avenida de los Poblados and the South Cemetery. Since the late 1990s, textile and printing companies have relocated to nearby municipalities outside Madrid, such as Móstoles, due to the availability of greater space and lower costs.

At present, District 11 is the most populous district in Madrid, with 258,927 registered residents (Madrid City Council, 2022). The district has undergone a significant economic transition, with the abandonment of all agricultural activity that once defined it. The current economic landscape is characterised by a substantial presence of metal manufacturing companies, with a total of 54 such entities operating within the district. This figure stands in stark contrast to the number of agricultural enterprises present and is significantly higher than the number of such companies recorded in any other district in Madrid. The district also features a substantial number of repair shops specialising in motor vehicles and motorcycles, with a total of 2,874 such enterprises accounting for 22.47% of all premises and economic activities within the district. This information is drawn from the latest data provided by the Madrid City Council, as of 1 January 2023. The long-standing tradition of printing services and other metal manufacturing gradually declined in the 1990s, with many of these industrial buildings being left vacant as a consequence of the relocation of manufacturing operations to Móstoles, Alcorcón, and other locations. The closure of mechanical repair, bodywork and paint shops, either due to retirement or other reasons, has resulted in a significant number of such premises becoming available for alternative uses, such as recording studios, art galleries and artists' studios.

3.3. Factors that Have Led to the Current Displacement.

The real estate bubble in Spain between 1997 and the end of 2007, and the subsequent onset of the financial crisis, had unforeseeable consequences for the population. This was due to the fact that the bubble affected all areas of the economy and caused significant changes in social habits. This was further exacerbated by the dire situation faced by citizens, who saw their purchasing power decline inexorably.

The property market witnessed a period of unparalleled growth that spanned a decade. However, this period of prosperity was abruptly halted by inflation, which exerted significant pressure on mortgage holders, leading to a state of stagnation in the market.

The inability to maintain mortgage payments, energy bills and basic living expenses has resulted in evictions, due to the lack of credit from banking institutions. This situation resulted in internal migration within the city to the suburbs, where housing prices were more affordable.

The situation was further complicated for art agents due to the cessation of the consistent investment that characterised the 1980s, 1990s and early 21st century, a period in which the art market was thriving and providing a stable income. In 2006, this market reached its zenith; however, three years later, at the nadir of the crisis, its turnover fell by 43.60% (Asensio, 2018). This situation was further exacerbated by the decline in the size of homes in which potential buyers could enjoy the works they purchased, and the concomitant decline in the purchasing power of the majority of society. The issue of storing and exhibiting work was problematic, which resulted in an exodus of artists' studios and galleries to less tense areas.

The artistic neighbourhood is defined as a "concentration of some (or several, the more intermingled the better) of the following elements: art, artists, artistic institutions" (Lorente, 2008). This concept involves the relocation of artistic activities and institutions away from well-touristed areas with a rich artistic heritage, towards less affluent, industrial areas with higher crime rates and distant from the historic centres of cities. This shift is driven by a desire to find cheaper locations for artistic activities and institutions.

Spain accounts for 1% of the global art market and is the seventh country, alongside Japan and South Korea, in the world ranking for art sales. This figure is significant given that China, the United States and the United Kingdom account for the remaining 80% (Guijarro, 2024). The authorities are aware of the importance and strength of the sector. According to the Figel report presented in 2006, the sector accounted for 2.3% of GDP in the European Union in 2003, which is double the size of the automotive industry (Sacco and Ferilli, 2018, p. 10). For this reason, the district administration has welcomed the transformation.

3.4. The Process of Establishing new Spaces Dedicated to Artistic Endeavours

The inaugural experiences of establishing spaces were not directly associated with the visual arts, as evidenced by the CasaBanchel initiative. This initiative, initiated in 2016, commenced as a solution for both occupational and communal living, with a primary focus on community housing. The building's evolution culminated in the subsequent opening of its doors to artist residencies and a diverse array of creative activities. Confronted with the imminent closure of the building due to the exorbitant rent demanded by the proprietor, the concept of the community house was devised. This was to be centred around a glass-covered courtyard, with overhead lighting, flanked by dwellings and workshops with large windows. The development is located in the old El Polígono ISO industrial estate in the former industrial area of the San Isidro neighbourhood. The presence of 40 studios, craft workshops and creative spaces has had a transformative effect on the area, which has become a creative hub.

The year 2016 marked the inauguration of Mala Fama within the confines of the aforementioned industrial estate, accompanied by the presence of numerous artists' workshops. These included the ateliers of Carlos Aires, Hugo Alonso, Alejandro Botubol, Marta Corsini, Rafael Díaz, Jorge García and Ruth Quirce. The organisation was situated within a repurposed industrial warehouse, which also served as the creative hub for the Nave Oporto studio. The programme of events includes workshops led by Irma Álvarez Laviada, Miguel Ángel Tornero, Santiago Giralda, Fod, Sonia Navarro, Belén Rodríguez, Manuel Saro and Toni Ramón. In addition, Nave 6 will host Julio Sarramián, Cristina Toledo, Helena Fernández and Carlos Cartaxo. The overarching objective of these initiatives is to facilitate knowledge exchange and interactions between artists and other relevant cultural and creative stakeholders, with a view to fostering creation, exhibition and the promotion of art.

The spaces are utilised for the purpose of hosting artistic creation and innovation events, including but not limited to performances, ephemeral projects and book presentations. The upper floors are home to renowned artists, including the founder, Carlos Aires, a Malaga-born artist who has been exhibiting at ARCO, Madrid's International Contemporary Art Fair, since at least 2023. His work is represented in prominent collections and museums, such as MACBA, ARTIUM, MAS, CAAC, Fondazione Benetton, and others. He himself comments on how, when he arrived from Belgium to settle in Madrid in 2010, he

realised that artists had no training and were forced to work in their own homes. Francisco Brives and Néstor Prieto, directors of the La Neomudéjar museum, were also aware of this situation and decided to open Zapadores in Fuencarral, also on the northern outskirts of Madrid (Treviño Avellaneda, 2024).

A recent example of a self-managed and collaborative art space that merits attention is Espacio Amazonas, which was inaugurated in 2023 in a former prop workshop (closed due to retirement) run by artists Nati Andreoli and Lina Sanabria (Lezcano, 27 November 2024), where artists Juan Cruz Portacelli and Chunchullo also work. This space is the venue for muralism workshops and artivism activities, which are characterised by a feminist spirit and which seek to foster community cohesion, with a particular emphasis on the integration and socialisation of immigrants from South America.

A return to the subject of galleries reveals another pioneering figure in Carabanchel: the Danish artist Dan Benveniste. Benveniste owned the Benveniste Gallery, which was located in Las Letras neighbourhood (Centro district) from 2006 to 2012. During this period, he made the decision to expand the exhibition space by moving into a former graphic arts space (Calle Nicolás Morales). This allowed him to continue with his intaglio engraving and publishing workshop. The continuation of this tradition is of great importance, as it not only preserves the intaglio engraving technique, but also revives one of Carabanchel's main industries in the second half of the 20th century: printing and rubber stamp manufacturing.

Table 1. Galleries and workshops (most recognised individual and collective). Name and address.

35.000 Jóvenes (Matilde Hernández, 36, 3 izquierda.)
An Wie (Calle Urgel, 33)
Arteaga Usted (Mercedes Arteaga, 50)
Artendencia House Studio (San Dámaso, 14, bajo)
Art Gallery 95, (Álvarez Abellán, 23)
Belmonte (Belmonte de Tajo, 61)
Bianchini Studio (San Patricio, 10)
Casa Antillón (Calle Chimbo, 12)
CasaBanchel (Santiago Estévez, 26)
Casa Bola (Época, 3-bis)
Center Inter Art (Av. del Manzanares, 144)
Chaiz Estudio (Alejandro Sánchez, 95)
El Grifo (Vista Alegre, 20, 2 A)
Espacio Vista (Vista Alegre, 20, 3 A)
Estudio 4.7 (Nicolás Morales 38-40, 4 7)
Studio 10 (Nicolás Morales, 38-40, 1 10)
Carlos Garaicoa Studio (Hermanos del Moral, 62)
José Luis Serzo Studio (Pedro Díez, 21-bis, 3 D)
Lisboa Studio (Pedro Díez, 21, 3)
Ey!Studio (Belmonte del Tajo, 19, 2 2)
Faro 12 Estudio (Pedro Díez, 21, 3 A, local 12)
Fuentesal & Arenillas / Paloma de Alba (Matilde Hernández, 36, 3 dcha.)
Galería Nueva (Alejandro Sánchez, 94 and Miguel Mayor, 1)
Gunter Gallery (Juanita, 11)
Hyper House (Ramón Sainz, 22)
In June We Trust (Amistad, 24, bajo)
Juana González (José Garrido, 3, bajo)
Lapislázuli (Conde de Vistahermosa, 3C)
La Gran (Nicolás Morales, 38)
La Latente (Pedro Díez, 21-bis, 1 7)
LabBrut Colectivo de Artistas (Capitán de Oro, 1)
La Oficina (Morenés Arteaga, 9)
Luis Miguel Rico (Santiago Estévez, 18)
Mala Fama (Pedro Díez, 25, 1 dcha.)
Memoria (Morenés Arteaga, 18)

Morfo Galería (Esteban de Arteaga, 3)
Nave 6 (Nicolás Morales, 38-40, 3 6)
Nave Oporto (Pedro Díez, 25, 2 dcha.)
NavEstudio Laura Lio (Tordo, 21, local left)
Noart Gallery (Antoñita Jiménez, 32)
Paloma Gámez (Nicolás Morales, 38-40, 4 8, loft 4)
photoAlquimia (Pedro Díez, 21-bis, 3)
Puerta Cuatro (Nicolás Morales, 38-40, 4 4)
Puesto Fiera (Fernán Caballero, 2 bis)
Totoki Guaraní (Pedro Díez, 21-bis, 1 2)
Tönnheim Gallery (Miguel Mayor, 1, rented to Galería Nueva in 2024).
Tu patio (Eduardo Marquina, 5)
U Studio (Virgen de Belén, 6, bajo)
Veta Gallery (Antoñita Jiménez, 39)
Sabrina Amrani Gallery (with branches in Malasaña - Calle Madera, 23, and in Carabanchel - Sallaberry, 52)
La Gran (Nicolás Morales, 38, 1st floor, door 8B).

Source(s): Own elaboration. September 2024. Based on the information made available by the Madrid City Council in District 11, more information gathered in the field has been added.

It has been observed that a number of galleries, which previously occupied compact spaces in the city centre, have relocated to the district of Carabanchel. This strategic decision was made with the objective of augmenting their exhibition capacity. Furthermore, it has been noted that this area has experienced a notable increase in footfall from visitors and collectors, which may have influenced the decision of these galleries to seek more spacious premises. The following cases are provided as illustrative examples: Galería Nueva and Sabrina Amrani.

The former maintains its two headquarters in the historic centre of Madrid (the Las Letras and Lavapiés neighbourhoods) and has acquired two properties in the Carabanchel district with the aim of establishing itself permanently through purchase rather than rental. A novel initiative has been adopted, involving the temporary rental of exhibition spaces to other galleries, with the aim of providing a platform for the display of artists with whom they have a collaborative relationship. The Galería Nueva is a cultural establishment with three locations in the Carabanchel district: specifically, GN1, GN2 and GN3. Two of these are situated on Alejandro Sánchez Street, with a third located on Miguel Mayor Street. The galleries are housed in a former butcher's shop and a garage that previously functioned as a fire brigade school. The institution has made several adaptations to the premises, including lowering walls to create open-plan spaces, smoothing and painting walls and floors, and installing artificial lighting. Daniel Silvo, director of Galería Nueva, provides an explanation of the establishment of the art space:

> Contemporary art has been around for many years. First, the artists arrived ten or twelve years ago. They began to arrive when industries left behind large warehouses, industrial buildings, garages, workshops and printing shops. These spaces were large, and artists began to occupy them as studios. Once the artists had settled in, galleries started opening nearby because they began to attract an audience of people dedicated to or interested in art. Three or four years ago, galleries started opening more regularly. My business involves renting my space to galleries from outside Madrid, so we need to be located within the hubs or routes of Madrid's art galleries. Now, Carabanchel is one of those hubs. It is impossible to get a space like this in a more central area, and this is in fact one of the reasons why galleries are coming here. (Martín and Ibabe, 2024).

The second gallery with several venues is Sabrina Amrani, its proprietor, who initially opened in 2011 in Calle de la Madera (Malasaña neighbourhood) and in 2019 in Carabanchel. Amrani states that they receive more visitors in this space (Carabanchel) than in the one in Calle Madera, in the centre of Madrid (Marco, 5-11 July 2024, p. 10).

The final gallery to be inaugurated was Art Gallery 95, a project by the artist Sfhir, winner of the prize for the best mural in the world for his La violonchelista in the I International Urban Art Competition, which was organised by the Street Art Cities platform in February 2024 with a view to promoting urban

artists. The edifice in question, a former repository for building materials, underwent a period of renovation that spanned nearly five years. During this time, the walls were adorned with plaster and painted, and new lighting systems were installed. It is currently one of the most visited galleries and one of the most popular with the public.

4. Results

In order to approach the digital communication of virtual spaces and unions, it is convenient to take into account their location and concentration in the neighbourhoods of the district, considering the permanent and momentary associations of joint activities. The district with the highest concentration of notable galleries is neighbourhood 112 (Opañel), which houses nine galleries. This is followed by neighbourhood 111 (Comillas), which contains two galleries, including Nigredo Espacio de Creación Artística. The next districts with notable galleries are 113 (San Isidro) and 114 (Vista Alegra), both of which contain two galleries, and 115 (Puerta Bonita), which contains one gallery. No galleries have been found in Abrantes or Buena Vista.

The identification of artists' studios is a challenging endeavour, as the cartographic representations typically feature only the most prominent studios or those established through collective entities such as groups and associations. The counting of the subjects in question is rendered unfeasible by three factors: firstly, the lack of opening hours; secondly, the absence of signage outside the building; and thirdly, the outdated data. However, there is a greater concentration of such establishments in the streets Pedro Díez and Nicolás Morales (neighbourhood 113, San Isidro) in the vicinity of the music venues Gruta 77 and Matilda, although the studios of the most renowned artists such as Carlos Garaicoa are located in Opañel, where there is a greater concentration of galleries.

In terms of transportation from other areas of the capital, the galleries are situated near the Oporto and Opañel metro stations. This convenient location ensures easy accessibility to the area from any point within the capital. In contrast to most areas of Madrid (and municipalities in the Autonomous Community), parking for private vehicles is not subject to time restrictions or mandatory payment. This policy is advantageous for visitors who do not have a time constraint and are able to visit all the galleries at their leisure. However, the installation of the Regulated Parking System (SER) of the Madrid City Council is seeking to extend to Opañel, a matter that the local community currently supports (Menéndez, 15 January 2025).

The identification of the sites is rendered more complex by the presence of certain elements. The majority of galleries are situated in extremely narrow streets, which makes it difficult for observers to see them from the street outside.

From the perspective of conventional physical communication within the spaces themselves, with the objective of attracting audiences and establishing the identity of an artistic and creative space, there is a general absence of signs and visible signage from the doors to the exterior. The majority of these were established within mechanical workshops and warehouses storing building materials, textiles and graphics. The original large 4 x 3 metre metal gates with a coat of paint, upon which the name of the gallery had been inscribed, were retained in many cases, albeit with lettering of a notably insufficient size (typically no larger than 150 points). An exception to this was the Veta gallery. Since September 2025, new signage has been installed in some galleries, including 95 Art Gallery, Galeria Nueva (where the sign changes with each exhibition) and Tönnheim Gallery (which is a rental in the premises of the former, but with a different entrance and its own identity).

Public institutions have been able to capitalise on this initiative, particularly in light of the initial collaboration of the nine galleries of the Círculo de Carabanchel, which united to enhance their visibility (Sánchez y Nicolás, 2024), in conjunction with the two prominent associations, Distrito Cultural and Ecosistema ISO. The latter association has been subject to graffiti on its walls, with messages such as "Your art raises our rent" (conversation with Marko Zednik, 23 September 2024). The local residents, aware of the potential dangers associated with gentrification, are keen to avoid it at all costs. This is the rationale behind the artists' workshops remaining concealed from the public eye; they opt for a discreet existence to circumvent any potential suspicion.

The District Board of the Madrid City Council has pursued a strategic initiative focused on cultivating a distinct brand identity under the umbrella of Distrito 11. This endeavour entails the integration of

private sector resources, including cultural and artistic institutions and educational centres focused on nature, with the objective of augmenting the existing infrastructure to a total of 170 cultural entities (Ayuntamiento de Madrid, 2024). This ambitious undertaking encompasses performing arts, plastic arts, art galleries, and rehearsal spaces, underscoring a multifaceted approach to cultural development. The visual representation of the brand Distrito 11 is characterised by Ángel Merlo's logo, which comprises the letter D intersected by the Manzanares River. Distrito 11's objective is to elevate Carabanchel to a level comparable to Soho, Montmartre or Chiado. This ambition is to be realised through the creation of eight spaces designated for artistic expression, each of which will be distinguished by its unique characteristics. The following districts are under consideration: ISO, Oporto, Vista Alegre, San Isidro, Tercio, Opañel, Comillas and Río. The final space aims to establish a connection between Distrito 11 and Matadero, a goal that was emphasised by Councillor Carlos Izquierdo during the press conference that was held to present the brand: "Carabanchel will be an urban and cultural landscape of Madrid Río and Matadero Madrid" (Diario de Madrid, 5 April 2024), and this can be regarded as a clear example of "territorial rebalancing".

The Distrito 11 brand currently possesses minimal relevance, as evidenced by its absence from the networks analysed, as well as its integration into the communication strategies of the galleries themselves, both in digital and traditional media.

Private and associative initiatives aimed at attracting collectors and art experts have been instrumental in enhancing the district's visibility. Examples of this phenomenon include the Carajillo Visit, which has been organised by Mala Fama and Nave Oporto since 2017 (the date is given as 2017, as this is the year in which the poster of the organisers was published in Arte Informado on 27 February 2019). The Carajillo Visit brings ARCO visitors to Carabanchel as an Open Studios experience, which, at least since 2018, has been part of ARCO's VIP programme.

In addition, a variety of activities are scheduled to occur in the district during the weeks leading up to Art Week. These include the presentation of the Hybrid Art Fair at Galería Nueva on 24 February 2024, which is set to take place between 7 and 10 March in Plaza de Santa Bárbara in Madrid. In this case, the focus is on the interaction between the centre and the periphery, with the objective of shifting towards the centre from the periphery. This contrasts with the conventional approach of endeavouring to move in the opposite direction.

Artbanchel, an initiative that took place from 10 to 12 May 2017, was carried out by 120 cultural agents who were based in 35 studios in the district. The initiative was followed by 4,147 followers on its Instagram profile, where it had 143 posts. The initiative left a trace of the alternative artistic activities they carried out in the various spaces in videos posted on their Instagram profile, and these remain available for consultation today.

In the context of digital communication by associations such as Círculo de Carabanchel, or for the purpose of locating any visitor, it is imperative to have mobile applications for the location of the spaces, such as Google. Círculo Carabanchel provides the public with an interactive map showing the locations, opening hours and contact details of the associated galleries (http://circulocarabanchel.com).

Círculo Carabanchel boasts a substantial following of 2148 individuals, accompanied by a noteworthy publication count of 327. These publications are meticulously tagged and engage with the galleries affiliated with the association.

The majority of the galleries demonstrate a commendable level of commitment to effective communication, as evidenced by the dynamic nature of their websites and the visual clarity of their designs. These designs serve to facilitate access to links to their profiles on various networks and encourage subscription to their newsletters.

The most effective form of communication on the Instagram network is through interaction with galleries, predominantly through photographic publications, with carousel posts being the most prevalent format. However, videos are also employed, featuring brief news reports, moving images of intricate details, and concise interviews with artists.

Referral to other traditional media does, however, appear to be an effective strategy for increasing one's following, as evidenced by the case of La Gran, which has been successful in this regard. The strategy employed by La Gran involves tagging and publishing images of print press editions in which it appears, including ABC Cultural, El Cultural, Babelia, El Mundo, La Razón, El Plural, Diario de Valladolid, and a total of 27 other publications. It can be inferred that a greater amount of work has been invested in contracting traditional media in order to provide its profile with content, as well as a communication

strategy that relies on all the media for its actions. Other galleries that refer to traditional media include Belmonte, 95 Art Gallery, Galería Nueva, Sabrina Amrani and Veta. It is evident that they have amassed the most substantial following and demonstrate a high level of engagement with their audience.

The number of followers is also higher in the case of Sabrina Amrani (Venice Biennale and others), as is the case of Sabrina Amrani (Venice Biennale and others). Participation in the Estampa Fair or attendance at ARCO (even as visitors) and other related activities is customary. Examples of such activities include JustMadrid and Hybrid House Art. The Tönnheim gallery (which is located in a space rented from Galería Nueva) is responsible for the labelling and promotion of a variety of events and spaces. The exhibition has been showcased at prominent art fairs, including the UVNT Art Fair in Matadero, as well as spaces in New York, Basel, Art Marbella, Stockholm, San Francisco, and others. However, it has been observed that the exhibition does not elicit the same effect in all these locations.

The galleries have been configured to redirect from Instagram to their websites, with the link to the latter being located within the profile information.

Table 2. Activity on Instagram. Analysis of profiles.

	Posts	Followers (x thousand)	Followed	First post
95 Art Gallery	87	30,7	96	16/06/2023
Belmonte	197	10,2	994	17/03/2021
New Gallery	562	11,6	3139	14/12/2019
Hyper House	66	7,8	998	08/03/2022
La Gran	752	11,8	2519	16/01/2017
La Oficina	135	3,4	763	02/06/2023
Memory	392	6,7	440	11/09/2020
Noart Gallery	25	0,2	211	11/05/2023
Tönnheim Gallery	372	3,3	1402	24/07/2018
Veta Gallery	360	25,8	108	21/11/2021
Sabrina Amrani Gallery	2603	18,3	2461	30/05/2011 (09/04/2019, opening Carabanchel 01/2019)

Source(s): Carlos Treviño, January 2025.

There are two notable examples of success where the number of publications does not particularly affect the number of publications, 95 Art Gallery and Hyper House. As for the number of followers and followers, there is a trend in the relationship: a greater number of followers equals a greater number of followers, but we cannot speak of a mathematical proportionality which, moreover, is not fulfilled in all cases, 95 Art Gallery being once again the exception.

As for activity on the X network (formerly Twitter), it is practically non-existent; indeed, it is only used by the Sabrina Amrani gallery with considerable success, perhaps due to its international nature.

Table 3. Activity on X (former Twitter).

	Publications	Followers (x thousand)	Followed	First publication
95 Art Gallery	-	-	-	No profile
Belmonte	-	-	-	No profile
New Gallery	6	40	38	02/2021
Hyper House	-	-	-	No profile
La Gran	-	-	-	No profile
The Office	1	2	12	10/2017
Report	-	-	-	No profile
Noart Gallery	0	0	1	Open 03/2024

Tönnheim Gallery	-	-	-	No profile
Veta Gallery	-	-	-	No profile
Sabrina Amrani Gallery	9191	3412	1701	03/2011

Source(s): Carlos Treviño, January 2025.

5. Conclusions and Discussion

The initial and most salient conclusion is the absence of the X network among galleries, given that any business or institution endeavours to cover all possible channels to achieve maximum media presence. This absence of the art world from the X network corresponds to other brief studies, such as the one that demonstrates the absence of Zapadores artists from this network (Treviño Avellaneda, 2024) and their preference for Instagram.

The data gathered indicates a clear preference for Instagram among visual arts agents and their respective followers. It was observed that the websites of all the galleries under scrutiny redirect to their respective Instagram profiles.

A correlation has been demonstrated between the increase in followers and the number of posts, with the latter being proportional to the age of the profiles. However, this correlation is not found to be statistically significant. Nonetheless, it has been observed to be particularly effective in the context of redirecting to other traditional media and profiles. The utilisation of conventional media, encompassing both print and television, along with the incorporation of visual elements, is particularly advantageous in fostering interactions and enhancing relevance. It is noteworthy that radio, in this context, is rendered virtually obsolete. The utilisation of tags and hashtags in the context of activities and other spaces has been demonstrated to be a beneficial strategy for increasing the number of followers.

The communicative participation of agents constituting cultural spaces, through collaborative actions, tags and publications by artists, public bodies, associations, foundations, galleries, etc., ensures success not only in terms of communication but also in terms of the permanence and continuity of the artistic space itself, thereby confirming the theories extensively and thoroughly studied by Pilar Aumente (2021).

However, it should be noted that there are two exceptions to this general rule, which are represented by the cases of 95 Art Gallery and Hyper House. The former has the second lowest number of posts and followers, yet the highest number of followers, while the latter has the lowest number of posts and virtually no relationship with other agents or associations, nor any redirection to traditional media, but maintains a central position in terms of followers. The common factor that could explain these two cases, especially the first, is the appeal of their artistic content. The former is urban art and the latter is the interrelation between the physical and digital worlds.

The case of Hyper House is particularly evident in the digital nature of the art they transfer from the network, which functions optimally within its 'own medium'. Moreover, it has garnered a substantial following among young audiences who are more familiar with using social media, particularly Instagram.

The success of 95 Art Gallery can be attributed to its ability to attract a younger audience, as evidenced by a visit to the gallery in person. This is further enhanced by the international profile of its director, the urban artist Sphir. In 2023, the year the gallery opened, Sphir's mural was voted the best in the world by the international platform Street Art Cities. It is imperative to acknowledge an additional element that is intrinsically linked to the artistic oeuvre displayed in the gallery and on Instagram. Urban art is becoming the preferred artistic expression for Instagram users to share in their posts (due to its accessibility on the street and the freedom to photograph it without copyright restrictions), which multiplies the relevance acquired by these artists, as is the case of the Spanish artist Okuda, and determines the identity of cities. In this regard, there are studies that demonstrate this trend and the impact of Instagram and street art (MacDowall, 2019; MacDowall and de Souza, 2018), the monitoring of its mainly young users, and the creation of territorial and artistic identities.

The communication strategy employed by galleries utilises various forms of social media and websites as a means to promote artists, encourage attendance at physical exhibition spaces, and showcase both visual art creations and the exhibition spaces themselves. The majority of these posts take the form of photographs and videos.

The meticulous attention to detail exhibited in the galleries' web communication, as well as the superlative quality of their Instagram posts, stands in stark contrast to the dearth of support received from public institutions. This support, limited to a handful of press releases and sporadic promotional activities during the logo's launch, has not been forthcoming despite the absence of the logo in both physical and virtual gallery spaces.

The promotion of the art district has been supported by traditional media such as television, specialised press and daily newspapers, both in print and digital editions. In addition to this, the area has undeniably benefited from the increased exposure provided by Instagram.

The primary objective of the galleries' communication efforts is to establish a physical attraction, in addition to cultivating the image and relevance of their own brands, which they regard as essential collaborators.

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