

Territories in Transit: Influxes and Influences

Jesús Madriñán and the Collection of the Museo Etnológico

This exhibition explores the movement of people for opposing reasons —leisure and survival— through contemporary art and the photographic holdings of the Museo Etnológico.

In 2024, Santiago-born artist Jesús Madriñán lived in Lanzarote with the aim of studying the impact of migration and tourism on the island's identity. Despite their foreign and transitory nature, both phenomena have lasting effects that shape the daily life of the archipelago, acting as a metaphor for current (im)balances and hierarchies.

The series *Lanzarote* combines monumental portraits with still lifes made from local materials and tourist-generated waste found by chance. The close-ups and indistinct backgrounds offer little contextual information, presenting migrants and tourists on equal footing. Madriñán makes use of the audience's potential preconceived ideas to question the relevance of classifying people based on their circumstances, highlighting their shared humanity.

Just as the artist narrows the framing to open minds, the exhibition deliberately plays with a past and present ambiguity that blurs categorisation, emphasising that transience is inseparable from human nature. The dialogue between different times and places opens a space for reflection and debate about power dynamics between people and regions of the world.

Monserrat Pis Marcos
Curator

The Museo Etnológico houses thousands of images that document the evolution of Galician society from the late 19th century to the present. These photographs capture the transformation of the country, which shifted from having a negative migratory balance to a positive one, and reflect its consolidation as a leisure destination, a point of departure, and a place of settlement.

The portraits from the collection in this room offer polished, often retouched visions intended to project a favourable image of the individuals in front of the camera. They were taken both in Galicia and in the Americas, although their provenance is not always immediately evident. Inspired by the ambiguity of *Lanzarote*, the names of the portrayed individuals are not included. Their stories are told only when relevant to outline the diverse and complex landscape of human mobility.

Providing a counterpoint to Madriñán's minimalistic still lifes are images referencing tourism and modes of transport that—then as now—connect and separate people who are bound to coexist for at least the duration of the journey that links them.

The selection's small and intimate scale reflects its historical perspective—less urgent than the challenges posed by *Lanzarote*, but essential for understanding the processes that have led to the present moment.