



## **An open-ended account**

The Spanish transition was a long process originating in the incorporation of the Spanish economy into international capitalism in the 1970s and in the formation, at about the same time, of movements of political and union resistance with a real capacity for mobilization, culminating in the accession of Spain to the European Union in 1986. Although the change of regime took place between the death of the dictator in 1975 and the passing of the Constitution in 1978, it would have been unlikely to develop in the primarily pacific way it did without the far-reaching transformation that Spanish society had been experiencing since the 1960s. Economic development, domestic immigration, the growth of cities and the progressive liberalization of everyday habits, despite the repressive power of the political ideological tandem of the Francoist state machinery and the Catholic Church, were determinant factors in breaking down the regime after the death of the *Caudillo*.

Conditioned by the double game of amnesty and amnesia around which the transition mostly turned, the official history of this major change tends to reduce it practically to the political sphere. Some versions have adopted a quasi-official tone and explained the transition as a pact between the more salvageable sectors of the preceding regime and the democratic political leaders, with the King as the principal architect. Yet everything would have been quite different if what Franco considered “all tied up” had not already begun to come undone long before 20 November 1975. To a large extent, it was actually Spanish society that was responsible for this undoing as it gradually evolved, leaving the regime behind and producing a growing rift between the Francoist superstructure and the social reality of the country. Reducing the interpretation of Francoism to an exercise of political pacting and metamorphosis, apart from its divergence from reality, had practical consequences that can still be felt today. It has been a difficult process to achieve full recognition of the part society played in the transition.

«In Transition» sets out to challenge this perspective. And, without denying the major role of institutional politics, it seeks to highlight some of the social, cultural and even moral keys to the transition. The exhibition therefore explores transformations in Spanish life in the latter years of Francoism and the early years of democracy, charting the long disentangling of the ties of Francoism and also showing how, even today, some issues are still more closely linked than is desirable. Without the strikes and the gradual occupation of public space by citizens, it would be impossible to understand why the Francoist regime yielded more easily than expected, but music and education also offer important clues to cultural change, and a look at institutions such as the police station and the psychiatric hospital bear witness to the complexities of processes of change. Without claiming to be comprehensive, the exhibition takes a diachronic approach to aspects of Spanish reality that are vital to understanding and assessing the change. And, at the same time, it incorporates elements that table the examination of an aspect which has been widely explored in other transitions but which, in our country, continues surrounded by the aura of taboo: the functioning of the repressive machinery of dictatorship.

«In Transition» is an open-ended exhibition, a proposal worthy of extension or further exploration by other projects. Above all, it must invite the opinions of new generations about this episode in recent history. Because if there is one thing that this exhibition seeks to avoid, it is helping to crystallize the transition into an adamant account.