

CARABANCHEL, A SPACE FOR VISUAL ARTS ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF MADRID

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ABSTRACT

The cultural space represented by the DISTRITO 11 brand has been instrumental in establishing Carabanchel as a significant artistic reference point on the outskirts of Madrid. The spontaneous concentration of artistic workshops, galleries, recording studios, and architecture, among other such facilities, has resulted in a total of 170 artistic containers. This phenomenon has led to the emergence of a novel creative territory, which is the subject of this study. The research commences with a bibliographic search to identify the district's unique characteristics and identity, and the reasons for the displacement of agents from the art world. An exploratory method was employed, encompassing direct fieldwork and engagement with, and observation of, the actions undertaken by the architects of this transformation. It was concluded that the motivation for establishing themselves in Carabanchel was initially due to the architectural idiosyncrasies and high housing prices, and that its continuity relies on the collaboration of private and public agents.

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1. Introduction

In the second decade of the 21st century, Carabanchel has become the latest phenomenon of concentration of creative and artistic spaces in Madrid. This development is characterised by its location away from the city centre, a novelty when compared to previous cultural territories in the city.

It has been described as a "hornet's nest of spaces for music, residencies and alternative spaces and located relatively close to the centre of Madrid" (Marco, 2024). In this sense, it is interesting to pay attention to the term "alternative", given that this creative space has taken shape in a spontaneous manner without any planning based on the promotion or recommendation of public bodies. Rather, it is the result of an attraction provoked by the situation itself, caused by various factors that have taken place in the city since the second decade of the century. These factors are added to the idiosyncrasy and architectural heritage of the territory and its situation of proximity to the centre of the Spanish capital.

These cultural spaces, located on the periphery of major cities, have been the subject of recent scholarly investigation due to their consistency in both cause and consequence, thus demonstrating that they are not isolated cases. It is evident that prior endeavours directed towards the consolidation of neighbourhoods and cultural territories, encompassing both tangible and intangible heritage, frequently culminate in gentrification processes. These processes, in turn, result in the exodus of the original population, including the very architects of these transformations. Consequently, in order to circumvent the repetition of these errors, it is imperative to formulate novel models of integration within the territories. Examples of these processes of gentrification and touristification have occurred, firstly, in areas with a high concentration of historical and artistic heritage in cities such as the historic centres of Florence and Venice, with processes of "disneylandisation", as they have been termed by Sacco and Ferilli (2018, p. 10) and, secondly, in areas imagined as safe spaces in relation to human rights, such as Chueca in Madrid and Castro in San Francisco (Treviño, 2023).

The concept of an artistic quarter has its origins in the territories that were formed in the first enlargements of the major European capitals at the close of the 19th century, a notable example being Montmartre. This concept persisted through to the 20th century, when artistic concentrations and galleries emerged as the primary focus. In this period, the prevailing concern was the economic empowerment of visual artists, who, by and large, were characterised by a limited purchasing power and a consequent need for substantial spaces to establish their studios, a situation exemplified by Soho in New York.

With regard to the peripheries, these creative spaces were not only limited to neighbourhoods or districts far from the historic centres but were even formed in rural municipalities far from the municipalities of the big cities. For instance, in the 19th century, we may cite the cases of Barbizon, Le Havre or Pont Aven, and, returning to Spain, Medinaceli in Soria from the beginning of the 19th century (Treviño, 2024) and Villanueva del Rosario in Malaga (Sánchez, 2023).

In this article, Carabanchel is considered peripheral, insofar as it is distanced from the classic concept of a neighbourhood with a high concentration of architectural monuments and museums. This development is attributable to an exodus of artists and gallery owners motivated by the flight, precisely, of the processes of gentrification from those central areas in which it is unviable to establish studios and exhibition venues. In addition, as elucidated subsequently, until the mid-20th century, it was an autonomous municipality of Madrid, exhibiting a distinctive architectural character stemming from its origins as a working-class and industrial town.

Carabanchel represents the latest manifestation of these characteristics in Spain, thus prompting research interest in its study. The objective is twofold: firstly, to create a comprehensive snapshot of its current situation, and secondly, to serve as a laboratory in which to propose alternative solutions to avoid the adverse effects to which these spaces are typically subjected.

1.1. Objectives

The primary objective of this research endeavour is to undertake a comprehensive analysis of the phenomenon of Carabanchel as a creative and artistic space on the outskirts of Madrid. This analysis will serve as a foundational basis for future research, with a particular focus on the potential transformations and effects that may ensue from the social recognition of the area as an artistic and

cultural hub. In order to achieve this overarching objective, it is necessary to address a number of specific objectives, including the following:

- Study of the history and heritage of the area, as well as the motivations behind the choice of Carabanchel by artistic agents.
- Photographic documentation of the galleries, artists' workshops, cultural spaces, and other elements deemed to constitute an active component of the phenomenon is to be undertaken.
- Examination of the relationships between the different social agents, with the original inhabitants, with the public administration, and the mutual support they provide is recommended.
- An exploration of the various communication actions employed to promote the spaces is warranted.

1.2. Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses have been formulated:

H1- Housing prices and the industrial architecture of Carabanchel have been pivotal to the movement of artists and galleries.

H2- Institutional support is imperative to achieve the objectives of consolidation and permanence.

H3- Digital communication has been demonstrated to facilitate the confirmation and survival of artistic agents in Carabanchel.

The significance of the research is evidenced by its necessity for the study of emerging peripheral spaces in major cities. In this case, an exhaustive study of a Madrid space in full development is undertaken, with the objective of providing a framework for the analysis of other spaces, facilitating comparisons, establishing inference relations and conducting a posteriori evaluation.

2. History and Idiosyncrasies of Carabanchel

Situated to the south of Madrid, it is separated from the city by the Manzanares River and the M-30 ring road, and it borders the municipalities of Leganés and the districts of Latina and Usera. The latter district emerged from its own territory, since before it joined the municipality of Madrid, its boundaries reached Boadilla del Monte and Pozuelo de Alarcón to the west. A significant portion of the territory encompassing the two original municipalities, Carabanchel Alto and Carabanchel Bajo, was owned by Eugenia de Montijo.

Despite the fact that the municipality of Carabanchel did not become part of the municipality of Madrid until 31 January 1948 (BOE, 1948, p.447) it has historically maintained a closer relationship with the capital than other nearby municipalities, for several reasons. Firstly, it is important to note that the patron saint of the city, San Isidro Labrador, was employed by Juan de Vargas in Carabanchel, thus establishing an artistic legacy that has been represented in art by distinguished figures for centuries. The artists in question include Lope de Vega and Goya, with the former's work being entitled "Isidro, poema castellano" (1599) and the latter's "La pradera de San Isidro" (1788). Secondly, Carabanchel had become one of the main suppliers of agricultural products to the city, an issue that was reflected in various satirical examples in literature in which the Carabanchelero was used as the antithetical prototype of the educated and well-educated urbanite. This phenomenon has been observed in the works of renowned writers such as Cervantes, Tirso de Molina, Quevedo, Góngora, and even Victor Hugo, who have incorporated references to Carabanchel Bajo in their literary compositions (Sánchez and Nicolás, 2024, pp. 13-38).

During the Enlightenment, one of the most significant financiers of the 19th century settled in Carabanchel Alto, as did Francisco de Goya in 1819, albeit in Bajo, when he purchased the "Quinta del Sordo", which would subsequently become world-famous for housing the "Pinturas Negras" (Black Paintings). The landscape and quotidian life of Carabanchel were depicted in the 18th century by Ramon Bayeu y Subías, brother-in-law of Velázquez, who was joined by the latter in depicting the bullfighting theme of Carabanchel Alto. The construction of the Carabanchel Bajo bullring, known as Vista Alegre, was completed in 1908.

With regard to the palace buildings, the most prominent examples include the Palace of Eugenia de Montijo, also known as the Palace of Miranda, which underwent two distinct phases of construction in 1469 and 1575, and was demolished in 1968. Another notable example is the neoclassical Palace of Vista Alegre, also known as the Marqués de Salamanca Palace, which served as the residence of Carlos IV's

physician, Antonio Llorente, and was subsequently converted into a recreational area, featuring amenities such as baths and a casino. Following a series of transfers, the estate was expanded to 50 hectares in 1836 under the patronage of the fourth wife of Ferdinand VII, María Cristina de Borbón. This expansion included the construction of additional adjacent structures, such as a chapel, an orange grove, a workshop, a cowshed, and a worm farm, contributing to the development of the complex. The property was acquired by the Marquis of Salamanca in 1859, marking its zenith.

The substantial rise in internal migration between 1920 and the 1930s, the causes of which and associated data have been exhaustively examined by Javier Silvestre (2005), corresponds with the remarkable population surge in both municipalities, particularly in Carabanchel Bajo due to its close proximity to the capital. The population of Carabanchel Bajo increased from 5,291 in 1900 to 12,221 in 1920 and 26,942 in 1930. In Carabanchel Alto, the population was recorded at 2044 in 1900, 4445 in 1920, and 9065 in 1930. The 1950s witnessed the establishment of the ISO industrial estate, deriving its nomenclature from the fabrication of the extinct isocarro (motocarro). Subsequent decades witnessed population growth around the manufacturing industries, particularly metal, printing, textiles and food, which were emerging in the pre-existing industrial district of Carabanchel (which had amalgamated the two former municipalities and ceded a portion of its territory to other districts). The high-rise brick houses of the working-class neighbourhoods that subsequently replaced the small, low, single-storey farmhouses that had previously existed in the area represent a significant change in architectural development.

Since 1986, the population has consistently remained above 200,000 inhabitants, making it the most populous district in Madrid. As of 1 July 2022, the district's population was recorded as 258,927 inhabitants (Ayuntamiento de Madrid, 2022). The Madrid City Council's data on commercial premises and activities has yielded fundamental data that has led to the establishment of galleries and artists' studios. On the one hand, the total abandonment of its agricultural origin, which has no activity in this respect, the 54 manufactures of metallurgical products (much higher than any other district in Madrid) and the 2874 motor vehicle and motorbike repair shops, which account for 22.47% of the total census of premises and activities (Madrid City Council, 1 January 2023). The long-standing tradition of printing and other metal manufacturing services experienced a decline in the 1990s, leading to the migration of these industries to more distant areas such as Móstoles and Alcorcón. This migration resulted in a significant number of industrial buildings becoming vacant. The most significant concentration of commercial enterprises in the area is still that of mechanical repair and bodywork and paint shops. A significant number of these enterprises have closed, either due to retirement or other reasons. The result has been an increase in the number of recording studios, art galleries and artists' studios in these locations.

2.1. Underlying Factors Driving the Exodus of Cultural Containers. Real Estate Bubble and the Financial Crisis

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 general population. These consequences affected not only all areas of the economy but also led to significant changes in social habits due to the dire situation faced by citizens who saw their purchasing power decline with no way of resolving it. House prices, which had risen uncontrollably for a decade, reached a peak that brought the property market to a standstill, as inflation had the effect of tying mortgage holders' hands and feet.

The inability to maintain mortgage payments, in addition to energy bills and basic living expenses, resulted in evictions, as financial institutions declined to provide loans. This situation resulted in permanent internal migration to the outskirts of cities where housing prices were lower. The situation has proven more complicated for art agents, as the art market ceased to maintain the constant investment levels of the 1980s, 1990s and early 21st century, when it was a thriving market from which those involved could make a comfortable living. 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 is further compounded by the diminution in the size of homes available to potential buyers, as well as the decline in the purchasing power of the majority of society.

The issue of the storage and exhibition of works of art gave rise to a phenomenon of artists' studios and galleries being relocated to areas where the burden of these issues was less significant. The notion

of an artistic neighbourhood has been defined as “a concentration of some (or several, the more intermingled the better) of the following elements: art, artists, artistic institutions” (Lorente, 2008, p.1). This concept has largely been abandoned in established areas around tourist hotspots with a wealth of artistic heritage, with an influx instead occurring in run-down areas that were cheaper in terms of price per square metre of land. These areas have typically been degraded by the abandonment of industrial activity, crime and their distance from the historic centre of cities.

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 public authorities are cognisant of the importance and strength of the sector, which, despite the unfavourable conditions, is estimated to have accounted for 2.3% of GDP in the European Union in 2003, according to the Figel report presented in 2006 (Sacco and Ferilli, 2018, p. 10). This is why the district has welcomed this transformation.

3. Methodology

The methodology is founded upon an initial review of secondary bibliographical sources, with the purpose 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. In this context, the research published by the Art, Architecture and Communication in the Contemporary City Research Group over the course of the current century has proven to be a valuable resource, particularly since 2011, as evidenced by the works of *Barrios artísticos y distritos culturales* (Chaves & Tejeda, 2018) and the compilations of the proceedings of the *Jornadas Arte y Ciudad* (Art and City Conferences), which have been held since 2007. Of particular interest is the application of Pilar Aumente's theoretical reflections (Aumente, 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 fundamental historical approach has been adopted, encompassing the publication *Carabanchel es cultura* (Sánchez and Nicolás, 2024) and primary sources disseminated by Madrid City Council and other public entities concerning demographics and economic data. In approaching the artistic phenomenon under investigation in this study, it is essential to undertake a comprehensive review of the relevant newspaper library, social networks and digital resources on the web. This should include a range of academic studies, interviews and activities that have been traced via these media.

The fieldwork and immersion in the space itself are of equal importance. This includes visits to the galleries, parallel activities, conversations with artists, and the collection of data about the space to ascertain the correspondence between information found in social networks and newspaper articles and reality, which, as will be demonstrated subsequently, is often distorted.

The scheme under consideration is as follows: firstly, the concentration and location of artistic agents with the division of their sphere; secondly, the study of the circumstances and situations; thirdly, the integration in the space; fourthly, communication and projected image; and finally, the involvement of the different agents in the process of creating the cultural space.

Utilising the comprehensive data set, a reflective process is initiated to ascertain the potential ramifications of gentrification, the components of success and failure, and to formulate conclusions and hypotheses.

4. Analysis and Results

4.1. Location and Transport

Firstly, the location of the most prominent galleries is discussed. The highest concentration of galleries is observed in neighbourhood 112 (Opañel), with a total of nine galleries. This is followed by neighbourhood 111 (Comillas), which has two galleries, including Nigredo Espacio de Creación Artística. The next highest concentrations are observed in neighbourhoods 113 (San Isidro) and 114 (Vista Alegre), both with two galleries, and neighbourhood 115 (Puerta Bonita), with one gallery. Despite extensive research, no galleries have been found in Abrantes or Buena Vista.

The process of locating artists' studios is more intricate, as the cartographic representations typically depict only the most prominent studios or those established by groups and associations. The issue is

exacerbated by three factors: the limited opening hours, the absence of signage outside the building, and the outdated data. These elements contribute to significant difficulties in accurately counting and locating the items in question. However, a greater concentration of artistic production is observed in the streets Pedro Díez and Nicolás Morales (neighbourhood 113, San Isidro), in proximity to music venues such as Gruta 77 and Matilda. Conversely, the studios of more recognised artists, including Carlos Garaicoa, are located in Opañel, a district that is distinguished by its high concentration of galleries.

In terms of transportation, the greatest concentration of galleries is located between the Oporto and Opañel Metro stops. Consequently, it is not difficult to travel from any location in the capital to this area. In contrast to the majority of areas in Madrid (and municipalities of the Autonomous Community), there are no time restrictions or obligatory payment for parking private vehicles. This arrangement is advantageous for visitors who do not have a time constraint and are able to visit all the galleries at their leisure.

Nonetheless, the identification of the locations is rendered more complex by the fact that the majority of the galleries are situated in extremely narrow streets, which makes it impossible to see them even from the same street. The issue of artists' studios is even more complicated, since in most cases they are located in flats that are not at street level, with a total lack of signposting. Furthermore, in the case of such dwellings, notably artists' studios, they are not accessible to the general public and do not have designated visiting hours.

From a communicative standpoint, in order to attract audiences and establish an artistic and creative space, the absence of signs and visible signage for the galleries cannot be overlooked, since artists' studios do not have as much of an audience-attracting function as the galleries. As previously mentioned, the majority of these galleries were established within the confines of mechanical workshops. A notable aspect of their design is the retention of the original large metal gates, measuring approximately 4 x 3 metres, which have been preserved with a coat of paint. However, these gates have been accompanied by a paucity of lettering, with no more than 150 points, which hinders the identification of the respective spaces, even when the gates are closed and the viewer is standing in front of the gallery. There are exceptions to this rule, for example the Veta gallery, which maintains the gates but with a font size that is visible from the beginning of the street at a great distance. It is evident that the majority of these phenomena often go unnoticed.

In response to inquiries regarding this matter, the 95 Art Gallery, which does not feature the name of its gallery on its black doorway or any other form of identification when its doors are closed, asserts that the absence of a shop window renders signage superfluous and the need to draw attention to itself redundant. This is predicated on the assumption that prospective buyers and visitors are already acquainted with the address. However, a subsequent visit to the area, conducted a month after the initial submission of this article, revealed that the gallery and three other similar entities lacking signage had been added during September 2024. An exemplar of this phenomenon is the gallery of Sabrina Amrani, which features a glass shop window at street level with a blind (translucent so that the interior cannot be seen) and no nominal element visible to passers-by.

Consequently, the most effective approach to identifying these spaces is to utilise mobile device applications that provide guidance and alert users when they have arrived, given the challenges associated with tracking down precise addresses.

4.2. Art Galleries and Artists

As previously mentioned, the installation of these art containers within former mechanical workshops and other abandoned industrial buildings has resulted in the provision of substantial spaces, with some reaching 600 square metres in size (a case in point being the Sabrina Amrani gallery). These containers possess heights in excess of 5 metres, thus transforming them into authentic temples of art. These structures exhibit a grandeur that rivals that of museums yet differ from the conventional conception of art galleries commonly found in urban centres.

In certain galleries, such as Sabrina Amrani, the lighting is of a naturalistic nature, characterised by zenithal shed-type apertures. In instances where this aperture is not zenithal, the gallery features substantial windows that are situated within the confines of the old industrial buildings, which occupy a significant portion of the façade cladding. This paper sets out the case of CasaBanchel, which was originally developed as an occupational and co-living solution focused on communal housing in an

industrial building. This project was initiated in 2016 and subsequently expanded to include artistic residencies and other creative activities. It is situated in the old ISO Polygon, a former industrial area in the district of San Isidro, which has been converted into a creative centre with more than 40 studios, craft workshops and creative spaces. CasaBanchel, a three-storey building spanning 800 square metres, serves as a hub for diverse creative endeavours. The architectural conception of the structure is such that it is designed to function as a house in which individuals congregate within a glass-covered courtyard, the entrance of which permits the entry of zenithal light. The apartments and workshops on the sides of the building feature large windows. A significant number of alternative art spaces have been compelled to utilise artificial lighting in substantial areas or, in some cases, across the entirety of their exhibition spaces. This approach has been adopted by prominent institutions such as Veta and Art Gallery 95.

In 2016, Mala Fama was inaugurated in the same industrial estate, with several artists' workshops. This establishment shares an old industrial building with the Nave Oporto studio and aims to promote the knowledge of artists and facilitate encounters with cultural agents dedicated to the creation, exhibition and promotion of art. The venue under discussion is a substantial space, measuring 100 square metres. Within this space, a variety of events are held, including performances, ephemeral projects and book presentations. These events are focused on artistic creation and innovation. In the upper storeys, work by artists of some renown can be found. These include the founder of Mala Fama, Carlos Aires, an artist from Malaga who has been exhibiting at ARCO, the Feria Internacional del Arte Contemporáneo de Madrid, at least since 2023. His work is in the collections of such important contemporary art museums 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 did not have studios and were forced to work in their own homes. Francisco Brives and Néstor Prieto, directors of the museum La Neomudéjar, were also aware of this situation and decided to open Zapadores in Fuencarral, also in the northern outskirts of Madrid (Treviño, 2024).

Another artist who gained a notable reputation in Carabanchel was Danish-born Dan Benveniste, proprietor of the Benveniste Gallery. Located in the city centre (Calle Fernanflor, barrio de Las Letras) from 2006 to 2012, Benveniste expanded the gallery's exhibition space and established an important intaglio engraving and publishing workshop in Calle Nicolás Morales in 2012. This technique has been maintained to perpetuate not only the tradition of the method itself, but also one of the primary industries traditionally associated with Carabanchel in the latter half of the 20th century: the printing industry. Other elements that have been preserved include rubber pads, among others.

It has been observed that a number of galleries, which previously occupied smaller spaces in the centre of the capital, have relocated to the district of Carabanchel. This move was made with the objective of expanding their exhibition spaces, or in response to an apparent increase in footfall to this area. This is exemplified by Galería Nueva and Sabrina Amrani.

The first of these maintains its two venues in the historic centre of Madrid, in the Las Letras and Lavapiés districts, and has acquired two spaces in Carabanchel with a view to expanding its exhibition space and establishing itself permanently by buying rather than renting. The decision has been taken to pursue a novel experience by renting out their space to other galleries, with the aim of enabling the temporary exhibition of artists associated with Carabanchel. 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 firemen's school. The institution has undergone several adaptations, including the lowering of walls to create open-plan spaces, the smoothing and painting of walls and floors, and the installation of artificial lighting. Daniel Silvo, director of Galería Nueva, expounded on the genesis of the district:

Contemporary art has been a prominent form of artistic expression for many years. The initial arrival of artists occurred approximately a decade ago. The arrival of artists corresponds with the departure of industry, and they establish themselves in a variety of locations, including large warehouses, industrial buildings, garages, workshops, and printing presses. It is evident that the remaining spaces are substantial in size, and as such, artists begin to utilise them for the purpose of establishing their studios. Once the artists have been installed, a gallery is established in the vicinity, as the artists begin to attract an audience and a demographic of individuals dedicated

to or interested in art. Approximately three or four years ago, there was a notable shift in the galleries' approach, with a transition towards a more habitual mode of operation. The nature of the business I have developed, which involves the rental of my premises to galleries located outside of Madrid, necessitates our presence within the nuclei or established routes of art galleries in Madrid. Presently, Carabanchel has become one of these areas. It is evident that securing a space of this nature in a more central location is an insurmountable challenge. This is, in fact, one of the factors that has led to the relocation of galleries to this area. (Martín & Ibabe, 2024)

The second gallery with several locations is Sabrina Amrani, its proprietor, who initially opened in 2011 in Calle de la Madera (Malasaña neighbourhood) and in 2019 in Carabanchel. Amrani acknowledges that "We have more visitors in this space than in the one in Calle Madera, in the centre of Madrid" (Marco, 2024, p. 10).

In addition to the aforementioned Carlos Aires, the following artists are represented: Carlos Garaicoa, José Luis Serzo, Patricia Mateo and Laura Lío. The following artists are represented at Nave Oporto: Irma Álvarez-Laviada, Belén FOD, Santiago Giralda, Miki Leal, Sonia Navarro, Manuel Saro and Miguel Ángel Tornero.

The final gallery to open was Art Gallery 95, a project by the artist Sfhir, who was awarded the prize for the best mural in the world for his *La violonchelista* (The Cellist) in the 1st International Urban Art Competition, organised by the Street Art Cities platform in February 2024 with the aim of promoting urban artists. The garage in which it is located underwent a five-year period of remodelling prior to its opening, during which time plaster decorations and interventions on the walls, lighting, and other features were implemented. It has since become one of the most visited galleries and one of the most successful with the public.

Table 1. Galleries and workshops (most recognised individuals and collectives). Name and address.

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- **35.000 Jóvenes** (Matilde Hernández, 36, 3 izq.)
 - **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)
 - **Estudio 10** (Nicolás Morales, 38-40, 1 10)
 - **Estudio de Carlos Garaicoa** (Hermanos del Moral, 62)
 - **Estudio José Luis Serzo** (Pedro Díez, 21-bis, 3 D)
 - **Estudio Lisboa** (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 y Miguel Mayor, 1)
 - **Ginsberg + TZU** (Cañete, 19)
 - **Gunter Gallery** (Juanita, 11)
 - **Hyper House** (Ramón Sainz, 22)
 - **In June We Trust** (Amistad, 24, bajo)
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- **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 izquierdo)
 - **Noart Gallery** (Antoñita Jiménez, 32)
 - **Obertura Carabanchel** (Alejandro Sánchez, 94)
 - **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, alquilado a Galería Nueva en 2024).
 - **Tu patio** (Eduardo Marquina, 5)
 - **U Studio** (Virgen de Belén, 6, bajo)
 - **Veta Galeria** (Antoñita Jiménez, 39)
 - **Sabrina Amrani Gallery** (con sedes en Malasaña – calle Madera, 23 y en Carabanchel - Sallaberry, 52)
 - **La Gran** (Nicolás Morales, 38, planta 1, puerta 8B).
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Source(s): Own elaboration. September 2024. Based on the information made available by Madrid City Council in District 11, further information gathered in fieldwork has been added.

4.3. Partnership and Communication

As mentioned above, Carabanchel's transformation into an artistic and cultural district occurred through the gradual displacement of artists. Currently, the approximate figure provided by Distrito 11 is 130 artists in 40 studios (as of 2021). Initially, interpersonal communication played a key role in attracting other artists, who were drawn by the affordable rents of the workshops, which currently range from 200 euros for shared studios to 1000 euros for industrial buildings (Blasco in Marco, 2024, p. 8).

Public institutions have been able to capitalise on this momentum, particularly through the initial collaboration of ten galleries under the name *Círculo de Carabanchel*, who joined forces to increase their visibility (Sánchez y Nicolás, 2024), as well as the two major associations, *Distrito Cultural* and *Ecosistema ISO*. The latter association has had graffiti with messages such as 'Your art raises our rent' written on its walls (conversation with Marko Zednik, 23 September 2024). The neighbours, aware of the dangers of gentrification, want to avoid it at all costs. This is why the artists' studios are not visible from the street; the artists prefer to keep a low profile to avoid arousing suspicion.

The District Board of Madrid City Council has promoted an institutional commitment to create a brand image around the name "*Distrito 11*", adding public resources to private initiatives, including public cultural and artistic education centres, to reach a total of 170 cultural venues offering performing and visual arts, galleries, and rehearsal spaces (Diario de Madrid, 2024a). The brand "*Distrito 11*" is visually represented by Ángel Merlo's logo, which features a letter "D" crossed by the Manzanares River. Distrito 11 aims to raise Carabanchel to the level of Soho, Montmartre or Chiado by creating eight spaces for artistic expression. ISO: Oporto, Vista Alegre, San Isidro, Tercio, Opañel, Comillas and Ríol. The latter space seeks to connect the district with Matadero, which, as Councillor Carlos Izquierdo pointed out, establishes "Carabanchel as an urban and cultural landscape of Madrid Río and Matadero Madrid", providing a clear example of "territorial rebalancing" (Diario de Madrid, 2024b).

Private and associative initiatives aimed at attracting collectors and art experts have played a key role in raising awareness of the district. For example, Carajillo Visit, organised by Mala Fama and Nave Oporto since 2017, brings ARCO visitors to Carabanchel for an Open Studios experience. This has been part of ARCO's VIP programme since at least 2018. Other activities take place in the district in the weeks leading up to Art Week. For example, the Hybrid Art Fair was presented at Galería Nueva on 24 February 2024 and will take place in Madrid's Plaza de Santa Bárbara between 7 and 10 March. Once again, dialogues are established between the centre and the periphery, in this case moving towards the centre from the periphery, whereas communicative efforts usually aim to move in the opposite direction.

In terms of digital communication, as mentioned above, it is essential to have mobile applications to locate the spaces. As well as the Google search engine, Círculo Carabanchel provides the public with an interactive map showing the locations, opening hours, and contact details of the associated galleries (circulocarabanchel.com).

The galleries invest considerable effort in communication, boasting dynamic, visually cleanly designed websites with easy access to links to their network profiles and newsletter subscriptions.

This attention to communication contrasts with the designs of workshops, associations and collectives, which are simpler and less active. Even with institutional support, District 11 is limited to a few press releases and logo creation, suggesting a lack of real commitment to communication (there is no mobile application or website).

The traditional media, both in print and digital editions, and the specialised and daily press have given the district an artistic image, as have the social networks of artists, collectives, galleries, etc. Another noteworthy feature is the urban art route comprising 29 decorated façades that lend an artistic flair to this district, which attracts collectors and the curious, but which is difficult to notice at street level.

5. Discussion and Outlook

As mentioned above, the process of establishing Carabanchel as an artistic district involves some contradictions and, above all, a fear of gentrification that is not only expressed by the district's original residents, but also by the artists, collectives and galleries themselves. In this regard, galleries have opted to purchase industrial buildings to avoid displacement due to possible gentrification. Artists and collectives who rent space are also wary of this situation, and with good reason, given that the CasaBanchel collective has to vacate its space in a year's time because the rent will increase by 150% after almost a decade of renovations (conversation with Marko Zednik, 23 September 2024).

According to the real estate website Idealista.com, the rise in housing prices in Carabanchel has not been as spectacular as it is made out to be. While the average price in the municipality of Madrid has risen by 17.05% in the last year, in Carabanchel the increase has been 10.5%. According to Elena Garagui (2024) in *El Economista*, there is an uncontrollable gentrification process similar to that in Soho, talking about "almost 11%". However, the reality is that compared to house prices in Madrid as a whole and in the entire Community (13.2%), it is in Carabanchel where the increase has been lowest. Therefore, the much-feared gentrification is not happening in this case, or at least not yet, in the homes of ordinary citizens, whose fears have been expressed through graffiti and attacks such as those suffered by Ecosistema ISO.

The serious problem facing the district is the lack of protection for its industrial architectural heritage. It was the artists and collectives themselves who were based in these industrial buildings who approached Madrid City Council in 2016, when Manuela Carmena was mayor, to request a special protection plan for this type of building that they themselves were revitalising. The interest was twofold: one was to ensure their future for the collectives, workshops and cultural facilities, in short, to prevent further exodus; the other was to protect the rich industrial heritage that is so often undervalued in our country. Although the talks were fruitful, the new Popular Party government has taken a very different path, which includes support for the cultural and artistic promotion of the district with the aim of raising land prices, encouraging the construction of new housing and raising the standard of living. Therefore, talks in favour of industrial architectural conservation and the stability of the creative people who work in these buildings are seriously threatened when it comes to rental contracts.

In this regard, what has been exorbitantly revalued are the large industrial establishments where the artists had settled, not the adjacent dwellings. These large establishments are being bought by

construction companies to demolish them and build new buildings, and by large commercial chains that have discovered buildings that can be adapted to their businesses or use their spacious plots, as is the case of Mercadona, which has recently opened at 95 Zaida Street, behind CasaBanchel.

As Pilar Aumente points out, the collaborative participation of all the agents that form part of cultural spaces: artists, public bodies, associations, foundations, galleries, etc., is crucial to ensure the permanence and continuity of these spaces (2021). She also adds that integration into these spaces must generate interest and a sense of welcome among the original inhabitants. The aim is to bring about development and increased income in the neighbourhoods in the hospitality and other sectors and businesses that benefit directly and indirectly from the increase in visitors.

6. Conclusions

Firstly, an historical approach has been adopted through the review of bibliographical sources and various resources. This has enabled the architectural idiosyncrasies of Carabanchel to be understood, and fundamental issues in the new revitalisation of the spaces, garages and old factories to be revealed. These have undergone a process of revitalisation through art and creative activity. The artists have highlighted the industrial heritage of the site, noting the enormous spaces and magnificent lighting that have been maintained in a manner that respects the nature of the buildings, with minimal modifications.

The artistic and creative spaces of Carabanchel have been discreetly integrated into the district, so as not to arouse the inhabitants' concern about rising house prices. This has not yet happened and, at present, there is no indication that it will happen in the future. Conversely, there has been a marked increase in the cost of industrial buildings, which function as the primary storage facilities for artistic works. This rise in price has the potential to result in the displacement of the established artists and innovators who are currently based in Carabanchel.

The motivation for the establishment of artistic workshops and exhibition spaces in Carabanchel has been attributed to the decline in real estate prices following the economic downturn of the late 2000s. Initially, from 2010 onward, the initiative was undertaken by artists' workshop collectives; however, a more significant influx of such entities became evident from 2016 onwards.

The artistic agents have supported each other by creating associations and collectives, thus forming a community and refuge for artists. This phenomenon has been the cornerstone of the Carabanchel success. The relationship between the artistic agents and the original inhabitants has been characterised by challenges, prompting the agents to proactively initiate integration through the conception and implementation of activities, albeit with a reserved approach. The role of public bodies in this context appears to deviate from the objectives of controlling gentrification or providing support to artists and collectives. Instead, there is a discernible shift towards the enhancement of the standard of living, favouring the transfer of industrial heritage to private entities without ensuring its preservation. This approach is further compounded by the absence of reliable data, which likely contributes to the encouragement of gentrification, with the purported objective of augmenting municipal revenue.

The establishment of the brand image of Distrito 11, as a municipal initiative, appears to lack continuity and additional investment beyond the creation of a logo. This gives the impression of political opportunism, with the intention of claiming credit for a success that has been entirely attributable to artists, collectives and galleries. Indeed, communication at street level is discreet, and to a certain extent non-existent, with the aim of avoiding both the aesthetic transformation of the area and the social and economic changes that have been demonstrated to occur in other cities and at other times.

At present, the phenomenon of gentrification has not yet manifested itself. The majority of commercial establishments in the area continue to operate as traditional mechanics' workshops, providing a significant economic foundation for a considerable segment of the local population. The district does not possess the external appearance of an artistic or monumental neighbourhood, nor is there a firm commitment on the part of the public authorities to promote the industrial heritage. Consequently, the artistic tours are for a specialised public that does not affect the rest of the sectors in any notable way.

The Carabanchel phenomenon has been analysed through a combination of methods. Firstly, the territory has been thoroughly researched, with the author conducting first-hand interviews with gallery managers, collectives and artists. Secondly, extensive documentation from the newspaper library has been reviewed. The list of artistic agents has been updated, with particular attention paid to aspects such as concentration and distribution by and within neighbourhoods. It is evident that there is an

absence of concentration that is convenient for visitors. Furthermore, these concentrations are not located in main streets; in most cases, they are very hidden and difficult to locate. Collectors, clients and other interested parties are aware of the location of the galleries, and it has been reported that they receive visitors and that the business is indeed successful. Conversely, artists are able to operate within affordable rental markets.

With regard to the hypotheses, firstly, it has been demonstrated and confirmed by the artists and gallery owners themselves that the reason for the relocation to Carabanchel was the cost of living, indicating an economic migration to the periphery. Secondly, the hypothesis of the importance of institutional support is partly refuted, that is to say, clear and unwavering institutional support for art agents would be necessary, but institutional support seems to focus on self-interest (not even of all the inhabitants of the district) which does not particularly help to avoid the processes of speculation, nor does it contribute to cultural development. Whilst it is true that the promotion of flows of visitors interested in art from Matadero or Madrid Río to the new peripheral space could potentially yield positive results, there is currently no evidence to suggest that this strategy is yielding any such outcomes.

The third hypothesis also demonstrates some incongruence. On the one hand, galleries are making efforts in terms of digital communication to facilitate the location of their spaces by means of search engine submissions and technology maps such as those developed by Google, websites with clear and clean interfaces, and social networks. However, at street level, these signs are not generally utilised, and as a result, they are not readily identifiable when they are closed. Artists and collectives participate in collective activities, such as open studios, yet do not possess websites of their own and prefer to maintain anonymity, working in their studios without being located.

The Carabanchel phenomenon is set to endure, and while it is currently undergoing expansion, select collectives and individual artists' studios, predominantly those situated in industrial buildings, will be compelled to relinquish their tenancy in a gradual manner (in a manner consistent with their initial arrival). This is due to the process of escalating prices of these premises, which were previously abandoned and are now witnessing a resurgence in value.

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