

E X H I B I T I O N

# VOICES AND ECHOES

REMINISCENCES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN IN THE ATLANTIC



NOVEMBER · DECEMBER 2004

CASA DE COLÓN

Las Palmas de Gran Canaria



# WELCOME TO VOICES AND ECHOES

REMINISCENCES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN IN THE ATLANTIC

THE INTANGIBLE HERITAGE OF REAL DE LAS PALMAS

You are about to embark upon a voyage of Discovery much the same as Columbus embarked upon, but this time the discovery not of a New World but rather the re-discovery of an old world, the world intra-muros of Real Las Palmas. This is an exhibition about local identity and respect for difference in a globalised world, about 'glocalisation' in times of standardisation.

**Voices and Echoes** is based on oral history, the personalised view of history. Oral history has always been important to preserving identity, above all in the Canary Islands, where little vestige of the original language of the islanders' exists. But it is also more than ever important, ironically, in the so-called Age of the Communication Revolution, in Bethlehem, Beirut, North and South Nicosia in Cyprus, and among the immigrant and emigrant populations dotted across the Mediterranean world of the Euromed Heritage II funded project, Mediterranean Voices, and reflected in the data-base which you are about to discover.



A sense of shared space, time and historical memory is essential to the well-being and survival of any community especially in times of pressure exerted by war, political division, racial prejudice and the cultural standardisation produced in a global economy. Our aim is to share a space and time and build up a historical memory together.

The space we are to share is the space of Triana, Vegueta, San Cristóbal and the 'Riscos', from Fuera la Portada through to the Poyos del Obispo. These areas have been affected logically by changing customs and trends but are now at a critical point in their history, both at the general and personal level.

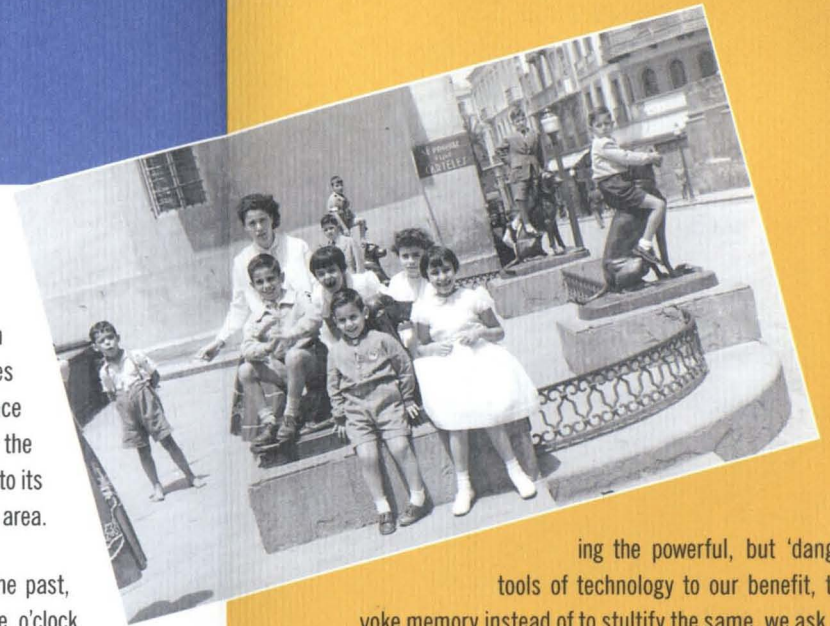
We underline the essentially social nature of commerce in Triana and the personalised service which distinguishes it from the many shopping centres which abound in our city. Triana occupies a place in older people's hearts which it no longer holds for the younger generations and which, perhaps, is the key to its future re-development and health as a commercial area.

We emphasize the different time parameters in the past, ruled by the Pflueger clock curfew of nine o'clock and the last tram ride, and the different rhythm of events which marks island life even now.

We look at public space and the memories attached to areas which no longer exist, bar in the photographs and in the memories of the older generations. And we see how the invasion of the motor car and the motorways, flyovers and car parks to accommodate the same have changed the physical space of this area.

Most importantly, we look at the collective memory: the people, places and things that our interviewees associate with their identity, and which mark them as a 'different' community, be it the patron saint of the neighbourhood, or the picturesque characters who populated the surroundings.

Courtship, rationing, the train 'La Pepa', trades and customs which have been lost, the corner shop, the Viera college, the photo studio Estudio Moderno, cinema-going as all of a social outing and event, the Torrecine, Pepe Caña Dulce, the smells and sounds of the past. This trip down Memory Lane is obviously nostalgic but it is designed to do much more than be a sentimental excursion. Us-



ing the powerful, but 'dangerous' tools of technology to our benefit, to provoke memory instead of to stultify the same, we ask people to remember what is important to the community and to keep that torch alive, in the awareness that only knowing where we come from, can we know where we are going. It is about common-day culture and what we can all do to preserve it in a live museum of intangible heritage.

It is a project about people doing what people know how to do best in the Canary Islands: participating in celebrating community culture and working together to survive optimistically, despite difficulties. A global economy will produce greater and greater standardisation and for islands that depend upon tourism for economic well-being, such as is the case of the Canary Islands, we need to be able to communicate and project the values which make us, different from the rest, to take culture out onto the street which is what sets the 'Mediterranean' lifestyle and culture apart from the rest, taking full advantage of the magnificent climate. We hope you enjoy the trip and encourage you to join the crew of **Med Voices** by collaborating with us in building up the data-base and the oral archive for future generations and the people of other countries to know and enjoy.



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### OPEN

Monday to Friday: 9-14 and 19-21

Saturdays and Sundays: 9-14

Closed on official holidays

