

COMFORT

AND DOMESTIC SPACE IN MODERN SPAIN

EDITED BY SUSAN LARSON



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Contents

Acknowledgments ix

Section I Key Questions and Possible Approaches

- 1 Comfort and Domestic Space in Modern Spain: What Does It Mean to Be at Home? 3

SUSAN LARSON

- 2 “By Which Ritual Was the House of Our Life Erected”? 29

CARLOS SAMBRICIO

Section II The Real and Imagined Spaces of the Living Room, Kitchen, Bath, and Bedroom

- 3 The Living Room and the Public Rise of the Private Human Condition 63

DAVIDE BORRELLI

- 4 The Multimedia Meanings of the Modern Kitchen 79

ANNA GIANNETTI

- 5 From Social Cult to Personal Well-Being: The Real and the Cinematic Bathroom at the Centre of the Domestic Project 98

FRANCESCA CASTANÒ

- 6 Inside the Bedroom: Between Constraint and Emancipation in Twentieth-Century Cinema and Architecture 117

CHRISTINE FONTAINE

Section III Comfort and Domestic Space in Spanish Popular Culture, 1896–1960

- 7 A Brief History of Domestic Space in Early Spanish Cinema, 1896–1939 139
JORGE GOROSTIZA
- 8 The Modernization and Mechanization of the Kitchen as a Female Space in Spanish Cinema, 1940–1960 164
ALBA ZARZA-ARRIBAS
- 9 From Functional Hygiene to Unattainable Sensuality: The Bathroom in Spanish Cinema and the Press during the Franco Regime, 1939–1960 186
JOSEFINA GONZÁLEZ CUBERO
- 10 Together, Alone, and in the Same Place: The Cinematic Living Room in 1950s Spain 215
ADAM L. WINKEL
- 11 Exposed Intimacies and Domestic Spaces: Bedrooms in Spanish Cinema, 1939–1960 233
ANA FERNÁNDEZ-CEBRIÁN

Section IV Comfort and Domestic Space in Spanish Popular Culture since 1960

- 12 What's Cooking in Almodóvar's Kitchens? 251
JUAN DELTELL PASTOR
- 13 Sensorial, Private, and Porous: The Bathroom as a Space of Regeneration in Post-Franco Cinema 272
MARTA PERIS
- 14 Comfort with(out) Comfort: New Couches and Conflicting Values in the Late Franco Comedy 290
JORGE PÉREZ
- 15 Bedroom Fantasies: Filming Intimacy in 1960s Spain 308
JUAN F. EGEA

Epilogue

- 16 “Qué casa tan ... acogedora”: Gendering Comfort and Domestic Space in Pedro Almodóvar’s *¿Qué he hecho yo para merecer esto!* 329

SALLY FAULKNER

Contributors 341

Index 347

9 From Functional Hygiene to Unattainable Sensuality: The Bathroom in Spanish Cinema and the Press during the Franco Regime, 1939–1960

JOSEFINA GONZÁLEZ CUBERO

A consideration of the bathroom in Spanish film from the beginning through the end of the strictly autarchic period of the Franco dictatorship, marked by the enactment of the 1959 Plan Nacional de Estabilización Económica (National Plan of Economic Stabilization), requires telling a story of denial and of absence: cinema succinctly captured a posteriori what was happening in this intimate space in the home. Spain's economic underdevelopment – a result of unemployment, a shortage of housing, and the poor maintenance of existing housing and infrastructure – was a problem of great magnitude since the very beginning of the Franco regime (known as the New State), one that had to be acknowledged before it could be overcome. The ministers of the Franco regime embarked on a social housing policy aimed at building new developments across the country in an effort to make housing affordable for all workers. The imposed autarky, however, reduced construction and limited the supply of building materials, impeding change and progress in the construction sector until the country was eventually opened up to international investment and diplomatic relationships.¹ This shift benefited those who had already held power in previous decades: they simply modernized and changed to create new political and economic elites.

After the Spanish Civil War, a significant portion of the Spanish population either lacked housing entirely or survived in dwellings without a dedicated bathroom space. In both urban and rural areas, private sanitary facilities were largely unavailable; most people used common latrines or fields or animal stables for taking care of their needs. The underprivileged washed where they could inside their dwellings, overcoming the lack of tap water and bathroom space with the use of a variety of portable water containers, as exemplified in the “all-in-one” space of a poor home in *Don Floripondio* (Fernández Ardavín 1940), a

film shot during the Second Republic that premiered some time later due to problems with censorship. In this film Don Floro (Valeriano León) performed his ablutions in the washbowl (*jofaina*) provided with water from the earthenware pitcher (*botijo*) hung from the ceiling, or in the more sophisticated washbowl with a sink, placed near the window, with a jug (*jarra* or *aguamanil*) and drainpipe leading to a pot. In the modest home of Doña Fe (Rafaela Rodríguez), the washbasin with a jug was inside a mirrored cabinet in the bedroom, where the basin, washbowl, or wooden bucket for bathing was placed. In Spanish cinema, washbasins with jugs were an indicator of the lack of hygienic conditions in domestic spaces during the years immediately after the end of the Civil War and the first Spanish *desarrollismo* period (often referred as Spain's "economic miracle"), as represented in the bedroom of the landlord and his guest in *La calle sin sol* (Gil 1948), the bedroom of the protagonist in the old Madrid apartment in *Día tras día* (Del Amo 1951), or even the kitchen of the *chabola* (shack) in *Los golfos* (Saura 1959).

If a home, or more specifically a bathroom, was a luxury that was inaccessible to the majority of the population, cinema sought to be "the entire world in reach of all Spaniards" as the NO-DO newsreel, instrument of state propaganda and the legitimizing cultural arm of the political regime, proclaimed. All cinematographic sessions in Spain's movie theatres during this time period started with this mandatory state newsreel, which preceded fictional films produced within Spain and abroad. The official state cinema and the private film industry were obliged to dispense with depicting the bathroom, however. With its almost complete disappearance in the 1940s and its timid presence in the 1950s, only modest references to personal hygiene or related activities were allowed to be shown. The government institution in charge of film censorship imposed a decorum stipulated in extraofficial requirements that were published by the censor Francisco Ortiz Muñoz in *Criterio y normas morales de censura cinematográfica* (Ortiz Muñoz 1946).² Their direction changed slightly when the *Normas de censura cinematográfica* was approved (*Boletín Oficial del Estado* 1963), and remained in force until the subsequent requirements were put in place the year of Franco's death (*Boletín Oficial del Estado* 1975). Just like their successors, Ortiz Muñoz's 1946 guidelines were outdated and anachronistic from the moment they were first published, and their ambiguity caused arbitrary, opportunistic, and contradictory decisions for almost two decades. These rules were transcribed from the prohibitions of the Production Code (1930/34–1967) of the American film industry (Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America [MPPDA]), popularly known as the Hays Code, a morality-based system of self-regulation of film content.

In the section devoted to “sets,” the code only referred to bedrooms and, even when it did not explicitly mention the bathroom, the section on “vulgarity” appealed to propriety and the need to respect the sensibilities of film viewers.³

This sensibility had its roots in American silent film, where representing the bathroom and its sanitary, hygienic elements and fixtures was considered completely unacceptable for society at large. While the toilet was largely omitted in film, the bidet, basins, bathtubs, and showers could occasionally be seen in the theatre-inspired sets in films from the pioneers of cinema to the masters of slapstick comedy. Spanish cinema, with less technical capacity and fewer studio resources, practically dispensed with the bathroom altogether, and was more focused on folkloric and rural topics, with the notable exception of *El golfo* (Togores and Dessy 1917). In beautifully captured scene, the main character, Enrique Villar (Ernesto Vilches), reads a letter near what appears to be the window of a real bathroom, judging by the space’s ample dimensions and configuration, in which only the bathtub and the washbasin are visible. This film represented a lifestyle that included a modern bathroom, a luxury that was out of reach for most social groups of any country, much less Spain at this moment in history.

Since the nineteenth century the United States took the lead when it came to the mechanization and standardization of the housing industry, while in Europe groundbreaking studies were being published and ambitious architectural projects were beginning to be built in the first third of the twentieth century. The modern architectural movement achieved notable results⁴ in this regard in both luxury and social housing, and the bathroom became a notably differentiated space, significantly so in the former and sufficiently so in the latter.⁵ Technology played an important part in these developments. Thanks to the great variety of hygienic fixtures at affordable prices, advertised in catalogues and the popular press, the rapid consolidation and incorporation of the private and single bathroom into most forms of American urban housing was made possible. However, when a full bathroom was displayed in the shots of the first apartment of the protagonists of *The Crowd* (King Vidor 1928), it was considered to be a desecration of the family home. The frontal view of the toilet and the scenes where the tank was being repaired were considered vulgar and contained scatological connotations strong enough for Louis B. Mayer to refuse to award it the Academy Award for best picture, despite the fact that it had been produced by his own MGM studios. In the 1940s, American directors had so internalized their self-censorship that they alluded to the toilet without showing its image, as happened in *The Grapes*

of *Wrath* (Ford 1940), which included only the sound of the modern tankless “flushometer” toilet of the 1930s.

Although the French-produced avant-garde film by Spanish director L'âge d'or (Buñuel 1930) contains one shot that partially shows a woman sitting on a toilet followed by a shot of the toilet standing alone, it would be well into the dictatorship before Spanish cinema would be permitted to capture brief and partial views of the uncovered toilet featuring an upper tank with a chain pull to allow for water flow. This was the most basic and private bathroom fixture available to the members of the more fortunate urban social classes. In cinema, of course, no one was allowed to appear seated on a toilet, whether it was placed inside a small latrine in the corridor of a rickety apartment inherited by Rodolfo in the centre of Madrid in *El pisito* (Ferrerri and Martínez-Vela 1959), inside a more upscale apartment bathroom in the same city in *El cochecito* (Marco Ferreri 1960), or at the bottom of a narrow and deep room with the window at the back, with the benefit of a basin in the attic of an apartment building in a crowded neighbourhood of Barcelona in *Cerca de las estrellas* (Fernández Ardavín 1962). Images of the toilet in *Psycho* (Hitchcock 1960) were removed; the film premiered in Spain in 1961 only after scenes with Marion (Janet Leigh) throwing paper into the toilet and taking a shower in a motel bathroom were cut. The guitar-shaped bidet (designed to be straddled for the purpose of washing one's private parts) rarely made its way into film during this time, since this bathroom fixture suffered the stigma of being linked to contraception, as seen in *Brillante porvenir* (Gubern and Aranda 1965) and *Amador* (Regueiro 1966). When someone finally appeared seated on the porcelain “throne” in a Spanish film, it was in the display of a toilet store in *40 grados a la sombra* (Ozores 1967) in the heyday of the building construction that was a pillar of the *desarrollismo* period. There were other vacant toilets on screens, however. The NO-DO newsreels, which had always avoided showing a toilet, only in 1972 allowed a shot of a small and complete bathroom from a window belonging to social housing that had been constructed for for cab drivers in the neighbourhood of Gran San Blas in Madrid (NO-DO 1541A 1972). This was a very rare exception in the many reels which distributed information about the housing developments built by the Instituto Nacional de la Vivienda (INV; National Institute of Housing) and the Obra Sindical del Hogar (OSH; Union of Home Development).

If the toilet, as well as the bidet, was largely banished from international screens since the early days of cinema, other bathroom fixtures were not. The bathtub, enshrined as an altar of sensuality, became a mainstay in Hollywood productions before the stock market crash

of 1929, and took on even more prominence in the following decade. The frivolous “white telephone” comedies were vehicles for dreamy bathrooms, where bathtubs filled with foamy water proliferated and in which the “supposedly” naked bodies of the actresses were submerged (except for their heads) in sequences that elevated them to icons of carnal desire. This trend was epitomized in the transparent swan-shaped bathtub where Crystal Allen (Joan Crawford) took a bath in *The Women* (Cukor 1939), surrounded by the luxurious bathroom powder room decorated with the ostentatious kitsch of the rest of the couple’s apartment. Luxurious bathtubs reflected a world of high society that in Spain inhabited apartments, palaces, urban hotels, and country villas equipped with one or several independent bathrooms. Spanish film replicated this foreign tendency towards the cinematographic exaggeration of the luxury of the bath/powder room with dated art deco touches in *El difunto es un vivo* (Iquino 1941). A built-in bathtub with tiles with aquatic motifs makes up the deep focus background of the spacious circular room from where Inocencio (Antonio Vico) looked at the camera as if it were a mirror. This window was where the spectator/*voyeur* could observe the demure privacy of the protagonist and indulge in fantasy in order to forget the food rationing and the “años del hambre” (years of hunger) of the 1940s, as the post-Civil War years were often called in Spain.

These bathrooms continued a tradition that began centuries earlier with the hygienic fittings commonly used in the bedrooms of noble residences. These devices were often moved to adjoining auxiliary rooms, where they were connected to plumbing installations and eventually transformed into modern sanitary fixtures inside a tiny bathroom, a model adopted early on by American hotels. For this reason, among the bathrooms of the noble and bourgeois residences in the traditional city centre and in the urban expansions (*ensanches*), those that were connected exclusively to the bedroom were associated with the highest social classes. In Spanish film, bathrooms like these are seen in the small palace of the rich lawyer in *Lecciones de buen amor* (Gil 1944), the homes of the married couple in *La vida en un hilo* (Neville 1945) and the marriageable young woman living in her father’s apartment in *El día de los enamorados* (Palacios 1959), and even in the home of the married couple with non-traditional gender roles in *Los derechos de la mujer* (Sáenz de Heredia 1963). The cinematographic sets, which sought to create a sense of verisimilitude with these intimate spaces of the life of the elites, often recreated them with an ascetic character that was out of step with the ornate bedrooms from where they could be glimpsed. A similar disjuncture was found between the formal living rooms and the

kitchen, which was the home territory of servants, who were invariably of humble and rural origin. These kitchens were linked to the living areas for these indispensable domestic servants, which included bedrooms and bathrooms that never received cinematographic attention.

The contrast between the two social spheres, the wealthy and the working classes inhabiting the elegant homes portrayed in film, was first made evident in the first Spanish-Italian co-production (Ular-gui-Imperator), *Los hijos de la noche/I figli della notte* (Perojo 1940), a comedy with what can be considered a pre-neorealist tone (Gubern 1994, 325). Perojo, one of the more cosmopolitan film directors of the time, dared to only partially capture the bathroom.⁶ This film, which was shot during the Fascist period in Rome's Cinecittà studios, featured the lavish sets of the Sicilian Salvo D'Angelo and showed the vigorous washing-up to which two young street outcasts (Miguel Ligeró and Estrellita Castro) were subjected after being taken in by Don Francisco (Alberto Romea) so they can impersonate his own biological children. This scene took place in the corner of a modern bathroom of a small palace, equipped with an attached bathtub with tiled sides that matched the wall and a shower linked by a flexible hose to double faucets. These were top-tier bathroom fixtures, for sale by commercial distributors, of the kind that were advertised in international trade magazines of the time (Blumenthal 1939, 57–66). The use of fairly closed frames which prevent the complete view of the bathtub allows the spectator to see Estrellita Castro, submerged in a foamy bath, showing her wet leg.

Aside from this particular case, cinematic bathtubs remained largely empty, since images of bathing women were banned in Spanish film during these two decades. Meanwhile Roca, the largest Spanish bathroom fixture manufacturing company, used other strategies for getting past state censorship regarding the bathroom. Roca, which had been baptizing its product lines with feminine names since the beginning of the twentieth century and in their advertising, used the image of a swan as a metaphor for quality. In the 1960s the bathtub assumed many purposes other than bathing: it became a place for household cleaning chores (*El cochecito*), a hiding place (*Vamos a contar mentiras*), a place to sleep (*Chica para todo, Operación secretaria*), a source of household floods (*Fin de semana*), and a place to play games (*Tú y yo somos tres, Amador*), just to name a few. The ultimate fantasy bathroom did not arrive in Spanish cinema until *Nadie oyó gritar* (De la Iglesia 1973), which featured pairs of ornate mirrors and sinks as well as a large circular bathtub overflowing with foam in an unrealistic set, where both the pleasure of the bath and the sexuality of the couple were insinuated,

capturing the desire for change that was so prevalent in the films of the late Franco regime.

The above-mentioned *Criterio* and *Normas*, written by Ortiz Muñoz, who defined himself as a fervent Catholic, followed the dictates of *Vigilanti Cura* (1936),⁷ a papal encyclical dedicated to cinematography which demanded that the example of the American National Legion of Decency be followed around the world. It was only at the Fourth Congress of the International Catholic Cinema and Audiovisual Organization,⁸ held in Brussels in 1947, that its implementation was defined by encouraging the creation of national ecclesiastical censorship offices.⁹ According to the 1950 report from the meeting, the Spanish representative, the Marquis of Vivel, spoke about the situation in Spain, recognizing that the representative of the Catholic Church in the Junta de Censura (Spanish Censorship Board) was invested with very broad powers (Marqués de Vivel 1950, 223) and that the Catholic press was at the forefront of maintaining moral standards. Some months after the conference the Reglamento de la Junta (Regulatory Board) ("Ministerio de Educación Nacional" 1947, 5598–9) was approved and signed by the Catholic José Ibáñez Martín in his role as Subsecretario de Educación Popular (Undersecretary of Popular Education). He also served as the Ministro de Educación Nacional (Minister of National Education) at the time and as such had been granted these powers when the Vice-secretaría de Educación Popular de la FET y de las JONS (Vice-secretary of Popular Education of the FET and the JONS) had been dissolved, after being led during its last few years (1941–5) by the Catholic, Falangist, and committed Franco supporter Gabriel Arias Salgado. These regulations summarized the provisions of the previous boards, which were undergoing constant name and administrative changes,¹⁰ regarding the role of the ecclesiastical member of the board, whose attendance was *sine qua non*. His vote was decisive in case of a tie regarding matters of morality or dogma, and he had the right to use his veto power as many times as he deemed necessary. Likewise, this ecclesiastical representative maintained his appointment by the diocese to be part of the board according to the above-mentioned legislation, which indicated that the decisions about censorship be handed down to the Catholic Church by the Franco regime, which held National Catholicism as part of its very identity.

This was not the only form of censorship. Even with the unconditional support of the state for the principles of Catholic morality, the bishops considered that further censorship was needed. Following the prescriptions of the 1947 Congress held in Brussels, they published the *Instrucciones y normas para la censura moral de espectáculos*

(Instructions and Norms for Moral Censorship of Entertainment, 1950) (*Ecclesia* 1950, 9–10), the first Spanish code of ecclesiastical censorship (Sánchez Noriega 2016, 177). For the purposes of enforcement, the Oficina Nacional Permanente de Vigilancia y Espectáculos (Permanent National Office for Vigilance and Shows, ONPVE, 1950) was created that same year as an arm of Acción Católica (Catholic Action) to further recategorize films, disseminating its ratings to parishes and schools. With this initiative, the church established its own strict parallel code of censorship, to which all believers were bound (Darnell Gasco 1956, 61–2). This, together with the church's control of state censorship, resulted in a monopoly in the censorship of films. Taking into account the prevailing ideology of the time (Cancio Fernández 2009, 162), state censorship was less concerned with political and ideological issues than with ensuring the morality of Spaniards, and was intensified by ecclesiastical censorship. By keeping what were considered to be undesirable or unpleasant elements from view (such as sensuality and hedonism), the church and the state managed to affirm the bathroom as an inviolable place in the Christian family home.

During the early Franco years, the film *La vida empieza a medianoche* (Orduña 1944), directed by Juan de Orduña, one of the favoured directors of the regime, exemplified both the cultural impact of cinema and the spatial architectural form of the bathroom. With two scenes taking place in two bathrooms of an apartment, one with entrances from the bedroom and the other from the living room, the film encapsulated the self-censorship of the cinematographic tradition that hid the latrine, as well as the state and church censorship that hid the activities of Silvia Heredia (Marta Santaolalla) when she closed the door to the lens of the camera.¹¹ However, this censorship did not preclude a view of the young boy's mischief in the bathtub. At the same time, the film captured the bathroom décor and fixtures favoured by the wealthy classes. In general, real bathrooms, much like this specific cinematographic bathroom mentioned here, were spacious and adhered to a design defined by the locations of the "standard" bathroom fixtures in vitrified porcelain or enameled grey iron, following basic functional criteria. The type of window required in an actual bathroom for natural illumination and ventilation very rarely appeared in the cinema because if it did, it would interfere with the filming, and might allude to unpleasant smells. All these architectural elements made up a uniform bathroom, with dimensions and layouts specified in the manuals for this purpose,¹² surrounded by an expanse of wall tiles, and washable surfaces. The overall environment was cold, bright, and antiseptic. In essence, the bathroom was an efficient, "clean and decent" space, as the

well-known British architect and painter Lawrence Wright called it in his book on the subject (Wright 1962).

In the harsh reality of the Spanish post-Civil War period, the bathroom continued to exude a coldness, transmitted to the idea of cleanliness, such as when Andrea (Conchita Montes) prepared to take a cold shower in the bathtub of the film *Nada* (Neville 1947). It is important to note here that the film's technical team studied *The Magnificent Ambersons* (Wells 1942), which had premiered in Madrid in 1945 (Sánchez-Biosca 1989, 81), and was inspired by the techniques of depth of field photography.¹³ The Spanish films of the same decade mentioned above likewise contained similar spaces, captured in a similar way. In *Los hijos de la noche/I figli della notte* (Perojo 1940) depth of field photography is used when the servants are eating in the kitchen, in front of the closed frame of the scene in the bathroom, while in *La vida empieza a medianoche* (Orduña 1944), *Lecciones de buen amor* (Gil 1944), and *La vida en un hilo* (Neville 1945) this was again the means of staging the bathroom. These techniques were employed by the Spanish directors with more international exposure and those with larger film budgets. In future decades, however, the use of "deep focus" would be increasingly common.

The hospital-like character of the bathroom space had taken hold in the first two decades of the century, when the colour white was associated with medicinal cleanliness in the fight against tuberculosis. The modern architectural movement applied these same "hygienic" properties to the modern house in the name of fighting infections, preventing diseases, promoting physical strength and overall good health, as well as eliminating pernicious ornamental fashions in architecture.¹⁴ When tuberculosis rates declined in the 1950s, the so did the obsession with hygiene and its association with the colour white. The colour white, with its cultural associations with virginal purity, according to Baudrillard (1969, 34), also played a symbolic role in attempts by Spanish authorities and the Catholic Church to quell deviant behaviour. Thus, the bathroom continued through the decades without significant functional, structural, or aesthetic transformations, at the same time that it was validated not only for its associations with bodily but also of moral cleanliness, but as a safeguard of these values (Vigarello 1991, 286). One prime example can be found in the actions of Tula (Aurora Bautista), the woman who sought refuge in the pristine bathroom in *La tía Tula* (Picazo 1964). Rural environments often represented the most genuine of the moral values defended by the Falangist sectors of the regime, and it was there that the bathrooms of large houses were found, oftentimes anchored in severe and monotonous whiteness, which had already fallen into disfavour (Lupton and Miller 1998, 33).

As the decade of the 1940s drew to a close, the films screened in Spain's cinemas began to introduce the bathrooms of the North American middle class, such as those found in *Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House* (Potter 1948) and *Father of the Bride* (Minnelli 1950). In *Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House*, the title character Jim Blandings (Cary Grant) took a hot shower every morning in the bathroom of the New York apartment he rented for his family, which had a bathtub, shower stall, and white tile on the walls. Stanley Banks (Spencer Tracy) in *Father of the Bride* meditated in the bathroom attached to his bedroom in his single-family house, with two sinks embedded in the continuous countertop, a bathtub with a shower, coloured tiles on the walls, and a toilet. From the middle of the 1950s through 1960s, these changes in the images of the domestic space of the bathroom from abroad were evident to the Spanish filmgoer and contrasted with much of those of Spanish filmography, which largely continued with the monolithic white aesthetic.¹⁵ Nevertheless, when the bathroom began to be seen no longer in strictly functional terms, the coloured patterns of the tiles began to cover the entire height of the walls during this period and were the only appreciable transformation in these cinematic spaces, even when they appeared in black and white films.¹⁶

At the end of the 1960s, the colour of the wall tiles led to an explosion of graphic patterns, new materials, and built-in furniture.¹⁷ Coloured bathroom fixtures were added to the mix more frequently in subsequent years, although American Standard had been distributing them since prewar times and Roca manufacturing them since 1943. In film, this was a cosmetic decoration that superficially changed the bathroom in the apartments of the newly constructed suburbs on the outskirts of the city, in the single-family homes (chalets), as well as in the social housing blocks that featured the layout dominant in coetaneous real dwellings. In the same way, during the beginning of the tourism boom, the bathrooms of other residential dwellings, such as urban and coastal pensions and hotels, also made this transition from white¹⁸ to colour.¹⁹

The population of an economically poor country had to be satisfied with small and incremental changes in housing standards. Many Spaniards, when going out into the streets, still had no access to modern sanitary facilities and had to settle for old public toilets of the kind where the wife of the title character *Plácido* (García Berlanga 1961) works, or use the facilities offered in traditional social spaces such as bars and cafes. On the other hand, the availability of hot water in the urban homes of more and more Spaniards during this time resulted in the substitution of the weekly bath for a daily shower. Gas and electric boilers and water heaters were symbols of the strengthening of hygienic practices

in the dual-purpose home/dance studio of *Distrito quinto* (Coll 1957) and in the vacation home featured in *Las dos y media y... veneno* (Ozores 1959). Bathtubs were often fitted with protective, water-repellant shower curtains. However, in the student residence of *Margarita se llama mi amor* (Fernández 1961) this curtain enclosed a shower embedded between the walls, fully visible in the film, including the shower drain in the floor. A far cry from the Hollywood fantasy shower of the widow Vera Simpson (Rita Hayworth) or the lavish bathtub of the showgirl Linda English (Kim Novak) in *Pal Joey* (George Sidney 1957) and other popular and colour movie musicals of the era.

One of the most typical scenes taking place in cinematographic bathrooms of the time was one that featured a character in front of a mirror. This reflective element, stripped of ornament, was usually accompanied by the auxiliary glass shelf with toiletries and placed above the standing washbasin (Baudrillard 1969, 22). The activities grooming, washing hands, brushing teeth, or shaving by film characters allows the use of mirrors of various positions, sizes, or styles as interlocutors. This has been the cinematographic technique par excellence for scenes of solitary introspection or inevitable conversation (Rybczynski 1991, 226),²⁰ thanks to the possibility of capturing the shot and reverse-shot in the same image. The mirror's reflection of the confined privacy of this interior space was barely glimpsed in Spanish cinema, however. Fragments of small spaces, the sobriety of architectural finishes, and basic bathroom fixtures implied the discipline imposed by dominant Catholic codes of morality in Spain which, far from seeking physical and psychological well-being, relentlessly repressed all natural human instincts.

In Spain the transformation of the bathroom was perceived more through film than through print media because of the relative lack of interest in publications covering new technologies, organizational design, wall coverings (paint, wood, paper, tiles and new materials), and furniture. The women's magazines directly connected to the state cultural apparatus were in tune with both the regime and Catholic Church and remained faithful to the censorship guidelines in place during the first decades of the dictatorship. Defined by its aristocratic inclination to reject vulgarity or the "common," the most class-conscious magazine with the longest run was *Arte y Hogar* (1943–78), which was aimed at women with significant economic resources and intellectual inquisitiveness within the limits of the gendered roles established for them. Edited by Fermina Bonilla and directed by her husband Eduardo Olasagasti, it was a mainstay among publications about domestic space. As chief architect of the Sección de Normas del Departamento Técnico (Standards

Section of the Technical Department) of the OSH, he was one of the three authors of the first phase of the Virgen del Pilar housing complex,²¹ the first such complex built in Madrid. The model home of the Virgen del Pilar housing complex was captured in a NO-DO newsreel featuring the living room, bedroom, and the bathtub of the small bathroom while the official retinue headed by Franco toured the dwelling on the occasion of the complex's inauguration, an unprecedented image for the time (NO-DO 135B, 1945). This magazine included designs for houses and home decoration made by architects and set designers, who either belonged to or were closely associated with the only party allowed (Fisac, Coderch, Feduchi, Chueca Goitia and Moreno Barberá, among others). These texts were interspersed with articles dedicated to literature, the visual arts, cinema, and theatre, and with pieces promoting an overall sense of sophisticated domesticity. Between the middle of the 1940s and in the early 1950s, *Arte y Hogar* published photographs of a minimalist bathroom – possibly from a foreign source, under the title “Pequeñas soluciones en la decoración” (Small Solutions in Decoration) (1944, 26–6), and on two other occasions published images of luxurious North American bathrooms in which toilets were prominently featured (Antequera 1945, 28–9) (“Cuartos de baño” 1951, 38–40), although the bathroom was not a preferred topic until the late 1960s, when it was undertaken again almost as a provocation (“Un tema para el atrevimiento” 1967, 44–5).

Meanwhile, the short-lived magazine *Y. Revista para la mujer* (1938–45), edited by the Sección Femenina of the FET and the JONS from its editorial office in San Sebastián, was devoted to instilling women with its socio-political ideology and exalting the traditional role of wife and mother. It frequently made reference to swimming in the organization's summer camps for young women in training, a practice that was always coupled with a hygienic-moral values and took place in public in swimming pools or beaches. These discussions did not allude to the private practice of bathing, however, and instead sought to change the hygiene habits of women in complete dissociation with the domestic space typically set aside for that purpose. In fact, only once was a modern bathroom found in the magazine's pages, with a caption that considered it “a necessity and not a luxury” (Sanz 1939).²² A 1940 issue, published just before the magazine moved its editorial office to Madrid, featured a “Consultorio” (advice column) about beauty and hygiene. Only in the publication's final issues did it launch a hygiene campaign (*Y. Revista para la mujer* 1945) among the female population.²³ Such lifestyle instructions were also undertaken by the educational and training divisions of the “Cátedras ambulantes” of the Sección Femenina, whose

first mobile caravan was called “Francisco Franco.” Among the traveling trucks and trailers there was a mobile living space for the female instructors, with a compartment composed of a washbasin, a “water closet” (in English in the original),²⁴ bidet, and shower, all supplied by a water tank, all of immaculate whiteness (“Cátedra ambulante Francisco Franco” 1944). It is significant, however, that this space was not seen in *Llegaron siete muchachas* (Viladomat 1957), a political propaganda feature film about the work of the Sección Femenina, whose director was also in charge of artistic direction for *Arte y Hogar*.

The contents of the short training courses given by the Sección Femenina were compiled in 1949 in *Nociones de higiene y medicina casera* (Notions of Hygiene and Home Medicine), the only book among its publications that dealt with technical questions in an accessible way, referring to the need for the sink to have a P-trap to avoid bad smells in the bathroom. There was an emphasis on traditional values for women even as they were changing with the times, as seen in magazines such as *Teresa: Revista para todas las mujeres* (1954–75) and *Telva* (1963), which presented a feature about a woman who was entering the professional world but without leaving home and family life entirely behind. The introduction of home décor, first in the kitchen and later in the bathroom, became more prevalent during the decline of the dictatorship. Architects and decorators influenced the birth of new magazines, such as *Nuevo Ambiente: Cuadernos monográficos de decoración* (1969) and *Casa y Jardín* (1975). Specifically, in 1973 *Nuevo Ambiente* published a special issue dedicated to the bathroom, which began with a text co-authored by Federico Correa and Marta Ribalta.²⁵ Correa was an architect and professor who would famously use the bathrooms portrayed in the film *Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House* as points of departure for his courses.

In *Arquitectura* (1918–36), the professional magazine of the Sociedad Central de Arquitectos (Central Society of Architects), very little importance was given to the bathroom in terms of its visual aspect and comfort. The publication addressed the subject for the first time in 1929 in the full-page photographs of the sumptuous new bathroom attached to the bedrooms of the Duchess of Alba in the Liria Palace in Madrid (“Palacio de Liria (Madrid)” 1929, 314). This was an exception, however. Bathrooms were only shown in this publication, as perspective drawings or as photographs in the advertising of the commercial construction companies, because they were consistently drawn into the floor plans of the published architectural projects. Two years later, an article in *Arquitectura* by Luis Lacasa on hygienic housing in the city recalled the decisions made in the United States regarding plumbing

installations and the consolidation of different types of bathroom appliances (Lacasa 1931, 233). This attention to technical matters culminated six years later when another architect appealed to the use of the "Alpha" siphonic system applicable to sanitary bathroom and kitchen elements (Chávarri 1935, 68–72). Once the Civil War ended and the magazine evolved into the *Revista Nacional de Arquitectura* (RNA, 1941–58), the very few articles on the bathroom maintained this scientific aspect and consistently stressed technological improvement.

The topic proposed before the war by AC: *Documentos de la actividad contemporánea* (1931–37) (the magazine of the group of architects known as the GATEPAC) regarding the need to design models of small bathtubs with seat basins in order to save water ("Número monográfico dedicado a la evolución del baño" 1936, 25–56) resurfaced again at the end of the 1940s, but for different reasons. The aim this second time around was to reduce the space and the number of bathroom fixtures by replacing them with the new versatile ceramic trays of the "Polibán" (sometimes known as a hip bath), which served as a children's bathtub, foot bath, shower, seated bathtub, and even a sink. Arguments for the "polibán" were published by the RNA in 1948 and 1949, as well as in 1948 (by the magazine *Cortijos y Rascacielos* (1930–53), where almost a decade later there appeared articles and advertisements for the ultimately unsuccessful "Wa-Bi" or toilet-bidet, designed by the architect José Mora Ortiz de Taranco (Mora Ortiz de Taranco 1956, 46). The magazine *Informes de la construcción* followed in this same line by promoting a bathroom with standardized elements (L. 1948), and a bit later with the bathroom-bidet-washbasin monobloc unit (Roselli 1950). These appearances in professional publications were the prelude to two lines of action. There was, on the one hand, the advertising push that followed in national newspapers, as the case of Roca's "Polibán" in *ABC*, and on the other hand, the systematic incorporation of the shower into the modest housing units for the working classes that the regime was building through the OSH, such as the standardized housing of Franco's 1955–6 Plan Sindical (Union Plan) program ("Vivienda tipo del programa 1955–56" 1956a, 23).

Reality outdid fiction, however, with the "minimum housing" of Miguel Fisac, what he called "viviendas en cadena" (chain housing units), which featured bathrooms equipped with a Turkish plate-shower and washbasin in every 37.60 m² home,²⁶ which was considered the minimum requirement for a "hygienic" bathroom (Fisac 1951, 8). It could become problematic, however, when this bare minimum remained unchanged (Sambricio 2009, 523), even when the size of the housing unit and the number of bedrooms increased according to the

needs of each family. Fisac and Sáenz de Oiza (Sáenz de Oiza 1959, 8) among others ("Vivienda tipo del programa 1955–56" 1956b, 9–12) proposed solutions to the problem of small bathrooms in affordable homes, with the aim of reducing construction costs by concentrating the kitchen and bathroom plumbing installation on a single wall. However, bathrooms with complete fixtures, including the bathtub, and an acceptable amount of space, were reserved for larger-scale social housing developments. Franco's New State undertook economically protected housing projects that contained housing units of various sizes, with the best ones destined to satisfy the needs and desires of a middle class made up primarily of civil servants and professionals.

The "Polibán," like other bathroom innovations, was noticed by the film industry a decade after its mass implementation. It was a source of mockery in *El inquilino* (Nieves Conde 1958), when Evaristo (Fernando Fernán Gómez) visited an apartment for sale in a privately developed high-rise that sought to make a profit and cut costs through the poor quality of construction of the building. The extremely tiny bathroom had two doors and contained a "Polibán" with a clothesline, a built-in toilet with a high tank, and no visible sink, all of this skirted by the white tiled baseboard to a height of 1.40 metres, the only requirement that the Reglamento Sobre Viviendas Protegidas (Regulation on Protected Housing) and the Normas y Ordenanzas (Standards and Ordinances) of the INV enforced since its inception in 1939 (*Instituto Nacional de la Vivienda* 1939, 45), although requirements were more specific about the toilet or latrine. The bathroom of the New State's social housing plans was also portrayed as very small and of poor quality in other Spanish films of the time, such as *El verdugo* (García Berlanga 1963), where it was equipped with the three essential hygienic appliances: sink, "Polibán," and toilet.

The exhibitions and trade fairs that were responsible for presenting domestic décor items and appliances made a great impact on both specialized professionals and the general public. The bathroom, nevertheless, remained largely invisible in the media. The extensive history of both the Feria de Muestras (Trade Fair) (1932) and the Salón del Hogar Moderno, or SHM (Modern Home Salon) (1951), held in Barcelona, confirmed that they were outstanding showcases for advances in design, products, and new materials for housing. The film *Historias de la Feria* (Rovira Beleta 1958) about the twenty-fifth edition of the Feria de Muestras was more of an invitation to attend than a way to provide concrete information; it functioned under the pretext of a couple occupying the displayed model home, whose bathroom was hidden behind the door. The SHM was organized by the Fomento de las Artes Decorativas

(FAD) and took place in the cupola of the Cinema-Theatre Coliseum, owned by the Ufilms company, under the direction of architect, producer, and film distributor Saturnino Ulargui. In this company's publications, the FAD showed only the slightest hint of the bathroom, in the form the luxurious bathroom/powder room designed by Martí, Clavé, and Picó and displayed in the third edition of the SHM in 1953 (Font 1956, 19). However, the next year the FAD convened a competition for architects and decorators to design complete furniture sets for low-income housing units for the lower and middle classes, in both rural and urban housing, all of which included a toilet (Cases Lamolla 1955, 73). None of the winners incorporated the fixtures in their designs, however, as stated in the publication featuring a review of the award-winning projects (Cases Lamolla 1956, 41–54).²⁷

A decade later, the Centro de Exposición Permanente e Información de la Construcción (Centre of Permanent Exhibition and Building Information), or EXCO, followed in SHM's steps by establishing the Exposición de Ambientes del Hogar y del Equipo Doméstico (Exhibition of Home Environments and Domestic Equipment) (1960) at the Ministry of Housing in Madrid, where its headquarters were located. It was featured in a special issue of the magazine *Arquitectura*, which had just reclaimed its former name under the direction of the politically ambiguous Carlos de Miguel, with graphic and photographic documentation of the floor plan of the exhibition dedicated to domestic architecture; no information regarding commercial architecture was provided ("Los sistemas de montaje" 1960, 2). The bathroom was not one of the exhibited spaces, however, and was only represented through the display of commercial products. Lack of professional attention to the bathroom is evident despite a feature article on the sink designed by José Antonio Corrales, "Los sistemas de montaje" (1960, 48–53). However, the exhibition was an overall success with the public, with 41,205 visitors during the hot summer months. Some members of the old Falangist guard took part in the series of conferences that accompanied the exhibition. Among the speakers, the architects in particular expressed their concerns surrounding the design of the more public parts of the house while the women writers and cultural critics participating in the event focused on the customs and attitudes surrounding the less visible parts of the Spanish home.

The lawyer and author Mercedes Formica, one of the founders of the Sección Femenina, called for the banishment of the faux Spanish or "Renaissance" style in her article "En legítima defensa del buen gusto" (In Legitimate Defense of Good Taste), where she articulated her support of what she called the "authentic" (Formica 1960, 40–3).

The writer Mercedes Ballesteros, in “La casa que no se ve” (The Unseen House) (Ballesteros 1960, 31–6), ordered women to reappropriate the kitchen, until then in the hands of the domestic servants that every good Catholic lady of means supposedly had in her residence. Faced with the decreasing size of the bathroom and kitchen in favour of the “living room” – using English, rather than Spanish, terminology – she called for a modern bathroom whose design would be based on what is comfortable and beautiful, as manifested in the efficiency of the fixtures as well as in the amount of space. She criticized the chromatic patterned decoration and the *cursi* (corny) flamboyance of accessories that were in fashion, owing to the influence of the so-called cinema bathrooms; she pointed out that Myrna Loy and Gary Grant were not the first people to take a bath, that there was a long tradition of bathing throughout history. Mercedes Ballesteros, who happened to be the wife of the film director Claudio de la Torre, wrote her reflections a year after the premiere of *Pillow Talk* (Gordon 1959), the film that through parallel editing showed two bathtubs simultaneously occupied by interior decorator Jan Morrow (Doris Day) and womanizing composer Brad Allen (Rock Hudson) in their respective designer apartments. Ballesteros also noted the social changes accompanying the introduction of the “Polibán,” which she defined as an “artifact for dwarfs,” advocating for the ancient Roman and Arab practices of bathing by immersion when she stated that “las últimas corrientes de la construcción van desplazando el baño – que se considera molicie burguesa y antideportiva – y se instalan preferentemente duchas. Y, dígame lo que se diga, la ducha donde mejor queda es en los manicomios” (The latest trends in construction are displacing the bathroom – which is considered a bourgeois and unsporting indolence – and the preferred showers are installed. And, whatever they say, the best place for the shower is in the madhouse) (Ballesteros 1960, 34). Obviously, this comment could only come from someone who belonged to the aristocracy because it referred to the use of the shower in mental hospitals and, hence, in other institutions of confinement and punishment, such as orphanages, reformatories, prisons, and penal colonies.

In conclusion, it could be said that Spanish feature films, the NO-DO newsreels, trade magazines, and the popular press created a kind of distorting mirror in which the society of the 1940s looked at itself (Castro de Paz 2002), perpetuated in the decade of the 1950s by these same media. When the bathroom began to appear in film, what prewar modern architecture had managed to bring together in a single space became in Spain visual fragments that were only indirectly linked to functional, hygienic fixtures. The most elaborate example of a high-status



Figure 9.1. A modern, well-equipped, and realistic bathroom in Spanish film of the 1940s can be found in *La vida empieza a medianoche* (Life Begins at Midnight). Dir. Juan de Orduña. Prod. CIFESA, 1944.

bathroom was found in the fictional film *La vida empieza a medianoche* (Orduña 1944) (figure 9.1). A contrasting example can be found in the small and basic bathroom of the social housing units explored in the documentary film *Ocharcoaga* (Grau 1961). Despite having been made at the express wish of Franco, and being subject to the difficulties of filming in such a small space, *Ocharcoaga* somehow exposed the poor quality of the toilets and unfinished wall coverings put in place by the OSH (figure 9.2). Somewhere between these two extremes was the depiction of the average bathroom, such as that found in the experimental film *Antes del desayuno* (Diamante 1954), where a daily morning routine is narrated in a cryptic style, full of ellipses and veiled visual allusions to circumvent film censorship regarding the representation and justification of suicide (figure 9.3). These are three representative works that each reflect their own narrative attitudes (moral, thematic, and spatial) to the bathroom; at the same time their images relied on the spatial



Figure 9.2. One of the few film sources documenting the design of bathrooms in social housing is *Ocharcoaga*, named for a neighborhood in Bilbao whose population grew quickly due industrialization between 1950 and 1960. Dir. Jorge Grau. Prod. Noticiario Cinematográfico Español, 1961.

deconstruction of the bathroom that was necessary to avoid the scrutiny of the censors, who exerted social and religious control. This same kind of spatial deconstruction was often present in the other films mentioned in this chapter, to varying degrees. The first and third of these last films mentioned here (*La vida empieza a medianoche* and *Ocharcoaga*, respectively) are examples located at the extremes of a scant record of different types of bathrooms in Spanish cinema during this period. Between these two polar opposites, *Antes del desayuno* features a bath-room of medium size that served to represent the *summum* of artifice to narrate a quite different, untouchable subject.

The “light and cheerful home” that the Franco regime intended to build for the humblest of the country’s citizens was intended to offer a modicum of hygienic privacy in its basic bathroom, whereas the homes of those who had domestic servants already had one or several bath-rooms. At the same time, changes in economic conditions, consumption patterns, and advertising were what were truly behind the aspirations of the upper class and the emerging middle class when it came to notions of comfort that were beginning to emerge in the real world.



Figure 9.3. Veiled allusions to a suicide committed in a bathroom circumvented Francoist film censorship in *Antes del desayuno* (Before Breakfast). Dir. Julio Diamante. Prod. Cruz Malta, 1954.

Constantly evolving in terms of fixtures and equipment (first by foreign industry and then at the national level when Spain's industrialization process began in earnest), bathrooms were eventually transformed into comfortable and practical spaces inherent to the modern home, accompanied by the incorporation of certain design elements in the following decades. Sublimated in Hollywood cinema as an object of sensuality and unattainable hedonism, represented by a bathtub overflowing with bubbles, the bathroom became for Spaniards a window that allowed them to look beyond their reality and dream about an "American way of life" that was still to come.

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NOTES

- 1 The Franco regime received international recognition when Spain was admitted to the United Nations, made its pact with the United States, and signed a Concordat with the Holy See.
- 2 This book contains a lecture given by the author in the Assembly Hall of the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC) on 21 June 1946, based on his project proposing the censorship code for the Spanish film industry and two appendices: the Hays Code (1930) and the encyclical *Vigilanti Cura* (1936).
- 3 The Ortiz Muñoz Project says: “Capítulo VI. Vulgaridad: Art. 32. Cuando se aborden asuntos desagradables, bajos, repugnantes -aunque no sean clasificados como maliciosos o perversos- deben tratarse con absoluta sujeción a los dictados del buen gusto y con todo respeto a la sensibilidad del público. Las expresiones groseras, vulgares o plebeyas no serán permitidas” (Chapter VI. Vulgarity: Art. 32. The treatment of low, disgusting, unpleasant, though not necessarily evil, subjects should be subject always to the dictate of good taste and a regard for sensibilities of the audience. Crude, vulgar and base expressions will not be permitted) Ortiz Muñoz (1946, 29).
- 4 Among these achievements were the German *siedlungs* and Le Corbusier’s singular houses and tract housing that were inspired by North American hotel models, as well as the celebration of the Congrès International d’Architecture Moderne (International Congress of Modern Architecture, or CIAM), especially those held in Frankfurt (1929) and Brussels (1930), dedicated to minimal housing and rational construction, respectively.
- 5 This text considers only the hygienic appliances inside the bathroom. On the topic of the “open” bathroom and the spatial autonomy of sanitary fixtures, see Nam (2013).
- 6 Twelve years earlier, Benito Perojo directed the film *La condesa María/ La comtesse Marie* (Perojo 1928), a Spanish-French co-production shot in France, in which the space and technology of the bathrooms are explored in much more detailed and open ways. The two elegant and extremely spacious guest bathrooms of the residence of Countess María (Rosario Oino) were designed for the film by the influential art director Lazare Meerson. These two bathrooms, temporarily used by the countess’s nephews, are featured while servants shave and give Manolo (Valentín Parera) a manicure and pedicure, and while Clotilde (Andrée Standard) takes a shower in the nude with her back to the camera. It is significant that in the long shots used to capture the the symmetrical monumentality of the art deco bathrooms, the positions of the two nephews are differentiated along their respective axes.

- 7 Encyclical of Pope Pius XI, addressed to the prelates of the United States and the rest of the world.
- 8 This chapter attempts to provide a succinct view of state censorship of both the Franco regime and the Catholic Church as links in a chain of a long and broader historical – both temporal and geographical – process in order to avoid treating them in isolation. This study does not seek to justify this censorship.
- 9 The Third Congress was held in Brussels in 1933, and the Fourth Congress, scheduled the following year in Vienna to study the papal encyclical, was not held due to the invasion of Austria by Adolf Hitler.
- 10 The Censorship Board, under different names, depended successively on several government agencies: the Ministerio del Interior, Ministerio de Gobernación, Secretaría General del Movimiento, Ministerio de Educación Nacional, and lastly, the Ministerio de Información y Turismo.
- 11 The censorship ordered the door to close before the viewer recalled the cameraman's hand covering the lens to hide the nude body of Sybil Seely's character as she tried to catch the soap that had fallen out of the bathtub in *One Week* (Keaton and Cline 1920). This gesture was also repeated in the *Imágenes* cinematographic magazine *Hogares modernos* (1967)
- 12 See *Grundrisslehre* (1941) by Siegfried Stratemann and *Bauentwurfslehre* (1936) by Ernst Neufert.
- 13 Although the mise en scène of "deep space" had been experimented with previously, the technological resource of "deep focus" became a paradigmatic technique of Hollywood cinema since the beginning of the 1940s (Bordwell, Staiger, and Thompson 1985, 350) largely due to the influence of camera operator Gregg Toland. This was possible thanks to the appearance on the market of wide-angle lenses and the greater photosensitivity of photographic emulsions on the flexible support.
- 14 On modern architecture's defence of the white wall as something updated and timeless in the face of the dangers of fashion, see Wigley (2013).
- 15 Among others, *Balarrasa* (Nieves Conde 1950), *Distrito quinto* (Coll 1957), *El inquilino* (Nieves Conde 1958), *Muchachas en vacaciones* (Elorrieta 1958), *La vida por delante* (Fernán-Gómez 1958), *El cochecito* (Ferreri 1960), *Maribel y la extraña familia* (Forqué 1960), *Atraco a las 3* (Forqué 1962), *Fin de semana* (Lazaga 1964), *Los subdesarrollados* (Merino 1968), *Del amor y otras soledades* (Martín Patino 1969).
- 16 Among others, *Vamos a contar mentiras* (Isasi-Isasmendi 1961), *La gran familia* (Palacios 1962), *Eva 63* (Lazaga 1963), *Tú y yo somos tres* (Gil 1964), *Fin de semana* (Lazaga 1964), *Brillante porvenir* (Gubern and Aranda 1965), *La familia y uno más* (Palacios 1965).

- 17 Among others, *Crónica de 9 meses* (Ozores 1967), *Peppermint Frappé* (Saura 1967), *La boutique* (García Berlanga 1967), *40 grados a la sombra* (Ozores 1967), *La dinamita está servida* (Merino 1968), *Cuatro noches de boda* (Ozores 1969), *No desearás al vecino del quinto* (Fernández 1970).
- 18 Among others, *La vida en un bloc* (Lucia 1956), *Un vaso de whisky* (Coll 1958), *El arte de vivir* (Diamante 1965).
- 19 Among others, *Ya tenemos coche* (Salvador 1958), *Hay alguien detrás de la puerta* (Demicheli 1961), *¿Dónde pongo este muerto?* (Ramírez 1961), *Casi un caballero* (Forqué 1964), *Amador* (Regueiro 1966), *Operación secretaria* (Ozores 1966).
- 20 Rybczynski acknowledges that the bathroom has not changed much since the nineteenth century and is still a shared space today, hosting diverse activities and having little charm and comfort.
- 21 Luis Gámir and Eduardo Olasagasti were the architects of the first phase of the Virgen del Pilar housing complex (1942–7), which they built when they were heads of two sections of the Technical Department of the OSH, directed by Germán Álvarez de Sotomayor.
- 22 The painter Vicente Viudes, draftsman and one of the editors of the “Cómo decorar la casa” (How to Decorate the House) magazine section which began in 1944, drew up a *Manual de decoración* in which the bathroom was also ignored.
- 23 For the general hygiene campaign promoted by the Sección Femenina, which had begun the previous year, *Cartilla de hygiene* (1944), a brochure with simple practical advice, was prepared.
- 24 The designation of the term “retrete” along with the English term “water closet” appears in documents and publications of the time, an elitist way of avoiding the more commonly used terms.
- 25 Both authors addressed this subject in other publications such as Ribalta (1973) and Correa and Ribalta (1974).
- 26 Fisac’s tract housing proposal won first prize in the competition for low-income housing projects of the Official College of Architects of Madrid in 1949.
- 27 Only the architect Antonio Moragas Gallisá included the bathroom in his drawing of the floor plan of the house.

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