

# Cinephilia and Politics from the Revolutionary 1960s to the Digital Revolution

## Establishing Shot: Close Reading the “Miró Films”

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As Film Studies finds itself in the middle of the so-called Digital Age, prominent scholars such as Susan Sontag and Laura Mulvey wax nostalgic about the celluloid, an almost mythical darkened-theater, and a shared spectatorial experience. They speak of a past collective spectatorship imperiled by fragmented, individualized experiences brought on by online and mobile technologies.

My research investigates a different kind of collectivity that, along with the cinephilic type, is alive, flourishing, and reaching greater audiences than ever before in the Digital Age. I return to the roots of cinephilia in the New Waves of the 1960s. Less interested in an idiosyncratic knowledge of film cultivated by the *Cahiers du Cinéma*, I explore fringe political filmmaking practices that paired the love of film creation and spectatorship with the subversion of hegemonic discourses. Eventually, I want to connect what I find in this era to current practices to help rethink the notion of the cinema's demise.

With Faculty Resource Committee support, I recently participated in the International Congress on Hispanic Cinemas in Madrid where all of these topics were addressed, and I gave a preliminary talk on my summer research project. This summer I will draft an article examining a series of short films directed and produced by Catalan filmmaker Pere Portabella and his close friends, the artists Joan Miró and Carles Santos. The “Miró Films” (1969-1973) have only been cursorily studied in the context of the Barcelona School of film whose surrealist and dadaist experiments film scholars have pointed to as signs of political disengagement during the end of Francisco Franco's dictatorship (1939-1975). My research, however, has revealed how these fringe groups employed highly political strategies in their reappropriation of the cinematic form to expose and interrupt the Francoist homogenizing, nationalist discourse. In the case of Portabella's work, I will engage in close reading of the audiovisual and spatiotemporal reclamation of Miró's work as Catalan in response to the dictatorship's appropriation of it as an outward sign of modernization. I am particularly interested in the concepts of remediation and intermediality in understanding how film that takes painting, sculpture, and tapestry as its contents contests fascist Aestheticism.

My work dovetails with that of Hannah Brown who will explore the negotiation of Basque identity during the same era through ethnographic documentary with similar reappropriative goals and featuring Basque modernist sculpture among its cultural “evidence.” The film *Ama Lur* (1968) that she will investigate is central to my long-term project. I became familiar with this film and scholarship on it last summer when I initiated the Basque phase of my research with the support of an Atkinson Faculty Development grant. I will also present a comparative study of the Barcelona School and

the Grupo Gaur, the group of artists who produced *Ama Lur*, at the Society for Cinema and Media Studies annual conference in the spring.

Andrea Adachi's examination of Ecuadorian graffiti will help Brown and me consider another medium for social change in a different, more contemporary context. Public and private space and social class, two foci of Adachi's project, also figure significantly in my work and Brown's. We will be particularly interested in the part of Adachi's investigation dedicated to the remediation of traditional graffiti by screen-based technologies.