

**Counter-
Information**
Video-Nou/
Servei de Vídeo
Comunitari



MAC
BA ^{TREN}_{TA}

During the period in Spain known as the Transition, a group of young people formed a working platform that conceived of video as an experimental tool for political intervention and a social weapon of counter-information. This exhibition traces the trajectory of the Video-Nou collective and its subsequent transformation into the Servei de Vídeo Comunitari. Active in Catalonia between 1977 and 1983, the group challenged official narratives at a moment when the media continued to adhere to structures inherited from Francoism.

Embedded in the enthusiastic climate that characterized the early years of the Transition, the group developed a practice rooted in neighborhood and countercultural movements, educational processes, and urban struggles, positioning the camera as an instigator of collective debate and the reclaiming of speech. However, this initial impetus was progressively shadowed by disenchantment, exposing the persistence of authoritarian structures and the limits of political change. It was by inhabiting that tension with institutionality that their practice acquired critical density.

Video-Nou's transformation into the Servei de Vídeo Comunitari consolidated the use of video as a means of communication and in situ social intervention, where images are not an end in themselves but part of a process that includes continuous feedback and discussion within the communities they worked with. In questioning the separation between emisor and receiver, the collective exceeded and critiqued dominant modes of audiovisual communication.

Dissolving the boundaries between art, document and action, video is understood not as representation but as a tool and a relational field where images circulate and are negotiated and transformed, bearing directly on the production of the social.

AGAINST LINEARITY: VIDEO AND COUNTER-MEDIA

**A participatory model of production
and return, grounded in neighborhood,
labor and feminist conflicts during the
Transition.**

The dominant media system, naturalized under Franco's dictatorship, imposed a linear manner of narrating reality: chronologically ordered, voiced by a single enunciator, transmitted via a centralized broadcaster, and – as authoritarian regimes invariably hoped – consumed individually and in isolation, by a passive audience. The irruption of video in the 1970s was enthusiastically greeted by many as a tactical, portable, and malleable medium capable of breaking that linearity and narrating from the margins – from the situatedness of bodies and places historically ignored by authorized media.

During the Transition, Video-Nou / Servei de Vídeo Comunitari recognized this potential in video technology and began developing multiple exercises of counter-information through community video, using the camera as an instrument of communication and social intervention. Through their practice, the collective participated in ecological and feminist mobilizations, as well as urban and workers' struggles. Recording, observing, and asking questions with a microphone became political acts. In dialogue with neighborhood associations, their videos not only documented these struggles but helped organize, disseminate and legitimize them.

Video became a means to disrupt official narratives and return speech to those who had historically been spoken for by others. As counter-media, they facilitated the social reappropriation of the means of producing collective narratives.



Photograph of people viewing monitors on the video-bus during the Lliga de Catalunya campaign, Video-Nou, 1977. MACBA Collection. Research and Documentation Centre. Gift of Col·lectiu Video-Nou / Servei de Vídeo Comunitari Archive. © Col·lectiu Video-Nou / Servei de Vídeo Comunitari



Photograph of a video workshop by Servei de Vídeo Comunitari in a school, Servei de Vídeo Comunitari, c. 1980. MACBA Collection. Research and Documentation Centre. Gift of Col·lectiu Video-Nou / Servei de Vídeo Comunitari Archive. © Col·lectiu Video-Nou / Servei de Vídeo Comunitari

AUDIOVISUAL EDUCATION: PEDAGOGY AND CRITICAL DIDACTICS

Video training for schools, unions, neighborhood associations and social organizations. Workshops and feedback sessions as spaces of co-learning.

More than just a recording device, video was understood as an ideal medium for communicative experimentation, a collective and practical way of learning to observe, narrate and intervene in social life. The educational models inherited from the dictatorship, like its media apparatus, operated vertically and

were oriented toward the reproduction of established forms of knowledge. Challenging this status quo, Video-Nou / Servei de Vídeo Comunitari adopted video as a medium of social intervention, suited to practices of intergenerational and collaborative community learning. This critical video pedagogy took shape in workshops of collective self-formation whose stated aim was self-sufficiency. Camera and microphone were understood not as neutral, objective or precious technological apparatuses, but as political, subjective and popular tools that to be passed around. Rather than the production of a polished work, the idea was a loop that could continue after the collective's departure, sustained by screening sessions and discussions about the videos. These feedback screenings took place in everyday situations – classrooms, shops, bars, assemblies and public spaces – where, through the return of images to the social fabric, they facilitated processes of exchange, intercommunication and collective consciousness-raising. Any shared space with a video monitor could become a community classroom for debate, enjoyment, intervention and social agitation.

In a context of media overexposure, audiovisual literacy – the capacity to read, interpret, question and dismantle dominant audiovisual discourses – is crucial, especially in providing children with a social weapon: community video as a means of activating critical ways of seeing, generating collective bonds and building shared knowledge.



Photograph of the Jornades Llibertàries Internacionals held in Barcelona in 1977, Video-Nou. MACBA Collection. Research and Documentation Centre. Gift of Col·lectiu Video-Nou / Servei de Vídeo Comunitari Archive.
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**VIDEO AND DISSIDENCE:
EMANCIPATORY PROCESSES**
Video as a tool of social participation and dissent accompanied the counterculture and the emergence of the sexual liberation movement during the Transition, breaking with the media invisibility imposed on non-normative bodies and practices.

Video has been fundamental to countercultural and dissident movements because of its immediacy, low cost and ability to disrupt the centralized logic of the media. It enabled historically silenced bodies to narrate themselves with their own codes, aesthetics, and priorities. During the Transition, Video-Nou / Servei de Vídeo Comunitari documented dissident figures from the music and underground comics scenes, such as el Rollo, as well as libertarian artists. Among them was

Ocaña, a queer painter and libertarian who embodied radical dissent through public exposure.

For decades, dissident communities were excluded from official narratives and the means of self-representation. Video became an autonomous channel for the circulation of knowledge, a living archive, and a network of solidarity. Before the internet, these images circulated through tapes and shared screenings that made desire communicable. The works and recordings presented here show how artists used video to move beyond cultural and gender norms and to challenge prevailing social and sexual morals. To record is not merely to document – it is to inscribe desire into history and into the construction of community. It is the capacity to produce counterimages and counternarratives.

URBAN TRANSFORMATION AND ACCESSIBILITY: INSTITUTIONAL ABANDONMENT

During the Transition, the city became a field of contestation. The outskirts expanded without planning, working-class neighborhoods lacked basic services and the gap between urban centers and peripheries became increasingly stigmatized. Meanwhile, in the historical Casc Antic, housing problems and deteriorating living conditions – particularly for working-class and immigrant residents – were becoming untenable. Video not only documented inequalities; it served as a tool of intervention. Video-Nou / Servei de Vídeo Comunitari played a key role in the neighborhoods where it filmed, returning images to the community to think collectively, articulate demands and call for transformation. Work with neighborhood associations, ateneos, and other community organizations gave visibility to the urbanism of precarity, the lack of accessibility and institutional abandonment.

Beyond mere denunciation, video exposed the speculative processes reshaping the city along economic lines. Opposing narratives of progress, it registered resistance and conflicts, giving voice to those displaced by urban growth. Through workshops and feedback screenings – some in partnership with the Barcelona city council – spaces of dialogue were created between residents and local government, with video bridging everyday experience and institutional politics. Navigating that tension, video became a tool of urban emancipation, challenging development models and reclaiming a city built from below.

Exhibition curated by: María Berríos and Daniel Gasol.

The exhibition *Counter-Information: Video-Nou / Servei de Vídeo Comunitari forms part of The gesture of filming. Video in the MACBA Collection*, a new display dedicated to the presence of video within the Collection, structured as a constellation of practices that understand video as a way of attending to reality.

Prefer listening?

Explore the exhibition with the free MACBA Digital Guide. Organised by themes and narrated by the curatorial team, it will accompany you through the galleries and allow you to delve deeper into the ideas and contexts that articulate the exhibition.

The exhibition expands

With a publication

Portable Notebook No. 44

Luis E. Herrero, *Lo importante es el proceso: vídeo y comunicación social en la experiencia de Video-Nou / Servei de Vídeo Comunitari*, 2011 (2026).

With an educational programme

Narratives of a Collection

Tour-workshop at the MACBA Collection
Secondary, vocational training, special education and functional diversity.
Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays
(November 2026 – May 2027),
at 12 noon.
By Avalancha.

Counter-Information: Video-Nou / Servei de Vídeo Comunitari

Guided tour
Secondary, vocational training, special education, universities and adult groups.
October 2026 – May 2027, on request
(by appointment).
By Albert Gironès, Ana Gnagui
and Eva Paià.

Experience it differently

Tours of *Counter-Information: Video-Nou / Servei de Vídeo Comunitari*

Sundays at 11.00 am.
From 19th July to 8th November 2026.
By Albert Gironès, Ana Gnagui
and Eva Paià.

Tours of *The Act of Filming. Video in the MACBA Collection*

Saturdays at 6.00 pm.
From 7th November 2026 to
22nd May 2027.
By Avalancha.

Free activity. Advance registration and
further information at macba.cat

Opening Hours

Monday to Friday: 11.00 am to 7.30 pm
(from 25/06 to 24/09: 10.00 am
to 8.00 pm).
Saturdays: 10.00 am to 8.00 pm.
Sundays: 10.00 am to 3.00 pm.
Free admission: First Sunday of the
month. Closed on Tuesdays (except
public holidays). Public holidays:
check website.

MACBA Evenings

Free admission on Thursdays, Fridays
and Saturdays from 6 pm to 8 pm (from
25 June to 24 September).

Museum tickets are valid for one month.
Activate yours at reception and return as
many times as you like.

