

HARD GELATIN

Hidden Stories from the 80s

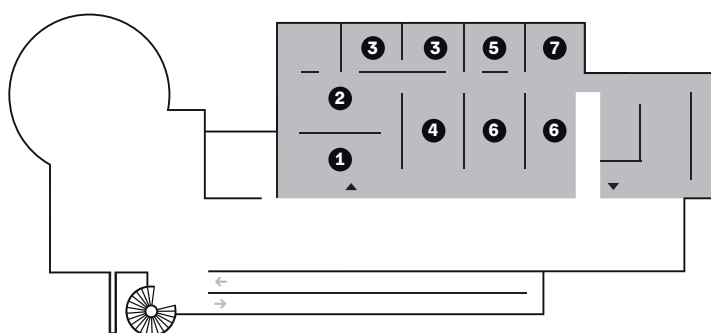
Exhibition from 4 November 2016 to 19 March 2017



Lluís Juncosa, *Crab Broth*, 1988. Lluís Juncosa Archive

Hard Gelatin takes a look at the Spanish situation in the eighties by reconsidering the stories generated during this period and questioning them from today's perspective.

Meier Building. Level 0



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THE OFFICIAL ACCOUNT OF THE EIGHTIES advocated the establishment of a democracy that prioritised need over reason and which focused on the future, not on analysing the recent past. This official construction of the country excluded any critical consideration of the link with the Franco regime and was based on amnesia. Culture was used by political parties as a powerful propaganda tool. It was seen as celebratory and festive and was constantly exploited as a means of promoting the image of a country with an active, dynamic and stylish youth; a country that had emerged from a bleak period and was looking ahead to the future with creative ideas; a country spurred on by its urge for renewal.

This exhibition spans the period from 1977 to 1992, although on occasions it necessarily exceeds these limits. It looks at a series of social, political and economic events in history, and at the same time presents the work of a number of groups, cultural activists and artists who adopted refutation, irony and questioning as subversive and dissenting stances. The exhibits include feature films, documentaries, television programmes, magazines, comics, fanzines, artworks, exercises in anti-art and other materials, combining the aesthetic and the socio-political in order to put forward alternative views of a fascinating period in our recent history and also of our present-day circumstances. *Hard Gelatin* is structured, then, on the basis of seven possible accounts that unsurprisingly intersect throughout the exhibition.

Forgotten memory. The omission of the recent past deals with the dissolving of the very recent past in the collective imaginary. Following the end of the dictatorship, the decision was made to turn the page and start a new chapter imbued with hope for the future in a bid to forge a democracy based on consensus and intended as a shift towards modernity and internationalisation. *Informe general* (1976) by Pere Portabella, which opens the exhibition, uses comments by key figures of the time as a way of exploring the move from a dictatorship to a state governed by the rule of law. Other exhibits include *143.353 (los ojos no quieren estar siempre cerrados)* (2010) by Marcelo Expósito, which contrasts the notions of modernity and colonialism in the Spanish imaginary with the exhuming of historical memory in mass graves; *El Camp de la Bota* (2004) by Francesc Abad, a project that recovers collective memory and questions the harm done by political silences; and comics that deal with the failed coup d'état of 23 February 1981. *Después de...* (1981), by the Bartolomé brothers, serves as a bridge between this account and the next.

Blind spots. From autonomous groups to democratic institutionalisation addresses the struggles of independent groups. Some had formerly operated clandestinely while others emerged under the auspices of the new democracy, but all of them believed in the need for reform and change. This section particularly addresses the way these groups' demands were diluted or altered in a new institutionalisation that, while fostering change, marginalised or neutralised many critical positions. The Video-Nou collective (1977–83) introduces this account with the articulation of new communal social forms, although it ended as a counter-information tool following the creation of democratic social structures that subsumed its role and shifted power to the centre. The film footage of the Jornades Libertàries is accompanied by documentation on the decline of libertarian movements. *La Transición*, a documentary screened on TVE (Spain's state television network), finds its counterpart in *No haber olvidado nada* (1977) by Gabriel Villota, Fito Rodríguez and Marcelo Expósito. In addition, this section of the exhibition features comments on the constitutional process and democratic elections.

From blue overalls to white collars. From the dismantling of workers' movements to neoliberalism considers the end of working-class movements and struggles, while looking at the effects of the Moncloa Pacts (1977), and the industrial restructuring and reshaping of neoliberal economic policies. The photographs taken by Colita of women working in factories and of the temporary labourers setting off to pick grapes in France share the space with Joaquim Jordà's film *Numax presenta* (1980) about the failed attempt at self-management by factory workers. Tino Calabuig's film *Lunes negro. Atocha 55* (1977) exposes the connection between the attack on the labour lawyers' practice in Madrid's Atocha and the strike by transport workers, as well as links with the Organización Sindical Española. Still in existence at that time, this organisation known as the 'vertical union' was the only legal trade union during the Franco era. 'La crisis', a special edition of the magazine *Butifarra!*, appears alongside *La memoria interior* (2002) by María Ruido, a reflection on the migration policies of Spain's central government, recounted through the story of the author's family.

In the neighbourhood of my dreams. From real estate to the city as spectacle presents the city as a place for neighbourhood demands and struggle, and in which major transformations are set in motion in readiness for the events held in 1992. This section of the exhibition ranges from the residents' struggles in neighbourhoods such as Can Serra, in the Besòs area, to the skits and proclamations of Agustín Parejo School, the *Arquitecturas prematuras* by Isidoro Valcárcel Medina, as well as Muntadas's work *City Museum* (1992) – a reflection on the public space and a city that has been turned into a theme park or spectacle – and *Sin ir más lejos* (1992) by Rogelio López Cuenca, which scorns the major celebratory events held in 1992 in Seville, Madrid and Barcelona. In addition, Manolo Laguillo's photographs painstakingly track the metamorphosis of the city of Barcelona from the late seventies to the present day.

Beautiful losers. On drugs and prisons looks at numerous aspects of narcotics, from drugs as a personal option to possible strategies designed to counter them; resistance in prisons; and the survival of laws that penalised behaviour, not crimes, such as the Social Danger Act, which remained in force until 1989. The COPEL (Prisoners' Coordinator in Fight) responded to the amnesty for political prisoners – and which thus did not apply to the general prison population – with a nation-wide militant structure that led to uprisings and self-harming (as photographed by Colita) as a means of applying pressure. In addition, Laia Manresa's film *Morir de día* (2010), based on a project begun by Joaquim Jordà, writes the history of this period through heroin and the perspectives of four protagonists with cultural connections, and includes poems and drawings by Pepe Sales, as well as poems by Albert Subirats. Manresa's film provides insights into the influx and spread of heroin in marginal areas of the city, and the extensive use of the drug in prisons from the early eighties onwards.

Stolen words. Counterculture versus the art institution contrasts the use of culture as a political and commercial tool with that of cultural practices' own exercises in critical subversion and reformulation. The country had formerly been characterised by a dearth of cultural institutions promoting art and contemporary creation, but attempts were now made to fill this gap by means of ambitious initiatives such as the Reina Sofía, the 1986 agreement on the construction of the future MACBA and the inauguration of the annual ARCO art fair. Within the art world, however, there were many who questioned and opposed this approach, with anti-artistic and anti-institutional stances flourishing as expressions of the rejection of a system that, in the name of modernity and internationalisation, pursued the spectacle.

Gaseous state. On otherness looks at escapism as a weapon and the creation of an imaginary world (Zush). It also considers the questioning of the lack of understanding of social problems, which were regarded as a kind of disease, rejected or overlooked. Daniel García Andújar's *Soy gitano* (1993) juxtaposes article 14 of the Spanish Constitution, which states all Spaniards are equal before the law, with the xenophobia that gypsies suffer daily. *Habitación Europa* (1992) by Isaías Griñolo and Angustias García contrasts a Spain that has overreached itself with accounts of events that are watered down in press reports. The exhibition closes with a personal timeline of this period by Alán Carrasco (2016) and with Pere Portabella's *Informe general II. El rapto de Europa* (2015).

Exhibition organised and produced by MACBA Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona

Curator

Teresa Grandas

L'internationale

With the support of the Culture Programme of the European Union



Culture

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International seminar

The Eighties Against the Grain

Wednesday 14 December 2016, 11 am to 8.30 pm

Coinciding with the exhibition, the seminar *The Eighties Against the Grain* will present some of the projects developed by the European institutions of L'Internationale, accompanied by case studies recently conducted in Spain by a generation born in that period, that demonstrate

the need to look at the past in order to understand and write the present.

Meier Auditorium.
200 places. Free admission.
Full programme and registration at www.macba.cat.
Activity organised in the context of L'Internationale.

Film programme

The Eighties: Hidden Fictions

Filmoteca de Catalunya
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Programme available soon at www.macba.cat

MACBA wishes to acknowledge the collaboration of El Periódico de Catalunya

in the presentation of Francesc Torres' work *Nuevas preguntas al pueblo español por un americano ignorante*.
#GelatinaDuraTorres

Opening times

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