

EXILES AND COLONISTS IN THE FIRST PERSON: THE FAMILY ARCHIVE AND ITS RECENT (RE)INTERPRETATIONS IN SPAIN¹

ALBERTO BERZOSA
JOSETXO CERDÁN

Film archives are complex institutions, characterised by the coexistence of many levels of management, involving material that carries the weight of history and territorial identities. Notwithstanding the national or regional status of most filmic artefacts, it is worth remembering that filmmaking, at least in its early years, was transnational by definition, and in most countries around the world the idea of a national or regional cinema took decades to develop. This adds a further complication to the multiple responsibilities associated with the transfer of this cultural heritage, which ranges from the preservation of the film footage that has survived the passage of time to exhibition programming or the increasingly prominent question of education. For years, one of the biggest challenges faced by film libraries has been the management of family collections of films made in substandard formats with amateur approaches. Such films are usually limited to showing the lifestyles of private indi-

viduals, their celebrations and domestic dynamics, projecting an idealised image of the family. But they may also document painful and controversial episodes in a country's history, such as exile or the colonial past of the 20th century. In such cases, the complexities associated with "cinema of mobility", which in a way make these films harder to classify due to their constantly changing nature, are added to difficulties in the location and handling of these documents in political and territorial terms. Film libraries have addressed these issues by adopting various strategies. Recently, for example, the Cinemateca Portuguesa film archive, which may be useful for comparison with the Spanish case given the historical similarities between Spain and Portugal over the past century (a long, fascist-leaning dictatorship followed in the mid-1970s by a process of transition—revolutionary in Portugal's case and reformist in Spain's—that would mark each country's political evolution in the decades that followed), has

promoted its colonial film collections through a tribute to their curator, Joana Pimentel (Pimentel, 2020). However, the focus of these collections is on the colonial question rather than on their household origins, no doubt because of the weight of the former in Portugal's transition to democracy in the 1970s. These collections thus contain footage of diverse origins with images of the Portuguese colonies. Another potential case for comparison is the *Archivo Memoria* (Memory Archive) at Mexico's Cineteca Nacional, a project launched in 2010 and still active today, involving the indiscriminate collection of home movies by the institution with the idea of

preserving images that shape our social memory and raising awareness of its importance through an extensive program of preservation and access. Beyond "saving" these films, the purpose of the project is to reimagine the archive as a place for creation: to conceive of its activities as a means of creating new understandings and new creative projects through the reuse of these moving pictures (*Archivo Memoria*, 2021).

In a country where the displacement of communities continues to be an often painful reality, there can be no doubt as to the key role these collections could play in terms of mobility. The case of Spain's film archive, *Filmoteca Española*, is also unique. In recent years, its curators have been giving special attention to home movies as a proactive approach to focusing on the question of Spain's film heritage. These domestic film collections include footage related to exile, mainly involving Spanish citizens who were forced to flee the country after the Civil War (1936-1939), but also related to the Spanish colonies, particularly Spain's possessions in Africa, which were given up over the course of the 20th century. This article explores how these collections have been managed by *Filmoteca Española* in recent years, from a perspective positioned at the intersection

between the specificity of cinema of mobility and the issues of the contemporary archive.

ON MOBILITY, FILM ARCHIVES AND HOMELESS IMAGES

Nobody would deny that movement from one place to another has been an unavoidable reality of human history since the age of the first hunters and gatherers. And it is equally true that as the centuries passed, mobility began to give way to settlements, and that the modern State, with increasingly firm borders and stricter controls on movement, sounded the death knell for nomadic culture. Yet paradoxically, the geopolitical conditions created by imbalances between nations at the same time have given rise to human displacements that are increasingly being viewed in negative terms. Nevertheless, ever since its birth in the 19th century, the principle of mobility has been an inherent part of cinema, as an heir to the trajectories initiated by the magic lantern in the 16th century and developed by the railway in the 18th (Crary, 2008). Whether as spectacle or as scientific apparatus, from the outset cinema seemed to be designed to move from one place to another and reveal this hybrid quality: to travel further, to grow as an industry, and to help confirm and promote the advances of science in far-flung lands (Elena, 1996). Certain specific episodes, such as Aleksander Medvedkin's cinetrain in the 1930s in the Soviet Union, and more general trends, such as the rise of international co-productions for the purpose of expanding the film industry in Europe in the late 1950s, have become particularly popular case studies in the scholarly literature on the subject.

At the same time, as a result of the paradox mentioned above, the history of cinema and mobility is a history filled with complicating twists and turns. Some have to do with negative views of mobility, while others are related to the scale of the medium itself. In the case of the former,

it must not be overlooked that at the very heart of displacement in cinema are reflections of the negative interpretations that have emerged in the context of modernity, related mainly to the trauma inherent in processes such as colonialism and exile. As for the latter, the scale of the medium is reduced in the case of films made outside the mainstream, in non-professional formats such as 8mm, 9.5mm, Super-8, or even 16mm. In such films, the point of view is located outside the context of the industry to take up a position in the realm of family life and of amateur filmmaking. These two considerations effectively multiply the narratives, so that a univocal history is augmented into a multitude of voices telling different life stories, intersecting with the complex plotlines woven by individual, family and collective identities. And moreover, when decades have passed, it is no longer the ones who recorded the images who mediate the memory, but the generations after them, rendering matters even more complex, as will be shown below. In this context, the issue and the institution of the archive becomes essential.

As we enter the third decade of the 21st century, it is striking to note that despite the importance that contemporary society gives to moving images, the film archive continues to be the most undervalued—and therefore underused—of all document repositories of the past century. But this is not solely or even mainly a problem affecting filmmakers or those engaged in film studies in the broadest sense of the term. The problem is worse among historians, anthropologists, sociologists, art historians and cultural scholars. Cinema, mainly but not exclusively through its archives, directly documents the historical events of the past century: whether our perspective is top-down or bottom-up, from the epicentre or from what has been more or less agreed and accepted as the margins. Cinema was there and today it is the film archives that store and preserve all those images (at least, those that have survived), wait-

ing to be viewed, interpreted, and (re)defined. And in the case of displacements, there is probably no better repository for understanding the 20th century with its many twists and turns and its many points of view than the library of moving images, especially when those images are the product of family or even individual filmmaking rather than the film industry.

As part of the so-called “heritage turn” that has defined the activity of film libraries since the late 1980s (Costa, 2004), collections of homemade films in substandard formats have gradually acquired a larger presence in archive collections, being rightfully recognised as an essential part of a national or regional audiovisual heritage. The collection of this material, and particularly of films produced in exile or in the colonies, poses numerous challenges for film archivists. In particular, it raises a number of critical questions that have been affecting the archives for at least two decades: the legal complexity of managing the rights to deposit the images, and the rights to the images themselves entailed in the dissemination of the footage; the challenge for restoration teams dealing with films that arrive in the archives in precarious condition; the delicate question of how to reconcile this type of amateur, intrahistorical filmmaking with the exhibition policies of film libraries (given that they are films that were made exclusively for private family viewing); and the problems sometimes associated with the historical episodes documented in the images if they touch on unresolved questions of national identity or issues that are in some way taboo (Costa, 2004; García-Casado, Alberich-Pascual, 2014).

In the Spanish case, these challenges have become especially thought-provoking in the context of the initiatives proposed in recent years by Filmoteca Española, implemented in collaboration with any public film archives that have been willing (and able) to take part with their home movie collections. In conjunction with these initi-

atives, some definitive policies have been adopted to expand access to this material, to recover the heritage it represents, to educate the public about its social significance and to find ways of exhibiting it. An example of these initiatives is the program implemented from 2018 to 2021 to recover episodes of Spanish history that still cause friction today, based on working with home movie footage located in different public film archives, whatever institution they may belong to, under the coordination of Filmoteca Española. This program resulted in the production of a trilogy of films. The first, Elena Oroz and Xosé Prieto Souto's *Vestigios en Super-8* [Vestiges on Super-8] (2018), was made on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the enactment of the Spanish Constitution that laid the foundations for the country's transition to democracy after the Franco dictatorship, using amateur footage—in some cases filmed with clearly militant objectives—that documents the country's political sea change through the private lives of its people. The other two films were Irene Gutiérrez's *Diarios del exilio* [Diaries of Exile] (2019) and Carmen Bellas and Alberto Berzosa's *Memorias de Ultramar* [Overseas Memoirs] (2021). These last two films will be discussed in detail below, as they consist precisely of images of mobility, dealing with exile in the first case and the colonies in the second. However, before delving into Filmoteca Española's policies for its home movie collections and examining the cases of these two most recent productions, some conceptual clarification about this type of material is in order.

The home movie footage recovered and preserved in film archives is worthy of study because it represents a bottom-up view located at the very eye of the hurricane of history, but without a specific historical objective beyond recording important episodes in the lives of those who filmed them, their friends and loved ones, given that this was the potential audience that these films were intended for. Despite the generic classification

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of footage like this as a kind of grassroots cinema, it is important to acknowledge that access to filming and exhibition equipment took a long time to be democratized, and that therefore this bottom-up view has a clear class-based element. Not everybody had the resources to buy the necessary equipment (camera, projector, splicer, acetone, etc.), or the material required to shoot the footage (the film, which would also subsequently need to be processed in professional labs). Nor did everyone have the leisure time necessary to learn how to make films. Moreover, there is still a need for detailed analysis of the strong gender bias that characterizes this type of filmmaking, as reflected in a manual published in 1973, translated into Spanish in the early 1980s, which contains statements like the following: “[e]quipped with a camera, the student, the working youth, the adolescent or the adult male—in short, anyone—will enjoy pleasant surprises and great satisfaction if they dedicate themselves to making 8mm films [sic]” (Lafrance, 1980: 10).

There is a clear connection between footage taken by people in exile and films made by colonists. For different historical reasons, both have been uprooted from a homeland or place of reference. It is important to bear in mind that both types of images have an aesthetic similar to that of other amateur films, based on similar princi-

ples of non-professional production for a private audience. However, although they share these limitations on circulation and target audience with other types of home-made productions, domestic images of exile and of the colonies possess a much more powerful quality in which uprootedness and deterritorialisation play an essential role that needs to be taken into account, offering a vision not only of a private, closed world but also of the world outside it, a somewhat strange and/or exotic environment, while the political events and economic realities of each time and place seep into that vision with an especially emphatic effect.

At the same time, the ontological differences between images of exile and colonial images are very clear: while the first depict individuals who have been forced to flee their country for whatever reason, the second are the work of people who form part of the imposed rule of a metropolis over another territory. This is why exile images fit well into the various conceptualisations of what is known as “accented cinema” or “minor cinema” (Andersson, Sundholm, 2019: 21-33) posited by post-colonial theorists, while images filmed by colonists, despite their many similarities with exile images, usually fall outside these categories. However, the focus of this study is on the idea of the story of individuals in their private world, over and above any institutional visions of the social realities themselves. There is no doubt that the two perspectives—institutional and private—ultimately overlap and intertwine, and there may even be a clear transfer of the institutional narrative into the family narrative (which may be more obvious in the case of colonial film collections), but it is precisely in the places where that transfer fails that these films are of the greatest interest. And those failures usually arise out of the idea—and, especially, the feeling—of uprootedness. Beyond their similarities and differences, it is evident that the images both of exiles and of colonists are in a way symptomatic of the phe-

nomenon of homelessness that philosophers as diverse as Martin Heidegger and György Lukács identified as one of the key characteristics of the modern human, and therefore, of the cultural products of modernity (Demos, 2013).

The logic and violence of the archive (Derrida, 1997), including the audiovisual archive, which on the one hand can be traced back to the encyclopaedia and the museum, and on the other is marked by the neoliberal crisis afflicting the contemporary public sphere (García-Casado, Alberich-Pascual, 2014), may often prove inoperative for the type of images described above. However, as noted at the beginning of this article, in recent years film libraries have been on the hunt for strategies and resources that can help them take a bold and effective approach to the points of friction that can arise in terms of preservation, accessibility, transfer and memory in the efforts to store, protect and catalogue images like these, created in the context of homelessness. Filmoteca Española offers a good case study for this.

AMATEUR CINEMA IN FILMOTECA ESPAÑOLA: THE COLLECTIONS

Major public archives like Filmoteca Española operate in a context which, paradoxically, could be described as disadvantageous for the development of collections of films that fall outside mainstream film industry production (what is known as national cinema). Even in the context of film industry production itself, the policies of the major public archives are defined by a need to limit the scope of action to canonical works of national cinema, which they undoubtedly help to construct with their policies of recovery, preservation and dissemination. Other productions, including works of amateur cinema, have historically been largely ignored. Although, as noted above, the heritage turn that began in the 1980s brought more attention to collections outside the canon of films produced for theatres, it is unde-

niable that the major archives, including Filmoteca Española, have been slow in reacting to the change. In fact, it is important to point out that Filmoteca Española has never initiated any specific campaigns like those of other public film libraries (such as the libraries of the Basque Country, Andalusia, Valencia and Extremadura, to name four singular examples) to recover amateur film footage that could chart an audiovisual map of the territory. In Catalonia, on the other hand, the development of such a map, both geographic and political, has focused not so much on home movies as on the important amateur film movement that was particularly active in the region from the 1920s to the 1950s.

With the above in mind, we seek here to establish a categorisation of the relationships between home movies and amateur films according to a different taxonomy from the one traditionally adopted. A hundred years ago, in the second decade of the 20th century, the term “amateur film” was coined (and associated to it the term “*cineísta*”, as a difference from that of *cineasta*/filmmaker) as a form of filmmaking distinct from (and to some extent opposite to) home moviemaking. While the latter was limited to capturing happy private family moments with the sole purpose of having them documented for posterity and for viewing in the same private context as their production, amateur films were created with a clearly creative intention, and although they might be produced in the same private context, the aim was to create works for public exhibition, if only among peers at amateur film conventions and competitions. A review of the records of these conventions generally reveals how amateur film was legitimised in part by establishing a distinction (of superiority) from home movies, with aspirations that were essentially creative (or, as was asserted in that era, artistic). A similar distinction was established from mainstream cinema (for theatres), although it is clear that commercial films, as well as experimental (arthouse) films, reports and newsreels,

also served as inspiration for these amateur *cineístas*. However, over time, as substandard formats became more widely popular (especially after the appearance of Super-8 film in the mid-1960s), amateur filmmakers (and their interactions) underwent a process of progressive transformation. The changing times in most Western societies, with substandard film formats becoming accessible to classes and generations other than those that had been using them until then, gave rise to new habits and practices in filmmaking, and in the contexts for exhibition and viewing. There can be no doubt that in this era, recently baptised “the long sixties” for the case of the United States (Strain, 2017) and perhaps too easily extended to the rest of the West, low-budget filmmaking found new purposes which, while remaining amateur, in many cases moved beyond the realm of the family, and of course distanced itself from the (bourgeois) artistic pretensions of amateur film as it had been known up until then, in a quest for a much more obvious dimension of social portrait. Even when the objective was still to depict family life, that depiction became much more contextualised in a broader social setting, as if the boundaries of the domestic world had expanded. While the accessibility of film formats to other social classes led to this representation of social change, or at least to hints at such an intention, among younger practitioners of filmmaking using substandard formats the field also opened up to collective, generational portraits that went beyond the limits of the traditional (idealised) family that had previously been the main focus of these practices. These new collective visions also entailed reflections of new spaces, as well as a whole range of behaviours and a less inhibited attitude towards the camera. In Spain, a good example of this phenomenon are the collections of films made in the 1960s and especially in the 1970s by young people who used their cameras to capture new social, sexual, political and collective movements emerging at that time.

MAPPING OUT THE LONG HISTORICAL TRAJECTORY OF AMATEUR FILM DOWN TO OUR OWN TIMES, IT WOULD SEEM FITTING TO CLASSIFY HOME MOVIES AS PART OF THAT TRAJECTORY, IRRESPECTIVE OF THE FACT THAT FOR A NUMBER OF DECADES (1920-1960) THE “AMATEUR FILM” MOVEMENT EFFECTIVELY CONSTRUCTED ITS LEGITIMACY IN OPPOSITION TO SUCH FILMS

Any analysis of all these developments in Western societies from the vantage point of our times, when the vast majority of adults (and many yet to reach adulthood) make daily use of devices whose multiple functions include that of a portable camera, compels us to reconsider certain perspectives that might have seemed useful a few decades ago but that today, in most cases, are merely nostalgic. Mapping out the long historical trajectory of amateur film down to our own times, it would seem fitting to classify home movies as part of that trajectory, irrespective of the fact that for a number of decades (1920-1960) the “amateur film” movement effectively constructed its legitimacy in opposition to such films. Another consideration of importance from a contemporary viewpoint is whether it would be more appropriate to characterise this type of film as domestic rather than family-related, as the portrait of this *domus* or domesticity pushes far beyond the boundaries of the traditional, idealised nuclear family that home movie collections depicted in a particular historical period. Having established these necessary preliminary points related to how the concept of amateur film is understood today, and with the additional clarification that Filmoteca Española has never had a proactive policy towards these types of films due to institutional factors (notwithstanding the best efforts and intentions of its staff), what follows is a brief description of

collections of this kind.² At the time of writing, Filmoteca Española has a total of 155 home movie collections in its archives. It is important to clarify that the size of each of these collections may vary widely, from collections made up of a single film reel to others with more than fifty containers with multiple reels in each one.

Despite the limitations mentioned above, the number of amateur film collections has grown progressively since 1979, when the first two were received: one in the form of a deposit and the other resulting from a purchase. The table below presents the evolution of the collection by decade:

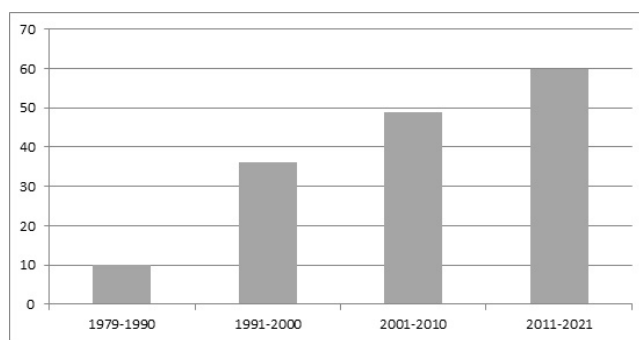


Image 1

A total of 62% of the collections are deposits and therefore the property of third parties, while only 38% have been acquired by the institution in various ways (donation, purchase, bequest, etc.). There is something inherent in the nature of these images that makes the families or descendants of the filmmakers reluctant to let them go, despite their obvious inability to view them. This is a common issue that affects many archives other than Filmoteca Española, and it also poses a problem related to the legal vacuum created when the relatives who made the deposit pass on, or even simply forget to update their contact details with the institution when they move, which happens with troublesome frequency.

Unfortunately, most amateur film footage archived at Filmoteca Española (a little more than

60%) has not yet been adequately classified, studied and dated, a fact that gives a clear idea of the work that still needs to be done with this material, which in the best of cases has only been inventoried. However, by analysing the data on the film format of each collection we can get an approximate idea, albeit with a wide margin for error, of the period when most of them may have been made:

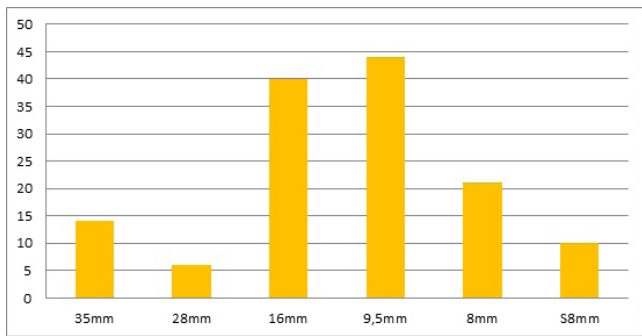


Image 2

While it is not possible to be certain, the table above suggests that most of the amateur film collections archived in Filmoteca Española were produced in the first half of the 20th century. The use of 35mm film for non-professional filmmaking was accessible only to a select few until other formats were developed. The 28mm format had a brief moment of glory in the 1910s, while the use of 9.5mm began in the early 1920s and declined ten years later when 8mm film became popular, although the two formats coexisted for several decades. Also widely used during this period was the 16mm format, which first appeared in the first half of the 1920s. This suggests that only the collections on 8mm and especially Super-8 (introduced in the mid-1960s) would have been made in the second half of the century. This clearly reflects a historical cycle whereby film collections are deposited with the institution only after having been passed onto the next generation after that of their creators. Nevertheless, it is troubling to note that the apparent awareness of the heritage value of these

collections among the wealthier classes (those who engaged in amateur filmmaking in the first half of the last century) did not spread equally to other classes once filmmaking became more widespread thanks to the more accessible formats. Needless to say, the advent of home video recorders made this problem alarmingly worse.

AMATEUR CINEMA IN FILMOTECA ESPAÑOLA: ACCESS AND DISSEMINATION

Despite its policy to archive amateur films since the late 1960s, Filmoteca Española has taken decades to draw attention to these collections and to develop an active policy for making them accessible. It has only been in the last few years that the film library has begun making more concerted efforts to develop initiatives with amateur films that would bring them off the shelves and onto screens. Notable among the strategies for making active use of the more interesting of these collections is a program implemented from 2018 to 2021 to curate and produce films based on non-professional or amateur home movies. This initiative involved the proposal of a collaboration between two individuals from different professional fields who did not usually work together in the interests of ensuring a balance between expertise in filmmaking technique and the fundamentals of academic research and analysis. These two people would take on the task of exploring the archives of Filmoteca Española, the network of public film libraries, and other archives and collections (especially those of private collectors and families) in an effort to locate home-made films dealing with the topics of Spain's transition to democracy, exile, and the colonial gaze. The research and material selection process triggered some vitally important dynamics of heritage management: digitisation of copies ensured less pressure on the original material associated with its use and would facilitate viewing and working with these images in the future; contact with the repositories of the material

chosen made it possible to collect information on the content of the films in the context of specific research, inevitably increasing the amount of contextual information on each film and fine-tuning its classification; and finally, if the material located was in the possession of private individuals, this open process helped initiate conversations that could lead to archival deposits or acquisitions, with the consequent enrichment of the collections preserved and accessible to the public. The ultimate objective of the research project proposed by Filmoteca Española was the production of a new film based on the footage chosen. Once complete, this new production would begin a new stage of dissemination in non-commercial professional contexts, ranging from film festivals to academic conferences.

With this approach, Filmoteca Española explored the possibility of expanding the scope of its heritage policies, especially in relation to cross-sectoral cooperation and visibility. In its nearly four years of activity, the program showed good results in each of these areas. Cross-sectoral cooperation was evident in the different departments of Filmoteca Española involved (collection management, digital lab, programming, communication and promotion) and the coordination with other archives, as well as the participation of sector professionals who generally collaborate externally on the more technical aspects of film production: editing, sound design, colour and graphics. In terms of visibility, the three films produced have been (and continue to be) exhibited at festivals and cultural centres, screened at the country's various public film libraries, and programmed as objects of discussion at seminars and conferences, both in Spain and internationally.³ All of this has brought home movie footage to screens that never would have been imagined by those who made the original films, and has raised awareness about the archive work of Filmoteca Española in places outside its usual dissemination channels and venues.

As mentioned above, of the three films resulting from the project, the last two constitute paradigmatic cases of working with images of mobility: in the case of *Diarios del exilio*, for what it says about Spanish exile through images filmed by Republican politicians and other Spaniards sympathetic to the Republican cause who were forced to flee Spain to avoid persecution, hardship or even execution after the victory of the Nationalist faction of the army led by Franco; and in *Memorias de ultramar*, for its images documenting the colonies, filmed between 1940 and 1975, mostly by Spaniards living in the last African territories still under Spanish rule. In addition to the issues discussed above, such as the common theme of mobility and the very different historical factors behind exile and colonialism, it is also important to consider these films from the perspective of historical memory and its imaginaries, as in the Spanish context this question is key for making sense of the different meanings of images of exile and of the colonies.

On this last point, it is necessary to return to the foundational moment of contemporary Spain: the transition to democracy. By the 1970s, the memory of exile had already become a highly topical question, and in the midst of the process of political change a number of innovative studies emerged, such as the research directed by José Luís Abellán (1976), published in several volumes under the title *El exilio español de 1939* [Spanish Exile of 1939]. The issue was even taken up in studies on Spanish cinema, such as Román Gubern's publication, also in 1976, titled *El cine español en el exilio* [Spanish Cinema in Exile]. In the political sphere, exiles also played a very important role in both practical and symbolic terms, and certain political and social movements of the period cannot be explained without them. For example, the President of the Catalan government, Josep Tarradellas, and the Basque *Lehendakari*, Jesús M. Leizola, were both still in exile when they began discussions in 1976 with the newly elected Span-

IT IS NECESSARY TO RETURN TO THE FOUNDATIONAL MOMENT OF CONTEMPORARY SPAIN: THE TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY. BY THE 1970S, THE MEMORY OF EXILE HAD ALREADY BECOME A HIGHLY TOPICAL QUESTION

ish prime minister, Adolfo Suárez, about potential changes to the country's regional affairs. Another example is the symbolic significance of the dissolution of the Spanish Republican government in exile and its embassy in Mexico in 1977, an act interpreted as a natural step towards the reconciliation of the Spanish people that was necessary to ensure the viability of Spain's new democratic project.⁴ In this same sense, the return to Spain of various prominent exiles (both Republicans and others), such as Salvador de Madariaga, Dolores Ibárruri, Rafael Alberti, Santiago Carrillo, Federica Montseny, Claudio Sánchez Albornoz, and Josep Tarradellas himself, was understood as a representation of the rapprochement between the two different Spains, culminating with the arrival in the country of Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* in 1981, the last exile, and another image of mobility.

On the other hand, Spain's recent colonial past did not receive the same level of political attention during the transition. Morocco and Equatorial Guinea had attained independence many years earlier and did not feature in the imaginaries or the political debates of the period. Conversely, the question of Western Sahara was a current issue at the time, appearing in the news, in the speeches and policies of the political parties, in the writings of critical cultural figures like Juan Goytisolo (Martínez Rubio, 2016), and in the works of collectives of visual artists linked to the radical left, such as La Familia Lavapiés and El Cubri. Nevertheless, the colonial question did not have the influence on the direction of the transition to democracy that exile did.⁵ On the contrary, the legacy of the colo-

nial relationship between Spain, Western Sahara, and the nation's other former African colonies has not received attention in terms of historical memory until much more recently. To understand the magnitude of this difference, we could take the example of cinema and consider how many exiles and how many people associated with Spain's colonial past in Africa took part in major documentaries on the transition, such as *Informe general* [General Report] (Pere Portabella, 1976), *La vieja memoria* [Old Memory] (Jaime Camino, 1978), *Entre la esperanza y el fraude* [Between Hope and Fraud] (Cooperativa de Cine Alternativo, 1979), *Dolores* (José Luis García Sánchez, Andrés Linares, 1981), or *Después de...* [After...] (Cecilia & José Juan Bartolomé, 1983). All these films feature the voices of exiles, some who have returned to Spain and others still living abroad, representing a milestone in the political movement towards democracy, while images of the colonies or testimonies related to the colonial past are entirely absent. The memory of colonial Africa would not begin to appear in cinema until much later, although it did resonate effectively in one pioneering film in the final years of the Franco dictatorship, *El desastre de Annual* [The Disaster of Annual] (Ricardo Franco, 1976). It would not be explored again until the release of titles such as Cecilia Bartolomé's *Black Island* (*Lejos de África*, 1996), and, after another long hiatus, Maria Ruido's *África 815* (Pilar Monsell, 2014) and *El ojo imperativo* [The Imperative Eye] (2015), both focusing on the case of Morocco, or projects like Laura Casielles' webdoc *Provincia 53* (2020) about Western Sahara, and Javier Fernández's *A Storm Was Coming* (*Anunciaron tormenta*, 2020) about Equatorial Guinea. The films *Diarios del exilio* and *Memorias de ultramar*, both of which will be discussed below, are intimately related to these different sensibilities of memory, and both their production processes and the narratives they invoke in the imaginaries of contemporary Spain tie in with the different genealogies of films outlined above.

Diarios del exilio is a documentary directed by the filmmaker and academic researcher Irene Gutiérrez.⁶ The film explores Republican exile with the aim of offering a broad picture of the issue, without adding specific data or information on the particular circumstances of the exiles featured or the places where the scenes occur. This place called exile includes settings in Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, Cuba, the United States, France, Italy, Austria, Switzerland, Norway, the United Kingdom, the USSR, Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, North Korea, and China. It is a setting in constant flux where, in contrast to the usual approach to exile, the filmmaker offers us no oral testimonies of those who left Spain during and after the Civil War, but instead shows fragments of their everyday lives, filmed by them or their family members as amateur filmmakers in non-commercial formats (9.5mm, Super-8 and 16mm film), all supported by a soundtrack that is equally fragmentary, as will be discussed below.

In the research process, the filmmaker consulted archives in the network of Spanish public film libraries⁷ and the Cineteca Nacional in Mexico, where she had access to various anonymous collections identified solely by the subject of exile, and others by individuals of political or cultural significance, such as the Basque *Lehendakari* José Antonio Aguirre, Catalan president Josep Tarradellas i Joan, the graphic designer Avel·li Artís Gener, the teacher Alejandra Soler and her translator husband Arnaldo Azzati, and the political leader Dolores Ibárruri, commonly known in Spain as *La Pasionaria* ("Passionflower"). Of all the footage featured in the film, the images of *La Pasionaria* are of the greatest significance for several reasons. Apart from the charisma of the woman herself and her historical importance as Secretary General and President of the Spanish Communist Party while in exile,⁸ her collection offers an open window through which we glimpse international icons of 20th-century political and cultural histo-

ry, such as Fidel Castro and Joan Báez, and important Spanish figures such as Santiago Carrillo and Ignacio Gallego. What is interesting about these individuals, however, is the fact that despite their political importance they all appear in a non-historical context, in ordinary situations far from the media spotlight, relaxing, talking casually at a table, taking a walk, sitting on a bench, riding a sled, playing with a pebble or getting their feet wet on the seashore with their trouser sleeves rolled up above their ankles.

As home movies filmed in exile, Dolores Ibárruri's collection of images is similar to those of other exiles, such as José Urraca Cristóbal and his family, who had similar historical and political reasons for their mobility. On the other hand, the symbolic and political significance of *La Pasionaria* is different and evokes a romantic mysticism associated with her that is not present when others appear on the screen, such as Soler-Azzati family, for example. Although she is not the only one with this aura in *Diarios del exilio*, as the appearance of Catalan president Lluís Companys or *Lehendakari* Aguirre produces similar effects, it is a quality that characterises images of Ibárruri in other films as well. A paradigmatic example of this is *La vieja memoria*, a film including original footage shot by Jaime Camino's film crew at her house in Moscow, which vests her with a humanity that the other politicians featured do not seem to have. And the same is true of *Dolores*, a film in which the interest in offering a gentler depiction of the character is more obvious. Fifty years later, *Diarios del exilio* establishes a link to that film through the evocation of memory and nostalgia around the same figure, perhaps magnified here through the use of family footage of the communist leader and through the central role she occupies in the film compared to the other people featured.

Beyond the images, the film evokes exile constantly through the soundtrack, whereby newly created elements, such as the music composed by Cristóbal Fernández (who was also responsible for

the sound design and editing), which propels the narrative forward, are combined with archival work that helps anchor what we see in its historical context. The reflections of the Republicans, the evocation of the distance and bleakness of the homeland, and the harsh conditions of exile resonate in the fragments of the old Republican standard “*Himno de Riego*”, the broadcasts of the communist radio station Radio Pirenaica, various declarations by Ibárruri addressed to emigrants, a speech by the Socialist Party leader Indalecio Prieto, the reading of the manifestos in support of political refugees, and even messages in the Basque language praising Basque culture.

Throughout the film, the personal and the collective components of the exile experience are interwoven into a single narrative. Elements familiar to exiles appear on screen in the form of traditions, parties, food, family interactions and leisure activities. However, the personal dimension of the narrative has more than a single face, as it appears with numerous nuances, given that *La Pasionaria*, Companys, Arnaldo Azzati, and José Urraca Cristóbal all have their own ways of celebrating or relaxing. This imbalance operates as a paradox, as it brings the collective memory triggered in *Diarios del exilio* closer to traditional narratives of history constructed on the basis of the experiences (albeit personal ones) of public figures with institutional status or significance, while the logic of a bottom-up history is nuanced throughout the film, despite relying on family collections for its construction. The memory of exile presented here is very close to the source of Spanish exiles’ political agency during the transition, in which the major documentaries of the period cited above also participated, turning an interest in exile, sympathy for its victims and respect for their memory into one of the generally accepted pillars of our democracy.

For the next edition of the program to promote Spain’s amateur film heritage, Filmoteca Española placed the focus on the colonial gaze, assign-

ing the research task to the film director Carmen Bellas and the art historian Alberto Berzosa. The guiding principle connecting the collections featured in *Memorias de ultramar* is the fact they were all filmed in African territories under Spanish control in different colonial contexts during the 20th century. This included the Protectorate of Morocco, which tied this country to Spain from 1912 to 1956, the city of Tangier, which was part of the Protectorate from June 1940 to October 1945, Spanish Guinea, comprising several colonies and islands in the Gulf of Guinea under Spanish rule from 1778 to 1968, and the Spanish Sahara, which was controlled by Spain from 1884 to 1975. The object of analysis was thus made up of images from a diverse range of geographical and cultural settings, connected by virtue of their relationship to a single metropolis. This was significant because, as in the case of exile, the aim was to offer a general portrait of the colonial gaze rather than to explore the specific conditions of each territory. Once again, it was an examination of a single theme based on material that reflected different individual histories.

But the material that gave shape to this film is different from that of *Diarios del exilio*. The first difference lies in the objective factors conditioning the mobility of those who filmed the footage, most of whom had left Spain for work reasons. Another is the greater degree of homogeneity between the collections in terms of the public prominence of their protagonists. Most of the films were made in family contexts by people who, although they were of significance to the local community given that many were landowners, business leaders and professionals with political profiles and institutional connections, never had the level of social significance of the exiles featured in *Diarios del exilio*. Two possible exceptions to this could be found in the collections of Armando Balboa and Nicolás Muller. Balboa was a politician with the National Liberation Movement of Equatorial Guinea (MONALIGE), one of the parties that formed part

THE IMAGES IN MEMORIAS DE ULTRAMAR ARE TAKEN FROM TEN DIFFERENT COLLECTIONS, SOME OF WHICH COME FROM THE ARCHIVES OF THE NETWORK OF PUBLIC FILM LIBRARIES,⁹ BUT ALSO FROM THE PRIVATE COLLECTIONS OF FORMER COLONISTS AND THEIR HEIRS WHO HAD THE ORIGINAL FILMS STASHED AWAY IN CLOSETS AND DRAWERS.

of the newly independent country's first government in 1968, and he also ended up becoming a victim of the repression of the dictator Francisco Macías just one year later. Muller was a photographer of Hungarian origin who shot several home movies in Tangier and other Moroccan cities while on an extended stay in the territory in the late 1940s. Neither of these two is highlighted in the film for his importance as a public figure. However, Balboa's collection does have one distinctive feature, as the protagonists of the footage are a mixed-race couple: the African Balboa and his middle-class Catalan wife, along with their children. Within the diegesis this collection represents a change in the direction of the gaze, as it is not the gaze of a regular colonist but of an African who was educated in the metropolis (in Barcelona) and then returned to his homeland to lead a new political movement, initially undercover and subsequently in power.

The images in *Memorias de ultramar* are taken from ten different collections, some of which come from the archives of the network of public film libraries,⁹ but also from the private collections of former colonists and their heirs who had the original films stashed away in closets and drawers. Some of these private collections, such as those of Miguel Vives Munné, Antonio Portabella-Camps, and Ana María Amparo García Vázquez, ended up being donated to the Filmoteca Española archives. Access to these films and

to other similar footage that was not ultimately included in the work was made possible by the process of reconstructing the networks of former colonists and natives through blogs, Facebook pages, institutions and cultural centres,¹⁰ as well as the diaries of employees in official agencies and researchers with experience working on Guinea, Morocco, Tangier, or Western Sahara.

After locating, viewing and selecting the footage, three main themes were identified for the articulation of a story of life in the colonies: a relationship with nature that oscillates between fascination and the desire to dominate it; the persistence of common traditions related to celebrations, cuisine and leisure activities; and the emphasis on the identification of an "us" (white European settlers of the upper or upper-middle class) and a "them" (racialised native Africans of the lower classes). The narrative objective of the film was to offer a general picture of life in the colonies, while also capturing the diverse nuances of the different territories and individual experiences. To do this, it was essential to underscore certain recurring motifs based on these main themes. Without historicising pretensions, the narrative also aims to offer some idea of the chronological evolution of the colonies, from the first arrival of the Spaniards through to their final departure. To this end, images of arrivals by sea and air are shown in the first few minutes, while the ending is organised around other aerial shots of the Sahara Desert alluding to the abandonment of the province in 1975.

The soundtrack also plays a key role in this film, as it was decided to give uniformity to the images with a sound design created by Juan Carlos Blancas that functions as a kind of soundscape. This strategy unifies the fragments, serving to underscore recurring features that contribute to the narrative flow. It also denaturalises the images because they are not realistically related to what we hear, which is also quite different from the stereotypical sounds of exotic settings. Only one

narration was included, taken from original recordings with the footage provided by Ana María Amparo García Vázquez, as the way the speaker presents the characters is also appropriate for situating the general action of the film.

Memorias de ultramar effectively brings to the screen a reality that does not form part of the mainstream collective imaginary of our country: the reality of the Spanish colonies in Africa. Colonial memory in Spain is much more closely associated with the countries of Latin America, whose processes of decolonisation and subsequent cooperation have a longer history and are more naturalised. Moreover, Spain's current relations with Western Sahara, Equatorial Guinea Ecuatorial and Morocco represent diplomatic challenges that often threaten to descend into political conflicts affecting Spain's interests, particularly in terms of fishing policy, migration, national security, political exile and energy dependence. The fact that relations with these former colonies constitute ongoing political issues today complicates the development of a colonial memory in strictly historical terms. *Memorias de ultramar*, along with the other two recently produced films discussed above, participates in a newly established process to articulate a discourse of memory related to Spain's colonies in Africa, and it forms part of a recent and more problematic genealogy as it presently lacks a general consensus to support it.

CONCLUSION

It can be considered a success of the so-called critical institutionalism today that the call made with the heritage turn of the 1980s is being answered. Beyond the change of focus, implementing cultural and heritage policies of substance represents a practical challenge that Filmoteca Española has been rising to now for decades. In the last five years, these efforts have also centred on a type of filmmaking that needs special attention in terms of heritage, given its traditionally precarious na-

ture in institutional terms: amateur film. In itself, this type of film is elusive and complicated to manage due to questions related to people's right to privacy and to control over their own image under Spanish law (Ley Orgánica 1/1982, de 5 de mayo) and even to the legal definition of the films in these collections as "cinematic works" (Real Decreto Legislativo 1/1996, de 12 de abril), a concept more traditionally associated with the world of copyright protection for commercial films. This added complexity gives rise to certain problems for the conception and development of ways of facilitating access to such material and expanding its audience. A further complication is the neglect that films like these have suffered historically, which far too often has exacerbated the deterioration of the film reels due to the inadequate conditions under which they have been stored.

In the specific case studied here, there is the added variable of mobility in the origins of the films, which complicates matters even further, especially when that mobility is the product of exile, as in the case of the Republicans after the Civil War, or due to the colonial logic of Francoist Spain in the period when the great empires of the past (with European metropolises) had effectively been reduced to a few dying embers.

With images filmed in the mid-20th century from the perspective of the physical and emotional fragility of homelessness, in private settings with family and friends, the collections related to exile and to the African colonies held in the amateur film archives of Filmoteca Española constitute highly sensitive material. The recent efforts made by the institution to explore this complex heritage have had a number of positive consequences both in terms of the preservation and expansion of the collections and in relation to access and dissemination.

Of course, the work of public heritage institutions like Filmoteca Española is not immune to the social and historical complexities and culture wars that always come into play in such circum-

stances. Added to the usual complications associated with cultural and heritage management is its relationship to complex realities of national identity that are still disputed today, such as the memory of Republican Spain and the country's recent colonial history. In this context, the Filmoteca Española program launched in 2018 to work with amateur films, reviewing Spain's transition to democracy from a bottom-up perspective through footage shot by ordinary people, posed the challenge of working with images of mobility in the form of exile and colonialism. The work undertaken in 2019 and 2020 facilitated the identification, classification, restoration and digitisation of film reels of very diverse origins, some of which have since come to form part of the catalogue of films available to future researchers. At the same time, it initiated creative processes that gave rise to two new productions: *Diarios del exilio* and *Memorias de ultramar*. Both films are inscribed in specific traditions in the history of Spanish cinema, albeit in unexpected ways, based on footage that had not been taken with the idea of being useful outside the households, political circles or generations of those who filmed them. Moreover, this amateur filmmaking is characterised by another paradox that serves as a kind of moral to the story: through their mobile, almost de-territorialised nature and even through the nostalgia elicited by their disconnection from their settings (even when those settings may be fascinating from a Eurocentric colonial perspective), these films bring images into our present that offer new angles on questions as theoretically static as the essence and roots of Spanish identity. The questioning of these supposedly immutable principles through the gaze of exiles and colonists can only be understood from the perspective of a better and broader understanding of the diverse range of recent historical processes that continue to have an impact on our present. ■

NOTES

- 1 This article has been written in the context of the research projects "Fossil Aesthetics: A Political Ecology of Art History, Visual Culture and the Cultural Imaginaries of Modernity" (PIE ref. 202010E005), coordinated by the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC), and "Cartographies of Cinema of Mobility in the Hispanic Atlantic" (CSO2017-85290-P), financed by the Ministry of Science and Innovation - State Research Agency, and the European Regional Development Fund.
- 2 The figures shown in the table form part of the research conducted at Filmoteca Española's Preservation and Restoration Centre for the Film Library Conference held in Pamplona on 22 and 23 November 2021 and were presented in a talk by Marián del Egidio and Josetxo Cerdán at that conference.
- 3 Venues where the films were screened include the Beijing International Film Festival (China), the Curtas Vila du Conde International Film Festival (Portugal), the *Rencontres Transfrontalières des Associations de la Mémoire historique, démocratique et antifasciste* (France), the *Colloque Hispanística XX: Empreintes d'ailleurs* (France), Centro Cultural Español in Buenos Aires (Argentina), the *Festival Etnovideográfico Internacional del Museo de Castilla y León* (Spain), Cineteca de Madrid (Spain), Casa Árabe (Madrid), and the Spanish film libraries in the regions of Galicia, Navarra, Zaragoza, Castilla y León, Valencia, and Andalusia.
- 4 Victoria Kent described the closure of the Republican Embassy in these terms in a column for the Spanish daily newspaper *El País* in 1977 (quoted in De Oliveira Acosta & Ortín Ramón, 1996: 225).
- 5 However, Javier Tusell and Genoveva G. Queipo de Llano (2003: 217-232) suggest that the issue of Western Sahara did at least serve as a pretext for King Juan Carlos I to begin exercising political autonomy and for Francoist Spain's last prime minister, Arias Navarro, to hold onto leadership.

- 6 Gutiérrez was supported in this research by Julián Etienne, an academic and programmer in Mexico, although it was Gutiérrez who ultimately gave the piece its final form.
- 7 The libraries in question were Filmoteca Española, Filmoteca Andaluza, Filmoteca de Catalunya, La Filmoteca - Institut Valencià de Cultura, Euskadiko Filmategia - Filmoteca Vasca, and Filmoteca de Canarias.
- 8 She was General Secretary of the party from 1942 to 1960, when Santiago Carrillo took over the leadership, and from that time she held the title of president until her death in 1989.
- 9 In this case, only from Filmoteca Española and La Filmoteca - Institut Valencià de Cultura. It is important to bear in mind that the project only really got up and running at the end of 2019 and its progress was severely affected by the lockdowns caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This affected the project participants' ability to consult the collections of different film archives, as well as their mobility and the pace of the work. The original plan was for the project to be presented in October 2020, but in the end this took place in March 2021.
- 10 Casa África, Centro Cultural de España in Malabo, Biblioteca Islámica del AECID, La Medina, Casa Árabe, Instituto Cervantes (Headquarters), and its branches in Tunisia and Tangier-Tetouan, Casa Sefarad-Israel, and Hermandad de las Tropas Nómadas.

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EXILES AND COLONISTS IN THE FIRST PERSON: THE FAMILY ARCHIVE AND ITS RECENT (RE) WRITINGS IN SPAIN

Abstract

Filmoteca Española has among its amateur film collections some very special collections in terms of mobility: films shot during the central decades of the 20th century in Republican exile and in the African colonies. These are very particular cultural products with a controversial historical character and complex conditions of management, conservation and dissemination by the institution. This article will first describe the particularities shared by both types of mobility images and will trace the lines that distinguish them. Then, the policies that have been carried out by Filmoteca Española for their conservation and dissemination are analysed; for this purpose, the research and curatorial programme implemented between 2018 and 2021 to recover these parcels of history by working with amateur images located in the archive's collection will be especially taken into account. Finally, we will analyse the two pieces produced within the framework of this programme related to exile and the colonies: *Diarios del exilio* (Irene Gutiérrez, 2029) and *Memorias de Ultramar* (Carmen Bellas and Alberto Berzosa, 2020).

Key words

Hobby Film; Film Archive; Exile; Colony; Memory.

Authors

Alberto Berzosa holds an European PhD in Art History and Theory. He works in the space where contemporary art, Film studies, political archives and curatorship intersect. He is the author of books such as *Cine y sexopolítica* (Brumaria, 2020), *Homoherejías Filmicas* (Brumaria, 2014) and *Cámara en mano contra el franquismo* (Al Margen, 2009). He has also curated some exhibitions such as «Madrid Activismos 1968-1982» at La Casa Encendida or «Sexopolíticas del cine marginal. Years 70 and 80» at the Institut Valencià d'Art Modern. He is currently a member of the project «Aesthetics Fossil» of the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC). Contact: alberto.berzosa@gmail.com

Josetxo Cerdán Los Arcos holds a PhD in Audiovisual Communication from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. He has been Associate Professor at the same university (2003-2008) and at the Universitat Rovira i Virgili (2008-2015). He is currently Professor of Audiovisual Communication Department of Communication at the Universidad Carlos III de Madrid since 2017. Since September 2018 he has held the position of Director at Filmoteca Española. In parallel to his work as a teacher and researcher, Cerdán has also carried out other tasks such as the direction of the Navarra International Documentary Film Festival (2010-2013) or the development of film

EXILIADOS Y COLONOS EN PRIMERA PERSONA: EL ARCHIVO FAMILIAR Y SUS (RE)ESCRITURAS RECIENTES EN ESPAÑA

Resumen

Filmoteca Española cuenta entre sus colecciones de cine aficionado con unos fondos muy especiales en términos de movilidad: películas filmadas durante las décadas centrales del siglo XX en el exilio republicano y en las colonias africanas. Se trata de productos culturales muy particulares con un carácter histórico polémico y unas complejas condiciones de gestión, conservación y difusión por parte de la institución. En este artículo, en primer lugar, se describen las particularidades que comparten ambos tipos de imágenes de movilidad y se trazan las líneas que las distinguen. Después, se analizan las políticas que se han llevado a cabo desde Filmoteca Española con vistas a su conservación y difusión, para lo cual se tendrá especialmente en cuenta el programa de investigación y comisariado implementado entre 2018 y 2021, con objeto de recuperar estas parcelas de la historia a partir del trabajo con imágenes de aficionado encontradas en los fondos de su archivo. Por último, se analizan las dos piezas producidas en el marco de este programa relacionadas con el exilio y las colonias: *Diarios del exilio* (Irene Gutiérrez, 2029) y *Memorias de Ultramar* (Carmen Bellas, Alberto Berzosa, 2020).

Palabras clave

Cine aficionado; archivo fílmico; exilio; colonia; memoria.

Autores

Alberto Berzosa es doctor Europeo en Historia y Teoría del Arte. Trabaja en el espacio donde se intersectan el arte contemporáneo, la historia del cine español, los archivos de carácter político y la curaduría. Es autor de los libros *Cine y sexopolítica* (Brumaria, 2020), *Homoherejías Filmicas* (Brumaria, 2014) y *Cámara en mano contra el franquismo* (Al Margen, 2009). También ha comisariado exposiciones como «Madrid Activismos 1968-1982», en La Casa Encendida, o «Sexopolíticas del cine marginal. Años 70 y 80», en el Institut Valencià d'Art Modern. Es miembro del grupo de investigación Estética Fósil del Instituto de Historia del CSIC. Contacto: alberto.berzosa@gmail.com

Josetxo Cerdán Los Arcos es doctor en Comunicación Audiovisual por la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. Ha sido profesor titular en la misma universidad (2003-2008) y en la Universitat Rovira i Virgili (2008-2015). Actualmente, y desde 2017, es catedrático de Comunicación Audiovisual en el Departamento de Comunicación de la Universidad Carlos III de Madrid. Desde septiembre de 2018, ocupa el cargo de director en Filmoteca Española. En paralelo a su labor como docente e investigador, también ha llevado a cabo otras tareas como la dirección del Festival Internacional de Cine Documental

programmes for various national and international institutions such as the Locarno International Film Festival (2009), the Anthology Film Archive (2013), or the Lincoln Center (2014). Contact: josetxo.cerdan@cultura.gob.es

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de Navarra (2010-2013) o la elaboración de programas cinematográficos para varias instituciones nacionales e internacionales, como el Festival Internacional de Cine de Locarno (2009), el Anthology Film Archive (2013), o el Lincoln Center (2014). Contacto: josetxo.cerdan@cultura.gob.es

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