

►01

A RETROSPECTIVE OF NEIGHBOURHOOD CINEMAS

***Rouch, un noir* (2004)**
by Isaki Lacuesta and Sérgio Dies



Centric Cinema, Cine Padró, Cine Rondas, Cine Monumental, Cine Diana, Cine Arnau, Cine Argentina, Cine Edén, Cine Oriente... some of the cinemas that have existed in the Raval during the course of the twentieth century. Neighbourhood cinemas, each distinct from one another, catering for diverse audiences, changing over the years, until finally closing their doors. None remain today. Without wishing to drift into nostalgia, taking a retrospective look at these cinemas and spaces that shaped the life of the neighbourhood should serve as an opportunity to examine our current reality and the significance we attribute to culture.

In *Rouch, un noir* (*Rouch, a Negro*, 2004), a portrait of French director and anthropologist Jean Rouch filmed by Sergi Dies and Isaki Lacuesta, it is precisely on the basis of that significance that he questions us. He points to some ruined buildings on the fledgling Illa Robadors and says that they represent cultural decay: a house that serves no purpose, but from which the future will re-emerge. According to the two filmmakers, the ruined building was to become the new headquarters of the Filmoteca de Catalunya, once again returning to the Raval having previously been based at Cine Padró on Carrer de la Cera between 1978 and 1981 when it was the National Filmoteca.



In front of that ruined building is the home where Aida had lived until she was forced out. She knows all the old neighbourhood cinemas, as do Olimpia, Maria, Nati, Julia, Herminia, Regina, Isabel and Montse, all fellow Raval local residents and users of the Josep Trueta and Josep Tarradellas municipal day centres for the elderly. Aida talks about the cinemas as community spaces: "There were fleas, there were nits [...]. Yes, there was poverty, but there was a warmth to the cinemas, it was a different story. And you could leave your children and knew the usher would keep an eye on them... that was a blessing!"

But, if the cinemas of the Raval had any defining quality, it was the hallmark characteristic of being part of a neighbourhood buzzing with local entertainments and amusements. Something that film has captured to perfection. In scenes such as the final chase at the Apolo amusement park in *Apartado de Correos 1001* (*PO Box 1001*, 1950) by Julio Salvador, or the Carmen de Mairena performances at the London Bar in *Barrio Chino* (*Chinatown*, 1990) by Morando and Gherardo Morandini. In these memoirs, intersections between attractions, cuplé and neighbourhood cinemas, we find a starting point from which to question the present. But the relationship between film and the Raval is not limited to its cinemas. Segundo de Chomón lived and worked at 61 Carrer de Poniente (now Carrer de Joaquim Costa) in Barcelona from 1896 to 1905, during the expansion of cinema, where he set up a film lighting workshop for cinematographers.

Plaça de Salvador Seguí
We are in the Plaça de Salvador Seguí square, the site of the Filmoteca de Catalunya's new headquarters, opened in 2012. The iconic Fernando Rus Hardware Store used to be located at number 68 Carrer de Sant Pau, renowned as the go-to place for the sale of photographic and cinematographic products since 1881. Cine Argentina stood close by on the same street, opening its doors in 1914. It would later change its name to Cine Florida, a few years before being destroyed by Italian bomber planes during the Spanish Civil War.

Don't miss the film clip and interview, which can be accessed using



►02

LOCAL HEALTH SPECIALISTS

***Mónica del Raval* (2009)**
by Francesc Betriu



In the words of Antonia Raya, a nurse at the Raval Nord primary care centre, community health, "is everything that goes on in the community in relation to caring for people; understanding what's happening in the local area, what the needs are and what we can contribute as an additional agent." A good example of the way *community health* is articulated is seen in the film *Monica del Raval* (2009) by Francesc Betriu, which presents a portrait of the life of this iconic local figure based on conversations with the support network around her: friends, customers, neighbours, shop owners, as well as healthcare professionals from the Drassanes primary care centre.

In this film, which talks about people being evicted from their homes and the problems associated with being a sex worker of a certain age, we see how housing and work act as determinants of health. Marcelo Covelo, who, like Antonia, forms part of the community health group at the Raval Nord centre, tells us about *Monica del Raval*: "In the scene at the hair salon, the interaction she has with her neighbour who says, 'Save your money, Monica!' is ultimately an example of that network and of community health. [...] And it also contributes to our mental health, our emotional health; the simple fact that Monica feels part of the neighbourhood probably makes her feel happier about living where she lives and working where she works, and probably safer".

It is important to remember that sex workers have always been, and still are, very important community health agents within local neighbourhoods. This is exemplified in the documentary film, *Petons a Robadors* (*Kisses in Robadors*, 2020) by Fotomovimien-to and Espais Crítics, in which members of the Putas Libertarias del Raval sex workers' collective are interviewed alongside other local residents. In fact, much of the filmography about the district can be analysed on the basis of this health paradigm. This is the case of *Sinatra* (1988), also by Francesc Betriu, in which the problem of loneliness and aging is addressed in a performance by Alfredo Landa.

From Monica to the primary care community health teams, there is a clear need to take a holistic approach to health in the Raval, without ignoring the structural causes behind our ailments and illnesses. Cinema often offers us fresh perspectives from which to examine this issue.

Carrer de l'Hospital, 61
We are at the corner of Carrer de l'Hospital and Junta de Comerç, which is now home to Bar Mendizábal, but, up until 2015, was where we could find the hair salon frequented by Ramona Coronado, aka Mónica, to tend to the blonde locks on which her famous crown rested. A place for conversation and self-care, hair salons play a vital role in community health.

Don't miss the film clip and interview, which can be accessed using the QR code!



►03

INHABITING THE STREETS AND THE SQUARES

***Ocaña, retrat intermitent* (1978)**
by Ventura Pons



"You ask me why I walk around naked on the street. Well, I'd like to know why people wear clothes," says Ocaña. Next, we see him dressed as a transvestite, surrounded by friends and onlookers as he walks down La Rambla exposing his genitals and backside. This is *Ocaña, retrat intermitent* (*Ocana, an Intermittent Portrait*, 1978), the first film Ventura Pons ever made, a film about José Pérez Ocaña, painter, performer, activist and one of the most influential figures of the post-Dictatorship underground scene.

Raval transvestite and activist, Translocura, models himself on Ocaña, positioned within a modern day transfeminist theoretical framework to question how we "perform" gender in public space. And how does he do that? By taking transvestism off the stage, onto the streets and into his work as a nurse, with the aim of normalising differences. "How many of the people around him

[Ocaña] would have felt identified and said: 'Look, if he can, I can too.' [...] It's taking public space as it is, public, and starting to add other ideas beyond those placed on us by heteronormativity. A complete inspiration. Great momma, Ocaña!"

La Plaza (2016), by Lola Clavo, complements the Ventura Pons' film. The filmmaker provides an account of the memories and everyday life of families, both chosen and biological, in an environment close to Ocaña himself, while letting us glimpse the restrictions associated with understanding space on the basis of public-private binarism. Urban art represents another form of subverting the established uses of streets and squares. The Raval district possesses its own highly valuable audiovisual document of the day the American artist Keith Haring, surrounded by the children from Carrer d'En Robador, created his painting, *Todos juntos podemos parar el sida* (*Together We Can Stop AIDS*, 1989) in the Plaça de Salvador Seguí square, where the Filmoteca de Catalunya is now based.

Public space in the Raval has always been a contentious issue. It is, as such, a sphere of political potentialities with regard to its uses and the ways in which the people there coexist, where film serves as another transformational tool. The streets and squares, from Plaça Reial to that of Salvador Seguí, do not merely serve as a backdrop to the filmography set in a neighbourhood district, but, in fact, represent a constituent part.

Plaça Reial
We find ourselves in Plaça Reial, the space where this intermittent portrait begins and ends, where Ocaña and some of his circle of friends used to live. Why are we here when the Raval is the focus of our route? The boundaries that delimit different neighbourhoods are dynamic and often creep across the administrative divisions. The area known as the barri Xino (*Chinatown*) did not always correspond to the borders of today's Raval district which, as the film shows here, also encompassed part of the Gothic Quarter as well.

Don't miss the film clip and interview, which can be accessed using the QR code!



►04

A DISTRICT OF CINEMATIC ARCHETYPES

***Distrito Quinto* (1958)**
by Julio Coll



The cop and the criminal, the bohemian and the sex worker, the anarchist and the fugitive. The Raval has always been, and still is, an area characterised by archetypes and recurring themes... Perhaps to an excessive degree? It is a categorisation that has accompanied the area and its literary portrayal since its very beginnings. A factor that, in the case of film, is hard to miss when you see that a considerable proportion of its filmography consists of films belonging to the police genre of the 1950s and 1960s, where the Raval was singled out as the perfect backdrop to scenes of violence loaded with seduction and with the obligatory moralist patina demanded by the dictators-hip.

It is for that reason that, besides the title, the only spatial reference that appears in *Distrito quinto* (*Fifth District*, 1958) by Julio Coll places the apartment where the action takes place on the street now known as Carrer Nou de la Rambla. By setting the action in the Raval the aim is to convey information with connotations that go far beyond a simple street name. These are the same connotations which Dipti Niroula, a student at Institut Miquel Tarradell, rails against when he says, "I'd like film to show the Raval where people support each other, where people work and do things as a community, where they



fight for their rights, without criminal activity, the support between different cultures... The good things. Not a better, but an accurate image of the neighbourhood."

Far from an image based on a specific moment in time, this kind of imagery has persisted in films, such as *Susanna* (1996) by Antonio Chavarrias, in which, forty years on, we still find the same ingredients: organised crime, infidelities, sexual violence and, finally, a case of femicide. But, do these fictional works have the potential to shape real life? The trial depicted by Joaquim Jordà in *De nens* (2003) serves as a good example, highlighting the fact that the political mechanisms responsible for pursuing urban reform is based on the stigmatisation of the entire population of the Raval over the course of decades.

How should the "fifth district", the *barri Xino* or the Raval be portrayed? Moving beyond moralistic or simplistic opinion on these kinds of portrayals, which also contain a degree of truth, we could question whether such portrayals do not also go some way towards scripting the lives of the residents of a neighbourhood whose fate, simply by living there, seems to have been preordained. Some keys to interpretation are found in *Vivim el barri*, an educational project run by the Filmoteca de Catalunya in collaboration with La Selva in which fifteen young people, of which Dipti was one, made three short films about the Raval.

Carrer Nou de la Rambla, 42
We are in front of the building where Distrito quinto was set, home to boarding houses, flamenco academies and, also, a safe house. This choice of location was no accident: Carrer Nou de la Rambla, then known as Carrer del Conde del Asalto, has been infamous since the end of the nineteenth century. Nicknamed "the road of sin", it runs between La Rambla and Parallel.

Don't miss the film clip and interview, which can be accessed using the QR code!



►05

DESTRUCTION AND CONSTRUCTION OF A RIGHT SUCH AS HOUSING

***En construcción* (2001)**
by José Luis Guerin



The film *En construcción* (*Work in Progress*, 2001) captures a defining moment in the district's history. Rita González, who had previously lived in Carrer de Sadurn before having to move to Carrer de Santa Elena as a result of the construction of the Illa Robadors, likens the situation to *Bienvenido, Mister Marshall!*, with the majority of the local residents believing, "They are going to give us amazing apartments!" According to her, once the works were complete, what the neighbourhood gained in space, it lost in terms of spirit and sense of community, with those who had promised the *amazing apartments* sparking the speculative processes that still plague residents today.

As it is today, the issue of access to housing, encompassing the entire process of eviction and the coexistence of old and new residents, was of paramount importance. José Luis Guerin conveys this in an intimate and simple way throughout his film, depicting the demolition of whole buildings, the construction of new apartments and the moment of sale, following the day-to-day life of a variety of people: an elderly former sailor, the construction workers building the flats on Carrer de les Carretes and Juani and Ivan, directly affected by the evictions.

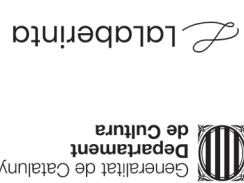


The right to housing is an omnipresent theme running through the filmography on the Raval: evictions, hostels, forced cohabitation and sublet flats. In Ignasi F. Iquino's classic film *Juventud a la intemperie* (*The Unsatisfied*, 1961), two police officers are seen speaking at a local police station: "The usual, arguments between subletters [...]." / "Yes. Why can't they find a solution to the awful housing problem..." / "It'll only take him a few days in the neighbourhood to realise that that's at the root of ninety percent of the problems we come up against here." The range of scenarios within this reality is depicted in *Raval, Raval...* (2006) by Antoni Verdager, a film that depicts the same point in time as *En construcción*, but that fictionalises a multitude of stories, all of them marked, to a greater or lesser extent, by the right to housing.

Juani and Ivan are just a few of the many residents who have been impacted by local policies on access to housing throughout the district's history. It is an issue that remains highly relevant today in light of the housing emergency currently affecting the lives of many of the residents of the Raval and across the city. Cinema has never shied away from this situation and, in fact, all the films presented as part of this route at some point highlight an unjust reality that affects us all.

Carrer de Sant Pau, 99
Although *En construcción* (*Work in Progress*, 2001) is typically associated with the Rambla del Raval, much of the film was shot in the new apartment blocks on Carrer de les Carretes. The skip full of demolitions rubble from which a local woman retrieves a painting of a house was located just a few metres from here.

Don't miss the film clip and interview, which can be accessed using the QR code!



The corresponding route bibliography and filmography is available in the Film Library.

A project curated by LaLaberita as part of the celebrations commemorating ten years of the Filmoteca in the Raval. In collaboration with designer, Ona Torres i Marnugat.

A huge thank you to all the people and groups who participated in the project, as well as to the exploitation rights holders of the various works included.

Portrait, 1978) © Ocaña, retrat intermitent (Ocana, an Intermittent

FILM ROUTE RAVAL

Images that reveal a neighbourhood



FILM ROUTE RAVAL

Images that reveal a neighbourhood

What can a film made in the 1950s teach us about Barcelona's Raval district today? How can a film shot twenty years ago be interpreted in modern times? What dialogues are established between the cinematographic portrayal of this neighbourhood and its realities?

In celebration of the Filmoteca de Catalunya's tenth anniversary in the Raval, we present a physical and virtual route that links film, local communities and entities to reveal a map of shared meanings with respect to the filmography associated with the area. By looking at a selection of iconic films, such as *Distrito quinto* (*Fifth District*, 1958) and *En construcción* (*Work in Progress*, 2001), we reflect on the issues that affect the lives of local residents, such as community health, the use of public space and the right to housing. The result is a collaborative map that illustrates the way in which film generates realities and realities

