Collective Cinema, Collective Heritage: Alternative Practices, Political Memories and Archival Futures

Activate WP4 // Online seminar 4 // November 27, 2026

The fourth seminar of the *Alternative Media and Digital Activism* work package of the MCSA Project *The Activist, the Archivist, and the Researcher: Novel Collaborative Strategies of Transnational Research, Archiving and Exhibiting Social and Political Dissent in Europe* (aka ACTIVATE) explores the diverse forms, historical trajectories, and archival afterlives of collective practices in cinema. Moving beyond conventional definitions of film collectives as explicitly militant or politically organised groups, the seminar examines how collective approaches to filmmaking, education, cultural activism, and audiovisual preservation have emerged, evolved, and intersected across different geographical, political, and institutional contexts.

From participatory filmmaking in educational environments to feminist and countercultural experiments, collective practices have challenged established models of authorship, artistic production, and cultural transmission. Yet these practices have rarely existed outside institutional frameworks or economic constraints. Their histories reveal complex relationships between creative autonomy and institutional support, political engagement and cultural recognition, collaborative ideals and the material conditions of collective labour. How have such tensions shaped the organisation, circulation, and reception of collectively produced films? And how might historical experiences of collective filmmaking inform contemporary attempts to develop alternative forms of artistic collaboration?

The seminar also turns to the archival lives of these practices, questioning how films and their associated documentation are preserved, interpreted, and transformed into cultural heritage. Rather than approaching archives merely as repositories of past collective experiences, it considers archiving itself as a potentially collective, participatory, and politically engaged activity. From grassroots preservation initiatives to the institutionalisation of independent audiovisual archives, these practices raise questions about cultural memory, access to heritage, and the uneven distribution of resources and expertise.

Bringing together historical research, archival perspectives, and practice-based reflections from different parts of the world, the seminar seeks to reconsider the boundaries of collective cinema and the changing relationships between filmmaking, political agency, and cultural heritage. In doing so, it invites a broader reflection on how collective practices not only leave traces in archives but also actively shape the ways in which cinematic histories are remembered, transmitted, and reactivated.

Achilleas Papakonstantis (Cinémathèque suisse)
Oksana Sarkisova (CEU/Blinken OSA Archivum)
François Vallotton (UNIL/Centre des sciences historiques de la culture)

9.30 am

Welcome and ACTIVATE introduction

9.45 am

PANEL 1

Davide Bianchi
University of Pisa, Italy
Amateur film collectives as independent agents of media pedagogy. The “Gruppo Cinema Albisola” as participatory educational experience (1969-1975 ca.)

Gintaré Bidlauskiené
Independent researcher, Lithuania
Reactivating Countercultural Memory: The Arturas Barysas-Baras Archive and the Legacy of Soviet Amateur Cinema

Break (10 min)

Marie-Charlotte Techené
Independent researcher, France
Revoir Anne Claire Poirier à la lumière du programme En tant que femmes nous-mêmes

Aline Bonvin, Sver Immel, Irene Izquierdo, Hanna Prenzel Hanna
collectives Kinokas, Process Institute, TINT, and Filmuniversität Babelsberg
Between Resistance and Contradiction - Filming Collectively Across Time

General Discussion

12.00 pm - **LUNCH BREAK**

1.15 pm

PANEL 2

Mohammadali Mansourian Mohammadali & Tuba Mozafari
Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran
From Collective Filmmaking to Cinematic Heritage: Archival Afterlives and Cultural Memory in the Dziga Vertov Group and Fereydoun Rahnema’s Cinema

Martino Cipriani
Bangkok University
Collective Action and Grassroots Resistance: Preserving Myanmar's Film Heritage

Stéphanie Ange
Diazinteregio Network, France
The film collectives behind the regional film archives - 1970-2025

General Discussion and Conclusion

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The workshop is open to public upon registration and takes place online. To register please send an email expressing your interest and specifying your name and institutional affiliation to **acces@cinematheque.ch** with subject **Activate WP Seminar 4** by 20 November, 2026.

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