

# 1978. The Referendum. Forms of the Constitution

The conflict between citizen and State was an aesthetic – and of course political – debate that ran clean through the Transition. Between 1976 and 1978, city walls and counterculture magazines debated the limits of parliamentary democracy, as though they were a parallel constituent assembly. Elsewhere, the language of the State and new techniques of marketing and political communication would coalesce in the different formats of the Constitution displayed publicly.



The myriad publications intended to inform the general public of the new legislation reveal an effort to visually smooth over their authoritarian origins, which is why they required the concurrence of light-humour illustrators such as Forges, Manuel Montalvo and José Ramón. The distance between the State and citizens was expressed in graffiti and murals, aptly documented by sociologists and photojournalists at the time; walls offered the chance to take a stance, although significantly large in number were the critical voices aimed in the direction of the vertical and technocratic nature of political reforms, and particularly loud in the 1976 and 1978 Referendums. The language of graffiti, influenced by May '68, demanded citizen participation and another model of culture and the city, with its polyphonic text, collectively replicated and modulated, opposing censorship's strikethroughs and combatting strategies of commercial advertising.

Similarly, the lack of any questioning of civil society was called out in magazines like *Viejo Topo*, *Herria Zutik* and, most notably, *Ajoblanco*, their pages criticising the new Constitution and its absence of citizen participation in its formulation and articles, the organic centrality of political parties in its drafting and State model, and its disregard for the right to self-determination, the status of women and marginalised people.