

# **blueprint circuits: conceptual art and politics in latin america**

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**Circuit: . . . a course around a periphery . . . space enclosed within a circumference . . . a system for two-way communication.<sup>1</sup>**

In 1972, taking stock of the status of Conceptual art in Western countries, the Spanish art historian Simón Marchán Fiz observed the beginnings of a tendency toward “ideological conceptualism” emerging in peripheral societies such as Argentina and Spain.<sup>2</sup> This version of Conceptual art came on the heels of the controversial propositions about the nature of art and artistic practice introduced in the mid-1960s by the North Americans Robert Barry, Mel Bochner, Douglas Huebler, Joseph Kosuth, Sol LeWitt, and Lawrence Weiner, as well as the British group Art & Language. These artists investigated the nature of the art object as well as the institutional mechanisms that support it, and their results tended to de-emphasize or eliminate the art object in favor of the process or ideas underlying it. North American Conceptual artists also questioned the role of museums and galleries in the promotion of art, its market status, and its relationship with the audience. This exposure of the functions of art in both social and cultural circuits has significantly redefined contemporary artistic practice over the last thirty years.

For Marchán Fiz, the distinguishing feature of the Spanish and Argentine forms of Conceptualism was extending the North American critique of the institutions and practices of art to an analysis of political and social issues. At the same time when he made these observations, the radical edge of North American Conceptual art's critique was obscured by the generalizing, reductive posture of Kosuth's "art-as-idea-as-idea."<sup>3</sup> In Kosuth's model the artwork as conceptual proposition is reduced to a tautological or self-reflexive statement. He insisted that art consists of nothing other than the artist's idea of it, and that art can claim no meaning outside itself. Marchán Fiz contrasted the rigidity of this self-referential, analytical model with the potential of "ideological conceptualism" to reveal political and social realities. For artists, he saw in this hybrid version of Conceptualism the possibility of an exit from the tautological impasse which, in his view, had deadlocked the practice of Conceptual art by 1972.

In Latin America Marchán Fiz was referring specifically to the Argentine Grupo do los Trece, but the version of Conceptual art he described has flourished not only in Argentina but in Uruguay, Chile, and Brazil since the mid-1960s.<sup>4</sup> As with any movement originating in the periphery, the work of Latin American political-conceptual artists—in its relationship with the mainstream source—engages in a pattern of mutual influence and response. It is both grounded in and distant from the legacy of North American Conceptualism in that it represents a transformation of it and also anticipated in many ways the forms of ideological conceptualism developed in the late 1970s and 1980s by feminist and other politically engaged artists in North America and Europe.<sup>5</sup> To investigate the reasons for this complex interaction is to delve into the ways in which the peripheral situation and socio-historical dynamic of Latin America imprinted a new logic onto the most radical achievements of center-based Conceptual art.

Marchán Fiz's insight can illuminate the development of Conceptual art in Latin America. Two generations of political-conceptual artists are discussed in his essay: the first—exemplified by the Argentine Víctor Grippo, the Uruguayan Luis Camnitzer, the Brazilian Cildo Meireles, and the Chileans Eugenio Dittborn and Gonzalo Díaz—witnessed the emergence of Conceptual art and the political upheavals of the 1960s in the United States and Latin America; the second group—which includes the Chilean Alfredo Jaar and the Brazilian Jac Leirner—emerged in the 1980s and experienced the demise of and aftermath of the political dictatorships whose rise to power the previous generation had seen.<sup>6</sup> Taken as a whole, the work of both groups embodies a series of systematic inversions of important propositions of North American Conceptual art, "counter-propositions" that function as "exits" from the ideological impasse seen by Marchán Fiz.

## STRATEGIC CIRCUITS: UNFOLDING POLITICS

In a recent interview with the critic Sean Cubitt, Eugenio Dittborn described the function of his *Pinturas Aeropostales* (Airmail Paintings) as a means of *traveling* “to negotiate the possibility of making visible the invisible: *the distance*.” Traveling “*to negotiate a meaning*,” he added, is the political element of his work; more precisely, it is “*the unfolding of that politics*.”<sup>7</sup> A preoccupation with bridging distances, crossing borders, and violating limits is also evident in Alfredo Jaar’s description of his photo-light-box installations as a body of production that deals with “the extraordinary, widening gap between Us and Them, that striking distance that is, after all, only a mental one.”<sup>8</sup> Each of Jaar’s installations features evidence of his travels to remote sites in order to research and document a theme. Understood conceptually, “traveling,” in the work of Dittborn and Jaar, as in that of Camnitzer, Díaz, Grippo, Leirner, and Meireles, established an “inverted route” that reverses the cultural polarity of “South” and “North” that has persistently subordinated Latin America to Europe and North America.

The closing of the gap between “center” and “periphery,” between “first” and “third” worlds—constructs that convey the disparities between highly industrialized and still-developing nations—has been at the heart of Latin American concerns since the colonial period. Geography and colonialism dictated a history based on cycles of journeys and displacements, circulation and exchange, between the metropolitan centers of Europe and the colonies of Latin America and the Caribbean. Forced into cultural and political subordination, the practices of art were locked in endless rounds of copy/repetition, adaptation/transformation, and resisting or confronting the dominant powers. With this background, the history of modern art in Latin America since the 1920s can be seen as a constant search to open a space for change amid the web of economic and cultural circuits that continues to determine the experience of artists in this region.<sup>9</sup>

The political-conceptual artists considered here are distinguished by their deliberate assumption of the peripheral condition as the starting point of their work.<sup>10</sup> (. . .) Coming of age in the midst of the postwar development effort known as *desarrollismo*, which significantly reorganized the socioeconomic structures of major Latin American countries,<sup>11</sup> this group also lived through the promise of liberation from the political and economic stranglehold of the United States. Employing “dependency theory” to analyze their situation, they envisioned an emancipated role for Latin America in the “first world” order. Such optimism coincided with the shift of the art world’s center from Paris to New York, reducing the distance—at least geographically—between that center and the Latin American periphery. The artistic environ-

ment of New York would play a pivotal role in the emergence of Conceptual and other experimental tendencies in Latin America by offering the large number of Latin American artists who arrived there in the 1960s freedom from the official conservatism of artistic institutions in their native countries.<sup>12</sup> It is important to note that unlike Brazil, where the early work of Hélio Oiticica and Lygia Clark had anticipated many experimental trends, Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay had little artistic experience to support the emergence of the radical practice of Conceptual art.<sup>13</sup> By contrast, the openly irreverent postures of such New York artists as Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns, Jim Dine, Andy Warhol, and Robert Morris offered a context in which to engage openly in artistic experimentation. In general, the work of these North American artists offered a critique of formalism and a recovery of the iconoclastic legacy of Marcel Duchamp, both of which would strongly appeal to Latin American artists. Being in New York also placed in perspective both the social and artistic problems of Latin American countries.<sup>14</sup>

The generation that rode the optimism of the 1960s, however, experienced frustration of its hopes for Latin America. Between 1964 and 1976, six major countries in South America fell under military rule, including Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay, where authoritarian regimes not only abolished the rights and privileges of democracy but also institutionalized torture, repression, and censorship.<sup>15</sup> The critic Nelly Richard has analyzed how the fall of Chile's president, Salvador Allende, in 1973, coupled with General Augusto Pinochet's seizure of power, shattered the existing framework of social and political experiences linked to democracy. This abrupt transformation of social structures brought about a "crisis of intelligibility," as Richard calls it. Subjected to strict rules of censorship, artists concerned with the production of art relevant to the country's recent history had no recourse but "to seek alternative ways to recover the meaning of that history, which had been replaced by the Grand History of the Victors."<sup>16</sup> Richard's description can be extended to countries like Argentina and Uruguay, which, until the mid-1960s, had known some degree of democracy.

All of the artists discussed here experienced authoritarianism, in its psychological and material forms, either as internal or external exiles.<sup>17</sup> Translating this experience artistically in a significant way could proceed only from giving new sense to the artist's role as an active intervener in political and ideological structures. (. . .)

The appeal Conceptual art held for these artists rested on two factors: first, its equation of art with knowledge that transcends the aesthetic realm, which enabled them to explore problems and issues linked to concrete social and political situations; second, its critique of the traditional institutions and agents of art, which opened the way for an elaboration of a form of art suited to the political and economic precariousness of Latin America.<sup>18</sup> Instead of serving

as vehicles to dissect the commodification of art under capitalism, the fundamental propositions of Conceptual art became elements of a strategy for exposing the limits of art and life under conditions of marginalization and, in some cases, repression. Hence, these artists developed a series of strategic inversions of the North American conceptual model, thereby determining the political character of their art.

## BARGAINING CIRCUITS: NEGOTIATING MEANINGS

**If M. DUCHAMP intervened at the level of Art (logic of phenomena), . . . what is done today, on the contrary, tends to be closer to Culture than to Art, and that is necessarily a political interference. That is to say, if aesthetics grounds Art, politics grounds Culture.**

—Cildo Meireles<sup>19</sup>

In the work of most of the Conceptual artists under consideration, the aims of bridging distance to negotiate meaning evolved into a deliberate tactic of *insertion* into prevailing artistic and ideological circuits. This was done in order to expose mechanisms of repression and disrupt the status of Latin American identity as a commodity exchanged along the axis between center and periphery. The development of such a conceptual strategic language, however, eventually situated the work of these artists in a paradoxical relation to a fundamental principle of European and North American Conceptual art: the dematerialization of the discrete object of art and its replacement by a linguistic or analytical proposition. Latin American artists inverted this principle through a recovery of the object, in the form of the mass-produced Duchampian readymade, which is the vehicle of their conceptual program.<sup>20</sup> Meireles' Coca-Cola bottles, bank notes, and leather boxes; Grippo's potatoes; Dittborn's found photographs and Airmail Paintings; Camnitzer's text/object combinations; Díaz's found objects and appropriated emblems of the advertising world; Jaar's light-boxes, mirrors and frames; Leirner's accumulations of "trash" provide us with curious twists of the Duchampian idea. Such objects are visual counterparts to the thought processes suggested by conceptual propositions. Following Duchamp, the artists were concerned not so much with the production of artistic objects but with the appropriation of already existing objects or forms as part of broad strategies of signification.<sup>21</sup>

The inversion of North American Conceptual art's analytic propositions can be attributed to these artists' explorations of the implications of Duchamp's legacy, which had already been investigated, with different results, by both Conceptual and Pop art. As Benjamin Buchloh has argued, with regard to analytic Conceptual art, the revival of the readymade led to an

analysis of the self-reflexive or self-referential qualities of the object. This analysis originated in a narrow reading of Duchamp's original intention; the significance of the readymade was reduced to the act that created it: "It's art because I say so."<sup>22</sup> On the other hand, in the case of such Pop artists as Andy Warhol, appropriation of the idea of the readymade led to the exaltation of marketable commodities, represented by the Coca-Cola bottle or Campbell's soup can, as icons of a market-driven culture.<sup>23</sup> Both approaches to the readymade can be seen as grounded in a passive attitude toward the prevailing system, which this group of political-conceptual artists aimed to subvert. Thus, in Latin American work, the ready-made object is always charged with meanings related to its functions within a larger social circuit. That is the Latin American conceptual proposition. In most cases the infusion of broader meanings is achieved by removing the object from circulation, physically transforming it, and, in the case of Meireles, reintroducing it into an everyday circuit. Through such acts as silk-screening messages onto actual Coca-Cola bottles and bank notes (Meireles); sewing and stitching together large quantities of trash (Leirner); enlarging, cropping, and juxtaposing found photographs (Dittborn); or wrapping and staining commercial cardboard boxes with red dye that simulates blood (Camnitzer), the artist reinscribes meaning into the commodity object. In this way, the readymade, as these artists employ it, goes beyond Pop art's fetishization of the object, turning it into a conveyor of political meanings within a specific social context. Once transformed, the object is inserted into a proposition where it operates through the following linguistic mechanisms: explicit message, metaphor, and analogy. (. . .)

## EXITING CIRCUITS: "RECYCLED CONTEXTS"

**In tautology there is a double murder: one kills rationality because it resists one; one kills language because it betrays one. . . . Now any refusal of language is a death. Tautology creates a dead, a motionless world.**

—Roland Barthes<sup>24</sup>

The political logic of the Latin American version of Conceptual art described thus far rests on two factors. On the one hand, it posits the recovery of the object and its insertion into a conceptual proposition or a physical space. This trait can be interpreted as anachronous to the extent that it runs counter to the general trend of mainstream Conceptual art, which moved toward the abolition of the art object. The constant presence of the object in the work of the artists discussed suggests that the reasons for the difference have to do with the demands of the

Latin American context. The grounding of artistic languages in extra-artistic concerns has indeed been a constant of the avant-garde in Latin America since the 1920s. It was not only an intrinsic part of the process of tearing apart or recycling forms transmitted from cultural and political centers but a logical step in the act of constructing a tradition with the copy as its starting point. On the other hand, Benjamin Buchloh has suggested that the obsession with “facticity” of North American Conceptual art practices can derive only from the concept of an “administered society” typical of “late” capitalism.<sup>25</sup> The absence in Latin America of the social conditions supporting an administered society makes it an unsuitable model, perhaps even antithetical to a Latin American context. The elaboration of a Conceptual art practice aimed at exposing Latin American political and social realities thus involved a series of inversions of the mainstream model of Conceptual art. Along with the examples already discussed, the differences between the two can be summarized by the following oppositions:

<i>Latin American</i>	<i>North American</i>
<i>Contextualization</i>	<i>self-reflexivity</i>
<i>Referentiality</i>	<i>tautology</i>
<i>Activism</i>	<i>passivity</i>
<i>Mediation</i>	<i>immediacy</i>

One could argue that if Duchamp’s propositions found a fertile ground in Latin America, it was because a refusal to abandon the specificity and communicative potential of the aesthetic object was deeply embedded in the modern art tradition initiated by the Mexican Mural Movement and later embraced by the group of political-conceptual artists. However, Duchamp’s radical subversion of art as institution, implicit in the provocative creation of the readymade, is reenacted in these artists’ works as an ironic tactic aimed at exposing a precarious activity: that of artistic practice in the frequently inoperative conditions of Latin America. Therefore, utilizing the readymade as a “package to communicate ideas,”<sup>26</sup> as Camnitzer has called it, ultimately points to an underlying concern with “devaluation,” the loss of the object’s symbolic value as a result of an economic or ideological process of exchange (as opposed to the North American artists’ preoccupation with the process of commodification). Thus, the acts of “reinsertion” carried out by these artists are intended to reinvest objects with social meaning. The ready-made, then, becomes an instrument for the artists’ critical intervention in the real, a stratagem by which patterns of understanding may be altered, or a site established for rein-

vesting reality with meaning. The readymade also turns into a vehicle by which aesthetic activity may be integrated with all the systems of reference used in everyday life.<sup>27</sup>

Such a reintegration could proceed only from rejecting the idea that the sphere of art is autonomous, thereby recovering the ethical dimension of artistic practice. The ultimate aim of this form of art can be seen as the elaboration of a system of signs, symbols, and actions through which the artist can intervene in what Jaar has called “the process of production and reproduction of meaning and consciousness.”<sup>28</sup> Unlike previous models of Latin American political art that relied on the content of the art’s “message,” the politics of this art requires “unfolding”: deconstructing linguistic and visual codes, subverting meanings, and activating space in order to impress on the viewer the effects of the mechanisms of power and ideology. By presenting the work itself as a space (whether physical or metaphoric), this art recovers the notion of the audience. That is to say, it regains for the artist the possibility of engaging in active communication through the artistic object or installation. In these circumstances, the viewer, as a socially constituted recipient, becomes an integral part of the conceptual proposition of the artist.

For these artists the act of replacing tautology with meaning is grounded in the larger project of exiting exhausted political and ideological circuits through the revitalizing of contexts—artistic, geographic, economic—in which they practice their art. This project, in turn, reveals a complex understanding of the realities of Latin America in relation to those of the first world. The deep goal of the work lies in the way it manages “to place in crisis the history of its own culture without forgoing a commitment to that same culture.”<sup>29</sup> No longer confined, however, to national boundaries, or split between national and international forces, center and periphery, first and third worlds, it exposes the relations among these constructs, their interdependence. To achieve this aim requires an active negotiation of meaning between them. The Latin American “inverted” model of Conceptual art thus reveals a practice which not only is inscribed in a different framework of development but responds to the misalignment of global politics. Through its capacity to blend central and peripheral sources in the structure and function of a work, it challenges the authority of the “center” as originator of artistic forms.

The practice of a revisionist Conceptual art, seen in the work of this select group of Latin American artists, represents the recovery of an emancipatory project. At a time when the “logic” of “late” capitalism has annihilated the goals of the historic avant-garde, and when most forms of contemporary art have run up the blind alley of self-referentiality, the range and possibilities of such an enterprise should not be overlooked in the United States, where the original propositions of Conceptual art were born.

## NOTES

1. *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* (Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1981), p. 408.
2. Simón Marchán Fiz, *Del arte objetual al arte de concepto: Las artes plásticas desde 1960* (1972; reprint ed., Madrid: Ediciones Akal, 1988), pp. 268–271. This book provides one of the first comprehensive discussions to appear in Spanish of the Conceptual art movements in Europe and North America.
3. A number of authors in recent years have criticized the apolitical reductiveness of Conceptual art, both in its original versions and in recent revivals. For instance, Hal Foster, in *Recodings: Art, Spectacle, Cultural Politics* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1985), p. 103, has noted that the practices of Conceptual artists that focus on general assumptions governing the institution of art in “late” capitalism are compromised by “present[ing] the exhibitional limits of art as socially indiscriminate and sexually indifferent.” Benjamin Buchloh has offered a detailed analysis and critique of those practices in “Conceptual Art, 1962–1969: From the Aesthetics of Administration to the Critique of Institutions,” *October* 55 (Winter 1990), pp. 105–143. Other recent critics who have commented on these issues include Robert C. Morgan, “The Situation of Conceptual Art,” *Arts* 63 (February 1989), pp. 40–43. Of the artists being considered in the present essay, Alfredo Jaar has offered the most cogent critique of this aspect of Conceptual art practice in the following statement: “Conceptual art’s greatest failure was definitely its provincialism, . . . in the sense that Tzvetan Todorov has used the term, . . . a failure to recognize that many provinces and capitals do exist. . . . All the dominant assumptions about art were challenged, but this was done practically behind closed doors, in an extraordinary [*sic*] exclusive fashion, almost in an arrogant way, and blind to a number of political events that transformed the world. For the conceptualists, obviously, life was elsewhere.” Alfredo Jaar, “Alfredo Jaar,” *Flash Art International* 143 (November/December 1988), p. 117.
4. Marchán Fiz, *Del arte objetual al arte de concepto*, pp. 269–270. The Grupo de los Trece was constituted in Buenos Aires in 1971 following a visit by the Polish director Jerzy Grotowski. The group was based at the Centro de Arte y Comunicación (CAYC), directed by Jorge Glusberg, and included the artists Jacques Bedel, Luis F. Bénédict, Gregorio Dujovny, Carlos Ginzburg, Victor Grippo, Vicente Marotta, Jorge González Mir, Luis Pazos, Juan Carlos Romero, and Horacio Zabala. For a summary, of the history, and objectives of the group, and illustrations of works by its members, see “El Grupo de los Trece,” in Gabriel Levinas, ed., *Arte argentino contemporáneo* (Madrid: Editorial Ameris, 1979), pp. 197–201.

5. A glance at the catalogues that accompanied two of the most influential surveys of Conceptual art ever mounted, *Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form, Concepts—Processes—Situations—Information* (Bern: Kunsthalle Bern, 1969), and Kynaston L. McShine, ed., *Information* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1970), reveals an almost complete absence of political concerns, though these would emerge later in the work of Marcel Broodthaers, Daniel Buren, and Hans Haacke, and in that of feminist artists. Even then, excepting the later work of Haacke, Barbara Kruger, Louise Lawler, and Martha Rosler, political or ideological issues were limited to critiques of the institutions of art and rarely addressed politics.

6. Other important artists who contributed to the consolidation of this form of art in Latin America include, in Brazil, Anna Bella Geiger, Rubens Gerchman, Mario Ishikawa, and Regina Vater; in Argentina, León Ferrari and the group Tucumán Arde; in Uruguay, Clemente Padin and Nelbia Romero; in Chile, Virginia Errazuriz, Carlos Leppe, Catalina Parra, and the CADA group, which included Juan Castillo, Lotty Rosenfeld, and others; and in Colombia, Antonio Caro. Also important were Felipe Ehrenberg and the numerous artistic collaboratives of the 1970s in Mexico. See Jorge Glusberg, *Arte en la Argentina: Del pop-art a la nueva imagen* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones de Arte Gaglianone, 1985); Nelly Richard, "Margins and Institutions: Art in Chile Since 1973," *Art and Text* 21 (May-July 1986), pp. 17–114; Aracy Amaral, *Arte pare quê? A preocupação social na arte brasileira, 1930–1970* (Sao Paulo: Nobel, 1984); Walter Zanini, *Circunambulatio* (Sao Paulo: Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de Sao Paulo, 1973); *6 jovem arte contemporânea* (Sao Paulo: Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de Sao Paulo, 1972); *8 jovem arte contemporânea* (Sao Paulo: Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de Sao Paulo, 1974); Shifra M. Goldman, "Elite Artists and Audiences: Can They Mix? The Mexican Front of Cultural Workers," *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture* 4 (1985), pp. 139–54; *De los grupos los individuos: Artistas plásticos de los grupos metropolitanos* (Mexico City: Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, 1985).

7. Sean Cubitt and Eugenio Dittborn, "An Airmail Interview," in Guy Brett and Sean Cubitt, *Camino Way: The Airmail Paintings of Eugenio Dittborn* (Santiago: Eugenio Dittborn, 1991), p. 28.

8. Alfredo Jaar, "La géographic ça sert, d'abord, à faire la guerre (Geography = War)," *Contemporânea* 2 (June 1989), inside cover.

9. This point is argued by Charles Merewether in "The Migration of Images: Inscriptions of Land and Body in Latin America," in *America: Bride of the Sun* (Antwerp: Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, 1992), pp. 197–222.

10. Dittborn has explained, “Como todo trabajo de arte que quiere dar cuenta de la periferia en la que se produce y circula, mi obra se ha propuesto asumir creativamente el irrecuperable atraso, así como la multiestratificación de esta periferia (As with any work of art that wants to take into account the periphery in which it is produced and circulated, my work has proposed to creatively assume the irreparable backwardness as well as the multiple stratifications of this periphery).”—*Chile vive* (Madrid: Círculo de Bellas Artes, 1987), p. 282.

11. See Néstor García Canclini, *Culturas híbridas: Estrategias para entrar y salir de la modernidad* (Mexico City: Editorial Grijalbo, 1989), pp. 65–93.

12. Of the artists considered in this essay, Camnitzer has lived in the New York area continuously since 1964, and Meireles resided in New York in 1970 and 1971. Reflecting on why he moved there, Camnitzer has stated, “New York seemed fascinating: the center of the empire. The measuring stick for success was set by the empire and not in the colonies.” Cited in Carla Stellweg, “‘Magnet—New York’: Conceptual, Performance, Environmental, and Installation Art by Latin American Artists in New York,” in Luis Cancel et al., *The Latin American Spirit: Art and Artists in the United States, 1920–1970* (New York: Bronx Museum of the Arts and Harry N. Abrams, 1988), p. 285. For an overview of other Latin American Conceptual artists active in New York during this period, see Stellweg, “‘Magnet- New York,’” pp. 284–311; and Jacqueline Barnitz, Florencia Bazzano Nelson, and Janis Bergman Carton, *Latin American Artists in New York since 1970* (Austin: Archer M. Huntington Art Gallery, University of Texas, 1987), pp. 13–19.

13. For details see Jacqueline Barnitz, “Conceptual Art and Latin America: A Natural Alliance,” in *Encounters/Displacements: Luis Camnitzer, Alfredo Jaar, Cildo Meireles* (Austin: Archer M. Huntington Art Gallery, University of Texas, 1992), pp. 35–48.

14. Several Latin American artists in New York created experimental work under the auspices of the New York Graphic Workshop, which was established by Camnitzer, Lilita Porter, and José Guillermo Castillo in 1964 and was dissolved in 1970 (author’s telephone interview with Luis Camnitzer, September 24, 1992). The workshop was founded on a form of political activism that rejected the commodity status of art, seeking instead to make it accessible to a mass audience through prints. The workshop launched the idea of serial graphics in which a single element could be assembled in many ways, a concept described by the acronym FANDSO (Free Assemblage, Nonfunctional, Disposable, Serial Object). See Luis Camnitzer, *Art in Editions: New Approaches* (New York: Pratt Center for Contemporary Printmaking and New York University, 1968). Shifra M. Goldman has analyzed the activities of the N.Y.G.W. in “Presencias y ausencias: Lilita Porter en Nueva York, 1964–1974,” in *Lilita Porter: Obra gráfica, 1964–1990* (San Juan: Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña, 1991), pp. 1–22.

15. The constitutional government of Brazil was overthrown by a military coup in 1964, and the nation was subsequently ruled by military dictators until 1985; Uruguay was ruled by a de facto military dictatorship from 1973 to 1985; Argentina experienced a succession of military governments after the coup of 1966; and Chile was governed from 1973 until 1989 by the dictator General Augusto Pinochet. Peru was under military rule from 1968 to 1980, Bolivia from 1971 to 1982, and Ecuador from 1972 to 1980. See Beverly Adams, “The Subject of Torture: The Art of Camnitzer, Nuñez, Parra, and Romero.” Master’s thesis, University of Texas, Austin, 1992, pp. 21–38.

16. Richard, “Margins and Institutions,” p. 17.

17. Camnitzer was in New York when Uruguay’s democratic government fell in 1973. Even though he did not return, the event indelibly marked his life and experience in the United States. Dittborn and Díaz remained in Chile throughout the military regime of Pinochet. Jaar lived through the fall of Allende and left Chile for New York in 1982; Meireles remained in Brazil for the duration of the military dictatorship, with the exception of the two years he spent in New York; Grippo lived through the black years in Argentina; Leirner has lived through the return of democracy to Brazil and the subsequent period of deep economic and social crisis.

18. The theme of art and torture in the work of Camnitzer, Dittborn, and other artists from South America has been analyzed by Beverly Adams in “The Subject of Torture” and by Charles Merewether in “El arte de la violencia: Un asunto de representación en el arte contemporáneo,” *Art Nexus* 2 (October 1991), pp. 92–96, and 3 (January 1992), p. 132–135.

19. “Se a interferência de M. DUCHAMP foi ao nível da Arte (lógica do fenômeno), . . . uma vez que o que se faz hoje tende a estar mais próximo da culture do que da Arte, é necessariamente uma inteferência politica. Porque se a estética fundamenta a Arte, é a Política que fundamenta a Cultura.” Cildo Meireles, “Arte-Cultura,” *Malasartes* 1 (September/October/November 1975), p. 15.

20. Conceptual artists do, of course, utilize objects in their work: photographs, video and audio tapes, drawings, maps, and diagrams, which function as “documents” that record the conceptual proposal.

21. Camnitzer, for instance, referred to form itself as being important only insofar as it could serve the purposes of content, and Meireles spoke of his attempts to develop a language of *inserção* rather than “style.” See Luis Camnitzer, “Chronology,” in Camnitzer, Mosquera, and Ramirez, *Camnitzer Retrospective*, p. 52; and Meireles, in Brito and Marcieira de Sousa, *Cildo Meireles*, p. 24.

22. Buchloh, “Conceptual Art 1962–1969,” pp. 124–127.

23. For analysis of the relationship of Meireles, Leirner, and other Brazilian artists to Warhol, see Paulo Herkenhoff, "Arte e money," *Revista galena* 24 (October 1989), pp. 60–67.
24. Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972), pp. 152–153.
25. Buchloh, "Conceptual Art, 1962–1969," pp. 128–129.
26. Luis Camnitzer, "Contemporary Colonial Art," paper presented at the Annual International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association, Washington, D.C., 1970. Meireles also used the term *package* to refer to his conceptual propositions with ready-mades.
27. See Luis Camnitzer, "Chronology," in Camnitzer, Mosquera, and Ramírez, *Camnitzer Retrospective*, p. 53.
28. Jaar, "Alfredo Jaar," p. 117.
29. Merewether, "Migration of Images," p. 202.

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