ICAA Documents Project Working Papers
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Front cover (see also p. 7, fig. 3): Luis Fernando Benedict, Proyecto Huervos, 1976–77, installation view.
Back cover (detail) and p. 18: Marta Minujín, Movimiento Interior [Internal Movement], 1960; sand, pigments, cardboard, pyroxylin shellac, chalk, and carpenter’s glue on canvas, 60 x 80 cm, collection of Lilian and Mario Rodero, Buenos Aires.

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This fifth edition of the ICAA Documents Project Working Papers highlights two winning essays of the Peter C. Marzio Award for Outstanding Research in 20th-century Latin American and Latino Art: “Signs, Systems, Contexts: The Centro de Arte y Comunicación at the São Paulo Bienal, 1977,” by Julia Detchon, and “Remembering Marta Minujín’s Informalismo: Memory and Politics in the Art of Post-Peronist Argentina,” by Michaela de Lacaze. In keeping with support for Latin American and Latino art extended by the late director of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Peter C. Marzio, the Award aims to recognize, reward, and enable new scholarship in the field. Chosen by a jury of distinguished scholars, these essays draw from the primary and critical resources available through the Documents of 20th-Century Latin American and Latino Art project's digital archive.

Julia Detchon analyzes the development of a Latin American brand of conceptual art in Argentina during the second half of the 20th century in her essay. Drawn from her master’s thesis at the University of Texas, Austin—“Latin American Conceptualism and the Problem of Ideology: The Centro de Arte y Comunicación at the São Paulo Bienal, 1977,” which she successfully defended in 2016—Detchon’s analysis considers the construction of an international narrative of conceptualism in the region from the lens of CAYC’s publications and activities during the 1970s. The author explicates how CAYC’s founder Jorge Glusberg’s strategy of promoting international exchanges between the center and art scholars, critics, and artists followed a strict “theoretical framework of structuralism” (from which “systems art” originates). Ultimately, Detchon argues that Minujín’s Informalist works were her own expression of the de-Peronization campaign of the years following the Revolución Libertadora of 1955.

Michaela de Lacaze reconstructs and investigates the discursive field and reception of Informalismo in Argentina during the 1960s through a deep analysis of the artist Marta Minujín’s little-known early works. The author argues that Minujín’s special circumstances as a latecomer to this movement, paired with the artist’s rejection of transcendentalist values, allowed her to reference what she viewed as a flawed social memory in Argentinean society in her body of work. De Lacaze focuses her analysis on Minujín’s first Informalist paintings, completed between 1960 and 1961, which the artist states differed greatly from other more expressive arte informe works as they “possessed the unmistakable density of concrete sidewalks and public walls—a dumb, obdurate solidity.” The fissures, holes, and blotsches in Minujín’s works, argues De Lacaze, depict the precarious foundation in which walls and sidewalks are built in Argentinean urban settings. In this critical way, Minujín effectively reconnected this art movement with Argentina’s own historical context. Ultimately, De Lacaze argues that Minujín’s Informalist works were her own expression of the de-Peronization campaign of the years following the Revolución Libertadora of 1955.

The ICAA is delighted to feature both essays as part of the Documents Project Working Papers series and is proud to serve as a key platform for accessing the growing body of knowledge on the field of Latin American and Latino art. The Peter C. Marzio Award is generously underwritten by The Transart Foundation for Art and Anthropology, a private nonprofit organization based in Houston dedicated to the support of contemporary artists and scholars who integrate advanced and relevant social, anthropological, or cultural research in their work.
In 1977, a group of Argentinean artists affiliated with the Centro de Arte y Comunicación (CAYC) in Buenos Aires won the Támara Grand Prize at the IV São Paulo Biennial—the first ever awarded to Latin American entrants. Their exhibition, titled Signs in Artificial Ecosystems (Signos en ecosistemas artificiales, Signs in Artificial Ecosystems), contained fifteen works by ten artists using formal vocabularies that were, by this time, internationally recognized as the language of Conceptual art. From a distance, these works seem to share a common political stance on pressing issues of the time: the silencing of populations, the disciplining of bodies as they occupy (urban) environments, and unequal access to food and nutrition. But another reading of these objects might consider how they functioned, and how they transmitted meaning, as they circulated in a complex web of social and political contexts. Indeed, the reliance of these objects on contextual or discursive meaning (which is perhaps a constituent element of Conceptual art more broadly) undermines the determinacy of their interpretation, the critical currency of CAYC’s exhibition and its presentation fluctuates across historical and institutional contexts. Interpretations have fluctuated such that the works in this exhibition, which new saw pointed in their critique of official culture, won in 1977 the official approval not only of the biennial’s organizers but also of Argentina’s dictator, Jorge Rafael Videla. Though they are commonly read from their content—or what they mean—their concern with structures of mass communication, the coding of messages, and the variable functions of an object as sign—or how they mean—reveals a more important political gesture. The critical nature of CAYC’s exhibition of Conceptual art at the 1977 São Paulo Biennial resides in this unstable semantic field. Its found objects, propositions, and performances are political because they unify the semiotics of power and authority.

CAYC and “Systems”

Jorge Glusberg, a critic and businessman, founded the Centro de Arte y Comunicación in 1969 as a space of interdisciplinary exchange that would establish intersections between current communication theories and avant-garde art practices. He invited critics, artists, and theorists from the likes of Guy Brett, Lucio Saporiti, Abraham Moles, Joseph Kosuth, Gillo Dorfles, and Jerzy Grotowski were frequent interlocutors—to give seminars or workshops, curate exhibitions, and participate in juries. These exchanges fell under a prevailing theoretical framework of structuralism, with shared inter- ests in distinctions between nature and culture, linguistic analogies, the use of plans and flow charts, the idea of a work as a “reduced model,” and the proposals of “systems art” as a visual metaphor for structuralism. Glusberg wrote in an early exhibition catalogue, from 1972, “It believe that the current languages, created by man out of his necessity to communicate, have a common denominator that have termed ‘systems’. Art as an idea, represented in this show, is such as a manifestation of a revolutionary opacity, opposed to the conscious misleading of ideologies, and represents a real Latin American set of problems.” A concern with the power of communication systems to represent the world—as authoritarian governments reformed national identifications through ideological scripts—informed art practices that intentionally resisted centralized interpretation with “revolutionary opacity.” For Glusberg, “systems art” offered a common vocabulary for addressing this “Latin American set of problems” of histories of colonialism and a dialogic relationship with artistic traditions of Europe and the United States, issues of development and economic stability, and, most urgently, political violence. Communication and information theories offered expansive method- ologies for addressing these issues by analyzing the production and conveyance of meaning. Systems provided a new form of “support for transmitting new axiologies,” as Mari Carmen Ramirez has written, allowing the artist to move away from authorship of a message and toward a more diffuse role as “encoder” or “organizer” of meaning. As a conceptual-curious model, systems allowed Glusberg to engage with local political concerns while diffusing some of the dangerous implications of institutional critique. By undermining the role of the artist and the primacy of his product, systems could also function as a tactic of “opacity” or evasion. Somewhat ironically, as CAYC exhibited internationally throughout the decade, “systems art” evolved into a marketable category through Glusberg could interpret and assimilate diverse aesthetic approaches to a “Latin American” set of problems. The hundreds of galeries, or bulletin, that he authored and mailed to art institutions around the world similarly worked toward systematizing a diverse constellation of aesthetic approaches. Systems made local problems legible to an international art world, offering up a radical investigation of the art object as a tactic of resistance to authoritarianism. CAYC thus functioned not only as a gallery but also as an institution with the explicit objective of inserting Argentinean and Latin American artists into circuits of local and international visibility; its politics ultimately increased its prestige abroad. In this area, CAYC’s objectives aligned with those of the São Paulo Biennial. Founded by the Brazilian industrialist Francisco “Ciccilo” Matta-Clark in 1942, the first Biennial International de São Paulo consciously modeled itself on the Venice Biennale. Matta-Clark had partnered with Nelson Rockefeller and the Museum of Modern Art (MMA) in New York three years prior to found the Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo (MAM-SP), which sponsored the new biennial and shaped its emphasis on modern art. While Rockefeller’s principal role in founding MAM-SP links the institution inextricably to projects of American cultural expansion under the Good Neighbor Policy, modern art also emphasized Brazil’s incipient modernity and played an important role in visualizing its entrance into international economic partnerships. Both the museum and biennial were thus products of a period of correlation between American cultural involvement in the hemisphere and Brazilian international aspirations, and have “always been intended to indicate Brazil’s competitive modernism to an international clientele.” As biennial historian Isabel Whitelegg has noted, the Biennial’s prizes were sponsored by companies seeking to share “in a new regime of transnational development, ushering in an influential generation of industry-linked patrons whose philanthropic intentions could not be divorced from a vested interest in forming international economic partnerships.” Held after 1985 in the Oscar Niemeyer-designed Ciccillo Matarazzo Pavilion, the biennial was identical in format to Venice’s, with both national presentations and international exhibitions. The largest exhibition spaces were given to Brazil, the United States, France, and Italy, and earlier exhibitions tended to minimize Brazil’s relation to other Latin American countries, which historically received little emphasis. Though the biennial separated from MAM-SP in 1961, Matarazzo remained director of the Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, its organizing body, until 1975. The separation entailed a shift from private, museum patronage to public support in the form of city and state funding. Beginning in 1967, the effects of this shift in control became evident, when the new military government removed a work by the Brazilian artist Cybele Varela. During Emílio Garrastazu Médici’s military government, the Brazilian critic (and former biennial curator) Mário Pedrosa first called for an international boycott, and, Whitelegg writes, “by 1971 the boycott had successfully appropriated the exhibi- tion’s international prestige, or, rather, participating in the Biennial, co-sponsored by Brazil’s right-wing military regime, had to come to be seen as a dubious ambition for any politically engaged artist.” The boycott continued through the 1970s, and managed to deflect much of the biennial’s coverage in the international press, though foreign artists continued to participate, and the biennial remained active. CAYC had not participated during the boycott years under pressure from a group called Movement for Latin American Cultural Independence (MILCA), of which Luis Wells, Luis Camnitzer, Carla Stellweg, Liliana Porter, and Teodoro Maus were members. In 1972, an artists’ group called the Museu Latinoamericano worked with MICA to produce the self-published book Contrabienal, which circulated as an alternative exhibition comprised of prints, letters, and evidence of political repression (fig. 21). In Contrabienal, Gordon Matta-Clark published open letters to artists calling on artists to withdraw their works from the Biennial, which “shamefully lent weight to that totalitarian government and its allies.” The letter also implicates Glusberg, in his role of inviting artists to participate through the CAYC exhibition Arte de Sistemas. Of those who were invited by Jorge Glusberg to participate in the São Paulo Biennial, the majority have already expressed their intention to withdraw their work, maintaining the boycott of 1970—the dubious way Glusberg handled this issue has seriously damaged the attractiveness of the show he has proposed in Buenos Aires. It has been suggested that instead of removing work from both exhibitions, the group is encouraged to exhibit at the same time in Argentina, making a firm collective statement against the situation in Brazil. My hunch is that the full intention of sending the works he receives to São Paulo, and that it is probably no easier to make political statements in Argentina than in Brazil. The CENTRO DE ARTE Y COMUNICACIÓN AT THE SÃO PAULO BIENAL, 1977 Julia Detchon

The letter, dated May 30, 1973, prompted a reply from Glusberg, also published in Contemporanea, titled “Por qué resolvi participar en Art Systems en la Bienal de San Pablo y hoy desisto” [“Why I Decided to Participate in Art Systems at the São Paulo Bienal and Now Will Not”]. In it, Glusberg explains his initial concerns about participating in the biennial and why, when Matarazzo invited him to exhibit Arte como idea and Arte cibernético, he later decided to participate. Writing that he ultimately shared Matarazzo’s position, and considering complaints from participating artists, Glusberg decided to withdraw the CAYC exhibitions from the biennial. Whatever his motivations, Glusberg surely recognized the expediency of boycotting in solidarity with international artists, and set out the 1973 and 1975 biennials as well despite a new section devoted to “Art and Communication” in 1973. “Taking part in the exhibition had been irreversibly cast as an ethical as well as a professional decision,” Whitelogg writes, but largely by American and European artists or Latin Americans living in exile. For Glusberg and for local artists, “the biennials of the 1970s present a complex choice, as each exhibition offered a chance not only to gain prestige, but to continue to work critically and apart from the market.”

The view that the São Paulo Bienal offered a space of exposure free of market forces is unconvincing given its historical interest in increasing Brazil’s visibility in international contexts. But the 1973 biennial may indeed have offered new opportunities for criticality, since it was the first edition produced under new leadership following the departure of Matarazzo, who did not allow curators to make substantial changes to display or documentation strategies. In 1977, under new curatorial leadership, the biennial’s organizers sought a stronger emphasis on Latin American (as distinct from Brazilian) art, and extended a special invitation to CAYC, who represented the most current Latin American avant-garde at the time and could thus bring “Latin America” to Brazil. Under a new curatorial structure, CAYC would be allowed to show independently of the national presentations in a thematic section designed by Maler. Through the Grupo CAYC’s entry in 1973 was, again, highly contentious, it was not because they participated, but because they won a Grand Prize—the first given to a Latin American entry in the Bienal’s twenty-seven-year history.

Signos en ecosistemas artificiales

For CAYC’s exhibition at the 1973 biennial, Signos en ecosistemas artificiales (Art Systems in Artificial Ecosystems), Glusberg made use of a systems framework, as he had in nearly all CAYC exhibitions, for unifying fifteen works by the ten artists of the Grupo CAYC (fig. 2). As the title suggests, the thematic linkages among works derived from their demonstration of the art object’s status as sign within the social space of a biennial. “Every artistic discourse is the product of a system of rhetorical transformations,” Glusberg wrote in an exhibit catalogue, and “every articulation of artistic space, as a system of signs, is constituted by the different rhetorical possibilities of the historical moment in which the artistic operate as the media or instruments with which they act” (W 218). If the works seemed to have minimized some of their active function in pursuit of more formal or semiotic concerns, it may reveal more about the biennial as a site of meaning-making than about artistic shifts.

The issues addressed by Signos en ecosistemas artificiales—the silencing of populations, the disciplining of bodies, the roles of religion and the landscape in constructions of Latin American identity, tensions between ancient and modern forms of knowledge, the inequalities of South American economics and the ironic gaps in access to food and nutrition—read as so political in nature, and so salient to the time, that they seem to border on reportage. But, as Daniel Quiles has noted, a message is rarely so specific that there is no room to open it up. These thematic concerns could apply to a number of ongoing situations, or even to an overall condition. Through their classification as “ideological conceptualism” has it is no room to open it up. These thematic concerns could apply to a number of ongoing situations, or even to an overall condition. However, their classification as “ideological conceptualism” has meant that Glusberg intended these models to function as signifiers in Argentina? To what do they refer? What function do they serve in Argentine national myths and self-fashioning? Was Argentina’s response to the world’s bounty from the surface of utilitarian wheat sacks take on an ironic tone, pointing instead to the country’s inability to feed its own population. The poverty implied by the gesture undermines the truth behind the refrain, “Argentina, breadbasket of the world.”

Benedict frames his interests as purely semiotic. However, the Mexican asexolet in Laberinto Invisible and the white rats in Laberinto para ratas blancas gesture subtly to an interest in the relationship between national myths and citizen formation. Amid the neo-liberal restructuring of Argentina’s Proceso Nacional, the white rats in a “rat race” gesture not only toward human adaption to and absorption in a code, like language, but also a new economic system that solicited foreign investment. Addressing Maler’s essay, which Benedict wrote, “the end piece (the white rat to the code) is the entropy of the system, because it has absorbed the participant into the correct run of the Labyrinth.” The rats, as participants, demonstrate metaphorically the processes of citizen formation under a new social order that promoted consumerism and the marketplace. Benedict’s use of white rats, or rats bred in a laboratory to optimize their adaptability to a system, may also suggest a biopolitics of access and mobility in this new social order, or perhaps the dictatorship’s intertwined capitalist fantasies of racial purity and consumer culture. Here Benedict conceives a scientific approach, perhaps to suggest the role of “ideological practices” in subject formation. Proyectos Horizonte, another work by Benedict, consisted of a wooden box containing turned wooden eggs inside small niches, with a stuffed hen positioned to face the artificial eggs (fig. 3). This tension between objects in artificial surroundings, and vice versa, speaks to a collapsing of signifier and referent. The grid, a system that manages the hen’s supply of eggs, imposes order on the natural world, turning the hen into a machine of food production. Agriculture and food production figure centrally to Argentina’s national myths and self-fashioning that, following Benedict’s logic, food as a symbol takes precedence over food as necessity of life. Is it the real hen or the artificial eggs that function as signifiers in Argentina? What do they refer to?

Leopoldo Maler, who trained in theatre and dance and worked in television while living in London in the 1960s, joined the Grupo CAYC to contribute La Ultima Cena (The Last Supper, fig. 5), an installation of a table with white cloth, set for thirteen on one side, as the scene is conventionally composed in painting. Above, the (sacrificial) lamb ties the hanging carcasses to the table, while the (sacrificial) lamb ties the hanging carcasses to the table, more clearly the table to the (sacrificial) lamb. Here, as in the other works, the realness or artificiality of the birds and participating in rituals of national identity. The hanging cattle and lamb carcasses made of lightweight white plastic hung from a rotating support. Barbed wire encircled the table on the ground, restricting the mise-en-scene to be viewed only from a distance. Having participated in the Happenings and exhibitions of D Tella in the 1960s, Maler became interested in the intersection of theater, dance and art through a work titled Caparroz Rosita (1966). In it, he staged a play with slides, fourteen ballerinas, and a radio announce in a make-it D Tella auditorium. He later collaborated with Marta Minujín on her famous installation La Menesnuda, and turned increasingly toward video art, offered numerous mariacs in the 1970s while living in Paris and New York in La Ultima Cena, Maler’s intersectional interests are evident: An immersive environ- ment that again conjures national myths and religion, Maler this time plays with the implications of participation. By inviting and then blocking entry, he teases apart the spectator’s dual roles of reading and participating in rituals of national identity. The hanging cattle make clear reference to the cornerstone of Argentina’s economy and culture, and the sheepish and the redundant in the evacuated biblical event below. In an interview, Maler interpreted the gesture subtly to an interest in the relationship between national myths and citizen formation. Amid the neo-liberal restructuring of Argentina’s Proceso Nacional, the white rats in a “rat race” gesture not only toward human adaption to and absorption in a code, like language, but also a new economic system that solicited foreign investment. Addressing Maler’s essay, which Benedict wrote, “the end piece (the white rat to the code) is the entropy of the system, because it has absorbed the participant into the correct run of the Labyrinth.” The rats, as participants, demonstrate metaphorically the processes of citizen formation under a new social order that promoted consumerism and the marketplace. Benedict’s use of white rats, or rats bred in a laboratory to optimize their adaptability to a system, may also suggest a biopolitics of access and mobility in this new social order, or perhaps the dictatorship’s intertwined capitalist fantasies of racial purity and consumer culture. Here Benedict conceives a scientific approach, perhaps to suggest the role of “ideological practices” in subject formation. Proyectos Horizonte, another work by Benedict, consisted of a wooden box containing turned wooden eggs inside small niches, with a stuffed hen positioned to face the artificial eggs (fig. 3). This tension between objects in artificial surroundings, and vice versa, speaks to a collapsing of signifier and referent. The grid, a system that manages the hen’s supply of eggs, imposes order on the natural world, turning the hen into a machine of food production. Agriculture and food production figure centrally to Argentina’s national myths and self-fashioning that, following Benedict’s logic, food as a symbol takes precedence over food as necessity of life. Is it the real hen or the artificial eggs that function as signifiers in Argentina? What do they refer to?
the Last Supper as a celebratory moment of freedom—that is, a symbol of ‘freedom as a process and not an object’—14 the combined elements of celebration and death, order and sacrifice, freedom and threat, constitute a complicated affective state of existence under military rule.

Victor Grippo’s contribution, Energía vegetal (fig. 6), built on themes he had developed since showing Analógia in 1 Art of Systems. In another incarnation of the work, Energía from 1972 (fig. 7), Grippo wired a potato to a voltmeter, which registers the energy stored inside it. The proposition, perhaps drawing on Grippo’s training as a chemist, cites a simple science project: a potato battery. As in Analógia, the voltmeter makes its invisible electricity evident in the material space of the viewer, completing an analogy to human consciousness. The potato, circulating as an art object, takes on a minimal aesthetic as a small, irregular, organic shape, hooked up to spindly black and red wires that feed into a space, functional voltmeter. A sturdy tuber, yanked from the ground, the potato looks almost delicate in this context, its pocked and bumpy skin prodded by wires. Such an odd juxtaposition might bring to mind the merging technologies of agriculture and industry at this time, and the primacy of agroindustry in Argentina’s economy. Grippo’s use of humble objects resonates with the attitudes of Minimalism and Arte povery, though he stipulated to Guy Brett that his work involved “a small amount of material [and] a great amount of imagination: this is the real ‘poor’ means: not the aesthetic Arte Povera.”19

Brett, a friend of Glusberg and Grippo and frequent interlocutor at CAYC, uncovered for an article remembering Grippo some notes he had taken over long conversations with the artist about this work. Some reveal the global events to which the work responded—Grippo had “mentioned a British military secret after the war: a biological battery, giving electricity from the movement of micro-organisms,” and “I was especially excited by the struggle of the north Vietnamese, and their courageous and ingenious improvisations against the might of the American army. For example, ‘the use by the Vietnamese of a specially [sic] sensitive person to act as a radar in forward positions to tell of approaching planes’.20 But perhaps most illuminated was his ‘feeling that here in Argentina, knowledge is untapped. Many pictographs of indigenous origin around Mendoza have never been studied. Thousands of items in the Museo de Arte de la Nación have not been studied.”21 His interest in low-tech means seems to value the tactics of the disempowered or disenfranchised (Latin American) subject against the “ideological practices” or political and economic forces of neo-colonialism, Cold War geopolitics, and the authoritarian nation-state.

Grippo once said, “what has to take place is a modification in the viewer’s form of reception, since what I try to do is elevate the gener-al tone of simple things not by making them abstract, but by altering hierarchies.”22 By recontextualizing a potato and altering its status within a hierarchy of social and material values, Grippo exposes what is already contained, invisibly, in an unremarkable object of everyday life. In an early essay on Grippo, Glusberg uncovered this power in the linguistic everyday by conjuring some of the Buenos Aires slang idioms featuring potatoes: “It can define an object of high quality, ‘este traje es una papa’—‘this suit is a potato’; or a job easily carried out, ‘qué papa hacer eso informes’—‘what a potato it is to do these reports’ (in English we would say ‘a piece of cake’); or an item of journalistic news of importance that implies a revelation, ‘tengo la papa’—‘I have the potato’ [we would say ‘a hot potato’]; a beautiful woman, ‘Fulanita es una papa’—‘Fulanita is a potato’ [we might say ‘a dish’] etc.”23 One other interesting connection to language is the dual translation of potato as “papa” and “father,” perhaps suggesting its spectral presence as a life-giving force of South American ontol-ogy or the equally important role of psychoanalysis in Argentina’s cultural arena. In English, however, “small” potatoes generally con-note insignificance; indeed, there is no more fitting descriptor for a “dirty cheap” potato than “povera,” “pebre,” or “poor.”

It through this linguistic linkage that the potato becomes a metonym for the people who cultivate them, conflating the iconic agricultural contributions of South America with its people. To make just one more linguistic metaphor: a Spanish phrase refers to an unconscious or cumbersome body as a “sack of potatoes,” underscoring the (seemingly) inert or silenced quality of a personified potato and body under repressive political conditions. It is difficult, then, to read the copper and zinc electrodes as reference to state use of electrical torture on political prisoners—practices that were at their peak in Argentina in 1971. Drawing on Grippo’s interest in alchemy, some critics have traced a parallel alchemical process by which he turns a “dirty potato” into a status object, a repository of social value. But Daniel Quijales has pointed out, torture is also an alchemical process: the conversion of person into object, citizen into inform-ant.24 In spite of this disturbing affective valence, the potato resists an entirely tragic reading, it is so unsanitating, so generous in its morphic possibilities, that it seems better suited to the realm of comedy than tragedy: the energy stored inside the potato ultimately only works toward powering the voltmeter, which only registers its work. The tautology plays out formally, in the circular visual logic of wires that, in spite of their color-coded, specialized functions, begin and end in the potato: it is a sign system in opera-tion, signifying the essence of the potato’s potential energy.

At the São Paulo Bienal, Grippo’s installation Energía vegetal (fig. 6) displayed potatoes piled messily atop a table that suggested a laboratory setting, wired together to amass a powerful current between them. Below, small piles of potatoes fed energy into the larger pile, which then fed wires that came together to power a single voltmeter, mounted in a vitrine against an adjoining wall. Though the tangles of wires do not seem to have been arranged in any aesthetic way, they do disappear behind the wall and reappear, as a single wire, to join up with the voltmeter nearby. Across from this arrangement, another table held an accumulation of potatoes without any attachments, along with specimens, test tubes, and flashlights. In contrast to the pile of unwired potatoes on the facing table—an “analogy with science”—the small output of an individual potato multiplied as it connected with another in the pile, an “analogy with consciousness.”25

The analogy of an expansion of consciousness when one connects with others is, as in Energía and Analógia 1, completed in the material space of the viewer, “when the potato’s latent energy becomes evi-dent, and the fact that the group as a whole can generate a torrent of energy capable of incurring a transformation becomes unquestion-able.”27 The implications of such a simple proposal— the presumably substantial summation of the imperceptible natural energy of pota-toes—are both political and poetic. The Argentinean critic Miguel Briante later wrote that the installation takes up “the energy inher-it in matter to develop a metaphor for consciousness, in order to point out—in very few words—that the brain, that intelligence, is also energy, and that this energy can change the world, and that commitment and freedom are to be found in the acceptance of this energy.”28 In this context, the silent potato, “in very few words,” points a growing Latin American (revolutionary) consciousness or a hopeful course for silenced people living under the ideological practices of dictatorship.

If these political and poetic valences seem evident in retrospect, they were not as obvious, or not as interesting, to press coverage of the exhibition. Argentinian and Brazilian media, which covered CAYC’s presence at the biennial heavily, focused primarily on the patent absurdity of an art exhibition comprised of sacks of wheat, piles of potatoes, and hanging lamb carcasses. Prior to October 12, when the jury awarded Sigues on ecosistemas the biennial’s Grand Prize, the exhibition—Grippo’s installation in particular—seemed to push the limits of what readers, if not biennial visitors, were willing to accept as art. What the Grand Prize revealed was the extent to which other artists participating in the biennial also questioned the ontological disruption posed by CAYC’s exhibition.

A Negotiated Position

The Brazilian newspaper Estado de São Paulo demonstrated this skepticism with a special section, “O Melhor da Bienal,” in its October 12, 1977, edition. The headline for an article reporting on the Grand Prize reads “Stones, Potatoes, Salami, Dirt, Wire Cages, Butts: The Grand Prize is the Argentines.”29 Above, a banner of three images dominates the page with images of the quotidiano materials that CAYC called art: a long table covered in potatoes (the unwired half of Grippo’s Energía vegetal installation), shot from below to exaggerate its length; a pile of rocks; an overhead shot of small pieces included in Alfredo Portilllo’s ritual space. The image of Grippo’s long stretch of potatoes, which highlights its minimal formal qualities as it seems to poke fun at the work, reappeared on the cover of the biennial sec-tion in the Argentinean newsweekly Somos on October 12. Under the headline “The Argentines at the Vanguard,” a color installation view occupies two thirds of the page, this time in color, looking slightly down on the table but still exaggerating its length. Grippo stands at the far end of the table’s vanishing point, hardly more visible than the blurred biennial visitors looking at another CAYC work to his right. The text above him reads, “The Group of Thirteen won the...
Indeed, the press coverage of the event, particularly in Brazilian media such as Manchete, revived debates about the ethical-political implications of what should be considered art. Some more conservative critics echoed the objections to associating such art with “the Argentine flag.” The magazine Eco de la semana, skeptical of the atmosphere of “delirium” at the biennial, complained, “a sum of sausages, potatoes, sacks of wheat, rats and plastic lids, in spite of which all international ribbons and freezes, does not amount to more than Laurie’s troublesome, barely worth the monetary amusements of editors and readers of this magazine.” The Brazilian editor Adolfo Bloch asked where in his company he could hang “the decoration potatoes, a hen and eggs, an ecumencial altar, birdcages, and I don’t know what other objects, bugs, and debris that won at the biennial.” Such resistance exhumes the commercial and anti-communist origins of the biennial. Krajobr’s initial response, however, was precisely the opposite: To him, the award was an act of censorship, politically motivated in its efforts to reward only Latin American artists that align themselves with power in a country with a “friendly regime.”

Given the seemingly critical tone of signs on ecosistemas artificiales, Krajobr’s interpretation of CAYC’s exhibition as politically expedient for biennial officials and the jury is puzzling. In a later interview, Jacques Bedel and Alfredo Portillos rejected the allegation, saying, “CAYC is not a group of wealthy people, but a group of professionals who work honestly and with effort. The proof is that three of us received works of social practice and negotiation in themselves. Videla’s telegram reveals the extent to which international art and “disappearances” of Argentinean citizens that were, in 1977, at their height. The telegram offers “most hearty congratulations” on the prize, which “reiterates once more Argentinean art’s high level and the rich variety of its diverse aesthetic proposals.”44 It may have been sent before news of the Grand Prize reached Argentina, and it certainly suggests that Videla never actually saw CAYC’s exhibition and its鸭 duties of state terror, though its irony reveals the complexities of meaning as they unfold in different ideological contexts. An even more deeply ironic line from the telegram praises CAYC for its “search for new art forms of artistic expression consistent with the time in which we live.”45 Even if the signos on ecosistemas artificiales exhibition was indicative of anything, it was the contingencies of context, the shifting structures of meaning according to “the time in which we live.”

Videla’s telegram reveals the extent to which international art politics had affirmed CAYC’s role in a global social order, as a result, the content of its exhibitions had little to do with their meaning. It is not that CAYC’s curatorial frameworks evolved toward tamer politics in later exhibitions, but that its mode of semiotic critique came to be read as political, but simply as objects of increased exchange value, as placeholders for bourgeois fantasies, and as symbols of Argentina’s currency in global art markets like Conceptualism. Here, in a reversal of the social meanings produced by the earlier exhibition Arte e ideología, CAYC’s art stands as an indictment of police intervention, the conceptual embrace of the very object of CAYC’s criticism reveals a different operation of the art world: signification as shared meaning. The official response CAYC elicited — threats from the police early on46 and later congratulations from the dictator — might be considered works of social practice and negotiation in themselves. Videla’s patrician claim that CAYC pioneered the “search for new art forms of economic injustice, such as Marotta’s sacks of wheat, or the silencing of people, such as Grippo’s potatoes or Gonzalez Mir’s caged birds, as anything but directly critical of their regimes?”

Grand Prize of the Bienal. Winnings of 12,500 dollars. Thirty-five countries and 250 artists participated. It is the first time that a non-European country has won such a high distinction. It was judged by an international jury. The prize raises the high level reached by Argentine art. Creativity was rewarded.39

The image again reappears in the Brazilian newsmagazine Manchete on October 23, under the headline “Franz Krajobr.” The Protest of the Sculptor.” The image of Grippo is the same as, and positioned directly above, an image of the Brazilian sculptor Franz Krajobr removing his work from the biennial. The full here is clear: Grippo, barely in focus at the far end of a table of potatoes, decentrizes his authorship of a work that relies on the meanings embedded in ordinary objects. Krajobr, below, insists on his authorial and interpretive control over a product of his own making, removing it from a context that did not support his prescribed meanings. Such images also have the effect of making Grippo to be the only artist exhibiting in the section; other Grupo CAYC artists do not appear in images of their works, such as Vicente Marotta’s wheat sacks on the cover of Somos Arte e ideología: CAYC. The text-oriented directly above, an image of the Brazilian sculptor Franz Krajobr by an international jury. The prize ratifies the high level reached by the group Etsedron, from Bahía, “that shows the cruelties of Brazilian misery, all around the world.” The artist rejected his moment of official sanction. Photos document Glusberg touring the exhibition with the Governor of the state of São Paulo, Paulo Egydio de Moraes, and the Abasto del Bienal. “36 According to Graziela Sarti, tensions surrounding the integrity of the jury by money days later was a national ceremony. O Globo reported complaints by the Polish Brazilian sculptor Franz Krajobr that two jurors, Marcia Tucker and Tomasso Trini, had made comments that Brazilian art could not be serious and that its entries were not “serious.” 37 Ironically, the sole dissenting voice on the jury came from the Argentinean Silvia Ambrosini, who supported only Male’s work but not the entire CAYC exhibition.38 When the jury announced it would award the titular Grand Prize to CAYC, Krajobr, despite having won one of the Premios Bienal, promptly set about dismantle his work in protest. The following day, the Argentinean newspaper La Nación reported:

The Brazilian artist Franca Krajobr dismantled his art, threatening to burn it, while growling, “there is no way, their decision only, “We were not expecting such a prize. We do not work for the sake of being awarded.”32

To him, the award was an act of censorship, politically motivated in its efforts to reward only Latin American artists that align themselves with power in a country with a “friendly regime.”


Perhaps most telling is a congratulatory telegram from General Jorge Rafael Videla, then president of Argentina and an architect of the torture and “disappearances” of Argentinean citizens that were, in 1977, at their height. The telegram offers “most hearty congratulations” on the prize, which “reiterates once more Argentinean art’s high level and the rich variety of its diverse aesthetic proposals.” It may have been sent before news of the Grand Prize reached Argentina, and it certainly suggests that Videla never actually saw CAYC’s exhibition and its鸭 duties of state terror, though its irony reveals the complexities of meaning as they unfold in different ideological contexts. An even more deeply ironic line from the telegram praises CAYC for its “search for new art forms of artistic expression consistent with the time in which we live.” Even if the signos on ecosistemas artificiales exhibition was indicative of anything, it was the contingencies of context, the shifting structures of meaning according to “the time in which we live.”

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Notes


2 Fundación OSDE, Arte de sistemas, 64.


4 See ICAA Record ID 3042 for a paradigmatic example of CAYC gacettas.


10 Ibid. ICAA Record ID 29666. Translation mine.


12 Ibid. ICAA Record ID 766244. Translation mine.


15 Ibid. ICAA Record ID 29666. Translation mine.


20 Though, as I argue elsewhere, this decentralization of interpretation also represents the political underpinnings of Conceptual art more broadly, including the “pure” or “analytical” strains associated with Europe and North America.


24 Quiles, “Network of Art and Communication: CAYC as Model.”

25 From pre-Hispanic roots to Mr. Potato Head, representations of potatoes bearing human traits are cute; they capitalise on a comedic metonymy that distills our essence to our most important part: our head. Ana Longoni discusses prehispanic clay representations of potatoes in her essay “Víctor Grippo: His Poetry, His Utopia,” in Facheri, Grippo, 286.

26 Sarti, “Grupo CAYC.”

27 Facheri, Grippo, 286.

28 Ibid. 


34 Sarti, “Grupo CAYC.”

35 Ibid.


37 Filho, “Víctor Kracjberg: O Protesto Do Escultor.”

38 “Los Argentinos, a la vanguardia.”


40 Ibid. ICAA Record ID 766259. Translation mine.


42 Quoted in “Los Argentinos, a la vanguardia.”

43 Sarti, “Grupo CAyC.” This part of the note was reproduced in “Los argentinos, a la vanguardia.”

44 For interesting coverage of this event, which I discuss in my thesis, “Latin American Conceptualism and the Problem of Ideology: The Centro de Arte y Comunicación at the São Paulo Bienal,” ICAA Record ID 761988.

**REMEMBERING MARTA MINUJÍN’S INFORMALISMO: MEMORY AND POLITICS IN THE ART OF POST-PERONIST ARGENTINA**

Michaela de la Cazaza

“It will be said that it is pure utopia and this is true. Isn’t human production always utopian, even when it seems most practical? Arte Informal is notoriously so.”


“Those [informalists] who elevate matter in function of its contents and offer us the miraculous road of an informal order that is sufficiently expressive, these are the ones who through this artistic road…paint on all things; or what is the same: these are the ones who invite us to nourish ourselves from the mystery, the contents, of a category with which we yearn towards the superior.”


“Could we…claim that the attitude of the ‘Informalist,’ those who elevate matter in function of its contents and offer us the miraculous road in which all contradictions and disturbances of the intellect find harmony?” —Rafael Squirru, “An Authentic Informalist Attitude,” Del Arte, June 1961

In 1961, the publication Del Arte devoted its July issue to Arte Informal or informalismo, an art movement that had become a noticeable presence in the Buenos Aires art scene since 1959 (figs. 1-3). Two years later, it continued to baffle the Argentinean public, who did not hesitate to disparage it. Primarily inspired from the Art Informel and Tachisme of Spanish, Italian, and French artists, such as Antoni Tàpies, Alberto Burri, and Jean Dubuffet, informalismo embraced extra-artistic materials to create abstract, nongeometric paintings (often bordering on relief) with opaque, highly textured, and usually earth-toned surfaces, whose facture conveyed the gestural force and spontaneity that was often a part of their making. Through its forms, materials, and methods of production, the movement positioned itself as a rejection of the rational and controlled geometric abstraction produced by the constructivist vanguard of the forties—Arte Concreto Involución, Madí, and Conceptismo, for instance.

As suggested by Del Arte’s cover headline, “Informalismo Tipped in the Scales,” the featured jury, comprised of three of Argentina’s most distinguished art critics, had the task of defining and judging the main merits of Informalismo in its ability to transmit a spiritual attitude or “supra-conscious zone” beyond time and space where all conflicts and disturbances of the intellect find harmony.1

In his essay “False and Probable Informalism,” the Spanish poet and critic Enrique Azcoaga (the least well-known and most skeptical of the three intellectuals) focused on distinguishing a legitimate Informalist art from a “dead,” purely decorative one by stressing that only the former had the ability to deliver “a road to elevation” through an “expressive order” (fig. 1). The director of the Museum of Modern Art in Buenos Aires, Rafael Squirru, approached the subject differently by establishing parallels between Informalismo, on the one hand, and Buddhism and Zen Poetry, on the other (fig. 2). He located the merits of informalismo in its ability to transmit a spiritual attitude through its humble materials, inner poetry, and overall opacity.2 To Squirru, informalismo granted its viewers access to a “superior order” or “supra-conscious zone” beyond time and space where all conflicts could be harmoniously resolved.3 Azcoaga’s and Squirru’s views of “good art” as a conduit to transcendence were echoed in Jorge Romero Brest’s portrayal of informalismo as a fundamentally “utopian” art, practiced by “cultivators of truth” (fig. 3).4

Brest’s odd linking of informalista art to spirituality, utopia, and even sacrificial virginity betrays precisely what unites all three critics: a view of the work of art as a secularized experience of the sacred. The pages of Del Arte therefore give us a glimpse into the way that the discursive field constituting Informalismo’s reception extrapolated artistic subjectivity from its immediate institutional context in order to reimage it as transhistorical. But the general critical attempt to subordinate Informalismo’s lowness through notions of expressivity, vitality, spirituality, beauty, and timelessness, among others, sprung, in fact, from the very language used by many prominent informalistas—a language and attitude that led the poet and critic Edúardo Jaguer to dismiss informalismo as a “sous-externalization of a new intellectual comfort” as early as 1958.5 Jaguer was not alone in this scorn. In his disparaging review of the Galería Van Riel’s 1959 exhibiton on informalismo, Argentinean critic Eduardo Baliani admonished artists that “the painter of this epoch…wants to use his redeemed technique transcendentally, he will have to do so with the minimum of responsibility to know that one cannot play by returning to an unintelligible babbling…” aiming to affirm blind adaptation, facilitated by the disorder into which painting has been driven (fig. 4).6

Because Brest was, at the time, the director of the National Museum of Fine Arts—an institution that had reopened in 1956 and quickly become the country’s premier arbiter of the arts—his analysis of informalismo, albeit abstruse, carried more weight than the observations of the other two critics. Organized as a series of numbered notes, which never quite coalesced into an argument, Brest’s tentative response highlighted the most salient attributes of the movement—mainly, the “crude realism” resulting from informalismo’s rejection of traditional art materials and its total negation of long held artistic values, such as permanence and high quality.7

But instead of delving into the anti-humanistic implications of Informalismo, Brest claimed that negation “always introduces a corresponding affirmation” and proceeded to neutralize informalismo’s negativity by turning to phenomenology and vaguely tautean philosophical notions, such as experience, imagination, and existence.8 For instance, Brest recognized that informalista artists embraced materials considered exogenous to art only to then insist that this group would in truth “fix content making absolutely immaterial works of art”—a desire for immateriality, which was at the “root of its spiritualism,” according to the critic.9 Brest also similarly reversed his point regarding informalismo’s tendency to embrace real time and materials by maintaining that the movement simultaneously “aspir[ed] to be anterior to experience,” that is, outside of history.10 Overall, informalismo was “not a school nor a tendency but rather a way of conceptualizing existence.”11

And yet “to be Informal” also required being “true to what surpassed experience and existence—a dubiously enigmatic realm, which exist[ed] beyond what one sees, thinks, feels, or fabricates,” Brest conjectured.12 Given these incongruous remarks, it is perhaps unsurprising that Brest went so far as to propose “virginal art” as an alternate name for a movement whose canvases flaunted a heterogeneous mix of base materials hardly evocative of virginial purity or innocence.13

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Greco, a star informalista and allegedly the first informalista painter of Argentina, was just as responsible as Kemble for the reception of informalismo in transatlantic terms. Greco’s artistic strategy consisted of always desecrating the art object through a vicious act of violence that was meant to emphasize “the death of painting” but which ultimately yielded yet another painterly image to be aesthetically appreciated. For his red and black series begun in 1959, Greco covered his canvases in tar and urine and then left them out in the rain and wind. Nevertheless, the resulting works, like his monochromatic Pinturas Negras of a year later, possessed striking surfaces that were hardly distinguishable from the decrepit paintings of a year earlier. The paintings’ tonal variations were a function of the surface materials that either absorbed or supported Minujín’s pigments. Made from sand, carpenter’s glue, and various other ingredients, the paintings’ gestural expressivity typical of most arte informal of the period. They consequently lacked the flatness to underscore, rather than override their monotone, inexpressive hues. They consequently lacked the gestural expressivity typical of most arte informal of the period.

In short, rather than attack painting only to produce paradoxically beautiful works, Greco’s anxiety over the movement she had recently espoused. To Minujín, informalismo’s claims to self-expression were inextricably tied to a need for self-reassurance; the informalistas could not legitimate their break from long-held artistic conventions without resorting to the comforting and even cliché pretext of expressivity and artistic freedom. In the same breath, Minujín also tacitly and tellingly equated the movement’s recourse to expression with both error and self contradiction.

Evidently, Minujín considered herself a part of informalismo and was not impervious to the rhetoric of the movement, as attested by the rest of the informalistas. However, Minujín’s self-awareness and unease was already enough to distinguish Minujín from her older peers. And her art set the artist further apart from them.

Pocked by holes, cracks, blotsches, and raised patches, Minujín’s Informalista paintings were barely distinguishable from the decrèpit ceilings, walls, and floors found in old buildings plugged by leaky plumbing (figs. 6, 9, 11). As an artist, theropolis of this preemptive defense of informalismo betrayed Minujín’s anxiety over the movement she had recently espoused. To Minujín, informalismo’s claims to self-expression were inextricably tied to a need for self-reassurance; the informalistas could not legitimate their break from long-held artistic conventions without resorting to the comforting and even cliché pretext of expressivity and artistic freedom. In the same breath, Minujín also tacitly and tellingly equated the movement’s recourse to expression with both error and self contradiction.

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Minujín's Informalismo, painting could not redeem the low elements that it incorporated into its space. On the contrary, the pictorial medium was itself corrupted by them. Minujín's eschewal of informalista notions of expressivity and transcendence was perhaps most evident in the painting Testimonio para una joven tumba [Testimony for a Young Tomb] (1960–61; see fig. 9), a key work in Minujín’s series of Informalist paintings, as evidenced by the artist's decision to send it to Paris for the Deuxième Biennale de Paris: Manifestación Biennale et Internationale des Jeunes Artistes in the fall of 1961. Even though the title of this work alluded to the recent tragic death of Minujín's brother, the painting refrained from communicating the pathos that one might expect from a grieving artist and, hence, willfully failed to distinguish itself from Minujín’s other informalista canvases.35 Testimony for a Young Tomb was, in effect, as silent as a grave. And as with a grave, the painting's hard surface both concealed and marked the horror of the body turned corpse. Indeed, the work's direct reference to mortality revealed the analogy between the work of art and the human body that ran throughout the whole of Minujín’s informalista art. In fact, it was her paintings’ antropomorfic impermanence—their performance of mortality—that effectively barred any sort of transcendental reading. The work of art was simply too firmly anchored in the hic et nunc to allow the viewer's mind to escape the mundane into the beyond of a superior order, as wished for by Squirru.

Minujín, furthermore, staged these paintings' dilapidation as ineluctable. In Untitled (1961–62), for instance, the artist's abortive attempts to mend the painting's surface became conspicuous. Extra layers of paint blatantly covered some of the painting's proliferating cracks. These layers were applied to the original surface in such a splashy fashion that they underlined more than concealed the flaws in the work. In addition, the colors of these corrective coats of paint approximated but never coincided with the shades of white or grey on which they were superimposed. This deliberate mismatch focused the viewer's attention on the work's accelerated aging by literally privileging the analogies between the painting's surface and the work's direct reference to mortality. Indeed, the work's direct reference to mortality revealed the analogy between the work of art and the human body that ran throughout the whole of Minujín’s Informalist art. In fact, it was Minujín’s Informalist art that equated pictorial space with the interiority of the subject only to better exclude the body and transcend the material realm. Clearly, a painting like Untitled (1961; see fig. 8) did not present the mnemonic field as a stable and cohesive psychological, privative space, populated by personal markers of uniquely felt emotions and experiences. The psyche of the bourgeois subject was not featured here as it had been in, for instance, the painted dreamscapes of Surrealism or its postwar outgrowths, like Abstract Expressionism.

If the “flattened picture plane" was, as Leo Steinberg theorized it in 1972, a "receptor surface on which objects are scattered [and] data entered," then Minujín’s paintings, although evoking the opaqueness and solidity of horizontal surfaces from the realm of culture, did not function as “receptors.” Rather, they were emitters of titillate signs or symptoms, betraying internal, organic, and temporal processes: rot, infection, and, at best, banal aging. In short, these paintings produced the uncanny impression of having a hidden interiority, whose secret churnings only partially transpired to the surface. One of Minujín’s few titled works Movimientos Interior [Internal Movement] (1960) made this aspect of the series explicit (see fig. 10).
Consumerism, however, was not the only phenomenon that came from the bustling commercial world of one of Latin America’s largest countries. Treasures of commonplace symbols and material facts were extracted from the tablet of the mind as dysfunctional and irreparably damaged by its trajectory through time. But aside from these flaws and signs of aging, Minujín’s tablet of the mind was patently barren, composed of nothing more than swaths of dull browns and beiges, offering little distraction to the eye. The mind was patently barren, composed of nothing more than swaths of dull browns and beiges, offering little distraction to the eye. The mind was patently barren, composed of nothing more than swaths of dull browns and beiges, offering little distraction to the eye.

Yet the “data,” to use Steinberg’s term, so conspicuously collected by Robert Rauschenberg in the 1950s. As argued by Steinberg, Rauschenberg’s picture plane spoke to “the consciousness immersed in its trajectory through time.”

The rhetoric supplementing Informalismo therefore had to deny the inherent contradiction between the material immediacy of the image and the timeless and autonomous allowed the movement to further disown its historical and anti-ideological technique, did not pose social or political problems.

Through Informalismo, artists hastily searched for “the key to what ever could be considered ‘new,’” for a visual vocabulary that could properly represent not the sociopolitical reality of the country, but its aspirations and idealized image as a renewed nation liberated from “dichotomies” and in tune with international artistic trends.

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Art historians consistently argue that Greco’s represented a colonization that strengthened or, at least, reasserted the reach youth with the figure of the avant-garde artist.

the opposite, perhaps because Argentina’s art world strongly associated tributed to this confusion by making contradictory statements regarding her age. As a teenager, Minujín often added a few years to her age in order to have born in 1941, while others pinpoint her birth to 1943. The artist has herself con –

University Press, 2007), 126. Artists, she argues, felt the need to go beyond bour –

matic of what Giunta describes as the Argentinean avant-garde’s conflicted relationship to the institution of art; see Andrea Giunta,

Greco’s photographs of the served these actions as artistic images and thus corrected their ephemerality, more than pure form. Furthermore, Greco’s not void painting, art or the art institution but simply relocated their shared key terpoint” of the Duchampian ready-made because they “do not entail removing the signaled object . . . from their contexts (the street, daily life) in order to place

Am ericas


30 Ibid., 270.

41 For more on this, see Eduardo Elena, Dignifying Argentina: Peronism, Citizenship, and Mass Consumption (Philadelphia: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010).

35 Her older brother had succumbed to cancer, a disease whose gradual destruc -

30 Ibid., 30.

52 Steinberg, “Reflections on the State of Criticism,” 32.

40 Krauss, 52.


54 Ibid., 63.

39 Ibid., 30.

50 Ibid., 30.

58 For more on the Argentinean intelligentsia’s rereading of Peronism in an

37 Steinberg, “Reflections on the State of Criticism,” 34.

38 Ibid., 32.

52 Steinberg, “Reflections on the State of Criticism,” 34.


50 Ibid., 30.

87 For more on the Argentinean intelligentsia’s rereading of Peronism in an

30 Ibid., 30.

52 Steinberg, “Reflections on the State of Criticism,” 34.


95 For a detailed, yet informative, account of this period see Pacheco, “From the Modern to the Contemporary,” 16–25.

50 Ibid., 30.

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30 Ibid., 30.

52 Steinberg, “Reflections on the State of Criticism,” 32.

40 Krauss, 52.


54 Ibid., 63.

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54 Ibid., 63.
CONTRIBUTORS

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Michaela de Lacaze earned a BA in the history of art and architecture at Harvard College and is a PhD candidate in modern and contemporary art at Columbia University. Her research has focused on new media art, happenings, performance art, Informalismo, and installation art in Latin America, especially in the context of Argentina and Brazil. While living in Seoul, South Korea in 2014–16, she became a fellow at the National Museum of Korea and developed an interest in East Asian art and Korean contemporary art, publishing essays on Ahn Kyuchul, Coby Choi, Korean ceramics, and the Dansaekhwa School. Her dissertation, currently in progress, centers on Marta Minujín, using her art as a lens through which to reconstruct the early history of Argentina’s avant-garde experiments with performance, new media, and different forms of participation during the first half of the 1960s. Since 2015, Michaela has worked under the leadership of curator Daehyung Lee as the editor-in-chief of Hyundai Motor’s Art Initiative. In addition, she is one of the curatorial assistants for the 2017 Korean Pavilion of the 57th Venice Biennale as well as the editor of the Korean Pavilion’s catalogue.