BILL KELLEY JR. and GRANT H. KESTER, editors

COLLECTIVE SITUATIONS

READINGS IN CONTEMPORARY LATIN AMERICAN ART, 1995–2010

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Cover art: Fernando Falconí (Falco) and a group of women from the Danubio Azul, "Nuestra Patrona de la Cantera," La Cantera, San Roque, Quito, 2008. Photo and project were part of the Encuentro de Arte y Comunidad al Zur-ich (2008) and the Tranvia Cero archives. Faces are intentionally blurred by the contributor.

To Samira and Elliott
Te quiero con todo mi alma.
—G.H.K.

A mi querida madre Zoila
—B.K. Jr.

Contents

Introduction

GRANT H. KESTER AND BILL KELLEY JR.

> Injustice is not an accident.
>
> *GUSTAVO GUTIÉRREZ,*
> *The Power of the Poor in History*

This collection of essays, statements, interviews, and project descriptions provides a selective overview of collaborative, socially engaged art practice in Latin America between 1995 and 2010. Our goal is to introduce English-language readers to some of the most engaging new artists and critics currently working in Mexico and Central and South America.[1] Many of the projects presented here are little known in the United States and Europe, and a significant number of the essays and interviews have been translated into English for the first time, specifically for this anthology. We believe this material deserves a much wider audience. While some publications have focused on earlier periods (Katzenstein and Giunta's *Listen, Here, Now!* for example, which includes material from Argentine artists active during the 1960s), this is the first book to present work from the most recent generation of artists working throughout the region.[2] This has been a remarkably fertile period of experimentation, with new forms of artistic production not just in Latin America, but globally. In particular, this period has witnessed a range of efforts to redefine conventional notions of aesthetic autonomy, as artistic practices began to overlap with and to parallel forms of cultural production in the realm of activism, urbanism, radical pedagogy, environmentalism, and other fields. Examples range from Park Fiction's experiments with participatory planning in Hamburg to Ala

Plastica's engagement with regional ecosystems in the Río de la Plata basin (discussed in this book), and from Huit Facette's projects in the villages of Senegal, to Tania Bruguera's Immigrant Movement International in New York.[3]

While a number of artists working in Latin America over the past fifteen years have gained considerable fame in the established circuit of international biennial and museum exhibitions (Francis Alÿs, Ernesto Neto, Gabriel Orozco, and Santiago Sierra, among others), their work will not be the focus of our attention here. In fact, many of the artists and groups presented in the current study are relatively unknown in the mainstream art world. This is due in part to the particular—some might say parochial—interests of contemporary curators and critics, but it also reflects a conscious decision by a number of these artists to locate their practices in networks of validation and reception that are peripheral to the mainstream art world and, by extension, to establish a different relationship with the public. Rather than simply accepting the self-selecting audiences and the arbitrary time constraints imposed by biennial commissions or museum exhibitions, these artists seek to define new publics and new constituencies for their practice, and to engage the broader field of variables (of space and time, situation and subjectivity) that constitute the social field of a given work. This act of secession also reflects a growing disillusionment with the increasingly close integration between the institutional mechanisms of the mainstream art world (the journals, curators, critics, art fairs, biennials, museums, and galleries that provide the discursive and intellectual validation for contemporary art) and the global auction market, in which contemporary art alone generated almost five billion dollars in sales in 2014.

Given the diversity and sheer size of the American continent, the relationship of the projects discussed here to the global art world cannot be generalized. Some regions have little in the way of "art world" infrastructure (galleries, museums, publications, and so on) while cities such as Buenos Aires, Mexico City, or Rio de Janeiro rival the art centers of Europe and North America. What seems to be consistent, as noted above, is that these practices have, with a few exceptions, traditionally operated outside the art world's purview. Only very recently, in cities that have a strong history of community-based art practice, such as Medellín or São Paolo, has some effort been made to incorporate these projects into a larger matrix of museological programming or art historical research and publication. In terms of research, some of these developments are driven

by teams of national and international curators, as is the case with the São Paolo Biennial, while others are taken on by academic researchers and independent research teams, such as the Red Conceptualismos del Sur. Art historical studies focused on contemporary art have been relatively rare in Latin America. As such, it is often the case that the writers associated with this work were either educated abroad, or emerged from other disciplines, such as the social sciences. This further contributes to a situation in which community-based or socially engaged art practices are more fully and frequently examined in fields outside of art history or theory (e.g., visual anthropology, sociology, etc.).

In many cases these artists and collectives exist in relatively precarious circumstances, with little institutional support or recognition from the art world, and an often antagonistic relationship to formal state bodies (this is evident in the case of Colectivo Sociedad Civil in Peru, Grupo Etcétera in Argentina, and Artistas en Resistancia in Guatemala, for example). The contrast with the sumptuary economy on display at art fairs, galleries, and biennials could hardly be more striking. This contrast is paralleled by a key ideological difference. Where the default attitude toward political change within the mainstream art world involves a studied cynicism (as Santiago Sierra famously observed, "I can't change anything . . . I don't believe in the possibility of change"), the artists represented here are committed to the idea that change is not only possible but essential, and that they can play a role in bringing it about.[4] At the same time, they have come of age in a region of the world where both the possibilities and the disappointments of political transformation are a subject of visceral, daily knowledge and lived historical experience. If there is a broader institutional context for this work, and a wider set of affiliations, it can be found in an improvisational network of activist and socially engaged artists and collectives scattered around the world, from Senegal, to Finland, to Myanmar, to Delhi and beyond, which are equally peripheral to the mainstream, Euro-American art world.

Site-specific art has conventionally operated through what might be described as a teleological orientation. While a given image, event, or idea may be generated in response to a particular context or situation, the artist's relationship to site is largely appropriative, and the locus of creativity resides primarily at the level of autonomous conceptual ideation (e.g., the well-worn image of the artist working alone in his or her studio). The world, in turn, becomes a kind of reservoir from which the artist may draw at will in elaborating his or her particular vision.[5] By and large, the

work presented in this collection has been produced through a situational engagement with active sites of social or cultural resistance (the Prestes Maia occupation in São Paolo, the ecosystem of Buenos Aires, the public sphere of Medellín). In each case we see a concern with tactical knowledge production and an extemporaneous relationship to incipient political formations and social spaces—a form of *civic reimagining*.[6] At the same time, these individual sites of practice share certain commonalities, through the influence of recent geopolitical shifts in Latin America, which we will trace below.

From the *Requerimiento* to the EZLN

The violence of Spanish colonization constituted a social trauma that was borne by the body politic of Latin America long after formal independence from Spain was achieved. While the specific or local forms of domination set in place by the Spanish colonizers were modified over time, in the case of Latin America, the underlying structures (the repression of indigenous languages and cultures; the hacienda system; forms of race-, caste-, and class-based oppression; the dominance of an elite of planters and merchants) remained largely intact, even as a new generation of neocolonial actors came to power in the region in the mid- to late nineteenth century (Great Britain and later the United States). In fact, the authority of the aristocratic *latifundistas* in Latin America was actually strengthened after independence due to the leading role they played in military resistance to Spanish authority. The concentration of land ownership in large estates, the appropriation of native lands, and the eradication of indigenous communities continued, and even increased, in many countries, especially during the late 1800s. As a result, neocolonial political movements retain a contradictory character. On the one hand, the leaders of these movements (Rafael Núñez during the regeneration period in Colombia, Juan Manuel Rosas's "populist" reforms in Buenos Aires, *La Reforma* in Mexico under Benito Juárez) sought to encourage resistance to foreign economic domination through appeals to a unified national identity. At the same time, these movements were often led by, and designed to benefit, wealthy landowners, traders, and industrialists at the expense of working-class, mestizo, and indigenous populations.[7]

Colonial powers, from Spain in the sixteenth century to the colonial adventures of various European nations in Africa during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, have typically maintained their domination through tactical alliances with local indigenous elites, which identify their interests

with the colonial power rather than with their own people. As a result, many of the conflicts that occurred in the countries of Latin America following liberation from Spain involved efforts by these same elites to retain control over the cultural and economic resources of their countries. The result was a cyclical process familiar to historians of the region, as a comprador class skimmed off a portion of the wealth exported from the country by foreign investors and corporations, in exchange for maintaining order and repressing organized resistance among the working class and indigenous populations.[8] This model was, in the long run, untenable. Debt payment burdens, pressure toward monoculture economies, and periodic currency devaluation only exacerbated internal class divisions, leading to the rise of a cadre of autocratic caudillos and military dictators during the early to mid-twentieth century.

In the post–World War II period (roughly 1950–70), a series of new political movements emerged in Latin America that attempted to challenge long-standing internal class divisions, while also taking up a more oppositional relationship to foreign capital. Typically these involved socialist or quasi-socialist reforms (Jacobo Árbenz Guzman in Guatemala and Victor Paz Estenssero in Bolivia in the early 1950s, Juan Velasco Alvarado's nationalization of oil production in Peru in 1968, and the 1970 election of Salvador Allende in Chile) as well as open revolution, in the case of Cuba in 1959 and the overthrow of the Somoza regime in Nicaragua by the Sandinistas in 1979. Most of these endeavors were greeted by overt and covert attempts at subversion by the United States, including support for military coups, dictatorships, and political assassinations. During the 1960s the Alliance for Progress, a hemispheric plan developed by the Kennedy administration, played a leading role in this process, providing indoctrination and counterinsurgency training for both urban and rural guerrilla groups in the name of "fighting communism" in the region.

By the mid-1970s many countries in Central and South America had returned to a familiar pattern in which foreign investors and corporations worked in tandem with internal elites, whose power was frequently maintained by military repression (e.g., in Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Uruguay, and Paraguay).[9] However, where previous client states had attempted to ameliorate some of the economic and social costs of dependence through spending on domestic social programs, the 1970s and 1980s witnessed a gradual return to democratically elected governments and a transition to early neoliberal policies, imposed through the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Under the so-called "Washington Consensus,"

these policies required debtor nations to reduce welfare and worker protections, eliminate tariffs, and open internal markets to foreign investment. It is important to understand that neoliberalism does not involve an absolute reduction of the state's power relative to the private sector. Rather, neoliberalism involves a transition in state function, as the government abandons a market-regulating role (imposing controls over corporate conduct, recognition of organized labor, etc.) and embraces instead a market-*complementing* role in which any "public" obligation is subordinate to the interests of corporate and financial elites.[10]

Neoliberal economic policies proved to be particularly well-suited to repressive political regimes in Latin America, as the withdrawal of social support systems (i.e., reductions in welfare, public education, health benefits, and so on) only served to increase internal social tensions that, in turn, were used to justify further social repression and violence. In response a number of political leaders during the late 1990s attempted to combine obedience to the fiscal discipline of neoliberal development with a largely symbolic embrace of populist domestic policies (e.g., Carlos Menem in Argentina, Alberto Fujimori in Peru, and Patricio Aylwin and Eduardo Frei in Chile). The failure of these efforts were epitomized by the fall of Fujimori in 2000, the Argentine debt crisis of 1999–2002, and the coterminous financial crisis in Brazil, which prompted a domino effect of monetary devaluations throughout the region. The result was the so-called "Pink Tide" of the early 2000s, as a series of political leaders emerged in Central and South America who were openly antagonistic to the neoliberal economic discourse that had dominated the region since the 1970s.[11] This marked a significant shift in Latin American politics, as these leaders came to power through peaceful, democratic means, reflecting a region-wide frustration with the social costs of globalization. At the same time, while heads of state such as Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, Rafael Correa, Hugo Chávez, and Evo Morales have been, or were, critical of neoliberal dogma, they also recognized the tactical necessity of working to some extent within the international economic community and the mechanisms of the global market.[12]

It is this final period, both utopian and pragmatic, that provides the political backdrop for many of the artistic experiments documented in this collection. The time frame for this collection is significant, beginning as it does in the mid-1990s, which witnessed both the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), that penultimate expression of neoliberal ideology, and the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas, Mexico, which introduced a new paradigm of revolution. It is a period marked by a wide-

spread repudiation of the tenets of neoliberalism and structural adjustment, and an equally widespread disillusionment with traditional armed resistance.[13] The gradual shift toward new forms of political organization in Latin America was signaled by the emergence of the EZLN (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional) or Zapatista Army of National Liberation in Chiapas in 1994. "It is not our arms which make us radical," the Zapatistas declared, "it is the new political practice which we propose . . . a political practice which does not seek the taking of power but the organization of society."[14] The Zapatistas deliberately sought to differentiate themselves from previous models of revolutionary insurrection. In an early interview Subcomandante Marcos stated:

> We do not want a dictatorship of another kind, nor anything out of this world, not international Communism and all that. We want justice where there is now not even minimum subsistence. . . . We do not want to monopolize the vanguard or say that we are the light, the only alternative, or stingily claim the qualification of revolutionary for one or another current.[15]

The Zapatistas are emblematic of a broader desire in Latin America during this period to move beyond the traditional notion of revolution as a system for communicating the expertise of a vanguard party or mobilizing the quiescent masses through agitation or exemplary acts of violence. Some indication of the richness and diversity of these new approaches can be found in Boaventura de Sousa Santos's "Reinventing Social Emancipation" initiative, which he launched in the early 2000s. This is an international research project that provides an overview of new forms of social struggle in the Global South. At the core of de Sousa Santos's research is a differentiation between existing models of "representative" democracy, associated with the traditions of bourgeois liberalism, and incipient forms of participatory democracy in Latin America, Asia, and Africa, many of which have been catalyzed in response to neoliberal globalization. "The main thesis" of this research, as de Sousa Santos writes, "is that the hegemonic model of [liberal, representative] democracy . . . guarantees no more than low-intensity democracy, based on the privatization of public welfare by more or less restricted elites, on the increasing distance between representatives and the represented, and on an abstract political inclusion made of concrete social exclusion."[16]

From Brazil's MST (Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra), to the *cocaleros* of Putumayo, to innovative forms of participatory budgeting

in Porto Allegro, de Sousa Santos identifies a "new emphasis on local democracy and on the variations of the democratic form."[17] Taken in the aggregate, these initiatives seek to expand democratic processes and principles beyond the formal confines of representative politics to the "lived temporality" of everyday life. They represent the struggle to "democratize democracy," in de Sousa Santos's words, and mark a movement toward a more experiential and pragmatic approach to social and political transformation. This model of change implies neither a rejection of strategic thinking nor a refusal to acknowledge the coordinated and systematic nature of oppression today.[18] It does, however, suggest that we must continually rediscover our relationship to practice: that consciousness does not always precede action, and that action itself can produce a form of knowledge that is both experiential and reflective. It is this same spirit that animates many of the artistic practices presented here.

The imperative to democratize our knowledge as well as our politics has also been addressed by the Chilean economist Manfred Max Neef. According to Max Neef, the current neoliberal economic model, often presented as the only possible form of economic policy and almost universally supported by Western universities and academics, fails to take account of "meaningful human scale indicators." Max Neef argues that conventionally educated economists who study poverty do so from the abstracted critical distance of "scientific" macroeconomic indicators (e.g., gross national product). As a result, they never truly understand the nature of poverty, how it affects people, or what local communities can do to improve their lives. He argues for a "barefoot economics" that would study issues such as poverty through learned community experience and democratize the indicators of development to include local ancestral knowledge and the impact on nature in any cost–benefit analysis. This suggests an enriched intercultural dialogue between histories and cultures analogous to what de Sousa Santos calls an "expanded ecology of knowledge."[19] De Sousa Santos and Max Neef both seek to challenge the "cognitive injustice" that has paralleled the economic and social injustice of the postcolonial period, as neoliberalism ignores, or deliberately represses, alternative epistemologies and value systems (whether of the indigenous, the poor and working class, or the non-Western).[20]

Progressive Latin American social theory since the 1950s has been characterized by a concern with the rights of the oppressed and methodologies that focus on local perspectives and initiatives. Thinkers such as Enrique Dussel have remarked on the practical and theoretical foundation estab-

lished in great part by advocates of Liberation Theology and other liberatory pedagogical and community-driven practices during the 1960s. As Dussel notes, this work enabled the rise of a new generation of left-wing political leaders and perspectives in key regions of Latin America. Within the distinctly decolonizing discourse of Liberation Philosophy, Dussel cites mid-century populist movements, the theoretical implications of the Cuban revolution, and the Catholic Church's work in developing local *comunidades de base* (base communities) that focus on the lives of the poor. Concurrently, the work of theologians like Gustavo Gutiérrez insisted on turning theology away from abstract philosophy and toward criticality and the social sciences. Within this arena of study, one must also acknowledge the contributions of Paolo Freire and other pedagogical theorists whose ideas on popular education and the political and liberatory nature of collaborative and community work through art have been extraordinarily influential.

The second Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM) in Medellín laid the groundwork and established the language of Liberation Theology in 1968. However, this was only one stage in a broader movement by Latin American activists and academics beginning in the 1960s to critique the Eurocentric foundations of Western theory and philosophy. Decolonial theoretical movements focused on revealing epistemological *exteriorities*—forms of knowledge and methodologies left aside and pushed beyond the scope of Eurocentric modernity in its drive toward modernization and capitalism. Decolonization, as a theoretical apparatus, is concerned with the contingency of a world-system that is defined by the centers of power. It seeks instead to recover forms of knowledge that *re-center* the frame on intercultural exchange and prioritize the cultural work of the Global South. Concepts such as *transmodernity*—seeing Euro-modernity and its economic forces "from the perspective of its *reverso*, its underside, its occluded other"—argue for the reevaluation of that same exteriority.[21] The development of a Latin American philosophy centered on the decolonization of knowledge has played an instrumental role in questioning the relativity of postmodern thought, and in ascribing validity to local cognitive histories, knowledge, and methodologies. These positions are grounded in the political movements of the late 1960s, a period that was as much about the affirmation of Third World peoples' autonomy, identity, will to freedom, and liberation as it was about the critique of imperialism, racism, and sexism within industrialized First World nations. Today these ideas not only provide the foundation for a historical understanding of

Latin American political thought; they continue to flourish in the hands of thinkers such as de Sousa Santos, Max Neef, Dussel, and others, and function as a theoretical framework for contemporary methodologies that reverberate through many of the practices in this book.

Otros-Nosotros

The dramatic expansion of collaborative and community-based art practices has been accompanied and framed by an emergent critical discourse that remains largely Euro- and U.S.-centric in both its theoretical orientation and its objects of study. The theoretical and methodological inheritances of Latin America are as diverse as its people, yet the analysis of these art practices within the intellectual centers of the West has tended to "translate" Western critical theory and apply it to Latin American art without recognizing or investigating local communities, contexts, histories, and practices. Recent art-world debates around issues of art, collectivity, and political change (Nicolas Bourriaud's "relational" art, Claire Bishop's deployment of Chantal Mouffe's concept of agonism, Jacques Rancière's framing of the ambiguous relationship between the aesthetic and the political, Miwon Kwon's foregrounding of displacement, etc.) have focused primarily on the work of more mainstream artists and have, in many cases, expressed a congenital mistrust of communal or collective identities and action. Thus, the projects documented in this book may well be viewed with some suspicion by mainstream art critics. From Ala Plastica's engagement with environmental policies in the Río de la Plata basin to La Linea's work with women's shelters in Tijuana, these projects operate both within and against the grain of existing civil society in Latin America. In each case we witness a willingness to work through civil and public institutions (NGOs, governmental agencies, unions, etc.), combined with a commitment to transforming these institutions through practical action and resistance.

Notwithstanding the persistent skepticism about collaborative and collective art practice among some critics and theorists, artists themselves have shown an increasing willingness to explore the potentials offered by this approach. As noted above, we are currently witnessing a heightened interest in these practices in the mainstream art world. This has led, in turn, to an inquiry into the place of collaborative and community-based art practices within a larger history of Latin American art. This inquiry has ranged from more general investigations into the history of the avant-garde in Latin America to case studies focused on specific projects, such as the

actions of the Tucumán Arde group in Argentina during the 1960s.[22] Thus, the drive to situate collaborative and collective art practices from Latin America within a larger canon has already begun. While the contemporary projects included in this book share certain commonalities with those earlier, historical practices, the methodologies employed by the artists presented here are distinctly transdisciplinary, placing greater emphasis on close community participation and dialogue. This marks an important departure from earlier models, in which the primary locus of creativity was often seen to reside within the authoring consciousness of a single artist. It suggests, as well, the need for a new set of analytic parameters that do not rely solely on the traditions of historical avant-garde art, but rather remain open to a broader range of influences, criteria, and intellectual contexts. Thus, projects like the memory recuperation initiatives created by Pablo Sanaguano or the community video network-building efforts of Alberto Muenala, both produced with indigenous groups in Ecuador, have closer ties to the traditions of radical pedagogy and the contemporary legislative efforts associated with the indigenous concept of *sumak kawsay* (translated as "good living" in Kichwa) than with the conventions of Western art history.[23]

These projects also demonstrate a range of tactics for overcoming the pervasive historical amnesia in many Latin American countries regarding the violence of authoritarian regimes during the 1970s and 1980s. This is evident in Grupo Etcétera's work in Buenos Aires, as well as memory and reconciliation projects in Colombia. Finally, we can observe new forms of protest and dissent in the cultural projects developed as part of the Prestes Maia occupations in São Paolo and Colectivo Sociedad Civil's *Lava la bandera* performances in Lima. In each case, these projects are characterized by a receptive, improvisational approach; an openness to the insights generated through practice and action; and a desire to both learn from, and move beyond, the limitations of past narratives of political emancipation. And in each case the groups involved seek to address a public that is both receptive to claims of social justice and able to act upon them. This faith in the often-fragile mechanisms of participatory democracy is all the more remarkable given the recent history of state repression in Latin America.

Taken in the aggregate, what do these artists and collectives have to teach us? We can identify several recurring themes or motifs in their practices, notwithstanding the very wide range of locations, constituencies, and thematic concerns evident throughout this anthology. The first, as already noted, is a sustained and immersive relationship to specific sites and

locations, and a model of critique that is always rooted in specific institutions, subjectivities, and political forces. This relationship entails a set of distinct methodologies (pragmatic forms of learning and research, interviews and conversations, shared perambulations or performative actions, etc.) and a heightened awareness of the complex interplay of the discursive, the haptic, and the political that structures any given site of practice. This work is, by and large, durationally extensive, unfolding over weeks, months, and even years of engagement. This situational commitment is joined by a strong connection to national and international networks of practitioners and activists struggling with similar issues throughout Latin America and around the world, from which many of these artists take inspiration and with whom there are frequent and productive exchanges. Second, the projects presented here exhibit a consistent concern with the generative potential of collaboration itself. In their essays, interviews, and statements these artists repeatedly stress the necessity of learning from the experiences and actions of their collaborators and interlocutors, of remaining open and receptive to the transformative encounters across the boundaries of subjectivity and culture that characterize their work. Finally, we encounter a shared recognition that existing models of both artistic practice and political resistance are changing, and a consequent willingness to challenge the conventional boundaries between art and activism or aesthetics and politics.[24]

We hope that this anthology can help facilitate a dialogue on, and further an investigation into, these diverse forms of artistic practice. The rapid growth of dialogical or collaborative forms of art making over the past decade, not to mention the rich and largely unwritten history of community-driven art practice, makes a collection of this nature all the more pertinent. Very little of this material is available in English, and we believe these translations can help open up a productive exchange between practitioners, critics, historians, and activists working in the United States and Europe (who may be unaware of the remarkable range of art practices developed in Latin America over the past twenty years) and their counterparts in Mexico and Central and South America. The selection of materials is by no means exhaustive, but we have sought to provide a representative sample of regional efforts to rethink the boundaries between art and activism and, by extension, the creative capacity of art. While many significant studies and groups have been left out of this collection, due to limitations of space and time, we feel the material we have been able to include effectively highlights the diversity of practices in the region.

We have organized the thirty-one readings in this book, consisting of essays, interviews, manifestos, and conversations, into six parts: (Un)Civil Disobedience, Urbanism, Memory, Indigeneity, Migrations, and Institutional Critique. The organizational structure came about organically, as we began to identify the most relevant case studies and projects. Each chapter includes a brief introduction, and detailed project descriptions accompany several of the texts. The project descriptions serve to highlight basic information not covered in the central text and are included to facilitate further research, and to provide an additional contextual foundation for the essays themselves. From the beginning of the editorial process we decided against imposing fixed limits on the kinds of texts we would publish. We were open to whatever format the artists and authors felt was most effective in representing their work or their creative investigations. Most of the texts are new, but there are a few that have been republished from smaller or less accessible publications.

As is so often the case with projects of this nature, it is, at the time of its publication, already a historical document. Over the past five years a range of exciting new works have been developed in Latin America. Important research on memory, violence, and the history of military repression (and its toll on, and relationship to, artistic and activist practice) has been undertaken by groups such as La Red Conceptualismos del Sur, and across the hemisphere. There are active and vibrant gender equality movements involving artists and cultural producers in Bolivia, Argentina, Ecuador, and other countries. Many of the artist groups in São Paolo or Buenos Aires who took to the streets in the early 2000s are now active in building organizations, developing infrastructure to facilitate international collaborations, and forming new cultural alliances and strategies to continue their initial political struggle, while also redefining the role of the artist in society.[25]

The ending date for this anthology, 2010, marked the moment that Lula da Silva stepped down as president of Brazil, to be replaced by his former chief of staff, Dilma Rousseff. Rousseff has become increasingly unpopular as inflation has increased dramatically, and her administration has been confronted with scandals over Petrobras, Brazil's state-run oil company. She is currently facing impeachment. By 2013 Hugo Chávez had died, replaced by his former vice president, Nicolás Maduro Moros. Maduro has also struggled, as falling oil prices have led to a growing economic crisis in Venezuela. Notwithstanding these shifts, Latin America remains one of the key regions in which new forms of resistance to the imperatives of

neoliberalism are sustained and at least partially encouraged at the state level (Rafael Correa and Evo Morales remain in power).[26] Moreover, 2010 was also the year in which Tunisian street vendor Mohamed Bouazizi immolated himself in protest after the police prevented him from selling vegetables, marking the beginning of the Arab Spring. We are unable here to pursue the productive points of contact between the Arab Spring and the subsequent Occupy movement (which began in 2011) and the work developed in Latin America during the Pink Tide. It is evident, however, that in each case we can identify a significant relationship between political resistance, especially in response to neoliberalism and antidemocratic or authoritarian regimes, and artistic production (for example, the new forms of street art that proliferated in Tahrir Square as well as in the Occupy movement). It is our hope that this collection will contribute to the ongoing dialogue around the nature of this relationship, as both artistic practice and political resistance continue to evolve, complicate, and challenge each other.[27]

Notes

Epigraph: Gustavo Gutiérrez, *The Power of the Poor in History* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), 117.1.

1 While our primary focus is on work produced in Latin America, especially projects that are less well known in the English-speaking world, we will also include some discussion of recent projects developed in diasporic communities in the United States (see "Of Co-investigations and Aesthetic Sustenance: A Conversation between Colectivo Situaciones and Electronic Disturbance Theater/b.a.n.g. lab" and Prerana Reddy's "How Three Artists Led the Queens Museum into Corona and Beyond," chapters 17 and 18). Of course, these two essays can offer only a partial and incomplete picture of the diversity of artistic practices developed by Latino/a diasporic communities in North America. We would note here that contemporary artistic practices being produced by Latino/a artists and communities in the United States are already well represented in English-language sources and museum exhibitions. See, for example, the exhibition "Our America: The Latino Presence in American Art" at the Smithsonian Museum of American Art (October 25, 2013–March 2, 2014), which toured nationally and featured a major conference and accompanying catalog. In addition, one of our concerns, as noted in this introduction, was to focus on projects developed in the context of significant political shifts that occurred in Latin America, specifically during the late 1990s and early 2000s (the so-called "Pink Tide").

2 Inés Katzenstein and Andrea Giunta, *Listen, Here, Now! Argentine Art of the 1960s: Writings of the Avant-Garde* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2004).

3 This work has been described as the expression of a "dialogical" (Kester) or "relational" (Bourriaud) aesthetic, and as evidence of a "participatory" turn in contemporary art. For recent studies, see Nicholas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, translated by Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods with the participation of Mathieu Copeland (Dijon: Les Presses du Réel, 2002); Grant Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004) and *The One and the Many: Contemporary Collaborative Art in a Global Context* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011); Shannon Jackson, *Social Works: Performing Art, Supporting Publics* (New York: Routledge, 2011), *Living as Form: Socially-Engaged Art from 1991–2011,* edited by Nato Thompson (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012), and *What We Made: Conversations on Art and Social Cooperation,* edited by Tom Finkelpearl (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013).

4 The Sierra quote is from the catalog *Santiago Sierra: Works 2002–1990* (Birmingham, UK: Ikon Gallery, 2002), 15.

5 See Grant Kester, "Lessons in Futility: Francis Alÿs and the Legacy of May '68," *Third Text* 23(4) (July 2009): 407–20.

6 By "tactical" we refer to the effects of artistic and activist practices at specific sites and in specific situations (as opposed to "strategic" forms of action that involve the calculation of the long-term effects of cumulative practices). There is an implicit scalar distinction here, but also a temporal shift, in which tactical action allows for the immediate recalibration of a resistant practice in response to changes, breakthroughs, or counter-actions at a given site. The concept of a "civic reimagining" refers to the capacity of certain artistic practices to contribute to a process of reframing the nature of public and civic space within a given social system. As with the *Lava la bandera* actions in Peru discussed by Gustavo Buntinx ("*Lava la bandera*: The Colectivo Sociedad Civil and the Cultural Overthrow of the Fujimori-Montesinos Dictatorship," chapter 1), this often entails the ability to reclaim signifiers or symbols of political unity (e.g., the Peruvian flag).

7 As historians Benjamin Keen and Keith Haynes argue:

> Populist reforms historically had united elites and subalterns under the banner of nationalism because they promised social and political inclusion without fundamentally redistributing property and power. In the absence of such a radical transformation of existing social structures, however, populist reforms had to be financed by high export prices, low-interest foreign loans or some combination of both.
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> —Benjamin Keen and Keith Haynes, *A History of Latin America: Independence to the Present*, vol. 2, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009), 498–99.

8 Originally deriving from the Portuguese word for "buyer," associated specifically with trade with China, "comprador" evolved in the Marxist tradition to identify a "native" manager of European colonial enterprises.

9 The overthrow of Anastasio Somoza by the Sandinistas in 1979 was an exception.

10 See *The State after Statism: New State Activities in the Age of Liberalization,* edited by Jonah D. Levy (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

11 These include Néstor Kirchner and Cristina Fernández in Argentina, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in Brazil, Evo Morales in Bolivia, Ricardo Lagos and Michelle Bachelet in Chile, Rafael Correa in Ecuador, Mauricio Funes in El Salvador, Manuel Zelaya in Honduras, Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua, Fernando Lugo in Paraguay, Tabaré Vázquez and José Mujica in Uruguay, and Hugo Chávez in Venezuela.

12 This is also a reflection of the loss of the USSR as a sponsor of state socialism in Latin America.

13 This period was also marked by the death of Jacobo Arenas of FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) in Colombia in 1990 and the capture of Abimael Guzmán of Sendero Luminoso in Peru in 1992. FARC had come under increasing criticism for its reliance on kidnapping for revenue and its recruitment of children as young as fifteen.

14 As Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos wrote in an open letter to "National and International Civil Society" in 1996:

> We do not want others, more or less of the right, center or left, to decide for us. We want to participate directly in the decisions which concern us, to control those who govern us, without regard to their political affiliation, and oblige them to "rule by obeying." We do not struggle to take power, we struggle for democracy, liberty, and justice. Our political proposal is the most radical in Mexico (perhaps in the world, but it is still too soon to say). It is so radical that all the traditional political spectrum (right, center left and those of one or the other extreme) criticize us and walk away from our delirium.
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> —Zapatista Army of National Liberation Mexico, "To National and International Civil Society" (August 30, 1996), http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/mexico/ezln/marc_to_cs_se96.html.

15 In a communiqué released in response to the emergence of the EPR (Popular Revolutionary Army), which engaged in more traditional armed resistance, the EZLN responded:

> You struggle for power. We struggle for democracy, liberty and justice. This is not the same thing. Though you may be successful and conquer power, we will continue struggling for democracy, liberty and justice. It does not matter who is in power, the Zapatistas are and have always struggled for democracy, liberty and justice.
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> —Zapatista Army of National Liberation Mexico, "To the Soldiers and Commanders of the Popular Revolutionary Army" (August 29, 1996), http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/mexico/ezln/ezln_epr_se96.html.

16 Boaventura de Sousa Santos, "General Introduction: Reinventing Social Emancipation: Toward New Manifestos," in *Democratizing Democracy: Beyond the Liberal Democratic Canon*, edited by Boaventura de Sousa Santos (London: Verso, 2005), ix.

17 Boaventura de Sousa Santos and Leonardo Avritzer, "Introduction: Opening Up the Canon of Democracy," in *Democratizing Democracy*, xxxvi. As de Sousa Santos and Avritzer continue, "The struggle for democracy is today above all a struggle for the democratization of democracy. Liberal democracy, the normative paradigm, confined democracy to the political realm. . . . This rendered the democratic process susceptible to constituting an island of democracy in a wide ocean of social despotism" (lxii).

18 In fact, as de Sousa Santos writes, "in our time, social emancipation involves a dual movement of de-globalization of the local (vis-à-vis hegemonic globalization) and its re-globalization (as part of counter-hegemonic globalization)." *Democratizing Democracy*, xxxvi.

19 Max-Neef, in reaffirming the importance of political agency in local human and economic development, defines the concept of "human scale development" as "focused and based on the satisfaction of fundamental human needs, on the generation of growing levels of self-reliance, and on the construction of organic articulations of people with nature and technology, of global processes with local activity, of the personal with the social, of planning with autonomy, and of civil society with the state." Manfred A. Max-Neef, *Human Scale Development: Conception, Application and Further Reflections* (New York: Apex Press, 1991), 8.

20 Also see Raewyn W. Connell, *Southern Theory: Social Science and the Global Dynamics of Knowledge* (London: Polity Press, 2007) and, in the context of postcolonial Africa specifically, Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, *Theory from the South: Or, How Euro-America Is Evolving toward Africa* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Press, 2012).

21 Eduardo Mendieta, in Enrique Dussel, *The Underside of Modernity: Ricoeur, Apel, Taylor and the Philosophy of Liberation,* translated and edited by Eduardo Mendieta (New York: Humanities, 1996), xxii.

22 Maria Carmen Ramirez's contribution in *Inverted Utopias: Avant-Garde Art in Latin America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004) and Luis Camnitzer's *Conceptualism in Latin American Art: Didactics of Liberation* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007) are two popular and recent examples.

23 See Pablo Alonso González and Alfredo Macías Vázquez, "An Ontological Turn in the Debate on Buen Vivir—Sumak Kawsay in Ecuador: Ideology, Knowledge and the Common," *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies* 10(1) (summer 2015): 1–20; Julien Vanhulst and Adrian E. Beling, "Buen Vivir: Emergent Discourse within or beyond Sustainable Development," *Ecological Economics* 101 (2014): 54–63; and Sarah A. Radcliffe, "Development for a Postneoliberal

Era? Sumak Kawsay, Living Well and the Limits to Decolonisation in Ecuador," *Geoforum* 43 (2012): 240–49.

24 Kester discusses this question in more depth in "On the Relationship between Theory and Practice in Socially Engaged Art," in the Blade of Grass journal *Fertile Ground* on July 29, 2015 (http://www.abladeofgrass.org/fertile-ground/between-theory-and-practice/), and the editorial for issue #2 of *FIELD: A Journal of Socially Engaged Art Criticism* (fall 2015) (http://field-journal.com/issue-2/kester-2).

25 Examples of this shift would include Grupo Etcétera and Frente 3 de Fevereiro. Each group has evolved, more recently, to explore their respective social and political concerns through the building of regional and international cultural alliances, publishing, and curatorial work.

26 Morales himself has been accused of facilitating the "bureaucratic stagnation of the Bolivian revolution." As Dinerstein has noted, in the post-Pink Tide period of retrenchment there are, among the grass roots, "divisions between those who support the governments and those who feel betrayed." See Ana Cecilia Dinerstein, *The Politics of Autonomy in Latin America: The Art of Organizing Hope* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 8.

27 For a useful study of the impact of the Occupy movement on artistic practice, see Yates McKee, *Strike Art: Contemporary Art and the Post-Occupy Condition* (Brooklyn, NY: Verso Books, 2016). The exhibition "Creative Dissent: Arts of the Arab World Uprisings" was on display at the Arab American National Museum in Dearborn, Michigan, between November 8, 2013 and February 9, 2014. See http://artsofthearabworlduprisings.com/.

Some projects documented in this anthology were featured in exhibitions organized by coeditor Bill Kelley Jr. Rather than see this as a source of editorial compromise, the author wishes to convey his belief that curatorial practice is one of the few ways in which it is possible for an independent researcher to gain direct, firsthand knowledge of these complex, long-term projects. This kind of field research is essential to a deeper critical, as well as curatorial, understanding of the work.