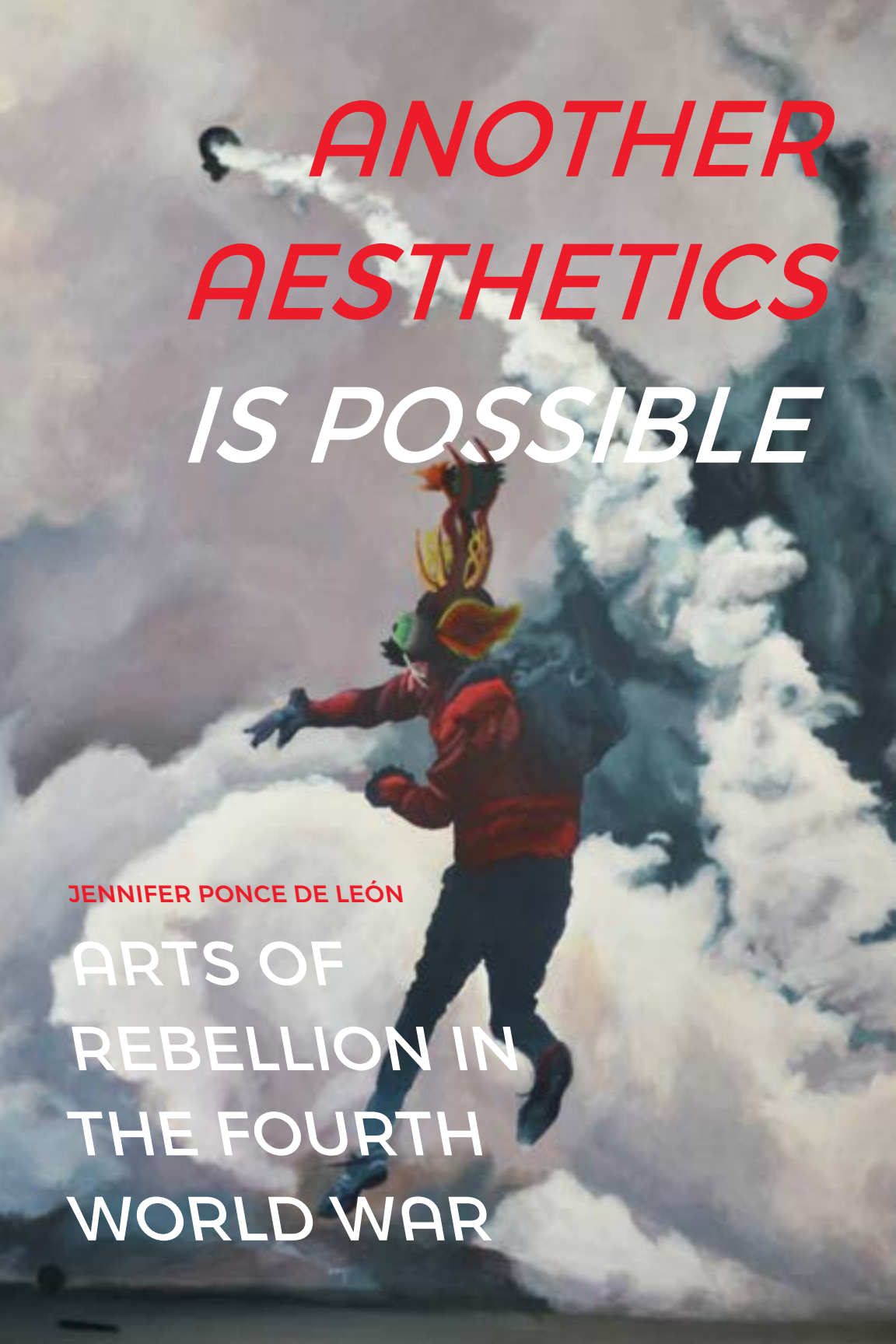

ANOTHER AESTHETICS IS POSSIBLE

JENNIFER PONCE DE LEÓN

ARTS OF REBELLION IN THE FOURTH WORLD WAR

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DISSIDENT ACTS *A series edited by*
Macarena Gómez-Barris and Diana Taylor

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to Gabriel

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INTRODUCTION

IN 2002, in the wake of a financial crisis and massive popular uprising that rocked Argentina, the artists of Etcétera . . . brought a proposal to a popular assembly that met weekly in a park in Buenos Aires: "Now that we have nothing, we should give back to the politicians the only thing we have left: our shit!" With the help of the assemblies and independent news media, they organized a collective performance that realized this proposal in the most literal way, directly in front of the National Congress.

In Los Angeles, California, a few months later, the Pocho Research Society of Erased and Invisible History inaugurated its practice of direct action public history. They installed seemingly official historical plaques on city monuments, adding occluded histories of working-class Latinas/os/xs and Mexican and Central American immigrants. In the hands of these guerrilla historians, a city monument's nationalist mystification of L.A.'s history was challenged by histories of Mexican and Central American migration to the city and a critique of US imperialism, and an official monument to the Southern Pacific Railroad was altered to honor the taggers who turned boxcars into canvases.

Back in Buenos Aires, Grupo de Arte Callejero (GAC; Street Art Group) was also mimicking state signage in guerrilla interventions that brought

histories suppressed by the state into public view. With what appeared to be traffic signs, they directed people to the homes of former military and police officers and priests. These signs functioned within exposure protests (*escraches*) that the Argentine human rights movement organizes to publicly denounce individuals who were involved in state terrorism during the country's most recent dictatorship, realizing a form of popular justice not dependent upon complicit state institutions. GAC's work in the human rights movement moved beyond a focus on state terrorism under dictatorship to address state violence in the present, as well as the ubiquitous discourse of "security" that is used to legitimate it.

In 2000 Etcétera . . . created a heterodox version of the human rights movement's exposure protests in front of Argentina's National Fine Arts Museum. It denounced the museum and one of its trustees, who is a powerful art collector and majority shareholder of an enormous agribusiness. With flaming sugar footprints and sticky traces, this *SUR*realist protest-performance exposed a history of corporate complicity in state terrorism in the 1970s and linked it to the same corporation's exploitation and poisoning of agro-industrial workers in the present, while challenging the bourgeois myths of high art's autonomy and the beneficence of cultural philanthropy.

A museum was also the focus of a public denunciation by the Diego de la Vega Cooperative Media Conglomerate, whose founder and CEO, Fran Ilich, is an artist and activist who has long been active in the social movement constellated around the EZLN (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional; Zapatista Army of National Liberation). Ilich penned a petition that called on Austria's World Museum to return the most famous object in its collections: an ancient Mexica (Aztec) headdress, "war booty . . . obtained in the midst of the American holocaust" in the sixteenth century.[1] This petition publicly launched an alternate reality game that was played out across multiple on- and offline platforms, from epistolary and economic exchanges to faux souvenirs and a pop-up coffee shop that materially supported Zapatista communities.

When George W. Bush, the self-proclaimed leader of the so-called War on Terror, came to Argentina in 2005, the Internacional Errorista (International Errorist) went public. After they appeared on streets and beaches bearing their "poetic arms," reports in the news media variously described them as actors playing terrorists, activists dressed as Palestinians, antiglobalization protestors, and vandals, while the police squadron that pulled up on the Erroristas said they had been reported as armed *piqueteros*—that is, members of Argentina's unemployed workers' movement. These police unwittingly

became actors in an errorist film about manufactured perceptions of criminality and security and the confluences among hemispheric antiterrorism politics, U.S. imperialism, and the criminalization of working-class people and dissident movements.

These practices and productions, among others discussed in this book, were created by artists whose omnivorous and politicized experimentalism has led them across and beyond the arts. They fuse artistic production with practices considered extraneous to disciplinary understandings of fine art and literature, such as direct action tactics, public history, gaming, cartography, and solidarity economies. This contradisciplinary experimentalism, as well as the largely extra-institutional character of their work, is bound up with the politics of their practice and its relationship to movements, as well as their heterodox understanding of what "art" is and what it can do.

Their art is articulated—in different ways, and always in specific contexts—with ongoing antisystemic movements and social struggles rooted in different parts of the Americas.[2] These include the anticapitalist and anticolonial movement constellated around the EZLN, which is led by indigenous peasants in southern Mexico; the 2001–2 Argentine uprising and urban social movements in Buenos Aires, including the human rights movement; struggles against the criminalization, policing, and displacement of racialized working-class people in Los Angeles; and the international movements against neoliberal "free trade" regimes and against U.S.-led wars. While these struggles have important local inscriptions and national determinations, they are all part of the global movement against capitalism and the oppression on which it depends. By analyzing art practices that are articulated with different collective struggles, this book elucidates the vitality and creativity of a contemporary anticapitalist cultural Left whose praxis is enmeshed with grassroots movements across the Americas.

AN OTHER AESTHETICS

The looking-glass school is the most democratic of educational institutions. There are no admissions exams, no registration fees, and courses are offered free to everyone everywhere on earth as well as in heaven. It's not for nothing that this school is the child of the first system in history to rule the world. . . . The looking-glass school teaches us to suffer reality, not change it; to forget the past, not learn from it; to accept the future, not invent it. In its halls of criminal learning, impotence, amnesia, and resignation are required courses. Yet perhaps—who can say—there can be no disgrace without grace, no sign without a countersign, and no school that does not beget

its counterschool.—Eduardo Galeano, Upside Down: A Primer for the Looking-Glass World *(2000)*

This book's title cites the imperative affirmation by the EZLN and its base communities that "another world is possible." Within the Zapatistas' theory and practice, this is an assertion that *los de abajo y a la izquierda* (those from below and on the Left) can create a world in which justice, real democracy, and freedom are accorded to all, which necessarily must be a world beyond capitalism.[3] Aesthetics—here understood in its broad sense as the socially forged sensory composition of a world—constitutes a crucial site of struggle in this effort. Because aesthetic practices and productions shape how we perceive and understand the world, they can and do participate in the multidimensional and collective labor of creating and defending another social reality. In this sense, an *other aesthetics* refers to the forging of worldviews that support the collective struggle to make and defend this other possible world.

An *other aesthetics* also refers to a materialist understanding of aesthetics that is not based upon the presumed specificity of what is socially designated as "art" and pertains, instead, to the composition of a sensorium, which is both mental and perceptual. It is based on the recognition, central to Marxist thought, that subjects' experienced lifeworlds are produced, reproduced, and transformed through social practice. As Marx writes, human individuals' existence "*is* social activity," as we make ourselves "for society and with the consciousness of [ourselves as] social being[s]."[4] All aspects of humans' "relations to the world—seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling, thinking, being aware, sensing, wanting, acting, loving"—are eminently social and historical.[5] Following the work of Marx, Frantz Fanon, Sylvia Wynter, and others, I reject the ontological division of biological and social life (and, by extension, of materiality and consciousness), maintaining instead that humans' consciousness is based in our actual life-process and does not exist apart from it.[6] Human cognition and sensuous perception are bound together and are the product of historical processes. As such, human activity and experience should be understood in all of their material sensuousness.

Aesthetics, which derives from *aisthánomai,* "to perceive, feel, or sense," allows us to discuss intellectual "sense" and material "sense" as inseparable, and the Marxist theory of aesthetics I have adumbrated references the sociocultural formatting of human cognition and perception, understood as co-constitutive. Jacques Rancière has contributed to this theory with his concept of the *distribution of the sensible,* a "primary aesthetics" that orders sensuous perception and thereby "produces a system of self-evident facts of

perception based on the set horizons and modalities of what is visible and audible, as well as what can be said, thought, made or done."[7] Yet Rancière's writings on aesthetics jettison fundamental Marxist insights about the objective bases of social organization and the determinations these exercise upon this primary aesthetics, as well as upon art.[8] I argue, instead, that the production of experienced lifeworlds via material practices operates within a complex social totality that is overdetermined by the social relations of production.

My heterodox use of the concept of aesthetics derives from my understanding that "ideology operates as an all-encompassing sensorium that emerges from the actual life-processes of Homo faber. It composes an entire universe through the collective and historical production of a shared world of sense that is at one and the same time physical *and* mental."[9] It is based on Marxist theories of ideology that posit that subjects' consciousness of themselves and their relationship to the world are constituted via ideology, which is produced and transformed through material practices.[10] These theories guide my analysis of the ways that social relations of production and reproduction relate to aesthetics and to aesthetic practices. I use the concept of *aesthetics* in order to specifically draw attention to the ways ideology structures our perception. While reductionist conceptions of ideology collapse it into mental representations or discourse, I want to emphasize that its reality-producing effects shape our entire world of experience, including through the modeling of perceptions, feelings, habits, actions, memories, and desire, as well as through ideas and language.

I am also interested in aesthetics because of its simultaneous proximity to and difference from art. In this book, "art" refers to literary and performing arts, as well as visual art. The history of art offers a rich repository of concepts, techniques, and methods for both analyzing and mobilizing the power of aesthetics, as defined earlier. However, theories of aesthetics that exclusively refer to those practices and productions that are identified as art easily ignore the social force aesthetics exercises through other social practices. When such approaches are based on claims that artworks have essential and particular aesthetic qualities and/or elicit a unique aesthetic experience, they obscure the historical constitution of art forms as sociocultural categories and the racial and gendered class relations (including colonial class relations) in which this history is embedded.[11] The artistic practices I analyze certainly draw on the history of art, and on the conventions and techniques that the historical codification of art as a specific type of labor and object of analysis has produced. However, they are equally

informed by and respond to histories and types of cultural practice generally considered extraneous to art when it is treated as a self-contained discourse or practice. For these reasons, I have developed a conceptual vocabulary that allows me to discuss how social practices of all types work to shape perceptions of and ideas about the world. This approach is also necessarily opposed to mimetic conceptions of art—that is, the idea that art represents reality. Rather, I am interested in how aesthetic practices are *constructive* of social reality.

When analyzing the place of the arts in the international communist movement, Antonio Gramsci wrote: "To fight for a new art would mean to fight to create individual artists, which is absurd since artists cannot be created artificially. One must speak of a struggle for a new culture, that is, for a new moral life that cannot but be intimately connected to a new intuition of life, until it becomes a new way of feeling and seeing reality and, therefore, a world intimately ingrained in 'possible artists' and 'possible works of art.'"[12] Gramsci re-framed debates about the politics of art that were taking place in the international Left by arguing that they should begin with the understanding that the arts are subordinate to and shaped by a far broader cultural and ideological struggle. For Gramsci, the cultural and ideological dimensions of class struggles are intrinsic to the exercise of hegemony. Hegemony names a social relation in which a dominant class or fraction of a class gains the "active consent" of subordinate or allied classes by exercising "cultural, moral, and ideological" leadership over them.[13] It is based on the economic power of dominant groups, and it is enforced by their exercise of domination through force as well, as succinctly captured in Gramsci's description of hegemony as consensus protected by an "armour of coercion."[14] Thus, the importance Gramsci and others accord to culture and ideology should not be taken to mean that their refashioning is sufficient for producing needed social change, or even that it is possible to bring about the cultural revolution Gramsci called for without transforming the economic and political structures upon which elites' power to shape culture and ideology rests.

Another Aesthetics Is Possible examines struggles over ways of "feeling and seeing reality" as they are intrinsic to contemporary class struggles. It analyses specific art practices as they shed light on ideological struggles and, specifically, as they advance cultural struggles of the Left. I describe as counterhegemonic those practices and forces that militate against the manufacture of consensual class domination. These work to dismantle the worldviews imposed by the powerful and replace these with an alternate critical and

coherent sense of reality through which people can grasp social contradictions. When Gramsci described this as replacing "common sense" (*senso comune*) with "good sense" (*buon senso*), his vocabulary underscored the fact that he was referring not only to the transformation of theoretical knowledge, but also to perception and practical knowledge.[15]

Because antisystemic movements are, among other things, powerful counterhegemonic forces, I have sought to understand how art practices have been influenced by and articulated with them. I have been inspired, in this regard, by the work of other scholars who have theorized art as part of movement cultures and analyzed how movements have produced counterhegemonic ideologies about culture and art.[16] Moreover, because artistic practices articulated with movements contribute to the latter's archives and repertoires, analyzing them also offers insight into the history and legacies of particular antisystemic struggles.

This book examines a variety of relationships art practices have to specific movements. Artists I discuss take up knowledge, discourses, and tactics that movements have produced, elaborate upon them, and translate them into new aesthetic forms. In some instances, they produce more speculative or utopian elaborations of worldviews movements have produced. Some artists fuse their art production with movements' forms of social action—be these direct action or economic resistance. They also engage in ideological struggles taking place *within* movements to amplify more radical tendencies.

As Luis Tapia argues, movements have the potential to act in every arena of social life.[17] In addition to mobilizing and organizing people and resources and transforming political systems, institutions, and forms of social organization, they also produce knowledge and shape culture and subjectivity. This has been amply theorized by intellectuals organic to socialist, anticolonial, and liberation movements, including those successful in taking state power, who have argued that collective projects of social transformation must also transform culture and produce new types of subjects.[18] Scholars have also shown how movements produce counterhegemonic knowledges and epistemologies, including alternative ways of conceiving of territory, nature, production, and justice.[19] For Suely Rolnik and Félix Guattari, antisystemic movements enable dominated groups to reappropriate the production of subjectivity by developing their own values and practical and theoretical referents beyond those imposed by dominant capitalist cultures.[20]

The multifaceted agency of movements challenges the distinctions between culture and politics that liberal ideology upholds.[21] As Tapia writes,

they "displace politics from its institutionalized spaces [within liberal states] and politicize social sites that had been depoliticized and, as such, legitimated in their function for organizing inequalities."[22] In so doing, movements often make political culture—that is, the practical knowledge and norms that shape how political processes are understood—an explicit grounds of contestation.[23]

Radical movements reveal elements of the "other possible world" to which the EZLN's revolutionary discourse refers—that is, of a "new society with which old collapsing bourgeois society itself is pregnant."[24] Arguing against messianic and programmatic conceptions of social transformation, Raúl Zibechi insists that this "other possible world" is not a "program to be realized"; rather, it is *already* being built in the interstices of the dominant capitalist order. For Zibechi, antisystemic movements are bearers of a "real and possible new world" that is "woven into the base of new social relations" these movements organize, and our task, then, is to defend, strengthen, affirm, and expand it.[25]

This world-in-the-making is largely invisible within the aesthetic-ideological coordinates the dominant social order imposes. That is, it is *aesthetically* rendered invisible, impossible, or forever deferred. Aesthetic practices aligned with movements can work to affirm and defend this other world by producing conditions that allow others to perceive it *as a real world*. This is, of course, precisely what hegemonic aesthetic practices do for dominant capitalist and colonial social orders: they make these seem natural, desirable, or, at least, like the only possible, or even imaginable, reality.

To capture the sense in which the entire experienced lifeworlds of subjects are shaped to naturalize colonial-capitalist social orders, Eduardo Galeano uses the extended metaphor of a "looking-glass world," evoking Lewis Carroll's novel as well as Marx and Engels's metaphor of the camera obscura of ideology. In this "looking-glass world," Galeano writes, where "price determines the value of things, of people, and of countries," "model citizens live reality as fatality."[26] In order to contend with this foreclosure of alternatives, counterhegemonic aesthetic practices create perceptual-epistemological openings that make it possible to perceive another reality whose very existence is obscured within dominant ideology. This does not mean that one's worldview can be entirely transformed all at once. Nor does it mean that such transformation can be an individual endeavor or one confined to the realm of ideas. On the contrary, Galeano's metaphors of a looking-glass school and its counterschool fittingly represent the composition and re-composition of

people's perceptions and understanding of reality as a collective and ongoing process that is grounded in material practice.

THE FOURTH WORLD WAR

The artists and writers addressed in this book were all born in the late 1960s or 1970s, and they became involved in art-making and grassroots politics in the late 1980s or 1990s. They are keenly aware of their generational formation as Leftists who came of age in the midst of antisystemic movements that differ significantly (in their theories, forms of organization, and social action) from the national revolutionary and liberationist movements of the 1960s and 1970s that were the experiential touchstones for their older kin, as well as an inspirational reference point for the artists themselves. Ilich spoke about this in one of my interviews with him, saying:

> My generation is the generation of rupture. My generation wanted international socialism; we had to make do with Zapatismo. It's a different thing, no? We wanted the romantic moment with Che's guerrilla, and Lenin, and later the state, production, space travel, socialism, the distribution of wealth in social forms, socialization of life, recreation, healthy food, electricity for everyone. And the Zapatista Indians brought another thing, which are ideas of autonomy, diversity, organization, right? They are against the state, so they absolutely changed our paradigm. Fortunately, I feel like I adapted to these times.[27]

Similarly, artists from Etcétera . . . describe themselves as belonging to a generation that is a "hinge"[28] between the world-historical conjuncture of the 1960s and early 1970s, in which revolutionary socialism was the horizon for antisystemic movements across Latin America, and the 1990s, when neoliberal capitalism was globally hegemonic, the institutional Left was liberal-reformist, and radical Left movements were not, generally speaking, immediately oriented toward taking state power. As a *hinge,* they connect the ideals of movements of their parents' generation to those in which they are involved, while contending with the transformation of antisystemic politics that has occurred in the intervening years.

The rupture in Left politics their generation straddles was accomplished through a ruling-class counteroffensive against labor and the Left, which I describe later. For the artists I write about, this is an unavoidable history, and, indeed, the political import of *how* it is historicized is of central concern to the Chilean and Argentine artists of Etcétera . . . and Grupo de Arte

Callejero. Their work demonstrates that an engagement with this history need not operate in melancholic or cynical modalities that fixate on the Left's defeat or claim that its youthful adventurism brought this about,[29] nor through idioms of nostalgia or funereal memorialization, which also bury radical politics in an inaccessible past. While readily learning from the histories that preceded them, these artists emphasize the vitality and urgency of Left movements in the present and demonstrate their full assumption of their own potential to make history in circumstances they did not choose.

These artists have honed the arts of rebellion within the world-historical context of the Fourth World War. This is the name the Zapatistas have given to the contemporary war of accumulation globalized capital is waging against "all of humanity, against the entire planet,"[30] in which "everything which opposes the logic of the market, . . . everything that prevents a human being from turning into a producing and purchasing machine is an enemy, and it must be destroyed."[31] While the accumulation of capital has denoted social warfare from its beginnings, the "Fourth World War" specifically refers to the form this has taken since the late twentieth century, in the context of globalization and globally hegemonic neoliberalism, as capitalist classes have managed to go further than ever before in "tearing down all nonmarket structures that have in the past placed limits on the accumulation—and the dictatorship—of capital."[32]

In the Zapatistas' periodization, the Fourth World War follows the Third. The "Third World War" refers to the period otherwise known as the Cold War (1945–90), during which time covert wars and wars of "intervention" waged in the Third World by the global superpowers and their surrogates killed an estimated 21 million persons and rendered more than a hundred million others refugees.[33] The inauguration of the Fourth World War in the 1990s indexes the end of the age of "three worlds," when First World Keynesian capitalism, Second World socialism, and Third World decolonization and capitalist developmentalism coexisted, and refers to the contemporary period of capitalist globalization in which "every country and much of humanity [is integrated] into a new globalized system of production, finance, and services."[34] As "globalization" refers to the spread of capitalist production relations around the world and the concomitant destruction of other forms of social organization, it is a continuation of the process that began with European colonialism and the consolidation of the capitalist world-system in the fifteenth century.[35] But "globalization" also refers to a transformation of global capitalism that began in the 1970s. Its salient feature is the

globalization of production processes, which has been enabled by neoliberal restructuring.[36]

Globalization and neoliberal restructuring constituted a counterrevolution led by the capitalist class and its political representatives and ideologues.[37] Coming in the wake of the World Revolution of 1968 and a structural crisis of accumulation, globalization was a means for capital to "break free of the class compromises and concessions" that the working and popular classes had won through decades of struggle, as well as to overcome limits nation-state–based corporate capitalism had placed on accumulation.[38] This reorganization of the accumulation process operated through the imposition of neoliberal social and economic policies on societies throughout the world.[39] These include social austerity, economic deregulation, trade liberalization, cuts to public employment and services, regressive taxation, and the privatization of commonly held social goods.[40] Neoliberalization has subordinated national economies to global economies and has opened up new territories for capitalist profiteering (i.e., outlets for excess accumulated capital).[41] It has also given capital more power to exploit and discipline labor, including through the latter's deregulation and flexibilization.[42] Neoliberalization has transformed capitalist social welfare states into states that more aggressively subordinate the needs of the working class to the demands of capitalist accumulation, while relying ever more regularly on coercive means to ensure obedience to this order.[43] While neoliberal policies are often a more ready target of critique than the capitalist system itself, it is imperative to remember that, as Samir Amin writes, "the savage neoliberal offensive only reveals the true face of capitalism and imperialism."[44]

The transformation of global capitalism since the 1970s has entailed a new round of primitive accumulation, entailing the expansion of capitalist social relations into formerly noncapitalist strata and the concomitant annihilation of the latter's forms of production and social organization, and the separation of millions of people from the means of production.[45] As theorized in Marxist thought, primitive accumulation is a permanent feature of capitalist accumulation and class war that grows from capital's constant need to form new markets and re-create labor supplies.[46] The expansion of capitalist relations operates both extensively and intensively, spreading into new territories and commodifying ever more aspects of social and biological life. It regularly operates through colonial conquest and plundering, war, dispossession, proletarianization and pauperization, and the transfer into private ownership of means of production that had been held in common, including the productive powers of the natural world.[47] While the Midnight Notes

Collective influentially theorized the latest round of intensified primitive accumulation that has occurred around the world since the 1970s as the "new enclosures," in reference to the process of enclosure that occurred in England in the late 1400s that helped give birth to capitalism, spokespersons for the EZLN use the vocabulary of "war" and "conquest" to theorize this phenomenon, thereby underscoring colonialism's foundational and ongoing role in capitalist accumulation.[48]

Latin America has been described as a "laboratory for neoliberal policies,"[49] in reference to their early and experimental imposition in the region. The process of neoliberalization was launched in the Southern Cone (Chile, Argentina, Uruguay) in the 1970s by civil-military dictatorships backed by national and transnational capitalist classes and the U.S. state apparatus.[50] These regimes used authoritarian governance and terrorism, including an internationally coordinated political assassination program (Operation Condor), to create political conditions that allowed them to impose anti-worker policies and attempt to eradicate socialist and communist ideologies and organizations of social solidarity.[51] This violent counterrevolution was also a reaction to the post–World War II advance of the Left across Latin America, which included the triumph of the Cuban Revolution (1959), the spread of Left guerrilla movements, and the rise of a socialist government in Chile (1970–73) and of Left-leaning nationalist governments elsewhere.[52] As Right-wing, pro-capital dictatorships took power across the region, they overthrew these governments through military coups, decimated the armed Left, and attacked workers' movements.

The United States' ruling class and state managers abetted these attacks on labor, the Left, and democratic institutions, and aided in the authoritarian imposition of neoliberal policies across Latin America and other parts of the Third World.[53] Their imposition of neoliberalism within the United States involved a greater "construction of political consent" via a powerful ideological crusade and the capture of political parties.[54] Yet it also entailed union-busting, strike-breaking, and intensification of the state's "domestic war-making," including the "secret, systematic, and sometimes savage use of force and fraud, by all levels of government, to sabotage progressive political activity."[55] The massive expansion of the Unites States' "industrialized punishment system," which made it the largest incarcerator in the world, was also a constitutive feature of neoliberal social and economic restructuring, serving multiple functions: to discipline labor and neutralize potentially rebellious persons who had been expelled from formal labor markets by restructuring, and also as a site of capitalist profiteering in itself (i.e., an outlet for excess accumulated capital).[56]

In the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, the neoliberalization process launched by dictatorships in Latin America was legitimized by the constitutional and nominally "democratic" regimes that succeeded them, whose "form of elite rule performs the function of legitimating existing inequalities . . . more effectively than authoritarianism" by offering a simulacrum of democratic participation in the form of tightly controlled elections.[57] While the 1980s saw an upsurge of Left movements in Central America, by the 1990s, following the defeat of the Sandinistas, neoliberal hegemony had spread across the Americas.[58]

While the U.S. state promoted neoliberalization and globalization across the hemisphere through economic coercion, propaganda, and military force, this should not be understood simply as a matter of its national ruling class promoting its imperial interests. Rather, as William Robinson argues, the U.S. state apparatus acts on behalf of the interests of a *transnational* capitalist class and uses its power to defend, expand, and stabilize the global capitalist system.[59] The underlying thrust of Robinson's argument is that a nation-state–based understanding of sociospatial relations obscures the dynamics of class struggle since globalization. He argues that the international division of labor that was created by modern colonialism has been reconfigured by the "transnational disbursal of the full range of world production processes" and the unprecedented transnational mobility of workers and the formation of a truly global labor pool.[60] A materialist analysis of how "groups exercise social power—through institutions—to control value production, to appropriate surpluses, and to reproduce these arrangements" reveals that global society has become "increasingly stratified less along national and territorial lines than along transnational social and class lines."[61] This is evident, for example, in the presence of conditions associated with peripheral social formations within the territory of core countries, including the United States, as well as capital's increasing use of immigrant labor pools and of the citizen/noncitizen divide to organize inequality and exploitation *within* a given state's territory.[62]

A transnational "*social* cartography"[63] not formatted by the sociospatial imaginary of the nation-state also brings into view the transnational contours of antisystemic struggles of recent decades. Michael Denning provides such a map in his historicization of the global antisystemic tendency that emerged in the 1970s. This antiglobalization movement (or movement of movements) has been constituted by heterogenous forms of struggle from below, from popular uprisings to organized movements and new forms of labor militancy.[64]

Latin America has been an epicenter of this antisystemic movement. Its status as a "laboratory for neoliberalism" also reflects the fierce resistance

working and popular classes have mounted to the neoliberal model, which prevented it from achieving stable hegemony in the region. The continental indigenous movement has been a leading force for mobilizing the popular classes in resistance to the predations of transnational capital.[65] As I discuss in chapter 1, the Zapatista uprising in 1994 galvanized the global Left, making clear that armed struggle was not a relic of the past, as liberal ideologues claimed. The Zapatistas have since redefined revolutionary praxis through their pursuit of autonomy and indigenous liberation and their powerful critique of the liberal colonial state.

A few years after the Zapatista uprising, workers in Argentina's provinces who had been thrown out of the formal labor sector by a wave of privatizations organized autonomously in what became known as the *piquetero* (picketer) movement. As I discuss in chapter 3, the *piqueteros* and the human rights movement were among those collective forces from below that set the stage for a massive popular uprising in Argentina (2001–2) that ousted the president and his entire cabinet and opened up an extraordinary context for social solidarity and mobilization.

The Zapatista and Argentine uprisings are among a constellation of popular uprisings that have taken place across the Americas in which the popular classes have collectively enacted their repudiation of capital's dictatorship and the political and repressive institutions that enforce it. These have also included the Caracazo (1989), which forms part of the genealogy of the Bolivarian Revolution; the Los Angeles Rebellion/Rodney King Riots (1992), which was led by the city's "multicultural and transnational working poor who had suffered most from economic restructuring";[66] multiple uprisings led by the indigenous movement in Ecuador throughout the 1990s and early 2000s; the Cochabamba Water Wars (2000); and many others. Antisystemic politics has also taken the forms of labor militancy and mass movements of peasants, women, environmentalists, students, and the urban poor, who have organized themselves outside of the institutions of the state. These movements brought progressive governments to power across South America is what is known as the "Pink Tide" (although, as I discuss in chapter 4, the relationships progressive liberal governments have had to popular movements are complex and oftentimes antagonistic). Latin American immigrants within the United States have also been protagonists of antisystemic movements, as evidenced, for example, in the new labor movement that emerged in L.A. in the 1990s and the immigrant rights movement that mobilized millions of people and organized massive strikes in the mid-2000s.

As Denning notes, while the many movements that comprise the global antisystemic tendency "share a common foe, even a common struggle, they don't always share the same analysis, strategy, or even name for that foe."[67] This is understandable. When conflicts arising from capitalism's contradictions confront political actors in particular social-cultural formations, "how these actors respond is 'mediated' by a host of concrete particulars," writes Colin Barker. For this reason, social movements should be understood as "*mediated* expressions of class struggle," he argues.[68] Moreover, because "historically, capitalism has expanded not only by 'economic' means" but also through "colonial subjugation of whole peoples, slavery and forced labour, coerced breaking up of older systems of social reproduction, immensely destructive wars along with the promotion of racist, sexual, religious and other oppressions," struggles against these numerous forms of oppression and violence are not distinct from class struggle, but "are mutually interdependent parts of the social movement against capitalism as a totality."[69] This book examines concrete instances of political and aesthetic struggle that form part of this global movement.

My purpose in composing a constellation of connected histories from distinct sociocultural formations is to show how contemporary movements and uprisings and their allied artistic practices form part of an antisystemic tendency that is rooted in transnational class struggles. Dominant ideologies—those that compose the "looking-glass world" so poignantly diagnosed by Galeano—attempt to obscure the scope and ferocity of anticapitalist struggle by representing resistance to exploitation and oppression, which is constant, multiform, and global, as so many isolated, purely local, and short-term adventures. Acting as a counterinsurgent force, the "looking-glass school" also teaches us that antisystemic movements are purely reactive, foreclosing apprehension of the other worlds they defend and create. As I hope this book will contribute to the counterschool Galeano invokes, I have sought to uncover connections across time and space that are so often effaced, to analyze the capacious and multiform capacities of movements from below, and to insist on their world-making ambitions and very real capacities—and to show how these are (though not exclusively) aesthetic endeavors.

AGAINST REPRESENTATION

Across the Americas, antisystemic movements have brought about legitimacy crises for neoliberal states. They have put into sharper relief the contradiction between these states' hegemonic function and class function—that

is, the extent to which their mandate to facilitate capitalist profiteering undermines the material basis for their ability to govern through the manufacturing of consent.[70] These legitimacy crises are also described as "crises of representation." I understand this to mean a crisis in the *ideology* of political representation,[71] which plays a central role in liberal states' hegemonic modes of domination.

Illustrating Gramsci's famous dictum that hegemony is "protected by an armour of coercion," neoliberal states in the Americas use violence to manage social conflict and repress antisystemic movements and uprisings.[72] Chapter 4 addresses this phenomenon in Argentina, examining the ways hegemonic and coercive modes of domination are related, as well as the ways they are differentially applied to persons belonging to different social classes. As the U.S. state has led a remilitarization of Latin America in recent decades, it has worked to arm and enlarge Latin American security forces and orient them toward the repression of those designated "internal enemies," including antisystemic movements.[73] It has also increasingly militarized its own territory, treating domestic policing as urban counterinsurgency operations akin to its neocolonial warfare abroad.[74] The explosive growth of the prison- and immigrant detention–industrial complex and the expansion of policing powers in the United States have served as a means of domestic social control in the face of a weakened material basis for hegemonic governance, while profiting from repression has become ever more central to circuits of accumulation.[75]

The artists discussed in this book have amplified the legitimacy crises collective movements have brought to neoliberal states by using their art to publicly critique ideologies of political representation and national identification through which these states exercise hegemony. This is evident in the artists' trenchant criticisms of bourgeois nationalisms' functionality for class domination, ongoing colonial conquest, state terrorism, and ideological obfuscation. For example, the Pocho Research Society's guerrilla interventions on state monuments show how nationalist aesthetics shape perceptions of history, territory, and human collectivities in ways that erase histories of imperialist conquest and naturalize racialized divisions of the global working class.

The artists also critique liberal political ideologies that operate through other modes of recognition. Ilich builds on the EZLN's fierce criticisms of the Mexican state as he satirizes and deconstructs its discourses of *indigenismo,* which operate as a form of multiculturalist representational politics that bolsters the domination of indigenous Mexicans by the (neo)colonial ruling class. The heterodox and radical reading of human rights politics put forth

by Etcétera . . . is a pointed challenge to liberal human rights politics that channel people's desires for justice toward institutions of bourgeois states that enforce systematic injustice. Works by Grupo de Arte Callejero and the Internacional Errorista reveal how security discourse interpellates subjects as citizens while justifying violence on behalf of capital's class war.

These artists all offer nuanced analyses of the ways in which the naturalization of representation as the ideological basis of hegemonic governance under liberalism is, among other things, an aesthetic endeavor—that is, one that marshals myriad aesthetic practices to capture people's imaginations, channel their desires, and shape their entire worldviews. Their work shows how ideologies of representation are promulgated by cultural productions and institutions whose political function in this regard is typically obscured. From Ilich's critique of museums and de la Loza's interrogation of historical productions, to Etcétera . . .'s examination of memory sites and sports spectacles, GAC's critical mimicry of touristic and nationalist signage, and the Erroristas' parodies of corporate media—these artists offer a broad view of ways in which culture is regularly used to bolster the hegemony of the ruling class.

Marxist analyses of the social role of intellectuals vis-à-vis the social relations of production illuminate the political agency exercised by those who engage in intellectual and communicational labor to shape public consciousness.[76] The hegemonic function of cultural productions to form citizen-consumer-subjects and enforce dominant ideologies operates not only through what they represent but also through their formal qualities and the modalities of reception they solicit. For example, as I discuss in chapter 3, artist-theorists have argued that the formal qualities of bourgeois theater serve its function as an instrument of class domination, as they naturalize the logic of political representation (i.e., delegation) and encourage a passive disposition in subjects.[77]

David Lloyd and Paul Thomas have shown how discourses on aesthetics and "high culture" that represent these as constituting an extra-economic and extrapolitical space of freedom and self-development actually work to bolster the exercise of hegemony. The (presumably ethical) "disposition of disinterested reflection" they solicit is a "formal or representative disposition" of the subject that annuls concrete particularity and questions of material differences among individuals. This disposition naturalizes the ideology of representation central to hegemonic governance under liberal "democracies," as it primes subjects for a form of political participation that offers only a "purely formal expression of equality."[78]

These theorists argue what is also amply demonstrated by the history of ruling classes' uses of culture as a tool of domination: (1) the cultural apparatus performs a hegemonic function; (2) ideologies about aesthetics and culture that deny this bolster this hegemonic function; and (3) cultural productions' ideological force operates through aesthetic form, the social relations cultural production and reception organize, and the formatting of reception, as well as on symbolic registers. Knowing this, it is only by assuming the *political* nature of our social role that we can mobilize our intellectual and communicational labor toward emancipatory and egalitarian ends.[79] Lloyd suggests that challenging the ideology of representation as it manifests in the "self-evidence of the state–civil society formation" is a crucial task for thusly committed intellectuals, given that our ascribed social function vis-à-vis liberal governance is precisely to naturalize this ideology.[80]

As counterhegemonic intellectuals, the artists discussed in this book use their work to amplify crises of hegemony that have erupted out of the longer-term and collective labor of antisystemic movements, while also shining a light on the constructive and creative character of these movements—that is, their capacities as "bearers of other worlds." The artists' critique of representational ideologies of liberal states operates in tandem with their efforts to convoke, defend, and bring into view other types of collectivities that exist both below and beyond liberal-colonial states and the categories of affiliation they impose. They do this not only through representations they put forth but also in terms of how, with whom, and for whom they produce, and the counterpublics and co-conspirators they seek or organize in the process. These relationships are manifested in multiple, often nested scales: from engagement with local social struggles to participation in movements of national and transnational dimensions.

PRODUCTION

The politics of artistic practices, and specifically the ways in which they are articulated with collective struggles, is manifested not only in the characteristics of individual works but also, fundamentally, in the social relations inscribed in these works' production, circulation, and reception.[81] This has been demonstrated by theorists and artists who critically interrogate the social relations of cultural production in class society and seek to transform them. Bertolt Brecht and Walter Benjamin theorized this endeavor in the 1930s in seminal texts on socialist art in which they argued that the social relations of cultural production are themselves a site and stake of class

struggle.[82] They asserted that the politics of a committed intellectual's or artist's practice lies not only in the political ideas represented in the works they produce but also in their work *on the forms and instruments of production.* The artist or intellectual should work to "alienate the apparatus of production from the ruling class" and transform it "to the maximum extent possible in the direction of socialism," Benjamin wrote, drawing on Brecht's concept of functional transformation. This is necessary, he added, because the "bourgeois apparatus of production and publication can assimilate an astonishing number of revolutionary themes without seriously placing its own existence or the existence of the class that possesses them into question." [83]

Countless artists have treated their work on the "forms and instruments" of cultural production and circulation as intrinsic to the politics of their practice—from Cine Liberación's revolutionary reconception of cinema and Augusto Boal's Theater of the Oppressed to anti-authoritarian protest art, arts of the Black and Chicano liberation movements in the United States, *testimonio* literature, and tactical media, to name just a few examples.[84] The artists I discuss in this book contribute to this tradition. They have forged alternative modes of producing and circulating art that move well beyond traditional *dispositifs* of exhibition and publishing. These enable their participation in collective movements and also afford them greater freedom from ruling-class institutions' functionalization of artistic labor. For example, Ilich disseminates literature via email lists, online petitions, and the sale of coffee, and he organizes the production of his artwork so that it supports Zapatista cooperatives' solidarity economies. Etcétera . . . and GAC combine their art with direct-action tactics to contribute to the Argentine human rights movement. The Pocho Research Society enacts direct-action public history by installing their own unauthorized historical markers in public spaces. Moreover, these artists have all created autonomous cultural infrastructure, from cultural and activist spaces (be they in storefronts, garages, or squats) to zines, independent presses, and platforms for collaboration. They use the production and circulation of their work to convoke communities of co-conspirators—be it through collective artistic production, the formation of translocal networks of activists and fellow travelers, or by creating work with and for the counterpublics organized by the movements of which they are part.

I am not suggesting that the artists and practices I examine are wholly disconnected from official cultural institutions or their symbolic and financial economies, nor do I want to deploy a strict or implicitly moralized inside/outside dichotomy as a means for understanding how artistic labor is related

to institutions and markets. After all, the "outside" of the cultural institution is still within capitalist social relations, and these artists face the unyielding economic demand of having to sell their labor power. Moreover, they generally seek to have expansive and varied audiences for their work. They have each figured out different ways of doing this: whether this means having both guerrilla and institutional art practices, subsidizing their art practice by selling their labor in other ways, and/or funneling institutional resources into their political communities. Without suggesting that a space of freedom for artistic labor lies just beyond the commercial art gallery or publishing house, I want to show how people shape the conditions in which they can produce and circulate their art in order to prioritize the *political use-value* of their practice over and against the system of values ruling-class institutions and markets impose upon art. Moreover, I will argue that this is *itself* a creative, world-making practice.

EXPERIMENTALISM

Recognizing that aesthetics is politicized across all dimensions of social life, these artists employ an omnivorous experimentalism that allows them to engage in aesthetic struggles in multiple sites and through myriad forms—including those considered extraneous to fine art and literature. While the performing, visual, and literary arts serve as a "historic reservoir" of techniques and "material, conceptual, and symbolic strategies" for their practices, these practices are not only artistic.[85] I describe them as *paradisciplinary* because they operate beyond the normative parameters of disciplinary understandings of art and literature, while some also exist as heterodox versions of other disciplinary practices.[86]

Within art historical discourse and aesthetic theory, artists' forays beyond their specialized fields is often celebrated as a consummate avant-garde gesture when it constitutes a renegotiation of what can be institutionally recognized as art, or when it is interpreted as a dissolution of distinctions between "art" and "life."[87] Yet the former interpretation accepts elite institutions' monopoly on the ratification of artistic value, while the latter implicitly relies on the ideology of art's autonomy.[88] When experimentalism is analyzed principally in terms of difference or innovation vis-à-vis a canonized history of forms (i.e., those already recognized as *art* from the perspective of ruling-class ideology), "newness" frequently functions as an unquestioned value unto itself. This is an expression of the market logics that suffuse contemporary culture industries and complicit progressivist ideologies of

cultural history. As association with newness translates into symbolic and financial capital, producers are encouraged to see themselves as individuals competing to differentiate their products from others', rather than as participants in collective projects organized around values other than the capitalist valorization of boutique products or services for elite consumption.

I am interested, instead, in elucidating artistic experimentalism that is rooted in an antisystemic politics—where the willingness to inhabit or create new forms and to combine art-making with other kinds of practices serves to bolster the counterhegemonic politics of this practice and/or connect it more effectively to collective movements. In doing this, I have been inspired by Brecht's theorization of the importance of experimentation in socialist art practice. In contraposition to other Marxist theorists' attempts to codify "correct" formal qualities for socialist literature, Brecht conceived of the politics of art in terms of its political and ideological *ends.*[89] He argued that socialist art should be *popular* in the sense that it should be for the people, the working masses, noting, "We have a people in mind who make history, change the world and themselves. We have in mind a fighting people and therefore an aggressive concept of what is *popular.*" Socialist art should also be "realistic" insofar as it should render apprehensible the "causal complexes of society," exposing ideologies that obscure these as "views imposed by the powerful," while "making possible the concrete and making possible abstraction from it."[90] In order to do this, Brecht argued, artists would need to be radically experimental, because they are operating in a dynamic social reality that is continually transformed by class struggle:

> With the people struggling and changing reality before our eyes, we must not cling to "tried" rules of narrative, venerable literary models, eternal aesthetic laws. . . . But we should use every means, old and new, tried and untried, derived from art and derived from other sources, to render reality to men in a form they can master. . . . Methods become exhausted; stimuli no longer work. New problems appear and demand new methods. Reality changes; in order to represent it, modes of representation must also change. . . . The oppressors do not work the same way in every epoch. . . . To turn the hunter into the quarry is something that demands invention.[91]

Brecht makes a *political* argument for artistic experimentation and formal innovation. This includes the practice of what I am calling paradisciplinarity, as he suggests that artists should draw on all types of forms and techniques, including those derived from sources other than the fine arts.[92] By arguing for an anti-idealist, historical, and situational analysis of art's potential to

support the socialist movement, Brecht suggests that the most effective aesthetic strategies will be developed through attention to the ways that class struggle is manifested in a historically specific social formation. I consider the experimentalism of the art practices discussed in this book in this fashion, and I analyze how artists' readiness to devise new forms and modes of making and circulating their art—or to utilize forms and techniques from other types of social practice—is meaningful to the politics of their practice and its articulation with collective struggles.

ART BEYOND ART

A great deal of writing on the relationship between politics and art treats these as historically transcendent categories with discernible essential qualities in order to argue that there is a unique relationship between them (i.e., between *art* and *politics* understood as decontextualized abstractions).[93] As Gabriel Rockhill argues, this obscures the fact that these sociocultural categories not only are constructed but are sites of struggle. Because such an approach brackets the complex social relations involved in specific aesthetic and political practices, it lends itself to an analysis of isolated artworks as if they were "talisman-like" in their magical ability to produce political effects all on their own, or to fail in doing so.[94] For these reasons, I do not make claims about the "politics of art" in an abstract sense. Instead, I examine specific artistic practices, ideologies, and movements in order to understand how political struggles manifest in struggles over aesthetics.

Rockhill's observations are of special relevance to this book, given that the art practices I examine are enmeshed in movements that actively displace the sites and meanings of politics, and given that they are not *only* "art" practices. Because they do not conform to forms and modes of circulation typically associated with fine art and literature, these practices have often been perceived as being something other than art or literature—be it activism, commerce, solidarity work, or vandalism. Their legibility as art, or as something else, is dynamic and situational. Taking seriously their variegated modes of circulation and reception means rejecting the notion that they must be *one* kind of production or practice in some essential sense.

The social life of these practices stands as a rejoinder not only to the ideology of art's autonomy from other aspects of social life but also to the idea that the aesthetic experience proffered by those creative practices socially designated as art is essentially different from other aesthetic experiences.[95] They make evident the need for an anti-essentialist understanding of art that

recognizes it as a sociocultural category that pertains to a historically and culturally specific social organization of labor, including reception.[96] The very perception of *art* that flows from this organization of labor is overdetermined by the social relations of production in general and by colonial, racial, and gender ideologies.[97] That is, there is an *immanently constituted* social understanding of what art is in particular contexts, which is shaped by institutions and markets and, ultimately, by the class relations to which these respond. Ideologies that affect how people perceive different kinds of creative labor, including ideologies about aesthetics and art, are themselves products of class struggle.

The artists I write about (like many artists) understand this perfectly well and intervene at *this* level. They knowingly manipulate the "signal systems"[98] that socially identify certain kinds of productions and practices as artistic, as this allows their work to circulate and be interpreted in ways that are not always preformatted by its identification as art or literature. In some cases, this allows them to interrogate the aesthetic-ideological dimensions of other types of practices or productions—such as historical markers, commercial exchanges, petitions, policing, news reports, and museum souvenirs. Avoiding identification of their practice as art in certain contexts also allows them to maximize its political use-value. As Stephen Wright argues, some activist artists do this in order to avoid the overwriting of their works' use-value by the abstract, homogenizing symbolic value that is associated with—in fact, defines—*works of art.*[99] By intentionally suppressing the social identification of their practice *as art,* he suggests, artists can encourage modes of reception in which the political use-values of their productions can predominate.[100] This evinces artists' engagement with aesthetics in the more capacious sense that I propose, as they understand that the very perception of art is an aesthetic phenomenon produced by social practices, and is therefore a site of potential intervention.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

My transdisciplinary research methodology is based on my understanding that artistic production is fundamentally a social practice. I have aimed to provide a complex account of the social worlds from which specific artistic and political practices have emerged and in which they have their effects. To do this, I bring together sociological and cultural analysis, history, ethnography, and formal analysis of artworks. As I analyze cultural productions and the social conflicts in which they are embedded, I show how these have

emerged from historical processes that unfold at multiple sociospatial scales. I thereby demonstrate how various local, national, and regional histories are interrelated and how these express structural dynamics that define the capitalist world-system. To develop this historically grounded and multiscalar transnational framework of analysis, I have drawn on Marxist social theory and scholarship from across the humanities and social sciences. I have been especially influenced by scholarship that analyzes Latina/o/x and Latin American history and culture through transnational, international, or global frameworks and whose challenges to nation-state–based paradigms in knowledge production are rooted in an internationalist politics.[101]

Since I began researching articulations between artistic practices and antisystemic movements in 2001, I have regularly interviewed artists about their practices and how these relate to political ideologies they embrace, movements they are part of, and histories that have influenced them. This book draws on many interviews carried out between 2002 and 2018, as well as the kind of knowledge that is gained through informal conversations and shared experience. I have known all of the artists I write about here for fifteen to twenty years, and I have spent a good deal of time with most of them. In this time, I have learned not only about their art but also about other things they do and the preoccupations and commitments that drive them. Knowing these things encouraged me to write about their work together. That is, I wanted to write about artists who bring their anticapitalist and antiracist politics into their artistic praxis. The intellectual questions and political preoccupations that drive my own research made this a determinant framing for this book—more than, say, artists' shared national origin, identities, or work in specific mediums or genres.

In many ways, my research for this book has been deeply intertwined with my seeking out and finding interlocutors, comrades, friends, and collaborators. I do not position myself as a disinterested critic, nor do I have a purely scholarly interest in the practices I write about here. Rather, I see them as part of a collective project that has fundamentally shaped how I see the world and to which I hope my own work can contribute.

This book begins with a study of a radically experimental transdisciplinary art practice that is aligned with Zapatismo. Chapter 1 examines work by Ilich that proffers an anticolonial and anticapitalist worldview while making metropolitan art production materially useful to Zapatista communities. It principally focuses on *Raiders of the Lost Crown* (2013), a heterodox alternate reality game whose players were charged with recapturing a legendary Mexica (Aztec) headdress from the Austrian museum that owns it. As the

game unfolded through epistolary exchanges, petitions, guerrilla interventions, and the operations of a pop-up coffee shop, it became clear that the mission to obtain the headdress was actually a plot device within an interactive narrative that ultimately articulated a far more capacious critique of contemporary colonialism and imperialism, tracing their dynamics from museums to capitalist regimes of debt and property, extractivism, NAFTA, indigenous dispossession, and Mexican nationalism and *indigenismo.*

As chapter 1 demonstrates how contemporary colonialism and imperialism marshal the power of aesthetics to naturalize their predations, it introduces two concepts I use throughout this book. First, I propose a *stereoscopic aesthetics* as one that enables the apprehension of multiple realities and the relation between them—specifically, a dominant "reality" and the counterhegemonic worldview(s) it attempts to foreclose from perception. Stereoscopic aesthetics provides a social depth of perception insofar as it enables an apprehension of epistemological-perceptual difference *and* throws light on the relations of power through which this difference is managed, negated, or obscured. Second, I consider aesthetic strategies that demonstrate the mutual imbrication of colonial, neocolonial, and neo-imperial time-space formations. Specifically, I show how *Raiders* enables a perception of *palimpsestic time* (a term I borrow from M. Jacqui Alexander) as it highlights the colonial character of contemporary modes of capitalist accumulation and liberal governance as they operate in the Fourth World War.

Chapter 2 deepens this book's inquiry into ways aesthetic practices situate subjects in particular time-space formations. It examines the guerrilla art practice—that is also direct action public history—of the Pocho Research Society of Erased and Invisible History. This collaborative platform in Los Angeles is a creation of Sandra de la Loza. The ephemeral countermonuments the Research Society installed throughout L.A. from 2002 to 2008 memorialized erased histories of working-class Latinas/os/xs and Latin Americans and illuminated forms of territorial displacement to which these groups are regularly subjected. Through a discussion of several of these works, I posit the concepts of *aesthetics of history* and *aesthetics of space* as heuristic devices that can illuminate particular facets in the social framework of sense-making. I use these concepts to analyze ways in which the social construction of collective pasts and the production of space are intertwined as they operate as tools of power and sites of struggle. I argue that the Pocho Research Society's guerrilla art models a counterhegemonic practice of historical sense-making that reconfigures underlying epistemological frameworks, practices, and social relations that shape historical production, specifically, as

it is manifested in public monuments and memorials. This chapter's discussion of counterhistory as a historical methodology that attends to the ways historical processes are distributed across multiple social strata, spatial scales, and temporalities illuminates the Pocho Research Society's heterodox practice of public history, while also elucidating (albeit indirectly) aspects of my own methodology in this book—specifically my focus on popular politics and its tension with bourgeois politics and the way I move between local, national, and transnational scales of analysis.

Chapter 3 also considers the political stakes of the aesthetics of history, particularly as this pertains to how perceptions of violence and forms of governance are forged. Specifically, it examines how competing historical representations of Argentina's most recent dictatorship and its political violence offer radically different perspectives on the postdictatorship neoliberal social order, the relationship between authoritarianism and political liberalism, and the history and possible futures of revolutionary anticapitalist politics. Two Buenos Aires–based art groups are the focus of this chapter: Grupo de Arte Callejero, known as GAC, and Etcétera. . . . Both groups have used their art to contribute to the Argentine human rights movement since the late 1990s, combining their art production with exposure protests (escraches) the movement uses to publicly denounce persons responsible for state terrorism. I argue that GAC's urban interventions and Etcétera . . .'s surrealist street theater express a minor and more radical tendency within the human rights movement, as they channel the movement's condemnation of state terrorism during Argentina's last dictatorship toward a critique of the multiform violence inherent in class domination, including the violence of the postdictatorship neoliberal state.

GAC and Etcétera . . .'s work from the late 1990s and early 2000s also expresses a repudiation of the ideology of political representation promulgated by the (neo)liberal state. This repudiation became increasingly generalized in Argentina during this time, as the working class's discontent with the effects of neoliberal policies mounted and popular movements organized themselves at a distance from state institutions and traditional unions. A popular uprising and crisis of state hegemony in 2001–2 created conditions for autonomous movements to flourish and cross-pollinate. GAC's and Etcétera . . .'s work in this context reflects the insurrectionary, collectivist, and anticapitalist ethos of the uprising and the urban movements it constellated.

Chapter 4 examines work GAC, Etcétera . . . , and the Internacional Errorista created in Argentina from 2002 to 2005 that evinces a counter-counterinsurgent aesthetics. Their interventions critique the multiform

tactics of pacification that were used to neutralize and fragment antisystemic movements and reconsolidate state hegemony in the wake of the 2001–2 uprising, from the consuming spectacle of electoral politics to the incorporation of popular organizations into the state apparatus, the criminalization of the poor and of dissident movements, and the intensification of an antiplebian security discourse. When a new progressive and populist government took power in Argentina in 2003 and vied to control the meanings and possibilities of politics, the terrain for antisystemic politics shifted considerably, as did the work of the artists I discuss. By tracking this shift in their practice, I employ a method of cultural analysis that registers conjunctural dynamics of sociopolitical struggles and the way expressive practices are situated in them.

With their bawdy street theater, Etcétera . . . infiltrated and parodied public spectacles to reveal their function as forms of statecraft—including a solemn ceremony that showcased an alliance between human rights organizations and the state. Interventionist works by GAC and the Internacional Errorista that examine police power and security discourse interrogate how the work of repression abets capitalist accumulation, while also showing how policing functions in hegemonic rule—that is, by maintaining class stratification and, ultimately, producing subjects who accept the liberal social order and the violence used to maintain it. The Internacional Errorista, which styles itself as a sendup of a surrealist terrorist cell, addresses, at once, the criminalization of working-class movements and Left activists in Argentina and the antiterrorism discourses and laws that were imposed across the Americas as part of the so-called Global War on Terror. In so doing, their work reveals the imbrication of spatial scales at which pacification and securitization operate and the traffic among different figures of criminality constructed by the transnational policing apparatus.

NOTES

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

1. Fran Ilich, email to Penacho email list, March 23, 2013.

2. "Antisystemic movement" is a concept developed within world-systems theory to analyze a wide array of social and popular movements that have organized against injustices of the capitalist world-system in ways that challenge prevailing social relations of production, including "socialist or labor movements, national liberation movements, peasant movements, women's movements, peace and ecology movements," among others. Amin et al., introduction to *Transforming the Revolution*, 9–10.

3. See, for example, the archive of texts by the EZLN commanders and spokespersons on *Enlace Zapatista*, http://enlacezapatista.ezln.org.mx, and their self-published book, Comisión de la Sexta del EZLN, *El pensamiento*.

4. Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, 105.

5. Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, 106. Useful commentaries on this aspect of Marx's thought include Gandesha, "Three Logics," 5–10; Sánchez Vázquez, *Las ideas estéticas*, 47–95.

6. Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, 99–114; Wynter, "Rethinking 'Aesthetics'" and "1492." My reference to "the human" is purely heuristic and is not meant to inscribe a strict dividing line between so-called *Homo sapiens* and other sentient beings.

7. Rancière, *Politics of Aesthetics*, 85.

8. For a discussion of some of the limitations of Rancière's work, as well as an argument in favor of a materialist and "radically historicist" approach to aesthetics,

see Rockhill, *Radical History*, 1–55 and 163–82; and Rockhill, *Interventions in Contemporary Thought*, 100–116, 214–42.

9. Ponce de León and Rockhill, "Toward a Compositional Model of Ideology."

10. As discussed in detail in "Toward a Compositional Model of Ideology," Marxist theories of ideology upon which I draw include Marx and Engels, *Collected Works,* 36; Marx, *Capital*, 165; Althusser, *On the Reproduction of Capitalism*, 171–272; Althusser, *For Marx*, 227–36; Galeano, *Upside Down*; Therborn, *Ideology of Power*; Hall, "Signification, Representation, Ideology"; Fields and Fields, *Racecraft,* 128–41; Rosaura Sánchez, "Critical Realist Theory of Identity"; and Eagleton, *Literary Theory*, 13; as well as Balibar's writing on Marx's concept of commodity fetishism in *Philosophy of Marx*, 60.

11. Wolff, *Aesthetics*, 14–18.

12. Gramsci, *Antonio Gramsci Reader*, 395.

13. Gramsci, *Antonio Gramsci Reader*, 192–96. For an excellent summary of Gramsci's concept of hegemony, see Robinson, *Promoting Polyarchy*, 21–22.

14. Gramsci, *Antonio Gramsci Reader*, 211–12; Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, 203.

15. Ponce de León and Rockhill, "Compositional Model of Ideology," 16; Gramsci, *Antonio Gramsci Reader*, 325–26.

16. For example, Denning, *Cultural Front*; Reed, *Art of Protest*; McCaughan, *Art and Social Movements*; Expósito, *Walter Benjamin*; Gómez-Barris, *Beyond the Pink Tide*; Streeby, *Radical Sensations*; Sholette, *Dark Matter*; Noriega, *Just Another Poster*?; Fuentes, *Performance Constellations*; Bogad, *Tactical Performance* and *Electoral Guerrilla Theater*.

17. Tapia, *Política salvaje*, 72–80.

18. Examples include Tse-Tung, "Talks at the Yenan Forum"; Cabral, *Return to the Source*, 39–69; Guevara and Castro, *Socialism and Man*, 22–29; Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*; Fernández Retamar, *Caliban*, 3–55.

19. See, for example, Escobar, *Territories of Difference*; Zibechi, *Territories in Resistance*; Martins de Carvalho, "Emancipation of the Movement"; Alvarez, Escobar, and Dagnino, "Introduction"; Gómez-Barris, *Extractive Zone*.

20. Guattari and Rolnik, *Molecular Revolution*, 261, 467.

21. Lloyd and Thomas, *Culture and the State*, 161.

22. Tapia, *Política salvaje*, 73.

23. Alvarez, Escobar, and Dagnino, "Introduction," 1–8.

24. Marx, qtd. in Zibechi, *Territories in Resistance*, 89.

25. Zibechi, *Territories in Resistance*, 20, 89.

26. Galeano, *Upside Down*, 308.

27. Fran Ilich, interview with author, May 30–June 1, 2016.

28. Garín Guzmán, O'Higgins, and Zukerfeld, "International Errorista," part 2.

29. See Beverley, *Latinamericanism*, 95–109.

30. Comisión de la Sexta del EZLN, *El pensamiento*, 316. All English translations from Spanish texts and interviews I conducted in Spanish are my own, unless otherwise noted.

31. Subcomandante Marcos, "La Cuarta Guerra."

32. Robinson, *Into the Tempest*, 72.

33. Ahmad, *Selected Writings*, 219.

34. Robinson, *Into the Tempest*, 208. Also see Amin, *Capitalism*, 46, 56–60.

35. Robinson, *Into the Tempest*, 11.

36. Robinson, *Into the Tempest*, 55–56; Smith, "New Globalism, New Urbanism," 432–33.

37. Robinson, *Latin America*, 14.

38. Immanuel Wallerstein, "Antisystemic Movements," in Amin et al., *Transforming the Revolution*, 39–48; Robinson, *Latin America*, 15.

39. Davis, *Planet of Slums*, 151–73.

40. Robinson, *Latin America*, 16–20.

41. Robinson, *Into the Tempest*, 18–19.

42. Robinson, *Into the Tempest*, 65–67.

43. Antonio Negri, qtd. in Ruth Wilson Gilmore, "Terror Austerity Race Gender Excess Theater," 26.

44. Amin, *World We Wish*, 33.

45. Robinson, *Into the Tempest*, 85; Midnight Notes Collective, "New Enclosures," 315–24.

46. Neocleous, *War Power*, 84–85. Also see Marx, *Capital*, 914–26; Luxemburg, *Accumulation of Capital*, 345–51; Nichols, "Disaggregating Primitive Accumulation"; Harvey, *New Imperialism*; Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks*, 6–15.

47. Nichols, "Disaggregating Primitive Accumulation," 27. Also see Neocleous, *War Power*, 48–87.

48. Midnight Notes Collective, "New Enclosures," 317–33; Subcomandante Marcos, "La Cuarta Guerra."

49. Sader, *New Mole*, 19.

50. Veltmeyer, Petras, and Vieux, *Neoliberalism and Class Conflict*, 62–78.

51. Bayer, Borón, and Gambina, *Terrorismo de estado*, 111–222; Harnecker, *Rebuilding the Left*, 13; Klein, *Shock Doctrine*, 75–141; Blum, *Killing Hope*, 201–16.

52. Sader, *New Mole*, 17.

53. Veltmeyer et al., *Neoliberalism and Class Conflict*, 111–22; Veltmeyer, *On the Move*, 19–29; Chomsky and Herman, *Washington Connection*, 1–99, 242–98; Blum, *Killing Hope*, 201–16; Grandin, *Empire's Workshop*, 52–222.

54. Harvey, *Brief History of Neoliberalism*, 39–40.

55. Caffentzis, "Capitalist Crisis to Proletarian Slavery"; Gilmore, "Globalisation and US Prison Growth," 176; Churchill and Vander Wall, COINTELPRO Papers, x.

56. Gilmore, "Globalisation and US Prison Growth," 137; Wacquant, *Punishing the Poor*, xvi–xvii, 306–308.

57. Robinson, *Promoting Polyarchy*, 51. Also see Harnecker, *Rebuilding the Left*, 13–14.

58. Sader, *New Mole*, 17–18.

59. Robinson, *Into the Tempest*, 114–15.

60. Robinson, *Latin America*, 43.

61. Robinson, *Latin America*, 43.

62. Saldaña-Portillo, "From the Borderlands," 502–4; Robinson, *Latin America*, 202–7.

63. See Robinson, "Remapping Development."

64. Denning, *Culture*, 35–50.

65. Robinson, *Latin America*, 300–304.

66. Soja, *Seeking Spatial Justice*, 144. Also see Mike Davis, "Uprising and Repression," 142.

67. Denning, *Culture*, 48–49. On the multiplicity of the movement and its sources, also see Amin, *World We Wish*, 36; Zibechi, *Movimientos sociales*, 35.

68. Barker, "Class Struggle," 46–47.

69. Barker, "Class Struggle," 45–46, 53. Also see Losurdo, *Class Struggle*, 7–51; Bhattacharya, "How Not to Skip"; Federici and Carlin, "Exploitation of Women."

70. Robinson, *Latin America*, 280–81.

71. See Therborn, *Ideology of Power*, 96.

72. Robinson, *Latin America*, 279–80.

73. Robinson, *Latin America*, 281, 286; Grandin, *Empire's Workshop*, 211–15.

74. Graham, *Cities under Siege*, 20–28.

75. Robinson, *Global Capitalism*, 205–8; Gilmore, *Golden Gulag*; Sandoval Palacios, *La frontera*.

76. Robinson, *Into the Tempest,* 22–28. Also see Sartre, "Plea for Intellectuals"; Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy*, 85–126; Gramsci, *Antonio Gramsci Reader*, 301–22.

77. Brecht, "Short Organum for the Theater," in *Brecht on Theater*, 189; Boal, *Theater of the Oppressed,* 97.

78. Lloyd and Thomas, *Culture and the State,* 7.

79. See Lloyd, "Representation's Coup," 11–23; Robinson, *Into the Tempest*, 31–43.

80. Lloyd, "Representation's Coup," 23.

81. Rockhill, *Radical History*, 6–7.

82. Brecht, *Brecht on Film*, 41–48; Benjamin, "Author as Producer."

83. Benjamin, "Author as Producer," 89.

84. See, for example, Boal, *Theater of the Oppressed*; Getino and Solanas, "Toward a Third Cinema"; Ilich, "Otra cultura"; Valdez, *Luis Valdez*; Whitener, "Politics of Infrastructure"; Expósito, *Walter Benjamin*; Longoni, Carvajal, and Vindel, "Socialización del arte."

85. Expósito, Vidal, and Vindel, "Activismo artístico," 45.

86. I am drawing on Brian Holmes's theorization of "extradisciplinary art," although I use the term "paradisciplinary" because I think these practices are better described as being *beyond* or *alongside* artistic and other disciplines. Holmes, "Extradisciplinary Investigations."

87. Kester and Wilson, "Autonomy, Agonism, and Activist," 114; Bürger, *Theory*, 49.

88. See Rockhill's critique of Bürger in *Radical History*, 102–11.

89. Jameson, "Presentation IV," in *Aesthetics and Politics*, 149.

90. Brecht, "Against Georg Lukács," 81–82.

91. Brecht, "Against Georg Lukács," 83.

92. Also see Brecht's "Notes on the Realist Mode of Writing," in which he argues that "when defining [art] we should feel free to draw on such arts as the art of surgery, of university lecturing, of mechanical engineering and of flying. In this way we would run less risk of talking nonsense about something called 'the realm of art', something very narrowly delimited, something that permits very strict, albeit very obscure, doctrines" (*Brecht on Art and Politics*, 242–43).

93. Rockhill, *Radical History*, 5–6.

94. Rockhill, *Radical History,* 5–6.

95. Wolff, *Aesthetics*, 11–18. The modern ideology of art's autonomy represents art as a specialized realm that is separate from other aspects of social life and obeys its own inner logic. Grant Kester argues that one way this ideology manifests itself in contemporary art discourse is in the embrace of theories of politics that cast political organizing as a contaminating influence on supposedly more authentic forms of political expression, which operate within institutions of the arts and higher education. Kester, *One and the Many*, 58–59.

96. Davis, *9.5 Theses on Art*, 31; Williams, *Sociology of Culture*, 126–27.

97. Davis, *9.5 Theses on Art*, 27–37.

98. Williams, *Sociology of Culture*, 130–37.

99. Wright, "Future of the Reciprocal."

100. Wright, "Future of the Reciprocal" and "Delicate Essence," 539–42.

101. For a few examples, see Akers Chacón and Davis, *No One Is Illegal*; Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing*; Denning, *Culture in the Age of Three Worlds*; Gómez, *Revolutionary Imaginations of Greater Mexico*; Gómez-Barris*, Extractive Zone*; Kazanjian and Saldaña-Portillo, "Traffic in History"; McCaughan, *Art and Social Movements*; Robinson, *Global Capitalism*, *Latin America*, and *Promoting Polyarchy*; Saldaña-Portillo, "From the Borderlands," *Indian Given*, and *Revolutionary Imagination in the Americas*; José Saldívar, *Dialectics of Our America* and *Trans-Americanity*; Ramón Saldívar, *Borderlands of Culture*; Streeby, *Radical Sensations*; Taylor, *Archive and the Repertoire*; Williams, *Divided World*; Zibechi, *Movimientos sociales, Polítca y miseria*, and *Territories in Resistance*.

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

1. "Activista buscará de recuperar el penacho de Moctezuma," *El Universal*, Feb. 1, 2018, http://www.eluniversal.com.mx/cultura/artes-visuales/activista-buscara-recuperar-el-penacho-de-moctezuma.

2. Milady Nazir, "A Symbol of Mexico's Pre-colonial Grandeur Fades out of Sight," *Fox News Latino*, Nov. 14, 2014, https://www.foxnews.com/lifestyle/a-symbol-of-mexicos-pre-colonial-grandeur-fades-out-of-sight.

3. As Santiago García Navarro suggests in "Live and Learn," a metawork consists of a totality of processes and social relations, not just their sporadic material manifestations as art objects. It exists as a "to-ing and fro-ing between object and process."

4. Ilich, email to Penacho email list, Mar. 23, 2013.