# UNIVERSITY OF READING SCHOOL OF ART

## The Quest for Representation: The Experimental Art Scene in Lima under Peru's Military Government (1968-1975)

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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I declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where stated otherwise by reference or acknowledgment, the work presented is entirely my own.

Katerina Valdivia Bruch

#### **Abstract**

This dissertation examines the experimental art scene in Lima during the first term of the Revolutionary Government of the Armed Forces in Peru (1968-1975), led by General Juan Velasco Alvarado. While this administration is known for the reforms introduced in relation to land redistribution, the cultural policies have been understudied.

Velasco Alvarado's government was characterised by being a leftist-oriented military regime with original social, cultural and educational reforms. Within this framework, it implemented a series of cultural policies that promoted the democratisation of art and culture. To achieve this, the military hired a group of artists and intellectuals, who were committed to state policies, either working for the government or supporting its initiatives. In this study, I focus on the social aspect of art. Based on this, I establish a correspondence between the government's cultural policies and the artistic debates in the Latin American context of the time. I argue that they had an impact on the understanding of the arts in Lima, as well as affected and redirected the experimental art scene towards social and local concerns.

From a curatorial perspective, I consider that this historical moment has been romanticised by a group of Peruvian curators, who have created a new and fictionalised history around it, which differs from the original circumstances of the time. This new version of the art history of the period has portrayed the government as repressive and violent, blaming it for the disappearance of the experimental art scene in Lima.<sup>2</sup> This depiction has led to equating this government with other military administrations of the period in South America, characterised by state violence, manifested through systematic repression, massive killings, rape, and

<sup>1</sup> Gobierno Revolucionario de las Fuerzas Armadas, GRFA for its Spanish acronym. The GRFA lasted from 1968-1980. The first term was led by General Juan Velasco Alvarado (3 October 1968 - 29 August 1975), and the second was conducted by General Francisco Morales Bermúdez (29 August 1975 - 28 July 1980). As the 1960s and 1970s are decades of redefinitions of the art concept, for the Peruvian case I have chosen to use the term 'experimental art' for those art practices that explored other art forms beyond paintings or sculptures.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The new historiography of this period has been circulating internationally since 2007.

tortures. Through this argumentative move, this theory has introduced the experimental art scene in Lima from the mid-1960s to mid-1970s within the theories of Latin American conceptualism. Against this backdrop, I argue that Velasco Alvarado's administration constitutes an exception in this context. To explain this, I introduce the historical circumstances of the period and the particularities of this military government. Contrasting the idea that the experimental art scene was interrupted, I give examples of a group of experimental artists who continued with their practice, and include the work by those who contributed to the government's cultural policies. In addition to this, I analyse examples of exhibitions, focusing on the ways Peruvian art under this military rule was presented to foreign audiences.

This study highlights the government's cultural policies and their efforts to bring about a more inclusive and decentralised cultural field in Peru. It also draws attention to the artists' contributions to state-led cultural programmes, which have been left unnoticed in curatorial essays and exhibitions since the mid-2000s. This dissertation contributes to a reflection on how the art scene during Velasco Alvarado's regime and the military were introduced in international exhibitions and academic circles, questioning how a group of curators carried out art historical research.

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#### Introduction

Before I began to write the thesis, my research interest was *Contacta*, the total art festival initiated by Swiss artist Francesco Mariotti (1943). This festival, converging several different art forms, took place during the military government of Velasco Alvarado (1968-1975). It began as an artist initiative and became later a state-led event. In 2014, during the first year of my PhD programme, I travelled to Zurich and interviewed Francesco Mariotti and María Luy (a Peruvian artist, who is also Mariotti's wife). I also travelled to Lima (where I grew up) and began to search for publications about this period. I focused on history, sociology, anthropology, and art publications. My first stop was the library of the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú (PUCP), where I studied Philosophy back in the 1990s. I contacted some artists, whose work I appreciated and considered important to interview. I spoke with former members of the artist group *E.P.S. Huayco* (1980-1981). I met Rosario "Charo" Noriega, Juan Javier Salazar, Armando Williams and Herbert Rodríguez. I also had the opportunity to interview the artist Alfredo Márquez, former member of the artists' groups Bestiario/Los Bestias (1984-1987), Taller NN (1988-1991), Made in Perú (1992-1994) and *Perúfabrica* (1999-2003); the anthropologist Karen Bernedo and the artist Jorge Miyagui, members of the collective project Museo Itinerante Arte por la Memoria. During this trip, I interviewed the actors Ana Correa and Julián Vargas from the theatre group Yuyachkani, and the curator and critic Gustavo Buntinx. All of them were extremely generous, making time for me and answering my questions. Back in Berlin, my job at that time was very demanding. As time was short to dedicate it for my research, I chose to interrupt my PhD, even though my research was in its early phase. Nearly four years later, I came back with the determination to

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> While I was a student at the Philosophy faculty at the PUCP in Lima, I worked for four years (1994-1998) for the Archivo de Música Tradicional Andina (Archive for Traditional Andean Music, AMTA for its Spanish acronym; today Instituto de Etnomusicología (Ethnomusicology Institute, IDE)). Throughout the 1990s, I was part of the contemporary dance scene in Lima and worked for different dance companies. After finishing my BA in Philosophy, I moved to Europe in November 1999 and I have been living in Berlin since February 2000. While being based in Berlin, I lived in Barcelona on two occasions to pursue two degrees, a postgraduate diploma in Cultural Policies and Management at the Universitat de Barcelona (2002-2003), and an MA in Critical Theory and Museum Studies of the Independent Study Programme at the MACBA museum (2005-2006; degree given by the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona). In 2004, after an internship at the Education Department of Smithsonian Institution's Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, I decided to work also in the field of visual arts. Before curating, I have worked as exhibitions coordinator, arts writer and press officer. In 2006, I began my career as a freelance curator, without leaving my performative artistic practice. Depending on the project, my practice may shift from dance and choreography, to writing or curating.

complete what I have started.

I did, thus far, not know much about Velasco Alvarado's government, but I was intrigued. This regime still influences Peruvians, who have contrasting opinions about it. As for many Peruvians, myself included, the military usually generates aversion. This military administration was different. While in Peru the military generally supported the dominant classes, Velasco Alvarado's government put the attention on the underprivileged population. It also focused on art and education as a means for social change. Something unusual for Peruvian standards was that the military hired established artists and intellectuals to conceive its cultural policies. The particularity of this military government caught my attention for these reasons. When I began to read I came across an essay by British historian Anna Cant, which was a fascinating analysis of the Agrarian Reform posters during Velasco Alvarado's regime.<sup>5</sup> Her work opened new avenues for me. I got in touch with her, and we talked via Skype about her research. I decided to broaden the scope of my study. Instead of focusing only on the festival Contacta (held in 1971, 1972 and 1979), on Mariotti and the work of the artists within the framework of these festivals, I chose to expand my field of research and include Velasco Alvarado's cultural policies. Having left Peru in November 1999, after living in Lima during the turbulent decades of the internal armed conflict, I felt the need to understand what happened before this tragic period of violence in Peruvian history.<sup>6</sup> Going back in time gave me some distance. At the same time, it was less emotionally loaded. I also consider that from a geographical distance (I live in Berlin), one can see things from a different perspective.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Anna Cant, 'Land for Those Who Work It': A Visual Analysis of the Agrarian Reform Posters in Velasco's Peru, *Journal of Latin American Studies* 44, issue 1 (2012): 1-37. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022216X11001106. For all the websites and other online resources in this dissertation: last modified July 30, 2023.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> The internal armed conflict (1980-2000) in Peru was a period of violence led by the insurgent guerrilla groups Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path, founded in 1969) and MRTA (Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru (Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement, established in 1982). These two groups, as well as the Peruvian military and the police, committed several acts of violence and crimes against humanity. The result of this was the assassination and disappearance of more than 70,000 people, mainly from the regions and rural areas.

## Division of the Thesis

Velasco Alvarado's cultural policies aimed to approach art to the underprivileged population and to make space for art forms, which were previously disregarded. They corresponded with the ideals of Third Worldism and Latin America's internationalism during the Cold War era. Against this backdrop, the cultural policies were in tune with broader discussions on the social dimension of art and the democratisation of culture in Latin America. This entailed acknowledging and promoting cultural expressions within local contexts and decentralising cultural matters. The first chapter focuses on the social aspect of art, exemplified through the cultural policies implemented during the military government. In this chapter, I examine three topics: 1) the visual communication strategies employed by the military government, typified via the Agrarian reform posters, the magazine *Chaski*. *Semanario de los pueblos jóvenes*, and the organisation of cartoon workshops; 2) the decentralisation of art through total art festivals, and 3) the reappraisal of crafts.

The examples of the cultural policies I am introducing in the first chapter have been overlooked by a group of Peruvian curators, who have been active in the art scene in Lima since the 2000s. The second chapter examines how the military and the art scene during Velasco Alvarado's government have been introduced to international audiences. For instance, the inclusion of crafts and topics surrounding the concept of *lo popular* (the popular) in Peruvian contemporary art have appeared as something that evolved from artistic experimentation. This viewpoint pays no attention to the discussions on the social aspect of art and *lo popular* that emerged during the military government, which corresponded with the focus on local artistic productions and the Latin Americanist spirit of the period. Since the term *lo popular* has different connotations, for the purposes of my argumentation I will follow Roberto Miró Quesada's definition of *lo popular* that applies to the Peruvian context of the period of my study:

The popular, by an obvious semantic derivation, is understood as that which comes from the people. At the same time, the popular also has the meaning of majority and that being the case of what is democratic. What is democratic, in turn, is assumed to be ethically correct.

These considerations acquire specific nuances when dealing with underdeveloped countries, whereby what is popular is linked to what is poor. But in an underdeveloped country like this one, another element intervenes: the native culture, which was directly stripped of its rights by the Spanish invasion ... In other words, the popular has been understood as the poor majority of Andean origin, whose cultural assumptions are assumed as correct for the mere fact of being majority, poor and Andean. Apart from the real weight of the Andean culture, which has been majority and agrarian until well into the twentieth century; the social categories of poverty and the majority do not automatically become sociological categories: they depend on a political instance that gives them meaning. That is, the popular would not be a given reality, but the construction of a social space that redefines reality from the political.<sup>7</sup>

Following Miró Quesada, I also understand *lo popular* as a construction, which in the context of the military government was not without contradictions. In the first chapter I use the term *lo popular* as mentioned above, in connection with the social aspect of art within the cultural policies of Velasco Alvarado's regime. While during Velasco Alvarado's government *lo popular* meant to include all Peruvians in cultural matters and make space to local cultural productions, paying attention to the ones made by Peruvians from different regions (paintings, crafts, dance or music); today, *lo popular* is interpreted as the visual incorporation (appropriation?) of aspects of these cultures in the artworks made by Creole middle and upper middle class artists, most of them based in Lima. It also includes the visual elements present in Lima's urban scenario that have been impacted by the internal migration movements to the capital city. Albeit with a few exceptions, the incorporation of *lo popular* in contemporary artworks does not include its actual producers, who continue to be discriminated against within the art scene. As Mijail Mitrovic observed, Peruvian

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> "Lo popular, por una derivación semántica obvia, es entendido como aquello que proviene del pueblo. Pero también popular tiene una connotación de mayoría y siéndolo así, de democrático. Lo democrático, a su vez, es asumido como éticamente lo correcto. Estas consideraciones adquieren matices específicos si se trata de países subdesarrollados, con lo cual lo popular va unido a lo que es pobre. Pero en un país subdesarrollado como este, interviene otro elemento: la cultura nativa, que fue directamente despojada de sus derechos por la invasión española ... Es decir, lo popular ha venido siendo entendido como aquella mayoría pobre de origen andino cuyos supuestos culturales son asumidos como correctos por el solo hecho de ser mayoritarios, pobres y andinos. Al margen del peso real de la cultura andina, mayoritaria y agraria hasta bien entrado el siglo XX, la pobreza y lo mayoritario son categorías sociales que no se convierten en categorías sociológicas de manera automática: dependen de una instancia política que les dé sentido. Es decir, lo popular no sería una realidad dada, sino la construcción de un espacio social que redefina la realidad a partir de lo político." Roberto Miró Quesada, *Lo popular viene del futuro. Escritos escogidos (1981-1990)* (Lima: La Siniestra Ensayos, 2022), 351-352. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

curators consider *lo popular* as one of the main characteristics of Peruvian contemporary art from the 1970s onwards.<sup>8</sup> While today *lo popular* is understood as a visual incorporation of the changing urban landscape, resulting from the internal migration of Peruvians from the regions and rural areas to Lima; I argue that the innovations and visual incorporations of *lo popular* in contemporary art were largely influenced by the social movements that emerged in the 1970s, the artistic debates in Latin America during that decade and the next, as well as the attention given to local cultural productions of the cultural policies introduced by Velasco Alvarado's government. Referring to the latter, Peruvian sociologist and cultural critic Roberto Miró Quesada stated the following:

The liquidation of the oligarchy and the active presence of the popular political sectors design a new map of the Peruvian reality, and with it a different way of facing and feeling culture.

Consequently, the artistic duty is impregnated with the new social tenor, redefining itself.

More than a redefinition, for me it was a *redirection* of the art scene towards social and local concerns. For instance, while in the mid-1960s experimental artists embraced without hesitation the latest US-American and European art tendencies, such as pop art, op art, hard edge, constructivism, happenings, performances, installations, or conceptual art; since the instauration of the military regime, a group of experimental artists contributed to the cultural policies of the government, aiming for a more social and inclusive art scene. Without losing their own visual explorations, they began to look inside of the country to find inspiration, engaged with their art in social concerns, as well as continued with their interest in overseas artistic tendencies. Yet, the experimental scene made a move towards *lo popular*, which consisted in the incorporation of visual elements coming from the local regional and urban popular cultures in their artworks. Since 2007, a new theory of art of this period has been circulating mostly in international academic and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Mijail Mitrovic Pease, *Extravíos de la forma, vanguardia, modernismo popular y arte contemporáneo en Lima desde los 60* (Lima: Arquitectura PUCP, 2019), 24.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> "La liquidación de la oligarquía y la presencia activa de los sectores políticos populares diseñan un nuevo mapa de la realidad peruana, y con ello una diferente manera de encarar y sentir la cultura. El quehacer artístico, entonces, se impregna de la nueva tónica social, redefiniéndose." Roberto Miró Quesada, *Lo popular viene del futuro. Escritos escogidos (1981-1990)*, 272.

exhibition circuits. I argue that this theory has created a new version of the history of Velasco Alvarado's regime, which does not correspond with the actual circumstances. This theory depicted the military government as repressive and violent and the artists contesting this administration. Additionally, it blamed the government for the disappearance of the experimental art scene in Lima. I argue that this reinterpretation of Velasco Alvarado's administration has been an argumentative move to fit within the account on Latin American conceptualism proposed by the Red Conceptualismos del Sur (RedCSur), focused on activist and artistic-political practices in Latin America from the 1960s onwards. While the military regimes in other South American countries – such as Chile, Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay – were characterised by state violence, via tortures, mass killings, rapes, and systematic repression; this does not apply to the Peruvian context during Velasco Alvarado's government.

To elucidate my point of view, I begin the second chapter with a survey of the theories on Latin American conceptualism. After this, I continue by introducing the arguments proposed by this new theory. I focus on the essays by Juan Acha "La revolución cultural" (The Cultural Revolution) and "Perù: Risveglio rivoluzionario" (Peru: Revolutionary Awakening), and Acha's understanding of cultural guerrilla, which have been employed as the basis to create this new theory of the period. <sup>12</sup> I

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> The new theory about this period has been developed by independent curators and researchers Miguel A. López and Emilio Tarazona.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Red Conceptualismos del Sur (Southern Conceptualisms Network, RedCSur for its Spanish acronym). According to the website, this network of artists and researchers was founded in 2007 as a "an affective and activist network that seeks to act in the field of epistemological, artistic and political disputes of the present from a plural South-South position." It "works in order to influence the critical dimension of artistic, archival and curatorial practices and social movements, under the idea that research is in itself a political act, intervening in different circumstances that mark the non-synchronic present that we inhabit." Red Conceptualismos del Sur, https://redcsur.net/.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Juan Wilfredo Acha Valdivieso was born in Sullana, department of Piura (in the Northern part of Peru) in 1916. He travelled to Germany in 1935 in order to study chemical engineering at the Technische Universität München. While he was pursuing his doctorate in chemistry, he came back to Peru in 1942 as a consequence of WWII. After working for several years as an engineer, he decided to dedicate his life to the study of the arts. In 1958, Acha began his career as an art critic (he was an autodidact) writing for the newspaper *El Comercio* under the pseudonym J. Nahuaca, which was a wordplay of his real name. Juan Acha was a cosmopolitan intellectual and an advocate for the renewal in the arts. While living in Lima, his early writings as a critic were committed to introducing the newest international art tendencies, as well as to reflecting on the local art practices. A bitter anecdote happened at the end of 1970, when Juan Acha was unjustly imprisoned by police in a private gathering, alleging that he was encouraging the attendees to consume drugs. Looking for better work opportunities, in 1971 Acha moved to Washington DC and throughout the year 1972 he settled in Mexico City,

contrast the new theory with the previous scholarship, information gathered from interviews with people active in the art scene during this government, and other essays written by Juan Acha. I claim that this theory has reinterpreted Acha's words to enhance an alleged radicality of the art scene, something I put into question throughout my analysis. The last part of the chapter analyses how the art scene during Velasco Alvarado's regime and the military government have been presented in international exhibitions. I examine how Peruvian contemporary art has been introduced to international audiences. I characterise this as curatorial fictions, in which Peruvian curators have presented their own assumptions of the military government as historical facts. To correspond with their ideas, they have created a new history of this period to introduce the Peruvian contemporary art scene into the international art circuit. Moreover, they have adapted, resized and decontextualised artworks to fit within their curatorial proposals. This has led to an inaccurate view of the art history of the period and the experimental scene during Velasco Alvarado's government. At the same time, the artworks have acquired new meanings that went beyond the original artists' intentions.

The last part of the thesis is an annexe. It is a compilation of all the activities carried out from 2018 to 2023 that have led to the establishment of the research platform on Latin American art *Rethinking Conceptualism: Avant-Garde, Activism and Politics in Latin American Art* (1960s-1980s). The online programme informed my research, giving me a theoretical framework of what was taking place in Latin America in the context of my study. This is visible, for instance, in chapter two, where I write about the theories on Latin American conceptualism. Additionally, I have added in the footnotes a selection of research materials developed throughout *Rethinking Conceptualism's* programme, which are related to the themes I am addressing in the chapter. The links include the resources developed during the online reading sessions and theoretical workshops, the symposium lectures, as well as the blog and the podcast.

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where he lived until he passed away in 1995. In Mexico, he developed a theory of art, stressing the need to generate an independent visual art thought from a Latin American perspective.

### Literature Review

In the past few years, there has been a growing interest in researching Velasco Alvarado's military administration. Recent publications have focused on the effects of the government's reforms in the regions, including the field of culture, which had been given less attention by the pre-existing literature about this regime.

The analysis of the government's visual propaganda is one of the topics that has been well documented in recent scholarship. Examples include the research by Anna Cant, Talía Dajes, Miguel Sánchez Flores and Christabelle Roca-Rey. The majority of these studies have paid attention to the Agrarian Reform posters and the mass communication strategies in the period between 1969 and 1971, produced by the Dirección de Promoción y Difusión de la Reforma Agraria (Office for the Promotion and Diffusion of the Agrarian Reform, DPDRA for its Spanish acronym). In her book *La propaganda visual durante el gobierno de Juan Velasco Alvarado (1968-1975)*, Christabelle Roca-Rey also explored the posters which were made between 1971 and 1974, and were published by the government office SINAMOS. Although she contributed to the already existing literature, her research missed the regional perspective. Roca-Rey's conclusions about SINAMOS relied on interviews with

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Anna Cant, "Representando la revolución: la propaganda política del Gobierno de Juan Velasco Alvarado en Perú (1968-1975)." in Imaginando América Latina: Historia y cultura visual, siglos XIX - XXI, eds. Sven Schuster and Óscar Daniel Hernández Quiñones (Rosario: Editorial Universidad del Rosario, 2017), 281-313. https://doi.org/10.12804/th9789587389456; Anna Cant, "Land for Those Who Work It': A Visual Analysis of the Agrarian Reform Posters in Velasco's Peru." Journal of Latin American Studies 44, no. 1 (2012): 1-37. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022216X11001106; Talía Dajes, "Del pop al populismo: los afiches de la Reforma Agraria de Jesús Ruiz Durand," in Mitologías velasquistas. Industrias culturales y la revolución peruana (1968-1975), ed. Miguel Sánchez Flores (Lima: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2020), 159-178; Miguel Antonio Sánchez Flores, "Más allá del 'pop achorado': una propuesta de relectura de los afiches de Jesús Ruiz Durand para la Reforma Agraria del gobierno de Juan Velasco Alvarado," Master thesis. Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2016. http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12404/7756; Miguel Sánchez Flores, "Más allá del 'pop achorado': una revisión de los afiches de Jesús Ruiz Durand para la Reforma Agraria del gobierno de Juan Velasco Alvarado," in Investigaciones en Arte y Diseño, tomo 2, eds. Mihaela Radulescu de Barrio de Mendoza and Melina Tamani Becerra (Lima: RyF Publicaciones y Servicios, 2018), 35-54; Christabelle Roca-Rey, "El afiche peruano de 1968 a 1975: entre continuidad y originalidad," in Investigaciones en Arte y Diseño, vol. 2, eds. Mihaela Radulescu de Barrio de Mendoza and Melissa Tamani (Lima: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, Facultad de Arte y Diseño), 19-33; and Christabelle Roca-Rey, La propaganda visual durante el gobierno de Juan Velasco Alvarado (1968-1975) (Lima: Instituto Francés de Estudios Andinos, 2016).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> SINAMOS is the acronym for Sistema Nacional de Apoyo a la Movilidad Social (National System of Support for Social Mobilisation). The organisation of SINAMOS was an example of corporatism. It was created to decentralise power and to give access to government matters to the marginalised population and integrate them into national life. Thomas C. Wright, *Latin America in the Era of the Cuban Revolution* (Westport, Connecticut, London: Praeger, 2001), 123.

Lima-based intellectuals, who worked for the DPDRA, such as the cultural theorist and poet Mirko Lauer and the artist Jesús Ruiz Durand. However, neither of them worked for SINAMOS in the regions. While Lauer left his position at the DPDRA to travel to Europe, Jesús Ruiz Durand briefly worked for SINAMOS's office in Lima. Ruiz Durand explained in an interview that he resigned his position, following some disagreements with Carlos Delgado, a sociologist who was SINAMOS's senior director. Yet, Ruiz Durand continued to work for the government, but for the Ministry of Education. Despite this, Roca-Rey described this governmental office as authoritarian, aiming to create propaganda to "force" the peasants to participate in the Agrarian Reform, which was something far from the truth. As we will see in this chapter, among the aims of SINAMOS was to support already established popular organisations, promote participation in the government's reforms, and decentralise cultural matters. Thus, SINAMOS's regional pamphlets, posters and other printed documents were produced by a group of artists from Lima and the regions.

The most comprehensive research on the visual communication strategies of Velasco Alvarado's government is the one by Anna Cant. She is also the author of *Land Without Masters: Agrarian Reform and Political Change under Peru's Military Government*, which is a study about the implementation of the Agrarian Reform and the work of SINAMOS in three geographically, culturally and socioeconomically different regions: the Northern Coastal province of Piura, the Andean Southern province of Cusco; and Tacna, a Southern province that borders with Chile. Far from following a unitary line of work, Cant observed that the activities conducted by SINAMOS varied from region to region and had different approaches. For instance, SINAMOS's officers learned from the local histories of social and political struggles regarding land tenure, adapting to each one of the local circumstances. Thus, to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Christabelle Roca-Rey, La propaganda visual durante el gobierno de Juan Velasco Alvarado (1968-1975), 23.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Anna Cant, "Representando la revolución: la propaganda política del Gobierno de Juan Velasco Alvarado en Perú (1968-1975)." in *Imaginando América Latina: Historia y cultura visual, siglos XIX - XXI*, eds. Sven Schuster and Óscar Daniel Hernández Quiñones (Rosario: Editorial Universidad del Rosario, 2017), 281-313. https://doi.org/10.12804/th9789587389456; Anna Cant, "Land for Those Who Work It': A Visual Analysis of the Agrarian Reform Posters in Velasco's Peru." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 44, no. 1 (2012): 1-37. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022216X11001106.

promote the Agrarian Reform in the regions, "the government worked through targeted propaganda and grassroots organizing, and SINAMOS engaged with local politics and translated its message into locally meaningful discourse."<sup>17</sup> While this office has been the target of criticism and was known by the nickname la aplanadora (the steamroller), examples of SINAMOS's regional offices illustrated that the degree of success of their activities depended on the local context and the people who were involved in them. Cant's study breaks with the idea of a unitary state-led organisation, which applied one single model to the whole country. As she observed, the Agrarian Reform was part of a major concern of the military regime: that of establishing a new Peruvian nation. This included prioritising education and literacy in rural areas to form *el hombre nuevo* (the new man). <sup>18</sup> At the same time, education was understood as a means for social transformation, aiming to promote political engagement and equality among Peruvians. While previous scholarship focused on the successes or failures of the Agrarian Reform in terms of productivity of the land and in relation to the economy, Cant highlighted the social aspect of it and how the reform promoted new ideas of citizenship and self-determination.

Anna Cant's research on the work by SINAMOS in the regions inspired three Peruvian social scientists – Raúl Álvarez, Manuel Barrós and Mijail Mitrovic – to write *Un grito a la tierra*. *Arte y revolución en Chaski (Cusco, 1972-1974)*. The publication is dedicated to the weekly magazine *Chaski*. *Semanario de los pueblos jóvenes*, which was edited by ORAMS VII, a regional office of SINAMOS in the city of Cusco. <sup>19</sup> The book centred on three topics: literature (paying special attention to poetry), the promotion of crafts via festivals and craft fairs, and visual propaganda (the last page of the magazine was a poster to take away). Manuel Barrós examined the work by local poets, who contributed to the magazine and whose works were published alongside the ones by famous Latin American writers. Raúl Álvarez

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Anna Cant, Land Without Masters: Agrarian Reform and Political Change under Peru's Military Government (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2021), 37.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Anna Cant, Land Without Masters, 74.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> ORAMS is the Spanish acronym of Oficina Regional de Apoyo a la Movilidad Social, the Regional Office for Social Mobility Support. ORAMS VII was active in the provinces of Apurímac, Cusco, and Madre de Dios.

analysed the promotion of crafts via festivals and craft fairs, which were subsidised by the military regime. He depicted how ORAMS VII shaped a new system of circulation of crafts, which was free of intermediaries. A contribution to the analysis of visual propaganda, but at the regional level, is the essay by Mijail Mitrovic, who explored the posters produced by the ORAMS VII office. Mitrovic concluded that there was a stylistic shift in the posters' compositions. While at a local scale figuration was the predominant strategy, abstraction was used at the national level.<sup>20</sup> The essays in *Un grito a la tierra*... illustrate the relative autonomy of SINAMOS's regional office in Cusco. It also shows how the people involved in this governmental office contributed to the emergence of a unique space for experimentation, expressed through poems, crafts, and posters, advocating for a new imagery for the emerging national-popular culture. Contrary to the idea of a vertical and authoritarian structure, as suggested by Roca-Rey, the activities organised by SINAMOS in Cusco stimulated an open space for creative exploration at the local level. They also evidenced that there was not a unified official cultural policy, which differed across regions.

The collection of essays *Mitologías velasquistas*. *Industrias culturales y la revolución peruana* (1968-1975), edited by Miguel Sánchez Flores, reunites some of the myths that have been circulating about Velasco Alvarado's administration. One of them was the cancellation of the concert of Santana in December of 1971. In his essay "¿Por qué se canceló el concierto de Santana?," historian Alejandro Santistevan analyses the real reasons why the concert did not take place. As Santistevan observed, while the *leyenda negra antivelasquista* (anti-Velasco black legend) attributed it to an alleged opposition of the military against rock music, he explained how the University Federation of the National University of San Marcos – which at that time was under the control of the ultra leftist political party Patria Roja – and the local press influenced the cancellation of Santana's concert in Lima.<sup>21</sup> Among the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Mijail Mitrovic, "Arte, propaganda y revolución: los afiches en Chaski," in *Un grito a la tierra. Arte y revolución en Chaski (Cusco, 1972-1974)*, eds. Raúl Álvarez, Manuel Barrós and Mijail Mitrovic (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 2022), 219.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Alejandro Santistevan, "¿Por qué se canceló el concierto de Santana?," in *Mitologías velasquistas*, 24. National University of San Marcos (Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, UNMSM for its Spanish acronym).

arguments were that the rock band was alienating and imperialist, while others claimed that it threatened the local decency and morals. In the same line of thought is the essay by journalist Fidel Gutiérrez Mendoza, whose analysis goes against the myth that rock music declined during the Velasco Alvarado regime. His overview of the local rock production revealed the contrary: the best Peruvian rock music records of the 1970s were released during this period.<sup>22</sup>

Concerning the cultural policies, the essay by Gonzalo Benavente Secco - director of the documentary on the Agrarian Reform La revolución y la tierra (2019) - explores the film production during Velasco Alvarado's regime, and how the promotion of cinema via the Ley de fomento de la industria cinematográfica (Law for the Promotion of the Cinema Industry) of 1972 contributed to the production of feature films, short films and documentaries.<sup>23</sup> The cinema law corresponded with the aims of the government's cultural policies: to decentralise cultural matters and shed light on Peru's cultural diversity. During this period, several films were recorded in different regions of the country, presenting local stories and characters, which were previously unnoticed. This was exemplified through the work of Nora de Izcue, Armando Robles Godoy, and Federico García. Another essay linked to the cultural policies and their efforts to highlight Peru's cultural diversity is the one by Manuel Barrós. He traces the trajectory of the Afro-Peruvian theatre and dance company Perú Negro, and how this group - thanks to the support of upper middle class intellectuals and the state - became the symbol of Peru's Afro-Peruvian culture, corresponding with the government's discourse of a pluricultural country.<sup>24</sup>

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Partido Comunista del Perú - Patria Roja is a political party that came about after a split in the Communist party in Peru. This Marxist-Leninist oriented party was founded in 1970 and exerted influence on teachers' and students' unions. Patria Roja was opposed to the military government of Velasco Alvarado.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Fidel Gutiérrez Mendoza, ""Al diablo con la revolución". Rock peruano en tiempos de Velasco," in *Mitologías velasquistas*, 63-84.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Gonzalo Benavente Secco, "El cine peruano: antes y después de Velasco," in *Mitologías velasquistas*, 85-96. *Ley de fomento de la industria cinematográfica* (Law for the Promotion of the Cinema Industry), Decree Law N°19327: https://docs.peru.justia.com/federales/decretos-leyes/19327-mar-28-1972.pdf.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Manuel Barrós, "El teatro negro afroperuano en el estado pluricultural. Política y sociedad en la trayectoria artística de Perú Negro (1969-1975)," in *Mitologías velasquistas*, 179-208.

Another publication that has informed my study is *The Peculiar Revolution: Rethinking the Peruvian Experiment under Military Rule*, edited by Carlos Aguirre and Paulo Drinot. During one of the interviews I conducted with the architect and artist Mario Acha, he highlighted the importance of the Education Reform of 1972, as well as the contributions to it by artists and intellectuals. Similarly, Patricia Oliart pointed out that the Education Reform "was the result of an exceptional collaboration between the military and a highly interdisciplinary group of experts," who were knowleageable about the "critique of pedagogy and the school system taking place in Europe, the United States, and Latin America." A lesser-known story is that of the introduction of the Andes as part of the global counterculture, in which Cusco became one of the epicentres of the hippie movement. All this was taking place concurrently with the government's promotion of an affluent tourist industry in the city, targeting foreign visitors to travel to the capital of the Inca Empire. According to Mark Rice, "the seeds of inequality endemic to Cuzco's present-day tourism economy were planted during the era of revolutionary military nationalism." <sup>26</sup>

Sociologist, lawyer and writer Héctor Béjar gives a first-hand approach about the work of SINAMOS. In his book *Velasco*, he explains the rise and fall of SINAMOS during its three years of activity.<sup>27</sup> One section of his book is dedicated to explain how the military was structured, stating that it did not constitute a homogeneous institution and that the progressive branch of the military was a minority.<sup>28</sup> Based on this, the collaboration among military and civilian leftists was not exempt from contradictions. Other personal experiences are presented in *Velasco y la independencia* 

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Patricia Oliart, "Politicizing Education: The 1972 Reform in Peru," in *The Peculiar Revolution: Rethinking the Peruvian Experiment under Military Rule*, eds. Carlos Aguirre and Paulo Drinot (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2017), 124.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Mark Rice. "Generals, Hotels, and Hippies: Velasco-Era Tourism Development and Conflict in Cuzco," in *The Peculiar Revolution*, 311.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Héctor Béjar, *Velasco* (Lima: Ediciones Achawata, 2021), 123-151. Béjar was a former guerrilla leader of the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN for its Spanish acronym). He published a book about his experience as a guerrilla leader, *Perú 1965: apuntes sobre una experiencia guerrillera* (written from 1966 to 1969, while he was in prison), which won the prize of Casa de las Américas in 1969. In 1970, he was released from prison thanks to an amnesty given by Velasco Alvarado's government. Béjar would later join the team of SINAMOS and will be in charge of the youth promotion.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Ibid., 58-71.

nacional. La revolución continúa, edited by Jorge Perazzo, Lilia Romero, and Luis Manuel Sánchez. In her essay, filmmaker Pilar Roca characterised Velasco Alvarado's government as a period of prosperity in the cultural field. For her, one of the government's achievements was to grant cinema the status of an industry and to understand it as a means of communication.<sup>29</sup>

A publication that analyses Peruvian contemporary art practice from the 1960s to today is *Extravíos de la forma: vanguardia, modernismo popular y arte contemporáneo en Lima desde los 60*, by Mijail Mitrovic. Contrary to the argument that depicts Velasco Alvarado's period as that of an "interruption" within the experimental art scene, he questions this alleged break. According to Mitrovic, the idea of the avant-garde to transform life through art went hand in hand with the political and cultural programme implemented by the military regime. In these circumstances, experimental artists gained an unusual prominence to act within the social sphere. "The main aim of the Velasquismo," he argued, "was the production of a new national-popular subjectivity that would support the revolutionary process." For Mitrovic, the foundations of Peruvian contemporary art, as we understand it today, were laid during Velasco Alvarado's administration.

These publications have enriched the existing scholarship about this military regime, by including regional approaches of the Agrarian Reform and the cultural policies, and by providing new enquiries about the government's visual mass communication strategies. However, these analyses have focused primarily on the reforms and cultural programmes from within the country, and the relationship between the central and the regional governments. One of the contributions of my study consists

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Pilar Roca, "La cinematografía y el plan cultural de Velasco," in *Velasco y la independencia nacional. La revolución continúa*, eds. Jorge Perazzo, Lilia Romero and Luis Manuel Sánchez (Lima: Juan Gutemberg Editores Impresores, 2022), 211.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Miguel A. López and Emilio Tarazona, "Re/montar la historia. Intervenir los 60, 40 años después," conference paper, September 2007,

https://www.academia.edu/26350100/Re\_montar\_la\_historia\_Intervenir\_los\_60\_40\_a%C3%B1os\_despu%C3% A9s\_conferencia\_2007\_; Miguel A. López and Emilio Tarazona, "Otra revolución posible. La guerrilla cultural en el Perú de 1970," *ILLAPA Mana Tukukuq*, no. 9, 2009: 73-86.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Mijail Mitrovic, *Extravíos de la forma: vanguardia, modernismo popular y arte contemporáneo en Lima desde los 60* (Lima: Arquitectura PUCP, 2019), 68.

in incorporating these studies, framing Velasco Alvarado's cultural policies within the Latin American context.

The cultural policies of Velasco Alvarado's government were understood as a process of decolonising culture. To introduce this part, I read essays on decolonial theories by Latin American scholars, such as the ones by Bolivian Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, Mexican Pablo González Casanova, and Peruvian Aníbal Quijano. I also looked carefully at official publications, local newspapers, and magazines of the period. To have a better understanding of the history of the period, the military government and its policies, I relied on publications by Peruvian historians and social scientists, such as Cecilia Méndez, Alberto Flores Galindo, Gonzalo Portocarrero, Julio Cotler, Sinesio López, Carlos Franco, and Enrique Mayer. I also included the international perspective of Velasco Alvarado's period, for instance that of Abraham F. Lowenthal, Thomas C. Wright, Darcy Ribeiro, Charles T. Goodsell, Eric Hobsbawm, Dirk Kruijt, and Linda J. Seligman. Regarding the art scene under this military rule, I made a selection of essays by Peruvian art historians, critics and cultural theorists, including Juan Acha, Alfonso Castrillón Vizcarra, Mirko Lauer, Gustavo Buntinx, Roberto Miró Quesada, and Hugo Salazar del Alcázar; contrasting their approaches to more recent ones by art curators and researchers, such as that of Miguel A. López, Emilio Tarazona, Sharon Lerner, Max Hernández Calvo, Natalia Majluf, Rodrigo Quijano, and Tatiana Cuevas.

### Contributions to the Field

This research, focused on the art scene during Velasco Alvarado's regime, fills the gap in the literature in English about the cultural policies of this government and the contributions to these policies by the experimental art scene. It situates Peru's cultural policies within the Latin American context, establishing a correspondence between these policies and the debates on the social aspect of art in Latin America. Although this administration presented itself as pursuing a singular process, these policies corresponded with a larger movement aiming for cultural decolonisation in Latin America. This included focusing on the regions, decentralising cultural matters, and paying attention to vernacular artistic productions. These state-led cultural programmes, which run in parallel to the already existing ones, broadened the cultural field, by including previous unor underrepresented groups of people, aiming to bring about a more inclusive and decentralised cultural field in Peru.

The above-mentioned topics have been overlooked in curatorial essays and exhibitions since the mid-2000s. Based on examples of international exhibitions that refer to Velasco Alvarado's government, this study examines how the experimental art scene and the military were presented to foreign audiences. With this, it contributes to a reflection about the ways how Peruvian contemporary art was introduced outside Peru, questioning how a group of curators carried out art historical research.

## **Chapter One**

## Velasco Alvarado's Cultural Policies: Towards Collaborative Artistic Practice and Social Inclusion

"At first, it seemed that it was just a military coup. Later, it became clear that it was the most daring and unexpected attempt to change the country, transforming the very foundations of the oligarchic order. Reform or revolution? The suspicion arose that perhaps the sought-after revolution was being carried out by others. History could be playing a trick: stripping young people of their projects, carrying out their ideas before their time, that is, before they could be the protagonists."

Alberto Flores Galindo<sup>32</sup>

Velasco Alvarado's administration (1968-1975) is one of the most controversial governments in twentieth century Peruvian history.<sup>33</sup> Up until today, there is no consensus among Peruvians about this regime.<sup>34</sup> For some, it put the country in a severe economic crisis. Others have acknowledged its social aspects. Whilst it is mostly remembered for its Agrarian Reform, it is in recent years that the regime and its cultural policies have gained increased attention from scholarly research.

On a global scale, Velasco Alvarado's government adhered to Third Worldist ideas

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> "Al principio, parecía sólo un golpe militar. Después se fue vislumbrando que se trataba del más audaz e inesperado intento por cambiar el país, transformando las bases mismas del orden oligárquico. ¿Reforma o revolución? Surgió la sospecha de que, tal vez, la revolución buscada la estaban haciendo otros. La historia podía estar jugando una mala pasada: despojar a los jóvenes de sus proyectos, realizar sus ideas antes de tiempo, es decir, antes de que ellos mismos pudieran ser los protagonistas." Alberto Flores Galindo, "Generación del 68: ilusión y realidad," *Márgenes. Encuentro y debate*, vol. 1, no. 1 (March 1987): 103-104. In the Peruvian context, oligarchy is a system of government in which the power is in the hands of a few people, who belong to a privileged social class.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Juan Velasco Alvarado (1910-1977) was born in the province of Piura. He belonged to a generation of progressive military officers, who studied at the Centro de Altos Estudios Militares (Centre for Higher Military Studies; CAEM for its Spanish acronym), established in 1951, now Centro de Altos Estudios Nacionales (CAEN, Centre for Higher National Studies). In addition to this, Velasco Alvarado came from a poor background, which may have reinforced the attention given to social concerns.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> On contrasting viewpoints about this government by different generations of Peruvians, see Gonzalo Portocarrero, "Memorias del Velasquismo," in *Batallas por la memoria: antagonismos de la promesa peruana*, eds. Marita Hamann, Santiago López Maguiña, Gonzalo Portocarrero Maisch and Víctor Vich (Lima: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2003), 229-256. On the personal perspectives about this government by Peruvian social scientists, see: "La experiencia velasquista en debate," in *El Perú de Velasco*, vol. 3, coord. Carlos Franco (Lima: Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo y la Participación, 1986), 911-970. On different points of view about the Agrarian Reform, see Enrique Mayer, *Ugly Stories of the Peruvian Agrarian Reform*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2009.

and the dependency theory.<sup>35</sup> Within this framework, it established foreign relations and alliances with Third World countries and the socialist bloc.<sup>36</sup> The military regime defined itself as *ni capitalista*, *ni comunista* (neither capitalist, nor communist), with an anti-imperialist and non-interventionist orientation. In connection with this, it joined the Non-Alignment Movement in 1973. For Peruvian historian Antonio Zapata "In reality Velasco, and the core of the military, were not communists. They were Third Worldists: the group of 77, the non-aligned. In other words, to find a middle way between Moscow and Washington. The influence of Nasser, Yugoslavia, India was strong."<sup>37</sup> Regarding certain policies, it sympathised with Cuba under Fidel Castro, Chile under Salvador Allende (1970-1973), and Yugoslavia under Josip Broz "Tito." For instance, it set up the Yugoslav model of the workers' self-management.<sup>38</sup> Yet, it continued to deal with US enterprises, albeit on a lower scale than the previous governments. US political scientist Charles T. Goodsell characterised the Peruvian military government as "confounding":

That revolution in Peru, then, is "confounding" primarily because it does not fit into the classification boxes normally used by observers of Latin America. Its combined personal and institutional leadership, participative corporatism, non totalitarian inhibiting of civil

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Anna Cant, Land Without Masters: Agrarian Reform and Political Change under Peru's Military Government (2021); Carlos Aguirre and Paulo Drinot, eds., The Peculiar Revolution: Rethinking the Peruvian Experiment under Military Rule (2017). The dependency theory assumes that the condition of underdevelopment in Latin America was the result of capital intervention from wealthy countries that kept growing their economy by extracting the resources from developing countries.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Prior to this government, the foreign agreements were bilateral. The military government established multilateral foreign relations and alliances with the neighbouring Andean countries (Bolivia, Colombia and Ecuador), the rest of Latin America and the Third World. It re-established relations with Cuba in 1972.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> "En realidad Velasco, y el núcleo de militares, no eran comunistas. Eran terceristas: el grupo de los 77, los no alineados. Es decir, encontrar un camino intermedio entre Moscú y Washington. Estaba fuerte la influencia de Nasser, Yugoslavia, la India." Miguel Sánchez Flores, "Más allá del pop achorado: una propuesta de relectura de los afiches de Jesús Ruiz Durand para la reforma agraria del gobierno de Juan Velasco Alvarado" (Master thesis, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2016), 135. The military officer Gamal Abdel Nasser was the second president of Egypt from 1954 to 1970. He was known for his Arab nationalist, Pan-African ideas.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> In May 1974 was promulgated the Social Property Law (Decree Law no. 20598). This Law implemented the socially owned enterprises (empresas de propiedad social), which made the workers co-owners of the companies they were working in. This was one of the efforts to build a social democratic government with full participation of all citizens (democracia social de participación plena).

It is also worth noting that Edvard Kardelj, creator of the workers' self-management system in former socialist Yugoslavia and one of the main men around Josip Broz "Tito", had a column in the Peruvian magazine *Oiga*. In this column, he introduced how the socially owned enterprises and the worker's self-management system were implemented in Yugoslavia.

liberties, socialism combined with private, foreign, and "social property" capital, and fluctuating relationships with Washington make it stand apart. What the generals have done – to the dismay of academic classifiers as well as ideologues of all stripes – is to reject stereotypes and adopt their own standards of consistency. This is unusual among Third World countries because of the frequent tendencies there toward insecure emulation. Peru is simply defining her own terms for the evaluation of her own unique revolution. <sup>39</sup>

Although it was not easy to classify, it was a tailor-made model. Velasco Alvarado established a state-capitalist system adapted to Peru's social, geographic, and economic reality. It promoted the industrialisation of the country, by allocating goods for exporting, instead of importing them. This system contributed to the development and nationalisation of the oil, mining, and fishing industries, previously controlled by foreign private corporations. Indeed, six days after the instauration of the military regime, the government expropriated the International Petroleum Company (IPC), located in the northern oil port and refinery in Talara. Unlike other leftist-oriented governments, in which freedom of belief would be one of the first to be cut out, during this administration the Catholic Church did not lose its power. It was also in this period in which the Teología de la Liberación (Liberation Theology), also known as Church of the Poor, began to spread in Latin America and had in Peru one of its main representatives, Gustavo Gutiérrez.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Charles T. Goodsell, "That Confounding Revolution in Peru," *Current History* 68, no. 401 (1975): 23, https://www.jstor.org/stable/45313217.

External analysts have labelled Velasco Alvarado's government as "The Peruvian Experiment" and "The Ambiguous Revolution" (Abraham F. Lowenthal); as well as "That Confounding Revolution" (Charles T. Goodsell), "The Peculiar Revolution" (Eric Hobsbawm) or "Revolution by Decree" (Dirk Kruijt). Abraham F. Lowenthal, "The Ambiguous Revolution," in *The Peruvian Experiment: Continuity and Change Under Military Rule*, ed. Abraham F. Lowenthal (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1975), 3-43; Charles T. Goodsell, "That Confounding Revolution in Peru," *Current History* 68, no. 401 (1975): 20-23, https://www.jstor.org/stable/45313217; Eric Hobsbawm, "Peru: The Peculiar "Revolution"," *The New York Review of Books*, December 16, 1971,

https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1971/12/16/peru-the-peculiar-revolution/; Dirk Kruijt, *Revolution by Decree: Peru, 1968-1975*, Amsterdam: Thela Publishers, 1994.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> The Liberation Theology in Latin America developed within the Catholic Church as a reaction against social inequality and poverty, towards the liberation of the oppressed. Its Marxist-based approach led to an admonition by the Vatican in the 1980s. Peruvian Dominican priest Gustavo Gutiérrez (1928), who is said to have coined the term in 1971, was one of its founders. Nicaraguan priest and poet Ernesto Cardenal (1925-2020), one of its representatives, visited Peru on several occasions, including during Velasco Alvarado's administration.

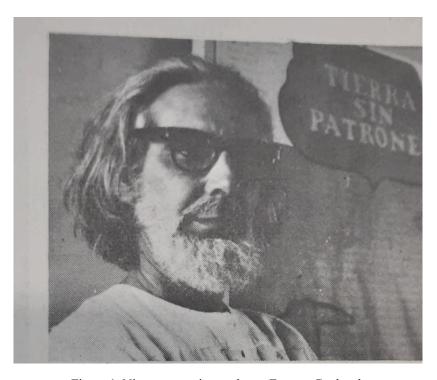


Figure 1. Nicaraguan priest and poet Ernesto Cardenal, follower of the Liberation Theology, during one of his visits to Peru.

At the back, one of the posters of the Agrarian Reform,

Tierra sin patrones (Land Without Masters), by Emilio Hernández Saavedra (detail).

Source: Oiga, no. 444, year IX (October 8, 1971): 41.

Another difference was that the military government did not create a party. For the implementation of its measures, civil workers were hired by the government for particular assignments. In the arts, this meant that there were no national artists, who were supported by the government or had to represent it. As for the cultural policies, they drew similarities with the ones of the Unidad Popular party in Chile under Salvador Allende (1970-1973) and that of Cuba under Fidel Castro. For Brazilian anthropologist Darcy Ribeiro, in that period Latin America had three ongoing models of social revolution: the Cuban, characterised for being socialist-revolutionary; the Chilean, which he distinguished for its socialist-evolutionary development; and the Peruvian, which represented a new variant of a socialist modernising model.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Darcy Ribeiro, "Nuevos caminos de la Revolución Latinoamericana," *Estudios Internacionales* 5, no. 18 (1972): 27. https://www.jstor.org/stable/41390734.

As a consequence of the dictatorship in Brazil (1964-1985), Ribeiro lived in exile in different Latin American countries, including Peru. During Velasco Alvarado's government, he worked as advisor for the university reform and was among the scientific committee of SINAMOS. I will write about this government office later in this chapter.

Anthropologist Enrique Mayer described the military government in these terms:

Juan Velasco Alvarado's Government (1968-1975) was revolutionary for its time. It was the first moment in which Peru confronted foreign corporations with entrenched privileges. Its nationalism was different because it incorporated indigenous, popular, and Andean people and their cultural themes, widening the imagined community of the nation. It undertook a serious attempt at income redistribution, and it organized a range of programs for the poor in the city and in the countryside. ... Going against Iron Curtain and Cold War policies to open relations with Mao's China, the Soviet Union, and the Eastern bloc countries, as well as maintaining friendly relationships with Cuba (coupled with nonalignment), was very progressive. Above all, the regime is remembered for executing Latin America's most radical agrarian reform ... This was carried out without bloodshed.<sup>42</sup>

This administration had a strong commitment to social change, which was implemented via a series of reforms (agrarian, industrial, and in education), aiming to "bring the excluded majority - those marginalized by race, language, geography, and poverty - into the national mainstream."43 In connection with this were the measures of recognising Quechua as one of the country's official languages (1975), the Education Reform (1972), and giving the right to vote to the illiterate population (1979). In the cultural field, the government set up a series of participatory cultural policies that involved all citizens regardless of their background, in which art was intended as a vehicle for social transformation. The government followed an anti-oligarch (from within the country) and anti-imperialist (from the outside) agenda. In the words of philosopher and educator Augusto Salazar Bondy (who was in charge of the Education Reform), it was about achieving a "culture of liberation," and not a "culture of domination" imposed by the ruling classes. 44 Influenced by Paulo Freire's dialogue-based popular education method, Salazar Bondy understood the "culture of liberation" as a process of concientización (raising awareness) of the oppressed to develop a critical thinking about one's own social and economic

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Enrique Mayer, *Ugly Stories of the Peruvian Agrarian Reform* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2019), 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Thomas C. Wright, Latin America in the Era of the Cuban Revolution, 112.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> Augusto Salazar Bondy, *Dominación y liberación. Escritos 1966-1974*, Lima: Fondo Editorial de la Facultad de Letras UNMSM, 1995.

conditions.<sup>45</sup> Both the cultural and education policies were based on a humanist socialism, with the purpose to attain a democratic participatory culture, which included all Peruvians without exceptions. As sociologist Gonzalo Portocarrero pointed out:

The Velasquismo represented an attempt to accelerate the construction of a nation in Peru. He tried to decolonise social relations, by denouncing the abysses and injustices, and narrowing the differences. He strived to unite Peruvians behind a project based on the promotion of social integration, the redistribution of wealth and the affirmation of the dignity and value of the popular world, both the urban and that of the peasants.<sup>46</sup>

Those who were working for the government explained the reasons for the Peruvian Revolution, which they understood as a process. For sociologist Carlos Delgado, the Peruvian Revolution was not against a particular government or political party. It came about as a fundamental questioning of Peruvian society, with the aim to transform the basic relations of economic, social, and political power. Another opinion was that of sociologist and historian Hugo Neira, who trusted the revolutionary process and the local inventiveness of the people to challenge "the canonical, classical and universal thought," aiming towards decentralising hegemonic Western culture. For him, there needed to be a middle way to go beyond

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> For Salazar Bondy, *concientización* meant to acquire a critical and rational awareness "of the social, economic, political, historical situation, of the reality in which one is living." Through dialogue and the exchange of experiences in a group one can develop critical thinking, resulting from an internal process. This shall be understood "not in the sense that I am making her/him aware, but in the sense that together we are talking and dialoguing" and little by little are "acquiring awareness of life, of the life we are in." Paulo Freire and Augusto Salazar Bondy, ¿Qué es la concientización y cómo funciona? (Lima: Editorial Causachún, 1975), 85 and 87.

Paulo Freire (1921-1997) was a Brazilian philosopher and educator, whose dialogue-based education method was employed in Peru in the areas of formal schooling and rural education. Freire's thoughts influenced the Education Reform and the integral alphabetisation programme ALFIN (Alfabetización Integral, ALFIN for its Spanish acronym). While living in exile (1964-1980), he came to Peru during the military government. His book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* was written during his exile in Chile in 1968. It was first published in Spanish.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> "El Velasquismo representó un intento por acelerar la construcción de una nación en el Perú. Trató de descolonizar las relaciones sociales, denunciando los abismos y las injusticias, y estrechando las diferencias. Procuró unir a los peruanos tras un proyecto basado en el fomento de la integración social, la redistribución de la riqueza y la afirmación de la dignidad y valor del mundo popular, tanto urbano como campesino." Gonzalo Portocarrero, "Memorias del Velasquismo," in *Batallas por la memoria: antagonismos de la promesa peruana*, eds. Marita Hamann, Santiago López Maguiña, Gonzalo Portocarrero Maisch, and Víctor Vich (Lima: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2003), 253.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Carlos Delgado Olivera, *Revolución peruana: autonomía y deslindes* (Lima: Libros de Contratiempo, 1975), 128-129. Carlos Delgado was also in charge of writing several of Velasco Alvarado's speeches.

the false dilemma of total copy or rejection of foreign models. Neira understood the government's process as "a revolutionary effort for decolonisation." Indeed, the search for a cultural decolonisation, the participatory cultural democracy, the national affirmation, and the critical awareness coincided with the Latin American liberation movements of the period. 49

Without the intention of being exhaustive, it was a historical period of intense questioning of several structures in society. Throughout the decades of the 1950s to 1970s, social, ecological, and political consciousness increased, aiming for a more just society. The rise of feminist thought, and the Black Panthers civil rights movement exemplify this awareness. Influenced by environmentalist proposals, a group of people sought to find alternative ways of living and of establishing communities, such as the hippie movement. Other global circumstances that affected the youth of that time were the increasing protests against the Vietnam War, the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia (1968), the massacre of students in Tlatelolco in Mexico (1968) and the death of Che Guevara in Bolivia (1967). In this context, anti-imperialist ideas spread in different parts of the world, influenced amongst others by the Cuban Revolution (1953-1959), the decolonisation processes in Africa and Asia throughout the 1950s and 1960s and the anti-authoritarian spirit of the Paris student movement of May '68. Within this framework, a critique of the bourgeois understanding of art as passive consumption and the alienation stemming from the cultural industries emerged. In addition to this, in the 1970s the search for a local and regional art identity were among the prevailing themes within the Latin American art discourse. Argentine anthropologist and cultural critic Néstor García Canclini explained it as follows:

The funeral declarations of art in Latin America usually take the form of social criticism. Art would have died by losing its meaning and function in the face of current injustices. That, at least, was the prevailing interpretation in the 1960s and early 1970s, when artists stopped painting, attacked museums and galleries, especially those representing modernity: the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> Eduardo Mendoza, "Hugo Neyra y su reencuentro con la revolución," *Oiga*, no. 435, year IX (August 6, 1971): 36. Hugo Neira Samanez was Director of Dissemination of SINAMOS.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Carla Sagástegui, "La historieta de la liberación/Juan Acevedo," in *Mitologías velasquistas*, 141.

Instituto di Tella in Buenos Aires, the São Paulo Biennale, the rituals of selection and consecration that updated peripheral art with that of the metropolis. The critique of cosmopolitan institutions questioned the imposition of visual patterns alien to "our identity." Some of these artists went to look for it in trade unions and popular organisations, others became designers of posters and comics, where they tried to express the sensitive habits and imaginaries of the masses. <sup>50</sup>

Against this backdrop, Cuba's cultural policies were influential in the formation of a continental spirit among Latin Americans. Throughout the 1960s to 1980s, the Casa de las Américas, the Cuban Film Institute and the National Ballet fostered what David Craven called a ""pan-Latin," or perhaps Pan-American, identity for artists throughout Latin America." Transnational alliances and networks of solidarity were established among Third World and Latin American countries. An example of an event with a transnational anti-imperialist and anti-colonial approach was the Congreso Cultural de la Habana (Cultural Congress of Havana) in January 1968, with the participation of an estimate of 500 intellectuals from 70 countries. In relation to the Latin Americanist climate promoted by Cuba's cultural policies was the establishment of a "meridian of solidarity" in the axis Cuba-Chile, during the socialist government of Allende. 52 Other activities included the organisation of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> "Las declaraciones fúnebres del arte en América Latina suelen tener la forma de crítica social. El arte habría muerto al extraviar su significado y su función ante las injusticias actuales. Esa fue, al menos, la interpretación prevaleciente en los años sesenta y principios de los setenta, cuando los artistas dejan de pintar, agreden a los museos y galerías, sobre todo los que representan la modernidad: el Instituto di Tella en Buenos Aires, la Bienal de Sao Paulo, los rituales de selección y consagración que actualizaban el arte periférico con el de las metrópolis. La crítica a las instituciones cosmopolitas cuestionaba la imposición de patrones visuales ajenos a "nuestra identidad". Algunos de esos artistas fueron a buscarla a sindicatos y organizaciones populares, otros se convirtieron en diseñadores de carteles e historietas donde intentaban expresar los hábitos sensibles e imaginarios de las masas." Néstor García Canclini, *Culturas híbridas. Estrategias para entrar y salir de la modernidad* (Mexico City: Grijalbo, 1990), 342.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> David Craven, *Art and Revolution in Latin America*, 1910-1990 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 81.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> The "meridian of solidarity" was established by the Institute of Latin American Art at the Universidad de Chile in Santiago de Chile, and the Casa de las Américas in La Habana. It was quite influential in forging networks among Latin American artists and intellectuals. For more information about the axis of solidarity Cuba-Chile, see: Sylvia Juliana Suárez and Carla Macchiavello, "Solidarity, Visual Arts, Networks and Revolution: A Brief Chronicle of the Rise and Fall of the Chile-Cuba Meridian in the Context of Latin American Art," in *Redes intelectuales. Arte y política en América Latina / Intellectual Networks: Art and Politics in Latin America*, ed. María Clara Bernal (Bogotá: Uniandes, 2015), 523-548.

As part of the programme of *Rethinking Conceptualism: Avant-Garde, Activism and Politics in Latin American Art (1960s-1980s)*, I organised an online reading session with Sylvia Suárez, who spoke about the "meridian of solidarity" in the Cuba-Chile axis, consisting in meetings and exhibitions with Latin American artists, who gathered in La Habana and Santiago de Chile between 1970 and 1973. The session took place on 25 May 2022.

meetings among Latin American artists, such as the first and second Encuentro de Plástica Latinoamericana (Meeting of Latin American Plastic Arts), held in Havana (1972 and 1973), and the Encuentro de Artistas del Cono Sur (Southern Cone Artists' Meeting), which took place in Santiago de Chile (1972).<sup>53</sup> In connection with this was also the creation of the Museo de la Solidaridad (Museum of Solidarity) between 1971 and 1973.<sup>54</sup> This vision of the arts corresponded with that of committed artists, who engaged in sociopolitical concerns, aiming for social change. Herein, artists understood themselves as cultural workers. Although they assumed a non-alienated, anti-colonial, anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist attitude, there was a sense of community emanating from the ideas of solidarity, participation in social concerns and collaborative artistic practice.

In Peru, this historical period was also marked by the industrialisation of the country, which favoured the rise of consumerism, mass media, and popular culture. Since the cultural production was connected mostly to the intellectual elite in Lima, the cultural policies promoted by the military government were unique and opened new avenues to understand art and democratisation of culture in Peru. Among the innovations were the creation of a national identity symbol, that at the same time

https://rethinkingconceptualism.com/ola/services/26-may-2022-18-00-h.

The selection of essays can be found here:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> It is worth mentioning that the second *Encuentro* (1973) took place right after the coup d'état by Pinochet in Chile. The declaration of the second Encuentro de Plástica Latinoamericana illustrated the social awareness regarding the conditions of several Latin American countries in that period, as well as the networks of solidarity. This pronouncement also included information about Velasco Alvarado's government, differentiating it from other South American military governments at that time. Quoting point II of the conclusions and agreements: "The identity of Latin America is consolidated in its various forms of struggle against imperialism. During the 1960s, the rise of the Latin American liberation movements was manifested in the socialist revolution in Cuba, the increase in mass struggle, the outbreak of urban and rural guerrilla warfare, the insurgency of student movements, the incorporation of left-wing students into the revolutionary struggle, the growth of the decolonisation process, the nationalist bias of governments *such as that established in Peru at the end of 1968*, the rise in Panama of the struggle for the sovereignty of the Canal, the triumph of the Unidad Popular in Chile." *Declaración Encuentro de Plástica Latinoamericana*, Casa de las Américas, La Habana (October 1973): 1, https://icaa.mfah.org/s/es/item/765863. Emphasis added.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> The museum was directed by Brazilian journalist and critic Mário Pedrosa, conceived in the framework *Operación Verdad* (Operation Truth), a counter-information campaign in support of Allende's government, that was under threat by an international boycott campaign led by the United States. In fact, Richard Nixon's administration feared that Chile could become the next Cuba or be sympathetic with Soviet politics and supported Allende's overthrow by the military Augusto Pinochet in 1973. "Allende and Chile: 'Bring Him Down', Salvador Allende's Historic Inauguration 50 Years Later. Declassified White House Records Show How Nixon-Kissinger Set Strategy of Destabilization – And Why," *National Security Archive*, November 3, 2020, https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/chile/2020-11-06/allende-inauguration-50th-anniversary.

reinforced the indigenous imagery; the establishment of mass communication as a political strategy to promote the Agrarian Reform, the organisation of interdisciplinary events in the regions, and the reappraisal of crafts. <sup>55</sup> All these policies contributed to a different understanding of the arts, which it was hoped would be more inclusive, participatory and decentralised. At the same time, they broke with the traditional elitist view of the arts, by broadening the scope of artistic practice, its producers, and consumers. This included making no distinctions between different art forms and understanding art as a collaborative and participatory practice.

Peru has always been a centralist country. Based on this, the government continuously thought about the regions and decentralised cultural events that generally would have been circumscribed to the capital city. It also gave attention to the local cultural productions coming from the regions, highlighting the promotion and circulation of arte popular (popular art/folk art), notably the Andean cultural expressions. In this period, the Afro-Peruvian cultural productions also benefited from the government's cultural programmes.<sup>56</sup> The peculiarities of this administration made it possible that several cultural references coexisted at the same time. Throughout this military rule, there were no contradictions between exhibiting in a gallery, participating in an international biennale or supporting the government's cultural policies. Within this framework, a group of intellectuals and artists contributed to the government's cultural policies in the formation of a more inclusive and decentralised cultural landscape. Among the intellectuals were the philosopher and educator Augusto Salazar Bondy, the philosopher and psychologist Leopoldo Chiappo, the linguist Martha Hildebrandt, and the archaeologist and anthropologist Luis Guillermo Lumbreras. The list of intellectuals included also the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> Nanda Leonardini, "Arte, pasión y política. El gobierno de Juan Velasco Alvarado," *XXXII Coloquio Internacional de Historia del Arte. Apropiarse del arte. Impulsos y pasiones* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, 2012), 200.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> On the topic of the promotion of Afro-Peruvian dance and music during the first term of the GRFA, see: Manuel Francisco Barrós Alcántara, "La trayectoria artística de Perú Negro: la historia, el teatro y lo afroperuano en su período fundacional (1969-1975)," Bachelor thesis, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2016; as well as the essay by the same author: Manuel Barrós "El teatro negro afroperuano en el estado pluricultural. Política y sociedad en la trayectoria artística de Perú Negro (1969-1975)," in *Mitologías velasquistas*, 179-208.

linguist, poet and philologist Alberto Escobar Sambrano, the writer Luis Alberto Ratto Chueca, the poet and journalist Reynaldo Naranjo, as well as the cultural theorist, poet and writer Mirko Lauer, and the writer and journalist José B. Adolph. Among the artists who contributed to the government were Luis Arias Vera, José Bracamonte Vera, Emilio Hernández Saavedra, Francesco Mariotti, Jesús Ruiz Durand and Luis Zevallos Hetzel; the photographer José Michilot, the film-makers Nora de Izcue, Pilar Roca and Federico García Hurtado; the graphic designer and guitarist Octavio Santa Cruz, and the cartoonists Juan Acevedo and Carlos Tovar Samanez.

Among the main private institutions that were dedicated to visual arts in Lima were the Instituto Cultural Peruano Norteamericano (ICPNA) and the Instituto de Arte Contemporáneo (IAC).<sup>57</sup> Other spaces that were active during the military government were the private galleries Cultura y Libertad, Quartier Latin, Solisol, Art Center, Pancho Fierro, Carlos Rodríguez, Galart, and Trapecio; as well as the French cultural centre Alliance Française, the gallery space of the Banco Continental, the cultural centre Petroperú, and the exhibition venue of the Fundación para las Artes. Among the state museums were the Museo de Arte de Lima (today MALI).

The IAC initiated a period of renewal of the local art environment by focusing on the work by both foreign and local artists with a modernist, non-figurative approach. Since its inception, it has been the reference space for the promotion of abstract art. This institution was responsible for the selection of the artists who would represent Peru at the Venice and São Paulo biennales. Its programme also included dance performances and poetry sessions. Regarding artistic experimentalism, during Velasco Alvarado's government, the IAC showed the exhibition *Paisaje Artificial* (Artificial Landscape) in July 1971. It consisted of two installations made of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Peruvian North American Cultural Institute, ICPNA for its Spanish acronym. It was established in 1938 and it is still active.

Institute of Contemporary Art, IAC for its Spanish acronym. The institution was founded in 1955 and ceased its activities in 1972. The group of people involved with the former IAC were the ones who opened the MAC-Lima museum (Museum of Contemporary Art in Lima) in 2013.

electronic materials by the Italian artist based in Peru Mario de Muro.<sup>58</sup> The same month, it hosted the total art festival *Contacta* to which I will refer later in this chapter. In October 1971, the IAC exhibited the group show *Arte y Cibernética* (Art and Cybernetics), with works by the artists Lloyd Summer, Jaume Estapà, Charles Mattox, as well as the groups *Arte y Cibernética* (with works by members of CAyC) from Buenos Aires, and the *Computer Technique Group* (CTG) from Tokyo.<sup>59</sup> In April 1972, the local press highlighted MoMA's exhibition on surrealism. In July the same year, the IAC presented the exhibition *Arte de Sistemas*, organised by CAyC, which included works by conceptual artists such as Lea Lublin, Nicolás García Uriburu, Christo, Joseph Kosuth and Lawrence Weiner.<sup>60</sup> Another venue that showcased experimental art was the gallery of the Banco Continental. In October 1972, it hosted a solo show by Argentine-Hungarian artist Gyula Kosice, who exhibited his hydrokinetic sculptures.<sup>61</sup>

Despite having had a fruitful period of events, in 1972 the IAC ceased its activities. According to Alfonso Castrillón Vizcarra (at that time executive director of IAC), one of the reasons for its closure was the rise to power of Velasco Alvarado in 1968, that rolled out "doubts and mistrust about the revolutionary project of the Armed Forces that discouraged the wealthy and the patrons of the arts." Indeed, among IAC's funding bodies were international companies, whose board of directors most likely might have been aware of the anti-imperialist tenor of the government and decided to discontinue financing this institution. Consequently, the IAC did not renew the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> Igor Bernaola Mateluna, Patricia Pajuelo Barreda, and Juan Peralta Berríos, eds., *IAC. Historias que contar* (1955-2015) (Lima: Instituto de Arte Contemporáneo, Museo de Arte Contemporáneo - MAC Lima, 2015), 175.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> The Centro de Arte y Comunicación (CAyC for its Spanish acronym), also known as "Grupo de los trece" (The Group of the Thirteen, for its thirteen members), was a group of Argentine artists that contributed to the creation of a conceptual art movement based on the ideas of systems art. For the group, the artwork was understood as a system of signs that responded to different codes, for instance conceptual, cybernetic, political, ecological, among others.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> The whole list of artists presented in this exhibition can be found here: "Arte de sistemas en el Instituto de Arte Contemporáneo," Lima, July 1972. *ICAA* archives, https://icaa.mfah.org/s/caycfiles/item/1476336.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> Augusto Elmore, "Pronto... el mago del agua," Caretas, no. 465 (October 4-19, 1972): 54-55.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> Alfonso Castrillón Vizcarra, "Recuerdos del Instituto de Arte Contemporáneo (IAC)," *Illapa Mana Tukukuq*, no. 18 (December 2021): 29.

contract it had with the State to use the facilities at the Museo de Arte Italiano in Lima's city centre. For similar reasons, the Fundación para las Artes also closed its venue in the early stages of the military government. However, the gallery space was taken over by four artists, Ciro Palacios, Milner Cajahuaringa, the Italian artist Ugo Camandona and Yugoslav artist Vladimir Rončević, who established the gallery Trapecio in 1969 in the former foundation premises. While some international collectors and donors left the country because of the new government; the local market grew significantly, resulting in the opening of new art spaces.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>63</sup> Personal communication with the artist Ciro Palacios, June 30, 2023.

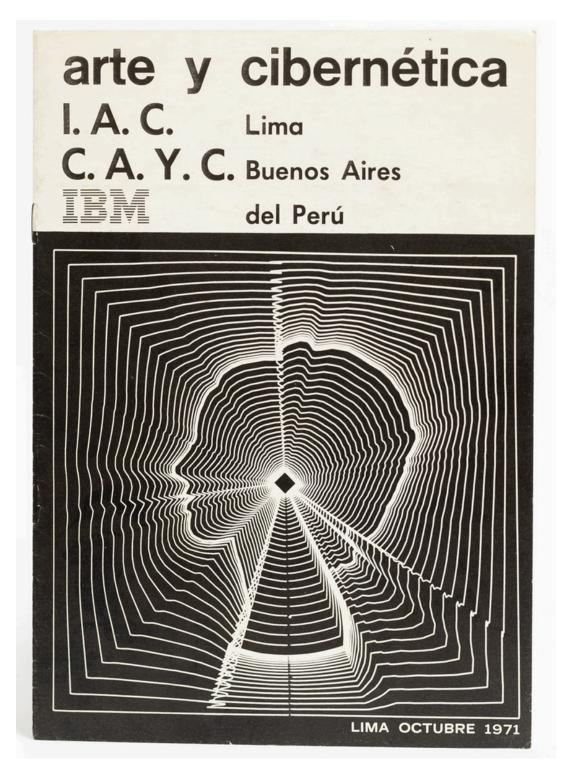


Figure 2. Cover of the leaflet of the exhibition *Arte y cibernética*, held at IAC in October 1971. The exhibition was sponsored by IBM Peru.

Source of the image: Alejo Ponce de León, "Back to the future: reviving an icon of the 1970s avant-garde in Buenos Aires," *Art Basel*, n.d.,

 $https://www.artbasel.com/stories/waldengallery-revives-spirit-of-cayc-in-buenos-aires.\\ Courtesy of waldengallery, Buenos Aires.$ 



Figure 3. The artist Gyula Kosice with one of his kinetic hydraulic sculptures. Source of the image: Augusto Elmore "Pronto... el mago del agua," *Caretas*, no. 465 (October 4-19, 1972): 55.

It shall be noted that, even before Velasco Alvarado's regime, the visual arts scene was comparatively smaller than that of theatre and literature. Besides already established theatre groups, such as AAA (Asociación de Artistas Aficionados) and the TUC (the theatre group of the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú); in 1969 the theatre ensemble Perú Negro began with its activities, promoting dance and music from the Afro-Peruvian community. 1971 was the inaugural year for two theatre companies, Yuyachkani and Cuatrotablas. Both were committed to exploring the social reality of the country, creating a new popular theatre. All three theatre companies continue to be active today. In addition to this, in 1971 the Instituto Nacional de Cultura (INC) established the Teatro Nacional Popular (TNP), with Alonso Alegría as its director. <sup>64</sup> The latter promoted the presentation of theatre productions not only in Lima, but also in impoverished areas in the outskirts of the capital city and in the regions. Alegría explained that the new established national popular theatre shall be complementary to the already existing theatre offer: "We are not replacing, let alone usurping anything by creating the TNP. We are simply complementing."65

The 1970s was also a decade of poetry. Among the most significant poets of this generation were Abelardo Sánchez León, José Watanabe and the poet movement *Hora Zero*. As Roberto Miró Quesada noted, *Hora Zero* inaugurated group work, considering it the privileged space for poetic creativity. The group highlighted socialist perspectives and popular participation. It was also a group with a significant number of female poets, who had a feminist approach. Poets of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> National Popular Theatre, TNP for its Spanish acronym.

National Institute of Culture, INC for its Spanish acronym. The Instituto Nacional de Cultura was inaugurated in March 1971, replacing the Casa de la Cultura, established in 1962. The INC had several branches throughout the country. Among the INC's aims were to foster the democratisation of culture and the expansion of the education sector, including artistic education. Nanda Leonardini, "Arte, pasión y política. El gobierno de Juan Velasco Alvarado," 198.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup> "No estamos suplantando ni menos usurpando nada al crear el TNP. Estamos simplemente complementando." Alonso Alegría in an interview in the magazine *Oiga*. "Algunas preguntas sobre el teatro nacional popular," *Oiga*, no. 439, year IX (September 3, 1971): 34.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup> Roberto Miró Quesada, *Lo popular viene del futuro*, 272-273.

Besides the group's co-founders Jorge Pimentel and Juan Ramírez Ruiz, among the members of *Hora Zero* were the poets Enrique Verástegui, Tulio Mora, Roger Santiváñez, Enrique Jáuregui and Jorge Nájar, as well as a large group of women poets such as Carmen Ollé, Enriqueta Beleván, Elsa Mayorga, Dalmacia Ruiz Rosas, Ana María Chagra and Cynthia Pimentel.

previous generation, such as Antonio Cisneros, Luis Hernández and César Calvo, continued to be active in this decade. The latter was not only a writer, but he was also involved in cultural activities. These included being the artistic director of *Perú Negro* in Lima, participating as member of the cultural association *Acción Cultural Javier Heraud* in Cusco, and directing INC's branch in Iquitos. César Calvo was also the initiator of the first Encuentro Mundial de la Canción Popular (World Encounter of Popular Music), held in Lima in 1972.<sup>67</sup>



Figure 4. Peruvian poet César Calvo. At the back, one of the posters of the Agrarian Reform by Jesús Ruiz Durand (detail). Source: *Oiga*, no. 448, year IX (November 5, 1971): 32.

Peruvian writer Julio Ramón Ribeyro, who was based in Paris, came to Peru in 1971 to witness the transformations that were taking place in the country. He explained his visit in an interview with César Calvo: "One of the reasons for my return to Peru is to see first-hand this process that is arousing so much interest in Europe and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> In an interview in the magazine *Oiga*, held a few months prior to the event, Calvo gave an overview of the different musicians and singer-songwriters that were invited to this international music meeting. Among them were representatives from Brazil such as Antonio Carlos Jobim, Vinícius de Moraes and Chico Buarque; from Uruguay, Alfredo Zitarrosa; from Argentina, Astor Piazzolla and Mercedes Sosa; from Cuba, Pablo Milanés and Silvio Rodríguez; from Spain, Joan Manuel Serrat. The event also counted with the participation of a delegation coming from Angola. From Indonesia they invited Rukmini Sukarno, who was an opera singer and the daughter of Indonesia's president Sukarno. Among the Peruvian representatives were Cecilia Bracamonte, Tania Libertad, Alicia Maguiña, Lucha Reyes and Jesús Vásquez. Eduardo Mendoza O., "En la ruta de la canción popular," *Oiga*, no. 448, year IX (5 November 1971): 32.

which, for obvious reasons, concerns me personally."68

As in poetry, music had a similar development. In connection with the new spirit of the Conservatorio Nacional de Música (National Conservatory of Music) under the direction of Celso Garrido-Lecca, the school introduced the first workshops on popular music. <sup>69</sup> From these workshops emerged the groups of *nueva canción* (new folk song) such as *Tiempo Nuevo*, *Vientos del Pueblo*, *Dúo Adagio* and *Korillacta*.



Figure 5. Cover of the LP "Nuestro canto 1," by *Tiempo Nuevo* (1975-1976). Source of the image: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=onhmmd1zqyw.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup> "Una de las razones de mi regreso al Perú es ver de cerca este proceso que en Europa despierta tanto interés y que, personalmente, por razones obvias, me atañe." César Calvo, "Ribeyro en París," *Oiga*, no. 435, year IX (August 6, 1971): 30.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> Celso Garrido-Lecca studied music in Peru, the United States and Chile. In Santiago de Chile, where he lived from 1950 to 1973, he began his career as a composer. He was closely working with representatives of the Chilean *canto nuevo* such as Víctor Jara, who was murdered by Chile's military in 1973. As a consequence of his close ties to Jara, he had to move back to Peru in November 1973. In 1974, he assumed a professorship in composition at the National Conservatory of Music and was director of this school from 1976 to 1979. During Velasco Alvarado's government, this institution was renamed Escuela Nacional de Música (National Music School). Since 2017, it has been named Universidad Nacional de Música (National Music University).

According to Roberto Miró Quesada, music, theatre, and poetry were engaged in recovering a national, colloquial and popular language that gave a more accurate account of the growing presence of the popular movement in the political sphere.<sup>70</sup>

During Velasco Alvarado's government, the cultural offer in Lima was thriving. Alongside local productions, international theatre and dance companies were invited to perform in the capital city. Among them was the Paul Taylor dance company from New York, which performed in Lima in 1969. Concerning cinema, the screenings were held in cinemas throughout the capital city, as well as in the Ministerio del Trabajo (Ministry of Labour) and the *cinearte* (arthouse cinema) venue of the Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos (UNMSM). It included mostly arthouse films.<sup>71</sup> In addition to this, the cinemas screened movies or hosted cinema weeks with films from socialist countries.<sup>72</sup> Other activities included an exhibition of Cuban cinema posters, which was held in 1972 at the Casona de San Marcos (the cultural centre of the UNMSM).<sup>73</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> Roberto Miró Quesada, *Lo popular viene del futuro*, 273.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos (National Major University of San Marcos, UNMSM for its Spanish acronym) is the oldest public university in Peru and in South America.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> Examples of this include films by Humberto Solás and Tomás Gutiérrez Alea from Cuba; Sergei Eisenstein and Andrei Tarkovsky from the USSR; and that of renowned filmmakers of other socialist countries, such as Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania or Yugoslavia.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> Ismael Pinto, "¡Cuidado con la pintura!"," Caretas, no. 458 (June 8-22, 1972): 18.





Figures 6-7. Examples of the cinema programme in Lima in 1971. Source of the images (from left to right): *Oiga* (August 27, 1971): 35; *Oiga* (June 25, 1971): 37.

Peruvian filmmaker and journalist Sonia Goldenberg described her generation as that of avid cinephiles, who went to cinema clubs to see "the same film ten times, in faded copies and badly projected."<sup>74</sup> She characterised the 1970s generation in Lima as follows, which is worth quoting at length on this point:

A few years ago, nobody doubted that society was sick, that all the injustices and all the problems in the world were social. ... But at that time everything was compatible. You could be a Trotskyist or a Marxist-Leninist and read the Kamasutra every morning, take LSD to explore the limits of human consciousness, or why not go to Chincheros to live in a hippie community. For better or worse, we were a deeply Americanised generation. We were born with TV and then absorbed the beat counterculture: we fervently read Allen Ginsberg and Dylan Thomas, revered Jimmy Hendrix and Janis Joplin ... We believed in utopia: desire was enough to change the world. Being young in the 1970s meant being uncompromising, irreverent, self-centred, and spontaneous. ... We were probably the first generation that stopped identifying with the adults. ... We were no longer experiencing the euphoria of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> "Acudimos masivamente a los cineclubes, para ver diez veces la misma película en copias descoloridas y mal proyectadas." Sonia Goldenberg, in "ENCUESTA: ¿Cómo fue su juventud?," *Debate*, no. 12 (December 1981): 43.

Cuban Revolution, but rather the death of Che, the protest against the Vietnam War, the Tlatelolco massacre and the death of Allende. We were also marked by the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia and the slogans of May '68 ... We knew that all socialisms were imperfect, that social thought had to be invented. ... It was natural that the military revolution aroused in us different degrees of enthusiasm.<sup>75</sup>

Beyond the fact whether Velasco Alvarado's government succeeded or not, and despite its flaws, I would like to pay attention to the contributions of the government's cultural policies and what remained from them.

Velasco Alvarado's cultural policies were conceived as a process of decolonisation that questioned the hegemonic cultural structure. According to the government's cultural policies: "Decolonisation of culture leads to true cultural democracy. The goal of a revolutionary and humanist cultural policy can only be the socialisation of cultural activity." The aim of the "socialisation of cultural activity" was to conceive cultural events to include a broader population. At the same time, it was about making space and making visible art forms, which were previously disregarded. For the implementation of these policies, the government relied on the expertise of artists and intellectuals. Among the activities were theatre performances, music concerts, dance performances, children's puppetry theatre, or comic workshops in

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Chinchero (also known as Chincheros) is a district in the Urubamba valley in the city of Cusco. About the hippies and the tourist industry in Cusco during Velasco Alvarado's administration, see: Mark Rice, "Generals, Hotels, and Hippies: Velasco-Era Tourism Development and Conflict in Cuzco," in *The Peculiar Revolution: Rethinking the Peruvian Experiment under Military Rule*, 295-317.

Thace unos años nadie dudaba que la sociedad estaba enferma, que todas las injusticias y todos los problemas del mundo eran sociales. ... Pero en ese entonces todo era compatible. Se podía ser trotskista o marxista-leninista y leer el Kamasutra todas las mañanas, tomar LSD para explorar los límites de la conciencia humana, o, por qué no, ir a Chincheros a vivir en una comunidad hippie. Para bien o para mal, somos una generación profundamente americanizada. Nacimos con la TV y luego absorbimos la contracultura beat: leímos con fervor a Allen Ginsberg y Dylan Thomas, veneramos a Jimmy Hendrix y a Janis Joplin ... Creíamos en la utopía: bastaba el deseo para cambiar el mundo. Ser joven en los 70 implicaba ser intransigente, irreverente, egocéntrico y espontáneo. ... Somos probablemente la primera generación que dejó de identificarse con los adultos. No vivimos ya la euforia de la revolución cubana, sino la muerte del Che, la protesta por la guerra de Vietnam, la masacre de Tlatelolco y la muerte de Allende. También nos marcaron la invasión rusa a Checoslovaquia y los slogans de Mayo del 68. ... Sabíamos que todos los socialismos eran imperfectos, que el pensamiento social tenía que ser inventado. ... Era natural que la revolución de los militares despertara en nosotros distintos grados de entusiasmo." Ibid., 42-43.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> "La descolonización de la cultura conduce a la verdadera democracia cultural. El objetivo de una política cultural revolucionaria y humanista no puede ser sino la socialización de la actividad cultural." Instituto Nacional de Cultura, *Política cultural del Perú* (Paris: UNESCO, 1977), 15. Although the publication of the Peruvian cultural policies was released in 1977, it is related to Velasco Alvarado's government.

impoverished areas, as well as the organisation of interdisciplinary art festivals and alternative sports competitions in the regions. Some of these activities included the participation of international art practitioners. For example, in 1973 Brazilian playwright Augusto Boal organised a series of workshops on popular theatre in the cities of Chiclayo and Lima. These workshops were directed to train educators, as part of the programme Operación Alfabetización Integral (ALFIN) of the Ministry of Education. Several cultural programmes were subsidised by the government. For instance, world-class speakers were invited to give lectures to which young people with scarce economic resources could attend for free. Another example was that of the Ministerio de Trabajo, which hosted a regular programme of cinema with reduced prices. The cultural policies also affected the local cinema production. For instance, the new film law fostered the production of several short films. The government also implemented the *Ley del Artista* (Decree Law N° 19479) in 1972, aiming to regularise artistic work through written contracts and social security payments.

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Augusto Salazar Bondy and Walter Peñaloza Ramella were the main theorists who developed the Education Reform. The book by Patricia Oliart, *Educar en tiempos de cambio*, 1968-1975 (2013) is dedicated to their original pedagogic proposals.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> The Integral Literacy Operation (Operación Alfabetización Integral, ALFIN for its Spanish acronym) was directed by Alfonso Lizarzaburu. Among the participants in the organisation of these workshops were Alicia Saco, Estela Linares, Luis Garrido Lecca, Ramón Vilcha, and the artist Jesús Ruiz Durand. The concept of "integral alphabetisation" included not only writing and reading, it considered language in a broad sense of the word, incorporating photography, theatre and other means of expression. The experiments with the people's theatre were based on Paulo Freire's popular education method. Augusto Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed* (London: Pluto Press, 1979), 95-135.

Overall, the Education Reform of 1972, with its programme of *Educación por el arte* (Education Through Arts), understood the importance of the arts within the schooling system. For more information about the Education Through Arts programme, see: Lyscenia Durazo Córdova, "La educación por el arte: Una apuesta por el desarrollo integral con y a través de las artes en la Reforma Educativa peruana de 1972." *Revista Enfoques Educacionales*, no. 18 (2021): 4-23. https://doi.org/10.5354/2735-7279.2021.65050.

Augusto Salazar Bondy and Walter Peñaloza Ramella were the main theorists who developed the Education

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> Pilar Roca, "La cinematografía y el plan cultural de Velasco," in *Velasco y la independencia nacional. La revolución continúa*, 208.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> Decree Law n° 19327, Ley de Fomento a la Industria Cinematográfica (Film Industry Promotion Act): https://docs.peru.justia.com/federales/decretos-leyes/19327-mar-28-1972.pdf.
For more information about the film production during Velasco Alvarado's government, see: Moisés Fernando Contreras Zanabria, "Construyendo un cine nacional: los cineastas y críticos de cine de la década de 1960, el gobierno de Juan Velasco Alvarado y la Ley de cine N°19327, 1960-1975," Master thesis in history, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2019; Gonzalo Benavente Secco, "El cine peruano: antes y después de Velasco," in *Mitologías velasquistas*, 85-96; Nelson García Miranda, *Cuando el cine era una fiesta: la producción de la ley n° 19327*, Lima: Grupo Chaski, 2013.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>80</sup> Decree Law n° 19479, Ley del Artista (Artist's Law): https://docs.peru.justia.com/federales/decretos-leyes/19479-jul-25-1972.pdf.

The cultural policies of the military government corresponded with Third Worldist ideas and Latin America's internationalism during the Cold War. They were in tune with a larger discussion about the social aspect of art and democratisation of culture in Latin America. This implied giving attention to the cultural productions within the local context and the decentralisation of cultural matters. In this chapter, I focus on the social aspect of art, exemplified in 1) the communication strategy and visual experimentation of the Agrarian Reform posters, the establishment of local publications such as Chaski. Semanario de los pueblos jóvenes, and the organisation of cartoon workshops; 2) the decentralisation of cultural activities via total art festivals; and 3) the re-evaluation of crafts. Several of these measures did not continue beyond this government. Despite all the efforts, it did not achieve enough popular support. As Héctor Béjar noted, the military surrounding Velasco Alvarado constituted a minority. Some of them obeyed by discipline, but without conviction.<sup>81</sup> Within the military itself, there were more conservative strands that impeded the advancement of the process initiated by Velasco Alvarado. For instance, the threatening situations between the mining and teaching unions in Huanta, Pamplona and Cobriza. 82 In addition to this, the oligarchy, and the far Left (active in universities and workers' unions) were among the government's constant opponents.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>81</sup> Héctor Béjar, Velasco, 40.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>82</sup> Alejandro Santistevan, "Huanta, Pamplona y Cobriza: tres casos de represión en el gobierno militar de Velasco Alvarado (1968-1971)," *Argumentos* 3, no. 1 (2022): 5-30, https://doi.org/10.46476/ra.v3i1.130. Héctor Béjar made the conservative strand of the military responsible for these acts of violence. Héctor Béjar, *Velasco*, 41.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>83</sup> Anna Cant, Land Without Masters: Agrarian Reform and Political Change under Peru's Military Government (2021); Héctor Béjar, Velasco (2021); Carlos Aguirre and Paulo Drinot, eds., The Peculiar Revolution: Rethinking the Peruvian Experiment under Military Rule (2017); Enrique Mayer, Ugly Stories of the Peruvian Agrarian Reform (2009).

## 1. Innovative Visual Communication Strategies

This section examines the visual communication strategies of the military government, exemplified in the Agrarian Reform posters, the organisation of *talleres de historieta popular* (workshops on popular cartoons) and the publication of the magazine *Chaski. Semanario de los pueblos jóvenes*. While the cartoon workshops and *Chaski* exemplified fruitful outcomes of the activities organised by the Ministry of Education and SINAMOS, the Agrarian Reform posters were not exempt from contradictions.

On 3 October 1968, General Juan Velasco Alvarado led a coup d'état and proclaimed the beginning of the Gobierno Revolucionario de las Fuerzas Armadas (GRFA). In contrast to other military administrations that took power in other South American countries, such as Brazil in 1964, Chile and Uruguay in 1973, and Argentina in 1976, which were instituted to prevent "revolutionary" leftist governments (rendered as communism or *fidelismo*) and were mostly backed by the CIA; in Peru, the military did a revolution from above in order to prevent a revolution from below. To justify this, the military government sought to complete the independence process from 1821, which according to Velasco Alvarado was truncated. For him, this process began much earlier with the Túpac Amaru II insurrection in 1780. In fact, it was the largest indigenous uprising against the Spanish colonial power, although up until then it was not considered a central event in Peruvian history. For the government, this anti-colonial insurrection represented the beginning of an era, that of liberation

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>84</sup> Thomas C. Wright, Latin America in the Era of the Cuban Revolution, 112.

The demands for the instauration of an agrarian reform were already present during Fernando Belaúnde's first term. During his presidential campaign, Belaúnde promised an agrarian reform in several regions, such as Cerro de Pasco, where peasant communities already proceeded to reclaim the land that they considered had been usurped by the cattle ranches. On 21 May 1964, Belaúnde's government declared the Agrarian Reform Law. This law had been promulgated after a series of peasant uprisings that included land seizures, particularly in the valley of La Convención (Cusco) in the early 1960s. However, the law from 1964 did not have a far-reaching effect. The opposition in Congress cut the bill to such an extent that it failed to achieve its objectives of transforming and democratising the agrarian property apparatus.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>85</sup> José Gabriel Condorcanqui (1738-1781), also known as Túpac Amaru II, was a *cacique* (hereditary chief) from Cusco. Before the GRFA, Túpac Amaru II was not a major figure in the official historiography of the Peruvian independence, although he was mentioned by several historians. For instance, Carlos Daniel Valcárcel's *La rebelión de Túpac Amaru* (1947) and *Rebeliones indígenas* (1946). Charles F. Walker, "The General and His Rebel," in *The Peculiar Revolution: Rethinking the Peruvian Experiment under Military Rule*, 54.

and social justice that needed to be completed. Considering this, the government understood itself as the second independence.

Túpac Amaru II became the visual icon of the military administration. His image will be visible in the logo of the GRFA, as well as in banknotes, coins, posters, stamps and official publications. Symbolically, the recovery of the figure of Túpac Amaru II represented also bringing to the fore the Andean culture that had been ignored for years. On the implications of Túpac Amaru II's defeat and the consequences imposed by the Spanish colonisers, Alberto Flores Galindo indicated the following:

Attributing the outbreak of the rebellion not only to economic factors ..., but also to cultural factors, the colonial administration attacked everything that could be considered as Andean culture: they prohibited indigenous theatre and painting, ... the use of Quechua, [and] traditional clothing. Ethnocide? The truth is that the indigenous population began to be as underestimated as feared by those who were not. Andean culture left public spaces and became clandestine. It is then that racial distinctions took on an importance that they did not have before. <sup>86</sup>

Historian Charles F. Walker considered the revaluation of Túpac Amaru II's image as "the heroic link between the ancient struggle against Spanish domination and today's struggle against imperialism." Walker paralleled this image with that of Ernesto 'Che' Guevara, corresponding with the aesthetics of political leaders/rebels in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Moreover, he connected it with the growing interest in the Third World, as well as in anti-colonial struggles in other parts of the world. In the context of previous peasant uprisings demanding land redistribution, such as the ones in the early 1960s in Peru, the image of Túpac Amaru II suggested the continuation of the revolutionary and emancipatory spirit of the people.

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<sup>86 &</sup>quot;Atribuyendo el estallido de la rebelión no sólo a factores económicos ... sino también a factores culturales, la administración colonial arremete contra todo lo que podría ser considerado como cultura andina: prohíben el teatro y la pintura indígena, ... el uso del quechua, la vestimenta tradicional. ¿Etnocidio? Lo cierto es que el indio comienza a ser tan menospreciado como temido por quienes no lo son. La cultura andina deja los espacios públicos y se torna clandestina. Es entonces cuando los distingos raciales cobran una importancia que no habían tenido antes." Alberto Flores Galindo, "República sin ciudadanos," *Fronteras*, vol. 1, no. 1 (1997): 17. The brackets are mine.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>87</sup> Charles F. Walker, "The General and His Rebel," 52.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 59.

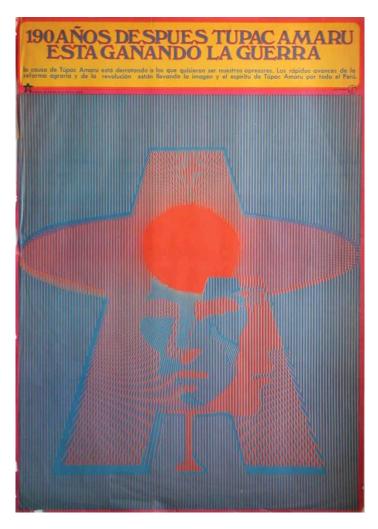


Figure 8. Jesús Ruiz Durand, 190 años después Túpac Amaru está ganando la guerra (190 Years Later Túpac Amaru is Winning the War), 100 x 70 cm, 1969-1971.

Source: Sam L. Slick Collection of Latin American and Iberian Posters, Center for South West Research, University Libraries, University of New Mexico.

Unity, but also participation were the terms used to introduce the 'Second Independence,' a process that included all Peruvians without distinctions. For the government, the changes in society, aiming for more justice and solidarity, would only be possible with the full participation of all citizens. As historian Carlos Aguirre noted, Velasco Alvarado thought that "the only solution to the compounded problems of dependency, underdevelopment, and social injustice was to complete the process of national liberation." In this context, the government put the attention

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>89</sup> Carlos Aguirre, "The Second Liberation?, Military Nationalism and the Sesquicentennial Commemoration of Peruvian Independence, 1821-1971," in *The Peculiar Revolution: Rethinking the Peruvian Experiment under Military Rule*, 25.

on the peasants. It was not only to empower, but mainly to encourage them to participate and contribute to the reforms. An example of this were the Agrarian Reform posters, which depicted the visual experimentation and innovative communication strategies developed during Velasco Alvarado's administration.

Prior to Velasco Alvarado's regime, during the first government of Fernando Belaúnde Terry (1963-1968), almost every sector of Peru's economy was private, with foreign investments playing a major role. There was a considerable social gap, with a small group of landowners and industrialists, and the vast majority living in poor conditions. To change this situation, the military government announced the implementation of the Agrarian Reform Law (Decree Law N° 17716) on 24 June 1969, aiming for a series of major land redistribution measures in the country. The 24 June was commonly known as "Día del indio" (Day of the Indian). From 1969 onwards, this day began to be known as "Día del campesino" (Peasant's Day). The government renamed this day, by replacing the former term *indio* – wrongly translated as Indian, with clear colonial connotations, to a term that shall refer to the indigenous population – with *campesino* (peasant), emphasising the contributions of the land workers to Peruvian society.

In 1969, the government created the Dirección de Promoción y Difusión de la Reforma Agraria (DPDRA), an office for press and propaganda matters, led by the journalist Efraín Ruiz Caro. For its implementation, the DPDRA hired a team of already established intellectuals, artists, writers, and designers, who worked actively either in administrative positions or as advisors. Among the intellectuals working for this office were the cultural theorist, poet and writer Mirko Lauer and the writer and journalist José B. Adolph; as well as the artists José Bracamonte Vera, Jesús Ruiz Durand, Emilio Hernández Saavedra and Carlos Gonzales. These artists and intellectuals oversaw the communication of the reforms, the messages inscribed in the Agrarian Reform posters and their design, as well as documented in photographs, videos and films the activities of the government.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>90</sup> Office for the Promotion and Diffusion of the Agrarian Reform, DPDRA for its Spanish acronym.

In 1971, the DPDRA was taken over by the Sistema Nacional de Apoyo a la Movilidad Social (SINAMOS). <sup>91</sup> The office of SINAMOS was instituted in June 1971, after several months of discussions. According to Dirk Kruijt, "there were three possible approaches to choose from; one option would be to seek an alliance of existing political parties; another was to create a new party; the third way was to create a technocratic apparatus with political functions." <sup>92</sup> The last would be the chosen one. In connection with this decision, General José Graham observed:

Change evokes counterforces, opposition. Sure, for a while you can make headway because the population is keyed up. But then you have to organize support. The revolution had to keep moving, the wheels had to keep turning. How do you do that without a party? How can you get the masses in motion without a party? So, what we did was create a new organism to mobilize the masses and organize them; its activities political all the way, but without a party: SINAMOS.<sup>93</sup>

The acronym reads in Spanish "sin amos" (without masters). This organisation promoted the ideas of socialist and libertarian humanism and was an example of democracy with full participation, as Carlos Delgado noted. According to Delgado, SINAMOS followed a self-management logic, which stimulated the participation of workers and all sectors of the population in the country's policies. Among the advisors of SINAMOS were General Leonidas Rodríguez Figueroa (chief of SINAMOS), Carlos Franco (ex-member of the Communist Party), Hugo Neira (director of diffusion of SINAMOS), Francisco Guerra García (political scientist) and Héctor Béjar. Brazilian anthropologist Darcy Ribeiro, who was exiled by Brazil's military regime, became director of SINAMOS's scientific committee. 94 SINAMOS supported several cultural activities in Lima and in different provinces throughout the country. These activities were committed to social inclusion and democratisation of culture, ideas that were also followed by the artists who were working in them.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>91</sup> National System of Support for Social Mobilisation, SINAMOS for its Spanish acronym.

<sup>92</sup> Dirk Kruijt, Revolution by Decree: Peru, 1968-1975 (Amsterdam: Thela Publishers, 1994), 117.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>93</sup> Ibid., 116.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>94</sup> Ibid., 117.

Among the artists contributing to these activities were Francesco Mariotti, Luis Zevallos Hetzel and Luis Arias Vera.

Cuba's Revolution inspired other Latin American countries with its experimental approach to spread political ideas. Distancing itself from the Soviets, Cuban artists did not reject abstract art and included pop art in their artistic productions. As Nicaraguan priest and poet Ernesto Cardenal stated in 1972: "Cuba, they said, found its true socialist realism in Pop Art." This was visible in Cuba's poster tradition, which included several elements of pop. These posters were not only meant to spread political propaganda, but they also served to promote different cultural activities, such as cinema, dance or music. Likewise, in Peru the Agrarian Reform posters were intended to mobilise the peasants, as well as suggested social transformation. Among their visual innovations were the mix of silkscreen prints with photographs, paintings, and other visual effects. The posters included elements from pop art, op art and the aesthetics of comics, using techniques of collage or (photo) montage. In relation to this, Anna Cant pointed out the following:

The use of pop art to depict indigenous *campesinos* challenged the portrayal of the 'backward Indian' that had persisted among *indigenista* artists. The overall effect was therefore an appeal to an inclusive modernity, while capitalising upon the vibrancy of pop art and its associations with youth. <sup>96</sup>

<sup>95</sup> David Craven, Art and Revolution in Latin America, 1910-1990, 75.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>96</sup> Anna Cant, "Land for Those Who Work It': A Visual Analysis of the Agrarian Reform Posters in Velasco's Peru," 19.

The *indigenismo* movement in Peru followed the idea of a nation that incorporated the indigenous peoples, by re-evaluating their culture and integrating them in national concerns. Intellectuals and artists from the capital city and from the regions explained the life of the indigenous peoples from an outsider perspective, describing their costumes and daily life, as well as engaging in a process of recovery of the country's history before the colonisation. The movement established a clear territorial (and cultural) differentiation between the industrialised Coastal regions and the urban capital city Lima, in contrast to the less developed Andean regions. Henrique Urbano defined *indigenismo* as an ideological discourse that promoted the "integration of the 'indigenous' element in the historiographical reading and global representation of the 'Peruvian nation'." In this sense, the idea of social change implied the (social and economic) integration of the indigenous peoples into a dominant system, namely the Western model, understood as social progress and development. Henrique Urbano, quoted by Jean-Marie Lemogodeuc, "Un mito de identidad: el indigenismo en Perú," in *Mitos políticos en las sociedades andinas: Origenes, invenciones, ficciones*, eds. Curiel, C., Lomné, G., & Martínez, F. (Caracas: Institut français d'études andines, 2006): par. 24. https://doi.org/10.4000/books.ifea.5173.

The Agrarian Reform posters represented the peasants as political subjects with a sense of agency in the present and looking to the future. At the same time, these images suggested the potential of a modernised countryside, which was also one of the aims of the Agrarian Reform. The posters had a clear purpose: to foster the participation of the land workers in the Agrarian Reform. Their messages encouraged popular mobilisation, presenting the peasants as the vital protagonists of the reform. They addressed land workers from different regions of the country, from the sugar plantations in the Northern Coast to the Andean mountainous regions in the South. Their visual representation was adapted according to the geographical place of their distribution. For instance, the image of a man wearing a straw hat referred to the population in the Northern regions. Other posters illustrated the tools for working the land, such the *chaquitaclla* used in the Andean regions. The posters were distributed nation-wide and had a massive distribution throughout the whole country.

For Peruvian historian Rolando Rojas, the posters were "part of an awareness campaign, social organisation and cultural promotion" directed to the reform's recipients, with the aim to "identify with the government's policies and generate a social consciousness about the transformation process taking place in the country." <sup>100</sup> The messages addressed the viewers using personal pronouns, such as  $t\acute{u}$  (you), the nouns *hermana* (sister) or *compadre* (buddy; the word is also understood as an extended family member such as godfather), suggesting certain proximity with the peasants. As Anna Cant observed, the posters and pamphlets went beyond the purposes of the Agrarian Reform, as they also included topics such as education,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>97</sup> Anna Cant, "Land for Those Who Work It," 19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>98</sup> Roughly, Peru could be divided into three main geographical areas: the Coast which faces the Pacific Ocean, the Andes mountain range, and the Amazon rainforest. The country is divided into 24 departments and one constitutional province (Callao).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>99</sup> Anna Cant, "Representando la revolución: la propaganda política del Gobierno de Juan Velasco Alvarado en Perú (1968-1975)," in *Imaginando América Latina: historia y cultura visual, siglos XIX al XXI* [online], eds. Sven Schuster and Óscar Daniel Hernández Quiñones (Bogotá: Editorial Universidad del Rosario, 2017), 291. https://doi.org/10.12804/th9789587389456.

<sup>100</sup> Rolando Rojas Rojas, Los años de Velasco (1968-1975) (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 2022), 192.

political activism and mass media communication.<sup>101</sup> Other posters were made to advertise cultural events, such as theatre performances, puppet theatre for children, craft fairs or festivals.



Figure 9. Jesús Ruiz Durand, *Compadre, los ojos bien abiertos para defender nuestra tierra* (Buddy, Keep the Eyes Wide Open to Defend Our Land), 100 x 70 cm, 1969-1971.

Source: Sam L. Slick Collection of Latin American and Iberian Posters, Center for South West Research, University Libraries, University of New Mexico.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>101</sup> Fiorella López, "[ENTREVISTA] Anna Cant: "La reforma agraria no es un capítulo cerrado en la historia del Perú"," *infoartes.pe*, June 17, 2016,

https://www.infoartes.pe/entrevista-anna-cant-la-reforma-agraria-no-es-un-capitulo-cerrado-en-la-historia-del-peru/.

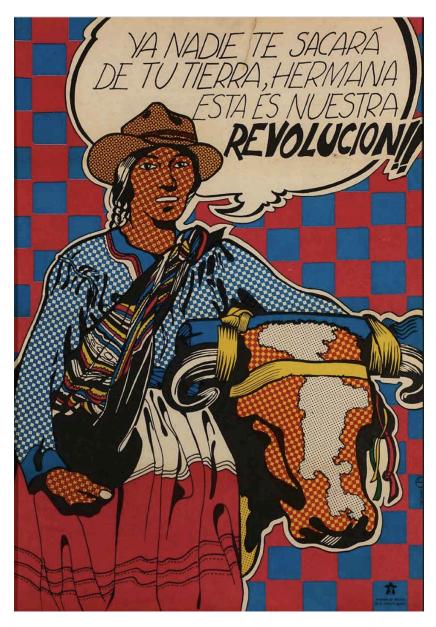


Figure 10. Jesús Ruiz Durand, *Ya nadie te sacará de tu tierra, hermana. ¡Esta es nuestra revolución!* (No one will take you off your land anymore, sister. This is our revolution!), 100 x 70 cm, 1969-1971. Source: MALBA, "Jesús Ruiz Durand sobre su serie de afiches Reforma Agraria," https://www.malba.org.ar/.

For Christabelle Roca-Rey, among the innovations of the Agrarian Reform posters were the representation of the Andean peasants, the introduction of Túpac Amaru II as national hero, the use of Quechua language and the depiction of Velasco Alvarado as "father of the nation." However, if one looks more carefully, in the posters and other visual representations (for instance that of public meetings), Velasco Alvarado appeared alongside Túpac Amaru II (who was the main figure of the GRFA). In some contexts, his image was next to Túpac Amaru II and José Carlos Mariátegui, suggesting a genealogy of the same struggle for social justice. In fact, Velasco Alvarado's aim was to continue the process Túpac Amaru II initiated in 1780. Hence, he was more a co-fighter in the struggle for liberation and not necessarily a father figure. This contrasted with the cult of the leader of other military governments. As Charles T. Goodsell observed, "Velasco is not a personal dictator. From the beginning, the military government in Peru has been a collective and cooperative undertaking." On the past of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>102</sup> Christabelle Roca-Rey, "El afiche peruano de 1968 a 1975: entre continuidad y originalidad," in *Investigaciones en Arte y Diseño*, vol. 2, eds. Mihaela Radulescu de Barrio de Mendoza and Melissa Tamani (Lima: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, Facultad de Arte y Diseño), 32-33.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>103</sup> José Carlos Mariátegui (1894-1930) was a Peruvian Marxist-oriented intellectual, founder of the Peruvian Socialist Party and of the cultural magazine *Amauta*. Mariátegui believed in a socialist modern indigenous nation. Among his influences were the Mexican (1910-1920) and Russian (1917-1923) Revolutions. For Mariátegui, Peruvian socialism was founded on the basis of the indigenous community and its pre-Columbian traditions which should be taken into consideration for the purpose of social change. His thesis on the "problema del indio" (the problem of the indigenous population) are present in his *Siete ensayos de interpretación de la realidad social peruana* (Seven Interpretive Essays on Peruvian Reality, first published in 1928) as well as in the magazine *Amauta* (1926-1930). The latter advocated for an independent intellectual thought from Latin America. *Amauta* had both an emancipatory, but also a cosmopolitan approach, illustrating that an indigenous modernity was not incompatible with the avant-garde. The magazine was a promoter of *indigenismo*, underpinning intense intellectual debates and forging networks with the European and Latin American avant-garde of the time. For more information about Amauta's intellectual and artistic networks, see: Natalia Majluf and Beverly Adams, *Redes de vanguardia: Amauta y América Latina, 1926-1930*, Lima: Asociación Museo de Arte de Lima - MALI, 2019.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>104</sup> Charles T. Goodsell, "That Confounding Revolution in Peru," 20.



Figure 11. Poster *Túpac Amaru lo prometió, Velasco lo cumplió* (Túpac Amaru promised it, Velasco accomplished it)
Source of the image: Charles Walker, "Reflections of Tupac Amaru," *Berkeley Review of Latin American Studies* (Fall 2014): 60.

Jesús Ruiz Durand designed the logo of the GRFA with the image of Túpac Amaru II and produced 24 posters of the Agrarian Reform. During his work for the government (first for the DPDRA, then for SINAMOS and later for the Ministry of Education), the artist travelled to different provinces in the country and photographed several peasants and factory workers. These photographs were the basis of his posters, which he combined with pop art (such as the inclusion of Ben-Day dots, as in Roy Lichtenstein) or op art (as in Victor Vasarely) techniques. Some of the posters followed the aesthetics of comic strips, which according to him was a visual language everybody would be able to understand.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>105</sup> Diego Otero, "Verbo hecho imagen. Ruiz Durand y sus atmósferas literarias," *El Comercio*, supplement El Dominical, July 15, 2007.

Ruiz Durand's posters were greatly inspired by US popular culture and the political poster tradition in the twentieth century. For instance, the poster by the illustrator Montgomery Flagg with Uncle Sam's imperative message "I want you for U.S. Army nearest recruiting section," exhorting US Americans enlist in the military during WWI. <sup>106</sup> In Ruiz Durand's poster (Figure 12) there is only an index finger pointing to the viewer. This faceless image leaves room for several interpretations. Whose finger is this? That of Túpac Amaru II, a military authority, a peasant, or a *compadre*?



Figure 12. Jesús Ruiz Durand, *Grandes cosas están pasando* (Great Things Are Taking Place), 100 x 70 cm, 1969-1971. Source of the image: Fundación Museo Reina Sofía, https://www.museoreinasofia.es/.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>106</sup> In this case, we are speaking of a double inspiration (or appropriation). Flagg's image was inspired by a British World War I recruitment poster from 1914, designed by the artist Alfred Leete. The poster portrayed Lord Kitchener, pointing his finger to enlist soldiers for the war. Kelly Knauer, "I Want You: The Story Behind the Iconic Recruitment Poster," *Time*, April 6, 2017, https://time.com/4725856/uncle-sam-poster-history/.

At first glance, the artist used antagonic cultural references: one associated with the growing mass mediated capitalist consumer culture, the other to a social-economic reform in land redistribution. However, as Andreas Huyssen noted, the reception of pop art has always been controversial. While it has been interpreted as glorifying consumerism; others used pop as a critical positioning against consumer culture. For Huyssen, "with pop, art became profane, concrete and suitable for mass reception." It had also the potential to become a genuinely popular art and to resolve the crisis of bourgeois art, for its academicism, evident since the beginning of the twentieth century. <sup>107</sup> In this sense, it offered a way to foster art's democratisation.

For Jesús Ruiz Durand, "the Cuban Revolution was the perfect breeding ground for the emergence of social communication." <sup>108</sup> In this vein, the posters were the most adaptable means for it. His understanding of art was that of approaching a broader audience, leaving out the idea of the artist as a genius:

I think that the "working class," the "peasant" or "the student" audiences are the ones that offer the ideal conditions for further artistic participation; with this I mean an artistic activity away from the traditional paternalistic concepts, where the spectator is a passive receptacle of the "inspiration" of the genius who creates on the heights of her/his ivory tower.<sup>109</sup>

In connection with this, Ruiz Durand stated his disgust regarding the art market and the bourgeois audience. Although he considered painting an "outdated art form," the artists were in the uncomfortable position of having to deal with the galleries. He added that at that time the intellectual life in Lima was alienated and completely detached from daily life. Some artists, like him, saw in the implementations suggested by the military government a possibility to act within the social sphere.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>107</sup> Andreas Huyssen, "The Cultural Politics of Pop: Reception and Critique of US Pop Art in the Federal Republic of Germany," *New German Critique*, no. 4 (1975): 79. https://doi.org/10.2307/487818.

<sup>108</sup> Maruja Barrig, "Jesús Ruiz Durand: la pintura es un arte caduco," *La Crónica* (June 25, 1975): 55.

<sup>109 &</sup>quot;Pienso que el "público obrero" así como el "público campesino" o "el público estudiante" son los que ofrecen las condiciones ideales para una mayor participación artística; me refiero a una actividad artística alejada de los tradicionales conceptos paternalistas donde el espectador es un receptáculo pasivo de la "inspiración" del genio que crea en las alturas de su torre de marfil." Jesús Ruiz Durand, "En la cultura: Ruiz Durand responde a la Casa de la Cultura," *Oiga*, no. 376 (May 29, 1970): 33-34.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>110</sup> Maruja Barrig, "Jesús Ruiz Durand: la pintura es un arte caduco," 54-55.

For Ruiz Durand, the military surrounding Velasco Alvarado were "a sort of advanced military *hippies* that you are not going to find anymore, and who were a product of the Centre for Advanced Military Studies (CAEM). The CAEM produced Velasco and a whole generation of military men with a bit of light in their heads." <sup>111</sup> Indeed, the officers at CAEM were formed by academics of the Universidad de San Marcos and Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú. Beyond issues on defence, they studied the social, political and economic reality of the country.

Ruiz Durand's posters were quite successful from a visual and external point of view. Some of his posters were bought by art collectors and were exhibited in several art shows, locally and internationally. Most of them were remembered in time because of their visual outcomes, but less for their content. Despite the positive reception, for Ruiz Durand the Agrarian Reform posters were a "truncated experience." The artists and intellectuals in charge of designing the posters did not have enough time to research, as they had to deliver the posters quite promptly. Ruiz Durand remembered a situation, in which he had only half an hour to do a drawing. Once approved, it was almost immediately sent to print. Other obstacles were the language barrier and the difficulties arising from a Quechua speaking context. He criticised the vertical communication of the messages that did not involve the needs

<sup>&</sup>quot;Esa especie de *hippies* militares de avanzada que ya no vas a encontrar nunca y que fueron producto del Centro de Altos Estudios Militares (CAEM). El CAEM produjo a Velasco y a toda esa generación de militares con algo de luz en la cabeza." Miguel Sánchez Flores, "Más allá del 'pop achorado': una propuesta de relectura de los afiches de Jesús Ruiz Durand para la reforma agraria del gobierno de Juan Velasco Alvarado" (Master thesis, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2016), 125.

<sup>112</sup> Ruiz Durand's Agrarian Reform posters have been exhibited in many major museums outside Peru, for instance the exhibition *Subversive Practices: Art under Conditions of Political Repression 60s–80s / South America / Europe* at the Württembergischer Kunstverein in 2009, *A Tale of Two Worlds* at Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt in 2018, and the touring exhibition *Memories of Underdevelopment: Art and the Decolonial Turn in Latin America*, 1960-1985 at the Jumex Museum in Mexico City and the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego in USA, 2017-2018. The MALBA Museum in Buenos Aires presented the posters in the exhibition *Afiches de la Reforma Agraria* in 2014 and included some posters of the series in its collection. The Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia (MNCARS) in Madrid has also included several of Ruiz Durand's posters in its collection, which are on view following this link: "Carteles de la Reforma Agraria Peruana," *Museo Reina Sofia*, https://www.museoreinasofia.es/coleccion/obra/carteles-reforma-agraria-peruana.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>113</sup> Jesús Ruiz Durand, "Afiches de la Reforma Agraria. Otra experiencia trunca," *U-tópicos: Entornoalovisual*, no. 4-5 (December 1984): 17.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>114</sup> Miguel Sánchez Flores, "Más allá del 'pop achorado'," 25.

<sup>115</sup> Jesús Ruiz Durand, "Afiches de la Reforma Agraria. Otra experiencia trunca," 17.

of their audience. Despite this, he recognised the dialogical approach that was introduced in the literacy programme of the government (ALFIN). <sup>116</sup> In 1972, Ruiz Durand left SINAMOS and joined the group of people, who were implementing the Education Reform with Augusto Salazar Bondy.

Talía Dajes highlighted Ruiz Durand's posters for their recycling techniques. For her, recycling meant

appropriating the set of images, stereotypes, and symbols of "the popular" – with all its ambiguities and contradictions – and redefining the boundaries of what is considered authentically Peruvian in terms that include the indigenous, the rural and, in general, everything that had been marginalised by the dominant urban Creole culture. <sup>117</sup>

However, Ruiz Durand combined images coming from US popular culture with the photographs he took from peasants. Ruiz Durand recalled that he represented them "in the foreground with pride, barefaced and with a dignified presence." He characterised his own version of pop as *pop achorado* (defiant pop), referring to the way he depicted the peasants and their sense of agency. Hence, his understanding of pop was not a redefinition of Peruanity. Given the fact of the plurality of Peruvian cultures, local languages (there are 48 indigenous languages in Peru) and different geographical regions, nothing could be further than "authentically Peruvian." In fact, recycling took place in practical ways. In some cases, the same image was used for different purposes. While the poster by Ruiz Durand (Figure 13) encouraged people to participate in the Agrarian Reform; the announcement of the magazine *Oiga* (Figure 14) served to inform about the achievements of the Agrarian Reform in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>116</sup> Maruja Barrig, "Jesús Ruiz Durand: la pintura es un arte caduco," 56.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>117</sup> "Reciclar, con respecto a los afiches de Ruiz Durand que he examinado aquí, significa apropiarse del conjunto de imágenes, estereotipos y símbolos de "lo popular" – con todas sus ambigüedades y contradicciones – y redefinir los límites de lo que se considera auténticamente peruano en términos que incluyen lo indígena, lo rural y, en general, todo lo que había sido marginalizado por la cultura urbana dominante criolla." Talía Dajes, "Del pop al populismo: los afiches de la Reforma Agraria de Jesús Ruiz Durand," in *Mitologías velasquistas*, 177.

<sup>118 &</sup>quot;...en primer plano con orgullo, con conchudez y con una presencia digna." Miguel Sánchez Flores, "Más allá del 'pop achorado'," 125.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>119</sup> Jesús Ruiz Durand, "Afiches de la Reforma Agraria: otra experiencia trunca," 17.

its first two years.



Figure 13. Jesús Ruiz Durand, *Revolución es participación, participación es revolución* (Revolution is Participation, Participation is Revolution), 70 x 100 cm, 1969-1971. Source of the image: Fundación Museo Reina Sofia.



Figure 14. *Dos años de Reforma Agraria. 24 de junio ¡... y adentro con el segundo!* (Two Years of the Agrarian Reform. 24 June, ... and enter into the second!). Image: Jesús Ruiz Durand. Source of the image: *Oiga*, no. 429, year IX (June 25, 1971): 3.

Similar types of recycling of images happened in the regions. Here, the posters were appropriated by the local community involved in the activities organised by SINAMOS. For instance, the image of Túpac Amaru II, published in the magazine *Chaski. Semanario de los pueblos jóvenes*. It takes the pointing finger present in Ruiz Durand's poster (Figure 12), combining it with the image of Túpac Amaru II (Figure 15).



Figure 15. Image of Túpac Amaru II with his index finger pointing to the viewer.

Below left, the image of a peasant.

Original image caption: *Chaski. Semanario de los pueblos jóvenes*, year III, no. 63, Cusco, March 9, 1974.

Source of the image: Raúl Álvarez, Manuel Barrós and Mijail Mitrovic, *Un grito a la tierra. Arte y revolución en Chaski (Cusco, 1972-1974)*, 222.

According to Anna Cant, some images showed mixed-messages that reduced the force of agency they intended to transmit. For instance, in a pamphlet directed to the people from the urban areas, rural people appeared worried and with overworn clothes, in contrast to the urban people portrayed stronger and decisive (Figure 16). For her, this image suggested that the Agrarian Reform was done in the name of the peasants, but without necessarily including them.<sup>120</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>120</sup> Anna Cant, "Representando la revolución," 289.



Figure 16. Dirección de Promoción y Difusión de la Reforma Agraria (DPDRA), 1969, "Al hombre de la ciudad peruana: ¿Cómo ayudar a la reforma agraria?" (To the men of the Peruvian city: How can you help the Agrarian Reform?) (pamphlet, DPDRA, Lima). Source of the image: Anna Cant, "Representando la revolución: la propaganda política del Gobierno de Juan Velasco Alvarado en Perú (1968-1975)," 288.

For Miguel Sánchez Flores, the posters were created for an audience belonging to political and artistic institutions, while the actual recipients – the protagonists of the posters – remained forgotten. Yet, as Cant pointed out, in the regions the posters were delivered to the most remote areas, contrasting with the view of Sánchez Flores. Beyond the images and the specific ideas that the posters aimed to transmit, the impact of the posters in public spaces was of utmost importance. This was the case of the city of Cusco, where the posters were literally everywhere; to the point that a local newspaper complained about the amount of posters placed all over the city, which also applied to several other areas of the country.

<sup>121</sup> Miguel Sánchez Flores, "Más allá del 'pop achorado'," 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>122</sup> Anna Cant, "Representando la revolución," 305.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>123</sup> Ibid., 305.

From 1969 to 1971, the DPDRA oversaw the visual communication mostly from the capital city. As soon as SINAMOS took over in June 1971, the decentralisation process increased. As recent studies about the work of SINAMOS in the regions have revealed, it was in the regions where the levels of social participation varied substantially. This has been illustrated by Anna Cant in her research about three regions (Cusco, Piura and Tacna). For Cant, the Agrarian Reform process differed from region to region, exemplified in the communication strategies employed to transmit their messages:

Whereas government communication efforts in Piura and Cusco engaged with regional histories of social injustice and portrayed the agrarian reform as a continuation of local struggles, SINAMOS promoters working in Tacna complained of indifference among the population. <sup>124</sup>

Anna Cant noted that SINAMOS offered the possibility to develop popular communication in the regions, with wide autonomy to experiment in areas such as literature and art. This was the case of the magazine *Chaski. Semanario de los pueblos jóvenes*, published from 29 December 1972 to 27 July 1974 in Cusco. The magazine was edited by ORAMS VII, a regional office of SINAMOS which was active in the provinces of Cusco, Madre de Dios, and Apurímac. Among the magazine editors were the artist Francesco Mariotti, the journalist Carmen Ibáñez and the actor Guido Guevara. *Chaski* was understood as journalism in the service of the community, exemplified in journalistic reports of local events, literature and poetry. It also included reviews of the activities organised by SINAMOS in the regions, such as festivals or craft fairs. The conceptualisation of this magazine was intended by the ORAMS VII office as a popular appropriation of the printed medium. The already established community-based initiatives activated the platforms suggested by ORAMS VII, and *Chaski* constituted an example of it.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>124</sup> Anna Cant, *Land Without Masters: Agrarian Reform and Political Change under Peru's Military Government* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2021), 65.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>125</sup> Raúl Álvarez, Manuel Barrós and Mijail Mitrovic, eds., *Un grito a la tierra. Arte y revolución en Chaski*, 231

ORAMS is the Spanish acronym for Oficina Regional de Apoyo a la Movilidad Social (Regional Office of Support for Social Mobilisation).

The publication *Un grito a la tierra*. *Arte y revolución en Chaski (Cusco, 1972-1974)* presents examples on how creativity came directly from the people involved in these activities. As the authors noted in the introduction:

*Chaski* provides a glimpse into the social life and tensions of the time, especially at the political level. As a publication, it deals with topics as varied as the urbanisation of shantytowns, football, local crime, rallies, public debates and, above all, the transformative actions of Sinamos within ORAMS VII. <sup>126</sup>

Literature was an important feature of the magazine. *Chaski* published texts by Peruvian contemporary writers, such as José B. Adolph (who also worked for SINAMOS), and by Latin American writers, for instance Gabriel García Márquez and Ernesto Cardenal. Alongside renowned Peruvian poets, namely César Vallejo and Javier Heraud, *Chaski* incorporated poems by less known authors. It included poems by the magazine's contributors from the localities in which ORAMS VII was active.

The last page of the magazine was a poster to take away. Some of them appropriated or recycled other posters (as in Figure 15), adapting them to the local context. Others were completely new creations, done by local artists, community-based initiatives or the ORAMS VII officers. On some occasions, the activities of the magazine went beyond the scope intended by the government. In addition to Túpac Amaru II, *Chaski* included images of other Latin American revolutionary leaders, such as Javier Heraud and Ernesto "Che" Guevara. These images suggested a genealogy and the continuation of a struggle that began with the Cuban Revolution and the peasant uprisings in the early 1960s in Peru. Although most of the known posters were the ones produced by the DPDRA; the posters in *Chaski* evidenced that not all the posters came from the central office. They presented a decentralised perspective. At

<sup>126 &</sup>quot;Chaski permite ver parte de la vida social y de las tensiones de la época, especialmente en el plano político. Como publicación, trata temas tan variados como la urbanización de los pueblos jóvenes, el fútbol, delitos

locales, mítines, debates públicos y, sobre todo, las acciones transformadoras del Sinamos en la ORAMS VII." Ibid., 12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>127</sup> Javier Heraud was trained in Cuba as a guerrilla leader. While he was part of the guerrilla of the Ejército de Liberación Nacional in Peru, he was shot to death in Puerto Maldonado (in the province of Madre de Dios) in 1963. He was 21 years old. Heraud was not acknowledged as a national hero by the military government.

the same time, these posters were adapted by the local community, according to its own communication needs.

Overall, the analysis of the posters has been devoted to the visual aspects and less on their reception. While some of the posters tried to show some proximity to the peasants, for instance by illustrating their local clothing or by using Quechua language; the fact is that many of them were illiterate and could not understand their messages. Indeed, most of the artists and intellectuals working for the DPDRA belonged to an intellectual elite based in the capital city, which had little knowledge of the local visual references and the language of the peasants. Although Ruiz Durand believed comics were a means of communication that everybody would be able to understand, the visual components and techniques used in the posters corresponded more to an urban environment than that of the land.

Paradoxically, the posters that resembled comics were not put into question, even though foreign comic strips, such as that of Walt Disney or Batman, were banned during Morales Bermúdez's government (the second term of the GRFA), which characterised them for being alienating and imperialist. As it happened in Chile with the "demystification" of comics during Allende's government, in Peru the military government supported the organisation of *talleres de historieta popular* (workshops on popular comics). Between 1974 and 1976, the cartoonist Juan Acevedo gave several workshops on how to create comic strips, in Villa El Salvador (a former shantytown in the outskirts of Lima, today a district) and at the Escuela Regional de Bellas Artes de Ayacucho (ERBA), the regional fine arts school in the province of Ayacucho. His methodology was later published in the book *Para hacer* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>128</sup> "Los cómics "alienantes" (1976-1980)," *Arkivperu*, May 7, 2017, https://arkivperu.com/comics-alienantes-1976-80/.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>129</sup> In 1972, Miguel Rojas Mix, who worked for Allende's government and was director of the Instituto de Arte Latinoamericano (Institute of Latin American Art) in Santiago de Chile, visited Lima. It is likely that the Chilean cultural policies might have influenced the Peruvian ones.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>130</sup> The workshops on popular comics were linked to the process of *concientización* put forward by Augusto Salazar Bondy as part of the Education Reform. The cartoonist Juan Acevedo worked at the Dialogic Communication Unit, within the Directorate of Social Communication, belonging to the General Directorate of Educational Extension of the Ministry of Education. From 1974 to 1975, he was director of the Escuela Regional de Bellas Artes de Ayacucho (Regional Fine Arts School of Ayacucho, ERBA for its Spanish

historietas (How to Make Comics) in 1978. These workshops were intended to democratise the language of comics, by focusing on local characters and stories; in opposition to the stories, characters and heroes portrayed in foreign cartoons. From this experience, he was later invited to give workshops in Nicaragua to former Sandinista insurgents, exemplifying the close links of Peruvian leftists with the revolutionary movements in Central America. <sup>131</sup>

In connection with this, it is worth referring to *Para leer al Pato Donald* (How to Read Donald Duck). In this book, Chilean writer and activist Ariel Dorfman and Belgian sociologist Armand Mattelart deconstructed the meaning of Walt Disney's Donald Duck comics and how they have given continuity to colonial structures. According to these authors, US mass culture discredited indigenous national cultures, by either deleting their history, representing them by means of clichés, portraying them as physically weak or with shaky psychological attributes. For instance, people from "Aztec-Land" (clearly referring to people from Mexico) were represented as kids or noble savages, who had to be treated as such. For Dorfman and Mattelart, comics, as well as other US mass mediated images, played with the principle of sensationalism by concealing "the new." Concerning the introduction of US mass culture in the Third World, David Craven observed the following:

acronym). On his experience at ERBA, see: Juan Acevedo, "La escuela regional de Bellas Artes de Ayacucho: una experiencia revolucionaria," *Textual* 10, no. 10 (October 1975): 71-79.

Concerning Acevedo's experience conducting cartoon workshops in Villa El Salvador, see: Juan Acevedo, "El taller de historieta popular," *Marka: actualidad y análisis*, no. 135 (December 20, 1979): 4-5; Juan Acevedo, "El avance de la historieta popular (I)," *Marka: actualidad y análisis*, no. 134 (December 13, 1979): 4-5. On his workshops on popular cartoons, as a methodology for popular communication, see: Carla Sagástegui, "Juan Acevedo/La historieta de la liberación," in *Mitologías velasquistas*, 125-142.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>131</sup> Juan Acevedo, "Historieta popular en Nicaragua," *Marka: actualidad y análisis,* no. 154 (May 8, 1980): 40-41.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>132</sup> Ariel Dorfman and Armand Mattelart, *Para leer al Pato Donald. Comunicación de masa y colonialismo* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI Editores, 1979), 58.

The book was first published in 1972 during Allende's government and it was sold in Peru the same year of its publication. After Pinochet's coup d'état, the book was banned. Dorfman, who was working for Allende's government, went into exile in the United States. After the return to democracy in 1990, he has been living between Santiago de Chile and North Carolina. Since 1985, he has taught at Duke University (Trinity College of Arts & Sciences) in the department of Latin American Studies, until he retired in 2016.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>133</sup> Ariel Dorfman and Armand Mattelart, *Para leer al Pato Donald*, 70.

While Western High Culture has often been used preemptively in the Third World, mass culture emanating from North America has been expressly conceived to eviscerate indigenous national culture in the same countries. ... Not only is indigenous culture consistently trivialised and denigrated, but ultimately history itself is dissolved. As such, the Third World inhabitants of U.S. mass culture are never heirs to their past, because that past is totally disconnected from this stereotypical present.<sup>134</sup>

In addition to devaluating indigenous culture and dissolving its history, "mass culture was celebrated as a monument of social progress on behalf of 'the people'."<sup>135</sup> Here, 'the people' were understood as consumers and not as producers of content. The *talleres de historieta popular* aimed to revert this view, by generating new content more accurate to the experiences of the local population. Instead of following foreign fictional heroes, Acevedo's workshops encouraged the participants to explore their own stories, more in line with their own experiences and with characters from which they could feel represented.

In conclusion, the Agrarian Reform posters portrayed the struggle against the oligarchic structure of the country, reinforcing the role of the peasants as political subjects. The posters were intended for the land workers, although in some cases they did not reach them as expected. Despite all these contradictions, reframing the peasants as forward looking and active citizens was something positive. At the same time, it contrasted with the previous representations of them, in which they were portrayed as part of the landscape or as passive individuals. For Mijail Mitrovic, Velasco Alvarado's propaganda "was resolved in a tension between the need to use universal symbols within a national space and to give recognition to specific people or groups, such as the peasantry, which had a long tradition of exoticism, degradation and invisibilities, always articulated by a racial gaze." <sup>136</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>134</sup> David Craven, "Popular Culture versus Mass Culture," in *Art History as Social Praxis: The Collected Writings of David Craven*, Historical Materialism, vol. 139, ed. Brian Winkenweder (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 283.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 284.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>136</sup> "... la propaganda del GRFA se resolvió en una tensión entre la necesidad de emplear símbolos universales dentro de un espacio nacional y dar reconocimiento a personas o grupos sociales específicos, como el campesinado, sobre los que pesaba una larga tradición de exotismo, degradación e invisibilización, siempre articulados por una mirada racial." Mijail Mitrovic, "Arte, propaganda y revolución: los afiches en *Chaski*," in *Un grito a la tierra. Arte y revolución en Chaski (Cusco, 1972-1974)*, 230.

Although the communication strategies were not exempt from paradoxes, the land allocations took place. Within eight years, 7,000,000 hectares were transferred to 1,500 collective units of various types. In total, 38.8% of the country's land was affected by the Agrarian Reform. Concerning the political and social consequences of the Agrarian Reform, Anna Cant noted the following:

Land reform was and still is highly controversial. On the one hand, left-wing activists considered the reform not radical enough. On the other hand, conservative opponents criticised it for reducing agricultural productivity and unfairly penalising productive farms, thus shifting the social justice ideology of the reform to a technocratic economistic approach. They declared land reform a failed agricultural policy and minimised its political significance. ... To challenge this view, it is important to highlight the political and social changes that are a consequence of land reform. The political discourse, cultural initiatives and educational programmes that accompanied land reform diminished elite dominance and promoted a more inclusive national identity. A second change took place within state institutions, which committed themselves to a fairer treatment of the rural population.<sup>138</sup>

For Cant, the impact of the social movements that derived from the Agrarian Reform process are evident. For instance, several NGOs were established during this period, which continue to advocate for peasant participation. Despite being a military government, political engagement of the masses increased significantly. Peasants experienced their first taste of voting through elections within agrarian cooperatives,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>137</sup> Anna Cant, "La singularidad de nuestro proceso': los significados políticos de la reforma agraria peruana," in *Las luchas sociales por la tierra en América Latina: un análisis histórico, comparativo y global*, eds. Hanne Cottyn, Javier Jahncke, Luis Montoya, Ela Pérez and Mattes Tempelmann (Lima: Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, 2016), 69.

For more information about the economic and social effects of the Agrarian Reform: R Maria Saleth, "Land Reform under Military: Agrarian Reform in Peru, 1969-78," *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 26, no. 30 (July 27, 1991): PE85-PE92.

<sup>138 &</sup>quot;La reforma agraria fue y sigue siendo muy controvertida. Por un lado, los activistas de izquierda consideraron la reforma poco radical. Por el otro lado, los oponentes conservadores la criticaron por reducir la productividad agrícola y penalizar injustamente las haciendas productivas, por lo que cambiaron la ideología de justicia social de la reforma por un enfoque tecnocrático economicista. Declararon la reforma agraria como una política agrícola fracasada y minimizaron su importancia política. ... Para desafiar este punto de vista, es importante resaltar los cambios políticos y sociales que son consecuencia de la reforma agraria. El discurso político, las iniciativas culturales y los programas educativos que acompañaron la reforma agraria disminuyeron el dominio de las élites y promovieron una identidad nacional más incluyente. Un segundo cambio se produjo al interior de las instituciones estatales, las cuales se comprometieron a dar un trato más justo a la población rural." Anna Cant, "La singularidad de nuestro proceso": los significados políticos de la reforma agraria peruana," 70.

which were open to all members regardless of literacy. Moreover, general assemblies of cooperatives provided opportunities for participating in discussions about working conditions and profit distribution. The national congresses of various agrarian confederations encouraged the development of peasant networks, facilitating representation of their interests. Notably, the Agrarian Reform process also brought improved access to education in rural areas. As Cant pointed out, before the reform, landowners prevented the children of employees from attending school and forced them to work in the *haciendas* (large land estates). In contrast, Velasco Alvarado's government promoted rural education, as a means of empowering peasants through training programmes in agrarian cooperatives.<sup>139</sup>

According to R Maria Saleth, "the agrarian reform implemented by the military represents the first ever successful attempt made in the history of Peru to systematically and structurally integrate the agricultural and industrial sectors." <sup>140</sup> However, as Linda J. Seligman observed, there was a fundamental contradiction in the reform's objectives: while it aimed to achieve national integration through more equitable distribution of income between the rural and urban sectors; at the same time, it was intended to generate economic productivity in the countryside to obtain national economic growth. <sup>141</sup>

In terms of political participation, Enrique Mayer observed the following:

... the junta vastly expanded the political participation of previous un- or underrepresented sectors of society. The popular classes in towns, villages, indigenous communities, and shantytowns were involved in projects and programs that ultimately advanced their

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>139</sup> The examples provided in this paragraph are based on the observations made by Anna Cant on the social and political impact of the Agrarian Reform. Anna Cant, "'La singularidad de nuestro proceso': los significados políticos de la reforma agraria peruana," 71.

The training programmes included the creation of closed-circuit programmes in video. These were audio-visual pedagogic tools for better production of the land, with the aim to modernise the agricultural sector after the land allocations. The rural training systems addressed the land workers in their own language and reflected their own reality. This innovative method of audio-visual pedagogy was also incorporated in other Latin American countries, following the Peruvian model. Colin Fraser, "Video y desarrollo rural. Perú: video-génesis," *Chasqui. Revista Latinoamericana de Comunicación* (January-March 1990): 73-77. I want to thank Humberto Garin for providing me with this information.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>140</sup> R Maria Saleth, "Land Reform under Military: Agrarian Reform in Peru, 1969-78," PE-91.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>141</sup> Linda J. Seligman, *Between Reform & Revolution: Political Struggles in the Peruvian Andes*, *1969-1991* (California: Stanford University Press, 1995), 68.

incorporation as citizens. The government treated them with greater respect than ever before, discouraging forms of social injustice and everyday humiliation. ... It was the first government ever to execute significant income redistribution in a society of great inequalities. It coupled the abolition of all forms of servitude in rural estates, a momentous shift in the history of the Andes, akin to the abolition of slavery in the Americas. 142

The peculiarity of the Agrarian Reform posters was manifested by updating and reinterpreting several cultural references. From a visual point of view, they were an example of hybridisation, combining elements from the local culture with socialist slogans, mass mediated images, photographs, comics, and the aesthetics of pop and op art. Innovative were their visual experimentations and illustrated attempts of inclusion of the peasants as the motor for social change. While some of the posters delivered contradictory messages, a publication such as *Chaski* made visible journalistic, artistic, and literary expressions created by Peruvians in the regions. At the same time, the community of people involved in these initiatives expressed themselves by their own means and freely joined these activities. These examples contrasted with the top-down authoritarian view of the government and the demobilisation of the masses, as defined by sociologists Julio Cotler and Aníbal Quijano. Something similar happened with the *talleres de historieta popular*, organised by Juan Acevedo. The encounter among the participants was that of mutual exchange of knowledge from their respective experiences.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>142</sup> Enrique Mayer, Ugly Stories of the Peruvian Agrarian Reform, 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>143</sup> While Quijano criticised the government for its paternalistic authoritarianism and for politically demobilising the dominated masses; Cotler characterised it for "the exclusion of most forms of political participation." Anibal Quijano, *Cuestiones y horizontes: de la dependencia histórico-estructural a la colonialidad/descolonialidad del poder* (Buenos Aires: CLACSO, Lima: Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, 2020), 486. Julio Cotler, "The New Mode of Political Domination," in *The Peruvian Experiment: Continuity and Change Under Military Rule*, ed. Abraham F. Lowenthal, 50. For their criticism against the government, both Cotler and Quijano were sent on exile to Mexico. They were among the few deported people during Velasco Alvarado's administration.

## 2. Total Art Festivals: Democratisation of Culture and Participation

This section is dedicated to the topic of decentralisation of cultural activities, as part of the cultural policies of Velasco Alvarado's government. It took place within Lima, by organising cultural events in impoverished areas in the outskirts of the capital city, and in different regions throughout the country. Decentralisation had the purpose of approaching culture to the popular masses. An example of this was the organisation of total art festivals. These were free of charge festivals in which several artistic disciplines converged. They included dance, theatre, puppetry, painting, sculpture, performances, music, conceptual art, photography, and crafts. I examine the transformation of the total art festivals, which developed from an artist initiative to massive state-organised events.

In 1971, the organisers of the Feria Internacional del Pacífico (International Pacific Fair) invited Swiss artist Francesco Mariotti to present his installation *El movimiento circular de la luz* (The Circular Movement of the Light), previously exhibited at the tenth edition of the Bienal de São Paulo in 1969.<sup>144</sup> After his participation in the fair, the artist was invited by art historian Alfonso Castrillón Vizcarra to do a solo exhibition at the IAC, which at that time was located at the Museo de Arte Italiano in Lima. Instead of a solo show, Mariotti decided to organise an exhibition-event, a total art festival, *Contacta 71*.<sup>145</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>144</sup> This multi-sensorial work (with a diameter of seven metres) was a luminous, acoustic and olfactory sculpture. The structure was of metal and glass, and the core included water and fire.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>145</sup> Francesco Mariotti was born in Bern in 1943. During his childhood, he lived in Peru for some years. Back in Europe, he studied art first in Paris (1965-1966) and then in Hamburg (1966-1969). While living in Hamburg, he was one of the founding members of the Syndikat für Kunstbetrieb (Syndicate for the Art Business) *Cruizin 4*, a group of artists that did a series of events in the form of happenings and exhibitions. In 1968, Mariotti participated in documenta 4 with Klaus Geldmacher, with their work *Projekt Geldmacher-Mariotti, Kassel.* The work consisted of a large-scale multimedia colourful and luminous cube. It is considered as one of the early electronic artworks. Up until his return to Peru, Mariotti was already an established artist in Europe. In Peru, Francesco Mariotti is known as 'Francisco' or also as 'Pancho' Mariotti. The artist was the son of Carlos Mariotti, a Swiss engineer and general manager of the electricity enterprise Empresas Eléctricas Asociadas (1957-1973), whose social responsibility as a businessman was highly appreciated in Peru. For instance, he supplied light and electricity to several shantytowns in Lima. Currently, Francesco Mariotti lives between Zurich and Punta Sal (in the North of Peru). The artist has given his archives as a loan to the Museo de Arte de Lima (MALI). Several of his archives are available online on the artist's website: *Mariotti*, https://mariotti.ch/.

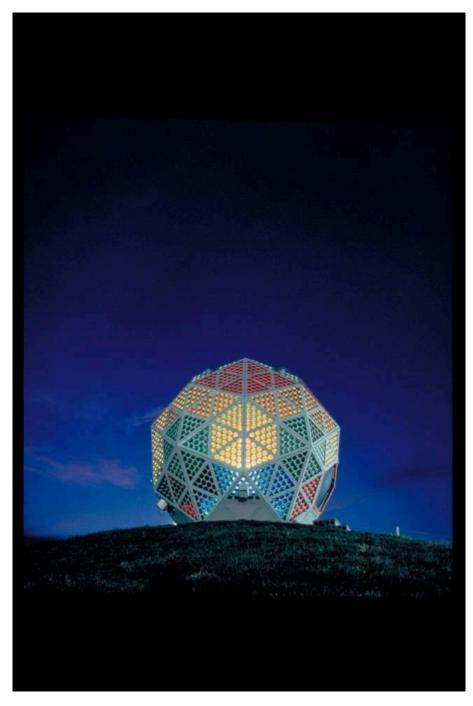


Figure 17. Francesco Mariotti's *El movimiento circular de la luz* at the Pacific International Fair in Lima, 1971.

Source of the image: https://mariotti.ch/.



Figure 18. Visitors inside of Francesco Mariotti's *El movimiento circular de la luz* at the Pacific International Fair in Lima, 1971.

Source of the image: https://mariotti.ch/.

He understood this event as his own artwork, in the sense of "una obra de arte que se hace sola" (an artwork that generates by itself). 146 Contacta 71 was a total art festival, in which all types of artistic disciplines were accepted and everyone could participate. For Contacta 71, Mariotti and José Andrés Lacko wrote a manifesto that was distributed as the festival's call for participation. 147 It invited different artists to take part in the festival, which was held at the surrounding gardens of the museum, the Jardines de Neptuno. According to the manifesto, "art is no longer an ornament" and has become "an attitude." It also "has disappeared as an object to make way towards dematerialised, conceptual art." Moreover, "This so-called conceptual art or idea-art, or less accurate non-object art, usually incorporates other disciplines" and can take "the form of typewritten pages, photographic sequences, the staging of public events or a mathematical premise." 148 The manifesto also stated the aims of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>146</sup> Personal communication with the artist, Zurich, June 5, 2014.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>147</sup> José Andrés Lacko is an Argentine sociologist of Hungarian-Slovakian descent, who studied sociology in Lima. He left Peru in the 1980s, in order to study cinema in Hungary. Since 1986 he has lived in Israel, where he dedicates his time to photography and filmmaking.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>148</sup> Manifesto of *Contacta 71*. Source: https://mariotti.ch/media/uploads/libros/Contacta\_71\_pdf.pdf.

the festival: to come closer to the public and to make them co-participants of the event. *Contacta* addressed art as processed-based, participatory, ephemeral, dematerialised and interdisciplinary. Some works followed the aesthetics of precarity, appraising improvisation; others took place as public interventions or performances. Poetry readings, music, dance and even yoga were among the activities of the four-day festival. On the spirit of the festival, art critic and curator Gustavo Buntinx noted:

Contacta 71 created the illusion of a continuous culture without borders or restrictions. Its accessibility was manifested as absolute: arts and crafts, theatre and puppetry, Rock and Huayno, vernacular dances and Yoga sessions, traditional and vegetarian food. All these arts gathered under the reverberations of the psychedelic techno-Andean sun that served as the emblem for the event, which was defined by one of the participants as "the unification of art." <sup>149</sup>

Contacta 71 depicted an interdisciplinary approach to the arts. Among the participating artists in the category "experimental art" were Luis Arias Vera, Francesco Mariotti, María Mercedes Luy, Ciro Palacios and Mario de Muro. In the category "painting, drawings, printing and photography" were the artists Luis Zevallos Hetzel, Emilio Hernández Saavedra, Tilsa Tsuchiya and Fernando De Szsyslo. In sculpture was visible the work by Víctor Delfín. José Andrés Lacko participated in the section dedicated to poetry. The category "music and theatre" included the folk-rock group *El Polen*, while in theatre participated the actor Edgar Guillén and the theatre group *Telba*.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>149</sup> "Contacta 71 generó la ilusión de un continuo cultural sin fronteras ni restricciones, cuya accesibilidad se manifestaba absoluta: artes y artesanías, teatros y títeres, rock y huayno, danzas vernaculares y sesiones de yoga, comidas típicas y vegetarianas, convivieron bajo las reverberaciones del psicodélico sol tecno-andino que sirvió de emblema al evento definido por uno de sus participantes como "la unificación del arte"." Gustavo Buntinx, *E.P.S. Huayco. Documentos* (Lima: Institut français d'études andines, Centro Cultural de España en Lima, Museo de Arte de Lima-MALI, 2005), 28.

*Huayno* is an Andean traditional music and dance form, which is common in Peru, Bolivia, and the Northern regions of Chile and Argentina.

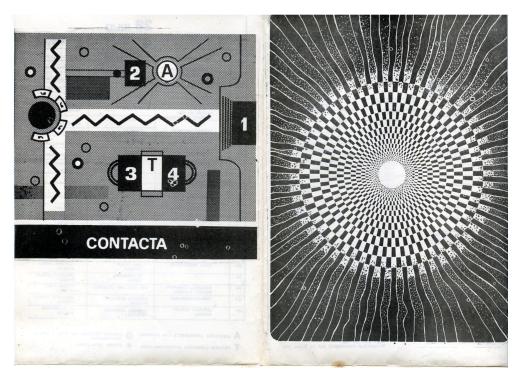


Figure 19. Detail of the leaflet of Contacta 71 with a map indicating the locations of the festival at the Museo de Arte Italiano.

Source of the image: https://mariotti.ch/.

In July 1972, following the success of its first edition, Francesco Mariotti co-organised with the artists Luis Arias Vera and Luis Zevallos Hetzel a second edition of the festival. This time, it was held at the Parque de la Reserva, a public park in Lima's city centre. The artists approached the government and asked for public funding to support the festival. One of SINAMOS's offices, the Dirección General de Organizaciones Culturales y Profesionales (General Direction of Cultural and Professional Organisations), backed it with logistics and money. As in its first edition, Contacta 72 included the work by several artists without making any distinctions. All types of art were welcomed. Among the participants were musicians, visual artists, dancers and poets, who presented their work in public spaces. As stated in the manifesto of Contacta 72, the festival presented art forms "that had not been given enough attention," such as crafts, children's art, circus art, psycho drama, art created in mental health and physical rehabilitation centres, design, graphics, experimental art, and conceptual art, without making any distinctions among them. The spirit of participation, innovation, collaboration, and social mobility aimed by SINAMOS corresponded with the participatory and multidisciplinary nature of the festival. The government seized the opportunity and

presented its own 'manifesto', by suggesting a link between the revolutionary government, the arts, and the people. According to the magazine *Sinamos informa*:

Contacta was a massive means of communication and the answer to the challenge posed by integrating people and art. But, above all, it was the direct contact of the artist with the ordinary citizen, with one who, responding to the stimuli given to them by the organisers, threw herself/himself into experimenting and creating. ... Revolution-art-the people. Hence, here is the trilogy of our time: or, in other words: Sinamos-Contacta-The People.

The aims of the government were in tune with the festival's idea of participation. In an interview, the artist Luis Arias Vera stated the importance of participation, which shall happen without discrimination of any kind: "Amateurs and professionals, everyone engages in art without any discrimination." For the artists, SINAMOS's objectives were compatible with *Contacta*'s goals. As stated by Mariotti:

We discovered that SINAMOS and Contacta corresponded in many ways. While SINAMOS seeks the active participation of the people in the life of the country; with Contacta we look for the participation of the people in the arts. What SINAMOS is putting forward within the social field, we are proposing it to a more restricted degree, within the artistic field. <sup>152</sup>

Contacta 72 reached a larger number of participants than its previous edition. Some of them were able to sell their works, which meant that the festival also had a financial outcome.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>150</sup> "Contacta fue un inmenso medio de comunicación, y la respuesta al reto que plantea la integración pueblo-arte. Pero, sobre todo, fue el contacto directo del artista con el hombre de la calle, con ese hombre que, respondiendo a los estímulos que le dieron los organizadores, se lanzó él a experimentar y crear. … Revolución-arte-pueblo. He aquí, pues, una trilogía de nuestro tiempo: o en otras palabras: Sinamos-Contacta-Pueblo." Anonymous, "Contacta 72: Arte Libertario", *Sinamos informa*, year 1, no. 2 (1972): 34-35.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>151</sup> "Aficionados y profesionales, todos participan del arte sin que haya lugar a ninguna discriminación." *La Nueva Crónica*, "Contacta 72 será una experiencia de significación," July 26, 1972.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>152</sup> "Descubrimos que el SINAMOS y Contacta coincidían en muchos aspectos. El SINAMOS, por ejemplo, busca la participación activa de la gente en la vida del país, nosotros en Contacta buscamos la participación de la gente en el arte. Lo que el SINAMOS se propone a nivel social nosotros lo proponemos a un nivel más restringido: a nivel artístico." Anonymous, "Contacta 72: Arte Libertario", *Sinamos informa*, year 1, no. 2 (1972): 35.

After the success of Contacta 72, SINAMOS hired Francesco Mariotti to work for the state-run organisation. In 1972, the artist moved to the city of Cusco, where he worked for SINAMOS's regional office ORAMS VII as head of Dissemination and Cultural Affairs. During his tenure, he was a member of the editorial team of Chaski. Semanario de los pueblos jóvenes, and was involved in the organisation of the total art festivals Hatariy (1972) and Inkari (1974). In addition to this, he developed art and communication projects, mostly in the form of silkscreen printing workshops with the local community and peasants. 153



Figure 20. Poster of the total art festival Contacta 72, by Francesco Mariotti. Source of the image: https://mariotti.ch/.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>153</sup> Gustavo Buntinx, E.P.S Huayco. Documentos, 30.

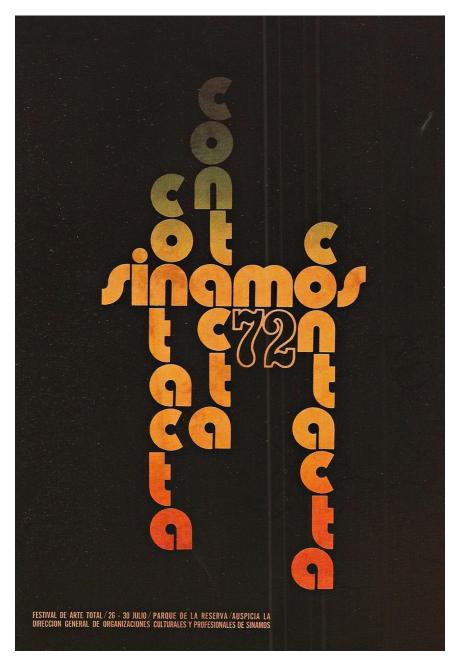


Figure 21. SINAMOS's version of the poster for *Contacta 72*. Design: José Bracamonte Vera.

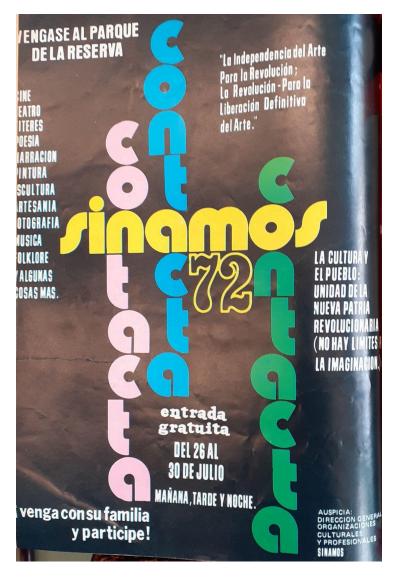


Figure 22. Advertising of the festival *Contacta 72* in the magazine *Oiga*. Source of the image: back cover of the magazine *Oiga*, June 23, 1972.

The government understood *Contacta* as a "rehearsal" for the major event *Inkari*. <sup>154</sup> The latter expanded the geographic scope of *Contacta*, by being the first nation-wide interdisciplinary art festival. As stated in the magazine *Sinamos informa*, the military administration acknowledged the importance of the arts in the revolutionary and emancipatory process, that would free the people from the "cultural dependence and populist subcultures with which capitalism has sickened us." For the government, it was through the arts and free creativity that a "rebirth of national culture" was

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>154</sup> Anonymous, "Reintegración: Inkari: un reencuentro esperado," *Oiga*, no. 546 (October 12, 1973): 41-43. The festival *Inkari* had several editions. The first was held in the city of Cusco (September 1973). A month later it took place in Lima at the Campo de Marte stadium (October 1973). In 1974, *Inkari* took place in different regions throughout the country, including Piura, Cusco, Apurímac and Madre de Dios.

possible.<sup>155</sup> What the government understood as "national culture" privileged Andean topics, for instance by naming the event *Inkari*, referring to the Andean mythological figure with the same name.<sup>156</sup>

Inspired by these types of festivals the government organised the festival *Arte y Pueblo* in Arequipa, as part of the celebrations of the Día de la Dignidad Nacional (Day of National Dignity) in October 1972.<sup>157</sup> A month later, SINAMOS, the cultural association Grupo de Acción Cultural Javier Heraud and the Casa de la Cultura organised the festival *Hatariy* in the city of Cusco.<sup>158</sup> The regional events organised by SINAMOS from 1972 onwards (*Arte y Pueblo, Hatariy, Inkari 73* and *Inkari 74*) focused more on crafts and local popular cultural expressions, fostering the value of indigenous cultural productions. The outcomes of these festivals encouraged the creation of several music groups and expanded the vinyl industry, by including Peruvian traditional music from different regions.<sup>159</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>155</sup> Anonymous, "Editorial: hacia una cultura popular," Sinamos informa, no. 13 (1973): 2-3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>156</sup> Inkari (also Inkarrí) is a mythological Andean figure that depicts a possible future free from the Spanish colonisers, in which the Inca has a triumphant return. The myth draws attention to Peruvian colonial history, for instance the imprisonment of Atahualpa by the Spanish colonists, which also marks the beginning of the Viceroyalty of Peru. One of the versions of the myth suggests that the body of the Inca has been buried in different parts of the country and the day these parts will come together, peace will be restored. The myth also has a messianic meaning, as the figure of Inkari resurrects/comes back to life. Other interpretations associate it with the dismemberment of Túpac Amaru II that led to his execution.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>157</sup> Anonymous, "Orams IX: Arte y Pueblo," *Sinamos informa*, no. 6 (1972): 74. The 9th October, the "Day of National Dignity," commemorates the seizure of La Brea and Pariñas oil refinery in the city of Talara by the GRFA. Six days after Velasco Alvarado's coup d'état, the government nationalised the oil industry that was in the hands of the International Petroleum Company (IPC). Nowadays, this day is known as the Oil Workers' Day and it is still celebrated in the city of Talara.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>158</sup> Hatariv means "to rise up," "to awaken," as well as "to get up" in Quechua language.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>159</sup> Pablo Molina, "De Trossingen a Cusco. Breves apuntes sobre la entrada del 'rondín' al espacio sonoro andino," *Mundos Sonoros*, July 15, 2019, https://mundossonoros.wordpress.com/2019/07/15/de-trossingen-al-cusco/. For more information about this topic, see Raúl R. Romero, "Decolonising Andean and Peruvian Music: A View from Within." Ethnomusicology Forum, vol. 30, no. 1 (2021): 129-139. https://doi.org/10.1080/17411912.2021.1938626.

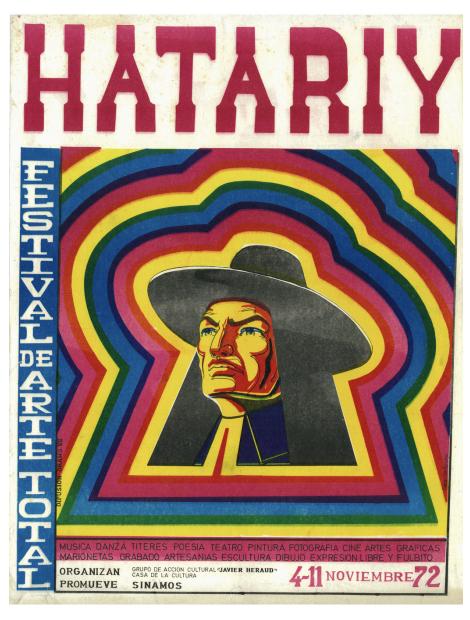


Figure 23. Poster of the total art festival *Hatariy*, held from 4 to 11 November 1972 in the city of Cusco. Poster by César Gavancho. Source of the image: https://mariotti.ch/.

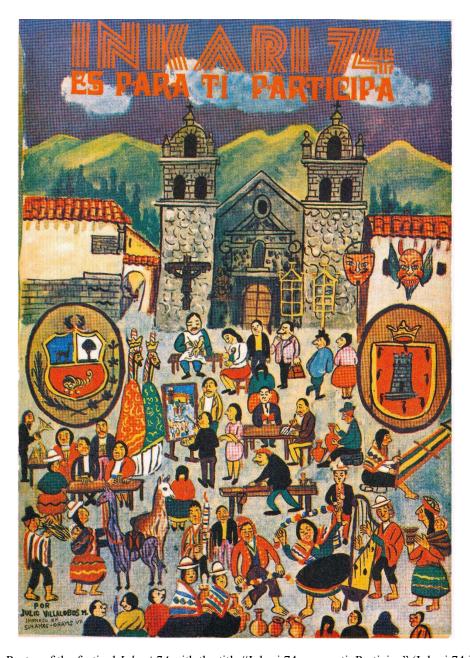


Figure 24. Poster of the festival *Inkari 74* with the title "Inkari 74 es para ti. Participa" (Inkari 74 is for You. Participate), published by SINAMOS-ORAMS VII office. Design of the poster: Julio Villalobos M. Source of the image: https://mariotti.ch/.

While living and working in Cusco, Mariotti created a luminous object on layered acrylic plates. The work with the title *Reforma Agraria* (Agrarian Reform) included a timeline of the government's first years and a document with the numbers of land allocated to the peasants from 1970 to 1973. The work was exhibited at the lobby of the Universidad Nacional San Antonio Abad del Cusco during the *IX Salón de Artistas* (9th edition of the Artists' Salon), organised by the INC's branch in Cusco in 1974.

Besides his work for the government, Mariotti continued participating in international exhibitions. In 1972, he collaborated with the artist Víctor Delfín in the creation of the *Tríptico del sol, el arco del cielo y la luna* (Triptych of the Sun, the Rainbow and the Moon), presented during the Coltejer Biennale in Medellín. Between 1972 and 1975, Mariotti took part in several exhibitions organised by CAyC. These shows were held, amongst others, in Córdoba, Buenos Aires, Quito, Madrid, Zagreb, Maastricht and Hamburg. He was also invited to participate with *La torre de la verdad* (The Tower of Truth) in one of the stations of the exhibition *Hacia un perfil del arte latinoamericano* (Towards a Profile of Latin American Art), which shall have toured to the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes in Santiago de Chile in 1973. However, after Pinochet's coup d'état the show was cancelled. The archives indicating the existence of the exhibition were found at the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes in Santiago, which staged the show in retrospect in 2020.<sup>161</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>160</sup> The artist's website includes a magazine clipping that portrays Francesco Mariotti sitting at a desk. At the back, an image of his work *Reforma Agraria*: https://www.mariotti.ch/es/expositions/1974/reforma-agraria/. The document with the land allocations is available under this link: https://www.mariotti.ch/media/uploads/libros/Adjudicaciones Reforma Agraria.pdf.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>161</sup> Mariana Marchesi and Sebastián Vidal Valenzuela, *La exposición olvidada y una lectura a cuatro artistas chilenos, CAYC: Chile/Argentina, 1973-1985-2020*, Santiago de Chile: Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, 2020.



Figure 25. View of *Tríptico del Sol, el Arco del Cielo y la Luna* presented at the Bienal de Coltejer, 1972. Source of the image: https://mariotti.ch/.

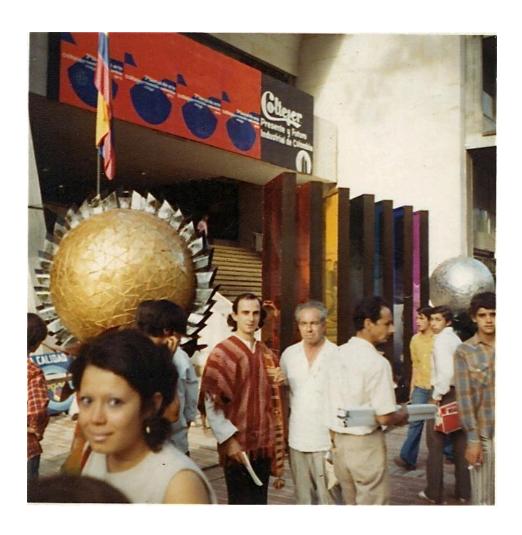


Figure 26. Francesco Mariotti (wearing a red poncho) at the Bienal de Coltejer, 1972. At the back, the triptych *Triptico del Sol, el Arco del Cielo y la Luna*. Source of the image: https://mariotti.ch/.

While Mariotti relocated to Cusco, the artist Luis Arias Vera began to work for INRED, the government's office in charge of recreation, physical education and sports activities. Between 1974 and 1976 Arias Vera organised two alternative sports events, the *Carrera de Chasquis* (Chasquis' Race) and the *Maratón de Triciclos* (Tricycles' Marathon). The first was a relay race from South to North of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>162</sup> INRED is the Spanish acronym for Instituto Nacional Recreación, Educación Física y Deportes (National Institute of Recreation, Physical Education and Sports).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>163</sup> *Chasqui* (also Chaski) is a Quechua word that means 'recipient' or 'messenger'. These races referred to the messengers – what we understand today under 'couriers' – during the Inca empire, who transmitted messages by foot using a complex system of relays spread throughout the entire territory. *Chicha* is a traditional Peruvian alcoholic beverage made from fermented corn.

Regarding these two activities, in this paragraph I am referring to the essay by Mijail Mitrovic, "Chasquis y triciclos: nuevas formas del deporte bajo el velasquismo," *Argumentos*, edition no. 2, year 13 (2019): 30-36. The promotional leaflet of the *Carrera de Chasquis* is available here: *ICAA archives*, "Instituto Nacional de Recreación, Educación Física y Deportes. 1os Juegos Deportivo-Recreativos Túpac Amaru para Organizaciones

country that began in Cusco and finished in Lambayeque. In total it covered 28,000 km, comprising 970 localities. This distance was run in daily relays, where the *chasquis* were "received in the squares amidst festivities with chicha, food and music." <sup>164</sup> In 1976, during the government of Morales Bermúdez, Arias Vera organised a second edition of this race, connecting the cities of Cusco and Cajamarca. The *Maratón de Triciclos* was sponsored by INRED and organised by the newspaper *La Crónica*. As Mitrovic noted, while the *Carrera de Chasquis* aimed to mobilise the rural population, the marathon was intended to include the proletarian workers, such as ice cream and bread sellers, recyclers, and other self-employed workers. The *Maratón de Triciclos* was held in Lima, covering the route from the Campo de Marte stadion to the working-class district of Vitarte. The only condition to participate was that of owning a tricycle. As it happened with the total art festivals, these alternative sports events encouraged the active participation of the audience.

Concerning Arias Vera's artistic trajectory in the period of Velasco Alvarado's administration, in 1968 the artist was awarded with a fellowship from Fundación para las Artes and spent a year in New York. In 1968 and 1969, he had two exhibitions at the Simone Stern gallery in New Orleans; and one in 1969 at the Kiko gallery in Houston. In addition to this, in 1972 Arias Vera participated in one of the stations of the exhibition *Arte de Sistemas Internacional*, organised by CAyC, which was held in Buenos Aires.<sup>165</sup>

All these state-led events did not happen without contradictions. Although the artists and intellectuals working for these initiatives had a relative freedom of action; at times, the intentions by the artists differed with that of the military. This was one

Agrarias y Carrera de Chasquis," Chiclayo, Perú: Instituto Nacional de Recreación, Educación Física y Deportes, 1975, https://icaa.mfah.org/s/en/item/1141392.

Video documentation about these races can be found here: Raúl Goyburu Producciones, "Carrera de Chasquis," April 25, 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QlOFagGsKCs; and Acervo Leistenschneider, "Maratón de Triciclos," July 1, 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l06oFXj1M1g.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>164</sup> Mijail Mitrovic, "Chasquis y triciclos: nuevas formas del deporte bajo el velasquismo," 31-32.

Web of the artist Luis Arias Vera: Arias Vera, http://www.ariasvera.com/bio1.html and ICAA archives, "Participantes en la muestra Arte de Sistemas Internacional," https://icaa.mfah.org/s/caycfiles/item/1476343#?c=&m=&s=&cv=&xywh=-616%2C1784%2C1230%2C581.

of the reasons why Francesco Mariotti decided to leave his position at SINAMOS in 1974.

Velasco Alvarado's health began to deteriorate in early 1973.<sup>166</sup> Without a leader being able to assume his former duties, from 1973 onwards authoritarianism increased and the government began to go off course. Among the reasons were the expropriation of the press in 1974 and the unstable economic situation of the country.<sup>167</sup> In addition to this, from 3 to 5 February 1975 the police did a general strike (also known as "Limazo" or "Febrerazo"), which ended as a brutal confrontation between the police, the military, civilians, and hooligans. Héctor Béjar added external factors to Velasco Alvarado's demise:

In September 1973 Nixon, Kissinger and Pinochet initiated the massacre of Chileans. Having achieved their objective, they began to take Peru into account. They did this through their friends and accomplices within the APRA [party] and the Navy. The terrorist campaign against the revolutionary leaders of the Navy and against Velasco were unleashed only

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>166</sup> End of January 1973, Velasco Alvarado had an aortic aneurysm. His health deteriorated, resulting in the amputation of one of his legs. He died on 24 December 1977. Thousands of people attended his funeral. Adrián Lerner, "Who Drove the Revolution's Hearse? The Funeral of Juan Velasco Alvarado," in *The Peculiar Revolution: Rethinking the Peruvian Experiment under Military Rule*, 73-93.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>167</sup> The first Estatuto de libertad prensa (Press Freedom Statute) was released on 30 December 1969 (Decree Law no. 18075). On 9 November 1971, the government introduced the General Law of Telecommunications (Decree Law no. 19020). In general, the laws on communication (radio, printed press and television) aimed to generate content for the large part of the population of the country that was not represented in the media. The government introduced these laws as part of a programme of "socialisation of communication media." Among the introductions were radio in Quechua language and television programmes that focused on the regions. It was also in this period in which traditional music from the regions began to be broadcasted on the radio nationwide. According to Anna Cant, in the beginning these initiatives questioned the social role of the media and sought to democratise both the organisation of mass media and the production of its content. In this sense, "Velasco government's policies were linked to an intellectual trend shared by many so-called third world countries." It was also intended to decrease television programmes with foreign influences (mainly from the United States) and reduce the power of the broadcast owners. Concerning this, Cant noted that in 1968 out of nineteen television channels, thirteen were owned by five Peruvian families. In 1974, the press reform (Decree Laws nos. 20680 and 20681) "expropriated national newspapers and transferred ownership of them to workers' groups, with the idea of better representing their interests in the public sphere. Thus, El Comercio passed to rural organisations; Expreso, to educational groups; and La Prensa, to industrial workers." Anna Cant, "Entre la vanguardia y el autoritarismo: el gobierno de Velasco y los mass-media. El caso del tío Johnny," in Mitologías velasquistas, 47-59. For more information about the mass media reforms and the situation of the press during Velasco Alvarado's government, see: Juan Gargurevich, Velasco y la prensa, 1968-1975, Lima: Fondo Editorial PUCP, 2021; Rita Atwood and Sérgio Mattos, "Mass Media Reform and Social Change: The Peruvian Experience," *Journal of Communication*, vol. 32, issue 2 (June 1982): 33-45. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1982.tb00493.x.

months later, starting in January 1974; it continued with the police strike and the plundering of Lima and ended with the deposition of Velasco in August 1975. 168

On 29 August 1975, the military Francisco Morales Bermúdez, a moderate supporter of Velasco Alvarado, led a coup d' état in the city of Tacna and established the second term of the GRFA, which lasted until 1980. More conservative than his predecessor, he did not continue with the process initiated by Velasco Alvarado and reversed most of his radical policies. Among them, he systematically dismantled SINAMOS and other organisations related to social mobilisation, which included the destruction of several of its archives. As Enrique Mayer observed, during Morales Bermúdez's government, "union smashing, persecution, and arbitrary arrests were common." <sup>169</sup> The economic crisis increased, which led to a general strike on 19 July 1977 that brought further demonstrations urging the return to democracy (this strike has been remembered as the biggest one in Peruvian history). In this tumultuous year, art students occupied the National Autonomous School of Fine Arts of Peru (ENSABAP) on 15 December 1977, demanding a change in the academic curriculum. 170 Two years later, in 1979, a group of former students of the ENSABAP, gathered and created the artist collective *Paréntesis* (Parenthesis).<sup>171</sup> The group began its activities with the publication of three advertisements in the newspaper *El* Comercio, with the following phrase: "Artistas plásticos buscan mecenas" (Visual artists are looking for a patron). The same year, the group approached Francesco Mariotti and with him they organised a third edition of the total art festival Contacta.

<sup>168 &</sup>quot;En septiembre de 1973 Nixon, Kissinger y Pinochet desencadenaron la matanza de chilenos. Conseguido su objetivo empezaron a tomar en cuenta al Perú. Lo hicieron a través de sus amigos y cómplices en el APRA y la Marina. La campaña terrorista contra los jefes revolucionarios de la Marina y contra Velasco fue desencadenada apenas meses después, desde enero de 1974; siguió con la huelga policial y el saqueo de Lima: y culminó con la deposición de Velasco en agosto de 1975." Héctor Béjar, *Velasco*, 43. The brackets are mine. The Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana (American Popular Revolutionary Alliance, APRA for its Spanish acronym) is a Peruvian political party, founded in 1924 by Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>169</sup> Enrique Mayer, Ugly Stories of the Peruvian Agrarian Reform, 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>170</sup> Escuela Nacional Superior Autónoma de Bellas Artes del Perú, ENSABAP for its Spanish acronym. About the crisis of the ENSABAP, see Gustavo Buntinx, *E.P.S. Huayco. Documentos*, 31-40.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>171</sup> *Paréntesis* was composed by Lucy Angulo, Rosario "Charo" Noriega (†), Mercedes Idoyaga, Fernando Bedoya, Juan Javier Salazar (†), Raúl Villavicencio, Jaime La Hoz and José Antonio Morales. Among the collaborators were Rossana Agois, Wiley Ludeña and Hugo Salazar del Alcázar (†).

Contacta 79 was held in Lima's Barranco district, known for its intellectual and bohemian circles. It took place from 27 to 30 July 1979, close to the celebrations of the National Independence Day (28 July 1821). Less massive than the previous editions, the festival coincided with the triumph of the Nicaraguan Sandinista Revolution, which was acknowledged in the festival's manifesto. In 1980, some members of Paréntesis joined with other artists and created the artist group Taller E.P.S. Huayco (1980-1981). 172 Positioning themselves against commercial art galleries, the artists used public spaces to produce and present their work. The city will be their source of inspiration. The group based its practice on the observations of Lima's visual landscape and the different cultures within it, incorporating elements from the local (urban) popular cultures. This was visible in silkscreen prints, as well as in works made with recycled materials. For instance, Arte al paso (Salchipapas) (1980) or Sarita Colonia (1980-1981), made with thousands of recycled milk cans, which were recollected from garbage heaps in shantytowns. <sup>173</sup> In addition to this, *Taller E.P.S.* Huayco organised street interviews with passers-by, Encuestas de preferencias estéticas de un público urbano (1981). It also did a mural in the district of Vitarte, which remained unfinished. Taller E.P.S. Huayco prioritised the urban settings of Lima; or its outskirts, as in Sarita Colonia, which was placed on a hill on the kilometre no. 56 of the Pan-American highway. The influence of the social theories of art circulating in the period, such as the ones by Nicos Hadjinicolaou, Mirko Lauer or Alfonso Castrillón Vizcarra, were visible in their first and only exhibition in a gallery space, Arte al paso, held at gallery Fórum in 1980.<sup>174</sup> Among the work Salchipapas, which was

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>172</sup> The core of the group was composed by the artists Francesco Mariotti, María Luy, Rosario "Charo" Noriega (†), Herbert Rodríguez, Juan Javier Salazar (†), Armando Williams and Mariela Zevallos. The name of the group took the initials of E.P.S., which came about from a wordplay stemming from different terms. Among them were "Empresas de Propiedad Social," which were the social property enterprises during Velasco Alvarado's government. Gustavo Buntinx, *E.P.S. Huayco. Documentos*, 101. The Quechua word *huayco* means mudslide.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>173</sup> The work *Salchipapas* (which is the name of a type of fast food, composed of fried sausages and potatoes) was first installed in the streets of Barranco and later as part of the exhibition *Arte al paso* in the gallery Fórum in 1980. *Sarita Colonia* was based on the image of a local popular saint with the same name. Although this saint has not been recognised by the Vatican, Sarita Colonia (1914-1940) is revered by many Peruvians, mainly in the capital city and in Callao, the port city where she passed away. To create *Sarita Colonia*, Taller E.P.S Huayco re-used part of the recycled milk cans of *Salchipapas*. An extensive analysis about this artist collective is the one by Gustavo Buntinx, *E.P.S. Huayco. Documentos* (2005).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>174</sup> Hadjinicolaou was the author of *Art History and Class Struggle* (1973), a book that widely influenced Latin American art historians, critics and artists in the 1970s.

installed on the floor of the gallery, the artists placed silkscreen printed posters and quotations by these art scholars on the gallery walls. Mariotti's work for the government and the focus on the local popular culture he experienced while working for ORAMS VII, Mirko Lauer's writings and the social theories of art circulating at the time were among the influences of the group. As Gustavo Buntinx noted, *Taller E.P.S. Huayco* exemplified the integration of the popular emergent cultures within the illustrated petty bourgeoisie.<sup>175</sup>



Figure 27. Installing *Arte al paso (Salchipapas)* in the streets of Barranco, May 1980.

Photo: Guillermo Orbegoso.

Source of the image: "Obras: portafolio II. E.P.S. Huayco (1980-1981),"

Gustavo Buntinx, E.P.S. Huayco. Documentos, 271-323,

https://books.openedition.org/ifea/8139?lang=de.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>175</sup> Gustavo Buntinx, "¿Entre lo popular y lo moderno? Alternativas pretendidas o reales en la joven plástica peruana," *Hueso Húmero*, no. 18 (July-September 1983): 79.



Figure 28. *Arte al paso* in the gallery Fórum, May 1980. Source of the image: "Obras: portafolio II. E.P.S. Huayco (1980-1981)," Gustavo Buntinx, E.P.S. Huayco. Documentos, 271-323, https://books.openedition.org/ifea/8139?lang=de.



Figure 29. Taller E.P.S. Huayco (María Luy, Francesco Mariotti, Rosario Noriega, Herbert Rodríguez, Armando Williams, Mariela Zevallos), *Sarita Colonia*, October 1980.

Enamel on tinplate: 60 m2, approx. (virtually destroyed). Photo: Marianne Ryzek.

Source of the image: "Obras: portafolio II. E.P.S. Huayco (1980-1981)," *Gustavo Buntinx, E.P.S. Huayco. Documentos*, 271-323,

https://books.openedition.org/ifea/8139?lang=de.

In conclusion, *Contacta* was an artist initiative that had three moments (*Contacta 71*, *Contacta 72* and *Contacta 79*). The first one was an artist initiative, the second was supported by the military government; and the third was again an artist-led event, co-organised by Mariotti with members of the artist group *Paréntesis*. <sup>176</sup> A question that remains open is whether the total art festivals organised by the government – which were inspired by *Contacta* – could still be considered "a work of art that generates by itself," as Mariotti noted; or if they just became part of one of the many undertakings of the government's busy political agenda.

For the government, decentralisation was a crucial measure to include all Peruvians in cultural and education matters. In this context, the total art festivals broke with traditional frameworks for art events (generally addressed to a limited and selected audience, and confined to art institutions or galleries), by taking place in public spaces and going beyond institutional artistic settings. These festivals contributed to an understanding of inclusive audiences and participants, as co-creators of the festival. Contrasting with a passive contemplation of artworks, they encouraged the active participation of the audience. In terms of artistic genres, all types of art were admitted and there were no distinctions among them. The participants chose how they wanted to engage. In these events, the value of crafts as an art form was acknowledged. For Mijail Mitrovic, the festivals were "collective experiments that articulated the artistic avant-garde on a scale that was unusual, and little explored by the avant-garde of the 1960s, which we must understand as an alternative mass culture to the capitalist one." Thus, the bourgeois experimental scene got closer to the local popular culture, reducing its elitist character.

For Claire Bishop, art under a socialist regime "is perhaps the most complicated episode in the history of participatory art, namely the impulses motivating collaborative practice when collectivism is an ideological requirement and a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>176</sup> I am not analysing *Contacta 79*, as it is not linked to the cultural policies I am focusing on in this chapter. Additionally, this edition of the festival was held after Velasco Alvarado's government.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>177</sup> "Se trata de experimentos colectivos que articularon a la vanguardia artística con una escala inusitada y poco explorada por la vanguardia de los años sesenta, que debemos entender como una cultura de masas alternativa a la capitalista." Mijail Mitrovic Pease, *Extravios de la forma*, 80.

state-imposed norm."178 In the examples about artists living under communism in the former Czech Republic (Prague and Bratislava) and the former Soviet Union (Moscow) during the 1960s and 1970s, Bishop draws the conclusion that instead of showing dissidence against an oppressively monolithic cultural sphere, these artists provided a space for "nurturing individualism (of behaviour, actions, interpretations)," expressed by means of escapist or celebratory collective experiences. She confronted these practices with examples from Argentine artists, who organised a series of critical actions during Juan Carlos Onganía's dictatorship (1966-1970) around the same period. In these examples, participation was a means to provoke audiences regarding their social conditions, by making them aware of them and hoping they would act in the social sphere. 179 I am taking these two examples by Bishop, that of socialist governments in Europe and that of a right-wing dictatorship in South America, to confront them with the military administration of Velasco Alvarado. As we have seen, during Velasco Alvarado's government participation was among the state-led concerns. This administration was conceived as a democracia social de participación plena (social democracy with full participation). However, the examples I have presented were neither nurturing individualist aesthetic experiences, nor wanted to provoke audiences. In the state-led events, participation was intended to create a sense of community and to engage in collaborative artistic practice. In the festivals, there was a utopian sense of a temporary harmonic collective creative experience, in which there was no discrimination among the participants or the creative means used. I agree with Mijail Mitrovic on the fact that the festivals suggested "the foundation of a kind of restitution of individual creativity whose destiny would be the community."180 For a short period of time, the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>178</sup> Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells. Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London: Verso, 2012), 129.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>179</sup> Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells*, 161.

Onganía conducted a civic-military dictatorship, which was self-proclaimed as "Revolución argentina" (Argentine Revolution) (1966-1970). With a conservative, right-wing tendency, it was influenced by Francisco Franco's dictatorship in Spain (1939-1975). Daniel G. Kressel, "The "Argentine Franco"?: The Regime of Juan Carlos Onganía and Its Ideological Dialogue with Francoist Spain (1966–1970)," *The Americas*, vol. 78, no. 1 (January 2021): 89-117, doi:10.1017/tam.2020.106.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>180</sup> "Lo que en los festivales aparecía como una socialización del arte encuentra aquí el fundamento de una especie de restitución de la creatividad individual cuyo destino sería la comunidad." Mijail Mitrovic Pease, *Extravíos de la forma*, 81.

total art festivals created a sense of equality among the participants, who would probably not have met in another context in daily life. These festivals had a similar purpose as the carnivalesque sense of the world by Mikhail Bakhtin. For him, the carnival suspended for a moment the distance among people. It brought people together, who usually were separated by hierarchical class-conscious structures, fostering free individual expression and interaction. At the same time, it offered a new mode of interaction among people, a non-hierarchical and familiar one. The total art festivals may also fall into the category of some relational art practices, in which participation is understood as a social encounter. Nonetheless, I am not sure if spontaneous creative actions, such as ones that would provoke audiences, would have been possible during state-organised events with the attendance of members of a military organisation.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>181</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoievsky's Poetics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 123.

## 3. Expanding the Notion of Art: The Reappraisal of Crafts

"It is hard to understand why some people find it so annoying to adjectivise an idea or a concept with the expression "Peruvian." They hate nationalism ... and, against the grain, they proclaim themselves furious internationalists. Only in a head confused by all sorts of abstractions, in a mind accustomed to proceeding without the waves of blood coming from the heart to it, to talk of Peruvian landscape, heroism, art, mission and hope can be considered as a threat to the survival of a feeling of universal fraternity. Such individuals – whose nationality is only a legal document that paradoxically serves to integrate Peruvian delegations abroad – should be asked to come down to Earth and act with a little more generosity and love."

— Sebastián Salazar Bondy<sup>182</sup>

"We do not always perceive the depth of our backwardness, the anachronism of our mentality, our cultural and social prejudices that we have taken as normal and prevail until today. They were much stronger back then."

— Héctor Béjar<sup>183</sup>

This section is about the re-evaluation of crafts as part of the cultural policies of Velasco Alvarado's government. This measure corresponded with a larger discussion regarding artistic production in Latin America throughout the 1970s and 1980s, in which the reappraisal of crafts was understood as an anti-colonial and anti-imperialist move. Despite this, in Peru the reappraisal of crafts did not go beyond being an inclusive gesture, as the art apparatus remained untouched.

As is the case, Peruvian society is deeply rooted in colonial structures, which unfortunately persist until today. Peruvians experience what Mexican sociologist Pablo González Casanova defined as "internal colonialism."<sup>184</sup> Its attributes include

<sup>182 &</sup>quot;No se entiende por qué para algunas gentes el adjetivar una idea o un concepto con la expresión "peruano" les resulta tan molesto. Detestan el nacionalismo ... y, a redopelo, se proclaman internacionalistas furibundos. Sólo en una cabeza confundida por todo tipo de abstracciones, en una mente habituada a proceder sin que le lleguen las oleadas de sangre que proceden del corazón, el hablar de paisaje, heroísmo, arte, misión y esperanza peruanos puede considerarse peligroso para la supervivencia de un sentimiento de fraternidad universal. Habría que pedirles a tales individuos —cuya nacionalidad es sólo un documento legal que sirve para integrar delegaciones paradójicamente peruanas al extranjero— que desciendan a la tierra y actúen en ella con un poco más de generosidad y amor." Sebastián Salazar Bondy, "Lo que niega un cosmopolita," *La Prensa: diario independiente de la mañana*, September 27, 1955.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>183</sup> "No siempre percibimos lo profundo de nuestro atraso, lo anacrónico de nuestra mentalidad, nuestros prejuicios culturales y sociales que tomamos como normales y prevalecen hasta hoy. Eran mucho más fuertes en aquella época." Héctor Béjar, *Velasco*, 40.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>184</sup> Pablo González Casanova, "El colonialismo interno," in *De la sociología del poder a la sociología de la explotación: pensar América Latina en el siglo XXI*, comp. Marcos Roitman Rosenmann (Bogotá: Siglo del Hombre Editores, CLACSO, 2009), 129-156. González Casanova developed the concept of *colonialismo interno* (internal colonialism) throughout the 1960s.

psychological attitudes that recreate the system of domination of the colonisers, perpetuating similar forms of exploitation of the indigenous population. More than psychological, internal colonialism is a structural phenomenon that affects several areas in society. González Casanova explained it as the transfer of economic, cultural and political inequality between the colony and the Spanish monarchy, to the existing discrimination between the urban population and the indigenous people. They take shape in the form of giving less or restricting access to education, technology, administrative and legal duties, or by linguistic discrimination. All these factors influence daily life and the labour conditions. For instance, by constraining the indigenous population to do unqualified jobs or by paying them lower wages. Within the capitalist context, class struggle is intertwined with racism. The internal colonialism engendered what I call an identity by exclusion, between the Creole Peruvians (Peruvians with European ancestry) and the rest of the country. The category of internal colonialism serves me to explain the fact that even after Peru's independence in July 1821, the colonial mindset has continued to be intrinsic to Peruvian society.

While the former Viceroyalty of Peru depended on the Spanish monarchy in Europe, establishing an economic monopoly; after independence, the centralism has been replicated in the capital city, where the decisions are made for the whole country. Although centralism is not something uncommon in other countries, in Peru centralism refers to the tendency among the social elite in Peru to amass and concentrate wealth and progress in the capital city. This pattern has persisted throughout Peru's history, resulting in significant levels of economic inequality and political disengagement in rural areas; with Lima gaining most socioeconomic advantages in the country. Furthermore, centralism has played a role in perpetuating systemic racism in Peru, as the concentration of wealth and education in Lima has led *Limeños* to perceive rural indigenous individuals as inferior. Accordingly, centralism has caused a disconnection with the regions and a lack of integration of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>185</sup> Marisol de la Cadena, "Silent Racism and Intellectual Superiority in Peru," *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 17, no. 2 (1998): 143-164. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3339226.

its population. In this context, the Creole population has the monopoly over the industry, press and other communication media, and the production of culture.

Although foreign imperialism has been presented as one of the causes of the country's underdevelopment; I consider that one of the main obstacles in Peru was an internal problem that has been affecting almost all areas of society: racism and classism. The drastic racial and classist division of Peruvian society continues to be one of the biggest impediments for the country to develop. It is true that there were imperialist agendas implicated in an extractive economy, determined to establish a monopoly and have control over the supply chain. However, the Creole population was more interested in serving this agenda or benefitting from it, than finding ways to focus on the possibilities of internal development within the country. In the semi-feudal economic and social system, which was the one that Velasco Alvarado aimed to overthrow, the export oligarchy was in alliance with the landowners. <sup>186</sup>

As Peruvian sociologist Sinesio López noted, there has been no exchange nor communication between classes, which made it impossible to develop a common collective national project. Additionally, in the cultural field the dominant class was absorbed by what was coming from abroad:

The ruling classes have not developed their own culture, even less a national culture. Their lifestyle, their consumption patterns, their artistic taste and their intellectual topics; in short, their common sense and the upper echelons of culture – science, art and technology – are more closely linked to the foreign markets of London, Paris and USA, than to their national needs. <sup>187</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>186</sup> Sociologist Julio Cotler defined the Peruvian society of this period as "dualistic" or "feudal-bourgeois." Julio Cotler, "The New Mode of Political Domination," in *The Peruvian Experiment: Continuity and Change Under Military Rule*, 47.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>187</sup> "Las clases dominantes no han desarrollado una cultura propia y menos aún una cultura nacional. Su estilo de vida, sus patrones de consumo, sus gustos artísticos y su problemática intelectual, en pocas palabras, su sentido común y los eslabones superiores de la cultura – ciencia, arte y técnica – se entroncan más con los mercados extranjeros de Londres y París y USA, que con sus necesidades nacionales." Sinesio López J., "El Estado oligárquico en el Perú: un ensayo de interpretación," *Revista Mexicana de Sociología*, vol. 40, no. 3 (July - September 1978): 996. https://www.jstor.org/stable/3539674.

The visual arts field has not been an exception to this rule, establishing a cultural imbalance and segregation. Against this backdrop, Mirko Lauer described the history of Peruvian painting in the twentieth century as a complex dynamic of oppositions between 'dominant' versus 'dominated' cultures. They were expressed in different moments, shifting from universalist to localist tendencies. Primarily, the axis of the local artistic debates encompassed the problems of cultural diversity and the class division in Peruvian society. For Lauer, from the 1930s onwards, what was considered as 'national' was in fact taken over by a foreign, modernising principle: American imperialism. Largely, it implied that the artists sought to create a local reproduction of what was produced abroad. Between the 1940s and 1950s several artists migrated to Europe, bringing back their ideas to Lima upon their return, also marking the expansion of the art market. In the mid 1950s, there was an intense debate in the press between abstraction and figuration (represented by *indigenismo*). In general, the polemic was about art's social function and the national element in the arts. 188 A half-way between universalism and localism was the abstraction style that emerged in the late 1950s, what Mirko Lauer called Teoría de las raíces nacionales (Theory of the National Roots). It consisted of a synthesis of abstraction and pre-colonial motifs. 189 This type of abstraction inherited the use of pre-Hispanic forms, which can be traced in the *indigenista* movement. Over time, the *Teoría de las* raíces nacionales had a positive acceptance by the local and international market. Still, as it happened with *indigenismo*, the elements that were taken from the indigenous culture followed the same principles of "depersonalisation and dehistoricization." <sup>190</sup> The same reverence of the past corresponded with the existing rhetoric used in the formation of Peruvian Creole nationalism in the late eighteenth century, which was essentially racist. While it glorified the Inca past, it discriminated against the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>188</sup> For more information about this debate: Alfonso Castrillón Vizcarra, "De abstracciones, informalismos y otras historias...," in *Tensiones generacionales* (Lima: Universidad Ricardo Palma, Instituto de Investigaciones Museológicas y Artísticas, 2014), 67-97; Carlos Dancourt, "La polémica del arte abstracto en el Perú: el proceso de asimilación de la modernidad," *América: Cahiers du CRICCAL*, Polémiques et manifestes aux XIXe et XXe siècles en Amérique latine, no. 2 (1998):163-171. https://doi.org/10.3406/ameri.1998.1377.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>189</sup> Fernando de Szyszlo epitomised the *Teoría de las raíces nacionales*, by incorporating pre-Inca and Inca patterns in his abstract paintings. Some of his works alluded to the historical colonial tensions during the Inca past. In addition to this, he used Quechua words to name his works.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>190</sup> Mirko Lauer, *Introducción a la pintura peruana del siglo XX* (Lima: Mosca Azul Editores, 1976), 159.

indigenous population in the present.<sup>191</sup> Herein, the first generation of abstractionists not only established a contemporary art style, but they also represented a social class. Non-figurative artists belonged to the middle class, went to private schools, and had no Andean ancestry.<sup>192</sup> The following twenty years were characterised by abstraction, which led into academism and the autonomy of art, a universalist period characterised by Juan Ríos as "the eclectic compromise between xenophobia and cosmopolitanism."<sup>193</sup>

The differentiation between so-called "high art" and crafts exemplified even more drastically the existing class and racial division within the country, as well as the 'Lima/regions' and 'urban/rural' divides. <sup>194</sup> While in the UK the Arts and Crafts Movement (c. 1850-1914) and later in Germany the Bauhaus (1919-1933) thought about the unification of arts, elevating the status of crafts; in Peru, crafts were considered racialised art forms associated with indigenous artisans or peasants, amateurs without an academic schooling in art. To question the "high art"/crafts divide, Latin American scholars such as Mirko Lauer, Ticio Escobar and Néstor García Canclini have written extensively about crafts in the context of capitalism. <sup>195</sup> All three agree that crafts cannot be defined as a fixed category, as it has been adapting and changing throughout time. Mass media and communication

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>191</sup> Cecilia Méndez G., "Incas Sí, Indios No: Notes on Peruvian Creole Nationalism and its Contemporary Crisis," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 28, no. 1 (1996): 197-225. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022216X00012682.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>192</sup> Alfonso Castrillón Vizcarra, "De abstracciones, informalismos y otras historias...," 69.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>193</sup> Mirko Lauer, *Introducción a la pintura peruana*, 129. Source of the original text: Juan Ríos, *La pintura contemporánea en el Perú* (Lima: Editorial Cultura Antártica, 1946), 68.
The Primer Salón de Arte Abstracto (First Salon of Abstract Art) took place in January 1958 at the Museo de Arte de Lima and was organised by the painters Benjamín Moncloa and Eduardo Moll.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>194</sup> "High art" or also "cultured art." I have intentionally put the term in quotation marks, as I am of the opinion that there is anything but "high" or "low" art.

Within the Peruvian context in the period of my analysis, so-called "high arts" were associated with formal, institutionalised art practices. Praised for their aesthetic and intellectual qualities, they were produced and consumed mainly by a privileged elite. In contrast, crafts were associated with traditional or vernacular cultures. Crafts stood for the skills and knowledge of the indigenous peoples. Some craft works have been of common use in daily life. This has led to the assumption of crafts as something utilitarian, but without any aesthetic function, affecting the ways how they have been valued and commodified.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>195</sup> Among their publications are Mirko Lauer, *Crítica de la artesanía* (1982) and *La producción artesanal en América Latina* (1989); Néstor García Canclini, *Culturas híbridas. Estrategias para entrar y salir de la modernidad* (1990) and *Las culturas populares en el capitalismo* (1982); Ticio Escobar, *El mito del arte y el mito del pueblo: Cuestiones sobre el arte popular* (1986).

technologies, the urbanisation processes, migration movements and the tourist industry are among the factors that have shaped crafts over the years. Furthermore, the mutual borrowing of elements between fine arts and crafts have been quite common, blurring the distinctions among these artistic genres. Néstor García Canclini suggested that one would advance more by abandoning the distinction about "what is pure or uncontaminated in art or crafts" and "studied them based on the uncertainties caused by their crossovers." <sup>196</sup>

In Latin America, the understanding of art and the "high art"/crafts divide are intrinsically connected to the colonisation process in the long sixteenth century. As defined by Aníbal Quijano and Immanuel Wallerstein, the colonisation of the Americas was the inaugural moment of the modern world-system and capitalist world-economy.<sup>197</sup> The colonisation introduced Eurocentric thought and race as a basic category. To justify the domination and the expansion of capitalism, dualistic categories were established. Everything non-European was rendered inferior, part of nature, barbarian or belonging to the past. In contrast, what came from Europe was valued as civilised, modern and was associated with progress. However, "the differences between Europe and non-Europe" were identified "as natural (racial) differences and not consequences of a history of power." In this context, Europeans appeared as the exclusive creators, agents, and protagonists of modernity. Regarding the suppression of the local cultural production, Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano described it as follows:

In the first place, they expropriated the cultural discoveries of the colonized peoples most apt for the development of capitalism to the profit of the European center. Second, they repressed as much as possible the colonized forms of knowledge production, the models of the production of meaning, their symbolic universe, the model of expression and of

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>196</sup> Néstor García Canclini, *Culturas híbridas. Estrategias para entrar y salir de la modernidad* (Mexico City: Editorial Grijalbo, 1990), 227.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>197</sup> Aníbal Quijano and Immanuel Wallerstein, "Americanity as a concept, or the Americas in the modern world-system," The Americas: 1492-1992. Multiplicity of historical paths and determinants of development, *International Social Science Journal*, no. 134 (November 1992): 550.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>198</sup> Aníbal Quijano & Michael Ennis, "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism and Latin America," *Nepantla: Views from South*, vol. 1, issue 3 (2000), 542. muse.jhu.edu/article/23906.

objectification and subjectivity. As is well known, repression in this field was most violent, profound, and long lasting among the Indians of Ibero-America, who were condemned to be an illiterate peasant subculture stripped of their objectified intellectual legacy.<sup>199</sup>

Consequently, the population in the American colonies had to replace their values, beliefs, and thoughts with foreign ones. As for the artistic expressions, they were not allowed to continue developing their visual imagery. Without the freedom to create, they were forced to express themselves only by the artistic means imposed by the colonisers. Quijano defined this discriminatory economic, social, cultural, and epistemic system of domination as 'coloniality of power.' Mexican historian Joaquín Barriendos expanded this notion with that of 'coloniality of seeing.' For him, the colonisation introduced a new "visual regime, based on the polarisation and inferiority between a subject that observes, and the object (or subject) observed." This new "geopolitics of seeing" in the so-called *Nuevo mundo* (New World) was inaugurated by the chroniclers and the cartographers, in connection with mercantile expansionism:

Before Eurocentric rationality was erected as a unique episteme, self-sufficient and centre of all development of humanity, the discriminatory matrix of savage otherness consisted of a kind of moral separation of the other, based on its definition, either as an apolitical being or outside the laws of men and divine laws. With the inauguration of the modern/colonial world-system and its capacity to render other epistemes invisible, mercantile expansionism implied that the archive-images of Indian cannibalism became a powerful visual machine. It was designed not only to deny indigenous humanity morally, politically and ontologically, but also to promote its body-politic inferiority, and to radicalise its ethno-cartographic racialisation.<sup>202</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>199</sup> Ibid., 540-541.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>200</sup> Aníbal Quijano, "Colonialidad del poder, cultura y conocimiento en América Latina," in *Capitalismo y geopolítica del conocimiento. El eurocentrismo y la filosofia de la liberación en el debate intelectual contemporáneo*, ed. Walter Mignolo (Durham and Buenos Aires: Duke University Press and Ediciones del Signo, 2001), 122.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>201</sup> Joaquín Barriendos, "La colonialidad del ver. Hacia un nuevo diálogo visual interepistémico," *Nómadas*, Regímenes de visualidad: emancipación y otredad desde América Latina, no. 35 (October 2011): 15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>202</sup> "Antes de que la racionalidad eurocentrada se erigiera como episteme única, suficiente en sí misma y centro de todo desarrollo de la humanidad, la matriz discriminatoria de la alteridad salvaje consistía en una suerte de separación moral del otro, a partir de su definición como ser apolítico o fuera de las leyes de los hombres y de las leyes divinas. Inaugurado el sistema-mundo moderno/colonial y echada a andar su capacidad para invisibilizar epistemes otras, el expansionismo mercantil propició que las imágenes-archivo sobre el canibalismo

Both the 'coloniality of seeing,' the racialised division of labour and epistemic racism originated in the colonisation of the Americas and are substantial to modernity. A view to destabilise and challenge this visual regime was the one proposed by Brazilian modernist poet Oswald de Andrade. In his *Manifesto Antropófago* (1928), de Andrade played with the idea of cannibalism to subvert Eurocentric thought, by suggesting the notion of anthropophagy as a creative force. Based on this, Latin American artists devoured foreign ideas and mixed them with the local ones, creating new aesthetic forms out of this cultural swallowing.<sup>203</sup> De Andrade empowered the exotic and subaltern Other, represented by the cannibal, advocating for the creative and subversive potential of appropriation.

Within the context of the cultural policies of Velasco Alvarado's administration, to decolonise culture meant to focus on the local cultural production. As already noted, the government aimed to instaurate an idea of a nation in which everybody was represented. Thus, the government centred on the cultural productions of the culturally and visually marginalised and underrepresented population. To achieve this, it gave more visibility to *arte popular* (popular art/folk art) as representative of Peru's national culture. As Rolando Rojas observed, in this period "nationalist discourses and Andean-popular expressions experienced a true splendour and were massively integrated into official rallies and cultural events." By giving attention to the local artistic productions, the cultural policies highlighted Peru's cultural diversity. The focus was mainly on Andean cultural expressions. At the same time, there was an actualisation of the *indigenista* narrative, understood as part of a nation-building process.

de Indias se convirtieran en una potente maquinaria visual destinada no sólo a negar moral, política y ontológicamente la humanidad indígena, sino también a promover su inferiorización corpopolítica, y a radicalizar su racialización etnocartográfica." Joaquín Barriendos, "La colonialidad del ver. Hacia un nuevo diálogo visual interepistémico," 20.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>203</sup> Oswald de Andrade, "Manifesto Antropófago," *Revista de Antropofagia*, year 1, no.1 (May 1928): 3; 7-8. English version: Oswald de Andrade and Leslie Bary, "Cannibalist Manifesto," *Latin American Literary Review*, vol. 19, no. 38 (July-December 1991): 38-47.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>204</sup> "Los discursos nacionalistas y las expresiones andino-populares conocieron un verdadero esplendor y se integraron masivamente dentro de los mítines y eventos culturales oficiales." Rolando Rojas Rojas, *Los años de Velasco*, 186.

On 25 October 1972, the government created the Empresa Peruana de Producción Artesanal (EPPA).<sup>205</sup> This public institution promoted crafts as an industry, as well as a means to generate revenues by offering new work and business possibilities. Among its activities, the EPPA organised several ferias artesanales (craft fairs) such as *Naylamp* in the city of Chiclayo in December 1972, which included the participation of craft producers from all over the country. Within the artistic field, crafts were put in the same category of so-called "high art." On 26 December 1975, a few months after Velasco Alvarado was overthrown by Morales Bermúdez, the INC awarded the altarpiece artist Joaquín López Antay (1897-1981) with the Premio Nacional de Cultura (National Culture Prize) in the category art. 206 This prize was generally given to artists working in the disciplines of painting, sculpture, music, or architecture. For the first time, it was handed over to a popular artist from Ayacucho. López Antay won among established artists, such as the painters Teodoro Núñez Ureta (1912-1988) and Carlos Quízpez Asín (1900-1983), and German-born academic musician Rodolfo (Rudolf) Holzmann (1910-1992). While López Antay's work had already international exposure and was praised locally by Peruvian writer and anthropologist José María Arguedas (1911-1969), the local art scene found this decision controversial. The announcement of the award propelled a heated debate. The art scene divided, in those who were in favour and against this decision. A group of artists belonging to the Asociación Peruana de Artistas Plásticos (ASPAP) wrote a public letter, claiming that crafts could not be considered art.<sup>207</sup> For the signatories of this communiqué, the retablos (altarpiece crafts) were not art, but an expression of artesanía (handcrafts) inherited from the Spanish colony. Hence, the award contradicted the ideas of the "national." As a response to this public letter a group of artists, who were members of the ASPAP, stepped down from the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>205</sup> Decree Law no. 19588 established the Empresa Peruana de Producción Artesanal (EPPA for its Spanish acronym). Anonymous, "Revolución en la artesanía," *Sinamos informa*, vol. 2, no. 6 (1972): 72.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>206</sup> The jury was composed of Cristina Gálvez, Leslie Lee, Carlos Bernasconi, Juan Gunther and Alfonso Castrillón Vizcarra. Among the supporters were also the dancer and choreographer Vera Stastny and the academic musician Enrique Pinilla, although they did not sign the document.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>207</sup> Peruvian Association of Professional Visual Artists, ASPAP for its Spanish acronym. The signatories were Francisco Abril de Vivero, Luis Cossio Marino, Alberto Dávila, Carlos A. Castillo, Miguel Ángel Cuadros, Edith Sachs and Emiliano Martínez.

association and founded the union of artists Sindicato Único de Trabajadores en las Artes Plásticas (SUTAP).<sup>208</sup> This group also manifested its position publicly. The inaugural manifesto stated the rejection of bourgeois alienation and denounced the manipulation of art with discriminatory aims. For the artists of the SUTAP, art shall be inscribed within the process of popular struggles, with the purpose to achieve cultural liberation.<sup>209</sup> In an interview, the artist Ciro Palacios (one of SUTAP's members) differentiated between the word "artists" from "art workers." While the first were involved in bourgeois individualism; the latter engaged in social collectivism, corresponding with their social and political commitment with the working class.<sup>210</sup> "Art workers" were against the sacralisation of individual creativity and in favour of collective artistic practice. Primarily, these artists understood their practice as a social and ethical duty, as part of the struggles for liberation in Latin America and that of the Third World. As for their international activities, SUTAP's members were sending a collective work to be presented at Casa de las Américas in Havana in June 1976, an action in solidarity with the Uruguayan people.

Alfonso Castrillón Vizcarra explained that "the problem of art is intimately bound up with the social phenomenon of class division, and to explain it we must start from these oppositions." Giving the National Culture Award to a popular artist meant for him to put *arte popular* "on the same level and degree of evidence" among other art forms in Peruvian art history. He considered López Antay far more authentic than other so-called "cultured artists," who copied ideas from

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>208</sup> Sole Syndicate of Art Workers, SUTAP for its Spanish acronym. The artists who established the union and signed the letter were Joaquín López Antay, Gastón Garreaud, Tilsa Tsuchiya, Ciro Palacios, Manuel Gómez, Félix Oliva, Venancio Shinki, Carlos Bernasconi, Leslie Lee, Juan Acevedo, Juan Gunther, José Carlos Gutiérrez, Sabino Springett, Elda Di Maglio, Ugo Camandona, Gerardo Chávez, Ángel Chávez, José Bracamonte, Víctor Escalante, Julio Camino Sánchez, Ramiro Llona and Cristina Portocarrero.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>209</sup> Correo Nueva Era, "Manifiesto. Acta de fundación Sindicato Único de Trabajadores en las Artes Plásticas," February 15, 1976.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>210</sup> *El Comercio*, "El arte y el deber social: declara Ciro Palacios, dirigente de los trabajadores de las artes plásticas," April 25, 1976.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>211</sup> Alfonso Castrillón V., "Arte popular o artesanía?," *Historia y cultura: revista del Museo Nacional de Historia*, no. 10 (1976-1977): 16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>212</sup> Alfonso Castrillón Vizcarra, *Tensiones generacionales/La generación del 68: entre la agonía y la fiesta de la modernidad*, 24.

international magazines and jumped from one art tendency to the next.<sup>213</sup> In retrospect, in 1982 he characterised the jury's decision, as "an act of provocation" that was probably "the best conceptual art action which criticised the aristocratic aesthetic ideology from within the system."<sup>214</sup> For Castrillón Vizcarra, one of the milestones of this debate consisted in focusing on the social aspect of art, as it was already happening in other Latin American countries. Concerning this, he mentioned the work carried out by Mário Pedrosa in Brazil, Néstor García Canclini and Juan Acha in Mexico, and Mirko Lauer in Peru.<sup>215</sup>

Paradoxically, as Mirko Lauer pointed out, not a single popular artist was invited to participate in the debate. He questioned whether it was more *un lío de blancos* (a white man's trouble). For Lauer, the award given to López Antay was a step towards the modernisation of the notion of art, whose ruling principle would be the official recognition as well as the equality of different art forms within the market. Without necessarily meaning opening up to *lo popular*, for him the inclusion of *arte popular* within the "high art" field constituted "an act of retributive justice." He severely criticised the automatic assumption of the Andean with *lo popular*, as among the Quechua-speaking people there were also hierarchies and class differences. However, the marked division of society was exemplified in the understanding of crafts and he urged the need to discuss it within these parameters. For Lauer, the "first revaluation must be that which is carried out in the face of its own creation by the oppressed sectors of society," posing the following question: "does it make sense for the oppressed sectors to reevaluate the integrity of a practice that comes from domination?" <sup>217</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>213</sup> Alfonso Castrillón, "J. López Antay es más auténtico que muchos artistas cultos," *La Prensa*, January 15, 1976.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>214</sup> "Se podría decir que fue un acto de provocación al sistema; a la distancia de los años creo comprender que fue la mejor acción de arte conceptual en el Perú que asestó un duro golpe a la ideología estética señorial, desde el interior del sistema." Alfonso Castrillón Vizcarra, "Reflexiones sobre el arte conceptual en el Perú y sus proyecciones," *Lienzo*, year III, no. 3/4 (1982): 73.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>215</sup> Alfonso Castrillón Vizcarra, "López Antay: significación actual," *U-tópicos: Entornoalovisual*, vol. 1, no. 1 (October 1982): 6-7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>216</sup> Mirko Lauer [N.O. Sengai], "López Antay: Un vernissage para la artesanía," *La Crónica*, January 27, 1976.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>217</sup> "… la primera revalorización debe ser aquella realizada ante su propia creación por los sectores oprimidos de la sociedad. Lo cual abre algunas preguntas polémicas: ¿tiene sentido que los sectores oprimidos revalúen el

In 1977, a year after this controversy, the gallery space of Petroperú exhibited contemporary popular ceramics. The same year, the INC decided to send Peruvian *arte popular* to represent Peru during the fourteenth edition of the Bienal de São Paulo. This decision did not happen without complaints, reactivating López Antay's debate. Peru's national participation in the Bienal de São Paulo was curated by the private collector George Thomas. It included craft objects produced in different periods, belonging to private collections. The artist Leslie Lee, who at that time was working for the INC, wrote the exhibition essay *A presença da arte popular* (The Presence of Popular Art). In this text, he made a review of artists who have included popular art in their works. Among them were Velásquez, Goya, Courbet, Cézanne, Van Gogh, Picasso and Léger, whose artworks expressed "the popular feeling" or were "nurtured by the passion that the popular inspired them." Lee stated that for centuries Lima has been turning its back to the country. The exhibition at the Bienal de São Paulo shall be a means to "repair an old and extremely grave injustice," suggesting that it was more an act of justice than an aesthetic statement. Curiously,

íntegro de una práctica proveniente de la dominación?" Mirko Lauer, *Crítica de la artesanía. Plástica y sociedad en los Andes peruanos* (Lima: Desco, 1982), 67.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>218</sup> Manuel Munive Maco, "El Museo de Arte Popular Peruano Contemporáneo Thomas. Apuntes para su historia," *Illapa Mana Tukukuq*, no. 10 (2013): 60. https://doi.org/10.31381/illapa.v0i10.511.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>219</sup> Francisco Abril de Rivero, "Populismo inframarxista," *Equis: el semanario del pueblo peruano*, October 12, 1977; Francisco Abril de Rivero, "¿Autenticidad o exotismo?," *Equis: el semanario del pueblo peruano* (October 19, 1977): 17; Ismael Pinto, "Humillados y ofendidos," *Equis: el semanario del pueblo peruano*, no. 82 (October 12, 1977); Anonymous, "Protesta contra INC manifiestan plásticos," *La Prensa*, October 12, 1977.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>220</sup> In 1976, George Thomas inaugurated the *Museo de Arte Popular Peruano Contemporáneo* (Museum of Contemporary Peruvian Popular Art), based on his collection of contemporary crafts which had been touring to different countries (Venezuela, Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, Colombia, France, Italy, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain and Bulgaria) since 1966. It was the first private institution of this kind in Peru. The museum existed until 1990, after the collector passed away.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>221</sup> Thomas exhibited works from his collection, as well that of Raúl Apesteguía, Elvira Luza and that of historian Pablo Macera.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>222</sup> Leslie Lee, "A presença da arte popular," *XIV Bienal Internacional de São Paulo*, exhibition catalogue (São Paulo: Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, 1977), 107. https://issuu.com/bienal/docs/name1bd664.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>223</sup> Leslie Lee, "A presença da arte popular," *XIV Bienal Internacional de São Paulo*, 107-108. The biennale was divided in several sections, such as "contemporary proposals," "urban archaeology," "catastrophic art," "video art," or "spatial poetry." The Peruvian crafts show was visible in the section "anthological exhibitions," alongside the retrospectives of Mexican painter and muralist Rufino Tamayo (1899-1991), Moroccan artist Chaibia Talal (1929-2004) and that of abstract painters, US American Alfred Jensen (1903-1981) and Spanish August Puig (1929-1999).

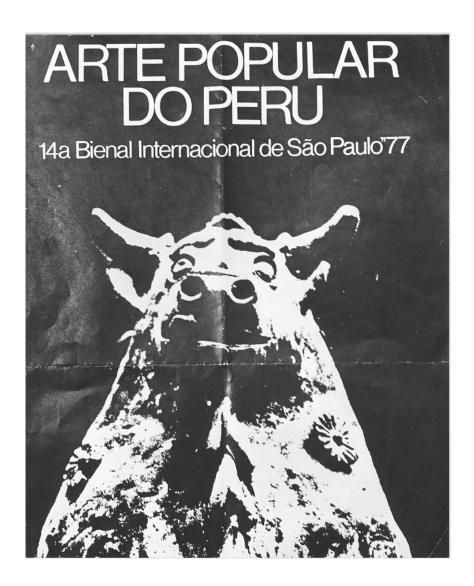


Figure 30. Poster *Arte popular do Peru: 14a. Bienal Internacional de São Paulo '77.*Source of the image: Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, 1977.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>224</sup> Ibid., 330-337. All the exhibited objects were tagged with the title *Arte Popular Peruana (PERU)*. Although the works in the catalogue were not labelled with the names of the artists, the press praised the sculptures of Rubén Valentín, which were part of the exhibition. Anonymous, "El Perú en la Bienal de Sao Paulo 1977," *El Mundo: revista gráfica peruana* (December 15, 1977-January 15, 1978): 41.



Figure 31. The collector George Thomas in front of some of the exhibited works.



Figure 32. View of the exhibition at the XIV Bienal de São Paulo, 1977.

Source of the images on this page: "El Perú en la Bienal de Sao Paulo 1977," *El Mundo: revista gráfica peruana*, December 15, 1977-January 15, 1978.

In the Latin American context, similar discussions and incorporations of crafts within contemporary art exhibitions were taking place. For instance, the debates on arte popular (popular art/folk art) that emerged during the Encuentro de Plástica Latinoamericana in Havana and the Encuentro de Artistas del Cono Sur in Santiago de Chile (1972), as well as the inclusion of crafts within the first four editions of the Bienal de La Habana (1984, 1986, 1989 and 1991). The final document of the Encuentros in Havana and Santiago had a complete section dedicated to Arte y creación popular (Art and Popular Creation). In this document, the dichotomy between "high art" and arte popular was presented as a class struggle, which in turn reinforced two ways to understand art:

A cultural duality is ... produced in society, between a dispossessed class that has not had access to that cultural structure and the class that possesses economic power. The foreign terminology that the colonised bourgeoisies use among us is called art, while the production of the dispossessed classes is considered "popular art."<sup>225</sup>

The document defined "high art" as bourgeois, colonised and capitalist; in contrast to a "revolutionary art" that included all art forms and was against an elitist view of the arts and imperialism.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>225</sup> "Se produce... una dualidad cultural en la sociedad, entre una clase desposeída que no ha tenido acceso a esa estructura cultural y la clase que posee el poder económico. Este lenguaje ajeno que manejan, entre nosotros, las burguesías colonizadas, se denomina arte, la producción de las clases desposeídas "arte popular"." Miguel Rojas Mix, ed., *Cuadernos de Arte Latinoamericano. Dos encuentros. Encuentros de artistas plásticos del Cono Sur (Chile). Encuentro de plástica latinoamericana (Cuba)* (Santiago de Chile: Editorial Andrés Bello, 1973), 16-17.

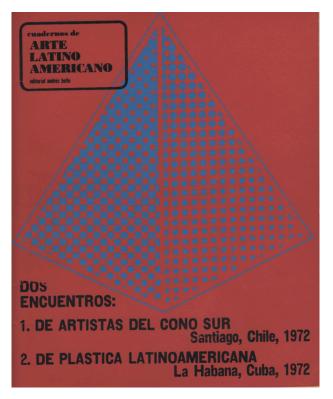


Figure 33. Cover of the publication Miguel Rojas Mix, ed., Dos encuentros: Encuentro de artistas plásticos del Cono Sur y Encuentros de plástica latinoamericana, Cuadernos de arte latinoamericano, Santiago de Chile: Editorial Andrés Bello, 1973. Source of the image: http://www.archivosenuso.org/carnevale/colecciones. Use rights: Graciela Carnevale.

As already mentioned, the Cuban government introduced a series of policies that encouraged the democratisation of culture. This was made possible by transforming the public sphere and decentralising political power on the local level, which also included the rural areas. According to David Craven, for Cubans "cultural democracy" conveyed a "more self-conscious and participatory role in the production of culture."<sup>226</sup> Within this framework, the inclusion of crafts in contemporary art exhibitions corresponded with anti-colonial and anti-imperialist ideas, in which there was no differentiation among different art forms. This was exemplified in the first four editions of the Bienal de La Habana. As Paloma Checa Gismero pointed out, one of the main aims of the Bienal was "to produce the first international exhibition of contemporary art to foreground objects from the Third World as art, regardless of their classification in the Euro-American exhibitionary complex."227 On the grounds of this, it "blurred traditional museographic

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>226</sup> David Craven, Art and Revolution in Latin America, 1910-1990, 76.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>227</sup> Paloma Checa Gismero, "Craft as Anti-colonial Universalism in the Bienal de La Habana," *Third Text* 36, no. 3 (2022): 262. https://doi.org/10.1080/09528822.2022.2052608.

distinctions between art and craft and the position of the amateur,"connecting "rural subjectivities alongside those of urban workers and urban cultural vanguards into the emancipatory mission." For Cuban art historian and curator Gerardo Mosquera the second edition of the Bienal in 1986 constituted the first truly global art exhibition:

It was the first global contemporary art show ever made: a mammoth, uneven, rather chaotic bunch of more than fifty exhibitions and events presenting 2,400 works by 690 artists from 57 countries. The Bienal's variegated structure made it a true urban festival, a *pachanga* that involved the whole city. More importantly: never before had artists, curators, critics and scholars from so many places ... met 'horizontally'. What made this Bienal historic was not its curating but its curatorial perspective. ... the event's curatorial standpoint was the result of a clear vision, in the making, towards the internationalisation of contemporary art that we enjoy today.<sup>229</sup>

Even though the Bienal de La Habana had already two editions, for the Euro-American art canon the first world art exhibition was *Les Magiciens de la terre*, curated by Jean-Hubert Martin at the Centre Georges Pompidou and Grande halle de la Villette in 1989. While *Les Magiciens...* characterised the non-Western artworks for their magic-metaphysical attributes, perpetuating the Eurocentric perspective of art; the Bienal de La Habana considered art as work, to defeat cultural alienation.<sup>230</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>228</sup> Ibid., 265-266.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>229</sup> Gerardo Mosquera, "The Third Bienal de La Habana in Its Global and Local Contexts," *Afterall*, https://www.afterall.org/article/the-third-bienal-de-la-habana-in-its-global-and-local-contexts-gerardo-mosquera However, the *pachanga* (party) of the Bienal soon vanished. Mosquera worked for the first three editions of the Bienal and resigned after the third one. Among his reasons were the fact that the work by several Cuban artists were censored by the government, considering them counterrevolutionary. The biggest repression was the imprisonment of the artist Ángel Delgado, after a performance.

As part of the programme of the symposium *Rethinking Conceptualism*..., Gerardo Mosquera gave a lecture about the importance of the Havana Biennale for the global art circuit. The lecture *Havana Utopia* can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Urw3qW9AARQ.

The online Q & A session with Gerardo Mosquera took place on 11 March 2021.

In other latitudes, the first exhibition of contemporary world art was the First Triennale India in 1968. Still, the Indian Triennale was less massive than the Cuban Bienal. It presented the work of artists from 31 countries and over 600 works. For more information about the India Triennale and his founder, Mulk Raj Anand, see: Nancy Adajania, "Globalism before globalization: The ambivalent fate of Triennale India," Shanay Jhaveri, ed., Western Artists and India: Creative Inspirations in Art and Design, Bombay: The Shoestring Publisher, 2013; Rashmi Viswanathan, "Mulk Raj Anand," post: notes on art in a global context, February 20, 2019, https://post.moma.org/mulk-raj-anand/.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>230</sup> Paloma Checa Gismero, "Craft as Anti-colonial Universalism in the Bienal de La Habana," 272-273.

For Checa Gismero, "Martin's approach glossed over the colonial residues at play in the imagining of non-euro-American artists as magicians bestowed with para-rational powers, favouring aesthetic reception over production." <sup>231</sup>

Beyond cultural policies, the distinction between "high art" and crafts was a major concern among Latin American art scholars. In 1975, the Coloquio Internacional de Zacatecas was dedicated entirely to this topic. The conference La dicotomía entre arte culto y popular (The Dichotomy Between High Art and Popular Art) invited Latin American art theorists to analyse and evaluate this divide. 232 Although all these ideas may sound as near perfect scenarios of inclusion, most of these approaches came from intellectuals, not from the common people. As Miguel Rojas Mix observed "the movement is still an expression of a bourgeois ideology," in which the working class has a marginal participation. Regarding the debates on lo popular, he argued, the discussions were about the content and rarely addressed the form.<sup>233</sup>

The inclusion of crafts as art during Velasco Alvarado's government enriched the already existing art environment, theoretically and visually. It not only made visible art forms which were previously disregarded, it also questioned the hegemonic art canon. However, the discussions were about the cultural productions, while the people who made them were not included in the conversation. Up until today, the Peruvian art scene is far from being inclusive. To overcome this, anthropologist and art researcher Giuliana Borea suggested that the category arte popular - which creates racial and symbolic hierarchies and distinctions within the market - shall not be used anymore.<sup>234</sup> She advocates for a dialogue with the artists, who must be the ones

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>231</sup> Ibid., 273.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>232</sup> The conference was organised by the Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México and took place in the city of Zacatecas from 11 to 14 August 1975. Among the participants were Mário Pedrosa, Marta Traba, Rita Eder, Ida Rodríguez Prampolini, Adelaida de Juan, Kasuya Sakai and Juan Acha. La dicotomía entre arte culto y arte popular (Coloquio internacional de Zacatecas), Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas. Estudios de arte y estética 14, Mexico City: Imprenta Universitaria, 1979.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>233</sup> Miguel Rojas Mix, "Arte y cultura en el Chile de Allende," *Artes Visuales*, no. 3 (Summer 1974): 17.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>234</sup> Giuliana Borea, ""Arte popular" y la imposibilidad de sujetos contemporáneos; o la estructura del pensamiento moderno y la racialización del arte," in Arte y antropología: estudios, encuentros y nuevos horizontes, ed. Giuliana Borea (Lima: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, Fondo Editorial, 2017), 114.

to decide how they prefer to be named. Although I share her position, I am of the opinion that the problem is not solved by deleting a word. Racism and classism is a serious problem in Peru, which is at the core of the division between *arte* and *arte popular*. There ought to be a thorough questioning of the entire art system, which continues to be highly hierarchised. In the art world, a few people continue to speak on behalf of different underrepresented communities, who still cannot voice their needs or express their own views about art. Curators, gallery owners and museum directors have the last word and they generally do not come from these communities. The Lima-centred art scene, which emulates the trends from the global art circuit, is still a bit reluctant to open to indigenous artists and to art made in the regions. Although since the 2000s there have been more indigenous artists participating in contemporary art exhibitions, this does not mean that they are not discriminated against. Even nowadays, the art from indigenous artists is contemplated from a social and paternalistic perspective, rather than from its aesthetic value. As the artist Rember Yahuarcani noted:

... many curators, gallery owners, and directors of cultural institutions believe that by exhibiting our work they are doing us a favour. We are in search of our place in contemporaneity.<sup>235</sup>

Yahuarcani argued that although there are several examples of contemporary artists who include elements of the indigenous heritage in their works; these appropriations are rarely thematised.<sup>236</sup> Indeed, these incorporations in contemporary art have been a constant for several years.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>235</sup> "Todavía en el circuito, muchos curadores, galeristas y directores de instituciones culturales creen que al exhibir nuestros trabajos nos están haciendo un favor. Estamos en la búsqueda de nuestro lugar en la contemporaneidad." Diana Mery Quiroz Galván, "Rember Yahuarcani: "Ha habido una gran apertura al arte indígena, pero el comercio de las obras es totalmente injusto"," *El Comercio*, October 7, 2022. https://elcomercio.pe/luces/arte/rember-yahuarcani-ha-habido-una-gran-apertura-al-arte-indigena-pero-el-comer cio-de-las-obras-es-totalmente-injusto-nuio-noticia/.

Rember Yahuarcani is a visual artist, activist and writer. He belongs to the Uitoto Áimen people, and lives between Pebas (his hometown, in Peru's Amazon region) and Lima, where he has lived since 2003. He has been the first indigenous artist, who has curated exhibitions about contemporary indigenous Peruvian art. For instance, the solo exhibition *Shimimbro*. *El hacedor del sonido*, with works by his father, Santiago Yahuarcani, who is an established artist (2023), and the group show *Nuio*: *volver a los orígenes* (2022). Previously, he co-curated with Giuliana Borea the exhibition *Itel/Neno!/Here!*: *Responses to Covid-19* (2020).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>236</sup> Ibid.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Latin American art scholars and artists questioned the hegemonic Euro-American art canon, by focusing on the local artistic production with the aim to achieve an independent visual arts perspective. In this context, the reappraisal of crafts was understood as a means of resistance (anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist, and anti-colonial) and of de-centering the art canon. At the same time, these discussions corresponded with the geopolitical shift of the art world during the Cold War and the alliances among Third World countries. In Peru, the re-evaluation of crafts was more an act of justice, than an aesthetic concern. Although the inclusive art approach of the government had good intentions, it was not sufficient, as the art apparatus remained the same and continued to be based on Western aesthetic logics. In order to achieve inclusion, one needs to think about "equal aesthetic rights," as noted by Boris Groys:

... this struggle for inclusion is possible only if the forms in which the desires of the excluded minorities manifest themselves are not rejected and suppressed from the beginning by any kind of aesthetic censorship operating in the name of higher aesthetical values. Only under the presupposition of the equality of all visual forms and media on the aesthetic level is it possible to resist the factual inequality between the images – as imposed from the outside, and reflecting cultural, social, political, or economical inequalities. <sup>237</sup>

While the different Peruvian cultures were acknowledged by the artists, the intellectuals, and the military; the inclusion of crafts within the "high art" scene was made by them and not by their actual producers. Instead of listening and asking them about ways of redefining the Peruvian artistic structure, they acted in their name without considering their opinions.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>237</sup> Boris Groys, Art Power (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 2013), 15.

## **Conclusions**

The military government brought Túpac Amaru II from the past to support the historical basis of its self-proclaimed revolution. At the same time, it recognised the rural population as political subjects in the present and looked to the future with the intention to institute a humanist state. It understood the importance of education and culture to bridge the gap among the different Peruvian cultures. Although the cultural policies of the military government were criticised for being 'nationalist,' I consider them a legitimate claim within the government's anti-imperialist and decolonial agenda. Other than 'nationalist,' they paid attention to the local context or the 'national' towards a self-defined cultural process. Based on this, the cultural policies validated a sense of community and solidarity. At the same time, they questioned existing hegemonies such as the art market's profit-orientation or individualist art creation. As Gonzalo Portocarrero noted, the importance of these policies could be understood as a sort of "cultural revolution," by means of "the revaluation of Andean culture, the nationalist elan and the attempt to socially integrate the country."238 The popular-nationalism, according to political scientist Omar Coronel, went hand in hand towards democratisation processes in the country.<sup>239</sup> Here, nationalism meant to "broaden the national community, by empowering and including peasants and workers," who gained "social rights, enabling their political agency."240

Velasco Alvarado's cultural policies stimulated an intense questioning of the nature of the arts. The differences were not only in regard to its materiality. They were related to matters of representation of the Peruvian art identity, the producers and the audiences who might be able to participate in cultural concerns, which also showed the immense class and racial gap in the country. A clear example of this was the debate around the notions of the so-called "high art" and crafts that came about

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>238</sup> Gonzalo Portocarrero, "Memorias del Velasquismo," 254.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>239</sup> Omar Coronel, "¿Es el nacionalismo siempre autoritario? La heterogeneidad del discurso nacionalista en el Perú," in *Sombras coloniales y globalización en el Perú de hoy*, ed. Gonzalo Portocarrero (Lima: Red para el Desarrollo de las Ciencias Sociales en el Perú, 2013), 203.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>240</sup> Ibid., 203.

after the National Culture Prize was given to the altarpiece artist Joaquín López Antay in 1975. Although this inclusion did not succeed, as the art system was not questioned; the debate that emerged from the award given to López Antay brought about questions concerning the inclusion of Peruvian artists beyond Lima and of indigenous origin, as well as giving *arte popular* a space within the art scene. This debate could be framed within an ongoing discussion in Latin America, in which the inclusion of crafts was moving towards cultural decolonisation.

Despite the efforts striving to include a broader population in cultural matters, the different Peruvian cultures continued to be addressed as closed environments. Instead of thinking about the possibility of coexistence of different cultures, they were understood as separate worlds. Roberto Miró Quesada explained it in clarity in these terms:

... it is a useless waste of energy to talk about Peru from closed cultural fields. Peru is a cultural confluence, and it is from this confluence that we must communicate. The way in which our cultural matrix has been structured, without the will to integrate ... has led to dichotomising alternatives instead of complementing them. The West has been seen as a source of pain and only pain; while the Andean culture acquired, by contrast, the category of the giver of happiness and only happiness. ... To say that Western culture is *only* individualistic has led to considering that Andean culture is *only* supportive. Simplism of this kind has trapped the analysis of national reality, identifying modernity with Western civilisation and, therefore, with domination. In other words, capitalism is confused with Western culture, without understanding that any culture, whatever it may be, is not defined from a single perspective. <sup>241</sup>

As Miró Quesada observed, while the intellectual bourgeoisie pretended to have proposed an alternative viewpoint, in the end it corresponded with the exclusive

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>241</sup> "... resulta un desgaste inútil de energías hablar, respecto al Perú, desde campos culturales cerrados. El Perú es una confluencia cultural, y es desde esa confluencia que tenemos que comunicarnos. La manera cómo se estructuró nuestra matriz cultural, sin voluntad integradora ... ha llevado a dicotomizar alternativas en vez de complementarlas. Lo occidental fue visto como fuente de dolor y sólo de dolor, ante lo cual lo andino adquirió, por contraposición, la categoría de dador de felicidad y sólo de felicidad. ... Decir que la cultura occidental es *sólo* individualista ha llevado a considerar que la cultura andina es *sólo* solidaria. Un simplismo de este tipo ha entrampado el análisis de la realidad nacional, identificando modernidad con occidentalidad y, por ende, con dominación. Es decir, se confunde capitalismo con cultura occidental, sin entender que una cultura, cualquiera que esta sea, no se define desde una sola perspectiva." Roberto Miró Quesada, *Lo popular viene del futuro*, 353.

posture of the dominant classes. For him, being poor or the ethnicity shall not be the defining categories for inclusion. One needs to think about a broader social scenario that takes into consideration those who control the production and redistribution of wealth, and those who are victims of that control. Only in these terms, he argued, is it possible to think of the possibility of achieving popular democracy and citizenship.<sup>242</sup>

The lack of social integration was visible in the way the artists approached the popular masses, by taking for granted that these groups needed the types of cultural activities they were offering. Indeed, the intellectual bourgeoisie was the one approaching the popular classes; it was not the other way around. In the end, the participation of the popular classes was minimal, and the ones who learned a bit about the social reality of the country were the artists who approached them. Following this, the process of decolonisation aimed by the cultural policies was not exempt of controversy. In some cases, they run the risk of aligning the popular classes to the dominant culture. While the cultural policies included other art forms previously disregarded, a great part of the art scene continued to perceive indigenous cultural productions as immaterial living heritage, folk art for (ethnology) museums, with their producers as static human beings and not in constant evolution. This was exemplified by not inviting any popular artist to participate in the discussions that emerged after López Antay won the National Culture Prize. The tensions and contradictions of the cultural scene showed how far were Peruvians to speak of a possibility of a horizontal dialogue. More than a dialogue, what was missing here was the act of listening: to listen to the needs of someone else, and not assuming in advance what is best for the Other.

One way to achieve decolonisation is the one suggested by Bolivian sociologist Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui through the Aymara term *ch*'*ixi*. <sup>243</sup> This notion embodies the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>242</sup> Roberto Miró Quesada, *Lo popular viene del futuro*, 353-355.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>243</sup> According to Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, "The notion ch'ixi, ... follows the Aymara idea of something that is and is not at the same time; in other words [it follows] the logic of the included third party. A ch'ixi grey colour is white and not white at the same time, it is white and it is also black, its opposite." Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, *Ch'ixinakax utxiwa: una reflexión sobre prácticas y discursos descolonizadores* (Buenos Aires: Tinta Limón, 2010), 69.

parallel coexistence of difference, "that do not merge, but rather antagonise or complement each other." Moreover, she noted, "it is about living together and inhabiting the contradictions. Not denying one side or the other, nor seeking a synthesis, but admitting the permanent struggle in our subjectivity between the indigenous and the European." Rivera Cusicanqui highlights the necessity to consider decolonisation not only as a discourse, but as an active and affirmative practice. Instead of assimilating the indigenous peoples to the dominant logic, she pays attention to how marginalised groups assert their own narratives. A possibility of exchange of knowledge, aesthetics and ethics could be through bilingualism, which she understands as a decolonising practice. The recognition of Quechua as an official national language and the introduction of bilingual education by Velasco Alvarado's regime was a step towards this direction.

The cultural policies of Velasco Alvarado's government encouraged collaborative artistic practice and social engagement. In this context, intellectuals and artists were the ones creating these spaces of encounter. Through these activities, they learned from the communities they were intervening with their practice. Herein, the artists involved in the cultural policies focused on being active in the social sphere. At the same time, they questioned imperialist agendas and aimed to break away from an elitist, market-oriented and bourgeois view of art. Although short-lived, the cultural policies were "complementing," as Alonso Alegría noted, the already established cultural offer. These cultural programmes run in parallel with the already established circuit of galleries and art institutions. While they approached so-called 'cultured' art forms to the popular masses, such as music concerts, theatre or cinema; at the same time, they reappraised the local art forms with the intention to include all Peruvians as cultural producers and consumers. This differed from the *indigenista* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>244</sup> Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, *Ch'ixinakax utxiwa*, 70.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>245</sup> "... se trata de convivir y habitar las contradicciones. No negar una parte ni la otra, ni buscar una síntesis, sino admitir la permanente lucha en nuestra subjetividad entre lo indio y lo europeo." Kattalin Barber, "Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui: "Tenemos que producir pensamiento a partir de lo cotidiano," El Salto, February 17, 2019, https://www.elsaltodiario.com/feminismo-poscolonial/silvia-rivera-cusicanqui-producir-pensamiento-cotidiano-pensamiento-indigena.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>246</sup> Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, *Ch'ixinakax utxiwa*, 71-72.

view, by making space for indigenous artists to express themselves by their own means. In the words of Raúl Álvarez Espinoza, it was an indigenous art produced and defined by indigenous people and not by *indigenistas*.<sup>247</sup>

The cultural policies showed the existing tensions among the different cultures in Peru. They established a sense of urgency to act in the social and cultural field. This engagement was visible in the work conducted by the artists, who freely joined the state-led programmes. These artists met with other Peruvians and were confronted with the huge inequalities existing in the country. Although the dialogue among them was not fully horizontal, at least it was a face-to-face meeting without mediations. Despite the positive outcomes, exemplified in the magazine *Chaski* or the *talleres de historieta popular* by Juan Acevedo, these initiatives did not reach a larger population. Future research about the implementation of the cultural policies in the regions shall give us more answers about how far-ranging Velasco Alvarado's policies were.

Albeit all these paradoxes, the discussions that emerged from the cultural policies were necessary and fundamental for the recognition of most Peruvians, who were invisible for centuries and up until then were not even considered as citizens. The debates that came about in this period set up a new ground to think about art, its different audiences, and producers. As Roberto Miró Quesada noted, a profound change needs to happen, not only within the artistic apparatus, it must also take place within the interpersonal relationships.<sup>248</sup> For him, popular art (understood as art for everyone) "would be [that] which proposes a resemanticisation of the symbolic field on the basis of broad cultural spaces, aiming at a social rethinking of interpersonal relations in a horizontal sense. In Peru, such art is still to be built."<sup>249</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>247</sup> Raúl Álvarez Espinoza, "Revolución en la artesanía. Las formas de movilización de la plástica popular cusqueña en *Chaski*," in *Un grito a la tierra. Arte y revolución en Chaski (Cusco, 1972-1974)*, 140.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>248</sup> Roberto Miró Quesada, *Lo popular viene del futuro*, 360.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>249</sup> "Arte popular sería [aquel] que proponga una resemantización del campo simbólico a partir de espacios culturales amplios, apuntando a un replanteamiento social de las relaciones interpersonales en sentido horizontal. Ese arte, en el Perú, está por construirse." Roberto Miró Quesada, *Lo popular viene del futuro*, 358. The brackets are mine.

While the government declared itself as pursuing a singular process, the cultural policies were influenced by the geopolitical shift in the cultural sphere that was taking place in the context of the Cold War. Indeed, the focus on the social aspect of art corresponded with that of a leftist-oriented, Third Worldist and Non-Aligned view of the arts. They promoted a humanist perspective of art and a culture of solidarity. At the same time, they followed anti-imperialist and anti-colonial agendas. According to Rojas Mix, in Latin America this revolutionary cultural process began with Che Guevara and Cuba's Revolution. Within this context, the artists' social and political commitment and the Latin American integration were among the main topics of the discussions.<sup>250</sup> Influenced by the Latin American revolutionary spirit of the period, artists engaged in artistic solidarity networks.<sup>251</sup>

Referring to Chile, Rojas Mix stated that during Allende's government the attitude towards art was that of approaching the popular classes, for instance via public murals (the *brigadas muralistas*), performing theatre in impoverished areas, and through posters. Indeed, the Peruvian cultural policies drew similarities with that of Chile under Allende. In Peru, this was exemplified by the demystification of mass media (for instance, the *talleres de historieta popular*), the participation in international artistic solidarity actions (such as the ones in solidarity with Chile, Uruguay or Nicaragua), or the decentralisation of art (for example, the total art festivals in the regions and the organisation of cultural events in low-income neighbourhoods in the outskirts of Lima). All these ideas corresponded with the Latin Americanist spirit of the period and the consecutive social turn in the arts.

Although the Peruvian cultural policies resembled in part that of Cuba, for instance the posters using elements from pop art or the decentralisation of cultural activities; the Peruvian military government differed much from that in Cuba. While Cuba projected to the outside a revolutionary agenda; the perspective from within the country contradicted this emancipatory feeling. In relation to this, Peruvian artist Ciro Palacios, who participated in the second Encuentro de Plástica Latinoamericana

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>250</sup> Miguel Rojas Mix, "Arte y cultura en el Chile de Allende," 16-17.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>251</sup> Ibid., 16.

in Havana (1973), spoke with me about his experience during this international encounter. He mentioned that the Chilean delegation could not be present, because of the coup d'état by Pinochet and the successive persecutions of alleged communists. Although the *Encuentro* made a tribute to the Chilean people, the atmosphere of the event was not open-minded or solidarian, as the artist hoped it would be. While in Havana, the invited artists were never left alone. Even if they wanted to meet outside the venues of the *Encuentro* or visit the city by themselves, they were escorted by officials from the government. Palacios stated that the group of artists gathered in this international encounter were invited to have an interview with so-called 'local journalists.' In the end, it was not a collective interview, but individual interrogations to the artists, who were asked to give information about their respective countries. Moreover, the invited artists visited the Escuela Nacional de Arte (National Art School), where they could see the work by Cuban art students. According to Palacios, the quality of the works was scarce and some of them were mainly about political militancy, for instance paintings with portraits of Marx or Lenin. As for the Cuban delegation of artists participating in the *Encuentro*, these were artists who belonged to the Cuban Communist party. They were dressed nicely and were able to travel abroad. This contrasted with other Cuban artists, who were not admitted to participate in this international gathering. Based on this, I asked him if the artists in Peru experienced something similar during Velasco Alvarado's administration. Ciro Palacios answered the following: "No, not at all. On the contrary."252

One cannot expect to change a country within less than seven years, let alone eliminate the colonial mindset that has been there for centuries, which unfortunately persists. This government is important primarily for having questioned several areas of Peruvian society that needed to be addressed. In a country that is extremely divided, Velasco Alvarado's administration constituted a challenge for many Peruvians. They were confronted with problems that were swept under the rug for far too long. Perhaps people were asking too much of the government, instead of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>252</sup> "No, en absoluto. Al contrario." Personal communication with Ciro Palacios, July 4, 2023. The whole paragraph is based on this conversation.

looking at one's own limitations. For instance, the critique of the cultural policies as 'nationalist,' even though they were implemented by artists and intellectuals. In truth, among the artists there were different understandings of art, how to address participation and include broader audiences. These differences were visible within the many paradoxes of the government's cultural policies and its communication strategies. In fact, artists are neither social workers nor social scientists. Nevertheless, the government trusted their expertise, by granting them official duties, which gave them relative freedom of scope of action. All these situations nurtured a series of artistic experimentations and a different appreciation of the arts in Peru. This was also reflected in the experimental art scene in Lima that redirected its practices towards social concerns, most likely because of these policies and the social tenor of the period in Latin America. For these reasons and despite its many contradictions, these policies were important.

Velasco Alvarado's government propelled a series of studies about Peru's social, political, and economic circumstances. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, coupled with the rise of social sciences in Peru, several publications were released. As Carlos Franco noted, this critical accumulation of knowledge will inevitably give rise in a very short time to new ways of thinking about the country and proposing programmes of action. The recent wave of studies about this government shows that there were some aspects of this administration from which one can learn something today. The examples of the cultural policies I have introduced in this chapter have been disregarded in the international academic and exhibition circuits. In the next chapter, I examine how a group of curators presented Velasco Alvarado's government and the experimental art scene during this period to international audiences.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>253</sup> Carlos Franco, *El Perú de Velasco*, vol. 3, 969.

## **Chapter Two**

## Por la puerta falsa: How the Experimental Art Scene in Lima from the Mid-1960s to Mid-1970s Gained Entry into the Latin American Conceptualist Canon

"Why, if it is against art, does it call itself art? Indeed, non-objectual creations suffer greatly from a bad choice of words. I think that the idea of conceptual art, the idea of non-objectual art, etc. and a series of other terms of this type contribute to a series of confusions, and every time they force us to begin debates with an explanation.

... It is not by chance that a great part of these manifestations still take place in galleries, including that many of them try to benefit from the prestige that the concept of art usually conveys to objects. ... There is still no conceptual art in Peru. What does exist is a series of attempts."

— Mirko Lauer<sup>254</sup>

This chapter illustrates how the emerging experimental art scene in Lima of the mid-1960s to mid-1970s entered the Latin American conceptualist canon. This was possible thanks to the work done by independent curators and researchers Miguel A. López and Emilio Tarazona. Both curators embarked on research about the origins of Peruvian 'non-objectualist' art.<sup>255</sup> The results of their findings were made visible in 2007 in the exhibitions *La persistencia de lo efímero. Orígenes del no-objetualismo peruano: ambientaciones / happenings / arte conceptual (1965-1975)* and *Arte Nuevo y el fulgor de la vanguardia: Disidencia, experimentación visual y transformación cultural.*<sup>256</sup> By virtue of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>254</sup> "¿Por qué, si está contra el arte, se llama a sí mismo arte? En efecto, las creaciones no objetuales sufren mucho por una mala selección de palabras. Yo pienso que la idea de arte conceptual, la idea de arte no-objetual, y así una serie de términos de este tipo, se prestan a una serie de confusiones y obligan a comenzar siempre los debates con una explicación. ... No es casual tampoco que gran parte de estas manifestaciones ocurran todavía en las galerías. Ni que muchas de ellas traten de beneficiarse del prestigio que el concepto arte suele comunicar a los objetos. ... No existe aún en el Perú un arte conceptual. Lo que existe es una serie de tanteos." Teresa Burga and Marie-France Cathelat, eds., *Perfil de la Mujer Peruana* (Lima: Investigaciones Sociales Artísticas, 1981), 268-269.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>255</sup> The curators used the term 'non-objectualism,' a notion developed by Juan Acha in 1972. Broadly, Acha introduced this term to speak about the dematerialisation of art in Latin America, in order to differentiate it from US-European conceptual art.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>256</sup> La persistencia de lo efímero. Orígenes del no-objetualismo peruano: ambientaciones / happenings / arte conceptual (1965-1975) was held at Centro Cultural de España in Lima (March to April 2007). Some months later, they presented their research in an international symposium in Mexico City and later in Bogotá. The text "Re/montar la historia. Intervenir los 60, 40 años después" was originally presented by López and Tarazona during the symposium Recargando lo Contemporáneo: Estrategias Curatoriales de Rescate del Arte Reciente (10 to 11 September 2007), coordinated by the critic Olivier Debroise in the framework of the discussions of the exhibition La era de la discrepancia. Arte y cultura visual en México 1968-1997, held at the National Autonomous University of México. A few days later, Miguel A. López gave a lecture on this paper during the

their public presentations and essays, their thesis on the Peruvian experimental scene of the mid-1960s to mid-1970s has been widely spread internationally in both academic and commercial art circuits. Although their contribution to making this scene visible, which resulted in the insertion of the Peruvian experimental art of this period in the Latin American and global art history map, was hugely significant, this thesis challenges how they addressed Velasco Alvarado's government.

Stemming from their discussions and connections within the Red Conceptualismos del Sur (RedCSur), of which they were both members, López and Tarazona established a theory of Peruvian contemporary art based on a combination of Juan Acha's aesthetic political writings. To fit their theory within the Latin American conceptualist canon, the authors made the following associations: First, Velasco Alvarado's administration is described as repressive and violent, suggesting tension and an environment not suitable for artistic experimentation, which – according to them – the artists contested through their practice. For these authors, the experimental art scene was interrupted, because of the military government. Second,

first Cátedra Latinoamericana de Historia y Teoría del Arte Alberto Urdaneta: Arte y Acción Política, organised by the Taller de Historia Crítica del Arte in Bogotá (17 and 19 September 2007).

Arte Nuevo y el fulgor de la vanguardia: Disidencia, experimentación visual y transformación cultural took place in December 2007 in two venues, the Sala Luis Miró Quesada Garland and the Sala Raúl Porras Barrenechea, both pertaining to the municipality of the district of Miraflores in Lima.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>257</sup> Miguel A. López and Emilio Tarazona, "Otra revolución posible. La guerrilla cultural en el Perú de 1970," Illapa Mana Tukukuq, no. 6 (2009). 70. https://doi.org/10.31381/illapa.v0i6.1032. The essay "Otra revolución posible. La guerrilla cultural en el Perú de 1970" has been published in Spanish and Portuguese in Conceitualismos do Sul/Sur (2009), as well as in English (with some additions) with the title "An "Other" Possible Revolution: The Cultural Guerrilla in Peru in 1970," in A Companion to Modern and Contemporary Latin American and Latina/o Art (2022). The essay appears in the book in "Part IV, 1973-1990: Dictatorship, Social Violence, and the Rise of Conceptual Strategies." I will refer to this essay and to "Re/montar la historia. Intervenir los 60, 40 años después" (2007) as "López's and Tarazona's theory." It is through these two essays that their viewpoint on the experimental art scene in Lima during Velasco Alvarado's government began to be spread internationally. Their essay "Desgaste y disolución del objeto en el arte peruano de los años Sesenta. Una primera coordenada de rastro apenas perceptible," published in the art journal *Illapa Mana Tukukuq*, no.4 (2007): 39-48. https://doi.org/10.31381/illapa.v0i4.1137, focuses on the experimental art scene in Lima in the mid-1960s and briefly refers to Velasco Alvarado. This essay also appeared in the magazine Papers D'Art, no. 93 (second semester 2007): 141-144. Other essays by López and Tarazona that refer to the period of Velasco Alvarado's administration are the exhibition catalogues Teresa Burga: informes, esquemas, intervalos 17.9.10 (2011); Emilio Tarazona, Gloria Gómez-Sánchez: una década de mutaciones (1960-1970) (2015); and the book by Miguel A. López, Robar la historia: Contrarrelatos y prácticas artísticas de oposición (2019). Other essays by López's that refer to this period are "Cultural Guerrilla: Juan Acha and the Peruvian Avant-Garde of the 1960s," in *post: notes on art in a global context* (2016); "Juan Acha's Creative Engagement: "Paper and More Paper" (1969)," in *Colección Cisneros* (2016); Miguel A. López and Jason Weiss, "Teresa Burga: Desplegando El Cuerpo (Social) Femenino/Teresa Burga: Unfolding the (Social) Female Body," *Art Journal* 73, no. 2 (2014): 46-65; and "F(r)icciones cosmopolitas. Redefiniciones estéticas y políticas de una idea de vanguardia en los años 60s," in Arte Contemporáneo. Colección Museo de Arte de Lima, ed. Sharon Lerner (Lima: Museo de Arte de Lima, 2013), 17-45.

this administration has been disapproved by these authors for being nationalistic and conservative, leaving unnoticed its innovative cultural and education policies, aiming for social change. Third, this insertion of the Peruvian experimental art in the Latin American conceptualist canon has led to a major generalisation that parallels the first term of the GRFA to other military regimes of the same period in South America, without individuating the particularity of Velasco Alvarado's government.

I argue that López and Tarazona have reinterpreted both Juan Acha's essays and the artworks presented by the Peruvian critic in his writings. This argumentative move resulted not only in the current assumption that Juan Acha and the experimental scene were actively criticising the government, it also managed to integrate the Peruvian art scene of the period within RedCSur's account on Latin American conceptualism. Contrasting López's and Tarazona's theory, I claim that the artists' critical positioning in the Peruvian context was directed against the institutional framework of the arts scene of that time, and not against the military government. In truth, neither the experimental artists were criticising it, nor Velasco Alvarado's administration impeded their practice. Quite the contrary happened. The government hired some of these artists for the sake of the implementation of different reforms in matters of culture and education, as well as for communication and propaganda measures, which I have delved into in the first chapter.

Juan Acha's and the artists' critique was against the local established art system, with the aim of renovating it and broadening the spectrum of artistic practice. This also included a critique against consumerism, art's commodification and the manipulation stemming from mass media. In contrast to López's and Tarazona's alleged criticism against the government, I argue that this criticism was not there in the first place. They purposefully manipulated the information to enter the international framework that the RedCSur was providing them. Additionally, by discrediting Velasco Alvarado's government from the start, their theory disregarded the work of a significant group of experimental artists during this period. Drawing on a reinterpretation of Juan Acha's notion of 'cultural guerrilla,' López and Tarazona defined the whole experimental art scene from the mid-1960s to mid-1970s

as 'disruptive.' Their unnecessary focus on 'dissidence' overlooked the contributions of the cultural policies of the government, and the spirit of solidarity and collaborative practice of the artists who worked in them. Moreover, they did not refer to the ongoing debates on the social aspect of art in Latin America during the 1970s, which stimulated these types of artistic approaches.

In essence, the accounts on Latin American conceptualism I will refer to in this chapter assume that the sociopolitical circumstances affected artistic production. Within this framework, committed artists engaged in social concerns, for instance by denouncing social injustice or by contesting authoritarian regimes. However, these parameters have been applied for the whole subcontinent, without individuating possible exceptions. I argue that the experimental art scene in Lima constituted a special case. Before the military government began to introduce its measures, the experimental art scene was focused on the artistic trends coming from overseas. It neither reflected the social reality of the country, nor their works were based on the local context. This was exemplified in the works by the members of the artist group *Arte Nuevo* (1966-1968).

As I mentioned in the first chapter, it is through the government's implementation of different cultural and educational policies that artistic experimentalism redirected its practice. Having this in mind, I believe that the artistic production is not a synchronised response or reflection of the sociopolitical context. I share the approach by Mara Polgovsky Ezcurra, who observed the following:

The time of political change and that of artistic change are often out of joint, and one must, in consequence, refrain from too-readily associating certain art forms with certain political eras, as is so commonly done. The problem with these types of associations is the risk of sacrificing the nuances and productive contradictions resulting from the close visual, formal, and material analysis of discrete artworks for the sake of the bigger political picture.<sup>258</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>258</sup> Mara Polgovsky Ezcurra, *Touched Bodies: The Performative Turn in Latin American Art* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers, 2019), 15.

As part of the programme of *Rethinking Conceptualism: Avant-Garde, Activism and Politics in Latin American Art (1960s-1980s)*, I organised an online reading session with Mara Polgovsky Ezcurra and discussed her book *Touched Bodies: The Performative Turn in Latin American Art* with the audience. The session was held on 27 May 2021. The selection of texts for the meeting can be found here:

In this chapter, I examine whether the Peruvian art scene, as presented by López and Tarazona, is suitable to be included in RedCSur's account of Latin American conceptualism. I contrast Juan Acha's position with the essays by other local critics, such as Mirko Lauer, Alfonso Castrillón Vizcarra, Hugo Salazar del Alcázar and Gustavo Buntinx, who have written about the experimentalism of the mid-1960s to mid-1970s in Lima.<sup>259</sup> Contesting the idea that during this period the art scene was interrupted, I present examples, showing that the artists continued with their creative undertakings during the military government and beyond it. The last section of this chapter is dedicated to examining how Velasco Alvarado's regime and the artistic production throughout this government have been presented in the international exhibition circuit. The examples of exhibitions showcasing Peruvian contemporary art abroad illustrate how curators have intervened in history, by erasing the original debates of the period and assuming that these claims were something that derived from the artistic explorations. These examples depict a phenomenon in the current historiography of art in Peru, in which curators adapt a scene and recreate it, to fit within the market and the trends of the international art discourse. For instance, by leaving out the complexity and richness of a particular art scene, or by inscribing it in categories that serve their curatorial purposes. These new interpretations of the past may disregard part of history, especially when it comes to speaking about a military government such as Velasco Alvarado's.

https://rethinking conceptualism.com/ola/services/mara-polgovsky-ezcurra-touched-bodies-the-performative-turn-in-latin-american-art.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>259</sup> Mirko Lauer (1947) is a cultural critic, writer and poet. He is the co-founder of the magazine *Hueso Húmero*, together with Abelardo Oquendo and Mario Montalbetti. The magazine, created in 1979, is still published until today. Mirko Lauer was close to Juan Acha and also participated in several events organised by the latter. For instance, the Primer Coloquio Latinoamericano de Arte No Objetual y Arte Urbano, held at the Museo de Arte Moderno in Medellín in 1981. Lauer also contributed to the reforms of Velasco Alvarado's administration and worked for the DPDRA, as already mentioned in the first chapter.

Art historian and museologist Alfonso Castrillón Vizcarra (1935) was executive director of the IAC during the first term of the GRFA. He was also one of the jury members of the National Culture Award of 1975, which was handed over in January 1976 to the altarpiece artist Joaquín López Antay. In 2004, he founded the academic journal *ILLAPA Mana Tukukuq*, published at the Universidad Ricardo Palma. Currently, he is director of the Master in Museology and Cultural Management, as well as director of the Visual Arts Gallery and of the Institute of Museological and Artistic Research at the same university.

Hugo Salazar del Alcázar (1955-1996) was an architect and cultural critic, focused on visual arts and theatre. Gustavo Buntinx (1957) is an Argentine curator and art critic, based in Lima. He is the founder of Micromuseo "al fondo hay sitio."

## 1. Theories on Latin American Conceptualism

Since the 1990s, there has been an increasing interest in the revision of the historiography of Latin American art from the 1960s to the 1980s. Art historians Andrea Giunta and George F. Flaherty defined it as a 'Historical Turn,' consisting of a re-examination of the art history canon, by either subverting the notion of genealogy itself or by generating new genealogies. <sup>260</sup> This also included the recovery of terms developed by Latin American artists and scholars throughout these decades. <sup>261</sup> Concerning this, one needs to assume synchronicity as an art historical method and acknowledge that Latin American art practices were not peripheral, but happening at the same time with other international neo-avant-gardes. <sup>262</sup> It also means that after WWII there was a shared atmosphere in different parts of the world that stimulated the emergence of what Giunta understands as "simultaneous avant-gardes." <sup>263</sup> Based on this, she argued, Latin American experimental art should

According to Hal Foster, the neo avant-garde emerged in a historical context characterised by the increase of consumerism and mass media culture. As a result of this, artists began to incorporate elements from popular culture, advertising and mass media into their artworks. In this context, artists were interested in exploring the intersections between so-called 'high' and 'low' culture, as well as the impact of media and technology on artistic practice. For Foster, neo-avant-garde artists were aware of the historical precedents set by the historical avant-garde and deliberately engaged with it, by referencing it in their works. For instance, they employed strategies such as appropriation, pastiche and re-enactment to comment on or interrogate the traditions and legacies of modernism. Moreover, there was a shift towards process-oriented and conceptually-driven practices. Artists were interested in exploring ideas, actions and the viewer's engagement. In this vein, performance art, conceptual art and installations became prominent forms within the neo-avant-garde. This included also a critique of the commercialisation and commodification of art in the postmodern era. The focus on current circumstances or "the real" are also among the characteristics of the neo-avant-garde. Hal Foster, *The Return of the Real: The Avant-Garde at the End of the Century*, Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 1996; Hal Foster, "What's Neo about the Neo-Avant-Garde?," *October* 70 (1994): 5-32. https://doi.org/10.2307/779051.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>260</sup> Andrea Giunta and George F. Flaherty, "Latin American Art History: An Historiographic Turn," *Art in Translation*, vol. 9, issue S1 (August 2017): 123, https://doi.org/10.1080/17561310.2016.1246293.

As part of the programme of *Rethinking Conceptualism: Avant-Garde, Activism and Politics in Latin American Art (1960s-1980s)*, I organised an online reading session about this topic, which was held on 25 June 2020. The selection of essays can be found here: https://rethinkingconceptualism.com/ola/services/25-june-2020-18-00-h.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>261</sup> Andrea Giunta and George F. Flaherty, "Latin American Art History: An Historiographic Turn," 123. For instance, arte destructivo (Destructive Art, a group that emerged in Argentina out of informalist art), poema proceso (processed-based poem, a term introduced by Wlademir Dias-Pino in connection to visual poetry), arte inobjectual (inobjectual art, a term introduced by Uruguayan artist Clemente Padín), arte no objectual (non objectual art, coined by Juan Acha), áreas cerradas y áreas abiertas (open and closed areas, terms introduced by Marta Traba), culturas híbridas (hybrid cultures, by Néstor García Canclini) or neoconcretismo (Neo-Concrete Art, an art movement that emerged in Brazil in 1959 with Ferreira Gullar as the movement's referent).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>262</sup> Ibid., 123.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>263</sup> Andrea Giunta, *Contra el canon. El arte contemporáneo en un mundo sin centro* (Buenos Aires, Siglo XXI editores, 2020), 6.

This idea has been also developed in: Andrea Giunta, ¿Cuándo empieza el arte contemporáneo? / When Does Contemporary Art Begin? (Buenos Aires: Fundación arteBA, 2014); Andrea Giunta, "Simultaneous

be understood in a process of historical re-evaluation, experimentation and anti-institutionalism. The idea of 'simultaneous avant-gardes' is related to the understanding of a 'horizontal history' by Polish art historian Piotr Piotrowski.<sup>264</sup> Both Giunta's and Piotrowski's notions allude to a need to de-center the US-European art history canon, by stressing the simultaneity of different art movements and the transnational networks among artists. One shall not forget artists' exchanges, networks, and travels throughout these decades. In this sense, I share the view of a transnational "connected and circulatory approach" on art history, as proposed by Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel, which "could help us think of a way to escape a binary arrangement of the world into We and Others, regardless of the positive or negative valuation given to either."<sup>265</sup>

Giunta and Flaherty characterised the decades of the 1960s and 1970s as a period in which "art and revolution were terms that worked together," highlighting the year of 1968 as "an important marker for neo-avant-gardes globally." <sup>266</sup> The context for the emergence of these neo-avant-gardes in Latin America coincided with the aftermath of the Cuban Revolution (1953-1959), which influenced several Latin American artists who began to question the US imperialist agenda. It also suggested new ways to understand the notions of revolution and utopia, put forward different transnational networks among artists, and promoted a new understanding of internationalism in the 1960s. At the same time, these decades were characterised by the emergence of several repressive and authoritarian military regimes in Latin America, such as the ones in Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Chile, which were backed by the CIA. In this context, these authoritarian regimes dismantled previous

Avant-Gardes and Horizontal Art Histories: Avant-Gardes Outside of the Canonic Narrations," in *Horizontal Art History and Beyond*, eds. Agata Jakubowska and Magdalena Radomska (Abingdon, Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2022), 206-217.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>264</sup> Piotr Piotrowski. "Toward a Horizontal History of the European Avant-Garde." In *European Avant-Garde and Modernism Studies*, eds. Sascha Bru and Peter Nicholls (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009): 49-58.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>265</sup> Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel, "The Uses and Abuses of Peripheries in Art," *Artl@s Bulletin*, vol. 3, issue 1 (Spring 2014): 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>266</sup> Andrea Giunta and George F. Flaherty, "Latin American Art History: An Historiographic Turn," 130.

developmentalist measures, shifting towards a neoliberal economic model.<sup>267</sup>

The same historical horizon is the one followed by the term 'Latin American conceptualism.' This idiom has been employed since the 1990s to describe the dematerialisation of art in Latin America that developed concurrently and not as a derivative category from European and US American conceptual art. Among the theorists who began to define and use this term were Puerto Rican curator Mari Carmen Ramírez, Uruguayan artist and theorist Luis Camnitzer and Argentine art historian and researcher Ana Longoni. All these authors stressed the political tensions in Latin America at that time. They also agreed on the fact that Latin American conceptualism cannot be characterised for having a particular style, but for questioning the status of artistic practice.

In the United States of America, the exhibition *Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin,* 1950s-1980s, held at the Queens Museum in 1999, introduced the term 'conceptualism' to question the hegemonic notion of conceptual art. The exhibition, co-curated by Rachel Weiss, Jane Farver and Luis Camnitzer, acknowledged the importance of local circumstances which gave birth to conceptualism in different regions around the world. As Rachel Weiss noted, "The show argued that there were many different modernities in all those different places, and that Conceptualism arose variously across those locales and from those modernities," coinciding with the idea of simultaneous avant-gardes suggested by Andrea Giunta. <sup>269</sup> For Luis Camnitzer, in this exhibition it was more important "to study the manifestations within a local context, following local clocks," instead of following the Anglo-American conceptual art temporality (1965-1975). <sup>270</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>267</sup> Mara Polgovsky Ezcurra, Touched Bodies: The Performative Turn in Latin American Art, 13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>268</sup> I am referring to the essays by Mari Carmen Ramírez, "Blueprint Circuits: Conceptual Art and Politics in Latin America" (1993) and "Tactics for Thriving on Adversity: Conceptualism in Latin America, 1960-1980" (1999); the book by Luis Camnitzer, *Conceptualism in Latin American Art: Didactics of Liberation* (2007); and the essays by Ana Longoni, "Otros inicios del conceptualismo (argentino y latinoamericano)" (2007) and "Relatos *otros* de los conceptualismos" (2009).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>269</sup> Rachel Weiss, "Thinking Back on Global Conceptualism," *post: notes on art in a global context*, May 1, 2015, https://post.moma.org/thinking-back-on-global-conceptualism/.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>270</sup> Fernando Davis, "Entrevista a Luis Camnitzer 'Global Conceptualism fue algo intestinal e incontrolable, al mismo tiempo que presuntuoso y utópico'," *Ramona*, no. 86 (November 2008): 31.

Prior to this show, in 1993 Mari Carmen Ramírez published the essay *Blueprint* Circuits: Conceptual Art and Politics in Latin America as part of the catalogue of the exhibition "Latin American Artists of the Twentieth Century," curated by Waldo Rasmussen at the MoMA in 1992.<sup>271</sup> Ramírez's essay was a response to a claim by Simón Marchán Fiz, who characterised the dematerialisation of art in Latin America as "ideological conceptualism," referring to the works by the Argentine group CAyC.<sup>272</sup> For Mari Carmen Ramírez, while in Europe and the United States the dematerialisation of art is depicted by the use of language, institutional critique or the creation of tautologies; Latin American conceptualism offers a series of counterpropositions to the ideology dilemma proposed by Fiz. She understands ideology in the sense of subversion and the recovery of an emancipatory project. For Ramírez, Latin American conceptualism is defined by its participatory character, the creation of sensorial-tactile environments (art can be pleasurable) and the use of public spaces.<sup>273</sup> She considered that the artists were actively intervening in political and ideological structures, what she calls "anti-discourses." An example of this were Cildo Meireles's *Insertions into Ideological Circuits* projects, in which the artist intervened mass products with critical messages, eluding the state censorship imposed by Brazil's dictatorship. For instance, Cédula Project (Bank Note Project, 1970) in which the artist stamped the question "Quem matou Herzog?" (Who Killed Herzog?) on bank notes, referring to the disappearance of the journalist Vladimir Herzog; or Coca-Cola Project (1970), in which he wrote instructions on a Coca-Cola bottle on how to turn it into a molotov cocktail.

Another view is that of Uruguayan artist and theorist Luis Camnitzer. For Camnitzer, while US-European conceptual art was associated with a reduction and dematerialisation of the object, in Latin America the accent was on communication of ideas, highlighting the fact that a great percentage of ideas dealt with politics.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>271</sup> Mari Carmen Ramírez, "Blueprint Circuits: Conceptual Art and Politics in Latin America," in *Latin American Artists of the Twentieth Century*, ed. Waldo Rasmussen (New York: MoMA, 1993), 156-169.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>272</sup> Ramírez referred to Simón Marchán Fiz's book *Del arte objetual al arte del concepto*, published in 1972.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>273</sup> Mari Carmen Ramírez, "Tactics for Thriving on Adversity: Conceptualism in Latin America, 1960-1980," in *Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin, 1950s-1980s*, eds. Luis Camnitzer, Jane Farver, and Rachel Weiss (New York: Queens Museum of Art, 1999), 62 and 64.

Based on this, the artists were less interested in style and more in producing open-ended and interdisciplinary communication strategies. For him, conceptualism is a strategy that proposes a solution to certain problems, in which the form is not related to a style, but to the possibility to solve (or not) a problem. <sup>274</sup> As an example he mentioned Construcción de un horno popular para hacer pan (Construction of a Popular Oven for Making Bread) by Víctor Grippo, which consisted in the collective construction of a traditional mud oven in the public space. <sup>275</sup> The piece not only denounced the increasing impoverishment of the working class in Argentina, it also acknowledged a popular tradition of making bread.<sup>276</sup> For Camnitzer, the main characteristics of Latin American conceptualism are pedagogy, poetry and politics, "and the blurriness of the borders that separate them from visual art." 277 He traces the early origins of Latin American conceptualism in the work of Venezuelan philosopher and educator Simón Rodríguez, whose particular visual structure for his writings anticipated Mallarmé's formal experimentation by several decades.<sup>278</sup> What Simón Rodríguez accomplished in art and pedagogy, the urban guerrilla group Tupamaros achieved in art and politics, by integrating art with life.<sup>279</sup> For Camnitzer,

The online reading session # 1, as part of the programme of *Rethinking Conceptualism*, was dedicated to this book. The selected essays are available to download under this link:

https://rethinkingconceptualism.com/ola/services/fully-booked-agotado.

The podcast of this session is available here:

https://anchor.fm/rethinking conceptualism/episodes/Online-Reading-Session-1-Luis-Camnitzer-Conceptualism-in-Latin-American-Art-Didactics-of-Liberation-ego5f6/a-a2mslps.

Simón Narciso Jesús Rodríguez (1769 - 1854) – or Samuel Robinson, during his exile in Jamaica from Spanish America – was a Venezuelan philosopher and educator, who is known for his writings against Spanish tyranny. He was influenced by Jean-Jacques Rousseau and wrote extensively about pedagogy, poetry and politics. Rodríguez was Simón Bolívar's tutor and mentor, and is best known for having forged his spirit and ideas.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>274</sup> Fernando Davis, "Entrevista a Luis Camnitzer," 29.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>275</sup> Víctor Grippo was invited to participate in the exhibition *Arte e Ideología. CAyC al aire libre* (Art and Ideology. CAyC outdoors), organised by CAyC in Buenos Aires in 1972. The exhibition took place in the surroundings of the Plaza Roberto Arlt. On this occasion, Víctor Grippo and Jorge Gamarra presented *Construcción de un horno popular para hacer pan*, carried out in collaboration with the rural worker A. Rossi, who came with an assistant to help him. The action took place in three stages: building the oven, making the bread, breaking it and distributing it to the passers-by. The activity also included the distribution of a written paper, explaining the intentions of the work.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>276</sup> Luis Camnitzer, *Conceptualism in Latin American Art: Didactics of Liberation* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007), 20.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>277</sup> Luis Camnitzer, Conceptualism in Latin American Art, 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>278</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>279</sup> Tupamaros National Liberation Movement (1967-1972) was a Uruguayan guerrilla group named after the Peruvian revolutionary *cacique* (local political leader) Túpac Amaru II. Its origins lie in the union between the Movimiento de Apoyo al Campesino (Peasant Support Movement), composed by members of trade unions and

this guerrilla group succeeded in establishing parameters for aesthetic perception through the economy and effectiveness of their messages. Both Tupamaros and Simón Rodríguez contributed to what he called "didactics of liberation." Camnitzer understands Latin American conceptualism as peripheral, while conceptual art corresponds to the hegemonic Euro-US American perspective of art. While being part of the artist group *New York Graphic Workshop* (1964-1970) – with Liliana Porter and Guillermo Castillo – in his early New York years, he spoke about his work as "contextual art." Parameters of their messages. Both Tupamaros and Simón Rodríguez contributed to what he called "didactics of liberation." Parameters of liberation."

While Camnitzer and Ramírez defined Latin American conceptualism mainly in relation to the United States, Ana Longoni followed a South-South approach, in connection with the aims of the RedCSur. Longoni is interested in rescuing the forgotten narratives of artistic-political practices in the 1960s and 1970s in Latin America, and how they can activate the present and question the way one can do art and politics today. These practices were associated with what Longoni understands as "force-ideas of avant-garde and revolution." For her, Latin American conceptualisms are a series of "decentred" proposals. In this sense, the

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the radicalised cells of the Socialist Party of Uruguay. Some artists and intellectuals were also involved in this movement. Among their influences were the Cuban Revolution and Ernesto "Che" Guevara.

As part of the programme of *Rethinking Conceptualism*, I organised a session with Luis Camnitzer, in which we discussed with the audience his posture on Mari Carmen Ramírez's texts on Latin American conceptualism. The session took place on 30 July 2020. The selection of texts can be found here:

https://rethinkingconceptualism.com/ola/services/online-reading-session-3-sesion-de-lecturas-en-linea-3. Under this link you may find the podcast of the session with Camnitzer:

https://anchor.fm/rethinkingconceptualism/episodes/Online-Reading-Session-3-Blue-Print-Circuits-Conceptual-Art-and-Politics-in-Latin-America--Special-guest-Luis-Camnitzer-eiajs7/a-a2vplkp.

 $https://rethinking conceptualism.tumblr.com/post/614024363533123584/in-this-interview-the-artist-luis-camnitz\ er-talks.$ 

https://www.laizquierdadiario.com/Ana-Longoni-El-trabajo-de-investigacion-es-para-mi-una-practica-politica-omo-un-modo-de-militancia.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>280</sup> Luis Camnitzer, Conceptualism in Latin American Art, 10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>281</sup> The interview with Camnitzer's appreciation on art during this period can be found in the blog of Rethinking Conceptualism, *Rethinking Conceptualism* blog,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>282</sup> Elina Martinelli, "Ana Longoni: "El trabajo de investigación es para mí una práctica política, como un modo de militancia," *La Izquierda Diario*, December 3, 2014, https://www.laizquierdadiario.com/Ana-Longoni-El-trabajo-de-investigacion-es-para-mi-una-practica-politica-c

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>283</sup> Ana Longoni developed this idea in depth in the essay "Vanguardia y revolución como ideas-fuerza en el arte argentino de los años sesenta," *MODOS*, vol. 1, no. 3 (September 2017): 150-179. https://doi.org/10.24978/mod.v1i3.871; as well as in Ana Longoni, "Vanguardia y revolución: Ideas y prácticas artístico-políticas en Argentina de los años'60/'70," PhD diss., Universidad de Buenos Aires, 2004.

artists were less concerned with being recognised in their peripheral condition, they were more interested in questioning the artistic status by infringing it.<sup>284</sup> Longoni's point of view corresponds with Giunta's simultaneous avant-gardes, as well as her interest in a recovery of terms. She speaks of conceptualisms in plural, bringing about several notions that were in use prior to the introduction of the term 'Latin American conceptualism' in the 1990s. Referring to Argentina, she noted that in 1968 the artist Ricardo Carreira spoke about 'dishabituation,' which included intervening in reality, transforming the audience and its environment. Another view is that of theorist Oscar Masotta who introduced the term 'dematerialisation' in 1967, borrowing it from Russian constructivist artist El Lissitsky.<sup>285</sup> For Masotta, "the work of art shall influence or alter the consciousness or the parameters of perception of the audience."<sup>286</sup> Indeed, both Oscar Masotta and US curator, critic and activist Lucy Lippard were using the term dematerialisation in the same period.<sup>287</sup>

Ramírez and Longoni share the view of Roberto Jacoby, who described the art practices of that period as "a strategy of anti-discourses" against the fetishisation of autonomous art and the systems of production and circulation of the work of art in late capitalism. Longoni considers that all these categories illustrated the "need to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>284</sup> Longoni uses the verb "desbordar" that could be roughly translated as overflow or going beyond the border. Ana Longoni, "Otros inicios del conceptualismo (argentino y latinoamericano)," *Papers D'Art*, no. 93 (second semester 2007): 158.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>285</sup> El Lissitsky, "The Future of the Book," *New Left Review*, no. I/41 (January/February 1967): 39-44. This essay was first published in 1926.

As part of the programme of *Rethinking Conceptualism: Avant-Garde, Activism and Politics in Latin American Art (1960s-1980s)*, I organised an online reading session with Karen Benezra, focusing on the work by Oscar Masotta. The session was dedicated to her book *Dematerialization: Art and Design in Latin America* and was held on 26 November 2020. The selection of texts for the meeting can be found here: https://rethinkingconceptualism.com/ola/services/26-november-2020-18-00-h.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>286</sup> Ana Longoni, "Otros inicios del conceptualismo (argentino y latinoamericano)," 156.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>287</sup> Lippard travelled to Argentina in September 1968. In an interview from 1969 with Ursula Meyer, she described her visit to Argentina as her political 'awakening' that would radicalise her practice. In this interview Lippard stated the following: "I was politicized by a trip to Argentina in the fall of 1968, when I talked to artists who felt that it was immoral to make their art in the society that existed there. It becomes clear that today everything, even art, exists in a political situation." After her trip to Argentina, Lippard will get involved with the Art Workers' Coalition and Women Artists in Revolution. Lucy Lippard, *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), 8. For more information about Lucy Lippard's experience in Argentina, see: Pip Day, "Locating '2,972,453': Lucy R. Lippard in Argentina," *Afterall*, Lucy Lippard's Numbers Shows 1969-74, https://www.afterall.org/article/locating-2-972-453-lucyr.lippard-in-argentina-pip-day.

generate a new theoretical language" to articulate the outburst of several artistic expressions that questioned the traditional art forms of that time. As they are historically situated, she insists on not passively assuming the term 'conceptualism.' Longoni emphasised that several of these artists resisted this assimilation very early on. For instance, the artists Juan Pablo Renzi and León Ferrari, who participated in the counter-communication campaign *Tucumán Arde* (1968), were against inscribing it as a manifestation of conceptual art. As Longoni observed, although they had no intentions to classify it as art, these political-artistic practices have been de-historicized and commodified by the market.

For Longoni, the artistic practices of the 1960s and 1970s in Latin America were characterised by their radicality and for suggesting "a territory of imprecise borders," appropriating spaces that were unconventional to the arts. To this she added that one should be aware of this impreciseness, which can help us to avoid stereotyped or reassuring categories.<sup>291</sup> However, this impreciseness has led to an understanding of art as political activism by Longoni and the members of RedCSur. As art historian Daniel R. Quiles observed, among the networks' activities are calls for action, which at times are closer to political militancy than to historiographic practice.<sup>292</sup> For him, this posture runs the risk of creating a new essentialism in Latin American art, one that "responds to a never-ending onslaught of traumatic

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>288</sup> Ana Longoni, "Otros inicios del conceptualismo (argentino y latinoamericano)," 157.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>289</sup> Ibid., 157.

In 1968, a group of artists from the cities of Rosario and Buenos Aires organised *Tucumán Arde* (Tucumán is Burning), a counter-communication campaign that denounced the poverty and the living conditions of the sugar cane workers in Tucumán. This campaign differed from Onganía's political discourse that presented the province of Tucumán as an example of the government's successful policies, covering up the real situation of its inhabitants. An extensive research on this experience and beyond it is the publication by Ana Longoni and Mariano Mestman, *Del Di Tella a Tucumán Arde: vanguardia artística y política en el 68' argentino*, Buenos Aires: El cielo por asalto, 2000.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>290</sup> Elina Martinelli, "Ana Longoni: "El trabajo de investigación es para mí una práctica política, como un modo de militancia," *La Izquierda Diario*, December 3, 2014.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>291</sup> Ana Longoni, "Otros inicios del conceptualismo (argentino y latinoamericano)," 158.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>292</sup> For instance, the support of the Venezuelan government of Nicolás Maduro, claiming that it was the continuation of a fight against imperialism. RedCSur, "Situación en Venezuela," Comunicado de la RedCSur (RedCSur's statement), February 22, 2014, https://redcsur.net/2014/02/22/situacion-en-venezuela/.

events."293

While Ramírez situated her argument in relation to the one proposed by Simón Marchán Fiz, Longoni and Camnitzer positioned themselves in contrast to German art historian Benjamin H. D. Buchloh. According to Buchloh,

... the proposal inherent in Conceptual Art was to replace the object of spatial and perceptual experience by linguistic definition alone (the work as analytic proposition), it thus constituted the most consequential assault on the status of that object: its visuality, its commodity status, and its form of distribution. ... Conceptual practices, furthermore, reflected upon the construction and the role (or the death) of the author just as much as they redefined the conditions of receivership and the role of the spectator. <sup>294</sup>

Buchloh stressed the difficulties of historicising conceptual art, due to the variety of its proposals, which were sometimes in contradiction. He also observed how much conceptual artists influenced each other's works. Other than the analytic proposition and the focus on a linguistic definition, his observations on the death of the author, the redefinition of the role of the audience, and the problems of historization of conceptual art are very much related to the claims of Latin American conceptualism.

Regarding the geographical areas in which the first Latin American conceptualisms first emerged, Mari Carmen Ramírez circumscribed them to Brazil, Chile, Argentina, Colombia, Venezuela, and the Latin American artists' community in New York. Broadening this perspective, Longoni argued that one cannot restrict it to these geographical areas. Further scholarship has proved that conceptualism happened in other Latin American countries in the same period. In this sense, she mentioned Juan

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>293</sup> Daniel R. Quiles, "Exhibition as Network, Network as Curator: Canonizing Art from "Latin America"," *Artl@s Bulletin*, vol. 3, no. 1 (2014): 76.

The tendency to characterise the whole Latin American subcontinent under similar criteria is also visible in the exhibition *Subversive Practices*. *Art under Conditions of Political Repression 60s–80s / South America / Europe* to which I will refer later in this chapter.

However, in the nineties there was a group Latin American artists and theorists, including Gerardo Mosquera, Mirko Lauer, Nelly Richard or Ticio Escobar, who were questioning and looking for possibilities to go beyond essentialist views of Latin America, for instance the publication *Beyond the Fantastic: Contemporary Art Criticism from Latin America*, edited by Gerardo Mosquera (1996).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>294</sup> Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, "Conceptual Art 1962-1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions," *October* 55 (1990): 107. https://www.jstor.org/stable/778941.

Acha's term 'non-objectualism' and the research carried out by López and Tarazona on the artist group *Arte Nuevo*. <sup>295</sup> She praised the work by these curators for "reconstructing with unusual rigour a series of lost episodes of the beginnings of Peruvian experimentalism since the mid-1960s." <sup>296</sup> For Longoni, *Arte Nuevo* proposed other ways of thinking and practising art, but has been overshadowed by the historiographical weight attributed to the artist collective *Taller E.P.S. Huayco*. <sup>297</sup> Another reason that silenced this scene was the contradictory process of Velasco Alvarado's administration, which was mirrored in the art scene as "a persistent discomfort of the artists regarding the structures of power." <sup>298</sup> Longoni's conclusions about the Peruvian art scene are a simplification of a much more complex situation that I want to clarify in this chapter. In the lines that follow, I examine whether this discomfort regarding the structures of power may be attributed to Velasco Alvarado's government, or were a reflection of the anti-authoritarian and rebellious spirit of the period. This included a critique of the bourgeois understanding of art and art's commodification.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>295</sup> Arte Nuevo (1966-1968) was a Peruvian artist group, composed by the artists Luis Arias Vera (1931-2016), Teresa Burga (1935-2021), Jaime Dávila (1937), Víctor Delfin (1927), Gloria Gómez Sánchez (1921-2007), Emilio Hernández Saavedra (1940), José Tang (1941-2006), Armando Varela (1933) and Luis Zevallos Hetzel (1933). The group initiated its activities as a response to the Festivales de Lima (also known as First Lima Biennale) on 24 October 1966. From this group, Luis Arias Vera, Emilio Hernández Saavedra and Luis Zevallos Hetzel contributed to the reforms that Velasco Alvarado's government was conducting.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>296</sup> Ana Longoni, "Relatos *otros* de los conceptualismos," in *Conceitualismos do Sul/Sur*, eds. Cristina Freire and Ana Longoni (São Paulo: Editora Annablume, 2009), 279. Longoni also mentions *Arte Nuevo* and Juan Acha in her essay "Otros inicios del conceptualismo (argentino y latinoamericano)."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>297</sup> Ana Longoni, "Relatos *otros* de los conceptualismos," 278.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>298</sup> Ibid., 280-281.

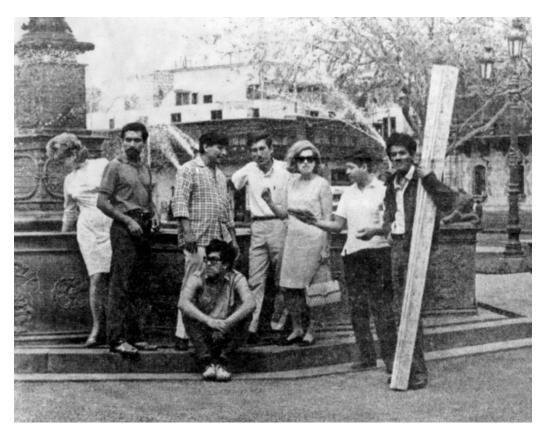


Figure 34. *Arte Nuevo* members in the Plaza de Armas, the main city square in Lima, 1966. From left to right: Gloria Gómez Sánchez, Armando Varela, Luis Arias Vera, Emilio Hernández Saavedra (sitting), Luis Zevallos Hetzel, Teresa Burga, Jaime Dávila and José Tang. (Víctor Delfin, who was also a member of the group, is not portrayed in this image).

Source of the image: *El Comercio*, November 20, 1990, C18.

Ana Longoni challenged the perspective of 'Latin American conceptualism' as a homogenising notion that shall apply to the whole subcontinent, by introducing other terminologies that developed before 'Latin American conceptualism' began to be used. In his essay "How Do We Know What Latin American Conceptualism Looks Like?," Miguel A. López follows Longoni's point of view, stating that these notions constituted "a *multitude* of not-yet articulated and potential genealogies." He questioned the dichotomy that depicts Latin American conceptualism as strictly political and subversive, in contrast to a more 'depoliticised' North American canon, going against the arguments proposed by Mari Carmen Ramírez and Luis Camnitzer. To explain his position, he gave an extensive introduction of the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>299</sup> Miguel A. López, "How Do We Know What Latin American Conceptualism Looks Like?," *Afterall: A Journal of Art, Context and Enquiry*, The University of Chicago Press on behalf of Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, University of the Arts London, issue 23 (Spring 2010): 15. https://www.jstor.org/stable/20711776.

exhibition Inventario 1965-1975. Archivo Graciela Carnevale, presented in the city of Rosario in 2008, forty years after the counter-communication campaign *Tucumán Arde* took place. The exhibition was based on the archives of Graciela Carnevale, an artist who participated in *Tucumán Arde* in 1968. According to López, "The exhibition took the transformation of 'Tucumán Arde' into an artwork as its starting point ... in an attempt to visually compose a chronological micro-narrative that would describe the events of 1968."300 This implied revisiting the different narratives that have emerged around Tucumán Arde in the last years. The archive served as "the material background from which those reconstructions seemed to appear and disappear," suggesting their capacity to disrupt "all narrative certainty." 301 It also foregrounded the fact that *Tucumán Arde* refused to be defined as art, questioning its canonisation in the art world as an epitome of "political art." I agree with López on this, as I also question the need to characterise Latin American art from the 1960s to 1970s as per se subversive or political. While he advocated for a more porous understanding of dematerialised art practices in Latin America, paying attention to their different developments; conversely, he defined the Peruvian experimental art practices of the 1960s as primarily disruptive, rebellious and political.<sup>302</sup>

I have given an extensive description of Ana Longoni's approach on the artistic-political art practices in Latin America from the 1960s onwards, as this is the version shared by López and Tarazona. In the next section, I examine how the experimental art scene in Lima from the mid-1960s to 1970s gained entry into the canon of artistic-political practices proposed by the RedCSur.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>300</sup> Miguel A. López, "How Do We Know What Latin American Conceptualism Looks Like?," 16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>301</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>302</sup> Miguel A. López, "Cultural Guerrilla: Juan Acha and the Peruvian Avant-Garde of the 1960s," *post: notes on art in a global context*, November 9, 2016, https://post.moma.org/cultural-guerrilla-juan-acha-and-the-peruvian-avant-garde-of-the-1960s/.

## 2. Entering the Latin American Conceptualist Canon

"Conceptual art is a method of investigating art itself, a reflection on its specificity and meaning. It matters little whether it is considered art or not; what counts is its critical approach to the artistic problem. In this sense, I am inclined to consider conceptual art as an operational critique that starts from the very ground of creation."

— Alfonso Castrillón Vizcarra<sup>303</sup>

Drawing on Juan Acha's understanding of 'cultural guerrilla warfare,' in this section I focus on two of his essays, "La revolución cultural" and "Perù: Risveglio rivoluzionario," which have been instrumental for Miguel A. López and Emilio Tarazona to develop their own thesis on the beginnings of the experimental art scene of the mid-1960s to mid-1970s in Lima. In the following paragraphs, I examine the claim of activism attributed to some of the artworks. I argue that Juan Acha's definition of cultural guerrilla differed from the one López and Tarazona attributed to the Peruvian critic. In fact, neither Juan Acha's writings nor the artists' practices were a criticism directed against the military government, contradicting López's and Tarazona's premise.

## 2.1. Definitions of the Cultural Guerrilla Warfare in the Field of Visual Arts

In the 1960s and 1970s, the social revolution was understood as a fight against capitalist exploitation and imperialism. Throughout the Latin American subcontinent, committed artists and intellectuals aimed to achieve social change, by either engaging in social activities, abandoning their artistic practice or by joining the armed struggle.<sup>304</sup> They identified their practice as a political activity, capable of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>303</sup> "El arte conceptual es un método de investigar el arte mismo, una reflexión sobre su especificidad y su sentido. Poco importa que se le considere arte o no, lo importante es su enfoque crítico sobre el problema artístico. En este sentido me inclino a considerar el arte conceptual como una crítica operativa que parte del terreno mismo de la creación." Alfonso Castrillón Vizcarra, "Reflexiones sobre el arte conceptual en el Perú y sus proyecciones: Primer Coloquio latino-americano sobre Arte no objetual. Museo de Medellín – Mayo de 1981," *Letras* 48, no. 88-89 (1985), 28.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>304</sup> Ana Longoni, "Vanguardia y Revolución como ideas-fuerza en el arte argentino de los años sesenta," *MODOS*, vol. 1, no. 3 (September 2017): 150-179; Ana Longoni and Mariano Mestman, *Del Di Tella a* 

transforming society. For instance, in the early 1960s in Peru, the poet Javier Heraud and the sociologist, lawyer and artist Héctor Béjar participated in the armed struggle as part of the guerrilla Ejército de Liberación Nacional, which was inspired by the Cuban Revolution.<sup>305</sup> Although the social relations of production in Peru were predominantly capitalist, it should be pointed out that the guerrillas of the early 1960s primarily fought for fair land redistribution and to give the land to those who worked it. It was a dispute against internal forces of domination: the semi-feudal system of land ownership and the persisting colonial structures in the country.

For art historian David Craven, while in the 1960s the notions of 'guerrilla' and 'revolution' were used as synonymous, it was the guerrilla that redefined the understanding of doing a revolution in Latin America. For instance, by focusing on the city/country divide, or by introducing irregular and unexpected tactics. In fact, the guerrillas in Latin America made visible "the logic of uneven development in the Third World." As Craven noted, it was Augusto César Sandino, leader of the rebellion against the US occupation of Nicaragua (1927-1933), who coined the term guerrilla in 1927. Sandino characterised it as "a special system of war that we have taken to calling 'little war' (guerrilla)." <sup>307</sup>

Concerning the field of art, Paula Barreiro López noted that 'cultural guerrilla' was understood "as a way for destabilizing the cultural and social system, comprising artistic action as a part of a general revolutionary process against Imperialism." It put together several artistic practices that were characterised "by collectivization, participation and action in the socio-political sphere." 308 All these ideas were already

Tucumán Arde: vanguardia artística y política en el 68' argentino (2000), and Mara Polgovsky Ezcurra, Touched Bodies: The Performative Turn in Latin American Art (2019).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>305</sup> The guerrilla movements of the early 1960s in Peru included the already mentioned Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN, active from 1962 to 1965), Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (MIR, active from 1962 to 1965) and Hugo Blanco's insurrection in La Convención, Cusco (1961-1963).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>306</sup> David Craven, Art and Revolution in Latin America, 9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>307</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>308</sup> Paula Barreiro López, "Collectivization, participation and dissidence on the transatlantic axis during the Cold War: Cultural Guerrilla for destabilizing the balance of power in the 1960s," *Culture & History Digital Journal*, vol. 4, no. 1 (June 2015): 2. https://doi.org/10.3989/chdj.2015.007.

circulating in the arts field since the late 1950s and during the 1960s, reaching their peak in the Paris May '68 riots. An example of this was the *Salón de Mayo*, held in 1967 in Havana, to which several artists and intellectuals based in France travelled to Cuba. This meeting "would further incite their fascination for the Latin American cause and foster their dis-identification with the ideological-geographical bipolarity of the Cold War." Upon their return, they would actively participate in the French barricades of 1968. Barreiro López highlighted the networks established between European and Latin American artists at that time, and the influence of the Cuban Revolution in the Paris' riots. In general, there was not an established rule or precise form on how the cultural guerrilla would take place in the visual arts. What was clear is that it welcomed a large variety of artforms, including painting, silkscreen prints, posters, murals, performances, or conceptual practices.

In this period the notion of 'cultural guerrilla warfare' began to be used by artists and critics, with different connotations. For instance, Italian art historian, critic and curator Germano Celant used it to introduce what later will be identified as the *arte povera* movement. In this context, he presented the work of some Italian artists representative of a rebellious attitude, that shall contest the established art world in the sense of a 'guerrilla warfare.' Celant urged the need to go back to essential principles. This included abandoning sheer consumption and suggesting the use of poor (ordinary or found) objects, positioning his view against abstraction, pop art and the primary structures. 122

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>309</sup> The *Salón de mayo* in Havana (1967) was conceived by Cuban painter Wifredo Lam and Carlos Franqui, writer and director of the Cuban newspaper *Revolución*, both with strong networks in Paris. The idea was to bring the *Salon de Mai* (May Salon) to Cuba, under the name of *Salón de mayo*. Among the artists and intellectuals who were invited to this event were writers and art critics Michel Leiris, Peter Weiss, Juan Goytisolo, Jorge Semprúm, Alain Jouffroy, Gérald Gassiot Talabot, Marguerite Duras, Maurice Nadeau, Jean-Jacques Lévêque, Michel Ragon and Harald Szeemann; as well as artists such as Eduardo Arroyo, Gudmundur Erró, Roberto Matta, Valerio Adami, Antonio Recalcati, Bernard Rancillac, César Baldaccini and Pierre Alechinsky. Paula Barreiro López, "Collectivization...," 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>310</sup> Paula Barreiro López, "A Guerrilla War of Things? Objects, Subversion and Anti-Capitalism," *Arts & Societés*, # 99, https://www.sciencespo.fr/artsetsocietes/en/archives/3335.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>311</sup> Germano Celant, "Appunti per una guerriglia," *Flash Art*, no. 5, November-December 1967. The essay ended with the following sentence "Siamo infatti già alla guerriglia" (We are in fact already in a guerrilla warfare), announcing a present state of change.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>312</sup> Here, he was referring to the sculpture works exhibited in *Primary Structures: Younger American and British Sculptors*, held from April to June 1966 at The Jewish Museum in New York.

Another view was that of Argentine artist Julio Le Parc in his "Guerrilla Cultural" (Cultural Guerrilla Warfare), written in March 1968 in Paris. In this essay, Le Parc made a call for action: "I think that one must act. To act whenever possible. To act to create other situations where one can develop a more concerted, more orchestrated action. To act even at the risk of being mistaken." Participation and the viewer's integration as part of the artwork were also among the main ideas of the *Groupe de Recherche d'Art Visuel* (GRAV), to which Le Parc was one of its co-founders and key members. Julio Le Parc joined the Paris May '68 riots, participating in the *Ateliers Populaires* (Popular Workshops), in which most of the posters of the Paris movement were collectively produced. Although Le Parc moved to Paris in 1958, his call for action from 1968 could be framed within his identification with the Latin American cause against imperialism.

In 1970, Brazilian art critic Frederico Morais published the essay "Contra a arte afluente: o corpo é o motor da "obra"" (Against Affluent Art: The Body is the Motor of the "Artwork"), in which he employed the terminology of the guerrilla, by defining the artists as guerrilla leaders and art as an ambush.<sup>316</sup> For him, guerrilla artists contested affluent art (represented by machines and technology), by creating art out of recycled materials, found objects, or by using the body. In this context "it is important to make our wealth, out of the misery and the underdevelopment

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<sup>313 &</sup>quot;... pienso que es necesario actuar. Actuar en cada ocasión. Actuar para crear otras situaciones donde se pueda desenvolver una acción más concertada, más orquestada. Actuar incluso a riesgo de equivocarse." Julio Le Parc, "Guerrilla Cultural," March 1968, http://julioleparc.org/gu%C3%A9rilla-culturelle.html. Originally published in *Robho*, no. 3, Spring 1968.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>314</sup> The Groupe de Recherche d'Art Visuel (Visual Arts Research Group, GRAV for its French acronym) was active between 1960 and 1968. It was a collaborative artist collective composed by eleven opto-kinetic artists, such as François Morellet, Julio Le Parc, Francisco Sobrino, Horacio Garcia Rossi, Yvaral (Jean-Pierre Vasarely), Joël Stein and Vera Molnár. Collective work, participation and freedom of the viewer were among the group's aims regarding their practice. The GRAV proposed a series of environments, in which the main actor was the spectator, keeping the intervention of the artist and the interpretation of meaning of the work to its minimum.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>315</sup> Paula Barreiro López, "Collectivization...," 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>316</sup> Frederico Morais, "Contra a arte afluente: o corpo é o motor da "obra"," *Revista de Cultura Vozes*, vol.1, no. 64 (January/February 1970): 45-59.

condition."<sup>317</sup> Morais characterised art as a process-based embodied experience, reflecting on aesthetic experiences that went beyond the field of arts, such as addressing *marginália* (marginality).<sup>318</sup> This was exemplified in the work of the artist Hélio Oiticica, who went to the *favelas* (shantytowns) in Rio de Janeiro and incorporated elements of the popular culture of these communities in his artistic practice.<sup>319</sup>

## 2.1.2. The Cultural Guerrilla as a Metaphor to Question the Arts Establishment

Juan Acha's essays "La revolución cultural" and "Perù: Risveglio rivoluzionario" were reflections regarding the above-mentioned spirit. Between 1968 and 1969 Acha spent several months in Europe. In 1968, he visited documenta 4 in Kassel, witnessed the boycott of the 34th edition of the Biennale di Venezia and the aftermath of the May 1968 student movements. The latter affected him deeply and made him shift his view on the arts. Inspired by this, he wrote the essay "La revolución cultural." In this text, Juan Acha proposed a transmutation of values

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>317</sup> "... importante é fazer da miséria, do subdesenvolvimento, nossa principal riqueza." Ibid., 59.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>318</sup> As part of the programme of *Rethinking Conceptualism*, Claudia Calirman gave an online workshop on 10 June 2020, which was dedicated to this topic. The podcast of the workshop "Brazilian Art from 1960s to 1980s: An Aesthetics of the Margins," can be found here:

https://anchor.fm/rethinking conceptualism/episodes/Online-Workshop-Brazilian-Art-from-1960s-to-1980s-An-Aesthetics-of-the-Margins--with-Claudia-Calirman-egnkkm/a-a2mqajk.

For more information about *marginália* in Brazilian art: Claudia Calirman, "Marginália in Brazil's "Stone-Throwing Age"," *Art Journal* 78, no. 1 (January 2, 2019): 48-65. https://doi.org/10.1080/00043249.2019.1598149.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>319</sup> In 1964, Oiticica joined the Estação Primeira de Mangueira Samba School, located at the Mangueira Hill, a *favela* in Rio de Janeiro. From this experience, he began to incorporate bodily and sensorial, as well as popular and vernacular elements into his work, through dance, choreography and music. Is in this context in which the artist initiated his series of *parangolés*, consisting of capes, banners or flags made from different materials (for instance fabrics, plastic or straw mats), sometimes containing political or poetic phrases. By wearing, running or dancing with a *parangolé*, one ceases to be a spectator and becomes part of the work of art. Oiticica understood his *parangolés* as 'anti-art,' criticising the theorisation of art and appealing for a notion of art as a lived experience.

As part of the symposium of *Rethinking Conceptualism*, Lisette Lagnado gave a lecture on Hélio Oiticica with the title "The Intricacies of Hélio Oiticica's Conceptualism in his "Programa Ambiental"." The video with her presentation can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tyxtAOkIak4.

The panel discussion "Conceptualism in Hélio Oiticica and Gloria Gómez-Sánchez" with Lisette Lagnado and Emilio Tarazona, and the Q&A session with the audience took place on 12 March 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>320</sup> Juan Acha, "La revolución cultural," *Oiga*, no. 386, year VIII (August 14, 1970): 29 and 31.

and its hierarchies, criticising both the bourgeoisie and consumer culture, something he described as a 'cultural guerrilla.' Acha equated the artists to political cultural revolutionaries or guerrilla fighters. What differentiated them from the latter was that they "do not just seek destruction. They seek what people fear the most: the freedom of individual behaviour within a climate of mutual respect." He characterised the artists as the driving force of this cultural revolution, emphasising on the ones that would incite mental and sensorial changes in society. 322

In "Perù: Risveglio rivoluzionario," he expanded the idea of a cultural guerrilla, connecting avant-garde with underdevelopment. For him, these were not incompatible terms, as the avant-garde was needed to prevent the negative effects of consumer culture, resulting from industrialisation. As in "La revolución cultural," in "Perù: Risveglio rivoluzionario" he called out to eradicate the decadent system of values, appealing to the need to emancipate from two imperialisms that were operating in the Third World:

... that of the spiritual and traditional official European rhetoric, and that of the technocratic and progressive pragmatism of the US American "ruling class" [sic]; both interested in maintaining a primacy of certain systems of values negating individual freedom, leading us to reject any radical change that goes against their economies.<sup>324</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>321</sup> Juan Acha, "La revolución cultural," 31.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>322</sup> Juan Acha's ideas of a cultural revolution with the artists as the agents of this mental and sensorial changes, as well as the critique to consumer culture were most likely influenced by Herbert Marcuse's writings, one of the main intellectual references that inspired the French barricades in 1968. For instance, in "An Essay on Liberation," Marcuse stated that the cultural revolution is possible by means of a collective practice, stressing aesthetic-erotic needs in order to "create a beautiful and pleasing environment that would eliminate the horrors of capitalist industrialization." Douglas Kellner, ed., *Herbert Marcuse, Art and Liberation*, Collected Papers of Herbert Marcuse, vol. 4 (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 49. Furthermore, Marcuse's criticism against consumer culture and the resulting alienation of the masses (what he understood under one-dimensionality) were among the ideas developed in his book *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society*, first published in 1964.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>323</sup> It has to be noted that the original essay "Perú: Despertar revolucionario" (Peru: Revolutionary Awakening) was first published in Italian with the title "Perù: Risveglio rivoluzionario" in the magazine *D'Ars* in June 1971. Hence, Acha's introduction of the scene in Lima of 1970 was intended for a foreign reader. Juan Acha, "Perù: Risveglio rivoluzionario," *D'Ars*, no. 55, year XII (June 1971): 22-39. The draft was written in Lima in September 1970. I have taken the original essay in Spanish from this publication: Joaquín Barriendos, ed., *Juan Acha. Despertar revolucionario/Revolutionary Awakening* (Barcelona: RM Verlag, 2017), 33-40.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>324</sup> "... el de la retórica espiritualista y tradicionalista del oficialismo europeo, y el del pragmatismo tecnocrático y progresista de la "ruling class" norteamericana; ambos interesados en la primacía de sistemas de valores que niegan la libertad al individuo y nos hacen rechazar cualquier cambio radical y contrario a su economía." Juan

In both essays, the notions of cultural guerrilla warfare, cultural activism and revolutionary awakening were mutually related. The two essays underlined the social and political dimensions of artistic practices. They reflected on a critical spirit, the need for a change of mentality, as well as for a renewal in the arts, which was represented in the attitude of some artists in the early 1970s. According to Juan Acha, a few artists in Lima were already participating in this spirit, by thinking and spreading the need for a cultural revolution. Among the artists representative of this spirit were Rafael Hastings (Abelardo Rafael Indacochea), the dancer and choreographer Yvonne von Möllendorff (Yvonne de Indacochea, Rafael Hastings's wife), Emilio Hernández Saavedra (a former member of *Arte Nuevo*), Mario Acha (Juan Acha's son, who at that time was doing experimental cinema), a group of five recently graduated students from the National School of Fine Arts (Consuelo Rabanal, Leonor Chocano, Ernesto Maguiña, Eduardo Castilla and Hilda Chirinos), and the Italian artist living in Peru Mario de Muro.

Similar to Germano Celant, who applied the metaphor of the cultural guerrilla warfare to introduce the *arte povera* movement, for Acha the term suggested the appearance of nonsalable ephemeral installations (*ambientaciones* (environments) or *penetrables* (participatory installations or sculptures)), or time-based art practices (performances, happenings, interventions in public spaces, light art, video or experimental cinema) in the art scene in Lima. Acha depicted these art forms for their criticality against consumption and for representing to their best the rebellious attitude of the artists of that time. Another feature that connects Acha's cultural guerrilla with that of Celant was that neither of them did transgress the artistic context. Their theories described art styles that were against consumerism (at least theoretically, although they were later commercialised) and the established art system. Both paid attention to the notion of art as idea or attitude, followed by a reduction of the art object (or the use of poor materials as in *arte povera*).

Acha, "Despertar revolucionario," in *Juan Acha. Despertar revolucionario/Revolutionary Awakening*, ed. Joaquín Barriendos, 35. The brackets are mine.

In my view, Juan Acha's definition of cultural guerrilla referred to art practices with a critical potential, typified by time-based and performative artworks and the use of the public space. At the same time, the cultural guerrilla was used as a metaphor to introduce the experimental scene of 1970 to an international audience. In another article he declared that "the decade of the 1970s would be the heyday of activism (art as idea or attitude)." For him, activism was possible through conceptual art (art as idea), an art form that also entailed a critical attitude. However, while the cultural guerrilla by Le Parc implied collective participatory actions and an active engagement in social and political matters; the cultural guerrilla in Lima mentioned in Acha's essays stayed within the artistic setting and had no other social or political engagement beyond this framework. To explain this, I am taking four examples of artworks that Juan Acha described as representative of a cultural guerrilla. After this, I connect these examples with the alleged critique against the government that has been attributed to these works by López and Tarazona.

The first example is *Todo el amor* (All the Love), a street intervention by Rafael Hastings (1945-2020). The piece consisted of inviting the audience to observe couples, while they were socialising in different public parks. During the action, the artist distributed some messages (their content aimed to incite free love) among the couples he met in the parks, which they could pass on to each other. *Todo el amor* had a celebratory and hedonistic character, by encouraging the attendees to enjoy this big party ("GRAN FIESTA"). Among the novelties of this piece were the use of the public space, its performative character, and the inclusion of the couples as part of the artistic intervention. Still, as Castrillón Vizcarra noted, Hastings's actions were comprehensible only by an informed elite and went unnoticed "in the deaf climate in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>325</sup> "La década del setenta será el apogeo del activismo (arte como idea o actitud)." Juan Acha, "Reflejos sobre la década del 70," *El Comercio*, supplement Dominical (January 4, 1970): 39.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>326</sup> Alfonso Castrillón Vizcarra, ¿El ojo de la navaja o el filo de la tormenta? (Lima: Universidad Ricardo Palma, 2001), 187.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>327</sup> Rafael Hastings, "La próxima exposición de Hastings. Todo el amor," *Oiga*, no. 383, year VIII (July 17, 1970): 32.

Lima."<sup>328</sup> Nevertheless, López and Tarazona interpreted the handing out of the messages by the artist as a gesture that rejected "certain moralistic disciplinary measures against sexual behaviour" of the military government.<sup>329</sup> However, in its original context *Todo el amor* was announced as an exhibition in the magazine *Oiga*. It was advertised as a show in public spaces, with a duration of three months, starting on 16 July 1970. It had a date, time (from 7 p.m. to 1 a.m.) and it was held in different locations (Parque Neptuno, Parque de la Exposición, Parque de la Reserva and Campo de Marte). There was nothing activist in this action. Beyond this, the military government did not impose any disciplinary measures against sexual behaviour.

Rafael Hastings began his artistic career in Europe, with stations in Brussels, London and Paris. In November 1967, he travelled for some months to Lima, presenting two solo exhibitions the year after (at the IAC and the gallery Quartier Latin, in February and March 1968 respectively). Before moving back to Lima in 1969, Hastings lived in Paris. As José-Carlos Mariátegui Ezeta noted, in this period his work was "strongly influenced by the student and youth movements of May 1968." Common of Hastings's practice were a criticism of the art establishment, as well as references to biographical and daily life themes. Throughout his career, he developed a multidisciplinary oeuvre, covering the fields of performance, cinema, video and dance.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>328</sup> By "deaf climate," he meant the audience in Lima that did not understand the meaning of these actions. Alfonso Castrillón Vizcarra, *Tensiones generacionales/La generación del 68: entre la agonía y la fiesta de la modernidad* (Lima: ICPNA; Banco Sudamericano, 2003), 33.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>329</sup> "... en abierto rechazo de ciertas medidas disciplinares moralistas contra el comportamiento sexual." Miguel A. López and Emilio Tarazona, "Otra revolución posible," 82.

Rafael Hastings moved to Brussels in 1962 to study art and art history at the Brussels Fine Arts Academy. His first exhibition was held in Brussels in 1967 at the Galerie Racines, which was presented by the film-maker Jean-Luc Godard and the choreographer Maurice Béjart. The same year, he moved to London to continue his studies at the Royal College of Art. José-Carlos Mariátegui Ezeta, "El trabajo de cine y video de Rafael Hastings," *Illapa Mana Tukukuq*, no. 17 (2020): 51. https://doi.org/10.31381/illapa.v0i17.3471.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>331</sup> José-Carlos Mariátegui Ezeta, "El trabajo de cine y video de Rafael Hastings," 51.

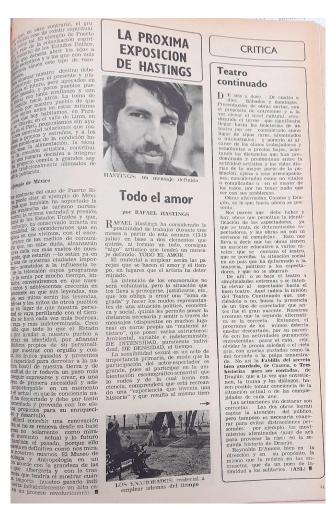


Figure 35. Rafael Hastings, "La próxima exposición de Hastings. Todo el amor," Source of the image: *Oiga*, no. 383, year VIII (July 17, 1970): 31.



Figure 36. Rafael Hastings, "La próxima exposición de Hastings. Todo el amor," Source of the image: *Oiga*, no. 383, year VIII (July 17, 1970): 32.

Another work representative of Juan Acha's 'cultural guerrilla' was Ballet verbal (also known as Tres Ballets or Antiballet), by Yvonne von Möllendorff, held on 6 August 1970 at IAC. 332 During the presentation, the dancer and choreographer stood alone in front of the audience with a tape recorder. Once she turned it on, a voice described three dance performances in different dance styles (a classical ballet duet, a modern dance piece, and a contemporary dance performance). In the third one, the voice narrated that some buses drove the audience to an open-air location, switching the scenography from the theatre to the street. In all these 'ballets,' the voice illustrated the atmosphere of the dances, the dancers' movements, the music, the stage setting, the use of the light, and the relation of the dancers to the audience. In the last two minutes of the recording, the voice criticised the alienation of the cultural system and consumerism, encouraging the listeners (the audience) to tear down this estranging system, "so that we can finally accomplish together the sovereign exercise of our freedom."333 The conclusion of Ballet verbal denoted a critique against art's commodification and its manipulation, exhorting the audience to be active and break away from the system of alienation stemming from the arts.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>332</sup> Alfonso Castrillón Vizcarra invited the choreographer and dancer to participate in a programme dedicated to dance. Alfonso Castrillón Vizcarra, "Recuerdos del Instituto de Arte Contemporáneo (IAC)," *Illapa Mana Tukukuq*, no. 18 (2021): 28; Alfonso Castrillón Vizcarra, *Tensiones generacionales/La generación del 68: entre la agonía y la fiesta de la modernidad*, 33.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>333</sup> Luis Alvarado, "Movimientos, sonidos, imaginación. Entrevista con Yvonne von Mollendorff," *Centro del sonido*,

https://centrodelsonido.pe/articulos/movimiento-sonidos-imaginacion-entrevista-con-yvonne-von-mollendorff/. From 00:08:50 until the end, the voice stated the following: "Conclusion: It is clear that the three ballets you have witnessed are more or less skilful descriptions of past, present or future manifestations of culture that you openly maintain, applaud, comment, criticise or support. These drugs are accepted as an indispensable ideological screen that supports the real mechanism of our consumer societies. Art has become a product promoted by a battalion of artists and intellectuals, conferring on it an aura of spirituality and deluding the masses into cretinization. Creators must realise that by collaborating with the dominant system at the level of culture they are merely beatifying a system that is immoral. The system accepts innovations only when they are devoid of power. The arts are used to convince the people that an economic system can be made humane, giving value only to what is inoffensive, decorative, playful or confessional. All institutions are on the side of the big distribution apparatus: theatre, television, museums, cinema, and the artist uses them to obtain fame and money. In this way, finally, a bourgeois definition of culture in the name of the past and common sense has set us on a path that leads us from one alienation to the next, but it is time to accelerate the time of destruction of this cultural system, maintained by an unconscious mass, so that we can finally accomplish together the sovereign exercise of our freedom." Yvonne von Möllendorff - Anti-Ballet (1970), version of 2021, voice and recording by Frido Martin, https://soundcloud.com/centrodelsonido/yvonne-von-mollendorf-antiballet-1970. The audio transcription and the translation are mine.



Figure 37. *Ballet verbal*, by Yvonne von Möllendorff, held at IAC in 1970. Source of the image: https://centrodelsonido.pe/.

Although *Ballet verbal* did not mention the military government, for López and Tarazona in this work the choreographer "openly spoke against the reformist restrictions and rhetoric of the so-called Revolutionary Government of the Armed Forces."<sup>334</sup>

In line with the latter were the street interventions *Arte* = \$ (Art = \$), encouraged by Hastings, with Hilda Chirinos, Leonor Chocano, Consuelo Rabanal, Eduardo Castilla and Ernesto Maguiña. These interventions consisted of a series of graffiti sprayed on the walls of house facades in residential neighbourhoods in Lima, depicting a critique against art's commodification.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>334</sup> Miguel A. López and Emilio Tarazona, "Crosscurrent Passages: Dissident Tactics in Peruvian Art, 1968-1992," *Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart*,

https://www.wkv-stuttgart.de/en/program/2009/exhibitions/subversive/sections/lopeztarazona/. Another interpretation of this piece is the one given by Joaquín Barriendos, who stated that the choreographer was literally repeating Juan Acha's words. However, Acha's article "La revolución cultural" was published in the magazine *Oiga* a few days after von Möllendorff's performance (on 14 August 1970). Joaquín Barriendos, "Revolución en la revolución. Los escritos estético-políticos de Juan Acha," in *Juan Acha. Despertar revolucionario/Revolutionary Awakening*, 29-30.



Figure 38. Arte = \$, street intervention in Lima, 1970. Photo: Ernesto Maguiña.

A work that falls out of this scheme and does not criticise the art establishment is *Iniciación al cinematógrafo* (Initiation to the Cinematograph), by the architect, filmmaker and documentalist Mario Acha, presented in June 1970 at IAC. In "Perù: Risveglio rivoluzionario," Juan Acha highlighted the didactic character of this work, which he described as an introduction of the treatment of images in cinematic practice. In fact, *Iniciación al cinematógrafo* presented a sequence of photographs, as close-ups and then zoomed out, indicating the movement of the images in films.<sup>335</sup> López and Tarazona mentioned this work in their theory, but without giving further details. Something they overlooked was the fact that Mario Acha contributed book covers to some publications of the Ministry of Education during Velasco Alvarado's government. Regarding the Education Reform, Mario Acha noted the following: "I think it has been the best Education Reform in Peru and probably in Latin America."<sup>336</sup> He highlighted the importance given to culture during this government, which understood culture "in the broadest sense [of the word]." This meant the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>335</sup> *Iniciación al cinematógrafo* was a photography installation that included a video shot with a Super 8 camera. Video of the installation: Mario Acha, "Instalaciones MAK - iniciación al cinematógrafo I, 1970," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELTALr\_UkrY.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>336</sup> Personal communication with Mario Acha, March 24, 2022. Unless otherwise noted, all the other quotes referring to Mario Acha are from the same interview. The words in brackets are mine.

attention put on the cultural formation of the country, including modes of behaviour and of human relationship. For Mario Acha, Velasco Alvarado had a humanist view and was a good listener. Even though he was a military man, "He listened to Salazar Bondy, who was one of his great advisors." However, Velasco Alvarado "found opposition from conservative groups, who did not want these changes." He continued stating that "Velasco went against the oligarchy and the traditional apparatus went against him." Unfortunately, he argued, "many things that were done during this period have been completely erased." Comparing it to other Peruvian governments, Mario Acha noted that "The big difference that I see in Velasco was the participation. He sought the participation of the thinking, intellectual elite of Peru."

Concerning the guerrillas taking place in the country in the early 1960s, Mario Acha stated the following:

In any case, we must not be unfair to the Velasco era. There were many mistakes, but there were also many successes. And, above all, we must not forget that what happened with Velasco came after the guerrilla era. Everyone forgets about that. The guerrilla era began when I was at school. I have colleagues from Leoncio Prado, who have died in the guerrilla. ... For some people they were heroes, for others they were criminals. [This guerrilla] happened long before Sendero, it happened long before Abimael Guzmán. 337 ... It was the somewhat "romantic" time of the guerrilla leader, composed of very young people who went to fight in the interior of the country. ... This time was before Velasco. So, there was in the air a kind of disagreement and awareness of how bad the interior of Peru was, which is something that continues until today. 338

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>337</sup> Leoncio Prado is a military school in Lima. Mario Acha studied there. Abimael Guzmán, also known as Presidente Gonzalo, was the leader of the subversive group Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>338</sup> "En todo caso, no hay que ser injustos con la época de Velasco. Hubo muchos errores, pero también hubo muchos aciertos. Y, sobre todo, no hay que olvidar que lo de Velasco viene posterior a la época de la guerrilla. Todo el mundo se olvida de eso. La época de la guerrilla comienza cuando yo estaba en el colegio. Yo tengo compañeros de Leoncio Prado que han muerto en la guerrilla. ... Es mucho antes de Sendero, es mucho antes de Abimael Guzmán. Era la época un poco "romántica" del guerrillero, que se iba a luchar hacia adentro y era gente muy joven. ... Esta época fue anterior a Velasco. Entonces, había en el aire ese tipo de inconformidad y de consciencia de lo mal que estaba el interior del Perú, que sigue siendo hasta hoy." Personal communication with Mario Acha, March 24, 2022.

For all this, he upheld Velasco Alvarado, because "there was no bloodshed" during his term. As well as his son, Juan Acha was also aware of the changes taking place in the country. For instance, his essay "Por una nueva política artística" (For a New Artistic Policy), which was written in the context of the ongoing Education Reform (1972). For Acha, the new artistic policy should address three main areas that ought to reformulate their approaches: the field of art education in schools, art academies and universities; that of art and the harmful effects of mass media; and the cultural institutions.<sup>339</sup>

In an interview with the critic Luis Lama, Juan Acha described how pointless it was to continue with all the experimentalism, when there was an urgency to act in the social sphere. Concerning the question why the experimentalism faded away (after Juan Acha left the country and settled in Mexico in 1972) and his influence on the young artists, Juan Acha stated the following:

I would not say that they were influenced by me, but rather that this coincided with the new military government. Even in 1970 the entire group tried to support the government and we proposed collaborating in a series of activities for workers and peasants, but we were ignored. Another factor was May 1968, which led me, like many artists, to abandon art criticism for two years, when I realised that all this avant-gardism was leading nowhere. This is when all the euphoria began to come to an end.<sup>340</sup>

While the works presented in his 'cultural guerrilla' were circumscribed to the artistic context, in the praxis Juan Acha and the group of artists close to him made a proposal to the government, aiming to contribute to its cultural activities. This is an indication that both Acha and the artists were not indifferent to the process of

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>339</sup> Juan Acha, "Por una nueva política artística," in *Ensayos y ponencias latinoamericanistas* (Caracas: Ediciones GAN, 1984), 27-35. It was first published in *Diario Nueva Crónica*, April 10-11, 1972. The essay mentions the visit to Lima of Miguel Rojas Mix (director of the Instituto de Arte Latinoamericano in Santiago de Chile), who foregrounded the importance given to art and culture in Chile under Allende.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>340</sup> "Yo no diría que seguían una influencia mía, sino que eso coincidió con el nuevo gobierno militar. Inclusive en el año 70 todo el grupo trató de apoyar al gobierno y propusimos colaborar en una serie de manifestaciones para obreros y campesinos, pero no se nos hizo caso. Otro de los factores fue mayo del 68, que dio lugar a que, al igual que muchos artistas, yo abandonara por dos años la crítica de arte al darme cuenta de que todo ese vanguardismo no conducía a nada. Allí se inició el final de la euforia." Luis Lama, "Conversación con Juan Acha," *Debate*, no. 10 (1981): 77.

transformation that the military were conducting. Even though the proposal remained unheard, there is no evidence that Juan Acha was actively criticising the military government. Acha's statement not only sheds light on a period of intense questioning of artistic practice, manifested through a feeling of discomfort regarding art's mystification and its disconnection from reality. It also shows how he was reflecting about his own role as a critic. Considering this, Acha understood art criticism as part of the field of social sciences. For him, a critic should be an interdisciplinary theorist, someone who studies the artistic reality, prioritising "the source and destination of all artistic work, which is the community," instead of promoting the career of individual artists.<sup>341</sup>

Concerning the 'cultural guerrilla,' Juan Acha defined information and the written word as denunciation. A way to illustrate this was the exhibition *Papel y más papel*. *14 manipulaciones con papel periódico* (Paper and More Paper: 14 Manipulations with Newspapers), held in June 1969 at Fundación para las Artes. For this show, Acha invited a group of thirteen artists to create an *ambientación* (environment) that included the work of fourteen "manipulators," among them Juan Acha himself. He environment consisted of a room covered with newspapers on the walls, as well as several objects made with newspapers. It was a collective work, in which the word artist was replaced by the word manipulator, deliberately chosen to reinforce the idea of the artists and the critic as manipulators of the media. For Juan Acha, it was the first work of *arte povera* taking place in the country. *Papel y más papel...* criticised both the manipulation of media and art as mass mediated news, in an analogous way as *Happening para un jabalí difunto* (Happening for a Dead Boar) from

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>341</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>342</sup> Juan Acha, "Perú: Despertar revolucionario," in *Juan Acha. Despertar revolucionario/Revolutionary Awakening*, 38-39.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>343</sup> The "manipulators" were Jorge Bernuy, Mario Acha, Cristina Portocarrero, Luis Zevallos Hetzel, Emilio Hernández Saavedra, Queta Gaillour, Juan Acha, Jesús Ruiz Durand, Gloria Gómez Sánchez, José Tang, Jaime Dávila, Gilberto Urday, Rubela Dávila and Regina Aprijaskis.

The invitation flyer included a definition of the words 'paper' and 'newspaper,' taken from the encyclopaedic dictionary Vox, drawing parallels with Joseph Kosuth's series *Titled (Art as Idea as Idea)* (1966-1968). In this series, in which language becomes the work of art, Kosuth placed several definitions of terms taken from the dictionary on a black background, such as the words 'art,' 'definition,' or 'meaning.' The newspapers used for *Papel y más papel*... were donated by *El Comercio*, the newspaper where Juan Acha worked as a critic.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>344</sup> Juan Acha, "Estancamiento en la plástica," *El Comercio*, January 1, 1970.

1966. In this work, Argentine artists Eduardo Costa, Raúl Escari and Roberto Jacoby announced in the press an exhibition that did not take place, questioning the existence of the artwork by presenting it as mere information. At the same time, they criticised media from within, by unveiling the mechanisms of constructing realities that operate through mass media.



Figure 39. Invitation flyer to the exhibition *Papel y más papel. 14 manipulaciones con papel periódico*, held at Fundación para las Artes in June 1969.

Photo: Courtesy of Mario Acha.



Figure 40. View of the exhibition *Papel y más papel. 14 manipulaciones con papel periódico*, 1969. Work by Gloria Gómez Sánchez. Photo: courtesy of Mario Acha.

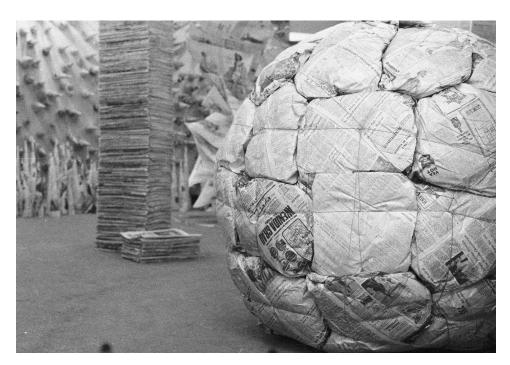


Figure 41. View of the exhibition *Papel y más papel. 14 manipulaciones con papel periódico*, 1969. Work by Juan Acha (left) and by Mario Acha (right). Photo: courtesy of Mario Acha.



Figure 42. View of the exhibition *Papel y más papel. 14 manipulaciones con papel periódico*, 1969. Work by Juan Acha (left) and Jesús Ruiz Durand (right). Photo: courtesy of Mario Acha.

It shall be noted that the notion of 'cultural guerrilla' was something new in Juan Acha's intellectual reflections. Regarding his writings of the 1960s, one can see that Acha was frequently shifting sands. This is an indication of the *parcours* of his intellectual trajectory and incessant questioning of his own thoughts. For instance, while in 1965 he wrote first with scepticism about pop, criticising Luis Arias Vera's solo exhibition *Escenografía para un folklore urbano... y amparo ambiental para una serie de pinturas sobre la META–MOR–FOSIS* for its "exaggerated sense of realism;" in 1969 he defended the accusation of plagiarism against Luis Zevallos Hetzel, whose pop art triptych *Motociclista No. 3* was awarded with the main prize during the Festivales de Ancón.<sup>345</sup> Up until then, he understood the term avant-garde as renewal,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>345</sup> Juan Acha, "Exagerado sentido realista: exposición de Luis Arias Vera," *El Comercio*, November 9, 1965; Juan Acha, "Arte Pop: procedimientos y finalidades," *El Comercio* (May 25, 1969): 38-39. Zevallos Hetzel's piece was criticised for taking images from advertising, something that Juan Acha defended by explaining that these were pop's recurring creative sources.

At that time, Ancón was an exclusive beach resort in the outskirts of Lima, frequented by Lima's upper middle class. The beach was famous for its entertainment and cultural programmes, for instance the Festivales de Ancón, which included a music festival akin to the Festival di Sanremo in Italy.

conveying the ideas of progress and development. For example, for the exhibition *Nuevas tendencias en la plástica peruana* in April 1968, corresponding with the visit of MoMA's representatives to Lima, Juan Acha wrote with enthusiasm about technology, claiming that it would be the motor of the country to overcome its underdevelopment situation.<sup>346</sup> Later, after experiencing the aftermath of the May '68 movements, he turned his attention to criticising consumer culture, the manipulation of media and the alienation stemming from the cultural industries. While Lucy Lippard had her political awakening after visiting Buenos Aires, Acha's awakening happened after witnessing the aftermath of the May '68 movements during his travels through Europe. Paradoxically, it did not happen before, for instance when several artists throughout Latin America began to question imperialism, sympathising with the resistance offered by the guerrillas or the Cuban cause.

Concerning the Peruvian identity, in his first writings of 1958, Juan Acha questioned the need to incorporate Peruvian topics in paintings. In connection with the debate on figuration and abstraction, he was an advocate of the latter. In a publication written for the Pan American Union, *Peru. Art in Latin America today* (1961), Acha suggested Fernando de Szyszlo as the representative *par excellence* of modern Peruvian art. For him, de Szyszlo synthesised two opposing forces: the search for a universal language in art through abstraction and the link to Peru's Inca past, situating him in a localist tradition. Despite criticising the Peruvian identity in his early writings, once he moved to Mexico in 1972 he began to reflect on what could be characterised as the 'Latin American art identity.'

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>346</sup> Juan Acha, "La vanguardia pictórica en el Perú," in *Nuevas tendencias en la plástica peruana*, exhibition leaflet, Lima: Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, Fundación para las Artes, 1968. Courtesy of the personal archive of Mahia Biblos, Mexico City. https://icaa.mfah.org/s/es/item/1142850. The essay was written on the occasion of the exhibition *Nuevas tendencias en la plástica peruana*, held at Fundación para las Artes from 3 to 20 May 1968. The text was written in April 1968 and it was significantly influenced by the writings of Marshall McLuhan.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>347</sup> Juan Acha [J. Nahuaca], "La peruanización de la pintura," *El Comercio*, August 31, 1958; Juan Acha [J. Nahuaca], "¿Existe una pintura peruana?," *El Comercio*, supplement Dominical, September 21, 1958; Juan Acha [J. Nahuaca], "Las ideas doctrinarias y la pintura," *El Comercio*, July 20, 1958; Juan Acha [J. Nahuaca], "Conscripción peruana de la pintura," *El Comercio*, supplement Dominical, May 4, 1958.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>348</sup> Juan Acha, *Peru. Art in Latin America today*, Washington DC: Pan American Union, 1961; Nadia Moreno, "Entre *latinoamericanismos*: la colección de libros Art in Latin America Today, editada por la Unión Panamericana (1959-1969)," in *Redes intelectuales. Arte y política en América Latina*, ed. María Clara Bernal (Bogotá: Ediciones Uniandes, 2015), 387.

Juan Acha's glorification of technology, his belief in the idea of progress and the avant-garde doing a cultural guerrilla warfare were in contradiction to the situation of underdevelopment in his native country. In fact, the country did not reach the level of technology and industrialisation he was aiming for. All these ideas were almost foreign to the context he was referring to, and the change he wanted was somehow idealist in nature, as it was not a process that derived from the local circumstances. His view of art was restricted to the cities, leaving out the regions as a site for artistic production. As for the change in society he was pursuing in his "cultural revolution," Juan Acha limited it to the artists and the urban intellectual youth. This group of people was also the one which was able to afford the type of cultural consumerism he would later criticise.

Overall, Juan Acha's excitement regarding the young experimental art scene was not shared by other local critics in Lima. While Acha wrote with enthusiasm about the decade of the 1970s, anticipating the arrival of audio-visual works, as well as activist art and land art; in retrospect, cultural critic Hugo Salazar del Alcázar stated that Acha's "prophecy" did not come true, as none of these artistic expressions developed in the country in that decade. Conversely, Salazar del Alcázar characterised the scene for being dependent on what was happening abroad, for instance at documenta or the Biennale di Venezia. Similarly, Castrillón Vizcarra regretted the artists' low theoretical knowledge, arguing that they were either broadly browsing through international magazines or simply following the ideas brought by foreign visiting art critics. He stated that while in Europe the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>349</sup> Juan Acha, "Reflejos sobre la década del 70," 39. Hugo Salazar del Alcázar, "Veleidad y demografía en el no-objetualismo peruano," *Hueso Húmero*, no. 18 (July-September 1983): 113.

<sup>350</sup> By 'foreign visiting art critics' he was referring to Argentine art critic Jorge Romero Brest, who influenced the experimental art scene of the mid 1960s. In fact, Jorge Romero Brest visited Peru in August 1965 and gave six lectures on the latest experimental artistic forms, such as *ambientaciones* (environments) and happenings. A few months later, from 3 to 5 November 1965, three experimental exhibitions took place in Lima that were most likely affected by Romero Brest's visit. The first one took place at IAC, on 3 November. Organised by Mario Acha, Miguel Malatesta and Efraín Montero – three architecture students of the Universidad Nacional de Ingeniería – the exhibition *Mimuy* included works created with recycled waste. The second show, on 4 November 1965, was *Escenografía para un folklore urbano y amparo ambiental para una serie de pinturas sobre la META–MOR–FOSIS* by Luis Arias Vera at the gallery Cultura y Libertad, with objects that invited the audience to participate; and the third, which opened on 5 November 1965, was the exhibition *Yllomomo* by Gloria Gómez Sánchez at the gallery Solisol, whose *muñecones* (big papier-maché puppets) and assemblages with plaster, fabric and wire had an ephemeral character. Regarding further artistic introductions, it was Gloria

dematerialisation of the object derived from a long process of questioning the basis of artistic production, in Peru the conceptual avant-garde emerged all of a sudden. It was an a-typical phenomenon disconnected from the social reality of the country and without a reflective positioning about it.<sup>351</sup>

It seems that Acha's enthusiasm was clearly transmissible, as both López and Tarazona adopted the critic's position, although most of the local critics did not describe the experimental art scene with such eagerness. For instance, while Mirko Lauer depicted the scene for taking foreign art tendencies "with a rather unreflective character, as a spontaneous and uncritical product of the international circumstances of the time;" Miguel A. López argued that Lauer's statement might have reinforced the minor interest that has been given to revisit this moment in Peruvian art history.<sup>352</sup> In fact, López was convinced about the radicality of the art scene of that time. Referring to Arte Nuevo, he affirmed that it "tried to incorporate a new, challenging language, one that would disrupt the traditional criteria for evaluating art."353 I agree with him, regarding the fact that this group made a series of introductions in the art scene. Indeed, Arte Nuevo artists brought in the Lima art scene the international art trends such pop art, op art, hard edge, constructivism, happenings, environments, and early conceptual art. The group celebrated mass media, new technologies and consumer culture. The artists were greatly inspired by what they found in magazines about the art scene in the United States. They were also influenced by the Argentine experimental scene to which they had regular contact. However, more than a disruption, as López argued, it was a continuation.

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Gómez Sánchez who brought in informalism to Peru after her experience living in Buenos Aires (first in 1958 for family reasons, and later in 1968 with a grant by Fundación para las Artes).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>351</sup> "El salto a la vanguardia, exabrupto, en los años 68, es un fenómeno a-típico desligado de nuestra realidad y privado de una reflexión crítica en el seno mismo de la producción." Alfonso Castrillón Vizcarra, "Reflexiones sobre el arte conceptual en el Perú y sus proyecciones," *Lienzo*, year III, no. 3/4 (1982): 74.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>352</sup> Mirko Lauer, *Introducción a la pintura peruana del siglo XX*, 167.

David Flores-Hora, "Los orígenes del no-objetualismo peruano. Entrevista con Miguel López, escritor, curador e investigador peruano," *Critica.cl*, August 14, 2007.

https://critica.cl/artes-visuales/los-origenes-del-no-objetualismo-peruano-entrevista-a-miguel-lopez-co-curador-de-la-exposicion-la-persistencia-de-lo-efimero-origenes-del-no-objetualismo-peruano-ambientaciones-happenin gs-ar.

<sup>353</sup> Miguel A. López, "Cultural Guerrilla: Juan Acha and the Peruvian Avant-Garde of the 1960s."

Even though these artists rejected the established art forms (figurative and abstract paintings), they carried on looking outside of the country to find inspiration. As the older generations, these artists continued to follow what was happening in the international market, corresponding to what Lauer identified as "decades of anti-localist preaching."<sup>354</sup>

In his memories, the artist Emilio Hernández Saavedra (former member of *Arte Nuevo*) remembered this period as follows:

We wanted to detach ourselves from the official concepts that prevailed in the arts environment, anchored in the premise of a necessary "national identity," which at that time did not mean anything to us. ... In the absence of a nearby reference point, we were interested in what was being done elsewhere, in New York or Buenos Aires, where artists were renewing the international art scene and responding to our concerns for a different kind of art. Arrogance was far from our motivations; we simply sought to refresh our eyes, away from theoretical labyrinths and intellectual postures.<sup>355</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>354</sup> Mirko Lauer, *Introducción a la pintura peruana del siglo XX*, 167.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>355</sup> "Nosotros queríamos desligarnos de los conceptos solemnes que imperaban en el medio, anclados en la premisa de una necesaria "identidad nacional", lo que por entonces no nos decía nada. ... A falta de un referente cercano, nos interesábamos por lo que se hacía en otras partes, Nueva York, o Buenos Aires, donde los artistas renovaban la escena artística internacional y respondían a nuestras inquietudes por un arte distinto. El esnobismo estaba lejos de nuestras motivaciones; simplemente buscábamos refrescar los ojos, lejos de los laberintos teóricos y las posturas intelectuales." Emilio Hernández Saavedra, La ruta de las luciérnagas. Cuaderno de apunte, chapter 1, the beginning, part 10, "El grupo Señal, Arte Nuevo y El ombligo de Adán," 49-55. Courtesy of the text: Emilio Hernández Saavedra. The text does not have a date, but according to the artist he might have written it in 2011 or 2012.

Regarding "national identity," in this essay he is referring to the prevalence of Peruvian topics in paintings, influenced by the *indigenismo* movement. This was also visible in the local development of abstraction, with *neo-indigenista* traits.



Figure 43. Emilio Hernández Saavedra, *Bob Dylan*, enamel on wood, 200 x 140 cm, 1968. Source of the image: courtesy of Emilio Hernández Saavedra.

Arte Nuevo's entry in the scene took place on 24 October 1966 with the organisation of an exhibition at the one-day gallery El ombligo de Adán (Adam's Navel), which was held the same day of the inauguration of the Festivales de Lima (also known as First Lima Biennale). With this, the artists denounced the lack of transparency of the organisation of the festival. However, in my view it was more a call to attract attention towards the artists' practice, as well as to include more experimental works within the institutional framework. Indeed, the same exhibition at El ombligo de Adán was presented at the Museo de Arte de Lima a month later, followed by the organisation of a series of solo shows by the group's members at the gallery Cultura y Libertad in 1967. The same year, the group had an exhibition at the gallery Lirolay

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>356</sup> Among the artists' claims were the short time frame between the call for proposals and the presentation of the works, the limited number of participating artists from Peru, and the exclusive invitation of a selected number of already established artists. They also noted that not a single artist from Venezuela was invited to participate, in spite of its significant art scene. The artists were also wondering why Romero Brest's assignment as president of the jury was not communicated in advance. They argued that the Argentine critic came to Lima to somehow "give the blessing" to a decision that was already made before his arrival, as the main prize was already given to Chilean artist Roberto Matta. This situation also showed the preference to choose artworks of already established artists, which was not the sense of an event that was intended to promote the work of young artists.

in Buenos Aires. In 1968, the artists were part of *Nuevas tendencias en la plástica peruana* (New Tendencies in Peruvian Art), held at Fundación para las Artes, coinciding with the visit of MoMA's representatives to Peru.

The exhibition at El ombligo de Adán exemplified a new way to present art in Lima, away from rigid societal conventions and elitism. Nonetheless, the artists were more interested in updating and not in dismantling the institutional framework of the arts scene; otherwise, they would not have agreed in presenting the same exhibition at the Museo de Arte de Lima. In fact, *Arte Nuevo* members were eager to be part of an exhibition setting, but on their own terms. This meant adapting to the new times of change. In addition to this, one should bear in mind the existing generational gap of the time. With these introductions, the younger generation of artists wanted to show a new "attitude" that would differentiate them from the older one.

In this section, I have examined the term 'cultural guerrilla' by Juan Acha, confronting his view with the interpretations by López and Tarazona. While Juan Acha was speaking about a critique of the art establishment, for instance *Ballet verbal* by von Möllendorff; López and Tarazona interpreted this work as a critique against the military government. The same happened with the work *Todo el amor*. While it was announced as an exhibition in public places in the magazine *Oiga*, López and Tarazona characterised it as an activist work that rejected certain disciplinary measures against sexual behaviour in public spaces. Furthermore, they argued that there was a parallel (activist and disruptive) social revolution taking place in the country. Nonetheless, this alleged social revolution did not happen. All the artists' actions in Acha's essays happened in artistic settings and did not involve a broader community.

It is worth mentioning that both Emilio Tarazona and Miguel A. López consider their curatorial practice as a space for dissent and the museum as a place for political activation. In this sense, their research and writings tend to look for agonistic

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>357</sup> This idea is also shared by Joaquín Barriendos, who described it as a somatic and sensorial revolution. Joaquín Barriendos, "Revolución en la revolución. Los escritos estético-políticos de Juan Acha," in *Juan Acha*. *Despertar revolucionario/Revolutionary Awakening*, ed. Joaquín Barriendos, 10-30.

scenarios. The way they have portrayed the military government in Peru suggests the need to have an opponent to contest.<sup>358</sup> Indeed, all the ingredients were there to create this tension: the military administration, the experimental artists, and the period of political turmoil in Latin America. In addition to this, they shared the network of the RedCSur that supported their research and curatorial practice.<sup>359</sup>

As we have seen, among the definitions of 'cultural guerrilla' were the questioning of imperialist agendas, a criticism of art as consumerism and a reflection on how art could contribute to social change. In Peru, once the military government made a call to intellectuals and artists to participate in its cultural policies, the artists and the critic Juan Acha began to see the country with different eyes. However, this was not the situation when the experimental scene emerged in the mid-1960s with *Arte Nuevo*. As already noted in the first chapter, the experimental art scene redirected its practice during the military government towards social concerns and "the popular." Within this context, a group of artists contributed to the government's policies. Hence, the alleged interruption of experimentalism, which López and Tarazona attributed to the military government, did not happen. In fact, the artists continued producing experimental works. What changed is that other art forms, previously not considered as art (such as crafts) began to be part of the cultural offer,

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Barriendos and Zanna Gilbert.

<sup>358</sup> Miguel A. López and Emilio Tarazona, "Re/montar la historia. Intervenir los 60, 40 años después." https://www.academia.edu/26350100/Re\_montar\_la\_historia\_Intervenir\_los\_60\_40\_a%C3%B1os\_despu%C3% A9s\_conferencia\_2007; and Miguel A. López and Emilio Tarazona, "Otra revolución posible," 84. In order to explain their argument on agonism, the curators took the idea of the political by Chantal Mouffe (*On the Political*, Routledge, 2005). However, Mouffe's basis of her analysis are Western democracies and I wonder if her theory could be applicable to a leftist-oriented military government such as Velasco Alvarado's. A similar viewpoint is the one shared by Ana Longoni as a researcher: "...for me, research work is a political practice, as a means of militancy. Even if one does it within the academic or the university world, it is still there where one can question, generate critical pedagogies of these practices, bring about new readings, new archives, activate them collectively." Elina Martinelli, "Ana Longoni: "El trabajo de investigación es para mí una práctica política, como un modo de militancia."

<sup>359</sup> Thanks to their connections with RedCSur and Ana Longoni, both curators participated in the exhibitions Subversive Practices: Art under Conditions of Political Repression, 60s-80s / South America / Europe (2009) and Perder la forma humana. Una imagen sísmica de los años ochenta en América Latina (Losing the Human Form: A Seismic Image of the 1980s in Latin America) (2013-2014). Furthermore, Joaquín Barriendos (member of RedCSur) invited Miguel A. López to contribute an essay to post: notes on art in a global context, the online magazine of the MoMA museum. The magazine's edition was dedicated to Juan Acha, on the occasion of the century of his birth. The editorial work was coordinated by

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>360</sup> Miguel A. López and Emilio Tarazona, "Otra revolución posible," 83.

alongside already established art forms. In parallel to the focus given to crafts and local popular culture, other art forms continued to be presented. This contradicts the claim that experimental art was interrupted by the military regime. As exemplified by the culture guide of November 1971 of the magazine *Oiga* (Figure 44), cybernetics, crafts, art made by school children and photography were exhibited at the same time in different art institutions in Lima.<sup>361</sup>



Figure 44. Image of the culture guide for the month of November 1971 in Lima. Source: magazine *Oiga*, no. 448, year IX (November 5, 1971): 38.

López and Tarazona deliberately described the sociopolitical context as violent and repressive to fit their theory within RedCSur's account on Latin American conceptualism. In addition to this, they politically 'activated' the artists surrounding Juan Acha, alleging a disruption and activism against the government, which were

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>361</sup> The list of events includes the following exhibitions: Argentine industrial design (Argentina en el diseño industrial) at the Museo de Arte de Lima, Art and Cybernetics (Arte y Cibernética) at IAC in the location of the Museo de Arte Italiano, Artistic Crafts (Artesanía artística) at ICPNA, Bulgaria in Photography (Bulgaria en fotografía) at INC, and Children's Art (Art infantil) at Art Center gallery.

not there in the original context. Paradoxically, during Velasco Alvarado's administration, the artists in Lima were well-served. They had consistent exposure in the media and their works were exhibited regularly. In addition to this, this period was characterised by a boom of art galleries and other art spaces.

These curators assumed that there were two different groups within the experimental art scene, one in favour and one against the government. According to Miguel A. López, "While a significant number of artists yielded to the reformist processes backed by the regime – including major agrarian reform – others stepped back and criticized the government's "revolutionary" rhetoric."<sup>362</sup> However, the artists who worked for the government belonged to the same group of experimental artists, who were exhibiting their works in galleries and art institutions without any restrictions. Hence, it was not a separate group of artists with opposed views. For instance, Jesús Ruiz Durand, who was already an established artist at that time, constitutes a good example. He participated in the group exhibition *Papel y más papel...*, organised by Juan Acha in 1969. He also collaborated as a photographer for the magazine *Caretas*. In fact, there was no contradiction between exhibiting in a gallery, designing posters to promote the Agrarian Reform or shooting fashion photos. Despite being two seemingly heterogeneous communication strategies, that of fashion and political propaganda, the artist was not impeded to do both.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>362</sup> Miguel A. López, "Cultural Guerrilla: Juan Acha and the Peruvian Avant-Garde of the 1960s."



Figure 45. "El cuero y el cabelludo," *Caretas*, no. 399 (July 24-August 7, 1969): 48-49. Photos: Jesús Ruiz Durand.

In an essay about the work of RedCSur, Miguel A. López mentioned the importance of bringing Francesco Mariotti's archives from Switzerland back to Peru. For him, this would help to "rethink the history of art since the late 1960s (manuscripts, catalogues, graphics and photographic records), which also includes numerous materials on cultural practices during the military regime of Velasco Alvarado, which are still poorly researched until today." This quote evidences that by the time López and Tarazona wrote their theory (2007), there was no in-depth study on the cultural practices and policies during Velasco Alvarado's administration. Instead of admitting not having researched this government, they preferred to discard it from the start.

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Currently, Francesco Mariotti's and María Luy's archives are on loan at the MALI museum, available to be used for research purposes.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>363</sup> "... para repensar la historia del arte desde fines de los años sesenta (manuscritos, catálogos, gráfica y registros fotográficos), lo cual incluye también numerosos materiales sobre las prácticas culturales durante el régimen militar de Velasco Alvarado aún hoy escasamente investigados." Miguel A. López, "Red Conceptualismos del Sur: Memoria, política, microhistorias y experimentación con archivos," Miguel A. López, *Robar la historia: contrarrelatos y prácticas artísticas de oposición* (Santiago de Chile: Ediciones Metales Pesados, 2017), 124-125. https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvckq6rg.9.

To situate the scene within the artistic discussions in Lima: in the mid-1960s, the Lima art scene was still in a debate between abstraction and figuration. The majority of artists were doing paintings or sculptures, with a predominance of abstraction, the *Teoría de las raíces nacionales* or surrealism. These artistic expressions continued throughout Velasco Alvarado's administration. The critique against the decision to give the National Culture Award to López Antay came from a group of painters, such Fernando De Szyszlo, Milner Cajahuaringa, or the ex-director of the ENSABAP Juan Manuel Ugarte Eléspuru. It did not come from the group of experimental artists. Neither the artists of *Arte Nuevo*, nor other artists who were close to Juan Acha – such as Rafael Hastings, Yvonne von Möllendorff, Hilda Chirinos, Leonor Chocano, Consuelo Rabanal, Eduardo Castilla, Ernesto Maguiña or Mario Acha – participated in this debate.

Arte Nuevo's incursion into the art scene introduced a new way to understand art aside from abstraction, in a context of a changing global landscape influenced by mass consumerism, new technologies and mass media. As Mijail Mitrovic pointed out, Juan Acha and the experimental art scene of the mid-1960s to early 1970s were an "enclave" within the art scene in Lima. Their ideas regarding art were disconnected from the social and economic reality of the country. They praised progress, technology and media, although such technology was embryonic in that period in the Peruvian context. To exemplify the fluctuating character of this emerging experimentalism, within two years this group and Juan Acha himself shifted from highlighting progress, mass media and technology to a critique of mass media and consumer culture. Paradoxically, once the military government began and voiced its intentions, one could observe that this group shared with the government the critique of capitalism.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>364</sup> Mijail Mitrovic Pease, Extravíos de la forma, 47.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>365</sup> For instance, the essays by Juan Acha "La vanguardia pictórica en el Perú" (written in April 1968) on the occasion of the exhibition *Nuevas tendencias en la plástica peruana*, in which he embraced technology and mass culture; shifting to a critique of consumerism in "Perù: Risveglio rivoluzionario" (the original text in Spanish was written in September 1970).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>366</sup> Mijail Mitrovic Pease, Extravíos de la forma, 57.

## Interruptions?

Despite the group's initial enthusiasm, *Arte Nuevo*'s experimentations did not last long. Some of the group members would give up on these sets of practices, either by going back to painting or by leaving the art scene completely. This was the case of Gloria Gómez Sánchez. She left the scene in 1970, with a conceptual artwork *EL ESPACIO DE ESTA EXPOSICIÓN ES EL DE TU MENTE. HAZ DE TU VIDA LA OBRA* (The Space of this Exhibition is in Your Mind. Make of Your Life an Artwork). This piece was presented at the gallery Cultura y Libertad in October 1970. The gallery, almost empty, placed this text on one of its walls. As part of the exhibition, the artist put on a small table a pile of texts which read a manifesto, declaring that she would abandon aesthetics in favour of ethics. In fact, by ethics Gómez Sánchez meant religion, turning into a devout Catholic.<sup>367</sup> This piece, which is a radical conceptual art statement, contrasts with the life the artist chose to live after leaving the arts scene. The artist would dedicate her time to motherhood and to being a housewife.

According to López and Tarazona, the experimental art scene was truncated, because of the military government. In their essay "An "Other" Possible Revolution: The Cultural Guerrilla in Peru in 1970," published in *A Companion to Modern and Contemporary Latin American and Latina/o Art* (2022), they stated the following:

The transformations to come, foretold at the beginning of 1970, suffered an ill-timed cut. The escalation of repression under the Velasco nationalist regime, coupled with the difficulties that any cultural project implemented outside of state institutions had to dealt with, coincided with the renunciation of Gómez-Sánchez and Emilio Hernández Saavedra - who also quit and burnt all his artworks before moving to Cusco.<sup>368</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>367</sup> I want to thank Mijail Mitrovic for this information. Personal communication with Mijail Mitrovic, October 7, 2022.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>368</sup> Miguel A. López and Emilio Tarazona, "An "Other" Possible Revolution: The Cultural Guerrilla in Peru in 1970," in *A Companion to Modern and Contemporary Latin American and Latina/o Art*, eds. Alejandro Anreus, Robin Adèle Greeley, Megan A. Sullivan, and Dara Arnold (New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 2022), 308.

Concerning this statement, I asked Emilio Hernández Saavedra if he put his artworks on fire before moving to Cusco and as a protest against the government, to which he replied: "That is not the case. I began to abandon and lose sight of works rather out of disinterest; but not as an action with that purpose." Indeed, his criticism was against the established art system, manifested through getting rid of publications and images that referred about his work as an artist:

In a publication I mentioned that I was escaping from the organised art system. I threw into the bin catalogues, photographs, reviews and articles that talked about my work in the art world, a story that was finished for me.<sup>370</sup>



Figure 46. Emilio Hernández Saavedra with his work exhibited in the framework of *Arte Nuevo*'s exhibition at the Museo de Arte de Lima, 1966.

Source of the image: courtesy of Alejandro Arias López-Rocha and Emilio Hernández Saavedra.<sup>371</sup>

<sup>369</sup> "Eso no es así. Fui abandonando y perdiendo de vista obras más bien por desinterés; pero no como una acción con ese propósito." Email communication with Emilio Hernández Saavedra, June 7, 2023.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>370</sup> "En una publicación mencioné que, escapando del sistema organizado, eché al tacho catálogos, fotografías, críticas y artículos que hablaban de mi trabajo en el mundo del arte, una historia que para mí era asunto terminado." Email communication with the artist, June 8, 2023.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>371</sup> The artist destroyed this work (Figure 46) and gave the wood pieces to a carpenter to re-use them. Email communication with Emilio Hernández Saavedra, June 7, 2023.

His reasons for abandoning the scene were connected to a critique of the art system and were not related to the government or its policies. The artist left the art scene and moved with his family to Cusco in 1974, where they lived in a hippie commune with other artists and musicians in the Urubamba Valley. During his time in Cusco, he contributed some illustrations to the newspaper *El Comercio* to finance his living expenses.<sup>372</sup> Regarding his experience as a member of *Arte Nuevo* within the context of Velasco Alvarado's administration, Hernández Saavedra observed the following:

Since [19]66, two years before Velasco came to power, Arte Nuevo group had been formed and had held three exhibitions. During his government, in my case until [19]74 when I went to live in Urubamba, I was able to participate in several exhibitions, and in the organisation of quite notorious activities with complete freedom. Like many, in those years I found some of the government's projects very stimulating. I collaborated as a photographer with a magazine of the Ministry of Education, and I replaced Jesús Ruiz as head of the graphic design department of Sinamos during his holidays. But, then, I radically disassociated myself from the galleries and the cultural milieu; from then on, I got involved with musicians and people with long hair and countercultural concerns.<sup>373</sup>

As other two former members of *Arte Nuevo*, such as Luis Zevallos Hetzel (who was one of the organisers of *Contacta 72*) and Luis Arias Vera (who worked for the government and organised the *Carrera de Chasquis* and *Maratón de Triciclos*), Emilio Hernández Saavedra contributed to the government's communication strategies and cultural policies. In addition to designing a poster for the Agrarian Reform, he shot photographs for a publication of the Ministry of Education.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>372</sup> Personal communication with Emilio Hernández Saavedra, June 14, 2022.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>373</sup> "Desde el año 66, dos años antes de que tomara el poder Velasco, se había formado el grupo Arte Nuevo y [había] hecho tres exhibiciones. Ya en su gobierno, en mi caso hasta el año 74 en que me fui a vivir a Urubamba, pude participar en varias exposiciones, y en la organización de actividades bastante notorias, con plena libertad. Como muchos, en esos años encontré muy estimulantes algunos proyectos del gobierno. Colaboré como fotógrafo con una revista del M. de Educación, y sustituí en sus vacaciones a Jesús Ruiz en la dirección del Departamento de diseño gráfico de Sinamos. Pero luego me desvinculé radicalmente de las galerías y el medio cultural; relacionándome desde entonces con músicos y gente de pelo largo e inquietudes contraculturales." Email communication with Emilio Hernández Saavedra, June 8, 2023. The brackets are mine.

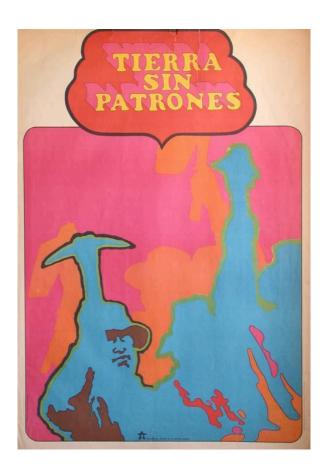


Figure 47. Emilio Hernández Saavedra, Tierra sin patrones (Land Without Masters), 100 x 70 cm, 1969-1971. Source of the image: Sam L. Slick Collection of Latin American and Iberian Posters, Center for South West Research, University Libraries, University of New Mexico.

Concerning *Arte Nuevo*, the group ceased its collaboration for personal reasons, and not as a consequence of the military government:

Our group gradually disbanded, rather because some of us became more interested in personal work. That was my case. This happened from 1968 onwards. This had nothing to do with the Velasco government. As for me, it was because I wanted to leave the city for the countryside.374

It is also important to mention that the cultural policies of the government began to take form after Arte Nuevo's dissolution. From this group, perhaps the one who was consistent with her conceptual explorations was Teresa Burga. The artist moved to

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>374</sup> "Nuestro grupo se disolvió paulatinamente, más bien porque algunos fuimos tomando más interés en el trabajo personal. Ese fue mi caso. Esto fue dándose a partir del 68. Esto no tuvo ninguna relación con el gobierno de Velasco. En cuanto a mí, fue por mi propósito de salir de la ciudad al campo." Email communication with Emilio Hernández Saavedra, June 2, 2023.

the United States in 1968, after receiving a Fulbright scholarship to study at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, returning to Peru in 1971. While in Chicago, she initiated a series of explorations on language, media communication and information technologies, in concordance with the early US conceptual art. Back in Peru, in 1975 Burga began to work for the Oficina General de Aduanas, the National Customs Office, a job she would do for thirty years until 2005.

During Velasco Alvarado's administration, Teresa Burga had two solo exhibitions, *Autorretrato*. *Estructura*. *Informe*. 9.6.72 (1972) and 4 *mensajes* (1974), both held at ICPNA. Following her interest in information systems and the collection of data, Burga created the multimedia self-portrait *Autorretrato*. *Estructura*. *Informe*. 9.6.72 (Self Portrait. Structure. Report. 9.6.72), based on an accumulation of several personal data, such as ID cards, portrait photographs (front and side views) with measurements of her face on a millimetre paper, her medical history, and records of her heartbeat. According to the artist, the opening of the exhibition *Autorretrato*... counted with the participation of some "ministers of the government, as well as General Velasco's wife, his mother, his aunt, all of them."

Concerning *4 mensajes*, the installation consisted of four random messages taken from different television channels the same day (27 December 1973). Although the exhibition showcasing this work was held the year the military expropriated the press (1974), it was neither censored nor criticised. Perhaps, as the artist noted, the military did not understand her work.<sup>377</sup> In 2018, I had the chance to visit Teresa Burga's retrospective *Teresa Burga: Aleatory Structures* at the Migros Museum in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>375</sup> *Autorretrato*... was presented in June 1972, less than a year after IAC held the exhibition *Art and Cybernetics* in October 1971 with works by Argentine group CAyC, addressing topics such as dematerialisation, communication and information technologies akin to Burga's individual explorations.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>376</sup> "... fueron los propios ministros, la esposa del general Velasco, la mamá, la tía, todititos." Miguel A. López "Teresa Burga en la Bienal de Venecia y el MALBA," *arte nuevo* blog, July 1, 2015, http://arte-nuevo.blogspot.com/2015/07/teresa-burga-en-la-bienal-de-venecia-y.html. This interview with the title "Lo más cerca posible del azar" was held at the MALI museum on 5 December 2011, as part of the series of conversations *MALI Uno a uno*. The interview was later published in the exhibition catalogues of Teresa Burga's solo exhibitions *Teresa Burga*. *Estructuras de aire / Structures of Air* at MALBA in Buenos Aires, and *Teresa Burga: Aleatory Structures* at Migros Museum in Zurich.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>377</sup> Miguel A. López "Teresa Burga en la Bienal de Venecia y el MALBA," *arte nuevo* blog, July 1, 2015.

Zurich. *4 mensajes* was for me an encrypted piece and even I could not tell what the messages were about. However, Miguel A. López alluded to the possibility of a hidden criticism against the government.<sup>378</sup>



Figure 48. Installation view of *4 mensajes*.

Source of the image: *Teresa Burga: Aleatory Structures*, Heike Munder, ed., (Zurich: Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst & JRP | Ringier, 2018), 135.

In my view, Teresa Burga accurately followed the approach of US conceptual art *as a style*. According to Lucy Lippard's observations on conceptual art, most of these works were characterised for their use of lists, measurements, counting, repetition, neutral descriptions, introduction of daily life and work routines, and an emphasis on process. There was also a "fascination with pseudo-scientific data and neo-philosophical gobbledygook." For Lippard, "communication (but not community) and distribution (but not accessibility) were inherent in Conceptual art."<sup>379</sup> All these elements were present in Burga's works of that period. Her work (after her studies in Chicago) was relatively hermetic, self-referential, and hardly social.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>378</sup> Miguel A. López, "Conceptualismos 'fallidos': Extravíos estéticos y pulsiones políticas en la obra de Teresa Burga," *Teresa Burga. Informes, Esquemas, Intervalos 17.9.10* (Lima: ICPNA and Württembergischer Kunstverein, 2011), 85-88.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>379</sup> Lucy Lippard, Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object, xv-xvi.

Nonetheless, Heike Munder – the curator of the show at Migros Museum – indicated that Burga's art

...went largely unnoticed by both the Latin American and the Western art scenes. One factor may have been the political conditions of her native Peru, which long suffered under a military dictatorship and went through severe economic crises. A more crucial reason why there was little discussion of and recognition for Burga's work may have been that both its forms and its content left local critics nonplussed; the dictatorial regime, meanwhile, cut her off from the international circulation of ideas.<sup>380</sup>

While the two terms of the GRFA lasted until 1980, I wonder why Burga's work remained unnoticed for more than twenty years (1984-2005), far beyond the military government. Moreover, during the GRFA and after it the artist worked for the National Customs Office. Hence, she was deeply inserted in the framework of Peru's official institutions. Despite her privileged upbringing and the fact that Burga's father (a Navy officer) knew Velasco Alvarado personally while he was stationed in Paris in the early 1960s; since the artist's "rediscovery" by López and Tarazona, Burga's work has been inextricably linked to Velasco Alvarado's regime. It seems that there is little room to understand the artist's work, other than the interpretations given by these curators and that of art historian Dorota Biczel, who has also researched about the artist. Yet, the current sophisticated and intricate discourse around Burga's practice has sparked doubts regarding her conceptual art approach. For instance, a review on her solo exhibition in Stuttgart stated the following: "Burga never celebrated Conceptual art as bloodless asceticism." In this show, "her

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>380</sup> Heike Munder, "Teresa Burga - An Introduction," in *Teresa Burga: Aleatory Structures*, ed. Heike Munder (Zurich: Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst & JRP | Ringier, 2018), 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>381</sup> In 1984, Burga participated in the group exhibition *Las vanguardias artísticas de los años sesenta* (The Artistic Avant-Gardes of the 1960s), curated by Gustavo Buntinx. In 2005, her work was presented in the group show *Lima inhabitada* (Uninhabited Lima), curated by Manuel Munive.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>382</sup> Biczel co-curated with López and Tarazona the exhibition *Die Chronologie der Teresa Burga - Berichte, Diagramme, Intervalle / 29.9.11* (Teresa Burga's Chronology: Reports, Diagrams, Intervals 29.9.11), held at Württembergischer Kunstverein in Stuttgart from 30 September 2011 to 8 January 2012. Among her published essays are: Dorota Biczel, "An Artwork as an Apparatus," in *Teresa Burga: Aleatory Structures*, 36-40; Dorota Biczel, "Cracking Open the Systems: Media, Materiality and Agency in Teresa Burga's Self-Portrait. Structure. Report. 9.6.72," *Alternativas*, no. 3 (2014): 1-23.

conceptual art came across as so smart and so nonchalant that one was tempted to coin a neologism: nonconceptual art."<sup>383</sup> In fact, Teresa Burga began to gain international recognition in great part thanks to López's and Tarazona's work. Nowadays, she is considered a pioneer of conceptual art in Latin America in international art circles worldwide.

Rafael Hastings was another artist, who continued producing experimental works during Velasco Alvarado's administration. During the 1970s, he produced several videos and films, for instance the video *What Do You Really Know About Fashion* (1973) or the four short films *El incondicionado desocultamiento (4 cortometrajes sobre el hecho de desaparecer)* (1974). Other audio-visual works included *Hola Soledad* (1973), and *We Are Not a Family* (1974), which unfortunately have been lost. The artist also participated in several international exhibitions, such as the ones on art and media organised by CAyC. After this period of intense visual explorations in video and cinema, in the 1980s Hastings came back to do paintings. A further example is Mario Acha, who did not interrupt his practice. Throughout the 1970s, he created experimental films, mostly on 16 mm. Among them were *Las voces de la tierra* (1974), *Los reinos del desierto* (1975), the animation film *Mito de Inkarri* (1977), or *Mi dulce amiga* (1978).

Despite all this evidence, López and Tarazona assumed a radicality in the arts scene in Lima from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s, presenting the artists as the injured parties of the military government. I have to ask myself: if it was so repressive and violent, as López and Tarazona have persistently declared, why would a group of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>383</sup> Jörg Scheller, "Teresa Burga," *Frieze*, issue 3, November 10, 2011, https://www.frieze.com/article/teresa-burga.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>384</sup> José-Carlos Mariátegui Ezeta, "El trabajo de cine y video de Rafael Hastings," 54. These videos are available online under this link: "Rafael Hastings Film Project," *ATA*, https://ata.org.pe/rafaelhastings/.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>385</sup> José-Carlos Mariátegui Ezeta, "Un viaje por la obra audiovisual de Rafael Hastings," *ATA*, https://ata.org.pe/un-viaje-por-la-obra-audiovisual-de-rafael-hastings/. This included the participation in the exhibitions *Arte de Sistemas* in Buenos Aires (1971), *Towards a Profile of Latin American Art* in Buenos Aires (1972), the third Brugge Triennale in Belgium (1974), *Agora 74/75: CAYC, Art and Technology in Latin America* in Maastricht (1974). Hastings also had a solo exhibition at CAyC in Buenos Aires in 1973. Moreover, the video *What Do You Really Know About Fashion* was produced by Ediciones Tercer Mundo (a cooperative that produced videos and films, which was run by CAyC's director Jorge Glusberg, the film editor Danilo Galasse and the filmmaker Pedro Roth).

experimental artists contribute to the government's cultural and education policies? Why would Teresa Burga return to Peru after studying in the United States, or Hastings come back to his native country, after a successful career in Europe? Why would Brazilian anthropologist Darcy Ribeiro decide to live in exile in Peru? Why could Emilio Hernández Saavedra and his family live in a hippie community in Cusco? How could these alternative communities even exist? Why did Teresa Burga work for the government's customs office for so many years? If López's and Tarazona's theory was true, where are the artworks or artists' actions that challenged the government? Where are all the (many, as they claimed) imprisoned, repressed, or deported Peruvians of this period?

As already noted, as the government progressed and Velasco Alvarado's health began to deteriorate (early 1973 onwards), the regime became more authoritarian. In this context, it increasingly controlled communication media (radio, television, and printed press) that led to the expropriation of the press in 1974. Regarding the topic of violence, what happened was that the Left radicalised in Peru during the two terms of the GRFA (1968-1980). With the return to democracy (a few months before Belaúnde Terry came to power for his second term), Sendero Luminoso initiated the internal armed conflict on 17 May 1980, by entering with guns in the Electoral Registry office in the town of Chuschi (in the department of Ayacucho), confiscating the electoral ballot boxes. From that moment on, a period of violence began and lasted until 2000.

Thus, López's and Tarazona's interpretation of the scene may fit in the accounts of Latin American conceptualism, referring to the emergence of dematerialisation of art under *real* repressive and violent conditions. In these circumstances, some artists were contesting the government through their practice, at the risk of being persecuted. This was the case of the right-wing dictatorships in several South American countries, in which tortures, rape, mass detentions, forced disappearances

and assassinations were part of the practiced state violence. It also included a strong policing climate and censorship.<sup>386</sup>

There was no interruption of the experimental art scene, which questions the need of López and Tarazona to manipulate the information and create a tension that was not there in its original context. Arguably is also their depiction of the government as "violent and repressive." Even Julio Cotler, one of its most severe critics, did not characterise the government in these terms. As Cotler noted, "It must be emphasized that the implementation of the authoritarian, corporate system adopted by the revolutionary government does not depend on systematic repression." López's and Tarazona's fascination with violence and rupture are connected to their own biassed view of the military government, rather than the actual circumstances of the period. Curiously, in other latitudes in Latin America the existing political tensions and repression under military regimes did not impede the artists to carry on with their practice. At the risk of being persecuted, tortured, imprisoned, or even killed, the artists continued to produce critical works. In connection with this, Mari Carmen Ramírez noted the following paradox:

... perhaps the greatest contradiction confronted by conceptualism in Latin America is embodied in a painful irony: the advent of democracy brought about its demise. This leads me to raise an admittedly unfair question. Had authoritarianism not existed, would conceptualism have achieved the same high profile in Latin America?<sup>388</sup>

While for Mari Carmen Ramírez the authoritarian environment encouraged the most interesting works; López and Tarazona blamed the military government for the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>386</sup> For instance, the CIA backed state terrorism campaign "Plan Cóndor" (also known as "Operación Cóndor") (1975-1983) to allegedly combat terrorism and subversion. It established right-wing dictatorships in Brazil in 1964, in 1971 in Bolivia; in 1973 in Chile and Uruguay; and in 1976 in Argentina. In Paraguay, although the dictatorship began much earlier (1954), the country would be involved in the programme in 1975. In Peru, the military Francisco Morales Bermúdez, who overthrew Velasco Alvarado in 1975, was sentenced to life imprisonment in 2017 for his participation in "Plan Cóndor." Among others, he was charged for the deportation of 13 Peruvian citizens and the disappearance of 23 Argentine-Italian civilians living in exile in Peru, who were sent to the Argentine province of Jujuy (following a request by the Argentine government) and never came back.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>387</sup> Julio Cotler, "The New Mode of Political Domination," 77.

Mari Carmen Ramírez, "Tactics for Thriving on Adversity: Conceptualism in Latin America, 1960-1980,"

disappearance of the experimental scene. To use this as an argument is just "an excuse," said Alfonso Castrillón Vizcarra when I interviewed him.<sup>389</sup> Instead of addressing their shortcomings – such as scarce research and lack of experimentation, discontinuity, or cloning the work of famous US conceptual artists –, they made the government responsible for all what the artists did not accomplish.

The experimental artists in Lima continued to work in different directions, despite the government's policies. Indeed, this period was characterised for the emergence of new galleries and other art spaces, which also featured experimental artworks. In addition to this, the large part of the artists (who were not following pop, op, hard edge, happenings, constructivism, or conceptual art) carried on with their work either on expressionist abstraction, the *Teoría de las raíces nacionales*, or surrealism, while others were interested in figurative art. None of these art forms were impeded to be practised. The cultural policies of the government were never meant to exclude the already established art forms. These policies were intended to broaden the cultural offer, with the aim to include other audiences and other art forms, previously overlooked.

López and Tarazona created a new version of the history of the period to give the impression of a thriving conceptual art scene. What they presented in their theory was a group of young artists, supported by a few intellectuals from the middle and upper middle classes. Yet, their work was not understood by the local audience, accustomed to paintings and sculptures. I venture to say that even without the military government it would have been the same. Indeed, this lack of reception from the local audience was noticed by Mirko Lauer and Alfonso Castrillón Vizcarra. Both have given a more comprehensive view of the period, beyond Juan Acha's departure in the early 1970s. However, in López's and Tarazona's theory, they are barely mentioned.

Conclusively, the experimental art scene in Lima was not interrupted because of the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>389</sup> Personal communication with Alfonso Castrillón Vizcarra, August 18, 2022.

government or when Juan Acha left the country. In addition to this, the artists were not threatened during Velasco Alvarado's government. Artists such as Teresa Burga, Francesco Mariotti, Rafael Hastings, Luis Arias Vera or Mario Acha continued to produce experimental works throughout the 1970s. As for the dissolution of *Arte Nuevo*, it happened for personal reasons, not because of the military government or its policies.

In this section I have presented a problem on how art history is written today, showing how poorly research is conducted. Unfortunately, this is happening not only in Peru, but it also applies to other latitudes as well. Instead of revising the original sources and magazines of the time, publications written by other authors, or reading books on social sciences and the history about Velasco Alvarado's government; international art historians, curators and critics have taken the shortest route, assuming López's and Tarazona's theory as a historical fact. Without taking time to read and understand the context in which these artistic practices took place and make their own opinion about it; they have just echoed this theory, spreading a simplistic version of the history and the art scene in Peru of this period.

I question the need to create myths in art history and the essentialist view of Latin American art in the decades of the 1960s to 1980s. One that assumes that all the military governments were authoritarian, violent, and repressive; in which the artists are presented as a sort of heroes, challenging governments or showing how to do things better. I also question the idea that considers Latin American art from this period as *per se* disruptive or dissident. Arguable is also the eagerness to create black and white scenarios, in which the artists are portrayed as 'the good ones,' in opposition to governments, institutions or authorities seen as 'the bad ones.' This view does not open up to look more carefully at the tensions originating from multi-layered social, economic and political circumstances. Indeed, reality is not black and white and is far more complex. The fact that in Peru experimental artists were working for the government does not make them a failure or lose the strength of their artistic creativity. Conversely, to decide to not contribute to the government's policies does not automatically mean that these artists were against the regime. It

also does not imply that they were the most progressive ones.

All these arguments put into question the rigour of López's and Tarazona's research. All in all, this dramatisation of the political situation in Peru helped the curators to introduce the Peruvian art scene within the framework of the RedCSur. Paradoxically, the activities organised by the group of artists who worked for the government – which López and Tarazona deliberately left out in their theory – corresponded with the ideas of the artistic-political practices that the RedCSur was interested in recovering. However, in all these years, neither Ana Longoni nor the members of the RedCSur have questioned this theory. Curiously, the network contributed to spreading it in different international academic and exhibition circuits, which also makes me speculate about RedCSur's criteria to accept a theory and how it conducts historiographic research.

### 2.2. Stealing and Betraying History

This section examines the missing links in López's and Tarazona's theory. I argue that their theory should be revised and updated. What they have put into circulation within the international art circuit differs much from the original context of the art scene in Lima during Velasco Alvarado's government.

López and Tarazona repeatedly addressed the experimental artists as belligerent, disruptive, and rebellious. Instead, I acknowledge their humanist approach, their sense of solidarity and social engagement, something they overlooked in their account. They disregarded the military government from the start, leaving out several experimental art practices taking place during that period. At the same time, they discredited one of the few Peruvian governments that put attention to art and education as a means for social change. The reforms that Miguel A. López described as "dangerously nationalistic" were indeed an attempt to broaden the scope of the arts, its audience, and its producers.<sup>390</sup> In fact, the cultural and education policies of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>390</sup> Miguel A. López, "Cultural Guerrilla: Juan Acha and the Peruvian Avant-Garde of the 1960s."

the government strived to bridge the gap between the social classes, by democratising culture and offering cultural programmes to different communities. They were intended to give access to art to a broader population, as producers and consumers of culture, beyond the small elite in Lima. As a result, they also revealed the immense social and economic divide that existed in the country.

By showing one side of the social reality of the country, López and Tarazona overlooked the changes in society that were already taking place after the instauration of Velasco Alvarado's government. In their theory, there is no reference to the economic and social situation of the country, appearing as if the capital city was comparable to other (more industrialised and cosmopolitan) big metropolises. Moreover, López's and Tarazona's account refers to a reduced group of people within a particular social class (the intellectual middle and upper middle class in Lima). This partial view of the capital city passed over the social contradictions of the moment in which the first experimental practices appeared. In this respect, Gustavo Buntinx characterised Velasco Alvarado's period for the coexistence of two parallel modernities, a cosmopolitan and an Andean modernity. Buntinx illustrated this cultural disparity as follows:

At a time when ... the proliferation of popular stadiums brought to light the irruption of the Andean into the urban culture, experimentalism inaugurated its most important exhibitions with music groups that imitated songs of the Beatles, which were sung in broken English.<sup>391</sup>

This situation evidenced that the artistic experimentalism was taking place, concurrently with the cultural events organised by the military government. At the same time, it exemplified the existing social and cultural contradictions in the capital

In this essay, López considers that the cultural guerrilla began already with *Arte Nuevo*, although Juan Acha began to use this term in 1970. This idea has been also replicated by Joaquín Barriendos in his essay "Revolución en la revolución. Los escritos estético-políticos de Juan Acha," already mentioned.

Rock groups in Lima of the late 1960s and 1970s were mostly singing in English. For more information about Peruvian rock during Velasco Alvarado: Fidel Gutiérrez Mendoza ""Al diablo con la revolución". Rock peruano en tiempos de Velasco," in *Mitologías velasquistas*, 63-84.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>391</sup> "En momentos en que ... la proliferación de los coliseos populares sacaba a relucir la irrupción de lo andino en la cultura urbana, el experimentalismo inauguraba sus exposiciones más importantes con grupos musicales que remedaban canciones de los Beatles masticando un inglés escasamente aprendido." Gustavo Buntinx, "Modernidades cosmopolita y andina en la vanguardia peruana," 283.

city: it showed the differences between the intellectual elite in Lima and the rest of the capital city, not to mention the rest of the country that was virtually absent in cultural matters. Indeed, in that period Lima represented 20 percent of the whole population of the country. As Eric Hobsbawm observed, "On the eve of the military takeover something like 40 percent of Lima's population was underemployed or unemployed, and something like the same percentage lived in anything from matting shelters to adobe shacks."<sup>392</sup>

López and Tarazona focused on labelling the artworks and the whole experimental scene of the mid-1960s to mid-1970s as 'disruptive,' 'activist' or 'dissident.' Using these adjectives, the scene appeared more radical. By framing the works as 'activist,' they corresponded with RedCSur's interest in artistic-political practices from Latin America from the 1960s onwards. In truth, from the beginning both curators had an international audience in mind.<sup>393</sup> Without any difficulties, they managed to introduce their version of the experimental art scene of the mid-1960s to 1970s in the international art circuit, which had limited or no information about the Peruvian art scene and the history of the period.

Instead of creating a fiction about the art scene in the mid 1960s to mid 1970s, I consider that they could have centred their attention on analysing the contributions of this scene to the theories of Latin American conceptualism, or to reflect on Acha's 'non-objectualism.' While López and Tarazona described this period as the origins of 'non-objectualism' in Peru, in their theory they take this term as a given, without any clarification. However, for Juan Acha, who developed this concept in 1972, this notion encompassed a revision of the presence of local popular culture (such as the carnival or crafts) in contemporary art practice, as well as a reflection on the cultural

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>392</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, "Peru: The Peculiar "Revolution," *The New York Review of Books*, December 16, 1971, https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1971/12/16/peru-the-peculiar-revolution/.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>393</sup> It is worth noting that the majority of Miguel A. López's essays have been circulating in international publications, such as *Afterall*, *Art Journal*, or *post: notes on art in a global context*, positioning himself as a reference on Peruvian and Latin American art in the international art circuit. His view of Velasco Alvarado's government has been shared by other art historians, critics and curators specialised in Latin American art, as well as in international exhibitions that included Peruvian artists of this period. Among them are Joaquín Barriendos, Dorota Biczel, Sofia Gotti, Julieta González and Megan Sullivan.

dependency from the hegemonic centres, urging the need to focus on local neo-avant-gardes. 'Non-objectualism' was a flexible and mutable concept, which Acha left open to discussion.<sup>394</sup> Hence, considering only one aspect of it, for instance activism, does not acknowledge the complexity of its definition. More than opposing the hegemonic term of conceptual art, 'non-objectualism' opened an ongoing discussion on different criteria to evaluate Latin American visual arts practice, with the aim to discuss its particularities and empower it. The term stimulated a visual art thought from Latin America and for Latin America, following a Latin Americanist approach. Both Acha and Lauer were among other Latin American art theorists and critics, such as French-Chilean Nelly Richard, Mexicans Rita Eder and Ida Rodríguez Prampolini, Argentines Néstor García Canclini or Marta Traba, Paraguayan Ticio Escobar, Brazilians Aracy Amaral, Mário Pedrosa or Frederico Morais, who gathered in international meetings, focusing on discussing an independent visual thought from a Latin American perspective. Among them were the Symposium in Austin, Texas (1975); the Latin American Meeting in Caracas (1978), the first Latin American Biennale in São Paulo in 1978 (which had only one edition), or the First Latin American Conference on Non-Objectual Art and Urban Art, held in Medellín in 1981.

As we have seen, the accounts on Latin American conceptualism suggested a more politicised and disruptive canon of conceptual art (Ramírez); continued to think in binaries (hegemony-periphery), aiming for a (peripheral) conceptualist canon that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>394</sup> This was exemplified in the framework of the Primer Coloquio Latinoamericano de Arte No Objetual y Arte Urbano, in which 'non-objectualism' was discussed among other participating speakers, who defined it according to the social reality of their respective countries. For instance, while Néstor García Canclini focused on the commodification of crafts in Mexico; Jorge Glusberg referred to the importance of the critic-curator from his perspective as CAyC's director. Another example is that of art historian Aracy Amaral, who spoke about the somatic approach and the carnival in Brazilian art; while Nelly Richard addressed the use of the body and the landscape in the experimental art practices in Chile. Although the speakers did not necessarily agree among themselves, the conference offered an open space to think together about the particularities of the visual art practice in the region, from a Latin American perspective.

During the symposium *Rethinking Conceptualism: Avant-Garde, Activism and Politics in Latin American Art* (1960s-1980s), Jorge Lopera gave a lecture on this conference. In his lecture, he defined non-objectualism as "a hinge term" that connected different artistic realities in Latin America. The video of his lecture can be seen here: *Jorge Lopera, Primer Coloquio Latinoamericano sobre Arte No-objetual y Arte Urbano: búsquedas de un pensamiento visual independiente,* 

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O4C24UFt-\_M&list=PLPOmY7utO8r439aVSIj1rIrb\_gS\_n3T1j&index=1. The Q & A session with the audience took place on 17 March 2021.

emerged in parallel to the hegemonic Euro-American conceptual art (Camnitzer); or addressed artistic-political practices that shall neither be defined as art nor fetishised (Longoni). However, the term 'non-objectualism' goes beyond these theories and I would be cautious in including it within the Latin American conceptualist canon.<sup>395</sup> While the theories on Latin American conceptualism have focused on the synchronicity of the Latin American neo-avant-gardes from the 1960s and their inclusion in the global art history map; Juan Acha focused on finding ways to define what could be called the 'Latin American art identity.' Acha was influenced by the dependency theory. In the cultural field, this was interpreted as Latin America's cultural dependency from the Euro-American centres. His position contrasted with the Latin American conceptualist perspective since the 1990s. The latter questions the peripheral status of the Latin American neo-avant-gardes, by situating them within other neo-avant-gardes developing concurrently in different parts of the world.<sup>396</sup>

In an interview with Fernando Davis, Luis Camnitzer admitted not having read Juan Acha for considering him "a bit hermetic." Although Ana Longoni highlighted the importance of the recovery of terms, she did not give any further information about

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https://periodicos.ufmg.br/index.php/revistapos/article/view/15446. Serviddio refers to Juan Acha, Marta Traba and Jorge Romero Brest as art critics who became theorists; and Gabriela A. Piñero, *Ruptura y continuidad*. *Crítica de arte desde América Latina*, Santiago de Chile: Ediciones Metales Pesados, 2019. In this book, Piñero focuses on the theories developed by Mari Carmen Ramírez, Luis Camnitzer, Gerardo Mosquera, and Nelly Richard.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>395</sup> I share the view of Santiago Valencia Parra, who gives the reasons why 'non-objectualism' cannot be framed within the theories of Latin American conceptualism. Santiago Valencia Parra, "Un después del arte. Disidencia estético-cultural en el no-objetualismo de Juan Acha," Master thesis, Universidad de los Andes, 2021. https://repositorio.uniandes.edu.co/handle/1992/53237.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>396</sup> It is important to mention that while in the 1970s and early 1980s the focus of the debates were on the 'Latin American art identity' stressing the dialogue among Latin American scholars and artists; in the late 1980s and 1990s the theories centred on understanding art from Latin America in the global context, in the sense of difference, as well as putting emphasis on the context from where the art was produced, the "desde aqui" (from here), as Gerardo Mosquera noted. Gerardo Mosquera, "From Latin American Art to Art from Latin America." *ArtNexus*, no. 48 (April- June 2003): 70-74; and Gerardo Mosquera, "Good-Bye Identity, Welcome Difference: From Latin American Art to Art from Latin America." *Third Text*, vol. 15, issue 56 (2001): 25-32. For more information about these debates, see: Fabiana Serviddio, "La conformación de nuevas teorías sobre el arte latinoamericano en el proceso de crisis epistemológica de la modernidad." *PÓS: Revista Do Programa De Pós-graduação Em Artes Da EBA/UFMG* (November 2012): 62-81.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>397</sup> Fernando Davis, "Entrevista a Luis Camnitzer," 26.

'non-objectualism,' nor mentioned Juan Acha's contributions.<sup>398</sup> Paradoxically, the term 'non-objectualism' followed a similar South-South approach as the one encouraged by the RedCSur. The notion addressed "problems that, surprisingly, are also contained in the RedCSur's proposals: studying popular agency, observing marginalised productions, examining non-hegemonic aesthetic formations and revaluing the agents of the Latin American cultural milieu." Other than mentioning it, there has not been an in-depth study of 'non-objectualism' within the RedCSur. Nonetheless, it is not my intention to give an analysis of 'non-objectualism' as it goes beyond the topic of this chapter. What I would like to point out is that Juan Acha introduced it as an open-ended notion that brought about an ongoing discussion. More than a fixed term, it was a continuous reflection and re-evaluation of the different developments in visual arts practice in Latin America. This is also how I understand intellectual practice, a series of questionings, turnabouts, revisions, and reconsiderations of initial positions.

#### **Reinventing History**

Regarding the treatment of history, in several essays Miguel A. López has followed to the letter the idea of recovering the past to activate the present, suggested by Ana Longoni. In connection with this, he stated that "one does not retrieve the past in order to make it exist as an accumulation of recovered skeletons but to profoundly disturb the orders and securities of the present," something he would develop in other essays under the concept of "stealing history." <sup>400</sup> In fact, stealing and betraying

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>398</sup> Longoni compares Juan Acha's role in Lima to that of Oscar Masotta in Buenos Aires. The latter played a pivotal role in the experimental art scene in Argentina of the 1960s. Ana Longoni, "Relatos *otros* de los conceptualismos," 279.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>399</sup> "No se resalta el peso que podría tener la formulación no-objetual de cara a los conceptualismos, trayendo problemas que, de forma sorprendente, también están contenidos en las propuestas de la RedCSur: estudiar la agencia popular, observar las producciones marginalizadas, examinar las formaciones estéticas no-hegemónicas y revalorizar los agentes del medio cultural latinoamericano." Santiago Valencia Parra, "Un después del arte. Disidencia estético-cultural en el no-objetualismo de Juan Acha," 76.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>400</sup> "No se recupera el pasado para hacerlo existir como un cúmulo de esqueletos recobrados, sino para perturbar profundamente los órdenes y seguridades del presente." Miguel A. López, "Secuestros, politizaciones, analiticidades, mitificaciones. A propósito del 'arte conceptual' en América Latina en los sesenta/setenta," *Ramona*, no. 82 (July 2008): 47. Similar ideas are present in these essays: Miguel A. López, "How Do We Know What Latin American Conceptualism Looks Like?," *Afterall: A Journal of Art, Context and Enquiry*,

history is literally what López and Tarazona have done in their theory. For instance, they reinterpreted works (such as *Todo el amor* or *Ballet verbal*) as a critique of the government, while in their original context they did not have these intentions. They decontextualised Emilio Hernández's words (referring to the artist burning his works), as if it was a reaction against the government. Their reinterpretation of the period has created the current assumption in the international art circuit that equates Velasco Alvarado's administration to the right-wing authoritarian governments in South America of the period. While in these contexts artists were threatened, this cannot be said about the Peruvian situation during Velasco Alvarado's regime.

In my view, activating the present means turning back in time, without victimising history, trying to understand the moment when these practices took place in their original sociopolitical context. To have a broader idea of the period, one needs to take a careful look at magazines and publications, focus on the theories circulating at that time, and not only read art publications or follow the view of one single art critic. The attentive act of listening to the artists' stories may also help, although memory is a fragile archival resource, and I would not solely rely on it. From that position, one can begin to think in which ways these past art practices may have contributed to a reflection about the present. A recent example of activation is CADA's action *NO*+ (No More) from 1983, which was made visible again during the massive protests and riots between 2019 and 2020, known in Chile as *Estallido social* (Social Outburst).<sup>401</sup> While CADA's actions in public spaces of 1983 were directed against the state violence during Pinochet's dictatorship; the reappearance of the slogan *NO*+ in 2019 and 2020 acquired new meanings. For instance, *NO*+ *Abusos* (No More Abuses) against the rise of the cost of living and social inequality during

issue 23 (Spring 2010): 5-21; and Miguel A. López, "Robar la historia, traicionar el arte conceptual," *des-bor-des*, no. 0, http://archivo.des-bor-des.net/0/miguel\_lopez.php.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>401</sup> NO+ was an action in public spaces carried out by CADA (Colectivo Acciones de Arte) in 1983, condemning the state-violence in Chile during Pinochet's regime. CADA was a group of Chilean artists, active between 1979 and 1985, composed by the artist Lotty Rosenfeld (1943–2020), artist and writer Diamela Eltit (1949), artist Juan Castillo (1952), sociologist Fernando Balcells (1950), and the poet Raúl Zurita (1950). During the symposium *Rethinking Conceptualism: Avant-Garde, Activism and Politics in Latin American Art* (1960s-1980s), Fernanda Carvajal gave a lecture on CADA's archive and the activation of the public space, *Astucia práctica y potencias de lo común en el Archivo CADA*. The video of Carvajal's lecture can be seen here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1XmcfuI0L9w.

Sebastián Piñera's government.

As for the RedCSur and the work carried out by Ana Longoni (first at the MACBA museum in Barcelona and later at the Reina Sofía museum in Madrid), they have been instrumental in introducing the narratives of the Latin American artistic-political art practices, mainly in the Spanish and Portuguese-speaking context. Through exhibitions, conferences and other activities, this scene is now more present beyond Latin America. One of the main achievements of the RedCSur has been the recovery of artists' archives, for instance the archives of Clemente Padín, Roberto Jacoby or Graciela Carnevale, which are now available for public research.<sup>402</sup> After all, all these accounts on Latin American conceptualism (that of Ramírez, Longoni and Camnitzer) have managed to position Latin American conceptualism in the Northern hemispheric art circuit, which has been absorbed under the label of global art, as well as having enriched the market. Overall, I consider that the recovery of terms and their analysis open new avenues for a revision of the historiography of Latin American art. In this sense, I share the view of Andrea Giunta who emphasises on the need to re-examine these terminologies and put into question the existence of canons. 403

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>402</sup> Part of these archives are available online: *archivos en uso*, http://archivosenuso.org/.

The symposium *Rethinking Conceptualism* included a panel dedicated to artists' archives. The online Q & A session, held 18 March 2021, counted with the participation of Ana Longoni, Fernanda Carvajal, Vania Markarian and Julio Cabrio. The artist Clemente Padín was among the guests and participated in the discussion on his own archive (Padín's archive has been donated to the General Archive of the Universidad de la República (Udelar) in Montevideo). The lectures of the panel "Artists' Archives and Collectives" can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLPOmY7utO8r6bIiAFZ8luBBckXO0BCe26.

Additionally, as part of the programme of *Rethinking Conceptualism*, I invited the artist Clemente Padín and the editor Darío Marroche to present Padín's book *Vanguardia poética latinoamericana*, which has been re-published in 2021. The online reading session took place in Spanish on 25 November 2021. The selection of essays can be found here: https://rethinkingconceptualism.com/ola/services/25-november-2021-18-00-h-gmt-1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>403</sup> Andrea Giunta, *Contra el canon: El arte contemporáneo en un mundo sin centro*, Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI Editores, 2020.

## 3. Curatorial Fictions: Velasco Alvarado's Administration in International Exhibitions

This section presents examples of how Velasco Alvarado's government and the experimental artworks made during this period have been introduced in the international exhibition circuit. I define them as curatorial fictions, as they responded more to the curatorial needs, than to the actual history or the work made by the artists of that time. The first part is dedicated to the exhibition *Galería de arte* (1970), by Emilio Hernández Saavedra. I examine how this exhibition has conducted new interpretations of the contemporary art scene in Lima. I pay attention to a booklet, which has been resized and recontextualised to fit within different curatorial proposals. The last two parts of this section are dedicated to three exhibitions. Taking these examples, I analyse how Peruvian contemporary art and Velasco Alvarado's period have been presented in international exhibition settings.

### 3.1. Redefining El Museo de arte borrado

In 1970, the gallery Cultura y Libertad hosted a solo exhibition with works by Emilio Hernández Saavedra (1940), a former member of *Arte Nuevo*. The show with the title *Galería de arte* (Art Gallery) deconstructed every single element of the gallery Cultura y Libertad. It included a map with the location of the gallery, the architectural plan, portrait photos of the gallery staff (director, artistic advisor, secretary, and employee) placed on walls, and a drawing on a wall indicating a missing window that was taken away after the gallery's renovation. Furthermore, the artist printed a small catalogue (21,5 x 22 cm) that accompanied the exhibition. This leaflet included portrait images of the gallery workers, a series of photos of the artist's walking journey with time references when they were shot, and the definition of the word 'gallery' taken from a dictionary. The images in the booklet were in tune with the description-based works by early US conceptual art.<sup>404</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>404</sup> One can see clear references to On Kawara's *Today* series (from 1966 to 2013) or Joseph Kosuth's *Titled (Art as Idea as Idea)* series (1967). In fact, Emilio Hernández Saavedra would not have any problem mentioning where his influences were coming from. In an article published in 1969, the artist declared that he had been appropriating images from international magazines since 1966. The article was a response in support of the accusation of plagiarism against Luis Zevallos Hetzel's *Motociclista N*° 3, who took an image from advertising

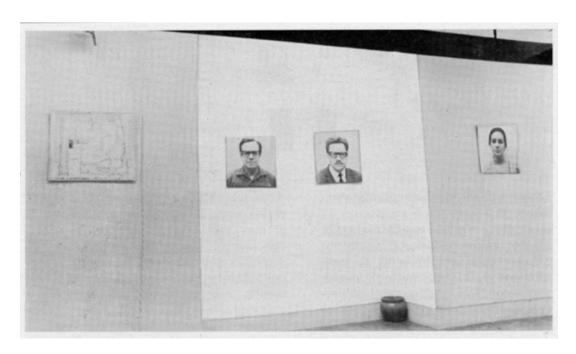


Figure 49. Exhibition view of *Galería de arte* at gallery Cultura y Libertad, 1970. Photo: courtesy of Mario Acha.

The brochure, which according to the artist was just "additional material to explore some ideas," would be the one that would gain attention by the local art scene from 2007 onwards. In the booklet was also the image of *El Museo de arte borrado* (The Erased Museum of Art), consisting of a modified photograph of the Museo de Arte de Lima, in which the museum was deliberately removed. In a conversation I had with Emilio Hernández Saavedra, he explained that to shoot this image he had to climb to the top of a tall building above Grau Square in Lima's city centre, to have an aerial view of the Museo de Arte de Lima and its surroundings. By leaving the space of the museum empty, he wanted to indicate the inefficiency of it in the artistic context of the time. Horizontal to indicate the inefficiency of the time artistic context of the time. This image (an offset print on paper of 21,5 x 22 cm) was just a simple "gesture," as the artist noted. However, although *El Museo de arte borrado* was not the main attraction of the show, it began to be extensively used by different local curators, gallerists and artists, acquiring in some cases new meanings beyond the

as the source for his triptych painting. Emilio Hernández Saavedra, "A propósito del "plagio"," *El Comercio*, May 23, 1969.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>405</sup> "Ese catálogo era más bien un material adicional, un espacio plus, para desarrollar algunas ideas." Email communication with Emilio Hernández Saavedra, October 15, 2022.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>406</sup> Personal communication with Emilio Hernández Saavedra, June 14, 2022.

artist's initial intentions. Since the mid-2000s this image has generated a theory on contemporary art in Peru, in terms of a "museum void," lack of institutionality, as well as an anti-institutional character of the arts scene in Lima.

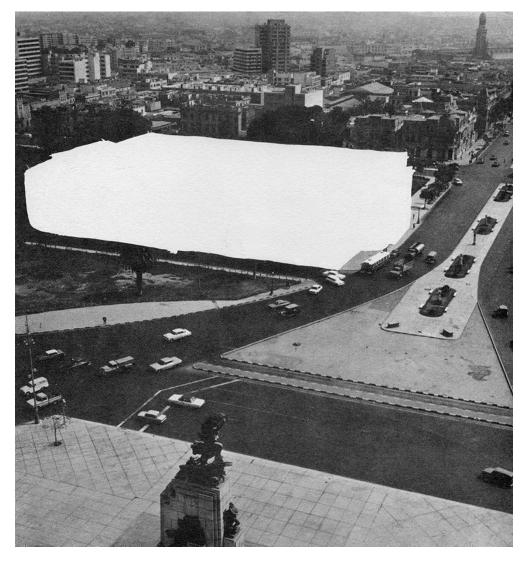


Figure 50. Emilio Hernández Saavedra, *El Museo de arte borrado* (The Erased Museum of Art). Image belonging to the booklet of the exhibition *Galería de arte* (21,5 x 22 cm), 1970. Photo: courtesy of the artist.

(In some settings, the photo appears with the title EL MUSEO DE ARTE BORRADO, handwritten by the artist on the left side of the image)



Figure 51. Image belonging to the booklet of the exhibition *Galería de arte* (21,5 x 22 cm), 1970. Photo: courtesy of Emilio Hernández Saavedra.



Figure 52. Image belonging to the booklet of the exhibition *Galería de arte* (21,5 x 22 cm), 1970. Photo: courtesy of Emilio Hernández Saavedra.



Figure 53. Image belonging to the booklet of the exhibition *Galería de arte* (21,5 x 22 cm), 1970. Photo: courtesy of Emilio Hernández Saavedra.



Figure 54. Image belonging to the booklet of the exhibition *Galería de arte* (21,5 x 22 cm), 1970. Photo: courtesy of Emilio Hernández Saavedra.

GALERÍA fr., Galérie; it., Galleria; i., Gallery; a., Galerie (del it. galleria, quizás del 1. Galilea) f. Habitación larga y espaciosa, con muchas ventanas o columnas, para pasearse o exponer obras de arte. || Corredor descubierto o con vidrieras, que da luz a las piezas interiores de un edificio. Debido a la costumbre de adornar estos corredores con cuadros y piezas de arte, se ha dado el nombre de galerías a las colecciones de obras artísticas y, p. ext., a los establecimientos donde las venden o tienen expuestas, o venden articulos semejantes. || Paraiso del teatro. || Bastidor que sostiene la cortina. || Galicismo por vulgo o público. || Mar. Balcón de popa. || Crujía. || Mil. Camino subterráneo, usado en las obras de fortificación o en la guerra de minas. || Camino defendido de los tiros de una plaza para poder acercarse a su muralla.

EMÍLIO HERNANDEZ — O GALERÍA DE ARTE GALERÍA CULTURA Y LIBERTAD/LIMA JUNIO 1970



Figure 55. Image belonging to the booklet of the exhibition *Galería de arte* (21,5 x 22 cm), 1970. (On the bottom right, the logo of the gallery Cultura y Libertad)

Photo: courtesy of Emilio Hernández Saavedra.

Back then, Juan Acha reviewed the show as follows:

In this exhibition we find photographic information turned into art. No one is unaware of the importance of information, the manipulations to which it is often subjected and the struggle to direct it. To such an extent that today for many people the information about an event is more important than the event itself. Here is Hernández's cold and well-calculated denunciation. 407

As in *Papel y más papel...*, for Acha the exhibition *Galería de arte* exemplified the importance given to journalistic or art critic reviews (information about an event), rather than to the event itself. While *Papel y más papel...* put the attention on the artists as manipulators, in this show the manipulation came from communication media, which – according to Acha – Hernández Saavedra denounced in his show.

The current interpretation of *Galería de arte* differs much from Acha's review. Since 2007, one image of the booklet – *El Museo de arte borrado* (Figure 50) – has exponentially appeared in different artistic scenarios. According to Stephan Gruber and Mijail Mitrovic, this image stemmed from a rather marginal position and would later occupy the centre stage in the Peruvian contemporary art scene. In fact, the work has changed its original dimensions (21,5 x 22 cm) and has been reprinted (124 x 124 cm) for the exhibitions *La persistencia de lo efímero. Orígenes del no-objetualismo peruano: ambientaciones / happenings / arte conceptual (1965-1975)* in Lima; and in *Crosscurrent Passages: Dissident Tactics in Peruvian Art, 1968-1992* in Stuttgart, both co-curated by Miguel A. López and Emilio Tarazona, in 2007 and 2009 respectively. In both shows the curators selected images of the booklet, enlarged them and presented them as single images in the exhibition venues.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>407</sup> "En esta muestra encontramos la información fotográfica convertida en arte. A nadie escapa la importancia de la información, las manipulaciones a que se le suele someter y la lucha por dirigirla. A tal punto que hoy para muchos la información sobre un hecho es más importante que el hecho mismo. He aquí la denuncia fría y bien calculada de Hernández." Juan Acha, "Informe fotográfico convertido en arte: Hernández y la fotografía," *El Comercio*, June 20, 1970.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>408</sup> Stephan Gruber and Mijail Mitrovic Pease, "Estructuras alrededor del vacío. "El Museo de arte borrado" y la construcción del arte contemporáneo en el Perú," *Toráx*, vol. 1, no. 1 (July 2017): 84. Part of my analysis on the current interpretations of *El Museo de arte borrado* has been based on this essay.

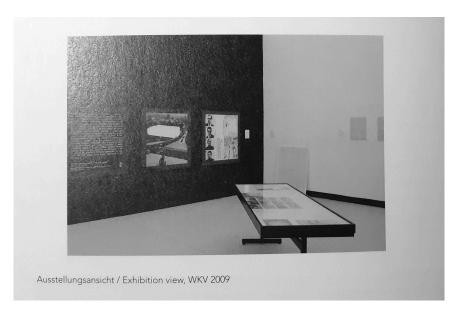


Figure 56. Exhibition view of *Crosscurrent Passages*... at Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart, 2009. Source of the image: Hans D. Christ and Iris Dressler, eds., *Subversive Practices. Art Under Conditions of Political Repression: 60s-80s / South America / Europe*, 446.

The curators Tatiana Cuevas and Rodrigo Quijano repeated this procedure in their co-curated show *Arte al paso*, which toured to São Paulo in 2011 and Bogotá in 2013. Additionally, the image of *El Museo de arte borrado* was used as the cover of the exhibition catalogue.



Figure 57. Cover of the catalogue *Arte al paso: Coleção Contemporânea do Museo de Arte de Lima*, edited by the Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, 2011.

Ironically, the Museo de Arte de Lima, which was portrayed in Hernández's image as an ineffective institution, got interested in this work and purchased the original booklet in 2011.

El Museo de arte borrado has also inspired a solo exhibition, *Progresión geométrica* (Geometric Progression) by Juan Salas Carreño, which focused on the history of this image and its transformations throughout the years. In this show, held in 2015, the artist explored the different ways *El Museo de arte borrado* has been interpreted and presented in recent years. For the exhibition, the artist gathered all the documentation he could find about this work, from the time it was created to the present. Salas's show consisted of the presentation of these documents, including texts taken from publications, as well as timelines about this artwork and the different sizes it gained through its different interpretations and exhibition settings. As Mitrovic and Gruber observed, the artist made visible the discursive density of the work, by showing the local history of art that has been created around this image.

In 2016, Gustavo Buntinx curated the exhibition *Vacío Museal: medio siglo de museotopías peruanas (1966-2016)* (Museum Void: Half a Century of Peruvian Museum Utopias (1966-2016)), held at the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo (MAC) in Lima. The exhibition was about several alternatives of museums (what he understands as 'museum utopias'), created by artists and collectives in Peru from 1966 to 2016. In this exhibition, the curator presented Sandra Gamarra's oil painting *El Museo de Arte borrado (d'apres Emilio Hernández Saavedra, 1970)* (220 x 200 cm), which was an enlarged canvas of Hernández Saavedra's original photograph.<sup>411</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>409</sup> The solo exhibition *Progresión geométrica* was held at the gallery *L'Imaginaire* at L'Alliance Française in Lima. Some exhibition views and the artist text for the exhibition are available here: https://www.juansalascarreno.com/progresion-geometrica/.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>410</sup>Stephan Gruber and Mijail Mitrovic Pease, "Estructuras alrededor del vacío," 84.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>411</sup> Prior to this exhibition, both Gamarra's painting and the original work by Emilio Hernández Saavedra were part of the show *Lo impuro y lo contaminado III. Pulsiones (neo)barrocas en las rutas de MICROMUSEO*, curated by Gustavo Buntinx for the Trienal de Chile at the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo in Santiago de Chile in 2009. Buntinx commissioned Gamarra's painting for this exhibition, without informing Hernández Saavedra about it. Although it was an appropriation of his image, the artist took it with humour stating that "these are the typical licences and appropriations of pop." While Hernández Saavedra was glad to see that the painting was

Buntinx, who considers Peru as an "ultra-peripheral country," stresses the marginality of the local art scene, which he describes as a dynamic convolute of urban popular culture, baroque, pop, and the cultures that emerged from the internal migration from the regions to the capital city; ideas that are visible in his long-term project Micromuseo "al fondo hay sitio." 412 He developed his claim of the "museum void" as a desire to satisfy, as well an alternative to the museum as institution, exemplified by different museum utopias that have been part of the Peruvian art scene since 1966. 413 For him, the first museum utopia is the gallery El ombligo de Adán by Arte Nuevo (1966), followed by the work El Museo de arte borrado, as part of the exhibition Galería de Arte by Emilio Hernández Saavedra (1970). On this subject, Gruber and Mitrovic conceive the 'museum utopia' in two senses: to fill a void, as well as to be free from any institutional framework. In this sense, the precariousness and ephemeral character of these museum utopias would be understood as a strength rather than a weakness in the Peruvian art scene. 414 Paradoxically, Buntinx's exhibition on museum utopias took place in the first contemporary art museum in Peru, MAC (Museo de Arte Contemporáneo), inaugurated in Lima in 2013, which in turn validates these 'utopias' as formal institutions.

As Gruber and Mitrovic observed, the exponential circulation of *El Museo de arte borrado* happened in a moment of growing interest in contemporary art in Lima. For instance, since the 2000s the MALI museum has increased its contemporary art collection and there has been a significant expansion of the art market, with new galleries and art fairs. Within this context, *El Museo de arte borrado* was presented as

intended as an homage to his work; he would have preferred to be informed in advance about it. Email communication with Emilio Hernández Saavedra, October 23, 2022.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>412</sup> Mariagrazia Muscatello, "El peor enemigo del arte es el mundo del arte," *Artishock*, December 7, 2018 https://artishockrevista.com/2018/12/07/gustavo-buntinx-entrevista/. In Peru, a "micro" is a popular mode of transportation, consisting of a small van that has been transformed into a minibus. "Al fondo hay sitio" is a usual phrase of the minibuses' co-workers, who inform the passengers that they can find a place to sit at the back of the van.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>413</sup> Gustavo Buntinx, "Vacío museal," exhibition catalogue of *Micromuseo (al fondo hay sitio)*, 2007. The exhibition was presented during the *Encuentro Entre Dos Mares*, Bienal São Paulo-Valencia, held in Valencia, Spain, from March to June 2007.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>414</sup> Stephan Gruber and Mijail Mitrovic, "Estructuras alrededor del vacío," 87.

part of the exhibition with the title Peru at the gallery Henrique Faria in Buenos Aires in 2016, in which the image was resized in an edition of 10 prints (53,5 x 50 cm) from its original version, placing the work in the commercial art circuit. From all this, Gruber and Mitrovic concluded that the place El Museo de arte borrado has gained in the local contemporary art scene did not emerge from the circumstances, but it was rather a creation by the current art scene in Lima. As a result of this, the local curators have inserted this image in the framework of the international discourse on institutional critique, as well as on conceptual art.

The proliferating interpretations of *El Museo de arte borrado* are clear examples of how curators adapt the works to their own needs. Regarding the latter, Emilio Hernández Saavedra stressed that although curatorial work is important to understand and interpret art in different environments, it also "runs the risk of becoming a subtle platform for protagonism." <sup>416</sup> In fact, the importance given to curators within the Peruvian contemporary art scene has significantly increased in the last twenty years. In relation to this, the artist remarked the following:

In all this time, various theorists and curators have been gaining prominence and appearing as stars, placing the artists' works almost as their own products. It is in this sense that I was telling you that the "Museum..." was a gesture without major pretensions. The gesture was undoubtedly loaded with intention in the context of the panorama of those days; but very distant from the intentions that drive much of what is done and published today. I believe that the growing and multiplied interpretations were the sense that gave real validity to this gesture. 417

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>415</sup> Ibid., 86.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>416</sup> "El trabajo curatorial que es importante para entender e interpretar la obra artística en los diferentes contextos; también puede implicar el riesgo de llegar a convertirse en una plataforma sutil para el protagonismo." Email communication with Emilio Hernández Saavedra, July 25, 2022. As a side note: The artist did not know about Gruber's and Mitrovic's analysis of this work, until I sent him the essay via Email.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>417</sup> "En todo este tiempo, varios teóricos y curadores han ido ganando protagonismo y apareciendo como estrellas, poniendo las obras de los artistas casi como productos suyos. Es en este sentido que te digo que el "Museo...", fue un gesto sin mayores pretensiones. El gesto fue sin duda cargado de intención, en el contexto del panorama de esos días; pero muy distante de los propósitos que hoy mueven mucho de lo que se hace y publica. Creo que las interpretaciones que fueron creciendo y multiplicándose, fueron el sentido que le dio validez real a este gesto." Email communication with Emilio Hernández Saavedra, July 27, 2022.



Figure 58. Sandra Gamarra, *El Museo de Arte borrado (d'aprés Emilio Hernández Saavedra, 1970)*.

Oil on canvas, 220 x 200 cm, 2008-2009.

Source of the image: Colección del MICROMUSEO ("al fondo hay sitio")

https://micromuseo.org.pe/

According to Peruvian curator and critic Max Hernández Calvo, there is a "narcissist fascination with the (auto) marginality" and, in view of the precariousness of the scene, "any alternative initiative became establishment by default." Indeed, the condition of marginality or peripherality in the art scene has also been connected to the idea of being non hegemonic. This is presented in two directions, either by contesting the hegemony from the margins, or by wishing to be fully represented, as it happened with Buntinx's exhibition on museum utopias held at the MAC museum. As Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel noted:

This strategy is not new. Non-Western Conceptual artists and their supporters from the 1960s through the 1980s, for example, consistently made reference to their regions' peripheral status and specificity in a bid to be integrated into the canon that has proved successful. Going to the peripheries to incorporate them into art history could be thus considered perfectly trendy, perhaps a concession to art historical leftist political correctness or a sacrifice to the goddesses of "renewal" and "openness." 419

The situation that Gruber and Mitrovic have individuated shows the over-interpretation of the visual aspects of an artwork and its exponential use for curatorial purposes. In some cases, the aims of the curators and their interpretations differ from the meaning of the works in their original context. This leads to the next section that draws attention to the historical fictions created by Peruvian curators, to fit within the international exhibition circuit.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>418</sup> Max Hernández Calvo, "Una coyuntura que no fue. Galerías, bienales e instituciones en Lima a fines de los noventa," *Ramona*, no. 89 (2009): 28-29. Although the author is speaking about the biennales in Lima in the late 1990s, it may be applied to the examples presented in this chapter.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>419</sup> Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel, "The Uses and Abuses of Peripheries in Art," 5.

# 3.2. The Obsession with Dissidence: *Crosscurrent Passages: Dissident Tactics in Peruvian Art, 1968-1992*

This section analyses the exhibition *Crosscurrent Passages: Dissident Tactics in Peruvian Art, 1968-1992*, co-curated by Miguel A. López and Emilio Tarazona in the framework of *Subversive Practices: Art under Conditions of Political Repression, 60s-80s, South America / Europe,* held at the Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart in 2009. I argue that this exhibition has contributed to an essentialist view of Latin American artistic practices in the decades between the 1960s and 1980s, one that assumes that all the military governments in Latin America were repressive and violent, with the artists enduring and contesting these conditions.

According to the exhibition catalogue, *Subversive Practices*... "focuses on experimental and conceptual art practices from the 1960s to the 1980s that emerged under the conditions of military dictatorships and communist regimes in South America and Europe. It is about artistic practices that not only radically questioned the traditional concept of art, the institutions and the relationship between art and the public realm, but also contested the existing political power structures." In this exhibition, López and Tarazona have adapted the artworks to the curatorial proposal, in order to fit with the idea of repression and dissidence suggested by the organisers of the entire show. Under the umbrella term "dissidence" they included several generations of artists with different claims. I argue that the idea of dissidence they aimed to portray in the show entered into contradiction, by presenting works by artists who worked for Velasco Alvarado's government and contributed to its reforms.

In *Crosscurrent Passages...*, spanning the years 1968 to 1992, the whole country is portrayed as experiencing a continuum of violence and repression. As is the case, Peruvian democracy is quite unsteady, and I would be cautious in showing in one

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>420</sup> "... fokussiert experimentelle und konzeptuelle Kunstpraktiken, die von den 1960er- bis 1980er-Jahren unter den Bedingungen von Militärdiktaturen und kommunistischen Regimes in Südamerika und Europa entstanden sind. Es geht um künstlerische Praktiken, die nicht nur den tradierten Kunstbegriff, die Institutionen sowie das Verhältnis von Kunst und Öffentlichkeit radikal infrage stellten, sondern die zugleich gegen die bestehenden politischen Machtsysteme opponierten." Hans D. Christ and Iris Dressler, eds., *Subversive Practices. Art Under Conditions of Political Repression: 60s-80s / South America / Europe* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2010), 13.

exhibition all these different moments of Peruvian history with different political orientations. There has been no continuity throughout these governments and they should be examined separately. Something similar happened with the selection of artists. In this show, the claims of the artists could not have been more different. While *Arte Nuevo* artists criticised the institutional framework of the art scene of the mid-1960s; the artist group *Taller NN*, the artists Herbert Rodríguez and Alfredo Márquez portrayed the violence experienced in the decades of the internal armed conflict. Whilst *Grupo Chaclacayo* addressed queer aesthetics, sexual dissidence and violence; *Taller E.P.S. Huayco* used the public space as the site for their artistic practice, incorporating in their works elements taken from the urban popular cultures in Lima. Lima.

For López and Tarazona, Velasco Alvarado's regime "attempted to accelerate the breakdown of the oligarchy and to support industrial modernization through radical reformist measures, which at the same time generated a persecutory, highly conservative police climate." Yet, the exhibition showcased artworks made by artists who contributed to Velasco Alvarado's reforms, such as Francesco Mariotti, Luis Arias Vera, Emilio Hernández Saavedra and Jesús Ruiz Durand. This situation contradicted the dissidence the curators intended to illustrate. Nonetheless, to introduce these works, they described that the artists were challenging the government from within its policies. For the curators, Luis Arias Vera's *Carrera de* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>421</sup> These were the different administrations from 1968 to 1992: Juan Velasco Alvarado (1968-1975, military administration), Francisco Morales Bermúdez (1975-1980, military administration (GRFA's second term)), Fernando Belaúnde Terry (1980-1985, democratically elected), Alan García Pérez (1985-1990, democratically elected) and Alberto Fujimori Fujimori (1990-1992, democratically elected, until his self-inflicted coup). Moreover, López and Tarazona did not specify that the GRFA had two terms (the first, from 1968 to 1975; and the second, from 1975 to 1980). This imprecise data appeared from an outsider perspective as the continuation of a single military administration.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>422</sup> *Taller NN* (1988-1991) was an artists' group composed by Alfredo Márquez, Álex Ángeles, José Luis García and Enrique Wong. They thematised the internal armed conflict in Peru through a series of silkscreen prints and engravings, as well through poetry with political content.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>423</sup> The artist collective *Grupo Chaclacayo* (Chaclacayo Group), active between 1983 to 1994, was composed by Peruvian artists Sergio Zevallos and Raúl Avellaneda, and German artist Helmut Psotta. They worked in Chaclacayo (from which they took their name), a district of Lima at the foothills of the Andes. The group's activities were sponsored by Goethe-Institut Lima.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>424</sup> Miguel A. López and Emilio Tarazona, "Crosscurrent Passages: Dissident Tactics in Peruvian Art, 1968-1992," in Hans D. Christ and Iris Dressler, eds., Subversive Practices. Art Under Conditions of Political Repression: 60s-80s / South America / Europe (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2010), 443.

Chasquis "marks an alternative model of "revolt" within the military revolutionary order." According to them, this work "seems to offer one of the most significant counterpoints to the vertical transformation model of the imposed, controlled "revolution"." Paradoxically, Arias Vera was a supporter and not a disruptor of the government's policies. The artist organised the relay race Carrera de Chasquis, while he was working for INRED, covering several regions throughout the country. Contrasting with the top-down control of the military government claimed by the curators in their show, it was precisely in the regions where the social mobilisation and participation was intensified.

Yvonne von Möllendorff's *Ballet verbal* was also part of the exhibition. Curiously, the curators only exhibited photographs as a documentation of the performance held at IAC in 1970. The essence of the work, which was the voice describing the dances with a final speech reflecting on the art system, was not part of the show. If they were asked to present the recording, the curators would have had to reveal the real content of the piece. However, their interest was that of illustrating repression and a problematic environment. It was easier for them to present photographs, than a voice narrating what the work was about. To make it more confusing, López and Tarazona also included works made by the artist and poet Jorge Eduardo Eielson (1924-2006), an artist who moved to Rome in 1951, lived a period in Paris and then settled in Milan. I wonder whether Eielson's works had a repercussion in the Peruvian art scene of that time, having his basis in Europe.

The overall concept of the exhibition *Subversive Practices*... was organised in nine sections according to an "artificial cartography" that shall break the "linearity and thoroughness of art-historical narratives." As in Miguel A. López's claim of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>425</sup> Miguel A. López and Emilio Tarazona, "Crosscurrent Passages: Dissident Tactics in Peruvian Art, 1968-1992," in *Subversive Practices*, 447.

<sup>426</sup> Ibid., 445.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>427</sup> "Insofern folgte Subversive Praktiken dem Konzept einer artifiziellen Kartografie …, die die linearen und auf Vollständigkeit zielenden Narrative der Kunstgeschichte aufbricht." Hans D. Christ and Iris Dressler, eds., *Subversive Practices*, 30.

Vivid [Radical] Memory. Radical Conceptual Art revisited: A social and political perspective from the East and the South was the starting point of the exhibition Subversive Practices.... It was a project organised by Antoni Mercader at the MACBA museum in Barcelona (2006-2007). The essays written in connection with this project

"stealing history," history needs to be contested, as if it would be something one shall avoid at all costs. *Subversive Practices...* included artistic practices from South America (Argentina, Chile, the networks of the MAC-USP in São Paulo, and Peru), as well as Eastern Europe (Hungary and Romania), the Collective Actions Group from Moscow, Catalonia, and the former GDR. In this show, the South American countries were treated equally, as if all four countries were experiencing the same repressive and violent conditions. However, Velasco Alvarado's regime was far from the right-wing military governments in Brazil (1964-1985), Argentina under Onganía (1966-1970) and Videla's Dirty War (1976-1981), or Chile under Pinochet (1973-1990).

In the end, instead of giving a new framework to understand the artistic practices and their contributions to conceptualist theories, Subversive Practices... has reinforced the already established generalisations and assumptions regarding Latin American art in the decades between the 1960s and 1980s: that of understanding the whole period as repressive and violent, and the artists as the ones contesting these circumstances. It seems that there was a need of the organisers to establish commonalities and perpetuate stereotypes, at the cost of giving an essentialist view of the whole region. In Subversive Practices..., the dictatorships or authoritarian governments set the tone of the artworks. Yet, do art practices become automatically 'subversive,' 'dissident' or 'critical,' just by taking place in military governments? What if the artists were not against the regime? How can one describe the practices of the artists who worked for the government, as in Velasco Alvarado's administration? In fact, the example of Peru exposes the problem of generalising: a military administration does not automatically have to be violent; and democracy does not guarantee peace, as the violence in Peru began once democracy was re-established.

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are available in Roser Asparó, Jordi Font Agulló, and Magdala Perpinyà Gombau, eds., *Papers D'Art*, no. 93, second semester 2007.

In 2007, Ana Longoni, Miguel A. López and Emilio Tarazona participated in this seminar. As the web of RedCSur noted, "At that time these researchers shared the concern and need to intervene politically in the steps of neutralisation of a series of political-artistic practices that took place in the 1960s in Latin America," *Red Conceptualismos del Sur*, https://redcsur.net/category/seminars-and-presentations/.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>428</sup> The three other curatorial proposals for Latin America were done by members of the RedCSur. Paulina Varas and Ramón Castillo curated the part dedicated to Chile, Cristina Freire the one on Brazil, while the one on Argentina was curated by Fernando Davis. In 2010, *Subversive Practices*... toured to the Museum of Contemporary Art of the University of São Paulo (MAC-USP), with the title *Redes Alternativas*.

The exhibition *Subversive Practices*... exemplifies a common curatorial strategy applied to geopolitical areas that are non-US or non-European. It assumed certain characteristics to describe a whole region in the same period, without addressing possible exceptions. Other international exhibitions on Latin American art of the 1960s to 1980s follow a similar approach. In addition to subversive, the art practices of these decades are labelled as 'radical' or 'dissident.' Controversial is the fact that López and Tarazona adapted their curatorial statement to the show. They dramatised the situation of the country during Velasco Alvarado's regime, creating a fictionalised version of the history to enhance a supposed dissidence within the art scene. Paradoxically, during this military administration, a group of experimental artists were participating and supporting, and not disrupting the ongoing changes that the government was putting forward.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>429</sup> In the art circuit, Eastern European countries are understood as a different geopolitical region within Europe.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>430</sup> For instance, *Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960-1985*. The exhibition was co-curated by Andrea Giunta and Cecilia Fajardo-Hill. It was presented at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, Brooklyn Museum of Art in New York and the Pinacoteca de São Paulo (2017-2018). A more recent example is *The Edge of Things: Dissident Art under Repressive Regimes*. The exhibition took place at the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum at Michigan State University in 2020 and was curated by Carla Acevedo-Yates.

# 3.3. Fictions and Appropriations of "lo popular" in *Arte al Paso* and *Memories of Underdevelopment: Art and the Decolonial Turn in Latin America, 1960-1985*

The problem is that "popular" is a word that has been misused, but I wish to understand that it means "for the people," "for all Peruvians."

— Alonso Alegría<sup>431</sup>

In this section, I examine the use of *lo popular* in two exhibitions: *Arte al paso*, co-curated by Rodrigo Quijano and Tatiana Cuevas; and *Memories of Underdevelopment*: *Art and the Decolonial Turn in Latin America*, 1960-1985, in which Sharon Lerner was one of the co-curators. In these two shows, *lo popular* is understood in two senses: 1) as representative of the main characteristics of Peruvian contemporary art, and 2) as a homogenising feature. I argue that the curators stressed only the visual aspects of *lo popular*, and not their social components, which were crucial in the works by the artists who worked for Velasco Alvarado's government. By focusing only on the visual aspects of *lo popular* in the urban scenario of Lima, these curators left out the producers of this urban visual imagery. At the same time, by unifying contemporary art with *lo popular* they presented a harmonic visual reality, which in effect is based on exclusion.

As already stated in the first chapter, *lo popular* began to be a recurrent motif in the experimental art scene during and after Velasco Alvarado's administration. While during the military government *lo popular* intended to include all Peruvians in cultural matters, as well as to broaden the scope of cultural production and consumption by including regional art forms; today the term functions as a category that presents only the visual elements introduced in the city landscape by the marginalised communities in Lima, but without necessarily including the people

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>431</sup> "Lo malo es que "popular" es una palabra que se ha maleado, pero yo quiero entender que significa "para la gente", "para todos los peruanos"." Alonso Alegría in an interview in the magazine *Oiga*. "Algunas preguntas sobre el teatro nacional popular," *Oiga*, no. 439, year IX (September 3, 1971): 33.

who produced them. Indeed, the group of people creating *lo popular* rarely attend any of these curated shows, or participate within the contemporary art scene.

The use of *lo popular* is a fictional visual integration, as if Lima's inhabitants would happily share *lo popular*. While the *Teoría de las raíces nacionales* incorporated elements from the pre-Inca and Inca past in abstraction to supposedly integrate the local cultures in the paintings; today contemporary artists focus on the present of *lo popular*, incorporating visual elements stemming from the urban cultures in Lima and the indigenous cultures throughout the country. Among them are images of street food, strident colourful posters, neon lights or local popular saints. *Lo popular* also may include visual elements and materials from indigenous cultural productions, such as hand-woven textiles, embroidery, ceramics, hand-woven straw, *mates burilados* (gourd carvings) or hand-printed geometric patterns, in contemporary artworks.

Since the 2000s, *lo popular* has been increasingly used in curatorial proposals to characterise Peruvian contemporary art. According to this premise, the visual landscape in the capital city changed because of the internal migration, which José Matos Mar defined as *desborde popular* (popular overflow). While the internal migration to Lima has been a process that began already in the 1940s, for Matos Mar it is in the 1970s that this *desborde* became more evident. As Mijail Mitrovic observed, for the contemporary art scene in Lima *lo popular* functions as a "warranty of historicity," but that of postmodern historicity. He understands the use of *lo popular* as a fable, an idea which I also share.

Following Fredric Jameson, the postmodern is characterised by its ever present sense, a feeling of nostalgia, and the weakening of historicity, what he describes as a "pathological symptom of a society that has become incapable of dealing with time

<sup>432</sup> José Matos Mar, *Desborde popular y crisis del Estado. El nuevo rostro de Lima en la década de 1980*, Lima: Concytec, 1985. An interesting analysis on the use of the term *lo popular* in Peru's contemporary art scene is the one by Mijail Mitrovic. Mijail Mitrovic Pease, "El "desborde popular" del arte en el Perú," *Ecuador Debate*, no. 99 (2016): 59-78.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>433</sup> Mijail Mitrovic Pease, Extravíos de la forma, 29.

and history."<sup>434</sup> The sense of history has disappeared, which has created a feeling of a perpetual present in constant change.<sup>435</sup> Based on this, the contemporary art scene in Lima assumed both the internal migration and the appearance of *lo popular* in the visual landscape of the city, as a historical process that has influenced contemporary artistic practice. This argument ignores all the discussions on *lo popular* that emerged during Velasco Alvarado's administration. For the government's cultural policies, *lo popular* meant not only the visual elements of the local popular cultures. It was about including everyone in cultural and educational matters and broadening the scope of the arts, by incorporating local popular art forms previously disregarded in the art scene. In addition to this, the focus on *lo popular* contested cultural alienation. The current interpretation of *lo popular* does not acknowledge the influence of Velasco Alvarado's cultural policies on the redefinition of *lo popular* within the artistic discourse in the 1970s.

As noted in the example of *Crosscurrent Passages...*, it is common to bring together several generations of artists with different claims in one show, with the aim to present Peruvian contemporary art to international audiences. This model has also been applied by Rodrigo Quijano and Tatiana Cuevas in their co-curated exhibition *Arte al paso*. In this show, the emergence of *lo popular* is the result of the urban processes and the internal migration. The catalogue of *Arte al paso* does an interesting semantic exercise: it overlaps two moments in contemporary Peruvian art in the same image, by including *El Museo de arte borrado* (1970) and giving the show the title *Arte al paso* (1980), alluding to the exhibition with the same name by the artist collective *Taller E.P.S. Huayco*. As Gruber and Mitrovic observed, there is a contradiction here. While the museum void, exemplified by *El Museo de arte borrado*,

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>434</sup> Fredric Jameson, *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern, 1983-1998* (London and New York: Verso, 1998), 10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>435</sup> Fredric Jameson, *The Cultural Turn*, 20.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>436</sup> Tatiana Cuevas and Rodrigo Quijano, *Arte al paso: Coleção Contemporânea do Museo de Arte de Lima* (São Paulo: Museo de Arte de Lima, Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, 2011), 14-15. The expression *al paso* means "on the go" or "en passant." It also refers to anything you can buy from street vendors, while you are in the street on the move. The exhibition *Arte al paso* took place at the Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo in 2011 and at Museo de Arte Miguel Urrutia of the Banco de la República in Bogotá in 2013. Rodrigo Quijano is a Peruvian poet, art researcher and curator. Tatiana Cuevas is a Mexican art historian and curator. She was curator of contemporary art at MALI from 2008 to 2011.

denounced the lack of a proper infrastructure for contemporary art; the claim of *Arte al paso* was an aesthetic-political demand to leave the institutional space, addressing the public space by using the streets as a place for artistic production. Although *El Museo de arte borrado* was the integral part of several other images in the brochure made by Hernández Saavedra, in the catalogue of Quijano's and Cuevas's exhibition it appears as the main feature of the show. In the timeline of the catalogue, *El Museo de arte borrado* is featured as representing the year 1970. In a way they established the "date of birth" of the claim of un-institutionality, a concept that has been developed by Gustavo Buntinx. However, for Buntinx the timeline started in 1966 with *Arte Nuevo*'s exhibition at El ombligo de Adán.

One section of the show refers to the visual representations of the indigenous population, which have been incorporated in some contemporary artworks. The section with the title "Violence, Resistance, and Memory" focused on the period of the internal armed conflict (1980-2000). Curiously, within this section the curators exhibited some of the Agrarian Reform posters made by Jesús Ruiz Durand during Velasco Alvarado's government, corresponding to a different period in Peruvian history (1968-1975). Visually, the images addressed the same group of people. However, their content delivered contradictory messages. While the posters of the Agrarian Reform represented empowered peasants as the actors of the reforms, during the internal armed conflict they were victims of brutal violence.

The curators introduced the section "Violence, Resistance, and Memory" as follows: "Like many Latin American countries, Peru's history has been marked by conflicts associated with the exclusion of large sectors of the population from political decision-making and from the benefits of political development." Despite the fact of the country's social and economic imbalance, its pervasive racism and classism,

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>437</sup> Stephan Gruber and Mijail Mitrovic, "Estructuras alrededor del vacío," 90.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>438</sup> Tatiana Cuevas and Rodrigo Quijano, *Arte al paso: Coleção Contemporânea do Museo de Arte de Lima*, 241-245.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>439</sup> "Al igual que muchos países latinoamericanos, la historia del Perú ha estado marcada por los conflictos asociados a la exclusión de grandes sectores de la población de la toma de decisiones políticas y de los beneficios del desarrollo político." Tatiana Cuevas and Rodrigo Quijano, *Arte al paso: Coleção Contemporânea do Museo de Arte de Lima*, 161.

there is no indication about the reasons for this exclusion. Paradoxically, the timeline of the show begins with the year 1962, referring to the peasant uprisings in the early 1960s. It suggests the struggle of the people who demanded a fair land redistribution, in the context of a semi-feudal society that was Peru until the late 1960s. Still, this fact stays without any explanation. I wonder what was the purpose of starting the timeline in 1962. Are the "rebellious attitude" and *lo popular* what define Peruvian contemporary art?



Figure 59. Taller NN, *Carpeta Negra* (The Black Folder), 1988. Source of the image: Tatiana Cuevas and Rodrigo Quijano, *Arte al paso: Coleção Contemporânea do Museo de Arte de Lima*, 182.

Another example is the touring exhibition *Memories of Underdevelopment: Art and the Decolonial Turn in Latin America, 1960-1985,* co-curated by Sharon Lerner for the Peruvian part of the show.<sup>440</sup> In this exhibition, Velasco Alvarado's government is equated to the right-wing military dictatorships in other South American countries of that time. Julieta González – the main curator of the show – explained it as

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>440</sup> Sharon Lerner, who worked for several years as chief curator at MALI, is since January 2022 the current director of the museum. The exhibition *Memories of Underdevelopment: Art and the Decolonial Turn in Latin America, 1960-1985* was first presented as part of *Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA*, at the Museum of Contemporary Art in San Diego (September 2017 to January 2018), and toured to the Museo Jumex in Mexico City (March to September 2018).

It was announced that this show would also be presented at the MALI museum, but it did not happen. Personal communication with the artist Armando Williams, June 22, 2022.

follows: "the repression instrumentalized by the right-wing dictatorships in Brazil, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay was in effect replicated in Peru but on the opposite side of the ideological spectrum," a statement which is also shared by Sharon Lerner. 441

In her curatorial essay, Lerner linked the exhibition to a comment on Peruvian modernity by Mirko Lauer, "Sólo lo popular es realmente moderno hoy en el Perú" (Today, only the popular is truly modern in Peru), written on the occasion of the original *Arte al paso* exhibition by *Taller E.P.S. Huayco* from 1980. 442 She uses *lo popular* in the same way as in the exhibition by Quijano and Cuevas, adding the concepts of underdevelopment and Peru's (unfinished) modernity. However, as Mijail Mitrovic pointed out, Lauer understood modernity in connection with the process of capitalist modernisation in Peru. This process engendered "a new social subject: the subject of the migration, the subject of the socio-economic transformation promoted by the Velasquismo." For *Taller E.P.S. Huayco* and for Lauer *lo popular* represented a possibility within a socialist modernity. 443

In Sharon Lerner's statement, *lo popular* appears as a visual category that integrates all Peruvians in the urban scenario, even the ones who continue to be marginalised. As for the visual contributions to *lo popular*, she presented works by Luis Arias Vera and Jesús Ruiz Durand, highlighting *Taller E.P.S. Huayco*, as a group which according to her "fully engaged with the issue of the popular and its articulation with a new group of urban inhabitants of Lima of migrant background." This sentence needs further explanation. The first thing that I want to point out is the use of the term

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>441</sup> Julieta González, Sharon Lerner, Jacopo Crivelli Visconti, and Andrea Giunta, eds., *Memories of Underdevelopment: Art and the Decolonial Turn in Latin America, 1960-1985* (San Diego: Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, 2017), 53.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>442</sup> Sharon Lerner, "Shifting the Focus: Underdevelopment and the "Popular" in the Peruvian Avant-Garde, 1967-1981," in *Memories of Underdevelopment: Art and the Decolonial Turn in Latin America*, 112. Mirko Lauer, "Arte al paso: tome uno," in Gustavo Buntinx, *E.P.S. Huayco. Documentos*, 183.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>443</sup> "... un nuevo sujeto social: el sujeto de la migración, el de la transformación socioeconómica que impulsó el velasquismo." Fernando González-Olaechea "Reunir los textos de Roberto Miró Quesada supone un acto de justicia," Entrevista a Mijail Mitrovic, *la cul*, n.d., https://revistalacul.pucp.edu.pe/Reunir-los-textos-de-Roberto-Miro-Quesada-supone-un-acto-de.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>444</sup> Sharon Lerner, "Shifting the Focus: Underdevelopment and the "Popular" in the Peruvian Avant-Garde, 1967-1981," in *Memories of Underdevelopment*, 112.

'migrant.' For Lerner, Peruvians who are not originally from the capital city are referred to as 'migrants.' However, this term can be misleading, particularly in international settings, where 'migrant' is generally associated with 'foreigner' (the exhibition *Memories of Underdevelopment...* was held in Mexico and the US). To clarify, these individuals are Peruvian citizens, but they were born in other regions of Peru or lived there before relocating to Lima. Concerning her depiction of *Taller E.P.S. Huayco*, these artists engaged with Lima's urban visual landscape, used public spaces as platforms to exhibit their works, and incorporated in their artworks visual aspects of *lo popular*. Yet, Arias Vera and Ruiz Durand engaged with the people, not only with their visual contributions. For instance, while they were working for the government they travelled to different regions and developed projects with the local communities. I also wonder whether the artworks exhibited by Lerner had a decolonial aspiration, which was the main topic of the whole show.

#### **Conclusions**

Taking Velasco Alvarado's military government as an example, I have questioned the theories on Latin American conceptualism that connect repressive and authoritarian governments with the emergence of conceptualism in Latin America. As the Peruvian case has shown, the artists worked for the government in state programmes with the purpose to integrate a larger population in cultural and artistic matters. They were intended to complement the cultural offer, by making space for other art forms, producers, and audiences, within the already existing art scene. Herewith, artists engaged in the government's policies, without having to adhere to a party or leave their ongoing practices. Moreover, the government did not impede them from continuing with their own artistic explorations.

By avoiding talking about this military administration, the analysed exhibitions omitted the debate on *lo popular* that emerged during this regime. While the military government associated *lo popular* with the inclusion of previously un- or underrepresented cultural productions and involved broader audiences; the curators of these exhibitions assume *lo popular* as part of the history of Lima and its changing

visual environment, resulting from the process of the internal migration from the regions to the capital city. For Peruvian curators, *lo popular* functions as a cohesive notion, without explaining that it is mainly a visual inclusion of the local Peruvian cultures within contemporary artworks, which in most of the cases exclude the people who created them.

In the above-mentioned exhibitions, the curators have incorporated several commonplaces of recent Peruvian curatorial practice. For instance, the claims of un-institutionality, marginality or peripherality (coined by Gustavo Buntinx), or dissidence and activism (López and Tarazona). Other examples include *lo popular*, as stated by Mirko Lauer in the original exhibition *Arte al paso* of 1980. This phrase has been first quoted by Buntinx, and has been reused by López and Tarazona, and Lerner. Indeed, in several curatorial essays one curator quotes the other. They do not question nor add anything new to the already predefined categories established by the curators themselves. In addition to this, the art scene continues to be Lima-centred. The curators refer to the capital city as representative of the whole country.<sup>445</sup>

In all these examples the curators are intervening in history, by reinterpreting or decontextualising it. They dictate how to read the works, leaving no space for other interpretations beyond theirs. This includes resizing and giving new meanings to the artworks to be included in the international exhibition circuit. In these shows, the sense of history is vague and, in some cases, imprecise, as in the case of Velasco Alvarado's government. An illustration of this inaccuracy is Sharon Lerner's description of SINAMOS as "an official movement during the first years of the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>445</sup> Albeit with a few exceptions, the artistic productions beyond Lima and the work by indigenous artists are imperceptible in the contemporary art scene. Influenced by the current international decolonial and inclusive approach to the arts, there is an increasing interest to exhibit works by indigenous artists, mostly from the Amazon region and the Andes. Additionally, the celebrations of the bicentenary of Peru's independence (2021-2022) have paid attention to the diversity of Peruvian culture, organising exhibitions that presented the work by indigenous artists. For an illustration of the gradual inclusion of contemporary indigenous art in three museums in Lima, MAC (Museum of Contemporary Art), MALI (Lima Art Museum), and MASM (San Marcos Art Museum), see: Gabriela Germaná and Amy Bowman-McElhone, "Asserting the Vernacular: Contested Musealities and Contemporary Art in Lima, Peru," *Arts*, no. 9 (February 2020): 1-17. https://doi.org/10.3390/arts9010017.

military government."<sup>446</sup> Although SINAMOS was not a movement and it did not exist until 1971, for her it began already in 1969 which accurately corresponds to the year when the governmental office DPDRA was established. Another example is the timeline of Peruvian (art) history developed by Quijano and Cuevas, which was published as part of the catalogue of their co-curated show *Arte al paso*. According to this timeline, the total art festivals *Contacta 71*, *Contacta 72* and *Inkari* in 1973 were all artist-led events, ignoring the significant intervention of SINAMOS in the organisation of *Contacta 72* and *Inkari* in 1973.<sup>447</sup> Indeed, there is no historical coherence when it comes to speaking about this government. It is more important to adjust the history to the curatorial statement, than to revise the facts.

Whilst they have not undergone research about this period, this military administration has created some difficulties for the curators. For instance, while the introduction of *lo popular* by the artists is described as something positive and a characteristic of contemporary art practice; when it comes to the same topic in connection with Velasco Alvarado's government it is interpreted as an imposition from above or a populist measure. However, there was not a single decree or publication of the government that put pressure on the artists, or forced them to follow certain art forms. In addition to this, there is a tendency to present the artists who worked for the government, as the ones who "disrupted" or offered "challenging alternatives" within it. Curiously, the government trusted these artists and gave them the power to implement official policies, something quite unusual for military regimes in Peru.

In the analysed exhibitions, several generations of artists with different claims are presented under the same umbrella. By joining them under the same label, these shows have established an artificial unit, overseeing the nuances of individual

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>446</sup> Sharon Lerner, "Shifting the Focus: Underdevelopment and the "Popular" in the Peruvian Avant-Garde, 1967-1981," in *Memories of Underdevelopment*, 107.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>447</sup> Tatiana Cuevas and Rodrigo Quijano, Arte al paso: Coleção Contemporânea do Museo de Arte de Lima, 242.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>448</sup> "...the incorporation of a sort of vernacular modernity as a state imposition." Sharon Lerner, "Shifting the Focus: Underdevelopment and the "Popular" in the Peruvian Avant-Garde, 1967-1981," in *Memories of Underdevelopment*, 107.

practices. Oftentimes, the descriptions (such as critical, dissident, marginal, radical, or activist) are far from the original intentions of the artists. The curators highlight resistance, marginalisation, peripherality or precariousness *as aesthetic qualities*. This criterion serves to enter in several canons, such as 'World Art,' 'art from the Global South,' 'Latin American Conceptualism' or 'Global Conceptualism.'

As there are scarce state-funded institutions that support artistic practice, the art scene in Peru is almost exclusively dependent on private initiatives and the market. Several artists must juggle between different jobs, affecting the continuity of their practice. Other artists apply for residencies or establish themselves overseas for better opportunities. In addition to this, there is the belief that the artists need to be guided by the curators as their mentors. During a discussion at the MALI museum in 2011, art historian Natalia Majluf stated the following:

I feel that today's young artists are orphaned by curators, as there are no spaces of sociability and coexistence to articulate relevant debates for the younger generation. And I am afraid that this is affecting their training and perception.<sup>449</sup>

The creative freedom of the artists depends on the commands established by the curators. This is an indication of the power of the curators, who have far more influence than the artists. Indeed, the market has had a strong impact on the art scene in Lima. As a consequence of this, Peruvian curators produce exhibitions that sell. Others engage in foreign-funded projects. In this context, some curators have been more interested in promoting their careers than in doing in-depth research.

Among the current topics in the contemporary Peruvian art scene are memory, extractivism, ecology, indigenous cultural practices, and queer cultures, highly

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>449</sup> "Yo siento que los artistas jóvenes de hoy están huérfanos de curadores, que no hay espacios de sociabilidad y convivencia para articular debates pertinentes para esa generación más joven. Y me temo que eso está afectando su formación y su percepción," in *Arte contemporáneo. Colección Museo de Arte de Lima*, 335. In the discussion about the state of the art scene in Peru participated the curators Gustavo Buntinx, Miguel A. López, Rodrigo Quijano, Tatiana Cuevas and the art historian Natalia Majluf (who at that time was director of the MALI museum). The discussion was held in 2011 at the MALI museum and was moderated by the curator Jorge Villacorta. Paradoxically, there were no artists invited to talk and give their opinion about the art scene in Lima.

influenced by the current international art discourse and the market, centred on decolonial, environmental, and inclusive approaches. With few exceptions, young artists are prone to adapt their works to the market's tendencies, instead of following personal interests or creative explorations. In connection with this, the artist Mario Acha commented that "in Peru we are in a race to conquer the international biennales and to vaguely resemble the Western timeline, going slightly against the grain of what is being done in other countries with strong and powerful cultures." He added that "the market has tamed the artist's rebelliousness." Thus, the artists have become fairly conformist people, with no greater pretensions than showing their work in galleries or biennales.<sup>450</sup>

Curating has become a machine of producing newness. The problem is that this machine is running too fast, undermining proper research. Even if a show addresses topics from the past, these are seen from a new perspective, to "create a contrast between form and historical background, to make the form look other and new." This is exemplified in research-based exhibitions, characterised by their "information overload," according to Claire Bishop. I share her reflection, perhaps more as an advice: "WE NEED TO BE CAREFUL what we wish for: at one pole, the presentation of information without an authorial voice or position; at the other, a position that can't be contested, only agreed with." As Boris Groys observed, "today's art audience increasingly encounters art *documentation*," which "only confirms the absence of the artwork."

In the past years and in different parts of the world, several exhibitions of

https://www.infoartes.pe/entrevista-mario-acha-en-este-momento-el-arte-esta-en-una-encrucijada/.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>450</sup> "... en Perú estamos en una carrera por conquistar las bienales internacionales y asemejarnos un poco a línea del tiempo occidental, yendo un poco a contra-corriente en lo que se hace en otros países con culturas fuertes y poderosas." Giselle Girón, "[INFORME] Mario Acha: "En este momento el arte está en una encrucijada"," *infoartes.pe*, April 22, 2016,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>451</sup> Boris Groys, Art Power, 40.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>452</sup> Claire Bishop, "Information Overload," *Artforum*, vol. 61, no. 8, April 2023, https://www.artforum.com/print/202304/claire-bishop-on-the-superabundance-of-research-based-art-90274.

<sup>453</sup> Boris Groys, Art Power, 49.

contemporary art have incorporated cultural productions by Afro-communities and indigenous peoples, associating them with resistance. Yet, this culturalist reframing of artistic practices, instead of empowering, could go in the opposite direction by exoticising cultures. For instance, the re-opening of the House of World Cultures in Berlin in June 2023. The vernissage included a Voodoo ritual as part of the opening ceremony within the framework of *O Quilombismo*. Here, the ritual is being devoid from its original transformative power within its original context. In addition to this, there is a revival of the "artist as ethnographer," something Hal Foster noted back in the nineties. As he pointed out:

In the ethnographer paradigm, with the cultural other, the oppressed postcolonial, subaltern, or subcultural ... is the Archimedean point from which the dominant culture will be transformed or at least *subverted*. 456

The danger of this paradigm is the "ideological patronage," referring to one's own projections about the Other, which may be reduced to certain established characteristics, but also idealised by ascribing to them special qualities. Concerning this, he warned us to be careful on how to reframe the Other: "artists and critics" shall "be familiar not only with the structure of each culture well enough to map it, but also with its history well enough to narrate it."

As we have seen in this chapter, there is a tendency among Peruvian curators to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>454</sup> The opening ceremony took place on 2 June 2023. The *Sèvitè Houngan* (Voodoo priest) Jean-Daniel Lafontant from Haití performed the Voodoo ritual, *Haus der Kulturen der Welt*, "Invoking Papa Legba," https://www.hkw.de/programme/o-quilombismo-acts-of-opening/invoking-papa-legba#main. My review of this exhibition can be found in the blog of *Rethinking Conceptualism*: Katerina Valdivia Bruch, "Acts of Decontextualising Again: On the Risks of Auto-Exoticism in "O Quilombismo" at House of World Cultures," *Rethinking Conceptualism* blog, July 21, 2023, https://rethinkingconceptualism.tumblr.com/post/726360898401452032/acts-of-decontextualising-again-on-the-risks-of.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>455</sup> Hal Foster, "The Artist as Ethnographer?," in *The Traffic in Culture: Refiguring Art and Anthropology*, eds. George E. Marcus and Fred R. Myrs (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995): 302-309; and Hal Foster, *The Return of the Real: The Avant-Garde at the End of the Century* (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 1996), 171-203.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>456</sup> Hal Foster, *The Return of the Real*, 173.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>457</sup> Ibid., 202.

dramatise and create fictions about the social reality of the country, which in turn are adapted to fit within the market's hunger for supposed "critical works." This curatorial strategy has been applied to be included in the institutional framework and the discursive trends coming from the international art circuit. In Europe, the formula of inserting the so-called "margins" in the global art world assumes the curators' proposals as facts, repeating what they said without reviewing the sources or contextualising the artworks. In addition to this, the current ethical turn in the arts and the discourse on identity politics tend to look at the past from today's perspective. This situation runs the risk of compromising the works, by decontextualising and reinterpreting the original artistic practices. 458

I believe one cannot change the past, but we can intervene in the present to shape a better future. In fact, the past should allow us to reflect and learn to avoid repeating the same mistakes. To reinvent (art) history and modify artworks for curatorial purposes shall be open to debate. This situation reveals that there should be an ethical turn in curating as well. Adapting the works to personal needs and position of power in the arts leave the artists without their original voices. At the same time, it presents new versions of a story they may not have wanted to tell.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>458</sup> For instance, by trying to correct them or erase injustice. An example of this are the new outsourcing departments established in museums, which are asked to review the names of artworks that may contain discriminating words or are not inclusive enough; or the decision to refrain from exhibiting certain works, for considering that they may offend certain groups of people. A widely mediated example was the censorship of the painting by Dana Schutz "Open Casket," based on a photograph of Emmett Till, which was presented at the Whitney Biennial in 2017. The work was asked for removal claiming, among others, that a white artist cannot portray the pain of the African-American community. I share the view by Coco Fusco in this article: Coco Fusco, "Censorship, Not the Painting Must Go: On Dana Schutz's Image of Emmett Till," *Hyperallergic*, March 27, 2017,

https://hyperallergic.com/368290/censorship-not-the-painting-must-go-on-dana-schutzs-image-of-emmett-till/. On the current lack of freedom and self-censorship in the arts, see: Hanno Rauterberg, *Wie frei ist die Kunst? Der neue Kulturkampf und die Krise des Liberalismus*. Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2019.

# 4. Final Conclusions

This dissertation addressed two areas of study: art history and curating. In the first chapter, I have examined examples of the communication strategies and the cultural policies during Velasco Alvarado's government (1968-1975). I centred my attention on the social aspect of art, establishing a connection between the Peruvian context and what was taking place in the cultural field in the Latin American subcontinent. Although Velasco Alvarado's cultural policies understood art as a collaborative and participatory practice, aiming for social integration; they were not without controversy. Indeed, these paradoxes are the ones that shall get attention. They brought to the fore the existing conflicts within the arts environment, its lack of inclusion, and the different understandings of art of the period. At the same time, they pushed the art scene to reconsider the foundations on which the art system was based. Despite their contradictions, they are worthy of being reflected today. They questioned topics that are still unresolved and need to be examined. For instance, the current need for outsourcing departments in museums, overseeing that inclusion and diversity are respected. Similar issues were discussed during Velasco Alvarado's administration, in the hope of integrating all Peruvians in cultural and educational matters. Nowadays, there is a return to focusing on local contexts, paying attention to local cultural productions, and the inclusion of art produced by indigenous artists as part of contemporary art exhibitions. The purpose of the theoretical part was to present these overlooked debates, which remain highly relevant today.

While the artists in Lima were aware of what was happening in other latitudes, the Latin Americanist perspective of the period has been barely mentioned by Peruvian curators. By opening to the whole Latin American region, one can get a better picture. The social turn in the arts, the focus on the artistic productions and *lo popular*, the networks of solidarity, the anti-imperialist and anti-colonial tenor were among the subjects of the art discourse in the decades of the 1960s and 1970s in Latin America. Moreover, the inclusion of *lo popular* within the artistic practice was not unique to the Peruvian context. It was a common feature in the work of several Latin American visual artists of that time. The Latin Americanist perspective, as well as

the networks among Latin American artists were also exemplified in the field of music. During Velasco Alvarado's government, there were exchanges and collaborations between Peruvian and Chilean musicians, such as Celso Garrido-Lecca and Víctor Jara through the *canto nuevo*; or among the folk rock groups *El Polen*, from Peru, and *Los Jaivas*, from Chile. Also from Chile was cultural theorist Miguel Rojas Mix, who visited Peru in 1972. His visit might have exerted influence on the visual art scene and the government's cultural policies. In addition to this, three influential Brazilian intellectuals came to Peru in this period, Darcy Ribeiro, Augusto Boal and Paulo Freire, who contributed to the education policies of the military government.

The already established networks of *Arte Nuevo* with Argentina, as well as Hastings's connection to the art scene in Europe (Paris, London and Brussels) and the Argentine group CAyC, showed that the artists in Lima related to other art latitudes, which might have affected their practice. Other exchanges or collaborations between Peruvian and other Latin American artists could be a topic for further research. Given the fact that the military government opened diplomatic relations with Eastern European countries and the socialist bloc, it would be worth examining the artistic networks established with these countries in this period. Regarding exchanges and collaborations between Central European and Latin American artists, an interesting study is the one by Katarzyna Cytlak, who examined Joseph Beuys's appropriations and the influence of Argentine artists in his work. Notably, Nicolás García Uriburu and his approach on ecology. 459 I imagine there are other similar situations that question the Eurocentric art canon, which have not been explored in depth yet.

In the second chapter, I have analysed examples of essays and exhibitions by Peruvian curators, who have created a new history about Velasco Alvarado's regime and the experimental art scene of this period, which differs from the original

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>459</sup> Katarzyna Cytlak, "La rivoluzione siamo noi: Latin American Artists in Critical Dialogue with Joseph Beuys," *Third Text*, vol. 30, no. 5-6 (2016): 346-367. The essay can be found in the blog of *Rethinking Conceptualism*:

https://rethinkingconceptualism.tumblr.com/post/716310120949334016/although-things-have-been-changing-in-the-last.

historical circumstances. Taking the Peruvian case as an example, I have examined how a group of Peruvian curators have been conducting historiographic research, questioning their lack of historicity. While history has always been re-written, in the case I have examined it has been deliberately manipulated: either to be in tune with the current international art discourse, or to enter within the Latin American conceptualist canon proposed by the RedCSur. Concerning the international art discourse, I have questioned the problems that may arise from generalisations, resulting from establishing canons. This included a comment on how art historical research is conducted today, by taking the latest accounts as facts. This form of research does neither pay attention to the social, economic and political circumstances of a particular period in history, nor understands the complexity of a government such as Velasco Alvarado's.

Regarding the agenda for future investigations, as the regional perspective is still understudied, I consider that there are still many avenues to discover regarding the impact of Velasco Alvarado's cultural policies in the regions. As exemplified in the magazine *Chaski*. *Semanario de los pueblos jóvenes*, a group of artists and intellectuals were involved in community-based activities. While they encouraged creativity and self-expression; they explored other means of popular communication. Another research could be about other publications produced during the military government. For instance, the publications of the Instituto Nacional de Cultura (INC) and the Ministry of Education; as well as the magazines *Participación* and *Sinamos informa*. In addition to this, a study on the artists' contributions to the education policies and the different programmes on art education developed in this period deserve more attention. Most studies about this area have been done in the field of education and social sciences, and less in the disciplines of visual arts and art history.

A topic that caught my attention during my research were the collaborations among artists from different disciplines. For instance, Francesco Mariotti contributed some silkscreen and woodcut prints to the novel *Las tres mitades de Ino Moxo y otros brujos amazónicos* (Three Halves of Ino Moxo: Teachings of the Wizard of the Upper

Amazon) by César Calvo, published in 1981. They both were involved in the organisation of the festival *Hatariy* in Cusco in 1972. Calvo was not only a prolific writer, but he also composed song lyrics for the singer and songwriter Chabuca Granda. Another example is that of the musician Manongo Mujica, who worked with Rafael Hastings on several occasions, creating incidental music for his videos. I am sure there were other fruitful collaborations in that period, yet to be explored. While the presence of women in the field of poetry was strong in the 1970s, it would be worth analysing the contributions by women scholars to Peruvian art history. In my study, I have found that most of the art critics were men. However, a closer look at publications of the period may give us more information on the presence of women, who contributed to theorising about Peruvian art.

In this study, I have mentioned that there was a Latin Americanist perspective in the arts in the 1970s and 1980s. Although I did not examine it in detail and briefly pointed out the existing networks among Latin American artists and scholars, it is a topic I explored throughout the development of the programme of *Rethinking Conceptualism...*. Currently, Mijail Mitrovic is researching the social theory of art in Latin America in the 1970s and 1980s. His thorough analysis of the art scene in Lima has informed part of my research. These and other conversations I had with art scholars (Alfonso Castrillón Vizcarra) and artists (Francesco Mariotti, Emilio Hernández Saavedra, Mario Acha, and Ciro Palacios), who were active in the period of my study, reinforced my initial assumptions and provided me with valuable information. They also confirmed that the path I was taking was going in the right direction. I am glad to have had the opportunity to exchange some ideas with them.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>460</sup> Essays on his ongoing research include: Mijail Mitrovic Pease, "Passages of a Marxist Critique of Art in Peru: From Artworks to Plastic Objects (1976–82)," Historical Materialism 31, 1 (2023): 122-158, https://doi.org/10.1163/1569206x-20232095; and Mijail Mitrovic, "Between Two Latin Americanisms: The Social Theory of Art (1975–86)," *e-flux*, issue no. 37, June 2023, https://www.e-flux.com/journal/137/545116/between-two-latin-americanisms-the-social-theory-of-art-1975-86/.

# Annexe: Rethinking Conceptualism: Avant-Garde, Activism and Politics in Latin American Art (1960s-1980s)

# 1. Concept

Between the 1960s and 1980s, several Latin American countries were under military rule. At that time, there was a wave of mass awakening, a surge of social awareness in Latin America calling for more social justice, influenced mainly by the Cuban Revolution (1953-1959), amongst other socialist initiatives. At the same time, there was a need to find new ways to maintain local economies without accepting the monopoly and profit of international enterprises. In this context, socialist ideas spread across the hemisphere, primarily focused against US imperialism.

This political upheaval created a sense of unity among many Latin American countries. And, even though these states had different levels of foreign intervention and diverse social and cultural developments, they were unified by a social element: the fight for social justice and longing for change was understood as something relevant to the whole subcontinent. The common spirit of correspondence and internationalism, arising from this sociopolitical context, paved the way for the establishment of several networks for solidarity and protest.

Under these conditions, a number of artists across Latin America turned to art as a tool for demonstration, aiming to foster social change. During this period, some artists and critics also looked for ways to describe this artistic production, identifying aspects they considered characteristic of the Latin American subcontinent.

Within this framework, the symposium on conceptual art from Latin America *Rethinking Conceptualism: Avant-Garde, Activism and Politics in Latin American Art* (1960s-1980s) presents an overview of conceptual art practices in Latin America from the 1960s to the 1980s, showing its characteristics and particularities that set it apart from the mainstream conceptualist art canon in Europe and the United States. One of

the aims of this event is to spread awareness of this lesser-known moment in art

history in Germany, showing how Latin American artists explored the potential of

art, politics, and the avant-garde.

Additionally, the project strives to make visible the links between Latin America and

Germany, by showing the work of the protagonists of that period and their ties to

Germany, and by presenting an exhibition of works by Latin American artists living

in Berlin, who depict their view of Latin America from the diaspora.

Katerina Valdivia Bruch

Artistic director and curator

**Symposium:** 10, 11, 12, 17, 18, 19, 24, 25 March 2021<sup>461</sup>

**Exhibition:** 2 - 9 June 2021<sup>462</sup>

Collaborating institutions: Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut, Instituto Cervantes Berlin

(2020-2021)

Funded by: Hauptstadtkulturfonds, Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (2020-2021)

With the support of: Embassy of Uruguay in Germany, Embassy of Chile in

Germany (2020-2021)

Online presence:

Web: https://rethinkingconceptualism.com/

Blog: https://rethinkingconceptualism.tumblr.com/

Podcast: Spotify "Rethinking Conceptualism"

YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/c/rethinkingconceptualism

<sup>461</sup> Original dates of the symposium before the COVID-19 pandemic: 27-28 April 2020.

<sup>462</sup> Original dates of the exhibition before the COVID-19 pandemic: 28 April-3 May 2020.

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# 1.1. Symposium Rethinking Conceptualism: Avant-Garde, Activism and Politics in Latin American Art (1960s-1980s)

The symposium was composed of previously recorded lectures, which are available on *Rethinking Conceptualism*'s YouTube channel.

The Q & A sessions with the speakers were held in eight online sessions between 10 March and 25 March 2021. The sessions were in English (with simultaneous interpretation into English for the sessions that took place in Spanish). The symposium was organised in collaboration with the Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut.

## **Speakers:**

Luis Camnitzer, artist and theorist, New York

**Ana Longoni**, art historian and curator, Director of Public Activities, Museo Reina Sofía, Madrid

**Gerardo Mosquera**, independent curator and art critic, La Habana/Madrid **Lisette Lagnado**, curator and author, co-curator 11th Berlin Biennale, São Paulo/Berlin

**Joaquín Barriendos**, curator and researcher, Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, UNAM, Mexico City

**Cecilia Fajardo-Hill**, art historian and independent curator, Southern California **Víctor Vich**, researcher and author, Full Professor, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú and Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes, Lima

**Claudia Calirman**, art historian and independent curator, Associate Professor of Art History at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, New York

Emilio Tarazona, independent curator, Lima/Bogotá

Vania Markarian historian, Archivo General de la Universidad de la República, Montevideo (her lecture and essay were done in collaboration with Julio Cabrio)

María Mercedes Herrera Buitrago, art historian and independent curator, Bogotá

Óscar Ardila Luna, art historian and independent curator, Berlin

**Fernanda Carvajal**, sociologist and researcher, Member of the Red Conceptualismos del Sur, Santiago de Chile/Buenos Aires

Jorge Lopera, independent researcher and curator, Medellín/Mexico City

#### Discussion Third Cinema and Internationalism

Online 25 March, 18:00 (GMT +1)

The term "Third Cinema" was coined by Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino, key figures of the Argentine political filmmaking movement Grupo Cine Liberación (The Liberation Film Group). In 1969 they published the essay "Hacia un Tercer cine" (Towards a Third Cinema) in the magazine Tricontinental (a periodical founded by the Organisation of Solidarity with the People of Asia, Africa and Latin America), which went on to become one of the best-known manifestos of the movement.

Understood as a type of cinema which aimed for political and cultural decolonisation, it clearly differentiated itself from First Cinema (Hollywood) and Second Cinema (European cinema d'auteur) during the 1960s and 1970s. It did so, for instance, by eliminating the separation between art and life, by adopting a rough aesthetic style, or by addressing social injustice and class relations with a clear anti-imperialist message.

Influenced by Marxist, Third Worldist theories and the work by authors such as Frantz Fanon, the movement questioned power structures, both in filmmaking and society. Additionally, it challenged neo-colonialism and colonialism and the consequent loss of cultural independence, giving a voice to oppressed communities and their social struggles.

Third Cinema became popular in the 1960s and 1970s among socially and politically engaged filmmakers in Latin America, Asia and Africa. The movement developed concurrently with the emergence of 'New Latin American Cinema' and the establishment of the Pan African Federation of Filmmakers (FEPACI). It is worth mentioning that Third Cinema filmmakers were in close dialogue with like-minded

filmmakers, critics, and institutions in First World countries.

The discussion *Third Cinema and Internationalism* presents different internationalist strategies in Third Cinema, such as networks of collaboration and exchange, the distribution of archives and films, meetings, festivals, and screenings.

The event was held in Spanish.

#### A discussion with:

Mariano Mestman, researcher in cultural history, CONICET-UBA, Buenos Aires Cecilia Lacruz, film researcher, Grupo de Estudios Audiovisuales, GEstA-UdelaR, Montevideo

**Miguel Errazu**, film researcher, postdoctoral researcher, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, Lerma, Mexico

**Moderator: Peter B. Schumann**, journalist, specialised in Latin American topics (radio, television, publications) and author of the book "Historia del cine latinoamericano" (Buenos Aires, 1987)

1.2. Exhibition Between Personal Chronicles and Collective Memory

Artists: María Linares, Daniela Lehmann Carrasco, Ana María Millán, Yoel Díaz

Vázquez

Curated by Katerina Valdivia Bruch

Opening: 2 June 2021, 19:00 h. Exhibition: 2 to 9 June 2021

Address: Instituto Cervantes Berlin, Rosenstraße 14, 10178 Berlin

**Curatorial text:** 

What do we remember? Are memories a reconstruction of the real? Are they built

upon real facts or merely fictional stories? Is it possible to create a historiography

based on personal narratives?

The exhibition Between Personal Chronicles and Collective Memory acknowledges the

ephemerality of memories, examining their veracity as well as their inaccuracies and

ambiguities. One of the ideas of the show is to portray different methods, such as

collecting material, tracing paths, recording, or reproducing oral histories, and

address the importance of personal experiences in the (re)construction of an event. It

also considers the recollection of multiple memories as valuable material for

rewriting a history that has not been recorded by the official narratives. In this way,

it brings to light personal stories that have generally remained unnoticed.

Between Personal Chronicles and Collective Memory focuses on oral history and the

production of knowledge transmitted verbally over generations. It reflects on the

circulation of memories and how these are kept alive through orality. Part of the

process is the creation of a collective memory, often marked by experiences of

resistance, violence, or traumatic situations.

**Exhibited works:** 

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#### María Linares, RENOMBREMOS EL 12 DE OCTUBRE



Figure 60. RENOMBREMOS EL 12 DE OCTUBRE, 2019. Photo: © María Linares.

What is celebrated on 12th October in Colombia? There is no such thing as "race"! Colombian artist María Linares seeks to change the name of Day of Race (Día de la raza). For more than a century, Columbus Day (in Colombia "Day of Race") has been celebrated in Colombia, as in many other Latin American countries, to commemorate the supposed "discovery" of the American continent. However, since the 1990s, the existence of "races" has been questioned as much as the idea of a discovery, and this name has been changed in some Latin American countries, but not yet in Colombia.

With this background in mind, María Linares initiated an artistic project in 2019, that seeks to give a new name to Columbus Day in Colombia through a participatory process. The artist argues that we can no longer speak about "races," because it has been scientifically proven that "races" do not exist and because the term implies discrimination. She has also created a database where people can make suggestions for new names, give 'likes' to existing proposals or sign a petition under this link: www.renombremosel12deoctubre.org

On view during the exhibition: a video projection, a book, and a participatory online database with a petition.

# Artist biography:

**María Linares** is a Colombian artist, who has lived in Germany since 1996. She is currently writing her PhD in Art at the Bauhaus University in Weimar, under the title *On the Utopia of a Society without Prejudices*. Her fields of work include art in the public space and participatory art practices. Among her work topics are issues on prejudices, racism, and the question of identity. María Linares was co-initiator of the Citizen Art Days and the daily services artists' collective.

http://www.marialinares.com/

### Daniela Lehmann Carrasco Le Glück Quantitativ II, 2021



Figure 61. Le Glück Quantitativ, 2010. Video Still: © Daniela Lehmann Carrasco.



Figure 62. Círculo, 2021. Video Still: © Daniela Lehmann Carrasco.

Le Glück Quantitativ II (2021) consists of a two-channel video projection. The first video is from 2010 and is part of the mixed media installation Le Glück Quantitativ. The video is an assembly of found footage of documentaries taken from the internet and films d'auteur, from Chile and from the German Federal Republic in the

1970s-1980s – among them *La Batalla de Chile*, a trilogy of documentaries by Patricio Guzmán, released between 1975 and 1979, and the documentary series by different German film directors *Deutschland im Herbst* (1977-1978) –, as well as recorded film material by the artist.

Le Glück Quantitativ connects iconographic fragments of memories from the former Federal Republic of Germany and Chile, with personal memory images of the artist during the 1970s, intertwining the collective memory and the subjective process of remembering. The artist herself left Chile with her family to live in Germany when she was a child.

The second video, *Círculo* (Circle) (2021), uses the same technique of borrowing found footage from the internet. In this case, the montage consists of actual footage from news broadcasts, internet channels and private recordings of demonstrations, political actions, street fights and gatherings of the Chilean civil movement that took place in Chile in 2019 and 2020, as well as recordings by the artist, who witnessed the demonstrations in early 2020.

The mixed media installation *Le Glück Quantitativ II* puts the two videos in a dialogue. With this, she reflects on Chile's history during Pinochet's dictatorship connecting it with the present moment, through the social movements against social inequality, colonial power structures, state repression, corruption and violence in Chile that continue to the present day.

# Artist biography:

**Daniela Lehmann Carrasco** was born in Santiago de Chile and came with her family to Frankfurt am Main in 1974. She studied Art History and Philosophy at the Johann-Wolfgang-von-Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main and Film and Art at the University of Fine Arts in Hamburg. Since 2007, she has lived and worked in Berlin. As part of her practice, she researches topics regarding collective memory and individual remembrance processes. She critically challenges identity constructions

and the official narrative within medial and/or postcolonial power structures. Among her works are video and mixed media installations, video screenings in public spaces, public interventions, and walks. Since 2014 she is working on a long-term auto ethnographic project about the involuntary circular migration history of her German Jewish and Chilean family, from Berlin to Santiago de Chile and back.





Figures 63-64. *Elevación*, 2019. Video Stills: © Ana María Millán.

A two-headed, anthropomorphic bull; a woman who literally turns the world upside down; a blue ghost that becomes an arrow; a boulder with eyes leading a debris avalanche breaking into the valley, whereupon a pink enchantress turns the stones into pink clouds. In Ana María Millán's *Elevación* (Elevation), very different beings appear, whose interactions with each other form a loose, myth-like narrative.

The individual characters do not seem to come from the same world, similar to characters from different (gaming) universes in computer games, or when players create their own avatars and roam together through artificial online worlds. A preform of online role-playing games are LARP, live-action role-plays, which still enjoy great popularity today. For *Elevación*, Millán first had participants in a workshop at the Museo de Arte Moderno de Bogotá, Colombia, design their own avatars and then develop stories with them in a LARP. Only then did she create the animations and the video, for which she digitally re-enacted and interpreted the collaborative, improvised narrative.

The special thing about LARP is that each character has its own agency, i.e., acts independently of a dramaturgy and makes its own free decisions. This results less in a self-contained narrative than in a complex dynamic of different narrative voices. Similarly, myths and sagas can also be understood as stories formed by many, even if the narrative takes place in a succession rather than a coexistence. The resulting refractions and contradictions give them a mysticism, an undertow of their own.

According to Millán, in her work, narrative forms are negotiated, which are generally regarded as dysfunctional – plot lines run into nothing, figures disappear and reappear, symbols remain ambivalent. This aesthetic of the dysfunctional is reinforced by the amateurish, hands-on animation with its numerous references to pop, internet, and gaming culture. Colourful landscapes with drug plant flora, untouched 3D nature, and the soothing ambient soundtrack let the audience participate in the escapism inherent in gaming worlds. In contrast, a comic strip on the history of the FARC and its role in the armed conflict in Colombia from 1964 to 2017 served as the starting point for the collaborative development process of Elevación. The alleged escapism is thus juxtaposed with very real Colombian social issues. The ambivalence – on the one hand, violence, and exclusion, on the other hand, departure and utopia – is not resolved until the end. We remain in the loop of a constant process of transformation (text by Julius Vapiano).

Technical data:

Elevación, 2019

Animation, 16:9, 4k colour, sound, 00:10:12

Participants: Christian Arias, Nicolh Avila Vega, Sandra Martínez, Sebastián Mira, Angélica Rodríguez Jacquin, Wilmer Rodríguez, Mayra Natalia Rubiano, Ana García Santana, Paola Sanz, Clara Unigarro, Laura Wiesner

Choreography and Mocab: Jennyfer Caro

Animation: Andrés Sandoval Alba

Sound design: Jaime Carvajal

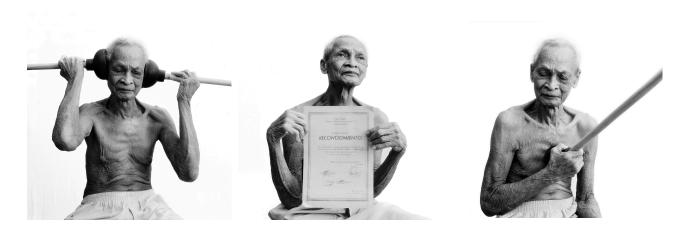
Music: Diego Cuéllar

# Artist biography:

Ana María Millán (\*1975, Cali, Colombia). Her work addresses the politics of animation in relation to digital cultures and subcultures, gender, and propaganda. She has developed techniques based on role playing, re-enactment and ideas about animation as methodology to make a series of plays that end in the form of narrative films. It speaks from amateur cultures, pop political culture, sound territories and technology, incorporating the possibilities and mistakes of the rehearsals, and narrative forms considered dysfunctional. Millán's work has been shown at the *Art* Encounters Biennial, Timișoara, Romania 2019; Witte de With (solo exhibition), Rotterdam 2018; Le bruit des choses qui tombent, FRAC Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur, Marseille 2017; Immortality for All, Savvy Contemporary, Berlin 2016; Frío en Colombia, Luis Caballero Prize (solo exhibition), Archivo General de la Nación, Bogotá 2015; Nido o Átomo. He Aquí la Estrella, Die Ecke Arte Contemporáneo, Santiago de Chile 2015; Mutis Mutare, Matadero, Madrid 2015; Video Sector, Miami Art Basel, Miami 2014; Ir para Volver, 12 Bienal de Cuenca, Cuenca 2014; ¿Tierra de Nadie?, Centro Cultural Montehermoso, Vitoria-Gasteiz 2011; AUTO-KINO!, presented by Phil Collins, Temporäre Kunsthalle, Berlin 2009; Historias Colaterales, Centro Cultural de España, Guatemala 2008; I Still Believe in Miracles - Part I, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, 2005. Ana María Millán is one of the co-founders of the artist

collective Helena Producciones and since 1998 she co-curates the Festival de Performance de Cali with the collective. She lives and works in Cali and Berlin. http://anamariamillan.info/

### Yoel Díaz Vázquez, San Felipe, 2005-2018



Figures 65-67. Images of the photography series *San Felipe*, 2005-2018, b/w UV print, Hahnemühle Fine Art Print, 70 x 70 cm. Photos: © Yoel Díaz Vázquez.

In regard to this particular photography project, I asked my grandfather Felipe Vázquez if I could take his picture interacting with two very distinctive objects from his life: An achievement award (certificate of recognition), for his remarkable years of service, and a plunger. My grandfather's relationship with this award was one of pride and resignation through years of hard work. However, his relationship with the plunger was an uncomfortable and introspective one. It is important to mention that he'd turned 80 by the time these pictures were taken. He suffered from an injured hip because of a work accident, and he was almost blind and therefore dependent on his daughters and grandchildren. Although his body had changed, his mind didn't as he continued to be a *fidelista* up until his death.

It was important for me to place my grandfather in this dilemma, through the metaphorical insinuation of these constructed photographs: The discrepancies of the politics of the leader he faithfully supported. The storyteller (the person who documents) is in a position of power as he selects, narrates, and leaves to posterity

what's to be remembered. I personally make use of this power through the images that construct these fictitious photographs, in relation to what the body of my grandfather represents and his social identity. This work honours his humanity and does not propose a propagandist triumph, topical of the ideology he believed in. I am presenting a human, revealing him nude, the wrinkles of his body, his gesticulations, and expressions (text by Yoel Díaz Vázquez).

Three photographs of this series will be presented during the exhibition.

#### Artist biography:

Yoel Díaz Vázquez (\* 1973 in Havana, Cuba) is an artist whose work has been shown in many international exhibitions worldwide, currently living, and working in Berlin, Germany. He holds a diploma in fine arts from the San Alejandro Academy of Fine Arts, Havana, Cuba. Among the group shows are Wespe und Orchidee, Museu Casa das Onze Janelas, Belém do Pará, Brazil (2016/17); MED 15: International Art Encounter of Medellín, Museo de Antioquia, Medellín, Colombia (2015); Sans Serif, Kesselhaus, Berlin, Germany (2014); Wahala, Savvy Contemporary, Berlin (2012); In Other's Words, nGbK and Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin (2012); SITAC X, Mexico City, Mexico (2012); Other Possible Worlds, nGbK, Berlin (2011); 29th Sao Paulo Biennial, Brazil (2010); After the Light II, Radialsystem, Berlin (2010); Las Américas Latinas, Spazio Oberdan, Milan, Italy (2009); Confluencias, National Hispanic Cultural Center, Albuquerque, NM, USA (2009); 9na Bienal de Video Juan Downey, MAC, Quinta Normal, Chile (2009); Arboleda, el cuerpo es cuerpo, Gallery Jesús Gallardo, León, Mexico (2008); Arte e Vita, 11th international artists' symposium, Barth, Germany (2007); Heartbeat, Sternesen Museum, Oslo, Norway (2006); Input, Kunsthaus Essen, Germany (2005).

https://yoeldiazvazquez.com/

#### Additional programme: Workshops on the Creation of Memories<sup>463</sup>

Based on their artistic practice, the artists María Linares, Daniela Lehmann Carrasco and Yoel Díaz Vázquez will give workshops in which they will share their methods used in the creation of memories. The workshops were coordinated by Katerina Valdivia Bruch.

#### Workshop 1: Discrimination and Language

# With María Linares (online, 30 September 2021)

The aim of this workshop is to investigate and question the normality of discrimination processes prevailing in everyday life, happening mainly through language.

The participants are invited to reflect on their own experiences of discrimination from an awareness-raising exercise of the German Anti-Bias-Werkstatt (Anti-Prejudice Workshop). Based on this, we will compile expressions that imply discrimination and focus on those that reveal a historical burden, and then look for options on how to deconstruct them through a playful process.

Limited number of spaces available. Registrations via Eventbrite.

#### Workshop 2: Autoethnographic Walk

#### With Daniela Lehmann Carrasco (in Berlin, 5 June 2021)

The workshop will be about the creation of an autoethnographic archive and the visibility of (personal) stories and memories in the public space.

As a starting point, the artist will give a short introduction on topics related to the disappearance of traces of historic and/or autobiographical incidents in the public space, mainly in architecture, and will show possible ways to make them visible again. Afterwards, the participants and the artist will do a walk around the "Scheunenviertel" (Barn Quarter). Back at Instituto Cervantes, the group will share their experiences and work on the creation of a collective map.

This workshop is based on the long-term autoethnographic project Andreasstrasse

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>463</sup> Before the pandemic, all the workshops were programmed to take place on 27 March 2021 (from 11:00 to 14:00 h).

5/Kleine Andreasstrasse 11, which is about the involuntary circular emigration history of the German Jewish and Chilean family of the artist, from Berlin to Santiago de Chile and back.

The participants will have to think about a particular place in their own history (in Berlin or elsewhere), which is meaningful to their personal history.

The workshop will take place open air and will be held in German, English and/or Spanish.

Limited number of spaces available. Registration required.

The workshops will take place from 11:00 to 14:00 h.

Meeting space: Instituto Cervantes Berlin

Rosenstraße 18, 10178 Berlin

# **Workshop 3: The Objects of my Memories**

### With Yoel Díaz Vázquez (online, 28 October 2021)

The aim of this workshop is to stimulate individual narration on the visual imagery of our social and political context, through the objects and subjects of our personal memory.

Participants are invited to examine ways on how we might be able to question the facts that underpin the official narrative, based on an artistic practice that visually trespasses the personal history implicit in the object of our memory.

Based on exercises of interaction and participation, we will analyse the objects that generate relevant dichotomies (for example: private and public, Western and Non-Western) to proceed to the symbolic creation of new readings.

For the workshop, the participants have to bring objects that have a personal meaning to them, in relation to a historical, social or political topic they would like to work with.

Limited number of spaces available. Registrations via Eventbrite.

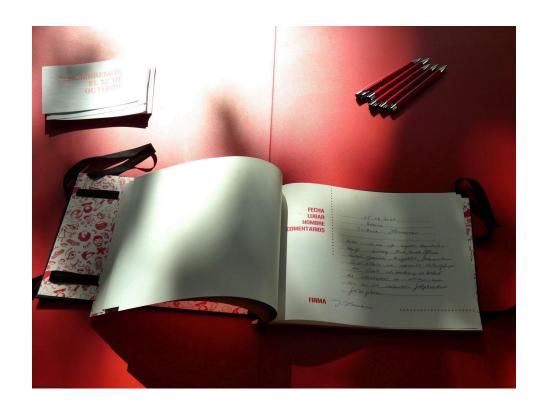
# Exhibition views of Between Personal Chronicles and Collective Memory



Figure 68. Installation view of *Elevación*, by Ana María Millán. Photo: Katerina Valdivia Bruch.



Figure 69. The artist Ana María Millán (left), talking to an exhibition visitor in front of her work.
Photo: Katerina Valdivia Bruch.





Figures 70-71. Installation views of *RENOMBREMOS EL 12 DE OCTUBRE*, by María Linares. Photos: Katerina Valdivia Bruch.



Figure 72. Installation view of *RENOMBREMOS EL 12 DE OCTUBRE*, by María Linares. Photo: Katerina Valdivia Bruch.



Figure 73. Installation view of *San Felipe*, by Yoel Díaz Vázquez. Photo: Katerina Valdivia Bruch.



Figure 74. Installation view of *San Felipe*, by Yoel Díaz Vázquez. Photo: Katerina Valdivia Bruch.



Figure 75. Installation view of *Le Glück Quantitativ II*, by Daniela Lehmann Carrasco. Photo: Katerina Valdivia Bruch.

Workshop by Daniela Lehmann Carrasco, *Autoethnographic Walk*, held on 5 June 2021:





Figures 76-77. The artist Daniela Lehmann Carrasco (the one with a long light blue shirt) and the workshop participants during the artist's autoethnographic walk in Berlin.

Photos: Katerina Valdivia Bruch.

# 1.3. Online Programme and Online Resources

# **Blog \* Rethinking Conceptualism**

The blog serves as a resource on issues related to Latin American art, with articles, interviews, essays and videos, including material related to the participants of the project: https://rethinkingconceptualism.tumblr.com/

#### Online events

The online events were conceptualised and organised by Katerina Valdivia Bruch and took place in the form of reading sessions, discussions, and workshops. 464

For each one of the events, we provided a list with a link to download all the proposed reading materials. The online workshops and reading sessions were free of charge and were held in English, with simultaneous interpretation from German and Spanish into English, if needed. The sessions were announced on the project's website and shared through its social media channels (Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram). The registrations to participate in the programme were either via Email or Eventbrite. All the sessions were free of charge.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>464</sup> I began with the blog in March 2020 and it is still ongoing. The online programme was developed between May 2020 and November 2022.

I was in charge of the layout and design of the programme, the website, YouTube channel, podcast, blog and social media (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter). Otherwise noted, for all the images of the online programme: Layout and design: Katerina Valdivia Bruch.

# 1.3.1. Theoretical Workshops

Online Workshop: "Brazilian Art from 1960s to 1980s: An Aesthetics of the Margins," with Claudia Calirman

10 June 2020, 18:00 h (GMT+2) via Zoom

(original date: 29 April 2020 at Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut)

ONLINE WORKSHOP | TALLER EN LÍNEA

"Brazilian Art from 1960s

to 1980s: An Aesthetics

of the Margins"

With Claudia Calirman

10 June 2020 18:00 h (GMT + 2, Berlin time)



This workshop explores the period from the late 1960s through the 1980s, in which prominent Brazilian artists claimed that their work existed at the margins of society, both apart and alienated from the conservative social order, taking up the term "marginália" or marginality. To position oneself as a marginal was an active strategy, rather than a passive position. These artists proposed an alternative strategy to hegemonic artistic modes of production. They were influenced by the "Tropicália" movement, which merged the modern and the archaic, national elements and international trends. These novel practices transcended traditional mediums, eschewing the finished work of art in favour of actions, interventions, and propositions.

Under this link you will find the texts we are going to discuss during the workshop: https://tinyurl.com/ycclbs57

CLAUDIA CALIRMAN is Associate Professor at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, New York, in the Department of Art and Music. Her areas of study are Latin American, modern, and contemporary art. She is the author of "Brazilian Art under Dictatorship: Antonio Manuel, Artur Barrio, and Cildo Meireles" (Duke University Press, 2012), which analyses the intersection of politics and the visual arts during the most repressive years of Brazil's military regime, from 1968 until 1975. The book received the 2013 Arvey Award by the Association for Latin American Art. Calirman is a 2013 recipient of the Arts Writers Grant from Creative Capital/Warhol Foundation and was the 2008-2009 Jorge Paulo Lemann Visiting Scholar at the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies at Harvard University. She is a member of the International Association of Art Critics (AICA). Calirman has curated several exhibitions in New York, including "Berna Reale: While You Laugh" (Nara Roesler Gallery, NY, 2019); "Basta! Art and Violence in Latin America" (John Jay College, 2016); and "Antonio Manuel: I Want to Act, not Represent!" (Americas Society, 2011).

Online Workshop "Curating Dematerialisation: The Archivo Juan Acha as Curatorial Object," with Joaquín Barriendos

**8 July 2020, 18:00 h (GMT +2, Berlin time) via Zoom** (original date: 29 April 2020 at Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut)

"Curating Dematerialisation:
The Archivo Juan Acha as
Curatorial Object"

With Joaquín Barriendos

8 July 2020 18:00 h (GMT + 2, Berlin time)



The aim of the workshop is to discuss the forms of circulation and exhibition of documents/objects related to Latin American conceptualist art and non-objectual art of the 1960s and 1970s. For this, we will take as a starting point the exhibition "Juan Acha. Revolutionary Awakening", which was exhibited at the University Museum of Contemporary Art of Mexico (MUAC) in 2017. In addition to reviewing the category 'dematerialisation', we will consider the usefulness of other concepts such as 'artistic documentation' and 'site-specific document'. From these, we will talk about the division between work and document and reflect on what is at stake when we are preserving, rebuilding, or exhibiting non-objectual art.

Under this link you will find the texts we are going to discuss during the workshop: https://tinyurl.com/yar9zqoe

JOAQUÍN BARRIENDOS is Associate Professor at UNAM (National Autonomous University of Mexico). He writes on the intersection of Latin American art and modernist aesthetic cosmopolitanism. He is the author of various books, including "Archivos fuera de lugar" (2017), "Juan Acha. Revolutionary Awakening" (2017), "Art Geography and the Global Challenge of Critical Thinking" (2011), and "Geoestética y transculturalidad" (2007).

# 1.3.2. Online Reading Sessions

From May 2020 to November 2022, I organised a series of online reading sessions on a regular basis, usually one session per month. The aim of the sessions was to discuss different theories on Latin American conceptualism, as well as to reconsider certain terminologies and assumptions on Latin American art.

The sessions, some of them with invited guests, were coordinated, conceptualised, and moderated by Katerina Valdivia Bruch with selected texts regarding some of the topics that were addressed during the symposium and beyond it. In these sessions, the participants worked together on the proposed texts.

Online Reading Session #1 28 May 2020, 18:00 h (GMT +2) via Zoom



In this online reading session, we are going to discuss together the introduction and the first two chapters of Luis Camnitzer's book "Conceptualism in Latin American Art: Didactics of Liberation" (University of Texas Press, 2007).

Link to access the texts: https://tinyurl.com/y44dz5n5

Summary of the book:

Conceptualism played a different role in Latin American art during the 1960s and 1970s than in Europe and the United States, where conceptualist artists predominantly sought to challenge the primacy of the art object and art institutions, as well as the commercialization of art. Latin American artists turned to conceptualism as a vehicle for radically questioning the very nature of art itself, as well as art's role in responding to societal needs and crises in conjunction with politics, poetry, and pedagogy. Because of this distinctive agenda, Latin American conceptualism must be viewed and understood, not as a derivative of Euroamerican models.

In this book, one of Latin America's foremost conceptualist artists, Luis Camnitzer, offers a first-hand account of conceptualism in Latin American art. Placing the evolution of conceptualism within the history of Latin America, he explores conceptualism as a strategy, rather than a style, in Latin American culture. He shows how the roots of conceptualism reach back to the early nineteenth century in the work of Símon Rodríguez, Símon Bolívar's tutor. Camnitzer then follows conceptualism to the point where art crossed into politics, as with the Argentine group *Tucumán Arde* in 1968, and where politics crossed into art, as with the Tupamaro movement in Uruguay during the 1960s and early 1970s. Camnitzer concludes by investigating how, after 1970, conceptualist manifestations returned to the fold of more conventional art and describes some of the consequences that followed when art evolved from being a political tool to become what is known as "political art."

Introduction and moderation: Katerina Valdivia Bruch



In this session, we will discuss questions regarding Latin American art history, how it was written and by whom, archives and other resources.

#### Selection of texts:

- Andrea Giunta & George F. Flaherty "Latin American Art History: An Historiographic Turn", In: Art in Translation, volume 9, supplement 1, pp. 121-142, 2017
- Complementary reading material: introduction and chapter one of "Is Art History Global?," edited by James Elkins (2007)

Link to access the texts: https://tinyurl.com/yamkdkml

#### Abstract:

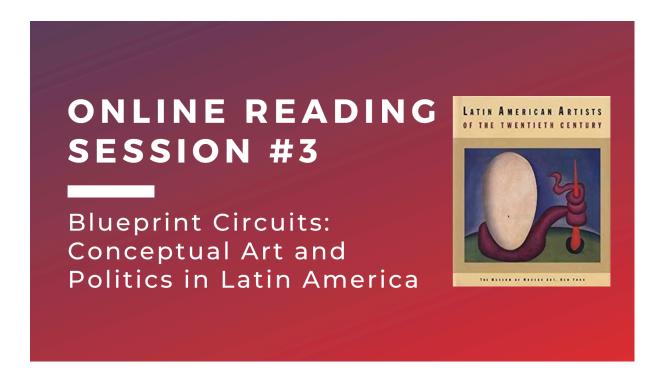
This text was written as part of a series of research seminars, organised in Colombia, Argentina, and Brazil, focused on Latin American and United States Latino art from 1960 to 1990. It challenges the dominant narrative of modernism that places Latin

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American and Latino art in the margins. The essay analyses the history of Latin American avant-garde and neo-vanguard art from a comparative perspective, focusing on topics such as transnational exchanges among artists and collectives, and the impact of political and economic change.

Introduction and moderation: Katerina Valdivia Bruch

Online Reading Session #3
30 July 2020, 18:00 h (GMT +2) via Zoom
Invited guest: Luis Camnitzer



In this session, we will discuss with Luis Camnitzer two essays by Mari Carmen Ramírez, which describe what she considers characteristic of conceptualism in Latin American art and speak about the need to rewrite its history. Camnitzer will comment on his own theory on conceptualism in Latin America and contrast it with the one proposed by Ramírez.

### Selection of texts:

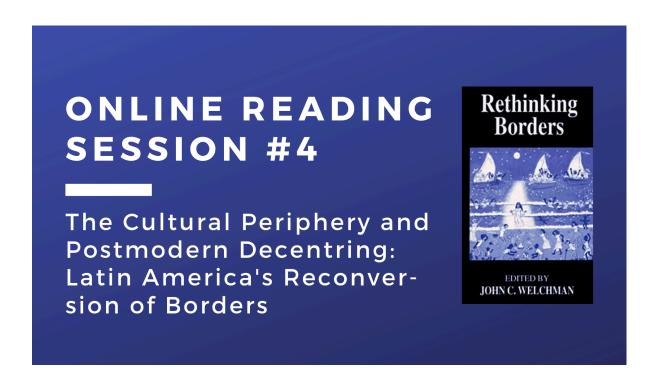
- Mari Carmen Ramírez "Blueprint Circuits: Conceptual Art and Politics in Latin

America," in: Rasmussen, Waldo (ed.) Latin American Artists of the Twentieth Century. Exhibition catalogue. New York: MoMA, 1993, pp. 156-169.

- Mari Carmen Ramírez, "Tactics for Thriving on Adversity: Conceptualism in Latin America," in: Global Conceptualism. Points of Origin, 1950s-1980s. Exhibition catalogue. New York: Queens Museum of Art, 1999, pp. 52-71.

Link to access the texts: https://tinyurl.com/ybvx6gt3

Mari Carmen Ramírez is the Wortham Curator of Latin American Art and founding Director of the International Center for the Arts of the Americas (ICAA) at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (2001-the present). Prior to that, she was curator of Latin American Art at the Jack S. Blanton Museum of Art and adjunct lecturer in the department of art and art history, both at The University of Texas at Austin (1989-2001). She received a PhD in Art History from the University of Chicago. Ramírez has curated numerous exhibitions of Latin American art, including the recent exhibitions "Beatriz González: A Retrospective" (MFAH-PAMM, 2019, co-curated with Tobias Ostrander) and "Between Play and Grief: Selections from the Latino-American Collection" (MFAH, 2019). At the ICAA, Ramírez conceptualised and oversaw the initiative "Documents of 20th Century Latin American and Latino Art: A Digital Archive and Publications Project." She is also chief co-editor with Héctor Olea for the Yale University Press book series "Critical Documents of 20th Century Latin American and Latino Art." She has written extensively on a broad range of topics, including identity politics, multiculturalism, globalisation, and curatorial practice.



In this session, we will discuss two essays by Nelly Richard that address topics such as borders, peripheries and interstices. We will see in which way these terms might be related to the shifting definitions of Latin American art.

#### Selection of texts:

- Nelly Richard, "The Cultural Periphery and Postmodern Decentring: Latin America's Reconversion of Borders", in: Rethinking Borders, ed. by John C. Welchman, University of Minnesota Press, Palgrave Macmillan, 1996.
- Nelly Richard, "Peripheral Derivations Concerning the Interstitial", in: Sur, sur, sur, sur..., published on the occasion of the VII SITAC symposium, 2010

Link to access the texts: https://tinyurl.com/ya26heb4

Nelly Richard is a cultural theorist and essayist. She is founder and director of Revista de Crítica Cultural (1990–2008), and director of the M.A. in Cultural Studies at the University of Arts and Social Science ARCIS (2006–2013). She is the author of a

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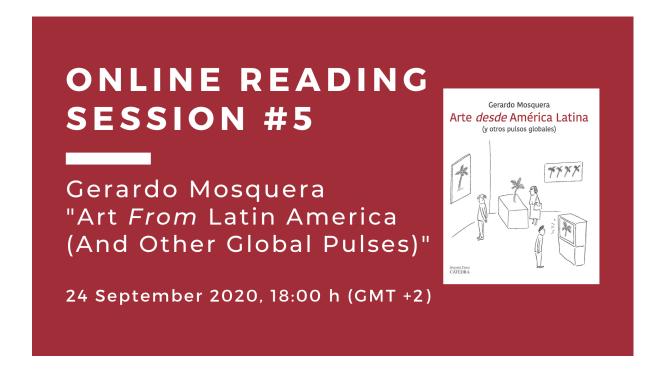
wide array of national and international publications, including "Diálogos latinoamericanos en las fronteras del arte" (2014), "Crítica y política" (2013), "Crítica de la memoria" (2010), "Feminismo, género y diferencia(s)" (2008), "Fracturas de la memoria. Arte y pensamiento crítico" (2007), "Residuos y metáforas. Ensayos de crítica cultural sobre el Chile de la transición" (1998), "La insubordinación de los signos: cambio político, transformaciones culturales y poéticas de la crisis" (1994), "Masculino / Femenino" (1993) and "Márgenes e Instituciones" (1986, reedited in 2008). Furthermore, she curated the Chilean Pavilion at the 56th Venice Biennale in 2015, under the title "Poéticas de la disidencia: Paz Errázuriz – Lotty Rosenfeld" (Poetics of Dissidence: Paz Errázuriz – Lotty Rosenfeld).

Introduction and moderation: Katerina Valdivia Bruch

Online Reading Session #5

24 September 2020, 18:00 h (GMT +2) via Zoom

Invited guest: Gerardo Mosquera



In this session, we will discuss with Gerardo Mosquera questions around the definition of Latin American art and the Latin American identity. In his essays,

Mosquera revisits these categories and reflects on how Latin American art has been included in the global art circuits and warns us about the dangers of using fixed categories that might lead to a self-exoticism. Part of the discussion will be dedicated to his newest publication "Arte desde América Latina (y otros pulsos globales)" (Art From Latin America (And Other Global Pulses)), an anthology of essays written from 1992-2017, edited by Cátedra (Madrid) in 2020.

#### Selection of texts:

- "Good-Bye Identity, Welcome Difference: From Latin American Art to Art from Latin America." In: Third Text, Volume 15, issue 56, 2001, pp. 25-32
- Foreword of the exhibition "Ante America," courtesy Gerardo Mosquera
- "From Latin American Art to Art from Latin America." In: Contemporary Art in Latin America, Black Dog Publishing Limited, London, 2010, pp. 12-23
- "Takeoff," Introduction of "Arte desde América Latina (y otros pulsos globales)," English version, courtesy Gerardo Mosquera

Link to access the texts: https://tinyurl.com/yyoq5puy

GERARDO MOSQUERA is an independent curator, writer, art critic and historian based in Havana and Madrid. He is advisor to the Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten, Amsterdam, and member of the advisory board of several international art centres and journals. He was co-founder of the Havana Biennial, Curator at the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, Artistic Director of PHotoSpain, Madrid, and has curated a number of biennials and international exhibitions around the world, most recently the 21st Paiz Art Biennial, Guatemala, and "Useless. Machines for Dreaming, Thinking and Seeing," Bronx Museum, New York. He recently co-curated the 3rd edition of "Today Documents" for the Today Art Museum in Beijing. Mosquera received the Guggenheim Fellowship in 1990 and is author of numerous publications on contemporary art and art theory. His latest book is "Arte desde América Latina (y otros pulsos globales)," published this year.

Online Reading Session #6

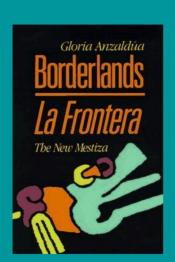
29 October 2020, 18:00 h (GMT +1) via Zoom

**Invited guest: Mayra Bottaro** 

# ONLINE READING SESSION #6

Gloria Anzaldúa "Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza"

29 October 2020, 18:00 h (GMT +1)



In this session, Mayra Bottaro will introduce chapter 1 and 7 of the book "Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza" by Gloria Anzaldúa, that addresses topics such as Chicano culture, identity, race, gender and colonialism.

#### Abstract of the book:

Rooted in Gloria Anzaldúa's experience as a Chicana, a lesbian, an activist, and a writer, the essays and poems in this volume profoundly challenged, and continue to challenge, how we think about identity. "Borderlands/La Frontera" remaps our understanding of what a "border" is, presenting it not as a simple divide between here and there, us and them, but as a psychic, social, and cultural terrain that we inhabit, and that inhabits all of us.

The book is divided into two parts. The first, "Crossing Borders," is written mostly in prose, and moves between memoir and critical theory, interspersed occasionally with poetry and quotations from other thinkers, poets, and singers. Anzaldúa also

switches between Spanish and English, and between more casual and "academic" ways of writing. The second part, "Un Agitado Viento/Ehécatl, The Wind," is entirely poetry.

Additional reading material: Édouard Glissant "Poetics of Relation," University of Michigan Press, 1997. "Creolizations," p.89; "Distancing, Determining," pp. 141-157.

Link to access the texts: https://tinyurl.com/y62xglap

MAYRA BOTTARO received her PhD in Hispanic Languages and Literatures from UC Berkeley. She is assistant Professor at the University of Oregon and currently co-directs the Nineteenth Century Section of the Latin American Studies Association (LASA). Her book "Chronopolitics. New Media, Periodicity and Seriality in the Hispanic Atlantic, 1750-1880" (forthcoming in 2021) examines the links between material culture, media, and temporality and identifies a series of changes in the understanding of time and the notion of futurity, showing how the aesthetics of seriality became embedded within epistemological changes. She is currently working on her second monograph, "Scrambled Messages: Telegraphic Poetics and the New Atlantic Language," at the intersection of materialities of new media, theories of language, poetics, and artistic experimental practices, and on a Digital Humanities project "Archivo Organizado y Centralizado de Rubén Darío" at Universidad Tres de Febrero, Argentina.

Online Reading Session #7

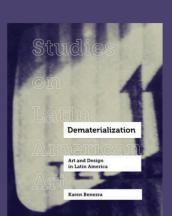
26 November 2020, 18:00 h (GMT +1) via Zoom

Invited guest: Karen Benezra

# ONLINE READING SESSION #7

Karen Benezra "Dematerialization: Art and Design in Latin America"





In this session, we will discuss with Karen Benezra the introduction and the first chapter of her recently published book "Dematerialization: Art and Design in Latin America" and focus our attention on Oscar Masotta's definition of the term dematerialization.

#### Selection of texts:

- Karen Benezra, "Dematerialization: Art and Design in Latin America." University of California Press, 2020. Introduction and chapter 1.

Additional reading material:

- Oscar Masotta, "After Pop, We Dematerialize" (1967) (we have included both the original text in Spanish and the translation into English)

Link to access the texts: https://tinyurl.com/y22hsnze

#### About the book:

"Dematerialization" examines the intertwined experimental practices and critical

discourses of art and industrial design in Argentina, Mexico, and Chile in the 1960s and 1970s. Provocative in nature, this book investigates the way that artists, critics, and designers considered the relationship between the crisis of the modernist concept of artistic medium and the radical social transformation brought about by the accelerated capitalist development of the preceding decades. Beginning with Oscar Masotta's sui generis definition of the term, Karen Benezra proposes dematerialization as a concept that allows us to see how disputes over the materiality of the art and design object functioned to address questions concerning the role of appearance, myth, and ideology in the dynamic logic structuring social relations in contemporary discussions of aesthetics, artistic collectivism, and industrial design. "Dematerialization" brings new insights to the fields of contemporary art history, critical theory, and Latin American cultural studies.

KAREN BENEZRA holds a PhD in Hispanic Studies with a minor in Comparative Literature from Cornell University. Her research and teaching interests include twentieth-century Latin American literature, visual art, and critical social and psychoanalytic theory. She is the author of "Dematerialization: Art and Design in Latin America," published by the University of California Press in 2020, and editor of the forthcoming volume "Accumulation and Subjectivity in Latin America". Currently, she is working on two book-length studies. The first, tentatively titled "The Inorganic: Collective Life under Capitalism" examines the concept of property operative in the work of Latin American thinkers who considered the psychic, ethical, and political effects of capitalist expansion beginning in the second half of the twentieth century. The second, "Toward a Popular Art" explores the relationship between art and hegemony in Chile during the country's extensive period of popular front politics in the work of muralists, printmakers, and intellectuals invested in defining both art and the purportedly popular subject of politics. Currently, she is teaching at the Department of Modern Languages and Comparative Literature at Baruch College, CUNY. Since 2012, she has been one of the editors of the journal ARTMargins.

Online Reading Session #8 28 January 2021, 18:00 h (GMT +1) via Zoom

Invited guest: Cecilia Fajardo-Hill



In this session, we will discuss with Cecilia Fajardo-Hill some topics related to women artists, who were actively shaping the arts scene in Latin America during the 1960s to 1980s. The encounter will focus on a selection of essays from the catalogue of the exhibition "Radical Women: Latin American Art (1960-1985)," which was the first large-scale exhibition dedicated to Latin American, Chicana and Latina women artists. The exhibition took place at the Hammer Museum (Los Angeles) in 2017, travelling to the Brooklyn Museum (New York) and the Pinacoteca in São Paulo in 2018.

Selection of essays from the "Radical Women" catalogue:

- Introduction by Cecilia Fajardo-Hill and Andrea Giunta
- Cecilia Fajardo-Hill, "The Invisibility of Latin American Women Artists: Problematizing Art Historical and Curatorial Practices"
- Andrea Giunta, "The Iconographic Turn: The Denormalization of Bodies and

Sensibilities in the Work of Latin American Women Artists"

- Marcela Guerrero "Yo misma fui mi ruta": A Decolonial Feminist Analysis of Art from the Hispanic Caribbean
- Carla Stellweg "No son todas las que están ni están todas las que son"

#### Additional reading material:

Cecilia Fajardo-Hill and Marcela Guerrero, "Latina Art Through the Exhibition Lens: Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960-1985." In: Diálogo, volume 20, number 1, Spring 2017, pp. 133-140.

Link to access the texts: https://tinyurl.com/y63wm7rn

### Abstract of the catalogue:

This stunning reappraisal offers long overdue recognition to the enormous contribution to the field of contemporary art of women artists in Latin America and those of Latino and Chicano heritage working during a pivotal time in history. Amidst the tumult and revolution that characterised the latter half of the 20th century in Latin America and the United States, women artists were staking their claim in nearly every field. This wide-ranging volume examines the work of more than 100 female artists with nearly 300 works in the fields of painting, sculpture, photography, video, performance art, and other experimental media. A series of thematic essays, arranged by country, address the cultural and political contexts in which these radical artists worked, while other essays address key issues such as feminism, art history, and the political body. Drawing its design and feel from the radical underground pamphlets, catalogues, and posters of the era, this is the first examination of a highly influential period in 20th-century art history.

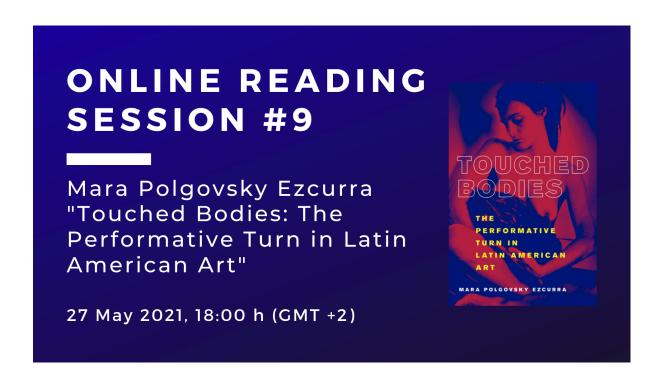
CECILIA FAJARDO-HILL is an art historian and curator in modern and contemporary art, specialised in Latin American art. She holds a PhD in Art History from the University of Essex, England, and an MA in 20th Century Art History from the Courtauld Institute of Art, London, England. Fajardo-Hill has published and curated extensively on contemporary Latin American and international artists. In

2017 she co-curated the touring show "Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960-1985," the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, 2017, and is co-curating the upcoming touring exhibition "Xican-a.o.x. Body," Phoenix Art Museum, 2021. She is co-editor of a book on Guatemalan art, 2020, and the editor of "Remains – Tomorrow: Themes in Contemporary Latin American Abstraction" 2020. She is Research Scholar at the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center, Los Angeles and currently she is Fellowship Visiting Research Scholar in the Programme in Latin American Studies (PLAS) and Visiting Lecturer at Princeton University.

Coordination and moderation: Katerina Valdivia Bruch

Online Reading Session #8

27 May 2021, 18:00 h (GMT +2) via Zoom
Invited guest: Mara Polgovsky Ezcurra



In this session, we will discuss with Mara Polgovsky Ezcurra the introduction, chapter 1 and the conclusion of her book "Touched Bodies: The Performative Turn in Latin American Art" published by Rutgers in 2019.

## Abstract of the publication:

What is the role of pleasure and pain in the politics of art? In "Touched Bodies," Mara Polgovsky Ezcurra approaches this question as she examines the flourishing of live and intermedial performance in Latin America during times of authoritarianism and its significance during transitions to democracy. Based on original documents and innovative readings, her book brings politics and ethics to the discussion of artistic developments during the "long 1980s." She describes the rise of performance art in the context of feminism, HIV-activism, and human right movements, taking a close look at the work of Diamela Eltit and Raúl Zurita from Chile, León Ferrari and Liliana Maresca from Argentina, and Marcos Kurtycz, the No Grupo art collective, and Proceso Pentágono from Mexico. The comparative study of the work of these artists attests to a performative turn in Latin American art during the 1980s that, like photography and film before, recast the artistic field, changing the ways in which we perceive art and understand its role in society.

Shortlisted for the 2020 Association for the Study of the Arts of the Present Book Prize and Winner of the 2019 Art Journal Prize from the College Art Association. Additional reading material: Mara Polgovsky Ezcurra (2018) "Beyond Evil: Politics, Ethics, and Religion in León Ferrari's Illustrated Nunca más," Art Journal, 77:3, 20-47.

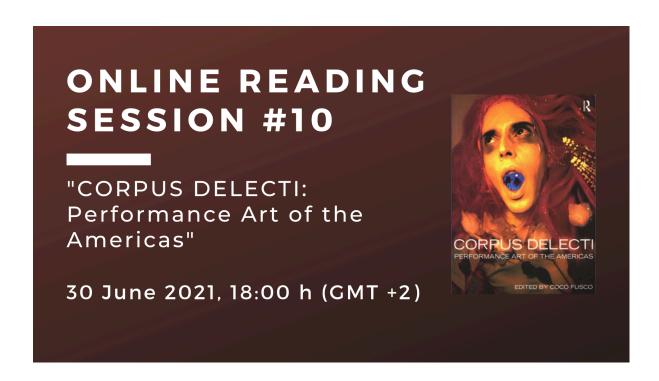
#### About the author:

MARA POLGOVSKY EZCURRA is an art historian and cultural theorist. She joined the History of Art Department at Birkbeck, University of London in 2018, after finishing her PhD and holding a Junior Research Fellowship at the University of Cambridge. Her research focuses on contemporary Latin American Art and Intellectual History, with a particular emphasis on the politics of aesthetics, the body, and dimensions of agency and "liveness" in ecological and feminist artistic practice. She is the recipient of the 2019 Art Journal award, and she is currently a Leverhulme Research Fellow. Her publications include the monograph "Touched Bodies: The Performative Turn in Latin American Art" (Rutgers University Press, 2019,

shortlisted for the 2020 Book Prize of the Association for the Study of the Art of the Present), the forthcoming essay collection "Marcos Kurtycz: Corporeality Unbound" (Fauna-Jumex, 2021), and the edited volumes "Sabotage Art: Politics and Iconoclasm in Contemporary Latin America" (I.B. Tauris, 2016, edited with Sophie Halart), "Eugenio Polgovsky: Poetics of the Real/La poética de lo real" (Ambulante-Tecolote Films, 2020), and "Re-Public: The New Public Art in Mexico" (under review).

Coordination and moderation: Katerina Valdivia Bruch

Online Reading Session # 10 30 June 2021, 18:00 h (GMT +2) via Zoom



In this session, we will discuss a selection of texts in "Corpus Delecti: Performance Art of the Americas," a collection of essays edited by Coco Fusco, published by Routledge in 1999.

Link to access the texts: https://tinyurl.com/3dwuajw9

Abstract of the book:

An exploration of performance art from the Americas for English language readers, "Corpus Delecti" is a unique collection of historical and critical studies of contemporary Latin American performance. Drawing on live art from the 1960s to the present day, the essays explore the impact of Latin American politics, popular

culture, and syncretic religions on Latin American performance.

their work draws upon and responds to their environment.

Including contributions by artists as well as scholars, Fusco's collection bridges the theory/practice divide and discusses a wide variety of genres, including body art, carpa, vaudeville, staged political protest and hacktivism. The essays demonstrate how specific social and historical contexts have shaped Latin American performance. They also show how those factors have affected the choices artists make, and how

Selected essays for the session:

- Coco Fusco, Introduction: "Latin American Performance and the Reconquista of Civil Space"
- Simone Osthoff "Lygia Clark and Hélio Oiticica: A Legacy of Interactivity and Participation for a Telematic Future"
- María Elena Ramos "Embodying Venezuela"
- Nelly Richard "Margins and Institutions: Performances of the Chilean Avanzada"
- Francisco Casas "Las Yeguas del Apocalipsis (The Mares of the Apocalypse): The Equine Lips of Exile"
- Felipe Ehrenberg "The Street and Its Conditions"
- Maris Bustamante "Non-Objective Arts in Mexico, 1963-83"
- C.Ondine Chavoya "Orphans of Modernism: The Performance Art of Asco"
- Leandro Soto "Performance in Cuba in the 1980s: A Personal Testimony"

Introduction and moderation: Katerina Valdivia Bruch

Online Reading Session # 11

25 November 2021, 18:00 h (GMT +1) via Zoom

Invited guests: Clemente Padín and Darío Marroche

# ONLINE READING SESSION #11

Clemente Padín "Vanguardia poética latinoamericana"

25 Nov. 2021, 18:00 h (GMT +1)



In this session, we will discuss with Clemente Padín a selection of his essays on visual poetry and performance in his book "Vanguardia poética latinoamericana." We have also invited Darío Marroche, editor of the second edition of "Vanguardia poética latinoamericana," recently published by the editorial microutopías, who will speak with us about this new edition of the book.

Note: The meeting will be held in Spanish language.

Link to access the texts: https://tinyurl.com/575t6z27

#### Abstract of the publication:

"Vanguardia poética latinoamericana" (ed. microutopías, 2021) brings together essays by Clemente Padín written between 1965 and 2020 on the poetic and visual practices of the Latin American avant-garde: experimental poetry, mail art, video art, urban interventions and poetic action, among others. Of great theoretical and documentary

value, the book aims to highlight the creation of the Latin American avant-garde and open new dialogues on contemporary creation.

This is the second edition of the book, initially published as "Vanguardia poética latinoamericana y otros ensayos" (Ed. Colectivo Editorial Sur/l, Buenos Aires, 2018).

#### About the author:

Clemente Padín (Lascano, Rocha, October 8, 1939) is a Uruguayan poet, performer, artist and Graphic designer and a reference in the artistic currents of concrete poetry and mail art. He graduated in Hispanic Literature at the UdelaR (University of the Republic in Uruguay). He is the editor of the publications Los huevos del Plata (1965-1969), OVUM 10 and OVUM (1969-1975), Participación (1984-1986) and Correo del Sur (2000). He has contributed as an author to the magazine "Escáner Cultural: Revista Virtual de Arte Contemporáneo y Nuevas Tendencias," as well as has published in several international art magazines and other publications. Padín has participated in more than 200 group exhibitions and more than 1,200 Mail Art exhibitions worldwide.

He has had solo exhibitions in the United States, Italy, South Korea, Argentina, Uruguay, Germany, Mexico, Spain, Canada, Dominican Republic, Peru, Brazil, Belgium and Japan. He participated in the XVI Sao Paulo Biennial (1981) and to the Biennials of Havana (1984 and 2000), Cuenca, Ecuador (2002) and the 2nd Biennial of Art in Thessaloniki, Greece (2009). Padín received a scholarship from the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) (1984).

Padín is the author of 25 books and hundreds of notes and articles. He was distinguished with Pedro Figari Award for his artistic career in 2005, as well as the award 400 Años de la Universidad Nacional de Córdoba (400 Years of the National University of Córdoba), Argentina, and the Bernard Heidsiek Honorary Prize of the Centre Georges Pompidou France, in 2019. His archive is in the General Archive of the UdelaR, Montevideo, Uruguay.

#### About the editor:

Darío Marroche is a Uruguayan architect and designer. He is currently working as an independent publisher in visual arts, coordinating a publication studio from

Montevideo called microutopías. Since 2014 his works relate the publishing process as a creative act and reflective exercise of graphic activism. He considers publishing as an artistic practice in the generation of microutopías: space-time aesthetic experiences that are socially engaged. He organises community-based activities around self-publishing, art books and visual poetry, as well as coordinating the Montevideo Art Book Fair since 2018.

Coordination and moderation: Katerina Valdivia Bruch

Online Reading Session # 12 25 May 2022, 18:00 h (GMT +2) via Zoom Invited guest: Sylvia Suárez



In this session, we will discuss a selection of essays on networks among artists and intellectuals from Latin America in the twentieth century, that are part of the publication "Redes intelectuales: arte y política en América Latina" (Intellectual Networks: Art and Politics in Latin America), edited by María Clara Bernal and published by Uniandes in 2015.

#### Selection of texts:

"The relationship between Europe and Latin America in Cultural Publications of the Nineteen-twenties: Some Readings," by Ivonne Pine, Jorge Ramírez and María Clara Bernal, pp. 422-459.

"Solidarity, Visual Arts, Networks and Revolution: A Brief Chronicle of the Rise and Fall of the Chile-Cuba Meridian in the Context of Latin American Art," by Sylvia Juliana Suárez and Carla Macchiavello, pp.523-548.

Click here to download the texts: https://tinyurl.com/5c2u22hp

### Abstract of the publication:

This book is part of the project "Intellectual Networks: Art and Politics in Latin America." Its main goal is to study the discussions about the relationship between art and politics in Latin American cities from 1920 to 1980. The analysis of this period offers insight into the networks that emerged from the exchange between artists and intellectuals during unique historical conditions and through diverse platforms. The principal thematic areas in Intellectual Networks are the continental nodes and networks constructed by cultural magazines during the first half of the twentieth century, poetic-ideological networks that caused a polarisation between American intellectuals and artists during the Cold War and, lastly, macro-, and micro-political networks established by the most ideologically compromised artists, critics, and curators during the seventies. The book gathers multiple perspectives because understanding the complexity of continental artistic processes implies a commitment to networking.

SYLVIA SUÁREZ (\* Bogotá 1981) is a curator, art historian and professor at the Department of Visual Arts at the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana. Her research focus is on modern and contemporary art in Colombia and Latin America and the study of the links between artistic experimentation, politics, education, and the construction of citizenship. She is a member of the interdisciplinary research group Taller Historia Crítica del Arte (Workshop of Critical History of Art, established in 2004 in Colombia), focused on the discussion and revision of 20th century

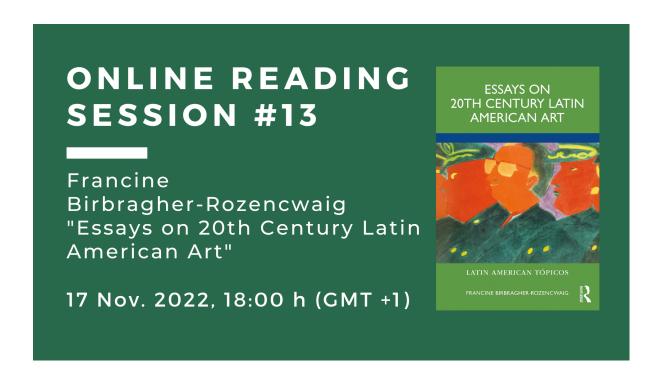
Colombian art, and she is also member of the Red Conceptualismos del Sur (Southern Conceptualisms Network).

Coordination and moderation: Katerina Valdivia Bruch

### Online Reading Session # 13

Francine Birbragher-Rozencwaig "Essays on 20th Century Latin American Art" 17 November 2022, 18:00 h (GMT +1) via Zoom

Invited guest: Francine Birbragher-Rozencwaig, PhD



In this session, we will discuss a selection of essays on Central American and Caribbean art, art and politics in the 1960s and 1980s, and the importance of the carnival in Latin America.

#### Selection of texts:

- Prologue
- Chapter 3: Politics in Latin American Art from the 1960s to the 1980s
- Chapter 5: Art in Central America and the Caribbean since the 1990s
- Chapter 6: Carnival in Latin America and the Caribbean

Download the texts here: https://tinyurl.com/mu6fjxf7

# Abstract of the publication:

"Essays on 20th Century Latin American Art" (New York, NY: Routledge, 2022) provides a broad synthesis of the subject through short chapters illustrated with reproductions of iconic works by artists who have made significant contributions to art and society. Designed as a teaching tool for non-art historians, the book's purpose is to introduce these important artists within a new scholarly context and recognize their accomplishments with those of others beyond the Americas and the Caribbean. The publication provides an in-depth analysis of topics such as political issues in Latin American art and art and popular culture, introducing views on artists and art-related issues that have rarely been addressed. Organised both regionally and thematically, it takes a unique approach to the exploration of art in the Americas, beginning with discussions of Modernism and Abstraction, followed by a chapter on art and politics from the 1960s to the 1980s. The author covers Spanish-speaking Central America and the Caribbean, regions not usually addressed in Latin American art history surveys. The chapter on Carnival as an expression of popular culture is a particularly valuable addition. This book will be of interest to students and scholars of Latin American history, culture, art, international relations, gender studies, and sociology, as well as Caribbean studies.

#### Biography of the author:

FRANCINE BIRBRAGHER-ROZENCWAIG is an art historian, independent curator, and writer. She holds a master's degree in art history and a doctorate in Latin American history from the University of Miami. She is an editor and contributor to ArtNexus magazine. Since 1989 she has been writing about contemporary art with an emphasis on Latin America and the Caribbean. As an independent curator, she has organised more than one hundred exhibitions in the United States and Latin America. She is the author of Essays on Latin American Art of the 20th Century (Routledge, 2022). She currently works on projects that question the limits between "high art" and "popular art," analyse gender and sexual identity issues and suggest

new historical readings from artistic expressions. She is co-curator with Juan Canela of the 23rd edition of the Bienal de Arte Paiz, which will take place in Guatemala in 2023.

## 1.3.3. Arts & Conversation

This event series is based on the networks of people who were involved in the project *Rethinking Conceptualism* as part of the audience, speakers or guests, as well as those who are part of an older network and have been working with me in the past.

I developed the series "Arts & Conversation" in 2007, in which I invited different artists, art practitioners and researchers to give a talk and speak with the audience about their current projects in Berlin. During these events, the guests presented an ongoing project and gave the audience the possibility to speak about it with the people involved in it. The sessions were in the form of talks, performances, or video screenings. Now, many years later, I decided to invite people to share their work with the audience in an online format.

Arts & Conversation "On Borders"

Invited guests: Tintin Wulia and Alex Brahim

7 July 2022, 18:00 h (GMT+2) via Zoom



In this meeting, we are going to speak about two current artistic projects that address

the topic of borders.

The research project "Protocols of Killings: 1965, distance, and the ethics of future warfare," by Tintin Wulia, explores the connection between violence, distance, and accountability. It aesthetically draws parallels between the protocols around the Indonesian massacres in 1965 and 1966 and the future technology of drone warfare. The project "Juntos aparte" (Together Apart), by Alex Brahim, addresses topics of migration, restriction, citizenship, and mobility at the Venezuelan-Colombian border between San Antonio del Táchira (Venezuela) and Cúcuta (Colombia). Since 2017, the international encounter on art, thought and borders "Juntos Aparte. Encuentro Internacional de Arte, Pensamiento y Fronteras" has been carried out in the city of Cúcuta.

## About the guests:

TINTIN WULIA is a Senior Researcher at HDK-Valand/ Academy of Art and Design, University of Gothenburg, and an internationally practising artist who has been examining the complexities of borders for more than two decades. She sees the world as an interconnected system – not a borderless world, but a world where entities interface with one another in contiguity and continuity. Tintin's works have been shown in major exhibitions including Chicago Architecture Biennale (2021) and a solo pavilion at 57th Venice Biennale (2017). They are also part of prominent collections internationally, including He Xiangning Art Museum, China, and Van Abbemuseum, Netherlands. She currently leads her artistic research project Protocols of Killings: 1965, distance, and the ethics of future warfare (Swedish Research Council-funded, 2021-23). She is recipient of the prestigious European Research Council/ERC Starting Grant 2021, to lead an interdisciplinary team during her 5-year project Things for Politics' Sake: Aesthetic Objects and Social Change.

About the research project "Protocols of Killings: 1965, distance, and the ethics of future warfare":

Both the Indonesian 1965-66 massacres and drone warfare are hyper distant killings – the 1965 massacres were abetted and condoned by leading democracies of the

world – and both are full of secrecy. However, a large archive about the Indonesian mass killings 1965-66 was finally declassified in 2018. This 30,000-page archive comprises daily inter-embassies communication from the United States Embassy in Jakarta between 1964-68, surrounding the killings.

The project will aesthetically translate patterns of group dynamics from this archive into participatory performances that I will workshop with different audiences around the world, engaging survivors' groups as facilitators. Participants will discuss embodied experiences from the workshop to understand how distance links with accountability when it comes to violence. The protocols that shape the group dynamics from the Indonesian US archive may be similar to the decentralised protocols of the autonomous swarm drone that operates as a pack without a central control, a technological feature of future warfare.

## More information:

https://www.gu.se/en/research/protocols-of-killings-1965-distance-and-the-ethics-of-future-warfare

Website of the artist: http://tintinwulia.com/

ALEX BRAHIM is an independent curator and cultural manager, from Cúcuta, Colombia. He is the director of Fundación El Pilar, the main entity behind the international project "Juntos Aparte. Encuentro Internacional de Arte, Pensamiento y Fronteras" carried out since 2017 in the city of Cúcuta, Colombia. His work encompasses theory, production, programming, communication, and cultural activation. He co-directs, together with marketing expert Tania Brett, the platform DIBINa, an independent node for artistic project management and relational communication. He regularly develops commissioned and independent programmes and exhibitions, as well as gives talks in different art centres and universities. Among his curated projects are "Critical Botox" (Bucarest, Romania, 2012); "ClaResil 2012mg" (La Capella, Barcelona, Spain, 2012); the cycles "Interferències" (Terrassa, 2012) and "Audiencias cardinales" (Espai Cultural Caja Madrid at Barcelona, 2011), "CUVO" at Matadero, Madrid, Spain (2010), "Capilars 0.0" at Museu de L'Empordà, Figueres (2009), "Atasco de Papel" at La Casa

Encendida, Madrid (2008) and the video art programmes, such as "Not without my music" at the Loop Art Fair, Barcelona (2011) or "Pandeo" at CCCB, Barcelona (2009).

About Juntos Aparte:

"Juntos aparte" (Together Apart) is an answer, from the territory of art to the emergency that is lived in the border territory between Colombia and Venezuela, at the height of Cúcuta and San Antonio del Táchira, historically one of the most dynamic border crossings in Latin America. The closing of the passage and the slow and partial reopening have generated an unprecedented humanitarian crisis in the region, separating families and communities in an area characterised by strong bonds and brotherhood, where the border rather than the separation line has been a centre of convergence. "Juntos aparte" is an artistic project with authors and works of reference in contemporary international art addressing topics of migration, restriction, citizenship and mobility.

More information: https://juntosaparte.com/web/en/home/

Coordination and moderation: Katerina Valdivia Bruch

Photo: Terra Incognita, Et Cetera, 2009. Courtesy Tintin Wulia.

Arts & Conversation "Despatriarcalizar el archivo" Invitadas: Karen Cordero Reiman, Natalia de la Rosa y Roselin Rodríguez 28 de julio de 2022, 18:00 (GMT +2) vía Zoom



Hay muchas maneras de trabajar con archivos de arte o de artistas. Una forma de hacerlo es tomando una postura crítica de acercamiento desde una perspectiva que desafíe al patriarcado.

Sobre éste y otros temas hablaremos en nuestra sesión "Arts & Conversation" (Arte y conversación) con nuestras invitadas Karen Cordero Reiman, Natalia de la Rosa y Roselin Rodríguez, integrantes del seminario y taller "Despatriarcalizar el archivo" en Ciudad de México.

## Sobre Despatriarcalizar el archivo:

El seminario y taller Despatriarcalizar el archivo es un grupo de trabajo formado desde febrero 2020, que reúne a investigadorxs diversxs – historiadores del arte, artistas visuales, antropólogxs y escritorxs, entre otrxs – con el fin de compartir experiencias y construir estrategias comunes para analizar y proponer alternativas a los "modelos patriarcales ligados a ejercicios de poder en el campo de la cultura y del arte". Desde entonces, se ha convertido en una iniciativa colectiva que ha

consolidado una primera etapa de reflexión y creación en este sentido, y que ha compartido este proceso y sus resultados iniciales en publicaciones en línea, conferencias y talleres.

## Biografías:

KAREN CORDERO REIMAN es historiadora del arte, curadora y escritora. Es autora de múltiples publicaciones sobre el arte de los siglos XX y XXI, sobre todo con respecto a las relaciones entre el llamado arte culto y el llamado arte popular en México; la historiografía y crítica del arte; cuerpo, género e identidad sexual en el arte mexicano, y políticas museísticas y curatoriales. También ha tenido una participación constante en el ámbito museístico, con actividades de curaduría, asesoría e investigación. Actualmente trabaja como investigadora y curadora independiente, así como en proyectos creativos personales que entrelazan el arte, la literatura y la historia.

NATALIA DE LA ROSA obtuvo su doctorado en Historia del Arte por la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. Sus intereses cubren el arte moderno y contemporáneo en México, el muralismo, el arte público y sus actualizaciones críticas. Su trabajo establece un análisis en torno a las relaciones entre arte, política y economía, y sus acercamientos reflexionan sobre redes existentes entre artistas, ediciones, instituciones culturales y conceptos en el hemisferio, con el fin de destacar narrativas locales y alternas. Curadora de la colección del Museo de Arte Moderno entre 2014 y 2016 y Posdoctorante Asociada en la Duke University (Franklin Humanities Institute) a través del Proyecto "Pop América, 1965-1975" (2016-2018). Cuenta con diversas publicaciones nacionales e internacionales. Profesora invitada en Campus Expandido y SIACO (MUAC) y en el programa de historia del arte en la ENES-Morelia. Sus últimas curadurías fueron "Carla Rippey. Cosas que pasan" (2020, Biquini Wax EPS) y "Magali Lara. El agua no me basta para beberme la vida" (Yacusis. Grupo de Estudios Sub-Críticos, Lagunamx, 2021), en colaboración con Roselin R. Espinosa. Actualmente es becaria posdoctoral por la Coordinación de Humanidades (UNAM) para una residencia de investigación en el Instituto de Investigaciones Filológicas (2020-2022). Es co-fundadora y colaboradora de Los

Yacusis. Grupo de Estudios Sub-Críticos y del seminario Despatriarcalizar el archivo.

ROSELIN RODRÍGUEZ ESPINOSA (La Habana, 1986) Reside en Ciudad de México. Es historiadora del arte y curadora. Actualmente cursa el Doctorado en Historia del Arte en la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México donde también obtuvo su título de Maestría. Sus intereses abarcan arte experimental y cultura popular en la posvanguardia (70'-80'), arte caribeño y latinoamericano contemporáneo. De 2016 a 2018 fue Coordinadora curatorial en el Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo (MUAC/UNAM), 2016-2018. Ha sido docente en la Escuela Nacional de Artes Plásticas (UNAM), Instituto de Estudios Críticos, el Museo Jumex y Centro. Fue co-curadora de la muestra "Carla Rippey. Cosas que pasan" (BWEPS, México, 2020) y "Magali Lara. El agua no me basta para beberme la vida" (Laguna, México, 2021). Curadora de Nuevo barroco popular (MUME, Viena, 2019). Entre 2015 y 2020 fue parte del espacio de arte interdependiente Biquini Wax EPS. Hoy es miembra del seminario "Despatriarcalizar el archivo" y desde 2015 de Yacusis. Grupo de Estudios Sub-críticos, un colectivo de investigación curatorial sobre arte latinoamericano desde la posguerra.

Coordinación y moderación: Katerina Valdivia Bruch
Con la colaboración de Sara Vakili (Universidad de Tubinga, Departamento de
Cultura y Literatura Inglesa & Estudios del Sur Global).
El evento será en español.

## 1.4. Publication

Rethinking Conceptualism: Avant-garde, Activism and Politics in Latin American Art (1960s-1980s)

Proceedings of the symposium *Rethinking Conceptualism: Avant-garde, Activism and Politics in Latin American Art (1960s-1980s)*. The publication consists of an introduction, the conference papers and additional essays.

A publication edited by Katerina Valdivia Bruch. The publication (in progress) is intended to be bilingual in Spanish and English. The number of pages is around 300 to 350, in each language. It is planned to be published as an E-Book and in print.

The publication will also incorporate images of the artworks by the artists of the exhibition *Between Personal Chronicles and Collective Memory*, which was part of the programme of *Rethinking Conceptualism: Avant-garde*, *Activism and Politics in Latin American Art* (1960s-1980s).

Authors: Luis Camnitzer, Ana Longoni, Gerardo Mosquera, Lisette Lagnado, Joaquín Barriendos, Cecilia Fajardo-Hill, Víctor Vich, Claudia Calirman, Emilio Tarazona, Vania Markarian (text co-authored with Julio Cabrio), María Mercedes Herrera Buitrago, Óscar Ardila Luna, Fernanda Carvajal, Jorge Lopera, Mariano Mestman, Cecilia Lacruz, Miguel Errazu, María Linares and Katerina Valdivia Bruch.

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- Luis Camnitzer, "Conceptualism in Latin America: Didactics of Liberation," 14 Years Later
- Vania Markarian and Julio Cabrio, Clemente Padín at the Archivo General de la Universidad de la República
- Víctor Vich, *Noticia última: Los nuevos lenguajes de la memoria* (Breaking News: The New Languages of Memory)
- Jorge Lopera, "Primer Coloquio Latinoamericano sobre Arte No-objetual y Arte Urbano": busquedas de un pensamiento visual independiente (The First Latin

- American Conference on Non-Objectual Art and Urban Art: A Quest for an Independent Visual Thought)
- María Mercedes Herrera Buitrago, *Para una teoría del arte latinoamericano*. *Marta Traba y la "vanguardia no objetual"* (For a Theory on Latin American art:

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- Gerardo Mosquera, Havana Utopia
- Óscar Ardila Luna, "Campos de memoria/Erinnerungsfelder". Intervenciones artísticas en el espacio público en Colombia, 2000-2011 (Fields of Memory: Artistic Interventions in Public Spaces in Colombia, 2000-2011)
- Lisette Lagnado, The Intricacies of Hélio Oiticica's Conceptualism in His 'Programa Ambiental'
- Cecilia Fajardo-Hill, Conceptualisms in Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960-1985
- Ana Longoni, *Embutes de la memoria* (Memory Hideouts)
- Claudia Calirman, The Wide-Open Mouth: Brazilian Women Artists in the 1970s
- Joaquín Barriendos, AVANT-GARDISM AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT: Ultra-Activist Tactics in the Early Work of Juan Acha
- Fernanda Carvajal, *Astucia práctica y potencias de lo común en el Archivo CADA* (Practical Cunning and the Power of the Commons in CADA's Archive)
- Emilio Tarazona, *Por un arte de propagación: Gloria Gómez-Sánchez en los inicios del conceptualismo en el Perú* (For an Art of Propagation: Gloria Gómez-Sánchez in the Beginnings of Conceptualism in Peru)

## On Third Cinema and Internationalism:

- Cecilia Lacruz, La camara como arma: cartografía en construcción de una imagen faro (The Camera as a Weapon: Mapping Under Construction of a Lighthouse Image)
- Miguel Errazu, Contra el tiempo del acto: una lectura de "Los problemas" del tercer cine, de Alberto Híjar (Against the Time of the Act: A Reading of Alberto Híjar's "The Problems" of Third Cinema)
- Mariano Mestman, La Exposición del Tercer Mundo en La hora de los hornos

cubana. Internacionalismo y vanguardia en torno al Congreso Cultural de La Habana de 1968. (The Third World Exhibition in the Cuban The Hour of the Furnaces: Internationalism and Avant- garde Around the Cultural Congress of Havana).

# Additional essays:

- Joaquín Barriendos, Latin American Art and the British Cultural Diplomacy: The Rise and Fall of New Internationalism
- María Linares, RENOMBREMOS EL 12 DE OCTUBRE: A Deconstructive Intervention
- Gerardo Mosquera, Against Latin American Art
- Katerina Valdivia Bruch, A Cultural Guerrilla Warfare? The Experimental Art Scene in Lima During Velasco Alvarado's Government (1968-1975)

## **Funding:**

For the project *Rethinking Conceptualism* I got public funding from the Capital Cultural Fund of the Senate Department for Culture and Europe in Berlin and the Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations in Stuttgart.

# 2. Participation in Local and International Events

13 October 2022, 13.30 h (Bogotá), 20.30 h (Berlin), via Zoom:

Artistic presentation "Between Personal Chronicles and Collective Memory: Artistic Perspectives on Memory, Oral History and Resistance from the Latin American Diaspora in Berlin."

Participants: Katerina Valdivia Bruch, Daniela Lehmann Carrasco and María Linares



The event is part of the programme of the First Meeting of the Latin American Regional Group of the Memory Studies Association, held in Bogotá (in presence and online).

In this talk, Katerina Valdivia Bruch will speak about what inspired her to develop the exhibition *Between Personal Chronicles and Collective Memory* and included a brief introduction to the exhibition.

The talk will continue with the participation of the artist Daniela Lehmann Carrasco, who will present her long-term project on her family history, based on autoethnographic walks. Through these walks, the artist reflects on her family's memories and migrations (from Germany to Chile and from Chile to Germany) in

two historical periods, the Second World War, and the Pinochet dictatorship.

Afterwards, the artist María Linares will give an introduction of RENOMBREMOS EL 12 DE OCTUBRE, a participatory project that was created with the idea of giving a new name to the "Day of the Race" in Colombia. The project started in 2019, before the name of this commemorative day was changed in Colombia in 2021.

17-18 March 2023: Presentation of the paper "A Cultural Guerrilla Warfare? The Experimental Art Scene in Lima During Velasco Alvarado's Administration (1968-1975)" during the Second Forum of Equal and Poor - A comparative perspective on Art in Communist Europe and the Global South in the long 1970s in Poznań. 465



The conference was part of the second East-Central European Art Forum of the Piotr Piotrowski Center for Research on East-Central European Art. It was the final chapter of a four-part conference series organised in the framework of the project Resonances: Regional and Transregional Cultural Transfer in the Art of the 1970s.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>465</sup> The programme of the conference is available under this link: http://piotrpiotrowskicenter.amu.edu.pl/equalpoor/programme/.

## 2.1. Previous Public Presentations

Conference presentations that led to the development of the project *Rethinking Conceptualism: Avant-Garde, Activism and Politics in Latin American Art* (1960s-1980s):

18 May 2018: Speaker during the symposium "The Legacy of 1968 in Latin America: Making the Personal Political" at the University of Leicester.

Title of the presentation: "1968 in Peru: Between a Cultural Guerrilla and a Social Revolution"



Katerina Valdivia Bruch's presentation focuses on the interplay between art and politics: how visual art was used for political purposes during Velasco Alvarado's government (1968-1975), and how political terminology was deployed to talk about art practice in the work of Peruvian art critic Juan Acha.

The talk will concentrate on the Agrarian Reform posters and the work of some artists who were working for the state-run organisation SINAMOS (National System of Support for Social Mobilisation). These posters encouraged participation in the Agrarian Reform and promoted a series of cultural events supported by the government. Part of the presentation will be also dedicated to the role played by Peruvian art critic Juan Acha in this context.

# 17 June 2019: Lecture: "Juan Acha's 'Non-Objectualism': A Latin American, Decolonial Art Theory?" at Forum Transregionale Studien, Berlin

Peruvian art critic and theorist Juan Acha (1916-1995), a graduated chemical engineer, started writing about art in 1958. From 1958-1971 he was an active figure in the arts field in Lima, and between 1972 until his death he lived and worked in Mexico City, where he would develop a theory of art for Latin America. He is known for coining the term "non-objectualism" to depict conceptualist art practices in Latin America, aside from the US-European conceptual art canon.

Juan Acha was a solitary figure in the art scene in Lima. While most artists were following the *indigenismo* movement, he was a keen supporter of the emerging avant-garde art scene in Lima in the 1960s. Besides this, he developed a social theory of art, in which he connected avant-garde with underdevelopment, but also demanded a renewal in the arts with the artists as main agents of this change.

The talk will introduce some of the main thoughts by Juan Acha that contributed to developing his theory of non-objectualism. It will question whether his non-objectualist art theory could be considered a decolonial positioning towards the arts, or if it was a matter of recontextualising the international conceptual art trend in the Latin American avant-garde scene of that time.

16 November 2019: Presentation of "Curating as a Dialogic Practice" during the conference "Curate Your Context: Methods on and of Curating" at Institut national d'histoire de l'art (INHA), Paris

The conference "Curate Your Context: Methods on and of Curating" will focus on methodological frameworks in curatorial practice through presentations by seven PhD students of the PhD in Practice in Curating programme. There will also be an additional contribution by Farid Rakun of ruangrupa on their artistic/curatorial practice, and Prof. Dr. Jérôme Glicenstein will respond to the presentations. We also present the latest issues of the magazine *On Curating*. With a contribution by Farid Rakun, member of ruangrupa (artistic director of documenta 15) and presentations by PhD students Sascia Bailer, Katerina Valdivia Bruch, Antonio Cataldo, Hadas Kedar, Ronald Kolb, Lalita Radavić, and Maayan Sheleff.

Feedback by Prof. Dr. Jérôme Glicenstein Organised and moderated by Prof. Dr. Dorothee Richter

As part of the conference, Katerina Valdivia Bruch will speak about curating as a dialogic practice with a focus on the audience. She will include examples of her projects grounded on this idea and give a short introduction on her upcoming project, the symposium *Rethinking Conceptualism: Avant-Garde, Activism and Politics in Latin American Art* (1960s-1980s).

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>466</sup> Announcement of "Curate Your Context: Methods on and of Curating": *e-flux*, October 30, 2019, https://www.e-flux.com/announcements/295609/curate-your-context-methods-on-and-of-curating/.

# 2.2. Additional Programme of Rethinking Conceptualism

26 May 2023, 18:30 h at Andenbuch, Berlin: Book presentation of *Arte argentino* – Ästhetik und Identitätsnarrative in der argentinischen Kunst. Ausgewählte Arbeiten von Marta Minujín und Luis Felipe Noé with the author Dr Lena Geuer.

Below the announcement in German language as it was presented on the website of the library and cultural space Andenbuch:<sup>467</sup>



Ausgewählte Arbeiten von Marta Minujín und Luis Felipe Noé.

Moderation: Katerina Valdivia Bruch, Künstlerische Leiterin von Rethinking Conceptualism: Avant-Garde, Activism and Politics in Latin American Art (1960s-1980s)

Die Monografie *Arte argentino – Ästhetik und Identitätsnarrative in der argentinischen Kunst. Ausgewählte Arbeiten von Marta Minujín und Luis Felipe Noé* von Lena Geuer erschien 2022 im transcript Verlag. Das Buch liefert für den deutschsprachigen Raum eine erste umfassende Studie, die den Begriff der 'arte argentino' mittels postkolonialer und sinnlich-materieller Ansätze kritisch durchleuchtet. So hat die Autorin das Verhältnis zwischen Eigenem und Fremdem in Hinblick auf

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>467</sup> Announcement of the book presentation at Andenbuch, Berlin: *Andenbuch*, n.d., https://andenbuch.de/events/lena-geuer-arte-argentino-asthetik-und-identitatsnarrative-in-der-argentinischen-kun st/.

Identitätsnarrative in der künstlerischen Praxis sowie in der nationalen und geopolitischen Aneignung von Kunst ausführlich untersucht. Die Entstehung der "arte argentino" ist zutiefst in koloniale Machtverhältnisse verstrickt und bedarf einer postkolonialen Analyse. Künstlerische Arbeiten, wie jene von Marta Minujín und Luis Felipe Noé, die unter dem Begriff "argentinische Kunst" zusammengefasst werden und ihn wesentlich gestalten, verlangen jedoch nach einer ästhetischen Verhandlung.

In den 1960er und 1970er Jahren lebten Marta Minujín und Luis Felipe Noé in den internationalen Kunstmetropolen Paris und New York, bevor sie in den 1980er Jahren nach Buenos Aires zurückkehrten. Die Künstler:innen haben die global vernetzte Kunstrezeption ab den 1960er Jahren durch ihre Arbeiten mitgestaltet und nachhaltig geprägt. Vor dem Hintergrund der Global Art History widmet sich die Studie auch eurozentrischen Narrative in der Kunstgeschichtsschreibung, die durch das Potenzial der 'arte argentino' dekonstruiert und in transkulturelle Erzählungen transformiert werden konnten.

# Biografie der Autorin:

Dr. Lena Geuer ist Kunsthistorikerin. Sie arbeitet als wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin am Institut für Kunst und Musik der TU Dresden und lehrt transkulturelle Kunstgeschichte mit einem Schwerpunkt auf moderner und zeitgenössischer lateinamerikanischer Kunst. Sie promovierte im Rahmen des Graduiertenkollegs " Materialität und Produktion" an der Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf über die argentinische Kunst. In ihrem Habilitationsprojekt untersucht sie das Konzept des Verzichts und dessen ästhetische Bedeutung an der Schnittstelle von Kunst und Nachhaltigkeit. Gemeinsam mit Ömer Alkin gab sie den Sammelband Postkolonialismus and Postmigration (2022) heraus. Ihr Buch Arte Argentino: Ästhetik und Identitätsnarrative in der argentinischen Kunst. Ausgewählte Werke von Marta Minujín und Luis Felipe Noé ist im August 2022 im transcript Verlag erschienen.

Die Veranstaltung findet in deutscher Sprache statt, mit einer kurzen Einführung in spanischer Sprache.

# 3. Symposium Programme

# SYMPOSIUM

Rethinking Conceptualism:
Avant-Garde, Activism and
Politics in Latin American Art
(1960s-1980s)

Online Programme 10, 11, 12, 17, 18, 19, 24, 25 March 2021

All sessions start at 18:00 h (GMT +1)

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	IMPORTANT NOTE:
	osium will take place entirely online.
	es will be recorded in advance and  n YouTube during the month of March 2021.
	link to watch the videos with the lectures:
https://www.yo	outube.com/c/rethinkingconceptualism
	meetings will be Q & A sessions, in which
	e the chance to enter in a conversation with the and discuss the topics of the lectures.
speakers a	the discuss the topics of the fectures.
We recommend you	to watch the videos before the Zoom meetings with the speakers.
Re	gistrations via Eventbrite:
https://rethi	nkingconceptualism.eventbrite.com

# Rethinking Conceptualism: Avant-Garde, Activism and Politics in Latin American Art (1960s-1980s)

Between the 1960s and 1980s, several Latin American countries were under military rule. At that time, there was a wave of mass awakening, a surge of social awareness in Latin America calling for more social justice, influenced mainly by the Cuban Revolution (1953-1959), amongst other socialist initiatives. At the same time, there was a need to find new ways to maintain local economies without accepting the monopoly and profit of international enterprises. In this context, socialist ideas spread across the hemisphere, primarily focused against U.S. imperialism.

This political upheaval created a sense of unity among many Latin American countries. And, despite the fact that these states had different levels of foreign intervention and diverse social and cultural developments, they were unified by a social element: the fight for social justice and longing for change was understood as something relevant to the whole subcontinent. The common spirit of correspondence and the internationalism, arising from this sociopolitical context, paved the way for the establishment of a number of networks for solidarity and protest.

Under these conditions, a number of artists across Latin America turned to art as a tool for demonstration, aiming to foster social change. During this period, some artists and critics also looked for ways to describe this artistic production, identifying aspects they considered characteristic of the Latin American subcontinent. Within this framework, the symposium on conceptual art from Latin America Rethinking Conceptualism: Avant-Garde, Activism and Politics in Latin American Art (1960s-1980s) presents an overview of conceptual art practices in Latin America from the 1960s to the 1980s, showing its characteristics and particularities that set it apart from the mainstream conceptualist art canon in Europe and the U.S.

One of the aims of this event is to spread awareness of this lesser-known moment in art history in Germany, showing how Latin American artists explored the potential of art, politics and the avant-garde. Additionally, the project strives to make visible the links between Latin America and Germany, by showing the work of the protagonists of that period and their ties to Germany, and by presenting an exhibition of works by Latin American artists living in Berlin, who depict their view of Latin America from the diaspora.

Katerina Valdivia Bruch
Artistic director and curator



Theories on Latin American Art: Juan Acha, Marta Traba, Luis Camnitzer

Wed., 10 March 2021



**JOAQUÍN BARRIENDOS** 

Curator and researcher, Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, UNAM, Mexico City

Juan Acha: Rethinking Latin America from the Margins



MARÍA MERCEDES HERRERA BUITRAGO

Art historian and independent curator, Bogotá

Para una teoría del arte latinoamericano. Marta Traba y la vanguardia no objetual (For a Theory on Latin American Art: Marta Traba and the Non-Objectual Avant-Garde)



**LUIS CAMNITZER** 

Artist and theorist, New York

Conceptualism in Latin America: Didactics of Liberation, 14 Years Later

Moderated by Katerina Valdivia Bruch

DAY 2

Havana Utopia

Thursday, 11 March 2021



## **GERARDO MOSQUERA**

Independent curator and art critic, La Habana/Madrid

The presentation will briefly examine the Havana Biennial's collective creation of a new internationalism in art in the framework of Cold War's Cuba and its Third World politics, and the contradictions it involved.

Moderated by Katerina Valdivia Bruch



## Conceptualism in Hélio Oiticica and Gloria Gómez-Sánchez

Friday, 12 March 2021



LISETTE LAGNADO

Curator and author, former co-curator 11th Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art, São Paulo/Berlin

The Intricacies of Hélio Oiticica's Conceptualism in his "Programa Ambiental"



**EMILIO TARAZONA** 

Independent curator, Lima/Bogotá

Por un arte de propagación: Gloria Gómez-Sánchez y los inicios del conceptualismo en el Perú (For an Art of Dissemination: Gloria Gómez-Sánchez and the Beginning of Conceptualism in Peru)

Moderated by Daniela Labra

DAY 4

The First Latin American Conference on Non-Objectual Art and Urban Art

Wed., 17 March 2021



**JORGE LOPERA** 

Independent researcher and curator, Medellín/Mexico City

Primer Coloquio Latinoamericano sobre Arte No-objetual y Arte Urbano: búsquedas de un pensamiento visual independiente (First Latin American Conference on Non-Objectual Art and Urban Art: A Quest for an Independent Visual Thought)

Moderated by Katerina Valdivia Bruch



Artists' Archives and Collectives

Thursday, 18 March 2021



**ANA LONGONI** 

Art historian and curator, Director of Public Programmes at MNCARS (Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía), Buenos Aires/Madrid

Embutes de la memoria (Memory Hideouts)



## VANIA MARKARIAN

Historian, Archivo General de la Universidad de la República (AGU-UdelaR), Montevideo

Clemente Padín en el Archivo General de la Universidad de la República (Clemente Padín at the Archivo General de la Universidad de la República)\*



FERNANDA CARVAJAL

Sociologist and researcher, member of Red Conceptualismos del Sur, Santiago de Chile/Buenos Aires

Astucia práctica y potencias de lo común en el Archivo CADA (Practical Cleverness and the Power of the Common in CADA's Archive)

Moderated by Mayra Bottaro

\*Video presentation co-authored with Julio Cabrio (AGU-UdelaR)



Art, Memory and Violence: Examples from Colombia and Perú

Friday, 19 March 2021



## **ÓSCAR ARDILA LUNA**

Art historian and independent curator, Bogotá/Berlin

Campos de memoria/Erinnerungsfelder. Intervenciones artísticas en el espacio público en Colombia, 2000-2011 (Fields of Memory: Artistic Interventions in Public Spaces in Colombia, 2000-2011)



## **VÍCTOR VICH**

Researcher and author, Full Professor at Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú and Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes, Lima

Noticia última: los nuevos lenguajes de la memoria (Breaking News: The New Languages of Memory)

Moderated by María Linares

DAY 7

Latin American Women Artists Wednesday, 24 March 2021



CECILIA FAJARDO-HILL

Art historian and independent curator, Southern California and New York

Conceptualisms in Radical Women: Latin American Art, 1960–1985



**CLAUDIA CALIRMAN** 

Art historian and curator, Associate Professor of Art History at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, New York

Sticking Out The Tongue: Brazilian Women Artists in the 1970s

Moderated by Mayra Bottaro



Discussion: Third Cinema and Internationalism

Thursday, 25 March 2021



**CECILIA LACRUZ** 

Film researcher, Grupo de Estudios Audiovisuales, GEstA-UdelaR, Montevideo

Una imagen para el Tercer cine (An Image for Third Cinema)



**OLIVIER HADOUCHI** 

Independent film researcher (PhD in Film Studies) and curator, Paris

Sources, Origins and Projects of Third Cinema in the Context of Latin American Film Manifestos & Third World's Struggles



**MIGUEL ERRAZU** 

Independent film researcher, Madrid/Mexico City

Internacionalismo y localismo en el Tercer cine mexicano (Internationalism and Localism in Mexican Third Cinema)



**MARIANO MESTMAN** 

Researcher in cultural history, CONICET-UBA, Buenos Aires

Latinoamericanismo/Tercermundismo (1968-1974): Del Congreso Cultural de La Habana a los Estados Generales del Tercer Cine (Latin Americanism/Third Worldism (1968-1974): From the Havana Cultural Congress to the General Estates of Third Cinema)

In conversation with Peter B. Schumann

The discussion will take place in Spanish/La discusión tendrá lugar en español

The videos with the conferences will be available in English or in Spanish with English subtitles/ Los videos con las conferencias estarán disponibles en inglés o en español con subtítulos en inglés

#### Team:

Artistic director and project manager:



Katerina Valdivia Bruch Independent curator and arts writer Berlin

Moderators during the Q & A sessions:



Daniela Labra Curator and art critic Rio de Janeiro/Berlin



Mayra Bottaro Scholar, Latin American Studies Association Oregon and Philadelphia



María Linares Artist Bogotá/Berlin

Moderator during the discussion Third Cinema and Internationalism:



Peter B. Schumann Journalist, specialised in Latin American topics (radio, television, publications) and author of the book "Historia del cine latinoamericano" (Buenos Aires, 1987), Berlin

Additional programme at Instituto Cervantes Berlin:

Exhibition Between Personal Chronicles and Collective Memory

Opening: 26 March 2021, 19:00 h

Artists: María Linares, Daniela Lehmann Carrasco, Ana María Millán,

Yoel Díaz Vázquez

Opening hours: 11:00 - 19:00 h

Workshops with the artists: 27 March 2021, 11:00 - 14:00 h

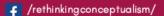
Address: Instituto Cervantes Berlin, Rosenstraße 18, 10178 Berlin

Note: Due to the pandemic, the dates of the exhibition are subject to change. We will keep you informed, if there will be further changes.

# Rethinking Conceptualism: Avant-Garde, Activism and Politics in Latin American Art (1960s-1980s)

A project by Katerina Valdivia Bruch

web: www.rethinkingconceptualism.com





麘 "Rethinking Conceptualism" and https://anchor.fm/rethinkingconceptualism"

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