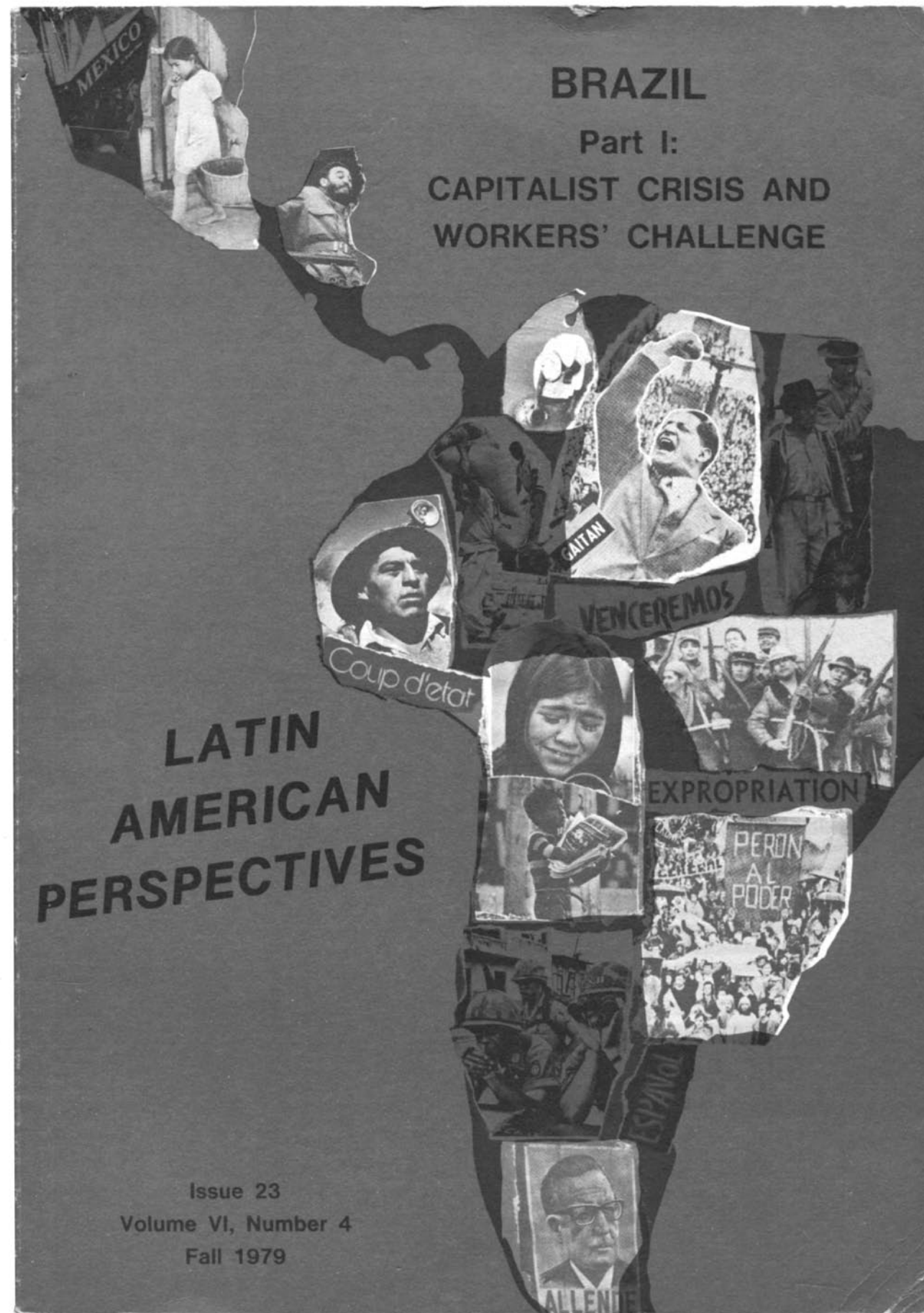




THE COUNTER-PUBLIC SPHERE
IN THE CONDOR YEARS

POETICS OF THE COUNTER-PUBLIC SPHERE IN THE CONDOR YEARS

NICOLÁS GUAGNINI



US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and Augusto Pinochet shake hands, 1976.

In 1968, US four star General Robert W. Porter Jr., who served as Commander-in-Chief of the United States Southern Command from 1965 to 1969, stated that “in order to facilitate the coordinated employment of internal security forces within and among Latin American countries, we are...endeavoring to foster interservice and regional cooperation by assisting in the organization of integrated command and control centers; the establishment of common operating procedures; and the conduct of joint and combined training exercises.”¹ The idea of Operation Condor was thus cemented as a perverse late 20th century offshoot of the Monroe Doctrine of American hemispherical influence. Plans were developed at the US Army School of the Americas and the Conference of American Armies. A declassified CIA document dated June 23, 1976 reveals that “in early 1974, security officials from Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay, and Bolivia met in Buenos Aires to prepare coordinated actions against subversive targets.”² The United States government provided planning, coordination, technical support, training on torture, counterintelligence and propaganda maneuvers, and supplied military aid to the juntas that it backed and helped put in place; most notoriously through the assassination of the Chilean president-elect Salvador Allende on September 11, 1973 to install General Pinochet in his place. The policies and actions resulting from the Condor years span the Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Carter, and Reagan administrations.

A recurrent character in this story, appearing next to each general in each country in many pictures, is Henry Kissinger. Naturally, such support was routed and articulated through the CIA in close dialogue with him.³

Operation Condor, or Condor Plan, as it is also referred to, was put in place in the context of the Cold War to stop the forces of the left from advancing in the subcontinent. The socialist Allende had been legitimately elected in Chile, and the Focoismo, or “Foco” (focus) theory was adopted widely. Counter to predominant Marxist thought, this theory proposed that there was no need to wait for the “objective conditions” of a popular uprising before entering the last stage of the revolutionary, that is armed, struggle. Foco theory was based on the experience of Che Guevara in Cuba, and formalized by the French intellectual Régis Debray, who taught at the University of Havana in 1960 and was captured and jailed in Bolivia in 1967 during the trip that cost Guevara his life. It posited that a vanguard of small, fast-moving paramilitary cadres could provide a focal point for popular discontent against a ruling regime, and thereby lead a general insurrection. Although the original theory argued for mobilizing and launching attacks from rural areas, by the late 1960s Foco tactics began to be adopted by urban guerrilla warfare movements. Guevara himself stressed that this theory was ideally suited for Third World countries where guerrilleros had to look for support among both the urban workers and the peasants.

While the overall repression launched against the populations of the countries affected by Operation Condor, and especially in Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Chile was presented in the strictly controlled press as a contained war against guerrilla groups (later manipulatively referred to as the “Dirty War”), it really amounted to a tout court prosecution of the intelligentsia, organized labor, and workers in the cultural industries. Universities and unions were prime targets. Disappearance, torture, and exile were forced onto significant swaths of the population. The number of victims is not totally clear, but the objective is. The aim of Operation Condor was to obtain total control of public institutions, public space and public discourse, which were to be completely purged from any element not obedient to the juntas, which in turn obeyed Washington and its obsession with suppressing any ideological current affiliated with Marxism. This subjugation of a group of nation states to one larger state was achieved by force.

The unquestioned conviction behind the very formulation of the state is that political power is manifested within a relation that ultimately comes down to coercion. Max Weber theorized this relationship succinctly by defining the existence of the state itself as an entity having the monopoly of the legitimate use of power. Of course this alleged legitimacy is already historically linked to numerous post-colonial excesses in the South American nation states as well as in the

¹ Jan Knipppers Black: *United States Penetration of Brazil* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1977), 211.

² J. Patrice McSherry: *Predatory States: Operation Condor and Covert War in Latin America* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 78.

³ Greg Grandin: *The Last Colonial Massacre: Latin America in the Cold War* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 75.

United States, particularly in respect to the ongoing decimation of what was left of the Indigenous peoples and their culture. The legitimacy of state power played out in a perennially contested battlefield of checks and balances in the periods in which these South American countries were democracies, but became a matter of outright abuse during the dictatorships. Thus the public sphere under a dictatorial state power, with curfews and restrictions on the right to assembly, cannot be conceptualized outside the threat of coercive or actualized violence.



The term “public sphere” was originally coined in 1962 by German philosopher Jürgen Habermas, who defined it in general terms as an imaginary community, which does not necessarily exist in a specific physical space; it is a discursive space in which individuals and groups associate to discuss matters of mutual interest.⁴ As Nancy Fraser put it, the public sphere is also “a theater in modern societies in which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk.”⁵ The notion of a public sphere revolves around how participatory democracy and public opinion become political action. A legitimate government listens to this “social theater” and is in turn influenced by the public sphere.

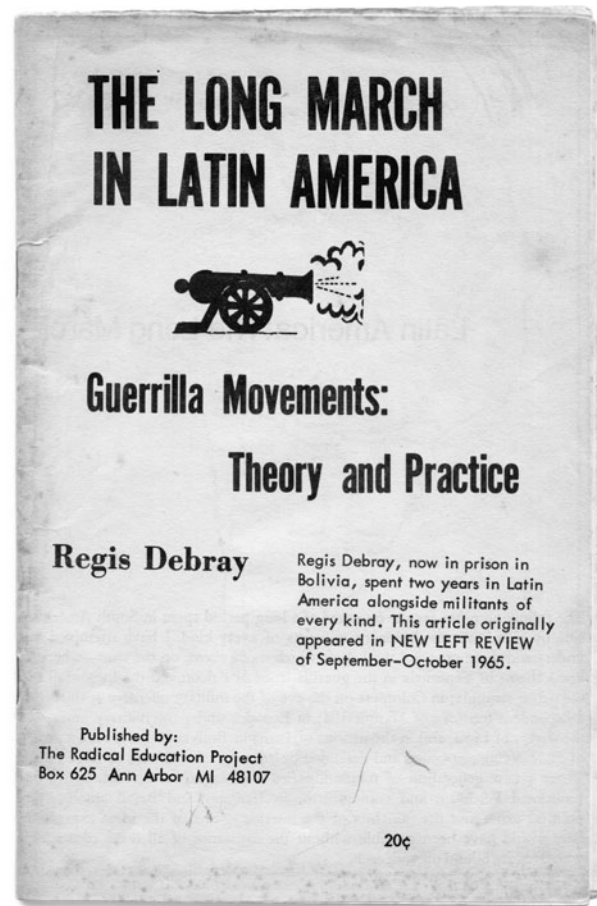
Contemporary with and unrelated to Operation Condor, Alexander Kluge and Oskar Negt produced a polemical reply to Habermas’ thesis in which they coined and defined the attendant counter-term. In their 1972 collaboration *Public Sphere and Experience: Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere* they argued that the Habermasian public sphere was one that ignored the existence of other public spheres and reflected and protected the specific interests of the bourgeoisie.⁶ Their thesis contrasted a proletarian public sphere with the dominant one predicated on access to a Kantian sovereign rationality by means of private property ownership. Simply put, the ability to participate in a public sphere determined by those entwined forces would just bespeak privilege. This privilege could thus be challenged in a counter-public sphere.⁷

For the purpose of appropriating and deploying the term in an analysis of some specific art practices of the Condor period in Chile, Argentina and Brazil, I will equate the dialectical opposition bourgeois/proletarian in a legitimate democratic state with the convergent but not entirely identical opposition of the conglomerate formed by the owners of the means of economic production (both industrial and agricultural oligarchies) and the US-backed generals versus the intelligentsia and the general population, including the middle class and the peasants and proletarians.⁸ Of course, in the second construct, the one corresponding to the

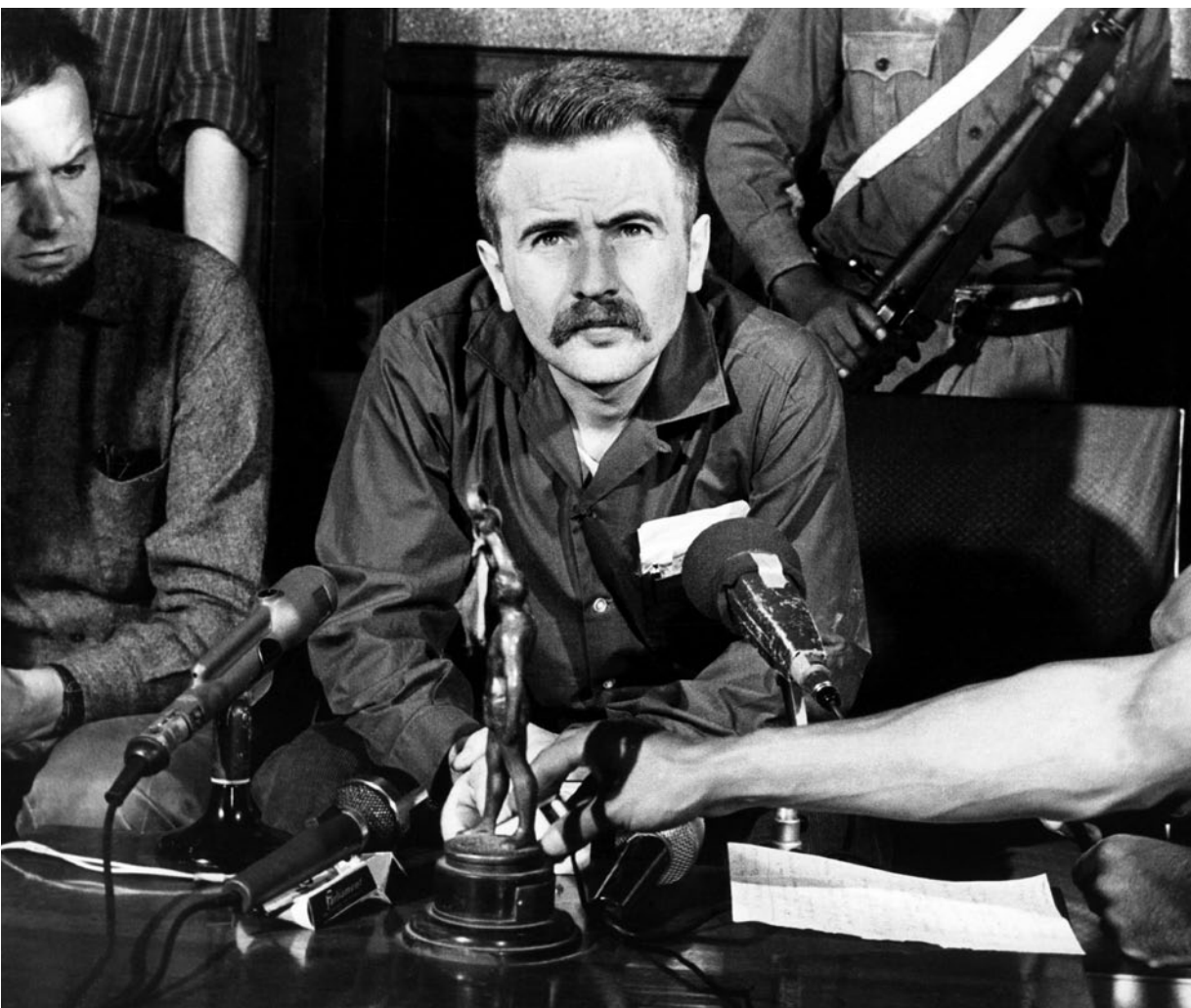
cultural milieus of South American countries under the effects of Operation Condor, the use of coercion, torture and general censorship exponentially amplifies the domination exercised by means of capital in the first. A dictatorship can necessarily only be met with a counter-public sphere. The common traditional and historical designation for what I refer to as counter-public sphere in this exhibition and text was “resistance”—a concept which remains operative today.

The specific historicity of an instance of resistance is never that of achieving stability, but that of a process of endless recuperation. Behind the inaugural dates and places a continuous labor of reconstruction has never stopped taking place. Resistance folds back onto itself and is projected in time—political processes are ongoing. The most historicized culture of resistance during the Condor years revolves around the human rights movements, the alternative press, and cultural production, especially in the fields of visual arts, film, and theater, that addressed the effects of repression in a direct, representative manner.⁹ Needless to say, at the time, mere participation in the construction of this resistance as a component of a counter-public sphere implied severe personal risk. All these practices are of unquestionable value, as are the discourses and exhibitions, among other manifestations, that enact and make possible their recuperation.

Yet, in this exhibition I want to define, for the first time, a typology of artwork that generates its own form of inscription, present and historical, in the counter-public sphere, and in the archive as an integral part of the work itself. What differentiates these works from direct representational modes is that they take place in and/or address public and institutional space (public squares, museums, roads, the sovereign territory); that they occupy such public space in a surreptitious and unexpected manner that converges with the postulates



of Foco theory for revolutionary urban action; that they are simultaneously hermetic and polysemic while still directly talking back to their authoritarian conditions of production; and that, in their abiding simplicity, they attain a maximum of possibilities with a minimum of resources, poetically disrupting the symbolic order with the most economic of means.¹⁰



Régis Debray holds a press conference to announce his detainment by the Bolivian government, 1967.

4 Jürgen Habermas: *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry Into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989. Originally published 1962 in German under the title *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* by Hermann Luchterhand Verlag, Darmstadt and Neuwied).

5 Nancy Fraser: “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy,” *Social Text*, no. 25/26 (1990): 57.

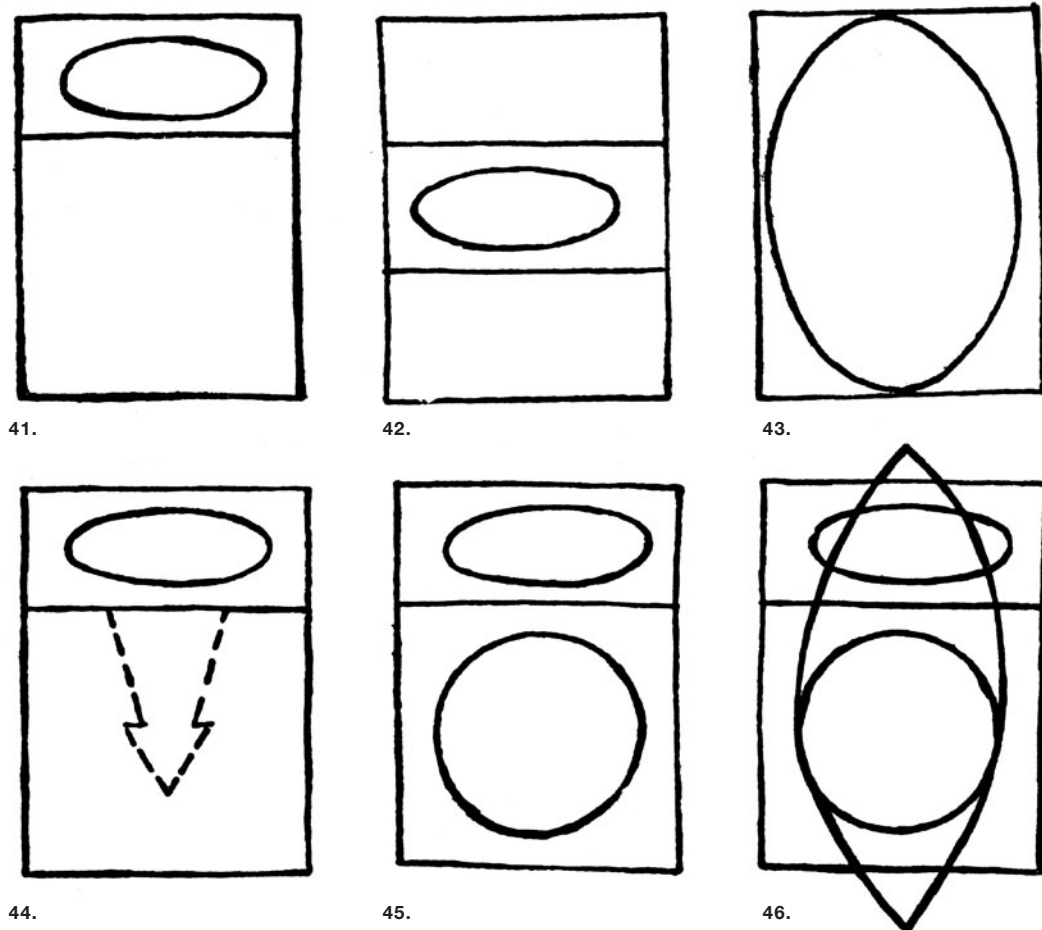
6 Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge: *Public Sphere and Experience: Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993. Originally published 1972 in German under the title *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung: Zur Organisationsanalyse von bürgerlicher und proletarischer Öffentlichkeit* by Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main).

7 The challenge to this understanding that privilege determines the public sphere is very much alive in the current debates around museum boards and restitution of artifacts stolen during the colonial period.

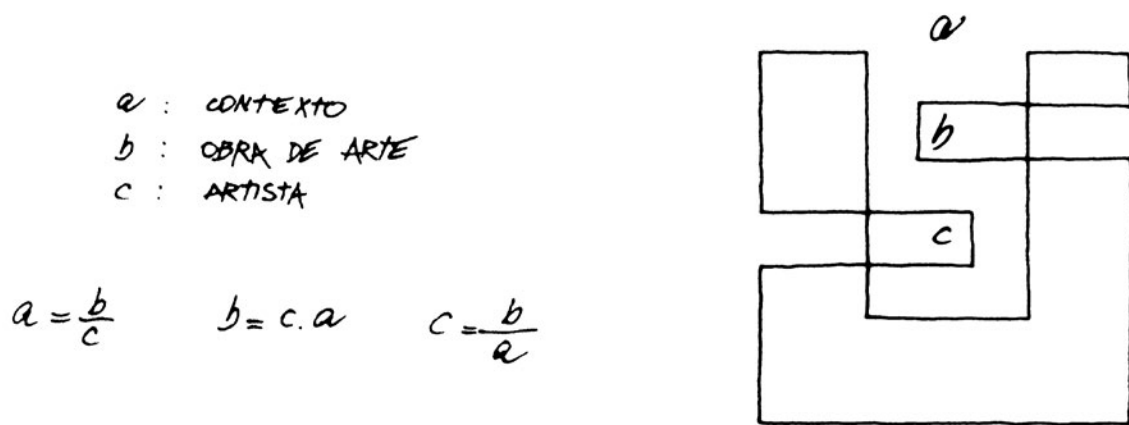
8 For the purpose of this essay I will maintain the idea of this proposed equivalence. Yet, it could be fruitful to consider dialectical and hybridized forms. The mixed economy of China might offer another example, where a popular revolution mutates into a communist/capitalist hybrid that, for better or worse, does lift a majority of the population out of poverty while keeping dictatorial levels of state control. The degeneration of popular revolutionary forces in Egypt, Nicaragua, Zimbabwe, etc. would be another case in point. The challenge of a more nuanced argument would be to determine the valence of proletarian classes within these shifting dynamics.

9 This distinction echoes the debates of the late 1930s and 1940s in the Argentine leftist avant-garde between realist painters defending positions aligned with Antonio Berni or the Mexican Muralists and the Concrete artists. As usual, Tomás Maldonado sums up the issue succinctly: “To present is the opposite of to represent.” Tomás Maldonado: “¿Adónde va la pintura?: Contesta Tomás Maldonado,” *Contrapunto: literatura—crítica—arte*, vol. 1, no.3 (April 1943): 10–11. Translation mine.

10 “A Maximum of Possibilities with a Minimum of Resource” is the title of an excellent text by Fernando Davis published in *Horacio Zabala: 300 metros de cinta negra para encintar una plaza pública*, Buenos Aires: Otra Cosa, 47. In this text, Davis unpacks the Althusserian roots of the ideological context in which Zabala’s work in this exhibition was produced.



41. Italian Stage. The actors are separated from the audience and always act within the same fixed area.
42. Theatre in the round (central stage). Although the position of the stage changes, the barrier between actor and spectator remains.
43. Theatre Laboratory. Actors and spectators are no longer separated. The whole room becomes the stage and, at the same time, the place for the spectators.
44. In the period of theatre reform at the beginning of our century, attempts were made (by Meyerhold, Placator and others) to bring the actors down from time to time among the audience. The stage is still, however the centre of the action.
45. The spectators are considered a unity of potential participants. The actors address them or may occasionally even be placed in the midst of them.
46. Theatre Laboratory. Here the producer always keeps in mind that he has two "ensembles" to direct: the actors and the spectators. The performance results from an integration of these to "ensembles".



11 Dias had a solo show at CAYC in 1973, and participated in a group show that same year. Rosenfeld’s video was presented in the context of a group screening in late 1979.

12 Antonio Dias’ friend and critic of reference in Brazil was Paulo Sérgio Duarte. Dias’ work has been discussed in the context of “Nova Objetividade,” a movement crystallized by the eponymous exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in Rio in 1967, the last major show in Brazil the artist participated in before leaving the country; the denomination “Popcreto” has been felicitously applied to his early work. Zabala can be seen in the context of the Grupo de los 13 and generally within the activities of CAYC in Buenos Aires, which director Jorge Glusberg has chronicled in a range of texts. The activities of the CADA group and of Lotty Rosenfeld have been contextualized in Chile as part of the “Escena de Avanzada,” a denomination and period thoroughly theorized by Nelly Richard, María Eugenia Brito, and Justo Pastor Mellado.

13 After 1968, the situation in Brazil deteriorated and several leading artists and intellectuals left. In 1969, the Revolutionary Movement 8 October kidnapped the US ambassador to Brazil, Charles Burke Elbrick. In exchange for the ambassador, the group demanded the release of imprisoned dissidents who were being tortured. The government responded by adopting more brutal measures leading to the assassination of Carlos Marighela, a guerrilla leader, two months after Elbrick’s kidnapping. These events precipitated the so-called “lead years” of harder repression. In parallel with Dias leaving for Milan, Hélio Oiticica went into exile, first in London and then in New York, and Lygia Clark moved to Paris in 1968, where she lived until 1976.

14 There is a 1968 version of *Freedom Territory* in a private collection in São Paulo in which the lines are black and another version with white lines photographed at Studio Marconi in Milan and reproduced in 1969 in the seventeenth issue of the French magazine *Opus*; a third version, also white, is dated 1968/2012 and is in the Daros Collection in Switzerland. Additionally, *Freedom Territory* appears to have sometimes been combined with another piece, *To the Police* (1968), a set of hand-sized rocks that were placed on the intersections of the grid.

15 Luis Camnitzer: *Conceptualism in Latin American Art: Didactics of Liberation* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007), 191, 201. At the time, conceptual artists in the United States prioritized tautological linguistic representation over visual representation, eschewing any relationship with the social horizon, much less a political position.

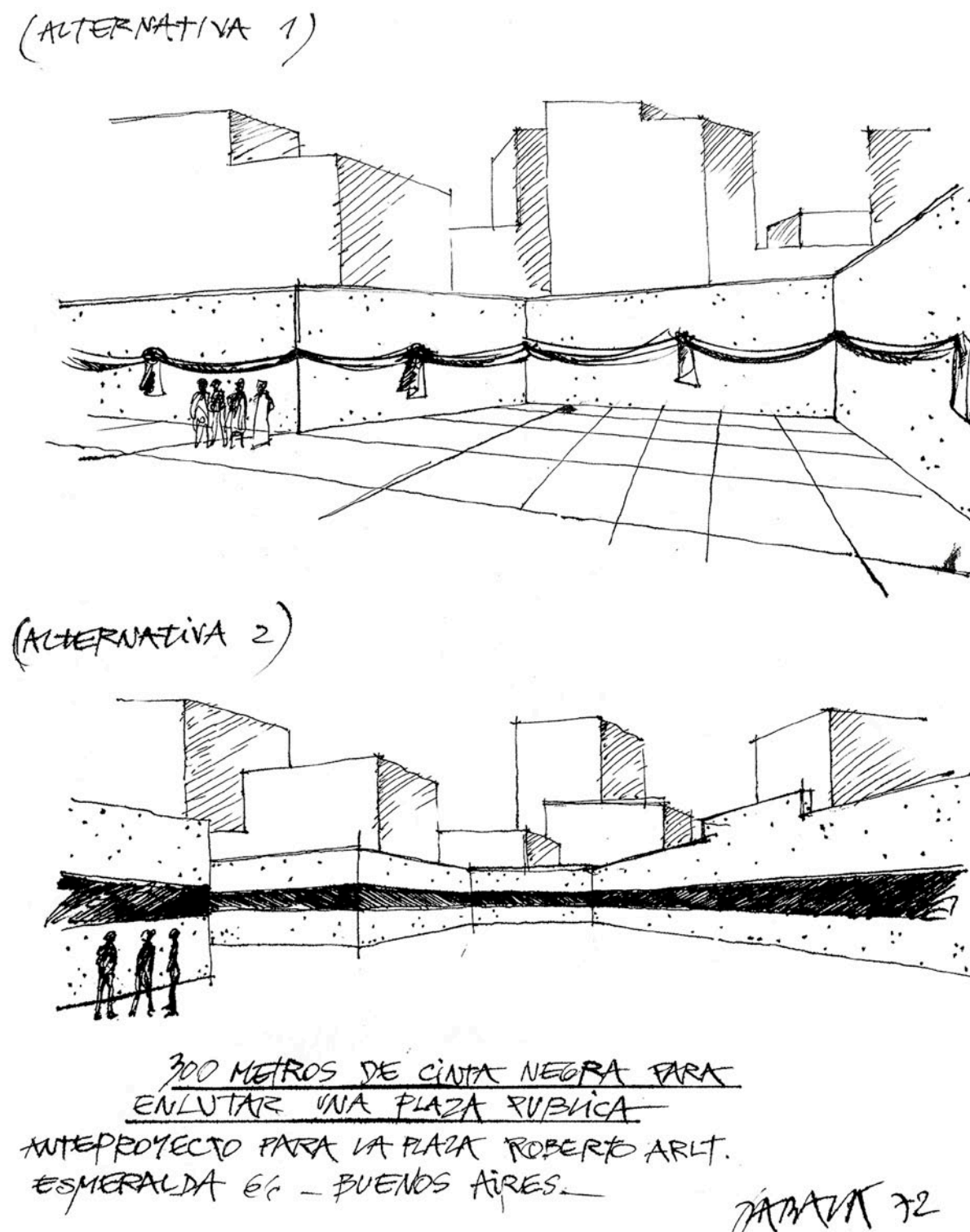
contrary, the sobriety of the white sans serif lettering on a flat black flag and the invocation of the grid to subversive territorial ends suggest the possibility of a free rational order, piercing through the oppressive alienated “reality” of an everyday life created by state-controlled mass media. Dias’ precise and poetic insubordination does not obey a chaotic impulse, but instead is analytical and rooted in concrete poetry. In this distinction lies the difference between resistance as an act of consciousness and mere expressive rebellion. Rebellion of any kind, from dissenting political activism to long hair, was generally presented in the discourses of the right as a dangerous anarchistic threat to a sacred (and Catholic) social order, a menace enabled by the exploitation of a misguided and immature youth by Marxist ideologues. Rebellion could be re-appropriated by the generals as irrational and infantile destruction. Dias’ late sixties lucid insurrectional invocation of a non-alienated order towards the creation of a counter-public sphere is *cosa mentale*, in the sense of (conceptual) art.

On Friday, November 12, 1971 Jerzy Grotowski, the Polish theater director responsible for formulating and theorizing the idea of a “poor theater,” was invited to lecture at the CAYC center in Buenos Aires. He spoke from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Jorge Glusberg, the critic-impresario who created and ran the institution and issued the invitation, later wrote “Some days later, we were inviting several visual artists in order to create a working team in the “Grotowskian Lab” style.... After some meetings, 13 guests were on the short list out of the original 25; chance and fortune had repeated the number of chairs of the theater that Grotowski founded in Opole twelve years before.”¹⁶ That was the genesis of the Grupo de los 13 (Group of 13), which counted Horacio Zabala among its members.

The ideology of Grotowski’s poor theater is aligned with two other post war manifestations theorized by Europeans which can be situated in opposition to the rising global dominance of American art and culture in synch with the advance of the spectacular forces of television and mass media, and with an awareness of local conditions of production emphasizing an economy of means: Italian/Brazilian architect Lina Bo Bardi’s “poor architecture,” a result of the formative experience of living in Salvador in the north-eastern state of Bahia from 1958–63, one of the poorest cities in Brazil and the one with the highest Afro-Brazilian population;¹⁷

16 Jorge Glusberg: “Origen del grupo CAYC,” in *Grupo CAYC Patagonia* (Buenos Aires: Ruth Benzacar Gallery, 1988), unpaginated. Translation mine. The Group of 13 was later renamed Group CAYC, which existed in different formations over the years; at times the founder, critic, curator and impresario Glusberg included himself as a participating artist. Glusberg’s trajectory took an ugly turn during the 1976–83 dictatorship as he participated in the 1977 São Paulo Biennial as the Argentine delegate with the CAYC group, and, after obtaining the first prize, sent a telegram to General Videla expressing his pride for “representing the humanism of Argentine Art outside of the country.” Simultaneously, the junta ran a propaganda campaign to deny violations of human right as subversive smears of exiled activists to denigrate the humanity of Argentines. Camnitzer: *Conceptualism in Latin American Art*, 304–5n10. Later in 1977, Glusberg, who financed the CAYC with his lighting company Modulor, won the lucrative contract to provide lighting for the stadiums that the junta built for the FIFA World Cup in July 1978.

17 After a decade of both public and private building projects in Brazil, Bo Bardi’s Bahia Museum of Popular Art, which was informed by her concept of “poor” architecture, was deemed subversive by the military government, which occupied and closed it in 1964, and forced Bo Bardi to resign as director.



Police dismantle the exhibition *Arte e Ideologia*, CAYC al Aire Libre, 1972.

and “Arte Povera” or “poor art,” a term coined by Italian critic Germano Celant in 1967 at the onset of the eponymous movement which had its epicenter in Turin. Fully discussing these formulations in relationship to South America must be the subject of another essay. Here, I merely want to highlight two basic similarities that became congruently operative in the activities of the formative moment of the Group of 13 and in Horacio Zabala’s early work towards generating a counter-public sphere: a desire to work with whatever resources are available at the site of cultural production (which in architectural terms naturally includes existing structures) while abandoning ideas of traditional technique and material requirements; and a rejection to the spectacular deployment of alienating technology (in lieu of content), favoring instead modes of communication not mediated by an external structural power. As Grotowski put it: “No matter how much theatre expands and exploits its mechanical resources, it will remain technologically inferior to film and television. Consequently, I propose poverty in theatre. We have resigned from the

stage-and-auditorium plant: for each production, a new space is designed for the actors and spectators.”¹⁸

The second dictum, which calls for generating a new spatial and situational relationship between actors and spectators, was directly applied by the Group of 13 in September 1972 in the exhibition *Arte e Ideologia*, CAYC al Aire Libre (Art and Ideology, CAYC Outdoors), held in the Plaza Roberto Arlt in downtown Buenos Aires, an irregularly shaped public square with two entry points occupying roughly one third of a city block. In the context of visual art, the breakdown of the separation that Grotowski had theorized for the theater took the form of short-circuiting the traditional continuity between studio, object, and exhibition by making the public square the site of both production and reception. There are diagrams of Grotowski’s spatial solutions in the Theatre Laboratory that show strong resemblances with Zabala’s schemes outlining the integrative dialectics between artist, artwork, and context. The programmatic introduction of the public space into these equations is perhaps the most poignant contribution of the Group of 13.

18 Jerzy Grotowski: *Towards a Poor Theater*, ed. by Eugenio Barba (New York: Routledge, 2002. First published 1968 by Odin Teatret Forlag, Denmark), 19. Antonin Artaud’s “Theater of Cruelty” is often placed in genealogical relationship to both Grotowski’s “Poor Theater” and Tadeusz Kantor’s “Theater of Death.” All three propositions are in a dialogue with the crucial South American theater developments of the period: “Panic Theater,” by Alejandro Jodorowsky, Fernando Arrabal, and Ronald Topor; and Augusto Boal’s “Theater of the Oppressed.”

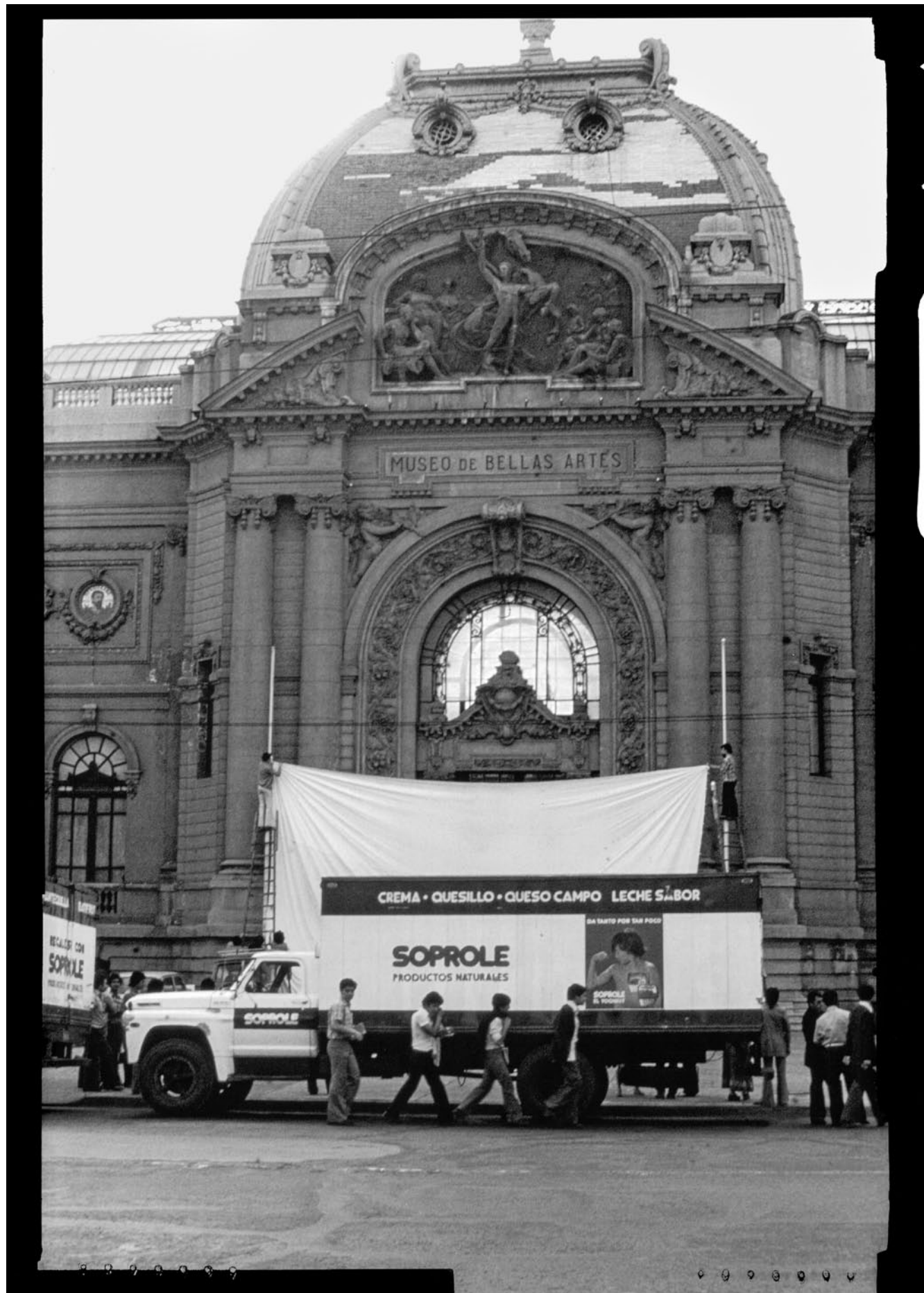
19 Horacio Zabala: *Vademecum para artistas: Observaciones sobre el arte contemporáneo* (Buenos Aires: Asunto Impreso Ediciones, 2009), 16. Translation mine.



2012 reconstruction of *300 metros de cinta negra para enlutar una plaza pública* by Horacio Zabala, 1972.

Art and Ideology opened a month after the Trelew Massacre. Sixteen political prisoners who belonged to the guerrilla groups FAR (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias*/Revolutionary Armed Forces), ERP (*Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo*/People’s Revolutionary army), and Montoneros, and were jailed in the Rawson Prison, located in the frigid and isolated Patagonian province of Chubut, were summarily executed by firing squad on an airbase near the city of Trelew on August 22, 1972, in retaliation for an alleged escape attempt. Zabala’s contribution to *Art and Ideology* was *300 metros de cinta negra para enlutar una plaza pública* (300 Meters of Black Plastic to Swath a Public Square in Mourning), which consisted of a strip of black plastic about one meter wide enclosing the entire perimeter of the square interrupted at periodical intervals by bows. Black industrial plastic is of course as “poor” a material as there is, as it was and is utilized for the production of garbage bags. The piece effectively turned the public square into a funeral parlor. The actualization of a private space of mourning in a public space is what gives political meaning to the work—yet the Trelew Massacre was never mentioned. Zabala negates the politics of active representation, stating “the artist doesn’t introduce messages or meanings in the work, but instead activates possible images and ideas.”¹⁹ This polysemic intervention by poetic activation is aligned with the disruption of the symbolic order of the state in Dias’ inverted “reality” counter-flag. The reality of repression, however, violently intruded in Zabala’s evocation of a mortuary in architectural space. Three days after the show opened, the police took down the entire exhibition, confiscated the works, and the Municipality of Buenos Aires initiated legal proceedings against Glusberg as the exhibition organizer.

The CADA group, formed in Chile in 1979, six years into Pinochet’s reign of terror, does away altogether with the ideas of both artist and exhibition. The invocation of collectivity, art, and, more importantly, action, in their acronym (*Colectivo Acciones de Arte*/Art Actions Collective) is suggestive of a guerrilla group and exemplifies the reach of Debray’s Foco theory as a methodological tool in the seventies. The program of CADA was to generate poetic, consciousness-raising surprise actions that simultaneously amounted to artworks and instances of surreptitious civil disobedience. Public space here meant the entire city. Consequently, CADA actions did not have a privileged and unified experiential viewpoint as they unfolded in space and time on the streets of Santiago. Only two



One of eight milk trucks outside the Museo de Bellas Artes for *Inversión de Escena*, 1979.



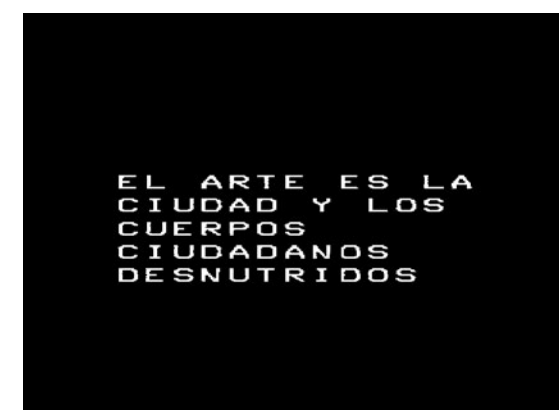
Members of CADA cover the facade of Museo de Bellas Artes for *Inversión de Escena*, 1979.

of the five participants were visual artists. Two others, the poet Raul Zurita and the writer Diamela Eltit, had met in 1974 in a reading group that experimented with acting exercises based on the theories of Antonin Artaud. Zurita recalls: “All we did was screaming. At the time people were being killed, and tortured, and we screamed and screamed. It wasn’t Artaud, even if we believed it was. It was Chile.” Eltit locates her first contact with a breakdown of disciplines in that experience: “We did some voice exercises with Artaud texts that strain the body under extreme tension and then we tried different praxes in order to stage and actualize those texts. Those experiences pointed to a destruction of traditional criteria of reading, and of disciplinary distinctions like theater or filmmaking.”²⁰ Their cathartic encounter with Artaud would be metabolized in precise actions.

CADA member and sociologist Fernando Balcells defined what they meant by action: “In CADA actions, problems regarding the social construction of reality were posed. Problems concerning the status of language, of images.”²¹ His definitions are strikingly similar to Kluge and Negt’s calling for a counter-public sphere where the privilege of sovereign rationality to utter public speech is not exclusively in the hands of those with power: “‘Social sculpture’ is the production of landscape and space as the artwork of a community. In that sense every person that works in the expansion of his or her life space is also an artist.”²² CADA eliminated the notion of the subjectivity of the artist as an exclusive channel to operate in the symbolic world.

On October 17, 1977, CADA carried out the second of their five subversive actions, *Inversión de escena* (Scene Inversion). The title again points to theater, as

in the creation of a scene; and the strategy of inversion is connected to Dias’ *Eye Patch* in the form of a flag with mirrored writing and Zabala’s presentation of an interior space in a public square. In their own description: “Ten milk trucks initiate a programmed route through the city of Santiago, from a milk factory, and end up lined in front of the Fine Arts Museum, this route is destined to unite a milk production center and an art conservation center. This union is



consummate by hanging at the entrance of the museum a white cloth measuring one hundred square meters closing the entrance. The city is the museum offered in the contemplation of its own lacks.”²³ The execution of these two components of an unauthorized action depended on contingencies and ruses. CADA members had gotten word that the Museum director had undergone surgery and was not going to be there. To organize the truck procession (which

ended up being only eight trucks instead of ten) from the milk producer Soprole they convinced a company manager that it would be a publicity stunt equating their brand with fine arts in front of the most prestigious museum in the country—without any mention of the cloth blocking access to the museum and occluding its facade. After the action, and when the ideology of CADA’s activities dawned on them, Soprole officials attempted unsuccessfully to acquire the documentation of the action, and changed their logo.²⁴

The symbolism of the action must be unpacked in relationship to its context. Salvador Allende had promised the free distribution of half a liter of milk to each Chilean child to mitigate chronic malnourishment (that is the “lack” of the city referred to in the description), an important social outreach program that was cancelled under the dictatorship.²⁵ Often pictures would be censored from newspapers and magazines at the last minute, leaving large empty white spaces. The procession created a “union” between the milk, the city, and the blockaded museum—a Beaux Arts structure with the obligatory steps, columns and neoclassical ornamentation that are recurrent symbols of official state culture throughout South American capitals. It is also an ironic appropriation of military parades, in which tanks roll up avenues, and of Catholic rituals—images of General Pinochet attending mass in uniform were televised frequently. Balcells defends non-linear hermeticism as a possible building block of a non spectacularized public sphere in no uncertain terms: “Artworks with a direct message, in which pain, violence and death are directly represented have a commonality with messages that are dominant in society, such as advertising: they have an univocal and authoritarian

²⁰ The quotes by Zurita and Eltit are from interviews with CADA members by Robert Neustadt. Robert Neustadt: *CADA día: la creación de un arte social* (Santiago de Chile: Cuarto Propio, 2001), 79, 82. Translation mine.

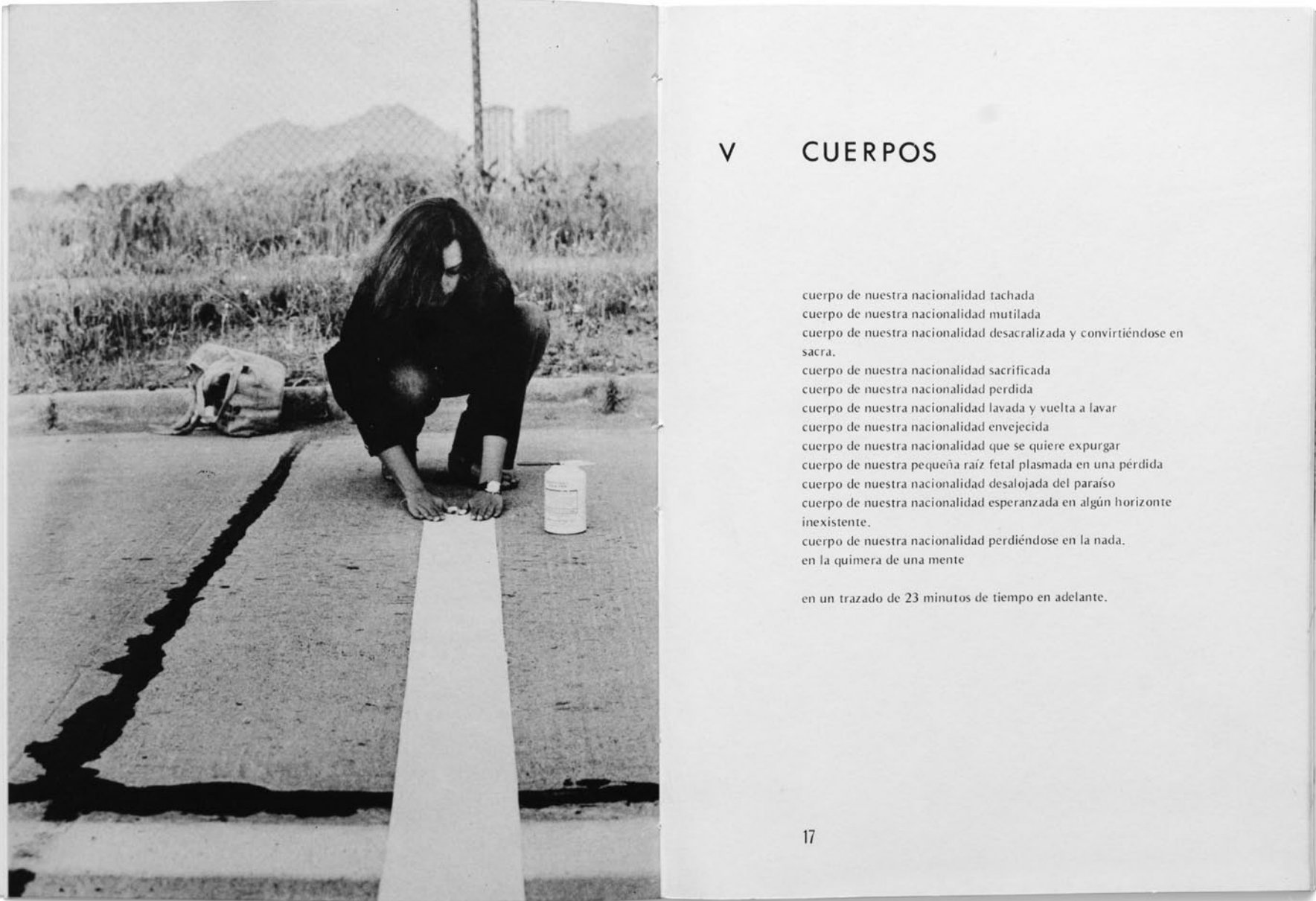
²¹ Neustadt, *CADA*, 69.

²² Neustadt, *CADA*, 70. Balcells was detained without charges and tortured between October and November 1973. He then left Chile for Paris and returned six years later, at the time of CADA’s foundation.

²³ CADA: *Inversión de escena / Inversion of Scene*. Manuscript in Spanish and English, available online: http://www.archivosenuso.org/cada/accion#viewer=viewer/311%3Fas_overlay%3Dtrue&js= (accessed February 13, 2020)

²⁴ This *modus operandi*, which crucially relies on deception and transgression, coincides with the planning of guerrilla actions in urban space. For an analysis of how guerrilla actions by the Foco-oriented group Tupamaros can be read as art, see Camnitzer: *Conceptualism in Latin American Art*, 44–59.

²⁵ Poet and artist Cecilia Vicuña, who was in contact with Zurita, followed up with an action in Bogotá at the behest of CADA later in 1979; it involved spilling a glass of milk in front of the Quinta de Bolívar, a colonial house that had been the home of the soldier and statesman Simón Bolívar and was subsequently turned into a museum in his honor.



V CUERPOS

cuerpo de nuestra nacionalidad tachada
cuerpo de nuestra nacionalidad mutilada
cuerpo de nuestra nacionalidad desacralizada y convirtiéndose en
sacra.
cuerpo de nuestra nacionalidad sacrificada
cuerpo de nuestra nacionalidad perdida
cuerpo de nuestra nacionalidad lavada y vuelta a lavar
cuerpo de nuestra nacionalidad envejecida
cuerpo de nuestra nacionalidad que se quiere expurgar
cuerpo de nuestra pequeña raíz fetal plasmada en una pérdida
cuerpo de nuestra nacionalidad desalojada del paraíso
cuerpo de nuestra nacionalidad esperanzada en algún horizonte
inexistente.
cuerpo de nuestra nacionalidad perdiéndose en la nada.
en la quimera de una mente

en un trazado de 23 minutos de tiempo en adelante.

linearity. These works don't open a space for the spectator to reflect, and don't pose problems or possibilities for dialogue."²⁶

Lotty Rosenfeld is perhaps the artist who most effectively actualized poetic polysemic hermeticism and a critique of authoritarianism in the public space while restricting herself to an extreme economy of means with great clarity. In 1979, Rosenfeld, in synch with her activities with CADA, but operating individually, realized her intervention *Una milla de cruces sobre el pavimento* (A Mile of Crosses on the Pavement) on Manquehue Avenue in Santiago. Rosenfeld pre-cut and rolled up canvas strips that were the same length and width as the white dashed dividing lines on the road; she then proceeded to unroll them and glue their ends down, creating crosses on each line. Pavement markings convey information to road users. The dashed lines mean that you can change lanes. Free circulation was, of course, a contingent and often suspended right during the dictatorship. Rosenfeld's own conceptualization towards the regulation of the quotidian goes well beyond the specificity of the moment, proposing, like Dias, a tout-court critique of the semiotic order of the state: "What I do is to make apparent one of the ways in which power operates in everyday life, introducing a 'crisis' in a sub system of community regulation. An intervention on a sign means precisely to indicate that it as a discourse (which is arbitrary like all discourses because it is cultural), and by exposing this I destroy its order, I throw it into disarray."²⁷

There is a video documenting the action and a modest artist book, published by CADA in 1980 in an edition of 500, which function as supplemental, archival components of the piece. The only language in the video is Rosenfeld's own voice, stating at the beginning "No fui feliz" (No, I wasn't happy). The booklet features a repeated photograph of Rosenfeld on the left pages; she is kneeling on the road, about to place a piece of fabric onto the dividing line to turn it into a cross; in

lieu of exegetical theory and/or factual information, a poem by María Eugenia Brito and Eltit unfolds on the right pages. The two authors of the collaborative poem responded to Rosenfeld's artwork with an artwork. Their answer signals a second disarray of the discursive order: in poetry language always means "more" than what it could in prose, a plus of signification. No explanations are needed. Another circuit, that of the artwork and its critical positioning by way of an interpretation inscribed in a disciplinary discourse, is being sabotaged.

Rosenfeld's inversion, which turned a minus sign into a plus sign, created feedback within CADA as well. Their fourth action, carried out between late 1983 and early 1984, consisted of a series of nightly graffiti attacks, executed by CADA members with the aid of several other adherents who scrawled *NO* + ("no mas," i.e. no more) on the walls of Santiago. Subsequently, random people would complete the sentence: *NO* + *dictadura*, *NO* + *tortura*, and so on. Here, Rosenfeld's individual intervention returns as a new semiotic proposition in the context of the group: a word and a sign, a negation and an affirmation, with an open semantic end to be completed by the citizenry. Her late statement again reclaims rationality; it is precisely by dialectics, the most classic of analytical means, that she can throw the symbolic order into "disarray," just to regain it in a collective form, applied towards the public expression of that which the state is repressing—talking back to a controlled media from the counter-public sphere of the city walls. Rosenfeld's initial "unhappy" gesture simply introduced the plus sign into the semiotics of traffic management, opening a space to equate a physical circulation channel in the city with public political discourse.

These invitations to question reality, to create a free territory, these infiltrations into the space of the city were liminal, near minuscule actions during the Condor years. Evaluating their actual impact on political processes is somewhat futile. They now exist as part of an archive of mostly photographs, texts, and

videotapes waiting to be activated. Yet, as modes and models of resistance, they remain operative and resonant decades later. Walter Benjamin uses the term *Jetztzeit* to describe a time that has been detached from the continuum of history and ripe with revolutionary possibility. It is time filled with energy. Benjamin contrasts *Jetztzeit* with the "homogeneous, empty time" of the ruling class, which would correspond to the Habermasian bourgeois public sphere dismantled by Kluge and Negt's critical reformulation. This revolutionary time for active recuperation is ready to take what Benjamin called the "tiger's leap into the past."²⁸ In the Benjaminian narrative it takes the intervention of the artist to produce this leap. In that sense the archive's *Jetztzeit* is ready to explode in the streets of Hong Kong, Algiers, Chile, in the online world, or wherever the forces of the state as power itself seem to seamlessly dominate public space and discourse, by means of capital, surveillance, algorithms, or sheer coercive force. The poetics of the counter-public sphere lurk in the archive as historical dynamite.

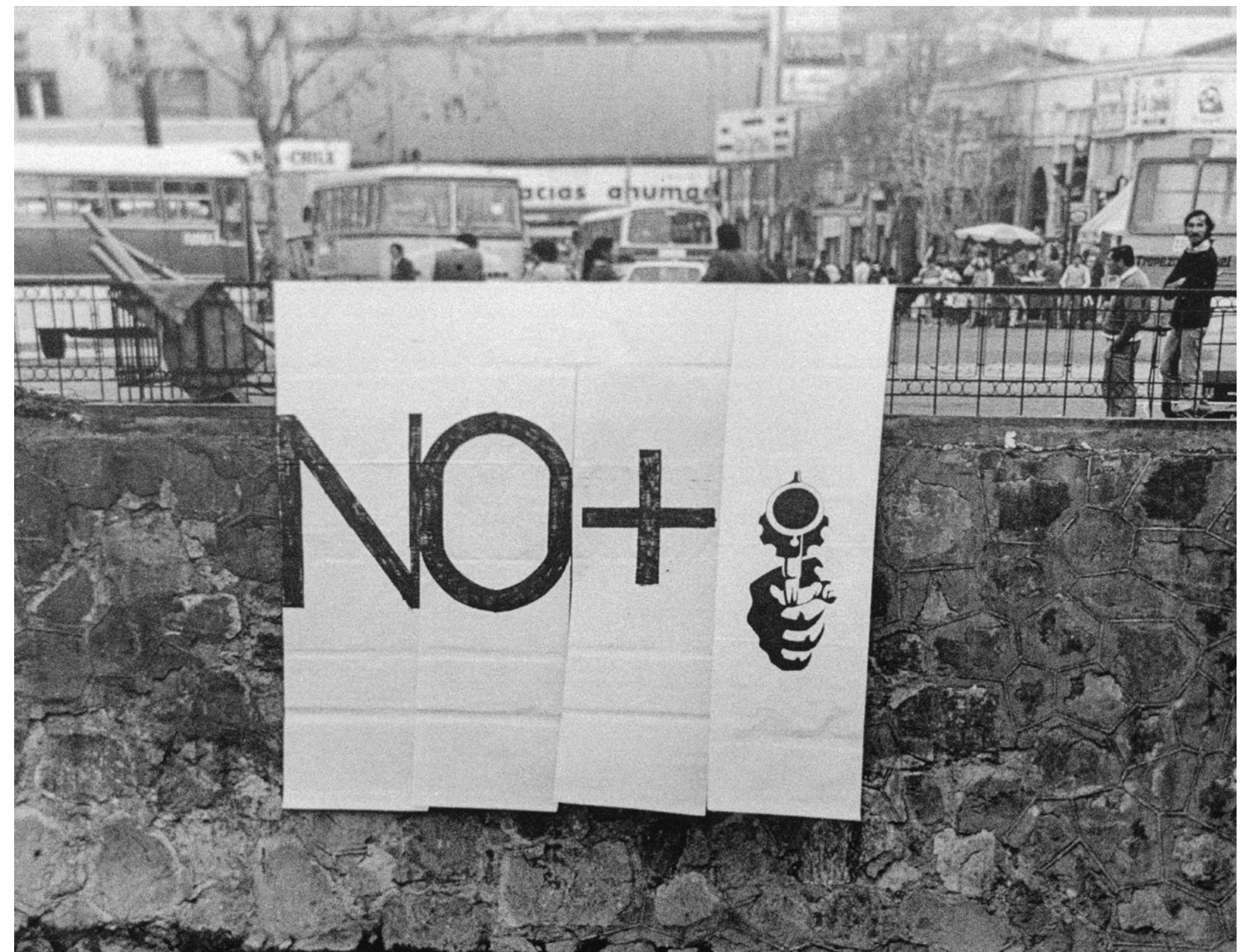
26 Neustadt, *CADA*, 18, 21. Translation mine.

27 Neustadt, *CADA*, 18, 52. Translation mine.

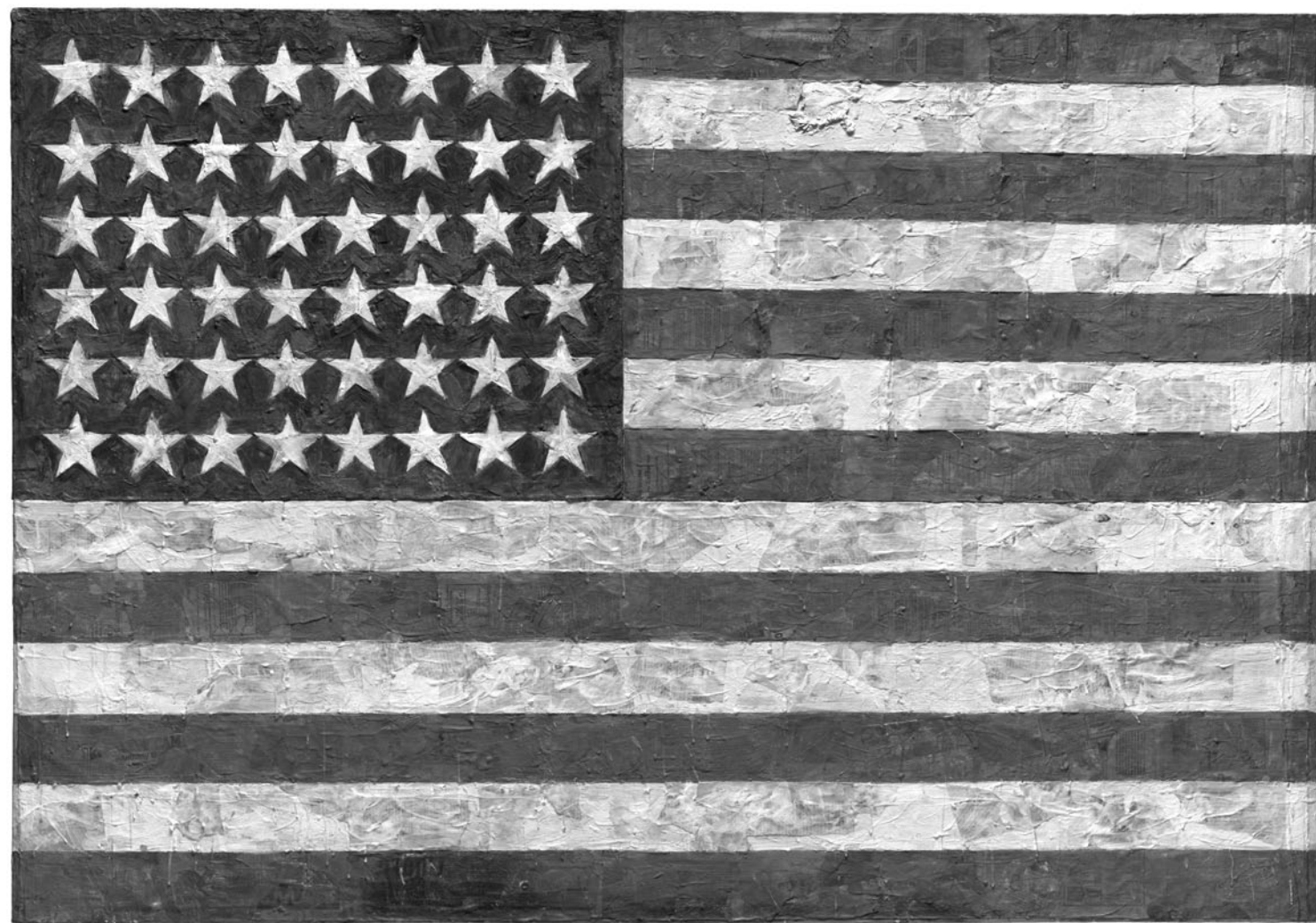
28 Walter Benjamin: "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in Walter Benjamin: *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. by Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken 1969. Originally published 1955 in German under the title *Illuminationen* by Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main), 261.



Lotty Rosenfeld glues fabric to Manquehue Avenue in Santiago de Chile for *Una milla de cruces sobre el pavimento*, 1979–80.



NO + protest action on the bank of the Mapocho River near Los Carros Bridge in Santiago, 1983.



Flag by Jasper Johns, 1954–55



Tapa Olho by Antonio Dias, 1969

ANTONIO DIAS’ VERSIONS OF THE FLAG & THE DISCOVERY OF REALITIES

TOBI MAIER



Untitled by Reena Spaulings, 2004

Flags are important denominators for ideas and ideologies, longings and belongings—not only in the well-known contexts of nation-building and the military, but way beyond. Similar to logos or anthems, flags generate empathy and compassion, and are designed for creating emotional ties. Carrying a flag demonstrates a strong sense of resistance or commitment to supporting a specific cause. The taxonomy of groups and entities that fly flags is vast and spans the military, political parties, ideological and religious associations, LGBTQ people, Indigenous populations, sports clubs, scout organizations, freemasons, cargo vessels, commercial brands, and many others.

Since the 1950s, the flag of the United States has appeared in numerous works by contemporary artists. An incomplete list begins with Jasper Johns’ *Flag* (1954–55), his flat, oil-and-encaustic rendering of the stars and stripes on a background of collaged newspaper, and includes other examples ranging from Sturtevant’s *Johns Flag* (1966) or *Johns Flag Above White Ground* (1967–1968), Ed Ruscha’s 1987 painting *Our Flag* and David Hammons’ *African-American Flag* (1990) to Cady Noland’s perforated banner adorning a guillotine in *Gibbet* (1993–94), Danh Vo’s *She was more like a beauty queen from a movie scene* (2009), and Ruscha again, with his updated *Our Flag* from 2017. Ruscha has stated: “Any flag that flies for 250 years is bound to get a little ragged and tattered, especially if we help it along.”¹ The Tate Gallery in London shared this view—it reproduced the quote on a 2019 gallery label for the work. The American flag has been a tool of nationalistic propaganda during the Cold War, and the US took it to the moon in 1969.² For former colonies like the United States or Brazil flying their own flags meant claiming territory from European powers. These flags, which adorn government offices and embassies and promote sets of values and ideals, have been worn down by the reality of history. Traces of this process can be detected in the tattered flag in Ruscha’s 2017 painting. Yet his work is not a flag; it remains a painting. The same is true for Johns’ work, not least because of the formal complexity and iconographic density produced by the layer of collaged newspaper underneath the mix of oil, pigment, and wax.³ Appropriating these historical records and materials that viewers can identify with, Johns alerts us to the veiled structures of reality lurking below the surface of painted stars and stripes.

Let us now have a look at some “real” flags in recent art production. A number of artists have taken to the medium of sculpture or installation to situate the flag in space: In 2005, the short-lived New York gallery Haswelllediger & Co. presented an exhibition by Reena Spaulings, which featured a series of unstretched paintings hung from flagpoles. In a short review, Kyle Bentley noted that these “flags—fabric remnants and tablecloths—are smeared with thick black paint or stained with (presumably cheap) red wine. They are adorned with plastic figures and utensils, fake flora, skull-and-bones appliqué, and various heavy metal detritus.”⁴ One of them depicts red brick and mortar and could have been created in loving homage to the tenement buildings of the Lower East Side (the home of the eponymous gallery, Reena Spaulings Fine Art, which was located on Grand Street at the time), in synch with a critique of rampant real estate speculation there. Seven years later, referencing the art world rituals taking place in the by then heavily gentrified neighborhood, Reena Spaulings produced another *Flag*, this time from a tablecloth they took from a dinner at the

then-fashionable Bowery Hotel, which was held on the occasion of Klara Lidén’s exhibition at the New Museum. This sequence of flags encapsulates local New York history. Teresa Margolles’ *Flag I* from 2009, on the other hand, looks further south and addresses the violence at the US-Mexican border. Her flag contains traces of blood and soil from sites of brutal crimes related to the drug wars.

If Johns was responding to the idea of the ready-made and Ruscha commented on the American wars of the 20th century, then—in light of US imperialism, the Vietnam War, institutionalized racism, and the genocide of Indigenous peoples—the artists also criticized the supposed meaning of the American flag and the

American Dream, which allegedly unified all nations under one flag in peace, the Pax Americana. Conversely, if Reena Spaulings’ flags evoke a bohemian New York City lifestyle that includes all kinds of anxieties as well as gentrification, and Margolles alludes to the drug wars on the US border, their flags stake a claim for territories that are oppressed, invisible, multiple or fluctuating (a flag flown today could allude to different constituencies or make reference to the past, for example). Flags function as surfaces onto which one can project identities, issues, or concerns. The territories they demarcate can be ideological, racial, poetic, and tribal. At times these flags are somewhat exclusive, addressing only a specific group. In other instances, such



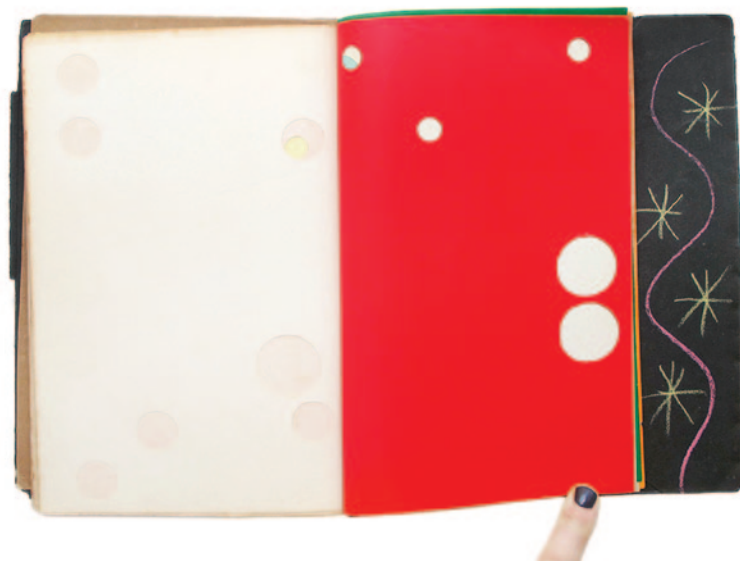
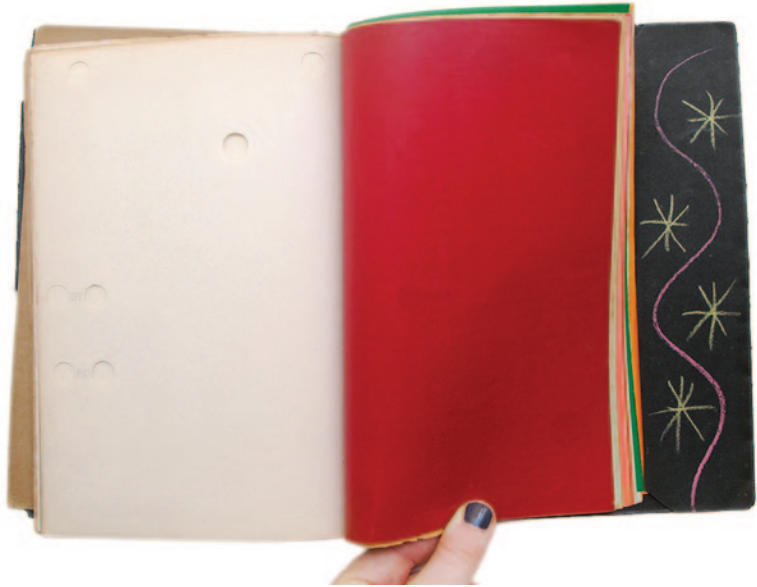
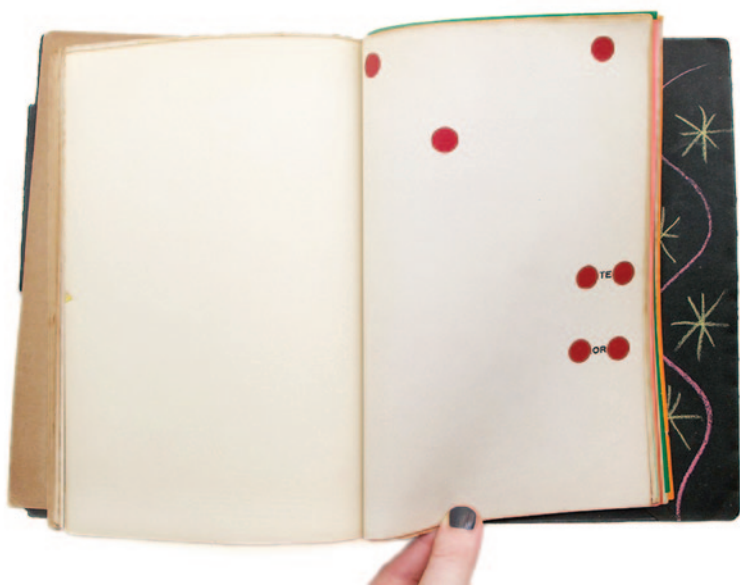
Bandera/Flag I by Teresa Margolles installed on exterior of the Palazzo Rota Ivancich in Venice, 2009.

1 The original sense of the flag’s colors, with white signifying purity and innocence, red standing for valor and bravery, and blue representing vigilance, perseverance, and justice, has long receded into the distance. For some, the flag still symbolizes freedom and prosperity, yet for many others, it means slavery, suffering and death.

2 The US flag by itself is no longer sufficient to stake claims in space. CNN reported on May 16, 2020 that the US Space Force, the newest branch of the armed services, has unveiled its own official flag at the White House. <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/05/16/politics/space-force-flag/index.html> (accessed May 17, 2020).

3 The conflict and interplay between abstraction and representation has already been analyzed by Clement Greenberg who stated: “Everything that usually serves representation and illusion is left to serve nothing but itself, that is, abstraction; while everything that usually serves the abstract or decorative — flatness, bare outlines, all-over or symmetrical design — is put to the service of representation.” Clement Greenberg: “After Abstract Expressionism” in Clement Greenberg: *The Collected Essays and Criticism, Vol. 4, Modernism with a Vengeance, 1957–1969*, ed. by John O’Brian (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 27.

4 <https://www.artforum.com/picks/reena-spaulings-8508> (accessed March 19, 2020).



Pages from *A Ave* by Wladimir Dias-Pino, 1956

Pages from *A Ave* by Wladimir Dias-Pino, 1956



O país inventado by Antonio Dias, 1976

was a key location for the political left in Italy.¹² Dias' choice for black as a background for *Tapa olho* and *Project for an Artistic Attitude* as well as other works from this period, like *Cabeças* (Heads, 1968), seem to have been triggered by his own dark mood, as he stated: "I was feeling very depressed, everything was collapsing inside."¹³ At the same time, the artist seemed determined to take a stance against authority: in contrast to a white flag, the black flag signals an opposition towards the idea of surrender.

In formal terms, it is important to notice that *Tapa olho* features four further eyelets on the left and right of the rectangle-shaped cloth. It is not clear if Dias added these eyelets or if the holes were already in the fabric when he acquired it to make the work. Whether the eyelets were custom-made or not, they suggest the possibility to handle and interpret the flag flexibly: Were we to rotate the textile by 90-degree angles, the word *REALTÁ*, which now reads *ÁTLAER*, would assume further formations or versions.

Perhaps this is where Dias' work comes closest to the traditions of the concrete poetry movement, which started in 1956 in Brazil. However, the approach of the *poema/processo* group, founded simultaneously in Natal and Rio de Janeiro in 1967 and active until 1972, seems more pertinent as a tool for analyzing *Tapa olho*.

"Process is the necessary dynamic relation that exists between diverse structures or components of a given structure, and that constitute the concretization of the continuum space-time: movement = the operation of solutions" states the catalogue published on the occasion of the *Fourth National poema/processo Exhibition* in Bahia during April 1968. The first two paragraphs describe the idea of process: "§ When changes or transformations happen one says that there is a process" and "§§ Process: discovery of reality."¹⁴ Dias' question appears to be: How can these parameters be translated into an actual work of art?

If, in 1967, art critic Mario Pedrosa could label Dias "popist of the underdevelopment" because of his early figurative drawings, the works Dias' made after his arrival in Europe displayed a staunch conceptual character.¹⁵ It had become evident that the notion of process was inherent to the work. Because of the apparent possibility of handling the flag with the different eyelets, one can imagine a variety of ways of presenting this one-word poem spelling out *REALTÁ*. According to the artist Wladimir Dias-Pino, one of the founders of the concrete poetry movement and *poema/processo*, "a poem could be produced with a single word, and exist in different versions. This concept of the version is opposite to the concept of the

translation, which is relying on discourse. Version stems from materiality."¹⁶ The material characteristics of the cloth with a variety of openings thus allow for a process to take place.

As Dias-Pino further stated, "*poema/processo* wanted to demonstrate the importance of a system permitting versions. Visual poetry was too rigid in its structure to allow for versions. And if there is no opening, no version, then there is no process."¹⁷ Dias-Pino's book *A Ave* (1956) was published in an edition of 300 different examples and developed the idea of reading it in different versions even further by including perforated sheets that covered various pages.¹⁸ This also suggests a formal connection to cybernetics and early computer punch card technology—a language that Waldemar Cordeiro and Giorgio Moscati would soon convert into early Brazilian computer art, which they created on an IBM 360 at the University of São Paulo in 1968–69.

Not unlike the founders of Art & Language and *poema/processo* who have been working at the intersection of image and word, Dias appears to suggest that reality is malleable, that there is not a single reality, that the one we have is not to be celebrated, but to be mourned (or improved) as if he was saying: "come cohorts, follow me and join me in the anarchist struggle." For him, reality existed in versions.



If we take the title of the work literally, *Tapa olho* covers the eyes of the viewer; the inscription *ÁTLAER* can be deciphered as *REALTÁ* by using a mirror. This interest in the functioning of vision is reminiscent of ideas first developed by surrealists like Salvador Dalí, who famously made the eye the main subject of his oeuvre, or André Breton. Breton passed away in 1966, the year that Dias arrived in Paris, yet his legacy might have still resonated with the young artist. In his *First Manifesto of Surrealism* (1924), Breton wondered if "the 'reality' with which I am kept busy continues to exist in the state of dream" and if the dream can "also be used to solve the fundamental questions of life?"¹⁹ Here lies the magic of the work that exists between reality, dream and suspension. Regarding Dias' use of white lettering on a black background, the Brazilian curator Paulo Herkenhoff also offered the notion of suspension.²⁰ Reality as we (think) we know it is suspended and *Tapa olho* reaches into this state of suspension, a condition that many who seemed to feel safe from AIDS, Zika, Ebola or other epidemics became familiar with during the Covid-19 crisis, which brought everyone closer to the fundamental questions of life (and death).

Another work by Dias, which also plays with the idea of suspension, is *O país inventado* (The Invented Country, 1976).²¹ This imperfect and dissected flag can be read as a critique of the idea of national repre-

sentation and the craving for homogeneous identity that inform the contemporary symbolism of the Brazilian flag, or the proclamations by neo-Nazis in Germany. Dias got the idea for this work when he observed a group of squatters in a building in front of his Milan home.²² The flag is made from red satin with a square of about one sixth of the overall size of the fabric cut out at its top right corner. Something is missing, or has never been there, or can be imagined by each spectator individually. Dias' *O país inventado* might be dedicated to a place of utopia for a community that liberated itself from the toxic ideologies that proliferate when there is a lack of humanitarian positions. The choice of the color red contains the obvious historical connotations of Marxist communist ideals.²³ This notion of color has been explored in other recent artist projects such as Pavel Büchler's *Red Flag* (1997)²⁴ or Felix Gmelin's *Farbtest, Die Rote Fahne II* (Color Test, The Red Flag II) from 2002.²⁵ The limits of the color spectrum have consequently been tested in Guagnini's own video documenting his performance *Clear Allegiance* (2012), which shows the artist demonstrating by himself in Harlem with a transparent flag in hand, "repositioning himself as a child of the failed revolutionary promises of 1968."²⁶

In 1977, one year after producing *O país inventado*, Dias decided to travel to Nepal in search for a type

of paper he remembered from his time in Paris. The trip must have also been a kind of sabbatical or exit strategy for Dias, taking a break from the turmoil in Italy, which was rocked by violent social struggles. Many activists went underground, and in November 1977 a group of philosophers, among them Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, signed *L'Appel des intellectuels français contre la répression en Italie* (The Call of French Intellectuals Against Repression in Italy) in protest against Antonio Negri's imprisonment and the Italian anti-terrorism legislation. Arriving in Nepal, Dias found himself in isolation due to the difficulties of communicating with locals. One of the pieces he produced there was *Territorio para vermes* (Territory for Worms, 1977–78, handmade paper, cellulose with clay, iron oxide and soot, 60 × 143 cm), which also features a red rectangle with a missing square in the top right corner, now placed next to the outline of a flag. During the current Coronavirus crisis, which forced everyone who could afford to do so into isolation, the reality of possibly traveling to Nepal appears even further removed than it might have been in the mid-1970s. Instead—and not only since Covid-19—we are increasingly being pushed back to remain in our "nation." Everyone is supposed to stay "at home," under their respective flags. However, identifying with a flag and a national identity is impossible for many—including Dias himself.

12 A range of far-left groups emerged in Italy at that time, including the Italian Communist Party (PCI), the extra-parliamentary Autonomist movement with Potere Operaio (1967–73) and Lotta Continua headquartered in Rome (1969–76) as well as the Brigate Rosse (1970–88), which originated from the region of Trento. The first prominent violent actions took place in Milan such as the Red Brigades burning of Siemens foreman Giuseppe Leoni's car (1970), the killing of police officer Luigi Calabresi attributed to Lotta Continua (1972) or the Milan police headquarters bombing in 1973, which was carried out by the self-proclaimed anarchist Gianfranco Bertoli.

13 *Early Days in Rio, Paris and Milan*. Antonio Dias in conversation with Lilian Tone.

14 This text by the *poema/processo* group, "Processo — leitura do projeto," first appeared in the catalogue of the *Fourth National poema/processo Exhibition* in April 1968. The translation from Portuguese by Antonio Sergio Bessa was published under the title "Process — reading of the project" in *OEI*, no. 66: "poema/processo," 2014: 9–10.

15 Pedrosa, Mario *Do Pop Americano ao Setanejo Dias*, originally published in the *Correio da Manhã* newspaper on October 29, 1967, and reprinted in Mario Pedrosa: *Acadêmicos e Modernos: Textos Escolhidos III*, ed. by Otilia Arantes, (São Paulo: edusp, 2004), 368.

16 "Intensified reading, expanded writing (a conversation with Wladimir Dias-Pino on intensivism, concrete poetry, process/poem and the visual encyclopedia)," in *OEI*, no. 66: 152.

17 *OEI*, no. 66: 148.

18 *A Ave* (1956) is reproduced in *OEI*, no. 66: 121–128. Dias-Pino attributed *A Ave* to the Intensivism movement, which he had founded in Mato Grosso together with Rubens de Mendonça and which preceded *poema/processo* (*OEI*, no. 66:121). Dias-Pino further elaborated on the concept and history behind *Pré-Intensivismo* and *Intensivismo*: "It's like the Pantanal, this vast tropical wetland area. We forget that the sources are in Mato Grosso, and without these sources there would be no Pantanal. We created the *Intensivismo* movement in 1948, affirming intensity. We wanted to avoid the notion of genres; we didn't want to argue about whether something was a visual poem or a figurative poem or a sculpture. Within the realm of what we called poem these questions were not important. *Intensivismo* created a superposition of images in order to achieve intensity," *OEI*, no. 66: 145.

19 André Breton: *First Manifesto of Surrealism* (1924), excerpt reprinted in *Art in Theory 1900–2000*, 449.

20 Paulo Herkenhoff: "Monochromes, the autonomy of color and the centerless world," in *XXIV Bienal de São Paulo, Vol.1: Historical Nucleus: Antropofagia and Histories of Cannibalisms* (São Paulo: Fundação Bienal de São Paulo 1998), 207.

21 This flag might be familiar to New York audiences as it was installed above the exhibition entrance of the 2015 survey *Transmissions: Art in Eastern Europe and Latin America, 1960–1980* at the Museum of Modern Art, where it functioned as a prelude to the presentation.

22 *Antonio Dias, Part 3: Invented Country*. Antonio Dias in conversation with Lilian Tone, November 17, 2012 https://post.at.moma.org/content_items/316-incomplete-biography-interview-with-antonio-dias (accessed April 18, 2020).

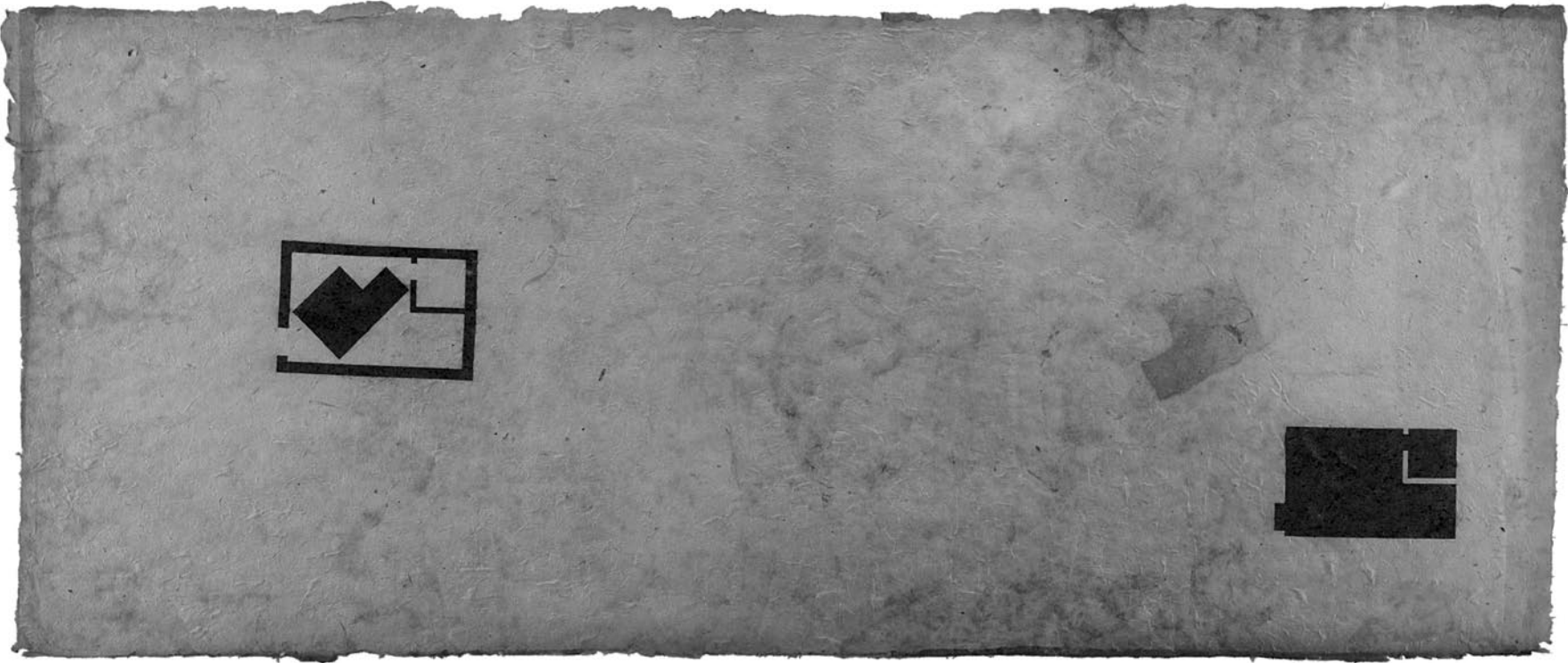
23 The color schemes signaling these ideologies are flexible and have changed over time. While 19th century anarchists used monochrome red flags, some time later black flags came to signify the total opposition to any sort of nation state and flag symbolism. Worker cooperatives during the Spanish civil war used a diagonally bisected red and black flag.

24 Curated by Ian Hunt, Büchler's November 1997 installation directed a beam of red light onto the flag on the spire of the Manchester Cathedral at night. The light source was located in the reading room window of Chetham's Library where Marx and Engels studied in 1845.

25 In 1968, German director Gerd Conradt documented a street action featuring a series of runners — among them Gmelin's father — carrying a red flag through the streets of Berlin. Gmelin restaged and documented this action in Stockholm in 2002. The resulting two-channel video is available online: <https://vimeo.com/99812524> (accessed May 9, 2020).

26 The video is available online, accompanied by a brief introduction, from which this quote is taken: <https://www.kinosued.com/01-05-2020-nicolas-guagnini> (accessed June 3, 2020).

PLATES



Território para Vermes by Antonio Dias , 1977–78

- 2

Various authors, “Brazil, Part 1: Capitalist Crisis and Workers’ Challenge” in *Latin American Perspectives*, Issue 23, Volume 6, Number 4, February, 1979. Collection of the Institute for Studies on Latin American Art (ISLAA)
- 3

Under the umbrella of the 1976 meeting of the Organization of American States in Santiago, Chilean President Augusto Pinochet greets US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger upon his arrival at the President’s office on June 8. During this meeting Kissinger addressed the Human Rights Commission’s recent objection to Pinochet’s use of kidnapping, murder and torture against his political opponents. Kissinger provided assurance that “in the United States, as you know, we are sympathetic with what you are trying to do here.” © Bettmann / Getty Images
- 4

Jürgen Habermas by Mark Reeve, 2020

Jules Régis Debray holds a press conference to announce his detainment by the Bolivian government on August 28, 1967. Earlier that year on April 20, Debray was arrested in Muyupampa, Bolivia. He was accused of partaking in acts of “murder, incitement to subversion and violation of Bolivian sovereignty” as part of Che Guevara’s guerrilla group. On November 17, he was convicted and sentenced to 30 years in prison. He was later released in 1970 after a campaign on his behalf which included the notable figures Jean-Paul Sartre, André Malraux, General Charles de Gaulle and Pope Paul VI. © Keystone Pictures USA / zumapress.com

Jules Régis Debray, *The Long March in Latin America. Guerrilla Movements: Theory and Practice*. Minneapolis: The Radical Education Project, 1965 (originally published in *New Left Review*, September–October, 1965). Collection of the Institute for Studies on Latin American Art (ISLAA)
- 5

Jerzy Grotowski, *Towards a Poor Theatre*. Routledge, New York 2002, p.157.

Horacio Zabala, *Vademecum Para Aristas*, Asunto Impreso Ediciones, Buenos Aires, 2009, p. 73. Collection of the Institute for Studies on Latin American Art (ISLAA)
- 6

Horacio Zabala
Anteproyecto para 300 metros de cinta negra para enlutar una plaza pública, Alternativa 1–Alternativa 2, 1972
Ink on paper
12³/₄ × 8³/₈ in (32.4 × 21.2 cm)
Collection of the Institute for Studies on Latin American Art (ISLAA)
© Courtesy Horacio Zabala / Herlitzka + Faria

Horacio Zabala
300 metros de cinta negra para enlutar una plaza pública, 1972 (Reconstruction 2012)
Industrial plastic tape
39³/₈ × 1181 in (100 × 3000 cm)
- 7

1972 press photograph of police closing the *Arte e Ideologia*, *CAYC al Aire Libre* exhibition. Photographer unknown. Reproduced in *D’Ars* magazine XV, number 71–72, Milan, 1974.
- 8

CADA (Colectivo de Acciones de Arte)
[Raúl Zurita, Fernando Balcells, Diamela Eltit, Lotty Rosenfeld, Juan Castillo]
Inversión de Escena, Santiago de Chile, 1979
Digital print on photo paper
15¹/₈ × 11 in (38.5 × 28 cm)
Edition of 10
© Courtesy CADA / 1 Mira Madrid Gallery

Still from CADA (Colectivo de Acciones de Arte)
[Raúl Zurita, Fernando Balcells, Diamela Eltit, Lotty Rosenfeld, Juan Castillo]
Inversión de Escena, Santiago de Chile, 1979.
Digital copy in color, 5’07”
© Courtesy CADA / 1 Mira Madrid Gallery
This video document of the milk truck convoy through Santiago played on a monitor in the back of a milk truck outside the Museo de Bellas Artes.
- 9

CADA (Colectivo de Acciones de Arte)
[Raúl Zurita, Fernando Balcells, Diamela Eltit, Lotty Rosenfeld, Juan Castillo]
Inversión de Escena, Santiago de Chile, 1979
Digital print on photo paper
11 × 15¹/₈ in (28 × 38.5 cm)
Edition of 10
© Courtesy CADA / 1 Mira Madrid Gallery

Lotty Rosenfeld, *Una Milla de Cruces Sobre el Pavimento*. Santiago de Chile: Ediciones CADA, 1980. Collection of the Institute for Studies on Latin American Art (ISLAA)
- 10

Lotty Rosenfeld, *Una Milla de Cruces Sobre el Pavimento* (A Mile of Crosses on the Pavement), Santiago de Chile, 1979–80
Video, color, silent, 5’22”
Edition of 25
© Courtesy Lotty Rosenfeld / 1 Mira Madrid Gallery
- 11

CADA
No +, Rio Mapocho, Santiago de Chile, 1983
Photo by Jorge Brantamayer
© Courtesy CADA / 1 Mira Madrid Gallery
- 12

Jasper Johns
Flag, 1954–55 (dated on reverse 1954)
Encaustic, oil and collage on fabric mounted on plywood, three panels
42¹/₄ × 60⁵/₈ in (107.3 × 153.8 cm)
Gift of Philip Johnson in honor of Alfred H. Barr, Jr.
© The Museum of Modern Art / Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY
© 2020 Jasper Johns / Licensed by VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY
- 13

Antonio Dias
Tapa Olho (Eye Patch), 1969
Acrylic on black fabric
33 × 36³/₄ in (83.8 × 93.3 cm)
Collection of the Institute for Studies on Latin American Art (ISLAA)
© Courtesy Antonio Dias / Galeria Nara Roesler
- 14

Reena Spaulings
Untitled, 2012
Acrylic on canvas, grommets, aluminum pole, bracket, flag
36 × 52 in, pole 72 in (91.4 × 142.25 cm, pole 182.9 cm)
© Courtesy Reena Spaulings
- 15

Teresa Margolles
Bandera/Flag 1, 2009
Blood, earth and other substances on fabric
117³/₈ × 74¹/₈ in (298 × 188 cm)
Installation view of the exterior of the Palazzo Rota Ivancich, part of *What Else Could We Talk About?*, Mexican Pavilion, curated by Cuauhtémoc Medina, 53rd Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy, May 2009
© Courtesy Teresa Margolles / Gabinete TM and James Cohan, New York
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Still from the NASA broadcast of the Apollo 11 Moonwalk on July 20, 1969.

Carlos Marighella’s membership card to the Partido Comunista Brasileiro (The Brazilian Communist Party).
Collection of the Public Archives of the State of Rio de Janeiro
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“Hip-ity Dip-ity” by Josiah Chang, 2020
- 18

1971 press photograph. Photographer unknown. This photograph was used by Waldemar Cordeiro to produce *A Mulher que Não É B.B.*
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Waldemar Cordeiro
A Mulher que Não É B.B., 1971
Offset print
23⁵/₈ × 23⁵/₈ in (61 × 44.5 cm)
Edition of 300
Courtesy Família Cordeiro
- 20–1

Wlademir Dias-Pino
Pages from *A Ave*, 1956
Photographs by Cecilia Grönberg, 2014
Selection from a photographic documentation printed in *OEI* #66; process / poem, poema / processo, eds. Jonas (J) Magnusson & Cecilia Grönberg in collaboration with Tobi Maier, 520 pages, 2014.
9 × 6¹/₄ in (23 × 16 cm)
Edition of 300
- 21

Antonio Dias
O país inventado, 1976
Satin, bronze pole with patina
196⁷/₈ in (500.1 cm) long
© Courtesy Antonio Dias / Galeria Nara Roesler
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Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari by Mark Reeve, 2020
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Antonio Dias
Território para Vermes, 1977–78
Nepalese paper (cellulose with mud, iron oxide, soot)
23⁵/₈ × 56³/₈ in (60 × 143 cm)
Collection of the Institute for Studies on Latin American Art (ISLAA)
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THE COUNTER-PUBLIC SPHERE IN THE CONDOR YEARS

This publication is published by the Institute for Studies on Latin American Art (ISLAA) on the occasion of the exhibition curated by Nicolás Guagnini and organized by ISLAA.

ISLAA is proud to present its new exhibitions program on modern and contemporary Latin American art. These exhibitions respond to ISLAA's mission to advance arts from Latin America and to support future generations of experts on Latin American art. The exhibitions draw from ISLAA's library, archive, and graphic arts collection—which are currently being catalogued—and curators work closely with our team of archivists to classify and study the materials. Through its exhibitions program, ISLAA seeks to trigger new research on understudied figures, areas, and periods of the history of Latin American art, and to offer new generations of scholars, curators, and arts professional a hands-on curatorial experience.

Special thanks to Ariel Aisiks, Mercedes Cohen, Guadalupe González, Blanca Serrano Ortiz de Solórzano and Jordi Ballart

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“Poetics of the Counter-Public Sphere in the Condor Years” © Nicolás Guagnini, 2020
Nicolas Guagnini is an Argentine artist, writer and curator living in New York City. His work has been exhibited extensively throughout Europe, Latin America and the United States. His work is in the collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Centre Pompidou in Paris. His writing has been published in *October*, *Texte zur Kunst* and *Ramona* magazines as well as exhibition catalogues from the MoMA and the Whitney. He was cofounder of Union Gaucha Productions, an experimental film production company, and of Orchard, a cooperative gallery in the Lower East Side.

“Antonio Dias’ Versions of the Flag & the Discovery of Realities” © Tobi Maier, 2020
Tobi Maier is a curator, writer, and the director of the Municipal Galleries in Lisbon. Previously he organized the exhibition space SOLO SHOWS in São Paulo (2015–18) and worked as an associate curator for the 30th edition of the Bienal de São Paulo (2012) and as a curator at Ludlow 38 in New York (2008–11) and at Frankfurter Kunstverein in Frankfurt am Main (2006–08). He holds an MA in Curating Contemporary Art from the Royal College of Art, London and completed PhD research in the department of Poéticas Visuais at the Escola de Comunicações e Artes, Universidade de São Paulo. He has contributed to a variety of journals including *Artforum*, *ArtReview*, *Flash Art*, *Frieze*, *OEI*, and *Texte zur Kunst* and lectures frequently.

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Editor: Nicolás Guagnini
Design: William Hayden
Copy Editing: Magnus Schaeffer
Printing: Linco

ISBN 978-1-952136-96-2 (print)
ISBN 978-1-952136-97-9 (online)

