Latin America, Last Avant-Garde (New York 4-5 Apr 08)

CALL FOR PAPERS

Latin America: The Last Avant-Garde

Co-sponsored by the Department of Art History, The Graduate Center, CUNY and the Department of the History of Art, Yale University

April 4-5 2008, New York City

This symposium is organized around the conceit that Latin America is the site of the last avant-garde. We are not interested in the truth or falsity of this conceit, but how it operates as an interpretive paradigm. In several key episodes of Latin American art, artists and critics have positioned the region as a privileged, even mythological, site for the final realization of an avant-garde project initiated in Europe. In other instances, avant-gardism provided a discourse of rupture by which Latin American artists aligned themselves with revolutionary, utopian, and universalist aims while disavowing European cultural dependency and advancing a claim for the unique character of the national or regional avant-garde. In both cases, the original military metaphor of the avant-garde, with its associations of innovation, radicality, and novelty, has been brought to bear on artistic movements and individual experiments that have self-consciously figured "lastness" as a strategic paradigm.

The conjoining of these two impulses within the Latin American avant-garde forces into view key structural contradictions between modernity, Modernism, and the avant-garde. How is characterization of the Latin American avant-garde as either unitary or merely reactive complicated by the avant-garde's fundamentally international character? How has avant-gardism intersected with political, economic and military pressures particular to the region? How have Latin American artists engaged in interdisciplinary collaborations and expanded networks of informational flow in order to catalyze new, or "final" articulations of the avant-garde? How have artists exploited temporal delay and geographic marginality as aesthetic and conceptual gambits, and how might such articulations debunk the very notion of the avant-garde's originality?

In recent years, Latin American modern art has reemerged as a priority

within academic departments and museum collections, an interest that coincides with a shift away from regionalism and identity politics as the central tropes of its study. In this sense too, Latin American art can be considered the "last," or most recent, avant-garde to be canonized (or colonized) within art historical Modernism. How can new studies and interpretations of Latin American avant-garde art allow us to refigure histories of "prewar" and "postwar" art, modernity and cultural exchange, theories of the avant-garde and neo-avant-garde, and other modernist methodologies? How might recent theoretical models posited in exhibitions such as Inverted Utopias and The Geometry of Hope such as the "constellation," "regressive utopia," or "deformed modernity" impact the study of avant-gardism in Latin America? At a current moment in which the dialectic between "local" and "global" has taken center stage, how might art historians help shape a history of the region that accounts for and challenges larger threads of avant-gardism?

We welcome submissions for 20-minute papers that employ, problematize, and expand concepts of the avant-garde in order to address 20th century Latin American art and its critical reception. Papers will be published in PART, Journal of the CUNY PhD Program in Art History (http://dsc.gc.cuny.edu/part).

Please e-mail a 300 word abstract and CV to koyaanisquiles@gmail.com and Irene.small@yale.edu by November 15, 2007.

Reference:

CFP: Latin America, Last Avant-Garde (New York 4-5 Apr 08). In: ArtHist.net, Sep 21, 2007 (accessed Nov 23, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/29574>.