

FROM THE EDITORS

The devastating effects of the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic have poignantly laid bare, once again, the limits of our capacity to act together and cooperate, even in the face of imminent threats to human survival on this planet. Unsurprisingly, deeply ingrained market mechanisms have ensured, both institutionally and ideologically, that international competition rather than solidarity determined the rhythm and mode of the fight against the global pandemic. Beyond and besides the very necessary measures to prevent contagion, the current crisis further accelerated the proliferation of borders, walls, and checkpoints (physical and otherwise) that have been more effective at segregating humans than at containing viruses. While vaccines roll out from the production lines of industrialized countries, speculation runs wild on which states and regions will recover faster and thus be in a position to lead the “post-corona” world. And yet, as Uruguayan artist Luis Camnitzer observed in a recent interview, we don’t even know whether or not this quarantine will ever end.

Camnitzer’s interview with Rachel Weiss, conducted by invitation of the editors of *ARTMargins* during the early days of the US pandemic, in March and April 2020, is the opening feature of this issue. In a candid, politically insightful, and often moving exchange, the two friends and longtime collaborators discuss the relationship between art and education, Conceptualism, Camnitzer’s past and current art projects,

and his vexed relationship with the art market. Camnitzer talks at length about his involvement with Cuba in the 1980s, recalling his vision of the potential of cooperation and solidarity between Latin American artists around the Casa de las Américas in Havana; debates the role of art in denouncing internationally the atrocities committed by Uruguay's dictatorship; and avows his enduring feeling of isolation and displacement within the North American artistic and intellectual scene.

Displacement as a crucial phenomenon in the transnational art world is also the topic of this issue's Artist Project by Bruno Moreschi, Christopher Bratton, Dalida Maria Benfield, Gabriel Pereira, and Guilherme Falcão. Following up on their previous pamphlet *history of _rt* (2016), the collective presents here for the first time a second pamphlet as part of the same series, entitled *_rt movements*. Starting from physical definitions of movement and displacement, they tackle the multiple implications of these terms in contemporary art practice and theory. "To move is to become displaced and to displace. . . . Movement produces ever-emerging meanings, circulating between peoples, places, and histories," the artists observe, as they inquire into the relationship between displacement and political power and approach the traveling fates of artworks such as Picasso's *Guernica* and Lygia Pape's *Divisor* in an increasingly interconnected (pre-pandemic) art world.

This question of displacement within and into the framework of contemporary art resonates strongly in Raino Isto's "'I Lived without Seeing These Artworks': (Albanian) Socialist Realism and/against Contemporary Art." The article examines the arrival of Albania's Socialist Realist art in Western Europe and its problematic path toward readability within 21st-century artistic contexts. In particular, Isto approaches Harald Szeemann's 2003 exhibition *Blood & Honey* at Vienna's Essl Museum to discuss the position of Albanian Socialist Realism in contemporary artistic discourse. He argues that exhibitions such as *Blood & Honey*, in mapping the art of the Balkans, at the same time fulfilled the task of defining the cultural borders of an emerging new "Europe" against its southern neighbors. The incorporation of Albania's Socialist Realism in the global history of contemporary art thus implied its further isolation and confinement to a specific, peripheral place and time, flattening its complexity and downplaying its inherent transnationalism.

Catherine Spencer's "Navigating Internationalism from Buenos Aires: The Centro de Arte y Comunicación" charts the strategies of art-

ists, curators, and critics to engage the international art world under the eyes of Argentina's 1970s military dictatorship. Following Andrea Giunta and George F. Flaherty's call to challenge the categories and established roles of center and periphery in the contemporary art world through scholarship on Latin American art, Spencer takes up the case of the Centro de Arte y Comunicación (CAYC) to shed light on the internationalist dynamics of 1970s Argentine artistic production and discourse.

Karolina Majewska-Güde's "If You Want to Say Something—Speak in the Language of the Language: Ewa Partum's Model of Conceptual Art" focuses on the Conceptualist practice of Ewa Partum to inquire into the geopolitical specificities of the cultural production of Central and Eastern European postwar avant-gardes. Majewska-Güde examines Partum's work and her exhibition and communication strategies through the founding of Galeria Adres in 1972. Contemporaneous with Buenos Aires's CAYC, Partum's gallery took up a similar role of enabling communication between Polish artists and their peers in Western Europe and beyond. Working under an epistemic condition Majewska-Güde defines as "East looking at West not looking at East," Conceptual artists in Poland and other Eastern European countries occupied, she argues, a place "in the orbit" (rather than the periphery) of Western culture.

A more drastic experience of the tension between the West and its supposed periphery comes to light in Jalal Al-e Ahmad's "To Mohassess, For the Wall," this issue's Document, published with an introduction by Mohammadreza Mirzaei. Written in 1964, during a time of profound transformations in the Iranian cultural and artistic landscape, the piece is addressed to the painter Bahman Mohassess upon his return to Tehran from Italy, where he had studied together with a cohort of other young Iranian artists. Describing the contemporary moment of Iranian painting as one of repeated uprootings and transplantations, Ahmad warns of the dangers of imitating the West—a concept that he understood not just geographically or culturally, but in political-economic terms as well. As Mirzaei suggests, more than a commentary on painting, Al-e Ahmad's text provides a glimpse into the debates and conflicts surrounding the adoption of Western-style modernism in 1960s Iran and its perceived clash with local artistic traditions.

Finally, this issue's Review Article, by Irmgard Emmelhainz, discusses Amy Sara Carroll's *ReMex: Toward an Art History of the NAFTA*

Era (2017). Focusing on art based in Mexico City as well as Chicano, feminist, and border art in the 1990s, Carroll's monograph proposes to rewrite the history of Mexican art in a way that suggests, as Emmelhainz puts it, an "alternative lineage for Latin American Conceptualism," based chiefly on the thread of allegorical representations of nationality. More than a territory, "greater Mexico" emerges in Carroll's study as an imaginary site that transcends geographic borders. However, despite the book's ostensive problematization of geopolitical borders, Emmelhainz contends that Carroll's proposal of "reMexing" risks returning contemporary artistic practices from Mexico, and Latin American Conceptualism more generally, to the old function ascribed by colonialism to Latin American art—that of repeatedly producing national allegories for international consumption.