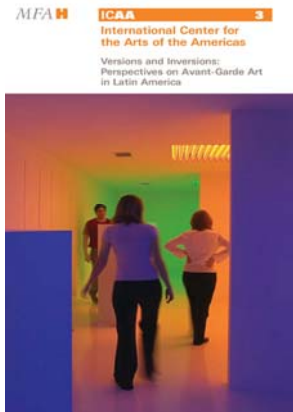


Versions and Inversions: Perspectives on Avant-Garde in Latin America / Edited by Héctor Olea and Maria Carmen Ramírez.—(ICAA, 3).—Houston, TX: The Museum of Fine Arts, Texas, dist. by Yale University Press, December 2006.—272 pp.: ill. + 1 dvd.—ISBN 0-300-11652-7: \$40.00 (pa.).



This text includes essays presented at the symposium held in conjunction with the 2004 exhibition, *Inverted Utopias: Avant Garde Art in Latin America*, at the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston. It serves as a companion to the exhibition catalog and gives further illumination on the selected works and the curatorial intent of this exhibition.

Since this exhibition is very much the assertion of judgments made by its curators and authors, the essays lend more exposition to their effort to remove these avant-garde works from the practice of viewing them in a Eurocentric, geographic or chronological context and pose them in a dialectical arrangement of six "constellations," such as "Play and Grief" or "Cryptic and Committed." In his essay, Robert Storr speaks of this intent, an intention that brings this art out of mainstream criticism: "Also, it seems to me, this model of 'constellations' allows ways of coordinating, of setting up the coordination of, the relation of either different schools or groups of artists and their communities." The curators hope to place these works in a newly

appreciated context on their own and out of the periphery of art history, where, they assert, they have so wrongly remained since the 1950s and 1960s. Some better-known artists, such as Joaquin Garcia Torres and Gego, are included in the exhibition along with several others who are less familiar internationally. The essays are arranged in two parts: "The Rights of Inversion" and "The Displacement of Utopias." Discussions in part one attempt to unhinge prior arguments about this art by addressing specific rhetoric or reception history. Essays in part two provide a broader, global context for the art and a general discussion of the exhibition, and for readers who are unfamiliar with the catalog, this section may be the best place to begin reading.

Olea specializes in modern and avant-garde Latin American art and has written several monographs on some of the artists featured in this exhibition. Ramírez is the Wortham Curator of Latin American Art at the MFA Houston and director for the International Center for the Arts of the Americas (ICAA).

The enclosed dvd offers a 360-degree rotating tour of the exhibition in each of the gallery rooms. Essays are translated in English and Spanish, and they provide several rich, new viewpoints on this subject and on the praxis of art history.

Beverly Mitchell, Fine Arts Librarian, Jake and Nancy Hamon Arts Library, Southern Methodist University, bmitchel@smu.edu

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