



Dossier: Between Images, Words, and Screens: Challenges, Transversalities, and Reinventions in Latin American Art

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BETWEEN IMAGES, WORDS, AND SCREENS: CHALLENGES, TRANSVERSALITIES, AND REINVENTIONS IN LATIN AMERICAN ART

The dossier Between Images, Words and Screens brings together a constellation of essays that, while defining the territory of Latin America and the Caribbean, raise questions about the regimes of visibility and invisibility inscribed in images and words. A historical thread runs through most of the texts: stories of oppression, violence, erasure, and, simultaneously, of resistance and demands for recognition. This is a region marked by structural traumas — colonial, racial, economic — that nonetheless resists the arrogance and mechanisms of domination through an artistic practice that reshapes ways of seeing and constructs counter-narratives. The reflection proposed here is not merely about images; it concerns the genealogies of meaning they carry and how, through them, it becomes possible to critically engage with a colonial and slave-owning past with inventiveness and ethical positioning.

Latin American artistic expressions, through their multiple mediations, do not function as neutral mirrors but as instruments for constructing and contesting collective subjectivities. These arts simultaneously stand as

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surfaces for reflection and as intervening forces in the fragmented realities of the region. The dossier proposes an immersion into the complex layers that structure these productions: the points of connection between artwork, territory, memory, and body; the transversal affiliations across gender, race, class, and sexuality; the intertwining of aesthetics and politics that makes visible what is intended to be concealed.

Latin American cinema, literature, and visual arts have historically played a role in mapping identity, territorial, and economic tensions, exposing wounds that persist beneath the surface of official discourse. It is within this field of tension that aesthetic practices emerge, destabilizing hegemonic narratives: they challenge the normalization of experience, unveil the mechanisms of the coloniality of knowledge, and propose frameworks that embrace plurality and dissent. Social critique, in this context, is not an ornament but a constitutive structure: art interrogates bureaucracies, exposes symbolic corruption, and materializes the desire for institutional and communal reconfigurations. The creative act's capacity to produce “unblindings”—that is, to reveal epistemological blind spots—positions art as a site of contestation of power regimes, activating new modes of reception and representation.

This critical work, however, unfolds in a terrain marked by constraints. Obsolete institutional models, discursive controls, both overt and covert censorship, chronic underfunding, and the exodus of knowledge qualify the landscape as one of ongoing struggle. Artistic production, especially that emerging from geographic and symbolic peripheries, responds with strategies of reinvention: hybrid regional forms, accessibility mechanisms that reshape audiences (such as audio description), and technological appropriations that fragment and redraw traditional circuits of circulation and legitimacy. Within this dynamism, identity emerges not as a fixed essence but as a contested construction, traversed by genealogies of mestizaje, diaspora, marginalization, and intersectionality that produce differentiated visibilities and erasures.

The emergence of new technologies and the transnational circulation of images and voices have intensified these complexities. Networks and platforms expand the sites of enunciation, enabling popular and dissident narratives to be articulated with a speed and immediacy that challenge established institutional channels. This expansion, not without contradictions, reconfigures our understanding of the cultural public sphere, displacing the axis of representation and enabling citizens to become authors of their own images and stories. What unfolds, therefore, is a continuous negotiation between the local and the global, between inheritances and inventions, one that reaffirms the potential of cinema and the arts as territories of resistance and transformation.

In sum, Latin American art and cinema present themselves as arenas where histories, politics, economies, and subjectivities intersect. They are indeed sites of aesthetic-ideological struggle, but also spaces of affirmation of diversity, creative persistence, and the relentless pursuit of expressive freedom and recognition. Within this entanglement lie possibilities for reinventing human experience and rewriting collective memories that insist on being otherwise.

Mayra Huerta Jiménez (Universidad Autónoma de Baja California, México), in her article *Artistic Creation and Territoriality in the Border Landscape: Three Case Studies*, investigates a series of artistic projects by Ingrid Hernández, Omar Pimienta, and Cynthia Hoope, in which documentary records and personal artistic marks intertwine with the aim of reflecting on issues related to migration, displacement, modes of inhabiting borderlands and transborder territories, as well as the redefinition of identities. Although these artistic projects are geographically situated in a defined zone between northwestern Mexico and the southwestern United States, especially between the cities of Tijuana, Baja California, and San Diego, the artists' relationships to these spaces and their life experiences outline distinct ways of representing and exposing social, political, and territorial circumstances. Thus, according to the author, aesthetics of border territories are configured, as observed in the

work of Ingrid Hernández, who, having been born and mostly raised in Tijuana, conceives her locality as an environment tense between what is her own and determined, and that which unfolds at its limits: the “Californian horizon.” At the same time, transborder aesthetics emerge, supported by three main characteristics: hybridity, mixture, and malleability. In this second group, Huerta Jiménez places the works of Omar Pimienta and Cynthia Hoope, two artists who, having lived and worked in both Mexico and the United States, construct representations and aesthetics in which notions of belonging and identity appear more fluid, open, and mutable.

In *Tearing Down Walls and Suffocations: Zózimo Bulbul and the Counter-Trauma in the Age of Global Apartheid*, Julio Cesar de Tavares (The University of Texas at Austin, USA) begins his analysis from Latin American audiovisual production, focusing on another facet of violence: racism. Recognizing image production as an anthropological act — one that transcends the idea of the image as mere “ethnographic data” — the author proposes studying the image in its multiple and simultaneous dimensions: technical, aesthetic, cultural, and political, in order to analyze the role and importance of Zózimo Bulbul, the leading exponent and driving force of Black Cinema in Brazil. Starting with a review of the consolidation process of what we today understand as Brazilian Black Cinema, the author highlights the importance of aesthetics and activism present in the films of this movement as responses to colonial and racist processes, discourses, and grammars that underpin the absence or underrepresentation of Black presence in national cinema and audiovisual media. As part of this review, Zózimo Bulbul’s cinematic work receives special attention, standing out for creating a cinematic space of racial consciousness, which the author terms a counter-trauma space. This space reveals, through images, the Black, male, peripheral, diasporic body, accented, and its power as a site of memory. Although limited to the context of Brazilian cinema, by discussing the consolidation of the theoretical and artivist concept of Black Cinema within cultural, audiovisual, activist, intellectual, academic, and antiracist militancy

fields, the author offers us a broader pedagogical and affective mediation that clarifies the political place of Black visualities in tearing down walls, barriers, and screens on and beyond the screen — and against global apartheid.

The discussion of racism in Latin America and artistic resistance to this colonial legacy also runs through the article Revolutionary Literature: Considerations about the Black Movement in the Antilles, by Fabiana dos Santos Sousa (Universidade de Coimbra, Portugal), a historical approach to literature and the Negritude movement in the Antillean region. Highlighting the work of Martinican Aimé Césaire, mentor and principal representative of the Negritude movement, the article discusses how this written production contributed to shaping a literature of revolution by addressing theoretical aspects of Afro-descendant identity construction and its relationship with the Black diaspora. To understand the revolutionary nature of this literary production, the author offers a broad review of the Negritude concept itself, drawing on Édouard Glissant, Jean-Paul Sartre, Edward Said, and René Depestre, and presents the contradictions and criticisms aimed at the movement — especially concerning its being rooted in one place (the Antilles) while referring to another (Africa), which some intellectuals saw as leading to escapism or even essentialism about the African continent. It is concluded that many of these contradictions must be understood in light of the era in which the movement emerged, and despite the critiques, Negritude was a landmark of revolution and resistance in literature, remaining of utmost relevance in the struggle for racial and social equality not only within the diaspora in Latin American countries but worldwide.

In their text The “Quijote Negros”: Identity Crisis and the Reflection of Being the Other, Pamela Villarroel (Universidad de las Artes, Ecuador) and Juan Andrago (Universidad de las Américas, Ecuador) analyze the Ecuadorian film *Quijotes negros* (Sandino Burbano, 2016) through the lens of Latin American identity debates and the legacy of colonialism. Employing an antirealist fictional style that moves between melodrama, the grotesque, and surrealism, the film thematizes and problematizes identity formations in which the blend

of Spanish legacy and indigenous elements, whether literary, political, or cultural, does not emerge organically or cohesively. Drawing from Cervantes's work, which partially lends its name to the film, a narrative unfolds that intertwines stereotypically Spanish characters with local ones or those imbued with regional traditions. The resolution introduces the future existence of a descendant born from the absurd and complex relationship between the Queen of Spain and the "Black Quixote" of Afro-American descent. This figure embodies the hybrid nature of Latin American societies while ironically extending the colonial imaginary, presented with parody yet still persisting. The paradigm of mestizaje and forced encounter, marked by domination and power, also permeates the mise-en-scène, yielding powerful poetic imagery, notably in a scene where Sancho, a mestizo of Andean descent, strives to graft two different flowers into a single bloom.

Based on her observation of the growing focus on gender-based violence in contemporary cinemas of Argentina and Brazil, particularly the increasing representation of sexual violence against women, Joelma Ferreira dos Santos (Universidade do Estado da Bahia, Brazil), in the article *Violence against Women in Argentine and Brazilian Regional Cinema: An Intersectional Reading*, examines two films: *Baixio das Bestas* (Brazil, 2006), directed by Cláudio Assis, and *La niña de tacones amarillos* (Argentina, 2015), directed by María Luján Loioco. Through these works, the author offers a powerful feminist critique grounded in intersectional theory. To frame her discussion, Santos first contextualizes her theoretical and political decision to use the term "violence against women," highlighting the importance of naming such violence within the broader agenda of gender debates in Latin America. She underscores the tragic frequency of such crimes in the region. Her situated reflection draws on key contributions from leading scholars in gender and decolonial studies, such as Rita Segato, María Lugones, and Kimberlé Crenshaw, to analyze the films from feminist, decolonial, and intersectional perspectives. In doing so, she also emphasizes the regional dimensions of these films, bringing into dialogue different theoretical approaches to the

recognition and characteristics of regional cinemas. Santos's analysis foregrounds the shared narrative setting of both films: socially marginalized environments where economic hardship and precarious living conditions subject young, non-white female protagonists to various forms of violence, culminating in sexual violence. The article enriches the dossier not only through the urgency of its topic but, above all, by encouraging reflection on the ethical and committed ways in which each narrative chooses to address it.

In her article *Modes of Comedy in Argentine Cinema: Four Moments*, Lucía Rodríguez Riva (Universidad de Buenos Aires and Universidad Nacional de las Artes, Argentina) provides an organic overview of a genre that is emblematic and consistent in Argentine cinema: comedy. To this end, she identifies and analyzes four strands corresponding to different historical moments, which shape stable narrative forms and spectacular models in dialogue with specific social and political contexts: the popular comedy of the 1930s (aligned with the rise of other widely accepted popular artistic forms such as radio and the recording industry); the sophisticated comedy of the 1940s (reflecting the economic and social transformations of the time); the picaresque comedy of the 1970s and 1980s (marked by tensions between modernization and the eruption of the military regime in 1976); and two contemporary strands that update the formats of romantic comedy and situational comedy (focused on current themes such as youth, labor insertion, and redefinition of family ties). Furthermore, Rodríguez Riva highlights the fruitful relationships between these modes of comedy and vernacular spectacular traditions (such as popular theatre and the sainete criollo), as well as with international forms like screwball comedy, sitcom, and American scatological humor. Such alliances reinforced the genre locally and, at certain moments, contributed to its international circulation.

In the text *The Case of Pactos de Mayo: Early Transnational Cinema*, Mónica Villarroel (Universidad Mayor, Santiago, Chile) analyzes the images of the May Pacts, which were captured by the French Eugenio Py, who worked at the Lepage company in Buenos Aires, and by the Spaniards Juan José Pont and

Pijoan Trías, owners of the Pont & Trías company in Santiago. Villarroel shows that the use Argentina and Chile made of these films highlighted the national dimension within the transnational exchange configured in this pact. The alliance sought to end the border tensions caused by both countries' interests in obtaining ocean access in the Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego regions. In these images, the tensions seem erased but resurface when each country's state power — naval, military, and economic — is presented. As government propaganda, the films contributed to the construction of nation-states in the context of modernity. The scholar points out that, although the filmmakers were European, these films do not have a Eurocentric approach, since there is no devaluation of Latin American countries. This claim opens an interesting debate about what constitutes a Eurocentric gaze: is it merely the devaluation of otherness, as is most common? Or the subjection to untouchable categories, such as that of modernity itself?

Based on the history of culture, which contrasts with cultural history, Antonio Álvarez Pitaluga (Universidad de Costa Rica, Costa Rica), in the text *Contemporary Cuban Cinema and Social Critique: Notes for a Cultural History of the Revolution* (2016–2024), reflects on how Cuban cinema after the 1980s has been unable to maintain the expressive freedom and political criticism that characterized this cinema since the film *El Mégano* (1955). During those decades, the films produced on the island rivaled historical production in terms of interpretation, since the latter suffered from a strong state monopoly, unlike cinema, which produced relevant visions of the past and present regarding social criticism. The current crisis in Cuban society, the saturation of themes of misery and emigration, the departure of a considerable number of filmmakers from Cuba, and ICAIC censorship are pointed out as some of the reasons for the stagnation of Cuban cinema in recent decades. Even those films that appeal to the myth of independence — based on the anti-colonial struggles for freedom — could only repeat, according to the scholar, a worn-out political language, far removed from the daily reality of present-day Cuba.

The interview “A Dance Between Voices” or the Challenges of Audiodescription in Latin American Audiovisual: Interview with Ednilson Sacramento and Rafael Braz, conducted by Morgana Gama de Lima (Universidade Federal da Bahia, Brazil) and Rosângela Fachel de Medeiros (Universidade Federal de Pelotas, Brazil), reflects on the accessibility of audiovisual works for the visually impaired. This debate is of utmost importance when considering a broader and more inclusive audiovisual field. Access fundamentally depends on the figure of the self-describer. The self-description of an audiovisual work is not simple; besides the professional, the participation of a consultant with visual impairment seems essential. In this dialogue between these new figures, perhaps a reflection on the inter-translation undertaken by both will emerge.

The review "We are a mixture": notes on borders and (non)belonging in Gloria Anzaldúa, by Maria Paula Rodrigues Martins de Carvalho (Universidade Estadual de Campinas), considers Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza (1987) a fundamental work for contemporary decolonial and intersectional thought in Latin America. The Chicana intellectual breaks with Western binary epistemologies, defending mestizaje as a practice of cultural translation and a form of resistance to colonial power. The book, which uses a hybrid format of literature and theory, proposes a "third space" of identity that incorporates the intersections of race, gender, and sexuality. The work redefines queer as an act of rebellion, emphasizing the complexity and contradictions of (non)belonging.

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