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## **NETWORK AND CIRCULATIONS DURING THE COLD WAR: DIALOGUES AND INTERCULTURAL PRACTICES IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH (1957-1991)<sup>1</sup>**

During the Cold War, social transformations together with technical innovations such as far-reaching progress in the fields of information, communications, aerodynamics and cybernetic technologies (for both military and civilian purposes), among others, favored the creation of transnational networks that provided a fruitful dialogue in the visual arts, literature, architecture, art criticism and theory. Such exchange of information, knowledge and experiences transcended the division into two ideological blocks; quite often, ideas were not exclusively limited to a specific region or scene, but circulated beyond the borders, generating

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<sup>1</sup> Translation: Béatriz Cordero Martín

intercultural dialogues that challenged the bipolar and non-aligned geographies of the Cold War.

Migrations and artistic collaborations nurtured cross-connections between spaces considered as centre(s) and periphery(ies), as well as between different professional and disciplinary fields. Additionally, they made possible the creation of new spaces, producing platforms or “gray areas” where ideologies in dispute and conceptions opposed to a static vision of the Cold War could be expressed. Transnational and transcontinental exchanges also fostered a general impulse of social and political solidarity among the actors involved, as well as resistance to the hegemonic frameworks of the superpowers. Expressions of solidarity manifested through the states’ cultural policies, as well as individual or collective initiatives carried out from the margins of the system became recurrent phenomena. From the late 1950s onwards, as a result of anti-imperialist and decolonization struggles, the interactions developed in the context of these networks favored a utopian and socialist turn that would have a considerable impact on what was starting to be referred to as the Global South.

This monographic issue of *REG|AC* maps some of the cultural networks of the Cold War (1957-1991) developed through—or in contact with—the Transatlantic and the Pacific South, considering the social and political relations produced around it, as well as their points of contact and friction with institutional agendas and civil participation. It focuses, therefore, on the complex dynamics through which cultural agents dealt with the social, economic and geographical dissonances implied by these transfers, while cultural affinities were expressed on the basis of language, ideology, religion and history in a specific geographical space.

The “Transatlantic/Pacific South” refers to a complex spatial and geopolitical configuration that has the Atlantic and Pacific oceans as backbones around which the political, economic, military, and cultural interests were brought together and interacted with each other, and from which specific cultural and artistic policies were established. Following the reflections of Levander and Mignolo, we understand the “South” as an entity configured in the struggles and conflicts between a global imperial domination of the superpowers during the Cold War and the emancipatory and decolonial forces that formed global designs.<sup>2</sup> As a methodological resource within the framework of a cultural historiography of the Cold War period, this notion allows to add complexity to a scenario based on the bipolar West/East relationship and to raise issues not only linked to ideological struggles and their decline in allied territories, but also to other (dis)balances of an economic, gender, racial and visual nature, which precisely manifested during the processes of transference and through the productions derived from them.

The Transatlantic/Pacific South is therefore presented as a complex unit of analysis that fosters a transnational perspective, centered on mobility and flows that sustained relations, diplomacies, encounters, migrations and diasporas of agents, practices and objects. It refers to a political, social and cultural geography, which played an important role in the orientation and agency of specific relations between individuals and social collectives, as well as artistic and cultural practices during the Cold War.

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<sup>2</sup> See “Introduction” (2011), in Levander, Caroline and Mignolo, Walter (eds.), *The Global South*. 5:1 March 3.

While it is true that this space was one more agent in the configuration of the cultural hegemony of the superpowers, delimiting borders between the north and the south, it is essential to develop a critical reading of it in order to articulate a tricontinental space that is geographic, as well as cultural and political in other terms. To speak of a “Transatlantic/Pacific South” allows us to think of a real and imagined space in which, during a specific historical period, identities were negotiated, hegemonic racial and cultural policies were exercised, but also productive syncretisms were produced, shared knowledge and dissident responses to the geopolitical order of the Cold War were conveyed, thus configuring alternative models of coexistence and relationship.<sup>3</sup>

Alongside the analysis of the multiple interactions provided through these cultural networks, this issue seeks to investigate to what extent such circulations and exchanges of models not only reflected, but also participated in the subversion of Cold War policies. It also seeks to critically discuss the implication of such exchanges in the construction of transnational movements, which anticipated and nurtured narratives and structures of a post-1989 postmodern, multicultural society. In this respect, the vision of proximity offered by the case studies collected here enables us to capture a plurality of expressions and reactions, and relate them both to the local circumstances of their emergence and to the global factors that affect their trajectories.

From that starting point, some of the questions that support this monographic issue are: How did collaborative networks shape and

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<sup>3</sup> Gardner, Anthony and Greene, Charles (2014), “South as method? Biennials past and present”. In Galit Eilat et al. (eds.), *Making Biennials in Contemporary Times, Essays from the World Biennial Forum no2*. São Paulo: Biennial Foundation Fundação Bienal de São Paulo and Instituto de Cultural Contemporânea, 28-36.

transform spaces and platforms that brought into dialogue a wide range of cultural and social actors? What kind of exchanges between different disciplines developed through these networks? What were the means and structures through which objects and ideas could circulate, and how did they influence their forms and content? How did these multiple exchanges participate in, or interfere with, the Cold War's politics of representation and expression, as well as its ideological rhetoric?

How does the poetic and aesthetic dimension of the above-mentioned processes reveal itself, and to what extent does it promote the construction of transcultural imaginaries (bringing into play, for example, internationalism, solidarity and freedom)? What material and ideological conditions determined these exchanges (displacements due to exile, migration or professional motives, adherence to ideologies and political causes, or also individual need for communication and exchange)? How can the study of these networks contribute to a paradigm shift in the historiography of the Cold War?

The contributions collected in this issue embrace these questions from a multiplicity of perspectives, highlighting significant aspects of the crossing between cultural production and circulations, among which four axes of analysis stand out: magazines, as privileged platforms for communication and circulation; the image (particularly photographic) as a vehicle for solidarity and propaganda; the mobility of artists and traveling agents; and finally, the productive crossing between transnational politics and cultural poetics.

## Magazines: communication and circulation platforms

Magazines and periodicals played an essential role in the distribution of ideas and images and favored communication between authors and creators living in distant places. **Gabriela Aceves** considers the trajectory of the magazine *El Corno Emplumado/The Plumed Horn*, published in Mexico in the sixties. Seeking to bring the northern and southern hemispheres into contact—especially in the Americas—without establishing a relationship of domination and dependence, the magazine implemented the principle of multidirectionality, thanks to bilingual editions that favored the circulation of contents beyond its area of established reception. Aceves emphasizes the experimental dimension of the magazine and its eclectic and inclusive nature, especially regarding political ideas and ideologies. Her attention to visual contents allows her to insist on the role of journals as privileged vehicles for experimental artistic production that transcend cultural divisions and hierarchies. Her article reaffirms the importance of the sixties as a moment of emergence of a mobile and protoglobal counter-culture that can be shared beyond the borders and divisions of the Cold War.

While Aceves points out some contradictions of *El Corno Emplumado* (as its intention of being counter-cultural and anti-establishment while being founded by Mexican government), **Christian Padilla's** contribution deepens on the collusion between culture and private capital of the big monopolistic companies. Padilla examines the case of the magazine *Lámpara*, published in Colombia by the Standard Oil Company since 1952 and active for several decades. Initially focused on issues related to oil and commerce, the magazine quickly became an important channel for the dissemination of ideas and practices by Colombian artists and intellectuals. On the one hand, *Lámpara* appears

as the promoter of a specific national production (a typical “ESSO culture”, according to Marta Traba), as in the case of photographer Leo Matiz. The attribution of literary or artistic prizes by ESSO (Colombian subsidiary of the Standard Oil Company) highlights the connection between the sponsor and the national cultural production, mediated in this case by the figure of Álvaro Mutis. On the other hand, beyond the evident support to the arts—which led to a series of collaborations with figures such as José Gómez Sicre and Traba, and traveling exhibitions in the United States and Western Europe—the article highlights the role of cultural publications promoted by oil companies, as developmental actions and forms of control over local production to maintain political and economic stability in the region, preventing revolutionary or socialist activities.

### **Photographs and images as vehicles of propaganda and solidarity**

The intersections between national policies, diplomacy, and private economic interests were also at stake in other spheres and geographies. From the publication of the photograph of a Vietnamese artisan published in the American design magazine *Interiors*, **Jennifer Way** proposes to reflect, on the one hand, on the modalities of production and circulation of objects created by Vietnamese artisans for American homes and, on the other hand, on the photographic representations of the figure of the craftsman as a paradigm of the power relationship between the United States and Vietnam; a relationship that is also mediated -as the author suggests- by a gender dimension. Way explains how US diplomacy in South Vietnam—largely dedicated to limiting the influence in the South of the socialist republic established in North Vietnam—was exercised through economic support to local crafts. The

production and sale of everyday objects were encouraged at the same time the middle class and consumerism were being promoted. An important agent of this process was the industrial designer Russel Wright, whose technical knowledge and industrial skills—associated with an idea of masculinity, Way suggests—are contrasted in his photographic portraits with the feminized representations of the Asian craftsman as the archetype of the colonized subject. The article highlights the role of printed photography in magazines as a vehicle for reaffirming power and authority in Southeast Asia, emphasizing gender as an important marker of this relationship.

The circulation of photographs (or film stills) appears as well in the text of **Laura Ramírez Palacio**; this time, in relation to expressions of solidarity crystallized around the figure of child soldiers in El Salvador throughout the eighties. Examining the dissemination of these images through European international solidarity networks, the author analyzes the visual motifs linked to childhood that circulated with the complicity of foreign photographers and journalists, some of them directly involved in committees of national solidarity with El Salvador. Variations in the construction of the images and their display in different published media have influenced the changing perception of children's participation in armed conflict. From archival materials, Ramírez Palacio proposes to examine these images in their correlation in order to detect the social imaginaries that were constructed and transformed from them, starting from a sympathetic view of childhood, until the identitarian use of an image from which the notion of childhood is eliminated, in order to promote more abstract and generic notions about the anti-imperialist armed struggle. Ramírez Palacio observes that in contrast to other visualities related to Cold War conflicts, in the case of El Salvador and other countries of Central America the figure of the child appears not as

a victim, but as an active agent, a desiring subject, involved in the revolutionary process. She suggests that the image of the child acted as a point of union or encounter, crystallizing a transnational consensus that allowed some representations of the Salvadoran guerrillas to be conveyed.

### **Artists and traveling agents**

While the articles by Laura Ramírez Palacio and Jennifer Way reveal a strong participation of (mostly Western) mediating agents in the construction and distribution of images to a broad public, the essays by **Neus Moyano** and **Ornela Barisone** contemplate processes of displacement and exchange that encouraged the circulation of ideas and artifacts, more specifically in an expanding artistic field.

Questioning the simplistic readings that see the presence of European artists in Brazil as a condition for the development of avant-garde Brazilian art, Neus Moyano examines the crossed trajectories of different agents involved in the exchange between the Ulm School, in Germany, and South American countries such as Argentina and mostly Brazil, between the 1950s and 1970s. Among them, Tomás Maldonado and Max Bill; the first traveled from Argentina to the Ulm school, the second from Ulm to Brazil. The article reconstructs these transnational journeys and the people linked to them, with turning points materialized in exhibitions, publications and works. The text emphasizes the multidirectionality of exchanges, thus contradicting unilateral visions.

In both Neus Moyano's analysis and Ornela Barisone's contribution, the relationship between Latin American countries and Europe ceases to be a unilateral conditioning factor, to be seen as an integral element of a

more complex synthetic and syncretic process in which both parts nourish each other. Barisone studies the figure of artist Carmelo Arden Quin, co-founder of Madí art in the 1940s. Her analysis focuses on Buenos Aires and Paris, to propose a reading where both cities appear not so much as representative centers of their nation states, but rather as places of confluence of individuals and creative experiences, weaving relationships between poetry and visual arts. While the cosmopolitan encounter between the visual poet Julien Blaine and Arden Quin in Paris had an evident repercussion in the practice of both in the late 1940s, particularly with the incorporation of a more “participatory” dimension in Quin’s art, the author suggests that these transformations became more evident *a posteriori*, in the pages of the Argentine magazine *Robho* published two decades later.

Delving into the question of artistic mobility in relation with industrial development and information technology, **Pablo Santa Olalla** examines the conditions for the development of conceptualism in the seventies and its connections with the evolution of commercial aviation. In addition to a detailed and well-documented analysis of the emergence of the Jet Age, Santa Olalla proposes the term “traveling agent” to designate artists or cultural agents who “made the journey a part of their own agency.” Artists like On Kawara, Antoni Muntadas and Carlos Ginzburg thus introduced, in the framework of radical industrial and technological changes, the dimension of mobility in their artistic research. Beyond new ways of occupying and moving around in the physical and geographical space—which, suggests Santa Olalla, call into question the distinctions between center/s and periphery/ies, particularly within what he designates as “the South-Atlantic space of conceptualism”—the traveling agents also operated methodological and epistemological displacements, pushing established limits in art.

## Politics and cultural poetics

In the same context of the seventies studied by Santa Olalla, the Center for Art and Communication (CAYC) of Buenos Aires promoted by Jorge Glusberg, presented itself as a decentralized institution which established alliances with other places and agents from countries that had been considered “marginal.” **Katarzyna Cytlak**’s analysis seeks to complicate the readings that have seen in Jorge Glusberg a simple promoter and agent of internationalization of a specific model—often stereotypical-of Latin American art, responding to the expectations of western countries. From a trans-regional perspective, her text delves into a still little explored aspect of the Argentinian critic’s activities, exposing his ambition to generate contacts with countries belonging to the Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe, thus creating alliances and networks of visibility outside the Western art system and market. Cytlak not only reveals this facet of the CAYC through exhibition documentation, she also points to the fluctuating nature of the political interpretations of these practices, according to the contexts and socio-political experiences to which they were linked.

Politics mediated by experiences of migration, resistance and memory emerges as a key aspect in the practice of the Chilean visual artist Cecilia Vicuña. It is mixed, however, with other elements of biographical and personal character, sometimes oniric in nature. The letter addressed by **Giulia Lamoni** to art historian and critic Carla Machiavelo as a way to open a dialogue has as its main thread Vicuña’s trajectory and aesthetic strategy, related to her experience of migration and exile in London in the 1970s. The context of the Cold War must be seen as a stage in which conflicts transcended the spheres of influence of the two super powers, since it affected multiple territories and populations. In some cases,

artists operated as living testimonies or catalysts of images to make these conflicts public and to position themselves politically and ideologically. In the case of Cecilia Vicuña, the concept of suturing allows her to describe her *modus operandi*, which consists in performing an inscription of elements and objects reflecting everyday life in her country of origin, Chile, in the reality of London. Her works serve as testimonies of a condition of uprooting that does not cease to be fertile; source of stories and transoceanic resistances.

One could also speak of transoceanic stories in the case of Linda Kitson, whose atypical trajectory is exposed in **Clare Carolin's** article. Kitson, an English illustrator, was sent by British troops to document the military conflict between the United Kingdom and Argentina over the possession and control of the Malvinas Islands in 1982. After a reconstruction of the socio-political conditions that preceded Kitson's journey, insisting on the defensive discourse of the dominant political class in the United Kingdom throughout the 1970s, Carolin reflects on the points of contact and disjunction—starting with gender—between, on the one hand, Kitson's journey and her mission to inform, report through her drawings and, on the other hand, the pictorial works with scenes of torture and interrogation exhibited at the same time in London by Leon Golub. Both works carried the same intention of documenting events that occurred in what Carolin designates as a “generic” global south, the result of a Western imaginary shaped by geopolitics.

The conceptual, ideological and cultural map drawn up thanks to the essays gathered in this monographic issue **Networks and Circulations in the Cold War: Intercultural Dialogues and Practices in the Global South (1957-1991)** offers a dynamic perspective. Individual trajectories intersect with collective processes generating aesthetic

proposals and forms of knowledge that are particularly permeable to impulses and influences coming from other areas and disciplines. Undoubtedly, these essays establish a dialogue with the analysis and debates on the Cold War generated within the framework of the international platform of research to which this publication belongs: *Decentralized Modernities: Art, Politics and Counterculture in the Transatlantic Axis during the Cold War (projects:HAR2014-53834-P and HAR2017-82755-P)*. The following essays deepen the analysis of the phenomena of exchange and circulation that contributed to decentralize the dominant axes, and describe a complex transnational and transcontinental history, where the processes of globalization that characterize our contemporaneity are already underway.