

EDITORIAL

The role and conception of the museum have shifted over time. For reasons having to do both with their own mission and the vicissitudes and transformations of the social, political, and intellectual environment, institutions like MUSAC have been gradually and actively re-inventing themselves as propagators of knowledge and culture. As a result of the paradigm shifts that MUSAC has undergone in recent years, its principal task has come to be the creation of space for the production and articulation of art discourse. That discourse has been fostered through the exhibitions it holds, through its collections of historical and cultural artefacts, and—perhaps the most active and intellectually engaged aspect—through the scheduling of conferences, symposia, and other scholarly events that invite spectators, researchers, and theorists to explore the possibilities of reflection and discussion about art and society.

It's true that MUSAC has already been sharing and developing the new discourses it has generated by means of its publications—through catalogs, books, and other educational and promotional materials—and for that reason many people may regard those projects as sufficient to expound its mission. However, when the museum is seen as a living and dynamic actor within the context of the urban environment, social reality, and cyberspace, it becomes crucial that the institution extend itself to new planes that relate to its work, its obligations, and its responsibilities, and that it establish an opening for and a commitment to the reflections—both theoretical and artistic—that give it meaning and purpose in its contemporary setting.

Setting out from that perspective, РАДАЯ, MUSAC's Journal of Art and Thought, has been founded as a tool for research, debate, and dialogue. This new articulation of the museum hasn't been created solely with the intention of supporting the institution's own programming or in order to provide coverage of its collections and activities; it is also conceived of as an independent enterprise in its own right. As an additional department of the museum, and as an embodiment of the actions the museum proposes, it creates a new academic tool for reflecting on themes and issues from the past, present, and future that interest us, that concern us, or that we find noteworthy. It will serve, we hope, as an open doorway onto dialogue and creation.

In taking on all of these tasks we believe that it's necessary for MUSAC to establish this forum for debate as a way to periodically introduce other areas of interest to the community at large and, in turn, extend the museum's commitment. This is how we envisage RADAЯ: a semi-annual bilingual journal, to be distributed internationally by Actar, which will serve as a scholarly medium for discussing the issues, reflections, and concerns generated within the intellectual mechanisms of the museum, ones connected, whether closely or distantly, to the projects we produce. Each issue will invite theorists, artists, curators, intellectuals, analysts, writers, and sociologists to engage with different spaces for art, culture, and thought, in order to formalize new discourses and reflections on specific monographic themes.

RADAЯ thus wishes to provide a specific yet broad perspective on a particular idea, thought, way of seeing, event, space, or time. It will do this largely through previously unpublished texts by scholars and critics who are creating new discourses and arguments (although we don't exclude the possibility of republishing and revisiting earlier writings that may shed new light or provide new perspectives on the topic under consideration). While these articles will form the core of the journal, RADAЯ will also feature—in an effort to balance the realm of communication and the space of creation—a section devoted to specific projects by artists and other creators, whose work will contribute to broadening or raising questions about each issue's particular theme.

This issue #0 is special not only because it inaugurates a new path for MUSAC, but also because it is directly connected—in the manner of a supplement or extension—to the exhibition project that justifies it and from which it takes its title and theme. *Model Kits: Thinking Latin America from the MUSAC Collection* invited us to think about Latin America as an eternally possible and therefore ultimately infinite work-in-progress, a project with no fixed point in space or time, with different trajectories, open to multiple worlds. It was construed as a sort of unlimited *ars combinatoria*, one that wouldn't exclusively refer to the Latin American geographical-cultural environment but that would also foster and encourage various and contrasting readings and conclusions, uncertain storylines, and ambiguous clues, leaving unanswered questions and forking paths.

The articles in this issue broaden and deepen those ideas and readings—as well as some of their theoretical, historical or urban implications—through the precise, specific, and personal perspectives of a group of Latin American specialists. Andrea Giunta reflects on contemporary interrelationships between art, politics, and society in Latin America in the context of biopolitics and the relationship between images of life and art, in order to point out the changes occurring in a setting that has distinct characteristics in regard to the production, organization, distribution, online promotion, and educational dynamics of art. Nicolás Guagnini devises and outlines a possible history of Latin Ame-

rican art based on texts by distinguished avant-garde poets and writers, so as to shape a kind of signifying collage that highlights some of the confusions and misunderstandings about what today is heralded (and perhaps will continue to be heralded) as contemporary Latin American art. Rosina Cazali reviews the decisive experience of action art and performance in Central America through the artists and works that have reflected on the region's conflicts, sometimes brimming with references to violence and death, and at other times drawing on a new poetics and on physical and psychological concerns. Natalia Majluf analyzes how the concept of "Latin America" has been transformed into a commodity of artistic consumption. Demonstrating how this transformation stems, on the one hand, from the real imbalance between the production of artworks and lack of local infrastructure, and, on the other, from the promotion of that work in the international art world, she shows how this situation has developed as an unintended consequence of the unexpected success of the struggle to include Latin American art within international circuits.

Ana María Durán Calisto addresses the phenomenon of the Latin American megapolis through an overview of the Amazon basin, making sense of the contrast between the exotic-romantic representation of the region in the media as a mythical and remote land and the contemporary reality of its wealth and resources, the conflicts that these have produced, and the irreversible urban expansion and artificiality they fuel. Raúl Cárdenas interweaves the historical events of twentieth-century Mexico with personalities and ideas from the country's experience of modernity, as well as recent examples of curatorship, in order to evaluate different stances regarding urbanism and architecture in Mexican contemporary art. Iván de la Nuez responds to personal questions while sketching the inexhaustible universe of history, politics, literature, and art that define "the stain" and "the map" of Latin America. The original projects produced for RADAЯ by Fernanda Gomes, Armando Andrade Tudela, Jhafis Quintero González and Pablo León de la Barra, ranging from formal poetics to subjective projection, and from the personal experience of the social to the juxtaposition and coexistence of urban realities, round off the "model kits" that shape this first issue.

Issue #0 is also special because it has been produced, presented, and distributed within the framework of the International Book Fair of Guadalajara, Mexico, where authors and publications from Castile and Leon were the focus of attention as the special guests of its 24th instalment, and where, with this issue, MUSAC had an honoured position.

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