



TEACHER'S GUIDE  
Luis Camnitzer

UNDER THE SAME SUN  
ART FROM LATIN AMERICA TODAY

How to Use this Guide	5
Exhibition Overview	5
Introduction by Luis Camnitzer	7
How might you make a found object into an archeological artifact? Mariana Castillo Deball	17
How can mixing two seemingly unrelated systems or ideas spark new meanings and insights? Paul Ramírez Jonas	23
How do you make people aware of social injustices and motivate them to action? Iván Navarro	29
How might the world function if we could communicate with everything the way we do with other people? Wilfredo Prieto	35
What effects would a different structure of time have? Carla Zaccagnini	41
How might you tell a coherent story without using grammar or narration? Rivane Neuenschwander	47
How would you use the opportunity to address a million people in a minute or less? Alfredo Jaar	53
Authors	59

## HOW TO USE THE GUIDE

The guide proposes three approaches—*Problems*, *Projects*, and *Questions*—each of which is followed by a reproduction of a work of art in the exhibition, a quote from the artist, and information and questions related to the context in which the work was made.

The *Problems* section presents ideas for consideration and poses a broad question. The related *Projects* section includes a call to action. The featured tasks are sequenced from simple to complex and can be adapted accordingly. They are intended to inspire the creation of new projects proposed by teachers, students, and anyone else involved. The final section, *Questions*, is wide-ranging, flexible, and not limited by disciplinary boundaries.

We strongly suggest that teachers try out these or similar ideas before introducing the artworks to students; this helps to establish patterns of thought akin to the artists' own and avoids the risk of restricting enquiry to the concepts and forms presented directly by the artists and their works. It also creates a peer-to-peer relationship between artists and participants, allowing both to become actively involved in the artistic process.

Although the *Problem*, *Projects*, and *Questions* sections were inspired by the exhibition's works and themes, they are proposed independently of them and are aimed at eliciting original trans-disciplinary thinking. Once this is achieved, participants can compare their results with what the artists thought and did. This guide provides a series of stimuli aimed at leading readers to generate new problems, projects, and questions, all of which we invite you to send to [education@guggenheim.org](mailto:education@guggenheim.org). Pedagogically speaking, the works produced by the artist are not a destination, but should instead be regarded as a catalyst for personal creative learning experiences.

## EXHIBITION OVERVIEW

The presentation of *Under the Same Sun: Art from Latin America Today* marks the second phase of the Guggenheim UBS MAP Global Art Initiative. Organized by Pablo León de la Barra, Guggenheim UBS MAP Curator, Latin America, the exhibition features contemporary works by 40 artists and collaborative duos representing 15 countries, including Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba,

Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Puerto Rico (United States), Uruguay, and Venezuela. Following its presentation in New York, *Under the Same Sun: Art from Latin America Today* will travel to the Museu de Arte Moderna (MAM) in São Paulo and the Museo Jumex in Mexico City.

Featuring approximately fifty works including installations, mixed-media works, paintings, photographs, sculptures, videos, and works on paper, *Under the Same Sun* considers some of the most significant contemporary art practices in Latin America today. This presentation is the second of three exhibitions that form part of the Guggenheim UBS MAP Global Art Initiative. The artworks in the exhibition, along with others acquired as part of the initiative, will become part of the Guggenheim's permanent collection under the auspices of the Guggenheim UBS MAP Purchase Fund.

The exhibition presents a diversity of creative responses to complex shared realities, which have been influenced by colonial and modern histories, repressive governments, economic crises, and social inequality, as well as by concurrent periods of regional economic wealth, development, and progress. It shows contemporary artistic responses to the past and present that are inscribed within these contexts, and explores the possible construction of alternative futures.

## INTRODUCTION

Luis Camnitzer

*Under the Same Sun: Art from Latin America Today* is an exhibition of works of art from a specific geographical location. This simple criterion, which allows for the inclusion of artwork that considers a broad range of issues, makes it an ideal source of transdisciplinary questions pertinent both inside and outside the classroom.

The exhibition, of a contemporary selection of Latin American art presented in the United States, poses some questions that have general cultural and political implications. As curator Pablo León de la Barra states, the artists were selected according to their provision of "creative responses to diverse political, socioeconomic, and cultural factors including the legacies of colonialism and the failure of the modernist project." But other issues also pertain to both being Latin American and being presented in the United States. León de la Barra accepts that much of the art in his exhibition is culturally hybrid.

Many of the artists, while they may live in the United States, maintain connections with Latin America and thus operate from a particular perspective. *Under the Same Sun* assumes a corresponding vantage point. In its first presentation, it is concerned to some degree with Latin America as seen from New York, with all the complexities introduced by the presence of populations in a state of diaspora, including the negotiation of tensions between centers and peripheries. When the exhibition travels to Latin America, it will also confront the public with issues around the meeting of national and continental identities.

The United States is a country separated from Latin America by armed guards and a barrier, also known in the United States as the Border Fence or Border Wall. Meanwhile, there is no wall that separates the United States from Canada—even the border that does exist can seem superfluous. Yet the land of the United States, unlike Canada's, was colonized by Spain long before the Pilgrims arrived. Spanish is the second most prevalent language in the United States, and the percentage of Spanish speakers there with Latin American roots is growing rapidly. It is forecast that non-Hispanic whites in the United States will become a minority group during the next three decades.

A theoretical scenario in which the United States becomes part of Latin America is not entirely far-fetched. As it is, Latin America is a diverse mixture, held together in large part by language and colonial history. Since 1965, when the quota system for immigration into the

United States was abolished, the ethnic profile of the country has changed and its composition has diversified, even as it finds itself pulled in many directions at once. This raises issues of identity and cultural allegiance, and complicates the character of both in relation to any given ethnic or national group.

It is difficult to determine how much of the sense of identity is imposed by stereotyping and how much is a form of affirmation. In 1970, the U.S. Census Bureau created the umbrella term *Hispanic* to simplify its task. The term is not used in Latin America and its utility is still debated by those who are thus classified, as is its 1997 “update” to *Latino*.

The use of such labels isn’t new. In 1942, President Roosevelt, prompted by the attack on Pearl Harbor, signed an edict that allowed the internment of people of Japanese ancestry in concentration camps. Here, an umbrella term originated in a problematic relationship between nations, indiscriminately covering an entire ethnic group and forcing the reaffirmation of an identity that separated itself from the national sense.

Roughly three-quarters of the 110,000 Japanese Americans thus interned were U.S. citizens. Residents born in Japan comprised the remaining quarter (they did not qualify for citizenship). Added to these were 1,800 residents in Peru, imported under a special treaty. Ironically, not long after, a segregated Japanese American battalion was organized among that same population. The Japanese American soldiers were sent to fight in European battlefields and, as proof of their patriotism, returned as the highest decorated group in the military, thus reasserting their U.S. national identity.

In 1924, fear of ethnic imbalance prompted the United States to institute immigration quotas. These quotas were mainly created to limit the immigration of Southern and Eastern European Jews. In 1954, Operation Wetback deported over a million Mexicans considered illegal aliens. None of these attempts did much to create national homogeneity. The push for multiculturalism represents an attempt to negotiate a balanced middle ground between nationality and diversity, but its success remains undetermined.

Today, there are 1.5 million Dominicans in the United States—about ten per cent of the total population of the Dominican Republic and more than live in Santo Domingo, the country’s capital. Most travel back and forth between the two countries. Dominicans are probably more authentically “dual” citizens than any other nationals,

and presidential candidates in the Dominican Republic campaign in the United States to attract votes. Between 1970 and 1980, approximately one fifth of the population of Uruguay emigrated for political and economic reasons. Uruguay is a country divided into 19 “departments” or provinces, and there is a movement to create a twentieth department to accommodate Uruguayans who live in diaspora and will continue to do so. Wikipedia, a global, non-geographic institution, shows different (usually complementary) information for the same topics according to the language in which one opens a given page; knowledge disseminated by Wikipedia is thus subject to language-based locality.

One could travel the world finding examples of the ways in which the use of borders to pinpoint identities is problematic, even meaningless. First nations share different national territories and have stronger bonds than people unified by nation-states. More specifically in art, Picasso, Miró, Modigliani, Vasarely, and many other artists are identified as part of French art history, to which they undoubtedly contributed, but without severing ties with their countries of birth.

What defines the culture of a country, homogeneity or diversity? Does culture remain confined within geographic borders or does it spill over? And if it does, how so? What is the role of diaspora in all this? Some of the artists in *Under the Same Sun* no longer live in their countries of origin, yet they continue to feel strongly connected to them. The issue of identity is fluid and controversial, and an exhibition such as this will not provide answers but rather raise further—important—questions.

The geographic label thus gives *Under the Same Sun* a perspective that cannot remain limited to passive appreciation of the artworks therein. It puts the onus on the viewer to examine his or her own cultural placement and how that placement relates to what is seen. By definition, this is an exhibition bound to divide the public into those who share the backgrounds of the artists and those who don’t, though that division will be mostly anecdotal and biographical.

In a multiethnic society, issues of diaspora or problems of assimilation facing one group become examples and metaphors for others. Because the exhibition is focused on Latin America, many of its topics refer directly to that particular geography, but they may still be relevant to others and serve to provoke open-ended discussions. The exhibition may provide information about Latin America, but should also generate thoughts about the relation in general between presence and exile, being in the midst of one’s community and on its periphery,

building new communities and pining for old ones, preserving extant traditions and establishing new ones. Those artists who work in their countries of origin face important decisions about looking beyond them to work within an international tradition, or picking up on local traits as sources of inspiration.

Accordingly, some works in the exhibition explore personal issues while others are concerned with collective identity; some fit into what is done in the international mainstream while others are more regional. Still others address general topics that don't fit into any particular category. The question of whether this medley of approaches constitutes a true portrait of Latin American art may indeed be an important part of that portrait. It is a portrait after the fact, one that *emerges*, and does not follow a predetermined blueprint or program.

The topics in the exhibition, while relevant to art practice, also point out art's broader cultural function. Simply by expressing themselves, artists reveal, pinpoint, criticize, and affirm issues that are relevant to non-artists. Artists don't work in a void but reflect and shape cultural conditions. This is what determines the need for and existence of their works; in making them, artists try to answer questions or solve problems in the best way they can. In order to ensure that judgment of the work transcends personal taste, the viewer should understand the reasons why an artist does what he or she does. The main purpose here is not to develop art appreciation, but rather to encourage the ability to analyze critically during the construction of knowledge. Faced with works of this nature, there are two important steps to consider undertaking. The first is to learn how to see the work of art as being a possible solution to a problem. The second is to (also critically) observe oneself while trying to find the ways in which to understand what is being seen.

Museum visitors have the ability, even the responsibility, to decide on the relative success of the exhibition and the works therein. The museum as an institution does its best to persuade the public of the success of its exhibitions, but the viewer should remain critical nonetheless. In fact, an exhibition invites the possibility that the viewer may not agree with or even be interested in the views that its contents appear to be propounding or promoting, or accept the presentation as valid. I believe that institutional responsibility is not so much that of convincing viewers that they are wrong when they don't agree, but rather supporting dissent that is reasoned and responsible.

Art is often selected to expose an identity, to show the viewer "other" cultures and act as a guide in their understanding. In some

ways this is more of an anthropological task than an artistic one, but the mission of contemporary art museums is not considered as such. When a contemporary museum acquires art, its mission to underscore quality becomes even more critical. This raises the issue of what constitutes good art. But identifying the determining factor or factors here is not just an "art question," it is also a sociocultural issue that transcends or, at least, makes artistic considerations relative. This then proposes a different kind of dialogue. The expectations, value judgments, and needs of the public may be totally different of those of the museum, and it is important to find an arena where those discrepancies may be compared and discussed.

### GOOD WORKS OF ART ARE *NEEDED* WORKS OF ART

This teacher's guide underscores the utility of going beyond art. We therefore invite you not to use the works in the exhibition as routes to issues and associations hidden in objects and images. Instead, we ask you to go *around* them, to touch on the cultural contexts in which the works were made and use the exhibition as an excuse to discuss a wide range of relevant topics. Without diminishing the importance of the works, we encourage you to use them as starting points and stimuli to explore subjects that establish common ground between students and artists.

This guide will support you in identifying the possible conditions in which the artworks in the exhibition were made, and you and the students should feel free to propose or imagine additions to, subtractions from, or other changes to these conditions. It presents some open-ended explorations that relate to these potential questions and may represent an origin of or justification for the works. The order of issues in the guide is a deliberate one; discussion of actual art examples is left until last. We ask that you discuss the formal aspects of the displayed objects *after* these investigations are completed, not before, so as to avoid influencing students.

## CRITICAL THINKING BEGINS AT THE OUTSET

The topics detailed here serve as background content that may assist students in “placing” the work. The suggested projects do not require craft skills and the results may be unrelated to art per se. Both are designed to open up thinking, not to tutor students in artistic “sophistication.” They are not intended as recipes, but proposed as examples. Hopefully, they will generate new undertakings designed either individually or in conjunction with students. In responding to the projects, the student should decide, with total freedom of choice, what discipline and means of work and presentation are most appropriate.

What is important is that each student should understand and experience conditions similar to those faced by the artists. The decision to become an artist is often the result of personal educational background rather than a selection made in order to solve a perceived or actual problem. From the beginning, students should draw personal conclusions from their own approach. Later, the results can be compared with those of the artists for an evaluation of the accomplishments of both groups.

Critical thinking and creative problem solving should be applied prior to and during the exhibition visit. Both the Guggenheim Museum’s educators and this guide can support you and the students in this process but you may decide to use or bypass aspects of what you are given in order to approach more general themes. Most of the following topics may be discussed more than once: in the classroom prior to the Museum visit, in the exhibition, and again after seeing it. As part of the experience, the student should examine his or her own cultural identity and compare any conclusions with those suggested by the exhibition. The following non-art related questions and investigations associated with identity and cultural background may support students in developing their own positions.

## QUESTIONS AND PROJECTS

- Why do we label and impose stereotypes on others? What labels, if any, are acceptable to you?
- When an official form asks you to check a box about racial or ethnic background, what are your thoughts and feelings?
- Regardless of your background, what labels would you be willing

- to attribute to yourself? What is your reasoning?
- Design an official form that asks background questions you find appropriate, relevant, and/or interesting.
- What is Latin America to you? How do you think of it? In purely geographical terms? Culturally? Historically? What elements or criteria might justify grouping so many countries under one label? How does Latin America compare with Asia or Africa? Does the term “Latin American countries” make more sense to you than “African countries” or “European countries?” If so, why?
- If you had the power to rearrange geography and reposition countries, what would the map of Latin America look like? What would be the reasons behind the changes you made?
- How would you compare Latin America with the United States? What do you think might hold Latin America together as a coherent entity? What about the United States? Compare both of your lists of observations. What do you think they suggest?
- Today, there might be a bigger cultural difference between a Republican state and a Democratic state in the United States than between the Dominican Republic and Mexico. Do you think ideology or geography poses the most significant divide? Explain your response.
- How would you improve the map of the United States? What would you do to improve the map of the Americas? Get a map of the Americas and invite students to “improve” it.
- Do you believe that your family’s or your own country of origin is relevant in any way to you once you have decided to live in the United States? How does its relevance, or lack thereof, affect your self-image? What, if any, decisions do you make because of your beliefs?
- Imagine writing a letter to your grandchildren many years in the future. What would you mention about your or your family’s country of origin or cultural background?
- If you consider yourself Latin American, what connections do you feel with other countries of the continent besides your own? How do these connections show?
- How might your country of origin be affected if it were to be placed within another continent? What changes would be imposed on the country and its people?
- What is being *Hispanic* to you? What about being *Latino*? What connections or distinctions can you make between both terms?

- What advantages or disadvantages do you consider there are in using either label? How do they relate to you?
- Come up with a name for a group with whom you have things in common. The group may range in size from a private club to an international cause. Define the characteristics of the group and find a label that represents the group in a positive way and as accurately as possible.

### ART AS A LABEL

A second category of questions raised by this exhibition relates more directly to art. Some of these questions refer to problems that are similar to those addressed by the artists. The explorations and topics provided in the second part of this guide are inspired by individual artists' works and provide examples of possible projects, which you may choose to elaborate on and are encouraged to create new ones. We recommend that you develop them as independently as possible from the artists' works, preferably before visiting the exhibition, so that the students are free from influence while coming up with their responses. Another section of the questions, listed below, refers to other general themes related more concretely to the exhibition.

The initial work without being influenced by the works of the artists will help establish a horizontal relationship between the students and the artists, encouraging them to feel free to compare results and conclusions and, eventually, to formulate new problems that continue to enrich our culture. The students and you should traverse creative paths similar to those the artists took rather than remaining at the receiving end of their work. These processes will help the students and you develop an active and collegial dialogue with the art and artists, and not remain subordinated consumers.

### ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- In the case of an exhibition of Latin American art, what do you think should be the criteria for judging quality? Do you believe the curator should follow U.S. standards or should the criteria for selection respect those used where the art was produced and the impact it might have had there? Are there criteria that transcend

- geography and culture? What criteria would you use? Explain your response.
- Do you think art "represents" the individual artist who made it or the country of its origin? Can a work of art, in your opinion, represent a continent?
  - Do you believe an artist automatically makes Latin American art because his or her country of origin is in Latin America? What makes you think that?
  - What does the term "Latin American art" mean to you?
  - Would you prefer it to be classified as "Latin American," or according to a different label? Why?
  - The exhibition will travel to other countries and will be shown in Latin America. What changes to the exhibition, if any, would you suggest for displaying it in different locations? What are the reasons for your suggested changes?
  - How do you think art relates to expressing individuality, communicating and building identities, or conveying an idea to other people (it may attempt all of the above, but sometimes artists emphasize certain intentions more than others)? If you were to make art, which of these options or what others would you stress? How would you rank them and why?
  - If you are of Latin American origin and were asked to make "Asian" art (or vice versa) what would you do and how? What if you were asked to make "Chinese" art? Make an example. Try making a work of art that would be attributed to another continent, country and/or culture after studying what elements would warrant that label.
  - Prior to visiting the museum, discuss what you expect to see in a Latin American contemporary art exhibition that is different from other art expositions?
  - Do you think art that is considered "good" (important, relevant, eloquent) in Latin America has to be thought of as "good" art in the United States (and vice versa)? What are your arguments?
  - Select an everyday object and transform it so that it looks "Latin American." Try to identify which qualities of your transformation are stereotypical. Document the object before and after its transformation. Discuss your thought processes and the changes you made.

HOW MIGHT  
YOU MAKE  
A FOUND  
OBJECT INTO  
AN ARCHEO-  
LOGICAL  
ARTIFACT?

## PROBLEM

Archeology is the study of historical human activity, and uses the remnants of a particular culture to reconstruct its society. Archeological practice is usually applied to the past, though there is no definition of when that past begins. This subjective element makes the discipline potentially susceptible to points of view that can influence its scientific procedure. This is what enables it to be applied to materials and things belonging to a *recent* past. For example, a flattened soda can on the street could be interpreted as an artifact to be analyzed from an archeological point of view, revealing many things that characterize our culture. We might examine what it contained, how and why it might have been discarded, and what might have flattened it (a significantly different type of investigation from looking at an undamaged can).

## PROJECTS

- A Create an archeological dig in a sandbox or garden by secretly burying manufactured objects or fragments thereof. Take turns ascribing, in a credible way, the date of manufacturing, use, and cultural conditions of each object as deduced from its design and imagined use.
- B Take an everyday object (coin, fork, pencil, shoe, etc.) and pretend that it belongs to a different historical period about which you have some knowledge. Based on your imagined context, think about how the object might function differently in that culture and time.
- C Attribute a real or imagined event to a particular area in a garden or park (you might imagine that, for example, *The Hunger Games* occurred there). Find and identify objects in the area and rethink their functions to “prove” that the event took place in the spot you claim. Provide a credible explanation that justifies your assertion and display your findings. You may wish to research how scholarly presentations are made in order to ensure that so your project will be taken seriously. Have others evaluate your exposition.

- D Pick a room at home, in school, or elsewhere, and observe everything in it from an archeologist’s point of view. Write explanatory labels for each object in the room, addressing a hypothetical public that does not know the culture that produced it. Prepare an illustrated guide with this information.

## QUESTIONS

- 1 What makes antique objects valuable? When do you think something changes from “used” to “antique”? What determines the change?
- 2 How can qualities and functions be attributed to objects when the culture that produced them is unknown?
- 3 How might you avoid projecting the present onto an interpretation of the past?
- 4 Where does analysis stop and interpretation begin?
- 5 A frame usually designates its contents as art. How do you think archeological artifacts should be presented in exhibitions?
- 6 Methods of presentation change over time. Do you think archeological exhibitions today might themselves be perceived as archeological material in the future? How would you display it?
- 7 How can archeology be an act of cultural dominance?
- 8 Who do you think should be the rightful owners of archeological finds?

## MARIANA CASTILLO DEBALL

*I think this started when I did the first project about archeological objects in Mexico, and I realized that, for instance when you go to a museum, like an ethnographic museum, you see a very beautiful Asian piece displayed in a showcase, and you never know where they found this object, or where it was originally, or who owned it first. Many times the trajectory of the object and how it arrived at the specific place it is in now is really interesting, really rich, but somehow it's never integrated into the history of the display itself.<sup>1</sup>*

*History is always viewed from the point of view of power, so how can you go down into the sources and find the history of people who have no voice? In the case of archeological objects, these are objects that were taken by the colonizers and were taken away from people who'd lost their voice. It's very difficult to try to imagine it, to put yourself in the position of someone who lost power or lost agency.<sup>2</sup>*

### Mariana Castillo Deball



Mariana Castillo Deball, *Stelae Storage*, 2013. Metal rack, two plaster plates, and 28 inkjet prints mounted on cardboard, 150 x 150 x 80 cm overall. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Guggenheim UBS MAP Purchase Fund 2014.13  
Mariana Castillo Deball, *Lost Magic Kingdoms Peolozzi*, 2013. Metal rack and four plaster plates, 150 x 150 x 80 cm overall. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Guggenheim UBS MAP Purchase Fund 2014.14

During a 2012–13 residency at Chisenhale Gallery in Cove Park, Scotland, Mariana Castillo Deball researched two archives extensively. The first was the storage facility of the British Museum in London, where she studied the nineteenth-century casts of British explorer, archeologist, and diplomat Alfred Maudslay (1850–1931). The second was the archive of ephemera at the Scottish National Galleries. In *Stelae Storage*<sup>3</sup> and other works, the artist uses exhibition strategies patterned after nineteenth-century museum displays to address subject matter belonging to her own cultural tradition.

Castillo Deball, who is Mexican, lives and works in Berlin, and trained in printmaking, states that a lot of her experiments were “somehow related to the process of printing, where you have a negative and you make a positive. This relationship between the positive and the negative developed—in different ways—through a story or through an object, or through the distortions an imprint makes.”<sup>4</sup>

- 1 What do you think about Castillo Deball’s comment “History is always viewed from the point of view of power”?
- 2 How do her words relate to the concept of “otherness” (the quality of not belonging to a particular cultural group) and the “colonial gaze” (the superior cultural perspective often adopted by a nation possessed of, or formerly possessed of, global power)?

1. Mariana Castillo Deball interviewed by Katie Guggenheim, Chisenhale Gallery, London, May 2013, [http://www.chisenhale.org.uk/archive/exhibitions/images/MCD\\_Sheet1.pdf](http://www.chisenhale.org.uk/archive/exhibitions/images/MCD_Sheet1.pdf).
2. Ibid.
3. A *stelae* is an upright stone slab or column typically bearing a commemorative inscription or relief design, often serving as a gravestone, which appear in different cultures such as Egypt, China and Mexico.
4. Castillo Deball interviewed by Katie Guggenheim.

HOW CAN  
MIXING TWO  
SEEMINGLY  
UNRELATED  
SYSTEMS OR  
IDEAS  
SPARK NEW  
MEANINGS  
AND INSIGHTS?

## PROBLEM

Drawing connections between disparate ideas is an important strategy in systems design. Systems can be quite complex, but all are, fundamentally, collections of elements and relationships. A biosphere, city, company, or computer chip—and the universe itself—are all systems.

## PROJECTS

- A Identify some everyday experiences (for example, “I ate some soup that was too heavy and too hot”). Rephrase the experiences with metaphors that underscore and illustrate them (for example, “the soup felt like molten lead”). Visually depict the metaphors by exploring what can be added by using color, shape, proportion, new information, or something unexpected.
- B Take a weather forecast map or a map of your town, city, or country and rename as many words as possible to make it a *poetic* map.
- C A metaphor can be thought of as a translation from factual and descriptive language to one with images that enhance description. Choose a page from a scientific article or textbook and rewrite the entire text using metaphors.
- D Select two inventories (phone book, local real estate listings, etc.) and/or notation systems (letters, musical notes, etc.). Make a point (humorous, political, poetic, etc.) by correlating, meshing, and/or reordering the listings to create a new order.

## QUESTIONS

- 1 What is poetry?
- 2 What other forms, in addition to word arrangements, might poetry take?
- 3 How do you recognize something as being poetic?
- 4 How could poetry be used to give the feeling of objectivity?
- 5 Under what conditions do you think this would be effective?
- 6 What would be the effects of poetry permeating all information systems?

## PAUL RAMÍREZ JONAS

*In 1997 I made a video piece called Longer Day where I drove as far west as I could—leaving my home at dawn and stopping when the sun set. I was curious about the many epic journeys of discovery and conquests undertaken by western civilization. I prepared myself by reading the diaries of Columbus, the diary of a crewman in Magellan’s circumnavigation, and the diaries of Lewis and Clark. Was this western motion a way to beat death? To achieve immortality? To stop the sun from setting? On the drive back east I began to think about the sunrise. Why had so few works of art been made about the sunrise? I conceived of Another Day over the ensuing years. I settled on tracking the sunrise of cities situated exactly on every 4th meridian. I sat down with a thick detailed atlas and for months my fingers traced the meridians on the pages: finding cities, villages and settlements. I compiled long lists of beautiful geographical names. I realized that this new piece was being prepared through armchair traveling . . . by reading, by imagining.<sup>1</sup>*

Paul Ramírez Jonas



Paul Ramírez Jonas, *Another Day*, 2003. Three monitors, custom-made microcontroller, and PBASIC code output to NTSC video signal, edition 1/3. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Guggenheim UBS MAP Purchase Fund 2014.49

Paul Ramírez Jonas, who made *Another Day* in 2003, writes, “This piece was modeled after arrival and departure displays in airports and train stations. It tracks the sunrise for 90 cities around the world. The chosen cities are evenly spaced along every fourth meridian. The display counts down to the next sunrise. When the sun rises on the top city on the list, the countdown pauses, then the top city disappears and the list is updated up. The arrival of new days is relentless.”<sup>2</sup>

Born in California and raised in Honduras, Ramírez Jonas has lived in New York City since 1989 and currently teaches at Hunter College, City University of New York. His work is often associated with public spaces and underlines his focus on the interactions between the public or, as he writes, “the publics,”<sup>3</sup> and his art. Ramírez Jonas explains, “I’m interested in space, specifically public space, and the two parts of that compound word: what is ‘the public’ and what is ‘the space’ of ‘public space’ [ . . . ] How can the dynamic be changed?”<sup>4</sup>

- 1 Compare your initial reactions to this work with your current understanding of it. How does the information the artist provides in his work affect your interpretation of it?
- 2 What in this work is unexpected?
- 3 Consider the different ways in which Ramírez Jonas mixes systems to create new meanings.
- 4 How would you go about mixing different systems to create new meanings?
- 5 How might a train schedule look if a sundial were the only time-keeping device?

- 1 Paul Ramírez Jonas, in correspondence with Luis Camnitzer, March 17, 2014.
- 2 Paul Ramírez Jonas, “*Another Day*, 2003,” [www.paulramirezjonas.com](http://www.paulramirezjonas.com), 2003, [http://www.paulramirezjonas.com/selected/new\\_index.php#13&24\\_2003&sub131&01\\_Another%20Day](http://www.paulramirezjonas.com/selected/new_index.php#13&24_2003&sub131&01_Another%20Day).
- 3 Paul Ramírez Jonas in Carol Becker, “Utopian Strategies: Artists Anticipate their Audiences,” *Brooklyn Rail*, June 3, 2011, <http://www.brooklynrail.org/2011/06/art/utopian-strategies-artists-anticipate-their-audiences>.
- 4 Ibid.

HOW DO  
YOU MAKE  
PEOPLE AWARE  
OF SOCIAL  
INJUSTICES  
AND  
MOTIVATE  
THEM TO  
ACTION?

## PROBLEM

Poverty and consequent homelessness are globally evident problems, yet people who live comfortably often act as if they didn't exist. In different parts of the world, homelessness adopts different symbols. In some places, it is a blanket made out of newspapers or a shelter made of cardboard boxes. In the United States, the supermarket cart has become a symbol of these circumstances.

We have become desensitized to homelessness. We protect ourselves with the idea that someone else is responsible for correcting it and continue our daily lives. Consequently, those affected, and the symbols that stand for them, become invisible to us. This invisibility perpetuates social injustice. Thus, it becomes the task of those who want to improve society to make the invisible visible. What steps would you take to reduce homelessness?

## PROJECTS

- A Think about your daily life. Identify a social habit that you take for granted and perform without much thought, such as shaking hands, applauding, standing in line, or wearing a tie. Make a symbol that makes people more aware of this habit. Choose the best place to put your symbol in order to make your point convincingly. If this is impractical, represent your symbol by altering a photograph using collage or Photoshop, or by making a model.
- B Collect some newspaper and magazine advertisements and look for overt and hidden symbols that try to get you to buy what is being advertised. For example, the order of the images could form a hidden message; the inclusion of attractive people or expensive surroundings might constitute another. List these symbols, then try to create new ones that subvert the ad's original purpose.
- C Analyze the problem of homelessness and offer solutions. Design an outfit or habitat for the homeless that solves their most basic needs but doesn't impair their mobility. If the technology needed is not yet available, imagine it (think science fiction). Make a design that upholds the individual's dignity but has enough symbolic

presence that it displaces the usual symbols of homelessness such as shopping bags, or a cart.

- D Some communities have rallied against the building of halfway houses or homeless shelters in their midst. Propose a way to integrate a shelter into a residential area that overcomes local residents' resistance. What other changes would be useful besides the architectural?

## QUESTIONS

- 1 How do symbols, when not purposefully designed, emerge in society?
- 2 How can the placement of a symbol affect its meaning?
- 3 A stop sign makes you stop. How could symbols effectively induce more complex actions?
- 4 When does a symbol become an icon and an icon a symbol?
- 5 What could political or social art learn from advertising? And vice versa?
- 6 What do you think is the role of surprise in conveying a message? How would you go about making an unexpected symbol?
- 7 How do functionality and symbolic value merge in architecture (the White House, for example)?

## IVÁN NAVARRO

Homeless Lamp, the Juice Sucker questions the idea of the autonomy of a work of art in relation to its exhibition space. During the planning, the project was conceived of as a work that would maintain a close formal relation between two types of objects of everyday use: the supermarket cart and fluorescent tubes. The combination of both objects provokes a perceptual and material tension that opens them up to questioning their original functions.

To problematize this formal autonomy of the sculpture, a fundamental component of the project was the necessity of inserting it into the public space. The sculpture becomes a dependent object (a parasite) that is only complete when it comes into contact with an electric source that turns the lights on, in this case energy you can steal from city lampposts.<sup>1</sup>

Iván Navarro



Iván Navarro, *Homeless Lamp, the Juice Sucker*, 2004–05. Fluorescent lamps, wheels, and color video, with sound. 4 min., 31 sec., sculpture 116.8 x 172.7 x 72.4 cm, edition 3/3. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Guggenheim UBS MAP Purchase Fund and partial gift of the artist 2014.42

Navarro, who was born in Santiago, Chile, and grew up during the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet (1915–2006), now lives and works in New York. For this sculpture, the artist worked with the band Nutria NN who created a rendition of Jorge Saldaña's (b. 1931) ballad "Juan sin tierra" (Landless Juan). The song's lyrics describe the 1910 Mexican peasant revolution and agrarian movement led by Emiliano Zapata (1879–1919), among others. The accompanying video shows Navarro and an artist friend pushing the fluorescent light supermarket cart through Chelsea, Manhattan. Navarro explains: "The way to exhibit this work in an art space is in a documentary model, i.e. the sculpture is always accompanied by a video that shows it in action. This shows that the idea of autonomy is in crisis at the moment of making the sculpture interact with the few sources of electrical power that are available on the street."<sup>2</sup>

- 1 The title of Navarro's work, *Homeless Lamp, the Juice Sucker*, refers to the electricity Navarro "stole" to make the fluorescent tubes light up on the street. What else could this title imply?
- 2 If you were a person without a home, how do you think you would react to this artwork?
- 3 Does an artist making political art represent a cause or just express a personal opinion? How can political art be effective?
- 4 How has Navarro responded to the problem, "How do you make people aware of social injustices and motivate them to action?"
- 5 What is the difference between a work of art that is displayed in the street and one that is exhibited in a museum?
- 6 What is required for Navarro's work to be considered "public art"?
- 7 How might the meaning of this artwork change if it were made of different materials? What new meanings might you derive from these materials?
- 8 What happens when "art language" is mixed with everyday meaning?

1 Iván Navarro, in correspondence with Luis Camnitzer, March 18, 2014.

2 Ibid.

HOW MIGHT  
THE WORLD  
FUNCTION IF  
WE COULD  
COMMUNICATE  
WITH  
EVERYTHING  
THE WAY WE  
DO WITH  
OTHER PEOPLE?

## PROBLEM

Animals and people are usually mobile. Minerals and vegetation tend to be static, fixed to a place. Belief in the “anthropic” principle and the projection of anthropomorphic views influence how we think about our surroundings.<sup>1</sup> A human-centered worldview has helped create order but has also led to *animism*.<sup>2</sup> The first robots were made to look like human beings, and we lecture our pets hoping that they will understand us. We also instinctively attribute culpability to inanimate objects (think, for example, of the tennis player who breaks his or her racket when the ball fails to clear the net).

## PROJECTS

- A Pick a tree in your neighborhood and observe it in detail. Look at how the branches grow from the trunk and how the roots enter the soil. Notice the scars and knots on the trunk and how the leaves react when the wind and light hit them. Write a diary for the tree for one week.
- B Ask your students or peers to select two objects at random and write their names on two pieces of paper. Fold the pieces and place them in a container, shuffle them, and redistribute them to ensure a random selection. Have them write a dialogue between two selected objects that only they could have. The dialogue can only include statements attributable to the specific objects and their presumed personalities, and which wouldn’t make sense if anybody else said them.
- C Following the above, what would the offspring of the two objects look like? Determine all their traits and variants, and map possible gene pools for both objects. Select those attributes you think should be inherited or intermingled. Research the concept of *morphing*, find appropriate computer programs, and design the offspring.
- D *Uprooting* and *transplanting* are words for actions taken from plant cultivation that are also used as metaphors for human relocation. Find words for human actions that may be used as

metaphors applied to vegetation. Identify those that already exist and try to create new ones.

## QUESTIONS

- 1 Many cultures project life onto inanimate objects or constructions (the Jewish Golem, Voodoo dolls, fetishisms applied to beloved objects, etc.). What do you believe the values attributed to certain objects have to do with? Identify examples. Maybe you keep a battered armchair because your grandfather sat in it; things may be sacred because somebody touched them. During the seventeenth century, a “tulip mania” developed in Holland that led people to exchange up to twelve acres of land for one bulb. A work of art can be valued at many millions of dollars. How would you justify or critique these concepts of value?
- 2 What objects are you most connected to? What qualities or associations determine your affinity with these objects?
- 3 What role do you think robotic pets have in our culture in comparison with stuffed animals?
- 4 Where is the boundary that separates animals that should be respected and cared for from those that may be sacrificed? What roles do culture, geography, and intellect play in determining this separation?
- 5 Some believe that plants suffer and express pain. What are the ethical implications of this?
- 6 Could someone who doesn’t speak English be considered disabled? What do you think “being disabled or handicapped” means? What references are used to define it?

1 The *Anthropic Principle* is the scientific theory that any observation of the universe has to be compatible with the way in which humans observe it. The term *anthropomorphic* refers to the projection of human feelings and agendas on to non-human organisms.

2 *Animism* is the belief that things in nature such as animals, trees, and mountains, have spirits.

## WILFREDO PRIETO

*Walk is a performance where I walked with an ornamental plant for approximately 5 kilometers. This piece seeks the absurd within reality, attempting to create reflections stemming from the aesthetic and the functional and, simultaneously, a utopia of the effort to arrive at nothing.*<sup>1</sup>

Wilfredo Prieto often works with everyday objects to create situations that are so slightly out-of-the-ordinary that they might go unnoticed. “What is most important to me is the link and the rapprochement between art and reality,” says Prieto. “The artist is more of a discoverer, an archaeologist who reaffirms or underscores symbolic nuances that are given in actual reality [ . . . ] I engage in an act of camouflaging the pieces with the reality from which they originate, while simultaneously, as works of art, they generate meaning. I believe that I happen upon a piece rather than create it.”<sup>2</sup>



Wilfredo Prieto, *Walk*, 2000 (detail view). Wheelbarrow, soil, plant, and inkjet print, overall dimensions variable. A.P. 1/1, edition of 1. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Guggenheim UBS MAP Purchase Fund 2014.47

Prieto is concerned with the way his artworks communicate with the viewer and provoke interpretations: “What I consider important is to work with the least possible formal content and resources, and to obtain the maximum effect.”<sup>3</sup>

Wilfredo Prieto was born in the Cuban province of Sancti Spíritus and moved to Havana to pursue his studies in art at the Instituto Superior de Arte (ISA). He has traveled extensively and alternates between living in Havana and Barcelona. Regarding identity and nationality, Prieto remarks, “I think it is a condition of all people today, in spite of the differences that can mark our history, our context or our training: we have common perceptions and attitudes about our present. The concerns of a Korean, a Canadian, or Frenchman are very similar when they get up and brush their teeth. Therefore, I think that the problem is not in getting rid of the labels, such as the ‘Latin-American’—because we are already free of all in our natural state—but rather in seeking them ourselves.”<sup>4</sup>

- 1 How do Prieto’s statements affect your interpretation of his work?
- 2 Consider Prieto’s work in relation to the problem “How would the world function if we could communicate with everything the way we do with other people?”
- 3 If you saw someone walking down the street pushing a wheelbarrow with a plant in it, how would you know that it was art? Why do you think Prieto’s work is considered art? Where do you think the notion of art is located, in the path linking the artist’s ideas, the object and/or the viewer’s reception?

1 Wilfredo Prieto, in correspondence with Luis Camnitzer, April 3, 2014.

2 Wilfredo Prieto, interviewed by Direlia Lazo, Havana, February 2006, <http://www.kadist.org/en/programs/all/1375>.

3 Ibid.

4 Wilfredo Prieto in Ricardo Porrero, “Arqueología cotidiana: Entrevista a Wilfredo Prieto,” October 30, 2012, <http://www.revistacodigo.com/entrevista-wilfredo-prieto/>.

WHAT  
EFFECTS  
WOULD  
A DIFFERENT  
STRUCTURE  
OF TIME  
HAVE?

## PROBLEM

It is often said that history repeats itself. This could mean that there is a coincidental repetition of events, that there are cycles of shared events, that humanity doesn't learn from past mistakes, or, more likely, because certain interests remain constant, people try to achieve the same thing time and again.

The routine of daily life, of brushing your teeth and putting your socks on, can feel like an endless biographical repetition. Considered as repetition, time feels like a repeatedly breaking wave or a spiral rather than a straight line, yet biographies and history are customarily related as linear progressions.

## PROJECTS

- A Make a graph of two weeks, with the days on the horizontal axis and the hours on the vertical one. Register repetitious activities for two weeks and draw the corresponding curve. Graph your "ideal" life by adjusting the coordinates and curve.
- B Chart all the wars that took place during the twentieth century. Take into account the causes of each conflict and its effects on each sponsoring country or group. Develop a way of visually representing the variables with quickly readable configurations (graphs, charts, diagrams, etc.).
- C Graph the ups and downs of the stock market over the past two years. Choose any other event that unfolded over the same period (the weather, variations in demographics, trends in obesity, etc.), track it, and make a graph. Combine the graphs to demonstrate a correlation.
- D Rewrite U.S. history in the twentieth century by underscoring positive periods instead of negative ones (often, negative markers are used when referring to historical eras ["the period between World War I and II"]).

## QUESTIONS

- 1 A coincidence is the repetition of an event in the absence of a common cause. How can randomness produce coincidences?
- 2 Do you think order is a form of randomness, or vice versa?
- 3 How is it possible that people discover or invent the same things at the same time in different countries without having been in communication with one another?
- 4 What do you think is the connection, if any, between the position of the planets and human life?
- 5 How would you go about proving that two parallel systems influence each other?
- 6 Do you think a time tunnel is theoretically possible? If so, how? What would you do if you had access to one?
- 7 If an hour lasted seventy minutes and days and years were extended accordingly, how would our daily lives be affected?

## CARLA ZACCAGNINI

*Evidências de uma farsa (Evidence of a Farce) is a project initiated in 2011 and still under development. It intends to bring together a collection of diptychs, which pair elements from two different time frames, both dealing with an international image(ry) of Brazil. Each of these diptychs is composed by one element that belongs to the last two decades, and another one belonging to the so-called período desenvolvimentista (developmentist era), which coincides with the postwar decades. These objects, photographs, films and other memorabilia are the symptoms found in a daily context and popular standards of representation of a geopolitical position and presentation of Brasil.*

*The project results from research for a text written in 2011, which led me to notice a series of “visual coincidences” between an image of Brasil that circulated back in the 1950s and 1960s and the one that is being produced or publicized in recent years. So far, I have approximated two magazine covers and two animation movies, apart from the lack of an image depicting two Brazilian celebrities somehow connected to the UN. Other fields under research at the moment include the World Cup, Miss Universe and the modern art museums created in Brasil in the late '40s versus the Rio de Janeiro Guggenheim project.”<sup>1</sup>*



According to Carla Zaccagnini, an Argentine artist, critic, and curator who has lived in Brazil since she was seven years old, “Brazil, the Country of the Future’ is almost an axiom, an automatic enunciation, something like ‘Paris, the City of Light’ or ‘New York, the Big Apple’, derived maybe from the distinctions given to aristocrats: ‘Maria the Mad’, ‘Ivan the Terrible,’ ‘Philip the Handsome’ . . . Brazil keeps being the Country of the Future, its name always followed by this sentence. Something between a promise and a curse.”<sup>2</sup>

Depicted on the 1956 *Time* magazine cover that Zaccagnini chose for her work in the exhibition is Juscelino Kubitschek (1902–76), President of Brazil from 1956 to 1961, a time of economic prosperity and political stability. Kubitschek was assassinated in 1976, twenty years after the journal’s publication. Paired with this is an *Economist* cover with the tagline “Brazil Takes Off” and an image of Corcovado Mountain from which the iconic statue of Christ the Redeemer is pictured launching itself into orbit.

- 1 Do you believe the coincidence of the two covers serves as a prediction for 2029 (twenty years after the *Economist* cover)? Why, or why not? What do you think are the chances that another major international magazine cover will appear in 2062 with the same subject matter? What interests other than news do magazine covers serve?
- 2 How and when does the economic success of a country reach its people? How can you relate the problem “What effects would a different structure of time have?” to Zaccagnini’s work?
- 3 The minimum wage in the U.S. in 1970 was \$1.65, which today would be the equivalent of \$9.00. What conclusions can you draw from this? How would you present, in the most synthetic way possible, this information and/or conclusion?

<sup>1</sup> Carla Zaccagnini, in correspondence with Luis Camnitzer, March 13, 2014.  
<sup>2</sup> Carla Zaccagnini, “O Futuro introdução De Estado Novo a País do Futuro” in Runo Lagomarsino and Carlos Motta, ed.s, *The Future Lasts Forever* (Sweden: Gävle Konstcentrum, 2011), pp. 178–9.

HOW MIGHT  
YOU TELL  
A COHERENT  
STORY  
WITHOUT  
USING  
GRAMMAR OR  
NARRATION?

## PROBLEM

Words designate things. By evoking images of people, places, and things in our imagination, they not only name objects but are also containers for ideas. Thus we are able to build unique spaces and configurations in our minds that, in our *shared* reality, consist only of words. A listing of names in a phone book can recreate a city. A listing of books could produce a library. This quality is not only limited to words but is also true of any series of units that recreates an order in another's imagination.

## PROJECTS

- A Choose a fictitious location from a dream, a movie, a book, or a show (however unreal), and create a convincing map.
- B Without narrating, recreate a room of your home in someone else's imagination by using nouns and adjectives to describe forms, colors, and textures, but without using conjunctions (*and*, *but*, *for*, etc.).
- C Select a few pages from a short story in a book and change the conjunctions that link the words while maintaining the appearance of a narrative.
- D In a mathematical graph there are objects or vertices and links or edges. Mailing a letter connects two points with a single link. Mass mailings connect one point with thousands of others. Both graphs are easy to represent in two dimensions. Make a graph of Facebook connections taking into account an initial message, responses to it, and "likes."

## QUESTIONS

- 1 How would a map of your travels look?
- 2 Taking a trip is different than going to the store. At what distance does the idea of travel begin and why?
- 3 Where does "near" end and "far" begin?
- 4 In the late eighteenth century, going from New York to New Jersey was a long trip. Today it is a daily commute. What effect does transportation have on how we conceive of geographical space?
- 5 What is needed to classify a location as exotic? How does the notion of exoticism affect our perception of distance?
- 6 Why do you think the names of places are repeated (Paris, France/Paris, Texas; York/New York; Cartagena, Spain/Cartagena, Colombia)?
- 7 If language were mapped, how would you represent grammar?

## RIVANE NEUENSCHWANDER

*Mapa-Múndi BR (Postal) (2007) is an interactive work. It consists of 65 postcards of photographs of locations all around Brazil. The postcards are of businesses, hotels and locations named after foreign cities and countries and arranged alphabetically on wall shelves suggesting a map of the world without leaving Brazil. Hand painted bar signs named after exotic cities and apartment blocks named after chic Riviera towns all suggest the lure and glamour of foreign destinations. From the exclusive urban dwellings of São Paulo to ramshackle bars in regional towns, the uses of these names suggest identification with the world outside Brazil. The postcards are produced in an unlimited edition, allowing for the audience participation and completion of the work. Disseminated by the audience, the work continues to travel outside of its original location, suggesting the imagined journeys of a population that is trapped by socioeconomic circumstance.<sup>1</sup>*

With *Mapa-Múndi BR (Postal)*, Rivane Neuenschwander highlights lesser-known geographies with the names of well-known locations. By inviting people to send postcards of these unfamiliar locations, a fictitious net is created that establishes new links between senders' and recipients' addresses, the known and lesser-known places with the same names, and the fictitious travels.



Rivane Neuenschwander, *Mapa-Múndi BR (Postal)*, 2007 (detail), 65 printed postcards, endless copies, on wood shelves; Postcards 10 x 15 cm each; installation 90 x 260 cm overall, edition 5/6, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Guggenheim UBS MAP Purchase Fund 2014.43

Born in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, with Swiss, Portuguese, and Amerindian ancestry, Neuenschwander is curious about languages and geographies. The artist has stated that she has a recurring interest in using her works as a way to minimally modify the world, allowing “art to be the medium by which you can question and give solution to inquiries.”<sup>2</sup> “I have free will to choose in the most conscious way what it is that I want to say,” she states. “If I choose to speak of environmental issues, for example, then I am going to talk about it and seek the best way to give form to these issues. What I mean is that it is both an internal need of mine and of how I acquire arriving at it, as in my profession, I have the responsibility to say something and I am going to strive to go in that direction.”<sup>3</sup>

Regarding art and the artist’s role, Neuenschwander reflects: “I think art is for transforming your perception on things. And, there are many artists that I don’t know who changed my way of thinking in different ways. What I mean is, it’s important; we are filtering and putting it back in a different way. I don’t create things myself so what I do is like picking things from here, picking up things from there, trying to give them a form and putting them back in the world again. So it’s just like noticing things in a different way and how can you transform small things and put meaning on things. I think this is very important.”<sup>4</sup>

- 1 What are your reactions to *Mapa-Múndi BR (Postal)*?
- 2 What do you think could be the consequences of the networks that are created?
- 3 What connections can you make between the problem “How can you conjure up an orderly image without using grammar or narration?” and *Mapa-Múndi BR (Postal)*?
- 4 What questions do you think the artist is addressing with *Mapa-Múndi BR (Postal)*? How would you go about responding to those questions yourself?

1 Text provided by Isadora Fonseca, Studio Rivane Neuenschwander.  
2 Rivane Neuenschwander, *Curta Artes Parte II–Rivane Neuenschwander*, produced by Documenta Video Brasil and SESCTV, 2013, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yLvOlr\\_05-E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yLvOlr_05-E).  
3 Ibid.  
4 Rivane Neuenschwander, *At a Certain Distance. Rivane Neuenschwander*, Malmö Konsthall September 11–November 14, 2010, <http://arttoolsproject.eu/interviews/malmo-konsthall-sweden/artists/rivane-neuenschwander>.

HOW WOULD  
YOU USE THE  
OPPORTUNITY  
TO ADDRESS  
A MILLION  
PEOPLE  
IN A MINUTE  
OR LESS?

## PROBLEM

Works of art are exhibited in a museum for contemplation. A painting is supposed to hold a viewer's attention for a long time even if it can be seen in a couple of seconds and dismissed. Video art demands from the viewer the time in which it develops. A newspaper headline is consumed at a glance. Posters are designed according to the speed of circulation of the people that will see them. Graffiti in bathrooms have time constraints, both in execution and viewing. Therefore, a message has to take into account the observer and the amount of time for viewing. An art museum filters its public through the viewers' interests, excluding those not interested in art. A newspaper headline is indiscriminate, addressing everyone.

## PROJECTS

- A Design an "important" message to be attached to the doorframe that leads into the classroom. Consider both peers' interests and the speed of entry into the room (there shouldn't be a traffic jam).
- B Write a front-page headline on an issue you care about for a major newspaper. Determine the best approach for reaching the readers and achieving the desired effect.
- C Imagine that the Times Square Spectacolor screen is available for you to present anything you want in under a minute. Keep in mind over a million people who speak different languages and are from all social classes will see your message. How would you go about conveying your message effectively to the greatest number of people?
- D Identify words or names taken from another language or culture that are used as if they were originally English (for example, *entrepreneur*, *pizza*, *siesta*). If English is not your first language, conduct the analysis in your own language. Design an advertising campaign to return the word to its origin.

## QUESTIONS

- 1 What do you think is the ideological impact of certain words being transferred from one language to another?
- 2 When Charles de Gaulle (1890–1970) ruled France he tried to "clean" the French language of foreign words. Do you think it is possible to preserve the purity of a language? What would be the advantages and disadvantages of doing so?
- 3 What is the impact of transferring habits between cultures (chewing gum, "happy hour," Mother's Day, Cinco de Mayo, Chinese New Year, etc.)?

## ALFREDO JAAR

*When I moved to New York in 1982, I was shocked to discover that the daily use of the word America was referring only to the United States and not to the continent. In expressions like Welcome to America or God bless America or When did you arrive in America? I realized that people were only referring to the United States and, in doing so, were ignoring the rest of the continent, practically erasing it from the map.*

*As an artist who was born in Chile, I always considered myself as a Chilean first, a Latin American second, and an American third. In Spanish, the word America refers to the entire continent, and it was part of our education to see ourselves as belonging to America, the continent, as opposed to Europe or Africa, for example.*

*Language is not innocent and reflects a geopolitical reality. The use of the word America in the U.S.A., erroneously referring only to the U.S.A. and not to the entire continent, is a clear manifestation of the political, financial and cultural domination of the U.S.A. of the rest of the continent. U.S. interventions in Central and South America were the manifestation of this reality, a desire to control what was happening in the 'backyard.'*<sup>1</sup>

The artist, architect and filmmaker Alfredo Jaar lives and works in New York. Among his more than sixty public interventions around the world is *A Logo for America* (1987), an animation for the Spectacolor sign above the U.S. Army recruiting station in Times Square, New York City. It was made at the invitation of Public Art Fund and displays the statement "This is not America" in an outline of the United States,



*A Logo for America, 1987. Digital color video, with sound, 10 min., 25 sec., edition 2/6. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Gift of the artist on the occasion of the Guggenheim UBS MAP Global Art Initiative 2014.30*

then "This is not America's flag" over an image of the U.S. flag. Finally, the work displays the maps of South, Central, and North America over the word "America."

Jaar describes the animation: "It was a subversive gesture, but of course, to no avail. [ . . . ] It was about how to use the creativity and a public space to speak out against a negative image, false of our continent. It was the first animation that I did, almost a small film. The most spectacular reaction was that of NPR (National Public Radio) who came to Times Square and asked people's opinion. There were people who said that it was illegal."<sup>2</sup>

The site of *A Logo for America* is essential to the work. "Context is everything," argues Jaar. "How can we act in a world without understanding it? Impossible. So the exercise of reflection is first and foremost, a reflection about context. It's a matter of understanding it in order to be able to act in it."<sup>3</sup> "The language and the formal solutions I use also arise from a specific audience. They're rigorously designed for me to communicate with that audience and no other. If this communication eventually has some 'universal' value and speaks to other audiences, all the better, but from the outset my works are site-specific in the broadest sense of the term: for a specific place and for a specific audience."<sup>4</sup>

- 1 What is your reaction to this work?
- 2 Why do you think some people might have considered this work illegal?
- 3 How does your solution to the problem "How would you use the opportunity to address a million people in a minute or less?" compare with Jaar's work?
- 4 What is the origin of the name *America*?
- 5 How did the name become associated with the United States? What countries do you associate with North America?
- 6 What would be the significance/ramifications if the United States changed its name to the United States of Venezuela (or any other country that doesn't use "United States" in its original name)?

1 Alfredo Jaar, in correspondence with Luis Camnitzer, March 11, 2014.

2 Alfredo Jaar in "Alfredo Jaar, Conversaciones en Chile, 2005," in *Jaar SCL 2006*, exh. cat. (Santiago, Chile: Fundación Telefónica, 2006), p. 72.

3 Alfredo Jaar and Luis Camnitzer, "Luis Camnitzer vs. Alfredo Jaar," *Fluor*, no. 1, 2012, Madrid, pp. 8–23.

4 Ibid.

**LUIS CAMNITZER** is a Uruguayan artist and pedagogue who has lived in New York since 1964. He is a Professor Emeritus of Art at the State University of New York, College at Old Westbury. He has been the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship (1961 and 1982); the Frank Jewitt Mather Award of the College Art Association (2011); and the Skowhegan Medal for Conceptual and Interdisciplinary Practices (2012). He represented Uruguay in the Venice Biennial (1988). His work is in the collections of over thirty museums. Some of his writings include: *New Art of Cuba* (University of Texas Press, 1994/2004); *Arte y Enseñanza: La ética del poder* (Madrid: Casa de América, 2000); *Didactics of Liberation: Conceptualist Art in Latin America* (University of Texas Press, 2007); and *On Art, Artists, Latin America and Other Utopias* (University of Texas Press, 2010).

**MARÍA DEL CARMEN GONZÁLEZ** has more than 25 years' experience in museum and art education. She was Curator of Education at the Fundación Cisneros/Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros from 2005 to 2013, consulting in countries including Argentina, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Mexico, the United States, and Venezuela. From 1992 to 2004, she held various posts in the Department of Education of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, including Coordinator of International Education Programs, Higher Education and Special U.S. Projects. From 1994 to 1998, she was an adjunct faculty member in the Department of Art Education at the School of Visual Arts, New York. Ms. Gonzalez is co-author of catalogue essays for exhibition publications and educational materials including *ModernStarts: People, Places, Things* (1999); *Looking at Matisse and Picasso* (2003); and *Piensa en arte/Think Art* (2006–12).

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# GUGGENHEIM UBS MAP

GLOBAL ART INITIATIVE

HOW MIGHT YOU MAKE  
A FOUND OBJECT INTO AN  
ARCHEOLOGICAL ARTIFACT?

¿QUÉ EFECTOS TENDRÍA  
UNA ESTRUCTURA DISTINTA  
DEL TIEMPO?

¿CÓMO PUEDE LA MEZCLA  
DE DOS SISTEMAS  
APARENTEMENTE NO  
RELACIONADOS GENERAR  
NUEVOS SIGNIFICADOS  
Y PERCEPCIONES?

HOW MIGHT YOU TELL  
A COHERENT STORY  
WITHOUT USING GRAMMAR  
OR NARRATION?

HOW DO YOU MAKE  
PEOPLE AWARE OF SOCIAL  
INJUSTICES AND MOTIVATE  
THEM TO ACTION?

¿CÓMO UTILIZARÍAS  
LA OPORTUNIDAD PARA  
DIRIGIRTE A UN MILLÓN  
DE PERSONAS EN UN  
MINUTO O MENOS?

¿CÓMO FUNCIONARÍA  
EL MUNDO SI NOS  
COMUNICÁRAMOS CON  
TODO DE LA MISMA FORMA  
COMO LO HACEMOS  
CON OTRAS PERSONAS?

WHAT WOULD BE THE  
EFFECTS OF POETRY  
PERMEATING ALL  
INFORMATION SYSTEMS?

