



City/Art: The Urban Scene in Latin America

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In *City/Art*, anthropologists, literary and cultural critics, a philosopher, and an architect explore how creative practices continually reconstruct the urban scene in Latin America. The contributors, all Latin Americanists, describe how creativity—broadly conceived to encompass urban design, museums, graffiti, film, music, literature, architecture, performance art, and more—combines with nationalist rhetoric and historical discourse to define Latin American cities. Taken together, the essays model different ways of approaching Latin America's urban centers not only as places that inspire and house creative practices but also as ongoing collective creative endeavors themselves. The essays range from an examination of how differences of scale and point of view affect people's experience of everyday life in Mexico City to a reflection on the transformation of a prison into a shopping mall in Uruguay, and from an analysis of Buenos Aires's preoccupation with its own status and cultural identity to a consideration of what Miami means to Cubans in the United States.

Contributors delve into the aspirations embodied in the modernist urbanism of Brasília and the work of Lotty Rosenfeld, a Santiago performance artist who addresses the intersections of art, urban landscapes, and daily life. One author assesses the political possibilities of public art through an analysis of subway-station mosaics and Julio Cortázar's short story "Graffiti," while others look at the representation of Buenos Aires as a "Jewish elsewhere" in twentieth-century fiction and at two different responses to urban crisis in Rio de Janeiro. The collection closes with an essay by a member of the São Paulo urban intervention group Arte/Cidade, which invades office buildings, de-industrialized sites, and other vacant areas to install collectively produced works of art. Like that group, *City/Art* provides original, alternative perspectives on specific urban sites so that they can be seen anew.

Contributors. Hugo Achugar, Rebecca E. Biron, Nelson Brissac Peixoto, Néstor García Canclini, Adrián Gorelik, James Holston, Amy Kaminsky, Samuel Neal Lockhart, José Quiroga, Nelly Richard, Marcy Schwartz, George Yúdice

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Editorial Review

Review

“Professor Biron, and the international colleagues whose work she has collected in *City/Art*, admirably aid in the effort to move *nortamericanos*' view of Latin America from the trivial to the substantial.” - Michael R. Mosher, *Leonardo*

“This is a fascinating, if rather fragmented, book. This fragmentedness is intentional, and is due in part to the multidisciplinary, open-ended orientation of the collection. . . . [T]he book challenges us to approach and understand the complexity of ‘Latin American’ cities in new, productive, and inspiring ways.” - Kristin Norget, *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*

“*City/Art* includes ten provocative chapters spanning a variety of topics within the urban cultural studies field. From architecture and city planning to more ephemeral artistic manifestations embodied in graffiti, film, fiction and everyday life, the distinguished scholars assembled here provide a thoughtful assessment of what is otherwise a vast, nearly incomprehensible, hyper-dynamic subject.” - Andrew Grant Wood, *The Latin Americanist*

“An insightful and suggestive collection of approaches to creative practices that produce and are produced by Latin American cities. *City/Art* offers a multidisciplinary collage of ways of studying and interrogating meaningful imaginaries of some of the most vibrant, amicable, violent, passionate, unequal, sensual, and intriguing cities in the contemporary world.”—**Daniel Mato**, Universidad Central de Venezuela

“Urban planning in the world's most chaotic megacities? Flamboyant creativity in the planet's slums? The breathless pace of change in Latin America has left us both fascinated and confused. *City/Art* creates an exciting space for real interdisciplinary dialogue between culture studies and urban planning scholars on the new challenges to urban life in some of the world's largest cities, and helps us in the urgent task of rethinking the cultural with respect to the social and political spaces in which it is imbedded.”—**Debra A. Castillo**, author of *Re-dreaming America: Toward a Bilingual Understanding of American Literature*

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About the Author

Rebecca E. Biron is Associate Professor of Spanish and Comparative Literature at Dartmouth College. She is the author of *Murder and Masculinity: Violent Fictions of Twentieth-Century Latin America*.

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