

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



Many artists, critics, social scientists, and philosophers who stimulated my rethinking of contemporary society and art are recognized in these pages. The sections that I devote to Francis Alÿs, Carlos Amorales, León Ferrari, Antoni Muntadas, and Gabriel Orozco are based on pieces that I was invited to write for catalogues or books about their works and on lengthy visits to their studios and exhibits.

To support theoretical arguments in a transnational ethnographic understanding of what is happening in the arts and cultures today, one must spend a lot of time in workshops, galleries, museums, biennales, art fairs, and symposia in many countries, talking with viewers who enjoy or reject them. When we have the chance to think in company, sometimes in the company of the same people in different cities and at institutions with differing strategies, and to continue conversations and debates over email, our chances improve of correcting a first impression or an intellectual habit that otherwise might persist in our thinking when the world has already moved on to other things. For this reason I owe a debt of gratitude to, among others, Rita Eder, Andrea Giunta, Manuel Gutiérrez Estévez, Nelly Richard, Graciela Speranza, and George Yúdice.

The Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana in Mexico City gave me the research time I needed and made it possible for me to take on these intellectual arguments in a graduate

seminar in 2009. One of the students, Paz Sastre, helped search for information on the Internet and gave me suggestions for improving the text. Gabriela Alarcón, Rosario Mata, and Cecilia Meira also helped me as able research assistants. Four chapters were based on a seminar in January 2010 at the University of Barcelona, directed by Anna María Guasch and Joaquín Barriendos Rodríguez. Marcelo Cohen, Andrea Giunta, Alejandro Grimson, Jesús Martín-Barbero, Fiamma Montezemolo, Graciela Speranza, and Juan Villoro also read key parts of the book and helped me to understand what I was doing in them.

Sharing with Magali Lara the delight of her paintings and her view of my texts, seeing a few hundred exhibits with her in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, China, Spain, the United States, Italy, Japan, and Mexico, being jointly surprised by the rituals, enjoying the work and the play of understanding art, its creators, and its audiences—all this had us crossing many more borders than those that separate states or aesthetic trends.