

EDITORIAL STATEMENT

The writings in this issue all share a preoccupation with the silences, disappearances, and contradictions within historical archives. Across national, regional, and diasporic spaces, they attend to the deliberate acts of remembering and forgetting that accompanied the political, economic, and technological shifts of the postwar era. Often violent, sometimes incomplete, these shifts required and begat different roles for artistic practice. The turbulence and legacies of 1968, the collective traumas of ethno-nationalist wars, or the ongoing struggles of liberation and neocolonialism have led artists in Mexico, Britain, the Balkans, and Palestine to revalue materials, approaches, and commitments to community.

Our now rich and varied discussions of the form, content, and allure of modernist archives have led to attempts to imagine counter- or nonhegemonic archival forms that redress and revise extant historical narratives and measures of truth. The contributions to this issue invite us to consider the promise of such future archives, even if that future may seem impossible. After all, social failure forms part of the structure of this promise and is related to the real conditions of shrinking, defunct, or censored archives.

In her contribution, “‘To Make Books Is to Multiply’: Artists’ Books and Feminist Expression in Mexico,” Maggie Borowitz unsettles the standard history of artists’ book production during the so-called golden

epoch of independent publishing in Mexico between the mid-1970s and 1980s, by directing our attention beyond the legacy of Felipe Ehrenberg to a burgeoning feminist art scene. Revisiting the archive, she argues that artists like Magali Lara and Yani Pecanins embraced and experimented with the book as one of a number of experimental art forms, offering a nuanced, intimate reading experience that privileged women's stories and experiences. Borowitz situates these vanguard practices within the broader milieu of collaborative art practices that flourished in the wake of the collective trauma of state violence in the lead-up to the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City.

We remain in the 1970s with Kylie Gilchrist's article on Pakistani British artist Rasheed Araeen's contributions to the Manufactured Art exhibition at Camden Art Centre in London (1970). Araeen's piece for this exhibition, *8bS*, was composed of minimalist structures manufactured from industrial, mass-produced materials. Critics have often placed works like these in conversation with more familiar artistic statements by American Minimalists, like Robert Morris, who are interested in postformalist objects. However, analyzing Araeen's accompanying artist statement—one that may have been intentionally left out of the catalog, in an act of what Gilchrist calls "institutional 'forgetting'"—the author finds that Araeen's thoughts on field structuring had in fact preceded the open work of Morris. Gilchrist's reengagement with a broader archive enlivens the story of (British) Minimalism, exposing the structural racism faced by artists within the postwar art world. By linking Araeen's diasporic art practices with his engineering experiences while working for a British petrochemical company in a rapidly industrializing postcolonial Pakistan, Gilchrist deprovincializes standard narratives of Minimalism that have failed to register the broader intersections of postcolonial global capitalism.

In "Emergency Aesthetics: The Case of the Four Faces of Omarska," Iva Glisic and Biljana Puric consider the thorny politics of memory work and contemporary aesthetics in the Balkans after the violent collapse of socialist Yugoslavia in 1991. The authors contemplate the ways in which the Four Faces of Omarska artistic collective, an interdisciplinary working group of practitioners, advanced a model of "radical art" aimed at regenerating forms of civic solidarity—perhaps instantiating what Santiago Zabala has called "emergency aesthetics"—suitable for tackling the weight of historical amnesia, the atrocities of conflict, and sanctioned state silences. The artistic platforms pursued by

the Omarska collective employ tactics that guard against political erasure and invest in the possibilities of shared futures.

In her review article, Birgit Hopfener focuses on two books that interrogate the critical moment at the turn of the millennium when the discursive realms of the global contemporary intersected with the rise of contemporary Chinese art. The first, *Uncooperative Contemporaries: Art Exhibitions in Shanghai in 2000*, a multi-authored volume in the Afterall Exhibition Histories series, examines the import and impact of the first Shanghai Biennale in 2000 and its related offsite shows. The second, Franziska Koch's *Die "chinesische Avantgarde" und das Dispositiv der Ausstellung (The "Chinese Avant-Garde" and the Exhibition as Dispositif)*, focuses on group exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art in the West. Hopfener highlights the central role of exhibition-making as archive in an entangled global art world and argues for a transcultural methodology that can address the multiple encounters and intersections that characterize shifting art world dynamics and discourses.

In the Documents section, Alessandra Amin offers translations of two 1974 exhibition reviews that focus on the politics of representation and revolution at the First Arab Biennial of Fine Arts in Baghdad. Addressing the showing of Palestinian artworks at the Biennial, both reviews were originally published in the Moroccan cultural journal *Intégral*. Their differing critiques of the role of art in liberation struggles and of art world categories such as "folk" and "craft" bring to the fore historical and contemporary questions about the imbrication of politics and image, both in the Arab world and elsewhere. In the article entitled "Revolutionary Painting and the Palestinian Revolution," pioneering Moroccan modernist Mohammed Chabâa chides the PLO's delegation for exhibiting naive folk motifs that lack political bite, while Italian art critic Toni Maraini's "Baghdad 1974: A Summary of the First Arab Biennial of Fine Arts," in the same issue, takes a softer tack, pondering whether "naive" landscapes and "folkloric" scenes can be considered "combat art."

Tan Zi Hao's Artist Project challenges us to think beyond narrow notions of the archive, training his lens instead on nonhuman accumulative registers, where unseen worlds and relations thrive. The Project consists of a series of macro photographs highlighting the marvels of the cases formed by household casebearer larvae. The artist argues that by zooming in on these cases found in the corners of human households, one can reveal "an uncanny intimacy between birth and decay, between living and dying. If their birth is symptomatic of our decay, if

they are nurtured by traces of our living, then we are aging just as we are constantly nurturing.” What does it mean to age in this ecological entanglement of the human and nonhuman, at home?

The contemplation of this minute, intimate, living archive shifts our perspective onto our shared responsibilities toward the planet and toward one another. Intertwined and relational, it gestures toward what Palestinian filmmaker Larissa Sansour might call the acts of insurrection that we perform as preparation for a future archive—an archive both hopeful and deeply vulnerable at the same time.