

Lisa Mosier  
Terminal Report  
Stone Center Summer Field Research Grant 2007

Title of Project:  
**Exhibiting Art, Exhibiting Politics: Argentina's Role in International Architectural Theory in the 1970s and 80s**

As per my grant proposal, I used my summer field research grant to conduct archival research in Buenos Aires, Argentina on a project that combined art and architectural historical research. The subject of my research was an avant-garde collective in Buenos Aires called the *Centro de Arte y Comunicación* (CAYC), and several of their local and international exhibitions held in the 1970s and 1980s. Not only did these impactful exhibitions combine art and architecture on multiple levels, but they emphasized Buenos Aires' role as an international center of conceptual art while promoting the city as a major contributor to the development of architectural discourse. The initial thesis of my proposal argued that the vigorous organization of these exhibits and congresses themselves was the method by which Argentina promoted and established its international position in architectural theory, a view which I found supported by the material I uncovered during my archival research.

The dates of my travel were July 10 – August 1, 2007, and I was located in Buenos Aires for the entire period. During this time, as I described in my proposal, I spent each weekday in various archives, consulting with archivists, recording information from rare exhibition catalogs, books, journals, and newspaper articles, while concurrently attempting to make new contacts and find sources “on the ground” in Buenos Aires, so to

speak, which I had not uncovered in preparatory research at home. All in all, I was extremely pleased with the amount and quality of material I was able to amass for my project.

I originally proposed conducting research at three institutions: the Documentation Center for the History of Visual Arts at the Fundación Espigas; the CEDODAL (Centro de Documentación de Arquitectura Latinoamericana); and the CAYC (Centro de Arte y Comunicación). I worked at the Fundación Espigas as planned, but found subsequent to my proposal that the CEDODAL had stopped accepting outside researchers due to financial constraints. Since its focus was architectural journals and books, I was fortunately able to use the library of the Sociedad Central de Arquitectos as a satisfactory substitute for the same kinds of information. I also found that the CAYC archives were now in the care of the archives of the Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires, and so was able to consult them at that location. In addition to these archives, I also conducted research at the Biblioteca Nacional de Argentina.

With consideration to the objectives of the grant to provide an opportunity for the development of the early stages of a research project, I designed this period of field research to provide the basis for the development of a dissertation proposal in the next year. The opportunity to record so much material from documentary sources, as well as the chance to develop hypotheses and track down various leads while in the city, were both very fruitful for this enterprise. I was able to build an initial framework for a dissertation proposal as well as bring back photocopies and photographs of hundreds of pages of supporting material for further interpretation. For example, I was able to get a much more complete picture of when and where the CAYC produced exhibits, as well as

their visual content. I was also able to start to analyze the political content of the exhibits in terms of the political environment in which they were staged. These findings were relevant to my argument that artists and architects of this period used the method of staging local and international exhibitions as part of the construction of a national identity, both by participating in these fields at an international level, as well as by variously encoding or expressing political statements in their work.

I would like to thank the Stone Center for their generous funding of this research. It was a very pleasant and productive opportunity for me and my work. I have been encouraged by my advisor, Dr. Florencia Bazzano-Nelson, to continue this project, as she confirms that the CAYC had a very influential presence in Buenos Aires but has not been widely researched or interpreted. Therefore it is my intention to build upon this project over the next several years, and am grateful to the Stone Center for an auspicious start.