

of the 1970s was emphatically not Paris of the Situationist Internationalists in the late 1950s. What happens to the “society of the spectacle” when civil society is repressed, mute and powerless? Did artistic collaboration fill a void left by anti-politics? *Brazilian Art under Dictatorship* begs these questions, which warrant more nuanced exploration.

Calirman acknowledges her reluctance to “credit the dictatorship with having had a predominantly stimulating effect on the artistic production of the time,” (a notion she dismisses as “absurd”) (146), turning instead to a descriptive agenda: to create “a portrait of the time” and “to *provide a context* for understanding the impact of AI-5 . . . over the visual arts” (7; italics mine). The absence of a clear central thesis weakens the book’s organization, which meanders from theme to theme and repeats key events, figures and texts as they influenced each individual artist. Yet the context Calirman provides, particularly the arbitrary role of museums and public institutions, provides explanatory variables beyond the narrow parameters of state repression vs. individual creativity. Her depiction of a sophisticated artistic culture, fed on more than a decade of international exposure to “universal forms” through the activities of the São Paulo Biennial, suddenly shifting with the boycott “from international exhibitions and grand gestures to local exhibitions and impromptu happenings” (35) suggests a more palatable causality, as the introspection and local collaboration demanded by the political context catalyzed a watershed of Brazilian innovation that anticipates Brazil’s meteoric market and critical ascent after the fall of the regime. Copiously researched, imminently readable and introducing a wealth of invaluable material not readily available in English, *Brazilian Art under Dictatorship* opens fertile terrain that should inspire further scholarship on this vital period of creativity amidst adversity.

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JUAN CARLOS KOROL, CLAUDIO BELINI: *Historia económica de la Argentina en el siglo XX*. Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI editores, 2012.

This book traces the economic history of twentieth-century Argentina from the outbreak of the First World War to the collapse of the currency convertibility plan that marked the end of the neoliberal economic reforms enforced in the country during the 1990s. In so doing it takes up the controversial economic performance of a leading South American country that has long received widespread scholarly attention, and that at the onset of the last century many

academics, writers, politicians, and journalists thought was destined to become a world power in the Western Hemisphere. An introductory chapter provides an overall balance of the Argentine economy in the early 1910s and anticipates the outlook of the book. It is followed by different chapters of comparable depth dealing with specific periods. Thereafter, with a long-term view the conclusions evaluate Argentina's economic record in the last century and raise well-known social, economic, political and institutional issues that, despite their significance and the professional caliber of their spokesmen, the Kirchner administrations have either ignored, underestimated, or dismissed since 2007 as shallow and politically-motivated criticism. Finally, there is a useful bibliographic essay that outlines some influential intellectual currents in the field and a bibliography that is listed by chapter.

Belini's and Korol's work summarizes for lay readers the contemporary development of the Argentine economy, the current empirical and theoretical findings of their scholarly debates, and offers the authors' personal interpretations about these trends and crossroads. It has an admittedly chronological and historiographical approach whose successful application reflects the professional standing of its authors. It describes the impact of the favourable and pluralistic environment that encouraged the development of economic history and social sciences in Argentina since the restoration of democracy in the early 1980s. With an excellent writing style, it also meets the authors' aim to remain at a prudent distance from the hypercritical, apologetic, and partisan interpretations of Argentine economic history that flourished in the last decades as the country became immersed in an economic quagmire that, after the short-lived Indian summer of the 1990s, peaked during the last economic crisis. Hence, the Argentine case is certainly considered as one of "thwarted development." But knowledgeable readers will notice that, with substantial arguments, this viewpoint is at odds with the belief that Argentina is a puzzling example of national post-1930 failure and irretrievable economic retardation, coupled with institutional decline, that permeates the work of neo-institutionalist and neoclassical scholars such Cortés Conde, Díaz Alejandro, Dellapaolera, and Taylor. With this outlook, for example, diverging experiences such as Peronism and the last military dictatorship are discussed evenhandedly.

The format of the book is attractive for potential readers and deserves mention. With a special focus on economic policymaking and supported by a reasonable number of relevant tables and graphs, all chapters examine the macroeconomic and institutional environment of successive periods. Though with minor variations that depend on the notoriety of certain issues in the period under review, the performance of regional economies, foreign trade, primary and secondary activities are also considered. Eventually social issues, underlying ideological

influences and the intellectual debates raised by these developments during critical turning points are broached. In special cases this discussion is further illustrated with well-chosen illustrations, photographs, and cartoons from major national archives, newspapers, and periodicals. Excerpts of travellers' and journalistic accounts from miscellaneous contemporary publications and also scholarly publications that have made significant theoretical or empirical inroads in the field are also included. The range of these background materials runs from the writings of Alejandro Bunge, Alfredo Palacios, Arturo Jauretche, and the analysts of the "stop and go" cycles that hit the national economy since the late 1940s, to photographs, front covers, and cartoons taken from periodicals such as "Caras y Caretas," "Primera Plana," and private collections as well as the Archivo General de la Nación.

Perhaps a few additional topics of current relevance could have been given more prominence. One of them is monetary and financial affairs, and particularly the functioning of the Central Bank that is indirectly mentioned in the conclusion as an isolated islet of state bureaucratic efficiency in the 1930s. After all, these issues were at the hub of all the post-1945 public policy experiments that ultimately led to the sweeping neoliberal economic reforms of the 1990s. The micro and macroeconomic vagaries of national economic growth in the last century is broached in the last monograph by Chudnovsky and López. Also, in view of the recent work of Acemoglu, Robinson and Ferguson, the authors could have pursued their moderate reservations about the relevance of the institutional economics paradigm and their call for further research about it, as well as about state interventionist policies of the last decades, with due reference to the work of political economists Spiller and Tommasi on the institutional foundations of public policies in Argentina in the last decades.

In sum, however, this is a highly recommendable and sophisticated contribution to the understanding of Argentine economic history during the twentieth century. The general public, students, and academics—in other words a fairly wide readership—will profit from it and enjoy the subtleties of its provocative analysis.

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