

Interim Report from the Program Chairs: Chicago, 2014

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As we write this piece, the 32nd International Congress of LASA is approaching with a wonderful array of interesting panels on varied topics. Forty years after the September 11 coup that toppled Allende in Chile, we have chosen “Democracy and Memory” as the theme for the Congress. This theme has inspired a series of interdisciplinary panels that examine the way new democracies deal with a violent past, and discuss both the legacies of authoritarian regimes and the challenges that new democracies have faced with regard to a wide spectrum of political, theoretical, historical, and cultural concerns. Different and often conflicting ways of conceiving memory have stimulated panels that raise questions about how to conserve, display, teach, and artistically deal with those legacies, in addition to addressing issues of restitution and redemption.

We are delighted to report that the call for papers has generated enthusiasm among Latin Americanist scholars at large, and the proposals cover a remarkably broad range of academic disciplines and fields of study beyond the theme of the Congress. The active involvement of the track chairs and their networks in the planning of the conference has led to the creation of a series of thought-provoking panels on a wide variety of topics. These panels will deal with new objects of study as well as old topics that have inspired renewed interest, and they will reflect new configurations of studies and disciplines that have led to innovative research and teaching. Among the topics that will be discussed in Chicago are sovereignty and political as well as aesthetic communities; new mass movements and civil protests that are ongoing or have happened in the very recent past; new media and original initiatives to report those events; reconfigurations of Latino Studies; the

renovated contours of Latin American art in a global world; and the persisting precariousness of labor. These are only a tiny fraction of the variegated topics and problems that we will have the opportunity to debate at the conference.

Here is a preliminary list of invited panels and roundtables:

- Democracy after Transition
- Democracia, instituciones y agencia: El legado de Guillermo O'Donnell
- Diasporas and Home Country Politics: False Promise or Opportunity?
- Globalization on the Ground: Space, Place, and Media among Mobile Populations
- Knowing the Field: Studying Labor for What and for Whom?
- “Latin American” in the Arts? A Roundtable
- Latin American Urban Studies and Planning: Present and Future Research Directions
- Latina/o Studies: A State-of-the-Field Discussion
- Liberalism in Latin American History and Historiography
- Literature and Globalization
- Memorias del futuro (los Film Studies en América Latina frente a las mutaciones audiovisuales)
- New Approaches to Understanding the Privatization of Violence in Latin America
- Políticas/estéticas de lo común: Políticas del afecto
- Políticas/estéticas de lo común: Umbrales de multitud
- Posthegemony

- Postneoliberalism and Embodiment
- Taking It to the Streets: Perspectives on Recent Mass Mobilizations in Latin American Democracies
- Teaching Memory? Schooling, Cultural Transmission, and Democracy
- U.S.–Latin American Relations: Policy Relevance, Academic Relevance, and the Future
- What's Left in Bolivia? Honoring the Life and Work of Benjamin Kohl
- A World Where Many Worlds Fit? Cosmopolitics and Indigenous Movements in Abya Yala

We want to thank the track chairs and co-chairs for all of their hard work. They are now in the process of reviewing and ranking around 1,174 individual proposals and 622 panel proposals. We are looking forward to working with them as we put together the final program. We will also continue to work closely with President Merilee Grindle and LASA's professional staff in the coming months. We hope that this effort will translate into another wonderful Congress. The city of Chicago, with its impressive architectural, musical, artistic, and historical legacies, promises to be a more than appropriate setting for this intellectual conversation.

We look forward to seeing everyone in Chicago next May! ■