

Amant

English Guide

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Education by Night

July 2 – September 10, 2022



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Curatorial Text

Education by Night comprises the newly commissioned video *Night Geography* as well as a selection of archival texts, short movies, documents, and drawings inspired by documentaries about Latin America that were made for schools in the United States between the 1950s–1980s. These films often used corporate footage to portray the region as a territory of endless resources, open to new ideas of progress and modernity. They boasted a rhetoric emphasizing the inherent cultural commonality between the North and South of the Americas. By promoting a sense of solidarity, these media supported the economic interests of the U.S., who essentially saw the region as a provider of cheap labor and raw materials, as well as a valuable export market. This capsule exhibition traces echoes of that period in the present in a non-linear manner. It lays bare how pedagogy and culture have often been instrumentalized as political and ideological tools for furthering asymmetrical relations of codependence.

First Person, Third Person, Same Person (ongoing series)

September 2021 – September 2022

First Person, Third Person, Same Person is the first chapter of Amant's screening program and highlights the cinematic work of artists Grada Kilomba, Manthia Diawara, Olivia Plender, Dora García, and Clara Ianni. A common thread throughout the screening program is the weaving together of news, testimonials, memories, documents, diaries, books, and other epistolary documents. This assembling creates a multifaceted, collage-like view of historical facts and resonates with contemporary circumstances. The included films tend to rely on a peripheral narrator or give historical characters the opportunity to address present-day realities, and in doing so impact the viewer at a cognitive as well as an affective level. The result is a semi-fictional reality in which remembering, reflecting, and acting are equally relevant.

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Works

Night Geography, 2022

Video slide show (loop), 16 min, sound

Night Geography is a video-collage created with excerpts from pedagogic films commissioned by the Office of Inter-American Affairs (a governmental agency started in 1940, with Nelson Rockefeller at the helm) to illustrate the life, culture, nature, and society in Latin America to younger viewers during the period of the Cold War (1947-1991). A second narrative intersecting the footage follows the story of a piece of metal space junk that crashed into the Brazilian state of Maranhão, a mining area from which similar minerals were extracted.

From Figurativism to Abstractionism, 2017

Video, 6 mins and 14 secs, sound

This work revisits *From Figurativism to Abstractionism*, the 1949 opening exhibition of the Museum of Modern Art in São Paulo. The museum followed the model of the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, promoting the idea of universal cultural production. Many of the works in the exhibition were donated or loaned by American magnate Nelson Rockefeller (whose mother had been a key founder of New York's Museum of Modern Art) with the aim of creating an exhibition that exalted abstraction as the most developed and highest form of art over other figurative, social, or identity-oriented expressions.

The video combines excerpts from correspondence between Nelson Rockefeller and Brazilian entrepreneur and founder of the Museum, Ciccillo Matarazzo, with fragments from the 1969 "The Rockefeller Report on the Americas." With a clear aim to suppress Communist ideologies, this 1969 document—addressed to then U.S. President Richard Nixon—reported on political, economic, cultural, and social issues that would shape the future relationships between the U.S. and Latin America. Sound fragments of *Saludos amigos* (Greetings Friends), a Walt Disney cartoon commissioned by Rockefeller in 1943 accompany the image collage.

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Openings (films made by the Office for Inter-American Affairs 1941-1949), 2022

Video-collage, 4 mins 18 secs, no sound.

Openings brings together colorful cover animations of travelogues about Latin America made by the Office of Inter-American Affairs (OIAA) led by Nelson Rockefeller. This public relations campaign aimed to change the perception of South America as a poor area without opportunities, and instead promoted it as a region ripe for business ventures. Often made with re-used corporate footage, the short films portrayed valuable strategic places and resources.

Some of these films are also part of *Night Geography* video.

Eyes and Years South (from the publication of the Office for Inter-American Affairs 1945), 2022

Wall mural

This mural inverts the original graphic design of "Eyes and Years South", an article in the 1945 American pedagogic booklet *See and Hear* published by the Office for Inter-American Affairs. The article mentions the films made by the OIAA, which introduced Latin American countries to U.S. audiences in the 1940s.

Objects (excerpts from "The Rockefeller Report on the Americas" 1969), 2022

Vinyl

This wall text features an extensive list of objects mentioned in "The Rockefeller Report on the Americas" coordinated by Nelson Rockefeller for the U.S. Government in 1969. The document covered economic, political, military, religious, cultural, and technological issues related to the Latin American region.

In 1969, after taking office, U.S. President Richard Nixon asked Nelson Rockefeller to prepare a report on the state of the Alliance for Progress and U.S. policy in Latin America. At the end of World War II, Rockefeller served in the U.S. State Department as the leader of the division responsible for Latin American relations while simultaneously growing his

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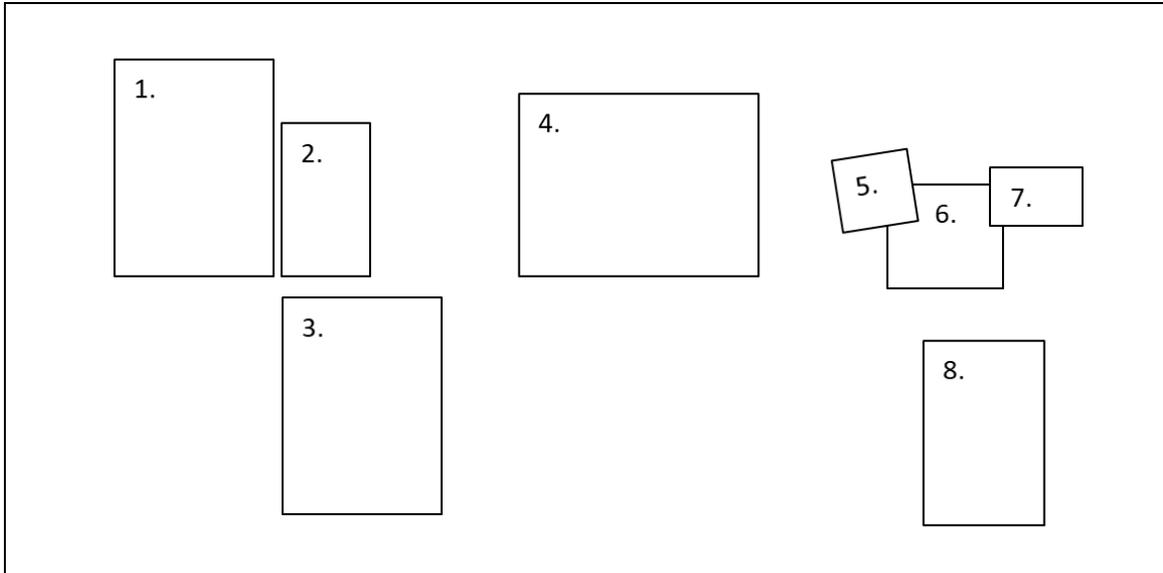
personal businesses in the region. The report was made during the beginning years of the military dictatorship in Brazil (which began in 1964 with a U.S. government supported coup d'état by the Brazilian armed forces and lasted until 1985).

Education by Night, 2020-2022

Overhead projector and learning materials

In Education Through the Night, the learning material used for learning mathematics and calculation is used to scramble notions of perception, materiality, abstraction, and representation. The installation is composed of figures created from small wooden blocks that, placed on overhead projectors, cast shadows that do not resemble the shapes of the stacked blocks.

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Vitrine 1.

1. “What will Rockefeller say about us?”

Veja Magazine, São Paulo, June 1969.

Cover image of Nelson Rockefeller during his visit to Brazil while coordinating the production of the Report on the Americas.

2. *The Rockefeller Report on the Americas. The Official Report of a United States Presidential Mission for the Western Hemisphere*

Book by Nelson Rockefeller, Quadrangle Books, Chicago, 1969.

3. “Cars Invade Brazil”

Veja Magazine, São Paulo, April 1969.

4. “In Amazonia and Northeast you get money without spending it”

Advertisement from Brazil’s Ministry of Interior, 1970.

5. “Fallen satellite piece from Starlink, in Brazil, nearby the mine where one of its components is extracted”

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in *Folha de SP*, March 16, 2022.

Picture of the metal satellite piece from Starlink crashed in Brazil, causing surprise and fear when it landed. One of the components of the piece is made from metal mined in a place nearby.

6. **“Jair Bolsonaro greets businessman Elon Musk at a luxury hotel in Porto Feliz (SP)”**

in *Amazonia Conecta*, May 20, 2022.

At this meeting, Bolsonaro and Musk announced a partnership in which Musk's company Starlink would provide internet connection for rural schools in Amazonia while also monitoring the region via photos and videos taken by the same satellites.

7. **“Super excited to be in Brazil for launch of Starlink for 19,000 unconnected schools in rural areas & environmental monitoring of Amazon! [Emojis]”.**

Tweet from Elon Musk, May 20, 2022.

8. **“Pile of tin”**

Advertisement in a Brazilian magazine, 1970.

Vitrine 2.

“Eyes and Ears South”

in *See and Hear: The Journal on Audio-Visual Learning*, 1945, produced by the Office of Inter-American Affairs. Page 63-73

Pedagogic leaflet that accompanied educational films about Latin America. The learning videos were made with reused corporative footage, edited by the OIAA, offering an overview on political, cultural, historical, and economical issues in the region. Aimed to begin fostering US-Latin America relationships in schools, the films often convey the region in terms of valuable strategic locations and profitable resources for the US.