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The role of dis:connections between Latin American and European photography in shaping the institutionalisation of the medium in the late 1970s and early 1980s

The problem

The international institutionalisation of photography into the culture, art and education has been the subject of recent research lately in the Global North and South. However, decolonialising Latin American photography requires a better understanding of the international dis:connections in its organisation. This work is underway, though access to archives and documents remains challenging.

Core interest

My core interest is to explore the dis:connections between Latin American and European photography during the 1970s and 1980s, focussing on how these interactions influenced the institutionalisation and global recognition of Latin American photography. I seek to understand how these transnational exchanges, shaped by political and cultural shifts, contributed to the construction of a distinctive Latin American photographic style, while challenging colonial and hegemonic narratives in the global history of the medium.

global dis:connect

This dis:connective aspect of the research is its interdisciplinary and critical approach to the cultural transfers between Latin America and Europe in the 1970s and 1980s. It addresses the tensions and dialogues in these exchanges, which relate to the fact that photographers in Latin America sought to define their intrinsic value as an independent product, but needed to do so by inserting themselves in the mainstream art market based in Europe and North America.

Preliminary results

Interviews with photographers who participated in the Latin American Colloquia reveal challenges in connecting with international peers and the importance of the Colloquia in shaping a collective identity for Latin American photography. Archival documents reveal that networks were formed following these events to foster previously absent exchange and collaboration. Preliminary results also indicate the need to focus on the specific cultural and political contexts of Latin America rather than merely positioning the region within Eurocentric frameworks.

