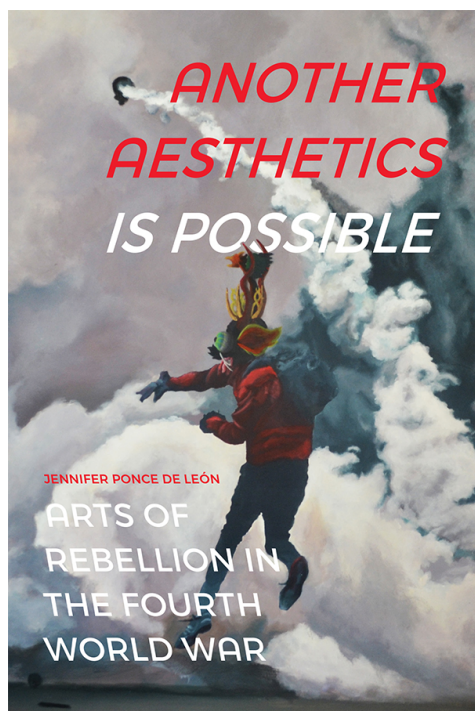


## Another Aesthetics is Possible: Arts of Rebellion in the Fourth World War

by Jennifer Ponce de León. Duke University Press, April 2021. 328 p. ill. ISBN 9781478011255 (pbk.), \$27.95.

Reviewed July 2021 Dan McClure, Library Director, Dora Badollet Library, Clatsop Community College, dmccclure@clatsopcc.edu



Jennifer Ponce de León, assistant professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania, presents a fascinating body of transdisciplinary research that explores artists and art collectives whose social and political practices operate forcefully and intriguingly against capitalist systems that increasingly displace indigenous populations in the Americas, especially in Latin American societies. We have moved from the Third World War—the Cold War—to the Fourth World War, the Zapatista name for the contemporary struggle in which “accumulated globalized capital” seeks to eliminate any force countering its hegemony. The artists Ponce de León investigates are generationally linked, born in the 1960s and 1970s, with bodies of work emerging in the 1980s and 1990s, but hail from locations across the Americas in Argentina, Mexico, and the United States.

By the time 2002 ushered in a devastating financial crisis in Argentina, these artistic practices matured (and continue to take shape), creating similarly robust artistic provocations that expose the global misfortunes of the poor and marginalized. Ponce de León’s selection of activist artists inspires a critical analysis with participants utilizing methods to remedy or rewrite history. Diego de la Vega Cooperative Media Conglomerate, led by artist Fran Ilich, waged a publicity campaign demanding the return of the famed headdress of Moctezuma from the World Museum in Austria and created an alternate reality game, *Raiders of the Lost Crown*, which skewers the role of museum practice. Sandra de la Loza and the Pocho Research Society of Erased and Visible History launched various guerilla interventions in Los Angeles, including installing historical plaques relating whitewashed episodes as a form of Situationist

détournement. Two Buenos Aires-based groups, Etcétera... and Grupo de Arte Callejero (Street Art Group), created social movement-based practices using performances and graphic displays to interrogate bourgeois complacency and expose repression and state violence.

By challenging the vestiges of colonial power structures, and by extension, the art and material cultural production of dominant cultures, these practitioners have shown another aesthetics, which questions or subverts the narrative of global capital. Overall, the text is absorbing but demanding, dense, and highly referential. Those whose comfort zone is reading critical theorists such as Antonio Gramsci, Louis Althusser, or Jacques Rancière will enjoy the many intellectual explorations and theoretical underpinnings, along with more than a nod to Marx and Engels. Thoroughly researched and forcefully detailed, this substantial text provides only eight pages of color reproductions and only a few in black and white, while including a bibliography of over twenty pages, a detailed index, and 174 endnotes. This occasionally challenging study, which highlights artists whose radical practices fall well outside the traditional exposure of market-based norms, is recommended for libraries supporting academic programs steeped in critical theory, especially at a graduate level.