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*Aesthetics and Politics: Community-Based Art in Brazil*

Within the last ten years, community-based art has been on the rise in Brazil, attracting attention on an international level. This form of art seeks to involve community members in the art making process and stems from the Neoconcrete movement of the late 1950s in Brazil. During this time, artists such as Hélio Oiticica and Lygia Clark incorporated interactive view experiences into their works. My dissertation investigates the emergence of community-based art in Brazil within the larger category of Brazilian contemporary art from the late 1950s to the present and examines large-scale community-based artworks in Brazil. This form of art has taken as its central focus the division between the highest and lowest socioeconomic members of Brazilian society, and has emerged exclusively in *favela* communities in Rio de Janeiro. Therefore, making sense of these works can only be done through deep engagement with the city. The emergence of these works in Brazil also contributes to the theoretical debate surrounding autonomy and form. Art that includes an element of social participation, such as community-based art, is often understood as post-autonomous, confronting the viewer in his or her own space and time, shattering the distance between the artist, the viewer, and the work of art, and even calling into question its own status as art. For the most part, critics and theorists have celebrated the political possibilities created by art's post-autonomy. As such, my dissertation participates in a turn in art history and theory that seeks to question the aesthetic and political stakes of post-autonomy. It does so, however, through a close examination of community-based art in Brazil and an understanding of the politics of the city of Rio de Janeiro.