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## GENERAL EDITORS' FOREWORD

Within the larger Objects/Histories series, this smaller set of volumes addresses the diverse lives that artistic modernism has had beyond the West during the twentieth century. This book, one of three volumes, explores the fertile exchanges between local artists and those of European descent, among them radical expatriates, in colonial settings. A symptom of the complexity and heterogeneity of such settings is that some of those local artists are referred to, and refer to themselves, as indigenous; for others, that term is less appropriate. The focus on Africa, Oceania, and the Americas fills a gap in current scholarship that is a legacy of Western modernism's much-debated primitivism.

In response to the striking absence of these art histories from global narratives, in 2010 we initiated a program of research and discussion that has resulted in these publications. From the outset, the agenda was not simply to pluralize a monolithic Western construct. We take it for granted, as many readers will, that the humanities and social sciences have moved in that direction. Yet this epistemological sea change does not in itself enable any genuine understanding of the diversity of modernist innovation beyond the West, the legacies of modernist primitivism, or the ambivalent exchanges between European cultural brokers and those they stimulated and mentored. Whereas globalization was already a cliché of the international art world by the late-twentieth century, the apparent inclusiveness of biennials had in no way been matched by an adequate account of the Native modernisms of the interwar years or those of the fifties and sixties. In part for telling reasons—these artists' notions of self, history, and culture preceded and were somewhat incommensurable with the formations of identity politics that gained ascendancy in the seventies—the art world, and the critical writing around it, has suffered a kind of amnesia regarding these remarkable and formative histories.

Scholars have produced fine studies focused on artists in specific countries and regions, including books previously published in the *Objects/Histories* series, but the subject also demands a wider, comparative approach, which can reveal both the shared experiences engendered by colonial policies and the specificity of local responses. This set of volumes draws on the work of scholars from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, the United Kingdom, the United States, and elsewhere who collectively bring decades of research experience into the remarkable lives of indigenous artists and their strange and paradoxical dealings with Western mentors and institutions. The heterogeneity of milieux and artists' trajectories, as well as the successes and failures of these artists' work, are vital to the understanding we seek to achieve and convey. One aim is to tell some of their stories. Another is to exemplify, rather than merely declare the need for, a genuinely global art history.

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