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Countries featured:
Nigeria, South Africa, Argentina, Chile, Guatemala, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Bosnia, Serbia, Croatia

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Around the World, an Artistic Response to Authoritarian Rule

The Art of Truth-Telling about Authoritarian Rule
Edited by Ksenija Bilbija, Jo Ellen Fair, Cynthia E. Milton, and Leigh A. Payne
Publication Date: 25 October 2005
Paper $19.95, Cloth $60.00; 136 pages
Includes 87 black-and-white, and 245 color illustrations

The truth about what happened under repressive rule is not easy to come by. This impressive anthology proposes cogently and very persuasively innovative and often unexpected ways for tracking down this elusive quarry and in the process advocates a better deal for those who have for so long been rendered impotent and voiceless. A most worthwhile undertaking. Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu

“This book is both important and necessary in its laying bare of the human costs of dictatorship, and of the challenges faced by those who seek to come to terms with, and indeed remedy or atone for, brutal pasts.”—Susana Chávez-Silverman, author of Killer Crónicas: Bilingual Memories

People who have lived through authoritarian rule have stories to tell. They want to tell their truths: truths that have been silenced, truths that have been censored, truths that are still uncomfortable. But how do individuals begin to speak about a political past that was too horrible for words, especially when the words only came in torrents of pabulum, snake oil, and venom? How are versions of events that have slipped outside of official narratives best voiced in a society moving out of authoritarianism? This generously illustrated volume examines the art of truth-telling and the creation of stories, accounts, images, songs, street theater, paintings, urban designs, and ideas that pay witness to authoritarian pasts.

This comprehensive collection, with contributions by scholars, activists, and artists from around the world, explores this theme across a range of national experiences, each featuring its own unique set of historical, institutional, and cultural conditions. This book is bold, creative in form and content, and unlike any other treatment of authoritarian transitions, with the editors and contributors daringly staking a place for cross-disciplinary conversations on modern history, creative art, politics, and social meaning. By examining the truths—both official and unofficial—about the past, we can learn how to avoid repeating atrocities in the future.


Publication of this book was made possible by grants from Université de Montréal and from the following programs at the University of Wisconsin-Madison: African Studies Program; Anonymouse Fund for the Humanities; Center for Southeast Asian Studies; Center for Russia, East Europe, and Central Asia; Global Studies Program; Latin American, Caribbean, and Iberian Studies Program; and the University of Wisconsin Foundation.

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