

Art in America

February 1988

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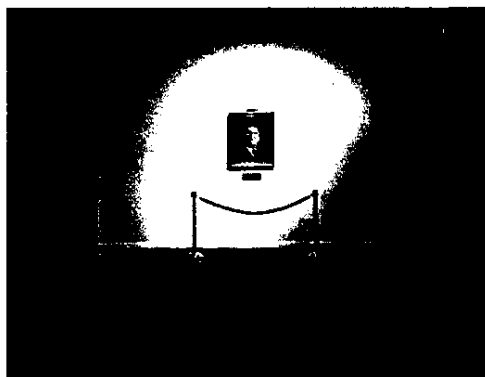
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Cover: Detail of Hans Haacke's installation *Oil Painting, Homage to Marcel Broodthaers, 1982*, mixed mediums, at the New Museum of Contemporary Art. Photo Fred Scruton, courtesy New Museum. See article on Hans Haacke beginning on page 96.

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Hans Haacke: Memory and Instrumental Reason

Refusing "the trademark appearance of art," Hans Haacke employs factual information as a basis for political and cultural critique. Below, a theoretical discussion of the sources and far-reaching implications of Haacke's challenge to hegemonic methods of art-making.

BY BENJAMIN H.D. BUCHLOH

Works of art which by their existence take the side of the victims of a rationality that subjugates nature, are even in their protest constitutively implicated in the process of rationalization itself. Were they to try to disown it, they would become both aesthetically and socially powerless: mere clay. The organizing, unifying principle of each and every work of art is borrowed from that very rationality whose claim to totality it seeks to defy.

—Theodor W. Adorno¹

By now we know that analysis of the reception of a particular work can clarify its immanent meanings and functions as well as the external factors that control its social positioning within that segment of the culture industry generally identified as "the art world." Some types of new artistic production and stylistic shifts are regularly embraced with enthusiasm; they are, in fact, the means by which the art market avoids the twin dangers of economic and esthetic entropy. At the same time, other unacceptable practices are just as regularly relegated to oblivion and silence. In recent history, we have witnessed the extraordinary success of certain artists' work at one moment in time, and have then seen those same artists' reputations wither away to nothingness in less than a decade (e.g., Victor Vasarely). We have also seen the almost complete neglect of other artists (or esthetic positions), along with the art world's refusal to reconsider work that has suffered decades of inattention and incomprehension (e.g., John Heartfield).

Of course, artists themselves, as "experts of legitimation" (Gramsci), engage in a diversity of strategies ranging from pure acceptance of the culture's ideological usages of their work to, at the opposite extreme, programmatic efforts to contest the very framework of that culture, as well as its ideological apparatus. Whether a given type of work affirms the cultural hegemony of a particular class and its ideology, or instead criticizes and even attacks that hegemony, may obviously determine whether a particular audience accepts or refuses its practices and propositions.

Raymond Williams's reflections on the historical power and persistence of a "selective tradition" can also shed some useful light on



Hans Haacke: Les must de Rembrandt, 1986, concrete bunker containing mock facade of a Cartier boutique with photo of South African black workers (exterior view above, interior opposite). Informational plaques establish business links between Cartier Monde, The Rembrandt Group (a network of South African companies) and GENCOR, a South African mining concern known for its brutal treatment of the black mining workforce (installed in Le Consortium, Dijon, France, 1986).

Haacke's work first defined itself in the context of a mid-'60s generation that had recognized the historic failure of modernist concepts of autonomy and visual pleasure.

the positioning of specific works within the cultural sphere:

There is a process which I call the *selective tradition*: that which, within the terms of an effective dominant culture, is always passed off as "the tradition," "the significant past." But always the selectivity is the point; the way in which from a whole possible era of past and present, certain meanings and practices are chosen for emphasis, [while] certain other meanings and practices are excluded.²

It is highly informative to approach the work of Hans Haacke through its reception. A mid-career artist who was born in Cologne in 1936 and took up residence in the U.S. in 1965, Haacke has now produced art works and exhibited for more than 25 years (his first exhibition took place at New York's Wittenborn One-Wall Gallery in 1962).³ Before this past season, which has seen an atypical flurry of art world attention to his work, it would not have seemed in the least inappropriate to categorize Haacke as a marginalized artist. His current traveling exhibition (organized by Brian Wallis at the New Museum in New York last winter and now at the Knight Gallery in Charlotte, North Carolina) is actually his first American one-person museum show. Until very recently, only two public American institutions (Allen Memorial Art Museum of Oberlin College and Ohio State University) had acquired any of his major works.⁴

As for the reputedly advanced museums of Europe, and especially West Germany, they have collectively paid little attention to Haacke indeed. Though devoted for the last 20 years to the reconstruction of a modernist and contemporary progressive culture on the pattern of the hegemonic American image, West German museums, with only one exception, have not acquired any of Haacke's mature—i.e., political—works, and none has yet given him a retrospective (it seems that they no more recognize him as a German artist than American museums accept him as an American).⁵ Furthermore, Haacke is not included in any of the famous private collections in West Germany. What he has experienced instead is at least one spectacular scandal of institutional censorship at the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum in his hometown of Cologne (the excluded work was *Manet-PROJEKT '74*)—an incident which matched the notorious cancellation of his exhibition at the Guggenheim Museum in 1971. In addition, there have been several subsequent occasions in which censorship was barely avoided in last minute compromise solutions, or was practiced under the guise of legalistic pedantry.⁶

Neither the paranoia of the Left nor a conspiracy theory is necessary to explain Haacke's history of marginalization and the extent of his institutional and commercial exclusion in both Europe and North America. What the reception of Haacke's work does prove is that the supposedly all-embracing liberalism of high-cultural institutions and of the market may be far more selective than is generally believed, and that those institutions can be rather rigorous in their secret acts of revenge and clandestine repression. It seems that Haacke has too often challenged institutional power and control, and that the institutional, discursive and economic apparatuses of international high art have not forgiven him for "baring those devices."

It is clear that, for postwar Germany in particular, the type of factually specific memory that Haacke constructs is not very appealing. What the dominant forces in contemporary German culture

seem to prefer is work that mourns the political barbarism of the Nazi past. Apparently they can afford to applaud the sublime and polyvalent (or are they merely politically obscurantist?) poetic meditations and pictorial reconciliations of work by Beuys and Kiefer. What they cannot tolerate is Haacke's devotion to factual accuracy—an accuracy that has painfully revealed, for instance, how a prominent figure in the economic establishment of the Nazi government, the banker Hermann Joseph Abs, now functions as a major cultural benefactor in the liberal democracy of postwar Germany.

Haacke's reconstructions of cultural memory are neither nostalgic nor conciliatory; rather, they alert us to current facts. His work makes one aware, for example, of the links between the politics of repression practiced in remote countries of the Third World and certain individuals or corporations who figure as philanthropists and cultural patrons in various capitals of the First World—and who conceal themselves behind the liberal-democratic character masks provided by those First World cultural activities (e.g., the Guggenheim trustees in Chile; the Philips Corporation in Iran and South Africa; the Bührle Family, the Saatchis, Alcan, Cartier, Mobil and British Leyland in South Africa). Thus, one could argue that Haacke's work invokes the memory of a potential or actual continuity between historic Fascism of the '30s and the politics of liberal democracies under multinational capitalism. Moreover, Haacke constructs this kind of memory by working at the center of our supposedly autonomous and apolitical culture. And since his artistic means are necessitated by both the political and cultural realities within which he inscribes his work, he has inevitably had to redefine the hegemonic methods of representation and to develop a practice in which he can effectively collect and display knowledge as a critique of ideology.

In discussing Haacke's work, one needs to avoid the temptation to construct an image of the artist as a political martyr. Nor should one depoliticize his work in an act of art-historical hagiography or canonization. Rather, the critical task is to determine whether that work has in fact been marginalized because it represents a turning point—one of those historical moments in which a set of traditional assumptions about the structures and functions of art are being effectively challenged (in the way that Heartfield's work constituted such an instant in the '30s).

Thus, it may be important to point out first of all that Haacke's work has always been attacked by those humanist critics who attempt to revitalize universalist notions of the artist's role as a purveyor of the lost values of subjectivity, identity, creativity and cultural memory, as well as by those critics who emphasize the artist's singular capacity to reenact and continue the history of bourgeois culture.⁷ In manifest opposition to such an approach, Haacke affirms a very different view of the artist's role. His work is based on the idea that cultural production and reception have increasingly become subjected to relations and interests of power operating outside of the producer's control. Furthermore, Haacke sees the esthetic construct as primarily constituted by the political associations of high cultural institutions as well as by the ideological usages of high cultural representations. For him, artistic production in our society also has an inescapable dialectic relationship with those mass-cultural formations that govern collective perception (many of his works embrace the commodity esthetic of contemporary advertising and its primary role as the service industry of dominant ideology and state power, and also reflect upon high art's proximity to these practices).

Any analysis of the reception of Haacke's art must furthermore come to terms with the common argument that his work is marginalized because of its relative lack of artistic merit, its esthetic

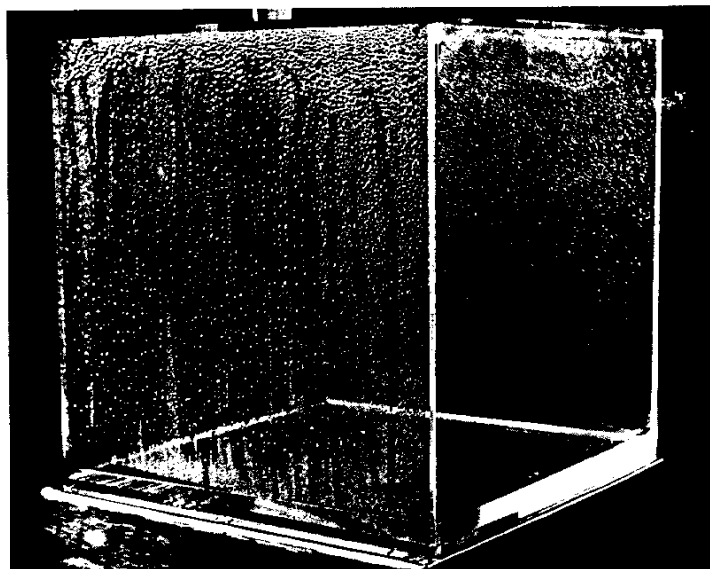
shortcomings. This argument is most frequently leveled by those who speak in the name of institutional expertise and critical competence. These critics contend that Haacke's production is too secular in its concerns, that it is incapable of generating the type of visual or cognitive pleasure which we supposedly experience from other art, that its rigorous commitment to documentary facts and political subject matter and its quasi-journalistic accumulation of universally available information disqualify it as a supreme esthetic experience.

These guardians of the cultural canon, practicing institutional repression and censorship, have never presented sufficiently developed arguments for their exclusion of Haacke's work, nor have they clarified their objections in esthetic terms (although they do, of course, supply us with an involuntary caricature of the language of estheticism and artistic spirituality, a language which has by now become identical with the language of blatant bureaucratic power). Thus, when Horst Keller, then director of the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, argued his case for the censorship of Haacke's work in 1974, he said: "A museum knows nothing about economic power; it does indeed, however, know something about spiritual power."⁸ And when Thomas Messer, director of the Guggenheim Museum, explained the reason for his institution's suppression of Haacke's work in 1971, he invoked the concept of the autonomy of art, stating that he had to fend off an "alien substance that had entered the art museum organism."⁹ Elsewhere, Messer articulated his position even more programmatically: "I would say that at the point at which the intention and the result of a work is no longer general, summary, metaphoric and symbolic, by the point it addresses itself to a known specific topical situation, its status as a work of art—or at least its immunity as a work of art—is in question."¹⁰

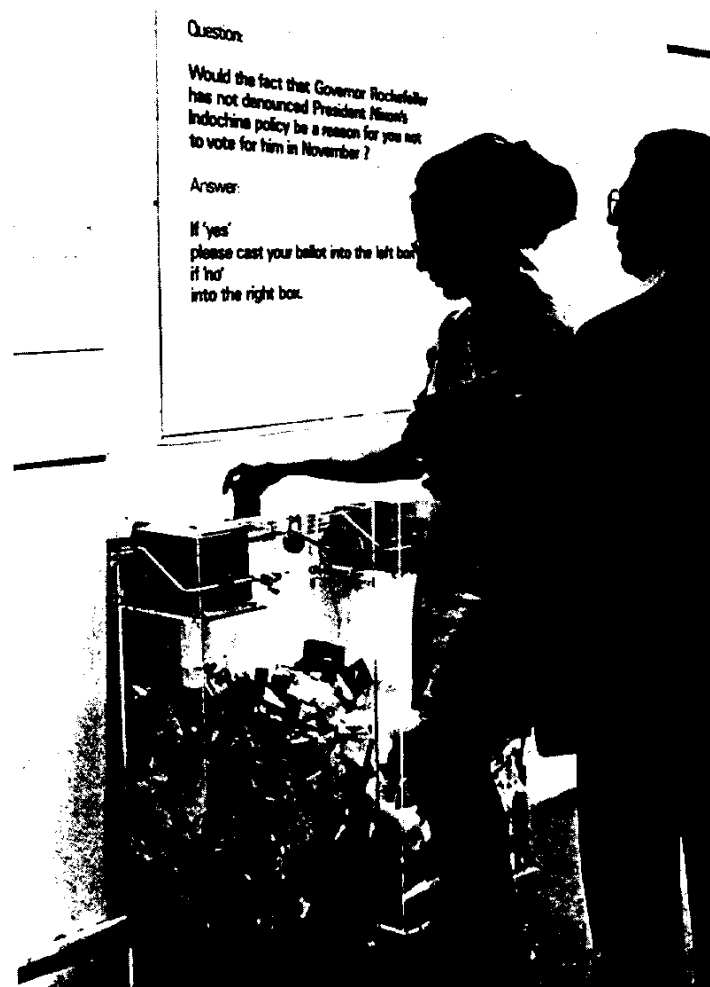
It seems appropriate that a critique of Haacke's critics (and by implication of the type of artistic practice that they advocate) should address the two concepts of esthetic autonomy and esthetic pleasure—i.e., the aspects of the art work that Haacke supposedly violates in the name of political instrumentality. Though one would expect to find a competent articulation of the concept of autonomy in bourgeois esthetics, oddly enough it is only within Marxist esthetic thought that an adequate theorization of the dialectic of autonomy and instrumentality can be located. Adorno's essay "Commitment," for example, specifically addresses the problem of the destruction of esthetic autonomy in the service of instrumental thought and the subordination of esthetic pleasure under the positivist demands of communication:

There are two "positions on objectivity" which are constantly at war with one another, even when intellectual life falsely presents them as at peace. A work of art that is committed strips the magic from a work of art that is content to be a fetish, an idle pastime for those who would like to sleep through the deluge that threatens them, in an apoliticism that is in fact deeply political. . . . For autonomous works of art, however, such considerations, and the conception of art which underlies them, are themselves the spiritual catastrophe of which the committed keep warning. Once the life of the mind renounces the duty and liberty of its own pure objectification, it has abdicated. Thereafter, works of art merely assimilate themselves to the brute existence against which they protest, in forms so ephemeral . . . that from their first day they belong to the seminars in which they inevitably end. . . . Committed art, necessarily detached, as art, from reality, cancels the distance between the two. "Art for art's sake" denies by its absolute claims that ineradicable connection with reality which is the polemical *a priori* of the attempt to make art autonomous from the real. Between these two poles the tension in which art has lived in every age till now is dissolved.¹¹

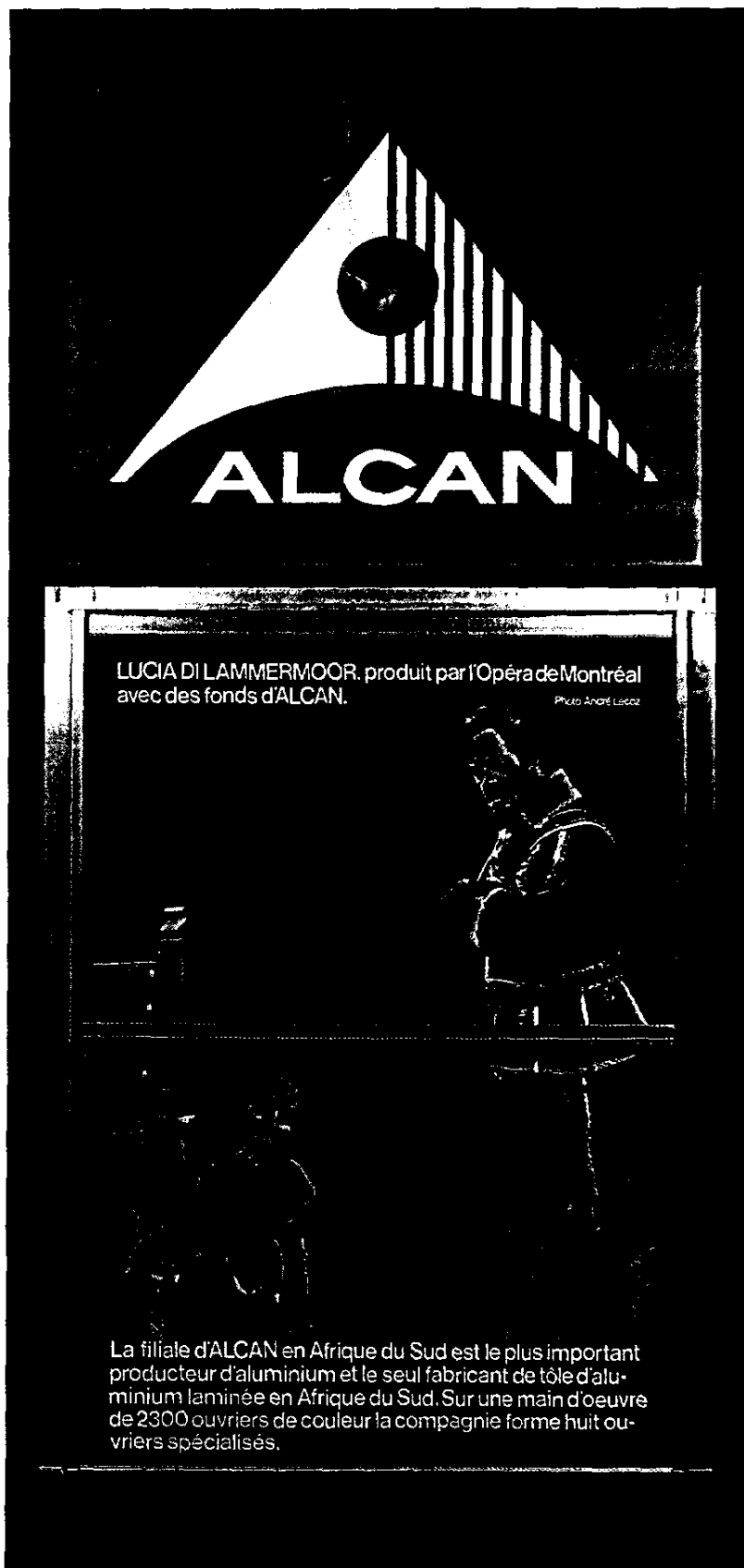
While we now understand that Adorno's argument for the auton-



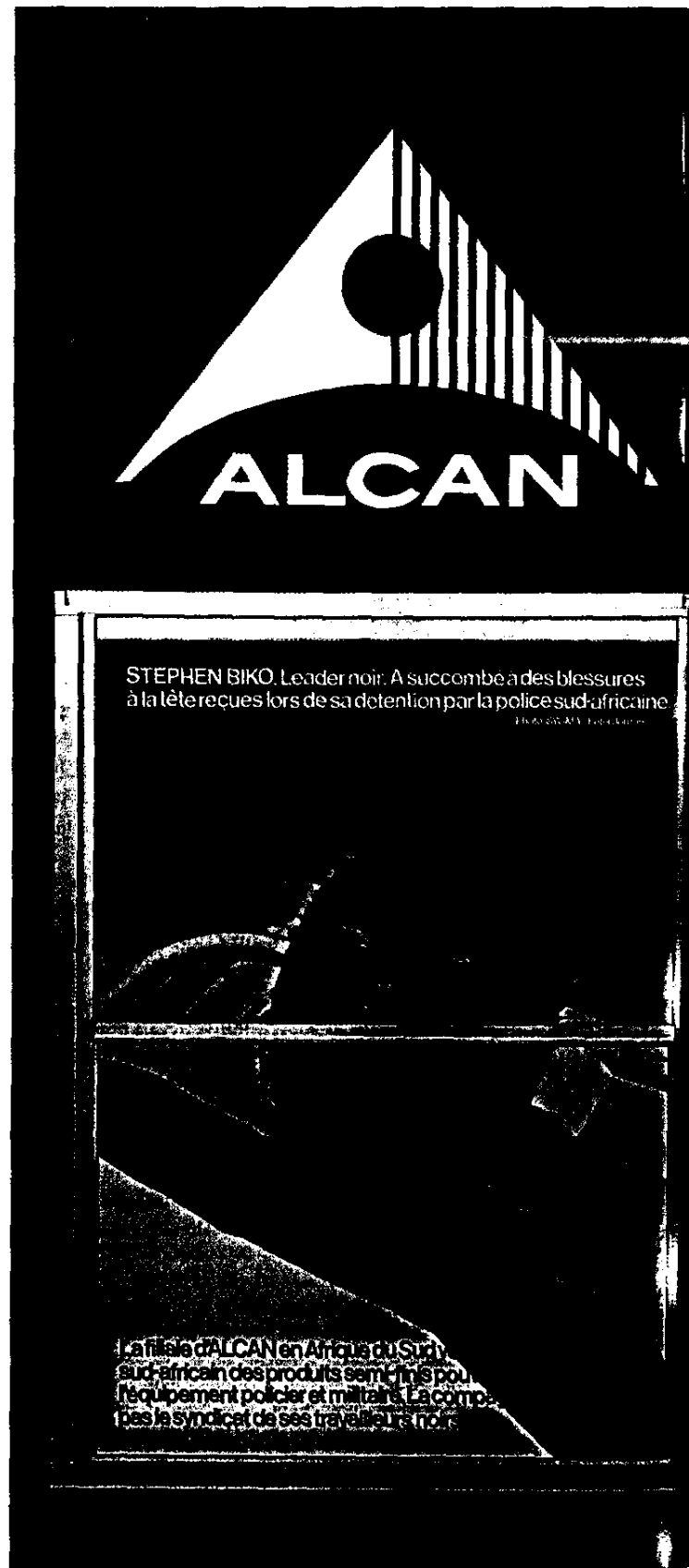
Condensation Cube, one of a series of acrylic plastic cubes demonstrating the condensation of humidity in a gallery space; project conceived in 1963, exhibited 1965.



MOMA-Poll, 1970, an installation for audience participation at the Museum of Modern Art's 1970 "Information" exhibition.



Voici Alcan, 1983, three 86½-by-41-inch panels with photographs, aluminum windows, acrylic plastic, silver foil; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. The two outside photos show operatic productions sponsored by Alcan, whose South African affiliate provides aluminum products for that country's police and military. Central photo is of black leader Stephen Biko, mortally wounded while detained by South African police in 1977.



omy of the art work was historically still dependent upon the modernist model of critical negation and refusal—a model which originated with Mallarmé's Symbolist hermeticism—and even though Adorno himself admits in a later section of his essay that the opposition between the two esthetic configurations is no longer as clearly defined, his argument is not historically informed by the

Haacke's art focuses on links between the politics of repression in the Third World and individuals or corporations who figure as major cultural patrons in the capitals of the First World.

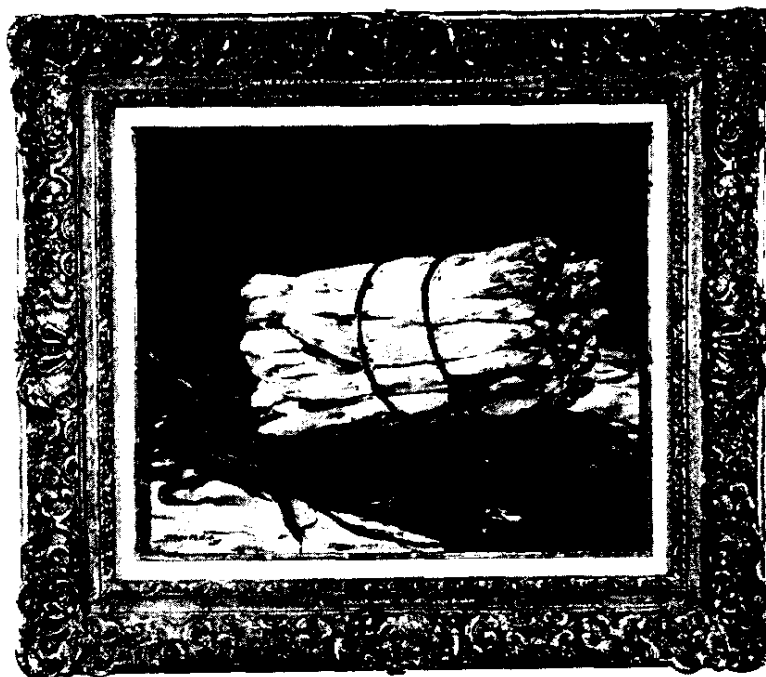
Moreover, the historical debates and the artistic production emerging from these movements, especially the actual transformation of the structure of the esthetic object and of the author-audience relationship, and, most important perhaps, the disenfranchising of the hegemony of the visual as the dominant category in which the esthetic is constituted, were themselves the product of technological advances and of the actual facts of social emancipation and political liberation. What Adorno's traditional modernist thought failed to recognize is that those esthetic changes and those new technological and social conditions constituted an historically irreversible reality—and that they would continue to do so in spite of the subsequent bureaucratization of Socialism and the conquest of the unconscious by postwar advertising and commodification. Indeed, they are as much of an historical reality as the bourgeois culture of modernism and its concepts of autonomy. It is the sum total of historical events—not one particular moment of that history—which is inextricably inscribed in each subsequent esthetic decision and artistic formation. Yet those critical transformations of modernist esthetics, which constitute a different definition of cultural practice, have been all but erased from our cultural memory; the "selective tradition" of Western hegemonic culture has trained us to disavow and repress them. As a result, artistic practices which still incorporate those changes into their conception of art production now appear to be instrumental as well as deeply implicated in the totality of technocratic and administrative logic; moreover, their rationalistic character seems especially egregious during a period (like our own) when sudden emphasis is placed on the type of art that nostalgically turns back to the historical origins of bourgeois culture.

It is important to recognize that artists who nevertheless continue to reject the idea of esthetic autonomy have also had to abandon traditional procedures of artistic production (and, by implication, of course, the cognitive concepts embedded in them). Ian Burn, an artist whose own theories and work of the early '70s were close to Haacke's, has described this problem as specific to his generation (and in the process has provided—or so it might seem at first glance—a rationale for the new cultural conservatism). Burn, a former member of the Art & Language group, writes the following:

While arguments can be made in favor of discarding "anachronistic" practices in the face of "space-age" technologies, what is so often overlooked is that skills are not merely manual dexterity but forms of knowledge. The acquisition of particular skills implies an access to a body of accumulated knowledge. Thus deskilling means a rupture with an historical body of knowledge—in other words, a dehistoricization of the practice of art.¹²

What Burn's argument omits is that the process of "deskilling" (which is operative in the art of Haacke and the entire generation of post-Minimal and Conceptual artists as much as in that of the earlier avant-garde movements) implies not simply a dehistoricization of the "historical body of knowledge," but also a critical analysis of the specific social, political and ideological interests which certain forms of esthetic knowledge have served and fulfilled. On the other hand, it is precisely the anti-esthetic impulse, the "factographic" dimen-

actual transformations of esthetic practice that took place within the 20th century itself. In particular, Adorno ignores the fact that the concept of autotelic purity was actually dismantled early in the century—first, in the esthetics of Duchamp and Dadaism after 1913, but even more so in the wake of Constructivist abstraction and Productivist esthetics in the Soviet Union between 1919 and 1925.



Details from Manet-PROJEKT '74, 1974 (collection Dr. Roger Matthys, Deurle, Belgium). Planned for an exhibition at the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, but rejected, the installation was to have included the original Manet painting, along with ten panels tracing the work's history of ownership. The controversial ninth panel (below) reveals that the chairman of the Wallraf-Richartz-Kuratorium was Hitler's minister of economics.

Das Spargel-Stilleben erworben durch die Initiative des Vorsitzenden des Wallraf-Richartz-Kuratoriums



Hermann J. Abs

Geboren 1901 in Bonn - Entspricht wohlhabender katholischer Familie. Vater Dr. Josef Abs, Rechtsanwalt und Justizrat, Mithhaber der Hubertus Braunscheim AG. Brüder, Edt. Mutter Katharina Lückert.

Abitur 1919 Realgymnasium Bonn - Ein Sem. Jurastudium Universität Bonn - Banklehre im Kölner Bankhaus Delbrück von der Heydt & Co. Erwerb internationaler Bankerfahrung in Amsterdam, London, Paris, USA.

Heiratet 1928 Inez Schmitzer. Ihr Vater mit Georg von Schnitzler vom Vorstand des IG Farben-Konzerns verwandt. Tante verheiratet mit Baron Alfred Neven du Mont. Schwester verheiratet mit Georg Graf von der Goltz. - Geburt der Kinder Thomas und Marion Abs.

Mitglied der Zentrumpartei. - 1929 Prokurist im Bankhaus Delbrück, Schaeffer & Co., Berlin. 1935-37 einer der 5 Teilhaber der Bank.

1937 im Vorstand und Aufsichtsrat der Deutschen Bank, Berlin. Leiter der Auslandsabteilung. - 1939 von Reichswirtschaftsminister Funk in den Beirat der Deutschen Reichsbank berufen. - Mitglied in Ausschüssen der Reichsbank, Reichsgruppe Industrie, Reichsgruppe Banken, Reichswirtschaftskammer und einem Arbeitskreis im Reichswirtschaftsministerium. - 1944 in über 50 Aufsichtsrats- und Verwaltungsräten großer Unternehmen. Mitgliedschaft in Gesellschaften zur Wahrnehmung deutscher Wirtschaftsinteressen im Ausland.

1946 für 6 Wochen in britischer Haft. - Von der Alliierten Entnazifizierungsbehörde als entlastet (5) eingestuft.

1948 bei der Gründung der Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau. Mithabhaber an der Wirtschaftsplanung der Bundesregierung beteiligt. Wirtschaftsberater Konrad Adenauers. - Leiter der deutschen Delegation bei der Londoner Schuldenkonferenz 1951/53. Berater bei den Wiedergutmachungsverhandlungen mit Israel in Den Haag. 1954 Mitglied der CDU.

1952 im Aufsichtsrat der Süddeutschen Bank AG. - 1957-67 Vorstandssprecher der Deutschen Bank AG. Seit 1967 Vorsitzender des Aufsichtsrats.

Ehrenvorsitzender des Aufsichtsrats:
Deutsche Überseeische Bank, Hamburg - Pöhl Maschinenfabrik AG, Langen (Hessen)
Vorsitzender des Aufsichtsrats:
Dahlbusch Verwaltungs-AG, Gelsenkirchen - Deimler Benz AG, Stuttgart-Untertürkheim -
Deutsche Bank AG, Frankfurt - Deutsche Luftfahrt AG, Köln - Philipp Holzmann AG, Frankfurt -
Phoenix Gummiwerke AG, Hamburg-Harburg - RWE Elektrizitätswerk AG, Essen -
Vereinigte Glaswerke AG, Wuppertal-Elberfeld - Zellstoff-Fabrik Waldhof AG, Mannheim

Ehrenvorsitzender:
Salamander AG, Kornwestheim - Gebr. Stumm GmbH, Brannbaur (Westf.) -
Süddeutsche Zucker-AG, Mannheim
Stellvert. Vors. des Aufsichtsrats:
Badische Anilin- und Soda-Fabrik AG, Ludwigshafen - Siemens AG, Berlin-München
Mitglied des Aufsichtsrats:
Metallgesellschaft AG, Frankfurt
Präsident des Verwaltungsrats:
Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau - Deutsche Bundesbahn

Großes Bundesverdienstkreuz mit Stern, Papst-Stern zum Komturkreuz, Großkreuz Isabella die Katholische von Spanien, Cruzeiro do Sul von Brasilien - Ritter des Ordens vom Heiligen Grab -
Dr. h. c. der Univ. Göttingen, Sofia, Tokio und der Wirtschaftshochschule Mannheim.
Lebt in Kronberg (Taunus) und auf dem Benratherhof bei Remagen

Photo aus Current Biography Yearbook 1970 New York

Master narratives of ownership and exchange value, each of these works reads as a metonymic history of esthetic experience and the motivations of patronage during the last 100 years.

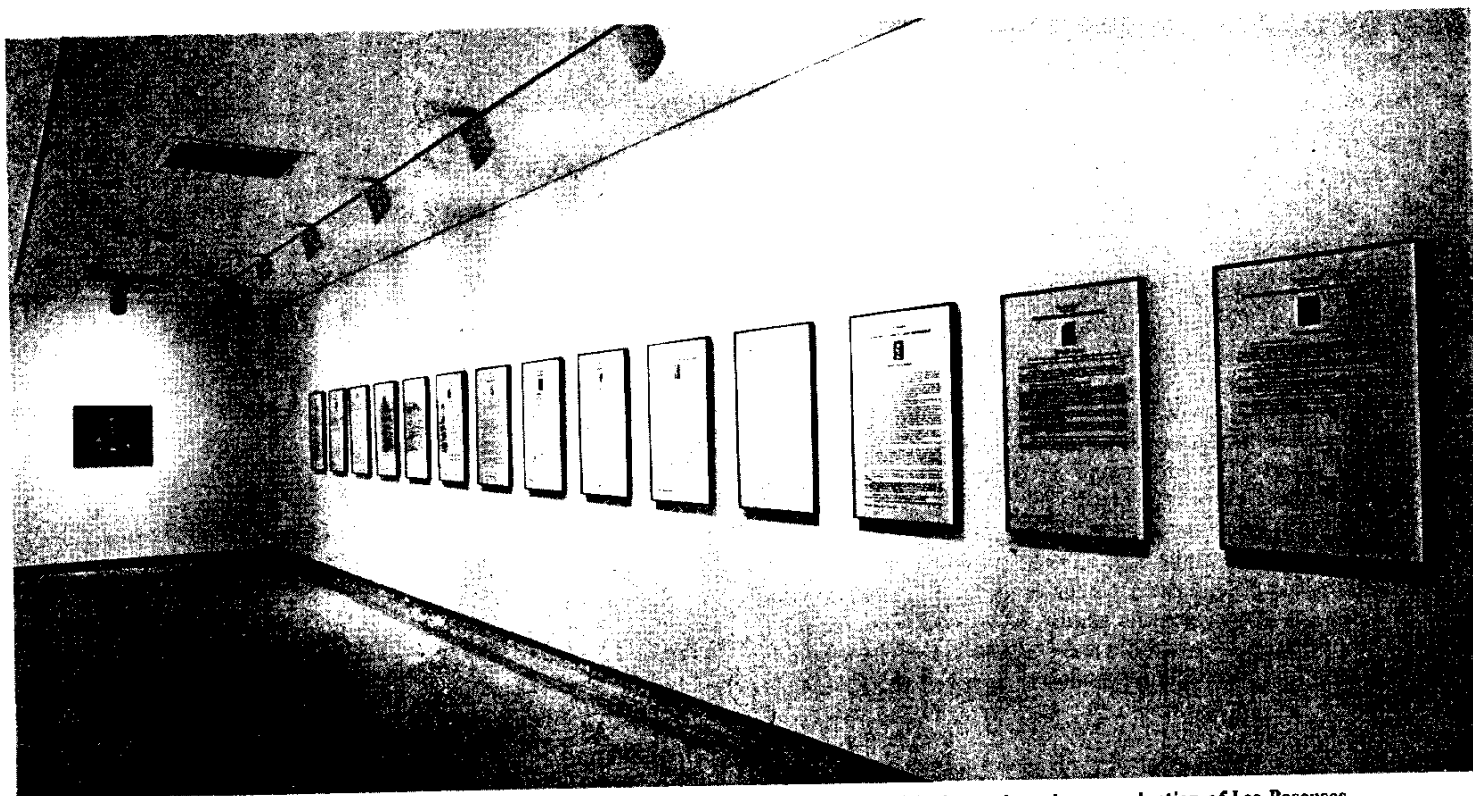
sion in Haacke's work, which demands new skills, which develops a different form of historical knowledge, and which addresses a different social group and different modes of experience.¹³

As for the presumed incapacity, or refusal, of Haacke's work to generate "esthetic pleasure," in this case, too, one must turn to Marxist criticism for the best articulation of the relevant argument about an artistic practice that denies visual pleasure. The German literary critic, Gisela Dischner, for example, approaches the issue by discussing the links between the avant-garde's process of artistic dehistoricization and its tendency toward desensualization. For her, both phenomena are destructive elements in contemporary leftist esthetics, and she sees both as emerging from an undialectical approach to the enlightenment legacy:

The question of whether artistic production is still possible as tendentially unalienated labor, or under which circumstances it could become possible, will have to be investigated in the context of a materialistic theory of socialization. . . . As was the case with Benjamin's *angelus novus*, the tendency towards the future will only be revealed in a contemplative gaze upon the past and not in detachment from the past as the misery that has been overcome and left behind—which was the method of the enlightenment. The latter method is still operative. It appears in the form of dehistoricization and desensualization in the dogmatism of leftist esthetics. This dogmatic left will either reduce literature to the illustration of engaged politics, or it will leave literature, and its critical analysis, entirely to the right.¹⁴

What Dischner fails to note is that the very notion of the esthetic as unalienated labor and pure sensory experience is of course itself dependent upon a historic construct—the Romantic conception of creativity. A last bastion of the idea of naturalness, this 19th-century notion of instinctive creativity has haunted all modernist esthetic practice with ever-increasing urgency. It appears in the dialectic between modernist deskilling of esthetic procedures and the modernist emphasis on artistic performance—i.e., on acts that transgress all rationally controlled, functional labor. Both esthetic positions—the idea of the autonomous gesture of deskilling as an avant-garde strategy of negation and resistance as well as its opposite, the Expressionist's definition of esthetic practice as an instinctual and libidinal act of transgression that reconstitutes the unalienated subject—are dialectical opposites. Both emerge from late 19th-century capitalist culture, and both found not only their socio-political and ideological analysis but their esthetic demolition as well in the first decade of the 20th century.

Any critique of Haacke's work that argues against its apparent instrumentalization of the esthetic (and therefore its implicit or explicit destruction of esthetic memory) would have to recognize that the process of dehistoricization is already assumed in those supposedly esthetically pleasing works which rely on obsolete and inaccessible forms of knowledge and techniques for producing meaning. Haacke does not conceive of memory as a cultural retrieval system, an esthetic means of legitimizing a political present that has long lost its legitimation. Rather, his work consists of acts of counter-memory, in which he refers to the body of acquired legacies and practices, the new social relations that earlier in this century generated the first configurations of a new form of political and cultural legitimation.



Above, installation view of Seurat's "Les Poseuses" (small version), 1888-1891, fourteen 20-by-30-inch panels, color reproduction of Les Poseuses (edition of 8). Below, two panels with biographies of former owners of the Seurat painting.

"Les Poseuses"
(small version)
acquired, probably as a present, by



Jules F. Christophe

Born 1840 in Paris. Son of a merchant.
Writer and government official. 1889 appointed Deputy Chief of Staff in the French Ministry of War.

Author of theater plays and fiction. 1887 co-author with Anatole Cerfberr of "Repertoire de la Comédie humaine," a biographical dictionary for Balzac readers. Contributor of theater and art criticism, essays and biographical articles to numerous literary magazines associated with symbolism and anarchist communism. Publishes 1890 one of the early extensive articles on Seurat and his theories ever written, in "Les Hommes d'Aujourd'hui," a symbolist weekly. In the same magazine appear his articles on the painters Dubois-Pillet and Maximilian Luce. He himself is the subject of a biographical sketch by Félix Fénéon in "Les Hommes d'Aujourd'hui."

Closely related to circle of symbolist/anarchist writers and neo-impressionist painters, including Fénéon, Gustave Kahn, Charles Henry, Paul Adam, Jean Ajalbert, Jules Laforgue, Seurat, Signac, Pissarro.

Has strong sympathies with anarchist communism. Contributes to fund for the destitute children of imprisoned anarchists.

Author of Seurat's obituary in "La Plume" 1891.

Reportedly gives his son "Les Poseuses" during his own life time. Date of death unknown.

Detail of Drawing by Dubois-Pillet. 1888

"Les Poseuses"
(small version)
purchased 1971 for unknown amount (part in art works) by



Heinz Berggruen

Born 1914 in Berlin, Germany.

Studies art history in Berlin and Toulouse, France; graduating there with equivalent of Master of Fine Art degree. In late 1930s moves to California. Postgraduate studies in art history at Berkeley. Assistant Curator of San Francisco Museum of Art. Writes art criticism for *San Francisco Chronicle*. Works at 1939 World Exposition on Treasure Island, San Francisco.

Marryes Lilian Zellerbach of prominent San Francisco paper manufacturing family. Birth of son John Berggruen 1943 (now art dealer in San Francisco). Birth of daughter Helen. 1945.

After World War II, service in US Army. Stationed in England and Germany. Works for German language US Army publication in Munich.

Around 1947 move to Paris via Zurich. Employed by cultural division of UNESCO. In late 1940s, starts dealing in art books and prints. Becomes art dealer. Berggruen & Co. now at 20, rue de l'Université, develops into one of major Parisian art dealers in modern art, particularly Ecole de Paris.

Lives in St. Louis, Paris, and on chateau near Pontosse. Owns large collection.

1974 elected member of the Board of Directors of Artemis S.A., a Luxembourg-based art investment holding company. Chevalier of Legion of Honor.

His purchase of Seurat's *Les Poseuses* at "impressive profit" to Artemis S.A. (annual report). Painting now on anonymous loan to Bavarian State Museum, Munich.

Photo from "Art in America," 1983

Guardians of the cultural canon contend that the rigorous commitment of Haacke's art to documentary facts and political subjects disqualifies it as a supreme esthetic experience.

Haacke's work first began to define itself in the context of a mid-'60s generation that had recognized the historical failure of the modernist concepts of autonomy and visual pleasure. Working in Germany of the late '50s and early '60s, Haacke confronted a situation in which non-representational geometric painting was attempting to acquire renewed vigor and to overcome its obvious obsolescence via association with European postwar transcendental theories—e.g., those of Yves Klein and the German Zero Group (with which Haacke himself was informally connected for a brief time in the '60s). His own dilemma at that time is apparent in an early interview with Jack Burnham in 1966, in which he explicitly describes his position as positivist scientism, but at the same time displays a considerable degree of ambivalence about the exclusive rigor of this approach. In a paradoxical statement, Haacke attempts to redeem the transcendental dimension of modernist reductivism, a dimension that the scientism and factual indexicality of his early work had originally set out to negate: "I believe that a rational, almost positivist approach, a certain sobriety can be developed to a point until they unfold into something very poetical, weightless and irrational. Perhaps this could help to explain the seemingly contradictory nature of my work."¹⁶

Even before Haacke produced what he calls his "first really political work" (the *MOMA-Poll* at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, installed and conducted on the occasion of the "Information" exhibition in 1970), his approach seems to have followed—albeit unknowingly, as he has repeatedly asserted—the historical model of Productivist factography and its project of a collaborative and participatory esthetic. Activating the viewing subject—or, in Walter Benjamin's terms, transforming the passive, contemplative mode of bourgeois esthetic experience into an (inter)active participatory mode of perception and collaboration—had been one of the programmatic goals of the Productivist esthetic after 1921. The extent to which this central issue of a participatory esthetic was reduced during the '60s to a simplistic level that assumed an infantilized viewer is certainly one of the more astonishing facts of postwar history. Haacke's early participatory work, such as his *Photoelectric Viewer Controlled Coordinate System* (1966–68), is of this period and incorporates those limiting conditions: indeed, the mere fact that members of his audience were sufficiently implicated in his work's reflexive processes to illuminate the light bulbs of his environmental relief was then enough to make his work seem a radical departure from traditional esthetic experience.

Yet, along with the Minimalists, Haacke also belongs to the first generation of postwar artists who seriously transcend that early, limited conception of audience participation. The similarities and the differences between his work and that of the Minimal sculptors of the early to mid-'60s are instructive. If the Minimalists replaced the earlier notion of chance and game as participatory modes with a perceptual model of intricate process-based experience that involved interrelationships between viewer and object and that was derived from phenomenology, Haacke emphasized physiological, physical and biological processes; while in Haacke's works these processes functioned independently of the viewers' perceptual involvement, they often elicited interaction as well.

The terms within which Haacke defined his participatory projects



Details from Broadness and Diversity of the Ludwig Brigade, 1984, an installation. Left, oil on canvas with portrait of Ludwig; right, billboard with Trumpf advertisement.

in the mid- to late-'60s may have differed from the phenomenological investigations of the Minimal artists, but he nevertheless shared some of the positivist, experimental and behaviorist features of that generation. Like those of the Minimalists, his projects were still defined by an esthetic of participatory neutrality; both often reduced their viewers to the status of a participant in a behavioristic or perceptual experiment. Also like the Minimalists, Haacke was concerned with the revelation of process and structure rather than ideation and representation. He emphasized tactility and foregrounded gravity as the basic means of implementing viewer-activated participation. These features are addressed in a 1965 leaflet that he published as a private manifesto in Cologne; in it he argues that he wanted

[to] make something which experiences, reacts to its environment, changes, is non-stable.../[to] make something indeterminate, which always looks different [and] the shape of which cannot be predicted precisely.../[to] make something which reacts to light and temperature changes, is subject to air currents and depends, in its functioning, on the forces of gravity.../[to] make something which the "spectator" handles, with which he plays, and thus animates it.../[to] make something which lives in time and makes the "spectator" experience time.../[to] articulate something Natural...¹⁶

It seems relevant to recognize that the willfulness and abstraction



Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin, planned to coincide with the first exhibition of Peter Ludwig's collection of East German art. poster.

of Haacke's early work in the '60s, the naturalistic and scientific character of its subjects (the biological and the physical systems which he uses to abstractly represent "life" and "time," as he calls them), are an inevitable product of his positivist, reductivist aesthetic. Works such as *Ice Stick* (1966), in which a cooling system condenses the humidity of the gallery space and transforms it into ice, or *Skyline* (1967), with its line of helium-filled balloons in Central Park, or *Grass Grows* (1969), which was part of the famous "Earth Art" exhibition, all incorporate what K. Michael Hays, in his discussion of Hannes Meyer's Productivist architecture, has identified as a "hypostatized rationalism." Hays sees this phenomenon as "a constraint more than a liberating convention [wherein] *Sachlichkeit's* ambition of negation turns back on itself, reentering the work as its opposite—as ideology, as fixed patterns of form, action and thought."¹⁷

Although the Minimalists' claim to neutrality, their apparent refusal to identify the cultural construct by means of its relations to and condition of power, effectively turned viewers into unknowing subjects of that power, audience participation in Minimal art, and in Haacke's works of the mid-'60s, generated an esthetic semblance of democratic equality, a seeming sense of accessibility for the uninitiated. In a different context, Edward Said has described that

illusory equality as it occurs in what he calls "valorized speech":

By the valorization of speech I mean that the discursive, circumstantially dense interchange of speaker facing hearer is made to stand—sometimes misleadingly—for a democratic equality and copresence in actuality between speaker and hearer. Not only is the discursive relation far from equal in actuality, but the text's attempt to dissemble by seeming to be open democratically to anyone who might read it is also an act of bad faith. . . . As Nietzsche had the perspicacity to see, texts are fundamentally facts of power, not of democratic exchange.¹⁸

In spite of Haacke's frequent affirmations of the mutual interest and support that related him to some of the Minimalists (in particular, Andre, Morris and LeWitt), he himself early on emphasized the differences. Talking about his own work during that period, he said:

The overriding requirement . . . is that I allow the process to have its way. . . . I am not aiming for a particular look, so visual terms do not apply. . . . A very important difference between the work of the Minimal sculptors and my work is that they were interested in inertness whereas I was concerned with change. . . .¹⁹

And although there are obvious structural, material and morpholog-

HIPPOKRATIE

Skulptur für den öffentlichen Raum, das städtische Verkehrsnetz.



Was haben HIPPOS und dieser Bus gemeinsam?



HIPPO =
Hippokratie
Hippokratie
Hippokratie



Sie fahren mit MERCEDES-Motoren durch Wohngegenden.

Hippokratie, 1987, rejected project for a bus design for Münster's "Skulptur Projekte." The bus inscription says: "What do hippos and this bus have in common: they both use Mercedes Engines." The "hippo" is a South African vehicle employed by the police against the black population.

Neither the paranoia of the Left nor a conspiracy theory is necessary to explain Haacke's history of marginalization and the extent of his exclusion in Europe and the U.S.

ical similarities between a work like Haacke's *Condensation Cube* (whose first model, according to Haacke, was made in 1963 and first exhibited in the exhibition "Nul" at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam in 1965) and, for example, Robert Morris's *Mirrored Cubes* (1965), one can argue that Haacke's art of that period already differed from that of the Minimalist sculptor in several crucial features. Most of all, Haacke's piece emphasizes a physical process (condensation) that is completely independent of the viewer's perception; as a consequence it disenfranchises the supremacy of the visual as the constitutive feature of esthetic experience. By contrast, Morris's work, despite its ingenious conception of visual experience as constituted in the triad between perceiver, object and architectural container, and its significant emphasis on the necessity to contextualize perception, yet remains firmly anchored in the neutral realm of the visual. Because of these differences, as well as the fact that Haacke's work failed—or, rather, refused—to maintain a consistent visual morphology (what Haacke himself has called "the trademark appearance of art"), it is only logical that his work of that period was never accepted by critics and historians into the "canon" of Minimal art.

With his first *Gallery-Goers' Profile* (1969), his performance work *On Sale at the Fondation Maeght* (1970) and the *MOMA-Poll* (1970), Haacke began developing an approach to art production which would once again separate his work from that of his peers—in this case, from Conceptual art, the then newly emerging artistic position that drew on premises of analytic philosophy in order to reduce the esthetic construct to a linguistic proposition. By that time, Haacke had already laid the foundations for, or perhaps even fully developed, the complex set of esthetic strategies that Mary Kelly has recently identified as the agenda of an oppositional post-modernism of the '80s, which she sees as

implementing a shift at the level of content and [putting] the so-called synthetic proposition back on the agenda, that is...[reversing] Kosuth's dictum that art is an *analytical proposition* and...[saying that] art isn't confined to speaking about art, it can refer to things outside itself, it can have what you would call "social purpose."²⁰

Haacke's emphasis on the functional dimension of the esthetic construct is another concept that clearly relates his work to the factographic tradition. Obviously, this functional dimension depends on the idea of artistic signification as communicative action—a notion which anchors the esthetic sign to a material referent (the shared referent of communicative action and the labor of representation implied in this concept). The idea of communicative action operates not only in programmatic opposition to the modernist's false concept of autonomy and its legacy in the so-called formalism of the '60s; in the contemporary context, and perhaps more importantly, the idea of communicative action also critically challenges the simulationist variety of postmodernism, in which artistic signification relies on a misconception of the esthetic sign as analogous to Baudrillard's *simulacrum* (which in its turn is based on the notion of the linguistic sign): i.e., that artistic meaning can be determined exclusively by internal differentials and without the presence of an external referent.

Haacke has described his attitude towards a functional esthetic as follows:

It helped that I was primarily what you might call job-oriented. Even in the '60s, I wanted things to function, in a very literal, physical sense. I carried this approach over to the more recent work. For example, in order to conduct a poll of the art public, one has to devise certain social situations, and for the presentation of the results, one has to use particular graphic means. Whether they happen to conform to period style or not is irrelevant.²¹

Furthermore, this functional dimension of Haacke's work performs a programmatic critique of the art work as exchange value. In an interview in 1979, Haacke says: "Obviously I work within a contradiction. Part of my message is that art should have a use-value rather than be seen as the commodity produced by an entrepreneur."²²

By 1969, Haacke already understood what the contemporary simulationist artists do not comprehend—the fallacies of the Duchamp legacy, about which he (and some of his peers, e.g., Broodthaers and Buren in Europe, Asher and Smithson in the U.S.) had become increasingly critical, even though Haacke himself had originally been highly susceptible to the radical implications of the Ready-Made model. This attitude towards Duchamp is evident in his reflections on his own mid-'60s work, in which he says:

At one time I did think of signing the rain, the ocean, fog, etc. like Duchamp signed a bottle rack or Yves Klein declared Nov 27th 1960 as a worldwide *Théâtre du Vide*. But then I hesitated and wondered if isolation, presentation at one given limited area, an estrangement from the normal is indispensable. It is a very difficult question. It finally boils down to a definition of art and I don't know what this "Art" is.²³

Unlike the work of the first generation influenced by Duchamp, namely the Pop artists, Haacke seems to have recognized by 1969 that the esthetic object was constituted as both a discursive and a material object whose possible reading emerged at the intersection of several determining factors: artistic (linguistic) conventions, the practices of institutional power, the ideological investment and economic needs of a shifting audience. Commitment to such a contextual concept of the art work inevitably required that Haacke dismantle the traditionally integrated artistic construct (integrated in

terms of its material and formal elements as much as its iconography or categorical consistency). Consequently, the reliable solidity of a pictorial or sculptural type vanishes altogether from Haacke's work around 1969 (just as it vanishes in the work of his peers in Europe and the U.S.). That closed pictorial and sculptural art work is dislodged in favor of a decentered object whose various and shifting origins and affiliations always remain visible in Haacke's contextual definition as the elements of social conflicts and oppositional interests, as unreconciled contradictions within the sphere of esthetic production and reception.

By the late '60s, Haacke and various European artists like Broodthaers and Buren had already critically dismissed Pop art and its legacy. In particular, they rejected Warhol's position, which pretended to effect an actual breakdown of the boundaries between mass culture and high culture, and which they perceived as a typically voluntaristic and libertarian anarchism of the '60s. Warhol's stance promised a release from the fetters of cultural complexity and privileged experience (a populist promise which endeared him to many members of the European Left). Haacke recognized that this promised collapse of the boundaries between mass cultural consumer object and the high cultural object (with its freight of cognition and its potential for critical negation) would in actuality only hasten the progress and increase the efficiency of the process of historical desublimation in which the cultural industry remains engaged up to this date. Yet Haacke has never assumed the position of an undialectic cultural conservatism nor defended an obsolete notion of esthetic experience as inextricably tied to the privileges of a particular class. Quite the opposite: whenever the legacy of the bourgeois cultural past actually enters Haacke's reflection, his work acquires those formal and structural functions which Walter Benjamin has described as allegorical devaluations of the esthetic object within the object itself. It is in these structural elements that Haacke's work anticipates within itself those processes to which the socially defined forms of use and reception will inevitably subject it.

Haacke's *Manet-PROJEKT '74* and his *Seurat's "Les Poseuses" (small version), 1888-1975* are exemplary models of that approach and clearly among Haacke's central achievements for defining the terms of future art production. In each of these works, Haacke sets forth the commercial history of a particular painting—a master narrative of ownership and exchange value; in these commemorations of the legacy of bourgeois high culture, the writing of art history is reduced to a mechanical and linear commodity history. The lapidary facts themselves as well as the detached, yet committed, exactitude with which Haacke has assembled his information on the object-fate and object-status of these early modern paintings, not to mention the correct formality with which he presents this information—all of this makes the works read as a metonymic history of esthetic experience and the motivations of patronage during the last 100 years, while simultaneously conveying a sense of the monumentality of the ruins of that experience. Haacke himself has referred to these panels as the “tombstones” of the paintings whose reception they recount, and he has thereby explicitly indicated that the allegorical dimension of these works resides in their commemorative function.²⁴ Haacke's works cast a contemplative gaze upon two objects of a lost culture; his commodity histories encapsulate the irretrievable loss of those dimensions of bourgeois culture represented by its early collectors and patrons. Haacke's vantage point is the present, in which these objects have become solely the trophies of corporate investment and institutional legitimation.

That this allegorical depletion of historical substance, a depletion which these panels perform by calmly reporting well known facts,

nevertheless unleashes again and again a high degree of institutional censorship attests not so much to the work's agitational provocation (what Thomas Messer in 1971 referred to as Haacke's “muckraking venture”) as to its systematic and successfully executed project of delegitimation. But Haacke's work, unlike that of Broodthaers, does not limit itself to the forms of critical negation that such allegorical strategies provide. By emphasizing the functional aspect of his work, by making each of his interventions specific to a particular occasion, and by linking allegorical strategies to instrumentalizing acts of information and communication, Haacke increases the subversive potential of his projects. He nevertheless refrains from agitational esthetics, since he understands (from his own *Visitors' Polls* if nothing else) that his viewer is not the revolutionary author/producer, but rather a privileged liberal middle-class spectator, who is safely contained in the institutional and the discursive network within which these works are experienced.

Thus, with his works of the mid-'70s, Haacke had not only critically transformed the Duchamp legacy, but he had also questioned whether the factographic conception of art—developed in the historical situation of revolutionary politics—had not forfeited its validity in the same manner that the radicality of Duchamp's Ready-Made concept had failed. Before that, in the late '60s, Haacke had already addressed the question of whether an activist practice which disregarded the fact that the cultural sphere was relatively autonomous could fulfill any function other than that of a mythified political art within the seemingly monolithic consciousness industry of late capitalist society. The way he responded to this question was to take the relations of power as the subject of his constructs, and it is precisely at that point—when the actual conditions of cultural production in late capitalism begin to determine both the subject matter and the structure of his work—that his production acquires its most complex historical identity and that it abandons all prior historical models.

While Haacke does not claim Gramsci as a source, it seems that his conception of culture in its inextricable association with power is close to Gramsci's ideas as described, for example, by Edward Said:

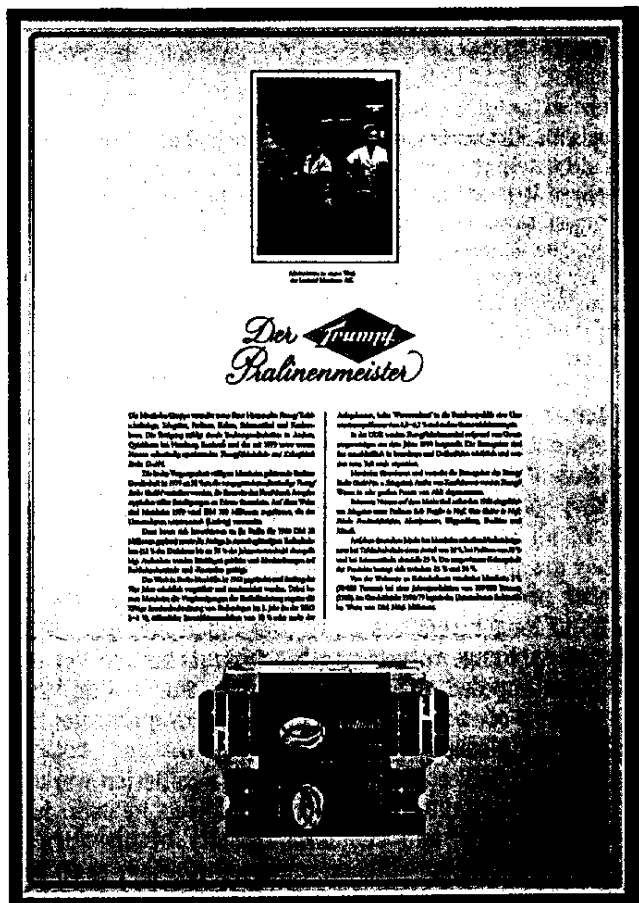
Well before Foucault, Gramsci had grasped the idea that culture serves authority, and ultimately the national State, not because it represses and coerces but because it is affirmative, positive, and persuasive. Culture is productive, Gramsci says, and this—much more than the monopoly of coercion held by the State—is what makes a national Western society strong, difficult for the revolutionary to conquer. . . . For we must be able to see culture as historical force possessing its own configurations, ones that intertwine with those in the socioeconomic sphere and that finally bear on the State as a State.²⁵

In the structure of his mature work and in his use of found objects, it is clear that Haacke has broken with Duchamp and his heirs. As deployed within the Duchamp legacy of the '60s as much as in its rediscovery in the '80s, consumer objects are stripped of all referentiality, of all allusions or connections to the social context from which they are initially drawn. Indeed, an object only takes on esthetic meaning precisely when its referentiality has been abolished, when it no longer reminds us of the labor invested in its production, of the exchange value extracted from its circulation and of the sign value imposed in its consumption. For within that tradition, elimination of referentiality is in fact the quintessential condition for esthetic pleasure.

In contrast, Haacke makes every effort in his installation work to reconstitute *all* of the contextual aspects of the objects he uses. Just as he insists on the site- and context-specificity of his various interventions in the institutional framework, he also insists on the object-specificity of the elements operating in that intervention.



The Chocolate Master, 1981, seven diptychs examining the connections between Peter Ludwig's multinational art acquisition activities and his chocolate-making interests.



Haacke's functional esthetic—which depends on the notion of artistic signification as communicative action—critically opposes the simulationist variety of postmodernism.

Thus when Haacke investigates the interrelationships between the cultural and the political activities of an individual or a corporation, he deploys the very objects of their productive enterprise within the esthetic construct itself. In *The Chocolate Master* (1981), for example, the actual presentation boxes of the products of the Ludwig corporation are used as the visual centerpieces of Haacke's carefully produced panels. Those panels document the disparity between the public claims of Peter Ludwig, the cultural benefactor, and the economic reality of the interests of Ludwig the chocolate tycoon (Haacke includes information about the working conditions of those who, by their labor, generate the surplus value which allows Ludwig to act as a cultural benefactor in the first place). Haacke has ironically identified the collaged objects he uses in this work as "the real Pop Art of the great Pop Art collector," thus accurately pointing once again to the discrepancies between the cultural pretenses of a seemingly omnipotent patron and his actual contribution to the "cultural" practices of everyday life:

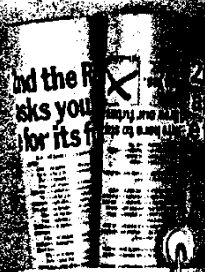
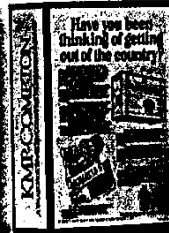
I quoted [the aesthetic of the products] as a form of art. I believe this is quite revealing because these packages call up all sorts of unconscious desires. They appeal to notions of value, which are, roughly speaking, very traditional and conservative. I did not want to make a flashy Pop art piece. That would have been cheap pamphleteering. . . . Naturally the collaged packages represent masterpieces of Monheim's Pop Art. . . .²⁶

This strategy indicates to what extent Haacke has critically transcended the limitations of the Duchamp legacy; by comparison, it also reveals the fallacies and comforts of recent attempts to exploit found-object assemblage as a means of revitalizing sculpture, as if the vanishing practice could be refreshed by the addition of topical mass cultural debris.

Haacke effects the same critical annihilation of the Ready-Made object as the comfortable *idée reçue* upon which a whole sculptural movement is currently based in his *Voici Alcan* piece of 1983. Here he frames the photograph of the murdered South African anti-apartheid leader Stephen Biko and photographs of two opera productions sponsored by the Alcan Corporation with actual products manufactured by this company—aluminum window frames. Among others, these are the very objects with which this corporation generates the surplus value to finance its cultural advertising ventures, just as its other products sustain the repressive government of South Africa and the company's own business ventures in that country. Haacke's attempt to preserve or to reconstitute the referentiality of these visual objects is fundamentally motivated by his awareness that, as Walter Benjamin has famously pointed out, documents of culture are at the same time documents of barbarism.²⁷

Just as Haacke's work of the late '60s had to oppose the legacy of formalist thought (or what passed for it), and just as he needed to transform and critically transcend the Duchamp legacy, his work is now confronted with the necessity to oppose definitions of the esthetic sign as they have emerged from the enthusiastic (and often misunderstood) adaptation of Baudrillard's concept of the simula-

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The Saatchi Collection (Simulations), 1987; installed at the Victoria Miro Gallery, London. At center, photo of Charles Saatchi with Lenin quote used in Saatchi & Saatchi's 1985 annual report. On shelf, chrome-plated fiberglass head of Lenin, cereal boxes with facsimiles of advertisements by KMP-Compton (Saatchi & Saatchi affiliates in South Africa). Bucket contains samples of KMP-Compton's advertising campaign to support the government's 1983 pro-apartheid referendum.

SAATCHI & SAATCHI WORLDWIDE
has a reputation with the London law firm
as the Munch & Kied in the mid-1980s,
but has no equity.

The management was well, says Kierck
"We are for all the different from
which several subsidiaries"

Hans Haacke

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crum. It seems to be one of the functions of the "free-floating signifier," which currently rules esthetic perception, to disavow precisely the element of barbarism that the referent provides and upon whose absence the experience of esthetic pleasure is predicated. If such is in fact the motivation for today's prohibition of referentiality, it cannot surprise us that Haacke's work is consistently accused of depriving its viewers of the specific pleasures of that disavowal. In this context, it is useful to reconsider Baudrillard's definition of the simulacrum in *Simulations*:

So it is with simulation, insofar as it is opposed to representation. The latter starts from the principle that the sign and the real are equivalent (even if this equivalence is utopian, it is a fundamental axiom). Conversely simulation starts from the *utopia* of this principle of equivalence, *from the radical negation of the sign as value*, from the sign as reversion and death sentence of every reference. Whereas representation tries to absorb simulation by interpreting it as false representation, simulation envelops the whole edifice of representation itself as a simulacrum.²⁸

Baudrillard's assumption that the simulacrum has taken over the function of representation obviously implies the abolition of language as a notion of communicative action; it also thereby obviates all questions concerning audience-specificity and audience-participation in esthetic constructs, and it ultimately negates the dimension of political critique and conscious resistance altogether. Baudrillard's anesthesia-philosophy, this soothing dispensation from the labor of production and material referentiality, has by now lulled an entire generation of artists into the comfort of the accomplice. While Baudrillard's sermon might adequately describe certain conditions of perception and consciousness from a monocentric perspective in the capitals of First World countries, it certainly obscures both the material conditions upon which this mirage is erected and, even more so, the actual conditions in those other areas (e.g., the Third World) where resistance and political struggles of opposition fight the "simulacrum" of First World politics imposed upon them with their lives.

Rather than yielding to the generally unspoken agreement that collective communication and political action are esthetically unrepresentable and at best a myth from the 19th century (as Baudrillard's contemptuous pamphlet on the concept of the political collective pretends),²⁹ Haacke, since 1969 and the beginning of his mature work, has insisted on the essentially collaborative character of artistic practice. For him, esthetic experience takes place within the sphere of communicative action, and it encompasses attempts at actual representation of the social collective, of the socially unrepresentable and of the unrepresented. These representations range from Haacke's earliest *Visitors' Polls* in 1969, where the presence and participation of viewers complete the "creative act" along the lines that Duchamp had predicted (though perhaps in a slightly different manner), through the Real Estate works, in which one segment of urban architectural experience is bracketed within the privileged space of the museum,³⁰ to more recent works such as *MetroMobilitan* (1985) and *Les must de Rembrandt* (1986). In the last two, as in several other earlier and subsequent works, the image of a specific social group struggling for political liberation—the black population of South Africa—is framed by corporate or institutional emblems of the class which dominates and oppresses them.

Of course, Haacke's images of social class (that ultimate "referent" of which contemporary representations would most like to be purified, a cleansing that Baudrillard has in fact encouraged) are

It is precisely the anti-esthetic, the "factographic" element, in Haacke's work that demands new skills, develops new forms of historical knowledge and addresses different social groups.

always mediated through his actual means of access to the experiences of the unrepresented and the unrepresentable—i.e., the means of an artist and a male, white, middle-class citizen in a First World capital. But to the same degree that Haacke acknowledges in his imagery that the oppressed and the exploited are accessible to the cultural construct only as always already mediated images, he also insists on the necessity to address issues of class and race in cultural representation. For Haacke, as for many other contemporary artists (including those who are hidden from the art world's eyes), it now seems increasingly obvious that it is the forms of representation which restrict themselves voluntarily to the purely cultural, the forms of representation which do not at least engage in a desperate attempt to represent those issues termed "unrepresentable," that are at this moment the truly barbaric. □

1. Theodor W. Adorno, "Commitment," *Aesthetics and Politics*, London, 1977, pp. 191-92.

2. Raymond Williams, "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory," *Problems in Materialism and Culture*, London, 1980, p. 39.

3. Critical support for Haacke's work has been given consistently by only three critics since the late 1960s: Jack Burnham, Lucy Lippard and John Perreault. The dealer Howard Wise supported Haacke's work in the late '60s and early '70s. Since 1973, the only major commercial gallery in the U.S. to exhibit Haacke's work on a regular basis has been the John Weber Gallery in New York. To my knowledge, no other commercial gallery in the U.S. has ever given Haacke a one-person exhibition.

4. During this past year (and since this essay, in slightly different form, was first delivered as a paper on Jan. 21, 1987, at Cooper Union), Haacke's situation has changed somewhat. In addition to his New Museum show, he was one of only five artists (along with Richard Artschwager, Jenny Holzer, Thomas Schütte and Richard Serra) whose work was represented in all three of 1987's major European contemporary art exhibitions (Documenta 8, Münster's "Skulptur Projekte," and Beaubourg's "L'Epoque, la mode, la morale, la passion"). Last year, too, the Philadelphia Museum of Art was the first major U.S. museum to acquire a significant, though comparatively apolitical, work by Haacke, a Duchamp paraphrase titled *Broken R.M.*... (1986). While one respects the museum's courageous commitment, one also cannot help noting that acquisition of a major work by Haacke (such as one of the groundbreaking Real Estate works of 1971) would not only have been more courageous, but would also have followed more directly the inclination of the Philadelphia *genius loci*, in whose centennial honor the Duchamp paraphrase was presumably acquired.

Also this past year, Haacke's first work to appear on the auction block, *On Social Grease* (1975), was included as part of the Gilman Paper Corporation Collection sale at Christie's, New York. The work not only attracted several competing bidders, but it also fetched the rather impressive price of slightly more than \$90,000.

In the light of these developments, it may seem exaggerated to continue to refer to Haacke's work as "marginalized." Nevertheless, the term still seems appropriate to me. Marginalization cannot be measured purely in terms of visibility in the market, the institutional world and the critical/historical literature. It should also be defined as the isolation of a given position and its eventual stylization as a unique stance—which seems to be the current form of marginalization to which Haacke's work is subjected: he has become a heroic, eccentric outsider of the esthetic mainstream and is finally being embraced within the terms of that mainstream. This embrace, however, seems to preclude consideration of the basic esthetic challenge that Haacke's work provides, a challenge also provided, incidentally, by those artists who have since the '70s developed their work in directions suggested by Haacke. (Indeed, some have possibly gone even further than Haacke himself—I am thinking here in particular of the work of Fred Lonidier, Martha Rosler and Allan Sekula.)

5. All of the European museums best known for their special commitment to contemporary art—Cologne's Wallraf-Richartz and Ludwig Museum, the Berlin National Gallery, the museums in Düsseldorf, Krefeld, Hamburg and Mönchengladbach, the Beaubourg Museum in Paris, the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, the Kunstmuseum in Basel, the Tate Gallery in London and the Louisiana Museum in Denmark—have rigorously excluded Haacke's work from their collections (and, with the notable

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exception of the Tate Gallery, from their exhibition walls as well).

The following European exceptions should be mentioned: the Kaiser Wilhelm Museum in Krefeld owns two very early Haacke works, a *Wave* from 1964, acquired by former director Paul Wember, and a *Condensation Piece* from the mid-'60s, acquired by Gerhard Storck in the late '70s. This same museum organized a first museum exhibition of Haacke's early work in 1972. The Neue Berliner Kunstverein, Berlin, organized a major exhibition (but not a retrospective) in collaboration with the Kunsthalle Bern in 1984-85. Another notable exception: the Kunstmuseum Bonn acquired the proposal *No Man's Land* (1973-74) and *Diptych: If you want to become a civil servant, you must bend in time* (1976). The Moderna Museet in Stockholm accepted Haacke's *High Voltage Discharge Travelling* (1968) as a donation. The Stedelijk van Abbe Museum in Eindhoven owns a copy of *Seurat's "Les Poseuses"* (small version), 1888-1975, and the Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, Ghent, owns *We believe in the power of creative imagination* (1980). Recently, the Fonds Régional d'Art Contemporain de Bourgogne acquired *Bührlesque* (1985), the first Haacke work to enter a French public collection.

6. It has frequently been argued that Haacke's 1971 Guggenheim exhibition was censored because the slumlords of his exposés were actually members of the board of trustees of the Guggenheim Museum. Though clearly false (the Real Estate pieces which provoked the censorship had no connection whatsoever with the museum's trustees), this commonly repeated mistake suggests that journalists have felt the necessity to construct a convincing scheme to explain an otherwise unfathomable act of censorship. Another equally revealing piece of misinformation is the also common argument that it was Haacke's exposé of the economic involvement of the Guggenheim trustees in Chile which led to the censoring of his 1971 exhibition. Haacke's *Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum Board of Trustees* dates from 1974 and was surely made in response to the CIA-initiated murder of the democratically elected president of Chile, Salvador Allende; obviously, the work also partially owes its origin to Haacke's own experience with that institution in 1971.

It should not surprise us unduly that a critic of the '80s might get his dates and facts wrong when talking about Haacke's work, but the degree of distortion and misinformation that appears in the following example could lead one to assume that the errors are not simply the result of the velocity to which the art world condemns its participants: "Hans Haacke, who spent much of the Conceptual period making kinetic sculpture, began to extend conceptualism into the political realm with an untitled 1973 work that documented the corporate affiliations of trustees of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (going so far as to implicate three board members in the coup of Chilean president Salvador Allende earlier that year); the piece, produced on the occasion of the Guggenheim's invitation to host a Haacke exhibition, drew art world headlines when it prompted the immediate cancellation of that exhibition" (from Dan Cameron's essay in *Art and Its Double*, Barcelona and Madrid, 1987, p. 20). Apart from its numerous errors, this statement contains the noteworthy suggestion that Haacke "spent much of the Conceptual period making kinetic sculpture." Haacke's *Gallery-Goers' Profile* (1969) and the *Poll* pieces of 1969-70 can hardly be called kinetic sculpture. Furthermore, it should be understood that it was never Haacke's ambition to join the Conceptual movement, nor to be perceived as part of it. If anything, he would have criticized the movement in the same manner as artists like Marcel Broodthaers and Daniel Buren.

The subtext of Cameron's statement seems to be that Haacke couldn't seriously expect not to be censored. The false dates and facts seem to function handily as an *ex post facto* justification for that censorship, and may, perhaps, be considered as an unconscious expression of the prejudicial attitude with which most of the official art world, and even its younger exemplars, still look at Haacke's work today.

As for last minute exclusions and/or compromises, one should note the cancellation of Haacke's contribution to the "Westkunst" exhibition in Cologne in 1981, in which a gentleman's agreement between the curator and the artist prevented a scandal; a similar situation occurred on the occasion of the "Von Hier Aus" exhibition in Düsseldorf in 1984. A more recent example is the legalistic pedantry of the city of Münster, which (in spite of strong support from the exhibition's curators) prevented the installation of Haacke's work on the Mercedes buses of the Municipal Transportation Authority, arguing that "political and ideological messages" do not have the same status as pure "advertising" messages and, like religious messages, are not legally permitted to be displayed on public transportation. (See *Skulptur Projekte*, eds. Klaus Bussman and Kasper König, Westfälisches Landesmuseum, Münster, 1987, pp. 113-16.)

7. For an example of a traditionalist argument against Haacke based on an ahistorical and essentialist conception of the artist and the functions of art, see Donald Kuspit, "Regressive Reproduction and Throwaway Conscience," *Artscribe*, Jan./Feb. 1987, pp. 26-31.

8. Horst Keller, letter to Hans Haacke justifying the censorship of *Manet-PROJEKT '74* from the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, as quoted in *Hans Haacke: Unfinished Business*, ed. Brian Wallis, New York, New Museum, 1987, p. 130.

9. *Hans Haacke: Unfinished Business*, p. 86.

10. Barbara Reise, "Which is in fact what happened" (Interview with Thomas Messer), *Studio International*, Vol. 181, No. 934, June 1971, pp. 34-37.

11. Adorno, "Commitment," pp. 177-78.

12. Ian Burn, "The Sixties: Crisis and Aftermath," *Art and Text*, Vol. 1, Autumn 1981, p. 52.

13. For an extensive discussion of the concept of "factography" in the context of post-Constructivist Soviet Productivism, see my essay "From Faktura to Factography," *October*, 30, Fall 1984, pp. 83-119 (reprinted in *October: The First Decade, 1976-1986*, Cambridge and London, MIT Press, 1987, pp. 76-113). In brief, "factography" can be defined as an art practice in which the facticity of given social, political and economical circumstances was seen as complex and important enough to merit artistic representation; it assumed that the new masses of industrial societies would warrant new participatory forms of art production that directly related to their daily experiences and thus transcended the traditional class limitations imposed by the esoteric standards of advanced bourgeois visual culture. While factography certainly constitutes the epitome of instrumentalized cultural practice, it is wrong to conflate its ventures with "mere" journalism—a criticism that has been leveled from the inception of factography against its major exponents, such as Sergei Tretjakov and John Heartfield, and that has also been consistently voiced as the cliché response to the work of Haacke. To what extent Haacke's work actually inscribes itself into the factographic tradition—of which he was apparently completely unaware—is revealed by Haacke in an interview in 1972: "I do not want to practice agitation which appeals or accuses. I am satisfied if I can provoke a consciousness of a general context and mutual dependence by facts alone. Facts are probably stronger and often less comfortable than even the best intended opinions. In the past one defined symbolic signs for the processes of reality and thus transposed them for the most part onto an ideal level. By contrast I would like to make the processes themselves appear and I see my work in explicit contradiction to 'abstract' art." And commenting on his Real Estate pieces, Haacke said: "Trusting that the facts would speak for themselves no validating commentary has accompanied the factual information [italics mine]." (From Karin Thomas, "Interview with Hans Haacke," *Kunst, Praxis Heute*, ed. Karin Thomas, Cologne, 1972, p. 102.) Haacke's position is all the more to be seen in that tradition since he defines himself—as did the factography artists—in explicit opposition to the legacy of modernist abstraction.

14. Gisela Dischner, Introduction to *Das Unvermögen der Realität*, Berlin, 1974, p. 8.

15. Jack Burnham, Interview with Hans Haacke, June 1966, *Tri-Quarterly*, Supplement 1, Spring 1967.

16. Hans Haacke, Untitled leaflet, Cologne, Jan. 1965.

17. K. Michael Hays, "Reproduction and Negation: The Cognitive Project of the Avant-Garde," *Revisions 2: Architecture, Production and Reproduction*, Princeton, Architectural Press, 1988, p. 17.

18. Edward Said, *The World, the Text and the Critic*, Cambridge, 1983, p. 45.

19. Jeanne Siegel, "Interview with Hans Haacke," *Arts Magazine*, May 1971 (Vol. 45, No. 7), p. 18 (reprinted in Jeanne Siegel, *Artwords*, Ann Arbor, 1985, pp. 213-14).

20. Mary Kelly/Laura Mulvey in "Conversation," *Afterimage*, March 1986, pp. 6-8.

21. Yve-Alain Bois, Douglas Crimp and Rosalind Krauss, "A Conversation with Hans Haacke," *October*, 30, Fall 1984, p. 47.

22. Burnham, Interview with Hans Haacke.

23. Ibid.

24. "A Conversation with Hans Haacke," *October*, p. 37.

25. Said, p. 171.

26. Walter Grasskamp, "Information Magic" (Interview with Hans Haacke on Mar. 30, 1981), *Hans Haacke*, exhibition catalogue, London, Tate Gallery, 1984, p. 97.

27. Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, New York, 1969, p. 256.

28. Jean Baudrillard, "The Precession of Simulacra," *Simulations*, New York, 1983, p. 11.

29. See Jean Baudrillard, *In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities*, New York, 1984, *passim*.

30. For an excellent discussion of this particular work, see Rosalyn Deutsche, "Property Values: Hans Haacke, Real Estate and the Museum," *Hans Haacke: Unfinished Business*, pp. 20-37.

"Hans Haacke: Unfinished Business" was organized by Brian Wallis for the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, where it opened (Dec. 12, '86-Feb. 15, '87). It traveled to the Mendel Art Gallery in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan; the La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art; and the Lowe Museum at the University of Miami, Coral Gables. It is currently at the Knight Gallery/Spirit Square Arts Center, Charlotte, N.C. (to Feb. 27, '88). In conjunction with the exhibition, a catalogue has been published by the New Museum and MIT (1986).

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