



WORKING CONDITIONS

The Writings of Hans Haacke

Hans Haacke

edited by Alexander Alberro

WRITINGART SERIES

WORKING CONDITIONS

THE MIT PRESS WRITING ART SERIES, EDITED BY ROGER CONOVER

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Working Conditions: The Writings of Hans Haacke, by Hans Haacke

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The Writings of Hans Haacke

Hans Haacke edited by Alexander Alberro

THE MIT PRESS Cambridge, Massachusetts London, England

WRITING **ART** SERIES

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This book was set in Minion Pro and Berthold Akzidenz Grotesk by the MIT Press. Printed and bound in the United States of America.

Endpapers:

MIT Sky Line, 1967

Down to Earth, Ensanche de Vallecas, Madrid, 2011

"I paid...", 2013, contribution to Gulf Labor's *52 Weeks* (Week 5, November 14, 2013)

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Haacke, Hans, 1936– author. | Alberro, Alexander, editor.

Title: Working conditions : the writings of Hans Haacke / Hans Haacke ;

Edited by Alexander Alberro.

Description: Cambridge, MA : The MIT Press, 2016. | Series: Writing art |

Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2016005143 | ISBN 9780262034838 (hardcover : alk. paper)

Subjects: LCSH: Art.

Classification: LCC N6888.H22 A35 2016 | DDC 700—dc23 LC record available at <http://lcn.loc.gov/2016005143>

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

CONTENTS

Preface vii

Introduction: Hans Haacke and the Rules of the Game by Alexander Alberro ix

WRITINGS

- 1 Untitled Statement, "We angrily resented . . .," 1960s 1
- 2 "Observing My Mirror Objects," 1962 2
- 3 Untitled Statement, "There is only a small difference . . .," 1963 4
- 4 Untitled Statement, ". . . make something which experiences . . .," 1965 5
- 5 Untitled Statement, "I have partially filled . . .," 1965 6
- 6 *Blue Sail*, 1965 7
- 7 Untitled Statement, "The label 'Kinetic Art' . . .," 1967 9
- 8 Untitled Statement, "For some years . . .," 1967 10
- 9 Untitled Statement, "In the mind of the public . . .," 1967 12
- 10 Untitled Talk at Annual Meeting of Intersocietal Color Council, New York, April 1968 14
- 11 *Nachrichten*, 1969–1970 26
- 12 *Environment Transplant*, 1969 27
- 13 Statement on refusing to participate in São Paulo Biennial, 1969 29
- 14 *MOMA-Poll*, 1970 31
- 15 Jeanne Siegel, "An Interview with Hans Haacke," 1971 33
- 16 "Correspondence: Guggenheim," 1971 41
- 17 *Shapolsky et al. Manhattan Real Estate Holdings, A Real-Time Social System, as of May 1, 1971*, 1971 45
- 18 "Provisional Remarks," 1971 48
- 19 *Rheinwasseraufbereitungsanlage* (Rhine Water Purification Plant), 1972 62
- 20 "Polls 1969–1973," 1973 63
- 21 *No-Man's Land*, 1973–1974 66
- 22 "All the 'Art' That's Fit to Show," 1974 67
- 23 *Manet-PROJEKT '74*, 1974 70
- 24 "The Constituency," 1976 75
- 25 "The Agent," 1977 81
- 26 "Working Conditions," 1979–1980 83
- 27 Untitled Statement, 1980 101

28	<i>Oelgemaelde: Hommage à Marcel Broodthaers</i> , 1982	102
29	"On Yves Klein. 20 years later," 1982	104
30	<i>Taking Stock (unfinished)</i> , 1983–1984	109
31	"Museums, Managers of Consciousness," 1983	111
32	<i>U.S. Isolation Box, Granada</i> , 1983, 1984	125
33	<i>MetroMobiltan</i> , 1985	127
34	<i>Les must de Rembrandt</i> , 1986	130
35	"And You Were Victorious After All: History of Project," 1988	132
36	"'La trahison des images': Answers to Two Questions from Jean Papineau," 1989	139
37	<i>Calligraphie</i> , 1989/2011	148
38	"German-German," 1990	150
39	"Caught between Revolver and Checkbook," 1993	152
40	"Gondola! Gondola!," 1993	159
41	"The Eagle from 1972 to the Present," 1994	172
42	"Free Exchange," 1994, with Pierre Bourdieu (excerpts)	176
43	Unpublished letter to Richard Koshalek, 1995	188
44	<i>ViewingMatters</i> , 1996	190
45	<i>DER BEVÖLKERUNG</i> (To the Population), 1999	192
46	<i>DER BEVÖLKERUNG</i> , 2001	195
47	<i>Mixed Messages</i> , 2001	205
48	"Public Sights," 2001	209
49	<i>Life Goes On</i> , 2005	214
50	Unpublished, "Celebration of the Peace Tower," 2006	215
51	<i>West Bank, 1994—27th Year of Occupation</i> , 2007–2009	218
52	"Lessons Learned," 2009	221
53	<i>The Invisible Hand of the Market</i> , 2009	236
54	"Interview with Cecilia Alemani," 2010	237
55	<i>Once Upon a Time</i> , 2010	243
56	"Hans Haacke Responds to Questions from <i>Texte zur Kunst</i> ," 2010	245
57	"Arrested Development," 2012	250
58	<i>Gift Horse</i> (Proposal), 2012	254
59	"Re: The Nod," 2014	256
	Notes	257
	Index	269

PREFACE

Since the 1960s, Hans Haacke's texts and artworks have helped redefine the way we view art and the roles that art plays in society. His work has consistently been interested in the interdependency of multiple elements. It has focused not only on the object but also on its interaction with its physical, biological, or social environment. Yet, Haacke has been consistent in producing art that is not confined to the esoteric spaces of the art world. As a result, his work has explored the social and psychological implications of visual materials and has exposed the operation of numerous institutions/spheres (both public and private alike). In its totality, Haacke's work has also traversed some of the crucial debates of its time. It is this important contribution that *Working Conditions: The Writings of Hans Haacke* seeks to convey.

The dramatic global expansion of the field of art in recent years makes a collection of Haacke's writings particularly timely. The expansion has not only led to larger audiences for art exhibitions and publications, but also to a growing recognition of the importance of art within a broad range of academic disciplines. At the same time, the transformation precipitated by that expansion—including the popularization, professionalization, corporatization, and globalization of art—has created a greater need for lucidly articulated, critical perspectives such as Haacke's. The artist has exhibited throughout the United States, Europe, Asia, and Latin America, and his essays have appeared in a broad array of publications. Haacke taught for many years at The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art in New York City and continues to lecture widely at universities and conferences in North America and Europe.

Many, though not all, of the texts and illustrations in this volume have been published in the past. Thanks go to the previous publishers of these materials. Connor Augustine and Nicholas Morgan's clerical and research assistance helped make the volume what it is today. Sincere thanks are also due to Roger Conover at the MIT Press for recognizing the importance of Haacke's work and helping to make this book possible. Finally, Linda Haacke's support of her longtime partner's writings has been immeasurable. This volume is dedicated to her.

0.1 Hans Haacke, *Photographic Notes, Documenta II, 1959, 1959*

INTRODUCTION

Hans Haacke and the Rules of the Game

Alexander Alberro

Hans Haacke studied art in the second half of the 1950s at the Art Academy [Staatliche Werkakademie] in Kassel, Germany. The institution had been revived in the tradition of the Bauhaus by two figures, landscape architect Hermann Mattern and artist and designer Arnold Bode, in 1947. The abstract painter Fritz Winter, a former Bauhaus student, joined the faculty ten years later. Mattern and Bode would also go on to found the *Documenta* exhibition of modern and contemporary art that continues to take place every four or five years in Kassel. The first installment of this event in 1955 sought to construct a bridge to modern art following the destruction of culture by the Nazis a couple of decades earlier.



As a student in the Academy, Haacke was hired to assist with *Documenta II* in 1959, working as a guard, and an art mover, and even a docent leading tours through the galleries. The show served several functions. It was at once a reintroduction to the public of the modern art that had been banned as “degenerate” by the Nazis, an attempt to rebuild the social fabric and urban infrastructure of the city of Kassel that had been largely destroyed during World War II, a tool in the Cold War designed to offset the persuasiveness of communism in Europe, and an effort to support the local tourism industry.

Haacke cites the experience of working at *Documenta II* as fundamental to his understanding of the operative rules by which the art world functions. As he writes in the retrospective text “Lessons Learned,” 2009, featured in this volume: “As I witnessed this particular moment of stage management, I overheard many conversations among art dealers, collectors, and members of the press, as well as with the organizers of the exhibition—or behind their backs. Eventually, it began to dawn on me that *Documenta*, and in fact all exhibitions, by design or default, promote the ranking of artists and art movements as much as the prices for which their works are traded.”¹ Haacke also caught a glimpse of other factors at play in determining the reception of artworks and by extension their market, including “how the works are presented, the attention they receive in the press, the business acumen of dealers and art advisers, and the critical and art historical discourse surrounding them.”² He came to realize that only a flawed understanding of the dynamics of the art world could be achieved if one did not take these aspects into consideration. Yet it also became evident that the opposite was the case as well: “to focus exclusively on the commodity status of artworks or on an artist’s celebrity rating among collectors, be that critically or in awe, would lead to an equally deficient understanding.” The internship at *Documenta II* was thus a crucial part of Haacke’s art education. The insights it provided about the rules of the game in the art world left him with the commitment to never be solely dependent on the sale of his works to cover his basic expenses.³

Haacke’s writings begin with an angry rejection of “the sentimental, pessimistic humanism” that was predominant in Western art in the 1950s “when misery was fashionable.”⁴ They quickly go on to chart the tension between inertness and fluidity or indeterminacy that characterizes much of his early work. “Painters and sculptors of static works are anxious to prevent their works from

being influenced by time and environmental conditions,” he writes.⁵ Their intention “is to make something that alters as little as possible.”⁶ For their part, spectators expect to encounter the artwork exactly “as it appeared immediately after its execution.”⁷ Insofar as time is permitted to enter into the order of the work, it is “only in the experience of the viewer.”⁸ Seeking from very early on to break with this “static” model of art practice, Haacke set out to make “dynamic,” “constantly changing” work, art that is “always on the move, never permitting a status quo.”⁹ This would be a type of production in which the components “*physically* communicate with each other,” and the composition as a whole *physically* interrelates with its surroundings.¹⁰ “Changes are desired and are part of the program,” he explained about his art in 1967, “they are not due to the shifting experience of the viewer. The changes actually take place.”¹¹ Haacke’s early work thus came to have an operative logic of its own. But rather than fully autonomous, that logic was modified by the context in which the art was installed. Variations in the surrounding environment, such as temperature, humidity, air pressure, air currents, or illumination, affected the constitution of the artworks. Accordingly, Haacke merged his early work with its physical context to form complex systems of interdependent elements or processes. These systems, which included transfers of energy, matter, or information, operated for the most part independently of the viewer. Not entirely unlike living organisms, they took on lives of their own, living “in time.”¹² The artworks functioned as “visual analogues” for “the world as a dynamic system.”¹³

Movement

Haacke’s paintings of the late 1950s are “reminiscent of Abstract Expressionist and Tachist modes.”¹⁴ They exhibit traces of movement and resemble “withering tissue, old walls, and the effects of long-time exposure to weathering.”¹⁵ While the artist’s goal in producing these works, in keeping with his belief in the essentially dynamic character of the world, was to register movement, it quickly became evident that neither the canvas nor the pigment or anything else he mixed into the paint could “render movement adequately.” At best, his efforts to produce dynamic compositions culminated in the display of “past movement,” traces of “the more or less vigorous marks of the tools with which [he] treated the canvas.”¹⁶

Acknowledging this impasse, during the last year of his studies in Kassel he began to produce paintings that “teased the retina and thus appeared to vibrate.”¹⁷

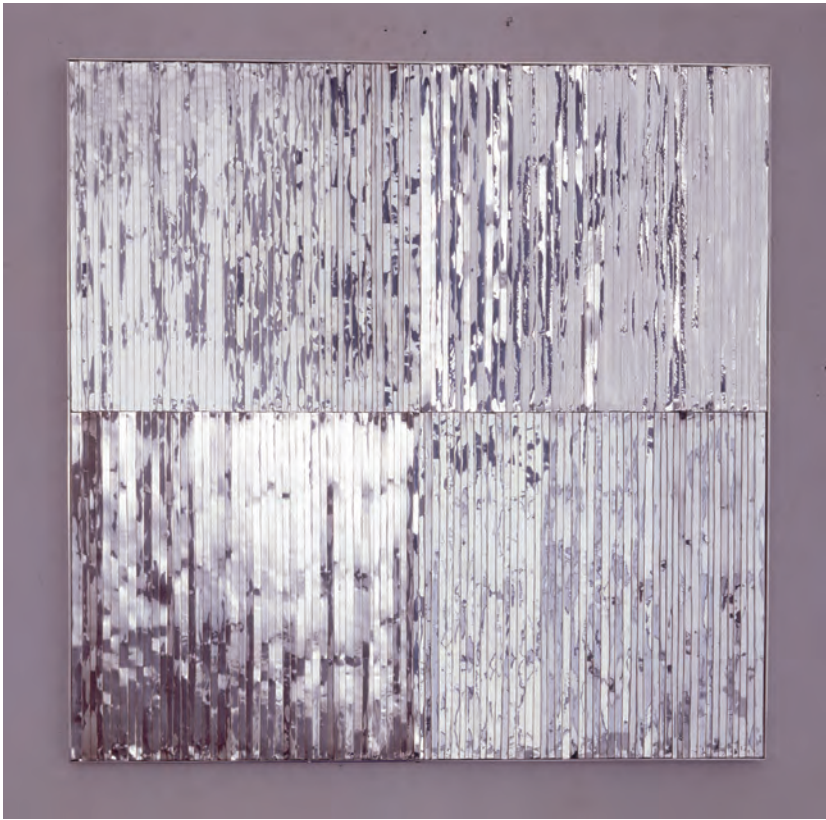
The pictures give the spectator the illusion that the particles of the painting move forward and backward, shift sideways, and sometimes spin, and these effects are only accentuated as the spectator changes position in front of the work. Needless to say, the movements are not real since the canvas and all the forms on it are purely static. But the technique’s exploitation of “the physiological deficiencies of the human eye for the creation of perceptual movements” produces the impression that the canvas is in fact vibrating before the spectator.¹⁸

By 1961, however, Haacke had exhausted the possibilities of this type of painting and become concerned about the false impression the canvases produce. This led first to experiments with reflective objects (they can no longer properly be referred to as paintings) made out of materials such as aluminum foil, stainless steel, and plastics. Haacke had begun to explore these materials after his student years in Germany and before he left Paris for the United States in 1961. At first, the reflecting works took the form of fairly flat panels suspended on a wall. But they soon became three-dimensional reliefs that protruded about ten inches into the room, and eventually entirely freestanding sculptures in the round. Insofar as the reflections captured by these objects shift and move according to the varying angles in which light falls upon them and the spectator sees them, the reflecting objects incorporate their environment as an integral but unstable element. Some of the mirror-objects, especially the ones comprised of two half-cylinders with each half reflecting the other, also formulate what Haacke referred to as “feedback” loops.¹⁹ But the reflective objects themselves remain utterly static entities. Haacke considered this lack of movement to be a consequential limit, and began to search for a way to compose actual motion.

In 1963, Haacke began to produce clear plastic containers into which he poured quantities of distilled water. Some of these relatively small units use the principle of the hourglass. Water drips through holes, runs down transparent panes in rivulets, or interacts with liquids of different density. Others were designed on the principle of the water level, letting air-bubbles wander back and forth, break up, and reunite. There were also sealed modules such as *Wave*, 1965, a long plastic container of water suspended from the ceiling. The viewer is invited to set the object in motion. As it sways back and forth like a pendulum, the



0.2 Hans Haacke, *Ce n'est pas la voie lactée*
(This Is Not the Milky Way), 1960



0.3 **Hans Haacke, A7-61, 1961**

enclosed water performs wave configurations.²⁰ The spectator, who variously pushes, turns, or pumps air into these containers, generates the energy needed for the hydraulic action. His or her physical participation is thus crucial in animating the artworks. The way she handles the pieces has a direct effect on the behavior of the liquids inside.²¹ With this development, Haacke's art finally surpassed the realm of illusion and simulation of motion in favor of phenomena that occur in time. The movement is "real."²²

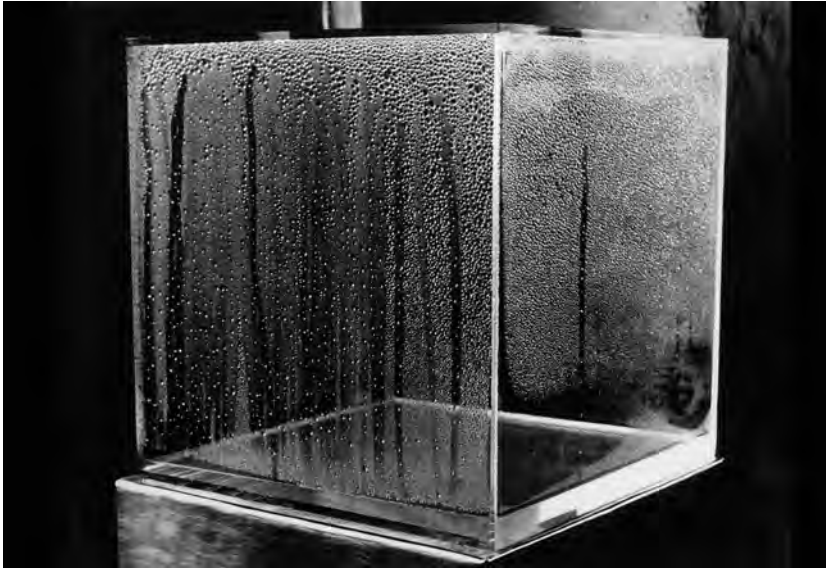


0.4 Hans Haacke, *Wave*, 1965

Haacke also realized that the mobilization of physical motion in sculpture has several other consequences for the production of art. The need to follow a preestablished set of physical laws that govern motion lessens the artist's control over his or her work and allows for a less "authoritarian" mode of production. The natural laws become the very thing out of which the work is made. For Haacke, this phenomenon led straight to a reflection on the logic of the "readymade": "Marcel Duchamp coined the term ['readymade'] in 1913 when he mounted an ordinary bicycle wheel, with its fork upside down, on an equally ordinary kitchen stool. The term was aimed at the unaltered acceptance of a prefabricated, generally available—readymade—object and its designation as a work of art. Duchamp's *Bicycle Wheel* [1913] was the first example of such a concept in history. It was also the first kinetic sculpture. I don't know if he intended his term to also cover the readymade-ness of the laws of rotary motion, which were obviously part of his piece."²³ As with the readymade, movement in art had a long history in the twentieth century. But it had attained an increased relevance in the years following the *Le mouvement* show in 1955 at the Galerie Denise René in Paris. In particular, the works of the artists allied with the *Nouvelle Tendance* in the early

1960s, including the Zero group of Düsseldorf, greatly interested Haacke, as did “the optical and kinetic explorations and the manifestos of the [Paris-based] *Groupe de recherche d’art visuel*,” also known as GRAV.²⁴ The latter had developed an artistic practice that combined the development of nonstatic and participatory works of art with a steady articulation of goals through the publication of texts. This phenomenon, as well as GRAV’s various attempts to involve the spectator in the realization of the art on display, would have a long-lasting impact on Haacke. Indeed, the role of the spectator was already a crucial element in the artist’s reflective works of the early 1960s, and this only increased with the plastic containers. As he put it in a passage that could have come straight out of one GRAV’s texts: “The active participation of the viewer . . . might help to undermine the false holiness that has surrounded art objects and to replace the fake mysticism with something resembling a partnership between the work and its supplier of energy. Such a relationship engages the viewer in a multi-sensory way, not only involving his eye, but also his touch, hearing, and sense of rhythm.”²⁵

But not all of the art that Haacke produced in the mid-1960s is dependent on the spectator. A case in point is *Condensation Cube*, 1963–1965, which follows its own pattern of behavior and functions even when there is no spectator present. The sealed plastic cube with a small pool of water at the bottom carries out a cycle of evaporation and condensation, with the evaporated droplets within succumbing to gravity and falling back into the pool. This is a physical process that evolves on its own, but in terms that respond to the surrounding environment. The intensity and angle of the light entering the transparent box, and the temperature and air currents surrounding it, all determine how fast the enclosed liquid will evaporate and condense. Sometimes the veil of droplets on the container’s inside walls forms so slowly that it takes several days for the individual beads to swell to a size that will make them run down the panes, leaving a trail behind them. At other times, the cycle might evolve in only a few hours. Then there is the inherent unevenness of the entire process that leads some condensation droplets to be heavier than others and therefore fall earlier: “The dew point is not a fixed figure on the temperature scale, but is itself dependent on a delicate constellation of ever-changing factors.”²⁶ In this sense, *Condensation Cube* functions as “an open system . . . responsive to changes in its environment.”²⁷ Yet, neither the visual considerations of spectators nor their physical energy are



0.5 Hans Haacke, *Condensation Cube*, 1963–1965

necessary for the realization of the piece. Rather, the spectators are cast in the role of “witnesses” to a real-time cyclical process that proceeds without their direct involvement.²⁸

Spectators in the presence of *Condensation Cube* behold a natural phenomenon that proceeds according to its own terms. Their engagement is limited to using the composition as a screen for their own culturally biased projections.²⁹ Art has traditionally operated in this manner. The conventional art object has no life of its own other than that which the spectators project onto it. Rather than being inert, however, *Condensation Cube* functions as a thing with a life of its own, “like a living organism reacting in a flexible manner to its environment.”³⁰ In this respect, the piece at once adopts and goes beyond the premise of readymade discussed earlier. The physical system of condensation that operates according to its own laws is given a new meaning when placed in the context of art. But unlike the operation of Duchamp’s readymade, in which the object loses its previous sense and function when it is cast as an artwork, Haacke’s

Condensation Cube maintains its nature as an ongoing real-time process and signifies art at the same time.³¹

Process

Early in his experiments with the dynamics of liquids, Haacke “realized that the flow of gasses is not unlike liquid flow; in other words, aerodynamics and hydrodynamics are related.”³² This soon led him to investigate the manipulation of liquids and of air motion. Both require the harnessing of movement. To design the aerodynamic works, he used lightweight fabrics and bodies such as balloons. This culminated in pieces such as *White Waving Line*, 1967, and *Sphere in Oblique Air Jet*, 1964–1967, in which the flimsy materials are caught in air streams. “The overriding requirement,” explains Haacke about the operation of such works, “is that I allow the process to have its way.”³³ In this respect, the decisions that go into the production of the aerodynamic works “are not stylistic (inert, hard edge, soft edge, antiform, etc.) but primarily functional. I am not aiming for a particular look, so visual terms do not apply.”³⁴

Floating sculptures are extremely sensitive, susceptible to the slightest changes in their environment. If the source of air motion, such as an electric fan, does not supply a consistently even flow of air and is not at all times directed into exactly the same path, the suspended body or fabric immediately reacts and, depending on its aerodynamic stability, regains a new equilibrium. Drafts in the space in which the aerodynamic sculpture is installed can also affect its operative system. The behavior of air-buoyant objects resembles that of a thermostatically controlled system. In their attempt to adjust to prevailing environmental conditions, they are caught in an interminable state of oscillation alternately overshooting and aiming too low. Similar to the behavior of living organisms, floating objects crash and may not recover if conditions change abruptly and to an excessive degree.

Haacke’s refrigerated works of roughly the same period also respond to meteorological changes in the environment. Yet, these pieces function in a dramatically opposite manner than works such as *Condensation Cube*. With the latter, for the phenomenon of condensation to occur the external temperature has to be cooler than that in the box. By contrast, a refrigerated piece such as *Ice Stick*,



0.6 Hans Haacke, *Flight*, 1967



0.7 Hans Haacke, *Ice Stick*, 1966

1966, in which environmental moisture freezes on the exposed metal coil, requires that the external temperature be warmer than the temperature on the inside.³⁵ On cool and humid days, the exposed freezing coils attract more environmental moisture and build up layers of ice more rapidly. Whereas new frost is dry and snowy, a sudden but brief rise in temperature may slightly melt the top layer of ice, leaving its surface with a hard, glassy look. Since meteorological changes are largely unpredictable, the ultimate texture and thickness of the ice cannot be foreseen. Randomness is thus built into the system and only statistical predictions can be made.

The refrigerated works transform water into a solid state. Haacke's steam-generating pieces such as *Steam*, 1967, put the opposite process in place: water is turned into its gaseous state. Water vapor takes on random shapes and, merging with the environment, soon becomes invisible. It also increases the moisture content of the air. Accordingly, works such as *Steam* function as humidifying devices. Haacke discovered that if one of these devices is located in the same place as a dehumidifying device such as a refrigerated work, the two complement each other, producing a balanced humidity. A physical exchange takes place, with one system feeding on the other. Obviously the radius of action of the symbiotic pair goes far beyond the space it materially occupies. The question of how large either one of the systems is, therefore, cannot be answered in terms of length, width, and height. The two seem to merge with their environment.

The artworks responding to and influencing meteorological conditions have a number of attributes in common. For one thing, their visual appearance is very difficult to control, and can only be predicted statistically. For another thing, the transformations these pieces undergo are essentially adjustments for the preservation of an equilibrium. Moreover, in all cases a transfer of energy takes place. Then, too, the rate at which the changes occur in these pieces is so slow that one can recognize growth and decline only after an extensive period of time. Haacke recognized that all of these characteristics are attributes of growth and entropy or death, and can be found not only in physical but also in biological systems.

This discovery led the artist to experiments with living organisms such as plants and animals. The first of these was made in 1967 when Haacke let grass sprout in an earth-filled tray on top of an acrylic cube, thus fusing a biological

process with a physical system that interacts with its environment. He soon abandoned the acrylic cube upon which the tray of earth rested, eliminating an element that could be interpreted as a pedestal for the grass, and let the seeds germinate in soil simply spread on the floor. For the *Earth Art* exhibition at Cornell University's Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art in 1969, Haacke created a cone of soil and spiked it with grass seeds. Since the room in which the mound was made had windows on two sides, the seeds sprouted during the show. He titled the piece *Grass Grows*, 1969. The environment participated in yet another way in *Bowery Seeds*, 1970. The artist left a mound of soil on the roof of the building in which he had a small studio in New York's Lower East Side. Soon enough, airborne seeds and spores buried in the soil and grew, giving the artwork a structured and yet highly indeterminate dimension at the same time.



0.8 Hans Haacke, *Grass Grows*, 1967–1969

There is no need for the presence of a spectator for these biological and physical processes to take their course. Neither the spectator's tangible energy nor his or her mental projection (i.e., conceiving of the piece as an artwork) is required. The systems function according to their own laws. In some cases, such as *Photo-Electric Viewer-Programmed Coordinate System*, 1968, the spectator becomes another material element in that process. A photoelectric cell is a sensory device, registering and processing information from its environment. As its title indicates, *Photo-Electric Viewer-Programmed Coordinate System* changes its state only in the presence of a spectator; it responds directly to the position of that spectator in the light-sensitized room. The spectator's body thus becomes an integral element of the work. Yet, the system's program is not affected by the spectator's knowledge, past experience, emotions, or perceptual psychology. It is fully independent of the spectator's mental participation.

Similar pieces with programs that operate without any contribution from the spectator include the Teletype machines that Haacke began to exhibit in 1969. The

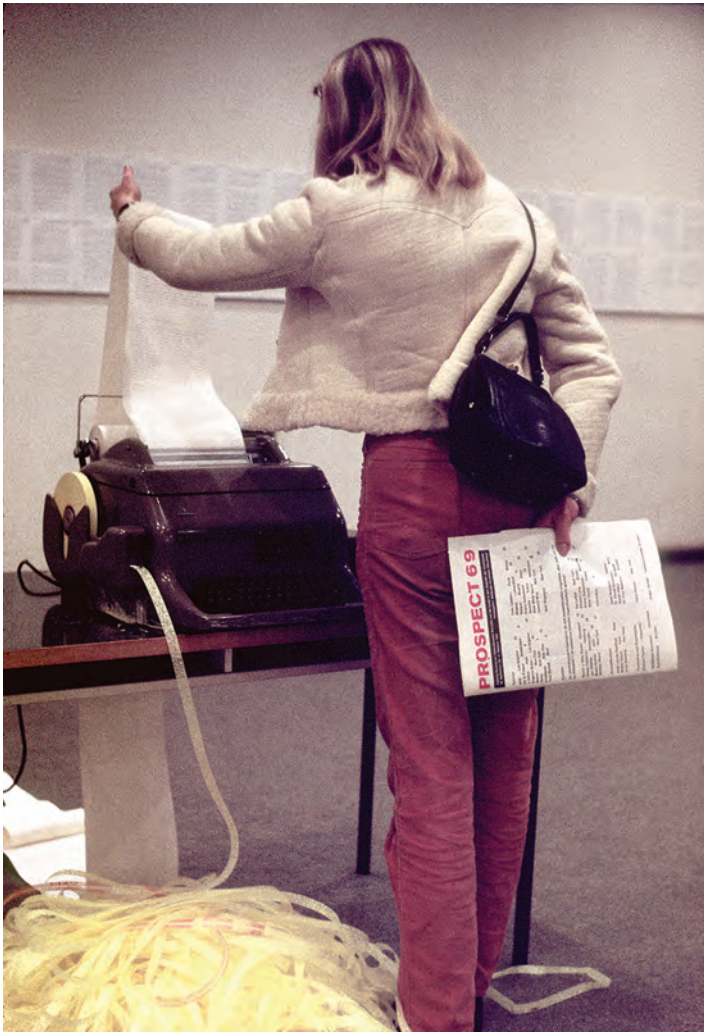


0.9 Hans Haacke, *Photo-Electric Viewer-Controlled Coordinate System*, 1966–1968

devices used in artworks such as *News*, 1969, printed information transmitted by news wire services. For their part, the spectators witnessed the information transmittal process, reading the news in real time as it came over the electronic wire service. The rolls of printed material were subsequently displayed in the gallery for further perusal the day after the transmission. Following that, at least in the first couple of times *News* and its variants were exhibited, the rolls of information were labeled, dated, and stored in transparent tubular containers. However, in subsequent manifestations of this piece, the printouts were left to accumulate on the floor and were not posted or preserved beyond the time of the exhibition.³⁶

This emphasis on real time also characterized the ill-fated proposal Haacke made to Maurice Tuchman's Art and Technology program at the Los Angeles County Museum in 1969. The artist suggested installing equipment for visual projection on a slowly turning turntable in the center of a large cylindrically shaped room. Loudspeakers situated behind the room's curved walls emitted sound that followed the slow sweep of projected images. The latter were transmitted to the projector live from a recording device mounted on a vehicle navigating through Los Angeles. Like the projection equipment in the gallery, the recording machine on the vehicle was fixed onto a slowly spinning turntable. It continuously scanned the streets of the city. Both visual and aural material were generated from the moving vehicle and transmitted live. Since the spectators in the gallery space were situated between the projector in the center and the surrounding walls, the light sent forth by the machine would occasionally cast their shadows. In this way, the projector fused the spectator with the data transmitted from the vehicle.³⁷

As the artworks just described make clear, much of Haacke's production in the mid-to-late 1960s was concerned with organizational patterns. It performed interdependent physical or biological processes, adapted to environmental changes, influenced its environment, and recycled and transferred energy, material, and information. Given that Haacke's new artworks could no longer properly be described as objects, critic Jack Burnham, one of the artist's early supporters, described them as "systems," adopting a term widely used in the natural and social sciences and in various complex technologies. Burnham also recommended to Haacke the work of biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy, one of the



0.10 Hans Haacke, *Nachrichten* (News), 1969

founders of general systems theory. Haacke soon realized that systems theory, and the attention that it pays to the interaction and interdependence of all elements that make up an organism, did indeed help to clarify his recent experiments, and when Bertalanffy's *General Systems Theory* was published in 1969, he studied the book carefully. He also began to make direct correlations between his earlier physical and biological systems, and the social sphere. As he writes in "Provisional Remarks," 1971, "systems analysts seem to be convinced that on a conceptual level, physical and biological phenomena have their equivalents in the social and behavioral sphere, that the same vocabulary applies, and that conditions in any one of these areas can be described by the same or related equations. In other words, these are not correspondences due to an imaginary language, but based on specifiable isomorphisms."³⁸ But evidently he was also aware that "any work done with and in a given social situation cannot remain detached from its cultural and ideological context."³⁹ Whereas a biological system with animals, such as *Chickens Hatching*, 1969, or a physical system with water, such as *Condensation Cube*, can remain separate from its cultural and ideological context, in the case of a social system, "the injection of any new element . . . will have consequences, no matter how small they may be. Often the repercussions cannot be predicted or they take a course contrary to what was expected. Laboratory conditions are practically nonexistent. . . . [O]ne has to weigh carefully the prospective outcome of undertakings in the social field. One's responsibilities increase."⁴⁰

Social Systems

By the 1970s, Haacke's art primarily emphasized real-time social systems. For Haacke, this was part of the logical development of his own trajectory: "Having stepped from the perceptually oriented and culturally controlled imagery of the visual arts to the presentation or interference in physical and/or biological systems in real time, the need arose to complete the areas of my activities with work also in the socio-political field, which affects our lives at least as much as the physical and biological determinants of our bodies and our environment."⁴¹ Yet, social systems are considerably different from biological or physical ones. Most importantly, they fundamentally require human participants, without whom there is no social set. A case in point is the *MOMA-Poll* of 1970, exhibited in the *Information* show at New York's Museum of Modern Art that year. To get a sense



0.11 Hans Haacke, *Chickens Hatching*, 1969

of the political opinions of the public that visited this museum, Haacke distributed paper ballots color-coded according to the type of entrance fee paid and installed two transparent Plexiglas ballot boxes, each equipped with automatic counting devices, into which visitors were invited to drop the ballots indicating their yes or no response to the following question: “Would the fact that Governor Rockefeller has not denounced President Nixon’s Indochina policy be a reason for you not to vote for him in November?” The real-time social system that comprised the work thereby highlighted the links between the museum, the Rockefeller family, the foreign policy of President Richard Nixon, and the Indochina war. But it also included the opinions of different types of museum visitors who felt they had a stake in this issue, as well as Haacke’s own altercations with the museum in the previous year as a member of the Art Workers’ Coalition. The result of the poll was roughly two to one against Rockefeller/Nixon and the war.

The “rigging” double agents of social fields became increasingly attractive to Haacke in the early 1970s.⁴² He realized that real-time social systems that produce topical information have the potential to be very powerful. They can focus attention on controversial issues that affect the social fabric and bring about social change. This led him to describe real-time social systems as “double agents,” at once running under the heading of “art” and operating as generators of manifest sociological data.⁴³ In this connection it is revealing to look briefly at Haacke’s *Gallery-Goers’ Birthplace and Residence Profile*, 1969, the first of many surveys of exhibition audiences that he has conducted over the years. *Gallery-Goers’ Birthplace and Residence Profile* was made as part of a show at New York’s Howard Wise Gallery, which was located on 57th Street in midtown Manhattan. The artist asked the visitors to the exhibition to mark, with different colored pins, their birthplace and current residence on large maps. Following the run of the show, Haacke traveled to all of the spots on the Manhattan map where visitors indicated they resided and photographed a typical building at that location. He planned to exhibit enlarged prints (5 × 7 inches) of the resulting 730 photographs according to a geographical score at the Guggenheim Museum where he was slated to have a one-person show in April 1971. All of the dwellings located to the east of Fifth Avenue were to go upward on the wall from a horizontal center line more or less at eye level, and those to the west downward toward the floor. The respective distance from Fifth Avenue was to determine the sequence of pictures east and west. Haacke calculated that the Fifth Avenue spine would take up approximately thirty-six yards of wall space.⁴⁴

The cumulative polling tallies that comprised the *Gallery-Goers’ Birthplace and Residence Profile* composition layed bare the demographics of the New York art world at the end of the 1960s. For instance, the poll revealed that the vast majority of the public for commercial art galleries lived in easily identifiable and restricted parts of the city. The main concentrations were on the Upper West Side (Central Park and adjoining blocks, and West End Avenue and its vicinity), the Upper East Side, and the Madison–Park Avenue areas. There were also large numbers of people who lived below 23rd Street on the east and west sides of the city, with clusters on the Lower East Side and the SoHo loft district. The photographs Haacke took captured the economic and social fabric of the neighborhoods in which gallery goers dwelled. They also provided glimpses of the



0.12 Hans Haacke, *Gallery-Goers' Birthplace and Residence Profile*, 1969

gentrification process. But the analysis was left for the spectator to make—Haacke merely imaged information generated by the *Gallery-Goers' Birthplace and Residence Profile*. As he notes in a 1971 interview with art critic Jeanne Siegel, “Naturally the Lower East Side pins were not put there by Puerto Ricans. Puerto Ricans and blacks (Harlem is practically not represented) do not take part in an art scene that is obviously dominated by the middle and upper income strata of society or their drop-out children. I leave it up to you as far as how you evaluate this situation. You continue the work by drawing your own conclusions from the information presented.”⁴⁵

Haacke planned to create another poll with a multiple-choice questionnaire and ten queries on topical socio-political issues at the Guggenheim Museum exhibition. Two sets of questions were to be asked. One pertained to demographic information about the visitor, such as age, sex, residence, educational background, and income bracket, and the other solicited opinions on a variety of social issues such as women's liberation, the legalization of marijuana, and school integration. The questions were all to be answered anonymously, and the responses tabulated and posted daily so that they were accessible to the spectators. As such, the visitors to the exhibition created “a collective self-portrait in a participatory and self-reflective process.”⁴⁶ The poll invited them “to consider how much they have in common and how they differ from each other, and to speculate about how, collectively, their demographic composition and opinions compare with people who do not visit art galleries and museums exhibiting contemporary art.”⁴⁷ But as is well known, the one-person show at the Guggenheim Museum did not materialize. Thomas Messer, the director of the museum, objected to the poll, as well as to two other works the artist prepared for the exhibition, and the entire event was canceled a month before the opening.

Apart from the visitor's poll, the other two works to which Messer objected were presentations of large Manhattan real estate holdings. Both *Sol Goldman and Alex DiLorenzo Manhattan Real Estate Holdings, a Real-Time Social System, as of May 1, 1971*, 1971, and *Shapolsky et al. Manhattan Real Estate Holdings, A Real-Time Social System, as of May 1, 1971*, also of 1971, included photographs, maps, charts, and data that Haacke had culled from public records stored in the New York County Clerk's office.⁴⁸ The latter featured 142 gelatin silver prints of building facades and empty lots, together with typewritten information on the

properties, two excerpts of a map of Manhattan (the Lower East Side and Harlem) with properties marked, and six charts outlining business relations within a real estate group headed by Harry Shapolsky. Haacke's painstaking research found that about seventy different shell corporations, which frequently bought, sold, and mortgaged real estate within the group, nominally owned the Shapolsky group. The boards included at least one member of the Shapolsky family, or someone with close ties to the family. The properties were located predominantly on the Lower East Side and in Harlem—in 1971 both slum areas of New York City—where they constituted the largest concentration of real estate under the control of a single group. What amounted to self-dealing had real economic advantages (mortgage payments were tax-deductible) and obscured the actual ownership of the properties. As the memo from Haacke to “all interested parties” dated April 3 and included in this volume asserts, when Messer demanded that he pull the three pieces from the show, the artist offered to modify two of the works in ways that addressed the director's concerns but would not affect the artworks' integrity.⁴⁹ But it was to no avail. Messer called off the show and fired the curator Edward Fry.

Museums and Ideology

Haacke found the phenomenon of being censored for presenting publicly available information that is already at the disposal of any citizen at once deplorable and highly revealing. Museums, as “institutions where attitudes, beliefs and values governing our social relations are shaped and promoted,” present themselves as sites where freedom of expression reigns, where high culture is cultivated and preserved.⁵⁰ Incidents of censorship expose the limits to that freedom, reveal the falsity of its ideals in practice, and make the need for a resolution of that contradiction plain. Indeed one of the operative principles in much of Haacke's work from the 1970s to the present has been that if one probes and critically assesses the soundness of the claims advanced (often tacitly) by art museums and similar institutions, then one will be in a better position to instantiate a nonrepressive art context. This gesture presumes that art exists not in static objects, but in a real-time critical exchange and open debate within the art world. The gesture is also dialectical. “The problem,” Haacke notes, “is not only to say something, to take a position, but also to create a productive provocation” that



216 E 5 St.
Block 385, Lot 11
5 story walk-up old law tenement
Owned by Hargreave Realty Inc., 608 E 11 St., NYC
Contracts signed by Harry J. Shapolsky, President ('65)
Martin Shapolsky, President ('64)
Principal Harry J. Shapolsky (according to Real Estate
Directory of Manhattan)
Acquired 8-21-1965 from John the Baptist Foundation,
c/o The Bank of New York, 45 Wall St., NYC,
for \$237,000.- (also 7 other bldgs.)
\$150,000.- mortgage at 6% interest, 8-19-1965, due
8-19-1970, held by The Ministers and Missionaries
Benefit Board of the American Baptist Convention,
475 Riverside Drive, NYC (also on 7 other bldgs.)
Assessed land value \$25,000.-, total \$75,000.- (includ-
ing 212 and 216 E 5 St.) (1971)

216 E 5 St.
Block 385, Lot 11
5 story walk-up old law tenement
Owned by Hargreave Realty Inc., 608 E 11 St., NYC
Contracts signed by Harry J. Shapolsky, President ('65)
Martin Shapolsky, President ('64)
Principal Harry J. Shapolsky (according to Real Estate
Directory of Manhattan)
Acquired 8-21-1965 from John the Baptist Foundation,
c/o The Bank of New York, 45 Wall St., NYC
for \$237,000.- (also 7 other bldgs.)
\$150,000.- mortgage at 6% interest, 8-19-1965, due
8-19-1970, held by The Ministers and Missionaries
Benefit Board of the American Baptist Convention,
475 Riverside Drive, NYC (also on 7 other bldgs.)
Assessed land value \$25,000.-, total \$75,000.- (includ-
ing 212-14 E 5 St.) (1971)

228 E 5 St.
Block 385, Lot 19
24 x 105' 5 story walk-up old law tenement
Owned by Hargreave Realty Inc., 608 E 11 St., NYC
Contracts signed by Harry J. Shapolsky, President ('65)
Martin Shapolsky, President ('64)
Acquired from John the Baptist Foundation
c/o The Bank of New York, 45 Wall St., NYC
for \$237,000.- (also 5 other properties), 8-21-1965
\$150,000.- mortgage (also on 5 other properties) at 6%
interest as of 8-19-1965 due 8-19-1970
held by The Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board of
The American Baptist Convention, 475 Riverside Dr. NYC
Assessed land value \$8,000.- total \$26,000.- (1971)

216 E 5 St.
Block 385, Lot 11
22 x 105' 5 story walk-up old law tenement
Owned by Hargreave Realty Inc., 608 E 11 St., NYC
Contracts signed by Harry J. Shapolsky, President ('65)
Martin Shapolsky, President ('64)
Acquired from John the Baptist Foundation
c/o The Bank of New York, 45 Wall St., NYC
for \$237,000.- (also 5 other properties), 8-21-1965
\$150,000.- mortgage (also on 5 other properties) at 6%
interest as of 8-19-1965 due 8-19-1970
held by The Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board of
The American Baptist Convention, 475 Riverside Dr. NYC
Assessed land value \$8,000.- total \$26,000.- (1971)

0.13 Hans Haacke, Shapolsky et al. Manhattan Real Estate Holdings, A Real-Time Social System, as of May 1, 1971, 1971

can intervene critically in the standing order of things and produce actual change in the relations of power.⁵¹ His practice thus holds out for the ideal institution of art: it holds onto the promise of the museum as a fundamental site of the democratic public sphere, and does not rest on its present limits as if they expose the entire truth.

By the early 1970s, Haacke was producing a critical work that questioned the underlying premises of the art system and many of its manifestations. The relationship between art and power had become quite clear to him: "By no means is the art quality of a product inherent in its substance. The art certificate is conferred upon it by the culturally powerful social set in which it is to be considered art, and it is only valid there and then."⁵² The museum in particular became one of his central focuses in these years. As he writes in "All the 'Art' That's Fit to Show," 1974: "By the very structure of its existence," the museum "is a political institution."⁵³ Its political power is located in its ability to determine that certain objects are culturally significant. As such, the individuals who administer museums and comparable art institutions wield a considerable amount of power. Yet, the guidelines by which these individuals operate are rarely discussed, or at least they were not taken up until Haacke began to question them in the 1970s. He observes that, "in principle, the decisions of museum officials . . . follow the boundaries set by their employers. These boundaries need not be expressly stated in order to be operative. Frequently, museum officials have internalized the thinking of their superiors to such a degree that it becomes natural for them to make the 'right' decision, and a congenial atmosphere reigns between employee and employer."⁵⁴ The dynamic is ideological and "most effective when it is not experienced as such."⁵⁵ In order to begin to understand "the forces that elevate certain products to the level of 'works of art' it is helpful—among other investigations—to look into the economic and political underpinnings of the institutions, individuals, and groups who share in the control of cultural power."⁵⁶ Hence, Haacke set out to develop an artistic practice that would perform this task.

In the mid-1970s, Haacke's writings began to speak about the relationship of the production, exhibition, and distribution (including consumption) of art to what writer Hans Magnus Enzensburger termed "the consciousness industry." As Haacke observes in "The Agent," 1977, "Works of art, like other products of the consciousness industry, are potentially capable of shaping their consumers' view

of the world and of themselves and may lead them to act upon that understanding.”⁵⁷ He continues: “Since commercial galleries influence the exhibition programs of museums and comparable institutions—with large audiences from the middle and upper-middle classes, which predominate in contemporary opinion and decision-making—it is not negligible which ideologies and emotions are traded in these establishments. Not surprisingly, institutions and galleries are often resistant to products that question generally held opinions and tastes, particularly if the positions they themselves hold are at stake.”⁵⁸ Yet, although critical artworks are rarely given prominence, they are the ones that provide the institution of art with “the necessary dynamics.”⁵⁹ Haacke focuses on this contradiction, seeing it as opening an enormous range of possibilities: “[T]he peculiar dialectics of consciousness—bolstered by their potential for financial speculation, and given the relative lack of uniformity of interests within the culture industry and among its consumers—nevertheless promotes the surfacing of such critical works, at least in liberal societies. With this modicum of openness, wherever suitable, the galleries’ promotional resources should be used without hesitation for a critique of the dominant system of beliefs while employing the very mechanisms of that system.”⁶⁰ In short, “given the dialectic nature of the contemporary petit-bourgeois consciousness industry, its vast resources probably can be put to use against the dominant ideology.”⁶¹ In Haacke’s view, to search for those “gaps,” those “holes in the wall that one can get through,” and to develop strategies to advocate for the democratic nature of art, is the responsibility of artists.⁶²

Effects of Corporate Sponsorship

Haacke’s exploration of the economic underpinnings and ideological implications of the consciousness industry inevitably led him to explore the transformations in the art world as the instrumentalization of culture by corporations increased. By the 1980s, the question of the effects of corporate sponsorship on the operation of museums had become one of his central concerns. As he observes in “Museums, Managers of Consciousness,” 1983, while “collectors seem to be acting primarily in their own self-interest and to be building pyramids to themselves when they attempt to impose their will on ‘chosen’ institutions, their moves are in fact less troublesome in the long run than the disconcerting arrival on the scene of

corporate funding for the arts.”⁶³ This process, which Haacke claims starts on a large scale toward the end of the 1960s, has seen “many large corporations, notably oil companies, [gain] a considerable foothold in U.S. museums and thereby among some of the major agents of the Western art world. There are almost no big exhibitions in large New York museums produced without corporate money.”⁶⁴ While making clear his awareness that the arts “have never been exempt from the ideological constraints of their respective period and power structure” and have often been used as an instrument of cultural capital and symbolic value by patrons, he interprets the “express intent” of corporate sponsorship in the arts as seeking to produce “a more sympathetic appraisal of the corporate state.”⁶⁵ In the 1960s, Haacke recalls, corporations with foresight, and in consultation with public relations experts, recognized that the audience that visits fine art museums belongs to “that segment of society that was or could reasonably be expected in the future to be close to the decision-makers of the country, if not to occupy influential positions themselves,” and began to cultivate this group.⁶⁶ As he writes in “Working Conditions,” 1979–1980, “the more sophisticated among executives of large corporations began to understand that the association of their company’s name—and business in general—with the arts could have considerable and long-term benefits for them, far in excess of the capital invested in such an effort.”⁶⁷ Haacke’s analyses elaborate on those benefits. Business executives, he argues, came to recognize that involvement in the arts not only attracts and retains sophisticated personnel, but also projects “an image of the company as a good corporate citizen and advertise[s] its products—all things which impress investors. Executives with a longer vision also saw that the association of their company (and, by implication, of business in general) with the high prestige of art [is] a subtle but effective means for lobbying in the corridors of government. It [can] open doors, facilitate passage of favorable legislation, and serve as a shield against scrutiny and criticism of corporate conduct.”⁶⁸ Added to this is a bonus to the corporation: “Since corporate contributions to museums are tax-deductible, the tax-payers, in effect, pay for the lobbying expenses. We are thus subsidizing not only the de facto privatization of our public museums, we are also underwriting the campaigns which affect how we live and what we think.”⁶⁹ The boon for the corporate sponsor is even greater when one considers that the financial contribution a corporation makes to the organization of an exhibition in

a public institution usually covers only a fraction of the show's costs and is miniscule compared to the amount of power the corporation gains from this investment: "Business may pay for only a small portion of the total expense of an exhibition, but it retains a veto, because without its contribution nothing goes."⁷⁰

A number of Haacke's artworks of the 1980s address the recalibration of the cultural sphere with the growth of corporate funding for arts institutions. *MetroMobiltan* of 1985, for instance, features a black-and-white photomural behind three suspended banners hanging from what looks like a fragment of The Metropolitan Museum of Art's front cornice. Two banners include statements from the Mobil company about its involvement in South Africa; the third announces an exhibition on African art that Mobil sponsored. Behind the banners is a photomural of a funeral procession in South Africa for black victims of the apartheid regime. The text on a plaque above the banners, excerpted from a leaflet published by the museum under the title "The Business Behind Art Knows the Art of Good Business. Your Company and The Metropolitan Museum of Art," extolls the plethora of public relations opportunities a corporation gains from sponsoring the arts. These opportunities, the text asserts, "can often provide a creative and cost effective answer to a specific, marketing objective, particularly where international, governmental or consumer relations may be a fundamental concern."⁷¹

Haacke's *Voici Alcan* of 1983 also addresses the intersection of political, economic, and ideological interests in the sphere of culture. Produced on the occasion of an exhibition of Haacke's work at the Galerie France Morin in Montreal, the piece combines the slick logo of Alcan, a company that provided aluminum products to the South African police and military, with posters of operas Alcan sponsored as well as an image of murdered South African activist Stephen Biko. The accompanying text, typewritten on aluminum foil, states the following: "Lucia di Lammermoor, produced by the Montreal Opera company with funding from Alcan. Alcan's South African affiliate is the most important producer of aluminum and the only fabricator of aluminum sheet in South Africa. From a nonwhite work force of 2,300, the company has trained eight skilled workers. Stephen Biko, black leader, died from head wounds received during his detention by the South African police. Alcan's South African affiliate sells to the South African government semifinished products that can be used in police and



0.14 Hans Haacke, *MetroMobiltan*, 1985

military equipment. The company does not recognize the trade union of its black workers.” Haacke framed the image of Biko, as well as those images publicizing the Montreal Opera, in a product that Alcan produces, namely an aluminum window frame.

Both of these artworks imply that the corporations involved sponsored the arts in order to mask their “real” nature, which includes the support of reprehensible regimes and the mistreatment of their own workers. But even more than that, the artworks question the type of culture that results when the institutions of the public sphere come to depend upon corporate sponsorship. The artworks ask what type of cultural neutrality can be claimed when it becomes clear that the various highly venerable cultural legacies with which the



0.15 Hans Haacke, *Voici Alcan*, 1983

sophisticated public of art museums likes to identify are deeply implicated in barbaric acts of political oppression. Haacke's unexpected conjunction of the cultural, economic, and political spheres troubles not only the status of the cultural institution, but also that of an artistic production that claims neutrality and autonomy.

Artworks such as *MetroMobiltan* and *Voici Alcan* also point to the site-specific nature of much of Haacke's work from the 1970s on. The context for which his art is made and in which it is publicly displayed is taken into consideration at the moment of production. He has been very clear about this. As he explains to sociologist Pierre Bourdieu in an early 1990s discussion, "I often work deliberately for a specific context. The social and political character of the exhibition locale plays a role, as do the architectural peculiarities of the space. In fact, the symbolic qualities of the context often are my most essential materials. A work made for a specific site cannot be moved and exhibited elsewhere."⁷² In other words, Haacke is very aware of the overdetermining power of context on whatever is displayed within its framework, and makes work that is specific to that context. But more than simply adapting to that context or framework, his art exposes and demystifies it.

What for Haacke is particularly problematic about the expansion of corporate funding to art institutions in the public sphere is the way that the latter are altered in turn. For one thing, "corporations are interested in sponsoring exhibitions that are likely to yield the greatest possible public relations dividends," namely, affirmative shows with mass appeal. "'High visibility' is an important criterion," but so too is congeniality. Hence, a proliferation of crowd-pleasing, uncritical blockbusters with sensationalist artworks has become the order of the day.⁷³ For another thing, the increase of corporate sponsorship has led to what Haacke refers to as "self-censorship," which occurs when "everybody has sufficiently internalized the rules of the game." Cautious about alienating corporate donors, museum officials have set a tone "that ever so subtly and effectively suggests not to venture into troublesome areas. . . . Discretion reigns supreme. The fear of losing a donor is effective enough."⁷⁴ There are, as he puts it, "many shades between non-interference and open repression."⁷⁵ As such, proposals for exhibitions that pose difficult questions are rarely considered: "[S]hows that could promote critical awareness, present products of consciousness dialectically and in

relation to the social world, or question relations of power, have a slim chance of being approved—not only because they are unlikely to attract corporate funding, but also because they could sour relations with potential sponsors for other shows. Consequently, self-censorship is having a boom.”⁷⁶ “Curators,” Haacke states with dismay, “have internalized these rules of the game and, understandably, do not want to waste their time.”⁷⁷

The Cultural Public Sphere

While the role of the art market on constructing the value of artworks has been a focus of Haacke’s writing for many years now, it takes greater prevalence in his writings of the late 1980s and 1990s. “Probably more than ever before,” he writes in response to a series of questions posed by the Paris-based magazine *art press* in 1987, “today it is the market that establishes the ‘importance’ of an artist’s products. . . . This development has perhaps been prompted by the emergence of an international network of a dozen or so galleries, which collaborate so closely that they form, for all practical purposes, a cartel with a powerful promotional apparatus.”⁷⁸ According to Haacke, the concentration of marketing power has been accompanied by the emergence of a new type of collector who speculates in artworks. The large quantities of art purchased by these figures, as well as the relatively fast turnover of this art, has had a great impact on the market. Haacke also laments the fact that so many artists seem to have been mesmerized by this market “frenzy” and have adapted their practices to reap its rewards: “From the world of advertising and sales promotion artists have adopted techniques for ‘positioning’ a product, and in some cases even for its styling. In a world that measures success primarily in monetary terms, it is only natural that the self-image and career goals of artists are affected as well, particularly since exposure and recognition is increasingly linked to stardom in the market.”⁷⁹

With his growing interest in the 1970s and 1980s in the sociological aspects of art, it is no surprise that Haacke was attracted to the work of Bourdieu. The two had met several times in the late 1980s and discovered that they shared much in common. They also began to reference each other’s work. The relationship culminated in a wide-ranging, book-length discussion between Haacke and Bourdieu that was ultimately published under the title *Free Exchange*, 1994.⁸⁰ There, Haacke freely applies Bourdieu’s terms to understand the operations of

power in the art world: “The American term “sponsoring” more accurately reflects that what we have here is really an exchange of capital: financial capital on the part of the sponsors and symbolic capital on the part of the sponsored. Most business people are quite open about this when they speak to their peers.”⁸¹ In response to Bourdieu’s observation that “from the moment that there is a science of the social world, it inevitably reveals that which is hidden, and in particular that which the dominant do not want to see unveiled,” Haacke remarks that most of his work merely brings to light that which is already at the disposal of any citizen.⁸² Directly putting into practice a belief in the interpretive richness of scraps and fragments of everyday life, Haacke sleuths through public archives and annals and produces artworks with what he finds.

In 1998, Haacke was invited to submit a proposal for an artwork to be placed in one of the two open-air courtyards of the Reichstag building in Berlin, which after many years was being rebuilt so that it could once again house the German Parliament. The Reichstag was initially constructed in 1896. An inscription on the portico of the building reads DEM DEUTSCHEN VOLKE (To the German People). As Haacke explains in his introduction to *DER BEVÖLKERUNG* (To the Population), 1999, in Germany, since 1913, the decisive factor as to whether one belongs to *dem deutschen Volke* has depended on whether one has German ancestry. The Nazis, when in power, applied the “rules governing German citizenship in the most racist manner conceivable. People who had every reason to consider themselves German, and whose families had been accepted unquestioningly, for generations, as German, all of a sudden became foreigners, with an uncertain status. Whether a person was considered German or not became a matter of life and death.”⁸³ In short, the Nazis turned the notion of “Volk” into a tribal myth of ethnic purity. In 1937, writer and playwright Bertolt Brecht, a figure whose ideas have been a consistent influence on Haacke’s thinking since at least the 1950s, observed that in the present xenophobic context, to say “Bevölkerung” (population) instead of Volk” was already to distance oneself from “many lies.”⁸⁴ Following Brecht’s reflection, Haacke dedicated his installation to the population (Bevölkerung) of Germany and decidedly not exclusively to the “Volk.” While a seemingly minor gesture, for Haacke it has considerable significance. When the laws governing German citizenship were changed in 2000 from the exclusive “law of blood” (*ius sanguinis*) toward a more inclusive “law of

soil” (*ius soli*), the reforms were vociferously “opposed by the conservative parties, the CDU and CSU,” who catered to xenophobic sentiments in the hope of collecting votes from the considerable number of Germans who might otherwise support more extreme rightwing parties.⁸⁵

Drawing from the operation of his earlier work with living biological systems, such as *Grass Grows* and *Bowery Seeds*, which if properly maintained could live on for an indefinite period of time, for the Reichstag commission Haacke proposed a work in which each elected member of the Bundestag was to be invited to deposit one hundred pounds of soil collected from his or her election district (or the states where he or she was elected from a party list) in the courtyard around large neon letters of the dedication DER BEVÖLKERUNG. As Haacke explains, “Seeds and roots from the places of origin are naturally embedded in the soil brought to Berlin. They will sprout, as will airborne seeds from Berlin. They are to develop freely—without any tending. . . . Newly elected Members of Parliament are invited to contribute to the soil in the courtyard and, in so doing, also to the vegetation. The process of plant growth and the addition . . . of soil, as they correspond to the rhythm of the parliamentary terms, is to continue as long as democratically elected legislators meet in the Reichstag building.”⁸⁶ Added to this, Haacke proposed a website featuring a live webcam overlooking the courtyard from a fixed position that would take daily photographs of DER BEVÖLKERUNG to track the changes in the courtyard. One image taken each day would be uploaded to the website www.derbevoelkerung.de. In Haacke’s view, the fact that “each member of the Bundestag, also those who will be elected in the future,” would be invited to participate in the creation of this piece conveyed its fundamentally democratic nature. “Symbolically, the entire country is represented—equally—in this ecosystem at the seat of the legislature. I understand the indiscriminate gathering and mixing of soil from all regions as an anti-particularistic action. It affirms communality and equality and requires initiative and commitment.”⁸⁷ Haacke’s proposal caused a considerable scandal, which he explains in the 2001 text *DER BEVÖLKERUNG* included in this volume, but in the end it was installed. The webcam continues to this day to upload images onto the website.

The general impetus of Haacke’s art practice is fairly consistent. Similar to the way that *DER BEVÖLKERUNG* relates to projects from early in his career, many other artworks made over the years resonate with previous ones. For instance, *Once Upon a Time*, 2010, a site-specific work the artist installed in the fourteenth-



0.16 Hans Haacke, *DER BEVÖLKERUNG* (To the Population), 2000–

century Church of San Francesco at the Fondazione Antonio Ratti in Como, Italy, is of a piece with *News* and its variants, which conveyed over real time topical information drawn from a number of electronic wire services. Rather than relay the expansive news reports of the day, *Once Upon a Time* featured live broadcasts of three television channels owned by Silvio Berlusconi, then prime minister of Italy. A scrolling electronic ticker with the latest quotes from companies listed on the Milan Stock Exchange, including several Berlusconi-owned companies, also punctuated the ensemble. The stock ticker was inserted into the frescoes depicting the legend of St. Francis, whereas the Berlusconi-owned television channels appeared as part of a fresco of the Last Supper and another biblical story. The projections, which had the effect of a moving collage, were carefully programmed to fill only the damaged gaps in the frescoes. In this manner, Haacke deftly juxtaposed the chapel consecrated to St. Francis, the selfless monk who dedicated his life to the welfare of others, to the greed, avarice, and obscene wealth of Berlusconi, long the wealthiest individual in Italy.⁸⁸ *Once Upon a Time* also parallels the various statistical profiles of gallery visitors that Haacke has made over the years in introducing the here and now of the social and economic context into the exhibition space. The artist leaves to the engaged spectator the decision whether to read the steady flow of information, process the content, and make the connections. Each work is composed of a system of intertwined strands, including the particulars of the specific installation, the general political climate in which the show takes place, and the active participation of the viewer who moves between the spaces of the city and the art context, weaving her own text.

The cluster of artworks that Haacke exhibited in 2009 at the New York exhibition space X-Initiative under the title of *Weather, or Not* was also full of references to past works. The exhibition included pieces spanning from the 1960s to the present. One of the new pieces, *BONUS-Storm*, 2009, featuring a light box flashing the word “BONUS” above six wall-mounted industrial fans, directly echoed *Wind Room*, 1969, in which three portable fans affixed to a platform behind a wire fence in the University of Washington’s Henry Art Gallery were pointed in the direction of the spectator, and recalled the numerous artworks Haacke made in the mid-1960s in which fans supported or moved lightweight materials. Haacke’s decision to open all of the windows of the exhibition space in the middle of the winter to allow the low temperature and often high humidity to enter the space at once evoked his many works that explicitly invite “the ‘outside’



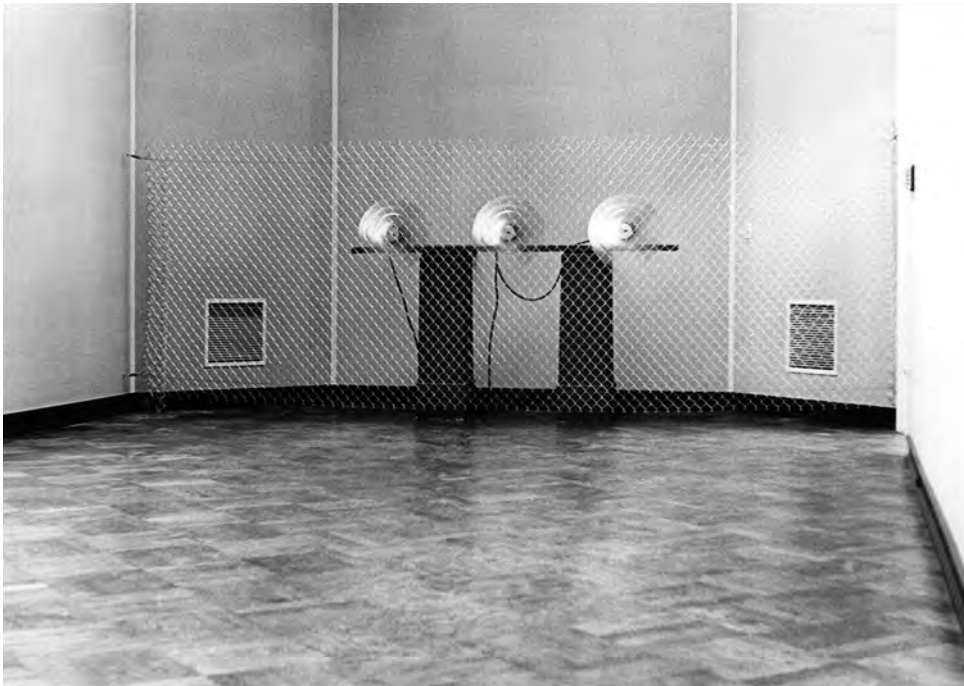
0.17 Hans Haacke, *Once Upon a Time*, 2010

world into the seemingly secluded and sheltered sanctuary of art exhibition spaces”⁸⁹ and pieces such as *Recording the Climate in Art Exhibition*, 1969–1970, which feature the instruments (a barograph, a hydrograph, and a thermograph) that conservators use to monitor atmospheric conditions in a gallery and thereby protect and preserve the value of the objects placed within it. Indeed, as the punning title already suggests, *Weather, or Not* as a whole reworked a number of artworks from the late 1960s that included meteorological phenomena and “gave a hint to the double meaning of the word ‘climate’”—not just the meteorological aspect which led spectators to keep their scarves on, but also the social and ethical dimension that called on visitors to take a position as citizens.⁹⁰ As Haacke remarks in response to a series of questions posed by the editors of the journal *Texte zur Kunst* in 2010, “It is a mistake to assume that commercial and public exhibition spaces are sealed off from the socio-political sphere. Their walls are porous in both directions.”⁹¹

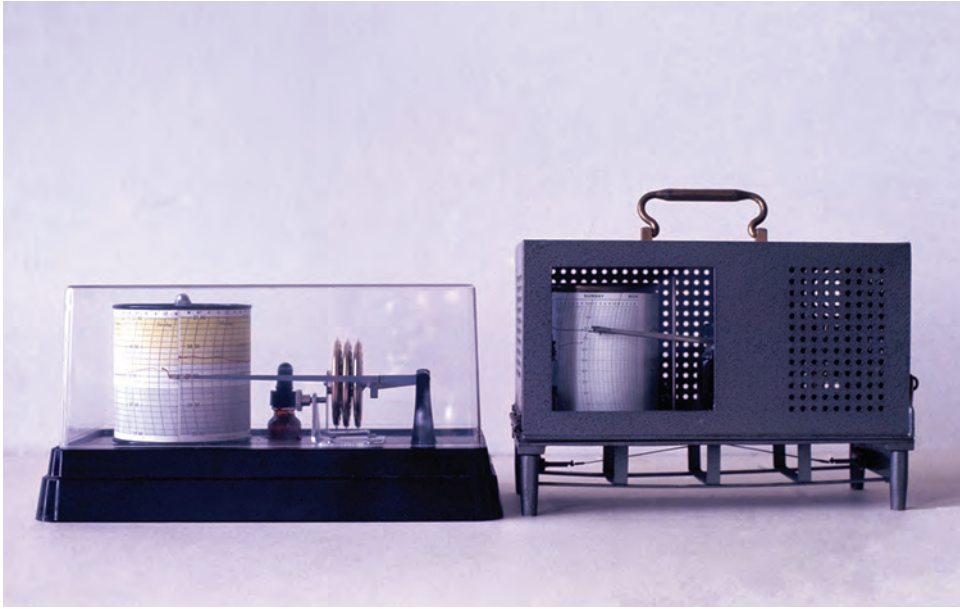
Haacke's art and writings expose the problematical nature of the contemporary art world, making apparent the intersections where political, economic, and ideological interests directly intervene and interfere in the production of public culture. At the same time, however, Haacke has consistently countered that reality by calling for a careful reassessment of what is lost when our cultural institutions, which were founded as democratic sites for the articulation of knowledge, historical memory, and self-reflexivity, as "places of education" that shape "the way we look at ourselves, and how we view our social relations," are infiltrated by economic concerns.⁹² As he writes in "Caught between Revolver and Checkbook," 1993, the democratic body "has maintained, since its emancipation 200 hundred years ago, that without the arts a society would be impoverished and perhaps even lose its viability as a creative, collective enterprise. . . . [A]bandoning [the arts] to market forces would subject them to the rationale



0.18 Hans Haacke, *BONUS-Storm*, 2009



0.19 Hans Haacke, *Wind Room*, 1969



0.20 Hans Haacke, *Recording the Climate in Art Exhibition*, 1969–1970

which governs mass entertainment and would thus destroy them.”⁹³ In other words, the struggle is a political one in which the stakes are high because core democratic values are in the balance: “In fact, art institutions are political institutions,” writes Haacke. “One could say that they are part of the battlefield where the conflicting ideological currents of a society clash. The art world, contrary to what is generally assumed, is not a world apart. What happens there is an expression of the world at large and has repercussions outside its confines.”⁹⁴ This is, then, the crux of Haacke’s artistic practice. For as critical as it has been of many developments in the art world of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, it has been equally consistent in insisting on the continued viability and validity of public interventions within that cultural context. His art and writings ultimately champion and advocate for the art institution—they call for the straightening or cleaning up of the operation of this important component of the public sphere and the realignment of its function with the democratic values of modernity.

Notes

1. Hans Haacke, "Lessons Learned," 2009, 225 [#52]. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations and references made in this introduction are drawn from or refer to texts featured in this volume and will be cited as such.
2. Ibid. [#52].
3. Ibid. [#52].
4. Hans Haacke, Untitled Statement, "We angrily resented . . .," 1960s, 1 [#1].
5. Hans Haacke, Untitled Statement, "The concept of 'systems' . . .," 1967, published in *Hans Haacke* (London: Phaidon, 2004), 102.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Hans Haacke, Untitled Statement, "For some years . . .," 1967, 10 [#8].
9. Hans Haacke, "Untitled Talk at Annual Meeting of Intersocietal Color Council, New York," April 1968, 15 [#10].
10. Hans Haacke, Untitled Statement, "A 'sculpture' that physically reacts to its environment," 1967, from announcement of solo exhibition at Howard Wise Gallery, New York, January 13 to February 3, 1968. In Hans Haacke archives, New York.
11. Haacke, Untitled Statement, "For some years . . .," 1967, 11 [#8].
12. Hans Haacke, Untitled Statement, ". . . make something which experiences . . .," 1965, 5 [#4].
13. Haacke, "Untitled Talk at Annual Meeting of Intersocietal Color Council, New York," April 1968, 17 [#10].
14. Ibid. [#10].
15. Ibid. [#10].
16. Ibid. [#10].
17. Ibid. [#10].
18. Ibid. [#10].
19. Hans Haacke, in Jeanne Siegel, "An Interview with Hans Haacke," 1971, 35 [#15].
20. Haacke, "Untitled Talk at Annual Meeting of Intersocietal Color Council, New York," April 1968, 21 [#10].
21. Ibid. [#10].
22. Ibid. [#10]; and Haacke, in Siegel, "An Interview with Hans Haacke," 1971, 34, 36 [#15].
23. Haacke, "Untitled Talk at Annual Meeting of Intersocietal Color Council, New York," April 1968 [#10].

24. Hans Haacke, "On Yves Klein. 20 years later," 1982, 105 [#29].
25. Haacke, "Untitled Talk at Annual Meeting of Intersocietal Color Council, New York," April 1968, 21 [#10].
26. Hans Haacke, "Provisional Remarks," 1971, 48 [#18].
27. Ibid. [#18].
28. Ibid. [#18].
29. Ibid., 49 [#18].
30. Haacke, in Siegel, "An Interview with Hans Haacke," 1971, 36 [#15].
31. Haacke, "Provisional Remarks," 1971, 50 [#18].
32. Haacke, "Untitled Talk at Annual Meeting of Intersocietal Color Council, New York," April 1968, 21 [#10].
33. Haacke, in Siegel, "An Interview with Hans Haacke," 1971, 35 [#15].
34. Ibid. [#15].
35. Ibid., 36 [#15].
36. Hans Haacke, *Nachrichten*, 1969–1970, 26 [#11].
37. Hans Haacke, *Environment Transplant*, 1969, 28 [#12].
38. Haacke, "Provisional Remarks," 1971, 50 [#18].
39. Ibid., 51 [#18].
40. Ibid. [#18].
41. Ibid. [#18].
42. Haacke, in Siegel, "An Interview with Hans Haacke," 1971, 37 [#15].
43. Ibid., 38–39 [#15].
44. Ibid. [#15].
45. Ibid., 39–40 [#15].
46. Haacke, "Lessons Learned," 2009, 228 [#52].
47. Ibid. [#52].
48. Hans Haacke, "Correspondence: Guggenheim," 1971, 42 [#16].
49. Ibid. [#16].
50. Hans Haacke, "The Eagle from 1972 to the Present," 1994, 172 [#41].
51. Hans Haacke, with Pierre Bourdieu, "Free Exchange," 1994 (excerpts), 176 [#42].

52. Hans Haacke, "The Constituency," 1976, 75 [24].
53. Hans Haacke, "All the 'Art' That's Fit to Show," 1974, 67 [#22].
54. Ibid. [#22].
55. Haacke, "The Constituency," 1976, 76 [#24].
56. Haacke, "All the 'Art' That's Fit to Show," 1974, 68 [#22].
57. Hans Haacke, "The Agent," 1977, 81 [#25].
58. Ibid., 82 [#25].
59. Ibid., 78 [#25].
60. Ibid., 82 [#25].
61. Haacke, "The Constituency," 1976, 79 [#24].
62. Hans Haacke, in Pierre Bourdieu and Hans Haacke, *Free Exchange* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), 77. Originally published in French under the title *Libre-Échange* (Paris: Editions du Seuil/les presses du réel, 1994).
63. Hans Haacke, "Museums, Managers of Consciousness," 1983, 10 [#31].
64. Hans Haacke, "Working Conditions," 1979–1980, 87 [#26].
65. Ibid., 85 [#26].
66. Haacke, "Lessons Learned," 2009, 229 [#52].
67. Haacke, "Working Conditions," 1979–1980, 85 [#26].
68. Haacke, "Museums, Managers of Consciousness," 1983, 121 [#31].
69. Haacke, "The Eagle from 1972 to the Present," 1994, 175 [#41].
70. Haacke, "Working Conditions," 1979–1980, 87 [#26].
71. Hans Haacke, *MetroMobiltan*, 1985, 127[#33].
72. Haacke, with Bourdieu, "Free Exchange," 1994 (excerpts), 183 [#42].
73. Haacke, "Working Conditions," 1979–1980, 88 [#26].
74. Ibid., 90 [#26].
75. Ibid., 94 [#26].
76. Haacke, "Museums, Managers of Consciousness," 1983, 122[#31].
77. Haacke, "Lessons Learned," 2009, 231[#52].

78. Published in French translation as “L’art, le sens et l’idéologie,” *art press* 136 (Paris, May 1989): 22–27. Original English version unpublished.
79. Ibid.
80. Haacke, “Working Conditions,” 1979–1980, 87 [#26].
81. Haacke, with Bourdieu, “Free Exchange,” 1994 (excerpts), 176 [#42].
82. Haacke, in Bourdieu and Haacke, *Free Exchange*, 54, 83.
83. Hans Haacke, *DER BEVÖLKERUNG*, 2001, 199 [#46].
84. Ibid., 200 [#46].
85. Ibid., 201 [#46].
86. Hans Haacke, *DER BEVÖLKERUNG* (To the Population), 1999, 193 [#45].
87. Haacke, *DER BEVÖLKERUNG*, 2001, 202 [#46].
88. Hans Haacke, *Once Upon a Time*, 2010, 243 [#55].
89. Hans Haacke, “Interview with Cecilia Alemani,” 2010, 241 [#54].
90. Ibid. [#54].
91. Hans Haacke, “Hans Haacke Responds to Questions from *Texte zur Kunst*,” 2010, 248 [#56].
92. Haacke, with Bourdieu, “Free Exchange,” 1994 (excerpts), 185 [#42].
93. Hans Haacke, “Caught between Revolver and Checkbook,” 1993, 155 [#39].
94. Haacke, with Bourdieu, “Free Exchange,” 1994 (excerpts), 185 [#42].

WRITINGS

1. **Untitled Statement, “We angrily resented . . .,” 1960s**

We angrily resented the sentimental, pessimistic humanism which occupied literature and the fine arts in the fifties, when misery was fashionable convention. We despised the thin-blooded melancholic aestheticism of the surviving artists of the middle generation. We recognized the authentic interpreters of the forties: Wols, [Hans] Hartung, [Jean] Fautrier, [Henri] Michaux, [Jackson] Pollock, and [Willem] De Kooning, but we did not feel any need to assume their position. We opposed them as soon as their existential experience and its expressions were turned into a handy spiritual convenience.

[Previously unpublished statement, early 1960s.]

2. "Observing My Mirror Objects," 1962

Observing my mirror objects made of polished stainless steel, I note:

There is neither a correct nor an incorrect point of view from which to look at them.

Their environments—including the spectator—form an integral part of them. The environment is constantly participating in their creation. They are not fixed, their appearances are infinite.

They are exceeding their material boundaries and are limited, respectively, by the boundaries of sight in the space in which they happen to be, the workshop, the exhibition room, and the stars.

They show different kinds of spaces inseparably linked together.

I define as volume the space they occupy materially, i.e., as air-displacing objects that offer resistance. It is static, measurable, limited.

I define as vibration the space that seems to move toward the spectator, away from him, and parallel to the horizon, when nearly homogeneous elements are seen, arranged in a nearly regular pattern, and when the distance between the elements is too wide to see them simultaneously with precision. This dynamic space is nonmaterial. It is moving within immeasurable limits and can be perceived only optically. These qualities are the same for both reflected and materially existing elements.

Reflection is creating unreal space, changing or static depending on the immobility or mobility of the surroundings, which are reduced to their visual qualities. Although it can be perceived only optically, it can be measured. It is nonmaterial, limited respectively by the boundaries of sight and created exclusively by light rays.

The incessant communication—to see and be seen—of the mirror-objects with the world and the spectator, their insoluble connection of real and unreal, static and dynamic, material and nonmaterial space, their indetermination, all fascinates me.

I think they are for . . .

[Written in Philadelphia on January 7, 1962. First published as exhibition announcement, Wittenborn One Wall Gallery, New York, September 1962. Text slightly modified in 2006.]

3. Untitled Statement, “There is only a small difference . . .,” 1963

There is only a small difference between the brightness of yellow and white. So it may happen that yellow dots on a white background become almost invisible under yellow light. In white light (daylight), however, these dots, if they have been arranged appropriately, seem to move toward the spectator, away from him, and possibly they also move parallel to the white sheet. After-images may occur, too. The white sheet is completely deprived of its background character; the dots lose their own life as graphic and defining elements. Small quantities of yellow in an a-compositional organization and the white space in between create a visually dynamic space-continuum without a fixed point.

This spatial experience is not always to be perceived immediately—sometimes it takes one minute of attentive viewing. Then the eye is caught by the whirl of the moving light-space. It is experiencing ever-changing visual sensation. The amount of information (to use the terminology of cybernetics), which seemed to be small at the beginning, is steadily increasing along the optical “conversation.” The relationship of spectator to pattern of dots is then realized as a psychophysical feedback system.

The patterns of dots discussed above do not represent anything. They do not stand for any figurative, abstract, symbolic or whatever content. Their “content” might be called a dynamic state, which is *happening* between them and the spectator. This is not a content that is being described, but one that is active itself: more precisely, the retina makes it seem to be optically active. Whatever associations and feelings the spectator will have during such a “performance” is left up to him. The *arrangeur* is not able nor does he want to set any limits.

[Written in New York on January 28, 1963. First published in *Print Portfolio* (New York: Pratt Graphic Art Center, 1963).]

4. **Untitled Statement, "... make something which experiences ...," 1965**

... make something which experiences, reacts to its environment, changes, is nonstable ...

... make something indeterminate, which always looks different, the shape of which cannot be predicted precisely ...

... make something which cannot "perform" without the assistance of its environment ...

... make something which reacts to light and temperature changes, is subject to air currents and depends, in its functioning, on the forces of gravity ...

... make something which the "spectator" handles, with which he plays and thus animates ...

... make something which lives in time and makes the "spectator" experience time ...

... articulate something Natural ...

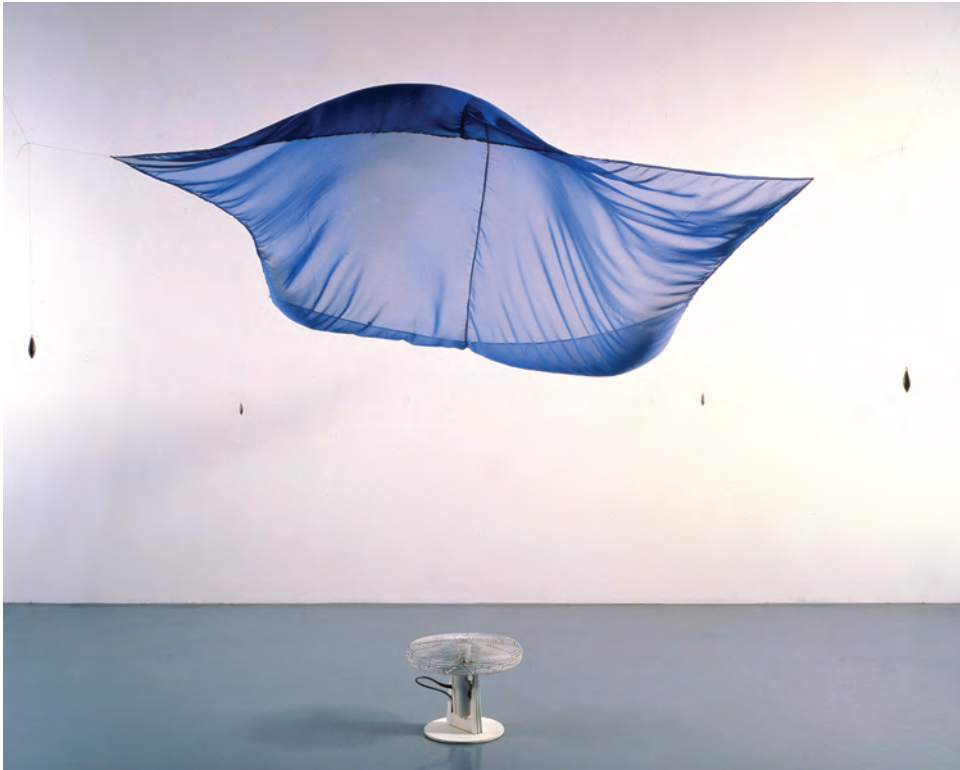
[Written in Cologne in January 1965. First published in *NUL 1965*, exh. cat. (Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum, 1965).]

5. **Untitled Statement, “I have partially filled . . .,” 1965**

I have partially filled Plexiglas containers of a simple stereometric form with water and have sealed them. The intrusion of light warms the inside of the boxes. Since the inside temperature is always higher than the surrounding temperature, the water enclosed condenses: a delicate veil of drops begins to develop on the inside walls. At first, they are so small that one can distinguish single drops from only a very close distance. The drops grow—hour-by-hour—small ones combine with larger ones. The speed of growth depends on the intensity and the angle of the intruding light. After a day, a dense cover of clearly defined drops has developed and they all reflect light. With continuing condensation, some drops reach such a size that their weight overcomes the forces of adhesion and they run down along the walls, leaving a trace. This trace starts to grow together again. Weeks after, manifold traces, running side by side, have developed. According to their respective age, they have drops of varying sizes. The process of condensation does not end. The box has a constantly but slowly changing appearance, which never repeats itself. The conditions are comparable to a living organism which reacts in a flexible manner to its surroundings. The image of condensation cannot be precisely predicted. It is changing freely, bound only by statistical limits. I like this freedom.

[Written in New York in October 1965. First publication, in French translation, “J’ai rempli en partie . . .,” *Robho* 2 (Paris, November/December 1967): n.p.]

6. *Blue Sail*, 1965



1.1 Hans Haacke, *Blue Sail*, 1964/1965

If wind blows into a light piece of material, it flutters like a flag or it swells like a sail, depending on the way in which it is suspended. The direction of the stream of air, as well as its intensity, also determine the movements. None of these movements is without an echo from all the others. A common pulse goes through the membrane. The swelling on one side makes the other side recede; tensions arise and decrease. The sensitive fabric reacts to the slightest changes of air conditions. A gentle draft makes it swing lightly; a strong air current makes it

swell almost to the bursting point or pulls so that it furiously twists itself about. Since many factors are involved, no movement can be precisely predicted. The wind driven fabric behaves like a living organism, all parts of which are constantly influencing each other. The unfolding of the organism in a harmonious manner depends on the intuitiveness and skill of the “wind player.” His means to reach the essential character of the material are manipulations of the wind sources and the shape and method of suspending the fabric. His materials are wind and flexible fabric; his tools are the laws of nature. The sensitivity of the wind player determines whether the fabric is given life and breathes.

[Written in Cologne in August 1965. First published in *Hans Haacke: Wind und Wasser*, exh. cat. (Berlin: Haus am Lützowplatz, 1965); first publication of English translation in Jack Burnham, “Hans Haacke: Wind and Water Sculpture,” *Tri-Quarterly Supplement* (Evanston, Spring 1967): 9.]

7. Untitled Statement, “The label ‘Kinetic Art’ . . .,” 1967

The label “Kinetic Art” has been widely used implying that there is a recognizable school style, trend, fad, or “movement” with definite characteristics. I am suspicious about this label, for I have doubts about the proclaimed common basis for all examples of so-called “Kinetic Art.” The only common denominator, naturally, would be that something moves. This, I believe, is a miserably poor unifying quality. With such a superficial approach, [Robert] Rauschenberg’s *Revolvers* would belong to the same class as Len Lye’s *Flip and Two Twisters*, as contrasted, let us say, to Jasper Johns’ work. It is obvious how misleading this is. There are various degrees of incorporating movement into three-dimensional work—i.e., movement could be an additional factor of the work, or its very essence. In the latter case, a careful examination would probably show that there are not only many different types of movement, but also numerous and often antagonistic rationales for venturing into nonstatic work. It would therefore be more revealing (but would also require more insight on the part of the art packaging agents) to establish relationships along other lines. This would indicate that certain “kinetic” work has more in common with static objects than with other “kinetic” work and vice versa.

[Written in New York in September 1967. Previously unpublished statement, September 1967.]

8. **Untitled Statement, “For some years . . .,” 1967**

For some years, attention has been directed to the environment as an important factor in static sculpture. The number, size, shape, and color of objects have been designed in reference to the area of display and the body of the viewer. These are physical factors—measurable and computable.

It is the subjective viewer, however, who experiences them as an “environment.” Only he is able to see the frame of reference established in “environmental sculpture” and to interpret it accordingly. Whatever the pattern of order for the object or set of objects within the area of display, this order is intelligible as a meaningful program only in the mind of the viewer. In other words, physical data depend on the subjective response of the viewer in order to become an “environment.”

There is another approach to dealing with the environment. That is providing for conditions in which the environment, no matter what its size and proportions, physically affects the “sculpture.” Changes in the environment, be it a room or outdoors, are followed closely by changes in the “sculpture.” For example, it might react to temperature, humidity, air pressure, air current, and illumination. To be precise, it is no longer justifiable to regard the “sculpture” as an isolated entity unto itself; it merges with the environment to form a system of higher complexity. It ceases to be a fixed object with stable measurements and enters into a net of relationships of a completely different order—an order that cannot be described in terms of length, width, and height. The object is dissolved. Its radius of action, as well as the range of outside factors which have an effect on it, reach far beyond the space it actually occupies in terms of its material. It physically communicates with the environment and thus becomes part of a larger system.

Naturally a system is also visible due only to recognizable shapes, colors, and spatial relationships, and all these object-oriented factors contribute to a larger or smaller degree to its “success.” However, it cannot be emphasized enough that these factors play only a minor role. Judging a system by these criteria is bypassing its essence.

In static sculpture and “environments,” it was hoped that time would not alter the fixed order. Time entered only in the experience of the viewer. The more complex set of relationships in physically environmental systems, on the other

hand, is deliberately designed to evolve in time and to be affected by time. Changes are desired and are part of the program—they are not due to the shifting experience of the viewer. The changes actually take place. An environmental system is real.

[Previously unpublished statement, September 1967.]

9. **Untitled Statement, “In the mind of the public . . .,” 1967**

In the mind of the public and some artists, the border between art and science has become fluid. The following developments have contributed to this state: scientific terminology has entered the jargon of artists and writers partly because of its precision (an unusual quality in art-talk) and partly because it implies a contemporary mystique. Detached, methodical, and analytical working habits have been adopted. A series of work is being produced like a test series. Some perceptual phenomena have received scientific explanations. Scientists are venturing into art. An increasing number of artists are in need of engineering techniques and devices and therefore collaborate with engineers. There is a general, naive veneration for science, probably based on its spectacular achievements as well as a fascination for its clarity and precision. Beyond that, it simply seems to be “in” to have something to do with science. This, and a host of other factors, has created a great confusion, which is rarely supported by scientists and engineers. It originates, rather, with the public, is propagated by a sensationalist press, and, not the least, derives from the artists themselves.

There is little doubt about the job of the scientist. But that is not the case for artists who can neither state their objectives clearly nor define the field in which they are working with any precision. This very weakness contributes to the general confusion with respect to the question of what art has to do with science.

It would certainly make no sense for artists to try to compete with scientists. It is further unlikely that the task of artists is to illustrate the abstract information provided by the scientists’ research, notwithstanding the gibberish about the electronic age. The employment of engineering techniques does not establish a scientific art. The artist’s application of scientific knowledge is not scientific in itself because it does not intend to contribute to the existing body of knowledge. It is also not the artist’s job to make the science classroom’s demonstrations more stylish.

In view of these negative statements, what then is the artist’s relationship to science? It is the exposure to fundamental ideas of science, even on an amateurish level, that has considerable influence on the artist’s thinking. In fact, the artist’s sensitivity to all information about his environment (of which science is a part) is likely to have a bearing on the ideological foundation of his work.

This, however, is neither surprising nor new. Artists of the past were equally open to the total body of knowledge of their times. No matter how poorly science was developed, it has always played an important part in art. Also, the use of engineering techniques was familiar to artists, particularly to sculptors and architects. For example, Leonardo da Vinci's wide range of activities was outstanding, but he was not the only one in his time with these interests. At his side were numerous fellow artists with a similar scope of interests. The very ideal of a Renaissance intellectual was to be a person with a familiarity in all the era's arts and sciences. However, this did not result in their work being called "scientific." There is no reason for qualifying the work of the current generation's artists as scientific either, no matter how technically sophisticated it might be. There exists a fundamental difference of intention. Whatever art may be, it is not science.

[Written in September 1967. First published and translated into German in Edward Fry and Hans Haacke, *Werkmonographie* (Cologne: DuMont Schauberg, 1972), 34.]

10. **Untitled Talk at Annual Meeting of Intersocietal Color Council, New York, April 1968**

Preface

The assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. prompts me to preface my talk. Last week, Western society, which likes to consider itself civilized, committed another shameful act, providing hideous proof of how great the gap is between this society's cherished self-esteem and reality. This follows a well-established course. The atrocities committed and condoned in Vietnam and rampant racism at home are only the latest despicable examples of a long tradition. Hardly any Western nation can claim to have had no part in this.

Artists, as members of the same society, realize with bitterness how unsuited their endeavors are for making society more humane. This in fact is probably not their task. Their profession does not lend itself to a meaningful contribution. Rather than staying aloof, however, artists should speak out against society's attempts to use their work as a means to cover up the failure of tackling urgent issues. Sponsoring the arts can be an honorable and worthwhile engagement, but it means little when the very basis of human interrelations and physical survival are at stake. It is there where immediate action is needed.(. . .)

Prepared Lecture

What I shall offer [in this second part of my talk] are disputable contentions, based more on belief and emotional engagement than on analysis. They will be phrased in imprecise terms and often rely on a nonprofessional's understanding of concepts belonging to non-art disciplines.

For a while I hesitated to venture into such extramural areas, particularly before an audience that I suspect includes people who know more about some of the things I shall touch upon. It would be common sense to talk only about things one is really familiar with. A dentist, for example, would be taken seriously only as long as he talked about subjects of his own profession; however, he would be laughed at if he began talking about the boundary layer of Phantom jet planes. Dentistry and aerodynamics are clearly defined disciplines with appropriately developed working methods, elaborate theoretical backgrounds couched in a

precise nomenclature. These disciplines know what they are after; their objectives are beyond any doubt. But none of this is true when it comes to the visual artist.

Each artist has a different approach, works with different assumptions, and pursues different traditions to guide him from the past into an unknown future. His terminology is fuzzy and often so personal that he has difficulty communicating it verbally. Moreover, it is hardly possible to find two artists that follow the same goal. In fact, a deeper probing would probably reveal that their stated objectives are so vague that in a reasoned discourse, they would not seem to make sense at all. Still, in spite of all these deficiencies, the artist's business requires his involvement in practically everything, however superficial it might have to remain. He works in reference not to a section of the world, but to the whole world. In the best cases, the theoretical foundation of his work is universally encompassing. This outrageously immodest attitude is an inescapable. It would be bypassing the issue to say that the artist's business is how to work with this or that material to manipulate the findings of perceptual psychology, and that the rest should be left to other professions. Such advice would not consider the essential platform from which the artist works, the very *raison d'être* of his production. It would not answer what and why he should produce at all. Only an involvement with the world outside his studio can provide such an answer. The total scope of information he receives day after day is of concern. An artist is not an isolated system. In order to survive in his profession, he has to continuously interact with the world around him. Theoretically, there are no limits to his involvement. The limits are practical: overfeeding and indigestion from information, and, as a consequence, a shapeless production.

Hopefully, this lengthy apology might serve to justify my venturing into areas that don't seem to belong to my field. It is obvious that the apology itself is already part of the philosophizing that I warned you about.

One of my essential premises is the strong belief that the world is something dynamic, something that is constantly changing, that is always on the move, never permitting a status quo. Obviously, such a view of the world is not new, nor is it particularly original in 1968. Twenty-five hundred years ago, Heraclitus proclaimed that everything is in flux. Throughout history, he was followed by an illustrious number of philosophers who, although with varying accents, shared a similar dynamic view of the world, up to the present day. From my superficial

understanding of today's scientific thought, I assume that present insight into the structure of our universe also sees it as a dynamic system rather than a static system.

All scientific and philosophic reading, though, would be of little avail if my personal, day-to-day experience did not support the findings of relevant thinkers. On the other hand, these personal experiences would also appear to be unreliable if they were not backed by more objective authorities. My belief in the pervasive pattern of change developed through my observation of all that was going on around and within me. It is not speculation, but the recognition of a total absence of anything solid and forever unchanging. Everything changes; nothing remains the same.

Like everybody else, I have witnessed life cycles: birth, growth, aging, and death. I have observed how social relationships developed: the relationship between members of my family, between me and my wife, me and my friends. Again as everybody else, I have witnessed changes in larger social groups; violent upheavals as well as the gradual modification of an untenable position. The stubborn clinging to a status quo in social life proved to be self-delusion and automatically doomed to failure. I have also noticed that politicians often feel that changes in their policies have to be camouflaged because their electorate is apprehensive about change, about facing an unknown future, and would rather continue with the familiar. The full realization that nothing remains the same is apparently not easy to accept. That nothing exists outside of time seems to frighten many people and make them dizzy. Surely, every one of us has caught himself trying to arrest things, to create a haven of still waters, and has found himself doubly perturbed when realizing that his attempt was futile from the outset. There is no way to stop the world and get off.

My realization of this pervasive state of flux naturally did not come about overnight. It developed slowly, gained more and more impetus, and has gradually assumed almost obsessive proportions. Particularly in my dealings with other people, I became both frightened as well as fascinated by the changes in my relationships to them. On the less personal level, the dynamics of political life intrigued me increasingly. I have never been a political activist. With the exception of occasional fierce telegrams to politicians and participation in

national elections, I remained an observer mesmerized by this monstrous game of power. I became a newspaper addict.

Since the development of my view of the world as a dynamic system was gradual and almost unnoticed, visual analogues for such a dynamic system crept into my painting and sculpture like a clandestine fifth column. Sometimes, I made decisions on theoretical grounds; at other times, in analyzing what I had just completed, I discovered that it pointed in the direction of (visually) nonstatic work. Practice and theory alternated in determining the course of my work, influencing each other respectively. As with a great number of decisions we have to make in other areas, decisions in the visual arts are often made less with deliberation than with an intuitive inclination toward the alternative most in line with one's personal make-up. They seem to rely on an extremely subtle play between lucid awareness and evaluation of the relevant factors and an almost unconscious process of arriving at a decision. It is only in retrospect that I can discern continuity and a logical, consistent step-by-step development. As has been the case until now, I have only an extremely vague notion of where this course is heading. The only guideline in this venture into the unknown is what [Wassily] Kandinsky once called the "principle of inner necessity."

The paintings I made around 1958–1959 were reminiscent of Abstract Expressionist and Tachist modes. They exhibited traces of movement and imitated the looks of withering tissue, old walls, and the effects of long-time exposure to weathering. The canvas, the pigment, and whatever I mixed into it, naturally could not render movement adequately. At best, I arrived at a convincing record of past movement: the more or less vigorous marks of the tools with which I treated the canvas. The weathering effects were mere deception of the viewer. Something was made to look older than it actually was.

The paintings that followed teased the retina and thus appeared to vibrate—motion was again created by trickery. The viewer had the illusion that the particles of the painting were moving toward him, away from him, sideways, and sometimes spinning. Naturally, nothing like that was actually happening on the canvas. However, the reliance on the physiological deficiencies of the human eye for the creation of perceptual movements results in something very immediate. The frozen movement of the previous stage was abandoned and a movement that seems to occur while viewing the painting had taken its place. The viewer actually

sees the canvas vibrating. The vibration's intensity, or rather the viewer's response to the optical stimulus, changes as time goes by. The emphasis has shifted in these paintings from the mimetic to the psychophysical. Although with a different accent, they were still illusionistic.

The works of 1961–1962, made out of reflecting materials such as aluminum foil, stainless steel, and plastics, were more trustworthy. That means reflections actually changed with the changing of the angle of the incoming light and the angle from which the viewer looked at them. The room in which these reflecting objects (they are not really paintings any more) were displayed became part of them simply by being reflected in them. In fact, the objects could not be seen isolated at all. Their appearance was constantly at the mercy of their environment. Actual, not illusionistic, changes were taking place, changes that could be recorded by a camera. Stretching beyond the space it materially occupied by integrating the area of display, an optical dialogue was established between the reflector and its surroundings. The viewer, being part of the surroundings, participated in this dialogue.

In the beginning, the reflecting works were fairly flat panels hanging on the wall. Later, they became deep reliefs, protruding up to one foot into the room, until they finally asserted themselves as freestanding sculptures.

A painter is limited in what he puts on his canvas only by his imagination and self-imposed rules. As long as the pigment, the binder, and the canvas hold out, he can defy every physical law; he is able to make anything appear that the human mind might dream of. It was for this reason that Leonardo da Vinci maintained that painting was superior to sculpture. However, it is almost impossible to paint a painting that is not, to a smaller or larger degree, illusionistic. Paintings and wall reliefs, moreover, seem to lack an essential attribute that would qualify them as things that are psychologically experienced as being real. They always remain intangible, imaginary schemes, without body and tactile sensuousness, and stay nicely tucked away, so that one is never in danger of tripping over them. Never are they willing to take a stand, to commit themselves to the viewers' space and be fully exposed to his scrutiny. Consequently, there is always a credibility gap. Frustration over painting's elusiveness, lack of physical presence, and immediacy, has led numerous painters to give up painting for works in three dimensions.

My mutation from painter to sculptor thus follows a familiar pattern. Without commenting on my own work, I would like to add, in parenthesis, that the achievements of twentieth-century sculpture have been brought about mainly by ex-painters, not by professional sculptors. In the following, it will become clear that my turn to three-dimensional products also prepared the way for . . . works [that actually move].

Although their physical appearance changed, and an equally physical link with their environment was established, the mirror-objects were still static themselves—they only reflected outside movement. A logical step was to introduce actual motion. In 1963, I replaced a solid, transparent, and reflective material [with] an equally transparent and reflective, but liquid, medium: I replaced acrylic plastic [with] water in motion. Taking this step, I concluded a course, the beginning of which can be traced back to my early art school painting.

I finally had left behind illusions and simulations of motion, artificiality and make-believe. This was not any more an “as if,” it was simply “it” itself—something that actually took place, something actually occurring in time. The viewer no longer had to be duped into seeing something that was not physically happening. This was real. It did not refer to anything, but what it actually was.

From my account, it might sound as though this development were unprecedented and influenced by nobody. This is naturally not the case. I was vaguely aware of the fifty-odd years of the history of moving sculpture, and was particularly encouraged by the works and ideas of artists who were allied with the Zero Group of Düsseldorf, the Parisian Nouveaux Réalistes and the Groupe de Recherche d'Art Visuel. I don't think one has to be ashamed of being part of a tradition. In fact, most likely it is impossible to not belong to a tradition. Only Athena could make it fully developed out of the head of Zeus.

The use and exclusive reliance on physical motion in sculpture has practical and further philosophical consequences. A traditional sculptor's choice of shapes is limited by certain mechanical deficiencies of his material, e.g., the members of a stone sculpture have to be of a minimum thickness so that they will not break. Some configurations cannot be cast in bronze or plastics, and others cannot be produced in construction materials. However, these are minor restrictions; usually an efficient material can be found. Rarely do these limitations have a

bearing on the sculptor's concept or interfere substantially with his work. For all practical purposes, he is in full control of his production.

If, on the other hand, one feels compelled to articulate actual motion, such an authoritarian position cannot be maintained. There is a set of physical laws governing motion, which severely interferes with one's freewheeling imagination. Only strict obedience to these laws guarantees proper functioning. It is therefore not only advisable not to try to defy them, but it is of utmost importance to study them and make them useful for one's purposes. If you can't fight them, join them. Let them become the very thing out of which the work consists. As simplistic as the individual work might be, by virtue of its functioning, it participates in the gigantic system of rules that prevents our work from breaking to pieces and keeps us alive.

Letting the natural laws in is tantamount to the adoption of something, which, in the art jargon, is known as readymade. Marcel Duchamp coined the term in 1913 when he mounted an ordinary bicycle wheel, with its fork upside down, on an equally ordinary kitchen stool. The term was aimed at the unaltered acceptance of a prefabricated, generally available—readymade—object and its designation as a work of art. Duchamp's *Bicycle Wheel* [1913] was the first example of such a concept in history. It was also the first kinetic sculpture. I don't know if he intended his term to also cover the readymade-ness of the laws of rotary motion, which were obviously part of his piece.

The conscious acceptance of natural laws to make sculpture certainly parallels Duchamp's gesture of laying his hand on readymade objects. In this sense, spitting from the Brooklyn Bridge onto a Grace Line cruiser full of sightseers would be a short-lived readymade, if one says so.

I did not make it my business to spit from bridges onto tourists. I explored the potential of hydrodynamics in a different manner. With the exception of an outdoor "raintree," rigged last summer in Central Park, I confined myself, for practical reasons, to articulating flow phenomena in small, manageable plastic containers. For example, using the principle of the hourglass, I made water drip through holes, run down transparent panes in rivulets, or have it interact with liquids of different density. Other containers were designed on the principle of the water level, letting air-bubbles wander back and forth, break up, and reunite. Or, I had air injected on the bottom of water filled containers and rise to the surface

like the bubbles of aerated aquariums. Again, others, suspended from the ceiling and swinging in pendulum fashion, made enclosed water perform wave configurations.

In all of these cases, the viewer had to shed his usually passive role and become active. It was he who had to supply the energy needed for the hydraulic action, either by turning the containers upside down, pushing them, swinging them, or pumping air into them. Nothing happened without his physical participation. The viewer was the animator. The way he handled the pieces had an effect on how the liquids behaved—gracefully or jerkily.

I was surprised to notice that there are people who are incapable of tuning their actions to the natural rhythm of flow. These same people are probably bad dancers and, due to their clumsiness, dangerous to the objects they handle. The active participation of the viewer as a generator and midwife for the performance of the works might help undermine the false holiness that has surrounded art objects and to replace the fake mysticism with something resembling a partnership between the work and its supplier of energy. Such a relationship engages the viewer in a multi-sensory way, not only involving his eye, but also his touch, hearing, and sense of rhythm.

My venture into the dynamics of liquids proceeded slowly. I made many mistakes before arriving at satisfactory results. My memory of high school physics was rather weak and some of the problems that I faced are not covered by a normal high school curriculum. I therefore had to rely a lot on trial and error, with much waste of materials and energy as a consequence. Once in a while, I also received useful hints from people more acquainted with watery problems.

Early during my hydrodynamic experiments, I realized that the flow of gasses is not unlike liquid flow; in other words, aerodynamics and hydrodynamics are related. This revived old dreams of making things light, airy, take off [from] the ground, and fly. It seemed only consequent to move from visually lightweight, transparent, but solid material, to liquids, and to finally arrive at air. I then proceeded on a double track with the manipulation of liquid as well as air motion.

Aerodynamics proved to be an extremely inaccessible field for laymen. It was hard to get advice and to develop an intuitive understanding for the important factors. There were great difficulties in harnessing the movement of air and in predicting its effect on lightweight bodies and fabrics in order to arrive at

aerodynamically viable designs. Even engineers seem still to rely a lot on trial and error when tackling this delicate and elusive medium.

I mentioned earlier the de-mystifying effect that the viewer's physical interaction with the work has on his psychological response to this work. What he does is to break through the invisible barrier that seems to remove every pedestal sculpture from the space that he, himself, inhabits.

Like the frame of a painting, the pedestal seems to create an isolated space, which is not of this world. In this respect it is most significant that [Auguste] Rodin, in spite of strong opposition on the part of his patron, insisted that his *Burghers of Calais* [1889] be on an even footing with the living citizens of the town, and not be elevated on a high pedestal as originally planned. The tendency of not using a pedestal to separate a sculpture from the floor on which the viewer stands has gained increasing . . . accept[ance] by a great number of artists today. What has been lost in this otherwise most welcome change is the pedestal-sculpture's appearance of somehow floating in the air. The lack of a supporting structure that visually seems to absorb most of the weight makes floor sculpture look all the more weighty, inert, ponderous, chained to the ground and somewhat pathetic. Lifting it off the ground by means of air-support is like taking off its chains and liberating it.

Since floating sculptures, figuratively speaking, don't stand with both feet on the ground, they are extremely sensitive, easily injured, and susceptible to react to the slightest changes in their environment. If the source of air-motion, an electric fan for example, does not supply a consistently even flow of air and is not directed at all times into exactly the same path, the floating body or fabric immediately reacts and, depending on its aerodynamic stability, regains a new equilibrium. Also, outside drafts can influence the system. The behavior of air-buoyant objects resembles that of a thermostatically controlled setup. In their attempt to adjust to prevailing environmental conditions, they alternately overshoot and aim too low, thus being caught in an interminable state of oscillation. If conditions change abruptly and to an excessive degree, floating objects crash and will not recover, similar to living organisms.

Resemblance to living organisms is also to be noticed with the condensation boxes. Their behavior is determined by the intensity and the angle of incandescent light, by the temperature, and by drafts in their environment. These factors

determine how much and how fast the enclosed water will evaporate and condense. Sometimes the veil of droplets on the container's inside walls forms so slowly that it takes several days for them to grow to a size that would make them run down the panes, leaving a trail behind them. As is to be expected, these streaks will eventually be covered again with condensation. Certain conditions are more conducive for the cycle to evolve—it might then only take a few hours. Since condensation droplets don't grow evenly, some are heavier than others and consequently fall earlier. Thus, after a while, the container's walls are covered with streaks of varying density and age, sometimes superseding each other. A record of the stages the system went through emerges.

The refrigerated works equally respond to meteorological changes in their environment. On cool and humid days, the exposed freezing coils attract more environmental moisture and, accordingly, build up a layer of ice faster. Rapidly growing frost is dry and snowy. A sudden rise in temperature can make the top layer of ice melt down a little and its surface will then have a hard, glassy look. As meteorological changes are rather unpredictable, so the texture and thickness of ice cannot be foreseen. Randomness is built into the system in the sense that only statistical predications can be made.

The refrigerated works transform water from a vapor into a solid state. The opposing process takes place in the steam-generating piece, which turns water into its gaseous state. Water vapor is extremely susceptible to being diverted from its course of ejection—it takes on random shapes and, merging with the environment, it soon becomes invisible. Naturally, the moisture content of the air increases. Therefore, the steam-generator can be considered as a humidifying device. On the other hand, the refrigerated works act as dehumidifiers. If both are united in the same locality, they complement each other, securing a balanced humidity. A physical exchange takes place, with one partner feeding on the other. Obviously the radius of action of the complementary pair goes far beyond the space they materially occupy. The question of how large either one of the two is, therefore, cannot be answered in terms of length, width, and height. They seem to merge with their environment.

The works responding to and influencing meteorological conditions have the following attributes in common: their appearance is only statistically determined; the changes they undergo are adjustments for the preservation of an equilibrium;

a transfer of energy takes place; and the rate at which the changes occur is so slow that one can recognize growth and decline only after an extensive length of time. These are also attributes to be found in biological growth and death. So why not plant grass?

A photoelectric cell is a sensory device. Like water in all its states, lightweight materials in air streams, and grass, it registers and processes certain information from its environment. As the name indicates, the *Photo-Electric Viewer-Programmed Coordinate System* (1968) changes its state only in the presence of people—then it responds to the geographical position of the persons in the light-sensitized room. These people become integral parts of the work for the time of their presence. As long as they stay there, it is give and take. One could regard it as a symbiotic relationship. (. . .)

Jack Burnham, an artist and author of a book entitled *Beyond Modern Sculpture: The Effects of Science and Technology on the Sculpture of This Century*, was probably the first to point out the following: the term “sculpture” is misleading and therefore inappropriate to denote works which perform interdependent, physical processes, adapt to environmental changes, influence their environment, vs. recycle and transfer energy, material, and information. Sculptures are objects of definite dimensions, a particular shape and color. Works concerned with organizational patterns as described above, however, can hardly be regarded as objects. Jack Burnham, therefore, suggested calling them “systems,” adopting a term widely used in the natural and social sciences and in various complex technologies.

The physical self-sufficiency of a system has a decisive effect on the viewer’s relationship to the work. His role might be reduced to being the source of physical energy in works conceived for viewer participation. His mere presence might be sufficient. The meteorological systems described function even when there is no viewer at all, i.e., their program operates independently of any contribution on the part of the viewer.

Whether the viewer’s physical participation is required or not, the system’s program is not effected by his knowledge, past experience, the mechanics of perceptual psychology, his emotions, or any other involvement short of his running berserk and smashing it. In the past, a sculpture or painting had meaning only at the grace of the viewer. His projections into a piece of marble or a canvas

with particular configurations provided the program and made them significant. Without his emotional and intellectual involvement, the material remained meaningless. A system's program, on the other hand, is independent of the viewer's mental participation.

Naturally, exposure to a system also releases a gulf of subjective projections in the viewer. These projections, however, can be measured relative to the system's program. The viewer's role is reduced to that of a witness.

A system is not imagined; it is objectively present; it is real.

[Talk delivered at annual meeting of Intersocietal Color Council, New York, April 1968. First published in Bitite Vinklers, "Hans Haacke," *Art International* 13, no. 7 (September 1969): 44–49, 56.]

11. *Nachrichten*, 1969–1970

During *Prospect 69*, a Teletype machine installed at the Düsseldorf Kunsthalle printed out the messages transmitted by the dpa (*Deutsche Presse Agentur*) news wire service. On the day after the transmission, the paper printouts were displayed for further reading and, eventually, on the third day, these rolls were labeled, dated, and stored in transparent tubular containers. During the time of the exhibition, the West German federal elections were held. *Prospect 69* was organized with the stated goal of providing a preview of the exhibition programs for the following year of an internationally selected group of galleries. These galleries co-financed the exhibition.

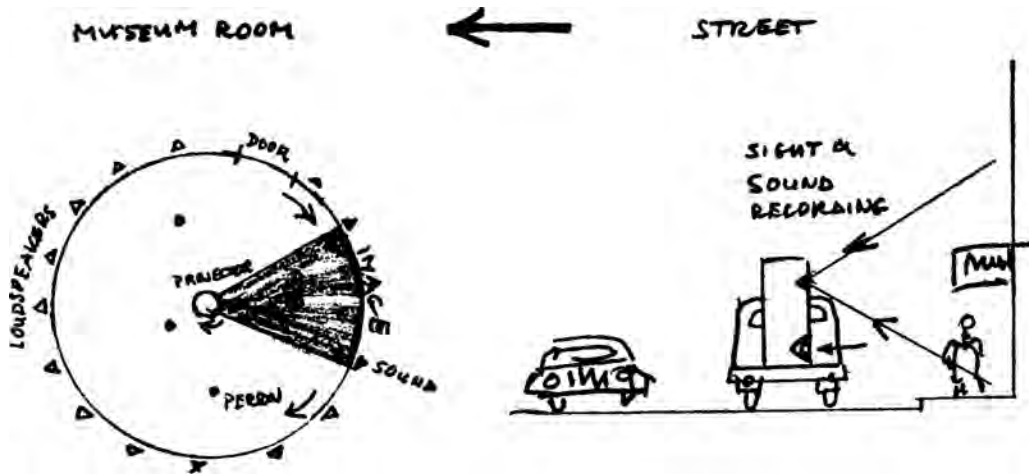
Two months later, on the occasion of a one-person exhibition at the Howard Wise Gallery in New York (November 4–20, 1969), the UPI (United Press International) news service was printed by a Teletype machine in the gallery. In this installation, as in the previous one, the printed paper rolls were displayed after the day of transmission and then stored (twenty-six plastic containers, each $3\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{3}{4}$ inches [8.9×24.8 cm]).

For an installation at the Jewish Museum as part of the *Software* exhibition (September 16–November 8, 1970), five Teletype machines simultaneously recorded the wire services of ANSA (Italian), dpa (German), the New York Times News Service, Reuters, and UPI. The printouts accumulated on the floor and were not posted or preserved beyond the time of the exhibition.

This was also the way [*Nachrichten* (News)] was presented in the exhibition *Directions 3: Eight Artists* at the Milwaukee Art Center (June 18–August 8, 1971). In Milwaukee, the wire services recorded were those of the *Los Angeles Times*/*Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, and UPI.

[First exhibited in the international group exhibition *Prospect 69*, at the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, September 18–October 12, 1969. First published in Brian Wallace, ed., *Hans Haacke: Unfinished Business*, exh. cat. (New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1986), 74–75.]

12. *Environment Transplant*, 1969



1.2 Hans Haacke, *Environment Transplant* (proposal), 1969

Installed in the center of a large white room in the shape of a vertical cylinder is equipment for visual projection mounted on a slowly turning turntable. The projections emitted from the projectors on the rotating turntable sweep over the curved walls like beams of a lighthouse. Loudspeakers are situated behind the walls all around the room so that sound emission can follow the sweeping of the projected images (a less desirable though cheaper version would be to mount a single loudspeaker on the turntable).

Corresponding to this setup in the museum, sound and image recording devices are mounted on a truck. Like the projection equipment, the recording equipment is fixed onto a slowly spinning turntable. It continuously scans the "horizon." During the exhibition hours, the truck drives through the entire Los Angeles metropolitan area constantly recording the sights and sounds of the streets it goes through.

The recorded material is immediately (i.e., without any time lag) transmitted into the museum and projected onto the walls of the room and/or emitted

through loudspeakers in the room. Visitors will sometimes stand between the projector and the “screen.” Consequently, their shadows will appear on the wall and they themselves become the “screen.” Whatever noises they make will also mingle with the street noises piped from the truck into the room.

[Proposal for the *Art and Technology* exhibition, curated by Maurice Tuchman at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 1969. The proposal was not accepted by the selections committee. First published in Edward F. Fry, ed., *Hans Haacke: Werkmonographie* (Cologne: Verlag M. DuMont Schauberg, 1972), 72.]

13. Statement on refusing to participate in São Paulo Biennial, 1969

Dear Gyorgy Kepes,

After I left you this morning I went through many hours of soul-searching as to whether I should finally accept your invitation to participate in the U.S. pavilion of the São Paulo Biennale.

As you might remember, I indicated somewhat between the lines that my status as a foreigner as well as the U.S. government's foreign policies are potential obstacles for exhibiting under U.S. auspices. I had thought about these questions as soon as I heard from Jack [Burnham] and Otto [Piene] that I might be invited. However, I had not taken them as seriously as I do now. This might explain why I left you with the impression that I would participate in the exhibition.

I have finally come to the conclusion that I cannot participate in an exhibition that represents the United States abroad.

We are unfortunately not living in a time in which art can simply be viewed and exhibited as it is.

The U.S. government is fighting an immoral war in Vietnam and is vigorously supporting fascist regimes in Brazil and in other parts of the world. At present, any exhibition under U.S. government auspices is designed and/or liable to promote the image and the policies of this government. It becomes a tool of international public relations, irrespective of the honorable intentions of the organizers and participants. With repressive tolerance, the energies of artists are being diverted into serving the needs of a policy that those very artists rightfully despise. If they do not want to become involuntary accomplices they have no choice but to refuse the showing of their work in a national representation abroad.

I very much hope you will understand my feelings. Let me assure you that I do not question your intentions and your integrity in organizing this exhibition. I have no doubts about the sincerity of your humanism. I wish my refusal to accept

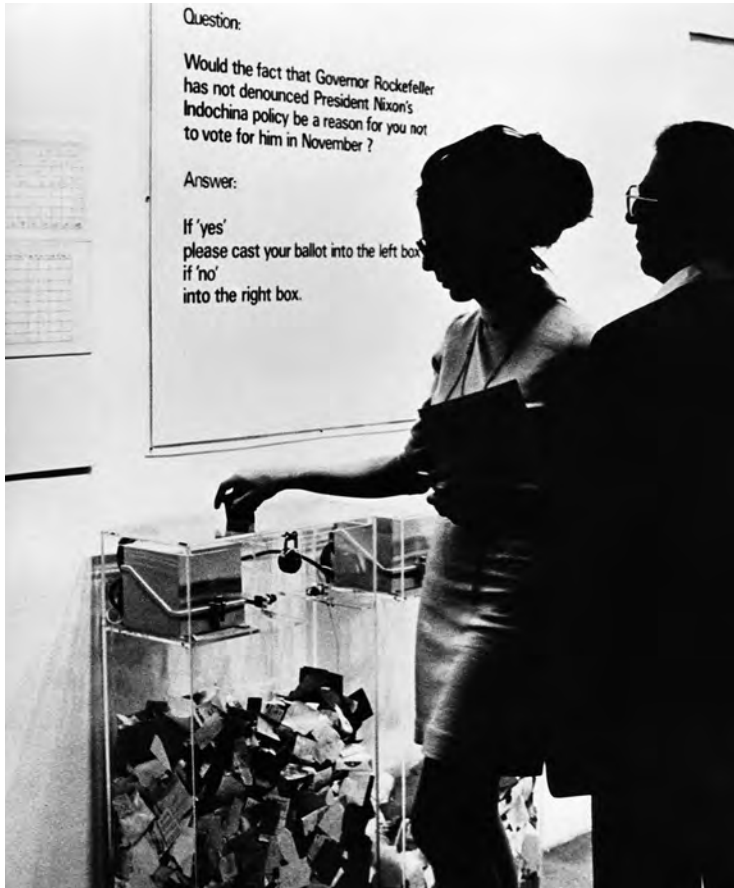
your invitation will not become an obstacle for our mutual respect and that we will remain on friendly terms.

Let me thank you for your interest in my work and the invitation to show it in São Paulo.

My best regards,

[Previously unpublished letter from Haacke to MIT Professor Gyorgy Kepes, April 22, 1969.]

14. *MOMA-Poll*, 1970



1.3 Hans Haacke, *MOMA-Poll*, 1970

Visitors of the *Information* show at the Museum of Modern Art (June 20–September 20, 1970) were asked to respond with ballots to a question posted above two transparent boxes in the exhibition. Automatic counters recorded

the ballots. By the end of the exhibition, they had tallied 25,566 (68.7 percent) “Yes” votes and 11,533 (31.3 percent) “No” votes. 37,129 visitors (12.4 percent) of a total of 299,057 visitors had participated.

The question referred to Nelson Rockefeller, a four-term Republican governor of the State of New York (1958–1973), who was running for reelection in 1970. Two months before the opening of the exhibition, the United States had bombed and invaded Cambodia, even though that country had declared itself neutral in the Vietnam conflict. In protest, large antiwar demonstrations were held throughout the United States. On the campus of Kent State University, four protesting students were shot dead by the Ohio National Guard. Many New York artists joined the “Art Strike,” an ad hoc group, which called for the temporary closing of museums.

The Rockefeller family played an important role in the founding of the Museum of Modern Art in 1929. Nelson Rockefeller was a member of its board of trustees from 1932 until his death in 1979. From 1939 to 1941 and from 1946 to 1953 he was president, and from 1957 to 1958 chairman of the board. At the time of the *Information* show, Nelson’s brother David Rockefeller served as chairman (1962–1972 and 1987–1993). Until his retirement in 1981, David was also chairman of the Chase Manhattan Bank, one of the most powerful banks of the United States. Their sister-in-law, Mrs. John D. Rockefeller III, succeeded him in the chairmanship of the Museum in 1986. David Rockefeller quotes the *MOMA-Poll*’s question in his autobiography.

[There are many earlier versions of this text. This one was written for and published in *Hans Haacke* (London: Phaidon, 2004), 9.]

15. Jeanne Siegel, “An Interview with Hans Haacke,” 1971

Jeanne Siegel: You have been called a naturalist because of your extensive interest in physical elements as well as grass, birds, and animals.

Hans Haacke: I don't consider myself a naturalist, nor for that matter a conceptualist or a kineticist, an earth artist, elementalism, minimalist, a marriage broker for art and technology, or the proud carrier of any other button that has been offered over the years. I closed my little statement of 1965 “articulate something Natural.” That has an intended double meaning. It refers to “nature,” and it means something self-understood, ordinary, uncontrived, normal, something of an everyday quality. When people see the wind stuff or the things I have done with animals, they call me a “naturalist.” Then they get confused or feel cheated when they discover, for example, my interest in using a computer to conduct a demographic survey. This is inconsistent only for those with a naive understanding of nature—nature being the sky, the Rockies, Smokey the Bear. The difference between “nature” and “technology” is only that the latter is man-made. The functioning of either one can be described by the same conceptual models, and both obviously follow the same rules of operation. It also seems that the way social organizations behave is not much different. The world does not break up into neat university departments. It is one super-system with a myriad [of] subsystems, each one more or less affected by all the others.

If you take a grand view, you can divide the world into three or four categories—the physical, the biological, the social and behavioral—each of them having interrelations with the others at one point or another. There is no hierarchy. All of them are important for the upkeep of the total system. It could be that there are times when one of these categories interests you more than another. So, for example, I now spend more thought on things in the social field, but simultaneously I am preparing a large water-cycle for the Guggenheim¹ show that uses the peculiarities of the building.

JS: When did you first become aware of systems theory?

HH: Sometime in '65 or '66 I was introduced to the concept of systems. I heard about systems analysis, and the related fields of operational research, cybernetics, etc. The concepts used in these fields seemed to apply to what I had been doing and there was a useful terminology that seemed to describe it much more succinctly than the terminology that I and other people had been using until then, so I adopted it. But using a new terminology doesn't mean that the work described has changed. A new term is nothing holy, so it can't serve as a union label. On the other hand, a clear terminology can help stimulate thinking.

JS: Jack Burnham has had a lot to say about systems and sculpture, yours in particular. When did you first meet him?

HH: I met Jack in 1962 when we were both isolated from people interested in what we were doing. Since then we have been in contact and have had a very fruitful exchange of ideas. It was Jack who introduced me to systems analysis.

JS: What is your definition of a system that is also a work of art?

HH: A system is most generally defined as a grouping of elements subject to a common plan and purpose. These elements or components interact so as to arrive at a joint goal. To separate the elements would be to destroy the system. The term was originally used in the natural sciences for understanding the behavior of physically interdependent processes. It explained phenomena of directional change, recycling, and equilibrium. I believe the term "system" should be reserved for sculptures in which a transfer of energy, material, or information occurs, and which do not depend on perceptual interpretation. I use the word "systems" exclusively for things that are not systems in terms of perception, but are physical, biological, or social entities which, I believe, are more real than perceptual titillation.

JS: Do you originate systems? Do you demonstrate existing systems?

HH: Both, but not for didactic reasons. Let me give an example. Take the *Cycle* [1969], water trickling out of holes in a hose, which I laid out around the periphery of the roof of my studio building. The water was following the uneven surface of the roof, down to a central pool from which it was pumped back into the hose. This is a system which I originated. On the other hand, the invitation to come to the same roof on a given day and view the weather was a demonstration of the meteorological system. This was later complemented by that day's weather chart and the weather statistics of the month.

JS: When did you first break away from the object?

HH: Reflective pieces that I made in 1961 evaded being an object. You had a hard time seeing what was actually there, namely, the laminated material. The reflected environment obliterated the objecthood. One of these pieces was made of two half-cylinders covered with aluminum-foil laminations. A part of the left half-cylinder is reflected in part of the right half-cylinder, and vice versa. So you have something like feedback—the two halves of the piece are optically interdependent, they are “environments” for each other. Then, of course, they also respond to the environmental conditions of light and color in the display space.

JS: Many of the works that immediately followed—the waterboxes, the *Ice Stick* [1966], and others—visually resemble minimal sculptures.

HH: I was concerned with having a shape that didn't impose itself as something important. The shape is primarily determined by technical factors: the material comes in plates or rods or tubes, in other words, in a form that mass production and versatility of commercial uses impose. The overriding requirement, however, is that I allow the process to have its way. I have to provide an appropriate container for the water, for example, or create a condition in which what I am aiming for can function best. Consequently my decisions are not stylistic (inert, hard edge, soft edge, antiform, etc.) but primarily functional. I am not aiming for a particular look, so visual terms do not apply.

Naturally everyone has preferences that determine what they choose to do and how this will finally appear. For instance, I don't like heavy-looking things, so I gravitated toward comparatively immaterial things, visually. That eventually led me to abandon the visual artist's aim of organizing perceptual patterns. If a system can be seen, I don't object to it and I take care of its looks—much the way a mathematician does with an equation.

A very important difference between the work of minimal sculptors and my work is that they were interested in inertness, whereas I was concerned with change. From the beginning the concept of change has been the ideological basis of my work. All the way down there's absolutely nothing static . . . nothing that does not change, or instigate real change. Most minimal work disregards change. Things claim to be inert, static, immovably beyond time. But the status quo is an illusion, a dangerous illusion politically.

JS: How did your attitude about change manifest itself in these works?

HH: Well, first, by the use of water I got rid of the static illusion and introduced real motion. (At first one only stumbles over the more obvious.) Then I saw the rain boxes condensing and I was very intrigued by it—there was this fantastic cycle of evaporation, condensation, then the droplets falling. That is a process evolving all by itself. This was the first time I had something that was literally responding to its environment. And, all without a little help from a friend, the response was so subtle that one had to come back after a while to notice it—it had a history. One could decipher the history of the process from the condensation patterns on the inside of the container's walls. It was like a living organism reacting in a flexible manner to its environment. It would be more appropriate, however, to liken it to our weather system.

The *Ice Stick*, it should be pointed out, is the reverse of the condensation pieces. In the condensation pieces, you have the cold on the outside and the warm inside—that's what causes condensation. With the *Ice Stick*, you have the cold inside and the warm outside. Consequently, environmental moisture settles on the exposed freezing coil and freezes there. This piece, incidentally, has been reproduced rather often, probably because of its erotic connotations. This was not intended. It's just easy to make a straight freezing coil. I am not into Surrealist

game-playing and metaphors. My stuff is very open. In other words, there's not much to be said because everything is right there. What can be said is only descriptive. There are no mysteries and psychological investigations would not reveal my secrets.

JS: How did you make the transition from physical systems to biological ones?

HH: The condensation as much as the formation of ice, figuratively speaking, [is] related to growth. It was a natural step, then, to introduce actual growth—namely, biological growth. The grass pieces went through a life cycle: they were seeded a few days before the exhibition; the seedlings came out of the ground at the time of the opening of the exhibition, they grew during the show, and at the end of the exhibition they were about to die.

JS: Growth is obviously a manifestation of change. Are there conditions other than change upon which a work can depend?

HH: Interference in an existing situation which thereby affects it—this is something that intrigues me. I've brought water into a rather dry forest, a sort of irrigation system, which then changed the existing vegetation.

JS: Is there any difference in communication between social systems and physical or biological ones?

HH: For physical or biological processes to take their course, there is no need for the presence of a viewer—unless, as with some participatory works, his physical energy is required (he then becomes an indispensable part of the system's physical environment). However, there is no need for *anybody* to get mentally involved. These systems function on their own, since their operation does not take place in the viewer's mind (naturally this does not prevent a mental or emotional response).

The rigging of a social situation, however, usually follows a different pattern. There the process takes place exclusively in the minds of people. Without participants there is no social set. Take the *MOMA-Poll* in last year's *Information*

show: the work was based on a particular political situation circumscribed by the Indochina War, [President Richard] Nixon's and [Nelson Aldrich] Rockefeller's involvement in it, MOMA's close ties to both, my own little quarrels with the museum as part of the Art Workers' Coalition's activities, and then all the minds of the people who had a stake in this game—the Vietcong as much as the Scarsdale lady on her culture tour to the city. The result of the poll—approximately 2 to 1 against Rockefeller/Nixon and the war—is only the top of the iceberg. The figures are not quite reliable because MOMA, as usual, did not follow instructions, and polls have to be taken with a grain of salt.

Emily Genauer gave us a little glimpse of the larger base of the work in her review of the show. She wrote: "One may wonder at the humor (propriety, obviously, is too archaic a concept even to consider) of such poll-taking in a museum founded by the governor's mother, headed now by his brother, and served by himself and other members of his family in important financial and administrative capacities since its founding 40 years ago." With this little paragraph she provided some of the background for the work that was not intelligible for the politically less-informed visitors of the museum. She also articulated feelings that are shared by the top people at numerous museums. It goes like this: We are the guardians of culture. We honor artists by inviting them to show in *our* museum, we want them to behave like guests, proper, polite, and grateful. After all, we have put up the dough for this place.

The energy of information interests me a lot. Information presented at the right time and in the right place can be potentially very powerful. It can affect the general social fabric. Such things go beyond established high culture as it has been perpetrated by a taste-directed art industry. Of course, I don't believe that artists really wield any significant power. At best, one can focus attention. But every little bit helps. In concert with other people's activities outside the art scene, maybe the social climate of society can be changed. Anyway, when you work with the "real stuff" you have to think about potential consequences. A lot of things would never enter the decision-making process if one worked with symbolic representations that have to be weighed carefully. If you work with real-time systems, well, you probably go beyond [Marcel] Duchamp's position. Real-time systems are double agents. They might run under the heading "art," but this

culturization does not prevent them from operating as normal. The *MOMA-Poll* had even more energy in the museum than it would have had in the street—real socio-political energy, not awe-inspiring symbolism.

JS: Can you describe a social work that is not political?

HH: Probably all things dealing with social situations are to a greater or lesser degree political. Take *Gallery-Goer's Birthplace and Residence Profile*. I asked the people that came to my exhibition to mark with a blue pin on large maps where they were living. After the show I traveled to all those spots on the Manhattan map that were marked by a blue pin and took a photograph of the building or approximately that location. I came up with about 730 photographs for Manhattan (naturally not every visitor participated in the game). The photographs were enlarged to 5" by 7" They will be displayed on the wall of the Guggenheim according to a geographical score. All those spots that were east of Fifth Avenue go upward on the wall from a horizontal center line, those west go downward. The respective distance from Fifth Avenue determines the sequence of pictures East and West. The Fifth Avenue spine takes up approximately thirty-six yards of wall space. Sometimes the photographs reach up to the ceiling, on other occasions (e.g., there is only one on the west side and none on the east side) it becomes a very jagged distribution. The "composition" is a composition determined by the information provided by the gallery goers. No visual considerations play a role.

All this sounds very innocent and apolitical. The information I collected, however, is sociologically quite revealing. The public of commercial art galleries, and probably that of museums, lives in easily identifiable and restricted areas. The main concentrations are on the upper West Side (Central Park and adjoining blocks, and West End Avenue with adjoining blocks), the Upper East Side, somewhat heavier in the Madison–Park Avenue areas: then below 23rd Street on the East and West sides with clusters on the Lower East Side and [in] the loft district. The photographs give an idea of the economic and social fabric of the immediate neighborhood of the gallery goers. Naturally the Lower East Side pins were not put there by Puerto Ricans. Puerto Ricans and blacks (Harlem is practically not represented) do not take part in an art scene that is obviously

dominated by the middle and upper income strata of society or their dropout children. I leave it up to you as far as how you evaluate this situation. You continue the work by drawing your own conclusions from the information presented.

[This interview, conducted in early 1971, was first published in *Arts Magazine* 45, no. 7 (New York, May 1971): 18–21.]

16. "Correspondence: Guggenheim," 1971

APRIL 1, 1971:
HANS HAACKE'S ONE-MAN SHOW
CANCELLED BY GUGGENHEIM FOR
ALLEGED SOCIAL & POLITICAL
CONTENT

APRIL 26, 1971:
CURATOR ED FRY FIRED (WITH 4
DAYS' NOTICE) FOR SUPPORTING
HAACKE & ARTISTS' RIGHTS
OF FREE EXPRESSION

MAY 1, 1971:
ARTISTS DEMONSTRATE AT
THE GUGGENHEIM IN SUPPORT
OF HAACKE & AGAINST ART
CENSORSHIP; PETITION
CIRCULATED INTERNATIONALLY
TO CENSURE GUGGENHEIM &
DIRECTOR THOMAS MESSER ...
NEXT? AWC MAY 1, 1971

1.4 Art Workers' Coalition leaflet (cover design by Carl Andre), 1971

From: Hans Haacke

To: All interested parties

Re: Cancellation of Haacke one-man exhibition at Guggenheim Museum

Date: New York, April 3, 1971

On April 1, 1971, I was informed by Thomas Messer, director of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, that he had canceled the exhibition of my work scheduled to open on April 30, 1971, because three major works for the show dealt with specific social situations. In his opinion, such subjects do not belong in museums unless they come in a generalized or symbolic form.

Despite my offer to modify two of the works in ways that would not affect their integrity, but which eliminated all grounds for Mr. Messer's charge of "muckraking," he persisted in his position.

Mr. Messer is wrong on two counts: First, in his confusion of the political stand which an artist's work may assert with a political stand taken by the museum that shows this work; second, in his assumption that my pieces advocate any political cause. They do not.

Two of the three works are presentations of large Manhattan real estate holdings (photographs of the facades of the properties and documentary information collected from the public records of the County Clerk's office). The works contain no evaluative comment. One set of holdings is mainly slum-located properties owned by a group of people related by family and business ties. The other system is the extensive real estate interests, largely in commercial properties, held by two partners.

On March 25, I met Mr. Messer's objections of possible libel and "muckraking" by substituting fictitious names for the principals and generalizing their addresses.

The third work is a poll of the Guggenheim Museum's visitors, consisting of ten demographic questions (age, sex, education, etc.) and ten opinion questions on current socio-political issues ranging from "Do you sympathize with Women's Lib?" to "In your opinion, should the general orientation of the country be more conservative or less conservative?"

The answers to the questions are to be tabulated and posted daily as part of the piece. Following standard polling practices, I tried to frame the questions so that they do not assert a political stance, are not inflammatory, and do not prejudice the answers. I have conducted polls of the art public previously at the Howard Wise Gallery, at the Museum of Modern Art, and the Jewish Museum.

The three pieces in question are examples of the “real-time systems” which have constituted my work for many years. A brief explanatory statement about my work was contained in the announcement for my last New York show at The Howard Wise Gallery in 1969:

The working premise is to think in terms of systems; the production of systems, the interference with and the exposure of existing systems. Such an approach is concerned with the operational structure of organizations, in which transfer of information, energy and/or material occurs. Systems can be physical, biological or social, they can be man-made, naturally existing, or a combination of any of the above. In all cases verifiable processes are referred to.

Since the Guggenheim invitation resulted from that show, Mr. Messer could have had no doubts about the nature of my work. In turn, I had no reason to suspect that any of my work was unacceptable to the Museum. Reference to our social and political environment by many different artists and in many different forms is a frequent feature at exhibitions in New York museums.

It was only during this past January that I learned, for the first time and after working on the show for more than six months, that Mr. Messer had any qualms about my work with social systems, and it was not until mid-March that he told me specifically that the Guggenheim Museum had a strict policy of barring work that referred to the social environment in other than symbolic, indirect, or generalized ways.

After accepting the Guggenheim invitation a year ago, I deferred invitations to three other museum shows in Paris, Krefeld, and Buenos Aires, so that I could concentrate my energies upon this project.

If I wanted to remain true to my philosophical premises, I could not comply with Mr. Messer’s insistent demands to essentially modify or eliminate the three works. Verifiability is a major ingredient of the social, biological, and physical

systems which I consider as mutually complementary parts of an encompassing whole.

Whatever one's aesthetic opinion may be, it would seem to be obvious that the Museum has no right to ban or censor the work of an invited artist just because it may deal with political or social issues. By doing so, Mr. Messer is guilty of censorship and infringes on the artist's right to free expression within the walls of the Guggenheim Museum.

Mr. Messer has taken a stand which puts him completely at variance with the professed attitudes of all of the world's major museums, except for those located in countries under totalitarian domination and must put him in potential conflict with every artist who accepts an invitation to show his work at the Guggenheim Museum.

[Widely disseminated memo. Written by Haacke on April 3, 1971.]

17. ***Shapolsky et al. Manhattan Real Estate Holdings, A Real-Time Social System, as of May 1, 1971, 1971***

One hundred forty-two photos of building facades and empty lots, with typewritten information on properties, as culled from the New York County Clerk's records, each 20×7 inch[es] (51×18 cm); two excerpts of a map of New York (Lower East Side and Harlem) with properties marked, and six charts outlining business relations within a real estate group, each 24×20 inch[es] (61×51 cm).



1.5 ***Hans Haacke, Shapolsky et al. Manhattan Real Estate Holdings, a Real-Time Social System, as of May 1, 1971, 1971***

The Shapolsky group was nominally owned by about seventy different corporations, which frequently bought, sold, and mortgaged real estate within the group. The boards included at least one member of the Shapolsky family or someone with close ties to the family. The properties were located predominantly on the Lower East Side and in Harlem—in 1971 both slum areas of New York City—where they constituted the largest concentration of real estate under the control of a single group. What amounted to self-dealing had tax advantages (mortgage payments are tax deductible) and obscured the actual ownership of the properties. The information for the work was culled from public records of the New York County Clerk's Office.

Harry Shapolsky appears to have been the key figure of the group. He was described by the New York District Attorney's Office as a "front for high officials of the Department of Buildings." He was indicted for bribing building inspectors. In 1959, he was convicted of rent gouging because he had taken under-the-table payments from Puerto Rican tenants in exchange for allowing them to rent apartments in his buildings on the Lower East Side. He received a \$4,000 fine and a suspended jail sentence of four years. The district attorney severely criticized the suspension of the jail sentence, saying: "There have been a number of rent gougers in the past who have gone to jail, and none has been as notorious as Shapolsky." The district attorney further accused Harry Shapolsky of having "ruthlessly exploited the shortage of housing space."

In 1995, the New York radio station WMCA listed Harry Shapolsky among about a dozen slumlords who were "hiding behind the obscurity of corporate names." It also reported that he owned or controlled some two hundred old-law tenements, many of which he had been buying and selling or foreclosing in inside deals, thereby increasing his profits. Moreover, it was revealed that the IRS (U.S. Tax Authority) was disputing Shapolsky's declaration of \$29,000 a djusted taxable income for 1955. According to IRS computations, his income amounted to \$417,697.

In 1971, Thomas Messer, then the director of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, rejected *Shapolsky et al. Manhattan Real Estate Holdings, a Real-Time Social System, as of May 1, 1971*, and two other works, which had been made for a solo exhibition at the museum. He canceled the exhibition six weeks before the opening when the artist refused to withdraw the disputed works. Messer called

them “inappropriate” for exhibition at the museum and stated he had had to “fend off an alien substance that had entered the art museum organism.” Edward F. Fry, curator of the exhibition, was fired when he publicly defended the works. Artists held a protest demonstration in the museum, and over one hundred pledged not to exhibit at the Guggenheim “until the policy of art censorship and its advocates are changed.” Many commentators mistakenly assumed that the trustees of the museum were linked to the Shapolsky real estate group. There is no evidence to that effect.

[There are many earlier versions of this text. This is a shortened version of a text written for the exhibition catalog *Hans Haacke: “Obra Social”* (Barcelona: Fundació Antoni Tàpies, 1995), 70–72.]

18. "Provisional Remarks," 1971

In 1963 I built my first weather box. It was a rectangular container, made of clear plastic, in which I sealed some distilled water. Air currents, light entering the container, and changes in temperature made the internal temperature rise above the outside temperature and led to the condensation of the evaporating water on the inside walls of the box. If a condensation droplet gained a certain size, it would fall or run down the pane erasing all other drops in its way. The trace left behind would be eventually covered again with a veil of droplets, although their size would differ from that of the older ones. The dew point is not a fixed figure on the temperature scale, but is itself dependent on a delicate constellation of ever-changing factors. I was very excited about the subtle communication with a seemingly sealed off environment and the complexity of interrelated conditions determining the meteorological process. This was an open system, a system responsive to changes in its environment. Ambient climatic changes were answered by a transfer of energy and material inside the boxes in a self-regulatory way, with the goal of maintaining equilibrium.

Such a system differed essentially from sculpture as I knew it, because its operational program was in no way determined by visual considerations, although the veil of droplets remained visually appealing. It functioned independently of a viewer and thus carried meaning on its own terms, meaning in the sense of an organized, goal-seeking whole. A viewer was relegated to the role of witness to a process that would evolve without him. He was naturally not limited in his associative vagaries, which in turn could invest this process with a sign value and a cultural meaning. However, irrespective of what he was reading into it, the dynamic system took its own course. I was dealing with real stuff—on its own terms.

This implied a departure from generally accepted attitudes in the visual arts. Here, no attempt to solve formal "problems" was made. It was the behavior of a meteorological system that determined the appearance. It gave only clues to what was actually happening. The interdependent adjustments and the cause for these adjustments remained invisible. Considerations about the arrangement of visual material, the composition of colors, shapes, textures, and spaces, became irrelevant and stylistic innovations are without interest. The structuring of the elements, the materials, and conditions for this and other systems that I worked

with became a function of their performance. Although my interest and later on the interest of an art-oriented public in such processes was culturally determined, the processes themselves did not share the mythical character of art and were not affected by what was read into them. They were subject only to the laws of nature.

If real-time systems are introduced into an art context, chickens hatching and growing up in a museum, for example, a very strange dialectic of transformation and sameness occurs. The chickens in the museum, naturally, are still the same kind of chickens that would also have been born from these eggs on a chicken farm; and if they are sent to a farm at the end of the exhibition, they are indistinguishable from all other chickens there. Condensation on a car window, for that matter, is physically also no different from the condensation in my weather box. As has been said above, these processes follow their own pattern of behavior that is totally immune to the cultural context into which they are placed. On the other hand, the museum or any other cultural frame invests real-time systems with an additional program (meaning). Such a super-structure for a “readymade” process is determined by the historical and cultural context in which the system receives attention. In this respect, it does not differ from other culturally impregnated activities and presentations (painting, sculpture, poetry, etc.). The aborigines of the Amazon would attribute value to neither a Raphael nor a Duchamp readymade.

The witness and/or participant in a real-time system that evolves in a cultural context, recognized by him as such, therefore responds in an ambiguous way; he is caught seeing something which proceeds according to its own terms, at the same time realizing that he is using it as a screen for his own culturally biased projections. This oscillatory state can exist only with real-time systems; painting and sculpture of the traditional mode operate exclusively as projection screens—they have no life of their own.

I suspect that this is the point in which *real-time* “readymades” or “assisted readymades” also differ from the Duchampian premise. Duchamp was probably the first to expose the mechanism that transforms a piece of material into “art.” His elevation of readymade *objects* to a culturally significant level gave them a new meaning. But in doing so, he divested them of their original program. Although memories of that program lingered (in fact without that knowledge, the new meaning would be different), neither he nor the visitors to a Duchamp exhibition, in fact, continued to use the urinal as usual. In contrast to this, real-

time systems are not objects and the cultural attention directed to them does not stop or change the ongoing process. As long as no attempt is made to present documentary material (photographs, verbal descriptions, maps, and so on) of a real-time system as the thing itself, the same holds true for processes that occur outside and are simultaneously or subsequently reported in a cultural context.

This is not the place to talk about all the other physical and biological situations that I rigged with a great variety of elements in a multitude of different environmental circumstances. The principle of real-time systems in which interdependent processes of energy, material, and/or information occur has been indicated and it pervades all of them.

A few remarks should be devoted to my expansion into the field of socio-political systems. Artists as well as other people are operating in a given socio-political environment: their immediate group of friends and their family, their jobs, and the art scene. Beyond this parochial environment they are naturally also infinitesimally small and powerless elements in the larger social fabric of their respective countries and the political and ideological power blocks of the world. It has not been long since artists began to realize the role they have unconsciously been playing as political beings, and a painful learning process seems still to be ahead.

Weather boxes have seemingly nothing to do with socio-political situations; however, even on the superficial level of figurative speech, there are many similarities. We speak of political currents, pressure, of a political climate and a political balance, political interdependence, a low in relations between two countries, political thaw, and the rest. Meteorological terms are abundant. More important, though, beyond such analogies, which might let unwanted symbolism in through the back door, systems analysts seem to be convinced that on a conceptual level, physical and biological phenomena have their equivalents in the social and behavioral sphere, that the same vocabulary applies, and that conditions in any one of these areas can be described by the same or related equations. In other words, these are not correspondences due to an imaginary language, but based on specifiable isomorphisms.

Having stepped from the perceptually oriented and culturally controlled imagery of the visual arts to the presentation or interference in physical and/or biological systems in real time, the need arose to complete the areas of my

activities with work also in the socio-political field, which affects our lives at least as much as the physical and biological determinants of our bodies and our environment. I was no doubt pushed in this direction by the general political awakening that followed years of absolute apathy after World War II.

Physical and biological processes are per se apolitical, although human decisions for the structuring of either one are naturally ideologically determined, as, for example, the Bomb and the Pill. Social phenomena are as real as physical or biological ones; we all participate in any number of social systems and are affected by them. Their verifiability, however, seems to be limited because they often elude the measuring stick; and since the researcher is, himself, a social being, he, by necessity, influences the object of investigation and is infinitely more encumbered than his colleague in the natural sciences.

Consequently, any work done with and in a given social situation cannot remain detached from its cultural and ideological context. It differs essentially, therefore, from the functional self-sufficiency of a weather box. In fact, it is precisely the exchange of necessarily biased information between the members of a social set that provides the energy on which social relations evolve. The injection of any new element into a given social organism will have consequences, no matter how small they may be. Often the repercussions cannot be predicted or they take a course contrary to what was expected. Laboratory conditions are practically nonexistent. As in dealing with “the real stuff” in physical and biological systems, perhaps more so, one has to weigh carefully the prospective outcome of undertakings in the social field. One’s responsibilities increase; however, this also gives the satisfaction of being taken as a bit more than a court-jester, with the danger of not being forgiven everything.

Here is a modest example of a work that I produced for a given socio-political situation. In response to an invitation to participate in the *Information* show, held by the New York Museum of Modern Art during the summer of 1970, I entered two transparent ballot boxes, each equipped with automatic counting devices, into which visitors to the exhibition were invited to drop ballots signifying their response to a yes-no question. The question was: “Would the fact that Governor Rockefeller has not denounced President Nixon’s Indochina policy be a reason for you not to vote for him in November?” By the end of the exhibition the counter of



1.6 Hans Haacke, *John Weber Gallery Visitors' Profile 2*, 1973

JOHN WEBER GALLERY VISITORS' PROFILE 2		by Hans Haacke	
A work in progress during his exhibition at the J. Weber Galler, 420 W. Broadway, NYC, April 28 – May 17, 1973.			
Please answer by punching out bridge between edge and hole next to the answer of your choice.			
as artist	Do you have a professional interest in art?	What do you think is the approximate proportion of Nixon sympathizers among art museum trustees?	100 % 75 % 50 % 25 % 0 % don't know
as art/art history student			
other professional interest			
no professional interest			
Manhattan	Where do you live?	What do you think is the approximate proportion of Nixon sympathizers among visitors to contemporary art exhibitions?	100 % 75 % 50 % 25 % 0 % don't know
Brooklyn			
Queens			
Bronx			
Richmond			
adjoining counties			
elsewhere North/Middle Atlantic States			
South Atlantic States			
Central and Mountain States			
Pacific States			
abroad			
favor	Does your notion of art favor, tolerate, or reject works that make deliberate reference to socio-political things?	What was your personal income in 1972 (before taxes)?	none \$1 - 1999 \$2000 - 4999 \$5000 - 9999 \$10000 - 14999 \$15000 - 19999 \$20000 - 24999 \$25000 - 29999 over \$30000
tolerate			
reject			
don't know			
yes, 50 %	Do you think, as a matter of principal, that all group shows should include women artists?	Sex?	male female
yes, but no specified quota			
sex should be no criterion			
don't know			

Continued

1.7 Hans Haacke, *John Weber Gallery Visitors' Profile 2*, 1973. Front of two-sided keypunch card.

none \$1 — 1999 \$2000 — 4999 \$5000 — 14999 \$15000 — 29999 over \$30000	How much money have you spent on buying art(total)?	Do you think the preferences of those who financially back the art world influence the kind of work artists produce?	yes, a lot somewhat slightly not at all don't know
only to themselves patrons of museum museum membership museum staff artists' representatives publicly elected officials American Association of Museums College Art Association National Endowment for the Arts Associated Councils of the Arts foundation representatives other(write in) _____ don't know	To whom should the trustees of art museums be accountable(more than one can be named)?	Have you ever lived or worked for more than one half year in a poverty area? It has been charged that the present U.S. Government is catering to business interests. Do you think this is the case?	yes no always often occasionally never don't know
responsible not responsible don't know	Some people say President Nixon is ultimately responsible for the Watergate scheme. Do you agree?	Do you think the collectors who buy the kind of art you like, share your political/ideological opinions?	generally yes generally no don't know
poverty lower middle income middle income upper middle income wealthy	How would you characterize the socio-economic status of your parents?	How old are you?	under 18 years 18 - 24 years 25 - 30 years 31 - 35 years 36 - 45 years 46 - 55 years 56 - 65 years over 65 years
Catholic Protestant Jewish other mixed none	What is the religious background of your family?	Would your standard of living be affected, if no more art of living artists were bought? Do you daily read the political section of a newspaper? Do you think the visitors of the J. Weber Gallery who participated in the poll differed from those who did not?	yes no don't know yes no very different somewhat d. essentially same don't know
Thank you. Drop the card into the ballot box. Your answers will be tabulated with the answers of all other visitors. Intermediate results will be posted during the exhibition.			

1.8 Hans Haacke, *John Weber Gallery Visitors' Profile 2*, 1973. Back of two-sided keypunch card.

the YES-box had made 25,566 registrations, the NO-box had a tally of 11,53. For a number of reasons the result has to be taken with a grain of salt, although the general trend seems to be trustworthy.

Emily Genauer commented [in *Newsday*] on the *MOMA-Poll* in her review of the “Information” show as follows: “One may wonder at the humor (propriety, obviously is too archaic a concept even to consider) of such poll-taking in a museum founded by the governor’s mother, headed now by his brother, and served by himself and other members of his family in important financial and administrative capacities since its founding forty years ago.” The reviewer succinctly provided the necessary background information for the understanding of the socio-political field for which this work was designed.

Naturally, it would have been naive to assume that this poll taking could affect the outcome of the 1970 gubernatorial elections, in which Nelson Rockefeller enjoyed solid conservative support.

It should be noted that in this instance the museum acted not only as the cultural backdrop but also as a vital ingredient of the social constellation of the work itself. The museum’s ties to the Rockefellers, Nixon, and, in turn, their involvement in the Indochina war, as much as its policy to present a serene image of itself to an unsuspecting public, were part of this real-time system.

The embarrassment and indignation caused are indicative of the double-agent character of a real-time social system operating in an art context. On one hand, the *MOMA-Poll* was like any other item exhibited by the museum, something invested with the aura of culture and special significance. From experience we know that a process, as much as a painting, can be elevated into the realm of art. On the other hand, as mentioned above, such benediction cannot stop the process from continuing. In the case of this particular situation, the museum pedestal not only failed to emasculate the work, but endowed it with social power that it did not enjoy in the studio. This potential is not restricted to the premises of the museum. Any repercussions that it might have had and might still have beyond West 53rd Street, including those that might derive from this report, are part of the work. This demonstrates that works operating in real time must not be geographically defined nor can one say when the work is completed. Conceivably the situation into which a new element was injected has passed when the process unleashed at that moment has gained its greatest potential.

These questions and your answers are part of

Hans Haacke's DOCUMENTA-VISITORS' PROFILE

a work in progress during documenta 5.

Please fill out this questionnaire

and drop it into the box

provided for this. Don't sign.

Example. () =

Use a pencil. () =

Only horizontal lines! () =

1 Do you have a professional interest in art, e.g. artist, critic, dealer, etc.?	yes no	13 Have you ever taken one of the following drugs (without prescription)?	hashish, marihuana opium morphium, heroin codein LSD, amphetamine other hallucinogenic drugs amphetamines barbiturates none
2 Do you think an artist who exhibits a painting depicting Frank Josef Strauß with a swastika, should be prosecuted?	yes no	14 How old are you?	under 20 years 20 - 25 years 25 - 30 years 30 - 35 years 35 - 40 years 40 - 45 years over 45 years
3 What school do you or did you attend last?	Grade/Primary School Secondary/High School Junior College Professional/Trade School Undergraduate/Graduate School	15 Do you think the interests of big industry are generally compatible with the common good?	yes no don't know
4 The Ostpolitik of which party do you prefer?	the Ostpolitik of the SPD-FDP of the CDU/CSU don't know	16 Would you be willing to pay higher taxes and/or prices for the rehabilitation of the environment?	yes no don't know
5 Do you think members of communist organizations should not be appointed to positions in the civil service?	yes no don't know	17 What is your net income per month?	under 700 700 - 1000 1000 - 1400 1400 - 1800 1800 - 2500 2500 - 3500 over 3500
6 Where do you live?	in Kassel within 40 km of Kassel elsewhere in Hesse elsewhere in the Federal Republic abroad	18 Do you think the tax rate for an annual income of more than 200,000 DM should be raised to 60%?	yes no don't know
7 Are you for the legalization of abortions?	yes, generally only during the first 3 months generally only in case of mental/social hardship & rape only if health of mother/child is in danger no, under no circumstances	19 What is or was your profession?	unskilled worker skilled worker employee(lower echelon) employee(qualified supervisor) senior executive civil servant(lower echelon) civil servant(middle echelon) civil servant(upper echelon) professional self-employed(others) farmer housewife armed forces grade/highschool student apprentice university student
8 Sex?	male female	20 Are you in favor of the City of Kassel, the State of Hesse and the Federal Republic financing documenta 5 with your tax money?	yes no don't know
9 What is your religion?	Protestant Catholic other none		
10 What do you think about the influence of the churches in the Federal Republic?	it is too little too great just right don't know		
11 What do you think about the influence of the unions in the Federal Republic?	it is too little too great just right don't know		
12 If elections were held today, which party would you vote for?	SPD CDU/CSU FDP NPD DKP other none, don't know		

Thank you for your cooperation. Your answers will be processed by computer. The results will be posted in the exhibition.

The *MOMA-Poll* was harmless. At best it was embarrassing for the museum and its backers and served as a valve for the anger of a surprisingly large proportion of the visitors. Work in the socio-political field, however, must not be restricted to the rigging of a satirical setting and dealing with art-world figures.

[New York, February 1971, written for the catalog of a solo exhibition that was to have opened in May 1971 at the Guggenheim Museum.]

Continued (after cancellation of the exhibition):

My experience with the Guggenheim Museum in the spring of 1971 might illustrate this point. Four weeks before the scheduled opening of a one-man exhibition at the Museum, the show was canceled. Thomas Messer, the

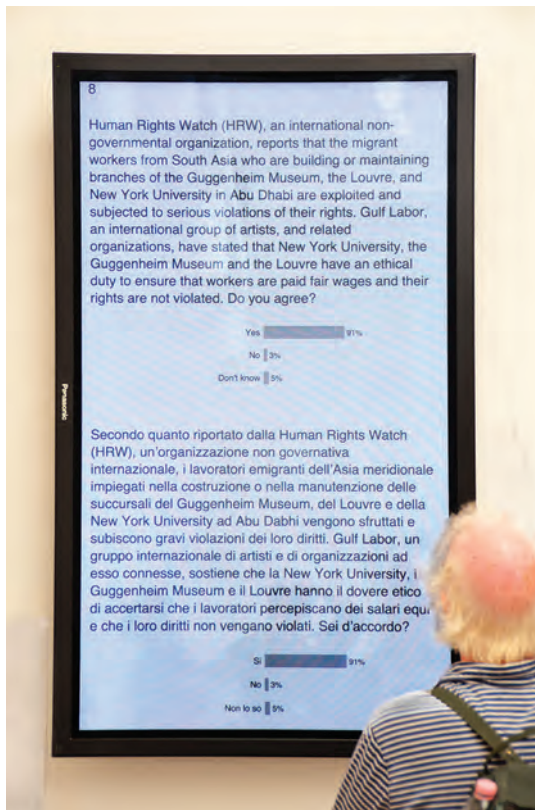


- 1.10 **Hans Haacke, *World Poll* (Venice Biennale), 2015.** Twenty multiple-choice questions to be answered on iPads.

Guggenheim Museum's director, objected to three social systems that I had prepared for the exhibition.

Two of the three censored pieces were representations of current large Manhattan real-estate holdings: photographs of the facades of the properties, maps indicating their location, and documentary information on ownership and mortgages culled from the public records of the New York County Clerk's office. The works contained no evaluative content and were legally unassailable.

The third piece was to be a significantly enlarged version of my poll at the Museum of Modern Art, a survey of the Guggenheim Museum's visitors



1.11 Hans Haacke, *World Poll* (Venice Biennale), 2015. Intermediate results on question no. 8.

consisting of ten demographic questions and ten questions on current socio-political issues. The answers, given voluntarily and anonymously, were to be tabulated and posted daily.

In a letter giving his reasons for the cancellation, Mr. Messer claimed there was danger that the Guggenheim Museum would be sued for libel by the two real-estate groups. In the judgment of several lawyers intimately familiar with the material in question, however, there were no grounds for a libel suit because the information I planned to display is true, it is on public record, the manner of presentation was not defamatory, and, while retaining corporate names, I had agreed to replace all names of individuals. The opinion of these lawyers was tested successfully through the subsequent publication of significant portions of the two real-estate systems in several art magazines. None of them was sued. Although Mr. Messer's legal reasoning does not stand up under scrutiny, it duped many unfamiliar with the law and thus served as a useful smoke screen for the more dubious reasons behind the cancellation.

In the aforementioned letter Mr. Messer pontificated "that art may have social and political *consequences* but these, we believe, are furthered by indirection and by the generalized exemplary force that works of art may exert upon the environment," and later he postulated "symbolic significance" to be a criterion for rendering a work "esthetically susceptible and thereby a fit subject matter for a Museum." His understanding of "symbolic significance" or, as he also refers to it, "symbolic expression," requires the use of a metaphoric language with rather tenuous ties to the object of the metaphor and therefore suitable for the sublimation of conflicts.

What Mr. Messer is objecting to is obviously the double nature of real-time systems, their potency both in the art context and on their home turf. Had the substance of the three works been historically removed or had it been coded without the provision of a key, my exhibition would not have been canceled. Mr. Messer complained that I had sacrificed the "immunity" of a work of art by my insistence on being specific and presenting topical and verifiable information.

The very principle of a real-time system, its actuality, is considered by Mr. Messer a poison, when he writes, "the choice was between the acceptance of or the rejection of an alien substance that had entered the art museum organism."

Human communication, and consequently social systems, functions only by way of some sort of language. Like the entries in the public record pointing to real-time property interests, the signs of the medieval painter, e.g., were well defined and intelligible. Both make unambiguous reference to signifieds, the existence of which is not doubted by their contemporary users (the believer fully accepted the stories of the *biblia pauperum* as having actually occurred; no distinction between God's time and physical time was made). In contrast to this clear "symbolic expression," the color-code without key that Mr. Messer suggested, was not meant to communicate but to obscure and, by lifting the content onto an ideal plane, severed all connections to the actual world. To have real-time systems abide by the canons developed for works operating in an ideal time and space would, in effect, deny their right of existence and disregard *das Kunstwollen* (Alois Riegl's recognition that each era chooses the language most appropriate to communicate).

A close examination would probably reveal that Mr. Messer's criterion of "immunity" is not fulfilled by a great number of works and even entire periods and cultures presently accepted in the history of art. Arguments for abstract art, legitimate at the beginning of this century, are now used to defend attitudes hostile to enlightenment and greater social awareness.

It is significant that the conflict came to a head over "real stuff" of a socio-political nature, although none of the other twelve biological and physical systems for the show fulfilled Mr. Messer's criteria of indirection, generalization, and symbolism. Mere focusing on large-scale private property without comment was deemed "inappropriate" and so was the solicitation and collection of opinions on current socio-political issues. Preventing the free flow of information is the trademark of totalitarian regimes. In Mr. Messer's view, the accumulation of large capital should remain shrouded under a veil of mystery so that it will not become subject to public scrutiny. Similar to the poll I conducted at the Museum of Modern Art, the context in which such a survey is held becomes a vital ingredient of the system. In withholding the museum context, Mr. Messer protected the interests of those who might profit from the museum public's lack of awareness of its own role in society, an awareness that might result in changing attitudes and commitments. Concomitant with this goes his avoidance of putting the Museum and its present constituency into a larger social perspective with possibly a new self-understanding and different responsibilities and programming. The

cancellation of the exhibition no doubt was a political act. It clearly violated the policy Mr. Messer himself has set for the Guggenheim Museum, which “excludes active engagement toward social and political ends.”

By censoring the show, Mr. Messer furnished one of the vital elements of a real-time social system, as complex and possibly more consequential than those he tried to avoid. The complementary element was my own decision to prefer having the exhibition not take place than to submit to his ultimatum that I abandon the three works. However, there would have been no consequences to speak of had I pulled in my tail and not immediately issued a public statement and assured its widest possible circulation (a copy of Mr. Messer’s letter giving his reasons for the cancellation was attached). I thus plugged the affair into the larger environment of the artistically and politically alert public.

Unwittingly, Mr. Messer is playing the role of the protagonist in a large-scale real-time social system. As with earlier physical and biological systems, the provision of some key elements set an environmentally controlled process in motion, the ramifications and consequences of which still remain uncertain. The affair was covered in numerous newspapers, periodicals, on radio and television, both in the United States and in Europe. Edward Fry, the curator of the show, was fired because he publicly denounced the cancellation. An exhibition boycott against the Guggenheim Museum has been declared by more than 130 artists who stated, “Believing that by canceling Hans Haacke’s show, Thomas Messer, director of the Guggenheim Museum, has betrayed the cause of free art and the charter of his own institution, we the undersigned artists join in refusing to allow our works to be exhibited in the Guggenheim until the policy of art censorship and its advocates are changed.”

Whatever the final outcome of the conflict will be, I am confident it will increase the awareness of all participants esthetically as much as politically. It has and will result in changing attitudes and will affect a number of decisions for the future.

[The first part of this text was intended for the exhibition catalog of a solo show that was to have opened in May 1971 at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, and the second part was written in the summer of 1971, after the cancellation of the exhibition. The entire text was first published, translated into German, as

“Provisorische Bemerkungen zur Absage meiner Ausstellung im Guggenheim Museum,” in Edward F. Fry, ed., *Hans Haacke: Werkmonographie* (Cologne: DuMont Schauberg, 1972), 60–70. It was republished in the original English as “Provisional Remarks,” in Matthias Flügge and Robert Fleck, eds., *Hans Haacke, for real: Works 1959–2006*, exh. cat. (Düsseldorf: Richter Verlag, 2006), 257–262.]

19. ***Rheinwasseraufbereitungsanlage* (Rhine Water Purification Plant), 1972**

Highly polluted Rhine water was treated through a system of chemical agents and filters. After having gone through this process, it was fit for the survival of goldfish. A hose carried the overflow out to the garden of the museum where it seeped into the ground.

At the time of the exhibition, the City of Krefeld annually discharged 42 million cubic meters of untreated household and industrial wastewater into the Rhine.

The Museum Haus Lange, like its parent, the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Museum in Krefeld, is a municipal institution. The director is a civil servant.

[This text was written for *Hans Haacke* (London: Phaidon, 2004), 53.]



1.12 **Hans Haacke, *Rheinwasseraufbereitungsanlage* (Rhine Water Purification Plant), 1972**

20. "Polls 1969–1973," 1973

Between 1969 and 1973 a variety of polls were conducted among art audiences in the United States and West Germany.

1. The first poll was held as a part of a one-person exhibition at the Howard Wise Gallery in New York, November 1–29, 1969. The visitors were requested to mark their birthplace and their current residence with pins on maps.

2. Also in 1969, a proposal was developed for the *Software* exhibition, to be held at the Jewish Museum, September 16–November 8, 1970. This proposal contained the following description: "Teletype terminals are positioned in the exhibition area at locations that will be passed by all visitors. These keyboard terminals are connected with a digital computer on a time-sharing basis and serve both as input as well as output devices.

Each visitor begins his interaction with a computer by typing in a self-chosen code identification. In order to preserve anonymity, actual names never enter the system. Using a keyboard, the visitor then proceeds to answer questions posed to him via Teletype printout. Moving on to another terminal he identifies himself again by his code. Recognizing the code of the individual, the computer presents additional questions without repeating or asking questions that do not apply, because of answers previously given. Due to branches in the polling programs a number of questions are personalized and vary from visitor to visitor.

Essentially the questions are of two types. One set asks the visitor for factual information about himself, for example, age, sex, educational background, income bracket, etc. The other set of questions inquires about opinions on a variety of subjects.

The computer compiles the answers, compares them with information received from other visitors, and correlates data relevant for a statistical breakdown.

At the exit area of the exhibition a Teletype terminal prints out the processed information in the form of statistics giving the number of persons who have answered the questions, absolute figures for the answers, percentages, and finally correlations between opinions and the visitors' demographic background. The

processing speed of the computer makes it possible for the statistical evaluation of all answers to be up-to-date and available at any given time. A closed-circuit television setup projects the constantly changing data from the printout onto a large screen, so that it is accessible to a great number of people.

Based on their own information, gradually a statistical profile of the exhibition's visitors emerges."

Questions were formulated, flow charts for the branches were drawn, and computer experts affiliated with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology prepared the necessary software. However, because of equipment failure, the polling project had to be abandoned at the start of the exhibition.

3. As part of the exhibition *Information* at The Museum of Modern Art (June 20–September 20, 1970), a single either-or question of a political nature was posed to the museum's visitors. This question was prominently posted and could be answered by dropping a ballot into one of the two ballot boxes.

4. A multiple-choice questionnaire with ten demographic questions and ten questions on topical sociopolitical issues was prepared for a one-person exhibition that was scheduled to open at the Guggenheim Museum in April 1971. The questions were almost identical to those incorporated in the program for the poll of the visitors to the *Software* exhibition. They were to be answered anonymously. Thomas Messer, director of the Guggenheim Museum, objected to the poll, as well as two other works prepared for the exhibition. As a result, the exhibition was canceled and this work was not realized.

5. During the group exhibition *Directions 3: Eight Artists*, at the Milwaukee Art Center (June 19–August 8, 1972), as well as a one-person exhibition at the Museum Haus Lange in Krefeld, Germany (May 22–July 16, 1972), visitors were invited to complete a multiple-choice questionnaire similar to the one prepared for the aborted exhibition at the Guggenheim Museum. In Milwaukee, a computer processed the answers, whereas in Krefeld they were tabulated manually. In both institutions the results were posted and regularly updated over the time of the exhibitions. Of the 1,336 visitors to the Krefeld exhibition, a total of 717 (45.6 percent) participated in the poll.

6. At *Documenta V* in Kassel, Germany (June 30–October 8, 1972), the visitors were requested in German, English, and French, to complete a machine-readable multiple-choice questionnaire, again with ten demographic questions and ten questions on topical socio-political issues. The answers were processed by the regional computer center for Kassel. Regularly updated printouts were posted in the exhibition. A total of 41,810 (9.8 percent) visitors to *Documenta V* participated in the poll.

7. In May and in September 1972, polls were conducted along similar lines at the John Weber Gallery in New York.

8. A similar poll was also conducted during a group show *Kunst im politischen Kampf*, at the Kunstverein Hannover (March 31–May 13, 1973).

Subsequently, the answers to overlapping questions in the three German polls (Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld; *Documenta V*, Kassel; and Kunstverein Hannover) were tabulated and compared with each other in bar graphs, similar to those of the *John Weber Gallery Visitors' Profile 1* and 2. These graphs were exhibited in one-person exhibitions at the Frankfurter Kunstverein (September 10–October 24, 1976) and the Badischer Kunstverein in Karlsruhe (March 8–April 17, 1977).

[Written for and published in *Hans Haacke: "Obra Social,"* exh. cat. (Barcelona: Fundació Antoni Tàpies, 1995), 62–64.]

21. *No-Man's Land*, 1973–1974

The below-grade square or long, rectangular courtyard, which is part of the complex of buildings belonging to the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Justice of the Federal Republic of Germany in the Bad Godesberg district of Bonn, is to be completely covered with concrete. A circular area, about twenty-five meters in diameter, is marked off on this surface.

A conveyor belt is to deposit earth in its center until it runs off the sides of the pile and covers the entire circle. The mound's height is determined by the amount of earth required to fill the demarcated area in the way described.

Once completed, the mound is left alone. It is to be expected that erosion will alter it, that airborne seeds and seeds carried in the soil will sprout, and that, eventually, wild plant growth will cover it. The area must not be cultivated or cleared at the behest or the suggestion of the neighbors. The natural process should take its course without interference.

After completion, the demarcated territory will be granted the status of an independent enclave under international law, a territory where no state has sovereign rights and the laws of no state apply.

The Federal Republic of Germany will conclude with me a treaty of unlimited duration under international law, in which it waives all rights in and to this territory, in which it pledges to ensure that everyone will have access to the enclave and that it will not influence, directly or indirectly, the events and developments in *No-Man's Land*. In turn, I will pledge to abstain from interfering in any way in what will happen within the demarcated territory. Protected from the weather under glass, copies of the treaty will be placed in the immediate vicinity of the mound and made available for examination to everyone. The entire correspondence between all relevant parties regarding the *No-Man's Land* project will be accessible to the public in a museum or another appropriate institution.

[Written in 1973–1974. First published in *Hans Haacke. Volume I*, exh. cat. (Oxford: Museum of Modern Art, 1978; Eindhoven: Van Abbemuseum, 1979), 64–65.]

22. "All the 'Art' That's Fit to Show," 1974

Products which are considered "works of art" have been singled out as culturally significant objects by those who, at any given time and social stratum, wield the power to confer the predicate "work of art" onto them; they cannot elevate themselves from the host of man-made objects simply on the basis of some inherent qualities.

Today, museums and comparable art institutions, like e.g., the ICA in London, belong to that group of agents in a society who have a sizeable, although not an exclusive, share in this cultural power on the level of so-called "high art."

Irrespective of the "avant-garde" or "conservative," rightist" or "leftist" stance a museum might take, it is, among other things, a carrier of socio-political connotations. By the very structure of its existence, it is a political institution. This is as true for museums in Moscow or Peking as for a museum in Cologne or the Guggenheim Museum. The question of private or public funding of the institution does not affect this axiom. The policies of publicly financed institutions are obviously subject to the approval of the supervising governmental agency. In turn, privately funded institutions naturally reflect the predilections and interests of their supporters. Any public museum receiving private donations may find itself in a conflict of interests. On the other hand, the indirect subsidy of many private institutions, through exemption from taxes and partial funding of their programs, could equally create problems. Often, however, there exists in fact, if not by design, a tolerance or even a congruence of the respective ideological persuasions.

In principle, the decisions of museum officials, ideologically highly determined or receptive to deviations from the norm, follow the boundaries set by their employers. These boundaries need not be expressly stated in order to be operative. Frequently, museum officials have internalized the thinking of their superiors to such a degree that it becomes natural for them to make the "right" decision, and a congenial atmosphere reigns between employee and employer. Nevertheless, it would be simplistic to assume that in each case museum officials are faithfully translating the interests of their superiors into museum policy, particularly since new cultural manifestations are not always recognizable as to their suitability or opposition to the parties concerned.

The potential for confusion is increased by the fact that the convictions of an “artist” are not necessarily reflected in the objective position his/her work takes on the socio-political scale and that this position could change over the years to the point of reversal.

Still, in order to gain some insight into the forces that elevate certain products to the level of “works of art” it is helpful—among other investigations—to look into the economic and political underpinnings of the institutions, individuals, and groups who share in the control of cultural power.

Strategies might be developed for performing this task in ways that its manifestations are liable to be considered “works of art” in their own right. Not surprisingly, some museums do not think they have sufficient independence to exhibit such a portrait of their own structure and try to dissuade or even censor works of this nature, as has been demonstrated. Fortunately art institutions and other cultural power agents do not form a monolithic block; so the public’s access to such works might be limited but not totally prevented.

Bertolt Brecht’s 1934 appraisal of the “Five Difficulties in Writing the Truth” is still valid today. They are the need for “the courage to write the truth, although it is being suppressed; the intelligence to recognize it, although it is being covered up; the judgment to choose those in whose hands it becomes effective; the cunning to spread it among them.”

There are no “artists,” however, who are immune to being affected and influenced by the socio-political value-system of the society in which they live and of which all cultural agencies are a part, no matter if they are ignorant of these constraints or not (“artists” like “work of art” are put in quotation marks because they are predicates with evaluative connotations deriving their currency from the relative ideological frame of a given cultural power group). So-called “avant-garde art” is, at best, working close to the limitations set by its cultural/political environment, but it always operates within that allowance.

“Artists,” as much as their supporters and their enemies, no matter of what ideological coloration, are unwitting partners in the art syndrome and relate to each other dialectically. They participate jointly in the maintenance and/or development of the ideological make-up of their society. They work within that frame, set the frame, and are being framed.

[This text was initially written for and published as an untitled catalog statement in *Art Into Society, Society Into Art*, exh. cat. (London: Institute of Contemporary Art, 1974), 63. It was republished with the present title in A. A. Bronson and Peggy Gale, eds., *Museums by Artists* (Toronto: Art Metropole, 1983), 151–152.]

23. *Manet-PROJEKT '74*, 1974



1.13 Hans Haacke, *Manet-PROJEKT '74*, 1974

In 1974, at the occasion of its 150th anniversary, the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum in Cologne² organized an exhibition with the title *PROJEKT '74*. Promoted with the slogan “Art Remains Art,” it was to present “aspects of international art at the beginning of the seventies.” The Cologne Kunsthalle (like the museum, a municipal institution) and the local Kunstverein (a private institution with subsidies from the city) joined the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum in putting this exhibition together.

I submitted an outline for a new work: [Édouard] Manet’s *Bunch of Asparagus* of 1880, collection Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, is on a studio easel in an approx. 6 x 8 meter room of *PROJEKT '74*. Panels on the walls present the social and

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



Hermann J. Abs

Geboren 1901 in Bonn. – Entstammt wohlhabender katholischer Familie. Vater Dr. Josef Abs, Rechtsanwalt und Justizrat, Mitinhaber der Hubertus Braunkohlen AG, Brüggem, Ertf. Mutter Katharina Lückerrath.

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

Heiratet 1928 Inez Schnitzler. 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 Zentrumsparlei. – 1929 Prokura im Bankhaus Delbrück, Schlicker & 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 Aufsichts- 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. Maßgeblich 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 Überseische Bank, Hamburg – Piller Maschinenfabrik AG, Langen (Hessen)

Vorsitzender des Aufsichtsrats:

Dahlbusch Verwaltungs-AG, Gelsenkirchen – Daimler-Benz AG, Stuttgart-Untertürkheim – Deutsche Bank AG, Frankfurt – Deutsche Lufthansa AG, Köln – Philipp Holzmann AG, Frankfurt – Phoenix Gummiwerke AG, Hamburg-Harburg – RWE Elektrizitätswerk AG, Essen – Vereinigte Glanzstoff AG, Wuppertal-Eilberfeld – Zellstoff-Fabrik Waldhof AG, Mannheim

Ehrenvorsitzender:

Salamander AG, Kornwestheim – Gebr. Stumm GmbH, Brämbach (Westf.) –

Süddeutsche Zucker-AG, Mannheim

Stellvert. Vrs. des Aufsichtsrats:

Badische Anilin- und Sodafabrik AG, Ludwigshafen – Siemens AG, Berlin-München

Mitglied des Aufsichtsrats:

Metallgesellschaft AG, Frankfurt

Präsident des Verwaltungsrats:

Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau – Deutsche Bundesbahn

Großes Bundesverdienstkreuz mit Stern, Päpstl. 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 Bentgerhof bei Remagen.

Photo aus Current Biography Yearbook, 1970 New York.

economic position of the persons who have owned the painting over the years and the prices paid for it.”

Dr. Evelyn Weiss, modern art curator of the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum (now senior curator and deputy director of the Museum Ludwig) and one of the six members of the *PROJEKT '74* organizing team, responded that this plan was “one of the best projects submitted,” but that it could neither be executed in the exhibition nor presented in the catalog.

This decision was reached by the organizing team in what was described as a “democratic vote.” The outcome of the balloting was three to three. Voting for the work’s exhibition were Dr. Evelyn Weiss; Dr. Manfred Schneckenburger, then director of the Kunsthalle (in 1977 and 1987 organizer of *Documenta*, from 1991 until his retirement in 2004 professor at the Art Academy in Münster); and Dr. Wulf Herzogenrath, director of the Kunstverein (later curator at the Nationalgalerie Berlin, director of the Kunsthalle in Bremen, and since 2012 director of Section Visual Art of Akademie der Künste, Berlin). The votes against the work were cast by Dr. Horst Keller, director of the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum; Dr. Albert Schug, the museum’s librarian; and Dr. Dieter Ronte, personal aide to Prof. Dr. Gert von der Osten, who was head of all Cologne municipal museums (Ronte was later director of the Museum of Modern Art—Palais Liechtenstein in Vienna and from 1993 to 2007 director of the Städtisches Kunstmuseum, Bonn). With the exception of the head of the private Kunstverein, all team members were subordinates of Prof. Dr. von der Osten.

Dr. Keller objected to listing Hermann J. Abs’s nineteen positions on boards of directors. Information about the social and economic standing of Abs was provided in the work because, as the chairman of the Wallraf-Richartz-Kuratorium (Association of the Friends of the Museum) he was instrumental in acquiring the Manet painting. After explaining that the museum depends on private donations for major acquisitions, even though financially carried by the city and the state, Dr. Keller wrote in a letter to the artist: “It would be an absolutely inadequate assessment of the spiritual commitment of a man if one were to relate, in any way, to such an idealistic engagement the host of offices he holds in totally different walks of life. . . . However, a grateful museum and an appreciative city, or one willing to be moved to gratitude, must protect initiatives

of such an extraordinary nature from any interpretation that might later throw even the slightest shadow on it.”

In another letter Dr. Keller remarked: “A museum knows nothing about economic power; however, it does, indeed, know something about spiritual power.”

Neither Dr. Keller nor Prof. Dr. von der Osten saw the work before they rejected it. On the day of the museum’s press opening, it went on exhibition at Galerie Paul Maenz in Cologne. Standing in for the original *Bunch of Asparagus* was a full-size color reproduction.

The French artist Daniel Buren, who had also been invited to *PROJEKT ’74*, incorporated in his own work a scaled-down facsimile of the *Manet-PROJEKT ’74*. Alongside, Buren glued a poster entitled “Art Remains Politics” with an excerpt from his 1970 essay “Limited Critiques”: “Art, whatever else it may be, is exclusively political. What is called for is the *analysis of formal and cultural limits* (and not one *or* the other) within which art exists and struggles. These limits are many and of different intensities. Although the prevailing ideology and the associated artists try in every way to *camouflage* them, and although it is too early—the conditions are not met—to blow them up, the time has come to *unveil* them.”

Prof. Dr. von der Osten had those parts of Buren’s work which had been provided by Haacke (including a color reproduction of the Manet still life) pasted over.

Several artists, among them Antonio Días, Frank Gillette, and Newton and Helen Harrison, closed down their works in protest. Carl Andre, Robert Filliou, and Sol LeWitt had previously withdrawn from the exhibition when they heard that *Manet-PROJEKT ’74* would not be admitted.

In preparation for an article in *Art in America*, the New York art historian Prof. Carl R. Baldwin asked Dr. Keller, in a letter: “Do you have reason to believe that Dr. Abs himself would have minded the objective presentation of facts regarding his professional involvements?” Dr. Keller’s answer was “As I already stated clearly in a letter to Hans Haacke, I have to answer this question with a definite yes.”

After his retirement, and until his death in 1994, Hermann J. Abs continued his association with Deutsche Bank and cultural politics. Representing a German

consortium at a 1983 Sotheby Parke-Bernet auction in London, he successfully bid for an old German illuminated manuscript, the Gospels of Henry the Lion, at a price of DM 32 million (\$11.7 million). As the “secret head of the Department of Culture” of the city of Frankfurt (this is how Hilmar Hoffmann, who had been Department head for twenty years, referred to him), Abs saw to it that Klaus Gallwitz, the director of the Frankfurt Staedelsches Kunstinstitut (a municipally funded art museum), was forced into early retirement in 1992, after he had brought upon himself the anger of Abs. Abs also managed to block the appointment of the leading candidate to fill the vacancy, a civil service position, and had a protégé of his appointed instead.

In 1982, after the Vatican Bank’s entanglement in a scandal with Banco Ambrosiano of Milan, Abs was chosen by Pope John Paul II to serve on an advisory board to set straight the Vatican’s finances. The appointment drew strong protests from the Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies in Los Angeles because, during the Nazi period, Abs had played a central role at Deutsche Bank in the “Aryanization” of Jewish property. This led Abs to be put on a U.S. government “watch list” and prohibited from ever entering the United States.

[Shortened version of a text written for *Hans Haacke: “Obra Social,”* exh. cat. (Barcelona: Fundació Antoni Tàpies, 1995), 78–81.]

24. "The Constituency," 1976

Two polls, conducted respectively in 1972 and 1973, at the New York John Weber Gallery, a commercial gallery for contemporary art, showed that 70 percent of 858 (first poll) and 74 percent of 1,324 (second poll) gallery visitors who responded to a questionnaire during each of two two-and-a-half-week periods declared that they had a "professional interest in art."³

The visitors of commercial galleries of contemporary art in New York seem to be an extremely select audience, recruiting itself from the ranks of the college-educated, middle, and upper-middle classes. The professionally uncommitted public of the gallery can hardly be suspected of representing "the proletariat" or the mythical "man in the street."

Those who have a professional interest in art (artists, students, critics, the directors, curators and their assistants in museums and comparable institutions, gallery owners and their assistants, advertising and public relations executives, government and party bureaucrats in charge of the arts, art advisors of foundations, corporations and collectors, etc.) influence which products and activities are to be considered "art" and how much attention should be paid to each artist and the often competing art "movements." Many members of this diverse group are not independent agents but act rather on behalf of employers and clients whose opinions they have internalized or cannot afford to disregard.

By no means is the "art" quality of a product inherent in its substance. The art certificate is conferred upon it by the culturally powerful social set in which it is to be considered art, and it is only valid there and then. The attribution of value, particularly if this value is not supported by the needs for physical survival and comfort, is determined ideologically. Unless one invokes God or the quasi-divine inspiration of a disembodied party, the setting of norms and their subtle or not so subtle enforcement, throughout history, [are] performed by particular individuals or groups of people and ha[ve] no claim to universal acceptance. Their beliefs, emotional needs, goals and interests, no matter if the particular cultural power elite is aware of and acknowledges it, decide on the ever shifting art criteria.

Usually there is no quarrel about the existence of ideological determination if it emanates from a political or religious authority. The liberal culture mongers do not quite as readily admit the fact that man-made value-systems and beliefs,

reflecting particular interests, are also at work in liberal surroundings. Ideology, of course, is most effective when it is not experienced as such.

Still, in the liberal environment of the John Weber Gallery, the question “Do you think the preferences of those who financially back the art world influence the kind of works artists produce?” received a remarkable answer. Thirty percent of the 1,324 respondents of the aforementioned poll answered “Yes, a lot.” Another 37 percent answered “Somewhat.” The answer “Not at all” was chosen by only 9 percent. To fully appreciate the gallery visitors’ feeling[s] of dependence, potential conflict, and, possibly, cynicism and alienation, it is worth noting that 43 percent thought their standard of living would be affected if no more art[works] of living artists were bought.

Apparently a sizeable portion of the visitors of the gallery (74 percent of them declared a professional interest in art) believed, at the time, that the economic power of private and institutional collectors, foundations, publishers, corporate and private contributors to art institutions and governmental funding agencies does, indeed, play a decisive role in the production and distribution of contemporary art.

The validation of certain products as contemporary high art, which, of course, guides future production while feeding on the consensus of the past, is obviously not independent of the art industry’s economic base.⁴ A cursory look at the art world in liberal societies might therefore lead to the conclusion that it is, in fact, as stringently controlled as the cultural life in societies where street cleaning equipment is called out to take care of deviant art, where a palette of blood and earth is used or an occasional blooming of a thousand flowers is announced with great fanfare.

It is true that the trustees and, per force, the directors of many big museums probably agree with the declaration of one of their director-colleagues: “We are pursuing esthetic and educational objectives that are self-sufficient and without ulterior motive. On those grounds the trustees have established policies that exclude active engagement toward social and political ends.”⁵

Such policies pretend to be based on the sociologically and philosophically untenable premise of a self-sufficient education and free-floating aesthetics while ignoring that a museum, by its very existence, actively engages in the promotion

of social and political ends. Thus many museums which constitute some of the more powerful agents in the validation and distribution of art are closed to a whole range of contemporary work, and, if applied consistently, also to many works of the past. Such a ban has the further effect of seriously impairing the economic viability of the incriminated works in commercial galleries, another of the major validating agents. Therefore, in effect if not by design, this posture has far-reaching consequences and leaves a politically neutral stance far behind, if such a thing exists at all.

The idealist notion of an art created out of and exclusively for “disinterested pleasure” (Kant), a claim contradicted by history and everyday experience, is upheld by formalist art theory as promulgated and normatively established by Clement Greenberg and his adherents. Formalist thinking, however, is not confined to his accredited followers; it reigns wherever formal qualities are viewed in isolation and their pure demonstration becomes the intended message.

This theory of cultural production and dissemination, obviously, overlooks the economic and ideological circumstances under which the industry and formalist theory itself operate. Questions as to the content and the audience and beneficiaries of art are heresy for a true formalist. Neither contemporary thinking in the social and political sciences nor psychoanalytic theory support[s] such views. The pressures and lures of the world do not stop respectfully at the gate to the “temple,” Giscard d’Estaing’s term for the Paris Centre Pompidou (!), or the studio door.

It is not surprising, then, that the designers of public spaces and the corporate men who dominate the boards of trustees of cultural institutions in the United States are so fond of these nineteenth-century concepts of art for art’s sake.⁶ The fact that many works done in this vein today are abstract and enjoy avant-garde status no longer poses a problem and now is often seen as an asset in the hunt for cultural prestige. The corporate state, like governments, has a natural allergy to questions such as “what” and “for whom.” Unwittingly or not, formalist theory provides an alibi. It induces its clients to believe that they are witnessing and participating in important historic events, as if artworks, purportedly made for their own sake, still performed the liberating role they played in the nineteenth century.

Aside from this powerful ideological allegiance and confluence of interests, the curators, critics, artists, and dealers of the formalist persuasion, like the producers and promoters of any other product or system of messages, also have an economic interest in the maintenance and expansion of their position in the market. The investment of considerable funds is at stake.⁷

In spite of these constraining forces, it is demonstrably false to assume that their control over the art world in liberal societies is complete. Examples could be cited in which certain cultural products are censored outright or discouraged from surfacing in one corner and accepted or even promoted in another corner of the same liberal environment.⁸ Although in all these instances ideology, or more crudely, apparent financial considerations guide the decisions, the individuals and social forces behind them do not necessarily share the same beliefs, value-systems, and interests.

The consciousness industry, of which the art industry is an integral but minor small shop operation for a custom-made output, is such a far-flung global operation, with so many potentially conflicting elements, that absolute product control is impossible.⁹ It is this lack of total cohesion and the occasional divergence of interests that secures a modicum of “deviant” behavior.

The relative openness to nonconforming products—not to be equated with so-called pluralism—is further aided by the consciousness industry’s built-in dialectics. For it to remain viable and profitable, it requires a pool of workers and a clientele with the judgment and the demand for ever new forms of entertainment, fresh information, and sensual as well as intellectual stimulation. Although rarely in the foreground, it is the “deviant” elements that provide the necessary dynamics. Without them the industry would bureaucratize and stagnate in boredom, which is, in fact, what happens in repressive environments.

Ironically, the ideological stabilization of power in the hands of a given power elite is predicated on the mobilization of the resources for its potential overthrow. If “repressive tolerance” were as smothering as Herbert Marcuse fears, there would be no need to spend enormous amounts of money for propaganda and the public relations efforts of big corporations (Mobil Oil Corp. spent \$ 21 million alone for its “Goodwill Umbrella” in 1976). These investments attest to the race between an ever more sophisticated public and newly developed techniques of persuasion, in which also art is increasingly used as an instrument.

The millions of white-collar workers of the consciousness industry, the teachers, journalists, priests, art professionals and all other producers and disseminators of mental products, are engaged in the cementing of the dominant ideological constructs—as well as in dismantling them. In many ways, this group reflects the ambiguous role of the petite bourgeoisie, that amorphous and steadily growing class with a middle and upper-middle income and some form of higher education, oscillating between the owners of the means of production and the “proletariat.”¹⁰ This embarrassing and embarrassed class, in doubt about its identity and aspirations, and riddled with conflicts and guilt, is the origin of the contemporary innovators and rebels, as it is the reservoir of those most actively engaged in the preservation of the status quo.

The general art public (not to be confused with the relatively small number of collectors), i.e., the public of museums and art centers, comes from the same social pool. It is a rather young audience, financially at ease but not rich, college-educated and flirting rather with the political Left than with the Right.¹¹ Thus there is a remarkable demographic resemblance between the art professionals, the art public at large, and probably the readership of this publication. Apparently art is no longer the exclusive domain of the bourgeoisie and nobility as it was in the past. Decades of doctrinaire interpretation of only a few aspects of the economic base have prevented us from adequately understanding the complexities of the art world and the even more complex functioning of the consciousness industry, of which the art world appears to be a microscopic model and a part. Nor have we learned to understand the elusive character of the expanding petite bourgeoisie in industrialized societies, which has become a considerable force in the consciousness industry and among its consumers. It seems to play a more important role in societal change than is normally recognized.

Nothing is gained by decrying the daily manipulation of our minds or by retreating into a private world supposedly untouched by it. There is no reason to leave to the corporate state and its public-relations mercenaries the service of our sensuous and mental needs, or to allow, by default, the promotion of values that are not in our interest. Given the dialectic nature of the contemporary petit-bourgeois consciousness industry, its vast resources probably can be put to use against the dominant ideology.

This, however, seems to be possible only with a matching dialectical approach and may very well require a cunning involvement in all the contradictions of the medium and its practitioners.

[This text, written in 1976, was first published in French as “Les adhérents” in *Art actuel: Skira annuel* 77, no. 3 (Geneva, 1977): 141–148. English translation, modified, in *Hans Haacke, Volume 1*, exh. cat. (Oxford: Museum of Modern Art, 1978; Eindhoven: Van Abbemuseum, 1979), 78–81. The text was republished, slightly modified from the original, in Matthias Flügge and Robert Fleck, eds., *Hans Haacke, for real: Works 1959–2006*, exh. cat. (Düsseldorf: Richter Verlag, 2006), 266–269.]

25. "The Agent," 1977

Commercial art galleries are powerful agents in that small segment of the consciousness industry which we know as the world of so-called high art. It is apparent that, due to the limited resources of artists for reaching possible clients on their own, the chances for the sale of their products are considerably greater if they are promoted by a gallery. The prestige and consequently the cultural power of an established gallery not only creates a market, it also facilitates the securing of teaching jobs and grants, so that there is often a direct connection between an artist's affiliation with a commercial gallery and his/her standard of living and command over productive resources.

Obviously, today galleries also hold a key position in the dissemination of the works of an artist. Exhibitions under their auspices generate articles in trade journals and other publications and furnish the grist for the gossip and shop talk of the industry. Above all, it is through such shows and the feedback they receive that an artist is invited to exhibitions in other galleries, in museums, and in international art events, which, in turn, are often organized in collaboration with galleries. Therefore also, the access to large audiences through exhibitions in prestigious showplaces with accompanying consecration, press coverage, and increase in market value can be gained more easily through the mediation of a gallery than without.

Art dealers, however, are more than merchants; they are also purveyors as well as representatives of ideology and occasionally connoisseurs with emotional ties to their suppliers and clients. The difficulty in fully assessing their role derives from the ambiguous nature of the product they promote and sell.

An item deemed to be a work of art by a cultural power elite is a commodity, an ideological token, and the source for intellectual and emotional gratification, all in one. Although these constitutive qualities relate to each other, their relationships are not proportional or fixed. The evaluation of each, moreover, depends on the ever-changing beliefs, values, and needs of the individual or the social set by which it happens to be judged.

Works of art, like other products of the consciousness industry, are potentially capable of shaping their consumers' view of the world and of themselves and may lead them to act upon that understanding. Since commercial galleries influence the exhibition programs of museums and comparable institutions—with large

audiences from the middle and upper-middle classes, which predominate in contemporary opinion and decision making—it is not negligible which ideologies and emotions are traded in these establishments.

Not surprisingly, institutions and galleries are often resistant to products that question generally held opinions and tastes, particularly if the positions they themselves hold are at stake. But the peculiar dialectics of consciousness—bolstered by their potential for financial speculation, and given the relative lack of uniformity of interests within the culture industry and among its consumers—nevertheless promotes the surfacing of such critical works, at least in liberal societies.

With this modicum of openness, wherever suitable, the galleries' promotional resources should be used without hesitation for a critique of the dominant system of beliefs while employing the very mechanisms of that system.

[This text was first published in Christine Bernhard, ed., *Was erwartest Du?/What Do You Expect?* (Cologne: Paul Maenz, 1977), 99–20. First English translation of “The Agent,” in *Hans Haacke, Volume 1*, exh. cat. (Oxford: Museum of Modern Art, 1978; Eindhoven: Van Abbemuseum, 1979), 83.]

26. “Working Conditions,” 1979–1980

“Business could hold art exhibitions to tell its own story.” William B. Renner, president of Alcoa, proposed this salutary measure in an address to the American Advertising Federation on June 30, 1977.¹² He was prompted to make this suggestion by the hostility to which he and his peers claim to have been subjected in the post-Watergate period. Don Stroetzel, a public relations officer of Mobil, the second largest U.S. oil company, joined him in 1979, complaining: “No longer is it possible to rely on Washington’s basic sympathy for business as a protection against damaging legislation and regulation.”¹³

This was hardly an adequate description of political reality two years ago. However, the Mobil man’s wail that “other voices are often stronger at the polling places” has clearly been proven to be unjustified by the ascent to power of the Moral Majority only one year later.¹⁴ His expressions of fear that the voters would be swayed by “highly organized consumer groups” and “highly organized environmental groups” to question the presumed identity of the interests of government, business, and the populace were obviously unfounded, if not meant merely to serve as a political device.¹⁵

The sentiments expressed by the two gentlemen have led, over the years, to corporate policies that have significantly changed the political landscape of the United States. Their statements should not be taken as atypical. They are interesting in what they reveal as much as in what they do not reveal. The spokesman of Mobil Oil, which is the most visible, though by far not the most generous, supporter of popularly accepted cultural programs, is certainly correct in his judgment that, historically, there has been a close relationship between the U.S. government and the business world.¹⁶ Although, according to opinion polls around the world, people are currently less willing to believe that the welfare of stockholders coincides with their own, there is little evidence that this growing skepticism is anything more than a vaguely articulated mistrust; nor, as we have seen in the 1980 elections, has this skepticism been translated into decisive political power. The “highly organized” groups, questioning certain aspects of corporate behavior, are obviously no match for the lavishly funded campaigns that business wages in the generally sympathetic media. Nor can they field a phalanx

of well-connected lobbyists and political law firms, whose partners swap positions in government and business as a matter of routine. And they also cannot equal the business-formed political action committees, which generously underwrite friendly politicians and may help defeat others at the polls. For example, four liberal senators, Birch Bayh, Frank Church, John Culver, and George McGovern, were all on Mobil's hit list.¹⁷ Since their defeat in the 1980 elections they are no longer in the way of the oil interests. It is not easy for business to present itself in the role of the underdog.

Still, it is perfectly sound logic for Stroetzel to paint such a bleak picture. It would be shortsighted not to break the budding opposition in time. And the necessary resolve can be summoned only if the corporate world takes this potential threat to its freewheeling power seriously. Mobil has been in the forefront of this campaign. For the promotion of its view of the world, Mobil in 1980 bought advertising space in U.S. newspapers at an estimated cost of \$6 million.¹⁸ This amount, of course, covers only one part of the total persuading efforts of the company. In 1976, the budget of its public affairs department in New York was \$21 million.¹⁹ No product advertising was paid out of this. In answer to a question from an enthusiastic shareholder at the 1980 annual meeting, the Mobil chairman Rawleigh Warner Jr. revealed, "worldwide, we spent \$102 million last year for advertising."²⁰ This is where the seemingly pure world of "high" art enters into the equation.

Contemporary social practice endows not only individual works of art but also art as such with an aura.²¹ Its seemingly unimpeachable "Otherness"—divorced from the haggles of the day, preserved and conserved, a manifestation of the "disinterested" human mind fathoming the secrets of the world—can, in a sober moment, be understood as an instrument that can be used to further interests neither on the mind of the artist nor on the minds of his initiate admirers. The quasi-mythical authority art enjoys, an authority too often unquestioningly accepted or even cherished by its practitioners and followers, gives art a disproportionately large power within the consciousness industry. It is disproportionate in relation to the capital invested in it and to the size of its audience.

Different from other products of that industry, works of art are approached with reverence. Even the outraged dismissal of a work not meeting the viewer's

criteria of taste is of a special nature. He or she may not react as in an ordinary, everyday disagreement, but rather as if fundamental assumptions that give a sense of security are now challenged. Given the extraordinary prestige of art, its supposedly eternal truth and beauty, together with the exultation the viewer may have experienced in dealing with it, then any sample that does not elicit these cherished responses and instead appears to contradict the accepted “universal” values must, for that very reason, be vigorously and perhaps even violently rejected. The wells of truth must not be poisoned! The howls of indignation the Dadaists provoked confirm that they were, indeed, committing a sacrilege.

The arts naturally have never been exempt from the ideological constraints of their respective period and power structure.²² More often than not they have been used as an instrument designed for the benefit of sponsors. It is no different today. The Alcoa president’s suggestion to generate art exhibits with the express intent of leading us to a more sympathetic appraisal of the corporate state has already been in practice in a more subtle, and therefore possibly more effective, way than he seems to envision.

In the 1960s, the more sophisticated among executives of large corporations began to understand that the association of their company’s name—and business in general—with the arts could have considerable and long-term benefits for them, far in excess of the capital invested in such an effort. Some of the originators of corporate art programs were, in private life, art collectors who possibly believed that while pursuing the company’s interests they were also serving a good cause. Many of the newcomers in the field are more cynical.²³ An astute appraisal of the situation prompted Ruder & Finn, one of the most prominent public relations agencies in New York, to establish its own arts division, with a permanent staff to advise its clients in the use of art for their business goals and, if necessary, to curate exhibitions.²⁴

Not surprisingly, because of long-standing personal connections to the world of business and finance, the Museum of Modern Art has maintained for many years an Art Advisory Service for corporations. Following the example of the museum, of which he is a trustee, Ivan Chermayeff has added an art-consulting department to the design firm of Chermayeff and Geismar. (Mobil is one of its major clients.) Some larger companies have hired their own staffs of art professionals who are usually part of the public relations departments and

sometimes enjoy direct access to the chief executive. A succinct summary of the business rationale of corporate art programs was given by David Rockefeller, vice chairman of the Museum of Modern Art and, until his retirement in 1981, chairman of the Chase Manhattan Bank: "From an economic standpoint, such involvement [in the arts] can mean direct and tangible benefits. It can provide a company with extensive publicity and advertising, a brighter public reputation, and an improved corporate image. It can build better customer relations, a readier acceptance of company products, and a superior appraisal of their quality. Promotion of the arts can improve the morale of employees, and help attract qualified personnel."²⁵

While the beautification of company offices is designed to boost productivity and generate loyalty among employees, the sponsorship of culture outside the company walls is, over the years, likely to have at least as far-reaching consequences for the art world as will sales to corporate collections. The acquisition of artworks by a company is relatively easy to justify to stockholders. Since the selection is usually made by professional art consultants—art consulting is a booming business in itself—its value is liable to increase, and it often proves to be a better investment than other capital ventures of the same company. Corporate art consultants generally avoid works their clients would consider controversial. ("No nudes and no politics.") Mitchell Douglas Kahan writes in his catalog introduction to the exhibition *Art Inc., American Paintings from Corporate Collections*: "It may also be argued that because it lacks specific imagery abstract art can be noncontroversial. It is probably not coincidental that the rapid surge of private and corporate collecting in the 1960s accompanied the production of a large body of art concerned with formal issues—shape, color, line, edge, and structure. In a decade ripe with social change, this art provided a restful interlude from the stringent demands of the real world."²⁶ It takes a bit more sophistication to realize that the seeming altruism in underwriting museum exhibitions, cultural television programs, concerts, etc., is possibly much more profitable. Some corporate executives who are familiar with the liberal milieu, such as Herbert Schmertz of Mobil, clearly see that in order to retain influence in government and to beat back assaults from citizen groups advocating stricter regulation of the industry, it is of the utmost importance to woo specifically the liberal segment of the population.²⁷ At present, the Left in the United States poses no significant

challenge to what business likes to describe as the “free-enterprise system.” It is the erosion of trust and occasional flare-ups among liberals that could, some time in the future, seriously undermine that system.

This demographic segment is, of course, also the one most disposed to culture. If a large company with great exposure and a public relations problem, like an oil company or a cigarette producer, manages to associate its name with a human activity of high social prestige (art, for example), the attackers become confused and the attacks are blunted. As a letter to the *New York Times* put it simply, “a company that supports the arts cannot be all bad.” A Mobil public relations man aptly described the kickback his company receives for its tax-deductible payoff to culture as its “good will umbrella.”²⁸

Over the past decade many large corporations, notably oil companies, have gained a considerable foothold in U.S. museums and thereby among some of the major agents of the Western art world. There are almost no big exhibitions in large New York museums produced without corporate money. Frequently the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) contributes funds to the same shows. Listing the public and the corporate sponsor in tandem gives the latter added prestige and makes it more difficult to question its motives. The NEA often stipulates that its funds are complemented or matched by grants “from the community,” which invariably drives museums into the arms of corporations and gives these sponsors a platform for the enhancement of their public image. The influence is likely to increase now that the NEA budget has been cut, and President Reagan, like Mayor Koch in New York, has specifically appealed to the private sector to fill the gap. Business may pay for only a small portion of the total expense of an exhibition, but it retains a veto, because without its contribution nothing goes. Throughout the organization of the show and, in particular, in its promotion, the corporate influence is felt.²⁹

Taxpayers thus subsidize the greater glory and profit of business on several levels: through the budget of the NEA, through the tax deductibility of corporate donations, and through the legislation resulting from this public-relations scheme; [and] legislation to induce investors, through proper “incentives” (favorable tax laws, lax environmental regulations, benign neglect of health and safety for workers, low minimum-wage rules, etc.), to make their wealth available for further and higher profits. The direction of funds from the executive suite

naturally also has a bearing on the type of show the public is offered. For obvious reasons, corporations are interested in sponsoring exhibitions that are likely to yield the greatest possible public relations dividends. These are shows with popular appeal and sometimes of some sensational nature. They must be suitable to advertise the sponsor's name on posters, announcements, in reviews, etc. "High visibility" is an important criterion.³⁰ Controversy is not necessarily shunned, as long as the debate, in the end, will help improve the image of the sponsor among the art-loving liberals it is aiming at. This, for example, is the rationale behind Alcoa's and Philip Morris's support of shows by women and black artists. Or the mildly contemporary venture of the *19 Artists—Emergent Americans* at the Guggenheim Museum, which was generously billed as the *1981 Exxon National Exhibition*. Invariably a sizable portion of the grant is earmarked for publicizing the event over the underwriter's logo. United Technologies, the producer of fighter planes, helicopters, and other war gear, allots 25 percent of its grants for publicity. Mobil is reported sometimes even to match the amount of its grant with publicity funds. The catalog and the installations are often quite sumptuous, impressing on the readers and viewers, by sheer lavishness, that they are witnesses to an important event. This does not preclude creativity in the design or in the scholarship at accustomed levels, and even the theme or subject of the exhibition may also live up to generally accepted standards. Recognizably deficient shows are obviously counterproductive with the liberal target group. Nevertheless such slip-ups do occur, giving art critics reason to question the sponsors' involvement.

Since museums stumbled onto the road of corporate image building, they have become increasingly dependent on funds from business. Inflation and the drying up of funds from traditional sources have contributed to this situation. Toward the end of the 1960s, museum personnel, spurred perhaps by the rebellious spirit of the period, also began to demand professional wages, and occasionally backed up their demands with job actions.

At the same time, museums continued to compete with each other for the media's attention, with more and more extravagant ventures. Gideon Chagy, then vice president of the Business Committee for the Arts, observed correctly, "One of the choices was not to grow so fast and big as they have."³¹

Many directors and curators felt that for the sake of their own careers they had to stay in the limelight and maintain, if not heighten, the pace and costly

appearance of the activities they had taught the public to expect. This certainly did not help wean the institutions from the corporate coffers. Since most boards of trustees of U.S. museums are dominated by prominent people from the financial and business world, there was no clash in mentality, and the steadily growing addiction to corporate funds was naturally condoned.³² Thus, by necessity or inclination, the success of an exhibition has come to be measured more and more in Hollywood terms: by media coverage and box office. Museums adopted corporate terms for the evaluation of an exhibition. Attendance figures became the yardstick, but because this was a gradual development, few among the art professionals recognized how far the priorities had shifted, and fewer still were ready to or could afford to call attention to it. Sherman Lee, director of the Cleveland Museum of Art, is among the few. He warns: "It's part of the gradual businessization or privatization of art museums. . . . If you put hype around the visual arts and 'market' them you fundamentally change the nature of what you are working with."³³ Moreover, without the advantage of a historical perspective, the public did not notice that a visit to the museum also means exposure to "hidden persuaders."

Though the relative strength or weakness of an individual museum director or curator may play a decisive role, exhibition programs and general museum policy [are] never totally free of manipulation by those who control the purse strings. As well, the dependency, and particularly an urge for self-censorship, has now been structurally incorporated into the museum world in a heretofore unknown way. Thomas Messer, director of the Guggenheim Museum, candidly stated: "You approach corporations with projects you believe are acceptable to them in the first place. These tend to be safer projects. The Tut exhibition is the sort of thing any corporation would love to support."³⁴ Although museum boards in the United States have traditionally been linked to the power elite of the country, the tax-deductible infusion of corporate money as a deliberate means to create popular consent adds a new dimension to the institutions' ideological bias. It is at the risk of both his or her professional career and the future viability of the institution that a museum official stages activities that are likely to alienate corporate donors.³⁵ Direct and traceable interference happens rarely; everybody has sufficiently internalized the rules of the game.³⁶ Heavy-handed censorship is normally left to Stalinist or fascist regimes. Instead, a tone is set that ever so subtly

and effectively suggests not to venture into troublesome areas. If open threats occur, they are difficult to document. Discretion reigns supreme. The fear of losing a donor is effective enough.

One cause for the withholding of support could be the staging of events and exhibitions aggressively analyzing the ideological implication of the objects on display. With few notable exceptions there have been no exhibitions in major U.S. museums presenting the material critically, within the socio-political context of its period.³⁷ For example, in its 1968 exhibition, *Dada, Surrealism and Their Heritage*, the Museum of Modern Art followed its usual pattern and gave the sociopolitical dimension of its subject rather short shrift. As a matter of convenience the work of John Heartfield was simply omitted from both the exhibition and the catalog (organized and written by William S. Rubin, the museum's chief ideologue). By and large, art history is still being written from the perspective of the owners and patrons. Art history has been influenced by those who can afford to acquire and control the objects of scholarship more than have other branches of the study of cultural history. Also typical is the Whitney Museum's celebration of the American Bicentennial, with an exhibition from the collection of American art of John D. Rockefeller III and a catalog written by E. P. Richardson, the art historian whom Mr. Rockefeller had charged to assemble the collection. Naturally, Richardson presented the period in which his client's family had amassed its fortune in a way compatible with the Rockefeller view of history.³⁸ (Interestingly, the show was staged with a grant from Alcoa.)

As the curatorial bias in the organization of historical shows is in favor of the "natural order" of things, so it is in the selection and presentation of works by contemporary artists. The chances for an artist whose work recognizably challenges the historically imposed social "contract" to have his or her work prominently displayed or acquired are extremely slim.³⁹ More than the other branches of the consciousness industry in the United States, the established art world is committed to a rather uniform ideological fare.

Of course, this does not preclude a diversity of styles and competition among various "avant-gardes." Neither does it follow that artists who do gain prominent exposure for their work are therefore personally opposed to a redistribution of wealth and power or to a critical examination of the underpinnings of the society in which they win acclaim. Among those whose work seems to be politically

neutral and consequently acceptable are, in fact, a number with leftist sympathies who put their money where their mouth is. The mere fact that a work does not openly display the preferred ideological leaning, naturally, is no sensible reason to call it unimaginative, lacking in innovation, and intellectually inferior. Possibly motivated by their legitimate mistrust for anything acceptable to the established powers, many on the Left are blind to the creative achievements of those whose interpretation of the world they do not share. To their own detriment, they often cling to worn-out patterns, downgrade innovation, and, in spurts of occasional Puritanism, they will denounce anything with a sensuous appeal or with humor. (Bertolt Brecht wisely advocated the “culinary” ingredient of art.) If one is looking for a worthy tradition to build on, better it should be Dadaism or Constructivism than a so-called Socialist Realism, which was neither terribly socialist nor realist, but succeeded in giving socially engaged art a bad name. Given this, it is not surprising that above and beyond the monetary rewards offered, the corporate state has been naturally attractive to everyone who sees his or her talents recognized and appreciated there.

The dearth of exhibitions exploring the interdependence of culture and the dominant ideology of its era are matched by the lack of critical support for and debate about such ventures in the trade literature and the established American art press. The limitation of the universe of discourse thoroughly discourages the recognition that this is by no means the natural state of affairs, that this is not the only world conceivable, that, in fact, it is produced by historical forces which can and deserve to be traced and analyzed—and not only from a parochial art-world point of view. The prevalent attitude even outside the formalist Bible Belt, from whence it received its inspiration, is once again that art and politics do not mix, and that “political art” is ipso facto bad art. Not only will you have a less than average chance to make substantial money from it, but it is also viewed as intrinsically inferior. And who wants to be associated with a loser?

Hidden in the denunciation as propaganda of so-called political art, and in its excommunication from the realm of “true” art, is usually the assumption that works that do not refer to our social environment have no ideological dimension. While this may very well be the intention of the artists in question, their subjective choice is, of course, objectively as much a political act as that of those who intentionally incorporate social concerns into their work. The situation is

comparable to the nonvoter's illusion of having "dropped out" of politics simply by abstaining from the polls. Not only has he or she acted politically, but the act has also concretely influenced the outcome of the elections. In this way, the "nonpolitical" or supposedly apolitical artist unwittingly affects the ideological coloration of the art world. The net result is therefore also that of "propaganda," even though it is not recognized or planned as such. Ideology, as is well known, is most effective when there is no awareness of its pervasive presence.

Lately, discussions of "political art" are confronted with a new phenomenon: works sporting political imagery or provocative titles, such as *Nigger Drawings*, which no doubt affect the ideological climate, but seem to avoid the stigma of "political art" through a dandyish aloofness to the object of their allusions. Following in the footsteps of Andy Warhol, the practice of playful folkloric adoption of political styles and attitudes, ranging indiscriminately from Left to Right, in effect only titillates and trivializes the political implications. The work thus evades being viewed as breast-beating and "uncool." The Mudd Club set pursues politics with the zeal of a panty raid. Senator Jesse Helms need not worry about it. Art, like any other form of human communication, is a product of concrete social relations and affects these relations in turn. The more astute of its manipulators among corporate executives and government officials around the globe know full well that the encounter with art is not just a private, affective expression (and experience) in a historical vacuum. They have an interest, however, in continuing its romantic mystification. Suppression of its cognitive and moral components, and the promotion of art as an entity unto itself, favors the sentimental internalization of an imaginary world of "universal" values insulated from all material conditions. It is ironic and, for the artists concerned, a cruel joke, that the most intense personal utterances and the most detached handling of formal elements are among the easiest types of work to "co-opt." Derailment of efforts to analyze the forces shaping our consciousness and social practice, by limiting culture to a privatistic, pseudo-religious ghetto, secures the status quo: this is the goal of the public relations operative who has earned his or her salt.

Although the objectives and strategies of corporate art sponsorship can be charted without great difficulty, it is still another matter to evaluate the relative ideological position of a particular work. Contrary to popular belief, a work of art communicates only to a limited degree what the artist intended, and even that

portion often requires scholarly exegesis. Its meaning, in fact, has a rather tenuous connection to the configuration of its material substance. The same goes for its status as a work of art. As Allan Sekula succinctly put it: "The meaning of a work of art ought to be regarded, then, as *contingent*, rather than immanent, universally given, or fixed."⁴⁰

The meaning does, indeed, depend a great deal on the social and historical context in which it is viewed. The interpretation of a work, as much as the admission of an object to the realm of art, and its relative ranking there, can change radically, depending on who does the decoding and where and when the encounter takes place. The circumstances in which art is viewed, and the viewers' particular biographies and set of unquestioned beliefs and values, naturally determine also the socio-political effect it will have.

This built-in relativity rules out a permanent ideological mating and thus complicates the debate over corporate and governmental instrumentalization of art. Only evaluations for a particular cultural context are permissible. Not that the manipulators are too concerned about such seemingly arcane issues; the industry of persuasion is well versed in choosing where to apply the most effective means. In contrast, the opposition (and its bewildered fellow travelers) to the public relations sweep lacks a universally applicable yardstick, which leads to confusion and infighting, all to the benefit of the powers that be. The problem with spelling out some of these obstacles for productions aimed at creating critical awareness is that the bleak picture that inevitably emerges could completely demoralize whoever considered plodding in that direction. Some encouraging elements therefore deserve mention.

As is well known, the prestige and influence of New York galleries and museums over art activities in other parts of the United States and abroad [are] quite formidable. But they have lost some of the clout they had during the 1960s. Provincial museums and, above all, university galleries, have gained self-assurance, sophistication, and means, and often now can act more independently than the larger institutions. University galleries are more insulated from the boards of their parent organizations, so that courageous directors, with a sense for adventure, can afford more easily to present programs unthinkable elsewhere. Some of them have the added advantage of being supported in this course by the sizable intellectual constituency they are meant to serve, which happily comprises

not only art departments. Increasingly, the “safe” shows become the dubious prerogative of the large art machines in big cities, whereas the more explorative events occur in the provinces, where the stakes do not seem to be as high.

In the “colonies,” Canada, Europe, and Australia, the big city on the Hudson is no longer viewed as the exclusive arbiter. The economic slide of the United States and, conversely, the prosperity of the last decade in continental Europe, have certainly played a role in this development. Also a generally cooler appraisal of the United States after Vietnam and Watergate, and the rise to power of the Moral Majority, may have contributed to this relative emancipation. Thus the increasing domination of the established art world in New York by the corporate dollar is somewhat contained. But there are structural differences too, which, at times, permit a greater receptivity for critical works outside the United States, where practically all museums and exhibition facilities are publicly funded. In contrast to their counterparts in the United States, these are run by municipalities, states or the national government and are therefore overseen by governmental bodies or their appointed professional representatives. As always, the relative strength, courage, and savvy of a museum director determine how much room he or she has to maneuver. But, similar to the dependence of art administrators on the sources of funding in the United States, their colleagues in Canada, Europe, and elsewhere can be brought into line through political pressure. Agencies like the Arts Council of Great Britain, which are to serve as buffers between the government and the recipients of its monies, sometimes play a valuable, though limited, protective role.⁴¹

Regardless of their ideological coloration, authoritarian regimes, with a keen sense for the implications of culture, of course exercise absolute control and suppress every move that might be interpreted as a challenge. But there are obviously many shades between non-interference and open repression that comprise, in the gray area between the two extremes, the debilitating haggles with an insensitive bureaucracy as well as the administration of art as a social therapeutic tool, the needs for image-building by politicians as well as those of the tourist industry.

Popular disapproval of certain types of art and the resulting political pressure on the supervisors of the institution seen at fault pose problems of a different

nature. While such campaigns are not always wholly spontaneous and may be just a demagogic media-hype, the issues raised draw attention to fundamental questions for a democratic society. Should the population have a direct say in what kind of culture it supports with its tax money? Is it sufficiently informed to make sound judgments in its own long-term interests? And could such interests be served, in fact, by an art that does not attract a large public?

These are questions that are still academic in a country where museums are private institutions ruled by boards of trustees at their own discretion. Different from other membership organizations, these boards are not even answerable to the dues-paying members of the museums.⁴² Nor do the indirect public subsidies they receive through their exemption from taxation, the tax deductibility of donations, and the direct support through public grants, diminish their legal autonomy. As has been demonstrated above, however, this legal independence should by no means be understood as genuine autonomy or, for that matter, ideological neutrality—if there were such a thing.

While supervision through governmental agencies can be disastrous, in a liberal environment it harbors the potential for a freedom of movement presently unimaginable in the larger institutions of the United States. In a few European countries one does, indeed, encounter places with a sufficiently ingrained spirit of liberality and tolerance for nonconformist views and a politically enlightened and assertive art public. Particularly encouraging is the lack of uniformity: exhibitions that are unthinkable in the institutions of one city may quite easily go on in the neighboring city, and this with ample promotion.⁴³

Traces of the rebellion of the 1960s, in spite of an unmistakable backlash, can still be felt, and they preserve a climate, here and there, in which the exclusion of divergent points of view is politically inopportune. A few cultural bureaucracies are even sympathetic to (and others at least do not interfere with) the decisions of determined professional subordinates. Critique of ideology and social practice is far from generally accepted, but the room to move is potentially greater.

An example might serve to illustrate the atmospheric difference: early in 1979 the Stedelijk van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, Holland, a municipal institution, presented in its central exhibition hall two large works openly questioning the business practices of Philips in Iran and South Africa. Philips, the fourth largest

non-American multinational company, maintains its world headquarters in Eindhoven. It is the biggest private employer of that city and of the Netherlands. Only the local newspaper cautiously sidestepped the issues raised in the two works. However, they were covered extensively and sympathetically in the daily and weekly national press. Some of the commentators even pursued the critical spirit of the two works in prodding the company into an embarrassed comment, which they gleefully reported.⁴⁴

In New York, no curator in his or her right mind would currently dare to stage a show of a similar nature—say, an exhibition exploring the Chase Manhattan Bank's financing of South Africa's apartheid regime.⁴⁵ While the curator's European colleague is a civil servant with tenure, the New Yorker might be dismissed from one day to the next for an attitude that, according to prevalent standards, would amount to insubordination. The situation in Eindhoven is not typical, but quite a few examples of a similar nature could be listed.⁴⁶ Neither would it be difficult, though, to enumerate episodes of accommodation with the powers that be matching those in the United States.

Cologne, for example, has a history of submission to private sponsors. Most conspicuous is the servility of the city's art establishment toward the chocolate manufacturer Peter Ludwig. Through strategic placement of parts of his art collection, under stringent conditions, he exerts, as a private individual, considerable power in the public museums of Cologne as well as in other European cities (Vienna, Basle, etc.). Peter Ludwig's influence would increase significantly if his 1980 proposal for a "Ludwig Foundation" of national scope were enacted. While he is to donate, according to the draft agreement that became public in the fall of 1980, an as yet unnamed number of artworks from his collection, the city of Cologne is to give up ownership of its new museum of modern art and jointly fund the foundation, together with the state of North Rhine-Westphalia and the government in Bonn (speculations about the annual budget range from \$3 to 15 million).⁴⁷ Peter Ludwig would be the chairman of this publicly subsidized foundation. He would retain a veto for ten years in all questions relating to the works he donated. As a private individual he would in effect accumulate unmatched powers over the art world in West Germany and beyond, because the purpose of the foundation is not only the curatorial care of

his collection, for which Ludwig would save payment of several hundred-thousand dollars in property taxes annually—the foundation, under his chairmanship, would also be in the business of buying art, organizing exhibitions, providing or denying loans, and promoting “regional, national and international measures in the visual arts and related areas.” While his prospective partners have so far responded favorably to Ludwig’s proposal and have entered into negotiations with him, the echo in the German press has been predominantly critical of the power-grab it fears. Spearheaded by Dr. Werner Schmalenbach of the Landesgalerie in Düsseldorf, the heads of art institutions in West Germany have also vigorously warned against acceptance of the terms of the draft agreement.

Commercial galleries in New York are still the primary source for the material one eventually comes to see in the city’s museums. Rarely do works appear in the large institutions before they have been tried out on the market. To a considerable degree, curators educate themselves specifically in the commercial outlets of contemporary art. Conversely, gallery people acquire a sense for what is potentially interesting not only to private collectors but also to institutional buyers. Thus the odds are against productions that are difficult or impossible to market. It is all the more surprising therefore that there are a number of notable exceptions to the rule. This may have to do with the benefits of notoriety derived from “controversial”—even though not hot-selling—shows. Potential sales abroad, where the works’ implications might not be felt as sharply or even be accepted as something exotic and titillating, may lure. But it could also have something to do [with] the particular gallery owner’s personal attachment to and notions about art. Unless they are independently wealthy, dealers obviously must look at works of art as merchandise. Initially, however, at least for a good number of them, their professional motivation was primarily not so much the lure of becoming successful in business but rather the entry into what they perceived as an unconventional, sensuously rewarding world of high-risk mental adventure with a venerable history. Moral and intellectual commitment, tenacity, and courage in the face of adversity seemed to be required. These qualities and the original enthusiasm are exposed to considerable wear in day-to-day affairs, buffeted about by the need for economic survival and by natural disillusionment. Over the years priorities of mental speculation for little monetary gain tend to be exchanged for

speculation with assets for a high financial return. Still, for a minority of dealers, the spirit of high-mindedness lingers on, and among those are also a few with a sense for art as an express social agent. Obviously it is easier for them to adopt such a stance if their income is assured through sales of works of a different nature. Attendance in these galleries can easily reach 1,500 people for an exhibition. In a survey in one of the galleries in question, more than two-thirds of its public claimed to have a professional interest in art.⁴⁸ Art students constitute a major element in that group. The majority of the gallerygoers have a college education and, with the exception of students and young artists, are financially at ease. The collectors who keep the gallery in business make up only a small percentage of its audience. Contemporary art galleries attract a generally liberal public, with a sprinkling of people with leftist attitudes.

In spite of little coverage in the trade journals, works of socio-political engagement do occasionally reach an audience in New York through commercial galleries. The mistrust and hostility some may feel toward these marketing outlets should not make one overlook their potential for distribution, particularly since their public clearly constitutes a segment of the target group that the corporations are trying to keep under their spell. The boundaries of the art world are porous.

“High art,” as Martha Rosler points out, “is a feeder system, however, distorted, for mass culture.”⁴⁹ The peculiar composition of the high-art audience suggests that it comprises people who could become or already are important allies in resisting the tide of corporate brainwashing. It is unwise to reject them as “elitists.” They deserve a critical art as much as other audiences.

Exhibitions in commercial galleries can generate invitations for similar undertakings in university galleries and other exhibition facilities around the country and abroad, with potentially large audiences. Given the peculiar workings of the contemporary art system, the “certification” through galleries—aside from the galleries’ own capacity to amplify alternative modes of thinking—can also lead to teaching positions and speaking engagements, and even encourage sympathetic individuals in grant-giving agencies to act favorably without jeopardizing their positions. In short, the economic foundation for further adventures could be laid by unhesitatingly exploiting the habits and following the maneuvers of the established art world in its promotion of works of other persuasions.

Apart from the conventional places for reaching an audience, some artists have successfully tried other avenues. Occasionally, for example, the small nonprofit organizations growing in the New York Soho milieu (The Kitchen, Franklin Furnace, Printed Matter, etc.) and equivalent operations elsewhere offer a forum.⁵⁰ President Reagan's cuts of the NEA budget are likely to hurt these small institutions more than they will hurt museums. Quite possibly this has been done deliberately. The president's proclamation that the government should not be engaged in social change will thus bring about just such changes for artists (as well as for the millions whose lives will be adversely affected by cuts in social programs to the benefit of the military-industrial complex). Recently, groups of younger artists have tried with some success to organize their own exhibition outlets outside the established circuit. Cooperative ventures obviously give valuable encouragement and protection.

Intriguing in a different way are precedents for collaboration with labor unions and other organizations pursuing compatible goals.⁵¹ Unfortunately, the leadership of such groups is frequently so overwhelmed by the daily demands of practical politics that it cannot devote enough attention to long-term efforts to change the ideological environment in its favor, provided it does have a theoretically informed overview. Different from well-heeled politicians and their corporate art directors, this leadership often does not understand how communication in a media-saturated environment works. On the artists' side, these deficiencies of the potential partner are often matched by a serious lack of insight into the complexities of practical politics and the mentality of non-art audiences. Klaus Staeck, in West Germany, is probably the most experienced in working both inside and outside the art world in this regard.

Although with conflicting aims, the Right argues as much as the orthodox Left against the introduction of socially critical works into established art institutions, branding such enterprises as either "subversion" or "co-optation." Both seem to be concerned with purity. Contradicting its own rhetoric about the "free marketplace of ideas," the Right demands the "rejection of an alien substance" in order to protect its accustomed turf.⁵² On the other side, a poor understanding of the consciousness industry and the diverse expectations of its

disparate audience leads the orthodox Left to self-destructive and sectarian ghettoization.

Referring to the Kassel *Documenta VI*, Oskar Negt, a West German sociologist, pointedly said: “I do not believe one should leave the bourgeois media to the right.”⁵³ It would be an inestimable loss if artists acquiesced in the domination of the art world by corporate interests. If our interpretation of the world is influenced by what we see and hear, and if the consciousness industry is providing a large part of these stimuli, then any attempt to contribute to the shaping of the collective view of our social relations inevitably requires an aggressive and cunning participation in that industry, wherever it appears possible and suitable—outside, as well as inside, the established art world. However, it would be naïve to assume that such efforts succeed easily and could yield immediate and traceable results. Like the corporate campaigns, one can only hope for long-term effects on the ideological complexion of society, in concert with parallel developments outside the art world. Art is in fact a minor—although, because of its social prestige, not an entirely negligible—agent in the formation of our consciousness. Under the heading “How Art Makes Us Feel at Home in the World,” John Russell, the *New York Times* critic, explained recently: “It is fundamental to the white magic of art that it does away with the nightmare of disorientation. Not only does art tell us who we are, but it tells us—or it used to tell us—where we are.”⁵⁴

Artists supposedly know a lot about art, and are emotionally committed to this “vocation,” which they chose, among other reasons, because they perceived it as an alternative to the corporate value system. It is then their own turf, which they have to defend against the public relations mercenaries and their paymasters. They could turn their alienation, aggressively, into a socially productive resource.

[This text was first written in September 1979 and revised in 1980. It was first published in German as “Arbeitsbedingungen,” *Kunstforum International* (Mainz) 42 (1980): 214–227. It was first published in English as “Working Conditions,” *Artforum* 19, no. 10 (Summer 1981): 56–61.]

27. **Untitled Statement, 1980**

If art contributes to, among other things, the way we view the world and shape social relations, then it does matter whose image of the world it promotes and whose interests it serves.

[This statement was first published in *Skira annuel* 6 (Geneva, 1980): 91.]

28. *Oelgemaelde: Hommage à Marcel Broodthaers, 1982*

One week before the opening of *Documenta VII*, an international art exhibition in Kassel, President Reagan delivered a speech to the Bundestag (Parliament of the Federal Republic of Germany) in Bonn to rally support for the stationing of Cruise and Pershing II missiles in Germany. His visit was accompanied by a huge demonstration against nuclear arms, the largest demonstration held in Germany since World War II. The photograph for the installation was taken at this rally. *Documenta VII* was generally understood as a celebration and restoration of the traditional status of painting.

In subsequent exhibitions of this work, the photomural of the original *Documenta* installation was replaced by a photo representing local anti-nuclear demonstrations, taken by other photographers.

On June 12, 1982, two days after the demonstration in Bonn, a record-breaking anti-nuclear march, attended by more than 500,000 people, wound through the streets of New York to Central Park. A photograph of this rally, taken by Eva Cockcroft from the Park Avenue overpass, facing East on 42nd Street, was used for the first installation in the United States at the John Weber Gallery, New York, May 1983.

Ed Barber supplied a photograph of an anti-nuclear rally in Hyde Park for the installation at the Tate Gallery, London, January 1984.

A photograph taken by Michael v. Graffenried of an anti-nuclear demonstration on the Bundesplatz, in front of the Swiss Parliament Building in Bern, was used for the installation at the Kunsthalle Bern, March 1985.

Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev signed a treaty in 1987 on the elimination of all intermediate range nuclear missiles their countries had stationed on European soil.

[This version of a text on *Oelgemaelde: Hommage à Marcel Broodthaers* was first published in *Hans Haacke: "Obra Social,"* exh. cat. (Barcelona: Fundació Antoni Tàpies, 1995), 126.]



1.15, 1.16 **Hans Haacke, *Oelgemaelde, Hommage à Marcel Broodthaers* (Oil Painting, Homage to Marcel Broodthaers), 1982**

29. "On Yves Klein. 20 years later," 1982

When I received the request to write something about the influence Yves Klein may have had on my work and what I think about Klein today, I accepted spontaneously. I did so because I had just visited the exhibition of Klein relics at the Guggenheim Museum and was engrossed in reading the excellent catalog accompanying the show. Memories were revived, a bit of nostalgia for the Paris of 1960 played a role, and I was challenged to review my feelings toward Klein which had for some time been oscillating between fascination, indebtedness, and respect on the one side, and scornful opposition on the other.

When I arrived in Paris in 1960, fresh out of art school, I was most attracted by what was going on at the miniscule gallery of Iris Clert. I remember shows of [Jean] Tinguely, Ad Reinhardt, Arman's *Plein*, the magnetic world of Takis, and, of course, the presence of Klein in the rue des Beaux-Arts as well as in the chic environs of the rue du Faubourg St. Honoré.

While I was in my final year in art school in Germany, I had made contact with Otto Piene and the ZERO group. These Düsseldorf artists had introduced me to that faction of the European avant-garde, which looked to Klein as guide, comrade in arms, or competitor. My personal encounter with Klein in Paris was brief. I was introduced by a mutual acquaintance, Bernard Aubertin. Klein invited me to come along on the inspection tour of his *Théâtre du vide* on November 27, 1960, and take photographs. I remember being very confused. His breaking of traditional art modes intrigued me. His charm was engaging, and as a fledgling artist I was enormously flattered by his invitation. However, I also remember being nonplussed by the scientific theories Klein was propounding over lunch. And I was irritated by his laying claim on "immaterial" properties and his Madison Avenue-style promotion of mystic experiences. An argument over the terms under which I would let Klein have the photos I had taken terminated our relations. In retrospect this trivial incident seems to be indicative. Apparently I was not under Klein's spell and therefore did not relent just to retain my access to the guru.

After so many years, it is not easy to discern what influence Klein had on my work and thinking. As others do, I probably picked those elements, which suited my disposition and gained most from misunderstanding Klein's intentions.

A code word in Düsseldorf was *vibration*. It was not well defined, as art terminology rarely is. Its meaning hovered between a German Romantic, almost mystical experience and a down to earth interest in movement and perceptual psychology. I leaned to the more rational physical and psycho-physiological side. Therefore it was the perceptual radiance and spatial illusion of *IKB*, but also its reference to air and weightlessness, that attracted me, whereas I had difficulty understanding what was meant by “pure sensibility,” a problem I still have today.

No wonder then that I was also intrigued by the optical and kinetic explorations and the manifestos of the *Groupe de recherche d'art visuel*, which took positions diametrically opposed to those of Klein. And I was interested in the work of Takis, who did not belong to Klein's orbit.

I thought Klein had betrayed his own precepts when he mounted sponges and pebbles on his panels making them look like an ocean floor. The sponge sculptures seemed to be figurative and fetishistic regressions and the fire-color paintings looked to me like a kitsch version of Tachism. Being allergic to symbolism and not knowing that Klein was a Rosicrucian adept I viewed the *Anthropométries* as nothing but publicity stunts and a trivial re-entry of figurative art through the backdoor.

On the other hand, I was fond of those *Monogolds* on which leaves of gold sparkled and fluttered in the slightest breeze, even responding to the viewer's breath. They seemed to be true to Klein's spirit as I had interpreted it. However, I thought the flat gold panels relied mostly on the fetishistic qualities of the material and I rejected their preciousness.

I probably noted with sympathy Klein's use of rain as a random method for the production of images, images that registered the process of their own making, as Marcel Duchamp and his peers had employed chance techniques to that effect before. The appearance of fire, air, and water in the architectural projects Klein thought about with Walter Ruhnau may have encouraged me to go ahead with my own work with water and the manipulation of microclimates that I began toward the end of 1962. It is hard to tell, in retrospect, what impact, if any, related ideas of the ZERO artists had on me, and to what extent they in turn may have been inspired by Klein's example.

When I left Paris for the United States in 1961 I continued my perceptual experiments, which included work with reflective materials that I had begun in

Germany. Mirror-reflection meant for me, among other things, the incorporation of the environment as an integral but unstable element of the work. Its appearance was contingent on the viewer's angle of vision. Thus, as a substance it seemed to "immaterialize." This occurred, of course, due to the laws of optics, rather than to occult powers I might have had.

Eventually I moved to using water because of its peculiar optical and dynamic properties and its responsiveness to changes of climate. Along with the study of fluids I became interested in aerodynamics and began working with lightweight materials in air streams. While in Paris I had not trusted the photographic "evidence" for Klein's leap into the void nor the levitation of a blue globe under his gaze. But I was undoubtedly intrigued by Klein's urge to defy gravity, ideas that had moved Michelangelo and Tatlin before.

The exposure to systems theory, the attention it pays to the interaction and interdependence of all elements that make up an "organism," further removed me from whatever affinities my thinking may have had at some point with Klein and the ZERO group. If I had not made up my mind in the early 1960s whether I was a materialist, this certainly became clear by the middle of the decade.

From physical systems, I moved on to working with living organisms (plants, animals) and eventually included the social world in the scope of my activities. I became particularly interested in the economic underpinnings and the ideological implications of the consciousness industry, in which the art world plays a minor, though because of its cultural prestige, not negligible role. It is in this context that I was specifically requested by the editors of *art press* to comment on the sociological ramifications of some of Klein's proto-conceptual "events" and "performances."

I believe the public of Klein's 1958 exhibition of *Le Vide* at Iris Clert's responded basically in two ways. The event was either viewed as a joke in the Dada tradition, or people did indeed imagine the empty gallery to be impregnated by Klein's "pictorial sensibility," as he claimed it was. Even though contradictory, both reactions are situated well within the frame of mythical references accepted by the art world in Paris in 1958. The mutually supportive myths of the artist as demi-god or dandy and the gallery as a place of worship or salon for the display of sophistication were operating in full force. Klein had given clues to justify both interpretations. The gallery, however, was not revealed as an institution for the

trading of property and ideology. Klein never showed any interest in fostering analytic and critical attitudes. He probably abhorred such an orientation as being associated with what he viewed as the divisiveness of the line.

Dimanche, Klein's *Journal d'un seul jour*, was in many ways a religious pamphlet. The fact that it was on display at a few select newsstands in Montparnasse and Saint Germain, possibly at Klein's prodding, did not make it a mass-circulation item. It stayed well within the closed circuit of the art world and was read only by the congregation, which had been tipped off. *Dimanche* was designed to promote the greater glory of the "blue revolution." It served as a vehicle to spread the prophet's word, backed by the authority of the miracles he had performed. In a megalomaniac, though inconsequential gesture, Klein took possession of the world's entire population and benignly granted each and everyone to go on with what they were doing. That included, among others, the nervous sentries guarding the Paris police stations with submachine guns, the *plastiqueurs*, the rebellious generals in Algeria and the tall general at the Elysée. Although the CRS did not beat up student demonstrators on that Sunday, they were implicitly also receiving Klein's wishes for a happy day. Is taking the whole enterprise seriously a sign for the lack of a sense of humor?

Was the sale of "Immaterial Zones of Pictorial Sensibility" an alchemically inspired "conceptual" gesture? Or was it a ploy to draw attention to the exchange value of art and the validating powers of money in the world of culture? The ritualistic burning of the collector's receipt, the enshrinement of part of the gold Klein received in the *Monogolds*, and his offering of another part to Saint Rita of Cascia, the saint of desperate and impossible causes, all point to a quasi religious transaction rather than an act in league with Abby Hoffman's sacrilegious dumping of money into the New York Stock Exchange.

Why did I express respect for Klein in my introductory remarks? Because he was a great adventurer. With his electrifying example he contributed, together with others, to the successful challenge of the orthodoxies of the Academy of his day. As naive and objectionable as much of Klein's work may be, it nevertheless serves as a positive model for an engagement beyond the provision of commodities and tasteful titillation of the retina. He pursued his Romantic goals through public relations and cheating, but also with great courage [and] flair, and [was] unafraid of taking risks. Like the alchemists of old, Klein seemed to have

been torn between scrounging for a formula to turn lead into gold and the search for the philosopher's stone.

The *Dépassement de la problématique de l'art* turned out to be an illusion. Yves Klein's Eden is not around the corner. Social conflicts and the problems of our material existence do not dissolve through impregnation with "pure sensibility." They are for real and demand taking sides.

[First published as "Sur Yves Klein, vingt ans après" in *Art Pres* 67 (February 1983): 10–11.]

30. *Taking Stock (unfinished)*, 1983–1984



1.17 Hans Haacke, *Taking Stock (unfinished)*, 1983–1984

The sculpture of Pandora (1890) is by Harry Bates (Tate Gallery collection). “MS” and “CS,” on the broken plates, are the initials of the brothers Maurice and Charles Saatchi. In 1982, when Charles Saatchi was an influential member of the Patrons of New Art of the Tate Gallery, the Tate gave Julian Schnabel a solo exhibition (nine of eleven paintings were owned by Saatchi). He was also on the board of London’s Whitechapel Gallery. After *Taking Stock (unfinished)* was

exhibited at the Tate Gallery in 1984, he resigned from the Patrons of New Art Committee and the Whitechapel Gallery.

Charles Saatchi began collecting art in the early 1970s. From photo-realism and pattern painting, his interest shifted to minimalism, Neo-Expressionism, and “neo-geo” works. During the 1990s he focused on young British art (YBA) and [has] recently begun to champion painting. Throughout these years he sold works from his collection and has been a partner in art investment companies, some of them registered in tax havens. *Sensation*, an exhibition of YBA works from his collection at the Royal Academy in London and the Brooklyn Museum, was sponsored by Christie’s, the auction house, through which he usually sells works from his holdings (exhibited also at Berlin’s Hamburger Bahnhof–Museum für Gegenwart).

Charles Saatchi’s art purchases were initially financed through Saatchi & Saatchi PLC, the advertising agency he and his brother started in 1970 and built into the largest holding company of ad agencies in the world. By 1994 shareholders had ousted both brothers from their positions on the board of the company. Two years later they opened M&C Saatchi in London.

Saatchi & Saatchi ran Margaret Thatcher’s election campaigns in 1979, 1983, and 1987. They were awarded the British Airways account as well as accounts of other state-owned entities. Maurice Saatchi credited the Tories: “We owe them everything. . . .” He became a life peer in 1996. In 2003 Michael Howard appointed him co-chairman of the Conservative Party. During Howard’s candidacy for the Tory leadership, he held a news conference at the museum Charles Saatchi had opened in 2003 at County Hall on the banks of the Thames (closed after three years). Lord Saatchi resigned from the party chairmanship in 2005. He caused an uproar when he submitted a bill of £1.5 million for M&C’s work on the Tory election campaign of that year.

[This version of a text on *Taking Stock (unfinished)* was first published in *Hans Haacke, for real: Works 1959–2006*, exh. cat. (Düsseldorf: Richter Verlag, 2006), 170–171.]

31. **"Museums, Managers of Consciousness," 1983**

The art world as a whole, and museums in particular, belong to what has aptly been called the "consciousness industry." More than twenty years ago, the German writer Hans Magnus Enzensberger gave us some insight into the nature of this industry in an article, which used that phrase as its title. Although he did not specifically elaborate on the art world, his article did refer to it in passing. It seems worthwhile here to extrapolate from and to expand upon Enzensberger's thoughts for a discussion of the role museums and other art-exhibiting institutions play.

Like Enzensberger, I believe the use of the term "industry" for the entire range of activities of those who are employed or working on a freelance basis in the art field has a salutary effect. With one stroke that term cuts through the romantic clouds that envelop the often misleading and mythical notions widely held about the production, distribution, and consumption of art. Artists, as much as galleries, museums, and journalists (not excluding art historians), hesitate to discuss the industrial aspect of their activities. An unequivocal acknowledgment might endanger the cherished romantic ideas with which most art world participants enter the field, and which still sustain them emotionally today. Supplanting the traditional bohemian image of the art world with that of a business operation could also negatively affect the marketability of its products and interfere with fundraising efforts. Those who, in fact, plan and execute industrial strategies—whether by inclination or need—tend to mystify art, conceal its industrial aspects, and often fall for their own propaganda. Given the prevalent marketability of myths, it may sound almost sacrilegious to insist on using the term "industry."

On the other hand, a new breed has recently appeared on the industrial landscape: the arts managers. Trained by prestigious business schools, they are convinced that art can and should be managed like the production and marketing of other goods. They make no apologies and have few romantic hang-ups. They do not blush in assessing the receptivity and potential development of an audience for their product. As a natural part of their education, they are conversant with budgeting, investment, and price-setting strategies. They have studied organizational goals, managerial structures, and the peculiar social and political environment of their organization. Even the intricacies of labor relations and the

ways in which interpersonal issues might affect the organization are part of their curriculum.

Of course, art-world denizens of the old school have employed all these and other skills for decades. Instead of enrolling in arts administration courses taught according to the Harvard Business School's case method, they have learned their skills on the job. Following their instincts, they have often been more successful managers than the new graduates promise to be, since the latter are mainly taught by professors with little or no direct knowledge of the peculiarities of the art world. Traditionally, however, the old-timers are shy in admitting to themselves and others the industrial character of their activities and most still do not view themselves as managers. It is to be expected that the lack of delusions and aspirations among the new art administrators will have a noticeable impact on the state of the industry. Being trained primarily as technocrats, they are less likely to have an emotional attachment to the peculiar nature of the product they are promoting. And this attitude, in turn, will have an effect on the type of products we will soon begin to see.

My insistence on the term "industry" is not motivated by sympathy for the new technocrats. As a matter of fact, I have serious reservations about their training, the mentality it fosters, and the consequences it will have. What the emergence of arts administration departments in business schools demonstrates, however, is the fact that in spite of the mystique surrounding the production and distribution of art, we are now—and indeed have been all along—dealing with social organizations that follow industrial modes of operation, ranging in size from the cottage industry to national and multinational conglomerates. Supervisory boards are becoming aware of this fact. Given current financial problems, they try to streamline their operations. Consequently, the present director of the Museum of Modern Art in New York has a management background, and the boards of trustees of other U.S. museums have or are planning to split the position of director into that of a business manager and an artistic director. The Metropolitan Museum in New York is one case where this split has already occurred. The debate often centers merely on which of the two executives should and will in fact have the last word.

Traditionally, members who come from the world of business and high finance dominate the boards of trustees of U.S. museums. The board is legally

responsible for the institution and consequently the trustees are the ultimate authority. Thus the business mentality has always been conspicuously strong at the decision-making level of private museums in the United States. However, the state of affairs is not essentially different in public museums in other parts of the world. Whether the directors have an art-historical background or not, they perform, in fact, the tasks of the chief executive officer of a business organization. Like their peers in other industries, they prepare budgets and development plans, and present them for approval to their respective public supervising bodies and funding agencies. The staging of an international exhibition such as a Biennale or a *Documenta* presents a major managerial challenge with repercussions not only for what is being managed, but also for the future career of the executive in charge.

Responding to a realistic appraisal of their lot, even artists are now acquiring managerial training in workshops funded by public agencies in the United States. Such sessions are usually well attended, as artists recognize that the managerial skills for running a small business could have a bearing on their own survival. Some of the more successful artists employ their own business managers. As for art dealers, it goes without saying that they are engaged in running businesses. The success of their enterprises and the future of the artists in their stables obviously depend a great deal on their managerial skills. Paid advisors, accountants, lawyers, and public relations agents assist them. In turn, collectors often do their collecting with the assistance of a paid staff.

At least in passing, I should mention that numerous other industries depend on the economic vitality of the art branch of the consciousness industry. Arts administrators do not exaggerate when they defend their claims for public support by pointing to the number of jobs that are affected not only in their own institutions, but also in communications and, particularly, in the hotel and restaurant industries. The Tut show [*Treasures of Tutankhamun*, 1979] at The Metropolitan Museum is estimated to have generated \$111 million for the economy of New York City. In New York and possibly elsewhere, real-estate speculators follow with great interest the move of artists into low-rent commercial and residential areas. From experience they know that artists unwittingly open these areas for gentrification and lucrative development. New York's SoHo district is a striking example. Mayor Koch, always a friend to the realtors who stuff his

campaign chest, tried recently to plant artists into particular streets on the Lower East Side to accomplish what is euphemistically called the “rehabilitation” of a neighborhood, but what, in fact, means squeezing out an indigenous poor population in order to attract developers of high-rent housing. The *Terminal* show (1983) was the brainchild of the city’s Public Development Corporation; it was meant to draw attention to the industrial potential of the former Brooklyn Army Terminal building. And the Museum of Modern Art, having erected a luxury apartment tower over its own building, is also now actively involved in real estate.

Elsewhere, city governments have recognized the importance of the art industry. The city of Hannover in West Germany, for example, sponsored several widely publicized art events in an attempt to improve its dull image. As large corporations point to the cultural life of their location in order to attract sophisticated personnel, so Hannover speculated that the outlay for art would be amortized many times by the attraction the city would gain for businesses seeking sites for relocation. It is well documented that *Documenta* is held in an out-of-the-way place like Kassel and given economic support by the city, state, and federal government because it was assumed that Kassel would be put on the map by an international art exhibition. It was hoped that the event would revitalize the economically depressed region close to the border to East Germany and that it would prop up the local tourist industry.

Another German example of the way in which direct industrial benefits flow from investment in art may be seen in the activities of the collector Peter Ludwig. It is widely believed that the motive behind his buying a large chunk of government-sanctioned Soviet art and displaying it in “his” museums was to open the Soviet market for his chocolate company. Ludwig may have risked his reputation as a connoisseur of art, but by buying into the Soviet consciousness industry he proved his taste for sweet deals. More recently, Ludwig recapitalized his company by selling a collection of medieval manuscripts to the J. Paul Getty Museum for an estimated price of \$40 to \$60 million. As a shrewd businessman, Ludwig used the money to establish a foundation that owns shares in his company. Thus the income from this capital remains untaxed and, in effect, the ordinary taxpayer winds up subsidizing Ludwig’s power ambitions in the art world.

Aside from the reasons already mentioned, the discomfort in applying industrial nomenclature to works of art may also have to do with the fact that these products are not entirely physical in nature. Although transmitted in one material form or another, they are developed in and by consciousness and have meaning only for another consciousness. In addition, it is possible to argue over the extent to which the physical object determines the manner in which the receiver decodes it. Such interpretive work is in turn a product of consciousness, performed gratis by each viewer but potentially salable if undertaken by curators, historians, critics, appraisers, teachers, etc. The hesitancy to use industrial concepts and language can probably also be attributed to our lingering idealist tradition, which associates such work with the “spirit,” a term with religious overtones and one that indicates the avoidance of mundane considerations.

The tax authorities, however, have no compunction in assessing the income derived from the “spiritual” activities. Conversely, the taxpayers so affected do not shy away from deducting relevant business expenses. They normally protest against tax rulings, which declare their work to be nothing but a hobby, or to put it in Kantian terms, the pursuit of “disinterested pleasure.” Economists consider the consciousness industry as part of the ever-growing service sector and include it as a matter of course in the computation of the gross national product.

The product of the consciousness industry, however, is not only elusive because of its seemingly nonsecular nature and its aspects of intangibility. More disconcerting, perhaps, is the fact that we do not even totally command our individual consciousness. As Karl Marx observed in *The German Ideology*, consciousness is a social product. It is, in fact, not our private property, homegrown and a home to retire to. It is the result of a collective historical endeavor, embedded in and reflecting particular value systems, aspirations, and goals. And these do not by any means represent the interests of everybody. Nor are we dealing with a universally accepted body of knowledge or beliefs. Word has gotten around that material conditions and the ideological context in which an individual grows up and lives determines to a considerable extent his or her consciousness. As has been pointed out (and not only by Marxist social scientists and psychologists), consciousness is not a pure, independent, value-free entity, evolving according to internal, self-sufficient, and universal rules. It is contingent, an open system, responsible to the crosscurrents of the environment. It is, in fact,

a battleground of conflicting interests. Correspondingly, the products of consciousness represent interests and interpretations of the world that are potentially at odds with each other. The products of the means of production, like those means themselves, are not neutral. As they were shaped by their respective environments and social relations, so do they in turn influence our view of the human condition.

Currently we are witnessing a great retreat to the private cocoon. We see a lot of noncommittal, sometimes cynical playing on naively perceived social forces, along with other forms of contemporary dandyism and updated versions of art for art's sake. Some artists and promoters may reject any commitment and refuse to accept the notion that their work presents a point of view beyond itself or that it fosters certain attitudes; nevertheless, as soon as work enjoys larger exposure it inevitably participates in the public discourse, advances particular systems of belief, and has reverberations in the social arena. At that point, artworks are no longer a private affair. The producer and the distributor must then weigh the impact.

But it is important to recognize that the codes employed by artists are often not as clear and unambiguous as those in other fields of communication. Controlled ambiguity may, in fact, be one of the characteristics of much Western art since the Renaissance. It is not uncommon that messages are received in a garbled, distorted form; they may even relay the opposite of what was intended (not to mention the kinds of creative confusion and muddle-headed-ness that can accompany the artwork's production). To compound these problems, there are the historical contingencies of the codes and the unavoidable biases of those who decipher them. With so many variables, there is ample room for exegesis and a livelihood is thus guaranteed for many workers in the consciousness industry.

Although the product under discussion appears to be quite slippery, it is by no means inconsequential, as cultural functionaries from Moscow to Washington make clear every day. It is recognized in both capitals that not only the mass media deserve monitoring, but also those activities, which are normally relegated to special sections at the back of newspapers. The *New York Times* calls its weekend section "Arts and Leisure" and covers under this heading theater, dance, film, art, numismatics, gardening, and other ostensibly harmless activities. Other papers carry these items under equally innocuous titles, such as "culture,"

“entertainment,” or “lifestyle.” Why should governments, and for that matter corporations which are not themselves in the communications industry, pay attention to such seeming trivia? I think they do so for good reason. They have understood, sometimes better than the people who work in the leisure suits of culture, that the term “culture” camouflages the social and political consequences resulting from the industrial distribution of consciousness.

The channeling of consciousness is pervasive not only under dictatorships, but also in liberal societies. To make such an assertion may sound outrageous because according to popular myth, liberal regimes do not behave this way. Such an assertion could also be misunderstood as an attempt to downplay the brutality with which mainstream conduct is enforced in totalitarian regimes, or as a claim that coercion of the same viciousness is practiced elsewhere as well. In nondictatorial societies, the induction into and the maintenance of a particular way of thinking and seeing must be performed with subtlety in order to succeed. Staying within the acceptable range of divergent views must be perceived as the natural thing to do.

Within the art world, museums and other institutions that stage exhibitions play an important role in the inculcation of opinions and attitudes. Indeed, they usually present themselves as educational organizations and consider education as one of their primary responsibilities. Naturally, museums work in the vineyards of consciousness. To state that obvious fact, however, is not an accusation of devious conduct. An institution’s intellectual and moral position becomes tenuous only if it claims to be free of ideological bias. And such an institution should be challenged if it refuses to acknowledge that it operates under constraints deriving from its sources of funding and from the authority to which it reports.

It is perhaps not surprising that many museums indignantly reject the notion that they provide a biased view of the works in their custody. Indeed, museums usually claim to subscribe to the canons of impartial scholarship. As honorable as such an endeavor is—and it is still a valid goal to strive for—it suffers from idealist delusions about the nonpartisan character of consciousness. A theoretical prop for this worthy but untenable position is the nineteenth-century doctrine of art for art’s sake. That doctrine has an avant-garde historical veneer and in its time did indeed perform a liberating role. Even today, in countries where artists are openly compelled to serve prescribed policies, it still has an emancipatory ring. The

gospel of art for art's sake isolates art and postulates its self-sufficiency, as if art had or followed rules, which are impervious to the social environment. Adherents of the doctrine believe that art does not and should not reflect the squabbles of the day. Obviously they are mistaken in their assumption that products of consciousness can be created in isolation. Their stance and what is crafted under its auspices have not only theoretical but also definite social implications. American formalism updated the doctrine and associated it with the political concepts of the "free world" and individualism. Under Clement Greenberg's tutelage, everything that made worldly references was simply excommunicated from art so as to shield the Grail of taste from contamination. What began as a liberating drive turned into its opposite. The doctrine now provides museums with an alibi for ignoring the ideological aspects of artworks and the equally ideological implications of the way those works are presented to the public. Whether such neutralizing is performed with deliberation or merely out of habit or lack of resources is irrelevant: practiced over many years it constitutes a powerful form of indoctrination.

Every museum is perforce a political institution, no matter whether it is privately run or maintained and supervised by governmental agencies. Those who hold the purse strings and have the authority over hiring and firing are, in effect, in charge of every element of the organization, if they choose to use their powers. While the rule of the boards of trustees of museums in the United States is generally uncontested, the supervisory bodies of public institutions elsewhere have to contend much more with public opinion and the prevailing political climate. It follows that political considerations play a role in the appointment of museum directors. Once they are in office and have civil service status with tenure, such officials often enjoy more independence than their colleagues in the United States, who can be dismissed from one day to the next, as occurred with Bates Lowry and John Hightower at the Museum of Modern Art within a few years' time. But it is advisable, of course, to be a political animal in both settings. Funding, as much as one's prospect for promotion to more prestigious posts, depends on how well one can play the game.

Directors in private U.S. museums need to be attuned primarily to the frame of mind represented by the *Wall Street Journal*, the daily source of edification of the board members. They are affected less by who happens to be the occupant of

the White House or the mayor's office, although this is not totally irrelevant for the success of applications for public grants. In other countries the outcome of elections can have a direct bearing on museum policies. Agility in dealing with political parties, possibly even membership in a party, can be an asset. The arrival of Margaret Thatcher in Downing Street and of François Mitterrand at the Élysée noticeably affected the art institutions in their respective countries. Whether in private or in public museums, disregard of political realities among them, the political needs of the supervising bodies, and the ideological complexion of their members is a guarantee of managerial failure.

It is usually required that, at least to the public, institutions appear nonpartisan. This does not exclude the sub-rosa promotion of the interests of the ultimate boss. As in other walks of life, the consciousness industry also knows the hidden agenda, which is more likely to succeed if it is not perceived as such. It would be wrong, however, to assume that the objectives and the mentality of every art executive are or should be at odds with those on whose support his organization depends. There are natural and honorable allegiances as much as there are forced marriages and marriages of convenience. All players, though, usually see to it that the serene facade of the art temple is preserved.

During the past twenty years, the power relations between art institutions and their sources of funding have become more complex. Museums have to be maintained either by public agencies—the tradition in Europe—or through donations from private individuals and philanthropic organizations, as has been the pattern in the United States. When Congress established the National Endowment for the Arts in 1965, U.S. museums gained an additional source of funding. In accepting public grants, however, they became accountable—even if in practice only to a limited degree—to government agencies.

Some public museums in Europe went the road of mixed support, too, although in the opposite direction. Private donors came on board with attractive collections. As has been customary in U.S. museums, however, some of these donors demanded a part in policy making. One of the most spectacular recent examples has been the de facto takeover of museums (among others, museums in Cologne, Vienna, and Aachen) that received or believed they would receive gifts from the German collector Peter Ludwig. As is well known in the Rhineland, Count Panza di Biumo's attempt to get his way in the new museum of

Mönchengladbach, down the Rhine from Ludwig's headquarters, was successfully rebuffed by the director, Johannes Cladders, who is both resolute and a good poker player in his own right.⁵⁵ How far the Saatchis in London will get in dominating the Tate Gallery's Patrons of New Art—and thereby the museum's policies for contemporary art—is currently watched with the same fascination and nervousness as developments in the Kremlin. A recent, much-noticed instance of Saatchi influence was the Tate's 1982 Schnabel show, which consisted almost entirely of works from the Saatchis' collection. In addition to his position on the steering committee of the Tate's Patrons of New Art, Charles Saatchi is also a trustee of the Whitechapel Gallery.⁵⁶ Furthermore, the Saatchis' advertising agency has just begun handling publicity for the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Royal Academy, the National Portrait Gallery, the Serpentine Gallery, and the British Crafts Council. Certainly the election victory of Mrs. Thatcher, in which the Saatchis played a part as the advertising agency of the Conservative Party, did not weaken their position (and may in turn have provided the Conservatives with a powerful agent within the hallowed hall of the Tate).⁵⁷

If such collectors seem to be acting primarily in their own self-interest and to be building pyramids to themselves when they attempt to impose their will on "chosen" institutions, their moves are in fact less troublesome in the long run than the disconcerting arrival on the scene of corporate funding for the arts—even though the latter at first appears to be more innocuous.⁵⁸ Starting on a large scale toward the end of the 1960s in the United States and expanding rapidly ever since, corporate funding has spread during the last five years to [Great] Britain and the [European] Continent. Ambitious exhibition programs that could not be financed through traditional sources led museums to turn to corporations for support. The larger, more lavishly appointed these shows and their catalogs became, however, the more glamour the audiences began to expect. In an ever-advancing spiral the public was made to believe that only Hollywood-style extravaganzas were worth seeing and that only they could give an accurate sense of the world of art. The resulting box-office pressure made the museums still more dependent on corporate funding. Then came the recessions of the 1970s and 1980s. Many individual donors could no longer contribute at the accustomed rate, and inflation eroded the purchasing power of funds. To compound the financial problems, many governments, facing huge deficits—often due to sizable expansions of

military budgets—cut their support for social services as well as their arts funding. Again museums felt they had no choice but to turn to corporations for a bailout. Following their own ideological inclinations and making them national policy, President Reagan and Mrs. Thatcher encouraged the so-called private sector to pick up the slack in financial support.

Why have business executives been receptive to the museums' pleas for money? During the restive 1960s the more astute ones began to understand that corporate involvement in the arts is too important to be left to the chairman's wife. Irrespective of their own love for or indifference toward art, they recognized that a company's association with art could yield benefits far out of proportion to a specific financial investment. Not only could such a policy attract sophisticated personnel, but it also projected an image of the company as a good corporate citizen and advertised its products—all things which impress investors. Executives with a longer vision also saw that the association of their company (and, by implication, of business in general) with the high prestige of art was a subtle but effective means for lobbying in the corridors of government. It could open doors, facilitate passage of favorable legislation, and serve as a shield against scrutiny and criticism of corporate conduct.

Museums, of course, are not blind to the attractions for business of lobbying through art. For example, in a pamphlet with the telling title "The Business behind Art Knows the Art of Good Business," The Metropolitan Museum [of Art] in New York woos prospective corporate sponsors by assuring them: "Many public relations opportunities are available through the sponsorship of programs, special exhibitions and services. These can often provide a creative and cost-effective answer to a specific marketing objective, particularly where international, governmental or consumer relations may be a fundamental concern."⁵⁹

A public relations executive of Mobil in New York aptly called the company's art support a "good will umbrella," and his colleague from Exxon referred to it as a "social lubricant."⁶⁰ It is liberals in particular who need to be greased, because they are the most likely and sophisticated critics of corporations and they are often in positions of influence. They also happen to be more interested in culture than other groups on the political spectrum. Luke Rittner, who as outgoing director of the British Association of Business Sponsorship of the Arts should know, recently

explained: “A few years ago companies thought sponsoring the arts was charitable. Now they realize there is also another aspect; it is a tool they can use for corporate promotion in one form or another.” Rittner, obviously in tune with his prime minister, has been appointed the new secretary general on the British Arts Council.

Corporate public relations officers know that the greatest publicity benefits can be derived from high-visibility events, shows that draw crowds and are covered extensively by the popular media; these are shows that are based on and create myths—in short, blockbusters. As long as an institution is not squeamish about company involvement in press releases, posters, advertisements, and its exhibition catalog, its grant proposal for such an extravaganza is likely to be examined with sympathy. Some companies are happy to underwrite publicity for the event (which usually includes the company logo) at a rate almost matching the funds they make available for the exhibition itself. Generally, such companies look for events that are “exciting,” a word that pops up in museum press releases and catalog prefaces more often than any other.

Museum managers have learned, of course, what kinds of shows are likely to attract corporate funding. And they also know that they have to keep their institutions in the limelight. Corporations now sponsor most shows in large New York museums. Institutions in London will soon be catching up with them. The Whitney Museum has even gone one step further. It has established branches—almost literally a merger—on the premises of two companies.⁶¹ It is fair to assume that exhibition proposals that do not fulfill the necessary criteria for corporate sponsorship risk not being considered, and we never hear about them.

Certainly, shows that could promote critical awareness, present products of consciousness dialectically and in relation to the social world, or question relations of power, have a slim chance of being approved—not only because they are unlikely to attract corporate funding, but also because they could sour relations with potential sponsors for other shows. Consequently, self-censorship is having a boom.⁶² Without exerting any direct pressure, corporations have effectively gained a veto in museums, even though their financial contribution often covers only a fraction of the costs of an exhibition. Depending on circumstances, these contributions are tax deductible as a business expense or a charitable contribution.

Ordinary taxpayers are thus footing part of the bill. In effect, they are unwitting sponsors of private corporate policies, which, in many cases, are detrimental to their health and safety, the general welfare, and in conflict with their personal ethics.

Since the corporate blanket is so warm, glaring examples of direct interference rare, and the increasing dominance of the museums' development offices hard to trace, the change of climate is hardly perceived, nor is it taken as a threat. To say that this change might have consequences beyond the confines of the institution and that it affects the type of art that is and will be produced therefore can sound like over-dramatization. Through naiveté, need, or addiction to corporate financing, museums are now on the slippery road to becoming public relations agents for the interests of big business and its ideological allies. The adjustments that museums make in the selection and promotion of works for exhibition and in the way they present them create a climate that supports prevailing distributions of power and capital and persuades the populace that the status quo is the natural and best order of things. Rather than sponsoring intelligent, critical awareness, museums thus tend to foster appeasement.

Those engaged in collaboration with the public relations officers of companies rarely see themselves as promoters of acquiescence. On the contrary, they are usually convinced that their activities are in the best interests of art. Such a well-intentioned delusion can survive only as long as art is perceived as a mythical entity above mundane interests and ideological conflict. And it is, of course, this misunderstanding of the role that products of the consciousness industry play which constitutes the indispensable base for all corporate strategies of persuasion.

Whether museums contend with governments, power trips of individuals, or the corporate steamroller, they are in the business of molding and channeling consciousness. Even though they may not agree with the system of beliefs dominant at the time, their options not to subscribe to them and instead to promote an alternative consciousness are limited. The survival of the institution and personal careers are often at stake. But in nondictatorial societies, the means for the production of consciousness are not all in one hand. The sophistication required to promote a particular interpretation of the world is potentially also available to question that interpretation and to offer other versions. As the need to spend enormous sums for public relations and government propaganda indicates,

things are not frozen. Political constellations shift and unincorporated zones exist in sufficient numbers to disturb the mainstream.

It was never easy for museums to preserve or regain a degree of maneuverability and intellectual integrity. It takes stealth, intelligence, determination—and some luck. But a democratic society demands nothing less than that.

[This is a slightly altered version of an essay that was originally delivered as a talk at the annual meeting of the Art Museum Association of Australia in Canberra, August 30, 1983. First published in Ian North, ed., *Art Museums and Big Business* (Kingston: Art Museums Association of Australia, 1984), 33–40, and reprinted in *Art in America* 72, no. 2 (February 1984): 9–17.]

32. *U.S. Isolation Box, Grenada, 1983, 1984*

On October 25, 1983, President Reagan sent 7,000 U.S. troops to Grenada, a small Caribbean Island with a population of 85,000. Their mission, he said, was to rescue American students at St. George's University Medical School during a violent power struggle between two factions of Grenada's leftist government party. Both factions were friendly to Cuba. Declassified Pentagon documents reveal that the students were not in danger and the military intervention was, in fact, meant to interfere with the Cuban construction of an airport to support the island's tourist industry. As a result 110 members of the Grenadian militia, 71 Cuban construction workers, and 19 American soldiers died during the campaign. The Pentagon awarded 9,802 decorations, including 813 Bronze Stars. President Reagan, referring to the American hostage crisis in Iran, declared: "Our days of weakness are over. Our military forces are standing tall."

The *New York Times* reported on November 17, 1983, that U.S. troops detained prisoners in box-like isolation chambers. These wood boxes measured approximately eight by eight feet, had four small openings, cut too high to see in or out, and a number of ventilation holes one inch in diameter. Prisoners were forced to enter the boxes by crawling through a hatch close to the ground. Inside one box a prisoner had scribbled, "It's hot in here." Prisoners were forced to enter the boxes by crawling through a hatch that extended from the floor to about knee level.

U.S. Isolation Box, Grenada, 1983 was exhibited in the public mall of the Graduate Center of the City University of New York on 42nd Street. It was part of a series of events organized by the ad hoc coalition Artists' Call against U.S. Intervention in Central America that took place in over twenty cities in the United States and Canada. Over seven hundred artists participated in New York. Claes Oldenburg designed the poster. Well-known galleries such as Leo Castelli, Paula Cooper, and Barbara Gladstone made their spaces available for the protest.

A *Wall Street Journal* editorial attacked *U.S. Isolation Box, Grenada, 1983* as being "in proper company" with "America's greatest collection of obscenity and pornography" around Times Square, a few blocks away from the Graduate Center.

In *The New Criterion*, a journal financed by, among others, Richard Mellon Scaife, a well-known supporter of ultraconservative causes, and individuals



1.18 Hans Haacke, *U.S. Isolation Box, Grenada, 1983, 1984*

including independent counsel Kenneth W. Starr, the neo-conservative art critic Hilton Kramer declared *U.S. Isolation Box, Grenada, 1983* “devoid of any discernible artistic quality.” He broadly associated the artists of the exhibition, The New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York, and others with “the Stalinist ethos.”

As a panelist of the National Endowment for the Arts during the Reagan administration, Kramer had successfully argued for the discontinuation of grants for art critics because, he said, the recipients had been “opposed to just about every policy of the United States government.” Currently he ranks among the most vociferous critics of the NEA. He is also calling for the abolishment of all black and gender studies in universities.

[This text was most likely written as a wall label to accompany the photo of *U.S. Isolation Box, Grenada, 1983* in the group show *Inside the Box* at the Bernstein Gallery, Princeton University, in 2011. Segments of this text were published in *Hans Haacke* (London: Phaidon, 2004), 119.]

33. *MetroMobiltan*, 1985



1.19 Hans Haacke, *MetroMobiltan*, 1985

The black-and-white photomural behind the banners is based on a color slide taken by the SYGMA photographer Alan Tannenbaum. It shows the funeral procession for black victims shot by the South African police at Crossroads, near Cape Town, on March 16, 1985.

Text on a plaque above the banners says: “Many public relations opportunities are available through the sponsorship of programs, special exhibitions and services. These can often provide a creative and cost effective answer to a specific, marketing objective, particularly where international, governmental or consumer relations may be a fundamental concern.[—]The Metropolitan Museum of Art.” (Excerpted from a leaflet published by The Metropolitan Museum of Art under the title “The Business behind Art Knows the Art of Good Business: Your Company and The Metropolitan Museum of Art.”)

The image on the central banner represents a seated figure from Tanda, Africa, c. 1400 AD, National Museum, Lagos, Nigeria.

The texts on the left and right banners are excerpted from the Mobil Corporation's response to a 1981 shareholder resolution presented by a coalition of church groups. The resolution proposed the prohibition of sales to the South African police and military, during the time of the apartheid regime. Mobil management recommended a vote against adopting such a policy, calling it "unwise."

With more than \$400 million worth of assets in South Africa, Mobil was one of the largest U.S. investors in that country. It held 20 percent of the petroleum market, had a refinery, a network of 120 supply depots, and more than 1,200 service stations. The apartheid government considered the oil industry as playing a vital strategic role. Oil was deemed a "munition of war." Mobil is estimated to have met 20 percent of the South African police and military's fuel needs. In 1984, its refinery in Durban was the target of a rocket-propelled grenade attack by the African National Congress (ANC), the black liberation movement headed by Nelson Mandela.

In 1986, the Mobil management again recommended voting against a shareholder resolution which demanded the termination of petroleum supplies to the South African police and military. Pension funds, universities, and other large U.S. institutional investors increasingly divested themselves of Mobil shares in protest against Mobil's collaboration with apartheid, and the U.S. Congress passed sanctions. Responding to these pressures Mobil eventually withdrew from South Africa in 1989. It sold its assets to Gencor Ltd., an Afrikaner-owned conglomerate with extensive interests in mining and other important industries. After bitter strikes in the early 1980s, Gencor had been called an "enemy company" by Cyril Ramaphosa, then the leader of the black mine workers union and later the Secretary General of the ANC.

In 1994, as a result of international and domestic economic and political pressure, apartheid came to an end. Free elections were held, and Nelson Mandela was inaugurated as the president of South Africa.

On October 10, 1985, Mobil ran an advertisement in the *New York Times*, entitled "Art, for the sake of business." In answer to its own question "What's in it for us?" Mobil proudly declared the reasons for its involvement in cultural activities: "Improving—and ensuring—the business climate."

In the 1970s and 1980s, Mobil had sponsored numerous exhibitions at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, among them, in 1980, a show of ancient Nigerian art, and *Te Maori*, an exhibition of works by tribal artists from New Zealand in 1984 (The company holds major assets in Nigeria and New Zealand.) These exhibitions were accompanied by an extensive publicity campaign underwritten by Mobil, including posters in New York bus shelters and full-page advertisements with the Mobil logo. The company also gave \$500,000 for The Metropolitan's Islamic galleries, where it then entertained the Saudi Arabian Prince Sultan Bin Abdul-Aziz (Mobil gets more than half of its oil from Saudi Arabia).

In 1984, Mobil threatened the Tate Gallery and the Stedelijk van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven with a lawsuit if they continued distribution of a catalog of mine that they had jointly published at the occasion of a solo exhibition. The company objected to three of the works on Mobil's activities, as well as an interview, all of which were reproduced in the publication. Mobil charged that they violated certain of the company's and its officers' rights. Not familiar with U.S. law on which the claims were based, both museums provisionally withdrew the catalog from distribution. After about a year, however, apprised of the unsustainability of the charges, the museums released the publication.

In 1985, The Metropolitan [Museum]'s director Philippe de Montebello explained to a *Newsweek* reporter what effect corporate sponsorship has: "It's an inherent, insidious, hidden form of censorship."⁶³

[This text has numerous different versions. This version was published in *Hans Haacke: "Obra Social,"* exh. cat. (Barcelona: Fundació Antoni Tàpies), 146–148.]

34. *Les must de Rembrandt, 1986*

Compagnie Financière Richmond, an offshore holding company of the South Africa-based Rembrandt Group, was formed in 1987 in Switzerland to insulate its parent from international sanctions against apartheid. Rembrandt's self-portrait serves as [the] logo of the conglomerate, which was founded in 1940 by Anton Rupert as a vehicle for apartheid interests. The international Rembrandt empire is now managed by his son Johann. The Rupert family is the second wealthiest family in South Africa.

In South Africa, Rembrandt had major interests in engineering, investment banking, insurance, financial services, printing, petrochemical products, tobacco, food, and alcohol, as well as mining (17.3 percent of Gold Fields, 25 percent of GENCOR). Because of its violent suppressions of strikes by black miners, GENCOR was called an "enemy company" by Cyril Ramaphosa (then president of [the] National Union of Mine Workers).

Under apartheid, Total South Africa was the largest French business enterprise in South Africa. It met a vital part of South Africa's petroleum need. Rembrandt held over 30 percent of Total's shares.

Through its Vendôme subsidiary, Rembrandt/Richmont has become the world's second-largest luxury goods company (in revenues), controlling the jewelers Cartier and Van Clef & Arpels, Montblanc pens, Dunhill luggage, the Swiss watchmakers Piaget, Baume & Mercier, and Vacheron Constantin. It also has interests in high fashion. In 1999 it divested from Rothmans (tobacco) and in 2000 from European pay-television.

In 1984, Alain-Dominique Perrin, until 2003 president of Cartier, established the Cartier Foundation for Contemporary Art in Paris. He explained that corporate sponsorship of culture "is a tool for the seduction of public opinion." It promotes a company's "image," helps "developing new markets," and serves "to neutralize criticism from consumer and ecological groups." He emphasized: "It is important to abandon the idea that sponsoring culture is a disinterested investment."

[Written in 2003, this text was first published in *Hans Haacke* (London: Phaidon, 2004), 96–97.]



1.20 Hans Haacke, *Les must de Rembrandt*, 1986 (Exterior)



1.21 Hans Haacke, *Les must de Rembrandt*, 1986 (Interior)

35. “*And You Were Victorious After All: History of Project,*” 1988

Every fall since 1968, a culture festival known as the *Steirischer Herbst* has been held in Graz, the capital of the Austrian province of Styria. The festival features concerts, theater and opera productions, film showings, and symposia by writers as well as art exhibitions. Although constituted as an independent organization, the director is chosen by a board on which representatives of the provincial and city government play important roles. In 1988, the board was chaired by Prof. Kurt Jungwirth, the deputy governor of Styria and a prominent member of the conservative party (ÖVP). Graz was represented by its social democratic mayor Alfred Stingl (SPÖ) and its commissioner of culture Helmut Strobl (ÖVP). The province, Graz, and the Austrian government fund the festival.



1.22 Hans Haacke, *Und Ihr habt doch gesiegt* (And You Were Victorious After All), 1988



1.23 Hans Haacke, *Und ihr habt doch gesiegt* (And You Were Victorious After All), 1988

Dr. Peter Vujica, the director of *Steirischer Herbst* in 1988, chose for the twentieth anniversary of the festival the motto “Guilt and Innocence of Art,” and suggested that reference be made to Hitler’s annexation of Austria in 1938. The Anschluss was the theme of a number of public events in Austria in the year of its fiftieth anniversary. Inevitably, the enthusiastic welcome Hitler received when his

troops marched into Austria became the topic of an agitated public debate. It was further fueled by the controversy surrounding the role the recently elected Austrian president Kurt Waldheim had played as a Wehrmacht officer in the Balkans during World War II.

Dr. Vujica commissioned Dr. Werner Fenz, the curator of the City's Neue Galerie, to organize the visual arts section for 1988. Dr. Fenz invited artists from various countries to produce works for temporary installation in selected public places in Graz. He chose as *Bezugspunkte 38/88* (Points of Reference 38/88) locations that had played a significant role during the Nazi regime, such as the police headquarters/Gestapo, city hall, squares where Nazi rallies had been held, the Hitler Youth headquarters, the bishop's palace, etc.

Programmatically, Werner Fenz stated in the catalog: "*Points of Reference* is to challenge the artists to deal with history, politics, and society, and thereby to reclaim an intellectual space, which is being abandoned to everyday indifference in an ongoing, unexamined and manipulated retreat." Sixteen artists from eight countries eventually accepted the invitation from Graz. For the execution of their proposals, the cooperation of city, provincial, and federal agencies, including that of the Catholic Church, [was] indispensable. The readiness with which these agencies did, in fact, assist the projects is all the more remarkable, as it was clear from the beginning that *Points of Reference* would touch a raw nerve in the local population. Only the Austrian Railroad did not allow the Graz railway station to be used.

At the Southend of Herrengasse, the most prominent street of Graz, leading from city hall past the Renaissance provincial government building, a string of shops, outdoor cafés and banks to the Opernring, rises on a triangular square, one of the city's older monuments, the *Mariensäule*. A fluted column on a massive base, crowned by a gilded statue of the Virgin Mary on a crescent moon, it was erected late in the seventeenth century to commemorate the victory over the Turks. It has been a popular landmark ever since.

When Hitler conferred on Graz the honorary title *Stadt der Volkserhebung* (City of the People's Insurrection), the ceremony on July 25, 1938, was held at the foot of the *Mariensäule*. Graz had earned this title as an early and vital Nazi stronghold in Austria. Already weeks before the Anschluss, 15,000 Nazis had paraded down Herrengasse in a torchlight parade, the swastika flag had been

hoisted from the balcony of city hall, and Jewish shop windows had been smashed.

For the celebration in 1938, the *Mariensäule* had been hidden under an enormous obelisk, draped in red fabric and emblazoned with the Nazi insignia and the inscription *UND IHR HABT DOCH GESIEGT* (And You Were Victorious After All). This claim of ultimate triumph referred to the failed putsch in Vienna on July 25, 1934, four years earlier, during which Nazis had murdered the Austro-fascist chancellor Dr. Engelbert Dollfuß. A fire bowl topped the obelisk.

Werner Fenz designated the *Mariensäule* and its surroundings as one of the sixteen “Points of Reference.” According to photographs of its transformation into a Nazi victory column, I had its appearance of July 25, 1938, reconstructed for the *Steirischer Herbst*. The only difference from the original was an addition around the base. Listed white on a black ground in the *fractura* typeface preferred by the Nazis, were “The Vanquished of Styria: 300 gypsies killed, 2,500 Jews killed, 8,000 political prisoners killed or died in detention, 9,000 civilians killed in the war, 12,000 missing, 27,900 soldiers killed.”

Facing the obelisk, on a spot where in 1938 a wall of large swastika flags served as backdrop for the Nazi dignitaries when they were addressing their uniformed audience, I had a billboard erected with sixteen posters. With a swastika in their center the posters carried, in white *fractura* on a red ground, the inscription “Graz—City of The People’s Insurrection.” Pasted into the middle of the swastikas were facsimile reproductions of documents from 1938. Among them were several classified advertisements from the local newspapers announcing the “Aryan” ownership or recent “Aryanization” of local shops and that Nazi paraphernalia were in stock. In others, “Aryans” were looking for jobs or marriage partners. One warned the public that he would have anybody prosecuted who spread rumors he might not be “Aryan.” Also included were the university law school’s catalog page with the listing of courses on the new race laws and Germanic legal doctrine, as well as the congratulatory telegram the university president had sent to Hitler. There were, as well, reproductions of the prayer with which the city’s pastor welcomed the new Nazi era and ads by employees who publically thanked their employer for having granted them a bonus at the occasion of the Anschluss. Also represented was the local newspaper’s jubilant report of the burning of the synagogue: “For Graz the problem of the provocative presence of a Jewish temple

has now been unequivocally solved by the will of the people.” And there was a facsimile of the Gestapo list of motor vehicles that had been confiscated from local Jews.

As soon as the obelisk was covered with the red drapes carrying the inscriptions and the Nazi eagle, and it became clear, why the statue of the virgin had been encased, there was commotion at the site. Throngs of people gathered and engaged in heated debate over whether, after fifty years, one should stir up the Nazi past again. Some of the opposition was clearly motivated by anti-Semitic sentiments. While most people of retirement age were incensed, the local TV also showed several passionate supporters of the idea that they must confront and come to terms with their ugly past. Among them was an old woman commenting, while the camera was rolling: “I wonder why these people are so upset. They must feel guilty.” The reaction of those who, due to their age, could not have been implicated in the Nazi period, was very mixed, ranging from hostility, indifference, and incomprehension to enthusiastic approval of the *Steirischer Herbst’s* project. In their opening address, the mayor of Graz and the deputy governor both stressed the need for more education about recent history, particularly for the young. And they both stressed that any exhibition of art in public places inevitably has political connotations. Local media coverage was generous and for the most part decidedly favorable.

The sixteen posters with documents from 1938 were torn down frequently and had to be replaced. But they were also attracting attentive readers and an occasional class of schoolchildren under the guidance of their teacher. Other works of the exhibition were vandalized, too, probably more out of aggression against what the vandals perceived as offensive to their notions of art or as a prank than for political reasons. Particularly a sound piece by the Californian Bill Fontana, who had powerful loudspeakers boom the sounds of Hamburg foghorns and the mating calls of exotic animals from a tower onto the city, incurred the population’s ire and eventually was turned off. From the first day on, at night, a guard was posted at the obelisk.

Out of the view of the guard, about a week before the closing of the exhibition, in the night of November 2, my memorial to the victims of the Nazis in Syria was firebombed. Although the fire department was able to extinguish the flames [quickly], much of drapes and the top of the obelisk were burned and the

statue of the virgin was severely damaged, when the soldering joints of the cooper sculpture melted.

The local, the national, and also the West German press reported the firebombing, some relating it to the hostile reactions to the Burgtheater's premiere of *Der Heldenplatz* by the Austrian playwright Thomas Bernhard. Many headlines referred to the ruin of the Mahnmal (memorial) as "Schandmal" (monument of shame), strongly condemning the arson and the suspected motivation behind it. An exception was the *Neue Kronen Zeitung*, the largest and most conservative yellow press daily of Austria, which had been the strongest supporter of Kurt Waldheim. The Graz editor used the occasion to accuse the leaders of the Catholic Church for having permitted the encasement of the *Mariensäule* and the politicians for having squandered tax money for such a "shameful" purpose.

For noon on the Saturday following the arson, Richard Kriesche, an artist from Graz, called for a fifteen-minute demonstration of silence at the ruin. About 100 people from the local art community joined him and discussed the meaning of the event with the Saturday crowd of shoppers that had gathered around. For days afterwards, inspired by the Katholische Aktion (Lay Apostolate), leftist political groups, and students, people demonstrated, deposited flowers and, at night, lit candles at the foot of the burned obelisk. Kriesche, the mayor, and some local newspapers and others proposed to leave the ruin, as a memorial, in place, beyond the time of the exhibition, until Christmas. However, the conservative party (ÖVP) and pressure from Graz merchants eventually doomed this plan.

In commemoration of the Kristallnacht, the billboard of sixteen posters was covered with the inscription: "In the night from November 9 to 10, 1938, all synagogues in Austria were looted, destroyed and set on fire. And in the night from November 2 to 3, 1988, this memorial was destroyed by a firebomb."

With the help of a police sketch and descriptions from two people who had seen him from afar, the arsonist was arrested out of the crowd lining the streets of Graz during the silent march commemorating Kristallnacht. He was identified as an unemployed thirty-six-year-old, who had been traveling in neo-Nazi circles. Also the instigator of the firebombing was arrested. He is a well-known sixty-seven-year-old Nazi.

Reports from Graz suggest that the events surrounding *Points of Reference* 38/88 may have served as a catalyst for a critical examination of the local political

culture. Stefan Karner, a professor for contemporary social and economic history at the Graz University, and author of a book entitled *Styria during the Third Reich, 1938–1945*, wrote about his observations: “I can assure you, that many people in Graz have been deeply affected, particularly by the damage done to the artwork. And they suddenly realized, how important it is to deal with this period also in artistic terms, and how problematic this subject still seems to be in Graz. I believe many of the reactions give reason to take heart and to be optimistic.”

[This text was first published in English as “Und Ihr habt doch gesiegt, 1988,” in *October* 48 (Spring 1989): 79–89.]

36. “*La trahison des images*’: Answers to Two Questions from Jean Papineau,” 1989



1.24 Hans Haacke, *Alcan: Tableau pour la Salle du Conseil d'Administration* (Alcan: Painting for the Board Room), 1983

Jean Papineau: When first shown in Montreal in February 1983, *Voici Alcan* bore in epigraph a quotation from [Bertolt] Brecht. To my knowledge, the quotation was never reproduced elsewhere, not even in *Unfinished Business* (1986), and nowhere has there been mention of the work having been placed under the sign of Brecht.⁶⁴ As a reminder, the Brecht read: “less than ever does a simple reproduction of reality express something about reality. A photograph of the Krupp works or the AEG reveals almost nothing about these institutions. Reality



1.25, 1.26 **Hans Haacke, *Voici Alcan*, 1983**

proper has shifted over into the functional. The reification of human relationships, for instance in the factory, no longer reveals what is ultimate in these relations. Therefore *something has to be constructed*, something artificial, something fabricated.⁶⁵

Brecht's statement was first published in 1922. Ten years later, in his 1931 article on photography ("A Short History of Photography"), Walter Benjamin argued along the same lines. Using the exact same quotation from Brecht, Benjamin characterized the work he was discussing by calling it *the art of unmaking or construction*, and then added that the decisive confrontation was between *creative and constructive photography*.



1.27 Hans Haacke, *Voici Alcan*, 1983

Would it be erroneous (or anachronistic) in both art historical and ontological meanings of the word *constructive*, to discuss your work as sequential to the theoretical framework set by Brecht and Benjamin? If not, then how does this apply more directly to *Voici Alcan*?

Hans Haacke: When I exhibited the two works, especially made for a first showing in Montreal at the Galerie France Morin in 1983, I discreetly posted Brecht's well-known statement (quoted in *Walter Benjamin's Kleine Geschichte der Photographie* of 1931) on one wall of the gallery.

According to this quote, Brecht maintained that less than ever before a simple “rendition of reality” says something about reality. He went on to explain that, for example, a photo of the Krupp factories or those of AEG (the German equivalent to General Electric—recently absorbed by Daimler Benz) yield hardly anything about these industrial empires. What constitutes reality, is how things function. In order to represent that, however, one needs to “construct something, something artificial, posed.”⁶⁶

Benjamin quoted Brecht while arguing against “creative” photography, which does not offer insight into the “crisis of contemporary society,” but, rather, lends itself to being used as an ideal marketing device. Instead, Benjamin calls for “photographic construction,” capable of capturing human interrelations, a photography that unmasks and serves cognition.

The Brecht quote is frequently cited in discussions over the free-floating meaning of the photographic image which is anchored only, and read accordingly, by the context in which it appears, often in the form of an accompanying caption. Brecht’s statement also fuels the discussion of the popular but faulty assumption that a photograph—different from a painting in which everything can be invented—represents reality. But his analysis should not be restricted to photography and the twentieth century. Visual communication in pre-photographic societies, of course, also did not rely on the faithful rendition of light rays reflected by objects as a means to express what was considered reality. It resorted, as we do today, to “something constructed, something artificial, posed,” to accomplish that.

What prompted me to remind the visitors to my exhibition in Montreal of the Brecht/Benjamin analysis was my discovery of an aerial photograph of the Alcan smelters in Northern Quebec in a glossy company publication with the title *Voici Alcan*. This color photograph, I thought, was the contemporary Canadian counterpart to the photographs of the Krupp and AEG plants in Brecht’s Berlin.

I took it as my job to get under the skin of the promotional surface. By revealing the health and safety conditions (“reification of human relations,” for Brecht) to which the Alcan workers are subjected, I tried to bring the lofty view of the smelters down to earth, to the everyday reality of those who labor for the

shareholders' benefit. Along with this, I tried to expose the role this photograph played in Alcan's ["the world is beautiful" (Benjamin)] campaign.

In brief, I turned the aerial view into a vaguely impressionistic painting, I framed it in aluminum moldings, and, in an upbeat promotional language, I inscribed on the misty sky, wherein pictures of this kind one might find an uplifting message, an enumeration of the diseases the workers in the Alcan smelter have the good fortune to contract. And I dedicated the painting by giving it the title *Tableau pour la salle du conseil d'administration*.

For my second 1983 "construction" in Montreal, where Alcan maintains its headquarters (the context of a work's first exhibition is often part of its material), I borrowed the title *Voici Alcan* from the company's promotional pamphlet. My *Voici Alcan* connected the aluminum giant's South African interests with its good works for the Montreal Opera.

Five years later, when this piece was part of the inaugural exhibition of the new National Gallery in Ottawa, it prompted an Alcan executive to explode[:]
"We have been betrayed by a pseudo-artist trying to make his reputation at our expense" (quoted in *The Globe and Mail*). As a footnote, I should add that, in spite of Alcan's divestment from South Africa in 1986 (I claim no responsibility for this move), the company admitted in 1987 to the Washington-based Investor Responsibility Research Center that it still had dealings with the apartheid country.

JP: Discussing your work, some critics rest their argument on an analogy with sociology or political discourse. Bluntly summarized, the argument seems to imply that art (or the quality of a work of art) depends upon the politics from which it stems. In other words, good politics account for good art.

This again reminds me of Brecht. And so, to substitute one analogy for another, your work seems to bear more profound resemblance with Brecht's concept of the *Lehrstück* (literally "didactic piece") or even his *Arbeitsjournal* than with, say, [Howard S.] Becker's *Artworlds* or Bourdieu's *Distinction*. The question is one of presentation (and of construction), not of political awareness.

Even if Brecht's work had not been labeled *political*, one could not help but notice the didactic mode which characterizes most of his theater. In fact, where Brecht is concerned, the didactic is what makes up for the political. Since this mode, the didactic, also seems to be one of the main features of your work, would reducing critical discussion to subject matter deprive your work of its *political* overtone?

HH: Whether or not artists intend to do so, tempered by their personal *habitus* (Bourdieu) their work draws from and feeds into that intractable consensual amalgam of unquestioned assumptions, goals, and values that is often referred to as ideology. It is a product of the consciousness industry, in which art plays a small but not insignificant role. Were it as negligible as is popularly assumed, politicians around the world would not try to influence the industry's product line, nor would corporations invest capital to exploit and control it. Many artists and their hangers-on deny that their work has any political relevance, or they are satisfied with a tacit and implicit contribution to the shaping of our ideological climate. I believe that once one has realized that the art world is not an isolated enclave all unto its own, one had better consider the ramifications and potential consequences of one's work. That is as much an attempt to act responsibly as it is to protect oneself against instant cooptation.

I don't like being lectured to and don't feel comfortable telling other people, with a raised finger, what to think and do. Laying out the "politically correct" line of the day, the "representation of [good] politics," bores me. It is probably also self-defeating. While I have learned a great deal from political theorists, sociological discourse, and reading the newspaper, merely illustrating what I picked up there would be a scholastic exercise. It does not turn me on—and it does not engage the audience! Involving the audience, however, was one of Brecht's goals, and in this sense, perhaps, mine is also a "didactic" enterprise.

As Brecht employed the language of many cultures and unveiled the hidden agenda of words, so do I *montage* visual and verbal quotes from a variety of sources. Clashing like in the proverbial Surrealist summit-meeting of the umbrella and the sewing machine on the operating table, these tokens are forced to spill the beans on what they claim to stand for while, at the same time, they generate new and useful meanings. Similar to the way Brecht presented his audience with contradictory arguments, pretending that conflicts are irresolvable or offering

solutions that appear unacceptable, I like to invite the viewer to work, to become the author of a dialectical process, i.e., to decode, to make connections, to think things through, take a position, or, if necessary, hesitate drawing a quick and simple conclusion. This labor should be enjoyable. Like the inventor of the “epic theatre” I care for the “culinary effect,” and do not exclude a degree of connoisseurship.

Earlier this year, I produced an environment with multiple interlocking and conflicting layers of signification for a show at the Beaubourg in Paris. In the center of one of the large rooms of the Galeries Contemporaines, I fenced off a “construction” site with old, banged-up, corrugated sheet metal, and nailed signs on the fence saying *Chantier interdit au public* (Construction site. Keep out) and *Port Casque obligatoire* (Hard hat area), as one finds them at construction sites in France. Extending above the fence one could see the upper half of a large granite slab, propped up inside by heavy wooden beams as old buildings in Paris are kept from toppling into adjacent empty lots. The slab was vaguely reminiscent of the mysterious protagonist in the film *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Engraved in the granite block (imported from South Africa) by stone carvers of the Montparnasse cemetery was the “Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen,” which had been proclaimed two hundred years ago during the first sessions of the new French National Assembly.

Behind the construction site, so to speak as a backdrop, I mounted an enormous French flag across the full height and length of the wall. Blown by fans, it billowed dramatically like the *tricolore* of the Arc de Triomphe, its grandiloquence heightened by raking theater lights below. Standard-issue police barriers barred access to the national(ist) symbol, with which the French identify unquestioningly (like the nationals of other countries do with their flag).

The opposite wall, the one facing the propped up “Declaration of the Rights of Man” and the flag histrionics, was entirely covered with the white ceramic tiles typical of the Parisian subway. A billboard poster I had discovered in the Métro in 1987 occupied its center, flanked by the blue signs of the *Barbès-Rochechouart* station (without changing trains, in this case without leaving the set, one can travel underground from chic sixteenth arrondissement in the shade of the Arc de Triomphe to the immigrant ghetto of the contemporary third estate at Barbès-Rochechouart in the North). The poster, designed by Roux, Ségéla, Cayssac &

Goudard (a well-known French advertising agency) for the Paris department store *Au Bon Marché*, peddles home improvement materials for the domestic construction site. A young couple, cradling rolls of wallpaper and a power drill in their arms, like the heroes on Soviet posters holding their rifles and pitchforks, full of yuppie pep, looks up to a bright future and announces solemnly: “Let’s Redecorate Our World.” The sponsor promises a 20 percent discount for this revolutionary endeavor.

Inscribed on the two adjacent walls, white on a Muslim green background, I inscribed the three words that fired the French revolution and since grace the facades of every French city hall, school, and court building with what now amounts to mocking cynicism: *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*. But only the workers of the Centre Pompidou, who clean it after hours, can read the magic words unaided—they are inscribed on the wall in Arabic calligraphy.

An integral part of the material for my “construction” was the political situation in the year of the French Revolution’s anniversary. Surprisingly, this historical event is still controversial in France. In fact, the church, the aristocracy, and much of the political Right stayed aloof or quietly even sabotaged the celebrations. (The political designations Right and Left are still used with ideological partisanship by everybody in France.) The revisionist historian François Furet, whose books on the subject dominated the displays of bookstores, was successfully championed by the conservatives, as was James M. Markam, the correspondent of the *New York Times*, who focused on the bloodshed of the revolution. The *gauchiste* Left grumbled as well, accusing the socialist government of having betrayed the revolution of which it considers itself the rightful heir. The old French struggle between the Girondists and the Jacobins flared up with new ferocity, while the general public became increasingly bored and disgusted by the revolutionary hoopla and the commercialization of the event the closer the fourteenth of July approached. Nevertheless, it is commonly believed in France, as in other countries, that the revolution’s goals have been accomplished and that the “Rights of Man” are firmly implanted in Western democratic societies. What better sign for this assumption than the adoption by Jacques Chirac’s neo-Gaullist RPR (Rassemblement pour la République) of the Phrygian bonnet as the logo for his rightist party.

An important subtext to contemporary French politics is the tense relations between the indigenous French and a large, poor, predominantly Muslim immigrant population. Civil rights organizations like SOS-Racisme and the League des droits de l'homme are on critical but friendlier terms with the socialist government than with its rightist predecessor, which was notorious for its discriminatory laws and police practices. Right-wing parties have formed occasional voting alliances with Le Pen's racist Front National, a party which has also drawn support from traditionally communist voters. A raucous demonstration in the center of Paris against Salman Rushdie, with calls for his death, by a large crowd of fervent Muslims shocked French TV viewers early this year and gave race relations still another spin—and focused anew on the French Revolution's link between civil rights and secularization.

Searching for a title for my environment, I first thought of calling it *LEF Au Bon Marché*. L(iberté) E(galité) F(raternité) means “Left” in Russian and served as title of a Moscow periodical which counted [Vladimir] Mayakovsky and [Alexandr] Rodchenko among its regular contributors. The Parisian department store's name can be colloquially translated as “on the cheap.” I discarded the idea eventually, because it required a lot of arcane knowledge to be understood. Instead I let myself be inspired by the “revolutionary” subway poster's caption and called the piece simply *Décor*.

The summary of the ingredients of my environment may demonstrate that its subject is not the “Declaration of the Rights of Man,” that, in fact, looking for an easily definable subject misses the point. Like my *Oelgemaelde, Hommage à Marcel Broodthaers* of 1982, *Décor* does not offer new information. It does not even have a readily identifiable “bad guy.” Like Brecht's theater, it is impervious to empathy. It is probably a melancholic *Décor*.

[This text was first published in *Parachute* 56 (Montreal, October–December 1989): 16–19.]

37. *Calligraphie*, 1989/2011

In 1989, the president of the *Assemblée nationale*, the Lower House of the French Parliament, invited six artists to participate in a competition for a work to celebrate its bicentennial in the Cour d'Honneur of the Palais-Bourbon in Paris, where the *Assemblée nationale* has been meeting since 1789. I was among the invited.

My proposal was entitled *Calligraphie*. The jury did not choose it.



1.28 Hans Haacke, *Calligraphie*, 1989

According to the proposal, the members of the *Assemblée nationale* are invited to contribute a rock from their district. The irregularly shaped rocks are fitted together and polished, so that they form a perfectly smooth cone. This cone dominates the elevated part of the courtyard. Its shape is reminiscent of the revolutionary architecture of Étienne-Louis Boullée and alludes to the ideas of the Enlightenment that inspired the “Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen” in 1789.

Gold-leafed calligraphy on the cone’s smooth surface spells—in Arabic—the motto of the French Republic: *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité* (Freedom, Equality, Brotherhood).

A jet of water shoots up from the cone’s top. The water then flows down its surface, over the Arabic calligraphy in its path toward the center of a balustrade that separates the upper from the lower part of the courtyard. It rushes through a breach in the balustrade onto the main courtyard below.

Viewed from above, a large planted area that occupies much of the main courtyard is recognizable as the map of France. Replacing the manicured, garden design of Versailles, this is a field, where common French crops grow in a four-year cycle: wheat, corn, sunflower, rapeseed, cabbage, beans, peas, and potatoes. During the fourth year, it remains fallow. Vents of an underground parking garage interrupt the field’s expanse. The water that had come down from the cone flows in a shallow trough around its periphery toward the courtyard’s entrance, where it disappears into the ground. It is recycled.

Different from the relatively homogeneous French population of 1789, France—like many other nations—is today a multi-racial and multi-cultural society. Freedom, equality and brotherhood are not extended to all residents, particularly not to the Muslim population. As in 1989, these tenets are still violated today, even though they appear on the letterhead of all official correspondence and are chiseled into the facades of public buildings.

While the principles of freedom, equality, and solidarity for all—irrespective of origin, gender, and religion—are enshrined in many constitutions, they are far from being observed in all nations that have such constitutions. In many societies, it is dangerous to invoke them.

[This text was first published in *Sharjah Biennial 10*, exh. cat. (Sharjah: Sharjah Art Foundation, 2011), 123.]

38. “German-German,” 1990

On June 20 [1990], just two weeks before a consumer-demand economy broke out in the German Democratic Republic (GDR), eighty-one segments of the antifascist protective wall that had been inaugurated in 1961 and continuously improved thereafter, were auctioned off at the Metropole Palace Hotel in Monte Carlo. The majority of these segments, ennobled on one side by the application of spray paint, originated in Kreuzberg, where they had been dismantled by Berlin-based GDR border guards in a concerted action during the nights of January 22 to 26. Limex-Bau Export-Import, a state-owned export company in the GDR, guarantees the authenticity of every auction lot by a certificate dated November 9, 1989. Decorating the letterhead of the document is a seal in which three crenellated towers and an eyeless eagle—its left wing lost some feathers—are surrounded by the words SIGILLUM DE BERLIN BURGENSEIUM. The auction was arranged jointly by Lelé Berlin Wall Verkaufs- und Wirtschaftswerbung GmbH of West Berlin and the Galerie Park Place, a Monaco auction house that, as the glossy catalog announces, had already “run a number of often unusual auctions, from exclusive sports cars to rare wines.”

The managing director of Tempelhofer Ufer, LLC chose the slogan “Imagination knows no borders,” which she had discovered on the outer wall of “Really Existing Socialism” as her own “personal and professional challenge.” The proceeds from the auction were to benefit public health services for workers and farmers, which, as two professors associated with Charité hospital testify in the catalog, are “the sickest patients in the GDR.” They also confess that a great deal of thought had been given to “what should happen after the quiet revolution in the GDR had stripped the wall of its purpose.” This edition of art in public places, auctioned under their auspices, is limited to 360 numbered pieces.

The catalog quotes Berlin’s Mayor, Walter Momper: “Art versus cast concrete. Art won.” Like the Mayor, his new, much-debated urban development partner [Daimler-Benz] expressed confidence in the healing power of art, while savoring a choice piece of real estate. In full-page ads placed in the international press, this largest arms manufacturer of Germany professed its faith in Goethe’s defiant

dictum “Art will always remain art.” In keeping with its obligation to the nation’s cultural heritage, the company sponsors activities worldwide: the South African police, the IFA-Kombinat [automobile factory] in Ludwigsfelde, the restoration of Dresden after its destruction during the war of the *Volksgenossen*, and Andy Warhol. The corporation even remembered its 46,000 former employees, who had written the motto “Work shall set you free” on their banners, granting them 434 Deutsch marks per head.

On the construction plans for the lookout towers (1974 model) in the former rabbit hangout of Berlin, 690 cm under the crenels, in a cross section, one can spot a barely recognizable doormat. On page IV/12, the foreman of the construction brigade could see a detailed plan for the doormat. “Be prepared!” shouted the chancellor [Helmut Kohl]. In view of the pending refashioning of his brothers and sisters to the German unification lifestyle, the Stasi-heir Peter-Michael Diestel, in the spring of 1990, requested from Bonn a batch of Uzis and an assortment of additional equipment for an orderly conversion to the D-Mark. The choir responded: “Always prepared!”

[This text, written in August 1990, was first published as “Deutsch-Deutsch” in the catalog of *Die Endlichkeit der Freiheit, Berlin 1990: Ein Ausstellungsprojekt in Ost und West* (Berlin: Edition Hentrich, 1990), 100. English translation first published in *Hans Haacke, for real: Works 1959–2006*, exh. cat. (Düsseldorf: Richter Verlag, 2006), 284.]

39. "Caught between Revolver and Checkbook," 1993

When I recently looked up the word "culture" in quotation reference books, I discovered this startling phrase: "When I hear the word culture, I reach for my revolver."

I did not find, at first, the decidedly less militant phrase "When I hear the word culture, I reach for my checkbook." I had set out to locate this quotation, because I thought it was pertinent to our topic "The Arts and the Economy." After my initial disappointment, I realized that the martial quotation I had found by accident was not without relevance and, in fact, complemented the one I was looking for.

The gun-toting speaker is one of the heroes of a play that premiered in Berlin on Hitler's birthday, a short month after he had seized power in Germany in 1933.⁶⁷ The author, Hanns Johst, had earlier made himself a name as an Expressionist writer and poet. With a pledge of undying loyalty, he dedicated his new play to Hitler. Two years later, Johst was put in charge of the literature section in [Joseph] Goebbels's propaganda ministry.

High culture, as the tone of the quotation implies, was recognized by the protagonist on the stage, as much as by the playwright's new bosses as something to be watched, as something potentially threatening and, if need be, to be regulated or even suppressed. However, as Johst's personal career demonstrates, the new masters also recognized, as others had before and would do later, that the symbolic power of the arts could be put to good use.

Not least the Medici in Florence knew of the persuasive powers of the arts. But the relations between sponsors and sponsored have never have been tension free. The Inquisition in Venice, for example, was suspicious enough of Veronese's treatment of *The Last Supper* to summon him before its tribunal. As a matter of fact, they were right to be wary of him.

Mistrust, hostility, and an urge to ridicule or censor the arts, are not foreign to our time. Nor are we unaccustomed to seeing them used as instruments for the promotion of particular interests. We hardly remember that only forty years ago, abstract art was suspected by influential Americans as being part of a communist conspiracy, and that shortly afterwards, in an ironical twist, Abstract Expressionist paintings were sent to Europe to play a combat role in the ideological battles of

the cold war. We have fortunately been spared the degree of fundamentalist fervor that calls for the killing of artists accused of blasphemy. But we have had our share of incendiary speeches in Congress. “Obscenity” has become a household word in Washington. The charge of supporting pornography was even hurled at George Bush and made him flinch during his unsuccessful reelection campaign. Most recently, Morley Safer, the Sunday painter of sudden fame, lectured the 31 million viewers of *60 Minutes* that contemporary art, the kind shown in museums like the Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum, was nothing but a hoax.⁶⁸

These examples, uneven as they are, and coming from varied historical periods and diverse social contexts, illustrate a truism of the sociology of culture: Artworks do not represent universally accepted notions of the good, the beautiful, and the true. Whether they are viewed as uplifting, destructive, or nothing more than a profitable investment, depends on who looks at them. In extreme situations, as the quotation that triggered these thoughts suggests, culture is silenced with guns. Contrary to Kant’s dictum of “disinterested pleasure,” the arts are not ideologically neutral. They are, in fact, one of the many arenas where conflicting ideas about who we are and what our social relations should be are pitted against each other. Encoded in cultural productions are interests, beliefs, and goals. Consequently they, in turn, have an influence on interests, beliefs, and goals. Artists and arts institutions—like the media and schools—are part of what has been called the consciousness industry. They participate to varying degrees in a symbolic struggle over the perception of the social world, and thereby shape society. Pierre Bourdieu, perhaps the most eminent contemporary sociologist of culture, puts us on the alert: “The most successful ideological effects,” he says, “are those which have no need for words, and ask no more than complicitous silence. It follows . . . that any analysis of ideologies, in the narrow sense of “legitimizing discourses,” which fails to include an analysis of the corresponding institutional mechanisms, is liable to be no more than a contribution to the efficacy of those ideologies.”⁶⁹

As our notions of the good, the beautiful and the true, the classical triad, are contingent, endlessly negotiated, or fought over, so is the encoded meaning of cultural productions not something permanent, comparable to the genetic code. The context in which they appear has a signifying power of its own. As the context changes, so does the way audiences respond. One and the same artifact

can elicit rather varied reactions, depending on the historical period, the cultural and social circumstances, or for that matter, its exchange value.

In addition to their symbolic value, art productions, of course, have an economic value. They are bought and sold, are subject to the mechanism of supply and demand, and are objects of speculation, like shares in the stock market. Hype, negative propaganda, and the unstructured, gossipy talk of the town have always been part of the art market. Symbolic and economic value affect each other, but they do not necessarily go in tandem.

The phrase, “When I hear the word culture, I reach for my checkbook,” could make us think, that the speaker understands that high culture is an expensive enterprise, that it needs not only moral but also financial backing, and that he is willing to chip in. It conjures up the image of the altruistic private patron who has been the proverbial mainstay of the arts in this country. However, the comment also has a cold, cynical ring. In fact, it was this ambiguity that led me to research its origin. With the help of knowledgeable friends I eventually traced it.

Like the “revolver” quotation, this phrase is uttered by an actor. Jean-Luc Godard, in his 1963 screenplay “Le Mépris” (Contempt), puts it into the mouth of Jack Palance.⁷⁰ Palance plays the role of a movie producer in Godard’s film. Working for this producer is Fritz Lang who plays himself as a director. In the opening sequence, Lang and the producer look at rushes from the *Ulysses* film Lang is shooting. The scene of an alluring nude siren languorously swimming under water, prompts the producer to ask Lang: “What will go with this?” Lang answers with a recitation of a passage from Dante, whereupon the producer jumps up in a rage, tears down the projection screen, tramples on it, and screams: “This is what I’ll do with your films!” When Lang mumbles something like “culture” or “crime against culture,” the producer cuts him off: “When I hear the word culture, I reach for my checkbook.” In effect, he pulls out his checkbook, writes out a check on the back of his attractive young secretary, Francesca, and gives it to the screen-writer, who pockets it, presumably with the understanding that he will rewrite the script.⁷¹

The parallelism of the two quotations is probably not accidental. Fritz Lang certainly knew of the outburst on the Berlin stage. What we know about Jean-Luc Godard suggests that he had heard the phrase too, perhaps even from Fritz Lang. It is fair to assume Godard not only saw a linguistic connection, but invented this scene as a parable that allowed him to link the violence of the gun with economic violence. Lang’s symbolic capital, i.e., his reputation as a film director, proves not

to be a match for the economic capital of the producer, although the producer is nothing without Lang. Symbolic and economic capital constitutes power. They are linked in a complex, often strained, and sometimes even violent but inescapable relationship. They are rarely equal partners.

The French Revolution was the cause for fundamental changes in the arts of Europe. Old economic dependencies and ideological allegiances were broken. An understanding and a practice for a new world, no longer governed by divine right, by princes and religious authority, had to be developed. What was to be the role of the arts, and what was to be their economic support structure in a society in which the population, at least in theory, had become the sovereign? Still today, two hundred years later, these issues remain unsettled.

However, without much debate, the newly emancipated states recognized support of the arts, as natural for the *res publica*, a bona fide public cause. Particularly in view of the different history in this country and the laissez-faire arguments one hears occasionally, it is worth noting that the citizenry of Europe has maintained, since its emancipation two hundred years ago, that without the arts a society would be impoverished and perhaps even lose its viability as a creative, collective enterprise. Therefore all legislatures, no matter of which political bent, passed budgets in which, as unquestionable as the funding of schools and the military, a portion of the taxes was allotted to the arts. This is also the model Canada and Australia have adopted, countries which did not exist when the European consensus developed. The voters in those countries agree, still today, that the arts need and deserve their financial support, that abandoning them to market forces would subject them to the rationale which governs mass entertainment and would thus destroy them. The electorate seems to have a sense that art productions are fundamentally not merchandise, and therefore public expenditures need not be legitimized in terms of economic profitability. The number and the professional level of arts institutions supported under these circumstances, and as a corollary the comparatively high interest and participation in their activities, [are] truly remarkable. Sometimes figures speak. The French culture budget has been slightly raised this year to \$2.3 billion.⁷² In comparison, the 1994 budget of the National Endowment for the Arts stands at \$166 million. It was reduced by 5 percent. The cut was not so much motivated by fiscal constraints, but by the desire to punish the NEA for having, quite

legitimately, funded politically unpopular artists and institutions who exhibited them.⁷³

The National Endowment for the Arts, like many of the state councils for the arts and municipal arts funding agencies, was established in the 1960s. The traditional sources of arts funding in this country, private patrons and the membership of arts institutions and their paying public, were recognized as being no longer adequate. A new sense of civic responsibility and enthusiasm for high culture, together with the discovery that the arts can create jobs and bring in tax money, made public funding a politically viable proposition.⁷⁴

However, beginning in the Reagan Administration and coming to a nasty boil during the presidency of George Bush, the NEA became a pawn in the “culture wars” which always simmer below the surface. They broke into the open over the NEA’s support for the Mapplethorpe exhibition and the passage of the notorious Helms amendment in 1989, which unconstitutionally regulated eligibility for NEA grants. What has happened at the NEA during the past few years, was anticipated as a possible threat in the 1960s. Interestingly, during the establishment of the agency, it was the Republicans who insisted that the NEA be insulated from political interference. This led to the creation of professional peer panels independent juries of experts who, instead of political appointees, were to decide on grants. Twenty-five years later Republicans, with the help of conservative Democrats, demolished this safeguard against political manipulation. They severely damaged the agency and its constituency, which appears, in fact, to have been the ultimate goal of at least some of the NEA’s critics.

The arts agencies were formed at a time when art audiences grew at a phenomenal rate. The arts were no longer seen as a pastime of “effete snobs.” They became so fashionable, in fact, that marketing and corporate public relations experts discovered their potential. Without studying sociology, these wizards understood high culture’s symbolic power. In exchange for their money, companies who needed to polish their image began to attach their logo to prestigious art events. They often spent as much or more on advertising their association with the event they were sponsoring than on the event itself. Art institutions, in turn, wooed the sponsors with attractive packages and assured them, as The Metropolitan Museum did: “The business behind art knows the art of good business.” For the CEOs who had no taste for word plays, the museum

spelled out what it meant: “Many public relations opportunities are available through the sponsorship of programs, special exhibitions and services. These can often provide a creative and cost effective answer to a specific marketing objective, particularly where international, governmental or consumer relations may be a fundamental concern.”⁷⁵ Of course, like the movie producer in Godard’s parable, the PR operatives know that [to] appeal to as large a number of people as possible is essential. They also understand that not all ideas promote the interests of their client. Some are even harmful. Art professionals now use their colleagues in the development office as a “reality check.”

Philippe de Montebello, the director of The Metropolitan Museum, is certainly a connoisseur in these matters. He has no delusions: “It’s an inherent, insidious, hidden form of censorship,” he admits.⁷⁶ But the imposition of the sponsor’s agenda not only has an effect on what we get to see and hear. Mr. de Montebello’s president at the Met explained: “To a large degree, we’ve accepted a certain principle about funding that, in passing through our illustrious hall, the money is cleansed.”⁷⁷ His suggestion that the sponsor’s money is dirty came in response to a question about his museum’s collaboration with Philip Morris. The world’s largest maker of carcinogenic consumer products is also the most conspicuous corporate sponsor of the arts. But not only of the arts. Philip Morris also gives hundreds of thousands of dollars to the Jesse Helms Center in North Carolina, and it sponsors the Bill of Rights. As contradictory as this may sound, it makes perfect corporate sense. Jesse Helms was instrumental in breaking down trade barriers against the import of American cigarettes in Asia, and he battles untiringly against tobacco tax increases. The Marlboro men paid the National Archives \$600,000 for the permission to “sponsor” the Bill of Rights in a two-year \$60 million campaign. The campaign was designed to frame the cowboys’ arguments against smoking restrictions as a civil rights issue. Support for the arts is used to build constituencies in this struggle and to keep the lines open to the movers and shakers in the media and in politics.

A PR man from Mobil once explained his company’s rationale for supporting the arts: “These programs build enough acceptance to allow us to get tough on substantive issues.”⁷⁸ One of the Mobil ads on the op-ed page of the *New York Times* put it more bluntly: “Art for the sake of business.” Corporate support of the arts is meant to influence legislation, and, according to Alain-Dominique Perrin,

the CEO of Cartier, to “neutralize critics.” Monsieur Perrin has reason to be enthusiastic: “Arts sponsorship is not just a tremendous tool of corporate communications,” he crows, “it is much more than that: It is a tool for the seduction of public opinion.”

The expenses of this amorous enterprise are tax deductible. As a consequence, the seduced foot the bill for their seduction. This strategy succeeds as long as we are convinced that we get something for nothing—and believe in “disinterested pleasure.”

[This text was written as a paper to be delivered at “The Arts and the Economy,” a colloquium held at Baruch College in New York on November 18, 1993. It was first published in Olin Robison, Robert Freeman, and Charles A. Riley II, eds., *The Arts in the World Economy: Public Policy and Private Philanthropy for a Global Cultural Community* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1994), 95–102.]

40. "Gondola! Gondola!" 1993

"Gondola! Gondola! That is the battle cry of Venice." With this opening line, the party paper of the capital of the Reich opened its first-page atmospheric report from Venice on June 14, 1934.⁷⁹ The following day, the correspondent cabled enthusiastically: "The gondolas, marvelously festooned with lanterns, come to a stop at the Biennale. Aristocratic ladies alight, men stride solemnly. . . . Has there ever been a time in Germany when the Führer was called a foreigner? Venice greets him with the *Meistersinger*! He sits to the right of the Duce."⁸⁰ What is behind this story? An Austrian postcard painter was on his first trip to Italy. He had a friend down there, Benito. A dozen years earlier, Benito had made a march on Rome and taken over the place. That inspired the postcard painter, a year later, to try something similar in Munich. But it was a flop. It took him until 1933 to pull off a coup in Berlin. Thus, a celebration was in order. But Adolfo, as the Italians called him, was too busy, at first. They had to wait for an entire year. Only then could the two friends have a vacation together in Venice. Benito threw him a tremendous welcoming party, with everything Venice had to offer. Also after the first night, a lot was happening. At the crack of dawn, already, there was shouting in the Piazza San Marco: "*Evviva Hitler!*" Berliners read in the paper the following day: "Throngs of fascist maidens in black skirts and white blouses were on their feet."⁸¹ But not only girls were filling the streets. Blackshirts, too, were lining up en masse: "The avant-gardists left a particularly good impression. The human material was excellent."⁸² Benito appeared in full regalia on the grandstand, which had been put up in front of the *Caffe Florian*. "There was a reveling in light and colors, costumes and beauty. And as always, there was the blue sky of the South."⁸³ The press spoke of a "frenzy of enthusiasm."

After the celebration on the Piazza San Marco, the postcard painter took a motorboat to the Biennale. As a former denizen of Schwabing, he was curious to see what his colleagues had been up to. At the *Giardini Pubblici* landing, he was greeted by Count Giuseppe Volpi di Misurata, the president of the Biennale, and by Antonio Maraini, its general secretary.⁸⁴ Like the 2,000 *giovani fascisti* who had lined up to welcome him, the two gentlemen had donned the local black garb with boots, shoulder strap, and decorations that had become fashionable in those years. This black costume was only one of many in which the goateed Count Volpi



1.29, 1.30 **Hans Haacke, *GERMANIA*, 1993**



moved in the circles of international finance and politics. He had busied himself, among other places, on the Balkans, at Rapallo, in regional electric power companies, banking, insurance, and in transportation. As a condottiere and governor of the Italian colony of Tripolitania he had earned the title of count, as well as large land holdings. Together with Vittorio Cini, and Achille Gaggia, Volpi had been promoting a new port and industrial zone at Marghera near Mestre on the mainland. To venerable Venice they had assigned the role of a museum island with fully integrated service industries. Volpi, the godfather of Venice, had substantial interests on both sides of the lagoon. Benito's guest from Berlin, for example, was lodged in the *Grand Hotel*, which was one of many luxury hotels belonging to his CIGA chain. The agile tactician had been an early patron of the Venetian *fascio*—perhaps assuming that his revolutionary political friends would



1.31 Hans Haacke, *GERMANIA*, 1993

protect him from the red menace. When things had reliably settled in 1922, he joined the party. The Duce thought highly of him. In 1925 he entrusted the Venetian senator with his Ministry of Finance, and a few months after the Biennale visit from Berlin, he made him president of the Italian Association of Industrialists. As head of *Confinindustria* he had frequent dealings with the newly established *Reichsgruppe Industrie*. Like his colleague Hermann Josef Abs⁸⁵ of the Deutsche Bank in the cold North, the busy Count of Misurati warmed seats in more than forty different boardrooms. And, after 1945, both men were able to rely

on old business friends abroad. Happily, their exoneration was assured (for their comrade-in-arms up North this turned out to be the prelude to a spectacular postwar career and, in his old age, even the occupation of the Städel Museum in Frankfurt. Only in the United States is he still *persona non grata*). No question, Benito's Biennale guest was not received by some doddering impoverished nobleman who had charitably been put in charge of an honorary culture post: il Conte Giuseppe Volpi di Misurata was a seasoned man, well versed in all the dirty tricks Venice had in store.

The painter from Schwabing immediately made his way to the German pavilion. In 1934, it had been decorated by Eberhard Hanfstaengi, who had just been appointed director of the National Gallery in Berlin (he was a cousin of his good friend Putzi from Munich). For a good while he stayed silently in the first room, contemplating the bust of Hindenburg. Then he saw himself confronted with Ferdinand Liebermann's *Reich Chancellor Hitler* (1937). He looked deeply into his bronze eyes. What he found there has not been recorded. Eventually, without comment, he turned away. Joseph Wackerle's *National Emblem*, an excellent example for his new corporate identity program, filled him with new confidence in predestination. Continuing on his tour, he had occasion to celebrate a happy reunion with the *German Soil*, a painting by Werner Peiner from his own collection. In the intoxicating atmosphere of Venice, this painting offered a welcome opportunity to reconnect with the heaviness of the earth at home, and with the discipline of the German peasant.⁸⁶ Finally, facing Georg Kolbe's *Statue for a Stadium* (1937), a giant nude, he was inspired to think about film projects for Leni Riefenstahl. Not only was he a lover of the visual arts and architecture. For many years, he had also been a movie buff. Like so much else, he shared this passion with his *cicerone*. The Biennale president, in fact, was the one who, in 1932, had started the Venice Film Festival—even though he was also occupying the office of provost of San Marco. Naturally, like the Biennale, the Festival played an important part in his investments in the local tourist industry. At times, Volpi had also acted as patron saint when trouble was brewing in Rome over some hot scenes on the silver screen. At the end of his tour, our vacationer was clearly pleased.

The *Reichskulturkammer* of his Ministry of Public Relations—under Joseph Goebbels—had done an excellent job. To be sure, there were a few minor glitches

such as the exhibition of Kolbe's bust of Hans Prinzhorn and Barlach's *Monks Reading* (1932). That had to do with an argument that was still raging between Goebbels, who was known for his connoisseurship, and the hard line of the national observer Alfred Rosenberg. They quarreled over whether the Expressionists were to be branded "cultural Bolsheviks" or whether their angular style was, in fact, a perfect representation of the new era (Goebbels, the consummate PR man, had a penchant for modern art. During the preceding year, he had sponsored a Futurist show in Berlin; and prior to Fritz Lang's sudden departure from *Metropolis*, he had seriously considered entrusting him with the supervision of the Reich's entire film production). For the time being, in Venice, the Biennale visitor let his hosts know how much he appreciated their efforts. During their warm farewell, Antonio Maraini, the general secretary, expressed the hope that, in the near future, the German pavilion would be enlarged and equipped with state of the art exhibition technology. Within a few years, this wish was to be fulfilled. In spite of the inclusion of Prinzhorn and Barlach, Eberhard Hanfstaengl had done his *Kulturarbeit* with such loyalty that he was allowed to continue his work in 1936 (his triumphal period, however, had to wait until 1948; for ten years, until 1958, the buddy from Munich atoned).

No doubt, the *Kraft durch Freude* [strength through joy] excursion to Venice could be chalked up as a fantastic success. The enthusiastic review in the *Lavoro Fascista* served as a confirmation: "The fact that Fascism and National Socialism let sprout the seeds of a new culture, is the best guarantee for the peaceful intentions of Fascist Italy and National Socialist Germany."⁸⁷

This editorial from Rome was both high praise and an appeal to diligently nurture the frail shoots of the new German will to culture. It was a matter of defending German soil and German blood against all that was foreign. Martin Heidegger, as president of the University of Freiburg, had already announced in 1933, in a proud "Declaration of allegiance to Adolf Hitler and the National Socialist State": "We have completely broken with idolizing a thinking without ground and power."⁸⁸ Contemplating human existence, the New Age philosopher arrived at the conclusion: "Superman belongs to that race of mankind which, above all, wills itself as race and allies itself with that race. . . . Amidst the meaninglessness of everything, this race posits the will to power as the 'meaning of the earth.' The final stage of European nihilism is the 'catastrophe,' in the sense

of an affirmative turnabout.”⁸⁹ Superman’s race struck. Marxist, Jewish, and democratic literature was purged by fire (born late, Hans Jürgen Syberberg recently embraced the view that the Left and Jews were responsible for the misery of German culture).⁹⁰ The cleansing had begun.

The 1936 Olympic games in Berlin offered another opportunity to spread the image of the New German around the world. *Mens sana in corpore sano sit*. Shortly after his return from the sun of Italy, the tanned vacationer laid down an ardently awaited line in the quarrel over pictures: “Our resolve was firm that the driveling Dadaist-Cubist and Futuristic “experience”-mongers and “objectivity”-mongers would never, under any circumstances, be allowed any part in our cultural rebirth.”⁹¹ Tried and tested artists like Joseph Wackerle and Arno Breker, as well as Leni Riefenstahl were given major commissions. The Bauhaus artist Herbert Bayer also came on board. He produced a brash design for the exhibition guide of *Deutschland Ausstellung 1936* (six years later he designed *The Road to Victory* at the Museum of Modern Art in New York).⁹² For artists who did not belong to the *Field and Stream* variety but thought their works were nonetheless compatible with the dominant *Zeitgeist*—many well-known modern artists held such mistaken beliefs—the year 1937 turned out to be a major educational experience: In Munich, the master artist of the Reich inaugurated his *Haus der Deutschen Kunst* with a representative selection from the pool of new creativity—and they were not invited. Instead their products could be inspected in the *Degenerate Art* exhibition around the corner.

1937 was also the year when preparations for the next Biennale got under way. The new *völkisch* art was to be presented to the world in a monumental new building, representative of the power and self-confidence of the Third Reich, and not in that classicist jewel case, in which Count Volpi’s guest had encountered his double in 1934. Like the old building, the new one was to be designed by a Bavarian architect.⁹³ Professor Ernst Haiger from Munich, the *Stadt der Bewegung* [City of the Movement], got the commission. In January 1938 the professor informed the general secretary of the Biennale that the Führer had approved his plans (the decision did not surprise, since he had faithfully followed the example of Paul Ludwig Troost, the decorator of ocean liners). He closed his letter with a remark that beautifully linked economic and political considerations with esthetic expectations: “Since the costs of the construction will be covered by the German

Government, I am looking forward to a concession on your part in regard to the reshaping of the area in front of the building. It needs more symmetry.”⁹⁴ In response, Commendatore Bazzoni asserted his proprietary rights. But he agreed to meet the Axis partner halfway. One of the three trees, which was in the way, was cut down, and Società Anonima Cementi Armati of Venice brought the pavilion into the imperious Munich streamline within a record time of sixty-four days. The master architect described his work in a statement: “Tall and strong pillars of stone carry the portico, and above the entrance the national emblem of the Third Reich prepares us for the new spirit of German art.”⁹⁵ A stonemason of the Società Anonima had chiseled into the entablature, in unadorned, simple lettering, the word GERMANIA. In order to lend the interior a cool and solemn appearance the Bavarian drawing room parquet of the old pavilion had been replaced by Chiampo mandorlato, a stone similar to Istrian marble. On November 2, 1938, the periodical of the Building Department of the Prussian Ministry of Finance gave the edifice an excellent review: “It is not immaterial in what setting the art of our German fatherland is presented abroad. The new German exhibition hall in Venice is not only an impressive and distinguished representation of the Third Reich, it also demonstrates that an artistically perfect environment will enhance the art works it houses.”⁹⁶ A week after this review, the Jews of the Reich were given a crystal shower.

The Master of the Pubic Hair was granted right of the first night in the new state chapel in Venice. Adolf Ziegler had earned it well as master of the *Haus der Deutschen Kunst* in Munich. In the *Giardini Pubblici*, he proved his manhood again. His exhibition concept assigned the central role to the boss’s two favorite artists.⁹⁷ In their work he recognized: “The forceful spirit of our people’s race and testimony of a proud past have once more unlocked the German soul.”⁹⁸ Coyly waving a laurel twig, Arno Breker’s *Heroine* and her *Decathlete* companion did an impressive burlesque number as nude sentries (they had trained together at the 1936 Berlin Olympics). In comparison, [Josef] Thorak’s tête-à-tête of *Führer* and *Duce* were rather chaste. Breker’s ensemble, in fact, amounted to exquisite foreplay for the next date in Venice. In 1940, the first year of the war, Breker’s bodybuilder demonstrated his *Readiness*. Already from the steps leading up to the portico, the pilgrim could see through the open door, far, in the depth of the apse, a resplendent hunk drawing his sword, his eyes firmly turned towards the East (the

master had put the last touches on the magnificent body before the invasion of Poland). It was a top performance. The creator was awarded the Grand Prix.

After this high point in Venice, Arno Breker distinguished himself with great bravery on the home front. With blind devotion to his supreme commander, he fought in his studio until the last drop of blood. He was on special assignment. Meanwhile, smoke signals appeared in the sky similar to those rising from incinerators. Also Venice participated in the general cleansing. As far as one could see the fields of honor were being fertilized. When the time clocks of the Thousand Year Reich refused service after twelve years, and Breker's patron of many years went down ingloriously, there was only a brief pause for this tenacious fighter. Old comrades such as [Aristide] Maillol, [Maurice] Vlaminck, [Louis-Ferdinand] Céline, [Jean] Cocteau and Jean Marais, Salvador Dalí, Ezra Pound, and, of course, Winifred Wagner and Ernst Jünger, all needed busts. However, new admirers from trade and industry knocked on the door of his studio in Düsseldorf, too. There were even commissions from statesmen for the creator of the *Party* and the *Armed Forces*, the two monumental action figures that had been guarding the entrance to the Reich Chancellery in Berlin until the end. Among the new clients were the Christian Democrats Konrad Adenauer and Ludwig Erhard. The easy-going father of the German miracle sent the yapping pipsqueaks packing: "The rebuilding of a country requires not only economic effort from a people but also reflection on its spiritual and cultural values. Arno Breker's artistic achievements have survived all kinds of political favors and resentments because of their unshakable foundation. An artist like Breker, tolerant and unwavering, who works with a deep commitment to Christian ethics and the Good, needs no defense. Through his work Breker defends man's freedom and dignity in society."⁹⁹

Unfortunately, Erhard who had made the Deutsche mark roll lacked the art world reputation necessary to shield the master from petulant grumbling. Art connoisseurs with impeccable credentials had to come forward. Peter Ludwig and Baron Hans Heinrich Thyssen-Bornemisza stepped in. As a sign of their admiration, they commissioned the victor of Venice to fashion their and their spouses' likenesses for eternity. Tastefully, the Baron proceeded in private. The chocolate master, however, as is his habit, acted in the limelight of the world. When the Museum Ludwig was opened in Cologne he confided to *Der Spiegel*: "I think Breker is an interesting artist, a great portraitist. . . . Certainly, there is a

penchant for conservatism around the world. I have followed Breker's work for quite a while. It was only a year and a half ago, however, that my wife and I decided to commission a portrait." The admirer of Cicciolina also offered an art-theoretical aperçu: "Postmodern—what else does that mean than being traditional?"¹⁰⁰ A week after the 1993 Biennale opening, an exhibition with the title *Ludwigslust—Die Sammlung Irene und Peter Ludwig* is to be inaugurated in Nürnberg at the Germanic National Museum. To get the visitors in the right mood, the collector will be introduced to them through portraits of him by Andy Warhol, Bernhard Heisig, Jean-Olivier Hucleux, and Arno Breker.¹⁰¹

As always Venice is worth a visit, also in 1993. The art world's logistical strategists booked hotels for the big days of the Biennale opening in June as early as Christmas. Travel agencies with an intimate knowledge of the industry's needs have prepared informational pamphlets and are offering personalized service. The *Danieli*, a hangout of art stars, is making this pitch: "Over the past five years almost all rooms have been renovated in the CIGA Empire style. The spacious rooms have muted color schemes and luxurious marble bathrooms."¹⁰² Old hands in the hotel industry remember CIGA Empire as the favored style of Count Volpi's hotel chain. For people with more exquisite taste there is the *Cipriani* on the Giudecca: "It is noteworthy for its exceptional comfort, amenities, personalized service, secure surroundings and refined taste."¹⁰³ The secure surroundings of the *Cipriani* are not emphasized without reason. For decades the bohemians of the art world stayed around the corner at the *Casa Frolo*. The establishment also knows how to fend off overtures from the working class residents of the Giudecca. In fact, the *Cipriani*, with its refined taste and tight security, has proven itself as an ideal pied-à-terre for the world economic summit. If need be, the American 6th Fleet interposes itself between the *Giardini Pubblici* and the hotel with its concern for an atmosphere of total relaxation and privacy for intimate business transactions. During the time of the Biennale opening, a double superior room is available for Lit 690,000 (a pprox. \$435). An additional value added tax of 19 percent is charged. However, given the deterioration of the Italian currency, the tax will be of little significance for foreign clients. The *Cipriani* name is a guarantee for good company in other ways as well. Since preparations for the 1993 Biennale have entered their final stretch, Harry Cipriani is commemorating Ernest Hemingway, his father's loyal drinking buddy. His own bottom-line

double-page advertisements: “I think that having the American Express® Card, the world becomes smaller” (years ago American Express had already contributed to the *Mystic Lam in Ghent*).¹⁰⁴ *Deutsches Reisebüro* is encouraging its clients to think of intimate settings, too: “How about an exquisite dinner for two at Antico Martini’s or at Harry’s famous bar?”¹⁰⁵

A desire for a global love-in was at the birth of the Biennale. It still moves masses of visitors to Venice one hundred years later. Riccardo Selvatico, an author of comedies and the city’s mayor from 1890 to 1895, together with local artist friends, invented the Biennale as an international sales exhibition.¹⁰⁶ In his appeal to German artists to participate, he declared: “The city council of Venice decided to establish this art exhibition because it is convinced that art is, indeed, one of the most valuable elements of civilization and that it offers an unprejudiced decision of the mind as well as the brotherly union of all peoples.”¹⁰⁷ Thanks to excellent publicity, 224,000 visitors came to the first Biennale, and there were also sales.¹⁰⁸ Selvatico, the good soul, was replaced by a clerical-conservative coalition, of which the first general secretary of the Biennale, Antonio Fradeletto, was an active member. He was a traditionalist art historian at the University Ca’Pesaro in Venice. Under his aegis the exhibition developed as an event to benefit the local restaurant and hotel industry and an asset in the development plans of the Venetian establishment. As is the case with Worlds Fairs and the Olympic games, local investment policy and the insatiable desire for national representation happily joined forces also in Venice, in an ideologically saturated arena.

The Biennale troops traditionally pass their busy days at the *Paradiso* or the *Florian* on the Piazza San Marco and continue into the wee hours at Harry’s. In case of doubt, the bills are processed as tax-deductible business expenses. However, the excursion to Venice not only satisfies everybody’s understandable needs for relaxation and disinterested pleasure. The traders, producers, buyers and cultural officials, the press and the hangers-on, all flock to the Venetian get-together to spy (“information is power”), to develop and promote reputations, and of course, to nurture old and establish new friendships and business connections. What is at stake isn’t chicken-shit. The Venetian gift for comedy in marrying big money with sublime art challenges today’s jet-set actors to rival the *Serenissima*’s model with contemporary versions of intimacy, chutzpah, and nonchalance. Honi soit qui mal y pense. A few days after the abandon of the

carnival in Venice, the show moves on to the hard sell of the Basel Art Fair, and, depending on taste, it could end in Nuremberg with *Ludwigslust*.

One would underestimate the Biennale (held on a site where Napoleon razed a monastery two hundred years ago to make room for a park) if one were to believe that it is concerned only with development aid for Venice and dividing the secular shares of the art market. Philip Morris, at least, was not fooled. The giant consumer goods corporation sponsored the American pavilion of Isamu Noguchi in 1986. The Marlboro cowboys couldn't care less whether Noguchi's prices would go up. Living in the saddle all their lives, they understood one thing: "It takes art to make a company great."¹⁰⁹ One might be tempted to assume the weather-beaten fellows with big hats were thinking of paintings of their horses, or of fiery sunsets behind the Rockies. No, they are used to more powerful stuff. They aim at the big show places for "high art" around the world. One can surmise what they are looking for from the jargon with which such behavior is analyzed in a book published by the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (national conservative German newspaper): "Sponsoring has three central communications goals: recognition, attitudes, and the promotion of good relations." What matters is that "the positive image of the sponsored is transferred to the sponsor (image transfer)." Conclusion: "Sponsoring is an opportunity to cultivate relations with selected big clients, trading partners, opinion makers and multipliers, in an attractive setting."¹¹⁰ The oil men from Mobil are more direct. They call it "Art for the sake of business." For those who are a bit dense they elaborate: "What's in it for us—or *for your company? Improving—and ensuring the business climate.*"¹¹¹ In plain English this means low taxes, favorable regulations in the areas of commerce, public health and the environment, governmental export assistance, irrespective of the nature of the products and the politics of the country of destination, and a defense against criticism of the sponsor's conduct. For example, behind the smokescreen of art, it is easier for the *Wehrwirtschaftsführer* [Third Reich term: Leaders of the Defense Industry] of Daimler-Benz to rid themselves elegantly of pesky reporters inquiring about the company's chumminess with Saddam Hussein and the Iranian Revolutionary Guards. Alain-Dominique Perrin, the boss of the Cartier bauble shop in Paris, once described this mechanism in exquisite, amorous terms: "Sponsoring art is not only a fantastic communications tool. It is much more than that. It is a tool for the seduction of public opinion."¹¹² The best part is that the seduced are allowed to pay for the expenses of this aphrodisiac incurred in their

seduction. They are tax deductible. The cowboys with their cancer-sticks simply followed their innate country smarts when they decided to take in Noguchi for a ride. “Culture is in fashion. All the better. As long as it lasts, we should use it,” applauds the gentleman from Place Vendôme (apparently he is aware of the impermanence of the high entertainment value culture enjoys at the moment).¹¹³ According to Thomas Wegner, who staged a fair of electronic consumer products (*MEDIALE*) laced with art in the 1993 cyberspace of Hamburg, “art events on the scale of Documenta or the Biennale are modern myths.”¹¹⁴ Public relations experts and their marketing colleagues have gleefully discovered that, of late, the prestige and the symbolic power of these and comparable mythical art institutions are at their disposal. Art still exudes the odor of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful, an unbeatable opportunity for image transfer. Because it is not suspected of serving worldly interests, The Good, the True, and the Beautiful (GTB) represent enormous symbolic capital, even though it cannot be put in numbers.¹¹⁵ In his Biennale call, the mayor/comedy writer Riccardo Selvatico had declared that “art is one of the most valuable elements of civilization” and that it offers “an unprejudiced decision of the mind.”¹¹⁶ Managers do not need to worry about what this may mean as long as their target groups believe in immaculate conception and no mass lay-offs are in the offing. While Casanova, that great Venetian expert, taught them that not just anything is suitable for the enterprise of seduction, they can rely on the art institutions to choose the appropriate means. We know from Philippe de Montebello, unquestionably a connoisseur of the milieu, how the internal control mechanism of sponsoring works: “It’s an inherent, insidious, hidden form of censorship.”¹¹⁷

GTB does not only serve as a lubricant and constitutes exchange value in art markets. The Good, the True, and the Beautiful are empty terms, ready to be filled by any number of different contents. It is therefore not surprising that fierce arguments have always raged among producers, traders, as well as in the warehouses over the dominance of this or that ingredient. And not only there. When it comes to the definition of the Good, The True, and the Beautiful, more is at stake than parochial politicians of the art world sometimes imagine. Determining language is ideological and political management—aside from other locations to be sampled also in what has filled the pavilions of the Biennale over the past one hundred years. On October 3, 1786, Goethe wrote in his diary about

his visit to the Chiesa dei Gesuati at Zattere in Venice: “Gesuati. Truly, a Jesuit church. Merry paintings of Tiepolo. On sections of the ceiling, one can see more of the lovely saints than their thighs—if my perspective does not fool me.”¹¹⁸

[This text was written to accompany Haacke's installation at the 45th Venice Biennale in 1993. It was first published in English in *Hans Haacke, Bodenlos: Biennale Venedig 1993, Deutscher Pavillon*, exh. cat. (Stuttgart: Cantz, 1993), 27–36.]

41. "The Eagle from 1972 to the Present," 1994

More than twenty years ago, in 1972, Marcel Broodthaers presented the *Eagle Department* of his *Museum of Modern Art* at the Kunsthalle in Düsseldorf. In his preface to the catalog, Broodthaers wrote: "As a foreign artist, I am glad that, for the purpose of an analytical (in contrast to an emotional) consideration of the concept of art, I was able to benefit from the freedom of expression in the Federal Republic. What are the limits to the freedom of expression an artist is granted? In practical terms, it is where the political leadership of a country draws the line. Therefore it is only natural that I express my gratitude to the chancellor of the Federal Republic, Willy Brandt."¹¹⁹

Such a catalog statement is unusual. All the more did it intrigue me, as did the exhibition *The Eagle from the Oligocene to the Present*.

In his fictional museum, Broodthaers equates the power popularly attributed to the eagle with the aura surrounding art. He suggests that neither the authority of the state nor the symbolic power of art, interchangeably represented by the eagle in his metaphoric universe, are innate, god-given, and universally recognized. Rather, like in the story of the Wizard of Oz, they are projections of power, social constructs, to which Broodthaers alludes using the term "ideology." His catalog preface implies that an analysis of the ideological underpinnings of power, like those of art, has political ramifications which may test a society's limits to freedom of expression.

Indeed, museums are institutions where attitudes, beliefs, and values governing our social relations are shaped and promoted. Consequently, whether intended or not, as managers of consciousness, museums are agents in the political arena. It is perhaps for this reason that Broodthaers paid tribute to Willy Brandt for having created a climate favoring freedom of expression. In general terms, I would agree with this assessment, particularly if one compares the Federal Republic of 1972 with the Soviet Union and its satellites under Stalin and his successors, or with Hitler's Germany.

However, in my view, Broodthaers overstated the power of the central political leadership in democratic societies. And he disregarded the degree to which local and regional powers, as well as powerful private individuals and pressure groups, are able to control the public discourse. I can attest to this from

my own experience with censorship at the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum in Cologne (now the Museum Ludwig) and at the Guggenheim Museum in New York.

Broodthaers was, in fact, quite aware that power relationships in the world of symbolic capital were much more complex than the catalog preface, isolated from his work and his other writings, seems to suggest. In fact, at the occasion of his entry into the art world in 1964 he unmistakably alluded to the connection between the symbolic value of artworks and their exchange value. He knew, of course, that the reputation of artists is subject to currency fluctuations and that the art market, like markets of other goods of fictional value, invites the manipulation of the price for which the eagles that are nesting in studios, museums, trading posts, and among ornithological commentators are traded.

On one of the four installation photos in the retrospective volume II of the Düsseldorf catalog, connoisseurs of the art scene can identify Willy Bongard, the inventor of the *Art Compass*. This art stock market analysis has been published annually since 1970 in the German business magazine *Capital*.¹²⁰ On the catalog photo, one can discern that Bongard is carrying a copy of the first volume of the Broodthaers catalog. He looks to the left, in the direction in which a slide projector is pointed. One cannot see what is projected. On the wall behind the projector hangs a banner with the coat of arms of Cologne and a double-headed eagle. Metaphorically, and reflecting on his own enterprise, this 1972 photo seems to restate the artist's understanding that the symbolic and the economic capital of what Broodthaers, in 1964, called "insincere" products, do affect each other. But contrary to the suggestions of the *Art Compass* their respective ratings do not match.

In spite of his professed "insincerity," Broodthaers was not particularly interested in being a big player in the high stakes game of the art stock market. On the contrary, in the post-exhibition volume of the catalog, he expressed with pride that he had plucked some feathers from the mythical bird. But he also acknowledged a degree of failure: "The language of advertising aims for the unconscious of the consumer/viewer; that is how the magic eagle regains its power."¹²¹ Closing in a tone of resignation he described a world which, at the time, appeared to many readers to be the bitter fruit of a paranoid imagination: "Art is used in advertising with enormous success. It rules over bright horizons. It represents the dreams of mankind."¹²²

Twenty years later, the Düsseldorf Kunsthalle proved him right. Seemingly following in Broodthaers's footsteps, while, in fact, quite deliberately not plucking feathers but instead lending its institutional aura to marketing gambits, the Kunsthalle collaborated with the Michael Schirner advertising agency on an exhibition with the suggestive title *Avantgarde & Kampagne*.¹²³ This promotion of marketing as high art lasted only the days. Other institutions have been more generous. The Museum of Modern Art in Frankfurt for example, like the 1993 Venice Biennale, let us be part of the brave new world of Benetton for more extended periods.

Sponsors, however, are a much more influential breed than the Benetton vultures. Like in the United States, where they originated, they are now increasingly determining flight patterns also in museums of the old world. Although they often underwrite only a small part of the costs, sponsors are indirectly gaining veto power over programming in many public institutions of Europe. Oblivious to what is at stake, and abetted by an equally insouciant press, the political class is shirking its democratic responsibilities by allowing or even advocating the de facto takeover of the institutions with which they, as public servants, have been entrusted. More and more, exhibition programs are determined by the degree to which they lend themselves to a positive image transfer for a sponsoring corporation or, for that matter, the public relations needs of politicians. As a consequence, crowd pleasing, uncritical blockbusters become the order of the day, not feather plucking events. Under these pressures, programs with low entertainment value, and events planned with analytic and experimental ambitions increasingly fall victim to institutional self-censorship. The press, in gullible collusion with the sponsors, pays little attention to less glamorous and usually underfunded projects, perhaps because they are not touted by a big publicity machine like the one that corporations fund at the same rate as the sponsored events. In effect, the public is given the impression that only blockbusters are worth seeing, and it stays away. Caught in a vicious circle, the financial health of risk-taking institutions is endangered by poor box office figures. This, in turn, can weaken them in budget deliberations before legislators, who mistakenly take high attendance figures as a political mandate or a sign of outstanding performance that deserves to be rewarded.

According to a recent study by the Ifo-Institute (Research Institute for Economy) in Munich, 87.2 percent of the sponsors underwrite art events for business reasons (“image transfer”).¹²⁴ Hilmar Hoffmann, who should know, as the former cultural commissioner of the city of Frankfurt, recently deplored as a “very dangerous development” that “museum directors are chosen today because they have good relations to the world of banking, trade and industry” rather than on the basis of professional qualifications.¹²⁵ The cooperative spirit of directors with such credentials offers a high degree of synergy to the boards of the institutions which are themselves dominated by representatives from banking, trade, and industry.

Public relations experts are convinced that the association with art improves their clients’ standing in the arena of public opinion, and that it facilitates their dealings with legislators and the press. The image transfer is to affect tax rates, trade rules, health, safety and environmental legislation, and labor relations in favor of the sponsors. And it is to subtly dissuade elected officials and the press from scrutinizing corporate conduct and to deflect public criticism. Since corporate contributions to museums are tax deductible, the taxpayers, in effect, pay for the lobbying expenses. We are thus subsidizing not only the de facto privatization of our public museums, we are also underwriting the campaigns which affect how we live and what we think.

As the first illustration of Volume II of his catalog, Broodthaers chose the gold-framed painting of a castle nestled in a romantic mountain landscape. He supplied the following caption: “Oh melancholy, brittle castle of eagles.”

[This text was written as a paper to be delivered at the conference “The Museum of Contemporary Art between East and West,” Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Bonn, January 21–23, 1994. It was first published in German as “Der Adler von 1972 bis heute,” *kritische berichte* (Marburg) 3 (1994): 22–29; and in English in *Hans Haacke: “Obra Social,”* exh. cat. (Barcelona: Fundació Antoni Tàpies, 1995), 224–226.]

42. “Free Exchange,” 1994, with Pierre Bourdieu (excerpts)

HH: I think it is important to distinguish between the traditional notion of patronage and the public relations maneuvers parading as patronage today. Invoking the name of Maecenas, corporations give themselves an aura of altruism. The American term “sponsoring” more accurately reflects that what we have here is really an exchange of capital: financial capital on the part of the sponsors and symbolic capital on the part of the sponsored. Most business people are quite open about this when they speak to their peers. (. . .)

PB: Through your work you carry out a diversion of the processes used by wise managers. You use an analysis of the symbolic strategies of “patrons” in order to devise a kind of action that will turn their own weapons against them. (. . .)

HH: Occasionally, I believe, I succeeded in producing works which played a catalytic role. But I think works that do not get big public attention also leave a trace. All productions of the consciousness industry, no matter whether intended or not, influence the social climate and thereby the political climate as well.

In the specific cases we are discussing, the problem is not only to say something, to take a position, but also to create a productive provocation. The sensitivity of the context into which one inserts something, or the manner in which one does it, can trigger a public debate. However, it does not work well if the press fails to play its role of amplifier and forum for debate. There has to be a sort of collaboration. The press often plays a double game without being quite aware of it, or, at least not openly, showing that it does. (. . .)

PB: There is a kind of censorship through silence. If, when one wants to transmit a message, there is no response in journalistic circles—if it doesn’t interest journalists—then the message is not transmitted. Journalists have been the screen or filter between all intellectual action and the public. (. . .)

HH: A number of years ago, I participated in a symposium with the title “Aesthetic Value: The Effect of the Market on the Meaning and Significance of Art.” Among the panelists was Philippe de Montebello, the director of The

Metropolitan Museum of Art. He was incensed over an article in the *New York Times* by Michael Brenson. In this article, Brenson (he has since lost his job at the paper) had proposed rethinking the question of evaluation, and the criteria of quality in regard to works by artists who, like women and artists from non-European backgrounds, have until now been left outside the traditional circuit of Western culture. For the esthete of The Metropolitan [Museum] the idea that an absolute judgment does not exist constitutes an “ultimate sacrilege.” Full of conviction and shaking with emotion he exclaimed: “There has to be somewhere an absolute. . . . Just as I believe there has to be a God.”

PB: I had been speaking of cultural monotheism. . . . We could also speak of the restoration of absolutism.

HH: The question of whether it is possible to use constant criteria to evaluate works from Africa, India, and other cultures in his museum, he answered with yes, “if you are, and I’m going to use another unpopular term, cultivated.” Such arrogance can perhaps be explained by the fear that recognition of the contingency of all judgment puts into question enormous investments, symbolic investments as much as financial investments—and social rank. The defenders of “disinterested” and absolute judgment skillfully muddle the debate by painting their adversaries as people who have abdicated *all* judgment, advocates of the “anything goes.” Like everybody else I use criteria when I look at objects in the collection of The Metropolitan Museum. Coming more or less from the same cultural background as this manager of symbolic power, I probably agree with him in many instances. In others, however, my “habitus” (one of your terms I find useful for this discussion) would undoubtedly put me on the opposite side of his universe of significations, taste, and ideological preferences.

The history of centuries of collective reception like that of my own experience does not permit me to believe in the absolute. As I use my judgment in art, always mindful that my criteria lack universal validity, so are my ideas and actions in other areas guided by a system of values. My support for multiculturalism, for example, does not keep me from rejecting fundamentalism, no matter whether Christian, Islamic, Jewish or any other. I am against those who

condemn multiculturalism, but I am equally opposed to those who, in the name of multiculturalism, suppress freedom of expression.

PB: Behind the defense of culture is hidden the defense of the West against Eastern “barbarism” and all the threats it is reputed to pose to European values and the European way of life.

HH: I believe, in the United States, we have entered a period of deep polarization. The 1980s, that decade of the “in” and “out” (equivalent to your “chic” and “non-chic”), are bankrupt. We no longer have the luxury of looking at things in terms of fashion. Unpleasant realities are catching up with us. People begin to understand that vital things are in question—their standard of living is at stake, if not more.

Sometimes I ask myself whether intellectuals have, in fact, a romantic notion of their profession. The failure of the cultural revolution of 1968 may have been such a traumatic experience for them that they are incapable of analyzing what role they played then and what role they play today. I believe many French intellectuals on the Left have been weakened by a sense of defeat. It may have been further accentuated, at the time, by their disgust over the repression of the revolution in Czechoslovakia by the very powers some of them still believed to be their natural allies. And then they began to discover that intelligent people also existed outside their small world, even though, until then, they had not taken them seriously: top executives in business, the media and politics, people who seem to succeed. Full of admiration for their efficacy and fascinated by the apparent success of individuals who do not spend their time with critical questions, these intellectuals begin to fall in line.

PB: You are describing the Saint-Simon Club . . .

HH: To compensate for their sense of inferiority and their disillusion with the reality of the countries that had called themselves “socialist,” many of them defected. They are now part of management. I readily concede that this scenario is rather speculative and drawn by somebody who doesn’t have an intimate knowledge of the situation in France.

PB: No, it's not far off. I think the shock caused by the movement of May 1968 had a quite determinant effect. Strangely, this symbolic revolution, which did not have great political consequences, left deep marks on the spirit, particularly among professors, from Los Angeles to Berlin. . . . Just as one cannot understand the thought of the end of the last century—from Durkheim to Le Bon and to the conservative philosophers inspired by them—if one forgets the Commune, so one cannot understand the rebirth of conservative and neo-conservative thought, in the United States and in France, and the appearance of a veritable international conservative movement, with its networks, its journals, its foundations, and its associations, if one does not keep in mind the trauma caused by the movement of May 1968. That collective trauma threw back into the most bitter conservatism, notably in question of art and culture, academics—sometimes even “liberals” and progressives—who felt that their ultimate values as men of culture were threatened and who identified with mediocre pleas for the preservation and restoration of culture, such as those of Allan Bloom, among so many others. (. . .)

But you were just talking about the “intellectuals” who, to escape from disenchantment in face of the failure of so-called socialist regimes, went over to the side of the establishment (this is an optimistic hypothesis: there is also the ambition for power, which permits them to exert, by other means, an influence they could not exert solely with their intellectual weapons). Since the 1960s, certain intellectuals—on the whole sociologists or the economists influenced by the American model—have exalted the figure of the expert manager or the administrative technocrat against the previously dominant image of the critical intellectual, particularly that of socialists in power [who] dealt a decisive blow to that image. Socialist power has given rise to its own small-minded, court intellectuals who, from colloquium to commission, have taken the front stage, blocking or combating the work of those who have continued to resist in their research on all orders.

HH: There is, perhaps, an insoluble conflict. No organization, certainly not a complex society like ours, can survive without managers. I am sure we gain by the presence of intellectuals in managerial positions. But I am also fully aware that the goal of management is to assure a smooth operation rather than reflection and critique. These are contradictory responsibilities. I have witnessed the radical and,

no doubt, inevitable change in people from the art world, when they move from the critique to the curating of exhibitions or the management of institutions. (. . .)

PB: Radical liberalism is evidently the death of free cultural production because censorship is exerted through money. If, for example, I had to find sponsors to finance my research, I would have a hard time. As would you, if you had to seek support from Mercedes or Cartier. These examples are obviously a bit crude, but I think that they are important because the stakes can be seen most clearly in extreme cases.

HH: There is an entirely different tradition in the United States. Almost all cultural institutions are private and depend on the good graces of donors and, more recently, on sponsors. What frightens me is that Europe is beginning to follow the American model. Institutions which were liberated from the tutelage of princes and the Church now fall more and more under the control of corporations. Obviously, these corporations are only to serve the interests of their shareholders—this is what they are set up for. The de-facto privatization of cultural institutions has a terrible price. Practically speaking, the republic, the *res publica*, i.e., the public cause, is being abandoned. Even though the sponsors cover only a small part of the cost, it is they who really determine the program. Mr. de Montebello, who is certainly an expert in these matters, admitted once that “it’s an inherent, insidious, hidden form of censorship.”¹²⁶ It is difficult to reverse the situation once the state has abdicated and the institutions have become dependent on the sponsors. Even though in the end, i.e., at the level of the national budget, the taxpayers still pay the bills, the institutions, focusing on their immediate and individual problems, only see financial relief. More and more they are getting used to limitations on the content of their programming. Management prevails. Nevertheless, the chief of Cartier implicitly warned us that the sponsors’ enthusiasm is not guaranteed forever. In an interview he explained: “Culture is in fashion, all the better. As long as it lasts, we should use it.”¹²⁷ It would be naive to think that the state will resume its responsibilities for culture when the Cartiers of the world have lost interest. (. . .)

PB: At this point, it would seem important to reflect on the fact that the process of autonomization of the artistic world (in relation to patrons, academies, states, etc.) is accompanied by a renunciation of certain functions, particularly political functions. One of the effects that you produce consists in reintroducing those functions. In other words, you extend the freedom that has been acquired by artists throughout history, and which was limited to form, to other functions. This leads to the problem of the perception of your works. There are those who are interested in the form and who do not see the critical function, and those who are interested in the critical function and do not see the form, so in reality the work's aesthetic necessity has to do with the fact that you say things, but in a form that is equally necessary, and just as subversive, as what you say.

HH: I believe the public for what we call art is rarely homogeneous. There is always tension between people who are, above all, interested in *what* is “told” and those who focus primarily on the *how*. Neither of them can fully comprehend and appreciate a work of art. “Form” speaks and “content” is inscribed in “form.” The whole is inevitably imbued with ideological significations. That’s also true for my work. There are those who are attracted by the subject and the information . . .

PB: The message.

HH: . . . explicit or implicit. They may find themselves reinforced in their opinions recognizing that they are not alone in thinking what they think. It is pleasurable to come across things that help us to better articulate vague notions we have and to give them a more precise form. Therefore, preaching to the converted, as one says, is not a total waste of time. A good deal of advertising and all political candidates [do] it, for good reason. Opposed to the sympathizers are, of course, the people who disagree. Some of them disagree to the point of trying to suppress my works—there have been several spectacular examples. The attempts to censor demonstrate, if nothing else, that the censors think an exhibition of my works could have consequences.¹²⁸ Between these two extremes exists a sizable audience that is curious and without fixed opinions. It is in this group where one finds people who are prepared to reexamine the provisional positions they hold. Generally speaking, they match the target group of marketing

and public relations experts whose job it is to expand the market for a product or for certain opinions. That's also where a good part of the press is situated. Obviously, this is only a very rough sketch.

Within the group that is primarily interested in what we provisionally called "form" (every time I use this binary terminology which, I think, is absolutely misleading, I get a stomach ache) there is a large contingent of esthetes who maintain that political references contaminate art and introduce what Clement Greenberg called "extra-artistic" elements. For these esthetes, that amounts to nothing but journalism, or worse, to propaganda, comparable to the art of Stalin and the Nazis. Aside from other aspects, they overlook the fact that my work is far from being appreciated by the powers that be. This "formalist" argument is built on the implicit assumption that the objects which constitute (in retrospect) the history of art were produced in a social vacuum, and that they therefore reveal nothing about the environment of their origin. Artists have usually been quite aware of the socio-political determinants of their time. In fact, in the past, they often created works designed to serve specific and prescribed goals. Since the nineteenth century, in the West, the situation has become more complex with the disappearance of commissions from the Church and the princes. But already the art of the Dutch bourgeoisie of the seventeenth century demonstrates that it continued to be an expression of ideas, attitudes, and values of the collective social climate or of particular persons of the period. In principle, nothing has changed since. Whether artists like it or not, artworks are always ideological tokens, even if they don't serve identifiable clients by name. As tokens of power and symbolic capital (I hope my use of another one of your terms is correct) they play a political role. Several art movements of this century (among others I am thinking of important factions of the Constructivists, the Dadaists, and Surrealists) quite explicitly pursued political goals. It strikes me that insisting on the "form" or the "message" constitutes a sort of separatism. Both are politically charged. Speaking of the propaganda aspect of all art, I would like to add that the meaning and impact of a given object are not fixed for all eternity. They depend on the context in which one sees them. Fortunately, the majority of people are not particularly concerned about the presumed purity of art. For obvious reasons, in the art world, one is particularly interested in the visual qualities of my works. Questions are raised as to how they relate to the history of art and whether I developed new

approaches. One is more skilled in deciphering the “forms” as signifiers and there is a greater appreciation of technical aspects. As a counterpart to the people who are able to identify subtle political allusions, my sympathizers in the art world enjoy spotting art historical references that remain inaccessible to a lay audience. I believe that one of the reasons for the recognition my work has gained from a rather diverse public is a sense, shared by both of the factions I crudely distinguished (obviously it is more complex), that “form” expresses a “message,” and that a “message” would not get through without an appropriate “form.” The integration of the two components is what counts.

PB: Do you mean that even when they privilege one of the two aspects, they indistinctly sense the presence of the other?

HH: Yes, I think so.

PB: And that they sense that your works are doubly necessary, from both the point of view of the message and from the point of view of the form and of the relationship between the two?

HH: The context in which the public encounters my works also plays an important role. The people who came upon my installations in the public places of Graz, Munich, and Berlin are different from the museum public and the still more specialized audience of galleries. People in the latter categories look at my stuff in terms of art, even when they dispute its art status. . . . By contrast, the uninitiated passers-by in the street see my work with different eyes.

I often work deliberately for a specific context. The social and political character of the exhibition locale plays a role, as do the architectural peculiarities of the space. In fact, the symbolic qualities of the context often are my most essential materials. A work made for a specific site cannot be moved and exhibited elsewhere. The significance of its physical elements as well depends frequently on the context. For example, the neon Mercedes-star which revolves on top of one of the tall buildings one passes on the train when entering Paris from the North, means something different from its counterpart on the roof of the Europa Center in Berlin (particularly when the city was still divided by the wall), and from the Mercedes-star I planted on a watchtower of the old death strip.

PB: That is also one of the ties that the autonomization of art has broken. The museum effect extracts the work from all contexts, demanding the “pure” gaze. You reestablish the link with the context. What you say takes into consideration the circumstances in which it is said. The proper language is that which is appropriate, opportune, and effective. That’s what makes the example of Graz so extraordinary, even in the treatment the public gives the work. It’s almost as if you had wanted to lead people to burn the work. Did you foresee that?

HH: No, not the fire-bombing. But we did take precautions. Guards were posted at night. One knows from experience that contemporary sculpture in the public arena, no matter what kind, invites vandalism.

As far as work for a given context is concerned, I like to add that, as with many questions touching the theory and the sociology of art, there is a precedent in the practice of Marcel Duchamp. When he anonymously entered his *Fountain* in the exhibition of the Society of Independent Artists, he deliberately aimed at a specific context. Being a member of this New York association himself, he knew it well and could imagine what the reaction of his colleagues would be. That’s what he played on.

PB: Yes, but, paradoxically, he did somewhat the inverse of what you do. He used the museum as a decontextualizing context, if I may use the expression. That is: I take a urinal and, by the very fact of putting it in a museum, I change its nature, because the museum will have the effect on it that it has on all the objects exhibited. It is no longer a triptych or a crucifix before which one will pray, but rather a work of art that one must contemplate.

HH: Today it’s a relic. But in 1917 it caused a scandal. Duchamp succeeded in unmasking the unspoken artistic criteria of his colleagues who demanded that this object be excluded from the universe of art. However, when his friend Walter Arensberg purchased the urinal, these criteria were no longer valid as they were before. All of a sudden this urinal was perceived as different from other urinals one could buy in plumbing supply stores of New York, probably for less money. Its meaning had changed. With this maneuver Duchamp revealed the rules of the game, the symbolic power of the context. (. . .)

The debate over the directorship of museums goes beyond the complaints about the institutions serving as outlets for art dealers in New York or elsewhere. Explicating the context in which artworks were created, as some do, is branded as “Marxist” a very damaging label. The most accepted practice remains that of decontextualizing objects, a bit like the presentation of a butterfly collection. It circumvents, by default, the consideration of the social field in which the art objects originated and to which their creators made reference. This is undoubtedly a politically smart practice. But it ends up in a neutralization of art. Art institutions, a bit like schools, are places of education. They influence the way we look at ourselves, and how we view our social relations. As is the case in other branches of the consciousness industry, also here, in a subtle way, our values are being negotiated. In fact, art institutions are political institutions. One could say that they are part of the battlefield where the conflicting ideological currents of a society clash. The art world, contrary to what is generally assumed, is not a world apart. What happens there is an expression of the world at large and has repercussions outside its confines. Because these relations are not mechanical and the fronts are not clearly drawn, it is not easy to demonstrate this interdependence of art and society. It manifests itself more at the level of the social climate than in specific cases. However, as the meteorological metaphor suggests, what happens in particular geographical regions is not totally negligible. Climate is a soft concept. However, I am convinced that is where the general direction of societies is, almost imperceptibly, decided.

PB: That being said, according to the forms of art, the rift is more or less great. Nevertheless, there are forms of art that institute and live from this rift.

HH: But these forms influence what I call the climate, too.

PB: Yes, at least negatively. By not doing what they could do . . .

HH: At the beginning of the 1980s, a dozen years after the cultural revolution of the 1960s, there was a boom in Neo-Expressionist painting. The domination of the scene by this expressionism and a revival of the traditions of painting, were the signal for the end of a rich period of experimentation, analysis, and social

engagement. Following this trend, *Documenta VII*, 1982, more or less certified the restoration of a mythic world: the individual as independent agent, the artist as demigod, challenger of the world, in short: Rambo.¹²⁹ This corresponded, in the United States, with the arrival of Reagan in the White House and in Bonn, a bit later, of Kohl in the chancellery. Margaret Thatcher was already busy dismantling the welfare state (and her country) for the sake of “free enterprise.” Her American friend prepared a defense against the “Evil Empire” for the upcoming Star Wars. Charles Saatchi, chief of the advertising agency that ran Maggie’s election campaigns, bought the new paintings wholesale and made their prices soar. Of course, out of public view, work that was not “in” continued underground, and there were young artists who developed new ways which were to be recognized much later. It would be unfair to accuse the artists (and their following) who made a fortune under these circumstances to have consciously promoted the policies of the people in power. However, I believe that, at the level of the climate, there was a mutually profitable collaboration. (. . .)

PB: To undertake forms of action which are at the same time symbolically effective and politically complex and rigorous, without concessions, wouldn’t it be necessary to form teams composed of researchers, artists, theater people, communication specialists (publicists, graphic artists, journalists, etc.) and thus mobilize a force equivalent to the symbolic forces that must be confronted?

HH: I believe it is very important that it is fun. It has to be enjoyable. It must be a pleasure for the public to get involved. Bertolt Brecht said it well.

PB: Yes, but you are giving a definition of your *métier*. . . . With esthetics you are on the side of feeling, sensitivity, and pleasure. That is also true of writers. But can and should philosophers, sociologists, everyone who is on the side of the concept, of the intelligible, propose giving pleasure? The truth is that if they do so, people think that they are after cost-free success. And it must be said, those who give pleasure often chase after success.

HH: I don’t believe the work of a philosopher or a scientist cannot be pleasurable. There are texts I enjoy reading, and there are others I detest because of their

bureaucratic and pretentious language. I don't finish reading them, even if the subject interests me. (. . .)

[This conversation between Pierre Bourdieu and Hans Haacke, begun in 1991 and completed in 1993, was published in French under the title *Libre-Échange* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil/les presses du réel, 1994), and in English as *Free Exchange* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995). The volume was issued in the United States by Stanford University Press in 1995.]

43. Unpublished letter to Richard Koshalek, 1995

Dear Mr. Koshalek:

From the invitation to this week's opening of the MOCA exhibition *1965–1975: Reconsidering the Object of Art* I learned, with dismay, that the celebration of the re-opened Temporary Contemporary and, as it appears (the wording is not quite clear), the exhibition itself, is sponsored by Philip Morris Companies Inc.

When you asked me to lend my work (*Shapolsky et al. Manhattan Real Estate Holdings, a Real-Time Social System, as of May 1, 1971*) to this exhibition, you did not mention the sponsorship of the show—and unfortunately I failed to inquire.

Let me explain why I am appalled by MOCA's decision to have Philip Morris sponsor this event.

As Dr. Louis Sullivan, the former U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services, bluntly stated in 1990: "Cigarettes are the only legal product that, when used as intended, cause death." Government agencies estimate that more than 300,000 Americans die every year from smoking related diseases, and that smoking costs the nation \$52 million annually in health expenses or time lost from work.

Recently, California Congressman Henry A. Waxman, basing his assertion on internal company documents and scientific analysis, accused Philip Morris of deliberately manipulating nicotine levels in cigarettes, in effect thus also manipulating their addictive quality. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration concluded that nicotine was a drug that should be regulated.

In addition to sponsoring art events for public relations purposes, Philip Morris also sponsors Senator Jesse Helms. Not only did the company regularly contribute to the Senator's reelection campaigns, it also made substantial contributions to the Jesse Helms Center in North Carolina, where the Senator's version of "American values" is promoted.

As you know, Senator Helms is determined to destroy the National Endowment for the Arts, an agency that has supported your museum, this exhibition, and many of the invited artists. The irony is inescapable and bitter.

The Senator is notorious for his hostility to the freedom of expression and sexual orientation, not to speak of the many other positions he holds which are anathema to probably all artists in the exhibition. When Philip Morris's promotion of Senator Helms became known in 1990, ACT-UP called for an international boycott of the company's products. Many artists joined the boycott.

You must also be aware that, last year, Philip Morris threatened to withhold its sponsorship of cultural events in New York if the City Council passed a ban on smoking in public places. Your peers in New York museums were solicited to become tobacco industry lobbyists. The boldness of this instrumentalization of culture by a corporation was unprecedented.

The artists represented in *1965–1975: Reconsidering the Object of Art* belong to a generation that, as you wrote in your letter to me, “began to question the nature, meaning and function of art and thus marked a significant rupture with traditional forms and concepts of artmaking.” You also said this “will, quite auspiciously, be the re-opening exhibition” for MOCA's Temporary Contemporary.

Particularly in light of these statements, respect for the artists and their work, as well as the interests and ethics of an institution such as yours, should have precluded MOCA from allowing Philip Morris the privilege of being associated with this event.

Sincerely yours,

[This text was written as an open letter to Richard Koshalek, director, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, October 10, 1995.]

44. *ViewingMatters*, 1996

Entering the storage vault of a museum is like going into a *Wunderkammer*. Artifacts of all sizes and value, produced by individuals (some nameless) of diverse historical periods and reputations hang indiscriminately next to each other and sit together intimately on shelves or on the floor. Close packing is the governing principle. This is the collection.

The context for which these objects were made no longer exists. At some time they were all considered to be wonderful and they are all worth wondering about today. However, only studies drawing on all fields of human inquiry—not only art history—can give us an inkling of the role and significance they had at the time



1.32 Hans Haacke, *ViewingMatters*, 1996

they were made and how their meaning changed over the years (this is true also for works of the recent past).

Both the presence and the absence of works by certain artists, “schools,” and art movements in a collection tell a lot about the people who shaped it, about their passions, scholarship, friendships, and civic spirit (as well as money and power games). Above all, however, they tell us about the ideological functions these works performed for them: in classical terminology, how and to the benefit of whom they represented the ever-changing notions of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful.

Whenever an object is exhibited (or otherwise singled out), it enters into a “conversation” with other artifacts and, according to the context in which it is placed, it champions an array of particular views which, inevitably, differ from a host of other views. Both as metaphor and agent (and not only within the art world) it becomes part of the negotiations—and struggle—over how we understand the world and what our social relations should be. Viewing matters: upstairs.

[Written as wall text for the exhibition *ViewingMatters*, at the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, with works and objects of the Museum’s collection, 1996. First published in English and German in Hans Haacke, *AnsichtsSachen/ViewingMatters* (Düsseldorf: Richter Verlag, 1999), 7.]

45. **DER BEVÖLKERUNG (To the Population), 1999**



1.33 **Hans Haacke, DER BEVÖLKERUNG (To the Population), 2000–**

From the center of the northern courtyard of the Reichstag building, white neon letters beam the words DER BEVÖLKERUNG (To the Population) toward the sky. The 1.20 m (47 inch) high letters are laid out on the ground along the courtyard's long axis. They can be read from the Assembly Hall from West to East. Visitors on the roof of the building can see them glowing on the bottom of the courtyard. The typeface of the neon letters is derived from the inscription DEM DEUTSCHEN VOLKE (To the German People) above the West gate of the Reichstag building.

The Members of the Bundestag are invited to bring 50 kilos (approx. 100 pounds) of soil to the courtyard, collected from their election districts or the

states where they were elected from a party list. The soil, coming from 669 different regions of the Federal Republic (current number of deputies), is to be spread around the neon letters in a wooden trough measuring $6.30 \times 20.80 \times 0.30$ m ($248 \times 8 \times 11$ inches).

Seeds and roots from the places of origin are naturally embedded in the soil brought to Berlin. They will sprout, as will airborne seeds from Berlin. They are to develop freely—without any tending. When a legislator leaves Parliament, a commensurate portion of soil is removed. Newly elected Members of Parliament are invited to contribute to the soil in the courtyard and, in so doing, also to the vegetation.

The process of plant growth and the addition and removal of soil, as they correspond to the rhythm of the parliamentary terms, is to continue as long as democratically elected legislators meet in the Reichstag building.

At those locations from which the words DER BEVÖLKERUNG can be seen, panels are to be installed, i.e., at Assembly Hall level and the press floor, as well as in areas where the public is admitted in the Assembly Hall and on the roof. Listed on these panels are the names of all Members of Parliament, together with their party affiliation and the districts and states they represent. The panels also provide concise information on the conceptual background of the lettering, the process of plant growth, and the dates on which Members contributed soil. At the beginning of every new legislative term, the panels are to be replaced so that they reflect the changed membership of the Parliament.

In order to assure the widest possible access from outside the building, the information on the plaques, together with a current photo of the courtyard, is posted on a website established for this purpose. A webcam overlooking the courtyard from a fixed position is programmed to take a photo every two hours and to present the image taken at noon to the visitors of the website. The website is updated daily. A databank with a constantly expanding picture archive develops. It allows tracking the changes in the courtyard, compressed as in time-lapse recording.

A link to the website DER BEVÖLKERUNG is to give legislators who have contributed soil to the courtyard an opportunity to present their own texts and images.

Objects not belonging to the project are to be excluded from the courtyard.



1.34 Hans Haacke, *DER BEVÖLKERUNG* (To the Population), 2000–

[This text was written as a proposal submitted to the Kunstbeirat (Art Advisory Committee) of Deutscher Bundestag (Parliament of Federal Republic of Germany), in October 1999. The English translation was first published in Sabine Breitwieser, ed., *Mia san mia: Hans Haacke*, exh. cat. (Vienna: Generali Foundation, 2001), 101–105.]

46. *DER BEVÖLKERUNG*, 2001

As an introduction to a recent installation in Berlin I would like to call to mind a work I produced for the *Earth Art* exhibition at the Andrew Dickson White Museum of Cornell University in 1969. I believe this was the first exhibition in the United States of so-called Earth Art. I piled soil in the center of a room, seeded the mound with grass, and the seeds did what they do under halfway decent climactic conditions: they sprouted and grew. Therefore the title *Grass Grows* (1969).

At another occasion plants grew—without assistance—from seeds the wind had blown into a bit of soil I had left on the roof where I had a studio in New York (from 1965 to 1984). I photographed it. And that was it: *Bowery Seeds*, vintage 1970. Obviously, such a process could not be exhibited in a gallery to be merchandised. It was strictly “site-specific.”

A strange thing happened to me about two years ago. But before I get to that, let me review a bit of German history. When East and West Germany were joined in 1990, the German Parliament decided that Berlin ought to be again the capital of the country. The Bundestag was to move from Bonn to Berlin and into the Reichstag, the old building of the German Parliament. It is a rather monstrous edifice by the architect Paul Wallot. Contrary to generally held assumptions, the Reichstag has a democratic history. It was from one of its balconies that, in 1918, the Social Democratic politician Scheidemann proclaimed Germany a republic. According to strong circumstantial evidence, it was the Nazis who, in a successful ploy to solidify their control in 1933, made the building go up in flames. It was further damaged during Hitler’s war.

As the result of an international competition, the Bundestag gave a non-German architect, Sir Norman Foster, the commission to rebuild its future home in Berlin. Foster refurbished the interior and, after some prodding—his prize-winning design provided for a gas station-like flat roof over the entire building, held by pillars in the four corners—he also designed a dome for the roof (the old Reichstag had one).

Like some other countries, Germany has a rule according to which a certain percentage of the construction budget for public buildings must be set aside for art. The Kunstbeirat, a standing committee of the Bundestag, comprised of twelve

MPs and assisted by half a dozen art advisors (museum directors, curators, art professors, etc.) is in charge of art-related matters in all buildings of the Parliament. The parties of the Bundestag are represented in the committee proportional to their presence in the Parliament. The president of the Bundestag chairs the committee.

The committee decided that artists with an international reputation who, in case of doubt, are in their fifties or older, were to be invited—without competition—to submit proposals for assigned spaces in the Reichstag. Besides these, a select group of artists was invited to compete for commissions for the as-yet nonexistent new buildings that are to house the offices of the parliamentarians. In the Reichstag, each of the former occupation powers was to be represented by one artist—Norman Foster for Britain, Jenny Holzer was to represent the United States, Christian Boltanski was chosen as the French artist, and Ilya Kabakov was to have represented Russia (the Soviet Union). Kabakov made two proposals which were both rejected for reasons that I am unaware of. Another Russian artist, Grischa Bruskin, was then given the commission. Once the Kunstbeirat accepted a proposal (if the first one was rejected, the artist was to submit a second design), the artist was given a budget for its realization: a fixed amount! It had to cover everything: the production, insurance, taxes, etc. Also, the honorarium had to come out of this fixed amount.

In 1998, to my great surprise, I was invited to submit a proposal for one of the two interior open-air courtyards of the Reichstag. The southern courtyard had already been assigned to Ulrich Rückriem. His work was almost complete when I made my first visit to see “my” site in the northern courtyard (I was the last artist to be invited).

Before I describe my project, I would like to speak about the building and its immediate neighborhood. In 1998 the area around the Reichstag was an enormous construction site. Many aspects of Foster’s refurbished interior building I don’t care for, but his dome is absolutely spectacular, a tourist attraction of the first order. Every visitor to Berlin considers it essential to visit the roof and the dome, often waiting an hour in line. A huge inverted mirror-clad nose in the center of the dome serves as an exhaust pipe for the foul air generated by the MPs in the assembly hall below. Two spiral ramps wind along the dome’s periphery.

You can walk all the way to the top and enjoy a fantastic overview of the city and, as in most museums, there is a café!

From the dome, a view onto East Berlin shows what a boomtown this city has become. Wherever you look you see cranes. A view north reveals the new Chancellery under construction, an ugly colossus courtesy of Helmut Kohl. Gerhard Schröder, his successor, commented dryly: “It could have been a size smaller.” To the west you can see the Siegessäule (Victory Column) sticking up above the trees of the Tiergarten, that huge park in the middle of the city. The column used to be shorter and stood right in front of the Reichstag. Albert Speer added to its height and moved it to where it is now to make room for the north-south axis of his grandiose design for Hitler’s new Berlin. The Siegessäule was erected in celebration of the victory of the German armies over the French in 1871 and the establishment of the German Empire—the Kaiser was crowned in Versailles. Looking south, one can see the Brandenburg Gate and a bit further a large empty lot where the Holocaust memorial by Peter Eisenman is to be sited (the longer the negotiations with Eisenman continue, the more it changes from its winning proposal). I can understand why Richard Serra, originally the co-designer with Eisenman, eventually decided not to have anything to do with these compromises, and pulled out.

I would now like to focus on the facade of the building. It is worthwhile to look closely at the figures on the pediment to get an idea of what this building represented at the time of its completion in 1896. On the large shield in the center is the German eagle with the Prussian coat of arms stuck on its chest. On the shield, cushioned by the Royal ermine coat, rests the crown of the Prussian king and at the very top of the triangle is the crown of the Kaiser (the Prussian king and the emperor happened to be one and the same person). Left and right of the shield, two beefy Teutonic characters with Wagnerian helmets and swords are ready to defend the two crowns. Particularly noteworthy in the far right corner of the pediment is a sculptor, naked, busy chiseling a bust of Kaiser Wilhelm I. In the opposite corner, you see the bow of a ship, palm leaves and tropical fruit, all references to the desperate attempt of the Kaiser to catch up with his European neighbors and build a colonial empire. Germany had designs on Africa (its colonies were rather short-lived). Today you still find many other references to the Kaiser—all four sides of the little turrets on the roof left and right of the

pediment, carry the Kaiser's initials "W I" (Wilhelm I). Each of the turrets is topped off with the imperial crown and emblazoned in the ceiling of the portico are the initials of three successive emperors of the late nineteenth century. Neither the architecture of the building nor its decorations made reference to the Parliament. Instead it celebrated the king and emperor. In effect, the Reichstag looks as if it were an imperial palace.

When I first saw it in 1998, the courtyard for which I was asked to submit a proposal was still a construction site. Early on I realized that it is primarily seen from above as a two-dimensional image. Only the cooks in the restaurant on the lower level of the building and a few office employees have direct access. The MPs look onto the courtyard from the assembly hall on the second floor and the public can see it from the roof.

I would now like to draw your attention to the inscription on the portico. It reads DEM DEUTSCHEN VOLKE (To the German People). I saw it for the first time when I was preparing an exhibition in Berlin in 1984. It was by accident on a Sunday afternoon when I was strolling aimlessly through the Tiergarten (I did not know the city well) that I came across the Reichstag ruin, blocking the view of the Wall immediately behind it (the Wall divided the city from 1961 to 1989). On the lawn in front of the building, kids were playing soccer and families were barbecuing lamb—it was a Turkish environment (Berlin is the largest Turkish city outside Turkey). And up there, on the architrave, I read in giant bronze letters, "To the German People." To many of the children playing on the lawn, as to their parents, uncles, and aunts it seemed to say, "This place is not for you! You don't belong! You stay out!" The inscription sounded even more aggressive a few weeks later when I saw it light up in the crackle of fireworks, in front of the forbidding scenery of the Reichstag. I will never forget this experience.

In German, the word "Volk" has more and different connotations than the English word "people" or the French "*le peuple*." Particularly during the twentieth century it has played a conflict-ridden and fateful role. Germany became a nation-state only toward the end of the nineteenth century. Unlike England and France, which for many centuries had been unified countries under central rule, Germans identified themselves primarily on the basis of culture and ethnicity. The French have been defining themselves and their nation in political and not in ethnic terms. It was as a revolutionary political class, "*le peuple*," which rose up and swept

away the monarchy. Like other colonial empires, however, the French have also been facing the problem of integrating those not born of parents with ancestral roots in the “home country.” Still, the official French position is that all of them are French citizens, to be assimilated rather than marginalized or excluded (in practice, of course, it doesn’t always work that way).

For centuries, German citizenship was defined primarily in terms of its complex political geography. Until 1913, birth in one of the myriad principalities and kingdoms that divided the territory that is now Germany determined whose subject one was. Probably in part responding to the large influx of Poles who came to work in agriculture and in the mines of the Ruhr, and as a reaction to the massive migration of Eastern Europeans westward (many of them passing through Germany on their way overseas), birthplace no longer determined citizenship. Inspired by the nationalism sweeping Europe at the time, lineage became the new criterion. From then on, the decisive factor was whether one had German ancestry.

Being countries of immigrants, the United States, Canada, and Australia have always taken a diametrically opposite approach. One is an American no matter who one’s parents are, as long as one is born on American territory—including planes and ships flying the American flag. Pregnant women are known to have gone to the United States in order to give birth to an American child even though they had no intention of settling.

The Nazis eventually applied the new rules governing German citizenship in the most racist manner conceivable. People who had every reason to consider themselves German, and whose families had been accepted unquestioningly, for generations, as German, all of a sudden became foreigners, with an uncertain status. Whether a person was considered German or not became a matter of life and death. One of the sons of the Jewish bronze casters who produced the letters for the dedication “To the German People” died in Auschwitz; the other was executed in Berlin-Plötzensee [prison]. Members of the Reichstag were not immune. One hundred and thirteen members of the German Parliament were stripped of their German citizenship; seventy-five of them died in prison and concentration camps, eight committed suicide. Chilling statistics.

All these thoughts passed through my mind as I read the exclusive qualifier “deutsch” on the facade of the Reichstag. I remembered how the Nazis had turned the notion of “Volk” into a tribal myth of ethnic purity. The use of the prefix

“Volk-” proliferated. There were the “Volksgenossen” (thoroughbred Germans), the “Volksempfänger” (radio), the “Volkswagen,” the “Volksgerichtshof” (Gestapo court), the “Volkssturm” (teenagers and old men who were drafted toward the end of the war), etc. The “gesundes Volksempfinden” (healthy sense of the Volk) was invoked to purge the museums of “degenerate art.” In 1937, while in Danish exile, Bertolt Brecht wrote an incisive essay entitled “Five Difficulties in Writing the Truth.” He maintained “In these times, he who says Bevölkerung (population) instead of Volk. . . , already does not support many lies.” I remember reading the essay in high school. This sentence particularly stuck in my mind.

From 1945 to 1989, the notion of “Volk” was interpreted quite differently in the so-called German Democratic Republic. Laws were passed by a “Volkskammer” [GDR Parliament], the military was called “Volksarmee,” and law and order was maintained by the “Volkspolizei.” People worked in “Volkseigenen Betrieben” [State Enterprises]. When the workers went on strike in 1953 and braved the tanks of the rulers, Bertolt Brecht, now living in East Berlin, made another incisive comment: “Wouldn’t it be easier, if the government dissolved the people and chose another one?” The government made the mistake of not heeding his advice. As a consequence, in 1989, they got to hear the chant “We are the people!” with the emphasis on the “We.” In the tradition of the French Revolution, the hated regime was swept away.

Let me go back in history. When the architect Wallot proposed the inscription “To the German People” at the time of the completion of his building, it did not have the ominous ring I just recounted. The Kaiser’s response was equivalent to “over my dead body.” The space on the architrave remained empty. He apparently understood these words as a challenge to his supremacy and he may have remembered what happened to one of his French peers. A reaction of a totally different kind came from playwright and poet Frank Wedekind, who had once been jailed for *lèse-majesté*. When he heard that such a dedication was supposed to grace the building he wrote a satirical poem in which he prayed to God to spare him of ever having to see these words on the Reichstag. Wedekind rhymed “Volke” with “Wolke” (cloud), alluding to the semantic cloudiness of the Teutonic word “Volk.”

In 1915, during the second year of the war, when, contrary to the initial enthusiasm and expectations, things were not going too well, one of the Kaiser’s advisors suggested to his majesty that it might now be opportune to agree to the dedication, thinking that this gesture might be well received by the war-weary

nation. The Kaiser finally gave his consent (in fact, hardly anybody seems to have cared). For the casting of the bronze letters the Kaiser even approved the melting down of two canons that had been captured during the Napoleonic Wars. A question still to be resolved was whether the first letter of the adjective “deutsch” was to be done in lower case (like all German adjectives) or whether it was to be capitalized. A Solomonic solution was found: the entire inscription was capitalized. A clever compromise was also reached for the conflict between the conservatives who favored the old German Fraktur typeface and the more modern inclined who argued for a Roman typeface (a typeface commonly used by the French and British and therefore in danger of being associated with the enemy). The designer and architect Peter Behrens was commissioned to design the lettering. He joined elements of both Fraktur and Roman in an art nouveau-inspired blend.

The fact that the Kaiser consented to the dedication only under the pressures of war, the choice of captured canons as material for the letters, and then the struggle over the typeface, all indicate that the inscription “To the German People” had, right from the beginning, a nationalist charge (aside from the Kaiser’s hearing a republican ring). (. . .)

In order to retain a visually recognizable link to the inscription on the facade, I adopted the typeface designed by Peter Behrens and, following Bertolt Brecht’s musings, my installation is not dedicated to the “Volk” nor exclusively to Germans but indiscriminately to the population of Germany—DER BEVÖLKERUNG. At present, such seemingly minor shifts have considerable significance. German identity and the laws governing citizenship are hotly debated topics. Thanks to the election victory of the SPD and the Greens in 1998, lineage is no longer the almost exclusive criterion for citizenship. German citizenship laws have changed from the exclusive “law of blood” (*ius sanguinis*) toward an inclusive “law of soil” (*ius soli*), a reform opposed by the conservative parties, the CDU and CSU. They continue to appeal to xenophobic sentiments in the hope of collecting support from those who might otherwise vote for neo-Nazi parties. For the same reason the CDU and CSU downplay the significance and danger of recent anti-Semitic attacks and assaults on people who do not look sufficiently German to their assailants.

Members of the Bundestag are not responsible to a mythical Volk but TO THE POPULATION. In contrast to the fiction of German tribal unity, the territory (lat. terra = earth, soil, land) of the Federal Republic is a reality, recognized and defined by international law. Posts driven into the ground along its borders demarcate its material existence and the land is common to all who live within its borders.

In fact, some seven million inhabitants of Germany, roughly 9 percent of the population, are foreigners. Laws passed by the Bundestag affect all inhabitants—also those who are not German citizens and therefore cannot vote. The national exclusivity proclaimed on the portico of the Reichstag building is questionable also in view of widening European unification and many other transnational commitments.

Most public monuments, once they are inaugurated, fade into the landscape like equestrian statues. Their original purpose is soon forgotten. I wanted my installation to be an ongoing process. Each member of the Bundestag, also those who will be elected in the future, was therefore invited to participate in its creation. Symbolically, the entire country is represented—equally—in this ecosystem at the seat of the legislature. I understand the indiscriminate gathering and mixing of soil from all regions as an anti-particularistic action. It affirms communality and equality and requires initiative and commitment. It corresponds, metaphorically, to the commitment to the common cause, which is expected from everyone when they are asked to go to vote. The invitation to actively participate in the creation of this art project also suggests to the legislators that they think about the role artworks are meant to play at their place of work.

The committee accepted my proposal on November 2, 1999, with one dissenting vote—Volker Kauder of the conservative CDU. He immediately started a nation-wide campaign in the press and in Parliament to prevent the project from being realized. Even though the art committee re-confirmed its decision a few months later, the campaign gained steam. Editorialists of all political stripes weighed in and I must have been asked for at least a dozen interviews by the media. Consequently, I had to learn how to conduct myself in front of a TV camera. The controversy eventually led to a debate in the full House on April 5, 2000, on whether the proposal, which the Parliament's own committee had twice

approved with overwhelming majorities, was indeed to be realized. It won by a majority of two votes, the slimmest possible margin.

The hardware of the project has since been installed. The Speaker of the Bundestag, Wolfgang Thierse, inaugurated it on September 12, with a little speech and a bag of soil from the Jewish cemetery in Prenzlauer Berg in East Berlin where he lives. Two dozen of his colleagues (from all parties) joined him on that day with soil from their election districts.

The two Conservative parties, the CDU and the CSU fiercely opposed my project (the dissenter of the Kunstbeirat is a prominent leader of the CDU in Baden-Württemberg). But there were two notable exceptions: Frau Blank and Frau Süssmuth—both members of the Art Committee. Frau Süssmuth, the Speaker of the Bundestag under the previous government of Helmut Kohl, is now responsible for many of the more enlightened positions in her party and, as the former head of the Kunstbeirat, she gave the committee the status it has today. Isolated in the midst of their jeering male colleagues the two women sat next to each other during the debate (I witnessed it from the balcony). Frau Süssmuth gave an emotional speech in support of my proposal which earned strong applause from across the aisle while her fellow party members sat on their hands. In case my project was defeated she proposed to deposit in the courtyard the mass of xenophobic letters she had received, berating her for supporting it.

The opposition in her party was fueled mainly by nationalist sentiments. They were expressed so blatantly in the debate that members of other parties who, until then, had planned to reject the project or to abstain—many stated they didn't believe in voting on art—were so shocked that they eventually came out in support.

Ironically, a prominent Green party member, Antje Vollmer, was among the most vehement opponents. Passing an aesthetic judgment, she simply called the project "Biokitsch," and wondered aloud whether any of her fellow members in the Bundestag would indeed make fools of themselves by bringing soil to Berlin (earlier she had promoted the idea of commissioning Bruce Nauman instead of me and having his project sponsored by a collector).

One of the more peculiar arguments—among others advanced by the art historian Martin Warnke—was gleefully seized by, of all people, the conservative opposition: Bringing soil from election districts to Berlin, according to their view,

is equivalent to Nazi rituals celebrating “Blut und Boden” (Blood and Soil). If one were to accept that reasoning, the ground on which the two million Turks in Germany walk is contaminated forever by the Nazis. In effect, Hitler would retain ultimate authority on the meaning of earth.

The way the members of the Bundestag have since participated shows how ill-conceived this argument was from the beginning. The Minister of Justice collected soil from the grave of Carlo Schmid, one of the revered framers of the country’s postwar constitution. Several MPs collected soil from former concentration camps and other sites of historical significance. One SPD member brought soil from the site of a house that had been burnt down by neo-Nazis because Turks had inhabited it. Others invited their constituents to make proposals as to where soil should be collected, and earth was used as a medium to make an ecological point. I read about legislators having non-German citizens participate in the process. Eventually of course, the soil will mix. Two Green party members from Berlin let it be known that they spiked their soil with marijuana seeds. That prompted the French newspaper *Le Monde* to run an article on its front page about marijuana growing at the Reichstag. Also worms were imported knowingly (they are good for aerating the soil). I hope they multiply and wish them good luck. A friend of mine compared the many different colored heaps of earth with the heaps of spices that you find in Turkish markets in Berlin. Now the first plants are sprouting and you can have a look into the courtyard at www.derbevoelkerung.de. The image is updated daily.

[This text was written as a lecture presented at the conference “Installations,” Tate Modern, London, November 5, 2000. It was first published in *Oxford Art Journal* 24, no. 2 (2001): 127–143.]

47. *Mixed Messages*, 2001

Artifacts in a museum collection are encrusted with layers upon layers of meaning that countless generations have bestowed on them. Acting as if on an archeological dig, historians try to expose the roles these objects have played over time, how they represented the desires and needs of the individuals who commissioned, produced, and used them, and how they reflected as well as shaped societies.

Almost all objects we encounter in museums were extracted from another context and “museumized” (religious artifacts are thereby effectively secularized). These dislocations often occurred under circumstances that, according to present standards, are questionable if not illegal. Inscribed in every collection, like the rings of a tree, is the history of the institution, its relation to donors and, in the case of the Victoria & Albert Museum, the museum’s connection with Buckingham Palace and the British Government. Echoes of the British Empire reverberate in its galleries.

The V & A, like other museums of its kind, traditionally admitted to its secularized temple only what it considered to be outstanding examples of the fine and applied arts. The institution’s original mission was driven by the spirit of enlightenment, national pride, and, interestingly, also by the pursuit of economic goals. Exposure to “the best” was to educate and uplift the general public. It was also to improve the products of the nation’s industry in order to better compete with those of its foreign rivals (the V & A, originally a museum of science and art, is an offshoot of the Great Exhibition of 1851).

“Masterworks,” in case of doubt, are objects commissioned and collected by the wealthy and powerful. As a curator of the V & A noted, while museums of applied arts hold excellent examples of Sèvres porcelain in their collections, we cannot see what the dishes looked like from which the workers of the Manufacture royale ate their meals. In the same vein, due to the V & A’s exclusive interest in high fashion, the dress collection does not have a single example of clothing worn by the British working classes. To find such a garment I had to turn to the Museum of Childhood in Bethnal Green (a branch of the V & A). However, for some time now, other departments have had more inclusive collecting policies.

Every selection from a museum's holdings reveals not only the tastes and ideological biases of the curators and their Acquisitions Committees, as sanctioned by the museums with which they are affiliated, but also those of the academic institution of art history—not to speak of the culture at large. Together with the choice and arrangement of artifacts, curators implicitly exhibit the social environment to which they themselves belong. They frame and (unwittingly) are being framed. Of course, this is also true for the exhibition I have put together.

Among the many institutional constraints affecting the realization of curatorial ideas are those imposed by the departments of conservation and security. Acting in the “interests” of the objects in their custody, their tendency is to lock them away in climate-controlled vaults. In fact, many are not released even when the most stringent conditions are met. Others are allowed to be seen only in the netherworld of glass coffins, on the other side of barriers, and in dim light, deprived of a good deal of their sensuous appeal. Carrying the tag “national heritage” they are effectively embalmed as mummies with high insurance policies. Protective devices increase the homogenization that all artifacts are subjected to when they enter a collection.

More often than not these multifaceted contingencies are overlooked by the visitor, and traditional—presumably universal—notions of “The Good,” “The True,” and “The Beautiful” prevail.

A precursor to the classic European museum was the *Wunderkammer*, or cabinet of curiosities. Humanist scholars and princes assembled oddities of all kinds as subjects of study, wonderment and trophies of conquest. Curiosities in the sense of the strange and exotic were met by the curiosity of the inquisitive eye and mind (Sir John Soane's house in London is a late manifestation of this adventurous spirit). Hierarchies of “high” and “low” did not exist in these collections. The knowledge pursued was encyclopedic—and the capacity to marvel paramount. In certain respects this spirit is antecedent to attitudes behind today's anthropologically inspired study of “material culture.”

When I began wandering through the galleries of the V & A in preparation for this exhibition, I decided to approach it as if it were such a *Wunderkammer*. I took photographs of everything that for one reason or another piqued my curiosity. Curators generously drew my attention to works that, based on my

conversations with them, they suspected would be of interest to me. During this explorative stage, I found myself returning over and over again to a loosely knit set of themes. I was reminded of a phenomenon I had experienced before, namely, that objects signify one thing when they are seen alone, but have a very different meaning when viewed in combination with others. As is the case with all selections and arrangements, this very process inevitably puts a spin on them. Even in isolation, depending on one's ideological make-up, they evoke a host of different meanings.

A striking example of an image with multiple and contradictory semantic layers is a photograph by Jindrich Marco titled *A Souvenir of Warsaw*, 1947. We see a photographer taking a picture of two Polish soldiers with rifles at the ready. They pose in front of a backdrop with a painting of a bucolic landscape. The photo session takes place in the middle of the ruins of Warsaw. Equally poignant is a doll in the Museum of Childhood. It comes with interchangeable heads: a black boy's head and a white girl's head, as well as a choice of black and white limbs. One black arm is considered too fragile for a journey from Bethnal Green to South Kensington.

Taking the *Wunderkammer* as a model for my exhibition, I opt for hybridization, the discontinuous, and nonlinear. Seemingly coherent systems of museum classification are disregarded (in fact, most of them have little to do with the role the objects played in their "native" environments). Instead I embrace ambiguity and contradiction. The inclusion of objects I personally like or view as "masterworks" is matched by the selection of items I find ridiculous or despicable. Such a "frivolous" disruption of the customary order is likely to cause semantic turbulence. It provokes the naïfs (and I count myself among them) to take up the challenge of making sense in different ways, namely according to our own life's experiences—in today's society.

This creative process, full of the pleasures of free association and discovery, is comparable to a parlor game I played as a child, a game that gained art-historical recognition when it was adopted in the 1920s by the Surrealists: the exquisite corpse. This resurrection of disparate parts as a coherent composite is related to another Surrealist technique for the production of meanings, a provocative example for which is the Comte de Lautréamont's notorious meeting of a sewing

machine and an umbrella on an operating table. I act as a “social secretary” who puts together a guest list and a seating order hoping that a sly arrangement of unexpected encounters will bear fruit.

[This text was written as a statement to accompany the one-person exhibition *Mixed Messages*, put together with objects from the collection of the Victoria & Albert Museum at the Serpentine Gallery in London, January 30–March 1, 2001. It was first published in *Give & Take* (London: Serpentine Gallery and Victoria Albert Museum, 2001), 47–52.]

48. "Public Sights," 2001

When people talk about art in the "public space," I like to put quotation marks around the word "space." Traditionally, one uses the term "public space" when something is installed in the streets, squares, or parks, that is, in places belonging to the city, the state, or the federal government.

Public space is not the same as being in "public." Events taking place indoors do not necessarily exclude the public. As long as they are not put on exclusively for a private circle, they fulfill the criteria for being public. From this perspective, events in commercial galleries, museums, and other generally accessible indoor areas belong to the public. In recent times, the public can be found also in cyberspace, which can be seen as a type of "public space." What happens in all these places can potentially affect public opinion.

Because everyone in the public space has physical access to artworks, others and I, years ago, wrongly thought that these works were therefore not just for the initiated, but accessible to all, also in the communicative sense. Since the number of people seeing artists' works in areas tended to by the city's parks and sanitation departments is much larger than the number of museum and gallery visitors, we were also under the illusion that we were reaching "the masses." That, too, was a well-meant, yet false conclusion. It has to do with a naïve understanding of reception, reduced simply to the optical.

In interior spaces provided for such presentation, the readiness to engage with artworks is normally greater than "on the street." In the "sacred halls," artworks are met with greater attentiveness and a certain degree of respect. Only in rare cases does rejection lead to vandalism. Understanding reception as context-dependent is the daily bread of advertisers and public relations people.

The usually considerable differences between the attitudes toward works meant to be viewed inside or outside are narrower at events staged outdoors by art institutions, such as the *Sculpture. Projects in Münster 1997*. The art public "takes to the streets," and even people not interested in art pay attention to works installed on the streets and squares and in the city's parks because the national and international media comment extensively on the event. That does not protect the art on display from deliberate destruction. The opposite can even be the case

since the media interest increases the fetishistic aspect of the works, and thus destroying a work promises an even greater resonance.

In my own practice, I have had experiences with many different presentation sites, none of which were free of restrictions. Apart from reasonable architectural and financial limitations, political forces often came into play and these were then, at times, inextricably linked with financial conditions. On numerous occasions, the completion of a project depended on the courage, resourcefulness, and room to maneuver of those responsible for the exhibition.

I have been invited twice to the *Sculpture. Projects in Münster 1997*. My proposal for the first invitation in 1987 was not realized. The plan was to have a Münster city bus temporarily painted with camouflage patterns. Along the right side of the bus a question would have been added in white Helvetica (typeface) reading: “What do HIPPOS and this bus have in common?” The answer would have been found on the left side: “They drive through residential areas with Mercedes engines.” Most passersby would not have been satisfied with that because they wouldn’t have known what a HIPPO is. The explanation would have been found on the rear of the bus: “HIPPO = South African armored vehicle. Used by police against black inhabitants.”

In 1987, South Africa was still dominated by the racist apartheid regime which was despised by the entire world. Although the UN had declared an embargo on all goods for military use, Daimler-Benz delivered more than six thousand cross-country Unimog vehicles to the South African government. With the company’s knowledge, they were converted to armored troop transporters (HIPPOs) and rocket launchers—or they had been shipped ready for military use. In addition, Daimler-Benz, in a joint venture with a South African state company, manufactured heavy and extra-heavy engines, and it built in South Africa the only automobile production plant outside of Germany. It now dominates the market. When he took over as CEO of Mercedes Benz of South Africa Ltd. in 1985, Jürgen E. Schrempp explained: “I see great possibilities in this country, and that is not simply lip service. We are here and we want to stay here.” He led the South African Mercedes affiliate during a bitter strike of their black employees. He has since moved on to become the CEO of DaimlerChrysler.

The Stadtwerke Münster [municipal public works], whose advertising spaces are operated by the Deutsche Städte-Reklame [nationwide municipal advertising

company], refused to cooperate with my project. Advertising with political content is not allowed on city vehicles, it was said. Furthermore, camouflage paint interferes with general traffic safety.

Ten years later, the Deutsche Städte-Reklame sponsored a large poster (350 × 175 cm/138 × 69 inches) that I designed for *Documenta X*. In 1997, 4,000 of these posters were displayed on advertising kiosks in twelve large cities. On the poster, in front of the photograph of a piece of raw ham, one could read how companies assess their strategies as sponsors of culture. One of the people quoted was a spokesman of Daimler-Benz: “Sponsoring is used purposefully as part of image and good-will promotion.” A splendid Renaissance chest served as the background for the culturally hygienic conclusion (set in gold letters) of the former chief of the Deutsche Bank, Hilmar Kopper: “Whoever pays controls.”

Although the poster covered the entire surface of the kiosks, it was probably noticed only in Kassel, where it could be seen in three places of the *Documenta X* parcours. But even there, visitors to *Documenta X* paid attention to it only in passing. A widespread allergy to continual visual bombardment in the urban landscape leads us to block out many of the appeals for attention. A complex poster with relatively small elements therefore disappears easily in this visual noise. There was little resonance in the media. The debate on public policy I had hoped for did not occur. This example demonstrates that mass distribution in the “public space” (which is dominated by advertising) does not guarantee participation in the public discourse.

In the same year as *Documenta X*, another of my projects, *Standort Merry-go-round* (German Merry-go-round), was carried out in the *Sculpture. Projects in Münster 1997*. Although focusing on a monument on the city promenade (compared to 4,000 posters plastered in twelve cities it was geographically extremely limited), the project attracted a great deal of attention, not just in Münster and Germany, but [also] internationally. At this location, in 1909, a pompous nationalist celebration had been held to celebrate the dedication of a cylindrical war monument made of huge stone blocks. The monument commemorates the Prussian victories of 1864 in the Prussian-Danish war, of 1866 in the war against Austria, and 1870 in the Franco-Prussian war. Particular emphasis was given to the “Re-establishment of the Empire” in 1871, on the occasion of Wilhelm I’s coronation in Versailles as the German emperor. To local

Münsteraners the war memorial is known as the “Mäsentempel” (temple of asses). The inspiration for this neologism is a row of figures of naked warriors winding around the monument.

Next to this heroic readymade I placed a cylindrical enclosure made of construction planks. Looking through the gaps between the planks, one could see a children’s carousel in motion. The carousel organ played the German anthem at an extremely fast tempo, and therefore at a very high pitch. The music aroused the curiosity of passersby, leading them to look through the cracks. For the children, that was enough. Their parents and grandparents noticed relationships between the two round structures. The response from the media and personal conversations leads me to believe that the juxtaposition of the two structures made people think.

German history had been one of the themes of my works before, indoors and outdoors, and it continued being so later. My obsession with this history has resulted, among other things, in censorship, a temporary injunction, an arson attack, and a full-house debate in the German Parliament.

Klaus Bußmann—with Kasper König, the founder of the *Sculpture. Projects in Münster 1997*—played a role in my “Images of Germany,” not only in his home town of Münster, but also as Commissioner of the German Pavilion at the Venice Biennale. In 1991, the stubborn Westphalian invited Nam June Paik and me to represent Germany in the Giardini Pubblici. After thinking about it for a while, I accepted the invitation, because Bußmann, despite political pressures on him to play the “Greater German” card (after the reunification of Germany), had invited an artist who was neither German nor of “occidental” heritage, and furthermore, pairing that artist with someone who was suspect of denigrating his own country. And this on an international stage.

I understood “representing Germany” in two different ways: in the sense of the usual national flag-waving typical for such occasions, and in the sense of “rendering” and “portraying,” that one associates with the visual arts. At a dinner in New York, I explained to Bußmann during the main course how I’d thought about my representation of Germany. For the rest of the evening, I waited in vain for some comment from him. The answer came the next morning: “Okay, we’ll do it.” And so, in the interior of an art world space, the marble floor Hitler had laid there in 1937 was destroyed. And, in 1993, over the entryway to the German

Pavilion, where the eagle and the swastika had once hung, a giant Deutsche Mark with a mint date of 1990 [was] fastened. Thanks to the presence of the international media, a huge public saw this photogenic rubble.

Like the “elite” spaces of the art world, traditional public spaces are subject to the pressures of today’s entertainment-driven society, where ratings are all-important. In addition, artworks offer developmental aid for real estate interests, marketing, and tourism. But that’s not all they do. They also take part in the public discourse, though it differs from case to case—sometimes more, sometimes less, and sometimes not at all. They are under its influence. But, in turn, they can also affect how we understand and come to terms with the world; how we behave in personal relations and as a society; what kind of future we hope for; and what we are ready to do to bring it about. Whether artists, producers, and their clientele care about that or not has no bearing on the effect of this interconnected chatroom. The public space has ears. It pays to listen and to join in the conversation.

[This text was written to be presented at the conference “Kunst im öffentlichen Raum” (Art in Public Space), at Westfälisches Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kultur, Münster, 2001. It was first published in German and English as “OffenSichtlich,” in Florian Matzner, ed., *Public Art: Kunst im öffentlichen Raum* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2001): 330–361. For that publication it was translated into English by Allison Plath-Mosely and Hans Haacke.]

49. *Life Goes On*, 2005

Two years after “Shock and Awe,” “Stuff Happens,” “Mission Accomplished,” and photos of Iraqi prisoners on a dog leash and in modified Ku Klux Klan costume standing on a pedestal, I called an exhibition of mine at the Paula Cooper Gallery *State of the Union*. Dominating the cathedral-like space of the gallery was a 20 × 15 ft. banner of fifty white stars in a dark blue sky. It was torn in half from the top to about three feet on the bottom. One half remained suspended from the rafters; much of the other half piled up on the floor. Behind the torn flag, a printer produced, live, the latest news bulletins on what was happening in the world.

About twenty feet from the torn flag, on the floor of the gallery, sat a flowerpot with an orange tree. It was a plant that once had two stems. One of them had broken off. The other, leaning to one side, looked healthy and carried an orange. I called it *Life Goes On*.

After the exhibition, a woman working at the gallery asked me whether she could borrow *Life Goes On* for a couple of weeks. A dear friend of hers had passed away. Of course, I lent it to her.

[This text, written in 2015, is previously unpublished.]



1.35 Hans Haacke, *Life Goes On*, 2005

50. Unpublished, “Celebration of the Peace Tower,” 2006

Dear Friends of the Peace Tower! I would like to thank Rirkrit Tiravanija, Mark de Suvero, and all the others who built this great *Peace Tower*. It is an undertaking that required courage, tenacity, managerial skills, and, of course, a lot of work. It was essential that the curators of the Whitney Biennial and the museum’s director supported it. As important was that the Whitney museum’s board of trustees back the artists and the museum’s professionals, something that should not be taken for granted—particularly in the current political climate. Thank you all!

Almost exactly three years ago President George W. Bush landed in a flight suit on the deck of the aircraft carrier USS *Abraham Lincoln* off the coast of San Diego. On May Day of 2003, he announced to the world: “Major combat operations in Iraq have ended.” Behind the commander in chief, a banner proclaimed “Mission Accomplished.”

Ostensibly, the U.S. invasion of Iraq was to protect the world from Saddam Hussein’s “weapons of mass destruction.” These WMDs were never found—because they did not exist.

Ostensibly, a “War on Terror” was to stop Iraq’s collaboration with Al Qaeda. In 2003 there was no such link. The attack on Iraq, however, has since served as a recruiting tool for Osama Bin Laden and independent like-minded cells around the world.

Ostensibly, a brush fire of democratic ferment was to engulf the Middle East. Today, the region is still a political tinderbox but perhaps farther away from adopting the tenets of the Bill of Rights than it was three years ago.

The protection of these rights has since been diminished in this country. Steve Kurtz, a member of the artists collaborative Critical Art Ensemble, which is represented in this biennial, is a telling example. Harmless bacteria that he used in artwork critical of biotechnological corporations and their government support were deemed a threat to the nation. He was called before a grand jury. Eventually the charge of “bioterrorism” against him could not be sustained. However he is not off the hook. The government has indicted him since for “mail and wire fraud,” with a possible sentence of twenty years.

Steve Kurtz's plight is minimal compared to that of others who have been detained by the U.S. government under the auspices of the war. Simply by declaring an individual an "enemy combatant," countless individuals have been stripped of their civil rights and the protection of the Geneva Conventions. In an opinion delivered to the president, Alberto Gonzalez, currently the attorney general, declared, "in my judgment, this new paradigm renders obsolete Geneva's strict limitations on questioning of enemy prisoners and renders quaint some of its provisions." A medieval mindset has taken over. As we know today, U.S. personnel, acting with the open or tacit approval of their superiors, have since tortured many prisoners. Other detainees were secretly "rendered"—a new term—to countries known to torture prisoners. It did not improve the moral standing of the United States when Vice President Dick Cheney, with the president's nodding approval, vigorously protested Senator McCain's legislative attempt to ban torture.

The *New York Times* reports today, that the Department of Defense had identified 2,389 service members who have died since the start of the Iraq war. The return to their homeland has become a stealth operation. The public and the media are excluded. Estimates of the Iraqi death toll exceed 200,000. Statistics on the wounded and maimed are hard to come by.

When President Bush addressed the nation on March 17, 2003, and announced that within two days "Shock and Awe" would start, my wife and I became grandparents of twins. Evan and Matthew had their third birthday in March. And so has the morally and politically bankrupt policy of the White House. The twins are beginning to exercise their freedom of speech, and I am no longer as desperate as I was only a few months ago. The American voters appear to be finally waking up to what has been done in their name. And the media are no longer as much of a clique as they have been for too long. The Peace Tower is a sign that artists are also taking a public position against the war, as they did in 1966 with the first Peace Tower.

On the panel I contributed to the Peace Tower, a single star hovers in the blue sky above the forty-nine stars of the American flag that have fallen into a heap on the ground. I wish there will be reason soon for this star to become the first to rise

higher, together with the other stars, and not the last one to fall. Thank you again, Rirkrit and Mark, for this Tower.

[This text was written as a lecture to be delivered at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York on April 30, 2006. It is previously unpublished.]

51. *West Bank, 1994–27th Year of Occupation, 2007–2009*

Two years ago, Israeli and Palestinian artists jointly organized *Desert Generation*, an exhibition that called for the immediate end of the forty-year occupation of the West Bank and for a just peace. The six-day exhibition opened at the Jerusalem Artists' House on June 5, 2007. *Desert Generation* reopened two weeks later at the Kibbutz Art Gallery in Tel Aviv, and later traveled to Amsterdam and Manchester.

The exhibition comprised hundreds of images sent via e-mail by artists from Israel, Palestine, and around the world, in response to a call distributed as an electronic chain letter. The images thus received were printed in size A4 and hung on the gallery walls, without editing or selection.

The exhibition was accompanied by a statement:

The images comprising the exhibition represent a generation of Israeli and Palestinian artists doomed to waste their best years in the desert of the occupation. Freedom is indivisible, and as long as Palestinians are deprived of liberty, Israelis too cannot be free.

Desert Generation is an artists' initiative with no affiliation to political movements. Its organizers are artists who have been involved for decades in joint Israeli-Palestinian activities against the occupation: Larry Abramson, David Tartakover, Sliman Mansour, and David Reeb.

I was one of the recipients of the invitation to participate in *Desert Generation* and responded by sending a photo I had taken of a three-year-old boy in Deheisheh, a Palestinian Refugee Camp near Bethlehem, in 1994.

Larry Abramson, one of the Israeli organizers of *Desert Generation*, had invited me that year to speak with graduating students of the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design in Jerusalem. I knew Larry Abramson had kept in touch and exhibited with Palestinian artists. At my request, he introduced me to Sliman Mansour, who joined him thirteen years later as the Palestinian co-organizer of *Desert Generation*. Sliman Mansour and two of his friends took me on a tour of the West Bank. The Deheisheh refugee camp was one of the places we visited fifteen years ago—during the twenty-seventh year of Israeli occupation of the West Bank. The occupation is now in its forty-third year.

نظم فنانون إسرائيليون وفلسطينيون قبل عامين معرضاً بعنوان "جبل الصحراء" حيث دعى هذا المعرض الى الإنهاء الفوري لاربعين عاماً من إحتلال الضفة الغربية وقطاع غزة وإقامة سلام عادل. وأفتتح المعرض في "بيت الفنانين" في القدس في الخامس من حزيران ٢٠٠٧ وإنتقل بعد أسبوعين الى جاليري الكيبوتس في تل أبيب وإلحقاً الى أمستردام وماانشستر. تألف المعرض من مئات الصور التي أرسلها فنانون إسرائيليون وفلسطينيون من مختلف أنحاء العالم بواسطة البريد الإلكتروني ثلبية لدعوة تم توزيعها من خلال شبكة البريد الإلكتروني وتم طباعة الصور بحجم A٤ وتعليقها على جدران صالة العرض من دون إلتقاء أو حذف.

ومما جاء في البيان الذي رافق المعرض ما يلي:
إن الصور التي تشكل المعرض تمثل جيلاً من الفنانين الإسرائيليين والفلسطينيين الذين قدر لهم أن يعيشوا أفضل سنوات عمرهم في صحراء الأستلاب الحرة لا يمكن أن تتجزأ وما دام الفلسطينيون محرومون من حرياتهم فإن الإسرائيليين أيضاً لا يمكن أن يكونوا أحراراً.

"جبل الصحراء" هي مبادرة فنانين لا ينتمون الى تنظيمات سياسية؁ ومنظموها فنانون عملوا سوية خلال عقود في نشاطات متنوعة ضد الإحتلال مثل لاري أبرامسون وديفيد تراكوفر وسليمان منصور وديفيد ريب.

لقد كتبت أحد الذين إستلموا دعوة للمشاركة في معرض "جبل الصحراء" وأرسلت صورة فوتوغرافية لطفل عمره ثلاث سنوات لإتخطها عام ١٩٩٤ في مخيم الدهيشة وهو مخيم للاجئين للفلسطينيين قرب بيت لحم.

في عام ١٩٩٤ دعاني لاري أبرامسون؁ أحد منظمي معرض "جبل الصحراء" لإتحدث مع خريجي أكاديمية بتسائيل للفنون والتصميم في القدس. وقد كتبت أعرف أن لاري بقي على إتصال مع فنانين فلسطينيين وعرض معهم. وبناءً على طلبي عرضني على سليمان منصور الذي إنضم الى لاري بعد ١٢ عاماً في تنظيم معرض "جبل الصحراء". وأخذي سليمان منصور وإثنان من أصدقائه الفنانين رحلة في الضفة الغربية وكان مخيم الدهيشة أحد الأماكن التي زرتها قبل ١٥ عاماً خلال العام السابع والعشرون للإحتلال الإسرائيلي للضفة الغربية وقطاع غزة.

الإحتلال الآن في عامه الثالث والأربعون.

هانس هاكة

לפני שנתיים, אמנים ישראליים ופלסטיניים ארגנו במשותף את "דור המדבר", תערוכה שקראה לסיום מידיי של הכיבוש ולשלום צודק. התערוכה בת ששת הימים נפתחה בבית האמנים בירושלים ב-5 ביוני, 2007. תערוכת "דור המדבר" נפתחה מחדש כעבור שבועיים בגלריה הקיבוץ בתל אביב, ולאחר מכן נדדה לאמסטרדם ולמנצ'סטר.

התערוכה הורכבה ממאות דימויים שנשלחו באמצעות הדואר האלקטרוני מישראל, פלסטין ומרחבי העולם, בתגובה לקריאה שהופצה כמכתב שירות אלקטרוני. הדימויים שהתקבלו הודפסו בגודל A4 ונמלו על קירות הגלריה, לאם עריכה או סלקציה.

התערוכה לוותה בהצגה:

"הדימויים המרכזיים את התערוכה מייצגים דור של יוצרים ישראליים ופלסטיניים אשר נדונו כלות את מיטב שנותיהם במדבר של הכיבוש. חוש אינו ניתן לחלוקה, וכל עוד נשללת החרות של הפלסטינים גם הישראלים אינם בני חורין."

"דור המדבר" הינה יוזמת אמנים ואינה קשורה לכל תנועה פוליטית. מארגיה הינם אמנים המעורבים זה כמה עשורים במפלות ישראליות-פלסטיניות משותפות נגד הכיבוש: לארי אברמסון, דודי טרסקובר, סלימן מנצור ודודי ריב."

הייתי אחד ממקבלי ההזמנה להשתתף ב"דור המדבר" ונעניתי במשלוח צילום של ילד בן 3 שצילמתי בדהישה. מתנה פליטת פלסטין ליד בית לחם, בשנת 1994.

לארי אברמסון, אחד המארגנים הישראלים של "דור המדבר", הזמין אותי באותה שנה לכנס תלמידים שעמדו בפני סיום לימודיהם באקדמיה לאמנות ועיצוב בצלאל בירושלים. ידעתי כי לארי אברמסון שומר על קשר עם אמנים פלסטינים ומציג יחד עימם. לבקשתי, הוא הכיר לי את סלימן מנצור, שהצטרף אליו כעבור 13 שנה כשותף הפלסטיני לארגון "דור המדבר". סלימן מנצור ושניים מחבריו לקחו אותי לסיוור בגדה המערבית. מתנה הפליטים דהישה היה אחד המקומות בהם ביקרנו אז, לפני 15 שנה - בשנה ה-27 של הכיבוש הישראלי את הגדה המערבית. הכיבוש נמצא עתה בשנתו ה-43.

האנס האקה



1.37 Hans Haacke, *West Bank, 1994–27th Year of Occupation*, 2007–2009

[This text, in Arabic, Hebrew, English, and the official language of the country in which *West Bank, 1994–27th Year of Occupation*, 2007–2009, is being exhibited, is part of the artwork. It has been exhibited at the Venice Biennale and in New York at X Initiative in 2009.]

52. "Lessons Learned," 2009

As an introduction, let me speak about how I lost my innocence as a starry-eyed art student in Kassel in 1959. The landscape architect Hermann Mattern had provided a setting for this event four years earlier by planting a new lawn and fields of roses, bushes to hide behind, and furnishing other amenities in the Karlsaue of Kassel. For the 1955 *Bundesgartenschau* [Federal (biannual) Horticultural Exhibition], he had been commissioned to transform this war-ravaged park, and the ruin of the Orangerie palace dominating it, into a new place of pleasure. It was the third time this publicly financed and hugely popular horticultural exhibition was held, each time in a different German city.

Mattern, in fact, had only prepared the grounds for my loss of naiveté. The real culprit was a certain Arnold Bode, a close friend and colleague of Mattern's on the faculty of the academy in Kassel where I was a student during the second half of the 1950s. With cunning and determination the two developed a scheme for adding an ambitious art component to the *Bundesgartenschau*. And they called it *Documenta*.

As a professionally acclaimed landscape architect, Mattern had survived the Nazi regime relatively unscathed. Bode, on the other hand, had been fired from his job at an art teachers' training college in Berlin soon after Hitler's rise to power in 1933, and, according to the new terminology, being a "degenerate" artist he could not exhibit his paintings any more. In 1947, the two conspirators and like-minded friends resuscitated the Kassel art academy and made it an institution in the tradition of the Bauhaus. Studios, workshops, and an improvised lecture hall of what became my alma mater were established in an old barracks building that had miraculously survived the war. That is where Bode and Mattern hatched the *Documenta* plot in the early 1950s.

Kassel was a major center of Hitler's military industrial complex and served as an administrative hub for the Nazis' attempt to implement and export its brand of social engineering. In 1943, the city was subjected to devastating bombardments. Its center, like the heart of many German cities, was totally destroyed. Bode recognized the potential of one of the ruins, the Fridericianum, for accommodating the exhibition he was dreaming of. The Fridericianum had opened in 1779 as a public museum, the first museum built as such on the

continent. Landgrave Frederick II of Hesse-Kassel had paid for it to house his art holdings, various other collections of his, and a library. It offered him a naming opportunity: he called it “Fridericianum.” The wherewithal for the collection and the place for its display came from the sale of some 30,000 of his subjects to King George III of England, who deployed these Hessian soldiers in the American War of Independence, as we know, without ultimate success.

Between the end of the World War II and the reunification of Germany thirty-five years later, Kassel languished as an isolated backwater, far from major West German centers, about thirty kilometers away from the Iron Curtain. It was because of this precariousness that the Federal Government of West Germany and the state of Hesse provided considerable funds to the city, including finance for the 1955 *Bundesgartenschau* and—as its extension—a major international art exhibition. The rationale for these investments was similar to those behind the inclusion of a cultural component in World’s Fairs, the Olympic Games, the soccer World Cup, and comparable events attracting visitors from around the world: urban development on a massive scale and building an up-to-date infrastructure. This combination of hard- and software, invariably, is meant to boost a city’s or a country’s image, with the expectation of reaping positive economic and political rewards. Be that Kassel, London, or Beijing, the formula has proven its worth.

Pulling off the *Documenta* scheme required shrewdness, political savvy, and a sense for the practical. Bode was endowed with all of these. At least as important, however, were his infectious enthusiasm and his almost naive and total commitment to a notion of art that had nothing to do with economic and political expediency. Aside from drawing a salary as a painting professor, he had earned extra money and acquired skills as the designer of trade fair interiors. This experience, and the connections made along the way, served him well in transforming the ruin of the Fridericianum into the site for what later was referred to as the “museum of 100 days.”

Of major historical significance for Germany—and perhaps beyond its borders—was the program Bode and his collaborators developed for this improvised stage in downtown Kassel: nothing less than introducing or re-introducing Germans to the art which had been produced and exhibited in their own country before the Nazis banned it as “degenerate,” and acquainting them

with developments in Europe, from which most had been cut off for almost two decades. In retrospect, it is difficult to fully appreciate the boldness and the need for such an endeavor—nor the consequences it has had.

It was the first *Documenta* of 1955 and word that Fritz Winter, one of the best-known abstract painters in Germany at the time, had just been appointed to join the faculty, that made me apply for admission to the Kassel academy. I was accepted. Together with my fellow students, I was hired in 1959 to assist with the second *Documenta*. We served as guards, and we moved works from one location to another until their position looked right to Bode and his team. And, even though we had no training other than what we had picked up during our studies, we led tours of even less informed visitors.

As sometimes bewildered or awed onlookers, we got a sense that this exhibition was not just an art event but had national and even international political implications. As was to be expected, local dignitaries like the mayor of Kassel and the governor of the state of Hesse attended the opening. However, the president of the Republic came, too, as did cabinet members of the Federal government and ambassadors from many countries. As I learned later, the CIA had sponsored my first encounter with Abstract Expressionist paintings at *Documenta II*. Ironically, while having to fend off McCarthyite accusations against these works, it was the Museum of Modern Art's International Council that sent them on a European tour to serve as weapons in the Cold War. In the fight over the hearts and minds of intellectuals on the continent, Kassel, close to the Iron Curtain, was to serve as a beacon of the "free world" and contain the inroads so-called Socialist Realism had made in some European art circles.

As students of the academy in Kassel, we were aware of this Soviet art doctrine and its brutal enforcement not far from us to the east. We also understood that *Documenta* played a role in another ideological struggle, this one home-grown: Hans Sedlmayr's 1948 denunciation of much of nineteenth- and twentieth-century art and, in particular, of abstract art as a symptom of a "loss of the center."¹³ Sedlmayr, an Austrian Nazi collaborator, had succeeded not only in surviving the demise of Hitler's "Reich of a Thousand Years" but six years later in landing a senior position and a pulpit on the art history faculty of the University of Munich. Ingeniously, he had shifted his fascist ideological allegiances to the conservative wing of the Catholic Church. In art matters, this faction is most

conspicuously represented today by Cardinal Meisner of Cologne (in 2007, during the debate over Gerhard Richter's stained-glass windows in the Cologne Cathedral, the Cardinal warned his flock not to fall for "degenerate" art). Sedlmayr met a hugely receptive audience and in 1955, the year of the first *Documenta*, his polemic against modern art was re-published as a paperback by Ullstein, one of Germany's biggest publishing houses.

One year before the first *Documenta* in 1955, the art historian Werner Haftmann's *Painting in the 20th Century* was published in Munich.¹³¹ It was the first substantial overview of modern art after the war in Germany. In effect, it was a riposte to the philistine thesis of Hans Sedlmayr. Bode asked Haftmann to join his team and he became what commentators called the "chief ideologue" of *Documenta*. His impact in spreading the word on the art of the first half of the twentieth-century and his personal bias of favoring the École de Paris and abstract painting cannot be overestimated. His selections for *Documenta*, however, totally omitted Dada, much of French Surrealism, the works of Russian Constructivists as well as paintings of Neue Sachlichkeit. Given the mindset of even the most open-minded art historians of the period it is not surprising that neither non-Western art nor photography was considered worthy of inclusion. The name of John Heartfield does not appear in the index of Haftmann's book or in *Documenta*. The phobia about Soviet-inspired art, coupled with the devastatingly costly triumph over the kitsch promoted by the Nazis, probably led to the exclusion of works that articulated political attitudes. Haftmann's bible served as the only tool with which my peers and I tried to understand what we were guarding at the Fridericianum.

In effect, we also acted as stagehands. A new term had entered the vocabulary associated with art presentations: *Inszenierung* or *mise-en-scène*, a term derived from the world of the theater. Bode was the most accomplished among those who directed, or staged, exhibitions. Mounting a show was not just putting one picture next to the other on the wall. Individualized spaces were set up for single or sets of works. The unusual structuring of juxtapositions or placement of works on facing walls, and vistas across adjoining spaces fostered dialogue between paintings. Fluid transitions between relatively open rooms produced an ambulatory experience, different from walking through the clearly circumscribed spaces of traditional museum architecture, or the tedious line-up of booths at trade fairs.

Dominating visual axes were either avoided, or created to give leading roles to certain works in Bode's and Haftmann's choreography, as they did in the Fridericianum's two commanding spaces on the second floor. One was dominated by a large canvas (approximately 250 × 650 cm) by the German abstract painter Ernst Wilhelm Nay. It was the largest painting in the show, no doubt boosting Nay's reputation. The other space was devoted entirely to [Jackson] Pollock and presided over by his *Number 32* (1950)—in comparison to [Ernst Wilhelm] Nay's painting, a rather small work. [Lucio] Fontana's slit canvases were relegated to the Fridericianum's attic. I remember overhearing Werner Schmalenbach, one of the members of Bode's team, insisting that Robert Rauschenberg's *Bed* (1955) be removed. His wish was granted. Rudolf Zwirner, who served as secretary of *Documenta II*, kept the *Bed* in his office for the duration of the exhibition. Years later, Schmalenbach acquired *Number 32* for the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen in Düsseldorf, a new state museum he was heading by then, and Rudolf Zwirner became a powerhouse among German art dealers and co-founder of the Cologne Art Fair in 1967.

As I witnessed this particular moment of stage management, I overheard many conversations among art dealers, collectors, and members of the press, as well as with the organizers of the exhibition—or behind their backs. Eventually, it began to dawn on me that *Documenta*, and in fact all exhibitions, by design or default, promote the ranking of artists and art movements as much as the prices for which their works are traded. The selection and, for that matter, the omission, of certain works from prestigious exhibitions are not the only factors that have consequences: how the works are presented, the attention they receive in the press, the business acumen of dealers and art advisers, and the critical and art historical discourse surrounding them, can determine the reception of artworks—and their market. Ignoring this inevitable aspect of exhibitions would yield a flawed comprehension of the dynamics of the art world; yet, to focus exclusively on the commodity status of artworks or on an artist's celebrity rating among collectors, be that critically or in awe, would lead to an equally deficient understanding. After the loss of my innocence at *Documenta II*, I promised myself never to be dependent on the sale of my works to pay the rent.

Ten years after my graduation and five years after my move to New York, Kynaston McShine invited me to participate in the *Information* show he was

curating in 1970 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. It was the first major exhibition of so-called conceptual art in the United States, after several European institutions had already introduced many of the artists to their audiences, among them Harald Szeemann in *When Attitudes Become Form* at the Bern Kunsthalle and the ICA in London (1969).

Two and a half months before the opening of *Information*, the United States invaded Cambodia, and on 4 May, during a demonstration of students against the Vietnam War, the Ohio National Guard killed four students at Kent State University. Practically all men of draft age were opposed to the war. Many went to Canada to evade the draft or tried to get a draft deferment by going to college. (I had a number of such students at The Cooper Union in New York.)

Several artists in the *Information* show were close to the Art Workers' Coalition and Art Strike, two groups responding to the political events of the moment. They viewed the members of the boards of trustees of New York museums, in particular those of the Museum of Modern Art and The Metropolitan Museum, as representatives of the "establishment," responsible for the Vietnam War and the maintenance of racial, gender, and economic inequality in the United States. Heated confrontations occurred on the premises of MoMA and the Met. There were also rumblings by the staff of the Museum of Modern Art to form a labor union. It culminated in a strike against the museum's administration the following year.

This was the context in which my *MOMA-Poll* solicited the opinion of the visitors of the *Information* show on a topical issue. The polling question referred to Nelson Rockefeller's campaign for reelection as governor of New York State. For many years, Henry Kissinger, who advised President Nixon on the U.S. bombing of Cambodia and conduct of the so-called Cambodia Incursion had been Nelson Rockefeller's trusted foreign policy consultant. Nelson Rockefeller had himself been president and chairman of the MoMA Board. His brother David was chairman at the time of the *Information* show and their sister-in-law was on the board as well.

I had not revealed the content of my question until the night before the opening. David Rockefeller was not amused. Word has it that an emissary of his arrived at the museum the next day to demand the removal of the poll. However,

John Hightower, who had just been appointed director of the museum, did not follow orders. He lasted in his job less than two years.

In his memoirs David Rockefeller offers his reasoning behind John Hightower's short tenure: "He believed museums had an obligation to help society resolve its problems. Since Vietnam was one of the principal societal problems of the day, John thought MoMA should participate in the national debate. . . . He allowed the bookshop to sell a poster of the infamous My Lai massacre. . . . [Three members of the Art Workers' Coalition had produced the poster.] This was followed by the infamous *Information* exhibition in the summer of 1970. . . . Museum-goers were asked to vote on the question: "Would the fact that Governor Rockefeller had not denounced President Nixon's Indochina policy be a reason for you not to vote for him in November" . . . John was entitled to voice his opinions, but he had no right to turn the museum into a forum for antiwar activism and sexual liberation. . . . Bill Paley [chairman of CBS and president of the MoMA Board], with my full support, fired Hightower in early 1972."¹³²

During its twelve-week run, the *Information* show had 299,057 visitors. 12.4 percent of them participated in the poll. 68.7 percent dropped their ballots into the "No" box, indicating their opposition to Nelson Rockefeller; and 37.3 percent voted in his favor. It is not surprising that I became persona non grata at MoMA.

A few years later I also ran foul of the forces behind the Cologne Wallraf-Richartz Museum. I intended to include the biography of Hermann Josef Abs in the museum's 150-year anniversary show. As the chairman of Deutsche Bank he was a colleague of David Rockefeller. That was too much for the museum's director in Cologne. Perhaps learning from what had happened to John Hightower, he censored the work. The Cologne museum is a municipal institution. MoMA, by contrast, is private. However, with its tax-exempt status and the tax deductibility of donations by its patrons, the Museum of Modern Art is also supported by taxpayers.

Today, David Rockefeller is still a force to reckon with at the Museum of Modern Art. In 2005 he pledged a donation of \$100 million. Gratefully, the museum threw him a garden party. Two years earlier, Rudolph Giuliani had been honored at such an event for his contribution to the arts in New York—after the mayor had tried to close down the Brooklyn Museum over its exhibition of works by Chris Ofili. There is a tradition.

My interest in getting a sense of the public of art exhibitions began in 1969 with an inquiry into where the visitors of the Howard Wise Gallery on New York's 57th Street were born and where they lived. In 1971, using a multiple-choice questionnaire, I planned to conduct an expanded poll of the visitors of a show that I was scheduled to have at the Guggenheim Museum. As is well known, this exhibition was canceled six weeks before it was to open. One of the three works the museum director Thomas Messer objected to was this poll. It comprised ten demographic questions and ten questions concerning topical, political, and cultural issues. Messer argued the museum "is non-political, is apolitical, and not concerned with political and social issues" and therefore a political survey would be "out of bounds." He saw it as his duty to prevent that "an alien substance enters the Museum organism." I do not know whether the Guggenheim Museum in 1971 conducted audience surveys. Since then, however, the marketing department of every major museum in the world tries to learn as much as possible about its target audience.

The questionnaire of the aborted Guggenheim poll served a few months later as a poll at the Milwaukee Art Center. And a year later, I took similar surveys of the audiences of the Krefeld Museum Haus Lange, Harald Szeemann's *Documenta* V, the Kunstverein in Hanover, Germany, as well as the art crowd passing through the John Weber Gallery in New York. At that time, the John Weber Gallery was located in a building on West Broadway, together with four other galleries, among them the Castelli Gallery and the Sonnabend Gallery. The building was then known as the Pentagon of the art world. Of course, this concentration of galleries in one building in SoHo is nothing next to today's art emporiums in Chelsea.

Since the cumulative polling tallies were posted regularly in the exhibition, the visitors, in effect, were producing a collective self-portrait in a participatory and self-reflective process. I invited them to consider how much they have in common and how they differ from each other, and to speculate about how, collectively, their demographic composition and opinions compare with people who do not visit art galleries and museums exhibiting contemporary art. The data also offered the audience an opportunity to recognize that art is not produced, viewed, and traded in an awe-inspiring world apart but in a continuous social universe.

In the early 1970s, a relatively large portion of the art audience was rather young; many were college students. The majority of the older respondents had at least a college education. Many of the young were living on a relatively low income, but appeared to come from at least a middle-class if not well-to-do background. Since school classes were taken to *Documenta*, a third of the participants of the *Documenta V* poll were high-school students. On both sides of the Atlantic, the visitors were almost uniformly white. At the height of the Vietnam War and a time of pervasive questioning of political structures, both in Europe and the United States, it is not surprising that a large number of respondents professed critical attitudes toward their governments and established institutions. But not only the young among the exhibition visitors, also their elders could be called liberals (in the American use of the term).

This audience belonged to that segment of society that was or could reasonably be expected in the future to be close to the decision makers of the country, if not to occupy influential positions themselves. Corporations with foresight, in consultation with public relations experts, recognized that this group needed to be cultivated. As early as 1966, David Rockefeller, in his position as chairman of the Chase Manhattan Bank, had this to say: "From an economic standpoint, such involvement [in the arts] can mean direct and tangible benefits. It can provide a company with extensive publicity and advertising, a brighter public reputation, and an improved corporate image. It can build better customer relations, a readier acceptance of company products, and a superior appraisal of their quality. Promotion of the arts can improve the morale of employees and help attract qualified personnel."¹³

One of the early attempts to act on this understanding was, in 1969, the sponsorship by Philip Morris of Harald Szeemann's *When Attitudes Become Form*. Ruder & Finn, a New York public relations firm, guided the tobacco giant in this venture. In 2008, at the University of Venice, Claudia di Lecce wrote a thesis with the title "Avant-garde Marketing" on this collaboration under the heading "Arts & Culture." Ruder & Finn currently tells the visitors to its website what it is good at: "Our staff has experience in all of the following areas: institutional and corporate branding; identity and positioning; international and national media relations and special event management; sponsorship development and promotion; exhibition organization and circulation; strategic planning; and crisis communication."¹⁴

Among their (past) corporate clients they list David Rockefeller's Chase Manhattan Bank and Mobil.

Since the 1970s, Mobil and Exxon (now merged) have been conspicuous sponsors of art exhibitions. In 1984, Mobil treated an exhibition of mine at the Tate Gallery to what Ruder & Finn elegantly calls "crisis communication." It demanded that the catalog of the show be taken out of circulation. Supposedly, I had violated Mobil's copyright in several of my works. For almost an entire year the Tate Gallery did, in fact, pull the catalog. It was released only after a big New York law firm explained to the Tate that Mobil had peddled a bogus interpretation of U.S. law. Under the so-called fair-use doctrine, my use of the company's logo and quotes from its public pronouncements are exempt from copyright protection. Of course, they did not quite conform to the notion of "Art, for the sake of business," as Mobil had proclaimed in an advertisement on the op-ed page of the *New York Times*. For the dense reader of this ad the sponsors offered this reasoning: "What's in it for us—or for your company? Improving—and securing the business climate."

Six years later, Philip Morris (now sailing under the name of Altria) did not appreciate my interpretation of "innovation" and "experimentation" that the company had claimed when it sponsored Harald Szeemann's Bern exhibition. John Weber got a letter from Philip Morris's counsel, warning him that the company would react negatively if his gallery were to go ahead with an exhibition of mine that revealed the tobacco company's sponsorship of Senator Jesse Helms—as one could deduce from the show's announcement, Helms had made himself a name as the most powerful culture warrior of his time. Fortunately, John Weber was not intimidated. The show went on.

My citing these examples risks being understood as petty attempts to get even over minor slights, and overlooking the dependency of so many museums and art venues on corporate support. Therefore, I like to quote an expert, Philippe de Montebello, the former director of The Metropolitan Museum. In 1985 he confided to *Newsweek*: "It's an inherent, insidious, hidden form of censorship."¹³⁵ He probably meant self-censorship. Exhibition projects that are not likely to attract crowds, or could cause damaging controversies within the sponsors' target group, are abandoned before the institution even looks for outside funding.

Curators have internalized these rules of the game and, understandably, do not want to waste their time. The corporations' largesse, of course, is tax deductible.

Documenta in its early days attracted a mere 135,000 visitors, and Harald Szeemann's installment in 1972 increased attendance to approximately 230,000. These are paltry figures. Art audiences have since grown exponentially—as has the size of museum gift shops. Blockbuster exhibitions are de rigueur. Even the former stepchild, contemporary art, has become glamorous, in part due to a new breed of turbo collectors and multimillion-dollar price tags. Accelerating and banking on this development, the fashion industry has moved in. Major fashion houses have joined the club of sponsors courted by museums, curators, and an increasing number of artists. The rag trade emulates the example of oil companies, high-end car manufacturers, and banks, whose PR departments had recognized decades ago how an association with culture could improve their image and sales, and make them immune to critical questioning of their business practices. Already in Kassel, a hunch that *Documenta* might attract hotel guests to this godforsaken city, and fill restaurants and bars, encouraged the expenditure of tax money. Today, it is generally understood that the tourist and entertainment industry benefits from big art exhibitions. This year, the mayor of New York appointed The Metropolitan Museum's president Emily Rafferty to chair the board of NYC & Company, the city's marketing and tourism organization.

As early as 1895, well before *Documenta*, Riccardo Selvatico, the mayor of Venice, invented an art fair to promote the artists in town and to boost the local tourist industry. The then dominant nations of Europe took an interest in his venture. France, Britain, and Germany joined. Each built a national pavilion and hoisted their flags on a hill in the Giardini Pubblici, a hill [that] had been created from the rubble of the campanile of San Marco after its collapse in 1902. Other nations followed in the lowlands. It became the mother of all biennials.

Commissioner of the German pavilion for the 1993 installment of the Venice Biennale was Klaus Bussmann, at the time the director of the Westfälisches Landesmuseum and known as the co-founder of *Skulptur.Projekte in Münster*. The pavilion is owned by the German government and administered by its Foreign Office. Government officials urged Bussmann to select an East German and a West German artist, now that the two parts of Germany were reunited. In his view, this smacked of nationalism. And he resented the meddling in his

selection process. In response, he asked Nam June Paik and me to occupy the site on the hill. Paik was Korean, and I had been living in New York since 1965 and had not made myself popular among officials of my native country.

After some soul-searching, I accepted Bussmann's invitation. I decided to represent Germany in both senses of the term: being the official representative of Germany—the flag bearer, so to speak—and producing a representation of the country. Preparing for this task, I researched the pavilion's history, and, for hours, sat alone in its nave, which had been assigned to me.

I learned that the pavilion's present appearance was tied to Hitler's rise to power in 1933. As part of an excursion to Venice for a meeting with his comrade Benito Mussolini, the man who had not succeeded as a painter in Vienna paid a visit to the Biennale and the German pavilion. Hitler did not like what he saw. As a consequence, by 1937 an exhibition titled *Degenerate Art* opened in Munich, and plans for the re-styling of the pavilion in Venice were approved. A new national corporate identity was in the making—and so were preparations for the expansion of Germany beyond its borders and the introduction of a deadly program of ethnic cleansing.

Hitler's invasion of Poland, and, as a consequence, the beginning of World War II, was accompanied by Arno Breker's occupation of the German pavilion in the Giardini Pubblici, in 1939. For the occasion, Paik's and my predecessor presented to the international art world a body builder drawing his sword. The title of his statue was *Readiness* (1939). A lot had happened since. Fifty years later, with the reunification of Germany, a significant step could be taken to repair at least some of the horrific damage of the proclaimed "readiness." As we all know, the human toll of these years could not be undone.

I had not anticipated that the rubble of the marble plates, with which Hitler's architect had replaced the pavilion's original parquet floor, would make some viewers think of Caspar David Friedrich's 1823–1824 *Shipwreck of Hope*, now at the Hamburg Kunsthalle. The painting has been interpreted as expressing Friedrich's despair over the central European monarchies' successful repression of the republican movements and of the democratic agitation that had been inspired by the French Revolution and was followed by victory in the wars of liberation against Napoleon. The fact that the masts of the ship caught in the ice look like the trunks of fir trees with stumps of cut-off branches encourages me to accept

this interpretation. Friedrich is known for encoding political symbols in his paintings. To him fir trees represented Germany. I observed how visitors of the field of rubble in the German pavilion picked up unbroken plates and, with obvious emotion, smashed them to bits. Children used it as an adventure playground.

My works have been presented in a number of *Documentas* and biennials. Some of these spectacles may be traded under the heading “landmark exhibitions.” What qualifies as such, of course, is fungible. The most recent biennial including works of mine was the Gwangju Biennale in Korea, which opened in early September 2008.

Like *Documenta*, the Johannesburg Biennale and the Gwangju Biennale—respectively, the first biennials in Africa and in Asia, and both founded in 1995—have political origins. In Johannesburg, it marked the cultural opening after apartheid. Less known is the story behind the Gwangju Biennale. Gwangju, about two hours south of Seoul, was distant or in outright opposition to the eighteen-year reign of the South Korean dictator Park Chung-hee and his equally dictatorial successor. In May 1980, an uprising, spearheaded by local students and professors, was brutally suppressed by the military. Many hundreds of demonstrators were massacred. In 1995, a few years after a democratically elected president was inaugurated in Seoul, the Gwangju Biennale was founded as part of the retrospective celebration of the democratic uprising and a commemoration of its martyrs.

In his foreword to the Biennale catalog, the city’s mayor, who is also the president of the Gwangju Biennale Foundation, said: “The Gwangju Biennale belongs to civil society on the one hand, and on the other, it is a public and communal product of the co-operation among cultural agents, artists, economists and the city of Gwangju. . . . These efforts will no doubt cohere positioning Gwangju as a strategic signpost on the road to becoming the cultural hub-city of the global village and the cultural capital of Asia.”¹³⁶ Both the city of 1.3 million and the Seoul government appear ready to provide the funds for such an enterprise. Aside from the aspect of political restitution, they recognize the potentially profitable conversion of the symbolic capital of Gwangju into economic capital, with which they hope to secure the city’s future as “the cultural

capital of Asia.” Conversions of the symbolic capital of artworks into economic capital have always been the *raison d'être* of the art market, too.

Okwui Enwezor, who had curated the 2nd Johannesburg Biennale in 1997 and *Documenta XI* in 2002, was appointed artistic director of this year's Gwangju Biennale. The encounter with works in galleries—i.e., in art trading posts—has always had an effect on selections for ostensibly noncommercial presentations. Okwui Enwezor openly put his Biennale under the heading “Annual Report.” He invites the reader of the bilingual catalog to follow *A Year in Exhibitions*, presenting on sixty pages the press releases of the galleries and not-for-profit venues visited. He and his co-curators Hyunjin Kim of Korea and Ranjit Hoskote from India, and the four authors of so-called Position Papers and Insertions, based in Korea, the Philippines, Morocco, and New Orleans, selected works from around the world. None of the artists and groups chosen can be considered big players in the contemporary art market. A great number are not from Western Europe or the United States. Probably for that reason, the majority was unknown to me. In many instances, I had difficulty in getting a sense of the meaning of their works because I knew little or nothing about the context in which and for which they had been made. It was challenging, and I learned a lot.

The Gwangju Biennale attracted 400,000 visitors this year—most of them from the region, and among those a great number were school classes. Last year's *Documenta XII* had 750,000 visitors. Also in Kassel a great many were high-school students under the guidance of a teacher. It would be worth exploring what either public made of the works it was exposed to. I am certain, however, that the exposure to these exhibitions will affect their sense of themselves and of the world they live in. Such experiences have the potential of contributing to the social consensus of a period and a country.

In January 2008, Okwui Enwezor saw an exhibition of mine at the Paula Cooper Gallery in New York. He decided to make the entire show part of his Annual Report. To be seen in Gwangju were five works from the show: photographs that I had taken at *Documenta II* in 1959, *Wide White Flow* of 1967, an installation with moving parts from the 1960s, one of the three works that cost me the solo show at the Guggenheim Museum, and two works offering a sense of my feelings about current U.S. politics, *Trickle Up* and *Mission Accomplished*. The most recent is a torn image of the stars in heaven and the American flag on earth.



1.38 **Hans Haacke, *Wide White Flow*, 1967**

[This text was written as a paper to be presented at the “Landmark Exhibitions Symposium,” Tate Modern, London, October 10–11, 2008. It was first published in *Tate Papers* 12 (Autumn 2009), <http://www.tate.org.uk/download/file/fid/7265>.]

53. *The Invisible Hand of the Market*, 2009

The economist Adam Smith introduced the metaphor of the “invisible hand” that guides peoples’ actions in his treatise *The Wealth of Nations* (1776). It has been interpreted, particularly by economists who believe in the benefit of free market capitalism, as meaning that the unfettered pursuit of economic self-interest, in effect, promotes the public good. The influential *Wall Street Journal*, an unwavering supporter of neoliberalism, subscribes to this theory and forcefully argues against any governmental regulation of markets.

[Text published in *Hans Haacke: Castles in the Sky*, exh. cat. (Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 2012), 134.]



1.39 Hans Haacke, *The Invisible Hand of the Market*, 2009

54. "Interview with Cecilia Alemani," 2010

Cecilia Alemani: Can you tell me about the *Wind Room* (1969), the artwork that you realized for the Henry Gallery, University of Washington, Seattle, in 1968. What did you have in mind? How did you conceive the installation? How was the piece received by the institution and by the audience? How has this piece evolved into *BONUS-Storm* (2009)?

Hans Haacke: To refresh my memory I looked into old files and discovered that the exhibition at the Henry Gallery took place in the summer of 1969 and not in 1968. *Wind Room* was part of a group show with the title *Art and Machine: Motion, Light, Sound*. I participated in the exhibition with three works: *Wind Room*, 1969, *High Voltage Discharge Traveling*, 1968, and a site-specific outdoor installation called *Fog, Swamp, Erosion*, 1969. For that temporary installation, four high-pressure spray nozzles produced a mist-like dispersion of water, which was subject to prevailing air-currents. Rainbow colors appeared when the sun was shining. Eventually, the fog settled on a grassy slope, and the runoff eroded the terrain.

I describe this installation in some detail because it might give you a clue to my interest in meteorological phenomena. I understood weather as a prototypical example of a system of interactive physical components—with metaphorical significance. By 1969, I had worked for about five years with fans supporting or moving lightweight materials. And I had exposed balloons and finely dispersed water to the winds.

Neither in the 1969 *Wind Room*, nor [in] its adaptation for *BONUS-Storm* at X Initiative did I care much for the viewers' *visual* experience. In fact, I tried to reduce that as much as possible. In my correspondence with the Henry Gallery I found a note in which I expressed my distress that the three fans of the *Wind Room* had been mounted on pedestals, almost like sculptures (I was not present for the installation). At my insistence, half-way through the show, they were then mounted directly onto the wall, very much like they were installed at X Initiative. *Wind Room* was included a year later in another group show at the Henry Gallery

with the telling title *Tactile*. In fact, it is the tactile sense and not the eye I was appealing to. You were to feel it on your skin—and “in your face.”

By 2009, the shit had hit the fan on Wall Street. The wizards of Wall Street, who, for years, had been driven by exorbitant bonuses for short-term gains and no regard for the consequences of their actions, had run the global economy into the ground. And still, in spite of the personal miseries and national disasters they caused in the United States and around the world, they had no shame in continuing to collect the huge bonuses they had taught themselves to expect. After all, as Lloyd Blankfein, the CEO of Goldman Sachs, sheepishly explained, they were “doing God’s work.” The flashing BONUS sign was a storm alert from “God.” Don’t argue! Just get out of the way!

CA: In your exhibition at X Initiative, many works, both old and new, dealt with the economic recession and with current events. It was fascinating to see how a work such as *Thank you, Paine Webber*, which was realized at the end of the seventies, felt so contemporary even thirty years later and in such a different historic context. Do you think artworks can develop their own agenda, and even take on different meanings and targets depending on the time in which they were created or received? How do you see the connection of artworks with history and with the present? I know it’s a huge question, but I am sure you have thought about these problems many times. To which time does the artwork belong? To history or to the present?

HH: The short answer to your question is: it belongs to both, to history and to the present. As you say, after thirty years, *Thank you, Paine Webber* gained an—unfortunate—new topicality. While much had changed, we were rudely reminded that much is still the way it was then. The exploitation of peoples’ misery—in this particular case for PR purposes, but indicative of corporate attitudes and behavior—continues unabated. The use of a photo of an unemployed worker from Detroit during the Great Depression on the cover of the 1977 annual report of a powerful brokerage firm—not to speak of the consequences of investment strategies that led to that economic depression and more recent disasters—is a telling sign of how ingrained this “culture” really is. The lead essay in the 1977 annual report had the promising title: “Where Do Jobs Come From?—A Concise

Report on Unemployment and Wall Street's Role in Preventing It." A year later the annual report offered another enlightening piece: "Do You Sincerely Want to Be Poor?—Paine Webber's Centennial Essay on the Future of American Capitalism."

At the opening of the new millennium, Donald Marron, the smiling young man on the left in the group photo of the Paine Webber 1977 annual report, led the merger of his brokerage firm with UBS, the giant Swiss bank and wealth manager. During the twenty years as CEO of Paine Webber, Marron had amassed a substantial corporate art collection. The Museum of Modern Art opened its new building in 2005 with an exhibition of this collection under the UBS logo. It so happened that Donald Marron (now CEO of the private equity firm Lightyear Capital) had been the president for many years and, in 2005, was the vice president of the museum's board of trustees.

Another link to the art world: UBS has been and still is the main sponsor of the Basel Art Fair and Art Basel Miami. Like their American brethren, UBS invested massively in the sub-prime mortgage casino and needed to be bailed out by the Swiss taxpayers. On top of that, the U.S. government accused UBS of having knowingly assisted wealthy U.S. taxpayers in dodging taxes. As a consequence, the bank was pressured to reveal the names of thousands of the beneficiaries of its assistance. These accretions are today part of our reading of these two panels from 1979.

The relevance of a work for the present normally fades and is then studied by historians and of interest only to connoisseurs until, unexpectedly, as in the case of "Thank you, Paine Webber" it regains or even surpasses its original significance. This is not the norm! Documents of the past, including works of art—irrespective of whether the artists invested them with social or political connotations—require the study of the historical context for an understanding and appreciation of what they may have conveyed originally. But that historical perspective, too, is not stable. We look at past cultures today very differently from the way they were perceived by scholars and the public in earlier times. And our interpretations will not survive intact either. Meanings are projections. They are historically and culturally contingent, not to speak of the habitus of the person who invests a certain configuration with connotative implications.

CA: You recently visited Israel and the West Bank, where you were previously in 1994 and shot the photograph which was shown as part of *West Bank, 1994—27th Year of Occupation* (2007–2009). Can you tell me about the genesis of this work and its development from 1994 to now?

HH: In 1994, the Israeli artist Larry Abramson was teaching at Bezalel, the art academy in Jerusalem. Perhaps reacting to my work in the German pavilion of the 1993 Venice Biennale, he invited me to discuss the works of the school's graduating students. In the course of my visit, he introduced me to Sliman Mansour, a Palestinian artist living in East Jerusalem, with whom he had participated in a number of joint exhibitions of Israeli and Palestinian artists. One of these shows had been held at The Cooper Union in New York where I was teaching. Sliman took me in his car to Jericho and Bethlehem on the West Bank.

In addition to ducking into the Grotto of the Nativity, on the outskirts of Bethlehem we visited Deheisheh. Deheisheh is a refugee camp of Palestinians who had fled or were expelled from areas that Israel claimed for its new national territory in 1948, after the victory in what it calls its "War of Independence" (the Palestinians refer to what happened as "The Catastrophe"). We visited one of the families in the camp whom Sliman knew. That's where I photographed the little boy with the t-shirt proclaiming "Paradise."

Thirteen years later, in 2007, Sliman, Larry, and two other Israeli artists (David Reeb and David Tartakover) called for entries in an exhibition to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the ongoing Israeli occupation of the West Bank. I sent this image to the exhibition in Jerusalem. The show had the title *Desert Generation* and was accompanied by a statement: "The images comprising the exhibition represent a generation of Israeli and Palestinian artists doomed to waste their best years in the desert of the occupation. Freedom is indivisible, and as long as Palestinians are deprived of liberty, Israelis too cannot be free."

During my first visit to the Middle East, there was hope. The Oslo Accords had just been signed. But it did not last. A year later, Yitzhak Rabin, the Israeli prime minister who had signed the accords with Yasser Arafat, was assassinated by a right-wing religious Zionist and Benjamin Netanyahu, the Likud leader, who had also opposed the agreement, was elected prime minister in 1996.

During my second visit to Israel and the West Bank, in March of this year, I found a world sadly different from the one I remember from the mid-nineties. Among the speakers of a conference that I participated in at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art was David Reeb. As his contribution he projected a video he had recorded recently during one of the frequent peaceful joint demonstrations of Israelis and Palestinians against the walls and barriers that carve up the West Bank. He witnessed—and we saw on his video—how, what may have been a tear-gas projectile coming from a fortified army outpost, hit and killed one of his fellow demonstrators. This chilling testimony encapsulates for me much of what I saw and sensed traveling again in the Israeli Occupied Territories.

CA: You have often realized works that are “calls to action”: do you think art needs to intervene in life? Does it need to push us to leave the realm of fiction in order to enter in that of reality? In the show at “X” you had *Recording of Climate in Art Exhibition* (1969–1970), which I always thought is an attempt to reveal the fictional environment that the gallery space is built upon. *Weather, or Not* also struck me because it combined your early “systemic” works with your most recent “sociological” work. While one can envision them as part of the same or larger ensemble, how would you describe your work today in relation to your early work[s], which were, in the case of this show, incorporated and reconfigured in the exhibition?

HH: *Recording of Climate in Art Exhibition* was my contribution to the exhibition *Conceptual Art and Conceptual Aspects*, which Joseph Kosuth and others put together in 1970 at the New York Cultural Center at Columbus Circle (now the Museum of Arts and Design). It was a site-specific, ironic comment. Taken out of its original context, the ironic allusion extends generally to the rarified, super-controlled environments in which artworks are exhibited in museums and comparable spaces, their commodity/insurance values, and white glove treatment. Obviously, at X Initiative, with my opening all windows during the winter, allowing low temperature and often high humidity to enter the space, all these customs were violated. As with a number of other works since about 1969, I explicitly invited the “outside” world into the seemingly secluded and sheltered sanctuary of art exhibition spaces.

The punning title of the show, I hope, gave a hint to the double meaning of the word “climate.” There was the meteorological aspect, which kept us from taking our coats off, and there was the social dimension, which nagged us to take a position as citizens. In a way, this constituted a fusion of my early focus on purely physical systems (with metaphorical implications) and, since the late 1960s increasingly my interest in the interactive social forces that affect our existence. The seemingly quaint consideration of ethics enters the “picture.”

[This interview was first published in Cecilia Alemani, “Weather, or Not,” *The X Initiative Yearbook* (Milan: Mousse Publishing, 2010), 122–131.]

55. *Once Upon a Time*, 2010

San Francesco, the church of a former Franciscan monastery in Como—its origins go back to the Middle Ages—was decommissioned during the Napoleonic occupation of Northern Italy and served for many years as barracks for armies of several countries. After its skillful restoration during the 1970s, the Como municipality dedicated San Francesco to the memory of Antonio Ratti and made it available for cultural events and exhibitions. In 2010, invited by the Antonio Ratti Foundation, I used this space, covered with many layers of historical patina, for a site-specific installation.

None of the five eighteenth-century frescoes in the apse had survived undamaged; the one in the center had not survived at all. Both images to its left and right, with scenes of the legend of St. Francis, had a horizontal band missing at the same level, perhaps because a floor had been built there during the church's military service to better utilize the full height of the apse. In the large frescoes on the side walls of the apse, with images of the Last Supper and the Sacrifice of Melchisedec, irregularly shaped small areas, spread over their entire surface, were blank.

The condition of the frescoes, the role of the church as an early outpost of the order of the patron saint of the poor, and what I knew, learned, and was exposed to by the Italian media, became sources of inspiration for me.

Next to RAI, the Italian public television network, the three dominant private channels in Italy are owned by Mediaset, Silvio Berlusconi's media empire. As prime minister at the time, according to *The Economist*, Berlusconi also had effective control over RAI and thereby over 90 percent of Italian national TV. In addition, the media tycoon's Fininvest held major interests in banking, insurance, movie production, publishing, real estate, and A.C. Milan, a professional soccer club of international standing.

Two local computer and projection wizards managed, on my behalf, to fill the blank areas of the frescoes—the central field and the two large biblical scenes on the left and right of the apse—with live programming from Berlusconi's three television channels. The empty horizontal bands of the two frescoes, depicting the legend of St. Francis, served as backdrop for a live display of the ticker of the Milan stock exchange, on which Mediaset and Fininvest are listed.

A year after the mediated appearance in this saintly setting, Berlusconi's fortunes dropped in value. He was ingloriously forced to hand over Palazzo Chigi to a successor, Prime Minister Mario Monti, and became embroiled in one court case after another. In 2013, he was convicted of tax fraud and sentenced to four years in prison. Because of his age, the sentence was reduced to one year of community service at a senior center in Milan. Another conviction followed in 2015, this one for bribery in an effort to undermine Romano Prodi who had preceded him as prime minister. *Il cavaliere* is still appealing a prison sentence for having sex with an under-age prostitute.

[This text was written in 2015 and is previously unpublished.]

56. “Hans Haacke Responds to Questions from *Texte zur Kunst*,” 2010

At the end of August, I received an inquiry from *Texte zur Kunst* about whether I could contribute something on the topic of “Political Art?” for its December anniversary issue. The combination of the two words in the title was referred to as “not without problem.” A number of questions from the editors seem to illustrate this unease. I quote them here and try to provide some improvised answers.

Q: Is all art that deals with socio-critical topics inevitably political?

HH: All art productions, irrespective of their subject, the artists’ intentions, and how the recipients of the works interpret them, have a political effect. Like other public articulations they too are little pieces of the mosaic with which one can compare the conflict-ridden consensus of a society. It is these currents of the *Zeitgeist* that have a political effect in the present and thereby also in the future.

Q: How do aesthetics and politics relate to each other?

HH: Whatever one may understand by aesthetics, it, like all areas of life, is inextricably intertwined with politics. In the 1985 annual report of Saatchi & Saatchi PLC one could read: “As Lenin said, everything is connected to everything else.” At the time, the Saatchi brothers had already made a name for themselves as the bosses of a global advertising agency and promoter of the Tories. Charles, the younger of the two, had also become a big player in the international art world.

Q: How are the formal qualities of an artwork related to the social conditions that allow for its production?

HH: All human-made objects and behavior are shaped by their social environment and personal circumstances. Pierre Bourdieu spoke of “habitus.”

Q: Is political art more persuasive if it provokes or is subversive and expresses activism and engagement?



1.40 Hans Haacke, *Once Upon a Time*, 2010



1.41 Hans Haacke, *Once Upon a Time*, 2010

HH: Whether and to what extent so-called political art, i.e., art productions that are perceived as having a political agenda, are “persuasive,” depends not only on their own qualities; what matters as much is who the recipients happen to be and in which historic and social context they encounter them. Likewise, whether these productions are thought of as provocative, subversive, and, in fact, promoting their cause, depends on that context. Admen, public relations experts, press agents, and the managers of election campaigns, wrestle with these questions in order to develop promising strategies for their clients.

In a lecture of 1961 at the Museum of Modern Art, Marcel Duchamp said: “All in all, the creative act is not performed by the artist alone; the spectator brings the work in contact with the external world by deciphering and interpreting its inner qualification and thus adds his contribution to the creative act. This becomes even more obvious when posterity gives a final verdict and sometimes rehabilitates forgotten artists.”

Q: Can an art that considers itself as political be more than merely a personal gesture if it appears in the white cube; and no matter how radical it may be, can it avoid easily being co-opted by the capitalist art market and publicly subsidized or privately financed exhibition establishments?

HH: It is a mistake to assume that commercial and public exhibition spaces are sealed off from the socio-political sphere. Their walls are porous in both directions. It is frequently in the white cube where curators of exhibitions in public museums, biennials, *Documentas* and other noncommercial venues initially encounter the works they eventually select for their mega-shows. It therefore made sense that Okwui Enwezor and his co-curators of the 2008 Gwangju Biennale called the selection of what they had seen and found remarkable during their tours through galleries and other exhibiting venues around the world during the preceding year an “Annual Report.”

The mass media, lifestyle-connoisseurs, and bloggers boost indirect distribution. Also serving as lubricant is that cultural events have often become a spectacle, have gained entertainment value, and, as the case may be, that they are perceived as cool. The promotion of tourism and attempts to attract business also help. For an adequate assessment of the target group(s) one needs to recognize

that the public of the art world enjoys a comparatively high level of education and, as a consequence, exerts considerable influence in society. Younger visitors of art exhibitions are potentially more open to contrarian positions than their parents. They are the ones who will shape the future.

Q: Why is there an expectation that artists address political issues?

HH: Such expectations from the “fine arts” are far from being generally shared. “Political art” is often dismissed as “propaganda.” Below the surface, distant and troubling memories of a former *Propagandaministerium* and so-called Socialist Realism may play a role in the rejection. It is usually overlooked that positions critical of these former regimes, at the time, were denounced as “degenerate” or “serving the class enemy” and violently suppressed. Of course, censorship and self-censorship are not foreign to the present.

However, aside from such rejectionist attitudes, as in the past, many people expect “disinterested pleasure” from their encounter with art productions, particularly when interests are at stake. It is not generally recognized or, in fact, [is] duly forgotten that artists have been socially engaged for many centuries and that, e.g., Caspar David Friedrich was a decidedly political artist. It is the seeming otherworldliness and the “sublime” (transcending self-interest) that makes cultural events so attractive for sponsors. That, however, is a reason not to leave the field to them. You reap what you sow.

[This text was first published in *Texte zur Kunst* 80 (Berlin, December 2010): 124–125.]

57. “Arrested Development,” 2012

In 2010, taking a cab from the airport to the center of Madrid, I was startled to see on my right a large area of tree-lined, newly paved streets with benches, street lights, and traffic signs, but not a single house. When I asked what to make of this, I was told that there are a good number of such areas on the outskirts of Madrid. And indeed, being taken around on an exploratory ride, I got to see many. At the end of the day, when we stopped in Ensanche de Vallecas on the southeast corner of the city and looked at a map, spread out on the hood of the car, to find the easiest way back to the center of town, the driver suggested with a knowing smile that I look at the name of the spot where we were standing: Calle del Arte Conceptual. I took my first photo—of about 1,500 to come.

On the left and right was wasteland. A little up the deserted street, we passed an abandoned construction site. Rusty steel beams pointed to the sky. A placard with the seal of Madrid (a bear on its hind legs, eating from a tree) identified the halted construction as being managed by Madrid’s public housing authority. Continuing along Calle del Arte Conceptual, we crossed Calle Eduardo Chillida. At the intersection, signs and white stripes on the pavement directed pedestrians safely to the other side of the street. In fact, we were the only moving vehicle and, in both directions, there was not a single pedestrian or house in sight. Calle del Arte Expressionista, the next street we crossed was lined, at least on one side, by ten-story apartment buildings of recent vintage. And so were the last two blocks of Calle del Arte Conceptual, interrupted by a large empty lot, just before we reached Avenida de la Gran Vía del Sureste, a grandiose boulevard of three lanes in both directions, divided by a thirty-meter-wide median of overgrown, piled-up earth. It was almost totally void of traffic.

When I returned to Ensanche de Vallecas for another sightseeing tour, I took the Madrid subway to the last stop on the line. As I exited the station, I noticed it was also the end of a bus line. And I was treated to a startling view of skeletons of two ten-story buildings without a single wall. I could see the sky on the other side. A truly iconic sight. The two skeletons occupied lots 5.53.1C and D on Calle del Arte Figurativa, facing the Gran Vía.

Subsequent research by Silvia Herrero, a professor of urban planning at the European University of Madrid, revealed that every one of the nonexistent

apartments was accounted for in the municipal real estate registry, with detailed descriptions of their lay-out, mortgages, and ownership. In 2012, they were all the property of Anida Desarrollos Singulares, S.L., the real estate arm of BBVA, the second-largest bank of Spain.

Around the turn of the millennium, Madrid had made plans for the development of the city's periphery. That included the expansion of Vallecas, a working-class village in the southeast. The local district council's proposal, to make Ensanche de Vallecas (ensanche = expansion) a "cultural district" and to build, together with public and private housing, artists' studios, exhibition spaces, and other cultural facilities, was adopted by the City Council of Madrid in 2007.

Aside from art-world name-dropping, not a single one of the proposed cultural structures, or the plans for public sports facilities, have been realized. Large tracts of municipal and publicly subsidized housing (with sales restrictions) remain on the drawing board. Some were started but not completed. Equally, many developments by private investors proved to be "castles in the sky." Structures that were completed carry large signs, often over their entire length or height announcing "VENTA DE PISOS" (Apartments for sale), including telephone numbers. Some offer "REBAJAS!" (Discounts). On the deserted sidewalk of Calle del Arte Abstracto, a bench looks out onto a vast field of weeds, interrupted only by a prominent yellow placard proclaiming "PROPRIETARIO VENDE." This is not the only bench with such a view, and not the only sign with a sales pitch.

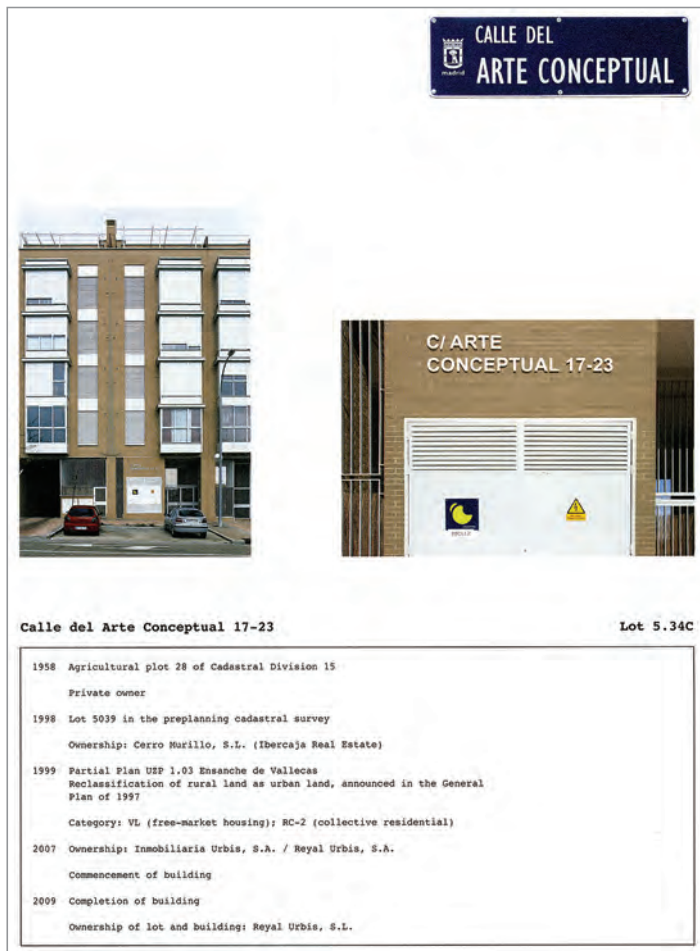
The children's playgrounds in Ensanche de Vallecas are deserted. Only after working hours does a bit of life come to the streets, and this consists mostly of dog owners taking their pets for a walk. For many, the nearest grocery stores, bars, and restaurants are at a half hour's walking distance near a shopping mall. As with a number of other streets, only a quarter of public housing that was planned for Calle del Arte Minimal is listed as "Construido," the rest remains "Non ejecutado."

Near Calle del Arte Conceptual, where my journey had started a year earlier, a cluster of publicly subsidized, two-story "chalets" had suffered from arrested development. Close to the shell of one of the houses, the fence protecting the site had a hole, through which I climbed to gain an insider's look. I stumbled on an extraordinary scene: scattered on the ground, I saw a bunch of red and yellow LEGO pieces mixed up with pieces of a puzzle. A photo opportunity!

In 2007, the Spanish real estate bubble burst (a year before the crash on Wall Street). The country went into a deep depression. Eight years later, the unemployment rate reached 25 percent, with youth unemployment more than 50 percent.



1.42, 1.43 **Hans Haacke, *Castillos en el aire***
(Castles in the Sky), 2012



1.44 Hans Haacke, *Castillos en el aire* (Castles in the Sky), 2012

[This text about an exploratory trip on the outskirts of Madrid, in preparation for Hans Haacke's exhibition *Castillos en el aire* (Castles in the Sky), 2012, at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, was written in 2015 and is previously unpublished.]

58. *Gift Horse (Proposal)*, 2012

The fourth plinth, on the northwest corner of Trafalgar Square, was meant to carry an equestrian statue of William IV (1765–1837). It is said that, due to a lack of funds, he was never able to join his older brother, George IV (1762–1830), who is known for his “dissolute way of life” and whose horseback effigy occupies the plinth on the northeast corner of the Square.

Both kings are younger contemporaries of George Stubbs (1724–1806), the English painter of horses and other animals, whose paintings are represented in the collections of the Tate Gallery and the National Gallery, at Trafalgar Square.

In 1766 Stubbs published his study “The Anatomy of the Horse,” thirty etchings, all accompanied by very detailed explanations of the skeleton, the muscles, and other parts of a horse’s anatomy.

A digitally altered version (orientation, limbs, neck, head adjusted) of the first skeleton plate of Stubbs’s “Anatomy of the Horse” serves to illustrate my proposal for the empty plinth.

A three-dimensional skeleton of a strutting horse occupies the plinth, facing the Square, with the National Gallery in the back. Its size is to match that of the horse carrying George IV.

A bow is tied around a frontal thighbone of the skeleton, as around a gift. Both sides of the “ribbon” are capable of displaying electronic messages. They transmit, live, the FTSE 100 ticker of the London Stock Exchange. At times, when no trading occurs, after hours, on weekends and holidays, the ticker of the most recent day of LSE activity is repeated.



1.45 **Hans Haacke, *Gift Horse*, 2015**

[On invitation, this text was written in 2012 as a proposal for the fourth plinth sculpture project in Trafalgar Square in London and is previously unpublished.]

59. “Re: The Nod,” 2014

Probably not unlike other artists who were invited to occupy the fourth plinth, I was both surprised and tickled when my proposal was given the nod.

I was sure my oblique tribute to two eighteenth-century Englishmen would not be a popular proposition today. In 1766, ten years before Adam Smith wrote “The Wealth of Nations” and introduced an often cited and perhaps misunderstood “invisible hand of the market” as the source of the common welfare, George Stubbs published his “Anatomy of the Horse.” Some 250 years later, followers of the Smith’s mythical hand flock to the City of London, to Wall Street, and other market places around the world, while the less fortunate look at the bare bones of the horseplay of today’s gentry.

The National Gallery, just a few feet away from the plinth, owns a portrait of *Whistlejacket*, the Marquess of Rockingham’s victorious racehorse, rearing, as Stubbs painted it for him. The City can be reached easily from the gallery’s horse show. And, as even every tourist knows, it is a short walk from the fourth plinth to Downing Street and the Houses of Parliament.

Stripped bare, *Gift Horse*, adorned with a flashing ribbon, will offer hardly any shelter from sun or rain. On windy days it may occasionally emit a whistle. But when the weather turns balmy, visitors sitting on the steps leading to the National Gallery may be intrigued by what the ticker of the London Stock Exchange tells them about their fortunes.

I hope the other two horses on Trafalgar Square, the one carrying Charles I, strutting, and the other, with George IV on its back, rather stoic, accept the newcomer graciously and recognize that their temporary companion has a lot to talk about.

By the time *Gift Horse* occupies its perch, early in 2015, the current Chinese “Year of the Horse” will have come to a close. A day before it was ushered in on January 30, 2014, London’s *Independent* newspaper, quoting Feng Shui wisdom, predicted: “Financial business also has the potential to be unstable.”

[This text was written on February 2, 2014, in response to the jury’s decision in favor of the *Gift Horse* proposal for realization on the fourth plinth of Trafalgar Square. It is previously unpublished.]

NOTES

1. This interview was conducted before Hans Haacke's show was canceled by the Guggenheim Museum.
2. In 1976, the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum and the new Museum Ludwig separated into two institutions, the latter focusing on art since the beginning of the twentieth century.
3. Complete results of *John Weber Gallery Visitors' Profile 1* and *2*, two surveys conducted by the author, are reproduced in Hans Haacke, *Framing and Being Framed: 7 Works 1970–75* (Halifax: Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design; New York: New York University Press, 1975), 69–94. Most visitors of the John Weber Gallery also visited exhibits at the Leo Castelli, Sonnabend, and Emmerich galleries, all contemporary art galleries in the same building at 420 West Broadway in New York. The polls were not based on representative samplings. Personal observation of the gallery public, however, suggests that the margin of error is not excessive so as to make the survey useless. For the purpose of this essay, collectors are not considered art professionals.
4. In a survey by the New York State Council on the Arts, the operating budget of nonprofit arts groups in New York State for the fiscal year of 1976–1977 is given as \$410 million.
5. Thomas Messer, director of the Guggenheim Museum, in a letter to the author dated March 19, 1971, explaining the rejection of works dealing with New York real estate for exhibition in a scheduled one-man show at the museum. The exhibition was eventually canceled and Edward F. Fry, the curator, dismissed.
6. Boards of Trustees of New York Museums: *Guggenheim Museum*: President, Peter O. Lawson-Johnston (mining company executive, represents Guggenheim family interests on numerous corporate boards). *The Metropolitan Museum of Art*: Chairman, C. Douglas Dillon (prominent investment banker). Vice presidents, Daniel P. Davison (banker, Morgan Guaranty Trust Co.), J. Richardson Dilworth (investment banker. Rockefeller & Family Associates), Roswell L. Gilpatrick (corporate lawyer, partner Cravath, Swaine & Moore, prominent NY law firm). *Museum of Modern Art*: President, Mrs. John D. Rockefeller III. Chairman, William S. Paley (chairman, CBS). Vice chairmen, Gardner Cowles (publisher; chairman, Cowles Communications Inc.), David Rockefeller (chairman, Chase Manhattan Bank). *Whitney Museum*: President, Flora Miller Irving (granddaughter of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney). Chairman, Howard Lipman (managing partner, Neuberger & Berman, securities company).
7. The Andre Emmerich Gallery, a major outpost for formalist art in New York, resumed advertising in *Artforum* after a two-year pause as soon as the anti-formalist editor/publisher John Coplans and his executive editor, Max Kozloff, were dismissed or forced to resign by the magazine's owner, Charles Cowles (son of [the] vice chairman of [the] board of trustees at [the] Museum of Modern Art), in December 1976. Other prominent New York galleries had also withheld advertising when *Artforum* editors did not abide by the tacit understanding that their galleries' artists receive ample attention and [that] the art world's infrastructure remain a taboo subject.

8. One example from the author's own experience: In 1974, the Cologne Wallraf-Richartz-Museum banned *Manet-PROJEKT '74*, a large work, for obvious economic and political reasons. Two years later, it was prominently displayed at the Kunstverein in Frankfurt. Both institutions are funded by their respective cities, and the Social Democratic Party dominated both city councils at the time. Before the Frankfurt exhibition, the piece had been shown in a commercial gallery in Cologne (Paul Maenz), at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London, and at the Palais des Beaux Arts of Brussels. It also had been reproduced extensively or in its entirety.
9. Title of an essay by Hans Magnus Enzensberger, in *Einzelheiten I: Bewusstseinsindustrie*, Frankfurt, 1962.
10. The contemporary petite bourgeoisie is the subject of many relevant essays in *Kursbuch 45*, Berlin, September 1976.
- 11 Supported by data from polls conducted by the author at Milwaukee Art Center, 1971, Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld, 1972, *Documenta V*, 1972, and Kunstverein Hannover 1973.
- 12 Context of quote: "Street theatre . . . serious theatre . . . music . . . art . . . architecture . . . comic books . . .—all can be powerful communicators. In 1969, Christo wrapped the entire rocky coast at Little Bay, Australia, in cloth (a million square feet of surface area) to change our understanding of sculpture, nature, and technology. More recently, he extended a high curtain across the valley of Rifle Gap, Colorado. The curtain included a hole for cars traveling in the valley to pass through. In the same vein, business could hold art exhibitions to tell its own story. We might, for example, include fifty-foot, inflated vinyl replicas of a machine gear and a loaf of bread to caricature the effect of inflation on the price of machine tools *and* food." "Outrageous, perhaps, but it might be effective, and it would at least demonstrate that business isn't afraid of new ideas." "Faced with the task of selling ideas on an unprecedented scale, we mustn't overlook any possibilities. Advertising and creative people have got to start mapping out this frontier. And business will find the creative thinkers that have the best maps." Remarks by W. B. Renner before the American Advertising Federation, Washington, D.C., June 1977. Excerpt from company transcript, 5.
- 13 Don Stroetzel, "Speaking Out: Risk and Reward," address to the American Association of Advertising Agencies, Annual Meeting, May 17, 1979, 2.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 See Charles E. Lindblom, *Politics and Markets—The World's Political-Economic System* (New York: Basic Books, 1977).
- 17 According to records of the Federal Elections Committee, opponents of these four senators received campaign funding from the Political Action Committees of Mobil and its subsidiaries.
- 18 *Advertising Age*, New York, September 11, 1980.
- 19 Irwin Ross, "Public Relations Isn't Kid-Glove Stuff at Mobil," *Fortune* (September 1976): 110.
20. Condensed report of the proceedings of the annual meeting of stockholders, May 8, 1980, Mobil Corporation, New York, 19.

21. It does so in spite of Walter Benjamin's belief in the dissolution of that aura in the age of mechanical reproduction. This prediction is most notably contradicted by the status photography has gained recently.
22. The term "ideology" is used throughout this text without the negative Marxian implication of "false consciousness."
23. Paul H. Flicker, president of SCM Corporation: "And I can tell you that with the \$150,000 a year we have allocated to our arts program, we are getting a lot more for our money than we would from a comparably priced ad campaign. \$150,000 would buy 2½ minutes a year on national television—and such a one-time effort can hardly be considered an ad campaign." Paul H. Flicker, "Why SCM Supports Art Exhibitions," *American Artist* (October 1978): 26.
24. For example, on behalf of Mobil, Ruder & Finn developed the idea for a show of American posters, hired the curators, and remained closely involved with the planning. Other clients are Springs Mills and Philip Morris.
25. David Rockefeller, "Culture and the Corporation," speech to the National Industrial Conference Board, September 20, 1966.
26. *Art Inc., American Paintings from Corporate Collections* (Montgomery: Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts, 1979), 35.
27. Herbert Schmertz worked in the 1960 presidential campaign of John F. Kennedy and was advance man for Robert Kennedy's 1968 campaign (on leave from Mobil). In 1980 he served as media consultant for Edward Kennedy. Rawleigh Warner, the chairman of Mobil, explains that one of the company's reasons for promoting Schmertz to vice president of public affairs was his "ability to talk to the Democratic side of the House and the Senate and to know some of those people—particularly some of those people we never, never would see before—the liberal element of the Democratic side." Quoted in Robert Sherrill, "Mobil News That's Fit to Print," *The Nation*, January 27, 1979, 71.
28. Raymond d'Argenio, manager of public relations at Mobil, in his address ("Farewell to the Low Profile") at the Eastern Annual Conference of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, New York, November 18, 1975, transcript, 3.
29. Even the tape one hears on the telephone, in answer to an inquiry about the Whitney Museum's current program, announces with each exhibition the corporation that underwrote it.
30. "Not only are we careful to see that as many attendees as possible recognize our part in the exhibition but we are very interested in getting media coverage to extend that recognition. I can't overstate the importance of this to us, or to any company that sponsors an exhibition or other cultural event. (They may tell themselves their sponsorship is altruistic, but it isn't.)" Paul H. Flicker, "Why Corporations Give Money to the Arts," *Wall Street Journal*, March 31, 1978, 18.
31. Transcript of taped panel discussion "Corporate Support (A Positive or Negative Influence on the Arts)," at the New Museum, New York, November 3, 1979.

32. *Guggenheim Museum*: President, Peter O. Lawson-Johnston (mining company executive, represents Guggenheim family interests on numerous corporate boards). *The Metropolitan Museum of Art*: Chairman C. Douglas Dillon (prominent investment banker) until the fall of 1983; since then, J. Richardson Dilworth (investment banker, Rockefeller & Family Associates). Vice chairmen: Daniel P. Davison (banker, Morgan Guaranty Trust Co.); Roswell L. Gilpatrick (partner, Cravath, Swaine & Moore, prominent New York law firm). *Museum of Modern Art*: President, Mrs. John D. Rockefeller III; Chairman, William S. Paley (chairman, CBS). Vice chairmen: Gardner Cowles (publisher; chairman, Cowles Communications Inc.); David Rockefeller (until April 1980 chairman, Chase Manhattan Bank). *Whitney Museum*: President, Flora Miller Irving (granddaughter of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney). Chairman, Howard Lipman (managing partner, Neuberger & Herman, securities company).

33. Quoted from Carol MacGuineas, "Blockbuster Exhibitions: Hype or Hope for Museums?," *Cultural Post*, Washington, D.C., National Endowment for the Arts, September–October 1979, 8.

34. Quoted in Robert Metz, "The Corporation as Art Patron: A Growth Stock," *Art News* (May 1979): 46.

35. In 1971, Edward Fry was fired as a curator of the Guggenheim Museum when he publicly defended the exhibition of works by the author dealing with New York real estate business. The exhibition was canceled by Thomas Messer, the museum's director, six weeks before its scheduled opening.

36. One documented instance—not from the art world—is the nonrenewal of a \$50,000 grant Mobil gave annually to the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. The oil company objected to the promotion of Chris Welles to be head of the program that was the beneficiary of the grant, because he had written a book critical of the oil industry. "Columbia Says Mobil Oil Will End Aid for Project in Dispute over Director," *New York Times*, July 19, 1977.

37. Patricia Hills curated two shows of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century American art at the Whitney Museum. The Film and Video Program of the same museum also occasionally serves as an outlet.

38. The Catalogue Committee of Artists Meeting for Cultural Change published *An Anti-Catalogue* (1977) as a critique of this exhibition and its catalog.

39. George F. Will, a columnist belonging to the journalistic entourage of President Reagan, identifies with "the wise fellow who said that artists making fun of businessmen remind him of a regiment in which the band makes fun of the cook." *Washington Post*, November 30, 1979.

40. Allan Sekula, "Dismantling Modernism, Reinventing Documentary (Notes on the Politics of Representation)," *Massachusetts Review* 19, no. 4 (Winter 1978): 859.

41. From the author's own experience: In 1978 the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, exhibited *A Breed Apart*, a work questioning British Leyland's nonrecognition of black trade unions in South Africa and its supply of Land Rovers to the police and military of that country. Leyland, the largest British automobile manufacturer, is owned by the British government. It has a large plant in Cowley, on the outskirts of Oxford. Together with the Anti-Apartheid Movement in London, the museum published the first of the seven panels comprising *A Breed Apart* as a poster in an edition of 1500. The Museum in Oxford is financed by the Arts Council of Great Britain, and so are all the exhibition facilities where the work was shown around England after its premiere in Oxford.

Equally, the work of Victor Burgin and other British artists with critical attitudes has been exhibited in institutions funded by the Arts Council. On the other hand, a print by Conrad Atkinson was deliberately kept out of an exhibition organized by the Arts Council. In the print Atkinson made a connection between Thalidomide, its manufacturer, Distillers Ltd., and the royal warrant that appears as a sign of approval on the bottles of alcoholic beverages and other products by the same company. He also has difficulties with his works on the political situation in Northern Ireland. Since writing this article in 1980, the author has heard from people in the British art world that the Arts Council has lost much of the limited independence it once enjoyed. They seem to have little confidence in the new secretary general, Luke Rittner, who was appointed by Mrs. Thatcher in 1983. Before this he was director of the British Association of Business Sponsorship of the Arts.

42. The *Kunstvereine* in West Germany are membership organizations for the staging of art exhibitions. Their boards are elected by the members. During the 1970s the relatively conservative boards of the *Kunstverein* in Hamburg and in Frankfurt were voted out of office and replaced by boards more representative of the membership's shift to a moderate Left position. The *Kunstverein* in West Berlin split into two rival organizations over similar ideological differences.

43. From the author's own experience: In 1974 the Cologne Wallraf-Richartz-Museum banned *Manet-PROJEKT '74* for obvious economic and political reasons. Two years later it was prominently displayed at the *Kunstverein* in Frankfurt. Both institutions are funded by their respective cities and the Social Democratic Party (SPD) dominated both city councils, at the time. Before the Frankfurt exhibition, the piece had been shown in a commercial gallery in Cologne (Paul Maenz), at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London and the Palais des Beaux-Arts of Brussels. Later it was also exhibited at the Badischer *Kunstverein* in Karlsruhe, the *Kunsthalle* in Düsseldorf, the Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris, the Stedelijk van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, and the Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst in Ghent.

44. From the author's own experience: Philips representatives were quoted in Marianne Brouwer, "Ik wil de dingen spannend houden; de politieke kunst van Hans Haacke," *Haagse Post*, Amsterdam, February 3, 1979; and Frits Bless, "Hans Haacke," *De Tijd*, Amsterdam, February 7, 1979.

45. See *U.S. Bank Loans to South Africa*, booklet published by the Corporate Data Exchange, New York, 1978.

46. Two examples from the author's experience: In 1972 the Museum Haus Lange in Krefeld, West Germany, exhibited a large work exposing the City of Krefeld's longstanding practice of discharging its sewage untreated into the Rhine. The museum is a municipal institution. Also, the *Kunstverein* in Frankfurt, subsidized by public funds, exhibited two works that questioned, on constitutional grounds, the State of Hesse's practice of the *Berufsverbot* [politically motivated professional ban]. Frankfurt is the largest city of Hesse. One of the two cases exposed was that of a person from Frankfurt. At the time, the SPD dominated both the city council and the government of the State of Hesse.

47. The agreement is titled *Urkunde über die Errichtung der Stiftung Ludwig zur Förderung der Bildenden Kunst und verwandter Gebiete*.

48. The author's *John Weber Gallery Visitors' Profile 1* and 2, 1972 and 1973 respectively.

49. Quoted from Martha Rosler, "What Do I Feel Should Be the Attitude of the Politically Committed Artist to 'the Gallery'?", unpublished statement, 3.
50. In West Germany, two artist-operated nonprofit "galleries" come to mind: Dieter Hacker's *Produzentengalerie* in West Berlin, and Bernard Sanford's *Augenladen* in Mannheim.
51. Fred Lonidier has exhibited his *Health and Safety Game* widely to labor audiences, as well as in art institutions.
52. Thomas Messer, director of the Guggenheim Museum, in "Guest Editorial," *Arts Magazine* 45 (Summer 1971): 5. The article defends the cancellation of the author's one-person show six weeks before its scheduled opening at the museum.
53. "Ich halte nichts davon, die bürgerlichen Medien rechts liegen zu lassen," in *Kunst und Medien: Materialien zur Documenta 6*, 193.
54. John Russell, "How Art Makes Us Feel at Home in the World," *New York Times*, April 12, 1981, section II, page 1.
55. Dr. Cladders was commissioner of the German pavilion of the Venice Biennale. In 1985 he retired from the directorship of the museum in Mönchengladbach. Count Panza di Biumo sold a major portion of his collection to the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles.
56. A major exhibition of the work of Julian Schnabel was held at the Whitechapel Gallery in the fall of 1986.
57. The vice chairman of Saatchi & Saatchi, Michael Dobbs, was chief of staff of the Conservative Party Chairman Norman Tebbit during the 1980s. Since then the Saatchi brothers have had close relations to the leadership of the Party. They played an important role in all their campaigns.
58. Because this influence is originating with individuals, it may not survive them and may in the end have only minor structural consequences.
59. Carl Spielvogel, the head of one of the Saatchi & Saatchi subsidiaries in New York, at the time, was chairman of The Metropolitan Museum's Business Committee. Charles Saatchi was vice chairman of the museum's International Business Committee.
60. In an op-ed page advertisement in *The New York Times* on October 10, 1985, Mobil explained, under the headline "Art, for the sake of business," the rationale behind its involvement in the arts in these words: "What's in it for us—or for your company? Improving—and ensuring—the business climate." More extensive reasons are given by Mobil director and vice president of public affairs, Herb Schmertz, in "Affinity-of-Purpose Marketing: The Case of Masterpiece Theatre," from his book *Good-bye to the Low Profile: The Art of Creative Confrontation* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1986).
61. The headquarters of Philip Morris in New York and the headquarters of the Champion International Corporation in Stamford, Connecticut.
62. Philippe de Montebello, director of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, is quoted in *Newsweek* (November 25, 1985), 98: "It's an inherent, insidious, hidden form of censorship . . . But corporations aren't censoring us—we're censoring ourselves."

63. "A Word from Our Sponsor," *Newsweek*, November 25, 1985, 98.
64. *Hans Haacke: Unfinished Business* was the exhibition catalog, edited by Brian Wallis, that accompanied Haacke's eponymous exhibition at The New Museum in New York in 1986. The catalog was first published by the New Museum in 1986, and republished by the MIT Press the following year [note from Brian Wallis].
65. Quoted in Walter Benjamin, "A Short History of Photography," trans. Phil Patton, *Artforum* 15, no. 6 (February 1977): 50–51. Translation modified by me.
66. Phil Patton's translation in *Artforum* (February 1977) reads: "to build something up, something artistic, created."
67. Hanns Johst, *Schlageter* (Munich: Albert Langen/Georg Müller, 1933), 26.
68. Morley Safer, "Yes . . . But Is It Art?," *60 Minutes*, CBS television, September 19, 1993. Transcript: Burrelle's Information Services, Livingston, N.J.
69. Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 188.
70. Jean Collet, ed., *Jean-Luc Godard, No. 18, Collection Cinéma d'aujourd'hui* (Paris: Editions Seghers, 1963), 140–142.
71. Ibid.
72. John Rockwell, "Making a Mark on French Culture," *New York Times*, November 8, 1993, C11.
73. Karen De Witt, "Senate Panel Gives Alexander Its Vote and a Rave Review," *New York Times*, September 23, 1993, C3, C18.
74. "In New York City, art and culture alone constitute a megaindustry—more than \$8 billion annually, conservatively estimated arts and tourism combined constitute one of the largest generators of tax revenues, some \$2.5 billion in direct state and federal tax receipts." Martin E. Segal, letter to the editor, *New York Times*, March 12, 1993, A28.

"In 1992, the total economic impact of the arts on the New York–New Jersey metropolitan region was \$9.8 billion . . . Almost \$3.5 billion in wages, salaries and royalties were generated . . . Employment, both direct and indirect, totaled 107,000." "The Arts as an Industry: Their Economic Importance to the New York–New Jersey Metropolitan Region" (New York: Arts Research Center, 1993), 3.
75. "The Business behind Art Knows the Art of Good Business," leaflet addressed to corporations, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, undated, approx. 1984.
76. "A Word from Our Sponsor," *Newsweek*, November 25, 1985, 98.
77. Amei Wallach, "Keeping Corporate Funds, In the Name of Art," *New York Newsday*, August 8, 1990, section II, page 2.
78. D'Argenio, "Farewell to the Low Profile."

79. Gustav W. Eberlein, "Venedig feiert Hitler," *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, Zentralorgan für die Reichshauptstadt 278 (June 15, 1934): 1.
80. Gustav W. Eberlein, "Venedigs grosse Tage," *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, Zentralorgan für die Reichshauptstadt 279 (June 16, 1934): 1.
81. Ibid.
82. "Der Vorbeimarsch der Giovani Fascisti," *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, Zentralorgan für die Reichshauptstadt 279 (June 16, 1934).
83. "Faschistenparade vor Hitler," *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*, Zentralorgan für die Reichshauptstadt 279 (June 16, 1934).
84. Sergio Romano, *Giuseppe Volpi et l'Italie moderne: Finance, Industrie et l'État de l'ère giolittienne à la Deuxième Guerre mondiale*, trans. Sophie Gherardi, 1979; reprint Rome École Française de Rome, Rome, 1982; Rolf Petri, "Industriestadt im Zugriff des großen Geldes," *Venedig: Ein politisches Reisebuch*, ed. Rolf Petri (Hamburg 1986), 1 B–1 F; Maurizio Reberschak, "Faschismus, Antifaschismus, Widerstand," *ibid.*, 118–31; Mario Isneghi, "Die Biennale: Väter und Söhne," *ibid.*, 195–211; Rolf Petri, "Disneyland in der Lagune: Tourismus als Selbstentfremdung," *ibid.*, 213–221.
85. Hans Haacke, *Manet-PROJEKT '74*, first exhibited at Galerie Paul Maenz, Cologne, 1974. Facsimile reproduction in Hans Haacke, *Framing and Being Framed*: (Halifax: The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design; New York: New York University Press, 1975), 69–94. Also in Brian Wallis, ed., *Hans Haacke: Unfinished Business* (New York and Cambridge, MA: The New Museum of Contemporary Art and the MIT Press, 1986), and other exhibition catalogs.
86. Annette Lagler, *Biennale Venedig: Der deutsche Beitrag und seine Theorie in der Chronologic von Zusammenkunft und Abgrenzung*, (Venedig: Deutsches Studienzentrum, dissertation, Technische Hochschule, Aachen 1991), 169–179; "La visita di Hitler alla XIX Biennale," *Gazzetta di Venezia*, June 16, 1934, 10–11; "Hitler alla Biennale," *Tevere*, June 16, 1934; "La visita di Hitler alla Biennale," *Gazzetta del Popolo*, June 16, 1934; "Besuch de Kunstausstellung 'Biennale,'" *Völkischer Beobachter* 167, June 16, 1934, 1.
87. "Aus der italienischen Presse," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, June 16, 1934, 1.
88. Martin Heidegger, cited in Jürgen Habermas, *Der philosophische Diskurs der Moderns* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1985), 187.
89. Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, vol. 2 (Pfullingen: Verlag Günther Neske, 1961), 3 B.
90. Hans Jürgen Syberberg, *Vom Unglück und Glück der Kunst in Deutschland nach dem letzten Kriege* (München: Matthes & Seitz, 1990).
91. Adolf Hitler, speech at Reichsparteitag 193, cited in Stephanie Barron, ed., *Degenerate Art: The Fate of the Avant-garde in Nazi Germany* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1991), 386.

92. "Inszenierung der Macht: Herbert Bayer, Kataloggestaltung," in *Inszenierung der Macht: Ästhetische Faszination im Faschismus*, ed. Klaus Behnken and Frank Wagner (Berlin: Neue Gesellschaft für bildende Kunst [NGBK]), 286–297; Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, "From Factura to Factography," *October* 30 (Fall 1984): 80–109.
93. Lagler, *Biennale Venedig*, 118f, 179f.
94. Letter of Ernst Haiger to Comm. Bazzoni, general secretary of the Biennale, January 10, 1938, *archivio storico delle arti contemporanee*, La Biennale di Venezia, Venice.
95. Ernst Haiger, "Der neue deutsche Ausstellungsbau der Biennale in Venedig," April 19, 1938 [typewritten], *archivio storico delle arti contemporanee*, La Biennale di Venezia, Venice.
96. G., "Das deutsche Kunstaustellungsgebäude in Venedig," *Zentralblatt der Bauverwaltung, vereinigt mit Zeitschrift für Bauwesen*, Prussian Ministry of Finance, Berlin, no. 58, November 2, 1938, 102–105.
97. Lagler, *Biennale Venedig*, 182–188.
98. Adolf Ziegler, *XXI Biennale di Venezia*, exh. cat. (1938), 257.
99. Ludwig Erhard, in *Form und Schönheit* (1974), published in *Salzburger Kulturvereinigung*, (1978), 15, cited in Siegfried Salzmann, "Der Fall Breker," *Im Namen des Volkes: Das "gesunde Volksempfinden" als Kunstmaßstab* (Duisburg: Wilhelm-Lehmbruck-Museum, 1979), 160.
100. Jürgen Hohmeyer, "Breker wird zur Seite gedrückt," *Der Spiegel*, September 1, 1986.
101. Presse-Information (3), Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nürnberg, July 1992.
102. "Biennale Venice 1993" promotional flyer, Humbert Travel Agency, Inc., New York, 1993.
103. Ibid.
104. American Express, double-page advertisement in *Art News* (April 1993): 5–6. Also *New York Times Magazine*, March 7, 1993, 8–9.
105. *DER Tour: Städtereisen* (Frankfurt: Deutsches Reisebüro GmbH, 1992).
106. Isneghi, "Die Biennale: Väter und Söhne."
107. Cited in Lagler, *Biennale Venedig*, 20.
108. Isneghi, "Die Biennale: Väter und Söhne."
109. Philip Morris slogan on double-page ads in the U.S. press, announcing art events sponsored by the company during the 1970s and 1980s.
110. Manfred Bruhn, *Sponsoring: Unternehmen als Mäzene und Sponsoren* (Wiesbaden: Gabler Verlag, 1987), 87.
111. "Art for the sake of business," Mobil Corporation advertisement, *New York Times*, October 10, 1985.
112. Alain-Dominique Perrin, "Le Mécénat français: La fin d'un préjugé," interviewed by Sandra d'Aboville, *Galleries Magazine* 15 (October/November 1986): 74.

113 Ibid., 75.

114. Thomas Wegner, “Bei der MEDIALE gehen Markenartikel und Kultur eine Ehe in getrennten Schlafzimmern ein” (At MEDIALE brand-name consumer goods are joined in a marriage with separate bedrooms), interview, *Prinz-Stadt-Monitor*, February 1993, Bochum, 15.

115 The sociologist Pierre Bourdieu has contributed much to the understanding of “symbolic power” and “symbolic capital.”

116 Cited in Lagler, *Biennale Venedig*, 20.

117 In “A Word from our Sponsor,” *Newsweek*, November 25, 1985, 98.

118 Johann Wolfgang Goethe, *Tagebuch der Italienischen Reise 1786: Notizen und Briefe aus Italien mit Skizzen und Zeichnungen des Autors*, ed. Christoph Michel (Frankfurt/Main: Insel Verlag, 1976), 114.

119 Marcel Broodthaers, *Museum: Der Adler vom Oligozän bis heute, Vol. I* (Städtische Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, 1972), 4.

120. Latest installment: Linde Rohr-Bongard, “Kunst gleich Kapital,” *Capital* (November 1993), 212–242.

121. Marcel Broodthaers, *Museum: Der Adler vom Oligozän bis heute, Vol. II* (Städtische Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, 1972), 9.

122 Ibid.

123 *Avantgarde & Kampagne*, Städtische Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, September 18–27 1992.

124. Willy Theobald, “Sponsoren an die Macht?,” *manager magazine* (Hamburg) (October 1993): 290.

125 Ibid., 302.

126. “A Word from Our Sponsor,” *Newsweek*, November 25, 1985, 98.

127 Alain-Dominique Perrin, “Le Mécénat français: La fin d’un préjugé,” interview with Sandra d’Aboville, *Galleries Magazine* 15 (October–November 1986): 74.

128. The director of an American museum told me in 1993 that I could not touch certain subjects in a one-person exhibition planned by his museum because if I did he would risk losing his job. I decided not to pursue plans for the exhibition.

129. Ten years later, Jan Hoet, the director of *Documenta IX* in 1992, openly excluded works that made explicit political allusions. Instead he opted for what he called “mystery” (interview with Hans-Joachim Müller, *Die Zeit*).

130. Hans Sedlmayr, *Art in Crisis: The Lost Center* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2006). German version originally published in 1948, first English translation in 1957.

131. Werner Haftmann, *Malerei im 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1954).

132. David Rockefeller, *Memoirs* (New York: Random House, 2002), 452–453.

13. David Rockefeller, "Culture and the Corporation," speech to the National Industrial Conference Board, September 20, 1966.

134. Formerly <http://www.ruderfinn.com/corporate-public-trust/arts-culture.html>. Homepage no longer exists.

135. "A Word from Our Sponsor," *Newsweek*, November 25, 1985, 98.

136. "Foreword. Annual Report: A Year in Exhibitions," *7th Gwangju Biennale*, exh. cat. (Gwangju Biennale Foundation and BOM [Books on the Move], 2008).

INDEX

Page numbers in italics refer to figures.

- 19 Artists—Emergent Americans* (Guggenheim Museum, 1981), 88
1965–1975: Reconsidering the Object of Art (Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 1995), 188, 189
60 Minutes, 153, 263n68
- A.C. Milan, 243
Abdulaziz Al Saud, Prince Sultan Bin, 129
Abramson, Larry, 218, 240
Abs, Hermann Josef, 72, 73, 74, 161, 227
Abstract art, xi, 4, 17, 59, 86, 77, 152, 163, 186, 223, 224, 225, 230, 251
 Abstract Expressionism, xi, 1, 17, 223
ACT-UP, 189
Adenauer, Konrad, 166
AEG 139, 142
Aerodynamics, xviii, 14, 21, 22, 106
African National Congress (ANC), 128
After-image, 24
Agenzia Nazionale Stampa Associata (ANSA), 26
Air, xiv, xviii, xi, xvi, xxi, xxii, xlii, 2, 5, 7, 10, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 48, 66, 105, 106, 193, 237
Airborne seeds, xxii, xlii, 66, 193. *See also* Seeds
Akademie der Künste, Berlin, 72
Al Qaeda, 215
Alcan, xx, xxxvi, xxxix, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143
Alcoa, 83, 85, 88, 90
Algerian war, 107
American Advertising Federation, 83, 258n12
American Express, 167, 265n104
Andre, Carl, 41, 73
Andrew Dickson White Museum of Art (now Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art), Cornell University, xxii, 195
Anida Desarrollos Singulares, S.L., 251
Anschluss, 133, B4, 135

Antico Martini, Venice, 168
 Antonio Ratti Foundation, Como, xlv, 243
 Arafat, Yasser, 240–241
Arbeitsjournal, 143
 Arensberg, Walter, 185
 Arman, 104
 Academy of Fine Arts, Münster, 72
 “Art and Machine: Motion, Light, Sound, Henry Gallery” (University of Washington, Seattle, 1969), 237
Art and Technology (Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, 1969), xxiv, 27–28
 Art Basel Miami, 239
Art Compass, 173
 Art for art’s sake, 77, 116, 117, 118
Art in America, 73, 124
Art Inc., American Paintings from Corporate Collections (Montgomery Art Museum, 1979), 86, 259n26
art press, xl, 106
 Art Strike, 32, 226
 Art Workers’ Coalition, xxvii, 38, 41, 226, 227
 Artists’ Call against U.S. Intervention in Central America, 125
 Arts Council of Great Britain, 94, 260–261n41
 Assemblée nationale, 145, 148
 Au Bon Marché, 146, 147
 Aubertin, Bernard, 104
 Avant-garde, 67, 68, 77, 90, 104, 117, 229, 264n91
Avantgarde & Kampagne (Städtische Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, 1992), 174, 266n123

 Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe, 1977, 65, 261n43. *See also* Polls
 Baldwin, Carl R., 73
 Banco Ambrosiano of Milan, 74
 Banco Bilbao Vizcaya Argentaria, S.A. (BBVA), 251
 Barbara Gladstone Gallery, 125
 Barber, Ed, 102
 Barlach, Ernst, 162, 163
 Monks Reading (1932), 162
 Basel Art Fair, 168, 239
 Bates, Harry, *Pandora* (1890), 109
 Bauhaus, ix, 164, 221
 Baume & Mercier, 130
 Bayer, Herbert, 164, 265n92
 Deutschland Ausstellung 1936 (1936), 164

Bayh, Birch, 84
 Becker, Howard S., *Artworlds* (1982), 143
 Behrens, Peter, 201
 Benetton, 174
 Benjamin, Walter, 140, 141, 142, 143, 239n21, 263n65
 Berlusconi, Silvio, xliv, 243, 244
 Bern Kunsthalle, 102, 226, 230
 Bernhard, Thomas, 137
 Bertalanffy, Ludwig von, xxiv, xxvi
 Biko, Stephen, xxxvi, xxxviii
 Bin Laden, Osama, 215
 Biological systems, xxvi, xlii, 10, 43, 44, 50, 51, 59, 60
 Bioterrorism, 215
 Blankfein, Lloyd, 238
 Bloom, Allan, 179
 Bode, Arnold, ix, 221
 Boltanski, Christian, 196
 Bongard, Willy, 173
 Boullée, Étienne-Louis, 149
 Bourdieu, Pierre, and Hans Haacke, *Free Exchange*, 1994, xl, 176–187
 Bourdieu, Pierre, xxxix, xl, xli, ln51, lin62, lin72, liin81, liin82, liin92, liin94, 144, 153, 176–189, 245, 263n69, 266n15
 Distinction (1979), 143
 habitus, 144, 177, 239, 245
 Brandt, Willy, 172
 Brecht, Bertolt, xli, 68, 91, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 147, 186, 200, 201
 Lehrstück, 143
 Breker, Arno, 164, 165, 166, 167, 232
 Decathlete (1936), 165
 Heroine (1940), 165
 Readiness (1939), 165, 232
 Brenson, Michael, 177
 British Airways, 110
 British Arts Council, 122
 British Association of Business Sponsorship of the Arts, 121, 260–261n41
 British Crafts Council, 120
 Broodthaers, Marcel, 102, 103, 147, 172, 173, 174, 266n19, 266n121
 Eagle Department of his Museum of Modern Art (1968), 172
 Brooklyn Army Terminal, 114
 Brooklyn Museum, 110, 227

Bruskin, Grisha, 196
 Buckingham Palace, 205
 Bundesplatz, Bern, 102
 Bundestag, Berlin, xlii, 102, 192, 194, 195, 196, 202, 203, 204
 Buren, Daniel, 73
 Burnham, Jack, xxiv, 8, 24, 29, 34
 Beyond Modern Sculpture: The Effects of Science and Technology on the Sculpture of This Century (1968), 24
 Bush, George H. W., 153, 156
 Bush, George W., 215, 216
 “Mission Accomplished,” 214, 215
 “Shock and Awe,” 214, 216
 “Stuff Happens,” 214
 Business Committee for the Arts, 88
 Bussmann, Klaus, 212, 231, 23

Cambodia, 32, 226. *See also* Indochina War
Capital, 173, 266 n120
 Cartier, 130, 158, 169, 180, 181
 Cartier Foundation for Contemporary Art, 130
 Castelli Gallery, 125, 228, 257n3
 Céline, Louis-Ferdinand, 166
 Censorship, xxxi, xxxix, xl, 44, 47, 57, 60, 68, 78, 89, 90, 122, 129, 152, 157, 170, 173, 174, 176, 180, 181, 22, 227, 230, 249, 262n62
 Centre Pompidou, 77, 146
 Chagy, Gideon, 88
 Chase Manhattan Bank, 32, 86, 96, 229, 230, 257n6, 260n32
 Cheney, Richard Bruce (“Dick”), 216
 Chermayeff, Ivan, 85
 Chermayeff and Geismar, 85
 Chiesa dei Gesuati, Venice, 170
 Chillida, Eduardo, 250
 Chirac, Jacques, 146
 Christie’s, 110
 Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands (CDU), xlii, 166, 201, 202, 203
 Christlich-Soziale Union in Bayern (CSU), xlii, 201, 203
 Chung-hee, Park, 233
 Church of San Francesco, Como, xlii–xliv, 243
 Church, Frank, 84
 Cicciolina (Ilona Staller), 167
 Cini, Vittorio, 160

Cipriani, Harry, 167
Cipriani, Venice, 167
 Cladders, Johannes, 120, 262n55
 Cleveland Museum of Art, 89
 Cockcroft, Eva, 102
 Cocteau, Jean, 166
 Cold War, x, 152–153, 223
 Cologne Art Fair, 225
 Cologne Kunsthalle, 70
 Commendatore Bazzoni, 165, 265n94
 Compagnie Financière Richmont, 130
 Comte de Lautréamont (Isidore-Lucien Ducasse), 207
Conceptual Art and Conceptual Aspects (New York Cultural Center, 1970), 241
 Conceptual Art, 33, 106, 107, 226, 241, 230, 251
 Condensation, xvi, xvii, xviii, 6, 22, 23, 36, 37, 48, 49
 Consciousness industry, xxxiii, xxxiv, 78, 79, 81, 84, 90, 100, 106, 111, 131, 144, 155, 156, 157, 159, 123, 144, 153, 176, 185
 Conservative Party, UK (Tories), 110, 110, 245, 262n57
 Constantin, Vacheron, 130
 Constructivism, 91, 182, 224
 Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art, 226, 240
 Corporations, xxxi, xxxiv, xxxv, xxxviii, xxxix, 46, 75, 78, 85, 87, 88, 89, 98, 144, 157, 120, 121, 122, 144, 174, 176, 180, 215, 229, 231, 259n30, 262n62, 263n75
 Critical Art Ensemble, 215
 Cubism, 164
 Cultural or symbolic capital, xxxv, xli, 84, 85, 86, 144, 154–155, 170, 173, 176, 182, 233, 234, 266n15
 Culver, John, 84
 Cybernetics, 4, 34

 Dada, 85, 90, 91, 106, 164, 182, 224
Dada, Surrealism and Their Heritage (Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1967), 90
 Daimler-Benz, 150, 169, 210, 211
 DaimlerChrysler, 210
 Dalí, Salvador, 166
 Dante Alighieri, 154
 da Vinci, Leonardo, 13, 18
 “Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen” (1789), 145, 149
 De Gaulle, Charles, 107
Degenerate Art (Munich, 1937), 164, 200, 221, 224, 232, 264n91
 De Kooning, Willem, 1
 de Montebello, Philippe, 129, 157, 170, 177, 180, 230, 262n62

Demystification, xxxix, 22, 49, 75, 84, 111
Der Spiegel, 166, 265n100
Desert Generation (Jerusalem Artists' House, 2007), 218, 240
 de Suvero, Mark, 215
 Deutsche Bank, 73, 74, 161, 211, 227
 Deutsche Press Agentur (dpa), 26
 Deutsche Städte-Reklame GmbH, 210, 211
 Deutsches Reisebüro, 168
 Días, Antonio, 73
 Diestel, Peter-Michael, 151
 di Lecce, Claudia, 229
Dimanche, 107. *See also* Klein, Yves
Directions 3: Eight Artists (Milwaukee Art Center, 1971), 26, 64
Documenta, ix, x, 65, 72, 100, 102, 1 B, 1 H, 170, 211, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 228, 229, 231, 233, 234, 248
Documenta I (1955), 223, 224
Documenta II (1959), x, 223, 225, 224
Documental IV (1968), 100
Documenta V (1972), 55, 6, 228, 229, 231, 258n11
Documenta VI (1977), 100, 262n53
Documenta VII (1982), 102, 186
Documenta IX (1992), 266n129
Documental X (2002), 211
Documental XI (2007), 234
Documenta XII (2012), 234
 Dollfuß, Engelbert, 135
 Duchamp, Marcel, xv, xvii, 20, 39, 49, 105, 184, 185, 248. *See also* Readymade
Bicycle Wheel (1913), xv, 20
 Dunhill, 20
 Durkheim, Émile, 179
 Dynamism, 2, 3, 4, 5, 16, 17. *See also* Aerodynamics; Dynamism; Hydrodynamics;
 Social dynamics

 Earth art, 33, 95
Earth Art (Andrew Dickson White Museum, Cornell University, 1969), xxii, 195
Economist, 243
 Eisenman, Peter, 197
 Engineering, 12, B, B0, 231
 Environments, vii, xi, xii, xvi, xii, xviii, xxi, xii, xiii, xiv, xvi, 2, 5, 10, 11, 12, 189, 222, 23, 24, 27–28, 35, 36, 37, 43, 48, 50, 51, 58, 60, 68, 76, 87, 91, 95, 99, 106, 111, 13, 16, 118, 145, 147, 165, 169, 175, 182, 198, 206, 207, 241, 245

Enwezor, Okwui, 234, 248
 Enzensberger, Hans Magnus, xxxiii. *See also* Consciousness industry
 Erhard, Ludwig, 166, 265n99
 Expressionism, xi, 1, 17, 152, 163, 186, 250
 Exxon, 88, 121, 230

 Fautrier, Jean, 1
 Federal Republic of Germany, 66, 102, 172, 193, 194, 202, 222
 Feedback, xii, 4, 35, 81
 Fenz, Werner, 134, 135
 Filliou, Robert, 73
 Fininvest, 243
 Fondazione Antonio Ratti, Como, xliv, 243
 Fontana, Bill, 136
 Fontana, Lucio, 225
 Foster, Norman, 195, 196
 Fradeletto, Antonio, 168
 Frankfurt Staedelsches Kunstinstitut, 74
Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ), 169
 Frankfurter Kunstverein, 65, 258n8, 261n42, 261n43, 261n46
 Franklin Furnace, 99
 Frederick II, Landgrave of Hesse-Kassel, 97
 Freedom of expression, xxxi, 172, 178, 189
 French Revolution, 146, 147, 149, 155, 200, 232
 Fridericianum, Kassel, 221, 222, 224, 225
 Friedrich, Caspar David, 232, 233, 249
 Shipwreck of Hope (1823–1824), 232
 Front National (FN), 147
 Fry, Edward F., xxxi, 13, 28, 37, 60, 61, 257n5, 260n35
 Furet, François, 146
 Futurism, 163, 164

 Gaggia, Achille, 160
 Galerie Denise René, xv
 Galerie France Morin, xxxvi, 141
 Galerie Iris Clert, 104, 106
 Galerie Paul Maenz in Cologne, 73, 82, 258n8, 261n43, 264n85
 Gallwitz, Klaus, 74
 Genauer, Emily, 38, 54
 Gencor Ltd., 128, 130
 General Systems Theory, xxvi, 34, 106

Geneva Conventions, 216
 George IV, 254, 256
 German Democratic Republic (DDR), 150, 200
 Giardini Pubblici, 159, 165, 167, 212, 231, 23
 Gillette, Frank, 73
 Giscard d'Estaing, Valéry, 77
 Giuliani, Rudolph, 227
 Gladstone, Barbara, 125
Globe and Mail, 143
 Godard, Jean-Luc, 154, 157, 263n70, 263n71
 Le Mépris (Contempt) (1963), 154
 Goebbels, Joseph, 152, 162, 163
 Goldman Sachs, 238
 Gonzalez, Alberto, 216
 Gorbachev, Mikhail, 102
 Gospels of Henry the Lion (c. 1188), 7
 Graduate Center, City University of New York, 125
 Greenberg, Clement, 77, 118, 18
 Groupe de recherche d'art visuel (GRAV), xvi, 19, 105
 Guggenheim Museum, xxviii, xxx, 42, 43, 44, 46, 56, 57, 58, 60, 61, 64, 67, 88,
 89, 104, 173, 228, 234, 257n1, 257n5, 257n6, 260n32, 260n35, 262n52
 Gwangju Biennale, 233, 234, 248, 267n136

 Haacke, Hans
 Alcan: Tableau pour la salle du conseil d'administration (1983), 139
 BONUS-Storm (2009), xli v, xlvii, 237, 238
 Bowery Seeds (1970), xxii, xlii, 195
 Calligraphie (1989/2011), 118, 148
 Chickens Hatching (1969), xxvi, xxvii, 49
 Condensation Cube (1963–1965), xvi, xvii, xviii, xxvi, 6, 22, 23, 36, 37, 48, 49
 Cycle (1969), 35
 Décor (1989), 147
 DER BEVÖLKERUNG, xli, xlii, xliii, 192, 192, 194, 195, 201
 Directions 3: Eight Artists poll (Milwaukee Art Center, 1971), 36, 64–65, 228, 258n11
 Documenta V poll (1972), 65, 228, 229, 258n11
 Fog, Swamp, Erosion (1969), 237
 Gallery-Goers' Birthplace and Residence Profile (1969), xxviii, xxix, xxx, 39
 GERMANIA (1993), 160, 161, 165
 Gift Horse (2013–2015), 254, 255, 256
 Grass Grows (1967–1969), xxii, xxii, xlii, 195
 High Voltage Discharge Traveling (1968), 237

Howard Wise Gallery poll (1969), 43, 63, 227
Ice Stick (1966), xviii–xix, xx, 35, 36
John Weber Gallery Visitors' Profile 1 and 2 (1972 and 1973), 52, 53, 65, 75, 76, 228, 257n3, 261 n48
Kunst im politischen Kampf poll (Kunstverein Hannover, 1973), 65, 258n11
Life Goes On (2005), 214, 214
Manet-PROJEKT '74 (1974), 70, 70, 71, 72, 73, 258n8, 261n43, 264n85
MetroMobiltan (1985), xxxvi, xxxvii, xxxix, 127, 127
Mission Accomplished (2005), 234
Mixed Messages (2001), 205–208
MOMA-Poll (1970), xxvi, xxvii, 31, 32, 38, 39, 43, 54, 56, 59, 64, 226
Museum Haus Lange poll (1972), 64–65, 228, 258n11
Nachrichten (News) (1969), xxiv, xxv, xlv, 26
Oelgemaelde, Hommage à Marcel Broodthaers (1982), 102, 103, 147
Once Upon a Time (2010), xlv, xlii–xliii, xlv, 243, 244, 246, 247
Photo-Electric Viewer-Programmed Coordinate System (1968), xxiii, xxiii, 24
Recording of Climate in Art Exhibition (1969–1970), xlv, xlviii, 241
Shapolsky et al Manhattan Real Estate Holdings, A Real-Time Social System as of May 1, 1971 (1971), xxix, xxx–xxxi, xxxii, 45, 45–46, 188
Software poll (Jewish Museum, 1970), 43, 63–64
Sol Goldman and Alex DiLorenzo Manhattan Real Estate Holdings, a Real-Time Social System, as of May 1, 1971 (1971), xxx
Sphere in Oblique Air Jet (1964–1967), xviii
Steam (1967), xxi
Taking Stock (unfinished) (1983–1984), 109, 109–110
Thank You, Paine Webber (1979), 238
Trickle Up (1992), 234
U.S. Isolation Box, Grenada (1983), 125–126, 126
UND IHR HABT DOCH GESIEGT (And You Were Victorious After All) (1988), 132–138, 132, 133
Voici Alcan (1983), xxxviii, xxxiv–xxxviii, xxxix, 139–143, 140, 141, 142
Wave (1964), xii, xiv, xv, 21
West Bank, 1994–27th Year of Occupation (2007–2009), 218, 219, 220, 240
White Waving Line (1967), xviii
Wind Room (1969), xlv, xlvii, 237
World Poll (Venice Biennale, 2015), 56, 57
 Haftmann, Werner, 225
Painting in the 20th Century (1954), 224, 266n131
 Haiger, Ernst, 164, 265n94
 Hamburger Bahnhof–Museum für Gegenwart, 110

Hanfstaengl, Eberhard, 163
 Hardware, 203, 222
 Harrison, Helen, 73
 Harrison, Newton, 73
 Harry's Bar, Venice, 168
 Hartung, Hans, 1
 Harvard Business School, 112
 Haus der Deutschen Kunst, 164, 165
 Heartfield, John, 90, 224
 Heidegger, Martin, 163, 264n88, 264n89
 Heisig, Bernhard, 167
 Helms, Jesse, 92, 156, 157, 188, 189, 230
 Henry Gallery, University of Washington, Seattle, xlv, 237
 Heraclitus, 15
 Herrero, Silvia, 250
 Herzogenrath, Wulf, 72
 Hightower, John, 118, 237
 Hitler, Adolf, 133, B4, 135, 152, 159, 162, 163, 172, 195, 197, 204, 212, 221, 223, 23,
 264n79, 264n86, 264n91
 Hoffman, Abby, 107
 Hoffmann, Hilmar, 74, 175
 Hollywood, 89, 120
 Holzer, Jenny, 196
 Hoskote, Ranjit, 234
 Howard Wise Gallery, xxviii, 26, 43, 63, 228
 Howard, Michael, 110
 Hucleux, Jean-Olivier, 167
 Humanism, x, 1, 29
 Hussein, Saddam, 169, 215
 Hydrodynamics, xvii, xviii, 20, 21, 48, 106

 Ideology, xxxi, xxxiv, 73, 76, 78, 79, 81, 91, 92, 95, 107, 115, 144, 172, 259n21
 IFA-Kombinat, 151
 Ifo-Institute, 175
Independent, 256
 Indochina War, xxvii, 38, 51, 54, 227 *See also* Vietnam War
 Information, xi, xxxiii, xxiv, xxviii, xxx, xxi, xlv, 4, 12, 15, 24, 34, 38, 39, 40, 42, 43,
 45, 46, 50, 51, 54, 57, 58, 59, 63, 64, 72, 78, 147, 167, 168, 181, 193
Information (Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1970), xxvi, 31, 32, 38, 51, 54,
 64, 225, 226, 227
 Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA), London, 69, 261, 261n43

Internal Revenue Service (IRS), 4
 Investor Responsibility Research Center, 143
 Iranian Revolutionary Guards, 169
 Iron Curtain, 222, 223
 Israeli Occupied Territories, 241

 J. Paul Getty Museum, 114
 Jesse Helms Center, 157, 188
 Jewish Museum, New York, 26, 43, 63,
 Johannesburg Biennale, 233, 234
 Johns, Jasper, 9
 John Weber Gallery, 52, 53, 55, 58, 76, 102, 228, 230, 257n3, 261n48
 Johst, Hanns, 152, 266
 Jünger, Ernst, 166
 Jungwirth, Kurt, 132

 Kabakov, Ilya, 196
 Kahan, Mitchell Douglas, 86
 Kaiser Wilhelm I, 197, 198, 211
 Kant, Immanuel, 77, 115, 153
 Karner, Stefan, 138
 Kauder, Volker, 202
 Keller, Horst, 72, 73
 Kent State University, 32, 226
 Kibbutz Art Gallery, Tel Aviv, 218
 Kim, Hyunjin, 234
 Kinetic, xv, xvi, 9, 20, 33, 105
 King George III, 222
 King, Martin Luther, Jr., 14
 Kissinger, Henry, 226
 Kitchen, 99
 Klein, Yves, 104–108
 Anthropométries (1960), 105
 Le Vide (1958), 106
 Monogolds (1960), 105, 107
 Théâtre du vide (1960), 104
 Koch, Ed, 87, 118
 Kohl, Helmut, 151, 186, 197, 207
 Kolbe, Georg, *Statue for a Stadium* (1937), 162
 König, Kasper, 212
 Kopper, Hilmar, 211

Koshalek, Richard, 188
 Kosuth, Joseph, 241
 Kramer, Hilton, 126
 Kriesche, Richard, 137
 Kristallnacht, 137
 Krupp AG, 139, 142
 Ku Klux Klan, 214
 Kubrick, Stanley, *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), 145
Kunst im politischen Kampf poll (Kunstverein Hannover, 1973), 65, 258n11
 Kunstbeirat, Deutscher Bundestag, 194, 195, 196, 203
 Kunsthalle Bern, 102, 226
 Kunsthalle Bremen, 72
 Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, 26, 172, 174, 261n43, 266n119, 266n121, 266n123
 Kunsthalle Hamburg, 232
 Kunstmuseum Bonn, 134
 Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen Düsseldorf, 225
 Kunstverein Hanover, 228
 Kurtz, Steve, 215, 216

 Landesgalerie Düsseldorf, 97
 Lang, Fritz, 154–155, 163
 Lee, Sherman, 89
 LEF, 147
 LEGO, 251
 LeLé Berlin Wall Verkaufs- und Wirtschaftswerbung GmbH, 150
Le Monde, 204
Le mouvement (Galerie Denise René, 1955), xv
 Lenin, Vladimir, 245
 Leo Castelli Gallery, 125, 257n3
 Le Pen, Jean-Marie, 147
 LeWitt, Sol, 73
Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité, 146, 149
 Liebermann, Ferdinand, *Reich Chancellor Hitler* (1937), 162
 Light, xii, xiv, xvi, xxiii, xliv, 2, 4, 5, 6, 18, 22, 2735, 48, 142, 237
 Lightyear Capital, 239
 Likud, 241
 Limex-Bau Export-Import, 150
 Liquid, xii, xiv, xvi, xviii, 19, 20, 22
 London Stock Exchange, 254, 256
 Los Angeles County Museum of Art, xxiv, 28, 264n91
Los Angeles Times, 26

Lowry, Bates, 118
Ludwigslust—Die Sammlung Irene und Peter Ludwig (Germanic National
 Museum, Nürnberg), 167
 Ludwig, Peter, 96, 97, 114, 119–120
 Lye, Len, *Flip and Two Twisters*, 1967, 9

 M&C Saatchi, 110
 Maillol, Aristide, 166
 Mandela, Nelson Aldrich, 128
 Manet, Édouard, *Bunch of Asparagus* (1880), 70, 71, 72, 73, 258n8, 261n43, 264 n85
 Mansour, Sliman, 218, 240
 Mapplethorpe, Robert, 156
 Maraini, Antonio, 159, 163
 Marais, Jean, 166
 Marco, Jindrich, *A Souvenir of Warsaw* (1947), 207
 Marcuse, Herbert, 78
 Mariensäule, 134, 135, 137
 Markam, James M., 146
 Marquess of Rockingham, 256
 Marron, Donald, 239
 Marx, Karl, 115, 163, 185, 259n22
 The German Ideology, 115
 Mathematics, 36
 Mattern, Hermann, ix, 221
 Mayakovsky, Vladimir, 147
 May 1968, 178, 179
 McCain, John, 216
 McCarthy, Joseph, 223
 McGovern, George, 84
 McShine, Kynaston, 225
 Mediaset, 243
 Meisner, Cardinal Joachim, 224
 Mercedes Benz, 180, 181, 210
 Messer, Thomas M., xxxi, 42, 43, 44, 46, 56, 59, 58, 60, 64, 89, 222, 228,
 257n5, 260n35, 262n52
 Metaphor, 37, 58, 172, 173, 185, 191, 202, 236, 237, 242,
 Meteorological, xxi, xlv, 23, 24, 35, 48, 50, 185, 237, 242
 Metropole Palace Hotel, Monte Carlo, 150
 Metropolitan Museum of Art, xxxvi, 112, 113, 111, 127, 129, 156, 157, 177, 226, 230, 231,
 257n6, 260n32, 262n59, 262n62, 263n75
 Michaux, Henri, 1

Michelangelo (Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni), 106
 Milan Stock Exchange, xlv, 243
 Military-industrial complex, 99, 221
 Milwaukee Art Center, 26, 64, 228, 258n11
 Minimalism, 33, 35, 36, 110, 231
 Mirrors, xxii, 2–3, 9, 106
 Mitterrand, François, 19
 Mobil Oil Corporation, xxxvi, 78, 83, 84, 87, 128, 129, 169
 Momper, Walter, 130
 Montblanc, 130
 Monti, Mario, 244
 Montreal Opera, xxxiv, xxxviii, 143
 Moral Majority, 83, 94,
 Movement, xi, xii, xiv, xv, xviii, 7, 8, 9, 17, 19, 21, 105
 Mudd Club, 92
 Museum für Moderne Kunst (MMK), Frankfurt, 174
 Museum Haus Lange, Krefeld, 43, 62, 64, 65, 228, 258n11, 261n46
 Museum Ludwig, Cologne, 166, 167, 172–173, 257n2. *See also* Wallraf-Richartz-Museum
 Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 189, 262n55
 Museum of Modern Art, New York, xxviii, 31, 32, 43, 51, 57, 59, 64, 66, 85, 86, 90,
 112, 14, 118, 153, 164, 223, 226, 227, 239, 248, 257n 6, 257n7, 260n32
 Mussolini, Benito (Il Duce), 159, 161, 165, 232
 My Lai, Vietnam, 227
 Mystification, 92. *See also* Myth
 Myth, xli, 49, 75, 84, 106, 111, 117, 122, 123, 120, 173, 186, 199, 202, 256. *See also* Mystification

 Napoleon (Napoléon Bonaparte), 169, 201, 232, 243
 National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), 87, 99, 19, 126, 155, 166, 189, 260n33
 National Gallery, London, 254, 256
 National Gallery, Ottawa, 143
 National Museum, Lagos, 127
 National Portrait Gallery, London, 120
 Nationalgalerie Berlin, 162
 Nauman, Bruce, 203
 Nay, Ernst Wilhelm, 225
 Nazi Party (National Socialist German Workers' Party), ix, x, xli, 74, 134, 135, 136,
 137, 163, 182, 195, 199, 201, 204, 221, 222, 223, 224, 264n91
 Negt, Oskar, 100
 Neo-Expressionism, 110, 186
 Neo-nazis, 137, 201, 204
 Netanyahu, Benjamin, 241

Neue Galerie, Graz, 134
Neue Kronen Zeitung, 137
 Neue Sachlichkeit, 224
New Criterion, 125
 New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York 26, 1~~2~~, 263n85
Newsweek, 230, 262n62, 263n63, 263n76, 266n17, 266n1~~2~~, 267n135
 New York County Clerk, xxx, 45, 46, 57
 New York Cultural Center, 241
 New York Stock Exchange, 107
New York Times, 26, 87, 100, 1~~6~~, 125, 1~~8~~, 146, 157, 177, 216, 230, 260n36, 262nn54, 60,
 263nn 72, 73, 74, 265n104, 265n111
 Nixon, Richard Milhous, xxvii, 38, 51, 54, 2~~5~~, 227
 Noguchi, Isamu, 1~~0~~
 Nouveaux Réalistes, 19
Nouvelle Tendance, 15

Ofili, Chris, 227
 Ohio National Guard, 32, 226
 Oldenburg, Claes, 125
 Olympic Games, 164, 168, 222
 Open system, xvi, 48, 1~~5~~
 Organism, xi, xvii, xviii, xxi, xxvi, 6, 8, 22, ~~3~~, 47, 51, 58, 1~~0~~, 228
 Oslo Accords, 240
 Österreichische Volkspartei (ÖVP), 132

Paik, Nam June, 212, 2~~3~~
 Paine Webber, “Do You Sincerely Want to Be Poor?—Paine Webber’s Centennial
 Essay on the Future of American Capitalism” (1978), 2~~3~~
 Paine Webber, “Where Do Jobs Come From?—A Concise Report on Unemployment
 and Wall Street’s Role in Preventing It” (1977), 2~~3~~
 Palais Liechtenstein, Vienna, 72
 Palance, Jack, 154
 Palazzo Chigi, Rome, 244
 Paley, Bill, 227, 257n6, 260n32
 Panza di Biumo Count Giuseppe, 1~~9~~, 262n55
 Paris Commune, 179
 Participation, xiv, xvi, xxiii, xlv, 16, 21, ~~2~~, 24, 25, 100, ~~5~~, 211
 Patronage, 176
 Paula Cooper Gallery, 125, ~~2~~, 234
 Peace Tower, 215, 216
 Peiner, Werner, *German Soil* (1938), 162

Pentagon, 1225, 228
 Perrin, Alain-Dominique, 130, 157, 158, 169, 265n112, 266n127
 Philip Morris International Inc., 88, 157, 169, 188, 189, 229, 230, 259n24, 262n61, 265n109
 Photoelectric, xxiii, 24
 Photography, viii, xxviii, xxx, xlii, 39, 40, 42, 50, 57, 102, 104, 106, 127, 135, 139,
 140, 141, 142, 143, 195, 206, 207, 211, 222, 234, 240, 259 n21, 263n65
 Physical systems, 37, 43, 44, 51, 59, 60, 106, 242
 meteorological systems, 24
 Piaget, 130
 Piazza San Marco, 159, 168
 Piene, Otto, 29, 104
 Place Vendôme, 170
 Plastics, xii, xvi, 18, 19, 20, 26, 48
 Pollock, Jackson, 1, 225
 Polls, xxvi, xxvii, xxviii, xxx, 32, 38, 39, 42, 43, 54, 56, 57, 59, 63–65, 75, 76, 83, 84,
 92, 226, 227, 228, 229, 257n3
 Pope John Paul II, 74
 Pound, Ezra, 166
 Printed Matter, 99
 Prinzhorn, Hans, 162, 163
 Process, xi, xvi, xvii, xviii, xxi, xxii, xiii, xiv, xxx, xlii, 6, 17, 23, 2434, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39,
 43, 48, 49, 50, 51, 54, 60, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 105, 145, 176, 181, 193, 195, 202, 204, 207
 Prodi, Romano, 244
PROJEKT '74, 70–74, 70, 71, 258n8, 261n43, 264n85
Prospect 69, 26
 Prussian Ministry of Finance, 165, 265n96
 Public, x, xxvii, xxviii, xxx, xxxi, xxxiii, xxxv, xxxvi, xxxviii, xxxix, xl, xli, xiv, xivi, xviii,
 12, 29, 39, 42, 43, 46, 47, 49, 54, 57, 58, 59, 60, 66, 67, 68, 75, 77, 78, 79, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88,
 89, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 98, 100, 106, 107, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 125, 127, 130, 133,
 134, 135, 136, 145, 146, 149, 150, 155, 156, 157, 158, 169, 170, 172, 174, 175, 176, 180, 181, 182, 183,
 184, 186, 188, 189, 193, 195, 198, 202, 205, 209, 210, 211, 213, 216, 221, 228, 229, 230, 233, 234, 236,
 239, 243, 245, 248, 249, 250, 251, 257n3, 258n9, 259n27, 259n28, 260n35, 261n46, 262n60
 Public Development Corporation, 114
 Puritanism, 91

 Rabin, Yitzhak, 240
 Racism, 14, 147
 Rafferty, Emily, 231
 Rain, 20, 36, 105
 Ramaphosa, Cyril, 128, 130
 Rambo, 186

Raphael (Raffaello Sanzio da Urbino), 49
 Rassemblement pour la République (RPR), 146
 Ratti, Antonio, 243
 Rauschenberg, Robert
 Bed (1955), 225
 Revolver (1967), 9
 Readymade, xv, vii, 20, 49, 212. *See also* Duchamp, Marcel
 Reagan, Ronald, 87, 99, 102, 121, 125, 16, 156, 186, 260n39
 Real-time systems, xxiv, xxviii, 39, 43, 49, 50, 58, 59
 Recycling, xxiv, 24, 34, 149
 Reeb, David, 218, 240, 241
 Refrigerated works, xviii, xxi, 23
 Reichstag, xli, xlii, 192, 193, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 202, 204
 Reinhardt, Ad, 104
 Rembrandt (Rembrant Harmenszoon van Rijn), 130
 Rembrandt Group, 130
 Renner, William B., 83, 258n12
 Richardson, E. P., 90
 Richter, Gerhard, 224
 Riefenstahl, Leni, 162, 164
 Riegl, Alois, 59
 Rittner, Luke, 121, 122, 20–261n41
Road to Victory, The (Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1942), 164
 Rockefeller, John D., III, 90
 Rockefeller, Mrs. John D., III, 32, 90, 257n6, 260n32
 Rockefeller, David, 32, 86, 226, 227, 229, 230, 257n6, 259n25, 260n32, 266n132, 267n133
 Rockefeller, Nelson, xvii, 32, 38, 51, 54, 22, 227
 Rodchenko, Alexandr, 147
 Rodin, Auguste, *Burghers of Calais* (1889), 22
 Ronte, Dieter, 72
 Rosenberg, Alfred, 163
 Rosicrucianism, 105
 Rosler, Martha, 98, 262n49
 Rothmans International, 130
 Roux, Ségéla, Cayssac & Goudard, 145–146
 Royal Academy of Arts, London, 110, 10
 Rubin, William S., 90
 Rückriem, Ulrich, 196
 Ruder & Finn, 85, 229, 230
 Ruhnau, Walter, 105
 Rupert, Anton, 130

Rupert, Johann, 130
 Rushdie, Salman, 147
 Russell, John, 100, 262n54

 Saatchi, Charles, 86, 109, 110, 10, 186, 262n59
 Saatchi, Maurice, 110
 Saatchi & Saatchi PLC, 110, 245, 262n57, 262n59
 Safer, Morley, 153, 263n68
 Saint Francis, 243
 Saint Rita of Cascia, 107
 Saint-Simon (Claude Henri de Rouvroy, comte de Saint-Simon), 178
 São Paulo Biennale, 29
 Scaife, Richard Mellon, 125
 Scheidemann, Philipp, 195
 Schirner, Michael, 174
 Schmalenbach, Werner, 97, 225
 Schmertz, Herbert, 86, 259n27, 262n60
 Schmid, Carlo, 204
 Schnabel, Julian, 109, 120, 262n56
 Schneckeburger, Manfred, 72
 Schrempp, Jürgen E., 210
 Schröder, Gerhard, 197
 Schug, Albert, 72
 Science, vii, xxiv, xli, 12, B, 24, 34, 51, 66, 77, 205
 Sculpture. Projects in Münster 1997 (1997), 209, 210, 211, 22
 Sculpture, xii, xv, xviii, 10, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 24, 34, 35, 48, 49, 105, 109, B7
 184, 209, 210, 211, 22, 237258n12
 Sedlmayr, Hans, 223, 224, 266n130
 Seeds, xxii, xlii, 37, 66, 163, 193, 195, 204. *See also* Airborne seeds
 Sekula, Allan, 93, 260n40
 Selvatico, Riccardo, 168, 170, 231
Sensation (Royal Academy of Art, London, 1997), 110
 Serpentine Gallery, 120, 208
 Serra, Richard, 197
 Shapolsky, Harry, xxxi, 46
 Shui, Feng, 256
 Siegel, Jeanne, 30, 33–40
 Siegessäule, Berlin, 197
 Simon Wiesenthal Center, 74
 Smith, Adam, *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), 236, 256
 Smokey the Bear, 33

Soane, John, 206
 Social Democratic Party, 132, 195, 258n, 261n43
 Social dynamics, x, xi, xxxiii, xxxiv, 15, 16
 Socialist Realism, 91, 223, 249
 Social systems, xxvi, xxviii, 37, 43, 44, 50, 51, 57, 58, 59
 Società Anonima Cementi Armati, 165
 Software, 64, 222
Software (Jewish Museum, 1970), 26, 63, 64
 Sonnabend Gallery, 228
 Sotheby Parke-Bernet, 74
 Soviet Union, 14, 146, 172, 196, 223, 224
 Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs (SPÖ), 132
 Spectator, xi, xii, xiv, xvi, xvii, xxxiii, xiv, xxx, xlv, xiv, 2, 3, 4, 5, 248.
 See also Viewer
 Speer, Albert, 197
 Staatliche Werkakademie, Kassel, ix, 221, 223
 Städelsches Kunstinstitut und Städtische Galerie (Städel Museum),
 Frankfurt am Main, 162
 Stadt der Volkserhebung, 134
 Stadtwerke Münster, 210
 Staeck, Klaus, 99
 Stalin, Joseph, 90, 126, 172, 182
 Star Wars, 186
 Starr, Kenneth W., 126
 Stasi (Ministerium für Staatssicherheit), 151
State of the Union (Paula Cooper Gallery, 2005), 214
 Static/nonstatic, x, xi, xii, xvi, xxi, 2, 3, 9, 10, 16, 17, 19, 36
 Statistic, xxi, xlv, 6, 23, 35, 63, 64, 199, 216
 Status quo, xi, 1516, 36, 79, 92, 123
 Steirischer Herbst, 132, 133, B5, B6
 St. George's University Medical School, Grenada, 125
 Stingl, Alfred, 132
 Strobl, Helmut, 132
 Stroetzel, Don, 83, 84, 258nB
 Stubbs, George, *The Anatomy of the Horse* (1766), 254, 256
 Whistlejacket, 1762, 256
 Sullivan, Louis, 188
 Surrealism, 90, 224
 Syberberg, Hans-Jürgen, 163, 264n90
 SYGMA, 127

Systems, xi, xxi, xxiii, xxiv, xxviii, xlii, 10, 24, 33, 34, 37, 39, 43, 44, 48,
 49, 50, 51, 57, 58, 59, 60, 75, 78, 106, 115, 242. *See also* Biological systems;
 General Systems Theory; Physical systems; Real-time systems;
 Social systems
 Szeemann, Harald, 226, 228, 229, 230, 231

 Tachism, xi, 17, 105
Tactile (Henry Gallery, University of Washington, Seattle, 1970), 237–238
 Takis, 104, 105
 Tannenbaum, Alan, 127
 Tartakover, David, 218, 240
 Tate Gallery, 102, 109, 110, 114, 129, 230, 254
 Tatlin, Vladimir, 106
 Tel Aviv Museum of Art, 241
 Teletype (teleprinter), xxiii, 26, 63
Te Maori (Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1984), 129
 Tempelhofer Ufer, LLC, 150
 Temperature, xi, xvi, xviii, xxi, xlv, 5, 6, 10, 22, 23, 48, 241
 Temporary Contemporary, 186, 189
Terminal (Brooklyn Army Terminal, New York, 1983), 114
Texte zur Kunst, xiv, 245–249
 Thatcher, Margaret, 110, 119, 120, 121, 186, 260–261n41
 Thermostat, xviii, 22,
 Thierse, Wolfgang, 203
 Third Reich, 138, 164, 165, 169
 Thorak, Josef, 165
 Thyssen-Bornemisza, Hans Heinrich, 166
 Time, xi xiv, xvi, xviii, xxiv, xxvi, xxvii, xxviii, xxx, xxxi, xlii, xlv, 5, 10, 11, 14, 17, 18,
 19, 24, 27, 36, 39, 43, 45, 46, 49, 50, 54, 58, 59, 60, 63, 64, 65, 73, 137, 165, 166, 188, 193,
 205, 238. *See also* Real-time systems
 Tinguely, Jean, 104
 Tiravanija, Rirkrit, 215
 Trafalgar Square, 254, 256
Treasures of Tutankhamun (Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1979), 118
 Troost, Paul Ludwig, 164
 Tuchman, Maurice, xxiv, 28

 UBS Financial Services Inc., 239
 United Technologies, 88
 Universidad Europea de Madrid, 250
 University Ca'Pesaro, Venice, 168

University of Freiburg, 163
 UPI (United Press International), 26
 U.S. Congress, 128
 U.S. Food and Drug Administration, 188
 USS Abraham Lincoln, 215

Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, Holland, 80, 82, 95, 129, 261n43
 Van Clef & Arpels, 130
 Vatican Bank, 74
 Venice Biennale, 56, 159, 162, 163, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 174, 212, 220,
 231, 232, 262n55, 264n86, 264n87, 265n93, 265n94, 265n95, 265n96, 265n97,
 265n98, 265n102, 265n108
 Veronese, Paolo, *The Last Supper* (1573), 152
 Vibration, 2, 18, 105
 Victoria & Albert Museum, 120, 205, 208
 Vietnam War, 14, 29, 32, 94, 226, 227, 229. *See also* Indochina War
 Viewer, xi, xii, xiv, xvi, xvii, xviii, *xviii*, xlv, 10, 11, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 24, 25, 37, 48, 84,
 85, 88, 93, 105, 106, 115, 145, 147, 153, 173, 232, 237 *See also* Spectator
 Vlamincx, Maurice, 166
 Vollmer, Antje, 203
 Volpi di Misurata, Count Giuseppe, 159, 160, 162, 164, 167, 264n84
 von der Osten, Gert, 72, 73,
 von Graffenried, Michael, 102
 Vujica, Peter, 118, 134

Wackerle, Joseph, 162, 164
 Wagner, Winifred, 166
 Waldheim, Kurt, 134, 137
 Wallis, Brian, *Hans Haacke: Unfinished Business* (1986), 139, 263n64, 264n85
 Wall Street, 238, 239, 252, 256
Wall Street Journal, 118, 125, 263, 259n30
 Wallot, Paul, 195, 200
 Wallraf-Richartz Museum, Cologne, 70, 72, 172–173, 227, 257n2, 258n8, 261n43.
 See also Museum Ludwig
 War on Terror, 215
 Warhol, Andy, 92, 151, 167
 Warner, Rawleigh, Jr., 84
Washington Post, 26, 260n39
 Water, xiv, xii, xvi, xxi, xxvi, 6, 8, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 33, 35, 36, 37, 48, 62,
 105, 106, 149, 154, 237
 Watergate, 83, 94

Waxman, Henry A., 188
 Weather, xlv, xlv, 35, 36, 48, 49, 50, 51, 66, 237 241, 256
 Wedekind, Frank, 200
 Wegner, Thomas, 170, 266n14
 Wehrwirtschaftsführer, 169
 Weiss, Evelyn, 72
 Westfälisches Landesmuseum, 213, 231
When Attitudes Become Form (Kunsthalle Bern, 1969), 226, 229
 White House, 19, 186, 216
 Whitechapel Gallery, 109, 110, 10, 262n56
 Whitney Museum of American Art, 90, 122, 53, 215, 217, 257n6, 259n29, 260n37
 William IV, 254
 Wind, xxiv, xlii, xlv, 7, 8, 16, 33, 48, 49, 195, 237
 Winter, Fritz, ix, 223
 Witness, x, xvii, 25, 77, 88, 180, 203, 225, 241
 Wizard of Oz, 172
 Wols (Alfred Otto Wolfgang Schulze), 1
 World Cup, 222
 World's Fairs, 168, 222
 World War II, x, 51, 10, 134, 222, 232
Wunderkammer, 190, 206, 207

 X-Initiative, xlv

 Young British Art (YBA), 110

 ZERO, xvi, 19, 104, 105, 106
 Ziegler, Adolf, 165, 265n98
 Zwirner, Rudolf, 225