



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Hans Haacke

Archives of American Art
750 9th Street, NW
Victor Building, Suite 2200
Washington, D.C. 20001
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/services/questions>
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/>

Table of Contents

Collection Overview	1
Administrative Information	1
Scope and Contents.....	1
Scope and Contents.....	1
Biographical / Historical.....	1
Names and Subjects	2
Container Listing	

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Oral history interview with Hans Haacke
Identifier:	AAA.haacke09
Date:	2009 Aug. 20-21
Creator:	Haacke, Hans, 1936- (Interviewee) Richards, Judith Olch (Interviewer)
Extent:	8 Items (Sound recording: 8 sound files (5 hr., 13 min.); digital, wav file) 105 Pages (Transcript)
Language:	English .

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

This interview is part of the Archives of American Art Oral History Program, started in 1958 to document the history of the visual arts in the United States, primarily through interviews with artists, historians, dealers, critics and administrators.

Conditions Governing Use

Authorization to quote or reproduce for the purposes of publication requires written permission from Hans Haacke. Contact Reference Services for more information.

Biographical / Historical

Interviewee Hans Haacke (1936-) is a conceptual artist and educator in New York, N.Y. He taught at Cooper Union in New York, N.Y. Interviewer Judith Olch Richards (1947-) is former Executive director of iCI in New York, N.Y.

Scope and Contents

An interview of Hans Haacke conducted 2009 Aug. 20 and 21, by Judith Olch Richards, for the Archives of American Art, at Haacke's home, in New York, N.Y.

Scope and Contents

Interview of Hans Haacke, conducted by Judith O. Richards for the Archives of American Art, in New York, New York on August 20, 21 and 28, 2009. Haacke speaks of growing up in pre-war Germany; the effect of war on his childhood; his grandfather's interest in art and it's early influence on him; traveling across Europe during high school; attending art school in Kassel, Germany where he majored in painting and studied under Fritz Winter; an early belief that all contemporary art must be abstract; his interaction with Otto Piene

through the Zero Group in Düsseldorf, Germany during the 1960s; his determination to become an artist; his involvement with the early days of documenta in Kassel; two post graduate grants, the DAAD which took him to Stanley William Hater's Atelier 17 in Paris and the Fulbright Scholarship that brought him to Tyler School of Fine Arts at Temple University in Pennsylvania; his first three dimensional objects and his interest in reflective materials and water; the importance of viewer participation and interaction in his works; moving back to Germany for two years and returning to the United States in 1965 and making New York City his permanent residence; his interest in what was called 'kinetic art' and his relationship with Willoughby Sharp; the element of play in his work; the term 'real time systems' as applied to his own work and the meaning of 'system' when applied to art work in general; his long teaching post at Cooper Union from 1967-2002 and a love of teaching; the critique of the institution and its role in his work; the Art Workers Coalition; Westbeth Artist Community in New York City; the work Shapolsky et al. Manhattan Real Estate Holdings, A Real Time Social System, as of May 1, 1971, the closing of his show at the Guggenheim Museum in New York because of the controversy over the piece; his continued interest in presenting information rather than commentary; various works that ask the visitor questions; various works that question provenance and proper ownership of major works of art; showing at galleries when his work was forced out of shows at major museums around the world; his studio practices; the role computer technology plays in helping him realize new projects; participating in competitions; his work entitled Germania [1993] that won him the Golden Lion at the Venice Biennale and several other works touch on the themes of German nationalism, including To the Population [2000] and Memorial to Rosa Luxemburg [2006]; the relationship between his art and works of sociology; showing at the Paula Cooper Gallery in New York City; his interest in writing as a way to articulate his ideas to critics, viewers and other artists; his experiences in the art world over the past 40 years. Haacke also recalls Günther Uecker, Heinz Mack, Arnold Bode, Vassilakis Takis, John Hendricks, Leon Golub, David Pease, Al Held, Robert Morris, Yvonne Rainer, George Wittenborn, Robert Motherwell, Lucio Fontana, the Gutai Group, George Rickey, Jesús Rafael Soto, Jack Burnham, Howard Wise, Jon Hendricks, Edward Fry, Thomas Messer, Kynaston McShine, Charles Saatchi, Seth Siegel, Robert Projansky, Nam June Paik, Norman Poster, Pierre Bourdieu, Kasper König, Howard Becker, Andrea Fraser, Johann Kresnik, Maria Eichhorn, Benjamin Buchloh, Eva Cockcroft and others. Total: 2 digital recording discs; 2 hours, 10 min.; transcribed 105 pages.

System Details

Originally recorded on 6 memory cards (secure digital, 1.25 in.).

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings