

**Hans Haacke**

Born Cologne, 1936

Resident, New York City

In February, 1969 we contacted Hans Haacke, asking him to submit a project proposal for A & T. In early March he submitted descriptions for six projects involving aerodynamics, condensation cycles, transduction and information retrieval.

We sent all six proposals to Dr. Charles Spitzer, our contact at Ampex Corporation, for his consideration. No collaboration with Ampex had emerged from several previous attempts, and we were anxious to effect a match. Dr. Spitzer indicated his willingness to discuss one of the proposed works, called *Environment Transplant* [1] at length with the artist, indicating at the outset that the major obstacle would be the use of *real time*. Early in April Haacke flew to Los Angeles and was accompanied to Ampex, in Redwood City, by Hal Glicksman. During two days of discussion Spitzer and Haacke thrashed out the major problems: securing an FCC permit for direct, real time transmission, a difficult bureaucratic procedure to undertake; hiring a truck and driver for the four month duration of the exhibition; and procuring certain television projection equipment which Ampex did not manufacture. Ampex did not want to assume responsibility for solving any of these problems.

Even if Haacke decided to use a time delay feedback system—taping the information instead of employing direct transmission—there was still the problem of obtaining the television projection equipment. Our efforts to get a donation of this equipment from other contracted A & T companies like G.E. were unsuccessful.

We wrote Haacke explaining the impasse we had reached; undaunted, he replied by telephone with still another project proposal called *Information Retrieval*. He wanted to program a computer to ask census-type questions about spectators at the exhibition; this information would be gathered and stored during the time of the exhibition, and retrieved at will. The resulting compilation of data would constitute a sociological profile of the exhibition visitors. Although we were unable to execute this proposal—since all participating computer corporations were already involved with other artists—Haacke was able to execute a variant of this piece for the *Software* exhibition at New York's Jewish Museum held in September, 1970.