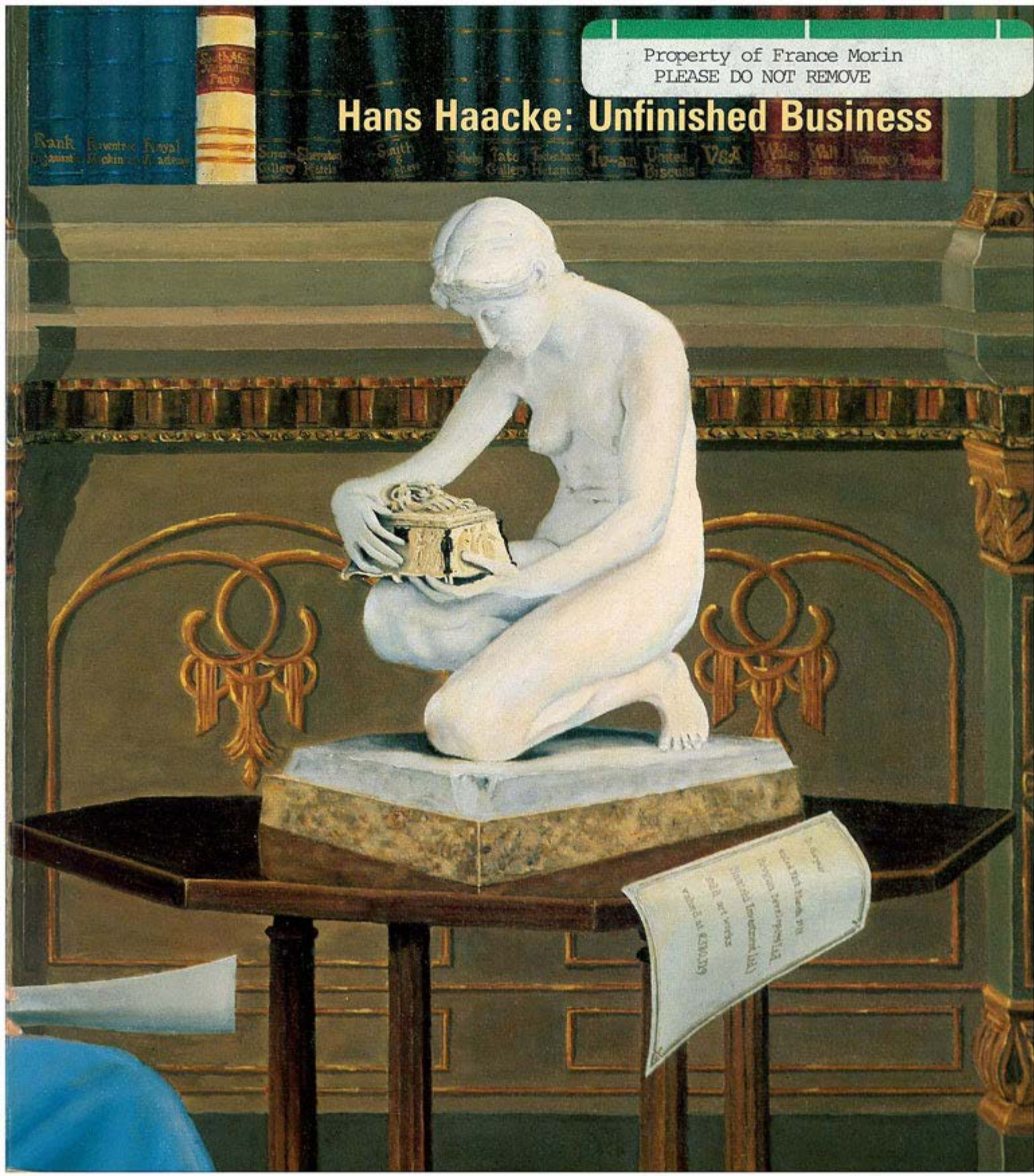


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Hans Haacke: Unfinished Business



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The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York

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Mobil



Cartier



Hans Haacke: Unfinished Business

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Director's Foreword

Marcia Tucker

Hans Haacke's work raises issues which, when first publicly addressed on the occasion of his canceled Guggenheim Museum exhibition in 1971, were extremely controversial. These issues remain trenchant questions today. To what extent can art exist outside of history and politics? For those artists like Haacke whose work has been loosely termed "socially concerned," where does "politics" begin and "aesthetics" leave off? What is the nature and responsibility of a museum—to its governing body, its staff, and to its public and the community of artists that it ostensibly serves?

In the more than fifteen years since that time, critical and public definitions of what constitutes art and art practice in general have changed dramatically, in significant measure due to Haacke's work itself. Like Haacke, increasing numbers of artists are committed to the idea that works of art are products of a specific time and place, can act as critiques of institutions and as catalysts of social change, and are subject to the same kinds of critical analysis as are other modes of production.

This exhibition and catalogue examine various aspects of this shifting cultural situation. The catalogue essays make clear that art has never been autonomous or separate from society at large. Indeed, this critical disavowal of "the autonomy of art" (Jameson) and of "modernist assumptions about the museum's status as a neutral arena" (Deutsche) are central to any debate today about the value of art and the institutions that house it; they suggest that there is an effective means by which art can reach beyond aesthetics with relevance both to the individual viewer and to a wider social context.

Haacke's work also challenges the role of museums as arbiters of taste. For The New Museum of Contemporary Art, this exhibition challenges our own perceptions of art, art institutions, and society in general. We accept the difficulties and contradictions inherent in presenting the Hans Haacke exhibition and firmly believe that the dialogue that may ensue is essential to us and to our audience, and hope that it is welcomed by both.

My thanks to Hans Haacke, to Brian Wallis, who organized the exhibition, to our board of trustees as well as the National Endowment for the Arts Aid to Special Exhibitions Program which generously supported it, and to those private, corporate, and state and federal agencies and foundations which have continued to underwrite The New Museum's programs in appreciation of differing voices and dissenting points of view.

Acknowledgments

Brian Wallis

One of the least apparent, though most politically expedient, aspects of Hans Haacke's work is the way in which it addresses and challenges its audience. For while the ostensible subjects of Haacke's works are the specific social and economic conditions he bares, the real political consequence is the education and transformation of the viewer. This passage which Haacke's work enfolds—from passive viewer to active reader and participant—makes particularly relevant the presentation of his work in a critical catalogue.

It also makes particularly meaningful the process of working with Hans Haacke on this exhibition. The same intelligence, incisive wit, meticulous attention to detail, and prescient political observations which animate his works, made working with Hans a rewarding and pleasurable experience. We thank him for the opportunity to present this work and to share with us his thoughts and ideas.

We are honored in this catalogue by a distinguished group of essayists. Leo Steinberg, Rosalyn Deutsche, and Fredric Jameson have each provided an eloquent and spirited argument for a particular reading of Haacke's work. For their efforts I am tremendously grateful.

At the Museum I would like to thank most of all, Marcia Tucker, who has supported this exhibition from its inception. In addition, my colleagues on the curatorial staff, Bill Olander, Lynn Gumpert, Lisa Parr, Karen Fiss, Alice Yang, and Portland McCormick, have all provided essential assistance, advice, and encouragement. Cindy Smith and Marion Kahan ably coordinated the details of shipping and installation of the exhibition.

This catalogue owes its realization to the work and dedication of three extraordinary individuals: Marcia Landsman, publications coordinator, who organized the project; Phil Mariani, who edited and typeset the book, and honed its conceptual framework; and Bethany Johns, of Homans/Salsgiver, who created the handsome design. My special thanks to Katy Homans and the staff of Homans/Salsgiver for their wholehearted support; thanks also to Mark Rakatansky of MIT Press. Others who assisted at various stages were Claire Dannenbaum, Eugene Mosier, Jennifer Freda, Sarah Baldwin, Page Rhinebeck, and Maud Lavin.

Insofar as this exhibition has been a collaborative effort—that is, a social as well as a business transaction—it has made clear that the process of social transformation to which Haacke's work is dedicated can be advanced. Yet it is also evident that this larger project remains, for now, unfinished business.

Institutions Trust Institutions

Brian Wallis

1. *Hoving's directorship of the Metropolitan Museum has been the subject of much discussion (including his own). Particularly useful are: Karl E. Meyer, The Art Museum: Power, Money, Ethics (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1979); Thomas Hoving, The Chase, The Capture: Collecting at the Metropolitan Museum (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1975); Thomas Hoving, King of Confessors (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1982).*

2. *Quoted in Douglas C. McGill, "Art World Subtly Shifts to Corporate Patronage," The New York Times, February 5, 1985, p. C14.*

One of the most emulated and symbolically significant innovations of Thomas Hoving's ten-year reign (1966-1977) as director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art was his introduction of large banners, hanging on the facade of the museum, to advertise temporary exhibitions. Along with the retinue of other changes now associated with the temporary exhibition—popular themes, dramatic lighting, gift shops, and, of course, anything *gold*—the banners signaled the beginning of a new era for museums: the age of corporate sponsorship. They also marked a more general alliance of the museum with mass spectacle, entertainment, and consumerism. But more specifically, the banners symbolized the ascendance in the museum world of a particular brand of liberal philosophy which was, in the early 1970s, best characterized by Hoving's personal blend of elitism and populism.¹ With these banners as his standard—connoting both royal fanfare and suburban mall promotions—Hoving was able to prove to corporate sponsors and diplomats alike that temporary exhibitions could associate them with quality and, at the same time, attract a large middle-class audience. In so doing, Hoving dramatically and effectively instituted a situation that today appears as a rather devalued and tricky combination of mass culture and the aesthetic biases of Reagan-era corporatism.

Corporate sponsorship can be traced back twenty-five years or more, but it is only since the beginning of Hoving's term that it has grown so prodigiously. In 1967 American corporations spent only about \$22 million on the arts; today that figure tops \$600 million and by the end of 1987 the figure will be close to \$1 billion annually. To the extent that this increase in corporate support has coincided with the expansion of multinational or global corporations, it should be noted that a large proportion of this sponsorship has come from just a handful of multinationals: IBM, Exxon, Philip Morris, Mobil, and a few others. Increasingly, this corporate largesse is directed toward the larger, more visible institutions—and on a scale that makes refusal difficult. At the Metropolitan Museum, for instance, the current director, Philippe de Montebello, reports that his museum is now "dependent on corporate sponsorship."² And, despite his belief that corporate sponsorship has become "an inherent, insidious, hidden form of censorship," the Metropolitan more actively than ever woos the corporate patron, insisting, as one museum brochure puts it, that "The Business Behind Art Knows the Art of Good Business."

As this brochure makes clear, corporate funding of exhibitions is not simply a type of cultural welfare for tax deductions or (as de Montebello suggests) a necessary evil which museums endure for their public. Rather, it is a mutual pact which both parties actively court and which is based on a shared set of values: liberal humanism. This ideology, common to the museum and the corporation, provides the subtext for the sponsored exhibitions. The "official" ideology of the humanities, liberal humanism stresses the importance of the unique individual; it advocates abstract notions of freedom and democracy; and it prefers purified aesthetics divorced from politics. These positions are structured on a foundation of idealized moral values, abstracted from everyday application. As the British critic Terry Eagleton has suggested:

*Liberal Humanism is a suburban moral ideology, limited in practice to largely interpersonal matters. It is stronger on adultery than on armaments, and its valuable concern with freedom, democracy and individual rights is simply not concrete enough. Its view of democracy, for example, is the abstract one of the ballot box, rather than a specific, living and practical democracy which might also concern the operations of the Foreign Office and Standard Oil.*³

3. Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), p. 207.

The contradictions of this moral program are nowhere more apparent than in the conflict between its humanitarian pretenses and the neo-imperialist expansion of multinational capitalism today. In a demonstrative, public way, sponsorship of art exhibitions helps to conceal these contradictions by providing both the museum and the corporation with a tool for enriching individual lives while suppressing real cultural and political difference, for promoting art "treasures" while masking private corporate interests. Indeed, as Hal Foster has observed, it is the temporary exhibition's calculated suppression of its material bases that "allows for its pretenses of social neutrality and cultural autonomy."⁴

4. Hal Foster, *Recodings: Art, Spectacle, Cultural Politics* (Port Townsend, Wash.: Bay Press, 1985), p. 101.

Given this general ideological schema, the questions we might ask include: How do the museum and the corporation employ the art exhibition as a promotional vehicle for advancing their interests and, specifically, for propping up existing class, racial, and sexual hierarchies? How is it possible that the "spiritual enrichment" of art can be shared at the same time as business is being promoted? In short, in the current cultural context, how does art function—in the words of one Mobil slogan—"for the sake of business"? The groundwork for an understanding of these questions is laid by the remarkably candid text of the Metropolitan Museum's brochure: "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 museum and the multinational corporation speak the same language; they both understand that an exchange is being offered—promotion for patronage.

As this entreaty suggests, a corporation's motives for sponsoring temporary art exhibitions are various, numerous, and, in many cases, an open secret. For instance, in its weekly *New York Times* op-ed advertisement of October 15, 1985, Mobil Corporation sought to explain (or extol) the uses of art "for the sake of business." With smug candor, Mobil listed various reasons "scores of businesses support the arts": to "spark economic development and revitalize urban areas" (e.g., Soho, the East Village); to "encourage commercial and residential real estate projects" (e.g., the Museum of Modern Art Tower, Equitable Tower); and to "be utilized in a business's advertising, marketing and public relations efforts" (e.g., Mobil's own "Masterpiece Theatre"). These reasons—various as they are—all remain components of what is cited in the editorial ad as the primary reason for sponsoring art: "Improving—and ensuring—the business climate."

But what does this mean—to improve and ensure the business climate? The French theorist Jacques Attali has observed that, as the multinational corporation moves from the status of a purely economic entity to that of a political entity, it must develop a language which is no longer that of profit only, but is instead based on a clearly defined and publicly promoted set of social, ethical, and moral values.⁵ Given the condition that, to the general audience and to politicians alike, a corporation's public image is now as important as its balance sheet, the establishment of or affiliation with a respectable liberal-humanist value system is clearly essential. However, these values are often merely grafted onto the corporation's image and reinforced through advertising and public relations. Increasingly, corporate advertising, for example, has moved away from promotion of products or services and toward the encouragement of an idealized lifestyle which will harmonize with the corporation's goals and purposes. Accordingly, when IBM is associated with intelligence ("THINK") or Mobil is linked to "quality television," this intangible "do-gooder" image impresses both potential critics and future lawmakers. Wedding the strategies inherent in the construction of the corporate image to the innate prestige and upper-crust cachet of art museums, the temporary art exhibition has achieved a specialized utility as a device for promoting corporate interests.

For a corporation to structure and promote a coherent value system requires a

5. Jacques Attali, "Comment," in *Multinational Corporations and European Public Opinion*, by George Peninou et al. (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1978), pp. 190-191.

certain control of information and a deliberate constitution of representations. Thus, the selection of exhibitions, as well as the presentation of them through advertising, press releases, and even banners, is purposeful and highly calculated. The result is that this self-conscious system of representations—at least as formulated in sponsored exhibitions—tends toward cautionary exclusion, the fixing of stereotypic interpretations, and the development of abstract rather than historically specific concepts. Beyond the obvious “special interests” of corporations (such as regional themes or themes related to particular products), most corporate sponsors finance exhibitions based on centrist ideals and uncontroversial subject matter. Hence, the proliferation of tame exhibitions of impressionist painting, generic theme shows (e.g., *Man and the Horse*), and historical exhibitions with few direct ties to the social and material culture either of the art exhibited or of the present day.

6. For Haacke's own description of *MetroMobiltan* and some of its factual sources, see Hans Haacke: 4 Works, 1983-1985 (New York: John Weber Gallery, 1985), n.p. The text on *MetroMobiltan* is also reprinted in *Impulse* 12, no. 2 (1985): 41-44.

One of Haacke's most recent works, *MetroMobiltan*,⁶ takes as its subject these relationships between the museum and corporate public relations. It is therefore appropriate that he uses as his principal formal device the large banners that hang in front of the Metropolitan Museum, and that he has inscribed on the frieze of the work precisely that statement from the Metropolitan's brochure by which the museum offers itself up for “public relations opportunities.” In the work, three banners like the ones at the Metropolitan hang under a fiberglass mock-up of the museum's entablature. In the center is a goldish banner for the 1980 Mobil-sponsored Metropolitan show, *Treasures of Ancient Nigeria*, which largely obscures a big black-and-white photo of a funeral for South African blacks; this is flanked on both sides by two blue banners inscribed with statements made by Mobil regarding its interests in South Africa.

As in all of Haacke's art works and writings, *MetroMobiltan* draws attention to the rhizome of largely concealed corporate relations which link art to the “real world” of economic and political interests. In order to do this, his art functions on several levels, “rewriting” the fixed images or practices of corporate semiotics, utilizing a montage of specific but loosely connected information to produce both an intensive and an extensive reading. Intensively, his work activates an involvement by the audience, provoking the viewer to become a reader of texts, and beyond this to burrow into obscured factual information which lies “behind” the work and forms the network of facts and associations connecting and supporting his images. (Haacke often provides this more detailed information in crisply stated and neatly argued expository wall labels.) Extensively, his art provokes an extrapolation from the individual work outward, establishing or suggesting macroscopic links between

the art world and other economic, social, and political power formations. Inevitably then, the picture we get of the position of the art object is not one of fixed meanings and universal attributes, but rather the art work as a matrix of conflicting and contradictory interests governed by a cabal of institutions and conjoined with the overriding profit motive of the corporate community.

In this way, *MetroMobiltan* synthesizes a vast amount of information about multinational corporations, political and economic conditions in South Africa, and the conflicted politics of corporate patronage of temporary art exhibitions. In the actual work, Haacke focuses on Mobil's logistical, financial, and psychological support for the white minority government of South Africa and its flagrantly racist policies. Mobil is inextricably linked to South Africa's economy since, despite its great natural resources, South Africa does not have its own oil reserves. It is therefore dependent on outside oil corporations, such as Mobil, to supply its civilian consumers, as well as its military and police.⁷ As explained in Mobil's own fact sheet on the subject, the corporation (through a subsidiary) has more than \$400 million worth of investments in South Africa; what Mobil doesn't say is that this makes it one of the principal U.S. investors in South Africa.⁸ According to estimates of the Investor Responsibility Research Center, the oil supplied by Mobil constitutes about twenty percent of the oil consumed by the country and about the same percentage of the total amount of oil used by the South African military and police.⁹

The effects of Mobil's involvement in South Africa have not gone unnoticed. Many advocacy groups have stressed that the removal of oil investments in South Africa would be the quickest way to end that country's policy of apartheid; as a result, pressure has been brought to bear on Mobil and other oil companies. In 1981, in a resolution included in Mobil's proxy statement, a coalition of church groups with Mobil stock encouraged other shareholders to demand that Mobil desist from supplying oil to the South African military and police. The corporation recommended a vote against this resolution, calling it "unwise," and it was in fact refused. (Part of Mobil's circuitous response is quoted on the flanking banners of Haacke's work.) What is more, lawyers for Mobil's South African subsidiary have warned the corporation that it faces potential prosecution for divulging information on the transfer of oil, since the oil it supplies the Botha government technically qualifies as "munitions of war."¹⁰ This legality remains unchallenged. More direct opposition has come, however, from South African activists who, recognizing the strategic importance of Mobil's operations, have twice attacked its facilities. The first attack was in November 1982 at the Mobil storage depot on the northern Natal

7. On the situation of the oil industry in South Africa, see David M. Liff, *The Oil Industry in South Africa* (Washington, D.C.: Investor Responsibility Research Center, 1979); African National Congress of South Africa, *Fuelling Apartheid* (New York: UN Centre Against Apartheid, 1980); Martin Bailey, *Oil Sanctions: South Africa's Weak Link* (New York: UN Centre Against Apartheid, 1980); Elizabeth Schmidt, *Decoding Corporate Camouflage: U.S. Business Support for Apartheid* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Policy Studies, 1980); Ann Seidman and Neva S. Makgetla, *South Africa and U.S. Multinational Corporations* (Westport, Conn.: Lawrence Hill and Co., 1977); Ann Seidman and Neva S. Makgetla, *Outposts of Monopoly Capitalism: Southern Africa in the Changing Global Economy* (Westport, Conn.: Lawrence Hill and Co., 1980); Kevin Danaher, *In Whose Interest? A Guide to U.S.-South Africa Relations* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Policy Studies, 1984).

8. Mobil Corporation, "Mobil in South Africa—A Fact Sheet for 1984," n.p.

9. These statistics are given by Haacke in Hans Haacke: 4 Works, n.p.

10. Schmidt, *Decoding Corporate Camouflage*, p. 71.

11. Both events are recorded in the useful chronology provided in Danaher, *In Whose Interest?*, pp. 170 and 189.

12. For a useful contemporary summary of the situation in Nigeria in 1979, see "Nigeria: The Grandiose Plans of Africa's Oil Giant," *Business Week*, no. 2570 (January 29, 1979): 46-48. An alternate view of the situation in Nigeria and its relation to *MetroMobiltan* is provided in Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe, "The Politics of Art," *Arts Magazine* 61, no. 1 (September 1986): 21-27 (esp. note 14, p. 27).

coast. More recently, in May 1984, guerrillas of the African National Congress fired rocket-launched grenades at Mobil's oil refinery in Durban, causing approximately \$25,000 worth of damage.¹¹

Obviously, sponsoring art exhibitions does not eliminate such real opposition. However, it does help to establish more favorable conditions for business in such host countries and at home. In this respect, the temporary exhibition serves as a remarkably flexible public relations tool. It stresses the corporation's interests in the life and culture of the host country; it promotes that culture in the home country, winning approval from both constituencies; and it functions as a bargaining chip—as yet another beneficial service the multinational corporation can offer. Haacke's *MetroMobiltan* highlights a specific instance of Mobil's self-conscious (and self-interested) promotion of the national art of one of its host countries. The central banner refers specifically to Mobil's 1980 sponsorship of a traveling exhibition of ancient Nigerian art as a direct inducement toward improving business relations between Nigeria—one of the richest oil nations of Africa—and the United States. This general cultural policy—set in motion by President Carter—was designed to help shift Nigeria's alliances away from Great Britain and toward the United States. As it happened, Mobil Corporation, which had extensive holdings in Nigeria, was able to improve its own standing in the eyes of the Nigerian government at the expense of British Petroleum, whose extensive holdings in Nigeria were expropriated in 1979 (by coincidence, shortly after Mobil had sealed its sponsorship of the *Treasures of Ancient Nigeria* exhibition).¹²

Haacke's parody, in *MetroMobiltan*, of corporate promotional tactics also clarifies the relation of that promotion to the establishment of a new, more conservative type of liberal humanism. In the work Haacke suggests that this value system—jointly promoted by the museum and its corporate sponsors—can be delineated in the following ways: first, in the reinforcement of class hierarchies through language and representation; secondly, in the reinstitution of primitivism as an effective form of cultural hierarchization and as a possible device for the consolidation of multinational corporate expansion; and thirdly, in the general shift from the museum as the tender of art and values to the corporation as arbiter of representations.

Immediately, we observe, for example, that the vocabulary of class division dominates the flanking banners of *MetroMobiltan*, where Haacke demonstrates how corporations structure into their language the same social dichotomy which characterized Hoving's banners: elitism and populism. In the statements reinscribed on the banners, Mobil defends its potentially illegal actions in South Africa. Yet,

each employs a different language: in the banner on the right, Mobil's management assumes a firm, authoritarian tone to certify the practices of its South African subsidiary as "responsible citizenship," while in the banner on the left, Mobil humbly suggests that its South African sales are "but a small part of its total sales." To point up the simultaneous contradiction in rhetoric of both statements, they are exhibited in *MetroMobiltan* in front of the mostly hidden image of a funeral for South African blacks—those who have no voice, no access to language.

Typically, this implicit and generalized program of elitist domination underlies a corporation's cooperation with a museum, for the museum is a virtual sign for quality, discrimination, connoisseurship: while providing fine entertainment, it also institutionalizes and validates the proclivities and dominance of the upper class. (In terms of temporary exhibitions, perhaps the most blatant example of such institutionalized class supremacy was the recent National Gallery exhibition, *The Treasure Houses of Britain: Five Hundred Years of Private Patronage and Art Collecting*. This exhibition, sponsored by the Ford Motor Company of Great Britain, sought to reify and revalidate the institutionalized practices of the upper class, that is, not only a particular aristocratic "lifestyle," but also a determining economic structure.) As in advertising, this valorization of wealth and upper-class values in museum exhibitions is depicted as a normative state of affairs, one available for all to view equally, democratically, at a distance. Everyone, it is stressed repeatedly, benefits from the patronage and sponsorship of those with money. In *MetroMobiltan*, Haacke makes clear how this "trickle-down" theory of patronage¹³ is applied both to arts patronage and to multinational involvement in South Africa (where—as Mobil stated in a recent advertisement—"the business community . . .—including the affiliates of American corporations—is a most effective instrument for social and economic change"). The corporation, it seems, knows what is best for the people—what "responsible citizenship" really means.

A second form this patronage has taken recently is a widespread support for temporary exhibitions whose theme is primitivism. The central banner of *MetroMobiltan* alludes not only to the specific exhibition *Treasures of Ancient Nigeria*, sponsored by Mobil, but more generally to the plethora of tribal art exhibitions (e.g., *Asante: Kingdom of Gold*, or *Te Maori: Maori Art from New Zealand Collections*) which have emerged in the last few years, many under the sponsorship of multinational corporations. Whether or not these exhibitions can be tied directly to neocolonialist expansion into the tribal homelands of these (now Third World) countries, this flurry of exhibitions has released the previously closeted skeleton of liberalism: primitivist racism. The particular iconography of

13. This theory of patronage is best illustrated in an earlier work of Haacke's entitled *Tiffany Cares* (1977-1978). In that work, Haacke had engraved on silver plate an actual editorial advertisement placed by Tiffany & Co. on page 3 of the *New York Times* (June 6, 1977). Under the title "Are the rich a menace?" the advertisement explains how the works of the rich benefit all, how—through investments—each rich man supports approximately a hundred other people. (This advertisement was reportedly written by the chairman of the board of Tiffany, Walter Hoving, father of Thomas Hoving.) Haacke's reply is succinct: "The 9,240,000 Unemployed in The United States of America Demand the Immediate Creation of More Millionaires." *Tiffany Cares* is discussed and illustrated elsewhere in this catalogue.

14. See, for example, Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

primitivism—analogue for Africa to what Edward Said has characterized as Orientalism for the Middle East¹⁴—demonstrates how national and colonialist discourses continue to posit black Africans and tribal cultures as a unified racial, geographical, political, and cultural zone. Mapped onto this generic otherness is the hierarchical system of linguistic and representational discrimination developed for class distinctions, but now applicable to racial difference as well. One way in which this otherness is fixed and stereotyped is through constant reference to African blacks in historical terms only (as in an exhibition of treasures of ancient Nigeria), never in terms of contemporary African art or reality.

Philip Morris' promotional advertisement for the 1984 MoMA exhibition "*Primitivism*" in *20th-Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern* provides a typical example of the contradiction faced by a corporation in representing a liberal view of primitivism. In the advertisement, three pairs of modern and tribal objects—which look vaguely alike but are culturally unrelated—are pictured under the question "Which is 'primitive'? Which is 'modern'?" Here, while Philip Morris raises (and reinforces) a semantic distinction between "primitive" and "modern," it also suggests, motivated as it is by liberal values, that there is no difference between the two. More subtly, in the context of its motto—"It takes art to make a company great"—the initial question "Which is 'primitive'? Which is 'modern'?" reverberates with new meaning, whereby these are no longer aesthetic categories only, but economic ones as well. This new meaning is elaborated in a preface to the exhibition catalogue by Hamish Maxwell, chairman and chief executive officer of Philip Morris, Inc., who speaks of his company's abiding interest in "developing countries" and of the "debt that modern culture owes these peoples." His conclusion is remarkably understated: "We understand the benefit of cultural interchange."¹⁵ In the context of the *Primitivism* show, "cultural interchange" here can be read as a euphemism for an institutionalized positioning of other races and cultures that deliberately appropriates and Westernizes them by encouraging a view of tribal cultures as underdeveloped in relation to Western "progress," by fixing cultural achievements in terms of individual yet anonymous artisans rather than cultural contexts, by establishing a false unity among a variety of cultures, and by yoking tribal groups to Western culture in a Family-of-Man assumption of common goals and motivations.

That these class and racial values have been strengthened in museum exhibitions through the linking of corporation and museum is evident in all manner of advertisements and promotional devices. Insofar as such advertisements are developed by the corporation (and not the museum), they constitute extensions and

15. In William Rubin, ed., "*Primitivism*" in *20th-Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1984). For other "primitivist" art exhibitions occurring in New York at the same time, see the list provided in *Art in America* 73, no. 4 (April 1985): 167.

interpretations of the temporary exhibition in light of the corporation's particular philosophical outlook. Like the banners on the museum facade, these advertisements provide an introduction to potential visitors and suggest a new role for both the museum and the corporate-sponsored temporary exhibition. Just as the department store initiated the middle-class consumer into the lifestyle of capitalism at the beginning of the modernist period, so now the temporary exhibition welcomes visitors in droves to imbibe "culture" within a particularly restricted value system, rigorously crafted through the combined efforts of the museum and the corporate sponsor. Like the department store in its heyday, perhaps the temporary exhibition is a paradigmatic institution for this era, corresponding to one phase of social and economic development—in this case, multinational capitalism.

As for the museum as an institution, Haacke's *MetroMobiltan* seems to encapsulate Hoving's prescient perception of its changing status. For in Hoving's time, the traditional concept of the museum as a scholarly accumulation of artifacts had already begun to recede before the new, corporatized notion of the museum as a thoroughfare for an endless flow of temporary exhibitions and their audiences. As if to broadcast this function symbolically, when it came to adding extensions to the museum, Hoving no longer envisioned solid facades, but sheer glass walls revealing and reflecting the constant trafficking of art objects and museum-goers. And across the monumental front of the museum—as in *MetroMobiltan*—Hoving erected the triptych of banners, now obscuring and displacing the former solidity of the museum's facade. So, as a final irony, it seems appropriate that as corporations begin to assimilate museum branches and even generate their own in-house museums, the reverse seems also to be true. It is thoroughly in keeping, then, with the confederation of institutions and the museum's own shifting function that the facade of the Metropolitan Museum no longer elicits a visual correspondence to a bank vault or a library, but rather to an image and a site more in keeping with its contemporary role—that of the commercial billboard.

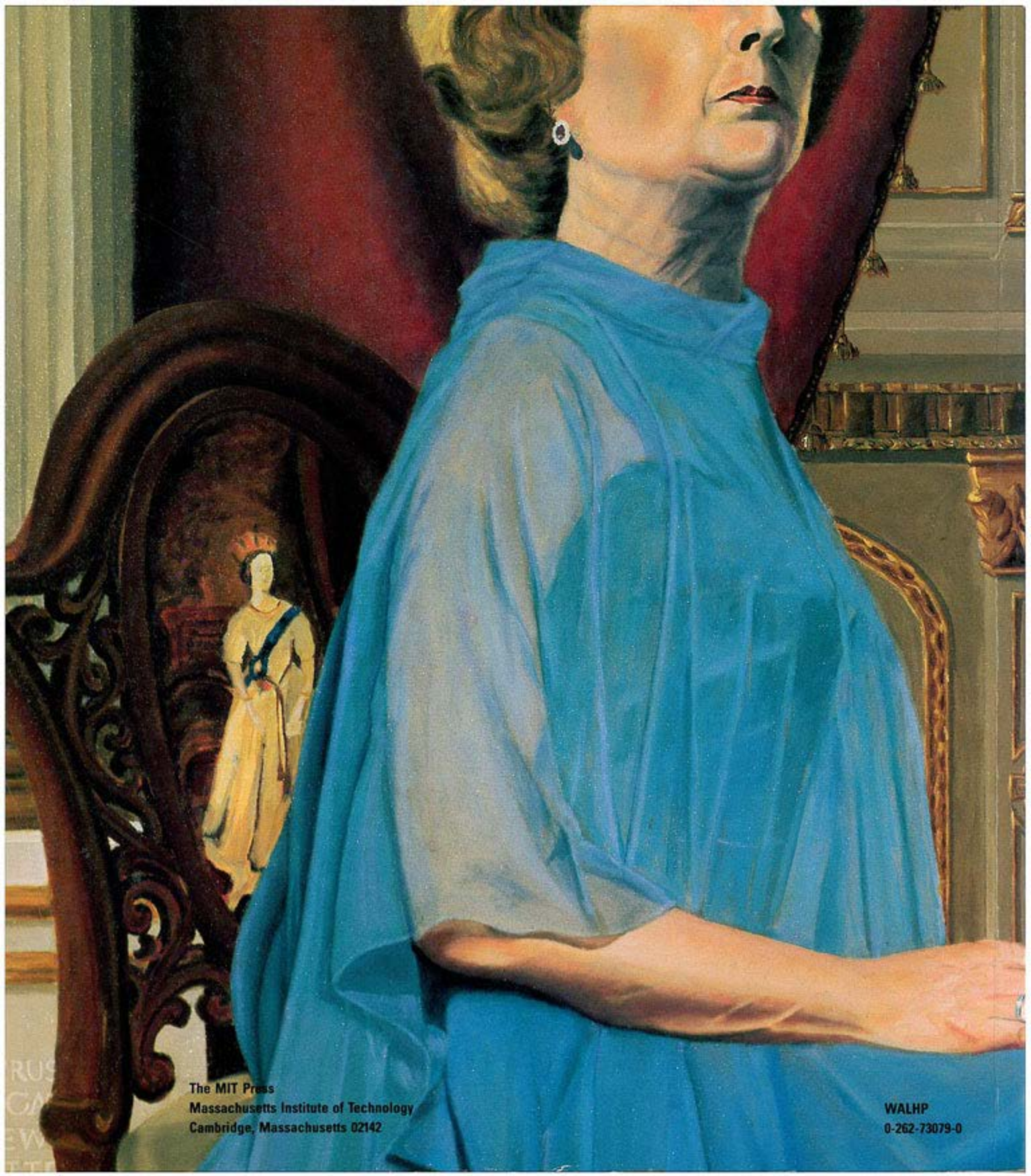
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