

Excerpt of dissertation, “What is an Exhibition?: Definition, Context, and Ideology in an Apparatus of Holding Out”
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The exhibition <i>HARALD SZEEMANN: DOCUMENTA 5</i>	
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6.1.1 documenta 5

Harald Szeemann was asked in this same year to direct the fifth iteration of documenta to occur in 1972. Established in Kassel, Germany, documenta quickly became regarded as an authority of contemporary art and one of the premier events to anticipate along with the Venice Biennial. Szeemann’s initial sketch for documenta 5 aligned with his most recent exhibitions—focused on ideas, performance, and the expectation of the exhibition to be more event than static presentation. Harald Szeemann’s documenta has come to be regarded as art historically important for the scope of the work presented, its break with documenta’s institutional tradition, the criticism amassed within and around the exhibition. Conscious that art, but more so, the world, was changing the documenta organization tapped Szeemann for a documenta different than its predecessors. What they got in 1972 was almost that. Szeemann of course took liberties

and turned some aspects of the survey on end, but the result was admittedly a compromise from what Szeemann touted to be a radical break.

documenta 5, also known as *d5*, occurred June 30 to October 8, 1972. The works of 217 artists were included and approximately 229,000 visitors saw that work. The initial budget was 3.4 million deutschmarks, which was about 1 million dollars in 1972. Considering inflation, that would equate to 6 million dollars today. By comparison, *documenta 14* in 2017 had a budget of 37 million euros, and went over by an additional 8 million euros.¹ Recent *documentas* have averaged about 150 artists in each and *documenta 13* in 2012 counted close to 1 million visitors.

One aspect of *d5* that was initially considered radical was the inclusion of kitsch, propaganda, and folk imagery. This presentation stunned early visitors as being out of expectation of what should be inside the Museum. Szeemann was regarded as a rule-breaker, so it should be no surprise, but the platform and scope of *documenta* was different than those he had before. It is apparent in his own writing from the time that he was not as fond of breaking tradition as evidenced in his reputation. Perhaps this inclusion had as much to do with manners and politeness of society in contrast to the expected high art as a means to contextualize new photo-realistic painting and participatory works that hardly resemble traditional plastic arts. The retention of manners and confronting social mores was a way to build cohesion following the trauma of WW2.² This exercise was not specific to *documenta*, visual art, or Germany—they

¹ Benjamin Sutton, "Documenta Organizers Call Report of €7M Deficit 'Speculations and Half-Truths,'" *Hyperallergic.com*, September 14, 2017, <https://hyperallergic.com/400562/documenta-organizers-call-report-of-e7m-deficit-speculations-and-half-truths>; and also Hili Perlson, "Adam Szymczyk Pushes Back Against *documenta*'s Financial Audit, Accusing the Board of 'Fabricating' a 'Controlled Scandal,'" *artnet.com*, November 21, 2017, <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/adam-szymczyk-replies-to-documenta-14-audit-report-1154420>.

² See Michael Glasmeier and Karen Stengel, eds., *50 Jahre / 50 Years Documenta 1955-2005* (Göttingen: Steidl, 2005), 192-195

were important means to reinforce civility in post-war Europe. Decency, etiquette, and bourgeois manners would have been key to class maintenance and the restoration of European culture. The importance of this is found in the foundation of documenta. This may show one effect of the institutional responsibility of the large-scale survey's influence on the exhibition-maker as the influence he was expected to have on that institution.

6.1.2 d5 in Context

documentas 1-4

Arnold Bode, a German painter, designer, and professor, founded the documenta series of exhibitions in 1955. Bode was declared a degenerate artist (*Entartete Künstler*) by the Nazis and banned from his art practice and teaching in the 1930s. He devised documenta in 1955 to be a temporary survey of modern art in the city of Kassel. The institution to host documenta would be the Museum Fridericianum, which opened in 1779 as the world's first museum originally intended for the public. Modern art was suppressed by National Socialists, the country was devastated by war and culturally deprived even after war ended. The Museum Fridericianum had been bombed in the war, and was only provisionally restored. The first documenta was intended as a restorative gesture for Germany, and quickly grew to be an international authority on what was aesthetically current at the time. In 1949 an exhibition was mounted in Cologne titled *Contemporary German Painting and Sculpture*. This exhibition was meant to serve as a counter to the "iconoclastic" aesthetic regime of the Nazi's in the preceding years and to reimagine what contemporary art could be in the newly-formed West Germany. Had this exhibition "succeeded" (in a retroactive art-historical view) there would be no need to talk about

documenta.³ Luckily for Bode, documenta was successful and was determined to reoccur in four years. Given its temporary nature, documenta was dubbed “the 100-day museum” and then, as now, the city of Kassel financially supported the non-profit institution. Currently, documenta occurs every five years, following a pattern of years ending in 2 and 7. An estimated 130,000 people visited the first documenta, while the most recent iteration in 2017 attracted close to 1 million visitors.

After the devastation of World War II, *documenta 1* showcased the work of modern artists and art movements that were repressed during the Nazi period—declared Degenerate Art (*Entartete Kunst*). Next, in 1959, *documenta 2* focused on the Post-War period and identified younger artists who seemed to be taking up the earlier challenges, specifically in abstract painting. The second documenta promoted abstract art as ‘a world language’ and was therefore seen by many as a rejection of realist art, in reaction to the social realism of fascist and Soviet preference.⁴ In 1964, *documenta 3* emphasized individual artists rather than the schools, or movements, to which they belonged. 1968 brought *documenta 4* which incorporated more contemporary art from the wider world, including a limited selection of Pop, Minimal, and Kinetic art.

The first four documentas were directed by Arnold Bode. Bode was in charge of administrative affairs but his main interest was the exhibition design and presentation. The partially destroyed Museum Fridericianum offered Bode an interestingly sparse environment to design around. Temporary walls, often with curtains as their cladding, filled the raw interior of

³ Walter Grasskamp, “For Example, Documenta, or How Is Art History Produced?,” in Greenberg, *Thinking about Exhibitions*, 67.

⁴ Grasskamp, “For Example, Documenta,” in Greenberg, *Thinking about Exhibitions*, 68.

the formerly grandiose 18th century structure. Convenient for Bode was the emergence of the white cube aesthetic of sparse, uninterrupted interiors to hold modern art. Bode's concern was staging the large event—building the “100-day museum”—more so than selecting the artwork. His concern with the first 4 documentas was more about the presentation than what was presented; therefore, he relied on gallerists and others as a committee for selecting the temporary collection. The principal theoretical concern of the presentation was supplied by the influential art historian Werner Haftmann. Haftmann's interest was modern art, especially abstract painting. Bode was concerned with executing the presentation, Haftmann was interested in what was presented; in other words—Bode was the pilot and Haftmann was the navigator. Artist selections and other organizational decisions were made by a committee of authorities under Bode's direction with Haftmann's ideals in mind. Therefore, the focus on modern art was in part an attempt to solidify Haftmann's art historical narrative of the avant-garde movements progressing through expression towards abstraction. The selections of the early documentas reinforced this narrative and emphasized abstraction as a “universal language.”⁵

Haftmann was author of the (then) influential art history text, *Painting in the Twentieth Century*, published in 1954. Haftman left after d3, before the arrival of Pop and photo-realism, and republished his textbook as a two-volume set, in an effort to codify the abstract art he had championed as universal. As Grasskamp explains it:

“While Bode's achievement, staging, evaporated on the day in which it was disassembled, Haftman could take with him what had proved to be enduring: his theoretical and historiographical constructions, the canon of the works selected and,

⁵ Grasskamp, “For Example, Documenta,” in Greenberg, *Thinking about Exhibitions*, 72-73.

above all, even some of their photographs. The plates in the second volume of his outstanding book overlap with the catalogues of the first three documentas and even some color printing blocks seem to have gone with him, which not only means that some expenses were saved but helps once more to answer the question of how art history is produced.”⁶

Although the exhibition only occurs every few years, planning and documentation happen at all times, so even though documenta—the ‘event’—is spread across years, the organization is in operation during those off-years. It may not have always been the case, but the primary function of the organization, and especially the artistic director, is planning the next iteration, which begins four years in advance of its presentation.⁷

When Attitudes Become Form originated in 1968, the same year as documenta 4. In stark contrast, the latter exhibition lacked representation of young artists and those working in the avant-garde of the late 1960s. Szeemann’s iteration in 1972 would be seen to correct this outdated perspective. When Szeemann was asked in 1970 to direct the next documenta, he agreed under the condition that Arnold Bode, Werner Haftmann, and the organizing committee would concede all control of the exhibition to him; they agreed, and the committee was abandoned. Szeemann had full authority, took the title Secretary General, and assembled a team of seven curators to assist him with selections. This marks a major shift in the way the exhibition would be created; for the first time Bode would not serve as Artistic Director.

⁶ Grasskamp, “For Example, Documenta,” in Greenberg, *Thinking about Exhibitions*, 74.

⁷ Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev made this lead-up period a part of *dOCUMENTA 13* in 2012, one of the three exhibition catalogues, 2. *The Logbook*, is the record of her years of planning and assembly.

Context of late 60s-early 70s

It is worth considering the cultural context that surrounded the formation of *documenta 5*. The political culture of the late 1960s can be described as a flourishing time for liberal struggles and claims to emancipation for different groups of people and even nations. In the United States and Western Europe, this emancipation was taking place within culture—a liberalization of embracing styles and affects that ran counter to the predominant, traditional standards in arts, music, entertainment, fashion, and media. Of course, some of these shifts toward a more liberal culture were more significant in terms of their effect on society—more opportunities in workplaces and some legislation to protect those historically oppressed.

The late 1960s were also the end of the economic boom following World War 2. The post-war years saw incredible economic growth and an acceleration in the expectations of material consumption in large parts of the world. Particularly in the US and re-built Europe, the economic situation of the growing consumer culture would have been unimaginable to that 20 years prior. But the beginning of the 1970s saw this expansion plateau, and in many areas began to contract. With the economic contraction, many of the social and cultural expansions of the previous decade stalled. It seems that the hedonistic manner of the free-love 1960s survived as the feel-good, easy-listening 1970s, while the grit and rioting for equality faded as the concern for personal economic stability grew as globalization came into focus. The idealism that fueled cultural advances and protest movements soured to skepticism about that idealism. It is not insignificant that the furious activity of the later 1960s, driven by ideological purpose, worked in many ways to dismantle the grand Modernist project. This point in history marks a transition that

brought with it the politicization and professionalization of intellectual activity and its opposite in politics. If, as Lyotard suggested, post-modernity was a “slackening” of modernity, then the culture of the West reflected this the jeans and long hair of the 1970s and the retreat from pointed critique of culture from within itself.

For an indication of the times, in 1967 Israeli and Arab forces’ Six-Day War ends with Israel occupying Sinai Peninsula, Golan Heights, Gaza Strip, and east bank of Suez Canal. Che Guevara was killed in Bolivia and race revolts broke out in over 100 US cities—the most violent and significant riot occurred in Detroit. At the same time, *Im Spazio* (The Space of Thoughts) curated by Germano Celant introduced Arte Povera at Galleria La Bertesca, Genoa, Italy. Marshall McLuhan’s *The Medium is the Massage*, Roland Barthes’s *Death of the Author*, Jacques Derrida’s *Of Grammatology*, Guy Debord’s *The Society of the Spectacle* and Theodor Adorno’s *Negative Dialectics* were all published this year.

In 1968 the Olympics were held in Mexico City; days before the start, hundreds of civilians were murdered and over a thousand arrested during protests. Americans Tommie Smith and John Carlos lowered their heads and raised fists on the podium as the *Star Spangled Banner* was played for their win. In France, more than a quarter of the population went on strike, shutting down the economy and halting the Cannes Film Festival, following student protests in May. North Korea seized a US Navy ship and held 83 people on board as spies. Czechoslovakia was invaded by the Soviets and Warsaw Pact members. The North Vietnamese launched the Tet offensive, a turning point in the Vietnam War, followed by the massacre 347 civilians at My Lai by American soldiers. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was killed in Memphis, Tennessee, and Robert F. Kennedy was killed in Los Angeles. Stanley Kubrick’s film *2001: A Space Odyssey* and Philip

K. Dick's book *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* were released. Valerie Solanas shot Andy Warhol and *documenta 4* was held in Kassel.

1969 included the Apollo moon landing, the first in-vitro fertilization of a human egg, the signing of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), and John Lennon and Yoko Ono's "Bed-Ins for Peace." 27-year-old Colonel Muammar al-Qaddafi deposed King Idris of Libya and established a pro-Arabic, anti-Western, Islamic republic. Richard M. Nixon was inaugurated as president, but the use of DDT was banned in residential areas in the US. The Stonewall riots in New York City marked the beginning of gay rights movement. The Weathermen (later the Weather Underground) group organized "Days of Rage" actions in Chicago. ARPA (Advanced Research Projects Agency) went online in December, connecting four major US universities. Designed for research, education, and government organizations, it is the foundation upon which the Internet will eventually be built. More than half a million people attended the 4-day Woodstock Music Festival, and a fan was killed at the Rolling Stones' concert in Altamont, California, by members of Hell's Angels motorcycle gang hired as security. Szeemann's *When Attitudes Become Form* and resignation from Kunsthalle Bern. Seth Siegelaub presented the exhibition *January 5–31, 1969* at his New York gallery, which contained no objects, no paintings and no sculptures.

In 1970 US troops invaded Cambodia and four students at Kent State University in Ohio were killed by National Guard at a demonstration protesting the invasion. East and West German leaders held their first meeting since 1948. Riots and terrorist violence across Italy were followed by an attempted coup. An earthquake killed more than 50,000 people in Peru. The Red Army Faction, better known as the Baader-Meinhof Group, was founded in West Germany. The US

Senate repealed the Gulf of Tonkin resolution which had given the president authority to send troops to Vietnam in 1964. Meanwhile, the LCD (liquid crystal display) was invented by Hoffmann-La Roche in Switzerland and IBM introduced the floppy disk. The exhibition *Information*, curated by Kynaston L. McShine, occurred at MoMA, New York. The Beatles broke up, and the English translation of Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* was published as was Hannah Arendt's *On Violence*.

In 1971 Erich Honecker assumed leadership of the East German Communist Party after Walter Ulbricht's resignation. Switzerland enacted women's suffrage through a referendum vote and the Soviet Union launched the first space station. Bangladesh won independence after a war with Pakistan and India while Qatar and The United Arab Emirates were established following independence from Great Britain. The Weather Underground bombed the US Capital building in March. In May, Anti-war militants attempt to disrupt government business in Washington—police and military arrested as many as 12,000 people. The New York Times published the “Pentagon Papers,” the classified material on planned expansion of Vietnam war. The Intel corporation released world's first microprocessor.

Finally, in 1972, while d5 was finalized and opened, eleven Israeli athletes were killed at the Olympic Games in Munich. Britain took over direct rule of Northern Ireland, and BBC Television broadcasted John Berger's *Ways of Seeing*. President Nixon visited China, ordered the “Christmas bombing” of North Vietnam, and five men were apprehended by police breaking into the Democratic National Committee headquarters in Washington, D.C.'s Watergate complex—the start of Nixon's Watergate scandal. A.I.R. Gallery, the first artist-run, non-profit gallery for

women artists in the United States opened in New York. The compact disk was developed by RCA, email was introduced, and Prozac was invented.

6.1.3 Harald Szeemann's documenta

For *d5* in 1972, Szeemann had the organizational-selection committee dissolved and demanded complete authority and creative autonomy. Szeemann became the first sole artistic director and curator for documenta—taking the title Secretary General.⁸ He also demanded assurance from the city of Kassel that there would be no censorship or interference. Along with Szeemann's abolition of the organizing committee, he rebranded—and for many at the time, corrupted—the intention of the exhibition, referring to his iteration in planning concepts as “the 100 day event” rather than the “100 day museum” as had been the slogan for its most recent iterations. The work of over 200 artists were incorporated into *d5*. This was not the largest representation of artists in a documenta, but the variety of their work and his reinvention of thematic (rather than material-based) arrangement forever changed the mode of documenta's presentation and has influenced every artistic director of the survey since. Each seems to bring a new formulation, or attempts to re-reinvent, Szeemann's 100 days in Kassel. It should be pointed out that for sake of this argument, the exhibition referred to includes the auxiliary material surrounding it—the catalogue, documentation, events and publications organized in conjunction with the display of visual artwork. This is in line with recent documentas (as other major surveys) as well, the catalogues of these presentations are crucial to its reception and should be considered as much a part of it as the performance, film, and educational programs.

⁸ *documenta* website, www.documenta.de/en/#

Szeemann's documenta ended the push for a universal language of abstraction in exchange for the demonstration of all varied forms, techniques, and approaches. The result was a chaos of equivalence and delimited standards of value judgements within the context of the single exhibition. This chaos was amplified by the incorporation of kitsch, advertising, political propaganda, and votive pictures. Performances in and on the museum were accompanied by an extensive film program, a section devoted to theater, and an audio/visual program designed to introduce visitors to the exhibition.

From the time of initial planning, Harald Szeemann set up his documenta to be different than its predecessors. From the title, *Questioning Reality—Image Worlds Today (Befragung der Realität – Bildwelten heute)*, it is clear that Szeemann meant to address more in this exhibition than the most recent trends in modern painting and sculpture. In direct reaction to the history of documenta, Szeemann initially promoted a “100-day event” that would occur out in the city of Kassel, not in its museums. But following the recent experience of *Happenings and Fluxus*, and feeling that this approach would amount to a scaled-up retrospective of those performances combined with the process-heavy artwork of *When Attitudes Become Form*, Szeemann returned to a more reliable model of a thematic exhibition. What was anticipated to be a radical departure from previous versions of international surveys was described in the exhibition catalogue as “a rejection of the phony freedom of a ‘museum in the street’” and restricted itself to two museum buildings.⁹ The Neue Galerie was dedicated to “the accentuation of content” while the main

⁹ This, and following from Szeemann, *Documenta 5: Exhibition Catalogue* (Munich: C. Bertelsmann Verlag, 1972); reprinted in Derieux, *Individual Methodology*, 104-5.

building for documenta, the Museum Fridericianum, was dedicated to form “with their respective purity and hybridity being dictated by the event-like character of the exhibition.”¹⁰

The exhibition itself presented artists’ recent tendencies in Conceptualism, body and performance art, Hyper-Realism (photo-realist painting), process-driven work, and film and video. The *d5* press release describes the exhibition as several “image worlds” divided into sections: realism, self-representation, idea and process art, participation and performance, and individual mythologies as well as “an additional section devoted to the parallel worlds of images including utopia, science fiction, kitsch, publicity, psychotic art.”¹¹ From the release, it seems that Szeemann’s intent is for the institution to absorb these worlds through recontextualization. Popular imagery had entered the realm of the high-art exhibition, Szeemann sought perhaps to temper the thrust of Pop and new Hyper-Realist painting by setting these works up in relation to their “real world” antecedents.

The catalogue introductory essay describes the exhibition as a compromise between artist-oriented and visitor-oriented approaches. “But neither was totally applicable in its pure form,” or to put it another way, this was not to be the exhibition like previous documentas or like the one anticipated. The hope then was to present the work without devolving in to a chaos of (pure) event—of all work out of the museum, or of a visitor-oriented program of sophistic seminars and to-be-expected picture installations. It is claimed that “the presentation of works is autonomous, as formally decided by the artist” which suggests that a) the artists involved are responsible for what is on view, and b) that it is only the reality of a world of images (of

¹⁰ Derieux, *Individual Methodology*, 104-5.

¹¹ Derieux, *Individual Methodology*, 105.

representation) that concerns the exhibition, not the reality of the everyday. With this in mind, *documenta 5* is described as “panoramic,” combining the “three magisterial forms of exhibition activity: criticism, information, documentation.”¹² It appears that despite the velocity of the exhibition’s title, this *documenta* is meant to serve the function of art-making and art-reception alone, not investigate the world in a larger sense through images. Perhaps the most telling indication that the anticipation of a radical departure should be avoided comes from a quote referencing the willful restriction of this *documenta* to be presented in two museum buildings —“art, to be seen as such, needs a museum context.”¹³

Image Worlds Today

The fact that *d5* was arranged as a thematic survey exhibition rather than a survey reflecting formal tendencies was a break with previous *documentas*. The first *documentas*, while showing variety of modern art, were doing so under the presumption of art-historical categorization—specifically Haftmann’s art history. This approach would have emphasized the appearance of formal qualities and their adherence to their respective tradition. Haftmann’s approach would, no doubt, have been influenced by Fry, Burr, and especially Greenburg in identifying and emphasizing the formal qualities of an object over the particular conceptual or subjective concerns of an artist.

The exhibition’s theme was developed by Szeemann’s team “from existing work of individual artists or groups and the present state of thought about general social problems...how

¹² Derieux, *Individual Methodology*, 104-5.

¹³ It is assumed that this reference is to painter Hans Hofmann. This quote gives no source and only reads “...that, as Hofmann put it two years ago...” *d5* catalogue, reprinted in Derieux, *Individual Methodology*, 104-5.

does art interpret the world?,” and was derived from reflection on content rather than formal principles.¹⁴ In initial planning documents (published in 1970-71), there appears to be more concern to connect the exhibition to social reality than the formal concerns of image-making as presented in the exhibition catalogue text. On Szeemann’s team, Bazon Brock, Professor of Non-Normative Aesthetics at the School of Visual Art, Hamburg, proposed the overall title *Questioning Reality–Image Worlds Today*. This theme was constellated to the works in exhibitions under three broad headings: “The Reality of the Image,” “The Reality of ‘What is Portrayed,’” and “The Identity or Non-Identity of the Image and ‘What is Portrayed’”

“The Reality of the Image” lists examples of Social Realism, kitsch, comics, science fiction, advertising and mass media, political propaganda, and social iconography (bank notes, flags, etc.). “The Reality of ‘What is Portrayed’” heading included photo-realist painting, Pop, Actionism (street art and theater), pornography, language, design, self-portraiture, psychedelic art and the section Individual Mythologies. “The Identity or Non-Identity of the Image and ‘What is Portrayed’” included objects determined to be children’s art, naïve or psychotic art, but also process and conceptual art, film, and theater.¹⁵ An anecdotal example was given to describe the relationship of the thematic sections: a real tire, a photo of a tire in an advertisement, that advertised tire in a Roy Lichtenstein painting, and then that Lichtenstein tire reproduced for publicity.¹⁶

Szeemann himself later described the various types of work under these headings as “the edifying image (trivial realism, trash objects, kitsch), the self-denying type (concept art), the

¹⁴ Derieux, *Individual Methodology*, 97.

¹⁵ Derieux, *Individual Methodology*, 97-98.

¹⁶ Derieux, *Individual Methodology*, 101.

persuasive type (advertising, political propaganda), the type that questions society (sociologically critical body art), the declamatory type (hyperrealism), and the type that points to a possible future (utopia, individual mythologies).”¹⁷

Description of d5 artwork

It is worth exploring the exhibition, as much as possible, through a brief description of its contents as they would have appeared. To get a sense of the layout, and the possible connections between works and their thematic sections, the following descriptions will follow installations and placements as they are presented in the catalogue’s floorplan layouts and as seen in many photographs available online and in print. With the exception of a film series at the Royal Cinema (*Kino Royal*) and a handful of installations outside, the vast majority of d5 was installed at the Museum Fridericianum and the nearby Neue Galerie.

Entering the Museum Fridericianum on the ground floor, one would have encountered work under the section headings “Information,” “Individual Mythologies,” films and video, and Bazon Brock’s audiovisual preface of the exhibition. The “Information” section included H.A. Schult’s *Biokinetic*—a haunting landscape constructed of garbage, fungi, mold and bacterial growths; documentation of Christo’s *Valley Curtain Project*—an orange fabric curtain that temporarily spanned a shallow valley in Colorado; K.P. Brehmer’s *Korrektur der Nationalfarben, gemessen an der Vermögensverteilung* (Correction of national colors, measured by the distribution of wealth)—a modified flag using the yellow, red, and black of the German flags. Instead of three equal bars of colors, Brehmer’s flag represents the nation’s distribution of wealth

¹⁷ Szeemann, *Selected Writings*, 65.

with almost the entirety of the flag in yellow to represent “big business,” a thin band of black to represent the “middle class,” and a sliver of red to represent “remaining households.” Similarly, was the inclusion of Hans Haacke’s *documenta Besucherprofil* (documenta Visitor Profile)—the results and description of a questionnaire to be completed by visitors. The questionnaire was available on site, and printed in the *d5* catalogue. This piece, executed at the Walker Art Center the year before, was initially intended his exhibition at the Guggenheim cancelled in 1971 as “inappropriate” and counter to the museums policies that “exclude active engagement toward social and political ends.”¹⁸ This questionnaire seeks to expose, through the computation of answers, the social-economic and ethnic “profile” of the typical exhibition visitor.

Another portion of the building was used for the screening of artists’ films and videos. Over 50 films and videos are listed in the catalogue and overwhelmingly represent work in this media by artists included elsewhere in *d5* including Vito Acconci, Joseph Beuys, Daniel Buren, Jan Dibbits, Howard Fried, Rebecca Horn, Bruce Nauman, Richard Serra, and Yoko Ono. It is unclear whether these played simultaneously, in sequence, or at timed intervals. A video library compiled by curator Walther König and a book library were present with information and context on the exhibition and those involved in it. Finally, was the Audiovisual Forward designed by Bazon Brock. This audiovisual preface to the exhibition was initial meant to be a very large component of *d5*, as part of the “Visitors’ School.” This section was intended to be an exhibition within the exhibition to offer the “cognitive, psychomotor, and socio-economic conditions for adequate reception of the theme.”¹⁹ This section would be comparable to current attempts in art

¹⁸ Glueck, “The Guggenheim Cancels Haacke’s Show.”

¹⁹ Derieux, *Individual Methodology*, 100.

education with specific areas devoted to didactic, interactive interpretations of the artwork and context of the exhibition. But the description of the Visitor's School in planning seems much more than these attempts to connect audiences and artworks. Scientists were to be involved, theories of perception discussed, and "procedures for stimulating reception" in each room are mentioned without detail.²⁰ Unfortunately, the Visitor's School did not materialize in full. Brock's Audiovisual Forward did comprise of lightboxes, slides, and videos for the didactic purpose of introducing the themes under which *d5* was constructed. It further attempted to mitigate common complaints of "art-about-art" and the perceived opacity of conceptualism at a time that was politically and ideologically polarized.²¹

The majority of the museums' ground floor was devoted to the section Individual Mythologies and curated directly by Szeemann. The section here included single-artist installations subtitled "Performances / Activities / Changes / Self-Portraiture." In spaces throughout, performances—and their evidence—by Vito Acconci, Arbeitszeit, James Lee Byars, Joseph Beuys, Terry Fox, Howard Fried, Gilbert & George, Rebecca Horn, Joan Jonas, Vettor Pisani, Klaus Rinke, Keith Sonnier, Trans-Parent Teacher Inc (Paul Cotton and Eugina Butler) Ben Vautier, and Franz Walther would have been found neighboring sculptures and paintings by Dan Graham, Jorg Immendorf, Yoko Ono, Giuseppe Penone, and Fritz Schwegler. Ben Vautier's room of this section contained various sizes of text paintings, and furniture for meeting. The room was used to host performances and other activities such as a "thinking-room" and a Fluxus concert throughout the run of the exhibition—including a boxing match that included Joseph

²⁰ Derieux, *Individual Methodology*, 100-101.

²¹ A very rich description of the theory and intention of the installation is found online from Brock's 1977 book *Ästhetik als Vermittlung* here: <https://bazonbrock.de/werke/detail/?id=54§id=385#sect>

Beuys and one of his students. Of special note is Vautier's dramatically large banner across the top of the museum at the entrance that read *Kunst Ist Überflüssig* (Art Is Superfluous). James Lee Byars executed performances in and around the museum including being led around blindfolded, standing stock-still on the frieze of the building's entrance dressed in white, or another, *Calling German Names*, in which Byars stood on the roof of the Museum Fridericianum using a golden bullhorn to broadcast Germanic names. Joseph Beuys set up his *Bureau für die direkte Demokratie* for the 100 days, keeping office hours, distributing literature, and hosting lectures and debates. As with most of Beuys performative, social work, the role of pedagogy for political change would have been central to the *Bureau*. One element to survive from Beuys temporary office is the printed plastic bag containing information sheets known as *Ein Vergleich zweier Gesellschaftsformen* (A comparison of two social forms). The bag was issued and used by Beuys in several actions and distributed by Beuys at *documenta 5*. The plastic bag, filled with pamphlets was a means to spread the "Organization for Direct Democracy by Plebiscite" political ideas. According to the diagrams printed on the bag, real direct democracy in the form of referenda-based society sits in opposition to the majority party state. Originally published by Galerie art intermedai, Köln, in 1971 this bag is also known as titled *How the Dictatorship of the Parties Can Be Overcome*.

The museum's first floor was split between the continuation of Individual Mythologies, this time dedicated to process and the sections "Idea" and "Idea/Light" curated by Konrad Fischer and Klaus Honnef. The Idea section consisted of a majority of photography and conceptual work. Here, would be found the Art & Language Institute, Robert Barry, Bernhard & Hilla Becher, Mel Bochner, Daniel Buren, Dan Graham, Douglas Heubler, and Sol LeWitt

among others. This section included a strong representation of artists' publications from Ed Ruscha (who designed the *d5* catalogue cover), Allen Ruppersberg, and Lawrence Wiener. Although the presentation of artists books would increasingly become part of exhibitionary practice, it can be said that *d5* provided the encouragement and facilities to make the presentation of artists books a viable working media for artists. Many artists known for conceptual books including Hanne Darboven, Stanley Brouwn, Michael Harvey, and John Baldessari, were a part of this section. Szeemann once referred to *documenta 5* as not simply a "producer" of an exhibition, but also as a "publisher and librarian."²² Lawrence Wiener's *A Primer (Elementarbuch)* was published by *documenta* for the exhibition, and it should also be noted that Szeemann's *documenta* included a 757 page catalogue.

The section Individual Mythologies: Processes included the works of 17 artists including Giovanni Anselmo, Eva Hesse, Jannis Kounellis, Barry Le Va, Mario Merz, Bruce Nauman, Panamarenko, Dorothea Rockburne, and Richard Serra. Several of these artists had additional work in other areas, all of them worked with Szeemann repeatedly throughout their careers. Panamarenko's *Aeromodeller*, a working airship 90 feet long, was the first working prototype of several flying vessels made in the years after. Additionally, protruding from the front of the museum, out of a window on this floor, visitors would have seen a clear plastic bubble surrounding a scaffold of stairs and palm tree. This bubble, *Oasis No. 7* (1972), the work of Viennese artist/architecture group Haus-Rucker-Co., was an inflated plastic sphere accessible from inside the building through a zippered door. Inside the structure, a short set of steps and a hammock strung between fake palm trees. From the outside, it look like a growth on the neo-

²² Anna Sigridur Arnar, "Books at Documenta: Medium, Art Object, Cultural Symbol," *On Curating*, no. 33 (June 2017): 151-64.

classical building; the view from inside the sphere would certainly have given the feeling of floating over the driveway below.²³

The small 2nd floor of the museum continued Fischer and Honnef's Idea/Light section with a concentration on the "light" aspect of that dyad. This section included Southern California artists largely associated with the West Coast Minimalism referred to as Light and Space and concerned with surface finish or the interaction of materials to their atmosphere. Artists Peter Alexander, Michael Asher, Ron Cooper, David Deutsch, Ed Moses, and Thomas Wudi were represented by paintings and sculptures using plastics or electronics—like David Deutsch's *Spinning Painting with Prop* (1971-72).

Finally, the top floor of the museum, 2/3rds the size of the ground and first floors, housed more of Szeemann's Individual Mythologies—section "Individual Mythologies 2." This segment was comprised primarily of sculptures, with some installations. Artists and works in this segment included Michael Buthe sculptures; John Dugger's "participation environment" titled *People's Participation Pavillion*; over 130 small sculptures by Franz Eggenschwiler; sculptures by Thomas Kovachevich, Piotr Kowalski, and Inge Mahn; over 60 pieces by Markus Raetz; and *Dream House* by La Monte Young & Marian Zazeela—an installation of light and sound.²⁴

The second venue for *d5* was the Neue Galerie, the art gallery building on campus of the state museums of Kassel. The Neue Galerie has been a venue for many documentas as well as a collecting institution in its own right, it is the home to the municipal and state art collection. The

²³ One of the most frequently photographed artworks from *d5*, this structure doesn't appear in the catalogue. Haus-Rucker-Co. is listed for two contributions housed in the Neue Galerie, neither of which is *Oasis*.

²⁴ Since 1992, this piece has been permanently installed and maintained by MELA Foundation, 275 Church Street, 3rd Floor, New York.

museum's collections consist of 19th century German Impressionism thru contemporary art. The Neue Galerie has regularly acquired pieces from documentas since 1982. The museum basement consisted entirely of "image words" sections devoted to social and cultural images. These sections were not for the "art" of *documenta 5*, but instead made up a contextualization and represented, in terms of the exhibition's theme, "The Reality of the Image." These sections, Utopia and Planning, Advertising, Science Fiction, Plat and Reality (Games), Social Iconography, and Political Propaganda were organized by a dozen members of Szeemann's curatorial advisory team. "Utopia and Planning" contained examples of architectural plans, ephemera, and models from Haus-Rucker-Co and Archigram's project *The Orchard Place* –a "speculative proposal for a serviced landscape allowing for ad-hoc accommodation" among others.²⁵

The section on Advertising was organized by German ad designer-artist Charles Wilp and consisted of large images of a 1968 campaign he did for Afri-Cola. The section on Science Fiction contained documents, books, comics, and film ephemera on popular movies and stories of science fiction. Like the architectural section, these images would have served to reinforce the idea of utopia through technology. According to the exhibition catalogue, the section titled Play and Reality consisted of an audio-visual presentation of 500 slides on 4 monitors that incorporated elements of children's play. The Social Iconography section covered a wide variety of everyday images, specifically different Swiss banknotes and a large display of covers of *Der Spiegel* magazine from 1960-72. The section Political Propaganda included examples of political posters, films, and other media from the beginning of the 20th century to the 1972. The designs

²⁵ <http://archigram.westminster.ac.uk/project.php?id=166>

and topics were specifically German, and the section was organized by, and featured posters by, German graphic artist Klaus Staeck. Staeck's images as political provocations would have been familiar to visitors in 1972 and have become iconic of Leftist subversive imagery in the West.

The ground floor featured an interesting mix of sections devoted to “Museums by Artist's,” “Trivial Realism,” and “Realism.” The artist's museums section consisted of five separate examples of artists engaging the form of “museum” through collections and display. The five artists for this section were Marcel Broodthaers, Herbert Distel, Marcel Duchamp, Claus Oldenburg, and Ben Vautier. The section “Trivial Realism” contained images and objects of historical artists and patrons, cliché works of fine art (like the Mona Lisa), devotional religious images and objects, garden gnomes, souvenirs and trinkets, homely items (like cuckoo clocks and beer steins), postcards, “collectables,” promotional products and company logos, images of “pin-up girls,” objects of “Peace and Love” and other hippie and popular slogans. These examples of popular imagery were located next to the section Realism, curated by Jean-Christophe Ammann, of new Photo-realist painting and sculpture. These Photo-realistic, or hyper-realist, objects most often included just these sorts of objects as subject matter. Examples of this small movement of the early 1970s included Chuck Close portraits, Richard Estes paintings of gleaming cars, referencing the Pop-Art sensibility—Jasper Johns flag paintings, and like-like figurative sculptures by Duane Hanson. This section would have been popular with visitors; judging from the press coverage at the time, these works were featured heavily in reviews of d5—including Franz Gertsch's painting *Medici* (1971-72) on the October cover of

Artforum. This section was to include numerous examples of Soviet Socialist Realism, but that was not realized.²⁶

Finally, the 2nd floor of the Neue Gallery continued sections of image worlds with “Imagination (or Image Worlds) and Piety” and “Imagery of the Mentally Ill,” and also the section of Individual Mythologies (Individual Mythologies I) in the Neue Gallery. Over 400 photographs, drawings, books, and objects depicting New Testament votive scenes with Christ, Modonna and Child, saints, and miracles. The section of “Imagery of the Mentally Ill” featured over 300 illustrations and objects. Many of these included works from diagnosed schizophrenic Adolf Wolfli, who lived 1864-1930. Wolfli lived in an asylum near Bern, making several tens-of-thousands pages worth of books and illustrations in his life there.²⁷

The final section was “Individual Mythologies 1” which contained pieces by 37 artists including Christian Boltanski, Paul Thek, Lucas Samaras, Marcel Broodthaers, Ed Kienholz, A.R. Penck, Sigmar Polke, Joseph Cornell, and H.C. Westermann. Boltanski’s inventoried objects, Cornell’s self-contained surrealisms in boxes, and Paul Thek’s monumental installation *ARK/PYRAMID* echo the seemingly rudimentary craftsmanship and interior narratives expressed in Wolfli’s illustrations. The section was diverse but would have surveyed the trend of rough-hewn construction that countered the slick finishes of Minimalism.

Film Section

²⁶ David Platzker in conversation with the author; Lawrence Alloway, “‘Reality’: Ideology at Documenta 5,” *Artforum*, October 1972, 31.

²⁷ A website of his work is at www.adolfwoelfli.ch