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A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "DAN GRAHAM", is centered on the page. The signature is written in a bold, blocky, slightly slanted font. The text is contained within a white rectangular area that has a rough, torn-paper-like border.

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Homes For America Rewind

I'm concerned that my "Homes For America" article has been read, incorrectly, as both an attack on Minimal Art and seen by the some critics, using a sociological perspective, mistakenly as also a critique of the banality of the new suburban city scape, somehow missing its "dead-pan" humor. Marie Paul-McDonald correctly saw it as a "fake" "think piece," parodying the typical "Esquire" magazine article where a sociological text would be illustrated with "high art" color photos by well-known photographers such as Stephen Shore. In my interest with suburbia as a template in terms for art making, I was trying to contradict the overworked cliché of the moment that art should be compositionally related to the empty white cube of the gallery space. Rather than being against "Minimal Art," in writing "Homes For America" I was influenced by the writings, and views of artists like Judd or Lewitt, and I see my "Homes For America" as a continuation of both Judd's and Lewitt's ideas and work. For me, Judd's article for "Art's Magazine" about the "neo-classical" city plan of Kansas City was influential. Sol Lewitt mentioned to me that his favorite de Chirico painting was one that depicted Torino's city plan. Lewitt's open wood lattice cubes might be understood as reflecting the grid city plan of New York City (Sol had worked in the office of I. M. Pei, whose architecture was also very grid-like).

In “Homes For America” I noticed that the quickly fabricated post World-War II suburban houses were deliberately not meant to last. Judd’s review of John Chamberlain’s automobile sculptures wrote that 50’s automobile cars could be seen as examples of “build-in” obsolescence of 50’s products which were being mass-produced to be deliberately disposable, so that the current new models would be replaced by newer, more glamorous models.

Maybe my interest in the suburban houses placed on the periphery of the city were also influenced by seeing Godard’s film “One Or Two Things I Know About Her” with images of the new quickly built high-rise apartment buildings located at the edge of Paris. In “Homes For America” I was also influenced by the French new novel, Michele Butor’s novels, like “Passing Time,” were organized by serial blocks similar to the compositional technique used by the musicians like Boulez. Sol Lewitt also used seriality in his works. I also was a fan of another French new novelist, Robert Pinget whose novels evoked the banal style of Flaubert’s “Madame Bovary” and “Three Tales.”

And I was influenced by some rock songs which depicted suburbia in Flaubertian terms, such as the Kinks “Mr. Pleasant” and the Beatles “Nowhere Man.” Unlike the dismissive “put down” of suburbia of these rock songs, my article was written with a kind of dumb “dead-pan” humor. In art, I also enjoyed the “dead-pan” humor of Lichtenstein paintings. I added to the “Homes For

America” article, made up by me, a list of the favorite colors for the new houses’ facades preferred by the husband and those preferred by the wife.