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In and Against Cinema

n REUBEN KEEHAN (TRANSLATION) ■ SITUATIONISTISCHE INTERNATIONALE

In the sense that its development shows a continuous tendency toward integrating new mechanical technologies, cinema is the central art of our society. It is therefore the best *representation* of an era of anarchically juxtaposed interventions (not articulated, merely added) — not only as anecdotal and formal expression, but also in its material infrastructure. Following on from the big screen, the introduction of stereophonics, and experiments with three dimensional pictures, the latest development was revealed by the United States at the Brussels exposition. By means of a process called "Circarama," reported in *Le Monde* on April 17, "we find ourselves in the center of the spectacle, living it — we have been integrated into it. When the sights of San Francisco's Chinatown are captured by a camera mounted in a car, we experience reflexes and sensations as if we were passengers." What's more, recent applications of aerosols have given rise to experiments with aromatic cinema, the realism of their effects expected without objection.

Cinema is thus presented as a passive substitute for the unitary artistic activity that is now possible. It is the raw material used by reactionary forces for the *spectacle* of non-participation. We are not afraid of saying that one *previously lived* in the world because we know that one finds oneself without freedom in the center of a miserable spectacle having "been integrated into it." But that isn't living, and the spectators are likewise not in-the--world. Those who wish to construct the world must fight cinema's tendency toward constituting the anti-construction of a situation (the construction of a slave ambiance, a worthy successor to cathedrals), while at the same time recognizing the interest that worthwhile technological applications such as stereo and scenting may contain in themselves.

Certain modern symptoms of art have yet to make their appearance in cinema. For example, certain formally destructive works, concurrent with what has been accepted for twenty or thirty years in literature and the plastic arts, are still rejected even in the cinema clubs. This delay follows not only directly from economic channels or from its being made up of such idealisms as moral censure, but also from the *positive importance* of cinematic art in modern society. Such importance is due to the superior means of influence present in cinematic works, leading necessarily to the increasing control of the medium by the dominant classes. These circumstances therefore demand that the struggle for the seizure of a truly experimental sector of the cinema must now be waged.

We can envisage two distinct uses for cinema: firstly, its utilization as a form of propaganda in the pre-situationist transitional period; and secondly, its direct employment as a constituent element of realized situations.

In its current importance in the lives of everyone, the limitations that ferment its renewal, and the immense significance of not doing without the freedom that this renewal can bring, cinema is somewhat comparable to architecture. It is necessary to take advantage of the progressive aspects of industrial cinema, and, just as in the organization of architecture in favor of psychological ambiance, we can extract the hidden gem from the dungheap of absolute functionalism.

Situationist International: Situationistisch / Situationist: All das, was sich auf die Theorie oder auf die praktische Tätigkeit von Situationen bezieht. Derjenige, der sich damit beschäftigt, Situationen zu konstruieren. Mitglied der situationistischen Internationale.
Situationismus: Sinnloses Wort, missbräuchlich durch Ableitung des vorigen gebildet. Einen Situationismus gibt es nicht — was eine Doktrin zur Interpretation der vorhandenen Tatsachen bedeuten würde. Selbstverständlich haben sich die Anti-Situationisten den Begriff „Situationismus" ausgedacht.

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