

The Guy Debord's Artistic Theory and Art Practice under the Background of the May Storm

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Abstract: The 1968 “May Revolution” in France was a political movement that had a fundamental impact on the cultural landscape and development trends of Western society after World War II. It also had a profound influence on the philosophy, literature, and art theory of the modern world. Guy Debord’s Situationist International and his theory of the society of the spectacle also emerged during this period, and they interacted and infiltrated with the social movements of the time. The theory and practice of Debord’s art formed a mutually interpretive relationship with social politics against the backdrop of the “May Revolution”. As practitioners of Debord’s art theory, Asger Jorn’s “détournement” strategy, Constant’s “New Babylon Plan”, and Giuseppe Gallizio’s industrial painting were all part of these artistic practices. These artistic activities were also a continuation and critical rejection of surrealism.

1. The Background of Guy Debord’s Art Theory—the Outbreak of “May Revolution” in France

After the end of World War II, Europe experienced an unprecedented accumulation of economic wealth. Most of the agricultural societies in France also transformed into modern industrial consumer societies. During this period, the authoritarian rule of Charles de Gaulle dominated the country, the entire Europe was shrouded in a gloomy atmosphere. Students and workers were filled with dissatisfaction towards society and politics, and the basic contradictions of the “May Storm” had emerged—the contradiction between abundant material and outdated political and social structures. The backbone of the “May Storm” was two groups: young university students and young workers. The reason for the outbreak of the movement was closely related to the sharp increase in the number of university students in French society at that time. “Between 1958 to 1968, the number of university students increased by 224%, and the social structure of the student population underwent significant changes in 15 years, but the teaching resources did not expand at all.” [1]. Students were dissatisfied with the De Gaulle government, overcrowded classrooms, and boring curriculum. In short, they were disgusted and dissatisfied with some seemingly unequal things in society. The sharp increase in the number of students is an important reason. Secondly, “more than one-third of university students in France (about 200,000 people) are literature colleges students.” [1]. The vast majority of students face the profession of teaching after graduation, but in this negative atmosphere, the profession of teacher was unattractive to most students, and society could not provide a large number of vacant positions. Therefore, in the “May Storm”, students played the role of intellectuals, guiding young people from all walks of life who participated in the movement. After the “May Storm” was called for by students, young workers quickly joined the tide of the movement. During this period, young workers working in factories felt the dictatorial and arbitrary style in the De Gaulle government. Young workers were dissatisfied with their wages and working conditions during the period of industrial reconstruction. They went on strike many times because they were tired of the strict hierarchical system and high-intensity production. These seemed to be previews before the “May Storm”, but in fact, the entire Europe was permeated with a negative atmosphere of political stagnation.

The young university students and workers seemed to be the source of the “May Storm”, but the deeper significance of this movement is “civilization” and the political power that concretizes and magnifies its flaws. The “May Storm” cannot be simply understood as a contradiction between bad education, lack of open politics, soulless civilization and the basic needs of human life. Its root should

be the tremendous changes in the times caused by various aspects of technological progress. In the 19th century, people's pursuit of mechanical led to a firm belief that science and technology could solve any problem. People's spiritual lives were strongly controlled by material desires. The increasing abundance of goods in the material world and the lack of spiritual richness presented a great incompatibility, that posing difficult questions for everyone about "what life means" and "what kind of society we should need." The "May Storm" triggered a large-scale social discussion and various opinions were put forward. Some people say it is a false revolution turning to spiritual rebellion, while others say it is about "dreams", "rejection", and "the persistence of vitality." Some scholars have made inferences about the "universal value crisis" or "spiritual rebellion". The "May Storm" is not only considered a spiritual rebellion against an unjust and absurd society but also a more general crisis of civilization. During the "May Storm", it triggered a large-scale discussion among sociologists, philosophers, and artists, and also led to the renewal of art theory. Guy Debord's Situationist International and Society of the Spectacle landed on the historical stage under such circumstances.

2. The Core of Guy Debord's Art Theory

The two most important contributions of Guy de Boer in his life were the creation of Situationist International (1957-1972) and his theoretical society of the spectacle >. There is a complex relationship between Situationist International and society of the spectacle. The Situationist International strives to find the point of intersection between art and politics. The period from 1957 to 1962 was the first phase of Situationist International's development, "known as the The International of Experimental Artist , Letterist Movement, Letterist International and The International Movement for an Imaginist Bahaus." [2]. Situationist International was an important social and Cultural trends in the mid to late 20th century, and its artistic practices during the "May Storm" period had a profound impact as a critical artistic concept. "It was not only a significant intellectual matrix that directly influenced the European contemporary avant-garde art and radical philosophical discourse, but also the direct practical matrix of the book 'The Society of the Spectacle'. Situationist International continued to use some of the expressive techniques and elements of Dadaism, Futurism, and Surrealism." [2] The Society of the Spectacle" describes how contemporary capitalism enters people's daily lives in various ways, and people see the commodity society filled with material desires as a spectacle created by capitalists. The spectacle is everything, and the spectacle is the goal.

After World War II, the global economy recovered vigorously, and the material goods became extremely abundant. The marginalization of daily life began to expand, people were immersed in an increasingly rich and materialistic life. The fanciful advertisements and glamorous product packaging were constantly impacting people's life. Production brought people a wealthy daily life, and social production shifted to the field of life. People firmly believed that capitalists had reached the point of ubiquitous control over politics rights and economic monopolies, and this trend had shifted from the infiltration of daily life to the field of cultural ideology. Therefore, what people see and hear is the "landscape" created by those politics power. The "landscape" cannot be simply understood as a visual deception in the dissemination process. It has two meanings: first, the "landscape" is a materialized worldview, and second, the "landscape" has an ideological function and is the outer garment of capitalism's legitimacy. The original meaning of "landscape" refers to a visible and objective scenery or phenomenon, and also refers to a subjective and conscious performance and show. [3]. Debord summarized the new characteristics of contemporary capitalist society that he saw-the dominant nature of contemporary society mainly manifests as a displayed pictorial quality. With "landscape" there will be "audience", the Capitalists as Power Holders, rely on controlling the production the landscape and gradually to manipulate the whole society. The "audience" is fascinated by the scenes that are seen, manipulated, and displayed in front of them, and life becomes a spectacle. Entertainment media, advertising, and news fills people's lives, and people lose their desire and demand for the true life, gradually become lost in the control of the spectacle ideology. During the "May Storm" period,

capitalists used all means to create a virtual reality landscape for the public, and daily life became an alienated spectacle and imagination! How to destroy these? Then people need to start with the most basic “daily life” and destroy the imaginary enemies given to people by capitalists. As the avant-garde, Situationist International launched a series of artistic practices and various liberation plans for the increasingly alienated “daily life”, and the concept of “reconfiguration situation” was the most common way of artistic criticism at that time.

3. The Early Artistic Practice of Situationist International

Guy Debord and the ideas of the Situationist International had a huge impact on social movement organization, culture, and artistic production. Debord was a founding member and key figure of the organization. During the “May Revolution”, Debord’s report “The Construction of Situationist International and the Organization and Activity Conditions of Situationist International Trends in Situations” began to explore various possibilities of Situationist International’s commitment to exploring the practice of art intervention in politics. The artists of the Situationist International, in order to express their repression, pain, and desire for everyday life, used the method of “constructing situations” to see “hope” or “satire” against the anxiety and dissatisfaction of contemporary society. In many ways, the Situationist International was understood as an inheritor and expounder of non-orthodox Marxist politics. They were a powerful weapon of the Situationist International and drew heavily on the history of the avant-garde. The representative artists were Asger Jorn, Constant Nieuwenbuys, and Giuseppe Pinot-Gallizio. They rethought the function of art and the essence of society through the collective form of aesthetic-political practice. In Debord’s theoretical work “The Society of the Spectacle”, the “détournement” strategy was an important theoretical support for the artistic group of this period. The object of “détournement” covered art activities, images, novels, films, soundtracks, etc. It was a strategy against capitalist activities and an important benchmark for artistic practice and theory of this period.

Asger Jorn's “détournement” strategy, Constant's “New Babylon Plan”, and Giuseppe Pinot-Gallizio’s industrial painting were the core and essence of the Situationist International’s artistic experiments. Their creative methods and content had great differences, but they were very similar in dealing with the core issues of bourgeois society. These artist’s ideas and creations are usually understood as the combination of avant-garde art and Marxism, but this understanding and expression are too narrow and simple, which may lead to overemphasizing certain aspects and neglecting others. These artist's artistic revolutionary strategies all implied a critique of the capitalist materialization of urban life. For example, Jorn and Constant’s artistic practice involved modeling, painting, and collage. They used practice to explore new creative design spaces and new forms of utopian relationships between people, surpassing the architectural environment under modern capitalist control. These practices aimed to “mobilize” and “promote” - to make the city’s architectural environment more fluid and flexible. They also made “suggestions” in the sense of conceptual architecture, hoping to “simulate” a new production model of collective space. The purpose was to overcome the erosion of capitalism and modernist urbanization processes on people.

3.1. Asger Jorn’s “Détournement” Strategy

Asger Jorn was the initiator of artistic practice in the Situationist International. Before joining the Situationist International, Jorn was already well-known as a leading member of the International Movement for an Imaginist Bahaus (IMIB). In the summer of 1956, he invited artist groups from all over Europe to the small town of Alba, hoping to attract more collaborators to challenge the discourse hegemony of European society. The participating artists included Italian artist Giuseppe Gallizio and representatives of the Letterist International (LI), including practitioners of art in Western Europe. Jorn invited these artists with the aim of establishing an art experiment and art theory research institute, working together to find ways to stop the technopolitics of functionalism and allow new “desires” to grow. He believed that experimental art practice was gradually marginalized by society because of the lack of corresponding theoretical support. He attributed this situation to the fact that European art privilege was controlled by art critics who favored musical and prose art forms, but Jorn believed that

prose art was the least experimental art form. Jorn described experimental art as the last fortress of freedom, so he founded the International Movement for an Imaginist Bahaus (IMIB) organization to resist the impact of technology. Jorn believed that art should express everyday life. Before the avant-garde period of the Situationist International, Jorn had already joined the Cobra artist group (Figure 1), whose consistent feature was emphasizing poetry and using dreamy expressionism techniques with surrealist implications. The painting style was free and unrestrained, with strong political ideals (Figure 2 and Figure 3).



Figure 1 COBRA artist group.



Figure 2 Asger Jorn, green ballet, 1960.



Figure 3 Asger Jorn, Souls for sale, 1958-1959.

Early on, Jorn was influenced by Jacques Ellul, particularly Ellul's 1954 work "La Technique, ou

l'Enjeu du siècle". Ellul was a French sociologist who sought to break the misconception that post-war technology only affected the industrial production aspect of society. Ellul believed that "technology permeates all aspects of social life, and even creates an ideology of 'the world needs machines to create'" [4]. Therefore, Jorn believed that all technology is art, and that art is the skill of creating the unknown: "To be an artist means to be able to create something impossible, to do what is considered impossible... In aesthetics, the impossible does not exist, and new things always seem impossible because the boundaries of possibility are based on established knowledge" [4]. In 1954, Jorn gave a public speech at the Milan Triennial, an international industrial design conference that brought together artists and visitors from across Europe. During this event, Max Bill, the first president of the post-war Bauhaus, gave a keynote speech in which he claimed that artists are false and that art is a useless production. In response to Bill's remarks, Jorn gave a speech entitled "Anti-Functionalism", in which he argued that "what we need today is not more gadgets, but a new ideological foundation that creates new obligations and new taboos. The role of the artist is to pose a fundamental question to contemporary people — 'How can we avoid the complete automation of our intelligence into instinctive and standardized reactions?' Free artists must ensure that life is not completely managed, and that society is not completely automated like industry. Only we can 'save' our youth, our intelligence, and our desire for the unknown" [5].

Jorn created a large number of works to put his artistic ideas into practice, and his artistic strategy of "détournement" was inspired by Dadaism and Surrealism. Early on, the artist purchased an unknown second-rate painting from a flea market, which he then reworked, leaving traces of his repainting on the canvas. Jorn held an art exhibition at the Left Bank Gallery in Paris entitled "Corrections", which, as the name suggests, was a "correction" or "reworking" of the unknown painting. After this, Jorn created a series of "corrections", which can be understood as a way of "correcting" the pervasive technological society of the time. These "corrected" works are considered to be the most quintessential representation of Situationist International, and are an example of the "détournement" strategy of realism. The "détournement" strategy was an important early artistic theory of Debord, which aimed to "anonymously and freely appropriate all kinds of texts, images, soundtracks, and films, and to recombine them through the appropriation and recombination of elements familiar to capitalism itself" [3]. The Situationist "détournement" concept is largely considered from a media criticism perspective, "détournement" is just a method of Situationist International that embezzlement - disruption - Reconstruction of existing text, images, or movie sequences, modifying them through retelling or other means and placing them in a new context, thereby changing their meaning and function while continuing to reference their original source. In a sense, the "détournement" strategy had two meanings. Firstly, it was a form of expression against the materialistic reality of contemporary life, which is artificial and constructed by capitalists, similar to the "spectacle" society described by Guy Debord. The "détournement" strategy aimed to break through the spectacle and find the true essence of life. Secondly, Jorn's early practice of randomly purchasing second-rate paintings from flea markets and re-creating them was a way of expressing his subjective perception of the world. By reconstructing the original artwork, Jorn sought to subvert its original meaning and create a critical language. The objects that Jorn used in his "détournement" strategy were arbitrary and floating, so by re-creating them, he hoped to reintegrate them into a subjective-objective relationship that could be discussed. The creative form of the "détournement" strategy originally came from Dadaism, but some aspects went beyond Dada's appropriation and collage. The "détournement" strategy is easily misunderstood as a critical destruction. "'détournement' refers to the structuring of the image of bourgeois society by exposing hidden manipulations or inhibitions, which is why some philosophers and artists of that period saw situationism as a continuation of surrealism." [6]. They saw not only Dadaist collages, but also a kind of a materialistic critique of reality. The "détournement" strategy became an important tool for situationists, not only for criticizing, imitating and exposing the hidden ideology in cultural and commercial products, but also for actively constructing new situations and experiences. In Jorn's artistic practice, he particularly emphasized this aspect.

The collaboration between Jorn and Debord aimed to bring together artists from all over Europe

in an aesthetic project. Debord's plan to construct "situations" coincided with Jorn's initiation of "international cooperation". Their collaboration demonstrated that Situationism combined its aesthetic project with organizational practice, and even more so, this cross-border collaboration was regarded as an artistic work of Situationist International.

3.2. Constant's "New Babylon Project"

Constant was also a member of the COBRA art group, he was an important participant in the Situationist International movement in the 1960s. During World War II, he was influenced by leftist ideas and early 20th-century art movements, he emphasizing that art should be experimental and involved in discussions of social issues. In July 1948, he co-founded the Dutch experimental group with Dutch painters Karel Appel and Corneille. He was also a member of the "Experimental Artists International" and believed in rejecting and opposing realistic and abstract art, they were seeking a more direct and concrete form of expression through continuous experimentation, giving people a childlike innocence and purity. In the early 1950s, Constant became a follower of Dutch modernist Aldo van Eyck. Constant abandoning avant-garde painting and turning to the practice of architecture and art, focusing on urban environmental concepts. Van Eyck's architectural ideas greatly influenced him, Van Eyck's concept of "art and habitat" had a great impact on Constant, which directly affected his later "New Babylon Project". The name "New Babylon" was coined by Debord in 1959, referring to a place where people live together, full of uncertainty and mobility. Debord and Constant attempted to create a new nomadic life of free drifting in the city, freeing people from the boredom of daily work controlled by capitalism. Situationists believed that the capitalist-controlled city was a functionalist modernization of the city, and the development of the city was threatened by increasingly strict functionalism and urban planning. The New Babylon project was seen as the best solution to this problem.

The New Babylon project was first conceived in 1956 and was not abandoned until 1974. It was a Situationist utopian fantasy of a completely modular city, constructed with standardized and easily adjustable units, without fixed boundaries or restrictions, and the entire city "floating" above transportation. The "New Babylon Plan" is synonymous with "Utopia", but compared to Utopia, New Babylon is more thorough. Constant believed that urban life should be people-oriented, and the pattern and creation of the city do not necessarily need to be based on rationality, but should start from sensibility. Urban construction should be a flexible, fluid, continuous spatial body that can tap and release everyone's potential and creativity.

The "New Babylon Project" involves detailed considerations of urban passages, transitional space networks, courtyards, and stairs. It also explicitly takes into account children's play areas and other game spaces. Constant believed that the interweaving of transitional elements and game spaces is a fundamental part of urban composition, and that a networked urban pattern is like the infinite and ever-changing internal maze of New Babylon (Figure 4). Constant believed that there should be plenty of game spaces in urban areas because he believed that individuals should have the freedom to pursue their own interests, and that civilization develops and evolves through games. People mainly gain the ability to think independently, develop their own skills, and evolve their concepts and meanings through games.

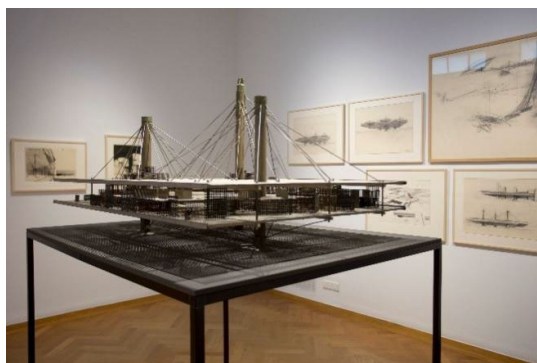


Figure 4 "Hanging Sector" features stacked boxes, pylons, and suspension cables, 1961.

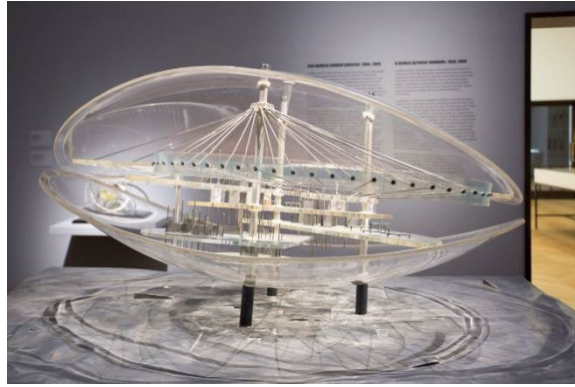


Figure 5 “Space Eater II” trades a square sector design for graceful curves, 1960.

In the 1970s, Constant actively engaged in design, modeling and theoretical exposition to promote his idea of the New Babylon plan. New Babylon is a city similar to a nomadic tribe, the city full of elevated and networked structures. It seems to have an infinite potential for expansion. In the fantastic imagination of New Babylon, the city is a vast network system composed of multiple “parts” interconnected with each other. This “urban system” rises from countless “stilts” and people shuttle back and forth in the maze-like city, experiencing various irreplacable decorations and a non-labor-based anarchist society. Fully automated production takes place underground, and agricultural production and high-speed transportation are separated from each other (Figure 5). The walls in the New Babylon project can be built and rebuilt at will, creating larger or smaller spaces according to actual needs, and each space can be constructed and transformed arbitrarily. “A huge suspended multi-level mesh structure that extends the surface space vertically. This maze-like spatial network is layered by function: the bottom space is dedicated to transportation, greenery and public gatherings use; the top layer is used as a helipad, public square, sports field and aerial green space; while the middle layer is used for living, production, consumption and entertainment, with movable partitions for free combination, forming a versatile structure designed to create temporary situations, people can freely construct space according to their own imagination.”[7] Constant wrote in his 1960 lecture in Amsterdam: “reveals a decentralized, reticular structure consisting of an irregular stringing together of numerous sectors, each covering an area of 5 to 10 hectares, which stretches for hundred of kilometres in every direction and in which a population of on average 10 million people reside. In view of their huge size, the levels are largely inaccessible to sunlight, so the interior of the city is artificially lit, ventilated, and airconditioned” [8]. People who move through this vast social space expect it to be divisible, changeable and moldable. The New Babylon project is an urbanism organized around the problems of labor, living space, and circulation between people and things, aiming to overcome modernism and attempting to construct a new model of the city and a new anthropological vision. In fact, New Babylon is a mirror of the city, a real and tangible existence in thought, but in reality, the New Babylon project is unachievable and has nothing to do with the real “city”. In 1966, Constant stated in an interview: “I am very aware that New Babylon cannot be realized now. The lifestyle on which the New Babylon project is based depends on whether the economic conditions allow it. The current automated production does not mean that we are free from slavery and labor, but it is a kind of ‘poverty’ and ‘boredom’ for workers” [9]. According to architectural historian Mark Wigley, Constant’s New Babylon is more of a challenge and resistance to capitalist society and space, and this project is not a specific implementation plan for the future world.

In May 1959, the New Babylon project was first presented to the public. Constant conveyed his vision of an ideal city to the audience through the exhibition of models. In the following decade, in addition to the models he built, Constant also held many exhibitions, including paintings, maps, photographs, films, and texts. Therefore, the New Babylon project cannot simply be classified as architecture, sculpture, or even art. This also confirms what Constant said in the manifesto of the Cobra group early on, that art needs to challenge and transcend traditional art classifications because social expressions can manifest in different ways, sometimes even appearing in conflicting visual

contexts (in some cases, detailed naturalism, in other cases, simplified or even expressionistic). This makes it impossible for the audience to view the New Babylon project as a plan for a specific group of structures.

The New Babylon plan is not an unchanging city model; on the contrary, every element of it has uncertainty, mobility, and flexibility. People circulating in this huge social space expect it to be divisible, changeable, and moldable. The New Babylon Project is an urbanism organized around the issues of labor and living space, as well as the circulation of people and things, aiming to overcome modernism and trying to construct a new city model and a new anthropological perspective. Constant's collaboration with Guy Debord is reflected "in primitive situationism, such as psychogeography, urban driving, architectural contexts, architectural tours, and singular urbanism. In 1955, Guy Debord proposed the concept of psychogeography, through which it can be seen that Debord emphasized the personal psychological experience in the city and studied the relationship between urban space and social environment from a psychological perspective. Therefore, this also confirms the initial model of the New Babylon project.

3.3. Giuseppe "Pinot" Gallizio's Industrial Painting

Guy Debord promoted the development of Situationist International through the industrial painting of Gallizio. Industrial painting is more technically proficient than the "aged" surrealism, Studying Gallizio's work helped to better understand Debord's theory. Late Surrealism and early Situationist International were contradictory in many ways. The growth and development of the Situationist International organization was not only due to Surrealism, but also to the production mode of industrial technology and the automatism.

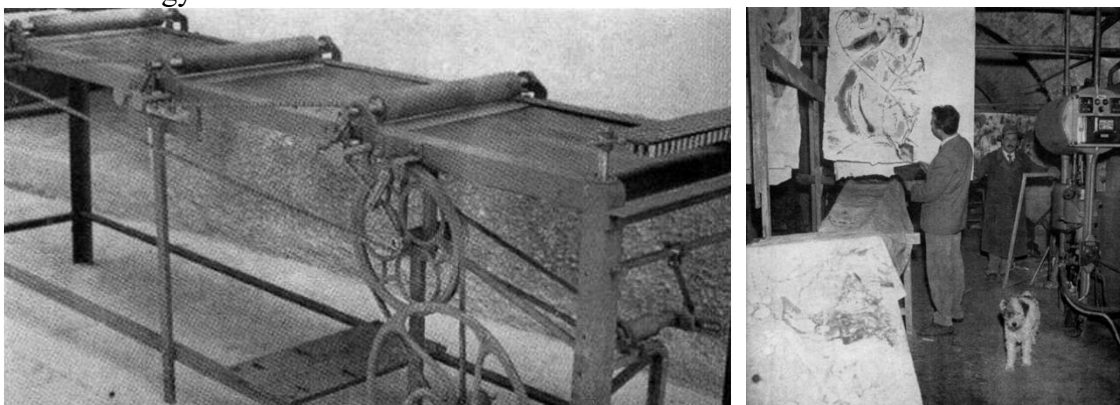


Figure 6 Jorn, Gallizio established the Alba Experimental Laboratory.



Figure 7 Pinot Gallizio, Asger Jorn, Piero Simondo, and friends working outside the Alba Experimental Laboratory, 1956.

Courtesy of the Gallizio Archive, Turi Gallizio was the core of the Situationist International movement. In July 1957, when he was over 50 years old, he formally joined the organization. Prior

to joining, he was an expert in scientific research and had achieved success in chemistry, botany, archaeology and other fields. Gallizio hoped to challenge the specialization of disciplines to achieve free interaction and connection between modern sciences, and to find the “primitive” roots in the monopoly of capitalism. After graduating from the School of Pharmacy at the University of Turin in the 1920s, Gallizio worked in the pharmaceutical related work, his professional knowledge and experience were directly related to the later creation of “industrial painting”. With Jorn, Gallizio established the Alba Experimental Laboratory (Figure 6), the laboratory became the main venue and laboratory for the Situationist International group’s creation of “industrial painting” in the future. Their experiments were a utopian project open to everyone, and were a new form of creativity that was inseparable from daily life. It aimed to guide modern culture away from technological bureaucracy, militarism and ostentatious consumption. For Gallizio and other artists, the Alba Laboratory was more like a workshop, and the creative tools they used were mostly common tools in the workshop. The artists coated the long canvas with liquid chemical resin, and then sprayed the canvas with brushes and spray with herbal perfume, explosive powder and colored pigments, and used industrial materials such as sand, resin, metal chips and other industrial materials in their works. After completion, the canvas was placed to the laboratory's radiator to dry, and the paint on the canvas gradually produced a chemical reaction, creating extremely vivid abstract painting effects that were difficult for artists to create. The artists then created some symbolic elements on the canvas, which were easily reminiscent of prehistoric cave paintings in Altamira and Lascaux, thus giving birth to the “Anti-Matter Cave Project” experiment. In December 1958, with Gallizio as the initiator, he organized an industrial painting exhibition called “Anti-Matter Cave” at Rene Drouin’s gallery. Debord and his wife, Michelle Bernstein, participated in this exhibition. The white walls of the gallery were adorned with paintings by primitive artist Jean Dubuffet and surrealist painter Wifredo Lam, among other artists, the gallery’s white walls, which were covered by 145 meters of “industrial paintings”. Visitors could smell the recently dried industrial paintings mixed with paint, herbal perfume, and various odors of resin. The gallery space was almost overwhelmed by the visitors during this exhibition.

This project was established in the basement of de Gallizio’s residence, and he acted as the liaison to establish a network group of artists and non-professionals (Figure 7). Gallizio adroitly use industrial equipment and tools to create “industrial painting” in the experiment. The laboratory metaphorically became a “cave”, a single space where humans had the impulse to create, with a “primitive” colour. The artists quickly produced hundreds of meters of industrial paintings with machines, the paint like scrolls on various industrial machines. The artists had their own division of labor on this small “assembly line”, and different parts of the works were created by different artists. This performance demonstrated the collaboration between surrealism and machinery. In fact, it was precisely because of the division of labor and cooperation with machinery that the personal will of the artists was avoided. Therefore, the artists used the performance to “mock” the current “rationalized mass production”. “Industrial painting is a critical distortion of the assembly line—a form of automation that imitates the automated world.” [10]. In a sense, Industrial painting is an accomplice of mechanization and consumer society, operating in an increasingly repetitive and regular world, “industrial painting” records the subjective authenticity and autonomous resistance of human beings. The artists left their traces on the long white cloth, seemingly expressing the importance of “humanity” in the mechanical production process. “Human beings are always the center of all technology and activities, and no machine can reduce the importance of the most primitive tools such as hands, hammers, scissors, and pillows without reducing the importance of human beings themselves.” [11].

Gallizio’s industrial painting, rather than being an art object, was more of a technical product used to “create situations that destroy everyday life”. The industrial paintings he created with other Situationists in the basement of the Alba house were like experiments conducted in a cave. This art, which was like experimenting in a cave, was a mixture of technical enthusiasm and the primitive anxiety of the primitive. They experimented in the “cave” and produced incredible chemical reactions, creating a temporary reality like a primitive cave. It blurred the boundaries between life and death, crucial regeneration and industrialization, utopian art and commodity culture. According to Italian

Situationists, in such a “primitive” environment, the influence of industrial painting can be extended to all aspects of life.

4. Situation International's Concerns about Surrealism

During the first stage of Situationist International’s development, known as the “avant-garde period,” many artistic groups emerged. Guy Debord intentionally led Situationist International towards becoming a factional group during this period. The artist’s works were characterized by marginalization and ambiguity, much like the works and concepts of the three artists mentioned above. To some extent, their artistic practices had shades of political criticism, as the artists used techniques such as collage, appropriation, and alienation. The uninitiated might confuse Situationist International's artistic practices with surrealism. Guy Debord was keenly aware of the risk of confusion between the two as early as the 1950s. He even specified specific artistic action plans for Giuseppe Gallizio in their correspondence, in order to guide and correct Situationist International’s direction and intentionally thwart the followers of surrealism. As a Situationist, Gallizio’s work is imbued with surrealist ideas. Surrealism was seen as a “new way of thinking” and was at the forefront of the scientific repositioning, Surrealism helping society to free from “anxiety” and “rigid systems.” Surrealism shifted its interest from positivism perspectives and control over natural and social technology towards super-rationality. As Marcuse proposed in the 1960s, “the first posture of surrealism is the refusal to work, a permanent ‘strike,’ in support of a comprehensive, non-professional group activity that anticipates new forms of life beyond capitalist division of labor”. [12]. Surrealism faced capitalist society with a completely liberated attitude. In some respects, Gallizio and Jorn held a critical attitude towards surrealism, but this did not mean they broke with it. They maintained an “ambiguous” relationship with surrealism. However, in Debuffet's view, Gallizio and other Situationist international artists were too enthusiastic about surrealism, especially after the huge success of the “Cavern of Antimatter” event. Debord excluded Gallizio and all other members of the Italian laboratory from the Situationist International organization. The official reason given was “they did not sever all connections with the art market, but rather ‘cooperated’ with the art market.” [13] Shortly after the “Cavern of Antimatter” event ended, Gallizio sold his industrial paintings at an expensive price to the Carnegie Institute in the United States. The official and seemingly "selfish" reasons could not conceal the tension and ambition among individuals and organizations within the Situationist International at that time. Guy Debord mentioned surrealism on many occasions, only to distinguish it from Situationism, its predecessor. In the 1958 Paris Debate, “Is surrealism dead or alive”, Debord commented, “Surrealist dreams are mere bourgeois impotence, artistic nostalgia, and a refusal to envisage the liberating use of our era’s superior technological means. Seizing such means for use in collective, concrete experimentation with new environments and behaviors is the start of a cultural revolution that cannot exist apart from these means.” [13]. In Debord’s view, revolutionary social change is inevitable. Although Debuffet openly rejected avant-garde tactics (surrealist expression), he still completed his final performance, which should be interpreted as a tribute to his former comrade Gallizio and also a tribute to surrealists. Debuffet realized that it was difficult for the Situationist International to completely replace surrealism through so-called technical means, and that it was extremely difficult to bring about change through avant-garde art.

5. Conclusion

Guy Debord had very close with these three above artists, which included art experiments, exhibitions, and publishing activities aimed at combining the most radical art trends of surrealism, expressionism, and non-figurative abstraction with open Marxist culture. In 1953, Constant and Asger Jorn founded the Imaginist Bauhaus, considered a “combat action” against the ceaseless and changing attacks of capitalism, turning their art experiments into action. Jorn believed that free art experiments expressed a desire for different things, and that technology had become an ideology after the war, not only setting up social forms but also shaping society’s development and establishing the society’s direction. In addition, it was also a stabilizing force, standardizing life and consolidating different

forms of society. Artists must take technology and social forms as a premise for creation, and Jorn proposed that the great aesthetic task of our times is to...make modern technological forms harmonize with human priorities. We need to make the essence of this form become active. Therefore, artists must subvert the technological dependence that supports society, and the issues they contemplate should not be limited to the creation of value. It is more about questioning what is given value and why it is given value.

Constant's "New Babylon Project", turned cities into battlefields of modernity. After urban planning was abolished, "continuous drift" took its place, that meaning was the city seen as a battlefield of modernity. In a sense, Constant's modular cities were an ideal cityscape map generated by Debord, Jorn, and himself. In conclusion, the early avant-garde period of the Situationist International was an art movement with surrealist. Whether the three artists were real Situationists or not, they still experimented with art in different ways to explore the possibility of social change.

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