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| Situationist Cinema |
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| Situationist Cinema refers to the films and cinematic techniques of the left-wing radical group The Situationist International. While primarily a political organisation, the Situationists’ early writings established them as an avant-garde art movement, with many Situationists being filmmakers, painters, sculptors, architects, writers, activists, and political philosophers. Guy Debord and René Viénet were the only two filmmakers foundational to the organisation. Debord regarded film as ‘the central art of our society’ (With and Against Cinema 19), and in his book *The Society of the Spectacle* (a central work of Situationist theory) argued that modern society had become so saturated by advertising, entertainment, and visual culture that ‘all that was once directly lived ha[d] become mere representation’ (Debord, La Société 12). While he felt that film was one of the most powerful tools of capitalist propaganda, he also believed its power could be recovered for revolutionary purposes. Viénet echoed these sentiments, stating that cinema was ‘undoubtedly [the] most utilizable means of expression of our time’ (Knabb 275). Situationist filmmakers thus tried to recover film from commodity culture and disrupt viewers’ expectations by using cinematic techniques considered anti-art. |
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| Further reading:  (Bureau of Public Secrets)  (Debord, Complete Cinematic Works: Scripts, Stills, Documents)  (Debord and Cornand, Guy Debord, son art et son temps [Guy Debord: His Art and His Time])  (Debord, Critique de la séparation [Critique of Separation])  (Debord, Hurlements pour Sade [Howls for Sade])  (Debord, In girum imus nocte et consumimur igni [We Turn in the Night, Consumed by Fire])  (Debord, Réfutation de tous les jugements, tant élogieux qu’hostiles, qui ont été jusqu’ici portés sur le filme 'La Société du Spectacle' [Refutation of All the Judgements, Pro or Con, Thus Far Rendered on the Film 'The Society of the Spectacle'])  (Debord, La Société du Spectacle [Society of the Spectacle])  (Debord, The Society of the Spectacle (1967))  (Debord, Sur le passage de quelques personnes à travers une assez courte unité de temps [On the Passage of a Few Persons Through a Rather Brief Unity of Time])  (Guy Debord's Cinema)  (Knabb, Situationist International Anthology)  (McDonough)  (Viénet, La Dialectique Peut-Elle Casser Les Briques? [Can Dialectics Break Bricks?])  (Viénet, Chinois, encore un effort pour êtres révolutionnaires! [Peking Duck Soup])  (Viénet, Les Filles de Kamare [The Girls of Kamare])  (Wark)  (With and Against Cinema) |

1. See Knabb p. 14-21 for a more fulsome discussion of *détournement*. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)