

## First proclamation of the Dutch Section of the SI

*Written by A. Alberts, Armando, Constant, Har Oudejans. Published in Internationale Situationniste #2, December 1959*

There is no longer any meaning in the search to develop this or that cultural activity if one does not start from a general view extended to the whole of society. This idea, which forms the basis of all theories of the post-War avant-garde, is the characteristic that distinguishes it from the avant-garde of the previous period. Since the war, purely formal researches have ground to a halt and new developments in the style of a given art are no longer produced.

On the contrary, the interest of the individual arts has diminished considerably, the work of art has become degraded into a banal commercial product, and truly all creative activity concentrates on the synthesis and liason of forces.

The collapse of the dominant culture has become a fact that can be observed everywhere. There is no longer a single thought, gesture or product of existing culture that demonstrates an understanding of our epoch. Culture is reduced to naught! The principles of the COBRA movement have not led to anything either, and the heritage COBRA bequeathed to us at its inglorious death consisted merely in formal variations on individual techniques in decomposition: neo-expressionism in painting and poetry.

Yet memories of the misery of the war, from which this expressionism drew its inspiration, were growing weaker and weaker. A new generation came to the fore. In France the Lettrist International was taking the initiative. In 1955, in Number 22 of *Potlatch*, it said [in "Why Lettrism?"]: "It must be understood that a literary school, a renewal of expression, or modernism, was not what we were about. It's a matter of a way of living that comes through exploration and provisional formulae; that itself only tends to occur in the provisional. The nature of this enterprise means that we work in a group, and that we rarely show ourselves: we expect much of the people and the events to come. We also possess that other great strength of no longer expecting anything of the host of known activities, individuals and institutions. We have to experiment with forms of architecture as well as rules of conduct."

The people from whom the Lettrists expected something began to arrive after 1956. The International Movement for an Imaginist Bauhaus, founded by Jorn and Gallizio to oppose the functionalist Bauhaus in Ulm, organized a congress in Alba. Constant's intervention showed us the way: "For the first time in history, architecture shall become an authentic art of construction. . . . It is in poetry that life will be housed." And the Lettrists' delegate [Gil J. Wolman] formulated that Congress's conclusion: "The parallel crises that currently affect all modes of creation are determined by a general process, and one can only arrive at the

resolution of these crises from within a general perspective. The movement of negation and destruction that has manifested itself with increasing swiftness against all antiquated conditions of artistic activity is irreversible: it is a consequence of the appearance of superior possibilities for action in the world."

A year later the Situationist International was founded at the Cosio d'Arroscia Conference.

The new forces orient themselves toward a complex of human activities that extend beyond utility: leisure, superior games. Contrary to what the functionalists think, culture is situated at the point where usefulness ends. Isn't the absence of culture today felt most distressingly in the misery of televisions and motor scooters? A revolution in life precedes a revolution in art. Unitary urbanism is only realizable using situationist means.

The need is finally seen, in the realization of unitary urbanism, for entirely new methods and techniques to replace existing artistic techniques.

Culture is already so old-fashioned, so backward when compared to the reality of life, that it is not even capable of using the technical inventions man already has at his disposal. Before any advance is possible, the whole arsenal of cultural conventions has to be renewed. One will only accede to this through teamwork.

But above all it is the construction of new situations that is required, the framework of new activities. The construction of situations is the prior condition for the creation of new forms; it is here that today's creators encounter their task.

The primitive conception of current urbanism as the organization of buildings and spaces according to aesthetic and utilitarian principles will of necessity be superseded by a conception of the habitat as a decor for life as a whole, as a collective creative at the level of an authentic art, a complex art of extremely varied means.

The artist today confronts an absolute cultural void: the absence of aesthetics, morality, lifestyle. Everything is to be invented.

Caught in this difficult position, he has one great strength: his acceptance of the transitory, his conception of life founded on the speeding by of time. Our essential need to create will only be satisfied through this new attitude. By renouncing fixed form, we arrive at all forms, which we invent and afterwards reject. It is abundance that will make a culture. This new attitude also implies that we renounce the work of art. It is uninterrupted invention that interests us: invention as a way of life.

The individual arts were tied to an idealist conception, to a seeking after the eternal.

Only urbanism will be able to become that unitary art that responds to the exigencies of dynamic creativity, the creativity of life.

Unitary urbanism will be the ever variable, ever alive, ever actual, ever creative activity of the man of tomorrow.

Everything we do today must be considered in relation to this perspective, and to prepare the path.

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