

Outdoor Play

Due Tuesday April 28th

This is a long term group project due near the end of the semester. Your group will have about a month and a half to plan-out and execute a Fluxus / Situationalist International (SI) style event or happening. You will document this public action and turn in a ~2-3min video via the class Youtube.com page.

a little history.

The Fluxus and SI movements were both (in different ways) engaged in subverting classic models of art creation and distribution - i.e. the museum/gallery value system; the commoditization of objects, of experience, and of artwork itself; and the boundary between the viewer/audience and artist/artwork. The Fluxus movement was very much interested in playing with the idea of art, and often made 'non-art' objects and events which broke all of the rules of stage audience relationships - humor was a large part of their work ideology. the SI people on the other hand were very heavily influenced by Marxism and the Letterists and saw their work as a catalyst for social change and revolution.

Guy Debord, the founder of SI, criticized modern society (as he knew it in the 50's-60's) as being entranced by the spectacle of mass culture and mass media. Relegating people to the role of benumbed spectators in the face of the many (false) splendors at the beginning of the age of entertainment. Debord formed the Situationalist International in a effort to find a way to challenge/subvert this overwhelming sense of alienation in society stemming from the domination of the individual by mass media and consumerism.

One of the strategies employed by Guy Debord and the SI was the use of *Detournement*, which roughly translates as "turnabout" or "derailment." His desire was to unseat people from their daily routines to take them out of the daze of the spectacle of modern life, and shift them (however briefly) into a state where one is reinvested into the moment - where a person becomes aware of themselves and their phenomenological experience of the world - to, as Debord put it, focus upon and give rise to the 'passional' moments of life. SI was also very interested in taking established art or mass media forms/strategies and turning them against themselves to reveal their fallacy or hypocrisy (think like the power point presentation of the YesMen).

The Fluxus movement did a lot to push at the boundaries of what art is and where art should be. They would make semi-mass produce flux kits to sell, give away or leave someplace to be stolen. These kits would be filled with strange games, tiny strips of film, and small art objects for people to interact and play with. They would also stage elaborate and bizarre performances (sometimes in galleries, or in vacant buildings, or anywhere they got together) that would bleed out into the audience and force the audience to participate in the artwork. Often there would be performers planted in the audience acting out simple actions like walking in a circle who would be hard to distinguish from a regular audience member. They wanted their art to be fun accessible and interactive with the real world.

(continued next side)

Project Criteria:

-For this project we will engage in the process of *Detournement*. You will stage an event or happening in a public location while there is a reasonable amount of human traffic passing by. The location should be commercial location (parking lot, department store, etc.) or public area (street, sidewalk, etc) regularly travelled by people.

-This may **NOT** be filmed in an apartment, dorm, Frat or Sorority House, **on Campus**, or in a home, the idea is to be out in public.

-Please avoid doing illegal things -we will go over some ground rules in class.

-You will use *at least* one camcorder to document your performative act.

-You may use a tripod, handheld style, or any other camera mounting strategy you can come up with (i.e. hidden camera in modified bag etc). Be sure to plan ahead and consider what mobility needs your action will require.

-You should take at least 20-30min of video footage of your performance which you will edit down to a roughly 2min video document of your action.

-The members of the team do not have to be the ones actually doing the performance - though at least one member of your team must be operating a camcorder. You may recruit as many other people as you wish to help carry out your action. Bonus points will be awarded to groups who are able to recruit 3rd party participants to help them stage the performance.

DUE DATES:

MAR 17: presentation DUE

Groups will have to give a 5-10min presentation with images to the class. The presentation should have photos of the prospective Happening location, details about what your groups is planning to do, and how you plan to record the event.

April 28: Final Video DUE

You will turn in your video document by uploading your finished quicktime movie to a class youtube account (despite how much this will make Guy Debord spin in his grave) which we will use to view and comment on the video in class. Name the video whatever you want but please put team member names in the video description. We will go over uploading instructions in class.

Class Youtube.com info: (please don't f' around with any of the other settings - just upload!)

Username: UIUCTimeArts343

Password: bobiscool