

Potential of the city: the interventions of The Situationist International and Gordon Matta-Clark.

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Potential of the city : the interventions of The Situationist International and Gordon Matta-Clark

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Abstract

For both the Situationist International (SI) and Gordon Matta-Clark, the city and its

architecture were the sites where capitalist modes of control acted on the individual at the most insidious level. The critical interventions of the Situationist's *dérives* and Matta-Clark's cuttings sought to destabilize the urban subject through a reorientation of the surrounding spaces of the city and its architecture. This reorientation was considered by the SI and Matta-Clark to be a necessary form of critique, one that would alert the participant to the capitalist predicates that functioned invisibly within the realm of everyday life. In addition, the *dérive* and the cutting were meant to have a positive effect, one that would reveal to the participant the accumulated individual and collective histories of the city, as well as provide new methods for interrogating the present moment. In this thesis, I outline some of the perceived problems of the Modernist city and investigate the various ways in which the Situationist International and Gordon Matta-Clark sought to intervene in this conflicted space. I argue that through their deployment of new forms of critique and reorientation to the past and the present, the SI and Matta-Clark offered the potential for new subjectivities to form, subjectivities that would see through and attempt to overcome capitalist control of the urban sphere

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