

*The Situationist International (S.I.) was an artistic and political movement founded in 1957 that combined Marxist theory, particularly Marx's concept of alienation, with an avant-garde creative practice. In the aftermath of World War II – a time of emergent consumerism and technological advancement in much of western Europe – the S.I. faced a novel, pernicious, and all-encompassing form of capitalism. Thus, they tasked themselves with ideating new methods to describe and subvert a seemingly apolitical and increasingly docile spirit among the general populace. In doing so, the Situationists developed concepts that were not only highly influential in their time but have become of prime importance in our current historical moment.*

*Contemporary modalities of communication and consumption in digital spaces render movement founder and spearhead Guy Debord's concept of the spectacle particularly prescient. In his seminal text "Society of the Spectacle," Debord posits the spectacle as a tool of manipulation and control that pacifies human's collaborative, creative, and revolutionary spirit, replacing it with the artificial desire to acquire status symbols. Interpersonal relationships are then transformed into a facsimile mediated by consumer objects and images. Today's predominantly online landscape encapsulates the spectacle in new and ever-more absurd manifestations, epitomized by tools of social engineering developed and employed by international megacorporations.*

*The aim of my web design project, *Situationship of the Spectacle*, is to introduce Situationist methods such as *dérive* and *détournement* to users in the context of online spaces. Debord's concept of the spectacle is employed as the primary analytical framework through which interactions take place: surface website elements are mere representations designed to distract and frustrate. Images of the May 1968 protests in France, in which the S.I. was highly influential, are manipulated to compose an engaging but subversive interactive space. It is only by exploring and then weaponizing digital tools against it that the thematic core of the project hidden beneath becomes accessible. Much in the same way that the Situationists reappropriated and infiltrated the cultural industry through *détournement*, so must users draw on their own curiosity and creativity to hijack the messages behind this project.*

