Hurlements en faveur de vous

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> *I love the cinema when it is insolent and does what it is not supposed to do.*
> —Daniel in Isidore Isou, *Traité de bave et d'éternité*, 1951

Guy Debord's first public appearance in print occurred in the pages of *Ion*, a single-issue magazine dedicated exclusively to Lettrist work in cinema and published under the direction of Marc-Gilbert Guillaumin (otherwise known as Marc'O) in April 1952. *Ion* included Isidore Isou's lengthy treatise "Esthétique du cinéma" and Marc'O's "Première manifestation d'un cinéma nucléaire," as well as the scripts for Gil J Wolman's *L'anticoncept*, François Dufrêne's *Tambours du jugement premier*, and Gabriel Pomerand's *La légende cruelle*. Yet what is often forgotten is that the issue also included Debord's "Prolégomènes à tout cinéma futur" as a preface to the original script for his film *Hurlements en faveur de Sade* (Howls for Sade, 1952), which at this point also included an image track.

The half-page "Prolégomènes" situates *Hurlements* within the Lettrist aesthetic in cinema as elaborated primarily by Isou. Debord writes, "My film will remain among the most important in the history of the reductive hypostasis of cinema through a terrorist disorganization of the discrepant."[1] With the invocation of *discrepant* Debord confesses his film's recourse to *montage discrépant* (discrepant editing), or what Isou first theorized in the pages of "Esthétique du cinéma" as the purposeful nonsynchronization of sound and image in film.[2] Debord's affiliation with Isou and the Lettrists remains little more than a passing reference in the critical literature on Debord. Yet a photograph from the time makes the identification explicit: a young Debord stands in front of a wall on which "ISOU" has been written in white paint.[3]

Hurlements' original script, which was elaborated in the winter of 1951–1952, further demonstrates Debord's indebtedness to a Lettrist film aesthetic. The image track lists shots of military troops, erotic scenes, scenes of riot, a boxing match, views of St. Germain-des-Prés, and the clientele at Mabillon café. Debord includes six images of himself, images of Isou and Marc'O, sequences of painted filmstrip (*pellicule brossée*), and the black sequences that would come to define the completed film. The mixing of original shots with preexisting footage, as well as painted filmstrips and sequences of pure color, explicitly recalls the visual aspects

of both Isou's *Traité de bave et d'éternité* (On venom and eternity, 1951) and Maurice Lemaître's *Le film est déjà commencé?* (Has the film already started? 1951). At this juncture, the script's sound track traced a poetic of refusal from the dadaists to the surrealists and was interspersed with Lettrist sounds: Dufrêne's poems "Marche" and "J'interroge et j'invective" (also featured in *Traité*); a Lettrist chorus with background cries and whistles (similar sounds are heard in earlier Lettrist films); glossolalia-graphic transcriptions such as "KWORXKE KOWONGUE KKH"; and "violent screams in the darkness" during the final black sequence.[4]

Between the publication of *Ion* in April and the debut of *Hurlements* two months later in June, Debord's film was transformed: it was neither shot nor printed. Its alternating black-and-white rhythm recalls Wolman's film *L'anticoncept* (1951), even when at the level of film material *Hurlements* was constructed exclusively from clear and opaque leader, thereby totally negating the filmed image.[5] When someone on the sound track speaks, the screen remains white and filled with light; otherwise the screen is dark. For the final twenty-four minutes, the viewer sits in darkness and silence. Of the total running time of seventy-five minutes, only twenty minutes contain light and speech. As a result, the realized film preserves only approximately half of the original script's text.[6] The five voices one hears in the sound track utter citations from letters, books, and newspapers and include everyday conversations that are at times punctuated by Debord's observations (e.g., "I made this film while there was still time to talk about it"). The voices deliver their texts with minimal tonal variation.[7] Other than the snippets of original and appropriated language and the initial twenty-five seconds of Wolman's physical poetry (or *mégapneumie*), *Hurlements*' sound track contains no other sound or aural accompaniment; that is, no Lettrist poetry or chorus, no cries, whistles, or screams.

While Debord's specific deployment of appropriated language in the final version of *Hurlements* begins to differentiate the work from prior Lettrist films, the various scripted and impromptu actions that occurred on account of the film's first full
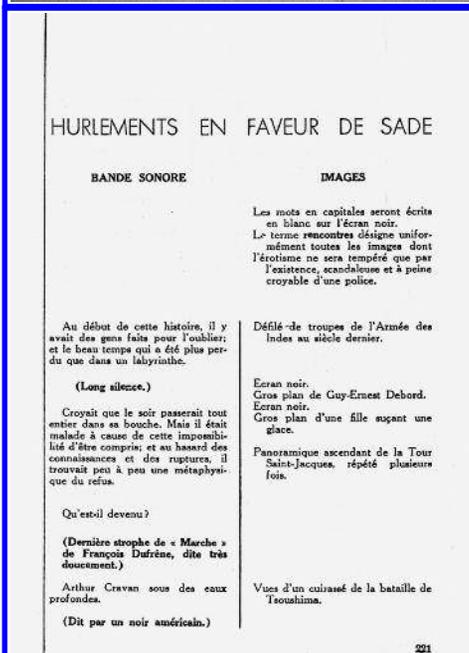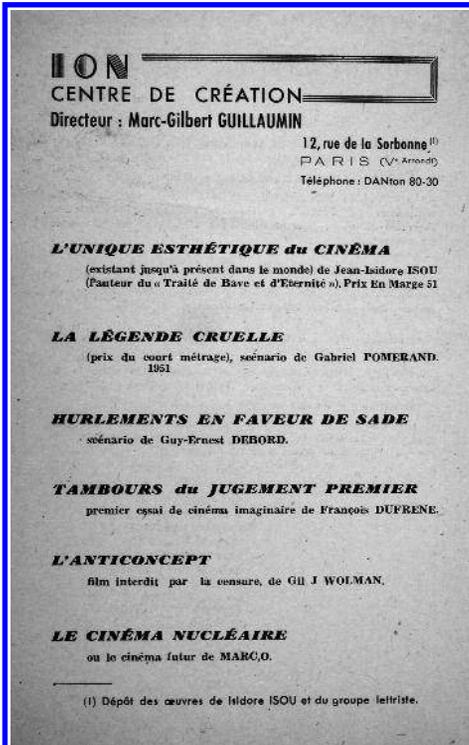

Top: Flyer for the first issue of the magazine *Ion*, April 1952. Courtesy Archiv Acquaviva, Berlin.

Bottom: Opening page of the script for *Hurlements en faveur de Sade* published in *Ion*, April 1952.

screening—largely unaddressed in the critical literature on Debord's films—keep *Hurlements* firmly within the purview of Lettrist experiments in cinema. What is more, these live elements articulate the work's historical specificity, just as the film's structure, together with the legacy of such actions, persistently enables active participation, albeit in different form, during contemporary screenings.

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The first screening of *Hurlements* took place on June 30, 1952, at the Ciné-club d'Avant-Garde 52 in the Musée de l'Homme in Paris. From the outset, audience members disrupted the screening by audibly expressing their discontent. The film club management ultimately stopped the film shortly after it began. According to Debord, "Several lettrists then dissociated themselves from such a crudely extremist film."[8] But at the time of *Hurlements*' first screening, the schism between Debord and Isou had not yet been formalized. (In Brussels in May and June of 1952, Debord and Wolman conceived of a dissident group—the Lettrist International [LI]—and in the course of the year they broke with Isou, most notably on account of what is known as the "Chaplin affair.")[9] Although the completed version of *Hurlements* negated filmed images, thereby rejecting the lingering illusionism in Isou's and Lemaître's films, "*Hurlements*," as Tom Levin notes, "remains a decidedly Lettrist work."[10] In his 1989 essay, Levin speaks to Debord's reduction of cinema to the filmstrip, projector, light, and screen, upon which the actual mechanics of a screening depend. He was also among the first scholars to introduce Debord's debt to Isou's concept of *montage discrépant*. Yet in addition to experimentation with the materials of film and the nonsynchronization of image and sound, Lettrist cinema in these years was also characterized by the nonsynchronization of what happens on and off the screen. Such an activation of off-screen space is perhaps nowhere more explicit than in Lemaître's designation of his work in film as a "*séance de cinéma*," a kind of film performance or what Lemaître
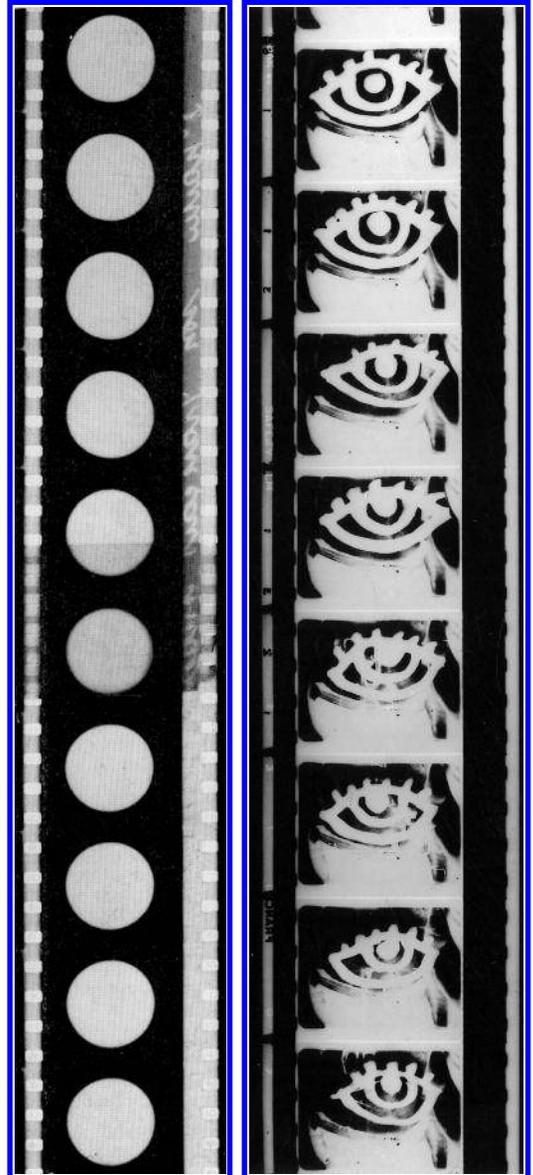
Left: Gil J Wolman. *L'anticoncept*, 1951. Filmstrip detail.

Right: Maurice Lemaître. *Le film est déjà commencé?* 1951. Filmstrip detail.

translates as "session" that moved Lettrist film beyond the image and sound track toward experimentation with the space of the screen as well as the space of theater.

With *Le film est déjà commencé?* Lemaître challenged the integrity of the conventional screen, expanding it to include draperies, objects waved in front of it, and the bodies of spectators who stood, both provoked and unprovoked, to speak. For its official premiere on December 7, 1951, at the Cluny Palace film club in the Quartier Latin, the entire theater staff, from managers to ushers, became part of the work.[11] Enlisting precisely those elements that are usually considered extrinsic to the cinematic viewing experience, the film's script is tellingly divided into three parts: sound, image, and "salle" (auditorium).[12] If Lemaître openly outlined the live elements that were to accompany his film, what remains outside the purview of *Hurlements*' final script, and by extension the cinematic apparatus within which the film was screened, are the various actions that were designed to occur before, during, and after the film's projection. These live elements are constitutive of, rather than peripheral to, *Hurlements*' critical stakes and are key to the film's actual production and reception.

On October 13, 1952, almost four months after the screening at the Musée de l'Homme, *Hurlements* was first shown in full at the Ciné-club du Quartier Latin in the context of the club's program on avant-garde film. The few published eyewitness accounts reveal the various extra-filmic elements designed for the occasion. Jean-Michel Mension (who was briefly an LI member) and Maurice Rajsfus (historian and French militant) offer the most detailed observations.[13] Mension recounts how the LI and its supporters sat in the balcony, while affiliates of Soulèvement de la Jeunesse, including Dufrêne, Marc'O, and Yolande du Luart, were seated in the orchestra below. Prior to the screening and in true film club format, a professor from the "Cinémathèque of Lausanne" introduced the film. But the "professor" was a fake film club lecturer. Using a thick Belgian-German accent, Serge Berna gave a lengthy speech describing the film's "erotic tension," which he claimed would become "all-consuming."[14] According to Rajsfus, one Lettrist cheekily proclaimed, "The eroticism should occur in the audience."[15]

Mension's account further details other staged disturbances and how the Lettrists "started shouting, crying scandal, insulting us. . . . We [the LI] responded in kind from the balcony."[16] Michèle Bernstein recalls that within this seemingly contentious context the exchanges were "tout à fait joyeux" (quite joyous) and that a scandal among "*complices*" (accomplices) has nothing "*méchant*" (mean) about it.[17] Moreover, Bernstein remembers a series of "Hurlements en faveur de vous," whereby Debord would

make a sign to prompt someone to scream. Bernstein responded to the prompt with her own "Hurlements en faveur de Guy."[18]

Of the notorious twenty-four minutes of darkness with which the film concludes, Rajsfus recalls,

> No one had walked out. The show had begun about nine, and at ten-thirty the lights went up definitively to the cat-calls of a frenzied public. The master of ceremonies seized on a brief moment of respite to announce question-and-answer time [i.e., the time of debate]. Ever serious, Serge Berna spoke, developing a few complimentary thoughts concerning Guy-Ernest Debord and his oeuvre. One spectator, trembling with rage, demanded an explanation of the filmmaker's reasons for entitling his film *Hurlements en faveur de Sade*. Completely straight-faced, Berna responded that there was a misunderstanding and that the film was really dedicated to a friend of Debord's, one Ernest Sade, currently engaged in the worthy trade of procurer in Rue Nicolas-Flamel.[19]

Such proceedings—the tripartite structure of lecture, screening, and debate—mine film club conventions consolidated in the 1920s.[20] Beyond the cantankerous reception *Hurlements*' first screening provoked, existing scholarship often fails to mention the second screening's film club–related events and the particular modality of discussion that it entails, which reveal the specificity of *Hurlements* and thus its difference from Debord's later work in film. While the public's participation situates *Hurlements* within the realm of Lettrist cinematic experimentation, especially that of Lemaître, Debord's specific deployment of appropriated language—to the exclusion of howls, whistles, and screams—aligns *Hurlements*' sound track with his later work.

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Like *Hurlements*, all of Debord's later films privilege the sound track over the image track. More specifically, they privilege *speech*—be it through voice-over or as manifest graphically through subtitles and intertitles. Yet with both *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, 1959) and *Critique de la séparation* (Critique of separation, 1961) Debord reintroduces the filmed image, combining appropriated shots with shots taken by his cameraman. Debord thus radicalizes the *détournement* already present in *Hurlements*' sound track in order to insist on the critical refunctioning of language, both visual and verbal. Applied as much to texts and words as to images, *détournement*

is a procedure of quotation and reuse whereby "any elements, no matter where they are taken from, can serve in making new combinations" so as to reclaim a different and noncommodified meaning.[21] After 1962 *détournement* became a primary technique for contesting spectacle, a strategy more present in the Situationist International's (SI) discourse at this time than the more spatialized and aleatory *dérive*.[22] In these later films, Debord also deploys other strategies to interrupt visual illusionism, narrative continuity, and spectatorial absorption, such as refilming still images (e.g., photographs, comics, newspaper clippings) and including shots of the film crew and clapper, thereby avowing his films' constructed status.

Each of Debord's films after *Hurlements* harnesses the power of communicative speech to repurpose photographic meaning toward alterative ends. *Critique de la séparation*, for example, abandons what is often considered the more nostalgic tone of *Sur le passage*, offering a sustained critique of everyday life and the historical context of the Cold War. Approximately nine minutes into the film, one sees a sequence that includes shots of the United Nations Security Council; Nikita Khrushchev with Charles de Gaulle; Dwight Eisenhower welcoming de Gaulle; a patriotic ceremony at the Arc de Triomphe; de Gaulle and Khrushchev standing at attention; Eisenhower with the pope; and a filmed photograph of Eisenhower being embraced by Francisco Franco. The voiceover (here Debord's) explains:

> Official news is elsewhere. Society broadcasts to itself its own image of its own history, a history reduced to a superficial and static pageant of its rulers—the persons who embody the apparent inevitability of whatever happens. The world of the rulers is the world of the spectacle. The cinema suits them well. Regardless of its subject matter, the cinema presents heroes and exemplary conduct modeled on the same old pattern as the rulers.

Debord challenges the idea that such footage should be understood as an image of reality, just as the newsreel version of history constitutes both a

material and object of critique in the film. Isou similarly used newsreel footage in his *Traité*, but with his theorization of *montage discrépant* he primarily upheld the independence of image and sound track, claiming that "discrepant montage . . . diverts the [sound and image] tracks and makes them indifferent to one another."[23] Debord, as Tom McDonough notes, readily affirms the two tracks' relation.[24] Debord writes, "The relation between the images, the spoken commentary and the subtitles is neither complementary nor indifferent, but is intended to itself be critical."[25] What this statement points to, in no uncertain terms, is Debord's investment in language, both written and spoken, as a method by which to critique the visuality of spectacle. Such a strategy, while it does not account for all the relations between speech and image in Debord's films, is representative of his approach: Debord uses language to counter the purported truth of an image.

As is well rehearsed in the literature on the situationists, their work with the means of artistic production and representation gave way over the course of the late 1950s and 1960s to a more active political engagement that also included a trenchant critique of language and its alienating effects. Published in the eighth issue of the *Internationale situationniste*, "Editorial Notes: All the King's Men" argues, "[Power] creates nothing; it recuperates. If it created the meaning of words, there would be no poetry, but solely useful 'information.' We could never confront one another *within* language, and *every refusal would be outside it, would be purely lettrist*."[26] For Debord and the SI, the Lettrists created nonmeaning as meaning, noncommunication as communication.[27] A politics of refusal was no longer to take place outside of language, a position first articulated in 1952 when Debord wrote that his film *Hurlements* was a "*dépassement du cri*" (surpassing of the scream).[28] Similarly, with regard to his film practice, Debord critiques the structure of representation and offers a trenchant critique of capitalism, but in the wake of *Hurlements* he does so *within* the technical mechanisms and support of cinema. Within the functioning of the apparatus Debord's films efface the relations for illusion in order to combat what the situationists describe as the "reactionary power of non-participatory *spectacle*."[29]

Opposite: Guy Debord.
Critique de la séparation, 1961.
Frame enlargement.

Right: Isidore Isou.
Traité de bave et d'éternité, 1951.
Frame enlargement.

The situationists' critique of "nonparticipation" under a spectacular regime brings me to Jacques Rancière's recent discussion of Debord's film adaptation of *La société du spectacle* (*The Society of the Spectacle*, 1967). Both the book and the film open with the lines "The whole life of those societies in which modern conditions of production prevail presents itself as an immense accumulation of *spectacles*. All that once was directly lived has become mere representation."[30] As with Debord's two earlier films, *La société du spectacle* (1973) reveals spectacle as the inversion of life through the use of appropriated film sequences that include everything from political rulers to cinema stars, from fashion models to ordinary commodities. With the exception of the opening images of Alice Becker-Ho, the film bespeaks the same reality: "our existence separated from ourselves, transformed by the machine of the spectacle into dead images before us, against us."[31] Rancière situates Debord's diagnosis of spectacle within his own assessment of what he calls the "intolerable image regime": a historical impasse in which the intolerable *in* the image has become the intolerable *of* the image—and thus the complicity of all images in the system they denounce.[32]

Because of *La société du spectacle*'s unrelenting display of the spectacle's exteriority, Rancière maintains that "it now seemed impossible to confer on any image whatsoever the power of exhibiting the intolerable and prompting us to struggle against it. The only thing to do seemed to be to counter-pose the passivity of the image, to its alienated existence, *living action*."[33] Rancière analyzes the strategic game between images, action, and speech played out in *La société du spectacle*, concluding that "[a]ction is presented as the only answer to the evil of the image."[34] He also turns to the voice-over's speech, which reveals to the spectator the state of passivity with which he or she consumes images, while the film's actual images—from Hollywood Westerns to war films—allegorize a call to action. Fittingly, in light of how the sound track is privileged in all of Debord's films, Rancière homes in on Debord's voice, which is imbued

Guy Debord.
La société du spectacle, 1973.
Frame enlargement.

with personal reflection but also theoretical reflexivity. Yet in *La société du spectacle*, Rancière characterizes the "authority of [Debord's] sovereign voice" as one that explains the truth of social relations in an act of unidirectional communication.[35]

Debord's use of voice-over aligns his work with the conventions of the essay film: from the use of verbal language to draw attention to an issue to the fact that the language is persuasive and well-written.[36] But earlier films such as *Critique* also insist on the limits of communication, whereby Debord places his authority in doubt through statements such as "we don't know what to say."[37] In each film he also uses *détournement* as a consistent linguistic strategy, often through subtitles and intertitles that refer to the authors of other historical and political works, including Mikhail Bakunin, Carl von Clausewitz, Karl Marx, Alexis de Tocqueville, and the Sorbonne Occupation Committee.[38] Thus, unlike the essay film and Rancière's assessment of the voice-over, Debord's work does not represent a single authorial voice nor is it necessarily sovereign—even when it hews close to didacticism.

On the one hand, in Debord's films language serves as a means of dialectical *negation* when the voice-over unveils an image's ideological meaning, as in the newsreel sequence that concludes with Eisenhower embraced by Franco. On the other hand, quoted speech, rather than serve exclusively as the means by which to negate the negation, is dialectically *intensified* in relation to images of recent history, whereby Marx's analysis of capitalism, for example, is extended to have critical purchase on advertising images in the present. Rather than secure his position as the sovereign subject of speech, in his films Debord actively situates his voice within collective history and a specifically Marxist genealogy. This, however, is not to imply that his use of language is polyvocal. Rather, he draws upon fragments from Marxist works so as to redeem and thus remotivate their meaning in relation to the present, an operation that could more properly be considered allegorical.[39] In this way, Debord's voice resists becoming an instrument of the self or the positive sign of presence even when he consistently maintains language's conceptual content intact—that is, for *La société du spectacle* there are no scripted cries, whistles, or screams.[40]

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Debord's *Hurlements* is undeniably different from his other work in film, a difference that does not rest on the absence of iconic images alone. Rancière inveighs against the purely allegorical call to action in *La société du spectacle*: "But for that [i.e., living action], was it not necessary to

abolish images, to plunge the screen into darkness so as to summon people to the action that was alone capable of opposing the lie of the spectacle? In the event, Guy Debord did not install darkness on the screen."[41] Rancière does not dwell on or invoke *Hurlements*, other than in a cursory footnote in which he reveals, "On the other hand, we might recall that he had done so [i.e., installed darkness on the screen] in a previous film, *Hurlements en faveur de Sade*."[42] As a result of the film's repression within the structure of his text (after all, Rancière confesses knowledge of *Hurlements* only in a footnote), the philosopher does not engage *how* and *when* Debord plunged the screen into darkness, thereby failing to address *Hurlements'* potential purchase on a reconsideration of aesthetics and politics in the present, just as he holds at bay the institutional context and conventions of the film clubs in which *Hurlements* was originally shown by focusing on the sovereign effect of Debord's voice-over.[43]

Within Debord's cinematic production, *Hurlements* remains singular: it continues to engender an active reception. About six weeks after a contentious screening of *Hurlements* at Lincoln Center's Walter Reade Theater, the film was presented as part of the series "VØID for FILM: Imageless Cinema."[44] Curated by Bradley Eros within the context of the first Migrating Forms Film Festival at Anthology Film Archives in New York, "VØID for FILM" presented a seven-hour marathon of imageless cinema on Friday, April 17, 2009. Unlike the screening at the Walter Reade, Eros's version of *Hurlements* took some creative license. (1) No print of *Hurlements* was used. Rather, the projector was turned on and off, while on occasion a loop of clear leader was used. (2) The sound track was read by members of the audience, and certain lines were uttered simultaneously by multiple individuals. (3) The timing of the light and dark sequences was decidedly off. (4) The sound track's delivery continued during the dark sequences. (5) The entire "screening" lasted only twenty-nine minutes. As the performed version of the film increasingly unraveled in the final five minutes, the script's remaining lines were interspersed with the audience's verbal interventions: "Play the Sharits film"; "We had a narrow escape"; "This is a real human moment"; "You drink far too much"; and "We're so De-*bored*," which, I admit, is my favorite line.

The "screening" at Anthology further demonstrates the extent to which the

VØID for FILM : imageless cinema
Program sequence:

Yoko Ono, **Film Script Ø** : 'Stare…" (1964, instruction text.)
Luis Recoder, **Untitled Projection** (2009, 5 min, 35mm projector, no film or light, sound (of the projector from the booth), microphone)
Nam June Paik, **Zen for Film** (1962-64, 8 min, 16mm clear leader, dust & scratches, actions & shadows, silent)
Ken Jacobs, **Constellation** (early 1970s, approx. 20 min, projectorless, darkness, camera flash, live instructions, actions)
Peter Kubelka, **Arnulf Rainer** (1960, 7 min, 35mm, b&w, sound)
Andrew Lampert, **Head/Tail** (1970/2004. 3 min, 35mm optical soundtrack)
Bradley Eros, **mercury** (1999, 7 min, 16mm black leader loop, scissors, projector light, mylar screen, cassette tape sound)
Keith Sanborn, **For the Birds** (2000, 8 min, DVD, b&w, stereo HiFi sound)
Jeff Perkins, **Movies for the Blind** (1990s-ongoing, 10 min excerpt, projectorless, flashlights, cassette tape sound)
Sandra Gibson, **Blue Light** (2005, 10 min, 35mm, color, silent)
Walter Ruttmann, **Weekend** (1928, 12 min, radiophonic montage, sound "film without images", CD version)
Bradley Eros, **Colour Theory (light on light)** (2008-9, 7 min, for multiple filmless projectors: 8mm,16mm,35mm; colored gels, room & screen light, sound on CD & live from machines)
Bill Brand, **Rate of Change: Acts of Light, Part 1** (1972, 17 min, 16mm, color, sound)
David Baker, **Ten Tha (Like Clouds)** (2009, 15 min, DVD, white+, sound)
Lary Seven, **Keystone {Kops}** (2009, approx. 10 min, two 35mm projectors, no film, projector sound, actions)
Takehisa Kosugi, **Film & Film No.4** (1965, approx. 10 min, no film, 16mm projector light, paper screen, knife or scissors, live action)
Greg Sharits, **Transfer** (c. 1978-80, 12 min, 16mm, colored leader, silent)
Taka Iimura, **Dead Movie** (1968, installation, approx.10 min, two 16mm projectors, two screens; one with projector light / no film, one with black leader loop & perforation sound)
Paul Sharits, **Apparent Motion** (1975, 30 min, 16mm, color, silent)
Coleen Fitzgibbon, **Internal Systems** (1974-75, 45 min, 16mm, color, sound)
Derek Jarman, **Blue** (1993, 75 min, 35mm on DVD, color, sound)
Guy Debord, **Howls for Sade {Hurlements en faveur de Sade}** (1952, 70 min, 35mm on DVD, b&w, sound; {if live: clear leader, microphone, spoken text, darkness, alcohol…})
Tony Conrad, **The Flicker** (1966, 30 min, 16mm, b&w, sound)
     TOTAL program length: Approximately 7 hours
Q: "Is it real?" A: "It's an image. A picture made of light." - *Jan Vermeer, 1666*

Program for "VØID for FILM: Imageless Cinema," 17 April 2009. Curated by Bradley Eros in the context of the first Migrating Forms film festival, Anthology Film Archives, New York.

meaning of the film does not reside a priori within the final script or within the technological mechanisms of film's support. *Hurlements*' appropriated language demonstrates an early instance of *détournement*. But the black sequences' refusal of images—both visual and verbal— presents neither Rancière's "intolerable image regime" nor the communicative conceit of spoken language. Rather than a top-down model of communication in which we see our alienation put on display at the same time that we are told about it, *Hurlements* alters the relations between seeing, speaking, and doing in the cinema and for its spectators. The film's structure allows for multiple subject positions to be voiced: from the literary to the sentimental, the revolutionary to the banal. Indeed, the film enables moments whose precise meaning and effects cannot be wholly anticipated. Insofar as visual and verbal images are negated, spectators answer *Hurlements* in different ways (at times, contrary to Debord's intentions, they even revel in the aesthetic contemplation of darkness). Rather than legislate what and how one must see, *Hurlements* engenders a different public with each new instance of the film's projection. In short, *Hurlements* implicates the spectator's actual participation in a way that Debord's other films fail to do. Perhaps this is what Debord was suggesting when he wrote, "What has caused most displeasure in the long term is what I did in 1952."[45]

Notes

1. Guy Debord, "Prolégomènes à tout cinéma futur," in *Ion* (Paris: Jean-Paul Rocher, 1999), 217. (The Rocher volume presents a facsimile of the original *Ion* published in 1952 by the Centre de Création.)

2. See the discussion in Jean Isidore Isou, "Esthétique du cinéma," in *Ion*, 7–153. For a comprehensive overview of the history of Lettrist cinema, see Frédérique Devaux, *Le cinéma lettriste: 1951–1991* (Paris: Paris Expérimental, 1992).

3. Debord's text continues by announcing a shift from a concern with "création" to the "conditionnement du spectateur" (conditioning of the spectator) and ends by asserting, "The arts of the future can be nothing less than disruptions of situations," thereby suggesting in inchoate form what he and the situationists will develop as "situations" over the course of the 1950s. Guy Debord, "Prolégomènes à tout cinéma futur," 217.

4. Guy Debord, script for *Hurlements en faveur de Sade*, in *Ion*, 230.

5. Debord alternated clear leader, which floods the screen with light, and opaque leader. The opaque leader, which Keith Sanborn explains creates a "palpable, eerie void," is materially different. Debord apparently used magnetic tape (used at the time for sound editing) for the opaque leader. When magnetic tape passes through the gate of a film projector, it is utterly opaque and is able to erase the borders of the frame. Moreover, when passing through the optical sound head of a film projector, magnetic tape is silent (thus differing from the film's optical sound track). See the technical specifications described by Sanborn in "Return of the Suppressed," *Artforum* 44, no. 6 (February 2006): esp. 188–189. I note how Wolman may have suggested to Debord the use of clear and opaque leader and briefly consider the differences between Wolman's and Debord's imageless films in my "How to Do Things without Words," *Grey Room* 42 (Winter 2010): 46–59.

6. With regard to the sound track, the introduction of "diverse articles from the Civil Code" was announced as a possibility in the original script but regularly punctuates the realized version. Also, two phrases from the "Prolégomènes" make their way to the sound track. These include the twice-repeated "L'amour n'est valable que dans une période prérévolutionnaire" (Love is valid only in a prerevolutionary period) and "Les arts futurs seront des bouleversements de situations, ou rien" (The arts of the future will be nothing less than disruptions of situations). For an excellent account of the changes in the sound track, please see Guy Claude Marie, *Guy Debord: De son cinéma en son art et en son temps* (Paris: Éditions Vrin, 2009), ch. 1.

7. *Hurlements*' final script was first published in the pages of *Les lèvres nues*, a magazine edited by the Belgian surrealist (later situationist) Marcel Mariën, in December 1955. The various voices of the film are identified in a footnote: Wolman (Voice 1), Debord (Voice 2), Serge Berna (Voice 3), Barbara Rosenthal (Voice 4), and Isou (Voice 5). The script

also notes the lengths of the fourteen dark sequences, which vary from thirty seconds to the final twenty-four minutes of darkness. See Guy Debord, "Grande fête de nuit" (preface) and "Hurlements en faveur de Sade" (script), *Les lèvres nues* 7 (December 1955): 18–23.

8. See Guy Debord, "Technical Notes on the First Three Films," in *Guy Debord: Complete Cinematic Works*, ed. and trans. Ken Knabb (1978; Edinburgh: AK Press, 2003), 211. Originally published as Guy Debord, "Fiches techniques," in *Contre le cinéma* (Aarhus, Denmark: Scandinavian Institute of Comparative Vandalism, 1964), n.p.

9. In October 1952, Charlie Chaplin arrived in Paris to promote his film *Limelight* (1952). Wolman and Jean-Louis Brau were the only Lettrists to get beyond the police roadblocks surrounding the Ritz Hotel, where they sabotaged Chaplin's press conference by distributing leaflets that stated, "We hope that your last film really will be your last." Signed by Berna, Brau, Debord, and Wolman, the last line of the text insisted in English, "Go home Mister Chaplin." In response, Isou, Pomerand, and Lemaître publically distanced themselves from the dissident group and published a letter in *Combat* that stated, "We dissociate ourselves from our friends' leaflet, and we associate ourselves with the homage paid to Chaplin by all of the population." See "Les lettristes désavouent les insulteurs de Chaplin," *Combat*, November 1, 1952. The members of the Lettrist International would in turn disavow Isou, Pomerand, and Lemaître in the text "Position de l'International lettriste," which was refused by *Combat* and later published in the *Internationale lettriste*. See Serge Berna, Jean-L. Brau, Guy-Ernest Debord, and Gil J Wolman, "Position de l'International lettriste," in *International lettriste* 1 (1952), reprinted in *Documents relatifs à la fondation de l'Internationale situationniste*, ed. Gérard Berreby (Paris: Éditions Allia, 1985), 151.

10. Thomas Y. Levin, "Dismantling the Spectacle: The Cinema of Guy Debord," in *Guy Debord and the Situationist International*, ed. Tom McDonough (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 344. Originally published in *On the Passage of a Few People through a Rather Brief Moment in Time: The Situationist International, 1957–1972* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press; Boston: Institute of Contemporary Art, 1989), 72–123.

11. Lemaître first screened *Le film est déjà commencé?* on November 12, 1951, at the Ciné-club d'Avant-Garde 52. The official "world" premiere, with complete mise-en-scène, took place the following month, on December 7, with the disorder Lemaître desired.

12. See the film script in Maurice Lemaître, *Le film est déjà commencé?* (Paris: Éditions André Bonne, 1952). See also the discussion of Lemaître's film-performance in Andrew V. Uroksie, "Beyond the Black Box: The Lettrist Cinema of Disjunction," *October* 135 (Winter 2011): 21–48. My research on Lemaître's film-performance, or séance, was presented in "Lettrist Cinema's Public Education," lecture presented as part of the "Sites of Cinema" faculty seminar, Columbia University, New York, 31 March 2011.

13. See the accounts by Jean-Michel Mension and Maurice Rajsfus in Jean-Michel Mension, *La tribu*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Paris: Éditions Allia, 2001), 86–91. For other accounts of the second screening, see Greil Marcus, *Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 323–343; and Christophe Bourseiller, *Vie et mort de Guy Debord: 1931–1994* (Paris: Plon, 1999), 56–57. In the 1950s, in addition to the two screenings in Paris, the film was shown in 1957 at the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) in London, where its reception was equally contentious. See the review "Contemporary Arts: Anti-Art," *The Spectator*, 12 July 1957, clipping in the ICA archive at the Research Centre for the Tate Library and Archive.

14. Mension, *La tribu*, 87.

15. See Mension, *La tribu*, 88. The original account is published in Maurice Rajsfus,

Une enfance laïque et républicaine (Paris: Manya, 1992), esp. 299–300.

16. Mension, *La tribu*, 88.

17. Michèle Bernstein, interview by author, 18 June 2010.

18. Bernstein, interview.

19. See Mension, *La Tribu*, 88, 91.

20. See Vincent Pinel, *Introduction au ciné-club: Histoire, théorie, pratique du ciné-club en France* (Paris: Éditions Ouvrières, 1964).

21. Guy Debord and Gil J Wolman, "A User's Guide to Détournement," in *Situationist International Anthology*, rev. and exp. ed., ed. and trans. Ken Knabb (Berkeley, CA: Bureau of Public Secrets, 2006), 15.

22. See Tom McDonough's critical account of *détournement* in *"The Beautiful Language of My Century": Reinventing the Language of Contestation in Postwar France, 1945–1968* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007), ch. 1.

23. Isou, "Esthétique du cinéma," 69.

24. McDonough offers an insightful analysis of *Critique de la séparation* in relation to the near contemporaneous *cinéma-vérité* film *Chronique d'un été* (Chronicle of a summer, 1960), a collaboration between Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin. See Tom McDonough, "Calling from the Inside: Filmic Topologies of the Everyday," *Grey Room* 26 (Winter 2007): 6–29. McDonough's analysis differs from Levin's earlier assessment of Debord's films. For Levin, Debord's refusal of narrative coherence in his films matches the incoherence of a contemporary reified life, thereby producing a film whose deliberate heterogeneity results in an aesthetic strategy that Levin designates as a "mimesis of incoherence." Levin, "Dismantling the Spectacle," 360.

25. Debord, "Technical Notes on the First Three Films," 213.

26. "Editorial Notes: All the King's Men" (1963), trans. Tom McDonough, in *Guy Debord and the Situationist International*, 154; emphasis added.

27. As early as 1958 Debord establishes "communication" as counter to "information," insisting that "all forms of pseudocommunication must be consigned to utter destruction, so that one day we may achieve real, direct communication." See Guy Debord, "Theses on Cultural Revolution," trans. John Shepley, in *Guy Debord and the Situationist International*, 65.

28. Debord, "Prolégomènes à tout cinéma futur," 230.

29. "Avec et contre le cinéma," *Internationale situationniste* 1 (1958): 9; emphasis in original.

30. Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Zone Books, 1995), 12. For the original French, see Guy Debord*, La société du spectacle* (Paris: Buchet-Chastel, 1967), 9.

31. Jacques Rancière, "The Intolerable Image," in *The Emancipated Spectator*, trans. Gregory Elliott (London: Verso, 2009), 86. For the original French version, see Jacques Rancière, "L'image intolérable," in *Le spectateur émancipé* (Paris: Éditions La Fabrique, 2008), 93–114.

32. What Rancière calls the "intolerable image regime" is key to his reimagination of aesthetics and politics, whereby he challenges the opposition between terms such as *viewing/knowing*, *appearance/reality*, *activity/passivity*, *image/speech*. In his essay, Rancière asks us to consider the production of images that aim to expose real suffering— that is, when an image of "reality" is counterposed to the realm of "appearance." Rancière situates political montage within this dialectic, whereby "one [image] must play the role of the reality that denounces the other's mirage. . . . [B]y the same token, it denounces the

mirage as the reality of our existence in which the image is included." Rancière, "The Intolerable Image," 85.

33. Rancière, "The Intolerable Image"; emphasis added.

34. Rancière, "The Intolerable Image," 87.

35. Rancière, "The Intolerable Image," 88.

36. For a discussion of the essay film's characteristics, as well as the genre's investment in expository prose, see Philip Lopate, "In Search of the Centaur: The Essay Film," in *Beyond Document: Essays on Non-fiction Film*, ed. Charles Warren (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1996): 243–270.

37. McDonough draws attention to Debord's avowals of confusion and the breakdown of communicative language in the voice-over to *La critique de la séparation*. See McDonough, "Calling from the Inside," esp. 16–17.

38. Over the course of the 1960s, situationist film theory was increasingly aligned with the political stakes of writing. In 1967 René Viénet recommended that SI members be equally capable of writing an article and making a film, given the medium's accessibility and the way film could in turn "intensify" the written articulation of the same problems. See René Viénet, "The Situationists and the New Forms of Action Against Politics and Art," trans. Tom McDonough, in *Guy Debord and the Situationist International*, 184–185. For the French original, see René Viénet, "Les situationnistes et les nouvelles formes d'action contre la politique et l'art," *Internationale situationniste* 11 (October 1967): 35.

39. As Walter Benjamin notes, the allegorist is motivated by "an appreciation of the transience of things, and the concern to rescue them for eternity." Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. John Osborne (ca. 1928; London: Verso, 1998), 223.

40. That said, the cumulative *effect* of the particular genealogy Debord mines reveals, contrary to his intention, Marxism's discursive (and gendered) constraints: the majority of the verbal citations come from men, and these citations serve to reveal the truth of commodified images that largely include women.

41. Rancière, "The Intolerable Image," 86.

42. Rancière, "The Intolerable Image," 86.

43. Rancière also refers to *Hurlements* in the context of his essay "Quand nous étions sur le Shenandoah," *Cahiers du Cinema* 605 (Octobre 2005), 92–93; translated in this issue of *Grey Room*. Here he takes issue with the fact that Debord did not "stop the projection and declare the end of cinema," as suggested by Voice 5 (Isou) in the sound track to *Hurlements*. I would briefly note that it was ultimately Isou who proclaimed that cinema was dead and that the debate itself constituted a film with Isou's *Film-débat* (Film debate, 1952), which was produced at the Musée de l'Homme sometime between May and December 1952. I further explore Isou's imageless film in relation to Debord in my manuscript "Off-Screen Cinema."

44. For accounts of the screening at the Walter Reade Theater and the public's response, see Zack Winestine, "Howls for Guy Debord," *Film Quarterly* 62, no. 4 (Summer 2009): 14; and Scott Foundas, "Reflections of a Darkened Screen," *LA Weekly*, 2 March 2009, http://blogs.laweekly.com/foundas/uncategorized/reflections-on-a-darkened-scre/.

45. Guy Debord, *Panégyrique tome premier* (Paris: Éditions Gérard Lebovici, 1989), 35. The original French reads, "Je crois plutôt que ce qui, chez moi, a déplu d'une manière très durable, c'est ce que j'ai fait en 1952."