

1968: A Global Perspective

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Militant Masculinity: The Case of the Situationist International

Over the course of its 15-year existence, the Situationist International produced a wide range of autobiographical images, films, and texts. While some depict the Situationists themselves, most represent one of their many alter-egos—gangsters, soldiers, knights, boxers, and cowboys. The task assigned to these self-portraits was specific: create a collective identity for the movement and publicize its political, philosophical, and artistic ambitions. Insofar as they align the Situationists with exemplars of phallic masculinity, these self-portraits would also seem to conflate militancy with virility and commitment with sexual potency. My paper will analyze the historical reasons behind the Situationists' decision to embrace a paradigm of hard masculinity and will conclude by debating this paradigm's viability, specifically with regard to activists operating during times of war. Ultimately, I will use the Situationists as a case study to parse the relationship between war, power, gender, and oppositional politics.

Bio:

Kelly Baum is the Locks Curatorial Fellow for Contemporary Art at the Princeton University Art Museum. Prior to that, she was the Assistant Curator of Contemporary Art at the Blanton Museum of Art. Kelly earned her Ph.D. in art history from the University of Delaware in 2005. "The Sex of the Situationist International," an article based on a chapter from her dissertation, will appear in the fall 2008 issue of *October*. Kelly has published widely on contemporary art and has curated dozens of exhibitions, including *Transactions*, *The Sirens' Song*, *Jedediah Ceasar: City of Industry*, and *Carol Bove: a setting for A. Pomodoro*