

Charting Knowledge: *The Situationist Times* at the Crossroads of Situationism, Publishing and Topology

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Abstract This article examines *The Situationist Times* (TST, 1962-67), a radical periodical by Dutch artist Jacqueline de Jong, in which artists, mathematicians and pataphysicists were brought together to investigate art, culture and space through a topological lens. On one side, the analysis emphasises how TST's topological approach employs a comparative methodology, merging diverse registers and disciplines to illustrate a pluriversal, mobile, chaotic world. On the other, it situates TST within the broader context of situationism and artists' periodicals, highlighting art publishing as a dynamic tool for renewing knowledge through cross-pollination.

Keywords Sitology. Jacqueline de Jong. Asger Jorn. Artists' periodicals. Art publishing.

Summary 1 Foundations and Trajectories. – 2 A Multidimensional, Speculative and Non-Orientable Magazine. – 3 Lineages, Connections and Nodes in *The Situationist Times*.

1 Foundations and Trajectories

The Situationist Times is a journal made by artists but it is not a journal about art. It is a journal of research, of experiments, but not of conclusions. I wanted to show that there were parallels in the fields of art, archaeology, sociology and politics, to show that the world is broader than we imagine. I wanted to look beyond the art world. (de Jong, Pollet 2019, 32)

With these words, Dutch artist Jacqueline de Jong (1939-2024) articulates the immense design and

editorial effort she undertook between 1962 and 1967 as the director of the six issues of *The Situationist Times* [fig. 1]. As an artist, editor and graphic designer, de Jong adopted a pioneering and exploratory approach, engaging with unfamiliar themes, drawing on a wide array of perspectives and tones. The magazine is notably distinguished from other Situationist publications by its focus on topology – the mathematics of metamorphosis¹ – as evidenced in the thematic explorations of issues 3 through 5, which focus on “Interlaced

“Foundations and Trajectories” and “A Multidimensional, Speculative and Non-Orientable Magazine” were authored by Simone Rossi, while “Lineages, Connections and Nodes in *The Situationist Times*” was authored by Camilla Salvaneschi.

1 Topology, developed in the late 19th century by mathematicians such as Johann Listing and Henri Poincaré, is a general theory of spatial properties that emphasises connection, continuity and the preservation of structure under transformation. Its abstract principles were soon applied beyond mathematics, influencing fields like psychoanalysis, architecture, art and philosophy, where it became a tool for examining fluidity, dynamic relations and transformative processes within structures, thought and cul-



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Patterns”, “Labyrinths” and “Rings and Chains”. These issues are characterised by their openness and multidimensionality, promoting active reader engagement and diverse interpretations, as highlighted on the back covers.

All reproduction, deformation, modification, derivation, and transformation of *The Situationist Times* is permitted.²

De Jong’s commitment to a flexible, disorienting and interpretative space was emblematic of the core principles of situationism. In her quest to rejuvenate this spirit, *The Situationist Times* stood in opposition to the increasingly theoretical, anti-artistic and institutionalised tendencies of the Situationist International and its official journal, *Internationale Situationniste* (1958-69). Her approach was marked by experimentation, playfulness and a resolute anti-organisational stance, reflecting the radical potential she believed had been stifled within the movement.³ To fully grasp de Jong’s design and epistemological rebellion against the orthodoxy of French Situationism, it is essential to consider not only her avant-garde background but also the formative experiences that shaped her approach.⁴ Her early years at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, under the guidance of renowned designer and curator Willem Sandberg, were instrumental in refining her graphic and typographic skills. However, it was the intellectual influence of Asger Jorn (1914-1973) that proved decisive in shaping her artistic and critical trajectory. Jorn’s interdisciplinary, anti-authoritarian ethos resonated deeply with de Jong’s vision for *The Situationist Times*, encouraging her to reject the rigid theoret-

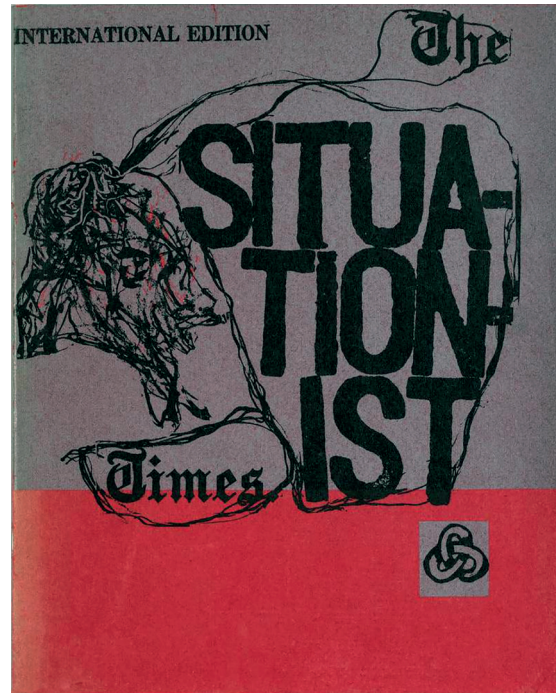


Figure 1 Jacqueline de Jong (ed.), *The Situationist Times*, 1, 1963. Cover

ical framework of the French Situationist International in favour of a more experimental, playful and inclusive approach.

Jorn’s eclectic and influential journey began as a member of the Danish Communist Party and traversed several avant-garde movements, including the Revolutionary Surrealism group,⁵ the Collège de ‘Pataphysique (College of ‘Pataphysics),⁶ and the co-founding of the CoBrA group⁷ and the In-

ture. For further exploration of topology’s interdisciplinary relevance, see Lury 2013; Massumi 2002 remains a seminal reference in its application to the humanities.

² So reads the back cover of issues 3 and 5 of *The Situationist Times*. For a more complete take on the magazines visit <https://vandal.ist/thesituationisttimes/>.

³ The Situationist movement originated in Europe in the mid-20th century, emerging as a response to the perceived failures of both traditional art and revolutionary politics. It was officially founded in July 1957 with the formation of the Situationist International during a conference in the little mountain village of Cosio d’Arroscia, Italy. This Movement was created through the merger of several avant-garde groups, including the Lettrist International, the International Movement for an Imaginist Bauhaus and the London Psychogeographical Association. By the early 1960s, however, the Situationist International had become more doctrinaire, leading to splits and the emergence of dissenting groups, such as the 2nd Situationist International, based at *Drakabygget* (Dragon’s Lair), a farm in Sweden led by Jorn’s brother, Jørgen Nash. More on the movement can be found within Stracey 2014; Wark 2008; 2011; Wollen 1989. About the Scandinavian rebels see Rasmussen, Jakobsen 2015.

⁴ For a more comprehensive analysis of de Jong’s artistic trajectory and practice, see Bayar et al. 2021; Déjean, de Jong 2020.

⁵ Founded by Belgian artist Christian Dotremont, the Revolutionary Surrealism (1943-49) was a faction within the Surrealist movement that sought to integrate Surrealism’s revolutionary aesthetics with Marxist political theory, emphasising the role of art in social and political change. For more info, cf. the facsimile reproduction of two issues of the group journal: *Le Bureau International du Surréalisme révolutionnaire* 1999.

⁶ The Collège de ‘Pataphysique was a satirical institution founded in Paris in 1948, dedicated to the study of ‘Pataphysics, the “science of imaginary solutions” created by Alfred Jarry. For more on ‘Pataphysics, consult: Hugill 2015.

⁷ The CoBrA Group was an avant-garde movement founded in 1948 in Copenhagen by artists from Copenhagen, Brussels and Amsterdam (hence the name). For further details, see Stokvis 2017.

ternational Movement for an Imaginist Bauhaus.⁸ Jorn's involvement within the Situationist International was significant until 1961, when he distanced himself from the doctrines of Guy-Ernest Debord, one of the group's leading figures.⁹ This disillusionment prompted Jorn to establish the *Skandinavisk Institut for Sammenlignende Vandalisme* (Scandinavian Institute for Comparative Vandalism)¹⁰ in his hometown of Silkeborg, Denmark, with the ambition of creating a counter-archive to the dominant history of Western art.

Jorn's visionary, albeit incomplete, project *10.000 års nordisk folkekunst* (10,000 Years of Scandinavian Folk Art) sought to document topological patterns like knots and interlacings in Nordic decoration.¹¹ The radical ethos developed at the Scandinavian Institute profoundly influenced de Jong's vision for *The Situationist Times*, reinforcing her innovative and subversive vision. Inspired by Jorn's explorations, de Jong integrated this topological research into the publication and drew extensively from the archive of the Institute for Comparative Vandalism.

Jorn and I were very fascinated by the fact that in topology, the use and interpretation of images were very similar to forms found in medieval art, archaeology (the Scythians, La Tène, and so on), as well as in more recent times. (de Jong, Prestsæter 2019, 132)

Particularly in issues 3 through 5, the magazine functions as an atlas of topological imagery, reflecting Jorn's comparative approach, initially developed in works such as *Guldhorn og lykkehjul* (The Golden Horn and The Wheel of Fortune),¹² finding in Aby Warburg's *Mnemosyne Atlas* and

André Malraux's *Le Musée imaginaire* (The Museum Without Walls) important references.¹³

Overall, this article positions *The Situationist Times* within a trajectory of reinterpretation and reactivation of a lesser-known strand of Northern European Situationism that opposed the dominant narrative of the Situationist International, promoting a challenge to methodological and disciplinary conventions through an ambitious, disorienting, playful and rebellious exploration of European art and culture. This aligns with a growing scholarly effort focused on the margins of the Situationist International, which has expanded to trace its influence in regions such as Scandinavia, Germany, the United States and England.¹⁴ Although much remains to be investigated, one of the goals of this article is to connect these diverse factions through de Jong's magazine. By drawing parallels both within *The Situationist Times* and with better-known periodicals like *Internationale Situationniste*, the study highlights moments of rupture, osmosis and exchange that shaped the magazine's narratives.

In so doing, the analysis serves a dual purpose: firstly, to illustrate how topological exploration transcends rigid definitions, blending diverse registers and disciplines to depict a chaotic, mobile and philosophically subversive world; and secondly, to shed light on the critical-theoretical generativity of Situationism. By positioning de Jong's endeavour within a broader context, it leverages art publishing as a medium for knowledge renewal through cross-pollination, while underscoring the central role of sitology – a neo-discipline coined by Jorn – as a foundational aspect of *The Situationist Times*. This centrality explains the renewed interest in such a project,¹⁵ especially as contemporary culture increasingly adopts topological frameworks.¹⁶

⁸ The International Movement for an Imaginist Bauhaus was founded in the mid-1950s by Asger Jorn as a reaction against the functionalism and rationalism of the original Bauhaus. The Kunsthall Oslo recently explored this movement in the exhibition *The Imaginist Bauhaus* (December 2016-February 2017). For more details, visit <https://kunsthalloslo.no/?p=3962&lang=en>. Additionally, the concept has been renewed within the decolonial project *Bauhaus Imaginista*. Cf. von Osten, Watson 2019.

⁹ Guy-Ernest Debord (1931-1994) was a French Marxist theorist, writer and filmmaker whose role within the movement was pivotal, as he was the principal architect of its theoretical framework and its most influential voice. See Debord [1967] 2013.

¹⁰ Institute's founders were also Professors Peter Glob and Werner Jacobsen from the Danish National Museum and Holger Arbman from the University of Lund, Sweden. See Henriksen 2003.

¹¹ One of Jorn's most significant exploration of his method and objectives is captured in the volume *Signes gravés sur les églises de l'Eure et du Calvados* (Signs Engraved on the Churches of Eure and Calvados), a cornerstone of the ambitious *Bibliothèque d'Alexandrie* series edited by the Scandinavian Institute for Comparative Vandalism. See Jorn 1964.

¹² Jorn 1957.

¹³ It is unclear whether Jorn was thoroughly acquainted with Warburg's work, though there are notable conceptual and formal continuities between their approaches. For further discussion, see Fasiolo 2016. Conversely, the significant influence of André Malraux's work, particularly his three-volume *Psychologie de l'art*, translated into English as *The Voices of Silence* (Malraux 1954), on Jorn is well-documented. For details, Harris 2012.

¹⁴ Cfr. Galimberti 2017; Murrieta Flores 2017; Rasmussen, Jakobsen 2011.

¹⁵ In recent years, *The Situationist Times* has experienced a substantial rise in academic, critical and museum interest. Notably, this increased attention includes the significant work of recovery and investigation undertaken by Prestsæter (2019).

¹⁶ Lury et al. 2012.

2 A Multidimensional, Speculative and Non-Orientable Magazine

The photographic archive that Jorn, along with de Jong and with significant contributions from Gérard Franceschi (chief photographer at the Louvre, whose images were also extensively used by Malraux for his iconographic collections), began constructing for the Scandinavian Institute, found a vibrant and inventive outlet in *The Situationist Times*. De Jong recontextualised these images, positioning them within a relational framework that engaged with a diverse range of voices and stimuli. This strategic repurposing aimed to explore how topology, within a Situationist framework, could generate new insights.

This approach – both rigorous and playful – mirrored Jorn’s interdisciplinary methodology developed in the 1960s, which combined scientific analysis with experimental creativity. Jorn employed topology not to rationalise reality or offer a unified narrative, but as a tool to unravel the complexities of cultural history, presenting a fragmented, incoherent and non-hierarchical account. In this context, topology functioned less as a mechanism for establishing order but as a means of fostering confusion and subversion. Jorn sought to transcend traditional topological frameworks by introducing the concept of “sitology”, a term he coined to describe a Situationist approach to topology as “the transformative morphology of the unique”.¹⁷

De Jong’s engagement with Jorn’s concept of sitology involved collaborating with numerous contributors and utilising a vast array of images – nearly eight hundred in the fifth issue alone. This collection included photographs, drawings and freehand tracings, many of which were created by de Jong herself [fig. 2]. De Jong enabled the emerging discipline of sitology to evolve organically, continuously cross-pollinating it, enabling the discipline to form, deform and reform without restraint. In repurposing topology, de Jong moved beyond its serious and scientific context, to create a rich, comparative discourse that spans a variety of cultural domains – from art and literature to poetry, psychogeography, history, music and architecture. Rather than seeking certainty, her approach embraced ambiguity and enigma. Here, mathematics did not serve to clarify but rather to illuminate the complexities and mysteries of reality. De Jong’s use of topology effectively challenged traditional academic discourse by blending mystery, humour and pataphysical exploration. To

pursue this enquiry, de Jong teamed up with cutting-edge figures like Max Bucaille, a mathematician by profession but an avant-garde spirit at heart. A poet, writer and artist, Bucaille had been a member of the Revolutionary Surrealist Group and the Collège de ‘Pataphysique alongside Jorn. He contributed to all five of the initial issues of *The Situationist Times*, authoring twelve articles that combined mathematical solutions with pen-and-ink drawings, introducing layers of complexity that disrupted conventional arguments [figs 3-4]. Bucaille became a crucial collaborator for de Jong, guiding her topological ventures. The scientific rigour of his demonstrations, filled with formulas and theorems, ultimately revealed itself as a carefully crafted illusion. True to his surrealist roots, Bucaille sought points where reality “semble s’effondrer sous le poids des paradoxes”.¹⁸ In the inaugural issue, he authored the magazine’s first manuscript text, *Le problème du point* (The Problem of the Point), implicitly addressing the topological issue of “homeomorphic reduction”. By issue 3, the first entirely dedicated to topology, de Jong allowed Bucaille to unveil the journal’s cryptic new direction in the introduction to *Pattern of Situological Applications*.

Aujourd’hui, c’est la recherche de l’invariant topologique (propriété inchangée dans une homéomorphie) dans les réalisations techniques ou scientifiques de l’homme de tous les temps et de tous les pays qui nous intéresse.¹⁹

From this point onward, the sitology drifts in Issue 3 evolves into a complex interplay of illustrations and captions, seamlessly presenting knots, croziers, overlapping situations and interlaced patterns. Symbols and decorations are drawn from a wide range of cultures, both across space and time. In this process, Merovingian art mingles with Turkish decorative motifs, Japanese calligraphic art encounters the work of Jackson Pollock and Scottish Christian churches intertwine with the graphic compositions on jazz scores by designer Bob Gil [fig. 5].

After presenting nearly 400 elements – where anonymous topological forms and details are juxtaposed with works by well-known artists – the narrative takes an even more ambiguous turn. It introduces a convoluted detective story by George

¹⁷ Sitology was first introduced by Asger Jorn in his text *La création ouverte et ses ennemis* (Open Creation and Its Enemies), originally published in December 1960 in Issue 5 of *Internationale Situationniste*. For the English translation, see Prestsæter 2023.

¹⁸ “Seems to collapse under the weight of paradoxes” (Authors’ transl.). Pollet 2011, 105.

¹⁹ “Today, it is the search for the topological invariant (a property unchanged in a homeomorphism) in the technical or scientific achievements of humanity across all times and all countries that interests us” (Authors’ transl.). de Jong 1963, 10.

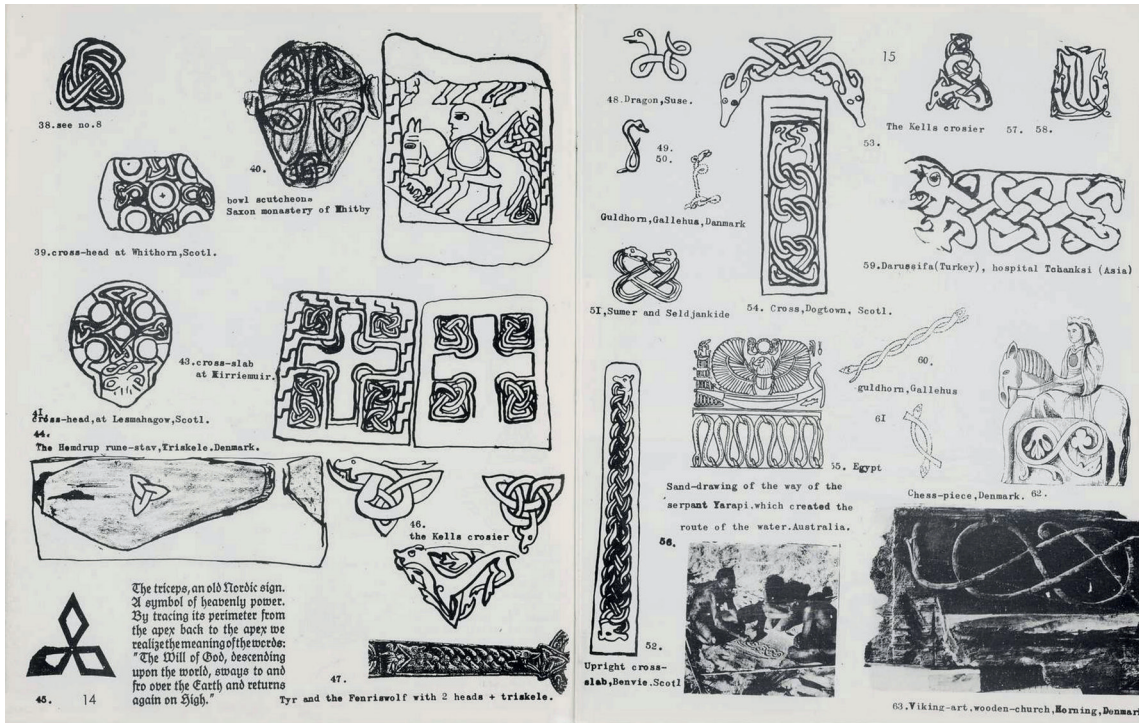


Figure 2 Jacqueline de Jong (ed.), *The Situationist Times*, 3, 1963, 14-15

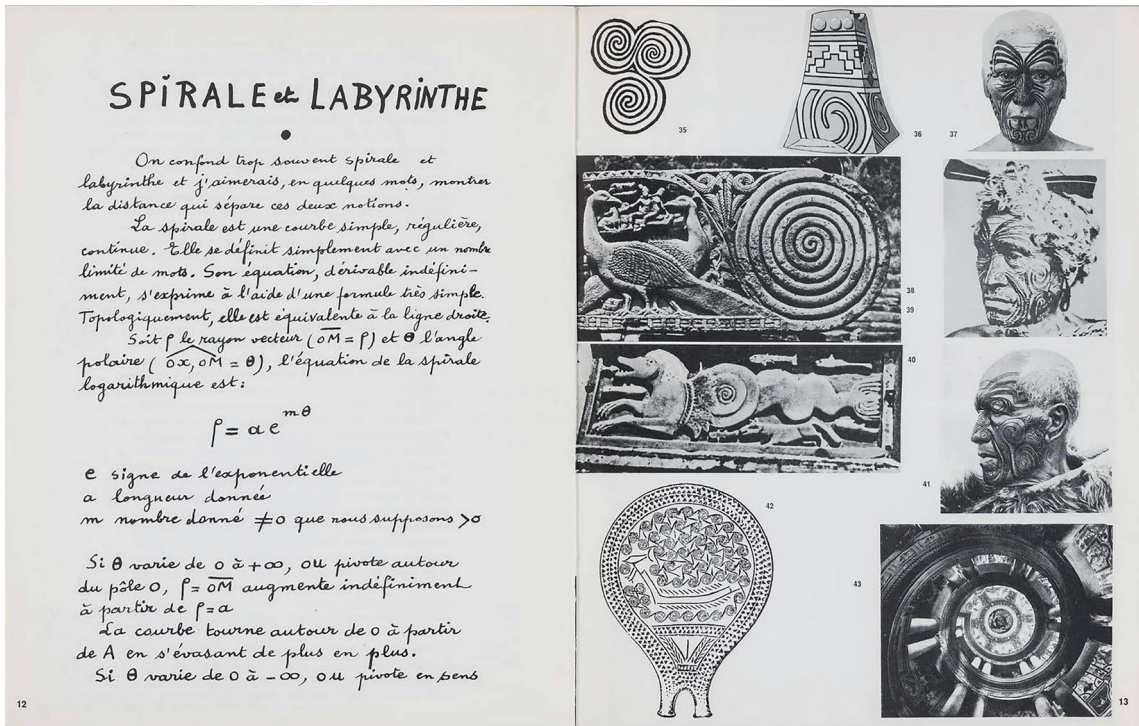


Figure 3 Jacqueline de Jong (ed.), *The Situationist Times*, 4, 1963, 12-13

"The giver of rings of gold,
The army leader bold,
In vengeance springs
On the pretensions
Of the bold and great,
Brought their end death—
In full reprisal
He drives with steel-lad hand
The master king from the land—
"Great
In deed of war,
The king who dwelt most north
To vengeance most wander forth:
All by array
King Olaf now rules o'er
"That five kings before—
To Edla's I found
Extends his ground,
No king in days of yore
E'er won an equal before,
And straightway too
With victory.

King Olaf took possession of the land these five kings had possessed, and took hostages from the hindern and borders in it. He took money instead of guest-quarters from the country north of the valley district, and from Hofdemark; and then returned to Raumarik, and so went to Haidland. This winter his stepfather Sigurd Sny died; and King Olaf went to Ringeske, where his mother Asta made a great feast for him. Olaf alone bore the title of king now in Norway.

Das Kinglein

Volkslied nach „Das Kabinen Wunderhorn“
1808

Mäßig bewegt

Volkswiese, 180

1. Bald gieh ich von Nocker halt gross am Rhein, bald hab ich reichthum, bald hab ich al-lein.
Was hab ich nur gewonnen, wenn ich dich hab dich, was hab ich nur gewonnen, wenn ich dich hab dich.

Und soll ich denn gross am Nocker, am Rhein, so werf ich mein schones Goldkinglein hinein.
Die Fische im Nocker, sie fressen im Rhein, und schwimmen hinunter ins tiefe Meer hinein.

Und schwimmen sie, die Fische, so fressen sie dich, die Fische, und kommen mit dir in sein's Tisch.
Der König der Fische, wer's Kinglein soll sein! Die drei kleine Schiffe sagen, die Kinglein, die drei sein!

Mein Schatzlein ist spröde bergig und bergig, ist mir wie'n was'weges das Goldkinglein fein.
"Kannst gross am Nocker, kannst gross am Rhein, wäist du mit mir immer die Kinglein hinein!"

L'INFINI ou DOIGT.

L'analyse mathématique étudie les fonctions $y = f(x)$ qui sont:

1°/ *définies dans un intervalle donné (x_1, x_2) si à toute valeur de x , comprise entre x_1 et x_2 , il correspond une valeur de y .*

2°/ *continues en un point x si à toute valeur positive de ϵ , choisie aussi petit qu'on le veut, il correspond un nombre α tel que si $-\alpha < x' - x < \alpha$ on ait*

$$-\epsilon < f(x') - f(x) < \epsilon$$

3°/ *dérivables en un point déterminé x si lorsque $\Delta x \rightarrow 0$*

$$f(x + \Delta x) - f(x) \frac{\Delta x}{\Delta x}$$

tend vers une limite: la dérivée de $y = f(x)$ au point x et qui s'écrit

$$y' = \frac{dy}{dx} = f'(x)$$

Figure 4 Jacqueline de Jong (ed.), The Situationist Times, 5, 1964, 56-7

281. Bob Gill - last word on jazz (1962)

60

61

Figure 5 Jacqueline de Jong (ed.), The Situationist Times, 3, 1963, 60-1

Hay, titled *A Short Trip to Chaos*, prefaced by an illustration of a devil. In her brief introduction, de Jong clarifies her intent: the goal is to showcase the metamorphic power of sitology, emphasising the search for variables within unity and unity among variables.

This story, as said by the author George Hay to be made in a topological manner, coincides strangely enough with a work realised in the 15th century and completely unknown to the author. [...] We can only conclude that it might happen to be due to the great faculty of deformation and derivation of the topological plasticities which forces their products to penetrate anywhere at any time in any form. Where, when and how will the next realisation be. (de Jong 1963, 83)

In Issue 4, de Jong introduced more structure. She provided a clear and detailed index, listing titles, authors and page numbers, with captions for illustrations indexed and organised at the end of the exploration. The central theme of the labyrinth is further explored in a final appendix, divided into sections such as music, text, film stills, decor, dance and directing. Despite this organisational effort, the issue presents an even more intricate and multifaceted exploration. It includes an expanded collection of images – engravings, pottery, tattoos, mosaics and church floor plans – that reference or resemble labyrinths from Celtic, Greco-Roman, Babylonian, Chinese and other traditions [fig. 6]. Alongside these visual elements, de Jong incorporated significant textual contributions. These include commissioned essays like *Non-orientable Surfaces* by Polish architect Lech Tomaszewski and *Ipotesi e elementi di topologia del labirinto* (Hypothesis and Elements of Maze Topology) by Italian painter Piero Simondo, as well as extracts from major authors such as Frank Kafka, Gaston Bachelard, James Joyce and William Shakespeare.

In the fifth and final issue dedicated to sitology through an examination of rings and chains, de Jong's editorial prowess reached its zenith. She masterfully orchestrated the art of juxtaposition, placing Norwegian Bronze Age rock engravings alongside Pol Bury's *Cinétisations* and medieval

wooden crucifixes beside Mexican clay statues [fig. 7]. The images are displayed in larger formats, creating a more immersive and striking visual impact. Additionally, de Jong assembled an even larger group of contributors to demonstrate that there exists “a certain analogy between non-Euclidean mathematics and informal art”.²⁰

While the formal layout of the issue returns to the more chaotic and heuristic style reminiscent of the third issue, the page count nearly triples. Beyond providing space to Asger Jorn and Max Bucaille, who are consistently present, de Jong expanded the exploration of sitology to encompass urbanistic, mythological, erotic, ludic, poetic perspectives as well as literary ones. This was achieved through the inclusion of excerpts from the 13th-century Scandinavian epic *Heimskringla* and, notably, *The Parable of the Three Rings* by German playwright Gotthold Ephraim Lessing – a work rich in symbolic and religious significance.

This parable culminates in a deeper appreciation of the latent meanings embedded in *The Situationist Times*. One motif that repeatedly surfaces in the magazine is the number three, which appears both in formal representations and in its allegorical significance. This recurrence might reflect an intentional design, as Jorn employed topology as a generative methodology to pioneer what he described as “the first complete revision of the existing philosophical system” from an artistic perspective.²¹ He introduced a tripartite logic, or triolectics,²² as an alternative to the binary thinking that underpins modern scientific thought. Unlike the spatial focus of traditional topology, Jorn's triolectics unfolds through a temporal tripolarisation.

In this context, it may be significant that de Jong chose to title her journal *The Situationist Times* rather than *The Situationist Spaces*. The title could suggest a deliberate embrace of anachronistic clashes and encounters – reflecting the temporal dynamics inherent in triolectics – between distinct yet interconnected cultural systems such as Roman, Scandinavian and Byzantine, as envisioned in Jorn's work. This approach allows for a rich dialogue that resists a simplistic or pacifying synthesis, aligning with the journal's broader mission of challenging and subverting conventional meanings.

²⁰ de Jong 2019, 189.

²¹ For further details on the radical ideas Asger Jorn developed during the 1960s cf. Shield 1998.

²² For a deeper understanding of Jorn's triolectics cf. his seminal texts, including *Naturens orden. De divisione Naturae* (The Natural Order, 1962) and *De la méthode triolectique dans ses applications en sitologie générale* (On the Triolectical Method in its Applications in General Sitology, 1964). English translations are available in Jorn 2002; 2015.

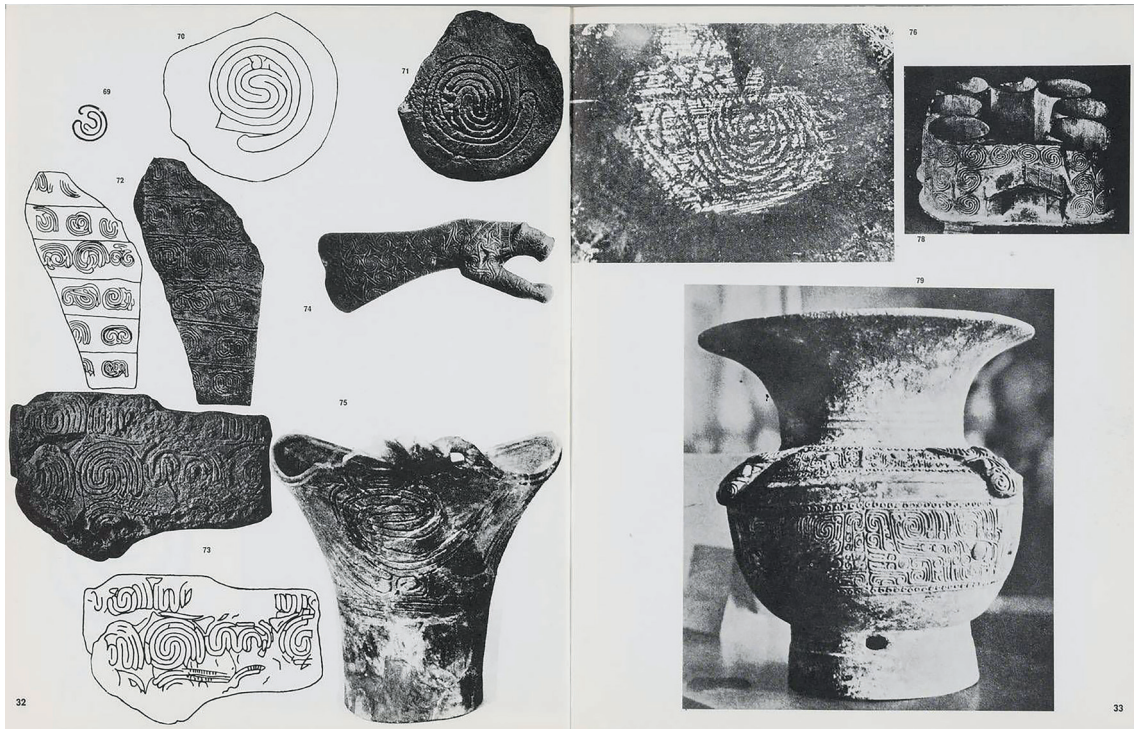


Figure 6 Jacqueline de Jong (ed.), *The Situationist Times*, 4, 1963, 32-3



Figure 7 Jacqueline de Jong (ed.), *The Situationist Times*, 5, 1964, 80-1

3 Lineages, Connections and Nodes in *The Situationist Times*

The intricate interplay within *The Situationist Times* – its evolving topological approach, its exploration of sitology and the cross-pollination of diverse subjects and materials, etc. – evident in Issues 3 to 5 yet present from its very inception, invites another contextualisation: one that situates the periodical within the broader historical landscape of the Situationist movement and reveals the complex networks and motivations that shaped its creation. The uniqueness of this magazine in the field of art publishing, in fact, lies not only in its experimental modes but also in the diminishing influence of Situationist periodicals and the increasing impact of other editorial models. *The Situationist Times* shows how a periodical is often shaped by external influences, emerging as a product of cross-pollination between various artistic and editorial practices – defined both by similarities and significant divergences.

If de Jong envisioned a periodical that was open and multidimensional, its defining characteristics – the ambition to transcend disciplinary boundaries, embrace a cross-cultural approach, incorporate multiple languages and experiment with diverse styles, materials and printing techniques – arose from a deeper need to break away from the restrictive doctrines of the Situationist International and its “house organ”²³ the *Internationale Situationniste*.²⁴ Published in Paris between 1958 and 1969, the periodical advanced the Situationists’ critique of spectacle and media culture while articulating their practices of *dérive* and *détournement*. Twelve issues were published. Aside from the mirrored cover which symbolised spectacle itself, much of the publication expressed the theoretical rather than aesthetic tendencies of the French faction.²⁵

In the interview *L’art en train de se faire*, Didier Schulmann – curator of the Kandinsky Library at Centre Pompidou – observes that a crucial factor when studying the history of a periodical publication is whether that very periodical was created in reference, in reaction, in response, in dialogue, in struggle with another periodical, or perhaps to fill a gap.²⁶ As is often the case, *The Situationist Times* was born from more than one of these reasons.²⁷ The initial idea to establish an English magazine to accompany the *Internationale Situationniste* and *SPUR* – the “ambassador” of the group’s German division²⁸ – emerged during the Fourth Conference of the Situationist International in London in September 1960.²⁹ Later, in November 1961, it was decided that this magazine would be called *The Situationist Times* and its core content would primarily consist of texts from the *Internationale Situationniste* translated into English. However, by May 1962, when the first issue circulated, de Jong had been sidelined by the movement and had completely revisited the journal’s structure.

It is at this juncture that the relationship between the *Internationale Situationniste* and *The Situationist Times* shifts from collaboration and dialogue to reaction and struggle. Form, content and practice began to diverge – sometimes successfully, other times less so – from the *Internationale Situationniste*’s editorial choices and strategies to become a “different” kind of periodical.³⁰ This transformation did not occur all at once but developed gradually. Over the course of its six issues, *The Situationist Times* underwent what Ellef Prestsæter retrospectively defined “a continuous process of transformation”,³¹ in which the magazine in time parted ways not only from the other journals published by the movement – *Internationale Situationniste*, *SPUR* and *Drakabygget* – but

²³ Allen 2011, 267.

²⁴ See Trespeuch-Berthelot 2016.

²⁵ On the difficult balance between art and politics in the Situationist International see Rasmussen 2004, 265-387. See also Routhier 2023.

²⁶ Schulmann, de Bretagne 2017.

²⁷ de Jong 1964, 15-18.

²⁸ *SPUR* was published in Munich between 1960 and 1961. For a history of the publication see: Birnie Danzker, Dornacher 2006; Diederichsen 2007; Galimberti 2016.

²⁹ The 4th Conference of the Situationist International was held in London on September 24-28, 1960, at a hidden location in the East End, seventeen months after the Munich Conference in April 1959. The situationists present at the London gathering included Debord, de Jong, Jorn, Attila Kotányi, Katja Lindell, Jürgen Nash, Heimrad Prem, Helmut Sturm, Maurice Wyckaert and Hans Peter Zimmer. Cf. Debord, *Internationale Situationniste* 1960, 19-23.

³⁰ Prestsæter 2019, 9.

³¹ Prestsæter 2019, 9.

by art magazines in general,³² and perhaps, as argued by the scholar, by itself.³³

Indeed, while the later issues of the periodical increasingly pursued de Jong and Jorn's distinctive practices and research, the first few issues still reflect significant resemblances and excerpts from *SPUR*³⁴ and the *Internationale Situationniste*.³⁵ Printed or collaged with different types of paper, with typographical experimentations, drawings and handwritten interferences,³⁶ these features are published alongside openly contrasting positions with the movement itself. A notable example is de Jong's *Critic on the Political Practice of Détournement*³⁷ [figs 8-9], in which the editor protests against the movement's (and in particular Debord's) choice to expel the members of the group SPUR from the Situationist International for their trial on the pornographic materials published in the journal. This was the moment in which the long-lasting contention between the movement's political faction (headed by Debord) and the aesthetic one (represented by the Spurists, Jorn and de Jong herself, among others) led to the ejection of the latter in February 1962.³⁸

Following this rift, de Jong felt the need to further highlight *The Situationist Times'* political and aesthetic departure from its origins. This clarification came only with the publication of the fourth issue. In a brochure accompanying the volume, de Jong not only elucidated the magazine's evolving features but also situated it within a broader lineage of other artists' magazines:

The Situationist Times is an international magazine by a group of avant-gardists within art and science. *The Situationist Times* will connect with the past and the present within art and search for points of contact between art and all expressions as well as between art and science. In particular by detecting complementary relationships, ambiguity, and analogies in art irrespective of era, as well as between art and

science of mathematics, and in topology. *The Situationist Times* is in a way successor to *Helhesten* and *Cobra*, and will attempt to carry on the effort that was started more than 20 years ago, with the aim of, among other things, fight every form of censorship.³⁹

Concluding with a manifesto-like declaration advocating for artistic and literary freedom, this short text underscores the necessity to position the magazine alongside two publications where Asger Jorn's influence was pivotal.⁴⁰ This alignment was likely driven by the magazine's title, which immediately evoked its former association with the Situationist movement, despite having since severed those ties.

The first periodical mentioned, *Helhesten* (Hell-Horse) was a wartime journal published in nine issues from April 1941 to November 1944, showcasing the abstract expressionist art of the Danish avant-garde group by the same name. The title was inspired by the three-legged horse of Scandinavian mythology, symbolising both death and illness. In its pages, the journal featured essays on art theory, non-Western artefacts, literature, poetry, film, architecture and photography, along with exhibition reviews and profiles of contemporary Danish artists.⁴¹ The second reference was the journal *Cobra: Bulletin pour la coordination des investigations artistiques*.⁴² Published across ten issues from 1948 to 1951, the journal served as the official organ of the CoBrA movement,⁴³ pivotal in coordinating and promoting their artistic endeavours and featuring original lithographs by prominent artists such as Pierre Alechinsky, Carl-Henning Pedersen, Asger Jorn himself, among others. However, while *Helhesten* was crucial for its transdisciplinary approach and its lithographic experimentations, *Cobra* became significant for the publication of aesthetic explorations extending from surrealism. In this instance, during a conversation with Juliette Pollet, de Jong stated that her mag-

³² Unlike other art or artists periodicals of the 1960s, which often provided information, critiques and had a tight link with contemporary art developments, *The Situationist Times* focused on the exploration of visual culture, psychogeography and radical politics, blending art, theory and activism in a way that was more experimental and anti-establishment than its contemporaries. On the specificities of artists magazines see amongst others Phillpot 1976; 1980; Pindell 1977; Allen 2011; Boivent, Perkins 2015.

³³ Prestsæter 2019, 9.

³⁴ de Jong, Arnaud 1962, 7, 8, 21-2.

³⁵ de Jong 1962, 45.

³⁶ For an analysis of *The Situationist Times'* design practices and the use of drawing within its pages, see Rossi 2022.

³⁷ de Jong 1962. For a transcription see Rasmussen, Jakobsen 2011, 77-84.

³⁸ Aarons, Roth 2009.

³⁹ Here cited from Prestsæter 2019, 11.

⁴⁰ On Jorn's influence in these two publications see Kurczynski 2019; 2021.

⁴¹ On *Helhesten* see: Greaves 2014; 2015.

⁴² Allen 2011, 250. See also Kurczynski 2021; Stokvis 2017.

⁴³ See footnote no. 7 of this article.



Figure 8 Jacqueline de Jong (ed.), “Critique on the Political Practice of Détournement”. Jacqueline de Jong, Noël Arnaud (eds), *The Situationist Times*, 1, 1962, 42-3

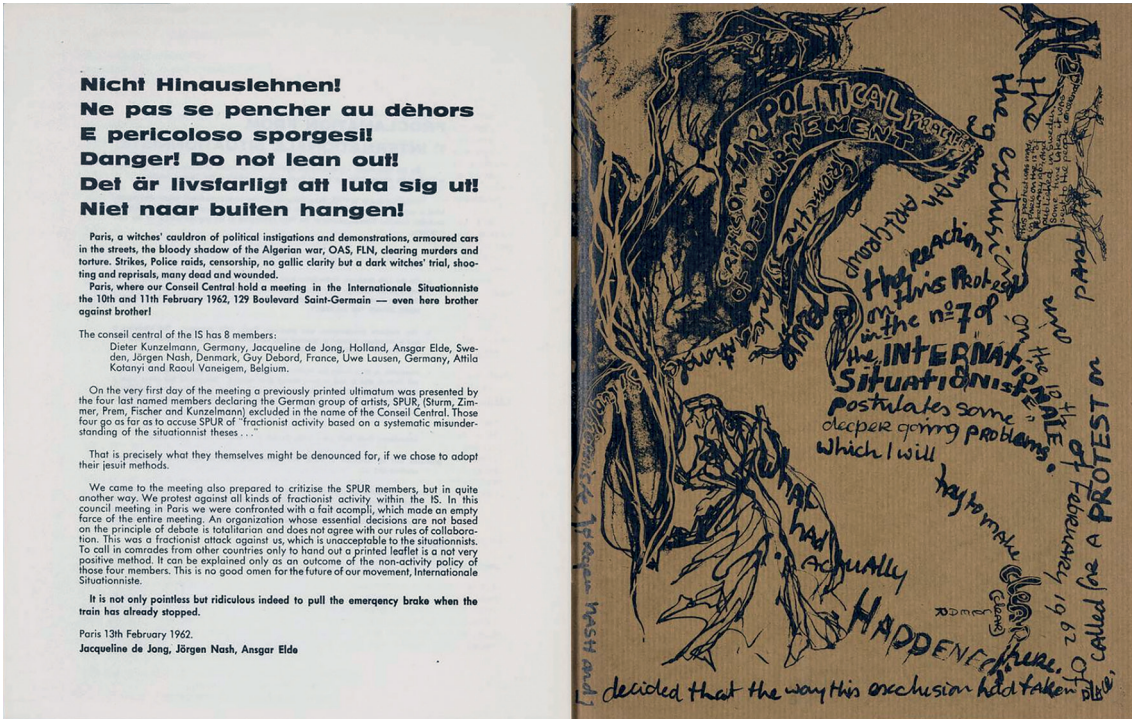


Figure 9 Jacqueline de Jong (ed.), “Critique on the Political Practice of Détournement”. Jacqueline de Jong, Noël Arnaud (eds), *The Situationist Times*, 1, 1962, 48-9

azine is definitely more similar to *Cobra* and *Surréalisme révolutionnaire*⁴⁴ than to the *Internationale Situationniste*.⁴⁵

In the same interview with Pollet, de Jong references other significant influences, including the cultural magazine *i10*, edited in Amsterdam between 1927 and 1929 and the previously mentioned 1957 artist book *Guldhorn og lykkehjul*⁴⁶ by Jorn. From the latter de Jong was inspired by the comparative approach of objects, images and theories⁴⁷ and the creation of alternative imaginaries, but also by the possibilities of a publication to organise and present a large amount of found images. In particular, she highlighted the importance of this approach in relation to readership. Specifically, what impressed her was the idea that the publication didn't need to "convince the reader about a particular interpretation",⁴⁸ since it created an alternative space in which the reader could engage in its own comparative analyses. This same approach can be found in the latest issues of *The Situationist Times*, in which the editor advanced by abandoning conventional presentation formats in favour of more dynamic and open-ended possibilities. De Jong shifted away from the rigid structure of publications like *Internationale Situationniste*, opting for a more fluid, organic presentation of its diverse contents and disciplines, almost epitomising the labyrinthine, interwoven and circular motions expressed throughout the issues.

In this sense, as stated by de Jong, *i10*

was a real inspiration: not only formally – although of course it did have that perfect form of the 1920s, with magnificent typography – but also in terms of content. I liked its diversity, the international nature of its contributions, the mixture of art, literature, music, science. (de Jong, Pollet 2019, 31)

i10 was an internationally-oriented, multi-disciplinary, multilingual, avant-garde magazine edited

by Dutch historian, author and anarchist Arthur Müller Lehning (1899-2000)⁴⁹ [fig. 10]. De Jong described it as a

general, cultural, intellectual, artistic, scientific collage, without any restrictions in its language, images or form. Freedom of speech and freedom of image. (de Jong, Prestsæter 2019)

Across its twenty-two issues, contributors included influential artists and thinkers of the interwar period such as Hans Arp, Walter Benjamin,⁵⁰ Wassily Kandinsky, El Lissitzky, Kazimir Malevich, Lucia Moholy, László Moholy-Nagy, Piet Mondrian, Alexander Schapiro and Kurt Schwitters. De Jong sought to embody the same spirit of unrestricted expression and creative experimentation in her magazine, striving to achieve a freedom of form and content that would allow the magazine to explore new and expanded artistic possibilities. Rather than merely complementing *Internationale Situationniste* and *SPUR* as it was intended at the outset, she envisioned *The Situationist Times* as operating somewhere between *i10* and *Cobra*, embracing both the artistic nonconformity and the political fluidity they represented.⁵¹

Amid the numerous references⁵² that trace the magazine's journey from its origins and ties to Situationism to its evolution as an independent publication, it becomes evident how complex an endeavour it is to construct the true lineage of a periodical – especially one whose history has evolved through ruptures, fragmentations, reconciliations, loss and renewal. Finding its roots, therefore, is both a captivating and intricate endeavour, as each influence becomes a node within a broader network of ideas – each one shaping and reshaping others. Often, the evolution of a periodical isn't fully apparent even to the editor who produces it, as the process is shaped by unforeseen influences, new layers, shifting contexts and the editor's own evolving vision.⁵³ Certainly this

⁴⁴ *Surréalisme révolutionnaire* was a French periodical published in one issue in 1948. It was edited by Christian Dotremont – founder of Revolutionary Surrealism (cf. footnote no. 5) – with Asger Jorn, Noël Arnaud, Zdeněk Lorenc. It became a reference for *The Situationist Times* thanks to de Jong's co-editorship with Arnaud on the first two issues.

⁴⁵ de Jong, Pollet 2019, 31.

⁴⁶ Jorn 1957.

⁴⁷ de Jong, Prestsæter 2019, 132.

⁴⁸ de Jong, Prestsæter 2019, 132.

⁴⁹ All issues of *i10* are freely available online on Delpher.nl: <https://www.delpher.nl/nl/tijdschriften/results?page=1&query=alternatieve+all+%22i10%22&coll=dts>. See also Helmond 1994.

⁵⁰ On Benjamin in *i10* see Peters 2023.

⁵¹ de Jong, Pollet 2019, 31.

⁵² Aside from the mentioned references, in a recent interview with Amy Sherlock, de Jong stated that another reference was the international lettrist magazine *Potlatch* (1954-57). Cf. de Jong, Sherlock 2017.

⁵³ This has to do with the periodical's highly malleable and evolving nature, but also to de Jong's fluid and anti-organisational editorial practice. On the latter see de Jong 1964, 16.



Figure 10 Arthur Müller Lehning (ed.), *i10*, 1, 1927. Cover

is the case with Jacqueline de Jong, whose ideas on the periodical and its “Jornian” influences,⁵⁴ despite its attempts to liberate itself from, in the end remained, as she put it, “complementary” to situationism.⁵⁵

In conclusion, understanding de Jong’s editorial efforts and the compositional yet elusive character of *The Situationist Times* – both in its experimental use of topology and its resistance to categorisation within the Situationist movement – requires further reflections. These will not be conclusive, rather they will remain open to new imageries around both the nature of the periodical and its making; less mechanical and rigid, and instead allowing for the spontaneous incursions of the calculable and the unknown. The experimentations, innovations, propositions and formal solutions proposed by de Jong are ways to explore the periodical’s possibil-

ities, both as a medium of knowledge production and circulation, and as an artwork.

In the spaces of the magazine – its pages and its formal structures – de Jong proposes a process free from constraints: from time and space, from divisions, restrictions, boundaries, traditions, practices, styles and organisational structures. The periodical becomes an organic, malleable entity, where even the editorial team is not fixed. This freedom was certainly tied to de Jong’s own artistic autonomy, which she could no longer take for granted after the schism with the Situationist movement. It also reflects a practice that adapts to the periodical’s evolving nature. With its specific temporality, the periodical serves as an open-ended, fluid and transitory platform for the dissemination of art.⁵⁶ As such, the periodical is more about beginnings, revisitations and experimentations that might not find a place in the more fixed formats of books or catalogs.

Each new issue and every page bring new reflections, positions and research, admitting revisitations, new perspectives and fresh examinations, as seen in issues 3 to 5 with their thematic and topological approaches. The periodical becomes what de Jong described as a “dynamic collage”⁵⁷ where diverse histories, formal languages and systems of expression intersect, transforming the printed page into a multidimensional and multitemporal object. In de Jong’s capable hands, the periodical embraces disorder, transience and the absurd; it becomes the epitome of a process perpetually open to change and reinterpretation. Not just of the editor and its contributors, but of the readers themselves, which may enter the volume at different stages and opt for other interpretations of its contents. However, while the dynamic nature of periodicals is relatively straightforward, collage as an assemblage methodology is more complex.⁵⁸ For de Jong, collage becomes a generative tool for renewing knowledge, presenting not a selection but a variety of languages, disciplines, practices, materials, theories and images that converge on each page to create new meanings. This approach redefines the role of the editor as artist and the periodical as a resonant medium of research, comparison, display and artistic creation, influencing both its contemporaneity and the decades that follow.

⁵⁴ Kurczynski observed that some images published by de Jong are identical to those published by Jorn. See Kurczynski 2011, 166.

⁵⁵ de Jong, Pollet 2019, 31.

⁵⁶ Beetham 1989.

⁵⁷ de Jong, Prestsæter 2019, 133.

⁵⁸ On collage and its intrinsic possibilities see amongst others Greenberg [1959] 1991; Krauss [1990] 1996; Taylor 2004; Waldman 1992.

The echoes created within its pages, guided by de Jong's forward-thinking vision, align with Jorn's assertion that

only spatial constructions with durations that stretch from a minute to thousands of years can be Situationist instruments.⁵⁹

The Situationist Times thus emerges as an inherently Situationist project: it epitomises the durational aspect of culture, functioning not only as a periodical but as an artwork in its own right – a living, adaptable entity that continually generates new contexts, connections and possibilities for future interpretations.

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⁵⁹ Jorn 1960, here cited from Prestsæter 2019, 45.

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