

## **Inverted Mountain, Some Associations**

### *Frankenstein's Monster*

Playing Prometheus, unholy parts, chemistry, and alchemy are ambiguously brought together in an isolated laboratory where the hideous and frightening yet sensitive and deeply caring being is created. Bolts protrude from it like the neck of Boris Karloff's 1930s film version. Twirling wing nuts is required to get inside its head.

### *Inferno*

How could it be that as he wandered higher and higher *the mountain that sloped downward* his soul fell lower and lower? To rise to the top of the peak, to achieve new elevations, to reach the tip of the powerful triangle is to feel the coldest air, to be the most distanced from the shifting tectonic plates and volcanic rivers of flames that created the mountain in the first place. The base of the triangle where all have fallen down is where the real power lies, flattened. Nine booklets, like Dante's nine circles of hell, show the climber seeking his fellow searchers through a haze of clouds and ash.

### *Situationist*

"It has become ungovernable, this wasteland where new sufferings are disguised with the name of former pleasures and where people are so afraid. They turn in the night, consumed by fire. They wake up in alarm and gropingly search for life. And word is getting around that those who have been expropriating that life have ended up losing it themselves."<sup>1</sup>

Sandpaper makes the connection first, a strip of it on the outside box. Guy Debord and Asger Jorn's infamous *Mémoires* with snatches of the former's writings, appropriated comic strips and photographs all covered with the latter's drips and splotches of paint bound in raw sandpaper so it would scuff at and wear away any other adjacent book when taking it from or putting it back on the shelf. Reading the

*Inverted Mountain* booklets we're on a kind of dark *dérive*, "which is the practice of a passional journey out of the ordinary through rapid changing of ambiances,"<sup>2</sup> a psychogeographical wandering to "express not subordination to randomness but complete insubordination to habitual influences."<sup>3</sup> Constant Nieuwenhuijs's view of the city as "half labyrinth half laboratory"<sup>4</sup> factors in here too. In the installation version of *Inverted Mountain* we can also make the connection to Pinot-Gallizio's covering of walls, floor, and ceilings in rolls of industrial canvas painted with homemade spray guns that spouted solvents, paints, resins for "caverns of anti-matter."<sup>5</sup>

### *Matter*

Each booklet spray-painted flat black has on its cover spews, strands, and raised specks like a galaxy of bright stars. While reading it in one's lap or on a table will fall flecks of black particles like soot and ash. By happenstance, in wetting my finger to turn a page, I tasted salt. Was it my own sweaty flesh or salt the artist used to raise the bumps of stars to form the cosmos? Robert Smithson, earth artist of The Spiral Jetty in the Great Salt Lake wrote, "There is no escape from matter. There is no escape from the physical nor is there any escape from the mind. The two are in a constant collision course."<sup>6</sup> We are both in the heights of the cosmos and the depths of a crater. Each image in its graininess is either being worn away or built up like pointillist's particles.

<sup>1</sup> from the film script *In Girum Imus Nocte et Consumimur Igni [We Spin Around the Night Consumed by Fire]*, Guy Debord, 1978

<sup>2</sup> from "Toward a Situationist International," Guy Debord, 1957

<sup>3</sup> from "Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography," Guy Debord, 1955

<sup>4</sup> from *The Situationists International: A User's Guide* by Simon Ford, 2005

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> from *The Writings of Robert Smithson*

