

# Guide to the Michèle Bernstein Papers

GEN MSS 1556



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July 2019

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library  
P. O. Box 208330  
New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
(203) 432-2977  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

**CALL NUMBER:** GEN MSS 1556

**CREATOR:** Bernstein, Michèle, author

**TITLE:** Michèle Bernstein papers

**DATES:** 1952-1989

**BULK DATES:** 1958-1964

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 4.05 linear feet (7 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** In French.

**SUMMARY:** Collection of correspondence, writings, and photographs, largely dating from the 1950s and 1960s, documenting Michèle Bernstein's relationship with the leading figure of the Internationale Situationniste (I.S.), Guy Debord, and her involvement with the movement. Personal papers contain 19 letters from Debord to Bernstein sent circa 1956-1968 discussing the activities of the I.S., 22 autograph manuscript poems by Debord addressed to Bernstein in 1964, postcards, and photographs of Bernstein, Debord, and others. Writings include annotated proofs and original maquettes for issues no. 1-9 of the *Internationale situationniste* journal, for 3 monographs of the Skandinavisk institut for sammenlignende vandalism's Bibliothèque d'Alexandrie series, and for various situationist tracts.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.mbernstein>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.mbernstein>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to [beinecke.images@yale.edu](mailto:beinecke.images@yale.edu).

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b.      box

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased from Michèle Bernstein and Didier Lecointre-Dominique Drouet on the Edwin J. Beinecke Book Fund, 2019.

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### Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

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### Conditions Governing Use

The Michèle Bernstein Papers is the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

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### Preferred Citation

Michèle Bernstein Papers. General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

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### Processing Information

Collections are processed to a variety of levels, depending on the work necessary to make them usable, their perceived research value, the availability of staff, competing priorities, and whether or not further accruals are expected. The library attempts to provide a basic level of preservation and access for all collections, and does more extensive processing of higher priority collections as time and resources permit.

This collection received a basic level of processing, including rehousing and minimal organization. Information included in the Description of Papers note and Collection Contents section is drawn from information supplied with the collection and from an initial survey of the contents.

This finding aid may be updated periodically to account for new acquisitions to the collection and/or revisions in arrangement and description.

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## Biographical / Historical

Michèle Bernstein (1932- ) is a French writer. She was a founding member of the avant-garde group Internationale situationniste from 1957-1967, a member of the editorial committee of the Internationale situationniste journal, and the first wife of the movement's leading figure, Guy Debord (1931-1994).

While a student at La Sorbonne, Paris, Bernstein associated with the Internationale lettriste and contributed to its newsletter *Potlatch*. Bernstein and Guy Debord met in 1952 and married in 1954. In 1957, Debord and Bernstein were among a group of break-away Lettrists who formed the Internationale situationniste, along with Ralph Rumney of the London Psychogeographical Association, members of the International Movement for an Imaginist Bauhaus, Asger Jorn, Giuseppe Pinot-Gallizio, and Piero Simondo, and others. Bernstein then wrote for the *Internationale situationniste* journal, and authored two roman à clef novels about the I.S.'s inner circle, *Tous les chevaux du roi* (1960) and *La Nuit* (1961).

Bernstein left the I.S. in 1967 and, though separated before, Debord and Bernstein divorced in 1972.

## Content Description

Collection of correspondence, writings, and photographs, largely dating from the 1950s and 1960s, documenting Michèle Bernstein's relationship with the leading figure of the Internationale Situationniste (I.S.), Guy Debord, and her involvement with the movement. Personal papers contain 19 letters from Debord to Bernstein sent circa 1956-1968 discussing the activities of the I.S., 22 autograph manuscript poems by Debord addressed to Bernstein in 1964, postcards, and photographs of Bernstein, Debord, and others. Writings include annotated proofs and original maquettes for issues no. 1-9 of the *Internationale situationniste* journal, for 3 monographs of the Skandinavisk institut for sammenlignende vandalisme's Bibliothèque d'Alexandrie series, and for various situationist tracts.

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## Arrangement

Organized into two series: I. Correspondence and Personal Papers, 1952-1989. II. Situationist Publications, 1955-1964.

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## Collection Contents

### Series I: Correspondence and Personal Papers, 1952–1989

0.42 linear feet (2 boxes)

Series I. Correspondence and Personal Papers contains letters, postcards, poems, and photographs dated 1952-1989. Autograph letters from Guy Debord to Bernstein, the bulk of which date from 1963, discuss the preparation of Internationale situationniste publications, the writing of Debord's *La société du spectacle*, Debord's daily life, and the activities of various collaborators including Asger Jorn, Raoul Vaneigem, and Patrick Straram. Manuscript poems include *Épopée Léwinienne*, a series of love poems by Debord addressed to Bernstein in early 1964, at a time when, separated from Debord, Bernstein began a relationship with French journalist Walter Lewino. Photographic prints, largely informal portraits during social gatherings, depict Bernstein, Debord, Jean Michel Mension, Jean Claude Guilbert, members of Gruppe SPUR, Jacques Fillon, Alice Becker-Ho, and Michèle Mochot.

Series I is arranged in the order it was received.

b. 1	<a href="#">Letters from Guy Debord</a> 3 Folders	[1956]-1968
b. 1	Postcards signed by Guy Debord, Constant, Maurice Wyckaert, Asger Jorn, and others of the I.S.	1959–1989
b. 1	Photographs of Michèle Bernstein, Guy Debord, and others 3 Folders Accompanied by a partial legend.	circa 1952-1971
b. 7	Poems by Guy Debord addressed to Michèle Bernstein 3 Folders Contains 17 autograph manuscript poems, unsigned, by Guy Debord sent over several weeks to Michèle Bernstein following a breakup in 1964 under the title <i>Épopée Léwinienne</i> . Also contains 5 additional poems by Debord created around the same time but that are not part of the <i>Épopée Léwinienne</i> . Accompanied by a manuscript notebook written by Bernstein providing explanations of the poems.  Box 7 (Guy Debord poems): This material is open for research. It was formerly restricted until 2022 January 1.	1964

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**Series II: Situationist Publications, 1955–1964**

3.63 linear feet (5 boxes)

Series II. Situationist Publications includes original maquettes and proofs used in the preparation of the first nine issues of the *Internationale situationniste* journal, published in Paris under the direction of Guy Debord and of an editorial committee composed of the I.S. inner circle, including Bernstein. Also included are proofs and other materials for the publication of three monographs in the *Bibliothèque d'Alexandrie* series published by the Scandinavian Institute of Comparative Vandalism under the direction of Asger Jorn: *Pinot-Gallizio, Le long voyage*, and Debord's *Contre le cinéma*; as well as proofs for various tracts and articles related to lettrism and situationism. Most proofs in the series feature manuscript typographical corrections and, occasionally, manuscript additions in the hand of Debord and Bernstein.

Series II is organized into three subseries: *Internationale situationniste* Journal, *Bibliothèque d'Alexandrie* Monograph Series, and Tracts and Other Printed Material.

	<i>Internationale situationniste</i> Journal	1958–1964
b. 6 (Oversize)	No. 1, proofs 2 Folders	1958
b. 6 (Oversize)	No. 2, proofs with manuscript corrections	1958
b. 2	No. 2, maquette and proofs with manuscript corrections 2 Folders	1958
b. 2	No. 3, maquette and proofs with manuscript corrections 3 Folders	1959
b. 2	No. 4, proofs with manuscript corrections 4 Folders	1960
b. 2	No. 5, maquette and proofs with manuscript corrections 3 Folders	1960
b. 3	No. 6, maquette and proofs with manuscript corrections 4 Folders	1961
b. 3	No. 7, proofs, some with manuscript corrections 3 Folders	1962
b. 3	No. 8, maquette and proofs, some with manuscript corrections 5 Folders	1963
b. 4	No. 9, maquette and proofs, some with manuscript corrections 7 Folders	1964
	<i>Bibliothèque d'Alexandrie</i> Monograph Series	1960–1964
b. 5	<a href="#">Bernstein, Michèle and Asger Jorn, Pinot-Gallizio, proofs with manuscript corrections</a> 2 Folders	1960
b. 5	<a href="#">Jorn, Asger and Pierre Wemaëre, Le long voyage, proofs with manuscript corrections</a> 1 Folder	1960

## Bibliothèque d'Alexandrie Monograph Series (continued)

b. 5	<p>Debord, Guy, <i>Contre le cinéma</i>, documents related to the publication <i>7 Folders</i></p> <p>Includes an autograph manuscript outline of the book, typescript script breakdowns (découpages) and autograph manuscript screenplays for the films <i>Sur le passage de quelques personnes à travers une assez courte durée de temps</i> and <i>Critique de la séparation</i>, proofs of the book with typographical corrections by Michèle Bernstein, original maquettes, and letter from André Frankin and manuscript notes concerning <i>Critique de la séparation</i>.</p>	1964
Tracts and Other Printed Material		1955-1964
b. 6 (Oversize)	[Bernstein, Michèle], "Note on the Situationist International," proof Version of the text published in the <i>Times Literary Supplement</i> on 1964 September 3.	
b. 5	Debord, Guy, "Préliminaires pour une définition de l'unité du programme révolutionnaire," proofs with manuscript additions	[1960]
b. 5	Debord, Guy, "Introduction à une critique de la géographie urbaine," proofs with manuscript typographical corrections Published in <i>Les lèvres nues</i> , no. 6, 1955.	[1955]
b. 6 (Oversize)	Debord, Guy, "THE NAKED CITY - Illustration de l'hypothèse des plaques tournantes en psychogéographie," lithograph	[1957]
b. 6 (Oversize)	Internationale lettriste, "Toutes ces dames au salon," printed tract with manuscript typographical corrections	[1956]
b. 6 (Oversize)	Internationale situationniste, proofs of printed tracts Contains "Au secours de Van Guglielmi!", "Nouveau théâtre d'opérations dans la culture," "Adresse de l'Internationale situationniste à l'assemblée générale de l'Association internationale des critiques d'art," "Nicht Hinauslehnen," and "España en el corazón."	1958-1964
b. 6 (Oversize)	Internationale situationniste, "Aux poubelles de l'histoire," maquette and proofs with manuscript corrections	[1963]
b. 6 (Oversize)	<a href="#">Jorn, Asger, "La lutte finale," proof</a>	[1960]
b. 5	Situationistisk Internationale bevaegelses skandinaviske sektion, <i>Situationistisk Revolution</i> , no.1	1962



## **Selected Search Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### **Subjects**

Authors, French -- 20th Century -- Archives  
Counterculture -- Europe -- Periodicals  
Literature, Experimental -- Europe -- 20th  
Century  
Protest literature

### **Genres / Formats**

Photographs  
Situationist literature

### **Occupations**

Periodical editors -- France -- Paris -- 20th  
Century

### **Names**

Debord, Guy, 1931-1994  
Jorn, Asger, 1914-1973

### **Corporate Bodies**

Internationale lettriste  
Internationale situationniste  
Skandinavisk institut for sammenlignende  
vandalisme

### **Acquired From**

Bernstein, Michèle , bookseller  
Didier Lecointre-Dominique Drouet , bookseller