

People ask, "What is the *Société Imaginaire*? Does it exist? Or is it a hoax?" The answer is: the *Société Imaginaire* exists, but it cannot be summarized without its subtlety being blunted or its fluency being compromised. It lives by refusal, by saying "no" to what other groups or societies depend on for survival. It has no manifesto, and will not be bound by any explicit formulation of its aims. It exists as a paradox; it is most alive when its life can be least assumed. Although it welcomes attempts to define what it is, it knows none will be right. If its members are evasive when asked to explain it, it is because they know that any answer, once uttered, comes too late. It is committed to "beyondness," to being always one step ahead of what can be said about it. Thus, it keeps growing. And though it has a history, a past amply documented with poems, prints, and statements of various sorts, it is always in the act of discarding them. Its archive is not just the natural by-product of its existence, but the repository of what should not be repeated. Its attention is fixed on the blank where the features of its new face will take shape. Its members are everywhere. They write to each other, and collaborate on projects that are dedicated to simultaneously establishing the *Société* and abolishing it, giving it an artifactual and literary history that it must forget. It is not dedicated to the cliché that we learn by experience. Rather, it believes that experience must be mistrusted, only then is learning possible. Its aim is not to describe the world, but to remystify it. It offers creation as a mode of life and a condition for living; at least for a time. This time.

Alzella, June 5, 1995

Man Stum.