

# JEAN TINGUELY

«For me the machine is above all an instrument that permits me to be poetic. If you respect the machine, if you enter into a game with the machine, then perhaps you can make a truly joyous machine—by joyous, I mean free.»

Jean Tinguely

## JEAN TINGUELY

curated by  
Camille Morineau, Lucia Pesapane  
and Vicente Todolí with Fiammetta Griccioli

**Pirelli HangarBicocca**  
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The exhibition is organized in collaboration  
with Museum Tinguely, Basel

### Public Program

The exhibition is accompanied by a series of events  
that allow visitors to learn more about some  
of the themes of the show and of Jean Tinguely's work.

### Museum Mediation

Museum mediators are present in the exhibition spaces  
to answer questions from the public, give information  
and context elements that can deepen the fruition  
of the artworks.

### Catalog

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the exhibition is available at the Pirelli HangarBicocca  
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Jean Tinguely with *Moulin à Prière II* (1954)  
during the installation of the exhibition "M E T A,"  
Galerie Alexandre Iolas, Paris, 1964  
© Museum Tinguely, Basel. Photo Monique Jacot

## The Artist

Jean Tinguely (Fribourg, 1925–Berne, 1991) was a pioneering artist of the 20th century who revolutionized the concept of artwork and was a key figure of kinetic art, which experimented with visual perception and movement during the 1960s and 1970s. At the heart of Tinguely's work is the machine, seen not only as a functional object but as a sculpture imbued with movement, sound, and its own poetry. The artist transformed discarded objects and salvaged materials, such as gears and scrap, into mechanical sculptures that are often ironic, noisy, cacophonous, and have a life of their own thanks to complex motors and mechanisms.

During his childhood, Jean Tinguely lived in Basel, where, at the age of 16, he began an apprenticeship working as a window decorator and during that time he followed courses in drawing at the School of Applied Arts. Attracted by the radical ideas of movements such as Dadaism, which emerged in Zurich in 1916, Tinguely was drawn to art that rejected the conventional stan-

dards of the time, pursuing new forms of expression incorporating movement and perception. In 1953, he left Basel for Paris, the vibrant center of the art scene, with his wife and fellow artist Eva Aeppli (1925–2015). There, he worked on new compositions and sculptures from wire and colored geometric shapes, inspired by the linear, kinetic, and mechanical sculptures known as “mobiles” of the American artist Alexander Calder (1898–1976). Another key influence was Marcel Duchamp (1887–1968), a pioneer of conceptual art, who in the 1920s created works with mechanisms and rotating circles that generated innovative optical effects.

At his first solo exhibition at Galerie Arnaud in Paris in 1954, Tinguely presented a series of wire sculptures called *Méta-mécaniques*, featuring small electric motors that animated parts of the works. The title was coined by art critic Pontus Hultén (1924–2006)—who would support him throughout his career and become a close friend. The prefix *méta* was then used by Tinguely in many of his works to underscore his intention to go beyond an idea and to emphasize the poetic nature of his sculptures, as they autonomously generate art. With *Méta-mécaniques* Tinguely sought to transcend the popular perception of machines: while industrial devices typically produce material goods through movement, these pieces, like much of his work, consisted of kinetic sculptures that move without any productive purpose, thus defying the utilitarian function and inviting contemplation on their intrinsic poetry. In December 1954, Italian artist and designer Bruno Munari (1907–1998) invited Tinguely to exhibit a number of works from this series at the Studio d’Architettura B24 in Milan, marking their first presentation to the Italian public.

In addition to movement, sound and, above all, noise become in time an important part of Tinguely’s practice. The first notable example is *Méta-mécanique sonore I* (1955), a black wall panel where small wire gears and hammers strike everyday objects like glasses, bottles, and tins. The strikes occur at irregular intervals, producing a chaotic and unpredictable sound effect. The *Méta-Matics*, made in 1959, were among the first sculptures designed to actively engage viewers. These motorized drawing machines are capable of making abstract works of art. One of the most iconic pieces in this series is *Méta-Matic No. 17*, presented at the Paris Biennial at the Musée d’Art Moderne in 1959, documented in renowned archival photographs of the artist standing next to the machine, enveloped in puffs of steam with the Eiffel Tower in the background.



*Klamauk* (1979) during the car race to commemorate the driver Jo Siffert, St-Ursanne-Les Rangiers, Switzerland, 1981  
© Estate Leonardo Bezzola. Photo Leonardo Bezzola

In 1960, Tinguely traveled to New York City for the first time, where he was captivated by the fervor and chaos of the city. On March 17, in the Sculpture Garden of the Museum of Modern Art, he presented the notorious sculpture-performance *Homage to New York* (1960), a 7-meter long and 8-meter-high installation consisting of approximately 80 bicycles, as well as tricycles, wheels, a bathtub, bells, horns, bottles, cans, and several motors. As intended by the artist, the machine destroyed itself in just 27 minutes. From then onwards, the spectacular, transformative nature of his work—seen by Tinguely as a way of bringing art closer to life—became increasingly evident in his production. For instance, the exhibition at the Galerie des Quatre Saisons that opened in Paris in May 1960, upon his return from New York City, was preceded by “Le transport,” a parade of his latest mechanical “creatures,” including *Gismo* and *L’appareil à faire des sculptures* (both from 1960 and featured in Pirelli HangarBicocca). Led by the artist and a few friends, these works were rolled from his studio on Impasse Ronsin to the gallery in an unusual procession that was promptly halted by the police.

From the 1960s onwards, Tinguely held several solo exhibitions in institutions and museums, collaborating frequently

with other artists on art projects, public works, and exhibitions. One of the most famous was “*Dylaby (Dynamic Labyrinth)*,” held at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam in 1962, which consisted of an exhibition conceived as a labyrinth strewn with physical obstacles, creating a challenging and immersive experience for visitors. The project was designed by Tinguely together with other artists, including Niki de Saint Phalle (1930–2002)—who had by then become his life partner—Robert Rauschenberg (1925–2008), and Daniel Spoerri. During this period, Tinguely began using found objects in his sculptures and installations, including organic elements such as fur and industrial scrap. These works, marked by unpredictable sounds and movements, surprised and amused viewers. This phase coincided with Tinguely’s involvement in the Nouveau Réalisme movement, founded by art critic Pierre Restany (1930–2003) in 1960. Artists in this movement approached reality in new ways, using everyday objects and, above all, the waste and remnants of consumer society into their works. Indeed, it was from an assemblage of scrap metal that Tinguely made his series of kinetic fountains installed in public spaces, including the famous *Fasnachtsbrunnen* created for the city of Basel in 1977.

In the 1980s, Tinguely’s art reached a peak of noise, grandeur, and color. In 1987, Palazzo Grassi in Venice hosted his most extensive retrospective to date, featuring over 90 installations, including his monumental mechanical, noise, and mobile creations. Among these was *Grosse Méta-Maxi-Maxi-Utopia* (1987), 17 meters long and 8 meters high, designed to be walkable by the public. In 1988, the artist acquired La Verrerie, an abandoned glass factory covering an area of over 3,000 square meters near Fribourg and Lausanne, which he transformed into the “Torpedo Institut.” Conceived as an “anti-museum,” it was intended as a space to embrace constant evolution, encouraging cross-pollination between art and everyday life. On the occasion of his funeral on September 4, 1991, more than 10,000 people took part in a memorial parade in Fribourg in honor of Tinguely. According to the artist’s last wishes, the procession was led by *Klamausk* (1979), a sound sculpture mounted on an old tractor with various percussion instruments. Amidst puffs of smoke and exploding firecrackers, it made its way through the crowd gathered to pay their last respects to the artist.

## The Exhibition

The exhibition is the first retrospective devoted to Jean Tinguely held in Italy since the artist’s death and features over 40 seminal works from the 1950s to the 1990s. The last major Italian tribute to Tinguely was the 1987 exhibition “Una magia più forte della morte” (A magic stronger than death) at Palazzo Grassi in Venice and subsequently presented at Promotrice delle Belle Arti in Turin, curated by Pontus Hultén.

The Milan show draws a connection to the industrial origin of the Pirelli HangarBicocca building, making it an ideal setting for Tinguely’s sculptures, crafted from iron, steel, and sheet metal, and evoking the atmosphere and spirit of his final studio in Fribourg. It is conceived as a visual and sonic scenography of monumental kinetic works, featuring musical and light works juxtaposed with cacophonous machines. Each work is activated for a specific period of time, following a pre-established choreography where the viewer is surrounded by moving wheels, bouncing sculptures, and sudden mechanical sounds. Without following a strictly chronological order, the exhibition highlights the evolution and thematic connections of Tinguely’s art, focusing on movement, noise and overcoming the boundaries of traditional sculpture.

This retrospective is also an opportunity to reflect on Tinguely’s close relationship with Milan, the site of some of his most ambitious projects such as *La Vittoria* (1970), the iconic performance in Piazza Duomo, presented through archival materials and drawings displayed in the Pirelli HangarBicocca Lab room.

1. ***Cercle et carré-éclatés***, 1981
2. ***Méta-Maxi***, 1986

The exhibition opens with two imposing sculptures that Jean Tinguely created in the 1980s as a result of his research on movement commenced in the 1950s. Both were made with wheels, belts, electric motors, and mechanical components, evoking the concept of the assembly line.

On the left is ***Cercle et carré-éclatés***, made in 1981. The title references the abstract artist group Cercle et Carré (Circle and Square), founded in Paris in 1929 by painter Joaquín Torres García (1874–1949) and art critic and historian Michel Seuphor (1901–1999). It is constructed using circles and squares: geometric shapes linked to symmetry, the concept of perfection and balance, considered among the principal compositional elements in abstract art. Tinguely, however, disrupts these ideals by introducing these forms to the “imperfect” circuit of *Cercle et carré-éclatés*. The sculpture is in fact an idling machine, whose movements are not aimed at assembling a product, but are irregular, uncoordinated, and generate noise. This sound, a hallmark of Tinguely’s work, reflect his ongoing exploration of discordance conducted since his first experiments with machines.

Sound is also an important element in ***Méta-Maxi***, made five years after *Cercle et carré-éclatés* and induced by the movement of the sculpture’s gears and of percussions. The Greek prefix *meta*, meaning “beyond” and “transcending;” underlines the creative character of Tinguely’s machines. In the majestic structure of *Méta-Maxi*, plastic and plush figures emerge from between the gears, distancing the machine from notions of perfection and predictability.



***Méta-Matic No. 10***, 1959  
 Iron tripod, metal molded sheet and rods, wooden wheels, rubber belts, black paint, electric motor  
 104 x 129 x 55 cm  
 Museum Tinguely, Basel, Donation Niki de Saint Phalle.  
 A cultural commitment of Roche  
 © Museum Tinguely, Basel. Photo Christian Baur

### 3. ***Méta-Matic No. 10***, 1959

«Come create your own painting with spirit, fury or elegance, using the *Méta-Matics* by Tinguely, sculptures that paint!» Thus reads the invitation to the *Méta-Matics* exhibition that opened in July 1959 at the Galerie Iris Clert in Paris, where the artist presented his innovative sculptures to the public. This series of works included drawing machines that viewers could operate. Powered by small mechanical motors, these devices created abstract drawings on paper using colored felt-tip pens.

The *Méta-Matics* exhibition not only invited the public to interact directly with the sculptures but also encouraged reflection on the role of the machine in art and the element of chance in the creative process. Viewer participation thus became an integral part of the piece, superseding the idea of the artist as sole creator. This approach made art accessible to all and al-

lowed the person who operated the machine to become the owner of the small work on paper.

As art critic Pontus Hultén explained, «Tinguely seeks mechanical disorder in his machines. The workings of his paintings have no precision other than that of chance.» The artist's interest in mechanical disorder and interaction with viewers would continue to mark his production of the following years, as can be seen by his drawing machines. An example is *Cyclograveur* (1960), a ludic machine that recalls a bicycle and could be activated by pushing its pedals to create a drawing.

*Méta-Matic No. 10*, presented in the show, is an exhibition replica of the 1959 machine, realized in 2024 by Museum Tinguely. For conservation purposes the original work can no longer be activated.

At Pirelli HangarBicocca's bookshop, it is possible to purchase a token for 5 euros that will allow visitors to activate the work and make a drawing on stamped paper.

4. *Sculpture méta-mécanique automobile*, 1954
5. *Méta-Herbin*, 1955
6. *Tricycle*, 1954

These three works constitute the earliest group featured in the exhibition. At the beginning of the 1950s, Tinguely made several wire sculptures, influenced by the geometric abstractionist experiments of the early 20th century. The art critic Pontus Hultén suggested Tinguely call these sculptures *Méta-mécaniques*, i.e., “beyond mechanics.” At a time when consumer society was just emerging, Tinguely proposed kinetic sculptures that echoed the form of gears and possessed no traditional production function.

The piece *Tricycle*, part of the series, resembles a tricycle made of wire gears. It was shown in Milan at the invitation of Bruno Munari, who organized Tinguely's first solo exhibition in Italy at the Studio d'Architettura B24 in December 1954.

The following year, at the Galerie Denise René in Paris, Tinguely displayed *Sculpture méta-mécanique automobile* in his solo exhibition “Le Mouvement”: a wire sculpture that again drew on the forms of the wheel and gear, to which the artist added details in sheet metal



*Méta-Herbin*, 1955  
Iron tripods, rods and wire, colored metal sheets, electric motor  
125 x 52 x 75 cm  
Fondation Gandur pour l'Art, Genève. Photo Sandra Pointet

painted with primary colors and black. Similar in terms of formal composition, the work *Méta-Herbin* was also featured in the same exhibition and named after the French painter Auguste Herbin (1862–1960). It was accompanied by *Méta-Kandinsky* (1955) and *Méta-Malevitch* (1954), referring to the geometric abstract avant-garde artists who painted triangles, circles, and semicircles as areas of solid color on white canvases.

For conservation purposes *Sculpture méta-mécanique automobile* and *Tricycle* can no longer be operated. Hence, they are not part of the overall activation schedule of works in the exhibition.

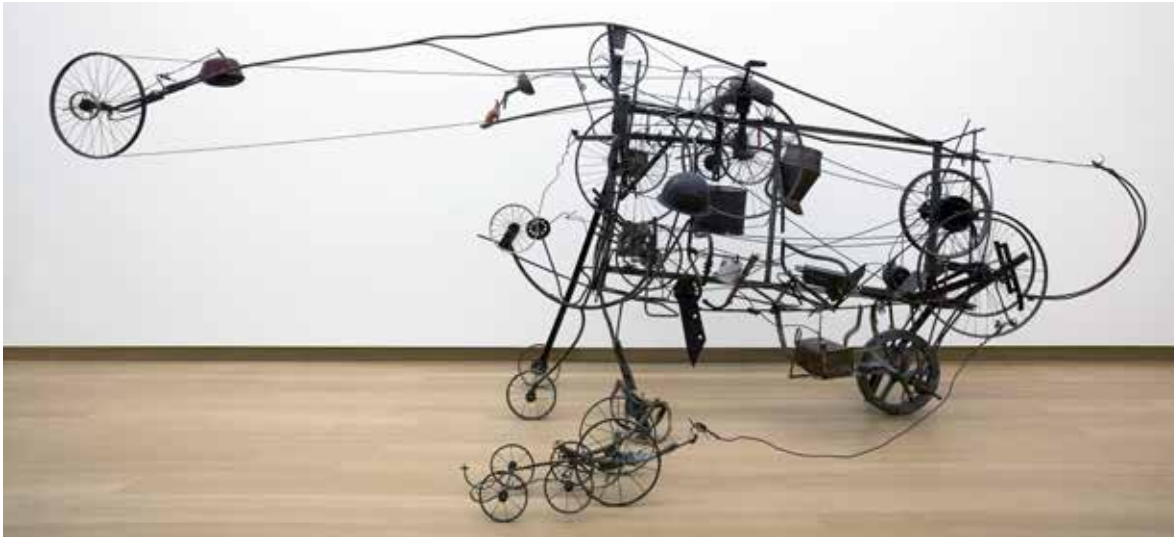


*Requiem pour une feuille morte*, 1967  
 Steel structure, wood and metal wheels, leather belts,  
 black paint, welded leaf with white paint, electric motor  
 305 x 1150 x 80 cm  
 Collection Fonds Renault pour l'art et la culture, France

## 7. *Requiem pour une feuille morte*, 1967

In 1967, Jean Tinguely created the monumental sculpture *Requiem pour une feuille morte* for the Swiss Pavilion at the World's Fair in Montréal. Drawing on the artist's experience as a set designer for the mechanical curtain of the ballet *L'Éloge de la Folie* by the renowned French choreographer Roland Petit (1924–2011) at the Théâtre de Champs-Élysées in Paris the previous year, the work consists of a series of wheels of different sizes driven by belts. As in the set design, the artist uses the concept of backlighting in which overlapping or adjacent circular shapes help to create a layered ensemble of geometric figures. The entire colossal wheel mechanism is connected to the movement of a single small metal leaf painted white, referenced humorously in the work's title.

*Requiem pour une feuille morte* is part of a series of sculptures created by the artist since 1963, all characterized by black monochrome surfaces. The radical gesture of painting everything black made Tinguely's work the polar opposite of the consumerist subjects of Pop Art, at the height of their popularity at the time: «Black is a way to make the found object disappear—it is the quintessential anti-New Realist gesture—no more New Realists, no more found objects.»



*Gismo*, 1960  
 Metal structure, wheels and rods,  
 tin can and pitcher, helmet,  
 rubber belts, electric motor  
 200 x 560 x 170 cm  
 Collection Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam

8. *L'appareil à faire des sculptures*, 1960

9. *Gismo*, 1960

Following the success of *Homage to New York* in 1960, Tinguely began experimenting with a new sculptural approach, using discarded objects and scrap materials found on the streets, with minimal alteration. This method was a direct critique to consumer society's idea of progress, in contrast to American Pop Art, which celebrated the object to an icon of modernity and prosperity.

*L'appareil à faire des sculptures*, realized with materials from Parisian dumps, is an emblematic example of Tinguely's critical stance on consumerism. The machine has a central body composed of a barrel welded to a rack structure, along with a tractor seat and other salvaged components. It was an interactive sculpture: a disc mounted on a tall metal rod, with a block of plaster, was rhythmically struck by a small chisel. Viewers could sit and spin the barrel with their feet, becoming an integral part of the artistic process and "sculptors" of the work.

At Pirelli HangarBicocca, *L'appareil à faire des sculptures* is displayed alongside another large sculpture, *Gismo*, just as they were

at the Galerie des Quatre Saisons in Paris in May 1960. In order to transport the works from his studio to the gallery, Tinguely had recruited several friends to organize a parade-like event, including a band, that he called "Le transport." *Gismo* resembles a large mechanical creature composed of bicycles, wheelbarrows, and small toy wheels, assembled from scrap metal and other found objects such as pots, tins, and a helmet. Driven by a small motor, it emitted loud mechanical sounds through the movement of its parts, creating a "total" experience that engaged viewers both visually and audibly.

For conservation purposes *L'appareil à faire des sculptures* and *Gismo* can no longer be operated. Hence, they are not part of the overall activation schedule of works in the exhibition. Their movement is documented in the nearby archival video of the parade "Le transport."



10. **Ballet des pauvres**, 1961

More than any other work produced in the 1960s, **Ballet des pauvres** exemplifies the ongoing evolution of Tinguely's artistic lexicon. The movements and materials he chose to work with became increasingly expressive, showing a gradual departure from the cleaner geometries of his 1950s works. *Ballet des pauvres* was displayed for the first time at the Moderna Museet in Stockholm in 1961, in an exhibition that offered a comprehensive overview of kinetic art, including the Futurists and Alexander Calder.

For the first time, Tinguely incorporated salvaged domestic objects into the sculpture, suspending with wires items such as clothing, including a nightdress, a tattered fox fur, a stocking worn on an artificial leg, and other metal pieces such as bells, pots, and a tray. All these objects are fixed to a suspended ceiling and connected to a motor activated by a timer, causing them to move and produce a rumbling noise. By suspending the base from the ceiling, Tinguely overturns the traditional concept of statuary sculpture with a base on the floor and pays tribute to the exhibitions with objects on the ceiling staged by Marcel Duchamp and in the Dadaist exhibitions, where humor was a key feature.

11. **Untitled, Baluba**, 1961–62
12. **Baluba Bleu**, 1962
13. **Untitled, Baluba**, 1962
14. **Baluba Furrure No. 3**, 1962

In accordance with his adherence to Nouveau Réalisme, and his choice to assemble disparate discarded objects and develop mechanical movement as an end in itself, Tinguely commenced the *Baluba* series. Seeking to engage the public with contemporary issues, the artist explained: «I made wobbling Balubas—sculptures meant to portray a certain craziness and rush in this technological civilization.» He also chose the title of the *Baluba* series as a reference to the political situation in Central Africa in the early 1960s. The Bantu people, which includes the Baluba, had played a key role in establishing independence in Congo, and their leader Patrice Lumumba (1925–1961) had been killed after less than a year into his presidency.

Each sculpture in the series comprises salvaged metal parts, to which Tinguely added small used objects, feathers or other organic elements. A motor inside each sculpture enables it to move when activated. Intentionally humorous, these machines take on a life of their own and become characters that raise questions about the meaning of life.

For conservation purposes *Baluba Bleu* can no longer be operated. Hence, it is not part of the overall activation schedule of works in the exhibition.

15. **Le gorille de Niki**, 1963
16. **Vive la muerte**, 1963
17. **Maschinenbar**, 1960–85

In the early 1960s, Tinguely produced small-scale sculptures with playful compositions made from found objects such as **Le gorille de Niki** and **Vive la muerte**, presented in the show together with the series of *Baluba*.

*Le gorille de Niki* features a sheet iron base topped with a plastic toy gorilla and an electric motor. Painted black, it incorporates elements of popular culture, such as the iconic gorilla from the film *King Kong* (1933) on New York City's tallest skyscrapers. *Vive la muerte*, on the other hand, features a skeletal figure on a horse, made from wire and other materials. In this case, the artist draws on mythology and popular culture for the figure of death personified, galloping with a scythe to sever the final ties between body and soul.

In the 1980s, Tinguely extended the series completing the work **Maschinenbar**, a long table with small sculptures also made from discarded materials, toys, and other tools, which he worked on for 20 years. By activating them, each element produces unexpected noises or movements, such as hammers comically striking small animals or animal skulls swaying on mechanical arms.

*Maschinenbar* can be directly operated by viewers using the buttons placed in front of the work.

18. **Rotozaza No. 2**, 1967

**Rotozaza No. 2** is an installation poetically conceived in opposition to the production assembly line. It features a conveyor belt that transports bottles, only to break them with a hammer at the end of its cycle, leaving the shards of glass heaped on the floor.

The title *Rotozaza* is onomatopoeic, evoking the sharp, shrill sound emitted by a machine. The simple, rudimentary device recalls the pioneering works of kinetic art. Tinguely made the first work of the series, *Rotozaza No. 1* (1967), designed for play: the machine “throws balls” that the public must continually reinsert into the mechanism to keep it active. In 1969, a third work was added to the series, *Rotozaza No. 3*, a machine displayed in the window of the Victor Loeb department store in Bern that repeatedly destroyed the plates on sale.

With these installations, Tinguely shifted the mechanical device from a purely productive context to a more playful and critical one. Once again, he sought to challenge consumer society by creating an experience that stimulates curiosity and offers an alternative reflection on the function and purpose of objects.

*Rotozaza No. 2* is activated by a museum mediator on Thursdays and Fridays at 11.30 am and on Saturday and Sundays at 11.30 am and 4.30 pm.

19. **Plateau agricole**, 1978

**Plateau agricole** is composed of parts of agricultural machinery painted in the characteristic red on a large iron base—a rarity for Tinguely, who always preferred polychrome or black-painted elements. The sculptures are free to move and operate on the platform devised as a stage for a visual and acoustic choreography. Tinguely experimented extensively with sound in the 1970s, with the creation of noisy machines, where agricultural objects became metallic musical instruments with their own rhythm and timbre.

The work was originally conceived for the 1978 group exhibition “Hammer Ausstellung” held in a former factory on Hammerstrasse in Basel, where it was displayed with works by Eva Aeppli, Niki de Saint Phalle, Daniel Spoerri, and Sigmar Polke (1941–2010), among others.

20. **Eos VIII**, 1966

21. **Bascule V**, 1969

22. **Spirale IV**, 1969

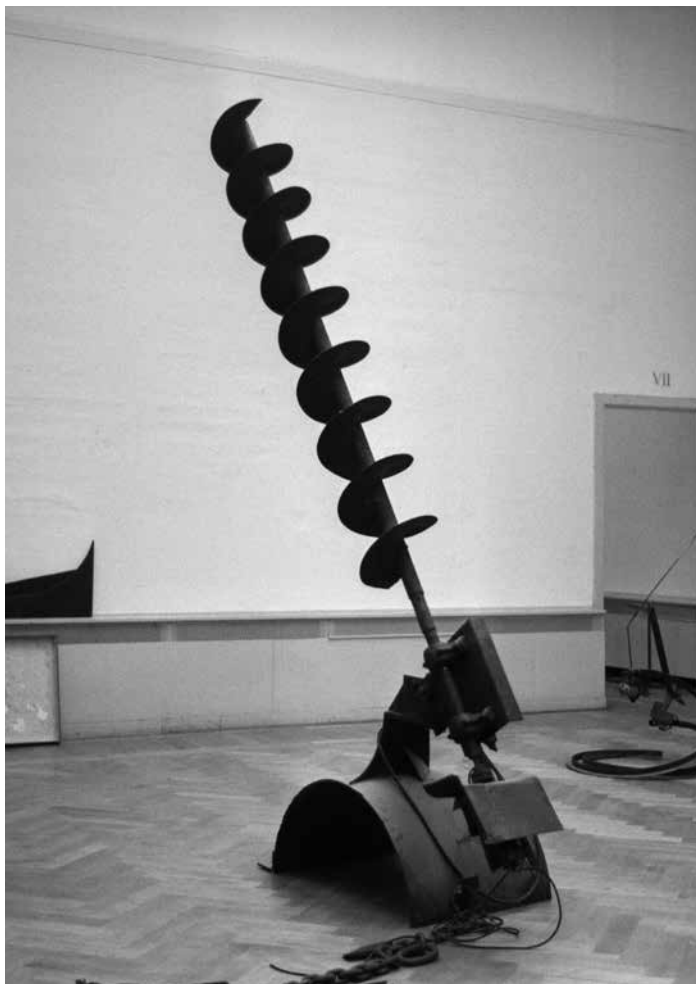
Displayed together in the exhibition space, the three sculptures are part of a series of works painted entirely black to which *Requiem pour une feuille morte* (1967) also belongs.

**Eos VIII** consists of metal parts, a belt, and a motor, conceived to move in a closed circuit without any tangible outcome. Its motion serves no productive purpose; rather, it is an act of pure mechanical expression.

In the mid-1960s, Tinguely also commenced the **Bascule** series. These works, resting on curved iron plates, are usually equipped with a pipe that moves back and forth. Their structure is intentionally designed to create an unstable swinging motion, resulting from two opposing movements that simultaneously complement and contrast each other.

These sculptures evoke weapons, like cannons and machine guns, or even drills in the case of **Spirale IV**, and are designed to reload themselves indefinitely without producing any real effect.

For conservation purposes *Spirale IV* can no longer be operated. Hence, it is not part of the overall activation schedule of works in the exhibition.



*Spirale IV*, 1969  
 Iron base, steel drill, black paint, electric motor  
 230 x 350 x 80 cm  
 Collection Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam  
 © Estate Leonardo Bezzola. Photo Leonardo Bezzola

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|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 23. <i>L'Odalisque</i> , 1989   | 28. <i>Mercedes</i> , 1991            |
| 24. <i>Lampe No. 2</i> , 1972   | 29. <i>Vive Marcel Duchamp</i> , 1991 |
| 25. <i>Lampe</i> , c. 1975-78   | 30. <i>Café Kyoto</i> , 1987          |
| 26. <i>Lampe</i> , 1990         |                                       |
| 27. <i>Mackay Messer</i> , 1991 |                                       |

Tinguely created his first “lamp sculpture” on the night of December 12, 1972, for Niki de Saint Phalle, assembling a piece of wrought iron, some wheels, springs, cables and, most importantly, several lamp holders and bulbs bought in a DIY shop. The lamp sculptures differ from his other works in that movement is secondary to their primary lighting function. After the first prototype, Tinguely created *Lampe No. 2*, which included a stuffed bird, electric cables, and a motor, in addition to colored bulbs. In *Lampe* (c. 1975-78), he aligned a series of small light bulbs on an arched structure.

From the 1980s onwards, he installed wall and ceiling lights, greatly extending their scale, to decorate cafés and bars, such as *Lampe* (1990). The first ensemble was made for the Cafeteria zur Münz in Zurich in 1983, followed by a design for the Café Kyoto in Japan and, finally, the last set of lamps for the bar of the Hotel Palace in Lausanne, Switzerland in 1991, including *Mackay Messer*, *Mercedes*, and *Vive Marcel Duchamp*, featured in the exhibition.

In the same years, Tinguely also produced lamps of monumental dimensions, most notably *L'Odalisque* (1989), on display at Pirelli HangarBicocca, and *Luminator* (1991). These works are the most complex and impressive assemblages of lamps created by the artist, the culmination of his research into kinetic light sculptures.



Jean Tinguely with *Schreckenskarrette-Viva Ferrari*, 1985  
 © Estate Leonardo Bezzola. Photo Leonardo Bezzola

- 31. *Pit-Stop*, 1984
- 32. *Schreckenskarrette-Viva Ferrari*, 1985
- 33. *Shuttlecock*, 1990

A racing car enthusiast, Tinguely was commissioned to make the *Pit-Stop* sculpture in the 1980s by car manufacturer Renault, composed of parts of the Renault RE40 Formula One model driven by Eddie Cheever and Alain Prost. Edited films with overlays and slow-motion shots from the Zeltweg racetrack in Austria are projected from the moving arms, showing Alain Prost's car during a pitstop in the 1983 Austrian Grand Prix. This is the sole example of film incorporated in the artist's work.

Two years later, Tinguely made *Schreckenskarrette-Viva Ferrari*, a sculpture evoking the world of Ferrari, of which he had been a collector since the 1960s, when he bought a 250GT Lusso. The title *Schreckenskarrette*, which translates to "chariot of fear," recalls the form of a Roman chariot and captures the thrill and danger of motor racing.



*Pit-Stop*, 1984  
 Parts of two Renault RE40 Formula One racing cars, iron elements, fourteen electric motors, four projectors, 16mm film 360 x 600 x 600 cm  
 Museum Tinguely, Basel, Donation Niki de Saint Phalle.  
 A cultural commitment of Roche  
 © Museum Tinguely, Basel. Photo Christian Baur

Finally, *Shuttlecock* is made from parts of a sidecar in which Swiss champion René Progin competed in the 1988 World Motorcycle Championship. This bodywork is the only one customized by Tinguely, and this was also the only time that the artist designed racing suits for the driver and passenger. The title *Shuttlecock* refers to the most challenging curve on the St. Moritz bobsleigh track, where speeds of up to 130 km/h are reached. In these sculptures, Tinguely combined his love of Formula One with his artistic vision, transforming sports vehicles and accessories into works of art that celebrate the aesthetics of speed and the energy of movement.

34. **Series of the *Philosophers*:**  
**Martin Heidegger, *Philosopher*, 1988;**  
**Jacob Burckhardt, *Philosopher*, 1988;**  
**Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosopher*, 1988;**  
**Friedrich Engels, *Philosopher*, 1988;**  
**Henri Bergson, *Philosopher*, 1988;**  
**Pjotr Kropotkin, *Philosopher*, 1988;**  
**Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Philosopher*, 1988;**  
**Wedekind, *Philosopher*, 1988-89**
35. **8 *Philosophers*, 1989**
- a. ***Platon in action***
  - b. ***Man at night dislikes to be alone***
  - c. ***Adorno at work***
  - d. ***The nightsong of the fish***  
**(*Delirium of holy Christian Morgenstern*)**
  - e. ***Democritos in trouble***
  - f. ***Nietzsche at thinking hard***
  - g. ***Heraclitos engaging in basic politics***
  - h. ***Locke reviewing his books***

Tinguely dedicated the sculptures of his ***Philosophers*** series to thinkers, friends, and artists who had influenced him. They include Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), whose ideas inspired the proponents of the French Revolution, the anarchist Pyotr Kropotkin (1842–1921), the playwright Frank Wedekind (1864–1918), the co-founder of Marxism together with Karl Marx (1818–1883) and supporter of communist ideologies Friedrich Engels (1820–1895), and modern thinkers such as Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), Jacob Burckhardt (1818–1897), Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951), and Henri Bergson (1859–1941).

Tinguely created distinct worlds for each figure, offering a personal portrayal. For example, the sculpture dedicated to Frank Wedekind has a rusty chair turned upside down like the preconceptions of the bourgeois society he intended to subvert, while Jacob Burckhardt's headdress resembles a rusty scroll that recalls Basel's coat of arms and the *Fasnacht Larve*, the traditional mask of Basel's carnival.

A year later, in 1989, the artist made **8 *Philosophers***, composed of eight kinetic sculptures representing philosophers, from antiquity to the 20th century, united on a large iron platform. With a playful



*Jacob Burckhardt, Philosopher, 1988*  
 Iron sheet and elements, car parts, wooden wheel,  
 Carnival papier mâché mask, feather, electric motor  
 239 x 152 x 67 cm  
 Museum Tinguely, Basel, Donation Niki de Saint Phalle  
 A cultural commitment of Roche  
 © Museum Tinguely, Basel. Photo Christian Baur

touch, Tinguely gave each philosopher a humorous title, such as “Democritus in trouble,” “Heraclitus practicing grassroots politics” or “Plato in action,” which shifts the Greek philosopher from the “in power” condition of his world of ideas to the plane of concrete realization.

**36. Niki de Saint Phalle and Jean Tinguely,  
*Le Champignon magique*, 1989**

*Le Champignon magique* is one of the last collaborative ventures by Jean Tinguely and Niki de Saint Phalle, an artistic duo and life partners, who started producing joint works in 1967. The title conjures up the image of a hallucinogenic mushroom with kaleidoscopic effects and psychotic visions. The sculpture takes the shape of a mushroom stalk divided into two distinct sections: on one side, a *Nana*, Niki de Saint Phalle’s iconic depiction of a voluptuous woman, and on the other, a man with an erect sex, entwined between the plants. These two figures symbolize the complementary nature of the artists: «Jean was movement, I [Niki de Saint Phalle] was color».

The mushroom cap is composed of rusty metal parts assembled by Tinguely, including pieces of the bodywork of a child’s toy car. These mechanical arms move slowly in a rotary motion. The mosaic of mirrors echoes the technique Saint Phalle employed in her imaginative sculptures for the Tarot Garden in Capalbio, Tuscany as well as in *Le Cyclop* (1991), a monumental installation made in collaboration with Tinguely in the forest Milly-la-Forêt, France.

[Lab room]

**37. *La Vittoria*, 1970**

In November 1970, in collaboration with art critic Pierre Restany and gallery owner Guido Le Noci, Jean Tinguely staged a memorable event in Milan to mark the tenth anniversary of Nouveau Réalisme: a true funeral ceremony for the movement, held from November 27 to 29. The culmination of the event was Tinguely’s spectacular and provocative performance, with the installation of a structure approximately ten meters high in Piazza del Duomo. At nine o’clock in the evening of November 28, *La Vittoria* (which Tinguely also called *The Suicide of the Machine*) was unveiled to the public: a gigantic golden phallic monument that launched firecrackers into the sky for nearly half an hour, with the famous song *O Sole Mio* playing in the background, until its destruction.

Displayed in the Lab room are 16 prints of Tinguely’s preparatory drawings for *La Vittoria* and archival materials of the event.

## Selected Exhibitions

Many international institutions have hosted solo exhibitions by Jean Tinguely, including Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf (2016); Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2016, 1984, 1973); Centro Cultural Borges, Buenos Aires (2012); Henie Onstad Art Centre, Oslo (2009); Institut Valencià d'Art Modern, Valencia (2008); Kunst Haus Wien (2008, 1991); Kunsthal Rotterdam (2007); Stadtgalerie Klagenfurt, Klagenfurt am Wörthersee, Austria (2003); Städtische Kunsthalle, Mannheim, Germany (2002); Musée Picasso, Antibes (1999); Museum für Kunst und Geschichte, Freiburg (1991); Central House of the Artist, Moscow (1990); Centre Pompidou, Paris (1988); Palazzo Grassi, Venice (1987); Louisiana Museum, Humlebaek, Denmark (1986, 1973, 1961); Museum of Modern art of Shiga, Japan (1984); Musée Rath, Geneva (1983); Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, Tate Gallery, London, Kunsthau, Zurich (1982); Wilhelm Lehmbruck Museum, Duisburg, Germany (1978); Kunstmuseum Basel (1976, 1972); Museum of Modern Art, New York City (1975, 1961); Moderna Museet, Stockholm (1972, 1966); Centre National d'Art Contemporain, Paris (1971); Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (1968); Dayton Art Institute, Ohio (1966); The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (1965); Kunsthalle, Baden-Baden, Germany (1964).

The artist has taken part in numerous group shows, such as Biennale de la sculpture, Yonne, France (1991); Biennale Monumenta, Middelheim, Antwerp (1987); Biennale de Paris (1982); documenta, Kassel (1968); Expo - International and Universal Exposition, Montréal (1967); Expo - Exposition Nationale Suisse, Lausanne (1964); Venice Biennale (1964); Salon de Mai, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (1966, 1964).

An entire museum has been dedicated to Jean Tinguely, the Museum Tinguely in Basel, a unique and interactive space, which opened in 1996 and houses the world's largest collection of his works, many of which were donated by Niki de Saint Phalle.

This publication accompanies the exhibition "Jean Tinguely"

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Pirelli HangarBicocca is a non-profit foundation dedicated to producing and promoting contemporary art. It was conceived and is supported by Pirelli. Established in 2004, Pirelli HangarBicocca has become a benchmark institution for the international art community, local public and region. It is a museum that is free of charge, accessible and open, and a place for experimentation, research and dissemination, where art is a point of reflection on the most topical themes of contemporary culture and society. It caters to a broad and diverse public with a program of major solo exhibitions by both Italian and international artists, a multi-disciplinary program of accompanying events and in-depth discussions, theoretical and informational publications, and educational courses. A team of museum facilitators is on hand at all times to help the public connect with the art. Vicente Todolí has been the foundation's artistic director since 2012.

Situated in a former industrial building, once a locomotive manufacturing facility, Pirelli HangarBicocca occupies 15,000 square meters, making it one of the largest single-level exhibition spaces in Europe. This vast area comprises the Shed and Navate spaces, which are used for temporary exhibitions, and the permanent display of Anselm Kiefer's *The Seven Heavenly Palaces 2004–2015*. This monumental installation with seven reinforced concrete towers has become one of the most iconic works in Milan. The building also houses a number of services for the public: a spacious entrance with reception area, facilities for educational activities, space for conferences and meetings, Bookshop and bistro with a charming outdoor area.

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