

SI C'EST NOIR, JE M'APPELLE JEAN Jean Tinguely

17 February – 22 March 2017

Opening: Thursday 16 February, 18.30

On view:

Monday - Friday 10.30-17.30; Saturday 14.00-18.00, free of charge

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Linking back to the title of a work from 1960, the Swiss Institute in Milan commemorates the dynamic personality of **Jean Tinguely** (1925-1991) for an Italian audience, in the wake of the national and international events for the 25th anniversary of the artist's passing in 2016.

In 1960 the Swiss sculptor emerged as an important figure on the contemporary art scene, triggering the explosion and partial self-destruction of his sculpture *Hommage à New York*, a representation with overtones of irony of the fact that modern dreams had blown to pieces some time ago. He deployed a similar scandalous and outrageous set piece to celebrate the 10th birthday of the Nouveau Réalisme at Piazza del Duomo in Milan. The movement had taken form precisely in the Lombardy capital, thanks to an exhibition at Galleria Apollinaire, around the critic Pierre Restany, and brought together, among others, Arman, François Dufrêne, Raymond Hains, Yves Klein, Martial Raysse, Daniel Spoerri, Niki de Saint Phalle, Jacques Villeglé and Jean Tinguely. On the evening of 28 November 1970, before the eyes of a cheering crowd, Tinguely exploded *La Vittoria*, a large steel sculpture with a very explicit phallic shape. The exhibition includes some of the published documents and film footage connected with this fundamental event in the expansive, iconoclastic and communicative thinking of Jean Tinguely.

The show in Milan is also an opportunity to investigate the lasting popularity, crossing several generations, of this outstanding figure in Swiss art. Thanks to the collaboration of two collectors, the Swiss Institute has gathered together objects that have contributed to firmly etch the image of Jean Tinguely in collective memory, particularly in Switzerland.

Precisely in Milan, where Jean Tinguely, together with friends, artists and critics challenged the powerful symbols of mass consumption, the show takes a playful look at the artist's proximity to a certain idea of Pop.

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Jean Tinguely (Fribourg, 1925 – Bern 1991) was an important Swiss sculptor and painter. He studied at the Kunstgewerbeschule in Basel, in a period in which he discovered the art of Schwitters and Klee, and became an admirer of the Bauhaus. He began his experimentation by creating the "Métamécaniques," sculpture-machines driven by electric motors or programmed to self-destruct, in a satirical take on the surplus material production typical of the advanced industrial societies.

In 1960 he was one of the artists who signed the manifesto of Nouveau Réalisme, rising to international prominence. His works have been featured in many important exhibitions and museums, including the Paris Biennale in 1959, Documenta 3, 4 and 6, MoMA New York, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago. He is considered one of the leading exponents of Swiss and international contemporary art.

Thanks to: Brutus Luginbühl, René & Madeleine Progin, Jean-Marc Rey.

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