

Abstracts and CVs for the conference *Jean Tinguely Revisited. Critical Re-Readings and New Perspectives*

On Falling Short

Sam Belinfante, Artist, London

CV:

Dr Sam Belinfante is an artist living and working in London, UK. Recent exhibitions include *I See a Voice* (The National Festival of Making, Blackburn, 2023) and *On the Circulation of Blood* (Creative Folkestone Triennial, 2021). Recent performances include *On Falling Short* (ICA, London, 2024) and *The Long, very long Journey* with Laure Prouvost (Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, 2023).

Abstract:

Taking the broken beats of the ellipsis as starting points, *On Falling Short* is a musical exploration of falling, failing and flailing – embracing processes of collapse and letting things go. Prepared and articulated by chance operations, these movements will draw on the work of Tinguely and his contemporaries while creatively embracing Belinfante's own productive shortcomings. Featuring unprepared contributions by local musicians.

Jean Tinguely Dreams of Electric Cows

Christine Burger, PhD Student, Southern Methodist University, Dallas

CV:

Christine Burger is enrolled in the PhD program in Art History at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. Her research focuses on themes of death, dying and mourning in modern and contemporary art. She has held curatorial positions at the Fondation Beyeler, Riehen/Basel, and at the Dallas Museum of Art. She continues to curate exhibitions of emerging artists in cultural centres and off-spaces in and around Dallas.

Abstract:

Several of Tinguely's late sculptures, which incorporate animal bones into assemblages of scrap metal, are seen as humorous *memento mori* motifs. This lecture proposes, however, that they are not just machines, but rather claim to be the real animal. The artist implied living matter, breathing life into mortal remains through mechanical movement. This lecture explores whether Tinguely was in fact making a humorous reference to his own mortality, or rather an extension of life in grotesque automatons.

Jean Tinguely at the Bachelor Machines (1975): The Machines and Masculinity and its Myths

Dr Nicola Foster, Associate Professor (Visual Arts), University of Suffolk

CV:

Nicola Foster is Associate Professor at the University of Suffolk. Her academic background is in European philosophy and visual culture. Recent publications include 'Contemporaneity as a Curatorial Approach: Black Models in New York, Paris and Guadeloupe', Routledge, 2023; 'Curators as Keepers and Makers: The British Museum's African Galleries', (2023); 'Nushu in Translation: Visual Art and Dance' (2020); and 'Re-Staging Difference: Re-staging Origin?' (2019).

Abstract:

The Swiss curator Harald Szeemann articulated 'three foundational gestures of the twentieth century', the first in the work of Duchamp, the second in that of Beuys and the third in that of Tinguely. The lecture will argue that Szeemann interpreted Tinguely's machines as addressing the myth of a closed-circuit erotic pleasure machine that seeks to escape social expectations of sexual desire fulfilled through procreation: a world in which everything has a purpose.

Kinetic Painting Group

Samia Halaby, Artist

Kevin Nathaniel, Music Director

CV:

Samia Halaby (b.1936 in Jerusalem) is a Palestinian-American artist, and scholar living and working in New York. In her distinctive abstract painting style, Halaby draws inspiration from nature and historical movements such as early Islamic architecture and the Soviet avant-garde, and continuously investigates how the human eye records the world, whether in stillness or movement. Using the most advanced tools available to her at the time, Halaby teaches herself coding and starts in 1986 to program kinetic paintings on an Amiga computer. These experimentations with code-generated visuals naturally evolve into the Kinetic Painting Program, through which she transforms the keyboard of her PC into a live digital painting instrument. Halaby's work is collected by many museums such as the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum of Art (New York and Abu Dhabi); Tate Modern (London); the Museum of Modern Art (New York); Centre Pompidou (Paris); and Birzeit University (Ramallah).

Abstract:

Samia Halaby presents a performance with multi-percussionist Kevin Nathaniel Hylton who performs using acoustic instruments many of which have an African origin. Her interactive program is written in C language, for an IBM compatible Personal Computer as an instrument of artistic form. It allows the artist to use a variety of sets of shapes, lines, colors and incorporate in real time the idea of movement and rhythm in her digital paintings. The live interaction with sound enriches the artistic inquiry as new paintings are cognizant of the unique relationship of sound and vision.

The performance will be followed by a Q&A with Samia Halaby and the curator, Dr. Sandra Beate Reimann.

Pathos and Parody – Study for the End of the World No. 2 (1962) Between Discourse and Representability

Dr Toni Hildebrandt, Institut für Kunstgeschichte, Walter Benjamin Kolleg,
Universität Bern

CV:

Toni Hildebrandt completed his doctorate in Art History at the University of Basel in 2014. His dissertation, *Entwurf und Entgrenzung. Kontradispositive der Zeichnung* (Design and Delimitation. Counter-Dispositives of Drawing, Fink, 2017), was awarded the Wolfgang Ratjen Prize 2018. He has been employed at the Institute of Art History of the University of Bern since 2014, as coordinator of the SNF Sinergia project 'Mediating the Ecological Imperative' since 2021 and as Senior Fellow at the Walter Benjamin Kolleg, University of Bern since 2024.

Abstract:

The lecture will draw more heavily on the extensive archive material (preliminary studies, paper works, drawings, postcards) for *Study for the End of the World No. 2* than has been done in the literature to date. A comparison with Pier Paolo Pasolini's (1961) and Andy Warhol's (1962) engagement with the atomic bomb will also bring into play two positions that operate in a comparable way, neither one-sidedly in the mode of parody nor in that of pathos.

Witches, Carnival, Dance of Death. On the Artistic Collaboration between Eva Aeppli and Jean Tinguely

Anna Kipke, Leuphana Universität Lüneburg / Freie Universität Berlin

CV:

Anna Kipke is an art historian at the Collaborative Research Centre 1512 Intervening Arts. Her research interests include the history and theory of modern and abstract art, the historiography of artistic practices, and trauma and healing as themes in twentieth and twenty-first-century art. In her dissertation project, 'Emma Kunz. Therapeutic Lines', she examines therapeutic practices as artistic methods of intervention between 1930 and 1960.

Abstract:

The lecture reconstructs the forms of artistic collaboration between Eva Aeppli and Jean Tinguely based on the example of their first and last joint exhibition *Collaboration* at Galerie Littmann in Basel (1991). The main question is how the personal manifests itself in collaborative artistic works such as installations, letter drawings and illustrations and in what way the artistic approaches thwart the art-historiographical narrative.

Jean Tinguely's Installation *Cenodoxus* – The Exposed Skeleton of Jesuit Theatre

Dr. Jenny Körber, Universität Hamburg

CV:

BA in Art History and German Philology (Münster, Paris IV.-La Sorbonne), MA in Art History and Literary Studies (Amsterdam), 2017 Junior Research Fellow at Harvard University, PhD (summa cum laude) at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin on 'Mediendispositiv des frühneuzeitlichen Jesuitenordens' (The Media Dispositive of the Early Modern Jesuit Order), 2020/21 traineeship at the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 2021/22, project curator at the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, since 2022 postdoctoral researcher (University of Hamburg, European History).

Abstract:

In 1981, Jean Tinguely created a kinetic installation made of iron frames, light bulbs and animal skulls, which he titled *Cenodoxus. Isenheimer Altar* (Isenheim Altarpiece). While research has already established the link with Mathias Grünewald's altar, the connection with the plays of the Jesuit Jacob Bidermann (1602) has been largely ignored. However, it is precisely the synopsis of the works that reveals more than a modern adaptation of Baroque *vanitas* or *memento mori* depictions.

In Search of the Political Tinguely

Georg Kreis, Historian, em. Prof., Universität Basel

CV:

As a historian specialising in contemporary history, Georg Kreis has worked at international, national and local level on the history of the twentieth century and in particular on the period since 1945, i.e. the social developments of Tinguely's lifetime. In addition to his academic lectureship, he has carried out official research assignments on state security, Switzerland's role in the Second World War and Swiss relations with apartheid South Africa. 1995–2011 President of the Federal Commission against Racism. For further information see: www.georgkreis.ch.

Abstract:

Tinguely was a creative rebel. This was probably due to his own disposition. But it was also due to the tense circumstances surrounding him in the early and static years of the Cold War. In the 1960s, there was also the enormous dynamism of the economic recovery, which Tinguely was extremely critical of. In the same decade, there was a growing willingness in Western society to accept alternative proposals in politics and art. This made Tinguely's work increasingly popular, but at the same time dampened the desired explosiveness. As a result, art in the service of protest simply became art in its own right.

The 'Urban Indian'. Tinguely and the Seemingly Wild

Prof. Dr. Barbara Lange, Kunsthistorisches Institut, Universität Tübingen

CV:

Studied Art History, Constitutional, Social and Economic history and Comparative Literature in Bonn. After working as a university assistant in Kiel and as a professor in Leipzig, she held a chair at the Institute of Art History in Tübingen from 2006 to 2022, where she recently conducted a research project on the potential of art in post-war Europe.

Abstract:

Taking the group of works entitled *Baluba* (1962) as a starting point, the lecture will explore the question of the artist's understanding of freedom. On the one hand, Tinguely's work reveals stereotypical images of societies that a Eurocentric cultural understanding of colonialism had classified as 'wild', while at the same time the bricolage of these sculptures is part of a post-war discourse that, despite all prejudices, sought ways out of a hierarchisation of cultures. This ambivalence will be presented.

Beasts and Bones: Bones and Skulls as Material in Jean Tinguely's Late Work

Prof. Dr. Petra Lange-Berndt, Kunstgeschichtliches Seminar, Universität Hamburg

CV:

Petra Lange-Berndt is Professor of Modern and Contemporary Art in the Department of Art History at the University of Hamburg. She has published on animals and taxidermy (*Animal Art, Präparierte Tiere in der Kunst, 1850–2000*, Silke Schreiber, 2009) and on material issues (*Materiality: Documents of Contemporary Art*, Whitechapel Gallery / MIT Press, 2015). She has been a member of the academic advisory board of the journal *Tierstudien. Zeitschrift für Animal Studies* since 2011.

Abstract:

Jean Tinguely used animal bones in his late work. The combination of machines, metals and organic materials appears to be a contrast, but there are also resonances: since the Industrial Revolution, cattle and pigs have been bred, killed and processed on a massive scale. This lecture traces the artist's artistic strategies. What significance do bones and skulls have within the history of art and culture? And how should the use of animal remains be judged from an ethical perspective?

Jean Tinguely's Futures Past: Meta-Mechanics, Dynamism, Dysfunction

Ara H. Merjian, Professor of Italian Studies and Affiliate of the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University

CV:

Ara H. Merjian is Professor of Italian Studies at New York University and an affiliate of the Institute of Fine Arts and Comparative Literature. He is the author and editor of more than ten books, including *Giorgio de Chirico and the Metaphysical City: Nietzsche, Paris Modernism* (Yale, 2014) and, most recently *Fragments of Totality: Futurism, Fascism, and the Sculptural Avant-Garde* (Yale, 2024) and *Futurism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2025).

Abstract:

Elements of Tinguely's sculptural practice find precedent in various Italian Futurist experiments, which sought to revolutionise the very premise of sculptural practice: from kineticism and motorization, interactive soundscapes to the 'useless machine'. This talk addresses not simply the formal components of Tinguely's mechanised works, but their attendant conceptual apparatus, particularly as related to wider European approaches to design and dysfunction.

'Afraid of Movement': Entropy and Kinetics in *Homage to New York*

Federica Milano, PhD Candidate, Sorbonne Université - Paris IV, La Sapienza Università di Roma

CV:

Federica Milano is completing a PhD at Sorbonne Université on corporate patronage in Italy and France from 1945 to 1968. She teaches Twentieth-Century Art History and Theory at Sorbonne Université and Visual Arts and New Media at Université Gustave Eiffel. She was a member of the scientific team of the Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art for the project '1959-1985, au prisme de la Biennale de Paris' and served as assistant curator for its archive exhibition at the Centre Pompidou (2021-22).

Abstract:

Homage to New York is recognised as a pivotal work in Jean Tinguely's career and as one of his most aesthetically significant works. Considered by art historians and critics to be both playful and complex, the Happening addresses fundamental themes such as immateriality, time, movement, automation, overproduction and apocalypse. The presentation seeks to reconcile these different interpretations through a new reading of the concept of entropy and its significance for kinetic art in the 1960s.

Tinguely as a Curator

Dr. Andres Pardey, Vice-Director, Museum Tinguely, Basel

CV:

Andres Pardey studied Art History at the University of Basel. He obtained his doctorate in 1996 with a thesis on the pictorial narrative in the works of Hans Holbein the Younger. He has held various positions at the Museum Tinguely since 1995 and has been Vice-Director and Head of Collection since 2007. He has curated over twenty exhibitions there, including Daniel Spoerri (2001), *Niki de Saint Phalle* (2001), *Marcel Duchamp* (2002), *Jean le Jeune* (2002), *Eva Aeppli* (2006) and most recently the group exhibitions *Impasse Ronsin* (2020) and *Fresh Window* (2024).

Abstract:

The lecture examines Jean Tinguely's role as a curator and/or co-organiser of exhibitions such as *Bewogen Beweging* (Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1961) and *Dylaby* (Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1962). Of particular interest is how his curatorial practice influenced the artistic positions and the overall presentation of the exhibitions.

'Spectacle empirique': Tinguely, the Painter, in Three Acts

AnnMarie Perl, Research Scholar and Lecturer, Department of Art & Archaeology, Princeton University

CV:

AnnMarie Perl is a historian of modern and contemporary art. Her research focuses on modern art's relation to the larger culture in different and related national contexts, especially those of France and the United States. Her first book project, *Showmanship: The Spectacularization of Painting in the U.S. and Europe, 1920s–1960s*, examines artworks dismissed as 'spectacle'.

Abstract:

A few weeks after his first one-man show at Galerie Denise René in Paris in 1956, Jean Tinguely took part in a one-night *Spectacle empirique* at the Théâtre Trois Baudets, a variety theatre in Montmartre. The lecture explores the period logic and artistic impact of Tinguely's leap from the world of art to the world of entertainment.

'Return to Almost Conventional Sculpture' – Painting in Tinguely's Kinetic Works

Dr. Sandra Beate Reimann, Curator, Museum Tinguely

CV:

Dr Sandra Beate Reimann is a curator at Museum Tinguely. She has curated exhibitions on Stephen Cripps (2017), Rebecca Horn (2019) and Otto Piene (2024), as well as the group exhibition *Territories of Waste* (2022). In 2018, she was responsible for an expanded collection presentation of Tinguely's works, focusing on the significance of *Homage to New York* for the dissolution of boundaries in sculpture (*Freitod der Skulptur*, 2020). Her research focuses on sculpture and installation in the second half of the twentieth century.

Abstract:

The use of scrap metal and found objects in his main and late works led to Tinguely being labelled a 'scrap artist'. However, there are several phases in his work in which he painted his reliefs and sculptures in monochrome or polychrome, and the materiality of

the works takes a back seat: e.g. in the '*méta-mechanique*' early work and in the *Black Sculptures* (ca. 1963–67). The lecture examines the function of painting, particularly in terms of the spatial and kinetic effect of the works, and focuses on the artistic impulses of Auguste Herbin and Louise Nevelson, which have been less recognised or overlooked.

Introduction to Tinguely's Sculpture Group *Baluba*

Dr. Sandra Beate Reimann, Curator, Museum Tinguely

Abstract:

The introduction provides an overview of Tinguely's group of works entitled *Baluba* (from 1963) and identifies open questions raised by these kinetic sculptures from a postcolonial perspective. The overview summarises the characteristics of the works as well as the development and differences to the previous group of totems and conveys the current state of knowledge on the background to the naming of these works after the Baluba ethnic group.

Tinguely and the Decorative: Reconsidering the Artist's Letter Drawings

Dr. Anne Röhl, Universität Siegen

CV:

Anne Röhl is a lecturer at the University of Siegen. She received her doctorate in Art History from the University of Zurich with a dissertation on textile handicraft in US-American art of the 1970s. Her research areas are textile media in modern and contemporary art, issues of materiality, techniques and gender, as well as the practices of art education.

Abstract:

The decorative was often thought of as the opposite of art and conflated with concepts like handicrafts, cheap industrial décor, popular culture and femininity. With stickers, stamps and decalomania, Tinguely's letter drawings employ historically feminine techniques such as scrapbooking. This lecture examines his drawings through the lens of the decorative, challenging the codification of gender characteristics usually ascribed to his work.

'Les hommes révoltés': Revisiting the Friendly Exchanges of Pontus Hultén and Jean Tinguely Through the Cultural Anarchism of the 1950s

Pierre Ruault, PhD student in contemporary art history, Université Rennes 2

CV:

Under the supervision of Antje Kramer-Mallordy, Pierre Ruault is pursuing a PhD in Art History at the University of Rennes 2, where he investigates the transnational dynamics between French and Swedish avant-gardes (1945–1968). His research highlights the emergence of a 'third way', offering an alternative to the dominant political and aesthetic models of the time. He also teaches contemporary art history and is actively involved in art criticism and curating.

Abstract:

In the late 1950s, the creative collaboration between Jean Tinguely and Pontus Hultén crystallized into an aesthetic and philosophical revolt aimed at transcending the ideological constraints of the post-war era. Their engagement aligned with a movement

of 'cultural anarchism', influenced by thinkers such as Albert Camus. Through their works and a selection of archival materials, this study examines their exchanges and the impact of their anarchist aesthetic on the avant-garde, within a transnational context linking Paris and Stockholm.

Jean Tinguely's Self-Portraits with Stuffed Birds

Dr. Fabiana Senkpiel, Institut Praktiken und Theorien der Künste, Hochschule der Künste Bern

CV:

Fabiana Senkpiel completed her PhD in Art History at the National Centre of Competence in Research eikones/Iconic Criticism at the University of Basel in 2011 with a dissertation on the relationship between image and time using the example of the self-portrait genre. Since 2016, Fabiana Senkpiel has been a research associate at the Institute for Practices and Theories in the Arts (IPTK) at the Bern Academy of the Arts since 2016.

Abstract:

There are remarkably few 'self-portraits' in Jean Tinguely's artistic oeuvre: this lecture examines Tinguely's artistic self-conception on the basis of two case studies in which a stuffed bird is an integral part, thus bringing to light an intersection between aesthetics and (animal) ethics. Tinguely's self-portraits will be examined across epochs and media against the background of current discourses in animal studies.

The Museum as a Playground: *Le Crocrodrome de Zig et Puce* at the Centre Pompidou, Paris, 1977

Roland Wetzel, Director, Museum Tinguely, Basel

CV:

Roland Wetzel (b. 1965) has been director of the Museum Tinguely in Basel since 2009. He studied Art History, Business Economics and Musicology at the University of Zurich. His research and interests focus on the transdisciplinary art forms of the 1910s, the 1960s and contemporary art. From 1995 to 1999 he worked at the Kunstmuseum Winterthur and from 2000 to 2009 at the Kunstmuseum Basel. At the Museum Tinguely, he has conceived an exhibition programme that includes Tinguely's role models, his contemporaries and relevant contemporary positions.

Abstract:

The installation *Le Crocrodrome de Zig et Puce* was created in 1977 in the entrance hall of the newly opened Centre Pompidou in Paris as a collaborative work by Jean Tinguely, Bernhard Luginbühl, Daniel Spoerri and Niki de Saint Phalle. Among other things, a ghost train, a giant pinball machine and Spoerri's *Musée Sentimental* are integrated into the large form of a dragon-like crocodile. The project epitomises Tinguely's artistic quest for the widest possible access and direct experience. The aim of this lecture is to explore this through his work and his environment, and with a view to the present day.

From Dakar to Paris, Pioneering critique: Bernard Rancillac's Dinner-Party of the Head-Hunters, 1966

Professor Sarah Wilson, The Courtauld, University of London

CV:

Sarah Wilson is Professor of the History of Modern and Contemporary Art at The Courtauld, University of London. In 2002, she co-curated the exhibition Paris, Capital of the Arts, 1900–1968 (Royal Academy London) and in 2010 published *The Visual World of French Theory, Vol. 1*, featuring Bernard Rancillac. In 1997, she was awarded the title of Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres for services to French art and culture. In 2015, she co-curated the 5th Guangzhou Triennial and was awarded the AICA Art Critics Prize. See www.sarah-wilson.london.

Abstract:

Three shutters open: Patrice Lumumba, Malcolm X and Frantz Fanon in black and white erupt into Bernard Rancillac's painting *Dinner-Party of the Head-Hunters*, where the art-loving guests wear African masks. The artist plays with the 'off-scene' versus the colonial obscene, using a Paris Match photograph from a reportage on the 1966 First World Festival of Negro Arts in Dakar and moving it to Paris.