



Artists Documentation Program (ADP) Interview Video Index

Artist: Jean Tinguely (Interview with Rico Weber, Artist's Assistant to Jean Tinguely)

Date: March 13, 1997

Location: The Menil Collection

Interviewer: Carol Mancusi-Ungaro

Video: Laurie McDonald / **Edit:** Laurie McDonald

Total Run Time: 01:11:45

Abstract:

Rico Weber, artist's assistant to both Jean Tinguely and Niki de Saint Phalle, discusses several of Tinguely's works, including one work that Tinguely co-created with Saint Phalle. The discussion, with Artists Documentation Program Founding Director and Menil Chief Conservator, Carol Mancusi-Ungaro, focuses primarily on the materials and methods that Tinguely used to create his kinetic sculptures.

Controlled Access Headings (Library of Congress):

Corporate Name(s)

Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
Artists Documentation Program
Harvard University. Art Museums
Menil Collection (Houston, Tex.)
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
Whitney Museum of American Art

Genre(s)

Interviews
Oral histories

Personal Name(s)

Mancusi-Ungaro, Carol
Saint-Phalle, Niki de, 1930-2002
Tinguely, Jean, 1925-1991

Subject(s)

Art--Conservation and restoration
Art--Technique
Kinetic sculpture
Nouveaux réalistes (Group of artists)
Sculpture

Exhibitions/Works:

Names of exhibitions and works referenced during this interview appear below in gray cells.

Controlled Vocabulary:

Except where indicated, all keywords employ Getty vocabularies (AAT/ULAN/TGN). Those marked with (*) employ Library of Congress Authorities. Those marked with (**) employ local terms.

Time	Contents	Subject Keywords
00:00:02	Opening Credits	
00:00:44	Introduction and Historical Anecdote Carol Mancusi-Ungaro, Rico Weber Weber describes his early experience of working with Jean Tinguely.	Museum of Modern Art
00:00:59	(Work Reference) Niki de Saint Phalle, Jean Tinguely, and Per Olof Ultvedt <i>Hon – en katedral (She – A Cathedral), 1966</i>	
00:01:14	(Work Reference) Jean Tinguely <i>Homage to New York, 1960</i>	
00:02:14	Historical Anecdote Weber explains how he became acquainted with and began to work for Tinguely.	assistants Moderna museet (Stockholm, Sweden)*
00:02:43	(Work Reference) Jean Tinguely <i>Heureka, 1963-64</i>	
00:03:54	Process of Creation Weber explains how he and Tinguely would salvage parts and use them to build mechanical sculpture. He also describes Tinguely's use of preparatory drawings.	artists' materials preparatory drawings sculpture (visual work)
00:03:55	(Work Reference) Niki de Saint Phalle, Jean Tinguely, and Per Olof Ultvedt <i>Hon – en katedral (She – A Cathedral), 1966</i>	
00:06:07	(Work Reference) Jean Tinguely <i>Le Cyclop, 1970</i>	
00:06:23	Historical Anecdote Weber describes traveling around the world with Tinguely to install new works.	assistants sculpture (visual work)
00:06:56	(Work Reference) Niki de Saint Phalle and Jean Tinguely	

	<i>Fantastic Paradise (Paradis Fantastique), 1967</i>	
00:08:05	(Work Reference) Jean Tinguely <i>Homage to New York, 1960</i>	
00:08:23	(Work References) Jean Tinguely <i>La Vittoria, 1970</i> Jean Tinguely <i>Study for an End of the World No. 2, 1962</i>	
00:08:55	Historical Anecdote Weber discusses Tinguely's relationship with Yves Klein and his use of color.	colors (hues or tints) Klein, Yves opera houses
00:09:00	(Work Reference) Gelsenkirchen Opera House Germany	
00:10:28	(Image) Jean Tinguely <i>Baluba, 1964</i> The Menil Collection, Houston, gift of the artist	
00:11:11	Technical Specifications and Conservation Issues Weber discusses the motors that Tinguely used in his works and offers his recollections of Tinguely's attitudes and practices with regard to the conservation of his works.	artist's intent motors
00:12:19	(Image) Niki de Saint Phalle and Jean Tinguely <i>M.O.N.S.T.R.E., 1964</i> The Menil Collection, Houston, gift of the artists	
00:13:04	(Image) Jean Tinguely <i>Le Patin No. 5, 1960</i> The Menil Collection, Houston	
00:15:02	Process of Creation and Conservation Issues Weber discusses <i>Le Patin No. 5</i> and assesses its current condition.	visual inspection
00:15:12	(Image) Jean Tinguely <i>Le Patin No. 5, 1960</i> The Menil Collection, Houston	
00:16:05	(Image)	

	Jean Tinguely <i>Le Patin No. 5, 1960 (detail of loose element)</i> The Menil Collection, Houston	
00:18:03	(Image) Jean Tinguely <i>Le Patin No. 5, 1960 (detail of work in motion)</i> The Menil Collection, Houston	
00:19:00	Exhibition and Conservation Issues Mancusi-Ungaro describes strategies that she uses to protect <i>Le Patin No. 5</i> during its exhibition.	pedals preservation (function) viewers (observers)
00:21:49	Process of Creation and Conservation Issues Weber discusses <i>WNYR No. 5 (Radio Sculpture)</i> , assessing its current condition. Mancusi-Ungaro describes a restoration that she undertook on the work and solicits Weber's opinions.	Plexiglas™ radio receivers restoration (process) safety visual inspection
00:22:04	(Image) Jean Tinguely <i>WNYR No. 5 (Radio Sculpture), 1962 (detail of work in motion)</i> The Menil Collection, Houston	
00:23:42	(Images) Jean Tinguely <i>WNYR No. 5 (Radio Sculpture), 1962 (details of feather, speaker, components, and Plexiglas)</i> The Menil Collection, Houston	
00:24:14	(Images) Jean Tinguely <i>WNYR No. 5 (Radio Sculpture), 1962 (details of Plexiglas)</i> The Menil Collection, Houston	
00:26:16	Exhibition and Conservation Issues Weber and Mancusi-Ungaro reflect on the dilemma of exhibiting Tinguely's works in motion and the difficulties of restoring them.	damage exhibiting lolas Gallery motion
00:27:55	Technical Specifications and Conservation Issues Weber discusses the materials that Tinguely used to create <i>Viridiana</i> . He assesses the work's current condition and offers his opinions on its future conservation.	Buñuel, Luis matte (optical property) motors paint restoration (process) spray painting
00:28:01	(Image) Jean Tinguely <i>Viridiana, 1963</i> The Menil Collection, Houston	
00:31:05	Exhibition	erosion iron (metal)

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	Weber discusses the pedestal supporting <i>Viridiana</i> . He and Mancusi-Ungaro demonstrate <i>Viridiana</i> in motion and discuss potential treatment options for the work.	Love, Jim pedestals welding
00:32:12	(Image) Jean Tinguely <i>Viridiana</i> , 1963 (detail of work in motion) The Menil Collection, Houston	
00:33:21	(Image) Jean Tinguely <i>Viridiana</i> , 1963 (detail of eroded metal) The Menil Collection, Houston	
00:34:24	(Image) Jean Tinguely <i>Viridiana</i> , 1963 (detail of iron rebar) The Menil Collection, Houston	
00:34:39	Technical Specifications and Historical Anecdote Weber discusses the origins of <i>Untitled</i> , 1966-67 and helps Mancusi-Ungaro to establish its authenticity as a work of Tinguely's.	authenticity pressboard
00:35:02	(Image) Jean Tinguely <i>Untitled</i> , 1966-67 The Menil Collection, Houston	
00:37:10	Technical Specifications and Conservation Issues Weber plugs in <i>Untitled</i> , 1966-67, demonstrating it in motion. He discusses Tinguely's practices with regard to giving his works titles and addresses whether the motorized works require oiling for maintenance.	motors oiling titles (documents) visual inspection
00:37:19	(Images) Jean Tinguely <i>Untitled</i> , 1966-67 (details of work in motion) The Menil Collection, Houston	
00:39:45	(Image) Jean Tinguely <i>Untitled</i> , 1966-67 (detail of motor) The Menil Collection, Houston	
00:40:11	Concept/Nature of Work and Conservation Issues Weber explains the title of <i>Baluba</i> , 1964, and observes the work in motion. He offers his opinion of how the work should be exhibited in order to minimize damage.	motors rheostats speed visual inspection
00:40:15	(Image)	

	<p>Jean Tinguely <i>Baluba</i>, 1964 The Menil Collection, Houston, gift of the artist</p>	
00:41:42	<p>(Image) Jean Tinguely <i>Baluba</i>, 1964 (detail of work in motion) The Menil Collection, Houston, gift of the artist</p>	
00:42:51	<p>(Image) Jean Tinguely <i>Baluba</i>, 1964 (detail of hanging elements) The Menil Collection, Houston, gift of the artist</p>	
00:43:43	<p>Technical Specifications and Conservation Issues Weber offers his opinions regarding where Tinguely may have found his materials for <i>Baluba</i>. He provides a possible answer to a mystery surrounding an old photograph of <i>Baluba</i> and offers suggestions for how to preserve the work's motor.</p>	<p>adhesive tape artists' materials coils (spiral objects) motors pellet bells springs (elastic objects)</p>
00:45:15	<p>(Image) Jean Tinguely <i>Baluba</i>, 1964 (detail of bell) The Menil Collection, Houston, gift of the artist</p>	
00:45:37	<p>(Image) Jean Tinguely <i>Baluba</i>, 1964 (detail of work in motion) The Menil Collection, Houston, gift of the artist</p>	
00:46:45	<p>(Image) Jean Tinguely <i>Baluba</i>, 1964 (detail of spring from motor) The Menil Collection, Houston, gift of the artist</p>	
00:47:17	<p>Process of Creation Weber discusses the techniques and materials that Tinguely used to create <i>Fountain</i>, 1969. He observes the work in motion and offers his opinions regarding a past conservation treatment and a later addition to the work.</p>	<p>fountains junkyards motors paint Rice University Institute for the Arts, Rice Museum visual inspection welding</p>
00:47:30	<p>(Exhibition Reference) "The Machine as Seen at the End of the Mechanical Age" Museum of Modern Art, New York November 27, 1968-February 9, 1969 University of St. Thomas, Houston March 25-May 18, 1969</p>	

00:47:34	(Image) Jean Tinguely <i>Fountain, 1969</i> The Menil Collection, Houston	
00:48:13	(Image) Jean Tinguely and Rico Weber fabricating <i>Fountain, 1969</i> , at Rice University Institute for the Arts, Rice Museum.	
00:48:16	(Work Reference) <i>Jean Tinguely in Motion, 1969</i> A film by François de Menil	
00:49:17	(Exhibition Reference) "The First Show: Paintings and Sculpture from Eight Collections 1940-1980" The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), Los Angeles November 20, 1983-February 10, 1984	
00:49:33	(Image) Jean Tinguely <i>Fountain, 1969</i> (detail of metal ring) The Menil Collection, Houston	
00:50:57	(Image) Jean Tinguely <i>Fountain, 1969</i> (installation view at Rice University barn) The Menil Collection, Houston	
00:51:19	(Images) Jean Tinguely <i>Fountain, 1969</i> (installation views in daytime and nighttime at Menil House) The Menil Collection, Houston	
00:52:41	(Image) Jean Tinguely <i>Fountain, 1969</i> (detail of electrical box to be painted) The Menil Collection, Houston	
00:52:52	Conservation Issues Weber observes <i>Fountain</i> in motion and makes recommendations regarding its future conservation.	belts (tool components)
00:53:18	(Image) Jean Tinguely <i>Fountain, 1969</i> (detail of work in motion) The Menil Collection, Houston	
00:55:51	(Image) Jean Tinguely	

	Fountain, 1969 (detail of work from another vantage point) The Menil Collection, Houston	
00:56:35	(Image) Jean Tinguely Fountain, 1969 (detail of work in motion) The Menil Collection, Houston	
00:57:59	Conservation Issues Weber assesses the damage to <i>Fontaine B-7</i> , 1969, and makes suggestions for its restoration.	corrosion damage restoration (process) weathering welding
00:58:15	(Image) Jean Tinguely Fontaine B-7, 1968 (installation view in Paris) The Menil Collection, Houston, gift of Pierre M. Schlumberger	
00:59:37	(Image) Jean Tinguely Fontaine B-7, 1968 (detail of broken wheels) The Menil Collection, Houston, gift of Pierre M. Schlumberger	
01:00:17	(Image) Jean Tinguely Fontaine B-7, 1968 (detail of broken pipe) The Menil Collection, Houston, gift of Pierre M. Schlumberger	
01:01:06	(Image) Jean Tinguely Fontaine B-7, 1968 (detail of hose) The Menil Collection, Houston, gift of Pierre M. Schlumberger	
01:01:27	(Image) Jean Tinguely Fontaine B-7, 1968 (detail of work in motion) The Menil Collection, Houston, gift of Pierre M. Schlumberger	
01:01:57	(Image) Jean Tinguely Fountain, 1969 (detail of sprinkler element) The Menil Collection, Houston	
01:03:44	(Image) Jean Tinguely Fontaine B-7, 1968 (view of work in the round) The Menil Collection, Houston, gift of Pierre M. Schlumberger	
01:03:08	Conservation Issues Weber makes plans to return to Houston to restore <i>Fontaine B-7</i> .	belts (tool components) coating (process) motors

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	He explains in greater detail his intent for its restoration.	paint sandblasting
01:08:46	(Image) Jean Tinguely <i>Fontaine B-7</i> , 1968 (detail of sprayer) The Menil Collection, Houston, gift of Pierre M. Schlumberger	
01:10:49	Closing Credits	