

LE CYCLOP



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THE MONUMENTAL FOLLY BY TINGUELY, SAINT PHALLE, AND THEIR FRIENDS (1969–2024)

22.5 meters high and 350 tons of steel! Created by Jean Tinguely in collaboration with Niki de Saint Phalle and their artist friends—Eva Aeppli, Arman, Philippe Bouveret, César, Seppi Imhof, Pierre Marie Lejeune, Bernhard Luginbuhl, Jean Pierre Raynaud, Larry Rivers, Jesús Rafael Soto, Daniel Spoerri, and Rico Weber—*Le Cyclop* is a monumental sculptural work that inhabits the forest of Milly-la-Forêt near Fontainebleau, just outside Paris.

It is one of the most challenging artworks in a public space, here in a natural setting that offers a unique framing and underlines its dramatic presence. The sculpture is an immense head almost entirely built from found and industrial materials and covered in sparkling mirrors. Its interior houses a surprising universe that can be discovered through a labyrinthine route punctuated with artworks and curiosities both humorous and somber: sound sculptures, a small automatic theater, machinery with scrap-metal gears, and homages to Duchamp, Klein, and Schwitters, among others. Dada, Nouveau Réalisme, Kinetic art, and Art Brut all merge in this total environment. The fruit of a collective adventure, *Le Cyclop* is also a utopia almost clandestinely forged over several decades by a team characterized by Tinguely as “mad sculptors.”

Introduced by Béatrice Salmon and Aude Bodet, this definitive publication tells the story of *Le Cyclop* in detail, bringing together new essays and perspectives by an international array of art historians and scholars (Baptiste Brun, Jill Carrick, Dominik Müller, Camille Paulhan, and Denys Riout), an extensive chronology, as well as remarkable documentation and archive material drawn from international sources. It also reveals the current condition of *Le Cyclop*, which was donated to the French state in 1987, after its recent complete restoration by the Centre National des Arts Plastiques, the national French institution in charge of the work's conservation.

Evaluating *Le Cyclop* in relation to the work of Tinguely and his fellow artists, as well as to the history of contemporary art, the volume offers an in-depth case study of a key creation in 20th-century art history, which still provides an unparalleled experience to visitors today.