

PRESS
INFO

December 2024



Fresh Window The Art of Display & Display of Art

4 December 2024 – 11 May 2025

Media preview:

Tuesday, 3 December 2024, 10:30 am

Opening:

Tuesday, 3 December 2024, 6:30 pm

Press material: tinguely.ch/en/press-download

With artworks by Berenice Abbott, Marina Abramović, Atelier E.B. (Beca Lipscombe & Lucy McKenzie), Eugène Atget, Peter Blake, Christo, Gregory Crewdson, Vlasta Delimar, Sari Dienes, Marcel Duchamp, Elmgreen & Dragset, Richard Estes, Anna Franceschini, Kit Galloway & Sherrie Rabinowitz, R.I.P. Germain, Sayre Gomez, Ion Grigorescu, Nigel Henderson, Lynn Hershman Leeson, María Teresa Hincapié, Jasper Johns, John Kasmin, François-Xavier Lalanne, Bertrand Lavier, Martina Morger, Robert Rauschenberg, Martha Rosler, Giorgio Sadotti, Tschabalala Self, Johnnie Shand Kydd, Sarah Staton, Iren Stehli, Pascale Marthine Tayou, Jean Tinguely, Goran Trbuljak, Andy Warhol, Jiajia Zhang.

The histories of window dressing and fine art are closely intertwined. Besides Jean Tinguely, many other artists made significant contributions in the field of window display design. Conversely, window displays have often featured as a motif in artworks or served as a stage for performances and interventions. Shop display windows also reflect social and political developments, as they have shaped the face of inner cities in the western world since the late nineteenth century, mirroring changes in social conditions and the use of public space. *Fresh Window. The Art of Display & Display of Art* is the first museum exhibition to explore the intersection of art and window dressing, from the rise of the department store around 1900 to today's exclusive luxury boutiques. The richness of this topic will be on show at Museum Tinguely from 4 December 2024 until 11 May 2025 with works by around forty artists of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and offers a chance discovering a far less well-known side of artists like Jean Tinguely, Sari Dienes, Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns and Andy Warhol. The exhibition can also be experienced outside the museum on the streets of Basel, as Museum Tinguely is cooperating with former students from the Institute Art Gender Nature at the University of Applied Sciences and Arts (FHNW) who will create installations and performances in various shop windows between 14 January and 2 March 2025.

Shop window displays as a site for artistic experimentation

The complexity and playfulness of approaches to this theme is already evident in the show's title *Fresh Window*, a reference to Marcel Duchamp's *Fresh Widow* (1920). This work is part of an important section of the exhibition devoted to the window's function as a connecting, blending and separating membrane that may attract or repel voyeurism and the associated desires. As a functional architectural space, the display window also creates a bridge to forms

of presentation used in museums – from picture frames to stages for performances and other art interventions.

The artists treat shop window displays as a mirror of society, offering opportunities to question and critique social conditions, gender relations, gentrification, western consumer culture and capitalism, and to explore window displays as a stage for political, social and urban change. The shop window is a site of interaction, dialogue and encounter. Many artists have not only earned a living by window dressing, but also used window displays to try out new links between art and the public sphere. As a result of digitization and the rise of online and mail-order shopping, cities are now having to deal with increasing numbers of empty shops, giving the exhibition an added sociopolitical relevance.

Window displays – where art meets commerce

In the late nineteenth century, when window displays developed into a central element of modern consumer culture, artists soon began exploring this new phenomenon. Following his absurd take on the window's functions and meanings in his 1920 work *Fresh Widow*, Marcel Duchamp designed his first shop window display in 1945 for the launch of a book by André Breton in New York. By this time, Jean Tinguely was finishing his training at Basel's school of applied arts and was already working as a professional window dresser in the city. Often made out of wire, his window designs anticipated the signature style of his later artworks.

In 1950s New York, an important role was played by Gene Moore, who fostered the talent of young, unknown artists in his position as art director for the department store Bonwit Teller and the jeweller Tiffany & Co. where he selected works by Sari Dienes and Susan Weil for window displays, as well as commissioning elaborate designs from Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns or Andy Warhol before they became established in the art world. Some of these shop window designs are documented in the exhibition in the form of photographs, while others have been faithfully reconstructed, allowing them to be rediscovered some 70 years later.

Conversely, such displays have featured as motifs in many paintings, installations, sculptures, video works and series of photographs. In the 1960s and '70s, Richard Estes, Peter Blake and Ion Grigorescu addressed the colourful, exuberant world of capitalism. The seductive function of window displays is highlighted in *Lèche Vitrines* (2020), a performance by Martina Morger who acts out the title (French for «window shopping») by licking shop windows. With the veiled windows of his *Store Fronts* (1964–68), Christo played on the aspect of voyeurism and on the sculptural properties of shop displays. The scenographic mastery of traditional window dressing is referred to in the *Street Vitrines* (2020) by Atelier E.B (Beca Lipscombe & Lucy McKenzie) and in Anna Franceschini's video work *Did you know you have a broken glass in the window?* (2020).

Display windows as a mirror of society

The role of display windows as a mirror of society that exerts a shaping influence on the face of the city is another aspect addressed by the artists featured in the exhibition. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Eugène Atget and Berenice Abbott documented various storefronts in Paris and New York. The fact that window displays can also reflect political change is shown by the photographs taken by Iren Stehli in Prague from the 1970s into the 1990s. With her series *Greenpoint: New Fronts* (since 2015, ongoing), Martha Rosler portrays the gentrification of her home neighbourhood in New York. In her *Greenpoint Project* (2011), she also took photographs of the people behind the windows. This highlights the important role shops can play in a social structure – an aspect also touched on in Tschabalala Self's series *Bodega Run* (since 2015, ongoing): in works using textiles, neon and photography, she deals with the history and culture of the bodegas where New York's various communities meet while doing their shopping. The increasing number of empty and abandoned storefronts is addressed in the photorealist paintings of Sayre Gomez and the cinematically atmospheric photographs of Gregory Crewdson.

The display window as a stage

As highly visible spaces in prominent locations, shop windows also been used by performance artists as a stage on which to address social and political issues. In October 1969, Tinguely's *Rotzaza III* was activated in the window of the Loeb department store in Bern: by smashing crockery in front of a crowd of onlookers, it articulated a radical critique of the western world's excessive consumerism in a playful format. Vlasta Delimar and María Teresa Hincapié used shop windows to draw attention to conventional role models for women. In her 1976 performance *Role Exchange*, Marina Abramović swapped workplaces with a prostitute in Amsterdam and spent two hours sitting in the window of a brothel. In this way, she questioned not only the value attributed to different activities, but also the moral connotations of the display window. In 1976, Lynn Hershman Leeson used the windows at the Bonwit Teller department store for a portrait of New York City in the form of a multimedia installation. Rather than presenting objects for sale, the sequence of narratively interlinked scenes offered food for thought. In 1980, Sherrie Rabinowitz and Kit Galloway used cutting-edge technology to allow people walking past a shop window in New York to communicate with people walking around Los Angeles via a kind of video telephony. This work, *Hole in Space*, illustrates the positive, communicative role a shop window can play.

The exhibition is curated by Adrian Dannatt, freelance curator and art critic, Tabea Panizzi, curator at Museum Tinguely, and Andres Pardey, vice director at Museum Tinguely. Assistant: Melanie Keller.

Extra muros – Shop Windows in the city

The exhibition extends out into the streets of Basel with interventions in shop windows. For this part of the show, Museum Tinguely is cooperating with StadtKonzeptBasel and former students from the Institute Art Gender Nature Basel Academy of Art and Design FHNW who will create installations and performances in various shop windows between 14 January through 2nd March 2025. The young artists will occupy and transform shop windows in Basel's centre, stimulating the imagination by combining urban space with forms of projection and desire. As an extension of the exhibition *Fresh Window* at Museum Tinguely, they will explore the ways artists can enter into dialog with and appropriate the structures and architectures of shops, presenting specially created works that bring the themes of the exhibition to life on Basel's streets. With dioramas, panoramas, environments and installations combining stained glass, lightshows and animation, these display window projects include animals, plants, objects, texts, performances and more, creating an open-air exhibition accessible to all passersby.

Catalogue: The richly illustrated catalogue (German/English) with contributions by Theo Carnegie-Tan, Adrian Dannatt, Natasha Degen, Blake Gopnik, Melanie Keller, Tabea Panizzi, Andres Pardey and Alys Williams is published by Verlag für moderne Kunst. The catalogue is available in bookshops for 42 CHF in the museum shop (EN) ISBN: 978-3-99153-143-2.

TINGUELY100 – 100 years of Jean Tinguely

On 22 May 2025, the Swiss artist Jean Tinguely (1925-1991) would have celebrated his 100th birthday. To mark this occasion, his innovative, playful and still-topical oeuvre will be honoured across Europe with a range of exhibitions. Details of the various events are available via the online platform www.tinguely100.com. From 20–22 March 2025, Museum Tinguely itself is organizing a conference in Basel under the title *Jean Tinguely Revisited: Critical Re-Readings and New Perspectives*, celebrating his birthday on 22 May with a big party and the inauguration of a ghost train created by the artists Rebecca Moss & Augustin Rebetez. This immersive large-scale installation, in Solitude Park outside the museum, will take visitors on a three-minute trip through an art landscape that references *Crocrodrome de Zig et Puce*, a work created by Jean Tinguely in 1977 with Bernhard Luginbühl, Niki de Saint Phalle and other artists for the opening of the Centre Pompidou in Paris. The art ghost train will be in operation from 22 May (Tinguely's birthday) until 30 August (the anniversary of his death).

General Information Museum Tinguely:

Exhibition title: *Fresh Window. The Art of Display & Display of Art*

Address: Museum Tinguely | Paul Sacher-Anlage 1 | 4002 Basel

Opening: Tuesday, 3 December 2024, 6:30 pm

Duration: 4 December 2024 – 11 May 2025

Opening hours: Tuesday – Sunday, daily from 11 am to 6 pm, Thursday 11 am to 9 pm

Curator's Tour with Adrian Dannatt, Tabea Panizzi and Andres Pardey, 5 December 2024, 7 pm, and 13 February, 7 pm, free admission

Website: www.tinguely.ch

Social Media: @museumtinguely | #museumtinguely | #freshwindow

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Credits: Martina Morger, *Lèche Vitrines*, 2020 (video still), video, HD 16:9, 17 min., courtesy the artist © Martina Morger, video still: Lukas Zerbst