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Impasse Ronsin. Murder, Love, and Art in the Heart of Paris **16 December 2020 – 29 August 2021**

Impasse Ronsin, a dead-end street in the midst of Paris's Montparnasse district, was a unique artists' colony, known for more than a century as a place of art, contemplation, conversation, celebration, innovation, creation and destruction. With «Impasse Ronsin. Murder, Love, and Art in the Heart of Paris», Museum Tinguely devotes the first major museum exhibition to this unusual urban network that was often in the headlines, presenting over 50 artists with more than 200 works, all made at Impasse Ronsin. The place was marked by a broad range of diverse artistic identities that went far beyond the avant-garde, with artists including Constantin Brâncuși, Max Ernst, Marta Minujín, Eva Aeppli, Niki de Saint Phalle and Larry Rivers, through to André Almo Del Debbio and Alfred Laliberté. The exhibition layout is based on the original architectural plan of the colony, surprising visitors with an unprecedented mixture of artworks and stories that bring Paris to life as a melting pot and cosmopolitan city of art.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, a complex was built on Impasse Ronsin, in Paris's 15th arrondissement, that extended existing buildings and provided studio space for 35 artists at a time. A broad range of practices came together: from a sculptor specialized in monuments, to amateur painters, to young avant-gardists exploring performance art. Impasse Ronsin is known above all as the place where Brâncuși lived and worked for four decades (his studio has been reconstructed outside the Centre Pompidou) and as the scene of the Affaire Steinheil, a mysterious crime of passion. The double murder, committed in 1908 in the only major formal building on the cul-de-sac, with its links to a salacious story about the death of French President Félix Faure almost a decade earlier, still fuels the legend surrounding the Impasse. It existed as a studio colony from around 1864 and came to an end in 1971 with the departure of the last artist, the sculptor André Almo Del Debbio, making way for the site to be built over with an extension to the adjacent Hôpital Necker.

Impasse Ronsin was often romanticized, even more so after it ceased to exist. But this bohemian location was characterized by the unusual diversity of its artists and the complex interweaving of their life and work in a place that can be understood as a unique habitat.

The exhibition at Museum Tinguely aims to reflect this diversity, presenting some 200 works by more than 50 artists, with an important part played by the exchanges between inhabitants and visitors to Impasse Ronsin. Artists like Marcel Duchamp, Max Ernst, Marta Minujín, Eva Aeppli, Niki de Saint Phalle, Daniel Spoerri, Larry Rivers and many others met in this place that was often described as shabby, dirty and precarious, but that also offered these artists the freedom to devote themselves unconditionally to their art.

It was in this oasis that Jean Tinguely had his first studio, from 1955, and where, in a creative frenzy, he quickly laid the foundations for his entire oeuvre: the *Méta-Malevich* and *Méta-Kandinsky* kinetic reliefs (some begun as early as 1954), early motorized wire sculptures like the *Méta-Hérbins*, early kinetic sound sculptures like *Mes étoiles*, the first three writing machines of 1955, followed by a whole group in 1959, as well as his series of collaborations with Yves Klein. It was also here that he met Niki de Saint Phalle, and where he parted ways with Eva Aeppli, who had moved with him to Paris in 1952.

The exhibition features works by the following artists:

Eva Aeppli, Théo Albéric, Arman, Louis Mircea Bassarab, Avraham 'Bera' Bazak, Suzanne Belloir, Henryk Berlewi, Alphonse Bertillon, Alfred Boucher, Constantin Brâncuși, Charles-Romain Capellaro, Paul-Gabriel Capellaro, Auguste-Henri Carli, Irina Codreanu, Liliane Coket, William N. Copley, André Almo Del Debbio, Robert Descharnes, Marcel Duchamp, Natalia Dumitresco, Max Ernst, Adolphe Victor Geoffroy-Dechaume, Julio González, Nadja Grossman Bulighin, Anatole Guillot, Raymond Hains, Anne Harvey, Eli Harvey, Jeanne Hillairet de Boisferon Ray, Florence Homolka-Meyer, Pontus Hultén, Alexandre Istrati, Jasper Johns, János Kender, Yves Klein, Joseph Lacasse, Claude Lalanne, François-Xavier Lalanne, Alfred Laliberté, Jean Lubet, Charles-Auguste Mengin, James Metcalf, Marta Minujín, Alicia Moi, Juana Muller, Fidencio Lucano Nava, Isamu Noguchi, Arleyte Péron, Reginald Pollack, Alexander Phimister Proctor, Larry Rivers, Gaston-Louis Roux, Harry Shunk, Niki de Saint Phalle, Daniel Spoerri, Adolphe Charles Édouard Steinheil, Joggi Stoecklin, Marc-Aurèle de Foy Suzor-Côté, Lucien Terriou, Jean Tinguely, Anael Topenot-del Debbio

Among others, it is thanks to Christophe-Emmanuel del Debbio, the son of the colony's last artist, that the exhibition's curators, Adrian Dannatt and Andres Pardey, were able to present the history of Impasse Ronsin so comprehensively at Museum Tinguely. For almost a decade, he has conducted in-depth studies into the history of the place where his father taught sculpture to students from around the world. He generously made available his huge archive of documents and photographs, and above all his research findings, as well as supporting the project with loans from his collection. This, along with loans from museums and private collections worldwide, made it possible to tell the story of Impasse Ronsin using artworks, documents and original objects. An exhibition architecture based on the layout of the colony gives visitors the opportunity to rediscover this unusual art location in the heart of Paris.

The exhibition is co-curated by Adrian Dannatt and Museum Tinguely's Vice-Director, Andres Pardey.

Publication

The exhibition will be accompanied by an extensive, richly illustrated catalogue, published by Kehrer in German and English, including previously unpublished documents and photographs, as well as many texts by both eye-witnesses and art historians as Phyllida Barlow, Oscar Chelimsky, Iris Clert, Bill Copley, Adrian Dannatt, Christophe-Emmanuel Del Debbio, Paul B. Franklin, Paul-Armand Gette, Jasper Johns, John Kasmin, Rotraut Klein-Moquay, Claude Lalanne, François-Xavier Lalanne, Liliane Lijn, Harry Mathews, Marta Minujín, Monique Alicia Moi-Orban, Karen Moller, Olivier Mosset, Jérôme Neutres, Elsa Noël-Guesnon, Isamu Noguchi, Andres Pardey, Reginald Pollack, Clarice Rivers, Larry Rivers, Philippe Roux, Niki de Saint Phalle, Luc Sante, Roy Skodnick, Daniel Spoerri, Haroun Tazieff, Calvin Tomkins, Phyllis Tower, Roland Wetzels. 256 pages, approx. 260 images, available at the museum's shop and online, 42 CHF, ISBN 978-3-96900-017-5 (EN)

General and practical Information:

Title of the exhibition: Impasse Ronsin. Murder, Love, and Art in the Heart of Paris

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

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Regular opening hours: Tuesday – Sunday, daily 11 am-6 pm

Websites: www.tinguely.ch

Social Media: @museumtinguely | #museumtinguely | #tinguely | #impasseronsin

Press contact: Isabelle Beilfuss | T.: +41 61 68 74 608 | Email: isabelle.beilfuss@roche.com

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