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THE CENTRE NATIONAL DES ARTS PLASTIQUES LAUNCHES RESTORATION OF JEAN TINGUELY'S LE CYCLOP



Jean Tinguely, *Le Cyclop*, 1969-1994, FNAC 95419
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Photo credit: Tadashi Ono



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Jean Tinguely, *Le Cyclop*, 1969-1994, FNAC 95419
View of the restoration in progress, April 2021
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In March 2021 the Centre national des arts plastiques (Cnap) initiated restoration of *Le Cyclop*, a total artwork conceptualised by the Swiss artist Jean Tinguely. The site, at the heart of woodland in Milly-la-Forêt, closed in October 2020 in preparation for this major restoration project, which will take just over a year. It is scheduled to reopen to the public in May 2022.



Niki de Saint Phalle, *La Face aux miroirs*, FNAC 95419 (7)
Work created for *Le Cyclop*, 1969-1994
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Photo credit: Régis Grman

LE CYCLOP, A SHARED ADVENTURE THAT BEGAN IN 1969 AND CONTINUES TODAY

The idea for this monumental artwork took root in the imaginations of Jean Tinguely and his friend and fellow Swiss artist, Bernard Luginbühl. From the outset, *Le Cyclop*'s characteristic modular metal structure was always intended to be a collective endeavour, to be shared with other artists: Niki de Saint Phalle, Eva Aeppli, Arman, César, Daniel Spoerri, Jean-Pierre Raynaud, Jesús-Rafael Soto, Rico Weber, Larry Rivers, Seppi Imhof, Philippe Bouveret and Pierre Marie Lejeune. All these artists created works for *Le Cyclop*, becoming part of an extraordinary adventure that lasted from 1969 until 1994. So as to ensure it would be protected and preserved for the long term, Jean Tinguely and Niki de Saint Phalle donated *Le Cyclop* to the French State in 1987. Since then, the Centre national des arts plastiques has been in charge of its conservation. The Association Le Cyclop, a non-profit that was set up in 1988, opens the site to visitors between April and end October, with programming that encourages new ways of seeing this multifarious work.

LE CYCLOP FACTS AND FIGURES

- **1969** Construction begins
- **1987** *Le Cyclop* donated to the French state
- **1994** Inauguration by President François Mitterrand
- **22.5 metres** high
- **350 metric tons** of steel
- **55,000 mirror tesserae**
- **14 artists**



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A VAST RESTORATION PROJECT

The topography of the site in addition to weather exposure makes conservation of *Le Cyclop* particularly challenging. The objective today is to restore *Le Cyclop*'s integrity, working with the artists or their beneficiaries. This complex project is overseen by three contractors: GFTK for architectural aspects, Phung Consulting for HVAC and Ecovi for quantity surveying. Throughout the project, a team of some twenty specialists in glass, metal, ceramic, textile, plaster and contemporary materials will work on-site and in their studios to restore the various elements that make up *Le Cyclop*.



Niki de Saint Phalle, *La Face aux miroirs*, FNAC 95419 (7)
View of the restoration in progress, April 2021
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TWO CRITICAL ASPECTS OF THE RESTORATION PROJECT: *LA FACE AUX MIROIRS* AND *HOMMAGE AUX DÉPORTÉS*

The main element requiring restoration is Niki de Saint Phalle's *La Face aux miroirs* (1986). Its mirrored surface (almost 325 m²) began to show signs of deterioration in 1996, with visible alterations to the silvering and the presence of microorganisms that were loosening the mirrors. Initial attempts to consolidate the structure were made in 2002. In 2006 repairs were carried out on small areas. Two years later, in 2008, a study programme was implemented with the Institut National du Patrimoine. This resulted in a timeline recording the stages in the creation of *Le Cyclop*, a condition report and a diagnosis that included recommendations for long-term restoration. This document provided valuable information. However, the work continued to deteriorate, putting visitors' safety at risk.



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Niki de Saint Phalle, *La Face aux miroirs*, FNAC 95419 (7)
View of *Le Cyclop's* eye; View of the restoration in progress, April 2021
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Photo credit: Camille Verrier



Niki de Saint Phalle, *La Face aux miroirs*, FNAC 95419 (7)
Removing *Le Cyclop's* eye prior to restoration;
View of the restoration in progress, May 2021
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Photo credit: Camille Verrier



Niki de Saint Phalle, *La Face aux miroirs*, FNAC 95419 (7)
Making a latex print of the mirrors on the tongue;
View of the restoration in progress, May 2021
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Photo credit: Camille Verrier



Making templates for the mirrors;
View of the restoration in progress, May 2021
Photo credit: Camille Verrier



Niki de Saint Phalle, *La Face aux miroirs*, FNAC 95419 (7)
Detail of the mirrors;
View of the restoration in progress, March 2021
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Netting was placed over the structure in January 2012. The Laboratoire de Recherche des Monuments Historiques was commissioned to survey the physical condition of the work. It presented its report in 2014. Following this, and with the authorisation of the beneficiary of Jean Tinguely and Niki de Saint Phalle, Cnap announced a full-scale restoration that would replace the 55,000 mirror tesserae. This operation scrupulously respects the original layout, supervised by Niki de Saint Phalle: the mirrors must be cut with no right angles and their size adapted to fit the curve of the face. For the replacement mirrors to exactly match the initial composition, a latex print is made of each zone then transferred onto paper to create templates for the individual pieces. The new mirrors will restore the face's shiny appearance while respecting the artist's intention that the myriad reflections become a form of camouflage. Companies donated materials and competencies to the project in 2013. 3DO Reality Capture carried out a 3D scan of the structure. Saint-Gobain gifted 628 m² of solar mirrors and, through its Weber subsidiary, mortar. Clairefontaine supplied paper for the templates.



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HOMMAGE AUX DÉPORTÉS

The second major restoration concerns Eva Aeppli's *Hommage aux déportés*. This evocation of the horror of the Shoah is composed of a 1930s train carriage, suspended from a platform more than 13 metres above the ground.

Inside are 15 figures made from white silk and brown velvet.

The carriage is currently in a state of advanced disrepair and will be identically restored. The damaged wood panels will be treated. Thermal insulation and a new air-conditioning system inside the wagon will ensure a sufficiently stable environment for the proper conservation of the silk and velvet figures.

This restoration is also an opportunity to review the watertightness of the basin in Jean Tinguely's *Hommage à Yves Klein*, and to restore or clean some of the works inside *Le Cyclop: Colonne* by Niki de Saint Phalle, *Méta-Harmonie* by Jean Tinguely, *Jauge* by Jean-Pierre Raynaud, *Pénétrable sonore* by Jesús-Rafael Soto, *Hommage à Mai 68* by Larry Rivers, *Tableau électrique* by Rico Weber and *Piccolo museo* by Giovanni Battista Podestà.



Eva Aeppli, *Hommage aux déportés*, FNAC 95419 (1). Bernhard Luginbühl, *L'oreille*, FNAC 95419 (18)
Works made for *Le Cyclop*, 1969-1994
View of the restoration in progress, April 2021
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Photo credit: Camille Verrier



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A 1.2 MILLION EUROS BUDGET

The budget for the restoration of *Le Cyclop* totals €1.2 million, funded by Cnap with support from the Ministry of Culture and a number of patrons.

In addition to essential contributions from Saint-Gobain and from 3DO Reality Capture, which carried out a 3D laser scan of Niki de Saint Phalle's *La Face aux miroirs*, Crédit Agricole Île-de-France and Fondation du Crédit Agricole are partner to an educational programme involving students at two technical colleges. The remainder of the budget came from two crowdfunding campaigns (MyMajorCompany and Commeon), and from donations by Geoterre and Galerie Georges-Philippe et Nathalie Vallois.



Jean Tinguely, *Méta-Harmonie*, FNAC 95419 (25)
Work made for *Le Cyclop*, 1969-1994
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Photo credit: Régis Grman



EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS BUILT AROUND THE RESTORATION OF LE CYCLOP AND NEW VISITOR FACILITIES

The Centre national des arts plastiques continues to support the next generation of art and culture professionals by rolling out two educational projects for students at technical colleges during the restoration of *Le Cyclop*. Students working towards a diploma in contemporary glass design and production at Lycée Lucas de Nehou will be given training then invited to assist with restoration of Niki de Saint Phalle's *La Face aux miroirs*. Year 11 and Year 12 students at Lycée Brassäi – Lycée Professionnel Régional de la Photographie et de l'Image will consider the implications and challenges of documenting a restoration project and the specific environment of *Le Cyclop*.

In addition, third- and fifth-year students at École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Paris-Belleville submitted their ideas on how to develop the area around *Le Cyclop* and its future visitor centre. An exhibition of their work is planned for September 2021 in Milly-la-Forêt.

PROJECT LEADERS

CENTRE NATIONAL DES ARTS PLASTIQUES

The Centre national des arts plastiques (Cnap) is one of the main agents for Ministry of Culture policy for the contemporary visual arts. On behalf of the French state, it acquires works for the national contemporary art collection which it also conserves. It makes works from the collection available for viewing through short and long loans in France and internationally, as a partner to exhibitions and through publications. The collection, which holds close to 105,000 works acquired from living artists over more than two centuries, is representative of the many forms art can take. One of the foremost advocates for contemporary culture in France, Cnap encourages artistic creation in all its diversity. It assists artists and other art professionals through a range of mechanisms, and gives prominence to the projects it supports through distribution programmes.

www.cnap.fr

ASSOCIATION LE CYCLOP

The Association Le Cyclop manages public access to *Le Cyclop*. It also opens the site to contemporary creation by extending regular invitations to emerging and established artists in the form of residencies, providing support for production, exhibitions of works near *Le Cyclop*, docent programmes, publications, etc. This non-profit organisation has operated as a contemporary art centre since 2012 and in 2017 became part of TRAM, the Île-de-France regional contemporary art network.

www.lecyclop.com



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SUPPORTERS

- Institut National du Patrimoine
- Laboratoire de Recherche des Monuments Historiques
- Contributors to MyMajorCompany and Commeon crowdfunding campaigns
- Galerie Georges-Philippe et Nathalie Vallois
- Geoterre
- Niki Charitable Art Foundation
- Fonds de Dotation pour le Soutien et la Valorisation du Cyclop

PARTNERS AND PATRONS



Saint-Gobain,
restoration patron



Crédit Agricole Ile-de-France Mécénat
and Fondation du Crédit Agricole –
Pays de France



Clairefontaine



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CONTACTS

Cnap communication division
Sandrine Vallée-Potelle
T. + 33 (0) 1 46 93 99 55
Sandrine.vallee-potelle@cnap.fr

Communic'Art press relations
Oriane Zerbib
T. + 33 (0) 1 71 19 48 04
ozerbib@communicart.fr



Eva Aeppli, *Hommage aux déportés*, FNAC 95419 (1)
Bernhard Luginbühl, *L'oreille*, FNAC 95419 (18)
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