

Museum Tinguely and corporate patronage

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The second great contribution of the Roche group and its founding family is the Museum Tinguely, opened in 1996 on the bank of the Rhine in the Solitude park, next to the Roche site. The museum is dedicated to Jean Tinguely, the Fribourg-born artist who grew up in Basel and whose kinetic machines made him one of the most popular artists of the twentieth century. It was designed by the Ticinese architect Mario Botta and is financed and operated by Roche.¹ Niki de Saint Phalle, Tinguely's widow, contributed works to the founding collection.²

The museum shows that corporate patronage in Basel follows the same principles as family patronage. Roche does not use the museum for advertising in any obvious manner. With the company's name appearing only discreetly, the museum presents itself as a public institution with a scholarly programme of exhibitions on kinetic art, sound and machines. Tinguely's own fountain on the Theaterplatz, the *Fasnachtsbrunnen* of 1977, had already made him a part of the city's visual identity, which gave the museum a connection with popular memory beyond the art world.³

Corporate patronage of this kind serves several purposes at once. It strengthens the attachment of the company to its home city at a time when shareholders, employees and products are global. It contributes to the quality of life that the company needs to recruit scientists and managers from abroad. Moreover, it gives the founding families, who still control Roche through a shareholder pool as Part G described, a visible role in the public life of the city that does not depend on their personal prominence.⁴ Novartis has pursued similar aims mainly through architecture, as a later section shows, while other companies of the region support concerts, festivals and exhibitions through sponsorship agreements.

1 Notes

1. On the Museum Tinguely, opened on 3 October 1996, designed by Mario Botta, founded and financed by F. Hoffmann-La Roche AG, see the publications of the Museum Tinguely and of Roche. Dates to be verified. ↩
2. On the gifts of Niki de Saint Phalle to the Museum Tinguely after Tinguely's death in 1991, see the publications of the museum. To be verified. ↩
3. On Jean Tinguely's Fasnachtsbrunnen (Tinguely-Brunnen) on the Theaterplatz in Basel, reportedly financed by the Migros cooperative of Basel and inaugurated in 1977, see the publications of the canton of Basel-Stadt. Commissioning details to be verified. ↩
4. On the control of Roche by the founding families through a shareholder pool, see Part G, Chapter I. To be verified. ↩

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