



MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN

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NIKI DE SAINT PHALLE: THE ARTIST

Catherine Marie-Agnès Fal de Saint Phalle was born in Neuilly-sur-Seine, France on October 29, 1930 and raised in New York City. A passionately imaginative and self-taught artist, she was extremely prolific, creating a stunning and diverse repertoire of work that includes sculptures, paintings and illustrations.

In the 1940's she worked as a model and photographs of her appeared in *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar* and on the cover of *Life* magazine. As an artist, she gained international fame in the early 1960s as one of the "New Realists," a group of artists that included Yves Klein, Arman and the Swiss kinetic sculptor, Jean Tinguely, who became her creative collaborator, and later her husband in 1971.

Niki, as she liked to be called, became known around the world in the early 1960s for her "shooting paintings" as she called them, in which she would fire bullets through containers of paint, spilling them onto a canvas.

Niki is best known for her joyful, robust *Nanas*, a French term for "babes" or "chicks." These powerful sculptures of dancing women celebrating life have appeared in museums, advertisements and worldwide exhibitions. Calling these large-scale sculptures and architectural installations "heralds of a new matriarchial age," she boldly personified her idea of feminine empowerment in the colorful, uninhibited *Nanas*.

Other major sculptural projects include *Hon* in Stockholm (1966), the *Stravinsky Fountain* in Paris (1983), *Noah's Ark* in Jerusalem (1998), *Queen Califia's Magical Circle* in Escondido, California, (1999-2003) and her most important work, the *Tarot Garden* in Tuscany (1980-1998).

In the early 1990's, Saint Phalle settled in Southern California and in 2000 she was awarded the 12th Premium Imperial Prize in the sculpture category, considered the Nobel Prize in the art world. She remained in California until her death in 2002. The Niki Charitable Art Foundation was established to promote her art worldwide, particularly in the U.S.


niki

April 27 through October 31

