



MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN

4344 Shaw Boulevard • St. Louis, MO • 63110 • (314) 577-5100 • www.mobot.org

Date: March 31, 2008

Contact: Public Relations Department

Phone: (314) 577-0254 or (314) 577-5141 (*media only*)

E-mail: karen.hagenow@mobot.org or lisa.brandon@mobot.org (*media only*)

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For Immediate Release

‘NIKI’ OPENS AT THE MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN APR. 27 *Imaginative Mosaic and Painted Sculptures by Niki De Saint Phalle*

(ST. LOUIS): *Niki*, an exhibition of the passionate pop art of Niki de Saint Phalle, opens at the Missouri Botanical Garden on Apr. 27. Forty colorful mosaic and painted sculptures of animals, dancing women, heroes and totems gathered from around the world will be displayed throughout the lovely 79-acre botanical garden through Oct. 31.

Niki de Saint Phalle (1930-2002) was born in France and raised in New York City. She was the only female member of Europe’s most important post-World War II art movement, the New Realists. Her work is well-known throughout Europe, South America and Asia. She designed and built two permanent sculpture gardens: *The Tarot Garden* in Tuscany (1980-1998) and *Queen Califia’s Magical Circle* (1999-2003) near San Diego.

A prolific self-taught artist, Niki’s repertoire of work also included paintings and illustrations. She sculpted her playful, larger-than-life creations from fiberglass and colorful stones, glass, mirrors and ceramic tiles. Visitors are encouraged to touch many of them and some invite sitting or climbing.

(over)


niki

April 27 through October 31



ADD ONE: Niki

The *Niki* exhibition includes voluptuous *Nanas*, animals, heroes and totems that range from four to 18 feet tall. Some weigh a ton or more, such as the amazing six-ton *La Cabeza* (The Head).

The exuberant, full-figured *Nanas* are among Niki's best known works. Nana is a French term for "chick" or "babe." *Nanas* have appeared in museums, outdoor sculptural exhibitions and as part of major permanent collections around the world.

Niki loved to see children climbing on her **Animal** sculptures. Her *Guardian Lions*, *Cat*, *Seals* and *Nikigator* are meant to be explored from the inside out.

Black Heroes portray famous African-American musicians and athletes, including Michael Jordan, Louis Armstrong and East St. Louis native Miles Davis. **Totems** were inspired by the artist's reverence for animals, nature and Native American culture and traditions.

Sponsors of individual sculptures are Cathy and Jim Berges, Jinny and Larry Browning, BSI Constructors Inc., Edward Jones, Macy's, Monsanto, Sachs Properties, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, and an anonymous friend of the Garden.

Niki will be included with \$8 general admission to the historic botanical garden (St. Louis City and County residents, \$4 adults, \$2 seniors). Members and children age 12 and under are free.

Niki's daughter, Laura Gabriela, will sign books in the Garden Gate Shop on Sunday, Apr. 27 at 4 p.m. The shop will carry *Niki* merchandise and mosaics for the home and garden throughout the exhibition.

"Niki Nights" will present casual outdoor dining and fun on Thursdays from 5 to 9 p.m. from May through September. "Niki Nights" admission will be \$7 adults, \$3 children and \$5 Garden members. The Doris I. Schnuck Children's Garden: A Missouri Adventure will remain open until dusk on these evenings at no extra charge. "Niki Nights" are sponsored by Anheuser-Busch.

Audio commentary of the exhibition will be available for access by cell phone or download to an mp3 player from www.mobot.org.

The Missouri Botanical Garden is located at 4344 Shaw Blvd. in St. Louis, just south of Interstate 44, two blocks east of the Vandeventer-Kingshighway exit. Park for free at the Garden and two blocks west at the Shaw-Vandeventer intersection. Please note that a section of I-64/U.S. 40 is under construction through 2009. Before traveling, check www.thenewi64.org for updates. Go to www.GetAroundStL.com for other helpful information. Rail commuters can take MetroLink to the Central West End station and catch a Metro bus to the Garden (www.metrostlouis.org).

For general Garden information, log on to www.mobot.org or call the 24-hour Garden Line recording at (314) 577-9400 or 1-800-642-8842. Read about Niki de Saint Phalle and her art on the Web at nikidesaintphalle.com or nikidesaintphalle.org.

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NOTE: Download news releases and images at:

http://www.mobot.org/press/Media_Room/Images/Niki/NikiMEDIA.asp