

# NIKI DE SAINT PHALLE

## BIOGRAPHY

- 1930 Born Catherine Marie-Agnes Fal de Saint Phalle October 29, Neuilly-sur-Seine, France
- 1937 Family moves to New York City. Now known as Niki de Saint Phalle, she attends several schools on the East Coast.
- 1947 Graduates from Oldfield School, Maryland.
- 1948-49 Niki, 18, works as a fashion model, appearing in *Life*, *Vogue*, and *Harper's Bazaar*.
- 1952-58 Moves to Paris to study drama, but begins painting in Nice, France. Encouraged by friends she starts exhibiting her works in France. Inspired in Spain by Antonio Gaudi, the idea for her sculpture garden takes root.
- 1961-64 Begins her series of *Shooting Paintings (Tirs)*: events involving sculptures and assemblages that concealed containers of paint that would burst and spatter paint when she shot them with a pistol. She becomes the only woman in the New Realist movement, meets and works with Salvador Dali, travels to Simon Rodilla's Watts Tower in Los Angeles and works in the United States.
- 1965-68 Begins work on her monumental Nana pieces including *Hon*, a giant *Nana* building for the Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden, designs inflatable pieces, and does theater and production work, including set design and costumes.
- 1971 Marries artist and long-time companion Jean Tinguely. Creates *Golem* in Jerusalem's Rabinovitch Park.
- 1973 Builds *The Dragon*, Belgium, a children's playhouse.
- 1974 Begins the *Tarot Garden* sculpture park in Tuscany, Italy. Opens 1998.
- 1982-86 Commissioned with Tinguely by the City of Paris, she begins work on the Stravinsky Fountain in front of the Centre Georges Pompidou. Co-authors and illustrates AIDS: *You Can't Catch It Holding Hands*.
- 1991-94 Tinguely dies. Artist moves to California. Begins collaboration on *Noah's Ark* in Jerusalem. Opens 2001.
- 2000 Receives 12th Praemium Imperial Prize in Japan. Begins *Queen Califia's Magical Circle* sculpture garden in Escondido, California. Opens 2003.
- 2002 Dies in La Jolla, California, after suffering for almost 30 years from lung ailments that developed with her early work with polyester materials and fumes.

### **SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS**

- 1956 Galerie Restaurant Gatthard, St. Gallen, Switzerland
- 1961 Kopke Gallery, Copenhagen, Demark  
Galerie J., Paris
- 1964 Hanover Gallery, London  
Dwan Gallery, Los Angeles
- 1965 Gallery Alexandre Iolas, New York
- 1974 Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam, The Netherlands
- 1980 Ulm Museum, Ulm, Germany
- 1987 Nassau County Museum of Fine Art, Roslyn, New York
- 1993 Musee d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris
- 2003 Herbert Palmer Gallery, Los Angeles
- 2007 Niki de Saint Phalle: A Spiritual Path, California Center  
for the Arts, Escondido, CA
- 2008 *Niki de Saint Phalle Retrospective*, Tate Liverpool,  
Liverpool, England  
*Les boîtes a secrets de Niki*, Musee en Herbe, Paris
- 2007-09 *Niki in the Garden*, assembled by the Niki Charitable Art  
Foundation; Missouri Botanical Garden, St. Louis, MO;  
traveled in North America

### **SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS**

- 1966 Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago
- 1968 Museum of Modern Art, New York
- 1969 Whitney Museum of Modern Art, New York
- 1970-71 Rotonda della Besana, Milan, Italy
- 1977 Muse National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris
- 1980 Whitney Museum of Modern Art, New York
- 1985 Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Chicago
- 1988 *XLIIIth Biennale*, Venice, Italy
- 1990 Wexner Center for the Visual Arts, Ohio State University,  
Columbus, OH
- 1997 Muse National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris  
Guggenheim Museum SoHo, New York
- 1999 Galerie JGM, Paris

### **SELECTED PUBLIC COMMISSIONS**

Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris

Queen Califia's Magical Circle Sculpture Garden, Escondido, CA

Tarot Garden Sculpture Park, Tuscany, Italy

### **SELECTED PUBLIC COLLECTIONS**

Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York

Hakone Open Air Museum, Japan

Hirshorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution,  
Washington, DC

Iwaki Street Art Museum, Iwaki, Japan

Kunserhaus, Vienna, Austria

Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden

Musee des Arts Decoratifs, Paris

Musee d'Art Moderne et d'Art Contemporain, Nice, France

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX

Menill Collection, Houston, TX

Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago

Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles

New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, LA

Niki Museum, Nasu, Japan

San Diego Museum of Art, San Diego, CA

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York

Sprengel Museum, Hannover, Germany

Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Tate Gallery, London

Victoria & Albert Museum, London

Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York



