

Niki de Saint Phalle Garden of Joy



OPERA GALLERY

**Niki de
Saint Phalle
Garden of Joy**

**8 March
6 April 2024**

OPERA GALLERY

Garden of Joy

Foreword

Gilles Dyan, Founder and Chairman, Opera Gallery Group
Jeremy Weltmann, Director, Opera Gallery Hong Kong
Wenwen Liu, Deputy Director, Opera Gallery Hong Kong

Niki de Saint Phalle (1930 – 2002) was an eminent figure within the international modern art scene. A complex, assertive individual, she is part of a select group of women to cement their place within art history. Her imaginative and provocative works, created with a variety of mediums in rainbow hues, reference a plethora of symbols from religion, mythology, mysticism, and her personal ideology.

Eighteen artworks, produced between 1972 – 2003, are proudly presented by Opera Gallery Hong Kong. This solo Saint Phalle exhibition “Garden of Joy” celebrates the collective human experience. A fierce advocate of social issues, Saint Phalle was an ambitious artist who vocalised beliefs relating to gender roles, religion, racial equality, and the prevention of AIDS.

Saint Phalle was adept at deriving inspiration from architecture and symbolism. She combined cultural influences with her imaginative reveries. A cathartic form of release, her art can be viewed, played with, inhabited and utilised by the public. The universal appeal of her sculptures allows them to thrive within the context of prestigious museums, public squares, and gardens.

Niki de Saint Phalle joined the New Realists in 1961 after meeting Jean Tinguely, who became her husband in 1971. Saint Phalle received worldwide recognition for her ‘Tirs’, shooting performances during which she achieved liberation by destroying objects with a rifle. The bleeding colours transformed into assemblage paintings. Her iconic “Nanas” danced into art history in 1965. A French slang for a woman and also the nickname of her childhood nanny, Saint Phalle’s ‘Nana’ was an ideal of maternal femininity. Her voluptuous form reflected the glory of women. The artist’s monumental *Tarot Garden* in Tuscany, a fantastical experimentation of sculptural forms, was accomplished with collaborators between 1978-1998. It represented both escapism and an amalgamation of her creative forces.

Saint Phalle’s assemblage of cultural experiences and creative collaborations produced a unique artistic legacy. Her free spirit is evident in both her acts of creation and destruction. The simultaneous experience of joy and pain during her life is mirrored in her art, which encourages viewers to play and to daydream, while questioning the duality of her works and their underlying social context. ●

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 Niki de Saint Phalle at the Stedelijk
 Museum, Amsterdam,
 The Netherlands, 1967 © Jack de Nijs



Proverbs of Possibility

Nicole Rudick
Art critic

In a print advertising her exhibition at the Gimpel Weitzenhoffer Gallery in 1979, Niki de Saint Phalle wrote a quotation, in her quintessential jubilant hand, across the top of the image: “What is now known was once only imagined.” The line is adapted from William Blake’s late-eighteenth-century book *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. In Blake’s telling, Hell is not a site for punishment but of unrepressed, unrestrained energy, and Heaven is a place of temperance and spiritual restraint, if not also repression and authoritarianism. Balance requires both realms—the sensual and the spiritual. “Without Contraries there is no progression,” he argues. “Attraction and Repulsion, Reason and Energy, Love and Hate, are necessary to Human existence.”

No visual artist has expressed this contradictory logic as sensitively as Saint Phalle. Blake’s conception not of binaries but of a marriage of opposing ideas is central to much of her art. The poster, for instance, advertises *The Golem*, a children’s playground constructed in the shape of a folkloric “monster,” with long tongues for slides; and *The Tower*, which she would later build as a gleaming, mirrored Tower of Babel in the Tarot Garden as a “reminder,” she writes, “of how ephemeral life is.” The inextricable nature of passion and restraint, violence and creation began early in her career as a way of working through negative feelings. In her ‘Tirs’, or shooting paintings, made primarily in the 1960s, she fired a rifle at canvases embedded with bags of color and cans of spray paint. As the gun’s shells pierce the objects, the colors explode and drip down the white plaster in an ecstatic transformation.

In 1971, Saint Phalle combined these instincts in the monochrome relief painting *White Tree*. She began drawing trees during her childhood in New York, and they make frequent appearances in her art. Often, their boughs carry a range of emotions and ideas, emblematic of the complex branching of the self. The mood in *White Tree* feels perilous: spidery creatures and reptilian monsters skitter among skulls inlaid into the trunk and snakelike limbs; the creatures devour hapless humans, leaving their tiny skeletons among the roots—a perverse family tree. Yet near the center of the trunk, amidst the scrabble of little beasts, is an outline of a small heart with a skull in the center—an embrace or acceptance, perhaps, of one’s darker qualities, traumatic family history, or a world at odds with oneself.

Saint Phalle's inclusion of monsters in her art offered her a way to tame her fears and to be, she wrote, “in charge of my destiny.” The Egyptian art she saw at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York enthralled Saint Phalle as a child, and an informal list in a sketchbook that she kept later in life attests to her fascination with ancient cultures and systems of belief:

Egyptians	Hindu	American Indian
Goddess Mother	Greek	Tibet
Mesopotamia	Roman	Confius [sic]
Druids	Boudism [sic]	Seik [sic]
Mexican	German Edas [sic]	Hebrew
African Religions	Polynesian	Christian

Saint Phalle was perhaps most afraid of snakes, and through her work she became intrigued by their significance as symbols variously of rebirth, danger, and transformation. *La Conversation* (1991) is a tête-à-tête chair whose opposite-facing seats are ringed by large colorful snakes. Occupants of the two-seater chair are at once together and apart, always one half of a whole, whether in intimate conversation or attuned to the solitary self. The snakes bridge the distance, both encouraging connection and emphasizing the divide. They also seem ready to participate: their mouths are open, able to converse, gossip, or consume. *Le Miroir (Magie du miroir)* (1980) features a mirror—itself an object of revelation—framed (literally) by a pair of snakes whose heads entwine at the top and tails below. The work is a looking glass, a portal, a means to speak with gods or see the future, with the ringed serpents as agents to other territories. One glance and anything is possible.

Her engagement with fearsome creatures leads Saint Phalle (and the viewer) to places she (and we) might not otherwise be able to understand or envision on our own. Her recurring symbols—trees and snakes as well as lions, dragons, birds, the sun, and rain—are guides to these subconscious or spiritual realms. “I would like to unlock the closed doors and windows of my mind,” she wrote in a 1974 drawing of a psychic landscape populated with these repeating visual elements. So much of her art engages the viewer as a participant, not only psychically but physically through work meant to be climbed on, explored, and used functionally. Beginning in the 1980s, Saint Phalle produced furniture, such as the chairs *Charly* (1981) and *Clarisse, Chaise Femme* (1982); *objets* such as *Le Chameau* (1986) and *Ange Vase* (1993); and illuminations such as *The Blue Falcon* (1980) and *Lampe Angulaire* (1992)—all rendered in her characteristic bright color combinations and playful forms. “I like the fact that I am able to say something on a very immediate level,” she told the *New York Times* in 1993. “So much of art today has become tied up with ideas, with philosophy, with the abstract, and a lot of people feel excluded from it because of the impoverishment of the image. Nobody is excluded from my work.”

Joy is among Saint Phalle's democratizing expressions, an emotion at work throughout her oeuvre—not only in the large-scale public sculptures but in her works on paper, small decorative pieces, and writings. The ‘Nanas’, which she began making in 1965, are perhaps the purest manifestation of this feeling. They “put everyone in a good mood,” she wrote in the mid-80s. The lemon-yellow Nana of *Dawn Jaune* (1995) skips gaily, like dancing sunshine, her bathing suit a map of esoteric imagery. The lime green Nana of *I Am Upside Down (verte)* (1997) wears a dazzling outfit and stands on her head, her curvaceous legs thrust coltishly into the air. She is a sculptural relief, mounted on the wall, yet in her exuberance she appears as a painting that has burst from the confines of two-dimensional space.

The Nanas are reminiscent of female forms from antiquity—the Paleolithic Venus of Willendorf, Near Eastern fertility figures, and Greek female sculptural nudes—but their colors link these early forms to contemporary womanhood. In *La Fontaine aux 4 Nanas, Les Quatre Baigneuses* (1988–90), four buxom ‘Nanas’ with different skin tones—black, yellow, white, and peach—submerge waist-deep in a circular lapis-blue pool. Saint Phalle may have been influenced by Cézanne's painting *Quatre baigneuses* (1876–77) or Picasso's *Quatre baigneuses* (1881–1973), both depictions of four nude female bathers (the former in a forest, the latter in a rocky setting by the ocean). Her version in the round, however, captures something of her subjects’ consciousness. Arms joyously outstretched and bodies conjoined by a central floral design, they may be emerging from the pool, a sisterhood of modern Venuses being born from the same primordial sea.

The bright colors and mirrored surfaces that distinguish so much of Saint Phalle's art spring in part from her memories of the “pure magic colors” held by her mother's crystal decanters reflecting off the mirrored walls in the New York apartment of her childhood. “I wanted to become the color,” she later recalled. Among the major arcana of the Tarot, she identified with the Fool, a traveler who does not have a fixed place in the sequence of cards and who signifies spontaneity, risk-taking, and freedom. His number in the deck is zero, a number of infinite potential. In her art, Saint Phalle represented that sense of liberty and possibility in herself with numerous birds, creatures that can go anywhere they please. “I am the beautiful white bird,” she declares in a 1968 silkscreen. That desire for autonomy never left her. Nearly twenty-five years later she wrote of the same impulse: “I wanted to fly like a bird and discover infinity.” *L'Oiseau amoureux* (1990/92) acts as a kind of summative expression of this feeling. A pink Nana in a bathing suit embellished with hot colors and a Pop design wraps her arms and legs around the body of a resplendently colored bird, its stout legs planted firmly on the earth and its wings spread wide. Saint Phalle produced this pair in a variety of sizes and color patterns, as fountains, large sculptures, and small multiples. In such a tight embrace, the ‘Nana’ and bird appear symbiotic, and Saint Phalle must have found the combination significant—a joyous woman with limitless freedom. ●

Artworks

(1972-2003)

White Tree

1972

Resin polyester assembled
on a wood panel

Unique piece

244,5 × 122 × 22 cm | 96.3 × 48 × 8.7 in

PROVENANCE

Alexander Iolas Gallery, New York, USA
Brooks Jackson Inc., New York, USA
Samy Kinge Gallery, Paris, France
Private collection

LITERATURE

*Niki de Saint Phalle, Catalogue raisonné,
1949-2000*, vol. 1, Acatos, Lausanne, 2001,
No. 548, ill. in colours p. 253

CERTIFICATE

The Niki Charitable Art Foundation
has confirmed the authenticity of this work



Petit Dragon

1974

Painted polyester resin

Unique piece

Stamped with the artist's signature 'Niki'
along the lower inner edge

25,1 × 18,1 × 8,9 cm | 9.9 × 7.1 × 3.5 in

PROVENANCE

Galerie Mitterand, Paris, France
Thomas B. Lemann, New Orleans, USA, 2022
Private collection, by descent

CERTIFICATE

The Niki Charitable Art Foundation
has confirmed the authenticity of this work



**Le Miroir
(Magie du miroir)**

1980

Polyester, painted wood, mirrored glass
Edition: 13/20
Signed 'Niki' and numbered '13/20' on the reverse
105,9 × 152 × 25,4 cm | 41.7 × 59.8 × 10 in

PROVENANCE
Galerie Bonnier, Geneva, Switzerland
Private collection, Geneva, Switzerland

LITERATURE
Lucia Pesapane and Annabelle Ténèze (ed.),
Niki de Saint Phalle. Les Années 1980 et 1990. L'art en liberté,
Gallimard | Les Abattoirs, Paris, 2022, ill. in colours p. 120

CERTIFICATE
The Niki Charitable Art Foundation
has confirmed the authenticity of this work



The Blue Falcon

1980

Painted polyester, metal,
light bulbs and electric system
Edition: 3/4 AP (Edition of 8)

Signed and numbered 'Niki E.A. III/IV'
on the base, Haligon stamp on the left leg
66 × 37 × 21 cm | 26 × 14.6 × 8.3 in

PROVENANCE
Private collection, Switzerland

CERTIFICATE
The Niki Charitable Art Foundation
has confirmed the authenticity of this work



Charly

1981

Painted resin
Edition: 15/20
Signed 'Niki' and numbered '15/20';
Haligon stamp on the bottom
109 × 119 × 74 cm | 42.9 × 46.9 × 29.1 in

PROVENANCE
Private collection

LITERATURE
Lucia Pesapane and Annabelle Ténèze (ed.),
Niki de Saint Phalle. Les Années 1980 et 1990. L'art en liberté,
Gallimard | Les Abattoirs, Paris, 2022, ill. in colours p. 131
Martin Eidelberg (ed.), *Le Plaisir de l'objet : nouveau regard
sur les Arts Décoratifs du XX^e siècle*, Flammarion, Paris, 1997,
ill. in colours p. 54

CERTIFICATE
The Niki Charitable Art Foundation
has confirmed the authenticity of this work



Clarice, Chaise Femme

1982

Painted resin
Edition: 5/6
Signed 'Niki' and numbered 'V/VI',
Haligon stamp on the bottom
122 × 113 × 81 cm | 48 × 44.5 × 31.9 in

PROVENANCE
Private collection

EXHIBITED
Montreal, Galerie Esperanza, «Sculptures et Lithographies»,
12 April–14 May 1983 (another edition exhibited)

Bonn, Kunst und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik
Deutschland, «Niki de Saint Phalle», 19 June–1 November
1992; Glasgow, McLellan Galleries, 22 January–4 April
1993; Paris, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, 24
June–12 September 1993 (another edition exhibited)

Regensburg, Kunstkabinett, «Niki de Saint Phalle: Graphik
und Skulpturen.», December 1996–17 January 1997

Montreal, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, «Le Plaisir de l'objet», 16
May–2 September 1997; Hull, Musée Canadien des Civilisations,
9 October 1997–15 February 1998; Ohio, Cincinnati Art Museum,
15 March–26 May 1998; Richmond, Virginia Museum of
Fine Arts, 16 November 1998–31 January 1999; Louisville, J.B.
Speed Museum, 8 March–23 May 1999; Munich, Die Neue
Sammlung, July–September 1999; Cracow, Muzeum Narodowe
w Krakowie, November 1999–January 2000; Paris, Musée des
Arts Décoratifs, March–May 2000 (another edition exhibited)

Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, «Niki de Saint
Phalle. La vie joyeuse des objets», 9 October–16
December 2001 (another edition exhibited)

San Diego, Mingei International Museum, «Niki de
Saint Phalle Remembered», 5 December 2003–30
June 2004 (another edition exhibited)

LITERATURE
Pontus Hultén (ed.), *Niki de Saint Phalle*, Paris-Musees
Association, Paris, 1990, ill. in colours p. 251
Martin Eidelberg, *Le Plaisir de l'objet : nouveau regard sur
les Arts Décoratifs du XXe siècle*, Flammarion, Paris, 1997, ill.
in colours p. 55
Lucia Pesapane and Annabelle Ténèze (ed.),
Niki de Saint Phalle. Les Années 1980 et 1990. L'art en liberté,
Gallimard | Les Abattoirs, Paris, 2022, ill. in colours p. 130

CERTIFICATE
The Niki Charitable Art Foundation
has confirmed the authenticity of this work



Le Chameau

1986

Painted resin

Edition: 1/50

Haligon stamp under the front leg;
numbered and signed

'1/50 / Niki de Saint Phalle'

on a plaque under the rear leg
24 × 40 × 10 cm | 9.4 × 15.7 × 3.9 in

PROVENANCE

Private collection

CERTIFICATE

The Niki Charitable Art Foundation
has confirmed the authenticity of this work



**La Fontaine aux 4 Nanas,
Les Quatre Baigneuses**

1988-1990

Painted resin

Edition: 2/150

Numbered and signed '2/150 / Niki de Saint Phalle'
on a metal plaque; Haligon stamp on the underside
14 × 50 × 46 cm | 5.5 × 19.7 × 18.1 in

PROVENANCE

Private collection

LITERATURE

Numa Hambursin, *Niki de Saint Phalle. L'ombre et la lumière.
Shadow and Line*, In Fine, Paris, 2019, ill. in colours p. 89

CERTIFICATE

The Niki Charitable Art Foundation
has confirmed the authenticity of this work



L'Oiseau amoureux

1990-1992

Painted polyester

Edition: 1/3

Signed and numbered 'Niki de Saint Phalle 1/3'
on the foot; Haligon stamp

155 × 150 × 60 cm | 61 × 59.1 × 23.6 in

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio

Galerie Jamileh Weber, Zurich, Switzerland

Private collection, Switzerland, 1994

CERTIFICATE

The Niki Charitable Art Foundation

has confirmed the authenticity of this work



La Conversation

1991

Painted resin
Edition: 1/20
Numbered and signed
'1/20 / Niki de Saint Phalle' on a plaque;
Haligon stamp on the bottom side
105 × 153 × 90 cm | 41.3 × 60.2 × 35.4 in

PROVENANCE
Private collection

LITERATURE
Lucia Pesapane and Annabelle Ténèze (ed.),
Niki de Saint Phalle. Les Années 1980 et 1990. L'art en liberté,
Gallimard | Les Abattoirs, Paris, 2022, ill. in colours p. 100

CERTIFICATE
The Niki Charitable Art Foundation
has confirmed the authenticity of this work



Pouf Serpent Jaune

1991

Painted resin
Edition: 12/20 (10 AP)
Numbered and signed
'12/20 / Niki de Saint Phalle' on a plaque
on the bottom; Haligon stamp
185 × 80 × 90 cm | 72.8 × 31.5 × 35.4 in

PROVENANCE
Artist's studio
Private collection

CERTIFICATE
The Niki Charitable Art Foundation
has confirmed the authenticity of this work



Lampe Angulaire

1992

Painted polyester, metal and light bulbs

Edition: 2/7

Stamped 'Plastiques / Haligon / d'Art';

signed and numbered on the back

on a label 'Niki de Saint Phalle, 2/7'

198 × 124 × 50 cm | 78 × 48.8 × 19.7 in

PROVENANCE

Private collection, USA

EXHIBITED

Paris, Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais,

«Niki de Saint Phalle 1930-2002»,

17 September 2014–2 February 2015; Bilbao, Guggenheim

Museum, 27 February–7 June 2015 (another edition exhibited)

LITERATURE

Camille Morineau (ed.), *Niki de Saint Phalle: 1930-2002*,

RMN-Grand Palais, Paris, 2014, exh. cat.,

No. 165, ill. in colours p. 299

Lucia Pesapane and Annabelle Ténèze (ed.),

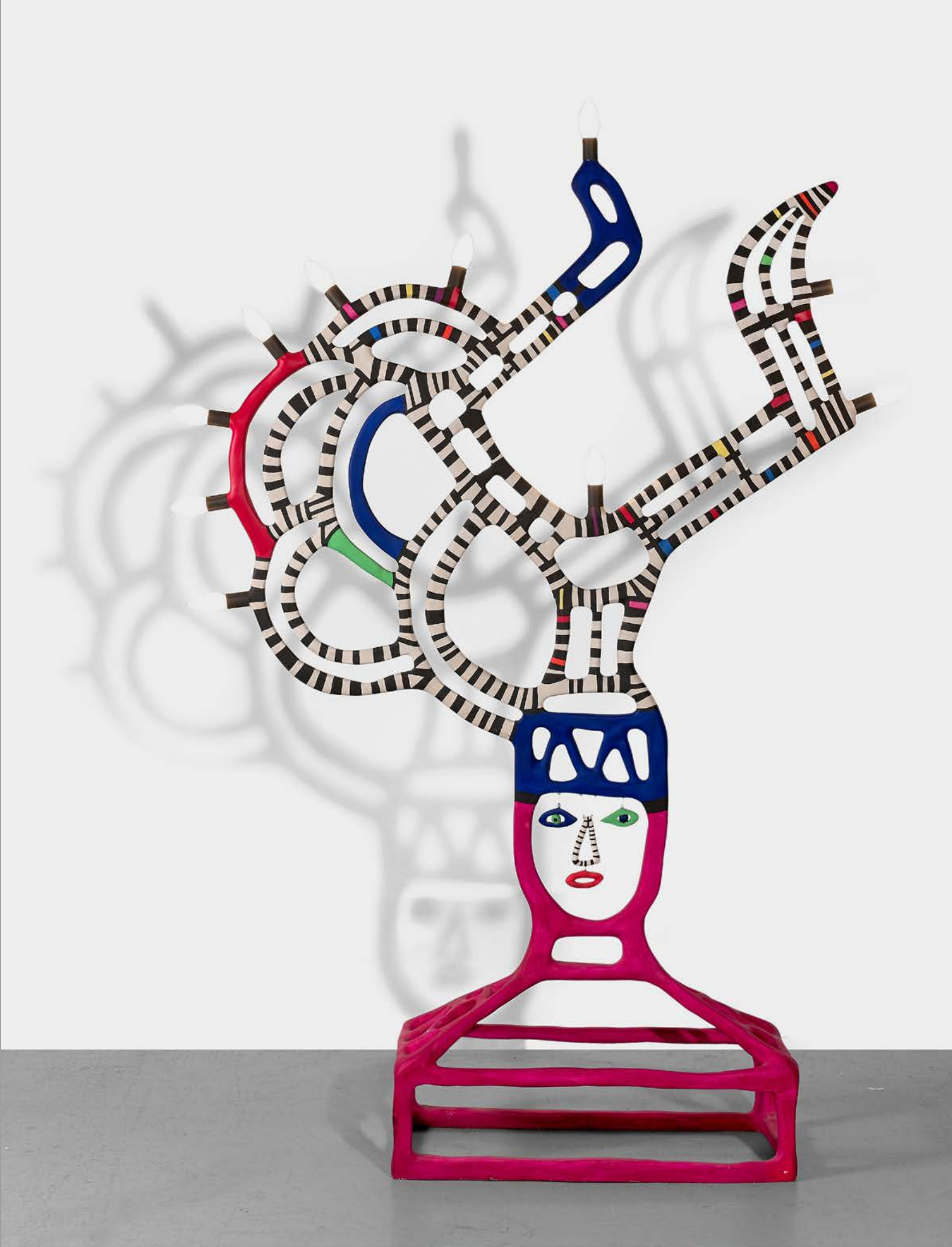
Niki de Saint Phalle. Les Années 1980 et 1990. L'art en liberté,

Gallimard | Les Abattoirs, Paris, 2022, ill. in colours p. 20

CERTIFICATE

The Niki Charitable Art Foundation

has confirmed the authenticity of this work



Ange Vase

1993

Painted polyester
and ceramic, iron base
Edition: 12/50

Signed and numbered
'12/50 / Niki de Saint Phalle';
Haligon stamp on the inside of the vase
99 × 57 × 32 cm | 39 × 22.4 × 12.6 in

PROVENANCE

Galerie Vogel, Heidelberg, Germany
Private collection, Baden-Württemberg, Germany
Private collection, Paris, France

LITERATURE

Lucia Pesapane and Annabelle Ténèze (ed.),
Niki de Saint Phalle. Les Années 1980 et 1990. L'art en liberté,
Gallimard | Les Abattoirs, Paris, 2022, ill. in colours p. 127
Numa Hambursin, *Niki de Saint Phalle. L'ombre et la lumière*,
Shadow and Line, In Fine, Paris, 2019, ill. in colours p. 86

CERTIFICATE

The Niki Charitable Art Foundation
has confirmed the authenticity of this work



The Unicorn

1994

Painted polyester resin on metal base

Edition: 1/8 (4 AP)

Signed 'Niki' on the horse's cape;
numbered '1/8' and stamped
with the foundry mark on the rear leg
106,7 × 142,2 × 30,5 cm | 42 × 56 × 12 in

PROVENANCE

Coplan Gallery, Boca Raton, USA

Estate of Donald Maharamn, Florida, USA, 1995

EXHIBITED

Rome, Fondazione Roma Museo, «Niki de Saint Phalle»,
4 November 2009–17 January 2010,
exh. cat., ill. colours pp. 104-105 (another edition exhibited)

Williamstown, Williams College Museum of Art,
«This Girl Bends: Art and Feminism Since 1960»,
26 June–12 December 2010 (another edition exhibited)

Katonah, Katonah Museum of Art,
«Constant Carnival: The Haas Brothers in Context»,
13 March–26 June 2022 (another edition exhibited)



Dawn Jaune

1995

Painted resin
Edition: 3/3 AP (Edition of 5)
Signed and dated 'Niki de Saint Phalle 95'
on the back of the left leg;
signed 'Niki' on the right foot, foundry stamp
144 × 114 × 41 cm | 56.7 × 44.9 × 16.1 in

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio
Private collection

LITERATURE

Lucia Pesapane and Annabelle Ténèze (ed.),
Niki de Saint Phalle. Les Années 1980 et 1990.
L'art en liberté, Gallimard | Les Abattoirs, Paris, 2022,
ill. in colours p. 25

CERTIFICATE

The Niki Charitable Art Foundation
has confirmed the authenticity of this work



**I Am Upside Down,
Green (Remembering)**

1997

Acrylic on polyester resin

Edition: 3/5

Not signed

117 × 80 × 14 cm | 46.1 × 31.5 × 5.5 in

PROVENANCE

Tasende Gallery, La Jolla, USA
Private collection

EXHIBITED

San Diego, Mingei Museum, «Niki de Saint Phalle.
Insider/Outsider World Inspired Art»,
24 May 1998–31 January 1999, exh. cat.,
Mingei International Museum-Balboa Park,
San Diego, California, 1998, ill. p. 117

LITERATURE

Niki de Saint-Phalle Catalogue Raisonné 1949 - 2000,
Vol. I, Acatos, Lausanne, 2001, No. 645, ill. in colours p. 294

CERTIFICATE

The Niki Charitable Art Foundation
has confirmed the authenticity of this work



Shamu - You Are My Killer Whale

1997

Fiberglass and painted polyester

Unique piece

Not signed

81,2 × 142,2 × 15,2 cm | 32 × 56 × 6 in

PROVENANCE

Artist's studio

Private collection, Switzerland, 1998

LITERATURE

Niki de Saint Phalle, Catalogue raisonné, œuvres de 1949-2000, vol. I, Acatos, Lausanne, 2001, No. 667, ill. in colours p. 304

CERTIFICATE

The Niki Charitable Art Foundation

has confirmed the authenticity of this work



Sun God Vase

2001-2003

Acrylic and resin on polyester resin

Edition: 6/12

Signed and numbered 'Niki de Saint Phalle 6/12'

on a brass plaque affixed to the underside

52,5 × 55 × 20 cm | 20.7 × 21.7 × 7.9 in

PROVENANCE

Mitterrand + Cramer, Geneva, Switzerland

Private collection, 2008



Niki de Saint Phalle Biography

Niki de Saint Phalle (1930 – 2002) was a self taught French-American artist who was born in France and grew up in New York. Saint Phalle lived and worked between France, Switzerland and the United States. The artist worked fluidly across a range of mediums: painting, sculpture, engraving, performance, writing and film. Her creations presented an assertive and unique point of view. She joined the Nouveaux Réalistes group in 1964 through her husband, Swiss artist Jean Tinguely.

Saint Phalle was originally propelled into the spotlight for her violent shooting performances, during which she used firearms to burst riots of colour from objects, transforming the action into assemblage paintings. She was later celebrated for her "Nanas", whimsical figures made from unconventional materials depicting animals, monsters, and females. Her voluptuous sculptures, exhibited in cities and prestigious museums worldwide, are emblematic of a vibrant, idealised woman. ●



- 1930

October 29, Catherine Marie-Agnès Fal de Saint Phalle was born in Neuilly-sur-Seine, France. As a young child, she was raised by a nanny she called "Nana".
- 1949

At age 18, Niki de Saint Phalle married her childhood friend Harry Mathews. Their first child Laura was born in 1951.
- 1953

Niki suffered from severe depression and moved to a psychiatric hospital in Nice. During her stay, she started exploring with paintings, which became a therapeutic form of expression.
- 1955

Her second child Philip was born. She moved to Madrid, then Barcelona, where she encountered the fantastical architecture of Antoni Gaudi.
- 1956

Niki de Saint Phalle completed a series of oil paintings. That year, she met Swiss sculptor Jean Tinguely, who assisted her to create her first sculpture. Saint Phalle would collaborate intensively with her New Realist friends.

Saint Phalle would later marry Jean Tinguely in 1971.
- 1959

Saint Phalle held her first public shooting performance. A dozen more sessions would occur between 1961 and 1963.
- 1961

In June, her first solo exhibition “Feu à volonté (Fire at will)” was organised by Pierre Restany and his wife at Galerie J. The same year, the MoMA in New York also exhibited her art.
- 1967

The Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam exhibited “Les Nanas au pouvoir (Nana Power)”, Niki’s first museum show.
- 1978

Saint Phalle began her ambitious construction for the “Tarot Garden”, her self-financed project for 20 years.
- 1980

Saint Phalle released her first collections of furniture and decorative objects.

The Centre Pompidou exhibited Niki de Saint Phalle’s first retrospective.
- 1983

The artist created the “Stravinsky Fountain” in Paris with husband Jean Tinguely.
- 1998

In May, the "Tarot Garden" was opened to the public. 22 monumental sculptures were unveiled, inspired by the divinatory tarot.
- 2002

Niki de Saint Phalle passed away on May 25th of respiratory failure in San Diego, California.

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Niki de Saint Phalle, 1972
(Niki smiles) © Laurent
Condominas

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Niki de Saint Phalle
during the exhibition "Les
Nouveaux Réalistes", Neue
Galerie, Kunstler Haus,
Munich, 10 February 1963
© Keystone Press / Alamy
Banque d'Images



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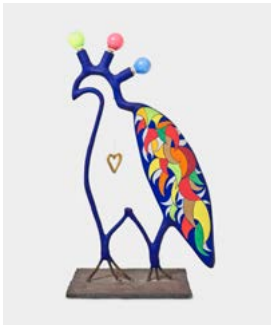
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This publication was created for the exhibition
"Niki de Saint Phalle: Garden of Joy"
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Cover

Niki de Saint Phalle, *Ange Vase*, 1993

OPERA GALLERY

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Niki de Saint Phalle
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