

The Menil Collection announces the release of a new publication on artist Niki de Saint Phalle

The first North American exhibition and catalogue to survey the artist's radical work of the 1960s

HOUSTON—August 3, 2021—The Menil Collection and the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego (MCASD) are pleased to announce the release of an exhibition catalogue to accompany *Niki de Saint Phalle in the 1960s*, the first major U.S. show to focus on the artist's radical work of that decade. The exhibition and book explore two significant series in Saint Phalle's career: the *Tirs*, or "shooting paintings," and the powerful *Nanas*, lively sculptures of the female form. *Niki de Saint Phalle in the 1960s* will be **on view at the Menil from September 10, 2021–January 23, 2022**, before traveling to San Diego in April 2022.

Published by the Menil and MCASD, the volume was edited by exhibition cocurators Jill Dawsey, the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, and Michelle White, The Menil Collection. The catalogue also features scholarly essays by Amelia Jones and Alena J. Williams, a creative response by Ariana Reines, and contributions from Molly Everett and Kyla McDonald.

Central to the book are beautifully printed reproductions of *Tirs* and *Nanas*, as well as related works of the time. Texts explore the impact of Saint Phalle's identity as a French-American artist, and the feminist origins and political context of her work, whether gun-shot paintings or outsized, exuberant *Nanas* sculptures. A highlight of the book is the first-ever comprehensive and heavily illustrated chronology of all of Saint Phalle's known shooting sessions in Europe and the U.S., drawn from research conducted at the Niki Charitable Art Foundation, with archival images of the artist's participatory and performance-based practice. In addition to a short biographical chronology, the book contains numerous period photographs of the artist with her work.

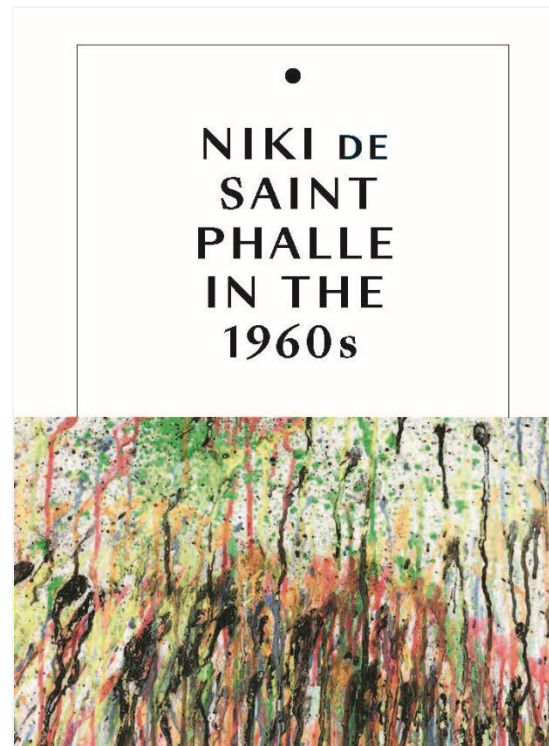
The book will be available for purchase [online](#) and at the [Menil Collection Bookstore](#) September 2021. The exhibition *Niki de Saint Phalle in the 1960s* is cocurated by Michelle White, Senior Curator, The Menil Collection, and Jill Dawsey, Curator, the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego. The catalogue is distributed by [Yale University Press](#).

Price \$50. 248 pages, 135 color + b/w illus., 7 1/4 x 10 inches. ISBN: 9780300260106.

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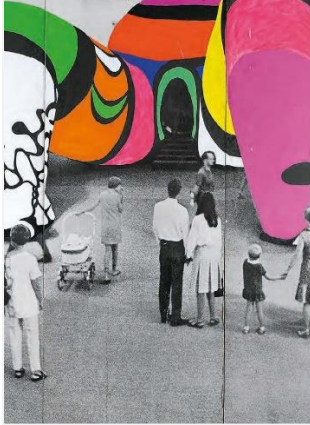
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NIKI DE SAINT PHALLE IN THE 1960s

Curated by
Michelle Wilks

With reviews by
Annela Jansen, Arlene Hester, and Susan Williams
and contributions by
Mark Rosenthal and Viki Richards

The Maud Collette, Houston
Department of Contemporary Art and Design
Coordinated by Yale University Press, New Haven and London

1961

Location: Houston, Texas, USA
Curator: Michelle Wilks
With reviews by: Annela Jansen, Arlene Hester, and Susan Williams
Contributions by: Mark Rosenthal and Viki Richards

In the early 1960s, Niki de Saint Phalle moved to Paris, France, where she met the artist Jean Tinguely. Together, they created the 'Nanas', a series of large, colorful, female figures that became a signature of her work. This photograph captures her in a public square in Paris, surrounded by people, likely during the early 1960s.

By the mid-1960s, Saint Phalle had become a prominent figure in the art world. Her work was characterized by vibrant colors and bold, abstract forms. The 'Nanas' series, which began in the early 1960s, became a major focus of her artistic output. These large-scale sculptures, often made of fabric and paper, depicted women in various poses and activities, reflecting her interest in the female form and social issues.

1972

In her 1972 exhibition, 'The Nanas', Niki de Saint Phalle presented a series of large-scale sculptures of women, known as the 'Nanas'. These sculptures, often made of fabric and paper, depicted women in various poses and activities, reflecting her interest in the female form and social issues. The exhibition was held at the Maud Collette in Houston, Texas, and was curated by Michelle Wilks.

The 'Nanas' series was a continuation of Saint Phalle's work from the 1960s, but it also reflected her growing interest in social and political issues. Many of the sculptures depicted women in situations of vulnerability or distress, such as the 'Nana' that was a woman being held back by a large, colorful, abstract form. This work was a response to the feminist movement and the social changes of the time.

THE FIRST FREE WOMEN

Niki de Saint Phalle's Nanas

I remember... being on 57th Street in New York a long time ago, and I saw a person I did not know at the time. It later turned out it was Niki de Saint Phalle, the French artist. She was walking on 57th Street and she had on one of those Australian raincoats, the black oil cloth, and it was flowing over her behind. She had a cowboy hat and cowboy boots and no purse—very important to me. I don't know why she had no purse. And I thought, "That is the first free woman I have ever seen in real life."

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