

Tang Contemporary Art presents:

Niki de Saint Phalle Solo Exhibition

Artist: Niki de Saint Phalle

Curator: Beili Wang

Exhibition Dates: July 12 – August 17, 2019

Location: 10/F, H Queen's, 80 Queen's Road Central, Central, Hong Kong

Opening Reception: Friday, July 12, 6 – 8 pm

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (HONG KONG – June 19, 2019):



The Bride

Polished bronze, palladium, silver plated parts, 200 x 200 x 82 cm,
1965 – 1992

《新娘》

拋光青銅、鈹金、鍍銀改件 | 200 x 200 x 82 cm | 1965 - 1992

Tang Contemporary Art is pleased to present *Niki de Saint Phalle Solo Exhibition*, an exhibition in collaboration with Niki Charitable Art Foundation and Galerie Mitterand, celebrating the discovery of this legendary French-American female artist in Asia.

Born in France and raised in the USA, Niki de Saint Phalle (1930-2002) was one of the most legendary women artists of the 20th century. She appeared on the art world scene in the early 60s as the only female member of the Nouveaux Realistes in Paris. She had no formal art education but learnt from her family and travels, she was also deeply influenced by numerous artists from the Middle Ages to Matisse and Pollock. In her mid-twenties, she suffered a major nervous breakdown and was hospitalised. Niki began creating art as therapy and voice to express her anger and hope in a primitive and experimental style using symbols like animals, monsters and female figures. Saint Phalle created a series of works in the early 1960s that were featured in her first exhibition *Tirs (Shooting Paintings)*. She suspended bags of paint in front of the white-painted assemblage and shot the assemblage with a pistol or rifle, causing the bags filled with paint to “bleed”. In 1963, she

created a series of sculptures protesting stereotypical societal roles for women as brides, birth-givers and prostitutes. Over time, her *Nanas* became more joyful, whimsical and colourful: she decided to glorify and liberate women. Saint Phalle used to be a fashion model in her teens and was very skinny herself but wanted to celebrate the female curves as well as women of all shapes and forms. These sculptures broke free from the social constraints imposed on women and advocated for universal empowerment for all women.



Tarot Garden, Tuscany, Italy, 1978 - 1998
《塔羅花園》| 托斯卡尼 | 意大利 | 1978-1998

In the 1970s, Saint Phalle began ambitiously working on large scale architectural public art projects. At this point of her life she wanted to create works that would bring joy, humour and colour to people's lives. To name a few examples: in 1972 Saint Phalle was commissioned to build a giant sculpture in Jerusalem and created a monumental dragon with 3 tongues, depicting 3 religions, for children to play together. In 1983, after receiving the invitation from French president François Mitterrand, Saint Phalle and Jean Tinguely created the Stravinsky Fountain in Paris. From the late 70s, Niki initiated the famous *Tarot Garden* (1978-1998) in Tuscany, Italy, with her artist and architect friends. This ambitious project with buildings and monumental sculptures based on Tarot cards became a lifetime signature project of Niki until she passed away in 2002.

She also produced design objects that went against the aesthetic of functionalism and challenged the usual narrative of Modernist design. In 1980, Saint Phalle began creating a series of polyester snake chairs, vases and lamps. In the early 1990s, she returned to the United States due to health reasons where she lived until her death in 2002. During her decade in the United States, Saint Phalle built a new sculpture garden: *Queen Califia's Magical Circle* (1999-2003) which is her last public artwork.

Like a phoenix, Niki de Saint Phalle always rose from her ashes. She struggled with mental and physical health but found a way to heal through her art. As she declared in a drawing near the end of her life, "La mort n'existe pas/Life is eternal" ("Death doesn't exist/Life is eternal"). Niki lived through her art and became a symbol of women's free will, love and hope.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Niki de Saint Phalle (1930-2002) born in France but raised in the USA, was one of the most legendary women artists of the 20th century. She appeared on the art world scene in the early 60's as the only female member of the Nouveaux Realistes in Paris. She caused an uproar and rose to fame "shooting" her paintings with a rifle. She then moved on to focus on a series of the various "roles" of women such as brides, births, prostitutes, Nanas and "Devouring Mothers". This was an obvious critic of the status of women in society, as well as their place in it. In the 70's, Saint Phalle began to create large colorful public art, her most important being the TAROT GARDEN in Italy to which she devoted 20 years of her life. In the early 90's she returned to the U.S., after the death of her husband and longtime collaborator, kinetic artist Jean Tinguely. There she continued creating art until her death, documenting her life and cultural clashes that her return to the U.S. had brought her.

ABOUT TANG CONTEMPORARY ART

Tang Contemporary Art was established in 1997 in Bangkok, later establishing galleries in Beijing and Hong Kong. The gallery is fully committed to producing critical projects and exhibitions to promote Chinese contemporary art regionally and worldwide, and encourage a dynamic exchange between Chinese artists and those abroad. Acting as one of the most progressive and critically driven exhibition spaces in China, the gallery strives to initiate dialogue between artists, curators, collectors and institutions working both locally and internationally. A roster of groundbreaking exhibitions has earned them international recognition, establishing their status as a pioneer of the contemporary art scene in Asia.

Tang Contemporary Art represents leading figures in Chinese art including Ai Weiwei, Huang Yongping, Shen Yuan, Wang Du, Liu Xiaodong, Yang Jiechang, Xia Xiaowan, Sun Yuan & Peng Yu, Yan Lei, Wang Yin, Wang Yuping, Yangjiang Group, Guo Wei, Zheng Guogu, Lin Yilin, He An, Zhao Zhao, Wang Yuyang, Weng Fen, Yang Yong, Xu Qu, Xu Xiaoguo, Ji Zhou, Cai Lei, Ling Jian, Liu Yujia, Zhu Jinshi, Qin Qi, Chen Yujun, Chen Yufan and Chen Wenbo, additionally collaborating with international artists such as H.H.Lim, Rirkrit Tiravanija, Sakarin Krue-On, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Adel Abdessemed, Dinh Q.Le, Michael Zelehoski, Jennifer Wen Ma, Rodel Tapaya, Natee Utarit and Heri Dono.

Tang Contemporary Art
10th Floor, 80 Queen's Road Central, Central, Hong Kong
Gallery Hours: Tuesday to Saturday, 11am – 7pm

info@tangcontemporary.com.hk | +852 2682 8289
WeChat: tang_contemporary
IG: tangcontemporaryart