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MoMA PS1 TO PRESENT FIRST NEW YORK EXHIBITION OF NIKI DE SAINT PHALLE OPENING MARCH 11

LONG ISLAND CITY, New York, February 8, 2021— MoMA PS1 presents the first New York museum exhibition of the work of visionary feminist artist Niki de Saint Phalle (American and French, 1930–2002). On view from March 11 to September 6, 2021, *Niki de Saint Phalle: Structures for Life* will feature over 200 works created from the mid-1960s until the artist's death, including sculptures, prints, drawings, jewelry, films, and archival materials. Highlighting Saint Phalle's interdisciplinary approach and engagement with key social and political issues, the exhibition will focus on works that she created to transform environments, individuals, and society.

From the beginning of her career in the 1950s, Saint Phalle pushed against accepted artistic practices, creating work that used assemblage as well as performative and collaborative modes of production. Saint Phalle initially gained attention in the early 1960s with her *Tirs,* paintings produced by firing a gun at plaster reliefs to release pockets of paint, and *Nanas*, brightly colored sculptures of female figures whose sinuous curves would inform much of her work to come. Beginning in the late 1960s, Saint Phalle started producing large-scale sculptures, which led to an expansion of her practice into architectural projects, sculpture gardens, books, prints, films, theater sets, clothing, jewelry, and, famously, her own perfume.

Central to the exhibition is an examination of Saint Phalle's large-scale outdoor sculptures and architectural projects, including *Le rêve de l'oiseau* (built for Rainer von Diez between 1968 and 1971); *Golem*, a playground in Jerusalem (1971-72); *Le Dragon de Knokke*, a children's playhouse in Belgium (1973-75); and *La fontaine Stravinsky* (1983); among others. These are represented in the exhibition by the many models she made in preparation for and in homage to her architectural works, as well as through a wide selection of archival materials—many of which have never before been exhibited.

The ideas explored in these works culminated in Saint Phalle's central life project, *Tarot Garden*, a massive architectural park outside Rome, Italy, which she began constructing in the late 1970s and continued to develop alongside key collaborators until her death. Opened to the public in 1998, the garden and its structures, which are based on the 22 Major Arcana of the tarot deck, allow for moments of interaction and reflection that underscore Saint Phalle's use of art to alter perception. The exhibition will include photographs and drawings of *Tarot Garden* as well as models that Saint Phalle created for its various structures. For Saint Phalle, these structures were charged spaces of imagination from which she envisioned experimental societies emerging, places "where you could have a new kind of life, to just be free."

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Saint Phalle also created a series of innovative works that reflect an ethos of collaboration and engagement with the politics of social space. Addressing subjects that ranged from women's rights to climate change and HIV/AIDS awareness, Saint Phalle was often at the vanguard in addressing the social and political issues of her time. Her illustrated book, *AIDS: You Can't Catch It Holding Hands* (1986), written in collaboration with Dr. Silvio Barandun, worked to destigmatize the disease and was translated into six languages.

Niki de Saint Phalle: Structures for Life is organized by Ruba Katrib, Curator, with Josephine Graf, Assistant Curator, MoMA PS1.

Niki de Saint Phalle was born in Neuilly-sur-Seine, France and raised in New York City. In 1948, at age 18, she married the writer Harry Matthews. They moved to Paris in 1952, and shortly thereafter Saint Phalle was hospitalized for a nervous breakdown and began painting as a therapeutic activity. In the late 1950s, Saint Phalle met artist Jean Tinguely, an important collaborator whom she married in 1971. She was the only female member of the Nouveau Réalisme group with Tinguely, Arman, Christo, and Yves Klein, among others. In 1961, the first solo exhibition of Saint Phalle's work was held at Galerie J, Paris. That same year, her work was included in the exhibition *The Art of Assemblage* at The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Saint Phalle was the subject of a retrospective at the Ulm Museum, Germany, and Centre Pompidou, Paris in 1980, and at the Kunsthalle Bonn in 1992. In 1994, she moved to California, where she lived until her death in 2002. Posthumously, her work has been the subject of major exhibitions at Tate Liverpool (2008); Grand Palais, Paris (2014); and the Power Station of Art, Shanghai (2018). Saint Phalle is represented in public collections including The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; and Tate Gallery, London.

PUBLICATION

In conjunction with *Niki de Saint Phalle: Structures for Life*, a new publication brings attention to Saint Phalle's work in architecture and public sculpture, and the commercial products such as perfume and jewelry that she produced to fund these ambitious projects. Featuring a wide selection of images of her architectural works and rarely seen archival materials, the book serves as a survey of her practice from the 1960s until the early 2000s. Edited and with an essay by exhibition curator Ruba Katrib, the publication features new scholarship by Anne Dressen, Nick Mauss, Alex Kitnick, and Lanka Tattersall.

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ABOUT MoMA PS1

MoMA PS1 champions how art and artists are at the intersection of the social, cultural, and political issues of their time. Providing audiences with the agency to ask questions, access to knowledge, and a forum for public debate, PS1 has offered insight into artists' diverse worldviews for more than 40 years. Founded in 1976 by Alanna Heiss, the institution was a defining force in the alternative space movement in New York City, transforming a nineteenth century public schoolhouse in Long Island City into a site for artistic experimentation and creativity. PS1 has been a member of New York City's Cultural Institutions Group (CIG) since 1982 and affiliated with The Museum of Modern Art since 2000.

Hours: MoMA PS1 is open from 12:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Thursday through Saturday, and until 6:00 p.m. on Sundays and Mondays. Closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day.

Admission: $10 suggested admission; $5 for students and senior citizens; free for New York City residents and MoMA members. Free admission for NYC residents is made possible by The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation. Entry is by advance timed ticket only and capacity is limited. Tickets must be reserved online at mo.ma/ps1tickets.

Visitor Guide: Discover even more from PS1 with the Bloomberg Connects app. Read wall text, hear directly from artists, and uncover the building's history with this multimedia

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MoMA PS1
22-25 Jackson Ave
Long Island City, NY 11101

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visitor guide. This digital experience is made possible through the support of Bloomberg Philanthropies.

Directions: MoMA PS1 is located at 22-25 Jackson Avenue at 46th Ave in Long Island City, Queens, across the Queensboro Bridge from midtown Manhattan. Traveling by subway, take the E, M, or 7 to Court Sq; or the G to Court Sq or 21 St-Van Alst. By bus, take the Q67 to Jackson and 46th Ave or the B62 to 46th Ave.

Information: For general inquiries, call (718) 784-2084 or visit moma.org/ps1.

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