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NIKI DE SAINT PHALLE

How the sculptor/painter exorcised her demons

Even though Niki de Saint Phalle grew up in a privileged family, her childhood was far from it. Her father abused her, her cold mother rejected her. She was also always frail of health, with many breathing problems laying her down for extended periods throughout her life.

Such was the tough base Niki fought against, demons haunting her.

Known for her monumental faceless colorful sculptures of iconized femininity (“Nanas”) as well as her splashy paintings and often outrageous films and performance art, de Saint Phalle drew victory from hardship in her success and great acclaim. From an enormous figure of a woman housing an amusement park into which one entered through the vagina, to a film dealing with her guilt over her father’s abuse, questioning whether she may have enticed it, shocking even her own companion, fellow “new realist” sculptor Jean Tinguely, she worked through such darkness, her work always very bright, joyful, indeed exuberant to the point of being in your face and with that element of rebellion, reveling in shocking the *bourgeois*.

This biography, in a growing series from NBM, narrates her colorful and dramatic life in chapters headed by Tarot cards, in deference to one of her major works: *The Tarot Garden*, each cleverly setting a Tarot theme to that part of her life. Authored by two women, the art’s naivete, and its sparing use of spot color is a perfect interpretation of her: beautiful as to have started as a model, conflicted yet cheery, frail yet energetic, but never losing her childlike wonder. At the end, you’ll find a clear chronology of her life’s accomplishments.

Other bios from NBM include *Monet*, *Itinerant of Light*, *Billie Holiday*, *Sartre*, from artists to philosophers to musicians, to thugs such as the recent *Billy the Kid* by Rick Geary. All have been met with great acclaim, many going back to press.

For interviews or further information, please be in touch with our publicist Stefan Blitz:
publicity@nbmpub.com.

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