

NEW RELEASE KEHRER VERLAG

Opelvillen Rüsselsheim

Niki de Saint Phalle und das Theater
- At Last I Found the Treasure

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Catalog accompanying the first comprehensive exhibition focusing on the role of the theatre in Niki de Saint Phalle's work

Very early on, Niki de Saint Phalle (1930 – 2002) discovered the theater as a source of inspiration. She wrote her first play when she was only a young student. With *Lysistrata*, presented in the Staatstheater in Kassel in 1966, an intensive cooperation began with the director Rainer von Diez, for whose production Niki de Saint Phalle designed the costumes and scenery. Artistic work for the stage proved to be an important field of experimentation for the artist. Fascinated by the possibility of the active participation of the audience, Niki de Saint Phalle then wrote the stage play *ICH*, which was presented in Kassel on the occasion of the 1968 documenta exhibition.

The role played by theater in her art after 1968 has remained largely unrecognized. This publication demonstrates for the first time to what extent Niki de Saint Phalle was fascinated by the theater and how this affected her work. Through this new point of view it will be possible to analyse the screen prints developed from the stage play *ICH* in a new way. The unique perspective on her works sheds new light on her oeuvre in general and especially on the large series revolving around the theme of love.

Exhibition

Niki de Saint Phalle und das Theater
Opelvillen, Rüsselsheim
07.12.2016 – March 2017

»The exhibition 'At Last I Found the Treasure – Niki de Saint Phalle and the Theatre' was conceived in order, for the first time, to present the artist, with more than a hundred objects, models, screen prints, and posters, as a significant force for performative art and theatre in the 1960s.«

– from the text by Beate Kemfert, Renate Goldmann and Erik Stephan

»Theatre has always fascinated me. At age 20, I attended a theatre school in Paris for 2 years. I wanted to be an actress and director. At 22, I had a serious depression, which changed my whole life. I found my way back to theatre years later, when Rainer Diez asked me to make the decor for 'Lysistrata'. I loved this work. It's one of my favourite plays.«

– Niki de Saint Phalle

www.opelvillen.de

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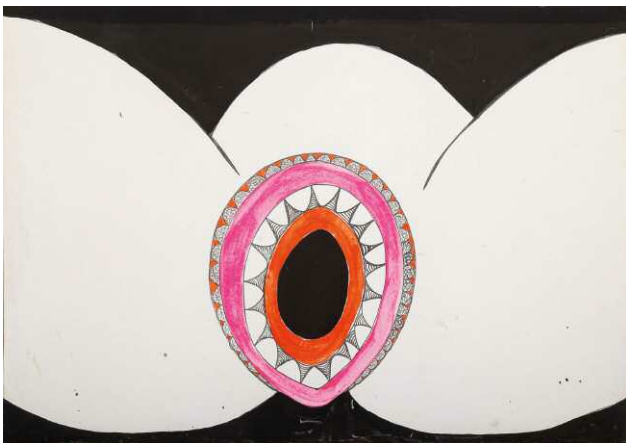
Press images



1 Niki de Saint Phalle in front of the poster for *Lysistrata*, Kassel 1966
© 2016 Niki Charitable Art Foundation / Adagp, Paris



2 Sketch of the ICH mask, 1968
© VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2016



3 Sketch of the lap of the woman in labour for *ICH*, 1968
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4 First model of the stage set for *lysistrata*, 1966
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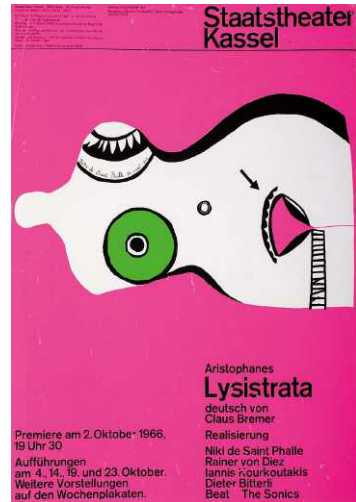
5 Cast of the stage set model for *lysistrata*, 1966
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6 Costume design for *lysistrata*, 1966
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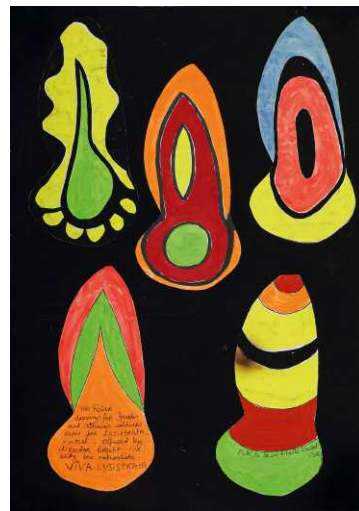
7 Poster *ICH*, Staatstheater Kassel, 1966
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8 Niki de Saint Phalle, Plakat *Lysistrata*, Staatstheater Kassel, 1966
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9 Model of the racing car for *ICH*, 1968
© VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2016



10 Preliminary design for the phalli for *Lysistrata*, 1966
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11 Niki de Saint Phalle and Jean Tinguely reworking the façade the night before the premiere, Photo: unknown



12 Niki de Saint Phalle and Rainer von Diez, Staatstheater Kassel, 1968
Photo: unknown