

# Basic Detail Report

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## Big Bird

### Date

1982

### Primary Maker

Niki de Saint Phalle

### Medium

Polyester resin

### Dimensions

160 x 149.9 x 99 cm

### Description

Although born in France, Niki de Saint Phalle spent her formative years in New York. A self-taught artist, her work from its inception was informed by deeply personal points of reference as well as a diverse range of artistic and anthropological sources which subsequently developed

into an exuberant and subjective mythology. Gaudí's Parc Guell was particularly influential and inspired her to create monumental, high-spirited figures in playground and garden settings. Her shooting paintings or tirs of the early 1960's which involved firing weapons at paint filled assemblages leading to explosions of colour, brought her to prominence and she became a member of the Nouveau Realistes, a French avant-garde group which included Christo and Yves Klein. De Saint Phalle's use of liquid polyester, a medium enabling curvaceous and polychromatic sculptures, resulted in her contracting emphysema. During her period of convalescence the theme of air came to the fore. Big Bird belongs to a body of work from the early 1980's she called Skinnys and described by her as 'air sculptures'. Birds were personally symbolic for her and recur frequently throughout her work. Big Bird's kinetic energy is heightened by his polychrome, coiled lead and the numerous voids through which the spectator can see. (JO'D)