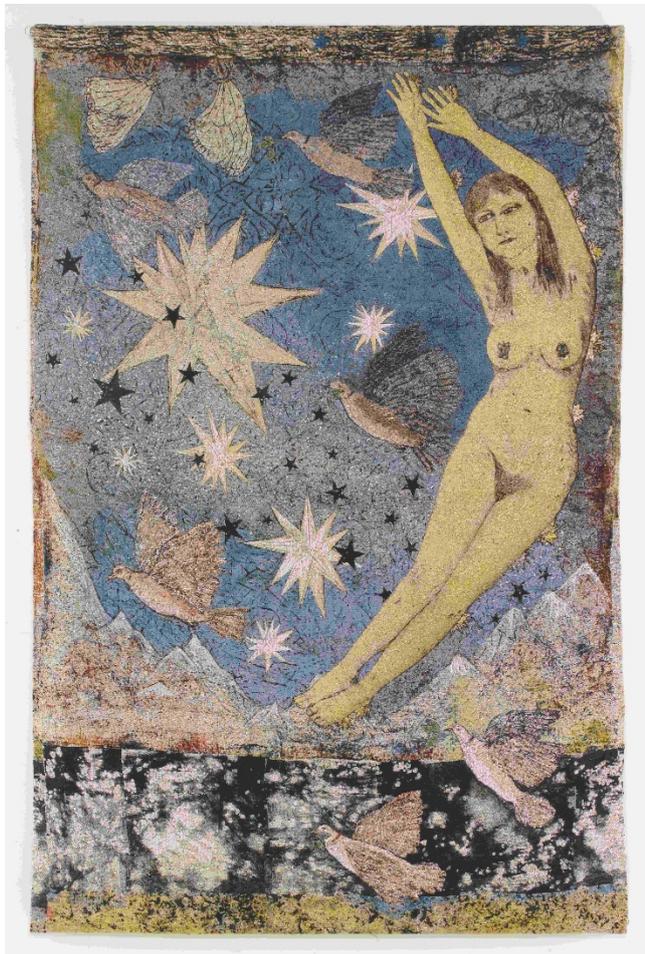


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KIKI SMITH
PROCESSION

Lower Belvedere
7 June to 15 September 2019



Kiki Smith, Sky, 2011

Photograph courtesy the artist and Magnolia Editions, Oakland © Kiki Smith, courtesy Pace Gallery

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Nature and culture, intellect and body, beauty and transience are the conditions of being human that Kiki Smith examines in her work. She reveals the body's fragility while exploring the individual's relationships with animals and the environment. *Procession*, at the Lower Belvedere, brings together some ninety works to construct a spiritual, intellectual, and mythical cosmos. This provides insight into her artistic work stretching from the early 1980s to the present day.

Belvedere Artistic Director Stella Rollig says, "*Kiki Smith conveys beauty and mortality as poles of human emotional experience in an unparalleled manner. In view of her works, there is no escape from existential questions. The Lower Belvedere's rooms provide an appropriately grandiose setting for the grace and depth of Kiki Smith's art.*"

While *Procession* places an emphasis on sculptures, works on paper and tapestries will be on view as well. Figures and stories sweep along in a ceremonial parade that underlines the power of the images and their charismatic qualities. The at times radical pictorial inventions and the abundance of diverse materials that Smith employs make for an unparalleled body of work and are indeed trailblazing for a younger generation of artists. Her work touches on the important themes of existence:

"Who owns control of the body? How is the humane to be sought in relationship to another being? What are the implications of the loss of habitat for animals and plants? What is the significance of our existence? Kiki Smith's body of work in its entirety is the answer to 'being in the world,'" says Petra Giloy-Hirtz, curator of the exhibition.

The exhibition, which was previously shown at the Haus der Kunst in Munich and at the Sara Hildén Museum in Tampere, is the largest retrospective of Kiki Smith's work in Europe to date. The title *Procession* is derived from the Latin word *procedere*, a reference to marching forward, advancing, or taking action. The exhibition opens with Smith's early works, which emerged under the influence of volatile socio-political and cultural changes shaped by AIDS and the discourse on sexuality, gender, and feminist activism. Unrestricted by taboos, discomfiture, and the limits of shame, her investigations of the (especially female) body illustrate the *conditio humana* – the human condition. In her objects and drawings, she presents individual body parts, including the foot, arm, ear, tongue, and organs such as the stomach and intestines, or carefully labeled vessels containing supposed bodily fluids, like urine, semen, saliva, blood, sweat, or tears. The inside of the body is turned outwards. Life-sized figures made of either beeswax (*Virgin Mary*, 1992) or paper and horsehair, as in the human figure hanging from the wall (*Untitled*, 1995), display the body naked and defenseless. Smith thus subverts the conventional notions of femininity: the woman appears neither as a desirable object nor as an idealized idol.

Beginning in the early 1990s, Smith turned to extracting themes from stories, myths, legends, fairy tales, and religious beliefs. She now embeds her subject, its physicality and its social experiences, in a larger context by examining the relationship of the individual toward nature and the environment. Lavish tapestries and sculptures create a universe that mirrors the close bond that exists between humans and animals. In her works, which include representations of dead animals, especially birds, and extinct species, Smith addresses our endangered creation. Her crows – *Untitled (Crows)* (1995/2016) – black and lifeless, their bodies scattered on the ground, bear witness to an ecological disaster.

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The last room, like a chamber of curiosities, groups together small sculptures from all of the artist's creative phases. The mundane and the magical, the profane and the sacred, the human and the animalistic all enter into a magical relationship and expose Kiki Smith as an enchantress of a disenchanted world.

At the Upper Belvedere, Smith's sculpture *Sun, Moon, Stars, and Clouds* refers to the exhibition.

American artist Kiki Smith, one of the most notable leaders in contemporary art, was born 1954 in Nuremberg, Germany, and lives in New York City and Upstate New York. She addresses topics of age and death, wounding and healing, birth, sexuality, gender, and memory. Employing an abundance of materials and techniques, Smith predominantly creates sculptures, but also drawings, etchings, and lithographs as well as artist books, photographs, and videos.

KIKI SMITH – BIOGRAPHY

Kiki Smith grew up in an artistic environment. Her father, Toni Smith, was a leading Minimalist sculptor; her mother, Jane Lawrence Smith, was a singer and actress; and her younger sister, Seton Smith, is a well-known photographer. Kiki Smith's first solo exhibition took place at New York's Fawbush Gallery in 1988. A solo museum show at the Dallas Museum of Art followed in 1989, and another at the Centre d'Art Contemporain in Geneva in 1990. In 1991, she participated for the first time in the Whitney Biennial in New York. Numerous exhibitions, mostly in the USA, followed. During 2005/06, her first major retrospective, *Kiki Smith: A Gathering, 1980-2005*, traveled from the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art to the Walker Art Center (Minneapolis), the Whitney Museum of American Art (New York), the Contemporary Arts Museum in Houston, and finally to the Museo Jumex in Mexico City.

In 2003 the Museum of Modern Art in New York was showing *Kiki Smith: Prints, Books, and Things*; and in 2010 the Brooklyn Museum showcased her *Sojourn* exhibit.

Historically, in Europe Smith's work has been held in high esteem, especially in Germany, Italy, and France, as exhibitions at the Kunstverein Bonn (1992), the Fondazione Querini Stampalia in Venice (2005), and the Palais des Papes in Avignon (2013) demonstrate.

Her works can be found in the collections of the world's most important museums, and she has received numerous international awards and prizes.

Kiki Smith is an adjunct professor at New York University and Columbia University.

PETRA GILOY-HIRTZ – BIOGRAPHY

Petra Giloy-Hirtz has curated exhibitions of contemporary art in museums, in galleries, and for companies, in both public and religious spaces. She writes and publishes books in collaboration with renowned publishing houses. She offers advice on building collections and coordinate archiving and documentation. She works particularly closely with a series of artists and seek to support their work through publications and exhibitions.

HISTORY

Associate professor and reader of medieval literature at the University of Düsseldorf for ten years. Since 1993 curator, writer, editor and consultant in visual arts. Numerous single-artist and thematic exhibitions at the Diözesanmuseum of the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising (1998–2005) amongst other venues, including artists such as Kai Althoff, Lawrence Carroll, Olafur Eliasson, Gloria Friedmann, Geoffrey Hendricks, Mischa Kuball, Christina Kubisch, Wolfgang Laib, Robert Longo, Julian Opie, David Reed, Kiki Smith, Pia Stadtbäumer, Bill Viola. Project manager for the head of cultural affairs of the City of Munich (1998–2000). Since 2017 consulting the Alexander Tutsek-Foundation, Munich.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Exhibition title	Kiki Smith. Procession
Exhibition duration	7 June to 15 September 2019
Venue	Lower Belvedere
Exhibits	91
Curator	Petra Giloy-Hirtz
Curatorial Assistant	Stephanie Auer
Exhibition Management	Eszter Valyi
Exhibition Graphics	Monica Strinu
Exhibition Catalogue	<i>Kiki Smith. Procession</i> Editors: Stella Rollig, Petra Giloy-Hirtz Authors: Okwui Enwezor, Petra Giloy-Hirtz, Virginia Raguin, Stella Rollig, Kiki Smith, Ulrich Wilmes, Julia Bryan-Wilson Graphic Design: Lea Stepken, New York Prestel Verlag, München – London – New York 224 pages, 160 images, 21,7 x 27 cm German & English Edition ISBN 978-3-7913-5885-7, German edition ISBN 978-3-7913-5626-6, English edition EUR 50,40
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Regular Entry	€ 14,- (Lower Belvedere)
Press Contact	Presse Belvedere Prinz Eugen-Straße 27, 1030 Wien T +43 1 795 57-177 M presse@belvedere.at

Complimentary images can be downloaded for press purposes at www.belvedere.at/press.

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