

Kiki Smith and Paper: The Body, the Muse, and the Spirit



1 - Kiki Smith and Paper: The Body, the Muse, and the Spirit

Photo by Casey Pankey



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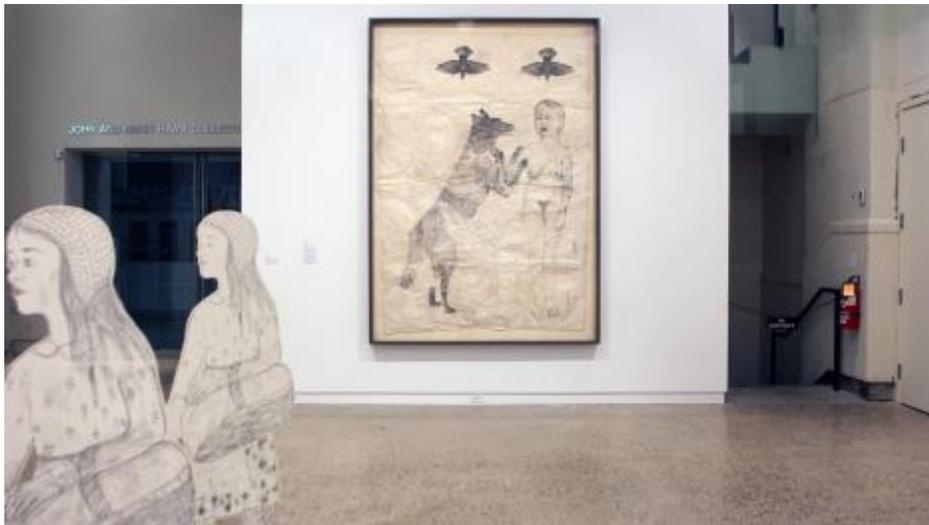
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Heralded as one of the most distinctive voices of her generation, Kiki Smith has been crafting captivating, challenging art for more than 35 years – from her early wax and plaster female figures to colorful wall-size tapestries of women and animals in nature. Birth, death, and regeneration are recurring themes – the human condition from its most vulnerable to its most enduring. Although Smith has ventured into an array of mediums, the one material she has most consistently engaged is paper, manipulating it for drawings, prints, and even sculpture.

Highlighting the artist’s passion for paper, this exhibition explores Kiki Smith’s perspective on the human body, and the female form in particular, a figure that has remained the foundation of her art.

Curated by Wendy Weitman, this is the third in our New York Project, a series of exhibitions bringing the work of major New York artists to Oklahoma.

August 08, 2017 to December 02, 2017

[Check out our Flickr album for more images from the exhibition.](#)

Major support for the exhibition and catalogue is provided by Jim Vallion, Bill Goldston, Malinda and Dick Fischer, OSU Museum of Art Founding Patrons and Charter Members, OSU Museum of Art Advocates, and the OSU/A&M Board of Regents.

RELATED PROGRAMS

[Free Community Workshop \(Alternative Printmaking\)](#)

Sept. 8 | Participants will begin at the museum with a tour of "Kiki Smith and Paper" before heading to the OSU Insect Adventure to draw from the collection. Afterwards, we'll move to the Stillwater Center for the Arts to explore a variety of alternative printmaking processes. 9 am to 6 pm.

[2nd Saturday](#)

Sept. 9 | On the second Saturday of every month, the museum provides free, hands-on art activities for visitors of all ages and abilities. 11 am to 3 pm. THIS MONTH: visiting artist [Tori Tasch](#) will help visitors create paper bowls inspired by Kiki Smith's use of handmade paper.

[Reception](#)

Sept. 21 | 5 to 7 pm

[An Afternoon with Kiki Smith](#)

Sept. 22 | Internationally known artist Kiki Smith makes a special appearance in Oklahoma to participate in a panel discussion about her body of work and emphasis on the female form. 3 pm. SPECIAL LOCATION: Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art (Norman)

[Unfamiliar Butterfly](#)

Sept. 23 | Visiting artist Wendy Jehlen will perform an interpretive dance inspired by the work of Kiki Smith. SPECIAL LOCATION: 21c Museum Hotel in Oklahoma City.

[Lilith](#)

Sept. 27 | Visiting artist Wendy Jehlen will perform an interpretive dance inspired by the work of Kiki Smith. SPECIAL LOCATION: Stillwater Community Center (Houston Theater) | 315 W. 8th Avenue, downtown Stillwater. 7:30 pm.

[Lunch + Learn: Cristina Gonzalez](#)

Oct. 26 | Cristina Gonzalez will discuss the relationship between "The Blue Feet" by Kiki Smith and the work of Sister Juana Inéz de la Cruz. 12:45 pm (For more info about Sister Juana Inéz de la Cruz, check out the Big Idea cards.)

[Lunch + Learn: Students from Gender and Visual Culture](#)

Nov. 10 | University students will discuss the works of "Femfolio" and "Kiki Smith and Paper." 12 pm.

Visiting Artists

GET TO KNOW
TORI TASCH
VISITING ARTIST



My current work includes altered books and printmaking processes on paper, the paper is folded into sculptural books. The images are based on photographs from the urban environment, which is very different from the open spaces where I live. The books refer to current events and their impact on the community. In my books the layers of transfer prints reference the destruction, loss of habitat, and upheaval from natural disasters and the man-made destruction of the mortgage crisis. The book is a metaphor for the soul and allows me to cope with daily events. Layers of transfers reference images from my travels and the area around my studio.

Images: Artwork by Victoria Tasch

GET INVOLVED

TORI TASCH VISITING ARTIST

PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

Alternative Printmaking Workshop

Friday, 9B. 9:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Free! Registration is required.

Participants will begin at the museum with a tour of Kiki Smith and Paper: The Body, The Muse, and the Spirit before heading to the OSU Insect Adventures to draw from the collection. Afterwards, we'll move to the Stillwater Center for the Arts to explore a variety of alternative printmaking processes (no press required). 9 am – 6 pm, space is limited, registration required (<http://museum.okstate.edu/workshop917>), ages 16+.

2nd Saturday: Community Workshop

Saturday, 9B. 11 AM - 3 PM.

Stillwater Center for the Arts, 1001 S Duck St, Stillwater, OK

Participants will create paper bowls inspired by Smith's use of handmade paper. All ages welcome.

ACADEMIC WORKSHOPS + CALL VISITS

ART 1303: Visual Thinking: Form and Space - Handmade paper sculptures. An installation of the students' works will be on display at the Visual Arts Annex, at the corner of McElroy and N. Ridge Dr. (0.2 mi east of McElroy and Western).

ART 4733: Museum Education - Storytelling with Objects. Students will help develop museum tour activities and educational programs associated with the exhibition.

ART 4213: BFA Studio Capstone - Tori Tasch will talk with Studio seniors about her career as an artist.



Would you like to have a visiting artist participate with your class? Contact Carrie Kim@okstate.edu for details.

9 - For more information or to register, visit <http://museum.okstate.edu/kikismith>

GET TO KNOW

WENDY JEHLLEN VISITING ARTIST



More than a choreographer, I am a storyteller whose telling is through movement and space. I am interested in archetypal stories – stories that exist outside of time and place. Archetypal stories describe what happens in the unknown between knowns. They tell of the journey. They take place in the time and space between – the wilderness, twilight, dreams. In performance, the dancer's body inhabits this liminal space, allowing the audience a glimpse of these eternal stories, for a moment.

My work has been evolving since 1998 in India, Italy, Japan, Brazil, Mali and the US. My performances weave together music, dance and storytelling, secular and sacred, aural and visual. With each synthesis, a language is created.

I believe in learning new forms and new ideas deeply, internalizing them and then allowing them to reemerge as part of my own vocabulary. This is what makes my work what it is – unplaceable and yet familiar. It is essential to my work that it not be tied to one place, one tradition, one genre. It is the weaving of disparate traditions, different ways of understanding that creates the fabric of my dance.

Left: Wendy Jehllen performing "Lily" - a performance inspired by Kiki Smith's sculpture of the same name.
Right: Kiki Smith, "Lily," 1994.

GET INVOLVED

WENDY JEHLLEN VISITING ARTIST

PUBLIC WORKSHOPS + EVENTS

Performance: "Unfamiliar Butterfly," in partnership with [Anspace] at Untitled
Saturday, 9/23, 7 pm

21 C Museum Hotel, 900 W Main St., Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73106

This interpretive dance is an embodiment of constant change and travel. The structure of the work is loosely based on the life cycle of a butterfly and is intended to change in each rendition. The performance is free and open to the public (no RSVP required).

Performance: "Lilith"

Wednesday, 9/27 7:30 pm

Stillwater Community Center, 315 W 8th Ave, Stillwater, OK 74074

Lilith is a study of the story of the first woman, created as Adam's equal, who rebelled against Adam and fled Eden. This character is explored as a figure from ancient gods who has been re-emissioned and reclaimed in modern feminist thought. Free and open to the public (no RSVP required).

drawingLAB, featuring Wendy JehlLEN

Thursday, 9/28, 6 - 8:30 pm

Stillwater Center for the Arts, 1003 S Duck St, Stillwater, OK 74074

Explore the use of the body as a vehicle for drawing in space (stress to make a mess, possible materials include powdered graphite or tempera).

ACADEMIC WORKSHOPS + CLASS VISITS

ART 4813: Museum Education - Interpretive-Movement Workshop. Students will learn techniques for interpreting visual art through physical movement.

GWST 2123: Intro to Gender Studies - Embodied Struggle. Students will explore gendered movement and the ways in which oppression is anchored in the body.

ART 4935/5603: Gender and Visual Culture. Wendy JehlLEN will discuss her interpretive process for works of art, such as "Lilith."



Would you like to have a visiting artist participate with your class? Contact Carrie Kim@okstate.edu for details.

10 - For more information or to register, visit <http://museum.okstate.edu/kikismith>

Thinking About the Artwork

BIG IDEA // STORY

Clickthrough the cards to view some key questions to consider.

Kiki Smith provokes us to think about our own stories, the characters, the morals and messages, and the beginning and endings that define our real and imagined lives.

What are the important stories that are told in our society today - in books, movies, pictures, music, the news, or by friends and family?

If you could personally guarantee a single story to be passed down to future generations - what would that story be, and what form would it take, and why?

Why are some stories told, as opposed to others? Why do some stories continue to be told over time while others are lost?

BIG IDEA // BODY

Clickthrough the cards to view some key questions to consider.

In what ways does the body inform one's experiences and relationship to the world?

How do Smith's choice of handling of materials tell or reveal the content of her pieces?



11 - Take a look at *Hair Head*. What power or meaning does hair have in our present day culture? In cultures past?

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12 - Take a look at *Untitled (hair print)*. How does this depiction of hair differ from the depictions of the hair worn by pop culture's childhood heroines (Disney princesses, Rapunzel, Medusa, Frozen, etc.)?

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BIG IDEA // MUSE

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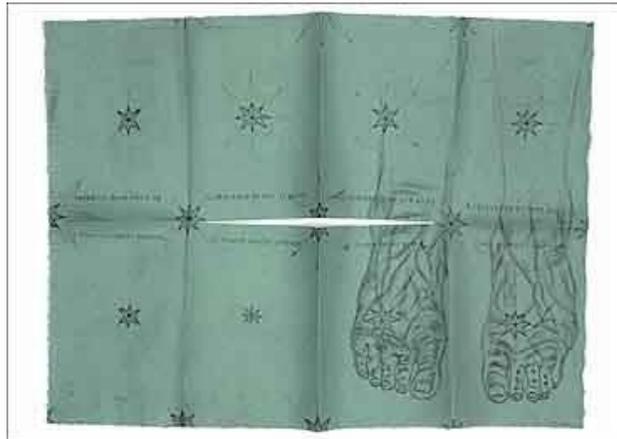
Smith used the female body to express universal concerns, but she began exploring specific female personae as well, borrowing from mythology and the Bible.

Mythology often uses particular symbols or signs that are identifiable by a wide audience. Why might that be important? Think of particular examples of these symbols. Think of particular works of art that relate to myths or mythological stories. Can myths represent both fact and fiction? How?

Smith Reinvents and re-imagines fairy tales. She often conflates these stories to create her own female archetype. What characteristics would a female superhero need to function in our society?

If we created a character, what might her role be? What stories might we tell about her?

Think about the fairy tales that Smith depicts. What happens in these stories? How might these fairy tales inform our society about the roles that girls and women play in our culture?



13 -

- Take a look at *Blue Prints*. What do all of these prints have in common? Where does one find these characters?
 - *Blue Prints* is an unfolded [zine](#) with adapted text from the famous Mexican nun and writer, sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (1648-1695). She is considered the first feminist of the Americas who became a nun to pursue her intellectual interests. [Click here to learn more about her.](#)
 - Learn more about this work and the inspiration behind it at our [Lunch + Learn: Cristina Gonzalez](#) on Oct. 26., 12:45 pm, OSU Museum of Art, 720 S. Husband St., Stillwater, OK.

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14 - Take a look at Wolf Girl? What qualities does a wolf possess? What about a girl? What characteristics and qualities does Wolf Girl possess? How would she be treated in this culture? Why?

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15 - Take a look at Born.

Describe the human figures. What do you notice about their facial expressions and body language? How are they dressed? What might their relationship be?

Describe the animal. How is it posed? What is its expression? Do you think it is alive or dead? What visual clues support your answer?

Consider the relationship between the two human figures and the animal. Describe how they are visually connected. What ideas does this connection suggest?

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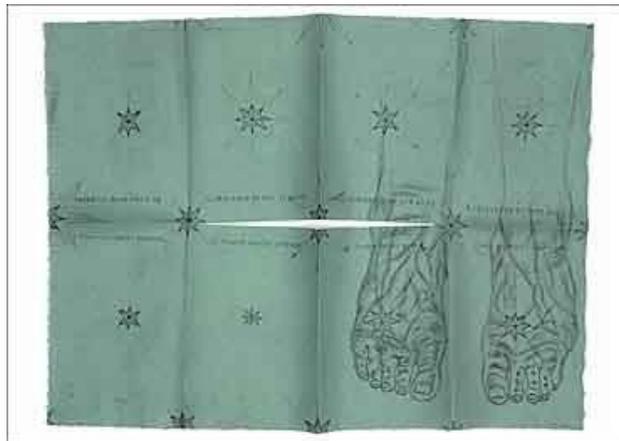
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Take another look at *Born*.

This painting was inspired by the Story "Little Red Riding Hood." What elements does Kiki Smith borrow from the story? What might the red hood symbolize? What or who might the wolf symbolize or personify?

In one version of the Brother Grimm's story "Little Red Riding Hood," a hunter cuts open a wolf's stomach and pulls out a grandmother and child. Smith's version of the story is illustrated from a feminist perspective. What components of the fairy-tale has she altered to express this perspective? Support your answer with visual details in the artwork.

The artist has used her own self-portrait for each of the figure's faces. What might the artist be suggesting about her own life by including these self-portraits? Does this change your understanding of the artwork? How?



16 -

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BIG IDEA // MUSE - *Blue Feet*

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17 - Perhaps the most celebrated literary figure of colonial Spanish America is Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (1651—1695), a Jeronymite nun in Mexico City. Her life and writings say much about the Baroque predicaments that were keenly felt, especially in the seventeenth century—a life of struggle toward salvation in a world of troubling contradictions. Find more information at the artLAB in the museum, or email casey.pankey@okstate.edu.

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More to Discover

ABOUT THE ARTIST

The daughter of American sculptor Tony Smith, Kiki Smith grew up in New Jersey. As a young girl, one of Smith's first experiences with art was helping her father make cardboard models for his geometric sculptures. This training, combined with her upbringing in the Catholic Church, later resurfaced in Smith's evocative sculptures, drawings, and prints. The recurring subject matter in Smith's work has presented the body as a source of knowledge, belief, and storytelling. In the 1980s, Smith's work focused on the body in intricate drawings and objects based on organs, cellular forms, and the human nervous system. This work evolved to incorporate animals, domestic objects, and narratives from classical mythology and folk tales. Life, death, and resurrection are important themes in many of Smith's installations and sculptures. Source: http://art21.org/files/uploads/pdf/art21_s2guide_smith.pdf

Additional Resources

[ART 21](#) Smith explains her relationship to meaning in her work: "I'd rather make something that's very open-ended that can have a meaning to me, but then it also can have a meaning to somebody else who can fill it up with their meaning."

[MoMA Interactives](#) An interactive exploration of Kiki's processes and inspirations

[Khan Academy](#) An exploration of Smith's "Lying with the Wolf," her intimate relationships with nature, feminist approaches to narrative, abjection and the body, and her draw to mysticism and mythologies.

[Visualising Little Red Riding Hood](#) - "The fairy tale is being translated from literary text into visual culture. The artists recoding the tales address shifts in cultural attitude, engaging predominantly with issues of identity and discrimination. In this paper I examine the visual development of "Little Red Riding Hood," investigating the manner in which the literary tale has been adopted by contemporary artists, how the visual responds to the textual, and cultural attitudes embedded in reiterations of the tale." - Sarah Bonner

[Contemporary Art Steams up the Hudson](#) - "Not your mother's house tour: This summer has brought a bounty of artwork to Catskill, Hudson, Cold Spring and beyond." Princenthal, Nancy. "Contemporary Art Steams Up the Hudson." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 24 Aug. 2017



18 - Explore "installation" and Kiki's process for working. Visit https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/exhibitions/kiki_smith for more information about this exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum.

artLAB

Stop by the artLAB to contribute your voice to the conversation about the exhibitions on view. While you're here, check out the many print and video resources available at the gathering space in the lobby or in the artLAB.

Be a part of the art! Contribute a piece to Tori Tasch's geometric paper installation in the artLAB vault now!

KIKI SMITH

Kiki Smith is curious about the world. Fairy tales, the human body, and art history are some of the things that inspire her artwork and help her to better understand the world.

What are you curious about?
Create a piece of artwork using the materials and resources to explore an idea or tell a story.

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#OKSTATEMOA

Share your
creation with
the world!

CREATE

KIKI SMITH AND PAPER



We experience everything through our senses - through our bodies. Kiki uses these experiences to tell stories.

Tell a story using what you experience through the body.



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Share your creation with the world!

KIKI SMITH AND PAPER



Kiki uses many materials and techniques to tell a story. What story is Kiki telling in *Plate 22 Mortal*? Notice how Kiki uses scratched lines to create her images and a range in values.

Create your own Kiki inspired scratchboard story using the materials provided.



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Share your creation with the world!



Come Fold, Cut, Glue, and Bend Make a Gem!

Kiki Smith began working with paper by creating geometric models for her father, Tony Smith, the sculptor. Her early explorations with paper led to greater experiments with paper and printmaking.

Most prints are on paper and paper is malleable and has the flexibility to take on many forms. Creating dimensional prints is a fun process, and there are many resources online for artists to incorporate and personalize the artwork. Dimensional print examples include origami, pop-up books, architectural models, and sculptural forms. We will create a collaborative installation of dimensional prints, some repeated, some new creations. We will focus on intimate, sculptural shapes, and repetitions of dimensional prints.

You can use the prints and templates provided, or you can experiment and create your own prints and shapes.

Thank you to Tori Tasch for providing inspiration for this collaborative installation. Tori experiments with altered books, paper sculptures, paper, and prints to create works inspired by the world around her. To learn more about Tori Tasch, or any of our visiting artists, talk with the artLAB staff.



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Share your creation with the world!

EDUCATOR RESOURCES

KIKI SMITH AND PAPER

THE BODY, THE MUSE, AND THE SPIRIT



WRITING YOUR WAY IN

Writing can be used as a learning tool to slow down thinking so that viewers can observe details and make connections. Following the three-picture-story with three simple questions is one example of using writing to scaffold interpretation.

1. What is the setting? Where is the action happening?
2. Who or what is involved? How are they interacting?
3. What do we know about the participants? Who has the power?

THREE PICTURE STORY

A three picture story is a story told through three related images designed to create a more complete sense of your subject than a single picture.

- **PICTURE 1: THE ESTABLISHING SHOT**
 - This is the big picture, or setting – where are we? For this shot, step back from the subject and put it into context. Think “wide-angle.”
- **PICTURE 2: THE RELATIONSHIP**
 - This shows subjects interacting – who/what are the characters? This may include subjects interacting with one another or their environment.
- **PICTURE 3: THE DETAILS**
 - This image completes the scene by zeroing in on a detail, something you might not notice in broader photos. This provides details which complete your narrative.

ADAPTED FROM [HTTPS://DAILYPOST.WORDPRESS.COM/2014/02/19/THREE-PICTURE-STORY/](https://dailypost.wordpress.com/2014/02/19/three-picture-story/)

You can choose any three works of art to create your story. Be as creative as you like. Make the story your own!

LESSON PROVIDED BY VISITING ARTIST, VICTORIA TASCH.



Academic Engagements

Students from Dr. Jennifer Borland's Gender and Visual Culture class were invited to write responses to *Femfolio* and *Kiki Smith and Paper: The Body, the Muse, and the Spirit*. We are excited to share these responses with you and we hope you enjoy!

The OSU Museum of Art

Visit the museum Tuesday - Saturdays, 11 am - 4 pm. Free admission.

Is there something you'd like to see at the museum? We would love to hear from you.

Oklahoma State University Museum of Art

720 South Husband Street, Stillwater, OK 74074

405.744.2780 | museum@okstate.edu | museum.okstate.edu

