

PRESS RELEASE
KIKI SMITH

opening on: Thursday November 30 2006 6-9 pm
address: Galleria Raffaella Cortese Via A. Stradella 7 20129 Milan
dates: November 30 2006 – January 27 2007
hours: Tuesday - Saturday 3-7.30 pm and by appointment

In a period in which contemporary graphic art is put aside by the big Art Fairs, Raffaella Cortese Gallery is pleased to announce "What is at hand", the solo show by the American artist Kiki Smith (1954). The exhibition offers an insight into the less known production of the artist, the prints. In 2003 the MoMA museum celebrated her remarkable body of prints with the exhibition "Prints, Books & Things". Kiki Smith started to make prints in the first half of the eighties and with time her prints became an essential part of her production and which she constantly carries on.

Smith's attention to human body, and in particular to feminine body, is an important subject of her research, even though at the beginning of the nineties her interests are focused also on the relationship between nature and the human being. An example is the work "White Mammals" (1998), seven Arctic and albino mammal etchings in which the animals are not represented posed but floating on a white background that emphasizes how they are easily bodies. In another work "Falcon" (2001) the great ability of the artist is evident in the details of the feathers.

"Constellation" (1996) underlines the interest of the artist for astronomy. In the lithographs, the beauty of the figures is supported by the handmade Nepalese paper that she also uses in her drawings.

"Banshee Pearls" (1991), a lithograph on 12 sheets made with dozens of self-portraits of different sizes, orientations and expressions, is the first one of a series of works focused on self-portrait, a subject that the artist investigates especially with this technique.

During her artistic research, Kiki Smith, has been often inspired by literature, by myths and tales. She always tries to re-interpret the main characters she borrows from different stories into a personal and feminine point of view. This is visible in the "Blue Print" series (1999), full of recalls to the Northern Masters ("Melancholia" where she quotes the Albrecht Dürer's etching) and the Victorian art ("Emily D", portrait of the poet Emily Dickinson).

The artist produces also some large format engravings, watercolored by hand, inspired by the famous novel of Lewis Carroll "Alice in Wonderland". An example are "Pool of Tears 2 (After Lewis Carroll)" (2001), the episode in which Alice finds herself plunged in her same tears among many big animals and "Come away from her (After Lewis Carroll)" (2003), from the scene in which the birds leave the young girl alone with her loneliness.

The tale "Alice in Wonderland" inspires also Smith's production of sculptures in porcelain, "Alice II (Feet Uncrossed)" (2005), an Alice dreamy and vulnerable.

In the same period the tale "Red Riding Hood" gives origins to different interpretations of male domination, two big lithographs are an example: "Companions" and "Born".

In recent years Kiki Smith produces also a series of small porcelain sculptures especially dedicated to women's body: "Woman with dog" (2003), "Tahitian Girls with Feathers" (2005), "Me in a Corner" (2005) and "Lo (Seated)" (2005).

Among many exhibitions dedicated to her work we can recall the solo show in 2005 at Fondazione Querini Stampalia in Venice and the travelling exhibition "A Gathering, 1980-2005" from the 16th of November 2006 at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.