

PRESS INFORMATION

**TOUCH. PRINTS BY KIKI SMITH**

**PRESS CONFERENCE: 13 FEBRUARY 2019, 11.00 A.M.**

**OPENING: 13 FEBRUARY 2019, 06.30 P.M.**

**EXHIBITION DURATION: 14 FEBRUARY – 26 MAY 2019**

With the exhibition *TOUCH. Prints by Kiki Smith*, the Staatliche Graphische Sammlung München is honoring the internationally acclaimed artist Kiki Smith of New York for her extraordinarily generous donation: Kiki Smith has donated her oeuvre of published prints—single sheets, series, and artist's books—to the Staatliche Graphische Sammlung München. If the series and books are counted as single prints, this amounts to the considerable number of 800 prints. Known internationally as one of the most renowned museums for works on paper, the Graphische Sammlung considers itself fortunate for this demonstration of faith, as it now has the largest holdings of prints by Kiki Smith in the world. Moreover, the artist's generosity extends into the future as well, since she intends to donate a copy of every new edition to Munich.

In the exhibition rooms of the Staatliche Graphische Sammlung München at the Pinakothek der Moderne, more than 160 works selected from this exceptional donation offer a fascinating look into the artist's entire oeuvre of prints from 1985 to the present. In the exhibition room "Temporary 1," under the title *Life and Work*, masterpieces from four decades are shown, highlighting how the life and work of the artist are closely intertwined. In the adjoining rooms of the Graphische Sammlung, Kiki Smith's prints have been grouped according to thematic aspects: visitors are initially met with motifs from *The World between Life and Death*, while the following rooms present the themes *The World of the Human Body* and *Inside the White Cube*.

Kiki Smith has a special connection to Germany and particularly to the Free State of Bavaria as it is her place of birth. She was born in Nuremberg in 1954, when her parents, the opera singer and actress Jane Smith and the rising architect and later internationally famous painter and sculptor Tony Smith were in Europe because her mother had an engagement here; in 1955, the family returned to New Jersey. In 1976, Kiki Smith moved to New York, where she has lived and worked ever since. Although the New York scene and Minimalism, Pop Art, and performance art influenced Kiki Smith, she found an artistic expression of her very own, which continues to substantiate her importance as an internationally renowned artist today.

The central theme of her oeuvre revolves around the question of human existence. Parallel to pioneering artists such as Nancy Spero, Louise Bourgeois, Robert Gober, and Félix González-Torres, she began to thematize the human body early in her career in the 1980s, initially in the form of fragments. Contemporary political issues, such as dealing with AIDS and emancipation, are echoed in her works. Since 1992, she has also turned to the animal as a companion for the human being. At the same time, she explores the checkered existence of humankind in biblical stories and, since 1999, in fairy tales. Since the late 1990s, she has also been investigating the human connection to nature and the cosmos.

Many of her subjects have their point of departure in prints, a means of artistic expression that is very important to her, and are then translated into sculptures, works in glass, tapestries, and other media. Since

the beginning of her career, Kiki Smith has been experimenting with printmaking techniques in very different ways and cooperates with printing workshops and publishers to find extraordinarily new paths and a diversity of materials and techniques that only a few artists master.

It is above all the sensuality of the surfaces that make Kiki Smith's prints so exciting—a quality expressed in the exhibition's title, *Touch*, which should be understood in both the literal and the metaphorical sense: first, the effect of her prints is very haptic—one would like to touch them; second, Kiki Smith's art is touching because of its subject matter—her themes get under your skin and offer an insight into what lies beneath the surface.

#### **EXHIBITION CATALOGUE**

In conjunction with the exhibition, a richly illustrated catalogue has been published by Verlag Walther König (256 pages). Edited by Michael Hering and Birgitta Heid with essays by Birgitta Heid, Katrin Holzherr, Anna-Sophia Reichelt, Nina Schleif, Franziska Stöhr, Susanne Wagini, and Maggie Wright, as well as an interview with Kiki Smith conducted by Michael Hering and Birgitta Heid. The catalogue costs 58 €.

#### **CATALOGUE RAISONNÉ**

Parallel to the presentation of works from the generous donation, another highlight related to the exhibition is that the first part of the catalogue raisonné of the editioned prints by Kiki Smith will be available online on the home page of the Staatliche Graphische Sammlung München.

#### **PROGRAM OF ACCOMPANYING EVENTS**

Guided tours, workshops and a film screening accompany the exhibition. For further information please see the attached program.

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#### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

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