



WOMEN ON THE RISE!

TEACHING INSTRUCTIONS: Kiki Smith

THEMES:

- Anatomy and processes of the body
- Representations of women and girls
- Female heroines
- Animals
- Myths
- Sculpture and Etching

FEATURED WORKS:

Sculptures and etchings of women and animals such as *Born* (2002) and *Wolf Girl* (1999); *How I Know I'm Here* (1985).

RESOURCES:

Links to images

- <http://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/smith/index.html>
- <http://www.moma.org/exhibitions/2003/kikismith/>
- <http://www.barbarakrakowgallery.com/contentmgr/showdetails.php/id/361>
- http://whitney.org/www/collection/feat_kiki.jsp
- <http://www.fabricworkshopandmuseum.org/exhibitions/smith.php>
- <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1187302,00.html>

Books

- *Kiki Smith: Prints, Books, and Things* by Wendy Weitman (2003): Museum of Modern Art, NY
- *Kiki Smith: A Gathering 1980-2005* by Siri Engberg, Linda Nochlin, and Marina Warner (2005): Walker Art Center, Minneapolis

DISCUSSION POINTS AND QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS:

- (Based on *How I Know I'm Here*) Why do you think she arranged the print the way she did? Can you tell which senses she's depicting?
- (Based on *Born*) How would you describe the expression of the woman in this work? Of the deer? Where would such a fantastical event take place? Describe it.

- Generate questions regarding the relationship between women and animals in the works you select. Emphasize scale and the portrayal of emotion (or lack thereof).
- View PBS Art21 segment on the artist (optional). Discussion points and questions can also be created based on the video.
<http://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/smith/index.html>

MATERIALS FOR HANDS-ON PROJECT: Kiki Smith

Creating “Familiars”

- Metallic scratch paper
- Scratch knives
- White or graphite transfer paper
- Images of animals and generic female forms
- Hinged mat board frames (optional)

PROCEDURE FOR HANDS-ON PROJECT:

Many of the animals in Smith’s work are considered “familiars”. “Familiars” is a term used to describe the animal companions of witches. Inspired by works such as *Born*, students will choose an animal and female form and combine them in an unexpected way. Using metallic scratch paper will mimic Smith’s etching technique and aesthetic.

- Instructor will generate multiple copies of images of animals and generic female forms in various positions
- Students will choose images to use in their scratch paper work
- Students will draw a composition joining an animal and human figure
- Image is applied via transfer paper to the surface of metallic scratch paper
- Students will use scratch knives to embellish their design
- Instructors will display works in mat frames (optional)

APPLICABLE NATIONAL VISUAL ARTS STANDARDS (GRADES 5 -12):

- NA—VA.5-8.1 (9-12.1): Understanding and Applying Media, Techniques, and Processes
- NA—VA.5-8.3 (9-12.3): Choosing and Evaluating A Range of Subject Matter, Symbols, and Ideas



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STUDENT HAND OUT: Kiki Smith

Kiki Smith (b. 1954—Nuremberg, Germany)

Kiki Smith was surrounded by art growing up as her father, Tony Smith, was a well-known sculptor and her mother a successful opera singer. She and her sisters would spend their time after school creating geometric paper models for their father's sculptures.

After graduating from high school she moved to San Francisco and spent a year touring with her favorite rock group. She later enrolled in Hartford Art School and moved to New York in 1976 where she took on several jobs that ranged from waitress to electrician. Although she was not considering a career in art at the time, Smith was continually producing work that ranged from sculpture to dress designs.

The death of her father marked Smith's new focus on art making. She began creating works that dealt with the human body, death, and re-birth. These works included large-scale sculptures, mostly of women, that explored human anatomy and liquids produced by the body. The focus on women in Smith's work is due in part to the painful loss of her sister, who died from AIDS.

Mythical women and animals also inspire Smith's work and she often portrays them in fairy tale like settings. She considers the characters in her work, such as Genevieve, the patron saint of Paris, heroines.

