

GALLERIA RAFFAELLA CORTESE

PRESS RELEASE

Kiki Smith

Quest

Kiki Smith, *Quest*
Alejandro Cesarco, *The Measures of Memory*

via a. stradella 4
via a. stradella 7

opening wednesday september 29th, 19:00-21:00

30 november 2017 – 2 march 2018 | tuesday – saturday h. 10:00-13:00 / 15:00-19:30 and by appointment

Raffaella Cortese is pleased to announce Kiki Smith's fourth solo show at the gallery, following her recent participation in the 57th Venice Biennale.

Kiki Smith, an American artist originally from Germany, is one of the most prominent figures in the contemporary art world. Since the late 70s her research has been centered on the study of identity and the iconography of women. In the first part of her artistic career Smith explored the themes of loss and death through the representation of the interior of our bodies, turning her attention to organs, cell structures and the nervous system. In the following years, Smith's work has evolved to include animals, household items and narratives from classical mythology, also giving great importance to femininity in its intimate and social spheres. The artist's career, which has been developing for nearly four decades, is characterized by a great deal of experimentation both in the choice of techniques - painting, sculpture, design and printing – and in the use of non-traditional materials – from glass to bronze, pottery, porcelain, chalk, paper, latex, hair, beeswax and gold.

On the occasion of this exhibition, a number of drawings and sculptures of female faces from 2016 will be on view. The titles of the drawings – *Gift, Sense, Utterance, Flurry, Seek, Pathology, Capture, Tilt, Hoping, Future Tense* – and those of the sculptures – *Send, Surge, Receive, Transmission, Conductor, Foreseen* – suggest actions in progress. Consciousness appears to be projected by the faces, which are present in and have similar physiognomic traits throughout all of the show's works, except for one sculpture where just one hand is the protagonist. The actions suggest an exchange, from the interior to the exterior, and vice versa, that doesn't reveal the truth about our being or the destiny that awaits us, by raising questions about how we experience our body and the world, as Smith herself stated: "they are drawings of heads talking and seeing and receiving and hearing and transmitting and wondering in the world".

In works of both mediums, the lines are broken and interrupted, highlighting a fragility and dematerialization that insistently reminds us of the fleeting nature of the human condition. Their narratives combine figurative representation and the cold rigor of formal abstraction to make suspended figures emerge in ethereal and timeless atmospheres. The faces, although they appear fragile, vulnerable and melancholic, reveal a tenacious life force and symbolize the nature of human consciousness. These slender and lonely faces live indefinitely, in a world where rationality and intuition, physicality and invisibility are united.

What emerges is the exploration of a place where sculpture and painting converge, asserting an effort that, following a path that's as varied as it is consistent, emphasizes a fragmented and fragile, yet always tangible, body. The human condition is the cornerstone of Kiki Smith's investigation and the meditation on life is the heart of her artistic research.

Kiki Smith (Nuremberg, 1954) lives and works in New York. Her most recent solo exhibitions include: *Kiki Smith and Paper: The Body, the Muse and the Spirit*, Oklahoma State University (2017); *Kiki Smith: Breath*, Palau de La Música Ofeó Català, Barcelona (2017); *Kiki Smith: Transformations*, UNT on the Square, University of North Texas, Denton (2014); *By the stream*, Galleria Raffaella Cortese, Milan (2012); *Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art*, Arizona (2012); *as Kiki Smith: Her Memory*, Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona (2009); *as Kiki Smith: Sojourn*, Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art, Brooklyn Museum, New York (2009); *Kiki Smith: The Touch of the Eye / The Look of the Hand*, Weatherspoon Art Museum, Greensboro, North Carolina (2008); *Kiki Smith*, Galleria Raffaella Cortese, Milan (2007).

A number of respected museums and institutions have dedicated survey shows to her: the Haus Esters Kunstmuseum in Krefeld (2008-2010), the Fondazione Querini Stampalia in Venice (2005); New York; the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis (2005-2007); the Museum of Modern Art (2003).

Her works have been included in the public collections of some of the world's most important museums: the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Moderna Museet in Stockholm, the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Tate Gallery in London, The Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, the Museum of Contemporary Art in San Diego. Her work is part of the *Viva Arte Viva* exhibition curated by Christine Macel at the 57th Venice Art Biennale.

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