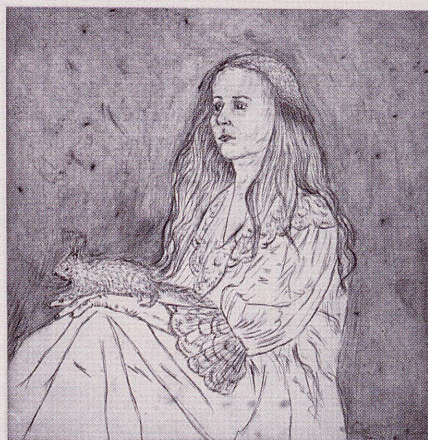


Maura Reilly, "Notes on Kiki Smith's 'Fall/Winter'," *Art Journal*, Winter 2000, pp. 6-7.



Kiki Smith. *Fall/Winter*,
1999 (working proof).
Photogravure, aquatint
etching, and dry point.
Sheet, 22 x 15 (55.9 x
38.1); image, 9 x 9
(22.9 x 22.9) each.

In the twenty years that Kiki Smith has been exhibiting her multimedia work, she has explored the body from inside to outside, constantly conflating the borders between the two. A Virgin Mary with flayed skin, a disembodied stomach, a wax figure with exposed muscles, a porcelain pelvis on a pedestal, truncated hands and feet—all are part of her extensive repertoire. Lately, in *Of Her Nature*, her recent one-person exhibition presented at PaceWildenstein in New York, she has produced an installation based on the story of Little Red Riding

Hood, in which girls with baskets accompany wolves and a life-size girl morphs into a werewolf, as well as tissue-paper sculptures of girls cradling cats or mice.

Maura Reilly

Notes on Kiki Smith's *Fall/Winter*

A recent work, titled *Fall/Winter*, not included in the exhibition, but very much in line with it conceptually, demonstrates Smith's continued fascination with the body (in this case, her body) and its relationship to animals. The two self-portraits are black-and-white photogravures with

acquatint etching and drypoint. In each of the images, Smith poses in three-quarter profile with a squirrel in her lap. In *Fall* she sits against a white background, wearing a white cap, and a dark smock; in *Winter* she sits against a black background, her hair disheveled beneath a similar cap, wearing white. The latter is more grim, brooding, and "gothic," while the former is more prim and static. In *Fall* there is an optimism, evidenced by the perky squirrel, which is lacking in *Winter*, where the squirrel seems to have been transformed into a rat, and the sitter into a witch-like figure. By offering up the last two seasons (there is no *Spring/Summer*), Smith underscores the fragility of life and the imminence of death. Form follows content here: these are delicate, intimate works built up out of vaporous lines and obsessively repetitive cross-hatchings.

The formal source for the work is a Hans Holbein painting titled *Lady with Squirrel and Magpie*, dating from 1527. The Holbein portrait also shows a young woman in a white cap in three-quarter profile, but with two popular domesticated animals of the period: a magpie (on her shoulder) and a squirrel (in her lap). Considering Smith's long-time enchantment with animals, the appeal of Holbein's portrait seems quite evident. As she explained in a 1992 interview, "When I was a kid I'd go find dead animals, like little squirrels or birds, and I'd put little necklaces around their necks and make little caskets, making them into mummies. I'd dress them up and I'd put all my treasures in with them and bury them." Animals have played a prominent role in her oeuvre; for instance, in 1995, she exhibited *Jersey Crows* (twenty-seven silicon-bronze birds); in 1997, a suite of deer caught in headlights; and in 1999, portraits of girls with hedgehogs. She is particularly drawn to animals' vulnerability, and here to children's as well, highlighted by her rendering of herself as a demure, innocent youth transformed into its dismal *doppelgänger*. In examining youth and the domestication of animals, she turns both into macabre *memento mori*.

Maura Reilly is a Ph.D. candidate at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, where she is completing a dissertation on Gustave Courbet's Images of lesbians and sexual politics in Second Empire France. She also writes reviews of contemporary art for *Art in America*.

Kiki Smith's *Fall/Winter* is the fourth in a series of limited edition prints that artists have contributed to support College Art Association's Professional Development Fellowship Program for Artists and Art Historians. For information on purchasing *Fall/Winter* (\$1,000 for members; \$1,750 for nonmembers), please contact Katie Hollander, Director of Development and Special Projects, at 212.691-1051, ext. 206 or khollander@collegeart.org. CAA would like to extend its special thanks to the artist, as well as to collaborating master printer Jonathan Higgins and his colleagues Eileen Foti, Gail Deery, and Randy Hemminghaus. CAA would also like to thank Judith K. Brodsky for her support of the Professional Development Fellowship.