

The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release
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PROJECTS: KIKI SMITH

November 9, 1990 - January 1, 1991

The Museum of Modern Art's next exhibition in its PROJECTS series is an installation by American artist Kiki Smith, on view from November 9, 1990, to January 1, 1991. Organized by Jennifer Wells, curatorial assistant in the Department of Painting and Sculpture, PROJECTS: KIKI SMITH features recent works, many of them never before shown in New York, that explore the human body and attempt to demystify it in light of contemporary concerns.

In the objects in the installation, Smith's vision of the body as an "open vessel," subject to both clinical and metaphorical interpretations, is paralleled by her alternating use of impersonal and "homemade" materials. In several works, for example, she uses embroidery, dyeing, and quilting--traditionally feminine forms of production--to suggest the frailty of the circulatory and nervous systems. In another piece, twelve water cooler bottles are elegantly inscribed with the names of life-sustaining fluids, such as blood, semen, sweat, and saliva.

Smith's work seems particularly compelling now, when the body has become a medical and political battleground. Her most recent piece in the installation consists of dozens of sperm-like forms individually cast in glass and placed on a black rubber mat. At once fragile and disturbing, these objects suggest interpretative frameworks such as biology and romance, and associations ranging from contagion to conception. Viewed in the same installation as a pair of cast bronze hands of identical twins, such a work also raises questions about uniqueness and individuality.

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