



**KIKI SMITH (b. 1954)****Club**

Signed and dated, lower middle, "Kiki Smith 1992"

cast bronze

33 x 8 x 6 in.

83.82 x 20.32 x 15.24 cm

1992

45631

**PROVENANCE:**

Tavelli Gallery, Aspen, Colorado

Private Collection, acquired from the above, 1993

The daughter of minimalist sculptor Tony Smith, Kiki's art is not limited to any single medium or technique, and her work often invites multiple interpretations. Club embodies the form and dimensions of a human leg, the essential element for movement and stability. Smith's title invites the viewer to reimagine a leg as a weapon and consider the fragility of the human condition, the power dynamics of bodily autonomy, and the complex interplay between strength and vulnerability. Such a transformation of a body part into an object conveys both protection and aggression and reflects upon how gender-specific bodies navigate our social and personal environment. Club exemplifies Smith's ability to create pieces rich in symbolism, open to interpretation, and provoke thought about the human experience.

A German-born American, Smith creates sculptures, drawings and prints that illuminate her fascination with the body and its use and perception of knowledge. Smith was raised in New Jersey with the early artistic influence of her father, American sculptor Tony Smith. In her childhood, Smith and her sisters would work with their father creating cardboard models of his sculptures, and with his artistic attention for craft and detail, he would lecture, at length, about the particular use of every technique and tool. She spent the majority of her childhood helping out her dad, the most rebellious of her sisters to do so. The work alienated her from the other students at school until the 1960's, instantly legitimating her bearded-father's eccentric artistic habits, and her relation to him, as avant-garde and cool.

While raised Irish-Catholic, her early work was influenced by story telling, the inner workings of the body and death. Unfazed by morbidity, the work was an artistic outlet for her to adjust with the passing of people she cared about. She says: "When I first started making things about the body, for probably the first five years or so it was all about death. My father died, so I was trying to think about why it was okay being dead. When people are dying I have to always remember that I'm not dying. I'll see that you can sort of start taking on, not the same symptoms of it, but you act as if you're leaving too. But you're not leaving, you're perfectly fine, everything's perfectly fine. I think you don't want to separate from them. I'm much less that way. Now I get to have other interests. For me, when I first made work it was much more about survival".

But even after her childhood steeped in art with her productive father, Smith was not planning on following in her father's footsteps. School was not of particular priority or

interest, and after graduating high school, she studied industrial baking at a trade school. Art became her focus in the 1980's, and was featured in a solo exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, New York: "Projects 24: Kiki Smith". She has been featured internationally for her wide variety of media works, and was awarded the Skowhegan Medal for Sculpture in 2000, was elected as a member into the Academy of Arts and Letters, and was the recipient of the Athena Award for Excellence in Printmaking, at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), both in 2005. Her sculpture *Standing* (1998) is on view in the Stuart Collection of public art at the University of California, San Diego campus. "I would say I still have a very deep necessity in my work and a deep necessity for self expression, and then a deep necessity to make this mediated stuff in between me and the world. But it's much freer now".

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