

# Kiki Smith

## Quotes

*Art, Thinking, Artist, People, Way, Museums, New York, Space, Spiritual,  
Trying, Father, Energy, Flying, Knows, Important, Drawing, Animal, Fun,  
Reflection, Moving*

Some people think or expect that you should make the same kinds of art forever because it creates a convenient narrative... I want my work to embody my inherent contradictions.

~Kiki Smith

The point isn't to know what you're doing. The point is to have an experience doing something.

~Kiki Smith

I trust my work. It's a collaboration with the material, and when it's viewed, it's a collaboration with the world.

~Kiki Smith

I think making things beautiful is important. But often what's first considered ugly is beautiful, too.

~Kiki Smith

Artists live in unknown spaces and give themselves over to following something unknown.

~Kiki Smith

Making art is a lot about just seeing what happens if you put some energy into something.

~Kiki Smith

Our culture seems to believe that it's entertaining to teach women to be frightened.

~Kiki Smith

Prints mimic what we are as humans: we are all the same and yet every one is different. I think there's a spiritual power in repetition, a devotional quality, like saying rosaries.

~Kiki Smith

One hopes that each piece contains enough space for several narratives.

~Kiki Smith

It's one of my loose theories that Catholicism and art have gone well together because both believe in the physical manifestation of the spiritual world.

~Kiki Smith

I told the students [at Yale] we were going to talk about love - I meant love in the sense of devotions to one's work - and about half the students got really pissed off.

~Kiki Smith

I really love printmaking. It's like a mystery and you're trying to figure out how to rein it in.

~Kiki Smith

It's fun, in a way, to explore what's risky in one's life.

~Kiki Smith

I think that sense of always traveling has something to do with anonymity and privacy and pleasure in having a very clear, very reductive life.

~Kiki Smith

Art is a reflection of everything that impacts your life.

~Kiki Smith

Stained glass enabled the modern world.

~Kiki Smith

If you stick to your work it will take care of you somehow.

~Kiki Smith

I think that objects have memories. I'm always thinking that I'll go to the museum and see something and have a big memory about some other lifetime.

~Kiki Smith

As an artist, you want to have an experience. What you need to experience changes over the course of your life because your life changes.

~Kiki Smith

I always say I'm Catholic - but a cultural Catholic. I wouldn't say I'm a spiritual person, although I pray every day.

~Kiki Smith

Life is much larger than how we image it, always, but society can be constricting in ways.

~Kiki Smith

The hardest thing is remembering that you have some complicity in the things that happen to you in your life.

~Kiki Smith

Sometimes your personal life is much more significant. Sometimes your work life is more significant. Friends and family, or sometimes the general population, take precedence.

~Kiki Smith

Life changes a lot. I guarantee you.

~Kiki Smith

It's just disgusting that in this society, the majority of students in art school are women, but they amount to less than 30% of what is shown in museums. That has not changed radically.

~Kiki Smith

In our family, there wasn't anything else besides art. Nothing else in the world existed. My father never spoke about going to a movie or listening to music, other than my mother's singing.

~Kiki Smith

Source of inspiration. The MAK is a museum that has had a profound effect on me as an artist and art viewer.

~Kiki Smith

My iPhone has changed my life - I spend hours taking photos of the sidewalk as I walk down the street. I like the casualness, that it's low-resolution.

~Kiki Smith

My work life makes much less sense now than 20 years ago. It's Humpty-Dumpty-like in a way; I can't put the pieces back together.

~Kiki Smith

When I was young, it was an exciting time to be in New York.

~Kiki Smith

I'm not moving from an ideological standpoint. Sometimes I'm trying to make my life better. Sometimes I'm trying to make my life worse! I'm trying to find a happy medium that I can make some sense of.

~Kiki Smith

I've been very lucky being in New York. While there are many things that have impacted my life, I have been able to stay here and do my own work.

~Kiki Smith

My support system is simple - people and time. The miracle of other people in your life.

~Kiki Smith

I first had no interest in figuration whatsoever.

~Kiki Smith

Things that are very significant and important to you when constructing an identity when you're younger change.

~Kiki Smith

I had stopped making figures, and then I began making images of animals in nature, which was a way to introduce the figure.

~Kiki Smith

I'm in general a nostalgic person, but I don't know if I'm nostalgic for the 80s!

~Kiki Smith

Now, it is much more difficult for young people coming to New York. But also when you're young, you have more time to interact with one another, to discover yourself with people of your generation.

~Kiki Smith

When studio art started being seen as important, I joined Colab, and then I became very involved.

~Kiki Smith

The miracle of being able to pay attention to other people in your life, and the miracle of being in time, and to continue being in time.

~Kiki Smith

Many people don't have relationships to their siblings in adulthood, or they have superficial ones. It's sort of unfashionable, particularly in America, to be close to your family.

~Kiki Smith

I didn't start to be an artist myself until I was 24.

~Kiki Smith

We as beings are very contradictory, complicated creatures that work in our best interest and against our best interest. In a certain way, I want my work to have all that messiness.

~Kiki Smith

I love flying buttresses!

~Kiki Smith

Life really changes. And it gets lighter, for the most part. You tolerate yourself and others better.

~Kiki Smith

I always thought it was a trap to fit into ideologies, and maybe that's a luxury position, but my work is a reflection of my being here. My being here is not a reflection of an idea.

~Kiki Smith

I'm peripheral in Colab's history because others were involved in media, filmmaking, and music, and I was always a studio artist.

~Kiki Smith

When you get older, you're running out of time. You care more about trying to stay on the planet a little longer, so you can learn how to draw better!

~Kiki Smith

In drawing, I often think of things as flying buttresses.

~Kiki Smith

It is very different when you age. The things that are significant, or what drives you, or the physical experience of being driven, changes over time.

~Kiki Smith

I think a lot of making art is listening to yourself.

~Kiki Smith

The point of art is that it always has the necessity to expand because people are inherently expanding.

~Kiki Smith

I'm reminded of the arm, and the body, and the appendage.

~Kiki Smith

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