

KIKI SMITH, *White Swan*, 1999, iris print
(fancy name for ink-jet print)

Kiki Smith (b. 1954, Nuremberg, Germany but American), feminist artist. Daughter of American sculptor Tony Smith, grew up in New Jersey. She is known mostly for her sculptures but she has explored all types of media throughout her career (sculpture, drawing, prints, photography). Her early subjects focused on the human body but in the 1990s, she started working on nature



themes, featuring closely observed images of nature (insects, birds and animals). She wanted to reveal the precarious state of nature and man's vital relationship to the environment and its creatures. Much of her photography references her work in sculpture, drawing and synthesizes subjects central to her oeuvre, such as anatomy, the natural world, folklore, mythology and religion.

Some facts about white swans (genus *Cygnus*; family Anatidae, related to geese and ducks). Swans usually mate for life, although divorce does sometimes occur, particularly following nesting failure. They are the largest members of the duck family: they can reach a length of over 60 inches and weigh over 33 lbs. with a wing-span that could reach almost 10 ft. Males and females are alike in their plumage. Males are generally bigger and heavier than females. Pure white swans are only found in temperate areas of the Northern Hemisphere. Almost entirely herbivorous. Swans feature prominently in mythology and folklore of many cultures. Symbol of love or fidelity.