

Wolfgang Hahn Prize 2016: Huang Yong Ping

On April 12, 2016, Huang Yong Ping will receive the Wolfgang Hahn Prize. This year the Gesellschaft für Moderne Kunst am Museum Ludwig is honoring an artist who occupies a central role in contemporary art discourse. In his often spectacular and simultaneously profound works, the artist, who was born in 1954 in China and has lived in Paris since 1989, reflects on such topics as globalization as well as exchanges and conflicts between cultures, societies, and politics.

On the occasion of the prize, the exhibition *Huang Yong Ping: 2016 Wolfgang Hahn Prize* will be on display at the Museum Ludwig from April 13 to August 28, 2016, featuring works from 1983 to 2004. An important component of the show is the 2004 work *Mémoire: Bat Project I, II, III, 2001–2003*, which the Museum Ludwig has purchased as part of the prize.

About the Jury's Decision

In Huang Yong Ping, the jury—which included guest juror Doryun Chong, chief curator at the M+ in Hong Kong—chose an artist who emerged from the Chinese avant-garde, but who is equally well versed in Western contemporary art. “Without ever sacrificing either iconographical ingenuity or sculptural mastery, Mr. Huang’s work shows us what is not familiar and soothing. For this reason, we celebrate him and artists like him. We need our artists to be bards for our contemporary times, speaking uncomfortable truths and reminding us of convenient oblivions,” writes Doryun Chong. One of Huang’s best-known works is a sculpture with the descriptive title *The History of Chinese Painting and the History of Modern Western Art Washed in the Washing Machine for Two Minutes* from 1987, which is representative of Huang’s modus operandi: an existing phenomenon or object is scrutinized and transformed; supposedly established meanings are questioned and can be renegotiated. Yilmaz Dziewior, director of the Museum Ludwig and also a member of the jury, states: “Huang Yong Ping’s work is shaped by a richness and individuality that makes it impossible to tie it to a single cultural sphere. He represents the encounter between the so-called West and the so-called East in such a detailed and knowledgeable manner that each culture becomes intertwined with the other, and it becomes difficult to decipher individual characteristics. I am very pleased that with Huang Yong Ping, for the first time in over twenty years, an artist who is not from Europe or North America has been awarded the Wolfgang Hahn Prize.”

As part of the prize, which is intended to honor an artist who has made a name for themselves in the art world with an internationally recognized body of work but who has not yet found the recognition he or she deserves in Germany in particular, one or more of the prizewinner’s works is purchased for the museum’s collection. “We’re delighted that Huang Yong Ping has made the acquisition of his work *Mémoire* from 2004 possible. As a sculpture and an archive at the same time, it is a key work in regard to Mr. Huang’s major Bat projects,” adds Kurt von Storch, chairman of the Gesellschaft für Moderne Kunst and also a juror, along with board members Gabriele Bierbaum, Sabine DuMont Schütte, Jörg Engels, and Robert Müller-Grünow.

**About the Exhibition *Huang Yong Ping: 2016 Wolfgang Hahn Prize*
April 13 – August 28, 2016**

The exhibition will present works created by Huang from 1983 to 2004, with the aim of conveying an impression of the consistent nature of his work. It will make clear how Huang creates art out of the insights he gains through observing and reflecting on the world around him; the works refer to political structures, supposedly fixed cultural meanings, and the contradictions and similarities of various systems. In tension-filled, multi-layered, and yet visually striking works, he manages to subtly engage with complex histories, with current political and societal developments, and with what the future might hold.

A good example of this is the newly acquired 2004 work *Mémorandum: Bat Project I, II, III, 2001–2003*, in which he opens up his archive. Planned in situ for exhibitions of contemporary sculpture or art in China—in 2001 for *Transplantation in Situ* in Shenzhen, in 2002 for the first Guangzhou Triennial, and in 2003 for the exhibition *Left Wing* in Beijing—the point of departure for all of the *Bat* projects was the collision on April 1, 2001, of an American EP-3 spy plane (also called the “Bat”) with a Chinese fighter jet over the South China Sea. The Chinese plane was destroyed, and the American plane landed on Hainan Island; after months of negotiations between China and the United States, it was dismantled and flown back to the United States in other airplanes. Huang Yong Ping was preoccupied with the incident when he was invited in 2001 to participate in *Transplantation in Situ* as part of the French contingent. For his project, he had a full-scale replica of part of the EP-3 spy plane built, divided into three equal parts. Though approved at the beginning by all parties involved, *Bat Project I* ended up being censored by both France and China. A similar fate befell both *Bat Project II* and *Bat Project III*: for the first, after long talks between the French consulate and the cultural department of Guangdong Province, under American observation, “unnamed higher powers” demanded the dismantling of *Bat Project II* (2002, see Huang Yong Ping’s chronology in the catalogue); for the second, the Beijing Wanliu Land Development Company, which sponsored the exhibition, canceled at the last minute, citing concerns over insufficient security (2003). Shortly afterward, in 2004, Huang created the work *Mémorandum*, which consists of his sketches, drafts, and notes, in addition to protest letters and newspaper clippings about the projects. Designed as a kind of gigantic wooden fanfold, it is both a sculpture that can be unfolded and a closed archive, an “artistic decision to make a representation—a literal traffic collision as well as a civilizational clash,” writes Doryun Chong in his catalogue essay. Seen either as a closed box or, as now at the Museum Ludwig, unfolded in its full expanse, *Mémorandum* reveals the history of these monumental projects and creates a permanent memory for them. “By painstakingly, artistically, and informatively processing the events around the spy plane and especially what befell his engagement with the topic in *Mémorandum: Bat Project I, II, III, 2001–2003*, Huang Yong Ping not only reacts, he also intervenes in the incidents and shapes them himself,” maintains Yilmaz Dziewior in his catalogue essay.

Other works in the exhibition engage with such themes as our mediatized society (including the 1994 work *Kiosk*, already in the Museum Ludwig’s collection), the blessing and curse of scientific and military inventions, and punishment and surveillance—such as the 2004 work *Huit Chevaux de Léonard de Vinci déchirant un porte-avions*. The 1983 work *Haymakers (Les Foins)* by Jules-Bastien

Lepage Was Exhibited in Shanghai in April 1978 shows Huang's turn away from painting and toward conceptual and sculptural works; and the 1997 work *Palanquin*, a palanquin made of bamboo canes covered in snakeskin and decorated with a pith helmet, which hangs light as a feather in the exhibition, subtly reminds the viewer of the dialectic between master and servant.

Artist's Book and Catalogue

On occasion of the awarding Huang Yong Ping's artist's book *Memorandum: Bat Project I, II, III, 2001–2004* will be published, accompanied by a catalogue with texts by Doryun Chong and Yilmaz Dziewior, as well as a chronology in which Huang Yong Ping details, from 2001 to today, the complex history of Bat Projects I, II, and III, each of which was censored shortly before its opening in China.

Artist's book by Huang Yong Ping. *Memorandum: Bat Project I, II, III, 2001–2004*, 2016.
Supplement, edited by Carla Cugini, Gesellschaft für Moderne Kunst. With texts by Doryun Chong and Yilmaz Dziewior and a chronology by Huang Yong Ping on the *Bat* projects. 120 pages.
Published by Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, Cologne, 2016.
Retail price: €39,80
Signed edition: €78

Sponsors

The exhibition, the publication and the evening of the award are kindly supported by BAUWENS and Ebner Stolz. Both companies consider the decision to support this high-calibre prize as a conscious effort to help strengthen the artistic landscape in Cologne. The commitment applies for three successive years and illustrates both companies' claim to continuity and reliability. BAUWENS is a traditional Cologne company founded over 140 years ago, Ebner Stolz a group of companies represented throughout Germany, including a firm based in Cologne with a history spanning over 80 years.

About Huang Yong Ping

Huang Yong Ping, the winner of the 2016 Wolfgang Hahn Prize, is one of the most important representatives of the Chinese avant-garde. His works contain sophisticated cross-references between conceptual Western-influenced culture and traditional Far Eastern culture. They link irony and humor, the political and the spiritual. The intention of his often large-format sculptural works is complex and multilayered. He is interested in presenting contradictions.

Huang Yong Ping—whose last name is written before his first name, as is usual in China—was born in 1954 in Xiamen, a coastal city in Fujian Province in the southeast, and completed his studies in 1981 at the Academy of Fine Arts in Zhejiang Province. His first exhibition was in 1983 at the Palace of Culture in Xiamen. In the following years, he joined other artists in founding the art movement Xiamen Dada and continued to exhibit in China. In 1989 he took part in the pioneering exhibition *Magiciens de la terre*, curated by Jean-Hubert Martin, at the Centre Georges Pompidou and the Grande halle de la Villette in Paris. In this exhibition, in which Western and non-Western artists were equally represented, Martin worked against the dominant focus on Europe and the United States in Western art history. The Tiananmen Square massacre also took place in 1989 in Beijing. In the same

year, Huang decided to settle in France in order to live and work there.

In the following decades, Huang took part in such important biennials and triennials as the Carnegie International (1991) in Pittsburgh, Manifesta 1 (1996) in Rotterdam, the third Shanghai Biennial (2001), the Guangzhou Triennial (2002), the tenth Istanbul Biennial (2007), and the third Moscow Biennale (2009). In 1999 he represented France along with Jean-Pierre Bertrand at the Venice Biennale. In 1997, De Appel in Amsterdam devoted a first retrospective to him. In 2005 the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis hosted a comprehensive retrospective of the artist with the title *House of Oracles*, which later traveled to MASS MoCA in Massachusetts and the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art in Beijing. Further significant solo exhibitions have included, for example, *Wu Zei* at the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco (2010), *Huang Yong Ping* at Nottingham Contemporary (2011), and *AMOY/XIAMEN* at the Musée d'Art Contemporain in Lyon in 2013.

In Germany, Huang participated in Skulptur Projekte Münster in 1997 and in the exhibition *Art Worlds in Dialogue* at the Museum Ludwig in Cologne in 1999. Currently, the Power Station, Shanghai's contemporary art museum, is showing a large retrospective of Huang Yong Ping's work. In addition, he is the guest of Monumenta 2016 at the Grand Palais in Paris, following Anselm Kiefer (2007), Richard Serra (2008), Christian Boltanski (2010), Anish Kapoor (2011), Daniel Buren (2012), and Ilya and Emilia Kabakov (2014). There he will be given carte blanche to create a large-scale installation in the 13,000-square-meter space (opening: May 8, 2016).

About the Wolfgang Hahn Prize

Wolfgang Hahn (1924–1987) was a founding member and officer of the Gesellschaft für Moderne Kunst am Museum Ludwig as well as a painting restorer and chief conservator at the Wallraf-Richartz Museum / Museum Ludwig. Above all, however, he was also a collector. In the 1950s he began exploring contemporary art and establishing a collection that he then expanded in the 1960s with works by artists of the European Fluxus and Happenings movements and Nouveau réalisme (new realism). In 1997 Siegfried Gohr, the founding director of the Museum Ludwig, remarked about Wolfgang Hahn: “The pressing question in the sixties about the relationship between art and life was less an inquiry that Hahn posed himself from the outside than one he formulated himself, out of his attitude toward art. Hahn lived with art and artists without distancing himself from middle-class reality, in which he was firmly rooted. He didn't degrade art to an object, but perceived it as part of his life with sustained energy. His engagement with art was the opposite of aestheticism; in the proper sense of the word, it served him, like others who surround themselves with it, as a vehicle of worldly wisdom.”

In 1994 the Gesellschaft für Moderne Kunst honored this attitude when it launched its prize for contemporary art, endowed with 100,000 German marks and named after Wolfgang Hahn. Today the award is endowed with a budget of up to 100,000 euros. The criteria for the selection of award-winners are: the prize is intended to honor preeminent artists who have established themselves in the art world through an internationally recognized oeuvre that, however, has not yet received adequate attention, above all in Germany. The award also comprises an exhibition of works by the prize recipient organized by the Museum Ludwig, featuring in particular the work or group of works being acquired, as well as an accompanying scholarly publication.