

## Francis Alÿs to Receive the Wolfgang Hahn Prize 2023

Francis Alÿs (b. 1959 in Antwerp) will be awarded the Wolfgang Hahn Prize 2023. The award ceremony takes place at the Museum Ludwig on November 17, 2023 at 6:30 pm.

Francis Alÿs: „Of course I am much honored, and in these polarized times, receiving such an award is significant and invigorating as it makes me feel that there is some coincidence of my own preoccupations and the public’s, and that a dialogue is possible.“

The decision was made by the jury consisting of Matthias Mühling, Director of the Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus in Munich, and the board members of the Gesellschaft für Moderne Kunst: Mayen Beckmann (Chairwoman), Gabriele Bierbaum, Sabine DuMont Schütte, Yilmaz Dziewior (Director, Museum Ludwig), Jörg Engels (Treasurer), and Robert Müller-Grünow.

Guest juror Matthias Mühling on the choice of the recipient of the Wolfgang Hahn Prize 2023: ‘The work of Francis Alÿs is anchored in the political and is at the same time poetic. His works often take the form of stagings of the absurdity of everyday life. With the simplest of artistic gestures, he tells of the complex social and all too often unequal realities of life in our societies. Contradictions of political and cultural regimes thus become just as tangible as the contradictions of his own aesthetic productions, which Alÿs formulates and presents in a pointed manner. Most recently, Francis Alÿs delighted audiences and critics alike at the 59<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale with a work on the political constitution of global children’s play. His exemplary documentaries on children’s play are observations that make the major themes of our present understandable in an empathetic way: for example, the burdens of colonial history and the resulting inequality of living conditions, as well as the utopias that lie in the beauty of shared play.’

‘We consider ourselves very fortunate to have nominated Francis Alÿs as an awardee from the numerous and top-quality proposals from our members; his socially critical art can give us impulses that impart important values for our coexistence in a time of upheavals and uncertainties. In an almost causal manner, he pursues with his work the possibilities of documenting seemingly everyday scenes and actions in challenging circumstances. For his photographic and video works, drawings, and paintings, Alÿs goes to regions of smouldering conflicts such as Afghanistan, Iraq, the Straits of Gibraltar, Jerusalem, or his hometown Mexico City. Whether we understand his vivid narratives as an invitation to re-examine our codes of values is something the artist leaves up to us in an inspiring way,’ explains Mayen Beckmann, Chairwoman of the Gesellschaft für Moderne Kunst.

Yilmaz Dziewior, Director of the Museum Ludwig: ‘Francis Alÿs works across media boundaries. In his works, his unique artistic position manifests itself in the way he observes our society. Alÿs’s investigations and actions, when he himself appears as a protagonist in his own works, involve themes such as migration, border demarcations, and the consequences of globalisation, and are a source for his oeuvre as a whole. Despite numerous exhibitions, Francis Alÿs’s works in Germany have thus far been represented primarily in private collections. The fact that the Museum Ludwig will receive a major work by the artist through the acquisition for the Wolfgang Hahn Prize 2023 is a great enrichment for our institution.’

Francis Alÿs (b. 1959 in Antwerp) lives and works in Mexico City. Trained as an architect and urbanist, he moved to Mexico in 1986 to work with local NGOs. He has been active in the visual arts since 1990, working across media with painting, drawing, actions, installation, video, and photography. Over the past twenty years, he has carried out numerous projects in collaboration with local communities around the world, from South America to North Africa and the Middle East. Francis Alÿs is representing Belgium at the 59<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale until November 2022. Further

exhibitions have been held at, among others: Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Switzerland, 2021-2022; Tai Kwun - Centre for Heritage & Arts, Hong Kong, 2020; Rockbund Art Museum (RAM), Shanghai, 2018; Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, 2018; Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, 2017; DOCUMENTA (13), Kassel, Kabul, Afghanistan; Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, 2013; The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2011; Tate Modern, London, 2010; The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, 2005; Museo Nacional de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, 2003; Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico City, 1997. He received the Blue Orange Prize in 2004, the Vincent Award in 2008, the BACA-Laureate Prize in 2010, the EYE Art & Film Prize in 2018, and the Whitechapel Gallery Art Icon Award and the Rolf Schock Prize in Visual Arts in 2020.

### **About the Wolfgang Hahn Prize**

The Wolfgang Hahn Prize is awarded annually by the Gesellschaft für Moderne Kunst am Museum Ludwig, in 2023 for the 29<sup>th</sup> time. The award is primarily intended to honour contemporary artists who have already made a name for themselves in the art world through an internationally recognised oeuvre, but who are not yet as well known in Germany as they deserve to be. The prize money of a maximum of 100,000 euros is funded by the members' contributions and goes towards the acquisition of a work or group of works by the artists for the collection of the Museum Ludwig. Linked to the prize is an exhibition organised by the Museum Ludwig of the acquired works by the awardee, as well as an accompanying publication.

The name of the prize honours the memory of the passionate Cologne-based collector and painting conservator Wolfgang Hahn (1924–1987), who was committed to the art of the European and American avant-garde in Cologne in many ways. The Gesellschaft für Moderne Kunst feels indebted to his exemplary work as a collector, as a founding member of the Gesellschaft, and as head of the restoration workshops of the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum and the Museum Ludwig.

The previous awardees are:

2022	Frank Bowling
2021	Marcel Odenbach
2020	Betye Saar
2019	Jac Leirner
2018	Haegue Yang
2017	Trisha Donnelly
2016	Huang Yong Ping
2015	Michael Krebber / R.H. Quaytman
2014	Kerry James Marshall
2013	Andrea Fraser
2012	Henrik Olesen
2011	John Miller
2010	Peter Fischli, David Weiss
2009	Christopher Wool
2008	Peter Doig
2006	Mike Kelley
2005	Richard Artschwager
2004	Rosemarie Trockel
2003	Niele Toroni
2002	Isa Genzken
2001	Raymond Pettibon
2000	Hubert Kiecol
1999	Pipilotti Rist
1998	Franz West

1997 Cindy Sherman  
1996 Günther Förg  
1995 Lawrence Weiner  
1994 James Lee Byars

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BAUWENS and EBNER STOLZ have supported the evening of the award ceremony, the presentation, and the publication of the Wolfgang Hahn Prize since 2016.

Further information is available at: [www.bauwens.de](http://www.bauwens.de) and [www.ebnerstolz.de](http://www.ebnerstolz.de).