

PRESS RELEASE

WOLFGANG LAIB: "YOU WILL GO SOMEWHERE ELSE"

18 July – 10 September 2016

Since the mid-1970s, Wolfgang Laib's works made of organic materials (marble, milk, rice, beeswax, and pollen) have been prized for the simplicity and purity of his artistic vision of archetypical forms, which are mainly inspired by non-European objects and buildings. His work is not about innovation and formal development, but continuity. His sparing use of objects and the stringency of his installations leads the viewer to linger and to a meditative contemplation of the work.

An installation of five large beeswax ships on wooden scaffolds occupies the central room of the gallery and gives the exhibition its title. Here the artist exemplarily deals with the transcendent as one of his foremost concerns. Laib says about this work: "It is about the transition from one body to another, from the material to the immaterial, from the visible to the invisible, from the imaginable to the unimaginable. [...] The wooden scaffolds make possible the distance, that which lies out of reach. I was very impressed by the wooden scaffolds in the Potala in Lhasa, which stand along the walls and bear stupas and sacred texts. [...] The simple columned mosques in Anatolia, the rectangular raised prayer platforms, were also very important to me."¹

As one of the first works of this type, the installation was shown in 1995 at Sperone Westwater in New York; later it was exhibited in an expanded form at the Venice Biennale in 1997 and at the Fondation Beyeler in Riehen in 2005/2006.

Laib's formal vocabulary is complemented with a selection of his delicate, spare drawings in oil pastels and pencil as well as his photography.

Wolfgang Laib was born in 1950 in Metzingen, Germany. He lives and works between Hochdorf in Upper Swabia, New York, and India. Since 1976 his works have been shown around the world in important galleries and museums. He has taken part in several biennales in Venice as well as Documenta 7 and 8 in Kassel. Between 2000 and 2002, a retrospective of his sculptures, drawings, and photographs was shown at the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington, the Dallas Museum of Art, and the Haus der Kunst in Munich. In autumn 2015 he received the Praemium Imperiale for his life's work. The Japanese prize, one of the most prestigious art prizes, is awarded for extraordinary contributions to the development, promotion, and progress of the arts.

The gallery is open during the high season from Monday to Saturday, 2 p.m. to 7 p.m.

¹ "Wolfgang Laib, Necmi Sönmez: Die Zeitlosigkeit als Beginn von etwas ganz anderem," in *Wolfgang Laib: Durchgang-Übergang*, exh. cat., Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, Stuttgart, 2000, p. 50.