

Schweizer
Kunst
suisse d'art
svizzero d'arte
svizzer d'art Swiss
for Art

Prix

Meret Oppenheim

2020

Grand Prix
Grand Prix
Gran Premio
Grond Premi
Grand Award



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation

Eidgenössisches Departement des Innern EDI
Département fédéral de l'intérieur DFI
Dipartimento federale dell'interno DFI
Departament federal da l'intern DFI
Federal Department of Home Affairs FDHA
Bundesamt für Kultur BAK
Office fédéral de la culture OFC
Ufficio federale della cultura UFC
Uffizi federal da cultura UFC
Federal Office of Culture FOC

The Swiss Grand Award for Art / Prix Meret Oppenheim
goes to

Marc Bauer

**Barbara Buser
Eric Honegger**

Koyo Kouoh

The Federal Office of Culture is pleased to award this year's Prix Meret Oppenheim to four outstanding Swiss cultural professionals: the artist Marc Bauer, the architects Barbara Buser & Eric Honegger and the curator Koyo Kouoh.

Upon recommendation of the Federal Art Commission, the Swiss Grand Award for Art / Prix Meret Oppenheim is awarded to individuals in the fields of art, art education and architecture whose work is particularly topical and relevant to Swiss artistic and architectural production. The laureates were selected in late 2019 by the Federal Art Commission.

The Federal Office of Culture is publishing the "Prix Meret Oppenheim 2020" publication featuring portraits of and interviews with the awardees. Tobia Bezzola conducts the interview with Marc Bauer; Sonia Zekri interviews Koyo Kouoh; and Jenny Keller talks to Barbara Buser and Eric Honegger. The laureates will be honoured this autumn together with the laureates of the Grand Prix Design (to Ida Gut, Monique Jacot, Kueng Caputo) and the Jan Tschichold Prize (to Maximage).

Marc Bauer

Born 1975 in Geneva,
lives in Zurich and Berlin

“In a way I seek ... to understand things I don't understand.”

History draughtsman. One of the most recognised Swiss artists, Marc Bauer has been creating socially and politically engaged art for more than twenty years now. He appropriates contemporary history and focuses on its dramas and excesses, in order to challenge the resulting ideology of power and human behaviours. Marc Bauer addresses these issues by creating fragmentary narrative threads in which the gaps remind us that memory is invariably selective. The artist combines personal and collective history and develops powerful narratives in which the text engages in a dialogue with the figures. Murals, animations, prints or graphite compositions applied to walls: the art of Marc Bauer is a theatre laid bare, in which mankind presents itself in its most terrifying and profound form. (JEJ)

Marc Bauer attended the École supérieure d'art visuel de Genève and the Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten in Amsterdam. He has shown his works in numerous solo exhibitions in Switzerland and abroad, notably MAMCO in Geneva (2010), the Museum Folkwang in Essen (2014), the Musée Jenisch in Vevey (2016) and the Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst in Zurich (2019). Works by Marc Bauer are in major public and private collections, including the Kunsthaus Zürich, the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the Kunstmuseum St. Gallen and the Nouveau Musée National de Monaco. Marc Bauer is a lecturer in painting and drawing at the Zürich University of the Arts (ZHdK). In 2001, 2005 and 2006 he was awarded a Swiss Art Award. His solo show *Mi piace Commenta Condividi, A Rethorical Figure* at the Istituto Svizzero in Milan will end on 10 July 2020.

Jury Statement:

Drawing is not only the primary medium of Marc Bauer, it is also the message. Sketch-like or hatched passages, subtle chiaroscuro, stark black and white contrasts form imagery which appears and hints at history. Imagery which follows the medium's ambivalence: precision in the formal realisation and the circling of the imaginary. This is what makes for the specific quality of the work of Marc Bauer. (LA)

Barbara Buser Eric Honegger

Barbara Buser
Born 1954 in Zurich, lives in Basel

Eric Honegger
Born 1966 in Zurich, lives in Basel

“Retaining what already exists and can be reused.”

Pioneers of Sustainability. For more than twenty years now, Barbara Buser and Eric Honegger have been concerned with the recycling of architectural elements and the conservation, appropriation and renovation of buildings. Their idea of architecture opposes “starchitecture”. It operates outside of the systems and, to date, is without much competition. Barbara Buser und Eric Honegger convert vacant buildings into living spaces and create new urban structures for entire city districts.

In 1995, Barbara Buser first established the “Bauteilbörse”, an exchange for recycling building components which are no longer used. In 1998, after experiences in countries like Tanzania and the Balkan states, Barbara Buser and Eric Honegger founded their architectural Baubüro Mitte, which is now called baubüro in situ. For a start, they converted the former offices of the Schweizerische Volksbank in Basel into a workspace and a highly popular café called “Unternehmen Mitte”. In 2000, they founded the Gundeldinger Feld and Kantensprung AG and revived the Gundeldingen quarter by revitalising the industrial area of the former Sulzer Burckhardt factory and its surroundings. Their new projects include the conversion of the Alte Markthalle in Basel, the Lagerplatz in Winterthur and the Kindl Areal in Berlin.

Barbara Buser and Eric Honegger have established the “unterdessen” (“in the meantime”) association for the temporary use of private property and, together with Tabea Michaelis and Pascal Biedermann, they run the think tank “denkstatt sàrl” which develops projects in urban and rural contexts.

Jury Statement:

Pioneers in revaluating existing structures on all scales and reactivating obsolete ones, Barbara Buser and Eric Honegger have for many years now unwaveringly pursued an ecological and political creed. Their realised projects are the fruit of inclusive and participative processes and have become a point of reference in the art of listening to a context and its users. Modesty and a focus on the essential characterise their interventions which, in an intelligent and innovative manner, put into practise principles of modularity, recycling and restructuring and have thus entered into the zeitgeist. (VE)

Koyo Kouoh

Born 1967 in Douala,
lives in Cape Town

“Separating art which illustrates a political system from art which has integrated systems of political thought in its practise.”

Institution Builder. Koyo Kouoh is an independent curator and internationally active cultural producer. The central thrust of her work may be described as redefining the contemporary African personality. Koyo Kouoh has broadened her curatorial activities by reflecting on the form of institutions in African emerging countries where cultural production has been the object of tensions between private initiatives and governmental conditions and where contexts, aesthetics and knowledge acquisition often do not measure up to Western paradigms.

In this context, Koyo Kouoh has played an important role by contributing to a new understanding of the potential of artistic organisations. One of her instruments is the RAW Material Company, a centre for art, knowledge and society she founded in Dakar in 2008. With its fundamentally interdisciplinary focus it contributes to the growth and recognition of artistic and intellectual work in Africa and beyond. In her practise as an independent curator, Koyo Kouoh addresses primarily gender issues and a feminist point of view. This focus is reflected notably in exhibitions like “Body Talk”, which was shown in Belgium, France and Sweden in 2015–16 and featured work by six women artists from Africa on subjects such as the body, feminism and sexuality.

At the same time, Koyo Kouoh is internationally active as a consultant and jury member. She was responsible for “Ataraxia”, the Salon suisse at the 2017 Venice Biennale; in eight back-to-back editions she served as curator of the art and training programme of the 1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair in London and New York; and she was a member of the curatorial teams of documenta 12 and 13. She has authored numerous publications, including the forthcoming “RAW Académie: A Matter of Knowledge” (2020), “Word! Word? Word! Issa Samb and The Undecipherable Form” (2013) and “Condition: Symposium Report on Building Art Institutions in Africa” (2012). Since 2019, she is serving as Executive Director and Chief Curator of the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa (Zeitz MOCAA) in Cape Town. Kouoh grew up in Switzerland and in the 1990s moved to Dakar, Senegal, where she founded Raw Material Company.

Jury Statement:

Koyo Kouoh is one of the most important and influential figures in the international art scene. As a curator and critic, as well as a founder of cultural institutions, she has devised new ways of presenting and disseminating art and made a lasting contribution to bringing the art from the African continent into a global context. (GC)

**Jury Prix
Meret Oppenheim 2020**

Federal Art Commission

**Laureates
2001–2019**

President
Giovanni Carmine
(Director, Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen,
St. Gallen)

Members

Laura Arici
(Art historian, Zurich)

Valentin Carron
(Artist, Fully)

Victoria Easton
(Architect, Christ & Gantenbein, Basel)

Julie Enckell Julliard
(Head of Cultural Development
Department, HEAD – Genève, Geneva)

Anne Julie Raccoursier
(Artist, Lausanne)

Anselm Stalder
(Artist, Basel)

Architecture Experts

Oliver Lütjens
(Architect, Lütjens Padmanabhan
Architekten, Zurich)

Tanya Zein
(Architect, FAZ architectes, Geneva)

**New members
since January 2020**

President
Raffael Dörig
(Director, Kunsthaus Langenthal)

Member
San Keller
(Artist, Zurich)

Commission Secretary
Léa Fluck
(Head of Art Promotion,
Federal Office of Culture)

2019	Meili & Peter Architekten Samuel Schellenberg Shirana Shahbazi	2006	Dario Gamboni Markus Raetz Catherine Schelbert Robert Suermond Rolf Winnewisser Peter Zumthor
2018	Sylvie Fleury Thomas Hirschhorn Luigi Snozzi	2005	Miriam Cahn Alexander Fickert & Katharina Knapkiewicz Johannes Gachnang Gianni Motti Václav Požárek Michel Ritter
2017	Peter Märkli Daniela Keiser Philip Ursprung	2004	Christine Binswanger & Harry Gugger Roman Kurzmeyer Peter Regli Hannes Rickli
2016	Adelina von Fürstenberg Christian Philipp Müller Martin Steinmann	2003	Silvia Bächli Rudolf Blättler Hervé Graumann Harm Lux Claude Sandoz
2015	Christoph Büchel Olivier Mosset Urs Stahel Staufer/Hasler	2002	Ian Anüll Hannes Brunner Marie José Burki Relax (Marie Antoinette Chiarenza, Daniel Croptier, Daniel Hauser) Renée Levi
2014	Anton Bruhin Catherine Quéloz Pipilotti Rist pool Architekten	2001	Peter Kamm Ilona Rüegg George Steinmann
2013	Thomas Huber Quintus Miller & Paola Maranta Marc Olivier Wahler		
2012	Bice Curiger Niele Toroni Günther Vogt		
2011	John Armleder Patrick Devanthery & Inès Lamunière Silvia Gmür Ingeborg Lüscher Guido Nussbaum		
2010	Gion A. Caminada Yan Duyvendak Claudia & Julia Müller Annette Schindler Roman Signer		
2009	Ursula Biemann Roger Diener Christian Marclay Muda Mathis & Sus Zwick Ingrid Wildi Merino		
2008	edition fink (Georg Rutishauser) Mariann Grunder Manon Mario Pagliarani Arthur Rüegg		
2007	Véronique Bacchetta Kurt W. Forster Peter Roesch Anselm Stalder		

Publications and Film Portraits

The Federal Office of Culture is publishing the "Prix Meret Oppenheim 2020" featuring portraits of and interviews with the awardees. Tobia Bezzola (art historian, Director of MASI, Lugano) conducts the interview with Marc Bauer; Sonia Zekri (journalist and author, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, Frankfurt) interviews Koyo Kouoh; and Jenny Keller (architect and journalist, *werk, bauen + wohnen*, Zurich) talks to Barbara Buser and Eric Honegger.

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David Mamie, Nicola Todeschini
Photography: Mehdi Benkler

The film portraits by Ramón Giger (6 minutes, in German and French, with English subtitles) will be presented in autumn 2020.

Trailers

Marc Bauer

<https://youtu.be/Bq4Dmt0OHWU>

Barbara Buser & Eric Honegger

<https://youtu.be/1qEV454udBs>

Koyo Kouoh

<https://youtu.be/Y8lgqfmNWRk>

Additional Information

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Photos of the awardees
(in high resolution)
www.bak.admin.ch/pmo

Social Media

Blog: www.swissartawards.ch
Instagram: @swissartawards
#swissartawards
#prixmeretoppenheim

Exhibition Swiss Art Awards and Prix Meret Oppenheim

The 2020 Swiss Art Awards exhibition Swiss Grand Award for Art / Prix Meret Oppenheim will not take place in the usual form in this year due to the current pandemic.

From August to October, the Swiss Art Awards will be presented to the public online and in a decentralized format. A publication encapsulating all the activities will appear as a supplement to the December edition of the *Kunstbulletin*. In recognition of their selection to the second round of the competition, the prize money will be distributed among all finalists.