

Press Kit

Schweizer
Grand
Prix Kunst

Prix
Meret Oppenheim
2019

Grand
Prix Suisse
d'Art

Gran
Premio Svizzero
d'Arte

Grond
Premi Svizzer
d'Art

Swiss
Grand Award
for Art



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

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

Swiss Grand Award for Art /
Prix Meret Oppenheim 2019 goes to:

**Meili & Peter
Architekten**

**Samuel
Schellenberg**

**Shirana
Shahbazi**

For the nineteenth time, the Federal Office of Culture presents the Swiss Grand Award for Art/Prix Meret Oppenheim to three outstanding Swiss culture professionals: the architects Marcel Meili and Markus Peter, the journalist and art critic Samuel Schellenberg and the artist Shirana Shahbazi. The laureates will be honoured together with the winners of the Swiss Art Awards on 10 June 2019 in Basel.

Created in 2001, the Swiss Grand Award for Art/Prix Meret Oppenheim is awarded on the recommendation of the Federal Art Commission to artists, architects, curators, researchers and critics, whose internationally renowned work is of particular relevance and importance to Swiss artistic and architectural practice. Film portraits of the laureates of the Swiss Grand Award for Art/Prix Meret Oppenheim 2019 will be on show in the Swiss Art Awards exhibition which also presents the participants of the second round of the Swiss Art Competition. Each award carries prize money of CHF 40,000.

Marcel Meili,
born 1953 in Küsnacht,
Markus Peter,
born 1957 in Zurich

Meili & Peter Architekten

The collaboration between architects Marcel Meili and Markus Peter dates back to 1987, when they founded their first firm. Some thirty years and three companies in Zurich and Munich later, the duo has participated in major competitions and carried out many projects that have established them as unquestionably influential figures in the Swiss architectural landscape.

Their pragmatic approach to architecture is characterised both by their attention to detail and by a careful study of the specific conditions under which their buildings will be used, and by the bespoke technical and technological innovations they develop for their projects. Meili and Peter strike a perfect balance between creative genius and constructive intelligence, which can also be seen in the many master-plans and urban planning research projects they have delivered.

Their “exemplary practice”, in the words of the Federal Art Commission, is based on the complementarity of Marcel Meili and Markus Peter. Marcel Meili studied at ETH Zurich, where he later taught before being appointed to a professorship in 1999. In particular, he co-directed the ETH Studio Basel Contemporary City Institute with Professors Roger Diener, Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron. He was also a visiting professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Design and taught at the Internationale Sommerakademie Berlin. Markus Peter trained as a civil engineering draughtsman and went on to be a visiting student in philosophy at the Freie Universität in Berlin. He received his diploma in architecture from the Technische Hochschule Winterthur. He was an assistant and visiting professor at ETH and taught at the International Summer Academy (Design) in Karlsruhe, before being appointed to a professorship at ETH in 2002. In addition to completing numerous projects in Switzerland and abroad, Meili and Peter publish regularly and have served on the juries of a number of international architecture competitions.

Jury Statement: Meili & Peter Architekten pursue an investigative approach to architecture: From a reading of the urban or an interpretation of the living space to a detail of construction, each project is the result of meticulous research, the smallest details of which are handled in an absolutely methodical manner. Their career as a duo is informed by their individual interests: Marcel Meili very early on pursued a pioneering curiosity in the fruitful territory of the periphery that leads to the famous studies of ETH Studio Basel. Markus Peter investigates construction techniques and their expression, drawing on the essence of the architectural. Together, they have established an exemplary practice that has for years built a theoretical and practical foundation for generations of architects who have followed their rich teaching. This year, the Federal Art Commission wishes to honor the energy – heroic and ambitious, at the same time humble – that they devote to unifying form, space, structure, and construction to conceive each project as an essential whole that is always more than the sum of its parts.

Samuel Schellenberg
born 1971 in Zurich,
lives and works in Lausanne

Samuel Schellenberg

Samuel Schellenberg first put his pen to work for *Le Courrier* in Geneva in 2004, after studying art history at the University of Lausanne. Now head of the cultural section of the newspaper – the only independent daily in the Lake Geneva area – he has established himself as a committed figure in cultural journalism. Essential given the risk of unilateralism but in the process of disappearing from the generalist press, art criticism nurtures a debate that opens up culture while recognising its social and political value.

In honouring Samuel Schellenberg for his work, the Federal Art Commission emphasises that he “has succeeded, through his investigations, in highlighting trends and issues in society that are reflected in art”. With uncompromising resolve, Schellenberg the critic tackles both regional and international subjects and not only covers current artistic events but also conducts in-depth investigations, fearlessly taking on institutions and prominent personalities in the process. Cultivating an interest in subjects that are often neglected by the media, he regularly examines cultural policy issues, publishing in-depth articles on topics such as artists’ remuneration, gender equality in the cultural world, and the artistic training and professional strategies of young artists who are often little known to the public at large.

By giving visibility to less-known areas of creativity such as independent art spaces and approaching his subjects from a thematic rather than an anecdotal angle, Samuel Schellenberg enables his readers to discover a rich and diverse artistic community and at the same time encourages that community to reflect critically on itself.

Jury Statement: An art historian by training, **Samuel Schellenberg** is an independent and committed journalist. For nearly fifteen years, he has covered current events in the visual arts for the daily newspaper *Le Courrier*. Tackling both Swiss and international subjects, cultural policy issues, and strong themes in the contemporary art scene, he has, through his inquiries, succeeded in highlighting trends and social issues that are reflected in art. Preferring to work discreetly, away from the most prominent centers, Schellenberg has allowed his pen to speak for the most marginalized approaches, the great paradoxes of the art world or scandals that have been ignored. At a time when the space for art criticism is increasingly disappearing and the independence of the press is being questioned, the Federal Art Commission underlines the exceptional nature of Samuel Schellenberg’s work.

Shirana Shahbazi
born 1974 in Teheran,
lives in Zurich

Shirana Shahbazi

Over the course of her artistic career, Shirana Shahbazi has developed a unique approach to the photographic medium that has earned her international recognition, both institutional and commercial. Working at the intersection of cultures, Shahbazi, who was born in Iran and emigrated to Germany before settling in Zurich in the late 1990s, is known for the polysemy of her photographs, which invite the viewer not only to contemplate, but also to deconstruct the various facets of the photographic act: the represented object and its sometimes political repercussions; the beauty and acuity of the eye mediated through a personal interpretation of a subject; and finally the power of the printed result, in all its material density. Flirting regularly with abstraction, sometimes venturing into installation, Shirana Shahbazi's works are much more than a test of the potential of analogue photography or the fascinating product of compositional virtuosity. They are the result of an elaborate artistic inquiry brought to life by technical expertise.

Shirana Shahbazi was born in Teheran in 1974. A graduate of the Fachhochschule Dortmund and the Hochschule für Gestaltung und Kunst in Zurich, she has presented her work in numerous exhibitions at venues including the Kunsthau Hamburg (2018), Istituto Svizzero in Milan (2018), Peter Kilchmann gallery in Zurich (2017), KINDL Zentrum für zeitgenössische Kunst, Berlin (2017), Kunsthalle Bern (2014), Fotomuseum Winterthur (2011) and the New Museum, New York (2011). Her works are held in major collections including Tate Modern, London, the Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem, Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich, Fotomuseum Winterthur, and the Museum of Modern Art and Guggenheim in New York. She was a winner in the Swiss Art Awards in 2004 and 2005.

Jury Statement: Shirana Shahbazi's artistic practice has been widely described and discussed by international critics and exhibited in museums, galleries, and biennials around the world. The images created by the Iranian-born artist poetically and precisely combine themes as varied as the subjectivity of intimacy, the experience of travel, and reflection on identity. The complexity and stratification of her work reaches its apex in her exhibitions, where it becomes clear that she views images as a network built around contrasts and assonances. Shirana Shahbazi also seems to seek pure beauty in her work, understood as a dimension that we should not be afraid of and that can surprise us, because it is inherent in the contrast of brightly colored gallery walls or the density of the urban grid in an Asian city. In Shirana Shahbazi, the Federal Art Commission honors an artist who has successfully revitalized the contemporary photographic idiom, widening the frontiers of the medium and developing a poetic view of the outside world and everyday objects.

**Jury Prix Meret Oppenheim 2019
Federal Art Commission**

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 Enckel Julliard

Head of Cultural Development
Department, HEAD, 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

**Laureates
2001–2018**

2018

Sylvie Fleury
Thomas Hirschhorn
Luigi Snozzi

2017

Peter Märkli
Daniela Keiser
Philip Ursprung

2016

Adelina von Fürstenberg
Christian Philipp Müller
Martin Steinmann

2015

Christoph Büchel
Olivier Mosset
Urs Stahel
Staufer/Hasler

2014

Anton Bruhin
Catherine Quéloz
Pipilotti Rist
pool Architekten

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

2006

Dario Gamboni
Markus Raetz
Catherine Schelbert
Robert Suermondt
Rolf Winnewisser
Peter Zumthor

2005

Miriam Cahn
Alexander Fickert &
Katharina Knapkiewicz
Johannes Gachnang
Gianni Motti
Václav Požárek
Michel Ritter

2004

Christine Binswanger &
Harry Gugger
Roman Kurzmeier
Peter Regli
Hannes Rickli

2003

Silvia Bächli
Rudolf Blättler
Hervé Graumann
Harm Lux
Claude Sandoz

2002

Ian Anüll
Hannes Brunner
Marie José Burki
Relax (Marie Antoinette Chiarenza,
Daniel Croptier, Daniel Hauser)
Renée Levi

2001

Peter Kamm
Ilona Rüegg
George Steinmann

Dates	Publication	Information
<p>Award Ceremony Swiss Grand Award for Art / Prix Meret Oppenheim and Swiss Art Awards: 10 June 2019, 5–6.30 pm</p>	<p>Coinciding with the award ceremony on 10 June 2019, the Federal Office of Culture is publishing “Swiss Grand Award for Art / Prix Meret Oppenheim 2019”, containing portraits of the award winners and interviews conducted by Martin Steinmann (architect, publisher and architectural theorist, Aarau) with Marcel Meili and Markus Peter, Tirdad Zolghadr (curator and author, Berlin) with Shirana Shahbazi and Petra Koehle and Nicolas Vermot-Petit-Outhenin (artists, Zurich) with Samuel Schellenberg.</p>	<p>On the Confederation’s culture awards: Danielle Nanchen Cultural Creativity Section Federal Office of Culture +41 58 464 98 23 danielle.nanchen@bak.admin.ch</p>
<p>Exhibition: Swiss Art Awards 2019 11 to 16 June 2019, daily from 10 am–7 pm Vernissage: 10 June 2019, 7–10 pm Press preview: 10 June 2019, 10 am Hall 3, Messe Basel Free entrance</p>	<p>ISBN 978-3-9524712-7-2 German, English, French Editorial: Gina Bucher & Manuela Schlumpf Graphic Design: Jalscha Röcke & Romy Strasser Photography: Moos-Tang</p> <p>Free copies of the publication are available in the exhibition or can be ordered by email swissart@bak.admin.ch</p>	<p>On the Swiss Art Awards: Léa Fluck Art Promotion Cultural Creativity Section Federal Office of Culture +41 58 462 92 89 lea.fluck@bak.admin.ch</p>
	Film Portraits	Press
	<p>The exhibition Swiss Art Awards 2019 presents film portraits of the laureates of the Swiss Grand Award for Art / Prix Meret Oppenheim 2019.</p> <p>German, French with subtitles Duration: approx. 7 min each Concept and realisation: Susanne Kaelin, 8horses</p>	<p>Media services: Anna Francke +41 79 778 49 15 media@swissartawards.ch Press images: High-resolution portraits of the laureates are available at: www.bak.admin.ch/pmo</p>
	<p>Trailers: Meili & Peter Architekten https://youtu.be/rp1xeg2p8qM Samuel Schellenberg https://youtu.be/PaBtK1uahcU Shirana Shahbazi https://youtu.be/6ZVYP1ibqVU</p>	Social Media
		<p>Blog: www.swissartawards.ch Instagram: @swissartawards #swissartawards #prixmeretoppenheim</p>