

WOLFGANG LAIB

OPENING: FRIDAY, JANUARY 21, 2011, 7–9 p.m.
EXHIBITION: JANUARY 21–MARCH 5, 2011



Installation view

The Buchmann Galerie is pleased to announce its third gallery exhibition in Berlin with Wolfgang Laib (b. 1950).

The sculptural center of the exhibition is composed of *Rice Houses* made from granite covered with soot and oil or tinted red. A portfolio of large-format drawings that were exhibited at the Musée de Grenoble is related to them.

We are especially pleased that, for the first time ever, Wolfgang Laib created a large wall drawing for the exhibition. By doing so, he established a connection between the works on paper and the sculptures in space.

Over a period of more than thirty years, Wolfgang Laib has created an oeuvre that largely escapes traditional categories and has an extraordinarily original quality.

Natural materials such as rice, pollen, milk, and beeswax are employed in art that also reinforces a spiritual dimension whose message is open.

The choice of these materials results in a group of works that unfolds slowly but steadily. Wolfgang Laib never definitively concludes any of his groups of works, as is evident from the presentation of several rice houses from various periods in this exhibition. The individual works and groups of works are juxtaposed with equal value and weight.

The rice houses recall, in their archaic form, reliquaries from the Far East. Wolfgang Laib thus takes up a traditional form but in the context of the exhibition separates it from its common function in favor of a sculptural dimension. The rice houses are embedded in conic piles of rice that vary in size. Piling the rice evokes the idea of an enormous potentiality in which every grain of rice bears within it an almost inexhaustible power to live and multiply.

Looking at Wolfgang Laib's drawings, one is taken with the clarity of forms and colors. They testify to a desire to achieve the essential, avoiding any ostentatious tendency. Every characteristic is necessary and turns out to be significant. The reduction of the formal vocabulary to primary elements and the tension in terms of the synthesis of form and idea condense in his works, which have a highly suggestive power. Beneath their apparent modesty, these works reveal complex occupations and unsuspected profundity.

For many years now, Wolfgang Laib has numbered among the German artists who enjoy an enduring international reputation and estimation. Important works and groups of works by Wolfgang Laib are represented, among other places, in the collections of MoMA in New York, the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington, the DePont Foundation in Tilburg, the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the Kunsthaus Zürich, and the Kunstmuseum Bonn.

Please do not hesitate to contact the gallery for additional information about the artist or for illustrations of the works.