

Roswitha Haftmann Stiftung

Press Release

Zurich, 16. November 2006

Swiss artist-duo Peter Fischli and David Weiss to receive Europe's most valuable art prize, awarded by the Roswitha Haftmann-Stiftung.

The Board of the Roswitha Haftman-Stiftung will today present the Roswitha Haftmann Prize – worth CHF 120,000 – to the Swiss artists Peter Fischli and David Weiss. Having worked together on video installations, photographic works and sculptures since 1979, Fischli/Weiss have carved out a place for themselves amongst the most important contemporary artists on the international stage.

Peter Fischli (*1952) and David Weiss (*1946) have been chosen as the recipients of Europe's most valuable art prize for their collaborative work. Born in Zurich, where they still live and work, they have developed in their video installations, sculptures and photographic works an immense wealth of pictorial ideas which, both witty and enigmatic, have the enduring capacity to attract and retain the viewer's attention. Keenly observant, Fischli/Weiss collect objects and impressions that subtly change in the work of art, thereby shifting the viewer's perspective on reality. As though experimenting in a visibility lab, they test and question – with gentle irony – the roles of viewer and artist alike. For over two decades now, the Swiss artists Fischli/Weiss have enjoyed international recognition. With the award of this year's Roswitha Haftmann Prize, the Board pays tribute to their shared artistic development. The award ceremony will take place in front of 500 invited guests at the Kunsthhaus Zürich. The laudatio is held by Dr. Thomas Wagner, editor for visual arts at the 'Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung' and a Member of the Board.

Kunsthhaus Zürich will present 'Peter Fischli and David Weiss. Questions & Flowers', a retrospective of works by the prizewinners, from 8 June until 9 September 2007.

Following in the footsteps of Walter de Maria, Maria Lassnig, Jeff Wall, Mona Hatoum and Robert Ryman, Fischli/Weiss are the recipients of the sixth Roswitha Haftmann Prize.

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The Roswitha Haftmann-Stiftung awards this prize every one to three years to living artists whose work is of outstanding importance. Valued at CHF 120,000 this is the most generous art prize in Europe. The Board of the Foundation, which selects the prizewinner(s), consists of the Directors (or a representative) of Kunstmuseum Bern, Kunstmuseum Basel, Museum Ludwig in Cologne and Kunsthaus Zürich, and other members named in the Constitution of the Foundation or co-opted by the Board itself.

Roswitha Haftmann (1927–1998) – a language teacher who subsequently modelled for American photographic agencies – was married to the art historian Werner Haftmann. She ran her own art gallery in Zurich until her death in 1998. Born in St. Gallen, she relished social occasions and used her not inconsiderable fortune to set up the Foundation that now funds the Roswitha Haftmann Prize.

The author Ludmila Vachtova has written a monograph, 'Roswitha Haftmann', remembering and celebrating the life of this patron of the arts – renowned for her beauty and sophisticated appreciation of art. Published by Scheidegger und Spiess, it is available for CHF 38.– in the Museum Shop in Kunsthaus Zürich.

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