

Schweizer Grand Prix Kunst  
Grand Prix suisse d'art  
Gran Premio svizzero d'arte  
Grond premi svizzer d'art  
Swiss Grand Award for Art

# Prix Meret Oppenheim

## 2024



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Home Affairs FDHA  
**Federal Office of Culture FOC**

# Presskit EN

Swiss Grand Award for Art  
Prix Meret Oppenheim 2024  
for

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Swiss Grand Award for Art  
Prix Meret Oppenheim 2024

June 11-16, 2024

Messe Basel, Hall 1.1

Award Ceremony and Opening: June 10, 2024

The Federal Office of Culture (FOC) is awarding the Prix Meret Oppenheim to outstanding Swiss art practitioners for the 24th time since it was founded in 2001. At the recommendation of the Federal Art Commission (FAC), the prizes for the 2024 edition will go to the art historian Jacqueline Burckhardt, the architect duo Marianne Burkhalter and Christian Sumi, and the artist Valérie Favre. The FOC would like to warmly congratulate the prizewinners as well as the members of the jury.

Together with the winners of the Swiss Art Awards, the prizewinners will be honored on June 10, 2024 in Basel. Philip Ursprung (Professor of Art and Architectural History at ETH Zurich and winner of the Prix Meret Oppenheim 2017), Martina Voser (Landscape architect and professor at ETH Zurich) and Carina Plath (Curator at the Sprengel Museum Hannover) will deliver the laudatory speeches at the award ceremony.

“We tracked down artists and writers whose interests and concerns seemed relevant to us; we benefited from the advice of competent people and built up a network. *Parkett’s* mission as a transatlantic bridge also meant publishing the magazine in German and English and having offices in Zurich and New York. We always worked directly with the artists.”

“As a model for the summer academy, I envisioned the groves of Academe in ancient Athens, where people would stroll about philosophizing. For instance, we organized one of the academies in Bern’s botanical gardens.”

Jacqueline Burckhardt is a woman of many talents: she is a restorer, art historian, curator, author, editor, and organizer. With her passion for art, she amalgamates all areas of activity in her life. She is guided by genuine curiosity and an affinity for art. Her training as a restorer at the Istituto Centrale del Restauro in Rome was a seminal influence on her approach to art. The knowledge Burckhardt gained there was primarily the combined experience of direct observation, of respect for the needs of a work of art, and of the interplay between theory and practice. Her studies at the University of Zurich complemented the union of theoretical knowledge and aesthetic experience with the scholarship of art historical analysis.

Jacqueline Burckhardt was the co-founder and editor of the art magazine *Parkett*. For 33 years, from 1984 to 2017, she played a key role in shaping the profile of the magazine. *Parkett* stimulated discussion in both German and English about the current art of the time, with a focus on the transatlantic exchange of art and artist relationships. The success was overwhelming, not least because of the proximity to the artists. *Parkett* published 101 issues and provided a platform for over 300 artists – listing them today reads like a who’s who of the art history of that time: from Richard Artschwager to Laura Owens, from Tauba Auerbach to Robert Wilson, from Cosima von Bonin to Jimmie Durham, from Maurizio Cattelan to Sylvie Fleury, and from Fischli/Weiss to Katharina Fritsch. There were also stars like Meret Oppenheim, Andy Warhol, Roni Horn, Paul McCarthy,

Isa Genzken, Richard Serra, Monica Bonvicini, storytellers such as Sam Taylor-Wood, Mika Rottenberg, Karen Kilimnik, Sophie Calle, global thinkers such as Alighiero e Boetti, Camille Henrot, Pipilotti Rist, and poets such as Luc Tuymans and Tacita Dean. Whether purists, storytellers, demiurges or global thinkers – artists are always committed to the specific aesthetics of the artistic economy of means as well as the awareness of the way in which the work of art appears.

In addition to her mediation work at *Parkett*, Burckhardt initiated a performance program at the Kunsthaus Zürich through which Laurie Anderson gained a loyal Zurich audience. She directed the Sommerakademie at the Zentrum Paul Klee in Bern for eight years. Under her leadership, the academy in Bern established itself in the art world and became an important meeting place for current art debates of the time. She taught future architects the foundations of art at the Accademia di architettura in Mendrisio. For the Novartis Campus in Basel (2005–2015) she created a complex iconographic program with several artists, through which the site now echoes the narrative of the research and history of the pharmaceutical industry. She presided over various committees such as the Fondation Nestlé pour l’Art and, from 1998 to 2006, the Swiss Federal Art Commission, thereby influencing the course of Swiss cultural policy. The German artist Sigmar Polke requested Jacqueline Burckhardt to accompany him with her expertise in the process of designing the stained glass windows at the Grossmünster in Zurich. She could be described as a director of revived art mediation, in allusion to her doctoral thesis entitled Giulio Romano, *Regisseur einer verlebendigten Antike* (Director of a Revivified Antiquity).

Jacqueline Burckhardt was born in Basel in 1947. She is a restorer, studied art history at the University of Zurich, and co-founded the art magazine *Parkett* in 1984. She lives in Zurich.

“We have tried to update and modernize timber construction in order to make it architecturally powerful.”  
– Christian Sumi

“Suddenly we were able to envision architecture not just vertically, but also horizontally, in layers.”  
– Marianne Burkhalter

The architect duo Marianne Burkhalter and Christian Sumi are pioneers of modern timber construction. Their innovative use of form and color in combination with timber and prefabricated components already attracted international attention in the 1980s and 1990s. They make programmatic statements by linking technical and formal aspects in their work and by taking the social and cultural dynamic of their buildings’ surroundings into account. Space is a crucial factor, as demonstrated by the spiral-shaped extension to Hotel Zürichberg of 1995.

They arrived at architecture from different angles. Marianne Burkhalter is a trained draftsman and initially worked at Superstudio in Florence and Studio Works in Los Angeles/New York, where she gained experience in the interdisciplinary approach then cultivated by the avant-garde in Italy and the United States. Like Christian Sumi, she was interested in fundamental issues of construction. In the early 1980s, Sumi conducted research on Otto Rudolf Salvisberg, Le Corbusier, and modernism at the ETH Institute for the History and Theory of Architecture (gta). The two architects founded their company in 1984.

In response to the political concerns of the 1970s, they worked together with environmentalists and did research of their own into energy conservation. They began building structures out of wood, as light as possible and with a minimum amount of material. In the 1990s, they were able to benefit from the possibilities offered by the development of new technologies in timber construction.

Influenced by Hans Fischli, Emil Roth, and the American pioneer of industrial construction Konrad Wachsmann, as well as Le Corbusier, Frank Lloyd Wright, and many more, Marianne Burkhalter and Christian Sumi were part of an architectural scene undergoing profound change. In the 1970s, author-

itarian structures came under scrutiny; there were calls for open urban spaces and women demanded to be heard. For the first time, the destruction of the environment became a rallying cry as well.

Burkhalter Sumi pursue a strategy of typological differentiation depending on the location and function of each project, for they are fully aware that an apartment is never just an empty space. Their designs reference models of modernism, which they revamp in contemporary terms, such as the Sunnige Hof housing cooperative in Zurich (2012). They have long incorporated the concept of adaptive reuse into their work, exploring how existing buildings might be structurally and sustainably adapted, and thus preserved. A case in point is a historic building that they converted into offices for Switzerland Tourism in Zurich (2019).

In 2021, the Federal Supreme Court ruled that their one-family home with a studio, built in 1986, was “worthy of protection for bearing exemplary witness to architectural advances in timber construction.” Construction of the privately initiated Kunsthalle Göschenen with works by the artists Hans Op de Beeck and Subodh Gupta has just been completed, and it opens this year. They participated in the Architecture Biennale in Venice in 2014 and 2018 and shared a chair at the Accademia di architettura in Mendrisio from 2008 to 2016. In addition, they have committed to several research projects such as an in-depth study of the Alpine region as a place of transit, *Der Gotthard / Il Gottardo. Landscape – Myths – Technology* (Park Books 2016), and a study of the Citroën DS, *The Goddess – La Déesse* (Lars Müller Publishers 2020). In 2021, over 100 of their handmade models for projects and study (1984–2020) were acquired by the gta archive of ETH Zurich.

Marianne Burkhalter, born in Thalwil in 1947, and Christian Sumi, born in 1950 in Biel, founded their offices Burkhalter Sumi in 1984. In 2021, they handed the company (now Oxid Architektur Zürich) over to their long-time partners Yves Schihin and Urs Rinklef. They have since a studio of their own in Zurich. They taught at the Accademia di architettura in Mendrisio from 2008 to 2016. They live in Zurich.

“Art is not comfortable.”

“For years I’ve been working on a structure in which cycles are created not as a linear addition of pictures but function like a spiral.”

The painter Valérie Favre, from the French part of Switzerland, is internationally known for the mythical creatures and figures that populate her series of oil paintings. Her compositions are characterized by a fictional world full of unrest, contradiction, and contrast. Her expressive, dynamic paintings critically examine motifs and images from art history and literature. Favre “builds” structures by working in parallel on various overlapping groups of works over several years. For her, painting is a radical way of “thinking world.”

After starting out in theater and film, she began at the end of the 1980s to concentrate on the medium of painting within an art discourse dominated by conceptualism and minimalism. She caused a sensation in France with her paintings of dresses without bodies in *Robes Rouges* (Red Dresses, 1994–1996) and quickly became a renowned feminist artist. One of her most striking visual inventions is the *Lapine Univers* (Universal Rabbit, 2001–2012), a hybrid female figure with long rabbit ears – heroine and anti-heroine in one. Work on a series can span ten years or more, as in *Suicide* (2003–2013). She translates this complex theme into painting in a lexical form with depictions of suicides in over one hundred variations. Favre’s strategy of re-enactment can be found not only in the appropriation of motifs from the history of painting such as Goya’s *Flight of the Witches* in the series *Ghosts* (2012–2016), but also in her series *Self-Portrait as Hugo Ball* (2016–2019), where she re-enacts the iconic photograph of the Dadaist at Cabaret Voltaire.

Favre often addresses experiences that have coalesced into archetypes as in *Der Dritte Bruder Grimm* (The Third Brother Grimm, 2004–2007), or *Redescriptions* (2007–2008), which in turn appear in her large-format triptychs *Théâtres* (2009–2017). Titles of cycles such as *Die Henkerin* (The Female Executioner, 2008–2009), *Kakerlake* (Cockroach, 2008–2010), *Fragments/Kosmos/Universum* (Fragments/Cosmos/Universe, 2019–2020) or *Le Bateau des Poètes* (The Poets’ Boat, 2020–2022) are

not only substantive references to her thinking, but also poetic extensions of her paintings. As a counterpoint, she creates ritualized work which includes the element of chance, as in *Balls and Tunnels* (since 1995). Chance also plays a role in the use of her working instrument, *La Poulinière* (The Broodmare), which refers to Marcel Duchamp *3 stoppages étalon* and features several aspects, such as defining a time factor for the painterly process.

Born in Switzerland and now working in Berlin and Neuchâtel, Favre has been a professor of painting at the Berlin University of the Arts since 2006. In 2012 she was nominated for the Prix Marcel Duchamp in France. Her work has been on view at such venues as the Sprengel Museum Hannover (2020), Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts de Lausanne (2018), Musée d’art Neuchâtel (2017), Von der Heydt Kunsthalle Wuppertal-Barmen (2016/2017), Franz Gertsch Museum, Burgdorf (2016), Musée d’art moderne et contemporain, Strasbourg (2015), Neuer Berliner Kunstverein (2013), K21 Düsseldorf (2010/2011), Kunstmuseum Luzern (2009/2010), Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (2009), Carré d’Art, Nîmes (2008), Haus am Waldsee, Berlin (2006), and Musée de Picardie, Amiens (2004).

Valérie Favre was born in 1959 in Evilard, Switzerland. She has been working as a painter since the 1980s and has been a professor of painting at the Berlin University of the Arts since 2006. She lives in Neuchâtel and Berlin.

## PUBLICATION

The Federal Office of Culture is producing the publication *Swiss Grand Award for Art / Prix Meret Oppenheim 2024* with portraits and interviews of the prizewinners. The interviews were conducted by Laura Arici with Jacqueline Burckhardt, Angela Lammert with Valérie Favre, and Nik Bärtsch and Luca Burkhalter with Marianne Burkhalter and Christian Sumi.

- ISBN 978-3-907394-11-3
- German, French, Italian, Romansh, English
- Editor: Gina Bucher
- Graphic Design: Nicolas Polli
- Photography: Anne Morgenstern and Florian Spring
- Circulation: 10,000

The publication will be issued in conjunction with the *Kunstbulletin*, July/August 2024, and can also be ordered free of charge at [swissart@bak.admin.ch](mailto:swissart@bak.admin.ch).

## SWISS GRAND AWARD FOR ART / PRIX MERET OPPENHEIM

The Prix Meret Oppenheim was launched in 2001 by the Federal Office of Culture in collaboration with the Federal Art Commission. It honors artists, architects, art educators, researchers, and critics who have succeeded in putting Swiss artistic production in the spotlight beyond national borders and for extended periods of time.

Each award carries prize money of CHF 40,000.

## FILM PORTRAITS

Director Jessie Fischer created film portraits of the winners of the Swiss Grand Award for Art / Prix Meret Oppenheim 2024.

- German, French with subtitles
- Duration: approx. 5 minutes each

The film portraits will be shown at the Swiss Art Awards exhibition and can also be viewed at [www.swissartawards.ch](http://www.swissartawards.ch) as of June 11, 2024.

## PRIX MERET OPPENHEIM 2024 JURY Federal Art Commission

### President

- Raffael Dörig,  
Director, Kunsthaus Langenthal

### Members

- Victoria Easton,  
Architect, Christ & Gantenbein, Basel
- San Keller, Artist, Zurich (until 31.12.2023)
- Roman Kurzmeyer, Curator, Lecturer  
and Head of the Ricola Collection, Basel
- Mai-Thu Perret, Artist, Geneva
- Nicole Schweizer, Curator  
of Contemporary Art, Musée cantonal  
des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne
- Una Szeemann, Artist, Zurich and Tegna

### Architecture Experts

- Catherine Gay, Architect, GayMenzel,  
Monthey (until 31.12.2023)
- Mia Hägg, Architect, Habiter Autrement,  
Locarno

### Commission Secretariat

- Léa Fluck,  
Art Historian, Federal Office of Culture

LAUREATES  
2001–2023

2023

- Stanislaus von Moos
- Uriel Orlow
- Parity Group

2022

- Caroline Bachmann
- Klodin Erb
- Jürg Konzett  
& Gianfranco Bronzini

2021

- Georges Descombes
- Esther Eppstein
- Vivian Suter

2020

- Marc Bauer
- Barbara Buser  
& Eric Honegger
- Koyo Kouoh

2019

- Meili Peter Architekten
- Shirana Shahbazi
- Samuel Schellenberg

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
- Staufner/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 Devanthéry  
& 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 Guggler
- 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

## EVENTS

- Award Ceremony  
Swiss Grand Award for Art / Prix Meret Oppenheim  
and Swiss Art Awards  
June 10, 2024

- Exhibition  
Swiss Art Awards 2024  
June 11-16, 2024  
Messe Basel, Hall 1.1  
Free admission

Tue-Sat 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Thu 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Sun 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

For more information, see:  
[schweizerkulturpreise.ch](http://schweizerkulturpreise.ch)

## CONTACT

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- Press Photos  
High-resolution photographs of the prizewinners  
can be found at: [bak.admin.ch/pmo](http://bak.admin.ch/pmo)

- Social Media  
[swissartawards.ch](http://swissartawards.ch)  
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