



COURTESY OF SCOTTSDALE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

Wolfgang Laib's "The Rice Meals," 1983, features rice and hazelnut pollen on brass plates. Laib challenges his audience to examine how they experience each day.

MEET THE ARTIST

What: ARTiculations: Wolfgang Laib — A Conversation. Exhibition curator Klaus Ottman hosts a conversation with Wolfgang Laib

Where: Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, Stage 2 theater

When: 1:30 p.m. today

How much: \$5, \$3 for students and members

Info: (480) 994-2787



Artist Wolfgang Laib used vast amounts of hazelnut pollen to create his "Pollen From Hazelnut," 1986.

Open your eyes

Artist Wolfgang Laib strives to remind us that nature's miracles are everywhere

BY AMY ABRAMS | SUNDAY ARTS

Artist Wolfgang Laib wants to wake us up. Amidst nature's exquisite offerings, we are summoned from sleep by his gentle whisper: "Look, look here — life's miracles."

Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art presents the first major survey of the internationally acclaimed German artist's work in a retrospective opening today.

Using milk, pollen, beeswax, rice and other natural substances, Laib creates objects and installations that celebrate the wonders of nature. Hazelnuts, dandelions and pine pollen are gathered and displayed in a series of cone-shaped mounds, beeswax is transformed into honey-scented dwellings and white marble slabs are filled with pure white milk.

The materials are loaded with meaning. The artist suggests the

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Deborah Hopkins

potential of humankind by bringing pollen to our senses. With just a speck of pollen, a field of flowers or a grove of trees is born. Rice and milk — so small, white and pure — can mean life or death to a small child. Paradox, in all of life, including nature, is revealed. Much contemporary art proposes external change in our increasingly challenging world. The artwork of Laib turns the problem inside out, proposing internal change. To alter our lives, suggests Laib, we must begin by examining who we are and how we experience each day.

In the 1970s, Laib, a former physician, turned to art and Eastern philosophy to explore his own

VISUAL ART

SEE IT

What: "Wolfgang Laib: A Retrospective"

Where: Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, 7380 E. Second St.

When: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday; 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Thursday; noon to 5 p.m. Sun. Through Jan. 6.

How much: \$7, \$5 for students with current ID, free to members with current membership cards and those 15 or younger. Free to all on Thursdays.

Info: (480) 994-2787 or www.scottsdalearts.org

connection with the earth and the divine. "His work is very personal," says Deborah Hopkins, SMOCA curator of exhibitions. "It is almost incidental that it finds an audience."

Indeed, Laib pursues art as a meditative practice and a sacred ritual. He practices being "in the moment" to fully experience life's everyday miracles. "The show is not just pictures on the wall. It can change how you see the world," Hopkins says. "You don't have to be an academic or an art expert to really feel something about this work. It has the potential to heal your spirit."

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