

Artist of Olfactory Appeal Wins Hugo Boss Prize

By RANDY KENNEDY OCT. 20, 2016

The Hugo Boss Prize, one of the most prominent international awards for visual artists, this year marking its 20th anniversary, will go to Anicka Yi. Ms. Yi, a South Korean-born, New York-based artist, uses elements like fragrances, food and fermentation to turn art toward a more whole-body experience.



"Search Image" (2016), by Anicka Yi.
Anicka Yi, 47 Canal, New York and Fridericianum, Kassel

German fashion company Hugo Boss. In addition to the \$100,000 cash award that comes with it, Ms. Yi will be given a solo exhibition at the museum — joining past winners with highly established reputations in the art world like Pierre Huyghe, Tacita Dean, Matthew Barney and Danh Vo.

Ms. Yi, 45, was chosen from a field of six nominees, several of whom are much better known in the art world, including the painter Laura Owens; the choreographer Ralph Lemon; and the artist-activist Tania Bruguera, who was arrested in Cuba, her homeland, last year while conducting politically provocative performances.

"The primacy of sight and vision over all the other senses doesn't make a whole lot of sense to me," Ms. Yi has said. Among other unstable and sometimes unsavory materials, her works have incorporated DNA samples, kombucha tea cultures, honey and flowering bacteria that she has used as a paint medium.

Katherine Brinson, a juror for the prize and a curator at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, which presents the award, said Ms. Yi's work stood out because of "a depth of promise in a practice that's been underway for many years," one that engages "in wildly seductive ways" a host of difficult questions — about art's permanence, about technology and biological engineering, and about the fragility of life.

The prize was begun in 1996 by the Guggenheim Foundation and the