Anicka Yi awarded 2016 Hugo Boss Prize

Jury for prize, given by Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, admired how experiments in artist’s work “push the limits of perceptual experience in the ‘visual’ arts”

by VICTORIA STAPLEY-BROWN  |  21 October 2016

Mark Lander, the CEO of Hugo Boss, Anicka Yi and Richard Armstrong, the director of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and Foundation (Photo: Neilson Barnard/Getty Images for HUGO BOSS)

The New York-based artist Anicka Yi was named the 2016 recipient of the biennial Hugo Boss Prize, which is awarded by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation and sponsored by the German fashion house Hugo Boss. This is the 20th
Yi’s conceptual works explore smell and tactility to challenge the primacy of vision as a sense, and are often made of perishable materials, which she says is a way of “questioning that sort of monumentality of the work that is going to outlive all of us as a relic of history” in her video interview for the prize. For her 2015 exhibition at The Kitchen in New York, You Can Call Me F, Yi cultivated bacteria with swabs she took from 100 women and painted with this organic material “like pigment” in an experience she calls “glorious” and “really fun”. She says that while she uses scientific processes in her work, it is ultimately driven by narrative: this particular work asked the question “What does feminism smell like?” Yi’s solo exhibition at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum is due to open in April.