

## Prize-Winning Artist's Guggenheim Show: 100,000 \$1 Bills on the Wall

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It's a concept that takes Warhol one bold step further: receive \$100,000 in prize money and instead of spending it, tack 100,000 used \$1 bills to the walls of a museum.



*Dominique Faget/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images*  
Hans-Peter Feldmann in 2010.

But the notion that, as Warhol, the man who painted “200 One Dollar Bills,” once said, “making money is art” is exactly what Hans-Peter Feldmann, the German artist who was awarded the \$100,000 Hugo Boss Prize in November, does *not* want art lovers to think next month when they step into a large gallery off the Frank Lloyd Wright ramp of the Guggenheim Museum in New York and see a room covered floor to ceiling with 100,000 \$1 bills.

“I’m 70 years old, and I began making art in the ’50s,” Mr. Feldmann said in a telephone interview from his studio in Düsseldorf, Germany. “At that time there was no money in the art world. Money and art didn’t exist. So for me, \$100,000 is very special, it’s incredible, really. And I would like to show the quantity of it.”

Describing the installation as “a big statement,” Mr. Feldmann said “it would be a pity” if people think that the exhibition is crass or that he is thumbing his nose in some way at the prize or the money or the Guggenheim. “I am not at all against the museum. It’s great that they have agreed to do this; it is a bit out of the norm.”

The Hugo Boss Prize, established in 1996 by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation and named for the German men’s wear company that sponsors it, is given every two years for significant achievement in contemporary art. The winner is awarded not only \$100,000, but also an exhibition, which this year runs from May 20 through Nov. 2. Mr. Feldmann is the oldest artist to [win the prize](#), which is generally given to emerging professionals. At the time of the announcement last year, the jury of art professionals defended its decision, saying that Mr. Feldmann epitomized the best of contemporary art right now.

When Mr. Feldmann told the Guggenheim curators what he wanted to do, they were not entirely surprised. "We have a history of realizing artists' visions no matter how extreme," said Nancy Spector, the chief curator. "We looked at it from every angle to see if it was doable and defensible. It is in keeping with his work."

Creating carefully conceived installations from everyday images is what Mr. Feldmann is known for. In 2004-5, MoMA P. S. 1 showed "100 Years," an exhibition made up of 101 photographic portraits of people ages 8 months to 100 years. And at the International Center of Photography in Midtown three years ago, he filled a room with the framed front pages of 100 newspapers — from New York, Paris, Dubai, Sydney, Seoul and elsewhere — printed on Sept. 12, 2001.

Officials at the Guggenheim estimate that it will take a team of art handlers about 13 days to pin the used bills to the walls. "The gallery will become a totally immersive environment," said Katherine Brinson, an assistant curator who is organizing the exhibition. She added that it was particularly important to Mr. Feldmann that the dollar bills be used ones. "It's the notion of value in everyday life," she said. "It's something we handle every day. And used money has a previous life." Mr. Feldmann said using crisp dollar bills could lead to the misunderstanding that the installation is about capitalism and power.

He has instructed the museum to tack the bills up vertically, not horizontally, and they will have to overlap to get the entire \$100,000 on the walls. Why vertically? Mr. Feldmann said it was an entirely pragmatic decision: "it's easier because they only will need one pin."

Since the money is there for the taking, officials at the Guggenheim are planning to have extra guards on duty and security cameras keeping a close watch on visitors. "In the next room you find \$10 million paintings, and nobody is stealing them," Mr. Feldmann said. "If they pocket \$1, O.K. But I'm sure that won't happen."

And although the intent may be different, even Mr. Feldmann acknowledged that his installation had its roots in the Pop Art of the 1960s and '70s. One obvious image that comes to mind is Warhol's 1962 silkscreen painting "200 One Dollar Bills," which sold for \$43.7 million at Sotheby's two years ago.

But Mr. Feldmann's installation is ephemeral: once the show is over, the money will be his for the spending.

"It can only be seen now, in this museum," he said. "It's a one-shot. That's all."