UGO RONDINONE CREATES EXCLUSIVE INSTALLATION FOR THE ART INSTITUTE’S BLUHM FAMILY TERRACE

we run through a desert on burning feet, all of us are glowing our faces look twisted.

On View April 20, 2014

Five towering stone sculptures set in a suggested fog-shrouded Chinese landscape, are now on view on the Art Institute of Chicago’s Bluhm Family Terrace. The installation, titled we run through a desert on burning feet, all of us are glowing our faces look twisted., was created exclusively for the Art Institute by Swiss-born, New York–based artist Ugo Rondinone. The installation is on view through April 20, 2014.

Ugo Rondinone (b. 1964) has earned international attention for his poetic, evocative work across a wide range of styles and media. He tends to work in series, selecting a medium and motif that he explores in multiple variations. His best-known groups of works include monochromatic large-scale drawings of trees, multicolored concentric circle paintings, sculptures of recumbent clowns or gnarly olive trees, and rainbow-colored neon signs. These poetic evocations often suggest the passage of time, introspective moods, and charged atmospheres.
The five sculptures in *we run through a desert on burning feet, all of us are glowing our faces look twisted* are part of a series that the artist began in 2008 known as *Scholar Rocks*, a reference to stones found in China’s Tai Lake region that were traditionally collected by scholars and used as ornaments for reflection. Scholars’ rocks, most standing at less than a foot in height and riddled with holes from natural erosion, have long been admired for their shapes and were evaluated on the aesthetic bases of form, texture, and the ways in which they were molded by nature. Those that suggested representations of figures or landscapes were highly valued; the most asymmetrical and unusual pieces were especially prized.

The installation at the Art Institute draws on this tradition. Here, Rondinone’s oversized rocks are situated in an imagined Chinese landscape. The Chicago skyline, normally visible through the glass parapet surrounding the terrace, is partially obscured by a brushy whitewash application, an allusion to the fog-laden skies often found in Chinese landscape painting. The installation space is thus transformed into one that encourages a more isolated contemplation of the works in keeping with the original meditative function of scholars’ rocks—but now on a monumental scale.

The works on view are part of a larger series of 17 scholars’ rocks that, like many other works in the artist’s oeuvre, are poetically titled. Each work in this series shares the same 17-word title—*we run through a desert on burning feet, all of us are glowing our faces look twisted*, a haiku of now-anonymous origins—but to mark each individual sculpture, a different word in the poem is capitalized.

The Bluhm Family Terrace is dedicated to site-specific works by leading contemporary artists, commissioned twice annually. Located on the third floor of the museum’s Modern Wing, the Bluhm Family Terrace has been the site of installations by Tomoaki Suzuki, Danh Vo, and Katharina Fritsch, among others.

**About Ugo Rondinone**
Ugo Rondinone was born in Brunnen, Switzerland, in 1964, and he currently lives and works in New York. He studied at the Hochschule für angewandte Kunst in Vienna from 1986 to 1990. He has had solo exhibitions at the Musée National d’Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (2003); Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, Australia (2003); Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne (2004); Whitechapel Art Gallery, London (2006); Creative Time: Art on the Plaza, Battery Park, New York (2007); and *Hell, Yes!*, New Museum of Contemporary Art,
New York (2007). Rondinone has been included in notable group exhibitions such as the Berlin Biennale (1998); Liverpool Biennale, Great Britain (2002); 7th Lyon Biennale, France (2003); 54th Carnegie International, Pittsburgh (2004); and Super Vision at the ICA, Boston (2006). Rondinone represented Switzerland, along with Urs Fischer, in the 52nd Venice Biennale (2007).

_We run through a desert on burning feet, all of us are glowing our faces look twisted._ is organized by the Art Institute of Chicago with major funding from Bluhm Family Endowment Fund, which supports exhibitions of modern and contemporary sculpture. The exhibition is curated by James Rondeau, Frances and Thomas Dittmer Chair and Curator, Department of Contemporary Art at the Art Institute of Chicago.

**Image:** Ugo Rondinone. _We run through a desert on burning feet, all of us are glowing our faces look twisted_. 2008. Photograph courtesy the artist and Gladstone Gallery, New York and Brussels.

# # # #

[www.artic.edu](http://www.artic.edu)
[Twitter](https://twitter.com)
[Facebook](https://www.facebook.com)

**MUSEUM HOURS**
Daily: 10:30–5:00
Thursdays until 8:00
Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's days.
Children under 14 always free
Members always free

City of Chicago residents with Chicago Public Library cards can borrow a "Museum Passport" card from any library branch for free general admission to the eleven members of Museums in the Park, including the Art Institute of Chicago.

The Art Institute of Chicago gratefully acknowledges the support of the Chicago Park District on behalf of the citizens of Chicago.