

December 12, 2024–March 30, 2025

ugo rondinone the rainbow body

Aspen Art Museum

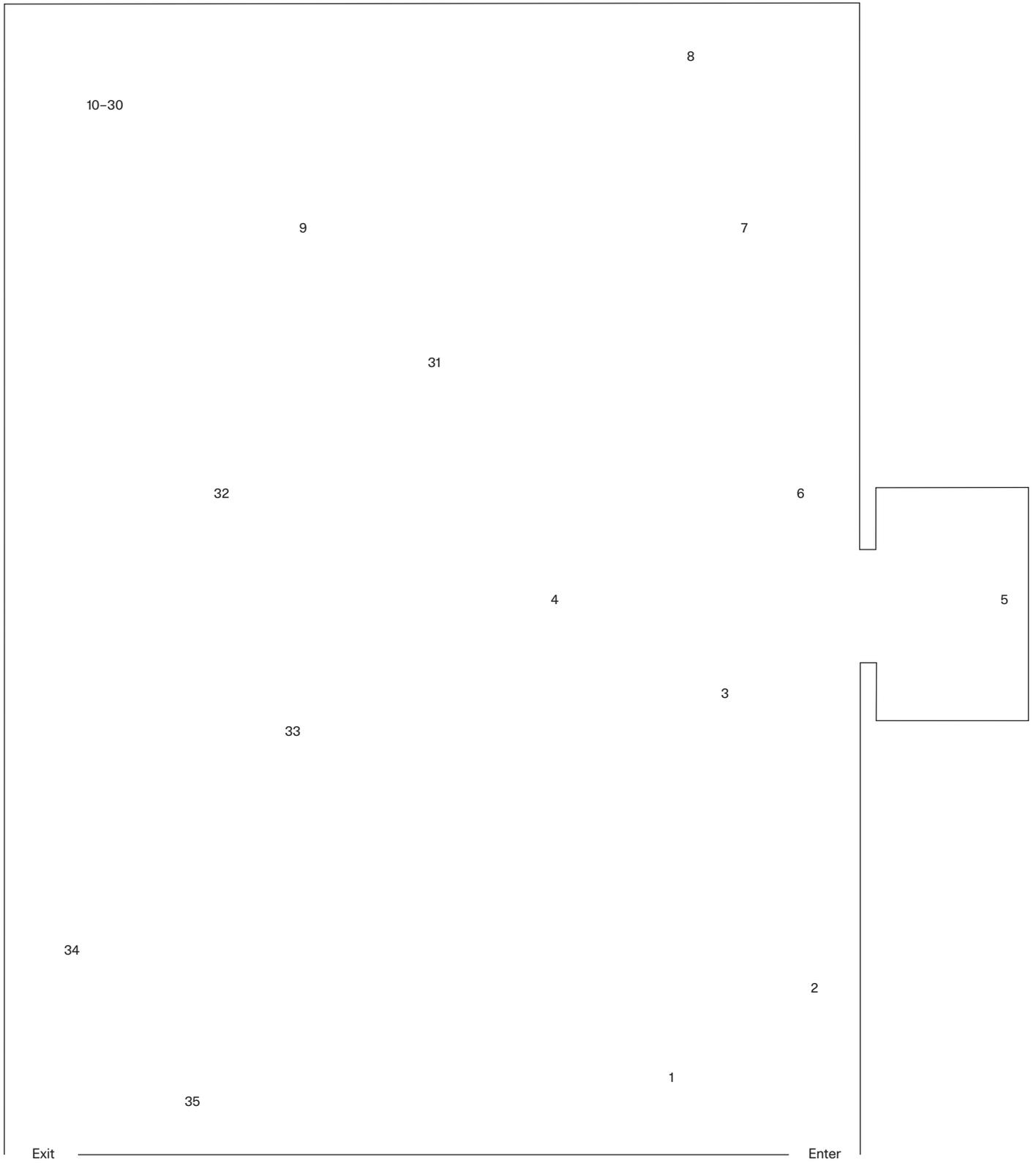
Aspen Art Museum is pleased to present ugo rondinone *the rainbow body*, the artist's first major institutional show in Colorado in a career spanning over three decades. The Museum's second-floor gallery is recast as a prismatic arena where fluorescent, lifelike sculptures of dancers sit at rest and in waiting. In his practice at large, Rondinone (b. 1964, Brunnen, Switzerland) is celebrated for expansive installations, working with photography, painting, poetry, outdoor sculpture, and neon rainbow signage. His visual vocabulary often incorporates the natural and primordial world, wherein rocks, clouds, trees, and the sun are recurrent motifs. Language and systems of communication such as lyrics or slogans mark other modes of exploring human subjectivity and experience.

the rainbow body considers the multivalent significance of the rainbow. This natural occurrence is at once nature's most delicate and ephemeral phenomenon, and an emblem rife with mystical aura and political undertones. "The rainbow is a bridge between everyone and everything," says Rondinone, "nature is not something apart from us, but intrinsic." The exhibition's title references a spiritual rite in Tibetan Buddhism in which the body is transformed into light upon death. This conversion is attained only by devoted practitioners and marks the highest form of realization. In this process, the human corpse and mind vanish, replaced by five-colored radiant lights.

The thirteen fluorescent, life-size wax casts of dancers in the gallery allude to this process. Averting their gazes, the hyperrealistic nude figures are impervious to viewers, but pulsing with vitality. Candles cast in bronze complete the scene, resting nearby on the bright-yellow gallery floor. In Rondinone's tableau, a stained-glass clock channels light through an adjacent nave—a lens to mark the passage of time as his dancers are captured in a state of deliberate stillness. These three distinct series—each conceived over ten years ago—evolved in tandem, but come together at Aspen Art Museum for the first time. This conceptual confluence denotes a trilogy of sorts, where materials morph and ideas overlap.

Originally produced with earthen pigments in shades of brown and green, Rondinone's wax dancers here appear vivid and multihued, signaling a progression toward a more prismatic, transcendent realm. Cast with uncanny detail, these bodies appear pliant and poised for transformation. In contrast, the artist's bronze candles, aptly titled *still lives*, capture a moment of impermanence in a more enduring material. The stained-glass clock in the adjacent gallery acts both as an emblem of time and as a window into an uncertain beyond. Installed without hands, with the device's use no longer apparent, time falls away.

The exhibition draws out the symbolic interconnection between these bodies of work, culminating in an electric arrival. Forging links between the natural world and the spiritual realm, here Rondinone continues his examination of the body's dematerialization and human encounters with the sublime.



From entry

1. *nude (xxxxxxxxxxx) (rainbow)*, 2021.
Wax mixed with day-glow pigments

2. *nude (xxxxxxxxxxx) (rainbow)*, 2021.
Wax mixed with day-glow pigments

3. *nude (x) (rainbow)*, 2021.
Wax mixed with day-glow pigments

4. *nude (xxxxxx) (rainbow)*, 2021.
Wax mixed with day-glow pigments

5. *rainbow clock*, 2024.
Stained-glass, wire

6. *nude (xxxx) (rainbow)*, 2021.
Wax mixed with day-glow pigments

7. *nude (xxxxxxxxxxx) (rainbow)*, 2021.
Wax mixed with day-glow pigments

8. *nude (xxxxxxxxxxx) (rainbow)*, 2021.
Wax mixed with day-glow pigments

9. *nude (xxx) (rainbow)*, 2021.
Wax mixed with day-glow pigments

Zig-zag from left to right

10. *still.life. (electric purple candle)* 2013.
Cast bronze, lead, paint

11. *still.life. (soft pink candle)* 2013.
Cast bronze, lead, paint

12. *still.life. (scarlet candle)* 2013.
Cast bronze, lead, paint

13. *still.life. (warm yellow candle)* 2024.
Cast bronze, lead, paint

14. *still.life. (purple candle)* 2024.
Cast bronze, lead, paint

15. *still.life. (canary yellow candle)* 2013.
Cast bronze, lead, paint

16. *still.life. (olive green candle)* 2013.
Cast bronze, lead, paint

17. *still.life. (rose pinkcandle)* 2024.
Cast bronze, lead, paint

18. *still.life. (black candle)* 2024.
Cast bronze, lead, paint

19. *still.life. (ruby rede candle)* 2024.
Cast bronze, lead, paint

20. *still.life. (light purple candle)* 2024.
Cast bronze, lead, paint

21. *still.life. (carrot orange candle)* 2024.
Cast bronze, lead, paint

22. *still.life. (royal blue candle)* 2013.
Cast bronze, lead, paint

23. *still.life. (baby blue candle)* 2013.
Cast bronze, lead, paint

24. *still.life. (snow white candle)* 2024.
Cast bronze, lead, paint

25. *still.life. (neon orange candle)* 2013.
Cast bronze, lead, paint

26. *still.life. (dove white candle)* 2022.
Cast bronze, lead, paint

27. *still.life. (neon green candle)* 2024.
Cast bronze, lead, paint

28. *still.life. (blue candle)* 2024.
Cast bronze, lead, paint

29. *still.life. (warm yellow candle)* 2022.
Cast bronze, lead, paint

30. *still.life. (light blue candle)* 2013.
Cast bronze, lead, paint

Continued

31. *nude (xxxxxxx) (rainbow)*, 2021.
Wax mixed with day-glow pigments

32. *nude (xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx) (rainbow)*, 2021.
Wax mixed with day-glow pigments

33. *nude (xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx) (rainbow)*, 2021.
Wax mixed with day-glow pigments

34. *nude (xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx) (rainbow)*, 2021.
Wax mixed with day-glow pigments

35. *nude (xxxxx) (rainbow)*, 2021.
Wax mixed with day-glow pigments

All works courtesy the artist, Sadie Coles HQ, London, and Gladstone

Exit

Ugo Rondinone was born in 1964 in Brunnen, Switzerland. He studied at the Universität für Angewandte Kunst in Vienna before moving to New York in 1997, where he lives and works to this day. His work has been the subject of recent institutional exhibitions at Belvedere, Vienna (2021); Museo Rufino Tamayo, Mexico City, Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, Petit Palais, Paris, and the Scuola Grande di San Giovanni Evangelista, Venice (2022); Musée d'art et d'histoire, Geneva, Städel Museum, Frankfurt, and Storm King,

New York (2023); Museum SAN, Wonju, Museum Würth 2 and Sculpture Garden, Künzelsau, and Kunstmuseum Luzern (2024). In 2007 he represented Switzerland at the 52nd Venice Biennale.

Forthcoming exhibitions include Arte Abierto, Mexico City, and the Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Milan (2025). Rondinone's moonrise. east. july was presented on the Aspen Art Museum Commons in 2017–18.

Accredited by the American Alliance of Museums in 1979, the Aspen Art Museum is a thriving and globally engaged non-collecting contemporary art museum. Following the 2014 opening of the museum's facility designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Shigeru Ban, the AAM enjoys increased attendance, renewed civic interaction, and international media attention. In July 2017, the AAM was one of ten institutions to receive the United States' National Medal for Museum and Library Services for its educational outreach to rural communities in Colorado's Roaring Fork Valley and its fostering of learning partnerships with civic and cultural partners within a 100-mile radius of the museum's Aspen location.

Aspen Art Museum

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Hours
Tuesday–Sunday, 10 AM–6 PM
Closed Mondays

Admission to the AAM is free courtesy of Amy and John Phelan.

This exhibition is organized by Nicola Lees, Nancy and Bob Magoon Director, and Daniel Merritt, Director of Curatorial Affairs, with Simone Krug, Curator.

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