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INSIDE ART

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ALLERGEN ART AT MOMA

In recent months visitors to the Museum of Modern Art got a free curry lunch as part of the Thai artist [Rirkrit Tiravanija's meals-as-art exhibitions](#).

In early 2013 another powdery substance will be in evidence at MoMA. Like the curry, it will test the senses, but this one will also test the sinuses. From mid-January through the end of February, the museum's atrium will be filled with hazelnut pollen collected over 12 years by the German artist Wolfgang Laib.

The installation, "Wolfgang Laib: Pollen From Hazelnut," will be a field of striking yellow pollen roughly 18 by 21 feet.

"It is going to be his largest installation to date and the first in a New York museum," said Ann Temkin, chief curator in MoMA's department of painting and sculpture. "There is so much thought about the back and forth between the East and West, and here's an artist who grew up in Germany exploring the visual and philosophical ideas that fuse Western Minimal Conceptual art with Eastern traditions."

Since the 1970s Mr. Laib has been creating work that uses natural materials in a magical, often ephemeral way. "Pollen is the potential beginning of the life of the plant," he said in a written statement. "It is as simple, as beautiful and as complex as this. And of course it has so many meanings. I think everybody who lives knows that pollen is important."

Mr. Laib collects the pollen outside his home and studio in a rural village in southern Germany. Over the years he has made work from different kinds of pollen, including buttercup, dandelion, hazelnut and pine. As a material, it takes on a kind of glow.

"The response to this meditative installation that is so still and so delicate, in contrast to the busy, noisy atrium, can't be predicted," Ms. Temkin said. "The artist loves the idea that people will look down on it from the balconies above."