

AO Recap – Art Basel 2013 in Basel Switzerland, June 13th-16th, 2013



Yoshitomo Nara, Pace Gallery at Art Basel 2013, Courtesy Pace Gallery

Last evening, the conclusion of [Art Basel](#) marked the finish line of a 6-week art world marathon, including [Frieze New York](#), the first edition of [Art Basel Hong Kong](#), and finally the Switzerland-based [Art Basel](#), alongside the opening of the [Venice Biennale](#), and record auction sales in New York. While the time period was most certainly overflowing

with events and attractions, the so-called “fair-fatigue” did not kick in at Basel, with record numbers of visitors at Art Basel (86,000 in total), and strong sales across the board. Interestingly, as the number of viewers has grown, the gallery booths have evolved, showing a more focused curatorial approach, often planned months in advance.



Donald Judd, David Zwirner at Art Basel 2013, Courtesy David Zwirner, New York/London

Unsurprisingly, given current trends in the global art world, the fair was dominated by abstraction and conceptualism. Historical pieces by early abstract innovators and contemporary artists were in strong supply, with a number of notable sales for landmark works. Particularly of note was [Alexander Calder's](#) works on sale. The Tina Kim Gallery and Kukje Gallery sold the artist's *Blue Flower, Red Flower* (1975) for the impressive price of \$2.8m, and the London-based [Helly Nahmad](#) sold the artist's *Sumac* (1961) for approximately \$12 million, as reported by The Art Newspaper. On the contemporary end of the spectrum, [Albert Oehlen's](#) large canvas *Untitled* was sold by Galerie Max Hetzler to a European collector for €250,000 within the first few hours of the fair, starting the event off in quick fashion.



Dadamaino, A arte Studio Invernizzi, Milan (2005), Courtesy: A arte Studio Invernizzi Milan

As predicted, the 44th edition of the Art Basel brought buoyant sales for the 304 galleries on hand. Following on the heels of an impressive auction week last month, many buyers came to the table ready to purchase. Within hours of the official start of the Art Basel, many of the coveted pieces had already been sold, the product of the fair's traditional mad dash in the opening hours of the fair. Mathias Rastorfer, co-owner and director of Galerie Gmurzynska, reported to Art Observed, "Strong sales in the first two days of the Art Basel Preview, ranging from \$50,000 to \$3 million for works ranging from [Miro](#) to [Yves Klein](#)."



Jepe Hein, *HAPPINESS DOES NOT COME FROM ACCUMULATING THINGS* (2012), Courtesy: the artist and Johann König, Berlin

Instant sales were reported at Paris Galerie Kamel Mennour, with 2011 Golden Lion [Camille Henrot's](#) *Overlapping Figures* selling for €18,000. Andrea Glimcher of The Pace Gallery also reported a busy week to Art Observed: "Over 30 works are sold as of now, including major sculptures by [Yoshitomo Nara](#), who had his first solo show at Pace open last month in New York. A 1974 clothespin sculpture by [Claes Oldenburg](#), who

currently has two critically acclaimed exhibitions on view at MoMA; a 1961 work by [John Chamberlain](#); a 1958 painting by [Agnes Martin](#); Two [Kiki Smith](#) bronzes wolf with bird and starbow bronzes; an oil on canvas portrait of [Andres Serrano](#) by [Chuck Close](#); as well as work by younger artists such as [Adam Pendleton](#) and [Adrian Ghenie](#), and all five editions of [Kevin Francis Gray](#)'s "Twelve Chambers" have sold as well. We are very pleased with another strong Art Basel."



Works by Donald Judd, Carmen Herrera, Lee Ufan, Tony Cragg and Anish Kapoor at Lisson Gallery at Art Basel

The close connection between the Venice Biennale and the Art Basel was also made evident in the selling of American pavilion showcase artist [Sarah Sze's](#) sculpture *Standing Pile (Cairn)* (2013) for \$32,000 at the Victoria Miro booth, according to [artmarketmonitor.com](#). The sculpture, like her unique pieces for the American Pavilion in Venice, is a delicate and intricate structure. Artwork by [Rudolf Stingel](#) was also in very high demand during the fair, with three canvases priced at \$2 million being sold at [Massimo De Carlo](#), [Sadie Coles](#), and [Gagosian](#). The sales follow his highly talked-about solo exhibition at the [Palazzo Grassi](#), in which he transformed the entire site into an installation with floor-to-

ceiling with Oriental-print rugs and silver paint works. [Hauser & Wirth](#) also sold several pieces by artists who were highly publicized during the opening of the Venice Biennale, such as a sculpture by [Hans Josephsohn](#) and an expressionist *Samson* painting from 1983 by [Maria Lassnig](#), who won, alongside [Marisa Merz](#), the Golden Lion for lifetime achievement in the arts as the Biennale this year.



i8 Gallery booth at Art Basel 2013. Courtesy of i8 Gallery, Reykjavik.



Alan Cristea's booth, with works by Michael Craig-Martin on The Alan Cristea Gallery Stand at Art Basel 2013



Oscar Tuazon at Art Unlimited 2013, Courtesy: Galerie Eva Presenhuber

The sales and displays of the Art Basel highlighted an art world in transition, with an ever-widening gap between the top and middle dealers. The most 'high-end' works were sold at solidly high prices, while the smaller works from less renowned artists sold at a considerably discounted rate by comparison, perhaps directly related to the recent global expansion of many top dealers. While the Art Basel fair itself does have an effect on a gallery's bottom line, the connections and clients cultivated during the days are also extremely beneficial, and galleries took full advantage of the event to network and converse with fellow gallerists, curators and artists on hand.



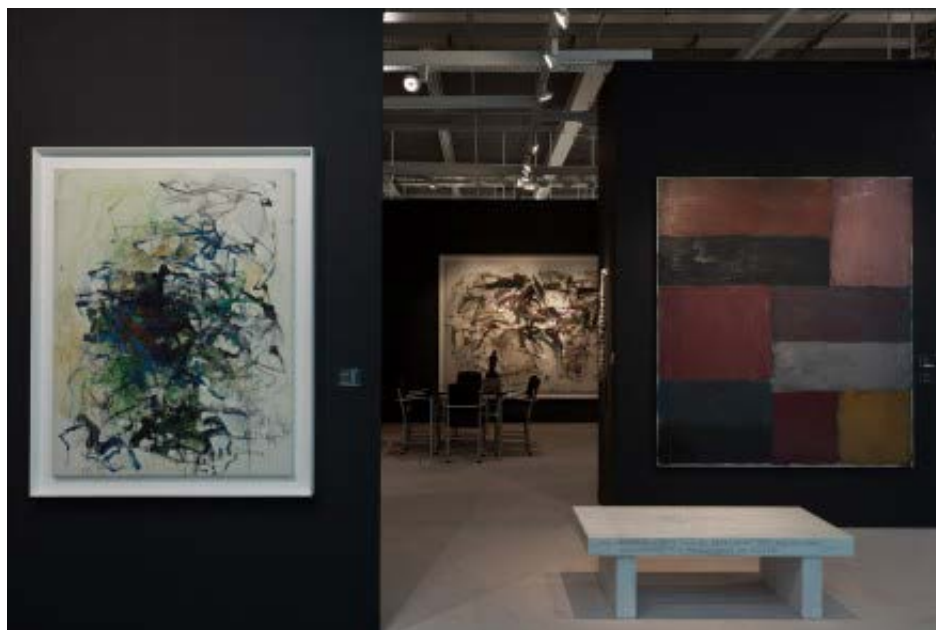
Installation view, Art Basel 2013, Courtesy: Galerie Kamm, Berlin, Photo: Andrea Rossetti



Mehdi Chouakri at Art Basel 2013, courtesy Mehdi Chouakri, Berlin; reproduction: Sebastiano Pellion di Persano

The Art Basel is not just about sales and investment; there are countless satellite exhibitions and events associated with it, from a Picasso exhibition at the Kunstmuseum Basel to a spontaneous listening party of [Kanye West's](#) new album, *Yeezus*, hosted by the artist himself. What is more, the Unlimited sector devoted an entire exhibition hall to large-

scale, site-specific works that are not for sale. The exhibition included many up and coming artists, for example Chinese installation artist [He An](#) present *Hubble*, which involved a tube constructed of billboards and light effects. The work of this newcomer was displayed adjacent to renowned artists, including [Ai Wei Wei](#), [Anthony Gormley](#) and [Chiharu Shiota](#), the latter of which produced a massive web of black string that covered several chairs and a piano.



Work by Joan Mitchell and Sean Scully at the Cheim & Read booth, Art Basel 2013, Courtesy: Cheim & Read

The monumental scale of the works on view did a remarkable job of mirroring the fair at large, an ever-growing event that seems as much a visual spectacle as some of the enormous sculptures on view. Once again emphasizing its position as center stage for the annual art sales, this year's edition of Art Basel was a fitting conclusion to 2013's hectic spring art schedule. With a final set of auctions occurring this week in London, galleries will look to catch their breaths this summer, and prepare for the upcoming events of the fall season.



Imi Knoebel, "Paul: Kenn ich!" at Galerie Bärbel Grässlin at Art Basel 2013,
Courtesy: Galerie Bärbel Grässlin



Team Gallery installation view at Art Basel 2013, courtesy of Team Gallery, New York



Sean Kelly Gallery at Art 44 Basel, Courtesy: Sean Kelly, New York



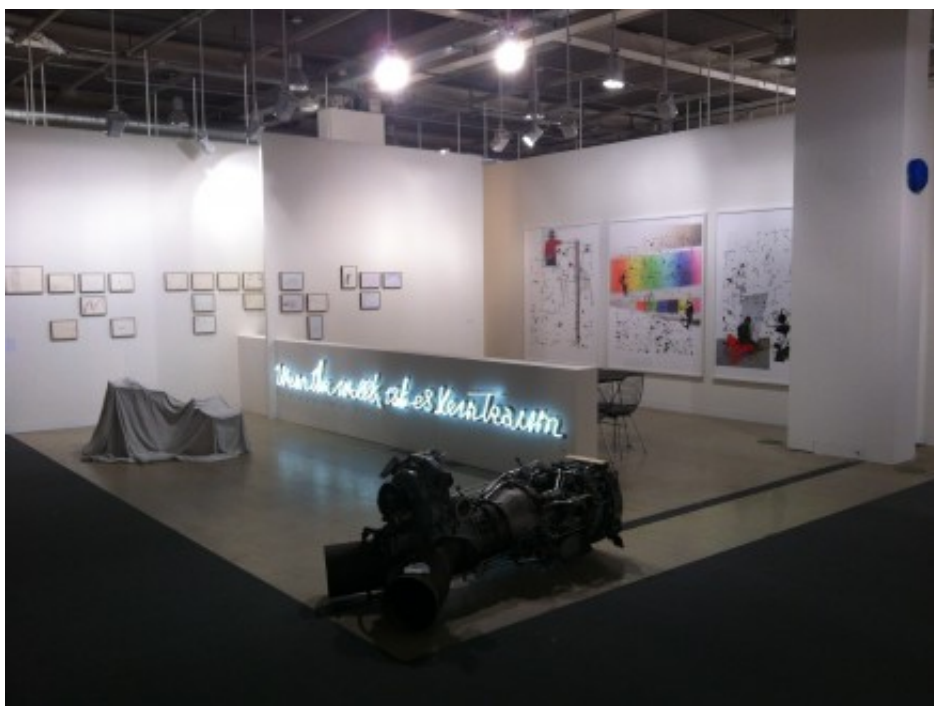
Galerie Eigen + Art, Berlin/Leipzig at Art Basel 2013, Couutesy: Galerie Eigen + Art, Berlin/Leipzig



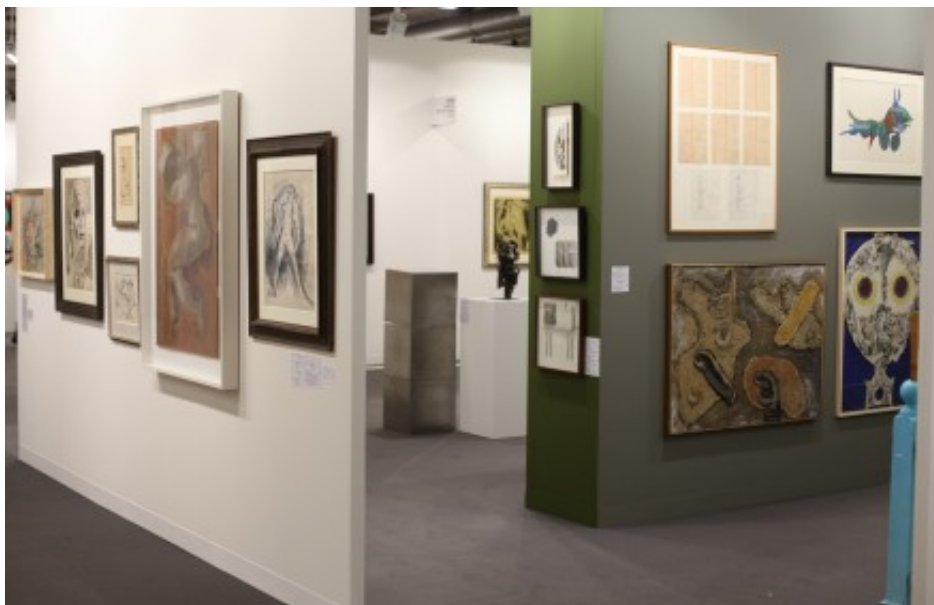
Galerie Gmurzynska at Art Basel 2013, Courtesy: Galerie Gmurzynska



Dvir Gallery Booth, Art Basel 2013, Courtesy of Dvir gallery



Annet Gelink Gallery at Art Basel 2013, Courtesy: Annet Gelink Gallery



GALERIE 1900-2000 at Art Basel 2013, Courtesy GALERIE 1900-2000



Liam Gillick, *Deleted Day Setting*, Maureen Paley at Art Basel 2013,

Courtest Maureen Paley

—C. Stein

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Picasso, Magritte to Tempt VIPs a \$2 Billion Art Basel [\[Bloomberg\]](#)

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Last Stop Basel as Art Marathon Ends [\[The Art Newspaper\]](#)

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