



Exhibitionary

# The art world mecca that is Basel

You've probably already touched down in Hong Kong, London, Venice, and Berlin earlier this year, but now it's time for one more stop: Basel. As the usually quiet Swiss city is inundated with the craze of the international art world and events that accompany it, we know it's impossible to follow any kind of planned itinerary, but you can at least have a few specifics on your radar – and that's where we come in. Here we give you an overview of where to be (and sometimes when) to avoid FOMO during your trip to the latest destination on the art world's map.



Let's start with the obvious: the mecca that is [Art Basel](#). As always, the fair is split into various segments with blue-chip names in the Galleries section and well (but lesser) established spaces in Statements. Outside of these, we have Parcours presenting projects throughout the city and Unlimited, a home for large-scale sculpture, film, and performances – in other words, not easily hung on the walls or showcased in the foyer. This year, Unlimited is perhaps the most exciting with work by **VALIE EXPORT** (her first Basel appearance since 2014, presented by [Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac](#)), **Bunny Rogers** ([Société](#)), **Mika Rottenberg** ([Hauser & Wirth](#)), **Jacolby Satterwhite** ([Mitchell-Innes & Nash](#)), **Vajiko Chachkhiani** ([Daniel Marzona](#)), and **Pae White** ([neugerriemschneider](#)), among others. It'll be especially hard to miss **Coco Fusco's** ten-foot-tall aluminum and steel sculpture *Tin Man of the Twenty-First Century*, 2018, which was created in response to Trump's election and is presented by [Alexander Gray Associates](#).

Coco Fusco: Tin Man of the Twenty-First Century, 2018.  
Courtesy Alexander Gray Associates, New York

When entering the main Galleries area, employ the useful skill of selective perception to whiz past the Koonces of the art world and instead focus on only a smattering of relatively unexpected and recurring names: watch out for **Alexandra Bircken**'s transformative assemblages at [BQ](#) and [Herald St](#), **Slavs and Tatars**' satirical prints at [Tanya Bonakdar Gallery](#) and [Kraupa-Tuskany Zeidler](#), and **Hannah Levy**'s animistic sculptures at [Casey Kaplan](#) and [mother's tankstation](#). In Statements, you can turn down the level of selective perception, but keep a keen eye out for **Kris Lemsalu** at [Temnikova & Kasela](#), **Farah Al Qasimi** at [The Third Line](#), and **Ad Minoliti** at [Galerie Crèvecoeur](#).



Kris Lemsalu: Time after time is our time, 2019. Courtesy Temnikova & Kasela, Tallinn

Whether or not you see all of these galleries' presentations, there is one artist whose work you certainly will not miss: South African master-of-everything **William Kentridge**. In addition to his sprawling survey exhibition "A Poem That Is Not Our Own" at [Kunstmuseum Basel](#), some of his politically loaded sculptures and drawings will be available for you (should you have the necessary piles of cash) to take home, thanks to Johannesburg and Cape Town's [Goodman Gallery](#). On Wednesday at 10 am, Kentridge will also be in conversation with Josef Helfenstein, Director of Kunstmuseum Basel, as part of the Art Basel Conversations program.



William Kentridge: *More Sweetly Play the Dance*, 2015 (installation view). Courtesy Kunstmuseum Basel, photo: Gina Folly

When you're on the way to the Kunstmuseum, just after you cross the river stop to see **Camille Henrot's** painted bronze sculpture *OCPD* outside at Münsterplatz, jointly presented as part of Art Basel Parours by [Kamel Mennour](#), [König Galerie](#) and [Metro Pictures](#). Then, after perusing Kentridge's show, it's time to make a few other stops on this side of the river. First, check out another recommended work in Parours: **Cathy Wilkes's** installation *Untitled*, 2018, at Museum der Kulturen Basel, only a five-minute walk from the Kunstmuseum. Presented by Glasgow's [The Modern Institute](#), this installation features two figures and two platforms, each holding the stem of a rose, the flower seemingly beheaded. If you've already been to Venice, then this should complement your experience of Wilkes's work at the British Pavilion, and if you've not yet been, it'll serve as a nice appetizer.

Just another five-minute walk is one more Parours work that shouldn't be missed: **Lawrence Abu Hamdan's** installation *The Recovered Manifesto of Wissam [inaudible]*, 2017, presented by [Maureen Paley](#) and appropriately located within the Staatsarchiv. Abu Hamdan's research has been used as advocacy for organizations like Amnesty International, and this piece revolves around his discovery of a recorded manuscript for a book or manifesto on the elusive, esoteric Islamic concept of "taqiyya," which is "widely understood as the right to lie."



Lawrence Abu Hamdan: *The Recovered Manifesto of Wissam* [inaudible], 2017. Courtesy Maureen Paley, London

By this time, we know that you'll be experiencing some serious art fatigue, but what's Basel without it? So grab an overpriced spritz and some overpriced food and embrace your inner HUO, because we're only halfway through – and mind you, this is just a fraction of everything that's happening throughout the week.

Next on the list, we're taking a small break from the uber-contemporary to reflect instead on the evolution of abstraction – albeit from a very Western and very male perspective. “Continuing Abstraction” marks [Gagosian](#)'s first pop-up exhibition in Basel, which truly, despite its commercial interests, will be something of a museum-scale show. To be seen at Rheinsprung 1 (strategically located only 150 meters from Le Trois Rois, where most of the mega collectors are supposed to sleep, dine and drink), it'll span abstraction's multifaceted eight-decade history: the earliest works included are *January*, 1947–48, and *Untitled*, 1948, by **Willem de Kooning**, and the most recent is *Civic Study in Yellow*, 2017, by **Theaster Gates**. In between are works by another 18 icons, including **Jackson Pollock**, **Cy Twombly**, **Robert Ryman**, **Mark Rothko**, and **Agnes Martin**.



Jackson Pollock, *Moon Vibrations*, c. 1953–55. Courtesy Gagolian © 2019 The Pollock-Krasner Foundation/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

If you find yourself bored by these primarily white (and dead) men though, fear not. Head to [LISTE](#), where plenty of young, international artists and galleries await your discovery. For the first time in its 25-year history, the fair is under new direction with former Berlin gallerist **Joanna Kamm** having taken the reins. This year, she is inaugurating a new space deemed the “Joinery,” which will feature a daily video and performance program as well as the Spike Forum, a series of discussions organized by one of LISTE’s special guests, [Spike Art Magazine](#).

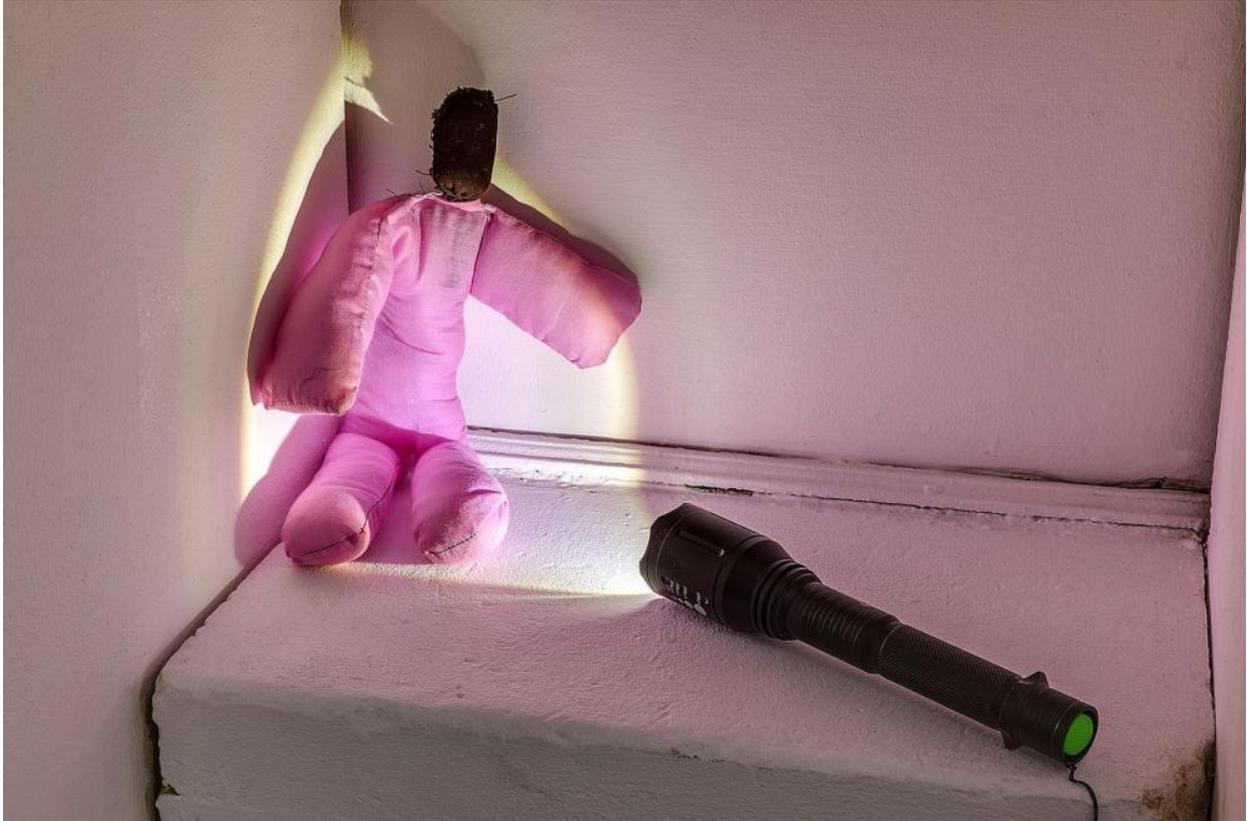
Inside the maze of the old Warteck brewery, we particularly suggest finding the newcomer [Super Dakota](#) from Brussels for their presentation of **Isaac Lythgoe**, who creates all-encompassing installations with narrative structures that are often both temporally and logically distorted. The presentation “aims to create a post-apocalyptic atmosphere in which the viewer is confronted in a dark narration of familiar icons.” Other noteworthy first-timers include Mexico City’s [Lodos](#), Paris’s [Bonny Poon](#), Bucharest’s [Sandwich](#), and [Sweetwater](#), Berlin. In terms of returning galleries, don’t miss New York’s [Bridget Donahue](#) with a presentation of **Monique Mouton**, **Jessi Reaves**, and **Martine Syms**; Prague’s [Hunt Kastner](#) with **Klára Hosnedlová**; or Berlin’s [Sandy Brown](#) with **Penny Goring**.



Courtesy LISTE – Art Fair Basel, photo: Daniel Spehr

Sharing with LISTE a mission of promoting young art is a new initiative entitled [June](#), which describes itself as a collectively organized “fair and exhibition platform.” Co-founded by **Esperanza Rosales** (Director of VI, VII in Oslo) and **Christian Anderson** (who runs an eponymous gallery in Copenhagen), the inaugural exhibition will feature 14 galleries, including [Hannah Hoffman](#) (Los Angeles), [Lulu](#) (Mexico City), [Meyer Kainer](#) (Vienna), [Midway Contemporary Art](#) (Minneapolis), [Misako & Rosen](#) (Tokyo), and [Stigter van Doesburg](#) (Amsterdam). But don’t wait until the weekend or try to stop by in the morning – June is only running from Tuesday to Friday, 1–8 pm.

Now, finally, what you’ve been waiting for: outside the fairs and gallery-related events, there are Basel’s project spaces. They might be few and far between, but those in existence hold the city’s best creative promise. On Tuesday evening around 7 pm, visit [Der Tank](#), which recently debuted *Oneness*, a newly commissioned project created by **Cecilia Bengolea** and curated by Chus Martínez (who will also moderate the talk “Gallery & Artist: New Relations” on Saturday at 7 pm as part of the Spike Forum at Liste). At this time, Bengolea – an Argentinian-born, Paris-based artist, dancer, and choreographer – will activate the immersive installation with a one-time-only performance. You can expect the scene to be set by new and archival video works that remind one of the depths of the sea.



Diamond Stingily: Hergott (Pink), 2018. Courtesy SALTS, photo: Romain Darnaud

Then, on Thursday night between 6 and 10 pm, join [SALTS](#) for their annual (and always very memorable) garden party – this year in celebration of their tenth anniversary as well as the opening of three exhibitions. Berlin-based It-man of the moment **Julian Charrière** will exhibit alongside **Marguerite Humeau** in “Twin Earth,” curated by Nadim Samman, while “Fridge & Mind Again,” curated by Samuel Leuenberger, will showcase works by **Tobias Spichtig**, whose practice often deals with the mythological aspects of daily life, injecting our present with fictional narratives. The space’s third exhibition, “Body Splits,” curated by Leuenberger and Elise Lammer with assistance from Simon Würsten, will surely be the show-stopper with its inclusion of some today’s most exciting young voices: **Nina Beier**, **Jesse Darling**, **Oliver Laric**, **Pakui Hardware**, **Puppies Puppies**, **Mia Sanchez**, and **Diamond Stingily** to name only a few. These artists all explore personal and political questions through representations of the body – be it one that is dismembered, distorted, augmented, or remodeled. Together and individually, they contribute to pressing discussions surrounding gender, sexuality, identity, and even the notion of what a ‘complete’ body might be.

Spend your time at SALTS wisely though, for on the same night at the same time is the opening celebration of **Rirkrit Tiravanija**’s “The Odious Smell of Truth” presented by [Beat Raeber, Galerie](#). As the second work in a ten-year program of public installations, we look forward to seeing the wall painting IRL. After all, what better way to present Tiravanija’s work, which always encourages or requires engagement from the audience, than in public space?



Rirkrit Tiravanija: The Odious Smell of Truth, 2019 (installation view). Courtesy Beat Raeber, Galerie, Zürich; neugerriemschneider, Berlin, photo: Vera Yu

And now, if you're reading this, we'd like to take a moment to say congratulations, you've reached the end of our 2019 Basel hit-list! We know it's a lot to remember, so if you haven't already, then [download our app](#) or [visit our website](#) which are both loaded with all of the above information and even more. Plus make sure to have push notifications enabled to receive our Alerts about noteworthy discussions, performances, parties and other events directly to your phone.

So pack your bags (don't forget an umbrella, it's supposed to rain most of the week), board that EasyJet flight, and we'll see you soon for yet another sleepless week.

— Emily McDermott