

What Happens in Basel...

Marius Stiger's Five Cars (Terror Management), 2026, presented by Blue Velvet at Art Basel Unlimited. Photo: Paul Laster

By PAUL LASTER and RENEE RICCARDO, August 6, 2026

With **Art Basel** as the main attraction, the Swiss city of Basel was buzzing with cultural activity in June. Traveling by train on the final day of Zurich Art Weekend, we headed to our charming apartment and then to the opening of **MAZE/Design Basel**, which was bigger and better than ever. Sited in the Elisabethenkirche, a 19th-century Gothic Revival multi-use church where the now-defunct Design Miami/Basel began in 2006, the design fair added an outdoor tent next to the historic church to accommodate more exhibitors in its second year.

Over the coming week, we attended exhibitions at the Kunsthalle Basel, where Mousse Magazine hosted a preview of Shuang Li's video survey and Janiva Ellis's solo show of new paintings, as well as the opening of **Liste Art Fair Basel**, one of the best international fairs for discovering emerging artists. While crossing paths with old friends and making new acquaintances, we spent days viewing and discussing artworks at the expansive Art Basel Unlimited and the ever-fascinating main Art Basel fair.

Journeys to the city's engaging galleries and museums for exhibitions and talks, including Hauser & Wirth, Contemporary Fine Arts, Fondation Beyeler, and Kunstmuseum Basel, were punctuated by visits to Art Basel's new media Zero 10 sector and the public art Parcours. We wrapped up our stay with an extended tour of **Basel Social Club**, located in a vacant multistory office building—befitting the show's "Office" theme—where the art grew increasingly wilder.

Scroll through to see some of the captivating people and art that made our visit memorable. What happens in Basel doesn't always stay in Basel. **WM**



MAZE/Design Basel at the Offene Kirche Elisabethen in Basel. Photo: Paul Laster





Philippe Cramer with his work at MAZE/Design Basel at the Offene Kirche Elisabethen. Photo: Renée Riccardo



Lea Colombo seated at her Red Jasper Dining Table (2026), presented by Salon 94 Design at MAZE/Design Basel at the Offene Kirche Elisabethen in Basel. Photo: Paul Laster



Tom Dixon's The Bird Chaise Longue (1997) at the center of Ketabi Bourdet's presentation at the MAZE/Design Basel at the Offene Kirche Elisabethen in Basel. Photo: Paul Laster



Patrick Jousse with Charlotte Perriand's Tunisie Bookcase (1952) at Jousse Enterprise's presentation at MAZE/Design Basel at the Offene Kirche Elisabethen in Basel. Photo: Paul Laster



Mousse Magazine & Publishing breakfast preview at the Kunsthalle Basel. Photo: Renée Riccardo



Mousse senior publishing editor Agnese Cantelmi at the Mousse Magazine & Publishing breakfast preview at the Kunsthalle Basel. Photo: Renée Riccardo



Shuang Li's Alliance (Heart Loop), 2026, video installation in her Alliance exhibition at the Kunsthalle Basel. Photo: Paul Laster





Visiting looking at *Une nuit agitée* (2026) by Janiva Ellis in her solo exhibition, Geneva, at the Kunsthalle Basel.
Photo: Renée Riccardo



The opening reception for Liste Art Fair Basel. Photo: Paul Laster



Pamela Auchincloss and Susan Krane with Mackeral Szafranski's paintings and sculptures at A-Lounge Contemporary at Liste Art Fair Basel. Photo: Paul Laster





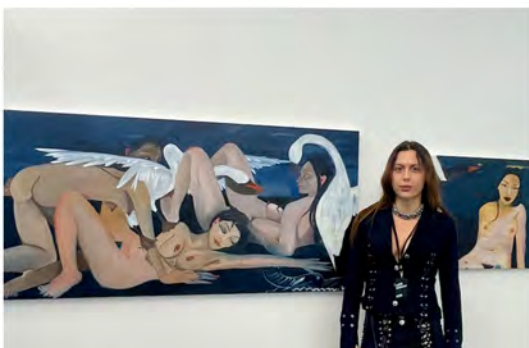
Luis Enrique Zela-Koort with his sculptures at Valerie's Factory at Liste Art Fair Basel. Photo: Renée Riccardo



Helvetia Art Prize 2026 winner Kelechi Amaka Madumere's sculptural installation at Liste Art Fair Basel. Photo: Paul Laster



Executive Director of the New Art Dealers Alliance (NADA) Heather Hubbs and Ebony L. Haynes, Global Head of Curatorial Projects at David Zwirner, at Liste Art Fair Basel. Photo: Paul Laster





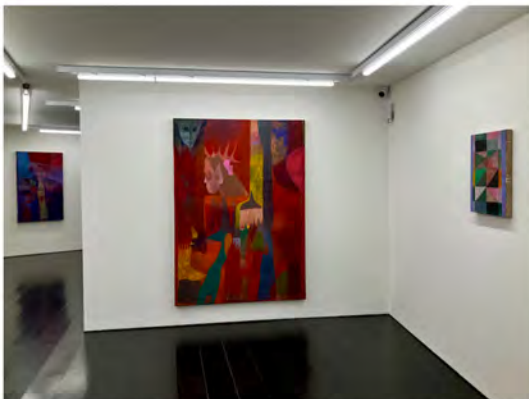
Yüz Taççı with paintings in her solo exhibition, presented by Osgoreen Gallery at Liste Art Fair Basel. Photo: Renée Riccardo



Installation view of France-Lise McGurn: DEE-TOUR at DomusHaus, presented by MASSIMODECARLO. Photo: Renée Riccardo



Max Beckmann's Selbstbildnis auf Grün mit grünem Hemd (Self-Portrait on Green with Green Shirt), 1938, in the Max Beckmann solo exhibition at Hauser & Wirth in Basel. Photo: Paul Laster



Installation view of Maja Ruznic: Who Tastes Fire and Cannot Speak at Contemporary Fine Arts in Basel. Photo: Paul Laster



Maja Ruznic with her painting 'The Girl Who Swallowed the Wolf' (2026) in her solo exhibition 'Who Tastes Fire and Cannot Speak' at Contemporary Fine Arts in Basel. Photo: Renée Riccardo

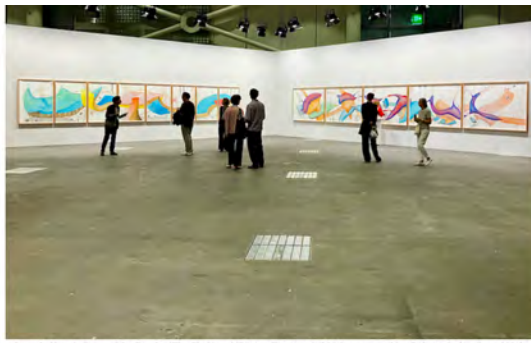


Chris Burden's 'L.A.P.D. Uniforms' (1993) presented by Gagosian at Art Basel Unlimited. Photo: Paul Laster



Bianca Censori and Kanye West observing Goshka Macuga's 'Exhibition M: A Re-enactment' (2023-26) at Art Basel Unlimited. Photo: Renée Riccardo





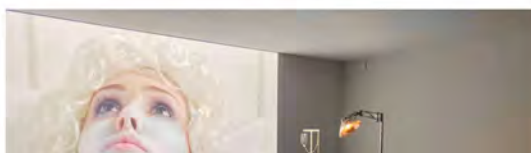
Jorinde Voigt's Song of the Earth - 'The Shift' and 'Divine Territory' (2016) presented by Galerie Judin, David Nolan Gallery, and Dirimart at Art Basel Unlimited. Photo: Paul Laster



Visitor looking at Tobias Spichtig's Drama installation, presented by Gallery Jan Kaps at Art Basel Unlimited. Photo: Renée Riccardo



Ryan Gander's I've felt everything I'm going to feel - The Unspeakable World (2026) presented by Lisson at Art Basel Unlimited. Photo: Paul Laster





*Bianca Censori as Izanami in Vanessa Beecroft's immersive installation, *Untitled (Izanami)*, presented by Lia Ramma Gallery at Art Basel Unlimited. Photo: Renée Riccardo*



Ugo Rondinone's paintings and sculpture presented by Galerie Eva Presenhuber at Art Basel. Photo: Paul Laster



303 Gallery's booth presentation at Art Basel. Photo: Renée Riccardo





John DeAndrea's hyperrealistic sculpture Lola (1973) presented by VGalerie Georges-Philippe & Nathalie Vallois at Art Basel. Photo: Paul Laster



Drift's Ralph Nasta and artist manager and collector Amir Sharbat with work by Hew Locke, presented by P.P.O.W at Art Basel. Photo: Paul Laster



Olafur Eliasson's The Fibonacci model for curious planets (2026), presented by neugerriemschneider at Art Basel. Photo: Renée Riccardo



Lucian Freud's final completed masterpiece, Portrait of the Hound (2011), portraying Freud's longtime studio assistant David Dawson posing nude alongside his whippet, presented by Acquavella Galleries at Art Basel. Photo: Paul Laster



Diego Marcon's sculpture Altri canimorti (16), 2025, presented by Sadie Coles HQ at Art Basel. Photo: Paul Laster



Juan Muñoz's Three Laughing at One (2026), presented by Galeria Elvira González at Art Basel Photo: Renée Riccardo



*Rithika Merchant's multipart screen *As The Universe, So The Soul* (2026), presented by TARQ at Art Basel. Photo: Paul Laster*



Klara Kristalova's solo exhibition, presented by Perrotin in the Kabinett sector of Art Basel. Photo: Renée Riccardo



*Henry Moore's monumental sculpture *Large Four Piece Reclining Figure* (1972-73), presented by Gagosian at Art Basel. Photo: Paul Laster*





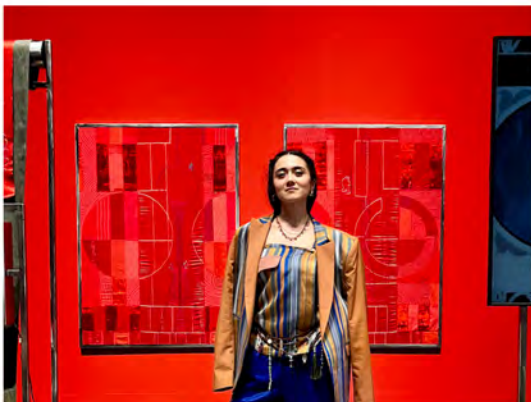
Donna Huanca's painting and living sculpture, presented by Contemporary Fine Art at Art Basel. Photo: Paul Laster



Enea Landscape Architecture's living exhibition, titled The Living Fragment: Enea Tree Museum at Art Basel 2026 in the Rundhof (inner courtyard) of Art Basel. Photo: Paul Laster



Landscape artist Enco Eneu with The Living Fragment: Enea Tree Museum at Art Basel 2026 in the Rundhof (inner courtyard) of Art Basel. Photo: Renée Riccardo





Art Basel Awards Emerging Artist medalist Aziza Kadyri's mixed-media digital installation, presented by East Contemporary in the new media Zero 10 sector at Art Basel. Photo: Paul Laster



Rafael Locano-Hemmer's Black Hole (2026), presented by bitforms gallery and Max Estrella in the new media Zero 10 sector of Art Basel. Photo: Renée Riccardo



William Mapan with his painting État des lieux (2026), presented by Art Blocks in the new media Zero 10 sector at Art Basel. Photo: Paul Laster





Haegue Yang's woven sculpture *The Intermediate - Five-Legged Frosty Fecund Imoogi* (2020) at the Stadtbrennerei (distillery), presented by Kukje Gallery and neugerriemschneider at Art Basel Parours. Photo: Paul Laster



David Nolan, Jorinde Voigt, and Puy Matthis Kurstens posing for the cameras at David Nolan Gallery, Dirimart, and Galerie Judin's dinner for Voigt's presentation at Art Basel Unlimited Photo: Renée Riccardo



studioMDA's Markus Dochantschi discussing his newly released monograph *studioMDA: Space for Art* at the Hatje Cantz bookshop at Art Basel. Photo: Paul Laster



Alia Al-Senussi moderating a talk with Kalapat Yantrasart, Gayane Umerova, Chris Dercon discussing the 2027 Bukhara Biennial at the Fondation Beyeler. Photo: Paul Laster





*A visitor photographing Pierre Huyghe's *Apnea* (2026), an artificial breathing organ suspended underwater, in his exhibition at the Fondation Beyeler. Photo: Paul Laster*



*Visitors engaged with Cao Fei's solo exhibition *Testimonies to the Near Future* at the Kunstmuseum Basel Gegenwart. Photo: Renée Riccardo*



*Louise Lawler's *(Bunny)* Sculpture and Painting (adjusted to fit, distorted for the times), 1999/2015/2019 at the Kunstmuseum Basel. Photo: Paul Laster*





Joseph Beuys's iconic installation titled *Feuerslitte II (Hearth II)*, created between 1978-79, consisting of 60 wool felt suits worn during the artist's performance parade, at the Kunstmuseum Basel. Photo: Paul Laster



Visitors admiring Helen Frankenthaler's painting *Movable Blue* (1973) in her exhibition at the Kunstmuseum Basel. Photo: Paul Laster



Mark Wallinger's sculptural figure for the theme of "Office" at the Basel Social Club. Photo: Renée Riccardo





Serenade 2 Our Laptops by performance artist Lelah "cr1ngedoctoR" Neary at the Basel Social Club. Photo: Paul Laster



Attendees enjoying the Social Wellness Hub, a multi-sensory collaboration by KEEN Wellbeing and the fitness collection Balboa at the Basel Social Club. Photo: Renée Riccardo

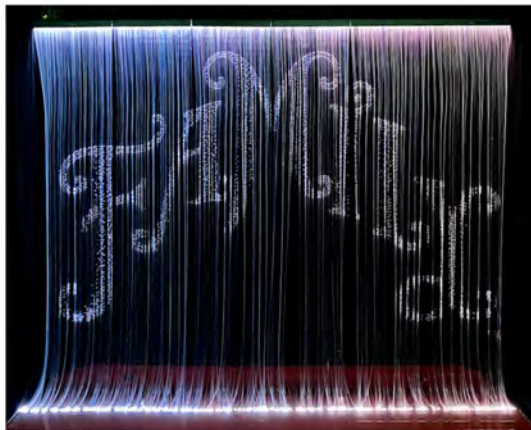


Hot Bling 2 Go's pop-up tooth gem "dental clinic" at the Basel Social Club. Photo: Paul Laster





Stems Gallery director Marion Marguerite Déné with Nick Doyle's *Human Resources* greyscale bar exploring themes of workplace control, ritual, and corporate fantasy at the Basel Social Club. Photo: Paul Laster



Shamiran Istifan's *Family*, presented by Gallery Kendra Jayne Patrick at Basel Social Club. Photo: Paul Laster



PAULLASTER

Paul Laster is a writer, editor, curator, artist and lecturer. He's a contributing editor at *ArtAsiaPacific* and *Whitehot Magazine* of Contemporary Art and writer for *Time Out New York*, *Harper's Bazaar Arabia*, *Galerie Magazine*, *Sculpture*, *Art & Object*, *Cultured*, *Architectural Digest*, *Garage*, *Surface*, *Ocula*, *Observer*, *ArtPulse*, *Conceptual Fine Arts* and *Glasstire*. He was the founding editor of *Artkrush*, started *The Daily Beast's* art section, and was art editor of Russell Simmons' *OneWorld Magazine*, as well as a curator at P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, now MoMA PS1.

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