

ARTSY

10 Must-See Works at Art Basel Unlimited

by Nate Freeman and Alexander Forbes
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Art Basel in Basel kicked off on Monday with the opening of Art Basel Unlimited, the fair's section for museum-scale installations, located this year on the upper floor of Messe Basel's Hall 1. Seventy-two presentations have been mounted for this seventh edition of Unlimited, with Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden curator-at-large Gianni Jetzer at the helm.

Works here span from historical pieces like Bruce Conner's 1966 video *BREAKAWAY* to pieces fresh from the studios of Sam Gilliam and He Xiangyu. While Unlimited has traditionally focused on large-scale sculpture and installation, there has been a steady rise in the amount of video presented in the section. That shift continues this year, with many of the strongest works—including five of our 10 must-see picks—playing out on screens in darkened rooms.

Barbara Bloom, *The Tip of the Iceberg* (1991)



Installation view of Barbara Bloom, *The Tip of the Iceberg*, 1991, presented by Galerie Gisela Capitain at Art Basel Unlimited, 2018. Courtesy of Art Basel.

Barbara Bloom has had a series of welcome comeback vehicles in the last year. The 1980s artist loosely associated with the Pictures Generation had a show that closed last June at David Lewis Gallery in New York, which was a triumph, and she also had work prominently included in the survey “Brand New: Art and Commodity in the 1980s” at the Hirshhorn, which closed this May. Now, visitors to the Messeplatz can take in *The Tip of the Iceberg*, which takes its inspiration from the wreck of the Titanic.

Lewis explained that Bloom thinks of the maritime disaster as *the* quintessential American story. Entering the dim booth, one finds a circular glass table bearing plates embossed with “RMS TITANIC”; underneath is a mirror, reflecting images of the Titanic’s wreckage that appear on the bottom of the plates.

The piece was first displayed at Jay Gorney Modern Art in New York’s SoHo in 1991. Gorney now works at Paula Cooper Gallery, which was at Unlimited presenting a video by Bruce Conner; when asked what it was like to see the work again after all these years, he gasped and said, “It was quite strange!”