David Lewis

Barbara Bloom

*The Tip of the Iceberg* (1991)

Art Basel | Unlimited
Messe Basel, Hall 1, U 20

June 11 - 17, 2018

Press
In pictures: must-see works at Art Basel’s Unlimited

The art fair’s section dedicated to monumental works is full of plastic, plants—and lots of gold

by Emily Sharpe
June 14, 2018
“This piece brings together deep space and deep sea. The tip of the iceberg and sets of china [stamped with the Titanic logo] allude to the sea and [the sinking of the] Titanic, while the lunette on the ceiling depicts objects, such as wrenches, cameras, gloves and screwdrivers, that Nasa has reported as being lost in space and so are presumably orbiting the earth. The walls are a deep blue—again, a reference to the sea and sky. She was one of the first artists from the 1980s who staged objects in a conceptual way. In the 1970s, much of the conceptual art was very dry.”
Der Kult irrationaler Verausgabung
Kunstliebhaber aus aller Welt pilgern wieder zu den Schauplätzen der Art Basel – auf der Suche nach obskuren Objekten der Begierde

PHILIPP MEIER

„Damien Hirst for sale, raub einer lautlichen Verleger aus dem Parterre-Fenster in der Stadtsäge gegenüber der Wartau-Bieregasse. Er bietet kleine Plastikfiguren an, die auf einer WC-Seat sitzende Kinder tobt die britische Kunstszene an. Von den Galeristen der Kunstszene „Liste“, die sich in Scharen vor...“

So ist es durchaus bezeichnend, dass sich die Art Basel selber den gesellschaftlichen Aufgaben stellt. Das Champs-Élysées eines der alternatives „Liste“ in der ehemaligen Brauerei fand einen Tag vor dem Hauptabend einzigartiges Publikum. Es ist wahrlich ein unvergesslicher Abend. Das ist der Auftritt Lucianos „Ja, Verausgabung“. Man muss sich in der Tat einem faszinierenden Dilemma der Kunst..."
See These 5 Show-Stopping Works at Art Basel Unlimited 2018

To join the conversation around curator Gianni Jetzer’s latest edition of Art Basel Unlimited, add these works to your must-see list.

by Tim Schneider
June 12, 2018

In a city, country, and even a larger event defined by elegant restraint, Art Basel Unlimited feels decidedly American in its bigger-is-better ethos. The monumentality of the offerings also makes this sector of the fair perhaps the only one where the best metric to judge an exhibitor’s success is whether or not their installation attracts crowds and conversations, not whether or not it generates sales. Call it the “moth-to-a-flame index.”

With that criterion in mind, artnet News’s Tim Schneider ventured to the unveiling of Art Basel Unlimited, which has been curated once again by Gianni Jetzer, to round up the pieces that will drive the cocktail party chatter and social-media story of the fair in 2018. Here are the five works you need to know to join the narrative.

Barbara Bloom
*The Tip of the Iceberg* (1991)
Galerie Gisela Capitain, Galleria Raffaella Cortese, and David Lewis

Photo by Tim Schneider.
Ocean-blue wall (and floor and ceiling) paint aside, what makes Bloom’s 1991 installation so magnetic is that it holds such a sizable space with so little material. But as gallerist David Lewis points out, the artist achieves this feat partly due to the fact that the story she leverages here is so huge. At the center of the booth stands a glass table stacked with porcelain dinnerware bearing the name of the RMS Titanic on its facing surfaces—and, if you mind the reflections shown in the circular mirror below them, images of the ship’s eventual disaster on its undersides. Above this composition hovers a circular ceiling frieze depicting objects documented as lost in space by NASA, either thanks to minor astronaut accidents (like losing your grip on a flashlight during a spacewalk) or catastrophic satellite wrecks. Lewis notes that, true to her practice, Bloom inverts these prototypically “macho” stories about shipwrecks and space exploration by re-centering them as meditations on absence. There’s also an air of Stanley Kubrick’s 2001: A Space Odyssey about the installation, in the way that it sings from the depths of the air to the vast mystery of the cosmos. The Tip of the Iceberg was still available at $270,000 yesterday afternoon.


10 Must-See Works at Art Basel Unlimited

by Nate Freeman and Alexander Forbes
June 12, 2018

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 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!”

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