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We arrived at the Lowenbraukunst building to view Manifesta II curated by artist Christian Jankowski, "What People Do for Money". A group of thirty artists was matched to Zurich professionals of their choice exploring the complications "surrounding the relationship between art and the world it occupies." To view Jon Rafman's installation "Open Heart Warrior" I sat on the spa lounge chair to listen to the meditative music coming from the surround sound system on 3 screens where virtual calming landscapes appeared and told my body to relax. In a state of total relaxation, I was soon jolted by the extreme transformation to negative, violent and belligerent images taken from the film and gaming culture. Jon brilliantly captures the essence of today's world where we are bombarded with excessive nightmarish content, although we long for the calm of the past.



Jon Rafman's "Open Heart Warrior (photo by author)

Dr. Dieter Bucharth's "Schwitters Miro Arp" exhibit in the same venue is a superb museum quality exhibition highlighting "the fusion of painting and sculpture through collage and assemblage". It consists of over 100 key works from American and European museums as well as international private collections. New perspectives on the three artists are offered as well as the "art historical movements of Dada and Surrealism".

Back to Basel on Sunday, we went to the Calder & Fischli / Weiss exhibition at the Fondation Beyeler which "focuses on the fleeting, precarious and exhilarating moment of fragile balance seen in the early and late 20th century works respectively. A fascinating juxtaposition of artists and beautifully installed!

Off to view "Sculpture on the Move, 1946-2016" the inaugural exhibition at the new and enlarged Kunstmuseum Basel, designed by Emanuel Christ and Christoph Gantebein. The underground passageway connects the old and new buildings with ease.

[RLH]



Curator Gianni Jetzer in front of Chiharu Shiota's installation (photo by author)

Monday morning kicked off the VIP week with stops at the openings of Volta, Liste and Art Unlimited. For the fifth year, it was curated by Gianni Jetzer, Curator-at-Large at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden. Eighty-eight monumental artworks were chosen, fourteen more than last year. Spanning six decades and including many new emerging artists from Asia, alongside the more established artists. This created a fascinating dialogue across generations and borders. This theme continued in the new Tate Modern Museum in London later in the week. Hans Op de Beeck, "The Collector's House" was one of the favorites on opening night. Viewers got lost in the abandoned, furnished room made of monochrome solid plaster evoking Pompeii. Elmgreen & Dragset's "Secondary", featuring ongoing bid calls from two opposing auction rooms without auctioneers or artworks was totally oppressive and chaotic. Chiharu Shiota's "Accumulation: Searching for Destination" included hundreds of beat-up vintage suitcases suspended from the roof at various heights. This evoked the uncertain status of refugees in the world today. She represented Japan at the Venice Biennale in 2015 with her moving work "The Key in the Hand".



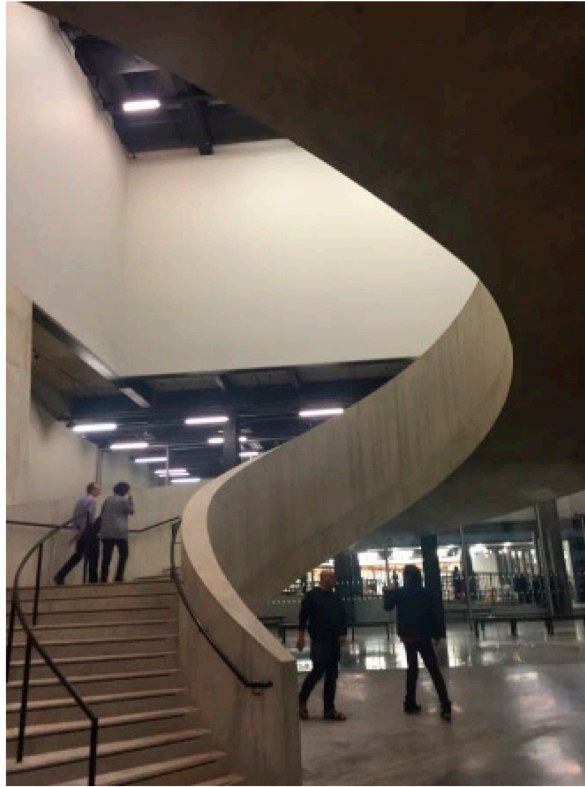
Hirshhorn chief curator Stephane Aquin and Rafael Lozano-Hemmer at HeK (photo by author)

Tuesday morning marked the first VIP opening and the long lines in the rain to enter the Messeplatz due to the first ever x-ray machine security checks. The topic of fear and terrorism was seen in many works including that of Kader Attia's "The Culture of Fear: An Invention of Evil". The installation of eight monochromatic paintings by Ettore Spalletti hung beneath a radiating white neon light and was a calming ethereal contrast to the previous work.

Tuesday evening, we attended the opening of Rafael Lozano-Hemmer's first Swiss museum exhibition "Preabsence". "Call on Water" a fountain creating breathable poetry using various ultrasonic atomizers made it's debut. Also on view were "Pulse Room" and "Microphone".

Next stop London! It was exciting to attend the opening of the new Tate Modern Museum designed by Herzog & de Meuron and it's brand new extension called the Switch House, a 10 story pyramid shaped building. In conversation with Curator Matthew Gale, he shared his enthusiasm and that of his team's efforts and achievements to exhibit diverse global artists' extraordinary works in all media. This open-minded approach toward a global more gender-balanced vision of modern and contemporary art is evidence that the new Tate Modern is embracing the political and philosophical challenges of the times.

The collection features 800 works by over 300 artists from more than 50 countries. 75 percent of the work on show has been purchased since 2000, over half of the solo displays are dedicated to works by female artists.

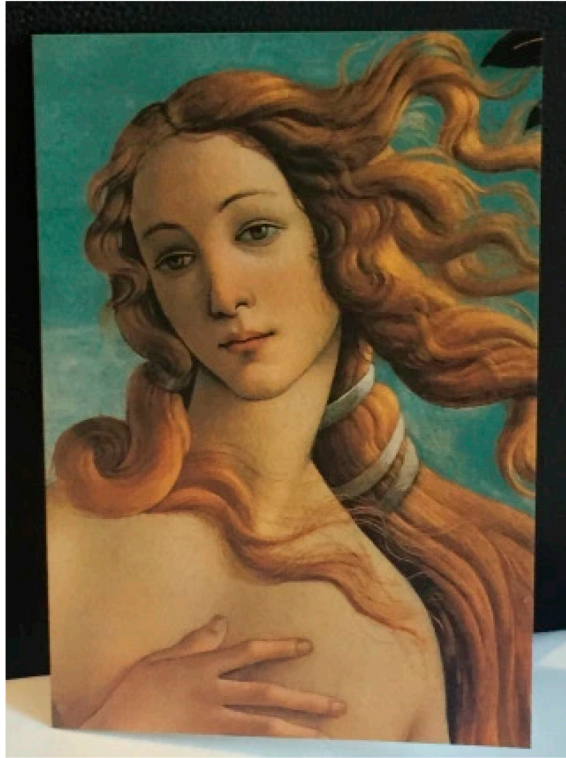


Staircase in Switch House (photo by author)

The most impressive result is the rehanging of the Tate Modern galleries as well as their new vision to welcome the millennial generation. The Tate Modern director Francis Morris has succeeded in diversifying its acquisitions to reflect the 21st century in this magnificent building. The new direction of the museum is more inclusive of photography, performance and film since the first ever Curator of Photography was appointed in 2009.

The following morning, I could not resist a return visit to Damien Hirst's Newport Street Gallery to view his personal collection of Jeff Koons as well as a quick stop in Pharmacy² which has just opened.

As Botticelli's "Birth of Venus" is one of my all-time favorite works of art, we visited the Victoria & Albert Museum to see "Botticelli Reimagined". It did not disappoint. Although praised in his lifetime, Botticelli was forgotten for more than 300 years until his work was rediscovered in the 19th century. His work inspired fashion, film, and artists including Warhol, Schiaparelli and Cindy Sherman. Bookmark the [permalink](#).



Detail from Botticelli's "Birth of Venus" (photo by author)