Six shows to see during Art Basel

Alleviate your fair-tigue with these exhibitions in and around the Swiss city

by JOSÉ DA SILVA, HANNAH MCGIVERN, LOUISA BUCK, AIMEE DAWSON, JULIA MICHALSKA | 14 June 2016


Fondation Beyeler, Calder & Fischli/Weiss, until 4 September Alexander Calder and Fischli/Weiss, now on show at the Fondation Beyeler, seem an unlikely pairing for an exhibition. What does the Modernist mobile-maker have in common with the contemporary conceptual collaborators? Balance, movement and the potential for things to fall apart, says the show’s curator, Theodora Vischer. The curator likens the Swiss duo’s Questions (2002-03)—a projection in a dark room of “simple, so-called small questions that are suddenly quite deep and touching”—to losing yourself in a room of Calder’s mobiles, which you “perceive not only as single works, but as a whole entity of different correspondences,” she says.
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The attention on flora and fauna, using beehives and birdcages, is an integral part of 24 Stops. Tobias Rehberger, 24 Stops, 2015/16. Photo: Mark Niedermann

24 Stops: Rehberger-Weg, between Fondation Beyeler and the Vitra campus (on show for 10 years)  Tobias Rehberger is offering weary Art Basel visitors a breath of fresh air in the form of his countryside art trail, 24 Stops: Rehberger-Weg. The German artist has designed a series of curious and colourful “way-markers”—including bells, bird cages, cuckoo clocks and beehives—to line the 5km path between the Fondation Beyeler in Basel and the Vitra Campus in nearby Weil am Rhein, Germany. In the spirit of unhurried contemplation, the border-crossing installation will stay in place for the next decade. Walkers in need of refreshment beyond the visual may particularly appreciate the inclusion of a fully functional water fountain.
Sculpture on the Move, 1946-2016, Kunstmuseum Basel until 18 September  

More than a decade after surveying the history of painting in the 20th century, the Kunstmuseum Basel has staged its curatorial counterpart in three dimensions: Sculpture on the Move. The show inaugurated the museum’s new 10,500 sq. m extension, designed by the local architects Christ & Gantenbein, in April. The expanded exhibition galleries trace the journey from the now-classic forms sculpted by the Modern masters Constantin Brancusi and Alberto Giacometti to the avant-garde ephemeral practices—captured here on film—of Gilbert & George, Gordon Matta-Clark and Bruce Nauman in the 1960s and 70s. Head to the Gegenwart building for sculptures from the new millennium by Maurizio Cattelan, Christoph Büchel and Danh Vo, among others. Michael Landy: Out of Order, Tinguely Museum, until 25 September  

Michael Landy’s first major survey show Out of Order, opened this week at the Tinguely Museum in Basel. He has admired the Swiss artist’s kinetic sculpture since a student. “I saw an exhibition of his at the Tate [Gallery] back in 1982 when I was a lowly textile student in the Midlands, which I absolutely loved,” Landy says. In 2010 he co-organised an exhibition that included his and Tinguely’s works at Tate Liverpool. The Tinguely Museum curators visited. “They saw this little collage of mine… and I think that's where the conversation began. It’s about how I break into the Tinguely Museum, steal all these sculptures and use them to create a huge sculpture, which then destroys the Tinguely Museum.
Rafael Lozano-Hemmer: Preabsence, Haus der Elektronischen Künste, until 28 August The electronic artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer is on (artistic) home turf with his show at Haus der Elektronischen Künste. With no fewer than 11 of his interactive works on show, from sound sculptures to data-driven displays, the exhibition reflects on human presence and absence in times of constant surveillance. The show includes the artist’s best-known work, Pulse Room (2006), an installation of hundreds of light bulbs that flash to the heartbeat of participants holding pulse sensors. Also on show is Lozano-Hemmer’s new work Redundant Assembly, which scans the faces of visitors and creates a changing patchwork portrait.
Salts, Birsefelden, until 21 July A brisk walk from central Basel is Birsefelden. Nestled between the Birs and Rhine rivers, the sleepy Swiss municipality is best known for its harbour and forest walks. But since 2009, locals have not only been welcoming nature lovers but art enthusiasts too. From post-internet to performance art, mail art to installations in garages, the non-profit space Salts is giving Art Basel’s most cutting-edge galleries a run for their money. This month, the UK artist Owen Piper and the French artist Lili Reynaud-Dewar, who met at the Glasgow School of Art, are collaborating for How to Talk Dirty and Influence People, the artists’ first institutional collaboration in Switzerland. Also on show is For My History of Flow, Leuenberger an exhibition of works by Lena Henke and the group show Works Off Paper in Salts’s Printed Room.