

# GUEST EDITOR'S LETTER

**G**iven the opportunity to engage the levels of an art market tethered to the accumulation of capital, luxury goods and all forms of the art producing, funding, exhibiting and acquiring processes, I write here surrounded by the layers of a community rooted in the contours of choosing deeply engaged creative lives.

My editorial approach was to measure, amplify and bring closer together the contradictions borne within this ecology. I conceived of approximately 80% of the articles here, while the publisher and the Art Basel team added stories of their own interests. I had no say regarding the advertisers, real estate adverts and other such offerings.

Embedded inside of this luxury publication, built for this year's art fair, is, of course, a strategy. Many of the choices I made are propositions for analysis of the contradictions we move within. Between these pages are commentaries and contemplations for movement forward. There are clear-eyed meditations on the creativity and understanding needed for undoing and repair.

I edited this issue with the desire to amplify and to weave together our rigorous practices and the contradictions and complicities that exist inside of this market and especially inside of these pages. No one from the Art Basel team flinched as I proposed the articles (approximately 20) I wanted to bring to life here.

We commissioned many of the most seasoned writers and thinkers (inside and outside of the art market) to take sober stock of where we are at this present moment. In doing so, these writers have produced beautifully clear language alongside their critiques and offered ways we move toward reparative gestures that work alongside many other demands to undo centuries of systemic harm. They guide us to understand the horizons of what was, what is and what can be.

That this magazine holds the confluences of our contemporary imaginings alongside vast luxury and the heights of a capitalist framework is nothing new. That our contemporary imaginings are often co-opted by all manner of celebrity, entertainment, nonprofits, universities, museums, the media and luxury conglomerates is also nothing new.

I am moved toward a creative and material liberation that requires us to undo,



return, repair, abolish and make whole. Here I am also emphasizing the weight of responsibility held by those with the wealth and power to redress a system that ails us. The conditions that form our maladies can shift toward a reparative framework overnight. The opportunity to systemically transform is available at every turn.

It seems that our struggles and creative lives have consistently been linked to and extracted by the wealth that sits adjacent to (or on top of) our lives as artists, arts workers and disenfranchised groups. I note here that our arts and culture ecology requires more than EDI/DEI initiatives and a systemic forward motion push toward more than what representation has on offer.

The artist, especially, as do so many others of us, holds the rigor of imagination for all of the other ways we could be: liberated, healthy, cared for, robustly compensated, materially satisfied, unionized, housed, environmentally conscious, sensually loved and supported, creatively stimulated, calm and, ultimately, free.

I thank the Art Basel global team for their trust here and their commitment to pay the writers well for this issue. I thank this magazine's entire staff and their editor-in-chief, Phebe Wahl, whom I worked closely with. I thank David Castillo for the gallery's wholehearted and steadfast support.

This current issue is the result of the glorious artists, writers, gallerists, curators, museum directors, collectors and politically engaged creatives who thought alongside me to produce here.

Finally, I raise up the demands put forth by unionizing arts workers and artists and all collectively organized individuals advocating for better and more in a system that can, in an instant, cease the plundering of resources, opportunities, communities and lives. I raise up the liberation demands of Indigenous peoples for Land Back and political, life-giving sovereignty and believe that centuries of reparations for the Black descendants of the institution of chattel slavery and its aftermath are minutes away from finally unfolding.

Liberation, as with the creative process, is a multipronged process that requires our full attention and consistent approach.

—Xaviera Simmons



# Art | Basel Miami Beach

DECEMBER 2021

## CHANGE EVERYTHING

GUEST EDITOR  
XAVIERA SIMMONS  
NAVIGATES THE  
ENTIRE TERRAIN

## GOING FORWARD

THE ADVISERS, ARTISTS,  
CURATORS, COLLECTORS,  
GALLERIES & MUSEUM  
MAVERICKS LEADING  
THE CHARGE

## SOURCE MATERIALS

SCULPTOR & TEXTILE ARTIST TAU LEWIS

## STATE OF THE ART

MUSEUM HYBRIDITY,  
MARKET REPORT &  
THE FUTURE OF FAIRS AS  
THE WORLD REBOUNDS