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The Freshman Class of Art Basel: Meet 7 Dealers Making Their Debut at the 2023 Swiss Fair

Julie Baumgardner - June 12, 2023

These dealers are poised to hit one of the art world's biggest stages. Here's how they're preparing.

It's June, which means the art market's most storied convention has arrived: Art Basel. At the Swiss brand's flagship fair, blue-chip pieces make their way out of studios, homes, and freeports and into the booths of the world's top 284 galleries. The fair takes over the Messeplatz, a multi-floor, multi-building conference venue that contains multiple sectors: the Main galleries section (241 booths), Unlimited (76 large-scale installations), Feature (20th and 21st century solo presentations), Kabinett (debuting in Basel this year with 13 thematic presentations), and Statements, which features emerging galleries (not to be confused with Liste, which is its own enterprise altogether). Visitors wandering the city's streets may also encounter Parours (24 public site-specific interventions organized by the fair).



Belkis Ayón, *Resurrección (Resurrection)*, 1998. Image courtesy of the Estate of Belkis Ayón and David Castillo.

Often with Basel, the conversation leans heavily on museum-quality finds by the likes of Gerhard Richter, Philip Guston, and Louise Bourgeois. But with the mood at global art fairs lately seeped in *discovery*—a stand-in for “new and less expensive”—we wanted to look at the galleries who are participating in the fair for the first time. Many dealers try for years, maybe even decades, to get into Basel, and acceptance is often considered a sign that one has truly arrived. Below, meet a selection of the freshman Art Basel class of 2023.

Cooper Cole

Location: Toronto, Canada

Founded: 2011

Founder: Simon Cole

Vibe: Canadian *and* cool

Blank Projects

Location: Cape Town, South Africa

Founded: 2012

Founder: Jonathan Garnham

Vibe: Southern African excellence

Hua International

Location: Beijing, China, and Berlin, Germany

Founded: 2017

Founder: Hua Xiaochan

Vibe: Global collaborative contemporary

Kendra Jayne Patrick

Location: Bern, Switzerland and New York, New York

Founded: 2021

Founder: Kendra Jayne Patrick

Vibe: Who's up next

Sans Titre

Location: Paris, France

Founded: 2020

Founder: Marie Madec

Vibe: Challenging and chic

Martos

Location: New York, NY

Founded: 2007

Founder: Jose Martos

Vibe: Curatorial, creative, and critical



Belkis Ayón, *AÑORANZA*, 1998. Image courtesy of the Estate of Belkis Ayón and David Castillo.

David Castillo Gallery

Location: Miami, Florida

Founded: 2005

Founder: David Castillo

Vibe: Dreamy conceptual

In Basel: Longtime Art Basel Miami Beach participant, David Castillo arrives in Switzerland with distinction. He's the only gallery from Miami to be included in this European affair. And he's bringing Belkis Ayón, the Afro-Cuban print-maker whose uncanny black figures with elongated Cheshire eyes stick in your mind's eye long after

you've stepped away. Though she died in 1999, Ayón's work has been visible around European audiences for the better part of the past decade. Cecilia Alemani included Ayón's prints in last year's Venice Biennale, and a few editions of those works will be on offer at the booth. The series, "Mujer," delves deep into Ayón's fascination with Abakuá, a secret Afro-Cuban society open only to men.
