

## At Art Basel's Oversized Unlimited Sector, Under-Recognized Artists Rub Shoulders with the Biggest Names in Art

14 June, 2016 | Vivienne Chow

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Installation view of Haegue Yang, *Sol LeWitt Upside Down - Structure with Three Towers, Expanded 23 Times, Split in Three*, 2015, presented by Kukje Gallery and Tina Kim Gallery at Art Basel Unlimited, 2016

The world has once again been hit by the devastating news of a mass killing and the global economy continues to experience foreshocks, suggesting a crack in the market could be around the corner. But spirits among the collectors and art aficionados who flocked to the Monday evening preview of Art Basel Unlimited remained strong. The sector for institutional-scale artworks too large or otherwise unfit for a traditional fair format kicks off a week of art-world events here. And it was one of the most crowded previews since Unlimited's inception in 2000.

The Hirshhorn Museum's Gianni Jetzer curates Art Basel Unlimited for the fifth year in a row. The often-copied but unparalleled platform boasts a record 88 monumental artworks this year—14 more than last year—ranging from paintings and sculptures to installations, moving image works, and performance art. So, while foot traffic was high, the extra art also helps to explain why the 16,000 square meters of exhibition space at the Messe Basel seems to be significantly tighter this time around.

This year's Unlimited brings together six decades of artists' work from around the globe, attempting to create dialogues across generations and borders. Asian artists have been given a particularly strong platform, with a number of those on view being lesser-known to the Western art world yet rubbing shoulders at Basel with blue-chip international names.

Hong Kong-based artist Samson Young has staged a sound performance for his work *Canon* (2015), presented by Galerie Gisela Capitain and team (gallery, inc). Dressed in a Hong Kong police uniform at the preview, Young stood behind a Long Range Acoustic Device (LRAD)—a sonic weapon the police used to disperse protesters—on an

eight-meter-high elevated perch, playing bird songs to fairgoers. The work makes strong references to the history of migration from Vietnam and mainland China to Hong Kong.

STPI presents *The Nameless* (2015), a video installation by Singaporean artist Ho Tzu Nyen. Ho skillfully uses footage from Hong Kong actor Tony Leung Chiu Wai's best-known features to construct a narrative about Lai Teck, an alias (one of 50) employed by the Secretary General of the Malayan Communist Party from 1939 to 1947. Cheng Ran, who was born in Inner Mongolia and now lives in Hangzhou, shows *In Course of the Miraculous* (2016), presented by Galerie Urs Meile, a nine-hour-long film that is based on three true stories.

Seoul's Kukje Gallery is collaborating with New York's Tina Kim Gallery to show South Korean artist Haegue Yang's *Sol LeWitt Upside Down - Structure with Three Towers, Expanded 23 Times, Split in Three* (2015), a monumental installation constructed of hundreds of window blinds that pays homage to LeWitt's work. The installation echoes the famous Minimalist artist's now-historic artwork *Irregular Tower* (1999), which is on view with Alfonso Artiaco Gallery at the other end of the exhibition hall.

Chiharu Shiota's *Accumulation: Searching for Destination* (2014-2016), presented by Galerie Daniel Templon, is no doubt one of the most eye-catching works on view. Those who visited the Venice Biennale last year will recognize Shiota's new work as an expansion on the artist's astonishing *The Key in the Hand* (2015), which was showcased in the Japanese pavilion. While *The Key in the Hand* featured vintage keys dangling in the air from red threads, *Accumulation* is much heavier and less poetic, with vintage suitcases suspended by threads from the ceiling.

Elsewhere, blockbuster artists dominate the show. Gladstone Gallery and Lisson Gallery present Anish Kapoor's *Dragon* (1992), an installation of pigmented limestone. Late artist John McCracken's *Six Columns* (2006), which first appeared in the artist's sketchbook in the early 1970s but was not realized in physical form until 2006, is presented by David Zwirner. James Turrell's fluorescent light installation *Cross Cut* (1998), taken from the artist's series "Wedgeworks" and brought by OMR, attracted the longest queue.

Hauser & Wirth presents *Tomato Head (Green)* (1994), a monumental installation that is considered one of Paul McCarthy's key works from that era. Sean Kelly and Sprüth Magers bring conceptual artist Joseph Kosuth's '*Titled (Art as Idea as Idea)*' [*Nothing*] (1968), consisting of 10 mounted Photostats depicting the definition of the word "nothing." The work is among the earliest on show at Unlimited, and was included in the artist's solo debut at Gallery 669 in Los Angeles in 1968. Berlin gallery neugerriemschneider presents *White House* (2015) by Chinese dissident artist Ai Weiwei, who turned the remains of a Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) wooden residential structure into an 80-square-meter installation covered in white paint. Not far away, Alison Knowles offers fair visitors bowls of freshly prepared salad as part of her performance *Make A Salad* (1962).

But the most mesmerizing work at Unlimited is Hans Op de Beeck's *The Collector's House* (2016), on view thanks to a collaboration between Marianne Boesky Gallery, Galleria Continua, and Galerie Krinzinger. An abandoned, furnished room made of monochrome solid plaster gives visitors an illusion of entering one's frozen but faded memories. It dazzled visitors at the preview night so much that many of them refused to exit the room—leaving many others waiting outside.

This year's Art Basel Unlimited may be the most ambitious edition of the sector to date when it comes to the number of works on view—and many of the presentations themselves, too. But, likely because of this fact, it doesn't quite manage to create the dialogue intended, or that existed in years past. Elbowing through the jam-packed exhibition hall while hopping from one presentation to another was very much a fair experience—even if the works belong in a museum.