



CULTURE

Art Basel opens for 2013

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Basel's world famous art fair throws opens its doors again this year. It features works from over three hundred top galleries spanning art, sculpture, photography and more from the great modern masters to the latest generation of emerging stars.

Pablo Picasso's painting "Man with a Pipe" is expected to fetch around 3.4 million euros and works by Germany's Gerhard Richter are also amongst this years highlights.

Marc Spiegler is the director of Art Basel and said: "I think that one trend that we see is that artists are less and less willing to be defined as being one type of artist. Younger artists will not say 'I'm a photographer, I'm a sculptor,' you know. Someone will do sculpture one time and performance the next time and photography the next time. I think they really develop their artworks and their oeuvre around a certain type of idea and then they think about which medium supports that idea best."

The event is considered the benchmark art fair in the world and has been described as the 'Olympics of the Art World'.

Adam Scheffer came all the way from New York. He's a partner at Cheim and Reid Gallery and was impressed with the works on offer: "Well, the quality is definitely there. I know there are a lot of art fairs out there. And it becomes increasingly clear that people are always holding back their best material for Basel. This is the standard by which everybody is judged and it's very clear this year that people went out to the tenth mile to get the best things possible."

Art Basel is more than just a trophy cabinet for the best-known and most expensive art. It's also a platform for less established artists to break into the market. And despite the economic conditions, the market is still good enough for the galleries not to have to chase clients.

New York-based art adviser Lisa Schiff said: "I don't think they have to try to find buyers. The buyers find them. If the art is really good, if it is really really good it sells itself. There is no sale that needs to happen. And the art here in Basel, honestly, most of it is spectacular. And it typically sells very quickly."

For many international collectors, it's the must-attend event on the annual calendar.

And as tax regulation tightens around the wealthy, they're increasingly turning to art as an alternative form of investment.

Around 60,000 art lovers are expected in total.

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