

ANNA SANSOM



UNLIMITED AT ART BASEL

IMPRESSIONS OF THIS YEAR'S ART BASEL IN SWITZERLAND

July 2016

Poetry and politics, reflections on the art world and digital manipulations converged at Unlimited during this year's edition of Art Basel in June. Held in a separate hall from the main fair, Unlimited featured a presentation of large-scale and monumental projects offering a broad perspective on the ideas shaping contemporary art. Curated by Gianni Jetzer, it brought together 86 projects, from older works by artists such as Frank Stella, Louise Lawler, Paul McCarthy and Sol LeWitt up to artworks made in the last couple of years. DAMN° reports on some of the most recent contributions.

Artists have long been interested in imagining the lifestyles of collectors – it is often in their homes that artworks find their destiny. Belgian artist Hans Op de Beeck created a mesmerising, room-sized sculptural installation, *The Collector's House* (2016), in monochromatic grey that seemed frozen in time. It encompassed a plethora of art historical references, from Monet's water lilies at Giverny, to the reclining nude, figurative sculpture, African masks and a Brancusi – thereby pondering over the original versus the copy.

Elmgreen & Dragset (Danish-Norwegian duo Michael Elmgreen and Ingar Dragset), who have made numerous artworks about the machinations of the art world, satirised a sale at an auction house in their installation, *Secondary* (2015). Podiums at either end of the room, a hammer resting on each, look out to rows of empty black chairs. A recording of an auction blares out, the shouting out of increasing prices screeching in the soulless secondary market space that is devoid of attendees.

The Orwellian idea of Big Brother is Watching You and the ubiquity of surveillance cameras was the subject of Rafael Lozano-Hemmer and Krzysztof Wodiczko's Zoom Pavilion (2015). As visitors entered the space, they immediately caught sight of themselves, and everybody else in the room, in black and white projections. It's an amplified reminder of our movements being monitored, only this time with our awareness.

Technology was also key to Jacqueline Humphries Untitled 2015/16. Huge black screens in an enclosed space begin glowing, taking on distinct palettes of colour – thus revealing themselves to be paintings as they are “activated” by the presence of viewers and ultraviolet light. This is thanks to the oil paintings containing ultraviolet-sensitive enamel. The work sees the American artist exploring the format of billboards or cinema screens with entrancing effect.

Sometimes a meaningful artwork is achieved through marrying a simple idea with subtlety and cleverness. This was the case of Ariel Schlesinger's Two Good Reasons (2015). Two sheets of white paper approach each other, moving closer together like a couple in a dance. They begin to rise up together as their tips touch, a force spurring them on. A hypnotic piece about romance and harmony.

At other times, the intellect behind the formalism of a piece is evident but its significance is only understood through reading the press release. Three irregularly-shaped black blocks with shaved edges – one upright and two collapsed on the ground – attract attention. Geopolitics and disputed territories come to mind. It transpires that the sculpture by Lebanese artist Rayyane Tabet is titled The Dead Sea In Three Parts (2013), referring to how the Dead Sea is divided between Jordan on the east side, Israel on the southwest side and the Occupied West Bank on the northwest side.

A curious-looking piece, lost in the middle of Unlimited, was Pamela Rosenkranz's Blue Runs (2016) – a white, kitchen sink with blue water running from its tap. Rosenkranz represented Switzerland at last year's Venice Biennale where she made a room-sized installation with a pale pink liquid. This time, she worked on a different scale, combining a coloured liquid with a household object.

The next edition of Unlimited, Art Basel, takes place from 15-18 June 2017.



Hans Op de Beeck. The Collector's House, 2016. Sculptural installation: Coated wood, coated polyester, pigmented plaster, PU, metal, glass 20 x 12.5 x 4 m. Courtesy: the artist and Galleria Continua, San Gimignano / Beijing / Les Moulins / Habana. Photo by Studio Hans Op De Beeck.



Elmgreen & Dragset Secondary, 2015. Courtesy by the artist and Galería Helga de Alvear.



Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, *Zoom Pavilion* (2015). Made in collaboration with Krzysztof Wodiczko. Installation Views, Unlimited, Art Basel 2016. Courtesy of Carroll / Fletcher.



Jacqueline Humphries, *Untitled*, 2015/2016. Oil and enamel on linen, ultraviolet light, various dimensions. © the artist, courtesy Galerie Gisela Capitain, Cologne & Greene Naftali, New York & Stuart Shave/Modern Art, London. Photo: Simon Vogel, Cologne



Jacqueline Humphries, *Untitled*, 2015/2016. Oil and enamel on linen, ultraviolet light, various dimensions. © the artist, courtesy Galerie Gisela Capitain, Cologne & Greene Naftali, New York & Stuart Shave/Modern Art, London. Photo: Simon Vogel, Cologne



Pamela Rosenkranz, *Blue Runs*, 2016 (detail). Ceramic sink, faucet, water, E131 dye, water tank, water pump. Sink and faucet: approximately 115 x 75 x 50 cm. Hidden water tank and pump: approximately 150 x 150 x 150 cm. Photographer Gunnar Meier. Copyright Pamela Rosenkranz. Courtesy the artist / Kunsthalle Basel / Sprüth Magers / Miguel Abreu Gallery / Karma International.



Rayyane Tabet. *The Dead Sea in Three Parts*, 2013. Styrofoam, mud from the Dead Sea, 150 x 400 x 300 cm. Courtesy: Sfeir-Semler Gallery Beirut/Hamburg.



Ariel Schlesinger. *2 Good Reasons*, 2016, engine, 2 polypropylene sheets, wooden plinth, 500 x 500 cm. Courtesy: Massimo Minini, Brescia - Italy.