



It All Starts in Zürich

By Paul Laster and Renee Riccardo

International art enthusiasts have long considered Zürich the unofficial pregame for Art Basel, a view dating back decades. Because Zürich serves as Switzerland's primary international flight hub and is only an hour from Basel by train, collectors, curators, and art professionals from around the world have often flown into Zürich several days before the fair.

Over the weekend leading up to Art Basel, they have explored Zürich's gallery scene to preview artworks ahead of the flurry of the fair. In turn, Zürich's galleries and institutions capitalized on the influx by organizing coordinated events, exclusive dinners, backyard barbecues, and cocktail parties for the engaged visitors.

The launch of [Zürich Art Weekend](#) (ZAW) in 2018 transformed the art-world gathering from an exclusive trade secret into an inclusive urban festival. Founded by art consultant and philanthropist Charlotte von Stotzingen with a group of local gallery owners, ZAW was created to bring together the city's art community and create a strategic, content-driven prelude to Art Basel.

Attending ZAW for the fourth consecutive year, we arrived earlier in the week to adjust to the time difference and settle into our Seefeld rental by the lake before the events began. Getting a head start on the long list of activities, we hit the galleries along Ramistrasse and near the Kunsthaus Zürich, where the marvelous Marisol survey kept us enchanted for an afternoon.

Leading up to ZAW's official opening, we visited galleries and shops and attended early opening receptions and dinners. When the weekend events began on Friday morning, we spent most of the day at the former Löwenbräu brewery building on Limmatstrasse, which was taken over by galleries and museums in 1996 and later expanded to house additional cultural spaces.



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Free and open to the public

With the ninth edition featuring 75+ exhibitions and 150+ public events across more than 70 venues, we kept up a steady pace until we departed for Basel on Sunday afternoon.

Scroll through to see some of the artworks and players that caught our attention during our delightful six-day stay. **WM**



Installation view, Regift - Swiss Institute New York at 40 (Louise Lawler matches) at LUMA Westbau. Photo: Renée Riccardo



Regift - Swiss Institute New York at 40 co-curators Alison Coplan and Stefanie Hessler discussing the exhibition after being introduced by Vassilis Oikonomopoulos, Artistic Director at LUMA Arles, at LUMA Westbau. Photo: Paul Laster



Eliza Douglas, Sugar Colt (2024), Regift - Swiss Institute New York at 40 at LUMA Westbau. Photo: Renée Riccardo



Artists Anna-Sophie Berger, Aura Rosenberg, Nina Beier, and John Miller, and curator Alison Coplan at the cocktail hour before the Zurich Art Weekend VIP Dinner at the Kunsthaus Zürich. Photo: Paul Laster'