

Satellite fairs and the fair week

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Art Basel has generated an ecosystem of satellite fairs that take place in the same week. The most important of them is Liste, founded in 1996 by a group of Basel gallerists around Peter Bläuer as a fair for young galleries and emerging artists. For many years it was held in the former Wardeck brewery in Kleinbasel. In 2022 it moved to the fairground, where it now occupies a hall of its own. Liste has served as a nursery for galleries that later joined the main fair. Other satellite fairs have come and gone, among them Volta, Scope, Photo Basel and, until its departure, Design Miami/Basel, which presented collectible design next to the main fair from the mid-2000s.¹

During the fair week, the city turns into a temporary art capital. Museums open major exhibitions, with the Fondation Beyeler and the Kunstmuseum attracting large numbers of visitors, while private collections open their doors to invited guests. Galleries, auction houses and banks host dinners and receptions in the old town, in villas in Riehen and in the hotels along the Rhine. For a week, Basel brings together a density of wealth, expertise and cultural capital that few cities in the world can match. Because nearly all of these activities are private, the public sees only their outward signs: limousines at the Messeplatz, crowded restaurants and an extraordinary concentration of art advisers in the hotel lobbies.²

1 Notes

1. On Liste (founded 1996, Peter Bläuer, formerly in the Wardeck brewery, at the Messe Basel since 2022) and other satellite fairs in Basel (Volta, Scope, Photo Basel, Design Miami/Basel), see the publications of the fairs and the trade press. Dates to be verified. ↩

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2. On the programme of exhibitions, receptions and private events during the Art Basel week, see the press coverage of the fair (for example NZZ, Basler Zeitung, The Art Newspaper). To be verified. ↩

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