

Unlimited, Miami Beach, Hong Kong, Paris and Qatar

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From the 1990s onwards, the fair developed new formats and new locations. In 2000, Art Basel introduced Unlimited, a section in a separate hall for large-scale works, installations, sculptures and video works that would not fit in a gallery booth. Unlimited, curated by an independent curator, became one of the most visited parts of the fair. It also changed the function of the fair, which no longer merely sold works but presented a curated exhibition with the ambition of a museum show. Other sections followed, among them Statements for young galleries presenting a single artist, Feature for historical and curated presentations, and Parours, which placed works in public spaces in the city.¹

The decisive step towards global expansion came in 2002. Under the direction of Sam Keller, who led the fair from 2000 to 2007, Art Basel opened a second edition in Miami Beach in December 2002. The first edition had been planned for 2001 but was postponed after the attacks of 11 September 2001. Miami Beach offered access to collectors from the United States and Latin America, a winter date that complemented the June fair in Basel, and a location in which entertainment, design and nightlife combined with the art market. Art Basel Miami Beach grew into one of the most important events in the American art calendar and spawned a cluster of satellite fairs of its own.²

The expansion into Asia followed a decade later. In 2011, MCH Group acquired a majority stake in Asian Art Fairs, the organiser of ART HK, the Hong Kong International Art Fair founded in 2008. After two further editions under the old name, the fair was relaunched as Art Basel Hong Kong in May 2013. Hong Kong offered the fair access to the growing number of collectors in mainland China, Taiwan, South-East Asia and the Gulf, as well as a free port without customs duties or value added tax on imported works of art. The political changes in Hong Kong after 2019 and

2020, together with the pandemic, raised questions about the city's future as an art market. Art Basel nevertheless maintained its Hong Kong edition, which has remained the leading art fair in Asia.³

In 2022, Art Basel entered Paris. The Réunion des musées nationaux – Grand Palais, which manages the Grand Palais, awarded the October slot that the Foire internationale d'art contemporain (FIAC) had occupied for decades to the Swiss organiser after a tender. The first edition, called Paris+ par Art Basel, took place in October 2022 in the Grand Palais Éphémère, a temporary structure on the Champ-de-Mars, since the Grand Palais itself was being renovated. From 2024, the fair moved into the restored Grand Palais under the name Art Basel Paris. The loss of FIAC caused some resentment in the French art world, whereas the success of the new fair confirmed the revival of Paris as an art market after the departure of the United Kingdom from the European Union.⁴

In 2025, Art Basel announced a further edition in Doha, Qatar, organised in partnership with a Qatari investment entity and scheduled for February 2026 in the Msheireb district. The announcement indicated the group's intention to establish a presence in the Gulf region, where several states are investing heavily in museums and cultural institutions. It also raised questions about reputational risk, labour rights and freedom of expression, which critics associate with cultural events in the Gulf states. The first edition was planned as a smaller format than the established fairs. Its results and the future of the format cannot yet be assessed with confidence.⁵

The leadership of the fair reflected its growth. After Sam Keller, Art Basel was led by a team of directors and from 2012 by Marc Spiegler, who became its global director and steered the expansion to Hong Kong and the preparation of the Paris edition. In 2022, Noah Horowitz was appointed to lead Art Basel, first as global director and then as chief executive officer. Under his leadership, the fair continued the development of digital services, publications and partnerships, while the Basel edition kept its position as the most important of the four, or now five, fairs.⁶

1 Notes

1. On the introduction of Art Unlimited (later Unlimited) in 2000 and the other sectors of Art Basel (Statements, Feature, Parours, Edition), see the publications and exhibitor regulations of Art Basel. Dates to be verified. ↩
2. On the foundation of Art Basel Miami Beach in December 2002 (postponed from 2001 after the attacks of 11 September 2001) under the

direction of Sam Keller, see the publications of Art Basel and MCH Group. To be verified. ↩

3. On the acquisition of a majority stake in Asian Art Fairs Ltd (organiser of ART HK, founded 2008) by MCH Group in 2011 and the first Art Basel Hong Kong in May 2013, see the MCH Group annual reports (2011–2013) and the publications of Art Basel. On the absence of customs duties and VAT on the import of art into Hong Kong, see the Hong Kong customs regulations. To be verified. ↩
4. On the tender of the Réunion des musées nationaux – Grand Palais in 2022, the replacement of FIAC by Paris+ par Art Basel (October 2022, Grand Palais Éphémère) and the move to the renovated Grand Palais as Art Basel Paris in 2024, see the publications of Art Basel and the RMN-GP and the press reports. To be verified. ↩
5. On the announcement in May 2025 of Art Basel Qatar, organised in partnership with QC+ (linked to Qatar Sports Investments) and planned for February 2026 in Msheireb Downtown Doha, see the press releases of Art Basel and MCH Group. Status to be verified. ↩
6. On the leadership of Art Basel (Sam Keller 2000–2007; Marc Spiegler from 2012, global director until 2022; Noah Horowitz from 2022), see the press releases of Art Basel and MCH Group. Dates and titles to be verified. ↩

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