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All the Beautiful, Expensive, and Corny Art I Saw at Art Basel This Year

December 11, 2015



This was a nice painting by [Hope Gangloff](#) at [Susan Inglett Gallery](#).

Every December a bunch of art fairs infest Miami, and every year I show up and try to understand what's going on. The main fair of Miami Art Week is **Art Basel**, which began life in Switzerland in 1970. In 2002 Art Basel Miami Beach was created, and its popularity birthed about 20 satellite art fairs of varying sizes, other unrelated shows, concerts, and about a million branded-content things and marketing-driven events. Art Basel exists because it's a fun way for the art world to have a reunion in a warm place, but mainly it was **created to evade paying taxes on expensive art pieces**. Art Basel is great; Art Basel is terrible. In some ways, it's a little microcosm of the best and worst aspects of the art world. I go every year to try to learn what I can, relaying my photos and information back to you, the VICE reader, while escaping my seasonal affective disorder. I hope reading this will make you feel like you were right there with me.

I covered Basel for VICE in [2012](#) and [2014](#). This year Basel kinda sucked. It's always a little corny, but it rained the whole week straight this year and a lot of cool people elected to stay home. Multiple friends made anti-Basel memes and then the police **shot a shirtless bank robber** and a **lady stabbed another lady**. At some point I caught a real bad flu, and now that I'm thinking about it, I really wish I'd stayed home this year. Anyway, here's how the week went.