

# VOLTA 12

BASEL  
JUNE 13-18  
2016

**VOLTA12, JUNE 13 – 18  
GLOBALLY CONSCIOUS AND GOING STRONG  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**BASEL: MONDAY, JUNE 20:** Twelve years is an accomplishment for a contemporary art fair, particularly when one can bob and weave around market peculiarities while still retaining its authenticity and identity

as a platform for critical discourse and international artistic discovery. The local press agreed, with the *Basler Zeitung* calling **VOLTA** "a stepping stone for Art Basel, where you can find works by artists who have exhibitions in major institutions and promising academy graduates" and cultural purveyors [barfi.ch](http://barfi.ch) adding that "last year VOLTA had shown that it is good for all discoveries and surprises. This year's exhibition also benefits from a more intimate atmosphere, where one can discourse easily with art dealers and artists." Coupled with the array of ambitious booth projects and pedigree of visitors to the fair — including notable repeat patrons from opening day — **VOLTA12** advanced its position as Basel's fair for new international positions.

"It's clear we are no longer the sparkling ingenue, in the mid-2000's frenzied atmosphere of a high market and impulse buys, like some kind of arm- or eye-candy," noted **Amanda Coulson**, VOLTA Artistic Director, reflecting on the fair week, "rather, VOLTA has matured into a critical and engaging exhibition or — to continue the metaphor — a solid marriage prospect. This year we've shown clearly that we are a proper venue for serious and deliberate acquisitions from both the reliable and loyal exhibitors who have remained with us through market vagaries, as well as the up-and-comers and those who eschew trends for conceptual and studied approaches."



Martin Asbæk (center, of his namesake Copenhagen gallery) introduces new works by Markus Oehlen and Kristian Dahlgaard to collectors Carole Server and Michael Hort, while gallery assistant Katrine Arevad prepares correspondences

Consistent action and attention were themes of the week. **Martin Asbæk Gallery** (Copenhagen) mounted a rigorous two-walled project of large-scale painted bronze "mega-molecule" sculptures by **Kristian Dahlgaard** and medium- to monumental-sized paintings by **Søren Martinsen** and **Markus Oehlen** (cycled between the two throughout the fair week). One Oehlen went on Tuesday (45K EUR approximately), five Martinsen paintings (four smaller, one huge) followed to one client, then two Dahlgaards (to a major Danish collection and an equally reputable New York institutional trustee, respectively), and by the final day the last large Oehlen moved to a prominent Turkish collection that runs a hotel and artist residency program. Returning to their same position as in 2015, **The Flat — Massimo Carasi** (Milan) fielded significant interest in **Paolo Cavinato's** *Spatial Conditions* series, selling a dozen sculptures from shoebox to crate-sized to various collectors and institutions, including a foundation in Lichtenstein and two to the **Fondation Boghossian Villa Empain** in Brussels. **Galerie Heike Strelow** (Frankfurt am Main) delivered her expected rigorously conceptual booth installation of artists working in themes of urban decay across various media, to considerable success. Early on, she sold **Khaled Barakeh's** large-scale five-layered C-print *Damascus 15/02/2012*, a hyper minimalist rendering of a friend's police-inflicted injury, to the same Lichtenstein foundation, and a second version days later to another major collection. As well, she sold **Grötsch/Metzger's** beguiling floor installation *Untitled (Fig Leaves)*, a cube-shaped array of the namesake plant dried for over eight years before assemblage on-site, to a French collector and curator who had first seen the work the morning of opening day. "It's amazing that we can sell this kind of work at an art fair!" Strelow noted. Meanwhile, **Galerie Dukan** (Paris/Leipzig) sold 17 markedly macabre drawings by **Josef Ofer** later in the week, to Miami (five), Germany, and to an artist exhibiting at the fair. "Many artists, and not just those at VOLTA, have been very impressed with Ofer's works," added gallery owner Sam Dukan. "They find something strong in them despite the smaller sizes." Commenting on the artist's unconventional maturation — exiting the Paris scene at a very young but profitable age to live peacefully and produce art within the Amazon region — Dukan added, "It's very important for me to show him at VOLTA, not only to show the art but to tell his story."





Tomas Umrian (director of SODA gallery, Bratislava) converses with a collector, surrounded by a multi-generational presentation of Slovak artists: Stano Filko, Lucia Tallová, and Ilona Németh

First-time VOLTA exhibitors exemplified the breadth of the fair's critical programming, from **Knoerle & Baettig contemporary's** (Winterthur) laser-sharp focus on **Frank Mujica** and **Alejandro Campins**, among Cuba's hottest emerging artists, to **Project ArtBeat's** (Tbilisi) multigenerational survey of Georgian talent: **Gio Sumbadze**, **Chubika**, and **Lado Pochkhua**. Nearby at **Anca Poterasu Gallery** (Bucharest), the gallery sold from both exhibiting artists, moving two prints from the first edition of **Nicu Ilfoveanu's** county fair photography series to the **Huis Marseille Museum for Photography** in Amsterdam. "This makes me very happy as a gallery," enthused Poterasu, "to have my artist's works acquired by a museum!" As well, she sold **Zoltan Béla's** found-object double assemblage *Adam and Eve* to a French collection and a Béla painting to Germany. Tomas Umrian, director of **SODA gallery** (Bratislava) noted that many gallerists from VOLTA and **Art Basel** had been inquiring about and buying from **Lucia Tallová**, the youngest of four artists in his cross-generational project of contemporary Slovak talent. "I've made connections with galleriests from Amsterdam and Paris, which could lead to future projects. This is how to establish her name to an international market." He sold two of Tallová's paintings, an installation of works, and four boxed drawings to a Korean collection, who Umrian added was keen to buy more from her. As well, he sold groundbreaking late Slovak conceptualist **Stano Filko's** installation to a British collection of conceptual art from the 1970s. At the front and facing the bold site-specific wall painting executed by **Jan van der Ploeg** on site over the weekend leading up to opening day, **taubert contemporary** (Berlin) moved a large painting by the Dutch geometric interventionalist to a new German collector based in Basel, whom Taubert noted "had seen Jan's solo exhibition at **Kunsthau Baselland** the other day, then came to the fair to see us." He added that Jan's wall painting at Markthalle received considerable attention, leading to various commissions including a public station project as well as a proposal for a private home, an entirely new move for the artist. Tracy Causey-Jeffrey (owner of **Causey Contemporary**, New York) noted the expected mixed reaction to artist **Kevin Bourgeois's** bracing site-specific, found-object assemblage *At Play in the Fields of the Lord* — comprised of used NYPD barricades, handcuffs, and batons composed into a swing-set — but was pleased with the dialogues with visitors that ensued. Beyond the institutional interest in Bourgeois' installation, the gallery sold a small and large work from his *CarbonNation* series, and Causey-Jeffrey added they made many new contacts, more than received at prior art fairs nor at the gallery. Building on opening day reaction to **Caroline Corbasson's** astrophysics research-based interdisciplinary solo booth *Bending Space*, **Galerie l'inlassable** (Paris) co-director Ulysse Geissler noted they met friends from France but sold only to new clients from Switzerland, rehanging the booth on Saturday morning with Corbasson's earlier *Blackout Books* series after her graphite powder compositions had sold out. The gallery also sold a heat-treated copper hexagon sculpture completed at her residency at Villa Boesch, recalling the upcoming James Webb Space Telescope.





Martine Poppe (exhibiting with Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, London) and VOLTA's Brian Fee co-lead a tour to Aesop guests during Basel Nacht at Markthalle

While VOLTA art fairs tend to feature a good number of exhibiting artists in attendance, there was an undeniable magic in the air Wednesday when the venerable artist-scientist **herman de vries** visited his gallery **CONRADS'** (Düsseldorf) booth. "He's a very sweet person," said gallery co-owner Helga Weckop-Conrads, adding that de vries had last visited Art Basel in 1979. "He hasn't been back in 40 years, but he was interested to visit this time and enjoyed it very much." Besides selling earth-palette compositions by de vries, who represented The Netherlands at last year's **Venice Biennale**, the gallery also sold small and large-scale works by **Sven Drühl**. "Business was good, and by that I mean good," added Weckop-Conrads. "This two-generations survey is very indicative of our gallery program. So we will find a new pair of artists to show next year." **New Art Projects** (London) was particularly proud of booth artist **Scott Hunt**, as the curator of the **Lucas Museum of Narrative Art** (Chicago) — as well as filmmaker/auteur **George Lucas** himself — visited the booth during the week after learning of Hunt's concurrent exhibition at the gallery's East London space. Over at **PATRICK MIKHAIL** (Montréal/Ottawa), Toronto collaborative duo **Michael John Vickers** and **Oliver Pauk** were regulars in their mixed-media installation *Force & Rhythm*, featuring Vickers' industrial-toned sculptures and Pauk's virtual and physical interventions. Dealer Mikhail was pleased at his artists' ambitious artworks and resultant installation. "This is an opportunity to launch them on an international platform and jumpstart two emerging artists who are fairly known about town in Toronto," said Mikhail. "Rather than wait and build their careers, we planned and worked for six months to launch this ambitious presentation. To me, this is getting back to the original VOLTA spirit: to the innovative visitors, the tastemakers and risk-takers, they are loving it. Those who get what we are doing really get it." By week's end, the gallery sold several of Pauk's digital compositions (\$8,000 each), including two to an Italian architect, plus several of Vickers' sculptures to Swiss clients. Beyond the sales, a major public commission in downtown Miami for Pauk is in the proposal stages, based off the collector's reaction to the artist's video animations at the fair, and the curators of the art collection owned by the **Royal Bank of Canada** are planning a purchase of Vickers' works, based on the strength of his showing at VOLTA12. "We usually have long-range plans, goals, and results in mind," added Mikhail, "and in this way, the VOLTA fairs totally deliver. Our goal is always to present 'ideas' that lead to long-range discussions with clients." **krupic kersting galerie** || **KUK** (Cologne) sold Oakland-based artist and recent Joan Mitchell Foundation awardee **Tracey Snelling's** audio-video installation *Cheetah's Strip Club* to an American collector, as well as other works to Swiss and Germans. "So many Americans were amazed to see Tracey's work and meet her hear," said co-director Markus Kersting, "and they wondered aloud why they didn't know her before." Besides co-leading a tour with VOLTA's Brian Fee and a group of representatives from **Aesop** on Thursday during **Basel Nacht** at Markthalle, young London-based Norwegian rising star **Martine Poppe** could be found before-hours at **Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery's** (London) booth, stretching and reinforcing her brand-new, luminous abstract paintings on taffeta. Following a sold-out presentation during the first week of the fair (to new clients from Los Angeles, Stockholm, and Switzerland), Hjellegjerde oversaw the artist's rehang Thursday morning, which resulted in another raft of sales. "This is a great debut for her in Basel," said Hjellegjerde on Poppe's success and sunny demeanor. "For me it's very important, as this is my first VOLTA Basel. I am very new to people and Martine is as well. It is about building trust and interest." Noting the many new clients she met this week, far beyond her circle at **VOLTA NY**, Hjellegjerde added, "Everyone says the quality here at the fair has gone up so much!"



Michael Kaufmann (director of HilgerBROT Kunsthalle, Vienna) presents works by Assunta Abdel Azim Mohamed to a collector

Swiss debuts often led to success at VOLTA12. Besides mid-career Spanish artist **Ángel Marcos**, whose major lightbox diptych *En Cuba #18* went to a Mexican institution along with other works, **HilgerBROTKunsthalle** (Vienna) director Michael Kaufmann was particularly enthused by the public's continued response to young Austrian-Egyptian artist **Assunta Abdel Azim Mohamed's** meticulous and poetic figurative ink compositions. Several mid-sized works went to collectors in Switzerland, Barcelona, and London, and another large work stayed local. **Angeles Baños** (Badajoz) sold 20 works from **Manuel Antonio Domínguez's** suite of gouache on found maps to the **21c Museum** (Louisville KY). **Anna Zorzini**, of her namesake Bucharest gallery, was especially enthusiastic about her first VOLTA fair and debuting Cluj School graduate **Ioan Popdan's** works in Switzerland. "I love Basel — I love VOLTA," she said. "It's been a great experience, different than VOLTA NY but the same level of amazingness." She was happy to leave three of Popdan's heavy, minimalist paintings to good Swiss collections. "This has been a very unique and special art experience that I really want to lead again." Over at two-time VOLTA Basel exhibitor **ARTCOURT Gallery** (Osaka), associate director Michiko Kiyosawa recalled the Friday sale of former Julian Schnabel protégée **Tsuyoshi Higashijima's** largest painting at the booth to a young Basel collector. "She arrived in the morning, saw Higashijima-san's painting and loved the color and technique. She left after spending some time on the floor, then I met her again in the evening and she bought it." Kiyosawa added that young booth artist **Tomoko Takagi**, who made her debut outside Japan at VOLTA NY in March, had sold as well. Commenting on his multi-generational project of Central European artists, veteran VOLTA dealer **Jiri Svestka** (of his Prague and Berlin spaces) said, "I am very happy to promote these young artists on an international level. There is been a particularly strong response to **Karima (Al-Mukhtarová)**, whose discreet and poetic interventions included a site-specific stacked box assemblage in the adjacent Nomad lounge) and to **Katarína (Poliačiková)**, recipient of a New York residency and proposed for a solo show in Bremen) as well." Svestka noted interest and sales in Czech superstar **Krištof Kintera**, who graced Basel two years ago with a solo survey at the **Museum Tinguely**. "Plus, collectors I met at Art (Basel) I also met here at VOLTA. And I tell you: I didn't expect this strong positive echo for these two artists, Karima and Katarína...well for **Sofie (Švedjová)**, the youngest in the booth at age 25) as well. It makes our position as a gallery and our collaboration with VOLTA that much stronger."



Géraldine Rusek and Ed Cross (right, of his namesake London gallery) present a solo booth of Eric Pina's mixed media works on paper to collectors

**Gallery Kogure** (Tokyo/New York) enjoyed a week of constant attention to booth artists **Asuka Sakuma** and **Futaro Mitsuki**, selling out of Sakuma's newsprint sculptures to all Swiss clients, including one the gallery met at **VOLTA11**, plus Mitsuki's large-scale pointillist portrait *Dojiji* to another Basel client and four editions of his lithography *Tamatebako*. "We had a great fair," said Ed Cross (owner of **Ed Cross Fine Art**, London), selling four of **Eric Pina's** sculptures and logging serious international interest in Pina's mural-sized gouache and mixed-media works on paper. "We've made some really good contacts from Europe and America, so we are very happy." **frosch&portmann** (New York) established many new American clients as well as met contacts they had made at VOLTA last year. The gallery sold from both booth artists **Julia Kuhl** and **Vicki Sher**, including one of Sher's scroll-like wall-mounted drawing to a local collector. **BACKSLASH** (Paris) received considered interest throughout the week for their elegant installation of urban reflection, selling a large self-portrait by **Fahamu Pecou**, which had been first presented at his solo exhibition *GRAV-I-TY* at MOCA (Atlanta), to a new Swiss client. **Ponce+Robles** (Madrid) sold both of Brazilian up-and-comer **Ding Musa's** sculptures, the artist's Swiss debut, as well as nearly 20 of Spanish duo **Aggtelek's** drawing series *Secondhand Paintings* to an international clientele. Mounting a two-concept divided project, **Slag Gallery** (Brooklyn) was bustling all week, as veteran dealer and force-of-nature Irina Protopopescu fielded sales from returning and new clients, selling six new concrete and mixed-media compositions by **Naomi Safran-Hon**, and a further two paintings by kindred Brooklynite **Avital Burg** (featured in the 2016 edition of **GalleryLOG's** artist-interview video series) to private and institutional collections. Plus, Protopopescu moved Romanian duo **Bors & Ritiu's** dramatic, lifesized polyester resin and heat-reactive painted sculpture *The Same Donkey, with a Different Hat* to a prominent American collector, an unusual acquisition for the client. "The collectors and buyers appreciate quality and something that is new," remarked Alfred Kornfeld, owner of **Galerie Kornfeld** (Berlin) and a three-time VOLTA Basel exhibitor. "They come and they stay, then they decide and they buy!" Between their two-artist split booth, featuring a range of **Michael John Kelly's** gestural abstract paintings and **Susanne Roewer's** sculptures and mixed-media interventions, Kornfeld, director Dr. Tilman Treusch, and gallerist Janina Rösner shared duties, greeting patrons Susan and Michael Hort (New York)

on their repeat visit to the fair Wednesday, while selling a Kelly diptych and a painting plus five Koeper works for over 50,000 EUR in sales. "We are happy!"



Martin Kudlek (of his Cologne gallery) presents manipulated found books by Christos Venetis to collectors

Longtime colleagues **Martin Kudlek** (of his namesake Cologne space) and **Patrick Heide** (of his London gallery) presented an open and flowing concept between their respective artist projects, to sustained attention throughout the week. Kudlek sold significantly from **Katrin Bremermann**, **Sofie Müller**, and **Christos Venetis** to clients from South Korea, France, Germany, and Switzerland. Heide agreed that feedback from clients was very positive, as he sold all but one of Berlin based rising star **Pius Fox**'s new suite of minimalist paintings, plus a cache of **Károly Keserü**'s reductive compositions (three large drawings and two large paintings, plus multiple smaller drawings) to clients in Denmark, Switzerland, and France. The gallery sold two of Cluj School talent **Dan Maciuca**'s roiling abstract paintings as well, to France and Belgium. **Gerhard Hofland** (Amsterdam/Leipzig) has sold out of **Johan Tahon**'s enigmatic, human-scale glazed ceramics, selling the pair *Triade A* and *Triade B* to the same Dutch collector after a third sculpture went on opening day. **Studio Sandra Recio** (Geneva) was proud of artist **Christine Boillat**, whose wall-sized and surreal charcoal drawing *Silent Circus*, which was awarded Switzerland's *Prix de Dessin* last year, found a home in a major Danish collection entirely new to the gallery and artist. Recio placed several other works to Swiss clients and recorded Spanish interest as well. Equal on the large-scale and utterly beguiling spectrum, **Espacio Valverde** (Madrid) sold both of **Elena Alonso**'s large rune-like compositions to an Irish collector new to the young Spanish artist, plus five of **Jorge Diezma**'s A3-sized bread drawings (each imbued with classical and Spanish sociopolitical undertones) and a modernized Still Life to primarily new Swiss, German, and American collectors, as well as to architects of **Kunstmuseum Basel**'s recent expansion whom had bought Alonso's works last year. Dealer Jacobo Fitz-James Stuart noted intense interest in Madrid-based English artist **Hugo Bruce**'s darkly whimsical naturalist sculptures as well. "There may not be so much of an immediate connection to Elena and Hugo," he added, "but they work together in a rock 'n roll way — *bueno*."





Sandra Recio (center, of her namesake Geneva gallery) presents Christine Boillat's *Silent Circus* and related drawings to clients as Lucie Renevier prepares notes. Right: Kevin Bourgeois' installation *At Play in the Fields of the Lord*, exhibited with Causey Contemporary (New York)

"I'm delighted with the response to my curated booth," said Xavier Ellis, owner of **CHARLIE SMITH LONDON** (London), of his ensemble project *The New Figurative*. "I sold eight out of nine artists to world-class collectors across the globe, including sold-out performances from **Eric Manigaud** and **Wendy Mayer**, and multiple sales for **Florian Heinke**." His booth reflected several necessary rehangerings throughout the week, as Mayer's mixed-media baby sculptures and Manigaud's macabre, large-scale graphite renderings moved out. "VOLTA continues to deliver repeat business and new collectors every year, providing my gallery with long lasting relationships with informed, proactive collectors." **LARMgalleri** (Copenhagen) and **Pablo's Birthday's** (New York) collaborative booth/bar welcomed visitors for extended periods of spirited respite, surrounded by high-quality international art. The galleries sold young Danish protégée **Asger Dybvad Larsen's** bedsheet-sized pressed paint-tray composition to a prominent Brussels collection, as well as several of **Angelika Schori's** large, two-side paper works to one client and minimalist works by **Henrik Eiben** and **Michael Rouillard** to the Lauscher Sammlung. "The response has been almost overwhelming," reflected Jesper Elg, owner of longtime VOLTA exhibitor **V1 Gallery** (Copenhagen), on the reception to their salon-style drawing show *The Parlor*. "It's kind of interesting for us to in a way go back to our roots as an edgy gallery while introducing new artists to this platform." He added that people understood the concept, immersing in the booth and poring over books by the 28 exhibited artists. "Our intention was to slow people down and that has worked. We are using our platform for something new." He tallied sales for over 50 individual pieces, ranging from \$400 – \$25,000, from artists with international renown like **Wes Lang** and **Troels Carlsen** to rising stars like **Emma Kohlmann** and **Alphachanneling**. "We've met new people as well as people we had hoped to see. Collectors we know have bought from us as well as from other galleries. That is a sign that there is something coherent going on at VOLTA."



Xavier Ellis (left, director of CHARLIE SMITH LONDON, London) in discussion with a client. In background: ceramic sculpture by Claire Partington and paintings by Florian Heinke, two artists in Ellis' curated booth *The New Figurative*

Throughout the week, a distinguished coterie of prominent international collectors and institutions — including notable repeat visitors — walked the corridors of Markthalle, including guests from opening day **Susan** and **Michael Hort** (New York); **Alain Servais** (Brussels); **Ole Faarup** (Fredriksburg, DK); **Marco Stücklin** (Basel); as well as **Zöe** and **Joel Dictrow** (New York); **Veronique Thierry** (Brussels); **Tatjana Friman** (Vienna); **Steve Shane** (New York); **Katie Perlstein** (Brussels); **Michael Rosenfeld** (London); **Jean-Marie** and **Pitou Gillis** (Belgium); **Monique Chaix** (St. Tropez); **Leif Djuurhus** (Chairman, **Danish Collectors Society**); **Rachel Kent** (Chief Curator, **Museum of Contemporary Art of Australia**, Sydney); **Steve Wilson** and **Alice Gray Stites** (**21c Museum**, Louisville KY); **Helle Behrndt** (Director, **Kunstforeningen GL Strand**, Copenhagen); **George Lucas** and **Judy Kim** (filmmaker/founder and deputy director/curator, **Lucas Museum of Narrative Art**, Chicago); **Nanda van den Berg** (Director, **Huis Marseille Museum for Photography**, Amsterdam); representatives from the **European Central Bank**; representatives from **Arthphilein Foundation** (Lichtenstein); curators from the **Fourchou Foundation** (Denmark/Beijing); curators from **Fondation Boghossian Villa Empain** (Brussels); representatives from the **Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art** (Gateshead UK); architects of **Kunstmuseum Basel**; **Guggenheim Museum** trustees (USA and worldwide); representatives from the **Lauscher Collection** (Prague); members

of **Roche** (Basel); members of **The Cultivist** (worldwide); and many other distinguished lovers of the arts.

*"I am proud of where we have taken the fair up to now, and I look toward the journey ahead as we progress in our 'teenage years,'" Amanda Coulson said. "Fantastic art-making of the most timely and relevant sort is occurring everywhere — all across the world — and great galleries young and old are supporting these artists. My VOLTA team and I will do so as well, traveling and seeking out these noteworthy positions and collaborating with them and their galleries on an international stage."*

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Foreground: Karima al-Mukhtarová's site-specific installation (presented by Jiri Svestka Gallery, Prague/Berlin), adjacent to the fair's Nomad lounge

