

EVENTS/CAUSES

## Luxury pours out of Design District for Art Basel Miami Beach

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*Mandarin Oriental, Miami*

By JEN KING

From fashion boutique gallery displays to ridesharing yacht applications, Art Basel Miami Beach has become a sanctuary for luxury brands looking to make an impression on discerning affluents and art enthusiasts.

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Held on the weekend of Dec. 3-6, Art Basel Miami Beach, a contemporary and modern art fair, gathers artwork from 267 galleries based in North America, Latin America, Asia, Europe and Africa. Alongside gallery exhibitions, performances and film screenings, luxury brands stage events and exclusives to further their interactions with Art Basel's wealthy crowds, who have a penchant for artwork and experiential happenings.

"The Miami event draws an impressive number and quality of exhibitors, which helps to attract an impressive number of wealthy consumers and that in turn attracts the brands," said Ron Kurtz, president of the [American Affluence Research Center](#), Atlanta. "Many of the attendees have a second home in Miami. Also, Miami is a great city to visit.

"Brands need to be innovative and creative in the events they offer to attract attendees," he said. "One way to do that is to work together with two or more brands as sponsors of the same event.

"That can provide a larger budget and create the opportunity to learn about more products of interest for the consumer."

### Welcome to Miami

Given the success of Art Basel Miami, established in 2002, the art fair has witnessed the Floridian city transition into a true luxury hub. The influx of interest in Miami as a city of wealth and possibility for high-end brands has resulted in luxury houses flocking to the city in droves to establish bricks-and-mortar outposts in art-involved neighborhoods such as the Design District.

Many of the brands that opened boutiques in the Design District have had stores elsewhere in Miami, such as in the Bal Harbour shopping center and elsewhere in the city, but being near the epicenter of Art Basel has presented houses with opportunities. Being in the right place at the right time has allowed brands to become a part of the Art Basel conversation in one way or another.

For example, Swiss watchmaker Hublot opened its Design District boutique right as Art Basel 2014 kicked off. To celebrate the store opening and the start of the fair, Hublot created an artist partnered commemorative watch.

This year, the Hublot Loves Art effort paired the watchmaker with Franco-Venezuelan artist Carlos Cruz-Diez, known for his kinetic-optic art. For his collaboration with Hublot, Mr. Cruz-Diez adapted his "Chromointerference (1964)" for three timepieces. Each of the watches have colored lines that have been printed on the dials, and superimposed over these designs is a mobile black frame that moves every minute ([see story](#)).



*Carlos Cruz-Diez timepiece for Hublot*

Italian fashion brand Fendi also just recently opened a Design District boutique ([see story](#)), but instead of creating a commemorative piece for the occasion, the label is using its storefront as the backdrop for a gallery. Within the store, Fendi is paying homage to the surrounding neighborhood with artwork by designers Maria Pergay, Thierry Lemaire and Marc Newson.

Similarly, Spanish leather goods maker Loewe is staging a temporary exhibit within its Design District boutique with a collection of works curated by brand creative director Jonathan Anderson. For "Chance Encounters," Mr. Anderson sought out pieces that evoke "the disruptive beauty of the chance encounter."

Pieces on view were created by four historical and contemporary British artists, an ode to Mr. Anderson's own heritage, and include: Anthea Hamilton, Paul Nash, Lucie Rie and Rose Wylie. While the exhibit will be on display from Dec. 2 through Jan. 17, Loewe has also shared pieces from Chance Encounters on its social accounts to further the project's exposure.

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PAUL NASH.From the series 'A Private World'.1931-1946.CHANCE ENCOUNTERS.

#LOEWEmaterials#LOEWEFoundation

Posted by [LOEWE](#) on [Tuesday, December 1, 2015](#)

For brands not typically associated with art the way the fashion and jewelry are, such as automakers, a sponsorship role is common.

For Germany's BMW, a primary sponsor of Art Basel Miami, this entails a number of aspects, including BMW Art Journey, a program supporting emerging talent through travel and the automaker's Art Cars effort that is now in its 40th year ([see story](#)).

In addition to its Art Cars display, BMW will also provide Art Basel with shuttles using its new 7 Series models.

Serving as a purveyor of the arts is common. For example, British automaker Rolls-Royce has worked with filmmaker Isaac Julien on a commissioned film, in partnership with the National YoungArts Foundation. Mr. Julien will present his film "Stones Against Diamonds (Ice Cave)" at Art Basel Miami.



*Still from Isaac Julien's video installation for Art Basel Miami Beach*

Events are the most common way for luxury brands to place themselves within the Art Basel social calendar. Mandarin Oriental, Miami is preparing for the influx of affluent art lovers set to attend the city's annual Art Basel Miami Beach fair.

To take advantage of the interest in art during the course of the three-day event, Mandarin Oriental has partnered with Peruvian gallery Morbo to give its guests an Art Basel exclusive experience. Those who book at Mandarin Oriental Miami will have the opportunity to enjoy the special exhibit of contemporary art title "Pure Abstraction" ([see story](#)).

#### Travel in style

Due to the concentration of wealth during an event such as Art Basel Miami Beach, efforts that exceed expectations become the norm.

Take ridesharing app Uber, for example, the popular car service is swapping out its usual models for something much more glitzy for the course of Art Basel. Miami traffic doubles when Art Basel is in session, making car service a nightmare, but Uber's solution offers attendees a better, quicker option to navigate the fair's parties and exhibits.

For the program Uber has partnered with beer brand Stella Artois on UberBOAT, which already operates in Istanbul, and works just as it would if a rider ordered a car. For a flat rate of \$35, an UberLUX car will bring attendees to a dock where they will board a yacht, with a six person max capacity.

Taking UberBOAT for a test run in Miami is sensible as the city has plans to further itself as an affluent haven.

Miami is continuing its development to cater to affluent residents and guests with the upcoming opening of the Deep Harbour at Island Gardens marina. Set to open in December, the marina will help Miami to position itself as the newest super yachting capital in the world ([see story](#)).

The draw to Miami is understandable for brands that target affluent consumers.

"Art Basel is an effective and efficient way to reach a very affluent audience of consumers that visit Art Basel Miami from all over the world, especially Latin America and Europe," Mr. Kurtz said.

#### Final Take

*Jen King, lead reporter on Luxury Daily, New York*