

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Luxury brands focus on hospitality for Art Basel Hong Kong

March 28, 2019



BMW's first Art Car will be on display during Art Basel. Image courtesy of BMW

By SARAH JONES

Audemars Piguet and Prada are among the luxury brands connecting with consumers over art during the Hong Kong edition of Art Basel.

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Being held from March 29 to 31, Art Basel Hong Kong attracts tens of thousands of art lovers to the city for exhibitions from 242 global galleries, conversations and events. As the art crowd flocks to Hong Kong, luxury brands are staging installations, lounges and more as they seek to align themselves with experiences and culture.

"Art Basel has become a brand in itself that attracts a very interesting audience with financial muscles," said Pontus Silfverstolpe, cofounder of **Barneby's**, Stockholm, Sweden.

"Art has always served as a social lubricant," he said. "As well as art has always been a natural element for the luxury industry since it attracts both money, creativity and brilliant minds."

Hong Kong hosts

The Peninsula is one of two hotel partners for the art fair. Marking the event, the hospitality group is launching Art in Resonance, a global art program.

Art in Resonance kicked off in Hong Kong with a gala on March 26, and an in-property installation will be up in Hong Kong from now until June 21. On display are pieces from artists Janet Echelman, Timothy Paul Myers and Ivn Navarro, which are featured throughout the forecourt and lobby.

Peninsula's Art in Resonance program will travel the globe

Peninsula also worked with Zhi-gang Lu, who teamed with Minax and Minaxdo to create an architectural-driven private dining experience. The resulting egg-shaped structure allows consumers to take in a quieter teahouse-inspired meal, escaping the bustle of the city.

Following Hong Kong, Art in Resonance will make its way to Paris this fall with more artist creations.

Audemars Piguet is also focusing on hospitality with a VIP lounge at the fair, for which it is an associate partner. The watchmaker commissioned artist Fernando Mastrangelo to create a booth.

Mr. Mastrangelo took inspiration from Audemars Piguet's home in the Valle de Joux and seeks to transport visitors to Switzerland. Included are a desk reminiscent of the area's caves and a room where guests can experience the feeling of a sun setting.

Audemars Piguet is partnering with Fernando Mastrangelo for Art Basel

La Prairie will also be on-site at the fair in the Collectors Lounge. According to the *South China Morning Post*, the beauty brand is showcasing three pieces from artist Chul Hyun Ahn that focus on light.

This is meant to translate the brand's recently launched White Caviar Illuminating Pearl Infusion and White Caviar Crme Extraordinaire into art, playing into the products' luminosity.

At Art Basel, host partner Ruinart will be highlighting its art collaboration for 2019. This year, the LVMH-owned Champagne house is exploring the connection between nature and humans in wine production.

For its annual art project, Ruinart has tapped Brazilian visual artist Vik Muniz, whose work focuses on the relationship that people have with memory. Mr. Muniz's work during his time with Ruinart aimed to capture the flow of its Champagnes, examining what often goes unnoticed through photography ([see story](#)).

BMW is also returning as a partner for the event. Along with providing a shuttle service, the automaker will be exhibiting the first BMW Art Car by Alexander Calder from the 1970s at its branded lounge.

As part of the brand's ongoing BMW Art Journey in collaboration with Art Basel, the latest recipient Zac Langdon-Pole will be on-hand to discuss and document his experience. The artist will also participate in a panel discussion at the show.

During Art Basel, BMW's jury will decide on the next awardee.

BMW and global art platform Artsy are also timing the launch of a new mobile city guide to Art Basel.

The Artsy mobile application now includes personalized city guides that encourage users to explore nearby gallery exhibitions, art fairs and museum shows ([see story](#)).

"Art Basel Hong Kong has set an enviable standard which is most attractive to luxury brands' desire for affiliation," said Rebecca Miller, founder/CEO of [Miller & Company](#), New York.

"Luxury brands understand the importance of collaboration, not only from a position of market share but from a standpoint of substance," she said. "They can authentically demonstrate their understanding of the consumer and their needs, spoken or not, by providing enriched opportunities to learn in a somewhat oblique experiential manner."

Art appeal

Outside of Art Basel's official partners, luxury brands are getting in on the action.

Italian fashion house Prada is continuing to engage consumers during Art Basel with the launch of a private club during the Hong Kong edition of the fair.

The second iteration of Prada Mode will see the brand host a space that functions as an eatery, lounge, gallery and event space. This follows the debut Prada Mode experience that kicked off at Art Basel Miami in December ([see story](#)).



[View this post on Instagram](#)

#Prada Mode Hong Kong interacts with the city, offering members unique experiences with a focus on contemporary culture at large and local. Discover more via link in bio. #PradaModeHK #ArtBaselHongKong

A post shared by Prada (@prada) on Mar 26, 2019 at 8:11pm PDT

Instagram post from Prada

"The fair, through hospitality or consumer-facing events, provides a rich platform from which brands may expand upon their values in support of artisans in all fields," Ms. Miller said. "They work from a perspective of shared passions for quality and innovation at all price-points, drawing in both HNW consumers and those who intend and or are just beginning to live a life of quality.

"Consumers who share these values will naturally be drawn to the brand - a pull or attraction, not a push or unwelcome approach for a sale," she said. "In addition, it allows a brand the perfect platform, originally established and proven in Basel, to effectively demonstrate depth and breadth in many facets."

Hugo Boss also announced the shortlist for its Hugo Boss Asia Art award on March 27 at Art Basel. Presented in partnership with the Rockbund Art Museum in Shanghai, the award aims to both support young artists and put them on a global stage.

A focus on younger luxury consumers is fitting, as they make up a large portion of the art market in Asia.

According to the third annual Art Basel and UBS Global Art Market Report, millennials made up nearly half of the high-spenders in the market. The global art market has grown nearly 10 percent in the last decade, reaching an estimated value of \$67.4 billion in 2018.

Asian markets saw the highest participation levels from millennial art collectors. Millennials accounted for 46 percent of art buyers in Singapore and 39 percent in Hong Kong ([see story](#)).

Art fairs have a shareability that drives more attention for participating brands.

"The art fair has a unique combination of the physical and the artistic, and sometimes philosophical, and the technological and very modern, which reflects our time," Barnebys' Mr. Silfverstolpe said.

"There is rarely an audience that use social media as much as on art events to pass on their experience," he said. "Which means that all companies and faces who are associated with it go on 'free ride.'"

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