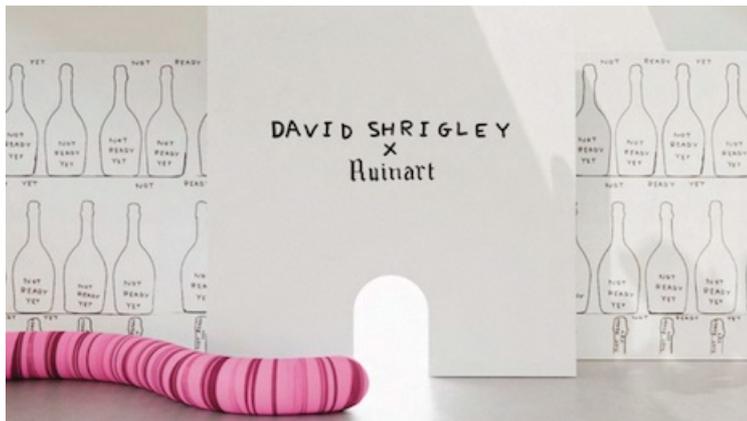


ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

## Luxury flocks to Miami for artistic brand activations

December 2, 2021



Ruinart is one of several luxury brands hosting events at Art Basel Miami Beach. Image credit: Ruinart

By SARAH RAMIREZ

Art Basel is making a triumphant return to Miami Beach after last year's canceled events, and luxury brands are following suit with the hopes of engaging with creative-minded affluents.

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Art Basel Miami Beach is one of several design- and art-oriented events recently taking place in South Florida, where more relaxed COVID-19 restrictions will allow brands to get close with consumers and collectors. The convergence of art and luxury at this year's events has attracted brands including eBay, BMW, Lexus, Ruinart and Wheels Up.

"As Art Basel Miami returns to South Florida after a year hiatus the fair seems to have an inspired sense of invigoration," said Tirath Kamdar, general manager of luxury at eBay, San Francisco.

"Like eBay, participants of all types seem to share an even stronger passion for the community than ever before, in celebration and support of the ever-growing art and design space," he said.

"eBay is always exploring new ways to partner to enhance the experience for all users, and as the premier event that adjoins artists, gallerists and collectors, we are thrilled to activate during this year's Art Basel Miami."

Welcome (back) to Miami

After many of Miami's top art events were scaled down or canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, widespread vaccination availability has allowed these festivities to return in a more traditional manner.

Art Miami began on Nov. 30, running through Dec. 5, while Design Miami takes place from Dec. 1 through Dec. 5 and Art Basel Miami Beach is from Dec. 2 to Dec. 4. Preview events and smaller fairs have also been taking place in recent days and weeks, further building anticipation.

For Miami Art Basel, Balmain has joined forces with @red to present an ephemeral art installation from @saype\_artiste. The monumental fresco entitled "(All of Us)" will be unveiled today, marking World AIDS Day in support of @red's fight against pandemics. #BALMAINxRED

[pic.twitter.com/mzeAZqoqzm](https://pic.twitter.com/mzeAZqoqzm)

Balmain (@Balmain) [December 1, 2021](#)

*Luxury brands across sectors are hosting installations in Miami for various art and design festivals*

LVMH-owned Champagne house Ruinart was among the brands hosting early Art Basel celebrations.

Ruinart, which often collaborates with artists on creative projects, hosted a dinner at the Miami Beach Botanical Garden with British artist David Shrigley and chef Flynn McGarry on Nov. 30.

Mr. Shrigley recent project "Unconventional Bubbles" (Bulles Singulieres) a collection of 36 drawings and acrylics, three neons, two ceramics and one door inspired by the Champagne creation process ([see story](#)) served as inspiration for the culinary event.

"Art is in the house's very nature," said Frdric Dufour, president at [Ruinart](#), in a statement. "We are continuing our commitment to art by supporting major contemporary art fairs and giving carte blanche to an artist each year."

Ruinart is also exhibiting a selection of Mr. Shrigley's pieces in Miami, as well as launching two [digital experiences](#) to make art more accessible.

As can be expected, online art marketplace [Artsy](#) will have a strong presence at Art Basel and Miami Art Week.

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A post shared by Artsy (@artsy)

*Artsy at Art Basel Miami Beach*

Through Dec. 5, the platform is hosting an in-person exhibition featuring the emerging artists on the 2021 edition of the Artsy Vanguard. On Dec. 2, Artsy is also hosting an invite-only contemporary art auction benefitting Planned Parenthood at the Nautilus Hotel.

Artsy has also partnered with American Express to sponsor Platinum Studio, a curated beach pop-up at the Edition Hotel Miami Beach with programming and another emerging artists exhibit.

Other high-end hospitality brands are also turning to activations to engage Art Basel attendees.



*BMW is the official automotive partner of Art Basel Miami Beach. Image credit: BMW*

Hospitality group **SLS Hotels & Residences** is hosting a series of events at its South Beach and Brickell properties, including a "Life in Style Design Series" panel with U.S. automaker Lincoln. **The Ritz-Carlton South Beach** tapped chef Jos Andrs and artist Serge Attukwei Clottey for a special collaboration as part of the festivities.

Private aviation firm **Wheels Up** has partnered with a local landmark, **The Bath Club**, for its "Wheels Up Celebrates Art" programming. The member's only club, Miami's oldest, will be the site for Wheels Up client dinners and cocktail parties.

Online marketplace eBay and GBK Brand Bar partnered on a luxury lounge at Istituto Marangoni in the Miami Design District.

As part of eBay's Art Basel experience, artists James Peter Henry and Jason Perez applied their unique creative techniques to luxury items from eBay's inventory live on-site during a kickoff event. These will be sold in an **online auction**, closing on Dec. 7, that benefits the Miami Fashion Foundation.

"For eBay, it was important that we highlight our unrivaled inventory in an engaging way that invites visitors to not only experience, but interact with our brand," Mr. Kamdar said. "Partnering with artists James Peter Henry and Jason Perez on a visual art exhibition through the lens of luxury by integrating product from our platform was an exciting way to celebrate our inaugural presence at the fair."

#### Artistic automakers

Luxury automakers have also descended on Miami to showoff unique vehicle designs.

Toyota Corp.'s **Lexus** presented an installation with to-scale, three-dimensional steel sculpture of the LF-Z Electrified Concept car. The design team consisted of faculty and students from the University of Miami School of Architecture.

German automaker **BMW** also focused on electrification for its Art Basel presentation, unveiling the BMW Concept XM. The series production model will be manufactured starting in late 2022 and will be available as a plug-in hybrid, the automaker's first electrified high-performance vehicle.

On Dec. 1, German automaker **Mercedes-Benz** revealed Project Maybach, an electric concept car created in collaboration with the late Virgil Abloh, at Miami's Rubell Museum. In a nod to Mr. Abloh's work towards inclusivity, the first hour was open exclusively to local design students in place of a press event ([see story](#)).

The Project Maybach reveal comes the day after Louis Vuitton hosted a runway presentation of Mr. Abloh's spring/summer 2022 collection in the city.

With an overwhelming slate of events, Art Basel Miami Beach offers a unique opportunity for luxury brands.

"Art Basel Miami is known for pushing boundaries through artist-led initiatives in the realm of not only contemporary art, but culinary art, performing art, fashion and beyond," said eBay's Mr. Kamdar. "[Standing out] is all about how a luxury brand brings its unique inventory to life."