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## The Five Best Booths at the June Art Fair, Basel's Smallest and Most Refreshing Fair

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The June Art Fair.  
SHANTI ESCALANTE-DE MATTEI/ARTNEWS

A five-minute walk from the Messeplatz, where Basel and Liste take place, is the June Art Fair. A smaller fair hosting just 19 galleries, June Art Fair represents enterprises that are no longer emerging but are perhaps not established enough or big enough to afford participating in Art Basel.

The small selection is partly due to the space: galleries at June show their artists' works in an underground bunker initially developed for nuclear fallout. It's a far cry from the antiseptic convention halls. In this context, one feels they can give their full attention to the art on view.

Back upstairs from the bunker are special projects like "I was born to just hang out" by DARP, an artistic and alternative living collective from Derbyshire whose installation of seated wooden figures in T-shirts invites audiences to chill for a moment. A selection of NFTs curated by Jared Madere was also on view as part of June Art Fair's crypto-art initiative Juneart.io. Flashing by on a TV monitor overlooking the kitchen garden outside the bunker was a surprising range of work Wretched Worm, who came up in the net-art movement; abstract painters like Joanne Robertson and Jake Cruzen; and more.

Below, *ARTnews* has put together a selection of the five best booths at June Art Fair.

## Daya Cahen at Stigter van Doesburg



Photo : Shanti Escalante/ARTnews

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In 2007, Dutch artist Daya Cahen infiltrated a summer recruiting camp for the Russian youth movement Nashi, which has been described as a kind of Putin-centered personality cult. During her time there, Cahen, whose works often focus on political messaging and conditioning, made a short film in which she interviewed Nashi followers and recorded clips of leaders of the camp.

One such leader, upon meeting the recruits, outlines the way of life in the camp and their expectations for how the recruits should behave. Nashi would be a place of hard work, and drinking was not tolerated. “Do not walk around looking sad or moody,” one unnamed leader remarks. “If you are a beautiful girl, prepare to be kissed.”

Young recruits talk about patrolling the city with the police as well as patrolling the camp itself. Nashi followers would eventually be linked with terrorizing Russian citizens who spoke out against Putin. Due to internal conflict, the group dissolved in 2013.

Cahen’s film plays on two screens that both showing the same film, with one on a slight lag. The effect is a quiet disjointedness that matches the split between the Nashi recruits’ innocent hopes and the violent reality of the cult.

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### **Oscar Abraham Pabón and Vytautas Kumza at Martin van Zomeren**





Photo : Shanti Escalante/ARTnews

Dealer Martin van Zomeren paired together two complementary artists: Oscar Abraham Pabón and Vytautas Kumza. Pabón's sculptures aim to undo objects and display their inner workings, a perhaps unsurprising urge, considering that he also has a background in architecture. In one work, Pabón dissected his own work suit and splayed it against the wall. In another, he took an old chair and disassembled so that it would lie flat. These interventions don't seem violent at all. Rather, they read as if the objects had found a newer, truer shape.

Kumza, a photographer who van Zomeren also described as a sculptor, presented works that aimed to decontextualize everyday objects. One picture shows a lock being penetrated with a drill bit, while another displays a lamp covered with feathers, with two tendrils of blonde hair sprouting from the photo.

## Tobias Bradford at Fabian Lang





Photo : Shanti Escalante/ARTnews

On a stage, a dead duck sings while an amputated arm scatters its fingers over a keyboard. A suspended drum plays itself, and a wooden structure wearing a pair of rubber boots jerks at an accordion. This all features in *Stagefright*, which artist Tobias Bradford made in 2021 along with other disturbing sculptures that move on their own accord and are also on view. (In another, a leg kicks around the floor, and an arm emerges from a post, jittering and holding a cup of coffee.) It's difficult not to be a little scared of these volatile objects, which are not quite alive yet appear to be.

## Petra Cortright at Foxy Production



Photo : Shanti Escalante/ARTnews

Petra Cortright has long been fascinated by the softwares and platforms that make up our digital lives. Continuing that interest is three new paintings by Cortright, each based on a photograph of flowers that she took and then manipulated with Photoshop. In the current context, when NFTs and generative art are dominating conversations, one is tempted to assume that the images were made using artificial intelligence. By contrast, going about this with Photoshop almost seems old school. But Cortright has always focused on the tools everybody uses—YouTube, for example, or editing programs—and these works at Foxy Production’s booth hold a special charm because of that.

## Yannic Joray at Sentiment



Photo : Shanti Escalante-De Mattei/ARTnews

Yannic Joray is captivated by the technologies that are created by specific political moments in history. On view at Sentiment’s booth are a set of two antennas that Joray made, replicas of ones used to broadcast Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty from West Germany to the ears of Soviet citizens. Radio Liberty is a U.S.-funded organization, and during the Cold War, the station delivered anti-Communist propaganda across the Iron

Curtain. Next to these antennas are large plaster sculptures of bisected teeth. Inside, they display a tiny mechanism that the CIA developed and implanted in people's teeth without their knowing. Allegedly, the people who had these receptors put in started hearing voices, causing them to think they were mad. These works evoke a pattern of media manipulation, distrust, and conspiracy that have mutated beyond anyone's control.



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