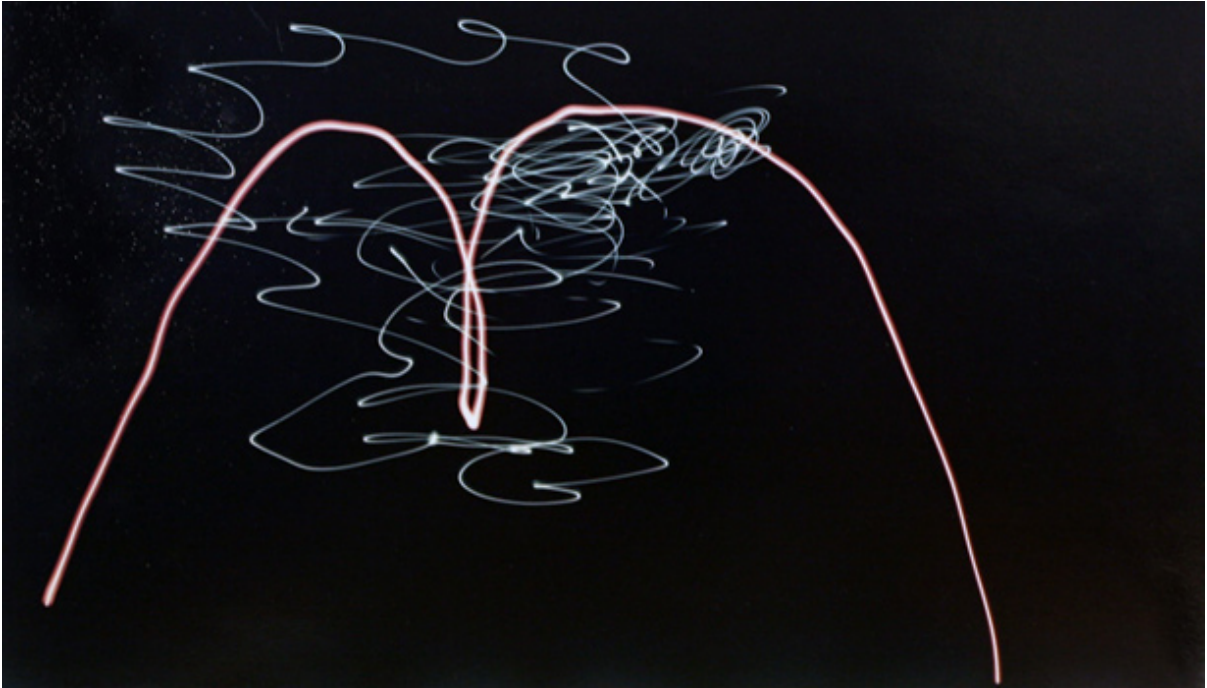


# The Best Booths at Art Basel 2011



Courtesy Bruce Silverstein Gallery, New York

Harry Callahan's "Light Patterns, Detroit" is at Bruce Silverstein's booth at Art Basel.

**By Benjamin Genocchio**

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BASEL—Despite trumpeting a new globalism with first-time gallery inclusions from Lebanon, Thailand, and Hungary, Art Basel remains a desperately parochial European affair with a smattering of top American and English dealers. Be that as it may, this is still by far the best fair in the world when it comes to the quality of the artwork for sale. One great booth follows another, making a best-and-worst-booths list decidedly one-sided. So here goes my rapid-fire list of things, wonderful and weird, gleaned from the opening day of the fair.

Right out of the gate, **Galerie m Bochum's** stand at the entrance proves once again that **Richard Serra's** arced steel sculptures take on greater monumentality when exhibited in confined spaces. "Siamese" (1988) fills the entire booth. Sometimes selling one work by a master at a hefty price can be easier than selling lots of little things, but it is a risky business proposition. Anything short of

success means that the gallery is out of pocket for expenses.

**Hauser & Wirth** and **L&M Arts** both have terrific booths. With money, you could buy pretty much any of their works on display and go away happy. The **Jeff Koons** sculpture at L&M, "Walrus Seal Trash Cans" (2003-2009), is a masterpiece of comic kitsch, not to mention among the most expensive objects here, along with the \$80 million **Warhol** at **Galerie Bruno Bischofberger**. Both L&M and Hauser & Wirth also have excellent **Paul McCarthy** sculptures for sale, either of which would make a superbly unsettling addition to any home.

Nearby **Bernard Jacobson Gallery** blows away much of the competition with choice examples of **Robert Motherwell's** works on paper — he doesn't have merely one or two, but a whole room of them. Sticking to booths oriented towards single-artist displays, **Michael Werner** has on hand several desirable **Sigmar Polke** works, in addition to pieces by modern masters. **Helly Nahmad** also has first-rate works by **Miro**, **Braque**, **Morandi**, and more.

Looking for something different? **Pier Paolo Calzolari** is for me among the fair's hidden treasures, with a single piece at the **Pace Gallery** and two more upstairs at **Marianne Boesky**. This Italian artist associated with Arte Povera frequently employed refrigeration components in sculptures that look and feel as fresh and lively today as when they were made 40 years ago. They speak to an ongoing rethinking of the language and materials of art.

Other finds include a surrealistic **Jackson Pollock** mosaic from 1938-41 at **Washburn Gallery**, priced conservatively at \$3 million, and a fabulous **Joan Mitchell** painting at **Kukje/Tina Kim Gallery**, priced at \$4.7 million. More affordable, but equally collectible, are **Jaume Plensa's** painted stainless-steel semi-figurative sculptures at **Galerie Lelong** and a whole range of things at **Galleria Continua**, increasingly one of the world's most dynamic galleries.

**Evan Penny's** creepy, hyperrealist sculptural self-portrait at **Sperone Westwater** is among the most immediately eye-catching works here — it is so lifelike it stops you in your tracks. So, too, for different reasons, does the spotlight on **Francis Bacon** at a roomy, elegant **Marlborough Gallery** booth, where a triptych by the artist is a serious contender for best in show. The gallery is considering any and all offers for it, I was told, with no set price, though the figure of sixty million was mentioned.

The late **Sylvia Sleigh**, at **Freymond-Guth**, gets my vote for new 20th-century master to watch, though I am not sure she is represented here by her best work. Other things to look out for are a zany **Sol LeWitt** wall drawing made of polystyrene at **Massimo De Carlo**, **Kurt Schwitters** collages at **Andrea Rosen** (where did she get them?), a lovely light-patterned dye-transfer photograph by **Harry Callahan** at **Bruce Silverstein**, and a **Hans Arp** bronze at **Mitchell-Innes & Nash**.

There is so much to like at this fair that happily it is hard to single out anything terrible. The vetting committee did a solid job in keeping out the riffraff — despite criticism in the press. But limiting this fair to mostly European and American dealers doesn't reflect the increasingly global art world we inhabit. How the organizers deal with this challenge — and opportunity — going forward will define the relevance and importance of the fair in years to come.