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Paris Challenges London's Art Crown With Art Basel Paris 2025 Edition At Grand Palais

Fresh from the frenzy of Frieze Week London, the art world descends on Paris as Art Basel brings 206 leading galleries to the historic Grand Palais. Dominant themes of art inspired by animals and nature include Murakami's Octopus.

By **Lee Sharrock**, Contributor. © My mission is to spotlight great art and cultu... ▼

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Hot on the heels of London's whirlwind Frieze Week, the international art world has shifted its gaze to Paris, where Art Basel Paris 2025 opens with striking confidence at the Grand Palais. The fair cements the city's growing dominance in the global art circuit, a kind of cultural sparring match between Paris and London, reminiscent of the famous Basquiat–Warhol boxing exhibition image.

This year's edition gathers 206 top international galleries, including 180 in the main Galleries sector and nearly one-third based in Paris, spotlighting both the fair's global reach and the enduring vitality of the Parisian gallery scene. A newly expanded Emergence section takes over the nave galleries with 16 solo presentations by rising artists, while the Premise section returns with nine curated booths featuring historical works, some predating 1900, in a dynamic blend of past, present, and the pulse of art's future.

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This is the second edition of Art Basel Paris in the Grand Palais, and there are a significant number of newcomers and a strong Parisian presence. I asked the fair's outgoing director Clément Delépine how he approached the curation to encourage international diversity while maintaining the fair's deep connection to Paris's own creative ecosystem:

Clément Delépine, Director Art Basel Paris: "What defines Art Basel Paris, above all, is dialogue—between the local and the global, between heritage and experimentation, between Paris and the wider world. From the outset, our ambition has been to shape a fair that is deeply rooted in the city's creative DNA while reflecting the extraordinary diversity of today's art world. This year, we're thrilled to welcome new voices such as Voloshyn Gallery from Kyiv and Château Shatto from Los Angeles, alongside long-time Art Basel exhibitors like Paula Cooper, Xavier Hufkens, and Lisson. That mix—of established figures and fresh perspectives, of proximity and distance—creates a certain dynamism that is essential. It's what keeps Art Basel Paris alive and forward-looking, echoing the avant-garde spirit that has always defined this city."



Art Basel Paris 2025
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Both the Art Basel Paris public program—presented at nine of Paris’s most iconic landmarks with monumental sculptures—and the fair in the Grand Palais, show a strong presence of art inspired by animals and birds, along with much impressive textiles and ceramics.

Highlights of the public art program include Alex Da Corte’s huge inflatable Kermit the Frog at Place Vendôme, Leiko Ikemura’s vast Usagi Rabbit sculpture by the Grand Palais, Julius von Bismarck at the Petit Palais, Nate Lowman at Musée national Eugène-Delacroix, and a suite of sculptures on avenue Winston-Churchill. The public sculpture program is executed in collaboration with Miu Miu, and also features *30 Blizzards*, a project by Helen Marten activated in the Palais d’Iéna.

Continuing the animal theme inside the Grand Palais is Takashi Murakami’s vast **Octopus inflatable**—a collaboration with Louis Vuitton—which appears at the top of the grand staircase, its colourful tentacles reaching towards the ornate banisters.

Noticeable themes that run through the fair include ceramics, textiles, anime and artists inspired by animals and nature. Maybe this trend of animals, nature and textiles in art is a result of humanity's need for an escape from tech and feel calmed and reassured by natural, handmade objects, combined with a need to nurture the natural world and let it nurture us, especially in such troubled times for the planet. Here are some of my highlights: