

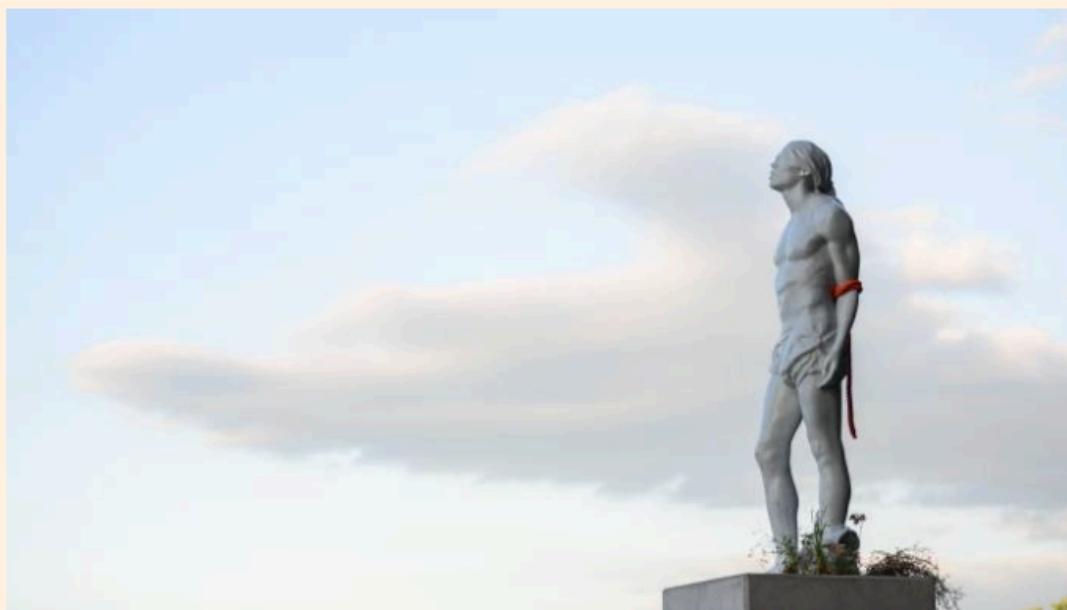
LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

Sutherland, Julia . Highlights from Art Basel Parcours 2017 Natural history and classical echoes around the city
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Highlights from Art Basel Parcours 2017

Natural history and classical echoes around the city



Reza Aramesh's 'Site of the Fall: Study of the Renaissance Garden' (2016-17) © Leila Heller Gallery

When a giant art fair such as Art Basel breaks out of its enclosure, it doesn't do things by halves. Parcours, which scatters works around the town in the open, in choice courtyards and buildings, boasts no fewer than 22 substantial pieces.

Curator Samuel Leuenberger has aimed for the widest range of media, including a sound installation (artist: Cally Spooner); Christodoulos Panayiotou handing out jewellery for visitors to wear; a light work by Pedro Cabrita Reis; and Rirkrit Tiravanija's giant slab of neon-lit words.

Only slightly more conventionally, there's animation and sound (by Nathalie Djurberg and Hans Berg) and a ["library" with film and sound works by Wu Tsang](#) in an old-fashioned private club.

Everything culminates in Parcours Night, on Saturday, with — of course — multiple performances.

LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

Two striking contributions both echo the Renaissance. Iranian artist Reza Aramesh's "Site of the Fall: Study of the Renaissance Garden" (2016-17) is three anguished marble figures whose impact partly depends on their sitings: one is in front of Basel's courts of justice, one surveys the stately Rhine, a third pits itself against the classics beside the Museum of Antiquities, thus invoking civil society, commerce, culture. Especially in the hands of a Middle Eastern artist, the pieces resonate as an eloquent statement about the western classical tradition and its ability — or lack of it — to evoke human feeling.

The classics have powerful reverberations, too, in Belgian artist Berlinde De Bruyckere's work. De Bruyckere has a thing about deer. "My Deer, 2011-2013", sited in front of the Natural History Museum, is a pitiable headless corpse cast in iron and laid on a table top as if just waiting for a Flemish Renaissance artist to paint it — or Ovid to write about it.

Natural history is a prevalent theme elsewhere. Ai Weiwei's enormous "Iron Tree" (2016) is echoed by Markus Selg's tapestry "Arcadia" (2017) and Erika Verzutti's cast bronze banana bunches, "Centipede" (2017), while "Footnote to a Fountain" (2017) by Sophie Nys celebrates the city's urban water sources.

It makes for rewarding walking.

To Sunday, artbasel.com/basel

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