

Morris, Jane, "The name's Charrière, Julian Charrière," *The Art Newspaper*, Art Basel in Basel Daily Edition, June 14, 2017.



## THE ART NEWSPAPER

Download our FREE daily app



# THE ART NEWSPAPER

Art Basel: 14/06/2017

### Fairy tale with a twist

Basel-based architects Herzog & de Meuron and artist Ai Weiwei put a 21st-century spin on the Hansel & Gretel tale for their new installation in New York  
[Page 4 >>](#)



### Expert Eye

From all-year Christmas trees to salvaged fragments of homes, Unlimited at Art Basel, curated by Gianni Jetzer, is thinking big  
[Pages 14-15 >>](#)

### An artists' curator

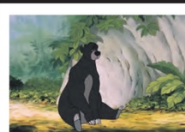
Artist Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster and Swiss curator Hans Ulrich Obrist have a love-in with Kasper König – the man behind Münster's Skulptur Projekte  
[Pages 9-10 >>](#)

### Julian Charrière

The Swiss artist on travelling, collaborations, the impact the digital age has on the landscape and why he consistently leaves his comfort zone  
[Pages 16-18 >>](#)



Andrea Bowers's *A Call to Arms: Building a Fem Army (2017)* reimagines political images from the past



David Claerbout has reworked the *Jungle Book*

### Baloo finds a good home

David Claerbout's reworking of Disney's *Jungle Book* has found a home in the US. The joint deal was struck by Sean Kelly and Esther Schipper, the Belgian artist's gallerists. The video features Baloo the bear and co without singing or slapstick. The animals behave as if in a real jungle. The result is bitersweet: a paradise lost. An edition of *The pure necessity (2016)* sold on the opening day of Unlimited on Monday. J.P.

### Sottsass cabinet sells

Rome's Galleria Giustini/Stagetti, showing in Design Miami/Basel, has sold a unique Tower Cabinet by Ettore Sottsass to a US collector, who will loan it to New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art for a survey of the designer, opening in July. The piece was made in the early 1960s for Sottsass's friend and colleague at Olivetti, the engineer Mario Tchou. Sottsass once wrote about the many uses for the cabinet, such as keeping "newspaper cuttings describing how to remove pineapple stains from the tablecloth". H.S.

## Power of pride

### Artists champion LGBT causes at Art Basel

Artists at Art Basel are championing gender-identity causes and transgender rights after thousands took to the streets to celebrate the LGBT community in cities such as Los Angeles, where an event last weekend turned into a protest against the policies of US President Donald Trump. "We need this discussion in the current climate," says Kathleen Bühler, a curator at the Kunstmuseum Bern, who is moderating an Art Basel talk on Friday called Fluidity of Identity.

Across Basel, in the former home of the fashion designer Fred Spillmann – one of the city's first openly gay figures – the transgender artist Wu Tsang has created a piece for the fair's Parcours programme. The secret life of things is open (2014-17) was made in collaboration with the poet and theorist Fred Moten and culminates on Saturday in a performance with the trans artist boychild.

The curator of Parcours, Samuel Leutenberger, says that Tsang addresses issues "that are so important to us", such as gender, class and race. "She has a wonderful way of engaging people through language and dance."

Transgender empowerment is the subject of a stand-out work in the Unlimited sector by the artist Andrea Bowers. *A Call to Arms: Building a Fem Army (2017)* reimagines three political illustrations from the 1970s and 1980s. The symbol of the transgender movement is emblazoned on the central figure's T-shirt. "Andrea expands her feminist call to arms to transgender people, which is an interesting facet of this fascinating work," says Unlimited curator Gianni Jetzer.

In a show held last year at New York's Andrew Krays gallery, Bowers showed photographs of three US

Continued on p4 >>



Underwater Pavilions (2017) was filmed off the coast of Los Angeles

### Maldives-bound: Aitken's pavilions

Los Angeles-based Doug Aitken, who is in Basel this week, tells us that his Underwater Pavilions are destined for an island in the Maldives. Because the South Asian archipelago has around 1,000 coral islands, selecting the best one is his new challenge. Visitors to Unlimited can get a sense of the sculptures in a film called Underwater Pavilions (2017), produced by the artist in collaboration with the ocean conservation organisation Parley for the Oceans. It was filmed when the pavilions were moored off the coast of Los Angeles in late 2016. The atmospheric film, which shows the geometric, mirrored sculptures attracting the curiosity of a passing seal as well as numerous fish, is being presented by his galleries Regen Projects, Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Victoria Miro and 303 Gallery. "One of the most liberating moments for me was when we made the Underwater Pavilions and we started to see the sea life growing on them and becoming a living ecosystem," Aitken said. J.P.

### Market report

# 20%

The percentage of millennial art collectors who employ consultants, according to the latest US Trust Insights on Wealth and Worth annual survey

FOR MORE, SEE PAGE 2 >>

U. ALLEMANDI & CO. PUBLISHING LTD

TURIN / LONDON / NEW YORK / PARIS / ATHENS / MOSCOW / BEIJING



Kukje Gallery and Tina Kim Gallery proudly present

## Park Chan-kyong Citizen's Forest

ART BASEL UNLIMITED 15-18 JUNE 2017

## INTERVIEW

Artist

The name's Charrière,  
Julian Charrière

The artist explored cooking before choosing his current occupation, which has arguably taken him in more daring directions, such as scuba-diving at the Bikini Atoll (below) for his First Light body of work



The Swiss artist who brings a close-up view of Chernobyl to Art Basel's Unlimited is not afraid to leave his comfort zone.

By Jane Morris

**T**owers of greyish-beige salt rise in hexagonal towers, a tribute perhaps to a utopian but misguided Modernist architect. At their base, puddles of an indeterminate liquid fill triangular pastel-coloured pans. Nearby are strangely pockmarked, black-and-white photographs of concrete structures abandoned on the steppe. Elsewhere, bricks made of a crumbling, white substance gradually ooze a thickish moisture into the vitrine that surrounds them.

These are works by the young Swiss artist Julian Charrière. They were on show at his first solo exhibition in London at the not-for-profit Parasol Unit gallery at the beginning of 2016 and since then his profile has continued to rise. He was one of only three artists aged 30 or under (he was born in 1987) to be selected by Christine Macel for her Viva Arte Viva exhibition at the Venice Biennale (until 26 November). There he is showing a new version of his salt towers, Future Fossil Spaces (2017), this time with "windows" inserted in the side walls. The liquid stored in solution is metal lithium, which is commonly used in mobile phone batteries.

At Art Basel on Saturday, he is participating in a talk about the problems with ecological art, and at Unlimited, he is showing Objects in mirror might be closer than they appear (2016-17) (Sies + Hölke and Galerie Tschudi). The video installation, made with the German artist and sometime collaborator Julius von Bismarck, mixes Nasa footage of some of the earliest images of the Earth from space with images of the landscape in the Chernobyl exclusion zone, seen reflected in the eyes of a deer.

**THE ART NEWSPAPER: When did you realise you wanted to be an artist?**

**JULIAN CHARRIÈRE:** I knew I wanted to communicate, but not using words. I thought about philosophy, architecture – even cooking. But when I was at high school, a great performance artist, Massimo Furlan, was teaching. He opened my eyes to new horizons, showing me an alternative way – through visual art – that I could deconstruct and engage with my surroundings.

**You were one of the students at the Institute of Spatial Experiments in Berlin, set up by the Danish-Icelandic artist Olafur Eliasson. What was that like?**

It was incredible. The group of people were so different, but somehow they quickly became my closest friends. We were shown first-hand the importance of sharing as a way of driving the creative process – collaborating on projects, sharing ideas, in a way that is not typical in the traditional art-school system.

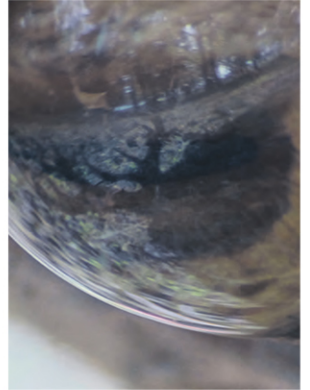
Continued on p18



OBJECTS IN MIRROR MIGHT BE CLOSER THAN THEY APPEAR. © DAVID OWENS, SMALLER IMAGES. © THE ARTISTS AND 'WE BUILD UP' BOON

### A FRESH PERSPECTIVE

Julian Charrière and Julius von Bismarck's *Objects in mirror might be closer than they appear* (2016-17) is in *Unlimited* at Art Basel this week. Nasa footage of early images of the Earth from space is mixed with images of Chernobyl, seen reflected in a deer's eyes



# INTERVIEW

Artist



Julian Charrière's Future Fossil Spaces (2017) in Viva Arte Viva, at this year's Venice Biennale

← Continued from p17

I've maintained a similar environment since, working in a shared studio space [in Berlin] with some of the people who went to the institute. This means we can collaborate naturally. It's really refreshing given how egocentric the art world can be.

I also learned that travelling would become a key part of my practice. We would go on field trips together and find ways of turning the experience into art projects. Some of my works now are directly linked to specific expeditions, but travel is also important for me as a way of stepping out of everyday life and taking me to places where ideas are free to flow.

**You made a series about the huge salt flats in Bolivia, which is not only an important wilderness, but the world's biggest source of lithium. You've also made works about alternative communities, like Drop City in the US in the 1960s. Do you consider yourself to be an artist with an ecological message? My work doesn't have a political agenda, but everyone should be concerned about ecological**

issues, including artists. But ecology as a concept isn't central to my work. Because the effects of society have become inherent properties of the environment and the materials that nature possesses have become inherent properties of civilisation, whenever I work on a particular site, that strong relationship is always present.

Lately I've been interested in examining the relationship between the world of geology – the embodiment of time passed over eons – and contemporary civilisation with its craving for speed. The Salar de Uyuni in Bolivia is the largest salt flat in the world, but it also has the largest known lithium deposit. It is a place where the forces of millennia have created one of the most crucial raw materials. It is now a place of friction, where the needs of the digital era will have an impact on the landscape for the millennia to come.

My obsession with this place grew and grew. When I finally travelled there, I could see the strata lines, a by-product of the lithium mining facilities. The leftover salt slabs, extracted from the ground so that lithium pools form, were naturally marked in a way that show the vast periods of time that led to their formation. I witnessed how the digital world, an ethereal space, relies on the hollowing out of the physical world.

*"I force myself away from my everyday life – it is a catalyst for my creative process"*

**Does danger appeal to you? You did a piece where you stood on an iceberg in the ocean off Iceland and tried to melt it with a blowtorch. You've also travelled to radioactive sites, such as Chernobyl.**

In terms of making work, I have to leave my comfort zone. I force myself away from my everyday life – it's a catalyst for my creative process. It's risky because the unknown is dangerous in its own right. There can be something frightening about the air of danger around some of these places, but their uncanniness attracts me. The point where beauty and atrocity coalesce within the unknown is sometimes the right terrain to start a new project.

• *Cohabitation and What Is Wrong with Ecological Art*, Hall 1, Saturday 17 June, 10am–11.30am

## Julian Charrière: Three key works

### Some Pigeons Are More Equal Than Others (2012)

Some hate ordinary city pigeons—or "flying rats", as they like to call them—while most just tolerate them. In a performance at the Venice Architecture Biennale in 2012 (and also in Copenhagen and Berlin), Charrière and Julius von Bismarck devised a humane trapping system, capturing the birds and spraying them with natural dyes in an assortment of vivid colours. The dull grey pigeon was transformed into a creature of beauty, raising questions of perception.



### Somehow They Never Stop Doing What They Always Did (2013)

Shown at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris as part of the Biennale de Lyon in 2013, this installation is made up of a set of atmospherically lit vitrines. Inside each vitrine is a structure resembling ancient monuments made from plaster mixed with fructose and lactose, plus water from major rivers, such as the Nile and Yangtze—themselves the source of powerful myths. Bacteria grows and the works slowly crumble. Charrière describes time as "an object of fascination for me" with "an inherent complexity that I try to address in my work".



### Polygon, series (photographs) (2014)

In 2014, Charrière travelled to Semipalatinsk in Kazakhstan, a nuclear test site for the Soviet Union from 1949 until 1989. Also known as the Polygon, the extent of the radioactive contamination of the site was not fully known for many years. Charrière's photographs use analogue technology, but he exposed the negatives to radiation before printing. The images are reminiscent of Bernd and Hilla Becker's documentation of the crumbling industrial structures of the Ruhr, but for the white spotting caused by the deadly radiation. *J.M.*

