

Celebrities are Art Stars at Basel

Beth Landman



"It's so much more fun when you buy!" declared Steve Simon, as he and significant other, Blaine Trump, socialized with the multilingual crowd at the [W Hotel](#) in Miami for Bally's cocktail hour Wednesday evening, just after Art Basel's Vernissage preview for VIP collectors.

"We walked around the fair for six and a half hours, and kept circling back to a few things we loved," smiled Trump.

The pair settled on a portrait of a woman against a backdrop of German newspaper articles. Michael Douglas and Catherine Zeta-Jones circled around the impressive Lichtensteins, Princes, and Stellas, and focused on a \$12 million Cy Twombly, while art adviser Maria Brito took Julian Schnabel, P. Diddy and Naomi Campbell on a buying expedition.

"A lot of booths were sold out this year," reported art expert Randy Slifka.

In fact, Diddy, who also perused the satellite fairs [Pulse](#) and [Scope](#), was beat out on the purchase of an American flag painted with 24 karat gold leaf by [Andrew Schoultz](#), and settled on a \$100,000 white neon work by [Tracey Emin](#). Campbell's boyfriend, Vlad Doronin, found two Russian paintings he gifted the hip-hop star with.

"It was Puffy's first time at Basel; he has a sharp eye," said Brito.

But even those who didn't have mega bucks to shell out for an artistic creation, found plenty of amusement over the five-day festivities of Art Basel.

The Design District continued to morph before our eyes. Hermes, Cartier and Louis Vuitton have staked out spaces for shops, and restaurants like Egg and Dart are drawing a dining scene. Parties for Pringle of Scotland and Casa Fendi drew the Basel crowd from the beach.

Hotels were hubs of activity. Apart from a string of private parties, the W was hopping due to The Dutch; the sister to Soho's trendy eatery was packed with everyone from veteran collectors like Aby Rosen to gallery owners who had snapped up tables in order to entertain clients.

Art aficionados flocked to [The Betsy](#), lured by the boutique hotel's private collection, on display throughout the property.

[Soho Beach House](#) drew a stellar crowd including Owen Wilson and Roberto Cavalli for Wednesday night's [art.sy](#) event; Thursday the hotel was the scene of five separate Basel-related parties hosted by Phillips Auction House, Mark Ryden, Michael Kohn Gallery, Panerai, LVMH and RBC Bank. [Gilt City](#) provided seaside solace; guests mingled, shopped (of course!) and were even given canvases to create their own works of art. "I am here for inspiration! I am painting a dog," explained Francesca Verani, an attorney.

[Architectural Digest](#) had its own wind-down "Oasis" at the back of [The Raleigh](#), complete with sponsors and a performance by Jakob Dylan. [Tiffany](#) was one of the many companies that took the opportunity of Art Basel to celebrate its brand, furnishing Colbie Caillat and Camila Alves with jewels. "It was quite a sight; these beautiful women dripping in diamonds," enthused Raleigh general manager Richard Cotter. "They were decked out and dancing, and really having fun!"

And they didn't even have to buy a painting.

Pictured: Wynwood Walls, Photo by Martha Cooper

