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Recap: Art Silicon Valley Brings Banksy, Kehinde Wiley to the Suburbs

by Nastia Voynovskaya Posted on October 15, 2014



Banksy for Keszler Gallery

The current art market in the Bay Area is precarious. Two of the City's three major art fairs disappeared last spring, galleries are getting evicted and artists are leaving due to unimpressive sales and rising rents. Curators from San Francisco and Oakland alike are racking their brains about how to appeal to the growing class of Twitterati. There is a disconnect between the Bay Area's influx of wealth and its art. Tucked away in suburban San Mateo, just south of SF, [Art Silicon Valley](#) was envisioned as a fair that would entice the tech elite. With Maserati as a sponsor and only high-end galleries allowed, this was the glitzy answer to DIY endeavors that have been popping up recently (like Art Beats, [covered here](#)).

Regardless of one's stance on the Bay Area's rapid gentrification, it's clear that a new approach is needed to keep the arts viable. The selection of galleries at Art Silicon Valley was refreshing. The event was put together by Art Miami, the organization behind several annual Basel Week fairs in December, and felt truly cosmopolitan.

Art Silicon Valley had a heavy emphasis on unusual materials, surprising effects and optical illusions. In C. Grimaldis Gallery's booth, for instance, Chul Hyun Ahn's sculptures utilized mirrors and neon lighting to create the effect of never-ending abysses and Matrix-like grids. Hollis Taggart Galleries from New York brought a warped video piece by Udo Noger, in which humanoid faces projected onto a bulbous sculpture babbled demonically in the VIP lounge. Art collective three at Now Contemporary Art's booth melted Anime action figures into fleshy masses, creating disturbing, biomorphic spheres or cubed-up stacks of characters.

There were controversial pieces, too. Keszler Gallery from New York brought several Banksys, cut from the walls on which they originally appeared. Since Banksy's October 2013 "Better Out Than In" street art "residency" in New York, the gallery has been taking several of the notable pieces (the cement sphinx, a snarky tag from the back of a truck) around to various

fairs across the country. Though the gallery claims to be displaying (and selling) them under the guise of preservation, it's dubious whether Banksy condoned the sale of these works or will be profiting from them.

Art Silicon Valley brought an unexpected experience to its suburban setting, and it seemed admittedly out of place to view Kehinde Wiley paintings or Andy Warhol originals in a convention center set amid strip malls. But its broad selection of experimental works and big-name pieces set the fair apart from other efforts to put San Francisco on the art map once again.



An Apex mural and Cyrus Tilton sculptures greeted fair-goers outside.



Banksy for Keszler Gallery



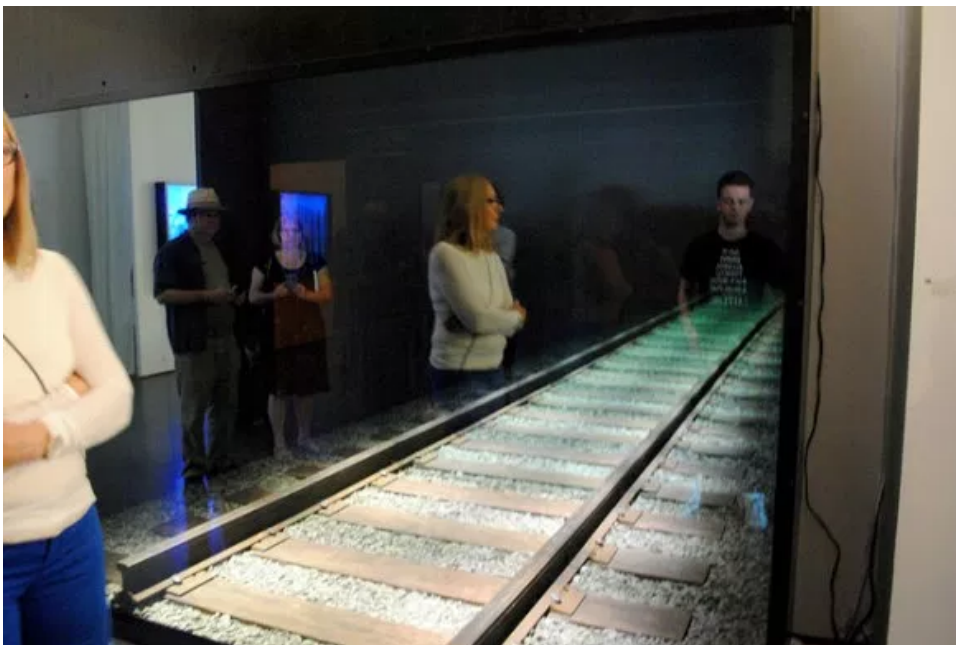
Banksy for Keszler Gallery



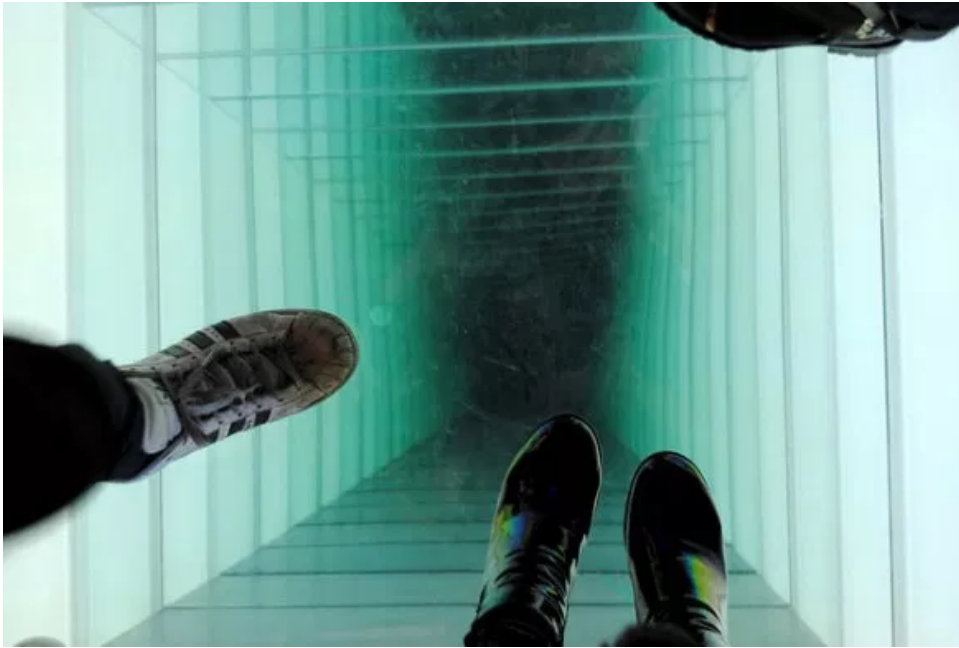
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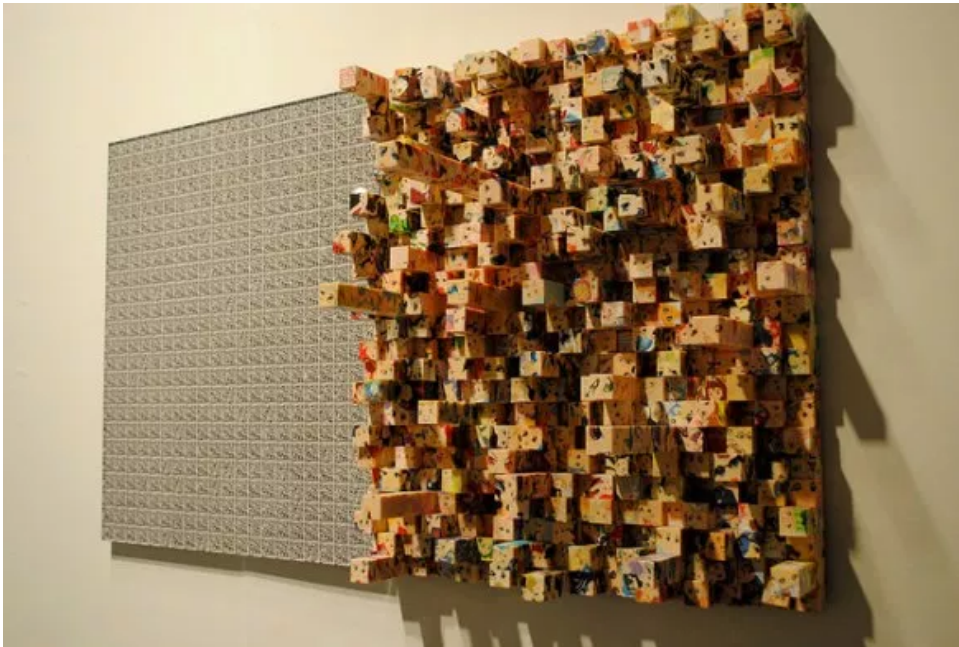
Kehinde Wiley for Jerome Zodo Contemporary



Chul Hyun Ahn for C. Grimaldis Gallery



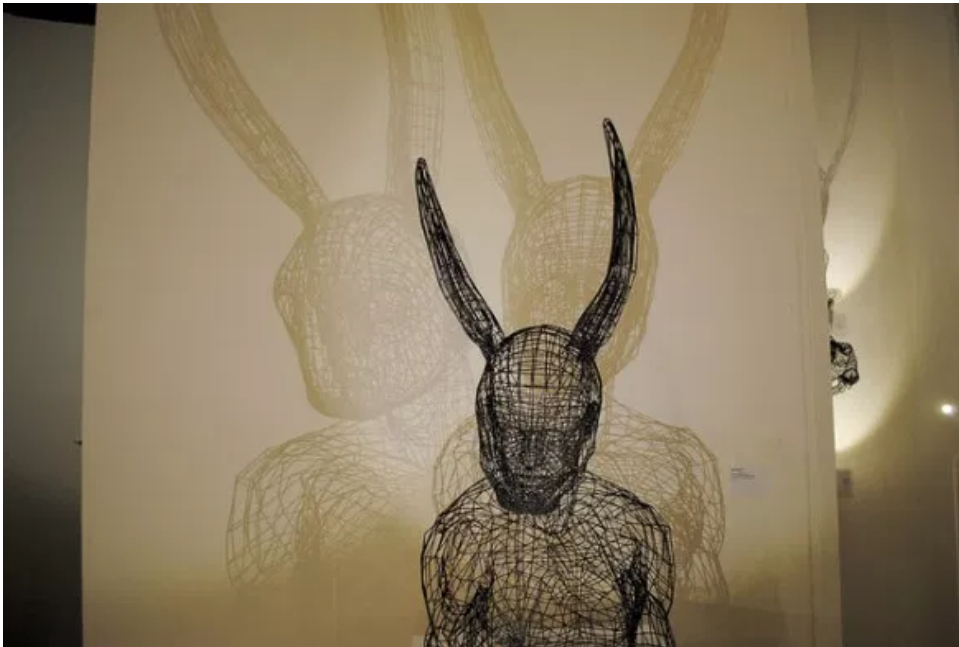
Chul Hyun Ahn for C. Grimaldis Gallery



three for Now Contemporary Art



three for Now Contemporary Art



Moto Waganari for Hollis Taggart Galleries



Moto Waganari for Hollis Taggart Galleries



Udo Noger for Hollis Taggart Galleries



Elizabeht Ernst for Catherine Edelman Gallery



Cyrus Tilton for Vessel Gallery



Apex for White Walls



Speedy Graffito for Fabien Castanier Gallery



Andy Warhol for Masterworks Fine Art



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