

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 17, 2026

ART BASEL AWARDS HONOR PAULA COOPER GALLERY WITH INAUGURAL GALLERY LEGACY AWARD



Art Basel Awards 2026 Gallery Legacy Award Recipient Paula Cooper Gallery represented by Senior Partner Steve Henry. Medalist dinner in Basel, June 17, 2026

WHAT

Art Basel is honored to announce Paula Cooper Gallery as the first recipient of the inaugural Art Basel Gallery Legacy Award. The award honors a gallery that has demonstrated sustained commitment to artists through long-term representation and career development, while shaping cultural and market impact, advancing movements and geographies, cultivating new collector bases, and exemplifying institutional leadership, ethical practice, and intergenerational stewardship.

Paula Cooper Gallery was selected by a distinguished jury of nine leading collectors, patrons, and industry leaders, including Füsün & Faruk Eczacıbaşı, Dana Farouki, Jill & Peter Kraus, Alan Lau, Michael Ringier, Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, and Komal Shah. The jury brings together internationally respected collectors and patrons from Europe, North America, the Middle East, and Asia, ensuring a balanced global perspective across cultural, institutional,

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and market viewpoints. Members are appointed on a rotating basis each year.

Paula Cooper Gallery was selected in recognition of its extraordinary and enduring contribution to the global art world. Since its founding in 1968, the gallery has established itself as one of the most influential galleries of the postwar era. Founded by Paula Cooper in New York, the gallery was the first to open in SoHo and quickly became a pioneering force, presenting historically significant exhibitions and championing artists whose practices would come to define generations of contemporary artistic production. From its inaugural exhibition, which benefited the anti-Vietnam War movement, Cooper's program has reflected a longstanding commitment to activism, public discourse, and cultural life beyond the gallery, including support for literary, music, dance, and community initiatives. Over more than five decades, Paula Cooper Gallery has represented and exhibited many of the most important artists of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, including Sol LeWitt, Donald Judd, Carl Andre, Joel Shapiro, Christian Marclay, Rudolf Stingel, Cecily Brown, Mark di Suvero, Lynda Benglis, Tauba Auerbach, Walid Raad, and Claes Oldenburg & Coosje van Bruggen, among many others.

The gallery's relationship with Art Basel dates back to 1999, marking more than twenty-five years of participation in the fair. Throughout this period, Paula Cooper Gallery has remained a cornerstone of the international gallery community, consistently presenting museum-quality exhibitions and advancing artists whose work has shaped the trajectory of contemporary art worldwide.

Paula Cooper, Founder of Paula Cooper Gallery, said: "To me, the value of the Art Basel fair is the vast accessibility it provides to work from around the world that one might not see otherwise, and the ability to see and meet people with the same interests— providing an opportunity to exchange ideas, form new friendships, and develop collaborations."

While artists are often honored for lifetime achievement, galleries, the long-term builders of artistic careers, markets, and cultural discourse, remain largely unrecognized at an institutional level. The Gallery Legacy Award addresses that gap, while reinforcing Art Basel's commitment to its core constituency: galleries.

A defining element of the Gallery Legacy Award is its commitment to mentorship and the future of the global gallery ecosystem. As part of this gesture, Paula Cooper Gallery has nominated Chapter NY as a next-generation gallery they wish to champion. In their name, Art Basel will contribute up to USD 50,000 toward the gallery's participation costs at next year's Art Basel show in June 2027, extending the award's impact to a new generation of gallerists.

Nicole Russo, Founder of Chapter NY, said: "Whenever I'm asked what kind of gallery I want Chapter to be like, I have always answered Paula Cooper. Over the years, she has created a program that is both ambitious and thoughtful, with a deep respect for artists and a commitment to the community. It's a real honor to be recognized by Paula in this way. It means more than I can say."

The Gallery Legacy Award was presented during the dinner honoring the **2026 Art Basel Awards Medalists Dinner**. The award trophy was designed by **Jacques Herzog** in collaboration with **Glassworks Matteo Gonet**. Hand-blown in clear glass, each unique piece is inspired by the form of a breath suspended in mid-air, reflecting the singular nature of artistic creation.

As Herzog notes, every breath takes a different shape, just as every creative act is unrepeatable. The trophy embodies the idea that a gallery is never static, but a living institution that evolves over time through its relationships with artists, audiences, and the broader cultural landscape. In honoring Paula Cooper Gallery, the award recognizes a legacy that continues to grow and inspire, shaping contemporary art through more than five decades of visionary leadership and enduring commitment to artists.

The Art Basel Awards are the first global initiative to recognize the full breadth of the contemporary art ecosystem, spanning nine categories that honor both artistic excellence and the individuals and institutions that shape and sustain it. From artists to curators, patrons, media figures, and cultural platforms, the Awards reflect a field in which influence is increasingly distributed across disciplines and forms of practice.

Entering its second year, the initiative's cross-industry perspective is further underscored by the continued support of BOSS as presenting partner, whose longstanding engagement with art and culture reinforces the Awards' commitment to dialogue across creative fields.

EVENT DETAILS

Beginning at 7:00 PM at Safran Zunft, over 200 key figures from across the global art world gathered to honor the 2026 Art Basel Awards medalists and reveal the recipient of the Gallery Legacy Award. Attendees included **Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani; guest speaker Glenn Lowry; collectors Komal Shah and Patrizia Sandretto Re Rebaudengo; gallerists Jay Jopling, Sadie Coles, Pilar Corrias, Monica Spruth, and Philomene Magers; jury members Adriano Pedrosa, Hans Ulrich Obrist, Jessica Morgan, and Elena Filipovic; museum leaders Max Hollein and Drew Sawyer; artists Trevor Paglen, Alfredo Jaar, Cao Fei, Nairy Baghramian, Ibrahim Mahama, and Lawrence Abu Hamdan; representatives from international VIP media; Basel-Stadt government officials Conradin Cramer and Kaspar Sutter; as well as Noah Horowitz, Ruba Katrib, Precious Okoyomon, Stefanie Hessler, and many others.** Glenn Lowry shared welcome remarks reflecting on the idea of excellence within the arts and culture sector. The Gallery Legacy Award was presented to Paula Cooper Gallery, recognizing a gallery that has demonstrated enduring commitment to artists through long-term representation, career development, and significant cultural and market impact. Steve Henry, Senior Partner, accepted the award on behalf of Paula Cooper Gallery.

WHO

Art Basel (@artbasel)
Paula Cooper Gallery (paulacoopergallery)

WHEN

Wednesday, June 17
7:00 PM to 11:00 PM

WHERE

Safran Zunft
Gerbergasse 11, 4001 Basel, Switzerland

MEDIA CONTACT

Claire Schwartz

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+19174459046
claires@suttoncomms.com

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About Art Basel Awards

Launched by Art Basel in 2025, Art Basel Awards is the world's first global honors dedicated to recognizing excellence across the contemporary art world. Each year, an International Jury of experts awards Medals to individuals and organizations spanning the industry whose practices and contributions are shaping the future of art. Medalists are selected against four key pillars: vision and innovation, skill and execution, engagement, and broader impact. Art Basel Awards confers both immediate, flexible support in the form of honorariums alongside global networking, philanthropic initiatives, tailored partnerships, and high-profile commissions designed to propel Medalists' work onto new platforms. Medalists are recognized globally by Art Basel through year-round campaigns and initiatives, including the Art Basel Awards Summit, the annual thought leadership conference for the most influential figures in the global art world and neighboring creative industries, held in Basel, Switzerland. Art Basel Awards is presented in partnership with BOSS. For more information, visit artbaselawards.com.

For the latest updates, follow [@artbaselawards](https://www.instagram.com/artbaselawards) on Instagram and WeChat.

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About Art Basel

Founded in 1970 by gallerists from Basel, Art Basel today stages the world's premier art shows for Modern and contemporary art, sited in Basel, Miami Beach, Hong Kong, and Paris. Defined by its host city and region, each show is unique, which is reflected in its participating galleries, artworks presented, and the content of parallel programming produced in collaboration with local institutions for each edition. Art Basel's engagement has expanded beyond art fairs through new digital platforms including the Art Basel App and initiatives such as the *Art Basel and UBS Global Art Market Report*, Art Basel Awards, and Art Basel Shop. Art Basel's Global Lead Partner is UBS. For more information, visit artbasel.com.

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About Paula Cooper Gallery

Paula Cooper Gallery, the first art gallery in SoHo, opened in 1968 with an exhibition to benefit the Student Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam. The show included works by Carl Andre, Dan Flavin, Donald Judd, Robert Mangold and Robert Ryman, among others, as well as Sol LeWitt's first wall drawing. For over fifty years, the gallery's artistic agenda has remained focused on, though not limited to, conceptual and minimal art. In 1996, the gallery moved to Chelsea to occupy an award-winning redesigned 19th century building. The architect was Richard Gluckman. In 1999, Paula Cooper opened a second exhibition space at 521 West 21st Street.

Beyond its immediate artistic program, the gallery has regularly hosted concerts, music symposia, dance performances, book receptions, poetry readings, as well as art exhibitions and special events to benefit various national and community organizations. For 25 years until 2000, the gallery presented a much celebrated series of New Year's Eve readings of Gertrude Stein's *The Making of Americans* and James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*.

Media Information and Images

Press releases and high-resolution images can be downloaded directly from artbasel.com/press.

Upcoming Art Basel Shows

Basel, June 18-21, 2026

Paris, October 23-25, 2026

Miami Beach, December 4-6, 2026

Qatar, January 28-30, 2027

Hong Kong, March 25-27, 2027