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A successful start: VOLTAShow 01 in Basel

On 19th June 2005, the doors of the VOLTAShow 01 closed for this year's first edition. After very successful start with strong turnover—over 2 million euros in fixed sales with more deals to be confirmed in the coming weeks—the organizers of Basel's new art fair—Friedrich Looock, Ulrich Voges, and Kavi Gupta—are more than content with their beginning. The fair withstood the public's curious and penetrating gaze and the founders were able to report a highly positive assessment. As Gupta stated "We achieved what we set out to do, providing a platform for a strong group of galleries and confirming our presence with our own, very specific profile."

From opening day VOLTAShow 01 saw the participation of a very high caliber of collector, a good mixture of both European, US and many from Asia, particularly Japan and Korea. However, it was not only the collectors and visitors who were convinced by their first impression of the VOLTAShow, but also the 23 invited international galleries, who felt that they were well represented in their pure and spacious booths of 28 square meters each. Many reported selling 75%-80% of their exhibited wares, even re-hanging their stands several times, with sales also being made of works in stock at their galleries back home. Average sales per booth were approximately 30,000 euros, though some estimated much higher figures, such as Zach Feuer from New York, with the commission of a large-scale work by his artist Pheobe Washburn from collector Jerry Speyer, who also purchased an installation by Japanese artist Yuken Teruya at Voges + Partner gallery. Nicholas Baker of f a projects from London stated quite simply that VOLTAShow was "fantastic, amazing, and well-organized"; they sold out of their ornately baroque, pigmented silicon wall sculptures by Neal Rock. Parker Jones of Los Angeles' Black Dragon Society noted that, "Usually sculpture is a hard sell at art fairs," but he also secured a home for all three editions of Ry Rocklen's humorous piece, a chair floating in four water-filled wine-glasses. Espacio Minimo from Madrid was meanwhile pleased to have placed the first Spanish artist in the collection of U.K. based Anita Zabludowicz.

Particular attractions of the VOLTAShow were both the enjoyable boat shuttle from the Liste to the Voltahalle as well as the transparent and light-flooded extension to the hall, designed by the Berlin-based architectural office Girod Engelbrecht. But the overwhelming appeal was the relaxed atmosphere, commented on by exhibitors and visitors alike. As Looock noted "There is a family feeling in Voltahalle, which we also passed on to the public" and dealer Fabrice Marcolini from Toronto remarked that "People seemed less intimidated and rushed, which encouraged greater exchange."

The founders' goal was to establish the VOLTAShow—also in the coming years—as a strong complement to Art Basel and Liste, making its aim the closing of gap between the already-existing fairs. A visiting public of over 10,000 curators, artists, and other specialized guests to the VOLTAShow 01 confirmed the need to fill this gap and enthusiastically welcomed it as part of "Basel Week."

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