

GLADSTONE

Louis Lucero II, "Surprises around every corner," *The New York Times*, June 15, 2017

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THE ART OF COLLECTING

Surprises around every corner



COURTESY OF ART BASEL

STEP RIGHT UP

Mr. Leuenberger's familiarity with Basel is an asset to his work as Parours curator, but his being Swiss also informed the mission of Salts, a nonprofit project space that he helped found in 2009 to promote young international and Swiss artists.

One of those young Swiss artists was Claudia Comte, who five years ago staged a small show in Salts' modest exhibition space — really, a backyard and a two-car garage. Today, Ms. Comte is the architect of the most prominent artwork at the 2017 Art Basel show: an enormous, participatory outdoor installation in the form of a carnival that the artist is calling "NOW I WON."

To fairgoers, the installation, directly in front of the main exhibition pavilions, will be all but unavoidable. Ms. Comte's newly constructed funfair, which is not part of the Parours sector, will encourage audience participation in activities including mini golf, arm-wrestling, bowling and darts.

But the games — all of which bear vaguely menacing names, like "Drop 'Em All" (bowling, but with original Comte sculptures as pins), "Dance or Die" (a dancing competition) and "Bend or Break" (arm-wrestling) — are only half the exhibition. Ms. Comte also used 23 six-meter tree trunks to render the name of the installation in lumber, a monumental creation set atop an artificial hill overlooking the carnival games.

Ms. Comte, who may be as fond of wordplay as a motif as she is of the chain saw as an artistic implement, described the phrase "NOW I WON" as "really one of the best palindromes that exists, I think, with great geometrical proportion."

The opportunity to show her work in a way that's virtually impossible to miss, in the plaza that for one week in June is the undeniable center of the art world, is a thrill for the artist, who said she had always been drawn to public artworks on a grand scale.

"I'm trying to reach a large public, and this mixture of audience really fascinates me a lot," Ms. Comte said.



Outside and in
At far left, Claudia Comte's participatory palindrome "NOW I WON." Left, Ai Weiwei's cast-iron tree. And a Sue Williamson installation will consist of bottles in nets, each engraved with the name of a person ensnared by slavery.

AI WEIWEI. COURTESY THE ARTIST AND HEUGENBROCHNER, BERLIN.
PHOTOGRAPH BY STUDIO AI WEIWEI

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND THE GOODMAN GALLERY