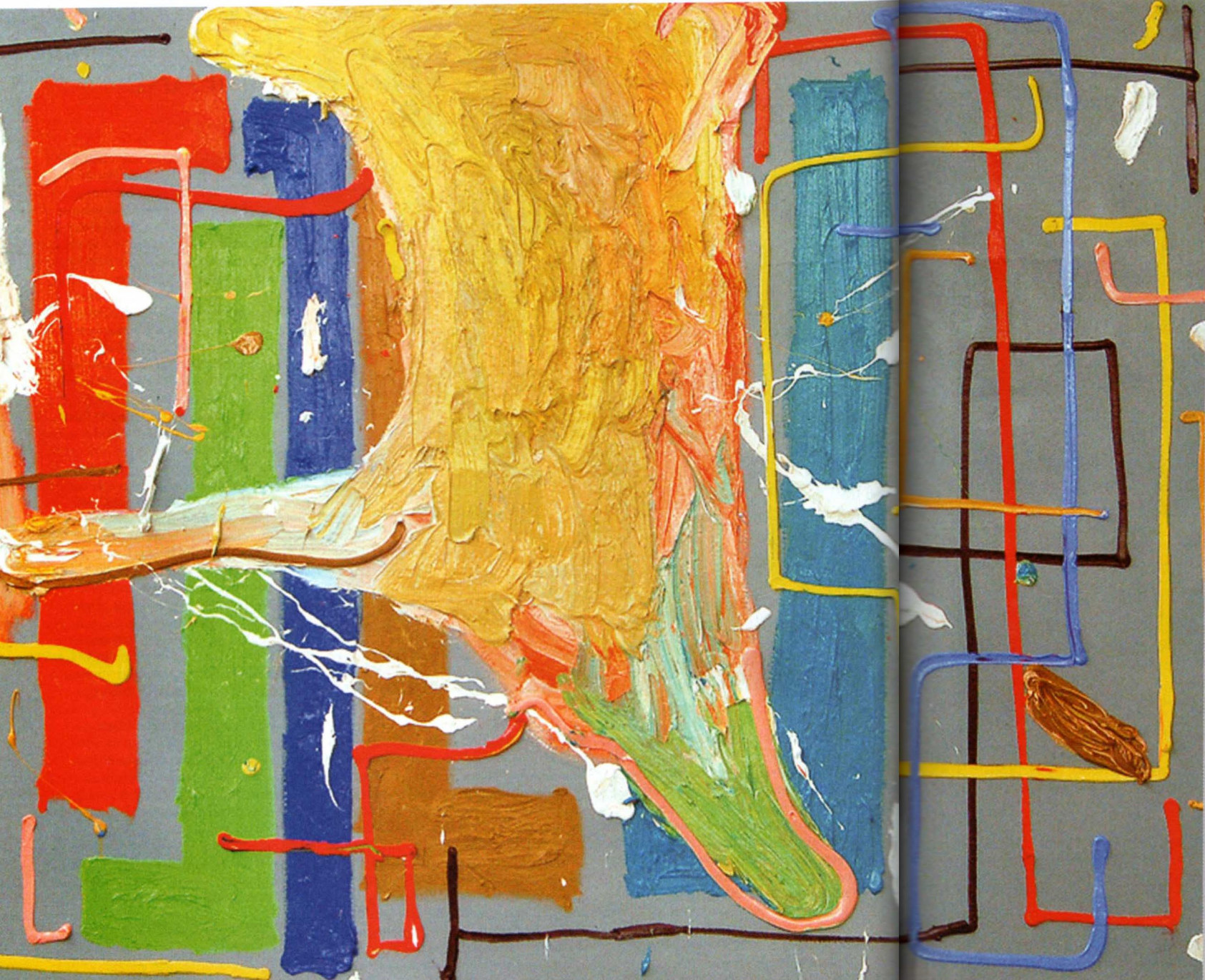


ALL THE FUN OF THE FAIR



AS ART BASEL, THE WORLD'S LEADING MODERN ART FAIR, OPENS ITS DOORS THIS MONTH, WE ROUND UP FIVE OF THE HOTTEST TICKETS

👁️ CATHERINE JARVIE

LOCATED ON THE BANKS of the Rhine, on the border between Switzerland, France and Germany, Basel has been a cultural, as well as geographical, crossroads for the best part of 2,000 years. A one-time trading hub for merchants travelling into central Europe, its ancient medieval centre is a sure sign of this long history of prosperity.

Yet, in recent years, the city has carved a niche for itself at the centre of an altogether different world – one where air kisses, rather than firm handshakes, are the most likely methods of sealing a deal or simply greeting someone. That's because Basel is home to one of the world's longest-running and most prestigious art fairs, Art Basel. It has been called the "Olympics of the art world" – a suitably epic moniker for an event in which the work of more than 2,500 artists is represented by around 300 international galleries and seen by over 62,000 people (if last year's figures are anything to go by) in just five days. Meanwhile, the entire city bursts into a sympathetic, month-long celebration of all things art-related. What's not to like? With the event opening this month for its 42nd consecutive year, we've rounded up our selection of the five hottest artists on show, as well as the place to catch them should you miss them at Art +2 Basel.

ARTISTS TO WATCH ANDRÉ BUTZER

German painter André Butzer is well used to stirring up controversy. "Most people hate it," he says of his boldly coloured, semi-figurative art. "A lot of others embrace it." Perhaps one of the problems is that Butzer's work is difficult to classify. Asked to talk about what his Berlin gallery, Max Hetzler (maxhetzler.com), will be displaying at this year's Art Basel, Butzer describes a piece, *La Chasse*, as "an abstract painting about a hunted piece of meat surrounded by electronic communication systems that don't work any more".



Not what you would necessarily expect from an artist who cites influences from the Italian Renaissance to Paul Cézanne, but it's definitely one to see.

Beyond Basel... Butzer in Hanover: Until 14 Aug, see Butzer's latest solo show at the Kestnergesellschaft museum (kestnergesellschaft.de) in Hanover. ➤

Left, La Chasse (Mis en Bouteille au Château) by André Butzer (2010); below, Vogue has called Art Basel "the most beautiful temporary museum of the world"

