

APOLLO

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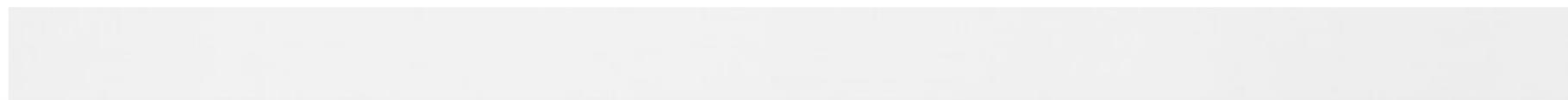
ART MARKET

Art Basel takes a historical turn

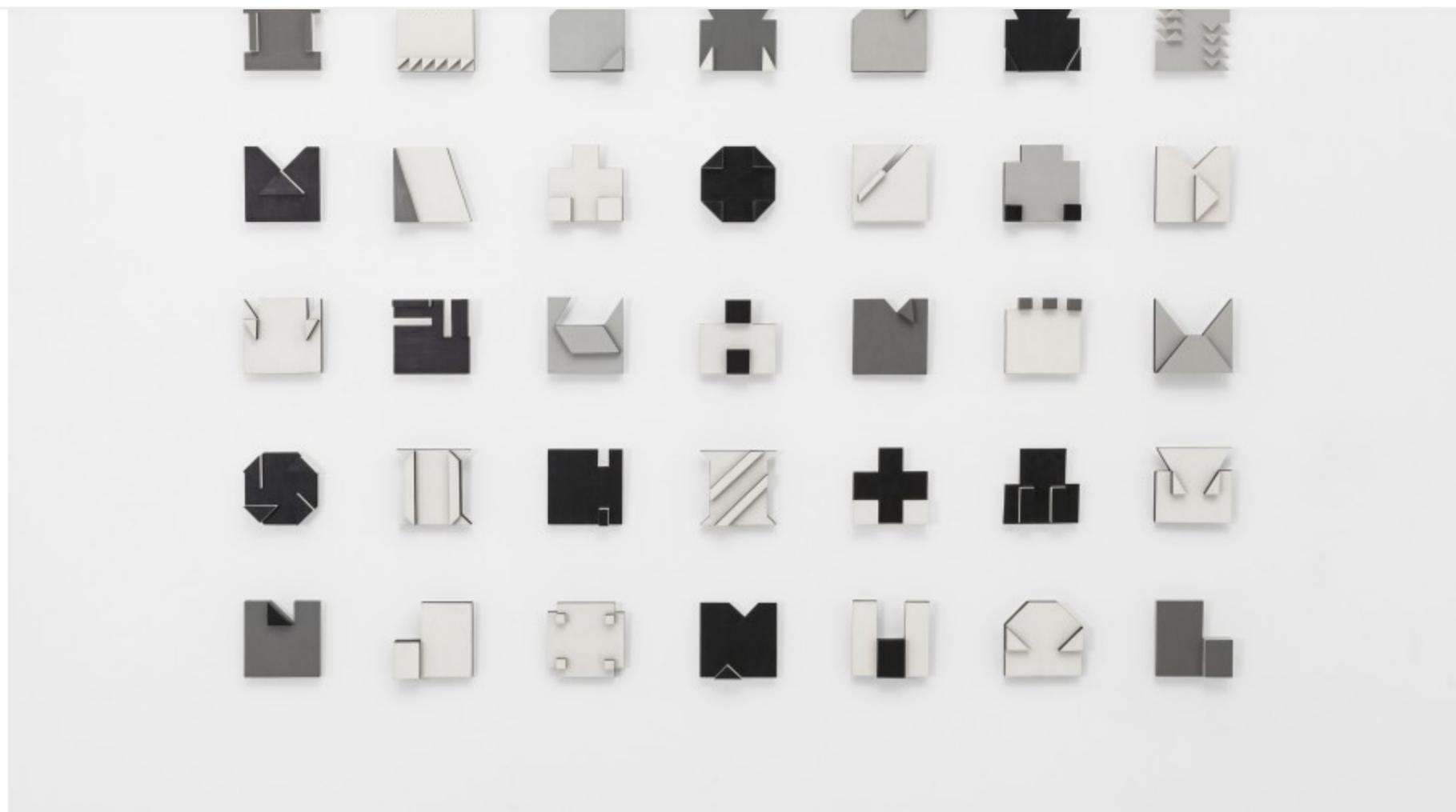
Competition for artists' estates | Liu Yiqian | Little Landy | and a bookish moment

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Book of Night and Day (1963–76), Lygia Pape. © Projeto Lygia Pape

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Competition for artists' estates | Much talk of competition for artist estates around Art Basel this year. Hauser & Wirth have recently announced worldwide representation of Brazilian artist Lygia Pape (1927–2004), working with Projeto Lygia Pape, which was founded by the artist before her death in 2004. This week the gallery announced the sale of Pape's *Book of Night and Day* (1963–76), a 35-part acrylic on wood piece, for \$2.8 million.

Speaking to *Apollo*, Mathias Rastorfer, CEO of Zurich-based Galerie Gmurzynska, which has worked with the Kurt Schwitters estate for 45 years, stressed his belief in the importance of such long relationships: 'For sales, those galleries who represent an artist or an estate and present a clear gallery

programme are doing well. Those qualities matter again now, where they mattered less in previous years'. The gallery currently has a Schwitters exhibition in its Zurich gallery (until 30 September) set within an installation designed by Zaha Hadid to pay homage to the artist's immersive *Merzbau* – the sculptural environment in which Schwitters lived and worked in Hanover. At the fair, Rastorfer senses a shift in demand towards the historical: 'In the past, contemporary galleries complained that modern galleries were showing contemporary art at Basel. Now contemporary galleries are showing more modern art than they should. People are looking for more substance and real values.'

Liu Yiqian | Another gallery that prides itself on its strong relationship with artists and their estates is the Marian Goodman Gallery, who also have a policy of not selling and telling. Ironically, sometimes it is the buyers who are not so discreet, particularly in the age of the selfie. Liu Yiqian, the big-spending Chinese collector and founder of the Long Museum in Shanghai, took to WeChat, the Chinese social platform, with a photograph of himself posing at the fair in front of what was reportedly his latest buy – *930-7 Strip*, an 36-foot long work by Gerhard Richter.

Little Landy | There were many strong works on (or made from) paper at the fair this year – including, at Brazilian gallery Bergamin & Gomide, the delicate *Droquinhas (Little Nothings)* (1965/66) by Mira Schendel, a twisted rice paper piece that was available at \$1.2m.



Photo: the author

Thomas Dane Gallery featured only works in or on paper, including large scale drawings by Cecily Brown and what was possibly the cheapest work in the whole fair: a diminutive sketch of a man vomiting by Michael Landy, pinned at floor level and priced at only \$300. According to director François Chantala, it had sold to a collector on preview day. Landy has done hundreds of these little drawings; they also feature in his solo show, 'Out of Order', at Basel's Tinguely Museum until 25 September.



A page from a Book of Hours written by Francesco Borromeo in 1474, with illuminations by Ambrogio de Predis. Courtesy Jörn Günther Rare Books

A bookish moment | In the winding streets of Basel's old town, and an antidote to the frenetic Messeplatz, are the premises of Dr. Jörn Günther Rare Books. During the fair, Günther has been holding an open house exhibition of medieval and Renaissance books and manuscripts; highlights include the largest surviving fragment of the Gutenberg Bible, and the first account of the New World after its discovery in 1493, written by Christopher Columbus and published in Basel in 1494. There is also a miniature Book of Hours from 1474, written by Francesco Borromeo and delicately illustrated by Ambrogio de Predis, a collaborator of Leonardo da Vinci. Although Günther generally attracts a rather different crowd to that of the fair, this week he has welcomed curators and contemporary art collectors. 'I like to understand clients' motivations,' says Günther. 'I have one client who collects Rothkos and he is interested in the colour fields in the illustrations.'

Visit the Magazines section of Art Basel to pick up a copy of the June issue of Apollo.