
On Wednesday, hordes of young art fans waited behind velvet ropes for entree to a party launching ``Artists and Prostitutes, 1985-2005." Fashion photographer David LaChapelle's oversized \$1,750 tome was for sale at the Taschen booth at the fair. Launching the book at Art Basel was a bid to elevate porn to art.

Anticlimax

The party spread out around three pools behind the new Asian-themed Setai hotel. LaChapelle's images of celebrities of the Paris Hilton variety, nude and slathered in oil, were projected on a large screen. A small house floated at the end of one pool, covered by red tarp. Photographers lined the edges of the pool, anticipating the unveiling.

A DJ, arms covered in tattoos, spun heavy metal. Dealer Larry Gagosian, with an entourage of tall women, strode through the crowd. The tarp was removed, revealing nude transsexual Amanda Lepore. She sat preening, holding a mirror where her penis once was, turning the pages of the Taschen tome. Flashbulbs went wild for Lepore, with her giant blond wig and breasts.