

# The Top 10 Arts Stories Of 2013

As we near the end of 2013, us nostalgia-happy folks here at HuffPost Arts & Culture are looking back at the art-centric events that made this year what it was. From blockbuster exhibitions to yonic architecture, art-savvy rappers to unsavory acid attacks, exorbitant auctions to street art atrocities, these were the top arts stories of 2013. Let us know your most memorable arts moments of the year in the comments.

## 1. Francis Bacon Sets Auction World Record



In early November a 1969 painting by Francis Bacon [set a world record for most expensive artwork ever sold at auction](#). "Three Studies of Lucian Freud" was sold for \$142,405,000 at Christie's postwar and contemporary art sale. The triptych depicts Bacon's friend and fellow artist Lucian Freud. The buyer of the work remains unknown. Jerry Saltz memorably called the piece "[A middle-brow painting by a middle-brow painter painting another middle-brow painter.](#)"

## 2. The Rain Room Makes Money, Breaks Hearts



Random International's Rain Room conquered the art world this summer, luring the masses to MoMA to experience the aesthetics of rain without getting wet. [The magic is done through a series of body-mapping cameras](#), nine controllable spouts, and 2500 litres of water falling at 1000 litres per minute, filtered and cycled back to the spouts from whence the water came. The result is as unnatural a version of a natural phenomenon as one can imagine. You'll feel like Moses parting the Red Sea, [explained the Guardian](#). Lines formed around the block, children cried and eventually the exhibition closed.

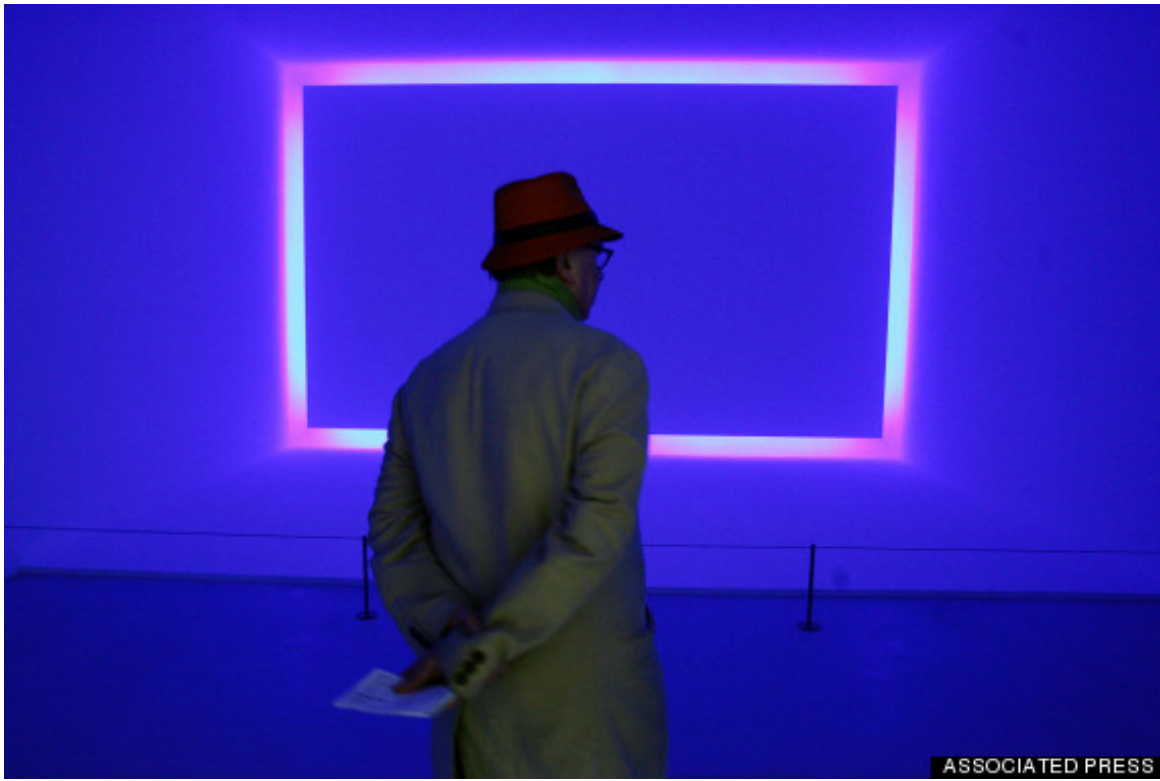
### 3. The Tragic Bolshoi Ballet Acid Attack



The drama and suspense of "Black Swan" paled in comparison to the drama that clouded the Bolshoi Ballet this

year. [Artistic director Sergei Filin fell victim to an acid attack](#) , a plot which was instigated, it was later revealed, by Pavel Dmitrichenko, primo ballerino and the face of the company's on-stage bad guy, Ivan the Terrible. From there things only got more twisted. Read a [play-by-play of the characters involved here](#).

#### 4. James Turrell Lights Up



Light artist and cosmic Santa Claus James Turrell cast a glowing light over the art world this year with major exhibitions in both the Guggenheim in New York and LACMA in LA. Turrell transformed the entire Guggenheim rotunda into one of his signature Skyspace, alluring New Yorkers to lie down in the middle of the iconic museum and gaze upwards. In Los Angeles viewers got the chance to experience perception in a closed cell, where pure light invaded the space and the senses for an entire 12 minutes. At the end of this summer, many finally realized Turrell's message when he famously said light "[is not the bearer of revelation -- it is the revelation.](#)"

#### 5. Nazi Looted Art Trove Uncovered



A massive hoard of more than 1,400 artworks found by tax investigators in a Munich apartment this November. The uncovered paintings included works by Pablo Picasso, Max Liebermann, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Marc Chagall, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Gustave Courbet, Auguste Renoir and Canaletto. Meike Hoffmann, an expert on "degenerate art," commented on the find: "[When you stand in front of the works, see the ones that were long thought to have been lost or destroyed and in a relatively good state — some of them dirty but not damaged — you have an incredible feeling of happiness.](#)"

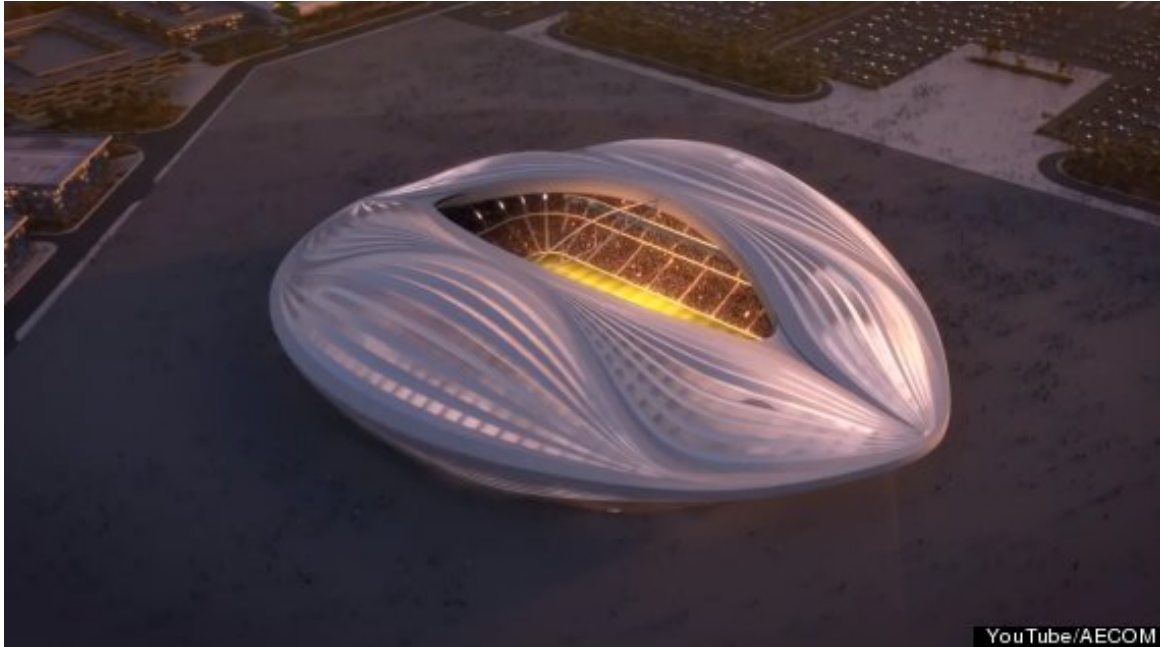
## 6. Banksy's New York Takeover



The world's most mysterious and omnipresent street artist, Banksy, spent the entire month of October surprising

New Yorkers and Instagram followers with an open-air exhibition titled "[Better Out Than In.](#)" Throughout the month Banksy delivered his signature stencils and familiar brand of art-inspired pranks, [including selling his original pieces for \\$60 a pop in Central Park.](#) For his final act, Banksy altered a second-hand painting from thrift store Housing Works, [selling it back for a whopping \\$615,000... Until the buyer backed out.](#)

## 7. Zaha Hadid's Vagina Stadium



Last month starchitect Zaha Hadid designed a football stadium in Qatar that seats 45,000 spectators, costs around \$140 billion and looks a lot like a giant vagina. Although Hadid called the allegations "[ridiculous,](#)" the internet was on a roll and would stop [making vagina-like GIFs for nobody.](#) [We think the Guardian summed the affair up best:](#) "In a world where sport and vaginas very rarely come together with such prominence (see every UK female footballer's salary versus every UK male footballer's salary), [the stadium design] can only be a good thing. And after all, why not have 45,000 people crammed inside a woman's reproductive system? It's not like they haven't been there before."

## 8. Jay Z Makes A Music Video With Lots Of Artists In It

In what was perhaps the end of performance art, rapper and mogul Jay Z created a ~~performance-art project~~ [really long music video](#) featuring anyone and everyone related to the art world in the New York City Area. One fateful day Marina Abramovic, Mickalene Thomas, Jerry Saltz and some of the cast of "Girls" danced with Jay as we waxed poetic about all the art he owns.

## 9. Mike Kelley's Retrospective Wows Everyone



The art world was devastated when multimedia artist Mike Kelley ended his own life last year. This fall a [40,000 square foot retrospective at MoMA PS1](#) immortalized the experimental and influential artist, turning his dirty jokes and low culture explorations into one massive conceptual exploration. Kelley's ability to combine sugary sweetness with the dark and sticky stuff below the surface is unparalleled, and his vision has shaped the formation of contemporary art. "My entrance into the art world was through the counter-culture," Kelley said of his work, "where it was common practice to lift material from mass culture and 'pervert' it to reverse or alter its meaning... Mass culture is scrutinized to discover what is hidden, repressed, within it."

## 10. 5 Pointz Removed Overnight



Despite the efforts of many to save Long Island City's 5 Pointz from demolition, the renowned graffiti haven disappeared one night without warning. The massive warehouse that served as Queen's biggest street art canvas

was whitewashed, erasing nearly 30 years of New York art history. The iconic building and art landmark will be transformed into high-end condos, and the building was whitewashed before its demolition to prevent a last-minute landmarking initiative. Street artist Meres One dubbed the tragic occurrence "[the greatest art murder in history](#)."

**Runners Up: Tilda Swinton's "The Maybe," Nick Cave's "Herd NYC," Paul McCarthy's "Snow White," Lady Gaga's Art Rave, the strange case of "Renoir Girl."**