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Melissa Gronlund
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Menart: New art fair focusing on Middle Eastern and North African works to open in Paris in May

► Beirut Art Fair founder Laure d'Hauteville returns to France to launch an event on regional art



Baya Mahieddine's gouache 'The Musicians' (1988) will be on view with Elmarsa at next month's Menart fair. Courtesy Elmarsa, Dubai

Menart, an art fair devoted to Middle East and North African works, is launching next month in Paris. The project is the brainchild of Laure d'Hauteville, who founded the Beirut Art Fair in 2010. Because of the pandemic and Lebanon's financial and social crisis, that fair is taking a hiatus, but d'Hauteville has returned to her native France to set up Menart in order to continue her work with regional galleries and artists. With 22 participating galleries from 13 different countries, Menart will be on the smaller side, and will be hosted in the private mansion that houses the Cornette de Saint Cyr auction house.

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Participants include Leila Heller Gallery and Elmarsa from Dubai, Athr Gallery and Mono Gallery from Saudi Arabia, and Jordan's Wadi Finan Art Gallery.

Lebanon is the most represented, with Saleh Barakat Gallery, Galerie Tanit and others, while a number of other French organisations will also take part, including groups from Palais de Tokyo and [Centre Pompidou](#).

Elmarsa will offer a painting by Baya Mahieddine, the Algerian artist whose joyful gouaches are currently on view at the Sharjah Art Museum.

Meanwhile, Galleria Continua, an international gallery that is a regular at Art Dubai, will show a painting by Syrian-American poet, essayist and visual artist Etel Adnan, who has long lived in Paris.



Etel Adnan's tapestry 'White Light', from 2016, will be on sale at Menart via Galleria Continua. Courtesy Galleria Continua

D'Hauteville launched the project with collector Paul de Rosen, and has appointed Lebanese curator Joanna Chevalier as artistic director.

"Some Middle Eastern artists are already well known to institutions and collectors," says Chevalier, citing talents such as Palestinian multimedia and installation artist Mona Hatoum, who lives in London, French artist Kader Attia, who spent his childhood between France and Algeria, and Lebanese-American artist Simone Fattal, who was born in Damascus and grew up in Lebanon.

There will also be a particular focus on female artists.

"Menart fair will permit the discovery of around 60 artists, including many established artists from the 1950s, '60s and '70s, such as [Moroccan painter] Mohammed Hamidi, [Egyptian-Danish painter] Hamed Abdalla, [Lebanese painter] Hussein Madi, and a great number of contemporary artists, many of whom are unknown in France."



Menart and Beirut Art Fair founder Laure d'Hauteville, right, and artistic director Joanna Chevalier. Menart

Despite France's high levels of Covid-19 cases, the event is set to go ahead in person between Thursday and Sunday, May 27 and 30.

A spokeswoman for the fair confirmed that safety measures, such as a one-way circuit and compulsory masks, would be in effect.

The event will take place in Paris's central eight arrondissement.

More information is at [menart-fair.com](#)

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