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How the 7th Edition of MENART Paris Questions the Meaning of Home

The latest edition of the Middle East and North African fair explores the shifting meaning of home through art during times of great instability

What does the idea of home really mean? During an area of immense transformation – both socio-economic and geopolitical – changes that are influencing where people reside, where one truly feels a sense of belong is a question that is being pondered across the world.

For the 7th edition of MENART Paris, a fair that was established in 2021 by the founder of the former Beirut Art Fair, Laure d'Hauteville and which focuses on modern and contemporary art from the Middle East, North Africa, the Levant, and the Arabian Gulf, this question comes at a most pertinent time.



"The theme 'Where Is Home?' emerged from a profound reality: across the Middle East and North Africa, the very notions of home, identity and belonging are being continuously redefined by political upheaval, armed conflicts, forced displacement and migration," says d'Hauteville. "Having lived in Lebanon for thirty years, I have witnessed firsthand how history can profoundly alter people's relationship with their homeland. The Beirut explosion of August 4, 2020, and my subsequent return to Paris reinforced a conviction that has guided my work for decades: home is not simply a geographical place. It is a question of memory, identity, cultural heritage and the freedom to belong."



This year's edition, which takes place from October 23 to 25 at the Galerie Joseph-Turenne in Paris, brings together 34 galleries from 18 countries, presenting over 100 artists. The works present revolve specifically around ideas of home, reflecting notions of belonging through language, the body, memory, territory, faith and the preservation of tradition. Participating galleries hail from across the region and include Artbooth Gallery from Abu Dhabi and Seoul; Firetti Contemporary from Dubai; Safarkhan Art Gallery from Cairo; Turab Art Project from Ramallah, Palestine; Beirut and Munich-based Galerie Tanit; Blue House Gallery from Damascus, Syria; Beit Eskender from Tripoli, Libya; Beirut-based Kalim Bechara Art Gallery; 2A Gallery and Negah Gallery from Tehran, Iran and Stal Gallery from Muscat, Oman.

One of the highlights is MENART's Project Room, which is curated by Wassyla Tamzali, founder of Les Ateliers Sauvages in Algiers and presents the work of 12 emerging artists whose practices reflect the vitality, diversity and independence of artistic creation in Algeria today.



"Algeria has an extraordinary artistic and intellectual heritage, yet its contemporary art scene remains insufficiently represented on the international stage," adds d'Hauteville. "We wanted to give visibility to a new generation of artists who live and work in Algeria, rather than focusing exclusively on artists from the diaspora."

One of MENART's most fundamental missions, emphasises d'Hauteville, is "to challenge the Western tendency to perceive art from the Middle East and North Africa through a single cultural, political or geographical lens."



Also exploring the notion of home is Dubai-based Palestinian-Canadian artist Samar Hejazi, whose work will be presented in a solo exhibition by Dubai-based art platform Nasij, founded by Nadine Khoury. Following her contribution to The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Art exhibition in New York earlier this year, Hejazi brings together textile, printmaking and installation to examine the relationship between memory, identity and belonging. At the centre of her presentation is Maw6ini (2018), a thread installation that reinterprets a familiar national anthem, questioning the symbols through which we understand homeland. Other works incorporate traditional Palestinian tatreez embroidery, reflecting on how cultural heritage and personal histories shape our sense of place. "As a Palestinian living in the diaspora, I've always been interested in the ways identity is shaped by language, geography, and the definitions we inherit," says Hejazi. "Through my work, I question the limitations of these definitions and explore what it means to exist beyond them."



Farshid Shafiey, *Untitled*, de la série *Head Over the High Hills*, 2024

The fair aims to reflect the region's rich tapestry of diverse cultures, traditions, languages and artistic tendencies. "Through the artists exhibited, Menart Fair 2026 demonstrates that they cannot be reduced to narratives of conflict, exile or identity," she adds. "Their work explores universal questions, from memory and belonging to freedom, innovation and the transformation of our societies."



Fella Tamzali, *Sans titre*, 2026

At a time when the world is shaped by fractures, mobility and pluralistic identities, home here emerges almost as a call to action – prompting the necessity to transcend the boundaries that have arisen between one's origin and the places in which they have resided and with which they have resonated. As d'Hauteville states: "Our ambition is to move beyond stereotypes and geographical labels, and to ensure that these artists are recognised first and foremost for the strength, originality and significance of their artistic practices within the global contemporary art scene.