

Your Compass in Paris by Pierre-Antoine Lalande

Paris regularly shines through its big names and must-see retrospectives, and visual burnout can set in quickly. But the city has much more to offer. For all the fears of Paris becoming a museum of itself, it still manages to escape the label. The city is paradoxical, overwhelmingly dense and, at times, admittedly irritating, but its renewed dynamism is difficult to deny. What makes the Parisian art ecosystem, and more broadly that of the Île-de-France region, particularly compelling is the persistence of alternative spaces despite rising costs, and the constant emergence of galleries, artist-run spaces and collectives that provide a counterpoint to the gravitational pull of the city centre and its private foundations. "Grand Paris" has become something of a catch-all phrase, one that has been on everyone's lips for some time now. But beyond the political project, its developments and slowdowns, perhaps it is more interesting to think of this compass as a guide to Greater Paris rather than Paris alone. Contemporary art has long spilled beyond the city's administrative boundaries, creating other routes, centres and ways of navigating it. So, without overlooking the essential venues, the blockbuster exhibitions and the names that flash brightest during Paris Art Week, this Compass also makes room for places driven by more singular programmes. You are free to skip the major draws and the clichés altogether, to dig around where the crowds begin to thin out, and to discover some of the names everyone may well be talking about tomorrow.



THE CENTRE & THE MARAIS -

Arr. I, II, IV

Trying to avoid the Marais during Paris Art Week would be an exercise in futility. Yes, it will be crowded. Yes, you will probably run into the same people several times. But the density is also what makes this part of Paris unique. Within a few streets, museums, private foundations, international galleries and much smaller ventures coexist, sometimes addressing radically different audiences. Start close to the world-famous rue de Rivoli. Opposite the Louvre, the Fondation Cartier pour l'Art Contemporain has recently entered a new chapter in its history with its move to Place du Palais-Royal. This autumn, it presents Ibrahim Mahama: The Harvest Season, an ambitious project by the Ghanaian artist conceived together with nine associated artists and collectives. A few minutes away, the Bourse de Commerce - Pinault Collection marks the bicentenary of the invention of photography with Remember Me, bringing together some 700 works by more than seventy artists and proposing a wideranging exploration of the medium. Before crossing the boulevard de Sébastopol, stop at Saint-Eustache, where Rémi Marcel's sculptural

installation brings the church's architecture into dialogue with the history of Les Halles, once known as the "belly of Paris". Ready for the intensity of the Marais? Head into one of the most concentrated parts of Paris's art scene, where the scale begins to change. Lafayette Anticipations has established itself as one of the neighbourhood's most agile foundations, often giving artists considerable space to experiment. Towards a Sea is the first institutional solo exhibition in France by Japanese painter Yu Nishimura. Photography continues nearby at the Maison Européenne de la Photographie (MEP), where Penn & Fashion revisits Irving Penn's more than sixty-year collaboration with Vogue, tracing the development of the remarkably pared-back aesthetic that came to define his fashion photography. At the Musée national Picasso-Paris, meanwhile, there is a good reason to forget Picasso himself: Kurt Schwitters. Le chaos-monde, 1918-1948 turns the spotlight on one of the twentieth century's great unclassifiable figures. Things become more interesting when these institutions rub shoulders with smaller, more independent structures. Across the Marais, from rue de Turenne to the streets around the (closed) Centre Pompidou, established international galleries such as Perrotin, Marian Goodman, Thaddaeus Ropac, Almine Rech, Mendes Wood DM and mor charpentier coexist with Sultana, Galerie Poggi, Sans titre, Anne Barrault and Allen. Their exhibitions often favour sharper, more adventurous positions and practices that have not yet been entirely absorbed into the institutional circuit. Push a little further south to Galerie Sator, tucked away in the unusual Cour de l'Île Louviers, near the Seine. Trying to visit every gallery is probably

the fastest route to exhaustion, so choose, wander and accept that you will miss things. A short walk north takes you to La Gaîté Lyrique, whose hybrid identity has always made it difficult to classify as simply an exhibition venue. It has invited artist and designer Stefan Sagmeister, known to a wider public for his visual work with musicians and bands, to take over its spaces. Heading a bit south again, do not rush past the Centre culturel suisse. Following its recent renovation, the institution moves freely between visual art, performance, music, literature and design. Two exhibitions currently coexist there: Monika Emmanuelle Kazi's terrain meuble, which explores domestic spaces and family memories through a diasporic experience, and Klodin Erb's Le Grand Drame, the Swiss artist's first solo show in France. Close by, the Centre Wallonie-Bruxelles combines a resolutely multidisciplinary programme with a useful escape from the more predictable Art Week circuit.



FROM RÉPUBLIQUE TO BELLEVILLE - Arr. X, XI, XIX, XX

If the Marais demonstrates Paris's extraordinary concentration of art, heading northeast reveals something else. Here, smaller galleries, artist-run initiatives, studios and workshops have historically played a

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greater role, while the rising cost of space is perhaps more visible too. Start around Place de la République, with exo exo nearby, and from there, follow the Canal Saint-Martin north: this year, Paris Internationale takes over a new venue on Quai de Valmy, confirming the gradual expansion of Art Week beyond its more familiar central and western territories. From République, head east towards Belleville, where the art scene feels less concentrated and more embedded in the neighbourhood itself. Belleville has long provided an alternative to the established gallery districts of the Marais and Saint-Germain-des-Prés, with commercial galleries, independent initiatives and artists' studios developing alongside one another. At FRAC Île-de-France, Le Plateau, on place Hannah-Arendt, Rayane Mcirdi presents Joyeuse retraite papa, his first institutional solo exhibition in Paris, drawing on stories and memories circulating between family, the Paris suburbs, Algeria and France. Belleville is also home to Marcelle Alix and Crèvecoeur, two galleries whose programmes have occupied a singular position in Paris for years.



MONTMARTRE, GOUTTE-D'OR & THE WEST - Arr. I, VIII, XVI, XVIII

The western art map tells a different story. Major museums, corporate foundations and some of the world's most powerful galleries increasingly coexist here. But before heading west, stay in the 18th arrondissement for a while. Le BAL is still one of Paris's essential spaces for thinking about images, whether photography, film or other

visual forms. The Space Between Us, drawn from the Wilson Centre for Photography collection, examines the relationship between photographers and those they photograph. A little higher up Montmartre, KADIST operates through a distinctive institutional model, built around an international contemporary art collection, exhibitions, residencies and collaborations extending far beyond Paris. Currently on view, Archives des invisibles is a project conceived by artists and filmmakers Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige. Bringing together previously unseen footage by filmmakers and artists mainly from the Mediterranean and France, the project gives images that had remained outside finished works a new life. From there, head down towards Barbès and the Union de la Jeunesse Internationale, an experimental cultural centre housed in the former Tati department store. Moving between exhibitions, workshops and other formats, the space gives particular attention to international youth and diasporic perspectives. Continue towards the Goutte-d'Or. The Institut des Cultures d'Islam (ICI), a cultural institution of the City of Paris and contemporary art centre, develops exhibitions and programmes exploring the plurality of cultures connected to Islam. Its current group show takes the mythical figure of the ogress as a point of departure. This is precisely the sort of institution that tends to fall outside the standard Art Week itinerary, despite offering another way of understanding contemporary Paris. Not far away, Chapelle XIV takes a very different approach: a hybrid and independent space combining a gallery, design, a record store and a café, with a particular focus on emerging practices. Moving west again, towards Saint-Lazare, the Fondation Pernod Ricard distinguishes itself from the city's larger foundations through its intimate scale and longstanding commitment to the French contemporary art scene. Over the top, undercover brings together Jonathan Martin,

Rosa Moreno and Clémence de La Tour du Pin as part of the second edition of the foundation's Nouveau Programme. Down at Tuileries the Jeu de Paume is an essential stop for lens-based practices, currently presenting Stan Douglas: Parallax. Further west, the Palais de Tokyo remains unavoidable. You and Your Gang brings together artists and collectives working away from major urban centres, focusing instead on rural, mountainous and insular territories and on different forms of collective life and production. In a week dominated by saturation, visibility and the market, the proposition feels particularly timely. Just a few footsteps away is the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris. This year's Prix Marcel Duchamp finalists are presented there, while another exhibition brings together around one hundred works by Lebanese-American artist Simone Fattal, spanning more than fifty years of her practice.



THE LEFT BANK, THE SOUTH-EAST & THE VAL-DE-MARNE - Arr. VI, VII, XIII, Ivry-sur-Seine, Vitry-sur-Seine

The Left Bank is often introduced through nostalgia: cafés, intellectuals, publishing houses, post-war Paris. It deserves something less sepia-toned. During Art Week, Asia NOW takes over the Monnaie de Paris on Quai de Conti, making it a natural starting point for this route. From there, the Beaux-Arts de Paris, overlooking the Seine on Quai Malaquais, combines its role as an art school with regular exhibitions open to the public. No gallery itinerary through Saint-Germain-des-

Prés would be complete without Mennour, now spread across several spaces around rue Saint-André-des-Arts and rue du Pont de Lodi and firmly established as one of the major names of the Parisian gallery scene. On rue Perronet, Shmorévaz offers a radically different format: an independent art space and bookshop supporting experimental, transdisciplinary, queer and DIY practices through exhibitions, performances and publishing. Nearby, Cahiers d'Art occupies a distinctive position between gallery and publishing house, continuing a history deeply intertwined with modern and contemporary art. Moving between these different scales makes Saint-Germain more interesting than its reputation as a neighbourhood of established galleries might suggest. Heading east, OFFSCREEN returns for its fifth edition, continuing its focus on image-based practices at the remarkable Chapelle Saint-Louis de la Salpêtrière, whose architecture is reason enough to make the trip. From there, the 13th arrondissement feels very different. Bétonsalon, Centre for Art and Research, located on the ground floor of Université Paris Cité's Grands Moulins campus, sits at the intersection of contemporary art, research and pedagogy, with a programme that regularly makes space for practices and histories overlooked elsewhere. Magnanrama takes the work and networks surrounding media theorist, activist and filmmaker Nathalie Magnan as its starting point. This part of Paris is also a reminder that an art itinerary does not have to follow the neighbourhoods traditionally associated with galleries. The south and southeast have their own cultural infrastructure, often embedded in universities, municipal projects and local communities rather than the commercial art market. Continue south across the périphérique to Ivry-sur-Seine, where Le Crédac occupies the former Manufacture des Céillets and has long been one of the Île-de-France region's most consistent contemporary art centres. Mano Manca, by Portuguese artist

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Pedro Barateiro, is currently on view.



BEYOND THE PÉRIPHÉRIQUE,
SEINE-SAINT-DENIS – Montreuil, Les Lilas,
Romainville, Pantin, Aubervilliers, Noisy-le-Sec,
Bobigny, Saint-Denis

From Grand Palais to Grand Paris. The distance is shorter than it sounds. The périphérique remains both an administrative and psychological border, but it has become an increasingly poor way of describing where contemporary art in Paris actually happens. Studios, residencies, galleries, art centres and production spaces now form a much wider constellation around the capital. One of Paris's advantages is its relative compactness. Getting around is surprisingly easy, particularly by metro or bike. Cycling is perhaps one of the best ways to understand how quickly the atmosphere of the city changes from one neighbourhood to another. During Art Week, when every hour seems accounted for, what happens between two exhibitions can become part of the itinerary itself. Montreuil deserves its own detour. Its cultural ecosystem is particularly dispersed, mixing artists' studios and independent initiatives with more established structures. The Maison Populaire has supported contemporary creation and curatorial experimentation for decades, developing exhibitions, residencies and programmes for young audiences with a strong connection to the city and its artistic community. It offers a glimpse of an art scene that exists well beyond the usual Parisian circuits. In Les Lilas, the Centre culturel Jean-

Cocteau is also a modest but rewarding stop, particularly for its carefully curated group shows. Its scale is far removed from the major institutions of Art Week, which is precisely part of its appeal. Continue to Romainville, which over the past few years has become an established point on the art map. Komunuma, installed in a former industrial site, has become an important hub for contemporary art in Greater Paris. Nearby, Fondation Fimenco, with its exhibition spaces and artist residencies, makes the trip to Romainville all the more worthwhile. Back towards Paris, in Pantin, Magasins Généraux, housed in former industrial warehouses beside the Canal de l'Ourcq, has developed a multidisciplinary programme attentive to emerging creation, visual cultures and the transformations of contemporary society. The journey is part of the pleasure. Follow the canal and the transition out of central Paris happens almost without noticing it. In Aubervilliers, POUH has recently entered a new chapter, moving into two buildings in the Parc des Portes de Paris. Home to around 270 artists, the vast creative hub combines studios, production facilities, residencies and exhibitions, making it another striking example of how artistic production continues to shift beyond Paris itself. A little beyond the usual circuit, in Noisy-le-Sec, La Galerie is worth the extra effort too, with an ambitious contemporary art programme housed in a former notary's residence. In Bobigny, Le Wonder offers another model of collective artistic production, bringing together artists' studios, workshops and exhibition spaces within a vast creative hub. And why not head north? Never been to Saint-Denis? Long associated with its industrial and working-class history, the city is also home to a dense network of cultural initiatives. Set in a vast former office building beside the Canal Saint-Denis, le 6b is a collectively run creative space bringing together around 200 residents working across visual arts, design, architecture,

working across visual arts, design, architecture, music, performance and other disciplines. Studios, exhibitions, concerts, workshops and festivals coexist there, making it less a conventional art centre than a place where artistic production and everyday collective life overlap. It is also a good example of the kinds of spaces that have developed beyond the Paris city limits, not as satellites of the centre, but as cultural ecosystems in their own right.



(BOIS DE) BOULOGNE – Arr. XVI,
Boulogne-Billancourt

Contemporary art may be the purpose of this Compass, but getting sidetracked is part of the point. Now reverse direction entirely. At the western edge of Paris, Fondation Louis Vuitton continues its exploration of the pioneering figures who shaped the history of modern art with Gustave Fayet, Collectionneur – Créateur. Icônes de l'art moderne. The building itself hardly needs an introduction. To the west, on the Île Seguin in Boulogne-Billancourt, Large has just opened its doors, making it one of the newest additions to the Greater Paris art map. Dedicated to contemporary art and particularly to supporting the French scene, the new centre inaugurates with Moteur Imaginaire, bringing the historic Renault art collection into dialogue with contemporary artists and new commissions. Its location is particularly symbolic. Île Seguin was once dominated by the vast Renault factory, and the arrival of another cultural institution here is part of the long evolution of this former industrial territory. But Large is perhaps most

industrial territory. But Large is perhaps most interesting simply because it adds another point to an art geography that no longer has a single centre.

ANYWHERE

And that seems like an appropriate place to finish, although a Compass should probably never tell you exactly where to stop. Paris Art Week encourages a strange kind of efficiency: carefully planned routes, overlapping openings, names saved on your phone and the persistent feeling that somewhere else, something more important is happening. Resist it, at least occasionally. Take the wrong metro exit. Stay longer than expected. Cross the périphérique for a single exhibition. Walk into a gallery whose name you do not recognise. Or abandon the programme altogether for an hour. After all, a city reveals itself as much through what happens between destinations as through the destinations themselves. This Compass is only one possible route through Paris. The best one will probably be the one you end up changing along the way.

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