



MATIGNON-SAINT-HONORÉ

The new beating heart of the art world

In recent months, a sweeping tide of art galleries has surged into Paris’s golden square — between Avenue Matignon and Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré — reviving a district steeped in artistic heritage and transforming it into what many now call a “one-of-a-kind cultural destination.” At the helm of this renaissance is gallerist Hélène Bailly, who founded the Matignon Saint-Honoré Association in 2024. She sat down with *Paris Capitale* to reflect on a neighborhood reborn. **By Anne Kerner**



Group show at Perrotin Gallery.

The Matignon–Saint-Honoré quadrant is buzzing like never before. Dozens of galleries have set up residence in this storied district, rekindling its legacy as the historic cradle of the Parisian art market. “*This is where the métier of the art dealer was born*,” Bailly, founder of the Matignon–Saint-Honoré Association, reminds us. In the 19th century, iconic galleries such as **Bernheim-Jeune** and **Durand-Ruel** established themselves here, championing movements and artists that would define modern art – Monet and the Impressionists, Van Gogh and Gauguin for the former; Renoir and Degas for the latter. Though Montmartre, Montparnasse, and Saint-Germain-des-Prés later emerged as artistic strongholds, the Matignon–Saint-Honoré area held its place

as a vibrant commercial artery for the arts. The presence of the Élysée Palace and surrounding ministries, along with the Universal Exposition of 1900, which ushered in the Grand and Petit Palais, helped to shape a district unlike any other in Paris. By the 20th century, the arrival of grand hotels such as Le Bristol and the expansion of haute couture brought an international clientele. The 1980s saw an influx of blue-chip auction houses – Sotheby’s and Christie’s among them – solidifying the district’s reputation. Foreign gallerists followed suit: Belgium’s **Guy Pieters** on Avenue Matignon, the American powerhouse **Larry Gagosian** on Rue de Ponthieu, and Italy’s **Tornabuoni Art**, known for spotlighting contemporary Italian crea-



Hélène Bailly, fondateur of the Matignon Saint-Honoré Association.

“*There’s nowhere else in the world where exceptional savoir-faire, haute couture, fine jewelry, watchmaking, world-class hotels, gastronomy, and the arts all converge with such harmony*,” he notes. “*It’s here that Sotheby’s inaugurated its new space – a historic building at 76 Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré – meticulously restored by design luminary Pierre Yovanovitch. This vibrancy elevates local events into moments of genuine prestige. Through the Comité, we ensure deep engagement in the life of the neighborhood while expanding its* ...



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Mariane Ibrahim is pleased to present, “Au service des rêves” (In the Service of Dreams), a solo exhibition of new paintings by Ugandan artist Ian Mwesiga.

... visibility.” **Hélène Bailly**, meanwhile, leads her gallery collective with equal vision and vigor. Riding the momentum of last year’s success, she now spearheads two landmark events: one in October 2025 in partnership with Art Basel, the other in May 2026 during Paris Drawing Week and Art Paris. “Major pedestrianization work will begin at Place Beauvau,” she adds with excitement, “and a Rockefeller Center-style ice rink is planned for the holidays.” Cymerman shares her determination: “We’ll be there with the galleries to rise to the occasion,” Bailly concludes. The district’s momentum also reflects a shifting geopolitical landscape. While Brexit and the pandemic rattled the global art market, Paris emerged newly fortified. “London lost its cultural edge, and Paris saw an opportunity to reclaim its rightful position,” explains Bailly. World-renowned galleries such as **Skarstedt, Mariane Ibrahim, Almine Rech, Nathalie Obadia, Cécile Fakhoury, Hauser & Wirth, White Cube**, and **Kamel Mennour** have seized the moment – opening refined new spaces and launching exceptional summer programs. Highlights



© CHAISSAC CHEZ MENNOUR

Mennour presents its first exhibition devoted to the last period of the work of Gaston Chaissac (1910-1964).

include French contemporary legend Fabrice Hyber at Galerie Obadia; American visual storyteller Taryn Simon at Almine Rech; striking figurative works by Ugandan painter Ian Mwesiga at Mariane Ibrahim; and a luminous tribute to light pioneer Robert Irwin at White Cube. By contrast, the Marais – a former stronghold for contemporary galleries – has faltered under new pedestrian-only policies. “Collectors don’t travel on foot or by bike,” Bailly remarks. “They don’t have hours to spend navigating crowds and tourists.” Meanwhile, in Matignon–Saint-Honoré, weekdays offer a more refined rhythm. Grand Haussmannian boulevards provide elegant access – ideal for those who pair high-end shopping with the discovery of museum-quality art. The district offers remarkable diversity: from old masters at **Florence de Voldère**, showcasing Flemish paintings, to mid-century treasures at **Jacques Lacoste** – home to Jean Royère and the Giacometti brothers – alongside bold contemporary pieces at Kamel Mennour, currently honoring the trailblazing Gaston Chaissac. Evenings conclude, as they should, over a drink or dinner at the Bristol or the Four Seasons George V – where art collectors and connoisseurs reconvene, and where, increasingly, everything seems to happen.

A cultural renaissance in motion

Recent arrivals further confirm the district’s momentum. **Galerie Le Clézio** opened its doors at 157 Rue du



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Faubourg Saint-Honoré at the end of 2024 and currently hosts a curated group exhibition. Just steps away, **Pron** – the new incarnation of Galerie Italienne – relocated from Rue du Louvre to No. 75, debuting in April with Belgian artist Gommaar Gilliams. **Galerie Mitterrand**, now at 95 Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré, made headlines with its historic summer show devoted to Niki de Saint Phalle. In April 2025, Emmanuel Perrotin unveiled his most ambitious Parisian space to date: a 400 sq.m. hôtel particulier on five floors at 8 Avenue Matignon. Best known for contemporary art, **Perrotin** now expands into

the secondary market, celebrating the opening with a show featuring the full roster of his artists. “There’s a gravity here now,” observes veteran dealer and advisor **Pierre Cornette de Saint-Cyr**, who will unveil a 60 sq.m. showroom on Avenue Franklin Roosevelt this fall. “This is where it all happens.” Indeed, the golden square lives up to its name – a living, breathing museum under the open sky. “There’s simply nothing else like it,” Bailly says. “It’s a phenomenal place.” Currently on view at her gallery: “Montparnasse and the School of Paris: Studio Stories”, featuring works by young artists from Poush studios, including Dune Varela. ■

View of the exhibition dedicated to Niki de Saint Phalle at Mitterrand Gallery.

MATIGNON - SAINT-HONORÉ SUMMER AGENDA

■ **Galerie Perrotin Matignon.** “Group show.” 2bis, avenue Matignon, 8th. Until July 15. www.perrotin.com

■ **White Cube.** “Robert Irwin” 10, avenue Matignon, 8th. Until July 19. www.whitecube.com

■ **Galerie Mariane Ibrahim.** “Ian Mwesiga. Au service des rêves,” 18, avenue Matignon, 8th. Until July 26. <https://marianeibrahim.com/fr>

■ **Galerie Mennour.** “Gaston Chaissac. Mille visages” 28, avenue Matignon, 8th. Until July 19. www.mennour.com

■ **Galerie Hélène Bailly.** “Montparnasse et l’école de Paris : Histoires d’ateliers” 71, rue du Faubourg St-Honoré, 8th. Until September 6. www.helenebailly.com

■ **Pron.** “Gommaar Gilliams. Homecoming” 75, rue du Faubourg St-Honoré, 8th. Until July 26. www.pron.fr

■ **Sothebys.** “Fashion Icons including the original Birkin” 83, rue du Faubourg St-Honoré, 8th. Live Auction: 10 July. www.sothebys.com

■ **Galerie Nathalie Obadia.** “Fabrice Hyber. Apocalypstick” 91, rue du Faubourg St-Honoré, 8th. Until July 26. www.nathalieobadia.com/fr

■ **Galerie Mitterrand.** “Niki de Saint Phalle, Mythologie” 95, rue du Faubourg St-Honoré, 8th. Until July 26. <https://mitterrand.com>