

Special Report

By Elena Martínez-Jacquet

• **Participants and exhibitions, as well as interviews with:**
Alain de Monbrison, Julien Flak, and Jacques Germain



Left to right: Venetian mask · Tischenko Gallery | *Nô de chūjō* mask, Japan · Mingei Japanese Art | Inupiaq mask, Alaska · Galerie Frédéric Rond | Yoruba mask, Nigeria · Arte Primitivo

Parcours des mondes 2025

From September 9 to 14, 2025, the Saint-Germain-des-Prés district in Paris will host the 24th annual *Parcours des Mondes*, the world's premier international event dedicated to the arts of Africa, Oceania, Asia, the Americas, and antiquity. For six days, this Parisian neighborhood will transform into an open-air, multiple-venue museum as some sixty specialized galleries from around the world assemble to present their finest works and most recent curatorial projects.

This year will again feature a contemporary section in the show, with the participation again of pioneering galleries such as Vallois, Claes Contemporary & Modern, and Christophe Person, joined this year by Magnin-A. Juxtapositions of traditional art with contemporary creations will punctuate the fair, notably at Duende Art Projects, Dierking & Woerner, Claes Contemporary, Abla and Alain Lecomte, Julien Flak, and Galerie Mingei.

Launched in 2023 to give less well-established and newer galleries greater visibility, the "Showcase" element of the fair serves as a springboard. Three new participants will exhibit this year: Ciprian Ilie, Alexandre & Patric Claes, and the OIA gallery. Enthusiastically received by the public, this section foregrounds the next generation of market players.

Another highlight this year is the significant strengthening of partnerships that extend the reach of *Parcours* beyond the galleries. The *Au cœur de l'Afrique classique* (*At the Heart of Classical Africa*) exhibition, organized by Jacques Germain at the nearby Galerie Gradiva exemplifies this dynamic.

Finally, Marc Ladreit de Lacharrière will again serve as its honorary president for *Parcours des Mondes*, underscoring the importance of the fair in promoting the non-European arts in association with his cultural initiatives. His keen eye and ongoing support affirm the fair's unique and key position in the international arts calendar.

VIEWPOINT

Parcours des Mondes and Contemporary African Art

Some thoughts from Yves-Bernard Debie, general director
of *Parcours des Mondes*:

Why have you decided to include contemporary African art in *Parcours des Mondes*?

It wasn't so much a decision as it was an evolution that seemed completely obvious to us. *Parcours des Mondes* has always been a place for dialogue between cultures, aesthetics, and eras. The artistic genius of the African continent is expressed not only through its older and traditional works but also in the effervescence and dynamism of its contemporary scene.

My trips to Benin with Georges-Philippe Vallois and to Congo and Senegal with Didier Claes were a revelation in this respect. My subsequent interactions with André Magnin and, more

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recently, with Christophe Person, have only confirmed my initial impressions. In fact, my art collection has followed suit.

Contemporary African artists draw on their multiple heritages, born of ancestral traditions and the impact of their encounters with the West, to create works that are deeply rooted in the issues that confront the world we live in today.

Classical African art offered revolutionary aesthetic concepts to Western modernism, which drew heavily on it. And today, in turn, we see contemporary African art drawing inspiration from Western art. To ignore this dynamic would be to try to freeze Africa in the past, disconnected from its living reality. By welcoming these new artists to *Parcours des Mondes*, we are enriching its DNA.

We also want to break down barriers and open up perceptions. All too often, so-called “primitive” art and contemporary African art are treated as two separate and hermetically sealed realms, when in truth they resonate, respond, and feed off one another.

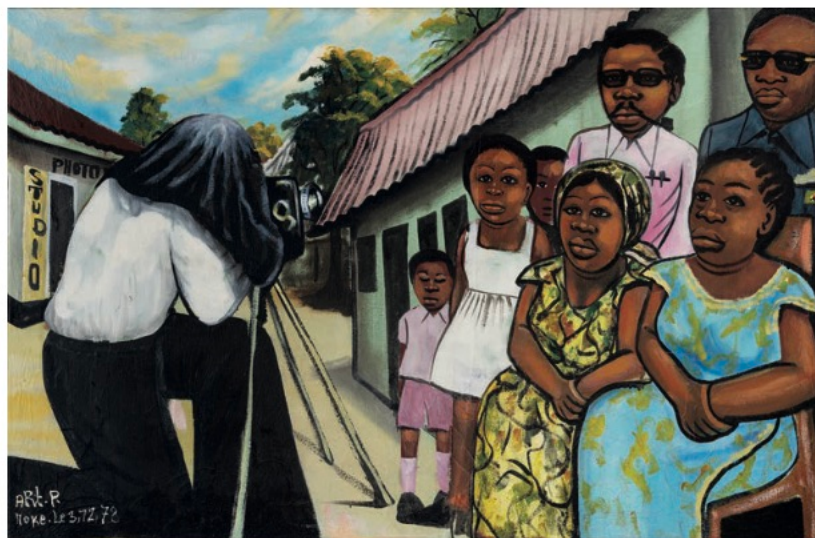
By integrating these artists into the world's largest non-Western art fair, we are affirming the continuity and legitimacy of African sculptural and artistic expressions, both past and present.



◀ Ernest Dükü (Bouaké, Côte d'Ivoire, b. 1958),
AA A TATATA @ Amenti shuffle Taawalé cosmique, 2020.
 Ink, acrylic, pen and collage on crumpled Chinese paper. 200 x 70 cm.

To be shown at the 2025 *Parcours des Mondes* by
 Galerie Christophe Person, which opened in Paris in
 2022 and has had a second location in Brussels since
 June 2025.

*Like a mystical manuscript, this composition explores the connections
 between ancestral memory, African cosmogony, and quantum physics.
 Using mixed media, the drawing becomes ritual. It relates the spiritual
 heritage of Akan, a community with a strong presence in Côte d'Ivoire, cou-
 pled with the intrusion of quantum mechanics into our imagination. Here,
 digital language intertwines with sacred languages in a back-and-forth
 dialogue between past and future. The work reads like a visual palimpsest,
 in which magical thinking converses with algorithms, profoundly question-
 ing our ways of believing while transmitting and perceiving the invisible.*



▲ Estevão Mucavele (Manjacaze,
 Mozambique, b. 1941). **Untitled**, c. 1985
 Oil on canvas. 64 x 80 cm.
 Photo: Nohan Ferreira (MU2411036).

▲ Seyni Awa Camara (Bignona, Senegal,
 b. 1945), **Untitled**, 2025.
 Terracotta. 202 x 46 x 36 cm.
 Photo: Nohan Ferreira (SC2504094).

To be shown at the 2025 *Parcours des Mondes* by
 Galerie Magnin-A, which opened in Paris in 2009.

*In the 1950s in southern Senegal, Seyni Awa Camara, initiated into
 pottery by her mother, disappeared into the forest and reappeared
 holding a clay statuette in her arms. Seyni maintains that she
 received this gift during a mystical experience. She has been creating
 fascinating anthropomorphic sculptures ever since. At the same
 time, Estevão Mucavele was working at the mine in Cape Town. Back
 in Maputo, he crossed deserts, canyons, and landscapes of natural
 shapes, all colored in blues, pinks and oranges, all at the mercy of
 crushing and intense light. He paints still, silent, hostile, abstract
 landscapes.*

*Camara and Mucavele are extraordinary artists who plunge us
 into the heart of the world's mysteries, outside of time.*

▲ Moke (Ibe, Democratic Republic of the Congo,
 1950–2001), **Untitled (The Photographer)**, 1978.
 Acrylic on flour bag. 113 x 74 cm.
 Photo: Valentin Clavairolles.

To be shown at the 2025 *Parcours des Mondes* by Claes
 Contemporary & Modern, which opened in Brussels in 2022.

*Moke draws his inspiration from the urban environment and everyday life in Kinshasa.
 Realistic and exuberant, his paintings reflect his keen sense of observation. His canvases
 depict scenes of spontaneity as if on the spot, like a photographic lens. It is not surpri-
 sing then that the theme of the photographer, whether portraying a family or a lively
 urban scenes, is recurrent in his work.*

