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EVENT

"Galeristes", a fair with a vision

Today, contemporary art fairs are popping up like mushrooms, and Paris is no exception. Over the past 10 years, we have seen them appearing everywhere – exploiting the aura of the FIAC (like the Yia Art Fair), the success of a trend (the AKA for African contemporary art) or a medium (Drawing Now, dedicated to drawing) – and then disappearing, victims of a declining market (like the Slick Art Fair, cancelled in 2016). But never before has a fair displayed a militant ambition. This is the driving force behind "Galeristes", whose first edition is taking place from 8 to 11 December in the revamped Carreau du Temple covered market in Paris. Its founders, the art critic Stéphane Corréard (a former departmental manager at Pierre Comette de Saint Cyr) and the collector Michel Poitevin, prefer to talk of a "salon". The aim is to restore galleries, deserted by art lovers for fairs, to their predominant position in the art market. Their strategy is to provide an event that revives the historical relationship between gallery owners and collectors – genuine collectors, though, not speculators. That's all! With a stage design that highlights exhibitors' personalities, a visit to the fair looks set to be an expe-

rience with a difference: one that encourages meetings. With this in view, the selection process has been stringent, centred on a core of 26 exclusively French galleries. With this first outing, around twenty applicants were refused for mainly ethical reasons (read the interview on page 98). The list of exhibitors includes the Christian Berst gallery (the Paris yardstick for Outsider art), the excellent Semiose, the Lelong and Loevenbruck galleries (two regulars at the FIAC), and the long-standing Jean Fournier gallery (the artist Simon Hantai's first dealer). A selection that represents the rich variety of the international scene, as Stéphane Corréard notes with satisfaction. The critic is confident about the impact of his little business, even if it is a touch Utopian. No more dull stands, intimidating exchanges, privileges for big names or unaffordable pieces (some works will be available at around €1,000). Here, galleries are treated like royalty, and collectors too. A decidedly mouth-watering prospect.

Céline Piettre

"Galeristes", the fair of galleries and active collectors, Carreau du Temple, 4, rue Eugène-Spüller, 75003 Paris. 8 to 11 December 2016. www.galeristes.fr

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José Manuel Egea, "Untitled (Marilyn Monroe)", 2013, felt pen and coloured pencil on photo paper, 91 x 61 cm (detail).

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