

9—12
APRIL 2026

ART. PARIS

GRAND PALAIS

BABEL
ART AND LANGUAGE
IN FRANCE

REPARATION



BNP PARIBAS
BANQUE PRIVÉE

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Art Paris 2026 Sara Ouhaddou, Winner of the *BNP Paribas* *Banque Privée Prize*

For its third edition, the BNP Paribas Banque Privée Prize – A Focus on the French Scene, endowed with €40,000, was awarded to Sara Ouhaddou, represented by Galerie Polaris, during the opening of Art Paris on April 8, 2026, in the presence of the jury members.

The BNP Paribas Banque Privée Prize – A Focus on the French Scene recognizes the career of a living artist from the French art scene. Through this award, BNP Paribas Banque Privée supports an artist's career while also highlighting the work of their gallery in promoting their practice and expanding its reach.

The winner of this third edition was selected from 16 nominees drawn from the selection of the 2026 guest curator, Loïc Le Gall, Director of Passerelle, Centre for Contemporary Art in Brest, as part of his thematic focus Babel – Art and Language in France.

According to guest curator Loïc Le Gall, Sara Ouhaddou, a French-Moroccan artist born in 1986, explores language as a system of signs embedded within cultural, social, and political histories often situated at the margins of dominant narratives. Through ceramics, sculpture, installation, and drawing, the artist examines how forms, motifs, and gestures circulate across cultures—transforming, transmitting, or disappearing over time.



Sara Ouhaddou

Crédit photo ministère de la culture d'Arabie Saoudite
©Galerie Polaris

In Ouhammadou's work, language is not limited to writing. It unfolds through vernacular alphabets, decorative patterns, artisanal codes, and practices rooted in oral traditions, where meaning is conveyed as much through memory as through gesture. This attention to craftsmanship—to what is learned through repetition, use, and experience—anchors her work in a living cultural continuity rather than a fixed archive. It echoes the reflections of writer and ethnologist Amadou Hampâté Bâ, for whom oral expression and gesture constitute essential forms of knowledge.

The signs mobilized by the artist are never fully stabilized. Their interpretation remains partial, situated, and dependent on context and individual experience. This resistance to immediate transparency invites the viewer to embrace a degree of uncertainty and to consider language as a living, fragile, and constantly evolving material.

By reactivating forms drawn from popular traditions and artisanal know-how, Sara Ouhammadou questions cultural hierarchies and the mechanisms through which knowledge is legitimized. Her work reveals a layered language of displacements and survivals, where meaning is constructed in the in-between—between oral and written, memory and material, heritage and invention.

The work of the French-Moroccan artist has been exhibited at Mucem (Marseille), Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (Madrid), Z33 (Hasselt), Centre Pompidou, Palais de Tokyo, the Institut des Cultures d'Islam, the Bauhaus in Dessau, and the Cité internationale des arts in Paris.



Sara Ouhammadou
Les mains fertiles - poétesse Mririda n'ait attik
 2024, courtesy Galerie Polaris
 © Younes Lagrouni

Fabrice Bagne,

Head of BNP Paribas Banque Privée:

“ We are delighted to once again support Art Paris this year, and particularly the French scene, through the BNP Paribas Banque Privée Prize. Art must remain a privileged space at the heart of society, as it is for our clients and partners. We are therefore naturally committed to supporting French artistic creation. The jury and I are pleased to highlight Sara Ouhammadou, this year's laureate, for her remarkable works, inspired by a vibrant multicultural palette. We wish her every success. ”

Guillaume Piens,

Fair Director of Art Paris:

“ I am first and foremost delighted to observe the growing prominence of the BNP Paribas Banque Privée Prize – A Focus on the French Scene within the French prize landscape in just three years. It serves a real purpose in showcasing artists from the French scene and has become a genuine career accelerator. Following Nathalie du Pasquier in 2024 and Thomas Lévy-Lasne in 2025, the jury unanimously awarded the prize to Sara Ouhaddou. The jury wished to highlight both an original practice that integrates traditional craftsmanship into visual works incorporating language as abstract symbols, and the artist’s commitment as a driver of economic, social, and cultural change through the dialogues she builds with artisans around the world, particularly in Morocco. ”

A Prestigious Jury

The BNP Paribas Banque Privée Prize jury brings together leading figures from the art world with diverse and complementary backgrounds. Comprising museum professionals, curators, journalists, collectors, and key actors engaged in contemporary art, it reflects recognized and multifaceted expertise. This diversity of perspectives ensures a rigorous and informed evaluation, extending and enhancing the initial selection curated by Loïc Le Gall around the theme Babel – Art and Language, and providing a relevant and ambitious platform for the artists presented.

- **Fabrice Bagne**, Head of BNP Paribas Banque Privée
- **Valérie Duponchelle**, journalist and art critic
- **Loïc Le Gall**, guest curator of Art Paris 2026 and Director of Passerelle, Brest
- **Christine Macel**, Chief Curator
- **Vera Michalski**, President of Libella Publishing Group and the Jan Michalski Foundation
- **Alfred Pacquement**, independent curator
- **Guillaume Piens**, Fair Director of Art Paris
- **Floriane de Saint-Pierre**, President of the Friends of the Centre Pompidou

The 16 Artists Nominated for the 2026 BNP Paribas Banque Privée Prize

- **Juliette Agnel** – Galerie Clémentine de la Féronnière
- **Joël Andrianomearisoa** – Almine Rech
- **Léo Fourdrinier** – Les filles du calvaire
- **Fabrice Hyber** – Galerie Nathalie Obadia
- **Mireille Kassar** – Saleh Barakat Gallery
- **Elias Kurdy** – Dilecta
- **MC Mitout** – Galerie Claire Gastaud
- **Tania Mouraud** – Galerie Claire Gastaud
- **Julie Navarro** – Galerie Wagner
- **Sara Ouhaddou** – Galerie Polaris
- **Laure Prouvost** – Galerie Nathalie Obadia
- **Luca Resta** – Yvon Lambert
- **Anne-Marie Schneider** – Michel Rein
- **Ernest T.** – Semiose
- **Camille Tsvétoukhine** – Loevenbruck
- **Fabienne Verdier** – Galerie Lelong

About the BNP Paribas Banque Privée Prize

Launched in 2024 by BNP Paribas Banque Privée and Art Paris, the BNP Paribas Banque Privée Prize – A Focus on the French Scene reflects the bank's longstanding commitment to supporting the French art scene. As the first private bank in France to create, as early as 1975, a dedicated art advisory service, BNP Paribas Banque Privée continues its patronage of contemporary creation through this prize.

The award naturally complements the support system for the French scene developed by Art Paris since 2018, which each year associates the subjective, historical, and critical perspective of a guest curator with a selection of French artists proposed by participating galleries around a defined theme.

Recognizing the career of a living artist from the French scene, regardless of age or notoriety, the prize pursues a dual objective: supporting an artist's career while promoting the work of their gallery, and fostering dialogue between generations by highlighting connections between established works and those of emerging artists. For its third edition, endowed with €40,000, the prize is awarded to one of the artists

featured in the thematic focus Babel: Art and Language in France, curated by Loïc Le Gall. Nathalie du Pasquier and Thomas Lévy-Lasne were the first laureates in 2024 and 2025, now joined by Sara Ouhaddou for the 2026 edition.

About Art Paris

A regional yet cosmopolitan fair focused on discovery, Art Paris has been committed to supporting the French scene. Since 2018, it has paired the subjective, historical, and critical perspective of a guest curator with the selection of specific projects by French artists proposed by participating galleries around a defined theme.

These have included: artists on the margins of history (François Piron, 2018), a French scene of another kind (Camille Morineau / AWARE, 2019), common and uncommon histories (Gaël Charbau, 2020), portrait and figuration (Hervé Mikaeloff, 2021), natural histories (Alfred Pacquement, 2022), art and engagement (Marc Donnadiou, 2023), fragile utopias (Éric de Chasse, 2024), Immortelle: A Focus on Figurative Painting in France (Amélie Adamo & Numa Hambursin, 2025), and for 2026, Babel – Art and Language in France curated by Loïc Le Gall.



About Loïc Le Gall, Guest Curator of Art Paris 2026

Loïc Le Gall has been Director of Passerelle Centre for Contemporary Art in Brest since 2019. An art historian and curator, he previously worked at the Centre national des arts plastiques and the Centre Pompidou from 2013 to 2019. From 2018 to 2019, he also led Bonnevalle, an initiative in Noisy-le-Sec dedicated to emerging creation. Since 2011, he has curated around fifty exhibitions in France and internationally, including solo shows by Reda Bousella, Michele Ciacciofera, Rafael Domenech, Alia Farid, Apostolos Georgiou, Fanny Gicquel, Han Bing, Nathanëlle Herbelin, Laura Henno, Hoda Kashiha, Liang Yuanwei, Caroline Mesquita, Hanako Murakami, Luiz Roque, Sean Scully, Achraf Touloub, and Philomena Williamson. He regularly contributes to journals, books, and catalogues dedicated to contemporary art.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Art Paris

April 9-12

2026 Grand Palais

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