



CATHERINE ISSERT ©Marie-Alix de Haro

ART PARIS 2025

GALERIE CATHERINE ISSERT

MARKS 50 YEARS OF VISIONARY ART

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In April 2025, under the grand glass canopy of the restored Grand Palais, the international art world gathered for a new edition of Art Paris—an essential fair dedicated to modern and contemporary art. Amid the vibrant energy of the event, I had the privilege of meeting Catherine Issert, founder of the eponymous gallery based in Saint-Paul-de-Vence. The encounter was particularly special: this year, *Galerie Catherine Issert* celebrates its 50th anniversary.

Since 1975, the gallery has embodied a singular vision of contemporary art, blending loyalty to pivotal 20th-century movements with ongoing support for contemporary creation. Its presence at Art Paris 2025 was no coincidence. Through a rigorous and coherent curatorial approach, the gallery reaffirmed its role as a landmark on the independent art scene.



Thomas Müller Sans titre, 2024, 29.7 x 21 cm

A Story of Artistic Commitment: From 1975 to Today

It all began in 1975 in Saint-Paul-de-Vence. Catherine Issert—then a young art enthusiast trained at the École du Louvre—gained early experience in prestigious galleries such as Jean Fournier in Paris and Galerie Maeght. With this dual academic and professional background, she made a bold move: opening her own gallery just steps from the legendary Colombe d'Or.

From the outset, Galerie Catherine Issert adopted a resolutely avant-garde stance. The gallery championed movements such as Supports/Surfaces, Fluxus, conceptual art, Land art, and Arte Povera—promoting forms often sidelined by the mainstream art market.

Over the decades, the gallery has forged deep, enduring relationships with artists like Jean-Michel Alberola, François Morellet, Claude Viallat, Ben, Jean Charles Blais, and Gérard Traquandi. These longstanding partnerships reflect a commitment that transcends exhibition calendars.

Yet the gallery has never become nostalgic. It also fosters younger voices—Marine Wallon, Xavier Theunis, Gautier Ferrero—nurturing a vibrant dialogue between heritage and innovation.

Across five decades, Galerie Catherine Issert has remained true to a clear philosophy: to support artists who engage both form and meaning, navigating the tension between visual rigor and intellectual exploration.

Art Paris 2025: Loyalty and Openness Beneath the Restored Glass Roof

This year's Art Paris marked a significant return to the historic Grand Palais, freshly reopened after major renovations. Beneath its luminous glass roof, galleries from across the globe presented the best of the contemporary scene. One booth stood out: Galerie Catherine Issert.

To honor its 50th anniversary, the gallery showcased a thoughtfully curated selection of artists that embody its spirit of consistency and discovery, loyalty and evolution.

The presentation included:

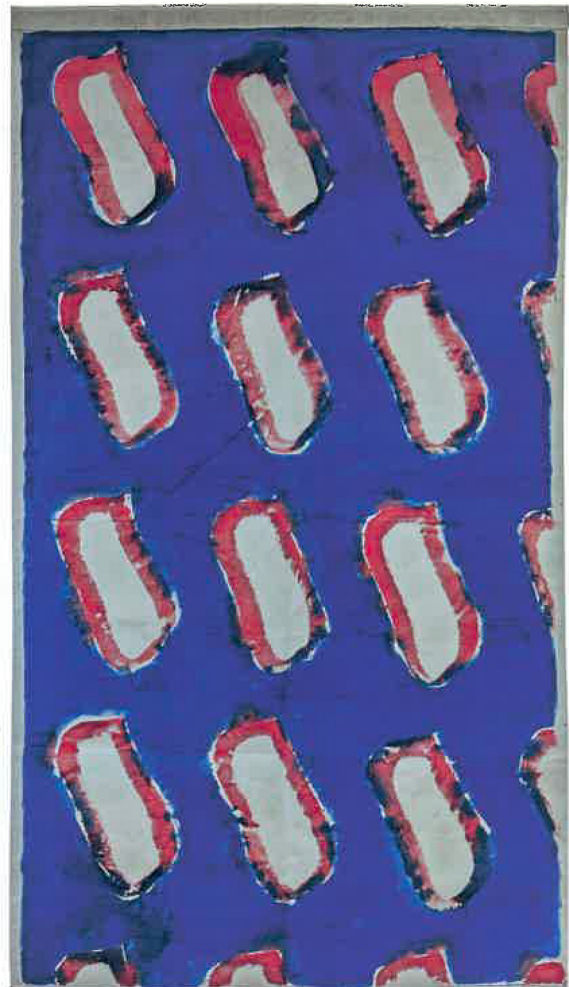
Historic figures: Jean-Michel Alberola, Claude Viallat, Jean Charles Blais

Contemporary voices: Marine Wallon, Yayoi Gunji, Xavier Theunis, Gautier Ferrero

Together, their works offered a transgenerational reading of abstraction and materiality—where space, gesture, and color echoed in harmony. Designed as a unified composition, the booth provided a poetic interlude amidst the fair's bustle.

"This feels bit like coming full circle," said Catherine Issert during our conversation, "but without nostalgia. I've always looked forward."

Claude Viallat 441/2024, 2024, 210 x 115 cm



50 Years of Art: An Anniversary Exhibition in Saint-Paul-de-Vence

Following Art Paris, the gallery will mark its milestone anniversary with a major group exhibition in Saint-Paul-de-Vence, running from June 28 to September 20, 2025. Around forty artists will be featured—each selected for their role in shaping the gallery's past and future.

The choice of a group show is intentional. It reflects Issert's enduring vision: to highlight a plurality of voices, foster dialogue across works, and embrace aesthetic intersections. This won't be a static retrospective—it's a living, breathing celebration. New works will be shown alongside older, sometimes never-before-exhibited pieces.

Artists include:

Established names: Jean-Michel Alberola, John M Armleder, Ben, François Morellet, Claude Viallat, Jean Charles Blais, Cécile Bart, Pier Paolo Calzolari

Younger and emerging talents: Marine Wallon, Minjung Kim, Thomas Müller, Xavier Theunis, Gautier Ferrero

The exhibition promises a sensitive, rigorous journey through fifty years of engagement with contemporary art. A commemorative catalogue, to be published by Bernard Chauveau Édition, will accompany the show—featuring key historical moments, critical essays, archives, and artist testimonies.

"I didn't want a frozen celebration," Issert notes. "I wanted this exhibition to speak to the present—with living, active artists and works that still question, explore, and provoke."

Set to be a highlight of Provence's cultural summer, the exhibition is also a quiet homage to a woman who has cultivated art as a way of being in the world.

Interview with Catherine Issert: A Conscious Commitment

At her booth in the Grand Palais, surrounded by the works of artists she has accompanied for decades, Catherine Issert shared her thoughts with unpretentious clarity.

Loyalty to Art Paris

"I've always been loyal to this fair," she said with a smile. *"I've been coming for years. It's one of the few that has maintained its identity—French and European—without being swallowed by scale."*

Her bond with Art Paris is deeply personal. Every edition reconnects her with the hopes and uncertainties of her early days.

"I almost opened the gallery in Paris," she recalled. "It was a real option. But I felt so rooted in the light, space, and artistic history of Saint-Paul-de-Vence. That's where I belonged—and I have no regrets."

Her loyalty extends beyond location—it shapes her approach to being a gallerist: close to the artists, independent in vision, and resistant to commercial pressure.

The Artist-Gallery Relationship

Catherine Issert doesn't speak of "representing" artists. She prefers: "those I walk alongside."

Gautier Ferrero Yaman 2024, 92 x 73 cm





In a world driven by transactions and immediacy, she values time, trust, and loyalty.

"I need a real relationship with the artists. It can't just be business. We build together. I'm with them in their doubts, their searches. And often, they lead me where I wouldn't have gone alone."

Some artists become part of a quiet, informal circle where human connection matters as much as the work.

"I've seen artists hang their first painting with me, then evolve, grow, reinvent themselves. That's what moves me—being able to accompany a full artistic life."

Art Against the Tide of Trends

Since 1975, Catherine Issert has witnessed waves of trends, schools, and market booms. But she has stayed the course—anchored in discipline, intuition, and freedom.

"I never wanted to follow trends. Often, I don't relate to them. A gallerist needs direction—a vision. It's up to us to propose, not just to follow."

Asked if there's a guiding principle behind her work, she smiles:

"Yes. I'm always searching for something essential. Not necessarily spectacular. Not trendy. But something that lasts. For me, a work of art is a space for thought—not just an image."

Catherine Issert stands among the quiet but essential figures in the French art world. Her integrity has earned her a place of lasting influence. In 50 years, she has built a demanding yet deeply human universe.

"I've seen many artists come and go, many galleries too. What remains are the connections, the artworks, and this freedom to choose—still today—without compromise."

Catherine Issert has not just built a gallery—she has created a story, a philosophy, and a way of inhabiting the art world.

Her commitment transcends exhibitions and artists. It is personal, rooted in values and her deep connection to Saint-Paul-de-Vence.

In a rapidly shifting art world, where trends flicker and fade, she has remained faithful to her vision of free, uncompromising art. Through her gallery, art becomes an adventure—an ongoing journey, far from market dictates.

Meeting her confirms a vital truth: art is not just a product, but a human endeavor—woven from loyalty, collaboration, and passion. That is the enduring legacy—and quiet beauty—of Galerie Catherine Issert: a place where history continues to be written each day, in the ink of authenticity. ■