



Art market // Feature

Art world moves in on the laid-back Balearic islands

With Hauser & Wirth's outpost on Menorca, new Ibiza gallery Can Garita and CAN Art Ibiza fair, the bohemian location is attracting art buyers

Dorian Batycka

14 June 2023



Ibiza is building its credentials as an art destination that embraces the Balearic Islands' laid-back outlook
Photocreo Bednarek

Home to a Swiss mega-gallery, and nestled in the shimmering waters of the Mediterranean Sea, the Balearic Islands form an archipelago of five enchantingly beautiful islands full of rich cultural heritage. While Ibiza is synonymous with vibrant nightlife and music festivals, its neighbours Mallorca and Menorca also have diverse historical legacies and thriving art scenes of their own.

In 2021, Hauser & Wirth opened an outpost on Menorca, an island with a population of just 96,000 but an annual tourist turnover of 1.4 million people. Housed in an 18th-century

repurposed naval hospital, Hauser's 1,500 sq. m art centre is not so much a white cube as it is an oasis of art. The space pays homage to the most quintessential parts of the Balearic spirit: gastronomic pursuits nestled within a kind of hippie laid-backness. The gallery space is surrounded by a series of lush gardens designed by Piet Oudolf.

Cultural haven

Yet, before the mega-gallery set up shop on Menorca, the Balearics had long been a haven for cultural wayfarers of all shapes and stripes. In 1932 the then wandering cultural theorist Walter Benjamin took a ferry from Barcelona to Ibiza, where he penned several postcards describing the quaint villages and uniquely inspiring cultural life he found on the island.



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CAN Art Ibiza, which launched in 2022, aims to provide a platform for emerging galleries, as well as rekindling the island's artistic heritage

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Ibiza is without a doubt the most famous of the islands, and a new art fair, launched last year, is trying to recapture some of the Benjamin spirit. CAN Art Ibiza—which this year will welcome 34 galleries from four continents and will run from 12-16 July—was conceived by director Sergio Sancho as a way of rekindling the island's fascination with the art of drifting.

CAN Art Ibiza is unique in the way it attempts to bring collectors into contact with the island's multifaceted offerings, combining art and social gatherings to offer a more laid-back experience than mega-fairs like Art Basel or ARCO. Last year the fair organised a party at an organic wine farm with the fashion brand Gucci, in addition to several other offsite and parallel programmes that gesture towards the island's unique essence.



“What I like about Ibiza is the freedom and non-judgement”

According to Sancho, the aim of this edition is to platform emerging galleries and foster dialogue with the vast array of cultural life in and around the Balearics. “As a passionate advocate of art and cultural exchange, Ibiza has always been a destination where art flourishes,” he says.

Offsite, CAN has organised exhibitions including one at the Faro de ses Coves Blanques, located inside a former lighthouse overlooking Sant Antoni Bay, which will feature works by Julià Panadès, a Mallorcan artist represented by Fran Reus Gallery. At Sa Punta des Molí Cultural Center, an exhibition by the Ibizan artist Jesús de Miguel will also open at the same time as the fair. La Nave Salinas Foundation, which last year hosted a sprawling exhibition by the artist Eva Beresin, will this year show a new series of works by the Australian artist Jonny Niesche, who is represented at the fair by The Hole NYC gallery, while London's Carl Kostyál gallery will return with a pop-up exhibition, *Painters of Modern Life*, curated by Katharine Kostyal.



Laia Estruch's *Kite 2* (2023) is part of Hauser & Wirth's *After the Mediterranean* show in Menorca; the mega-gallery opened an outpost on the island in 2021
Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth; photo by Roberto Ruiz

In addition to these, CAN is organising collector visits to MACE (the Contemporary Art Museum of Eivissa); Estudi Tur Costa, a cultural space located in the town of Jesús; and Casa Broner, the former residence and studio of German artist Edwin Broner, one of the island's most recognised architectural destinations, a Modernist masterpiece that evokes a mid-20th century approach to design that would later infiltrate and proliferate across the Balearics.

This summer will also see the opening of a new gallery, Can Garita, founded by the former Perrotin staffer Sarah Suco Torres. Housed in a traditional fishing hut known in local dialect as a *casetas de pescadores*, the retrofitted beach gallery will open with an exhibition by the US artist Grason Ratowsky on 10 July.

“What attracted me to the island was the architecture and nature but also the freedom. There is an energy and tranquility that co-exist,” Torres says. She plans to hold a rotating series of three to four exhibitions per year, in addition to supporting her artists through partnership with a local residency, Las Cicadas Ibiza, located in a 500-year-old restored farmhouse that hosts groups of three artists over four-week periods throughout the year.