

At the Gstaad Art Week I discovered exclusive and refined art in perfect harmony with nature

Between art chalets, improvised Calder exhibitions at the airport and exceptional characters

BY RICCARDO FREDDO

Gstaad Art Week: Guide to the 2025 Edition

Being in **Gstaad** is like immersing yourself in a world suspended between luxury and pristine nature. I arrived there aboard *Monarch* (2017), the train designed by Sarah Morris and commissioned by Maja Hoffmann's *Elevation*. With its bright colors inspired by the Monarch butterfly, it is a moving work of art that traverses the historic GoldenPass railway between Montreux and Zweisimmen. Here I had my first taste of the perfect fusion between art and Alpine landscape.



Courtesy of Sarah Morris and *Elevation*

Welcoming me in Gstaad is Anna Guggenbuehl Landau of 8One, a creative agency specializing in unique art itineraries and experiences around the world. Through her work, Anna masterfully supports the art ecosystem, sponsoring exhibitions and collaborating with non-profit organizations.

The first stop of the week was at the Gstaad Yacht Club for a talk with artist Not Vital and José Castañal of Thaddaeus Ropac Gallery. The event was part of *The Gstaad Cultural Encounters*, an initiative founded by Rita Caltagirone and Cindy Schönrich, designed to deepen artistic dialogue in a refined and convivial context. “It is increasingly important to share a high-quality

cultural and meaningful dialogue about art, in a current world that thinks almost only of its market,” says Rita Caltagirone. Not Vital presented the concept of SCARCH , a fusion of sculpture and architecture, talking about his project *House to Watch the Sunset* , houses built in remote places with a single purpose: to contemplate the sunset.



courtesy of Not Vital and Thaddaeus Ropac



Visages courtesy of Almine Rech

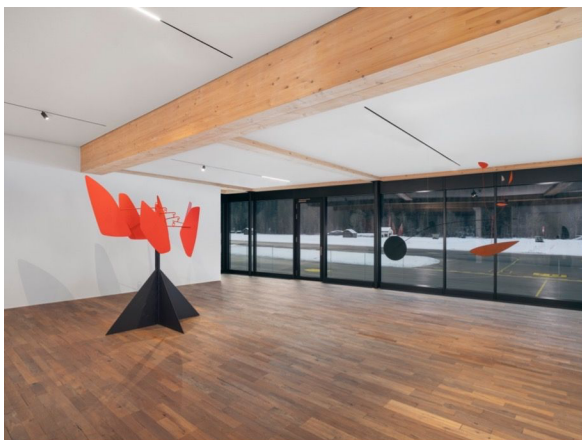
The queen of the Gstaad Art Week is undoubtedly Almine Rech. The gallerist accompanied me to the opening of *Visages* , a group show that explores contemporary and historical portraiture through works by Picasso, Warhol, Baselitz, and Richard Prince. The show reflects on identity and self-perception in an era marked by digital transformation and social disconnection. During our tour, Rech told me amusing anecdotes about her artists, underlining the exceptional

relationship she has with them. In particular, she spoke to me about her collaboration with James Turrell, describing how their friendship was built over time through shared ideas and a shared passion for light and space. Turrell, known for his immersive light installations, has always had a special relationship with Almine, who has been able to interpret and promote his artistic vision in a unique way; in fact, Almine opened his first gallery in Paris in 1989 with one of his exhibitions.



Almine Rech and James Turrell courtesy of Almine Rech

Another must-see exhibition was *Calder in Flight* at Tarmak22 at the private airport in Gstaad , organized by Nahmad Contemporary and curated by Edward Enninful. The works of Alexander Calder, the works tell the artist's relationship with movement and aerodynamics, creating a parallel with the world of aviation.



courtesy of Tarmak22 and Nahmad Contemporary



courtesy of Tarmak22 and Nahmad Contemporary

During the week, I had the opportunity to visit a private residence designed by Burkinabe architect and Pritzker Prize winner Francis Kéré, creative director Nachson Mimran, and Swiss architects Chaletbau Matti. **This chalet pays homage to African culture** through art and an interdisciplinary approach, creating a bridge between Africa and the rest of the world. The integration of art and artisanal artifacts reinforces the dialogue between tradition and innovation.

A signature element of the property is *Chalet III* by SUPERFLEX, a sculptural installation made of marble fragments, which acts as both an artistic statement and a habitat for diverse life forms. Inspired by children's drawings, the work challenges the perception of space and scale, encouraging coexistence between living beings. Over time, it could even transform into a coral reef, adapting to rising sea levels and embodying a message of sustainability and harmony between ecosystems.



*Photography by Cecil Mathieu | Image courtesy of Nachson Mimran



Courtesy of Los Vasos de Agua Clara

One of the highlights of the week was lunch at the Beracasa residence, hosted by Elizabeth and Alfredo. The house, with its cozy and refined atmosphere, was the perfect place for stimulating artistic conversations. What really made the lunch special was being able to toast with glasses inspired by the works of Salvador Dalí; unique design by Los Vasos de Agua Clara, made by

Clara Riera and Maite L. Fonta. It was not just a lunch, but a celebration of art, conviviality and the connections that form around a table.

The Art Gstaad Fair was presented by FP Journe, an exclusive brand that combines watchmaking and contemporary art. François-Paul Journe personally designs each watch, actively supporting art and culture. For the second edition of Art Gstaad 2025, FP Journe has renewed its commitment to promoting artistic dialogue and participation demonstrates its dedication to craftsmanship and interdisciplinary creativity, reinforcing the philosophy that links art and watchmaking in the pursuit of excellence.



The fair featured galleries with works of the highest quality, but one in particular struck me deeply: **John Giorno's painting *Life is a Killer***, exhibited at the Kurimazutto gallery. This work is part of the Black and White Poem Paintings series, which he began in 2010. The silkscreens on canvas combine powerful and contradictory messages from his poems, which strike the reader as imperatives, in a balance between sadness, sacredness and profanity.



Thanks to James Koch and Barbara Corti of Hauser & Wirth, I had the opportunity to visit the Vieux Chalet, the historic residence of Gunter Sachs, famous collector and husband of Brigitte Bardot. Today transformed into an exclusive exhibition space, the chalet hosts exhibitions by appointment during the winter and summer seasons in Gstaad.

Featuring exposed wooden beams and intimate spaces, the Vieux Chalet creates a fascinating dialogue between art and Alpine architecture. Works by Picasso, Calder, On Kawara and other modern masters sit alongside contemporary artists such as Pipilotti Rist, Rashid Johnson and Nicolas Party. Among the most intriguing curiosities, the famous swimming pool with a secret room adds a touch of mystery and charm to this historic home of the German playboy.

Since 2015, under the direction of James Koch, Hauser & Wirth has made this chalet a unique environment for the enjoyment of art, offering visitors an immersive experience among modern and contemporary masterpieces in an extraordinary context.

The Gstaad Art Week is not just an artistic event, but an immersive experience that blends art, nature and lifestyle in a unique context . An unmissable event for those who want to experience art in an exclusive and timeless atmosphere. The quality of the works exhibited, the high level of cultural encounters and the beauty of the Alpine context make this week an unrepeatable experience for collectors, artists and art lovers. Art here breathes fresh air: like nowhere else, the dialogue between tradition and contemporaneity creates a perfect synergy between past, present and future.