

Gallery Network (<https://news.artnet.com/buyers-guide/gallery-network>) partner

Spotlight: This New York Exhibition Explores The Multi-Faceted Appeal of 'African Abstraction'

"African Abstraction" at Montague Contemporary brings together the works of artists Bouvy Enkobo, Marc Standing, Muna Malik, and Thameur Mejr.

Artnet Gallery Network (<https://news.artnet.com/about/artnet-gallery-network-737>), April 8, 2022



Thameur Mejri, *Untitled (Stuff)*. Courtesy of Montague Contemporary.

Every month, hundreds of galleries add newly available works by thousands of artists to the Artnet Gallery Network—and every week, we shine a spotlight on one artist you should know. Check out what we have in store, and inquire for more with one simple click.

What You Need to Know: New York's Montague Contemporary champions emerging and mid-career contemporary artists from Africa and the African diaspora, with an aim of creating a more complex narrative around the arts and histories of the continent. The gallery's current exhibition "[African Abstraction](https://www.artnet.com/galleries/montague-contemporary/african-abstract)" (<https://www.artnet.com/galleries/montague-contemporary/african-abstract>)" does just that—showcasing

works of four contemporary artists who are exploring abstraction to unique ends. Artists Bouvy Enkobo (Democratic Republic of Congo), Marc Standing (Zimbabwe), Muna Malik (Yemen), and Thameur Mejri (Tunisia) all present new works for the exhibition.

Why We Like It: Amid a market fascination with figurative African art, these four artists present alternative paths forward and their own wholly distinct set of fixations and artistic strategies via abstraction. But rather than reaching for universalizing associations of color and form, each shows how much specificity and place abstract art can bring into play. Thus, for instance, Enkobo's turbo-charged, swirling canvasses brim with an energy that is meant to suggest the dynamism of urban life. But meanwhile, in a totally other register, another artist in the show, Mejri, *does* incorporate the figure of the body into his canvasses—but it's the fragmented and deliberately distorted body. Here, the process of abstraction is meant to show how systems of power warp human life. All in all "African Abstraction" is a lesson in just how malleable abstract art is, and how much lovers of the genre have to learn from artists from Africa.

According to the Gallery: Montague Hermann, founder of the gallery, writes: "In a sea of figurative works from the Congo, DRC-born Bouvy Enkobo's work is remarkably different and has attracted some excellent collectors (he has been purchased by the Africa First Collection, the Fondation Hironnelle, the Delegation of the European Union, and two recent acquisitions from significant private collections in New York and Oklahoma). Zimbabwean-born Marc Standing's recent works are inspired by several months spent painting at Wangechi Mutu's studio in Kenya during the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in a cooler, earth-tone-inspired palette (just sold one work to the Vajsova-Jones Collection in Singapore and another to a private collector in New York). Yemen-born/Los Angeles-based Muna Malik's works are a refreshing, contemporary interpretation of how we engage with nature and artifacts to understand our place in space and time—these works inspired by the Las Geel cave paintings in Somalia are have entirely sold out except for these two remaining works—one is currently being shown as part of the 'blu/s' show at ESMoa in California. Tunisian Thameur Mejri, one of our favorite artists tackling vanity and political agency through deconstruction, is having an incredible year, with two concurrent Museum shows—a solo exhibition 'Until My Veins Collapse' at the Musee d'Art Contemporain Lyon and as part of the group show 'And I Must Scream' at the Carlos Museum in Atlanta."

See images from "[African Abstraction \(https://www.artnet.com/galleries/montague-contemporary/african-abstraction\)](https://www.artnet.com/galleries/montague-contemporary/african-abstraction)," below.



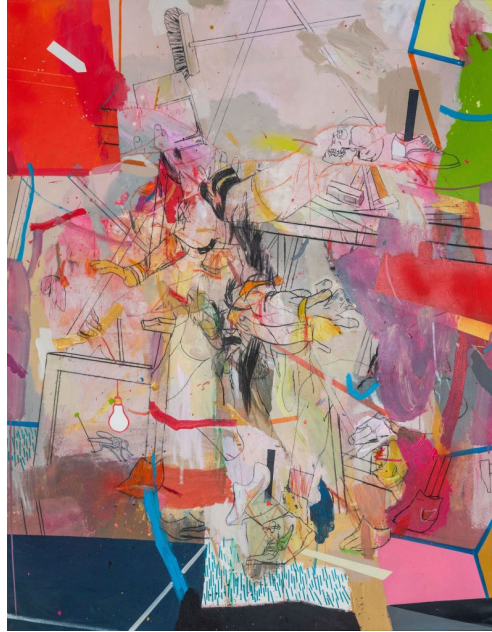
Marc Standing, *The Era of Deep Time*. Courtesy of Montague Contemporary.



Muna Malik, *Spice Dune*. Courtesy of Montague Contemporary.



Bouvy Enkobo, *Ecstasies*. Courtesy of Montague Contemporary.



Thameur Mejri, *Be Prepared for Hell II*. Courtesy of Montague Contemporary.

["African Abstraction \(https://www.artnet.com/galleries/montague-contemporary/african-abstract\)"](https://www.artnet.com/galleries/montague-contemporary/african-abstract) is on view at Montague Contemporary through April 23, 2022.

Follow [Artnet News \(https://www.facebook.com/artnet\)](https://www.facebook.com/artnet) on Facebook:

Like 384K

[Want to stay ahead of the art world? Subscribe to our newsletter to get the breaking news, eye-opening interviews, and incisive critical takes that drive the conversation forward.](http://link.artnet.com/join/522/newscta&hash=8e9534fb495110baf97a368037111816)
<http://link.artnet.com/join/522/newscta&hash=8e9534fb495110baf97a368037111816>

SHARE





(<https://news.artnet.com/about/artnet-gallery-network-737>)

Artnet Gallery Network

(<https://news.artnet.com/about/artnet-gallery-network-737>)



Montague Contemporary

USA, New York, New York

Member since 2021

[EXPLORE GALLERY \(HTTP://WWW.ARTNET.COM/GALLERIES/MONTAGUE-CONTE](http://www.artnet.com/galleries/montague-conte)

Updated 2 weeks ago

SIGN UP TO OUR DAILY NEWSLETTER

The best of Artnet News in your inbox

Enter your email

SUBSCRIBE

Artnet (<http://www.artnet.com>)

Artnet Auctions (<https://www.artnet.com/auctions/>)

Advertise (<http://www.artnet.com/advertising/>)

Press Releases (<http://www.artnet.com/about/press-releases.aspx>)

Terms (<http://www.artnet.com/about/terms-and-conditions-of-use>)

Privacy (<http://www.artnet.com/about/privacy-formal.asp>)

Cookies (<http://www.artnet.com/about/privacy-formal.asp#Cookies>)

About (<https://news.artnet.com/about>)

artnet Magazine Archive:

English (US) (<http://www.artnet.com/magazineus/frontpage.asp>)

Deutsch (<http://www.artnet.de/magazine/>)

Francais (<http://www.artnet.fr/magazine/frontpage.asp>)



(<http://www.facebook.com/artnet/>) (<http://www.instagram.com/artnet/>) (<http://www.twitter.com/artnet/>) (<http://www.pinterest.com/artnet/>) (<http://www.linkedin.com/company/artnet/>)



(<http://weibo.com/artnet>)