

Moisi, Laurent. "Game on Istanbul: Contemporary Istanbul Opens." *Whitewall*. (September 13, 2017)

# whitewall

## Game on Istanbul: Contemporary Istanbul Opens

By Laurent Moisi

The astro turf welcoming the guests to the 12th edition of Contemporary Istanbul (September 14—17) is just the starting point of this year's fair which aligns with the opening of the Istanbul Biennial (September 16—November 12), creating a unique art week.

The atmosphere at the fair preview on Wednesday felt calm, despite the current tormented political situation in Turkey. Under the leadership of first-time Director Kamiar Maleki, Contemporary Istanbul is challenging the perception of Turkey as a country closing itself off to the world.

Instead, the fair brings together a group of top tier galleries from all around the world (primarily Europe and the Middle East), like Vigo,

# LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

Victoria Miro, Leila Heller, and 55 Bellechasse. Booths with solo presentations of the work of Middle Eastern artists abound, offering the chance for discovery and dialogue for a new visitor, like us.

Challenging the traditional fair layout, Maleki organized the floor in a playful, yet efficient way, outfitting the space in classic green astro turf to remind us of Istanbul's parks that used to play such an important role in the cultural and social life of the Ottoman Empire and the early days of the republic.

This end-of-summer fair in the former capital of the empire is full of promise. Now aligned with museum show openings and the biennial, this art week is clearly one to watch and see how it evolves under its new direction.