



Petit Palais
Musée des Beaux-Arts
de la Ville de Paris

Bilal Hamdad

*Paname**

17 October 2025 - 8 February 2026



Bilal Hamdad, *Reflets*, 2024. 245 × 200 cm, oil on canvas. Collection particulière. Courtesy de l'artiste et TEMPLON, Paris – Bruxelles – New York. Photo © Isabelle Arthuis © Adagp, Paris, 2025

With its ambition of providing a platform for artists past and present, every year, the Petit Palais invites contemporary artists to exhibit their work amongst its permanent collections.

For this new season, the Petit Palais invites painter Bilal Hamdad to take possession of the museum's galleries, fostering a unique dialogue with paintings by Courbet, Fernand Pelez, Carolus-Duran, Benjamin-Constant, Léon Lhermitte, and many others. The exhibition features some twenty paintings, including two works created specifically for the occasion. This is the first and most ambitious exhibition devoted to the artist in a museum institution.

Born in 1987 in Sidi Bel Abbès, Algeria, Bilal Hamdad received an initial artistic education in his hometown before continuing his studies first in Algiers, then in Bourges, France, and finally the Beaux-Arts de Paris. Graduating in 2018, he rapidly made a name for himself with his large-scale pictorial compositions depicting scenes of Parisian life that convey a discreet yet powerful poetry of contemporary solitude.

*Paname is a common nickname for Paris

PRESS RELEASE

September 2025

CURATORS:

Annick Lemoine, Chief Heritage
Curator and Director of the
Petit Palais

Sixtine de Saint-Léger, Head of
Decorative Arts before 1800 and
Contemporary Art at the Petit Palais

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With snapshots as their starting point, he creates canvases of a striking naturalism. Like the photographer Atget before him, he captures the effervescence of the French capital by means of tight framing, vanishing lines, and a compelling chiaroscuro, documenting today's Paris. His works highlight solitary figures, absorbed in their thoughts or activities, often at a remove from the urban hustle and bustle. To the effervescence of the city, Bilal Hamdad contrasts the silent resonance of individuals: an urban landscape that is both populated and interior, yet overwhelmingly human.

His work generates a constant dialogue with the great masters of the past. Rubens, Caravaggio, Velázquez, but also Degas, Manet, Courbet, and Hopper all inform his practice. On a residency at the Casa de Velázquez in Madrid, the artist meditated at length in front of the paintings by the great masters on display at the Prado. Echoes of these influences emerge, inviting visitors to hone their observational skills in search of references from near and far. His work, at the crossroads of documentary and pictorial fable, builds bridges between past and present. Eager to place his work in the continuity of a renewed art history, he affirms the relevance of painting today, albeit in an era saturated with images.

A regular visitor to and avid fan of the Petit Palais, the artist approached the works within the museum's collections as if engaging in a silent conversation. In this exhibition, he brings contemporary Paris into a historic cultural space: the public can see métro exits, hurried lone figures, café scenes ... all moments of ordinary modern life captured in his paintings. Taking inspiration from Léon Lhermitte's *Les Halles de Paris*, a monumental and emblematic work in the Petit Palais collections, Bilal Hamdad responds with *Paname*, a painting of equally imposing dimensions. The artist takes a market at a métro exit as his subject matter; a scene captured last spring and offers a poetic and fragmented vision to convey the present moment.

In Bilal Hamdad's paintings, the capital's inhabitants become discreet allegories of the everyday urban landscape, bearers of a shared, multicultural, and universal experience. By incorporating the echoes of the old masters into the feverish rhythm of the contemporary world, the artist may be said to orchestrate a visual polyphony where silence speaks as much as the crowd. Invited by the Petit Palais, Bilal Hamdad sets to music this vital and uninterrupted dialogue between the works of yesterday and images of today, with a rare accuracy and poetry.

This exhibition has been organized with the support of the Galerie Templon.

TEMPLON

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PRACTICAL INFORMATION

PETIT PALAIS - MUSÉE DES
BEAUX-ARTS DE LA VILLE DE PARIS
Avenue Winston-Churchill,
75008 Paris
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petitpalais.paris.en

Tuesday to Sunday from 10am
to 6pm.
Free entrance

Accessible to visitors with
disabilities.



Bilal Hamdad, *Angelus*, 2021.
200 × 160 cm, oil on canvas. Collection privée,
Paris. Photo : Helianthe Bourdeaux-Maurin,
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