

Bonnes Mères

From 18th March to 31st August 2026
Mucem, J4, level 2 (1,000 m²)

Curatorship	Caroline Chenu, Research Officer at the Mucem Anne-Cécile Mailfert, President of the 'Fondation des Femmes'
Scenography	SCENO Agency, Birgitte Fryland
Graphic Design	Opixido



© Pierre et Gilles, *La Vierge à l'enfant*, Hafsia Herzi et Loric, 2009
Installation at the church of Sainte Eustache,
as part of 'La Force de l'art', Paris, April 2009
Format unframed: 200 x 134 cm; Format framed: 260.5 x 194.5 cm
Pierre et Gilles collection

For over four thousand years, motherhood has been central to tales, rites and images that shape the course of societies. Drawing from Mediterranean cultural sources, the exhibition *Bonnes Mères* explores motherhood as an intimate experience, social construct, political matter and artistic theme. From the ancient mother goddess to Marseille's "Good Mother", from patriotic heroines to contemporary artists, it reflects on the many ways motherhood is represented, often laden with expectations, and reveals the richness and variety of maternal experience. In three thematic movements, the exhibition first unfolds the imaginary realm of traditional maternal figures, then brings to light the multiple and sometimes invisible realities of motherhood, before evoking the bonds and transmissions that shape the mother-child relationship.

Bathed in light and immersive in its design, the scenography accompanies this emotional journey. It reveals the physical, symbolic and political weight carried by motherhood, while honouring those maternal figures long consigned to the shadows.

Exhibited Artists	Kader Attia, Nour Awada, Omar Bâ, Letizia Battaglia, Carlo Cignani, Jérémie Cosimi, Jean-Honoré Fragonard, Nathanaëlle Herbelin, Fatima Mazmouz, Prune Nourry, Pierre et Gilles, Niki de Saint Phalle, Karine Rougier, Zineb Sedira, Freddy Tsimba, Joana Vasconcelos and Mâkhi Xenakis.
Typologies	Ancient and contemporary works, small terracotta figures, large-scale paintings, photographs, excerpts from films including one produced by the Mucem, monumental installations... 400 works in total, among which around a hundred come from the Mucem's ethnographic collections.
Lending Institutions	Musée d'Orsay, Benaki Museum in Athens, Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris, and Musée des Beaux-Arts in Nancy.

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