

Mohamed Bourouissa Pour Noubia 13. 9.–18. 1. 2026

Press Information / Press Tour: Thu 11. 9. 2025, 11 am

The Marta Herford is presenting the most extensive solo museum exhibition in Germany to date of the internationally known artist **Mohamed Bourouissa** (b. 1978 in Blida, Algeria, lives in Paris). In gripping, poetic spatial narratives, the artist uses individual protagonists as examples to address thematic fields ranging from a colonial history that continues to be written today and structural discrimination to personal memories. Developed by invited curator Oriane Durand (b. 1981 in Marseille, lives in Berlin), the exhibition traces a path that starts out from Germany and extends via the suburbs of Paris to the artist's Algerian homeland. The selection includes photographs, films and installations dating from 2005 to the present, though many of the works have been specially adapted to the architecture of the museum or are being shown for the first time.

The exhibition titled *Pour Noubia* and its reconceived cinematic installation are dedicated to the artist's aunt, who is buried in Bielefeld. The film *Noubia* (2025) transforms the twenty-two-metre-tall exhibition space (Dome) into a kind of mausoleum, in which it is projected in a large format on a sheet of around a hundred square metres. Noubia Meier was born in Blida in 1942 and began to work as a prostitute during the Algerian War (1954–1962) when she was still young. She migrated via France and Belgium to Osnabrück, where she worked first in a brothel and later independently as a dominatrix and also married.

When she died in 2022, she left her nephew numerous photographs and video cassettes. Mohamed Bourouissa not only visited his aunt many times but also made audio recordings with her. On that basis and employing artificial intelligence, he developed a film that brings her back to life.

It is embedded into a gravel landscape as a spatial installation and is surrounded by additional sculptures to form a place of calm. In many aspects of the exhibition design,

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Bourouissa cites his aunt's surroundings; for example, a pool is reminiscent of one of the photographs from the brothel in Osnabrück. He appears himself as a child in several places in the film. The young boy by the pool may reference Bourouissa's own biography.

The empathetic portrait of the Arabic migrant and sex worker describes the obstacles she had to overcome but also her strength, her unbroken joie de vivre and her self-determined path to independence as a woman and entrepreneur. Although Bourouissa's work always emerge from his own surroundings, this new work reveals a narrative that is at one personal and collective.

The film *Généalogie de la Violence* (2024, Genealogy of Violence), which has won multiple prizes, leads to the suburbs of Paris. From the perspective of a narrator, it tells the story of his encounter with a young woman. The two are talking in a parked car when they are suddenly questioned by the police. This question which supposedly could have been trivial exposes the logic of racial profiling and the actions of a state system permeated by racist structures. The powerful visual level of the film, on which the real and the imagined space transition into one another in animation, makes it possible to understand the enormous psychological burden that those concerned experience.

Grids and hence structures characterise the works but also the design of the course through the exhibition. Large blue-, red- and orange-illuminated spatial elements titled *Lila* (derived from *layl*, the Arabic word for "night") (2024) bring together numerous objects and fragments of sculptures from the studio. The series *Hands* (2024–2025) continues these multi-layered pictorial elements on the walls. The series of wall objects consists of layers of foils and grid structures behind and on which are photographs of parts of the body, such as hands and faces, and gestures.

The physical encounter in the exhibition results from a number of facets: For example, there is an aluminium sculpture in the form of a tooth with a cavity, which can be read as a metaphor for the profound consequences of changed eating habits introduced into occupied areas by colonial influence. This and other works symbolise questions of physical existence in the context of one culture ruling another.

The photo series *Périphérique* (Peripheral), produced between 2005 and 2011, is dedicated to another chapter related to Paris; it made Mohamed Bourouissa famous on the contemporary art scene. The photographs were taken in the banlieues of Paris and show young men in staged compositions. The scenes cite nineteenth-century paintings like those of French painter Eugène Delacroix. Bourouissa uses the European canon of pictures to offer an empathetic and dignified mise-en-scène of marginalised groups in society today.

A wood structure inspired by the architecture of the psychiatric clinic in Blida marks another station in the exhibition. Blida, the hometown of the artist's family, became very important thanks to the work of the psychiatrist and anticolonial thinker Frantz Fanon. In the 1950s, Fanon studied there the profound psychological effects of colonialism on the colonised population.

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Standing at the centre of the installation is the multi-channel video work *Le murmure des fantômes* (The Whispering of Ghosts) (2018). In the film, a former patient of Fanon, Bourlem Mohamed, tells of experiencing the violent acts of French colonial rule. The traumatised protagonist found his own way to process them by designing the clinic's garden. In this work Bourouissa not only addresses the aftereffects of the Algerian War but also focuses on an exemplary form of resilience.

Finally, the exhibition shows a series of previously unpublished photographs taken in 2007 and 2008 in and around Blida, Algeria. There are portraits and landscapes in various forms that run across the curving walls of the gallery like a living panorama. They go beyond documentary realism to convey with unpretentious immediacy a feeling of everyday experience that opens up a space of resonance and connection.

The exhibition has been realised in cooperation with the Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich, where it will be shown in June 2026.

With the kind support of

Ministerium für
Kultur und Wissenschaft
des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen



Events

Fri Sept 12, 7 pm, Opening

Welcome remarks: Kathleen Rahn, Director of Marta Herford; Dr. Michael Reitemeyer, Head of the Department of Culture, Ministry of Culture and Science of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia; Christian Kötter-Lixfeld, Managing Director, Kultur Herford gGmbH; Exhibition introduction: Invited curator Oriane Durand

Sun Nov 23, 3 pm, Curator's tour with Oriane Durand

Wed Oct 15, 6 pm, Director's tour with Kathleen Rahn

through the exhibitions *Mohamed Bourouissa – Pour Noubia* and *Ingrid Wiener – Einfach machen und tun*

Wed Dec 10, 6 pm, Director's tour with Kathleen Rahn

through the exhibitions *Mohamed Bourouissa – Pour Noubia* and *Ingrid Wiener – Einfach machen und tun*

Sun Jan 18, TBA, Artist Talk with Mohamed Bourouissa and Oriane Durand (in English)

Education and Outreach Events

SprechStoff – recurring conversation format

How do the themes of the exhibition relate to people's lives in the region? In this accessible format, we exchange ideas with local experts on socially relevant issues from a variety of everyday perspectives. This creates a space for connection and unexpected thoughts. At the heart of the format is open conversation with visitors.

Sat Nov 29, 4 pm, SprechStoff on the topic of sex work, violence, and taboo subjects

TBD, 16 Uhr, SprechStoff on the topic of identity, migration, and racism

Open Round: Exploring Diversity Through Art

Sun Sept 21, 2-4.30 pm

Sun Oct 19, 2-4.30 pm

Sun Nov 16., 2-4.30 pm

Information Session for Educators

Wed Sept 17, 4.30-6 pm

Tours for Blind and Visually Impaired Visitors

Sat Nov 8, 2-3.30 pm

Sat Dec 13, 2-3.30 pm

Tours of the exhibitions

Wednesdays at 6 pm (the museum is open until 8 pm Wednesdays) as well as Saturdays, Sundays and on public holidays at 3 pm

Ticket 3.50 euro plus exhibition entrance fee, no registration required

Architecture tours

First Sunday of every month from 3 to 3 pm

Ticket 3.50 euro plus exhibition entrance fee, no registration required

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Workshops for companies and private groups

Whether for a birthday or team building, there are many occasions for a workshop at the Marta Atelier. With inspiration from the exhibition, you can explore yourself artistic approaches and techniques. Dates by arrangement

Press Information

You will find this press release and print-ready press images related to the exhibition in the press area at <https://presse.marta-herford.de/en/ausstellung/pour-noubia>
The password to the image area is: **M4rt4pr3ss3**

We are happy to arrange discussions of the background and interview opportunities for you. For this and all other information we are available at telephone at +49 (0) 5221-99 44 30-27 or by e-mail to presse@marta-herford.de.

Social Media

Hashtag: #MartaHerford #PourNoubia
Facebook: /MartaHerford
Instagram: @martaherford
YouTube: Marta Herford

Exhibition information

Artistic Director

Kathleen Rahn (director Marta Herford)

Invited curator

Oriane Durand

Exhibits

30 works including video, installation, photography, sculpture, and wall objects

Exhibition area

Gehry-Galleries: ca 1200 sqm

Duration

13. 9. 2025 – 18. 1. 2026

Marta Herford

Exhibition venue

Marta Herford, Goebenstraße 2–10, D-32052 Herford

Opening hours

Tue–Sun and public holidays 11 am to 6 pm, Wed 11 am to 8 pm

Closed 24/ 25/ 31 Dec and Good Friday

Open on 26 Dec 11 to 6 pm, New Year's Day from 1 pm

Contact/Info

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