

# Centre de la photographie de Mougins



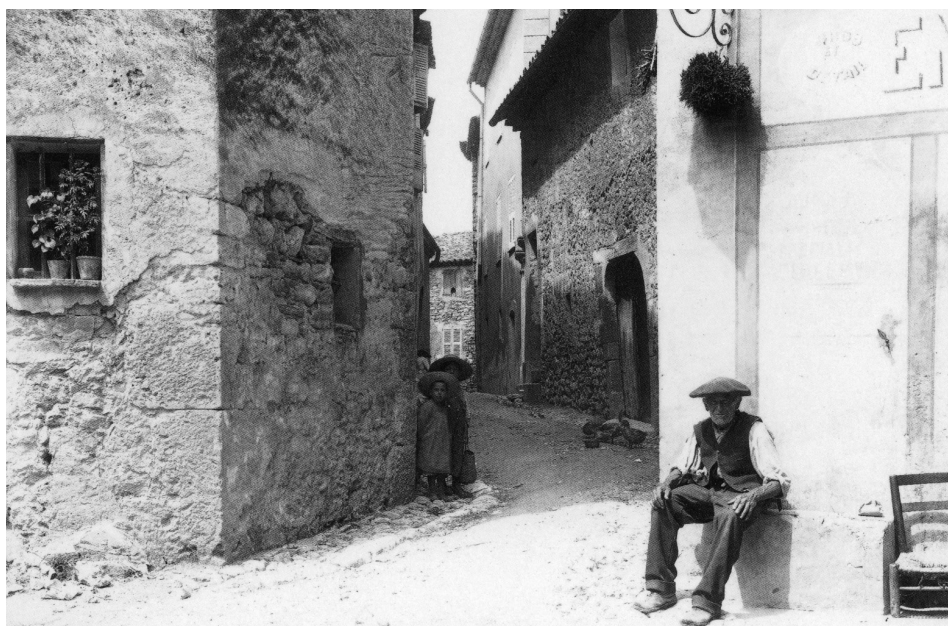
## Press kit

2	The Missions of the Center of Photography
4	A dedicated place in the village
6	The Center: a complex
8	The team
9	The programming
13	Mougins, a tradition of modernity
15	A strong local cultural policy
17	Figures and dates
20	Contact

## The missions of Center of Photography

The Mougins Center of Photography is an institution dedicated to still and moving images whose aim is to promote and exhibit the multiple trends of contemporary photography. Open to photographic modernity in all its forms, this municipal structure contributes to the culture and tourism policies pursued by the town of Mougins, as well as performing regional outreach and international communication activities. It is scheduled to open its doors on 3 July 2021. Its mission is to support the creation and experimentations of artists of all profiles: from France or overseas, up-and-coming or established. This support takes various forms including producing, exhibiting, publishing and residencies. Other local authorities in the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region (PACA), including those of Marseille and Nice, are already demonstrating a dynamic approach to photography by way of varied exhibitions or thanks to proactive publishing houses and diverse residency programs. The Mougins Center of Photography will complement these activities by providing a similar service for contemporary photography.

Mougins,  
rue des Lombards,  
circa 1900



Mougins,  
Aerial view,  
© Drone away – Demartini,  
2014





## A dedicated space in the village

Since 2018, the municipally-owned former presbytery in the village of Mougins has been undergoing a comprehensive transformation to become the Center of Photography. Presenting a total of approximately 330 square meters of floor space over three levels, the building offers reception and information areas, exhibition spaces and encounter spaces. The remaining core services of this fully functioning photography center – including administration, storage, residencies and workshops – are housed at other buildings within easy reach of the presbytery. This Center is the latest in a series of photography projects initiated between 1986 and 2019. Located at Porte Sarrazine (now the administrative headquarters, documentation center and workshop space), the Musée de la Photographie used to hold and exhibit the photographs of André Villers (1930-2016), a photographer who counted Picasso among his personal friends.

In late 2018, Agence Griesmar Architectes joined forces with Atelier Gabrielli Architecture and Anthony Hamon (Agence HA) to present a strategy for the rehabilitation and conversion of the former presbytery into a photography center. Their proposal was selected because of its respect for traditional architecture and discreet flourishes of modernity. The challenge at the heart of the Center of Photography project is to introduce contemporary concepts into a visual landscape that is steeped in history: ancient village, Mediterranean architecture, Provençal heritage, and so on. The architectural solution is minimal and measured. The metal ribbon of the main façade and the institution's visual identity are designed to catch the gaze of visitors to the village center and to draw them towards it.

### The architectural project

“In order to equip the future Center of Photography with the most open spaces possible, the decision was taken to retain the entirety of the building's exterior envelope and, instead, to demolish interior walls and partitions. A metal ‘box within a box’ was designed, thus removing existing elements without creating the need for intermediate pillars on the different floors, which would have significantly restricted the scenographic potential available during installations. [...]”

Our desire is to respect the balance between full and empty spaces<sup>5</sup> that characterizes historical architecture. Our aim is to create a visual invitation, to be seen in perspective from the pedestrian area in the heart of the village.”

“We wanted to build all our ideas around a single gesture that would be implemented into and adapted around the visitor’s journey, starting from the invitation in the village via the reception and up to the scenographic spaces created on each floor. Recalling photographic clichés with its very dark, almost black hue, the metallic ribbon is like an Ariadne’s thread whose coarse yet fine nature contrasts with the timeworn facades of the historic village center.”

Architectural note:  
Rehabilitation of an existing  
building in the village  
of Mougins into the Center of  
Photography, January 2019.  
AGA  
Agence Griesmar Architectes,  
Atelier Gabrielli Architecture.

## The Center: a complex

In today's age, to create a photography center is to embrace the ambition of developing a local, national and international point of reference, with the aim of becoming a key player in the emergence of contemporary creation, participating at every stage from the production of works to the debates they stimulate. With this in mind, the management team headed up by Yasmine Chemali and François Cheval intend to diversify the Center's visual output and offer an artistic program that is open to the world and to others.

Staying in touch with reality by choosing powerful, current subjects; respecting the need for equality by reserving a due place for women's photography; remaining in a state of permanent vigilance, on the lookout for other forms of expression beyond Europe's borders: these are the only rules to be applied to the programming choices. This desire, or rather ambition, requires the sustained implementation of devices and actions designed to stimulate discussion on contemporary art. The Center of Photography is a complex: a place for exhibitions and artist residencies, as well as a place for training complete with documentation center and educational workshops to activate the exhibition and develop tools to understand photography.

The photographic medium is a meeting place. A passageway, the bridge between artists and the public. Nowadays, the development of educational and mediation activities has become a priority. The Mougins Center of Photography wants to place its own emphasis on 'education through images' by way of specific activities (guided tours, conferences, meetings with artists, screenings of films and moving images), and to develop activities built around amateur and artistic practices (expression workshops, residency projects and practical workshops in schools or hospitals).

The challenge facing the Center is to bring its program of exhibitions to life through a wider set of educational activities. Its priority must be to engage the younger generations in Mougins: schoolchildren, of course, but also teenagers and young adults who bring a new and unique perspective on the production of images as something that they practice every day. In a society undergoing profound changes, the Center of Photography offers a space for expression and reflection in the historic village of Mougins. Each year, the artist residency will create more connections between photographic production, contemporary art and the

public. The Mougins area and its local residents, its status within the metropolitan community of Cannes Pays de Lérins and the Sophia Antipolis technology hub, and its relations with neighboring towns, will all be at the heart of the concerns shaping the artist residency. By testifying to the diversity of photographic practices, the works of local residents will challenge the identity of this ever-changing and constantly redefined territory, bringing genuine added value to the region's culture and tourism policies.

The ambition, year upon year, is to showcase, to exhibit and to collect moments and layers of real life in Mougins. The photographic residency will take place at a site annexed to the Center of Photography, in what is now the Espace Culturel. The winning candidates will be selected by a jury made up of professionals and representatives from the municipality and the Ministry of Culture (DRAC). Candidates will be put forward by the joint directors of the Center.

Just like the artist residency (private apartment and work space), all the missions of the Center of Photography benefit from the presence of two complementary spaces: Porte Sarrazine and a secure storage area. Porte Sarrazine houses the administrative offices and the documentation center, which holds specialist photography books made available to researchers, teachers and students. The ground floor is dedicated to hosting mediation workshops for groups and other activities organized in parallel to the Center's core program.

## The team

### **François Cheval, Artistic Director**

Born in Belfort in 1954. Lives and works in Chalon-sur-Saône. Having completed his studies in history and ethnology, François Cheval worked as a museum curator between 1982 and 2016. From 1996 to 2016, he was the director of the Nicéphore Niépce Museum in Chalon-sur-Saône. Since then, he has curated exhibitions at MuCEM for Marseille-Provence 2013, at the Pavillon Populaire in Montpellier, at PHotoEspaña, at Kyotographie and at Les Rencontres d'Arles. He is also the co-founder and co-director of the Lianzhou Museum of Photography, China's first ever public photography museum. In 2016, he created The Red Eye, an independent structure for photography projects and, since 2017, he has been the artistic director of the BMW Residency at Gobelins. In 2018, the city of Mougins asked him to assist the prime contractor with the Center of Photography project. In 2020, it was announced that he would become the Center's artistic director.

### **Yasmine Chemali, Manager**

Yasmine Chemali began her professional career in Beirut, having previously read art history and heritage conservation with a specialization in Islamic art at the École du Louvre. In 2011, she was placed in charge of the Fouad Debbas collection, a private set of photographs dating back to the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Between 2014 and 2020, she was the head of modern and contemporary art collections and exhibition's registrar at the Sursock Museum in Beirut. In 2020, she returned to France to become manager of the Mougins Center of Photography, where she now applies her expertise and exacting standards in the curating and management of exhibitions.

### **Laura Cohen, Visitor Relations and Mediation**

The holder of a degree in the research, practice and theory of plastic arts, Laura Cohen is a visual artist whose preferred means of expression is photography. She worked as a Art Mediator for Seconde Nature (Aix-en-Provence) before being put in charge of visitor relations at the city's Espace Culturel Départemental. An ideas person with a close connection to the general public, Laura Cohen is capable of creating the tools required to promote education in the visual arts and to initiate successful discussions with different audiences.



## The programming

Over the course of an annual program divided into three periods and spread over two separate exhibition areas of approximately 100 square meters, the primary aim of the new Center of Photography is to be a place of its time: open to the world and to others, and attentive to the porosity of the boundaries that separate contemporary photography from its immediate and global surroundings. Assembled by its artistic directors, the Center's program is intended to explore the multiple practices of the medium of photography, by presenting both its possibilities and its limits. By focusing as much on formal issues (from analogue to digital, traditional techniques, etc.) as on the evolution of distribution (from the press to the Internet) and the numerous contradictions of reality. In other words, every possible field of study into the contemporary image.

**For every exhibition, a publication,  
as a memory.**

As well as creating its own identity, the Center of Photography is also establishing its own editorial line in the form of a quarterly magazine documenting the exhibitions and works produced by residents or as a result of mediation activities.

The magazine will be in the image of the Center and, as with its exhibitions, it will adhere to the mantra of 'the simpler the better'. It will therefore take the form of a local publication produced in collaboration with service providers in the area. Innovation, the Center's trademark when it comes to photography, also means calling on locally-based photo developers, framers, printers and image artisans. This is more than a new start, it is an entirely different image. Making a varied selection of writing on photography available to the public. Placing diversity at the center of our ethos, be it geographical, equality-based, or generational; difference and contradiction will be at the heart of the program. Such is the contemporary photography that we wish to stand up for: photography created by living artists who are still producing work

2021 will therefore be the year in which Isabel Muñoz's elaborate and sophisticated use of traditional techniques will rub shoulders with Li Lang's slide projections. The 2021 season begins with '1001'

a two-floor exhibition of the latest works by Spanish photographer Isabel Muñoz (born 1951). It will be her first solo exhibition at a French institution in over 20 years. In the autumn of 2021, the Center of Photography will celebrate women's photography by extending invitations to Natasha Caruana (born in the UK, 1983) and Jenny Rova (born in Sweden, 1972). Their photography is built around personal stories told through familiar experiences. To kick off 2022, the Center of Photography will explore the very latest Asian photography by showcasing the works of Li Lang (born in China, 1969) and Yuki Onodera (born in Japan, 1962).

This program will be bolstered by the presence of publications that aim to expand, and even go beyond, the subject of photography. As such, when discussing the images presented, we will attempt various digressions into ethnology, we will not hesitate to reference the so-called "hard" sciences, we will discuss the necessary political, sociological and economic consequences of the images, and so on. This is photography as a matter for contemplation, beyond the simple exhibition space. Through these publications, we intend to break down barriers to facilitate a broader appreciation of the photographic practice and encourage greater reflection on the part of the viewers.

### Isabel Muñoz

The Mougins Center of Photography opens its doors to the public for the first time with an exhibition by Spanish photographer Isabel Muñoz. Born in Barcelona in 1951, Isabel Muñoz has lived and worked in Madrid since 1970. Renowned for her use of extra-large formats and platinum prints, her work has been the subject of international acclaim.

Her career was launched in 1986 with her first exhibition, *Toques* (1986), at the Institut Français in Madrid. Her work went on to appear in a series of individual and group exhibitions. Isabel Muñoz's career in photography has been punctuated by various awards and distinctions: the Prix Bartolomé Ros (2009), the Gold Medal of Merit in the Fine Arts awarded by the Ministry of Culture of Spain (2009), the UNICEF Spain Awareness Raising Award (2010) and the Fundación DE ARTE Prize (2012). Famed for her mastery of platinum prints and the originality of her artistic approach, Isabel Muñoz received the National Photography Award for 2016 from the Ministry of Culture of Spain. To mark the achievement, La Tabacalera in Madrid hosted a major retrospective entitled *The Anthropology of feelings*. Isabel Muñoz's works can be found in collections held at the Maison Européenne de la Photographie (MEP, Paris), the New Museum of Contemporary Art (New York), the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (Madrid), the Foto Colectania (Barcelona), the Fundación Canal (Madrid) and the Instituto Cervantes (Mexico City, Guatemala, La Paz, Shanghai).

The tone for her work was set as early as 1989, in her first series entitled *Tango* and *Flamenco*. Produced as large-format platinum prints, the photographs conveyed a search for feelings born out of a relationship of trust between the photographer and her subject. The camera becomes the possibility of a gateway to an unknown world, a means of access to an intangible space and a new temporality. The Mougins Center of Photography will exhibit the Spanish photographer's most recent works. Produced in Japan over the course of several visits between 2017 and 2020, the series is made

Isabel Muñoz,  
Man is an island,  
60 x 80 cm,  
2017



Isabel Muñoz,  
Two, three, four,  
60 x 60 cm,  
2018



Isabel Muñoz,  
Beyond the objective,  
110 x 145 cm,  
2018



up of mostly unpublished videos and still images. The exhibition<sup>12</sup> '1001' comprises various portraits that all remain rooted in alternative Japanese culture, sometimes respecting and sometimes surpassing tradition. Among an eye-opening gallery of characters can be found people practicing *butoh*, the transgressive dance movement that emerged in reaction to militarism and Hiroshima. Several generations of dancers, captured by Isabel Muñoz, express the thin line between suffering, beauty and death. There are disturbing nude portraits of yakuza and scenes of *shibari*, subjects usually associated with Japanese exoticism that bring us closer to an unalterable truth. Which does not change! And which must not change, in the name of human diversity. Isabel Muñoz ushers us into the intimate world of the dance of *butoh*, of the tattoos of the yakuza, of the pain and pleasure of *shibari*. Where we would not dare to go, where we cannot go. A deliberately confusing mixture of still images and slow movement, the installations also evoke climate change and the permanence of primary elements such as water and earth.

**A strong graphic and visual identity**  
**By Michel Lepetitdidier**

In 1988, Michel Lepetitdidier founded Le Petit Didier, a graphic design studio specializing in cultural communication. Since 2011, he has taught media design at the École Supérieure d'Art et Design de Saint-Étienne (ESADSE). He has also worked in collaboration with the Musée de Dole, the Fonds Régional d'Art Contemporain in Franche-Comté and Lorraine, the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Nancy, the Nicéphore Niépce and Denon museums in Chalon-sur-Saône, the Louvre, and many others. He has been a member of the International Graphic Alliance since 2003.

## Mougins, a tradition of modernity

Nestling between the hills of Cannes and the region of Grasse, the commune of Mougins belongs to the Alpes-Maritimes department. This historically rural town, once known for its jasmine harvest, has been granted the status of a garden city because of its myriad Provençal-style villas and the density of its leafy green spaces. The picturesque Provençal village of Mougins acquired an international reputation owing to its revered local cuisine and to the fact that it was home to many modern artists.

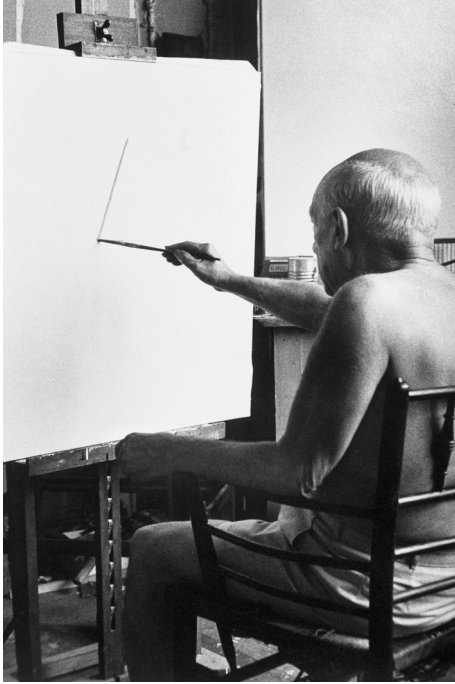
It was in Mougins that Pablo Picasso chose to spend the final 12 years of his life, at the Notre-Dame de Vie villa, nicknamed “the Minotaur’s Lair” because of the many works of art covering every inch of its wallspace. Francis Picabia was the first of the artists to move to the village. Other notable figures who spent time in Mougins on the invitations of Picabia or Picasso included Paul Éluard, Jean Cocteau, Rosemonde Gérard, Man Ray and Fernand Léger, who had a studio there for a time. The town’s reputation also ensured a steady flow of celebrity visitors: the Notre-Dame de Vie chapel hosted Winston Churchill and Charlie Chaplin, while Edith Piaf, Yves Saint Laurent, Christian Dior, Catherine Deneuve, Paul Anka, Jacques Brel, Roland Petit and Zizi Jeanmaire also enjoyed stays in the area.

Mougins is known for the quality of its food. The famous dishes of Célestin Véran and the sun-drenched cuisine of chef Roger Vergé have earned Mougins a fine reputation and international recognition. In the 1990s, Mougins enjoyed the status of being the village in France with the most Michelin stars, with seven in total. Today, Mougins has been awarded the Ville et Métiers d’Art label for gastronomy and also has its own international food festival, *Les Étoiles de Mougins*.

When it comes to historical and architectural heritage, there are many buildings of interest in the village. Porte Sarrazine, which belongs to the Center of Photography, stands as one of the last remaining traces of the fortified walls that once surrounded the medieval village. A short walk away, in the heart of the village, the church of Saint-Jacques le Majeur was first erected in the eleventh century and subsequently updated in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The presbytery that has now become



the Center of Photography stands on the site of a sump and what was once an animal-powered mill. Now a municipal building, Le Vaste Horizon is a former 1930s hotel where Picasso received his friends Paul Éluard, Dora Mar, Lee Miller and Man Ray.



David Douglas Duncan,  
Picasso in his studio,  
1957



André Villers,  
Self-portrait on Rolleiflex  
with Picasso,  
1957



Unknown,  
Roger Vergé  
with his friends César,  
Paul Bocuse, Guy Savoy,  
Jean Yanne...,  
Undated

## A strong local cultural policy

The Mougins Center of Photography contributes to a deliberate and coherent local cultural policy that is being implemented throughout the town. In the old village, the Espace Culturel, the local history museum and the former André Villers photography museum have all been, or still serve as, exhibition spaces showcasing both contemporary creation and the heritage of the town and region. Meanwhile, the Monumental Mougins event brings a new dimension to the village with its large-scale sculptures. The media library in the Tournamy district hosts a wide range of literary activities. Scène 55 is home to the performing arts, from theater to dance and puppetry. The presence of the nearby Cannes-Mougins Rosella Hightower dance school can be felt throughout the town. The publicly-owned Eco'Parc has been given a new lease of life as an entertainment park with a focus on education.

First opened in June 2011, the Musée d'Art Classique de Mougins (MACM) welcomes 20,000 visitors every year. The MACM owns a vast collection of Egyptian, Greek and Roman antiquities, which are complemented by fine examples of modern and contemporary art (including works by Dali, Chagall, Yves Klein, Damien Hirst and Arman), spread over a total of 400 m<sup>2</sup> on four levels. This privately-owned establishment is just one of a long list of modern art museums in the region: the Picasso Museum in Antibes, the Chagall and Matisse museums in Nice, the Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain de Nice, the Musée Fernand Léger in Biot and the Musée Bonnard in Le Cannet. The three village center institutions in Mougins – the MACM, the Espace Culturel and the Center of Photography – will create their own fresh dynamic through mutually complementary programming. The Center of Photography aims to attract 30,000 visitors in its first twelve months and to grow year-on-year by taking advantage of the region's tourist appeal and cultural output.

### Some figures

In 2018, a total of 25,572 people visited the Tourist Information center in the village of Mougins, located just a few hundred meters from the Center of Photography. In 2019, there were 21,005 visitors, including around 40 per month from abroad between

March and October (Italy is less than 70 km from Mougins).

In addition, there are those visitors who do not go to the Tourist Information. The tourists in the town tend to be made up of families, as well as groups, schoolchildren and retirees.

Nice Airport is the second busiest airport in France, having served over 14 million passengers in 2019 on flights to 117 international destinations and on popular direct routes. This international transport center is used by tourists and businessmen alike.

Many of the latter come to visit Sophia Antipolis, Europe's leading technology hub and home to 2,230 companies employing 36,300 people of 63 different nationalities, alongside thousands of researchers and students.

## In figures and dates

Center of Photography:  
Public opening on 3 July 2021  
Support for contemporary photography  
2 exhibition spaces of 100 m<sup>2</sup>  
3 exhibition cycles per year  
1 artist residency per year  
1 workshop space  
1 editorial line with a quarterly magazine

—

**Isabel Muñoz**  
**3.7.2021 – 3.10.2021**

—

**Natasha Caruana + Jenny Rova**  
**28.10.2021 – 30.01.2022**

—

**Li Lang + Yuki Onodera**  
**24.02.2022 – 22.05.2022**

—

Jenny Rova,  
Älskling,  
Série: A self-portrait  
through the eyes  
of my lovers,  
2017



Natasha Caruana,  
I had seen her,  
Série: At first sight,  
2015





Yuki Onodera,  
Darkside of the Moon,  
No. 1,  
2020



Li Lang,  
A0317,  
A Long Day  
of A Certain Year,  
2019

## Contact

**Centre  
de la photographie  
de Mougins**

**43 rue de l'Église  
06250 Mougins**

**+33 (0)4 22 21 52 12  
cpmougins.com  
info@cpmougins.com**

### **Press:**

**Agnès Renoult Communication**

**+33 (0)1 87 44 25 25  
www.agnesrenoult.com**

**Internationale press:  
Lisa Thiel  
lisa@agnesrenoult.com**

**National press:  
Donatienne de Varine  
donatienne@agnesrenoult.com**