

Centre
de la photographie
de Mougins



Bayeté Ross Smith

Press kit

**Beyond
Appearances
Bayeté Ross Smith**

**1st.11.
2024 –
9.02.
2025**

Curators:

**François Cheval
and Yasmine Chemali**

**Opening
on Thursday 31.10
2024
18:30**

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The Mougins Center of Photography is an institution dedicated to still and moving images, tasked with promoting and exhibiting the many trends in contemporary photography. Open to all forms of photographic modernity, the Center, as a municipal institution, boosts the cultural and tourism sector of the town of Mougins, seeking to enhance the region and foster international communication. From its opening on July 3rd 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.



Introduction

Often, what we see in front of us is preconceived. Representations of the other or others are reduced to a few simple and reductive formulas. Common sense attributes physical and behavioural characteristics that are perpetuated unchallenged. Societies and individuals rely on stereotypes to diminish reality. Bayeté Ross Smith, an African-American artist, bases his work on the strength and constancy of prejudice: on what could be called the pre-viewed. In his staged photographs, characters are given different personalities depending on their attitude, their appearance and occasionally their words. It becomes difficult to know what the true 'nature' of these individuals really is. Society, in particular American society, has a tendency to essentialise, in other words to reduce people to a trait considered significant. By generalising, we distort and thereby turn characterisation into the definition of our own identity by distancing others from ourselves.

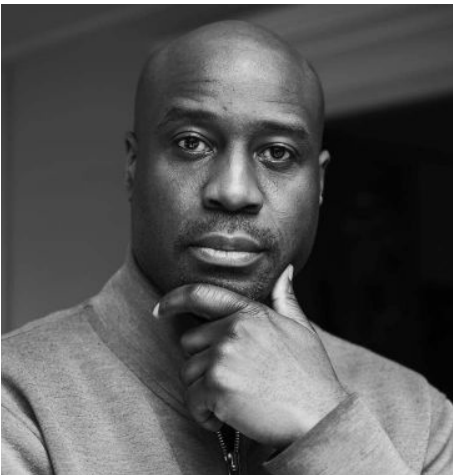
'Bayeté Ross Smith: Beyond Appearances' is the second part of an African-American trilogy. It follows the exhibition 'Stephen Shames: Comrade Sisters/ Women of the Black Panther Party' and will be followed in the summer of 2025 by 'Kwame Brathwaite: Black is Beautiful'.

The exhibition 'Bayeté Ross Smith: Beyond Appearances' is part of the PhotoSaintGermain festival program in partnership with the Musée National Eugène-Delacroix.

Exhibition 'Our Kind of People: Bayeté Ross Smith', 31.10.2024 – 3.02.2025. Musée National Eugène-Delacroix, 6 rue de Furstemberg, 75006 Paris. 01 44 41 86 50 musee-delacroix.fr <https://photosaintgermain.com>

Biography

Bayeté Ross Smith



Bayeté Ross Smith is a multidisciplinary artist, photographer, visual journalist, and filmmaker working at the intersection of photography, film, video, visual journalism, 3D objects, and new media. He is Columbia University Law School Artist-in-Residence, a TED speaker, a Clinton Foundation and George W. Bush Presidential Leadership Scholar, a Creative Capital Awardee, a CatchLight Global Fellow, as well as a New York Times embedded mediamaker.

His artistic practice encourages people to question their preexisting beliefs by inviting them to examine how cultural perspectives and biases influence how we perceive stories and, in turn, the concept of truth. Drawing on the concepts of identity and community, Bayeté Ross Smith studies and deconstructs ideas of beauty, value, and reciprocity. Identity is both a performance and a set of characteristics in service to controlled images and media that define individuals and cultures globally.

The Mougins Center of Photography is dedicating its first solo exhibition in France and Europe to him. His work has been presented at the Lincoln Center (New York), the Sheffield DocFest, and the LA Film Festival. His collaborative projects have been showcased at the Sundance Film Festival in 2008 and 2012, and his works are part of the collections of The Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC, the Oakland Museum of California, the Birmingham Museum of Art, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture and The Brooklyn Museum (New York). Additionally, he has created public art projects with Fondation Carmignac, CatchLight and Dysturb, the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts, the City of White Plains NY, The Lenfest Center for the Arts at Columbia University, the Northeast Sculpture Social Justice Billboard Project, the NYC Parks Department, the San Francisco District Attorney's Office, the Jerome Foundation, and the Hartford YMCA.

Photographic Series

Our Kind of People

2010-ongoing

Part Twelve:
Rahn Broady

Part Twenty-Four:
Fatima Anwar

Digigraphies
on Hahnemühle
Photo Rag Baryta

The 'Our Kind of People' series examines how perception about someone's identity, value, and character is affected by appearance – such as clothing, race/ ethnicity, gender, complexion and class signifiers – and how that then informs our daily interactions and social systems. The subjects in this work are dressed in clothing from their own wardrobes. The lighting and facial expressions throughout the series have been kept the same, from one photograph to the next.

Devoid of any other context for assessing the personality of the individual in the photograph, the viewer projects their own cultural perceptions – and most likely biases – onto each image.



Photographic Series

Our Kind of People

Part Ten:
Tone Poetix

Part Nineteen:
Mirlande Mersier

Part Seventeen:
Michael Brady

Digigraphies
sur Hahnemühle
Photo Rag Baryta



Photographic Series

Mirrors Face to Face

2010-2023

The series explores the idea of multiple personas and alter egos that exist within the same person. However, in a variation of the 'Our Kind of People' series, the 'Mirrors Face to Face' series examines how the different components of one's personality, the ego and superego, interact with one another. It is both fascinating to think about how the complexity of identity exists both internally and externally. The 'Mirrors Face to Face' series also raises questions about coping and mental health in a time in which people must perform different aspects of their personality, or even put on a false façade, in order to survive in modern society.

Mirrors Study 3

Digigraphy
on Hahnemühle
Photo Rag Baryta



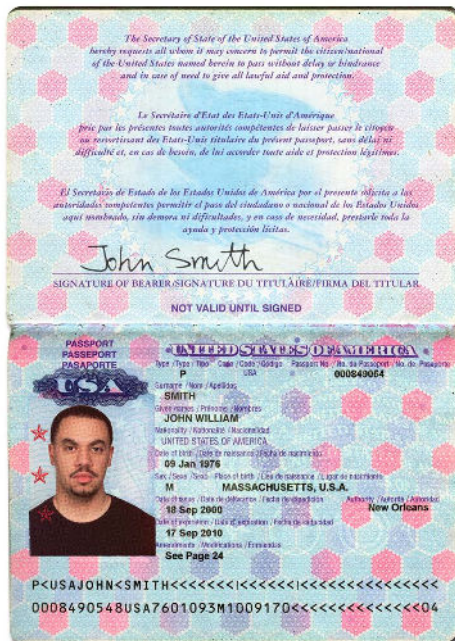
Photographic Series

Passing

2007-2022

'Passing' examines how nationality impacts our perception of identity, commonality, character, and value. Bayeté Ross Smith questions how perception and biases shift because of someone's nationality. Furthermore, how does the perception of a certain nationality impact access to the various resources of the world? How does change within a given nationality based on race/ethnicity and gender?

Digital prints



Photographic Series

Taking AIM

2010-2022

'Who is considered a victim, and who is considered a threat? This series examines our cultural relationship to violence. With these photographs, Bayeté Ross Smith is interested in the fine line that exists between acceptable, condoned, recreational violence and deplorable, criminalized violence. This dichotomy exists throughout popular culture in all forms of media, from television, music and movies, to fine art and literature. Also emerges in how history is told and recorded: which wars, massacres, and assassinations are considered justified, and which ones are considered atrocities.

Inkjet prints
on Hahnemühle Koizo



Photographic Series

Upwardly Mobile: Black American Professional Men 2004-2010

Brian C. Price
 MBA (Marketing)
 Regional Zone Manager
 Ford Motor Company,
 2005
 Friday morning, 7:30 am
 Saturday evening, 8:00 pm
 4039 West 167th Street,
 Lawndale CA
 Digigraphies
 on Hahnemühle
 Photo Rag Baryta

'Upwardly Mobile: Black American Professional Men' examines the complexity of the navigation of social codes, and many other challenges faced by young Black professional males freshly graduated from business and engineering schools as they integrate into corporate environments. In this early work, Bayeté Ross Smith already highlights the duality between two drastically different worlds, although popular perceptions of identity and ideas of equity and inclusion have been slowly changing. The photographic series examines the social complexities within the workplace and in daily life, when these young men do not fit into the preconceived notions about Black people. These ultimately leads to being stereotyped and misunderstood in one's professional life and in their personal life. Examples of this include being racially profiled by the police and their neighbours outside of their homes as a new homeowner or being perceived as unmotivated at work, simply because they are quiet and being passed over for promotion.



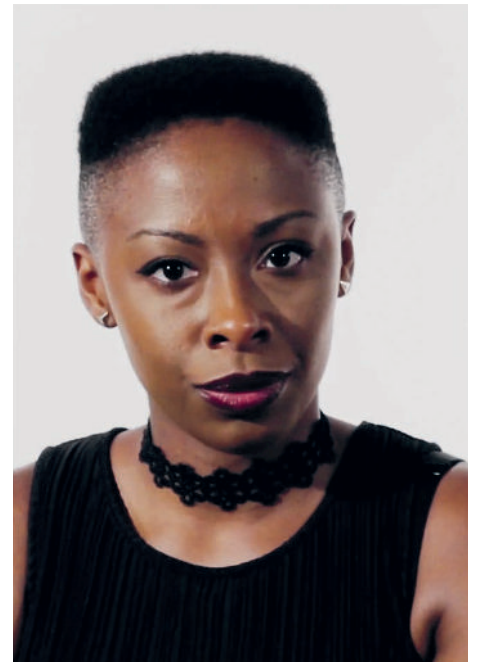
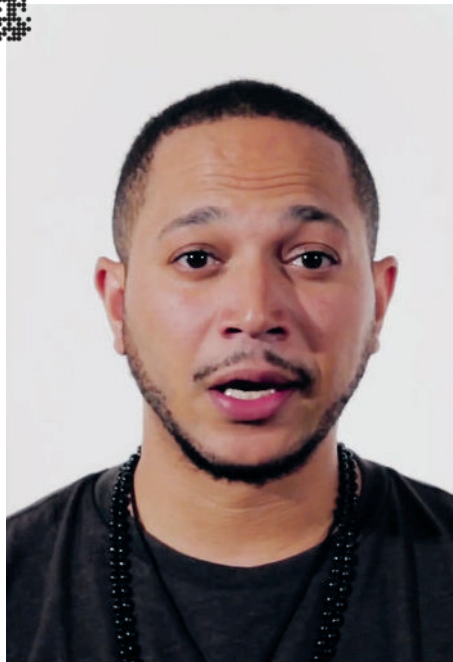
Video Work

West 4th Street

2022

West 4th Street is an interactive nonfiction video project that questions our perception of a story, truth, witnesses and testimony, based on the storyteller's identity. The event described in this project is based on an incident that happened to artist and photographer Russell Frederick in New York City. The words spoken are the exact words he used to describe the incident when he was interviewed years later. The story is performed by six different storytellers from different backgrounds. The audience can change the identity of the person telling the story at any point in the story. Artist and director Bayeté Ross Smith seeks to explore how identity and appearance affect our perception of the stories we are told and of truth. This work also questions the criteria for determining reliable sources of information and history.

HD video installation



Video Work

Red Summers

2021

With the series 'Red Summers', Bayeté Ross Smith explores attacks against Black communities in the United States between 1917 and 1921. Using 360 VR immersive videos of historically significant locations with overlaid archival images, the artist covers a largely forgotten chapter of the American history. The mob and riots in Tulsa (Oklahoma, 1921), Chicago (Illinois, 1919), Washington DC (1919), Omaha (Nebraska, 1919), Elaine (Arkansas, 1919), East St. Louis (Illinois, 1917), and Houston (Texas, 1917) are not isolated incidents, they are part of a continuum. 'Red Summers' sheds light on the lack of legal accountability by the justice system, and directly relates to the current challenges in the USA and worldwide regarding social justice, racial justice and human rights.

360 VR immersive short films in 4K and 6K videos. The original suite of films was published with The Guardian US.



Video Works

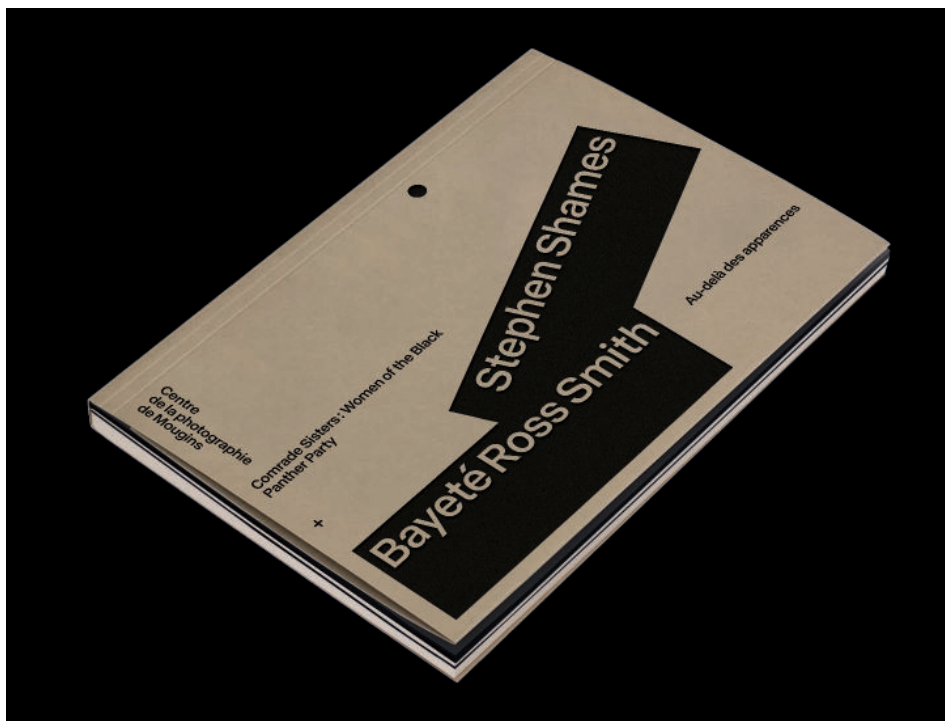
Malcom X + Ruby Bridges 2017

On February 21st, 1964, the charismatic and controversial civil and human rights leader Malcolm X was assassinated at a rally at the Audubon Ballroom in Manhattan. This immersive video allows audiences to hear from an eyewitness who worked directly with Malcolm X and to visit the assassination site. Many historians and activists believe the human rights movement of the 1960s in the U.S. was derailed by the assassinations of Malcolm X and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

On November 14th, 1960, 6-year-old Ruby Bridges desegregated the all-white William Frantz Elementary School in New Orleans, Louisiana. On that day, three other children – Leona Tate, Tessie Prevost, and Gail Etienne – start at McDonogh 19 Elementary School. Together, they contribute to the desegregation of the New Orleans school system, amid protests from white parents. In the video, Ruby's teacher, a white woman from Massachusetts, reflects on Ruby's integration that year.

360 VR immersives
shorts films
in 4K and 6K video
and archival imagery



Cahiers #8**Comrade Sisters: Women
of the Black Panther Party****Stephen Shames****+
Au-delà des apparences****Bayeté Ross Smith****Authors:**

Yasmine Chemali
François Cheval
Paul David Henderson
Ericka Huggins

Translation: Jennetta Petch**Publishing:**

June 2024
Bilingual French/English
192 pages
29 €
Isbn : 979-10-90698-57-4

On sale in the Mougins
Center of Photography
store.

Our publications:



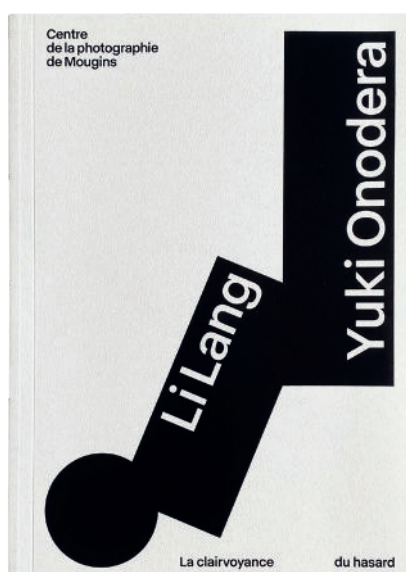
#1 Isabel Muñoz 1001

176 pages
 Isbn: 979-10-90698-50-5
 © 2021
 Authors:
 Yasmine Chemali,
 François Cheval,
 Stéphane du Mesnildot,
 Yuta Yagishita,
 Pascal Bagot,
 Emil Pacha Valencia
 Translation:
 Sara Heft



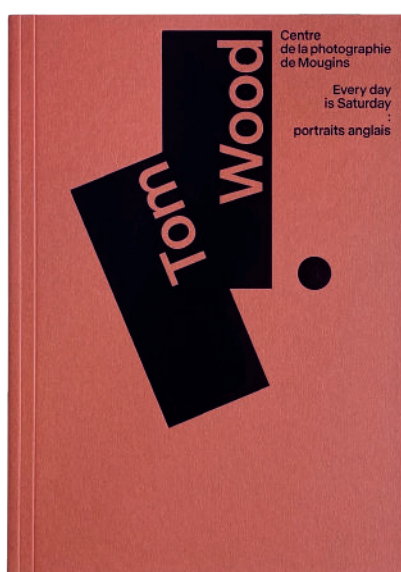
#2 Natasha Caruana + Jenny Rova L'amour toujours

192 pages
 Isbn: 979-10-90698-51-2
 © 2021
 Authors:
 François Cheval,
 Laurence Pourchez,
 Jenny Rova,
 Natasha Caruana,
 Dr Chris Hoff,
 Christophe Perrin,
 Yasmine Chemali
 Translation:
 Sara Heft



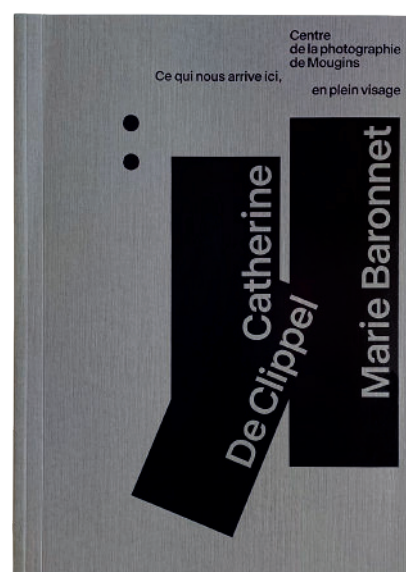
#3
Yuki Onodera
+ Li Lang
La clairvoyance du hasard

176 pages
 isbn: 979-10-90698-52-9
 © 2022
 Authors:
 François Cheval,
 András Páldi,
 Jean Daunizeau,
 Takayo Iida,
 Yasmine Chemali
 Translations:
 Ruth Oldham,
 Patrick Honoré



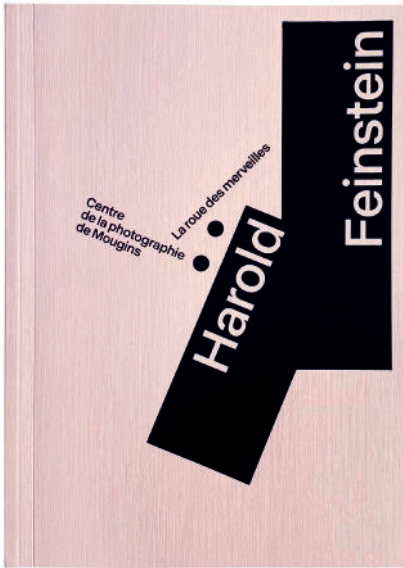
#4
Tom Wood
Every day is Saturday:
portraits anglais

192 pages
 isbn: 979-10-90698-53-6
 © 2022
 Authors:
 François Cheval,
 Leïla Vignal,
 Jean Daunizeau,
 Alexis Tadié,
 David Peace,
 John Peel,
 Yasmine Chemali
 Translations:
 Ruth Oldham,
 Alexis Tadié,
 Leïla Vignal



#5
Catherine De Clippel
+ Marie Baronnet
Ce qui nous arrive ici,
en plein visage

192 pages
 isbn: 979-10-90698-54-3
 © 2022
 Authors:
 Jérôme Esnouf,
 François Cheval,
 Jean-Paul Colleyn
 Translations:
 Ruth Oldham,
 Jennetta Petch



#6

Harold Feinstein
La roue des merveilles

192 pages

Isbn: 979-10-90698-55-0

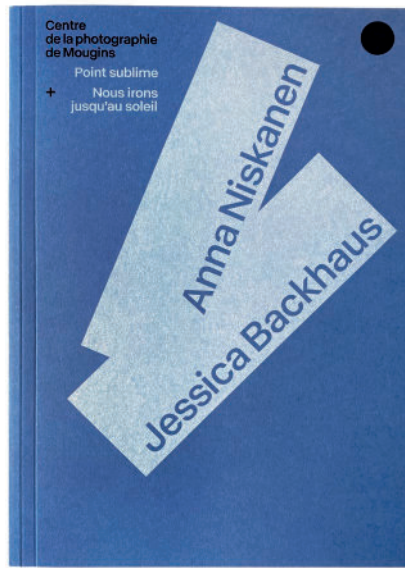
© 2023

Authors:

François Cheval,
 Alexis Tadié,
 Ya'ara Gil-Glazer,
 Yasmine Chemali

Translations:

Ruth Oldham,
 Jennetta Petch,
 Alexis Tadié



#7

Anna Niskanen
Point sublime
+ Jessica Backhaus
Nous irons jusqu'au soleil

144 pages

Isbn : 979-10-90698-56-7

© 2023

Authors:

François Cheval,
 András Páldi
 Anna Niskanen

Translation:

Jennetta Petch

Public

Guided tour

by Bayeté Ross Smith
Saturday 2.11.2024
17:00

Screening and discussion

Mariannes noires
 by Mame-Fatou Niang
 and Kaytie Nielsen
 (documentary, France,
 USA, 2017, 77 min)
Saturday 2.11.2024
18:00

In the presence
 of Mame-Fatou Niang
 Free entry,
 subject to availability.

Visites contées

The team at the Mougins
 Centre of Photography
 are offering an original
 format for family visits to
 the exhibitions. A story
 for children, conceived and
 told by our mediator, guides
 you through the world
 of the artist.

Sundays

3.11
1^{er}.12.2024

5.01
2.02.2025
16:00 → 16:30

From 4 years old,
 in French.
 Free admission
 on the 1st Sunday
 of the month.

Conversation

“Performative Bodies and
 Narratives: How Perception
 Shapes the Representation
 of Minority Identities.”
 with Pascale Obolo, curator
 and editor, and Nathalie Amae,
 curator and artistic director
 of the OVNI festival.
 Bayeté Ross Smith’s work
 explores collective memory
 to shape cultural and social
 narratives around marginalized
 racial and gender identities.
 This conversation will focus
 on the political-artistic body:
 who speaks for whom?
 How does the gaze on others
 turn bodies into objects
 or subjects of study?
 How are minority bodies
 compelled to navigate
 invisibility and overexposure,
 especially in public spaces?
 The discussion will deconstruct
 the perception mechanisms
 shaping the representation
 of minority identities
 and explore strategies to resist
 reductive frameworks.

Saturday 16.11.2024
14:45

in French.
 Free entry,
 subject to availability.

programme

Les visiteurs du soir Festival Botox(s)

Saturday 25.01
 and **Sunday 26.01.2025**
 Free admission
 Detailed program available
 on www.botoxs.fr

Off-site Program

Guided tour
 with the artist,
 Bayeté Ross Smith
 at Musée National
 Eugène-Delacroix (Paris)
Thursday 7.11.2024
18:00

Contacts

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Florence Buades
fbuades@villedemougins.com

Informations

Open

1st.11.2024 → 9.02.2025
13:00 → 18:00
Closed
on Mondays and Tuesdays

Admission

Adult → 6 €
Student → 3 €
Group (10 or +) → 4 € / pers.
Guided tours → 10 € / pers.

Free

1st Sunday of each month
Under 18, students
from the region PACA,
job seekers,
disabled visitors and one
accompanying person,
ICOM / ICOMOS / CIPAC,
Friends of the Center,
teachers, press,
guide-lecturers.

Guided tours (express)
every Wednesday
and Saturday
→ 15:00

**Book your
guided tour + workshop
for schools, groups
and associations:
Sinem Bostanci**
sbostanci@villedemougins.com

MOUGINS
CÔTE d'AZUR
FRANCE

 DÉPARTEMENT
DES ALPES-MARITIMES

RÉGION
SUD  PROVENCE
ALPES
CÔTE D'AZUR

Photo *Saint* Germain


Musée
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DIAGONAL





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de l'air

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