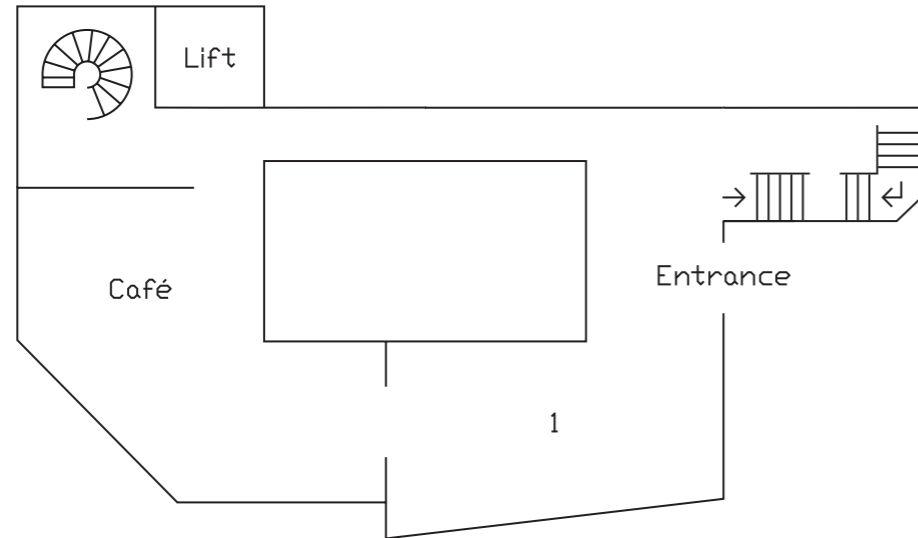


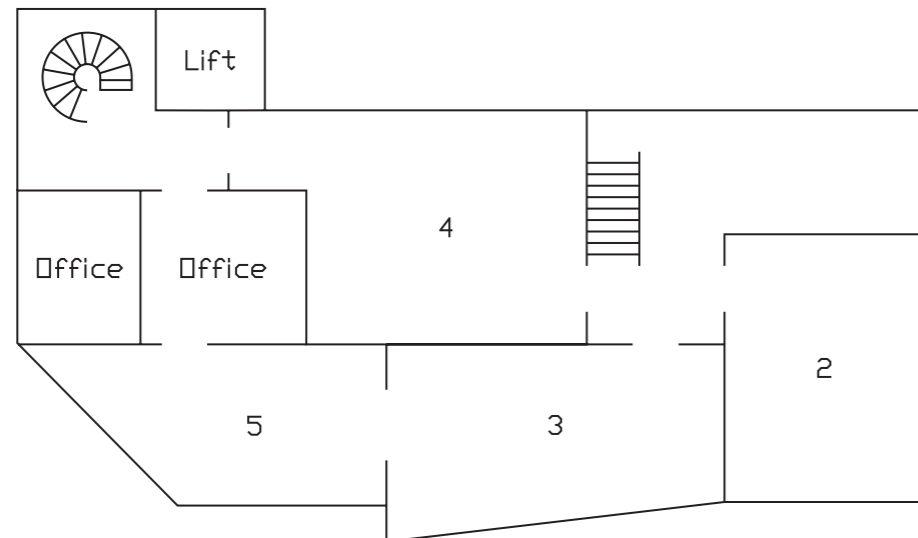
# FLOORPLAN

# EXHIBITION GUIDE

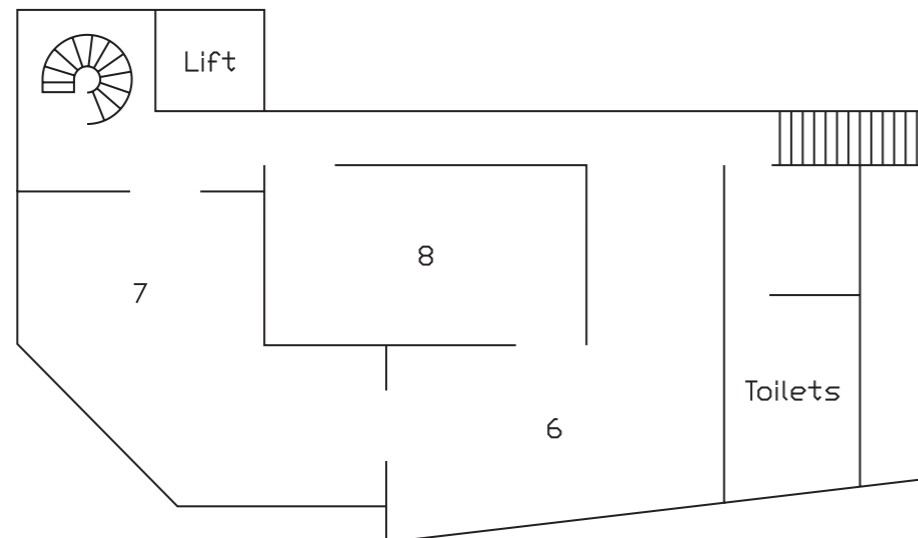
Ground Floor



First Floor



Basement



**MOHAMED BOUROISSA**  
*HARa!!!!!!hAaaRAAAAA!!!!!!hHAaA!!!*  
21 May–01 Aug 2021

*There's poetry inside the streets.*

Artist Mohamed Bourouissa engages with contemporary life through photography, film, installation and art history. He directs his attention to marginalised communities, who, against the odds, use the means at their disposal to make a place for themselves. Each situation that Bourouissa focuses on demands a different artistic approach, dialogue, and ethical negotiation. Growing up in the banlieue (suburbs) of Paris, and born in Algeria, he brings a specific view of the street, hip-hop culture, criminality, economics, and survival against structures of power that do not allow sections of the population to access basic rights of education, justice, and democratic citizenship.

His work questions how it's possible to make images as part of, and from within these communities that reveal how they are fixed (sometimes violently) within hierarchies of value dictated by capitalism and colonial history. The tension inherent to this project is palpable, given the role image-making plays in processes of classification and policing. Bourouissa powerfully explores this friction in close dialogue with the communities he embeds himself in, and across long term research periods. His works counteract reductive mediated images that reinforce prejudice and division, revealing how individuals negotiate the systems they find themselves in.

Different systems of exchange shape, and are quoted in, his works; whether in the form of his transactions with participants in making the work, tracking colonial and cultural histories across disparate geographies, focusing on flows of capital and transformations of value, and not least in showing his work in gallery spaces and as part of the art market – which he takes pleasure in disrupting.

His early work has often centred on the lives of young people of the banlieue, whose futures have been compromised, and whose backgrounds run against the rigid nationalism of the French Republic. Later his scope has globalised, finding subjects in Australia and the US, creating works from these encounters that reveal systems of power and routes of exchange. Bourouissa claims no emancipatory role for his work, rather that his practice comes from a particular place and way of seeing, and through an equitable dialogue with specific groups. Marshalling references from Delacroix to hip-hop, Bourouissa's works productively trouble the dividing line between the museum and the street, the centre and the periphery.

## ACROSS THE GALLERY

*Nous Sommes Halles*, with Anoush Kashoot, 2003-5  
This series was inspired by Jamel Shabazz's portraits of young people, clad in street wear, proudly posing in the streets of New York between 1980 and 1989. Mohamed Bourouissa and his friend Anoush Kashoot set out to invent their own street photography at Châtelet-Les Halles, where the youth of the Paris banlieues converge. In his quest to portray his generation, the artist focused on people wearing Lacoste clothes, popularised by the rap group *Årsenik*—a far cry from the image promoted by Lacoste's own advertisements at the time, yet later embraced by the company in a marketing u-turn.

## GROUND FLOOR

### 1. GARCIA FAMILY FOUNDATION GALLERY

*Brutal Family Roots*, 2020

First presented at the Sydney Biennale, this work is the result of time spent on residency at the Bundanon Trust, south of Sydney on the traditional lands of the Wodi Wodi people of the Yuin Nation. Whilst there Bourouissa learned that the yellow-flowered Acacia tree (or Mimosa) was not native to France and Algeria - as his childhood experience of it had suggested - but is a central part of indigenous culture. Acacia's had been exported under colonial occupation to the UK, France, and onward, as a hardy and fast-growing species. The tree thus traces colonial routes and networks of exchange – similar to the resilience and dispersal of hip-hop.

The audio featured was created through a collaboration with musicians MC Kronic (a Wodi Wodi man and local hip-hop/rap artist, activist and poet), Nardean (an Egyptian-Australian MC, poet, singer and songwriter) and Jordan Quiqueret (French sound designer and programmer). Bourouissa found a way to combine the energy frequencies of the Acacia tree into audible rhythms; a soundscape which is mixed with MC Kronic and Nardean's rap and song. The installation is a welcoming space in which to take some time, listen to the sounds, and contemplate the complexity of their origins.

## FIRST FLOOR

### 2. CANDIDA & ZAK GERTLER GALLERY

*Périphéries*, 2005-8

This series of photographs was shot in the aftermath of the Parisian riots in the Autumn of 2005. Bourouissa was away at the time and so experienced the riots, which had originated in the banlieue, through TV news programmes. He was struck by the repetitiveness of the images that the news shared; images of violence and

# LIST OF WORKS

deprivation that served to reinforce a narrow view of the populations who lived there. This series of photographs attempts to disrupt that flow of images. Each feature young people from the banlieue who were friends of, or from circles connected to, Bourouissa. The images were posed both through his direction and the participants own ideas. Some show amicable scenes, others simmer with tension, as if depicting the moment before the riots, imagining a scenario in which the tensions could have been dispelled and violence averted.

Bourouissa channels art history through the images, using motifs and compositions from classical paintings, such as Eugène Delacroix's *Liberty Leading the People* (1830) in the image *La République*; here the flag is lowered rather than raised, troubling French assimilationist nationalism.

The banlieue in Paris are a specific urban space, developed to house immigrant populations who moved to France after the war to help rebuild its cities. Made up of modernist buildings, and positioned on the other side of the 'periphery' road encircling central Paris, these areas are spatially removed from and badly connected to the city, creating a social division that maps out into lack of opportunities, education, and jobs.

## 3. DASKALOPOLOUS TANK GALLERY

*ALL-IN*, 2012

This hypnotic film was shot within the Paris Mint, where Euro coins are engraved. The images of this formidable building, which has been the seat of French currency production for centuries, are accompanied by French hip-hop artist Booba (Élie Yaffa), whose song *Foetus* (2009) chronicles his violent struggle to pull himself out of life on the streets; as he becomes at once the product and prisoner of the capitalist drive for money. The film is the same duration as a music video, and shot using similar camera moves. As the edit moves along to the beat of the track, at uncanny moments it is as if the movements of the coining machines are dictated by the track. The central image is that of a rotating coin being slowly engraved with Booba's portrait; the ultimate statement on the power of money - and its pursuit - over the subject under capitalism.

In his use of rap music within the field of visual art, Bourouissa questions the hierarchies of low and high culture, complicating or disrupting ascribed values and closed circuits of exchange. The presentation of the film in a gallery points to another form of exchange value; by placing the artwork within an art market context. Hip hop, art, and indeed human life itself, are co-presented as entangled in capital.

## 4. BRIDGET RILEY GALLERY

*Horse Day*, 2015

After being profoundly struck by Martha Camarillo's photographs of urban horsemen at the Fletcher Street Urban Riding Club in the Strawberry Mansion area of North Philadelphia, Bourouissa moved to the neighbourhood for a period of eight months to find out more about the community. The images of these black cowboys were powerful to him in their deconstruction of the white cowboy image upon which so much of American mythology rests; many of the working cowboys in the West were in fact black, Latino, and Native American.

Whilst living amongst the community he observed, drew and photographed its members. He eventually proposed the idea of a 'Horse Day' to the group, as an event at which the horsemen could display their skills for a prize; the idea drew on the popularity of 'car-tuning' events and evolved between the group as a collaboration. Each horseman was paired with a local artist who would design costumes for the horses. The resulting film documents the build-up and the day itself, joyfully celebrating the artistry of the riders, and the role such activities play in social cohesion and self-defined identity.

Surreal shots of horse and rider trotting through busy urban streets intercut the action. As with much of Bourouissa's work, the line between documentary and fiction is difficult to draw as set pieces intermix with observational moments.

## 5. RODEN COURTYARD GALLERY

*HARA!!!!!!hAAARAAAAA!!!!!!hHARAAA!!!*, 2020

Positioned both at the entrance of the CCA, and in the Roden Courtyard Gallery, this sound piece uses two well-known expressions from Marseille, 'hara' and 'aouin'. Both are words shouted in warning by lookouts around drug deal points when they see police approaching. Bourouissa transforms and distorts these words into abstract sounds.

## BASEMENT

### 6. WESTON GALLERY

*Nasser*, 2019

A man stands in front of a camera reading a letter. As he reads it aloud his French is halting and unsure, some words are illegible to him. The man is Bourouissa's uncle, and the letter sentences him for his role in a robbery. The fact that the official language of the state that disciplines him is almost unintelligible serves as a stark figuration of the gap that exists between the

judiciary and those to whom they dole out punishment.

*Shoplifters*, 2014

When in New York, Bourouissa discovered these images displayed behind the counter of a supermarket in Brooklyn. Depicting shoplifters holding the - often mundane - items they intended to steal, they were taken by the supermarket manager in return for not calling the police. Bourouissa gained permission from the shopkeeper to take photographs of the images, which he then restored as they were damaged by scotch tape and time.

The violence of the shopkeeper's action in taking and displaying these images is visceral, and something that Bourouissa struggled with before deciding to present them in art galleries. The eventual presentation of these works and what they make visible was invaluable to Bourouissa, however conflicted he was. *Shoplifters* speaks of the modern misery of poverty, which often disproportionately afflicts POC communities, and has yet to disappear in even the wealthiest nations.

## 7. BASEMENT 1

*Temps Mort*, 2009

The work *Temps Mort* originated as a project between Bourouissa and his incarcerated friend Al. Bourouissa asked Al to send him grainy smart phone photographs of the prison, and was captivated by their power. When his friend ended his sentence, he was put in touch with another young man in a remand centre. They began a correspondence via SMS message, which built into a collaboration. The inmate would send Bourouissa video footage in return for phone credit vouchers and images of the artists' own life. Trust between them grew, and the inmate began to shoot passages of film of his own direction, sharing these with the artist. What emerged is a lyrical document of inside and outside, incarceration and freedom, between two young men.

## EVENTS

10 Jun, 7–8pm ONLINE TALK  
*ALVARO BARRINGTON IN CONVERSATION WITH MOHAMED BOUROUISSA*

Artists Alvaro Barrington and Mohamed Bourouissa track their respective practices. Long-standing friends, their discussion will revolve around shared approaches to making artworks that deal with identity, belonging, migration, and power, with an aesthetics that channels art history through lived experience.

17 Jun, 7–8pm ONLINE TALK  
*RESISTANCE/CONFRONTATION: OLGA SMITH, WITH STEPHANIE BAILEY*

Through the double focus on the themes of resistance and confrontation, this talk delineates the volatile dynamics underpinning Mohamed Bourouissa's art. It draws on a wide range of Bourouissa's projects spanning photography, moving image and installation to show how these works intersect with symbolic, spatial and political constructions of inequality, social exclusion and racialised identities.

15 Jul, 7–8pm TALK  
*BLACK ECOLOGIES: IMANI JACQUELINE BROWN*  
Invited in response to Mohamed Bourouissa's work *Brutal Family Roots*, Imani Jacqueline Brown shares Black Ecologies, a body of work on ecological reparations that branches into an ongoing investigation with Forensic Architecture.

27 Jun, 1–2pm BSL TOUR  
Join Martin Glover for a British Sign Language (BSL) introduction to Goldsmiths CCA and tour of Mohamed Bourouissa's exhibition. Stay for an optional social chat and refreshments afterwards.  
For more information on upcoming events visit [goldsmithscca.art](http://goldsmithscca.art)

## LIMITED EDITION

To mark the exhibition Mohamed Bourouissa has created a new limited edition. To make a purchase please ask at the front desk, or check our website. All proceeds from editions sales go toward supporting our ongoing programme.

### SUPPORTED BY:

Trampoline  
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