



Villa Albertine  
San Francisco



**Press Contact:**

For Villa Albertine: May Wijaya, [mwijaya@resnicow.com](mailto:mwijaya@resnicow.com)

For California Humanities: Cherie Hill, [chill@calhum.org](mailto:chill@calhum.org)

***In the Banlieues/Centering the Margin: Oakland/Saint-Denis*, the first in a series of international exhibitions exploring arts and humanities, urbanism and placemaking in France and the United States, Opens June 15, 2022, at the Pavillon de l’Arsenal, Paris**

*Co-produced by Villa Albertine, California Humanities, Pavillon de l’Arsenal in Paris, and the urban planning non-profit organization SPUR in San Francisco, the exhibition examines cultural trends in the rapidly changing neighborhoods situated at the ‘outskirts’ of major urban centers*

June 9, 2022 (Saint-Denis, Paris, France)—Villa Albertine San Francisco and California Humanities are partnering to debut *In the Banlieues/Centering the Margin: Oakland/Saint-Denis*, the first in a series of international exhibitions about Oakland, California and Saint-Denis, Paris, two cities on the margins of major cities in France and the United States. Opening at the Pavillon de l’Arsenal in Paris on June 15, 2022, the exhibition highlights the symbolic reversal of the center and the periphery through an exploration of how Oakland and Saint-Denis are building their own influence by inventing solutions to urban challenges through forging community solidarity, social justice, urban innovation, and artistic intervention.

*In the Banlieues/Centering the Margin* reinterprets the critical moments in the history of Oakland and Saint-Denis and illustrates their contribution to current urban planning practices through storytelling. The exhibition shines light on those who challenge social norms, forge connections, speak for those who are rarely heard, and celebrate spaces and models of cooperation that summon sensitivity to build spaces on a human scale.

Co-produced by Villa Albertine San Francisco, a new cultural institution dedicated to the exchange of arts and ideas between France and the US, and California Humanities, a statewide nonprofit dedicated to building connections through the public humanities, this exhibition seeks to deepen cultural relations between the two countries. To date this cross-cultural collaboration has resulted in a short documentary, *Empowering Culture in our Cities*, filmed in both cities about the place of culture in cities on the margins, as well as a publication, *Translating Cities and Cultures*. Starting in the summer of 2022, the program will stage public exhibitions and programs around several key moments, guided by a multidisciplinary committee composed of artists, academics, political leaders, and urban planners.

*"In the Banlieues* is a French-American dialogue that puts into perspective the making of two urban fabrics, Oakland and Saint Denis," said Sabine de Maussion, Cultural Attaché and Director of Villa Albertine San Francisco. "The project is forging new vocabularies to allow an ongoing conversation between the two cities, their past and present and ways of belonging. It is an invitation to reflect on the potential of international cultural cooperation today, its current practices and urgent questions."

"The project amplifies the stories of those who make up the richness of our communities, revealing the local resources as well as the crucial role that artists and cultural organizations play in the making of more inclusive and creative cities," said Julie Fry, President and CEO of California Humanities.

"Oakland and Saint-Denis have long been breeding grounds for artistic creation. By centering those who are rarely heard, those who challenge ideas, the exhibition gives voice to cultural actors who question urban planning practices alongside the inhabitants and propose concrete solutions," said Laure Gayet and June Grant, co-curators of *In the Banlieues: Oakland/Saint-Denis* in a joint statement. "Gathering a hybrid composition of archival images, models, paintings, artistic installations, objects, and videos, this exhibition explores cultural and residential practices in urban planning. Places, people, and stories are at their core, drawing far from clichés portraits of composite suburbs. There is an urgent need to recognize those who live there on a daily basis, those who work and create there."

In France, the exhibition will take place in four stages:

- At the Pavillon de l'Arsenal from June 15 to the end of August 2022
- In Saint-Denis: in public spaces from September 2022
- At the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme Paris Nord from September 17 to December 2022.

In California, the exhibition will be presented beginning July 21 at SPUR, an urban planning non-profit organization in the San Francisco Bay Area, and in various locations in Oakland beginning in August 2022.

Conceived by the Franco-American curatorial duo Laure Gayet (Légendes Urbaines) and June Grant (BlinkLAB Architecture), the exhibition offers a three-pronged approach: a historical rereading of the urban, social, and cultural construction of the two cities; a narration of the lived experience of residents on the fringes of the dominant image of society; and a Franco-American review of tools and projects based on key themes.

### **Exhibition Works**

Several artists were invited to share new narratives of the inhabitants and territories at the heart of the exhibition through performances and public creative works. Among the works included in this traveling exhibition are:

#### **Portraits *moi Dionysienne - moi Dionysien* by Claire Doutriaux, Arte**

*Moi Dionysienne, Moi Dionysien* is a selection of the 365 portraits made by Claire Doutriaux, creator of the weekly ARTE program *Karambolage*, in partnership with Arte. For two years, Claire Doutriaux has asked the inhabitants of Saint-Denis to present an object that is important to them. More than 350 people of all ages and backgrounds have participated in the project, resulting in 365 one-to-two-minute short films with portraits that are sometimes joyful, sometimes melancholic, often full of humor, and offer a moment of intimacy and humanity for each protagonist that also allows us to discover other cultures and worlds. The portraits will also be presented in several media libraries and neighborhood houses in Saint-Denis in the summer and fall of 2022.

*"Of the 193 nations listed by the UN, some 137 are represented in Saint-Denis. Also, this large suburban city is a kind of laboratory for today's France; also,*

*beyond Saint-Denis, the whole of these films draws us a portrait of tomorrow's France." - Claire Doutriaux*

**SPACES: Our stories—duet stories and choreography, Kaimera Productions, 2022**

SPACES is a choreographic creation in public space, each edition of which is built with and for the inhabitants of the place where it is located. Participative and immersive, SPACES is built around the intimate stories of inhabitants and storytellers, mixed with dance, music, and video projections. A video installation at the center of the exhibition shows dance duets from the cities of Saint-Denis and Oakland. Performances will take place on June 25, 29, 30, and July 1, 2, 6, 7, 9 between the Halle du Marché and the Basilica of Saint-Denis.

*"How can we not feel a moment of connection after listening to this life story of a stranger who has offered up a part of himself? [...] SPACES is our little antidote to the division that society is experiencing. It is an invitation to heal together, locally and globally." - Simón Adinia Hanukai, Artistic Director and Stage Director, Kaimera Production*

**“Royal” portraits of Sophie Comtet Kouyaté**

A selection of "royal" portraits of the inhabitants of Saint-Denis by Sophie Comtet Kouyaté will be presented at the Pavillon de l'Arsenal, an invitation to cross the Boulevard Périphérique and discover the Polyphone exhibition at the Paul Eluard Museum in Saint-Denis from June 15 to November 7, 2022.

**VENTILATE by Lamyne M**

Born in Cameroon, visual artist and performer Lamyne M's project, "VENTILATE" explores our survival in the face of the challenges of global warming and the threat of the COVID pandemic. He lives and works in Saint-Denis.

Other featured artists include:

**Amir Aziz, Oakland Photographs, Multimedia journalist and OaklandSide reporter**

Many of the stories about Oakland offered in the exhibition are illustrated by the photographs of Amir Aziz. An Oakland native, Amir uses photography to document the life and times in which his rapidly changing community lives. From Black Panther women to Indigenous Peoples' celebrations, he creates a continuous archive of local events and social justice movements in the United States and abroad with his camera.

**ayodele nzinga, MFA, Ph.D., Poet Laureate, A Message to Saint-Denis and Oakland**

The complexity and nuanced beauty of the Oakland spirit resonates in the work by the city's first poet laureate, ayodele nzinga. nzinga is a poet, essayist, actress, director, playwright, and producer. For this exhibition, she wrote a message to the cities of Oakland and St. Denis that resonates with compassion and can be read through the landscape of the exhibition.

**EastSide Arts Alliance Collective, *Painting the Streets—Oakland's Revolt In Times Of Rebellion***

The first copies of *Painting the Streets - Oakland's Revolt In Times Of Rebellion*, a book by the EastSide Arts Alliance Collective, will be on display at the exhibition. It features murals painted in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on minority

residents. The foreword is by Ashara Ekundayo, Oakland-based curator, and editor of BLATANT-zine. EastSide Arts Alliance is a collective of Third World artists, cultural workers, and residents from minority populations, committed to working in the San Antonio neighborhood and other Oakland neighborhoods to support a creative environment that improves the quality of life for residents and advocates for progressive, systemic social change.

**Favianna Rodriguez, *The Living Schoolyard***

*The Living Schoolyard* is an environmental education and design collaboration between Oakland-based interdisciplinary artist, cultural strategist, and social justice activist Favianna Rodriguez and the Marham Elementary public-school administration. Marham Elementary's recently completed *Living Schoolyard* includes 84 trees added to provide shade, an outdoor classroom space, a turf play field that will also capture stormwater runoff, and a garden. Rodriguez's art and practice addresses migration, gender discrimination, climate change, and racial equity. Her work boldly retraces current myths, histories, and cultural practices, while healing wounds from the past

**In the Banlieues Events**

Related events including conferences, meetings, and festivals will be open to the general public from June to December 2022. These events include:

**City/Cité Conversation Series – online**

Offered by Villa Albertine San Francisco and California Humanities, the online lecture series invites cities around the world to share their cultural and urban innovations. Past meetings have featured urban planning experts and artists from Detroit, Chicago, and Paris as well as the mayors of Saint-Denis and Oakland.

**Street Art Festival, cross street art residencies 22/23**

In partnership with the Street Art Avenue Festival and the city of Saint-Denis, two artists from Oakland and Saint-Denis will be invited to Saint-Denis for a residency to create a collaborative work at the Saint-Denis Canal as part of the 2023 Street Art Avenue Festival.

**Additional events to be announced**

The public will be invited to participate in the various events organized from June to December 2022 as part of Périphéries, the European Capital of Culture candidacy of the territories of Saint-Denis, Plaine Commune, and Seine-Saint-Denis, partner of the exhibition *In the Banlieues: Oakland/Saint-Denis*. Throughout the program, the Art Explora volunteer community will offer informal conversations around works of art in several EHPAD, hospitals, and leisure centers in the area. To fight against all forms of isolation and social and geographical exclusion, everyone will be able to get involved close to home to (re)create links through the arts and culture.

Additional public programs will be presented in Oakland and San Francisco and at several cultural and iconic venues in the city.

This project is co-produced by Villa Albertine San Francisco and California Humanities, and presented by the Pavillon de l'Arsenal, Paris, and SPUR, San Francisco, as well as with the support of the 836M Foundation, the French Institute, the Art Explora Foundation, the cities of Oakland and Saint-Denis, and Arte.

## CO-PRODUCERS

### **About Villa Albertine**

Villa Albertine is a new kind of cultural institution whose mission is to create a community that links France and the United States in a shared exploration of arts and ideas. With a team of 80 people deployed in 10 major cities—Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, New Orleans, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C.—Villa Albertine presents its innovative programming nationwide. This includes 60 customized residencies for artists, thinkers, and cultural professionals; a series of cultural and humanities initiatives and events; a magazine; and resources and convenings for professionals in the cultural sphere. Villa Albertine is an institution of the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, with support from the French Ministry of Culture.

Villa Albertine San Francisco is a branch of the Villa Albertine network working in conjunction with the French American Cultural Society. For more information, please visit [villa-albertine.org](http://villa-albertine.org) or follow Villa Albertine on Facebook at [@villaalbertineusa](https://www.facebook.com/villaalbertineusa).

### **About California Humanities**

California Humanities, a statewide nonprofit partner of the National Endowment for the Humanities, promotes the humanities—focused on ideas, conversation, and learning—as relevant, meaningful ways to understand the human condition and connect people to each other in order to help strengthen California. California Humanities has provided grants and programs across the state since 1975. To learn more, visit [calhum.org](http://calhum.org), or like and follow on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/californiahumanities), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/californiahumanities), and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/californiahumanities).

## PARTNER LOCATIONS

### **The Pavillon de l'Arsenal**

The Pavillon de l'Arsenal is an information, documentation, and exhibition center for urban planning and architecture in Paris and the Paris metropolitan. The center will present the *In the Banlieues* exhibition from June 15 to the end of August 2022. For more information, visit the Pavillon de l'Arsenal on Facebook at [@PavillonArsenal](https://www.facebook.com/PavillonArsenal).

### **SPUR**

SPUR is a public urban planning organization based in the San Francisco Bay Area. Working on innovative practices to address contemporary urban planning issues, SPUR will present the *In the Banlieues* exhibition beginning July 21. For more information, visit <https://www.spur.org/>

### **Maison des Sciences de l'Homme Paris Nord**

Founded in Saint-Denis in 2001, the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme Paris Nord, supported by the CNRS and the universities of Paris 8 and Sorbonne Paris Nord, is a research and services institution dedicated to the development, promotion and dissemination of research in the humanities and social sciences.

## PARTNERS

### **836M**

836M is an innovative foundation based in San Francisco that brings contemporary art to life through exhibitions and by supporting emerging and established artists. Beginning in 2021, 836M initiates partnerships in Europe promoting diversity, social inclusion, and dialogue between

cultures. A laboratory for artists to explore new creations from Paris to San Francisco, 836M supports the *In the Banlieues* program in all its dimensions: exhibitions, artist residencies, and cultural exchanges between the two countries. For more information visit the 836M on Facebook at @836M.art.

### **The French Institute**

The French Institute promotes international artistic exchanges and dialogue between cultures. The French Institute has supported this international cooperation program since 2018. For more information visit the French Institute on Facebook at @institutfrancais.pageofficielle.

### **Art Explora Foundation**

Dedicated to sharing arts and culture with the greatest number of people, Art Explora renews the dialogue between the arts and the public at the local, national, and international levels. For more information visit the Art Explora Foundation on Facebook at @explora.art.

### **Arte**

Arte is a partner of the *In the Banlieues* program. Arte is committed to issues that are dear to the citizens of Europe: the fight against inequalities, whether social, cultural, economic, or geographical. For more information visit Arte on Facebook at @ARTEenglish.

### **Cities of Oakland and Saint-Denis**

The Cities of Oakland (@VisitOakland) and Saint-Denis(@VilleSaintDenis), a partner in the international cooperation program, have been active participants in the *In the Banlieues* program since its inception in 2018.

