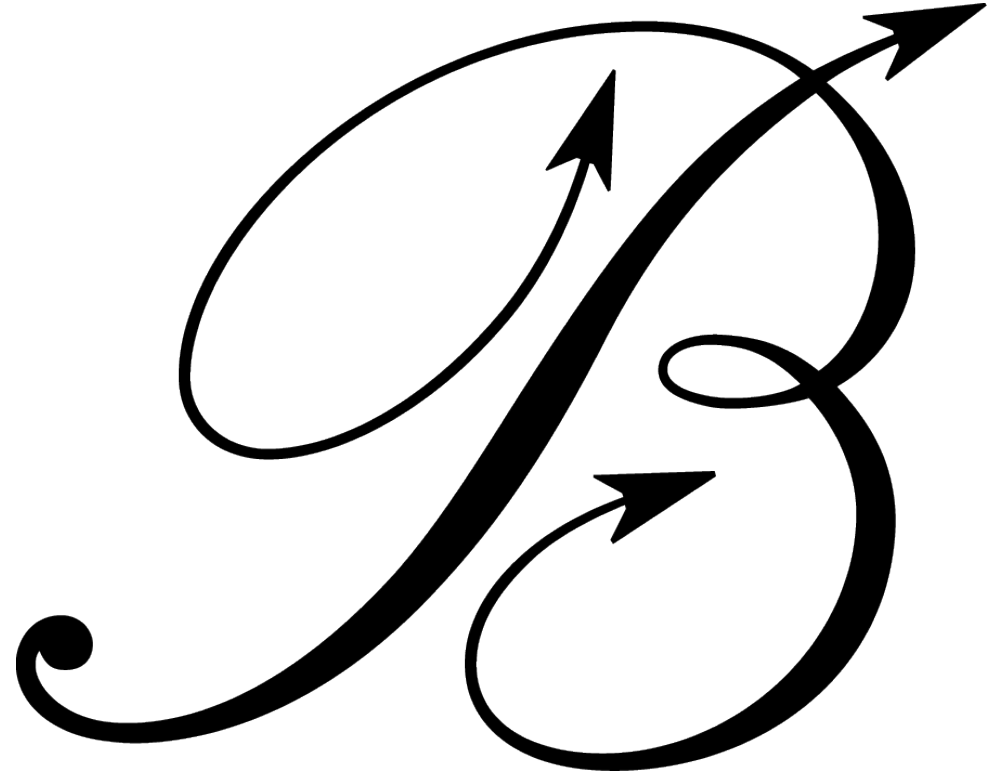


PASSAGES ART CONTEMPORARY CENTER 9 RUE JEANNE D'ARC - TROYES - FRANCE

**BBR**  
**LOUISA BABARI**  
FROM MAY 30 TO AUGUST 14, 2026  
OPENING ON MAY 29 FROM 6PM

PRESS KIT



LOUISA BABARI - BBR

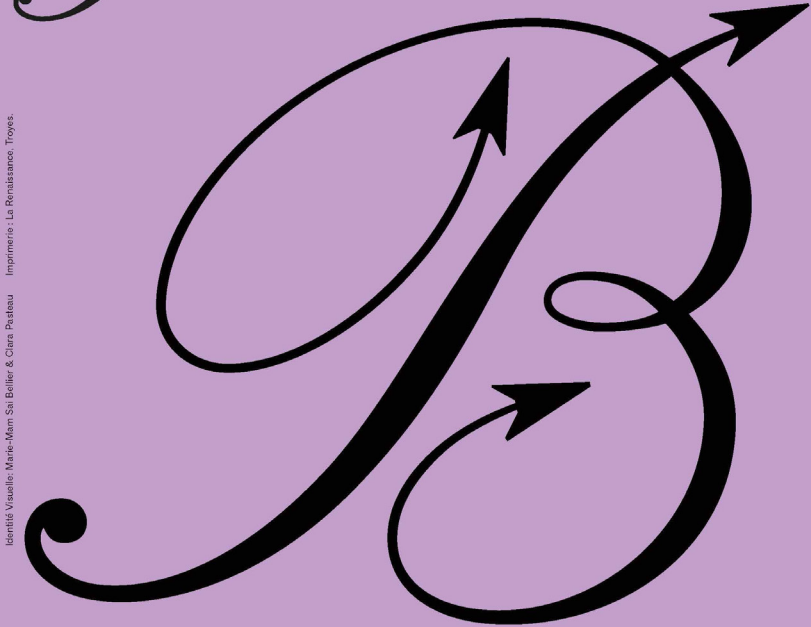
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PASSAGES  
CENTRE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN  
9 RUE JEANNE D'ARC – TROYES

**LOUISA  
BABARI**

Identité Visuelle: Marie-Mam, Sam, Beiller & Clara Pasleau Imprimerie: La Renaissance, Troyes.



30-05-26

14-08-26

**BBR**

ENTRÉE LIBRE DU MERCREDI AU DIMANCHE DE 14H00 À 18H00  
VERNISSAGE PUBLIC LE 29-05-26 À PARTIR DE 18H00

CETTE EXPOSITION EST COPRODUITE PAR AWARE: ARCHIVES OF WOMEN ARTISTS, RESEARCH AND EXHIBITIONS DANS LE CADRE DU PRIX AWARE 2023, EN PARTENARIAT AVEC DCA - ASSOCIATION FRANÇAISE DE DÉVELOPPEMENT DES CENTRES D'ART CONTEMPORAIN.



## PRESS KIT

Passages is delighted to present the work of Louisa Babari in a solo exhibition running from May 30 to August 14, 2026.

*BBR* brings together family photographs, candid snapshots, and archival images. Drawings, collages, and a video complete the body of work presented throughout the art center's galleries. Comprising 80 works—most of them produced specifically for the exhibition—the project symbolically retraces the history of the artist's surname, Babari, whose roots lie in the Numidian territory of the Aurès region in Algeria.

For Passages, the artist has chosen to create a family portrait across generations, one that is intrinsically intertwined with the history of Algeria. Through a constellation of figures, archaeological traces, and ancient statues, the exhibition unfolds both a historical and an intimate narrative.

The exhibition title, *BBR*, emerged from the artist's research in Algeria. By tracing the paths of the Babari tribe—identified as BBR on certain stelae—she ultimately constructs the portrait of a people shaped by migration and warfare. Roman culture intermingles with Libyco-Berber populations, while conflicts over territory and religion frequently arise.

**This exhibition is produced by CAC Passages (Troyes, 2026) and co-produced by AWARE: Archives of Women Artists, Research & Exhibitions, in partnership with DCA – the French Association for the Development of Contemporary Art Centers.**

**It has been awarded the label *Saison Méditerranée 2026* , organized by the Institut Français.**

- Exhibition on view from May 30 to August 14, 2026, Wednesday to Sunday, from 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm.
- Press preview on Friday, May 29, at 5:00 pm, and by appointment.
- Exhibition opening reception on May 29 from 6:00 pm onwards.



## BIOGRAPHY



Louisa Babari, *BBR*, Color photography, 2026

## BIOGRAPHY

Louisa Babari is an artist distinguished by the singularity of her background in political science, Russian language studies, and cinema. She develops a visual practice closely connected to historical and political subjects that resonate with her own family history.

Born to an Algerian father and a Russian mother, her dual nationality reflects a broader history: that of the bilateral relations between Russia and Algeria beginning in the 1950s. Her father, who was sent to Russia to pursue his studies, met her mother there, and Louisa Babari was born from their union. She grew up between these two culturally distant countries, which were nonetheless connected through issues of international politics in the context of independence wars and the communist states of Eastern Europe. This context would lead the artist's visual research toward the intertwining of reality and narrative—or autofiction—in order to address a variety of themes.

In many of her works, architecture emerges as a recurring motif: ruins, the home, and the house seem to evoke symbolic territorialities linked to her personal history. And since the intimate is always political, architecture also gives way to voices and family figures (*Journal d'un étudiant algérien à Moscou*, 2016), as well as more universal ones (*Voix Publiques*, 2018), creating rich and multifaceted works in which language complicates perception and bears witness to colonial histories and the distinct identities shaped by migration.

In Louisa Babari's work, a powerful grounding in language—its performativity, the question of translation, myth, and reality—also reflects a conceptual inquiry into the oral forms that constitute the foundation of identity. This is particularly evident in works such as *Lecture* (2017) and *Corps à corps* (2015), where intellectual figures (Vergès, Fanon) infiltrate subjects imbued with intimacy.

From a formal perspective, the practice of collage stands out in her work, whether in two-dimensional pieces, in her video works—which are close to experimental cinema<sup>1</sup>—or in her sound works. The appropriation of elements drawn from the observation of environments she inhabits (*The Hope*, 2018) or from old magazines (*A Secret Song*, 2021) also reveals a postcolonial perspective and an interest in archives, now engaged with our contemporary capitalist modernities.

The resonance between the subjects addressed by the artist and the realities of a brutal world marked by war and ongoing colonial issues demonstrates the necessity of bringing Louisa Babari's work to greater institutional prominence in France. As Elisabeth Lebovici writes, she “gives substance to a life trajectory.”<sup>2</sup>

Finally, the restrained and subtle artistic forms developed by Louisa Babari lend her work an undeniable elegance and a distinctive poetic quality.

A graduate of Sciences Po Paris and the National Institute for Oriental Languages and Civilizations (INALCO, Paris), where she studied contemporary Russian studies and cinema, she lives in Paris.

In 2014, her work gave rise to the publication *Aesthetics of the Antrum* (Cabeza de Chorlito). Her works have notably been exhibited at the Centre national édition art image (CNEAI) in Chatou, the Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilisations (MUCEM) in Marseille, Raw Material Company in Dakar, the Dakar Biennale, BOZAR in Brussels, the Maison des Arts de Malakoff, Manifesta 13 in Marseille, the National Center for Visual Arts (CNAP), and the FRAC Centre-Val de Loire in Orléans, and more recently at the [mac] in Marseille.

She also contributes occasionally to art and opinion journals (*Analyse. Opinion. Critique, Something We Africans Got*). In 2018, she received a grant from the Roberto Cimetta Fund as part of the Pan-African Poetry Programme.

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[1] Salma Mochtari described the artist as a filmmaker who “does not make cinema,” 2023

[https://awarewomenartists.com/artiste\\_prixaware/louisa-babari/](https://awarewomenartists.com/artiste_prixaware/louisa-babari/)

[2] Elisabeth Lebovici, \*Le Beau Vice\*, in \*Les cartes abattent leur jeu. Made in Algeria\*, MUCEM, Marseille, 2016

<https://le-beau-vice.blogspot.com/2016/01/les-cartes-abattent-leur-jeu-made-in.html>

## TEXT PANEL

Louisa Babari develops a practice at the intersection of photography, video, sound, and writing, grounded in a critical reflection on memory and the construction of identity.

Babari frequently revisits historical questions through the lens of a family history that bears witness to the bilateral relations between Russia and Algeria beginning in the 1950s. Her photographic work is driven by a desire to document the vestiges of the past in a world undergoing constant transformation. She often takes historical or archaeological archives as her point of departure, only to move beyond them and produce new visual forms.

Her work also reveals an autobiographical—or at least introspective—dimension, marked by traces of memory and lived or suggested experiences. Louisa Babari often explores the construction of identity through both individual and collective memory. She examines her cultural origins, family narratives, and the persistence of the past within the present. Through her artistic production, she creates bridges between art, archaeology, history, and storytelling, generating shared resources and forms of collective learning. She “reactivates visual resources” through personal photographs—portraits, ruins, and stelae.

Babari's work also highlights the ways in which bodies are exposed to social norms and regimes of visibility. Echoing Frantz Fanon's analysis of the Black body, perceived through the colonizer's gaze as an object fixed within stereotypes, Babari investigates the mechanisms of reduction and identity assignment.

The body thus becomes a site of tension between subjectivity and external perception, between lived experience and social construction. It is caught within relations of power that determine what can be seen, said, or recognized. This exposure of the body invites a reflection on visibility: who is looking? According to which norms? And with what consequences?

In her exhibition *BBR*, presented at Passages, Louisa Babari retraces the traces of the Babari lineage—her ancestors—through a series of photographs, drawings, collages, objects, and a film.

*BBR*, the lexical root of the name Babari, serves as the starting point of

this project. These three letters, inscribed on Punic stelae, testify to the presence of the Aurès tribe, from a mountainous region in northeastern Algeria. According to Ahmed M'Charek, professor and archaeologist at the University of Tunis, this name, derived from ancient Berber, is linked to a lineage whose presence in North Africa has been attested since Antiquity, within the Numidian kingdom.

From photographs of ancient ruins to family photographs, between Moscow and Algiers, Babari attempts to make us sensitive to the question of a narrative situated within 2,000 years of history, whether scientific or more fictional in nature. Certain motifs emerge from her sensitive investigations: lions, symbols associated with the ethnonym *BBR*; stones, moving and laden with symbolism; and portraits of her family, dating from a few decades ago or from more recent times. As an active participant in a cultural history, she thus produces a photographic language within a broader ensemble of experimental works, akin to avant-garde collage.

In Louisa Babari's work, the powerful anchoring in language—its performativity, the questions of translation, myth, and reality—also reflects a conceptual inquiry into the oral forms that constitute the foundation of identity. This is particularly evident in the film presented at Passages.

As an artist, Louisa Babari takes her own subjectivity as a point of departure. She is interested in micro-history and in producing her own archives; to do so, she turns toward her own narrative and that of her family.

Mirroring the exhibition *BBR*, she has also been invited by the [mac], the Contemporary Art Museum of the City of Marseille, to present another solo exhibition entitled *AFRICA*.

The two exhibitions are connected through their evocation of her research into her family origins, as well as through a publication, *BBR – Africa*, published by AA and available for purchase at Passages. What distinguishes them is the intimate dimension of the exhibition in Troyes, in which Louisa Babari materially constructs an autobiographical portrait, whereas in Marseille, her production of photographs, collages, and texts dedicated to ancient Algeria is more concerned with a community and a people across time.

**EXHIBITION VIEWS**



Exhibition view  
Photo credit : Aurélien Mole

**EXHIBITION VIEWS**



Exhibition view  
Photo credit : Aurélien Mole

EXHIBITION VIEWS



Exhibition view  
Photo credit : Aurélien Mole

## EXHIBITION VIEWS



*BBR (Mourad Babari, the artist's father, date unknown, family archive) satin print, 28.5×56cm, 2025*  
Photo credit : Aurélien Mole



Exhibition view  
Photo credit : Aurélien Mole



*BBR, series of 27 drawings, India ink on paper and dry pastel on paper, variable dimensions, 2024-2026.*  
Photo credit : Aurélien Mole

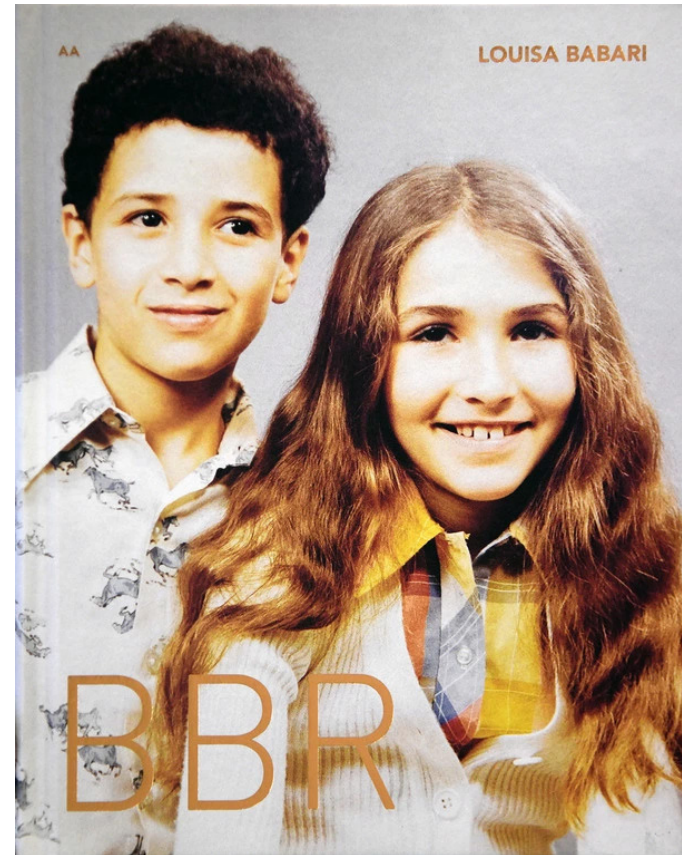
**CATALOG - AFRICA BBR PUBLISHED BY AA EDITIONS (MARSEILLE, FRANCE)**

Following the AWARE Prize, Louisa Babari was invited to develop a project for May 2026 consisting of two parallel exhibitions at Passages-Centre d'Art Contemporain and the [mac] Contemporary Art Museum of the City of Marseille, as part of the Mediterranean Season organized by the French Institute.

The publication *BBR-AFRICA* extends and connects these two projects through an autonomous form conceived as an artist's book. The more than 200 images featured in this catalogue originate from the corpus developed for Troyes and from the research undertaken for the production of the works presented in the Marseille exhibition.

Drawing upon the artist's personal history, this publication explores the intersections between intimate memory, colonial narratives, and photographic representation. Conceived as an experimental picture book, the publication brings together family archives, drawings, amateur photographs, and Algerian heritage within a fragmented and non-linear narrative. Envisioned as a visual experience akin to a flipbook, it translates into book form a mode of writing inspired by cinematic editing, in which each image functions as a shot contributing to the recomposition of a shifting narrative.

The texts by Stéphanie Airaud, Maëla Bescond, and Florian Gaité, translated into French, English, and Algerian Arabic, accompany this visual corpus. Through collage, layering, and the recomposition of images, *BBR-AFRICA* interrogates the uses of the archive and opens pathways toward alternative, sensitive, and non-hierarchical narratives situated between memory, fiction, and contemporary history.



**TEXT FOR THE CATALOG *AFRICA - BBR*, PUBLISHED BY AA EDITIONS, MARSEILLE, 2026**

When I encounter Louisa's work, I am struck by unusual perspectives on ruins, architecture, and landscapes that spark my curiosity. The artist directs her gaze toward a bush concealing part of a tombstone, recomposes incomplete and scattered archival forms against a black background. She dismantles and reassembles texts and images, retaining only their sensitive qualities in order to foreground what is essential—what ultimately shapes her aesthetic.

In a museum, a low-angle shot crowns an ancient statue with an industrial neon light, while a close-up of a plastic mannequin dressed in ceremonial attire reveals a hastily repaired hand wrapped in tape.

Her films, situated within the field of experimental video and produced with modest means, always weave a connection to her family as it intersects with political and intellectual spheres. She also intervenes in public space with Algerian and African poems—an ode to orality and transmission.

Louisa Babari works as an artist with the reflexes of a scholar: she reads, gathers, and recomposes history—that of her family and loved ones, that of her country, Algeria—creating a vast corpus that bears witness to the complexity of the past. Her work, marked by a punk elegance, generosity, and discreet memories, takes the form of a portrait composed of what might be called “territories of affect,” which she stages within her exhibitions.

Under the guise of a rap album title, \*BBR\* condenses and preserves the history of ancient Numidia, drawing from the Aurès region, where her ancestors resisted Roman and Arab imperial conquests and later took part in the Algerian War of Independence.

Through a rhizomatic approach, stone ultimately remains the central motif of the artist's practice. Almost invariably, a fragment of a tomb, an architectural element, or a statue quietly emerges within her unexpected framings. These “imperfect archives,” nearly abstract in appearance, continue to bear witness throughout this publication, which brings together the two simultaneous exhibitions in Marseille and Troyes.



Maëla Bescond, April 2026

## PROGRAM

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### **BBR Exhibition, Louisa Babari**

**Press tour**, Friday, May the 29th from 5pm  
**Opening reception**, Friday, May the 29th from 6pm  
**Exhibition open** from May 30 to August 14 2026

**Guided Tours** with a mediator every Saturday at 2pm  
Free admission, Wednesday to Sunday, from 2:00p.m. to 6:00p.m.

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#### **CAFÉ ESTIVAL**

Dans le jardin du centre d'art

chaque samedi et dimanche de 14h00 à

18h00

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#### **RENDEZ-VOUS IN THE GARDENS**

Guided tour of the Marot House and its garden

June 5, 6, and 7 from 5PM to 6PM  
free admission

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#### **WORKSHOP WITH THE ARTIST**

Collage workshop using family photos  
(to bring with)

Saturday, June 27 at 2PM  
free with registration

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#### **CHAMPAGNE TASTING**

In partnership with the Chassenay d'Arce Champagne

Thursday, July 2nd at 6PM  
limited places - free with registration

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#### **SATURDAY IN THE PRESENCE OF THE ARTIST**

Lecture

Saturday, July 4 from 2PM. to 6PM

**Book launch** : *BBR-AFRICA*  
AA Éditions, Marseille

Saturday, July 18 from 2PM to 6PM  
free admission

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#### **VISIT FOR TODDLERS (2-4 YEARS OLD)**

Fun and interactive discovery of the exhibition

Saturday, July 18 at 10AM  
free with registration

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#### **NIGHT VISITS**

Saturday, July 11 from 6PM. to 8PM  
free admission

Friday, July 24 from 6PM to 8PM  
free admission

## PRACTICAL INFORMATION



### **Passages**

Contemporary Art Centre of National Interest  
9 rue Jeanne d'Arc  
10000 Troyes, France

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Open to the public Wednesday to Sunday, 2:00 pm – 6:00 pm  
Administrative office open Monday to Friday, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm

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Phone number: +33 (0)3 25 73 28 27

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Email: [accueil@cac-passages.com](mailto:accueil@cac-passages.com)