

Mindset Los Angeles

Frank Gehry and the Cool School

June 27, 2026 – January 10, 2027

Works from the Schürmann Collection

June 27 – November 8, 2026

Press conference: Thursday June 25, 2026, 11 a.m.

Herford Meets Los Angeles: With its expansive project *Mindset Los Angeles*, Marta Herford turns its attention to the dialogue between art and architecture, taking Frank Gehry's early work as its point of departure and presenting it in the Marta museum building he designed. For the first time, the exhibition highlights Frank Gehry's close connections with artists—including members of the Cool School. More than 150 works bring together now-renowned figures of the American postwar avant-garde and open up a fresh perspective on the interplay between art and Gehry's early architectural projects. *Works from the Schürmann Collection* complement this overview of historical artistic approaches from the U.S. West Coast and extend it into the present.

With *Mindset Los Angeles*, Marta Herford presents, for the first time, an exhibition project that understands art and architecture as shared spaces of thought and experience. The point of departure is Frank Gehry's close relationship with the art scene of the American West Coast and its influence on his architectural thinking. Marta Herford's entire exhibition space is devoted to the wide-ranging project *Mindset Los Angeles*: while Frank Gehry and the Cool School illuminates the shared origins and networks in L.A., as well as the architect's ties to artists of his time, selected works from the Schürmann Collection broaden the perspective to include later artistic developments and contemporary concerns.

Marta Herford

Frank Gehry and the Cool School

In the late 1950s, the legendary Ferus Gallery laid the groundwork for a vibrant new avant-garde scene in Los Angeles. A loose circle of artists—primarily from L.A. and San Francisco—formed around the gallery run by Walter Hopps and Ed Kienholz. Inspired by the rebellious Beat Generation, this network became a hotbed of artistic experimentation. Many of the artists involved are now prominent names in recent art history, including key figures in American postwar art such as Larry Bell, Wallace Berman, Craig Kauffman, Edward Kienholz, and Ed Ruscha. In the 1960s, the art critic and *Artforum* editor Philip Leider grouped this loose artistic community under the term Cool School. The name refers not only to their artistic independence, but also to a mode of self-presentation marked by considerable self-confidence and a macho brand of cool.¹

Gehry, who described the connection between art and architecture as part of his DNA from his student days onward, became part of this dynamic art scene. His exchanges with the artists had a lasting impact on his understanding of architecture. Looking back, he described the openness of the scene as crucial to his own development: “The thinking, the stuff people were talking about and doing (in the Californian art scene) ... led to my own language.”

Gehry shared with these artists a spirit of experimentation, an openness to everyday materials, an engagement with new technologies, and an interest in surface, space, light, and perception. While the established and commercially successful art scene of Abstract Expressionism on the East Coast set out clear rules, Los Angeles was becoming a creative melting pot. Here, in the shadow of Hollywood—shaped by bustling boulevards, the urban infrastructure of multilane freeways, the booming automotive and aviation industries, an omnipresent advertising industry, and, not least, the extraordinary light of the Pacific Coast—artistic processes were able to unfold with a remarkable sense of freedom. The studios and workspaces that were still affordable at the time also contributed to this atmosphere.

Material, Light, and Perception

Out of this atmosphere, the artists began experimenting with technical processes and industrial materials. The object itself was no longer the sole focus; instead, attention shifted to the experience of space, light, and perception. This gave rise to the Light and Space and Finish Fetish movements, which—because of the West Coast’s distinctive cultural and technological conditions—would later be grouped together under the term L.A. Look.

At the same time, Los Angeles was also a magnet for artists from the East Coast. The Gemini printmaking, paper, and editions workshop, built by Gehry, attracted numerous artists. Gehry was fascinated by the artistic developments emerging from New York: the approaches of Minimal Art and Robert Rauschenberg’s assemblages, which were taking

¹ Ken D. Allen, Lucy Bradnock, and Lisa Turvey, “For People Who Know the Difference: Pop Art and the 1960s: A Definition,” in *Pacific Standard Time: Art in Los Angeles 1945–1980*, exhibition catalog, Martin Gropius Bau, Berlin, 2011, 125.

Marta Herford

shape in parallel with his own cardboard furniture. “This was the time when Rauschenberg and Johns were making art with junk. Donald Judd was making art with galvanized steel, and Carl Andre was putting bricks along the floor. Intellectually I connected with them, and not only because the minimalism fit my liberal tendencies. Despite its matter-of-factness, accessibility, and unpretentiousness, it was high art. It was obviously beautiful, and people were responding to it.”²

Between Architecture and Exhibition

This creative environment forms the starting point for the exhibition. With *Mindset Los Angeles – Frank Gehry and the Cool School* (June 27, 2026 – January 10, 2027), Marta Herford—Germany’s most recent architectural sculpture designed by Frank Gehry—also presents an exhibition about friendships. On view are approximately 150 works of the American postwar avant-garde, brought together for the exhibition from numerous European museums, estates, and galleries, along with selected early design drawings and models by Frank Gehry from the Getty Research Institute and the Gehry Partners archive in Los Angeles. The exhibits reveal formal parallels and thematic affinities between architecture and the visual arts in a direct and compelling way, bringing shared lines of thought and development to light.

A total of seven of Gehry’s projects are represented in the exhibition, including his own home. The *Gehry Residence*, itself a sculptural structure and a vivid demonstration of Gehry’s experimental approach to design, functions as a radical application of assemblage. An existing, simple building in the Dutch Colonial style was expanded and reorganized with structures made of wood, metal, and glass. In this way, the building evolved into an open system rather than a self-contained object. “My own house couldn’t be built anywhere but California. It was experimenting with wood and glass and materials that were used here.”³ “There was an amazing energy in the city, an openness and a sense that new things were happening.”⁴

Marta Herford, which opened in 2005, is also presented as part of this series. Closely related to the *Gehry Residence* and following the principles of assemblage, this museum of contemporary art, with its focus on design and architecture, wraps around an older building that Frank Gehry extensively expanded. Marta Herford is one of the few museum buildings Gehry realized and stands alongside internationally significant architectural projects in his oeuvre, such as the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao. With its organic forms, tilted and curving walls, brick cladding, undulating stainless-steel roof, and wood paneling, Marta Herford takes up key elements of Gehry’s approach and itself becomes an expression of his artistic vision.

² Barbara Isenberg, “Frank Gehry,” in *State of the Arts: California Artists Talk about Their Work* (New York: William Morrow/HarperCollins, 2000), 49.

³ Isenberg, “Frank Gehry,” 51.

⁴ Isenberg, “Frank Gehry,” 49.

Marta Herford

Important loans from the collection of Gaby and Wilhelm Schürmann, who have been collecting West Coast art since the 1980s, have allowed the exhibition to be expanded with key figures from 1970s Los Angeles. In the Lippold Gallery, in the context of *Mindset Los Angeles*, the exhibition presents exclusively works from the Schürmann Collection that build on the artistic approaches developed in Los Angeles and demonstrate their influence on later generations.

At the center is Jason Rhoades's expansive installation *The Great See Battles of Wilhelm Schürmann* (1994–95). Themes such as social fractures, tensions, and contradictory images—often in the context of U.S. (consumer) culture—define the conceptual framework for works by artists including Edgar Arceneaux, Sam Durant, and Aura Rosenberg.

The exhibition project is accompanied by a wide-ranging public program that brings the atmosphere of Los Angeles in the 1960s and 1970s to life beyond the exhibition spaces. Every Sunday, a free, curated film program invites visitors to immerse themselves in the cultural and social atmosphere of that era. Interviews with eyewitnesses and experts offer firsthand insights. As part of the popular *City and Vision* series, organized in collaboration with the Association of German Architects, Ostwestfalen-Lippe Region, exclusive talks on the themes of the exhibitions will be held for the first time. Lectures, curator-led tours, and a wide range of educational programs for all age groups round out the program and offer further opportunities to deepen visitors' engagement with the exhibition.

A catalog in German and English, edited by Marta Herford, will be published to accompany the exhibition. Spanning 192 pages, the publication brings together essays by Hunter Drohojowska-Philp, Sylvia Lavin, and Ann Kristin Kreisel, as well as two interviews: one with Larry Bell by Marcus Herse and another with Wilhelm Schürmann by Kathleen Rahn. It includes a foreword by the director of Marta Herford, more than 200 illustrations, historical documents, and original quotations by Frank Gehry. The hardcover volume (ISBN 978-3-7533-1042-8) will be published in late August by Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther und Franz König. It will be priced at €37 in the Marta shop during the exhibition and €42 thereafter.

Additional content and further information on the exhibited works and themes are available in the accompanying exhibition app: <https://app.interkit.marta-herford.de/app/t8vBWctGdzteafL2q/>.

App QR-Code



Marta Herford

Artists

Gehry Galleries:

John Altoon, Carl Andre, John Baldessari, Larry Bell, Billy Al Bengston, Wallace Berman, John Chamberlain, Judy Chicago, Meg Cranston / John Baldessari, Ronald Davis, Frank Gehry, David Hockney, Robert Irwin, Donald Judd, Craig Kauffman, Corita Kent, Edward Kienholz, Ed Moses, Claes Oldenburg / Coosje van Bruggen, Ken Price, Robert Rauschenberg, Deborah Remington, Ed Ruscha, Richard Serra, Pae White

Lippold Gallery:

Edgar Arceneaux, Sam Durant, Sean Duffy, Richard Hawkins, Jason Rhoades, Aura Rosenberg

Supported by

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des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen



In partnership with

Gehry Partners
Getty, Los Angeles
Gaby and Wilhelm Schürmann Collection, Herzogenrath

Events

Fri June 26, 4.30 pm, Children's Opening: *Chaos from Cardboard – Where Walls Learn to Dance*

Short guided tour for families, followed by a studio workshop for children ages 6–12. Free admission, registration required.

Fri June 26, 6.00 pm, Opening at Marta-Forum

With greetings by Anke Theisen, Mayor of Herford, and Ina Brandes MdL, Minister for Culture and Science of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (via video). Introduction by Marta Director Kathleen Rahn and curator Ann Kristin Kreisel. Closing words by Megan Meulemans (Gehry Partners LLP) and Maristella Casciato (Getty Research Institute). A food truck will be serving hot dogs, fries, and popcorn on the Marta Plaza. The Marta Café with its beautiful summer terrace will present a new exhibition-inspired menu. DJ Bobby will provide music throughout the evening. Free admission to all exhibitions from 6.00–10.00 pm.

Film Screening Series

every Sunday from 11.30 am throughout the exhibition *Mindset Los Angeles*
Free admission, no registration required.

Accompanying the exhibition *Mindset Los Angeles*, the first part of the film program gathers four films that approach Frank Gehry's architecture and its relationship to art from different angles. Beyond that, they turn to the city of Los Angeles itself. *Gehry's Vertigo* shows the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao from the vantage point of the cleaners who work suspended on ropes, bringing its sweeping surfaces dizzyingly close. *Large Scale Projects* follows Gehry's collaboration with the artists Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen, which produced works poised between sculpture, object and architecture. In *Sketches of Frank Gehry*, Sydney Pollack draws an intimate portrait of the architect himself, of the man and of his working process, from the first quick sketch through models to the finished building. Lastly, *Los Angeles Plays Itself* turns to the city, asking how its modern architecture is read on screen and endlessly reimagined. Across the four, the program moves from the individual building to the design process, to Gehry's proximity to art, and finally to the city as image: the Los Angeles that gave rise to Frank Gehry and the Cool School, and that they helped shape in turn.

Wed, July 8, 6.00 pm, Curator's Tour with Marta Curator Ann Kristin Kreisel

Wed, Aug 26, 6.00 pm, Curator's Tour with Marta Director Kathleen Rahn

Wed, Sept 2, 2026, 6.00 pm, At Marta with... Hartwig Rullkötter

This one-hour conversational tour features experts who contributed to the planning and construction of Marta. Kathleen Rahn is joined by Hartwig Rullkötter (Archimedes GmbH, Herford), the executive architect responsible for overseeing the museum's construction.

Marta Herford

Sat, Sept 5, 4.00 pm, SprechStoff: Let's Take Pictures

Architecture meets photography: Photograph Marta's distinctive architecture and discuss your observations.

Location: Marta HOCH2, 2nd Floor

Wed, Sept 9, 7.00 pm, Lecture: *Los Angeles, Hollywood, Pool Parties, and "Advanced Drug Research" – Artistic Innovation at CalArts and Its Lasting Legacy*

Christina Végh, Director of Kunsthalle Bielefeld, introduces key protagonists and eyewitnesses from the California Institute of the Arts through oral history interviews. CalArts developed a radical interdisciplinary educational model inspired by institutions such as the Bauhaus and Black Mountain College. Combined with the spirit of the 1970s, legendary pool parties, and classes such as "Advanced Drug Research," it fostered a unique cultural environment that helped establish Los Angeles as a leading center of artistic production and critical discourse.

Location: Marta Forum

Sat, Sept 26, 6.00 – 10.00 pm, Herford Cultural Night at Marta

Free admission to the exhibitions *Mindset Los Angeles – Frank Gehry and the Cool School* (Gehry Galleries) and *Mindset Los Angeles – Works from the Schürmann Collection* (Lippold Gallery, first floor). The evening includes gallery talks by Marta art mediators, dance performances responding to the museum's architecture (artistic direction, choreography, and stage direction by Tchekpo Dan Agbetou), and creative activities in the Marta Atelier.

Wed, Sept 30, 6:00 pm, At Marta with... Eckhard Hofmeister

A one-hour conversational tour with Eckhard Hofmeister, whose company Dach + Asphalt (Herford) realized Marta's distinctive curved stainless-steel roof.

Wed, Oct 7, 7.30 pm, City + Vision Special: *Hans Hollein – Museum Abteiberg: Building an Anti-Museum*

Illustrated lecture by Susanne Titz, Director of Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach. The lecture explores the work of Austrian architect, artist, and designer Hans Hollein (1934–2014), focusing on Museum Abteiberg (1972–1982), his first iconic museum building and recipient of the Pritzker Architecture Prize (1985). Presented in cooperation with the Association of German Architects (BDA), East Westphalia-Lippe.

Location: Marta Forum

Wed, Oct 14, 6.00 pm, Curator's Tour with Marta Director Kathleen Rahn

Wed, Oct 14, 7.30 pm

Piano Recital: *A Wanderer Between Worlds – A Final Program*

Matitjahu Kellig performs works by Johann Sebastian Bach, Paul Ben-Haim, Alessandro Marcello, Ben Zion Orgad, Lior Shambadal, Domenico Scarlatti, and Viktor Ullmann.

Location: Marta Forum

Marta Herford

Wed, Nov 4, 6.00 pm, At Marta with... Hartmut Braun

A conversational tour with longtime *Neue Westfälische* editor Hartmut Braun, who covered Marta's development and early years.

Sun, Nov 8, 11.30 am, Marta Philharmonic

A morning of music and art in cooperation with the North West German Philharmonic. Performers: Arata Yumi and Jovan Pantelich. The concert is followed by a guided visit to *Mindset Los Angeles* with Marta art speakers.
Location: Marta Forum

Sun, Nov 8, 2.00 pm, Last Look: *Mindset Los Angeles* – Works from the Schürmann Collection

On the closing day of the exhibition, Marta Director Kathleen Rahn offers a personal one-hour tour.
Location: Lippold Gallery

Wed, Nov 11, 6.30 pm, City + Vision – Frank Gehry Special

Conversational exhibition tour with Prof. Berthold Heinrich Penkhues and Marta Director Kathleen Rahn. **7.30 pm:** Illustrated lecture by Prof. Berthold Heinrich Penkhues. Having worked in Frank Gehry's office during the late 1980s, Penkhues shares personal insights into Gehry's architectural practice and his experiences working in Venice and Santa Monica, California. Presented in cooperation with the Association of German Architects (BDA), East Westphalia-Lippe.

Wed, Nov 25, 6.00 pm, Curator's Tour with Ann Kristin Kreisel**Wed, December 2, 7.30 pm, City + Vision – Herford Architecture Talks #49**

Keynote lecture by RIEHLE KÖTH (Stuttgart), followed by a panel discussion moderated by a representative of the local architectural community. Presented in cooperation with the Association of German Architects (BDA), East Westphalia-Lippe.
Location: Marta Forum

Wed, Dec 9, 6.00 pm, Curator's Tour with Marta Director Kathleen Rahn**Sun, January 10, 2:00 pm****Last Look: *Mindset Los Angeles* – Frank Gehry and the Cool School**

On the exhibition's closing day, Marta Director Kathleen Rahn offers a personal one-hour tour.

Public Guided Tours

Every Wednesday at 6.00 pm (the museum remains open until 8.00 pm on Wednesdays), as well as Saturdays, Sundays, and public holidays at 3.00 pm.
On selected Wednesdays, the curator's tour replaces the regular public tour.

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Tickets: €3.50 plus exhibition admission. No registration required. Tickets available online or at the museum desk.

Family Tours

Every fourth Sunday of the month, 2.00–3.00 pm.

Adults: €3.50 plus admission. Children: free admission.

Recommended for elementary school children up to age 14.

Public Architecture Tours

Every first and third Sunday of the month, 2.00–3.00 pm.

Tickets: €3.50 plus exhibition admission. No registration required. Tickets available online or at the museum box office.

Public Tours for Blind and Visually Impaired Visitors

Specially designed guided tours featuring detailed verbal descriptions of artworks and spaces.

Sat, Sept 26, 2.00–3.30 pm

Sat, Oct 31, 2.00–3.30 pm

Tickets: €3.50 plus reduced admission. Companions are admitted free of charge.

Registration required. Capacity is limited.

Free Guided Tours for Educators

Tue, June 30, 4.30–6.00 pm

Wed, July 1, 4.30–6.00 pm

Workshops for Companies and Private Groups

Whether for birthdays, team building, or other occasions, workshops in the Marta Atelier offer creative opportunities inspired by the exhibitions. Participants explore artistic approaches and techniques through hands-on activities.

Appointments by arrangement: bildung@marta-herford.de

Press Information

This press release as well as exhibition images are available for download in the press section at <https://marta-herford.de/presse/>

The password for the image section is: **M4rt4pr3ss3**

We would be happy to arrange background discussions and interview opportunities.

For this – and any further – information, please contact us by telephone on

+49 (0)5221 99 44 30-27 or by email at presse@marta-herford.de

Social Media

Hashtag: #MartaHerford #MindsetLosAngeles

Marta Herford

Facebook: /MartaHerford
Instagram: @martaherford
YouTube: Marta Herford

Exhibition Information

Artistic Director

Kathleen Rahn (Director, Marta Herford)
Ann Kristin Kreisel (Curator, Marta Herford)

Exhibits

Gehry Galleries: Over 150 works (ranging from drawings, paintings, photography, and film to sculpture and installation) by 27 different artists in dialogue with 6 early architectural projects and numerous sketches by Frank Gehry
Lippold Gallery: 10 works by 6 different artists, including paintings, installations, and drawings

Exhibition Space

Gehry Galleries: approx. 1,200 square meters
Lippold Gallery: 350 square meters

Dates

Gehry Galleries: June 27, 2026 – January 10, 2027
Lippold Gallery: June 27 – November 8, 2026

Venue

Marta Herford, Goebenstraße 2–10, D-32052 Herford

Opening Hours

Tue–Sun and on public holidays 11.00 am to 6.00 pm, Wed 11.00 am to 8.00 pm
Closed on 24/25/31 Dec and Good Friday
Open on 26 Dec 11.00 am to 6.00 pm, New Year's Day from 1.00 pm

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