



## TELL YOUR STORY! »OF COMING, GOING AND STAYING «

As part of the exhibition project "Vom Kommen, Gehen und Bleiben" (Of coming, going and staying), the Goethe-Institut Mannheim and photographer Mirko Müller are collecting personal stories from younger generations on the topic of "guest workers".



Exhibition „Vom Kommen, Gehen und Bleiben“, Alter Messplatz Mannheim 2022. Photo: Mirko Müller

You, your parents or grandparents have lived and worked in Germany, wanted to build up an existence there and yet decided to return to the "old" homeland? But what were their personal motives for doing so and do they see Germany as a piece of home? What do you associate with Germany and what memories do they/you still carry with you?

Since 1955, the so-called "guest workers" came to Germany within the framework of bilateral recruitment agreements. Some stayed, but others decided to return. A life in one or more homeland(s). It is these people who have left a positive mark on German society right up to the present day and whose stories are part of the common culture of remembrance.

The new Center for International Cultural Education at the Goethe-Institut Mannheim wants to track down and make visible precisely these memories and stories of people. The newly collected stories will be presented on the Instagram account @vomkommengehenundbleiben following the exhibition. In order to record these stories for posterity, they can also be archived in the MARCHIVUM, the archive of the city of Mannheim.

**Now it's up to you. No matter if you are new to Germany or if your parents or grandparents immigrated. We are looking forward to your story, opinion and feelings. Become part of "Vom Kommen, Gehen und Bleiben" and tell us your story. Whether text, voice-over or video - all formats are welcome. You can either send us an email or a WhatsApp message. You can send us videos and voice messages via email [hello.vkgub@gmail.com](mailto:hello.vkgub@gmail.com) or WhatsApp 0152 281 134 39.**

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**THE EXHIBITION »VOM KOMMEN, GEHEN UND BLEIBEN«  
29.01.2022 TO 31.03.2022, Mannheim, Germany**



Exhibition „Vom Kommen, Gehen und Bleiben“, Alter Messplatz Mannheim 2022. Photo: Mirko Müller

Days of travel, poor accommodation and language problems – the arrival of “guest workers” in Germany was usually not easy. Far from home, many of them initially wanted to earn money. They were called to Germany under recruitment agreements starting in 1955 to help build up the economy. Millions of people came here and found a new home – but for many this remained only a dream.

“Vom Kommen, Gehen und Bleiben” focuses on the people behind the term “guest worker”. With portraits, personal accounts and documents, the exhibition tells the special stories of special personalities who often lived in two worlds. The exhibition opens up new perspectives on the topic of “home and foreign”, but also on the feelings we humans associate with these terms. More than 100 people throughout Germany have shared their stories and had their portraits painted. A selection of 18 larger-than-life portraits on the forecourt of the National Theater Mannheim and the Alter Messplatz tell the moving experiences of the “guest workers”. With the help of QR codes, the stories of the people portrayed can be viewed in their original language on your own smartphone or here <https://vomkommengehenundbleiben.de/interviews/>. Corresponding documents, photographs, films and objects are on display at the Goethe-Institut Mannheim. In the digital space, “guest workers” and their descendants who live in Germany or have returned to their country of origin are invited to tell and share their stories.

**Mirko Müller** is a photographer and graduate communication designer who lives and works in Mannheim. In his photographic explorations, he often deals with people and their different lifestyles. He wants to convey and document with his photographic position, and it is particularly important to him to create an awareness of the individual facing him. The artist developed the project “Vom Kommen, Gehen und Bleiben” (Of Coming, Going and Staying) as part of his diploma thesis in 2019. He collected and documented biographies of “guest workers” from Greece, Italy, the former Yugoslavia, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, Turkey and Tunisia throughout Germany. A selection was made from the resulting interviews and photographs to present the project to the general public for the first time in an exhibition.

**Further information:** [www.vomkommengehenundbleiben.de](http://www.vomkommengehenundbleiben.de)

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Exhibition „Vom Kommen, Gehen und Bleiben“, Alter Messplatz Mannheim 2022. Photo: Elmar Witt

**The new Center for International Cultural Education at the Goethe-Institut Mannheim** is one of five centers in Germany. The Centers for International Cultural Education at Goethe-Instituts in Germany act as a bridge to the world. They make international perspectives on cultural education accessible at home and promote social cohesion in a diverse Germany. The long-term aim is to create a platform for a strategic exchange of experience between institutions of cultural education in combating right-wing extremism, racism and anti-Semitism. They are supported by the German Federal Foreign Office. Further information on the Center for International Cultural Education can be found at: [www.goethe.de/kubi](http://www.goethe.de/kubi)

An exhibition project of the Center for International Cultural Education at the Goethe-Institut Mannheim and Mirko Müller in cooperation with the Commissioner for Integration and Migration of the City of Mannheim, the National Theater Mannheim and the MARCHIVUM. Curated by Bonka von Bredow and Meike Weber.

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