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Mohamed Sleiman Labat is a Sahrawi multidisciplinary artist, filmmaker, writer & translator. Born and raised in the Sahrawi refugee camps southwest Algeria. He now runs community art space *Motif Art Studio*; a small art space built entirely from discarded materials following destructive floods that hit the refugee camps in 2015. He uses his art to investigate the multi-layered political, environmental and social issues affecting his local community in the desert and the world at large.

## Art Projects & Exhibitions:

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>2024</b>      | PHOSfate, <b>Luleå Biennial 2024</b> , Sweden   |
| <b>2023</b>      | DESERT PHOSfate, <b>CultureScapes 2023 SAHARA</b> , Basel, Switzerland  |
| <b>2023</b>      | PHOSfate Sandoponic Garden, <b>Helsinki Biennial 2023</b> , Vallisari Island & Helsinki Art Museum, FI.                             |
| <b>2023</b>      | Nomadic Seeds, with Pekka Niskanen, <b>Forum Box Gallery</b> , Helsinki, FI.  |
| <b>2022</b>      | Endless together with Matthew Galloway, <b>Te Tuhi Gallery</b> , Aotearoa NZ.   |
| <b>2021</b>      | The Desert at the Bottom of the Sea, <b>Artspace</b> , Auckland Aotearoa, NZ.   |
| <b>2020</b>      | Nomadic Seeds (Book and garden in Helsinki and Samara Camp - On-going Project)  |
| <b>2019</b>      |   |
| November         | The Year of Balls, Group Exhibition with <b>Myymalaz Gallery</b> 'Present Heritage' in BAM, Palermo. IT                             |
| October          | Hands, Photo exhibition in <b>Myymalaz Gallery</b> , Helsinki, FI.  |
| September        | Food Practices and Ethics, teaching course with Pekka Niskanen at <b>Art School MAA</b> , Helsinki.                                 |
| August           | Face of a Nomad, Work of the Month, <b>Photography Gallery Hypolite</b> , Helsinki, FI.   |
| August           | Imagining Godzilla, micro residency at <b>SOLU Bio Art Society</b> , Helsinki, FI.  |
| July             | PhosFATE, in collaboration with Pekka Niskanen and <b>Art School MAA</b> , Helsinki, FI.  |
|                  | Artist in Residence at <b>Kone Foundation Lauttasari Manor</b> , Helsinki, FI.  |
| <b>2018</b>      |   |
| November         | The Great Wave of Plastics, a <b>Fair Saturday</b> Event with MPDL and Bubisher Library, Samara Camps.                              |
| January          | 'The Land of Mines' A short film commissioned by SMACO, Screened in <b>The UN Palace</b> , Geneva.                                  |
| April            | In Close Proximity, Photography Exhibition with Belaxis Bui in <b>FAT Village Projects</b> . FL. USA.                               |
| March            | Artistic Recycling, workshops & exhibition with Oxfam & Chez Toi Design, Samara Camp.   |
| <b>2016-2017</b> |   |
| April            | Building "Motif Art Studio" in Samara Refugee Camp (One full year)  |
| <b>2014</b>      |   |
| May-August       | Designing the Saharawi Future Currency Project with Mel Chin and ARTifariti, Exhibited in <b>The Royal Ontario Museum</b> , Canada. |

## Awarded Grants & Residencies:

|      |  |
|------|--|
| 2014 | Prince Claus Fund Mentorship Award for Cultural and Artistic Responses to Environmental Crisis |
| 2023 | Atelier Mondial –International Arts Exchange Program. Basel, Switzerland (2 months)            |
| 2020 | Oskar Öflund Stiftelse (PhosFATE Research Group)   |
| 2020 | Perpetuum Mobile Artist in Residence (PM) Turku, FI (2 month residency)                        |
| 2020 | Saastamoinen Foundation Artist in Residence, Turku & Helsinki (4 month grant)                  |
| 2020 | Saari Residence by Kone Foundation, Perpetuum Mobile (PM) Finland (2 months residency)         |
| 2019 | PhosFATE Artistic Research with Pekka Niskanen, funded by Kone Foundation (3 years grant)      |
| 2019 | BioArt Society Residency with Godzilla Floating Research Platform                              |
| 2019 | Lauttasaari Manor Residence, Kone Foundation, Helsinki, FI (4 months residency)                |
| 2018 | Lush Spring Prize, with Jewellers of the Desert, London, UK.                                   |
| 2017 | Afkar Fellowship, Wassabi, New Silk Road, Swedish Institute, Tunisia (3 months fellowship)     |

## Conferences, Workshops & Talks:

### 2023

October Farming Practices in the desert, Bern University of Applied Science, Bern, Switzerland.

October Shores of Sahara-Sahel, Master Symposium **Institut Kunst Basel**, Switzerland.

September PHOSfate Multiple Destinies, **Museum of Impossible Form, Helsinki Biennial**

September Presentation at **PennState University School of Visual Arts**

2022 The Research Days at **University of the Arts**, Helsinki, FI.

2021 Peripheries in Parallax: BRAVE NEW PERIPHERIES, **Aalto University**, Helsinki

2021 The Gothenburg Symposium: Working Together, **Gothenburg University**.

2021 ARTISTS / IDEAS / NOW: Our Camp on Fire **Liverpool Arab Arts Festival**, UK

2020 Alliances & Commonalities 2020, **Uniarts, Stockholm**, Sweden.

July Arts & Plants, Workshop in **Almasar Library Centre** creating the first seed bank in the camps.

June Arts & Culture Solidarity Network. **World Economic Forum**

### 2019

October **PPLG Art Conference**, Thessaloniki, Greece

September Artists Talk with Pussy Riot Member at **Global Reporting, Stockholm**, Sweden.

August Artists Talk with Pekka Niskanen at SOLU, **Bio Art Society**, Helsinki, FI.

### 2018

October Participatory Photography Workshops with Olive Branch Arts, London (Second Level)

May The LUSH Spring Prize and Permaculture and Regenerative cultures, London, UK.

April Preserving Hope: Youth Creating Futures for Western Sahara, Finnish Social Forum

April Artist talk in Art School MAA, Helsinki, FI.

April Create to Heal, Presentation in PPLG Art Conference, Thessaloniki, Greece

### 2017

October Participatory Photography Workshops in collaboration with Olive Branch Arts, London

## Publications:

2021 "A Temple of Art in the middle of the Desert" in Arts and Culture in Global Development Practice. Published by the Routledge, London, UK.

2021 "PhosFATE", co-authored with Pekka Niskanen. In Situating Sustainability A Handbook of Contexts and Concepts. Helsinki University Press, Helsinki, Finland.

2020 "Family Gardens, an Emerging Discourse in the Sahrawi Community"  
Co-authored with Pekka Niskanen. In "Eco Noir" edited by Jack Faber & Anna Shraer. Published by The Academy of Fine Arts at the University of the Arts Helsinki, Finland.

2020 "Nomadic Seeds" co-authored with Pekka Niskanen, first published by Motif Art Studio

2019 Illustrations for 'Zahra' a novel by Portuguese Tomas Sopas Bandeira, Edições Afrontamento.

2015 "Settled Wanderers", the Poetry of Western Sahara, co-authored with Sam Berkson, Influx Press.

## Links and Media Materials:

**The Guardian** <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/article/2024/may/16/art-film-western-sahara-fisahara-festival-algeria-stories-sahrawi-people>

**The Art Paper** <https://www.the-art-paper.com/journal/print-archive-endless-permanence>

**The Art Newspaper** <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2023/06/12/can-biennials-really-be-sustainable-helsinki-biennial-looks-at-issues-around-the-climate-crisis>

**Motif Art Studio** <https://motifartstudio.com/>

**CultureScapes 2023, SAHARA, Basel, Switzerland**

<https://culturescapes.ch/en/theme/sahara/mohamed-sleiman-labat>

<https://culturescapes.ch/en/theme/sahara/the-films-of-mohamed-sleiman-labat>

<https://www.fhnw.ch/de/die-fhnw/hochschulen/hgk/veranstaltungen/master-symposium-shores-of-sahara-sahel>

***PHOSfate Sandoponic Garden, in Helsinki Biennial 2023, Helsinki, Finland***

<https://helsinkibiennaali.fi/en/artist/phosfate/>

***PhosFATE Artistic Research Project***

<https://koneensaatio.fi/en/stories/the-phosfate-project-discusses-phosphate-and-its-effects-on-the-baltic-sea-and-western-sahara/>

***Kone Foundation Artist in Residence with Pekka Niskanen and Art School MAA, Helsinki***

<https://koneensaatio.fi/apurahat/tuetut/2018-2/lauttasaaren-kartanon-residenssi-7-12-2018/>

***DESERT PHOSfate: 58 minutes Artist Film in Nomadic Seeds, ForumBox, Helsinki, Finland***

<https://forumbox.fi/en/exhibition/voyage-out/>

***The Research Days of the University of the Arts, Helsinki***

<https://sites.uniarts.fi/web/kuvaresearchdays/13.12.2022>

***Uniarts Helsinki's Fourth Research Pavilion, Helsinki***

<https://www.uniarts.fi/en/events/pekka-niskanen-mohamed-sleiman-labat-nomadic-seeds/>

***Peripheries in Parallax: BRAVE NEW PERIPHERIES, Aalto University, Helsinki***

<https://pinp2021.aalto.fi/april-9th-main-conference/>

***Family Gardens Research Paper in Eco Noir: a companion for precarious times***

<https://taju.uniarts.fi/handle/10024/7185>

***PhosFATE, co-authored with Pekka Niskanen. In Situating Sustainability***

A Handbook of Contexts and Concepts. Helsinki University Press

<https://hup.fi/site/books/e/10.33134/HUP-14/>

***The Desert at the Bottom of the Sea, Artspace Aotearoa, New Zealand***

<https://artspace-aotearoa.nz/exhibitions/te-tomo-kohua-street-cinema-programme>

***The Desert at the Bottom of the Sea, Artspace Aotearoa, New Zealand***

<https://tetuhi.art/exhibition/matthew-galloway-mohamed-sleiman-labat-endless/>

***Artists Talk in Bio Art Society, Helsinki***

<https://bioartsociety.fi/posts/artist-talk-pekka-niskanen-and-mohamed-sleiman-labat>

***Imagining Godzilla, Helsinki***

<http://imagininggodzilla.fi/pekka-niskanen-mohamed-sleiman-labat/>

***Imagining Godzilla, Bioart Society Micro-Residency, Helsinki***

<https://bioartsociety.fi/projects/state-of-the-art-network/activities/imagining-the-baltic-sea-online-seminar>

***A Temple of Art in the Middle of the Desert***

<https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781003148203-2/temple-art-middle-desert-mohamed-sleiman-labat>

***ARTISTS / IDEAS / NOW: Our Camp on Fire Liverpool Arab Arts Festival***

<https://www.arabartsfestival.com/events/artists-ideas-now-camp-on-fire/>

***Lush Spring Prize, London***

<https://springprize.org/2018-winners/>

***Pixelache Festival, Helsinki***

<https://burn.pixelache.ac/events/nomadic-seeds-desert-strawberries-and-phosfate-in-the-baltic-sea-screening-discussion>

<https://artdependence.com/articles/disentangling-archives-how-we-are-entering-a-new-era-the-case-of-pixelache-helsinki/>

***Present Heritage, Group Exhibition in Biennial of Mediterranean Archipelago, Palermo, Italy.***

<https://www.collectiveintelligence.fi/projects/a-present-heritage/>

<http://bampalermo.com/events/leredita-presente-a-present-heritage/>

***PPLG Presenter, Thessaloniki, Greece***

<https://pplg.org/presenters/>

***In Close Proximity, Philadelphia, USA***

<https://hyperallergic.com/430982/in-close-proximity-fatvillage/>

***Voices of Western Sahara***

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4t2NKLSCkmc>

***Art as a means of resistance in the Sahrawi refugee camps***

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zVLUBj\\_F23k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zVLUBj_F23k)

***Afkar Fellows, Tunisia***

<http://www.afkar.tn/fellows/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDQI2k2k8YM>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LcLzygR3EsM&index=7&list=PLCrF-lzcSuyFYzebOoa5T5\\_3Ueedmzo6h](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LcLzygR3EsM&index=7&list=PLCrF-lzcSuyFYzebOoa5T5_3Ueedmzo6h)

***The Great Wave of Plastics, Sahrawi Camp, Tindouf, Algeria***

[https://app.fairsaturday.org/fichaevento/877?fbclid=IwARoBjlhDJGvPB-eGmG8EoL0ckKHUn\\_JvXMMMjJmpFmjQJ9aCEzwJ093C3zU](https://app.fairsaturday.org/fichaevento/877?fbclid=IwARoBjlhDJGvPB-eGmG8EoL0ckKHUn_JvXMMMjJmpFmjQJ9aCEzwJ093C3zU)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Vbv3sojHHU>

***Untranslated Nature (Poetry Anthology) by Runosvengi, Helsinki***

<https://www.suomalainen.com/products/untranslated-nature-kaantamaton-luonto>

<https://www.mtvuutiset.fi/artikkeli/kirja-arvio-luonto-sakeiden-lapi/8377824>