

Desert Strawberries

Mohamed Sleiman Labat

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Small-scale family gardens started to emerge in the Sahrawi community in the Hamada Desert, southwest Algeria around 2002. Currently, there are over one thousand gardens spread in the five Sahrawi refugee camps. Leading figures in the process are Sahrawi agricultural engineers and gardeners who have been researching and developing the garden practices together with the families. The theories and practices have become rule-based knowledge in the gardening community. The phenomenon is redefining food perception and diet in the camps. It is taking part in the process of creating a new discourse and narrative for the Sahrawi. The Sahrawi have been pastoralist nomads in Western Sahara. The lifestyle they were leading comprised a number of traditions and rituals fit to cope with the surrounding desert environment where Sahrawi used to live. As we study the family gardens, one of its central parts seems to be an aim to have a self-sufficient way of living. Gardens and agricultural knowledge are starting to change people's perception about food production for this community where the dependency on international aid has been the case since the arrival of the Sahrawi to the refugee camps in 1975.

Mohamed Sleiman Labat

Mohamed Sleiman Labat is a photographer and video artist born in the Saharawi refugee camp in the Hamada desert in southwest Algeria. He took his primary education in the refugee camp before moving to study English literature at the University of Batna, Algeria. In 2014, Sleiman Labat collaborated with poet Sam Berkson, publishing *Settled Wanderers*, a collection of poems from the Saharawi oral traditions. He was the first to translate the most famous poems of Western Sahara into English. Sleiman Labat is the creator of Motif Art Studio, an art space built entirely from discarded materials located in Samara Camp. It functions as a creative hub for art creation and art education.

More about the Exhibition:

Slow Boil

29 May - 7 August

What can the sharing of kai do to transform how we conceive of knowledge, resilience and mana motuhake?

Artspace Aotearoa is proud to present *Slow Boil* (29 May - 7 August) an unfolding exhibition and public creative research project. *Slow Boil* is co-created by kaupapa Māori community group and kai security advocates Boil Up Crew and a group of contributing practitioners spanning architecture, community advocacy, design, food sovereignty, software and the visual arts. During a series of wānanga, works will be collectively produced and installed in the exhibition space alongside existing investigative works by Forensic Architecture.