

كرامتي - KARAMATI

What their eyes told me



Exhibition presentation dossier

KARAMATI

For the KARAMATI project, Peter Casaer photographs domestic workers and young women gardeners he met in Morocco, in the Rabat-Salé-Kénitra region.

Facing the camera, the gazes are direct, the women take their place. Walls, doors, streets, fabrics and light situate the portraits in a specific environment.

The exhibition brings these images together with fragments of testimonies collected within the Karamati project, led by the Belgian NGO Echos Communication. It is built around the tension between what is said and what is seen: on the one hand, words that speak of insecurity, contempt, fear or invisibility; on the other, portraits in which the women appear present, dignified and singular.

In Arabic, Karamati means “my dignity”.

This word does not soften the reality described in the testimonies. It recalls what is at stake: the recognition of work, of a history, of a person.

The photographs do not directly show abuse, fear or contempt. They shift the gaze towards the women themselves: their faces, their postures, their colours, their way of occupying the image.

The exhibition exists in this in-between space: words that express what is often silenced, minimised or made too ordinary; portraits that refuse to reduce these women to what they have endured.





What their eyes told me

The subtitle of the exhibition comes from an oral testimony by Fatima Outidir, representative in Morocco for Echos Communication.

This testimony is shaped by Fatima's years of experience within the Karamati project, but also by the exchanges that took place during the preparation of the exhibition. It is not an institutional text, nor an outside analysis. It is a voice.

Fatima speaks of what struck her throughout these encounters: the matter-of-fact way in which some women spoke about extremely harsh realities; the fear of losing their work; the absence of social protection; the acceptance of conditions one would refuse if one truly had a choice.

She also speaks of "ordinary forms of violence", those that become so familiar that they are eventually no longer named. Working without recognition or formal registration. Living in uncertainty. Growing old without a pension. Being treated as someone who counts for less.

But one sentence runs through her entire testimony:

"To reduce these women to their suffering would also be a form of injustice."

This sentence has become one of the keys to the exhibition.

It explains why the portraits occupy such an important place: they do not contradict the testimonies, but prevent suffering from locking the women into a single image.

The testimonies remind us of what must be fought.

The photographs remind us who stands before us: women who work, doubt, resist and continue.



A photographic language

In KARAMATI, the portrait is frontal, but never fixed.

The women are photographed at eye level, in a direct relationship with the camera. Some hold the gaze, others seem to be looking for something outside the frame, lower their eyes, look towards the ground or towards the sky.

Nothing is uniform.

The gazes move, sometimes withdraw, return, question. They give the portraits their inner movement.

The frame leaves room for postures, hands, clothing, silences.

Nothing is spectacular.

Nothing is forced.

The image is built through a form of restraint.





Colour occupies a central place.

It connects the portraits to one another, creates subtle correspondences, places the bodies within specific settings: walls, doors, streets, fabrics, light.

It is not used to embellish reality, but to situate people in a living environment made of matter, traces and nuances.

This photographic language works through proximity rather than argument. It does not seek effect.

It gives the visitor time to come closer, to linger, and then to return to the words in another way.

Exhibition route and words

Individual portraits, triptychs, photographic mosaics, images of medinas and large testimony panels together form the exhibition route..

The triptychs, mosaics and medina images introduce variations in rhythm and scale. The first triptych brings together three domestic workers dressed in blue, in a calm and frontal presence.

The second is devoted to the young women gardeners, photographed in vegetation, as if on the threshold of a professional future under construction.

The mosaics bring several portraits together around a shared colour palette, in a free echo of Moroccan mosaics.

The images of medinas, often without human presence, create breathing spaces within the exhibition and recall the places from which the portraits emerge.

The quotations come from testimonies collected from the participants.

They are deliberately detached from the photographs and brought together on large thematic panels, around lines of force such as exploitation, invisible lives, contempt, resistance or hope.



The young women gardeners

The young women gardeners occupy a particular place within KARAMATI.

They open another time dimension within the exhibition. In response to the stories of domestic workers, often marked by years of little-recognised labour, we encounter the faces of young women at the beginning of a professional path.

Trained in gardening, they enter a profession still often perceived as masculine. Their presence discreetly shifts boundaries: those of work, gender, self-confidence, and of the future one dares to imagine for oneself.

In the triptych devoted to them, they appear in the vegetation, as if emerging from it. The image introduces a more open breath, without letting go of the central question of the exhibition: how does one take one's place in a world of work that is not always waiting for you?

Here too, it is a question of dignity.

A dignity turned towards the future: learning, daring, projecting oneself, believing that one's place exists.



A modular exhibition

KARAMATI has been designed to circulate in a variety of venues: cultural centres, museums, libraries, photography festivals, heritage sites or temporary exhibition spaces.

The exhibition can be presented in its entirety or in a more compact form, depending on the dimensions and constraints of the venue.

The different ensembles — individual portraits, triptychs, mosaics, images of medinas, testimony panels — allow for a flexible installation while preserving the coherence of the exhibition.

Meetings, guided tours, lectures or discussions around the Karamati project can accompany the exhibition, depending on the host venue and the audiences concerned.

The exhibition is intended for different audiences.

It can be experienced as a photographic exhibition, as a project around work and rights, or as a space for reflection on recognition, social justice and the place of women in professions, spaces and narratives from which they are too often absent.



Echos Communication

Echos Communication is a Belgian NGO active in Morocco, Senegal and Belgium in the fields of social justice, labour rights and inclusion.

In collaboration with local partners and other Belgian organisations, it supports field-based projects for people in vulnerable situations, including women, young people and migrants.

It plays a connecting role between civil society organisations and local and regional authorities. Its work aims to strengthen access to rights, autonomy and fairer living and working conditions.

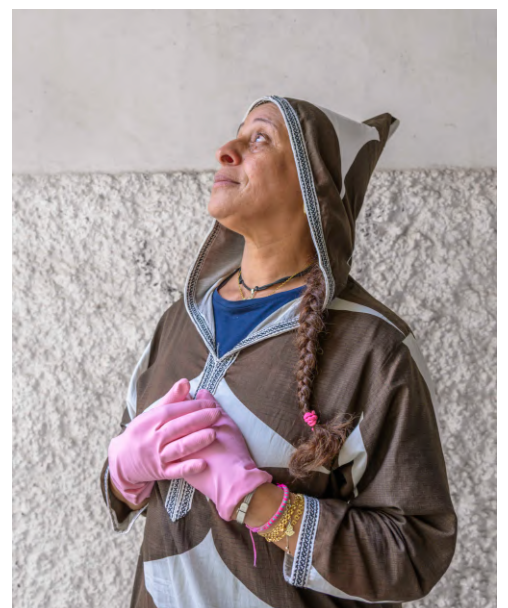
Peter Casaer

Peter Casaer is a photographer based in Brussels. His current work is shaped by more than thirty years of experience in the humanitarian sector, in Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Europe.

This path has confronted him with situations of crisis, injustice and vulnerability, but also with the strength of human relationships that emerge in such contexts. Photography, image-making and audiovisual work long accompanied his fieldwork before becoming a language in its own right.

His photographic projects focus on people, places and social realities that are too rarely looked at. He favours encounter, restraint and relationship over effect or spectacle.

With KARAMATI, Peter Casaer continues this approach through a series of portraits in which gaze, posture, colour and environment become the elements of a distinct presence.



Technical information

Title

KARAMATI
What their eyes told me

Concept and photography

Peter Casaer

Interviews en testimonium

Fatima Outidir
Vertegenwoordigster in Marokko, Echos Communication

Context

Karamati project, Echos Communication
Rabat-Salé-Kénitra region, Morocco.

Composition of the exhibition

Individual portraits
Triptychs
Photographic mosaics, compositions of 4 photographs
Medina images
Large testimony and information panels in Fr, NI, En

Configuration

Modular exhibition, adaptable according to the available space.



Available photographs and panels

To be determined in consultation with the host venue

Photographs

Number: 28 photographs

- 4 mosaics, each composed of 4 photographs, dimensions: 50 x 62.5 cm, 2 photographs, and 87.5 x 62.5 cm, 2 photographs
- 2 triptychs, each composed of 3 photographs, dimensions of the photographs: 90 x 112.5 cm
- 3 portraits, dimensions of the photographs: 90 x 112.5 cm
- 3 medina images, dimensions of the photographs: 90 x 112.5 cm

Additional photographs possible on request and by agreement.

Text panels, dimensions 90 x 112.5 cm

- 6 thematic panels; each panel multilingual: Arabic, Dutch, French.
- 3 panels "What their eyes told me"; 1 panel per language: Dutch, French, English.
- 1 information panel about the Karamati project, in 3 languages: Dutch, French, English.
- 1 information panel about Echos Communication and Peter Casaer, in 3 languages: Dutch, French, English.

Materials and hanging

The photographs are printed on Forex, a light and rigid material that is easy to hang. They are all equipped with a metal hanging system on the reverse side.

The text panels are printed on Dispa, a 3.8 mm paper board, both light and rigid.

Hanging according to the venue: walls, ceilings, other options.



Collection cards

Promotional postcards of the exhibition are available on request.



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Peter Casaer

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