



GOWEN
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

GOWEN AT PHOTO BASEL 2025

Imane Djamil
M'hammed Kilito
Seif Kousmate
James Nachtwey

Press Release | Photo Basel

June 17 - 22 | 2025

Photo Basel 10th anniversary edition

Imane Djamil, M'hammed Kilito, Seif Kousmate, James Nachtwey

Stand 26

June 17 – 22, 2025
During Art Basel week 2025

Preview Monday June 16 (by invitation only)
In the presence of the artists

Volkshaus Basel, Rebgrasse 12-14, 4058 Basel, Switzerland

Opening hours:

Tuesday, June 17 to Saturday, June 21: 12 PM – 8 PM

Sunday, June 22: 12 PM – 6 PM

Courtesy of the Artist and GOWEN. © M'hammed Kilito



M'hammed Kilito, *Picnic on the grass*, Tighmert oasis, Morocco, 100 x 100 cm, ed. of 5 + 2 AP, 2022.



M'hammed Kilito, *Aves Pacis*, 80 x 80 cm, ed. of 5 + 2 AP, 2018

For the 10th anniversary edition of Photo Basel, GOWEN gallery is delighted to show a group of three Moroccan visual artists working on long-term projects and who each use their photographic practice as a means of storytelling. Aware of the rise of a fast, sometimes incomplete global media landscape, the KOZ collective, consisting of **M'hammed Kilito**, **Imane Djamil** and **Seif Kousmate** focuses on a hybrid and research-based work. To complete the presentation, the booth includes an image by American photojournalist and war photographer **James Nachtwey**.

M'hammed Kilito (b.1981, Lviv, Ukraine) is a key figure in the field of international documentary photography. During his career, he has produced work based on a strong artistic commitment and from a humanitarian, social and environmental standpoint. Kilito has won the highest honours in photojournalism. He is a National Geographic Explorer, a *Magnum Foundation* grantee, a *World Press Photo* winner, a *Prince Claus Fund* and *AFAC Grantee*. He is a member of the VII photo agency originally founded by seven photographers including James Nachtwey.

Witnessing a world on the verge of transformation, M'hammed Kilito is concerned with efforts to preserve, enhance, and sustainably develop its deserts' oases, portraying the stories of their communities as actors or arbiters of change. Silently and inquisitively, he retraces the encounters and discoveries of his explorations through photographs, capturing authentic impressions of these sites and their singular societies, manifold specificities, rich heritage, and abundant resources.

Before it's gone series (2020 - ongoing)

Located in arid and semi-arid regions and considered an ecological bulwark against desertification and an important refuge for biodiversity, oases constitute an original ecosystem, based on the right balance of three elements: the abundance of water, the quality of the soil, and the presence of date palms. The palms with their parasol-shaped foliage create a humid microclimate, shaded from the wind and favorable to the development of plants. For the past 20 years, this balance no longer exists and these islands of greenery in the middle of the desert are suffering the impacts of human intervention and climate change. Indeed, according to official statistics from the Moroccan Ministry of Agriculture, over the last century, Morocco has already lost two-thirds of its 14 million palm trees. *Before it's gone* is an ongoing long-term project that documents life in oases with a focus on the complex and multidimensional issues of oasis degradation in Morocco and its impact on their inhabitants.

The multi-award winning series, including never-before-published images was presented at GOWEN gallery in Geneva in 2023, marking the very first exhibition of M'hammed's work at the gallery.



Courtesy of the Artist and GOWEN. © Imane Djamil.

Djamil Imane, *Armas Essalama*, 78 x 110 cm, edition of 2, 2020.

In her series *80 Miles to Atlantis*, **Imane Djamil** (b.1996, Casablanca) examines the historic coastline of Tarfaya, a Saharan city that lies across the sea from the Canary Islands, the Spanish archipelago where the mythical city of Atlantis is thought to have been located. Described in the dialogues of Greek philosopher Plato, Timaeus and Critia as an almost Utopian civilisation, the lush, resource-rich state was submerged by the ocean after falling out of favour with the Gods. The island's demise is echoed in the similar fate of Tarfaya today. Engulfed by sand due to natural phenomenon and the State's apathy towards preserving its cultural heritage, the abandonment of this coastal city and its heritage is further highlighted by the desertification of the Sahara, prompting populations to flee to urban areas because they are no longer able to access an adequate water supply.

The series interrogates the multiple symbolic registers of the built and natural landscape, the reconsideration of colonial architecture over time, and the blurring of lines between reality and myth. Frequently drawing on Greek mythology, a central characteristic of Djamil's work, the themes explored by the artist are of poignant relevance to today's world – the quest for symbiosis between urban development and the natural environment, the State's failure to support marginalised communities, and the complex reconciliation with

the colonial past and a post-colonial present and future. Imane Djamil's work offers a new perspective, marked by her use of a 'docudrama' style to better express the reality observed through her lens. Consistently confronting the complexity of people vis-à-vis their physical environment, her observations are combined with fictitious scenarios to reinforce her message through her chosen means of expression.



Courtesy of the Artist and GOWEN. © Seif Kousmate.

Seif Kousmate, *Untitled*, Rwandan Youth series, 90 x 60 cm, 2018-19.

After spending more than ten weeks in Rwanda, **Seif Kousmate** (b.1988, Essaouira) represents in his project entitled *Rwandan Youth* the portrait of an entire generation. Optimistic about its future and aware of the effort it must undertake for the country's development, this new generation is not always accepting of its past, despite the government's efforts for unity. As children of exiles, of perpetrators of genocide, of survivors, born as a result of rape and carriers of HIV, or orphans of the genocide, they live together despite their conflicting personal stories. In addition to a complex past, young Rwandans face unemployment, poverty, and rising education costs, making their resilience ever more critical.

Twenty-five years on, Rwanda is beginning to shine on the African and international scene. In his work, Seif Kousmate explores how forgiveness and reconciliation have become the foundations of this development, both of which are essential for understanding a new generation that did not experience firsthand the country's destructive criminal past. Through his research, Kousmate highlights the desire of young Rwandans to actively contribute to change within their communities as a way of moving beyond the traumatic events of 1994. Critical of the divisions created by their ancestors, they believe in a single Rwandan identity and in promoting peace through communal work. The memory of the genocide is still present but moving beyond the trauma and focusing on hope will help to enable coexistence in the Rwanda of today.

This is the first collaboration between Imane Djamil and Seif Kousmate with GOWEN at Photo Basel.

Since 1981, **James Nachtwey** (b. 1948, Syracuse, New York) has dedicated his career to documenting wars, conflicts and critical social issues worldwide including the violent breakup of the former Yugoslavia, the wars in Chechnya, civil strife in Northern Ireland and more recently, the Russian invasion of Ukraine. In Africa, he photographed the genocide in Rwanda, famines in Somalia and Sudan and the liberation struggle in South Africa. He documented the civil wars that engulfed Central America during the 1980s and the American invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, where he was wounded in a grenade attack. In Asia, he documented the overthrow of dictatorships in the Philippines, South Korea and Indonesia, as well as natural disasters in Japan and Nepal, and the extrajudicial 'war on drugs' in the Philippines. He has pursued social issues throughout the world with equal dedication. State-sanctioned, institutional abuse of orphans in Romania, homelessness, drug addiction, poverty, crime, global health issues and industrial pollution are a few of the subjects he has photographed extensively.

In his 1992 work taken in Soweto, Nachtwey documents children living in a segregated township playing on a trampoline. At the peak of their trajectory, they are momentarily liberated from gravity itself, as if in flight.

Some of the images, amongst Nachtwey's most famous, have become iconic and helped form our collective memory, transforming the photographed moment into the precise point when the image stands on its own to tell the story, or further still to evoke a universal theme.

James Nachtwey, whom GOWEN represents in Europe, was the subject of a solo show at the gallery in 2022. He is a founding member of the VII photo agency.



James Nachtwey, South Africa, Soweto, 76.2 x 101.6 cm, 1992.

M'hammed Kilito

M'hammed Kilito (b.1981, Lviv, Ukraine) lives and works in Casablanca. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Political Science from the University of Montreal and a Master's degree in Political Science from Ottawa University. He currently participates in the two-year VII Mentor Program. Awards and grants include: *World Press Photo Regional Prize*; *Louis Roederer Prize for Sustainability*; *National Geographic Society Explorer Grant*; *CAP Prize*; *Photography Prize of the Fondation des Treilles* and *Sheikh Saoud Al Thani Project Award*. He has been a finalist for the *Leica Oskar Barnack Award* and nominated for the *Prix Pictet*.

His works have been shown worldwide, including: the Leica Ernst Leitz Museum (Germany); Sharjah Art Foundation (UAE); 1:54 Art Fair (France); Tate Modern (UK); PhotoESPANA Festival (Spain); National Museum of Photography (Morocco); Addis Foto Fest (Ethiopia); Format Festival (UK); Bosnia and Herzegovina National Museum (Bosnia and Herzegovina); Photo Vogue Festival (Italy) and Misk Art Institute (Saudi Arabia). Publications include: *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The British Journal of Photography*, *Vogue Italia*, *L'Express*, *Liberation*, and *El Pais*. He has been represented by GOWEN gallery since 2021.



Imane Djamil

Imane Djamil is a Moroccan storyteller and documentary photographer who engages viewers in photojournalistic projects imbued with the style of docudramas. Her works straddle the realistic and phantasmagoric. Her awards and grants include *Arab Documentary Photography Program*, Magnum Foundation, AFAC, Prince Claus; -300 year Anniversary grant, The British Council Morocco; New Narratives in Environmental Photography Prize by Festival Photo La Gacilly and Fisheye Magazine/Gallery (2021). She is a contributor to the New York Times, Le Monde, Bloomberg and Reuters among others and has co-founded KOZ collective in 2020 alongside photographers M'hammed Kilito, Seif Kousmate and Yasmine Hatimi. Djamil was born in 1996 in Morocco, where she continues to live and work. She is based between Casablanca and Tarfaya, a Saharan town where she co-owns Cantara, a cultural entrepreneurship educational program.

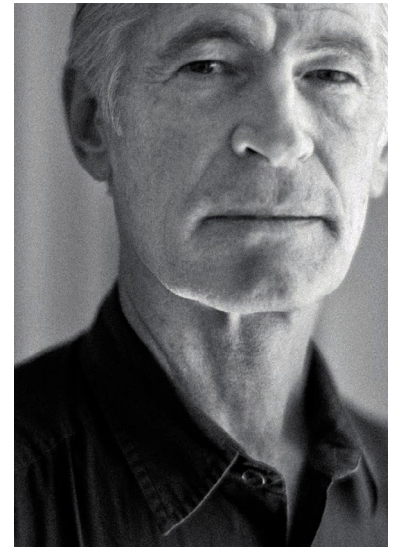


Seif Kousmate

Seif Kousmate (b.1988) is a visual artist born in Essaouira and living in Tangier, Morocco. In 2014, he quit his civil engineering career and bought his first camera at 26. As a self-taught artist, he began his journey into photography by exploring documentary photography. His lens was focused on capturing the diverse manifestations of marginalization in Africa. His early projects served as a platform for the narratives of Rwandan youth post genocide, formerly enslaved people in Mauritania (Haratins), and Subsaharian migrants in search of a better life in Europe. In Morocco, Seif's work revolved around Boujloud celebrations and documented the lives in the Atlas Mountains facing climate change. He is currently working on his series "Waha " and his first monograph, a four-year essay on the oases and the changes they are facing. Seif's artistic practice has evolved over the past decade, now intersecting with contemporary art and photography. His upcoming project explores masculinity and fatherhood, pushing the boundaries of photography into the realm of installation artwork and video.

James Nachtwey

James Nachtwey has received numerous awards from the journalism profession, as well as for contributions to art and humanitarian causes. In 2003 he received the *Dan David Prize*. In 2007 he was a recipient of both the *TED Prize* and the *Heinz Family Foundation Award* for the arts. In 2012 he was awarded the *Dresden Prize*, for promoting world peace. In 2016, Nachtwey was a recipient of the *Princess of Asturias Award*. Five times Nachtwey has been awarded the *Robert Capa Gold Medal*, for exceptional courage and enterprise, and the *World Press Photo Award* twice. He received the *W. Eugene Smith Memorial Grant* in Humanistic Photography and has been named *Magazine Photographer of the Year* eight times. Nachtwey's photographs are included in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the Bibliothèque nationale de France, the Pompidou Center and the Getty Museum among other venues. He has had numerous solo exhibitions worldwide, including the International Center of Photography in New York, Maison Européenne de la Photographie in Paris, Palazzo Reale in Milan, El Circulo de Bellas Artes in Madrid, Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris, Foam Fotografiemuseum in Amsterdam, Museum of Photographic Arts in San Diego, Fotografiska in Stockholm, New York and Tallinn, Palazzo delle Esposizioni in Rome, Karolinum in Prague, the Hasselblad Center in Göteborg, Sweden, Fondazione Palazzo Magnani in Reggio Emilia, Italy and C/O Berlin, among others.



About GOWEN gallery

Located in the historic old town of Geneva, GOWEN gallery represents Swiss and international emerging and mid-career artists. The gallery prides itself on its rich exhibition program, including curatorial projects and participation in renowned international art fairs, more recently with high profile monumental projects.

Founded in 2009 as Faye Fleming & Partner, the gallery became Gowen Contemporary in 2010. In 2021, a new 200 sqm space was opened in Geneva at Grand-Rue 23.

GOWEN gallery aims to showcase pioneering and cutting-edge artists engaged in experimental and critical approaches, often alongside significant works by historical and critically acclaimed artists, including loans from private collections. The gallery welcomes all forms of medium and artistic expression.

For more information visit:

Website: gowen.art

Instagram: [@gowencontemporary](https://www.instagram.com/gowencontemporary)