

PROJECT PROPOSAL

Takhshina Atelier space
Leena Pukki

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In the *Dust Portrait* project, the material is the dust floating in the air of Cairo. I collect the dust on paper and possibly plastic or glass material and create portraits of immigrants who have moved from somewhere else to Egypt and Cairo by drawing them on the dust.

I moved to Cairo 11 months ago, and one of the first things I noticed was the dust that seems to be everywhere. It covers non-used cars, trees, roads, and buildings. What it consists actually? I know there is some component of desert dust, and some part of it comes from the traffic, maybe pollution and everything that mega city produces, small particles that float in the air. Are there different colors of dust in different parts of the city?

In the project, I will make portraits of people who have moved to Cairo from different backgrounds. During the project, I will search for these people, interview them, and take a photograph, based on which I will create a portrait drawing with dust. The portraits are A4 or A3 in size, and they will be framed with simple frames and glass. There will be also a text based on the interview of the person exhibited with the portrait. The models will be paid a fee for participating in the project.

During the project, I will also experiment with whether it is possible to use the dust as a pigment in my own dry pastels or oil paints. If this is successful, I will also use the dust as a material in paintings on the same subject.

I am interested in the movement of people and immigration. Some move with wealth, some with nothing, fleeing war or persecution. The mobility of labor is also characteristic of the modern era. People come to Cairo for work, sent from the companies or states, to seek a better standard of living or the opportunity to support their families elsewhere. State borders shape the fate of individuals. Dust, like the desert, crosses borders and is common to people. Dust is everywhere, and we share it.

After moving to Cairo, I get to know of course other immigrants, most of them through my one-year-old daughter. While spending a lot of time at the playground I have met other moms and a lot of nannies. I am not used to the culture of having nannies or household workers, and that interests me. The dust coming inside apartments is usually taken care of by mothers or household workers, and here the work is constant battle. How do these people relate to dust?

In the big religions' creation narrative Jahve and Allah both formed man from the earth's dust. For me dust is a metaphor of transience of everything. Everyone one day, goes back to dust.

During the residency I would use Takhshina Atelier space as a daily working space for the project. I draw portraits there and transcript the interviews and write texts based on interviews. For the interviews and photos I probably have to travel in different parts of the city. On February I can work every day on the project from 9 AM to 3:30 PM, because I have no other assignments. The grant provided with the atelier I would use for production costs of the project: papers and other materials, frames, transportation, working grant and fees for the participants.

PRODUCTION BUDGET

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Dust Portraits/ Takhshina Atelier	
Leena Pukki	
MATERIALS	
Papers	2 500,00
Frames	8 000,00
Other materials for drawing	500,00
Protective materials	500,00
FEES	
Fees for participants of the project, 8 participants	10 000,00
TRAVEL EXPENSES	
Travels for the interviews and dust collecting	1 000,00
WORKING GRANT	
Leena Pukki	5 500,00
TOTAL EXPENSES	28 000,00

BIOGRAPHY

Leena Pukki (b. 1984 Espoo, Finland) is a visual artist whose work explores interspecies relationships, history, power relations, alternative realities, colors and single-celled organisms. Her artistic techniques diverse from media art and bio-art to large-scale mural paintings and installations.

Pukki holds a Master of Arts from Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture (2015) and a Bachelor of Arts in Fine Arts from Lahti University of Applied Sciences (2007).

Pukki's works have been shown at the Venice Biennale as part of Miracle Workers Collective that represented Finland in 2019, Kunsthalle Helsinki, Pori and Lappeenranta art museums, and at film festivals for example in Sweden, Norway, Germany, Indonesia, Canada, and Ukraine. She got Maecenas Guild Award from Kunsthalle Helsinki's Young Artists 2019- exhibition. Two of her video pieces are part of Finnish State Art Deposit Collection.

Pukki lives and works between Cairo and Helsinki.

LINKS TO PREVIOUS WORK

THE TIME OF A SLIME MOLD

2021. *Digital video. 9 min. 50 sec.*

<https://vimeo.com/leenapukki/limakonaika>

A FLAGELLATE SEARCHING FOR LOVE

2024. *Digital Video, 10 min. 40 sec.*

<https://vimeo.com/leenapukki/parveiluitio>

DREAMS

2022. *Mural, Silicate paint, 11 m x 14 m.*

<https://en.leenapukki.com/portfolio/dreams/>

HERE USED TO BE A FOREST

2021. *Mural, Spray paint, 6 m X 4 m.*

<https://en.leenapukki.com/portfolio/here-used-to-be-a-forest/>

IN SEARCH OF PERFECTION

2019, *Stop motion clay animation, 16 min. 25 sec.*

<https://vimeo.com/leenapukki/insearchofperfection>

<https://en.leenapukki.com/portfolio/in-search-of-perfection/>

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