

September 12, 2016

**MUSTAFAH ABDULAZIZ
WATER: CALIFORNIA
THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MUSEUM, WASHINGTON DC
12 NOVEMBER 2016 – 30 JANUARY 2017**



Mustafah Abdulaziz, *Classic Club Golf Course, Palm Desert, California, USA, 2015*

The Syngenta Photography Award is pleased to announce the launch of *Water: California*, by Mustafah Abdulaziz, the Professional Commission first prize winner for the Award's second edition.

The latest installment of the Berlin-based photographer's acclaimed *Water* series focuses on the drought crisis in California and will debut at the National Geographic Museum in Washington DC during FotoDC this November (12 – 20).

Compelled by the United Nations' 2010 report, which revealed that nearly 3.4 billion people across the globe will face water scarcity by 2025, Abdulaziz began documenting the impact of the crisis on a number of different cultures, in 2011. Supported by WaterAid, the United Nations and VSCO, his photographic series has captured the challenge of water scarcity facing populations in India, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Nigeria, Brazil and China.

Responding to the Award's theme of Scarcity-Waste, Abdulaziz's winning commission project proposal looks to the American state of California, where relentless drought has exacerbated the complex relationship between the dire need for water to ensure livelihoods, and the natural resource at work.

"The drought in California represents the latest and most conceptual chapter of the fifteen-year global project Water. To this day the state remains in turmoil with dwindling water supplies, high demand and an inability to enact solutions that are sustainable and reflective of their future. These photographs are not a reportage of drought, but rather, an examination of the ways in which human beings exist within the extreme margins of water. It is in this space that our structures, behaviour and perspectives are called into question," explains Abdulaziz.

"The Professional Commission of the Syngenta Photography Award has provided me the opportunity to create a new, critical chapter of my ongoing project on Water. The challenges of water, now and in the future, require time and freedom to examine. This Award gave me the necessary independence and support to turn my attention to California, an American state still within the grip of a record, multi-year drought. I was able to continue my long-term study on the relationship between man and nature, taking the project Water in an intriguing new direction."

The exhibition comprises of 15 large-scale lightboxes that reveal how water is both desperately sought after and taken for granted. With the aid of a US\$25,000 grant from the Syngenta Photography Award,

the photographer spent two months travelling around the Western American state exploring how water is distributed and redistributed – exposing how water misuse is putting future generations at risk.

To illustrate California's natural and man-made terrain, Abdulaziz took to the sky to produce a series of dramatic aerial shots of uniform towns, vast expanses of open water and endless arid land. He photographed dams, back gardens, beach trips and palm tree forests; alongside humanistic scenes of sun-worshipping bathers in crystalline swimming pools. With this, he highlights the challenge of scarcity and waste and the changing attitudes towards one of the world's most sought after and important natural resources.

Notes to Editors

The Syngenta Photography Award:

Launched in 2012, the Syngenta Photography Award was created to stimulate dialogue around key global challenges and to establish an important platform to explore issues of global significance through photography.

The theme of the third edition of The Syngenta Photography Award is Grow-Conserve. The winners of this edition will be announced in March 2017 at an award ceremony and exhibition of their work, at The Carnegie Library in Washington DC.

For the **Professional Commission**, professional photographers are invited to submit a series of 5–10 compelling images relating to the theme, accompanied by a creative project proposal of a maximum of 500 words exploring the theme in a more in-depth way, for a commission worth up to US\$25,000. Three prizes will be awarded in the Professional Commission category: first prize: US\$15,000, plus up to US\$25,000 for the commission project; second prize: US\$10,000; third prize: US\$5,000.

The **Open Competition** is open to all photographers who are 18 years or older whether amateur, professional or student. Photographers are invited to submit between 1-3 thought-provoking and captivating images exploring the theme of Grow-Conserve. The jury members will award three prizes in the Open Competition category: First prize: US\$5,000; Second prize: US\$3,000; Third prize: US\$2,000.

The inaugural Syngenta Photography Award (2012/13) theme was Rural-Urban, which explored the relationship and tensions between urban and rural environments. **Jan Brykczyński** won the 2013 Professional Commission. His book, *The Gardener* was made in response to his proposal on urban farming.

The theme of the Award's second edition (2014/15) was Scarcity-Waste. It drew attention to one of the greatest global challenges: how we can ensure enough land, food and water for future generations. **Mustafah Abdulaziz** was the winning photographer of the 2015 Professional Commission category.

About Syngenta:

Syngenta is a leading agriculture company helping to improve global food security by enabling millions of farmers to make better use of available resources. Through world class science and innovative crop solutions, our 28,000 people in over 90 countries are working to transform how crops are grown. We are committed to rescuing land from degradation, enhancing biodiversity and revitalizing rural communities. To learn more visit www.syngenta.com and www.goodgrowthplan.com. Follow us on Twitter® at [www.twitter.com/Syngenta](https://twitter.com/Syngenta)

About Mustafah Abdulaziz:

Mustafah Abdulaziz (b. 1986, New York City) is a documentary photographer based in Berlin, Germany. His ongoing project, *Water* has received support from the United Nations, WaterAid and VSCO, has been reviewed by Phaidon, *Monopol* and published in *Der Spiegel*, *The New Yorker*, *TIME* and *The Guardian*. In 2010, he worked as the first contract photographer for *The Wall Street Journal* and in 2012

was named one of PDN's 30 Emerging Photographers to Watch. His clients include *Le Monde*, *The New York Times*, *Monocle*, and *NPR*. His prints are represented by Milk Gallery in New York City. His archive is represented by Ostkreuz Agency in Germany. Abdulaziz is a member of the MJR photo collective. *Water* is a member of the Blue Earth Alliance, a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation.

About FotoDC:

FotoDC is an annual city-wide photography festival in Washington DC. Their mission is to provide exposure for photographers and make high-quality photography accessible to a range of audiences. This year the festival runs from 12 – 20 November.

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