

Event | A Conference of the Palm Trees

Saturday, December 7th, 16:00 – 18:00

Harlan Levey Projects

Rue Isidoor Teirlinck 65, 1080 Brussels, Belgium

In the context of our current exhibition “**A Botanical Conversation**”*, we are organizing a conference, with the interventions of **Haseeb Ahmed**, **Mehdi-Georges Lahlou**, and **Christopher Yggdre**.

Fossils of palms from 100 million years ago are almost identical to the beings we know today; like alligators and sharks, palms live among us as moving, breathing pieces of geological history. Their importance for the human species dates back as far as we can see: palms provided our ancestors with food, shelter, and the raw material for a variety of enterprises. Over the millennia, they’ve inspired us; to this day, palms are the only plant found in cave paintings, and they’ve appeared in religious beliefs from the Americas to the Mediterranean basin. Palm papyrus provided one of the first supports for written language; human stories have traveled through time on the surface of their leaves.

Today, palms are present as ever in human life. Two of the works featured in the exhibition “A Botanical Conversation” are directly concerned with these plants – **Haseeb Ahmed**’s *Anemophilous: Lovers of the Wind* marries his ongoing research on winds with a focus on the date palm. Ahmed’s scroll refers to the historical significance of papyrus, carrying words between us as the wind carries pollen from one solitary plant to countless others. **Mehdi-Georges Lahlou**’s *A Botanical Conversation* questions more contemporary uses of the palm, notably the disastrous ecological consequences of palm oil production. This project is the result of a long-standing interest, visible notably in his recent installation, *Conference of the Palm Trees*, the title of which inspired this talk.

For the upcoming “Conference of the Palm Trees” at Harlan Levey Projects, these two artists are joined by **Christopher Yggdre**, an author, curator, and artistic director of THE ELEMENTAL (Palm Springs, US). Yggdre has a particular focus on the palm plant, as evidenced by his recent show at THE ELEMENTAL, “Palm Trees Also Die”. Together, the three will discuss the questions arising from their respective projects: what does it mean to work with another species? What relationship is formed between the living plant and its representation? What are the possible impacts of this type of work? What kind of advocacy is possible for other forms of life?

The Conference is free and open to the public. As places are limited, RSVP is recommended to ensure your seat.

Please RSVP by email: info@hl-projects.com

* With works by Haseeb Ahmed, Sean Crossley, Mehdi-Georges Lahlou, Ella Littwitz, Isadora Neves Marques, Alex Reynolds, Sheida Soleimani, Julius von Bismarck, and Antwoine Washington.

The exhibition runs December 14th, 2024.



Isadora Neves Marques, *Linnaeus and the Terminator Seed*, 2017, exhibition view, A Botanical Conversation, Harlan Levey Projects, 2024