

Banana Branches

Nowadays, bananas are the most consumed fruit worldwide: Latin America and the Caribbean are the second largest banana exporters worldwide, only preceded by Asia. This means that most of the banana production occurs in southern regions of the globe. However, almost 80% of exports are acquired by developed countries. This data reflects a clear imbalance between countries in terms of commercial dependency. A fruit like the banana can help us shed light upon the past and still existing social and commercial inequalities and tension between regions affected by their colonial history and those countries that exceeded their colonial power.

Taking the above as a starting point, this exhibition aims to examine the subversive quality of the banana through its different artistic representations. The works included in this presentation aim to explore the meaning of bananas from a cultural and political standpoint. Latin American artists such as Paulo Nazareth emphasise the negative implications of banana trade in the region, like deforestation or the simplified perception of Latin-American cultures as ‘exotic’. Other artists included in the show have also used the banana fruit in their practice as a provocative tool to criticise those in power. Natalia LL’s pieces are a clear commentary not only on the shifting consumerism in Poland during the 1970s but also on the oppression suffered by women in the public sphere.

Spanning decades in contemporary art and encompassing several regions, the exhibition *Banana Branches* conveys the poetic and revolutionary power of representation that lies in something so simple and ordinary as the banana fruit.

Indian artist **Mahesh Baliga** (b. 1982) documents the intricacies of life in western India, instilling quotidian and often overlooked moments with emotional resonance.

London-based artist **Alma Berrow** (b. 1992) uses ceramics to create sculptures that elicit familiar moments felt in everyday life, subverting the still-life genre with her playful talismans.

Royal Academy graduate **Mark Corfield-Moore** (b.1988, Bangkok) uses the conception of fabrics as nomadic objects to interrogate his own mixed Thai and British heritage, a diasporic identity he consciously reflects upon in his work.

Polish artist **Natalia LL** (1937-2022) was a pioneering figure of feminist art and a fearless critic whose art relentlessly addressed the commodification of women’s bodies in pornography and in everyday life. Her best-known work, *Consumer Art* (1972) – a series of photographs and video in which a blonde woman lasciviously devours a banana (a rare product within socialist economies) – has been lauded as a defiant declaration of sex positivity as well as an ironic metaphor for the scarcity and consumption-poor lives within state socialism during the Cold War (1947–91).

June 17th to July 28th 2023
32 St. George Street, W1S 2EA

LAMB
LONDON
32 St. GEORGE St.

Banana Branches

London-based artist **Tonico Lemos Auad** (b.1968, Brazil) explores physical manifestations of belief, specifically looking at the personal or cultural significance afforded to everyday life objects. Often encompassing notions of architecture and landscape, Auad's practice investigates materiality, sensuality, process and how people negotiate the space around them.

Originally trained as an architect, Brazilian-based artist **Tiago Mestre's** (b.1978, Portugal) sculptures and paintings reflect his status as a Portuguese artist living and working in Brazil, as well as the historical associations of human and artistic flows between both countries. His work actively resists a singular reading and engages with different symbolic and anthropological registers, focusing on the ability to relate critically with the achievements of the project of modernity.

Born in Paris in 1984, **Théo Mercier** is a sculptor and a stage director. His work employs unlikely combinations of materials, playing on these contrasts to stage surrealist worlds and disconcerting images through sculptures and performances. In his work Mercier explores themes of abjection, psychoanalysis, and transcendence and his performances evolve towards a complex cross-disciplinary approach to anthropology.

Living as a nomad, **Paulo Nazareth's** (b. 1977, Brazil) work aims to raise awareness of pressing issues of immigration, racialization, globalization and colonialism, and its effects in his native Brazil and the Global South. While his work may manifest in video, photography, and found objects, his strongest medium may be cultivating relationships with people he encounters on the road — particularly those who must remain invisible due to their legal status or those who are repressed by governmental authorities, to unveil stereotyped assumptions about national identity, cultural history, and human value.

Drawing on the legacy of still life painting, London-based artist **Marius Steiger's** (b. 1999, Switzerland) work explores questions of authenticity, consumption and our increasingly fraught relationship with the natural world, creating works that are both alluring and unsettling in their polished, synthetic rendering of organic matter.

Interested in the counter culture present in marginalised areas, the works of Brazilian artist **Tiago Tebet** (b.1986) explore new experiences creating unusual situations during their process. Despite the use of known languages and techniques, Tebet's paintings never seek to reaffirm something that already exists, but to encounter through their new capacity, new relationships and meanings.

June 17th to July 28th 2023
32 St. George Street, W1S 2EA

LAMB
LONDON
32 ST. GEORGE ST.