

## A SYMBOL OF YEARNING THE PALM TREES THROUGHOUT ART HISTORY

Across continents, religions, and cultures, the palm symbolically conveys a promise of prosperity, peace, and salvation. It conjures up notions of luxury, the jet set, and eternal sunshine, representing a modern paradise on earth. *Paradise is Now: Palm Trees in Art* is a large-format photography book featuring the many diverse images of palms in contemporary art.

Berlin, April 24, 2018 — For more than two thousand years the palm has been extremely popular in both Eastern and Western cultures. In Christian, Jewish, and Islamic iconography, this fruitful and useful plant has been a symbol of harmony and fertility. In post-war Europe it still conveys a sense of an unassuming longing for the faraway south, while in global and secular pop culture today the palm has become the ultimate emblem of a modern paradise, being ubiquitous in advertising and social media.

However, the dark side of the palm is becoming increasingly apparent: since the 1960s at the latest the palm's clean image has faded, while ambivalence about it disturbs its spotless appearance. The palm has come to symbolize the exploitation of colonialism and globalization; it is linked to the psychological and moral decay of a society drifting toward superficiality.

"If the nineteenth century discovered the palm as an image onto which to project utopian notions of the departure for a new world—in the paintings of Paul Gauguin, it is the quintessentially exotic and foreign sight—these treatments of the tree in postwar and contemporary art illustrate that the iconography of the palm has become a complicated affair," explains the editor of this volume, the art historian Robert Grunenberg.

In front of this cultural backdrop, this richly illustrated catalogue, *Paradise Is Now: Palm Trees in Art*, raises several questions: What is behind the popularity of this emblem? What levels of meaning and which contradictions are revealed in the wake of this artistic exploration?

Besides texts by Bret Easton Ellis, Robert Grunenberg, Leif Randt, and Norman Rosenthal, the publication compiles works by John Baldessari, Marcel Broodthaers, Rodney Graham, David Hockney, Alicja Kwade, Sigmar Polke, Ed Ruscha, Secundino Hernández, and Henning Strassburger. The eponymous exhibition will open during the Gallery Weekend, and will be on display from April 26 to June 30 at both the Salon Dahlmann in Berlin and Robert Grunenberg Berlin. A booklaunch follows at the end of May; more information about this is on the way.



**PARADISE IS NOW  
PALM TREES IN ART**

Texts by Bret Easton Ellis, Robert Grunenberg, Leif Randt, Norman Rosenthal, graphic design by Studio Yukiko

German, English

2018. 160 pp., 150 ills.

hardcover

25.00 x 30.00 cm

ISBN 978-3-7757-4446-1

38,00 EUR

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Hatje Cantz is a groundbreaking international publishing company specializing in art, architecture, and photography. Since 1945 Hatje Cantz has been using its profound expertise and enthusiasm for craftsmanship to produce and publish books of the highest quality. We currently release around two hundred new titles annually.

Especially in the digital age, Hatje Cantz regards itself an element linking museums, artists, galleries, collectors, and art lovers. Conveying knowledge - in terms of both content and visuals - as well as an enthusiasm for art is always at the heart of our engagement.

In keeping with our ambition to make it possible to experience art beyond the medium of the book, Hatje Cantz has launched the EDITION GERD HATJE as we continue to expand our portfolio of strictly limited, signed editions featuring works on paper, photographic works of art, and art objects.

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