

Ziad Antar

Terres de pommes de terre - Solanum tuberosum, variété Spunta

Oct 22 — Dec 19, 2009 | Paris

These photographs were taken in Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Lebanon in 2003-2009.

Potato seeds must be cultivated in a cold climate to prevent attacks by insects and viruses. The potatoes for consumption can be grown in warm countries.

Growers of Lebanese potatoes regularly visit Europe to select and buy their seeds.

During the potato growing season, agricultural engineers and farmers pull up the roots to check for diseases or insect damage. This allows them also to estimate future production.

This new series by Ziad Antar, entitled Terres de pommes de terre, traces the history of potato production through its geography, entailing a north-south axis, and through its human participants.

The first room contains photographs taken indiscriminately at seed collection sites in Europe and the Beqaa Valley in Lebanon, where the potatoes are grown, in no particular order. The second room contains a series of photographs depicting the producers as they examine or exhibit their merchandise. Most of them are lacking of a face. An 8mm movie endeavours to shed light on life and relationships in the community, beyond the scientific documentary aspect.

This work takes a somewhat humorous look at the position of the artist as producer compared with potato producers.

Europe's relationship with the Middle East is also at the heart of this series based on this commercial potato cycle.