

Los Carpinteros

Location: Kurpark Engelberg

Hardly any other fruit is as widespread and available as the banana. Summer or winter, in the wholesale market in the city or in the grocery store at the end of the valley: bananas are always there. As if they were grown in Switzerland. Or anywhere else in the world where they can be bought.

All the more surprising is the encounter with the three seemingly storm-torn banana plants that the Cuban artist collective Los Carpinteros [The Carpenters] cast in bronze in 2018, and that now stand sparkling between raked paths and meticulously trimmed rhododendron bushes in the Kurpark Engelberg [spa gardens Engelberg] as if they had strayed here. And in a way, they have. While the fruits are an integral part of our fruit baskets, the plants are still considered foreign here. But that could change. Even in the mountains, the summers are getting warmer and the winters milder—and perhaps it will be banana palms that green the spa gardens long after others have shed their leaves. It would be another heroic story of this plant, to whose resistance against all kinds of natural forces Los Carpinteros have dedicated their *Plátanos*, as an allegory of survival in a troubled present between utopia and dystopia. (roe)

Los Carpinteros were founded in 1992 in Havana, Cuba, by Marco Antonio Castillo Valdes, born in 1971 in Camagüey, Cuba, Dagoberto Rodríguez Sánchez, born in 1969 in Caibarién, Cuba, and Alexandre Arrechea Jesus Zambrano, born in 1970 in Trinidad, Cuba. Their work has been exhibited many times, most recently at the Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil in Brasília (2017), the MUAC, Mexico City (2016), and the Museum Folkwang in Essen, Germany (2016). The group disbanded in 2018.