

Monument to the Disappearing Forests, 2023

80 spruce trunks, 1 oak trunk, LED

17 m x 6 m x 17 m

This monumental work consists of an immersive square grid made up of 81 tree trunks, which appear to emerge from the desert floor. Each tree in Comte's abstracted forest is six meters high and lit with LED lighting, creating a transfixing configuration of pathways. The resulting experience puts the torso and the trunk in direct relation, their physical and tactile proximity both intimate *and* distancing.

Due to the climate crisis, forests around the world are burning at alarming rates. Our global forests are vital for the ecosystem and its biodiversity — fifty percent of the air we breathe comes from forests while the rest is produced by oceans. They are the lungs of our world and rethinking current models is imperative. Instead of economic paradigms based on the destruction and exploitation of forests, we must imagine more ecologically generative systems focused on the survival and cultivation of the environment.

Monument to the Disappearing Forests's grid structure utilises a fundamental creative device that has helped humans map and represent the world around us. The generative potential of geometric grids have been used by artists throughout history such as da Vinci, Dürer and Michelangelo, as a tool to find the "perfect view" — to transmit the three dimensional world onto a surface.

Placed in the centre of the installation is an old debarked and smoothed down oak trunk with a hole at eye level that provides another new perspective. From here, the otherwise enclosed annual rings of the oak tree become visible.

This large-scale wooden environment can be experienced both from a distance and up-close — a city landmark, but also an experience that encourages an intimate, collective, and dynamic relationship with the work. Situated in the public sphere, *Monument to the Disappearing Forests* can be perceived as a forest that comes to life in the desert light.