

“on red nails, palm trees and other icons” is a personal archive of images that came together over the course of a year and a half. Some of the photographs go back over 15 years. Others are found images. Some are set, commissioned or reproduced from newspapers and other sources. In the summer of 2007 a young butcher killed two camels in the Guiza Zoo and smuggled the meat over the fence. When questioned by the police he said he did it out of desperation. He wanted to provide for his wife and three children; this incident set the trigger for the project.

Cairo is a city that is changing at a very fast pace. The zoo was built in the late 1800s. I started questioning the values that were important at that time and how they compare to the Cairo of today. Icons are being revised. Some disappear without a trace except in the memories of those who grew up with them. New icons are appearing everywhere. This project attempts to bring together an imaginary space that stands in for the flux in the visual, cultural profile of the city. In addition to over 300 images there is a video element that highlights certain activities that are on the verge of extinction.