

Daniel Steegmann Mangrané
A Leaf-Shaped Animal Draws The Hand
Curated by Lucia Aspesi and Fiammetta Griccioli

Press Conference September 10, 2019, 11.30 AM
Opening September 11, 2019, 7 PM
From September 12, 2019 to January 19, 2020



Daniel Steegmann Mangrané, *Mano con hojas*, 2013
Courtesy of the artist, KADIST collection

Pirelli HangarBicocca presents Daniel Steegmann Mangrané's first solo exhibition in Italy from September 12, 2019 to January 19, 2020. Over twenty works, produced from 1998 to today, engage visitors in an artistic investigation on the theme of ecological complexity and on the dialectic between man and nature.

Daniel Steegmann Mangrané (b. 1977, Barcelona; based in Rio de Janeiro since 2004) works with organic elements and technology and creates artworks through a variety of media—drawing, installation, photography, sculpture, film, video, holograms and virtual reality—often tracing the boundary between nature and artifice, where the separation between subject and object disappears and the collective experience is radically transformed. The artist places the sensory dimension of the viewer at the heart of his exhibitions, evoking a vivid physical experience and exploring with his works the very act of exhibiting. At the same time, intrigued by the richly biodiverse Brazilian rainforest, Steegmann Mangrané offers a reflection on the fragility and the possible disappearance of this environment, directly involving the observer in an intimate encounter with a depiction of nature and its animal and vegetal components.

The exhibition, curated by Lucia Aspesi and Fiammetta Griccioli, presents more than twenty works produced since 1998, including one of his first pieces, ***Lichtzwang (1998–ongoing)***, a series of hundreds of geometrical and abstract watercolors that constitute a sort of generative

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process of all his production. The encounter between living and chaotic elements with linear and clear-cut shapes is often present in Steegmann Mangrané's works, as in one of his most iconic pieces: the film ***Phasmides* (2012)** characterized by an organic and geometrical setting in which he explores the interconnection between the natural and artificial worlds through the observation of a phasmid, the entomological name for the stick insect. This creature becomes a recurring motif in his oeuvre, reappearing later in the wall-drawing ***Morfogénesis-cripsis* (2013)**, holograms like ***Holograma (estructura con bicho)* (2013)** or ***A Transparent Leaf Instead Of The Mouth* (2016–17)**: Steegmann Mangrané conceived this last work as a glass environment in which local trees and shrubs cohabit with different species of exotic stick and leaf insects. In this work, the mimetic quality of this animal is depicted, where they camouflage themselves among branches and plants. The insects seem to dissolve but also to infuse life into the surrounding ground, which gets animated and potentially starts to crawl. A longstanding fascination for the artist, biology is a central subject in his work, resulting in imagery that creates a strong visual framework through the inclusion of branches, leaves, and animals, and motifs of nets, weaves, meshes and grids.

The shift between material and immaterial experiences is expanded further in the exhibition at Pirelli HangarBicocca by Steegmann Mangrané's **site-specific intervention** made of white transparent fabric partitions that redefine the industrial quality of the exhibition space, whilst both concealing and revealing the exhibited works. Like fluctuating membranes, these screens give shape to the different areas of the show while allowing, by means of their transparency, an immediate overview of the entire exhibition. Their surfaces react to natural lighting conditions: shifting from a dense atmosphere to a more evanescent presence. The combination of mutating surfaces and projection devices dialogues with the seminal research on light and environments addressed by artists in the 1970s, such as Robert Irwin (1928), but also Hélio Oiticica (1937–1980) and Lygia Clark (1920–1988), who in Brazil developed a participative art that believed that sensorial engagement could be a democratic entry point to a work and have emancipatory socio-political qualities.

Greatly influenced by the Brazilian avant-garde of the '60s and '70s, the work of Steegmann Mangrané shares with it the discourses of abstraction and participation in the definition of the object, which becomes an open relationship of mutual influences rather than something closed on itself. This aspect is emphasized through the manipulation of sight that occurs in participative works such as ***Orange Oranges* (2001)**, a modular structure in which perception is altered by colored filtered walls. Visitors are thus invited to enter the structure and squeeze an orange, watching the space around them change color and become, for the viewers outside, part of the work itself. These effects of transforming perspectives become more evident in ***Phantom (Kingdom of All the Animals and All the Beasts in my Name)* (2015)**, a spectral, virtual-reality rendering in black and white of the rainforest. In this scenario, the artist creates a paradox between the presence of the body and its dissolution in the space: "I always aim to reach the moment the spectator is not looking at the artwork but at his or her own experience." In this way the ghostly appearance of the forest questions one's stability, movements and perception of the space. In contrast with this work, in the film ***16mm* (2008–11)** Steegmann Mangrané used a modified 16mm camera suspended on a cable above the rainforest. The camera travels in a perfectly straight line, portraying the chaotic depths of the forest. This film pays homage to the Structural cinema of the '60s and '70s, in which the technique of recording is as important as the subject recorded.

As evoked by the title of the exhibiton, "A Leaf-Shaped Animal Draws The Hand," the artist creates a poetic paradox in which the animal and human worlds seem to merge through drawing, questioning pre-established orders and behaviors.

The Artist

Some of the most relevant international institutions have hosted Steegmann Mangrané's solo shows, including IAC – Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne; Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham (2019); CCS Bard College, New York; Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona; CAC, Vilnius (2018); Fundação de Serralves, Porto (2017); Medellín Museum of Modern Art, Antioquia; The Green Parrot, Barcelona (2016); Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro; Casa Modernista, São Paulo (2015); CRAC Alsace Centre Rhénan d'Art Contemporain, Altkirch (2014); Casa França-Brasil, Rio de Janeiro (2013). His works have also been presented in numerous group shows, such as: the Centre Pompidou-Metz, Metz, 14th Lyon Biennale (2017); 9th Berlin Biennale (2016); New Museum Triennial, New York; Kadist Art Foundation, Paris (2015); 9th Mercosul Biennale, Porto Alegre (2013); 30th São Paulo Biennale (2012). Daniel Steegmann Mangrané's practice also involves curatorial projects, such as the recent show by Peruvian artist Armando Andrade Tudela at CA2M – Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo, Madrid.

The Catalogue

On the occasion of the exhibition, a monographic book on the artist's production will be realized. Edited by Lucia Aspesi and Fiammetta Griccioli, the catalogue will be published by Skira and is a collaboration between Pirelli HangarBicocca and IAC – Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne. It will feature contributions by art historians Kaira M. Cabañas, Flora Katz and a re-publishing of an interview between the artist and curator and writer Lauren Cornell, as well as texts by IAC's Director Nathalie Ergino and the curators of the show in Pirelli HangarBicocca. In addition to an in-depth photographic documentation of the exhibition, it will present the first comprehensive index of all the works produced by the artist in his career until today. The graphic design is conceived by Studio Manuel Raeder.

Exhibition Program

The exhibition "A Leaf-Shaped Animal Draws The Hand" is part of the 2019–2020 artistic program conceived by the Artistic Director Vicente Todolí together with the curatorial department: Roberta Tenconi, Curator; Lucia Aspesi, Assistant Curator; and Fiammetta Griccioli, Assistant Curator. The program will continue with exhibitions by Cerith Wyn Evans (October 31, 2019 – February 23, 2020); Trisha Baga (February – July 2020); Chen Zhen (April – September 2020); Neïl Beloufa (September 2020 – January 2021); and Steve McQueen (October 2020 – February 2021).

Pirelli HangarBicocca

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Info Sheet

Institution	Pirelli HangarBicocca
Artist	Daniel Steegmann Mangrané
Title	“A Leaf-Shaped Animal Draws the Hand”
Curated by	Lucia Aspesi and Fiammetta Griccioli
Press Conference	September 10, 2019, 11.30 AM
Opening	September 11, 2019, 7 PM
Exhibition dates	September 12, 2019–January 19, 2020
Location	Via Chiese 2, Milan
Opening hours	Thursday–Sunday, 10 AM–10 PM
Admission	Free
Catalogue	Skira
Workshops	During the week for schools During the weekend for families
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