

Daniel Steegmann Mangrané

EN

*A Leaf-Shaped Animal
Draws The Hand*



Pirelli HangarBicocca

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FREE ADMISSION

Cover: *Mano con Hojas*, 2013
Courtesy of the artist and KADIST Collection

Daniel Steegmann Mangrané

A Leaf-Shaped Animal Draws The Hand

12 September 2019 – 19 January 2020

Curated by Lucia Aspesi and Fiammetta Griccioli

Pirelli HangarBicocca



Daniel Steegmann Mangrané during the shooting of *16mm*, 2011.
Photo: Amilcar Packer

Daniel Steegmann Mangrané

The work of Daniel Steegmann Mangrané (Barcelona, 1977) features a highly poetic approach, in which geometric and abstract forms intersect with natural elements, creating a universe where motifs such as leaves, trees and insects prompt us to reconsider the reality that we inhabit. The artist employs different media to realize his works—including film, sculpture, video, photography, drawing and installation—according to a practice which intrinsically combines the characteristics of each medium with the production process.

Steegmann Mangrané began his education in Barcelona, where he studied art at EINA (an experimental school of which his parents were founding members in the 1960s) and then photography at GrisArt school. During those years he was deeply influenced by the exhibitions held at Fundació Antoni Tàpies, especially the retrospectives of Brazilian artists Lygia Clark (1920–1988) and Hélio Oiticica (1937–1980), who inspired his way of thinking and conceiving the artistic object. For these prominent figures of Neo-Concretism, a movement spread in Brazil between the late 1950s and early 1960s, the work of art was closely related to the viewer's body, soliciting its senses. This active involvement of the spectator's awareness triggered a process of democratization of the experience of art and ultimately of socio-political emancipation.

Attracted by this approach and fascinated by the tropical forest and biology since childhood, Steegmann Mangrané moved to Rio de Janeiro in 2004, where he currently lives, pursuing his research and gradually partaking in the lo-

cal art scene. Today he is a member of Capacete, a non-profit space in Rio de Janeiro that offers residencies to artists, and teaches at Parque Lage Visual Art School. Parallely, he became interested in the theories of radical anthropologists, in particular Eduardo Viveiros de Castro and Tânia Stolze Lima's "Amerindian Perspectivism." If for Western ontologies nature is the common ground from where everything else is differentiated, for Amerindian cosmologies the common ground that everything shares is humanity: according to this perception everything is people. A "point of view" is then not something that subjects have over objects, but, rather, it is the point of view that creates the subject, gives it agency and defines its ontological actuality. Depending from which perspective it is seen, an object can be the incarnation of a divinity, a religious instrument, or just a pot. Similarly, a person changes depending on who he/she is looked at by. For the artist this theory can open a new way of defining art: «Since everything is people, the traditional division of nature-culture applies in a completely new way. If there are no longer fixed objects and subjects, there are no longer artworks and viewers, but dynamic relations of mutual transformation. I think this is a much more compelling, engaging, and intriguing way to think about art.»

Steedmann Mangrané's first works are characterized by the use of organic materials, such as in *Ramita Partida* (Limón) (2000), consisting of a branch that contains a dried lemon within it. He also creates photographic compositions in which the figurative element is deconstructed through a process of abstraction applied to the image—as in the diptych *Coqueiros* (2006)—in which his interest for nature is expressed by both

representation (a view of the forest with a house in the background) and the elaboration of compositional elements (lines, colors, forms) interpreted through an artistic idiom of geometrical forms and abstraction. Meanwhile, the artist also creates modular structures and installations like *Orange Oranges* (2001) and *Resum/Trabalho* (*Total correction*) (2006) using metal elements and photographic filters to originate colorful immersive environments in which the viewer's experience becomes fundamental. The installation */ (- \)* (2013)—part of one of Steegmann Mangrané's most emblematic series—is also based on the dematerialization of the relations between the spectator's body, its movement, and the artwork in the space. It is in fact composed of four metal curtains, each in a different color, through which the viewer can pass.

In the subsequent years, Steegmann Mangrané directed his study of the natural sphere to the Mata Atlântica, one of the most biodiverse forests, which runs down Brazil's coastline all the way to Paraguay. Today, this forest is one of the artist's principal subjects. Detaching himself from the exoticism and romantic vision of the rainforest, he investigates the relations between existence and visibility, dissolution and belonging, physicality and abstraction, all of which are intrinsic aspects of the ecosystem. The figure of the phasmid (a "stick insect" known for its ability to resemble the vegetation on which it is settled) is emblematic of his research. The creature is present in many of his works, including the large vivarium *A Transparent Leaf Instead of the Mouth* (2016–2017), which also includes other species, and in the film *Phasmides* (2012) that records its stillness during the slow transition from a natural to a geometric environment. The insect represents a sort of

hybrid, a connection between the animal and natural worlds. Furthermore, it drives a two-way relationship with viewers, who are both fascinated and bewildered by their presence. With *Phasmides* the artist instills a connection between the medium, the unpredictability associated with the stick insects' mechanisms of survival and hunting, and their physical closeness to viewers when they are suddenly sighted.

A recurrent medium in Steegmann Mangrané's oeuvre, film becomes a broader reflection on the instability and fragility of images. Taking inspiration from experimental structural cinema, in which the techniques of shooting and projecting activate a dialog with the images, he created a series of 16mm films: *16mm* (2007-2011), *Teque-teque* (2010) and *Spiral Forest (Kingdom of all the animals and all the beasts is my name)* (2013-2015), in which he explores the potential of the medium unfolding different perspectives of the rainforest.

These themes resonate with other intensely lyrical works like *— —* (2018), in which Steegmann Mangrané allows a bright blue butterfly (*Morpho helenor*) from the tropics of Central and South America to fly freely in the exhibition space. Once again, the idea of presence is central to his practice, focusing the attention of the viewer on elements that would otherwise remain unobserved.

Gestures and words are blended in a language that draws on poetry, something that is apparent in many of the titles of his works and exhibitions. On account of their capacity to merge the animal and human kingdoms, and to erase all distinction between matter and form, Steegmann



— —, 2018. Kriska aluminum curtains and laser-cut, powder-coated steel frames; variable dimensions. Courtesy of the artist and Nuno Centeno

Mangrané often uses the words of the Brazilian author Stela do Patrocínio (1941-1997; interned in a psychiatric hospital, she was recognized as a poet only after her death), which become an integral part of his work. An example is given by *I Was Pure Gasses, Air, Empty Space, Time* (2015)—a series of wall drawings in which words by do Patrocínio are interposed with diagonal lines.

For Daniel Steegmann Mangrané an exhibition becomes a medium to reflect on visitors' role, specifically on their encounter with the works and their experience within the exhibition space. This approach recurs in several shows curated by the artist or on occasions in which he has been invited

to conceive the design of exhibition projects, for example “Cosmic Spring/Jardin Infini” held at the Centre Pompidou-Metz in 2017. The words of the artist reveal the nature of the notion of an exhibition as a fundamentally experimental space: «A museum must not be the setting for an accumulation of art objects, isolated and protected from the exterior, but the space in which our relationship with the objects and reality can be reconfigured.»



— —, 2018. Specimen of *Morpho helenor* butterfly. Installation view, Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona. Courtesy of the artist and Fundació Antoni Tàpies. Photo: Roberto Ruiz



Photographic documentation of the installation at Pirelli HangarBicocca, Milan, August 2019

The Exhibition

“A Leaf-Shaped Animal Draws The Hand” is Daniel Steegmann Mangrané’s first solo show in an Italian institution and the most comprehensive ever organized on his work. It unveils multiple perspectives on his artistic practice presenting more than twenty works realized since 1998 with different media.

The exhibition narrative unfolds along the site-specific installation *Phantom Architecture* (2019), composed of different partitions in semi-transparent white material that redefine the industrial character of Pirelli HangarBicocca and enclose and reveal the works on display. Like fluctuating membranes, the curtains divide the space into different areas while permitting, by means of their transparency, a view of different volumes and depths. Alluding to the studies on light and environments in the United States by artists such as Robert Irwin in the 1970s, Steegmann Mangrané created a display that combines tangible experiences with immaterial situations, in which the visitor’s body becomes part of the landscape. On the whole, the installation creates a dialogue with current research in architecture.

The natural light enters the usually dark space through the windows on the ceiling and walls of the Shed and interacts with the textile surfaces to create an evanescent atmosphere. During the evening, however, artificial lighting projects a light choreography on the ceiling.

As suggested by the title of the exhibition—“A Leaf-Shaped Animal Draws The Hand”—the artist creates a poetic paradox in which, through the action of drawing, the natural and human worlds merge, calling into question pre-established categories and behaviors.

1 *Lichtzwang*, 1998–ongoing

The German word *Lichtzwang*, complex to translate literally, could be explained as “light constraint.” Steegmann Mangrané takes the title from a volume of poetry by Paul Celan (1920–1970)—published in English as *Lightduress*—and highlights two underlying aspects of the work: the imposition of a rule and the modulation of light through the decomposition of color.

The concepts of margins and limits are fundamental to the development of this series of watercolors begun in 1998 and still ongoing. The common starting point is a sheet of paper taken from an arithmetic exercise book (i.e. patterned with small squares) measuring 21 x 15 centimeters. In each drawing, the artist structures shapes, forms and colors to experiment with the infinite possibilities offered by the printed grid and test its constructional limits. The subgroups of the watercolors query specific problems like the variation of color or the modulation of a structure, characterizing the entire sequence before disappearing into the next one, in which the execution of a transformation or emergence of a compositional rhythm might be discerned. This approach has allowed Steegmann Mangrané to experiment with variations,

loops, and permutations, as well as with time and duration. For the artist, this work has been a sort of generative matrix: ideas and forms that originated from *Lichtzwang* have been further developed in other projects with different media.

In this show, the entire series is featured in a dynamic relation with the exhibition display: watercolors are hung along a curved fabric partition so that visitors can not only move along the sequence but are also able to catch a glimpse in the background of other works that originate from *Lichtzwang*.

2 *Table with Objects*, 1998–ongoing

As the title states, *Table with Objects* is composed of a table on which a number of elements are grouped: models, experiments and tests out of which other works have developed, or which are considered by the artist as works that have never been completed, or as fragments to be used in the creation of future projects. Similarly to *Lichtzwang*, *Table with Objects* is in continual expansion and it was first exhibited in Barcelona, where Steegmann Mangrané had presented the evolution of his researches. As it often occurs in his oeuvre, which has formal and thematic affinities with Neo-Concretism, the artist chooses to present a process rather than a finished item. The elements in *Table with Objects* create a landscape of possibilities: they are in fact recurrent in the artist’s works and continue to stimulate and generate questions in his practice. The decision to present them on a table reflects the importance of the studio as a place of time and research.



Orange Oranges, 2001. Installation view, Rio de Janeiro, 2004. Courtesy of the artist and Esther Schipper, Berlin

3 *Orange Oranges*, 2001

Orange Oranges is part of a larger body of works in which the artist investigates the limits of perception. It is an environment of varying dimensions, whose ceiling and transparent walls are formed by an orange photographic filter. By passing through a curtain, visitors enter the structure and find seats and a table on which glasses, knives, a fruit-squeezer and some fresh oranges lie. They can make a glass of orange juice and drink it in a setting bathed in orange. When leaving the environment, visitors experience the surrounding space differently on account of chromatic compensation, an effect whose strength increases with the time spent inside the colored structure. The reduction of the chromatic spectrum am-

plifies the perception: inured by the pervasiveness of orange, visitors perceive the space as though it were colored blue.

Orange Oranges emphasizes and subverts duality and categories of thought, such as interior–exterior and subject–object, that exemplify our way of perceiving reality. The photographic filter is thus comparable to a membrane through which information and sensations are projected from the interior to the exterior and vice versa.

4 *16mm*, 2007–2011

The feeling of the almost overwhelming density of the rain-forest is the focus of *16mm*, which, more than any other work in the exhibition, reveals the artist's inclination for structural film. Spread in the United States during the 1960s, this cinematographic movement aimed at eliminating all illusory and appealing functions of the narrative in favor of productions focused on the technicalities of filmmaking, its mechanisms of shooting, projection and their phenomenological aspects. In Steegmann Mangrané's film, a camera modified with the help of an engineer penetrates a forest along a suspended cable whose length corresponds to the standard length of a 16mm film. The speed of movement of the camera along the cable is equal to that of the celluloid inside the reel during the shooting. As the artist explains: «Each meter of film shot corresponds exactly to a meter of forest traveled through.» This way, the two movements and distances overlap, linked together inside a form of mechanical motion that creates a long panoramic view which, in parallel with the imagery of



Photographic documentation of the shooting of *16mm*, 2007–2011

thick, wild vegetation, generates the intense sounds of the leaves and insects. Watching the film is both a physical and mental experience in which the thickness of the forest is cut by a completely straight line.

5 *Elegancia y Renuncia*, 2011

In *Elegancia y Renuncia* the image of the forest is made explicit by the presence of a single leaf, which, like a sort of module, represents the complexity of the entire ecosystem. Dried and flattened, it is held up by a slender vertical support specially designed by the artist as if it were a specimen from a botanical collection. The work has its origin in cutting as a creative gesture: from close up, the surface of the leaf is incised with circular designs that are illuminated by a nearby projector. The silhouette of the leaf is outlined negatively onto the body of the visitor who approaches the work, and its edges gradually dissolve.

6 *Geometric Nature/Biology*, 2011

A threshold to the exhibition space, this work acts as a sort of leitmotif, reminding us of the relationship between the animate and inanimate that recurs throughout “A Leaf-Shaped Animal Draws The Hand” by means of twigs and stick insects, elements that seem to be the counterpart of one another.

The notion of interrelation is visually exemplified in the sculpture in which the two sections of a small branch cut longitudi-

nally are suspended horizontally inside cables that run from the ceiling to the floor, suggesting an encounter between natural and man-made forms. Suspended and in precarious stasis, they fluctuate by their circumstances, thereby reacquiring their lost movement.

7 *Phasmides*, 2012

Phasmides is a digitized 16mm film depicting the slow movement of a family of stick insects (phasmids) that creates a choreography of appearances and disappearances in their physical context. The images record the almost ethereal and apparently inanimate presence of the insect in various timeless settings: starting in a more natural environment of branches and vegetation, the film passes progressively to more abstract and artificial surroundings. The space in which the creature moves is marked increasingly by geometric lines that initially blend with the organic forms of the natural elements, including that of the stick insect's anatomy until the shots include forms created by folded paper. The sequence of images nonetheless displays a continuity between the linearity of the natural elements and the organic nature of the forms of which the artifacts are made, that resemble origami or a series of continuous surfaces folded over on themselves. These latter surfaces recall Lygia Clark's *Bichos*, sculptures made since the 1960s with variable volumes and facets, characterized by their relation with the "organic line" and the exploration of ideal architectural forms.



Elegancia y Renuncia, 2011 (detail). Dried leaf (*Ficus elastica japonica*), metal stands, slide projector, laser cut steel slide; variable dimensions

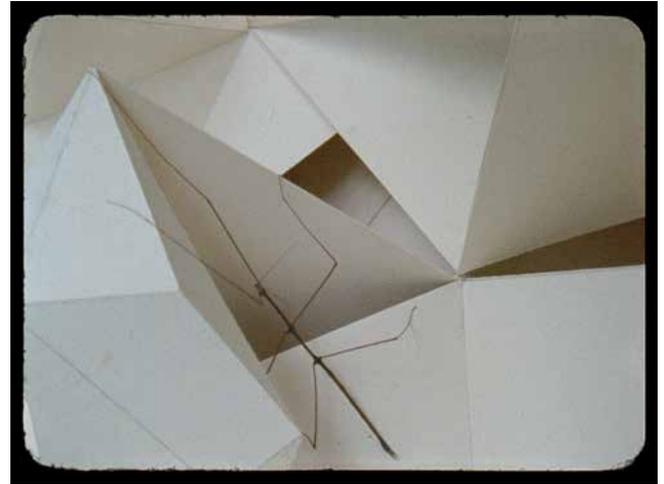
The combination of the editing and camera position directs the viewer's attention to the movements of the insect. The manner in which the phasmid (from the Greek *phasma*, meaning apparition or specter) is displayed, by means of its apparent absence, and the way the images follow on from one another in the film reveal the instability of the medium. The final pan of the camera towards the setting in which the film was shot shows elements that are generally hidden from the viewer, among which a reflection on the glass of a window that reveals the presence of the artist himself.

8A–F *Hologramas*, 2013

Holography is another technology used by the artist to trigger the viewer's eye and explore the potentialities of projection. Various holograms, each of a different subject, are installed independently in the exhibition space and feature a changing image. This technique records a light field projected in a two-dimensional medium to reveal a three-dimensional image. In some of the holograms, a stick insect is visible among geometric forms, while in others the branch itself is shown against triangular white forms.

9 *Mano con Hojas*, 2013

This hologram shows a hand out of which leaves appear to grow, seemingly giving life to a hybrid between the human and plant worlds. Although the body is a constant presence in the exhibition, this is the only work in which the human figure



Phasmides, 2012 (video still). 16mm film transferred to HD video, color, mute; 22 mins 41 secs

appears. The artist states, «If we blur the separation between humans and so-called non-humans—if we acknowledge that we are all part of the same tissue—culture and nature become one and the same mesh. Technology is not only something done by humans. I would like to think it is actually something more like breathing, something inherent to life.»

10 *Quebreira*, 2013

The soundtrack of *Quebreira* originates from a recording made by Steegmann Mangrané during a visit to an oil platform being constructed in a shipyard. The deafening

noise and constant vibrations, the clanking of the heavy machinery, the shifting of the materials and the movement of the workers are all reinterpreted by the delicate sound of a wind instrument. The piece is an improvisation by the flutist Joana Saraiva played while she listened to the recording but, given the impossibility of hearing the sounds she was performing over the level of noise of the machinery, she created a sound piece based on the vibrations of the flute she felt in her fingers, lips and body. *Quebreira* represents a translation between different scales, from the overwhelming din of the platform to the dimension of a single human body. It is played by a speaker and flows throughout the exhibition.

11 *Upsilon*, 2013

Based on the repetitive movements of the workers on the same oil platform of *Quebreira*, the painted steel sculpture is composed of three connected modules that can be combined to create many different forms. The work stands in a liminal space, opening a discussion on the notions of configuration, repetition and transformation presented throughout the exhibition. The title alludes to the Greek word *upsilon*, the 20th letter of the Greek alphabet (Υ), that stood over the entrance to Pythagorean school to indicate the two choices available to the youngsters—vice or virtue. *Upsilon* engages with a sort of linguistic process in which the letter is transmogrified into a sculptural module that creates a visual language.

12 *Spiral Forest (Kingdom of all the animals and all the beasts is my name)*, 2013–2015

13 *Spiral Forest (Gimbal)*, 2014

The film *Spiral Forest (Kingdom of all the animals and all the beasts is my name)* was shot using a 16mm camera fitted with a modified gimbal, a mechanism traditionally used in the construction of ships' compasses and clocks that allows an object to remain fixed in spite of the continued movement of its surrounding environment. This support also allowed the camera to turn through 360 degrees during filming. As with *16mm* (2007–2011), the panning movements of the camera are powered by the same motor that drives the film inside, thus ensuring that the movements caused by the shooting and turning are synchronized. *Spiral Forest (Kingdom of all the animals and all the beasts is my name)* is a disorienting portrait of the Mata Atlântica, in which leaves, branches and shrubs are seen from unusual angles thus presenting an alienating landscape. The silence of the images contrasts with the mechanical noise of the projector and the dynamism of the tropical vegetation, prompting the viewer to engage on the continuous motion of the film. A strong impression given by the film is the idea of the spiral, something that folds in on itself and introduces changes of perspective, bringing to mind works of Land Art like Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* (1970) in the Great Salt Lake in Utah, and Michael Snow's shots of *La Région Centrale* (1971).

The exhibition includes the work *Spiral Forest (Gimbal)* (2014), a gimbal specially created for the shooting of the film.

14 *Kiti Ka'aeté (Lines)*, 2014

Kiti Ka'aeté (Lines) consists of twenty-seven drawings, each representing a different configuration of the cuts from a collage depicting the Amazonian rainforest. By using geometric motifs of indigenous crafts, the artist incised the photo and recombined it, creating a kaleidoscopic view of tangled branches and vines. This collage then became the source for other works—from slide projections to wall drawings and sculptures—that explore the same self-generative logic. These abstract projections appear to the visitor on the white, semi-transparent fabric that can be seen from both sides. Although the slides are created through juxtapositions and well-defined incisions, the figures dissolve almost imperceptibly on the surface of the fabric. The work activates a dialectic between the sharpness of the cuts and the fluidity with which the subject engages with the seamless background.

The title is given by the juxtaposition of two terms in Tupi-Guaraní, an autochthonous linguistic branch of South America: *Ka'aeté* is the unexplored forest remote from anthropized territory, and, according to the local culture, a mythical place inhabited by spirits and divinities; the word *Kiti* indicates a cut made by a sharp instrument made by man and therefore using technology. As already underlined by *Elegancia y Renuncia* (2011), a cut is seen as a wound and a graphical gesture. It has been a recurrent practice in Steegmann Mangrané's oeuvre since his early production.

15 *Phantom (Kingdom of all the animals and all the beasts is my name)*, 2015

This work places the viewer inside a three-dimensional scan of the Mata Atlântica. Wearing a virtual reality headset, spectators find themselves in a black-and-white environment that reproduces an area of the forest detailed enough to record its biodiversity. The spectral image takes viewers into the tropical environment while also eliminating one's physical presence. For example, as one looks down towards one's feet, the view given is of plants and vegetation only. The central element of the installation is the dissolution of the viewer's body and the subversion of the spatial perception. This shift allows visitors the chance to watch the movements of who is wearing the Oculus, unaware of what is happening around. As stated by curator Lauren Cornell «We feel surrounded, dissolved within a sentient structure.» *Phantom (Kingdom of all the animals and all the beasts is my name)* is not designed to give a faithful replica of reality but attempts to make the viewer aware of a dislocation. The image seems to transform the vegetation into scientific data, creating a sort of «digital preservation» of one of the most biodiverse zones in Brazil which is today in serious danger.

16A *Systemic Grid 17 (Window)*, 2015

16B *Systemic Grid 124 (Window)*, 2019

The use of filters, curtains and divisions that engender an osmotic relationship between figure and background and between interior and exterior, plays an important role in Daniel Steegmann Mangrané's practice. This series of works includes

a glass plate on which oblique segments have been engraved and which has then been embedded in a cubic block made of concrete and wood. The contrast between opacity and transparency of the elements dissolves the division between the sculpture and its display, thus altering our vision. The surface of the glass plate filters and refracts the light distorting the background through a grid of lines that generate abstract forms and a physical relationship with the viewer. The two versions of *Systemic Grid (Window)* are part of a larger series of works created by motifs that self-generate, like a process of organic reproduction.

The works are an explicit reference to the supports conceived in 1968 by the designer and architect Lina Bo Bardi (1914–1992) for the display of the permanent collection of the Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP), in which the functionalism and forms of European modernism were reinterpreted and regenerated by means of a new and unusual idiom. While Bo Bardi's elements had the function of supporting paintings on a glass surface allowing also to watch the back of the canvases, in *Systemic Grid (Window)* Steegmann Mangrané makes transparency the pivot around which the work revolves.

17 *Table with Two Objects, 2016*

In this work, two objects are placed at opposite ends of a table, one fashioned by man, and the other taken from the natural world. The pair is placed in a dialog that calls into question the boundary between tradition and manual ability in which the distinction between nature and culture is once again blurred.

18 *A Transparent Leaf Instead of the Mouth, 2016–2017*

The work arises from Daniel Steegmann Mangrané's interest in the relationship between dissolution and belonging. As with *Phasmides* (2012), he uses the figure of the phasmid as a metaphor to push the boundaries between a subject and its environment, pointing to the interdependency that characterizes this relationship.

A Transparent Leaf Instead of the Mouth is an undulating glass pavilion similar to the terrariums used in natural history museums. The installation hosts plants and animals that can be observed by visitors. Inside the structure, the artist has recreated an ecosystem of shrubs and local plants together with exotic creatures that include stick insects, leaf insects and praying mantises, all of which have a mimetic capability to blend in with their environment. As a means of vision, *A Transparent Leaf...* activates simultaneous actions: on one hand, the insects become immobile to conceal themselves, and on the other, visitors move around the terrarium so as to be able to distinguish the insects from the vegetation. As occurs in a real forest, the installation generates a feeling of marvel and astonishment when the insects are discovered. The work is in fact a real ecosystem in which each element is closely dependent on the others; moreover, during the exhibition, it alters in accordance with its own rules, in a continual transformation that precludes it from being open to unambiguous interpretation. This constant metamorphosis is emphasized by the artist, who describes *A Transparent Leaf Instead of a Mouth* as «a linguistic landscape writing itself» and «a biological and semiotic experiment.» The inclusion of living creatures inside a



A Transparent Leaf Instead of the Mouth, 2016–2017. Glass, metal, ecosystem with autochthonous plants and exotic stick and leaf insects and mantises; 270 × 500 × 500 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Fundação de Serralves, Oporto. Photo: Andrea Rossetti

work prompts a broader reflection on the status of an art object conceived to be in constant evolution, whose significance alters in harmony with the temporality of the space in which it is presented, as well as on the role of natural entities in an artistic context that can generate new idioms and an assortment of interpretations of our surrounding reality.

19 *Phasmides*, 2018

Made of painted aluminum, the sculpture is formed of two intersecting segments that support one another in precarious balance. The wavy and geometric lines create a three-dimensional drawing in the space, while also framing it in different perspectives depending on the viewpoint the work is seen from. As in the video of the same name shown in front of it, *Phasmides* further develops the artist's research on the modernist language and its relations to expressions linked with the natural world.

20A *Rotating Table/Speculative Device*, 2018

20B *Rotating Table/Speculative Device*, 2018

20C *Rotating Table 1*, 2015

This series of sculptures is composed of a photographic tripod on which a reflective disc slowly rotates off-center. Lying on this circular surface is a twig sliced horizontally in two. *Rotating Table* alludes to photography, film, and scientific research as well to the impulse to categorize items that is typical of Western culture. The rotation of the disc



Rotating Table/Speculative Device, 2018. Mirrored steel rotating surface, tripod, split branch (*Prunus nigra*); 100 × Ø 36 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo, New York, Brussels

points up—while also dissolving—the relationship between what is organic, and thus animate, and the static nature of what is inanimate.

The idea of motion, which underlies the installation, is also conveyed in the opportunity for visitors to freely wander around the exhibition and to actively experience the works. In *Rotating Table*, the fundamental role played by the space within the kinetic dimension openly dialogs with the reflective surface, offering a perspective of the twig that would otherwise not be available.

21 *Morfogenesis-Crisis*, 2019

This work is a wall drawing devised as a conceptual grid that at a closer look unveils a thick weave of colored lines that follow the outline of few branches, also seen within the tangle. The title has its origin in the term “morphogenesis” (from the Greek *morphé* = form and *genesis* = creation), which relates to the process that leads to a particular form or structure. In biology, this evolution is that of an organism. The word *crisis* (in English “crisis”), which completes the title, refers to the capacity of animals to become invisible to predators, for example through mimesis. With the question «*Might not form, movement and language be our way to dissolve ourselves in the world?*» the French writer and anthropologist Roger Caillois (1913–1978), one of the artist’s reference figures, alludes to the process of dissolution and transformation that underlies this work, and which is apparent throughout this exhibition.

Selected Exhibitions

Daniel Steegmann Mangrané (Barcelona, 1977) lives and works in Rio de Janeiro. His works have been exhibited in numerous solo shows at international institutions, including: IAC – Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne; Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham (2019); CCS Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York; Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona; CAC, Vilnius (2018); Fundação de Serralves, Oporto (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). He has participated in major group shows, such as: Centre Pompidou-Metz, Metz, 14th Biennale de Lyon (2017); 9th Berlin Biennale (2016); New Museum Triennial, New York; Kadist Art Foundation, Paris (2015); 9th Mercosul Bienal, Porto Alegre (2013); 30th São Paulo Art Biennial (2012). His practice comprises curatorial projects such as the solo show of artist Armando Andrade Tudela at CA2M – Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo, Madrid (2019).

This publication accompanies the exhibition "A Leaf-Shaped Animal Draws The Hand" by Daniel Steegmann Mangrané

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The artist and all those who prefer to remain anonymous

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List of the Exhibited Works

- 1** **Lichtzwang, 1998**—ongoing
256 watercolors on graph paper
21 × 15 cm each
- 2** **Table with Objects, 1998**—ongoing
Metal, wood, various objects
90 × 180 × 85 cm
- 3** **Orange Oranges, 2001**
Steel modular structure, photographic filter (ref. 306 Medium Lemon), Indian silk curtain, stools, table, knives, juicers, cups, fresh oranges
220 × 295 × 295 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Esther Schipper, Berlin
- 4** **16mm, 2007** – 2011
16mm film, color, synchronized 4 channel digital sound, 4 mins 54 secs
- 5** **Elegancia y Renuncia, 2011**
Dried leaf (*Ficus elastica japonica*), metal stands, slide projector, laser cut steel slide
Variable dimensions
- 6** **Geometric Nature/Biology, 2011**
Split branch (*Fagus sylvatica*), elastic cords
Variable dimensions
- 7** **Phasmides, 2012**
16mm film transferred to HD video, color, mute, 22 mins 41 secs
- 8A** **Holograma 1 (Estrutura e galho), 2013**
- 8B** **Holograma 2 (Estrutura), 2013**
- 8C** **Holograma 3 (Galho sem bicho), 2013**
- 8D** **Holograma 4 (Galho com bicho), 2013**
- 8E** **Holograma 5, 2013**
- 8F** **Holograma 6 (Estrutura com bicho), 2013**
Ultimate holography plates
26 × 20 cm approx. each
Courtesy of the artist and Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo, New York, Brussels
- 9** **Mano con Hojas, 2013**
Ultimate holography plate
25 × 20 cm
Courtesy of the artist and KADIST Collection
- 10** **Quebreira, 2013**
Monochannel sound, speaker, metal stand, 23 mins 8 secs
In collaboration with Joana Saraiva
- 11** **Upsilon, 2013**
Painted steel
230 × 310 × 270 cm
- 12** **Spiral Forest (Kingdom of all the animals and all the beasts is my name), 2013–2015**
16mm film, color, mute, 10 mins 56 secs
Courtesy of the artist, Esther Schipper, Berlin and Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo, New York, Brussels
- 13** **Spiral Forest (Gimbal), 2014**
Custom made gimbal, camera arri 16sb, sensors, tripod
207 × Ø 94 cm
Courtesy of the artist, Esther Schipper, Berlin and Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo, New York, Brussels
- 14** **Kiti Ka'aeté (Lines), 2014**
Slide projector, laser cut steel slides, metal stand
Variable dimensions
Courtesy of the artist and Esther Schipper, Berlin
- 15** **Phantom (Kingdom of all the animals and all the beasts is my name), 2015**
Virtual reality environment, Oculus, Optrack tracking system
Courtesy of the artist, Esther Schipper, Berlin and Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo, New York, Brussels
- 16A** **Systemic Grid 17 (Window), 2015**
- 16B** **Systemic Grid 124 (Window), 2019**
Hand-blown ornamental glass, concrete and wood pedestal (based on Lina Bo Bardi design)
Glass panels: 261 × 126 cm each
Pedestals: 40 × 40 × 40 cm each
Courtesy of the artist and Esther Schipper, Berlin
- 17** **Table with Two Objects, 2016**
Table with two objects, one man-made
75 × 470 × 110 cm
- 18** **A Transparent Leaf Instead of the Mouth, 2016–2017**
Glass, metal, ecosystem with autochthonous plants, exotic stick and leaf insects and mantises
270 × 500 × 500 cm
Courtesy of the artist, Esther Schipper, Berlin and Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo, New York, Brussels
- 19** **Phasmides, 2018**
Primed aluminum, stainless steel
232 × 383 × 311 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Esther Schipper, Berlin
- 20A** **Rotating Table/Speculative Device, 2018**
- 20B** **Rotating Table/Speculative Device, 2018**
Mirrored steel rotating surface, tripod, split branch (*Prunus nigra*)
100 × Ø 36 cm each
Courtesy of the artist and Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo, New York, Brussels
- 20C** **Rotating Table 1, 2015**
Mirrored steel rotating surface, tripod, split branch (*Prunus nigra*)
100 × Ø 56 cm
Private Collection
- 21** **Morfogenesis–Cripsis, 2019**
Watercolor wall drawing, wood sticks
Variable dimensions
- 22** **Phantom Architecture, 2019**
Semi-transparent white fabric, steel
Variable dimensions
Work specifically conceived for the show.
Produced by Pirelli HangarBicocca

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Pirelli HangarBicocca is a non-profit foundation, established in 2004, which has converted a former industrial plant in Milan into an institution for producing and promoting contemporary art.

This dynamic center for experimentation and discovery covers 15,000 square meters, making it one of the largest contiguous exhibition spaces in Europe. It presents major solo shows every year by Italian and international artists, with each project conceived to work in close relation to the architecture of the complex, and explored in depth through a calendar of parallel events. Admission to the space and the shows is completely free of charge, and facilitators are on hand to help the general public connect with the art. Since 2013, Vicente Todolí has been the foundation's Artistic Director.

The complex, which once housed a locomotive factory, includes an area for public services and educational activities, and three exhibition spaces whose original twentieth-century architectural features have been left clearly visible: **Shed**, **Navate**, and **Cubo**.

As well as its exhibitions program and cultural events, Pirelli HangarBicocca also permanently houses one of Anselm Kiefer's most important site specific works, *The Seven Heavenly Palaces 2004-2015*, commissioned for the inauguration of Pirelli HangarBicocca.



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