

**Ernesto Neto**

*Between Earth and Sky*

Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York

May 14 - June 16, 2022

Tanya Bonakdar Gallery is pleased to present Ernesto Neto's *Between Earth and Sky*, on view in New York from May 14th to June 16th, 2022.

Since the 1990s Ernesto Neto has created a distinct body of work— an ongoing formal inquiry into space, volume, balance, and gravity that is equally informed by sensuality, energy, and spirituality. Drawing on biomorphism, Arte Povera and Minimalist sculpture, along with Neo-concretism and other Brazilian vanguard movements of the 1960s and 1970s, Ernesto Neto's work incorporates organic shapes and materials that engage all five senses. He is inspired by a wide range of sources— from Brazilian avant-garde artists such as Hélio Oiticica and Lygia Clark, through the Modernist abstraction of Alexander Calder and Constantin Brancusi, to the natural world, shamanism and craft culture.

*earthtreelifelove* in the downstairs gallery is the culmination of Ernesto Neto's ongoing exploration of the relationship between humans and the environment as inseparable entities. The cotton crochet carpet is made with spiral formations that represent the earth and the ocean, and the top of the sculpture represents the sky and leaves falling from a tree, highlighting the cycle of nature. Viewers are able to take off their shoes, lie down on the carpet and gaze up to experience a moment of meditation and contemplate their connection with the natural world. In *Steps and Leaves*, over 520 knotted cotton formations are attached directly to the surrounding walls in the main gallery, representing human steps moving through the earth. Combining his signature biomorphic shapes, and using weight and gravity to dictate form, Neto creates an alluring environment of color, texture, and smell that collapses the distance between viewer and artwork, and human and nature.

On the second floor, Ernesto Neto has created a sculptural garden beneath the skylight that is comprised of spices, mulch, pebbles, soil, and plants. Neto will invite the public to plant the garden in a special presentation, where visitors can connect with the natural environment and one another. Surrounded by an outline of bricks and crochet forms, Neto has created a sanctuary in which the plants can thrive. In the project room, new drawings and smaller sculptures are on display. Neto fills hand-knit crochet puffs with an array of spices and lays them on the ground so that the spices seep through and create patterns that resemble sun rays on the floor. In the drawing, Neto takes a crochet sculpture filled with spices and throws it onto the paper to create the shape of the sun. By producing a trace of this action, Neto challenges the static nature of sculpture and draws a connection between the human body and his work.

Among the most influential artists of his generation, Ernesto Neto has become known for his immersive environments of vibrant color, fragrance, and sound, and for his use of natural materials. While investigating the properties of the natural world, Neto's work also functions as

models of the social environment, creating new architectural settings that investigate scale and radically redefine the boundaries between the artwork and the viewer.

Born in 1964 in Rio de Janeiro, the artist continues to live and work in Brazil. He studied at the city's MAM Museum of Modern Art at Rio de Janeiro in 1984 through 1986, and also attended Escola de Artes Visuais do Parque Lage in 1987.

Ernesto Neto's work has been the subject of major museum exhibitions worldwide, including: *SunForceOceanLife* at The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (2021), *Mentre la vita ci respira* at GAMeC, Bergamo, Italy (2021), *Water Falls from the Breast to the Sky* at Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Chicago (2020), *Ernesto Neto: Sopro (Blow)* at Pinacoteca, São Paulo (traveled to Malba, Museum of Latin American Art, Buenos Aires, Argentina; Palacio de La Moneda Cultural Center, Santiago, Chile) (2019), *Ernesto Neto: Rui Ni / Voices of the Earth* at KUNSTEN Museum of Modern Art Aalborg, Denmark (2016), *Ernesto Neto: Boa* at Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, Helsinki, Finland (2016), *Ernesto Neto: Mother Body Emotional Densities, For Alive Temple Time Baby Son* at MCA San Diego (2015), *Ernesto Neto: Haux Haux* at Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck, Germany (2014), *Ernesto Neto: Gratitude* at Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, CO (2014), *Ernesto Neto: The body that carries me* at Guggenheim, Bilbao, Spain (2014), *Ernesto Neto: Madness is Part of Life* at Espace Louis Vuitton, Tokyo (2012), *Ernesto Neto: Cuddle on the Tightrope* at Nasher Sculpture Center (2012), *Ernesto Neto* at Faena Arts Center in Buenos Aires, which traveled to Estação Leopoldina in Rio de Janeiro (2011-2012), Hayward Gallery, Southbank Centre in London (2010) Museum of Modern Art in New York (2010), *Ernesto Neto: Intimacy* at Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art in Oslo (2010), *Dengo* at Sao Paulo Museum of Modern Art (2010), *Ernesto Neto - Mentre niente accade/ while nothing happens* at Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Roma in Italy (2008), *Ernesto Neto* at Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, Australia (2002), *Directions-Ernesto Neto*, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C. (2002), among others.

His work has also been featured in numerous group exhibitions and biennials, most recently the 14th Biennale de Lyon, curated by Emma Lavigne (2017). In 2001 he represented Brazil at the 49th Venice Biennale, and in 2017 Neto was prominently featured in *Vive Arte Viva* at the 57th Venice Biennale curated by Christine Macel. Neto has been included in major group shows at Guggenheim Bilbao, Albright Knox Art Gallery, and Centre Pompidou-Metz. In summer 2018, a large installation, *GaiaMotherTree* was successfully shown at the Zurich train station, in collaboration with Fondation Beyeler, with a month-long corresponding public and education program that took place inside the work.

Neto's work is well represented in international museum collections, including those of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Tate Gallery in London, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh, Museum Boijmans van Beuningen in Rotterdam, Centre Pompidou in Paris, Hara Museum in Tokyo, Contemporary Art Center of Inhotim in Brazil, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C., Milwaukee Art Museum, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, among many others.