

**Tomás Saraceno**

*Live(s) on Air*

Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, Los Angeles

February 24–May 4, 2024

Tanya Bonakdar Gallery is pleased to present *Live(s) on Air*, a solo exhibition of new works by Tomás Saraceno on view in Los Angeles from February 24 through May 4, 2024.

Throughout the exhibition, Saraceno invites participants into a meditation on forms of life and life-forming that shapes the possibilities for eco-social interdependence. Through an entanglement of bodies and elemental forces, the exhibition reveals the material and immaterial dynamics that have come to characterize the anthropocentric inequality and injustice of the present. Across sculpture, works on paper, and film, the exhibition proposes new movements for cohabitation and being on Earth today.

In the main space, a new body of work invites visitors to attune with bodies and forces on air. Encountered through a re-coding of color and temperature, Saraceno's cloud and foam sculptures propose complex geometric systems of fractal color through which light illuminates in myriad constellations. From the nacreous glow of spider/webs, to the energetic heat evidenced by a star's celestial color, the artist has long sought to make visible the spectral hues and synesthetic vectors that shape the cosmic web. A series of infrared photography suggests an era beyond the use of aerodynamics; here, temperature measurements rendered in colors reveal the thermodynamic vitality in the bodies of "lighter than air" aerosolar flight. In suspended sculptures, the allure of iridescence—the phenomena of luminous color produced by a particular intersection of light and viewing angle—becomes an allegory for a rapidly warming planet.

The front gallery will feature sculptures in tones that reference the Earth's flora and fauna, reflecting seasonal difference and interspecies vernacularity. Developed in consultation with ornithologists and wildlife organizations, some of these sculptures can be placed outdoors providing functional habitats for a range of animals, as meditations on biodiversity and interspecies cohabitation. Their modular structures are inspired by cumulonimbus clouds and are part of Saraceno's ongoing project *Cloud Cities*—a proposal for an alternative form of urbanism and assembly that might emerge when large cities are not built from a solely human perspective. Ownership of these works requires an agreement of co-ownership and shared stewardship of the environment.

The exhibition will also feature *Fly with Pacha, Into the Aerocene*, a film that portrays the long-standing relationship between the artist, the Aerocene community he founded, and the Communities of Salinas Grandes and Laguna de Guayatayoc in Jujuy, Northern Argentina. The film documents the communities' struggles to protect their land against industrial lithium mining, driven by the demand for batteries in the name of a so-called 'green transition'. In reality, these efforts are depleting water resources in the region and contaminating the Earth. The film follows flight of an aerosolar balloon, which broke 32 world records, over the Salinas Grandes. Lifted only by the heat of the sun and carried along the rivers of the wind, *Pacha* was recognized as the most sustainable flight in human history by the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (FAI), carrying the message "Water and Life are Worth More than Lithium" written by the communities.

Visitors to the gallery's reading room are invited to participate in a collective, inter-generational artwork for the benefit of the Communities of Salinas Grandes and Laguna de Guayatayoc. Renewing the practice of reading messages drawn in the sky through the phenomenon of *pareidolia*—the impulse that leads us to recognize significant patterns in 'random' information—visitors can draw on cloudscapes and in turn become part of a community for the free circulation of water, information and life. A new signed Aerocene edition will also be available for purchase, the entire proceeds of which will support the communities' ongoing legal and stewardship efforts.

A final gallery will contain works that delve more deeply into Saraceno's collaborative work with spiders. Beginning almost two decades ago, this project has led to the formation of *Arachnophilia*: an interdisciplinary, distributed and intercultural community that syncretizes artistic, scientific and situated knowledges through a shared affinity to spider/webs. This darkened gallery includes works woven in authorship by and with spiders that live alongside the artist at his studio in Berlin, Germany. By showcasing the meshwork of spider webs the artist hopes to encourage those who experience a fear of spiders (arachnophobia) to move toward a love and wonder of them (arachnophilia). More importantly, this ongoing exploration functions as both model and metaphor, celebrating extra-human technologies of sensing, and settlement, offering a more sensitive, collaborative way of life on Earth.

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Born in 1973 in Tucuman, Argentina, Saraceno currently lives and works in Berlin. He studied architecture at Universidad Nacional de Buenos Aires in Argentina from 1992 to 1999 and received postgraduate degrees from Escuela Superior de Bellas Artes de la Nación Ernesto de la Carcova, Buenos Aires (2000) and Staatliche Hochschule für Bildende Künste - Städelschule-Frankfurt am Main (2003).

Among his many exhibitions since the late 1990s, Saraceno's important solo presentations include those at Serpentine Galleries, London (2023); The Shed, New York (2022); Palazzo Strozzi, Florence, Italy (2020); Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France (2019); Fosun Foundation Shanghai, China (2019); Museo de Arte Moderno Buenos Aires, Argentina (2017); San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2016); Villa Croce, Genoa, Italy (2014); HfG Karlsruhe in Karlsruhe, Germany (2014); Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen K21, Düsseldorf (2013); Hangar Bicocca, Milan (2012-13); Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, St. Louis (2011-12); Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin (2011-12); Bonniers Konsthall, Stockholm (2010), which traveled to BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, UK (2011); and the Walker Arts Center, Minneapolis, which traveled to the Blaffer Art Museum, University of Houston, Texas (2009-10). Saraceno also was commissioned to create a site-specific installation for The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (2012), and he was included in the 58th Venice Biennale in 2019, curated by Ralph Rugoff, as well as in the 53rd Venice Biennale in 2009, curated by Daniel Birnbaum.

Saraceno's work is presently represented in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, Perez Art Museum in Miami, Dallas Museum of Art, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean in Luxembourg, Museum für Moderne Kunst in Frankfurt, Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Canada, among others.

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