

MARIANNE BOESKY GALLERY

509 West 24th Street, New York, NY 10011

Hugo França & Thiago Rocha Pitta
Tropical Molecule
February 15 – March 31, 2019

Marianne Boesky Gallery is pleased to present *Tropical Molecule*, an exhibition featuring the work of designer Hugo França and artist Thiago Rocha Pitta at Boesky West in Aspen, Colorado. Distinct in their conceptual and aesthetic approaches, Rocha Pitta and França are nonetheless united by a shared commitment to engaging with and honoring the natural environment, especially in their home country of Brazil. On view from February 15 through March 31, 2019, the exhibition will include França's characteristic sculptural furniture alongside a selection of Rocha Pitta's watercolors, frescos, and photographs. A new sculpture by Rocha Pitta will also be installed on the exterior of the gallery. Together, the works, which are being shown together for the first time, capture the continuously blurring boundaries between art and design and highlight nature as a powerful source of inspiration across discipline and time.

França's name has long been synonymous with monumental and organic forms. His functional sculptures, made from discarded and fallen Pequi trees, follow the natural lines, curves, and patterns of the trunks, roots, and branches from which they are produced. In França's skilled and dedicated hands, these marks and shapes are accentuated, resulting in iconic works that maintain the essence of their sources. In this way, França's work is almost spiritual, holding within it his deep appreciation and sensitivity to the materials and their origins as living things in the magnificent environs of Bahia. This quality, which França has maintained throughout his several decades of work, harkens back to the late 1980s when he launched his design practice.

In the early 1980s, seeking a life closer to nature, França relocated from São Paulo to Trancoso, where he was moved by the tremendous and unnecessary waste produced from the extraction and use of wood. Feeling particularly connected to the beautiful Pequi trees, which can grow to be 150 feet in height and 10 feet in diameter, he sought to give them new life through the creative process. Today, to make his works, França relies on his deep knowledge of coastal southern Bahia as well as his team and local communities to find the dead or fallen trees and remnants that become his benches, chairs, tables, and functional objects. In some instances, the first cuts that will emerge as these beautiful and compelling pieces occur within the forest, establishing an instinctual trajectory to the final forms.

Rocha Pitta's diverse practice is connected by a fascination with the subtle transformations of the earth, from the slow erosion of desert terrain to the descent of fog to the fluctuations of underwater formations. In his photographs and video installations, he trains the viewer's eyes on these almost imperceptible alterations, capturing an environment that is very much alive and in the constant throes of change. In recent years, Rocha Pitta has become more deeply engaged with the origins of life, tracing the role of microorganisms like stromatolites and cyanobacteria to photosynthesis through to the development of the ozone layer. Rocha Pitta's study of these processes has yielded an aesthetic and formal exploration and experimentation with the color green—its wide-ranging hues referencing the lushness of many of the earth's landscapes and especially those in his native country.

In his abstract watercolors and frescos, vivid greens and shades of blue coalesce to suggest both brilliant bursts of energy and moments of soothing calm. In this way, Rocha Pitta's recent works appear to encapsulate within their frames his vision for the creation of the earth itself, shifting from and to stillness and violent action. His vision and techniques underscore his profound awe of nature's power. With the artist's move in 2018 from São Paulo to the forested environs of Petrópolis, his connection to the subject has become more direct and, in turn, his examinations of it more immediate and personally poignant. Indeed, the sculpture, *Youth* (2018), which will be part of the upcoming exhibition, was created for his new studio, as part of a garden he's developing to further establish relationships between his artistic practice and the landscapes that inspire it.

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Hugo França was born in Porto Alegre in 1954. He is an acclaimed designer that throughout his career has received many awards, including most recently the "50 For The Future Of Design: The New Tastemakers" from *House & Garden*, New York, USA. França has presented his work at numerous national and international fairs, including Design Miami/Basel, Basel, Switzerland (2018), Design Miami, Miami, USA (2017, 2016), Collective 2 Design Fair NY, New York, USA (2014), and Guild Design Fair, Cape Town, South Africa (2014), among others. He has participated in 38 group exhibitions and 22 solo

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exhibitions, with the more recent including, in 2018, *Impressão Vegetal*, in which he made an unprecedented production of monotypes.

He has performed several public furniture projects in important cities such as Vancouver (Canada), São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) and has works in permanent collections such as the Instituto Cultural Inhotim in Brumadinho, MG (Brazil), with more than 130 of his works.

Thiago Rocha Pitta (born 1980 in Tiradentes, Minas Gerais, Brazil) is widely recognized as one of Brazil's leading contemporary artists. He has held solo exhibitions internationally at Galeria Millan, São Paulo (2018); Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York (2017); A Gentil Carioca, Rio de Janeiro (2016); Gluck50 Gallery, Milan (2013); Andersen Contemporary, Copenhagen (2012); Parque Lage, Rio de Janeiro (2010); and Meyer Riegger Galerie, Karlsruhe (2009), among others. In 2018, Rocha Pitta was selected to participate in *16th Istanbul Biennial*, organized by the Istanbul Foundation for Arts and Culture, and in 2012, he presented in the 30th Bienal de São Paulo, with his installation *A iminência das poéticas*. His work has been incorporated into public collections, including at the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Colección Jumex, Mexico City; Bass Museum of Art, Miami Beach, FL; Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris; Hara Museum, Tokyo; the ThyssenKrupp, Vienna; and the Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo, São Paulo.

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