



Press Release  
January 2018

# Dreaming Awake

10 March until 3 June 2018 in Marres, Maastricht



Credits: Luiz Zerbini, *Eu Paisagem*, 1998;  
Photo: Luiza Mello, Southern Brazil, 2017;  
Daniel Steegmann Mangrané, *Phantom*, 2017

The exhibition *Dreaming Awake* presents a tropical rainforest peeled back in layers. The exhibition is about the experience of touch caused by strong outside forces. The Amazon wilderness, moist, damp, sticky, deafening, breathtaking, is the most invasive form in which a landscape forces itself upon us. Once you're inside, there is no escape. The pressure of the environment is so powerful and hypnotic that it propels people into a dream state. *Dreaming Awake* aims to bring that experience to the visitors of Marres.

The immersive project is developed by the Brazilian curator Luiza Mello and Marres director Valentijn Byvanck in collaboration with the artists Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Daniel Steegmann Mangrané and Luiz Zerbini. *Dreaming Awake* is part of a series of Marres exhibitions in which the house is used to show an all-encompassing single work of art. Previous projects in this series were *Levi van Veluw: The Relativity of Matter* (2015) and *The Painted Bird* (2017).

**Jungle as a dream world**

It is hard to talk about the jungle without touching upon the clichés of exoticism or ecology. The jungle is rich, lush, bountiful, regenerative, the source of life, the substance of rituals, and the heart of darkness. The jungle is also one of the last vestiges of untamed nature, vulnerable, threatened by ceaseless human intervention.

The vocabularies for the jungle testify to the pull it has over our imagination. It has been like that for centuries. The relationship between the tamed and untamed, between human and nature, between the world of profits and the world of poetry spawn unending resources for discovery. The jungle is the stuff of dreams, not only in our abundant imagination, but also in the rituals and traditions of the people that inhabit it.

### **The myth of the wild forest and the garden of Eden**

The exhibition *Dreaming Awake* encourages the visitors to sense the deeper layers of nature. It invites visitors to embark on a voyage where their senses are opened for an experience that melts inner feeling and outer sensation into a single whole. They are immersed in mysteries posed by both the wild forest and the garden, simultaneously reflecting the desire for intervention and integration with nature. Views of the tropical forest by artists Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Daniel Steegmann Mangrané and Luiz Zerbini are presented in layers that become superimposed atop one another as the visitors move through the exhibition space.

The exhibition path is modeled after a sleep cycle, which begins with relaxation, passes through deep sleep, until arriving at the state of random brain activity, in which dreams occur intensely. When the visitors enter the doors of Marres and leave the city behind, they will begin a path that leads through a plant and tree environment in a greenhouse installed on the ground floor. The second layer proposes the visitor's body to move and be touched only by the sound of the phenomenon of tropical rain. In the third layer, the forest is revealed at times preserved in its wealth of colors and sounds, sometimes reduced to a black-and-white environment. Real and virtual images complement one another and add new perspectives to this narrative.

*Dreaming Awake* presents nature as a catalyst and driver of memory and imagination. The various layers of the jungle designed by the artists propel sensations that travel between the visitors' outer and inner worlds. At the end of the path, the visitors return to the beginning of the journey, the fantastic forest of the oneiric landscaper Luiz Zerbini. This return recalls the cycles of nature that are in constant transformation. Altered, ravaged, symbolized and represented throughout the history of humankind, the jungle remains inexhaustible, and for this reason a source of dreams, including those we experience when we are awake.

## **Natureza espiritual da realidade | Luiz Zerbini**

Luiz Zerbini paints through his ultrasensitive perception of the world. He has spent a part of his life at the sea, and another at the Botanical Garden of Rio de Janeiro among urban and tropical landscapes, connecting with the same intensity with nature and culture. His work breathes his fascination for plants, stones and animals, together with metallic colors of the city, experienced histories, fantasies and deliriums. Standing before one of his paintings is to enter a world that is both recognizable and improbable. Some years ago, Zerbini started to show his work process. He created table-worlds composed of elements that he collects on his walks and travels, using them in his paintings: sand, bamboo, butterflies, leaves, corals, bricks, etc.

In the exhibition *Dreaming Awake*, he goes even further. He proposes an integral experience in which the spectator can physically feel the density of nature. The ground floor of Marres will be transformed into a forest-garden consisting of plants he has painted, others he is still going to paint, species chosen one by one to take part in a colorful structure that refers to other artworks. *Natureza espiritual da realidade* [Spiritual Nature of Reality] is a living quasi-painting in which we are touched by humidity, color, the smell of moist earth, the decomposition of leaves, and where we marvel at the multiplicity of colors and shapes carefully placed in the space by the artist.

## **Promenade 2 | Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster**

Going up the stairs, the visitor comes across new layers of this dream-world forest. In *Promenade 2*, here presented in a version especially made for the space of Marres, the French artist Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster invites us to abstract the outer world and to experience the sound of a tropical rainstorm. The space is empty, to focus the visitors' attention entirely on the environment of sound. The visitor's body is encouraged to move and allow itself to be swept away freely by the sensations caused by the storm. *Promenade 2* is a soundtrack stimulating the emergence of visions, recollections and dreams.

## **Phantom & Spiral Forest | Daniel Steegmann Mangrané**

The Catalan artist Daniel Steegmann Mangrané is interested in the relationships between organic and geometric shapes, nature and culture. In the third layer of the exhibition, he presents two works produced in the tropical forest of Brazil's Southwest, the Atlantic Forest, one of the world's most rapidly disappearing ecosystems. The film *Spiral Forest* was shot with a custom-made gimbal (a hinged, gyroscope-like device in which an object can rotate 360 degrees while remaining upright) activated by the motor of a 16 mm camera. When the camera is turned on and starts filming, the gimbal rotates its three axes,

conducting the filming process while executing interlinked movements. The body of the spectator is turned around and around in the continuous spiral of *Spiral Forest* and projected into it, entering the flow of the image in motion.

The second work, *Phantom*, is a virtual reality environment in which the visitors, using an Oculus Rift, enter and move through a forest scanned in black and white. Through the simple act of putting on a technological device, the body disappears and is transported to the interior of a forest. Looking down, one does not see one's feet, but rather the forest soil, roots and leaves. Looking toward the sides, one sees the relations between the trees, and the multiplicity of species in the Atlantic Forest. The invisible body moves in this nearly perfect representation of reality through technology, physically experiencing the world's dissolution.

Marres receives structural support from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the Municipality of Maastricht and the Province of Limburg.

*Dreaming Awake* is made possible with financial support by the BankGiroLoterij Fonds and VSB Fonds.



Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en  
Wetenschap

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Gemeente Maastricht

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iedereen doet mee

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### Note for the editors

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