

DANIEL STEEGMANN MANGRANÉ
BEFRIENDING THE MOUNTAINS

Atelier Hermès, Seoul

November 28, 2025 – March 8, 2026



Esther Schipper

Daniel Steegmann Mangrané



Daniel Steegmann Mangrané was born in 1977 in Barcelona, Spain. He studied at the Escola de disseny i art, and the Gris ART School of Photography, both in Barcelona. The artist lives and works in Barcelona.

Steegmann Mangrané was nominated for the prestigious PIPA Prize for Latin American artists in 2012, 2013 and 2014.

The artist's practice encompasses a wide range of media, including film, sculpture, sound, gardens and drawing. His work focuses on the creation and migration of forms between different formal registers in nature, art and architecture. The artist is particularly interested in forms that, while appearing familiar, cannot be related to any specific references, be it in nature or culture. Using self-imposed systems, the artist creates works that undermine the boundaries between organic and man-made aesthetics and materials, as well as between chance and rule-based principles of composition. Consequently, his works often appear both sparse and sensual.

His work has been exhibited at numerous international institutions. Selected solo exhibitions include: **Befriending the Mountains**, Atelier Hermès, Seoul (2025); **A Leaf Shapes The Eye**, Kiasma, Helsinki and MACBA, Barcelona (2023–24); **Breathing Lines**, Nordnorsk Kunstmuseum Tromsø, Tromsø (2022); **Dog Eye**, Kunsthalle Münster, Münster (2020); **A Leaf-Shaped Animal Draws the Hand**, Pirelli HangarBicocca, Milan (2019); **Ne voulais prendre ni forme, ni chair, ni matière**, Institut d'Art Contemporain, Villeurbanne/Rhône-Alpes (2019); **The Word for World is Forest**, Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham (2019); **A Transparent Leaf Instead of the Mouth**, CCS Bard, Hessel Museum of Art, Annandale-on-Hudson (2018); **-'- -'-**, Fundació Tàpies, Barcelona (2018); **Phantom**, CAC – Contemporary Art Center, Vilnius (2018); **A Transparent Leaf Instead of the Mouth**, Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art, Porto (2017); **(Paisaje de posibilidades)**, Museo de Arte Moderno de Medellín, Medellín (2016); **Não queria ter corpo humano, carne humana ou forma humana**, The Green Parrot, Barcelona (2016); **Daniel Steegmann Mangrané / Philipp van Snick**, MAM Rio de Janeiro and Casa Modernista, São Paulo (both 2015); **Animal que no existeix**, CRAC Alsace – Centre rhénan d'art contemporain, Altkirch (2014); **Cipó, Taioba, Yví**, Casa França Brasil, Rio de Janeiro (2013), and **Duna económica / maqueta sin calidad**, Halfhouse, Barcelona (2011).

His work is in the collections of: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin; MACBA, Barcelona; CA2M – Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo, Madrid; Castello di Rivoli, Turin; Centro de Art Contemporânea Inhotim, Brumadinho; CPPC – Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros, Caracas and New York City; Fondazione Morra Greco, Naples; Fundação de Serralves, Porto; „la Caixa“ Collection of Contemporary Art, Barcelona; Fundación Jumex Art Contemporáneo, Mexico City; MAM – Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro; MUSAC – Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León, León; NMNM – Nouveau Musée National de Monaco, Monaco; Pinault Collection, Paris; Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taipei; Tate Gallery of Modern Art, London; TBA21 – Thyssen Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Madrid.

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Cover image: Exhibition view, Daniel Steegmann Mangrané, **Befriending the Mountains**, Atelier Hermès, Seoul (2025-26)

EXHIBITION TEXT

The exhibition “**Befriending the Mountains**” invites the viewers into an architectural structure divided by diagonal partitions. The artificially constructed white walls are numb straight lines, but they are arranged at disjointed angles, impeding the viewer’s perception of the overall space and creating a sense of disorientation. At the entrance, which opens in at least three directions, the visitors may feel a psychological turmoil, a feeling of entering a forest maze. And this “transfer” from an organized structure into a maze-like forest is to blur the formal opposition and disconnect between the two. A magical phenomenon occurs here as the diagonal partitions create a forest trail.

Next, the visitor encounters aluminum curtains, one of the artist’s signature series. Commonly found in Mediterranean life, these curtains, with their vibrant colors and pleasant texture, are made from ready-made pieces from Kriskadecor, which allow for easy connection. Steegmann Mangrané layered the curtains in the passageway in ways to create a situation where it’s difficult to tell whether they permit or obstruct passage. When the visitors boldly pass through them, the curtains transform from two-dimensional to three-dimensional, from material to immaterial. The physical contact and the resulting sound bring the boundary between the object and our bodies closer, blurring them.

While Félix González-Torres’ beaded curtains emphasized physical contact and sensation, Steegmann Mangrané’s curtains, with their uniquely shaped openings, evoke transfer and exploration. It’s a site-specific work, deriving its form from something the artist encountered in Korea. But the viewers, unable to pinpoint its exact nature, feel transported into a natural realm, thanks to the title, “**Befriending the Mountains**” (2025). Steegmann Mangrané produces his aluminum curtains sometimes in shades of a lush forest and sometimes in golden sunlight or sunset (the latter has been chosen for this exhibition), eliciting a vivid sense and awareness of physical contact with nature—a moment when the artificial turns natural.

Steegmann Mangrané’s approach to space design has been inspired by Baroque music’s use of ritornello and echo system. He guides and then distracts the viewer’s gaze, making them curious about what’s on the other side and ultimately let themselves wander in the labyrinthine exhibition space. Light from thin filaments and rocks they strike with lightning appear in every corner, but they are by no means identical. The rocks, moss-covered as if weathered by time, are nicknamed “**Mountain**,” “**Elephant**,” “**Lion**,” and “**Dragon**” based on their shapes. This work hints at the animistic notion that all beings inhabiting the universe—from animate and inanimate beings to astronomical phenomena and artificial objects—are imbued with spirits.

“**Fish Trying to Kiss the Moon**” (2025), a video installed beyond a glass window, shows the full moon cast over Wolji Pond in Gyeongju, historically known for moon viewing. In this poetic video, the moon and a fish meet through the slowly rippling water. In attempts to capture the constant creation and disappearance of fleeting nature, Steegmann Mangrané continues to document nature using media such as 16mm film, VR, and holograms.

Shifting the question of “What is nature?” to “Who is nature?,” Steegmann Mangrané’s eco-philosophical work faithfully and significantly fulfills the positive roles art can play in and for the world. The artist is fully devoted not only to revealing the poetic and aesthetic aspects of nature through visual art, but also to learning and disseminating the lessons of interlacing and interdependence taught by forests. He believes that this unique age called the Anthropocene can be a remarkable.

— Soyeon Ahn



Exhibition view: Daniel Steegmann Mangrané, **Befriending the Mountains**, Atelier Hermès, Seoul (2025-26)



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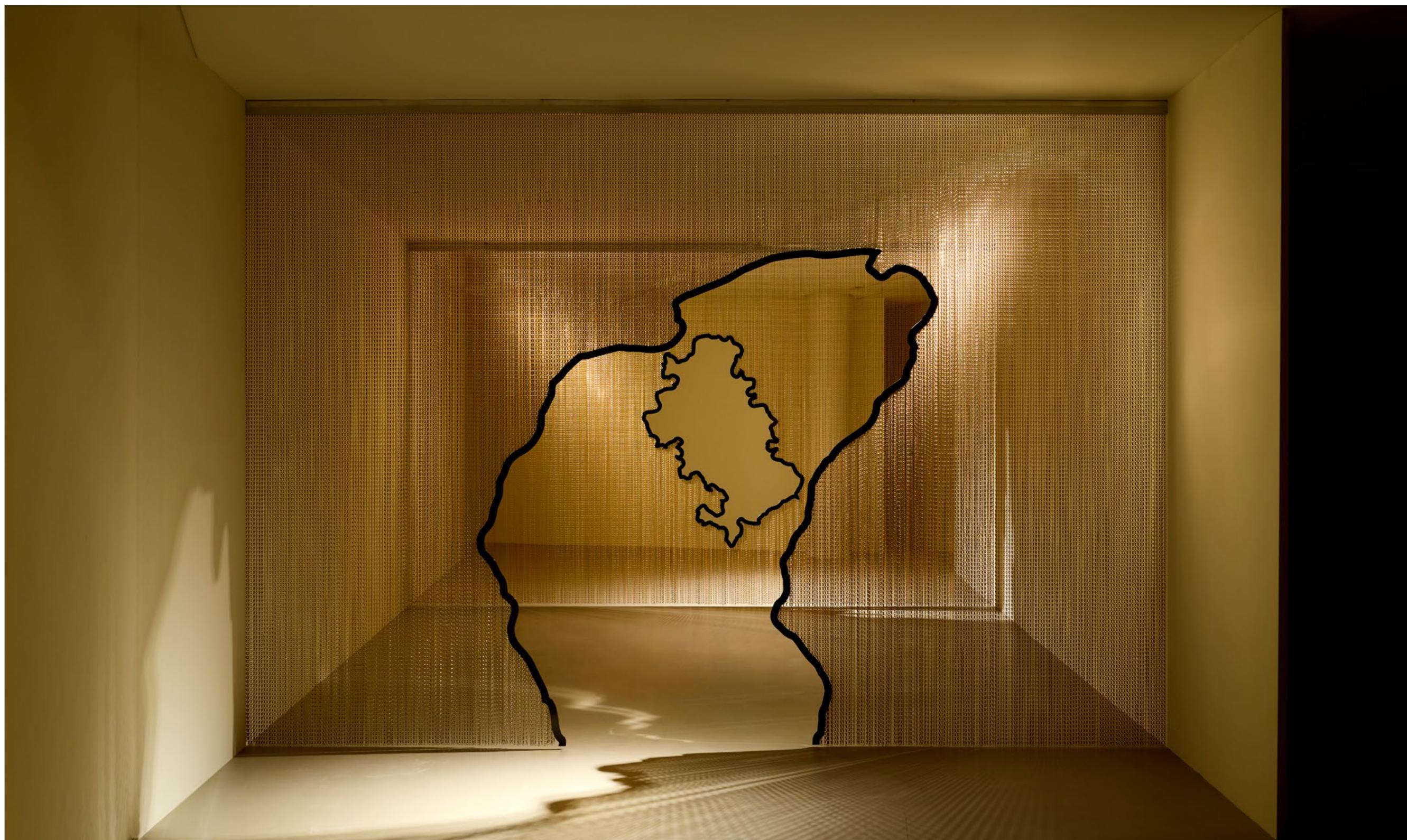
BEFRIENDING THE MOUNTAINS

Two works titled “**Befriending the Mountains**” are part of Steegmann Mangrané’s series of coloured aluminium curtains with differently shaped passageways made from Kriska aluminium chains. Widely used in Spain, Kriska curtains can function as flexible screens for entryways. They are light, often brightly colored and make a characteristic metallic sound when the chains touch.

The forms cut into the curtains have no direct references but relate to the artist’s idea of “model forms,” familiar but non-specific shapes. The “continuation” of the aluminium chains below the openings appears counterintuitive, adding an element of surprise. Oscillating between appearing as diaphanous screen and semi-solid object, the curtains are both indications of a transition (meant to be traversed, marking the end of one space and the beginning of the next) as well as sculptural objects, existing in a hybrid state between corporeality and immateriality.



Detail: Daniel Steegmann Mangrané, **Befriending the Mountains**, 2025, kriska aluminum curtain and laser cut powder-coated steel frame, dimensions variable



Daniel Steegmann Mangrané, **Befriending the Mountains**, 2025, kriska aluminum curtain and laser cut powder-coated steel frame, dimensions variable, max. dimensions: 315 x 495 cm (10 x 16 ft) (DSM 441)



Daniel Steegmann Mangrané, **Befriending the Mountains**, 2025, kriska aluminum curtain and laser cut powder-coated steel frame, dimensions variable, max. dimensions: 315 x 560 cm (10 x 18 ft) (DSM 443)



Detail: Daniel Steegmann Mangrané, **Befriending the Mountains**, 2025, kriska aluminum curtain and laser cut powder-coated steel frame, dimensions variable, max. dimensions: 315 x 495 cm (10 x 16 ft) (DSM 441)



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Exhibition view: Daniel Steegmann Mangrané, **Befriending the Mountains**, Atelier Hermès, Seoul (2025-26)

GEOMETRIC NATURE, 2025

The work consists of a small branch suspended as if in mid-air by thin elastic ropes that extend from ceiling to floor. The delicate organic structure appears to float in the room, slightly quivering when the elastic ropes vibrate.

Suspended a precarious stasis, the slight movement allowed by the elastic recalls its natural state as part of a tree animated by the elements in nature. This juxtaposition of human-made and organic worlds is a major theme of Steegmann Mangrané's practice.



Detail: Daniel Steegmann Mangrané, **Geometric Nature**, 2025, branch with elastic cords, dimensions variable (DSM 442)



Daniel Steegmann Mangrané, **Geometric Nature**, 2025, branch with elastic cords, dimensions variable (DSM 442)



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LIGHTNING STONE SERIES

The work belongs to a group of works titled **Lightning Stone** in which each piece pairs a single LED filament with a stone placed on the floor. The filament rises from the stone's upper surface toward the ceiling, creating a linear, luminous extension of the object below.

The rocks, moss-covered as if weathered by time, are nicknamed "**Mountain**," "**Elephant**," "**Lion**," and "**Dragon**" based on their shapes. These sculptural works hint at the animistic notion that all beings inhabiting the universe—from animate and inanimate beings to astronomical phenomena and artificial objects—are imbued with spirits.

The series bespeaks an important aspect of the artist's practice in which themes surrounding ecological entanglement find poetic formal expressions. As is often the case in Steegmann Mangrané's oeuvre, the series calls into question not only the hierarchy, but the distinction between animate and inanimate matter.



Detail: Daniel Steegmann Mangrané, **Lightning Stone (Mountain)**, 2025, stone and LED filament, dimensions variable (DSM 444)

LIGHTNING STONE (MOUNTAIN), 2025



Daniel Steegmann Mangrané, **Lightning Stone (Mountain)**, 2025, stone and LED filament, dimensions variable (DSM 444)

LIGHTNING STONE (ELEPHANT), 2025



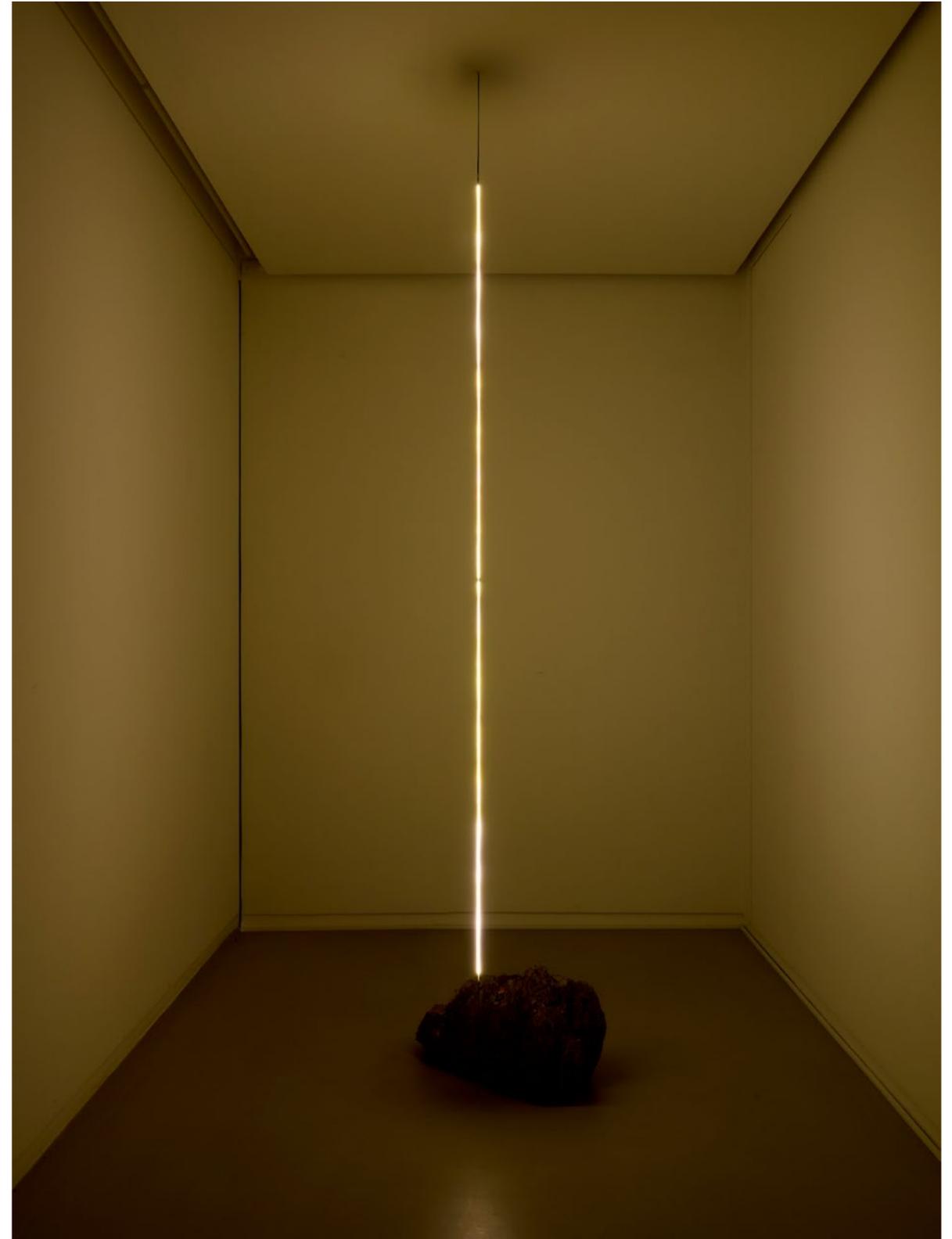
Daniel Steegmann Mangrané, **Lightning Stone (Elephant)**, 2025, stone and LED filament, dimensions variable (DSM 445)

LIGHTNING STONE (LION), 2025



Daniel Steegmann Mangrané, **Lightning Stone (Lion)**, 2025, stone and LED filament, dimensions variable (DSM 446)

LIGHTNING STONE (DRAGON), 2025



Daniel Steegmann Mangrané, **Lightning Stone (Dragon)**, 2025, stone and LED filament, dimensions variable (DSM 447)



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Exhibition view: Daniel Steegmann Mangrané, **Befriending the Mountains**, Atelier Hermès, Seoul (2025-26)

ELEGANCIA Y RENUNCIA, 2011

Elegancia y renuncia consists of a dried leaf held at its stem by a metal stand on which a slide projector shines light through a prepared slide. Two groups of tiny differently sized circles (one of three, the other of six) have been incised in the somewhat elliptical (lanceolate) shaped ficus leaf—this alteration however becomes visible mainly because of the light from the slide projector. The intensity of the luminous glow of the circular shapes created on the leaf (although it seems as if the pattern were even emanating from within it) by the projector seems extraordinary and counterintuitive since the distance between them is so great.

Delicate sculptural works consisting of altered organic material or resembling organic objects like bark, leaves and twigs produced in the last years explore the creation and migration of forms between different formal registers in nature, art and architecture. The artist is particularly interested in forms that, while appearing familiar, cannot be related to any specific references, be they in nature or culture. Like **Elegancia y renuncia**, his work often highlights the uncanny correspondences between organic and geometric shapes.

The owner of the work will receive ten prepared leaves, as well as precise instructions on how additional ones can be produced in the future.



Detail: Daniel Steegmann Mangrané, **Elegancia y renuncia**, 2011, dried leaf (*ficus elastica japonicum*), metal stands and slide projection (filter ref. 140 summer blue), dimensions variable, edition of 3 (DSM 036)



Daniel Steegmann Mangrané, **Elegancia y renuncia**, 2011, dried leaf (ficus elastica japonicum), metal stands and slide projection (filter ref. 140 summer blue), dimensions variable, edition of 3 (DSM 036)



Exhibition view: Daniel Steegmann Mangrané, **Befriending the Mountains**, Atelier Hermès, Seoul (2025-26)



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FISH TRYING TO KISS THE MOON, 2025

Fish Trying to Kiss the Moon is a video work showing the full moon reflected in Wolji, the historic Pond of the Moon in Gyeongju. Rather than focusing the camera on the moon itself, Daniel Steegmann Mangrané captured the water's shifting surface: in this minimal black-and-white piece, moonlight appears only through its bright reflection on the darkened pond. A single fish rises to the surface, briefly touching the trembling light—a quiet, poetic moment that animates the scene.

The work was produced for the artist's solo exhibition **Befriending the Mountain** at the Atelier Hermès in Seoul and reflects Steegmann Mangrané's longstanding interest in philosophies of nature. Parsing the architecture of thought situated in Korean gardening practices, the artist began visiting several gardens around Seoul. There he observed the significance of the moon-reflecting pond. As Steegmann Mangrané explains, "This kind of pond normally comes with a small pavilion with an over-sized roof, clinging to the west side of the pond, suspended over the edge, half on the land and half over the water. When sitting in the pavilion on a clear full moon night the oversized roof blocks the sky and makes you unable to see the moon directly, one has to look instead to its reflection in the pond... These ponds are a common feature in Confucian gardens and reflect the Confucian idea that some things cannot (and should not) be addressed directly."

Harnessing a sentient state of immersion, Steegmann Mangrané's subtle and poetic visual language cuts across his complex and generative oeuvre. His practice is remarkable not only for its aesthetic clarity but also for its contemplative depth, inspired by indigenous cosmologies and new materialisms.



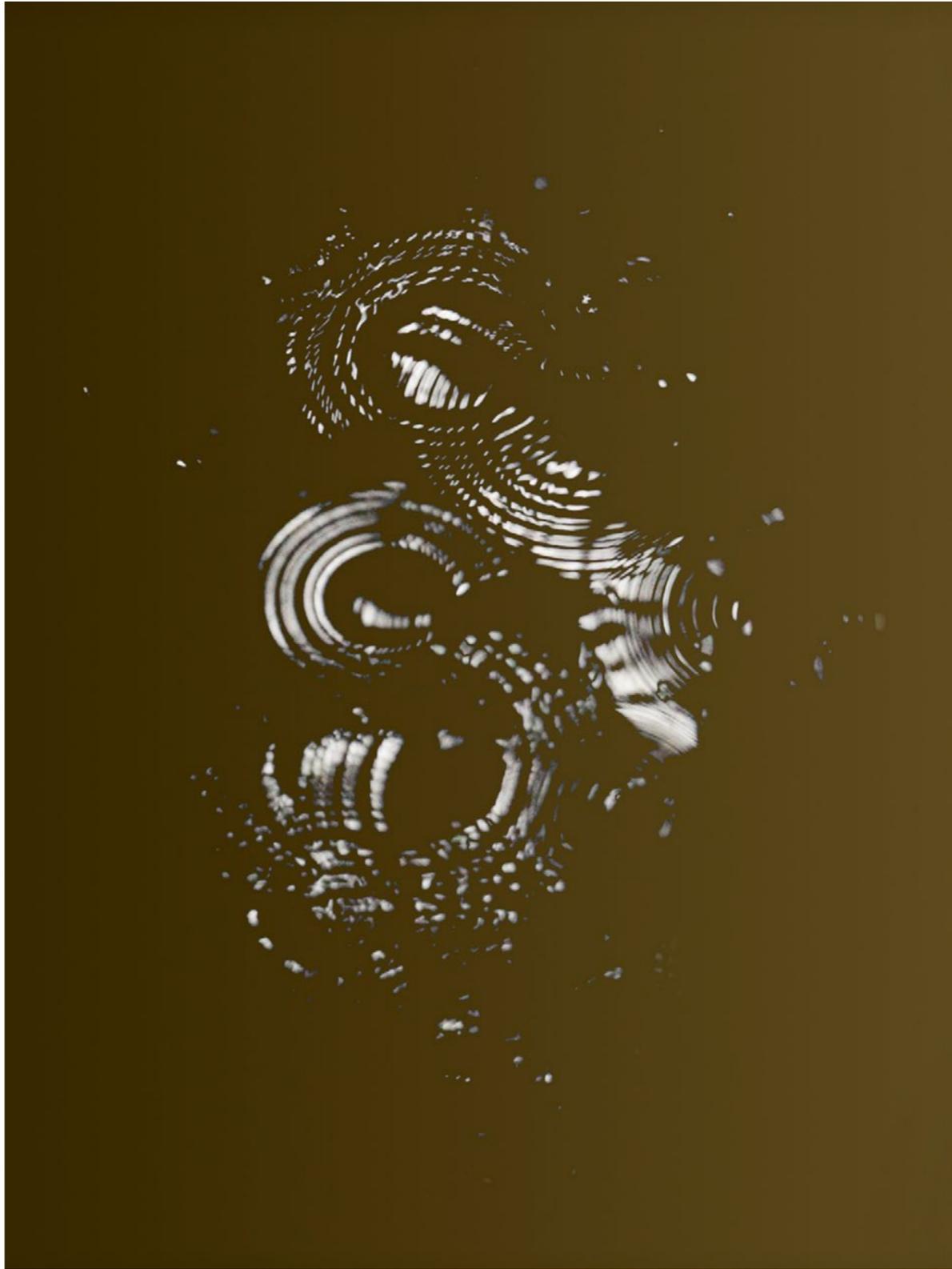
Video: Daniel Steegmann Mangrané, **Fish Trying to Kiss the Moon**, 2025, single channel HD video (black & white, no sound), duration: 17:38 min (loop), edition of 6 (DSM 448)



Video still: Daniel Steegmann Mangrané, **Fish Trying to Kiss the Moon**, 2025, single channel HD video (black & white, no sound), duration: 17:38 min (loop), edition of 6 (DSM 448)



Video still: Daniel Steegmann Mangrané, **Fish Trying to Kiss the Moon**, 2025, single channel HD video (black & white, no sound), duration: 17:38 min (loop), edition of 6 (DSM 448)



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HOLOGRAM SERIES

Daniel Steegmann Mangrané's series of **holograms** continue the artist's longstanding interest in the relationship between organic and geometric forms.

Akin to a small terrarium or the display cases at a museums of natural history, the **holograms** create a small tableaux vivant of twigs, geometric shapes and, in some cases, insects. As one peers „into“ the depicted space, trying to decipher what one is seeing, the arbitrariness of the distinction made between organic and human-made forms becomes apparent. In a reference to one of the artist's important early filmic works, Phasmides, 2012, the **holograms** bring together organic materials such as leaves and twigs, at times modified, with geometric shapes made from card board or others that recall organic material. Several works from the series include insects, among them phasmids and praying mantises.

The nature of a **hologram**, namely that it compels the viewer to move in order to experience the holographic effects fully, lends itself perfectly to this suite of works. The notion of making the waves of light visible (in effect, the process in which holographic images are produced) has been a recurring theme in Steegmann Mangrané's practice, yet it is also the suggestion of movement inherent in the holographic image that here corresponds with the fascination the animal has exerted on humanity: famously mimetic and still, phasmids are generally recognized in nature only when they move. In addition, the spectral or ghostlike aspect of **holograms** finds a linguistic parallel in the phasmid, as their name is rooted in the Greek word for apparition or ghost: "phantasma"

The use of technology in Steegmann Mangrane's practice always has a deliberate conceptual relevance. Working across many media, the use of digital scans or, in this case, holography draws attention to the influence technology can exert on the understanding of nature. The shifting connotations of certain media becomes an integral part of the work: thus, holography is in many ways an anachronistic medium, invented in 1948, it never fulfilled the high expectations with which it was initially invested.



Detail: Daniel Steegmann Mangrané, **Hologram (sprouting hand)**, 2021, pulse hologram, 25 x 20 cm (9 7/8 x 7 7/8 in), edition of 6 (DSM 412)

HOLOGRAM (MANTIS PALACE), 2021



Daniel Steegmann Mangrané, **Hologram (Mantis palace)**, 2021, pulse hologram, 25 x 20 cm (9 7/8 x 7 7/8 in), edition of 6 (DSM 299)

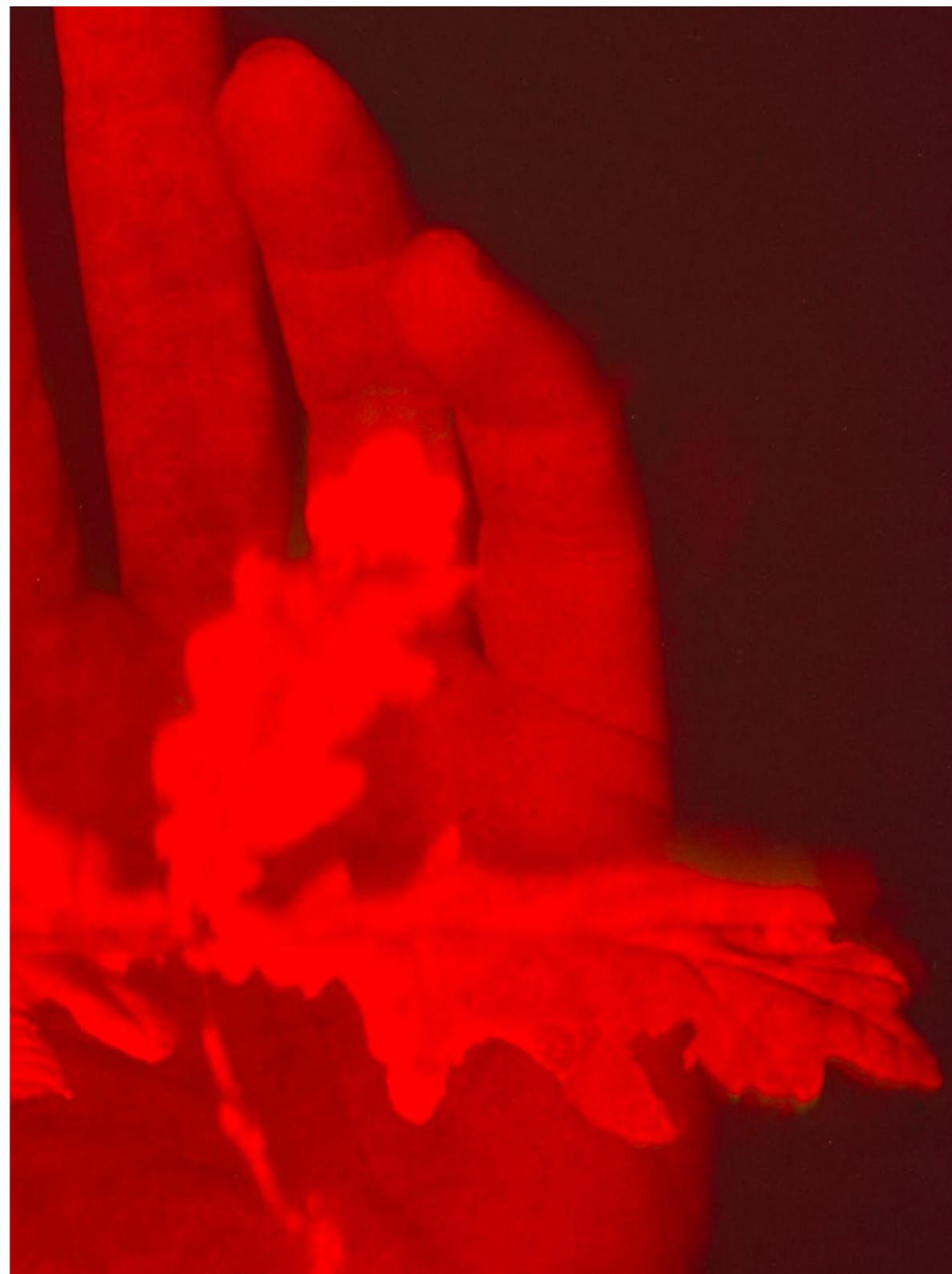


Detail: Daniel Steegmann Mangrané, **Hologram (Mantis palace)**, 2021, pulse hologram, 25 x 20 cm (9 7/8 x 7 7/8 in), edition of 6 (DSM 299)

HOLOGRAM (SPROUTING HAND), 2021



Daniel Steegmann Mangrané, **Hologram (sprouting hand)**, 2021, pulse hologram, 25 x 20 cm (9 7/8 x 7 7/8 in), edition of 6 (DSM 412)



Detail: Daniel Steegmann Mangrané, **Hologram (sprouting hand)**, 2021, pulse hologram, 25 x 20 cm (9 7/8 x 7 7/8 in), edition of 6 (DSM 412)



Exhibition view: Daniel Steegmann Mangrané, **Befriending the Mountains**, Atelier Hermès, Seoul (2025-26)

AVAILABLE WORKS



Daniel Steegmann Mangrané
Befriending the Mountains, 2025
Kriska aluminum curtain and laser cut powder-coated steel frame
Dimensions variable
Max. dimensions: 315 x 495 cm (10 x 16 ft)
(DSM 441)

EUR 50,000.00 (excl. taxes)



Daniel Steegmann Mangrané
Befriending the Mountains, 2025
Kriska aluminum curtain and laser cut powder-coated steel frame
Dimensions variable
Max. dimensions: 315 x 560 cm (10 x 18 ft)
(DSM 443)

EUR 50,000.00 (excl. taxes)



Daniel Steegmann Mangrané
Geometric Nature, 2025
Branch with elastic cords
Dimensions variable
(DSM 442)

EUR 20,000.00 (excl. taxes)



Daniel Steegmann Mangrané
Lightning Stone (Mountain), 2025
Stone and LED filament
Dimensions variable
(DSM 444)

EUR 30,000.00 (excl. taxes)



Daniel Steegmann Mangrané
Lightning Stone (Elephant), 2025
Stone and LED filament
Dimensions variable
(DSM 445)

EUR 30,000.00 (excl. taxes)



Daniel Steegmann Mangrané
Lightning Stone (Lion), 2025
Stone and LED filament
Dimensions variable
(DSM 446)

EUR 30,000.00 (excl. taxes)



Daniel Steegmann Mangrané
Lightning Stone (Dragon), 2025
Stone and LED filament
Dimensions variable
(DSM 447)

EUR 30,000.00 (excl. taxes)



Daniel Steegmann Mangrané
Elegancia y renuncia, 2011
Dried leaf (ficus elastica japonicum), metal stands
and slide projection (filter ref. 140 summer blue)
Dimensions variable
Edition of 3
(DSM 036)

EUR 35,000.00 (excl. taxes)



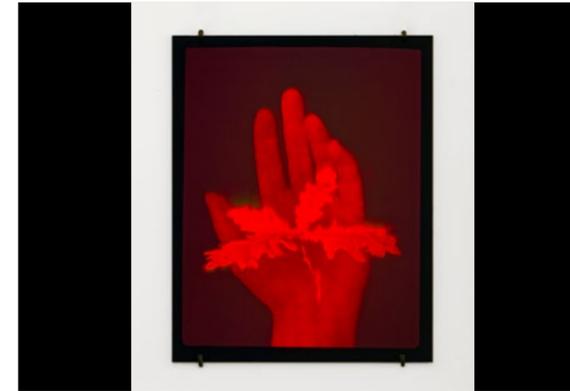
Daniel Steegmann Mangrané
Fish Trying to Kiss the Moon, 2025
Single channel HD video (black & white, no sound)
Duration: 17:38 min (loop)
Edition of 6
(DSM 448)

EUR 25,000.00 (excl. taxes)



Daniel Steegmann Mangrané
Hologram (Mantis palace), 2021
Pulse hologram
25 x 20 cm (9 7/8 x 7 7/8 in)
Edition of 6
(DSM 299)

EUR 12,000.00 (excl. taxes)



Daniel Steegmann Mangrané
Hologram (sprouting hand), 2021
Pulse hologram
25 x 20 cm
(9 7/8 x 7 7/8 in)
Edition of 6
(DSM 412)

EUR 12,000.00 (excl. taxes)

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