

Steel Life Arnaud Rivieren

16 May – 19 July 2024



Steel Life, the second solo-show of the artist at Custot Gallery, works as a continuation of the artist's previous exhibition *Natural Sublime*. By bringing forth new organic forms and new production processes, a new layer of complexity and depth is added to Rivieren's work.

A selection of 14 new and existing works is presented in the gallery space, taking the viewer into an exploration of the thematic growth this new body of work introduces. Through recognizable and nostalgic organic shapes, we find ourselves communicating with an inert nature, creating a sense of distorted and dissonant memory.

The development of this material complexity by Rivieren is highlighted in works such as *Acorn* (2023) or *Pine Cone* (2023), where new treatments of his signature stainless steel are presented to create interlocking textures, bringing life to the harsh and industrial material. These new patterns and techniques are the result of a direct confrontation between the artist and nature itself. A confrontation where the inherent architectural freedom of the earth's designs must be tamed by Rivieren's steel-bending skills.

Evolving from a riff on the fading sublime of nature, to the exploration of life in stillness, the work of Arnaud Rivieren evolves in a continuous shape. Their shape dictated by nature; these sculptures grow out of their steel to become symbols of individuality.

BIOGRAPHY

Arnaud Rivieren, born in Brussels in 1966, is a Dubai-based contemporary sculptor specialized in repurposing discarded industrial materials, which are scavenged around the dense industrial areas and scrapyards of the UAE.

Working in Dubai since 2002 after having lived in Singapore, Arnaud Rivieren has set-up his foundry in Jebel Ali, the heart of Dubai's expanding industrial landscape, in front of a scrapyard serving as source material for his large-scale outdoor sculptures.

Involved in the Oil and Gas field, Arnaud Rivieren has worked extensively in the steel industry, influencing his sculpting approach, teaching him the different properties of metals and alloys, bending, contorting and twisting, as well as industrial finishing techniques.

Rivieren transforms raw materials, such as tubular steel, iron beams and barrels through rigorous steel crafting techniques to produce large-scale outdoor sculptures. These structures contradict the solid and rigid function of the initial material and reveal a completely new shape, form and purpose for what was once deemed as disposable and forgotten. This environmentally conscious practice has come to define the heart of Arnaud Rivieren's work. Often looking back towards nature for his inspiration, expanding it and subliming it through the lens of a metal-bending master, creating a dialogue between the organic natural elements and industrial recycled materials.

Arnaud Rivieren exhibited in solo and group exhibitions at B21 Gallery (2006 and 2008), Dubai; Gallery Leila Heller (2009), New York, LKFF (2011), Brussels and La Galerie Nationale (2014 and 2017), Dubai. In 2012, his installation Paper Plane was presented in the heart of Brussels and at Parc Egmont as part of Art Brussels's Art in the City programme. His works were exhibited in the Belgian Pavilion during Shanghai World Expo in 2010 and he has participated in the first two editions of Bastakiya Art fair (now Sikka Art Fair). He has participated in group shows at Gallery Isabelle van den Eynde curated by Amanda Abu Khalil in 2016 and curated by Yasmina Reggad in 2017. In 2022 his solo show "Natural Sublime" was on view at Custot Gallery, Dubai. Collections and public acquisitions include TDIC Culture (UAE), Masdar (UAE), Fondation Herpain (Brussels) Randolph Hearst Collection (USA) and the Abu Dhabi Executive Office (UAE).