



FONDAZIONE  
PIER LUIGI E  
NATALINA REMOTTI

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Press release



Fondazione Pier Luigi e Natalina Remotti

**Tomas Saraceno**

*From Camogli to San Felipe, spiders weaving stars...*

March 13 – June 13 2010

curated by Francesca Pasini

In the installation by Tomas Saraceno at the latest Venice Biennial, *Galaxies Forming along Filaments, like Droplets along the Strands of a Spider's Web*, thousands of strands filled the room, forming an enormous web with bubble-vessels clustered inside.

At Fondazione Pier Luigi e Natalina Remotti in Camogli, with the installation *From Camogli to San Felipe, spiders weaving stars...* curated by Francesca Pasini, Tomas Saraceno offers another view of the strategy of the spider and its capacity to cross enormous distances dangling on strands of silk.

The installation it's part of the experimental project *Space Elevator*, a project made in Argentina last Spring by Tomas Saraceno, with the support and contribution - among others - of Fondazione Pier Luigi e Natalina Remotti.

To understand Saraceno's visions it is important to touch base with the English scientists of Rothamsted Research, who have developed a mathematical model to describe the phenomenon of the flight of arachnids known as "ballooning". The model shows that air turbulence can transport them hundreds of kilometers out to sea. Most spiders in search of new territory, or a mate, cast their silk into the air and can thus "parachute" to a new location. The main seasons of this activity are fall and spring. Normally they migrate



from one side of a field to another, but at times they can cover great distances. For twenty years the best mathematical description of the ballooning phenomenon was the so-called Humphrey model, but the Rothamsted researchers say it did not explain certain characteristics of the flight of spiders moving in air flows. In short, it treated the silk as if it were a stiff rod, and the spiders as if they were just dangling from the bottom end, like a sort of “upside-down lollipop”.

Instead, their flexibility permits the filaments suspended in the wind to twist with the turbulence, which alters the aerodynamic characteristics and allows the spiders to travel for unpredictable distances. Understanding how and why they move may help us to use spiders as biological control agents against agricultural pests.

This research prompted Saraceno, in the spring of 2009, to conduct a “ballooning” experiment in Argentina, flying some objects covered with helium-filled acrylic film. Another step with respect to his utopian habitat structures (*Air-Port-City*) that dialogue with the constellations and the research of architects like Richard Buckminster Fuller, Peter Cook and Yona Friedman.

In the exhibition at Fondazione Pier Luigi e Natalina Remotti, Tomas Saraceno proposes a synthesis between the images from the Argentine experiment and the bubble-cockpits for spiders seen in Venice. Along different trajectories, four bubbles cross the two levels of the building, while the strands that support them seem to be energy vectors that could ideally make the building itself lift off, if we imagine them being unfastened.

In the flight photographs shown on the walls of the second floor the structures at times take on the physiognomy of large drops of water vapor condensing in the sky, and at times seem like physiological entities that float at the edge of the horizon. In other cases, they take on the form of a tent. The photographs document the effective possibility of an airborne architecture, but also a poetic and intellectual tension, to imagine a more evanescent concept of human habitation. Forty years after man landed on the moon, Saraceno tells us that the next step is to gain experience, here on earth, of a gradual absence of gravity.

Inside the Fondazione Pier Luigi e Natalina Remotti, the bubbles suspended in space make us perceive a gravitational feeling inside the building itself, which on the ground floor interacts with the diverging trajectories of the three video projections *Space Elevator II* (2009), and on the upper level with the photographs of the flight experimentation in Argentina, and with the images arranged around a table, entitled *Ladies and Gentlemen We are Floating in Space and Mars on Water* (2009).

The result is a variable circuit that involves above and below, making us sense a “ballooning” in the atmosphere and the building itself.

The desire to experiment with ascent into the air led Tomas Saraceno, in the summer of 2009, to the International Space Studies Program of NASA, in Silicon Valley, where he developed further passages.

Among the discoveries of the neurosciences, that of mirror neurons has demonstrated the existence of a synchrony between action and observation. Mirror neurons fire in apes when they perform an action or see others perform the same action. But the research group headed by Vittorio Gallese has discovered that in man an effective interaction with objects is not required: the mirror neurons fire even when the action is simply mimed, and they are capable of encoding transitive and intransitive motor activity. Their primary role is the understand the actions of others.

Faced with the actions of Saraceno, what type of comprehension can be activated through the system of mirror neurons? How does synchrony happen between artistic action and observation? Does the attempt to dwell in the air, even temporarily, remain confined to fantasy? These are questions that art, cinema and literature have often asked, but if it is plausible that a mimed action makes mirror neurons fire, then the objects created by Saraceno permit transitive and intransitive actions that can encode an understanding of the air and the void.



## Tomas Saraceno

1973 born in San Miguel de Tucumán - Argentina  
Lives and works between and beyond the planet earth

### Education

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Summer 2009 | International Space Studies Program, NASA Center Ames, Silicon Valley, California, USA                  |
| 2003-2004   | Progettazione e Produzione delle Arti Visive, IUAV, Venezia, Italy – Postgraduate on Art & Architecture |
| 2001-2003   | Staatliche Hochschule für Bildende Künste - Städelschule-Frankfurt am Main                              |
| 1999-2000   | Escuela Superior de bellas Artes de la Nación Ernesto de la Cárcova, Postgraduate on Art & Architecture |
| 1992-1999   | Universidad Nacional de Buenos Aires, Argentina UBA- Degree Architect                                   |

### Selected Solo Exhibitions

|      |   |
|------|---|
| 2010 | “From Camogli to San Felipe, spiders weaving stars”, Fondazione Pierluigi e Natalina Remotti, Camogli, Italy (march -june)<br>Bonniers Konsthall, Stockholm (upcoming)<br>Houston Blaffer Gallery, Houston, USA (upcoming)  |
| 2009 | “Biosphere”, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen (in the framework of the cycle «RETHINK Relations»)<br>“Tomas Saraceno”, Mudam Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean, Luxembourg<br>(in the framework of the cycle «Habiter»)<br>“Lighter than air”, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, USA |
| 2008 | “Galaxies forming along filaments, like droplets along the strands of a spiders web”,<br>Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York, USA<br>“Cloudy Dunes”, Fondazione Garrone, Genova, Italy   |
| 2007 | “Biosphere MW32 Air-Port-City”, Pinksummer Gallery, Genova, Italy   |
| 2004 | “On- Air”, Pinksummer Gallery, Genova, Italy  |

### Selected Group Exhibitions

|      |   |
|------|---|
| 2009 | «53d Biennale di Venezia, 2009»<br>«In Defense of Nature», Barbican Art Center, London, UK<br>«Life Forms», Bonniers Konsthall, Stockholm   |
| 2008 | Psycho Buildings – Artists and Architecture», Hayward Gallery, London, Great Britain<br>«Sonsbeek 2008: Grandeur», Arnhem, The Netherlands<br>«Experiment Marathon Reykjavic», Reykjavic Art Museum, Kjarvalsstaðir, Reykjavic, Iceland |



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Special thanks to Pinksummer Gallery (Genova)

A selection of Images is available on [www.fondazioneremotti.it](http://www.fondazioneremotti.it)

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#### Press Preview

March 13 2010 | 5.00 pm

#### Opening

March 13 2010 | 6.00 pm – 8.00 pm

#### Show

March 13 2010 – June 13 2010

#### Opening Hours

From Thursday to Sunday  
from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.  
and by appointment  
Free Entrance



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