

Kupfer

Narcélio Grud: Anamorphysical

Curated by Florence Woodfield Morais

13th September - 4th October 2025

'Narcélio Grud is used the seeing the world around him as an environment to be transformed. Instead of conforming to the given social context, he prefers to think that a context is something waiting to be modified by his art interventions....as an artist, he is more interested in transforming the world than he is in depicting it' (Baixo Ribeiro, 2023)

Narcélio Grud (b.1976, Fortaleza, Brazil) is an emerging figure in contemporary sculpture whose studio practice focuses on sculpture, objects and works on paper that incorporate kinetic, sonic and interactive elements. His works explore the extended plastic possibilities of steel and wood, often incorporating natural elements of light, wind and sound and are often also accompanied by an organic or spontaneous intervention that further enrich the possibilities of his concrete abstraction. Either by incorporating movement, sound or unusual plastic manipulation into sculptures made of materials traditionally seen as fixed or static, or by inviting the participation of the viewer, Grud's work proposes new possibilities of connection with the world at large.

In Grud's work, there finds a new and irreverent formalism - passed down from the *Concrete* and *Neo-concrete* movements that are so important in the evolution of contemporary Brazilian art – but brought vitally into the present moment by proposing abstraction as a force for transformation. His work often examines and provokes new perspectives of our current reality of climate change and the widespread degradation of nature – always in the spirit of hope, promise, improvisation and with a knowledge of the wild, limitless intelligence contained within us and within the materials and elements with which he works.

Anamorphysical presents new sculptural works that represent a new frontier in Grud's practise. The title references this new frontier of distortion, extension or manipulation of materials; seeking the ephemeral in the midst of the intensely material. 'Anamorphic' is a concept usually linked to a fixed image that is formed as part of a process of distortion. The exhibition *Anamorphysical* instead seeks to arrive at a constantly-moving distortion; one that happens in the present moment and is linked to the infinite potential of movement within nature and the ability to evolve.

Leading the show are two works from the larger *Perspective* series of 2024-5; kinetic steel sculptures with internal joints that can be hung or curled, stretched or contracted. These works have various perspectives; the viewer's angle of vision can be changed, and the angles of the work itself can be changed. However, they work on a basic circular concept, inspired by Solar cycles. These works, as well as *Serpentina*, also shown here, have a strong visual and conceptual link with the seminal kinetic *Bicho* works by Lygia Clark. Clark's *Bichos* allow manipulation of geometric steel forms through the use of hinges, but instead Grud uses steel with internal joints that are based on biomorphic structures in nature, such as in jointed grasses and other stalks, that allow infinite variety of movement and flexibility within an organised structure. Grud builds these works using numerations and ratios that

exist with the Golden Ratio, aligning them with natural geometries that inherently exist in natural forms.

The *Extrusion* series, made of Anjelim wood (a native Brazilian wood variety) and steel is also represented in this show; exploring distortions and extensions of these materials. The biomorphic forms used here are also inspired by indigenous Brazilian architecture. Similarly, a series of new wall works using marquetry techniques are presented; also inspired by the artist's research into the solar cycles, aurora forms and indigenous architecture. There are five native Brazilian wood types used in these works: Frejô, Marfim, Muiracatiara, Ipê and Cedro. Native Brazilian wood is given an almost reverential place in these works; as a precious natural resource, and as a material in perfect natural balance, with all four vital elements (Air, Water, Earth and Fire) contained within it.

In the Kupfer garden, Grud has built a bespoke and large-scale installation of the work *Esperança* during his residency here, a work that depicts a house engulfed by weeds and water, as well as photographs and video works on this theme. The series *Esperança* began in 2020 as a public intervention at the beach Praia do Futuro, Fortaleza, Brazil - an area of intense urban speculation. The installation is marked by its simplicity, immediacy and urgent relevance - as there are countless houses like these worldwide that are most at risk from climate change and extreme weather events. However, with his signature irreverent style, Grud proposes in his title *Esperança* that instead of the houses becoming submerged, they are in fact newly emerging. This inversion of perspective suggests not only a powerful message of hope, but that perhaps it is only through a full immersion in the forces of nature, and submission to them, that we can reimagine ourselves as an integral part of nature itself. The word 'esperança' (hope) also makes reference to the work of Paulo Friere, Brazilian educator and philosopher, who with the creation of the verb 'esperançar', proposes hope as a force that is a call to action for a more integrated world. The word also references the seminal exhibition *The Geometry of Hope* which was presented at the Royal Academy in 2014, signalling the beginning of a worldwide interest in the continued study into geometrical abstraction in Latin American art, culminating most recently in Adriano Pedrosa's curation of the 2025 Venice Biennale.

In this moment, when the world often seemingly lacks a visible positive future perspective, we need the vital force of hope - not in a passive or naive sense - to act as a catalyst for change. This year Brazil will host the environmental summit COP-30, which will happen in the Amazon region (Bélem) for the first time, in a moment where intense debate around climate change with the engagement of society as a whole is necessary. Narcélio Grud's activism on a social scale surrounding this issue, is therefore even more welcome and necessary.

He has been the recipient of numerous art awards since 2007, and in recent years has had various major shows in Brazil and internationally, including at Museu de la Música Mexicana (DF, Mexico), The Museum of Image and Sound (Fortaleza, Brazil) and the Pinacoteca do Ceará (Fortaleza, Brazil). His work is included in various distinguished Brazilian public collections, including at Museu Niemeyer, Pinacoteca de Fortaleza, the state collections of Rio de Janeiro, Fortaleza, Rio das Ostras and Sobral, as well as the newly-inaugurated Parque das Esculturas (Espírito Santo, Brazil). We are honoured to present Narcélio Grud's work to a UK audience at such a pivotal time in his career and at a time when his work demands a more international presence. This exhibition is part of the UK/Brazil Season of Culture 2025-26, supported by the British Council and Instituto Guimarães Rosa.

Florence Woodfield Morais is a British curator. She has a 12 year career in the art world, at Christie's London, Stern Pissarro Gallery and is currently Executive Director of Kupfer and Associate Director of the Barry Kamen Estate.