

# Tomás Saraceno —Ala Champ

[champ-magazine.com/art/tomas-saraceno](http://champ-magazine.com/art/tomas-saraceno)



Spider silk acts as an active archive of particulate matter, its silvery strands thickening with carbon dust. Courtesy Tomás Saraceno with thanks to Arachnophilia

*Free the Air: How to hear the universe in a spider/web*, a monumental 95-foot-diameter sensory installation by Argentine-born, Berlin-based artist **Tomás Saraceno** fills multi-disciplinary artspace, The Shed, in New York.

The work has been commissioned specifically, custom for the 17,000-square-foot space, presented at the heart of Saraceno's expansive survey exhibition titled **Particular Matter(s)**. *How to hear the universe in a spider web? "Close your eyes, cover your ears, and sense felt vibrations...Gravitational waves resounding the cosmic web, yet to be felt. Infinite sensing of the world, life-forms weave constellations."*

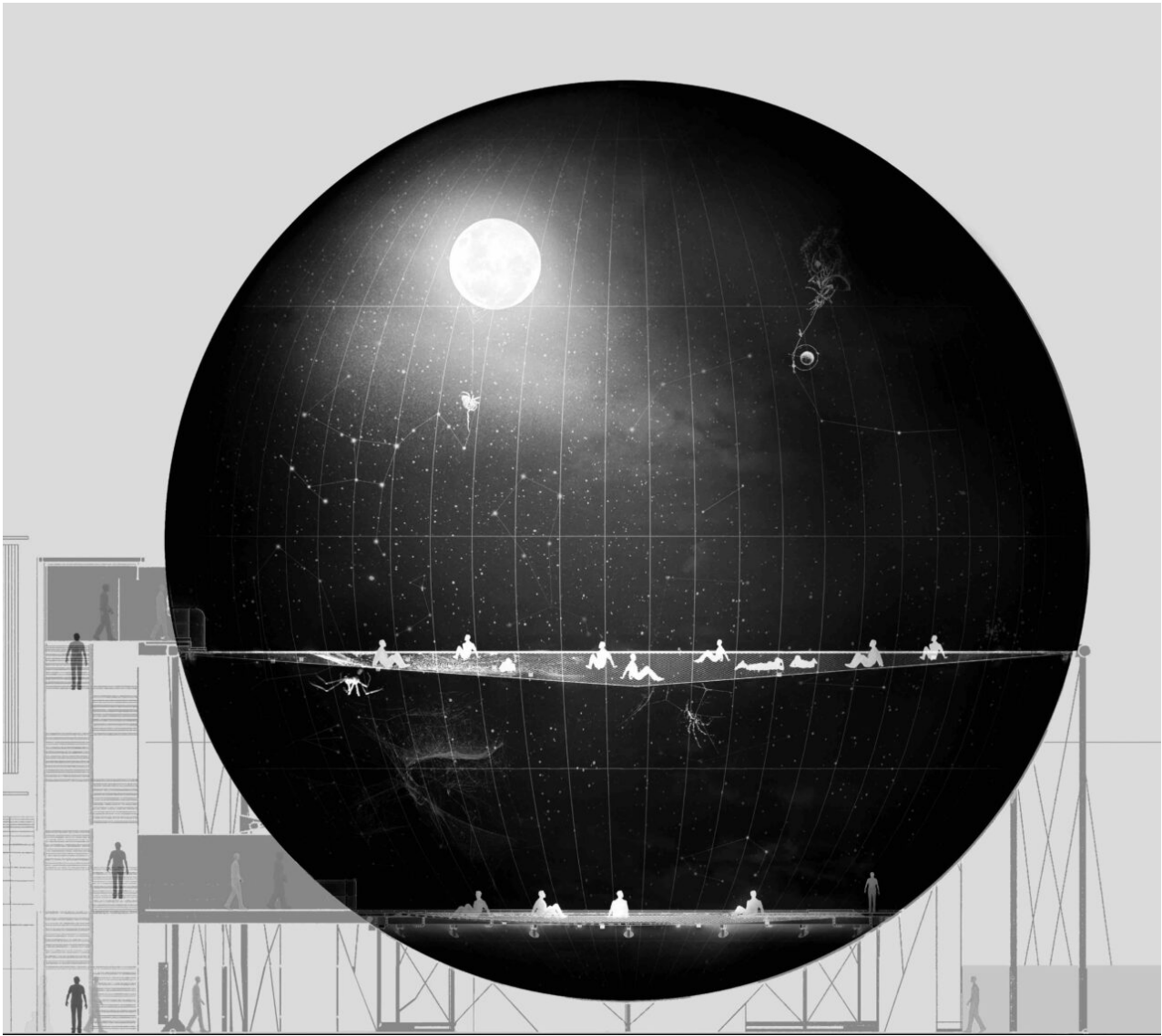
The orchestrated sensory experience is a concert of vibrations emitted by the movement of particles in the air and spider's entangled terrestrial and cosmic webs. This woven ensemble is composed of and performed by arachnid players, spider diviners, and atmospheric and cosmic matters, captured via recording devices in collaboration with the Arachnophilia community and amplified in the installation. The sculpture's interior features floating web-like floors stretched end-to-end on two levels, with the second 40 feet off the ground. Visitors enter the installation to find themselves enveloped in a light mist, suspended on nets floating in 450,000 cubic feet of air, a concert in four movements

for the air and for spider/webs begins as participants see what they cannot hear: particles of black carbon PM2.5 fogging the air, moving between participants and the geography of a spider's web.

The vibration of recorded sound waves produced by spiders shakes the net and connects with visitors. All senses are consumed, with the intention of Saraceno to create a new togetherness from these webs of life.



Tomás Saraceno: Particular Matter(s) | Photograph Hisham Akira Bharoocha



Tomás Saraceno | Collage towards Free the Air: How to hear the universe in a spider/web, 2022 Courtesy the artist

The largest exhibition in the US to date for the artist, *Particular Matter(s)* is timely, as Saraceno's work focuses on the complexity of our collective existence "while looking for ways to live together differently". His artistic process centres around collaboration, with humans, nature and spiders.

Saraceno is known for his work with local communities, scientific researchers, and leading institutions around the world. With his work with spiders, he proposes a conversation between human and nonhuman lifeforms. It's not them and us, we're all living together here, in the Capitalocene era together. Saraceno reminds us that the Capitalocene age we are in is characterized by the destructive effects of capitalism on the environment. Saraceno also collaborates with human communities that have been impacted by these negative effects to renew relationships with Earth, the air, and the cosmos, particularly as part of his community projects, *Aerocene* and *Arachnophilia*.

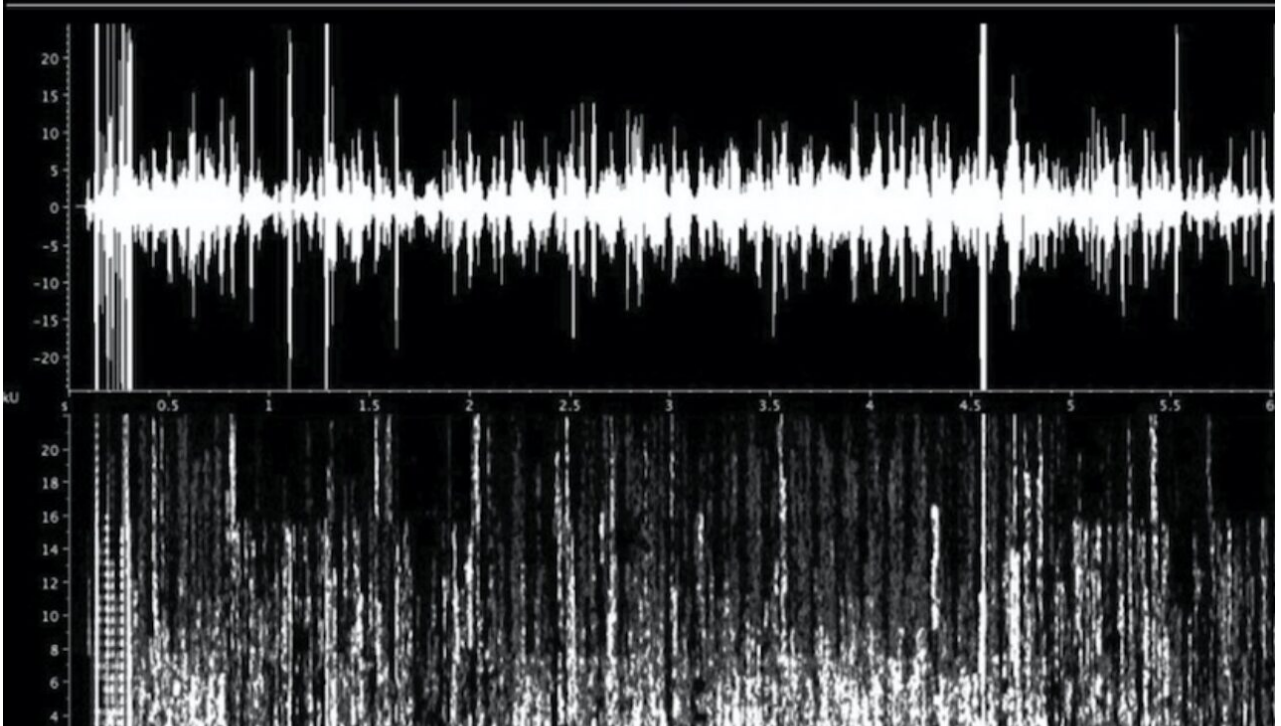
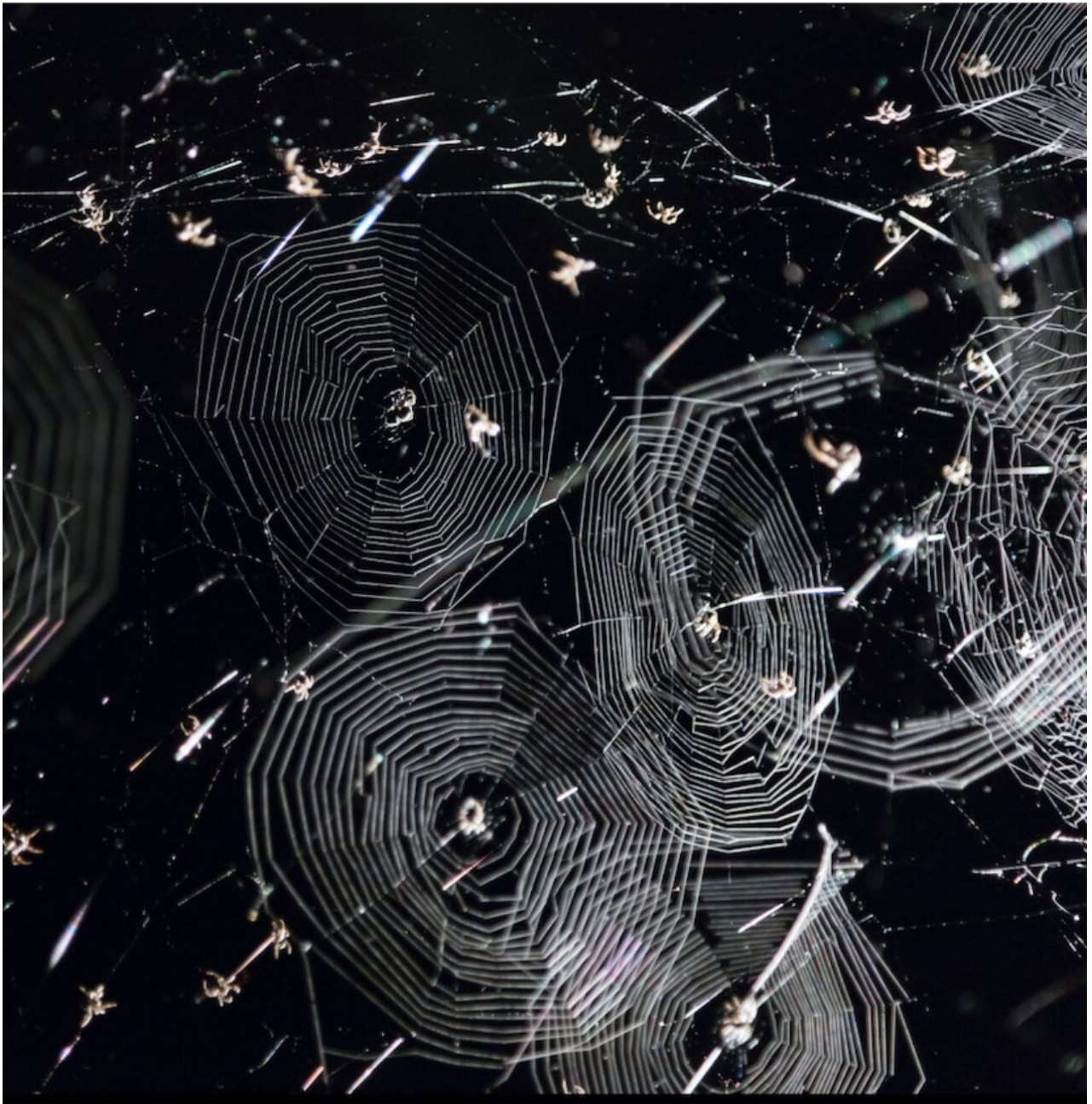


Tomás Saraceno: Particular Matter(s) | Photograph Hisham Akira Bharoocha

The second new Shed commission, titled *We Do Not All Breathe the Same Air*, was greatly influenced by scholar Harriet A. Washington, whose discourse with Saraceno informed the artist's research on the uneven distribution of pollution along geopolitical and racial lines for this commission.

The first iteration of this project, *Calendrier Lun-Air de Paris* at Palais de Tokyo in 2018, arranged filter tapes from BAM-1020 air pollution monitoring machines to visualize air pollution and its hourly discrepancies in Paris. These paper strips capture the amount of particulate matter in the air each hour in the form of variably shaded dots. As air pollution increases during an hour, the corresponding dot darkens in color on the paper strip. Readymades created by the atmosphere itself, these tiny dots reveal the intertwined relationship between fossil fuels, location, race, and the air based on pollution density. For *We Do Not All Breathe the Same Air*, Saraceno and The Shed collected filter tapes from air pollution regulation agencies across the United States, revealing what areas are most affected by air pollution across the country. Local community groups including El Puente and Bronx United contributed to conversations behind the development of this artwork. In March 2020, a portable ambient air quality machine called the E-BAM was installed on The Shed's roof to collect air quality readings for this commission in partnership with Met One Instruments, the company responsible for developing the Beta Attenuation Mass Monitor in the mid-1990s.







Stridulation signals of a *Nephila Senegalensis* from the Arachnophilia archive of vibrations. Part of *Free the Air: How to hear the universe in a spider/web*, 2022 Recorded at Studio Tomás Saraceno. Courtesy the artist and Arachnophilia

Curated by Emma Enderby, together with Alessandra Gómez and Adeze Wilford, Particular Matter(s) utilises the entirety of The Shed, showcasing its full potential as an immersive artspace. Enderby explains *“Tomás presents the necessity to reevaluate how we perceive and operate in the world and what to expect from it, which he achieves through interconnected, nonhierarchical collaborations across the human and nonhuman. the air and the particles that define it, spiders and their webs, and our visitors are all protagonists in Particular mMatter(s) at The Shed.”*

Through floating sculptures and interactive installations, spider webs are metaphors for Saraceno’s entire oeuvre of work. He’s connecting us all together, weaving his works to unite and show that we are all interconnected in this universe.

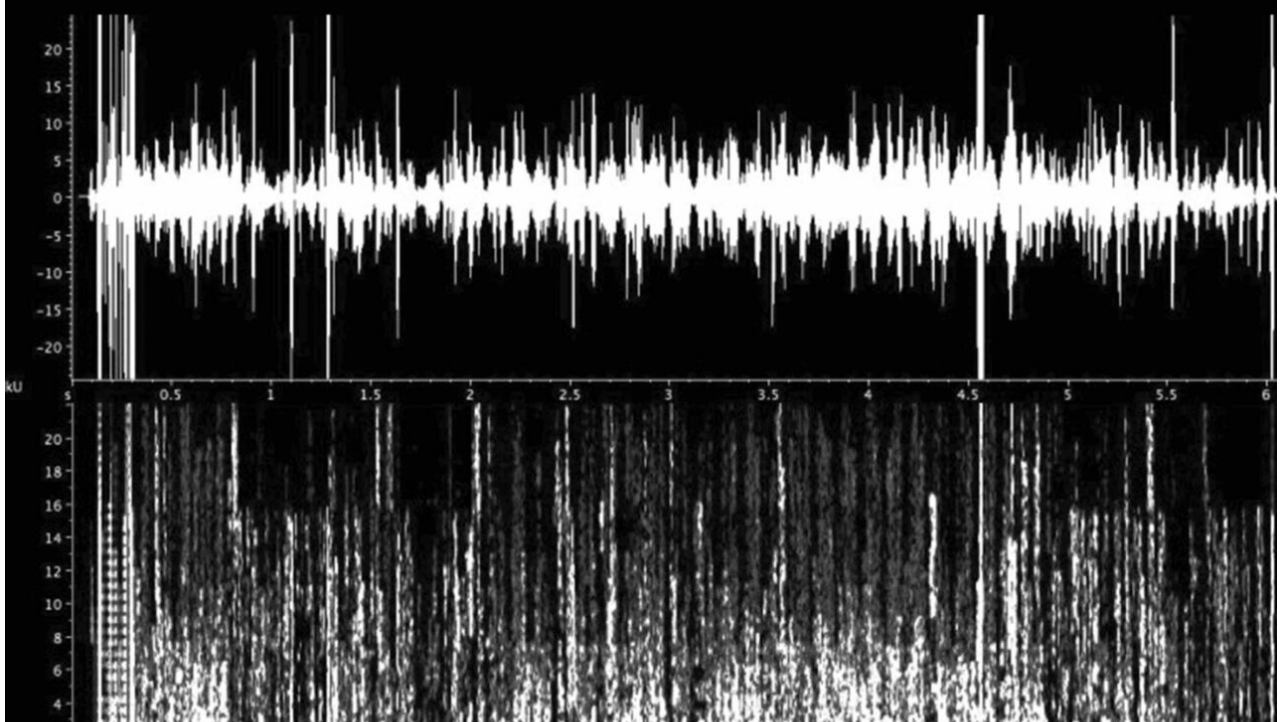
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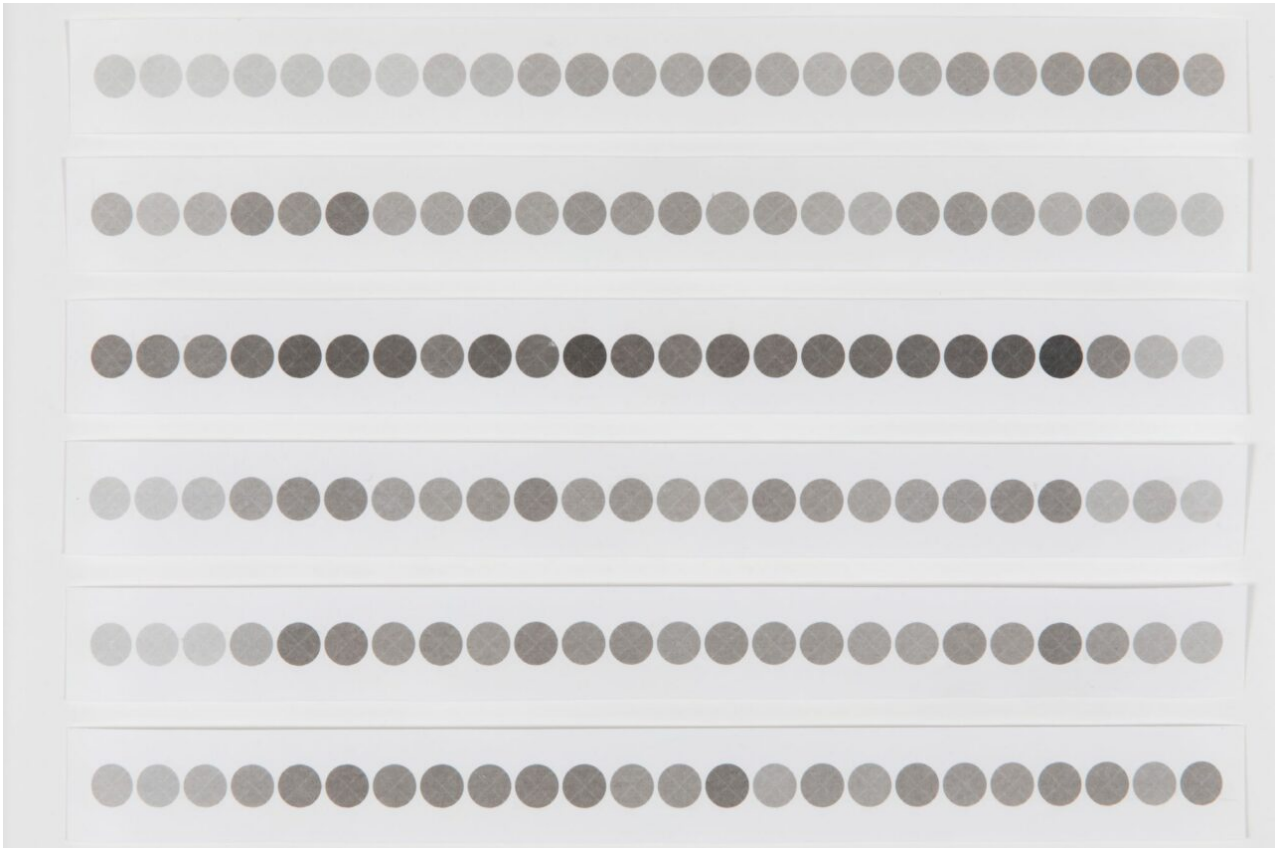
Argentinian-born, Berlin-based artist Tomás Saraceno | Photo: Robert Rieger.



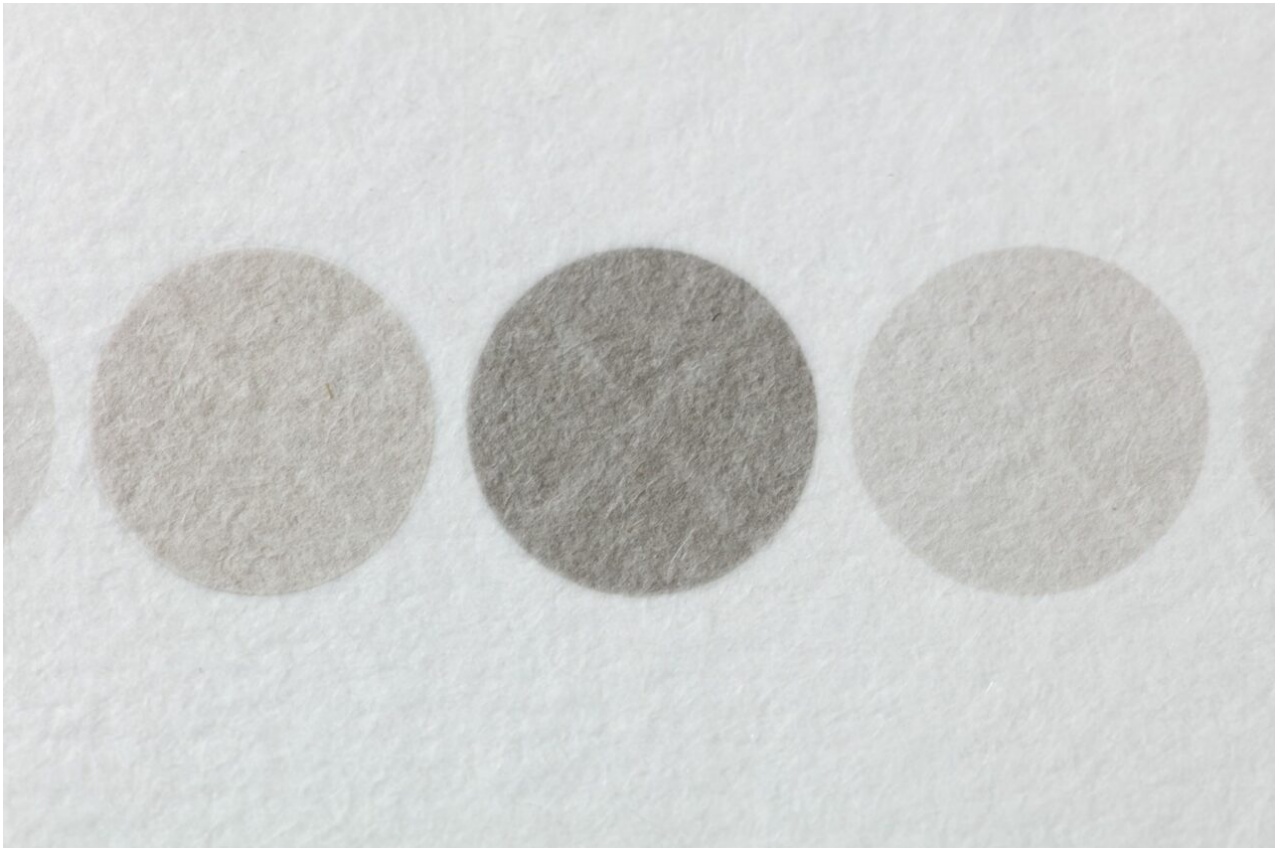




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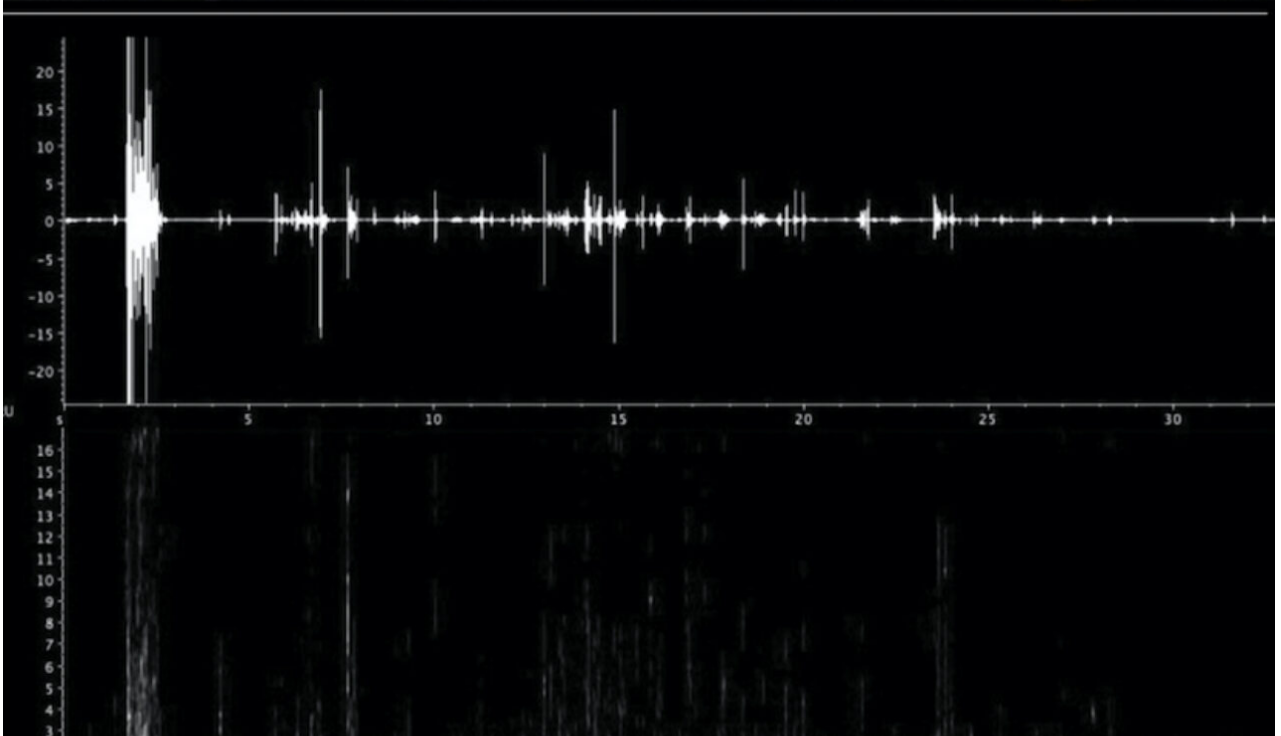


Tomás Saraceno, *We do not all breathe the same air* (detail), 2019-2022



Tomás Saraceno, *We do not all breathe the same air* (detail), 2019-2022 | With special thanks to Harriet Washington and The Shed. Courtesy the artist; Andersen's, Copenhagen; Ruth Benzacar, Buenos Aires; Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York/Los Angeles; Pinksummer Contemporary Art, Genoa; Neugerriemschneider, Berlin.







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**Tomás Saraceno: Particular Matter(s) at The Shed**

545 West 30th Street, New York 10001

*On View Friday, February 11 to Sunday, April 17, 2022*

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