

CUE

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Gallery Hours: Wed–Sat, 12–6 pm

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THE TROPICS, THE MOON, AND MARS

A solo exhibition by Mari Nagem

July 11–September 26, 2026



Detail of *flora futura (or the survival dance)*, 2026. Photo by Leo Ng, courtesy CUE Art.

New York, NY – CUE Art presents *The Tropics, The Moon, and Mars*, the first New York City solo exhibition of Brooklyn-based Brazilian artist **Mari Nagem**. The exhibition is on view at CUE's gallery space at 137 West 25th Street from July 11–September 26, 2026. Attendance during gallery hours (Wed–Sat, 12–6 pm) is free; no reservations are required.

About the Exhibition

The Tropics, The Moon, and Mars is an immersive installation that unites light, sound, sculpture, painting, and digital experiments. Nagem constructs a post-natural tropical environment in which heat reorganizes relationships between bodies, technologies, geological formations, and living systems. The tropics appear as climate, home, and projection: a lived geography shaped by extraction, ecological transformation, and a long history of being imagined from elsewhere.

The exhibition originates from a simple yet unsettling proposition: humanity dreams of becoming an interplanetary species while remaining unable to live collaboratively with the terrestrial ecologies it already inhabits. Rather than presenting planetary expansion as technological triumph, Nagem considers how fantasies of the Moon and Mars extend the same logics that have long shaped extractive relationships on Earth. The three locales of the exhibition title become less distinct destinations than overlapping terrains through which to reconsider survival, adaptation, and coexistence.

Through the works, scientific knowledge is translated into material propositions. Data serves as landscape; research infrastructure is imagined as domestic architecture; geological formations resemble bodies; synthetic objects take on natural qualities of minerals, branches, and nests. In the work, Nagem approaches scientific research as transformative subtext, allowing empirical observation and speculative imagination to coexist within the same environment.

The exhibition opens with works that establish this conceptual framework. In *space analog*, a stainless-steel surface shifts between the functions of bed, table, workstation, and platform over the course of the exhibition. Its form exemplifies embodied research conducted at the University of Arizona's Biosphere 2, where researchers developed adaptable furnishings for simulated lunar and Martian habitation. *tropics | moon | mars | ES*, a data painting generated through Google Ngram Viewer maps the appearance of these three place-constructs across Spanish-language literature, producing a terrain in which linguistic frequency becomes geological landscape. Together, these works position scientific inquiry, language, and everyday life as overlapping systems through which worlds are imagined and constructed.

Deeper into the gallery, natural light gives way to a saturated world of red-orange. Distinct orbital environments are populated by forms adapted to an unfamiliar climate. In *pássaros rodantes (whirlybirds)*, a yet untraced family artifact of birds carved from a tree trunk is transformed into a kinetic installation in which the figures move in reverse, evoking disrupted circadian rhythms, altered migration routes, and planetary cycles thrown out of alignment due to hyperheating. In another orbit, *ruínas ninhos*, ceramic sculptures embedded with mineral inclusions rest upon acrylic supports, suggesting futuristic ruins inspired by mining processes, mineral extraction, and the internal architecture of bird nests.

New ecological assemblages blur distinctions between organism and artifact, natural history and technological intervention. In *bouquet*, sawtooth oak from near the artist's Brooklyn home and driftwood sourced from Marajó Bay in the Brazilian Amazon live alongside human-defined "invasive" plant species and plastic. This orbit serves as an offering and a symbol of human intervention; the act of editing, cutting, and shaping is made visible through selection and arrangement. In *à deriva (adrift)*, driftwood encrusted with stone and enamel is likewise an offering from the ocean, reminding us of the longevity and potency of geological time, and the relative brevity of human existence.

Several works draw directly from long-term environmental research conducted in Brazilian ecosystems. *flora futura (or the survival dance)* references the ESECAFLOR experiment developed by the Goeldi Museum and the Federal University of Pará in the Caxiuanã National Forest. Designed to simulate prolonged drought conditions, this longitudinal study investigates how the rainforest responds to sustained reductions in rainfall. Within the exhibition, Nagem transforms decades of scientific observation into speculative futures; research findings become a sensitive projection of precarious survival, where future flora and unfamiliar species emerge through adaptation rather than permanence.

Heat permeates every aspect of this environment. Synthetic light burns rather than tanning. Color functions as both climate and atmosphere. Bodies—human, vegetal, geological, and technological—search for new modes of communication and persistence within an increasingly arid landscape. Accompanied by a commissioned sound work from Mapuche-Brazilian musician **Brisa Flow**, the installation is a temporal and evolving choreography in which survival is neither guaranteed nor singular.

The Tropics, The Moon, and Mars resists imagining the future as either dystopian inevitability or technological salvation. Instead, Nagem considers how various systems and forms of knowledge—scientific, traditional, artistic, and material—might generate new ways of inhabiting worlds that are already undergoing profound ecological change. The exhibition compels us to consider where we are going next, and how different forms of life might continue together within altered conditions of heat, time, and planetary belonging.

Read more about the exhibition at www.cueartfoundation.org.

About the Artist

Mari Nagem (b. Belo Horizonte, Brazil) is a multidisciplinary artist conceptually driven by the relationship between nature and technology. She has been awarded numerous international fellowships, commissions, and residencies, including: S+T+Arts Buen-TEK Residency (Rome, IT and Fortaleza, BR, 2026); a public commission for COP30 by the Tomie Ohtake Institute for the Emílio Goeldi Zoobotanical Park and Museum (Belém, BR, 2025); commissions for Mostra 3M (São Paulo, BR, 2024) and SFER IK Museion (Tulum, MX, 2024); the Celia and Wally Gilbert Fellowship at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory (US, 2024); the New York Foundation for the Arts Immigrant Artist Program (US, 2024); and the Ox-Bow Program Fellowship (US, 2022). She has been nominated for and received awards from Ars Electronica (S+T+Arts, 2026 and CIFO, 2024), the Pipa Prize (2024), and the Marcantonio Vilaça Prize (2021).

Nagem has participated in Latin American biennials, including Bienal Sur at the Macro Museum (Argentina) and the Digital Art Biennial (Brazil). She has had solo exhibitions at Cave Galeria (Fortaleza, 2026), Galeria Lume (São Paulo, 2024), and Paço das Artes (São Paulo, 2022), among others. Her work has been shown at Tomie Ohtake Institute, SESC, Oi Futuro, MAC Niterói, the Museum of Image and Sound (BR); MESH Art Center, Selva, Berry Campbell Gallery, Flatiron Project Space, New York Live Arts (US); Savvy Contemporary (DE); Sea Foundation (NL); and festivals such as FILE, Die Digitale Düsseldorf, and Athens Digital Arts Festival.

Nagem's projects and exhibitions have been featured in *Art Dialogues Magazine*, *The Art Newspaper*, *Arte!Brasileiros*, *Estadão*, *Revista Select*, and Brazil-based cultural television network Arte1, among others. She holds an MFA from the Haute École d'Art et Design de Genève, and currently lives and works between New York and Brazil.



pássaros rodantes (whirlybirds), 2026. Photo by Leo Ng, courtesy CUE Art.

About CUE Art

CUE Art is a nonprofit organization that works with and for emerging and underrecognized artists and art workers to create new opportunities and present varied perspectives in the arts. Through our gallery space and public programs, we foster the development of thought-provoking exhibitions and events, create avenues for mentorship, cultivate relationships amongst peers and the public, and facilitate the exchange of ideas. For more information about CUE, visit www.cueartfoundation.org.

Credits

The Tropics, The Moon, and Mars by Mari Nagem. Presented by CUE Art, 2026.

Sound Commission: Brisa Flow

Technical Consulting: Thiago Hersan

Technology Development: Mau Jabur, Philip Avetisov

Architectural Design Support: Beatriz Balduino, Matthew Saacke

Installation Support: Josue Guarionex, Lane Twitchell

Graphic Design: Jasmine Buckley

Exhibition Text and Curatorial Guidance: Jinny Khanduja

CUE Art Team:

Jinny Khanduja, *Executive Director*

Jasmine Buckley, *Gallery Associate*

The Tropics, The Moon, and Mars is organized as part of CUE's open call for solo exhibitions. Mari Nagem was awarded the opportunity to present a solo show at CUE's gallery space. Learn about the open call at www.cueartfoundation.org/open-call.



tropics | moon | mars | ES, 2026. Photos by Leo Ng, courtesy CUE Art.

Support

Programmatic support for CUE Art is provided by The Andy Warhol Foundation; the Arison Arts Foundation; The Helen Frankenthaler Foundation; Evercore, Inc; and members of CUE. Programs are also supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the City Council; and the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature.

