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'Um dia todos fomos peixes' by [Ernesto Neto](#)

[Gemma Hart](#) / [art&culture](#) / 28 mins ago

## Ernesto Neto // Exploring Biomorphism and the Interconnectedness of the Natural World



*Ere land and sea and the all-covering sky*

*Were made, in the whole world the countenance*

*Of nature was the same, all one, well named*

*Chaos, a raw and undivided mass*

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fabrics bleed from waves of turquoise, periwinkle and lime accented by bright flashes of neon orange, spiral into an intricate web. Buoys suspended float around the encompassing underbelly of the net. Moments of nebulous forms connect through the exhibition space, revealing rocks which protrude from the woven structures. Brazilian artist [Ernesto Neto](#) presents his large-scale immersive installation, *Um dia todos fomos peixes* as part of a larger exhibition *One Day We Were All Fish and the Earth's Belly* housed at the [Johannesburg Goodman Gallery](#) (24 November – 19 January 2019). As his debut on the continent, the sculptural work is representative of an enormous fish – signifying the gravity of ecological ailments affecting the ocean and a symbolic desire for spiritual transformation by illuminating our interconnectedness with nature.

His practice is founded on expressions of Biomorphism – design structures reminiscent of nature and living organisms – and minimalist sculpture. Ernesto's work of organic shapes is paired with aromatic spices as a mode of creating a multi-sensory experience which seeks to "renegotiates boundaries between artwork and viewer, the organic and manmade, the natural, spiritual and social worlds." Soft to the touch, the sculptural piece creates an insular world the fabric of which is derived from cloth made from traditional African and Brazilian textiles. In using these different materials, Ernesto draws connections between nodes of the Global South.

At a time of global political and environmental strife – Ernesto's exhibition is a gentle reminder of the awe-inspiring natural world, one that we are inherently part of. Ernesto's fascination with the ocean has been longstanding – a platform to investigate the complexities and relationship between natural landscapes and the human form. *Um dia todos fomos peixes* stems from a ceremony in Brazil facilitated by spiritual leader Álvaro Tukano. "In the beginning the Tukanos were fish, just a spine immersed in water". At the time Álvaro went on to describe the origin of life on earth, a narrative supported by a scientific understanding of evolution. The work was very much inspired by this realisation, constructed as a, "metaphor and a desire to encounter our own ancestry and absolute connection to nature, the nature that we are."



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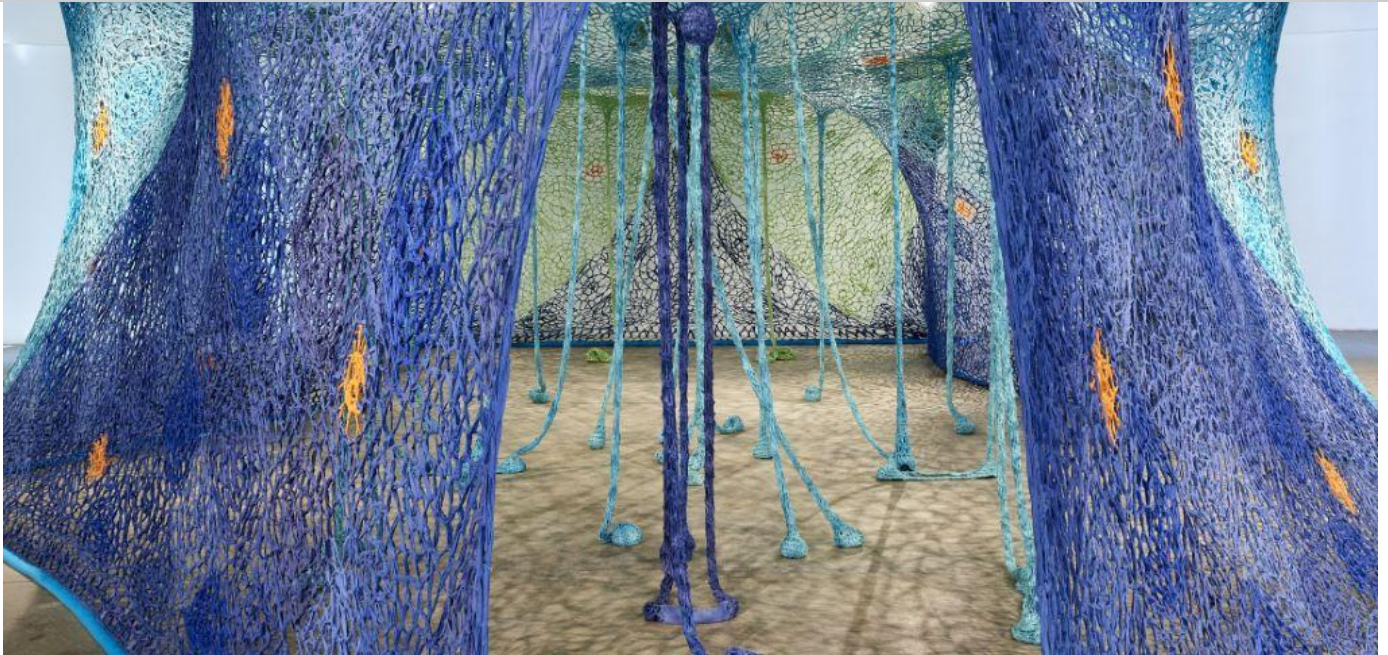
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