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## Tonico Lemos Auad

### *MOUTH, EARS, EYES just like us*

13 March – 18 April 2009

Private view Thursday 12 March 2009, 6-8pm

Stephen Friedman Gallery is pleased to present new work by London-based Brazilian artist Tonico Lemos Auad, his first major presentation in the UK.

Auad's work is concerned with materiality, sensuality, process and the relationship between the audience and their environment. Using a wide range of materials, from the ephemeral and everyday to the precious and enduring, he disregards material value to create lyrical, often transient forms.

In this exhibition Auad creates an installation of distinct sculptural works and specific interventions in the gallery space. Like an alchemist, he harnesses the potency of materials loaded with symbolism and cultural associations. Here Auad creates complex and intricate propositions that occupy the threshold between the sensory and extra-sensory. Delicate chains, broken and repaired with gossamer thread, hang like ethereal parabola in the air; the spectral tendrils of decaying grape stalks 'grow' like new shoots towards the sun, forming the wizened shape of an urn – a well-known symbol of immortality.

Pagan ideas of animals and plants acting as vessels for the human soul are explored alongside an engagement with the psychology of belief. In the back of the gallery an entire wall is covered with 'scratch-off' silver ink, like the surface of a lottery scratch card. Playfully evoking the human desire to trust in destiny and fortune, the audience is invited to scrape off the silver from the wall. But instead of winning numbers, collaged images of offerings made by Brazilians every new year to the Afro-Brazilian Candomblé goddess of the sea are unearthed, revealing a communal act of faith.

Notions of luck, chance and the supernatural pervade Auad's work. But beyond playfulness his work resonates with the darker underbelly of existence. For Auad an awareness of death and the brevity of life are always near at hand.

Auad was born in Brazil and lives and works in London. Recent solo exhibitions include: *Silent Singing*, CRG Gallery, NY (2008); Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, Colorado (2007). Group exhibitions include *Blooming: Brazil-Japan Where you are*, Toyota Municipal Art Museum, Japan (2008); *This is Not a Void* curated by Jens Hoffman at Galeria Luisa Strina, São Paulo (2008); *The British Art Show 06*, Hayward Gallery touring exhibition, UK (2006); *Art Circus (Jumping from the Ordinary)*, International Triennial of Contemporary Art, Yokohama, Japan (2005); *Adaptive Behavior*, New Museum, New York (2004) and *Becks Futures*, ICA, London (2004).

Forthcoming exhibition: **Thomas Nozkowski** 24 April – 23 May 2009

Gallery hours are: Tuesday to Friday, 10am-6pm and Saturday, 11am-5pm

For further details please contact Charlotte Nourse on +44 (0)20 7494 1434