
Art Nature

Henrique Oliveira's Arboreal Labyrinth Ruptures the Entrance to an Enchanting Exhibition

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GRACE EBERT



Detail of "Corupira" (2023), plywood, tapumes veneer, and tree branches, installation view of 'Fairy Tales' at Gallery of Modern Art Brisbane 2023. Photo by C Callistemon, © Henrique Oliveira and QAGOMA. All images courtesy of QAGOMA, shared with permission

From the ancient Mesopotamian "Epic of Gilgamesh" to the 18th-century French story of *Beauty and the Beast*, enchanted forests are an enduring trope of fairy tales. At Brisbane's [Gallery of Modern Art](#), a new group exhibition harnesses the allure of these magical environments and explores worlds beyond happily ever after. _____

Rather than open with the stereotypical "once upon a time," *Fairy Tales* ushers viewers into a sinuous labyrinth of rupturing trees. The latest work of [Henrique Oliveira \(previously\)](#), the undulating installation is titled "Corupira" and establishes a winding pathway through the gallery. "I've tried to create an environment that you have a different relationship with the space and somehow you are back to watch(ing) out. If you don't look up, you're gonna hit your head on a branch," he says in a video about the project. "Get back to your senses. I think that's something the world misses today." _____

"Corupira" twists the Tupi-Guarani myth of the demonic curupira, a redheaded creature with the power to ignite. Originating in the Brazilian Amazon, the legend says that the monster's feet were backward, so that those brave enough to enter the forest would be confused by which direction it was traveling if they attempted to follow its tracks.

Fairy Tales is on view in Brisbane through April 28. It's worth watching the timelapse below for an overview of how the installation took shape, and you can find more from Oliveira on [Instagram](#). You also might enjoy the work of [Firelei Baéz](#), who draws on similar mythological narratives. _____



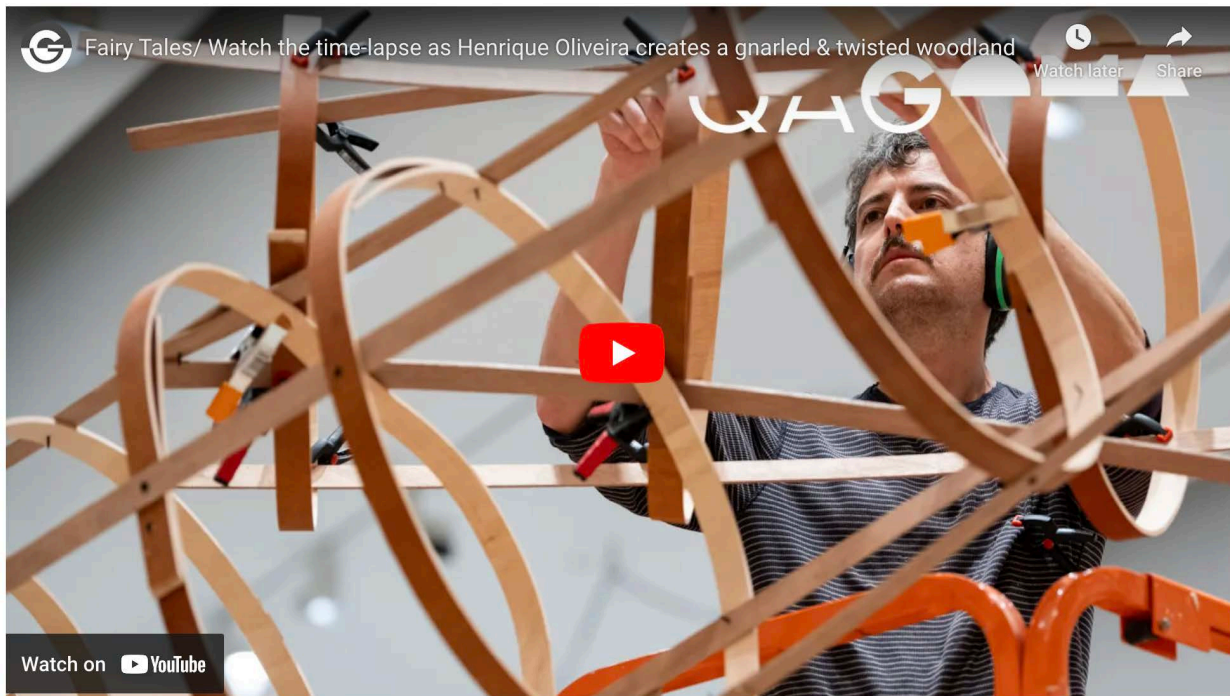
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