

Valeska Soares, born in Belo Horizonte in 1957, has been based in New York for the past twenty years. Soares has a BA in Architecture from Universidade Santa Úrsula in Rio, an MA from Pratt Institute in New York, and a PhD in Art from New York University (1994). Her extensive oeuvre, which encompasses sculpture, installation, collage, film and photography, often alludes to the realms of literature and mythology.

Soares's erudite practice is informed, both formally and thematically, by the work of the late Cuban-American artist Félix González-Torres (1957–96), especially her ongoing interest in exploring the delicate balancing of loving relationships. Like Gonzalez-Torres, she borrows from the language of Minimalism to create works of complex physical and psychological dimensions which challenge and inform one another. This is apparent in the series *After* (begun in 2007), which consists of sculptures of the intimate interior of a bedroom, including

pillows and mattresses carved out of white marble to suggest the absence of the body. She is also interested in the ephemeral quality of materials such as sugar (*Pure Theatre*, 2003; *Sugar Cubes*, 2009), perfume (*Kiss*, 2000; *Fainting Couch*, 2002) and light (*Vaga Lume*, 2006). In *Fainting Couch* a hollow bed-like mirrored structure filled with lilies and perfume whose essence seeps through small holes carved in its upper surface she evokes a psychoanalyst's couch while confronting the Freudian notion of love and death, Eros and Thanatos, as one and the same concept. *Vaga Lume*, which in Portuguese means both 'firefly' and 'flickering light' is a room-sized installation of porcelain ceiling lights each linked to a floor-to-ceiling chain, thus allowing viewers to turn the lights on and off. This gives the work's appearance infinite possibilities. *Folly* (2005–9), presented at the 51st Venice Biennale (2005), is now displayed in the Inhotim sculpture park. In an octagonal



pavilion whose exterior and interior walls are covered with mirrors, a film is projected of a couple dancing to Burt Bacharach's 1967 song 'The Look of Love' in the ballroom of the former casino (now museum) of Pampulha, an iconic Oscar Niemeyer building in the artist's hometown. The dancers meet and are separated through the optical illusion of their endlessly reflected projections, thus creating the nostalgic effect of fleeting memories.

Another strand of Soares's practice consists in the production of systems based on her collections of everyday objects. Such is the case with *Horizons* (2009), where decorative wooden boxes depicting typical Brazilian landscapes are aligned to form a single, continuous panoramic view. *Sugar Blues*, another ongoing series (begun in 2007), presents three-dimensional collages of the wrappers of sweets consumed by Soares and her friends, displayed on walls or on the floor. Her collection of second-hand

books was the starting point for two of her most remarkable works. In the series *After* (2007–8), she created large-scale installations of the dedication pages of volumes she disassembled, while in the *Bindings* series (2012), she assembled hardback book covers and dust jackets to create geometrical compositions on unprimed canvases. These works find dialogue between Soares and the late-20th-century artist Mira Schendel (1919–88), who shared the same curiosity regarding the power and limitations of language.

Soares has exhibited extensively in art galleries and institutions both in Brazil and abroad. Her work is featured in important private and institutional collections worldwide, including the Tate Modern, London; Inhotim, Belo Horizonte; the Daros Collection, Zurich; and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.



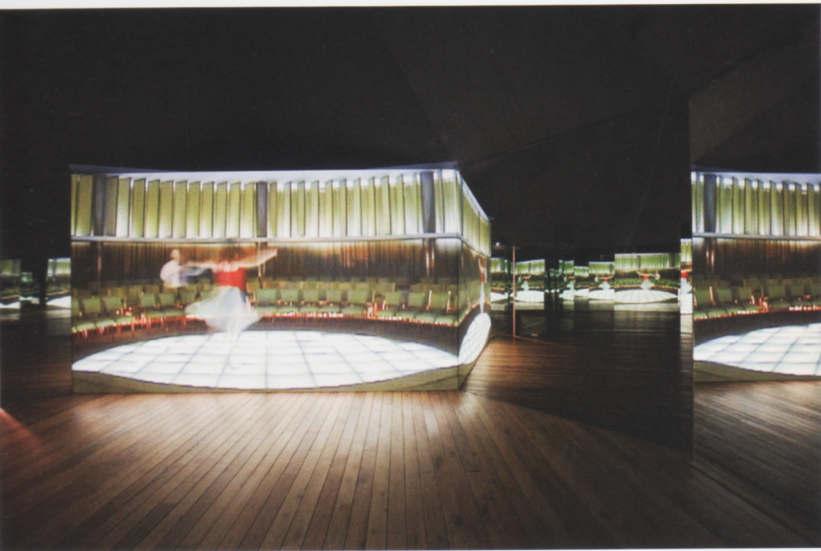
page top left
Blues (II), 2007
 Paper, paper collage
 18.5 x 30.5 cm
 Denise Andrade
 Valeska Soares
 Courtesy of the artist and
 Galeria Fortes Vilaça, São Paulo

top
Duet, 2008
 Carved marble
 183 x 83 x 19 cm
 Eleven Rivington Gallery Collection, New York
 Photo: Eduardo Ortega
 © Valeska Soares
 Courtesy of the artist and
 Galeria Fortes Vilaça, São Paulo

above
Untitled from After [Mattress II], 2008
 Solid carved marble block
 19 x 200 x 88 cm
 Photo: Eduardo Ortega
 © Valeska Soares
 Courtesy of the artist and
 Galeria Fortes Vilaça, São Paulo

page left
Blues (I), 2007
 Paper, collage, wooden ladder
 18 cm (each) (44 1/2 x 14)
 collection, São Paulo
 Eduardo Ortega
 Valeska Soares
 Courtesy of the artist and

above
Fainting Couch, 2002
 Stainless steel, textile, flowers
 35 x 110 x 200 cm
 Edition of 2 + 1 AP
 © Valeska Soares
 Courtesy of the artist and



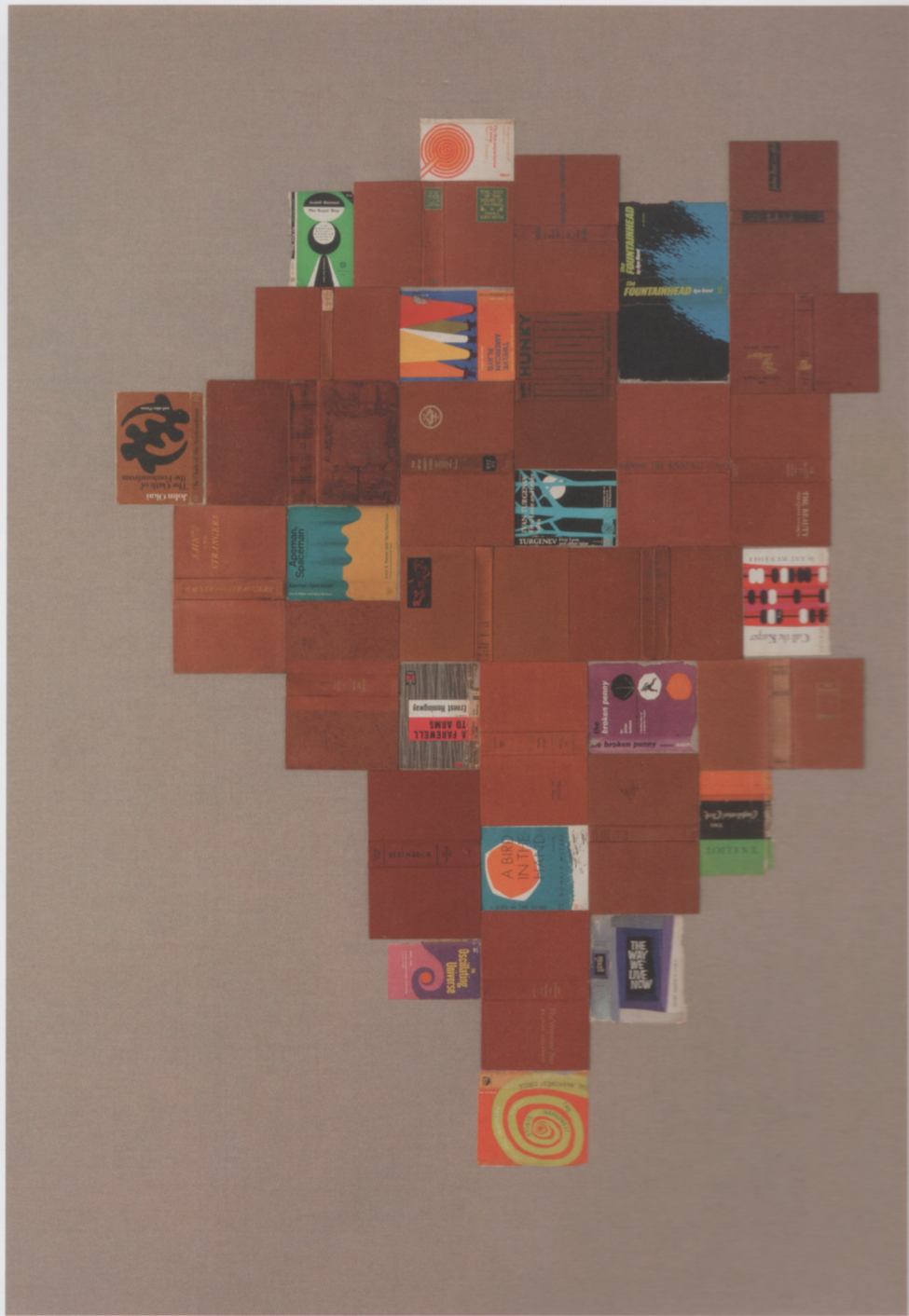
above and top
Follies, 2005
DVD projection (loop), wood construction,
mirror sound system
250 x 110 cm
Instituto Inhotim Collection, Brumadinho
© Valeska Soares
Courtesy of the artist and
Galeria Fortes Vilaça, São Paulo

right
Vaga Lume, 2006
Mixed media
100 x 100 cm (each unit)
Eleven Rivington Gallery Collection, New York
Photo: Eduardo Ortega
© Valeska Soares

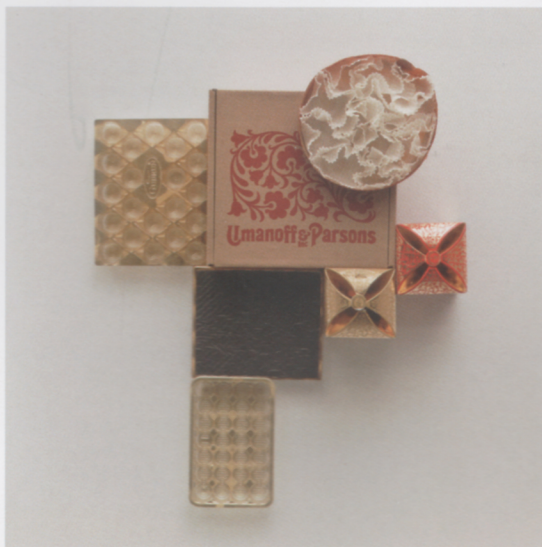




In Mirror (from Bindings), 2011
 Dust jackets and hardcovers on linen
 81 x 68 cm
 Collection, São Paulo
 Eduardo Ortega
 © Valeska Soares
 Courtesy of the artist and
 Galeria Fortes Vilaça, São Paulo



The Narrowest Circle (from Bindings), 2012
 Antique dust jackets and hardcovers on linen
 183 x 259 x 4.5 cm
 Photo: Eduardo Ortega
 © Valeska Soares
 Courtesy of the artist and
 Galeria Fortes Vilaça, São Paulo



Sugar Blues, 2009
 Paper, cardboard, plastic
 81 x 68 cm
 Photo: Eduardo Ortega
 © Valeska Soares
 Courtesy of the artist and
 Galeria Fortes Vilaça, São Paulo