

SHOWCASE

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CQ Interviews: Brazilian Artist Valeska Soares whose eclectic art over three decades, spans across media

Artist Valeska Soares' latest exhibition, *Entrementes* or 'Meanwhile', in Pinacoteca, Sao Paulo, revisits the artist's work through three decades to reveal her talent of giving mundane objects a new lease on life. With an education in architecture, the artist integrally uses space to create her experimental art.

Having lived in New York for decades, Valeska Soares' returns to her home country Brazil with works that include artworks from her unseen private collections. The artist's scope of work includes photographs, sculptures, sound and light installations among other formats. With a background in architecture, she is versatile in her use of materials that include mirrors, antiques, marble, porcelain, wood, cloth and even whiskey to create an aftermath of a party! Anything can turn into art in Soares's skilled hands and through her imagination.



SCOPE OF ART

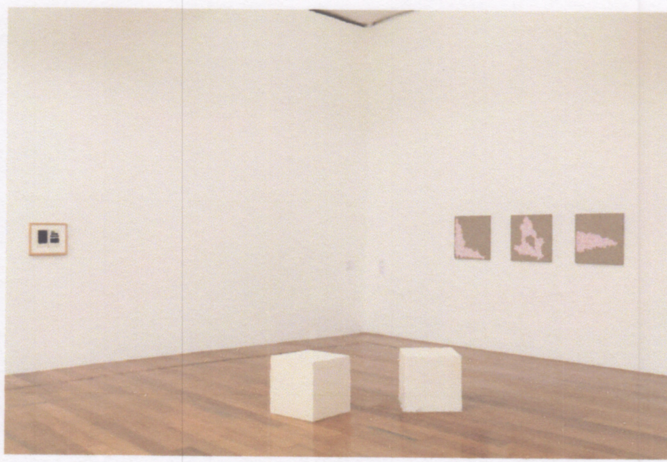
Valeska Soares' exhibition in Pinacoteca brings together diverse work that spans over 30 years

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ALWAYS EXPERIMENTING

Soares' work is eclectic using a range of media including photographs, sculpture, sound and light



VAGA LUME

In this installation, the artist uses light and sound to create an experiential work

Pinacoteca chooses from 30 years of your work and will be displayed in your home country, Brazil, - what are your feelings about Entrementes (Meanwhile)?

This exhibition was not intended to be a retrospective of my work. Though the works displayed have no chronology they create a dialogue together. It was quite a big surprise for me that the diverse works from different years don't clash when juxtaposed. A lot of my work in this exhibition hasn't been seen, some of it was taken out of my studio a long time ago and the audience has a chance to see unseen works.

How has your background in architecture influenced your work?

When I decided to study architecture, in the 80s, art school was very traditional; the things taught there were run-of-the-mill. However, architecture school was more adventurous as we had plenty of innovative minds teaching us.

Creating and designing the space where my art is displayed is possible for me as I have studied architecture. I have the tools to research and work with several materials and teams of people, just as an architect would.

I think deeply about the physical



OBJECTS OF OBSESSION

Objects figure often in the artist's effort to explore a collective memory



ART DÉCOR

In Epilogue, she uses antique tables, mirrors, decanters and even real liquor to create her art

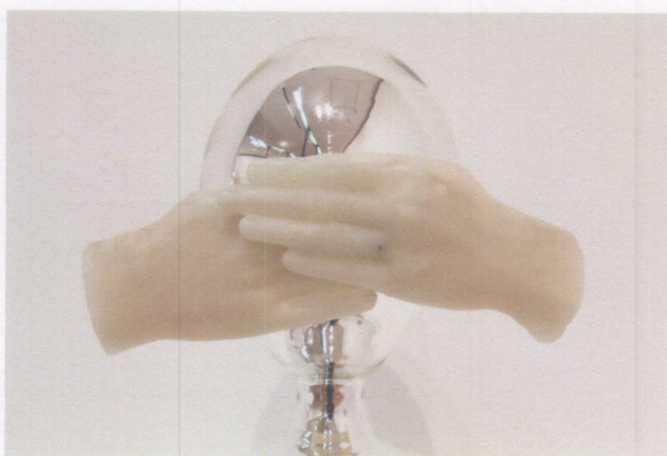
space where my works are displayed. I cannot resist dealing with space; sometimes I change the setting to imbue my work with significance

I think deeply about the physical space where my works are displayed. I cannot resist dealing with space; sometimes I change the setting to imbue my work with significance. For the exhibition in Pinacoteca, I incorporated the architecture of the gallery. I also demolished several walls to bring in natural light and to showcase the original arch. I wanted the audience to be able to meander through the gallery.

Your work far from being static is very interactive; you also choose not to have descriptions for your work, why?

Nothing has one true narrative – each of us creates a narrative. I don't want to influence how one perceives art by providing description. The artwork offers clues to build upon and can be seen subjectively. That's the way my shows are designed – not to repel or intimidate the audience, but to make everyone feel comfortable and unafraid of art. People can walk around it and experience the work themselves first and read about it later.

You are known to use a range of



RAW MATERIALS

What medium is used by the artist depends on the concept of her work. The idea dictates materials used by the artist



RECREATING REALITY

In Untitled (from Vanishing Point), 1998, Soares created pots of different sizes from beeswax, porcelain and aluminum

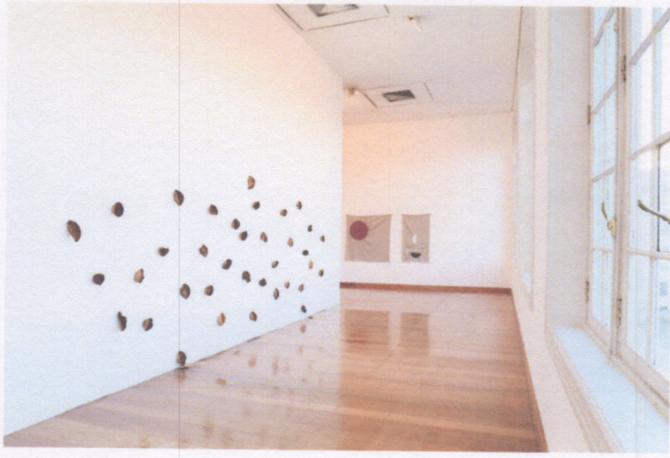
materials such as mirror, steel, porcelain, wax, aluminum etc. as well as different media including sound and smell. What motivates this diverse palate?

The material and format isn't my primary concern, it is the concept of my work that is important. If something can only be expressed by sound, then that's the media I go with. For example, my work *Vaga Lume* had to have sound and light for the work I was creating, without these elements, it wouldn't be what it is. So whether a work is a photograph, a collage, a sculpture, or an experimental installation that uses technology and light, will be dictated by the idea.

The material and format isn't my primary concern. My work is about an intelligence and it is the concept of my work that is important.

I do not like repetitions. Gestures and materials have limitations. I only use them if I can do something new with them. I have curatorial lists on eBay of antiques, books and other objects that I am interested in buying for my work. That's how I've sourced many objects.

Books are a preoccupation in a lot of your works – both stories



SPACED OUT

Influenced by architecture, the artist is involved in how her work is displayed in a given space



SECOND LIFE

The artist often repurposes old objects in her work. In Doubleface she uses period portraits of anonymous women

that influence your work like **Detour (2002)** – inspired by **Cities and Desire** by Italo Calvino, as well as the physical book – titles, book covers, dust jackets etc. How does literature inspire your work?

Books are the world to me; in fact narratives and media that include music, lyrics, books and movies are very important to me. Books figure highly in my work because media was different when I was growing up. It wasn't until I was 14 that I saw my first colour TV. With all of the new technology to read such as the Kindle, the physicality of books is being lost. There is also an anxiety that I may never read all the books I want to. Technology can preserve content, but the physical book is lost, dust jackets are being eaten by moths. I am giving them another life, perhaps extending their life beyond, with art.

Valeska Soares: Entrementes [Meanwhile] is showing in Pinacoteca, Sao Paulo until October 22, 2018. You can see more work by the artist [here](#).

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