nara roesler

# frieze london 2020 **brígida baltar**

**preview** october 7–8

**open to the public** october 9–16



**Galeria Nara Roesler** is delighted to share a solo presentation by Brazilian artist **Brígida Baltar** on Frieze London's current edition. The selection aims to grasp the artist's multi-disciplinary practice, which includes performative actions, sculptures, works on paper, and embroideries, offering a delve into Baltar's cohesive investigation on matters of transience, intimacy, body and shelter. The presentation begins with works from the 1990s, when the artist undertook a series of small poetic gestures from her own home, followed by pieces that demonstrate how her investigations slowly expanded to the outdoor, distinctively engaging with nature's ephemerality, finally arriving at Baltar's most recent experimentations with notions of chimerism and of the passing of time. Ultimately, the selection seeks to foreground the multifaceted, yet highly congruous nature of the artist's practice through representative elements within her artistic journey.





### brígida baltar

born in 1959 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where she lives and works

Brígida Baltar's practice spans across a wide range of mediums, which includes actions, photography, video, installation, drawing, embroidery and sculpture.

Baltar's artistic production began in the 1990s with 'small poetic gestures', developed in her studio-home in Botafogo, a neighborhood of Rio de Janeiro.

During nearly ten years, the artist collected items of domestic life such as water dripping through small cracks on the roof or dust falling from bricks. The act of collecting these unconventional traces of everyday life subsequently expanded outside of her home, giving rise to the *Coletas* series. In an attempt to capture mist, dew or ocean breeze Brígida Baltar undertook an ultimately poetic but impossible or rather, intangible task. According to curator Lisette Lagnado, 'the fabulizing process alludes to the return of a pre-industrial, infantile and primitive narrative. From an exemplary matrix, the story evolves into collective memory.'

Brígida Baltar's recent works derive from her early investigations, as she still uses previously collected bricks and dust to draw images of her hometown, or sculptures of her body, creating pieces that intertwine past and present works and experiences. More recently, Baltar has been producing embroideries and sculptures which relate to the body and to the skin as a starting point often channeling the idea of the chimera as a means to merge ideas around bodily memories and nature.

#### click here to see complete CV

#### selected solo exhibitions

- Brígida Baltar: Filmes, Espaço Cultural BNDES, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2019)
- A carne do mar, Galeria Nara Roesler, São Paulo, Brazil (2018)
- SAM Art Project, Paris, France (2012)
- O amor do pássaro rebelde, Cavalariças, Parque Lage, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2012)
- *Planteando utopias [Brígida Baltar / Marta Cali]*, Museu de Arte Contemporáneo de Bahía Blanca, Argentina (2008)
- Brígida Baltar Passagem secreta, Fundação Eva Klabin, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2007)
- Um Céu entre Paredes / An Indoor Heaven, Firstsite, Colchester, UK (2006)
- Collecting Humidity, Museum of Contemporary Art, Cleveland, USA (2002)

#### selected group exhibitions

- Feminino(s). Visualidades, ações, afetos, 12<sup>th</sup> Mercosul Biennial, Porto Alegre, Brazil (2020)
- I Remember Earth, Magasin des horizons, Centre d'arts et de Cultures, Grenoble, France (2019)
- Abstracción textil \ Textile Abstraction, Galería Casas Riegner, Bogotá, Colombia, 2018
- Natureza Franciscana, Museu de Arte Moderna (MAM), São Paulo, Brazil (2016)
- Drawing Biennial 2013, Drawing Room, London, UK (2013)
- *Circuitos Cruzados: o Centre Pompidou encontra o MAM*, Museu de Arte Moderna, São Paulo, Brazil (2013)
- *The Peripatetic School: Itinerant drawing from Latin America*, The Drawing Room, London, UK (2011); Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art (MIMA), Middlesbrough, UK (2011)
- Constructing Views: Experimental Film and Video from Brazil, New Museum, New York, USA (2010)
- The Nature of Things, Biennial of the Americas, Denver, USA (2010)

#### selected institutional collections

- Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil
- Colección Coppel (CIAC), Mexico City, Mexico
- Museum of Fine Arts Houston (MFAH), Houston, USA
- Museu de Arte do Rio (MAR), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- Museum of Contemporary Art of Cleveland, Cleveland, USA
- Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art (MiMA), Middlesbrough, UK









From the mid-1990s, Brígida Baltar turned to her own house as a source of inspiration, finding in it the thematic and materials to develop a body of work that she would continue working with for decades to come. From within her home, the artist experienced and developed ideas around the house's structure, its relationship with the body, inhabitation, and intimacy, engaging with and employing the building's physical elements to materialize her propositions. Baltar describes the process as follows: 'I started performing short actions and photographing myself through space, as I increasingly began to dig several holes everywhere—I opened windows—and made the piece **Abrigo** [Shelter] (1996) in which I drew and excavated the shape of my own body on the wall, with the exact profile and depth. At that time, dust, drips from roof leaks, chips of paint, wood, and pieces of the wall began to be part of my work. With bricks, I developed a series of sculptures, and when I had to leave that house I carried with me the bricks I had taken out, now crushed into dust.'

Abrigo [Shelter], 1996 photo-action edition of 3 + 1 AP 4 photographs of 60 x 40 cm/23.6 x 15.7 in each



**Torre** [Tower], 1995 photo-action edition of 3 9 photographs of 28 x 19 cm/11 x 7.5 in each



Through this process, Brígida Baltar began to investigate the process of disappearance, or dematerialization by challenging the concept of owning a home as a fixed, stable, localized matter. By extracting entire bricks from her walls, she turned her house into an item that could poetically travel with her, and serve as a medium to build other objects—*Venus*, is a characteristic example of this experimentation. Using bricks from the walls of her home, she created a small-scale work sculpted into the form of the silhouette of a female body. In 2005, the artist moved to a new home, taking with her parts of her old home either in the form of new, repurposed objects or in that of dust and bricks, which until today she returns to, prolonging the duration of her past and expanding the symbolic dimension of the home.





**Venus**, 1995 sculpted brick 22,4 x 10 x 7,5 cm/8.8 x 3.9 x 3 in

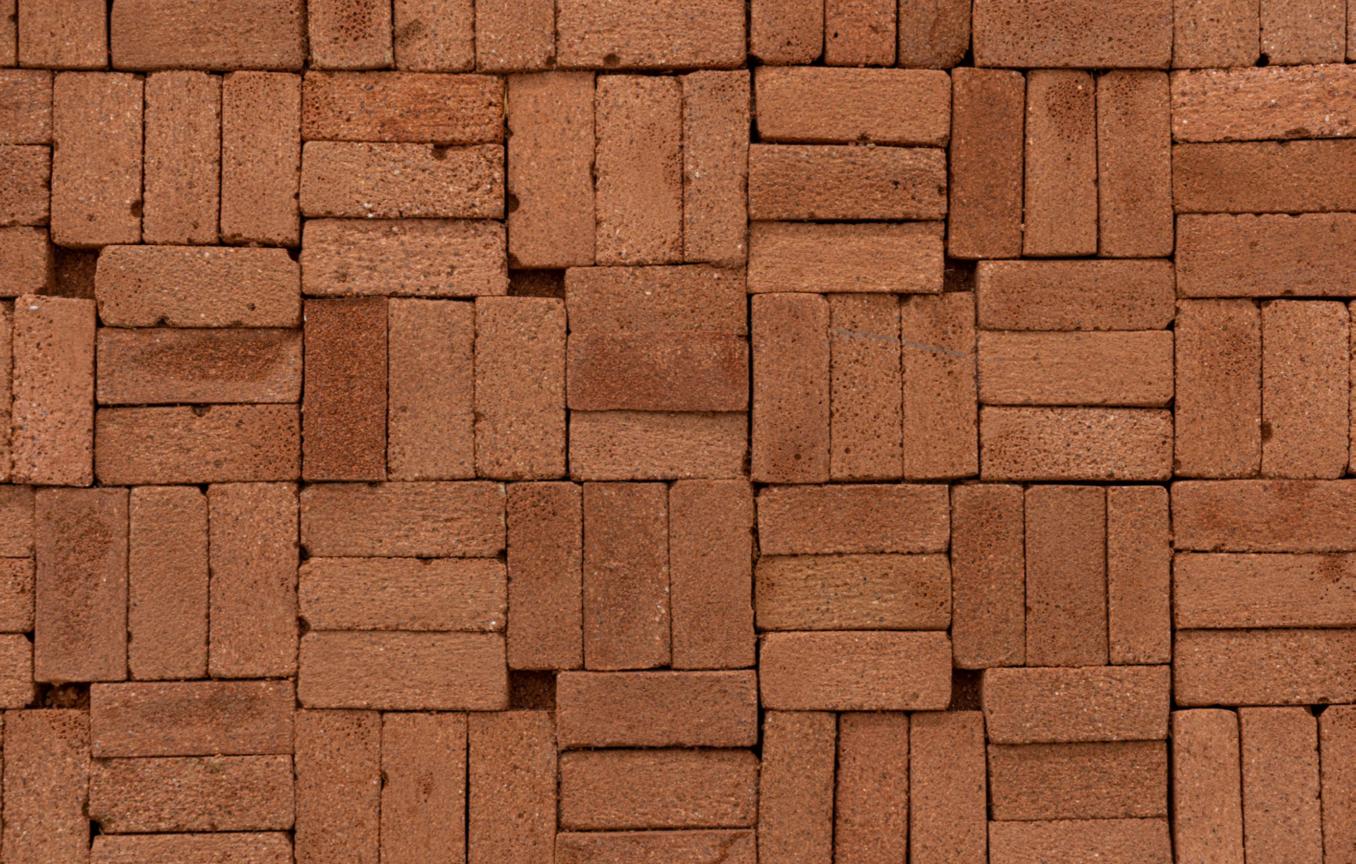




**Casa** [Home], 1997 20 glass bottles filled with brick dust on wood box 50 x 30 x 7 cm/19.7 x 11.8 x 2.8 in

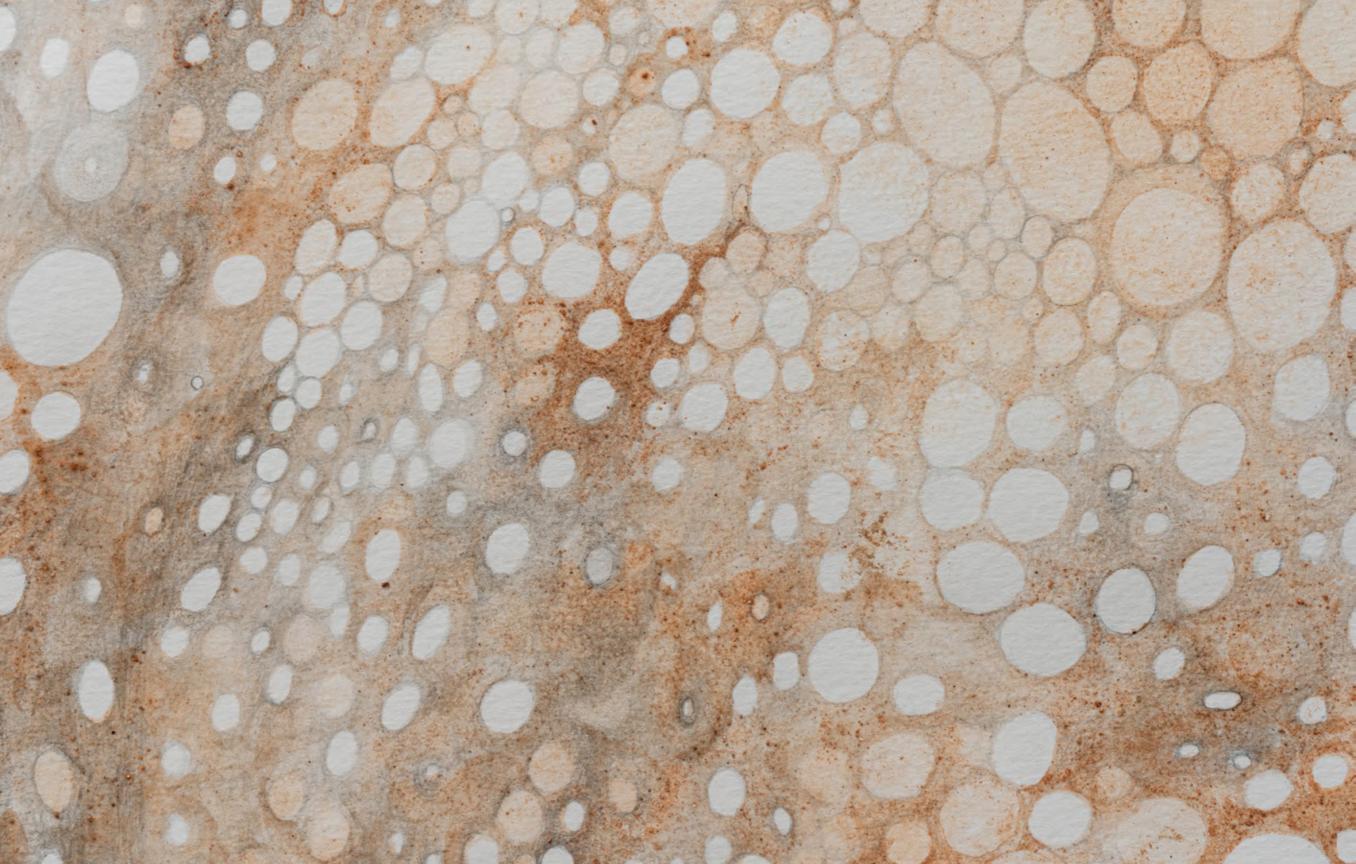


**Chão # 4** [Floor # 4], 2014 molded brick dust 100 x 80 cm/39.4 x 31.5 in





**Cosmos**, 2010 brick dust and graphite on paper 75 x 55 cm/29.5 x 21.7 in



A coleta da neblina [Mist Collecting] (1996) is part of a large body of performances titled *Coletas* [*Collections*], which the artist developed for over fifteen years. The works were a consequence of Baltar's research within the house, of selecting and storing materials, of keeping dust and drips from roof leaks inside flasks, which she eventually expanded into nature. The artist created a series of performative activities, including collections of fog, mist, and dew, whereby she captured, assembled, organized, and stored fleeting substances that had, in some way, interacted with her existence. In curator and critic Lisette Lagnado's words, 'the artist tried to grab the infinitesimal and to retain the transitory. Her wanderings took her farther and farther, as the horizon was undone by the morning mist. It was a criticism of current society's speed and endless blabbering, but it also was a whisper in thick woods.'

click here to see video



## A coleta da neblina

[*Mist Collecting*], 1996-1999 photo-action edition of 3 + 1 AP 24 photographs 21 x 30 cm/8,3 x 11,8 in each





**Casa de abelha** [Beehouse] (2002) is a body of ten photographic records of a performative action of the same name created on the occasion of the artist's participation in the 25<sup>th</sup> Biennial of São Paulo. The work can be understood as another form of unfolding of Baltar's overarching investigation of, and engagement with questions of interiority, intimacy, and shelter. The work is centered around the subject of the honeycomb, as a token of bees' collective organization and simultaneous action in seeking shelter and food. The artist began by creating a comb-like structure, using honey-colored textile sown following the smocking technique (which in Portuguese is called the Beehouse technique). She subsequently placed it onto different parts of her body, as if growing from and out of her figure, while she lay against the walls, floors, or stairs of her studio/house with honey dripping down. With this, she constructed what she calls a fable, a narrative without beginning or ending, the tale of a hybrid being discharging sweetness during an inward journey through the home and body as centers for affection.

#### click here to see video

**Casa de abelha** [Beehouse], 2002 photo-action edition of 3 + 1 AP 10 photographs 23 x 34 cm/9 x 13.4 in each Brígida Baltar's embroideries emerged as the artist worked on developing a different relationship with temporality, using waiting periods and pauses of activity as opportunities to engage in artisanal experimentations with time.

With this in mind, Brígida Baltar developed three series. The first is titled *A quimera das plantas* [*The Chimera of Plants*] (2015-2016) and consists of colorful embroideries representing hybrid plants executed on rectangular linen textiles. The resulting images are inspired by that of a chimera, which in Greek mythology designate figures that emerge as a whole made up of fragments of various different beings. Having received a bone marrow transplant from her brother, Baltar became intrigued by hybridism in nature and turned to explore the various forms in which they surge in the environment.



A quimera das plantas [Os cogumelos e a batata doce | Os cogumelos e o coração da bananeira] [The chimera of plants [The mushrooms and the sweet potato | The mushrooms and the heart of Banana tree plants]], 2016 embroidery on fabric 2 pieces of 60 x 41 cm/23.6 x 16.1 in





The second body of work is titled *Autorretrato com pelos* [*Self-portraits With Hair*] (2016). The series is made up of ten handkerchiefs embroidered with the image of the artist's self-portrait, onto which she adds patches of thread that resemble facial hair. The works were inspired by Baltar's sense of discomfort with her own body as she began to notice new hair growth throughout her body as a reaction to medical treatments. It is also interesting to note, that in using tissues as the canvas, the artist invades a traditionally intimate and male object with an image of herself, alluding once again to biological hybridity.

**Autorretrato com pelos** [Self-portrait With Hair], 2016 embroidery on fabric 38 x 37 cm/15 x 14.6 in





Autorretrato com pelos [Self-portrait With Hair], 2016 embroidery on fabric 38 x 37 cm/15 x 14.6 in



The third body of works is characterized by the artist's engagement with fabric as a metaphor for the skin. Baltar embroiders large areas of the cloth, always leaving some parts untouched as a means of creating a divide in thickness and materiality that gives the piece a sense of organic corporeality, further amplified by the human scale of the works. The surface also consists of small, almost ornamental representations of bruises, or sores, randomly dispersed throughout the fabric, reinforcing the notion of the body, the organic, and suggesting the piece could in fact be part of one's own figure.





#### Os hematomas

[The Hematomas], 2016 embroidery on fabric 74 x 42 cm/29.1 x 16.5 in

Os hematomas

[*The Hematomas*], 2016 embroidery on fabric 74 x 42 cm/29.1 x 16.5 in







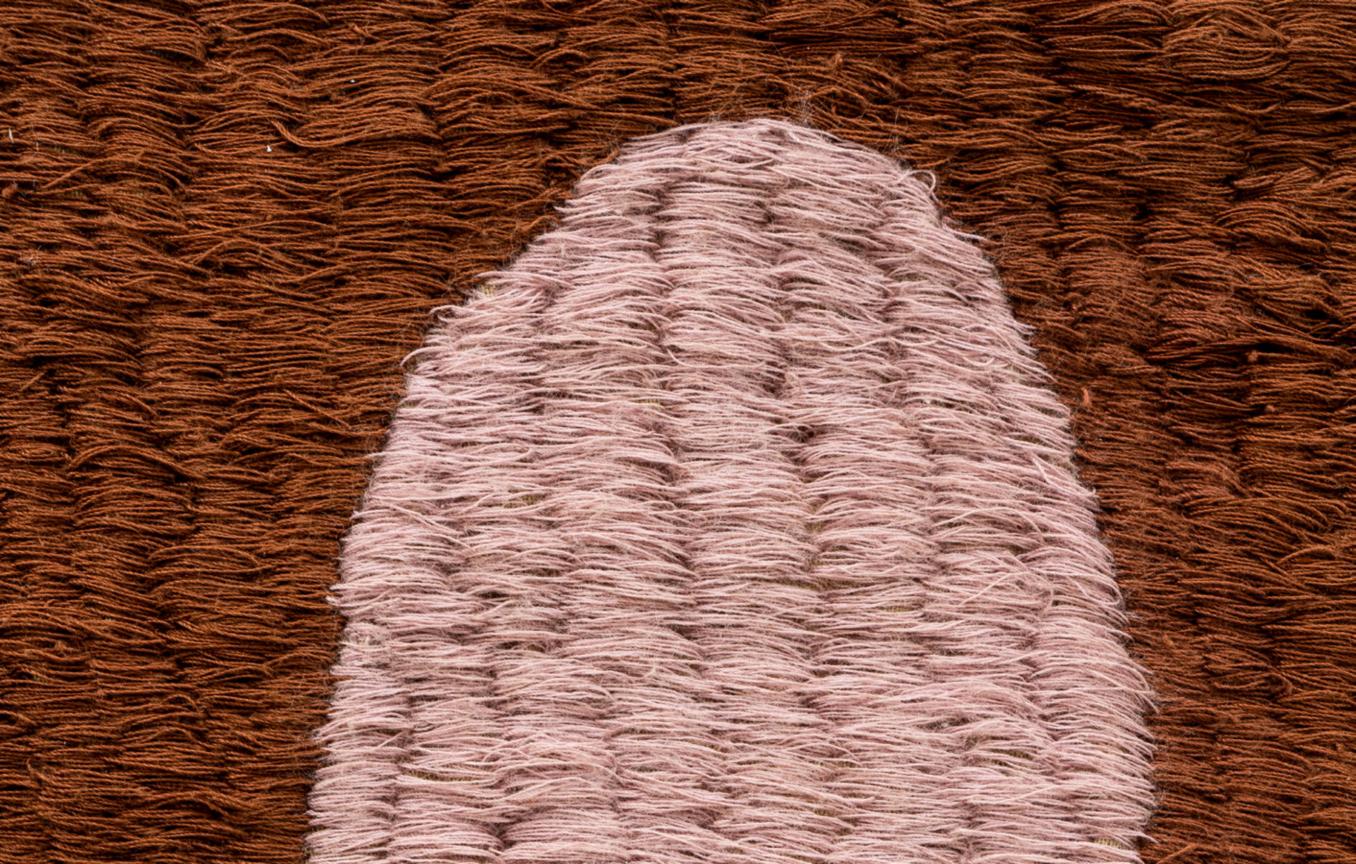




In 2017, Baltar began yet another set of works titled *Minha pele sua pele* [*My Skin Your Skin*] (2017–2019), whereby she covers textiles with embroidered areas in two different colors, suggesting an encounter and coexistence of chromatic bodies in the same space.

### Minha pele sua pele

[*My Skin Your Skin*], 2017/2019 embroidery on fabric 3 pieces of 40 x 40 cm/15.7 x 15.7 in





The Flesh of the Sea forms a group of ceramic sculptures in organic forms, which sometimes resemble shells that arguably come from the deepest parts of the ocean. In reliving her childhood memories, Baltar remembers strolling across Copacabana beach in Rio de Janeiro looking for perfect shells whilst she remembers finding mostly fragments. It took little for her to realize what she sees as the power of the incompleteness of organic elements. Furthermore, her interest in the chimerical and fabulous nature extends throughout this body of work. Here, Baltar intertwined notions of the home and intimacy once again, while sensually evoking parts of the female human body in its formal appearance.

**A carne do mar** [The Flesh of the Sea], 2017 glazed ceramics 35,4 x 41 x 7,5 cm/13.9 x 16.1 x 3 in





A carne do mar [The Flesh of the Sea], 2017 glazed ceramics 83 x 108 x 8,5 cm/32.7 x 42.5 x 3.3 in







*Mergulho* [*Dip*], 2018 bronze with silver bath 51 x 38 x 36 cm/20.1 x 15 x 14.2 in





As águas que me invadem [The Waters That Invade Me], 2017 glazed ceramics 57 x 95 x 76 cm/22.4 x 37.4 x 29.9 in





**Sob o sol** [Under the Sun], 2017 glazed ceramics 27 x 18 x 20 cm/10.6 x 7.1 x 7.9 in



A carne do mar III [The Flesh of the Sea III], 2018 glazed ceramics 44 x 22 x 24 cm/17.3 x 8.7 x 9.4 in





A concha triste [The Sad Shell], 2017 glazed ceramics 25 x 20 x 23 cm/9.8 x 7.9 x 9.1 in







**Concha gruta II** [Cave Shell II], 2017 glazed ceramics 15 x 59 x 57 cm/5.9 x 23.2 x 22.4 in







**Untitled**, 2017 glazed ceramics 48 x 13,5 x 9 cm/18.9 x 5.3 x 3.5 in









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