

brígida baltar

galeria nara roesler



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.

COVER **Mist Collecting**, 1996 (detail)

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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*, 12th 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

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the house and brick dust, 1990S–2000S

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 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
4 photographs of
60 x 40 cm/23.6 x 15.7 in each





Untitled, 2005
photo-action
30 x 40 cm/11.8 x 15.7 in



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 dust and bricks from the walls, the house was suddenly able to travel, and serve as a medium to build other objects—in *Casa* (1997) for example, she placed the dust collected from the walls of her home into glass bottles. Alternatively, in *Torre* (1996) the artist extricated entire bricks from the wall and repurposed them to create another shelter in a smaller-scale so as to closely encapsulate and embrace her body.

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



Torre [*Tower*], 1996
photo-action
5 photographs of 14 x 10 cm each

A horta da casa [*The Home Garden*], 1996/2019
seasoning and herbs planted on 21 bricks
variable dimensions



In 2005, the artist moved to a new home but took parts of her old house with her. Baltar began to use the materials and the dust as a medium to draw images on walls, on the floor, and on paper, as well as construct small sculptures, many of which depicted landscapes from Rio de Janeiro. According to art critic Moacir dos Anjos, 'The fact that they were made with brick dust from her home, make these images about asserting conviviality, rather than descriptive pieces of topographies and flora. The drawings are not meant to reproduce realistically that which meets the viewer's eyes; rather, they are meant to render an affective record of geography and botany to which they feel a sense of belonging.'

Brígida Baltar continues to explore brick dust and the brick's own form through several different artistic iterations. On the occasion of her exhibition at Juazeiro do Norte and in Fortaleza, she notably mixed dust from her home with soil from other regions, such as that of Cariri.



Floresta vermelha [*Red Forest*], 2009

brick dust on paper

90 x 140 cm/35.4 x 55.1 in



exhibition view of *Pó de casa*,
Galeria Nara Roesler, São Paulo, Brasil, 2007

Flora do sertão [*Flora from Sertão*], 2008
dust from region of sertão on paper, wood and stamp
200 x 300 cm/78.7 x 118.1 in

exhibition view of
The Peripatetic School:
Itinerant Drawing from Latin America
The Drawing Room, London, UK, 2011







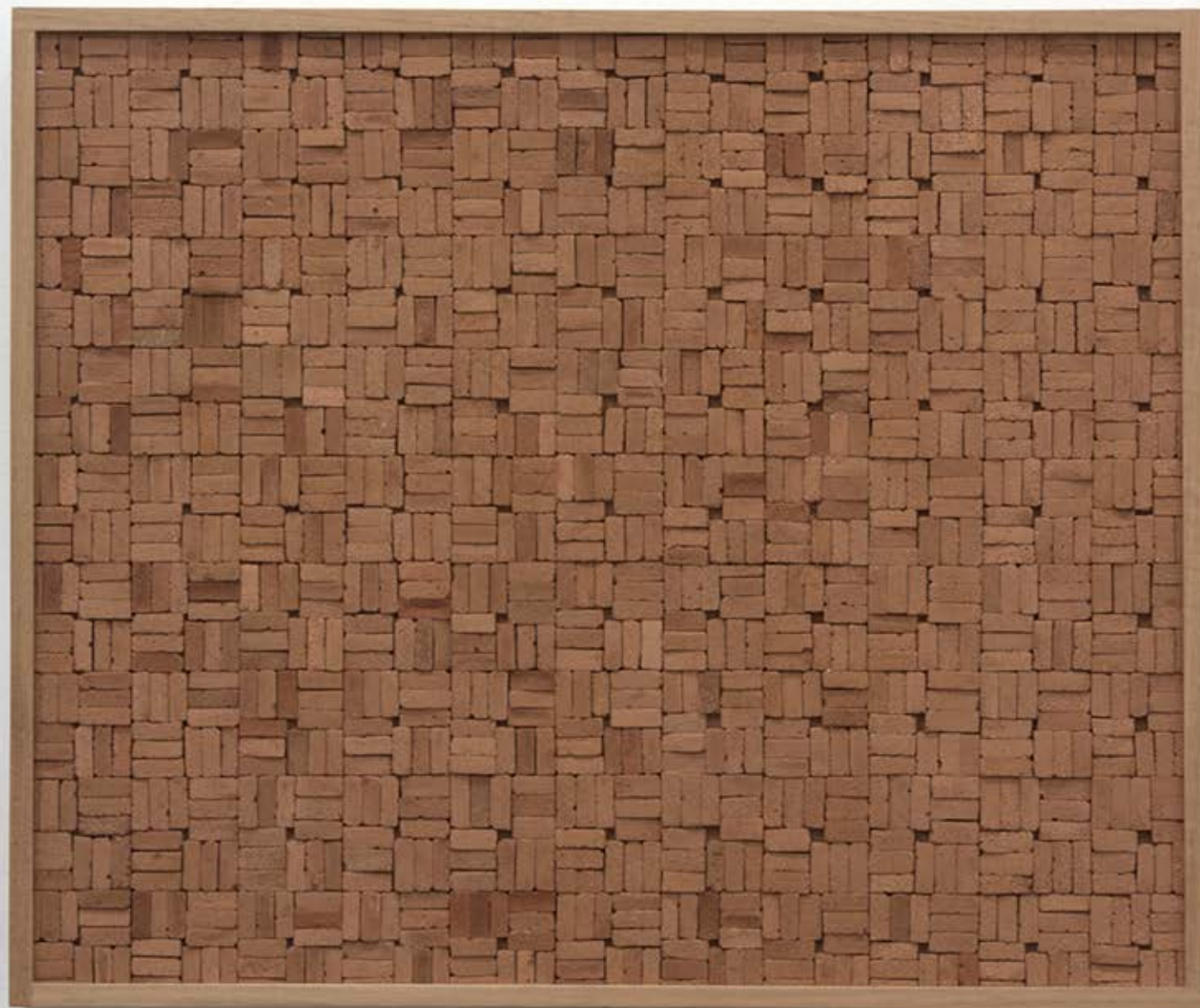
Sem título [Untitled], 2010
brick dust on paper
29 x 21 cm/11.4 x 8.3 in



Sem título [Untitled], 2010
brick dust on paper
29 x 21 cm/11.4 x 8.3 in



Sem título [Untitled], 2010
brick dust on paper
29 x 21 cm/11.4 x 8.3 in



Chão [*Floor*], 2018
molded brick dust
48,5 x 58,5 cm
19.1 x 23 in

exhibition view of
Um céu entre paredes / An Indoor Heaven,
Firstsite, Colchester, UK, 2006

molded brick dust and brick dust
in floor fissures



The idea for Brígida Baltar's *Canto brocado* stemmed from an ephemeral installation where she laid out brick dust throughout the exhibition space on the occasion of *Brígida Baltar – Passagem secreta* at Fundação Eva Klabin in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2007. The dust was minutely spread from a corner of the exhibition floor, recreating the motif of the institution's wallpapers. She later installed subsequent versions of Canto Brocado, occasionally reproducing alternative designs in dialogue with the exhibition space. Notably, in 2011, Baltar created a *Canto brocado* at Galeria 713 in Buenos Aires, that evoked the the gallery's hydraulic tiles' design. The work is therefore not only ephemeral, but also adaptable to different spaces, their particular designs and architecture, and thus, their particular histories. In recreating structural motifs by using brick powder, the artist once more offers an alternative to the rigidity of the shelter as a concept by balancing its transient counterparts.

Canto brocado [*Corner Brocade*], 2007

brick dust on floor

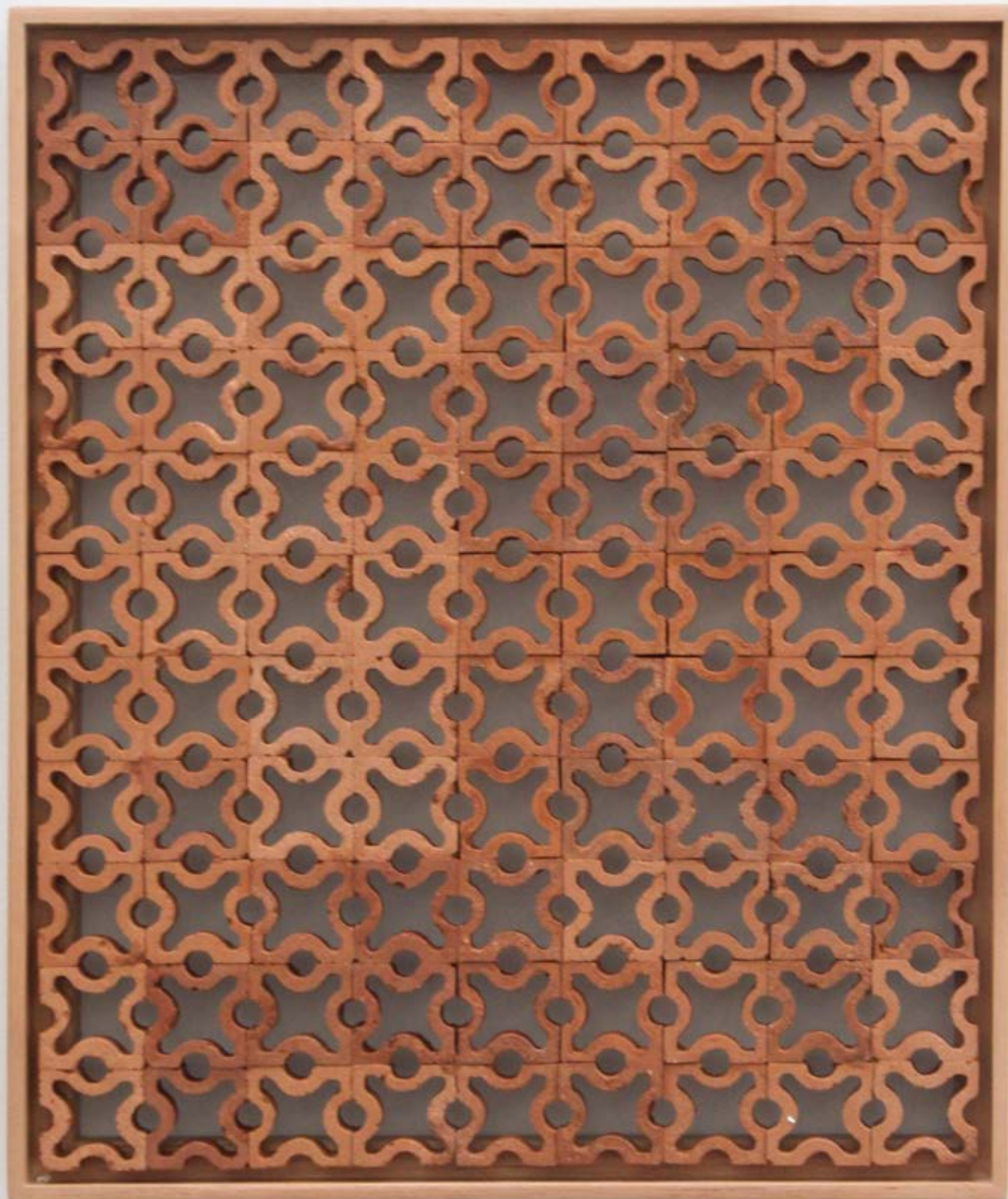
variable dimensions

exhibition view of *Brígida Baltar – Passagem Secreta*,
Projeto Respiração – Fundação Eva Klabin, Rio de Janeiro,
Brazil, 2007 (detail)





Sala brocada [Room Brocade], 2010
exhibition view of *Um Céu Entre Paredes*, Galeria Baobá,
Fundação Joaquim Nabuco, Recife, Brasil, 2010



Renda cobogó is an example of Brígida Baltar's repurposing of brick dust as part of an endeavor to redefine the rigidity of walls, or the home, into a more fluid, less divisive concept. This work is the result of the artist placing some of the powder gathered from her house into cobogó brick molds. This particular type of brick was created in the North-East of Brazil in 1920, yet, it is characteristic of Brazilian Modernist architecture—it is acclaimed not only for its effective ventilation, allowing for the wind to blow through the walls but also for its unique filtering of light. During the day, the bricks allow for sunlight to beam through its cavities, casting mosaics of light and shadow onto the interiors, while at night the darkness entwines with domestic illumination, continuously creating ever-changing plays on luminosity. Baltar's use of cobogó is perhaps best explained as another way for the artist to engage and interact with the transience of nature—of wind, of light and shadow—in creating a structure that may join two spaces, rather than divide, and allow for the ephemeral to invade one's intimate space.

Renda cobogó [*Cobogó Lace*], 2012
molded brick dust
33.5 x 25 cm/13.2 x 9.8 in

collections, 1993–2005

The artist's research within the house—, of selecting and storing materials, of keeping dust and drips from roof leaks inside flasks—was eventually expanded into nature. Indeed, over a decade, Brígida Baltar carried out several performative activities whereby she attempted to capture and collect fleeting substances such as dew, fog, or seawater mist. In her own words, 'My work is essentially about selection, storage and organization.'

The performances were documented through photographs and videos, both analog and digital, which produced intimate shots of the artist's scoutings of Rio de Janeiro's mountains and coasts at dawn. Glass flasks used to collect the mist, vinyl disks, drawings, watercolors and costumes are all emblematic elements within Baltar's investigations.

Collections is one of the artist's most important bodies of work, having been exhibited in numerous institutions worldwide. According to curator Lisette Lagnado, 'It was a criticism of current society's speed and endless blabbering, but it was also a whisper in thick woods. Ironically, these were the actions that made her known in the milieu of art.' While curator Andrea Giunta places it as a continuation of Lygia Clark's investigations: 'we cannot forget about Lygia and her touchable objects, in her research about the texture of stones, of sand, of textiles. Brígida touches humidity, the opaque, the vague, the diluted and dampened color, hidden in exhalation. Touching the intangible, the color detained in white hues.'

[Watch the video](#)

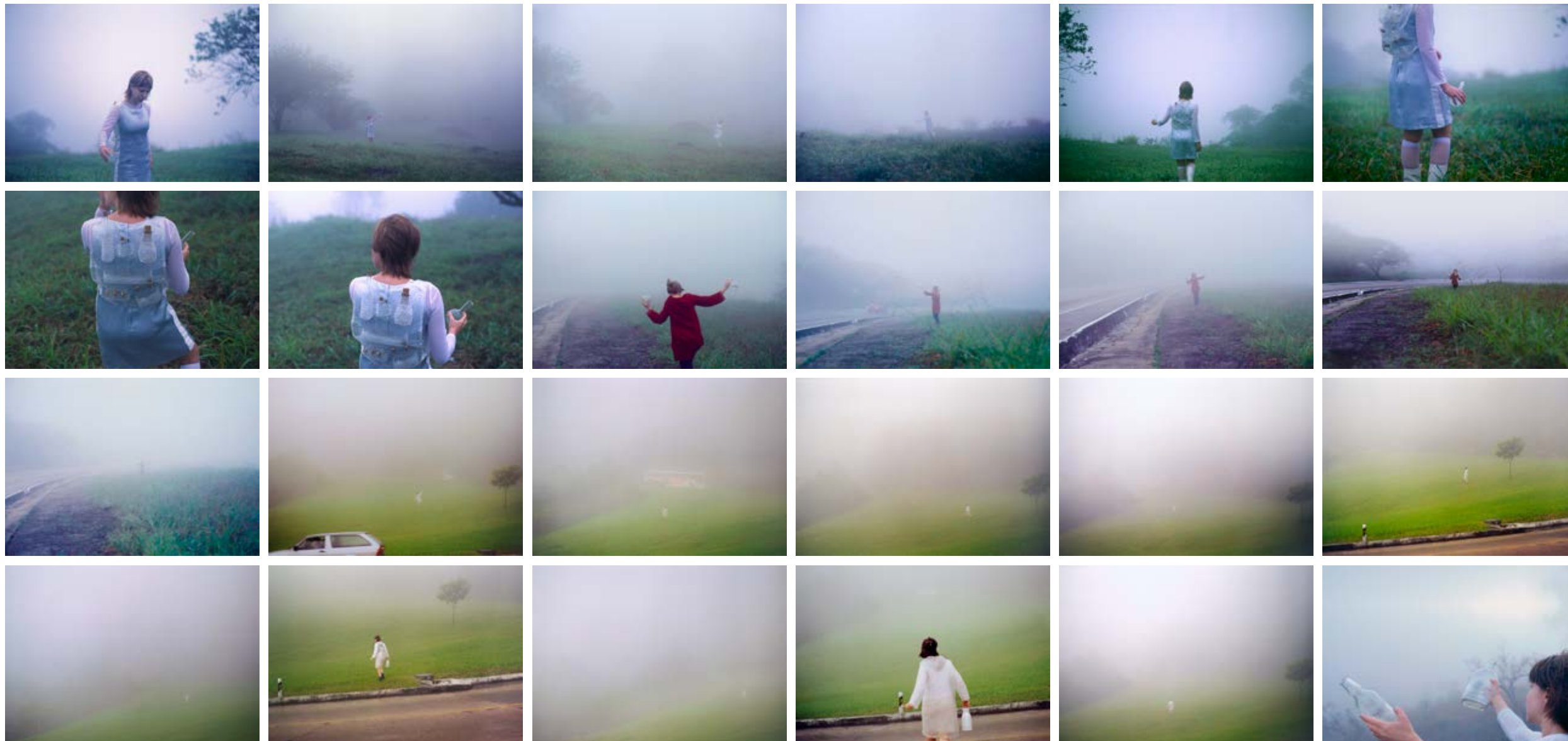


A coleta da neblina #24

[Mist Collecting #24], 1996–1999

photo-action

21 x 32 cm/8.3 x 12.6 in



A coleta da neblina
[Mist Collecting], 1996–1999
 photo-action
 24 photographs
 21 x 32 cm/8.3 x 12.6 in each



A coleta da neblina
[Sea Air Collecting], 2001
 photo-action
 40 x 60 cm/15.7 x 23.6 in



A coleta do orvalho
[Dew collecting], 2001
 photo-action
 40 x 60 cm/15.7 x 23.6 in



Coletor de orvalho
[Dew Collector], 2005
blown glass and wood
9 x 67 cm/3.5 x 26.4 in



exhibition view of *Brígida Baltar - Collecting Humidity*,
Kunsthhaus Baselland, Muttenez, Switzerland, 2002

Neblina maresia orvalho coletas,
[Mist Sea air Dew collections], 2001
vinyl record
31,5 x 31,3 cm/12.4 x 12.3 in



beehouse, 2002

In 2002, Brígida Baltar was invited to participate in the 25th Biennial of Sao Paulo, titled *Metropolitan Iconographies* and curated around the theme of the city by Alfons Hug and Agnaldo Farias. With this in mind, Baltar chose to investigate the honeycomb as a means of further developing her recurrent explorations of the home and of collectivity. The artist was interested in understanding how bees organize collectively and build such structures with the common objectives of obtaining shelter and food. Beehouse began with the artist choosing a honey-colored textile, which she sewed following the smocking technique, known as 'beehouse' in Portuguese. The artist placed the resulting structure onto different parts of her body, entwining bodily and domestic matters. She performed this work both within her house and in nature, recording her actions through photos and videos. Beehouse also consists of a series of drawings through which the artist further explored the structure and physicality of the honeycomb.

[Watch the video](#)



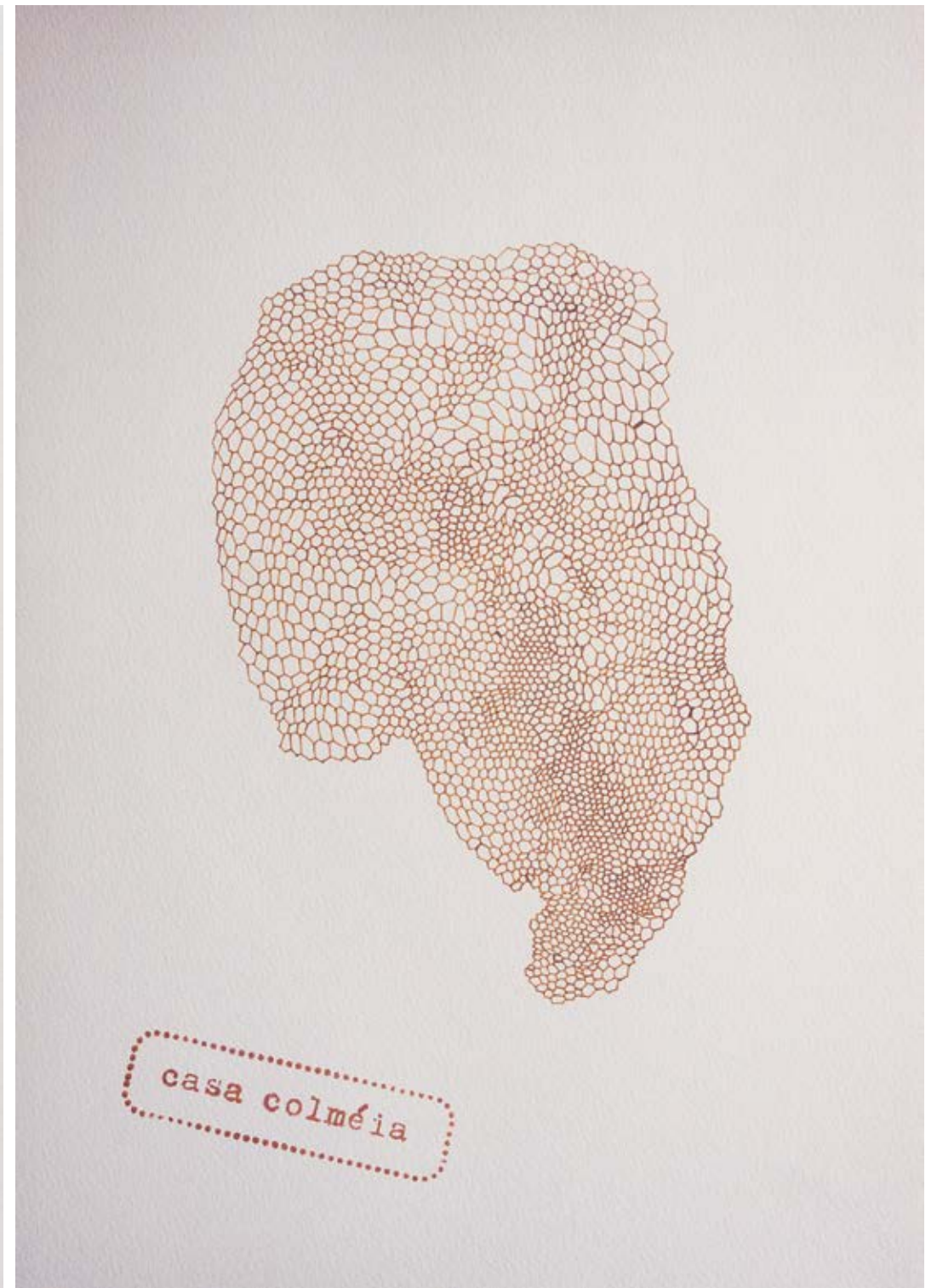
Casa de abelha [*Beehouse*], 2002
photo-action
40 x 60 cm/15.7 x 23.6 in



Casa de abelha [*Beehouse*], 2002
photo-action
10 photographs of
25 x 36 cm/9.8 x 14.2 in each

left
Casa de abelha
[Beehouse], 2003
ink and stamp on paper
40 x 30 cm

right
Casa de abelha
[Beehouse], 2003
ink and stamp on paper
40 x 30 cm



maria farinha ghost crab, 2004

Maria Farinha Ghost Crab is a fable-film inspired by a type of sand crab known as ghost crab, due to its agile and fleeting-like behavior, which is commonly found on the East Coast of the United States and on Brazilian beaches. In this work Brígida Baltar invited the actress Lorena da Silva to enact Maria Farinha (a name used to designate ghost crabs in Brazil), having to personify the animal, running hurriedly and incessantly digging holes in the sand. She also wore shell-shaped headphones through which she listened to sounds meant to capture the character's dream, reverie and delirious experience. The film was recorded on the island of Ilha Grande, Rio de Janeiro in 2004, using 16 mm film stock and produced with the kind support of CAPACETE.

[Watch the video](#)



Maria Farinha Ghost Crab, 2004
(photographic still)
16 mm / DVD
5'11"



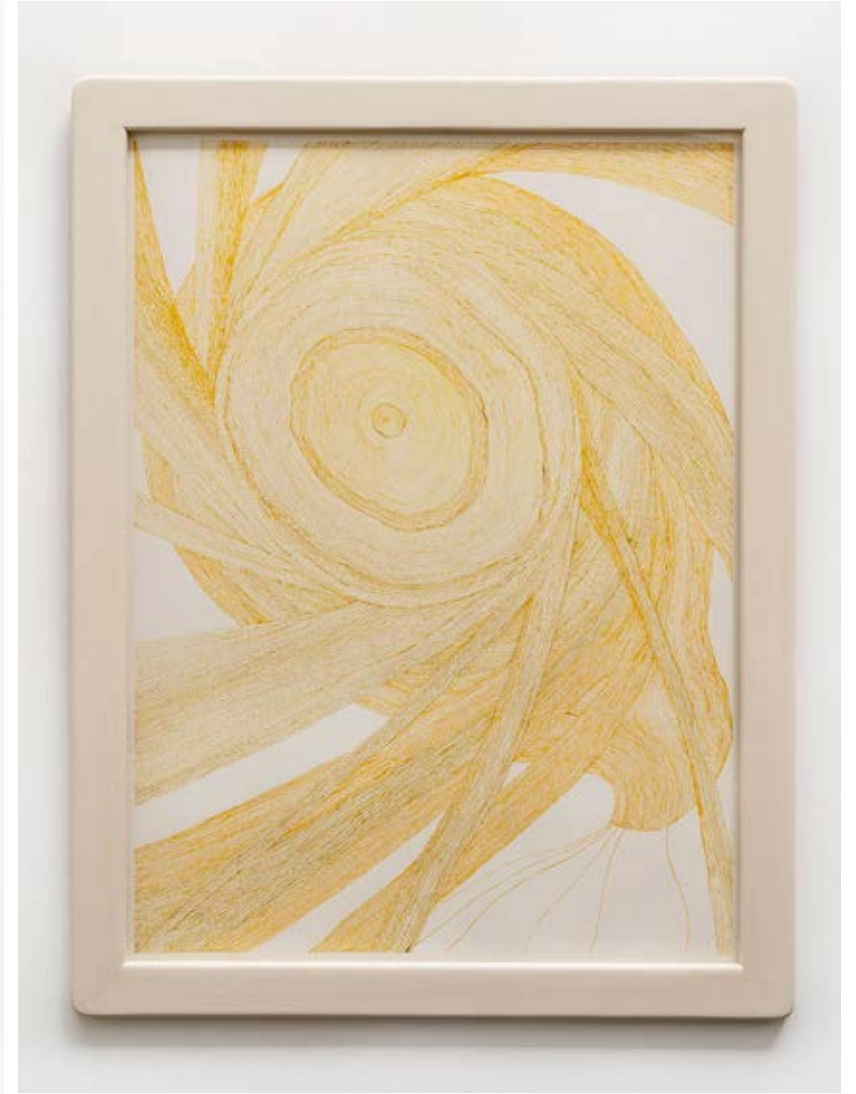
Maria Farinha Ghost Crab, 2004
fiber glass
variable dimensions



Maria Farinha Ghost Crab, 2004
ink on paper
75 x 55 cm/29.5 x 21.7 in



Maria Farinha Ghost Crab, 2004
ink on paper
75 x 55 cm/29.5 x 21.7 in



Maria Farinha Ghost Crab, 2004
ink on paper
75 x 55 cm/29.5 x 21.7 in



exhibition view of *Brígida Baltar: Filmes*,
Espaço Cultural BNDES,
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 2019

flying, 2011– 2012

This body of work engages with the ideas of falling, flying, vertigo and landing, as well as matters of light and shadow through a process of reappropriation of objects. In modifying their nature and purpose the artist created numerous sculptures and oneiric installations. Notably, *A queda* (2011) consists of a monumental chandelier, which the artist suspends just above the floor as if time—or gravity—had been suspended at a fragment of time immediately before the chandelier would crash on the ground. Another example lies in the work *Untitled* (2011), which is composed of a bronze harp accompanied by a collection of bronze wings, installed side by side. Here, the artist establishes physical and symbolic tension between suspension and fall, the angelical and the mundane, the lightness of feathers and the shiny heaviness of metal.

Teatro [Theater], 2011
wood and video
165 x 40 x 50 cm/65 x 15.7 x 19.7 in





Curator Marcelo Campos reflects on the artist's use of everyday objects in unexpected situations, stating that 'The appropriation of objects in unfinished and damaged sculptures brings back the ghostly shadows of history. At the same time, homage is paid to anti manufacture as a possibility of creation. It is finished, it is done. They are works and artifacts. Heritage is no longer unwanted. On the contrary, its meaning is expanded. One no longer searches for literal history, which connects image and myth, but rather activates the bric-a-brac of a sort of collage.'

Other iterations of the series *Flying* can be described as micro-installations consisting of small wood boxes, which are sculpted into the shape of tiny theaters. The stage is occupied by small screens that transmit videos created by Baltar, whereby shadows are presented as main characters. While the installations convey the artist's early work with theatrical scenography, the creation of microcosmic theaters engages with the idea of collective experiences establishing an intimate rapport through the manipulation of scale.



Voar [*To Fly*], 2011
(photographic still)
16 mm film
07'00" (loop)

[Watch an excerpt](#)



Sem título [Untitled], 2011
bronze
160 x 60 x 40 cm / 190 x 110 x 60 cm





left
Escultura alada I [*Winged Sculpture I*], 2011
 alabaster candlestick, glass, feathers,
 brocade carpet and wood
 13 x 27,5 x 23,5 cm/5.1 x 10.8 x 9.3 in

right
Escultura alada III [*Winged Sculpture III*], 2011
 stone, metal, ceramic and peacock feather
 13,5 x 27 x 12,5 cm/5.3 x 10.6 x 4.9 in



body, skin, affect, 2015– 2019

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* (2015–2016) [*The Chimera of Plants*] 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
[O shimeji e a cebola rôxa]
[The plant chimera
[The shimeji and the red onion]], 2016
embroidery on fabric
60 x 41 cm/23.6 x 16.1 in



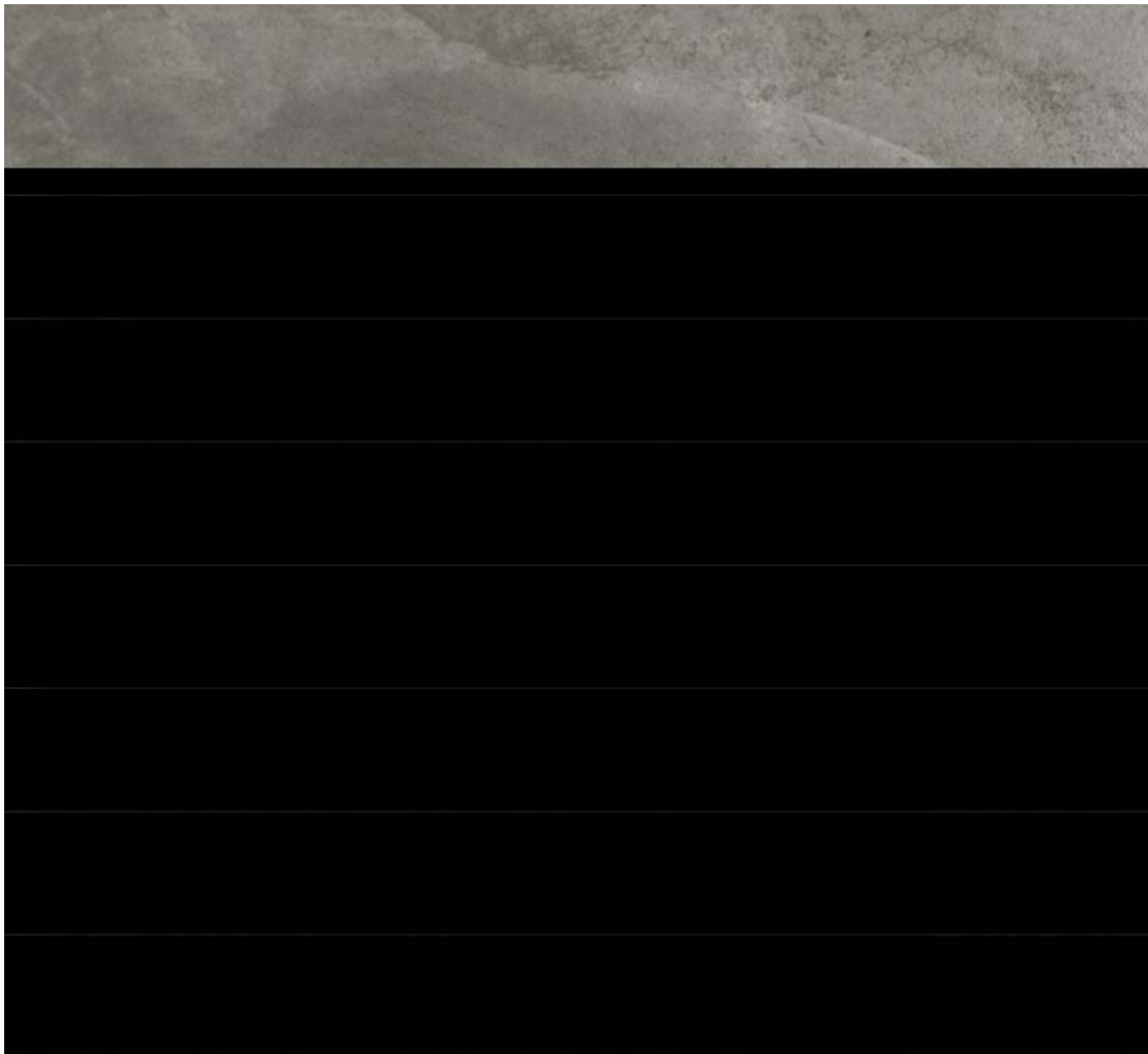


A quimera das plantas
[Costela de Adão e folha da Begônia]
 [The plant chimera [Monstera deliciosa
 and Begonia leaf]], 2015
 embroidery on fabric
 34 x 25,5 cm/13.4 x 10 in



A quimera das plantas
[Espada de São Jorge e Costela de Adão]
 [The plant chimera [Saint George's sword
 and Monstera deliciosa]], 2015
 embroidery on fabric
 35,5 x 29,5 cm/14 x 11.6 in

Irmãos [*Siblings*], 2015
philodendron and philodendron hederaceum on bronze
31 x 10 x 5 cm/12.2 x 3.9 x 2 in





The second body of work is titled *Autorretrato com pelos* (2016) [*Self-portraits With Hair*]. 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.

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

Os hematomas da planta
[The Plant's Hematomas], 2016
embroidery on fabric
73.5 x 77.5 cm/28.9 x 30.5 in

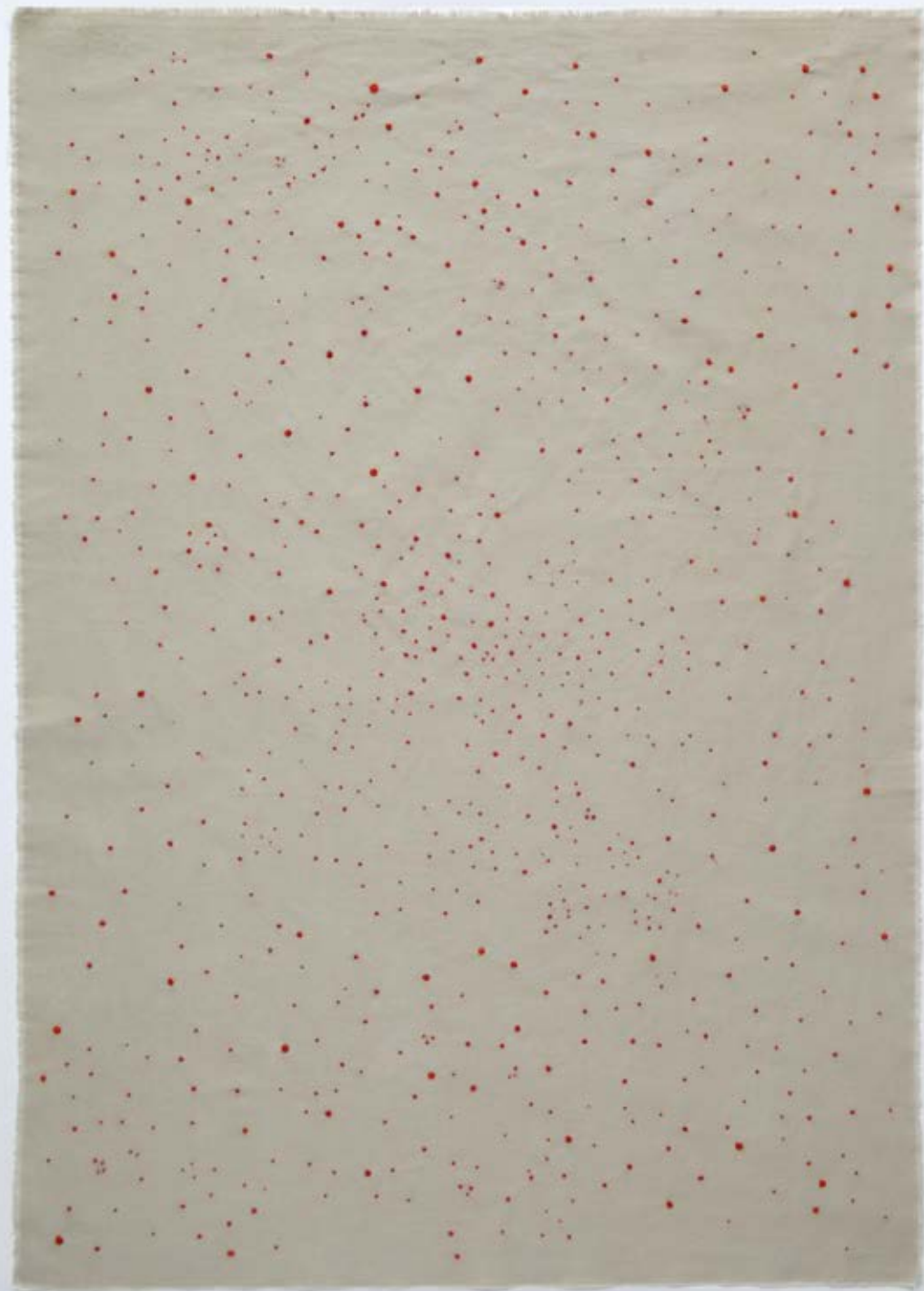




Os hematomas
[The Hematomas], 2016
embroidery on fabric
75 x 46 cm/29.5 x 18.1 in

As aftas [*The Mouth Sores*], 2016
embroidery on fabric
37 x 37 cm/14.6 x 14.6 in





As petéquias
[The Petechiaes], 2016
embroidery on fabric
76 x 54 cm/29.9 x 21.3 in



A mão que arde
[The Hand That Burns], 2016
oil on bronze
9 x 9 x 29 cm/3.5 x 3.5 x 11.4 in



O hematoma
[The Hematoma], 2016
 oil on porcelain
 35 x 23,5 x 1 cm / 13.8 x 9.3 x 0.4 in



O hematoma
[The Hematoma], 2016
 oil on porcelain
 33 x 20,7 x 1 cm / 13 x 8.1,5 x 0.4 in

the flesh of the sea, 2017–2018

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 intertwines notions of the home and intimacy once again, while sensually evoking parts of the female human body in its formal appearance.

Curator Marcelo Campos wrote on the series, saying that: '*The Flesh of the Sea* sees Brígida Baltar showing a heightened interest in ceramics, a material featured in her work since the beginning of her career in the 1990s. Among these experimentations, in addition to the interest in searching for abyssal colors, the pieces present a wealth of adverse pinks and deep blues. They thus resemble bodily forms and elements, quasi-organs, like vaginas, mouths, noses, eyes. The artist positions herself to scrutinize the burns in the material and its surprises, the change in sheen and tonality, the fissures, the transparency.'

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



exhibition view of *A carne do mar*
Galeria Nara Roesler, São Paulo, Brazil, 2018





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

Concha gruta II [Cave shell II], 2017
glazed ceramic
15 x 59 x 57 cm/5.9 x 23.2 x 22.4 in



As lambidas do mar
[The Sea's Licks], 2017
ceramic and enamel
19 x 33 x 74 cm / 7.5 x 13 x 29.1 in





O berro da concha
[The Shell's Bellow], 2017
ceramic and enamel
22 x 25 x 30 cm/8.7 x 9.8 x 11.8 in





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



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



brígida baltar is represented by galeria nara roesler

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