

nara roesler

marcelo silveira



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## marcelo silveira

b. 1962, Gravatá, Brazil

lives and works in Recife, Brazil

Marcelo Silveira's practice questions predetermined categories in art, challenging established notions of sculpture, installation, drawing, painting, and collecting. His art is driven by an interest in materiality, meaning that he is able to employ and transform any material into an artistic medium: wood, leather, paper, metal, plastic, and glass, amongst others. The layout that the artist creates with the objects and materials is equally pivotal to his practice and is often inspired in the customary formal repertoire applied to artifacts – e.g., bottles and glasses –, or from the revamping of conventional shapes using unexpected materials – much like his approach to wood.

The notions of collecting, along with that of creation/appropriation form the core of the artist's practice, emerging in his work in different ways: whether in the accumulation of found objects – like postcards, design rulers, perfume bottles, etc. –, or in objects that resemble household utensils, however unusable, or even in the way his works are often displayed in sets, where each fragment is part of a whole. The layout is, therefore, key to Silveira's practice, not only as a method of display but also to redefine objects, which can potentially awaken sentimental memories.

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### selected solo exhibitions

*Compacto com pacto*, Sesc Triunfo, Triunfo, Brazil

*Compacto mundo das coisas*, Galeria Nara Roesler, São Paulo, Brazil (2019)

*Com texto, obras por Marcelo Silveira*, Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Sorocaba (MACS), Sorocaba, Brazil (2018)

*Censor*, Museu da Imagem e do Som (MIS), São Paulo, Brazil (2016)

*1 Dedo de Prosa*, Museu de Arte Moderna Aloísio Magalhães (MAMAM), Recife, Brazil (2016)

### selected group shows

35<sup>th</sup> Panorama da Arte Brasileira, Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo (MAM-SP), São Paulo, Brazil (2017)

*Modos de ver o Brasil: Itaú Cultural 30 anos*, Oca, São Paulo, Brazil (2017)

10<sup>th</sup> Bienal del Mercosur, Porto Alegre, Brazil (2015)

*Travessias*, Galpão Bela Maré, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2013)

29<sup>th</sup> Bienal de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil (2010)

4<sup>th</sup> Biennial de València, Spain (2007)

### selected institutional collections

Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro (MAM Rio), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo (MAC USP), São Paulo, Brazil

Museu de Arte Moderna Aloísio Magalhães (MAMAM), Recife, Brazil

Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil

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cover exhibition view

*Hotel Solidão*, Nara Roesler New York, USA, 2022

images courtesy of the artist and Nara Roesler

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## wooden sculptures (cajacatinga wood)

Cajacatinga is a kind of wood that can be found in the Atlantic Rainforest in Brazil. Marcelo Silveira first came across this material through a water wheel in his family sugar mill. After its dismantling, the artist inherited it and appropriated it for his early experimentations. Belonging to the cedar family, its main features are its distinctive smell and its pliability, which allows for a wide range of aesthetic possibilities. Being water-resistant, it's been largely used in sugar mills, or in structures that are in constant contact with water.

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*Pele XXIII*, 2009/2021  
cajacatinga wood, beeswax  
and metallic pin  
unique  
170 × 191 × 42 cm  
66.9 × 75.2 × 16.5 in

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→  
*De natureza viva*, 2005/2006  
cajacatinga wood  
35 × 246 × 96 cm | 13.8 × 96.9 × 37.8 in  
54 × 126 × 75 cm | 21.3 × 49.6 × 29.5 in  
62 × 120 × 145 cm | 24.4 × 47.2 × 57.1 in









Marcelo Silveira has embraced the material as a key feature in his practice, which engages with the confluence of traditional methods, practices associated with craftwork, and aesthetics. The artist investigates the properties of this wood in an array of different layouts, ranging from structures assembled against the wall, like reliefs; to shapes that emerge from the floor, or, hang from above.

According to curator and critic Moacir do Anjos: “For some years now, Marcelo Silveira has been building structures with pieces of wood he cuts, sands and drills, just to pin and bolt them together. At times, these articulated structures are placed on the floor or against a wall, revealing a precarious construction that appears on the verge of dismantling. At other times, they dangle from the ceiling, remaining ambivalent – even at close range – as to whether they’re only meant to be seen, or also touched.”

For the series of sculptures *Compacto com pacto* (2018), Silveira broadens his research on wood as he appropriates the structures of rocking chairs. The artist repurposes the objects’ curvilinear fragments into abstract linear structures hung from the ceiling, or simply placed on the floor, conferring a certain sense of organicity to the exhibition site.

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*Guides of Liêdo (Lot IV)*, 2006  
cajacatinga wood  
14 pieces (280 × 180 × 70 cm | 110.2 × 70.9 × 27.6 in)  
variable dimensions

...RATA... MONIA... COM OS RECURSOS... BILIDADE... COES AVA...  
...NHOR... NCE... ROS DA FAMILIA... GUIR SEG... MES... O ANGUL...  
...OCAS... NDADA... CASA E COMO UMA... CESSOP... EM... UM DIS...  
...EZA E P... LETRA A PRASO FUR... MADONO... TOD EUM... ANG...  
...UM SIM... LETRA NA... DO PROP... E E BEM... DECORATI... AN...  
...OFFERT... AR O A QUEM A LEI... UROROI... ENCAIXE... NEL...  
...SE AMA... DE DIREITOS ESPECIA... AS NOAM... UO DAS PA... AFUN...  
...EDICAC... NTRE OS QUAIS OS DE PORO... E QUE... ESTAN TETE... VEL...  
...ELLAS... INQUILINO NA RUA SENAOP... RENTE POI EN DO POI... RDO...  
...O AR... AGAR NO DIA... NA... PRA ESTA... MAIS ALTA DO QUE... RESE...  
...DISSIM... BELECIDOS... A N ONOS SO MODEL... UDAR...  
...E BOM... E PRECISO QUETR... A N ONOS SO MODEL... ETI...  
...A LENTU... A BALHE COM... UIDE... TE TERA UM... METR... HA...  
...O TEXTO... ADO EVITANDO PO... SE DE EXTENSAO... N AS... ONIVE...  
...MODO... ASSIVEIS ACIDENTE... IRAS RENTE AS PAR... PEN...  
...DE XETA... A T... SO PROCES... MASR... MOVEN TA CENTIME... CODE...  
...D APIDO DE FIXA... AOD... ARTI LIVRE COMO... AS...  
...TEM TRINTA CENT... USAN...  
...ARMAR... TEM TRINTA CENT... USAN...  
...BAST... TEM TRINTA CENT... USAN...



*Aérea*, 2009/2010  
cajacatinga wood  
130 × 100 × 460 cm  
51.2 × 39.4 × 181.1 in





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*Compacto com pacto 06*, 2018  
wood  
50 × 110 × 90 cm | 19.7 × 43.3 × 35.4 in

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→  
*Compacto com pacto # 11*, 2018  
wood  
110 × 120 × 110 cm | 43.3 × 47.2 × 43.3 in







Compacto mundo das coisas, 2018  
exhibition view

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## appropriations

Appropriation stands at the core of Marcelo Silveira's practice, who asserts himself as an expert on items that are no longer useful. According to art historian and critic Michael Asbury, it is more appropriate to consider the artist in relation to Bispo do Rosário, rather than Marcel Duchamp, as the art historical inspiration for Marcelo Silveira's "incorporation of everyday objects proceeding from nature or from the detritus of consumerism that appears transformed, revisited, reconfigured in his work. Such is the case of *Com Fé*, which consists of golden foil coffee packages, stretched and framed like gold leaves. Here, such ordinary material is transformed into exquisite golden monochromes. These are works that, as the artist confesses, emerged from his dislike of the color gold. Not unlike his attitude towards his previous work, it is the acknowledgment of being repulsed by something or simply bothered by a dislike that draws his attention, that leads him towards that very thing, like a designer who returns to a previously drawn line."

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*Com fé*, 2013/2016  
wood and coffee packaging  
145 x 95,5 cm | 57.1 x 37.6 in





Silveira uses daily objects and materials that gain new meanings in being collected, displaced, juxtaposed to other objects, or by being physically altered. The artist often combines vocabularies and techniques from the Brazilian craftwork milieu with those of the art historical tradition. The body of work that draws upon appropriation is vast: *Só resta o cheiro* (2005), is comprised of a collection of five thousand bottles of perfume; *Irene da Alegria à Glória* (2017-18) displays a set of 160 postcards found by the artist and blotted out with a pen to near-complete obliteration of the image, inviting us to take a closer look at them; while *Arquitetura de interior* (2008), comprises wrapping paper pads assembled onto a thick pile.

*Irene da Alegria à Glória, grupo IV*,  
2018  
paper, wood, pen and metal  
47 x 57 x 5,5 cm | 18.5 x 22.4 x 2.2 in





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*Irene da Alegria à Glória (III) parte*  
2/5, 2017/2018  
paper, ballpoint pen, wood, and CMC  
3 pieces of 32 x 43 x 4 cm |  
12.6 x 16.9 x 1.6 in (each)





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Irene 4, 2017/2018  
post card  
10 pieces of 47 x 50 x 5 cm |  
18.5 x 19.7 x 2 in (each)

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exhibition view  
*Compacto mundo das coisas*  
Nara Roesler São Paulo, Brazil, 2019

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→→  
*Só resta o cheiro*, 2005  
5000 listed perfum glasses  
and wooden shelf  
240 x 200 x 80 cm |  
94.5 x 78.7 x 31.5 in





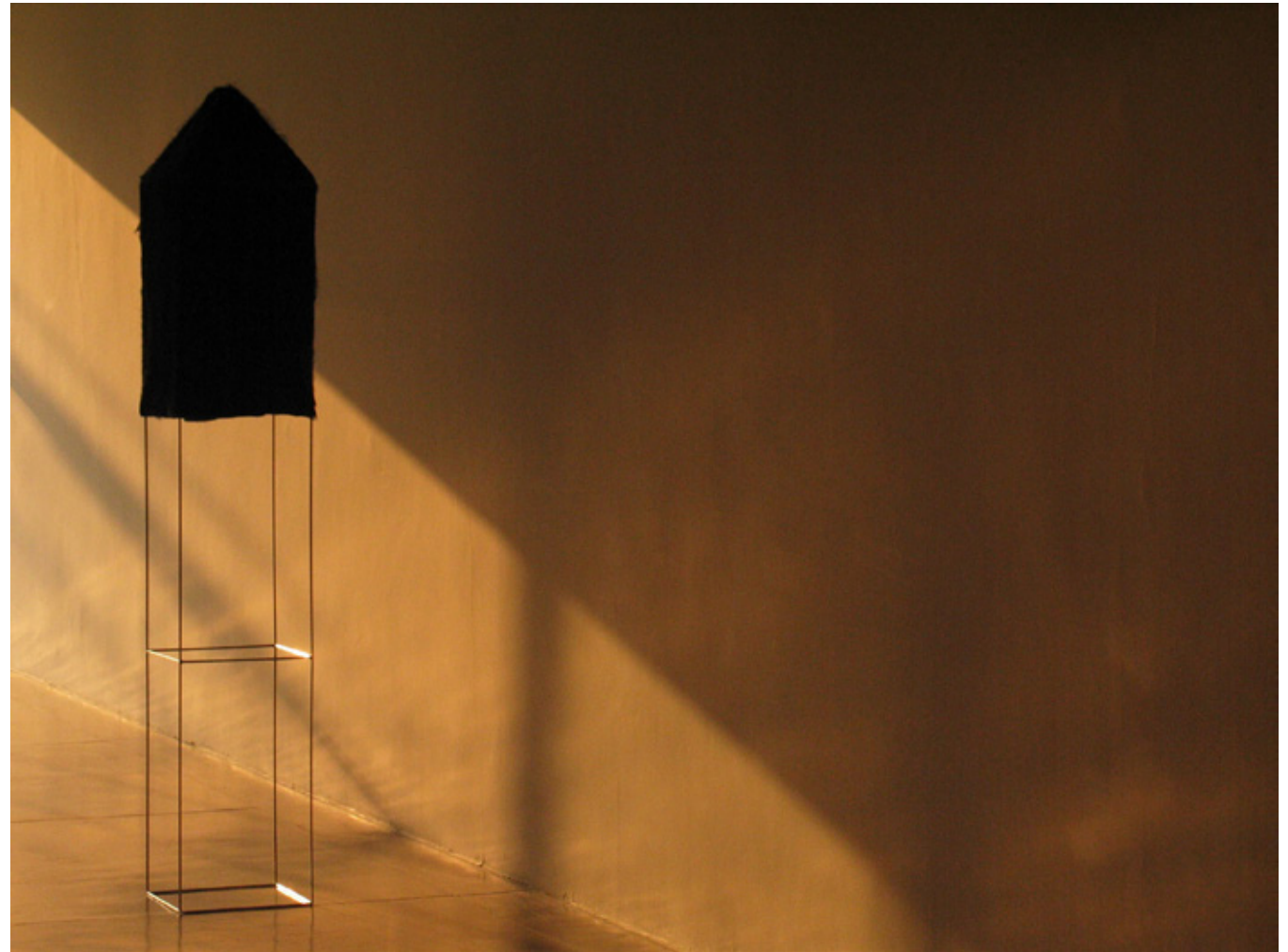


With *Censor* (2013-14), displayed at the eponymous exhibition at Museu da Imagem e do Som (MIS), in São Paulo, in 2016, the artist created a fictional film festival that referenced life during the years under the country's dictatorship. The work is made up of thirty movie posters printed in polychrome, covered with three magenta acrylic plates, leaving some areas of the underlying posters covered and others visible. The visible parts emerge to inform the audience of the practical and explicit meaning of each movie.

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## **casas**

In *Casas*, “Marcelo Silveira engages with the recurrent issues forming his body of work, such as: the exploitation or misappropriation of certain artisanal practices in Brazil, embedding phantasmal features to what has once been functional; the head-on confrontation with material, in a Brancusian sense, previously addressed only to wood; the organic and playful features of his forms, always providing a fresh and easy sense to anything primarily intellectual. Clearly, Silveira feels nostalgic about a time when the realm of work remained in mankind’s hands, wishing to reconnect the world of production to that of nature. But rather than positing a historical anachronism, it functions as an assertion that while art faces the power of digital media and machine intelligence, mankind should continue to be considered the means of creation.” As written by curator and critic Ligia Canongia.



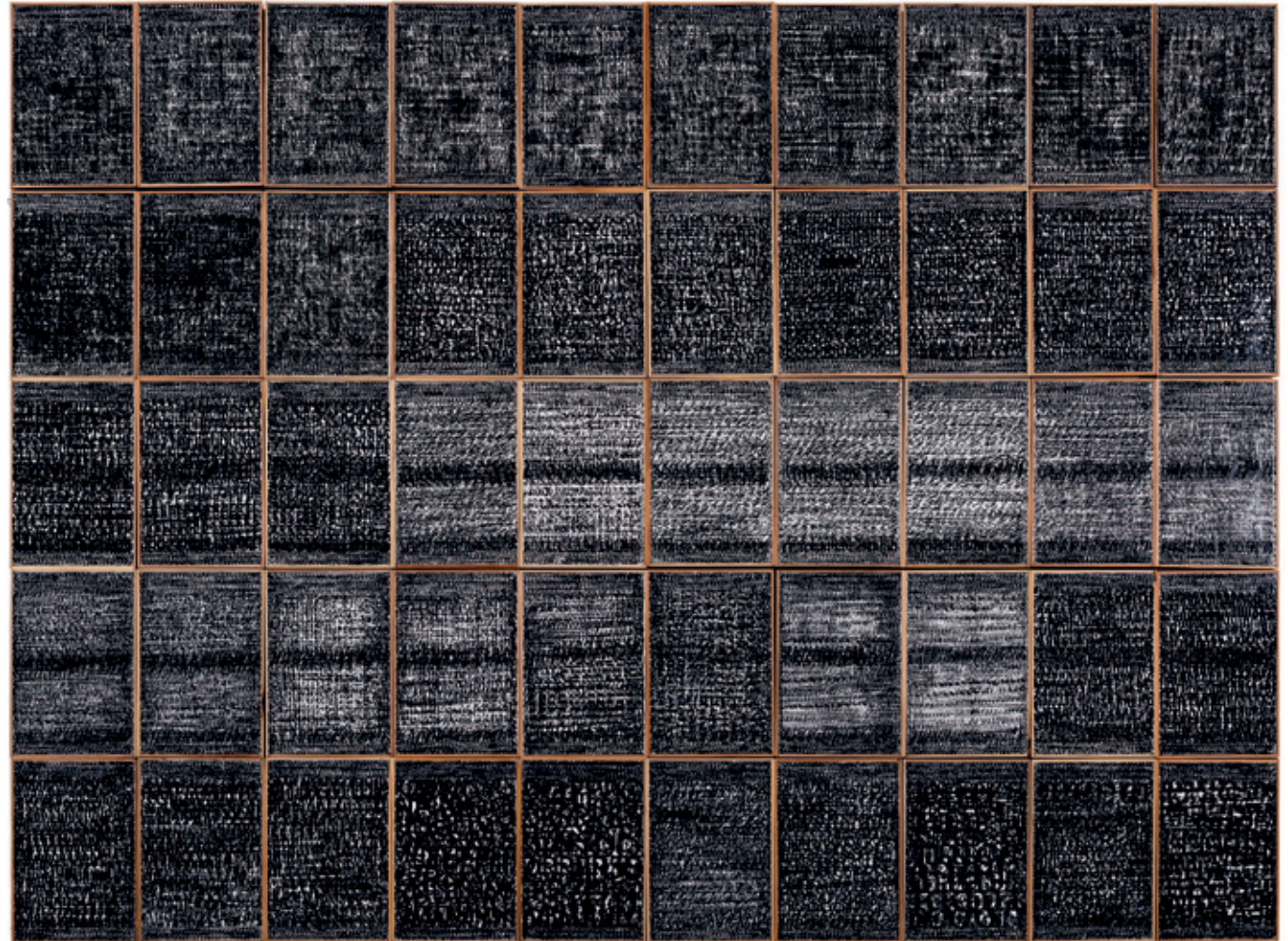


Domesticity and intimacy have always been featured in Marcelo Silveira's poetics. They come forth not only in the everyday elements that he appropriates but also in the history that is inherent to his found objects. The artist also often employs the shape of a house as a symbol for family and for domesticity. In series such as *CasaCoronha* (2003) and *Roupas de casa* (2003), he builds steel and leather structures that allude to domestic architecture. Silveira seems to create a skin that covers and protects these tiny domestic shapes, establishing a connection between the organic and inorganic, as well as offering a reflection upon the concept of shelter.

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## drawings

Marcelo Silveira's drawings often evoke techniques that resemble that of printmaking, employing matrices that allow for formal replication. *Caderno de escritos* (2006), for example, is created with stamps and ink on paper. The overlapping of designs gives rise to a formless area filled with gestures, yet stripped of any symbolic or figurative possibility, occupying a space between handwriting and drawing. This process is replicated in *Ata* (2015-17), where Silveira covers the surface of the paper in dry-transfer lettering.



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*Ata 1*, 2015/2017  
letraset on paper, wood  
and polycarbonate  
160 x 220 x 4 cm | 63 x 86.6 x 1.6 in

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exhibition view  
*Compacto mundo das coisas*  
Nara Roesler São Paulo, Brazil, 2019







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In *CUCO, ou Livro da semana* (2010-13), Silveira uses design rulers to create compositions - he fills sheets of paper with the shapes indicated by the rulers and then juxtaposes the papers to form the work. These rulers, whose purpose is to instrumentalize kids' drawings, work as stencils of various shapes, including animals, plants, and man-made structures. The work thus functions as a commentary on the possibilities of drawing that stem from subverting normative elements seeking to standardize technique, such as the very ruler employed. Alternatively, in *Caledoscópio* (2011), the artist creates tiny pictorial objects while gathering the aforementioned colored plastic rulers, in turn exploring the formal properties of these utensils.





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*Kaleidoscope*, 2011/2012  
colored plastic rulers  
and stainless steel  
27,5 x 20 x 5,5 cm | 10.8 x 7.9 x 2.2 in



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*Kaleidoscope*, 2011/2012  
colored plastic rulers  
and stainless steel  
27,5 x 20 x 5 cm | 10.8 x 7.9 x 2 in





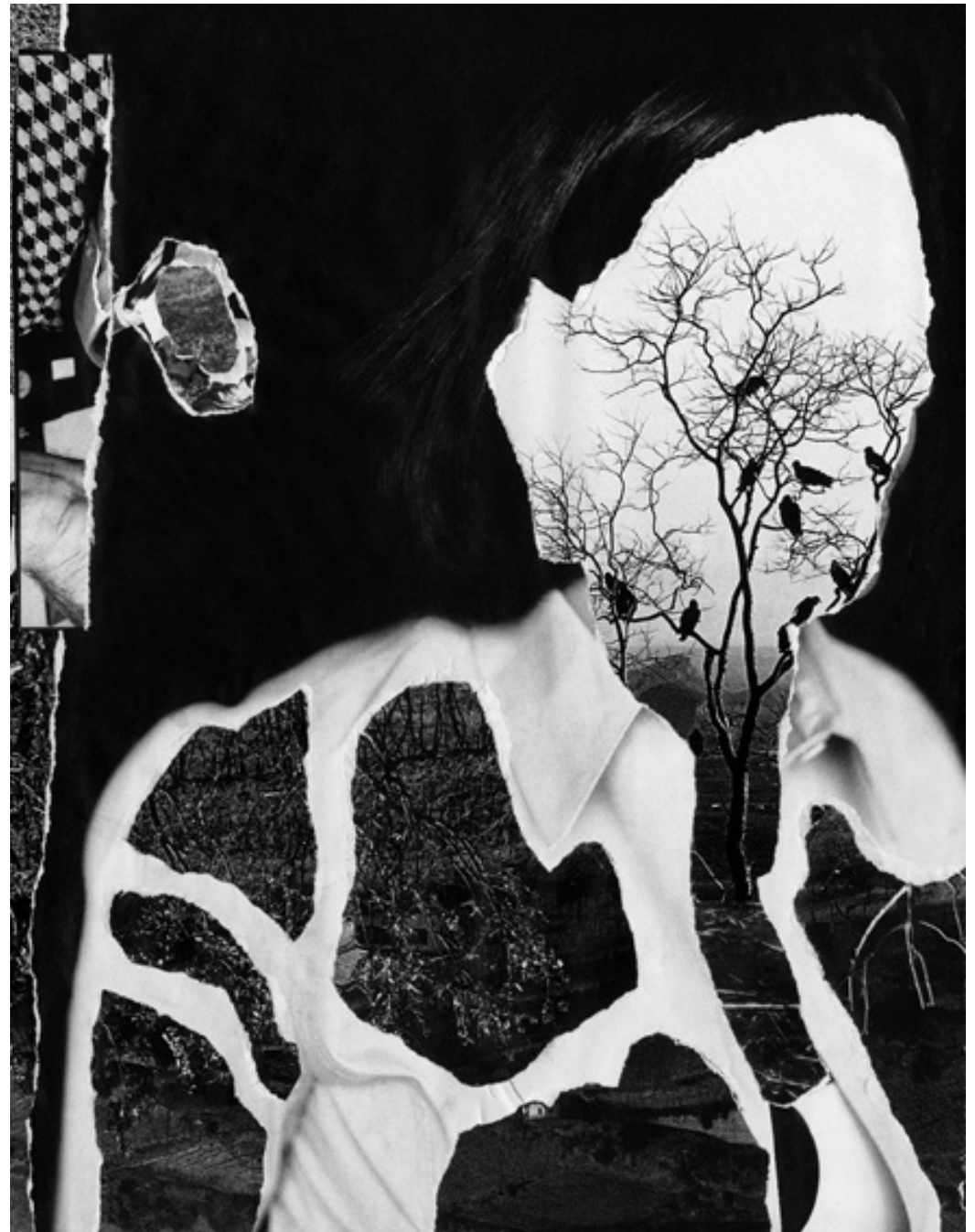
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## photo collages

In *Caixa de Retratos*, a series initiated in 2008, Marcelo Silveira researches and subverts the customary practice of storing photos inside boxes. The practice differs from that of keeping photo albums, which are reserved for those images intended for display, while the box keeps the ones chosen to remain unseen. With this in mind, there's a much more private element to the photo box. In this set of works, the artist cuts parts of images from magazines, and sorts them into boxes of fifty images each, resulting in various boxes with different fragments of magazine images. However, in being locked in their repositories, the images are no longer accessible, leaving the whole fragmented forever.

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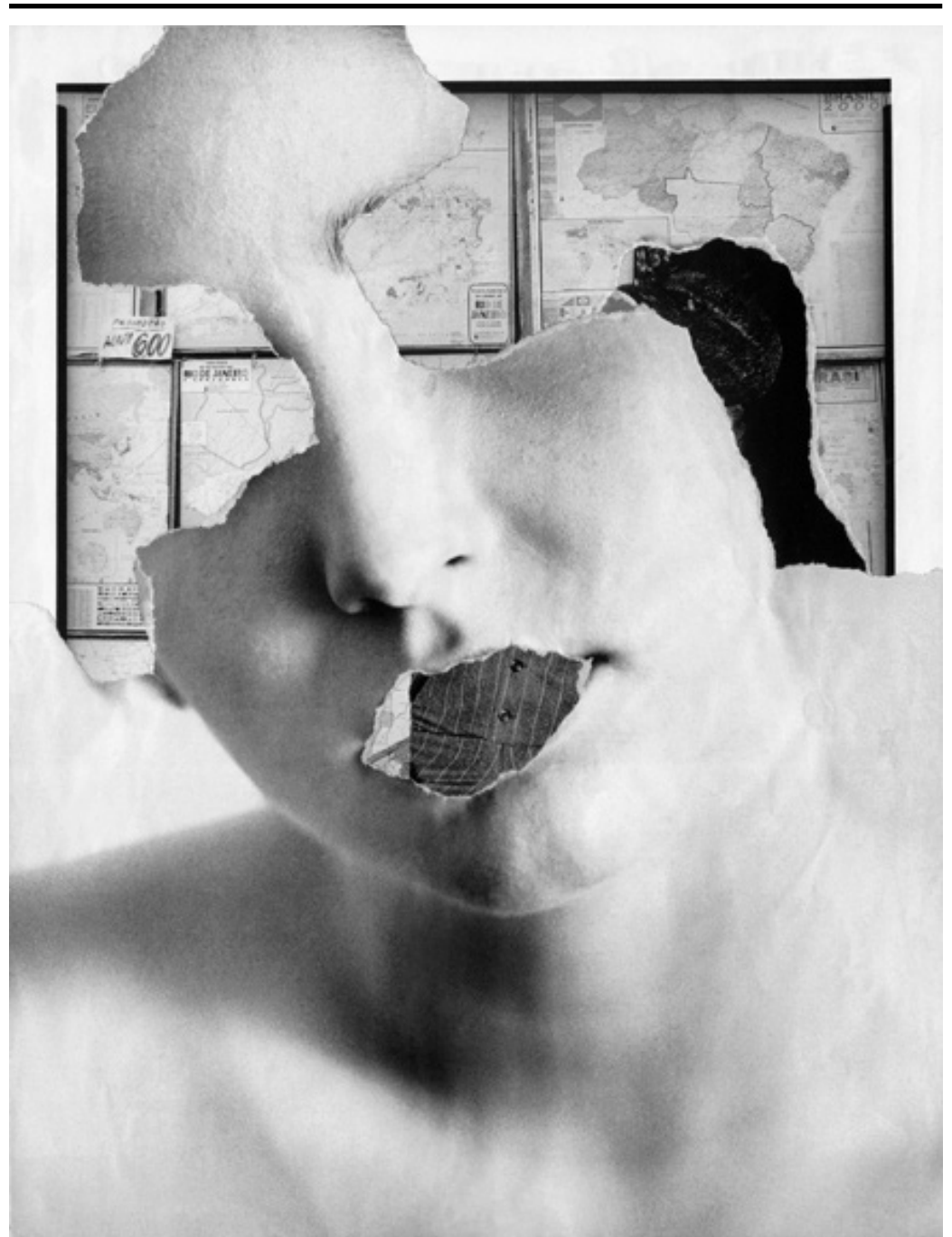
*Caixa de retratos/Família*  
Albuquerque, nº 140, 2008  
collage  
30 x 23 cm | 11.8 x 9.1 in





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*Caixa de retratos/Família Souza,*  
*nº 068, 2008*  
collage  
30 x 23 cm | 11.8 x 9.1 in



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*Caixa de retratos / Família Oliveira,*  
nº 188, 2008  
collage  
30 x 23 cm | 11.8 x 9.1 in



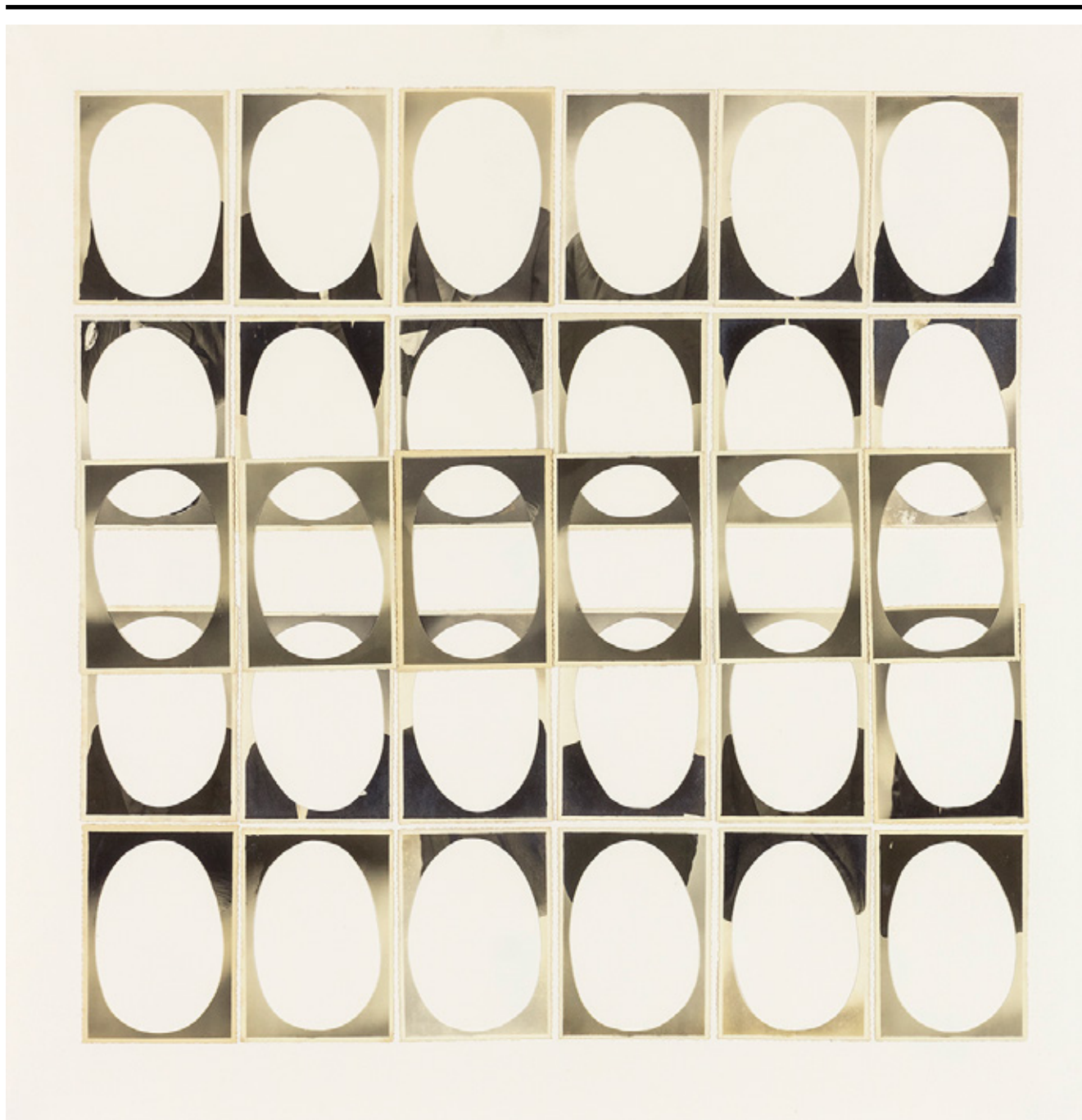




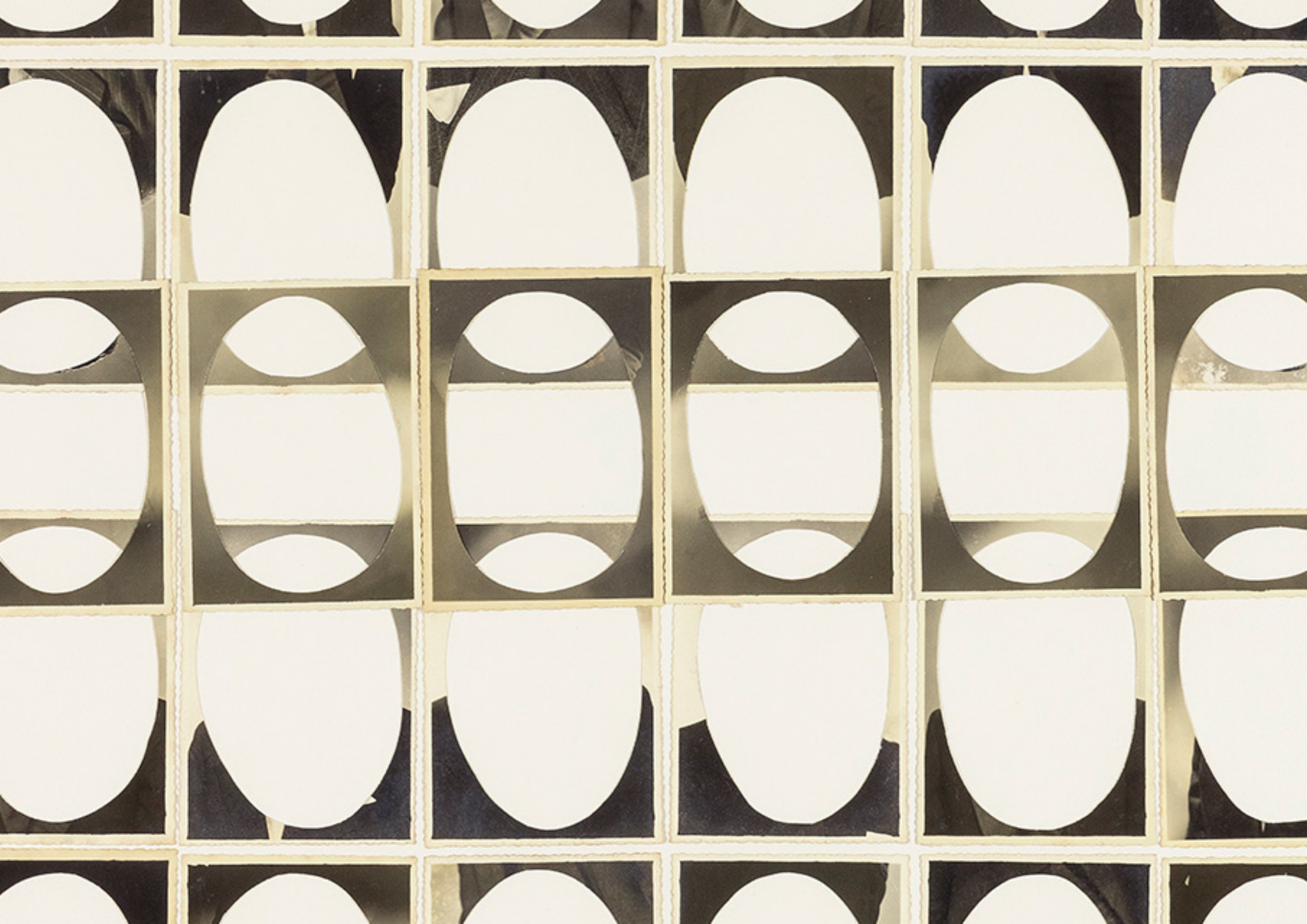
Recently, in 2020, Silveira began to develop the series *Sobre alegria e esquecimento*. The artist gathers a number of portraits, removing large oval parts from their centers. As a result, while portraits are created as means to extend people's existence, like assistants in memory, in removing people's faces from the image, the artist strips the object from its function.

In the series *Paisagem (Landscape, 2008-12)*, Marcelo Silveira reflects upon authorship as he appropriates books by famous photographers, cutting up parts of their images and grouping them together to compose constellations that enhance the connections between the images' textures and their hues. Color and hue are the *leitmotivs* of this work, creating abstract settings that allude to the organic interweaving of nature displayed in a landscape. Simultaneously, the title functions as a play on the idea of authorship: in Portuguese the title of the series can also be read as Pais-agem (meaning "Fathers act"), the paternal action – which can be associated with the artist's creative act.

*Sobre alegria e esquecimento # 01*,  
2020  
collage  
58 x 58 cm | 22.8 x 22.8 in



*Sobre alegria e esquecimento # 03,*  
2020  
collage  
3 pieces of 58 x 116 cm | 22.8 x 45.7 in











*Hotel Solidão* [Hotel Solitude], on the other hand, is based on an ample collection of the Brazilian magazine “Grande Hotel”, including issues ranging from 1947 to 1955. In this series, Silveira uses covers produced by Italian illustrators, which he carefully selects, sanitizes, cuts and pastes onto cardboard paper. With this, he creates compositions that stand out for their impactful multi-layered physicality and peculiar colorful appearance.









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## installations

Many of Marcelo Silveira's works feature an outstanding spatial quality, either in exploring corporeality through the amassment of two-dimensional media or in his particular placement of sculptural works within the exhibition spaces. In fact, some works appropriate the seriality associated with minimalism in an original manner, creating installation/sculpture hybrids. Such practices can be seen in *A grande tela* (2012), which seems to dematerialize the canvas into tangles of linen kept in bell jars; just as in *Cabeluda* (2006), where overhanging structures made of horsehair transform the exhibition site.





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Other works, such as *Rua da Usina* (2005-07) and *Capítulo um* (2004), use and manipulate light, in an effort to exemplify the ways in which one is able to alter perception. As for *Tudo ou nada* (2004-05), Silveira creates a site within the gallery – a structure made of wood, leather, fabric, glass, and acrylic, that works as a display case, or vitrine –, to establish a dialogue with the commercial aspect of the exhibition space that it occupies.



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## books and other multiples

Within Marcelo Silveira's production, the artist's book synthesizes his practice of gathering and collecting, as well as the intimate quality of his works. This medium allows the artist to explore – through objects designed to be experienced individually, from up-close –, many different images and compositions. Some examples of this practice include series of works developed in 2015, such as: *Lições Modernas*; *Muito pelo contrário*; and *Da série desenho de casa*, yet he first explored the artist's book in 2004 with the work *Livro do armazém*, a stamp-printed publication on bible paper for the relative transparency of the sheets to allow the printing to 'contaminate' through the pages.

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*Da série modernas 2*, 2015  
book  
43 x 18 x 23 cm | 16.9 x 7.1 x 9.1 in





According to curator Daniel Rangel: “in this series of artist’s books, words remain hidden. These publications are addressed as parcels of shapes, colors, and enigmas. Stacks of hidden wisdom, like books on unreachable library shelves. Imagination is activated by the titles and names seen in small collections of similar books or in encyclopedias and dictionaries. Both the research method and the collecting practice are recurrent in the artist’s production. His operating method resembles that of a research scientist, who learns from external elements, performs experiments in the lab, and periodically reveals his discoveries.”

*Da série modernas 1*, 2015  
book  
25 x 58 x 18 cm | 9.8 x 22.8 x 9.1 in



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nara roesler

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**são paulo**

avenida europa 655,  
jardim europa, 01449-001  
são paulo, sp, brasil  
t 55 (11) 2039 5454

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**rio de janeiro**

rua redentor 241,  
ipanema, 22421-030  
rio de janeiro, rj, brasil  
t 55 (21) 3591 0052

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**new york**

511 west 21<sup>st</sup> street  
new york, 10011 ny  
usa  
t 1 (212) 794 5038

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info@nararoesler.art

www.nararoesler.art