

Funduras
Solange Pessoa
Apr 4 – May 11, 2024

O mundo – este arrepio concêntrico: olho fixo por onde toda a matéria contempla o espaço descentrado. The world – this concentric shiver: A fixed eye through which all matter contemplates decentered space.

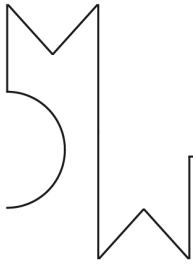
— Herberto Helder

In *Funduras*, Solange Pessoa presents an unexpected quality of minerals: Weightlessness. The artist mobilizes something that is removed from our imaginary and the language of stones and brings geological forces from the depths of the earth to the surface. From surface and weightlessness, singular chromatic movements stand out. Along this path, from charcoal and genipap pulp to the green of patina, resembling stone and bronze, they pass through colors and form from new relationships of matter, like the fusion of silver with crystal. And in addition to the chromatic axis of these unique relationships, there are the notable orange bonds in the compositions of her paintings.

Here's a geology lesson from Solange Pessoa: Everything comes from the earth. Composing unusual environments, Pessoa unveils everything concealed underground, allowing the earth's secrets to emerge in a dreamlike way through the affinities she creates. Through the creation of unique settings, Pessoa reveals hidden aspects of the earth, which manifest themselves in a dreamlike manner through the connections she establishes. With her installations, paintings, drawings, ceramics, sculptures, and video works, Solange Pessoa constructs landscapes that belong to an underground realm – in so doing she welcomes elements that were once concealed from human perception to exist in the present and populate it with diverse artistic forms. The artist crafts a dream of the earth. This is the concrete matter of the oneirism she has produced over the years. Her works take decades to form and, in the most immediate dimension, attract visitors who come into contact with each part of the exhibition.

The first two parts of the exhibition set up a passage through Solange Pessoa's mineral gardens, as we continue to circle the earth from there. The first part is located at the gallery's entrance, where black ceramics are arranged on the wall and floor. In the adjoining space, to the left, drawings with genipap and charcoal, *Frugívoros* (frugivores). The basic shapes drawn represent a return to imagery from the botanical world, which can be well positioned from the memory of genipap with charcoal as terrestrial fusions. These hybrid and fruitful forms seduce for a night engendered by the artist.

Solange Pessoa is grounded in the most essential elements, orchestrating them in terms of matter and memory. It is through the earth's minerals, fire, air, and water that we are struck by formations that escape any purely geological manifestation. There's a spirit in the stones that takes on breath and a plastic will as they assert themselves in space as entities with language. Before labeling this gesture "animistic," one must situate it in the wider context of Solange Pessoa's work since it is rather a state of invention of another place. Never lending herself to a purely imaginary or contingently concrete approach, the artist interweaves the geological with the unconscious of the human species. With the exhibition's attention turned to highly varied human and geological phenomena, the stones proposed in *Funduras* are imbued by the artist with a transition from non-human to human time. As a result, many of the titles proposed by the artist form metamorphic links between matter and memory.



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Verdilitas are pieces in which bronze and stone are fused together. These are fuchsite stones which, as well as being greenish, produce a patina-like effect when in contact with bronze. If the artist has a habit of combining contrasting materials such as bronze and plumage in her pieces, this time they show hybrid bodies in terms of substance, protected by the pigmentation that binds them together. Occupying wall and floor space, these reliefs partially emphasize that a so-called accident is nothing more than a prolonged encounter on a vast scale of time. *Verdilitas* are pieces that keep this non-human encounter in action.

Another unconventional encounter is the *Deliria Deveras* installation. Nine pieces of silver with varying dimensions are inserted, distributed over twenty tons of crystal. The silver is joined to the crystal. The installation combines brilliance and reflection. Light plays a fundamental role as a corresponding physical element of the installation participating vehemently in the space with variations throughout the day. Once again, the irregular and the regular meet. These nine pieces are entities that share the same body and are distributed throughout the myriad of crystals. Instead of returning the image of the onlookers, they invite the gaze: A permanent “vision,” myriads, capable of leading to delirium, to step outside oneself. Our fascination with the mineral world is tied to a collective unconscious that activates a species-wide memory reflecting our long journey across the earth. With this, the artist conveys the vital scope of minerals that are being combined with images, as with the *Solarengas 2* series, which comprises eight paintings, each measuring three by four meters.

Solarengas 2 is an unfolding of the *Solarengas 1* series, exhibited at Mendes Wood DM, New York in 2023. They are part of earthy paintings made from the artist’s personal archaeological research in churches in Bolivia and Peru. These motifs also circulate through popular Amerindian, Caboclo, and Quilombola (maroon) dwellings in the hinterlands of Brazil. In addition, these forces combine with Etruscan imagery that, in another context, could be called tropical frescoes. In these works, there is a memory of the dust of dirt roads and landscapes that intersperse fields, fruit, and crops. At no point does the artist leave what we might call the ages of the earth.

Funduras stems from this archaeological gesture that Solange Pessoa presents to the public. Her excavations also refer to the common imaginary that we share with diverse peoples, thus creating a metaphysical or supra-sensory dimension without the risk of falling into the illusion of any mysticism. These investigations include a range of references that are not foreign to cinema because, following Glauber Rocha, author-director of *The Age of the Earth* and *Entranced Earth*, one can observe that the artist is conducting a non-human trance of substances. In investigating the mineral world, Solange Pessoa elaborates and exposes relationships that are both infinitesimal and infinite in the realm of terrestrial forms and, above all, in her ability to make them, through artworks, assimilable to our organization of senses.

It is this millennia-old silence of stones, bronzes, crystals, and silver that henceforth becomes part of our language, our gestures, and our imagination until it embeds itself in our spirit. This mineral cinema can be experienced in the video *Delongas*, where, on a dark background, the most elementary movements of matter are witnessed. As much as the Mendes Wood DM space offers us a footing, the artist guides us through the earth’s telluric night and exposes us to the clearness of a mineral language, showing us that the ages of the earth are many.

— Eduardo Jorge de Oliveira

Mendes
Wood
DM