

July 2–October 26, 2025

Solange Pessoa: Catch the sun with your hand

Aspen Art Museum

“My work is about time. The slow time of matter. Not human time, but geological time-memory in the form of sediment.”

Through sculpture, drawing, ceramics, installations, and videos, Solange Pessoa examines the relationships between body, landscape, and the symbolic associations embedded within both.

Pessoa is deeply influenced by her surroundings, particularly the natural environment of her native Brazil, in which the mining of iron ore, gemstones, gold, and other minerals is a prevalent force. As such, Pessoa’s work is rooted in the telluric relationship between the landscape and the body. Moved by the experiments of other Brazilian artists such as Lygia Clark, Tarsila do Amaral, Maria Martins, and Tunga, her pieces often evoke cycles of regeneration, using tactile materials like wood, clay, and stone to create forms that resemble organic entities. The artist combines abstraction with references to the body, producing visceral works that suggest both fragility and strength. These pieces speak to the temporality of both human and nonhuman life, conjuring the physical and emotional processes of growth, aging, and decay.

Many of her pieces are imbued with a sense of ritual and spiritual energy, drawing from the symbolic traditions of Minas Gerais in southeastern Brazil, a land with complex histories of biodiversity, industry, and colonial conflict.

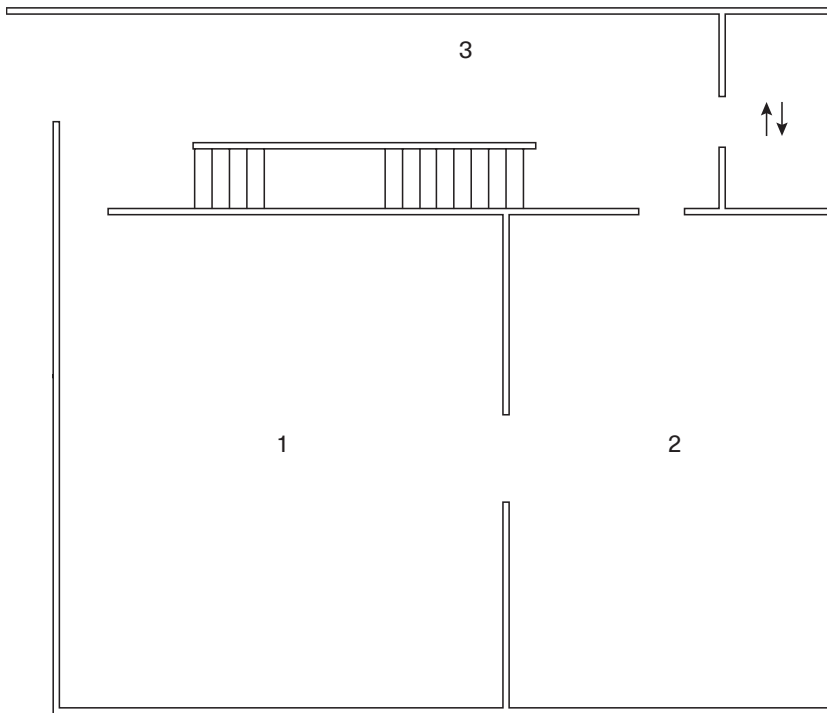
Pessoa’s practice is marked by a commitment to exploring the boundaries between the tangible and the intangible. Her works challenge the viewer to reconsider the body and nature not just as physical entities but as vessels for deeper meanings and emotional truths. Since the 1980s, Pessoa has explored the transmutation of bodily fluids and organic matter such as blood and human hair to recount the cycles of life and death.

Pessoa’s exhibition *Catch the sun with your hand* brings together four bodies of work across soapstone, ceramics, crystals, and organic materials. Many of her installations, including those in this exhibition, require years to complete, and even then, they are not fixed, remaining subject to change and evolving like cells that replicate, aggregate, and expand their biological nature.

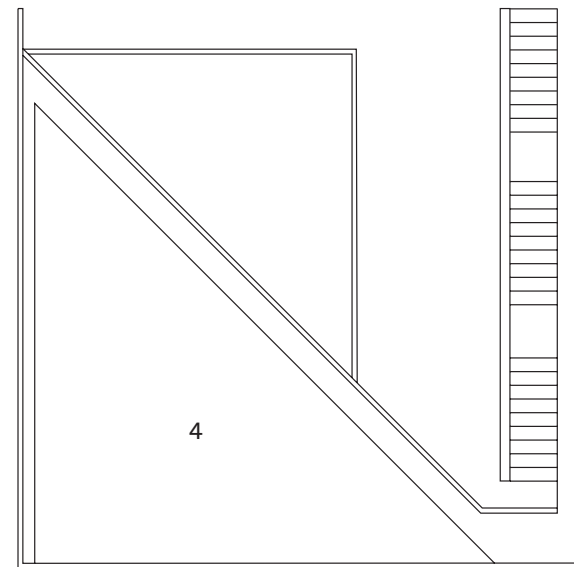
Solange Pessoa (b. 1961, Ferros, Brazil) lives and works in Belo Horizonte. Her selected solo institutional exhibitions include *Pilgrim Fields*, Tramway, Glasgow (2025); *Solange Pessoa*, Kunsthau Bregenz, Austria (2023); *Longilong*, Ballroom Marfa, Texas (2019); *Metaflor-Metaflora*, Museu Mineiro, Belo Horizonte (2013); Museu de Arte da Pampulha, Belo Horizonte (2008); Museu da Inconfidência, Ouro Preto (2000); Palácio das Artes, Belo Horizonte (1995); and Centro Cultural São Paulo (1992). Pessoa has participated in numerous group exhibitions in Brazil and abroad, including *Unravel: The Power and Politics of Textiles in Art*, Barbican Centre, London (2024); Fondation Cartier pour l’art contemporain, Triennale di Milano, Milan (2024); The 59th International Biennale di Venezia: *The Milk of Dreams*, Venice (2022); *Reclaim the Earth*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2022); *Living Worlds*, Fondation Cartier, Lille (2022); *Elementos Vitales: Ana*

Mendieta in Oaxaca, OA Juarez, Oaxaca (2021); *This Morning, in the Sweet Torpor of the Great Forest, is Like Every Morning in the World*, Country SALTS, Bennwil, Switzerland (2020); *Invenção de Origem*, Estação Pinacoteca, São Paulo (2018); *La Fin de Babylone. Mich wundert, dass ich so fröhlich bin! KölnSkulptur #9*, Cologne (2017); *New Shamans* (2016), *High Anxiety* (2016), and *No Man’s Land: Women Artists* (2015), Rubell Family Collection, Miami; *Arte e Patrimônio*, Paço Imperial, Rio de Janeiro (2014); *Arqueologia das Terras Altas*, 4th Bienal do Mercosul, Porto Alegre (2003); *Mostra do Redescobrimento*, CAPC musée d’art contemporain, Bordeaux (2001); *Heranças Contemporâneas* (1999) and *Encontros e Tendências* (1993), Museu de Arte Contemporânea de São Paulo; and *No Existen los Limites*, Hospital Matarazzo, São Paulo (1996).

Lower Level



Rooftop



List of works

1. *Bags – Aspen version*, 1994–2025
Linen bags, earth, minerals, charcoal, bones, flowers, poems, roots, pigments, seeds, feathers, stones, and other organic materials
149⁵/₈ × 157¹/₂ in.

Pessoa's *Bags* installation, seen here on the Museum's lower level, was first created in 1994 and is continually adapted for each new setting. The iteration of *Bags – Aspen version* (2023–25) has been reworked in response to the natural environment of the Roaring Fork Valley and the American West. For these installations, Pessoa fills towering walls of burlap sacks with soil, plant matter, bones, seeds, spices, and poems to create a living, universal, multisensory archive. Visitors are encouraged to sift through the abundant materials spilling into and from the sculptures, and to sense the living lands of Minas Gerais and Aspen. Visitors encounter printed images of Christo and Jeanne-Claude's environmental installation *Valley Curtain* in nearby Rifle, CO, and albums from Brazilian musicians Milton Nascimento and Gal Costa as an ode to the Tropicália movement, a Brazilian artistic and musical movement that emerged in the late 1960s as a countercultural revolution against Brazil's military dictatorship of 1964–85.

2. *Deliria Deveras*, 2021–24
Edition of 3 + 1 AP (1/3)
Crystals and 14 pieces of silver
Dimensions variable

Deliria Deveras features fourteen silver pieces inserted and distributed over twenty tons of crystal mined from the artist's hometown. Light plays a central role, constantly changing the installation's physical appearance and challenging our sense of perception. According to Pessoa, "materials exist in connection with thoughts and intuitions. They call us and choose us, they attract our perception and curiosity, and their untransferable nature and mysteries require research and close observation."

3. *Florasceas*, 2019
Composition of 9 ceramics
Dimensions variable

Works from Pessoa's *Florasceas* series (2019)—abstract red ceramic vessels with curved edges—are installed in the corridor outside the galleries, emerging from the wall like bodily protuberances. The product of meticulous shaping by Pessoa, these works signify a break from the stark geometries of Brazilian modernism. Touch emerges as a primary sense for the artist, who gives form to corporeal sensation.

4. *NIHIL NOVI SUB SOLE (fragments)*, 2019–21
Carved soapstone
Dimensions variable

Working outdoors has been a constant in Pessoa's forty-year practice. On the Museum rooftop, Pessoa's carved soapstone sculptures, whose collective title, *NIHIL NOVI SUB SOLE*, translates as "nothing new under the sun," demonstrate the pliability of materials as metaphoric resources.

For Pessoa, soapstone is an intimate yet foreign medium suffused with history and distant memories. Once ubiquitous as a material for eighteenth-century colonial architecture, including fountains and statues, soapstone is here returned to a more primordial state: the artist shapes it with her hands, leaving her sculptures to weather under the sun, and allowing for natural encounters to transform the work. The coils, swirls, and vine-like marks that adorn the sculptures' surfaces appear as symbols from an outlying past, echoing the mountainous landscape of Minas Gerais.

Aspen Art Museum

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Hours
Tuesday–Sunday, 10 AM–6 PM
Closed Mondays

Admission to the AAM is free courtesy of Amy and John Phelan.

Solange Pessoa: Catch the sun with your hand is curated by Claude Adjil,
Curator-at-Large.

Special thanks to Franklin Espath Pedroso, Gregory Bastos, Felipe Dmab,
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