



SAPHIRA VENTURA GALLERY PRESENTS

# GIOVANNA GOMES

OCCULT SURFACES: GEOGRAPHY OF THE INVISIBLE

Saphira Ventura Gallery presents

**Occult Surfaces: Geography of the Invisible**  
**Solo Exhibition by Giovanna Gomes**

Curated by  
**Alcinda Saphira**

Supported by  
**New York International Contemporary Art Society (NYICAS)**  
**Instituto Bienal Amazônia (IBA)**



**EXHIBITION**

**Occults Surfaces – Geography of the Invisible** presents a photographic investigation that invites the public to traverse the folds of the city, where the invisible reveals itself as a sensitive geography. From a transformative fifteen-day residency, Giovanna Gomes emerges as a narrator of contemplation: she does not merely record what is seen, but requests a presence that allows the eye to perceive new layers. **Curatorship and mentorship by Alcinda Saphira**, in partnership with the **New York International Contemporary Art Society** and **Saphira Ventura Gallery**, with the support of **Instituto Bienal Amazônia**, articulate research, career guidance, and curatorial practice, gathering curators from diverse institutions and a public witness to the experience of observation.

Designed to inhabit the tempo of the city, the exhibition moves from the poetry of abstraction beyond a regional vocabulary, expanding the North-Northeastern tessitura to the metropolis of New York. Silence, materialized in stone, water, pigment, and shadow, gains a voice and reveals what lies beneath the surface: the city is not merely seen; it is felt – in the furrows of light, in the insinuated absences, in the tiniest details that insist on not disappearing. Thus, the visible becomes memory, the ordinary becomes poetic coincidence, the concrete becomes possibility.

Hidden Surfaces is a tribute to the patience of looking: what waits, what slowly reveals itself, and, in doing so, transforms the observer. The exhibition invites the public to traverse the city's folds, not only to see but to inhabit the texture of the invisible, where time, materiality, and imagination converge to sediment meaning. May the aesthetic experience offered by the show dialogue with the body, with time, and with the courage to see beyond the immediate, providing a sensitive reading of the urban and a reverberation between what is visible and what is felt.

# CURATORIAL PRINCIPLES

**Patience of the gaze:** recognizing the time of contemplation as a condition of revelation.

**Sensorial reading of the city:** inhabiting the urban texture as an experience of presence.

**Translation between regions:** crossing geographical vocabularies to build a common geography of the invisible.

**Materiality as voice:** the silence that becomes concrete presence.

## CURATORIAL STATEMENT

Occult Surfaces – Geography of the Invisible unfolds as a contemplative photographic inquiry that invites viewers to inhabit the folds of the city. Born from a transformative residency, Giovanna Gomes speaks through time, materiality, and presence, transforming what is visible into memory and what is ordinary the project bridles research and career guidance to reveal a geography of the invisible that transcends regional vocabularies, forging a sensorial dialogue between time, body, and urban texture. The exhibition seeks not only to be seen, but to be felt, inviting a patient, attentive gaze that uncovers the city's latent contours and sedimented meanings.

**Alcinda Saphira**

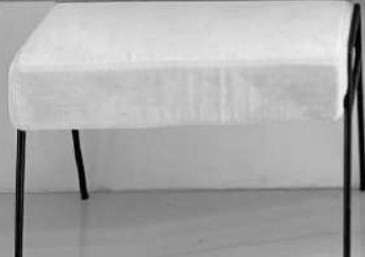
Curator

New York, September 4th, 2025



**ARTIST**

# BIOGRAPHY





## BIOGRAPHY

Giovanna Gomes is a Brazilian visual artist whose practice unfolds at the intersection of ancestry, memory, environment, and abstraction. Born in the Northeast of Brazil, she draws upon Black and Northeastern heritage as both subject and method, translating lived experience into a visual language that insists on presence and resists erasure. Her work engages with the materiality of the world—stone, soil, water, glass, and urban surfaces—transforming them through color and form into radiant abstractions.

These images are not descriptive documents but acts of invention: matter becomes metaphor, and texture becomes a site of imagination. In this process, Giovanna situates photography beyond its conventional function, opening it to the realm of the poetic and the political. Guided by the environment, her practice embodies what might be called a political abstraction: a mode where natural and urban fragments are reconfigured into chromatic fields that expose the tensions between visibility and invisibility, history and future, fragility and resilience.

This abstraction is not an escape from reality but a confrontation with it – foregrounding territories and bodies often relegated to the margins while asserting their centrality in a global artistic discourse. Giovanna’s work thus positions abstraction as a critical tool for reimagining presence, belonging, and ecology.

In her images, the environment is not backdrop but agent; each surface carries the weight of memory and the possibility of transformation. Her practice expands the possibilities of photography, proposing it as a field where history and landscape converge, and where vision itself becomes a form of resistance.

## ARTIST STATEMENT

My work begins with encounters. Fragments of stone, water, sand, or the traces of human presence. What guides me is imperfection, texture, and the unpredictable gestures of the world. I am not searching for a single subject but for moments where surfaces, whether natural or human-made, reveal themselves as skin, scars, or shifting geographies. As a Black woman artist, I approach abstraction as a political language.

Through photography, I dissolve boundaries between body and landscape, culture and environment, memory and present time. I am interested in how the lens teaches us to perceive life through fantasy, dream, and vigor, revealing connections that resist separation. The colors, textures, and movements in my work are not formal decisions but testimonies of freedom. They draw from the pulse of the Brazilian Northeast, from the vibrancy of Black ancestry, and from the urgency of living fully.

My photographs are not fixed representations but encounters between the concrete and the abstract, the ancestral and the contemporary. They invite the viewer to witness how imperfection itself becomes a site of transformation, where personal memory and collective history can coexist.



**ARTWORKS**



**What it is**



**What she sees**

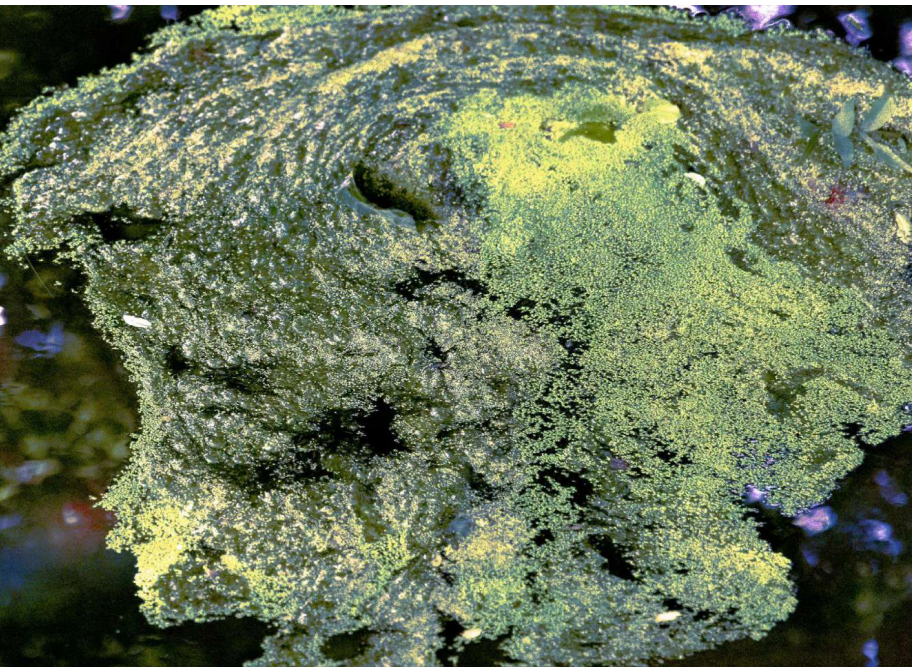


**GIOVANNA GOMES**

**CIDADE IMERSA**

Photography on mineral pigment print, 2025, 1 edition, 24 x 36 in

In this work, photography unfolds as a layered surface, where fragments of the city overlap without hierarchy or linear order. Reflections, glass, people, and traces of the natural world intersect in a visual field that resists clarity. The result is a portrait of New York not as skyline, but as skin—an epidermis of complexity where stories run into one another without asking permission. Giovanna's image captures the urgency of perceiving the city as a living organism, whose texture reveals both its vitality and its restlessness. It asks: what would it mean if the city could pause, if its layers could be seen all at once?

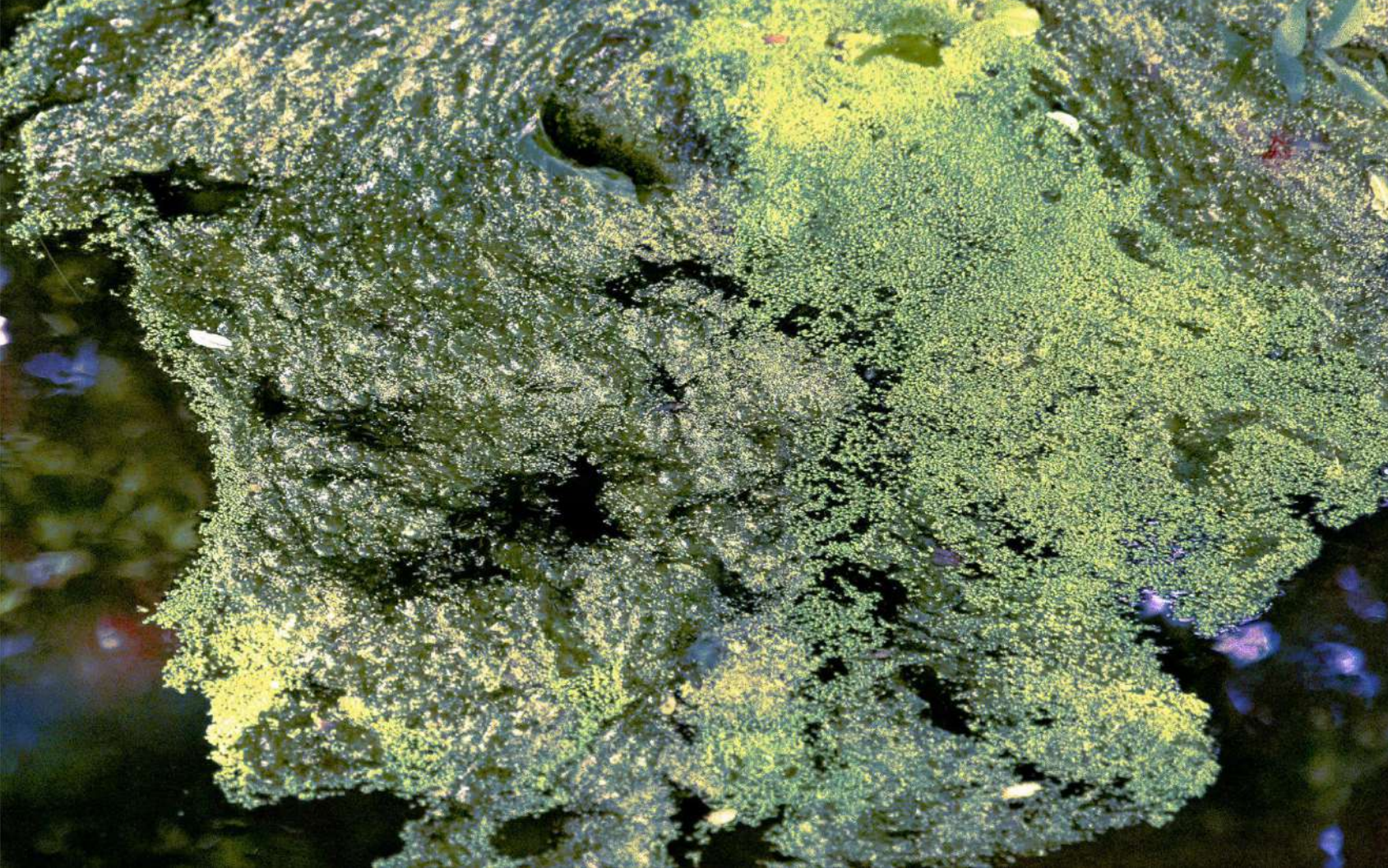


**GIOVANNA GOMES**

NO FUNDO EU TE VEJO (Deep Down I See You)

Photography on mineral pigment print, 2025, 1 edition, 24 x 18 in

This work emerges from a contemplative approach to urban nature. Against the velocity of New York, Giovanna turns her lens toward the delicate presence of moss, dissolving in light and shadow into a dance of unexpected forms. The photograph becomes a paradox: a dreamlike landscape discovered in the world's most frenetic city. Surfaces here are not flat but porous, offering the viewer an entry into what hides in plain sight. In this vision, to look deeply is to witness how life insists on appearing in the interstices of the metropolis.





**GIOVANNA GOMES**

**ESCAVACAO CINTILANTE**

Photography on mineral pigment print, 2025, 1 / 4 + 2 AP, 24 x 18 in

Concrete, often associated with rigidity and permanence, becomes in this work a site of revelation. Threads of darkness are interrupted by glimmers of light, producing a composition that feels both subterranean and celestial. Giovanna approaches the material as excavation: an act of uncovering what lies beneath. The result is a photograph that whispers rather than declares, marked by introspection, fragility, and surprise. In the silence of this surface, the possibility of renewal flickers.





**GIOVANNA GOMES**

RASTRO LUMINOSO

Photography on mineral pigment print, 2025, 1 edition, 30,75 x 5, 75 in

A single line of light transforms the surface of stone into a site of vision. In this work, Giovanna explores the threshold between texture and transcendence, where matter becomes charged with chromatic vibration. The elongated mark of brightness functions like a thread, guiding the gaze beyond the limits of the surface. The photograph suggests that to see is not to remain on the surface, but to follow the traces that light leaves behind—an invitation to imagine what lies beyond.



**GIOVANNA GOMES**

FERVOR

Photography on mineral pigment print, 2025, 1 edition, 33 x 6 in

Produced in the “paradise of waters” in Northeastern Brazil, this work translates the element of water into pure energy. The surface trembles with heat, movement, and emotion, as if vibration itself had taken visual form. Through thin layers and shifting transparencies, Giovanna constructs an image that is less about depiction than sensation. Fervor embodies intensity: a chromatic pulse that invites the viewer to contemplate water not as resource or background, but as force: fluid, radiant, and alive.

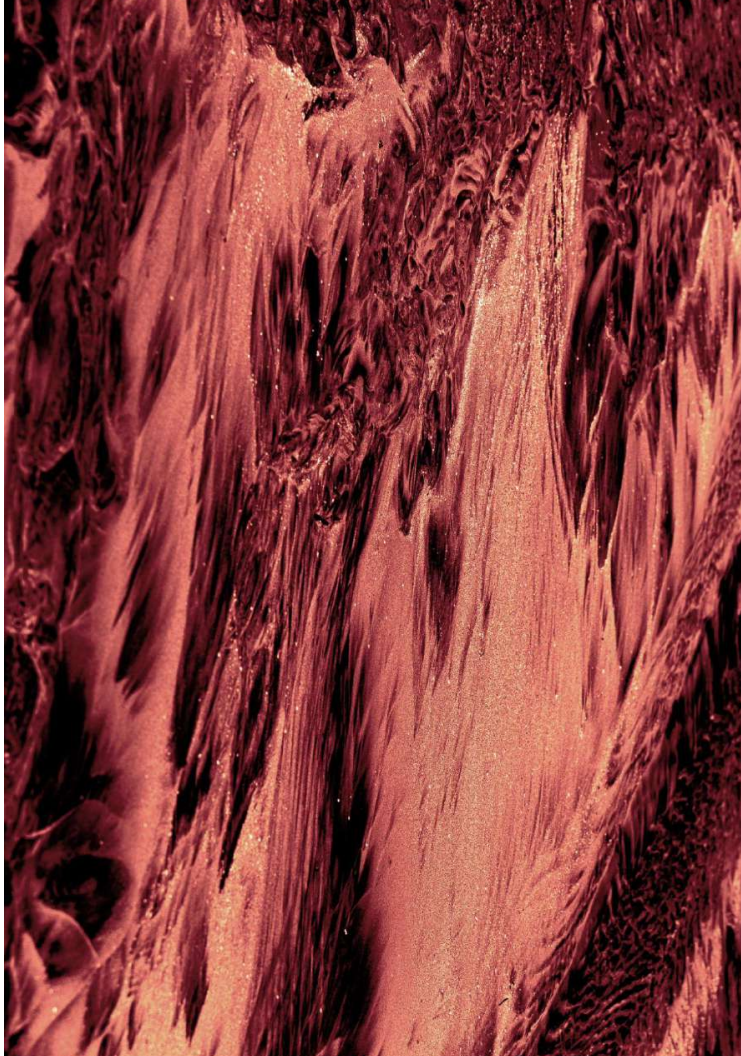


**GIOVANNA GOMES**

**GRAOS ESCONDIDOS**

Photography on mineral pigment print, 2025, 1 edition, 39,5 x 6 in

What is shared between the veining of a leaf and the scaffolding of human construction? This work dwells in that space of resemblance, where organic and artificial structures mirror one another. Giovanna frames the photograph as a dialogue between concealment and revelation, evoking the presence of what usually remains hidden. In this tension, the image becomes a meditation on fragility, resilience, and the subtle connections that bind the natural and the built environment.



**GIOVANNA GOMES**

**ARDENTE**

Photography on mineral pigment print, 2025, 1 / 4 + 2 AP, 12 x 17,25 in

Sand turns into fire in this poetic transformation of matter. Through intense color and fluid texture, Giovanna reimagines earth as flame, collapsing solidity into energy. The work evokes the impermanence of form, where each grain, each reflection, becomes a threshold between what is seen and what is felt. Ardente is both landscape and metaphor, a crossing between the visible and the imagined. It situates photography as a space where the most fragile material can ignite into vision.



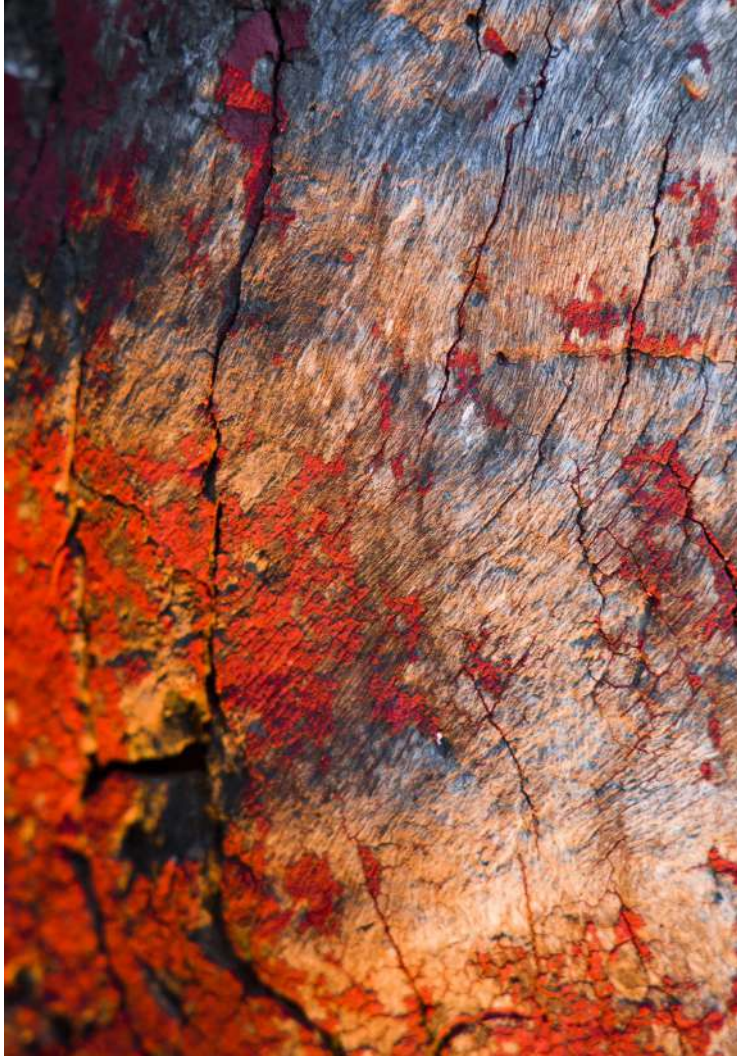
**GIOVANNA**

LABIRINTO

Photography on mineral pigment print, 2025 1 / 4 + 2 AP 12 x 17,25 in

**GOMES**

This work resists orientation: it has no beginning, middle, or end. Through the skin of glass, Giovanna constructs an image of ephemerality where the act of looking itself becomes a form of disorientation. Patterns and reflections seem to precede the act of photography, as if they had always been waiting to be discovered. In Labirinto, vision becomes both fascination and loss—an immersion into surfaces that hold the paradox of transparency and opacity, clarity and mystery.



**GIOVANNA**

CORACAO

DO

**GOMES**

SERTAO

Photography on canvas, 2024, 1 / 4 + 2 AP, 6,5 x 8,25 in

With precise attention to nature's rarest gestures, Giovanna turns her gaze toward the Northeastern Brazilian landscape, transforming its overlooked details into radiant abstraction. The work affirms the sertão not as margin but as center, where vibrancy and resilience converge. Flowing colors and textures celebrate the authenticity of the natural world, revealing it as protagonist rather than background. In *Coração do Sertão*, landscape becomes memory, presence, and affirmation—a testimony to the vitality of place and the imagination it inspires.



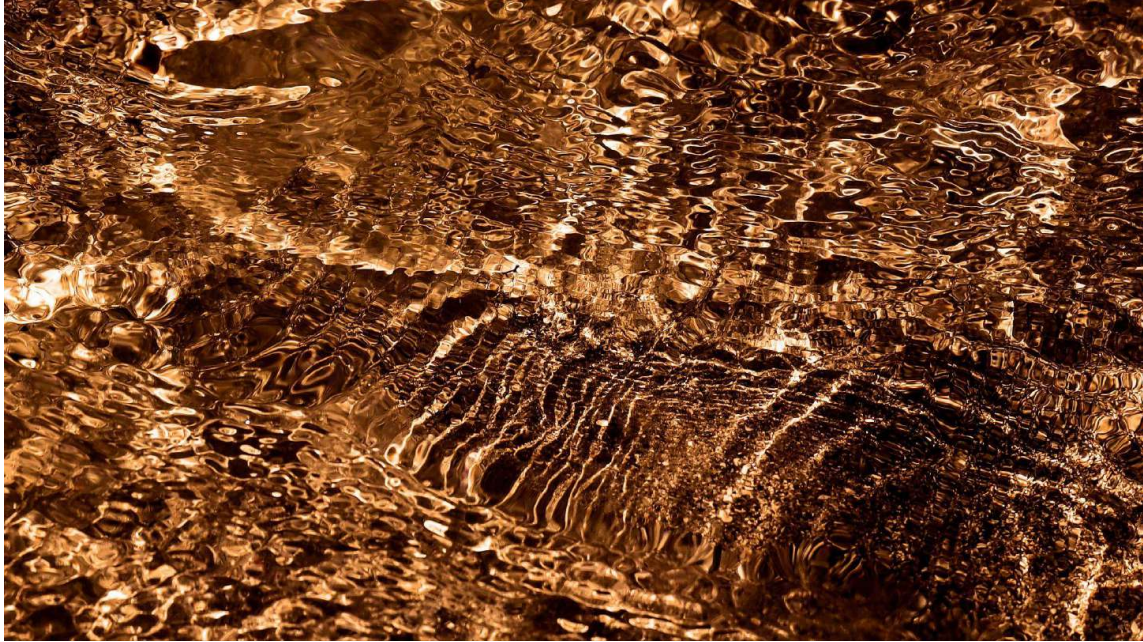
**GIOVANNA**

ENTRELACE

Photography on canvas, 2024, 1 / 4 + 2 AP, 6,5 x 8,25 in

**GOMES**

Stories and layers intersect in a poetic and visual dance in soft tones, which complement each other between light, brightness and shadow. This work is about hiding and also appearing. Coming and going. Ascending and declining. Movement and emotion guides life.



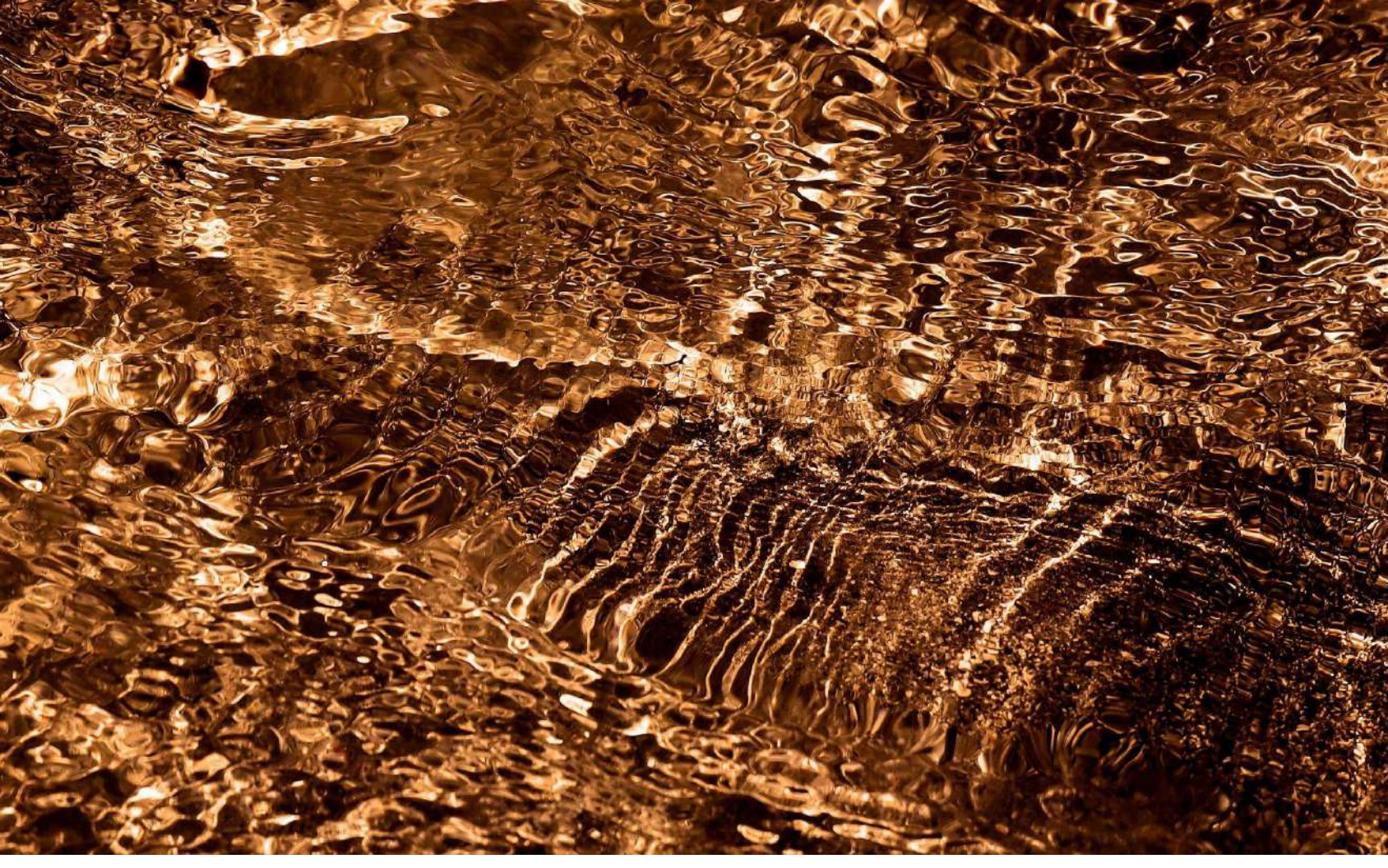
**GIOVANNA GOMES**

MILAGRE

Digital, 1 / 4 + 2 AP, 14 x 21 in

Abstract photograph of Brazilian waters. Milagre emerges from the depths of Northeastern Brazil's waters, where gold diffuses into liquid darkness. Rather than a simple reflection of the sea, it is a meditation on fluidity itself. Light breaks, bends, and escapes. The piece carries an elemental freedom, inviting the viewer into an immersion where water becomes both mirror and passage.





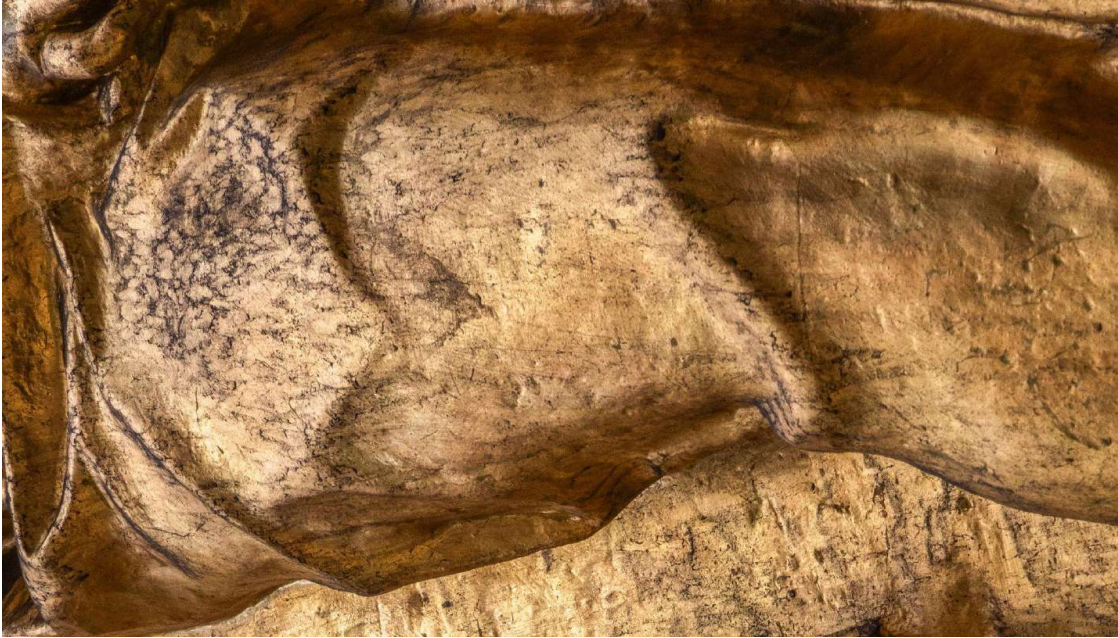


**GIOVANNA GOMES**

SKIN OF THE CITY I, 2025

Medium: digital, 1 / 4 + 2 AP, 43 x 24,5 in

Abstract photograph, New York. In Skin of the City I, architecture loses its rigidity. The fragment of a façade slips into something almost tactile, like an epidermis stretched and breathing. The city is no longer distant and monumental; it draws close, unsettlingly intimate, as though its surface might touch us back.



**GIOVANNA GOMES**

SKIN OF THE CITY II, 2025

Medium: digital, 1 / 4 + 2 AP, 43 x 24,5 in

Abstract photograph, New York Skin of the City II captures a metropolis in mutation. Steel and concrete fold into serpentine textures, a reminder that cities molt, shed, and regrow like living organisms. What appears as permanence reveals itself as process, a skin that will inevitably crack, reform, and disguise itself anew.





**GIOVANNA GOMES**

SKIN OF THE CITY III, 2025

Medium: digital, 1 / 4 + 2 AP, 43 x 24,5 in

Abstract photograph, New York In Skin of the City III, the urban fragment turns ambiguous: half architecture, half anatomy. What once was industrial seems to pulse, as if blood might circulate beneath its surface. The work unsettles the boundary between body and structure, proposing that the city may not only shelter us but also embody us.

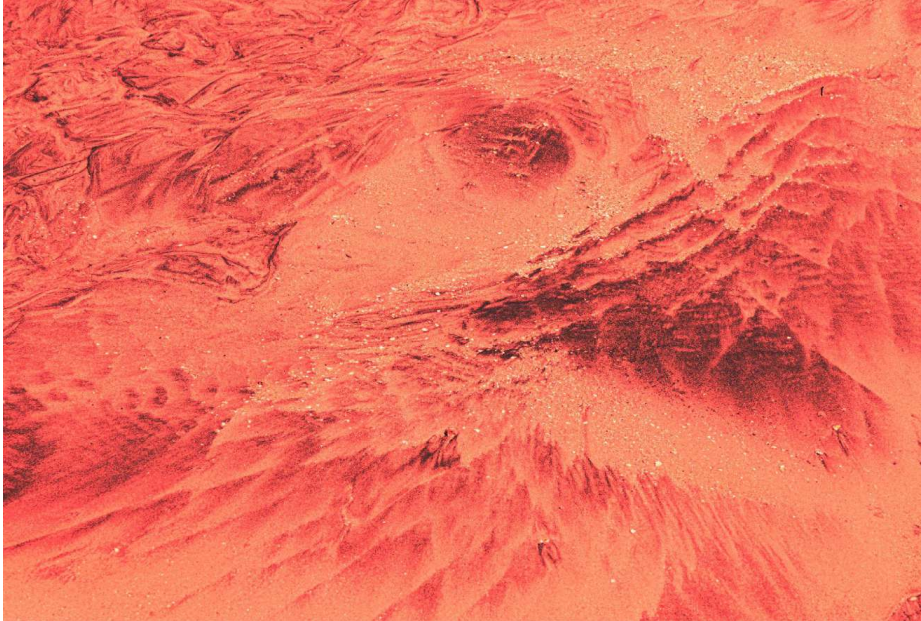


**GIOVANNA GOMES**

SKIN OF THE CITY IV, 2025

Medium: digital, 1 / 4 + 2 AP, 43 x 24,5 in

Abstract photograph, New York The final piece, Skin of the City IV, drifts toward landscape. Its folds and shadows recall cliffs, ravines, or geological layers, dissolving the distinction between built matter and natural terrain. The city becomes a hidden topography, an invisible geography waiting to be read not with the eyes of a passerby but with the gaze of an archeologist of surfaces.

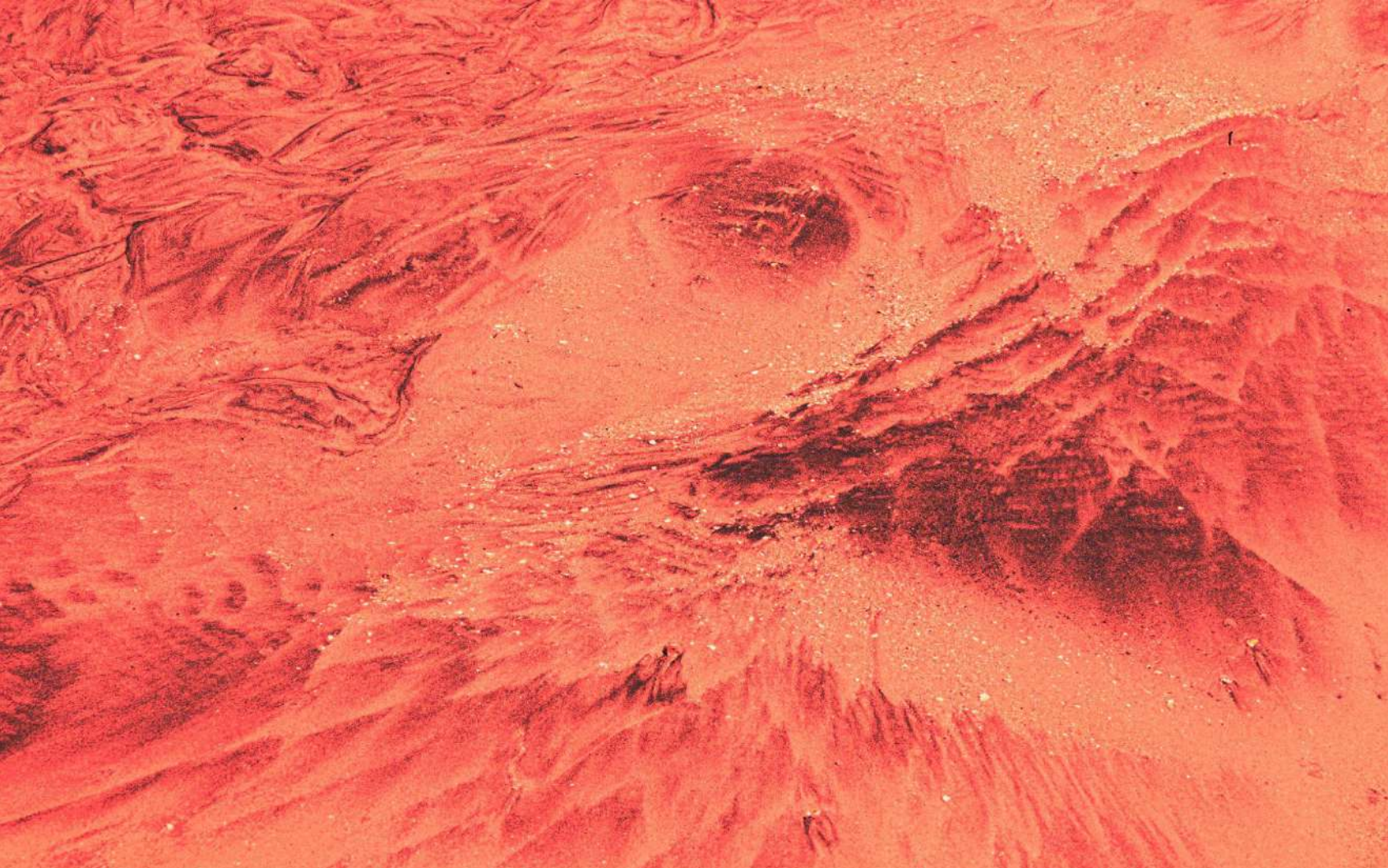


**GIOVANNA GOMES**

**FREEDOM**

Photography on canvas 2025, 1 / 2 + 1 AP , 50 x 40 in

Freedom was born in solitude, on a vast Brazilian beach where the sand unfolded like an open canvas, after hours of tracing gestures, spirals, and silent rhythms until the image revealed itself. The color red became essential, as an eruption of heat, urgency, and vitality. It carries the intensity of the sun, the melting of skin, and the raw pulse of joy that creation brings. For the artist, the work is not only a photograph but a declaration: in that deserted place, free from interruption, she discovered the liberty of shaping the world through her own gaze.







**GIOVANNA GOMES**

RAW STONE 2025

Medium: Digital, 1 / 4 + 2 AP, 43 x 24,5 in

Raw Stone A fragment of columbite, small enough to rest in the palm, becomes a mirror of the world. In Raw Stone, Giovanna directs it toward the sky, transforming mineral density into a radiant blue. The stone absorbs and refracts what surrounds it, shifting between opacity and light, weight and air. What seems inert becomes a site of reflection, an intimate cosmos condensed in raw matter.





**GIOVANNA GOMES**

VIDRO INVENTADO 2025

Medium: Digital, 1 / 4 + 2 AP, 43 x 24,5 in

Vidro Inventado. In Vidro Inventado, a domestic window in Ceará becomes an abstract surface of distortions and translucence. The glass, old and imperfect, carries the weight of memory while bending the present into fluid forms. Transparency into invention, showing that the most familiar materials can dissolve into new visual vocabularies when seen through the lens of attention and ancestry.





**GIOVANNA GOMES**

MATTER 2025

Medium: digital, 1 / 4 + 2 AP, 7 x 4 in

Matter confronts us with density: a dark, reddish fragment captured from the trunk of a New York tree. Exhibited alongside the very element it portrays, the photograph becomes both document and transformation. The pairing insists that matter is never singular, it is at once physical, symbolic, and cultural. Here, bark is no longer only bark; it becomes an interface between body, memory, and the act of seeing.



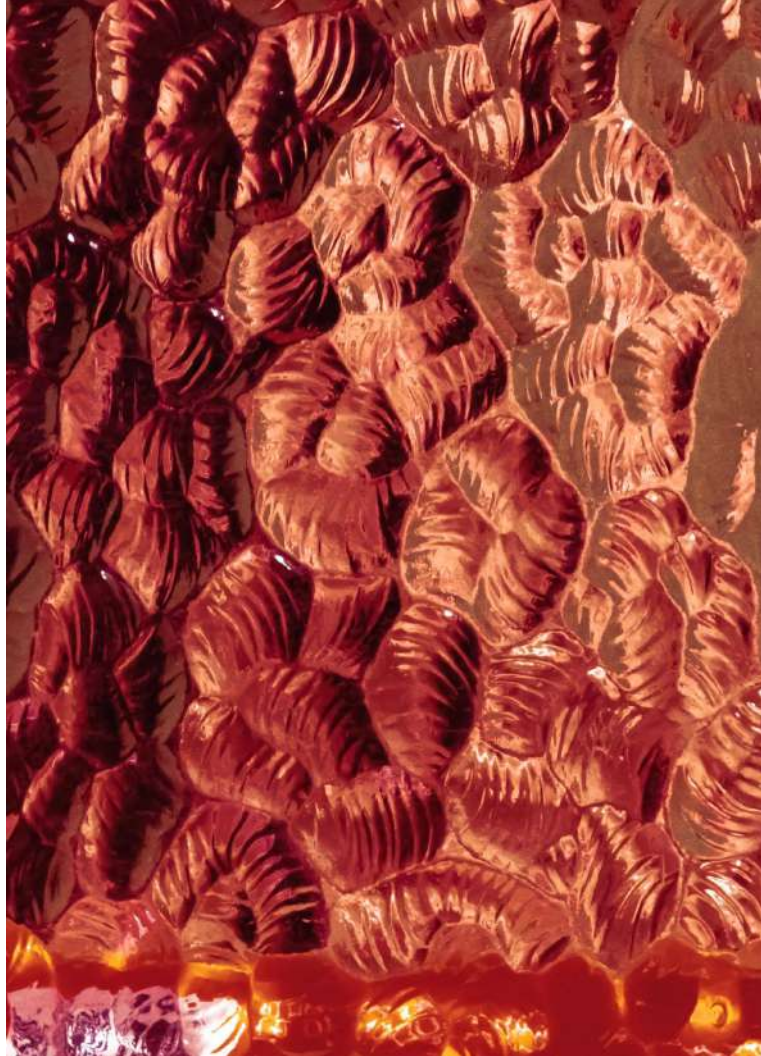
**GIOVANNA GOMES**

RAW

2025 Medium: Digital, 1 / 4 + 2, AP 7 x 4 in

A small stone becomes visceral in Raw. Its entrail-like textures and crimson hues recall flesh, rupture, and the intimacy of what is usually hidden. The work refuses polish: it insists on the crude, the raw, the unrefined, making visible the beauty in imperfection and in the uncanny resemblance between mineral and body.





GIOVANNA GOMES

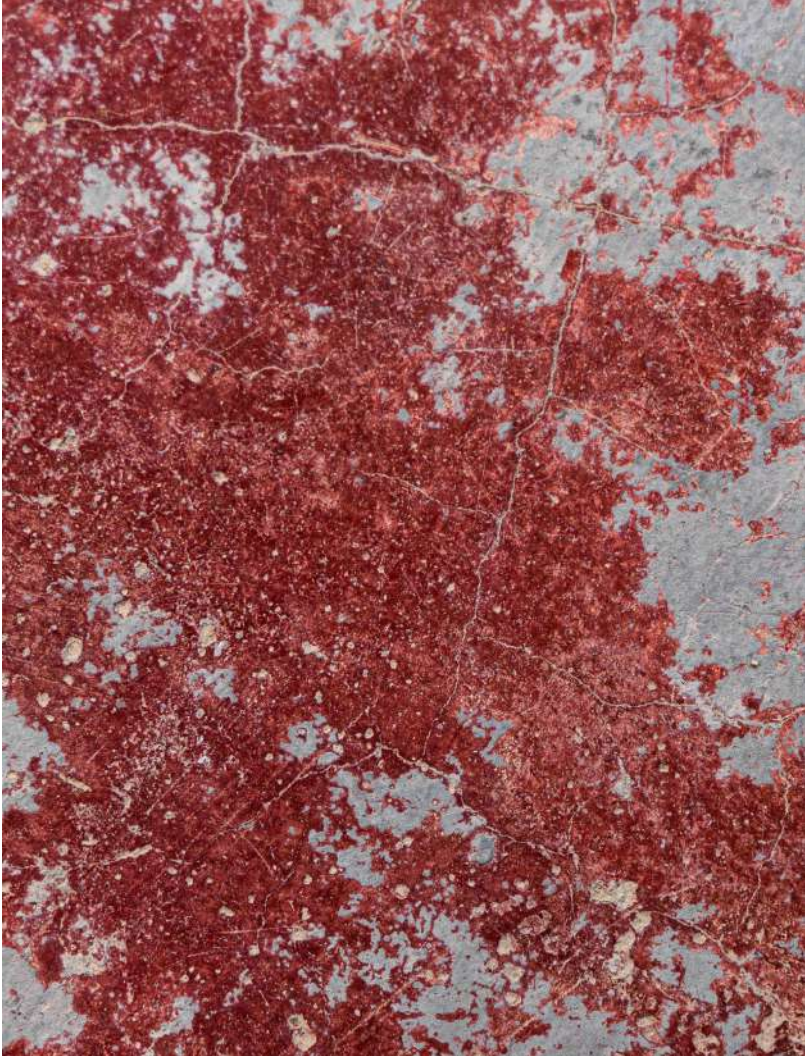
VIDRO INVENTADO II 2025

Medium: Digital, 1 / 4 + 2 AP, 43 x 24,5 in

Vidro Inventado II.

In this second iteration, the same window from the artist's family home reveals itself anew—this time refracted in red. Vidro Inventado II demonstrates how a shift in angle or color can alter perception entirely. What was once blue and serene becomes urgent, almost incendiary. The work suggests that even with repetition, difference thrives: the familiar always contains another face, another rhythm, another world.





**GIOVANNA GOMES**

CHAO 2025

Medium: Digital, 1 / 4 + 2 AP, 7 x 4 in

Taken in Mauriti, in the dry hinterlands of Ceará, Chão renders the cracked earth as a field of red explosions. What could be read as barrenness becomes luminous, vital, almost celebratory. The photograph is a testimony that even in scarcity, color persists and prosperity can be imagined. It is both a vision of survival and a reclamation of joy from the arid soil.



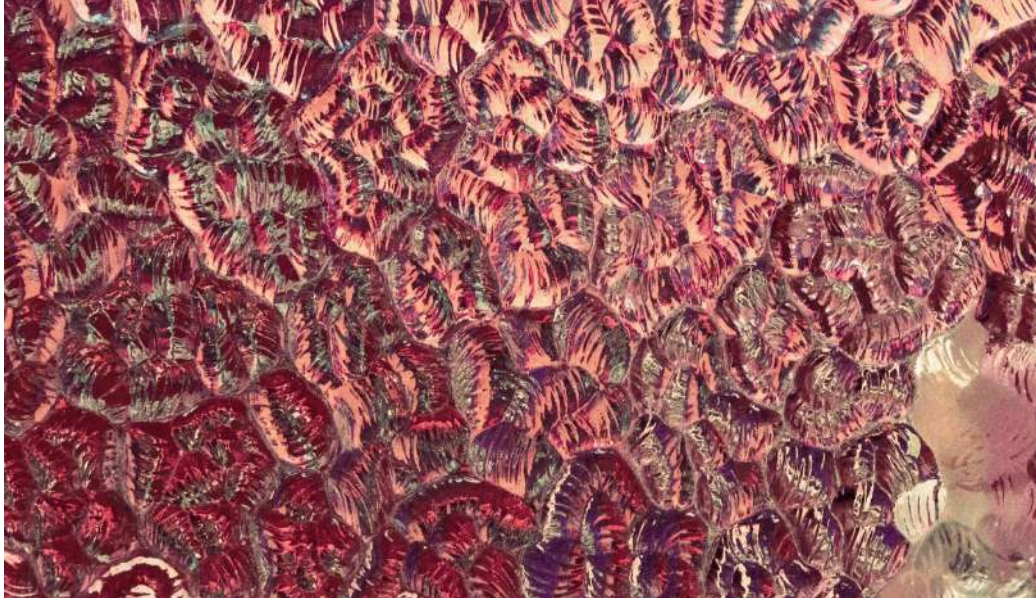
GIOVANNA GOMES

PELE, 2025

Medium: Digital, 1 / 4 + 2 AP, 16 x 28 In

Pele is drawn again from stone, yet it approaches the territory of flesh. White and red traces resemble scars, cuts, or veins, blurring the distinction between geological time and the fragility of human skin. The work reflects Giovanna's interest in how surfaces—whether rock, earth, or body—speak of both endurance and vulnerability. It is an image of resilience etched in matter.





**GIOVANNA GOMES**

VIDRO INVENTADO III 2025

Medium: Digital, 1 / 4 + 2 AP, 43 x 24,5 in

Vidro Inventado III amplifies transparency into spectacle. Glass here is neither neutral nor invisible; it is alive, refracting and vibrating as if charged with energy. The repetition across the series builds a rhythm of seeing. Each window fragment reminding us that vision itself is an invention, always partial, always in transformation.



Saphira Ventura

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