

Artist Spotlight: Valeska Soares—More than the Eye Can See

Posted on **January 27, 2011** by **Laura Hoffman**



Valeska Soares, *Untitled* (from "Entanglement" series), 1996; Cast beeswax and oil perfume; 48 x 50 x 12 1/2 in.; Gift of Heather and Tony Podesta Collection, Washington, DC

Brazilian sculptor and installation artist Valeska Soares investigates multi-sensory approaches and how memory and personality influence the viewers' perception of art. Soares has two artworks in *P(art)ners: Gifts from Heather and Tony Podesta*, on view through March 6. In *Untitled* (from *Entanglement* series), Soares creates both an olfactory and a visual experience. She carved two highly naturalistic mouths that each reveal a tongue and teeth, although their gender is unclear. Perfumed oil flows across the top of the wax slab from one mouth to another. Her other work, *Untitled* (from *Vanishing Point* series), employs mirrors to create a distorted view, evoking an imaginative and daydream-like quality.

Soares describes the challenges and uncertainties of the creative process: "You develop an idea, but if you're really sure of how the project is going to be perceived, there's no point in doing it. You have to allow yourself the possibility of failure, which would mean that all of the particulars of that situation could not be encompassed. If I allow myself that possibility, I learn things and can take a critical position toward what I do."



Valeska Soares, Untitled (from "Vanishing Point" series), 2002; Cast bronze, chromed; 11 1/4 x 7 7/8 x 3 1/2 in.; Gift of Heather and Tony Podesta Collection, Washington, DC

Born in 1957 in Belo Horizonte in the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais, Soares now resides in Brooklyn, New York, where she has been working for the past fifteen years, but still maintains a close connection to Minas. She received a Bachelor of Architecture from the Universidade Santa Úrsula, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (1987), a Post-Graduate Specialization Diploma in History of Art and Architecture at Pontificia Universidade Católica, Rio de Janeiro (1990), a Master of Arts from Pratt Institute, New York (1994), and a Ph.D. in Arts from New York University, New York (1994).

Soares has exhibited in numerous solo and group exhibitions and her work is in the collections of the Tate, London, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C., the Solomon Guggenheim Museum, New York, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, California, Centro de Arte Contemporânea, Inhotim, Brazil, and Centro De Arte Contemporânea, Malaga, Spain.

—Laura Hoffman is education intern at the National Museum of Women in the Arts and a graduate student at The George Washington University.

Works Cited

Martão, Silas. "Valeska Soares." *Frieze Magazine* Mar. 2008: n. pag. *Frieze*. Web. 24 Jan. 2011.
<http://www.frieze.com/issue/review/valeska_soares/>.

Muniz, Vik. "Valeska Soares." *BOMB Magazine* Winter 2001: n. pag. *Bombsite*. Web. 24 Jan. 2011.
<<http://bombsite.com/issues/74/articles/2353>>.