



*Acqua Alta*, 2019, handblown glass and water in 25 parts, dimensions variable

**Valeska Soares: *Acqua Alta***

Germantown: October 8–November 28, 2021

Alexander Gray Associates, Germantown presents *Acqua Alta* (2019), an iterative installation by Valeska Soares. *Acqua Alta* draws its name from the annual flooding that surges through the city of Venice, intensified in recent years by the effects of climate change. The installation is composed of hand-blown glass vessels of varying shapes and sizes, filled with water. Although its name and inspiration originally come from Venice, the vessels are filled from the nearest natural body of water in the location where it is presented. The variances in the color, opacity, and density of the water from each location are a succinct and evocative distillation of the effects of pollution—a problem that may look different from place to place but is nonetheless consistent and universal.

As is characteristic of Soares's work, *Acqua Alta* combines the artist's conceptual and formal elegance and refined composition with a profound emotionality. The bodies of water in each location necessarily evoke recognition and connection for its denizens, while providing a distinct visual locator for visitors. (The work feels different in Boca Raton than it does in Venice, for example.) In New York's Hudson Valley, a place with long histories of migration, colonialism, industry, and artistic production, the water is again imbued with multiple cultural and emotional meanings.

A through line in much of Soares's work is the exploration of loss, whether personal or collective. As humanity's shared experience of climate change intensifies, and as its consequences continue to sharpen, *Acqua Alta* brings forth—and, in a gesture of poignant futility, preserves—what we are losing, even as Soares's strategic deployment of aesthetic beauty gives shape and visible value to what is lost.

In 2018, a retrospective of Valeska Soares's work was on view at The Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, Brazil. She was the subject of the major mid-career survey, *Valeska Soares: Any Moment Now*, co-curated by Julie Joyce and Vanessa Davidson, at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, CA (2017) and the Phoenix Art Museum, AZ (2018). Previous surveys of Soares's work have been presented by the Museum de arte da Pampulha, Belo Horizonte, Brazil (2002) and the Bronx Museum of Art, NY (2003). She has been the subject of many one-person exhibitions, including at the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT (2017); The Jewish Museum, New York (2015); and Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey, Mexico (2003). Soares has also participated in numerous international exhibitions, including two Venice Biennales (2011, 2005); several São Paulo Biennials (2009, 1998, 1994); the Sharjah Biennial (2009); and the Taipei Biennial (2006). Other group exhibitions include Jardin infini. De Giverny à l'Amazonie, Centre Pompidou-Metz, Metz, France (2017) and the landmark Latin American exhibition, *Ultra Baroque: Aspects of Post Latin American Art*, Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, CA (traveled) (2000–03). Soares's artwork is included in many private and public collections, including the Bronx Museum of Art, NY; Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA; Dallas Museum of Art, TX; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C.; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA; Museum d'Art Contemporany de Barcelona, Spain; Solomon R. Guggenheim, New York, NY; Tate Modern, London, United Kingdom; Fundacion "la Caixa," Barcelona, Spain; The National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C.; Museu de Arte Contemporânea–MAC, São Paulo, Brazil; Museu de Arte Moderna–MAM, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Inhotim–Centro de Arte Contemporânea, Brumadinho, Brazil; Museo de Art Contemporáneo–MARCO, Monterrey, Mexico and others. Soares has been the recipient of multiple grants and awards, including the Coordenao de Aperfeioamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (CAPES) fellowship; The Getty Foundation; Anonymous Was a Woman Award; and the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship.

Alexander Gray Associates is a contemporary art gallery in New York City and Germantown NY. Through exhibitions, research, and artist representation, the Gallery spotlights artistic movements and artists who emerged in the mid- to late-Twentieth Century. Influential in cultural, social, and political spheres, these artists are notable for creating work that crosses geographic borders, generational contexts and artistic disciplines. Alexander Gray Associates is an organization committed to anti-racist and feminist principles. Alexander Gray Associates is a member of the Art Dealers Association of America.

New York: Tuesday–Saturday, 10:30 AM – 6:00 PM.  
Germantown: Friday–Sunday, 12:00 PM – 6:00 PM.