

BREATH OF THE EARTH



(RESPIRAÇÃO DA TERRA)



DENISE
MILAN



MARC POTTIER
Curator

DENISE MILAN, BREATH OF THE EARTH

August 2025 – February 2026

Rosewood Sao Paulo

An exhibition composed by sculptures in the gardens, and by photocollages from the series *Mist of the Earth* (2012) in the Art Library

Curated by Marc Pottier





MARC POTTIER

Curator

The breath of the Earth—or even more so, of the universe—and its myths, the moment “when matter and consciousness were one,” serve as inspiration for Denise Milan. She is a visionary and polymath artist, part shaman, part alchemist who, in this Rosewood gardens exhibition, seeks to show how the path of gold leads to our inner self. Milan enjoys exploring the relationships between the infinitely small and the infinitely large. Her inspirations, driven by a quest for the invisible that makes us live, guide her creations of bronze, stone, fossil, and crystal inscriptions, transcribing them into infinite creations. Sculptor? She normally does not transform materials, but assembles them, giving free rein to their brilliant insight. Poet? Her artwork is often accompanied by vertiginous verses, as in today’s exhibition *Breath of the Earth*. Visionary? She expands and intertwines her encyclopedic knowledge of all artistic and scientific disciplines, crystallizing her creative touch and reconciling us with the pulsations of an Earth we do not know.

In conversation with the *Olhar Mater* installation at the entrance to the Rosewood gardens—a sculpture installed last year that immediately seemed to marry with the garden’s energy—we present the exhibition *Breath of the Earth*. Five new works in other parts of the garden create a unique artistic path. This route expands the narrative of the already installed work, introducing a thematic and visual transformation that guides the passerby on an existential journey, enriching their experience of the space. For this tour, stromatolites were chosen—very ancient fossils, witnesses to the first organisms to perform photosynthesis. They are responsible for the oxygen gas that appeared on the planet about 3.5 billion years ago. The name comes from Ancient Greek language: *strōma/strōmatos*, “layer, stratum,” and *líthos*, “rock,” designating laminated biosedimentary rocks formed by microbial activity in aquatic environments from the Precambrian period.

To better understand her presentation, the artist offers all the keys to *Breath of the Earth*, a poem whose title was chosen for this exhibition:

*Like the white light that travels from star to star,
the path of golden light
leads
to our inner self.*

*We peer through matter
seeing in the primordial element
not the gold of possession, but the gold of the spirit.*

*Alchemical gold, born of fire and memory.
In its forms, there is not just gesture: there is an evocation of air—
the invisible breath that makes us live.*

*In primitive oceans,
stromatolites,
the beginnings of life on the planet,
opened paths,
released oxygen,
the Earth breathed for the first time.
Everything that lives began to pulse.*

*This same gesture
that brings breath
breathes from the stone,
awakens consciousness.*

*In the origin of languages,
in sacred mathematics,
forgotten knowledge vibrates
whispering to us—*

*where we come from,
who we are,
where we are going.*

*May the air, primordial breath,
inner golden light,
radiate, inspire, lead
once again
to the path of tomorrow.*

DENISE MILAN, 2025

Olhar Mater, 2023
160 x 25 cm
Quartzite, bronze, iron and glass





BETWEEN ENIGMA AND ENCYCLOPEDIA WONDER

This new series of sculptures is Denise Milan's way of connecting art to cultures, beliefs, dreams, and fictions, granting historical and anthropological depth to many of her reuses and appropriations. She sheds light on this quote from the famous ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle (384-322 BCE): "Art imitates and completes the movements that nature does not always bring to its end."

CELEBRATION OF GAIA

In the Rosewood gardens, she celebrates Gaia, the Earth. The first work, *Olhar Mater*, emerges like a radar connecting us to the world, while also symbolizing a stellar halo that links us to the infinitely large. It is also like an eye—the eye of a protective mother. The figure of the woman who gives life, who nurtures, is never far away in many of the works presented in this exhibition. The golden bronze central stone of the sculpture announces the journey and the invitation to enter the depths of the gardens to discover this golden path. As her poem indicates, along this path—so Brazilian yet also rooted in the great alchemical tradition proposed by the artist—she summons a web of countless references. It will be up to the viewer to unravel them and then give free rein to their own inspirations.

Oxigênio das Origens I, 2025
90 x 90 x 90 cm
Bronze





THE FIRST BREATHS OF THE EARTH

Released in 1968, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, the feature film by American director Stanley Kubrick (1928–1999), is today considered a masterpiece among science fiction classics. It illustrates various sequences, notably a sunrise seen from the interstellar void in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. The film symbolizes the dawn of the day but also the awakening to wisdom in Nietzsche's eponymous work, and the birth of humanity. The three evolutions of Man described in the film are the same as those envisioned by Nietzsche: the ape-man, the man, the superman. It seems that it is the film's monolith that transmits intelligence to the ape so that it becomes man. Many of Milan's works are based on basalt stones, like a matrix that could remind us of the first pulsations of the world, the first breaths of the Earth, that moment of communion between Man (no longer animal) and matter, of the birth of the first impulses.

Origênio das Origens II, 2025
50 x 148 x 100 cm
Bronze



SOPROURO

*evocation of air
the invisible breath that makes us live.*

DENISE MILAN, 2025

**Soprouro, 2025
300 x 300 cm
Bronze and basalt**



HYBRID COMPOSITIONS

Milan often seeks out rocks with human form to bring the mineral universe closer to our own, a way of showing that we are an integral part of Creation and therefore one of the elements of the Earth. The forms of her sculptures are hybrid compositions. We can see, in the Rosewood exhibition, Paleolithic Venuses with corpulent bodies revealing generous curves. Between 38,000 to 17,000 years ago, these figurines with common features were carved throughout Europe: a nakedness whose connection to fertility is consensual, considered the representation of a feminine ideal, the archetype of feminine beauty of the first Homo sapiens. But these phantasmagorical profiles—which some visitors to the exhibition may not see—can also evoke crucibles where gold is melted or, more prosaically, the growth rings of trees, connecting Milan's works from birth to death.

Imaginação Áurea III, 2025

60 x 120 x 120 cm

Bronze and basalt. Basalt shard floor, Portuguese mosaic style.



ETERNITY

Birth and death, but Denise Milan also addresses eternity. Sculptures in the shape of the “lemniscate” (∞) punctuate the exhibition, which ends with a halo of golden sunlight. She wishes to speak of infinity, of harmony, of the idea of a continuous cycle without beginning or end. This is undoubtedly an additional well-thought-out link in her golden path leading to our inner self. Gold is a metal with an exceptional lifespan. This durability is due to its inertness, which prevents it from reacting with other elements. It offers excellent resistance to oxidation, corrosion, acids, decomposition, and does not rust even in direct contact with seawater or freshwater. The only way to change the appearance of gold is to melt it. Recognized as a noble material since the dawn of time, gold has also been associated with the sacred, the divine, supernatural powers, and even immortality. Denise Milan invites us to the rebirth and eternity of our reflection.

Ciclo do Ouro – Destruição
e Renascimento, 2012
180 cm (95 kg)
Bronze



This exhibition is a true journey through history. Denise Milan, who imagines her own body as a crystal—a translucent body traversed by light—that seems to evoke the Big Bang. She begins our journey toward the origin of the Universe, which was born from the violent expansion of an extremely dense and extremely sensitive particle, 13.8 billion years ago. She envelops us in a whirlwind that carries us from the cosmos to our inner self, reviving and accelerating the original impulses of the creation of the world.

*Like the white light that travels from star to star,
the path of golden light leads
to our inner self.*

*Caminho de Ouroloz, 2025
160 x 80 x 80 cm
Bronze and basalt*



*The stones of Denise Milan crystallize the
mystery of the world to reconcile us with it,
by Marc Pottier, Dasartes magazine.*



Digital print on photographic paper with gold
leaf applied on aluminum

Tesouros subterrâneos, 2012
20 x 30 cm



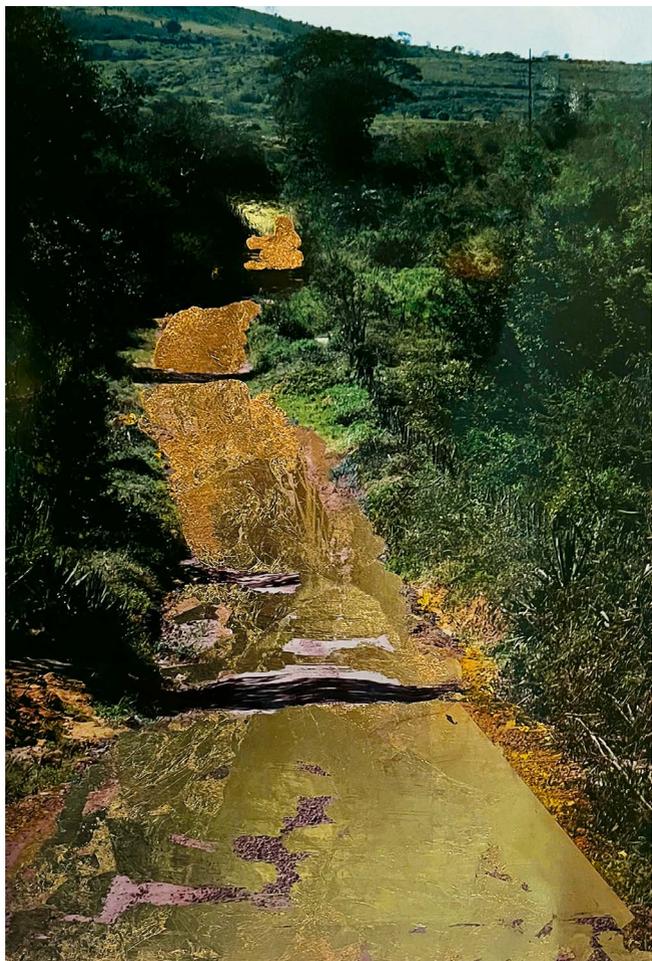
Do outro lado, 2012
20 x 30 cm



Crepúsculo encantado, 2012
20 x 30 cm



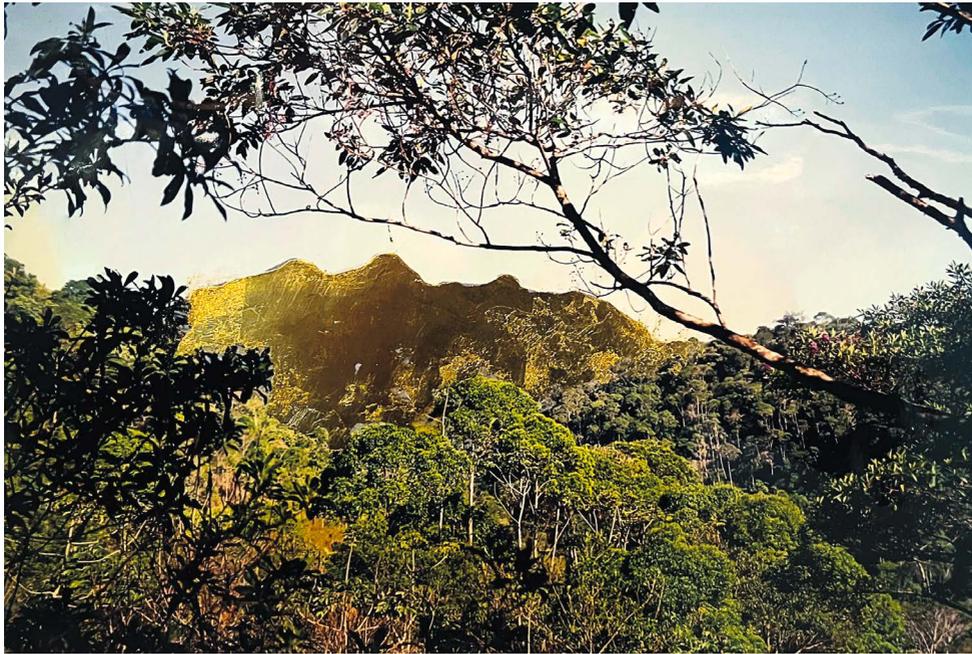
Encanto do amanhecer, 2012
20 x 30 cm



No imaginário, 2012
20 x 30 cm



Em busca, 2012
20 x 30 cm



Contemplação, 2012
30 x 20 cm



Éden, 2012
20 x 30 cm



Ouroluz, 2012
20 x 30 cm



Caminho Sagrado, 2012
30 x 20 cm

PHASE 3
Paradise Regained

The artworks in this collection are photo-collages where stones and flowers converge, unfolding into mandalas—a way to renewal.





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Photo: Carol Quintanilha

Denise Milan (Sao Paulo, 1954) is a global artist whose works are present across all five continents. Over more than forty years of artistic journey, her research delves into geology and the essence of stones, uniquely integrating science, technology, and nature.

Her work spans performance, public art, performing arts, opera, poetry, printmaking, video art, and multimedia, exploring multiple languages to create poetic and visual narratives with powerful symbolic resonance.

Milan also develops a solid academic practice at the intersection of art and science, collaborating with scientists from MIT (Cambridge, USA), Arizona State University (Arizona, USA), the University of Utah (Salt Lake City, USA), and the University of Sao Paulo (Sao Paulo, Brazil).

Her artworks and installations have been exhibited at prominent institutions in Brazil and abroad, such as MoMA PS1 (New York), the Museum of Contemporary Art (Chicago), the Barbican Centre (London), MASP – São Paulo Museum of Art Assis Chateaubriand (São Paulo), MAM – Museum of Modern Art of São Paulo (São Paulo), the Adler Planetarium (Chicago), and the Fondazione Berengo Art Space (Venice).

UNIVERSES

*Public Art / Biennial / Exhibitions /
Site Specific / Art Education / Performance*

GLOBAL PRESENCE

Assis, Belém, Brasília, Chapingo, Chicago, Denver, Fortaleza, Hakone, Hanover, London, Marknesse, Marrakesh, Massachusetts, New York, Osaka, Paris, Porto Alegre, Provo, Rio de Janeiro, Salt Lake City, Salvador, San Francisco, Seattle, São Paulo, Taipei, Treviso, Venice, and Washington.



5 Continents
37 Cities
75 Institutions

Universal, Denise Milan's vision engages with different themes such as:

SOCIO-ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Her art promotes dialogue between cultures and identities, creating spaces of encounter and belonging.

Reference:

- *U Ura Nuta Ué* project with Indigenous communities (Belém, 2002)
- Book and installation *Mist of the Earth* (2006)



ENVIRONMENT

She connects art, science, and nature to reflect on the preservation of the Earth.

Reference:

- COP 22, Marrakesh
- Panels at the Wilson Center, Georgetown University, and Conservation International

HEALING AND OVERCOMING

By transforming stones into metaphors of renewal, the artist inspires processes of healing and collective transformation.

Reference:

- *Garden of Light* (1998)
- *Time of Healing* (1999), inspired by Einstein
- *Plenitude* (2009), in partnership with Grupo Fleury



DIALOGUES: ART AND SCIENCE

Denise Milan has built a solid trajectory at the intersection of art, science, and sustainability, with recognition and invitations from globally renowned institutions. Her work has been presented at international conferences such as COP22 in Marrakesh, at the Wilson Center and Georgetown University (Washington D.C.), as well as in collaborations with MIT.nano and the Fetzer Institute (Italy).



MARRAKECH 2016
COP22 | CMP12 | CMA1
UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE

Throughout her career, she has engaged in dialogue with scientists in the fields of geology, mathematics, anthropology, physics, neuroscience, and philosophy, expanding the reach of her artistic practice beyond the cultural field. Along this path, the dialogue between art, culture, and science has been deepened through conferences and lectures with prominent figures such as Tom Lovejoy (biologist), Jerome Friedman (Nobel Prize in Physics), and Frank Wilczek (Nobel Prize in Physics).

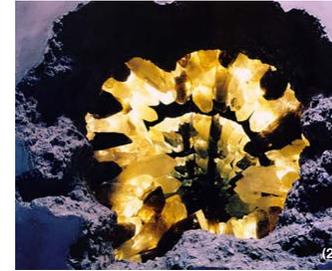


1988



Garden Light
MoMA PS1,
New York
USA

1993



Womb of Life
Co-author Ary Perez
Clinicas Subway Station
São Paulo
Brazil

1997



Genesis
Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis
Chateaubriand – MASP
São Paulo
Brazil

1999



Americas' Courtyard
Millenium Park (1998)
Adler Planetarium, Museum Campus (1999)
Chicago
USA

2006



Opera of Stones
Sesc Pinheiros, Sesc Araraquara,
Sesc Santo André
São Paulo
Brazil

2016



Oceanic Womb
COP 22, Emerson Elemental Do-Fest
Marrakesh
Morocco

2018



Brasilis Island [site specific]
Fundação Bienal de São Paulo
São Paulo
Brazil

2019



Earth Banquet
Fondazione Berengo Art Space
Veneza
Italy

2023



Magmatic Uterus
FAMA Museu – Fábrica de Arte
Marcos Amaro
Itu, São Paulo
Brazil

2024



Journey to the Center of the Earth
Farol Santander
São Paulo
Brazil



Marc Pottier

Marc Pottier, French, splitting his time between Brazil and France, is an international curator of contemporary art, specializing in art in public spaces. He is also connected to cultural digital platforms, television, and web TV (Arte1 in Brazil, Museum TV in Europe).

After working for the Sawada Collection (Nagoya, Tokyo, Paris, and New York), he served as Cultural Attaché for the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1998–2006) in Rio de Janeiro and Lisbon. He later worked for the Royal Group in Abu Dhabi.

Since 2012, he has been engaged in the Matarazzo project: with the book of interviews *Made by... Feito por Brasileiros* and the curatorship of both the creative invasion at the former Matarazzo Hospital in 2014 and the permanent art collections of Rosewood-Matarazzo.

Since 2021, he has been curator of Usina de Arte, a sculpture park near Recife; since 2022, a member of the Curatorial Board of MON (Oscar Niemeyer Museum) in Curitiba; curator of the new cultural space A.Galeria in Florianópolis, which opened in December 2024; and the international coordinator of the “Pompidou Paraná of Foz do Iguaçu,” a future project with an opening scheduled for 2027.

Le Jardin
Rosewood São Paulo



↑
Beginning of the itinerary
at Le Jardin

WORKS

1. *Olhar Mater*
2. *Oxigênio das Origens I*
3. *Caminho de OuroIuz*
4. *Oxigênio das Origens II*
5. *Soprouro*
6. *Imaginação Áurea III*
7. *Ciclo do Ouro*



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Highlights:
Jay Colton (1 and 2)
Thomas Susemihl (3)
Charles Osgood (4)
Acervo Denise Milan (5)
Thomas Susemihl (6)
Thomas Susemihl (7)
Sérgio Coimbra (8 e/and 9)
Carol Quintanilha (10)

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