

# Viviane Sassen

VIVIANE SASSEN, *Belladonna*, 2010, c-print, 100 x 125 cm, courtesy the artist and Stevenson (Cape Town, Johannesburg, Amsterdam), © Viviane Sassen



The Dutch artist Viviane Sassen (1972), who lived in Kenya as a child and has lived in Tanzania as an adult, attended both fashion design and fine art school in the Netherlands. Her facility for making objects rather than pictures is refreshing. Although she also works as a fashion photographer and her artistic medium is the photograph, she is really an image-maker. She constructs shaped photographs, plays with scale and routinely manipulates images' colours and forms, thus going far beyond 'set-up photography'. Sassen has remarked, 'You should always be able to judge a photograph on different grounds, on political, social, emotional, but also on personal grounds.' If that seems like a high bar, her artistic process makes achieving it possible.

Curated by Sassen herself, 'This Body Made of Stardust' assembles fifty images and one video, all dating from 2005 to 2025. The artworks are loosely organised around the theme of memento mori, that is, the fleeting nature of life. She prefers memento *amoris*, as her images capture the 'beauty and awe of passage' from earthly dust to stardust. For this exhibition, which coincided with the 20th edition of Fotografia Europea, she

has placed her images in dialogue with sculptures by Evgeny Antufiev, Kaarina Kaikkonen, Fabrizio Prevedello and TARWUK (Sassen selected the artworks from Collezione Maramotti).

Given her penchant for shaping both light and shadow, she considers herself no less a sculptor than a photographer. Notions of contortion, distortion and twisting are omnipresent here. Apparently, as a child Sassen played with perspective by twisting her body into unfamiliar postures, leading her to conceive the body as something to be reshaped and reimagined. Although her images are definitely alluring — many are even erotic — she makes a deliberate efforts to deflect the male gaze, as evidenced by the often obscured faces in her pictures.

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue with texts by Federica Angelucci of STEVENSON, Cape Town, and the art critic and curator Marco Scotini. (Sue Spaid)

Viviane Sassen, 'This Body Made of Stardust', Collezione Maramotti, through 27 July 2025, [collezioneMaramott.org](http://collezioneMaramott.org)

Grand Palais  
Paris

# Ernesto Neto



ERNESTO NETO, *Nosso Barco Tambor Terra*, 2024, installation view at MAAI, Lisbon, courtesy the artist and Fondation EDP, © Bruno Lopes

From 6 June to 25 July, the Grand Palais in Paris is hosting a major new installation by the Brazilian artist Ernesto Neto, renowned for his immersive environments that engage the body, the senses and the spirit in a dynamic dialogue with space. The exhibition offers more than just a visual spectacle: it's a place of encounter, celebration and grounding, staged beneath the glass-and-steel expanse of one of Paris's most iconic cultural landmarks.

The title itself is a poetic fusion of elements central to Neto's practice. *Barco* (boat) evokes the idea of journey and migration, of moving collectively across space and time. *Tambor* (drum) refers to rhythm and ritual, to the heartbeat of communal life, and the sonic memory of indigenous and Afro-Brazilian traditions. And *Terra* (earth) roots the experience in the elemental: soil, body, ancestry and the ecological systems that sustain us. Together, these words form a kind of mantra, a symbolic vessel carrying Neto's long-standing belief in art as a living, breathing ecosystem.

The installation was created in Neto's Rio de Janeiro studio and is one of the largest he has ever conceived. Suspended from the dome of the Grand Palais, a monumental,

hand-crocheted structure unfurls across the space like an organic canopy. Crafted from raw cotton, tree bark, spices and earth pigments, the piece resembles a forest suspended in air, its woven membranes inviting visitors to wander through corridors of scent, shadow and sound. The air is laced with cinnamon, turmeric and clove. Hammocks and bamboo arches invite you to relax. Musical instruments are scattered throughout, waiting to be played. Neto, who has long resisted the idea of the artwork as merely something to look at, calls visitors to participate. Take off your shoes. Touch the fabric. Breathe the air. Tap a drum. Feel the weight of the world beneath your feet. 'Nosso Barco Tambor Terra' is not just about the artwork on display, it is about the people within it, the breath they share, the energy they carry and the connections they (re)discover in a space temporarily freed from the demands of speed and screens. (Luc Franken)

Ernesto Neto, 'Nosso Barco Tambor Terra', through 25 July 2025, Grand Palais, Paris, [grandpalais.fr](http://grandpalais.fr)