

CANVAS**REBEL**



STORIES & INSIGHTS

Meet Luiza Gottschalk

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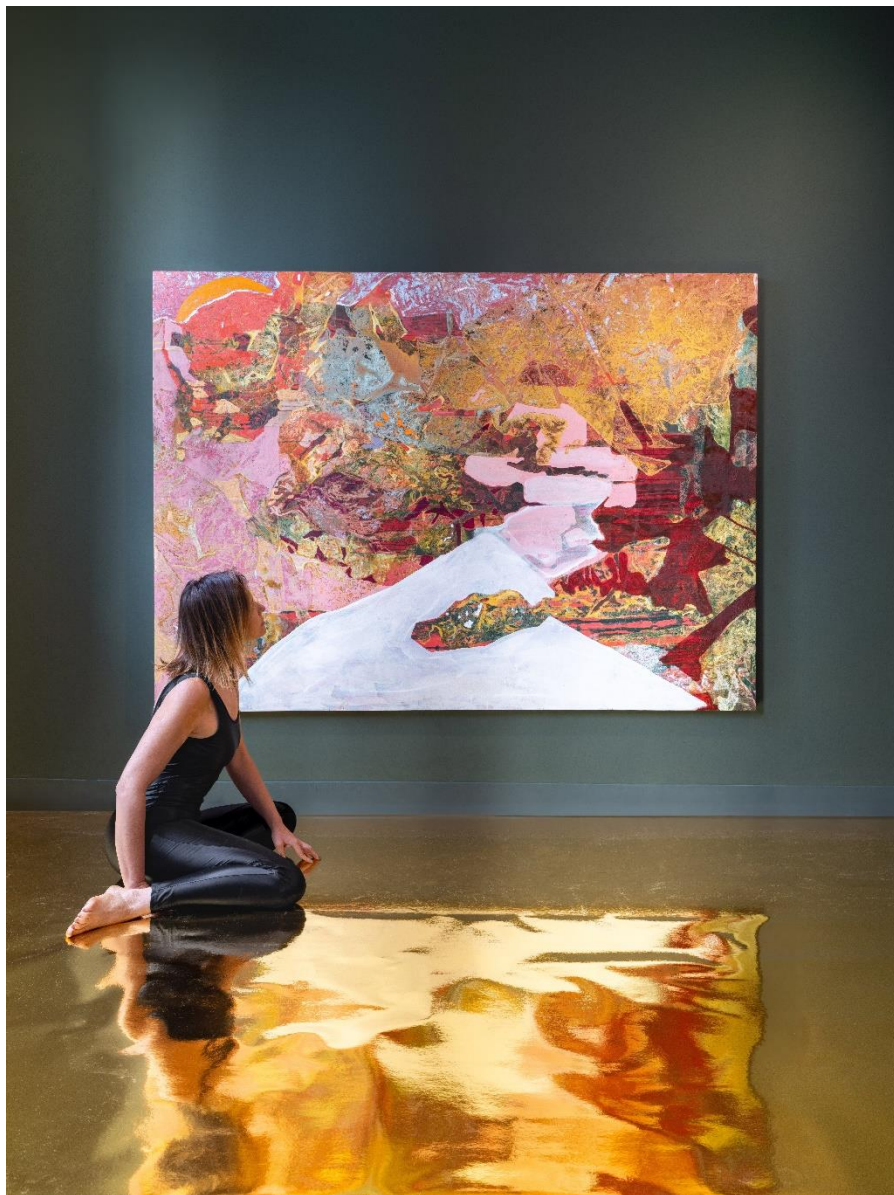
Alright – so today we’ve got the honor of introducing you to Luiza Gottschalk. We think you’ll enjoy our conversation, we’ve shared it below.

Luiza, thanks for joining us, excited to have you contributing your stories and insights. It's always helpful to hear about times when someone's had to take a risk – how did they think through the decision, why did they take the risk, and what ended up happening. We'd love to hear about a risk you've taken.

After 20 years of solid work in Brazil, arriving in NYC for a debut exhibition in Chelsea is undoubtedly a risk (at least that's what I've heard from the experts and advisors in the art world). It feels like starting from scratch all over again. NYC is a major international art world itself—"What if your work isn't accepted in the market? What will you do?" This kind of question reached me. I think about it this way: if I were an engineer constructing a bridge, it would be quite irresponsible not to have everything meticulously planned. But I am an artist—I wish to carve my own paths; I have no interest in walking well-trodden roads. I want to open my own trails—using the machete if necessary, I want to shape my way of being and expressing myself in the world, unfettered and free. I believe this is my role. It's not about the market; it's about creating a worldview, materializing possible universes.

I always thought being an artist meant living in an environment of creativity and freedom—I'm not so sure about that anymore. I was taught many rules during my time in college, from how to work with certain materials to what to expect from contemporary work—many "dos and don'ts."

I was raised amidst a forest, in the Serra da Mantiqueira, between São Paulo and Minas Gerais, Brazil. I experienced a human birth at the age of eight while we were three in the house, and the nearest hospital was 70 km away—the baby, now 34 years old, was born in my young hands—I cut the umbilical cord with my school scissors. I played at extracting venom from venomous snakes and encountered jaguars in the wild. None of this felt risky at all—it was just normal life.



When I returned to live in São Paulo at the age of ten (I was born in the big city and went to the forest at just one), it took me another 20 years to understand that this experience outside urban centers was not common. My attitude toward art stems from this nature of which I am a part—whole and fully in touch with the flows of life. Perhaps with a certain innocence, I am guided by the artistic impulse that resides within me.

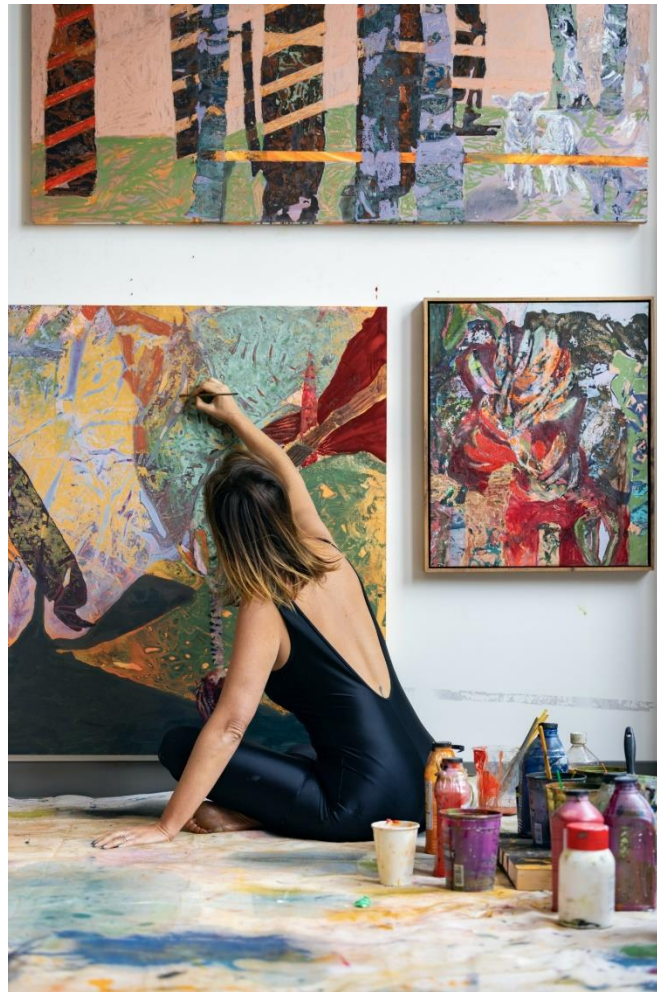
When I am asked if it's not risky to enter such a large market, I respond that I believe it is a great opportunity.

Great, appreciate you sharing that with us. Before we ask you to share more of your insights, can you take a moment to introduce yourself and how you got to where you are today to our readers.

My name is Luiza Gottschalk, and I live and work in Brazil. My artistic journey is guided by painting, where I seek to create magical atmospheres through color, texture, and the space itself. I have a deep curiosity for nature and how our bodies engage with it. In the between of figuration and abstraction, my work resides in the in-between; at times, a figure emerges from a stain, while at others, figures seem to dissolve like forces in motion.

My first artistic experience was in the performing arts, working in acting, direction, and set design for theatre. The desire to create immersive universes in my exhibitions stems from that background. My intimacy with nature, meanwhile, originates from my earliest years, spent in a forest in southeastern Brazil, far from urban centers—I traveled 70 km every day to attend school. In the forest, one does not simply contemplate the landscape from a distance; you are immersed in it. You perceive the forest with your entire body, 360 degrees in an active relationship with the life pulsating around you.





Today, my work navigates between theatre and the forest, creating a feeling of energy in motion. I resonate deeply with what Sarina Tang writes about my work in her book, *Troposphere Shared – Artists Brazil China*; “The choreography of movement in the act of painting itself produces results in flowing gestural brushstrokes, using dense or subtle color: fluctuating, evanescent, rhythm betraying secrets within. Mysterious figures, human and animal, suggested or hinted at, populate imaginary landscapes retained from memories or dreams. Many recall her childhood away from urban centers, in the Mantiqueira mountain range, a bucolic country environment between Minas Gerais and São Paulo. Each painting reflects inner peace or turbulence, emoting powerful personal agitation or tranquility. Paint is poured, applied with definitive brushstrokes, and sometimes parts of the canvas are dyed by submersion. Gottschalk thus creates images that are mostly undefined but awaken our deepest feelings—emotions accumulated over time, hidden, returning vividly to the surface.”



The organization within the tropical forest is almost chaotic, a blend of species huddling toward the sun. It is from this diversity of colors and shapes that I draw inspiration for the creation of my paintings. Each work is born from the previous one; it is never a planned endeavor. I begin with a blank canvas, layering free strokes of paint. Over the past eight years, I have developed a unique technique I call “overflow,” where in the paint spills between one fabric and another until it finds the canvas, imprinting the very paths of colored waters upon it. The designs in my paintings are organic occurrences marking the surface. I have investigated the absorption capacity of the canvases and plywood used in my works, creating layers and textures that amplify the image through the senses. From this exploration emerged a process of experimentation with materials and techniques that gradually coalesced into what I call an “overflow” method. This technique is characterized by placing fabric with a specific weave, saturated with liquid paint, over the surface of the painting. After several days of drying, the fabric is removed, revealing a kaleidoscope of color gradients and organic pathways shaped by the natural and organic movement of water.

We'd love to hear a story of resilience from your journey.

The technique I've been developing over the past few years was created by accident. I was invited from a theater director to create a set design for his production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" by Shakespeare. The issue was that the play was set to premiere in just two weeks, leaving me little time to sketch and produce everything. I decided to create a large paint on a thin fabric piece measuring 8 meters wide by 6 meters long that would cover all the back of the stage. But I was used to previously worked with oil paints, but given the tight timeline, that medium wouldn't be feasible. Instead.

The director wanted the set to convey both the playful and sensual atmosphere of the forest, as well as the structures and conventions of the city. To achieve this, I chose to paint on a thin linen fabric. This way, when we illuminated the scene from the front, we would see the flat painting. However, if we lit it from behind, it would transform into a transparent fabric, casting a forest of shadows with the bodies of the actors.

Since I wasn't familiar with water-based paint, I overly saturated both the pigment and the amount of water. The fabric became soaked, and paint overflowed onto the wall at the studio. When it dried, the fabric stuck to the wall—much like when we have a bandage on a wound and remove the gauze from the skin, leaving part of the skin on the bandage and part of the bandage on the skin. When I peeled the fabric away from the wall, the painting that emerged was truly fantastic. It was not the same artwork I had created; this work had been painted by the paint itself, not by my hand.

After all, the composition was accidental, with some areas overflowing and others not, much like the air bubbles that formed distinct figures on the wall. It was incredible to witness that unfolding before my eyes. From that moment on, everything changed for me; I began to see and perceive art as something alive and organic. Thus, I inadvertently created the technique that I have continued to develop and explore to this day.



Have any books or other resources had a big impact on you?

I once heard a great artist – an actor – give a testimony about Muhammad Ali; he said he was proud to have lived in the same generation as Cassius Clay and shared the world with him. I look up to and have learned a lot from artists who, in addition to being great in their practices, contributed to the world through their creations, such as Pina Bausch, Clarice Lispector, Leonard Cohen, and even Muhammad Ali.

I highly recommend the documentary that Wim Wenders made about Pina Bausch. I read and reread two of my favorite books by Clarice Lispector; “Água Viva” and “O Livro dos Prazeres”. I recently watched the documentary Hallelujah: Leonard Cohen, A Journey, A Song –just amazing! Any documentary that tells about Ali’s trajectory inside and outside the ring is enriching as a life lesson.

I want to contribute to the world; I will do the best work I can. I want people to feel touched by my work. I believe in what I once heard: “art shows that life is more important than art.” In striving to be the best artist I can be, I also endeavor to be the best person I can be. The two are intricately woven together—art and life. Who I am is just as important as what I do, because my work comes from what I am. I’m working to become the best person I can be.

I not only recommend the reading (life-changing), but also the practices suggested by Yogananda in his book Autobiography of a Yogi

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