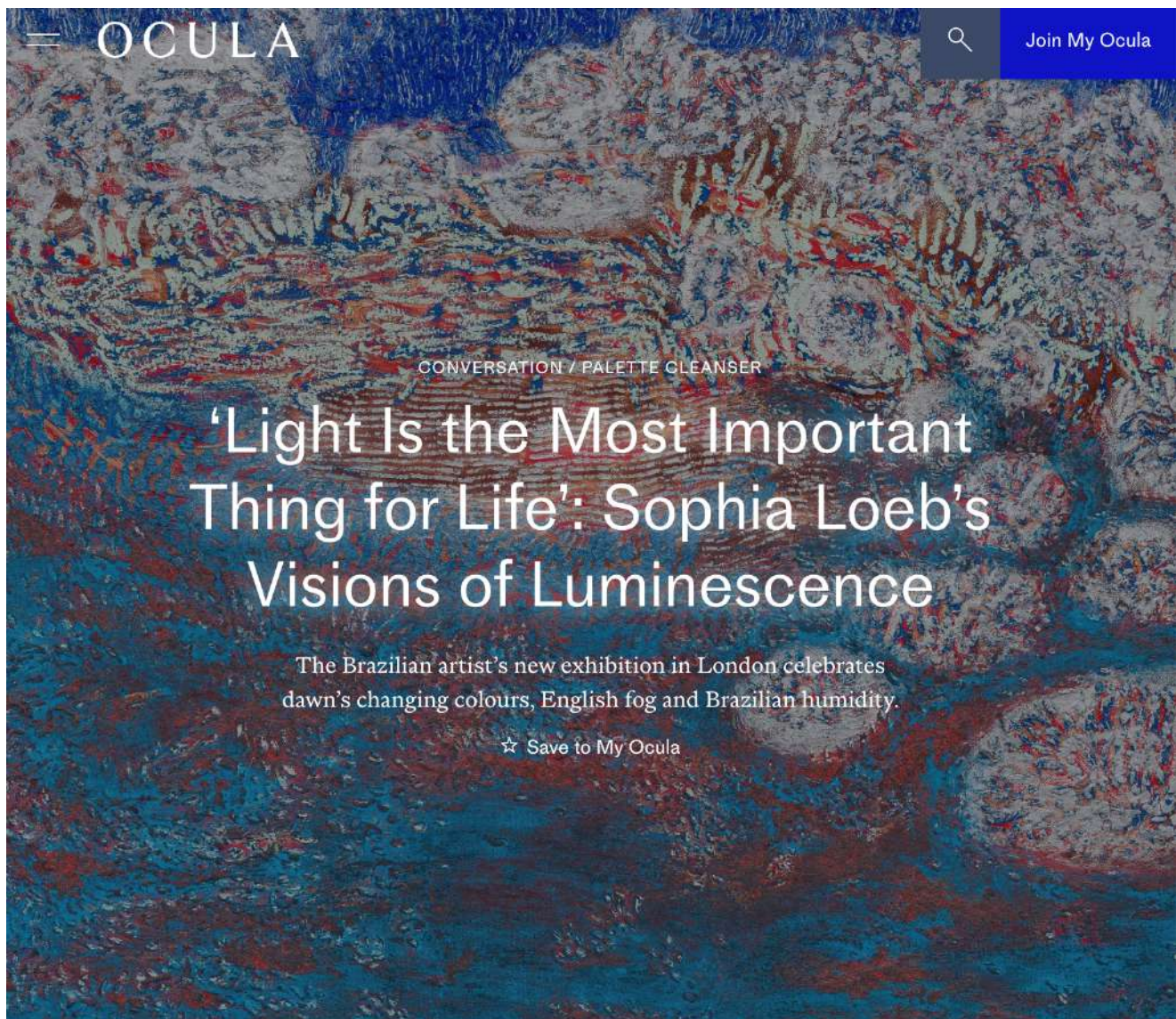


Medium
Date
Event
Web address

Web
June 7th, 2026
O Manifesto da Luz antes do Amanhecer
<https://ocula.com/magazine/conversations/sophia-loeb-exhibition-brazil-london/>

Publication
Author
Artist

Ocula
Baya Simons
Sophia Loeb



By Baya Simons - 7 June 2026, London

The paintings in Sophia Loeb's new exhibition at Pippy Houldsworth Gallery are not obviously of or about London. The large-scale abstract canvases, formed through as many as 20 individual layers of paint, shimmer with bursts of deep indigo, plumes of carnelian red and raspberry pink, floors of forest green and huge patches of marigold yellow, like the sky when it lights up at sunset. Looking closely, though, you notice shades of deep blue-grey, pillowy cloud-like forms and thin white mist creeping over the ground.

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Sophia Loeb, *Vinde nevoeira, revoará sobre a morada* (2026). © Sophia Loeb 2026. Courtesy the artist and Pippy Houldsworth Gallery, London. Photo: Ana Pigosso.

“There’s a lot of fog in the work,” says Loeb. “I think there’s something very mysterious about fog: the way that it sits, how it passes through nature; I think it has this mystical, mysterious aspect to it.” Loeb was born in São Paulo, studied in London at Goldsmiths and the Royal College of Art, and now splits her time between Brazil and London. She painted the works in this show in Brazil. “Maybe that’s why I’m painting fog, because I could have been missing London: this mystery, the sensation of the city”.

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Baya Simons: Why did you choose the title *O Manifesto da Luz antes do Amanhecer (The Manifesto of Light Before Dawn)* for the exhibition?

Sophia Loeb: In all of the works, there is a light coming through them. Every time I took the paintings outside the studio, and I bent them diagonally, I could see that the light would shimmer on the surface of the painting with a natural glitter. I started to think about light itself, and how it's alive, and how it brings things to life: we can only see everything here because of light, and so light is the most important thing for life, and light is also life at the same time.

I was thinking about that, and then I was thinking also about dawn and how light starts to come into earth: it changes colours, so the sun starts to go up and then you see different shades of violet and then it starts to change and everything starts to change colour, so light is responsible for the colours we see everywhere.

BS: Where does your interest in the natural world come from?

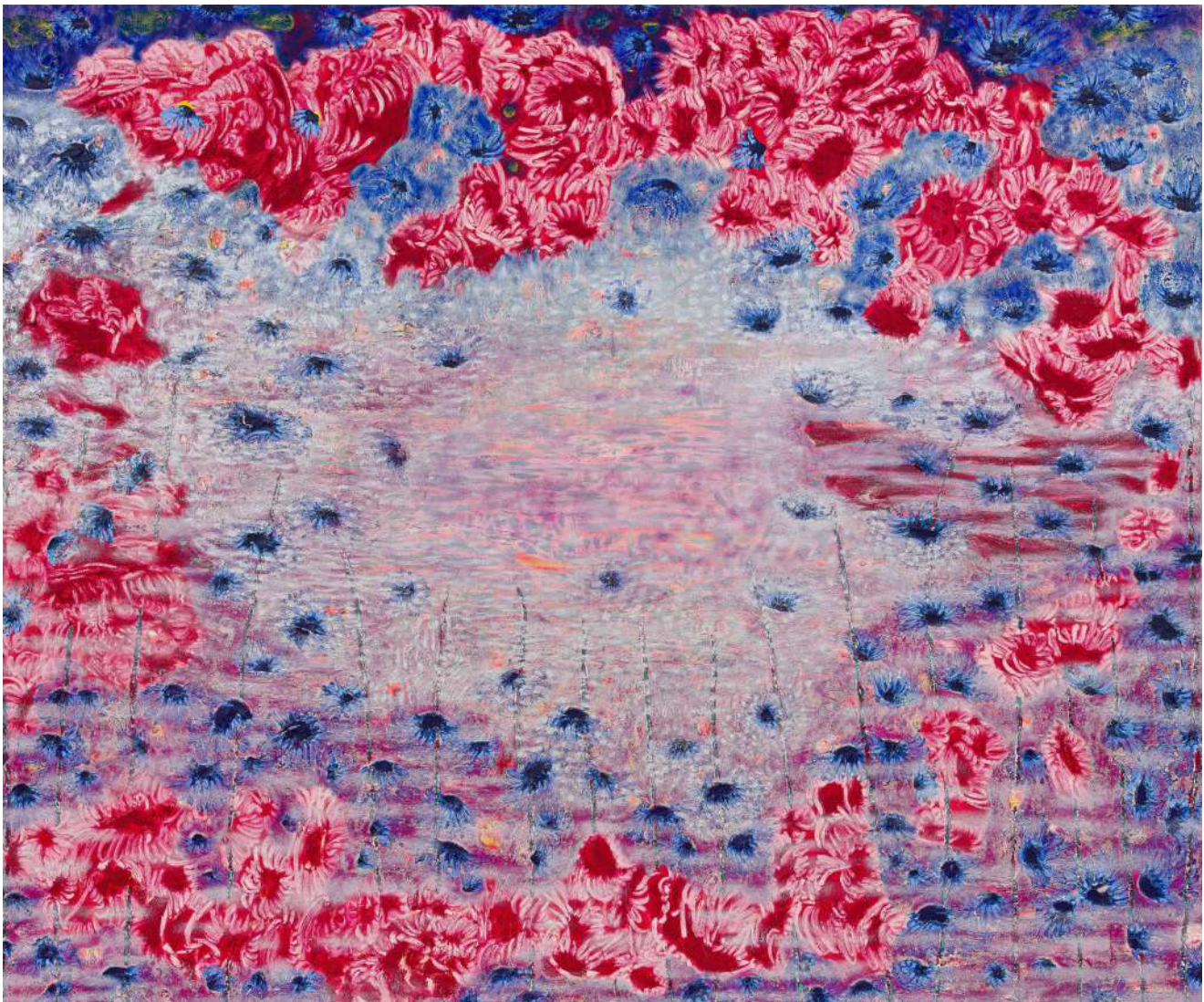
SL: Brazil is very abundant with nature in general, so even if you're in São Paulo, in a huge city, there's a lot of nature. Throughout Brazil, you drive for an hour out of the city and you're in nature. So I grew up in nature, and nature is part of the way I think. How I paint is sort of how nature behaves, too. The intuition I paint with, and how I allow things to happen in painting is from observing the behaviours of nature.

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Sophia Loeb, *O Olhar da Majestade* (2026). © Sophia Loeb 2026. Courtesy the artist and Pippy Houldsworth Gallery, London. Photo: Ana Pigosso.

BS: What makes you an intuitive painter?

SL: It's very intuitive: all of the decisions. I'm not aware of them at any moment. I don't have a proper idea of where I'm going to, where I went to get to. I don't know when it's finished; I just know when to stop painting, and then I know it's finished. It's like I can't add anything else, because everything is balanced: the entire composition seems resolved. So, when I see that it gets to that stage, I then I'm like: "Oh, it's finished."

“I think there's something very mysterious about fog”

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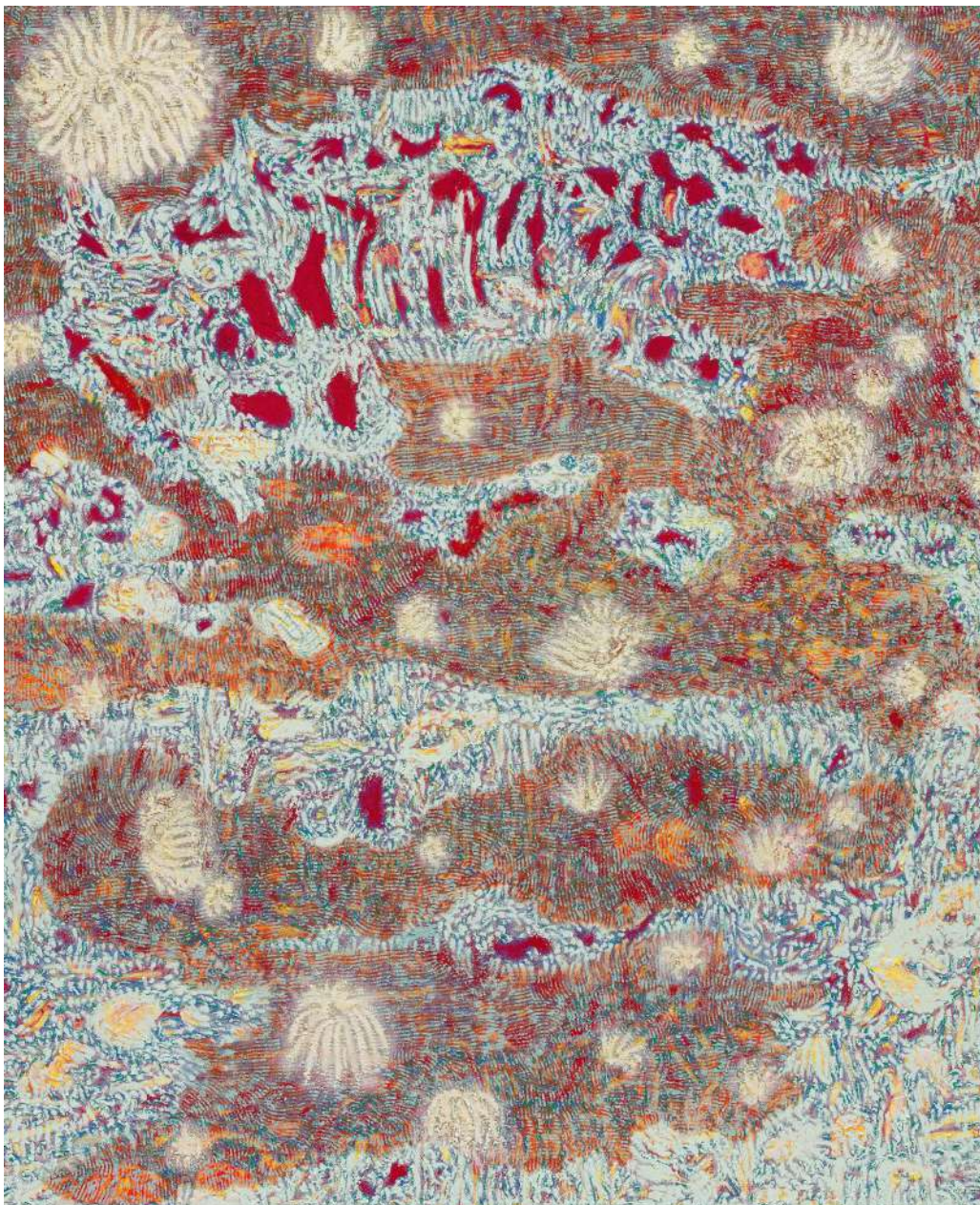
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BS: Why are layers of paint interesting to you?

SL: Each layer has its own identity, and it has its own texture. It has its own choices of how I apply it, and I use different tools, so every layer for me is really important. I don't do a layer thinking: "It's fine because I'm going to cover it later." Every single layer is a construction towards the end, so I take all the layers very seriously, because I don't know when I'm going to end it, so I could be ending it really quickly: it could be that a painting could have just three layers, so I need to be very careful with the layers. That's why I think the work is so rich in texture: it looks a bit alive when you look in person.

All of this is like what I went to put in the work: the noise of the work; a scent, a temperature. A painting can be cold or humid. There's a lot of humidity in all of these works, for some reason. Maybe it's because I was in Brazil, where it's very humid. But here in London, it's also humid because of rain.



Sophia Loeb, *Aparições em sua vida* (2026). © Sophia Loeb 2026. Courtesy the artist and Pippy Houldsworth Gallery, London. Photo: Ana Pigosso.

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BS: Did you grow up around art?

SL: My parents are not collectors. They appreciate art, but they have learned about art because of me. So I introduced the art world to my parents. So now we always go to museums together; they come to my studio regularly everywhere. My mum started doing art history classes. I was always interested in it. Every time I saw someone drawing when I was young, I would be amazed that they would be drawing something. I would be, like, “Wow, the person is doing a drawing.” I would ask an uncle of mine, because he likes to draw, and I would always ask him to draw me and draw things, and I would love to look at him doing it. So, I think this interest of transforming something into art, I was always amazed by. I think it’s magical. Doing art is magic.

BS: Who are your favourite artists?

SL: All of the abstract expressionists and all of the Impressionists. They have always influenced me, and they will always influence me, forever. There’s no other movement that touches me more. Yesterday I went to the National Gallery, and I saw Van Gogh. I will eternally be obsessed with Van Gogh. It’s so alive, his work. This thing of being alive that I was talking about, of light—I think his work is very alive and authentic, and the way he builds texture, it’s unreal. No one else does this. It’s just beautiful. Monet as well, because of how he plays with light. The way he paints things is softer, there’s less thick paint. Then the abstract expressionists. I also love Rothko.—[O]

Sophia Loeb, *O Manifesto da Luz antes do Amanhecer (The Manifesto of Light Before Dawn)* (until 4 July) at Pippy Houldsworth Gallery, London.

Main image: Sophia Loeb, *Levitamos sobre o abismo*, 2026. Courtesy the artist and Pippy Houldsworth Gallery, London © Sophia Loeb 2026 Photo: Ana Pigosso.