

Medium
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June 3rd, 2026
O Manifesto Da Luz Antes do Amanhecer
<https://www.wmagazine.com/culture/sophia-loeb-artist-paintings-studio-interview-2026>

Publication
Author
Artist

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Jacoba Urist
Sophia Loeb

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CULTURE

Sophia Loeb Paints Places That Feel Like They Should Exist

For her latest show at London's Pippy Houldsworth Gallery, the Brazilian artist channeled six months of solitude into luminous paintings that offer an escape.

by **Jacoba Urist**

Photographs by **André Klotz**

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Loeb wears her own clothing throughout. Photo by André Klotz

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Sophia Loeb's atelier is remarkably clean for an artist whose hyper-contemporary impressionism and thick, impasto layers have been her calling card since she started making headlines three years ago. Hardly any visible splatter on the wood floors or the brick walls is pretty impressive for someone who's been at it seven days a week since November, making work for her latest show, which opens at Pippy Houldsworth Gallery in London June 5 (on view through July 4). "I tell my assistant to be a neat freak," says the Brazilian artist. "I would be a disaster without her. It helps me create when everything is in place. If everything is a bowl of paint, you don't see the idea."

The two-story, three-bedroom house, in a residential area near Ibirapuera—São Paulo's "Central Park"—has been her workspace since moving back to her home country last fall. "I started living full-time with my parents again because I wanted to reconnect with my family," she says. "I found this cute, old house, in the best area, and it's only an eight-minute drive every day. The whole thing is my studio." She paints on the bottom level, and finished pieces go upstairs; it's a big contrast to London, where Loeb had just a small room, which she shared with other artists. "The upgrade is a huge deal for me," she continues. "I feel serenity entering the space because of the neighborhood. I even hear birds when I'm inside." Every week or so, her parents drop by to see her canvases. During lockdown she lived with them for eighteen months, but had to paint in her childhood bedroom. "Then I switched to the living room, and my parents were going crazy with me," she says. The smell was awful and everything was terribly messy, though Loeb considered Covid her most productive period, until now.

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While prepping this show, “O Manifesto Da Luz Antes Do Amanhecer (The Manifesto of Light Before Dawn),” the 29-year-old became fixated on rituals. “I started going to the same spot for lunch, and eating this Brazilian dish, rice, beans, meat, and farofa every single day,” Loeb says. “I sort of obsess on specific things that enter my realm of creativity and that is part of producing the work.” Another example: she blasted Kate Bush and the *Cats* soundtrack on her phone, without headphones or speakers, “nonstop, on repeat, for the last six months, the whole day, while painting... I have no idea why *Cats*.” Her theory: as a little girl, she dressed up as a feline and danced around, watching the musical on TV. Perhaps being back in Brazil triggered the connection. She’s also made a point of keeping her creative process private. “I don’t receive people. None of my friends have even been to my Brazilian studio. I was a hermit for six months,” she says. “As I grow, the more workaholic and obsessive I become. I use everything I feel to create.”

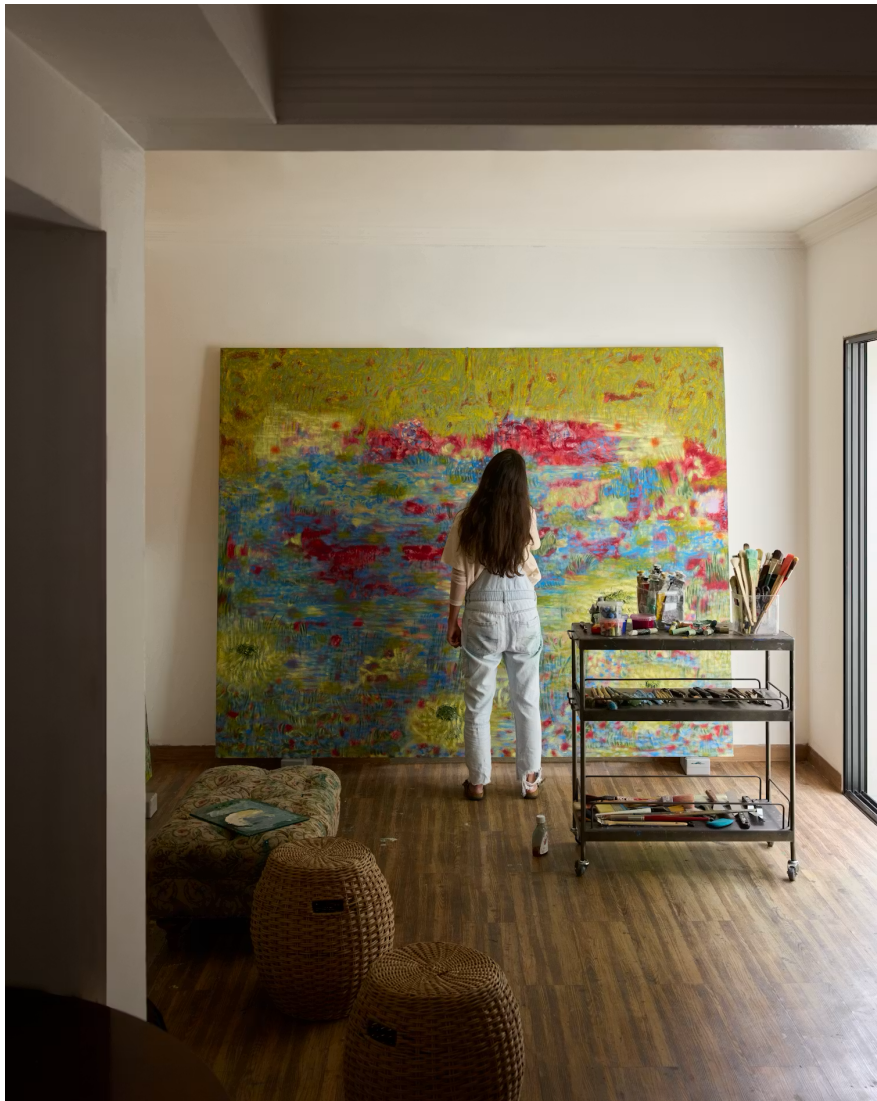


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For as long as she can remember, Loeb wanted to be an artist. Visiting a contemporary art fair during a family trip to Paris when she was around 12 sealed the deal. “There were so many artists, I thought, My god, this is incredible. It’s possible. This exists. And then I decided to pursue art and never tried anything else.” At 18, she left Brazil for the U.K. to do a foundational year at Camberwell College of Arts, then moved to Goldsmiths University. “It was very hard at the beginning because I didn’t feel understood,” she says. “Only 20 percent of the people wanted to be artists, and the rest were a bit lost or wanted to be curators.” By contrast, her time as a graduate student at the Royal College of Art was “emotionally exhausting, because we were all our work.”



Sophia Loeb, *A Batalha dos Sóis*, 2026

Courtesy the artist and Pippy Houldsworth Gallery, London. © Sophia Loeb 2026. Photo by Ana Pigosso

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Loeb has described her intense landscapes as scenes from a prehistoric past or a post-human future. “But I feel like what I paint does exist somewhere,” she clarifies. “I don’t know where it is and I’m trying to show it to people.” Though abstract, her brushstrokes trace leaf-like forms and flowers complemented with pyrotechnics of bold color. Her current show—seven paintings in all (each takes about a month to complete)—has color combinations that “weren’t part of my palette before, like pink and blue,” she says. Some prominently feature an iridescent pearl hue, with the lingering, luminous atmosphere of a greenhouse or a misty London morning. “There’s a lot of fog in this show,” she adds. “I think mist has this surreal effect. Nobody thinks of fog in Brazil.”



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Operating with palette knives and her hands, rotating canvases on the floor as she goes, Loeb's paintings are entirely intuitive, relaying how "the place evolves as it's being revealed to me." She draws strong inspiration from the cosmos, following feeds about space on Instagram. "How a new planet was formed or how a star behaves, these things are so connected to my work and guide my life," she says. "The light we see existed long before we perceived it. My work existed too, before I made it—it was meant to exist."



Photo by André Klotz