

'LONGILONGE' OPENS FRIDAY AT BALLROOM

By Sara Button

MARFA — Noted Brazilian artist Solange Pessoa is inspired by the complexities and space in Far West Texas. Pessoa's first solo museum exhibit in the United States will be hosted by Ballroom Marfa, with an opening reception on Friday, November 15 from 6-9 p.m.

Pessoa arose in the Brazilian art scene in the late 1980s and currently lives and works in the southeastern Brazilian state of Minas Gerais. The artist says she feels a familiar and intimate connection between Minas and the space in West Texas. "My imagination had a good introduction to the area here," she said. To her, both places evoke a sense of old memories, ancient times and civilizations, and geology.

"This is a region that doesn't end; it's always shifting," Pessoa said. "This is extremely personal because [I] always imagine space, and all the things I've seen in Marfa were in my imagination."

The artist says Minas is very similar to Texas because it has a very ancient memory. "Through archeology and fossils, I can release ancient feelings," she said.

Her exhibition, "Longilonge," will encompass five expressionistic and enigmatic works that take up all four rooms and the outdoor courtyard at Ballroom. Pessoa says the layers of time, and the shifting between those layers, bring "Longilonge" together. A made-up word, Pessoa believes longilonge means longer and longer.

Since 2015, Pessoa has had solo exhibitions in Miami, Los Angeles, New York, and now Marfa, where the artist's work will encompass the entire gallery space at Ballroom.

Pessoa visited Marfa for the first time this past May. "I have always been interested in Texas and in the United States because it is a very old region in Earth and very important in the formation of the American and Latin American people," Pessoa said. She has a strong interest in the archeology of the region because of the mysteries and because of the deserts. "I had wanted to go to the desert, a space of the desert, so I learned more about American sculpture."

"I've known about Marfa for many years, since the 90s because of Judd and other artists," Pessoa said. "The Brazilians have a very strong relationship with minimalism and sculpture. I have always wanted to see Marfa."

She returned to Marfa earlier this month for a research trip, where she met local botanists and archeologists and explored the pictographs in Seminole Canyon, among other things.

"I loved the pictographs at Seminole Canyon," Pessoa said. "They inspired me to create these panels. There is so much magic in those ancient paintings."

Pessoa said that the prehistoric paintings in Texas are different than the ones in Brazil. She feels they are darker and something that feeds the imagination, something unconscious. "The animal instincts perturb me," she said. "A wildlife; what existed is a shadow of them. I feel that."