

Vanessa Barragão

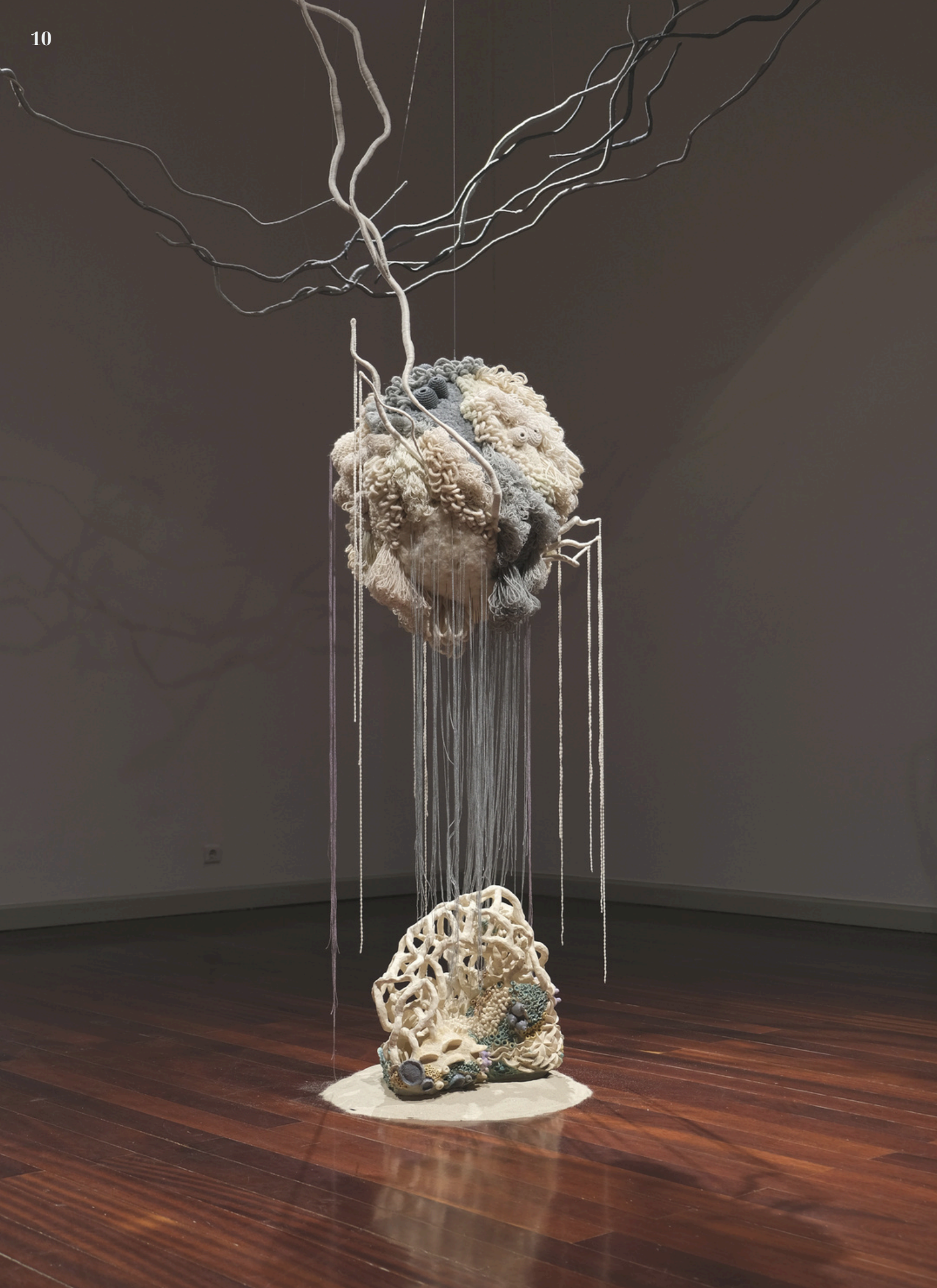
BASED IN PORTUGAL

ON THE COVER



Vanessa Barragão is an interdisciplinary artist who pioneered her career in the sustainability of textile art, deeply inspired by nature, especially the ocean. Growing up in a small coastal town in Portugal, her works reveal a deep connection to the natural world through using recycled materials and processes that are environmentally friendly in creating finely detailed tapestry, rug, and wall installation pieces of oceanic inspiration. Her practice stands out not only for aesthetic beauty but also for its commitment to current environmental issues, such as ocean pollution and climate change.





Sustainability and Art

Barragão's artistic practice is deeply rooted in sustainability, with a focus on all steps of the creative process. She sources textile waste from local factories and reuses discarded materials to craft her artworks. As she explains in an interview: "It was important for me to create something with meaning, and for me, that meant centering on the environment. I don't think I could work any other way." Through this approach, she not only reduces her environmental footprint but also contributes to the broader discourse on waste and pollution within the textile industry.

On her website, Barragão emphasizes the importance of using natural materials and dyes in her creations. She strives to minimize her ecological impact by adopting environmentally conscious practices and raising awareness through her art. Utilizing techniques such as hand-tufting, latch hooking, and crochet, she creates intricate patterns inspired by coral reefs and oceanic landscapes. The rich textures and vivid colors of her works evoke a sense of life and motion, celebrating the beauty of nature while underscoring its fragility.



PICTURE BY CLAUDIA GLORI



Oceanic Themes and Conservation

One of the central themes in Barragão's work is the ocean and its delicate ecosystems. Her art captures the complexity and beauty of underwater life, particularly coral reefs, which are undergoing drastic changes due to climate change and human activity. As she explains, "I've always felt more connected to the sea. Growing up on the coast, I couldn't shut my eyes to what's happening to the reefs. They're just so gorgeous, but they're dying out in such alarming numbers." Her work highlights this ecological crisis, urging viewers to reflect on their relationship with nature and the importance of conservation.

Among her most notable works is the Coral Garden—a monumental textile piece that embodies the vibrancy of coral ecosystems while addressing their destruction caused by pollution and global warming. Created entirely from discarded textiles, it serves as both a visual and tactile reminder of humanity's consumption and its impact on the planet. The intricate details of her work, down to the textures of the corals, reveal her profound respect for marine life and showcase her technical mastery as an artist.



BOTANICAL TAPESTRY
HEATHROW AIRPORT, LONDON, 2019

Connecting Art and Advocacy

Barragão views her art as a powerful tool for activism. As she explained in an interview, Vanessa Barragão considers her work a form of communication, emphasizing that art has the capacity to connect with people on a deeper level than raw statistics or data. This idea is evident in the way her pieces captivate viewers with their beauty while simultaneously encouraging serious reflection on environmental responsibility. By transforming discarded materials into stunning works of art, Barragão challenges the throwaway culture of modern society and highlights its detrimental impact on the planet.

Her installations have been showcased in various high-profile exhibitions and collaborations, sustaining interest from both the art world and environmental organizations. These partnerships allow her to explore innovative ways of raising awareness and encouraging action on environmental issues. As she notes, "We are all connected with nature, and we have to take care of it. My hope is that my work can remind people of that connection and inspire them to care for the Earth." Through her artistry, Barragão not only creates visually compelling pieces but also delivers a poignant message about humanity's role in protecting the environment.





Vanessa Barragão's art is more than a visual experience; it is a call to action for environmental preservation. Through her commitment to sustainability and her love for the ocean, Barragão has developed a body of work that is as beautiful as it is rich in meaning. The merging of art and environmental advocacy continues to make her voice significant in contemporary textile art. Vanessa Barragão aims to use her art as a tool to raise awareness and inspire positive change, particularly by drawing attention to pressing environmental concerns through her intricate textile creations.

PICTURE BY CLAUDIA GLORI

AUTHORED BY
POLYXENI ZIAZIA