

nara roesler

ART BASEL PARIS

booth P2
premise sector

private days
october 16–17
wednesday–thursday

public days
october 18–20
friday–sunday

grand palais
3 avenue du général
eisenhower, paris

ART BASEL PARIS 2024

For Art Basel Paris, Nara Roesler is pleased to present a project featuring selected works by two pioneering Brazilian artists from the 20th century: Tomie Ohtake (Japan 1913 - Brazil 2015) and Chico Tabibuia (born Francisco Silva Morales, Brazil 1936-2007).

Though radically different in their upbringing and stylistic achievements, Ohtake and Tabibuia share a profound connection as they represent two non-Western sources of spiritual inspiration for their art: Ohtake, the Japanese immigrated to Brazil, and Tabibuia, the illiterate, liminal art brut creator inspired by his Afro-Brazilian diasporic origins.

The otherness that informs both Ohtake's and Tabibuia's art resonates formally through a strange coincidence: the persistence of organic shapes in hybrid-like structures. In Ohtake's abstract paintings, these shapes are rounded and slightly anthropomorphic, while in Tabibuia's sculptures, they are sexualized and anamorphic, often featuring, conjoined hermaphrodite bodies.



Tomie Ohtake
Untitled, 1962
acrylic paint on canvas
30.2 x 46.9 x 1.6 in
76,8 x 119 x 4 cm



The subtlety of Ohtake's paintings contrasts with the literal sincerity of Tabibuia's sculptures. However, both artists exhibit a repertoire of bifacial bodies and shapes, characterized by the presence of fissures within them, forms nested one inside another, interconnected multiplied structures, and curved ample surfaces. These elements articulate their compositions—abstract yet organic in Ohtake's work, and organic yet mysteriously otherworldly in Tabibuia's.

Known for developing her unique stylistic persona by painting while blinding her eyes, Ohtake's metaphysical approach to abstraction, drawn from Zen philosophy, always results in forms that emerge with revelatory, sacerdotal gravity, as poet Theon Spanudis noted: 'Something very important, secret, and silent is communicated.'



Chico Tabibuia
Untitled, no date
wood sculpture
87 x 13 x 12.2 in
221 x 33 x 31 cm

In contrast, Tabibuia, who worked as a guide for blind individuals and as a woodworker, asserted that all his works, influenced by Afro-Brazilian symbolic elements and often depicting the central deity of Exu, were always the product of dream visions.



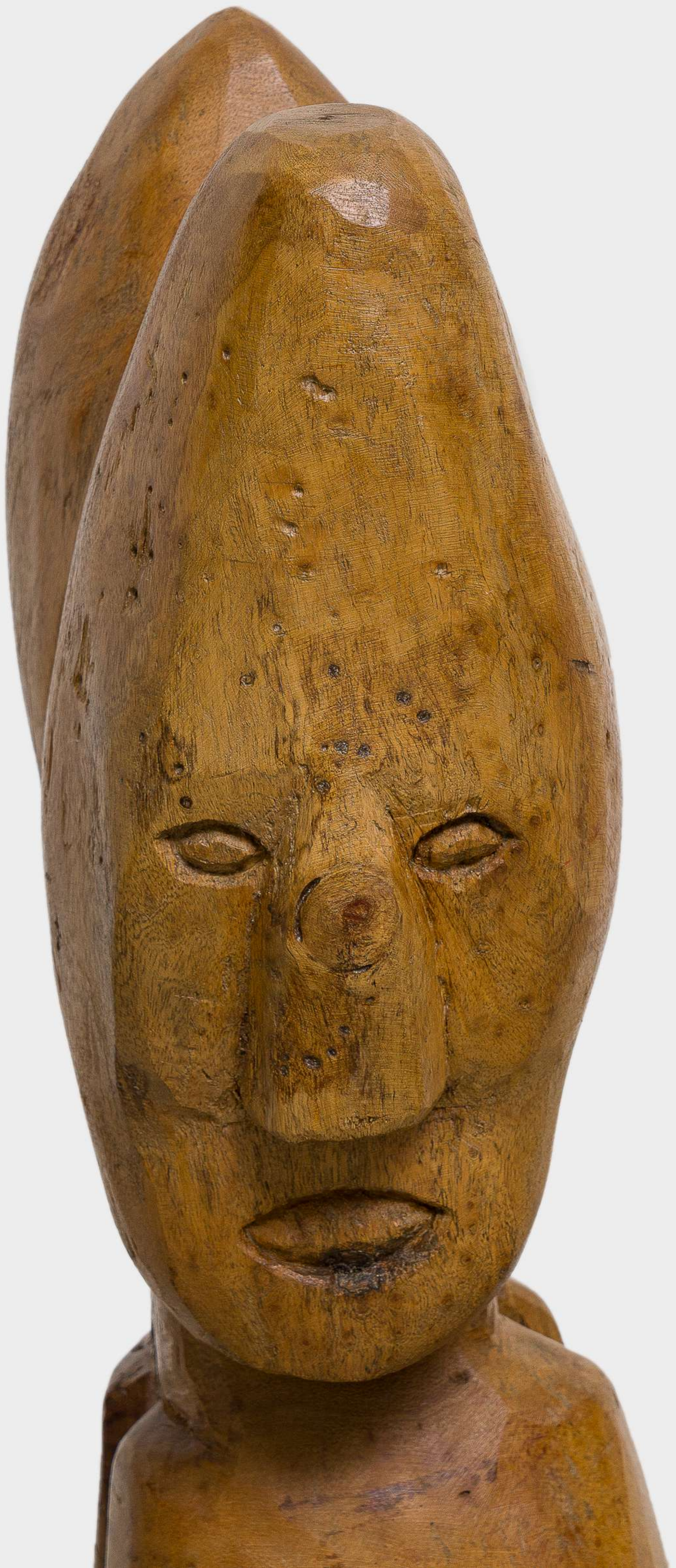
Tomie Ohtake
Roxo e Ocre, 1970
oil paint on canvas
156 x 105,5 cm
61.4 x 41.5 in





Chico Tabibuia
Exu 2 heads, circa 1990
wood sculpture
68 x 20 x 22 cm
26.8 x 7.9 x 8.7 in







Tomie Ohtake
Untitled, 1969
tinta óleo sobre tela
92 x 65 cm
26.4 x 19.7 in

In addition to showing the work of the so-called ‘first lady of Brazilian art,’ as Pietro Maria Bardi referred to Tomie Ohtake, this project also marks a return of Chico Tabibuia’s work to the Grand Palais, where his sculptures were featured in the landmark exhibition *Brésil-Arts Populaires* in 1987. As Emanuel Araujo has observed, his work ‘represents the continuity of a diasporic African presence in Brazilian art.’



By bridging the two polarities represented by these two major artists, our curatorial project aims to emphasize the significance of the 'foreign' and the profound impact that non-Western spiritual traditions have had on symbolic production in the Global South. This translation of cultural influence results in an overlooked complexity of modern art that extends beyond the North Atlantic coordinates.

Chico Tabibuia
Untitled, undated
wood sculpture
33.5 x 7.9 x 12.6 in
85 x 20 x 32 cm





Tomie Ohtake
Untitled, 1977
oil paint on canvas
95 x 95 cm
37.4 x 37.4 in



Tomie Ohtake
Untitled, 1969
oil paint on canvas
92 x 65 cm
36.2 x 25.6 in





Chico Tabibuia
Untitled, circa 1990
wood sculpture
45.7 x 8.7 x 9.8 in
116 x 22 x 25 cm





Tomie Ohtake
Untitled, 1983
oil paint on canvas
99,3 x 99,3 cm
39.1 x 39.1 in





Chico Tabibuia

Untitled, undated

wood sculpture

men: 31,49 x 8,26 x 7,87 in |

woman: 27,95 x 7,08 x 6,69 in

men: 80 x 21 x 20 cm |

woman: 71 x 18 x 17 cm





tomie ohtake

b. 1913, Kyoto, Japan

d. 2015, São Paulo, Brazil

One of the leading figures in abstract art in Brazil, Tomie Ohtake was born in Kyoto in 1913 and moved to Brazil in 1936. Her career as an artist began at the age of 37 when she joined the Seibi Group, which brought together artists of Japanese descent. In the late 1950s, after an initial phase focused on figurative studies in painting, she delved into abstract exploration. During this period, she created a series of works known as “blind paintings,” in which she blindfolded herself as part of experiments that challenged the foundational ideas of the Brazilian Neo-concrete movement while emphasizing sensitivity and intuition in her practice.

In her paintings from the mid-1970s through the 1980s, Ohtake developed a distinctive and unparalleled style of figural abstraction. Her magnificent works, characterized by round, organic forms that fill the visual field, are rendered with subtle gradations of hue and monochromatic expanses. Through this, she transformed the legacy of Brazilian modernism into one of the most eloquent repertoires of late-modern painting in the Americas. It was during this period that Ohtake’s work took on a cosmic dimension, driving her transition towards sculpture and real space.

Throughout her extensive career, Tomie Ohtake participated in 20 international biennials - including six in São Paulo, where she received the Itamaraty Prize, as well as the Venice Biennale, Tokyo, Havana, and Cuenca, among others. Her portfolio includes over 120 solo exhibitions (in São Paulo, twenty other Brazilian capitals, and cities such as New York, Washington DC, Miami, Tokyo, Rome, and Milan) and nearly 400 group exhibitions, both in Brazil and abroad. She also received 28 awards during her lifetime.

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selected solo exhibitions

- *Tomie Ohtake Dançante*, Instituto Tomie Ohtake (ITO), São Paulo, Brazil (2022)
- *Visible Persistence*, Nara Roesler New York, USA (2021)
- *Tomie Ohtake: nas pontas dos dedos*, Nara Roesler, São Paulo, Brazil (2017)
- *Tomie Ohtake 100–101*, Instituto Tomie Ohtake (ITO), São Paulo, Brazil (2015)
- *Pinturas Cegas*, Museu de Arte do Rio (MAR), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2013)

selected group exhibitions

- *Open Ended: SFMoMA’s Collection – 1900 to now*, SFMoMA, San Francisco, USA (2024)
- *60th International Art Exhibition La Biennale di Venezia, Stranieri Ovunque – Foreigners Everywhere*, Venezia, Italy (2024)
- *Action, Gesture, Paint: Women Artists and Global Abstraction 1940–70*, Whitechapel Gallery, London, UK (2023)
- *Composições para tempos insurgentes*, Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro (MAM Rio), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2021)
- *Surface Work*, Victoria Miro, London, UK (2018)

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- *Arte moderna na coleção da Fundação Edson Queiroz*, Museu Coleção Berardo, Lisboa, Portugal (2017)
 - *The World is our Home. A Poem on Abstraction*, Para Site, Hong Kong (2015)
 - *Fusion: Tracing Asian Migration to the Americas Through AMA’s Collection*, Art Museum of the Americas, Washington DC, USA (2013)

selected collections

- Metropolitan Museum of Art (MET), New York, USA
- San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA), San Francisco, USA
- Tate Modern, London, UK
- Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros, Caracas, Venezuela
- Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, USA
- Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan
- Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro (MAM Rio), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand (MASP), São Paulo, Brazil
- Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil

chico tabibuia

b. 1918, Casimiro de Abreu, Brazil

d. 2007, Casimiro de Abreu, Brazil

Chico Tabibuia's work is characterized by archetypal images with an erotic-sacred content, influenced by Afro-Brazilian symbolic elements. Often depicting the central deity of Exu, his sculptures fuse male and female and present a creation process that can be considered to have a ritualistic and spiritual background, since they were often created from revelations the artist had in his dreams.

Although he made his first works as a child, he began sculpting regularly from the 1970s onwards. Made from whole pieces of wood, without fittings and with rare additions, his sculptures respect the original shapes of roots and trunks collected by the artist.

In his works, ancestral and ritualistic elements can be seen both in the presence of the phallus and in the image of hermaphroditic beings, referring to archaic cultures, such as those of Dahomey and Nigeria, in which deities with stiff phalluses, symbolizing fertility, and hermaphrodites representing the dual aspect of generative power, recur.

selected solo exhibitions

- *Chico Tabibuia*, Galeria Estação, São Paulo, Brazil (2019)
- *Chico Tabibuia*, Nara Roesler, São Paulo, Brazil (1996)
- *Chico Tabibuia*, Museu Histórico Nacional, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (1989)

selected group exhibitions

- *Ensaio sobre a terra*, Simões de Assis, São Paulo, Brazil (2024)
- *A Memória é uma Invenção*, Museu de Arte

Moderna do Rio de Janeiro (MAM Rio), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2021)

- *Terra e Temperatura*, Almeida e Dale, São Paulo, Brazil (2021)
- *Histórias da Sexualidade*, Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP), São Paulo, Brazil (2017)

selected collections

- Museu Afro Brasil, São Paulo, Brazil
- Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP), São Paulo, Brazil

nara roesler

são paulo

av europa, 655

jardim europa, 01449-001

são paulo, sp, brasil

t 55 (11) 2039 5454

rio de janeiro

rua redentor 241

ipanema, 22421-030

rio de janeiro, rj, brasil

t 55 (21) 3591 0052

new york

511 west 21st street

new york, 10011 ny

usa

t 1 (212) 794 5038

info@nararoesler.art

www.nararoesler.art