

art basel miami beach 2019

tomie ohtake

kabinett sector | booth b10

december 5–8

miami beach convention center

Galeria Nara Roesler is pleased to participate in three sectors of Art Basel Miami Beach 2019: Galleries, Meridians and Kabinett. Its **Kabinett sector** presentation is centered around paintings produced between the 1950s and 1960s by Japanese-born Brazilian artist **Tomie Ohtake** (1913–2015).

From the outset of her career Tomie Ohtake focused on the investigation of juxtapositions of shapes and lines, passages of color and their effects on the viewer. From the 1950s onwards, she began to loosen her brushstrokes and the forms present on her paintings became more ethereal. During that period, the Brazilian Concrete movement began to give way to what would become known as the Neo-Concrete period, and by then Tomie Ohtake literally gave up representation of the external environment and started painting wearing a blindfold. At that point, Ohtake chose to detach her art-making from what is considered to be real, while establishing a relation between Zen procedures and the pictorial sign in the process of language formation.

On the first half of the 1960s, Ohtake's paintings veered towards clear forms, as the artist focused on compositions with a definite separation between figure and background. These figures resemble simple geometric shapes, but their outlines waver as edges on torn paper. These organic silhouettes are a product of the artist's investigations with hand-torn color paper from assorted photographic materials, like magazines, leaflets, etc. By relying on these collages for her compositions, Ohtake preserved an aspect of instantaneous gesture and infused her paintings with an element of chance. The studies became de-facto roadmaps for her paintings and engravings, which experimented with different scales and color combinations.

During the 1970s, her paintings embraced forms that were seemingly more concrete, as she began to use scissors to produce her cutouts. Now denser, the studies' compositions show color intruding on a white background, occasionally suggesting landscapes. The textures in the paintings often, and surprisingly, emerge from the collage itself.

Meanwhile, color became more prevalent, reflecting the psychedelic trend of the period. These studies were a main component in Ohtake's artistic process until the mid-1980s, when her paintings became more atmospheric as she embraced acrylic paint and focused on developing small-scale paint studies.

Ohtake's studies reveal the ingenuity with which she approached her paintings as well as the spontaneity in her pictorial practice. A Constructive artist, Ohtake uses neither mathematical structures nor the authoritarianism of straight lines and orthogonal planes to support her creative work. She relied on intuition, with an empirical creative method. Yet, this does not diminish rigor or prevent us from analyzing her paintings in intellectual terms, identifying some recurring elements or formal categories that appear in her work's different phases and which are perfectly coherent, resulting in a "discourse of forms" that composes an aesthetic thought. Ohtake's process also suggests an alternative reading of the duality between geometric calculation and expressive gesture that was taking place during that period in Brazil, which situates her as a landmark of invention and freedom within the parameters of the movement where she can be situated.

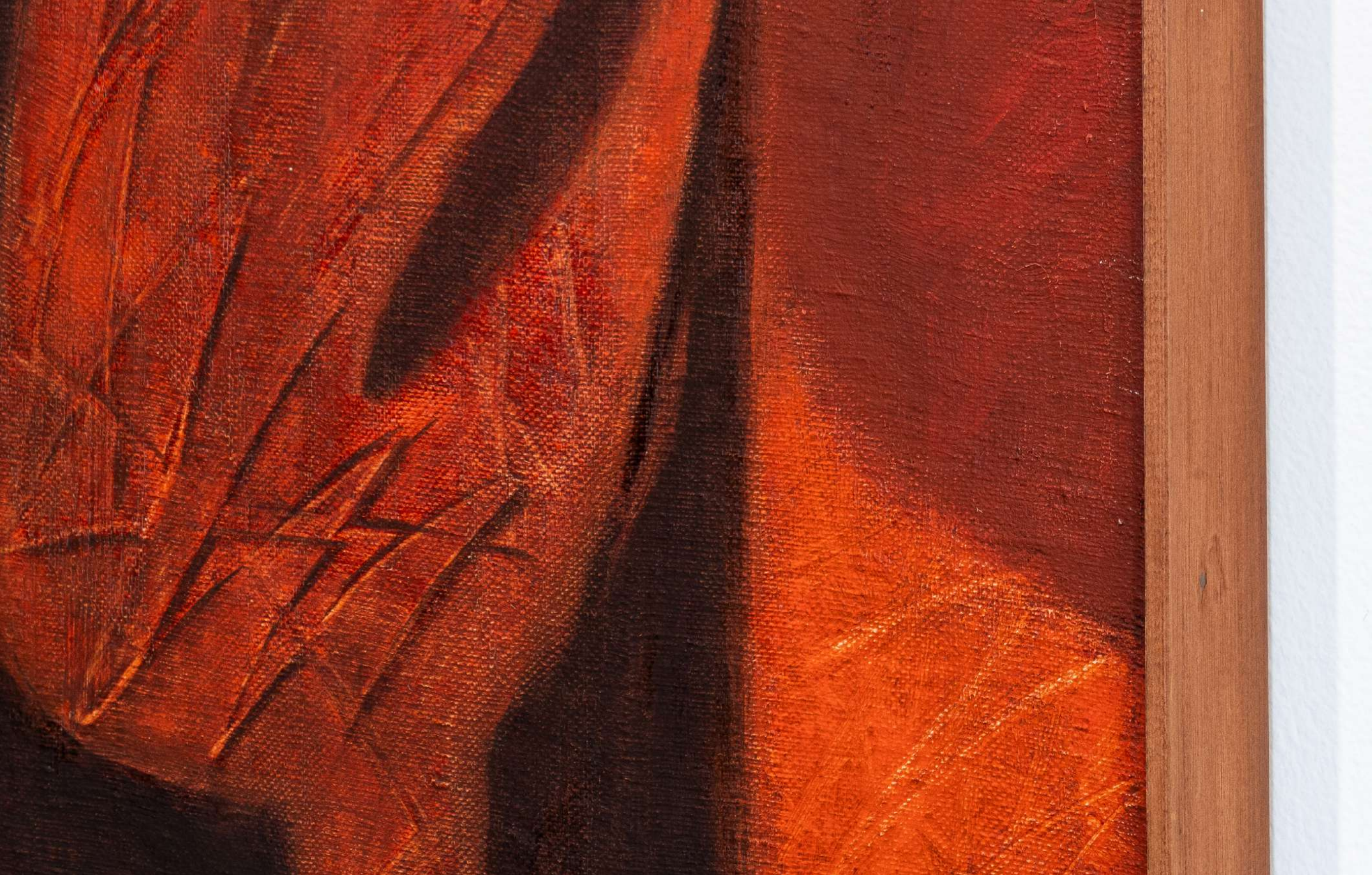
Tomie Ohtake once stated: "My work is Western; nevertheless, it receives much Japanese influence, a reflection of my formation. This influence is noticeable in the search for synthesis: a few elements must say many things." Born in Kyoto Japan, in 1936 Ohtake moved to Brazil where she stayed permanently due to the outbreak of the second World War. Yet, Ohtake did not begin her artistic career until 1952, when she had already developed personal and artistic ties in the country. Her paintings exemplify the transcultural dimension of her work, informed by the syncretic spiritual experience of Shinto-Buddhism then prevailing in Japan, which Ohtake brought to Brazil. In her condition as involuntary immigrant, Ohtake was constantly pursuing integration in Brazil. As a result, her works are haunting and expressive, seeming to coalesce in momentary formations before becoming something else.



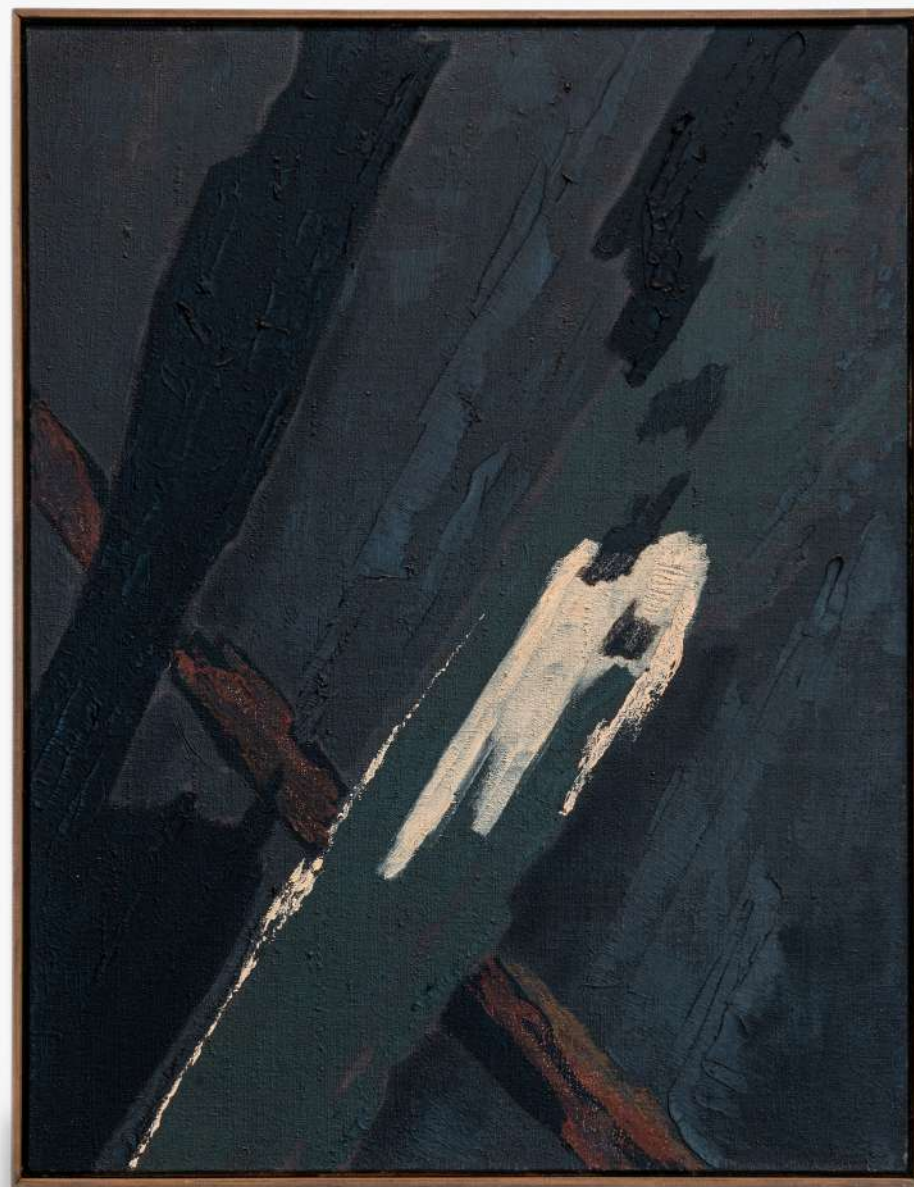
Tomie Ohtake
Untitled, 1956
oil paint on canvas
73 x 59,5 cm/28.7 x 23.4 in

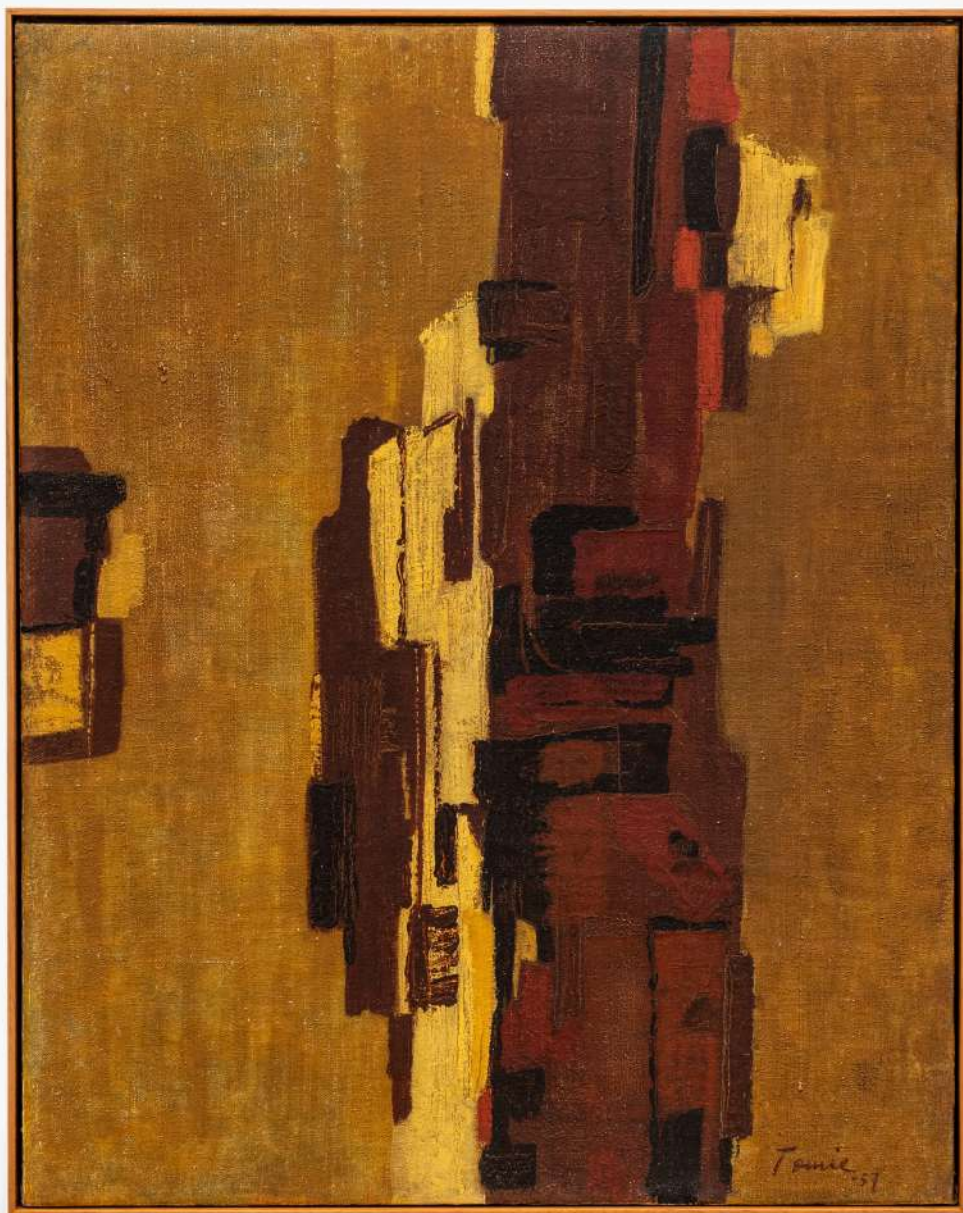
Tomie Ohtake
Untitled, 1956
oil paint on canvas
76 x 46 cm/29.9 x 18.1 in





Tomie Ohtake
Untitled, 1957
oil paint on canvas
65 x 50 cm/25.6 x 19.7 in





Tomie Ohtake
Untitled, 1957
oil paint on canvas
75 x 60 cm/29.5 x 23.6 in





Tomie Ohtake
Untitled, 1959
oil paint on canvas
97 x 77 cm/38.2 x 30.3 in





Tomie Ohtake
Untitled, 1962
oil paint on canvas
129 x 110 cm/50.8 x 43.3 in

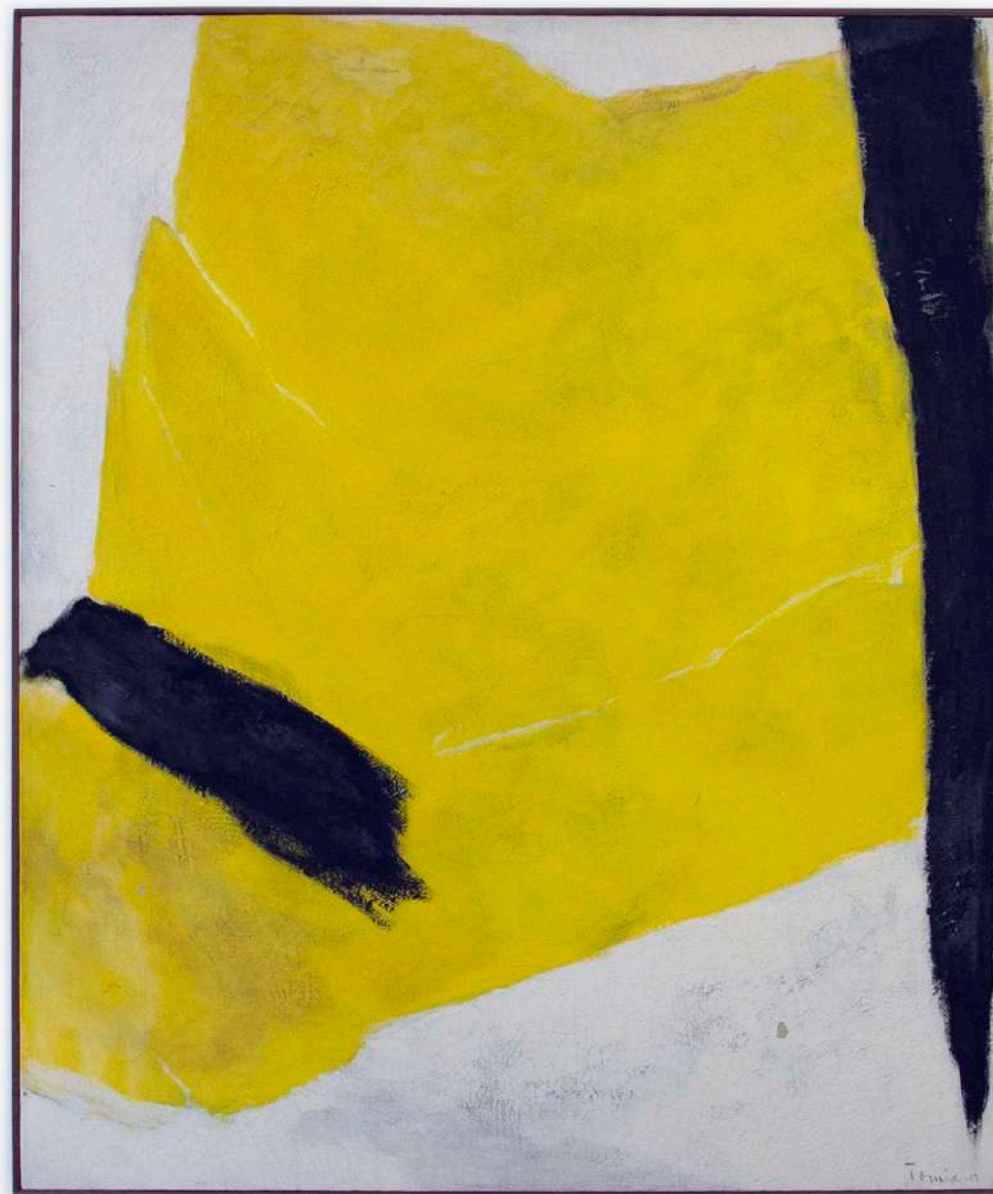




Tomie Ohtake
Untitled, 1962
oil paint on canvas
85,5 x 50 cm/33.7 x 19.7 in



Tomie Ohtake
Untitled, 1965
oil paint on canvas
120 x 100 cm/47.2 x 39.4 in





Tomie Ohtake
Untitled, 1966
oil paint on canvas
135 x 55 cm/53.1 x 21.7 in



tomie ohtake

1913, Kyoto, Japan | 2015, São Paulo, Brazil

One of the main representatives of abstract art in Brazil, Tomie Ohtake arrived in the country in her early twenties, coming from Kyoto, Japan, in 1936. It wasn't until she was 39 years old that she began painting, taking lessons with Japanese artist Keisuke Sugano, who was visiting Brazil at the time. In the late 1950s, when she left behind an initial phase of figurative studies, she immersed herself in abstract explorations. During this period, she performed a series known as blind paintings, where she would blindfold herself in experiments that challenged the ideas which grounded the Brazilian Neo-concrete movement, also bringing sensibility and intuition to the fore of her practice.

Between the 60s and 80s, Ohtake would produce her most iconic body of work. During that period the artist used techniques on paper such as tearing, cutting and collage, utilizing material from magazines, posters, books and exhibition invitations to conceive her compositions. By then, her artworks introduced geometric shapes with gestural contour and color areas defined by lines. The informalism and gestuality of her early works are then gradually abandoned when she chooses to investigate expressive painting techniques by applying loose brush-strokes and creating geometric, albeit ethereal forms, which were influenced by Zen philosophy. Despite being close to several avant-garde groups and movements, Ohtake always preferred to follow an independent trajectory, having painted until very late in life, having passed away when she was 102 years old. She participated in several biennials, including seven editions of the São Paulo Biennial and the 36th Venice Biennial in 1972.

recent solo exhibitions and projects

- *Tomie Ohtake: cor e corpo*, Caixa Cultural Brasília, Brasília, Brazil (2018)
- *Tomie Ohtake em Curitiba – Vultos, fissuras e clareiras*, Memorial da Cidade – Salão Paranaguá, Curitiba, Brazil (2018)
- *Tomie Ohtake: nas pontas dos dedos*, Galeria Nara Roesler, São Paulo, Brazil (2017)
- *Tomie por Tizuka Yamasaki*, Museu da Imagem e do Som (MIS), São Paulo, Brazil (2015)

recent group shows

- *Ateliê de Gravura: da tradição à experimentação*, Fundação Iberê Camargo (FIC), Porto Alegre, Brazil (2019)
- *Surface Work*, Victoria Miro, London, UK (2018)
- *Arte moderna na coleção da Fundação Edson Queiroz*, Museu Coleção Berardo, Lisbon, Portugal (2017)
- *The World is our Home. A Poem on Abstraction*, Para Site, Hong Kong, China (2015)
- *EFusion: Tracing Asian Migration to the Americas Through AMA's Collection*, Art Museum of the Americas, Washington, WA, USA (2013)

selected collections

- Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA
- M+, Hong Kong, China
- Tate Modern, London, UK
- Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, Brazil
- Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, Japan

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public hours
thursday, december 5 | 3pm – 8pm
friday, december 6 | 12 noon – 8pm
saturday, december 7 | 12 noon – 8pm
sunday, december 8 | 12 noon – 6pm

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