



nara roesler

**carlito carvalhosa:**  
**matter as image.**  
**works from 1987 to 2021**

curated by luis pérez-oramas  
and the estate of carlito carvalhosa

**nara roesler new york**  
**opening** may 4, 2022  
**exhibition** may 4 – jun 18, 2022

Carlito Carvalhosa (1961–2021) lived most of his life in Rio de Janeiro, where he embraced the radical legacy of Brazilian artists who preceded him. He brought their achievements to new, unprecedented dimensions in terms of concept, form, and scale.

Neo Concretism's *Theory of the Non Object*, Oiticica's *Fundamental Bases for the Definition of the Parangolé*, Clark's *Phantasmatic of the Body*, Antonio Manuel's *Body/Work* have been milestones of aesthetic newness leading to experiences of artistic exhaustion, both historically and formally, with implications preceding current manifestations such as Relational Aesthetics and Post-subjective Performative Art. The radicality of some of these propositions carried a weight for the generations

that followed them often translating into a conclusive *no-way out* in terms of art practice. For instance, Hélio Oiticica's or Lygia Clark's late works, ephemeral and anti-monumental, clearly stepped on territories that transcended the conventional frames of art, towards the extended fields of the *beyond-art*: therapy or social practice, *quasi-cinema* and anti-art.

The entire repertoire of Carlito Carvalhosa's *oeuvre* responded to this historical challenge, from his inception as a painter embedded in the deep sources of the formless and his acute sense of *what is there in reality* for art to his striking performative installations using fabric, neon, wood, wax, mirrors, and sound. Within the countless possibilities of

these materials, Carvalhosa addressed the sculptural quality of draperies and creases, painting as volume and mass, and even in some landmark installations the presence of sound as opaqueness and density. Carvalhosa's work stands out for his consistent understanding of a generative dimension of matter and materiality in visual arts. For him, *matter is image* and images always emerge from the opaque field of materiality as forces expanding through opaqueness and transparency, reflection, and blindness, as marks in the density of reality that one needs to experience time and again, as *things that were there before we were*.

—Luis Pérez-Oramas



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Carlito Carvalhosa during an artist residency at  
ESDI – Escola Superior de Desenho Industrial,  
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1993  
photo © Vicente de Mello



*Untitled (P02/88)*, 1988  
oil, enamel and resin  
on canvas on wood  
221 × 241 × 5,5 cm  
87 × 94.9 × 2.2 in











Carlito Carvalhosa was, alongside artists Nuno Ramos, Fabio Miguez, Rodrigo Andrade and Paulo Monteiro a founding member of the group Casa 7, which embraced the avant-garde of painting by the mid-1980s in Brazil. For them the equation to solve was, likely: what the after-life of painting (and of art for that matter) could be after the invention of artistic typologies such as 'Parangolé' (Oiticica), 'Obra Mole-Soft Work' (Clark), or 'Active Object' (Wyllis de Castro)?

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*Untitled*, 1987  
encaustic on wood  
135 × 160 × 2,8 cm  
53.1 × 63 × 1.1 in









Embracing the exhaustive legacy of their predecessors, by the 1980s young artists working in Brazil invented ways to keep their own production alive and relevant, confronted by the necessity of opening new paths for their works, often re-inscribing their own practices back into an expanded understanding of the conventions of painting.

Carvalhosa's was among the most radical painterly investigations of that time in Latin America. From striking monochromes in the 1980s to his 1990s series of waxes, Carvalhosa placed matter and seriality at the center of his production. Notable are his works on wax where the artist's hand and fingers are visible as traces coming from behind, from underneath the very material support, inverting the classical proposition of painting. He understood painting from within, as an abstract, opaque thickness that manifests itself as an expanding visual field rather than as a confined image.

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*Untitled (P18/92), 1992*  
wax, oil and clay on canvas  
on wood  
40 × 40 cm  
15.7 × 15.7 in





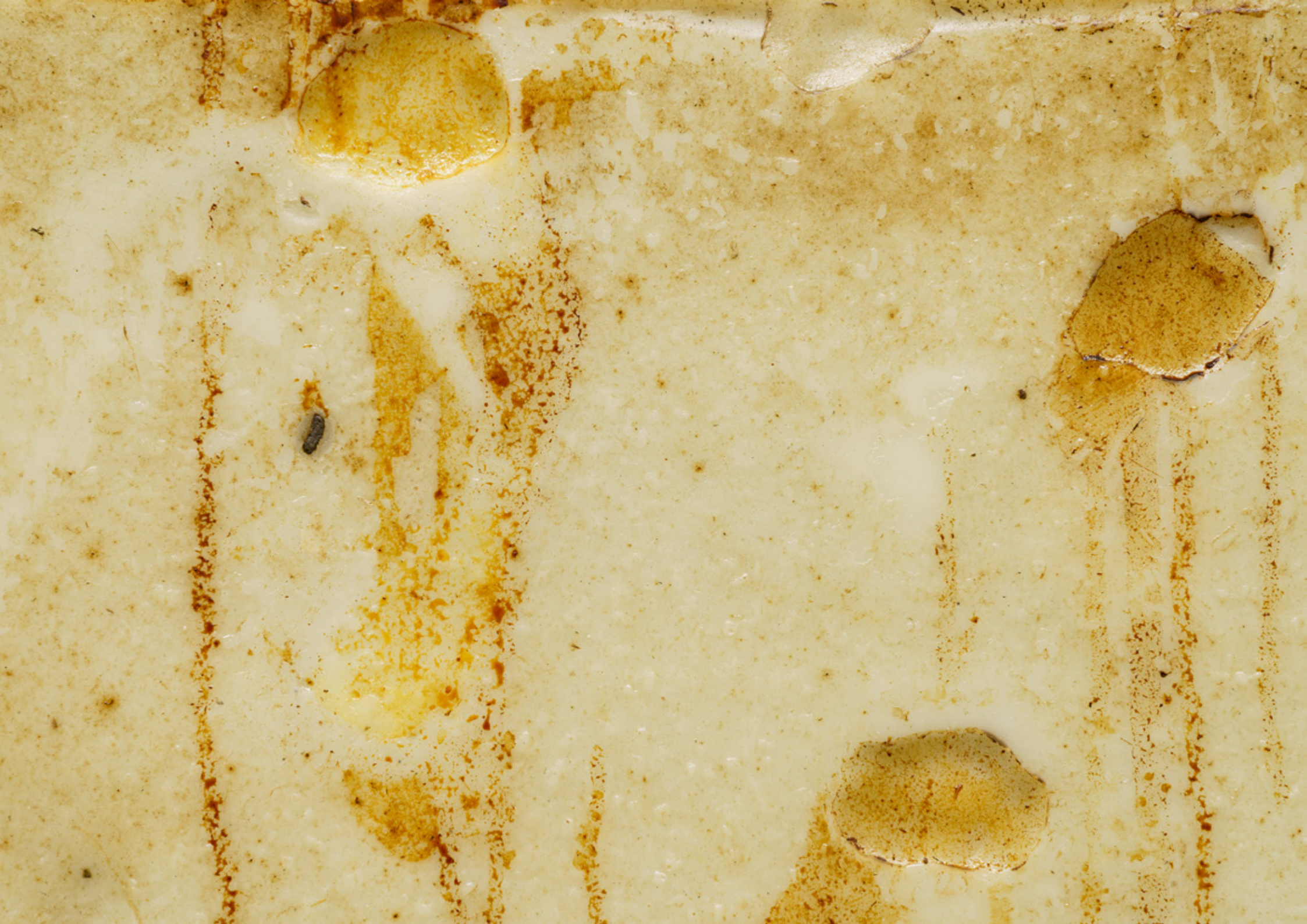




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*Untitled (P17/92)*, 1992  
wax, oil and clay on canvas  
on wood  
40 × 40 cm  
15.7 × 15.7 in







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*Untitled (P21/93), 1993*  
wax on wood  
222 × 123 × 6 cm  
87.4 × 48.4 × 2.4 in









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*Untitled (P18/91)*, 1991  
wax, clay and pigment  
on canvas on wood  
30 × 30 cm  
11.8 × 11.8 in









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*Untitled (P04/92)*, 1992  
wax, plaster, clay and pigment  
on canvas on wood  
30 × 30 cm  
11.8 × 11.8 in







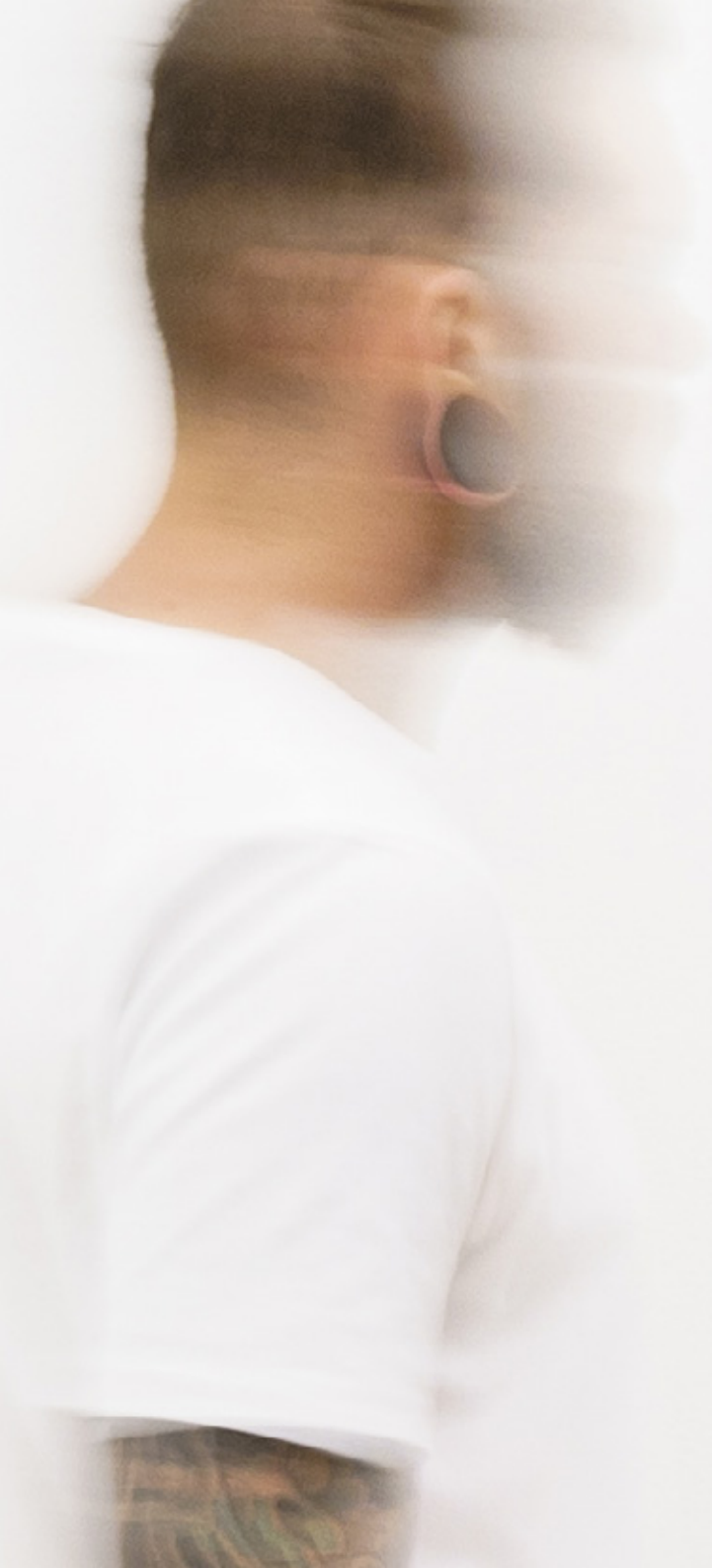


*Untitled (P06/92)*, 1992  
wax, oil, lead and pigment  
on canvas on wood  
30 × 30 cm  
11.8 × 11.8 in









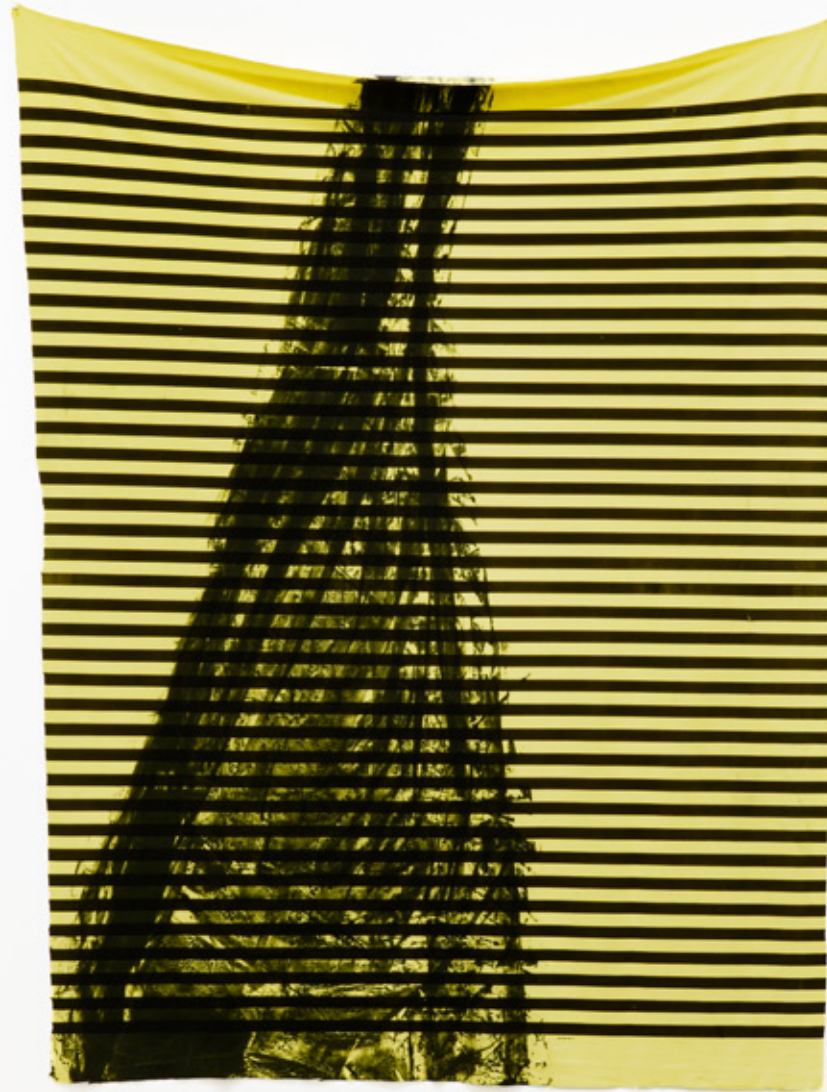
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*Untitled (P10/92), 1992*  
wax, oil and clay on canvas on wood  
30 × 30 cm  
11.8 × 11.8 in



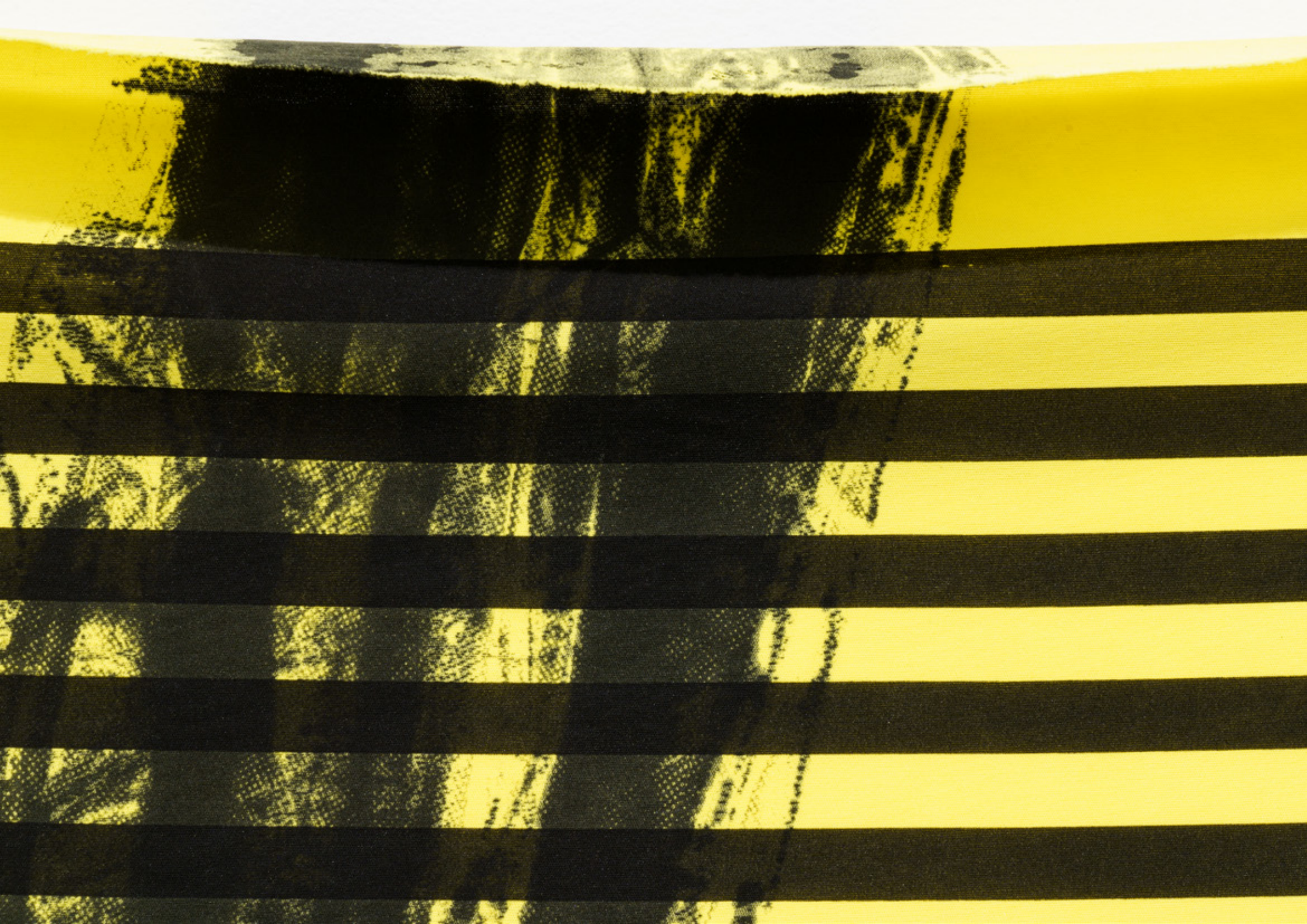






Untitled (P28/09), 2009  
painting on fabric  
166 × 130 cm  
65.4 × 51.2 in







The centrality of sculpture as an expanded practice—from the ‘discovery of Parangolé elements in the landscape’ (in Oiticica’s words) to amplified structures in environmental space, to three-dimensional painterly objects—is a signature of Carvalhosa’s oeuvre.



*Carro na árvore, 2010*

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*Carro na árvore*, 2010  
photograph  
edition of 100  
40 × 50 cm  
15.7 × 19.7 in







Notably important are ceramic and porcelain, ephemeral plaster sculptures as well as formless, monumental *lost-waxes* that Carvalhosa produced beginning the mid 1990s. These works allowed the artist to re-visit, in continuity with his understanding of matter as a generatrix force of his work, new forms and classical typologies such as abstract draperies and imprints, marking accidents from which he drew his painting repertoire on a variety of supports, mirrors, aluminum, textile and wax from the 2000s onwards.



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*Untitled (E11/96)*, 1996  
earthenware  
35 × 38 × 87 cm  
13.8 × 15 × 34.3 in



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*Untitled (E60a/96)*, 1996  
earthenware  
15 × 40 × 48 cm  
5.9 × 15.7 × 18.9 in











Untitled (E06/96), 1996  
 earthenware  
 8 × 8 × 30 cm  
 3.1 × 3.1 × 11.8 in

Untitled (E13/96), 1996  
 earthenware  
 28 × 26 × 56 cm  
 11 × 10.2 × 22 in

Untitled (E07\_3/96), 1997  
 porcelain  
 28 × 64 × 25 cm  
 11 × 25.2 × 9.8 in






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*Untitled (E18/97), 1997*  
stoneware  
10 × 30 × 61 cm  
3.9 × 11.8 × 24 in

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*Untitled (E17/96), 1996*  
earthenware  
30 × 33 × 59 cm  
11.8 × 13 × 23.2 in

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*Untitled (E04/97), 1997*  
stoneware  
53 × 36 × 73 cm  
20.9 × 14.2 × 28.7 in



*Untitled (P08/03), 2003*  
oil, grease and resin on mirror  
160 × 110 × 3 cm  
63 × 43.3 × 1.2 in









Particularly relevant are works where Carvalho included language-wit, deconstructed phrases serving often as titles- that can be found on the very surface of his mirror paintings. Carvalho addresses there the mirror image as inverted reflection—particularly by writing backwards—while he cancels it by covering the mirror surface with paint. The colorful literality of forms collides with the transparency of mirrors, opacifying it. This repertoire of forms often echoes the three-dimensional volumes of his formless sculptures, waxes and porcelains.



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*Untitled (P04/09), 2009*  
painting on mirror  
50 × 70 cm  
19.7 × 27.6 in











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*Untitled (P03/09), 2009*  
painting on mirror  
50 × 70 cm  
19.7 × 27.6 in







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*Já estava assim quando  
eu cheguei*, 2015  
wood, resin and marble  
edition of 6  
102 × 110 × 136 cm  
40.2 × 43.3 × 53.5 in









exhibition view of  
*Já estava assim quando eu cheguei*,  
Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro (MAM Rio),  
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 2006







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*Untitled (E18/15), 2015*  
wood  
8,5 × 30 × 14 cm  
3.3 × 11.8 × 5.5 in









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*Untitled (E19/15), 2015*  
wood  
37 × 22 × 20 cm  
14.6 × 8.7 × 7.9 in









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*Untitled (E21/15), 2015*  
wood  
47 × 20 × 20 cm  
18.5 × 7.9 × 7.9 in







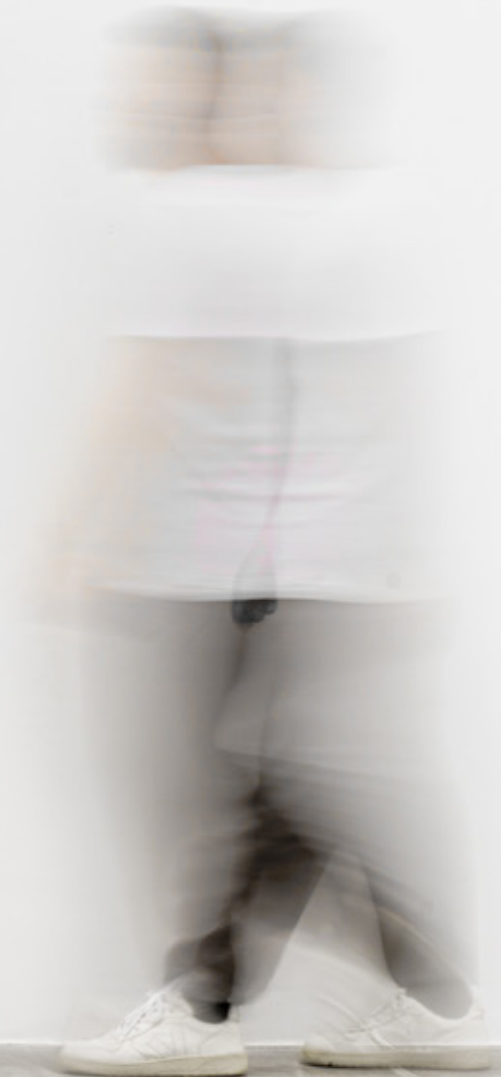


exhibition view of  
*Sala de espera*, Museu de Arte Contemporânea  
da Universidade de São Paulo (MAC-USP),  
São Paulo, Brazil, 2013  
courtesy of the artist and Nara Roesler



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*Untitled (P57/17)*, 2017  
resin on aluminum  
200 × 100 cm  
78.7 × 39.4 in









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*Untitled (P56/17), 2017*  
resin on aluminum  
200 x 100 cm  
78.7 x 39.4 in









Untitled (P82/17), 2017  
oil and resin on beaten aluminum  
200 x 100 cm  
78.7 x 39.4 in







*Untitled (P83/17), 2017*  
oil and resin on aluminum  
200 × 100 cm  
78.7 × 39.4 in

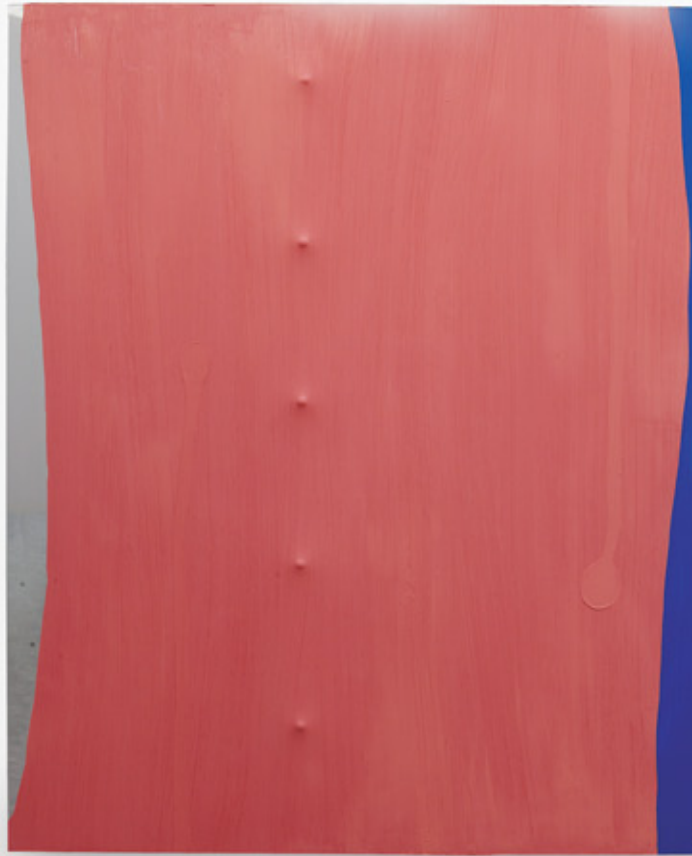






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*Untitled (P31/19)*, 2019  
oil on mirrored aluminum  
122 × 98 cm  
48 × 38.6 in







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*Untitled (P69/15), 2015*  
wax and oil on  
mirrored aluminum  
124 × 82 cm  
48.8 × 32.3 in









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*Untitled (P70/17), 2017*  
oil on mirrored aluminum  
80 × 122 cm  
31.5 × 48 in





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*Untitled*, 2021  
oil paint and wax on wood  
15 pieces of 50 × 40 × 6 cm  
19.7 × 15.7 × 2.4 in each

Key in Carvalho's late production were site specific and monumental installations, including light, sound and fabric that a gallery context is unable to accurately convey. Carvalho's untimely

passing interrupted a tireless production of serial paintings on wax where the artist stands-out as a brilliant colorist, and as a contemporary master obsessed with indexical marks.







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## carlito carvalhosa

b. 1961, São Paulo, Brazil

d. 2021, São Paulo, Brazil

Carlito Carvalhosa's work predominantly involves painting and sculpture. In the 1980s, Carvalhosa was a member of the São Paulo-based collective Grupo Casa 7, alongside Rodrigo Andrade, Fábio Miguez, Nuno Ramos, and Paulo Monteiro. Like his colleagues, he produced large paintings with an emphasis on pictorial gesture, an approach that was characteristic of the neo expressionist production. In the late 1980s, with the group having disintegrated, Carvalhosa began to experiment with encaustics and to make pictures using wax, either pure or mixed with pigments. In the mid-1990s, he turned to sculptures, making organic and malleable-like pieces with materials such as the so-called 'lost waxes'. During this period, he also experimented with porcelain sculptures.

Carvalhosa has ascribed deep eloquence to the materiality of the media that he employed, seeking to transcend formal aspects in order to explore matters of time and space. In his practice, one encounters a tension between form and materiality through a disjunction of the visible and the tactile —what we see is not what we touch, and what we touch is not what we see. At the beginning of the 2000s, he created paintings on mirrored surfaces which, in the words of curator Paulo Venancio Filho "put our presence inside them". Beyond Carvalhosa's recurrent techniques and materials, the artist has also frequently experimented with objects like tissues and lamps in his creation of installations.

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## selected solo exhibitions

- *I Want to Be Like You*, Nara Roesler, New York, USA (2019)
- *Sala de espera*, Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo (MAC USP), São Paulo, Brazil (2013)
- *Sum of Days*, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, USA (2011)
- *Corredor*, Projeto Parede, Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo (MAM-SP), São Paulo, Brazil (2008)

## selected group exhibitions

- *Passado/futuro/presente: arte contemporânea brasileira no acervo do MAM*, Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo (MAM-SP), São Paulo, Brazil (2019); Phoenix Art Museum, Phoenix, USA (2017)
- *Troposphere – Chinese and Brazilian Contemporary Art*, Beijing Minsheng Art Museum, Beijing, China (2017)
- 10<sup>th</sup> Curitiba International Biennial, Brazil (2015)
- *Rio (River)*, Performance, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, USA (2014)
- 30<sup>th</sup> and 18th São Paulo Biennial, Brazil (2013 and 1985)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Mercosul Biennial, Brazil (2001)

## selected institutional collections

- Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation (CIFO), Miami, USA
- Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo (MAM-SP), São Paulo, Brazil
- Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro (MAM Rio), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil



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exhibition view of  
*Sum of Days*, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA),  
New York, USA, 2011  
photo © Jeffrey Gray Brandsted



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