

nara roesler

## japan in/out brazil

nara roesler new york

opening september 4

exhibition september 4 – october 5, 2024



## japan in/out brazil

Nara Roesler New York is pleased to present *Japan in/out Brazil*, a group exhibition including three artists from different generations who represent the creative continuity of Japanese-Brazilian culture. The result of a diasporic process that sparked from Japan to Brazil at the end of the Nineteenth Century and peaked during the first half of the Twentieth Century, the Brazilian-Japanese community is among the most significant Asian presence in the Americas. Notably impactful in the cultural fields, and particularly visible in main urban centers such as São Paulo, a megalopolis with the largest Japanese population in the world after Tokyo.

The show aims to draw this constellation of cultural exchanges between Japan and Brazil through the work of three significant artists sharing their common Japanese-Brazilian experience. The generational arch these three brilliant women artists represent, embraces the entirety of the past century, from early Modernism to Contemporary Art.

Tomie Ohtake (1913-2014), Lydia Okumura (1949), and Asuka Anastacia Ogawa (1988) belong to three critically important moments: a highly sophisticated Modern abstraction in the case of Tomie Ohtake, Okumura's embodiment of late Modern site specific practices and the present moment, informed by self-identifying narratives in the case of Ogawa. Their works manifest with outstanding clarity, almost emblematically, the symbolic resonance of their artistic time: Ohtake's organic abstraction, Okumura's site-specific geometric opticality, and Ogawa's figuration informed by genre and ancestral narratives.

*Japan in/out Brazil* aims to state the porosity of frontiers, the primacy of places over nations, the fact that forms are the result of their errancy and displacement, and the intricate constellation of life and geography as a frame for artistic production. Emblematically global, *Japan in/out Brazil* draws a virtual figure of the world where America, Brazil, Europe, Africa, and Asia are intertwined in the resonance of three artistic lives.

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Tomie Ohtake  
*Untitled*, 1983  
acrylic paint on canvas  
200 x 251 x 4 cm  
78.7 x 98.8 x 1.6 in

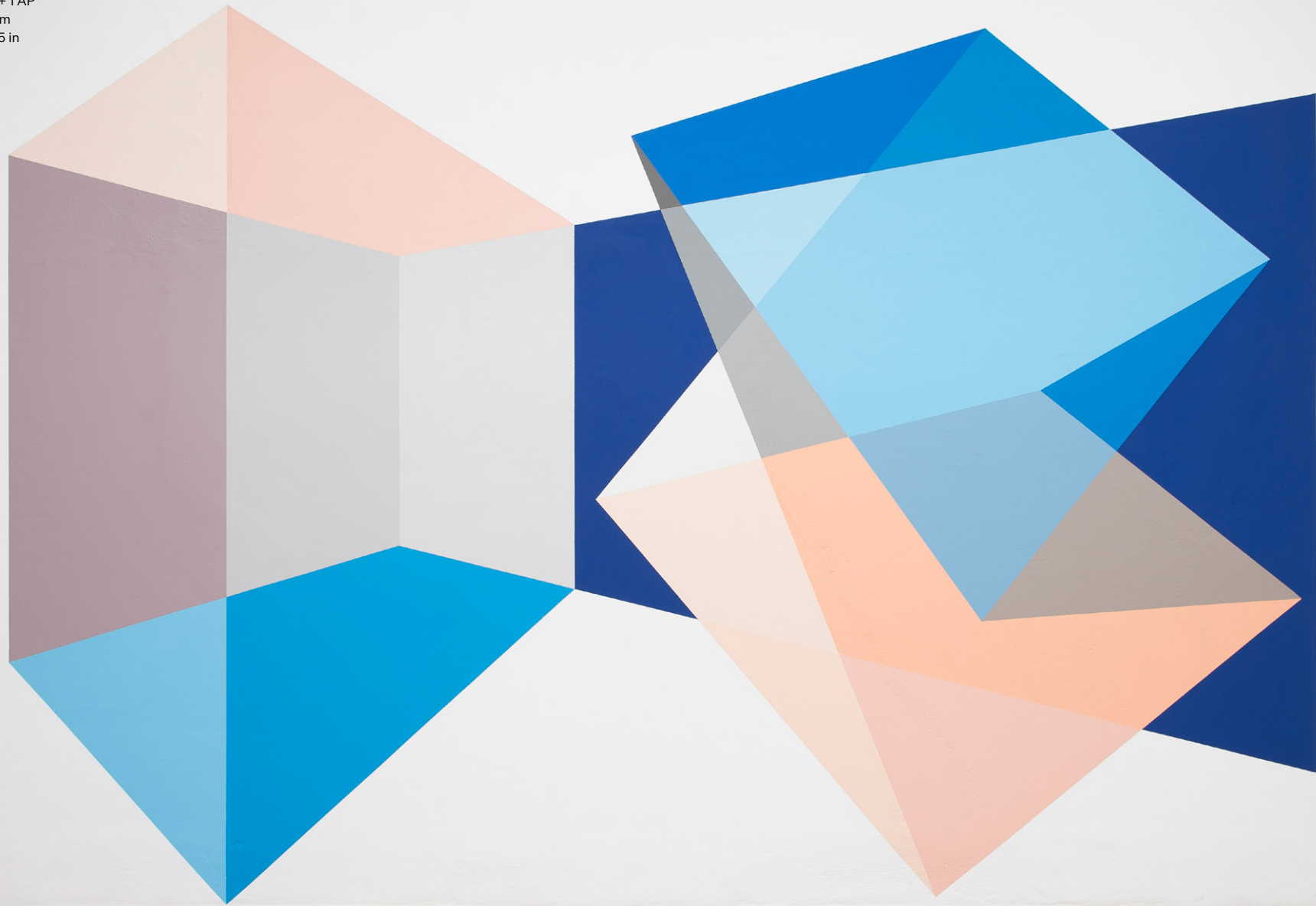








Lydia Okumura  
*Tribeca*, 1984  
acrylic paint on wall  
edition of 3 + 1 AP  
270 x 390 cm  
106.3 x 153.5 in











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Lydia Okumura  
*Untitled*, 2000  
oil paint on canvas  
50,8 x 63,5 cm  
20 x 25 in







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Lydia Okumura  
*Green and Pink, NYC*, 2002  
oil paint on canvas  
unique  
ø 30,5 cm  
ø 12 in









Lydia Okumura  
*Cadence I, NYC, 2003*  
oil paint on canvas  
unique  
ø 60 cm  
ø 23,6





Tomie Ohtake  
*Sem título*, 2014  
acrylic paint on canvas  
200,5 x 100,5 x 4 cm  
78.9 x 39.6 x 1.6 in











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Lydia Okumura  
*Untitled*, 2000  
oil paint on canvas  
50,8 x 63,5 cm  
20 x 25 in









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Lydia Okumura  
*Red and Blue III, NYC, 2001*  
oil paint on linen  
unique  
ø 30,5 cm  
ø 12 in









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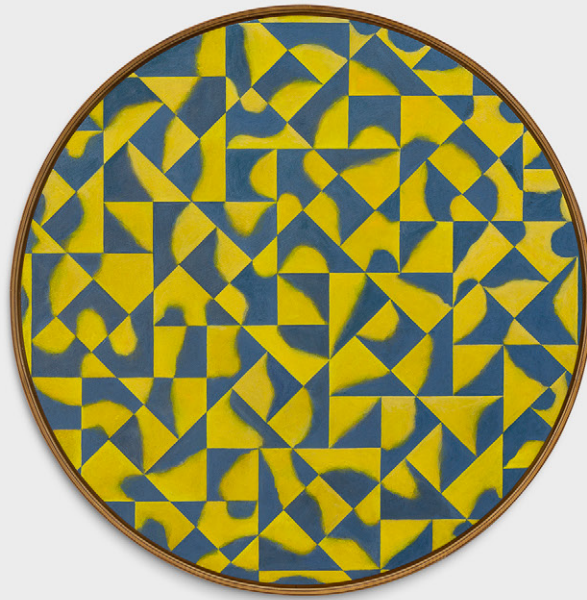
Asuka Anastacia Ogawa  
*Candle fingers*, 2024  
acrylic paint on canvas  
182,9 x 121,9 x 3,8 cm  
72 x 48 x 1.5 in



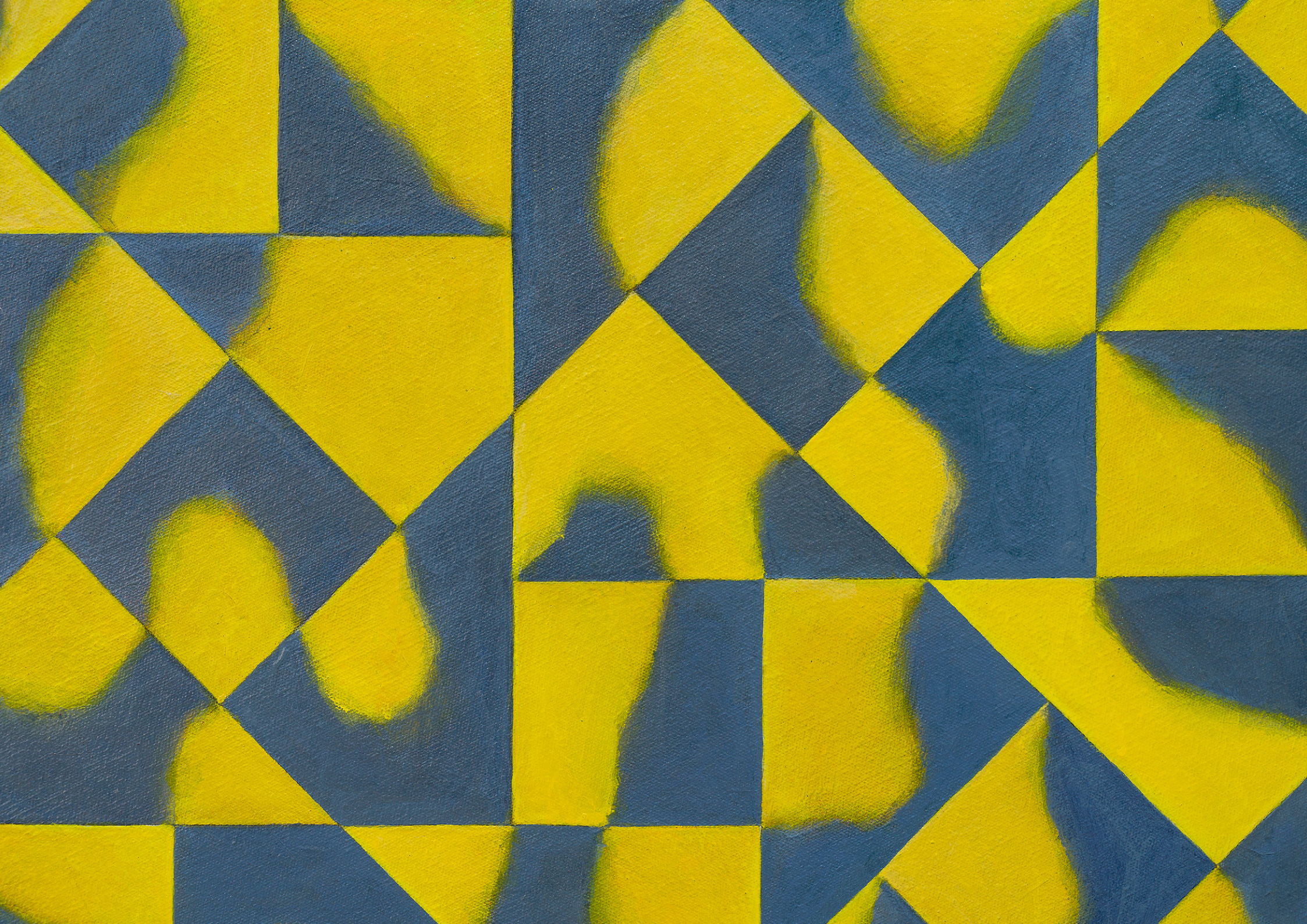




Lydia Okumura  
*Cadence I, NYC, 2002*  
oil paint on canvas  
unique  
ø 99,5 cm  
ø 39,2











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Lydia Okumura  
*Circum, NYC, 2003*  
acrylic paint on canvas  
unique  
ø 60 cm  
ø 23,6









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*Untitled, 1986*  
oil paint on canvas  
135 x 270 cm  
53.1 x 106.3 in









Asuka Anastacia Ogawa  
*Akai Hana, Murasaki*, 2024  
acrylic paint on canvas  
183,5 x 178,4 x 4,1 cm  
72.2 x 70.2 x 1.6 in







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## tomie ohtake

b. 1913, Kyoto, Japan

d. 2015, São Paulo, Brazil

One of the main representatives of 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 became a member of the Seibi group, which brought together artists of Japanese descent. In the late 1950s, when she left behind an initial phase of figurative studies in painting, she immersed herself in abstract explorations. In this phase, she performed a series of paintings which became 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.

In 1957, invited by critic Mário Pedrosa, she presented her first solo exhibition at the Museu de Arte Moderna in São Paulo, which was followed by her participation in the São Paulo Biennial in 1961. Ohtake began to experiment with various printmaking methods during the 1970s and, beginning in the late 1980s, undertook large-scale sculptural projects and public works in São Paulo and neighboring cities. Having worked until very late in life, Tomie Ohtake passed away in 2015, when she was 101 years old.

[click to see full cv](#)

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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)
- 60<sup>th</sup> International Art Exhibition La Biennale di Venezia, *Stranieri Ovunque – Foreigners Everywhere*, 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, United Kingdom (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 (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



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## lydia okumura

b. 1948, Osvaldo Cruz, Brazil

lives and works in New York

Lydia Okumura began her artistic career in the 1970s. Initially interested in ceramics, she studied fine arts at the Armando Álvares Penteado Foundation (FAAP) between 1970 and 1973, where she was introduced not only in the legacy of Brazilian geometric abstraction, but also in international art movements that were contemporary to her, such as Conceptual Art, which was increasingly strong in Brazil, and Minimalism. These investigations gave rise to works in different media, such as drawing, serigraphy, lithography and woodcut, with a particular emphasis on site-specific installation works, which form a highly expressive part of his poetics. Together with Genilson Soares and Francisco Inarra, between 1970 and 1974, he was part of the Equipe3 group, through which he carried out works and actions, as well as taking part in the 12<sup>th</sup> São Paulo International Biennial (1973).

With a visual research based on essential abstract elements: planes, lines and colors, the artist studies the relationships established between them, but taking into account an extra and crucial component in her work: the exhibition space. Using materials such as ropes, iron sheets, pencils and charcoal, she creates works that move between the two- and three-dimensional, projecting from the wall into the exhibition space.

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### selected solo exhibitions

- *Lydia Okumura*, Hall Art Foundation, Hildesheim, Germany (2022)
- *Lydia Okumura*, Galeria Jaqueline Martins, São Paulo, Brazil (2021)
- *Volume 84*, Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London, UK (2019)
- *Situations*, Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, Scottsdale, USA (2018)
- *Five Sides and Other Dimensions*, Broadway 1602, Nova York, USA (2017)
- *Situations*, UB Art Galleries, Buffalo, USA (2016)

### selected group exhibitions

- *This Must be the Place*, Americas Society, Nova York, USA (2021)
- *Dimensions of Reality: Female Minimal*, Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris, France (2020)
- *The Women Geometers*, Atchugarry Art Center, Miami, USA (2019)
- *Light, Line, Color and Space*, UB Art Galleries, University of Buffalo, USA (2018)

### selected collections

- Metropolitan Museum of Art, Nova York, USA
- Museum of Modern Art, Nova York, USA
- The University of New York, UB Anderson Gallery, Buffalo, USA
- Akron Museum of Art, Ohio, USA
- Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid, Spain
- The Hall Art Foundation, Derneburg, Germany
- The Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, Japan
- Guggenheim Museum, Dubai, UAE



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**asuka anastacia ogawa**

b. 1988, Tokyo, Japan

lives and works in Los Angeles

Born in Japan, Asuka Ogawa spent part of her childhood and teenage years in Brazil, completed her studies in Sweden and graduated from Central Saint Martins in London. The cultural diversity that permeated her formative years had a strong impact on her artistic production, which incorporates different visual references, beliefs and traditions.

Her dreamlike paintings, with monochrome and vibrant backgrounds, feature frontal representations of androgynous, doll-like children, constructed with great formal economy, with carefully constructed faces and almond-shaped eyes that seem to look beyond the painting. The construction scheme of these pictorial compositions, which due to their formal economy and chromatic intensity carry a certain aura of mystery, ends up bringing them closer to images of a spiritual nature. There is a strong reference in her poetics to her own ancestry, which combines Japanese and Afro-Brazilian elements. In the artist's words: 'Although I don't have a theme when I paint, I'm always thinking of my mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, and of the beauty, strength, struggle and love of our ancestors.'

This ancestral legacy is visible in the other elements that make up Asuka's paintings, such as clothing, props, objects and animals. The situations in which these characters are inserted are quite enigmatic and even banal, everyday scenes such as a wash or a game between children, in Asuka's paintings take on metaphysical contours, loaded with symbolism that connects the artist to her various roots.

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**selected solo exhibitions**

- *Melinha*, Nara Roesler, São Paulo, Brazil (2024)
- *Pedra*, Blum & Poe, Los Angeles, USA (2023)
- *Tamago*, Blum & Poe, Los Angeles, USA (2022)
- *Feijão*, Half Gallery, New York, USA (2019)
- *Soup*, Henry Taylor's, Los Angeles, USA (2017)

**selected group exhibitions**

- *Room by room: concepts, themes and artists in The Rachosfy Collection*, The Warehouse, Dallas, USA (2023)
- *Co-responses: Brazil and abroad*, Nara Roesler, New York, USA (2023)
- *5471 Miles*, Blum & Poe, Los Angeles, USA (2020)
- *Don't Eat Me*, Deli Gallery, Nova York, USA (2018)
- *Early 21st Century Art*, Almine Rech Gallery, Londres, Reino UK (2018)

**selected collections**

- Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, USA
- Nasher Museum of Art, Duke University, Durham, USA
- X Museum, Pequim, China



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nara roesler

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