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**tomie ohtake**  
infravermelho  
curated by paulo miyada

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opening april 13

exhibition april 13 – june 8, 2024



Tomie Ohtake, *Untitled*, 1994 [detail]. Photo: Flávio Freire.

In partnership with the Instituto Tomie Ohtake, Nara Roesler is pleased to present *Infravermelho*, a solo show by Japanese-Brazilian artist Tomie Ohtake (1913-2015). Paulo Miyada, the Institute's artistic director, worked alongside Rodrigo Ohtake, the architect and vice-president of the institution, to curate and design the exhibition. Parallel to Tomie Ohtake's work being presented for the first time in the Venice Biennale main exhibition, *Infravermelho* offers an opportunity to examine more closely an important stage in the artist's work.

In the exhibition, paintings, and a sculpture relevant to understanding Tomie Ohtake's production in the 1990s are presented in an arrangement that emphasizes their cosmological analogy. Today, with the impact of images produced from the data collected by the James Webb telescope, which captures light in the infrared spectrum that is invisible to the human eye, we are living in an era of renewing the collective imagination about the origins, expansion, and limits of space: which creates the opportunity to reinvestigate the role of the cosmic in Ohtake's work. Critics such as Frederico Morais and

Miguel Chaia have also looked at Tomie Ohtake's so-called "Cosmic Phase".

In the 1990s, when Tomie Ohtake was already established as an important Brazilian abstract artist and a key figure for the Japanese-Brazilian community, she transitioned from using oil paint to exploring acrylic paint in her work. This moment coincided with the transition from a creative process based on studies with collages of cut-out papers to the direct investigation of painting from synthetic forms: circles, spirals, ovoids, and amoeboids. In the same decade, Ohtake began producing sculptures as curved metal lines, modeled on a human scale from tiny wire models.

According to Paulo Miyada, "this is a moment when the artist refines her attention to pictorial gestures in the superimposition of layers and transparencies, with a collection of archetypal forms as her recurring object. In this sense, Ohtake moves away from the matrices of concrete abstract art and approaches, at the same time, oriental traditions (especially *ensō* in Zen Buddhism) and evocative images of nature (especially the cosmos)."

#### about tomie ohtake

One of the main representatives of abstract art in Brazil, Tomie Ohtake (b. 1913, Kyoto, Japan - d. 2015, São Paulo, Brazil) 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.

Tomie Ohtake works have been extensively exhibited worldwide. Important recent shows include: *Tomie Ohtake Dançante*, at Instituto Tomie Ohtake (ITO) (2022), in São Paulo, Brazil; *Visible Persistence*, at Nara Roesler (2021), in New York, USA; *Tomie Ohtake: cor e corpo*, at Caixa Cultural Brasília (2018), in Brasília, Brazil; *Tomie Ohtake: nas pontas dos dedos*, at Galeria Nara Roesler (2017), in São Paulo, Brazil. Main recent group show include: *Action, Gesture, Paint: Women Artists and Global Abstraction 1940-70*, at Whitechapel Gallery (2023), in London, UK; *Raio-que-o-parta: Ficções do moderno no Brasil*, at Sesc 24 de Maio (2022), in São Paulo, Brazil; *Composições para tempos insurgentes*, at Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro (MAM Rio) (2021), in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; *Surface Work*, at Victoria Miro (2018), in London, UK; *Arte moderna na coleção da Fundação Edson Queiroz*, Museu Coleção Berardo, Lisbon, Portugal (2017); *Fusion: Tracing Asian Migration to the Americas Through AMA's Collection*, at Art Museum of the Americas (2013), in Washington, USA. Her works are included in important collections, such as: Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros, Caracas, Venezuela; Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, USA; M+, Hong Kong; Metropolitan Museum of Art (MET), New York, USA; Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan; Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro (MAM Rio), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil; Tate Modern, London, UK.

#### about nara roesler

Nara Roesler is a leading Brazilian contemporary art gallery, representing seminal Brazilian and international artists who emerged in the 1950s as well as preeminent mid-career and emerging artists who dialogue with the currents put forth by these historical figures. Founded by Nara Roesler in 1989, the gallery has consistently fomented curatorial practice while upholding the utmost quality in art production. This has actively been put into practice through a select and rigorous exhibitions program created in close collaboration with its artists; the implementation and fostering of the Roesler Curatorial Project, a platform for curatorial projects; and continued support to artists beyond the gallery space, working with institutions and curators in offsite shows. In 2012, the gallery doubled its São Paulo exhibition space, in 2014 it expanded to Rio, and in 2015 it opened in New York City, continuing its mission to provide the best platform for its artists to show their work.

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