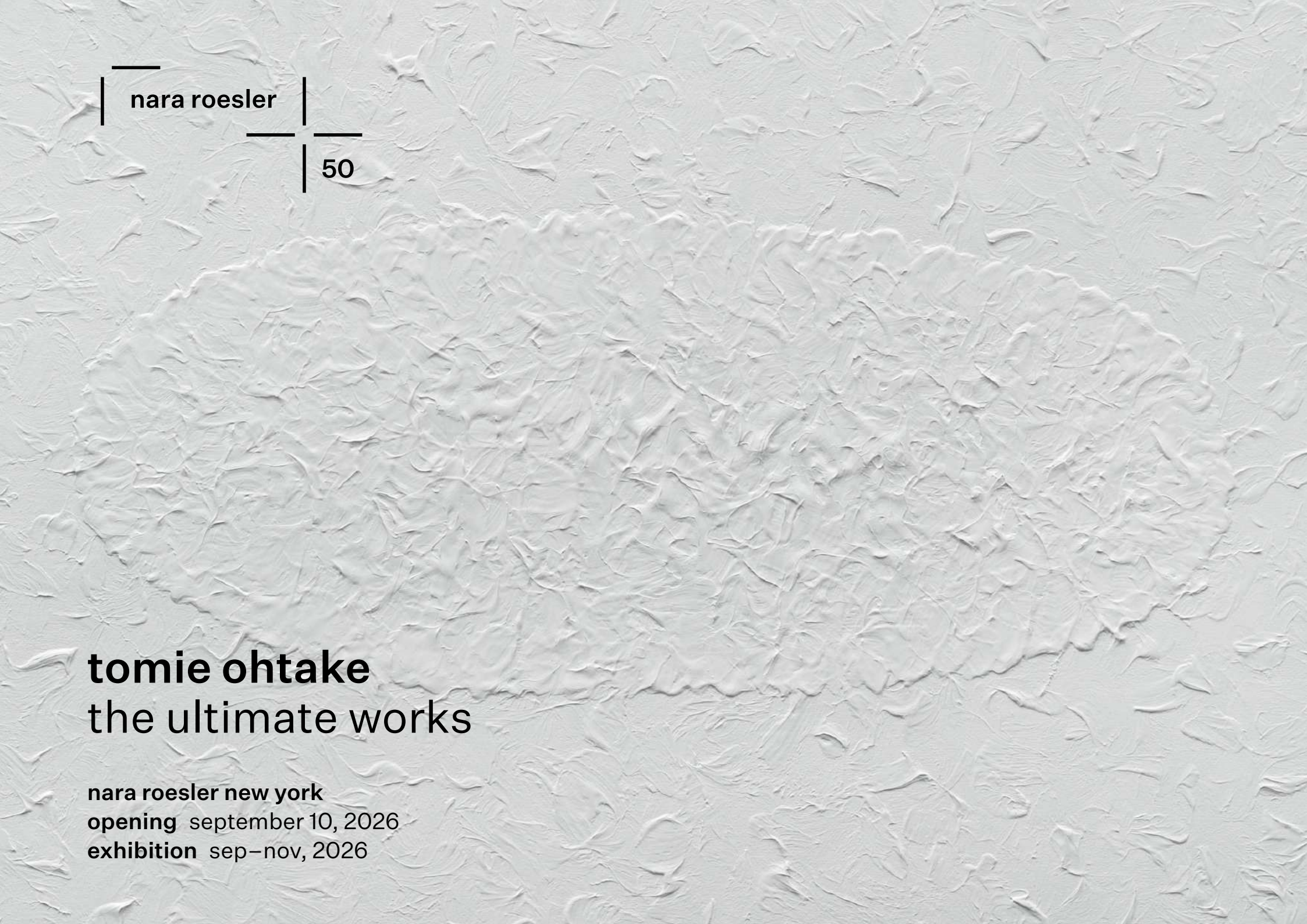




nara roesler

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tomie ohtake
the ultimate works

nara roesler new york
opening september 10, 2026
exhibition sep–nov, 2026

tomie ohtake
the ultimate works

Tomie Ohtake's practice converges with the artist's centenary, between 2013 and 2014. In the final year of her life, still actively working, Tomie produced a systematic body of entirely "white" works, dense with pigment, characterized by thick fields that lend themselves to the emphasis of texture and to making visible the trace of a brush that had traversed the entire twentieth century since, in a bold and conceptual decision, the artist began producing her "blind paintings" between 1960 and 1963.

From the outset, through her blind works, Tomie Ohtake thus emancipated painting from the "retinal imperative" that defines visual art in the West, and her practice comes together—and reaches its resolution—at the end of the artist's life in the entirely opaque—but dazzlingly white—fields of her final works.

It is these two dialectical poles—the blackness of closed eyes that led Tomie toward some of her earliest white paintings and the blind whiteness of her final work—that this exhibition seeks to bring together, tying the artistic and vital thread of the artist's life, her earliest works and those produced in her later years.

In these works from the final year of her life, Tomie Ohtake reaches one of the most consistent, specific, and eloquent moments in her articulation of paintings whose fields

contain straight or sinuous lines, emphasized in their individuality, in white on white and, in some cases, white on black.

Chromatic field and line, stripped of every supplement, are the constituents of this final body of work. The lines also manifest themselves as white lines in space, echoing white on white and white on black, fundamental references in modern art, from Malevich to Ohtake, and becoming, suspended in space in white, tubular sculptures that resonate unmistakably with the radical compositional sobriety of Tomie Ohtake's final paintings.

That initiatory and "Zen" darkness of vision, the voluntary blindness in search of a new visibility arising from the entire body rather than from the eyes alone, reaches its culmination at the end of the artist's life in the absolute white of her final paintings and sculptures. In this sense, these works are not merely "ultimate" chronologically; they also possess a recapitulative power, an "ultimacy" in which the entirety of a century-spanning body of work comes to be synthesized in a kind of chromatic "kenosis," a becoming-nothing—or only white—in order to become everything: ultimate fields for ultimate lines.

—Luis Pérez-Oramas



Tomie Ohtake

Untitled, 2014
acrylic paint on canvas
100 x 300 x 3,5 cm
39.4 x 118.1 x 1.4 in



TOMIE

2014



Untitled, 2014
acrylic paint on canvas
100 x 100 cm
39.4 x 39.4 in



studio-house
Tomie Ohtake

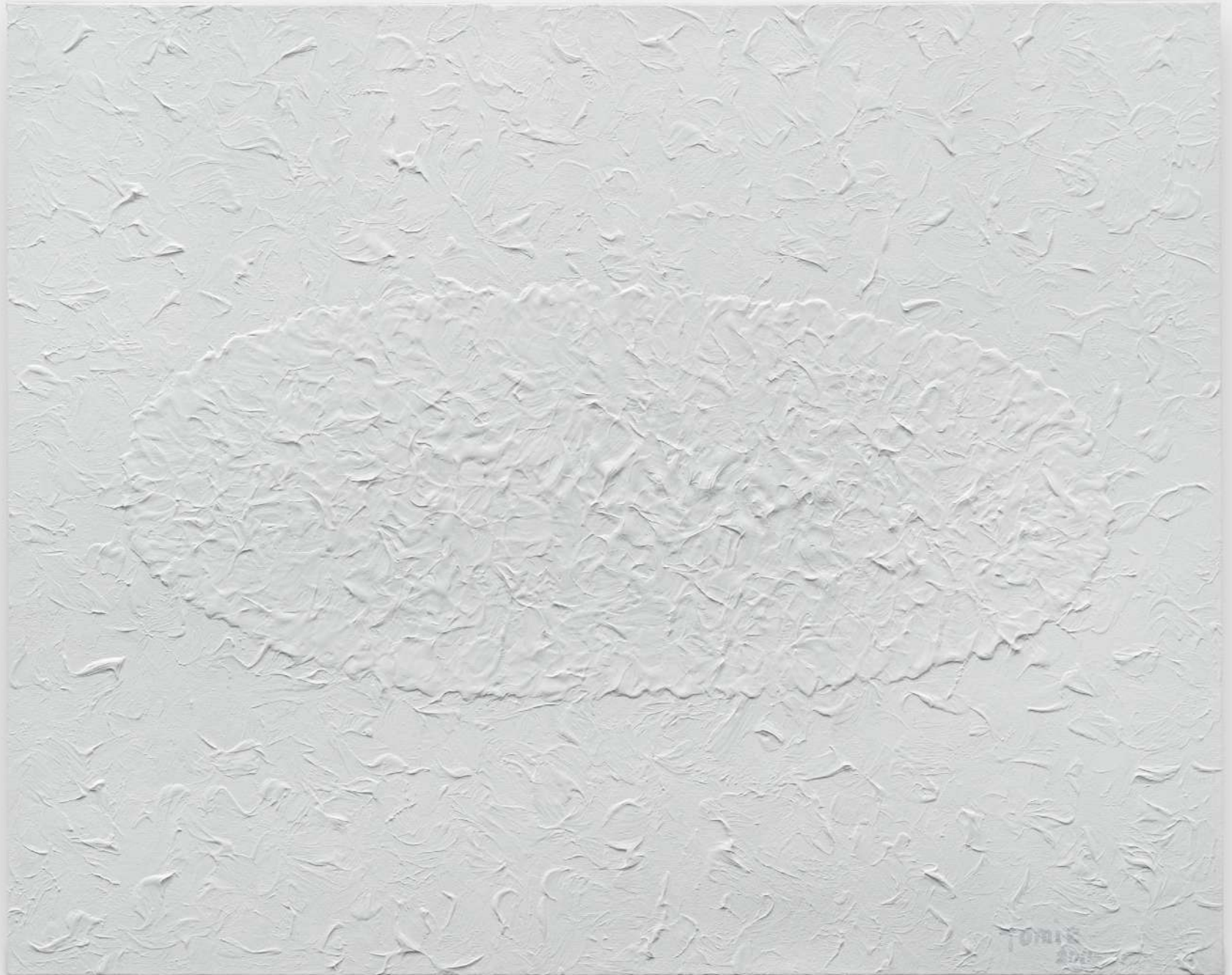


Untitled, 2014
acrylic paint on canvas
150,5 x 150,5 x 3,5 cm
59.3 x 59.3 x 1.4 in





Untitled, 2014
acrylic paint on canvas
120,5 x 150,5 x 3,5 cm
47.4 x 59.3 x 1.4 in



In Tomie Ohtake's final white paintings, layers of paint overlap across the canvas, creating accumulations of material that give rise to shapes upon the square plane. The artist thus revisits a fundamental principle of painting: the interplay between proximity and distance.

The shadows cast by the paint's own mass create a dynamic where color—in its underlying nature as a chromatic wave—thickens and condenses, embodying all colors and, at the same time, none of them. The paint ceases to be merely a surface, revealing pockets of shadow where the material builds up like a near-sculptural relief on the plane. In this play between light and shadow, color folds back on itself, rendering visible the very principles of its own creation.



Untitled, 2014
acrylic paint on canvas
100,5 x 100,5 x 3,5 cm
39.6 x 39.6 x 1.4 in









studio-house
Tomie Ohtake

Untitled, 2014
acrylic paint on canvas
125 x 125,5 x 3,5 cm
49.2 x 49.4 x 1.4 in



JODIE. 2014





Untitled, 2014
acrylic paint on canvas
100 x 150 cm
39.4 x 59.1 in



Untitled, 2014
acrylic paint on canvas
150,5 x 120,5 x 3,5 cm
59.3 x 47.4 x 1.4 in



—
Untitled, 2013
acrylic paint on canvas
60,5 x 150,5 x 3,5 cm
23.8 x 59.3 x 1.4 in





—
Untitled, 2014
acrylic paint on canvas
100,5 x 200,5 x 3 cm
39.6 x 78.9 x 1.2 in





Untitled, 2006
automotive paint
on tubular carbon steel
175 x 210 x 125 cm
68.9 x 82.7 x 49.2 in



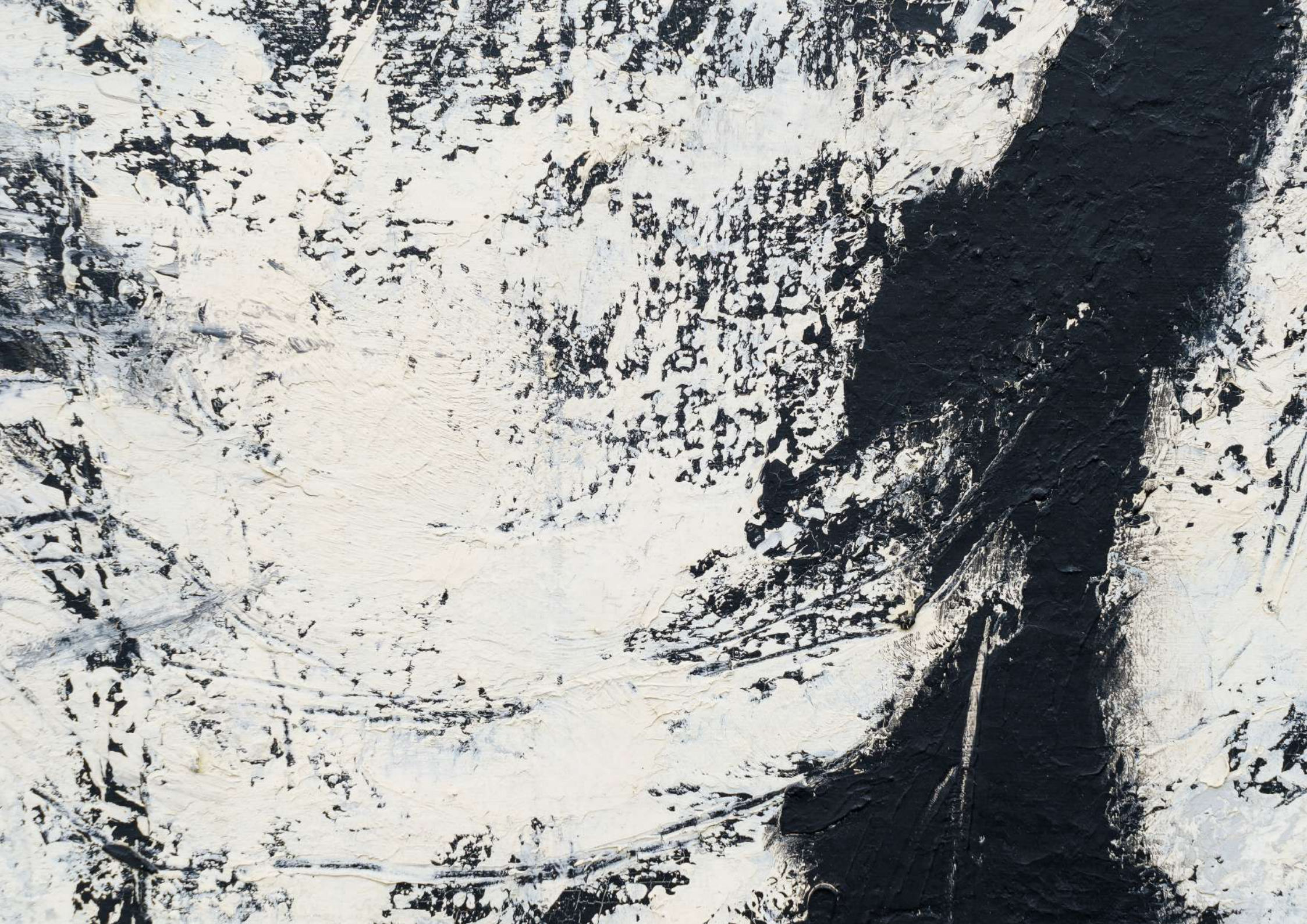


In her sculptures, organic forms made of tubular steel—also white—enter into dialogue with the white of the exhibition space, while the movement previously captured on canvas now meanders through the room.

The tangled structure twists upon itself to form points of continuity, like a thread dancing in mid-air. It is as though a brushstroke has been captured in three dimensions, revealing—through its tubular structure—varying angles of light and gradations of shadow. The gesture, which once appeared on the surface and now takes flight into the space, preserves its movement, turning the medium itself into the very vessel of its continuity.

Untitled, 1959
oil paint on canvas
100 x 70 cm
39.4 x 27.6 in







exhibition view
XXIII Bienal Internacional
de São Paulo, 1996
Special Room—Sculpture
Fundação Bienal de São Paulo
Pavilhão Cicillo Matarazzo,
São Paulo, Brazil

Untitled, 2013
tubular carbon steel
painted with automotive paint
115 x 200 x 210 cm
45.3 x 78.7 x 82.7 in



Untitled, 2014
tubular carbon steel
painted with automotive paint
110 x 95 cm
43.3 x 37.4 in





studio-house
Tomie Ohtake



Untitled, 1965
oil paint on canvas
135 x 110 cm
53.1 x 43.3 in





Untitled, 2014
tubular carbon steel
painted with
automotive paint
140 x 136 cm
55.1 x 53.5 in





Untitled, 2014
acrylic paint on canvas
200,5 x 100,5 x 4 cm
78.9 x 39.6 x 1.6 in







Untitled, 2009
tubular carbon steel
painted with automotive paint
48 x 97 x 167 cm
18.9 x 38.2 x 65.7 in



Untitled, 2013
acrylic paint on canvas
125 x 125 x 3,5 cm
49.2 x 49.2 x 1.4 in



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 in the 1950s under the guidance of Japanese artist Keiya Sugano. After an initial phase focused on figurative studies in painting, she began to explore the abstract. During this period, she created a series of works known as “blind paintings”, in which she painted blindfolded. This practice was suggested by the critic Mário Pedrosa, one of the main theoreticians of the Brazilian neo-concrete movement, emphasizing sensitivity and intuition in his 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

[click to see full cv](#)

selected solo exhibitions

- *Tomie Ohtake*, Pace Gallery, Tokyo, Japan (2025)
- *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*, 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

- Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, USA
- Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros, Caracas, Venezuela
- Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, USA
- San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMoMA), San Francisco, USA
- M+, Hong Kong
- Metropolitan Museum of Art (MET), New York, USA
- Mori Art Museum, Tóquio, 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
- Tate Modern, London, UK

nara roesler

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são paulo

avenida europa, 655
jardim europa, 01449-001
são paulo, sp, brasil
t 55 (11) 2039 5454

rio de janeiro

rua redentor, 241
ippanema, 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