

nara roesler

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TEFAF NEW YORK 2026

room 208

preview

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open to the public

may 15–19

park avenue armory

643 park avenue

new york, usa

Carlito Carvalhosa,
Untitled (P16/21), 2021 [detail]

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



carlito carvalhosa: the inner body of painting

luis pérez oramas

Carlito Carvalhosa (1961-2021) has become, since his untimely passing, a major reference among the Brazilian artists working at the beginning of the Twenty First Century. Known for his Proteus—like shape—shifting capacity to address all mediums at monumental dimensions, for his inventive transformation of exhibition spaces, for the rapturous architectural drive of his site-specific works, Carlito Carvalhosa's installations became a turning point in the history of the genre in Brazil. The only Brazilian artist to have invested the main atrium of The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Carvalhosa was since the beginning of his career a painter at his core, a painter of the paint's flesh and bones, a painter of the inner body of painting.

Circa 1987, working with bee wax and resin, Carvalhosa addressed the raw materiality of the medium in an exercise of painting's bereavement. By avoiding the conventional individuation of figures from his early work, Carlito Carvalhosa privileged the residual production of all-over fields where matter at its root and light as accident were complicit infusing a brave eloquence to his abstract, monumental repertoire. A disposition towards the uncontrollable action of matter, its malleability, the uncertainty of forms embedded on

it characterizes this early period of Carlito's work as a painter. Equally important is the very body of each painting, both its three-dimensional objecthood as well as its inner thickness, its poetic guts.

This selection by Nara Roesler Gallery for TEFAF NY 2026 focuses on Carvalhosa mature achievements as a painter. For an artist who was capable to de-activate the regulating and binary concepts of formalist visual art—such as opacity and transparency, matter and form, reflection and trace, front and back, muteness and sound, flatness and fold, etc.—the peak of his painterly production, in the period 2010-2019, features a major resolution of such formal contradictions, translating into a figural '*stasis*', an equilibrium embedded as suave, dense, organic, colorful compositions on unconventional supports such as mirrors, aluminum and wax.

Carlito Carvalhosa addressed painting beyond all conventions: rather than artfully attacking an empty support as a *tabula rasa*, Carvalhosa knew that such thing is nothing but an illusion. For Carvalhosa all surfaces are already traced, marked, all matter is a proto painting. As such, he used all sort of instruments, combining incisions and spills, leaks and brushstrokes, but also thrusts and shots from the back of aluminum surfaces, producing creases and protuberances that beautifully compose the very body of the painting. The organic roundness of colorful surfaces, their subtle thickness, their brilliant and playful game of opacity, contrasting with reflecting intervals made one of the most daring and elegant bodies of abstract painting in the early 2000. From the formless of wax at his beginnings to wax as form at the end of his life, Carlito Carvalhosa was able, notably in his last body of works, polyptych—like compositions made of serial painted waxes, to conciliate the secular opposition between the concrete and the formless, so significant for the transformative legacy of Brazilian late modernism.

Carlito Carvalhosa
Untitled, 1987
encaustic on canvas
190 x 230 x 3 cm
74.8 x 90.6 x 1.2 in



Untitled (1987) is an encaustic work using beeswax. The technique of using beeswax as a binder for pigment dates back thousands of years, but what, throughout art history, was a “means” appears here as an end in itself; what we see here is solely and exclusively the wax and its properties.



The materials Carlito chose from that point onward, starting with waxes, are generally characterized by their volatile, malleable nature, lacking a defined shape or constant volume; furthermore, especially in his earlier works, they exhibit a certain viscosity, as we see in the waxes and plasters.

In other words: whereas these tools were previously part of the technique, this artist explores them poetically through diverse possibilities and arrangements, which progressively extend into more three-dimensional configurations.



exhibition view

Carlito Carvalhosa - *A Metade do Dobro*, 2024

Instituto Tomie Ohtake, São Paulo, Brazil

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





Carlito also distorts certain areas of the metal sheet, leaving small protrusions visible in the composition. Even though the format is pictorial, Carlito emphasizes the properties of his raw materials to such an extent that they end up speaking for themselves, whether by imitating something or by revealing their true nature.



exhibition view

Carlito Carvalhosa – *Half of Double*, 2024-25
Instituto Tomie Ohtake, São Paulo, Brazil

Carlito Carvalhosa
Untitled (P13/14), 2014
oil paint and resin on
beaten aluminum
200 x 100 cm
78.7 x 39.4 in





Carlito Carvalhosa
Untitled (P65/18), 2018
oil paint on mirrored aluminum
30 x 21 x 6 cm
11.8 x 8.3 x 2.4 in



Carlito Carvalhosa
Untitled (P70/17), 2017
oil on mirrored aluminum
80 x 122 cm
31.5 x 48 in



In works produced between 2014 and 2017, the artist uses mirrored aluminum surfaces as support, spreading oil paint beneath them and, in some works, incorporating resins. In *Untitled (P51/17)* and *Untitled (P70/17)*, Carlito applies areas of color composed of oil paint onto the support, highlighting the fluid nature of the paint not only through the visible presence of brushstrokes but also through the application of thinner layers of pigment, revealing the reflective quality of the support beneath. Amid the smooth, light areas of color, which predominate, the artist also builds up denser areas of oil paint, creating an interplay between reflection and opacity.

Carlito Carvalhosa

Untitled (P51/17), 2017

oil paint on mirrored aluminum

122 x 80 cm

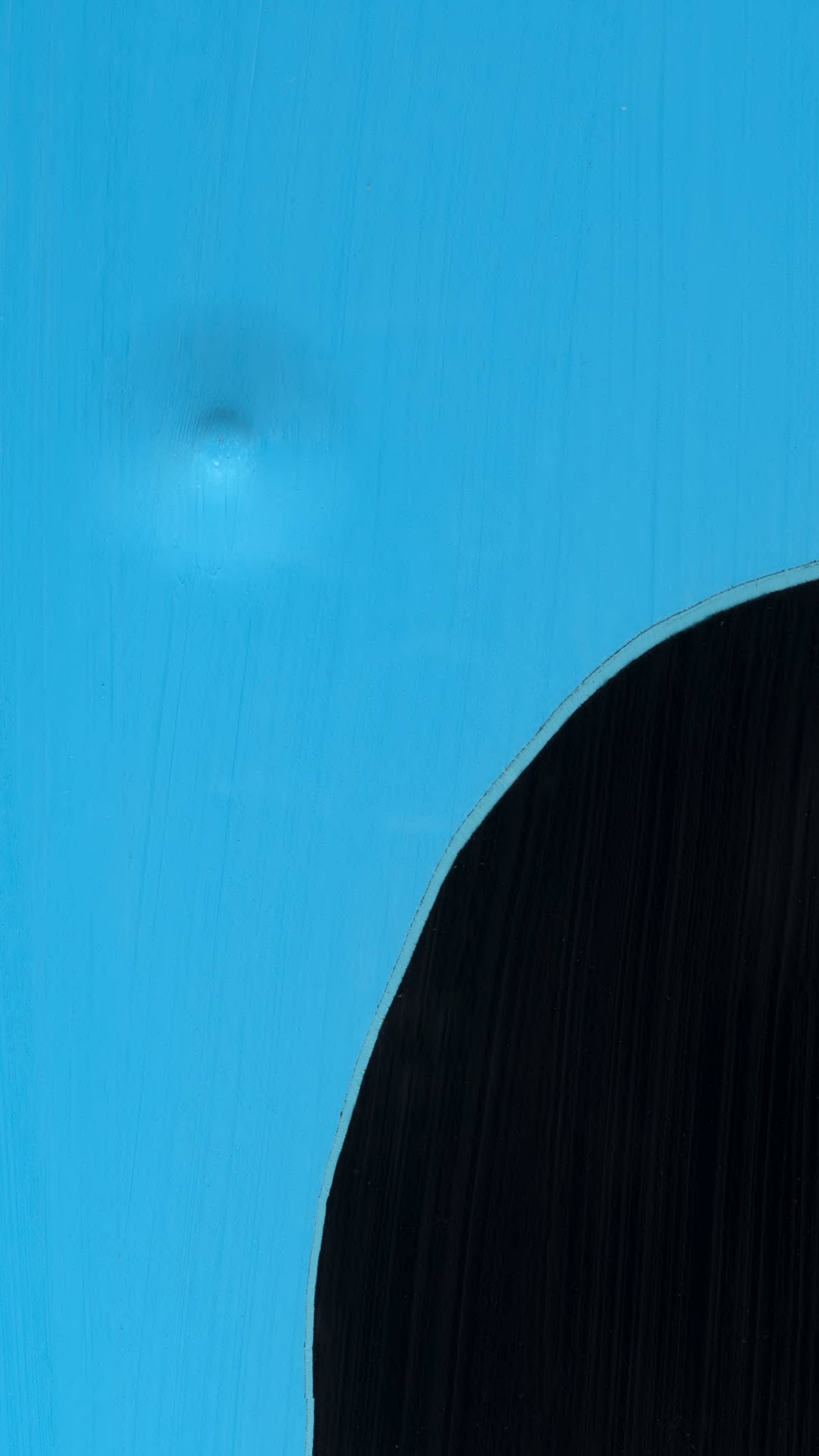
48 x 31.5 in





Carlito Carvalhosa
Untitled (P16/21), 2021
oil paint on mirrored aluminum
188 x 122 cm
74 x 48 in





Carlito Carvalhosa
Untitled (P61/17), 2017
oil paint on mirrored aluminum
122 x 80 cm
48 x 31.5 in





Carlito Carvalhosa in his
studio in Rio de Janeiro, 2019

Carlito Carvalhosa
Contact precautions (P 44/14), 2014
oil paint on aluminum
60 x 40 cm
23.6 x 15.7 in



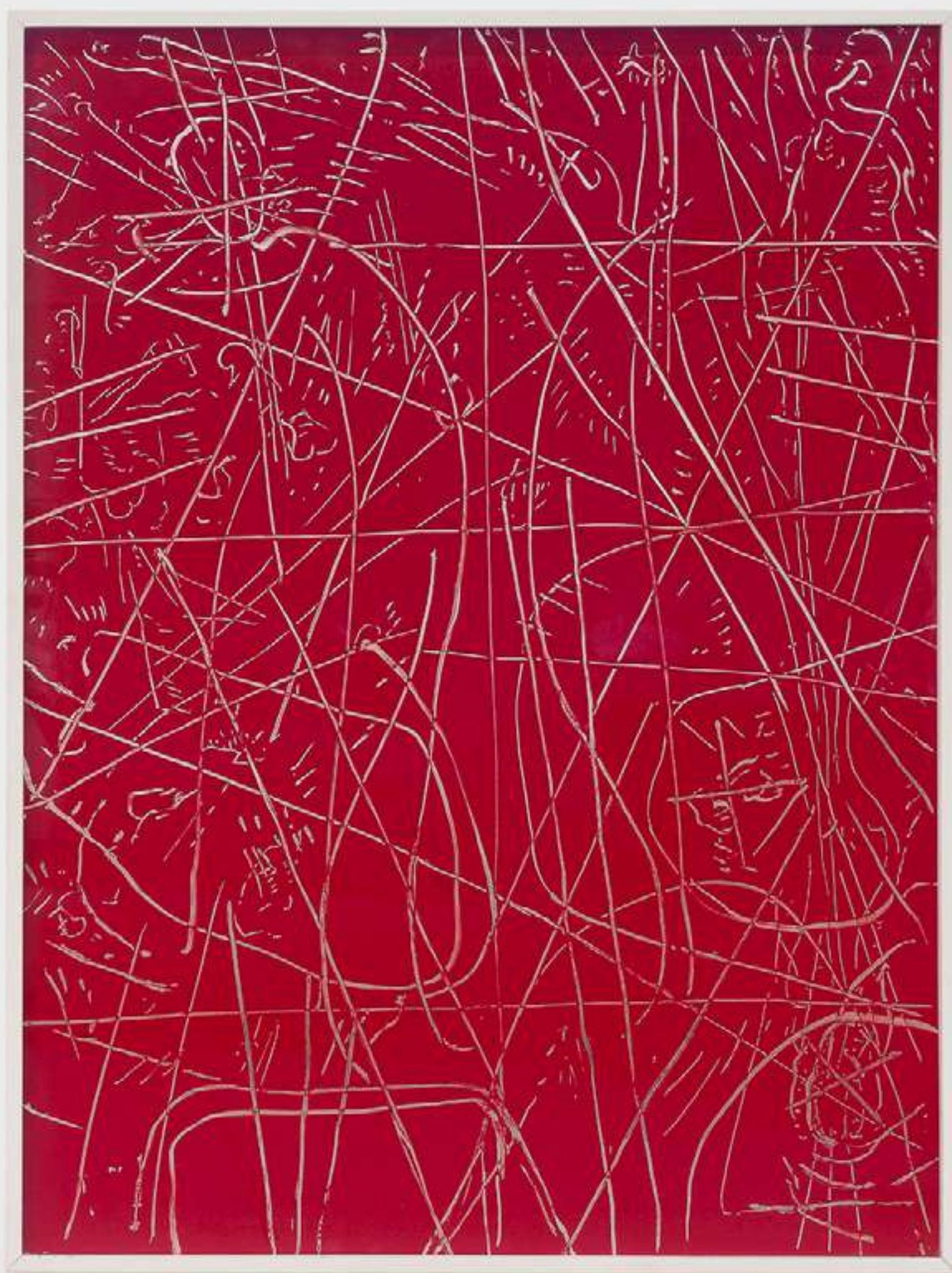
exhibition view

Precaução de Contato, 2014

Nara Roelser São Paulo, Brazil

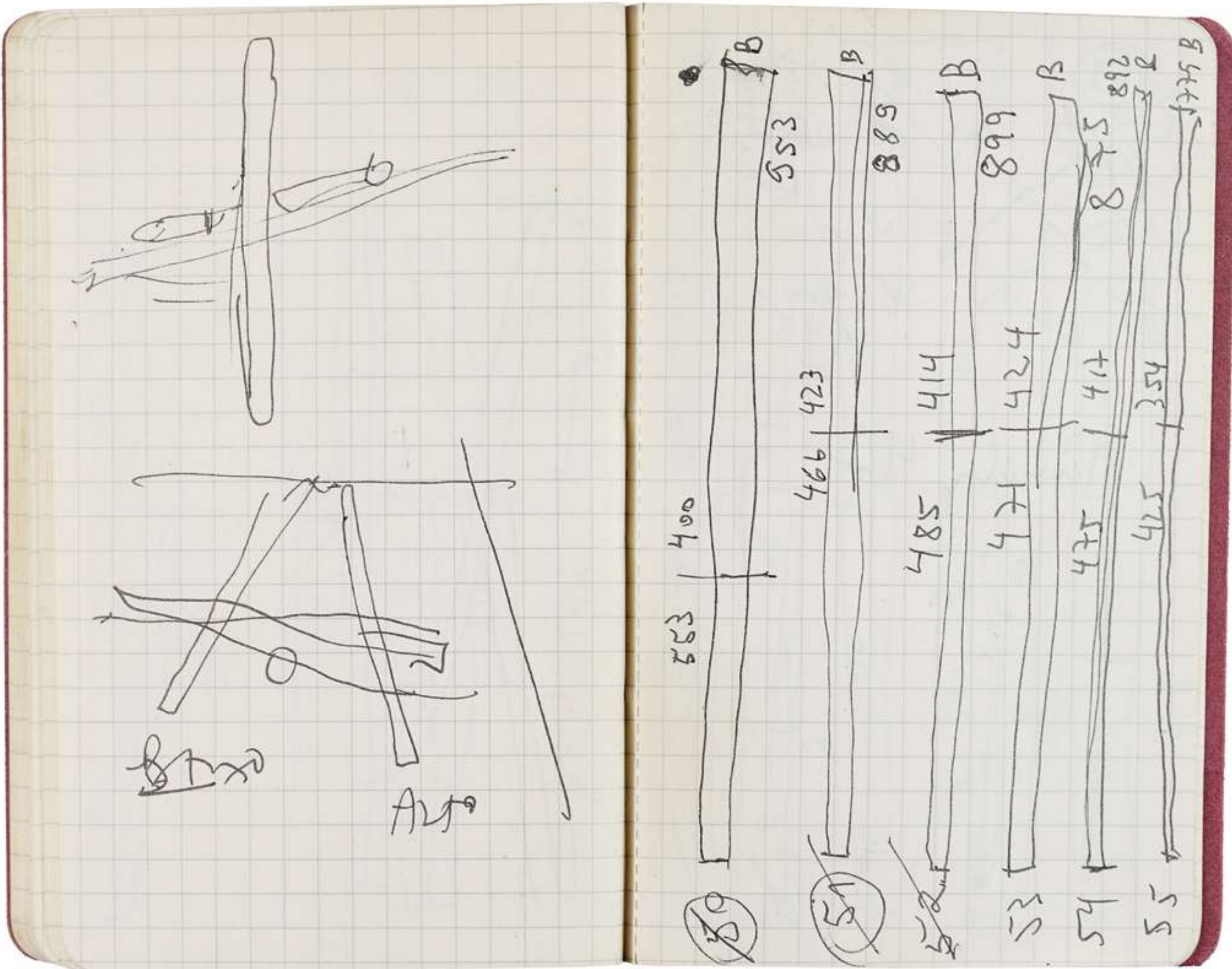
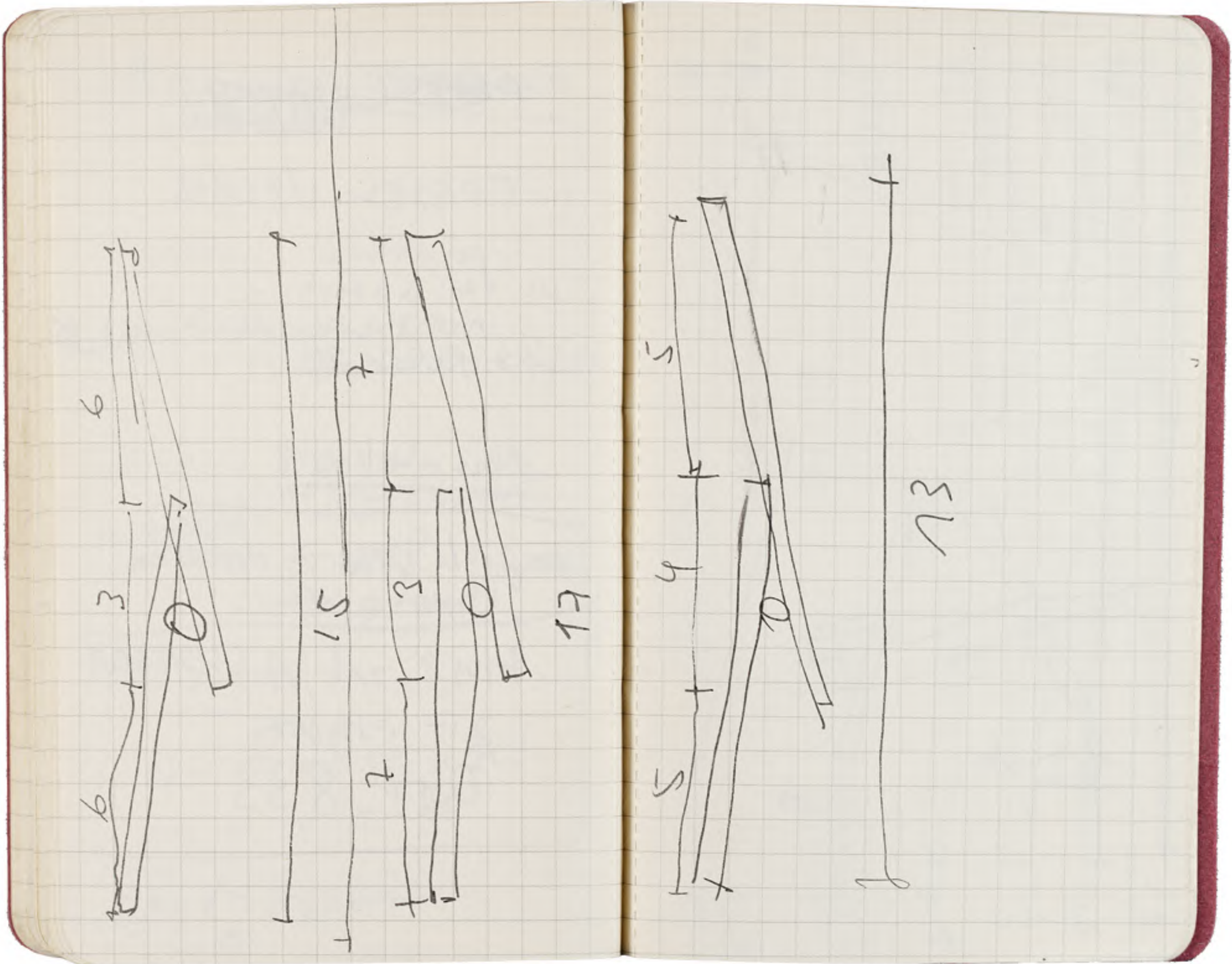


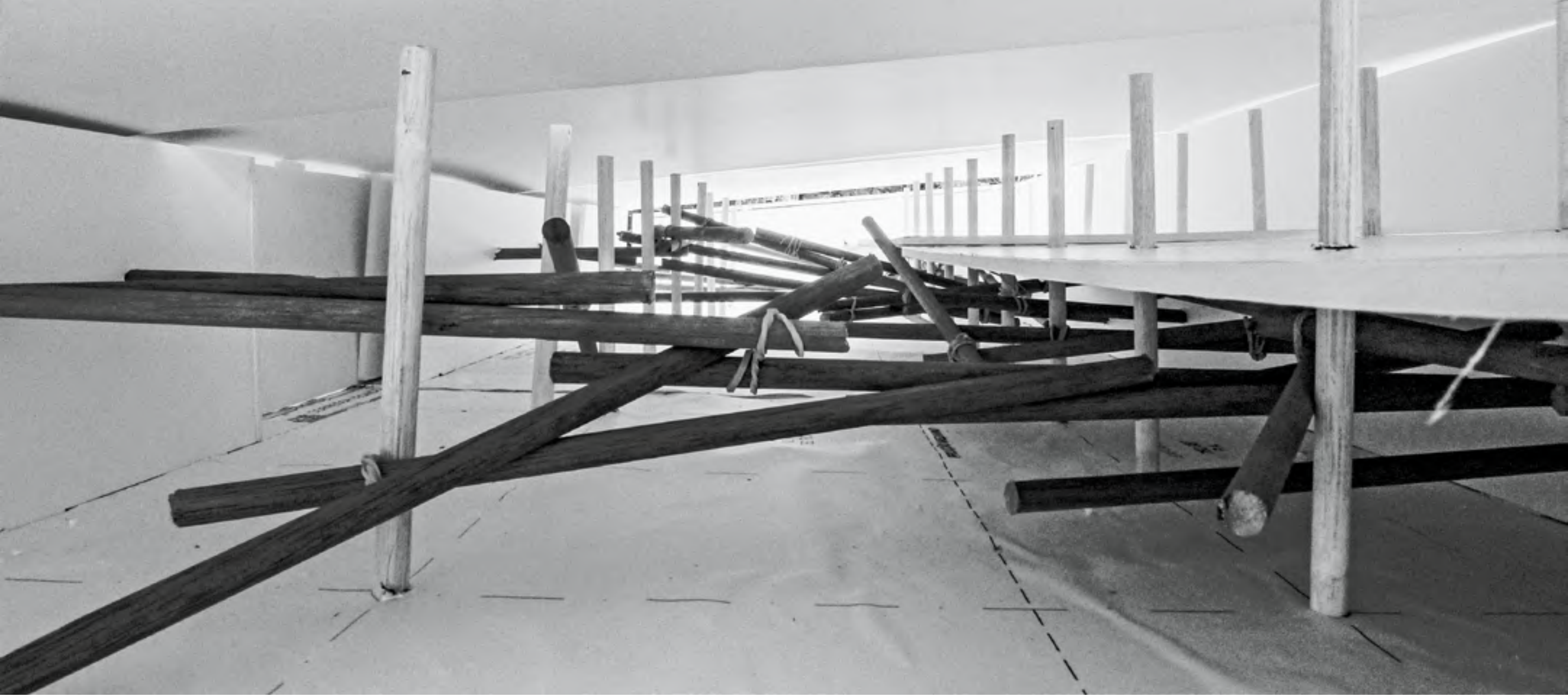
Carlito Carvalhosa
Untitled (P44/15), 2015
oil paint on aluminum
122 x 90 cm
48 x 35.4 in





Drawing made in sketchbook (2013)
 and scale model (next page)
 for the work *Sala de espera*, at the São Paulo
 Museum of Contemporary Art (MAC USP).





Sala de espera, 2013
70 discarded light poles,
steel cables
MAC USP



In works with wood, forms protrude from the walls. Although they appear, at first glance, to be sections cut directly from tree trunks, they are in fact fragments of electrical utility poles. On some of them, traces of paint applied to the original object can be seen, likely for signaling purposes. In this way, Carlito strips this type of object of its original function, restoring its organic nature.

Carlito Carvalhosa
Untitled (E18/15), 2015
wood
8,5 x 30 x 14 cm
3.3 x 11.8 x 5.5 in







Carlito Carvalhosa
Untitled (E19/15), 2015
wood
37 x 22 x 20 cm
14.6 x 8.7 x 7.9 in



Carlito Carvalhosa
Untitled (E21/15), 2015
wood
47 x 20 x 20 cm
18.5 x 7.9 x 7.9 in







exhibition view

The Nature of Things, 2024-25
Sesc Pompeia, São Paulo, Brazil



Carlito Carvalhosa's
Studio in Rio de Janeiro, 2019

While the materials are often malleable, the same can be said of the supports, such as mirrors, which began to appear frequently from the 2000s onward. The mirror is perceived not based on what it is in itself, but through what it reflects.

In Carlito's poetics, however, no surface is neutral.



Carlito Carvalhosa

Untitled, 2019

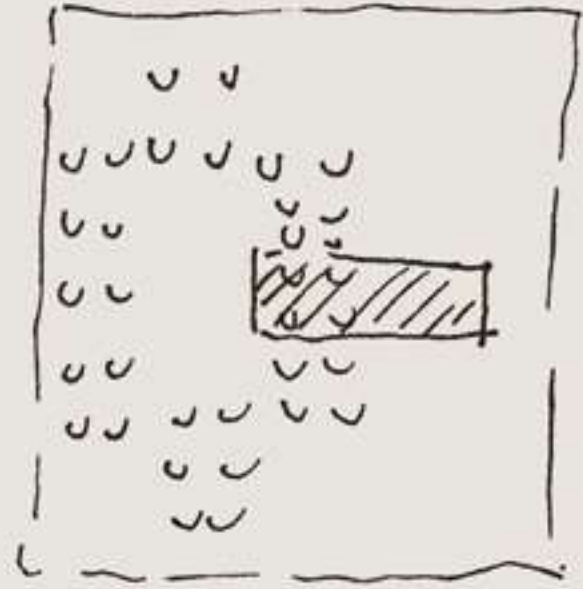
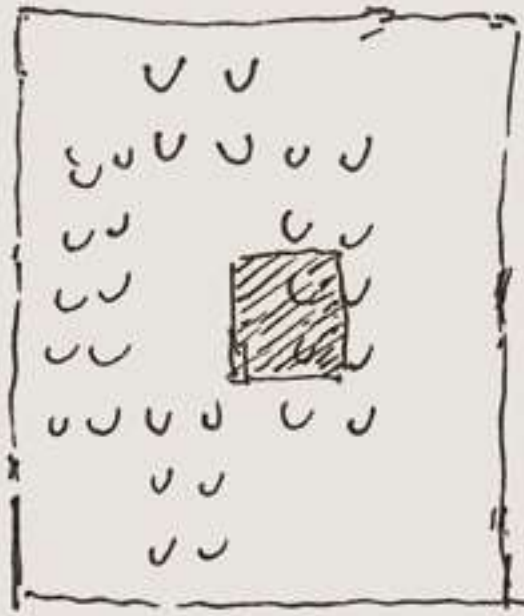
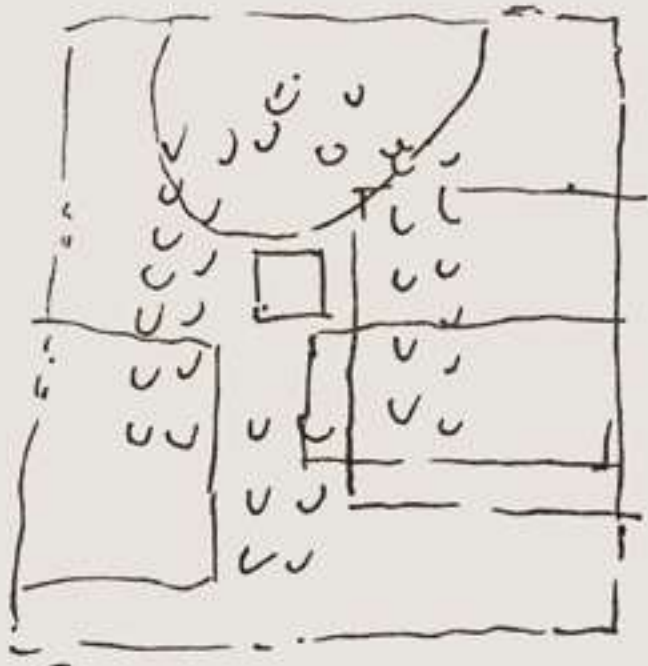
oil paint and wax on wood

6 pieces of 50 x 40 x 6 cm (each)

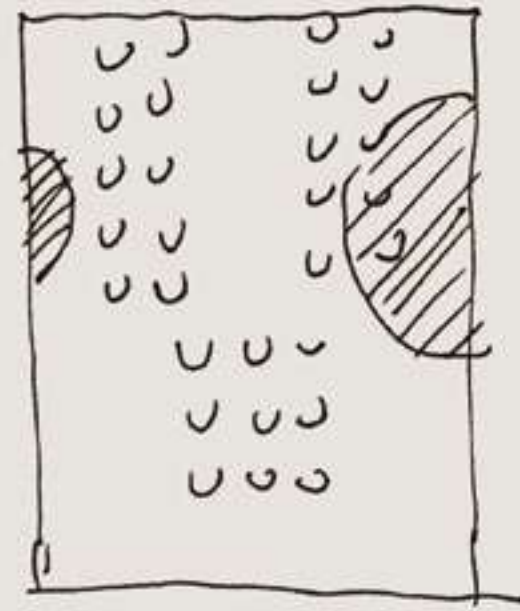
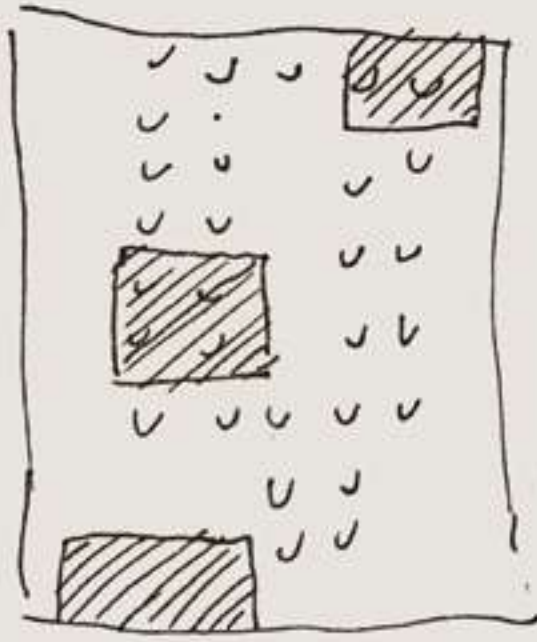
6 pieces of 19.7 x 15.7 x 2.4 in (each)

In a series of works produced toward the end of his career, between 2019 and 2021, the artist returns to using wax as his medium. The areas of color, painted beneath the wax, appear smooth here, with no trace of brushstrokes, and are arranged in geometric shapes. The flat, synthetic nature of these colored geometries is immediately betrayed by the small deformations the artist makes in the block of wax, creating various small protrusions resembling fingers, hands, and body parts.





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exhibition views of
I Want to Be Like You, 2019
Nara Roesler, New York, USA, 2019
photo © Pierce Harrison



Carlito Carvalhosa

Untitled (P06/21), 2021

oil paint and wax on wood

6 pieces of 50 x 40 x 6 cm

6 pieces of 19.7 x 15.7 x 2.4 in







exhibition view

Carlito Carolhosa – *Half of Double*, 2024-25
Instituto Tomie Ohtake, São Paulo, Brazil

exhibition view
Sum of Days, 2013
MoMA, New York, USA



exhibition view
Sum of Days, 2013
MoMA, New York, USA



Carlito Carvalhosa had several books published during his lifetime. The most recent publication on the artist is posthumous and was launched in 2025 at the Amant Foundation in New York.

This publication represents the most comprehensive monograph ever dedicated to the artist. In addition to essays by Luis Pérez-Oramas, Lúcia K. Stumpf, Geanine Gutierrez-Guimarães, André Lepecki, Daniel Rangel and Bernardo Mosqueira, the book features an illustrated chronology and an extensive selection of works arranged chronologically, highlighting the interplay between two-dimensional and three-dimensional works, large-scale installations, and recurring features that run throughout his practice.



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.

click to know more

selected solo exhibitions

- *Carlito Carvalhosa – Half of Double*, Instituto Tomie Ohtake, São Paulo, Brazil (2024-25)
- *A Natureza das Coisas*, Sesc Pompeia, São Paulo, Brazil (2024-25)
- *Matter as Image. Works from 1987 to 2021*, Nara Roesler, New York, USA (2022)
- *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

- *Fullgás - Artes Visuais e Anos 1980 no Brasil*, Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil (CCBB), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (2024)
- *Sensory Poetics: Collecting Abstraction*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, USA (2022)
- *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)
- 10th Curitiba International Biennial, Brazil (2015)
- *Rio (River)*, Performance, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, USA (2014)
- 30th and 18th São Paulo Biennial, Brazil (2013 and 1985)
- 3rd Mercosul Biennial, Brazil (2001)

selected collections

- Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, USA
- Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation (CIFO), Miami, USA
- Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP), São Paulo, Brazil
- 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
- Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, USA

back to the artist's works ↑

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