

GióMARCONI

Gomide&Co

nara roesler

SPROVIERI

**Art | Basel
Unlimited**

ANTONIO DIAS
THE ILLUSTRATION OF ART

U51 BOOTH | JUNE 15–21, 2026

ANTONIO DIAS

THE ILLUSTRATION OF ART

For its participation in Unlimited, Gió Marconi, Gomide&Co, Nara Roesler, and Sprovieri present a collaborative project centered on an installation created from two groups of paintings from Antonio Dias's *The Illustration of Art* series (1971–1974), developed from 1972 onward and decisive in his trajectory.

In the works *The Illustration of Art / Society / Model* (1973) and *The Illustration of Art / Art / Model* (1973), the notion of the “model” is articulated in a critical and contradictory manner, explicitly addressing the social, economic, and political dimensions of art at a moment when market dynamics and financial interests increasingly shaped artistic production.

Situated within the context of the Brazilian military dictatorship and the so-called “economic miracle” (1967–1973), the series responds to transformations in modes of sociability and subjectivation imposed by conservative modernization, as well as to the repression and erosion of the radical political positions that had marked the previous decade. In this context, debates within the Brazilian artistic vanguard shifted toward a socio-environmental framework, elaborated from exile and in dialogue with international discussions on conceptual and political art.

It is within this corpus that the formal motif of the incomplete rectangle emerges — a black surface from which a square segment is missing, as if

torn from the canvas. This visual gap becomes a structuring element of the series and operates as a tautological, self-referential model, intended to be repeated, displaced, and critiqued. By exposing absence as a constitutive element of form, the work gives aesthetic shape to a critical awareness of the social and economic conditions of artistic production.

In 1973, this logic was presented at the Paris Biennale in an installation composed of two sets of paintings arranged on opposing walls. On one wall, six identical black canvases displayed an unpainted square in the upper right corner, revealing the prepared surface of the canvas; above them appeared the inscription *The Illustration of Art / Art / Model*. On the opposite wall, the set was reiterated and expanded by a seventh, entirely black canvas in which the gap disappeared, accompanied by the inscription *The Illustration of Art / Society / Model*.

By preserving circularity while simultaneously closing it through surplus, the “model of society” strains the system and prevents its harmonious completion. Thus, the model of art may be contained within the model of society, but not the inverse—an asymmetry articulated through the works' own visual language.

Antonio Dias

1944 - 2018

The Illustration of Art / Art / Model;

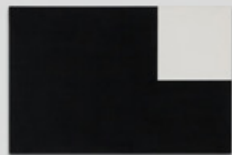
The Illustration of Art / Society / Model, 1973

Acrylic on canvas and vinyl adhesive

Set of 6, 23 1/2 x 35 1/2 in. (each)

Set of 7, 23 1/2 x 35 1/2 in. (each);

THE ILLUSTRATION OF ART
ART
MODEL



***The Illustration of Art / Art / Model*, 1973**

Exhibitions:

Antonio Dias: trabalhos 1965-1999. Centro de Arte Moderna José de Azeredo Perdigão - Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian: Lisboa, 1999

Antonio Dias: Trabalhos / Arbeiten / Works 1967–1994. Institut Mathildenhöhe: Darmstadt, 1994; Paço das Artes: São Paulo, December 08th, 1994 to January 08th, 1995

8ème Biennale de Paris. Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris: Paris, September 14th to October 21st, 1973

Literature:

Borderless Painting as Borderless Art: Antonio Dias between Brazil and Europe. Oakland: University of California Press, 2026 - p. 150

ANTONIO DIAS / IMAGE + MIRAGE. São Paulo: Estúdio Desvio, 2026 - p. 170-171

Arte negativa para um país negativo: Antonio Dias entre o Brasil e a Europa. São Paulo: Ubu Editora, 2023 - p. 228

Antonio Dias. São Paulo: Cosac Naify, 2015 - p. 174

Antonio Dias: o país inventado. Rio de Janeiro: Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro - MAM-Rio, 2001 - p. 120

Antonio Dias. Lisboa: Cosac & Naify e Centro de Arte Moderna José de Azeredo Perdigão, 1999 - p. 76

Latin American Artists of the Twentieth Century. New York: The Museum of Modern Art - MoMA, 1994 - p. 218

Antonio Dias: trabalhos/arbeiten/works 1967-1994. Ostfildern: Cantz Verlag, 1994 - p. 78

Antonio Dias. Taipei: Taipei Fine Arts Museum, 1985

Antonio Dias. Brescia: Ed. Piero Cavellini, 1983

Antonio Dias. Städtische Galerie Lenbachhaus im München / daad galerie, Berliner Künstlerprogramm des Deutschen Akademischen Austauschdienstes, 1993 - p. 50

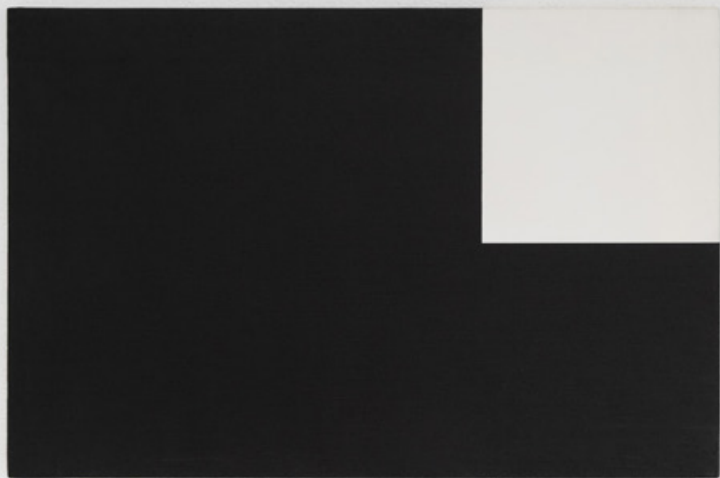
Antonio Dias. Rio de Janeiro: Funarte, 1979 - 24

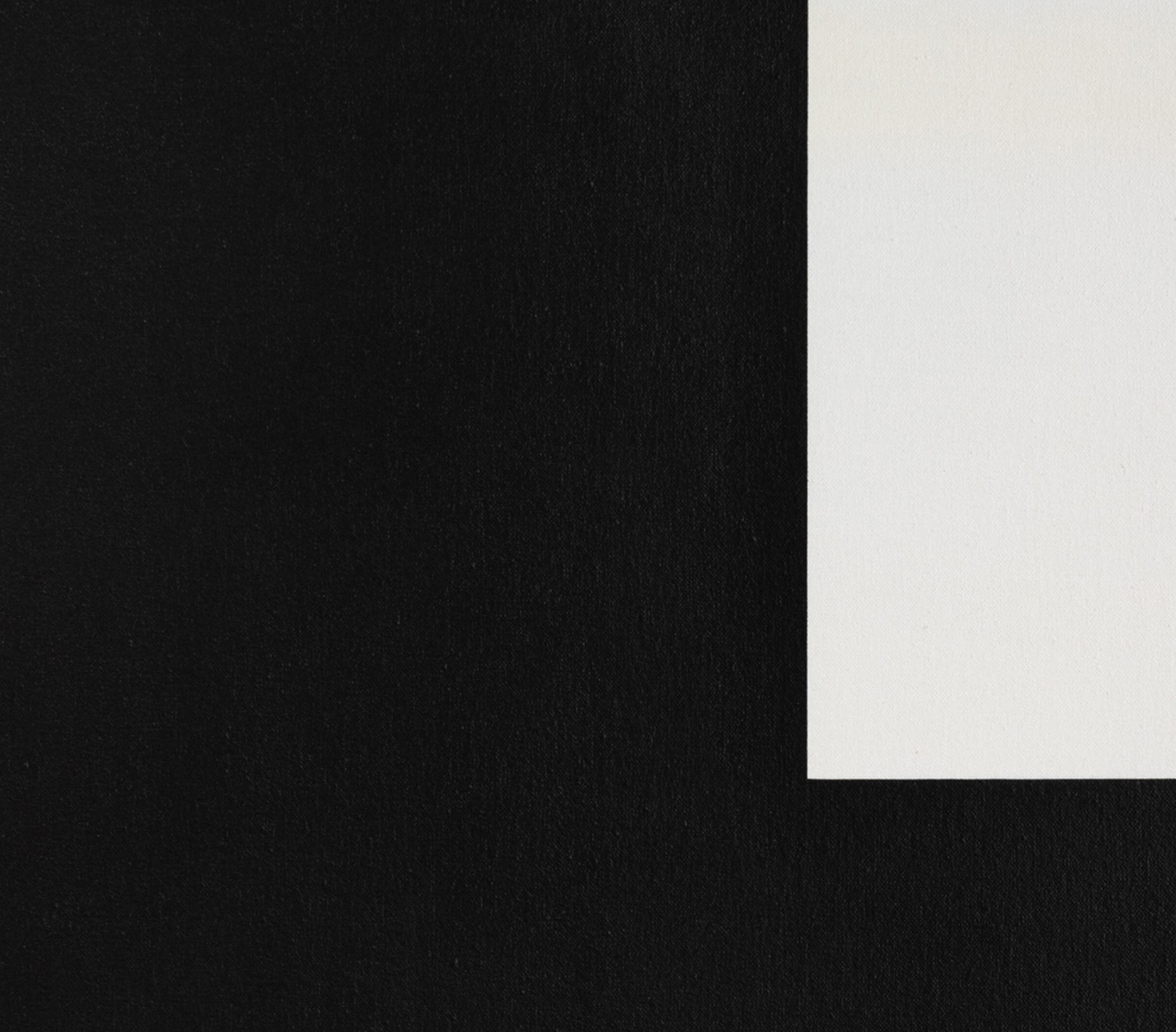
ABXL. Bruxelles: Albert Baronian, 1976

8e Biennale de Paris - Italia - Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; Musée National d'Art Moderne. Roma: Ente Quadriennale d'Arte, 1973

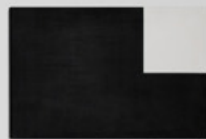
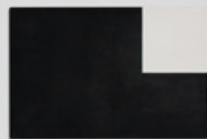
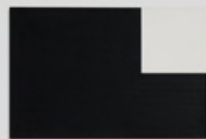
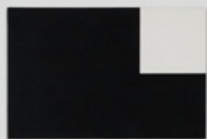
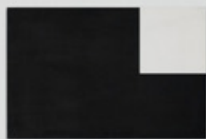
Quadriennale d'Arte, 1973

THE ILLUSTRATION OF ART
ART
MODEL



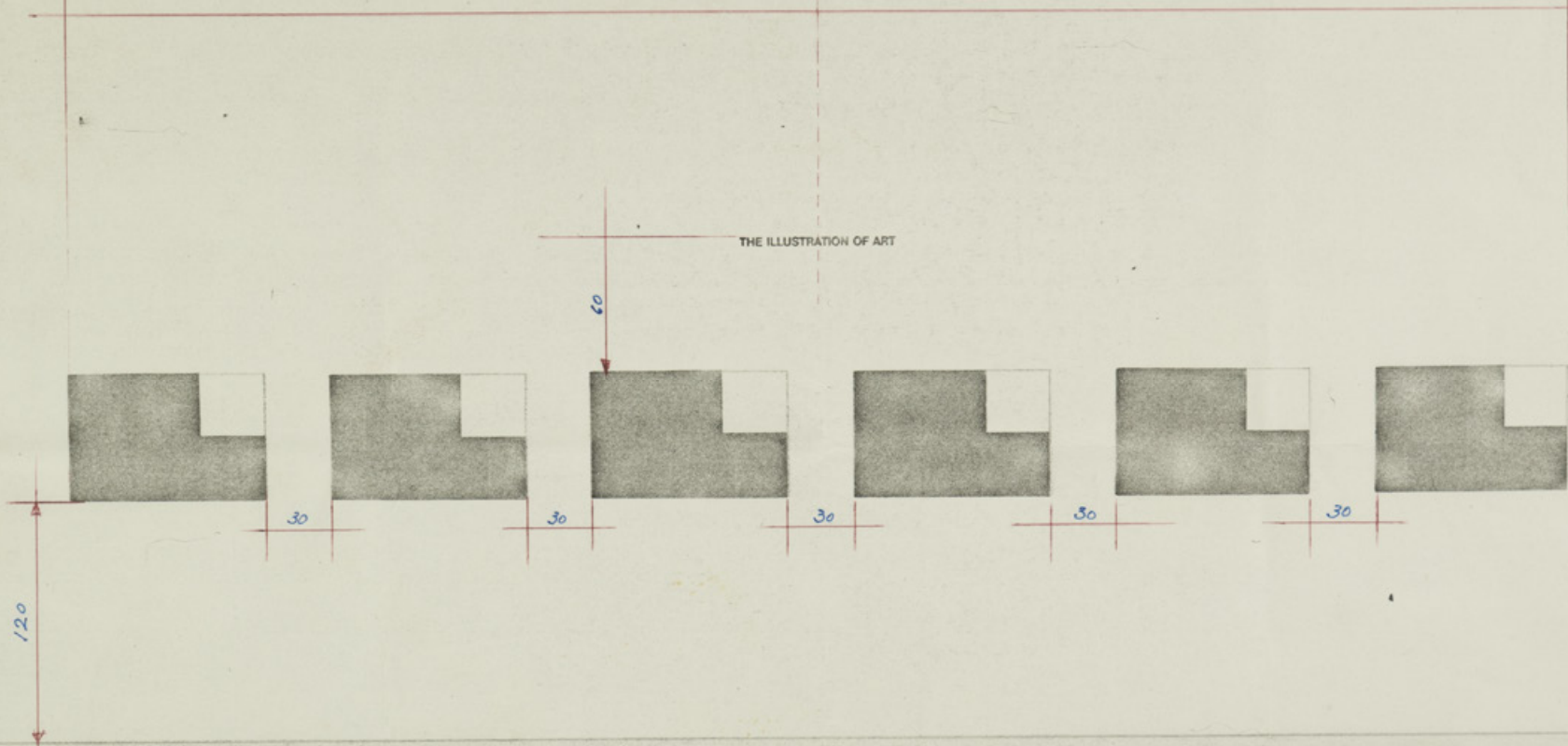


THE ILLUSTRATION OF ART
ART
MODEL



Installation layout plan for *The Illustration of Art / Art / Model*.
No. 50749_1. Antonio Dias Collection – Instituto de Arte Contemporânea.

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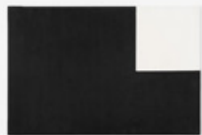
(FLOOR)
PLANCHER

ANTONIO DIAS 74 FORO BUONAPARTE 20121 MILANO	
The Illustration of Art	
MODEL / ART	

Installation view of Antonio Dias's works in the exhibition Antologia 1965–1999 at Centro de Arte Moderna, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon, Portugal, 1999. Antonio Dias Collection – Instituto de Arte Contemporânea. No. 51646.



THE ILLUSTRATION OF ART
SOCIETY
MODEL



***The Illustration of Art / Society / Model*, 1973**

Exhibitions:

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Antonio Dias: Trabalhos / Arbeiten / Works 1967–1994. Institut Mathildenhöhe: Darmstadt, 1994; Paço das Artes: December 08th, 1994 to January 08th, 1995

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Antonio Dias. Lisboa: Cosac & Naify e Centro de Arte Moderna José de Azeredo Perdigão, 1999 - p. 77

Antonio Dias: trabalhos/arbeiten/works 1967-1994. Ostfildern: Cantz Verlag, 1994 - p. 79

Antonio Dias. Taipei: Taipei Fine Arts Museum, 1985

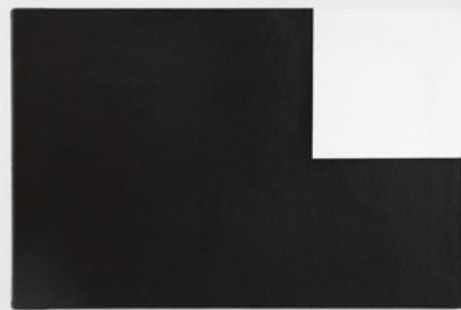
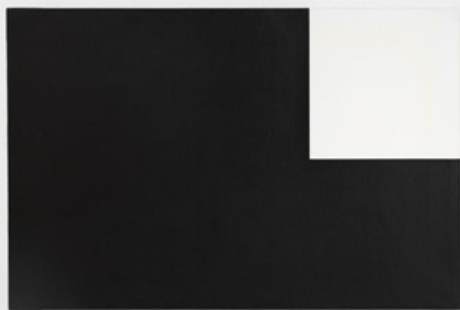
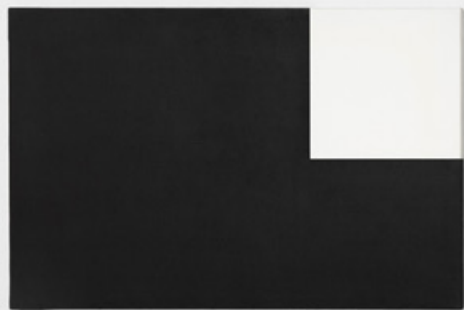
Antonio Dias. Stuttgart: Verlag Beatrix Wilhelm Leonberg, 1983

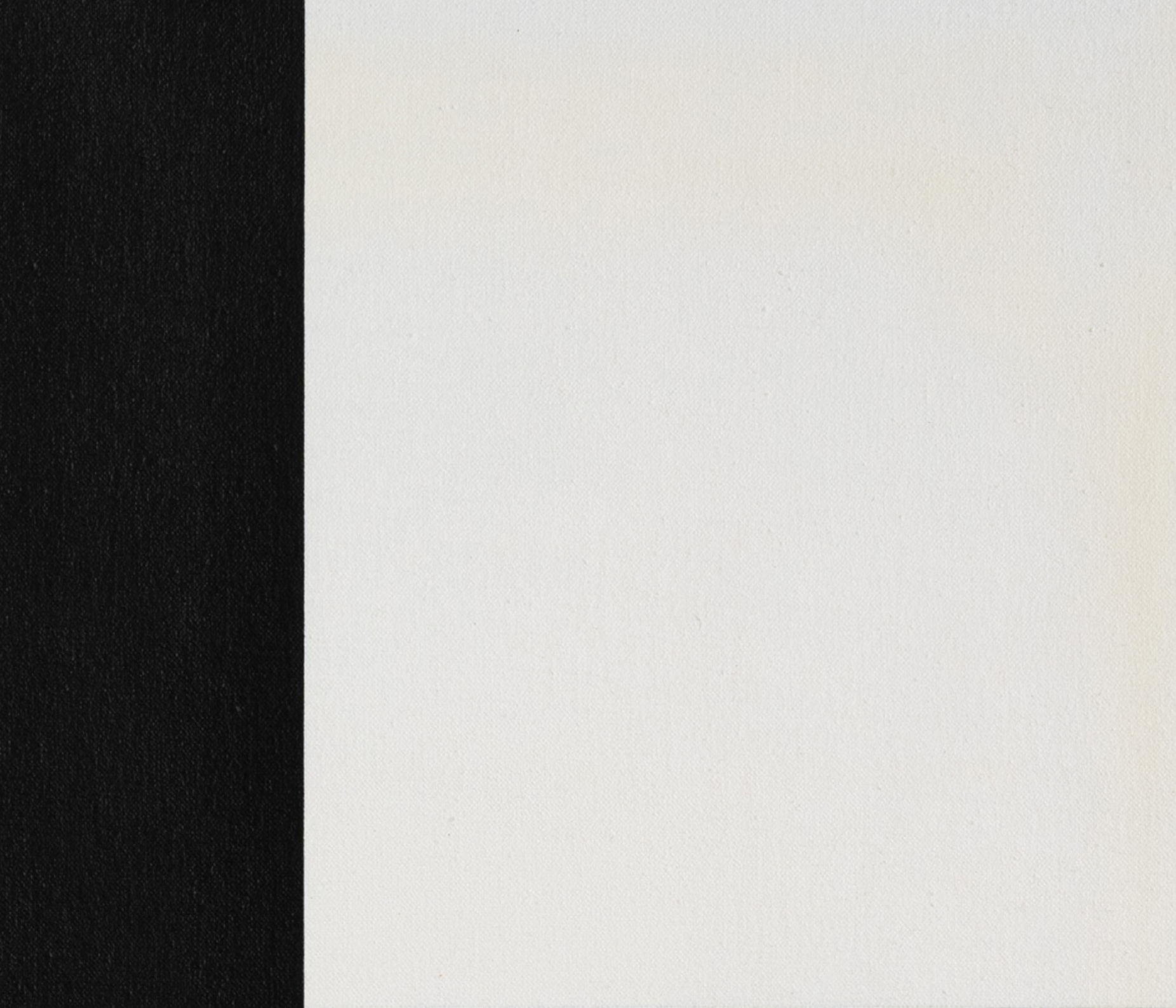
Antonio Dias. Rio de Janeiro: Funarte, 1979 - 25

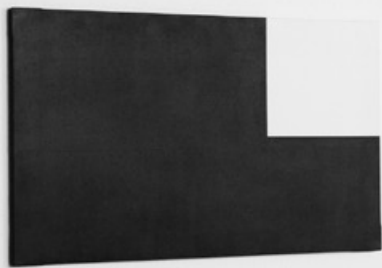
ABXL. Bruxelles: Albert Baronian, 1976

8e Biennale de Paris Italia - Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; Musée National d'Art Moderne. Roma: Ente Quadriennale d'Arte, 1973

THE ILLUSTRATION OF ART
SOCIETY
MODEL



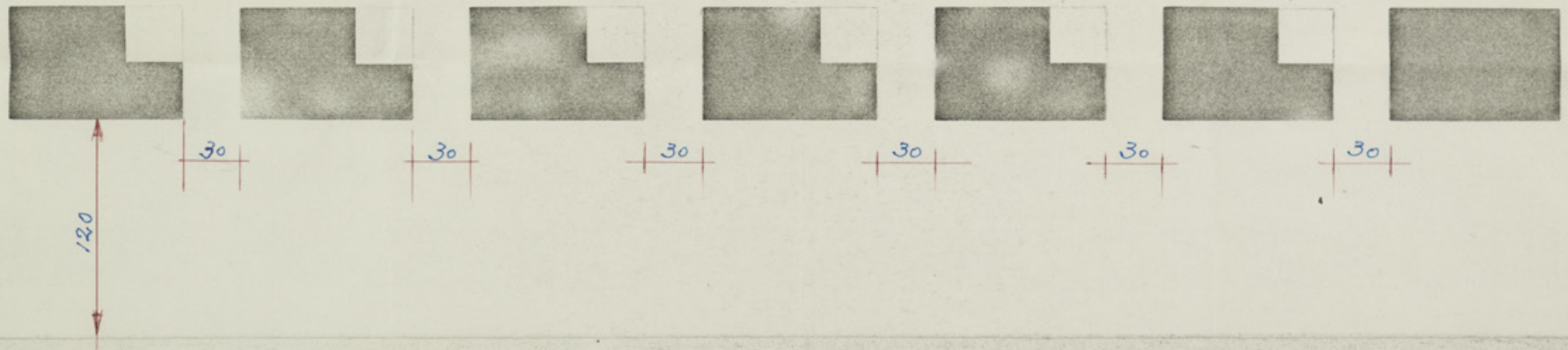




THE ILLUSTRATION OF ART
SOCIETY
MODEL

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THE ILLUSTRATION OF ART



(FLOOR)
PLANCHER

Installation layout plan for *The Illustration of Art / Society / Model*.
No. 50749_2. Antonio Dias Collection – Instituto de Arte Contemporânea.

ANTONIO DIAS 74 FORO BUONAPARTE 20121 MILANO	
The Illustration of Art	
MODEL / SOCIETY	

+ ou -

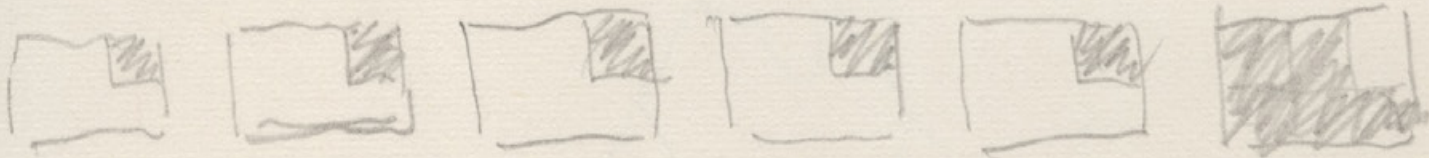
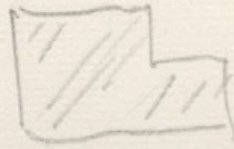
paint black
to eliminate

SÉRIE ART



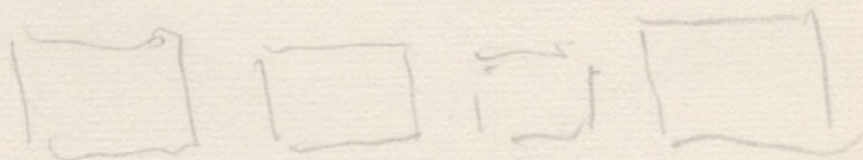
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(MIRROIRS)



Diferenças

Diferenças e repetições
se excluem mutuamente.



Os pontos básicos de pesquisa do meu trabalho de pintura são:

- a) os múltiplos significados de uma mesma imagem através do uso de frases ou palavras superpostas a tal imagem;
- b) a palavra escrita como uma possibilidade de criar uma imagem mental (não-pintura);
- c) as imagens acumuladas (pintura mais escrita) possibilitando a formação de uma linguagem permutacional;
- d) a obra não como interpretação da realidade percebida pelo artista, mas como instrumento para uma ação mental que coloca o espectador em condições de realizar a sua própria interpretação da realidade.

Essas pesquisas precisam ser desenvolvidas em todos os seus possíveis estados (pinturas, textos, áreas, ambientes), sem sofrer limitações naturalmente impostas pelo sistema de comercialização do trabalho artístico. Informações teóricas e diferentes possibilidades técnicas sendo desejáveis, um período de estudos e trabalho em New York é necessário. Pretendo poder começar tal período de trabalho a partir de setembro de 1971 e até junho de 1972.

"The basic research points of my painting practice are:

- a) the multiple meanings of a single image, generated through the use of phrases or words superimposed onto that image;
- b) the written word as a possibility for creating a mental image (non-pictorial);
- c) the accumulation of images (painting combined with writing), enabling the formation of a permutational language;
- d) the artwork not as an interpretation of reality perceived by the artist, but as an instrument for a mental action that places the viewer in a position to carry out their own interpretation of reality.

These investigations must be developed in all their possible forms (paintings, texts, areas, environments), without being constrained by the limitations naturally imposed by the system of commercialization of artistic work.

Given the importance of theoretical information and different technical possibilities, a period of study and work in New York is necessary. I expect to be able to begin this period of work from September 1971 through June 1972."

**A Ilustração da Arte
A Idéia de Corpo
Modelo**



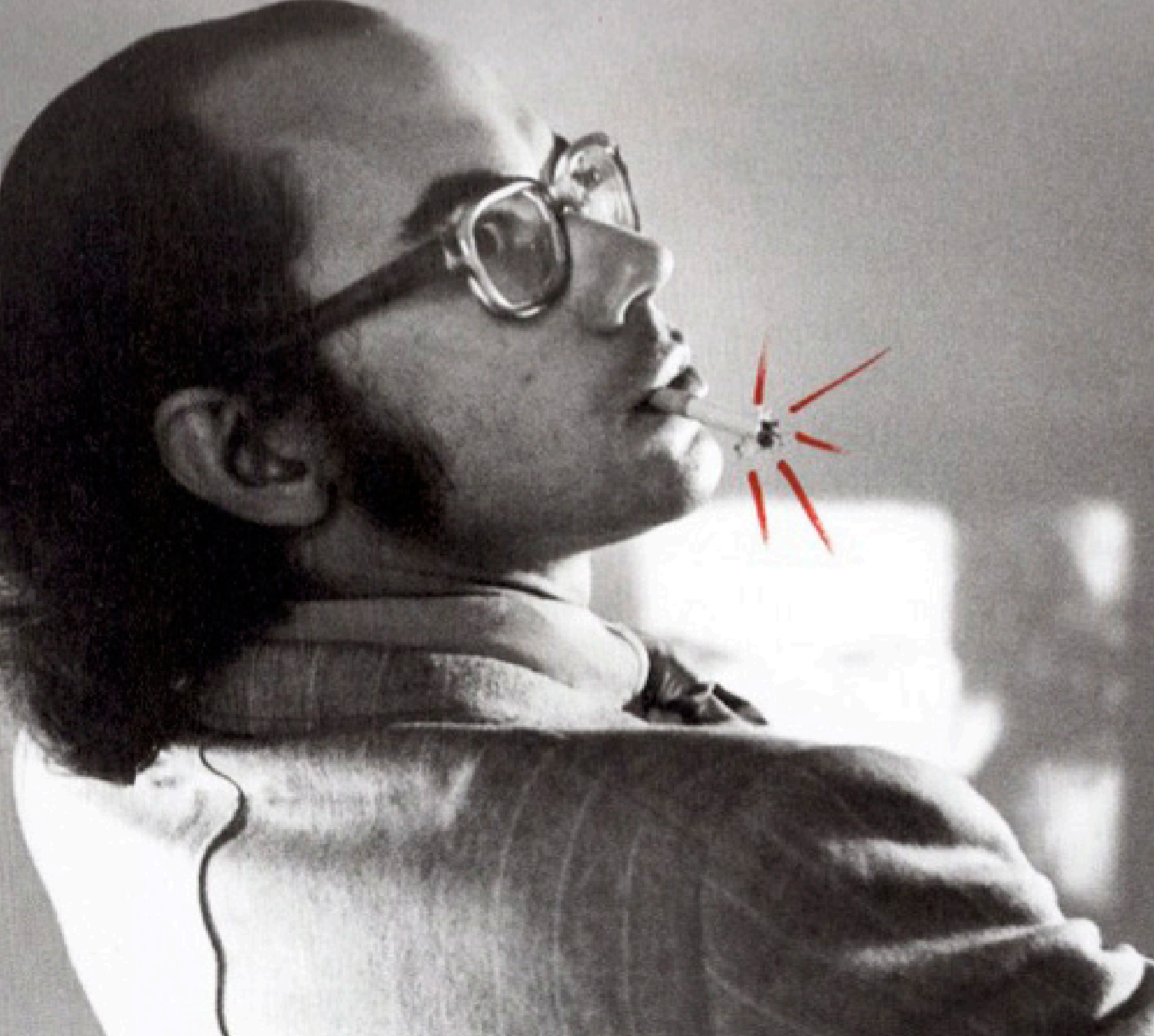
Este Trabalho

**A Ilustração da Arte
A Idéia de Corpo
Modelo**



Illustration reproduced in the Antonio Dias catalogue, published on the occasion of the exhibition at Galeria Saramenha, Rio de Janeiro, 1979, with a text by Paulo Sérgio Duarte. Antonio Dias Collection – Instituto de Arte Contemporânea. No. 51142_6.

O Trabalho Inteiro



ANTONIO DIAS

1944, Campina Grande, Brazil

2018, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Antonio Dias developed a body of work encompassing painting, printmaking, installation, video, and sound. He learned drawing techniques from his grandfather during childhood. Born in the state of Paraíba, he moved to Rio de Janeiro in 1958, where he worked as a draftsman on graphic design and architectural projects. He studied with Oswaldo Goeldi at the Estúdio de Gravura Livre of the Escola Nacional de Belas Artes.

He began his career in the 1960s, producing works marked by political critique in the form of paintings, drawings, and assemblages typical of the artists from the Nova Figuração Brasileira, of which he became one of the representatives. At the same time, his practice engaged in dialogue with Brazilian avant-garde movements, aligning both with the principles of the concretist movement and the ongoing cultural transformations in the country. From 1966, after self-exiling in Paris following criticisms of the Brazilian military dictatorship, the artist came into contact with figures from the Italian avant-garde movement Arte Povera, including Luciano Fabro and Giulio Paolini. In this European context, he increasingly turned toward abstraction, transforming his style.

In 1965, Antonio Dias received a scholarship and moved to Paris, where he lived until 1968. During this period, he developed a practice closely connected to international debates surrounding conceptual art and politics. That same year, he relocated to Milan, where he maintained a studio for several decades and became part of the circle around Studio Marconi, the gallery founded by Giorgio Marconi and one of the leading spaces for conceptual and analytical experimentation in Italy at the time. It was within this context that Dias came into contact with critics such as Tommaso Trini and artists engaged with conceptual art, minimalism, and *pittura-pittura*, developing works focused on the relations between image, language, and the circulation of art. At Studio Marconi, he held the solo exhibitions *Antonio Dias: Anywhere is my land* (1969) and *The Illustration of Art* (1971), both decisive for his international recognition. In 1971, he released the record *Record: The Space Between* and began the series *The Illustration of Art* (1971–1974), in which he further investigated the material conditions of art and artistic production. The following year, he received a John Simon

Guggenheim Memorial Foundation fellowship and spent a period living in New York.

In 1977, he traveled to Nepal to research traditional paper-making techniques, which resulted in large-scale works and the album *Trama*, composed of 11 woodcuts printed on Nepalese paper produced by local artisans. From the 1980s onward, he participated in important international exhibitions, including the 39th Biennale di Venezia (1980) and the 16th Bienal de São Paulo (1981). In 1992, he became a professor at the International Summer Academy of Fine Arts in Salzburg, Austria; in 1993, he taught at the State Academy of Fine Arts in Karlsruhe, Germany; and in 1997, he joined the postgraduate program at Ateliers Arnhem, Netherlands.

In 2010, he returned to Rio de Janeiro, dedicating himself especially to painting, focusing on surfaces, textures, and the juxtaposition of color planes. Among his recent solo exhibitions are *Antonio Dias: Derrotas e Vitórias* at the Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo – MAM-SP (2021); *Antonio Dias: Ta Tze Bao* at Galeria Nara Roesler, New York (2021); *Antonio Dias: O Ilusionista* at the Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro – MAM Rio (2018); *Una Collezione* at *Fondazione Marconi*, Milan (2017), among others. Between 2025 and 2026, Sprovieri, in London, and Gomide&Co, in São Paulo, presented two exhibitions dedicated to Antonio Dias's production from the late 1960s to the early 1970s. In 2025, Sprovieri organized *Antonio Dias: The Illustration of Art, 1969–1971*, a landmark exhibition that brought together works produced during the artist's early years in Milan and received wide critical attention. The following year, Gomide&Co presented *ANTONIO DIAS / IMAGE + MIRAGE*, further exploring this same period of the artist's trajectory through a group of historical works from the time, rarely exhibited previously.

His work is part of important institutional collections such as the Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo – MAM-SP; the Instituto Itaú Cultural, São Paulo; the Daros Latinamerica Collection, Zurich; the Museum Ludwig, Cologne; the Museum of Modern Art – MoMA (New York); and the Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires – MALBA, among others.

L'annon per la copia

IT IS ART WHAT IS MISSING

