

Sonia Gomes / Marina Perez Simão

September 3 – 27, 2020
68 Park Place
East Hampton, New York



Left: Sonia Gomes, *Untitled* (from the series *A vida não me assusta [Life Does Not Scare Me]*), 2020 © Sonia Gomes, courtesy Pace Gallery; Right: Marina Perez Simão, *Untitled*, 2020 © Marina Perez Simão, courtesy Pace Gallery

Pace Gallery is pleased to present *Sonia Gomes / Marina Perez Simão*, an exhibition of recent works by two leading Brazilian artists. The show marks Gomes' first exhibition with Pace since joining the gallery in June as well as Perez Simão's first project-based collaboration with Pace. An exploration into the ambiguity of abstraction, the presentation features five recent and historical sculptures by Gomes, nine new paintings by Perez Simão, and the artists' first collaborative piece, synthesizing their distinct aesthetics as a singular whole employing oil paint and embroidery. Inspired by the environment and past of their native Brazil, the works on display evoke landscapes poised between the chimerical and historical, as well as the personal and collective, while pointing to the dialogue between literature and the visual arts. The exhibition will take place at Pace's East Hampton venue from September 3 – 27, 2020.

Celebrated internationally for her abstract sculptures combining secondhand textiles with everyday materials, such as furniture, driftwood, and wire, Gomes is a barrier-breaking figure as the first living Afro-Brazilian woman artist to have a monographic show, *Sonia Gomes: Still I Rise*, at the São Paulo Museum of Art (MASP), in 2018. Through their tensile, slack and contorted forms, works such as *Cordão dos Mentecaptos [Cord of the Insane]* (2016) exude an enigmatic vitality and organicity suggestive of both the human body and Brazil's flora and fauna. Her practice actively reclaims Afro-Brazilian traditions as well as feminized crafts from the margins of history. "I always sought nonconformity with things that are established," Gomes explains of her art. It is also rich in literary references. Her recurrent use of bird cages, as seen, for instance, in *Vôo [Flight]* (2014), operates as a potent allusion to emancipatory struggles and the poetry of Maya Angelou, whose verses inspired the title and premise of Gomes's momentous solo exhibition at MASP.

At the cusp between abstraction and figuration, the paintings of Perez Simão present fluid forms in subtle chromatic harmonies that conjure the auratic and transformational qualities of luminous, open vistas without

ever depicting any specific place in explicit detail. Reveling in their ambiguity and harnessing the power of suggestion, canvases, such as *Untitled* (2020, 19 ¾ x 15 ¾ in), *Untitled* (2019, 72 ½ x 52 ¾ in) and *Untitled* (2020, 57 1/8 x 52 ¾ in), operate like the poetry that inspires Perez Simão: they evoke the sensations, moods, and rhythms of memories and places, rather than dispatch clear-cut messages in overt terms. When seen as a group, her works can formally rhyme and thereby intimate loose storylines—an indirect consequence of the artist’s approach to working on multiple canvases at once. “I feel that there is a sort of narrative in my paintings,” Perez Simão explains, “Passing from one element to the next is very important to me, the fluidity and ambivalence.” In this way, Perez Simão opens her work to the interpretational creativity of the viewer and thumbs the gap between representation and language, the lived and the said, the palpable and invisible.

Gomes, who recently joined Pace, has several major upcoming projects including commissioned works for the 2021 Gwangju Biennale and 2021 Liverpool Biennial. In 2022, Gomes will have her first solo exhibition with Pace Gallery at its venue in New York City.

Sonia Gomes (b. 1948, Caetanópolis, Brazil) combines secondhand textiles with everyday materials, such as furniture, driftwood, and wire, to create abstract sculptures that reclaim Afro-Brazilian traditions and feminized crafts from the margins of history.

Juxtaposing tensile and slack forms, Gomes’s contorted sculptures exude a corporeality and dynamism that she attributes to her love of popular Brazilian dances. At the same time, her work’s vitality evokes the enigmatic animism of sacred objects used in the spiritual practices of Brazil’s African diaspora—rites that the artist witnessed her grandmother, a shaman, perform during her childhood. Born in the Brazilian city of Caetanópolis, a once-important manufacturing center for textiles, Gomes uses found or gifted fabrics, which, according to her, “bring the history of the people that they belonged to.” “I give a new significance to them,” she adds. Her assemblages thus tie Brazil’s historical trajectory to the long-disregarded narratives of women, people of color, and countless anonymous individuals.

Through its recycling of used fabric, Gomes’s work also evinces a principle of thrift that is both a consequence of Brazil’s rapid and uneven industrial development and a dissenting answer to its accompanying culture of wasteful consumption and environmental destruction. As a whole, her art is marked by a decolonizing impulse, providing oblique responses to the social inequities and ecological urgencies of present-day Brazil and, more broadly, a globalized world.

Marina Perez Simão (b. 1981, Vitória, Brazil) has developed a working process based fundamentally on the accumulation and juxtaposition of memories and images. By combining personal experiences and multiple references stemming from fields such as philosophy, literature, and journalism, the artist collects certain

narratives in order to edit them through pictorial means that do not belong to any predefined language; rather, they develop with an organic practice, which combines thematic density and a delicate treatment.

Simão uses a variety of techniques, such as collage, drawing, and oil painting, as starting points in order to marry interior and exterior landscapes, she composes visual journeys that sometimes traverse the unknown, the abstract and the nebulous, but also include visions and memories. Simão's work leads us into territories in which we are confronted with that which is ungraspable, with that elusive and unspeakable instant that poets strive so hard to capture with their words.

Pace is a leading contemporary art gallery representing many of the most significant international artists and estates of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Under the leadership of President and CEO Marc Glimcher, Pace is a vital force within the art world and plays a critical role in shaping the history, creation, and engagement with modern and contemporary art. Since its founding by Arne Glimcher in 1960, Pace has developed a distinguished legacy for vibrant and dedicated relationships with renowned artists. As the gallery approaches the start of its seventh decade, Pace's mission continues to be inspired by a drive to support the world's most influential and innovative artists and to share their visionary work with people around the world.

Pace advances this mission through its dynamic global program, comprising ambitious exhibitions, artist projects, public installations, institutional collaborations, performances and interdisciplinary projects through Pace Live, and curatorial research and writing. Today, Pace has seven locations worldwide: two galleries in New York—including its newly opened headquarters at 540 West 25th Street, and an adjacent 8,000 sq. ft. exhibition space at 510 West 25th Street—as well as galleries in Palo Alto, London, Geneva, Hong Kong, and Seoul.

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