

# Lydia Okumura

Galeria Jaqueline Martins, São Paulo

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## Lydia Okumura

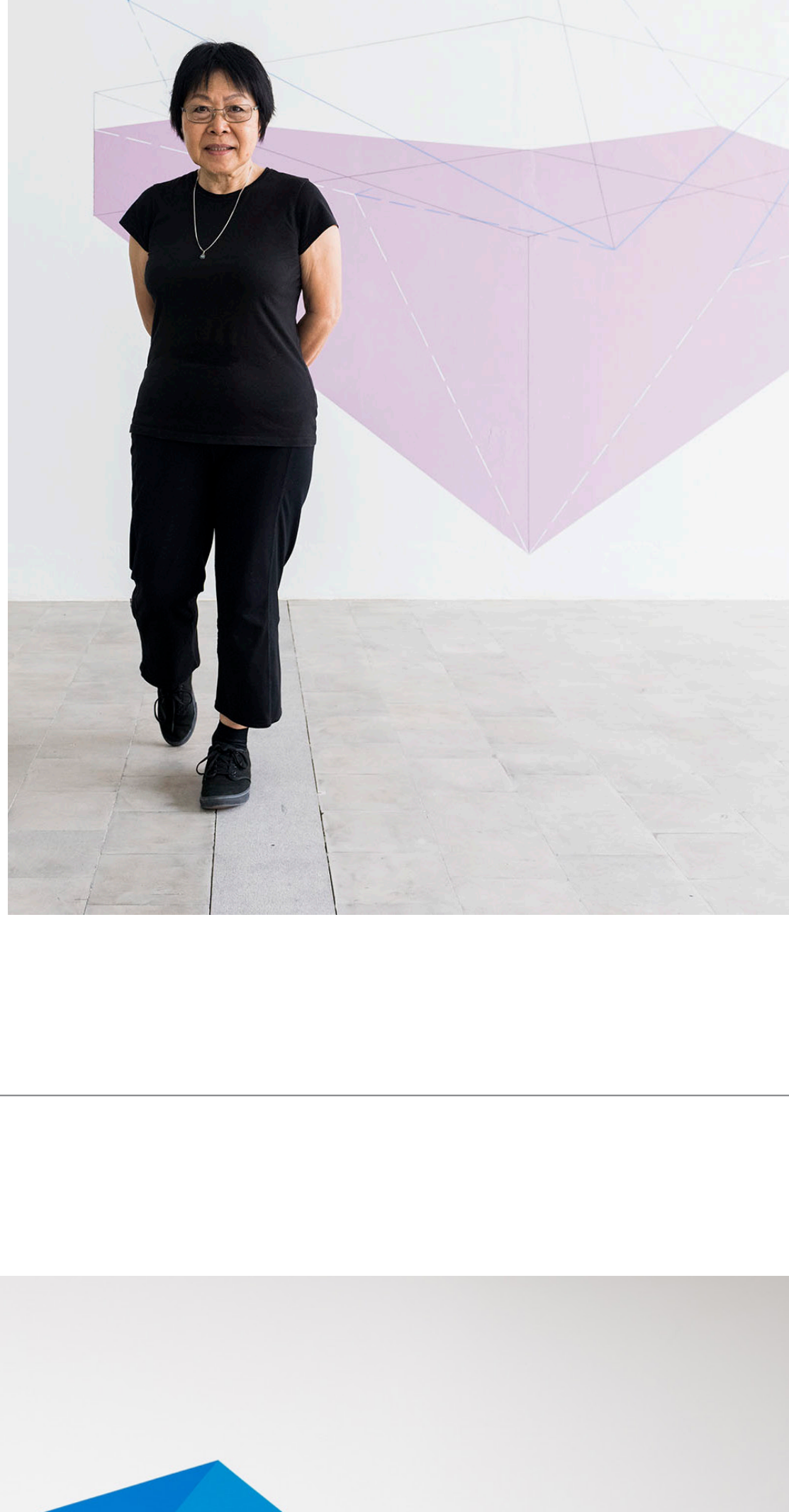
Oswaldo Cruz, Brasil, 1948.  
Lives and works in New York, USA.

Lydia Okumura started her career in the 1960s, fresh out of high school. At age 19, she had her first solo show (Assemblage-Relief Paintings, at São Paulo's Varanda Galeria de Arte), featuring relief paintings employing a variety of materials, including wood and glass. Later on, encouraged by artist and professor José Moraes, she joined the then-recently created FAAP School of Visual Arts, where she underwent formal training between 1970 and 1973 and turned to painting and drawing. During these years, she took an interest in concept and minimal art and in installation and performance, which were then-blossoming media around the world.

In 1973, the year of her first stint in the International Biennial, Okumura was working in collaboration with Genilson Soares and Francisco Iñarra, under the name Equipe 3. The three artists employed an experimental, collaborative methodology whereby each would create separate installations that invariably conversed with one another in the exhibition space. This moment marks the start of her use of geometric shapes expanded into space, an aesthetic she keeps exploring until this day. In addition to the connection between her research work and the legacy of geometric abstraction, Lydia Okumura's three-dimensional work actively deals with space and incorporates participation to turn viewers into collaborators. This feature also likens her output to the propositional, relational aspects of Brazilian neo-concretist research.

Lydia Okumura relocated to New York in 1974. Here, she joined the Pratt Graphics Center, where she connected with artists from different countries, broadening her reference set and flirting with conceptual practices such as those of Sol Lewitt and Fred Sandback, strongly marked by dematerialization and ephemerality. Her projects from the following decade relate directly to architecture, with large-scale installations, including at the Nobe Gallery, in 1978, and the Pratt Institute Gallery, in New York, where color planes are painted onto wall corners and tied up with string. She begins to explore the use of string in ever more complex ways, creating illusions of geometric volumes and amplifying the relationships and the contradictions between reality and imagination.

In the following decades, Okumura devotes herself more regularly to studio work as well, creating drawings on paper and paintings on canvas. Her two-dimensional work is highly connected with her installation work, and resonates the geometric shapes seen in space. The drawings are often plans for possible spatial works. However, it is in drawing that the fictional dimension of her oeuvre emerges in a more marked way. The multidimensionality of the reality that the artist refers to is often revealed more openly through her use of colors and lines.



Tribeca 1984  
acrylic paint on wall  
Ed: 1/3 + 1 A.P.  
270 x 390 cm

8972



work detail

"I do not try to make a space into something it is not, but to reaffirm it and to expand its possibilities"  
— Lydia Okumura

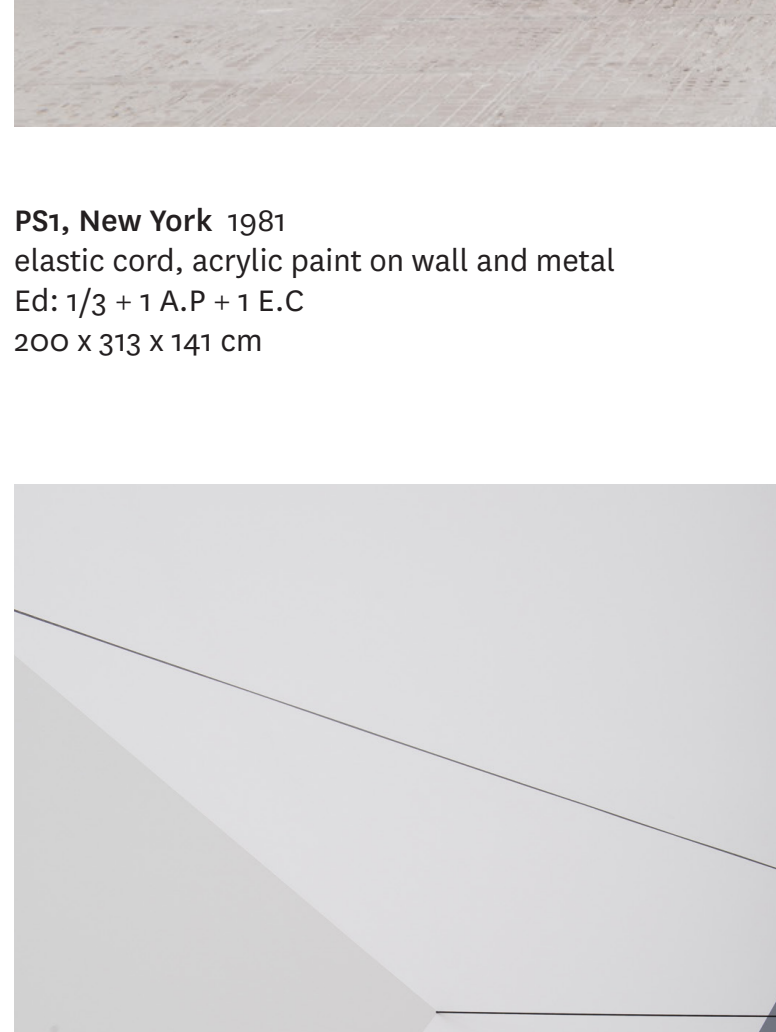
While not directly influenced by the Concrete and Neo-Concrete movements happening in Brazil during the 1950s, Okumura's work follows a trajectory of abstraction found throughout Latin American art. One can see similarities between Okumura's growing visual vocabulary and the early works of Waldemar Cordeiro, Lygia Pape, and Hélio Oiticica.

However, unlike Op art, that tricks the eye to move around the work of art rapidly, Okumura's process enlivens her forms, allowing for the viewer to have a deeper and slower interaction with the work.



PS1, New York 1981  
elastic cord, acrylic paint on wall and metal  
Ed: 1/3 + 1 A.P. + 1 E.C.  
200 x 313 x 141 cm

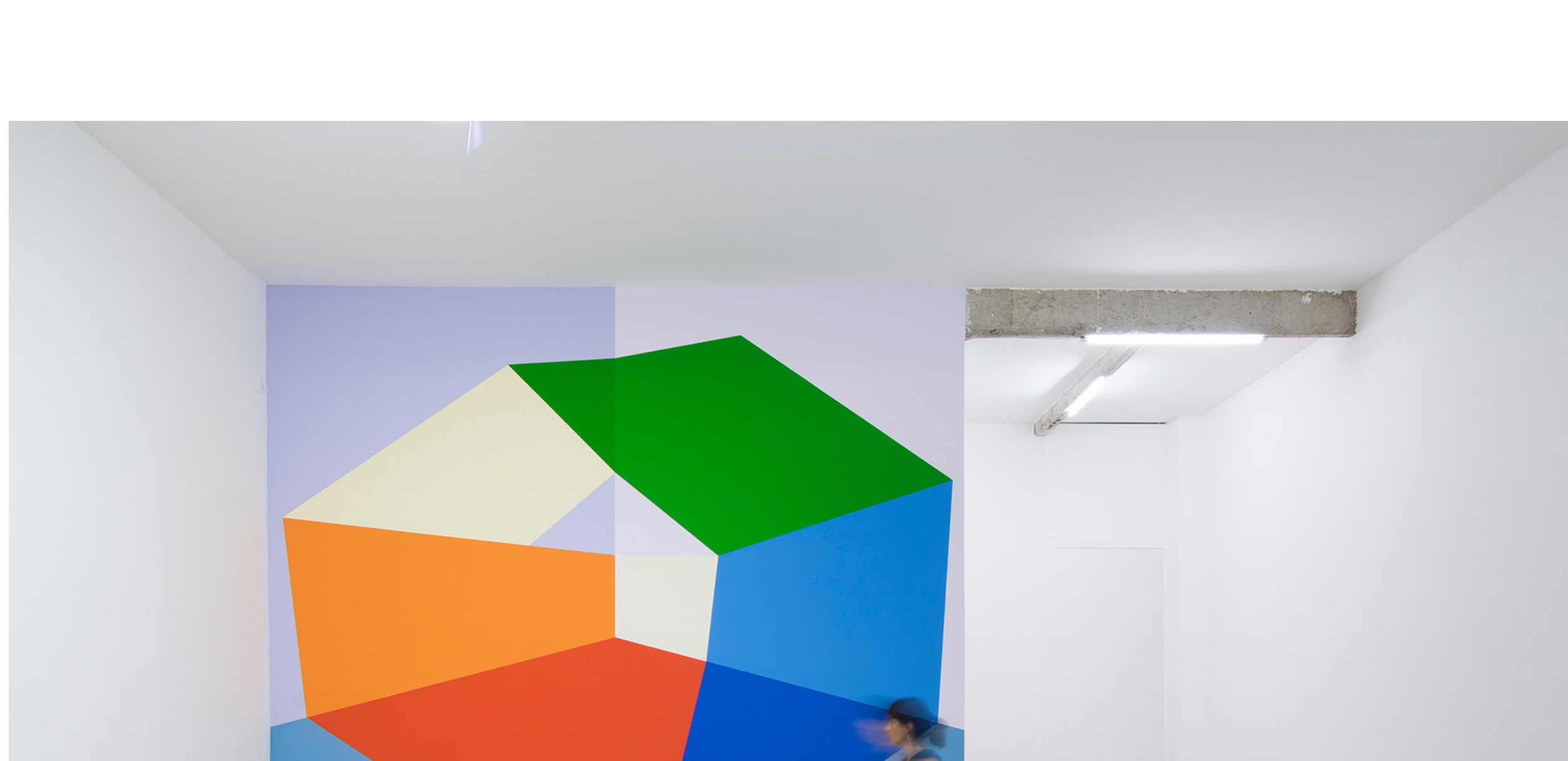
9023



work details

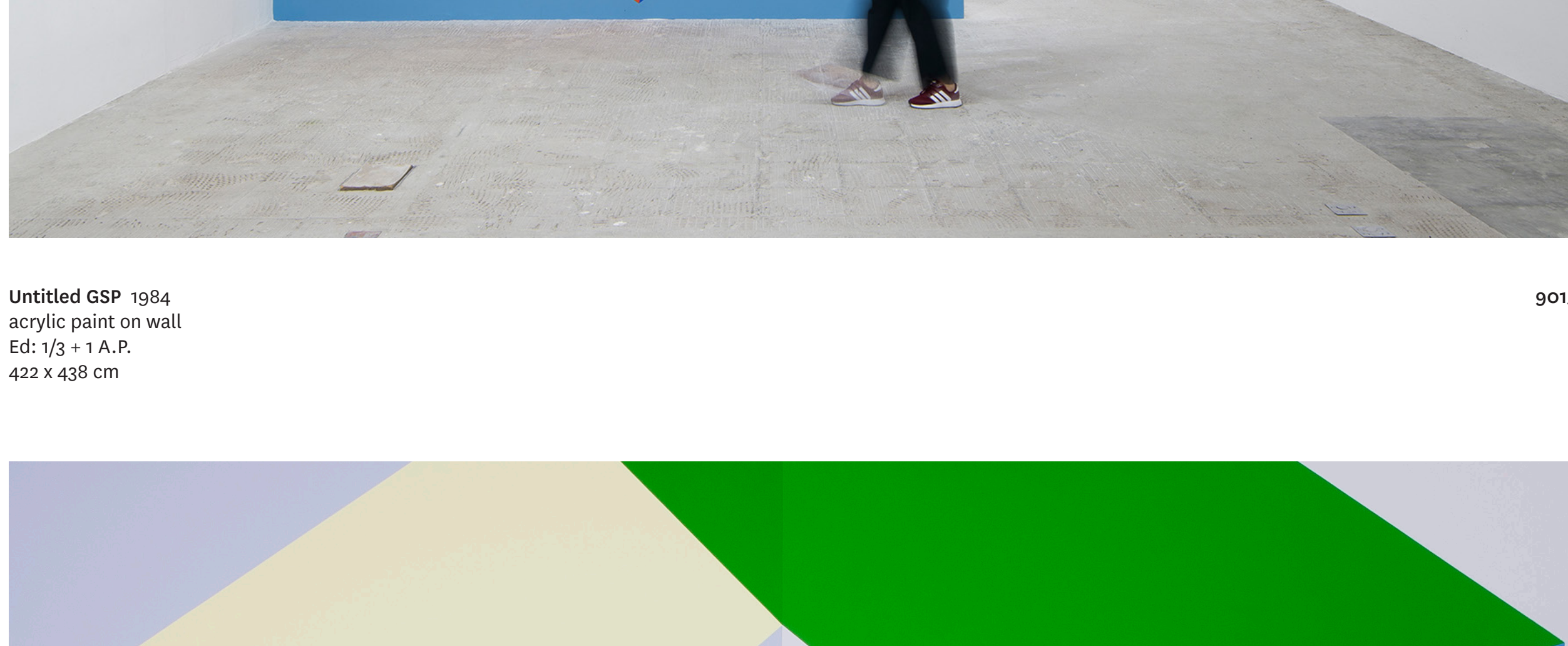


This work was first presented at the group show *The Shaped Field: Eccentric Formats*, organized by MoMA PS1 in 1981.

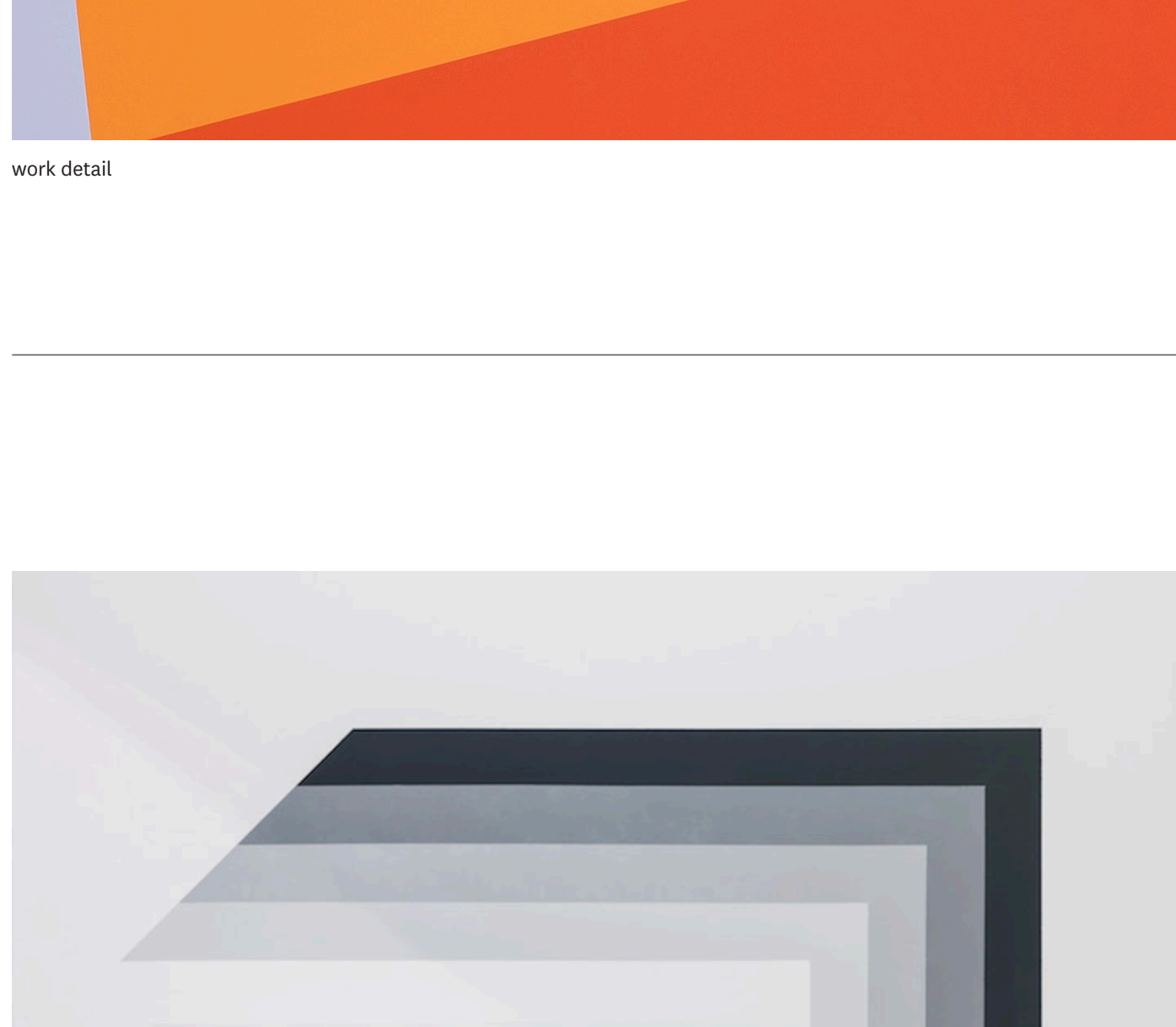


Untitled GSP 1984  
acrylic paint on wall  
Ed: 1/3 + 1 A.P.  
422 x 438 cm

9015



work detail

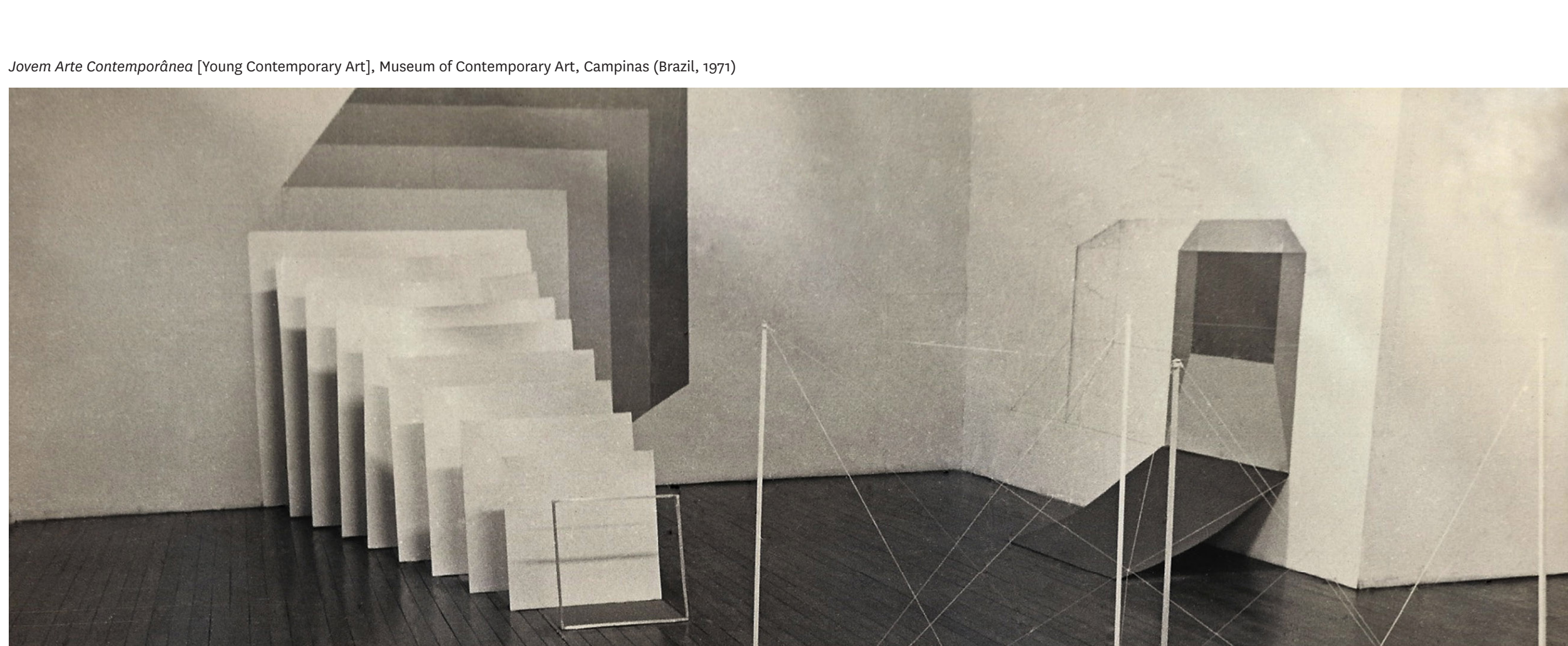


2657  
Different Dimensions of Reality II 1971  
acrylic paint on aluminum and wall  
Ed: 4/4 + 1 A.P. + 1 E.C.  
150 x 200 x 150 cm

The *Jovem Arte Contemporânea* [Young Contemporary Art] exhibition, held at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Campinas (Brazil, 1971), marked a turning point in Okumura's career. Although her practice remained conceptual, it was in this year that she began to research physical spaces in a more explicit way, actively challenging viewers to question the perceptions of the world around them through sculptures and installations. For this show, Lydia developed three works, *Different Dimensions of Reality I, II and III*.

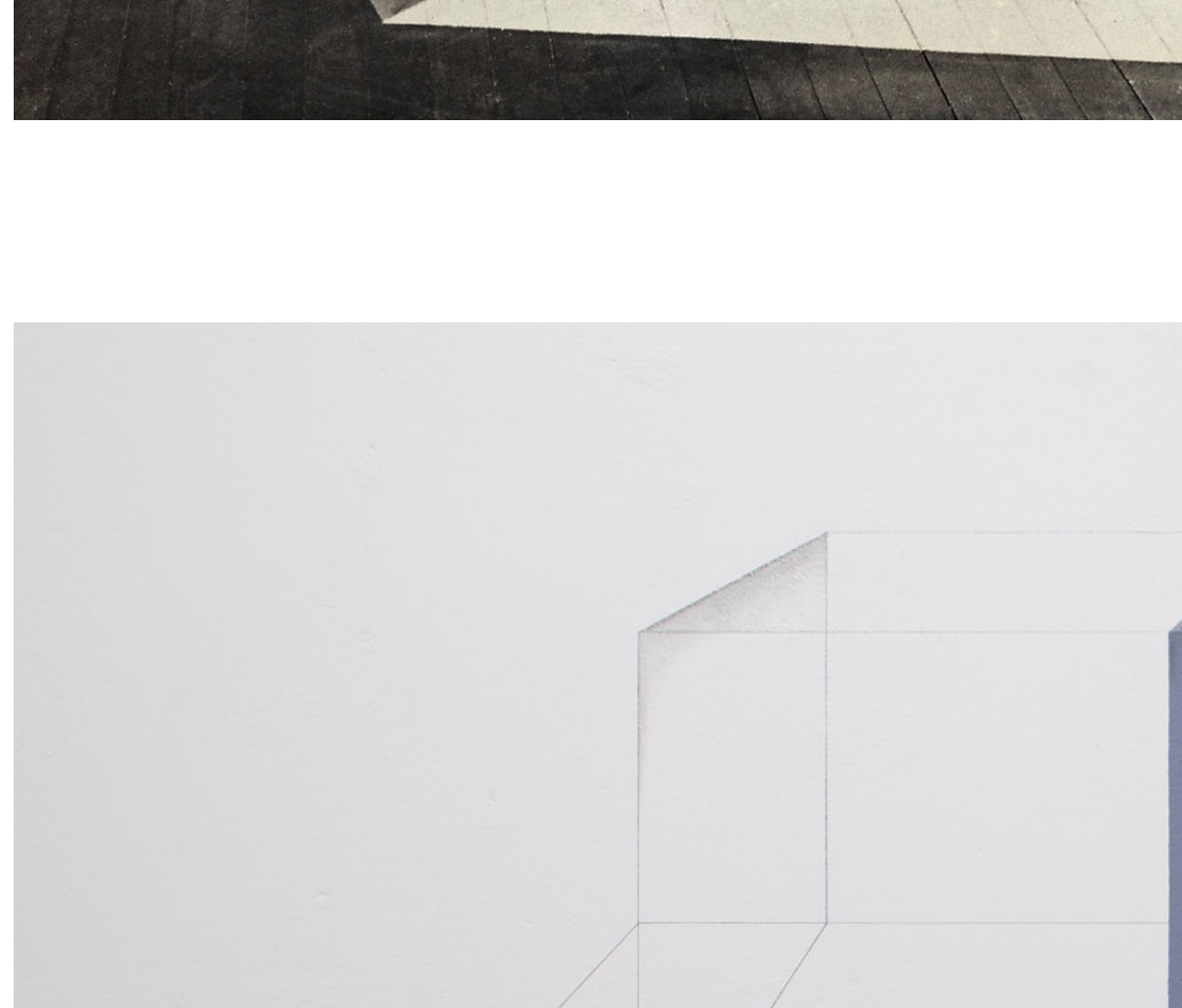
Unlike Op art that tricks the eye to move around the work of art rapidly, Okumura's process enlivens her forms, allowing for the viewer to have a deeper and slower interaction with the work. These works mark the beginning of Okumura's abstract visual language based on line, form, and space.

Jovem Arte Contemporânea [Young Contemporary Art], Museum of Contemporary Art, Campinas (Brazil, 1971)

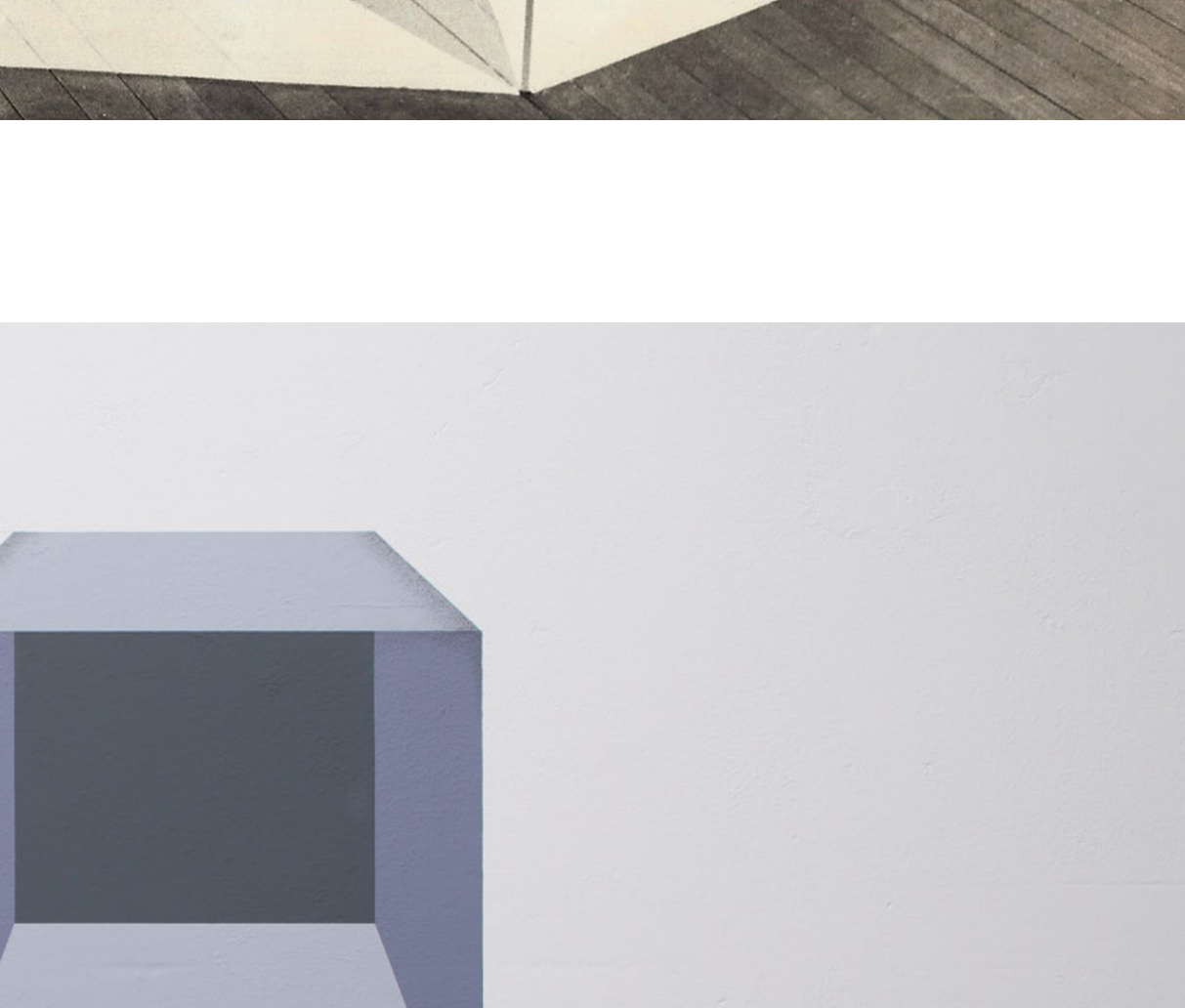


Different Dimensions of Reality I 1971  
graphite and acrylic paint on miteal and wall  
Ed: 2/5 + 1 A.P. + 1 E.C.  
170 x 200 x 20 cm

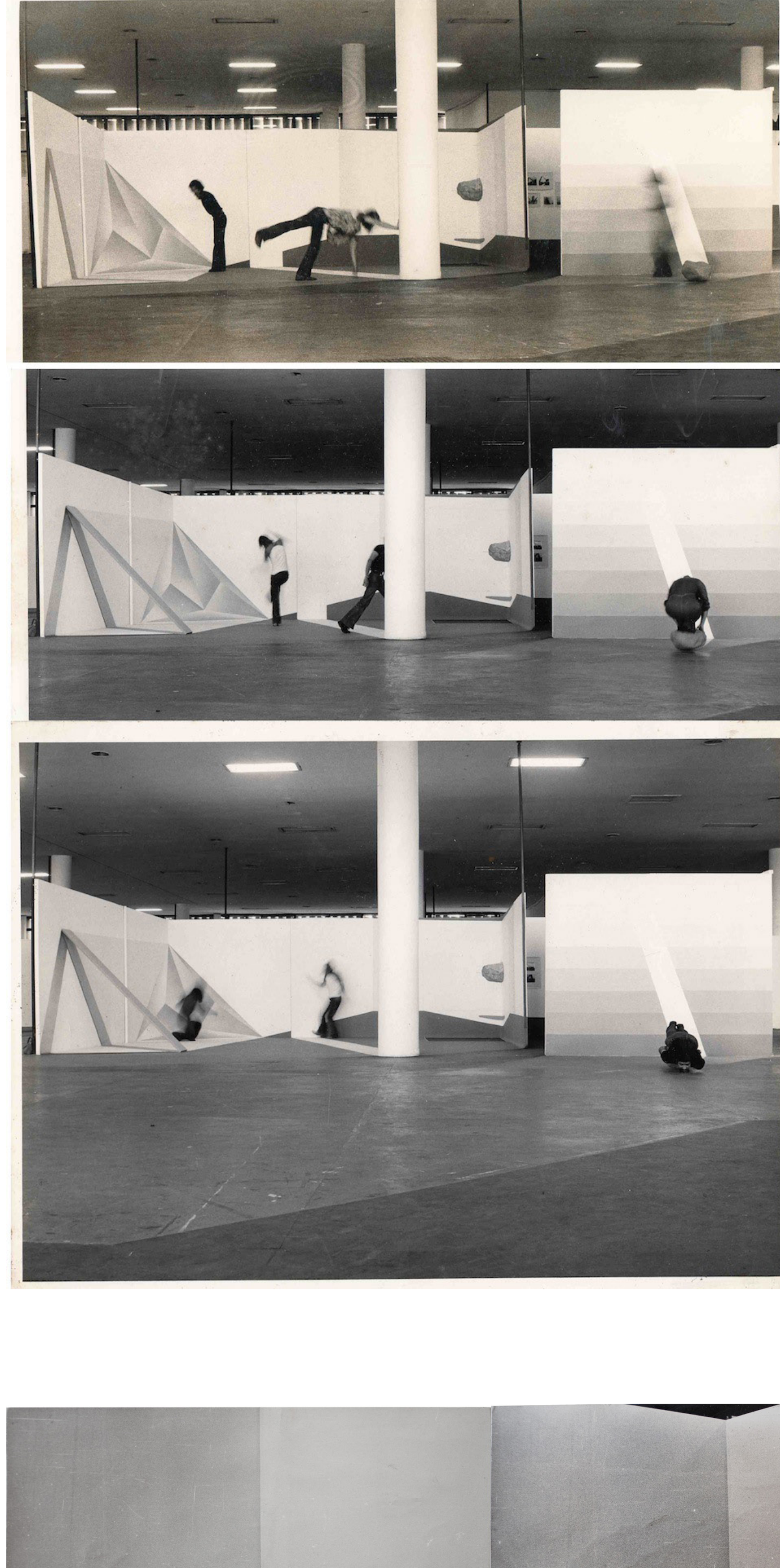
2665



work details



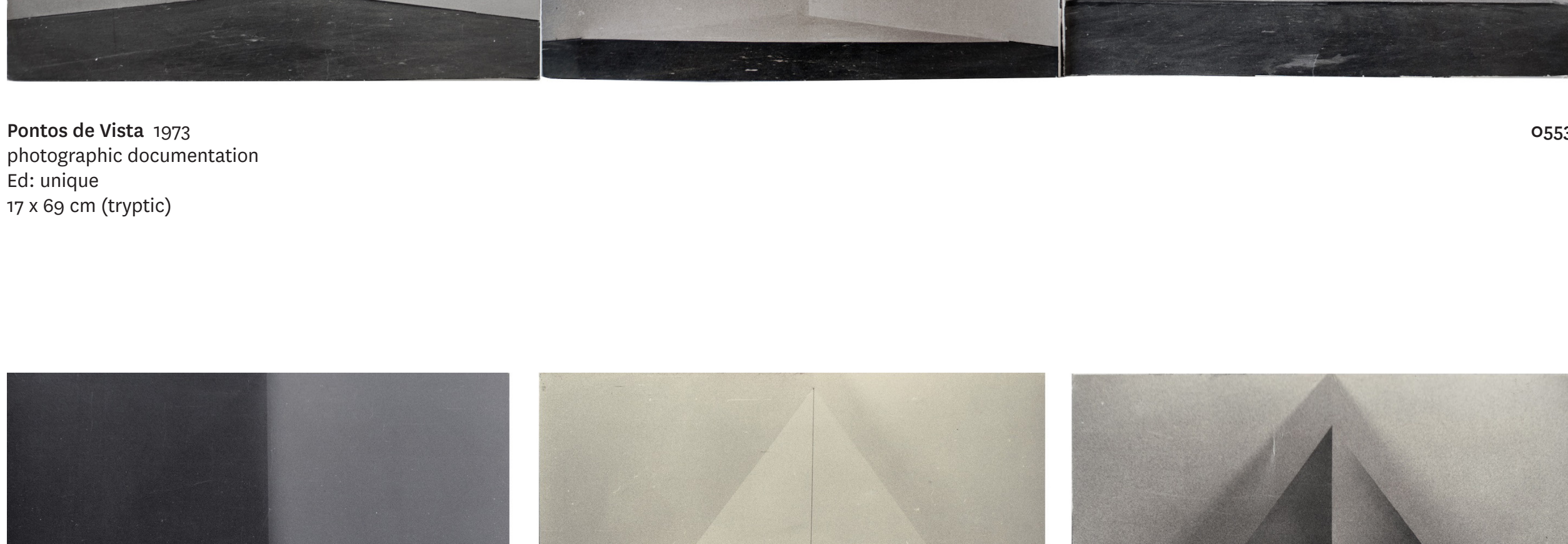




0056

Equipéz  
Pontos de Vista 1973  
photographic documentation  
Ed: unique  
33 x 24,5 cm

For the 12th São Paulo International Biennial, Equipéz (composed by Genilson Soares, Lydia Okumura and Francisco Ibarra) proposed a specific work designed from the Pavilion's space. Working collectively based on each other's concerns, the group's premise was that each individual action would find a reaction, described by them as "a game of mutual interference". When remodeling the appearance of the space, Equipéz completely transformed it, reinforcing its dimensions, barriers and depth by using graphic interventions. It was from this experience that Okumura began to expand its own style of geometric abstraction and to delve into specific installations for exhibition spaces.



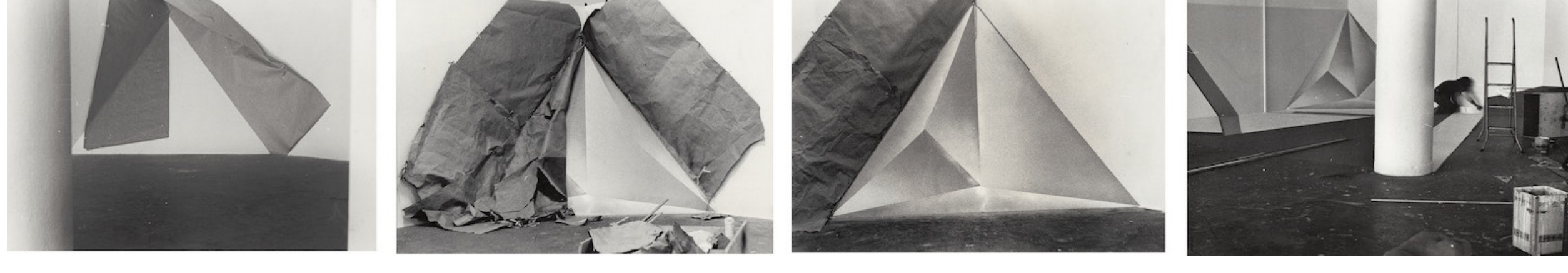
Pontos de Vista 1973  
photographic documentation  
Ed: unique  
17 x 69 cm (ptyptic)

0553



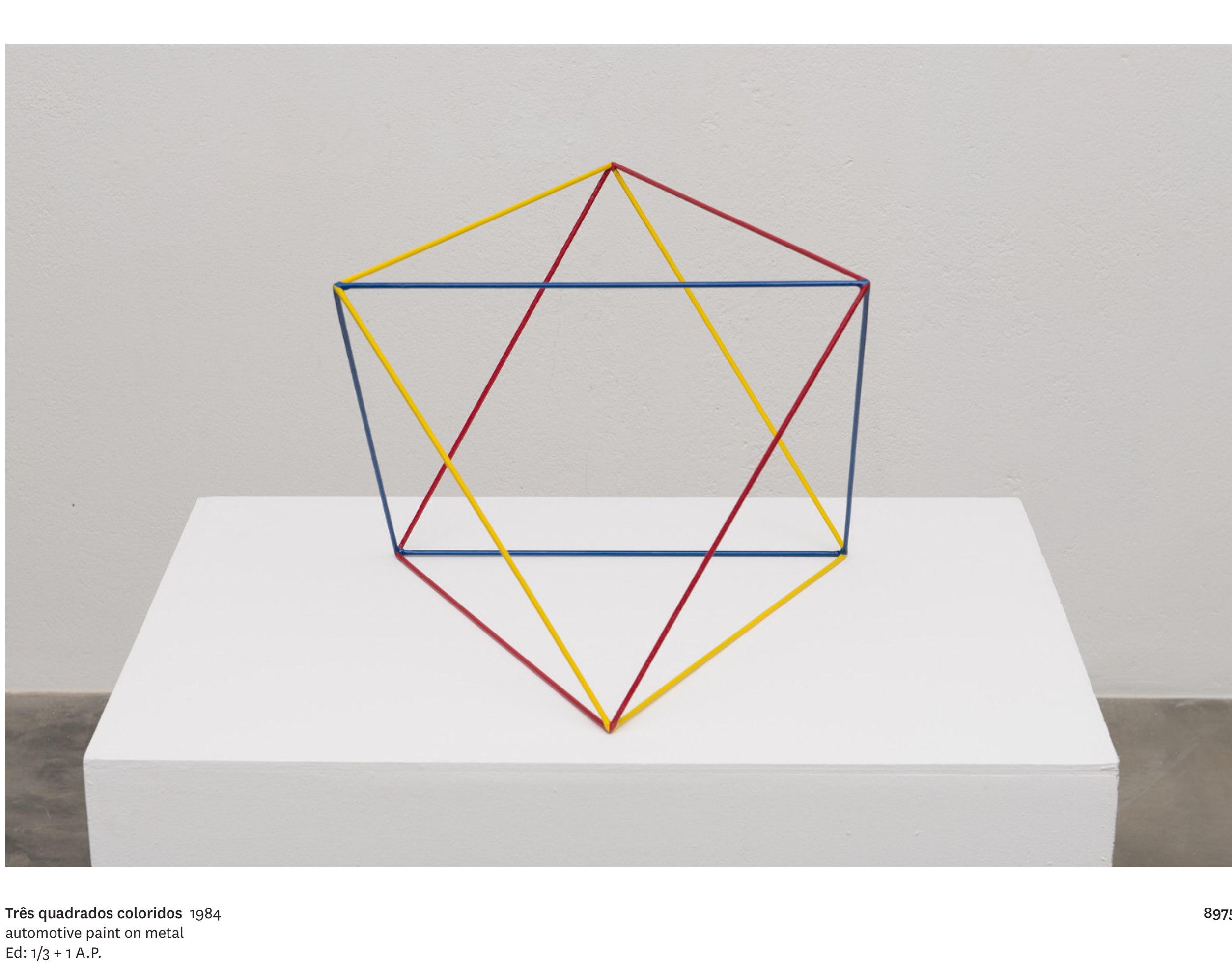
Pontos de Vista 1973  
photographic documentation  
Ed: unique  
17 x 69 cm (ptyptic)

0555



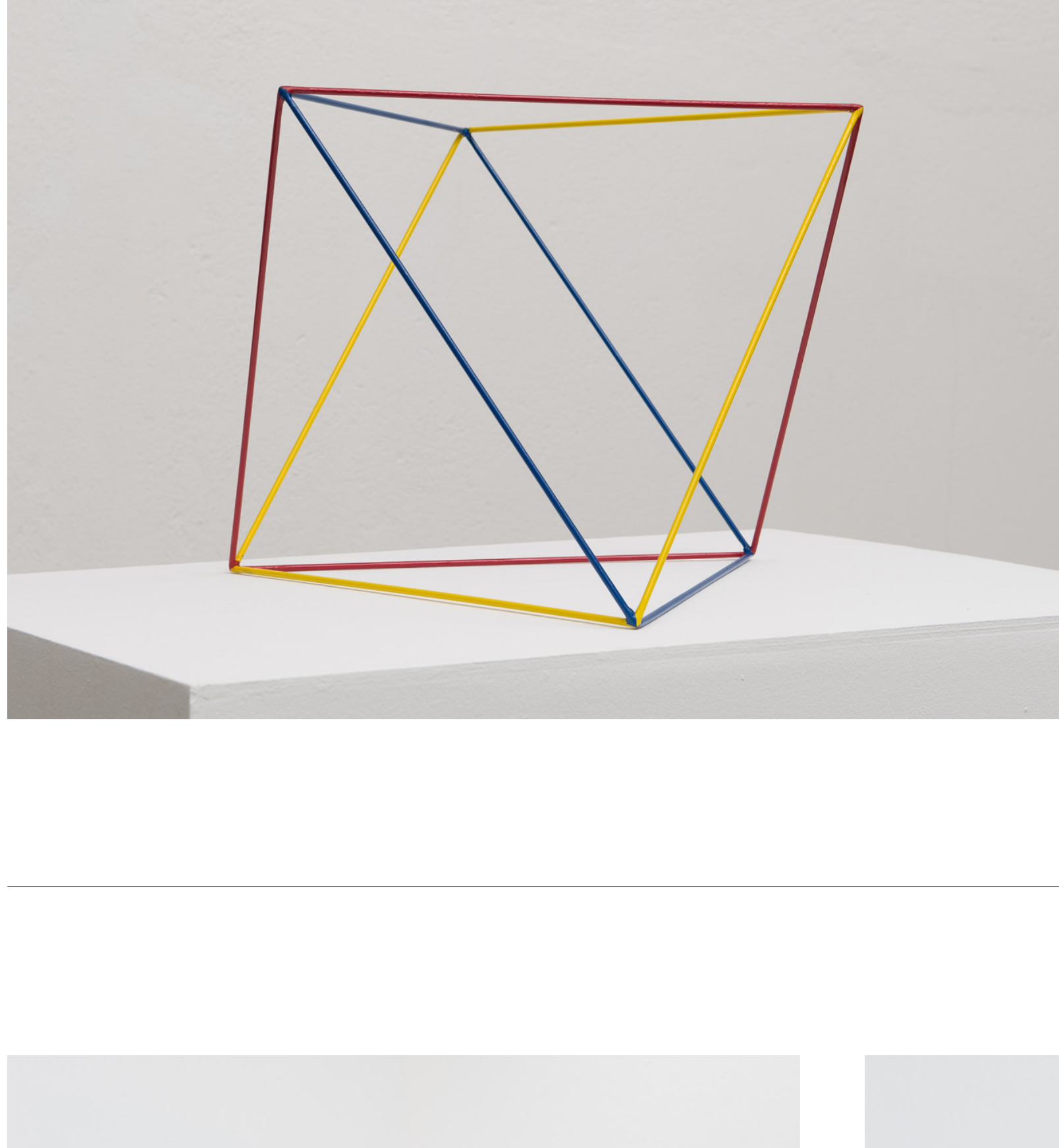
Pontos de Vista 1973  
photographic documentation  
Ed: unique  
18 x 96 cm (polyptic)

0557



Três quadrados coloridos 1984  
automotive paint on metal  
Ed: 1/3 + 1 A.P.  
34 x 41 x 47 cm

8975



In 1984, 10 years after moving to New York, Okumura was invited to make a solo exhibition of new works at São Paulo's Museum of Modern Art. With the reopening delayed due to the recent renovations made by architect Lina Bo Bardi, the artist had only 30 days to develop all the works. At the end of the term, Lydia presented an impressive number of 45 new pieces, many of them constructed with iron bars, steel wires, wooden panels and other elements that were available during the building renovation.

Três quadrados coloridos (1984) was among these new works.



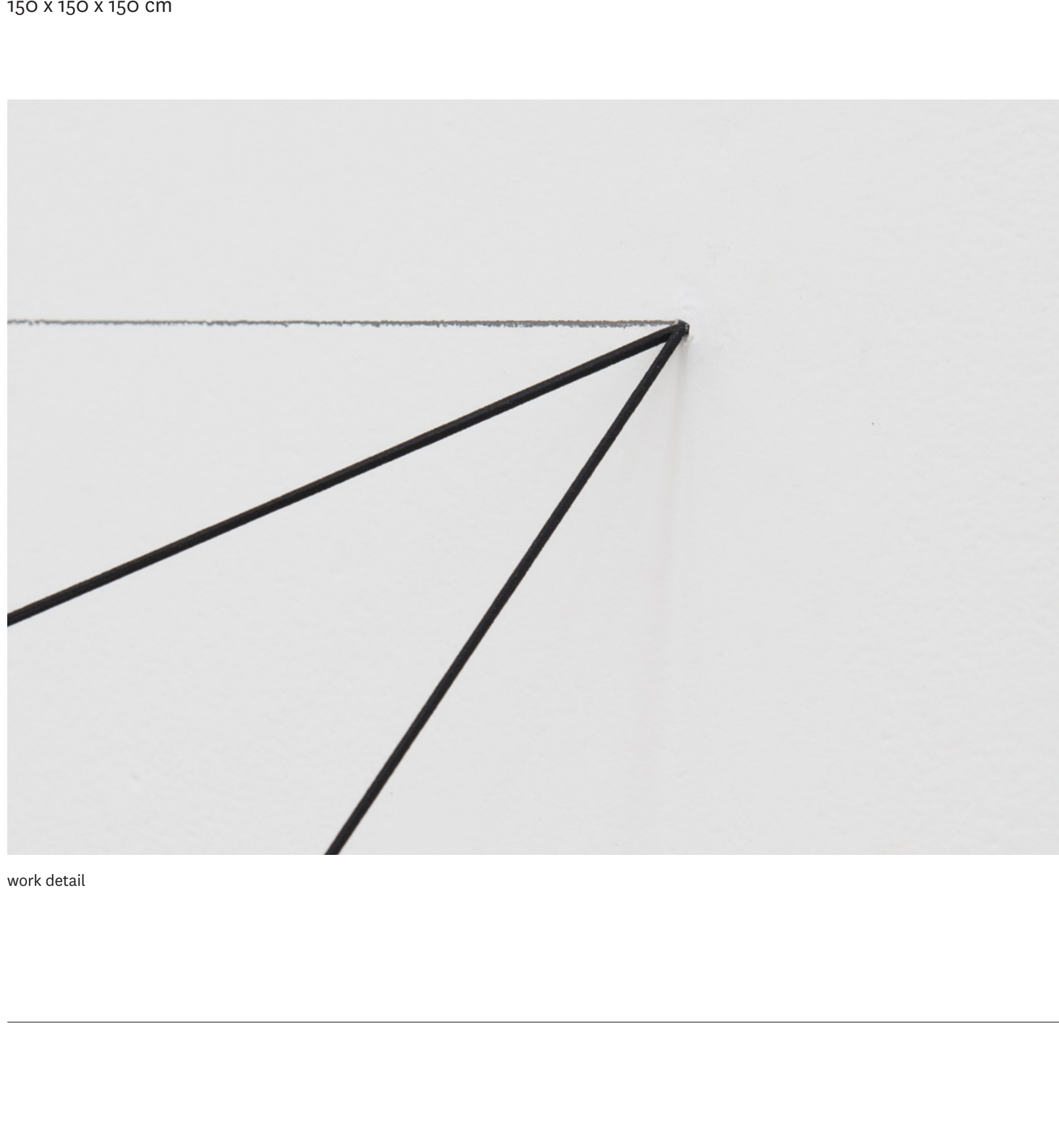
The Appearance 1975  
elastic cord and graphite on wall and floor  
Ed: 1/4 + 1 A.P. + 1 E.C.  
150 x 150 x 150 cm

8900



"The installations I had been creating were for the most part based on elements of the architecture inside the exhibition space. I would build virtual structures going through walls, the ceiling and the floor, sliding back and forth between two and three dimensions. In a way, the subject matter of my work has always been the viewers themselves. Walking across the space, they would begin to reflect about themselves"

Lydia Okumura



work detail

## Lydia Okumura CV

### Selected individual exhibitions

- 2021 *Lydia Okumura*, Galeria Jaqueline Martins, São Paulo, Brazil
- 2019 *Volume 84*, Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London  
*Dimensions*, Galeria Nuno Centeno, Porto, Portugal
- 2018 *Situations*, Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, Scottsdale, USA
- 2017 *Dentro, o que existe fora*, Galeria Jaqueline Martins, São Paulo, Brazil  
*Five Sides and Other Dimensions*, Broadway 1602, New York, USA  
*Situations*, Weber State University, Salt Lake City, Utah, USA
- 2016 *Situations*, UB Art Galleries, Buffalo, USA  
*Uprooting Architecture*: 1.000.000mg, Ideobox Artspace, Miami, USA
- 2015 *The Disappearance of Perspective*, Broadway 1602, New York, USA  
*In front of Light*, Centro Cultural São Paulo, Brazil
- 2004 *Recent Circular Paintings*, Galeria Deco, São Paulo, Brazil
- 1995 *Recent Paintings*, Museu de Arte da Pinacoteca do Estado, São Paulo, Brazil

- 1993 *Recent Works on Paper*, Galerie d'art Jean-Claude Bergeron, Ottawa, Canada
- 1991 *Recent Paintings*, Kate Art Gallery, São Paulo, Brazil
- 1984 *Lydia Okumura: Instalação*, MAM, São Paulo, Brazil  
*Installations and Paintings*, Condeso & Lawler Gallery, New York, USA
- 1983 *Installation and Works on Paper*, Utsubo Gallery, Osaka, Japan
- 1982 *Installation and Paintings*, Condeso & Lawler Gallery, New York, USA
- 1980 *Installation and Work on Paper*, Watari Gallery, Tokyo, Japan
- 1979 *Installation and Works on Paper*, Utsubo Gallery, Osaka, Japan
- 1977 *Graphics and Works on Paper*, Nobe Gallery, Tokyo, Japan  
*Registros de Experiencias de Recinto 1971-1977*, SESC Vila Nova, São Paulo, Brazil
- 1968 *Assemblage-Relief Paintings*, Varanda Galeria de Arte, São Paulo, Brazil

### Public collections

- Figueiredo Ferraz Institute, Ribeirão Preto, Brazil
- MUBE - Museu Brasileiro de Escultura, São Paulo, Brazil
- Pinacoteca do Estado, São Paulo, Brazil
- Museum of Modern Art, São Paulo, Brazil
- São Paulo's University Contemporary Art Museum, Brazil
- Centro Cultural São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil
- Itamaraty Palace, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brasília, Brazil
- Mário de Andrade Public Library, São Paulo, Brazil
- Museu de Arte Brasileira, FAAP, São Paulo, Brazil
- Museum of Modern Art, Bogotá, Colombia
- Museum of Belas Artes, Caracas, Venezuela
- Museo de Solidaridad Salvador Allende, Santiago, Chile

- Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA
- Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA
- The University of New York, UB Anderson Gallery, Buffalo, USA
- Akron Museum of Art, Ohio, USA
- Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid, Spain
- Es Balluard Museu d'Art Modern i Contemporani, Palma de Maiorca, Spain
- The Hall Art Foundation, Derneburg, Germany
- Contemporary Graphic Art Collection, Friedrikstad, Norway
- The Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, Japan
- Hyogo Prefecture Museum of Art, Kobe, Japan
- Guggenheim Museum, Dubai

### Selected group exhibitions

- 2020 *Female Minimal: Abstraction in the Expanded Field*, Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London  
*Dimensions of Reality: Female Minimal*, Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris, France
- 2019 *The Women Geometers*, Artchery Art Center, Miami, USA  
*Negative Space*, ZKM, Center for Art and Media, Germany
- 2018 *Matriz do Tempo Real*, MAC USP, São Paulo, Brazil  
*Land of Lads, Land of Lashes* - Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London  
*Light, Line, Color, and Space* - UB Art Galleries, Buffalo, USA  
*#iff2018* - Instituto Figueiredo Ferraz, Ribeirão Preto, Brazil
- 2017 *Für Barbara*, The Hall Foundation, Derneburg, Germany  
*Minimalist Anyway*, White Rainbow Gallery, Londres, England  
*Pedra no Céu*, Museu Brasileiro de Escultura, São Paulo, Brazil
- 2016 *Inaugural Exhibition*, Broadway 1602, New York, USA
- 2015 *Metáforas Construídas*, Galeria LaCometa, Bogotá, Colombia  
*SIDESHOW NATION III*, Sideshow Gallery, New York, USA
- 2014 *Points of View*, with Equipéz, Selar da Marquesa, São Paulo, Brazil  
*Contra o estado das coisas*, Galeria Jaqueline Martins, São Paulo, Brazil  
*ULTRAPASSADO II*, Broadway 1602, New York, USA  
*Sideshow Nation II*, Alamo, Sideshow Gallery, New York, USA
- 2010 *Salvador Allende Collection*, Museu de solidariedad, Santiago, Chile
- 2009 *Objeto Imaginado*, Centro Cultural São Paulo, Brazil  
*Brazil-Japão*, Palacete das Artes Rodin Bahia Salvador, Brazil
- 2008 *Contemporary Art Yokohama*, Iwasaki Museum, Yokohama, Japan  
*100 Anos de Arte Nikkey do Brasil*, CCB, Brasília, Brazil  
*Laços do Olhar*, Instituto Tomie Ohtake, São Paulo, Brazil  
*Nipo-brasileiros no acervo*, Museu da Pinacoteca do Estado, São Paulo, Brazil  
*Arte Brasil-Japão*, Moderno e Atual MAC/USP, São Paulo, Brazil
- 2005 *Other Dimensions of Abstract Art*, Gallery Onetwentyeight, New York, USA
- 2004 *Generations.04*, A.I.R. Gallery, New York, USA
- 2003 *Arte contemporânea nipo-brasileira*, Museu da Casa Brasileira, São Paulo, Brazil
- 2001 *Arte nipo-brasileira, momentos*, Galeria Euro-Art Castelli, São Paulo, Brazil  
*Festish-istic*, Gallery Onetwentyeight, New York, USA
- 1999 *Perspectives, Paintings and Installations from Brazil*, Onetwentyeight Gallery, New York, USA
- 1997 *Onetwentyeight Gallery*, New York, NY  
*Japanese/Brazilian Women's Exhibition*, Museu de Arte Nipo-Brasileiro, São Paulo, Brazil
- 1996 *Interiores*, MAM, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

- 1995 *Contemporary Japanese/Brazilian Artists*, MAC/USP São Paulo, Brazil  
*Five Contemporary Artists*, Toki Art Gallery, São Paulo, Brazil  
*Mares Navegadas*, Mosteiro dos Jerónimos, Lisbon, Portugal  
*Women's Global Vision*, Aba Gallery, New York, USA  
*XIV International Drawing Exhibition*, Miró Foundation, Barcelona, Spain
- 1994 *O desenho moderno no Brasil*, MAM, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 1993 *Portugal-Japão 450 anos de Amizade*, FAAP, São Paulo, Brazil
- 1991 *The Awakening/El Despertar*, The Discover Museum, Bridgeport, USA
- 1990 *Latin American Biennial, Latin Art CA '90*, Lavelin Gallery, Montreal, Canada
- 1989 *Invitational*: MAC Campinas, São Paulo, Brazil
- 1987 *Conexus*, Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art, New York, USA  
*Art of the Americas*, International Monetary Fund, Washington, USA
- 1986 *Artists for Artists*, Forefront Gallery, Long Island City, USA
- 1985 *Exuberant Abstraction*, Modern Art Consultants New York, USA  
*Today's Art of Brazil*, The Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, Japan
- 1984 *10 Artists of Latin America*, International House, New York, USA
- 1983 *17th International Biennial of São Paulo*, Brazil  
*Center for Inter-American Relations*, New York, USA  
*Condeso/Lawler Gallery*, New York, USA  
*Hispanic Achievement in the Arts*, Equitable Gallery, Philadelphia, USA  
*The Japan Dynasty '83*, The Sande Webster Gallery, Philadelphia, USA
- 1982 *Center for Inter-American Relations*, New York, USA  
*Central Hall Artists Gallery*, New York, USA
- 1981 *Contemporary Art of Latin America*, The National Museum of Osaka, Japan  
*Form, Inform and Recreate*, The International Biennial of Medellín, Colombia  
*The Shaped Fields: Eccentric Formats*, MoMA PS1, Long Islands City, USA  
*4a Bienal de Arte*, Medellín, Colombia
- 1980 *Installation/Two Artists*, Pratt Institute Gallery, Brooklyn, New York, USA  
*Dialectics of Isolation: An Exhibition of Third World Women Artists of the United States*, New York, USA
- 1979 *Nobe Gallery*, New York, USA  
*15th International Biennial of São Paulo*, Brazil  
*Three Artists: Equipéz Cranbook Academy of Art*, Bloomfield Hills, USA  
*Recent Acquisitions*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA  
*Contemporary Art Festival*, Dasegu, South Korea
- 1978 *Creative Artists*, Public Service Grantee Exhibition, New York, USA  
*Four Artists Installation*, Barbara Schwartz Residence, New York, USA  
*Museum of Modern Art*, Rijeka, Yugoslavia  
*Imigração 70*, SESC Campestre, São Paulo, Brazil

### São Paulo

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Monday to Fridays, 10am > 7pm  
Saturdays, 12pm > 5pm

### Brussels

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1000 — Brussels, Belgium  
+ 32 2 387 16 49  
Tuesday to Fridays, 11am > 7pm  
Saturdays, 2pm > 7pm

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### Represented artists

- Adriano Amarel BR
- Ana Mazzei BR
- André Parente BR
- Bill Lundberg USA
- Charbel-Joseph H. Boutros LB/FR
- Daniel de Paula BR
- Diango Hernández CB
- Dudu Santos BR
- Hudnison Jr BR
- Ícaro Lira BR
- Leticia Parente BR
- Luiz Alphonus BR
- Lydia Okumura BR
- Maria Noujaim BR
- Martha Araújo BR
- Rafael França BR
- Regina Vater BR
- Ricardo Basbaum BR
- Riccardo Baruzzi IT
- Robert Barry USA
- Stuart Brisley EN
- Victor Gerhard BR