

Sonia Gomes: É preciso não ter medo de criar

October 14 – November 15, 2025

5 Hanover Square
London

Opening Reception: Monday, October 13, 6–8 p.m.



Sonia Gomes, *Cru*, 2025 © Sonia Gomes, courtesy of Pace Gallery and Mendes Wood DM

Pace is pleased to announce *É preciso não ter medo de criar*, the first solo exhibition in the UK by São Paulo-based artist Sonia Gomes, on view at its gallery in London from October 14 to November 15. Curated by Paulo Miyada, the exhibition will feature all-new works, including the artist's signature pendants and torsions, alongside paintings and new sculptural explorations in bronze. This presentation coincides with the publication of Gomes's new catalogue, *Assombrar o mundo com Beleza (I Haunt the World with Beauty)*, which will be available to purchase at the gallery.

One of Brazil's foremost contemporary artists, Gomes combines second-hand textiles with everyday materials such as birdcages, driftwood, and wire to create abstract sculptures that reclaim traditions rooted in Afro-diasporic experiences and craft modes of artmaking from the margins of history. In 2015, she was the only Brazilian artist invited by the late curator Okwui Enwezor to the Arsenale exhibition of the 56th Venice Biennale, and in 2018, she became the first living Black woman artist to receive a monographic exhibition at the Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP). Last year, in 2024, she returned to Venice, showing work as part of the Holy See Pavilion for the 60th Venice Biennale.

Born in 1948 in Caetanópolis, a former textile hub in Minas Gerais, southeastern Brazil, Gomes has cultivated a singular practice anchored by her deft and meticulous manipulation of varied materials. Across these transformations, her approach remains rooted in gestures of care and reinforcement: sewing, tying, and wrapping.

The exhibition's title—translated as “one must not be afraid to create”—is drawn from Clarice Lispector's 1943 novel *Near to the Wild Heart* and has guided Gomes's embrace of new materials and techniques for this show. In addition to her ongoing experimentation with found and gifted fabrics, Gomes has created bronze sculptures for the first time. These forms—casts of textile-wrapped tree burls and branches—extend the artist's visual language, highlighting the tension between vulnerable materials and elevated finishes. This relationship recurs in a new group of wall-mounted works made from reclaimed lumber, transformed by the artist with gold leaf and fragments of a 19th-century liturgical vestment. Rectangular in form, they bring together weathered wood and gilded surface, continuing Gomes's engagement with contrast and transformation.

A major new work included in the show, titled *Tereza* (2025), fuses a group of Gomes's previously unrealized pendant works into one commanding form. Suspended from the ceiling and meandering through the exhibition space, this sculpture holds a vital, organic quality. In Brazilian Portuguese prison slang, *tereza* refers to the makeshift ropes used in escape attempts that are often fashioned from tied-together bedsheets and other fabrics. Gomes's hanging works, such as this one, embody the word's liberatory implications, allowing their textile remnants—carriers of collective and individual memory—to slip free from oblivion.

The artist's *Torção* (torsion) sculptures, two of which feature in the exhibition, emerge from a single line. To create these, Gomes engages her whole body in describing the sculpture's composition with uncoiled construction wire and steel reinforcing bars for the base. Choosing from her extensive trove of fabrics, Gomes forms the sculpture's body by wrapping, twisting, tying, weaving, and stitching scraps of these materials around and through its skeleton. In her studio, she separates handcrafted textiles—such as laces, embroideries, and knits—from industrially made materials, treating the former as compositional tools and the latter as a color palette. In a new wall-based *Torção* included in the exhibition, Gomes has explored an unprecedented level of openness in her composition: for the first time leaving one extreme of the spiral-wire structure hanging freely in the air.

Other highlights include two-dimensional artworks from Gomes's *Raio de Sol* (Sunbeam) series and new paintings. Throughout these, open and expansive forms layer and coalesce. These gestures, created by Gomes in Posca pen, watercolour, acrylic, thread, beads, and oil, recall the spiral forms that are deeply embedded in cyclical conceptions of time.

In three new works—titled *Cru* (Raw), *Um sopro de vida* (A Breath of Life), and *Peleja* (Tussle), all 2025—Gomes has embedded lengths of shibori-dyed, hand-stitched cotton crafted by Bai artisans on China's Tibetan border. She first encountered this material in a London market in 2019 and became captivated by the intricate volumes formed within the raw fabric. Each of the three new works created with these textiles takes its own approach to the delicate, labour-intensive process that would have been undone had the original dyeing been completed. Transformed by Gomes, they collapse past and present into a single poetic return.

Concurrent with her exhibition in London, Gomes's first-ever solo museum show in the United States, *Sonia Gomes: Ó Abre Alas!* is on view at Storm King Art Center through November 10. She is also presenting works in the Glass Pavilion at Louvre-Lens, France, until early next year, and at Instituto Tomie Ohtake in November 2025.

Sonia Gomes (b. 1948, Caetanópolis) 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. 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. 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.

Gomes's work is represented in numerous collections around the world, including the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; the Pérez Art Museum Miami; the Rubell Museum in Miami; the Minneapolis Institute of Art; the San Antonio Museum of Art in Texas; the Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo; the Museu de Arte de São Paulo; the Museu de Arte do Rio, Rio de Janeiro; the Instituto Inhotim in Brumadinho, Minas Gerais, Brazil; both the Guggenheim New York and Abu Dhabi; and Tate in London.

Pace is a leading international art gallery representing some of the most influential artists and estates of the 20th and 21st centuries, founded by Arne Glimcher in 1960. Holding decades-long relationships with Alexander Calder, Jean Dubuffet, Agnes Martin, Louise Nevelson, and Mark Rothko, Pace has a unique history that can be traced to its



early support of artists central to the Abstract Expressionist and Light and Space movements. Now in its seventh decade, the gallery continues to nurture its longstanding relationships with its legacy artists and estates while also making an investment in the careers of contemporary artists, including Torkwase Dyson, Loie Hollowell, Robert Nava, Adam Pendleton, and Marina Perez Simão.

Under the current leadership of CEO Marc Glimcher and President Samanthe Rubell, Pace has established itself as a collaborative force in the art world, partnering with other galleries and nonprofit organizations around the world in recent years. The gallery advances its mission to support its artists and share their visionary work with audiences and collectors around the world through a robust global program anchored by its exhibitions of both 20th century and contemporary art and scholarly projects from its imprint Pace Publishing, which produces books introducing new voices to the art historical canon. This artist-first ethos also extends to public installations, philanthropic events, performances, and other interdisciplinary programming presented by Pace.

Today, Pace has eight locations worldwide, including two galleries in New York—its eight-story headquarters at 540 West 25th Street and an adjacent 8,000-square-foot exhibition space at 510 West 25th Street. The gallery’s history in the New York art world dates to 1963, when it opened its first space in the city on East 57th Street. A champion of Light and Space artists, Pace has also been active in California for some 60 years, opening its West Coast flagship in Los Angeles in 2022. The gallery maintains European footholds in London and Geneva as well as Berlin, where it established an office in 2023. Pace was one of the first international galleries to have a major presence in Asia, where it has been active since 2008, the year it first opened in Beijing’s vibrant 798 Art District. It now operates galleries in Hong Kong and Seoul and opened its first gallery in Japan in Tokyo’s Azabudai Hills development in 2024.

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