



Sonia Gomes  
*The Silence of Color*  
08/06 – 03/08 2019

Mendes Wood DM has the pleasure to announce *The Silence of Color*, Sonia Gomes' first solo exhibition outside of Brazil. Gomes' work binds together cultural movements and traditions that are intrinsically linked to the affirmation of memory, identity and the transformative power of creation in situations of vulnerability and invisibility. Through the use of fabric, thread, found and gifted objects, her multi-dimensional, sometimes biomorphic sculptures and structures stand as insistent placeholders for the absent or unseen body. These gestural inquiries refer to the body itself, as a way to decolonize the past and reclaim the present to reconstitute and celebrate both the self and her black heritage.

In part, Gomes' connection to the world of fabric stems back to her birthplace, Caetanópolis - a city located near the capital of Minas Gerais, which was once an important center for textile manufacturing in Brazil. With her father's family working in a textile factory and the strong presence of her maternal grandmother, a midwife and faith healer who initiated her in binding and braiding, Gomes' upbringing was heavily marked by the craft of needlework. Since childhood, Gomes has collected pieces of cloth; marrying them with different materials from various environments, including clothes and furniture. Playing with the potential spiritual combinations that may arise between these elements, her compositions spring to life through a spontaneous and casual practice of deconstructing and re-assembling objects that together evoke the idea of the visceral and the sacred. Through this intuitive process, Gomes honors the previous history and agency of the objects, creating eclectic compositions that are imbued with the rich history of Brazil, as well as the personal history of the artist, her family and her community.

*The Silence of Color* traces the trajectory of Gomes' recent practice, showcasing colorful works from her latest institutional exhibitions in Brazil, *Still I Rise* at MASP (São Paulo, 2018) and *Casa de Vidro* (São Paulo, 2018), as well as a body of new works, from which this exhibition derives its title. Inspired by her work *Maria dos Anjos* (2017-2018), which Gomes made from pieces of a wedding dress that were sewn together with seams, moorings and various other fabrics, this new series of work marks the first in which white fabric is predominately incorporated. Despite using a wide and varied palette across her practice, the color white posed a challenge for Gomes - namely in that she viewed it as synonymous with silence. After bringing *Maria dos Anjos* to completion, Gomes decided on a hiatus from working with color in order to explore her aversion to using white fabric.

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The result of the artist's first exploration into work devoid of color, an experience she describes as particularly useful, are four new works. Continuing to employ a similar medium and form, Gomes honors the previous existence and historical legacy that is imbued in the fabric, whilst simultaneously exposing new and vibrant forms of existence in their (re)configuration.

Sonia Gomes (Caetanópolis, 1948) lives and works in São Paulo.

In 2018 the artist had her first major monographic institutional exhibitions in Brazil at MASP - Museu de Arte de São Paulo and at the Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Niterói.

In addition, her work has been included in institutional group exhibitions such as the 56<sup>a</sup> Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy (2015); *Entangled*, Turner Contemporary, Margate, United Kingdom (2017); *Revival*, The National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, USA (2017); *Art & Textiles – Fabric as Material and Concept in Modern Art*, Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, Germany (2013); *Out of Fashion. Textile in International Contemporary Art*, Kunsten – Museum of Modern Art Aalborg, Denmark (2013).

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