



On the left, sculpture in the Ibirapuera Theater, in São Paulo. Above, untitled creations from 1952 and 2013

Austerity and intuition in balance

Tomie Ohtake turns 100 this year with a permanently experimental character and in sync with her time

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Artist Tomie Ohtake will be 100 years old in November 2013. “Painting is my daily routine,” Ohtake likes to say; she has spent over six decades investigating the primordial aspects of painting with a near-devotional zeal. Ohtake did not become a painter until she was nearly 40 years old, more than 15 years after leaving Japan to come to Brazil. She married in São Paulo, had children and became a Brazilian citizen. The artist’s first figurative compositions date back to the early 1950s, but she quickly adopted informal abstraction as her voice and went on to doggedly explore the containment and materiality of gesture. Throughout her extensive career, Ohtake explored various ways of addressing a very limited range of issues: her geometric shapes are nearly always curved, marked by the sinuousness of the circle and the spiral; the colors tend to be placed not in contrast, but rather in balance; and gesture is normally contained and elegant, reminiscent of a choreographed dance or a musical movement. ■



Tomie Ohtake: markedly self-taught work