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Wanda Pimentel
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This show features, for the first time, a set of 27 paintings from the *Envolvimento* [Involvement] series, produced at the outset of the career of Wanda Pimentel (Rio de Janeiro, 1943)—a series that remains one of the artist's most emblematic. The focus of this exhibition is Pimentel's most productive period for the *Envolvimentos*, the years 1968 and 1969, although she worked on this series until 1984.

Wanda Pimentel began her studies in art in 1964, in Rio de Janeiro, where she was a student of Ivan Serpa (1923-1973), a painter known for his rigorous geometric abstractions. A good part of artistic production in the 1960s explored new paths for figurative art (in opposition to abstract art) through the pop art of the United States and in England, the *nouveau réalisme* in France, and the new figuration and new objectivity movements in Brazil. Pimentel's work, and particularly the *Envolvimento* series, can be understood in light of the clashing of these two apparently irreconcilable references: on the one hand, the rigor of the lines and abstract, geometric shapes; on the other, the desire to represent the contemporary and everyday world in transformation, as it is experienced and perceived.

The world represented in the paintings of this series involves a female body (even though we only see the body's legs and feet) in concise framings of household environments—the living room, the bedroom, the kitchen, the bathroom, the sewing room. The fragmented representation of the body and of the house is made in a synthetic, schematic, geometrized way, through precise (straight or curved) lines, fields of flat colors (without variations of hue, shadowings or gradations), a meticulous technique of applying the paint (there are no traces of gestures or brushstrokes apparent on the canvas) and a reduced color palette (often with black, white and one, two or three primary colors). The result is multicolored, bright, precise and stiff paintings with fragmented spaces and incongruent perspectives, as well as a strong tension between the bodies, the objects and the involvements among them.

From the sewing machine to the saw, from the articles of clothing and the shoes to the kitchen utensils, from the liquids that run and flow from the bottles and pans to the wisps of smoke or steam that rise from cigarettes and teacups, from the legs to the feet—everything appears to be simultaneously on the verge of chaos and yet submitted to the rigor of an order and discipline, something that the sequence of 27 works presented here (more than the paintings considered individually) reveals and underscores in an elegant way.

These readings take on a special significance if we consider the historical context of the late 1960s outside the history of art: all around the world a boom in mass media and consumer culture, and the women's rights movements; in Brazil, the military dictatorship (1964-80), which was intensified in 1968 with Institutional Act #5 (AI-5), prohibiting political protests of every sort. In this sense, Pimentel's simultaneously strident and asphyxiating *Envolvimentos* can be understood as critical and subtle surgical strikes against the entire system that was then being consolidated.

Curators: Adriano Pedrosa, artistic director, and Camila Bechelany, assistant curator