

# Mendes Wood DM introducing 'Linhas Tortas' | Chapter 1: Who has the power to write?

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**Mendes Wood DM presents *Linhas Tortas*, a multi-venue international group exhibition in São Paulo. Thread 1: *Who has the power to write?***

## ***Linhas Tortas***

curated by Diana Campbell

Opening September 2, 2023  
**Mendes Wood DM** São Paulo  
Rua Barra Funda 216  
São Paulo, Brazil

## **Casa Iramaia**

By appointment only

Mendes Wood DM is proud to announce [\*Linhas Tortas\*](#), a multi-venue international group exhibition in São Paulo that explores the entanglements of journeys and the power of storytelling, celebrating a decade of the gallery's existence. The exhibition takes inspiration from the Brazilian aphorism "deus escreve certo por linhas tortas," which literally translates to "god writes straight with crooked lines" and metaphorically to "god works in mysterious ways."

While many of the 100+ works of art in *Linhas Tortas* formally contain curving lines, *Linhas Tortas* does not take the aphorism which inspires its title at face value. The exhibition asks questions while proposing other ways to read this complex and ubiquitous phrase.

The exhibition contains five interconnected, overlapping, and often knotted curatorial threads that stretch across an intimate domestic space which is a masterpiece of Modern Brazilian architecture and an expansive industrial space that is the headquarters of Mendes Wood DM in São Paulo. These threads are held together by the idea that lines of solidarity bound by commitment, trust and friendship form a powerful, intangible currency that can enable radical change in previously unimaginable directions. Ones that aren't straight, narrow, expedient, or singular.

## **Thread 1**

*Who has the power to write? Who do we imagine this writer to be? What lines might have not made it onto the page, only kept alive through oral traditions and memory, art and culture?*



Image: Pim Blokker, *The one for Brazil*, 2023. Courtesy of the artist and Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo, Brussels, New York.

The idea of a singular genius creator often overshadowed the many minds and hearts that are part of the history behind "the genius." **Adriano Costa**, **Erika Verzutti**, and **Paulo Monteiro** often work with the same foundry when creating their individual artworks, and they invoke its presence in *Linhas Tortas* by creating a collaborative artwork that celebrates the role of the foundry in their ongoing creative journeys. In a moving work *Estrela que brilha*, **Patricia Leite** inscribes Romildo, a beloved colleague of the gallery who passed away during Covid-19, into the constellation of relationships holding the show, and the history of Mendes Wood DM, together. This small painting, on loan from one of the artists of the gallery, hangs in a place of honor above the fireplace at **Casa Iramaia**, a modernist home designed by the Ukrainian-Brazilian architect **Gregori Warchavchik** in Jardim Europa (the architect credited with building the first modernist house in Brazil in 1927-1928).



Image: Patricia Leite, *Estrela que brilha*, 2021. Courtesy of the artist and Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo, Brussels, New York.

Warchavchik's ability to build can also be credited to his lesser known wife, **Mina Klabin**, who was a landscape architect in her own right, but also from a family that could finance Warchavchik's projects. Little is published about Klabin's work, and the artists **Maaïke Schoorel** and **Pim Blokker**, who are also partners in life, bring her relative absence from history into the exhibition by considering the same image that calls to mind her cactus gardens from different perspectives. Her contribution to landscape architecture is overshadowed by the legacy of **Roberto Burle Marx**, whose legacy is critically considered by **Naufus Ramírez-Figueroa**.

Some writing simply omits what it does not consider to be important at the time, such as women. In *Ghost of a Smile*, **Lynda Benglis** nods to the infamous Artforum advertisement that she took out in 1979 with her artistic response to the editors who resigned in protest of how Benglis decided to question the machismo that it took to be a written part of the art world, a parody of the limitations of gendered relationships. In



her iconic skinning series, **Heidi Bucher** casts the traces of patriarchal architecture that was meant to exclude women or reduce their role to that of caretaker. In her ongoing series *Second Spring*, **Annalee Davis** ascribes value to women beyond that of reproduction; could it be that women's most valuable work could be done even after they can't bear children anymore? Why do frames crop the female body, what does art reduce the female body to, and what kind of support structures are needed for women to have their creative work seen and celebrated in the world? The work of **Nicole Chaput**, **Madelynn Gingold**, **Sanam Khatibi**, **Saskia Pintelon**, **Amie Siegel**, and many others draw us into considering these questions.

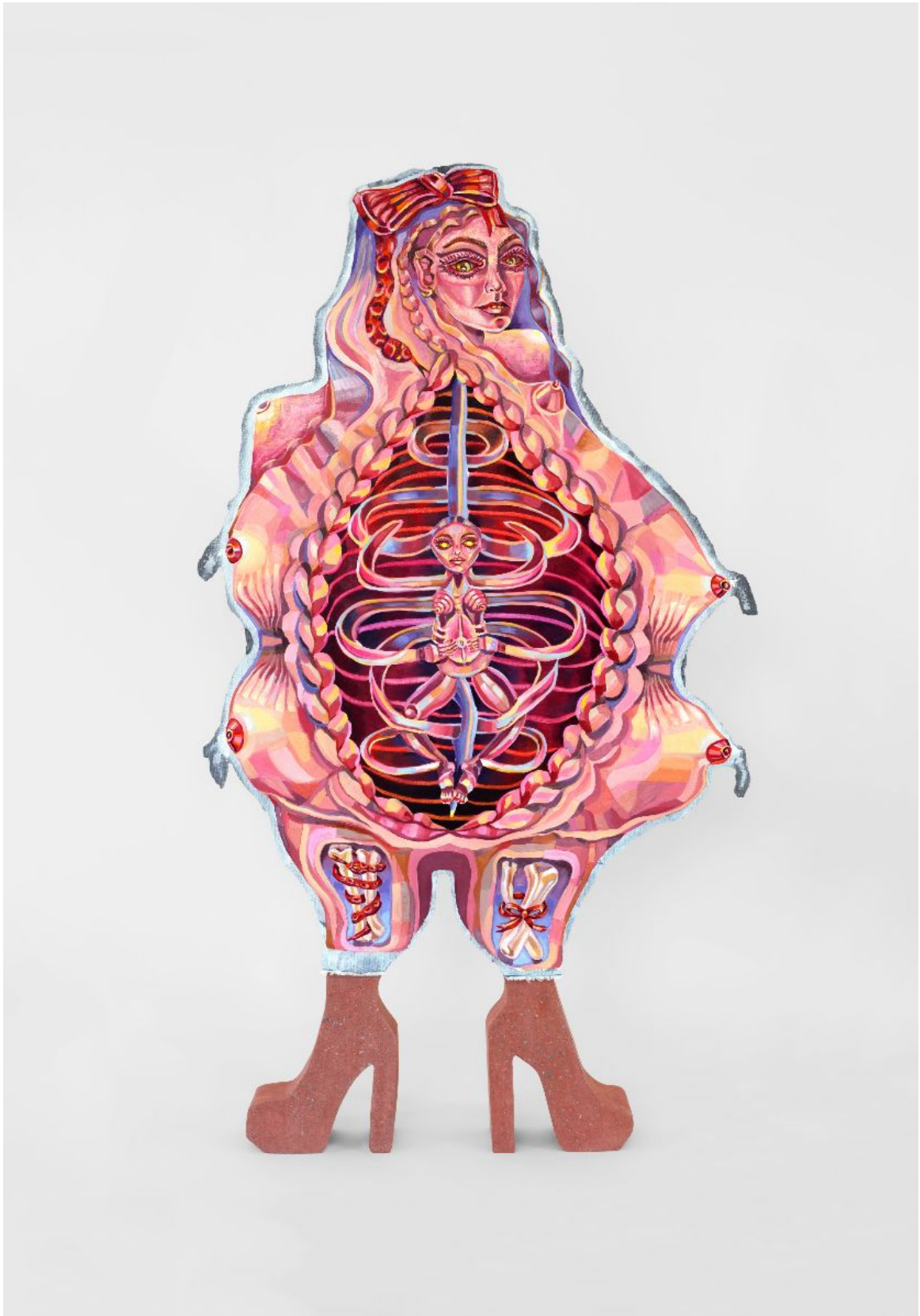


Image: Nicole Chaput, *La maldita belleza se nos pega como placenta*, 2023. Courtesy of the artist and Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo, Brussels, New York.

While some writing just omits, some writing can be actively violent. **Rosana Paulino** deconstructs the production and dissemination of racist theories that served as justification for European colonialism and the slave trade. **Castiel Vitorino Brasileiro** also gives name to colonially bestowed traumas so that a path forward for ancestral knowledge might open up, a theme also explored in the work of **Coco Fusco**, **Pol Taburet**, **Luana Vitra**, **Josi**, **Sula Bermúdez-Silverman**, **Tunga**, and many other artists in the exhibition. Writing, and art, have the power to enable humans to imagine the voices of non-human life and spirits, who make their presence known in the show.



Image: Annalee Davis, *Second Spring*, 2019. Courtesy of the artist and Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo, Brussels, New York.

Stay tuned for the next curatorial threads!

**Thread 2:** *What can the role of writing be in artistic expression? How do we sign what we write into the world?*

**Thread 3:** *Can unexpected journeys change who we are? What is the impact of encountering and engaging with a place outside of mainstream itineraries?*

**Thread 4:** *Can certain life events or twists of fate that seem like limitations open up new directions for creative expression? What do geometries of liberation look like?*

**Thread 5:** *Can we visualize time and space in ways and forms other than linear?*

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