

SMÉK SETÚBAL PORTFOLIO



Smék Setúbal - *Opponents*  
Bronze and steel. Installation, variable dimensions 2022



Smék Setúbal - *Opponents*. Central Galeria, 2022, São Paulo. Exhibition view.  
<https://www.centralgaleria.com/exposicoes/dora-smek-paul-setubal-opositores>




Reflecting the country's status of growing social tensions, the artists show an installation project consisting of bronze sculptures and chains that crisscross the gallery's venue, seeking to broaden the debate on democracy as well as on political, ethical and territorial polarity. Bronze cast from the artists' hand molds, they're combined and placed as parts of the children's game "thumb wrestling", whose goal is to capture your opponent's thumb using your own. However, in Smék and Setúbal's work, the fingers' gesture does not indicate a clear winner: it crystallizes the moment of dispute, broadening a sense of impasse and constant tension. For this exhibition, the artists chose to display the sculptures using a tensioning system, with chains, hooks and stainless steel turnbuckles placed as vectors, taking advantage of Central's concrete columns. Crisscrossing the exhibition space, the chains create transit obstacles and emphasize the opposition correlation of each gesture.

Smék Setúbal - *Opponents*. Central Galeria, 2022, São Paulo. Exhibition view.



Smék Setúbal - *The Battle of Eros I.* stoneware, wood and steel. 178 x 150 x 6 cm. 2023



'The Battle of Eros' is a series of ceramic sculptures based on erotic and archaeological references, in which the resulting images always appear fragmented, with a displaced element. This deliberate disjunction challenges the conventional integrity of the image, presenting itself as a collection of sculptures intentionally marked by a sense of rupture or incompleteness where the sexual scene is never completed. This aspect evokes the complexities and problems inherent in interpersonal relationships and intimacy.

With high-temperature stoneware ceramic components, a material close to the texture of the marble or stone archaeological ruins on which the research is based, this piece highlights the incompleteness inherent to the human condition.



Smék Setúbal

*Derivatives*

2022

bronze

29,5 x 29,5 cm

edition of 12

**Derivatives** part of the symbology of the Ouroboros, the swallowing serpent the tail itself, reminding us of the eternal return, of the beginning, of the cycles of life or the greatness o infinite. At work, the image always appears incomplete with one of the pieces in the wrong position, as if drifting to another direction, promoting a rupture imposed on the eternal return. Although the search for perfection guide us, making mistakes is part of our nature. "Derivatives" seeks to explain the error as a human virtue.





Smék Setúbal - *We know*, 2020  
Bronze, cast iron and steel. Variable dimensions





**We know** operates in the political sphere, when artists perpetuate, through a gesture of suspension, the incessant quest to make public knowledge hidden archives of truculent times like the dictatorship in Brazil, and the recent cases that remain unanswered, even though we know of the existence of these contents.

During the installation, the "dead file", a box commonly used to store important files, appears worn and dented, cast in iron, preventing its complete opening.

When looking through the cracks in the sealed box, what remains is just the rust caused by time, presenting the void as a response to the contents that are never revealed.

The emptiness of the cast iron box is also the weight

that strains the chains and the hands that support it, like the various cases that still remain suspended today.

# PAUL SETÚBAL PORTFOLIO

<https://www.paulsetubal.com/>



Paul Setúbal - *Because the knees bend*, Marina Abramovic Institute Takeover, Southbank Hall, London, 2023

During five days, the artist is in a corridor made of white walls, a public access passage that connects visitors to other performances. With his face and body completely covered by black clothing, the artist constantly manipulates a rubber police baton and maneuvers the object in space. Upon entering the corridor, the public observes the artist exhaustively handling and attacking the white walls, marking them due to the violence of the blows.



Paul Setúbal - *Compensation for Excess* (long durational performance), 2018

The artist sustain a work of art with his own body weight. This work has a considerable historical and commercial value. Weight 250kg Duration 45h. I'm interested to deal with power structures like the art world and market. In 2018 I presented the performance *Compensation for Excess* at SP ARTE an art fair in São Paulo. So, I created a struggle between my body weigth and a very important and expensive modern sculpture (sculpture by Franz Weissmann, 1970). i used some pulleys to reduce the weigth of the sculpture and hold it suspended in the air using my own body weight during all the days of the fair. If the sculpture fell, I destroyed a 1 milion piece of art history, and this created a tension in the Art fair, because some people acused me to tryed to destroy an art piece. It was a visceral and pointed statement about the relationship between the historic and commercial value and weight of an artwork versus the role of a person in the art system.



Paul Setúbal - *Bonze, Leather, Gold, Blood*. Solo show at Casa Triângulo, São Paulo, 2021. Exhibition view.  
<https://www.paulsetubal.com/bronze-couro-ouro-sangue>



Paul Setúbal - *Synopsis*. 2015 - 2020. Artist's blood, red soil and gold leaf on canvas. 150 x 600 cm.

Painting made from fragments of destruction mechanisms manuals, ancient paintings and medical images. The painting works like a large unfinished manual or a set of constellations that intersperse the fragments as an allegory of the construction of authoritarian thinking that surrounds democracies today.



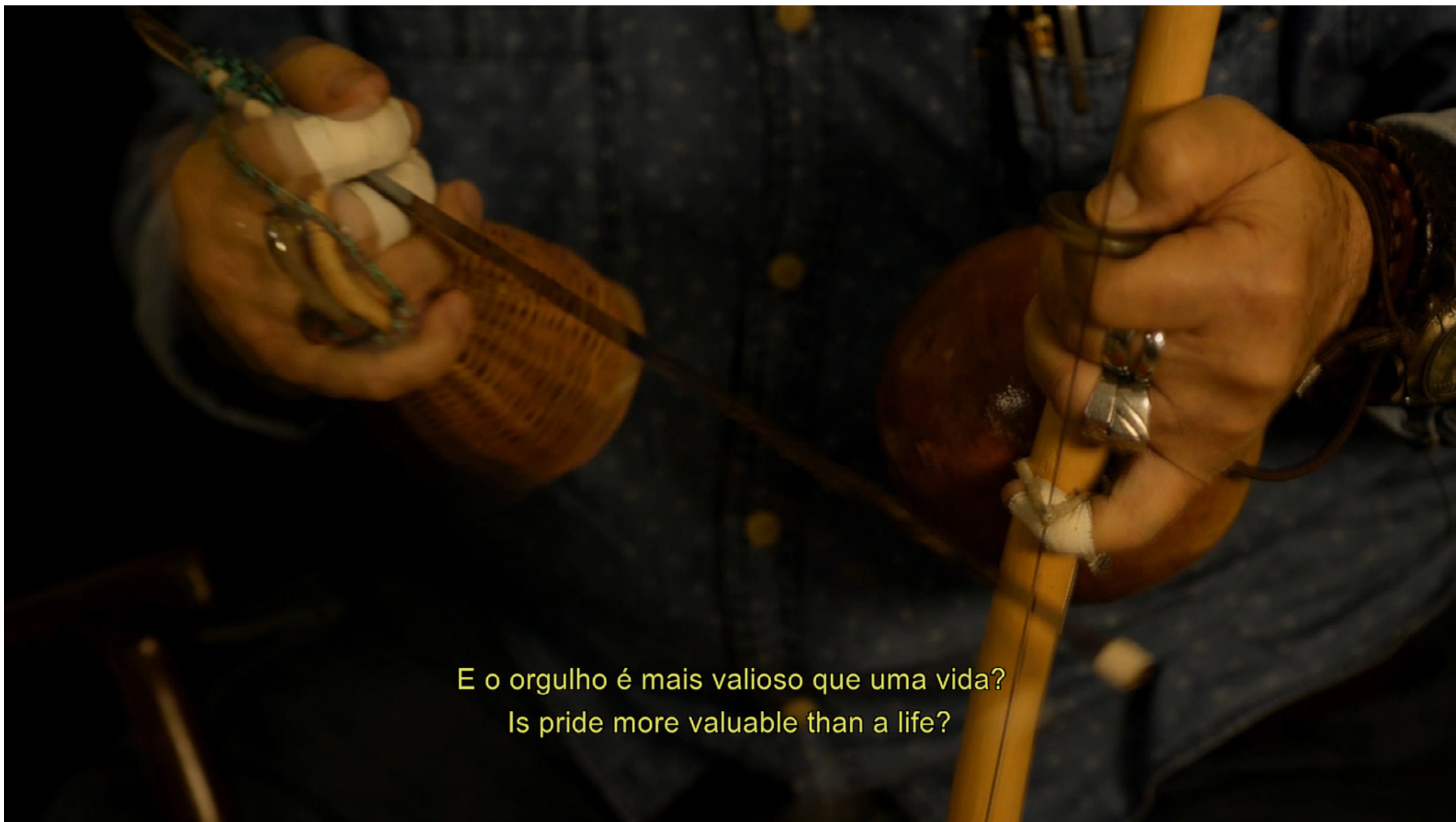
Paul Setúbal

*Sorrows I*

2020

leather, bronze and pyrite  
unique. 193 x 82 x 29 cm

The sculptures are built from molds and models of objects of domination, coercion, tailoring, historical references and colonial images. The title *Regrets* is a reference to the weight and consequence of the experiences we accumulate throughout our lives. The shapes cut out of bovine leather, recreate references to our formation as a country and people, from sewing patterns that bring to mind the countryside culture or the saddlebags and holsters used to carry firearms, as an incessant history of domination that hangs in society. The ox leather vestments, exquisitely cut from tailoring patterns, are added to berets, military caps and a few items appropriate for carnival costumes. The work transits between high culture and popular folklore, militarism and sexual articles, passing through Christian myths, art history and folktales. The sculptures carry a strong human-animal relationship, in the same sense that we replicate in ourselves the domination we exercise over nature.



E o orgulho é mais valioso que uma vida?  
Is pride more valuable than a life?

Paul Setúbal - A Country Tale. 1080p, color, sound. 6'00'' - Edition 5 + AP. 2020.

\*For a better appreciation of the video, you would need good headphones or good sound equipment.

This video presents a true story, about land expropriation and the struggles for territorial control in the interior of Brazil. The footage is accompanied by a soundtrack of a Capoeira master playing the berimbau. Capoeira is a popular Afro-Brazilian martial art which I myself practice and the berimbau is an important and sacred single-stringed musical instrument used in capoeira music. For me, the sound of the berimbau tells a moving tale of resistance, struggle and resilience over history.

<https://www.paulsetubal.com/a-country-tale>



Paul Setúbal - *Closed Body*. Copy of a police tactical shield smashed and engraved by the body.  
Bronze and acrylic. 120 x 60 x 30 cm. Unique. 2019





Paul Setúbal

Proposal for a monument (Death or Glory!)

Patinated bronze, steel, granite and wood

Edition 3 + 2 AP  
157 x 57 x 52 cm  
2018

The work proposes an inverted monument based on Dom Pedro I, the emperor who declared Brazil's independence. The model was taken from the painting "Independência ou Morte" by Pedro Américo, which portrays the supposed heroic gesture of the emperor when he took up the sword and declared independence. The bronze model follows all the details of the painting. The support of the monument is made by the tip of the sword, which is enclosed and balanced on a bronze base. The base for the sculpture is also its transport box, which perfectly stores all the parts of the sculpture.

# DORA SMÉK PORTFOLIO

<https://www.dorasmek.com.br/>



Dora Smék - *Overflow*, 2010-2019. Galeria Vermelho - 13th VERBO Performance Art festival

A wall of women side by side, they inhale and exhale in unison until they overflow in time with each body urinating in their pants.

<https://www.dorasmek.com.br/registro-verbo-2017>



Dora Smék

*Turn movement #4*

2022

Bronze and steel.

98,5 x 14,5 x 18 cm

The Turn series, still in process, is produced from the copy of the artist's arm based on Blanche's posture in the painting *Une Leçon clinique à la Salpêtrière*, 1887 by André Brouillet, which reports a medicine class conducted by Dr. Charcot, father of psychiatry. In the scene of the painting, the patient and object of study Blanche appears passed out with her fist clenched, as if the moment of exhaustion after the hysterical outbreak was captured, which due to the involuntary tension, the extremities of the body remained stiff.



Dora Smék -*The Dance of the Headless Body* (solo show), 2021. Central Galeria, São Paulo. Exhibition view.  
Works in this photo: *Throat* (2019), *Turn* (2021) e *Cannibals* (2021). Cast iron and bronze  
<https://www.centralgaleria.com/exposicoes/a-danca-do-corpo-sem-cabeca>



Dora Smék

*The Dance of the Headless Body*  
(solo show), 2021. Central Galeria,  
São Paulo. Exhibition view.

Works in this photo: Needle (2021),  
Aterra(2021) Turned eye (2021. Cast  
Iron, steel and video.

<https://www.centralgaleria.com/exposicoes/a-danca-do-corpo-sem-cabeca>



Dora Smék - *Turned eye*, 2021  
Vídeo Full HD 1080p. 3'32' (loop)  
<https://www.dorasmek.com.br/olho-virado>

Installation composed of 14 index fingers, cast in bronze and welded on rods that resemble silencers used in firearms to muffle the sound of the shot.

The fingers were copied from 14 different people aged between 7 and 93 years, with the height of each rod being the same as the height of each person's mouth. The arrangement of the rods in the exhibition space must be at least 1 meter apart, allowing the public to pass between each silencer, which must meet the approximate height of the visitor's mouth.

The 14 silencers are exposed within a circular area of approximately 6m in diameter lined with gravel. As the audience moves and walks on the gravel, the sound of the rubbing of the stones makes "shhh", a sound that we make when we place our index finger at the height of our mouth asking for silence. The number of fingers/rods and the size of the work can be adapted to the exhibition space.

Dora Smék - *Silencers*,  
2019-2020 (detail)  
Patinated bronze and gravel  
variable dimensions





Dora Smék

*Barra*

2020  
Cast aluminium  
118 x 160 x 58cm



Dora Smék

*Psychophysical Symmetrics: Allegory #1*

2022

Cast iron

21 x 41 x 12 cm



[Psychophysical Symmetrics is a series of sculptures in progress freely inspired by the Rorschach psychological test boards, in which a series of boards with ink stains are presented to the patient who interprets the abstract images associating them with recognizable shapes from their personal imaginary. Although controversial, the test that seeks to trace a psychological profile of the patient is part of the general culture, commonly associated with crisis situations. The series in process is based on the 10 most used boards in the test, Alegoria #1 was based on Rorschach's board 1 (pictured right).

The sculpture with three-dimensional volume can be supported on different surfaces as well as hung on the wall.

## Smék Setúbal

Smék Setúbal is a duo composed by Brazilian artists Paul Setúbal (1987) and Dora Smék (1987) who currently living and work between Brazil and Spain. Since 2017, the collective has created a series of installations, sculptures, performances, videos and photographs that take as their starting point the tensions inherent in human relationships. The emergence of the duo as an autonomous artist/collective begins with the tangency and friction between the individual productions of the two artists and establishes itself as a third artist with specific questions.

In Smék Setúbal's production the focus is on the shock between the two bodies of the two artists with their context, their differences, identity specificities, and extended to the social, public and political spheres. Smék Setúbal uses different techniques to build their works, such as projects based on classical and traditional crafts, site-specific installation projects and experimental proposals in the fields of performance, music and audiovisual in addition to expanding their research involving new media and technologies.

### Solo shows

2022 - Opposites, Central Galeria [São Paulo, Brazil]

2018 - Before the fall, Andrea Rehder Arte Contemporânea [São Paulo, Brazil]

### Group show

2023 - Derivantes, SP ARTE (Carbono Galeria) [São Paulo, Brazil]

2023 - La batalla de Eros, Estampa feria de Arte, (Reiners Contemporary Art) [Madrid, Spain]

2020 - No presente a vida (é) política (Presently, life (is) political), Central Galeria [São Paulo, Brazil]

2018 - Coletiva, Auroras [São Paulo, Brazil]

2018 - A luta ou o impossível, SP ARTE (Andrea Rehder Arte Contemporânea [São Paulo, Brazil]

2017 - Negativo - Instalação, performance. Sesc Belenzinho [São Paulo, Brazil]

### Residencies

2023 - Reiners Contemporary Art - Marbella, Málaga - Spain

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### About the artists:

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**Paul Setúbal**, born in Aparecida de Goiânia, Brazil (1987). Lives and works between São Paulo, Brazil and Málaga, Spain. PhD and Master in Art and Visual Culture and Licensed in Art at Federal University of Goiás. His research is based on art, images and culture.

**Solo exhibitions:** [2022] Throne without a king, C Galeria, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; The great fight, Galeria do Lago, Museu da República, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; [2021] Bronze, Leather, Gold, blood, Casa Triângulo, São Paulo, Brazil; [2018] Closed Body, C Galeria, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; [2016] Damage and Excess, Galeria Andrea Rehder, São Paulo, Brazil; [2015] Fire Warning, Elefante Centro Cultural, Brasília, Brazil.

**Selected group exhibitions:**[2023] Marina Abramović Institute Takeover - Queen Elizabeth Hall, Southbank Centre, London, England; [2022] Passado Presente: 200 anos depois - Centro Cultural PGE, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; [2021] Deriva Continental - C Galeria - Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; [2020] Cuerpos atravesados - Reiners Contemporary Art - Marbella, Spain; [2019] 29ª Edição do Programa de Exposições do Centro Cultural São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil; 36º Panorama de Arte Brasileira, Museu de Arte Moderna, São Paulo, Brazil; [2018] Arte Democracia Utopia: Quem não luta tá morto!, Museu de Arte do Rio, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Demonstração por Absurdo, Instituto Tomie Othake, São Paulo, Brazil; [2017] As Bandeiras da Revolução, Fundação Joaquim Nabuco, Recife, Brazil; 13º Verbo, Galeria Vermelho, São Paulo, Brazil; Osso, Instituto Tomie Ohtake, São Paulo, Brazil; [2016] Dark Mofo, Museum of Old and New Art, Tasmania, Australia; Behind the sun, HOME, Manchester, UK; A Cor do Brasil, Museu de Arte do Rio, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; [2015] Terra Comunal: Marina Abramovic + MAI, Sesc Pompéia, São Paulo, Brazil.

**Prizes/Residencies:** [2019] 7º Prêmio de Residência SP-Arte, Delfina Foundation, London, UK; [2018] Prêmio Foco Bradesco ArtRio, Residência Despina, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Pivô Arte Pesquisa; [2017] 45º Salão de Arte Contemporânea Luiz Sacilotto, Prêmio Aquisição.

**Public collections:** Museu de Arte do Rio, Museu de Arte de Brasília, Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Goiás e Casa do Olhar Luiz Sacilotto. He is a member of the performance collective Grupo Empreza.

<https://www.paulsetubal.com/cv>

**Dora Smék**, born in Campinas, Brazil (1987), Lives and works between São Paulo, Brazil and Málaga, Spain. Master in Visual Arts at the State University of Campinas, Brazil and Graduated in Body Arts at Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo, Brazil.

Body, movement, contraction, retention and flow are elements present in Smék's work based on different types of media, such as sculptures, installations, photographs, videos and performances. Her research is often related to processes of adaptation and suitability of the body in situations of tension, especially concerning the female body.

**Solo exhibitions:** [2021] The dance of the headless body, Central Galeria, São Paulo, Brazil

**Selected group exhibitions:** [2023] La Iberoamericana - Alcalá de Henares, Spain; Refundação - Ocupação 9 de Julho, São Paulo, Brazil; Corpo de delito - CCJF, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; [2022] 13th Mercosul Biennial- Trauma, Dreams and Escape Porto Alegre, Brazil; The Raw and the cooked, Galeria Athena, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Passagens, Praça IV Centenário, São Paulo, Brazil; [2021] Janelas para dentro, Casa Millan, São Paulo, Brazil; [2020] Arte em Campo, Pacaembu Stadium, Brazil; Presently, life (is) political, Central Galeria, Brazil (2020); Polissemia Política (Political Polysemy), Arte Londrina 8, Brasil (2020); Plei, Massapê Projetos, Brazil; [2019] 47º Salão de Arte Contemporânea Luiz Sacilotto, Brazil; Mulheres na Arte Brasileira: Entre dois Vértices, Centro Cultural São Paulo, Brazil; 12o de Arte de São Bernardo do Campo, Brazil; [2019] Brasília Extemporânea, Casa Niemeyer, Brazil; [2017] Transbordação, Galeria Vermelho (Verbo - Performance Art Festival), Brazil.

**Prizes/Residencies:** [2019] Acquisition Award 47th Contemporary Art Salon Luiz Sacilotto São Paulo, Brazil; Ateliê 397 São Paulo, Brazil; [2018] Pivô Arte Pesquisa, São Paulo, Brazil.

**Public collections:** Museu Nacional de Belas Artes, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Museu de Arte do Rio (MAR), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Casa do olhar Luiz Sacilotto, São Paulo, Brazil; Casa da Cultura da América Latina, Brasília, Brazil

<https://www.dorasmek.com.br/about>