

MAM São Paulo marks the reopening of its Ibirapuera Park headquarters with a new work by Carmela Gross

Created especially for the occasion, Brasil à mão livre (Brazil, Freehand) grew out of a map of Brazil that Gross drew from memory. The drawing has been transformed into a neon installation for the museum's restaurant, and is also available as a multiple



The **Museum of Modern Art of São Paulo** is celebrating the reopening of its Ibirapuera Park home with a special edition from the **MAM Collectors' Club** by **Carmela Gross. *Brasil à mão livre (Brazil, Freehand)*** is based on a political map of Brazil that Gross drew from memory and by hand. The work draws on Gross's longstanding interest in maps, which has been a part of her practice since the 1980s. The work is presented in two forms: as a neon installation in the MAM restaurant and as a multiple produced in an edition of 70.

In *Brazil, Freehand*, Gross reimagines the map of Brazil from memory, allowing its geography to shift and blur. States are stretched, compressed, or left out altogether, creating a version of the country that departs from the familiar conventions of cartography. For MAM chief curator **Cauê Alves**, this departure from geographic accuracy underscores the way memory is itself constructed: "Rather than reproducing Brazil's territory with cartographic precision, Carmela Gross creates a map shaped by memory, gesture, and imagination. The work is grounded in the idea that memory is always a construction, inviting us to consider how a territory is

Image credit:
Carmela Gross, *Brasil à mão livre*
(*Brazil, Freehand* [multiple], 2026)
Photo: Estúdio em Obra.

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represented, perceived, and remembered.”

In the multiple, the map is gilded, taking on another layer of meaning. The gold evokes the natural resources found in the territory, and the tragedy of reducing land to what can be extracted from it. Gross uses the work to reflect on the contradiction at the heart of this way of thinking: treating the world not as a living organism, but as a vast repository of commodities to be depleted without consequence.

The neon installation occupies the exposed-concrete wall of the museum’s restaurant and is visible from outside the Marquise. The map appears again in pink neon, its distorted, freehand contours laid over a grid. The two forms – one precise and standardized, the other irregular and intuitive – bring the conventional map of a territory into contrast with Gross’s own rendering of it. The cables and transformers remain visible, underscoring the work’s industrial character while connecting it to the urban environment around it.



Image credit: Carmela Gross, *Brasil à mão livre* (Brazil, Freehand [Neon installation in the MAM restaurant], 2026). Photo: Estúdio em Obra.
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The work grows out of Carmela Gross’s decades-long exploration of maps. Throughout her career, she has used cartography not simply to represent and organize space, but to investigate territory, memory, occupation, and the power structures embedded in the landscapes and cities we inhabit.

About Carmela Gross

Carmela Gross (São Paulo, Brazil, 1946) studied Fine Arts at FAAP, graduating in 1969, and later received her master’s degree (1981) and PhD (1987) from the School of Communications and Arts at the University of São Paulo (ECA-USP), where she worked under the supervision of curator Walter Zanini. One of the leading figures in contemporary Brazilian art, Gross has worked across drawing, printmaking, sculpture, and installation throughout her career. Her early work focused on the materials and techniques of making art, exploring reproduction, language, and the construction of images. Since the 1990s, she has increasingly worked in the urban realm, creating large-scale interventions and installations that use neon, banners, billboards, and other materials to examine architecture, the history of

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cities, their social and political dimensions, and the flows and structures that shape urban life. Gross also taught at ECA-USP for more than 40 years (1972–2015), where she is now professor emerita. Her teaching has influenced generations of artists and researchers. Her work is held in the collections of MAM São Paulo, Pinacoteca de São Paulo, and The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York.

MAM Collectors' Club — Special Reopening Edition

Artist: Carmela Gross

Work: Brasil à mão livre (Brazil, Freehand, 2026)

Medium: Gold-plated brass

Dimensions: 15.5 × 14 × 0.4 cm

Edition: 70 + artist's proofs

Price: R\$12,000 (twelve thousand reais)

For purchases or more information, email clubes@mam.org.br or reach us on WhatsApp at +55 11 94368-3988.

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