

Eleanor
Harwood
Gallery

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Eleanor Harwood Gallery presents:

Kira Dominguez Hultgren:
Intrusions

Exhibit Dates:

Opening reception: Saturday, January 11th, 6-8pm
January 11th - February 29th, 2020



Arose, 2019

Virgin and less pure wool in homespun marigold and primitive rust;
mixed yarn blends from the U.S., U.K., and Canada; Indian cotton; Chinese silk;
climbing gym rope from Berkeley Ironworks; found wooden frame
bars and stakes; cam straps and d-rings.

132 in H x 132 in W x 26 in D

January 11th, 2020 (San Francisco, CA) — Eleanor Harwood Gallery is pleased to present *Intrusions*, our second solo exhibition with Kira Dominguez Hultgren.

Kira Dominguez Hultgren weaves together histories of tangled intrusions nourished on the global confusion of the word *Indian*. Beginning with two Navajo weavings (artists unknown) from around 1876 and two Punjabi head-coverings embroidered by her great-aunt Dalip Kaur around 1923, Dominguez Hultgren mines with material hyperbole (hyperbolic tension on gallery-sized looms) the historical narratives that surround these two “Indian” archives. *Indian*, in this context, becomes synonymous with exoticism, with Edward Said’s *orientalism*, a theory which understands *Indian* to be a binary opposition to American or British, a term by which the Euro-American colonizer understands their own self and nationhood as, “that which the Indian is not.”

What does it mean to form an identity or nation in the negative, in distinction to what one is not? This is the question which motivates Dominguez Hultgren to weave through photographic documentation of two Navajo weavings from around 1876 in her work, “In the Negative.” These weavings were used as symbols of U.S. patriotism in exhibition catalogues, and centennial and bicentennial celebrations across the U.S., since the visual imagery in the weavings are a U.S. flag and the number 100. Yet, through her research at the Palace of the Governors Photo Archive (Santa Fe, New Mexico), Dominguez Hultgren follows what she believes to be intruding counter-narratives structurally embedded into these Navajo weavings. While the U.S. may have been forming a national identity through “Indian” weaving, Dominguez Hultgren sees an artist intentionally weaving nearly invisible zigzag lines that not only cut perpendicular to the horizontal red-and-white stripes of the flag, but leave the flag structurally vulnerable, quite literally in tatters, even if visibly whole. Rather than submitting to a binary distinction of Indian versus American, colonizer versus colonized, Dominguez Hultgren sees this artist as transmuting binary red and white stripes, vertical warp and horizontal weft lines into a slantwise deconstruction of the flag. The viewer must turn their gaze to read this flag, to read this historical narrative, at varying 45 degree angles, an angle which in fabric terminology is known as “the bias.” Perhaps rather than a symbol of nation, this Navajo weaver gives us in our own flag, a study of biases, a study of prejudice, in which one people group is defined at the expense of another.

In this show, Dominguez Hultgren also transmutes vertical and horizontal lines slantwise, turning crosses into Xs, following and cutting into the personal and historical biases by which not only these Navajo textiles are understood, but also two Punjabi head-coverings embroidered by her great-aunt and passed down to her from her grandmother. These embroidered head-coverings or shawls are called *phulkaris*, meaning flower-work, since the entire cloth is often covered in geometric-shaped flower embroidery. This art form comes from pre-partition Punjab, a region which stretches across the border of what is today Pakistan and India. Like this region, phulkari embroidery is also partitioned, broken up into many parts that look like a uniform whole. Motifs that at first glance appear to be one single floral design morph into and out of one another, changing, dropping off, disappearing mid-stitch. Although Gandhi used the handspun cloth upon which this embroidery was done as a symbol of Indian self-

sufficiency and revolution against the British empire (this cloth was known as *khadi* cloth) – phulkari embroidery intrudes into Gandhi’s narrative for India, burying it in colorful orange and pink silk, imported from China. Within this historical setting, phulkari embroidery begs the question: Where is the Indian in this work? Is India buried in the cloth, or once exported to America, does phulkari no longer speak to Punjabi partitions and an artist’s personal design decisions, but instead become a symbol for India as a whole nation, an entire culture, a sub-continent? Through her works “Arose” and “X on the Horizon,” Dominguez Hultgren, herself a Punjabi export to America, considers what it means to be Indian and to live in diaspora, (dis)placed like the stitches of her great-aunt’s phulkari in straight and biased lines.

For Dominguez Hultgren, textiles are an archive of material metaphor and physical protest from which she can reenact and destabilize historical narratives. Through both these two Navajo weavings and two Punjabi phulkaris, Dominguez Hultgren questions how woven intrusions are both a lens by which to see the intersections of nation, culture, history, and technology as they intrude into and form the brown body, the *Indian*, as well as manifestos, instructions by which she can flip those same intersections back on themselves. In her work, “Made in Mexico; XicanX and the Second(Hand)-Generation,” Dominguez Hultgren conflates the *Indian* within her own identity, finding that to be both colonized and colonizer on two different continents (Asia and North America), a daughter of an immigrant and migrant, leaves her decidedly biased, moving at cross-purposes to both. Or as Indigenous scholars Malea Powell and Gerald Vizenor describe, to be *Indian* is to leave the representation in ruins.

About the Artist

Kira Dominguez Hultgren is a California-based textile artist. She studied French postcolonial theory and literature at Princeton University, and performance and fine arts in Río Negro, Argentina. While in Patagonia, she apprenticed with master weaver Mary Coronado, where Dominguez Hultgren studied the process and history of indigenous warp-faced weaving of Mallín Ahogado on a Mapuche vertical post loom. In 2019, Dominguez Hultgren earned a dual-degree MFA/MA in Fine Arts and Visual and Critical Studies from California College of the Arts. Her research interests include material and embodied rhetorics, loom technologies, decolonizing material culture, and analyzing textiles as a performative critique against the visual. Dominguez Hultgren is represented by Eleanor Harwood Gallery in San Francisco, where she had her first solo show in 2018. She is currently a Graduate Fellow at the Headlands Center for the Arts.

About Eleanor Harwood Gallery

The Eleanor Harwood Gallery opened September 2006. The programming of the gallery focuses on emerging to mid-career artists exhibiting nationally and internationally. The roster includes artists that are represented in major American and European collections. The gallery actively promotes and encourages career growth for represented artists.

Location

1275 Minnesota Street, Suite 206
San Francisco, CA 94107

Hours

Tuesdays 1:00 - 5:00 PM, Wednesday - Saturday, 11:00 AM - 5:00 PM
And by appointment

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