

Eleanor Harwood Gallery presents:
Our Daily Parenthetical
Kira Dominguez Hultgren

Opening Reception
January 11th, 2025, 5-7 pm

Exhibit Dates
January 11th - February 22nd, 2025



Kira Dominguez Hultgren *With Snakes In Their Wings, Mixed Media, Textiles*

Eleanor Harwood Gallery is pleased to present Kira Dominguez Hultgren's fourth solo show with the gallery. A textile artist, Dominguez Hultgren uses her practice to explore the ways her family has negotiated race in the U.S. This interest started at 19-years-old when she received her first research grant to do a family-history project. Dominguez Hultgren spent the summer of 1999 interviewing her grandmother and separately her great-auntie Ina while looking through photo albums with them, learning that the same childhood backdrop is never the same childhood experience. Because while her grandmother grew up Indian and Hawaiian, her auntie Ina grew

up Black. It is between the stories of these two women that Dominguez Hultgren was raised with the parentheticals of race in America (“you never can outrun your place”).

This show was built from these parentheticals. Imagery and inspiration are drawn from two separate archives. First, photo slides from another auntie’s art gallery at the Air India offices in Los Angeles in 1961. These photo slides show textiles, sculptures, prints, murals, paintings, and other objects that her auntie Joyce collected and sold. At that time, Air India held one of the largest Indian art collections in the world. Today, many of these textiles and sculptures from auntie Joyce’s collection still live in Dominguez Hultgren’s family.

The second archive is a study of the imagery of the Virgin de Guadalupe in Chicana art from the 1960s to present. While Dominguez Hultgren draws on many sources for this assembled archive, she is particularly indebted to Alicia Gaspar de Alba and Alma López’s “Irreverent Apparition” (2011); Maria Esther Fernández and Laura E. Pérez’s curation of the retrospective exhibition, Amalia Mesa-Bains: Archaeology of Memory (which Dominguez Hultgren had the opportunity to see at El Museo del Barrio in 2024); and ongoing conversations with Consuelo Jimenez-Underwood about the slippage between images of the Aztec goddess Coatlicue and the Virgin de Guadalupe often visualized in Jimenez- Underwood’s work.

Weaving allows Dominguez Hultgren to step into seemingly disparate archives and mix-up the parenthetical backdrops (California, the 1960s, four-petal and egg-shaped imagery, the ways race and culture were negotiated). Writ-large in this looking, in her making, is the use of the loom, particularly the site of the “heddle” (like an eye of a needle or a closed parentheses) through which each yarn must pass through (at least on a European floor loom). Interestingly, indigenous, portable looms have a very different kind of heddle structure: an open loop, made from a continuous string of yarn. The indigenous heddle structure can be moved around onto different threads while weaving, so there is a lot of flexibility in the final fabric. But the tradeoff is that the weaving progresses slowly. In Europe, this open loop string heddle was turned into steel (more durable and efficient for weaving) and suddenly the fabric was fixed from the outset. Threads were easy to divide and control. And so, for the artist, the heddle pulls the conversation back to race. How do we go about restructuring a fabric? To finding compassionate synergies in parentheticals? It is not without a sense of irony for Dominguez Hultgren that most of the work in this show was made using immovable heddles (1,200 lbs of steel to be precise).

Artist Bio

Kira Dominguez Hultgren (b. 1980, she/they) is a U.S.-based artist, weaver, and educator. She studied postcolonial theory and literature at Princeton University, and studio arts and visual and critical studies at California College of the Arts. Their research interests include material and embodied rhetorics, re-storying material culture, and weaving as a performative critique of the visual. Dominguez Hultgren weaves with the material afterlife of a so-called multiracial family:

Chicanx-Indigenous-Indian-Hollywood Hawaiian-Brown-Black. Instead of being passed down, weaving and textile processes are brought up, resurrected from family stories and fabrics. Dominguez Hultgren builds looms to weave into the frayed edges of lost language, culture, traditions, and lives that were deliberately cut-off in past generations. Her looms – whether digital jacquard, backstrap, floor, post – materialize this present absence often as largescale checkboxes and X-marks. Questions about cultural appropriation and codeswitching, exoticism, and performing cultural misrecognitions occupy their practice.

Dominguez Hultgren has exhibited her work broadly including shows at the de Young Museum, Lehmann Maupin Gallery, the San Jose Museum of Quilt and Textile, and Eleanor Harwood Gallery. Their work has received critical attention including reviews in the New York Times and Architectural Digest. Dominguez Hultgren is an assistant professor at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Her work is included in the de Young Museum's permanent collection, and in noted Corporate collections such as Google, Facebook, JP Morgan Chase.

About Eleanor Harwood Gallery

Eleanor Harwood Gallery opened September 2006 in the Mission District and is now located in San Francisco's premier gallery complex, the Minnesota Street Project. The gallery specializes in work with complex craft and concept, exhibiting painting, drawing, sculpture, textiles and photography by emerging to mid-career artists. The roster includes artists that are represented in major American, European and Asian collections. The gallery actively promotes and encourages career growth for represented artists.

Location

1275 Minnesota Street, Suite 105, San Francisco, CA 94107

Hours

Tuesday-Saturday 11am-5:00pm and by appointment

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