



Centre for  
Contemporary  
Asian Art

# Holding Patterns

Part Two: Crossing Threads®

Connection and collaboration are fundamental to the creative process of sisters Lauren and Kass Hernandez. Their work as Crossing Threads® is a partnership of physical labour, technical expertise and emotional release with concepts of cultural heritage, personal identity and the importance of social and familial interconnectedness resonating within the fibres of their weaves. The pieces are anchored by a signature “interknot” technique – complex, hand-knotted chains of varying texture and thickness compositionally applied to generate an ingrained tension and release within their weaves.

But what happens to a creative partnership when communication and connection are severed? After the staging of their exhibition *DUALITY* in February 2020 the Hernandez sisters found that they needed to reconsider their professional and personal relationship. In the five years since establishing an artistic and commercial practice their kinship was compromised under the pressure of a physical and creative workload. Their friendship was erased, to the detriment of their individual identities and respective artistic capacities. The joy of creating together and sharing emotional energies had soured into self-doubt and influencing each other’s thoughts and output. Ties needed to be cut and new bonds repaired to regain their healthy, sisterly relationship.

One day after *DUALITY* concluded Australia recorded its first death from COVID-19 ushering in social distancing and isolation throughout the nation. Kass and Lauren Hernandez were forced apart halting their collaborative practice and production routines, exposing the division between them. The influence they held over each other was stripped when each artist naturally gravitated to their own SAORI looms. SAORI weaving is a method emphasising personal agency and intuition in the weaving process allowing for a melding of human and machine action to allow the artist to enter a meditative and liberating flow state of creation.

This reconnection with the ritual of reflection through the SAORI saw the artists engage individually with colour combinations, hues, textures and techniques in new and expanded ways from their previous work. Furthermore their isolated practice provided an invaluable opportunity to mentally and emotionally heal after identifying the traumas of their Crossing Threads® partnership. *CONSOLATION* by Kass Hernandez and *INWARD STATE* and *SEEK* by Lauren Hernandez are not only investigations into the art of weaving but crucial visual stories of repairing the nuanced relationship of two professionally, artistically and personally entwined individuals. The weaves are legible as real time confessions of doubt, anger, stress and sadness punctuated by exuberance and joy, reflected in the technical detours in tone, texture and composition in the pieces.

Included alongside Lauren and Kass Hernandez’s new works are *THE DIVIDE* and *UNDER MY SKIN*, pieces previously woven and presented under the Crossing Threads® name. The works represent a journey of self-discovery in defining what it means to be a Filipina amidst a western landscape. *THE DIVIDE* utilises the “interknot” chains as an interconnected support upon which textures and compositional tension ebb and flow to release into a calming field of acceptance and resolution of the artist’s internal burdens and anxieties. Conversely, *UNDER MY SKIN* is a dialogue of separate weaves assembled within a circular frame offering a visualisation of how individual personal and cultural traits and features make one’s identity whole.

Refining their craft and developing an artistic practice in which they position weaving as a medium for consideration, discussion and representation of identity, Lauren and Kass Hernandez have sewn themselves into the fibres of their work. Whether the weaves are structurally considered ahead of time or reactionary while on the loom, the work of Crossing Threads® demonstrates a refined understanding of and connection to the process of weaving and respect of the power of human connection.

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## LIST OF WORKS

Crossing Threads®, *CONSOLATION*, 2020, bamboo, cotton, hand dyed Merino wool, handspun upcycled yarn, hemp, leather, linen and mixed natural fibres; framed in Tasmanian oak; handwoven by Kass Hernandez; courtesy the artist.

Crossing Threads®, *INWARD STATE*, 2020, bamboo, cotton, hand dyed Merino wool, hemp, Japanese silk and paper, linen, mixed natural fibres and sari silk; framed in Tasmanian oak; handwoven by Lauren Hernandez; courtesy the artist.

Crossing Threads®, *SEEK*, 2020, bamboo, cotton, hand dyed Merino wool, hemp, Japanese silk and paper, linen, mixed natural fibres and sari silk; framed in Tasmanian oak; handwoven by Lauren Hernandez; courtesy the artist.

Crossing Threads®, *THE DIVIDE*, 2020, alpaca, bamboo, canvas, cotton, cotton roping, felted Merino wool, hand cut denim, hand cut leather, hand dyed raffia, hand dyed Shibori, hemp, linen, marine roping, Merino wool, mixed natural fibres, Pima cotton; suspended off a painted Tasmanian oak wooden dowel; handwoven by Kass Hernandez; courtesy the artist.

Crossing Threads®, *UNDER MY SKIN*, 2020, bamboo, chenille, Egyptian cotton, hemp, Japanese silk, jute, leather, linen, merino wool, mulberry tussah, raffia and wire on galvanised steel frame; handwoven by Lauren and Kass Hernandez; courtesy the artist.

## EXHIBITION ARTIST

**Crossing Threads®** is the collaborative work of Australian-born sisters of Filipino heritage Lauren Hernandez (b. 1988, Sydney) and Kass Hernandez (b. 1989, Sydney). These self-taught tapestry artists first explored the practice of weaving in early 2015 by attending a beginner's workshop. Known for their large-scale and highly textural handwoven pieces, the Hernandez sisters seek to emulate the natural forms found in nature. Their carefully curated fibre selections include Australian Merino wool, plant-based fibres, up-cycled/dead-stock fabrics and other foraged items that aren't traditionally used in fibre art. Their practice has led them to develop their recognisable 'interknot' technique, made up of intertwining hand-knotted chains of varying texture and thickness which graduate to a relief. The artists continually draw spiritual inspiration from their surrounding landscapes and personal experiences and are materialised through their abstract designs.

Curated by Con Gerakaris.

To find out more visit:

[4a.com.au/holding-patterns](http://4a.com.au/holding-patterns)

# Holding Patterns Part Two: Crossing Threads® 6–30 August 2020

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