

*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

*UNDER MY SKIN* is the only work exhibited in  *Holding Patterns*  woven collaboratively by Lauren and Kass Hernandez and represents a shared desire to rediscover and engage with their identities as Filipina women of colour in Australia. Acknowledging their cultural privilege and platform provided by their immigrant parents, the artists interrogate familial Filipino traditions and contemporary Australian values through synergic practice.

The circular form of  *UNDER MY SKIN*  structurally suggests a statement of wholeness, the fragmented composition and collage of tones and textures highlight the confluences of culture and values that inform one's identity. Within the looping structure is an assemblage of weaves created by Lauren and Kass on their SAORI loom, generating a visual dialogue of technique and artistry between the sisters. As an exercise in practice, undulating textures were achieved by substituting traditional fabrics for wire as the warp, allowing the artists to sculpt their weaves once off the loom. The expanded practice resulted in a piece with dimensionality and giving the physical depth to compliment the conceptual excavation of the layers forming their personal and cultural identities.

## *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

A manifestation of the artist's self-inflicted expectations of the future and burden of self-doubt, *THE DIVIDE* is a lyrical work of searching, hesitation and liberation. Handwoven on Kass Hernandez's frame loom, the piece demonstrates the application of traditional, contemporary and self-developed weaving techniques. The signature "interknot" of Crossing Threads' practice is intrinsic to the compositional tension and release of *THE DIVIDE*. The dense seabed of irregular, hand-knotted chains acts simultaneously as an undercurrent of complex internalised feelings and emotions and a net of support of interconnected relationships guiding us through periods of darkness and light.

While works created on a frame loom are woven from the base up, the chains, knots, braids, warps and wefts of *THE DIVIDE* generate a distinct lateral movement. Hernandez employs a palette of deep blues and indigos transitioning to comforting whites and creams punctuated with grounding earth tones throughout. Guided by a deep fissure of rigid blackness the viewer is guided through an ocean of textures and hues by the hand of the artist, her internal struggles resolving in real time on the loom. Chains ebb and flow with both spontaneity and forethought creating sections of material pressure which surrender into delicate weaves.

*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

*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

*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

In the wake of the exhibition *DUALITY* in early 2020, Lauren and Kass Hernandez reassessed their relationship as business partners, colleagues, friends and sisters. Crossing Threads had become the defining factor of their relationship, fundamentally changing their sisterly bonds. This self-imposed hiatus from creating work collaboratively was amplified by the COVID-19 lockdown of Sydney in late March exposing the fissures in both their practice and kinship.

With the physical and emotional space afforded by isolation the artists turned to their SAORI looms as a form of release and healing. Weaving on the SAORI loom requires synthesis between the physical movement of all one's appendages, concentration and artistic intent. Philosophically the SAORI encourages self-innovation and an embrace of intuition, emphasising and prioritising creativity and free expression through a distinct 'non-technique' when contrasted to frame or floor looms. "When you are seated at the loom, you become the loom" expresses Lauren Hernandez on this Japanese art of free-weaving. Similarly, Kass Hernandez finds the SAORI as a place to lose herself in the flow

state of weaving with the practice becoming a “way for my heart and mind to heal,” particularly prescient during this dysfunctional period of distance.

Handwoven by Lauren, *SEEK* and *INWARD STATE* are explorations in colours and textures as a complete and reactive transference of intuition and presence into the weave. Within the pieces are sections of varying tension and colour pops giving the works their own distinct energies and flows of momentum. *SEEK* and *INWARD STATE* feature colour combinations typical to past work with hues more representative of the artist’s emotional and mental state at the time of creation. Tense areas of irregular blues and metallic tones give way to earthen plains of perfect warps and wefts in *SEEK* alluding to the artist’s own introverted personality and the calmness of personal space. Orange thread bursts from clam sections in excitement, a signifier of human intervention against the perfect weave of the machine. *INWARD STATE* takes these investigations of texture further with waves of loose thread breaking up the perfectly crossed threads preceding them and tones reverberate throughout the weave providing a constant sense of togetherness in the face of separation.

*CONSOLATION* are contemplative weaves of comfort, healing and escapism with a strikingly different colour combination and composition. Produced in mid-March, Kass’ works balance anxiety and nostalgia with muted, neutral tones expressing a longing for peace and inner calm. With time of less concern, the artist playfully engages with a carefree and lighter side to herself, employing colours outside her comfort zone and a more delicate practice after the full body weaving experience of creating work for *DUALITY*. Kass revisited fibres, shades, concepts and techniques not included in previous pieces within these weaves as exercises in personal creativity after finding herself absolved of time and work constraints. In the piece weft threads are liberated from their corresponding warps and textures fluctuate with freedom with dark patches hint at wounds to be healed. Throughout the work is an overarching sense of nostalgia for simplicity and harmony expressed through the unplanned nature of SAORI weaving.