

HEROES GALLERY

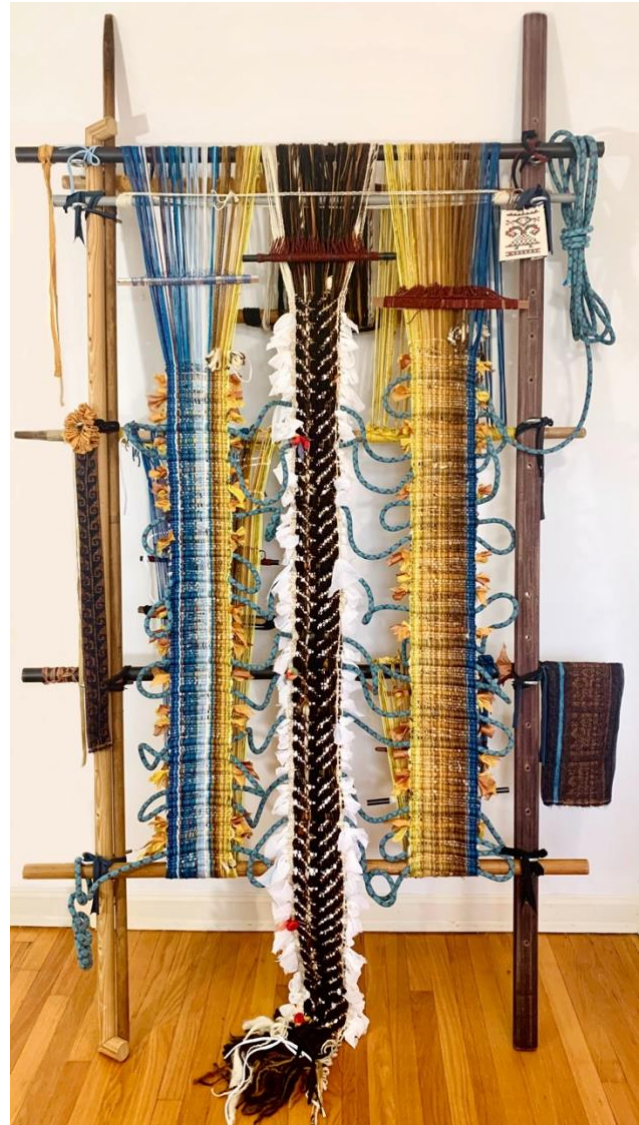
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Kira Dominguez Hultgren: Luz Jiménez

March 17th – April 23rd, 2022
opening March 17th, 5-8pm

Heroes Gallery is pleased to present works by contemporary artist Kira Dominguez Hultgren in conversation with the history of Nahuatl-Mexican artist, model, Nahuatl-language educator, storyteller and weaver Julia “Luz” Jiménez (1897-1965). By engaging with documentation and artwork about Jiménez’s life and the influence she had on the Mexican Modernist School, Dominguez Hultgren weaves an accumulation of cultural narratives and intertwined identities. How is weaving used to authenticate identity both in Jiménez’s life and in Dominguez Hultgren’s?

Self-described Chicana, Indian and Hollywood Hawaiian, Dominguez Hultgren sees her ancestry mirrored in her weaving; an embodiment and performance of strange combinations. She weaves in the tension between performing and preserving cultural identity and finding one’s self within the romanticized ideal of the indigenous woman at her loom.



Dominguez Hultgren states that “in (my) weavings nothing gets blurred; rather the vertical and horizontal materials move in opposite directions, each strand holding its own in-between warp and weft. To weave with competing, unequal materials is to reflect a lived experience of colonialism supported by unequal histories where some stories go unheard, unseen, while others seemingly become the whole story.” Weaving becomes a metaphor in which the intertwining of material represents different truths, personas and perceptions.

What is seen and unseen interlace to create identity. To perform or preserve an identity is not a choice between falsifying and truth-telling, but a strategy to make sense of one’s story in a larger web of non-neutral tensions and histories.

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Luz Jiménez lived this tension in her time, using the platforms given to her, using her audience's perceptions of her, to tie her story and her people to the larger history of the Mexican Revolution and modern art. For members of the Mexican Modernist school such as Diego Rivera, Jean Charlot, Fernando Leal and Tina Modotti, she became a symbol of idealized Mexican identity and the perfect artist-model for their work. Jean Charlot's son and art historian John Charlot explains that for his father, Jiménez was "the woman he saw in all women of Mexico" (Sylvia Orozco, "Luz Jiménez in My World," 149). Jiménez used this platform to talk about Nahua identity and culture, translate Náhuatl with ethnographers, tell and publish stories of her hometown Milpa Alta before and after the revolution. In other words, Jiménez wasn't only Mexican; she was also Nahua. She moved though, worked in, and knew the language of many worlds.

Artist and educator **Kira Dominguez Hultgren** studied French postcolonial theory and literature at Princeton University (2003) and performance and fine arts in Río Negro, Argentina (2012). She additionally holds a dual-degree MFA/MA in Fine Arts and Visual and Critical Studies from California College of the Arts, (2019). She has had solo exhibitions at the San Jose Museum of Quilt and Textile (2020); Gensler, San Francisco, CA (2019) and Eleanor Harwood Gallery in San Francisco (2018 & 2020) and group shows at NADA House, Governors Island, New York City, NY (2021); Minnesota Street Project, San Francisco, CA (2020) and at the de Young Fine Art Museum of San Francisco (2020). Residencies and awards include the Headlands Center for the Arts, Facebook AIR, and Brandford/Elliott Award Nomination for Excellence in Fiber Arts, Textile Society of America. Dominguez Hultgren is currently part-time faculty at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in Fiber and Material Studies and is represented by Eleanor Harwood Gallery in San Francisco.

Image: Kira Dominguez Hultgren, *In the Silence between Mother Tongues*, 2022, 92 x 55 x 12 inches