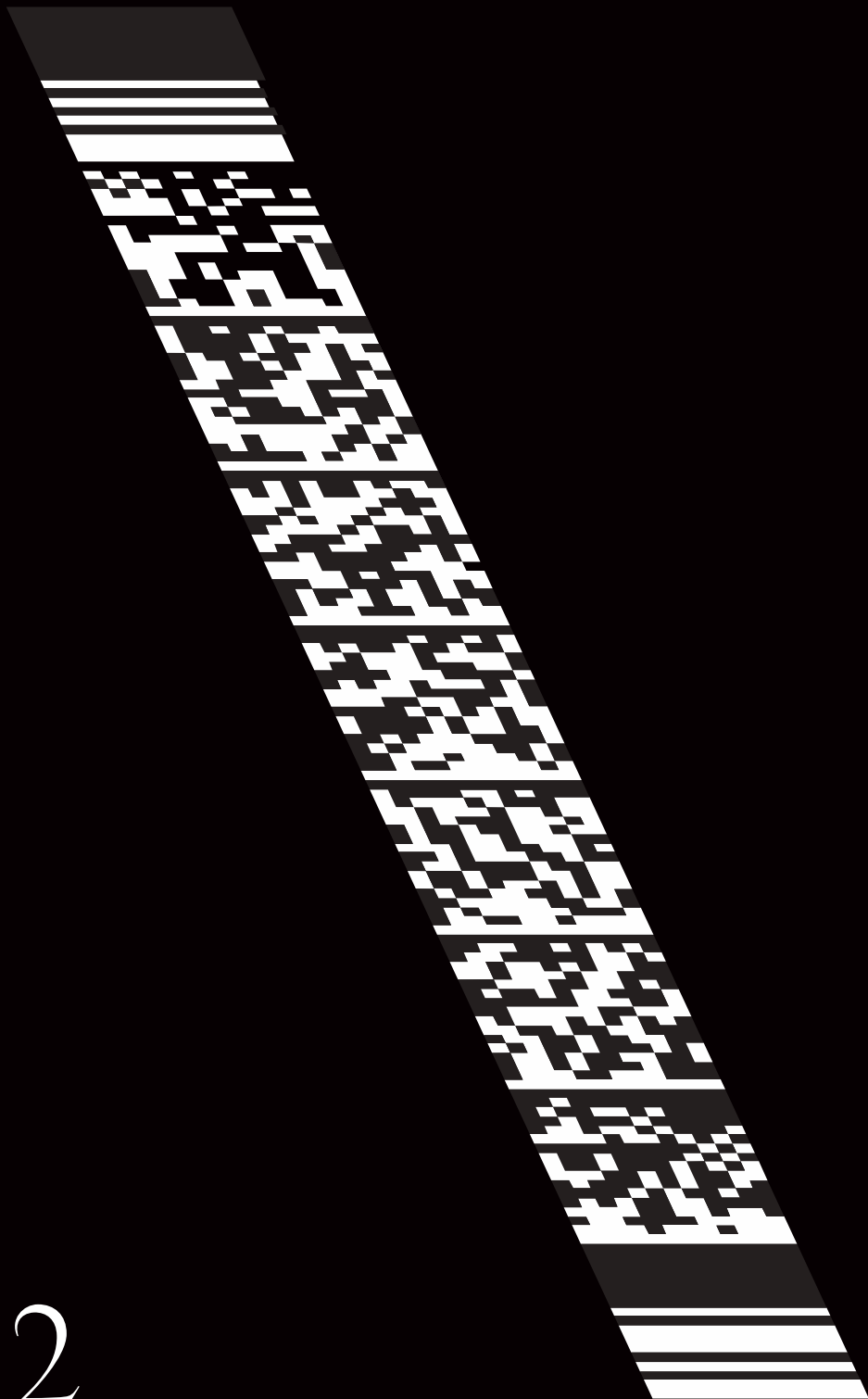


Soft Territories



Knockdown Center



2

Woven Spaces

by Carolina Arévalo

Soft Territories explores the forms that ideas of movement, migration, and locality incarnate in the praxis of three contemporary textile artists: Victoria Manganiello, Sarah Zapata, and Simon Sepulveda. The warp and weft of the loom—the basic relation of textiles—echo current critical thinking about verticality and horizontality in social and economic structures. The woven thread, an embodiment of the intersection between two planes, expresses different ideas about politics, territories, technologies, and interactions; thus, creating spaces of softness, warmth, and shelter.

Manganiello uses hand-spun yarn and mixed (natural and synthetic) color dyes to create hand-woven textiles that explore intersections between materiality, color, and direction. Her work is inherently abstract. A non-representational painting can alienate and confuse an observer without a fine art education. Manganiello explains that she uses the material to counter the effect of the form: if the viewer interacts with the medium every day, her artworks become immediately familiar.

Historically, the social fabric metaphor refers to an infinite matrix of relations between verticals and horizontals that structure a plane¹. From this perspective, the warp can be understood as a rigid system. The warp is incarnated by borders, immigration policies and requirements, regulatory institutions, legal frameworks, international agreements, and human rights. The weft is embodied by paths, people, stories, and experiences that offer multiple possibilities of intertwining. The threads in motion can be entwined in different ways to constitute a weave. Plain weaving essentially consists of a balance: twills give the weft freedom and gauze weaving liberates the warp, creating transparencies and voids.

Formally, Manganiello's work is also a chromatic exploration. Different color techniques coexist and nourish each other. The techniques include traditional and experimental ikat, warp painting with dyes, and application of colored dyes, acrylics, and other pigments to the finished handwoven canvas. Chromatic differences and repetitions can be interpreted as the construction of identity. As Deleuze proposed, the reproduction of series or copies of identities contain the structure of previous reproductions; multiplicity replaces the metaphysical concept of substance². Ikat is a tie-dye technique applied to the threads prior to the weaving process. Nuances are embedded in the genesis of the individual thread's identity before the elements interact. In weaving coloration, chromatic spaces emerge from the relationship between verticals and horizontals at the moment in which they meet and adapt to each other. Thus, repetition is related to time and the production of the new. In the subsequent dyeing, color is a response to the integrity of the landscape, a modification to the status quo of the work.

The concepts of non-linear time and the interconnectedness of humanity play a fundamental role in Manganiello's work. She explains that weaving, as an action in itself, is like the life of any individual; the process of creating a cloth consists of moments that constitute a cumulative experience, past and present coexist simultaneously within the work.

The division between art and craft is based on function, material, intellectual content, and class, as well as the construction of an economic and social system that defines the artist in opposition to the artisan. As in Zapata's work, Manganiello's traditional craft media oeuvre offers a different model of artistic iden-

tity. These processes of production involve the practice of the artist as an intelligible human, both 'producer' and 'ideologist'. Their aesthetic concerns explore, through different approaches, the practice of weaving as an act that connects them with their physical roots, addressing their feeling of refuge through thread constructions.

Questions of memory, identity, and borders are central to Zapata's work, a symbiotic practice of textile making and writing. She explores her cultural identity as a Peruvian-American woman through her practice: the sculptures evidence the employment of labor-intensive hand processes and traditional American rug-making techniques, as well as the engagement with Andean iconography and the ritual usage of altar clothes in the context of Andean offerings or ceremonies.

Around the 6th century B.C., the Paracas' textile tradition reached its highest technical expression of materialized afterlife beliefs. Magnificent mantles were crafted in the south of Peru and lay buried under the sand for two millennia. The mantles were used to wrap the bodies of distinguished individuals in funerary bundles and offered to deities during agricultural ceremonies—water and the propitiation of fertility were essential for the livelihood of these desert peoples.

Evoking the Peruvian tradition, Zapata creates textiles that mediate the sacred and the profane, articulating a complex universe of social relations. In *Falling Figures*, the artist evokes a central motif in the Paracas' visual language: the shaman in flight. These figures wear masks with animal-like features, their heads are turned to face behind them, and their hair is unbound. They are placed on a soft-edged checkerboard that represents a binary, yet generative, and complementary system. This iconography is part of a system of complex visual metaphors that allude to the society, natural environment, and rituals.

The visual language that Zapata articulates is also influenced by contemporary Andean textiles. The Mantle-Altar, *inkuña* in Quechua, is both an archeological and contemporary cloth used to define a ritual space and hold offerings. The woven surface of these textiles, as a representational space, creates a symbolic landscape of reciprocal relations based on complementary colors and proportions. These formal qualities ensure the sustainability of life by obtaining precious fertility. In *To Teach or Assume Authority*, she transforms her own wishes and offerings into colorful and textured fiber art object, placed as an altar in a contemporary art gallery. Zapata appropriates and humanizes an anodyne architecture and recovers different meanings of space by embodying her role as a mediator of cultural exchange.

In Zapata's altars, as in those of the traditional Peruvian textiles, the encounter of colors evokes a complementary relationship, extending the objectification of nature to spaces of softness and transition. Its haptic quality offers an invitation to experience these spaces, enhancing its material nature, which is rooted in a craft that arises from direct contact between the hand and material.

Throughout history, an important part of social life and its cultural expression has come from transforming surfaces, playing, and searching creatively for identity.

In this process of resignification and projection of the individual or social self the primary support is the skin; then, the textiles that cover us; lastly, the forms of inhabiting. Tapestry, as an art form, has been historically dependent on an intimate relationship with the interior spaces of architectural constructions. Renewing their function as artifacts that narrate significant stories, Sepúlveda creates wall hangings that unfold migration experiences.

Tapestries flourished as the preeminent figurative art form from the fourteenth century to the nineteenth century. They constituted ambitious allegorical or historical series by providing a monumental figurative medium on which a patron could parade images of ancestors, military conquests, or historical and mythological heroes with whom he wished to be associated. They played a central role in the art and propaganda of late medieval and Renaissance Europe.

Mixing digital and organic elements, Sepúlveda records the movement of people and commodities at a specific factual moment rather than narrating a fictional epic tale. As in traditional wall coverings, the iconography and metaphors depicted in the artworks are contemporaneous to the artist. For example, they display the signs and colors of flags as icons of the external political borders and the interior limits of the subject. He essentially offers a commentary of assimilation into the dominant culture by deconstructing and rearticulating specific tropes, always in a versatile visual language.

Sepúlveda appropriates their historical qualities of size, portability, and flexibility to articulate the movement of people and commodities, with multiple individual and collective identities; as well as the precarious balance in which all these occurrences take place. Traditional tapestries were ideal for the ostentatious ceremonies of the itinerant court, given their flexibility of placement. They are imbued with an inherent nomadic nature and conceived as carriers of stories in movement. There is a direct relation between the nature of the artifact and the subject that the artist depicts. Frederic Jameson states that the products of late capitalism “stand as the symbol and analogon of the incapacity of our minds, at least at present, to map the great global multinational and decentered communicational network which we find ourselves caught as individual subjects.” Jameson’s postmodernist proposal is particularly relevant to conceiving these artworks as artifacts of late capitalism.

Going back to their historical function, wall coverings kept draughty interiors insulated and prevented voices from being overheard in other rooms. Hiding secret passageways, they proclaimed and concealed various strata of the private domain. It is possible to note a dissociation between the artifact’s modes of communication. On one hand, its function lies in the propagation of an idea, what the patron wants to say. On the other hand, the artifact must control the propagation of ideas and comments within a larger space. Sepúlveda reconciles both modes by inverting the silent quality; what is representationally expressed wants to be disseminated.

Subjectivities materialize and resurface in a city shaken by politics, immigration, opportunities, issues of race, and gender. The exhibition positions textile art as both an ancestral and contemporary practice that creates a multi-discursive and relevant environment. Works on view reveal threads intertwining artworks that perform as environments of shelter or spaces of softness, warmth, and comfort. Each piece is a metaphor for interactions that questions how we cohabit and weave our social fabric.

1. Danto, Arthur. *Sheila Hicks: Weaving as Metaphor*. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2010.

2. Deleuze formulates a non-chronological concept of time as an n-dimensional and non-metrical manifold defined by a formal network of processes that are interacting with one another. Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *Mille Plateaux*. Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1980.

3. Paracas Textile Art: Museo Chileno De Arte Precolombino, *Paracas Funerary Mantles: Offerings for Life* 2015, Museo Chileno De Arte Precolombino, accessed September 21, 2016, <http://www.precolombino.cl/en/exposiciones/exposiciones/temporales/mantos-funerarios-de-paracas-ofrendas-para-la-vida/2015-el-arte-textil-de-paracas>.

4. Quechua is a language spoken by Andean people. It is one of a handful of Native American languages with over eight million speakers in the present. Quechua is native to Peru, Bolivia, Argentina and Ecuador.

5. Its name, fuses two concepts that are embedded in the textile: en'q'a is a regenerative vital principle that produces wellbeing and abundance; and uña, refers to mammal breeding and, affectionately, to the human child. Flores Ochoa, Jorge A. *Los Pastores De Paratia: Una Introducción a Su Estudio*, 1968.

6. Their function is mainly ceremonial, they provide agricultural fertility and are offered as symbolic gifts during divination rituals. In themselves and in relation to rituals, they are imbued with the condensed desires and intentions of the community. Brugnoli, P. and Hoces de la Guradia, S. "Investigación y descripción de textiles precolombinos andinos" in *Congrés internacional des américanistes*, and Victoria Solanilla i Demestre. *Tejiendo sueños en el Cono Sur textiles andinos: Pasado, presente y futuro: actas del simposio ARQ-21, 51o Congreso internacional de Americanistas*, Santiago de Chile, julio de 2003. Barcelona: Grupo d'Estudis Precolombins, 2004, 38.

7. Smith, Tai. "Tapestries in Space: An Alternative History of Site-Specificity" in Porter, Jenelle, and Glenn Adamson. 2014. *Fiber: Sculpture 1960-present*. Munich: Prestel, 153.

8. Campbell, Thomas. *Tapestry in the Renaissance: Art and Magnificence*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2013.

9. Jameson, Frederic. *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. London: Verso, 1993, 44.

10. Smith, T'ai. "Tapestries in Space: An Alternative History of Site-Specificity" in Porter, Jenelle, and Glenn Adamson. 2014. *Fiber: Sculpture 1960-present*. Munich: Prestel, 154.

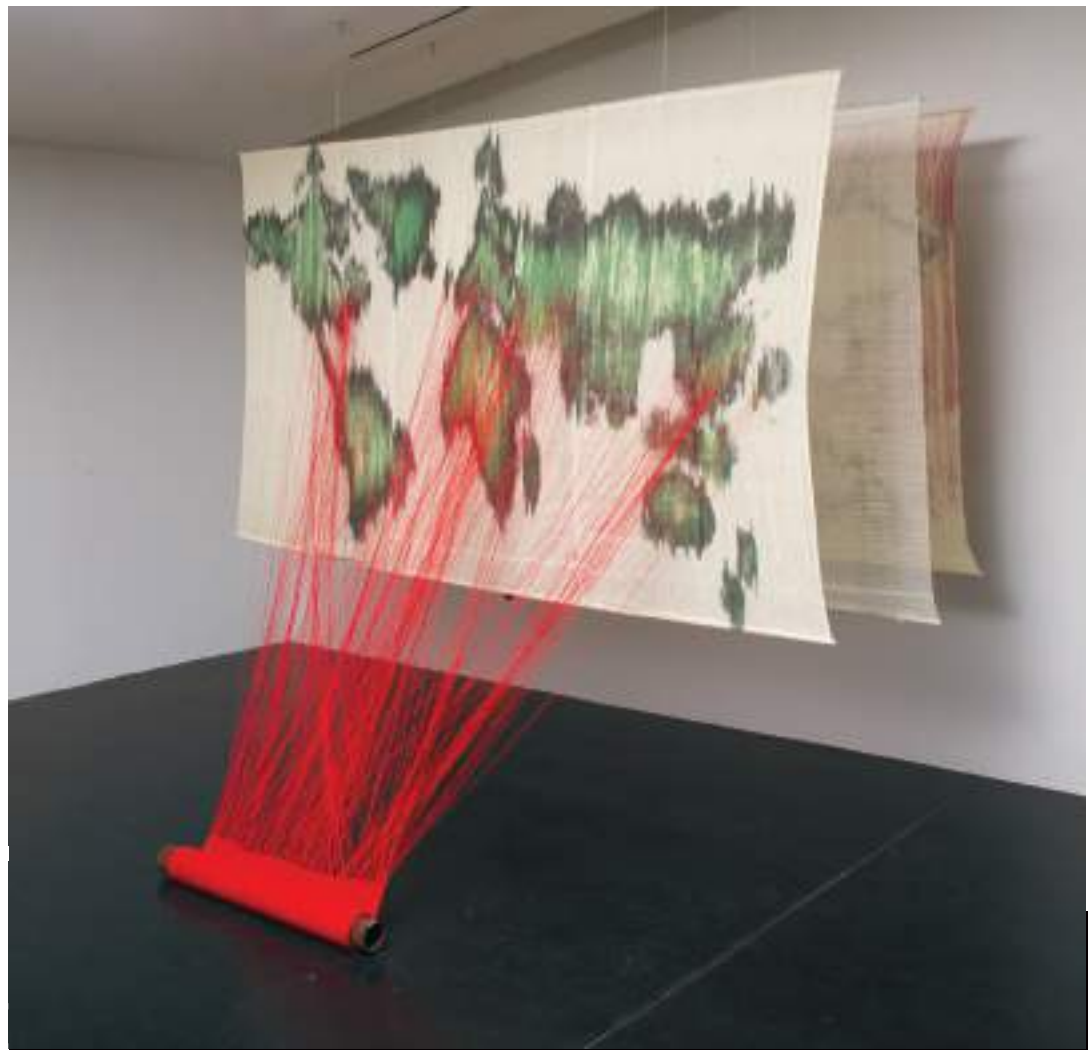
Carolina Arévalo

Carolina Arévalo (b. 1985, Santiago, Chile) is a researcher and curator. Her approach towards the idea of image as a mental state is center in the fundamental concepts of forms: the reinterpretation and representation of societies explained through historical styles, as they occur in art, design, and architecture. All objects and images communicate and can be recognized as texts; artifacts weave the public and private aspects, social and cultural conventions and the way in which people and position themselves in a context.

Victoria Manganiello

Victoria Manganiello (b.1989) is an installation and mixed media artist based in Brooklyn, NY. Her work has been exhibited throughout the USA and internationally including at the Queens Museum, Tang Museum, Pioneer Works, and the Museum of Art and Design. Victoria was recently named one of Forbes list 30 under 30 artists for 2019. She is an adjunct professor at both NYU and Parson's The New School. Exploring the intersections between materiality, technology, geography and storytelling, Victoria's installation work, abstract paintings, and kinetic sculptures are made meticulously with hand-woven textiles using hand-spun yarn and hand-mixed natural and synthetic color dyes.





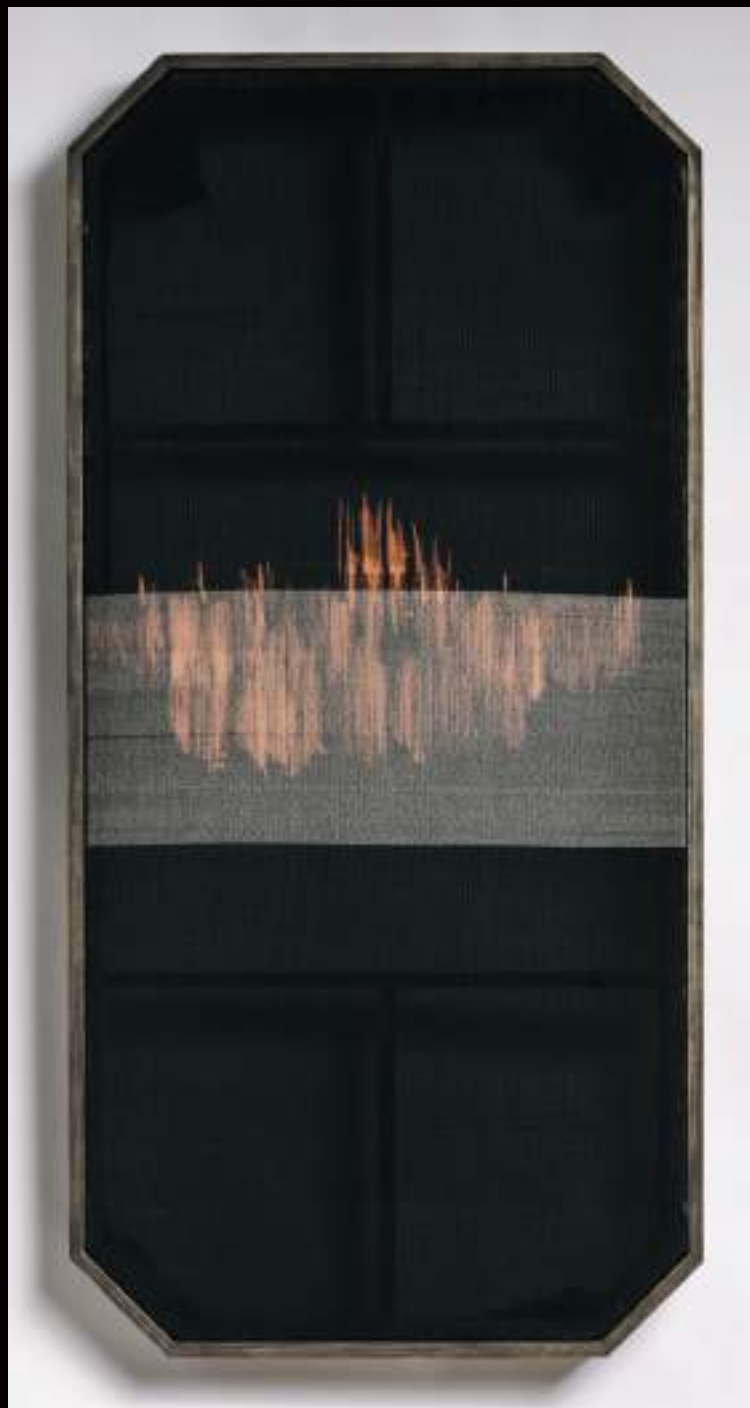
Get Me Out of Here
Natural and Synthetic Fiber and Dye, Aluminum
96 x 5 x 60 in
ca. 2012
Courtesy Victoria Manganiello



Gwondana
Natural and Synthetic Fiber and Dye
32 × 20 × 1.5 in
ca. 2015
Courtesy Victoria Manganiello



Laurasia
Natural and Synthetic Fiber and Dye
24 x 21 x 1.5 in
ca. 2015



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Page 12
Untitled #104
Natural and Synthetic Fiber and Dye
62 × 30 × 3.5 in
ca. 2018
Courtesy Victoria Manganiello

Page 13
Untitled #69
Cotton, Silk, Natural and Synthetic Dye
54 × 38 × 1.5 in
ca. 2017
Courtesy Victoria Manganiello



Statement

Our relationship with textiles is innately intimate and while different cultures have ascribed varying meanings to their textiles, the essence of the experience is the same no matter who you are. Cloth is an incredible equalizer and is perhaps the one thing that we all share. But the unique equality of cloth is no longer so unique. Our relationship with technology has recently become dominant in this equalizing function. Whether it be the dislocation within society, or the empowerment of disconnected communities, the varying ways in which we interact with technologies (both for good and for bad) are being questioned now more than ever before. Perhaps understanding the history of these technologies can help us consider technologies for the future.

Exploring the intersections between materiality, space, philosophy and storytelling, my installation work, abstract paintings, and performances are made with hand-woven textiles using hand-spun yarn and hand-mixed natural and synthetic color dyes. These labor-intensive and monotonous processes subliminally act as connectors to all the cultures on the map, current, and past that have, uniquely, yet simultaneously developed textile techniques across space yet I am using them to make abstract contemporary art.

By utilizing the genre of installation, these artworks create a space for viewers to find themselves within- between locations- questioning the relationship between where both they and we came from, where they are going and where we belong. Knowledge of the future is never provided at the start, yet we can understand that there is a direction to our histories.



Get Me Out of Here
Natural and Synthetic Fiber and Dye,
Aluminum
96 × 5 × 60 in
ca. 2012
Courtesy Victoria Manganiello

Sarah Zapata

Sarah Zapata (b. 1988, Corpus Christi, TX, USA) makes work with labor-intensive processes such as handweaving, rope coiling, latch hooking, and sewing by intersecting theories of gender and ethnicity with pre-colonial histories and techniques. Making work with meditative, mechanical means, her current work deals with the multiple facets of her complex identity: a Texan living in Brooklyn, a lesbian raised as an evangelical Christian, a first generation American of Latin American descent, a contemporary artist inspired by ancient civilizations, an artist challenging the history of craft as “women’s work” within the realm of art. Zapata’s work has been exhibited at the New Museum (NY), El Museo del Barrio (NY), Museum of Art and Design (NY), Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art (NY), Boston University (MA), LAXART (CA), Deli Gallery (NY), Arsenal Contemporary (NY), and Hudson Valley LGBTQ Community Center (NY). Zapata has also completed recent residencies at MASS MoCA (MA), A-Z West (CA), and Wave Hill (NY), and is the recent recipient of an NFA Project Grant from the National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures. Zapata was an artist-in-residence at the Museum of Arts and Design in 2016.



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To Teach or To Assume Authority

Natural and synthetic fiber, handwoven fabric, wood.

Dimensions variable

ca. 2018

Courtesy Sarah Zapata and Deli Gallery, NY

Page 19

Falling Figures

Handtufted natural and synthetic fiber.

52 × 50 in.

ca. 2018

Courtesy Sarah Zapata and Deli Gallery, NY











Da Dum

By Sarah Zapata

My leg hairs are erect, standing feels too weightless. I'm thankful to not feel my body, but it always worries me, like I don't appreciate it enough. I never want to be adverse to change, I know that I have a tendency to hold on to too much. I can't be like these older women who complain about how things used to be. I don't want to luxuriate in my misty perception of the past.

The heart is the toughest part of the body. Tenderness is in the hands. WITH THE FIRST WORLD CAME matter, then light, then limits. Human enlightenment could be described as the evolving ability to understand the nature and intricacies of limits.

Thousands of hot little needles kissed my blushed body. My feet ached, the skin danced in the pressure of the water as it began to detach itself from the sole of my foot. For the proportion of my height, my feet are small.

News scientist.com performed a study of comparing two females faces : one was a composite face made from eight women with unusually small feet, the other was a composite of women with unusually large feet.

Women with smaller feet have prettier faces. The men were three-and-a-half times as likely to pick the short-footed morph as more attractive, and almost 10 times as likely to say it was more feminine. Atkinson thinks men find these features attractive because they serve as markers of a healthy childhood. Biologists know that stress and poor nutrition during fetal development and puberty can affect sex hormone levels and cause earlier puberty.

This can leave such women relatively short and stout, while those with a more benign childhood continue growing for

longer, and attain a slenderer, more stereotypically feminine face and body, which most men find more attractive. Since faces and bodies are shaped by the same hormones, you should be able to predict the attractiveness of one body part by looking at another.

The da-DUM of a human heartbeat is the most common example of this rhythm.

A standard line of iambic pentameter is five iambic feet in a row:

da DUM da DUM da DUM da DUM da
DUM

Today marks the one week anniversary of these eyelashes, each individually glued onto my eye. It's a day when I'm free, free to be me, free to make meaningful eye contact. Each slow blink is a flirtation with reminding me that I never stop being a woman. I'll tie dye my blood type into every lining of my pants. I'm never escaping the refinement of English's constricting single syllable.

I plant my right foot on the sea and my left foot on the land.

It must have been love.

Excerpt of 'Border Lives: the Art of the Present'

Homi Bhabha

It is the trope of our times to locate the question of culture in the realm of the beyond. At the century's edge, we are less exercised by annihilation – the death of the author – or epiphany – the birth of the 'subject'. Our existence today is marked by a tenebrous sense of survival, living on the borderlines of the 'present', for which there seems to be no proper name other than the current and controversial shiftiness of the prefix 'post': postmodernism, postcolonialism, postfeminism....

The 'beyond' is neither a new horizon nor a leaving behind of the past... Beginnings and endings may be sustaining myths of the middle years; but in the fin de siècle, we find our selves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion. For there is a sense of disorientation, a disturbance of direction, in the beyond: an exploratory, restless movement caught so well in the French rendition of the words *au-delà* – here and there, on all sides, *fort/da*, hither and thither, back and forth.

The move away from the singularities of 'class' or 'gender' as primary conceptual and organizational categories, has resulted in an awareness of the subject positions – of race, gender generation, institutional location, geopolitical locale, sexual orientation – that inhabit any claim to identity in the modern world. What is theoretically innovative, and politically crucial, is the need to think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences. These 'in-between' spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood – singular or communal – that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself.

It is in the emergence of the interstices – the overlap and displacement of domains of difference – that the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated. How are the subjects formed 'in-between', or in excess of, the sun of the 'parts' of differences (usually intoned as race/class/gender, etc.)? How do strategies of representation or empowerment come to be formulated in the competing claims of communities where despite shared stories of deprivation and discrimination, the exchanges of values, meanings and priorities may not always be collaborative and dialogical but may be profoundly antagonistic, conflictual and even incommensurable? [...]

'Beyond' signifies spatial distance, marks progress, promises the future; but our intimations of exceeding the barrier or boundary – the very act of going beyond – are unknowable, becomes disjunct and displaced. The imaginary of spatial distance – to live somehow beyond the border of our times – throws into relief the temporal, social differences that interrupt our collusive sense of cultural contemporaneity. The present can no longer be simply envisaged as a break or a bonding with the past and the future, no longer a synchronic presence: our proximate self-presence, our public image, comes to be revealed for its discontinuities, its inequalities, its minorities. Unlike the dead hand of history that tells the beads of sequential time like a rosary, seeking to establish serial, causal connections, we are now confronted with what Walter Benjamin describes as the blasting of a monadic moment from

the homogenous course of history, 'establishing a conception of the present as the now''.

If the jargon of our times – postmodernity, postcoloniality, post-feminism – has any meaning at all, it does not lie in the popular use of the 'post' to indicate sequentiality – after-feminism; or polarity – anti-modernism. These terms that insistently gesture to the beyond, only embody its restless and revisionary energy if they transform the present into an expanded and ex-centric site of experience and empowerment. For instance, if the interest is postmodernism is limited to a celebration of the fragmentation of the 'grand narratives' of postenlightenment rationalism then, for all its intellectual excitement, it remains a profoundly parochial enterprise [. . .].

Postcoloniality, for its part, is a salutary reminder of the persistent 'neo-colonial' relations within the 'new' world order and the multinational division of labor. Such a perspective enables the authentication of histories of exploitation and the evolution of strategies of resistance. Beyond this, however, postcolonial critique bears witness to those countries and communities – in the North and the South, urban and rural – constituted, if I may coin a phrase, 'otherwise than modernity'. Such cultures of a postcolonial contra-modernity may be contingent to modernity, discontinuous or in contention with it, resistant to its oppressive, assimilationist technologies; but they also deploy the cultural hybridity of their borderline conditions to 'translate', and therefore reinscribe, the social imaginary of both metropolis and modernity [...].

Being in the 'beyond' [then] is to inhabit an intervening space, as any dictionary will tell you. But to dwell 'in the beyond' is also, as I have shown, to be part of a revisionary time, a return to the present to redescribe our cultural contemporaneity; to reinscribe our human, historic commonality; to touch the future on its hither side. In that sense, the intervening space 'beyond', becomes a space of intervention in the here and now [...].

The borderline work of culture demands an encounter with 'newness' that is not part of the continuum of past and present. It creates a sense of the new as an insurgent act of cultural translation. Such art does not merely recall the past as social cause or aesthetic precedent; it renews the past, refiguring it as a contingent 'in-between' space, that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present. The 'past-present' becomes part of the necessity, not the nostalgia of living.

Homi K. Bhabha (b.1949) is a leading theorist of cultural postcolonialism and globalization. He is the Anne F. Rothenberg Professor of English and American Literature and Language, and the Director of the Mahindra Humanities Center at Harvard University. This extract is taken from *The Location of Culture*, London and New York: Routledge, 1994.

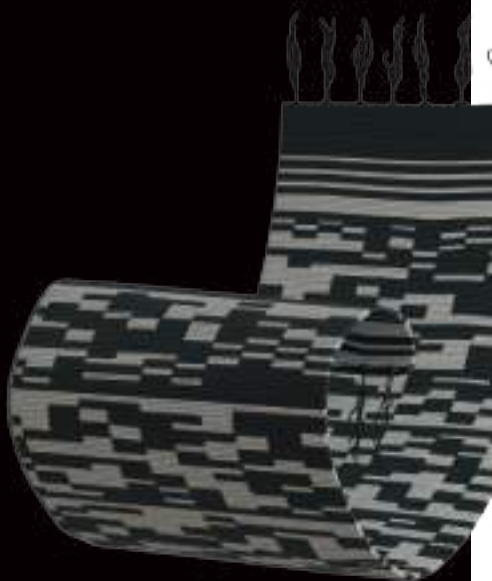


¹ Walter Benjamin, 'These on the philosophy of history', in his *Illuminations* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1970), pp 152-3.

Simón Sepúlveda

Simón Sepúlveda (b. 1989, Santiago, Chile) works on textile mixing bold graphics, with social and personal issues, like migration and identity. His work is a hyper-awareness of the precarious nature in trying to find a personal balance and also worldwide balance across migration, economics, and human rights issues. This worldwide perspective and artist direction within textiles has led him to fulfill a sense of purpose with his work. Sepúlveda's work has been exhibited at the Chilean Museum of Contemporary Art (Chile), Museum of Fine Arts (Chile), Visual Arts Museum (Chile), and Aquí Gallery (Chile). Sepúlveda is currently living and working at San Francisco as a designer for Apple.

Previously he has worked as a Designer at Sagmeister&Walsh (New York), Javier Jaén Studio (Barcelona) and Felicidad (Santiago).









p.27
We need no flags
ca. 2019
Polyester
133×60 in

p.28
Simón (Self-portrait)
ca. 2019
Polyester
133×60 in

p.29 / 33
Juan
ca. 2019
Polyester
133×60 in

A candid conversation with Simón Sepúlveda

The following interview with Simón Sepúlveda was conducted by Carolina Arévalo for Soft Territories, on February 28, 2019. Further exchanges between them occurred until March 8, 2019.

What do your artworks represent? How would you describe the visual language you articulate?

My works seek to represent social landscapes, mainly those that relate to migration. In this landscape, I seek to highlight and rescue the singularity and uniqueness of the subjects that partake in large scale processes in which the personal is often subsumed by the collective. My visual language is totally and absolutely inconsistent. I'm interested in refusing to have a single language because circumstances and contexts always change; on that basis, I am interested in being flexible. There are times when it is better to use colors and draw by hand and others when a black and white 3D (print) is better, yet both forms are super good and complement each other. It's like the difference between Wes Anderson and Paul Thomas Anderson; I like the second one better because he adapts and develops a different language in each film. At least that is what I try to do. Anyway, I think that what I do is inevitably linked to my background as a graphic designer, using massive codes and pop; and to my limitations, my technical and visual knowledge is limited so I develop what I have or can do.

Your first artworks emphasized textiles as an artifact of shelter, like blankets. Later you shifted their function, as wall hangings, a winking allusion to goblins...What does that change imply? In that sense, what does it mean to maintain the use of jacquard as a technique?

I think the shelter dimension is still present. Textiles give warmth and shelter even when they are

propped against a wall. It's less obvious but that initial idea remains present. I also believe that the artworks can be both. I don't mind if someone covers or touches this material. I don't think that a hung object ceases to be interactive. I like the textile as a technique because of its ductility and ability to move and adapt. I consider it plausible, when talking about these topics, to work with a material that changes, stretches, and is both vulnerable and delicate. That you have to take care of and spoil. Goblins on the other hand have always been used to tell stories. In this context, I like to use them as a narrative element in the textile.

Wall hangings were historically used to thermally isolate architectural spaces. The isolation was also acoustic, they offered a certain control over the propagation of ideas and comments in a larger space. Does your work also want to silence or contain some dimension of what is represented?

I think my work is part of a current stream that points to social problems; the solely hyper-personal stand is increasingly problematic in the face of more global issues. In that sense, I think what I want to do is the opposite of silence, I search for the amplification and expansion of a message and a problem.

1 UP or The Popular Unity (Spanish: Unidad Popular, UP) was a left-wing political alliance in Chile that stood behind the successful candidacy of Salvador Allende for the 1970 Chilean presidential election.

The technique implies that the design precedes the production of the artwork. In traditional European tapestry this was called modello. The difference with the jacquard is that production is mechanized. In that sense, your role is that of an ideologist rather than a producer. What are the implications of this approach to creating?

I love that mechanized production leaves variables to other's criteria. It makes a translation of what I do and that I lose control. I think it gives a much more interesting result both conceptually and formally. To be honest, the barrier of ideologist-producer doesn't worry me much. However, I've been working more closely with the producer in order to understand the variables in his interpretation, both material and constructive, to make a better work.

Currently, textile art has a feminist connotation. The medium historically belonged to women because it originated in the domestic domain. How do you position yourself in relation to the state of the art form?

It fascinates me to contribute with art that is a little looked down on, in the sense that it is considered homemade and not serious. I think this gives textiles their strength because at first they appear "weak" but after, if well executed, they surprise. Personally, I don't consider myself very nostalgic.

I don't look back or fixate too much on the vernacular. In fact I try to fight all that. It bores me when contemporary textile design or current graphic design—I mean in the context of Chile—is nostalgic and seeks to rescue or re-version things that already exist. I can't stand seeing a new version of a Mapuche (indigenous) pattern or a poster of the UP¹, although the originals fascinate me. I think you have to try to do new things, little seen, and suitable to the time, not look back but be in the present. I probably don't get it, but I'd rather die trying. Y.O.L.O.





Lulu
ca. 2019
Polyester
133×60 in



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Acknowledgments

Special thanks to Victoria Manganiello, Sarah Zapata, and Simon Sepulveda for trusting this project from the very beginning and making this exhibition happened with their relevant and haptic textile artwork. Many thanks for your time, dedication, and supportiveness.

Our profound gratitude to the Knockdown Center, for granting us this profound experience of art, enabling a fundamental conversation of awareness and explorations in times where questions of identity and intertwining are central in contemporary society.

Thanks to Professor Bhabha for sharing his knowledge under the light of postcoloniality and contemporary art on his publication.

The materialization of this catalog exhibit has been an insightful and engaging project; sincere thanks to Simón Sepúlveda, who also designed the catalog, and DIRAC, Cultural Affairs Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile, who has contributed to this project with the printing of 2,000 copies. Special thanks to Daniela Aravena who facilitated all the logistics involved.

Simón wants to thank to Noel Saavedra (Weberei) and Aron Filkey.



**CHILE LO
HACEMOS
TODOS**

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Soft Territories is a group exhibition at the Knockdowncenter, curated by Carolina Arévalo. It presents the work of Victoria Manganiello, Simón Sepúlveda and Sarah Zapata. Opens May 4th, 2019. The image in the cover is a textile representation based on a pdf 147 ticket that contains all the information of the + exhibition.