

Against a wall of large windows looking out to trees, scaffolding and buildings across the street, a floor loom and weaving bench sit positioned on a grey gallery floor at the Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts Project Space Gallery under an illuminating spotlight.

Flor de cuatro pétalos by Francisco echo Eraso, 2023.

A large “HD” followed by a small font “Harrisville Designs, Harrisville N.H. 03450” - reads, stamped onto the left side panel of the loom.

Geometric, soft but industrial New England Rock Maple wooden frame.
58” wide by 42” deep and around 50 inches in height
Roughly five feet by four feet by four feet

The loom provides enough space for a textile to be made at maximum fifty inches in width. A fairly sizable floor loom, typically used for making rugs.

The central rectangular structure called the “castle” sits in the middle of the loom. The castle has two vertical side panels with wide feet at the bottom, connected by a horizontal harness bar at the top, providing stability, durability, and trust in the structure.

Inside is a system of cables, chains, and hooks that run along the internal frame of the castle, connecting the harnesses with the ten “treadles” or pedals to raise and lower the warp threads up and down, following the order of the pattern. Like a well coordinated pianist.

With precision
And control.

This is the brain of the loom, the area where the system is solidified into its pattern code.

Each of the eight flat rectangular harnesses hold four thousand wire eyelet heddles hanging vertically, distributed amongst the harnesses. Each of the thousands of warp threads pass through these eyelets and continue along through the reed dent in the front 50 inches wide, the reed generously holds the warp ends in place, like a comb. Each strand sitting in tension through the reed, through the eyelet and along the back beam and down rolled onto the warp beam
Along with brown paper and warping slats
To ensure the threads remain organized and not inter-tangled.
The warp beam attaches to a hand crank controls the tension system with a stop pulley or friction break, Rotating clockwise to tighten and counter-clockwise loosen the tension.

The loom, an organized apparatus, connects and organizes the system of its sovereign body.

The warp threads move in a smooth horizontal plane.

A balance between disordered and taught tension throughout, as even as can be at this stage in its process.

Originally designed for rapid textile production, the loom now sits idly in the gallery
half-warped.

In the front side of the reed where the threads might typically pass over the breast beam to wind, and crank onto the front roller - or where the woven textile typically wraps around as it is being woven,

the four thousand or so strands are instead sectioned off
by color, cascading down the front beam into a loop, a knot, a long thick braid with a short tail of yarn grazing the ground in no particular order

almost like a quipu

Keeping track of the slow process,
Temporalities of crip time,
Borrowed time.

Quipus coded with accounting formulas,
divisions along the axes of
grief time
work time
rest time
time to weave.

The thin linen colors compose the two layers of this double weave.

Gold like stars, like mustard,
like the feeling of the earth warmed from the rays of sun at dusk,
the ripe skin of a freshly harvested lemon.
Gold like the weakest justification for genocide.

Irregularly dyed reddish pinks and light purples compose the second layer.

Washed out blood-red
like the mixtures of blood and serus fluid
that suction out of a surgical drain.
the blood of insects, or people treated as insects
by humans settling, displacing through debility.

On the loom

A weaving not yet woven
A textile still yet to come
A process as a product

An organized intertangling
A work about death
And about survival
By any means necessary

Up on top of the castle of the loom is a matching wooden tray
An altar to the weeds filled with smells of tea from the Andes mountains
Mugwort
Calendula
Rose
Lemongrass
Eucalyptus
Palo Santo
Sage
Rosemary
Lavender

On the front of the uppermost harness bar is a small double woven textile,
Shaped around its two layer pockets and folds
In the form of a ribbon
In blocks of alternating yellows and reds,
Each color is a variation made with different yarns
- fuzzy, smooth, linen, wool
large knotted threads in matching yellows flow down its side.

Where is the blue to complete this Colombian flag?

A
Red
Cross
bag
hangs
from
the
side of
the
loom

And pins, Consuelo's prized awards
For a hard day's care-work
the only things left binding us beyond our consequential
Mastectomies.

The pins all along the ribbon shaped small textile

Draped in the middle of the front panel of the loom

A tuft of hair sticking out- settled snug into a pocket, woven shut.

Two small rocks unseen inside another pocket, in between the double weave.

Six small circle pins

Red symmetrical crosses on a white background

With gold rims and outlines, with words that read:

“Cruz Roja Colombiana”

“Damas Grises”

“Nariño Directivo”

“15 años”

“20 años”

“Honor y Perseverancia”

And a small rectangular name pin:

“Consuelo R. de Eraso Voluntaria”

In mourning and dedication of my Abuelitos Erlinto y Consuelo

who dedicated their lives

to mutual aid

to the Red Cross

as presidents, volunteers, heart surgeon, nurse. Caregivers

to disabled and indigenous people under layered systems

Of occupied rule throughout Southern Colombia, in Pasto, Nariño.

To my grandparents who dared to question

maybe national relief isn't what will save us after all,

After all we have each other.

Who like the scorpion people sting whoever dares infringe on our survival

Those people, those pandemics

Those national agendas for gold hoarding.

The loom is programmed to weave Grief Portals in-between the two textile layers.

In between the gold and the red.

Holding

And losing

the linen Cross,

Hiding the liminal dimension both occupied and fleeting

pockets made from the juncture of the two surfaces.

A deconstructed flag, a cross which loses all of its meaning if you slow down too much

A technology inseparable from the

Inter-twining of craft and medicine

through war.

A deliberate process of rest and care

positioned as an alternative for the systems and nation states that fail us all.