

Here and Through and Back and Through

May 23, 2015 – July 11, 2015

In *Here and Through and Back and Through*, Christie Lim and Shamina Senaratne present a collection of new textile works.

The textile medium, perhaps more than other visual media, brings the human body immediately to the imagination. Textiles are at human scale. We experience textiles every day as clothing or as a covering to drape things in the home. Textiles are naturally intimate. Textiles are tactile. They invite touch to feel the weight and texture of the material between thumb and forefinger or the brush of a hand. And, the hand in textile art is very important as the human tool that colours and shapes materials. In each of Lim and Senaratne's works, the artists reveal the explicit facts of their having been made by hand through stitching, cutting, and embroidery.

Each individual body of work in the exhibition presents the viewer with a chance for an encounter. The works appear to change with each change in the viewer's position. Through the play of light and shadow, each change in position provides an opportunity to experience the work anew. Colours increase or decrease in intensity. The work envelops the viewer in one moment and obscures the space of another work in another moment. Looking through the sheerness of the fabric in one work gives a different appearance to each other work that can be seen. The collected works compel viewers to be present and open in the experience of each of these moments. This is a key theme that connects the works and the artists – it brings together moments, in meditation, in the everyday and the ethereal.

Senaratne's work, *Here, and Here and Here and Here*, features a prominent line of textile pieces held together by a single thread and pinned onto the gallery wall. As it moves forward across the length of the wall, the textile line traces a loop, moving upwards and backwards before returning forward again on its journey. The trajectory of the line and the dialogue that surrounds it follows the trajectory of life, with the looping figure evidence of a momentary change in direction over the life of the line. Senaratne's work describes a journey upon which a turn backwards can return one forwards again with new insights on a path back toward coherence.

There is something of meditative processes underlying both Lim and Senaratne's work. Each artist approaches the existential and everyday rhythms of life from the effortless rising and falling rhythm of each breath to the bustling or syncopated rhythms of the street, or the rhythmic goings on in the places people live and work, or in the rhythm of natural and cultural patterns that embellish the surfaces that surround us or the rhythms of the languages we use to communicate with one another.

For Lim the flotsam and jetsam of daily life present a stream of conscious raising moments that exemplify just how much our everyday lives play out as an improvisation with the spaces, places and times that we occupy. From one moment to the next, blasted from a seemingly mundane continuum, even the most mundane objects can lead to momentary insights or flights of imagination. The collection of the objects that we encounter in a moment, that Lim has painstakingly rendered in thread, show that moments do not happen to us, but happen with us.

In "*...And though the carpet maker didn't say, he now saw the world in a different way*", a large suspended transparent material exposes the threads that trace a collection of words that themselves appear suspended in air. The shadows of the stitched words cast upon the space give them new dimensions. They fall upon the viewer who chooses to rest upon the cushion. The words - a collection of terms that,

alone and together, we use to inform and describe personal identity and the motivations that sustain our place in the world - envelop the viewer.

The ten suspended, colourful, translucent panels that comprise Lim's *Departure/Arrival/Departure* create a luminous environment bisected with a gap between each five-panel group. The gap is illuminated by a single spot that stands as an invitation for a viewer to take up position in that place. It is a place of quiet contemplation where many layers of texture and colour can be seen through each other with the subtle undulations of the sheer fabric capturing the rhythmic flow of a clear and colourful breath. As one leaves that spot and moves along the panels, the intensity of the colour rises on the nearest panels as it falls away on those from which one moves farther away.

In the five suspended panels of a continuing series, *Interpreting the Shadows and the Light*, Senaratne references nature, and the marble pierced screens (jallis) and gardens found in Mogul architecture. Using over four hundred distinctly different hand-cut six-sided geometric forms, she hints at different perspectives on creation, the value and beauty of diversity and plurality, the constantly changing nature of reality. The passage from one screen though to the next offers the viewer a variety of narratives. As in the jallis they reference, they create experiences of the beauty of each surface; and at the same time they mediate relationships between people and spaces as the viewer is able to see through each to the next and also walk between them.

For Lim and Senaratne, working in textiles is a conscious act to work slowly and deliberately by hand; the process of making is an act of meditation. Each artist draws inspiration from the long and short moments of experience that provide opportunities for artistic contemplation. The works are meant to be seen from many points of view. While moving amongst these new works, they assemble and reassemble into an infinite number of stories that move here and through and back and through the exhibition.

Gregory Elgstrand
Curator, Art Gallery at Evergreen

Christie Lim is a recent graduate of Emily Carr University of Art and Design (BFA, 2013). She also studied in the Advanced Textiles Program at Capilano University (2011). Lim has developed a unique and provocative body of work in textiles that has recently been exhibited in such group exhibitions as *Vastness*, curated by Garry Kennedy & Cathy Busby at IE Gallery (2013), *Textile Art Show*, at Red Gate Gallery in Vancouver (2011) and *Close Reading: Artist Books from Emily Carr University Students and Alumni*, presented by the Port Moody Arts Centre in 2010. In 2013, Lim participated in *Tex'Atelier* in Agen, France lead by textile artist Nikola Orpen. She has been engaged as an instructor and volunteer at numerous organizations throughout the lower mainland. christielim.com

Shamina Senaratne has been a practicing artist, composer, musician, choreographer and dancer for over twenty years. Her textile works have been included in such important group exhibitions as *To Visit the Tiger* at the Vancouver Community Arts Council Gallery (1992), *Artropolis 93* in Vancouver (1993), *Desh Pardesh* (Toronto, 1994) where she was also artist-in-residence, and *The Return of the Tiger* at the Pendulum Gallery (2003). Senaratne's poetry and fiction have appeared in *West Coast Line*, *Dandelion*, *Ripple Effect*, and the anthologies *North West Edge*, *Lady Driven* and *Seven Sisters*. Her text based music and performances have been performed at Sonic Boom, Women in View Festival, the Kiss Project, and the Vancouver International Writers Festival. Senaratne has a BA in Communications and History and a Certificate in Public History from Simon Fraser University. She has studied textile design, colour theory, dye techniques, surface design and needlework over a number of years, through independent research and exploration, and through annual workshops and the Maiwa Textile Symposium. Senaratne is a member of the Vancouver Guild of Fibre Arts and Surface Design Association. shamina.info