



The **22**
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LORENZO HURTADO SEGOVIA

INTERVIEW BY KIERAN DONNAN

KIERAN DONNAN: Tell us a little about the process of creating your pieces and how you arrived at this form of working?

LHS: I was making dinner one night on a small stovetop grill made of woven metal strips when I had an epiphany. As the grill turned red over the fire, I realized that the modernist painting search for universals was actually pre-modern, pre-historic even, and it was the grid of weaving. The most basic weaving technique is found in textiles from all cultures around the world! So art history, graduate school discussions, conceptual development, and material qualities all coalesced into one simple idea: weave the painting. Initially I made two small one-sided pieces before realizing the backside was also woven and a potential composition. The next few pieces were small material explorations. These works are cut-up paintings on paper, woven together in new compositions. It was important to arrive at the thinnest strip width that held enough painterly information while retaining structural strength to withstand manual weaving. This is conceptually important in terms of retaining, yet arresting and rearticulating, painterly gestures. I used glue at the beginning to hold the ends in place, but I wanted to push possible connotations and thread came into play. All "Papel tejido" pieces are now hemmed and they're all made by hand from start to finish. I start by painting both sides of a sheet of paper, then cutting it into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch strips with a straight edge and utility knife, then weaving on a slanted table I rigged up from the wall, and finally hemming.

KD: Do you plan these differences on each side or are they happy accidents?

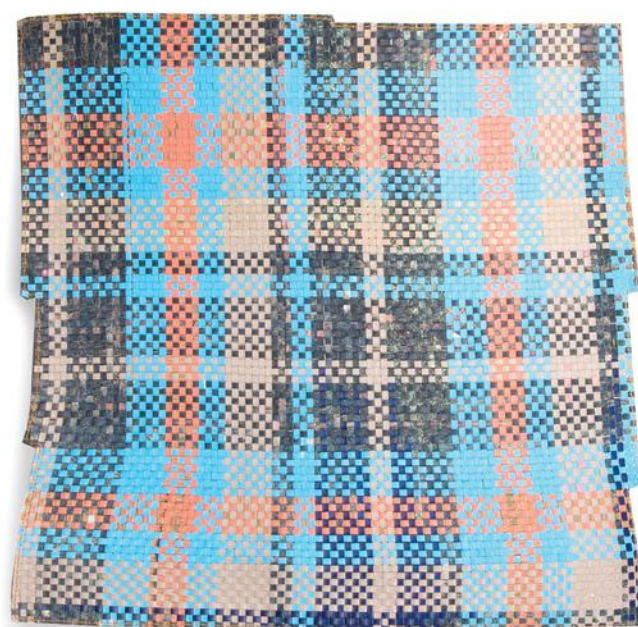
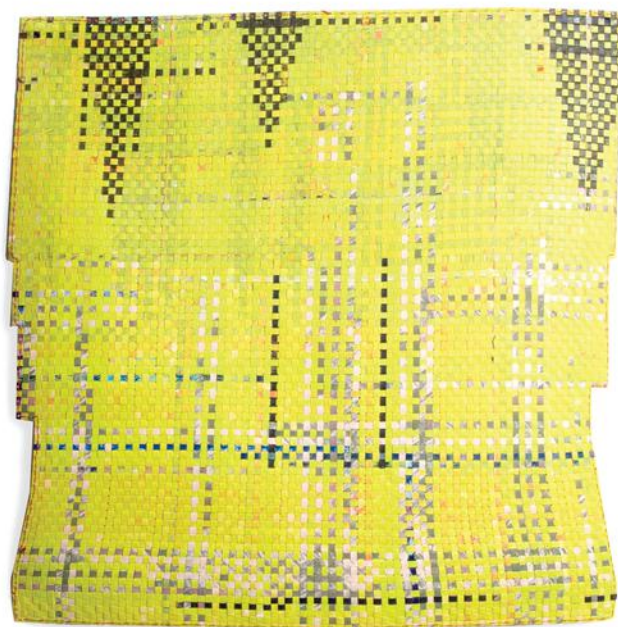
LHS: Both sides are planned. The first thing is to set a color palette for each side. Depending on the show I'm working on, I may plot a tartan sequence on one side and execute an ikat fade on the other. Often, though, the color palette I started with bores me, and that's when I throw a curveball color in. I think of it as a contrapuntal beat in music. I try to make each piece as diverse as the last within the physical and conceptual restraints of the "Papel tejido" body of work. While there are formal similarities for pieces within a given show, I hope the work evolves over time.

KD: In "Paisajes en tierra caliente" and "Primeras frutas," you have created a new type of texture to your art in your installations and Papel tejido. Can you explain the transition from ambient painting to more physical texture?

LHS: Transitions between bodies of work are not so clear-cut for me because I often work on multiple projects at the same time, over a long period of time — often years. The "Paisajes en tierra caliente" and "Primeras frutas" overlapped, a few of them were done at the same time, so they share the color palette and acrylic ink. What prompted me to do the "Paisajes en tierra caliente" is a self-conscious awareness of my labor condition. I was driving a beat-up white Ford Ranger at the time while still in grad school at Otis School of Art and Design. I became all too aware of many fellow commuters in their white trucks loaded with gardening tools, most of them Latino immigrants like myself. I found myself in a rarefied academic environment and I decided to paint small landscapes, a "lower class" painting genre, as a solidarity gesture. I saw a relationship between gardening and painting plants, different discursive registers and labor economies, but both aiming to manufacture a representation of nature. The "Primeras frutas" are the first body of work I worked on after finishing graduate school, as a professional. They are important for theological reasons. As a Christian, I practice tithing, and offering. While I am not harvesting grain for the first fruit offerings of the Old Testament, I am a painter and these are my first fruits as it were. The imagery consists of Christian symbolism, such as a white dove for the Holy Spirit, our church building, instruments for worship. They belong to Venice Foursquare Church in Venice, California, where my wife and I attended church at the time.

KD: How did the physical aspect of your new work change in how you can communicate?

LHS: The "Papel tejidos" came while still working on the "Primeras frutas" and the first few are roughly the same size as the wood panels for the paintings. The paintings are filled with tiny details. I thought the weaving texture itself would be the detail so that opened up the rest of the image to painterly gestures and general compositional approach. Recent "Papel tejidos" are bigger, up to 110 x 146 inches, and that enhances that atmospheric quality of the work while maintaining attention to surface, texture, and materials. The most recent "Papel tejido" pieces are guided by the idea that abstraction and representation are two sides of the same coin. Every representation is an abstraction and every abstraction is a representation. I think that even the most self-referential tautologies in art represent a certain ideology, education system, even class. I also think the most direct representational imagery is abstracted to a degree through its mannerism, style, and presentation.



KD: You have mentioned the importance of Christianity in your work. How do the “Papel tejido” artworks influence and evoke these feelings, and in what way can you see these being reinvigorated?

LHS: This is a tough question — one I haven’t solved and continue to address in my work. The first clear iteration of Christian content in the “Papel tejidos” happened for a show at CBI Gallery in January 2012. All pieces in that show had crosses in them, the cross being structurally inherent in the weaving technique and also a Christian symbol. The installation was set up as if it were a village where the pieces up front had architectonic imagery resembling church steeples and a piece at the back had a cross in a heart. This created a sort of travel from public, civic Christianity to private faith. My next show at CBI opens this December 2013. The work for that exhibition is mostly sculptural — tall wooden poles covered in woven cord emblazoned with various geometric shapes, words, and Christian symbols. They resemble scepters or staffs and are titled “Cetros.” There also is a large “Papel tejido,” the largest yet, a large painting, and other smaller pieces. It’s an eclectic show. I’m interested in how various peoples have interpreted Christianity and in the many ways that faith is manifest and made physical. I am making a move away from a readily coded Protestant visual language, away from clichés, but I still want to speak about Christianity and not about religion or spirituality as a vague general mood. It’s a difficult task.

KD: As I mentioned before, there is a certain ambience and

distant clearness in your art, especially in a close look at the “Papel tejido” images. There also seems to be so much reflection about the smallest aspects of the larger patterns. How can you explain these inner complexities and how do you see these details in the wider aspect of pattern and overall image?

LHS: These weavings are made a square quarter-inch at a time, so every detail seems huge to me while I’m working on a piece. I work on a slanted table rigged from a wall and roll the pieces under it as they get longer. I can only see about eighteen inches at a time and I cannot see the back-side until the piece is done. This situation forces me to track what I paint and weave so I can keep a mental image of what’s going on compositionally.

KD: How do you see the texture of your work changing in the future? There are many tiny intimate layerings within what you have presented, and even by themselves they seem to have a message. Do you intend to stay within the broader field of tapestry or explore these minor details even further?

LHS: I will continue to develop the “Papel tejido” work along the representation/abstraction duality for a few more pieces. I will also continue the “Cetros.” I think those bodies of work are open-ended and can have many manifestations. I am currently in the middle of illustrating a children’s book using hand-made stuffed dolls and dioramas. I’m exploring minor details in a new genre. We’ll see what comes next. I enjoy exploring and trying new things.

OPENING PAGE: *PAPEL TEJIDO 38 (RECTO)*, 2012, ACRYLIC ON PAPER

TOP LEFT AND RIGHT: *PAPEL TEJIDO 39 (RECTO + VERSO)*, 2012, ACRYLIC ON PAPER

BOTTOM LEFT: *PAPEL TEJIDO 34 (RECTO)*, 2012, ACRYLIC ON PAPER

BOTTOM RIGHT: *PAPEL TEJIDO 34 (VERSO)*, 2012, ACRYLIC ON PAPER



ABOUT THE MAGAZINE

The 22 features 22 contributors each issue. The magazine's mission is to publish art, music, and writing as integrated structures that play off each other and enhance the whole. We are looking for intriguing art, poetry, fiction, non-fiction, video, music, animation, and more. The restrictions are few and the work is chosen by the creators or a visiting guest editor/curator. Many of our issues revolve around themes which will be posted in advance of each issue. Our staff is currently volunteer based and we are always looking for great people. Please check out our jobs page if you are interested in volunteering for the 22.

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