

A.I.R.

never settling into the stability of objects

Zoila Andrea Coc-Chang (鄭慧蘭)

May 27–June 25, 2023

Opening reception: Thursday, June 1, from 6–8pm

GALLERY II

In *never settling into the stability of objects*, 2022–2023 Fellow Zoila Andrea Coc-Chang (鄭慧蘭) presents a new body of work consisting of sculptural weavings and paintings that foreground the resilience and bonds of her Chinese-Guatemalan diasporic kinship networks. Looping metals, entangled natural and synthetic fibers, and strung black beans gesture toward the intimacies and movements of her ancestors, seeding connections that honor their various migrations and everyday environments.

Throughout the past few years, Coc-Chang has been collecting food remnants and ephemera from Latin America and Asia, such as consumer food wrappers, corn husks, and avocado seeds, which are sourced from family, friends, shared meals, and local restaurants [from Guatemala City to Hialeah to New Haven, and places in between]. This ongoing exchange is not only a ritual, but a means of returning to/enacting ancestral guidance. She draws inspiration from her guiding lights: the creative sensibilities of her mami and papi, the spiritual practices of and for ancestors, and the ways of being of those on the margins.

Held within her dense weavings are remnants of silk organza, botanically dyed cotton, telephone lines, Chinese prayer bead grass, and an amalgamation of food packaging from Hi-Chews to Hong Kong style instant ramen. Hung from dozens of common nails that are embedded into the wall, works like *escondido debajo de las capas* morph materials that are in conversation with the landscapes both built and natural from which they emerge. By weaving these ingredients together to create unsettled objects, Coc-Chang signals to what grows from communities that are perpetually unsettled.

Through these unsettled objects, Coc-Chang converts the gallery space into an interstitial landscape, one that sits in the in-between of the geographies contained in the work. The gallery transforms into a place where she believes we see ourselves in. A place where she can imagine the r/emergence of her communities. A place where the care and futurity of others matter. The landscape holds various sites of rebellious inhabitation where people, ideas, and things (objects) come to light. In this case, she looks at the inner-workings of her home, food networks/gastronomic experiences, and the built and natural environment.

never settling into the stability of objects draws its title from the writing of Edgar Garcia's *Emergency: Reading the Popol Vuh in a Time of Crisis*. Coc-Chang uses art-making as a method to cultivate a continuous growing space of futurity from the skills that have been passed down and passed on despite uninterrupted violence.

“Never settling into the stability of objects in singular identities— never comfortable in isomorphy— things in Mesoamerican worlds remain in constant oscillation, iterability, intensification, multiplication, and relationality.” – Edgar Garcia



Zoila Andrea Coc-Chang, *escondido debajo de las capas* (detail), 2021–23, Silk organza, jute, wool, botanically dyed cotton, telephone lines, Chinese prayer bead grass, nails, and avocado seeds and food wrappers sourced from family, friends, shared meals and local restaurants, approx. 36 x 78 inches. Photo: Sebastián Pérez.

Zoila Andrea Coc-Chang (鄭慧蘭) is a Chinese-Guatemalan mixed-media artist and educator who grew up in Miami. Her work interrogates the complexities and intimacies between and within Asia and the Americas to not only reveal and work through the nuances of where and when these geographies collide, but in hope of forging new possibilities for existing beyond histories of struggle and territorially-bounded cultural representations. She is especially inspired by the collectivities and imaginaries of the trans-oceanic kinship networks that have formed through various migrations and the survival of their ways of being despite continuous conquest.

Coc-Chang holds an MFA in Painting & Printmaking from Yale School of Art and a BA in Studio Art and Education Studies from Brandeis University. She completed an apprenticeship at STPI Creative Workshop & Gallery in Singapore. Currently she is a Lecturer in Visual Arts at Brown University and will be a participant of the XXIII Bienal de Arte Paiz in Guatemala later in 2023.

