

Press Release



Haji Oh, *Mother Mountain*, 2023, cyanotype on linen fabric
Image reference: National Library of Australia, nla.obj-152972214

"I regard weaving and unraveling as ways to evoke the existence of silent memory, introducing my own concepts and ideas and creating spaces to stimulate people's imagination."

- Haji Oh, 2023

Alison Bradley Projects is proud to announce *Un / Weaving*, the debut solo exhibition of **Haji Oh** in the United States, curated by **Eimi Tagore-Erwin**. Oh (b. Osaka, 1976) is a third generation Zainichi Korean artist, born and raised in Japan, now based in Wollongong, Australia. Oh developed her own unique approach to the medium by incorporating traditional Korean sewing techniques, Japanese *kasuri* (ikat), *hogushigasuri* (warp printing ikat), and Guatemalan backstrap loom weaving. *Un / Weaving* showcases a selection of 15 artworks representative of Oh's oeuvre, surveying the artist's dynamic experimentations with textile as she has traced memory and migration through weaving, dyeing, stitching, photography, and cyanotype.

Oh's extensive body of work gives expression to the inevitable silences that occur amongst diasporic communities that don't easily fit into national histories. Drawing from the Latin word *texere*, meaning "to weave," Oh likens the process of creating textiles to composing a text—she weaves threads together to compose the structural space of memories that have been overlooked and forgotten, opening them up to the present.

Stemming from her grandmother's migration to Japan from Jeju Island, South Korea, in the 1930s, Oh's early works combine portraiture and textile to reimagine the "unknowability" of her ancestral past. Due to the generational distance between Oh and her grandmother, significant chapters of her family's immigration story were lost when her grandmother passed away in 2001. The artist learned traditional sewing techniques in South Korea in order to reflect upon her identity as a Korean in Japan, the un verbalized memories of her grandmother, and unresolved questions about her inherited past. Oh has since expanded her work to include the voices of overlooked migrant communities of the Pacific, mirroring her own transpacific travels. In 2008, she traveled to Canada as a visiting scholar of York University and interned at the Textile Museum of Canada in Toronto, leading her to create mixed media works about the experiences of incarcerated Japanese-Canadian women during WWII, with immersive sound components in both English and Japanese. Oh moved to Australia in 2014, where her work gained a more global perspective and she began her ongoing *Grand-mother Island Project* series, which traces the inherited and lost stories of migrant labor communities that have crossed the Pacific Ocean. The exhibition includes three chapters of this project, including the first of Oh's new site-specific *Seabird Habitatscapes* series. Reconceptualizing the landscapes of islands that pepper the Pacific, this new series reflects on the interconnectedness of resource extraction, imperialism, and migration in a bold culmination of Oh's experimentation with media.

Oh has spent two decades creating works that blur the framework of national boundaries, highlighting the liminality of transpacific movement and the way that these movements are often erased by history. Her body of work shifts seamlessly between the personal and global, but throughout, the memory of her grandmother is deeply influential—as a grounding figure and as a metaphor for an inherited past.

Alison Bradley Projects is honored to bring Oh's striking works to a wider audience in New York. In a city brimming with powerful, diasporic stories, Oh's work gains new meaning. *Un / Weaving: Haji Oh* is accompanied by an online catalog authored by Eimi Tagore-Erwin.

Artist Biography

Haji Oh is a Zainichi Korean artist from Osaka (b. 1976), living and working in Wollongong, Australia and Japan. An accomplished international textile and fiber artist, Oh studied Dyeing and Weaving at the Kyoto City University of the Arts, receiving her MA in 2002 and PhD in 2012. She was recently awarded the Tokyo Contemporary Art Award (TCAA) for 2024-2026 and named as a finalist for the ANTEPRIMA x Center for Heritage Arts and Textile (CHAT) Contemporary Textile Art Prize.

Oh's recent exhibitions include *KANTEN:観展 The Limits of History*, apexart, New York 2023; *Roppongi Crossing: Coming & Going*, Mori Art Museum, Tokyo 2022-23; *TEXTURE*, Canberra Contemporary Art Space 2023; *Publicness of the Art Center*, Art Tower Mito, Japan 2019-2020; *Memories in Weaving*, Oyama City Kurumaya Museum of Art, Japan 2019; Kanazawa: *Altering Home*, Neighborhoods in Kanazawa City; and *Wearing Memory*, University of Wollongong, 2015. She received the Han Chang-Woo-Tetsu Cultural Foundation Grant in 2011, and has completed artist residencies at Art Tower Mito and Aomori Contemporary Art Center, Japan; and Bundanon and University of Wollongong, Australia.

Curator Biography

Eimi Tagore-Erwin (b. 1991, USA) is curator and doctoral candidate of East Asian Studies at New York University. Her research focus is contemporary transpacific art engaging with colonial history, memory, and politics. Recent curatorial projects include *KANTEN 観展: The Limits of History* (apexart, 2023), *Floating Monuments: Motoyuki Shitamichi* (Alison Bradley Projects, 2023), and *Fierce Autonomy: Paintings by Yuki Katsura* (Alison Bradley Projects, 2021). She was a 2023 Curatorial Fellow at the Shigeo Kubota Video Art Foundation and a 2021 Wikipedia Fellow for PoNJA-GenKon and Asia Art Archive in America, where she focused on Japanese artists who have faced censorship. She was raised between California, Hawai'i, and Japan, experiences that influence her curatorial approach to transnational movement and collectivity.

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