



View of "Unraveling Collective Forms," 2019.
LOS ANGELES

"Unraveling Collective Forms"

LOS ANGELES CONTEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS (LACE)
6522 Hollywood Boulevard
April 3–May 25

The ancient Inca people used *quipus*, systems of knotted strings, to record precious data. When the Spanish conquerors arrived, many *quipus* were burned and, with them, the ciphers' keys. Today, scholars are still working to translate this language. Our imaginations must fill in the blanks.

"Unravelling Collective Forms" at Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions brings together women artists and artists of color engaging with the form and history of the *quipu* to process and reimagine the impact of colonialism, patriarchy, and Western imperialism. Mercedes Dorame's *The Wind Is Speaking – Ahniiken Shishiinamok*, 2019, is stationed at the front of the space: A meteor shower of red yarn flows from the ceiling and descends onto an unvanquished island painted on the floor with a mixture of cinnamon and salt, populated only by shells, fountain grass, and cast concrete stones. Offering guidebooks with which we might navigate this new world, Mónica Rodríguez and Jorge González have installed *Una extranjera peligrosa* (A Dangerous Foreigner), 2019, which comprises the library of anarcho-feminist Luisa Capetillo, including Emma Goldman's 1910 essay collection *Anarchism and Other Essays* ("But what about human nature? Can it be changed?"). A cattail carpet anchors a

space for focused reading. Nearby sits another sanctuary, a wood shelter, lacquered purple and lined with soft, soundproofing upholstery (Kim Zumpfe's *a safe place for people I love or; How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Weathering the Storm*, 2017). Within this shelter-like den, you can curl up and close your eyes; in the dark might come an onrush of feelings and memories.

This impulse toward heightened emotive expression is echoed in the cacophony emerging from the gallery's back end. Tania Candiani's three-channel video *Pulso* (Pulse), 2019, shows women ecstatically pounding traditional drums in Mexico City's subway. Their rebellious phrases convey a world of meaning, even without translation.

— Yxta Maya Murray

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