

Artist statement 7/13

I primarily practice floor-loom weaving and ikat dyeing. Ikat involves tying sections of thread before dyeing to create resists, accumulating to form certain patterns or motifs. Ikat has a specific tradition in Andhra Pradesh, where I am from in India. I am mourning my feelings of rootlessness, building patience, and centering my ideas of beauty within Indian aesthetics.

I engage in cumulative gestures of tying, weaving, knotting, and unknotting. I value repetition in my practice, but it is not a repetition which is singular and immobile. A tradition should not be so seamlessly translated or consumed. I am removed from the generational knowledge of the ikat tradition by class, culture, and physical distance. I do not want to cheat that lineage. In my study, Ikat weavers are often abstracted from their work. I must question and imagine my relationship to people whose names I don't know.

Although I practice ikat in a different environment and with more privilege than most ikat weavers in India, we share some language. In the small action of tying a knot, there is some overlap with other lives and generations. I am deeply drawn to the movement of generational knowledge, and I cannot resist idealizing traditions which are connected by blood. But I also must believe that knowledge can be imagined, for cultures whose memories have been attacked by imperial violence.

One of the first steps toward liberation is to overcome the narrative war, to build the habit of unlearning the desire for whiteness. The racist capitalist system which constantly fills our heads with the ideals of whiteness requires a constant rejection to combat it. It is a slow, cumulative shift, and I hope that my practice of ikat is ultimately a training for that transformation.