

## Ana Esteve Llorens: Thinking of Making

Lauren Moya Ford | Madrid 2018

I'm living on an island. I don't know anyone, and I spend most days alone. I came here with the goal of writing more than I'd ever written before. After months of imagining what it would be like, I've finally arrived. But I find myself mostly unable to write. I feel like I'm holding a book close against my nose, and all the text is too blurry to read. I realised that I will probably have to wait a few months before putting any of my impressions on paper. I won't be able to write until I can look back at the island from far away, from a place where I lose all the details that make today so sharp, crunchy, and hard to digest. That's when I'll be able to abstract this experience into something worth reading.

Ana Esteve Llorens says that "no abstraemos de la nada." When I first saw her new textiles pieces, their large scale and earthy tones made me think of color field paintings. But now that I'm living on an island, I see her colours and lines more palpably in the arid landscape around me. And just like the sand, ocean air, and dusty mountains have their own densities, the fibres in Esteve Llorens's pieces are made of different materials that shape their nature. Plant and insect dyes and fibres from Mexico and beyond embed them with a subtle sense of place, which Esteve Llorens identifies as an "accumulation of experiences, something that builds up with time." Indeed, weaving is a repetitive, physical process that opens up its maker to meditation and memory. Remembering is a kind of thinking and a kind of making, and when we remember, the story is rewritten, reinforced, and altered. The remembered image is always fragmented.

And so mirrors in these pieces are portals to another world, but only part of it. They might reflect portions of other works, or the viewer herself as she moves through the gallery space. Then, the viewer's body becomes part of the surface of the piece as she faces it. This is fitting, since the motion and rhythm of the weaver's body is what gives the works their form, tension, and shape. And so the two bodies are brought together, however briefly, by the mirror. The pieces invite the viewer to insert herself further through pictorial association- to her they may resemble a beach scene, a highway, a rattlesnake skin. This visual abstraction, along with the works' physical flexibility- that they can stretch, roll up, and hang- represent the compelling point between craft (in this case weaving) and fine art (installation and painting) that Esteve Llorens explores through her art practice.

The artist began weaving in Mexico, a place that I associate with a former lover, late nights, my grandmother, and all those who came before her. I can write about that place because enough time has passed since I have been there that thinking of it is actually remembering it. Those times and these pieces remind me of the obsidian mirrors I saw in museums, and of Tezcatlipoca, the Aztec god of smoking mirrors. That's what I need now- to see, but not clearly. I need a view smoked by time, space, and the profoundness of memory. Back here on the island, I'm thinking of making, but I'm not ready yet.

This text was published on the occasion of the exhibition "Trip".