

Hellen Ascoli: The World Upside Down

An exhibition exploring themes of translation and the power of textiles to connect across borders

April 8–August 1, 2025

Opening Reception:
April 8, 2025
6–8pm

Gallery Hours:
Monday–Friday
10:30am–5:30pm

The International Studio & Curatorial Program (ISCP) presents *Hellen Ascoli: The World Upside Down*, the artist's first solo exhibition in New York. Spanning a range of mediums from textiles to collage, drawing and video, *The World Upside Down* brings together works by Ascoli that explore how weaving serves as a form of translation, a way to retell collective histories, and reveal the power of language in its spoken, written, and woven forms. Ascoli, who is known for her intricate weavings made with a backstrap loom—a tool that wraps around the waist, often reflects on the ways textiles connect to the body and to place. She finds inspiration in an array of sources including weaving histories and material culture from her home country of Guatemala, as well as the decolonial writings of Gloria E. Anzaldúa and Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui.



Hellen Ascoli, *Interpreting Ana*, 2025, repurposed Corte (wrap around skirt) from Colotenango, cotton and raffia cloth hand woven on back-strap loom, random weave, and wood stick, 32 × 72 in. (81.28 × 182.88 cm)

Ascoli's thinking around translation is informed by her work as an interpreter for immigrant youth from Central and South America who are navigating the incarceration system in the United States. During her interpretation sessions, she creates points of connection by teaching random weaving, an intuitive technique that produces a loose, structureless pattern. In her own words, Ascoli says "I watch it become a support for these border crossers, who have become untethered to their country and language of origin." Works like *Interpreting Ana* feature this collaborative random weave intertwined with layers of differently woven textiles made using backstrap and floor looms. While weaving, Ascoli considers how experiences of migration and displacement stir up feelings of uncertainty and loss. Her practice makes space for sharing these stories and healing from personal and collective trauma.

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Hellen Ascoli is a Guatemalan artist, weaver, and educator living in Baltimore, Maryland and Guatemala City, Guatemala. She was a resident at ISCP in 2023, supported by the Pollock-Krasner Foundation. Her work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati; La Nueva Fábrica, Antigua Guatemala, Guatemala; Art Pace, San Antonio, Texas; and Proyectos Ultravioleta, Guatemala City, Guatemala. She has participated in group exhibitions at institutions including Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas; Museo Tamayo, Mexico City; Bienal de Arte Paiz, Museo de Correos, Guatemala City. Ascoli's work was recently featured in *Flow States - LA TRIENAL 2024* at El Museo del Barrio, New York, and it is currently on view in *Sharjah Biennial 16: to carry*, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates.

Hellen Ascoli: The World Upside Down is curated by Melinda Lang, ISCP's Director of Programs and Exhibitions. It is supported by Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso; Hartfield Foundation; James Rosenquist Foundation; Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation; New York City Council District 34; New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council; New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature; Swedish Arts Grants Committee; van Beuren Charitable Foundation; William Talbott Hillman Foundation; and Woodman Family Foundation.

About ISCP:

Founded in 1994, ISCP is the fourth-largest visual arts residency program in the world and a global leader in the field of visual arts residency programs. ISCP supports the creative development of artists and curators, and promotes exchange through residencies and public programs. Housed in a former factory in Brooklyn, with 35 light-filled work studios and two galleries, ISCP organizes exhibitions, events and offsite projects, which are free and open to all, sustaining a vibrant community of contemporary art practitioners and diverse audiences. Over 2,000 artists and curators from more than 105 countries, including the United States have undertaken residencies at ISCP.

ISCP does not discriminate on the basis of disability in terms of admission, access, or employment. ISCP programs and activities are accessible to visitors with disabilities. Accommodations are made to the best of the institution's ability, depending on individual visitors' needs. To request accommodations, please contact info@iscp-nyc.org or call 718-387-2900.



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