

An Unfolding Revolution toward Widespread Flourishing

Patricia Hoi Ling Ki



Figure 1: Patricia Hoi Ling Ki, "An Unfolding Revolution Toward Widespread Flourishing," altered book, 2019. India ink, embroidery, and crochet on paper, approx. 9.5" x 40."

Accessibility Text: Full spread of the altered book art piece, with accordion pages between hard covers. The book pages are stained with black ink, cut in various ways, with stitching and crochet pieces spreading out from them.

Artist Statement

The idea to create this work was sparked by a re-reading of former Canadian prime minister Steven Harper's 2008 apology regarding the Indian Residential Schools, in which generations of genocidal policies and practices of colonial violence against dignity and lifeworlds were framed within the words, "a sad chapter in our history" (qtd in Shotwell 2016, 31). This work is rage against this framing and the crimes it tries to obscure and protect. It deconstructs the frame by ripping apart, forcing open, cutting across. Through this reshaping, new forms emerge from the pages, demanding that new materials be added. They grow, spread, take over, though they are never fully outside of or detached from the frame (Butler 1993, 21–22).

The part of the book where all the pages are glued together is called a spine. Bones that hold up the rest of the bones, encasing the central nervous system, sending signals to the rest of the body, animating muscles, sinews, flesh, ways of being. Deconstructing the colonial frame means that "any reckoning with the past that we carry in our present involves crafting some way to inventory *the ghosts in our bones*, and some way to understand what colonialism took"

(Shotwell 2016, 23). This work imagines colonial devastation in the shape of a book, in the context of stories, where all our stories are connected at the spine. Like spilling ink on a single page, violence seeps through all the other pages, spreads across time and space, where injustices re-emerge over and over again, permeating every story in this “blasted landscape” (Shotwell 2016, 9).

My grandmother taught my mother how to stitch, who then passed on the skills to me. Stitching as a practice associated with femininity, and the relational space it generates through co-creating and co-learning, are devalued in capitalist regimes (Federici 2014, 170). Stitching in this work is a practice of defiance and unforgetting (Shotwell 2016, 36). We draw threads from those who come before to persistently regenerate upon a blasted landscape, telling the stories of our kin about resistance and collective care. I reattach the pages in an accordion spread so that the pages and threads hold each other up. We are never fully autonomous in deciding where our paths begin and end, but I continue to imagine the diverse, unruly growths flourishing at the edges of devastation (Tsing 2012, 151–152).



Figure 2: Patricia Hoi Ling Ki, "An Unfolding Revolution Toward Widespread Flourishing," altered book, 2019. India ink, embroidery, and crochet on paper, approx. 9.5" x 40."

Accessibility Text: Close-up photo of a section of the altered book art piece and a yellow crochet fabric spreading out from the accordion pages.



Figure 3 and 4: Patricia Hoi Ling Ki, "An Unfolding Revolution Toward Widespread Flourishing," altered book, 2019. India ink, embroidery, and crochet on paper, approx. 9.5" x 40." **Accessibility Text for Figure 3:** Close-up photo of a section of the altered book art piece and a yellow and red crochet fabric spreading out from the accordion pages. **Accessibility Text for Figure 4:** Close-up photo of a section of the altered book art piece showing multiple threads woven through cuts in the accordion pages and connecting them.



Works Cited

- Butler, Judith. 1993. "Critically Queer." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 1, no. 1: 17–32.
- Federici, Silvia. 2014. *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation*. Brooklyn: Autonomedia.
- Shotwell, Alexis. 2016. *Against Purity: Living Ethically in Compromised*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Tsing, Anna. 2012. "Unruly Edges: Mushrooms as Companion Species, for Donna Haraway." *Environmental Humanities* 1, no. 1: 141–154.

PATRICIA HOI LING KI is a settler-immigrant of Chinese/Hakka descent living in Tkaronto. Her arts-making, writing, and curiosities are often related to feminized emotionality, relationality, interdependence, ethics of care, and how care becomes violent. She holds a PhD from Critical Disability Studies at York University, and works as an educator in mental health services.