

JAMES RENWICK ALLIANCE FOR CRAFT 2021 MASTERS OF THE MEDIUM



Consuelo Jimenez Underwood

“Over thirty years ago, when “craft vs. art” was the most divisive issue in the arts, I discovered and established my “authentic artistic voice,” refocused my artistic studies from the paintbrush and pigments to “needle and thread.” Empowered by the voices of my indigenous maternal ancestors, I began to cross the intellectual borders that separated the hand and the mind(craft), from the spirit (fine art). My work is a reflection of personal border experiences: the interconnectedness of societies, insisting on beauty in struggle, and

celebrating the notion of “seeing” this world through my tri-cultural lens. Engaging materials, which reflect a contemporary hyper-modern sensitivity, are interwoven to create large-scale fiber art that is inspired in equal measures by land, politics and Spirit. The artwork becomes an external validation of ancestral memory and personal quest. Beauty, grace, and flowers soothe the quiet rage that has permeated the Americas for more than five hundred years. Thus, when I weave, sew, or embellish, the anonymous viejitas (hags) seem to express their encouragement and support of my creations.”

Consuelo Jimenez Underwood was born in Sacramento, California, the daughter of migrant agricultural workers, a Chicano mother and a father of Huichol Indian descent. Crossing borders and negotiating between three perspectives has always been fundamental to her identity and the basis of her creative process. Consuelo has exhibited and lectured nationally and internationally for more than twenty-five years. Her work is part of the permanent collections of museums such as the Smithsonian American Museum of Art, Museum of Art & Design in New York, the National Hispanic Center for the Arts, New Mexico, the Mexican Museum in San Francisco and the Oakland Museum of California. She was awarded the 2017 Master Artist Grant from the National Association of Latino Arts and Culture and was elected to the Council of Fellows of the American Craft Council in 2018. Consuelo received her BA and MA from San Diego State University. She began teaching fiber art at San Jose State University in 1987, where she received her MFA. For more than twenty years, Underwood worked to develop a vibrant fiber program, and inspire young artists to embrace thread.

Learn more about JRACraft Weekend: www.jra.org/jracraftnews/2021-masters-of-the-medium



The **James Renwick Alliance** is an independent national non-profit organization that celebrates the achievements of America's craft artists and fosters scholarship, education, connoisseurship and public appreciation of craft art. If you are not already a member, we invite you to become one. More information about us can be found on our website.