

Jenine Marsh

*Aiko Hachisuka; Pro Weight*

Text contributed to *All the Names*, Scrap Metal, Toronto 2017

*Pro Weight*, 2011

Silkscreen on clothing and foam

48 x 42 x 32 inches

Shlesinger-Walbohm Family Collection, Toronto

Bales of mass-produced clothing travel across the earth. New or used, they are bound together in massive bundles and sent somewhere, where they are broken up, distributed, sold, worn, and worn-out. A bale's price is determined by weight, not by its individual pieces. And this cost is always much less than what the garments will be separately sold for. Profit is made this way; buy in bales, sell in units. The transformation of the number 1, from "single" things, into a conglomerate "thing", and then back again, is a magic trick that pumps out an excess of profit.

There are other kinds of value for clothes to embody. Comfort, concealing, cushioning, containing - all that they provide for the body that wears them is woven in, and is tangible within the cloth itself. My garment's worth lies in how it takes care of me. But what happens to this value of care when clothing is not worn or wanted? Where does it go?

Aiko Hachisuka looks for used clothing at garage sales. And what she finds, she buys; all of it, the entire communally molted history of one family's life and styling. What has been outgrown, what is not worth its weight in closet space, and what would serve the household better as a handful of coins, is bought and brought to her studio. Here, the attention of alteration is uniquely paid to each piece. Garments are intricately twisted, folded and pressed down flat to silkscreen a solid colour across the visible surface. When unfolded, the printed colour breaks up into a non-repeating pattern of patches and slashes, preserving the image, memory and possibility of cloth's changeability. It is a skin that shows some of the things it can do.

Hachisuka wears some of the silkscreened apparel on her body. The rest she re-gathers, skillfully sewing and stuffing, puffing up with foam, and pressing down with an edge of stitches. Garment to garment, layer upon layer, clothing slowly accumulates into a colossal cylinder. This one she calls *Pro Weight*. With its vibrantly graphic surface, flowing undulations of form, and personified contortions, it is animated as a tangibly monolithic cartoon. And as with hand-drawn animation, its construction is exceedingly laborious. Although, it seems that to condense such a clenched planetoid, labor must have been aided either by gravity or by a most forceful static cling. In this dense proximity nothing is immobilized. Every surface engages in perpetual and simultaneous acts of touching, holding, twisting, folding and pressing: one against the other against the other against the other.

But move in closer and the impression of solidity evaporates; where the top of the mound should be, there is a hole. It's a giant rolled cuff, hollow all the way though. Ecstatically printed fabrics clash and dash into and out of the void at the centre. Skins that rolled off the body continue their rolling, into an edgeless tube that is always inside-out. If I could enter the middle space, I would be swaddled by a hundred garments. But these clothes and the void they make are not for me, or for any body to wear. I cannot climb in, and all of the various orifices of sleeve, neckline and waistband are sewn down into an impenetrable quilted surface. Still, it is not a barricading closure, but an intimate enclosure that I circumnavigate and wrap myself around.

Clothes delimit the body that wears them, but this limit is wonderfully flexible. They deform, billowing, flapping, swelling and stretching human mutability. Garments are designed to individually contain one body. *Pro Weight* enfolds an alternatively collective space. Stitched into a bottomless vessel, like a deep, uncountable and limitless zero, the bushelled '0' generates value in strange excess to the solitary 1. The significant exchange is not in the passing between hands, which bind and divide, buy and sell. Here, the exchange is found in a communal bond. Like a

wrestling embrace of orgiastic entanglement, Hachisuka's soft sculptures seize themselves in fervent proximity. Value multiplies over a printed and stitched surface that loves itself. This uncontainable intimacy does not need my body to be, but doesn't mind if I like to watch.