



THE
ETERNAL
THREAD

Lissy and Rudi Cole-Robinson

TE / IHO
MUTU / NGA
KORE



TE AHO MUTUNGA KORE

Essay by Kelly Joseph (Ngāti Maniapoto)

Tukua kia tū takitahi
ngā whetū o te rangi
Let each star in the sky
shine its own light

Lissy and Rudi Cole-Robinson are sparkling conduits of creativity. Like two luminescent messengers sent down to us from Te Whānau Mārama (The Family of Light), bedecked in neon finery and wielding crochet hooks, they unleash fluorescent threads of aroha and harikoa (joy) directly into our lives. Their large scale three-dimensional art installations swathed in tuimāwhai (crochet) dazzle us, leaving us breathless and giddy with child-like wonder.

Lissy (Ngāti Hineamaru, Ngāti Kahu) grew up romping amongst a magical playground of fabrics, feathers and beads inside the salon of her dad, renowned fashion designer Colin Cole. Her father's generosity of spirit and creative ferocity left an impression, colouring her worldview and her own artistic expression. It helped guide her towards a career of passionate experimentation with textiles and a bold, authentic aesthetic.

Hiwaiterangi
Lissy and Rudi Cole-Robinson
2021
Wool yarn, polystyrene



Rudi (Ngāti Kohua, Ngāti Makirangi, Ngāti Paoa, Ngāruahine, Ngāti Tū, Te Arawa) comes from a background of engineering and has always been interested in carving and sculpture. He worked alongside artist Eugene Kara at Te Puia Arts and Crafts Institute to create a magnificent carved bronze pataka. He also helped set up the first Māori-owned foundry. His mahi toi journey started when Lissy needed assistance keeping up with the demand for crochet goodness. After a foray into yarn bombing in 2018, covering a local

motorway overpass with yarn poppies, the duos passion for the medium burst forth like an incandescent fountain that hasn't stopped flowing.

The two creatives tag-team in the production process from design, to carving the polystyrene forms, to wrapping the toi whakairo with crochet. Together they explore the limitless and magical possibilities of tuimāwhai, propelled by a common goal of sharing high vibrational feels with their community. Everything they create is through the lens of Te Ao Māori, and reflects their deep love and reverence for mātauranga Māori.

Te Aho Mutunga Kore (The Eternal Thread) is a neon revisiting and celebration of Te Ao and the celestial atua of light, including *Hiwaiterangi*, an electric pink goddess who reaches skyward towards her whānau. She is the youngest of the stars in the Matariki cluster and an atua to whom mortals send wishes and dreams—she is connected to our heart's deepest desires. A notebook invites visitors to offer up their wishes to her.



Urutengangana and Hine Turama
Lissy and Rudi Cole-Robinson
2021
Acrylic yarn, polystyrene
Photograph by Sam Harnett





Pohutukawa and Hiwaiterangi
Lissy and Rudi Cole-Robinson
2021
LED Neon light, perspex

Mind that Māori
Lissy and Rudi Cole-Robinson
2019
Acrylic yarn
Photograph by
Raymond Sagapolutele

Tūmanako
Lissy and Rudi Cole-Robinson
2020
Acrylic yarn, polystyrene



Hiwaiterangi encourages transformation and our longing for restorative, healing change. Other deities include the dayglo pou of *Urutengangana* and *Hine Turama*, atua of light enveloped in resplendent Kahu huruhuru and spangled feathers. The two wheku of *Paki* and *Tūmanako* preside like benevolent guardians. Meanwhile neon works add luminosity to the space and act as beacons that draw us together. The Robinson-Coles inject a vibrant energy into a traditionally staid craft technique. Their toi gives a gentle wink, nudge and awhi to the dear kuia in our lives who kept us warm under their carefully crafted blankets. But the duo push the boundaries of the medium further, towards fresh, dizzying technicolour heights. Frustrated by the choices of yarn colours available has even led

them to have it manufactured to their predilection. The result is 100 percent wool in an eye popping spectrum; hues that draw viewers in when applied to details such as Hiwaiterangi's moko kauae. The names of their florescent wool range embodies their positive kaupapa, including Harikoa (Joy–Neon Pink), Waimarie (Good Fortune–Neon Yellow), Tūranga (Grounding–Neon green), Taumata (Passion–Red) and Ao Mārama (World of Light–White). Evoking nostalgia for simpler times, crochet can be a healing tool for those who adopt the meditative task. It encourages mindfulness and releases serotonin in the body through the repetitive action. Healing can also be found in the way that these playful, warm works elicit joyful wonder in the viewer. This is refreshing rongoā in our technological heavy lives, weighted



further by the feeling of unease driven by Covid-19, climate change and the trauma of colonisation.

The title *Te Aho Mutunga Kore* speaks about eternal threads that connect to past, present and future. The Robinson-Coles tuimāwhai embodies connection by weaving stories and sparking ideas, imagination and lively discussions. They are passionate about spreading their kaupapa of joy and uplifting people's spirits, as seen when they share their craft through empowering workshops in community spaces, schools and prisons. Through their mahi toi they are champions of inclusivity, whanaungatanga and manaakitanga by making the vibrancy of crochet accessible to everyone, no matter what their background.

Cover image:
Paki
Lissy and Rudi Cole-Robinson
2020
Acrylic yarn, polystyrene

The Robinson-Coles unapologetically live their best, most creative and authentic lives with the very same kaupapa of harikoa as their art, so that the distinction between life and mahi toi is seamless. They swath everything in their life with their beloved tuimāwhai—from their clothing, hair accessories, to their motukā and their Otahuhu home. These two vanguards guide us with their bright light as they themselves are guided. They see themselves as being prisms where the pure white light of their Tūpuna shines through them, and in turn this wairua shines through their mahi toi, emerging as a spectrum of the rainbow. They believe the kaleidoscopic thread that connects us all is aroha and harikoa. Crochet is the visual language in which this aho, this shining heart-centered and divine connection, unfurls outwards to community, to the world and beyond, returning upwards to our shimmering atua.

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