

When I was little my Mamaja (grandmother) would say that I shouldn't worry about our distance because we would always be connected by an invisible string. So I was never truly alone.

Flash forward a few years and we all sunk into a global pandemic, where isolation became an everyday burden. I could not escape the overwhelming sense of being lonely physically and emotionally from many loved ones but I was too depressed most of the time to deal with the mentally draining work of staying connected. Through making this work I was able to begin processing this tangled emotional mess and was reminded of my invisible strings.

I wanted to begin untangling my mess of feelings with this piece so I researched multiple perspectives on loneliness and social isolation from medical and philosophical sources. I was greatly inspired by Chiharu Shiota whose giant string web installations often represent themes of memory and shared experiences across time and space. I constructed my own web of string and hung candles to convey the complex feelings of love, hope, fear, and despair I hold towards connecting with people in my life. I also posed under layers of tarlatan to create a ghostly shell of myself contrasting the bright colors and lights. Lastly I created over a hundred unique swallow prints on handmade kozo paper, some hung up, some on the floor, and some on a pedestal off to the side. I view each bird as a soul, and I invite the viewer to take a print from the pedestal and reflect on connections during the pandemic year. Celebrate the people that supported you through the dark and grieve for connections lost. Hold onto this reflection for a moment, then let go by placing the print around the ghost.

*I MISS MY CHERISHED SWALLOWS*

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