

"Political Textiles" exhibition

ThreeWalls 119 North Peoria St #2a Chicago, IL 60607

October 15th- 17th, 2004

"Political Textiles" is a group art show and public craft collaboration organized by artist Sabrina Gschwandtner in celebration of the release of KnitKnit #4. "Political Textiles" creates a space for social commentary not only through a display of individual and collaborative craftwork that interprets politically charged subject matter, but also by generating open-invitation, collaborative crafting activities that will take place in the gallery on October 16th and 17th.

MicroRevolt, a group of knitters whose projects investigate sweatshops and capitalism, have contributed their "Nike Blanket Petition." Made from squares donated by knit hobbyists, each square is a petition for fair labor. Currently 14 x 9 feet, the blanket when completed will be sent to Nike CEO Phil Knight along with a letter demanding that Nike apparel be manufactured in accordance with established International Labor Organization conventions. Cat Mazza of MicroRevolt will be at ThreeWalls on Saturday, October 16th, to teach knitters to make 4x4 inch squares which will be used for the Nike Blanket's border.

Knitting patterns by Emily Drury and Mandy McIntosh will also be available for knitters to try out and take home. In addition, Lisa Anne Auerbach's patterns for pro-Kerry and anti-Bush clothing will be distributed at the gallery. Lisa Anne Auerbach runs a blog called "KnittersforKerry.com," dedicated "to ousting George W from his job one stitch at a time." Her knit clothing on display at ThreeWalls has been sold at Kerry fundraisers and worn at political protests.

"Repent," Sherri Wood's prayer memorial banner includes images of hundreds of tiny coffins representing the number of U.S. soldiers killed in Iraq. The banner was made with members of various faith and social justice communities at churches and sites of protest, and it will eventually include white running stitches between the coffins to represent the thousands of nameless dead Iraqi civilians. Sherri Wood will travel from North Carolina to be present at ThreeWalls on Sunday, October 17th, when she will lead a stitching circle to sew names of US soldiers and make stitches for the Iraqi dead.

Michele Smith's film "The Orientalist, chapter 1 - Odalisque" will be shown continuously all weekend. The film weaves together all manner of pop cultural fragments- news footage shot from a television screen, a 1965 Italian made James Bond type film about political assassination in Arab

countries, a CBN clip about suicide bombers, a Dean Martin Spy film, and a 19th century Orientalist painting of an odalisque digitally altered to appear as a cartoon. The film was partly shot through veils of mesh fabric and was interwoven frame by frame through the computer program iMovie.

Clothes by GRIZ - a collaboration between two fashion designers, Gary Graham and Liz Collins – along with agitating costume-props by Chicago-based artist Noe Kidder and Rhode Island native Jodi Buonanno focus on empowering the individual in the face of political domination and aggression. Other works on display include: LoVid's fabric work which utilizes leftover scraps of fabric in combination with lights powered by renewable human mechanical energy; Chris Habib's quilt made from a Massachusetts and a Texas state flag, which emphasizes the similarities between the Democratic and Republican US presidential candidates; and Jim Finn's needlepoint portrait which pays homage to Brazilian revolutionary Carlos Marighella.

The exhibition schedule is as follows:

Friday, October 15: **11am-6pm** "Political Textiles" exhibition open to the public  
**7pm** book launch and reception for KnitKnit issue #4

Saturday, October 16: **11am-6pm** "Political Textiles" exhibition open to the public

**Noon-5pm:** knitting workshops open to the public. Please bring your own yarn and knitting needles though some extras will be available. Multiple knitting patterns will be distributed and demonstrated. Cat Mazza of MicroRevolt will hold a knitting workshop to create 4x4 inch squares for the Nike Blanket's border.

Sunday, October 17th: **11am-6pm** "Political Textiles" exhibition open to the public

**Noon- 4pm:** an open sewing circle lead by artist Sherri Wood, held to sew names of US soldiers and make stitches for the Iraqi dead. Please bring embroidery thread and sewing needles with you, though some extras will be available at the gallery. An improvisational eulogy by Woody Sullender (banjo) and Kevin Davis (cello) will be performed.

KnitKnit issue #4 contents include:

Lise Hosein on the craftwork of Kathryn Ruppert-Dazai, Photos of the KnitKnit Sundown Salon event in Los Angeles by Jeaneen Lund, Logoknitter testimonial by Cat Mazza, "LoVid Videowear: If We're Going to Work Here, We Might As Well Make Ourselves at Home" article by Tanya Bezreh,

Instructions for knitting a geodesic hat by Lisa Anne Auerbach, "Megan Whitmarsh: the Beauty of Amateur Gesture" by David Basken, Kate Scott on Canada's Westside Stitches Couture Club, "High School Boys Who Knit" article by Emily Drury, Tim Brown's interview with Taylor Painter-Wolfe of the Ssion, "Knitting Pattern Transcription Using Repeating Number Sequences" by Staceyjoy Elkin, Review by Scott Bodenner of the "Talking Quilts" show at the American Folk Art Museum, Alice Wu on her first (and last) knitting lesson, Drawings by Christopher Ryan Ross, and images of special knitted items Lisa Bennett and Ninh Wysocan.

The first 300 issues come with a special cover made by knitwear designer Liz Collins. KnitKnit issues #3 and #4 are both available for \$20 at ThreeWalls. KnitKnit #4 has been made possible by yarn stores Wildfiber ([www.wildfiber.com](http://www.wildfiber.com)) and Purl Soho ([www.purlsoho.com](http://www.purlsoho.com)).

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