

# Stitch In Time

The Fabric of Contemporary Life

April 3 – July 5, 2015

Lewis Glucksman Gallery  
University College Cork

[www.glucksman.org](http://www.glucksman.org)



Slavs and Tatars, Love Letters no. 1, 2013, woolen yarn,  
courtesy of the artists

Artists: **Anni Albers, Sarah Browne, Jeremy Deller, Sissi Farassat, Angela Fulcher, Grayson Perry, Slavs and Tatars**

Curated by **Chris Clarke and Fiona Kearney**

The use of textiles as a creative medium stretches back to the earliest civilisations. Traditionally, there was a separation between fine and craft art practices, but in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the Bauhaus advocated the importance of design in everyday life, and embraced the use of fabric as part of their experimental approach to visual culture. **Stitch In Time** looks at the ways in which artists have used textiles to consider ideas of gender, community, labour and race. From protest banners to embroidered passports, abstract fabric designs to narrative tapestries, the exhibition demonstrates how such seemingly traditional practices remain particularly relevant to our present-day society.

The exploration of how textiles can be deployed in new and imaginative ways is exemplified by the work of **Anni Albers** (1899-1994). Having enrolled in the Bauhaus, the groundbreaking teaching institution that transformed modern design, art and

architecture, Albers had to embrace the possibilities of textiles when she was refused a place on the architecture course because of her gender. She experimented with new materials and abstract compositions throughout a long and distinguished career. The exhibition includes pieces created throughout her life, including reproductions of the 1930s hand-woven Bauhaus diploma textiles, window coverings from her 1999 retrospective in Venice and the wall hangings she created for the AT&T Building in New York.

In **Sarah Browne's** *A Model Society*, the artist advertised for knitwear models in Iceland to complete a survey on their everyday lives, expectations, and ambitions. Their responses, including comments like 'no war' and 'awesome daycare', were knitted into traditional lopi sweaters worn by the models. The resulting photographic images are presented as a slide projection alongside an artist book that details the knitting patterns used for the sweaters. This notion of collaboration also informs **Jeremy Deller's** series of protest banners, designed in partnership with different community groups and hand-sewn by Ed Hall. These works, displayed throughout the exhibition, stipulate demands that are alternately provocative, humourous, and poetic, while the social function of the banners is captured in the accompanying video work *Procession*. This 'self-portrait' of Manchester, developed over the year with local communities, culminated in a march through the city that featured banners, floats and musical performances.

**Slavs and Tatars's** Love Letters woollen carpets are based on drawings by Russian artist, playwright and poet Vladimir Mayakovsky, whose embrace of the Bolshevik revolution led to him being declared "the people's poet" during the Russian Revolution. The caricature-like imagery of their works describes the forced imposition of a unifying alphabet, first Latin then Cyrillic, upon the Muslim populations of the new Empire, and reflects the disillusionment that led Mayakovsky to commit suicide at the age of 37. **Angela Fulcher's** works reveal her interest in the historical and social associations of textiles. The colours, tones and patterns of her found draperies and carpets are resonant of domestic settings from the 1960s, and indicate the artist's research into the largely undocumented role of women in the design and production of 1960s hippy communes.

Employing incisions, folds, and insertions, Fulcher reconfigures these objects so that new aspects of their material are revealed.

The juxtaposition of the decorative and the political informs the works of **Sissi Farassat**, whose glittering, appliqued surfaces belie their provocative subject matter. The artist's expired passports are embellished with mosaics of abstract designs, Iranian flags, and stylized emblems that recall the ornamental aesthetic of her Persian heritage, while *War Carpet* uses vibrantly coloured crystals to depict military helicopters and weapons. Ideas of national and personal identity also come together in **Grayson Perry's** *Comfort Blanket*. Based on a £10 banknote, this large tapestry incorporates elements of Britain's national heritage – a cartoonish portrait of The Queen, embroidered references to the Magna Carta, the BBC and the National Health Service – alongside stereotypical traits associated with the British – 'A Nice Cuppa Tea', complaints about the weather, and a love of curry and pints. Perry's work represents his nation as a multicultural, diverse community, and an antidote to staid –and often politicized – perceptions of British identity.

The inherent attributes of textile – dedicated labour and craftsmanship, the relationship to domestic settings and household furnishings, and the specific graphic or illustrative qualities – sets it apart as a particularly egalitarian medium. Throughout **Stitch In Time**, artists use textile as a means of direct communication, whether by collaborating with specific partners, commenting upon political issues or by drawing on a shared understanding of its history in design and politics.

## Notes on the artists and artworks

**Stitch In Time** features work by the Irish artists Sarah Browne and Angela Fulcher. Sarah Browne is based in Dublin and previously represented Ireland in the 2009 Venice Biennale. She is currently collaborating with the artist Jesse Jones on a new commission for the London-based arts organization Artangel. Angela Fulcher is based in Cork and has exhibited widely throughout Ireland. Her recent exhibitions include shows at West Cork Art Centre, Skibbereen; Project Arts Centre, Dublin; and Crawford Art Gallery, Cork.

**Stitch In Time** features work by two Turner Prize winning artists: Jeremy Deller in 2003 and Grayson Perry in 2004.

Grayson Perry is one of Britain's most celebrated artists, known for his controversial ceramics and his cross-dressing alter ego Claire. He regularly features on television programmes including his 2014 three-part documentary for Channel 4 entitled *Who Are You?*

Anni Albers was a major figure in the field of textile design, weaving and printmaking. Upon enrolling at the Bauhaus school in 1922, she entered the weaving workshop because it was the only one open to her. She was also the partner of the acclaimed abstract painter Josef Albers whose work was featured in the 2012 Glucksman exhibition *The Sacred Modernist: Josef Albers as a Catholic Artist*.

Slavs and Tatars is an art collective whose work explores the politics, history and religion of Eurasia. Their work is featured in major collections including Tate Modern and the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Sissi Farassat was born in Tehran and moved to Vienna as a child. Her works are largely autobiographical and often reveal her personal history through a unique combination of influences of Persian and Viennese art and design.

It is possible to arrange for press interviews with the curators and some of the participating artists. For further discussion of the exhibition, press images or more detailed information, please contact:

Chris Clarke, Senior Curator, [c.clarke@ucc.ie](mailto:c.clarke@ucc.ie) or +353 21 4901822,  
Lewis Glucksman Gallery, University College Cork, Ireland.

## Notes on events in the exhibition

The Lewis Glucksman Gallery makes great art available to everyone. A wide range of events and activities are programmed for all abilities throughout the exhibition run. You can view the entire programme in our seasonal brochure at <http://glucksman.org/CurrentBrochure.pdf>

To learn about design and its place in contemporary society:

### **Perspectives: What is Design for Living?**

Santiago Cirugeda (architect), 1pm, Wednesday 15 April

Nicholas Fox Weber (author and historian), date tbc

<http://glucksman.org/perspectives.html>

To discover children's books

### **The Doodle Doctors**, Sunday 14 June

In partnership with Cork Midsummer Festival and Children's Books Ireland

For all the family:

### **Family Sundays**: making art together

3-4pm, Sundays from 12 April – 28 June 2015

<http://glucksman.org/familysundays.html>

Thanks to all artists and lenders of artworks for **Stitch In Time** including The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, Connecticut; Victoria Miro Gallery, London; The Modern Institute, Glasgow; Paragon Press, London; Kraupa-Tuskany Zeidler and private collections.

**Stitch In Time** is supported by University College Cork, Irish Design 2015, The Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, The Arts Council Ireland and private philanthropy through Cork University Foundation.

The **Lewis Glucksman Gallery** is open :

10 am – 5pm Tuesday – Saturday

2 – 5pm Sundays

Closed Mondays.

Admission to the Glucksman is free / Suggested €5 donation.

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