

2 July 2009

The National Gallery of Australia to be 'stitched up' by a tag crew of knitters as part of a festival of events during the last week of *Soft sculpture*

5–12 July 2009

The National Gallery of Australia will be holding Knitta Please, a festival of events starting from Sunday 5 July. The week will culminate in a community project, Stitching up the NGA, which is being held from Tuesday 7 to Sunday 12 July. Magda Sayeg, founder of Knitta Please, Sydney artist Denise Litchfield and a team of volunteers will transform six large concrete poles at the front entrance of the Gallery. Knitters all over the world have been invited to help create squares of knitting for the coverings, and the Gallery has had a great response, receiving contributions from as far as Sweden and the USA.

"The response from knitters around Australia has been amazing, with hundreds of knitted pieces flooding into the Gallery," said Public Programs Project Officer Michelle Fracaro. "We have received contributions from all over the country and overseas. Many schools from Canberra and surrounding areas have also become involved and their support and enthusiasm has been great."

Based in Austin, Texas, Magda Sayeg founded Knitta Please in 2005. Knitta Please is a tag crew of knitters who turned their frustration with their half-finished knitting projects into a phenomenon sweeping across the world. The crew 'yarn bombs' public spaces graffiti style, covering their targets with brightly knitted 'tags'. From everyday objects, such as parking meters and lamp posts, to more monumental targets like the Great Wall of China, Paris landmarks and a Mexico City bus.

Sayeg started Knitta Please out of a desire to make the urban world look more alive. First she created a cosy for the door handle to her boutique and when she wrapped a stop sign down the street from her store, people stopped their cars to take pictures. Local newspapers called to ask about her story. Friends started donating half-finished knitting projects and helped her tag locations around Houston, transforming

these frustrated bundles of knitting into public installations. The project exploded quickly, and Sayeg has been tagging public spaces ever since.

She now travels the world spreading the Knitta Please message, asking people to engage with their urban environment by bringing art out of the galleries and into the streets. Sayeg will be in Australia to participate in the Knitta Please festival of events.

Knitters are still invited to send in their yarn samples that measure 10–20 cm wide and 140 cm long. Any colour, yarn and technique will be accepted, but they need to be sent to the National Gallery of Australia before 7 July!

For further information, visit nga.gov.au/whatson/highlights.

An opportunity for media interviews and photographs will be available on Monday 6 July at 2.00 pm in the Gallery foyer.

Event details:

Sunday 5 July 2.00 pm

Artist talk: Magda Sayeg

James O Fairfax Theatre, *free*

Monday 6 July 10.00 am – 3.00 pm

Yarn-bombing and guerrilla knitting in the Sculpture Garden.

Sculpture Garden, *free*

Tuesday 7 to Sunday 12 July

Stitching up the NGA in association with NAIDOC Week

Gallery entrance, *free*

Wednesday 8 July 6.00–8.30 pm

Stitch 'n' bitch at the Parlour Wine Room

\$30; \$25 members (includes nibbles and complimentary glass of wine), bookings essential

Thursday 9 July 10.30 am – 12.30 pm

Children's knitting workshop (for ages 5+)

Small Theatre, *free* (materials supplied)

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