

1 March
– 28 April
2018

Needleman, Feminist Fan

¹ The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, <https://www.thesisters.org/>. Accessed 14 February, 2018.

² Just, Kate, 'Feminist Fan 2014 – 2017', <http://www.katejust.com>. Accessed 20 February, 2018.

³ Just, Kate, 'Feminist Fan #15 (Claude Cahun, Self Portrait, 1927)', 2015. *Instagram*, 6 November, 2015. Accessed 20 February, 2018. <https://www.instagram.com/katejustknits/>

Needleman, Feminist Fan is a two-person exhibition of textile works by Robert Brain and Kate Just. The identities of Brain and Just are woven into these pictures through loving and meticulous movement; push-pull, in-out. Repeat.

The works in *Needleman, Feminist Fan* have evolved from different places – Kate Just is a mid-career American-born Australian artist entrenched in the Melbourne art scene and Robert Brain is a self-taught Australian artist based in the leafy town of Leura in the Blue Mountains, New South Wales where he works at the ripe age of 85. Both artists use their art practice as an expression of self and as a representation of wider issues that are political and contemporary.

Self-proclaimed 'Needleman', Robert Brain spends most of his time making tapestries 'before breakfast, on the train, waiting for the pear tart to cook...' He blends art history, lived experience, politics, erotica and humour into tightly stitched and subversive embroideries.

This is evident in his 2012 work titled *Mardi Gras* that imagines a transvestite king and queen of Spain presiding at the Mardi Gras. Brain's fusion of key influences in this work include the 17th Century Spanish Painter Diego Velazquez whose historical depictions of the Spanish Royal Family mingle with the famous Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, LGBT activists originating in San Francisco in late 1970's, and forming a Sydney base in 1982¹.

Kate Just presents six of forty one artworks from her *Feminist Fan* series. Since 2014, Just has hand knitted portraits that fuse gender, sexuality and identity into an 'intimate family portrait of feminism'².

In *Feminist Fan no #15* from 2015, Just creates an knitted homage to Claude Cahun a prominent French surrealist artist and writer. Using a monochromatic self-portrait from 1927, Just represents her adoration for Cahun as a 'dandy, soldier, androgyne and nymph'³, whose image oozes a sense of inner confidence and fearlessness. Just's reverence for the artist and her devotion to feminism is shared with an online community through her posts of images of her works combined with the hashtag #feministfan on Instagram.

Brain and Just's works reflect upon ideas of self-identity, and the relationship between our internal and external worlds. Through laboured devotion to their craft, and a willingness to challenge tradition, these two important artists address historical and contemporary concerns. We're on a journey with the artists; gaining momentum slowly.

Curated by Louise Klerks

Robert Brain and Kate Just

ROBERT BRAIN

Robert Brain's tapestry practice explores themes such as homoerotic, art history and gender politics and is imbued with irreverent humour and unexpected juxtapositions. Brain (born 1933) has had a remarkable eight decades from his childhood in Tasmania; life in London and Europe in the 50s, 60s and 70s; career as an anthropologist and academic; widespread travels; and life in the Blue Mountains where he now lives and works. Brain's recent major exhibitions include *Tapestry* (2017) at Maunsell Wickes, Sydney; *Robert Brain: An Autobiographical Tapestry* (2016), a Bathurst Regional Art Gallery touring exhibition held at Bathurst Regional Art Gallery and Maitland Regional Art Gallery, 2016. In 2017-18, Brain was a finalist in the *National Self-Portrait Prize 2017* at UQ Art Museum, Queensland. He is currently represented by Maunsell Wickes Gallery, Sydney.

KATE JUST

Kate Just (born 1974) is an established American born, Melbourne based artist known for her knitted sculptural, and pictorial work, as well as installation based, public and participatory art projects often deploying text, textiles, clothing, knitting and neon. Just holds a Doctor of Philosophy (Sculpture) from Monash University, a Master of Arts from RMIT and a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Painting) from the Victorian College of the Arts where she is now the Head of Graduate Coursework. She has exhibited extensively, both locally and internationally, including at ACCA, Artspace, Gertrude Contemporary, National Gallery of Australia, Rijswijk Textile Biennial in the Netherlands, ICA in Richmond, Virginia, and A.I.R. Gallery in New York.

katejust.com

[@katejustknits](https://www.instagram.com/katejustknits)

CHAPTER HOUSE LANE

Chapter House Lane is a non-profit contemporary art space situated in Melbourne's CBD. The gallery's laneway position showcases contemporary art to seasoned enthusiasts and curious passers-by alike, providing a unique public platform for arts practitioners to contribute to Melbourne's lively cultural fabric.

chapterhouselane.org.au

LIST OF WORKS

From left to right

Kate Just, *Feminist Fan #10* (*Cindy Sherman, Untitled Film Still # 6, 1977*), 2015, hand knitted wool and acrylic yarns, 30.5 x 46 cm. \$3000

Robert Brain, *Robert with Girlfriend, Anne Padavini, Dancing in the Belvedere Ballroom, Hobart, 2008–2012*, pure wool, 94 x 92 cm. \$10,000

Kate Just, *Feminist Fan #27* (*A portrait of the artist Orlan by Fabrice Lévêque in 1997*), 2016, hand knitted wool and acrylic yarns, 51 x 38 cm. \$3000

Kate Just, *Feminist Fan #18* (*Yoko Ono, Cut Piece, 1965*), 2016, hand knitted wool and acrylic yarns, 46 x 35.5 cm. \$3000

Robert Brain, *Mardi Gras*, 2012, pure wool, 100 x 140 cm. \$20,000

Kate Just, *Feminist Fan #22* (*Sarah Maple, Self Portrait with Melons, 2012*), 2016, hand knitted wool and acrylic yarns, 59 x 35.5 cm. \$3000

Kate Just, *Feminist Fan #17* (*Kate Beynon, Self Portrait with Guardian Spirits, 2010*), 2016, hand knitted wool and acrylic yarns, 46 x 41 cm. \$3000

Robert Brain, *London Threesome: Margaret, Robert and Richard*, 2008–2012, pure wool, 94 x 92 cm. \$10,000

Kate Just, *Feminist Fan #15* (*Claude Cahun, Self Portrait, 1927*), 2015, hand knitted wool and acrylic yarns, 46 x 35.5 cm. \$3000

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CHAPTER HOUSE LANE

Chapter House Lane thanks McPherson Wines, Brooklyn Brewery and St Paul's Cathedral for their ongoing support of our not-for-profit space.

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Graphic design by Jessica Pitcher.