

THE KNITTING MAP

(2005)

Jools Gilson & Richard Povall
Exhibition touring, 2022 - 2027

Artist's Statement (Jools Gilson)

My practice is knotted, knitted and woven between the disciplines of visual art, writing and dance theatre; choreographies with dancers spinning wool; 30,000 sewing needles hung from a gallery ceiling; stories about wars waged through embroidery. The Knitting Map is a major exemplar of this work – it gave literal and poetic space for women to knit the weather, to become cartographers for a year, in our small extraordinary city, on the edge of Europe.

I'm interested in the grain and potentiality of textile practices to incisively re-think a contemporary poetics of femininity. In my work, textiles are powerfully performative, as they inscribe gestures of revolutionary craftiness as well as the stunning spaceplace of female historicity.



The Glucksman, Cork (2015).
Photo: Tomás Tyner.

Berman Museum of Art, Pennsylvania, US (2021), Glucksman Gallery, Cork, Ireland (2015), The Ganser Gallery, Millersville, PA, USA (2007) Millennium Hall, Cork Midsummer Festival, Ireland (2006) St. Luke's Church, Cork. European Capital of Culture: Cork 2005



Millennium Hall, Cork City Hall (2006).
Photo: Richard Povall.

The Knitting Map

- Pioneering connection of climate and textile hand making; one of the original Tempestries.
- Flagship project of Cork's year as European Capital of Culture (2005).
- Durational, textile installation combining hand-knitting with motion-sensing and meteorological technologies.
- Involved more than 2000 people, most of whom were working class women from Cork.
- Subject of local and national controversy 2005 –15.
- Visually and critically rich publication from Bloomsbury in 2019: *Textiles, Community and Controversy*, which uses The Knitting Map as its major case study.

Exhibiting *The Knitting Map*

The Knitting Map is currently being exhibited at the Berman Museum of Art in Pennsylvania as part of MAPPING CLIMATE CHANGE: The Knitting Map and The Tempestry Project. Framed within contemporary climate justice and textile arts debates, The Knitting Map is uniquely placed to engage audiences with the climate emergency and the powerful role of arts and textile practices. The Knitting Map documents a year of weather in Cork City in 2005. In the current exhibition at The Berman the counterpoint between the Tempestries - each made by an individual and The Knitting Map made by several thousand (mostly) Irish older women, entwine to perform a strident and distinctive rally call for making material and visible what is happening to our injured world.

From 2022 *The Knitting Map* is newly available for international exhibition.

Textiles, Community and Controversy: The Knitting Map was published by Bloomsbury in 2019.

Display

The Knitting Map may be exhibited in various forms, both through the manipulation of the material itself (pleating etc.), and in relation to its architectural environment. It is possible to hang sections of the map vertically, and this has been the case at recent exhibitions at The Glucksman in Cork and The Berman in Pennsylvania. The pleating and folding of the map on the gallery floor will likely be part of the installation process, and will respond directly to the architecture and light of the exhibiting space.

Knitting Map Technical Description

Stored in 4 sections each measuring 3m X 80m
Laid out flat, surface area is 12m X 80m (960m²)
Material is 80% acrylic, % 20% wool
Stored in four crates: 1.8m X 0.75m X 0.75m

Workshop Programme

The artists are both experienced educators, both within community contexts and up to third level. A workshop programme can be designed either directly with galleries/museums, or in collaboration with Education Departments. These workshops can explore ideas about climate/embodyment and textile practices; textile art as cartographies; gender, colonialism and textile art practices etc.

Symposia / Performance

The artists are also happy to contribute to symposia / conferences / public talks. Jools Gilson is also available for performance work in relation to The Knitting Map. Enquire for further details.

Further information: jjilson@ucc.ie



The Glucksman, Cork (2015)
Photo: Róisín O' Gorman

JOOLS GILSON is an artist who works across and between multiple disciplines; writing, choreography, installation and broadcast radio. She is Professor of Creative Practice at University College Cork, Ireland.

RICHARD POVALL is a sound artist, researcher and educator. He was formerly Director of Contemporary Music at Oberlin Conservatory (US) and Senior Research Fellow at Middlesex University and Dartington College of Arts.



The Glucksman, Cork (2015)
Photo: Tomás Tyner

The Knitting Map

All, Community and controversy 2005 - 2015

Artists: Jools Gilson and Richard Povall

In association with the School of Art, University College Cork

The Knitting Map was one of the cultural projects of Cork's year as European Capital of Culture in 2005, and became the subject of local and national controversy in that year, as well as during the intervening decade. The Knitting Map was a functional, textile installation, which combined new knitted fabric, many of whose were working class women from Cork. The Glucksman presents both the original work of art that emerged from the project, as well as photography, documents and materials that contextualise the project and enable audiences to revisit and re-evaluate this key moment in Cork's cultural history.