

Kate Just: *A new day in a strange land*

PRESS RELEASE

4 – 25 July 2009

Opening Saturday 4 July 3 – 5 pm

A New Day in a Strange Land is **Kate Just's** first solo exhibition with Nellie Castan Gallery, and comes after eight years of successfully exhibiting what she has become best known for: brightly coloured and large scale knitted sculptures and installations often based on the metamorphosis of women into natural and animal forms in mythology, religion, art and popular culture. **Just's** previous works in this vein included reinterpretations of famous paintings depicting such transformations by Heironymus Bosch, Tiepolo, Gustave Doré, Rafael, and also referenced or attempted to make some conversation with sculptures made by Bernini, Audrey Flak and Kiki Smith.

Bosch was the one that really taught me how transformation could be visualised in art. ...his imaginative collision of human, plant and animal into new forms is awe-inspiring.

A New Day in a Strange Land, while continuing **Just's** own work on transformation, is also a radical departure... away from knitting as her primary medium and from directly referencing other artists' forms or mythology.

Working with collage inspired **Just** to incorporate found and recycled materials into the sculptural works. She also uses more traditional sculptural materials including wire, plaster, expanding foam, and timber, making the final forms almost totally uniform with a the careful surface application of a hard setting epoxy clay and coats of high gloss or metallic spray paints.

Arranged to suggest a kind of alien landscape, the sculptures comprise various sized creatures, plants and unknown forms in the midst of metamorphosis or birth. These forms, especially the sun, the egg, and the cocoon, all reference the glowing potential of a new beginning. At first glance, it is a highly optimistic scene and yet the creatures are also hard-shelled, tough and unmoving.

While in the past, the knitting in the work operated as a protective, soft, and yet vulnerable in this work, the hard, shiny surfaces in this work are employed to suggest a different kind of change has occurred. In this case, I was aiming to visualise adaptation, and the potential for becoming stronger, brighter and more capable of resisting challenge and difficulty, whatever that might be.

Kate Just holds a Bachelor of Science in Film Making from Boston University, a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Painting) from the Victorian College of the Arts and a Master of Arts (Fine Arts) from RMIT University. She has exhibited her work across Australia in galleries in Melbourne, Sydney, Perth, Brisbane and Canberra at spaces including PICA, CCAS, Gallery 4A and Plimsoll Gallery, and been awarded numerous grants and prizes, including a 2006 Siemen's Art Prize and the Australian Postgraduate Award. She lectures in Painting at the Victorian College of the Arts and is currently a studio artist at Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces.

For images and further information please contact olivia@nelliecastangallery.com

