

# KNITTING NATION

## PHASE 4: PRIDE

JUNE 21, 2008 IN PROVIDENCE, RI



right: KNITTING NATION PHASE 1: Knitting During Wartime, May 2005, NYC. Photo by Kim Stoddard

## KNITTING NATION re-invents the rainbow flag with an army of uniformed machine knitters.....

On Saturday, June 21 in Providence, RI, artist, designer, and RISD professor Liz Collins will stage *KNITTING NATION PHASE 4: PRIDE*. The piece will be an homage to and reconstruction of the original rainbow pride flag. It will ascend the steps and hill at Waterplace Park over the course of 6 hours, engaging all who enter this picturesque public space in the center of Providence.

KNITTING NATION (KN) is an exploratory and multi-faceted art project, inaugurated in 2005 by Liz Collins, which combines performance, site specific installation, and collaboration with clothing and textile design and manufacturing, using manually-operated knitting machines. The project is a commentary on the interaction of humans and machines, global trade, fashion and iconography, and a celebration of machine knitting as a creative medium. The KNITTING NATION manifesto can be found at [www.lizcollins.com](http://www.lizcollins.com)

The rainbow pride flag was originally designed and constructed by Gilbert Baker in San

Francisco in 1978 to symbolize the diversity of the gay community, and has now become an internationally recognized icon of LGBTQ communities, politics and/or market-based identities. The first flag was made with 8 colors, with each color possessing symbolic meaning:

- \* hot pink for sex,
- \* red for life,
- \* orange for healing,
- \* yellow for sun,
- \* green for serenity with nature,
- \* turquoise for art,
- \* indigo for harmony, and
- \* violet for spirit.

Hot pink and turquoise were eventually dropped from the flag, in order to streamline the manufacturing of it, and the original symbolic intent of the colors has fallen away. The KNITTING NATION event will bring attention to this important and controversial symbol, examining it and reflecting on it, in the midst of the Providence Pride Festival.

At the June 21 event, from noon-6pm, eight knitters in unique and brightly colored uniforms will be seated in a row at manually-operated

knitting machines under a tent on the stage at Waterplace Park, each knitting a continuous length of fabric. The tent, decorated with flags, slogans, and other graphic and material elements pulled from and inspired by gay culture and politics, will protect the knitters from weather and assert the presence of the KN encampment. The other seven uniformed knitters will hand-stitch the knit yardage together as it comes off the machines. Every half hour, the knitters and stitchers will rotate positions, and this activity will carry on over the course of the afternoon, until a large banner grows up the face of the hill.

During this knitting and stitching frenzy, orators will take turns reading replies from an international internet poll, circulated by the artist, that describes the project and asks the simple question: "how do you feel about the rainbow flag?". In addition, the public will be invited to reply to the poll on the spot, open mike style, during the event.

Please contact Liz Collins at [liz@lizcollins.com](mailto:liz@lizcollins.com) for more info about KNITTING NATION or visit [www.lizcollins.com](http://www.lizcollins.com)

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