

Artist: SARAH CONTOS



*Women's demonstration in Front of Parliament House*, 2017, screen print on cotton and lamé, various fabrics, poly-fill thread, hardware and found gloves, 272 x 286cm. Image courtesy the artist and Ros Oxley9 Gallery Sydney Gallery, Sydney.

#### Information about Sarah Contos

*By layering and manipulating sourced objects, personal artefacts and vestiges of popular culture - Contos draws attention to emotional and theatrical relationships between imagery, form and materiality. Her work explores how these interactions trigger intimate experiential responses within a broader collective memory.*

#### Studying

Multidisciplinary artist Sarah Contos works across soft sculpture, craft, assemblage and painting. Her quilted and embroidered artwork is full of references to identity, eroticism, femininity, popular culture and history. With an artistic background as a theatre set designer Contos combines materials and textures with psychological and emotional qualities. To mark the centenary of Australia's largest industrial action and Great Strike of 1917 Contos was commissioned to produce a large banner-style patchwork quilt she titled '*Women's demonstration in Front of Parliament House*'. The work of art examines techniques and materials typically associated with 'women's work' and draws attention to the experiences of women during the strike, particularly the key incident whereby seamstresses from Eveleigh Railway Workshops expressed their unity by joining several hundred women in storming Parliament House.

Contos integrates pre-existing images of gloves and hands into the composition. The act of removing a photograph from its original narrative or context is like photomontage technique used by Dada artists to express their political dissent and Surrealist artists to explore free association of meaning of unrelated imagery to reflect the workings of the unconscious mind.

- Look at Raoul Hausmann's 'ABCD (Self Portrait)' or Man Ray's 'Le Violon d'Ingres' (Ingres's Violin) by Man Ray. What stylistic connections can you identify between Contos, Hausmann and Man Ray?

#### Making

- Create an artwork composed only from found photographic imagery about a current political event or movement that inspires you.
- Compile a collection of images relating to key elements or words. Rearrange and recombine images into an imaginative composition and emotional response.