

# PETER FILLINGHAM

*Basil Dress*

22 May – 18 July 2025  
66 rue du Temple, 75003 Paris



Peter Fillingham, *Fruit Salad*, 2025. 3 parts; vintage jacket, overcoat, trousers, wood, dyed cotton, steel.

Marian Goodman Gallery is pleased to present for the first time a solo show by Peter Fillingham featuring a new group of sculptural works that resonate with memory and history. Working primarily with found materials—objects often dismissed for their low cultural or economic value—Fillingham transforms the overlooked into sculptural forms and installations that carry a sense of theatricality. Rooted in the margins, both geographic and material, his practice exists where art coexists with everyday life. He draws inspiration from the structures and systems that operate behind the scenes in zones of transit, trade, and daily exchange, where colors are haphazard and materials give rise to unintentional sculptural ‘events.’

Upon entering the gallery, visitors encounter *Fruit Salad*, 2025, an installation comprising a jacket, an overcoat and trousers given to Fillingham by his long-time friend, the artist Tacita Dean. The set of garments, which belonged to her grandfather, Basil Dean, inspires Fillingham to evoke ENSA - The Entertainment National Service Association founded by Basil Dean in 1939. ENSA’s aim was to provide entertainment for British and Allied forces in warzones through comedians, singers, dancers and other performers who devoted themselves to providing levity for the entirety of the war. Fillingham found affinity with ENSA’s philosophy of improvisation, economy of means and inclusivity along with its affiliation with the Pierrot troupes from the time of World War I.

Both the coat and undercoat have been whimsically refabricated by Fillingham, layered with brightly-colored vintage satin patches, black pompoms and Pierrot costume ruffs to reference the ENSA troupe’s playful disruption of the formal codes using improvised elements. For curator Cécile Bourne-Farrell: “It is this place of disruption from regimented military discipline, all the more enhanced because of its makeshift, haphazard context, where Peter Fillingham feels at home. Within these marginal, liminal spaces where a rupture has taken place, Fillingham believes the resilience of human beings —and the connections between them— is exposed.”

The exhibition's title refers to the term used for the military uniform that Basil Dean advocated for ENSA performers to wear, both to legitimize their position within the armed forces and to ensure their safe return.

The works *17s Strip* and *8s Helter Skelter*, also convey theatrical qualities but in an abstract fashion; as compositions made with wooden bars covered with colored fabric or ribbon, they are equally rooted in the formal language of minimal sculpture and the visual vocabulary of folk culture. The floating diagonal shape in *Small drop*, 2025 —inspired by Paul Sérusier’s oil painting *The Golden Cylinder* from 1910— multiplies to form installations of delicate balance, at the limits of uncertainty.

*Here*, 2025, a disregarded object that was once a tiny vessel, is enlarged, painted and formally suspended and displayed.

In the second space of the gallery, *BF,RE,FW,DJ,CG,GJ,GB,MJ*, 2024, is a wall-mounted grid of cards with alphabet letters arranged in rows and columns according to a rigorous layout designed to remain indecipherable. The audience is invited to select letters to make up the initials of people they wish to be celebrated or recognized, with wooden steps for visitors to reach wherever they wish. This work was first made as a contextual response for *Exile Street / High*, curated last year by artist Peter Lewis at Ealing Project, London. It embraced the fluid and radical musical history of the space for many well known rock stars, whilst creating an intergenerational space for new audiences.

“Thinking about Peter,” explains Tacita Dean, “I realise how much he loves yarn and yarn: not only threads, fabric and colour, but also that he loves to talk and tell stories. He is a confluence of the oral traditions of both his parents, and of high and low art. His sculpture might appear improvised or jerry-built but this belies a deeper structure and purpose beneath his decisions. Despite the casual playfulness of some of his artworks, Peter is also quite a formal sculptor. There is rigging and weave in his process, as well as a great deal of humour and playfulness, camaraderie and spirit, sometimes mixed with a touch of whimsy.”

Born in Portsmouth, England, in 1964 to an Anglo-Indian family, Peter Fillingham obtained a BA in Fine Art, specializing in sculpture at the Camberwell School of Art and Design in 1987 and an MA in Sculpture at the Royal College of Art, London in 1989. In 1991, Fillingham was invited to Atelier Boltanski through École Nationale des Beaux-Arts in Paris and has maintained a close relationship with France ever since, having lived in the country for 8 years in the 2010s.

Since the early 1990s Fillingham has regularly exhibited his works, often in project or artist-run spaces, churches, villages and halls where art is integrated into everyday life. His project *Fleurs d'Ivry*, was a joint installation with Henry Coleman at the Bomb Factory Art Foundation in London earlier this year. His most recent solo exhibition, *Love France*, was at the Project 78 Gallery in St. Leonards-on-sea in 2022. Fillingham has worked on many collaborative projects with Tacita Dean and Rasheed Araeen over the years, including a joint exhibition at the Chelsea Space in London in 2018 with Araeen.

Throughout his career as an artist, Fillingham has been both course director and associate lecturer at many renowned art colleges in the UK and France, including UAL, Goldsmiths College and Parsons Paris. Fillingham lives and works in Hastings, England.

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