

CRAFTIVISM!

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KSL Civic Association for Adult Learning and KSL Study Centre
Lintulahdenkatu 10, 00500 Helsinki

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Editors Jutta Lithovius and Riina Näsi

Layout and illustrations Siiri Hirsiaho

Photos by Sami Repo

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TO THE READER

We wanted to publish Craftivism! so that you, in particular, would be able to find craftivism. Craftivism is a form of civic activism in which one's own opinions are expressed through handicrafts. The ways of doing crafts and the materials used can vary greatly in craftivism but the common element in crafts is the idea of taking a stand on social issues. Craftivism does not have rules as such but you can use exactly those materials that are available to you. Craftivism is action that is performed alone or with others for a cause that is important to you in order to tackle the injustices of society through making things by hand. Craftivism contains the opportunity to get people to act on behalf of a better future. Craftivism is an international movement that connects people all around the world. In Finland, various voluntary groups and communities such as *Radikaalit ristipistot (Radical Cross-stitch)*

at several different locations, *Joku Ompeluseura (Some Sewing Circle)* and *Turku Knit 'n' Tag* bring people together to do craftivism.

In this publication, the craftivists Kevät, Linnea, Niko, Riitta, Hanna, Tarja and Vilja write about what made them choose craftivism and what kind of opportunities craftivism opens up in terms of taking a stand and civic activism. All the authors have societal views on which they want to make an impact through crafts. The texts reflect the need to break out from the nature of crafts where it is typical to follow clear instructions and designs. The instructions are meant to be an inspiration for you so that you could go and explore the potential of craftivism.

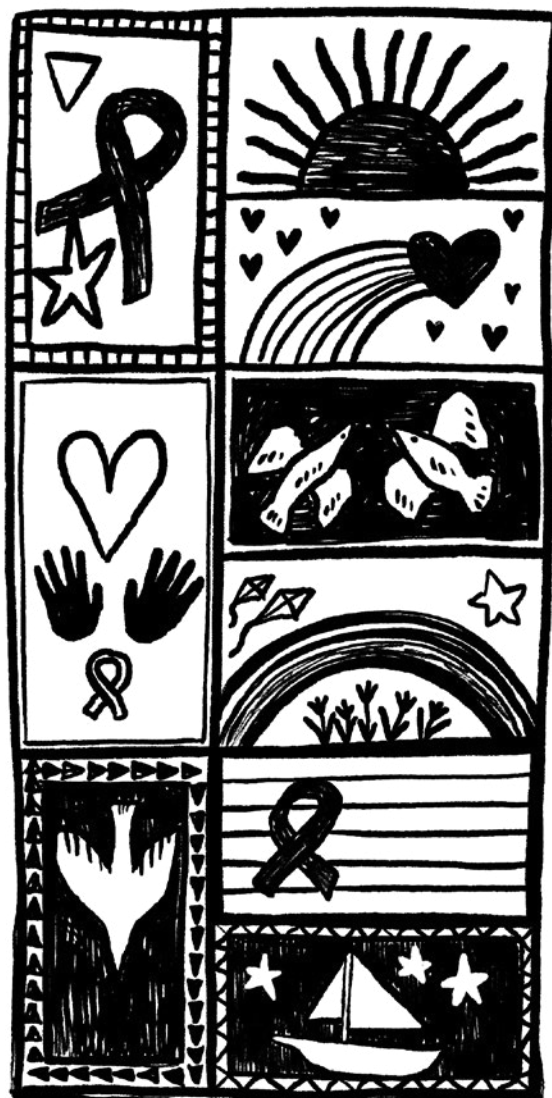
The authors of the publication and we the people at the KSL Study Centre encourage you to explore and create your own forms of self-expression by yourself and together

with others, and create workshops and courses around craftivism. You can use the publication in different study groups, learning institutions and in organisational activities so that craftivism will be recognised as a fruitful form of self-expression and civic activity.

We at the KSL Study Centre have wanted to support craftivism and make it visible as one form of activism. We have carried out campaigns such as Huuda huovuttamalla, #Suomilupaus and Jalanjälkeni (My footprint), which inspire people to take part in social debate and encourage those who do not identify with the traditional means of activism or whose voice is not heard in the society.

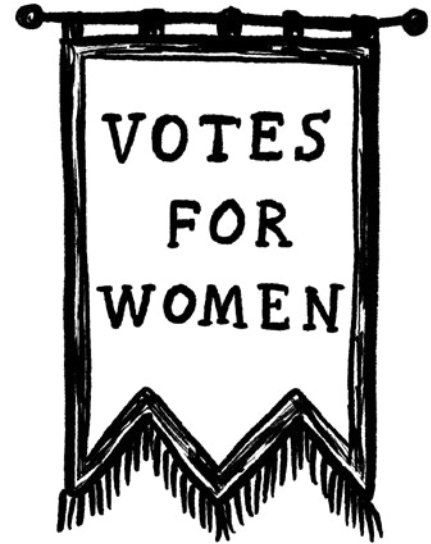
We hope that the book will inspire you to address important social themes, your thoughts and your feelings through craftivism.

Jutta Lithovius & Riina Näsi
KSL Study Centre



THE HISTORY OF CRAFTIVISM

- The term craftivism was allegedly first coined in 2003 by Betsy Greer, an American sociologist and a craft enthusiast. In the past years, a British activist, Sarah Corbett, has worked towards defining craftivism more precisely and towards making it known internationally and to the general public. (PERTTULA 2018, 142)
- The roots of craftivism stem from many different cultures, and handicrafts have been the means of activism and rebellion for centuries. For example:
 - One of the most famous craftivism projects is the AIDS Memorial Quilt. The purpose of more than 48 000 fabric panels of the quilt is to commemorate those who died of the disease, to increase awareness of a socially significant disease and to prevent it spreading. This craftivism work was a nominee for the 1989 Nobel Peace Prize. (THE AIDS MEMORIAL QUILT 2017.)
 - The suffragettes who fought for women's right to vote in Great Britain at the beginning of 1900's, handcrafted banners and small accessories in which the colours of the suffragette movement, i.e. purple for freedom, white for purity and green for hope, were repeated (CORBETT 2017, 8.).



SOURCES

Corbett, S. (2017). *How to Be a Craftivist: the art of gentle protest*. London: Cicada Books Ltd.

Perttula, J. (2018). Käsityöaktivismi osallistaa ja aktivoi ajattelemaan. *Aikuiskasvatus* 2,140-146.

The AIDS Memorial Quilt. (2017). *The AIDS Memorial Quilt*. www.aidsquilt.org



Niko Lindgren alias Mending Neko

TOWARDS A MORE SUSTAINABLE RELATIONSHIP WITH CLOTHES BY MEANS OF CULTIVATING TRADITION, CLOTHING CARE AND VISIBLE MENDING

In the dictionary, activism is defined as a policy of taking active action. It is through direct action a person becomes an active actor even beyond the election day. Direct action together with other people and active participation create a more open culture and increase the feeling of agency. Crafting resembles activism since it too is direct action. The result can be seen and experienced. But can it be activism?

For me, the mending of clothes is the most direct and instant way to express my dissatisfaction with the current state of the clothing industry. As a form of activism, highlighting the problems inherent in the global clothing industry is a clear way to underline the impossibility of the existing system. Overconsumption of natural resources, destruction of habitats, human rights issues, long transport chains and waste management issues are linked to the problems caused by

the clothing industry. The list is long, and it affects all of our lives. There are a lot of negative attitudes towards mended clothes. Furthermore, the skills you need in order to mend clothes are often unknown to my generation. In recent years, the problems linked to clothing production have come to light very clearly. Some of these can be solved simply by using clothes longer. This means that we have to learn to take better care of clothes and to mend worn-out clothes if needed.

I became interested in handicrafts already as a child. I wanted to learn how to sew costumes. The skills I had learnt as a teenager in Crafts at school became handy when I did not want to part with my favourite jeans. Activism came into the picture when I started to look for information about mending.

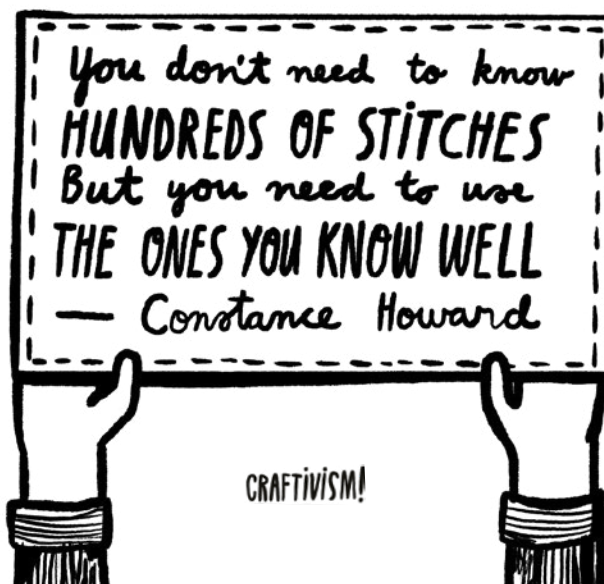
As a sewist, I do not strive towards perfection. I try to learn traditional techniques,

but I apply them according to my own needs and I have learnt a lot, for example, from the punk subculture. With traditional methods, the quality is tidy, of course. However, my punk rocker friend encouraged me to mend also clothes that even skilful sewists would declare scraps. Worn-out fabric may be hard to mend because it re-tears easily. In punk inspired mending, the re-tearing of clothing is not a threat but an opportunity. The clothing can be seen as sculptures, that are modified with every patch. Accepting wear and seeing it as an invitation for creative work is a step closer to saving a piece of clothing.

Craftivism includes many topics that are important to me. When mending clothes, one ends up dealing with many of the problems I mentioned earlier. When all the problems connected to production have been

outsourced, we cannot see them. Thus, it is easy to see the price tag only from the point of view of your wallet. Clothes have been extremely valuable throughout history. The consumer culture of today has developed only as recently as during the past few decades. With visible mending – whether it is visible patches or darning while commuting by train – I want to raise discussion about the true value of clothes. Value consists of the appreciation of both the material and the work. In the extremely polarised neoliberal capitalism, these values have no place but, in the future, things must be different for the sake of the survival of life.

Crafting can be a gentle way to approach activism. However, I feel that it cannot shy away from conflicts. Activism must become everyday life for more and more people.





The future of craftivism will be a triumph of resourcefulness. It will maintain traditional skills. It will revolutionise economy into circular economy. In the future, the changing climate and other challenges require adaptability, innovations and frugality from us. The global north will have to understand that the attitude of parsimony that governed life only a couple of generations ago was not a quirky wartime whim but a normal state of



affairs that has been everyday life for most of humanity for thousands of years. One of the big challenges of craftivism is to gain visibility also among those people who are not interested in knitting or sewing. We will have to work together and strengthen the idea of agency and mending to apply to everything. Craftivists will have to participate in public debate so that we can make a difference in the culture and change it.



” *The future of craftivism
will be a triumph of
resourcefulness.*



VISIBLE MENDING

MATERIALS NEEDED:

A long needle, a recycled fabric patch, sashiko or other cotton thread for stitching, sewing thread for basting. As an additional equipment, you can use a palm thimble.



1. You can begin mending when you notice that the fabric has worn out or when the hole is still small. Mending strengthens the fabric. The technique is suitable also for strengthening an intact fabric. In that case, you can leave out the patch.

2. You can design the pattern beforehand or create it while you stitch. If you are interested in traditional Japanese patterns, you can find ready-made designs also from the internet or from a library.

3. Set a patch of fabric on the reverse side of the fabric. It is good to fasten the patch with safety pins or by basting along the edges. This way it will stay put even when you are stitching a more complex pattern.

4. As you begin stitching, load several stitches on the needle all at once. Keep the stitches even, approximately the size of a rice grain. Leave the equivalent amount of empty space between the stitches.

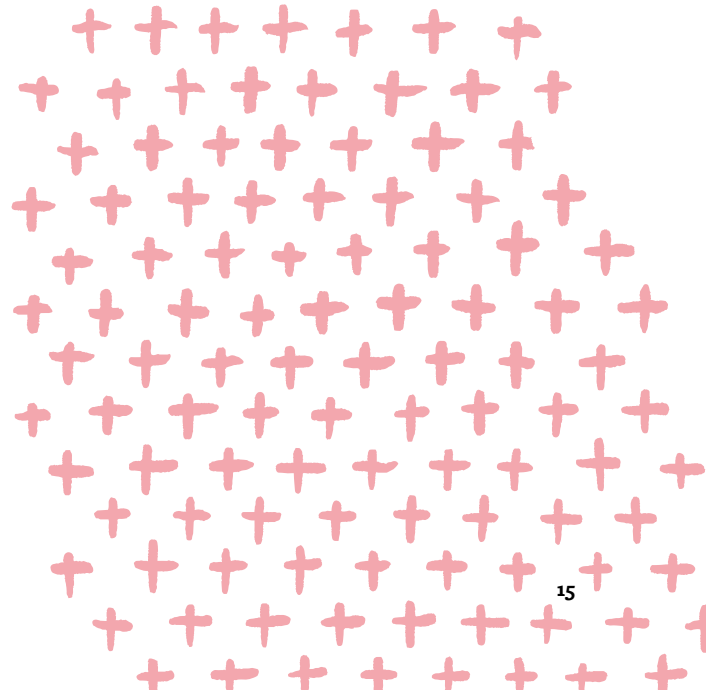


5. Pull the needle all the way through the stitches and keep going in the same manner. Do not pull the thread too tight when you change the direction of stitching.

6. You can finish off the patch with a knot. You can also flip the stitches over and stitch back via the same route. You can stitch until you run out of thread, or you can cut the thread when it seems to hold.

**WITH A LARGER HOLE
(FOR EXAMPLE, A TORN KNEE):**

1. Start by cutting off frayed edges.
2. Fold the edge of the fabric in approximately 1 cm. Stitch the patch and the edge of the hole together so that the folded edge stays hidden.
3. Stitch the patch closed around the hole as above. This strengthens the fabric and prevents it from re-tearing near the hole.





Riitta Skytt

COMMUNAL CRAFT UNITES PEOPLE AND CONTAINS A MESSAGE

I am an all-rounder of the media sector, now a pensioner and a freelancer. Because of my congenital underlying disease, I still write articles that deal with disability and diversity for organisational magazines. Furthermore, I like to write about crafts that include a communal aspect. In addition, I have acted as a volunteer, held workshops and undertaken development co-ordination duties at the World Village Festival.

I am not at the deep core of disability activism but on the outer circle, nevertheless. I think a genuine activist is a strong actor who has a clear vision of the common goal. I get too easily mixed up with my own threads. In social media, I follow craft-related posts such as insightful cross-stitching, knit graffitis and public works of art that have been realised as textile works.

I tried to strike up a conversation about craftivism on Facebook pages that deal with

disability but people were not inspired to discuss it more widely. Perhaps the society and the ordinary everyday life require so much effort from a disabled person that crafting as a means of making a difference feels too private and gentle. It might also be that the concept is foreign to many.

However, I believe that in time we will found a craftivism group of disabled people. While doing crafts we will discuss the issues that are important to us. With what kind of crafts can we have an impact on the inaccessibility of public spaces? How will crafting ward off forced help of intrusive people? What would I stitch onto my own strength mood board? How will our crafts be visible around town during the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on the 3rd of December?

It is not always easy to separate craftivism from charity. I think that in activism,

a clear message is more important than the material used. In charity, the material and the quality of the craft are essential. Despite good intentions, an unusable product that is poorly made from bad material turns into trash.

Both of my grandmothers were skilled in crafts. For example, my maternal grandmother wove decorative curtains on looms for all of her four daughters. My paternal grandmother was a farmer's daughter and a member of the Martha Organisation. Her handicrafts

were household linens and clothes suitable for everyday use. My own mother did leatherwork, sewed some of her clothes and knitted sweaters for us children.

The craft enthusiasm has passed on to me and my daughters. However, our crafts are very different from those of my grandmothers'. It would be nice to know what they thought about them.

As a handicrafter, I am eager but not very skilled. Perhaps it is because I am unable or impatient to follow the instructions. I do everything off the top of my head and my work gets out of hand easily. Sometimes I succeed but occasionally I have to dismantle my work. I crochet funny toys or beanies that my relatives do not want anymore. In addition, I darn and mend colourfully. After I mended the elbow of my comfort cardigan, I stitched the word "back pain" on top the patch. I am also going to stitch my other pains that I have from time to time, on my cardigan. To avoid the comfort cardigan becoming a cloak of sorrow, one has to stitch more cheerful words on to it, too.

My grandchild Siiri asked me to crochet a beautiful mermaid. When I started the work, I saw the flowing hairs, beautiful eyes and sinewy tails of Disney characters. But suddenly a question came to my mind: what



will happen to the beauties of the sea below pollution and floating plastic masses? I had to crochet a character that lived in those conditions. The character was named Raasu Roska (Poor Rubbish).

One of Raasu's eyes is blind like that of a Baltic herring, the hair is thin and tangled, and even the tail is oddly shaped. Raasu has decorated themselves with plastic trash they have found. Raasu took me and Siiri to the open sea and to the deep trenches to familiarise ourselves with the dire state of the oceans.

Perhaps, the raasus of the world will flock to schools, art clubs, youth centres and crafting groups already on the 25th August, the Baltic Sea Day, and tell us what we can do for the inhabitants of the oceans. You may find raasus, for example, from the piers of yacht clubs of all places.

One must always give hope a chance – I hope that during Siiri's life, the solution for cleaning up the oceans will be found.



IMAGINATION CREATES RAASU - THIS IS HOW YOU CAN START



Use your imagination; the instructions are only a suggestion. A character that lives in the sea, and especially in a polluted sea, can be of any kind.

MATERIALS

Head and body: *Cotton, bamboo or wool yarns.*

Choose the colour you want.

Crochet hook: *No 2 or 2,5 depending on the thickness of the yarn and the quality of your work.*

Tail: *Use all your leftover yarns. Glitter yarns and other special yarns work great.*

Face: *Stitch with a sewing thread or an embroidery thread. If it feels difficult, draw the face.*

Eyes: *Use buttons, sequins or patches for the eyes, or draw them with a marker.*

Hair: *The most tangled ball of yarn that you have not bothered to untangle works well as hair.*

Stuffing: *The filling that you can buy from art and craft shops and craft stores, felting wool or cotton wool.*

Decorations: *Raasu likes decorations. Cut decorations from used plastic packages and crinkle thin plastic bag as an adornment. Surely there are small unnecessary plastic items at your home, too. Now they are needed.*

DO LIKE THIS

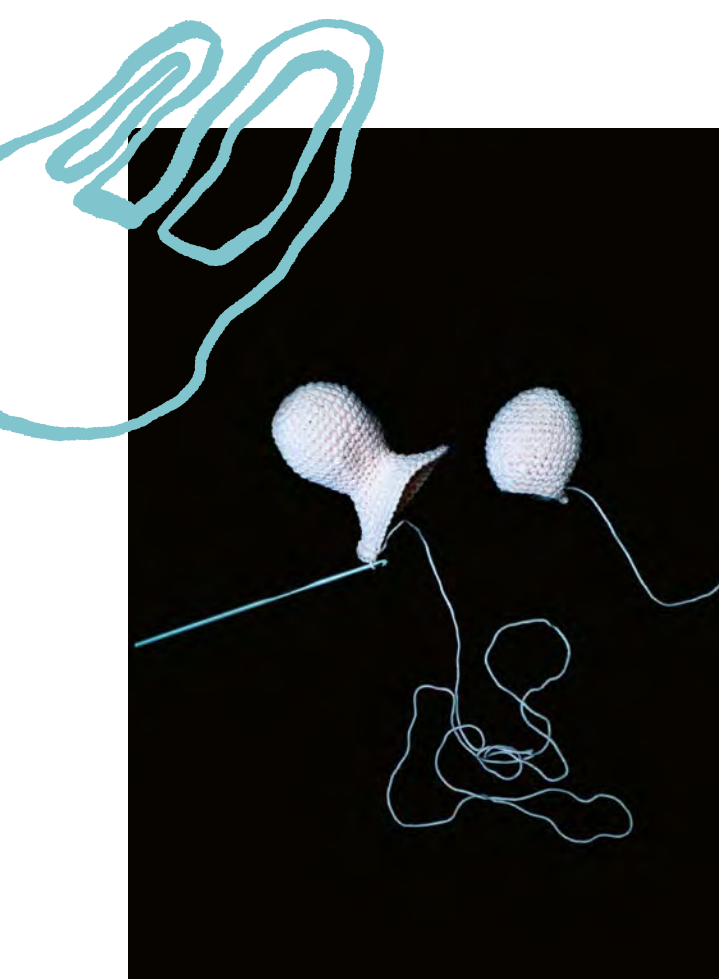
Raasu's head:

1. Crochet 3 chain stitches and connect them into a loop.
2. Increase, i.e. make two double crochet stitches into every stitch of the loop, approximately 6-7 stitches altogether.
3. Crochet the third row by increasing in the same manner.
4. Work so many rows even that the head starts to get round.
5. Increase every third stitch across one row.
6. Work one row even.





Hei
OLEN RAASU ROOKA
JA ASUN PERHEENI
KANS-SA ITÄMERES-
PYYDÄN SINUA AURA-
KAAN NEMÄ JA SA-
KALLA AUTAT ITSEÄSI
JAKMAA PERHEITÄSI
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YSTÄVÄSI RAASU



7. Repeat as in 5. and 6., until the head is wide enough for your liking.

8. Work rows even until the head is long enough.

9. Decrease every fourth stitch across one row.

10. Work one row even.

11. Repeat as in 9. and 10., until the opening for the head is approximately 20 stitches.

12. Work one row even. Do not crochet a very long neck or Raasu's head will slump. If that happens, create a spine and neck-cord from one chopstick or from a long barbecue stick. Push the stick in place from bottom all the way up to the head after the filling has been put in place.

Shoulders and body:

1. Shoulders will be crocheted by increasing on both sides of the neck. First, increase three stitches on either side of the neck.

2. Increase the second row in the same manner.

3. Increase on the shoulder widenings in this manner: Make two double crochet stitches, then one stitch, and then again two stitches. Continue like this until the shoulders are the right width.

4. Make double crochet stitches until the length of the body is what you want it to be. By increasing and decreasing you can create shapes on the body.

5. You do not have to worry if Raasu gets one extra lump somewhere! Raasu just happens to have one.

Hands:

1. Crochet as many stitches as you need for the desired arm length. Arms do not have to be the same length. There can also be more or less than two arms.

2. Crochet a panel of stitches.

3. Sew the panel into a roll and leave the other end part way open. This way it is easier to connect it firmly into the body.

4. You do not have to fill the arms.

5. If you want fingers, crochet them as chain stitches and make them sturdier by sewing. If the fingers feel



difficult, leave them out. Raasu can have, for instance, a fin instead of a palm.

Tail:

1. The tail will be crocheted into the shape of a cone. Start by crocheting the same amount of stitches as in Raasu's waist. Fasten the stitches into a loop.
2. Work rows even until you can make sure that the body and the tail go together. If they are not exactly the same size, the easiest thing to do will be to make the body wider or thinner by increasing or decreasing until the openings of the body and the tail are of the same size.
3. You can increase the tail according to your own taste or start to decrease rather soon. The shape and the size of the tail are a matter of taste. We do not know how the pollution of the oceans affect the growth and the shape of Raasu's tail.

Finishing:

1. Fill Raasu's head, body and tail.
2. Sew the tail and the body together.
3. Sew the hands in place.

4. Create the kind of hair you want Raasu to have. Raasu can be bald, of course, but there is often some sort of a tangle or pieces of string on the top of Raasu's head. Perhaps Raasu uses a piece of fishing net as hair.

5. If you want, crochet or sew ears and nose for Raasu. They can be small or big. They can be sewn as blanket stitches or they can be crocheted or drawn. Consider if Raasu might be hard of hearing.

6. Create the kind of face you want Raasu to have: embroider or draw it.

7. Decorate Raasu with small plastic garbage the way you like. Raasu will probably tell you how to do it.

8. Help Raasu to write a small note on behalf of ocean conservation. Raasu always wants to share the web addresses *puhdasmeri.fi* or *itameripaiva.fi* with people.







Tuoma Järvi
sivu 1/1
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Linnea Saarits

DOING IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING

I am a self-taught craft artist. I make art with various stitching techniques in the Lanka Palaa art collective among others. When I learnt the cross-stitch technique in 2015, I felt a new world opening up in front of me. It felt the same as learning to read as a child. I realised that with this technique I can do whatever I want and that everything is possible.

I began to lead the Radikaalit ristipistot (Radical cross-stitch) group in 2016 and later, together with Vilja Joensuu, I founded a crafting group called Joku Ompeluseura (Some Sewing Circle) that meets at Alakulttuurikeskus Loukko (Loukko Center of Subcultures). The most essential themes in both groups are the freedom to do and doing things together. I carry the same thought with me also in my career as a craft artist.

What is important in my craftivism is to encourage people to express themselves

artistically and freely. I want to encourage people to do anything that they feel is worth doing. Furthermore, I encourage to walk away from ideas that take more than they give. I have led people who feel very much insecure about themselves as craftists to stitching and other crafting techniques. I wish that people would learn to go towards their insecurities and shame by expressing themselves with techniques that someone else thinks they cannot do right. The liberation of self-expression and finding a new channel for emotional expression from stitching is sometimes touching to see. As a leader of Radikaalit ristipistot (Radical cross-stitch), I have had the possibility to empathise and to witness situations in which a person has found a motivation from cross-stitching to get up in the morning and to live through difficult times. These experiences have been important for

me too and have encouraged me to keep arranging the meetings.

Our meetings are open to everyone and we operate on the principles of a safer space both in Joku Ompeluseura (Some Sewing Circle) as well as in Radikaalit ristipistot (Radical cross-stitch). This is important for the atmosphere and the success of the meetings. I aim to create an atmosphere where the participants feel good about being and doing. I do not give instructions to people but I help when needed. This is all a part of my activism and my idea of how I wish people to get in touch with their creativity and skills. The greatest experiences of success are in those moments when I realise that the whole group is collectively and sensitively considering a solution over a needlework, for example. The core of my activism is to encourage people to experiment, to do and to find something good from all of it. It is rewarding and touching when the

participants are able to pour their feelings into an artwork or into making things.

The idea of Radikaalit ristipistot (Radical cross-stitch) is to gather together D.I.Y. inspired feminists, and often the works of the participants also deal with feminist themes. In addition, the discussions or occasional silence that takes place in the meeting is essential. There is this special atmosphere when doing crafts together. Silences feel natural because everyone is doing their own craft in which they become absorbed in from time to time. Some of the most important missions of my activism are people gathering to do things together and to be together.

The mottos of my activism are "doing is the most important thing", "anything goes" and "towards shame". Furthermore, the thought that no one cares what I do supports my liberation concerning my doing. Nobody can judge what I do because only I know what my artistic expression is really about.



CRAFTIVISM!



Lanka
Palaa

SPIES



”

The core of my activism is to encourage people to experiment, to do and to find something good from all of it.

IELETÖN
VIMMA
YSVÄTÄ



yhden
kerran
känkeän
tahdon löytää
vielä
elämän



TOWARDS SHAME – A STITCHING WORK

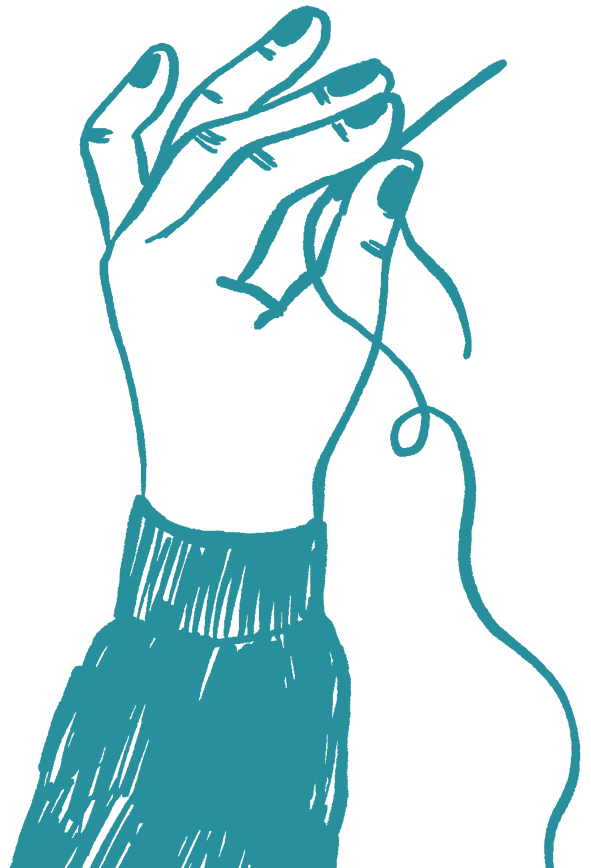
The materials I have acquired are recycled and from flea markets. The textile is an old and thin tapestry and the thread is a pearl embroidery cotton thread.

Think of a pattern or a sentence that is important to you or that you would like to focus on.

Choose the needle according to the fabric. A blunt needle is suitable for most textiles meant for stitching. For the stitching of heavier fabric you should use a sharper needle.

Vision the needle and the thread as a sort of a pen with which you doodle. You are unbelievably free to try all sorts of stitches and patterns. No one can say that you are making your own art work wrong in any way; it is your work. I suggest that you do something a little bit embarrassing at least occasionally and that you preferably realise your first idea without hesitating. But I also suggest to walk away from the idea if it turns into "a must". One should keep in mind that no one else is actually interested in what you are doing – the doing and your own feelings about your doing are the most important things.

In my own work, I have filled the letters with flat stitch, which is done by stitching wide stitches from one end of the letter to the other.



KOHTI

HÄPEÄÄ



Vilja Joensuu

ART IS POLITICAL

I believe that all art is political per se. Making art is a political act even when the objectives of the art themselves are not political. We live in the society and the society lives in us – thus, all our actions position themselves within a social context, whether we want it or not. It has always been this way, and no art of any era, genre or art movement has been created free from the social, cultural and political circumstances surrounding it.

The chance to be nonpolitical speaks of privileges and the choice to be nonpolitical is an extremely political act.

The activist potential of art, i.e. a chance to have an influence, is clear. However, calling all influencing activism is problematic. My relationship to activism is long and paradoxical in places. I feel that also activism has become a phenomenon that serves the individual-centred performance focus of the capitalist

system. Everything you do does not have to be activism in order for it to be valuable. On the other hand, calling everything activism blurs the lines between goal-oriented influencing and taking over one's life or personal empowerment, and this not to say that the latter ones are not important. Do what you do but do not let definitions restrict you!

Using crafting methods and traditions is a political choice in itself. Historically, crafts have been seen as gendered housework, or at best, a hobby that does not have a place in the canon of high art or in effective influencing. Crafts are linked with the hierarchies and power between genders and social classes. Elevating craft to a technique of modern art or to a tool of activism dismantles these settings for its part.

It is important for me to take the material impacts of my work into consideration:

am I producing more unnecessary matter into the world and do I support the production of materials that are harmful to the environment? Where do my works finally end up? Do they fill landfills or will they be burnt – what kind of emissions will my works generate? The world is filled to the brim with textiles and fibres. It is completely possible to do crafts without newly produced materials. Almost any kinds of fabrics are suitable for stitching: old kitchen towels, table cloths and doilies, clothes or curtains. You can often find unused embroidery threads from flea markets but you can also unravel thread from old textiles to be reused as has been done in the art work of this publication. Finger crocheting is a materially attainable technique because you will not need extra materials for it.

The art work I have designed takes a stand for the abortion right. Abortion is a human right, which is strongly connected to gender equality and class. The controlling of the sexuality and the bodily autonomy of women and gender minorities is a systematic maintenance of patriarchal power. Those who are in the most vulnerable position will be hurt the most by the tightening of legislation. In the 2020's, abortion laws have been tightened accompanied by protests, for example,

in Texas and Poland. Even in Finland, the abortion law dates back to the 1970's. A citizen's initiative to revise the law was submitted to the Parliament at the end of 2020.

When talking about abortion rights and sexual rights it is important to remember that gender is extremely diverse. Everyone who has a womb is not a woman. Everyone who is a woman does not have a womb. So do not simplify gender when you want to fight for sexual rights!



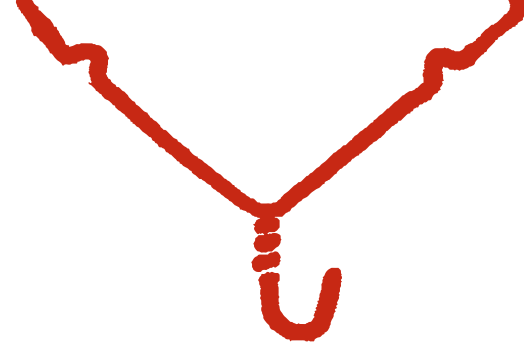
DEATH RACE



ma
hustan
koti
maulman

ABORTION IS A HUMAN RIGHT

- A FINGER CROCHET WORK



MATERIALS:

metallic hanger

wool yarn or synthetic yarn

1. Bend the hanger a little bit: pull the bottom away from the hook so that you get more space inside the triangle.

2. Start with a slip knot. Fasten the first stitch onto the hanger by threading the yarn around the metal and through the stitch. If you are right-handed, it is easiest to start from the slanted side of the hanger on the right side and work from right to left.

3. Crochet the yarn onto the hanger for approximately 3-5 cm so that every other stitch goes over the metal and every other goes under the metal. The number of stitches depends on the thickness of the yarn.

4. Continue with chain stitches until the strand reaches the other side of the hanger. Then

crochet the yarn onto the hanger for approximately 3-5 cm. Continue with chain stitches until you reach the bottom of the hanger. Crochet the yarn onto the hanger for approximately 1 cm. Continue with chain stitches until the strand reaches back to the starting point.

5. Connect the strand with the starting point of the work by threading one stitch through the stitches fastened onto the hanger. Continue with chain stitches until you have a strand of approximately 2-4 cm long. Fasten the strand to the stitches above by threading one stitch through one of the earlier stitches. Continue like this until you reach the left side. Now you can change the direction and go back from left to right. At 2-4 cm intervals, fasten the chain of stitches to the strands that go above.

6. Continue until you reach the bottom edge and until the triangle crocheted inside the hanger is filled. Finish off the stitches by pulling the yarn through the stitch.





Finger crocheting is a technique that does not require any other tools from me except yarn. In this work, the yarn is crocheted directly onto the hanger, which functions as a frame for the work. However, you can use this technique for other purposes, too. Some kind of a frame or a fixed starting point will help working on the piece. You can create large, even three-dimensional works for different frames or for different spaces with finger crocheting.

In finger crocheting, your fingers replace a crochet hook. The hand that would hold the hook, pulls the yarns through the stitch like a hook. The easiest thing to do is to crochet long strands of chain stitches and to fasten them every now and then to the frame or to the earlier stitches or strands. It is not possible to create a traditional knitting that consists of rows with finger crocheting but you can make all sorts of things out of crocheted strands!

Only an old-fashioned hanger bent into a triangle from one single piece of metal is suitable for this purpose. A smooth and a little bit thicker yarn will be easier to work with than thin and fuzzy. You can often find both hangers and yarn from flea markets and recycling centres.

You can reuse yarn by disassembling old clothes. A knitted sweater or a scarf will give you a surprisingly large amount of yarn when you unravel it. It may be hard to find the right end of a yarn from which the knit garment will start to unravel. However, when you find it, unravelling will be easy. If you are sensitive to dust, use a mask.

Unravelled yarn is curly. It is easier to work with a straighter yarn. You will be able to straighten the yarn somewhat if you dampen it and wind it tightly, for example, around a piece of cardboard.







Kevät Sieppi

THE REBEL SPIRIT OF STITCHING AND RAINBOW ACTIVISM

I am a 27 year old artist, a student finishing their studies at the Art Education Master's programme of Aalto University, an art teacher and an activist nature. At first, my activism consisted of participating in traditional protests and creating communities. After that, it included practising feminist pedagogy, having discussions with people who think very differently about things over and over again as well as emotion work and self-reflection.

Activism shifted easily into artistic work during my Bachelor of Art studies at the university in 2014-2017. For a long time, I had been interested in the aesthetic of street art around the world and the anonymous rebellion as well as the taking over of commercial advertising space that were associated with it. At some point, I saw a combination of street art and craftivism on Instagram - a stitching work attached to a bridge railing with the intention

of inspiring ideas in the occasional passer-by. There was something about the technique.

I ran into subvertising, protesting with strength in numbers and visual means against corporations that waste natural resources, and I was tremendously inspired by it all. At first, the desire to make political art guided my artistic work for a long time. Nowadays, I express myself diversely and with various techniques, and I do not always need to take a stand.

In the art history of the western countries, embroidery has long been viewed culturally as an insignificant activity of women and assumed females. During my art history studies, the white and male-centric roots of European art history dawned on me in a new way. Embroidery is a slow work in which the movement between the needle and the thread is repeated hundreds of times. We have been

accustomed to seeing the Home Sweet Home embroideries with flowers and the Bible verses on a decorative fabric at a grandmother's house.

Throughout the history of art, it has not been acceptable for a woman to be an artistic actor, especially not someone who would have things to say about the state of the society. Historically, the professional art work of women has often been reduced to the themes of flower paintings, arrangements and portraits. In the Middle Ages, nuns embroidered altar cloths in convents. Taking interest in art has been more acceptable for the upper class women and, for example, jewelry embroidery has been their hobby. (Honour & Fleming 1991, 16-17.)

Considering the history of the embroidery technique, it feels rebellious to stitch onto a fabric something that the viewer would not expect to be there. I started craftivism because of this delicious contradiction. It reminds me also of the state of the freedom of speech. I, an assumed female and a young artist, can stitch whatever I want onto a fabric and call it an important channel of artistic expression here in Finland. This is far from being the case all around the world.

Human rights and LGBTQIA+ themes, respecting the gender diversity, environmental

themes, feminist art, critique of capitalism, and art as an emotion work are important to me. As a queer artist, human rights and LGBT themes affect me personally and I want to keep the themes on display also for my community. I would like that gender and sexual minorities could be able to be themselves and to live without bullying and persecution in our societies. I often want to bring up trans issues because they are often left in the sidelines in the activism of sexual minorities.

In my own activism, the emphasis on the themes and the level of activity varies depending on my life situation – they live with me. My backpack says "Do no harm, take no shit", which is a pretty good and universal guideline. As an activist, you do not have to tolerate bad behaviour from others but it is also good to look in the mirror and consider how you go about with your activism. As a 19-year-old activist who had just discovered veganism, I occasionally got swept up in blaming people who ate meat or wore fur. I myself have also acted badly when doing social media activism – I have been provoked and angry and I have hurt people. That is the time when you should reflect on your own actions.

The questions of power and responsibility are present in the ways of doing social

media activism as they are in teaching, relationships and civic participation. Empathy and the will to grow as a person and as a teacher guide my own activity. An activist is often asked: "Why do you advocate for this issue and not this other one, which is more important to me?" I believe the same person can care about climate issues, unemployed people in Finland and, for example, vegetarianism.



Works cited and sources

Honour, Hugh & Fleming, John. 1991.
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Considering the history of the embroidery technique, it feels rebellious to stitch onto a fabric something that the viewer would not expect to be there.

STITCH A RAINBOW

You will need a needle, threads of different colours and an embroidery hoop if needed. You will be able to stitch also without the hoop. If it is possible, I always use surplus thread from, for example, recycling centres and flea markets. If you want, you can also use special threads from yarn stores. Occasionally, I like to bring special effects into my works, for example, with glitter thread. Furthermore, from well-equipped craft stores you can find lace with which you can decorate the edges of the work if you want to.

YOU WILL NEED

a needle (I recommend a large-eye needle), an embroidery hoop (a small one will do), red, orange, yellow, green, blue and violet threads, scissors

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Draw a pattern according to the picture onto a fabric base you have chosen. I recommend using a pencil or a similar pen that leaves a delicate mark.
2. Start by threading the needle with the red thread. Generally, the Pride flag is presented with the red colour on top. Push the needle through the fabric and tighten the thread. Push the needle through the fabric again so that you

guide the stitch towards your desired direction. Stitching is like slow drawing. Remember to finish off a new thread by tying a knot so that the thread will not unravel.

3. Stitch from up to bottom and strengthen the edges of the colour strip from time to time. The back of the stitching work is often quite messy but you do not have worry about it; it is part of the process. You can stitch with your own technique, too.

4. When you are ready with the red area, start with the orange, then yellow, green and violet areas.

5. I suggest you finish off all the different coloured threads in good time so that they will not get tangled into each other on the back side of the fabric. You should finish off the edges of the fabric as well so that the fabric will not unravel. This can be done also with sewing machine.

6. The work is complete when all the colours have been stitched by hand and the edges of the fabric have been finished.







Tarja Suomi ja Hanna Väättäin

CRAFTING AS INTROVERT ACTIVISM – A DREAM OF A HANDMADE, GENTLE CLIMATE ACTION

The climate crisis concerns us all but our chances to make an impact on it are different. Therefore, the means and the solutions must be diverse: feminist, queer, relating to disability politics, and anti-racist. Furthermore, activism must be possible for both extroverts and introverts. One of the introvert means of making a difference is craftivism. It is shielded from gazes. Anonymity protects the crafters. Introvert politics is fact-oriented and continuous in nature instead of highlighting individual craftivists or projects.

We are dreaming of a movement whose mode of action is gentle but strong and that is made of crafters who take a stand on climate crisis. As the logo of this movement that we have named Introkraft, we propose an embroidered eye with a water drop inside of it. The eye pattern has been previously used, for example, in the community art work Fobia

Sociale by Yarn Bombing Trivento in 2021. In the project, the activists fastened crocheted eyes onto a large chain-link fence that had been put up in a park in Milan. The eyes that were set side by side created an impressive whole over which one could empathise what it feels like to be looked at for a person who fears social situations. The water drop in the eye of Introkraft is also a tear that expresses concern over the climate crisis.

Tarja Suomi has acted as a producer in several events dealing with handicraft skills. She has led the open to all Knit'n'Tag on the banks of Aura River in Turku since 2013. In the event, the linden trees along the riverbank are decorated with knit graffitis. The works have taken a stand on mental health services, the situation of LGBTQIA + people and asylum policy among others. Hanna Väättäin has led a crafting group in Kaikkien Naisten

Talo (Every Women's Center) in Turku since 2018. The participants have been women who are in the middle of a residence permit process or an asylum process. The women have designed and crafted a wall hanging, a banner and a tablecloth that demand humane asylum policy, and taken part in Knit'n'Tag with works that demand peace and stopping the forced deportations in 2019 and 2021.

In the conservative Turku, craftivists are needed to make radical art that connects people. It is needed in order to bring the climate crisis and the inequality between people into focus. This has previously been done by a group called ATT Anarkistiset Taide Tädit among others. In the Turku Pride park party in 2018, ATT set up a craftivist joy and cry moment in which cloth handkerchiefs decorated with

sentences that took a stand, were hung on a cord that was fastened between trees.

Väätäinen has learnt craftivism from Pia Bartsch who works as a community artist in the Saari Residence, the artist residence of the Kone Foundation in Mynämäki. One of the first community art works that Bartsch realised, consisted of four wheelchairs that had been transformed into human-like figures. Beach Babe Barbara (2006) was going to the beach with a swimming ring and the Bride Magdalene dressed in white was heavily pregnant (2006). Bartsch uses surprisingly various techniques. One of these is handicrafts. For example, knit graffiti (The Bridge of Roses, 2012) and design, production and appliqué of clothes (The Saari Sirens, 2012, The Rococo Grunge Caramel - Tableau vivant, 2013) have been a part of the creation of Bartsch's works that differ greatly from one another. Following the example set by Bartsch, Introkraft continues the movement of craftivism, which utilises recycled materials, takes an open stand on injustices, and in which the works are being realised in local communities with discussions and experience sharing.

Climate political embroidery works have been made in the craftivism group of Kaikkien Naisten Talo (Every Women's Center) in 2021.

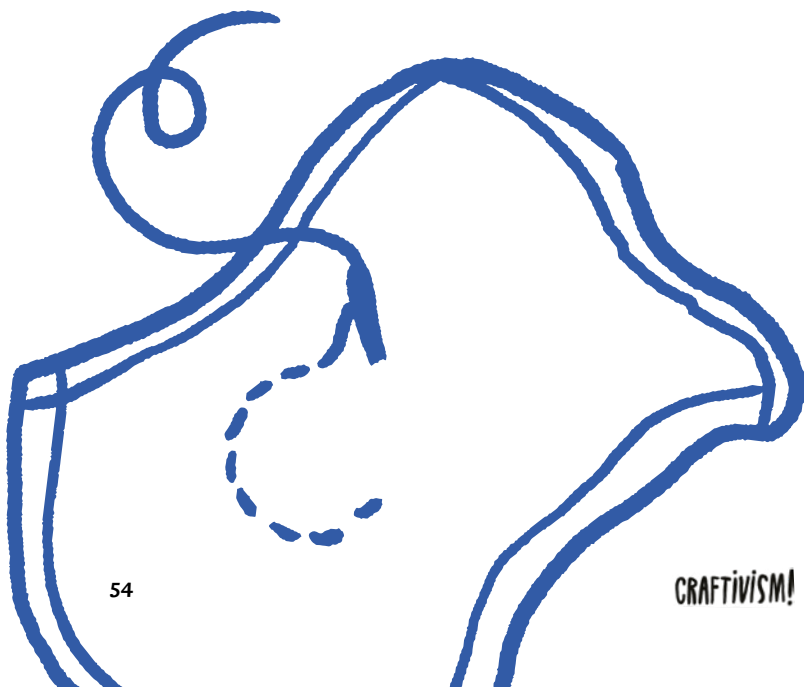
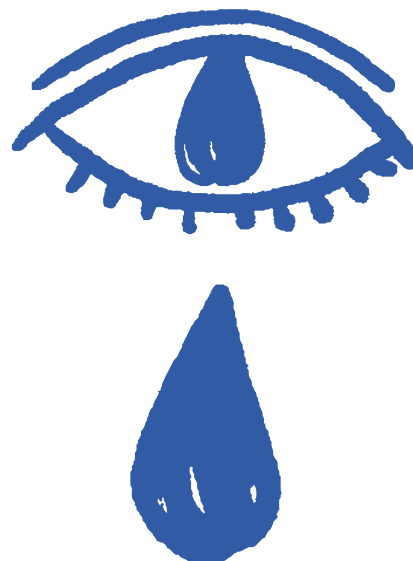
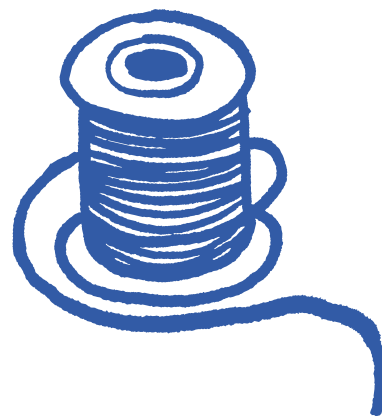




THE EYE OF THE CLIMATE ACTIVIST

In order to participate in introvert climate activism, you will need pieces of waffle cloth (size 20 cm x 20 cm) that have been cut from old towels, bathrobes and other removal textiles, and a thread and a tapestry needle.

HERE IS HOW TO DO IT: Stitch or thread your climate political slogan onto the fabric and your own variation of the eye with the water drop that tells something essential about where you come from. Send a picture of your work to those who make climate decisions: politicians and members of the board or leaders of transnational corporations. Share a picture of your work with the hashtag *#introkraft*.





MERI KYSY

LAIKSET



PUUTU ASIAAN



#JALANJALKENI



JALANJÄLKENI (MY FOOTPRINT)

Jalanjälkeni (My footprint) is a craftivism campaign of the KSL Study Centre, which provides an opportunity to think about sustainable future through one's own choices and craftivism. It has been possible to order a complete craftivism kit with supplies free of charge and do craftivism by yourself, together with friends, at schools or study groups. You can implement the instructions without the kit with your own supplies, too.

What is my footprint? We have an opportunity to have an impact on the future with the choices and decisions we now make. Even with small acts, everyone of us can have an impact on a better future and on the wellbeing of Earth. Stitch your thought that takes you towards a world that respects nature, animals and humans.

MATERIALS: You can use My footprint kit of the KSL Study Centre or a piece felt or fabric found at home and pieces of thread. In addition, you will need a needle and scissors.

1. What is my footprint? Consider which one of your thoughts, acts or choices takes you towards a world that respects nature, animals and humans.

2. Sketch your thought onto a felt or a fabric with a pencil as a text or as an image. Moreover, you can cut the felt or the fabric into a size or a shape that you like. You can make, for example, a patch to be fastened to a clothing or to a bag, a bookmark or a keychain.

3. Open the skein of thread, thread the needle and make a knot at the other end of the thread. Start at the reverse side of the work by pushing the needle through the felt or the fabric, and by making stitches of suitable length over the lines you have drawn.

4. When your work is complete, finish off with a knot at the reverse side of the fabric. You can decorate the felt, for example, with buttons, beads or pieces of fabric you find at home.

5. Sew or stitch a tag *#jalanjälkeni* onto your work.

6. You can share your photo in social media with hashtags *#jalanjälkeni #kulttuuriaktivismi #käsityöaktivismi #craftivism*. Tag *@jalanjalkeni* on Instagram.

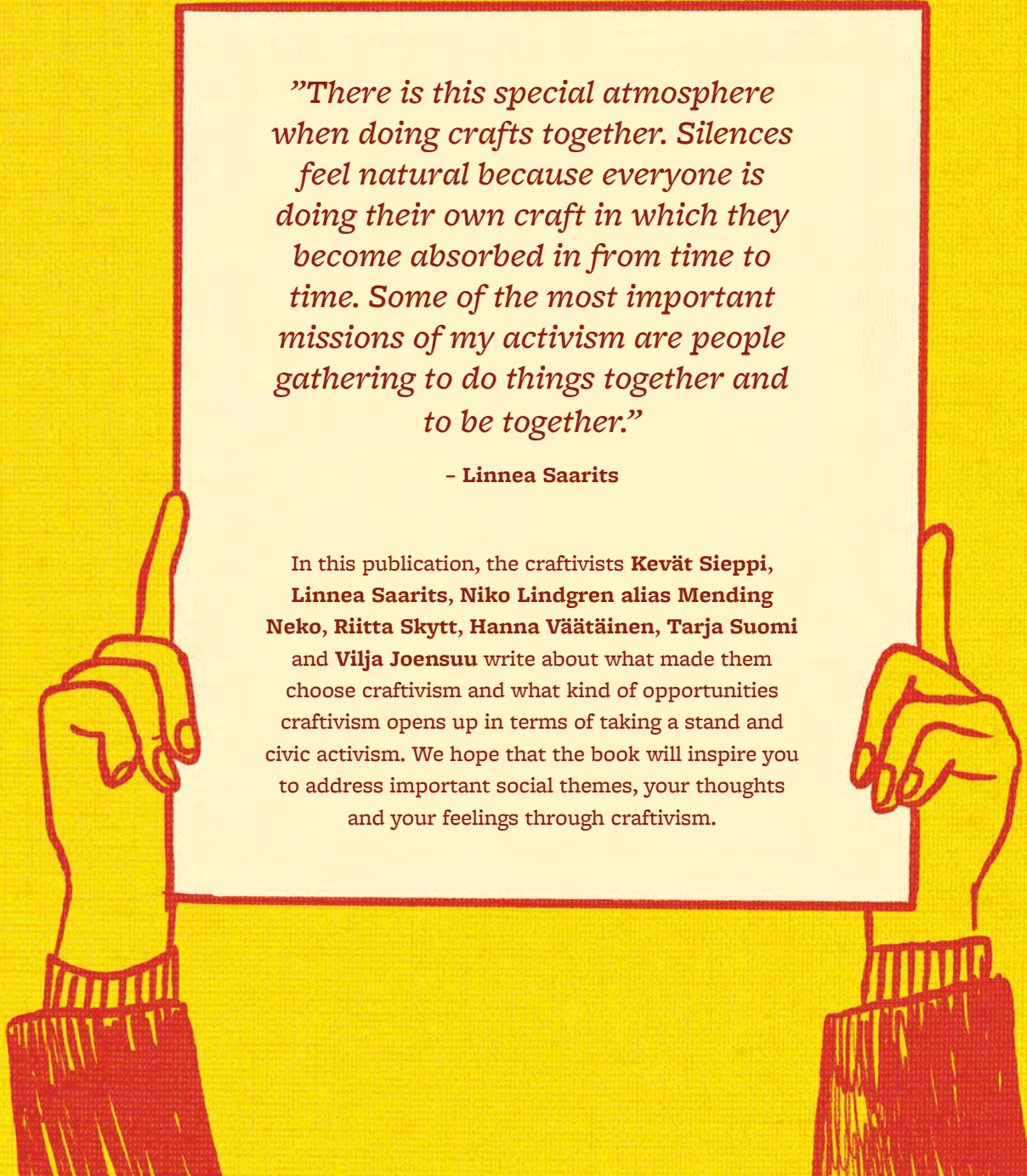
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THE PUBLICATIONS OF KSL

KSL produces books and study materials on adult education, culture, society and organisational skills. Free of charge publications can be downloaded or ordered from ksl.fi.



An illustration of two hands, one on the left and one on the right, holding a white rectangular sign. The hands are drawn in a simple, sketchy style with black outlines. The fingers are curled around the edges of the sign. The hands appear to be wearing dark, textured sleeves. The background is a solid, vibrant yellow.

”There is this special atmosphere when doing crafts together. Silences feel natural because everyone is doing their own craft in which they become absorbed in from time to time. Some of the most important missions of my activism are people gathering to do things together and to be together.”

- Linnea Saarits

In this publication, the craftivists **Kevät Sieppi**, **Linnea Saarits**, **Niko Lindgren** alias **Mending Neko**, **Riitta Skytt**, **Hanna Väätäinen**, **Tarja Suomi** and **Vilja Joensuu** write about what made them choose craftivism and what kind of opportunities craftivism opens up in terms of taking a stand and civic activism. We hope that the book will inspire you to address important social themes, your thoughts and your feelings through craftivism.