THE MATERIAL LANGUAGE OF PROTEST:

Textile Art and Clothing Craftivism, Britain 1970-2018

By

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ABSTRACT

This thesis analyses the material language of protest, specifically the communicative capacity of textile art and clothing handcrafted for activism in Britain from 1970 to 2018. The inquiry emerges from a multidisciplinary practice that became known as 'craftivism' (craft + activism), a term coined by writer Betsy Greer in 2003 to represent a craft-based movement that sought to reconceptualise handcraft as an alternative form of protest against social injustice and inequalities (Sinclair, 2014). Taking both a historical and a contemporary perspective, this research analyses the design, production and circulation of craftivism as well as its subsequent reception and interpretation within society. Although craftivism is a twenty-first-century neologism, it is nonetheless historically familiar, having been drawn on for centuries by women and marginalised groups as a strategy of empowerment, advocacy and protest (McGovern, 2019). Textile art and clothing took on renewed socio-political significance within the grassroots actions and mass demonstrations of the 1970s and 80s, marking a rise in the democratic use of art and craft as a communication tool in an age of visual media (McQuiston, 1997). Fibre-based crafts, such as sewing, embroidery and knitting were brought out of a domestic setting and repurposed as vehicles of material protest in support of the Anti-Cold War, Peace and Liberation movements (pertaining to gender, sexuality, and race). Suggestive symbols and opinionated slogans were sewn, painted or screen-printed onto banners, jackets and jumpers to confront injustice and inequalities.

During recent years, there has been a resurgence of artists, designers and amateur makers who employ handcraft to engage with pressing social and political issues, especially those underpinned by changes to the European and American political systems in the aftermath of the Brexit vote and the geopolitical consequences of President Trump's 2017 inauguration. Both campaigns have resulted in societal divides, feelings of powerlessness, and a rising distrust of authority which have culminated in global protests that have engaged not only those who are marginalised, but also society at large. Trump's presidential victory, in particular, raised anxieties amongst women who feared the advent of a heightened patriarchal power that would ultimately subjugate and exclude them, potentially affecting the future hegemony over their rights, health and bodies (Smirnova, 2018; Kaiser, 2020). With so much societal uncertainty, women felt that it was time to re-question their rights and current position in society, an uprising which was most notably demonstrated by the transnational Women's March (2017), #Metoo Movement (2017) and the 'Time's Up' Campaign (2018). The subversive and communicative capacities of clothing and textile art played a fundamental role in these movements to address ongoing issues of female inequality, sexual harassment, rape and domestic violence. This resurgence of do-it-yourself (DIY) craft culture in contemporary protests has

prompted this critical and retrospective examination. Although several academics have also conducted similar revaluations of the role of craft in activism, none have comprehensively addressed its communicative capacity, specifically analysing the design, fabrication and dissemination choices of the makers themselves, which is a central focus of this study. This research analyses the different design strategies, encoding methods and fabrication processes used by makers to draw attention, garner support and ideally, incite long-term socio-political change. This study thus identifies those tactics that have proven most useful in resonating with their target audience during the period from 1970 to 2018. This research thus proposes that four distinct design elements controlled by the maker can influence how craftivism is perceived and responded, which include the following: materiality, content, context and the clothed body. The impact of technological advancements and social media platforms are also explored, specifically examining how they affect the design, making and dissemination of contemporary craftivism. To best capture and contextualise this approach, four specific case studies were analysed. These were the Women's Liberation Movement (1970—1990); Punk Anti-Fashion (1974—1984); Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp (1981—1991); and contemporary craftivism in the form of The Women's Movement (2008—2018). The case studies are intentionally disparate, each selected to represent a diverse group of women who, despite their various backgrounds and political beliefs, utilised handcraft either individually or collectively to create and embellish clothing and textiles for the purposes of activism.

Many examples of craftivism have yet to be systematically investigated, as the circulation of activist clothing and textile art often occurs outside of organised institutions, given that they are informally displayed, exchanged, and worn. By assembling and categorising these individual objects, this study has a unique opportunity to examine how these textiles collectively serve to communicate extant issues visually, contextually and relationally. Despite the growing body of literature concerning craftivism, this in-depth analysis differentiates itself from previous research by examining craftivism holistically from process to product and its subsequent reception by society. There is also a dearth of research in terms of protest clothing, therefore justifying further investigation. Addressing this research gap will help to explain the role and influence of the clothed body on the presentation and reception of activist ideations since 1970.

To fully elucidate this line of inquiry, this research employs a multi-method data collection approach to examine both maker and artefact, an approach that draws upon the literature, archival research, object and visual analysis, focus group observation, and semi-structured interviews. To create a unique theoretical approach to craftivism, this thesis combines theories from the different fields of linguistics (Langer and Derrida) and material cultural studies (Gell and de Certeau) to determine the communicative capacity of craftivism as an object and practice of reform, as well as to understand the role of its makers, which are the key research inquiries. This

theoretical framework helps to conceptualise craftivism as a social agent, representing the maker's thoughts and beliefs through its materiality and aesthetics. These theories highlight the maker's intentionality invested into objects at the varying level of design, production and circulation of craftivism, preparing it to fulfil its purpose to communicate socio-political ideas.

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CHAPTER ONE: Introduction to Research

1.1   PURPOSE, RATIONALE AND PERSPECTIVE

This thesis analyses the material language of protest, specifically the communicative capacity of handcrafted clothing and textile art as a form of activism in Britain during the period from 1970 to 2018. The inquiry emerges from the multidisciplinary practice of 'craftivism' (craft + activism), a term that was first coined by writer Betsy Greer in 2003 to represent a movement that aimed to reconceptualise handcraft as an alternative form of protest (Sinclair, 2014).[1] Tired of conventionalised forms of political protest associated with vociferous messages and mass demonstrations, Greer envisioned craftivism as a way of channelling one's anger and frustration in a kinder, more gentle and more productive manner by making socio-political concerns tangible through handcrafted creativity and visual expression. This, she believed, would be harder to dismiss than one's mere voice (Greer, 2011). Although the concept of craftivism existed long before it was christened, conferring a name upon it allowed people to define their actions (Greer, 2014). For craftivist Carrie Reichardt, 'giving something the lexicon of language, making it a word, enables people to come together' (as cited in Baumstark, 2016, p.66). The term gained in popularity after Greer launched her website craftivism.com, which served as a communal space for crafters and activists to unite, exchange ideas and share skills. She found that craftivism allowed makers to reclaim their political agency by materialising their anger and resistance in the form of handmade objects, thereby challenging issues such as racism, sexism, exploitation of labour and the refugee crisis, amongst many others (Cronin and Robertson, 2011). Craftivism formed connections to several political movements of the time including feminism, anti-capitalism, environmentalism, and anti-war politics (Williams, 2011).

Throughout her writings on craftivism, Greer uses the word 'craft' to generalise any craft discipline, despite largely discussing textile-based examples (made from such

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[1] According to Wong (2008, p.26), *activism* is 'a dialectical process where power and resistance is always played out.' Thus, although domination is constraining, it provides us with opportunities for action. New forms of activist politics can thus be realised, particularly when people relate to each other through shared values and identities. 'Activism' is defined for this study as taking action to raise awareness of injustices and to ideally bring about social, political, economic and environmental change (Corbett, 2017). This particular study considers the effectiveness of activism as its ability to communicate and draw attention to an issue. Corbett (2017) writes, 'Determining whether something is effective means recognising that some ways of doing good are better than others'. Activism can take many forms which is discussed throughout this thesis.

techniques as embroidery, knitting, cross-stitch and quilting).[2] Although craftivism can be applied using any creative practice, it has predominately been demonstrated via textile-based processes. Needlecraft, in particular, has lent itself to activism due to its accessibility, materiality and mobility, as well as its historical connection with femininity and domesticity (Auerbach, 2012; Schuiling and Winge, 2019). Its relative familiarity across cultures also invites people to participate, irrespective of their respective skill level, as most projects do not require specialist expertise knowledge or equipment (Bryan-Wilson, 2017). Needlecrafts are also very portable as they generally comprise needles, thread/yarn and cloth, which makes such works convenient to make, carry and tuck away when out in public, particularly at protest demonstrations (Bryan-Wilson, 2017). Its making process is also extremely flexible, which is attractive for protest, as individuals and organisations are able to fit in the making around other tasks. Several early, high-profile projects involving textiles, specifically Cat Mazza's *Nike Blanket Petition* (2003-2008) and Marianne Jørgenson's *Tank-Cozy* (2007), gained much publicity and notoriety worldwide, becoming the face of the craftivist movement.[3] These projects provided a portrait of the construction of craftivism, serving as a guide for individuals and groups to execute their own creative activism in local communities (Williams, 2011). Several exhibitions featuring craftivism emerged within Europe and North America, predominantly over the last decade, many of which arose across Britain.[4] Although the majority of these exhibitions did not explicitly utilise the term 'craftivism' or focus solely on textile art or clothing, they all featured handcrafted objects used in protest movements to stage confrontations in hope of promoting societal change.

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[2] Craft is rooted in multiple values, which include, the physical process of making, the intimate and tactile experience, the invested time and the skill of the hand (Fariello, 2011). In German, *kraft* symbolises power, skill and capacity (Bratish and Brush, 2011). For this thesis, 'craft' is defined as a hand-making process resulting in a product representing the connection between the maker and material. Within the range of written and verbal discourses on fashion and textiles, the terms 'cloth', 'fabric' and 'textiles' are often used interchangeably. Within this study, the term 'textile' is selected as the most relevant for use. Unlike the terms 'fabric' or 'cloth', which imply a base or ground material, the word 'textiles' represent not only the physicality of cloth, but the processes, techniques and finishes that constitute its production.

[3] Mazza's *Nike Blanket Petition* (2003-2008) is her most well-known work, which involved networked crafters from over thirty countries protesting against Nike's labour abuses. Each crafter contributed a knitted or crocheted square, which made a fifteen feet blanket featuring the Nike swoosh emblem (McFadden, 2007). Jørgenson's *Tank-Cozy* (2007) will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 2.

[4] Early exhibitions featuring craftivist work occurred in the U.S. in 2007-2008. These include: *Radical Lace and Subversive Knitting* (Museum of Arts and Design, New York, USA, 2007); *Pricked: Extreme Embroidery* (Museum of Arts and Design, New York, USA, 2007-2008). British exhibitions include: *Big Ideas and Small Disruptions* (Brighton Museum, Brighton, England, 2013-2014); *Disobedient Objects* (Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 2014); *Challenging the Fabric of Society* (Peace Museum, Bradford, England, 2016-2017); *People Power: Fighting for Peace* (Imperial War Museum, London, England, 2017); *Hope to Nope: Graphics and* Politics 2008-18 (The Design Museum, London, 2018); *Home Strike* (l'étrangère Gallery, London, England, 2018); *Fashioned from Nature* (Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England, 2018), *T-shirt: Cult – Culture – Subversion* (Fashion and Textile Museum, London, England, 2018), *Fabric of Protest Exhibition* (People's History Museum, Manchester, England, 2018); *Represent! Voices 100 Years On* (People's History Museum, Manchester, England, 2018-2019); *Women Power Protest* (Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Birmingham, England, 2018-2019). These exhibitions will be discussed in more detail through this thesis.

As a term and a field of study, craftivism is fixed within the twenty-first century, regardless of its being practiced for centuries by marginalised groups as a means of resistance and defiance (McGovern, 2019). Generations of activists, anarchists and feminists have repeatedly drawn on handcraft as a means of empowerment, advocacy and protest (Fitzpatrick, 2018). As needlecrafts shifted from a necessity to a leisure activity during the 1970s, becoming less significant within the domestic lives of women, they were reappropriated as a subversive means of resistance and defiance by women themselves (Parker and Pollock, 2003 [1981]; Harris, 1988). This so-called 'feminine work' took on a new social and political importance within mass demonstrations and grassroots actions of the 1970s and 80s. Textile arts were used as prime visual aids to support the anti-Cold War, Peace and Liberation (gender, sexuality and race) movements. Articles of clothing also became blank canvases through which to publicise socio-political arguments, as well as to show solidarity towards a particular group or community. Women used their bodies, which were historically stigmatised and exploited, to make political statements and reclaim the power taken by prejudice and violence. Through these visual and material means, women created an avenue of communication through which to share their personal and collective experiences as affected by gender, sexuality and race, marking a rise in the democratic use of art and craft as a socio-political communication tool (McQuiston, 1997).

During recent years, there has been a resurgence of artists, designers and amateur makers who use handcrafts to engage with pressing social and political issues. These largely pertain to changes to the European and American political systems, particularly following the 2016 UK referendum, subsequent Brexit negotiations and President Trump's 2017 inauguration.[5] Both campaigns resulted in societal divides, feelings of powerlessness, and a growing distrust in government, ultimately triggering global protests which engaged not only the marginalised, but also society at large. This profound shift in political engagement demonstrated people's anger and emphasised a real need for change. Trump's presidential victory raised anxieties, particularly amongst women who feared a heightened patriarchal power that could possibly affect the future of their rights, health and bodies (Smirnova, 2018; Kaiser, 2020). Women worldwide felt it was time to readdress their rights and current position in society. In January 2017, 100,000 individuals gathered in London for the Women's March as part of a global demonstration of solidarity, totalling an estimated five million people worldwide (Bolton, 2017). The march was characterised by a creative outpouring of textile art and clothing, notably the pink hand-knitted 'pussyhat', a symbol that ultimately became synonymous with the campaign. Suggestive symbols and opinionated slogans were sewn, printed and painted onto banners

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[5] Brexit is a shorthand term devised by the merging of the words Britain and Exit simply to explain the concept of the UK leaving the European Union. The 2017 General election saw a surge among 18-25 year olds to an estimated 66% following Brexit and Trump's election (Bolton, 2017).

and jumpers to raise consciousness and denote allegiance to women's equality at local, regional and global levels. The subversive and communicative capabilities of clothing and textile art seen in the Women's March (2017—) initiated a surprising surge of DIY creativity within subsequent transnational movements geared towards women's rights, particularly 'SlutWalk(s)' (2011—), anti-Trump demonstrations (2016—), the #metoo Movement (2017) and 'Time's Up' Campaign (2018), all of which address ongoing issues of female inequality, sexual harassment, rape and domestic violence.[6] Many of these campaigns stem from the activist movements of the 1970s and 80s when the epoch for this research begins. These will be explored in more detail throughout this thesis.

This resurgence of DIY craft culture in modern-day protests has prompted this critical and retrospective examination. Although several academics have also been provoked into similar revaluations of craft for the purposes of activism, none have to date comprehensively addressed its communicative capacity, specifically analysing the design, fabrication and circulation of craftivism, which is the central focus of this thesis. This research analyses the various design strategies, encoding methods and fabrication processes used by makers themselves in order to draw attention, gain support and, ideally, incite socio-political change. This research analyses the different design strategies, encoding methods and fabrication processes used by makers to draw attention, garner support and ideally, incite long-term socio-political change. This study thus identifies those tactics that have proven most useful in resonating with their target audience during the period from 1970 to 2018. This research thus proposes that four distinct design elements controlled by the maker can influence how craftivism is perceived and responded, which include the following: materiality, content, context and the clothed body. The impact of technological advancements and social media platforms are also explored, specifically examining how they affect the design, making and dissemination of contemporary craftivism. To best capture and contextualise this approach, four specific case studies were analysed. These were the Women's Liberation Movement (1970—1990); Punk Anti-Fashion (1974—1984); Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp (1981—1991); and contemporary craftivism in the form of The Women's Movement (2008—2018). The case studies selected are deliberately disparate, each intended to include a diverse sample of makers who all, despite their divergent backgrounds and political beliefs, utilise handcraft either personally or collectively to create and embellish clothing and textiles as a means of resisting and challenging injustices. Many examples of craftivism have yet to be systematically investigated, as the circulation of activist clothing and textile art often arises outside of organised institutions, given that they are informally displayed, exchanged, and worn. By assembling these individual

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[6] Atkinson (2006, p.1) discusses DIY as a 'more democratic design process of self-driven, self-directed amateur design and production activity carried out more closely to the end user or the goods created'. He believes it is impossible to define DIY as there many types of activities and motivations (Atkinson, 2006).

objects for analysis, this study affords a unique opportunity to examine how they collectively communicate visually, contextually and relationally. Despite the growing body of literature concerning art activism, this in-depth analysis differentiates itself from pre-existing research by examining craftivism in its entirety from process to product. It is written from a Dress and Textile historiographical perspective and is intended to determine the communicative potential of craftivism based on the design, fabrication and dissemination choices of individual makers and their subsequent reception in society, thus underpinning the originality of this study. There is also a dearth of research devoted specifically to protest clothing, further justifying this research. Filling this gap will thus help to explain the role and influence that the clothed body has had on the presentation and reception of activist ideas since 1970. Beyond deepening our understanding of craftivism within current and past political climates, this research makes further significant contributions to scholarship in the fields of social activism, communication studies, dress and textile histories, and material culture studies. It also adds to the field of social movement studies which, hitherto, has tended to neglect topics of material culture and feminism (Bartlett and Henderson, 2016; Behnke, 2017).[7] Lastly, this thesis expands on feminist thinking, highlighting the continuity, evolution and relevance of craftivism by women, particularly in relation to foregrounding marginal voices, the disruption of dominant paradigms and expectations of female identity and behaviour.[8]

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[7] Using Dyer's (2016) definition, this thesis understands 'feminism' as the advocacy of women's rights on the ground of equality for the sexes'. For the purpose of thesis, 'feminism' refers not only to second-wave feminism (1970s and 80s), but also to contemporary and subsequent movements. Daly Goggin (2013, p.6) notes that categorising feminism by 'waves' is problematic since women have not always 'united in unified beliefs and values […]'. Since 'waves' tend to overlap, the dates provided for periods feminism in thesis are estimated.
[8] Within the literature review, this thesis will expand on feminist art ideologies of Nochlin (1989), Pollock (2003) and Parker and Pollock (2013), highlighting that the gendered history of art and craft cannot be separated from craftivism.

1.2 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The principal research aims and objectives for this theoretically based study are as follows:

1. Determine the communicative capacity of craftivism, as utilised within textile art and clothing, as an activist tool to voice socio-political concerns.

OBJECTIVES

Consider the influence of medium, content and context on the interpretation of craftivism.

Investigate the interrelationship between words and cloth as a means of socio-political action, particularly in examining how meaning was portrayed and transmitted.

Explore the role and impact which the clothed body has on the presentation and reception of craftivism as opposed to a message displayed as textile art.

Aim I

2. Understand the role and practice of the maker who employed craftivism within dress and textiles as an aesthetic means to address societal issues.

OBJECTIVES

Aim II

Investigate the relationship between British women and domesticity, specifically exploring shifts in social connotations of feminism and craft.

Explore the design procedure of the maker from process to product in terms of influence, modes of production, strategic encoding methods, artistic expression and lines of communication.

Assess how the practice of soft activists has transformed since 1970, particularly examining how influences such as technology and social media platforms have impacted their

1.3   RESEARCH PARAMETERS, BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

This thesis is geographically delimited to Great Britain. This nation is significant as it played host to numerous instances of historic and contemporary craftivism, which are subsequently analysed as case studies. The period of study, 1970 to 2018, is also fundamental to this discussion, as it encompasses several key social, political and economic events that influenced the creation and dissemination of craftivism in Britain. The 1970s was a turbulent decade that was notable for its economic turmoil, social uncertainty and the threat of nuclear war. It was in the midst of the Cold War (1945 – 1991), a period of international rivalry and geopolitical tension between the United States (Western Bloc) and the Soviet Union (Eastern Bloc) and their respective allies (Greenwood, 2000; Barnett, 2018).[9] Soviet expansion within Eastern Europe in the aftermath of World War II fuelled 'Western' fears of a communist plan to control the world, leading to a forty-year-long rivalry that defined the geopolitical map of the latter decades of the twentieth century (McMahon, 2003). The stakes were perilously high, with potentially catastrophic political and military implications, tensions that spilled over into proxy wars in Vietnam (1954-75) and Afghanistan (1979-1989) (McMahon, 2003).[10] Britain played a key role in these confrontations, protecting the United States and Western Bloc against the threat of Soviet invasion by harbouring nuclear weapons. This, in turn, resulted in a high level of defence spending and associated economic loss (McMahon, 2003). Britain's socio-economic climate was further impacted by financial recession (1973-75), industrial strikes, the oil crisis, rising inflation and growing unemployment (Kerr, 2003; Peach, 2013). In 1973, Britain entered the European Economic Community (EEC; now known as the European Union (EU)) in the hope of restoring the country's economic fortunes and reversing its diminished status in international trade (Wall, 2019). The country also experienced substantial political instability in the form of its frequent turnover of leadership. Within the 1970s, four different prime ministers served in office as the country descended into industrial and economic chaos (Turner, 2003). Margaret Thatcher became prime minister following the 1979

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[9] The United States and the Soviet Union emerged as global superpowers engaged in ideological, political, economic, and military competition. The Western Bloc was led by the United States and the democratic capitalist countries of Western and Central Europe. The Eastern Bloc comprised the communist nations of Eastern Europe and Asia, which were controlled by China and what was then called the Soviet Union. The distinct differences in the political systems of the two blocs often prevented them from reaching a mutual understanding on key policies.

[10] Since the U.S. and Russia did not declare war on each other directly, but supported opposing sides, these were considered to be proxy wars. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 created new tensions between the two countries. These tensions continued until 1989-91, when democratic changes were made to the Communist system, opening up a new relationship between the U.S. and Russia as well as the new nations of the former Soviet Union.

Vietnam War: North Vietnam was supported by the Soviet Union, China, and other communist allies; South Vietnam was supported by the United States, South Korea, the Philippines, Australia, Thailand, and other anti-communist allies. The invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet army and the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan government against the Mujahideen (an Afghan opposition group which was supported primarily by the United States, Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, China, and the United Kingdom). These conflicts were considered proxy wars between the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

'Winter of Discontent' during which several UK trade unions went on strike, depriving the country of its key public services (López, 2014; Shepherd, 2015). Thatcher's radical conservative leadership led to a decade-long period of discord with the unions, leaving much of the working-class population unemployed and poverty-stricken (López, 2014; Shepherd, 2015).[11] These political upheavals caused a growing restlessness among the population associated with a growth in activist movements protesting an array of issues, including social inequality, civil rights and peace activism, amongst others (Jefferies, 2016). According to McQuiston (1997), anti-establishmentarian feelings were at 'an all-time high', causing what she describes as:

> '[an] undeclared war between generations and their values; between races and classes; between Left and Right. It was a time for change: to fight for liberation, power and rights. Sexual liberation, black liberation, gay liberation – and Women's Liberation'. – McQuiston, 1997, p.79

This period of rapid social and cultural upheaval coincided with a renewed interest in traditional handcrafts and DIY culture (Turney, 2009; Peach, 2013). Owen (2011) explains that conventional expectations of handcrafts were rejected, as artists, activists and amateur makers increasingly used craft to depict the heightened political atmosphere of the time. Many young people, identifying as 'punk', also adopted a DIY ethos as they took up causes against the establishment (Sladen, 2007). Opposed to authority, conformity and consumerism, punks self-produced alternative music, 'zines' and clothing (Drueke and Zobl, 2012).[12] In keeping with their socialist principles, a DIY ethos allowed punks to gain visibility and to shift mass production 'back into the hands of ordinary people' (Talbot, 2013, p.25; Sklar and Donahue, 2018). They devised politically controversial clothing using self-styling and DIY techniques, such as adorning, sewing, hand-printing and distressing (see figure 1) (Talbot, 2013). Their politics were literally worn on their sleeves. Political symbols, profanity and humour were emblazoned onto clothing to resist mainstream ideals, which included conventional ideas of femininity and womanhood for many young women. Female punk's rough exterior often served as a protective shield against the heightened sexual harassment of the time. For Bolton (2013, p.12), 'Punk smashed every convention of acceptable self-presentation, whether based on age, status, gender, sexuality, or even ethnicity. It prized originality, authenticity, and individuality and devised specific visual codes to rebel against the cultural mainstream'. Hebidge (1979) and Sladen (2007) considered the rips, tears and slashes as socially charged representations of the economic deterioration, government stagnation and societal discontent of the time.

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[11] Although her popularity waned in her first few years of office due to recession, she received a landslide re-election in 1983 due to the recovering economy and victory in the 1982 Falklands War with Argentina (López, 2014; Shepherd, 2015).
[12] Do-it-yourself (DIY) culture is rooted in the avant-garde art movements of the 1950s.

Figure 1: Left: Vivienne Westwood and Malcolm McLaren (1977) Screen-printed muslin, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England, Image credit: Anna Boonstra Copyright: V&A; Right: Maker unknown (1977) Punk shirt, Hand-drawing and stencil on Cotton, The Horse Hospital, London, England, Image credit: Anna Boonstra.

Jefferies (2016b, p.17) also recognised a 'radical shift' in the textile art of the 1970s, specifically in relation to the 'content of the work, how work was made, where it was seen, and how it was received'. Art critic and activist Lucy Lippard (1973) believes that The Women's Liberation Movement (WLM) gave women the confidence to recoup 'low' materials to make feminist statements not only to protest the prejudice and sexism at the root to the art and craft field, but also the broader social and

political systems.[13] The WLM reassured women that it was in their own power to start making changes, challenging their role and position in society (Feminism and Non-Violence Study Group, 1983). WLM groups began sharing their experiences in a process that become known as 'conscious(ness) raising', thereby bringing their common experiences to light, highlighting that their personal problems were also actual political issues (Feminism and Non-Violence, 1983; Dekel, 2013). 'The personal is political' became their rally cry (Dekel, 2013).[14] Lippard actively encouraged women to use 'domestic arts' for activism, as they were sites of feminine agency that would gain attention because of their previously political irrelevance as mundane, ordinary household items (Lippard 1973; Knott, 2015).[15] At the time, needlecrafts signified a status of weakness and oppression that reinforced traditionally feminine roles and activities that many women were advocating that they should leave. By subverting these connotations, women could criticise the feminine and domestic ideologies that still confined them to the home. Embroidery, knitting and quilting were re-appropriated as tools of resistance to discuss the very issues they historically represented in relation to women's oppression and inequality.[16] Although women expressed their societal discontent in a variety of ways, many used textile-based processes to materialise their subjective experiences that had previously been kept private in the hope of quashing the divide between domestic and public domains (McQuiston, 1997).[17] As prime visual aids in support of the WLM's campaign, textile arts were used to advocate reproductive rights, professional equality, sexual freedom, financial independence and to end the culture of sexual harassment and domestic violence, *inter alia* (Broude and Garrard, 1994; Rowbotham, 1999; Skeggs, 1997). Clothing was adorned with symbols and opinionated slogans to communicate messages of gender equality and to show solidarity amongst supporters (see figure 2). These items of women's protest were used for collective, organised

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[13] The WLM was an organisation founded in the 1970s that attempted to express the needs to all women through the following seven demands: equal pay; equal education and job opportunities; reproductive rights; free 24-hour nurseries; legal/ financial independence; lesbian rights; to end violence or sexual assault (Wise, 1996; Skeggs, 1997). This was later criticised as women of colour and those with disabilities who felt excluded (Wise, 1996). WLM groups held protests, marches, staged demonstrations and published newsletters.

[14] The renown feminist movement slogan 'The personal is political' was coined by New York Group Activist Carol Hanisch in 1969 who claimed that women's daily experiences should be regarded as social and political issues rather than problems to be kept private (Dekel, 2013).

[15] Parker and Pollock (1981) discuss the art-world hierarchy between fine art and craft, which devalues textiles as a gendered practice within 'decorative crafts'. Since many of these practices (quilting, embroidery and patch-work) were carried out in the home, they were therefore framed through a feminine stereotype and distinguished as non-professional practices (Parker and Pollock, 1981). This thesis defines 'fibre art or fibre crafts' as hand-making activities involving materials consisting of fibre, such as yarn or fabric. This includes knitting, weaving, crochet, quilting, sewing, embroidery, cross-stitch and applique.

[16] Textiles have a longstanding historical association with protest in Britain, as demonstrated in the Trades Union Movement (1830s), Women's Suffrage campaigns (early 1900s), Women's Liberation and Peace Movements (1970s and 80s) and the Miners' Strike (1984, 1985). Unlike trades union banners which were largely professionally made with paint, the twentieth century suffragettes utilised embroidery due to its representation of feminine ideals when ridiculed for lacking feminine attributes by participating in activism (Harris, 1988).16 Tickner (1988, p.63) explains that the banners demonstrated 'dignified womanly skills while making unwomanly demands'. Needlecrafts' association with femininity was not viewed as a weakness, but rather as a symbol of strength and celebration (Harris, 1988; Parker, 2010 [1985], p.197; Bryant-Wilson, 2017).

[17] Many women struggled with the polarities of the public and private and outer versus inner worlds (McQuiston, 1997).

activism at marches and demonstrations, as well as at a smaller, more individual level. This thesis will discuss these aspects in detail at a later juncture. Lesbian and ethnic minorities criticised the movement for failing to account for their own oppression, which resulted in the formation of splinter groups, particularly by black and lesbian feminists (McQuiston, 1997; Dixton, 2014).[18] These women also employed textile art and clothing to promote their cause, which are included throughout this thesis.

Figure 2: Left: Michelene Wandor (1970s) Jumper, knit, MsUnderstood 2009 Exhibition, The Women's Library at London School of Economics, London, England, Courtesy of Dr Clare Rose; Right: *Spare Rib* (1975) tea towel, cotton screen-printed, The Women's Library at London School of Economics, London, England, Image credit: Anna Boonstra.

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[18] Black women, in particular, engaged in activism relating to issues of health and reproductive rights, immigration rights, anti-poverty, and police violence (Dixon, 2014).

There was also a growing concern over the environment in the 1980s, focusing on ecology and anti-nuclear strategies (Feminism and Nonviolence Study Group). To displace their feelings of fear and helplessness, a group of women united in political action and creativity in the largest mass feminist campaign of the early 1980s, termed the Women's Peace Movement. Using a non-violent approach, this women's-only protest contested the harbouring of American nuclear weapons on British soil at Greenham Common Airforce Base in the south of England.[19] Women materialised their perceptions of human security using textile art and handcrafted clothing in an effort to end the Cold War and its associated conflicts. Protesters hung embroidered and appliquéd banners conveying anti-war messages onto the fence surrounding the air force base, creating a visual distinction between their peaceful campaign and masculine representations of war (Horton, 2010). Protesters exploited the visual aesthetics and familiarity of textiles to initially attract viewers before engaging them in an exchange of pacifist ideas (Flood and Gavin, 2014). Knitted jumpers, hats and scarfs incorporating politically charged symbols and text were also made onsite as women came and went over a period of nineteen years before the campaign finally achieved disarmament in 2000 (see figure 3). This tactic of disarming a highly male-dominated space with feminine needlecraft unsettled the mainstream media's view of protest as being overtly destructive and violent (Horton, 2010; Robertson, 2011). Despite this, they were criticised for using 'feminine' tactics as they were considered by many as 'ineffective' or a 'safe form of activism' (Robertson, 2011, p.189). Although numerous women were sympathetic to both activist and feminist viewpoints, many of them declined to publicly support the peace movement due to the fear that they would be associated with the stigma of *feminist activism* (Pilcher, 1999; Parker, 2010 [1984]).[20] For Robertson (2011, p.189-90), 'The assumption that it was a female characteristic to respect life (and hence hate war)', 'presented a self-contradictory position for both the women involved in the protest at Greenham Common and those who kept away', which was otherwise detrimental to feminist goals.

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[19] According to the Feminism and Nonviolence Study Group (London, 1983, p.5), 'resistance to war and to the use of nuclear weapons is impossible without resistance to sexism, to racism, to imperialism and to violence as an everyday pervasive reality'. To rid the world of various forms of oppression, they believed that one must look at the structural underpinnings or system of patriarchy (Feminism and Nonviolence Study Group). They defined patriarchy as 'a system of male domination, prevalent in both capitalistic and socialist countries, which is oppressive to women and restrictive to men. It is a hierarchical system in which men have more or "value". More social and economic power, under which women suffer both from oppressive structures and from individual men' (Feminism & Non-violence Group, 1983, p.15). They consider peace as 'eradicating the causes of war and violence from our society' (Feminism & Non-violence Group, 1983, p.15).

[20] *The Guardian* labelled the women of Greenham Common as 'punks', 'lesbians' and women who 'make no attempt to behave as middle-class housewives' (Walter, 1999).
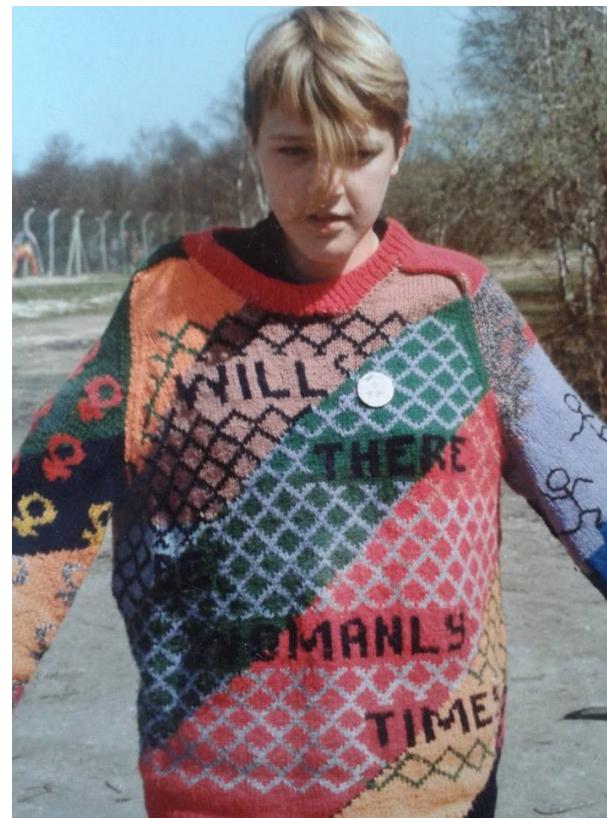
Figure 3: Left: Thalia Campbell (Early 1980s) Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp banner, appliqué, St Fagans National Museum of History, Cardiff, Wales, Image credit: Anna Boonstra; Right: Juley Howard (late 1980s) 'WILL THERE BE WOMANLY TIMES?' jumper, knit, Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp, Courtesy of Juley Howard.

Women's activism in the 1990s progressed from being a generalised, collective feminist statement to focus increasingly upon individuality as a means of expanding feminist inclusivity (Pentney, 2008). The movement was comprised of predominantly younger women who looked beyond gender by focusing on multiple identities of age, race and sexual orientation (Stevens, 2011). Such consciousness-raising strategies moved beyond mass demonstrations, taking a more individualistic turn that was concerned with everyday lifestyle politics that executed a perhaps less noticeable sense of activism. This change of outlook was criticised by previous movements (Daly Goggin, 2013; Drüeke and Zobl, 2012).[21] This study recognises a decline in textile and clothing activism in the 1990s, which can be attributed to changes in the outlook of feminism, the end of the Cold War, rapid technological advances, a generational disconnect with activism, and a conservative backlash against feminism (Molony and Nelson, 2017). This notion of a decline is supported by the extant literature (Robertson, 2011) and few evidentiary examples of textile-based objects, photographs and testimonials. The Aids Memorial Quilt Project (1987-present) is amongst a few examples of British women's collective activism from the 1990s.[22] The Riot Grrrl Movement also employed handcrafted techniques, but there were insufficient examples of textile art and clothing containing political symbols, text and imagery to support its inclusion in this project.[23]

Debbie Stoller's third-wave feminist magazine, *BUST,* and the subsequent *Stitch 'n Bitch* book series (2003-2007), helped to both popularise and politicise crafting circles amongst young, hip, urban women. She promoted DIY and handcraft through her feminist magazine *BUST*, as she believed that it was time for young feminists to rectify domestic crafts as a potential and subversive act, that had been largely discarded by many of their predecessors a few decades earlier (Chansky, 2010; Stoller and Henzel, 2011).[24] The idea that needlecrafts were too feminine to be performed in public, for Stroller, was 'proof' that domestic crafts needed to be reclaimed once again (Robertson, 2011).[25] Rather than being taught to knit and sew by their mothers at home, as women had been for generations, young people were learning from

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[21] Writer Nancy Whittier describes a 'political generation' as "a group of people (not necessarily of the same age) that experiences shared formative social conditions at approximately the same point in their lives, and holds a common interpretive framework shaped by historical circumstances" (quoted in Stevens, 2011, p.48).

[22] The Names Project Aids Memorial Quilt also called the (AIDS Memorial Quilt) originated in 1987 in San Francisco, U.S.A. The quilt was first shown in 1988 at the national mall in Washington DC - 1,920 panels, each measuring 6x3ft, the size of a human casket (Prain, 2014). Since its debut, the quilt has grown to be the largest community art project in the world, currently containing more than 48,000 panels, each commemorating someone who has died of an AIDS-related illness (Prain, 2014).

[23] This thesis refers to text as a system of signs that can be read or interpreted (written or printed words, phrases and slogans).

[24] NOTE: Since 'waves' tend to overlap, the dates provided in thesis are estimated. Greer's (n.d.) definition explicitly references what is arguably the most widely acknowledged origin of craftivism: third-wave feminism and its ambiguous relationship to popular culture and the materialism associated with mass production.

[25] Due to this individualist turn, Brown (2006, p.40) believes there was no identifiable "feminist aesthetic" in the early twenty-first century art and craft as there was in the 1970s and 80s, despite much of the work still addressing gender.

one another, gathering in public spaces to share and converse this knowledge (Barrett, 2008; Myzelev, 2009; Bratich and Brush, 2011; Prain, 2014; Jackson, 2019). The Calgary Revolutionary Knitting Circle and London's Cast-Off Knitting Club were two such formative groups that arose in the early 2000s to organise public knitting as a means of reclaiming communal space for creative social and political action, thereby aiding in the breakdown of the public-private division (Carpenter, 2010).

In 2003, Greer formed a portmanteau of the words craft and activism, namely '*craftivism'*, to describe the reclaimed use of handcraft for activism in response to the time's socio-political and economic climate (Sinclair, 2014). She thus positioned craft as an active and productive social action rather than as a passive domestic activity unconcerned with world issues (Baumstark, 2016). 'The beginning of the 21st century', according to Greer (2007, p.401, 2020), was the right time for the evolution of such an idea', given the 'states of materialism and mass production, the rise of feminism, and the time spanned from the Industrial Revolution'. Much like the 1970s, the rise in handcraft in the early 2000s was attributed to financial instability, government involvement in war, and the proliferation of a consumer-corporate culture (Peach, 2013). This renewed interest in hand-making was particularly influenced by the financial crisis of 2007-8, which was followed by the deepest recession thus far experienced in the UK (and much of the wider world), since the conclusion of the Second World War (Peach, 2013; Shepherd, 2015). The economic downturn had long-term socio-political effects, resulting in a sharp decline in international trade, rising unemployment rate, and a sharp drop in commodity prices (Peach, 2013). Several crafting groups embodying a DIY ethos formed within the first decade of the twenty-first century. The 'Maker's Market' or the 'Indie (Independent) Craft Movement', for instance, encouraged makers to create alternatives to mainstream mass-produced products by locally and ethically fabricating, and even selling handmade goods themselves (Black and Burisch, 2011).[26] Although created using traditional handcraft techniques such as ceramics and embroidery, these products often expressed modern and subversive narratives, challenging the contemporary expectations of craft in present-day society (Oakes, 2009; Waterhouse, 2010). Even though many indie crafters were not politically motivated and possessed no specific activist agenda, their work was often confused with craftivism as they were both considered alternative and subversive forms of contemporary craft (Waterhouse, 2010). Several scholars, however, believe that DIY craft is a political act in of itself — deemed an effective opposition to mass production and consumption — causing indie and craftivism's boundaries to become further blurred (Burcikova, 2011;

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[26] Several books and journals published in the mid-2000s were dedicated to Indie/New Wave Craft and the DIY craft movement of the early 2000s including, *KnitKnit (2002-2007), Subversive Stitch* (2006), *Subversive Seamster* (2007), *Indie Craft* (2010). The growing interest in 'reconnecting' with hand-making, resulted in new ways of creating, perceiving, and classifying craft. In the book and documentary *Handmade Nation,* Levine and Heimerl (2008) highlighted the new-wave of craft and its growing community who created an economy based on creativity.

Gauntlett, 2011; Stevens, 2011). [27]

According to writer-artist Sabrina Gschwandtner (2007), the growing interest in 'reconnecting' with hand-making was a reaction to numerous things, including the hyper-fast culture and our increasing reliance on digital technology. With the Internet gaining in popularity and accessibility during the early 2000s, several crafting websites and online message boards which were dedicated to the progressive nature of handcraft emerged (Buszek, 2011; Bratich and Brush, 2011; Stevens, 2011; Hackney, 2013). Alongside Greer's craftivism.com (2003), Jean Railla's getcrafty.com (1998) and Leah Kramer's craftster.org (2003) served as early websites, or 'third' spaces, for social-crafting groups to connect, debate topics, share skills and organise events, both online and in the physical world (Bratich and Brush, 2011). [28] Although many makers reconnected with handcraft to save waning familial craft traditions and engage in more tactical experiences that were otherwise lacking in the digital age, most makers embraced technological advancements, finding them essential to their practice (Williams, 1985; von Busch, 2010; Black and Burisch, 2011). Craftivists often merge traditional handcraft skills with digital tools to enhance visual design or ease the fabrication process. Social media platforms have also become invaluable resources for recent activist movements by facilitating the organisation of events, raising funds and aiding in the catalysis of government action (Orton-Johnson, 2014). Social networking sites such as Myspace, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and the commercial craft website Etsy.com have also played a significant role in the development of the craftivist movement, serving to further publicise socio-political messages through rapid dissemination (Orton-Johnson, 2014; Quito, 2017). Craft Scholar Glenn Adamson (2009, p.26) considers it a paradox that craftivism 'claims the political and aesthetic values of immediacy, materiality, and "slow culture", [yet] it travels the world instantaneously – via blogs, websites, and email attachments'. Craftivists not only make protest paraphernalia, but they also sell, loan and supply physical items and downloadable content globally. Online accessibility has also opened up further opportunities for activists to contribute to protest. Newmeyer (2008) recognises that traditional methods of activism can alienate certain groups of people who are otherwise unable to participate owing to such factors as employment, immigration, race, disability, family lifestyle, religion, location, etc.

The concept of craft for political engagement escalated after the September 11th, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States by the Islamist terrorist group Al-Qaeda, escalating the need to contribute to socio-political change worldwide (Greer, 2008). Shortly after the attacks, US President George W. Bush declared a global 'War on

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[27] According to Black and Burisch (2007), the Indie craft scene includes numerous approaches to making and selling goods as well as varying degrees of political and activist engagement.
[28] Kramer (2006) says that new media created greater visibility for its productions, which helped fuel the growing number of physical-world craft fairs and permanent stores.

Terror' in which he called on world leaders to join the fight, proclaiming that, 'Every nation, in every region now has a decision to make. Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists'. Prime Minister Tony Blair offered British support to the US by deploying troops and joining airstrikes in Afghanistan (2001-present) and the subsequent Iraq War (2002-2011, 2013-2017).[29] Several Islamic State (IS) terrorist attacks on British soil (2005, 2007, 2010, 2017, 2018) are thought to have contributed to the country's growing participation in the Iraqi and Syrian (2011-present) wars as part of an active coalition of Western countries which strove to end terrorism. The outbreak of war has prompted people to turn to handcraft and creativity to process happenings, express their political viewpoints and create reminders of the pain, loss and tragedy of war (Sinclair, 2014). In 2004, Rachel Matthews, the founder of London's knitting club "Cast Off" (2001), marched against the war in Iraq with a knitted banner stating, 'Drop Stitches not Bombs' (Press, 2018). A decade later, Wool Against Weapons created a seven-mile-long pink 'Peace Scarf' to protest Britain's decision to renew its Trident nuclear arsenal. Fowler (2017, p.132) considers craftivism as a symbolic, performative alternative to violence and distressing situations'. Greer also recognised the power of craft to discuss issues of war, as it is a non-confrontational medium that 'encourages dialogue and interrogation. We, in general, turn away from protest signs. Craft is a back door into a conversation' (Greer quoted in Atkinson, 2014).[30]

Within the last decade, artists, designers and amateur makers have used handcraft more than ever to engage with pressing social and political issues that are largely underpinned by recent changes to the European and American political systems, particularly in the wake of the 2016 UK referendum and the subsequent Brexit negotiations, as well as following President Trump's 2017 inauguration.[31] In particular, Trump's presidential victory raised anxieties amongst those women who feared

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[29] When the Soviet army invaded Afghanistan (1979) to support its communist government, it fought against an Afghan opposition group, the Mujahideen, which was supported by the US and its allies, including the U.K. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Mujahedeen are thought to have become more extreme. When the US was attacked (9-11) by Al-Qaeda (founded in 1980s by Osama bin Laden), some felt the group was associated with the Mujahedeen. Writer M. Rosenblum stated, 'Usama bin Ladin was the type of Soviet-hating freedom fighter that U.S. officials applauded when the world looked a little different' (Chattanooga Times/Free Press, 20-9-01). Although Russia has publicly supported the international effort to stabilise conflict in Afghanistan, they have supported Afghanistan through economic aid, trade and weaponry. Much like the Cold War, the ongoing conflict in Syria (2011-present) has also been described as a proxy war between regional and world powers, as long-time rivals, the US and Russia, Iraq and Saudi Arabia, and respective allies, are once again supporting opposing sides of war. The Syrian Civil War started as an internal struggle between the Syrian government (supported by Russia) and the anti-government rebel groups (backed by the US, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and allies). While battling each other, another group, IS joined the fight to seize land and power. IS is an extremist group based in the Middle East whose members have claimed responsibility for terrorist attacks worldwide. After a series of IS attacks across Europe in 2015, the US and allies, including the UK, expanded their air campaign in Iraq to include Syria. They targeted IS and Syrian government locations. At the request of the Syrian government, Russia also began an air campaign in pursuit of IS, but the opposition claims that the strikes have mostly killed civilians and rebels supported by the US.
[30] For New York Curator David Revere McFadden, the resurgence of domestic handcrafts after the September 11th attacks was no surprise as it was a response 'to a sense of impotency caused by military interventions and ensuing War's (McFadden 2008 quoted in Fowler, 2017, p.132-3). The practice of knitting specifically drew attention when knitting needles were deemed to be potential weapons and banned from cabin luggage on airplanes, causing their social connotations of being old-fashioned and the pastime of grannies to begin to wane (Auerbach, 2012).
[31] Brexit is a portmanteau of Britain and Exit intended to encapsulate the UK's departure from the European Union. The 2017 General election saw a surge among 18-25 year olds to an estimated 66% following Brexit and Trump election (Bolton, 2017).

a heightened patriarchal power, one that could affect their future rights (Smirnova, 2018; Kaiser, 2020). Textile art and clothing were thus used worldwide as primary visual aids in the Women's March (2017—), initiating a surprising surge of DIY creativity in subsequent transnational movements which were geared towards women's rights, notably 'SlutWalks' (2011—); anti-Trump demonstrations (2016—); the #metoo Movement (2017); and the Time's Up Campaign (2018), all of which sought to address ongoing issues of female inequality, sexual harassment, rape, and domestic violence (see figure 4 and 5).[32] Many of these campaigns stem from the activist movements of the 1970s such as the 'Reclaim the Night' marches which first took place across England in Leeds, York, Manchester, Newcastle, London, Bristol and Brighton on a November evening in 1977 in response to the announcement of evening curfews advising women to stay off the streets due to the spate of Yorkshire Ripper Murders (Mendes, 2015; Reclaim the Night, n.d.). Women marched with banners and placards, protesting against a wave of violence and sexual assault which prohibited them from occupying public space (Mendes, 2015). These marches continued until the early 1990s and were not revived until 2004 when the London Feminist network rebranded them as 'Take Back the Night' marches due to the continued sexual assault and harassment of women (Mendes, 2015; Reclaim the Night, n.d.). [33] In 2017, hundreds of people, inspired by the #metoo movement, joined the Take Back the Night marches in London, Bristol and Newcastle, carrying banners adorned with facts, statistics and sarcasm to elucidate the issue of sexual crimes against women (Reclaim the Night, n.d.).[34] Clothing emblazoned with politicised symbols, colours and phrases enabled victims of sexual violence to reclaim ownership of their bodies, thereby recovering the security and self-esteem lost to their assailants. The marches allowed women to show other survivors that they were not alone and should not be ashamed of the sexual and gender-based violence directed against them.

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[32] Atkinson (2006, p.1) discusses DIY as a 'more democratic design process of self-driven, self-directed amateur design and production activity'. Since there are many types of activities and motivations of DIY, Atkinson (2006) finds it impossible to define.

[33] The news media largely ignored rapes before the 1970s (Mendes, 2015). The idea for the marches was taken from earlier marches occurring in Rome and throughout Germany, which were featured in the feminist magazine *Spare Rib* (Reclaim the Night n.d). In 1978, several women on a march in London were attacked and arrested by police, which was the first time the marches involved state violence which, ironically, was a violent action against the march protesting violence against women which was organised as peaceful protest (Feminism and Non-Violence Study Group, 1983).

[34] American activist Tarana Burke first coined the phrase 'me too' in 2006, forcing conversations in public about gender and power. #Metoo went viral in October 2017 when American actress Alyssa Milano and transgender activist Charlotte Clymer suggested that all women who had ever been sexually harassed or assaulted should post #metoo as their online status giving society an idea of the magnitude of the problem (Press, 2018). Within 24 hours, more than 12 million posts had been made across social media (Press, 2018).

Figure 4: Left: Niku Archer (2018) 'Times Up Theresa Sisters Uncut' Jumpsuit, Cotton appliqué, worn to the BAFTAs, Image credit: Anna Boonstra; Right: Nancy Jo (2016) 'Pussyhat', knit, made for the Women's March in London, England, Image credit: Anna Boonstra.

Figure 5: Left: Sophie King (2017) 'Stop Teaching Girls How to Protect Themselves from Sexual Assault and Start Teaching Boys that Sexual Assault is Wrong', Embroidered corset, Courtesy of Sophie King; Right: Sophie King (2017)'Stop Blaming Women for Men's Inadequacies', Embroidered textile, Courtesy of Sophie King.

1.4   PERSONAL RELEVANCE

Although craftivism has been an area of personal interest since the early 2000s, it was not until 2014 that it really engaged my attention as a potential academic research topic. At the time, there was heightened political tension, not only in the U.K. with the Scottish Referendum and early discussions of a potential Brexit, but also in allied countries, such as the U.S., which was preparing for a change in leadership. Donald Trump's 2016 U.S. presidential campaign caused feelings of global unease owing to his statements and actions, both past and present, which were widely viewed as sexist, racist and nationalist (Smirnova, 2018; Kaiser, 2020). With so much societal uncertainty and festering distrust between the U.S. government and its allies, minority groups, notably women, turned to handcraft to express their socio-political discontent. It truly interested me that women in the twenty-first century still employ handcraft – a coded form of speech – to raise awareness of injustices and inequalities, much like their mothers and grandmothers did before them, regardless of the progress achieved by the democratic world towards free speech and human equality. The continuum of craft for activism during periods of adversity, one which has been maintained across generations and nations despite the rise of technology and new media, also made me question its communicative capacity to make a meaningful difference.

As outlined in Chapter Two, *Literature and Contextual Review*, publications pertaining to craftivism, especially those of the early 2000s, were largely North American. As an American citizen and British resident, I plan to bridge this gap in knowledge by shedding light on the unfamiliar, everyday acts of craftivism within Britain during this epoch (1970-2018). Beyond deepening our understanding of craftivism's communicative nature, I also hope to represent people's stories and the importance of their actions in establishing dialogue and, potentially, creating societal change.

It is important to note that this study focuses predominately on gender rather than other demographics such as race, age, or sexual orientation. When this study's fieldwork was conducted, largely between 2016-2018, The Women's Movement was at its zenith, providing numerous examples of craftivism, making it a straightforward selection as a contemporary case study. The Black Lives Matter Movement was in its formative stages though not yet as widespread as it is today. This movement involves many representations of craftivism that I plan to explore in future research.

1.5   THESIS OVERVIEW

Chapter One: Introduction to Research   This section outlines the research focus, rationale, aims and objectives, as well as key contributions to knowledge. The research parameters, background and context are also discussed, illustrating how the selected case studies meet the inclusion parameters of the research. The author's personal relevance to this thesis is also presented, highlighting her connections to the research topic and establishing her position to contribute.

Chapter Two: Literature and Contextual Review   This chapter both introduces and reviews the extant literature as it pertains to clothing and textile craftivism within numerous disciplines and from a variety of perspectives. To contextualise this study within the existing scholarship, relevant historic and contemporary debates will be discussed, thereby exposing those significant gaps in knowledge this thesis aims to address. This chapter is organised into three thematic sections, the first being 2.1 *Craftivism: Introduction* which introduces the practice of craftivism, presenting debates around its definition and which actions it constitutes. The literature addresses themes that include community engagement, technology, agency, power, space, materiality and subversion. Exhibitions featuring craftivist work are also discussed.

Section 2.2 *The Gendered History of Art and Craft: Textiles and Needlecrafts* traces the historic division of art and craft and its impact on women's involvement in needlecraft. This section highlights the influence of the second-wave of feminism in reappropriating textile art as a means of resistance and defiance by the female practitioners themselves. The repercussions of these efforts on subsequent generations of women's art and protest efforts are discussed, particularly with respect to the DIY craft movement of the early 2000s. The literature review discusses the histories and continuities of women's textile art as a form of activism.

Lastly, Section 2.3 *Clothing: The Body as a Banner* explores clothing and the body as portals for protest and resistance, drawing upon the literature from numerous disciplines and various perspectives. The use of clothing, notably the T-shirt and its prominent role within subcultures and activist movements to visualise socio-political viewpoints is elucidated. The communicative capacity of clothing as a form of activism is discussed, particularly in addressing the themes of materiality, identity, representation, solidarity, embodiment, agency, power and performance.

Chapter Three: Theory and Research Methodology   Chapter three establishes the theoretical underpinnings of this research, specifically explaining how the primary data intersects with theories of communication (Langer and Derrida) and material cultural studies (Gell and de Certeau), thereby providing an analytical framework through which to generate critical understandings of craftivism as an object and practice of reform. These theories highlight the maker's intentionality invested into objects at the varying level of design, production and circulation of craftivism, preparing it to fulfil its purpose to communicate socio-political ideas. This section also retraces the methodological framework set forth in this study, which includes the research approach, design, means of data collection and analysis. Primary research was obtained in four stages using a multi-method data collection approach that included archival research, object analysis, semiotic visual analysis, focus group research, a pilot study survey and semi-structured interviews. The themes and findings generated by data collection and analysis are discussed in subsequent chapters.

> ***Stage I***   A literature and contextual review was conducted as outlined in chapter two. This was performed in conjunction with archival research that involved searching for and extracting original information from documents, records, newspapers, pamphlets, photos and other sources relating to those activities, groups and individuals identified as being involved in the defined case studies. Several visits were made to formal institutions housing archival materials across Britain.[35] Information was also obtained from personal archives housed in London, Brighton and Surrey. The information obtained both guided and justified this project's research strategy, particularly in relation to informing subsequent research stages as they provided information on makers, objects and associated events.

> ***Stage II***   This stage involved the visual analysis of various objects, wherein clothing and textile objects were thoroughly examined to generate information regarding their history, design, method of fabrication, materiality, function and use. Much of this information was not available as textual evidence, validating the use of this means of analysis. In those instances where objects were unavailable for study, they were analysed visually by means of photographs.

> ***Stage III***   Focus group research was also implemented as a constituent part of this study's multi-method approach to investigate the communicative capacity

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[35] Archives visited included The British Library (London); Victoria and Albert Museum (London); Museum of London (London); The Horse Hospital (London); The Women's Library (London); The Women's Art Library (London); Black Cultural Archives (London); The Imperial War Museum (London); Fashion and Textile Museum (London); Peace Museum (Bradford); The Whitworth Art Gallery (Manchester); The People's History Museum (Manchester); The Feminist Archive South (Bristol); The Feminist Archive North (Leeds) and St Fagan's National Museum of History (Cardiff).

of craftivism and the role of the makers. The research was conducted within a textile workshop called 'Fabric of Protest' and was held at the People's History Museum in Manchester, England. The pilot study survey was conducted early on in the focus group research stage to quickly acquire data that could subsequently be analysed to inform the final stage of data collection.

Stage IV   Semi-structured interviews provided interaction with makers, academics and historians who have first-hand knowledge of craftivism. Makers described their involvement and experiences with craftivism in their own words, recounting their design choices, processes of making, as well as reactions and feedback to their work. The research priority was to hear multiple perspectives and untold stories from a diverse range of women which are often otherwise omitted from recorded history.

Chapter Four: Research Findings   Chapter four presents this study's research findings in four subsections that analyse the tactics used by craftivists to communicate messages through handcrafted clothing and textile art. Section 4.2 *Materiality* discusses the skills, value, and investment of time associated with hand-making techniques as well as the memory and sensory connections humans have to cloth, thereby making it valuable in engaging an audience. Section 4.3 *Content* shows how craftivists have employed text and symbols, many of which are recycled and re-appropriated, to inform and attract attention to their causes. Section 4.4 *Context* highlights the various forms of activism that craftivists are involved in, which delineates both personal efforts (public, private, every day, anonymous, and virtual) and collective actions (direct, indirect participation, and virtual). The role of the body and clothing in activism are discussed in further detail in section 4.5 *The Body*, specifically in relation to such dimensions as space, power, solidarity and performativity.

Chapter Five: Conclusions and Future Research   Chapter five concludes the thesis by recapitulating the original research aims and outlining its key contributions to knowledge. The findings are discussed in addition to avenues for future research.

Appendix   This thesis appendix includes numerous important documents, such as *Current Interview Participant Directory, Interview Transcripts, Participant Consent Form, Participant Information Form and Pilot Study Survey.*

1.6   GEOGRAPHIC DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

In this thesis, unless otherwise stated, the following terms are used to identify particular geographical or political regions.

Britain or Great Britain (GB) refers to the territory that comprises England, Scotland and Wales.

British is used as an adjective to describe something common to Britain as a geographic region or to the British people as a whole.

English as an adjective is used specifically to refer to England alone.

EU refers to the European Union, a political and economic union of European nations. The acronym **ECC** (European Economic Community) will also be utilised, which was the precursor to the EU.

UK refers to the United Kingdom or, officially, as the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

USA United States of America, commonly known as the United States **(US)** of America. **DC** is short form for the District of Columbia, the Federal District of the city of Washington which was designated as the nation's capital.

General Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BAFTA	British Academy of Film and Television Arts
BCE	Before Common Era
CND	Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
DIT	Do-it-together
DIY	Do-it-yourself
FDNY	Fire Department of the City of New York

FIT	Fashion Institute of Technology
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IS	Islamic State
JFK	John Fitzgerald Kennedy
KKK	Ku Klux Klan
LGBTQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersexed, Agender, Asexual, and Ally community.
MAGA	Make America Great Again
MET	Metropolitan
MP	Members of Parliament
NSMT	New Social Movement Theory
NYPD	New York Police Department
PCM	Pink Craftivist Movement
QDA	Qualitative Data Analysis
WLM	Women's Liberation Movement

CHAPTER TWO: Literature and Contextual Review

This chapter analyses the literature pertaining to clothing and textile craftivism within numerous disciplines and from a variety of perspectives. To contextualise this study within the existing scholarship, historic and contemporary debates will be discussed to expose extant gaps in knowledge that this thesis aims to address. Although artwork and exhibitions are often underrepresented in literature reviews, they will be included in this thesis as they contribute to a wider body of cultural knowledge, thereby aiding in the development of key arguments. References to relevant literature and artwork will also be made in subsequent chapters, where deemed appropriate. This chapter is organised into three thematic sections, namely 2.1 *Craftivism: Introduction*; 2.2 *The Gendered History of Art and Craft;* and 2.3 *Clothing: The Body as a Banner.*

2.1   CRAFTIVISM: INTRODUCTION

As craftivism grew into a worldwide movement, an increasing volume of academic work from the fields of contemporary arts and craft, women's studies, cultural sociology and material culture theory were dedicated to this emergent topic. Much of the prevailing discourse centres on the potential of craftivism to mould personal identity, build community, and incite public engagement to social action. The role of technology and online platforms in broadening the scope and impact of craftivism is a point of interest more recently investigated. Before craftivism drew any academic interest, it was largely documented by Internet-based sources which served as a tool for its dissemination. These sources trace its early development, characteristics and practical implementations as a sociocultural phenomenon. With the launch of her 2003 website craftivism.com, American-based writer Betsy Greer popularised the term *craftivism*, bringing activists and crafters together within a communal space to share ideas, information and skills. In her very first blog post, she clarifies the intent of the website, writing:

> 'My whole idea for this site is based on the idea that activism + craft = craftivism. That each time you participate in crafting you are making a difference, whether it's fighting against useless materialism or making items for charity or something betwixt and between. The idea [is] that activists can be crafters, and crafters can be activists'. – Greer, 2003a

Greer (2003) envisioned craftivism as a 'way of looking at life where voicing opinions through creativity makes your voice stronger, your compassion deeper & your quest for justice more infinite'. For Greer (2003b), craftivism was 'less about mass action' and 'more about realizing what *you* can do to makes things around you better'. Through small acts of personalised activism, she encouraged craftivists to 'apply their creativity toward making a difference, one person at a time' (Greer, 2007, p.401). 'The very essence of craftivism', she explains, 'lies in creating something that gets people to ask questions. Unlike more traditional forms of activism, which can be polarizing, there is a back-and-forth in craftivism. It turns us, as well as our work, into vessels of change' (Greer, 2014, p.8)'. Greer thus became a luminary for craftivism by writing, blogging and speaking publicly on the topic. Although she is thought to have coined the term *craftivism*, she instead credits another crafting forum, 'The Church of Craft' for first using the word on their blog in 2002, which she later discovered via a Google search (Greer, 2011; McGovern, 2019).[36] She found it interesting that 'two disparate and negatively defined words were bubbling together in other minds' beside her own (Greer, 2008b).[37] Despite being geographically separated, she recounts the shared frustration over issues 'like consumerism, materialism, anti-green living, a lack of personal expression, and overconsumption' (Greer, 2008, p.127).

In 2005, a Wikipedia page was dedicated to craftivism, summarising it as 'a form of activism, typically for social justice or environmentalism, that is centred around practices of craft - especially handicrafts. Practitioners are known as craftivists'. [38] The website has continuously evolved over the years and now connects craftivism with third-wave feminism, anti-capitalism, labour exploitation, environmentalism and anti-war politics. For academic Kristen Williams (2011, p.307), this Wikipedia article offers 'perhaps the most comprehensive definition of the movement as a cultural phenomenon'. The term *craftivism* was also added to the *Encyclopedia of Activism and Social Justice* in 2007 with an evolved definition composed by Greer herself (2007, p.401), in which she described it as a 'practice of engaged creativity, especially regarding political or social causes' to 'help bring about positive change via personalized activism'. She further explains craftivism as an alternative means

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[36] Church of Craft is an on and offline crafting community with chapters in the U.K., U.S. and Canada. The Church of Craft's mission aims 'to create an environment where any and all acts of making have value to our humanness' (churchofcraft.org, 2020).
[37] Greer finds the two positive words (craft and activism) have been culturally stigmatised as negative (Greer, 2008, 2011). 'At the time', she explains, 'all I could think of were clearly negative kinds of - isms: fascism, classism, elitism' (Greer, 2011, p.179).
[38] Wikipedia is a free online encyclopaedia that was founded in 2001, which is collaboratively edited and managed by its own users through the internet (Wikipedia.com, Accessed:1 July 2019). According to its records, Grant Neufeld, a Canadian community activist and foundered the Revolutionary Knitting Circle (2001 c.) in Calgary, Alberta Canada (Prain, 2014) is recorded to have started the craftivism Wikipedia page in 2005.

of advocating one's political viewpoints through creativity, which could be done at one's own pace without participating in large gatherings of chanting protestors as seen in traditional forms of activism (Greer, 2007, p.401). Due to several broad and open-ended definitions of craftivism, there was much confusion as to what constituted craftivism in the early 2000s. Many felt that it was difficult to distinguish and categorically disentangle craftivism from the other DIY crafting groups of the time (Waterhouse, 2010; Robertson, 2011). Uncertainty around the word caused it to be misused, and it became shorthand to describe any alternative or subversive crafting action (Buszek and Robertson, 2011). Several 'how to' publications for crafters that specifically discussed handcraft for social and political ends neglected to use the term *craftivism* entirely, despite it being widely recognised.[39] Although these authors didn't provide any reasoning for the term's absence, Greer (2008) believes that the words 'craft' and 'activism' can be off-putting to many since they are often negatively stigmatised. Fitzpatrick (2018, p.9) suspects that Greer's explanation of craftivism is purposively 'designed to be inclusive' to 'avoid any contestation that may arise if the practice were to be defined too narrowly'. The definition of craftivism was debated globally in 2009 when an argument arose within an internal group of the commercial craft website etsy.com regarding its political affiliation, specifically questioning what qualified as craftivism. The debate not only caused members to leave the group, but spurred thousands of conversations and blog posts on the topic across the world (Finn, 2009; 'Craftivism', n.d.). Some members believed that craftivism was instigated with socio-political intent as a pretext for protest and activism, while others felt that politics were not a part of their practice whatsoever. Handcraft became, for some, a political act of resistance in itself (Gauntlett, 2011). Although many contemporary makers are not politically motivated, the label of 'craftivist' is often hard to avoid since DIY crafting is often deemed an opposition to global corporate capitalism (Burcikova, 2011; Stevens, 2011). Faythe Levine, author and producer of the 2008 documentary *Handmade Nation: The Rise of DIY Art, Craft and Design* and its subsequent book, believes that craftivism is not strictly delimited to those who participate in protests or contribute to politically-driven projects, but rather should also include those crafters who work outside of mainstream consumer culture, thereby contributing to the 'handmade nation'. She writes, 'Like the lo-fi movement before them, these individuals and social collectives find value in the self-production of craft objects and understand this work as [a form of] protest against the increasing commodification of society' (Levine, 2009, p. 10). Amy Spencer's (2008 [2005]) *DIY: The Rise of Lo-Fi Culture* was one of the earliest books to discuss craftivism. The book provides insight into the lo-fi movement of the 1980s and 90s, which the author describes as low-cost DIY alternatives to music and media production (zines) employed by both punk and feminist cultures (Rato and Boler, 2014). She interviews several new-age crafters, including Betsy Greer, in

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[39] *Knitting for Peace* (2006) and *Quilting for Peace* (2009) are early texts that promoted charitable textile-making by featuring collective projects that aided communities affected by war, epidemics and natural disasters globally. Neither text mentions the craftivism movement.

which they discuss the links of contemporary craft to previous anti-establishment movements that valued the experience of production over consumption, such as Punk and Riot Grrrl (Spencer, 2005; Williams, 2011, p.309). For Spencer (2008 [2005]), the concept of making something that can easily be purchased was a conscious rejection of the dominant culture. Leah Kramer, craft blogger and founder of craftster.com (2003) shares Spencer's belief that the craftivist movement was driven by an anti-capitalist ethos to challenge corporate culture via individualised productions that supported sustainability and fair labour (Spencer, 2005; Williams, 2011).[40] For Greer (2007), craftivism brought back the personal in an era of mass production, therefore it should not be dismissed as 'apolitical' despite the makers' motivation.

Several texts considered the role of commodity and capitalism in craftivism, connecting it to the early arts and crafts movement which emanated from the concepts of the nineteenth-century designer William Morris and his predecessor John Ruskin, both of whom advocated the socio-political importance of handcraft in opposing industrial mass production (Minahan and Cox, 2007; Burcikova, 2011). Burcikova (2011) compares the movements, recognising that both were rooted in creativity, social responsibility, and sustainability. For Julia Bryan-Wilson (2017, p.31), the role that handcraft played in each movement differs, evolving from a rebellion against industrial manufacturing to a 'remystified craft by proclaiming for it special, and romanticized powers of disruption'. Close (2018, p.868-9) differentiates the two through gender, since The Arts and Crafts Movement was largely led by men, whereas craftivism is generally planned and performed by women.

Black and Burisch (2007, 2011) differentiate craftivism from other DIY crafting groups by considering the end product. Rather than exercising a high standard of technical skill, as demonstrated by Indie Craft, craftivism places greater value on its concept, process of making, deployment and its capacity to politically engage (Black and Burisch, 2011). 'This emphasis', they explain, 'has made room for reconsiderations of crafts(wo)manship, performativity, mindfulness, tacit knowledge, skill-sharing, DIY, anticapitalism, and activism' (Black and Burisch, 2011, p. 205). For instance, The NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt, fabricated as a memorial to the victims of AIDS, was assembled through group making, employing various skill levels and a 'non-hierarchical mix of quilting styles, skill levels, and aesthetics activism' (Black and Burisch, 2011, p. 206). Similarly, Bratich and Brush (2007, p.3) also placed a high value on the immaterial aspects of craftwork, particularly its 'power to act' or to cause 'affect' rather than its physical product or any capital produced. According to Stevens (2011) and Garber (2013), craftivist work isn't driven

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[40] This aligns with the 'Green' movement as many crafters use recycled materials to reduce environmental pollution (Williams, 2011). In Spencer's (2008 [2005]) interview with Greer, she states that she recognised the same parallels in the modern craft community that she saw with punk and DIY culture in the 1990s when involved in riot grrrl. According to Burisch and Black (2007), DIY practice shares common ground with craftivism since much of the motivation for doing-it-yourself stems from the idea that, by making goods by hand yourself, one can avoid purchasing mass-produced goods from large corporate systems.

by its material outcomes, nor does it seek professional validation within the traditional arts, but is instead socio-politically motivated to create awareness and incite change through social connectivity and participation.

Craftivists themselves have questioned precisely what actions constitute craftivism and its efficacy. Tal Fitzpatrick (2018, p.181), is particularly troubled by debates to what qualifies as craftivism, since she finds that such reductionism results in the formation of hierarchies which serve to undervalue 'smaller-scale and politically ambiguous actions' while excluding those people deemed to be 'doing craftivism wrong'. She has observed that certain craftivist practices are 'dismissed as ineffective attempts at activism', such as crafting for charity and sustainability (Fitzpatrick, 2019, p.433). Artist-activist Sarah Corbett (2017, p.13) also challenges whether charitable acts like donation, emergency relief, and fundraising, in conjunction with awareness-raising, should be considered activism. She concluded that, if craftivism is to reach people, achieve its goals and instigate change, craftivists should focus on the root causes of socio-political issues rather than providing support to people affected by these problems (Corbett, 2017; Fitzpatrick, 2019). To further explain, she re-appropriated a quote by human rights activist Desmond Tutu,

> '…emergency relief would be helping to pull people out of the river; activism would be going upstream to find out why they are falling in *and* coming up with a plan to change the system at play so that people don't fall in any more'. – Corbett, 2017, p.13

Unlike Corbett, Greer (2016) identifies the three central tenets of craftivism as 'donation (giving what you make away), beautification (making your surroundings more beautiful, for instance by yarnbombing) and notification (raising awareness about a cause or subject)'. [41]

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[41] Examples of these tenants are discussed throughout this thesis.

SMALL VS. LARGE SCALE CRAFTIVISM

Several scholars maintain the importance of small, individual efforts of resistance with radical change as their end goal (Greer, 2008, 2014; Orton-Johnson, 2014; Corbett, 2013, 2017). In *DIY Citizenship, Critical Making and Community,* Ratto and Boler (2014) propose that such small-scale acts are productive as they empower individuals to look for solutions to problems themselves. For von Busch (2010, p.117), craftivism's efficacy 'lies in its ability to interact, communicate and take action with a diverse range of people through small, sensible and sustainable acts that encourage societal change'.[42] He borrows the terms *(micro)movement* and *micropolitics* from new materialist thinking which considers that societal change is not limited to 'strictly grand-scale and calculable transformations', but can potentially produce change if implemented through 'tiny or almost imperceptible actions' (von Busch, 2010, p.117; Kontturi, 2014). American textile artist Cat Mazza also believes that change is not confined to governing policies, but can be achieved through individual 'micro revolts' (Debatty, 2008; Ho, 2009; von Busch, 2010, p.117).[43] Her work is inspired by French philosopher Felix Guattari's theory of molecular revolutions which considers how social or cultural movements can arise from small acts of resistance (Ho, 2009; von Busch, 2010, p.117). Similarly, Wood (2007) and Robertson and Buszek (2011) discuss 'micro-utopias' as alternatives to creating beneficial change, wherein individuals and small groups work together towards a common goal. Crawshaw (2017, p.37), explains that 'It might seem that massive repression can be defended only by equally massive resistance. But small actions can also embody aspirations for larger freedoms'. According to Brass et al (1997, p.7), DIY culture consists of making small changes individually and locally, rather than waiting for a global solution to all social and environmental issues. Artist Barb Hunt focuses on the value of small personal gestures which, for her, can 'accumulate into a declaration of caring and hope' (quoted in Black and Burisch, 2011, p.210). Greer (2011, p.180) also places emphasis on the power and responsibility of individualism to produce social change which, if done continually and repetitively, can slowly incite change. She elaborates on this concept,

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[42] This sort of conception of materiality as a (micro)movement is characteristic of new materialist thinking. Instead of grand-scale and calculable transformations in society, new materialism considers tiny or almost imperceptible actions as having the potential to elicit change (van Dolphijn and van der Tuin, 2013; Kontturi, 2014). Similarly, design researcher John Wood (2007) found that the biggest obstacle for change 'is our lack of imagination for alternatives and the deficiency of practical examples to guide our way through processes of change' (Wood quoted in Von Busch, 2010, p.11).

[43] Cat Mazza founded the Craftivist Collective MicroRevolt, which used needlecraft to confront injustice (Von Busch, 2010, p.117). MicroRevolt provides a freeware online that allows users to download knit patterns of corporate logos to demonstrate the intensive labour behind mass-produced products. Her work addresses issues such as sweatshop labour, consumerism and war, using digital social networking and community-building efforts (Gschwandtner, 2007; Von Busch, 2010, p.117). Her projects have been featured in exhibitions both nationally and internationally, such as in *Radical Lace and Subversive Knitting (*The Museum of the Arts and Design*, 2007, New York City)* and *Disobedient Objects* (Victoria and Albert Museum, 2014, London).

'As craftivists, we foment dialogue and thus help the world become a better place, albeit on a smaller scale than activists who organize mass demonstrations. To some, our work may seem unimportant, but to me, the small scale of craftivism is vital. It turns us, as well as our work, into vessels of change'. –Greer, 2014, 8-9.[44]

Since small-scale craftivist projects with relatively few participants diverge from traditional forms of activism, particularly mass demonstrations, several scholars have questioned its efficacy, debating whether working on an interpersonal scale is limited in effecting real societal change. Fitzpatrick (2019, p.433) explains that the efficacy of craftivism is largely evaluated in relation to 'achieving the macro-goals of activism – behavioural, policy, and systematic change'. Solomon (2013) observes that projects that 'do not exceed the home', those without specific political goals, or those without links to larger collective efforts are considered ineffective by some. Portwood-Stacer (2007), Carpenter (2010), and Solomon (2013) all proposed that craftivists should engage in larger and more collaborative projects since they believed that they have greater potential in actualising societal change. In his book series *Making is Connecting*, Gauntlett (2018 [2011], p.19-20) also recognised the wider impact of those projects practiced within groups or by large numbers of people.[45] He discusses the importance of communal crafting, whether in person or online, in driving social, cultural and political change (Gauntlett, 2018 [2011], p.95). For Orton-Johnson (2014, p.150), small craftivist gestures which are accompanied by online connectivity provide participants with a sense of 'community' that is easily 'accessible and immediate', despite it being considered a 'small contribution' towards activism.

Although the role of the individual is emphasised in DIY discourse, Chidgey (2014, p.103) argues that the basis of resistance, especially within marginalised communities, is really individual action within a larger collective effort, prompting several grassroots groups to advocate pluralising the acronym to 'do-it-yourselves' or replace it entirely with DIT ('do-it-together'). What is essential to activism, for Tim Jordan (2002), is not simply being more than one, but rather a sense of solidarity and shared identity that derives from such interactions.[46] Through the observation of a communal quilting project, Leone (2019) recognises that group interactions

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[44] For Fowler (2017), it is impossible to know if one person's action is going to make a greater impact *versus* a march comprising thousands of protesters.

[45] Gauntlett identifies five motivations of the contemporary craftsperson: embodied experience of creativity; social drive to make things; the psychological benefits of creativity and community; creativity as social capital; being able to leave your mark by creating objects and spaces (Orton-Johnson, 2014).

[46] Leone (2019, p.591-592) describes the quilt as an 'intermediary', allowing its message to rapidly spread, carrying the voices of marginalised individuals across the local community and beyond. For Robertson (2011), contemporary craft brings the practice out of isolation, giving women a sense of community via online communication networks.

generate camaraderie and relationship-building, thereby fostering collaboration, while also reinforcing a shared purpose. She found that the 'quilt format' was beneficial, as it allowed for individual voices to be preserved while still creating a 'unified message' when put together (Leone, 2019, p.595).

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: OFF AND ONLINE

Orton-Johnson (2014, p.142) acknowledges the historic shift in domestic crafts, particularly that of knitting, from a personal pursuit to a public activity that 'enables participants to express, produce, and consume "community"'. She examines the evolution of communal craft-based socialising from quilting bees and knitting circles to 'digitally mediated crafting' (Orton-Johnson, 2014, p.142). Art critic Dennis Stevens (2011) considers the 'democracy of the Internet and its non-hierarchical and decentralized format' as a gathering space for a new community of crafters and activists around the globe to connect, learn and exchange ideas (Stevens, 2011, p. 47-8). Online sources and social networking sites such as Myspace, Facebook, Etsy, Twitter and Instagram played a highly significant role in the development of the craftivist movement as an organised phenomenon. Markus (2019) discusses the online participatory culture, crediting its growth to its ease of use and speed in creating and disseminating personal and political interests. She specifically recognises the influence of digital media on the rapid growth of craftivist groups, such as the 2016-2017 Pussyhat Project, as its planning, collaboration, crowd-sourcing, dissemination and pattern sharing were all achieved online (Markus, 2019). Corbett and Housley (2011, p.344) also note the importance of digital networks in craftivist practice,

> 'The use of new media is a central aspect of craftivists' ability to raise awareness and organize activities. From a central website we organize projects and events that anyone is welcome to join in with. We encourage craftivists to send us photos and accounts of their projects for the website, so that we can show the world the global effect of our efforts'. – Corbett and Housley, 2011, p. 344

Jefferies (2016b, p.27) considers the utilisation of traditional handcraft in the digital age as a paradox since the Internet, she believes, has 'eroded the absolute necessity of a central, collective work practice in a physical specific place and time, [but] it has nevertheless provided virtual connectivity for independent crafters who can be

both independent and collective simultaneously'. [47]

Black and Burisch (2011) recognise that most craft practitioners rely on technology to some extent, whether as a tool for fabrication or the internet for selling items and sharing knowledge. In contrast to the early Arts and Crafts Movement, new technologies are not perceived as a threat to craftivists, but rather as a tool through which to advance traditional crafts (Von Busch, 2010).[48] Many people became inspired by the idea of hybridising their practices by adjoining craft with the digital space to create, document, and sell their work (Black and Burisch, 2011). Although often made as a solitary pursuit, Thomson (2007, p.162) believed that a craftsperson must have access to instant multimedia to achieve maximum exposure for their work. Despite claims that the craft revival was an 'anti-response' to technological advancement, most makers have created an alliance of old and new technologies, merging tactile crafts with digital media (von Busch, 2010; Fowler, 2017). Jean Railla (2006, p.10), however, recognised the importance of engaging with tangible materials in the digital age. She wrote, 'We work at computers all day. Crafting allows us the experience of the tactile world, the non-virtual, the *real*' (Railla quoted in von Busch, 2010, p.120). Although much craft discourse is centred on tactility, which the Internet and image-based sharing otherwise prohibit, it nonetheless provides an opportunity to consider ways of engaging craft communities without touch (Baumstark, 2016), which this thesis will explore in due course.

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[47] Curator Ele Carpenter (2010), who organised the *Embroidered Digital Commons* project (2009), explains that social-networking sites provided its disparate group of contributors with a sense of community as project as often conducted online opposed to meeting and creating together in a physical location.
[48] The project 'stitching together' by Swedish artists Åsa Ståhl and Kristina Lindström studies craft and communication, analysing participants' reactions to hand-sewing messages *versus* creating the same message by texting it to a digital embroidery machine.

MAKING: AGENCY AND POWER

Craftivism allows its makers to actively demonstrate their views by using slowness and quietness in their activism (Fowler, 2017). Corbett (2013, p.5) explains that 'Much activism is fast: sign this petition, click here, march there. Craft is naturally slow, it forces you to make time to stop and reflect on what issues mean, whom injustice affects and how we can be part of a solution'. Handcrafted objects take a sustained time for the maker to create, giving them adequate time to really contemplate complex issues versus the speed and ease of an online petition or tweeting a political statement (Corbett, 2017; Quito, 2017; Fowler, 2017). Social philosopher Anthony McCann takes a similar stance, stating that, "by sculpting, shaping, moulding, guiding, building, and by listening and responding as we go, we can become more aware of how we make a difference. Crafting can be a reclamation of the power of life" (quoted in Daly Goggin, 2013, p.5).

Fariello (2011) and Fitzpatrick (2018) both acknowledge the connection between craft and personal agency, which can be historically linked to the etymology of the German word *kraft,* meaning skill, power, capacity and strength. For Greer (2014, p.8), 'The creation of things by hand leads to a better understanding of democracy, because it reminds us that we have power'. Fitzpatrick (2018) argues that, without any individual agency, the maker would be less motivated to participate because they would not have the insight that their actions can affect the world. Sociologist David Gauntlett (2011, p.245) also claims that making things by hand 'shows us that we are powerful, creative agents […] Making things is about transforming materials into something new, but it is also about transforming one's own sense of self'. Similarly, Rozsika Parker (2010 [1985], p.xx) discusses the 'process of creativity' and the 'transformative impact on the sense of self' in her ground-breaking book *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine*. She considers how the head and hand work together to produce an object that exists both physically and mentally for its maker (Parker, 2010 [1985]). She also discusses the positive self-image that the fabrication process brings to its makers, from the objects themselves to their reception by others (Parker, 2010 [1985]). Both Greer (2014) and Corbett (2013) also recognise the restorative and therapeutic benefits of craftivism, noting its importance in creating positive change, both personally and politically.

PUBLIC SPACE, ENGAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

Much of the scholarship pertaining to craftivism has also been dedicated to public space and mobility, particularly the use of materiality to transform public spaces and people's everyday experiences. In 1999, Debbie Stoller advocated for reclaiming domestic arts by promoting her organised social knitting group, consisting largely of young women, who met regularly to craft, share skills and discuss personal and socio-political topics (Stoller, 2003). After releasing her inaugural book *Stitch 'n Bitch: The Knitter's Handbook* in 2003, these groups expanded rapidly worldwide, becoming established in thirty-seven countries, in effect replacing the 'knitting circles' of preceding generations (Bryant-Wilson, 2017; Jackson, 2019). The privacy of knitting was pushed into the forum of public protest through 'sit-in' demonstrations in yarn shops, pubs and subway cars, inviting spectators to observe and take part (Barrett, 2008; Ho, 2009; Myzelev, 2009; Bratich and Brush, 2011; Prain, 2014; Jackson, 2019). Knitting, sewing and crochet shifted away from the private act of an individual into a public, performative and collective activity, bringing people together in both physical and digital spaces (Robertson and Vinebaum, 2016). By mobilising textiles, makers can establish dialogue, build community and advocate for social change, while simultaneously exploring themes of power and gender (Robertson and Vinebaum, 2016). In *The Culture of Knitting,* Joanne Turney (2009, p.144) considers knitting 'a great leveler: the one activity or practice that can bring people together and overcome difference, creating harmonious environments in which sociability is at the forefront'.[49]

The early 2000s saw an increase in the use of textiles as street art. Knitted or crocheted designs were anonymously 'tagged' or attached to highly visible public structures such as park benches, railings or statues, and left behind in the urban landscape for those passing by (Robertson, 2011; Kuittinen, 2015; Poch and Poch, 2018; Schuiling and Winge, 2019). This form of graffiti has been variously referred to as 'guerrilla art', 'yarn storming', 'knitifiti', 'knit bombing' and, most notably, 'yarnbombing' (Black and Burish, 2009; Moore and Prain, 2009).[50] Despite being a non-violent form of protest, yarn bombing exploits graffiti's traditional reputation as being renegade by adopting militaristic language, thereby avoiding the traditional stereotypes of needlecraft as being feminine and domesticated (Carpenter, 2010,

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[49] Artist Françoise Dupré (2008) also noted that needlecraft are both easily accessible and highly social activities that can facilitate connections, even between strangers, due to their familiarity across cultures. For Dupré (2008), 'a meaningful and ethical collaborative-participatory practice is one that engages with participants' identity, taps into their experience and history and provides a context for participants to become active social subjects'.

[50] According to Sinclair (2014), guerrilla art is unauthorised form of street art that is anonymously situated in public spaces with the intention of making a socio-political statement. In contrast to large government campaigns, it can be used by civilians to express societal discontent. Lothian (2014 also discussed 'guerrilla kindness' in Greer's book *Craftivism*, which she describes as leaving random handcraft around the urban environment merely to create happiness for its finder.

Wallace, 2012; Arnold, 2013). Yarnbombing is thought to have first appeared in 2005 when American artist Magda Sayeg and her graffiti group 'Knitta Please' began to cover door handles, street signs and trees with brightly coloured knitted designs to beautify the bland city streets of Houston, Texas (Daly Goggin, 2015). While their work was not explicitly or overtly political, its placement gained much attention due to its disruptive displacement outside its associated sphere of the home (Moore and Prain, 2019, [2009]; Black and Burisch, 2011; Arnold, 2013). This soft-natured form of street art soon gained popularity worldwide, being carried out by creators of all ages and nationalities with varying motivations, such as creating happiness, enhancing city spaces and raising socio-political awareness (see figure 6).[51] The earliest and best-known books dedicated to the practice of yarnbombing, include *Yarn Bombing: The Art of Crochet and Knit Graffiti* (2009), *Stitch London* (2011) and *Knit the City* (2011), all of which are largely pictorial commemorations of interesting installations that are accompanied by tips, patterns and personal testimonies of the makers themselves.[52]

Several scholars have discussed the capacity of yarnbombing to alter and subvert everyday materials, environments and experiences, challenging societal expectations in order to socially engage and build a participatory democracy (Williams, 2011; Duxbury, 2013; Garber, 2013). By being 'out of place', yarnbombing transforms public spaces through colourful creations, while subverting people's perceptions of craft as being something inherently domestic (Duxbury, 2013; Daly Goggin, 2015). For Wallace (2012), the work 'only comes alive when animated by the mobility of people through these urban spaces, when the "shock of the new" (Barthes, 1997) jolts people out of routine'. Duxbury (2013, p.25) believes street art has the ability to:

> 'Activate public engagement, catalyse social relations, and evolve new ways of working and living; they can physically and symbolically change the spaces in which we live and relate, and foster greater connections with our natural and built environments; and they can provide new ways of perceiving and inquiring about the world, provoking and fostering changes in thinking, acting, and living together'. – Duxbury, 2013, p.25.

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[51] Several recognised yarnbombing groups and individuals worldwide include: 'Knitta Please' (Texas, United States), 'Knit the City' (London, England), 'Yarnbombing' (Canada), 'Grrl + Dogg' (Australia), 'Knitted Landscape' (Holland) and Molli Woodtagger (Germany).

[52] Kalloniatis' (2013) *Art of Yarn Bombing* is a photographic book containing knitted and crochet art projects that don't require a pattern, largely yarn bombing and street craft in South Australia. Similarly, Kaye's (2019) *Crochet with London Kaye: Projects and Ideas to Yarn Bomb Your Life* is a recent book featuring crochet, particularly its utilisation in yarnbombing, with tips and techniques for all levels of makers.

Figure 6: Left: Natasha Peter (2015) mini-protest banner, cross-stitch, London, England, Courtesy of Natasha Peter; Right: Maker unknown (2018) knitted peace banner, yarnbombing in London, England, Image credit: Anna Boonstra.

This communication practice of subverting dominant cultural forms with the unexpected is termed 'cultural jamming', a phrase that was developed in the 1980s and which has been employed predominately within the advertising sector by refiguring and subverting logos and product images (Kramer, 2006; Kuni, 2012; Delaure and Fink, 2017). Yarnbombing thus 'jams' the original meaning of the object, generating communication and social exchange (Kidd, 2016). Since 1985, The Guerrilla Girls utilised cultural jamming, largely in the form of billboards and posters, as a tactic by which to confront and expose discrimination and corruption within art

institutions (Kramer, 2006).[53] With a punk-like anti-establishmentarian attitude, they inverted mainstream marketing methods with their iconic posters that denounced specific galleries and museum directors with facts, humour and provocative images (Cushwa, 2019). The public came upon their billboards unexpectedly, which was a part of their strategy to provoke thought and, ideally, catalyse change. Kuittinen (2015) also finds that craftivists who incorporate beauty and humour into their work can subtly and non-confrontationally draw in their audience through its visual aesthetics prior to delivering its political message. She writes:

> 'A political message made beautiful can be more powerful, while simple eloquence may make an artwork more sad than angry. Political content can also be delivered with gentle humour: for instance, a weapon of warfare becomes instantly neutered when it is clad in colourful knitwear. An unexpected, visually engaging intervention with a cause challenges its audience through visual impact and immediacy'. – Kuittinen, 2015, p.14-15

Twentieth century philosophers Guy Debord (1984 [1967]), Mikhail Bakhtin (1984 [1968]), Michel de Certeau (1984 [1980]) and Nicholas Bourriaud (2002 [1998]) have explored the relationship arising between the artist, spectator and the environment selected for the exchange, particularly in those mediated instances where pedestrians engaged in dialectic and performative encounters with art (Fowler, 2017, p.137-8). This idea of 'situational art' seeks to create a situation wherein spectators participate in cultural and artistic production (Stevenson, 1999).[54] French philosopher and political theorist Jacques Rancière (2006, p. 90) uses the term 'encounter' to describe the moment when an artist uses a public space as a site for 'reception' to engage the passer-by in an unexpected relationship (Fowler, 2017, p.138). He considers activism as the ability of one to change situations by exhibiting their creativity in the public domain, ultimately giving anyone a voice, ultimately to restructure the hierarchy of power and create societal change (Rancière, 2009, 2010). By operating outside the gallery or museum, the artist capitalises on the element of surprise to create new experiences and activate environmental behaviour change.

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[53] For Jordan (2002, p.102), 'Cultural jamming is an attempt to reverse and transgress the meaning of cultural codes whose primarily aim is to persuade us to buy something or to be someone'.

[54] In 1957-72, an anarchistic group called the 'Situationist International (SI) was formed in Paris. This group, led by French theorist Guy Debord, reimagined the creation of art as mediated and collaborative experience where the artist blends everyday life with art (Stevenson, 1999). Using the tactic of 'dérive' they would de-familiarise the public by subverting their everyday environment with art (Thompson, 2004; Wallace, 2012). This element of surprise broke down power structures, ultimately creating public interest and conversation. Similarly, Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin (1984 [1968]) used the social phenomenon of the carnival to demonstrate the de-stabilisation of hierarchical structures. His writings illustrate the anti-authoritative approach adopted by carnivals in medieval Europe, particularly the collective performance that was created between performers and spectators. This unconventional format created an interaction where diverse people could be seen and heard. This idea aligns with French curator Nicholas Bourriaud's (2002 [1998]) concept of 'relational aesthetics', which views art as a product of interactions or collective experiences shared between the 'artist' and 'audience'. French theorist Michel de Certeau's (1984 [1980]) also work explored the practice of subversion in everyday activities and spaces, particularly analysing how small tactics of make-shift creativity can be used to reorder systems of power. Yarnbombing fits nicely into the theories mentioned above since it subverts the everyday act of crafting into an engaging form of activism by animating public spaces with art. These subtle and interactive interventions allow craftivists to create a sense of unfamiliarity that encourages conversation.

Corbett (2013, 2017) and Fowler (2017) both discuss craftivism as an alternative means of protest for makers to connect with others through the mediating object without raising a voice or participating physically. Since the craft object is used in place of the protester's physical presence, it 'performs' protest anonymously on their behalf as it is left behind within the urban environment (Fowler, 2017). For example, the UK-based group 'Craftivist Collective', founded by artist-activist Sarah Corbett in 2009, creates mini protest banners, leaving them anonymously within public spaces so they can become 'active' by arresting attention and provoking thought in the passers-by. The banners do not force viewpoints, as it remains the choice of those who chance upon them to decide whether or not to engage with them (Corbett, 2013). The object's aesthetics, images and text, encourage dialogue, thereby allowing makers to sidestep aggressive campaigning or awkward interactions with strangers on the street. Corbett (2017, p. 22) refers to this type of craftivism as 'introverted activism', since one doesn't need to vie for attention or initiate a conversation, but can rather wait for people to decide whether to engage with the object, which is less intimidating for both the maker and viewer. Craftivism, in this sense, has given those uncomfortable with traditional forms of protest the capacity to articulate societal injustices. Craftivist Sarah Tarmaster found that this approach has allowed her to express herself 'without having to have the confidence to get up in front of loads of people' (quoted in Fowler, 2017, p.135). Fowler (2017) questions whether it is possible to effectively protest without being physically present, since the adoption of anonymity and a lack of physical participation could potentially communicate the maker's lack of confidence in public engagement, or even be considered an anti-performance, since some feel that it's the maker's responsibility to stand behind their opinion. Without a physical interaction with the creator, she wonders if viewers may lack clarity of the work's intended message (Fowler, 2017). Taking a feminist perspective, Fowler (2017) also debates whether it is wise to replace the female voice which is often dismissed with an object of protest. She ultimately concludes that the absence and quietness of the protester does not result in a lack of individuality or voice, but rather the craftwork itself communicates these elements through its aesthetics (Fowler, 2017).

Much like traditional street graffiti, yarnbombing is largely done without permission, making unauthorised changes to the look and feel of the cityscape and is, therefore, considered by many to be an act of vandalism (McGovern, 2019; Millie, 2019).[55] This chimes with Hutcheson's (2006, p.81) belief that 'no space is truly

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[55] Several makers have received attention and commissions for their yarnbombing from galleries and commercial enterprises (Kuittinen, 2015).

"public"', but is 'always owned or controlled by someone[else]' with their own rules and regulations.[56] Yarnbombing has caused citizens to question their rights in public spaces and their conventions as to what should be seen in the city (Wallace, 2012; Haveri, 2013). To protect their identity from possible criminal charges, makers often remain anonymous or claim ownership of their work through a pseudonym (Truman, 2010; Sheppard, 2012). Similarly, The Guerrilla Girls of the 1980s also utilised anonymity to conceal their identities, not just because their actions were considered deviant and potentially career-damaging, but also to keep the focus on their message which they considered more important than their individual identities (Kramer, 2006; Schor, 2009).[57] Truman (2010) recognises the polarities of street art, particularly the notion of the seen and unseen that keeps the art visible and artist hidden. Similarly, for Kuittinen (2015), the creative experience transcends authorship.

Despite remaining illegal in most jurisdictions, Hahner and Varda (2014, p.306) find that many local communities embrace yarnbombing as 'It is a softer and less damaging street art than standard graffiti, bringing 'warmth an amusement to passers-by'. Makers understand that their labour-intensive works can be ignored, ridiculed, easily removed, or else destroyed by the elements within hours or days after installation (Riggle, 2010; Kuittinen, 2015; McGovern, 2019). For Kuittinen (2015, p.9), 'Documentation is often the foundation of the work' since 'ephemeral pieces can be experienced only as photographs. The keenest fans can follow the images online'. Accessibility and communality are key to yarnbombing, which was not possible before social media (Kuittinen, 2015). The utilisation of GPS, digital mapping and photography are increasingly used by makers to document the existence and location of yarnbombing online (Wallace, 2012).[58]

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[56] According to Kock and Villadsen (2012, p. 4), 'Public discourse is concrete, manifest, omnipresent, visible, and accessible for all; anyone can relate to it, and it is the conduit of numerous societal functions and dynamisms'. Wallace (2012) believes that public space is a site of struggle where social discourse should circulate. Alyce McGovern's (2019) *Craftivism and Yarn Bombing: A Criminological Exploration* examines what qualifies as a crime and criminal in reference to craftivism. She also connects themes of gender, power and public space to yarnbombing. For Lewinsohn (2009), the city walls represent authority and ownership and authority, while graffiti is the voice of those fighting back against these systems of control.

[57] Artist-activist Lauren O'Farrell founded the UK textile graffiti group, Knit the City Yarn Corps in 2009. She used the alias 'Deadly Knitshade' to claim her installations, which she documented in *Stitch London* (2011) and *Knit the City* (2011). Paul Kingsnorth discusses the success of English street artist Banksy, stating that 'Anonymity is the new authorship' (Kingsnorth quoted in fowler, 2017, p.139).

[58] Online conversations revolve around locations, themes, materials, techniques and tips for yarnbombing (Kuittinen, 2015).

MATERIALITY AND SUBVERSION

Although many craftivists adopt the 'vocabulary' of traditional graffiti to undermine the age-old ideals of femininity and domesticity which are tied to needlecrafts, O'Farrell (2011) prefers the term 'yarn-storming' to ward off the violent connotations of 'bomb', which many consider off-putting and unduly confrontational (Daly Goggin, 2014). For Millie (2019, p.1274), however, the union of 'yarn' and 'bomb' is both 'ironic and comical', lacking any street credibility due to its traditional stereotype as a 'granny hobby'. Haveri (2013, p.3) also believes that crafts cannot be 'completely silence[d]' in terms of their original meanings even when situated in new environments due to their strong relation 'to traditions, maintenance, care and womanhood'. Since it is difficult to rid handcraft of its historic associations, Parker (2010 [1984]) recognises the subversive potential of using needlecraft to publicly address issues of politics and power that are traditionally related to masculinity. For Hackney (2013, p.175), the unrepresented or 'hidden zones' of domestic crafts which lie 'outside the masculine systems of capitalist culture' can be given new meaning when introduced into communal spaces outside of the home. Hahner and Varda (2014) find that yarnbombing can reclaim and transform the masculine nature of the urban environment with a softer and potentially more feminised and domesticated aesthetic, allowing for women's inclusion within the social discourse through creative expression. The city thus becomes an extension of the private, as streets are adorned with the materiality of the home, softening the hard edges of the city (Robertson, 2007; Hahner and Varda, 2014; Kuittinen, 2015). Arnold (2013) and Daly Goggin (2013) identify the many dualities arising through yarnbombing, particularly the divisions between the personal and political; the public and the private; the feminine and the masculine; the domestic and the urban. Similarly, Haveri (2013, p.12) perceives yarnbombing 'as a soft way to make a silent protest against the masculine culture and city environment that is mostly covered with visual messages sponsored by commercial entities'. For Daly Goggin (2013), the beauty, softness and colours of the yarn are juxtaposed against the hardness and ugliness of both the cityscape and the societal issues they are addressing (Daly Goggin, 2013). She uses the term 'soft power' to describe the role of textiles in socio-political action, particularly their ability to subvert the meaning of their component materials and connotations when 'displaced' in the cityscape (Daly Goggin, 2013). She writes:

> '[yarnbombing] challenges and explodes the connotation of "soft" as flimsy, weak, stereotypically feminine and the connotation of "power" as brute force, strong, stereotypically masculine. Both words are turned inside out in many current activist movements: Soft is strong and power is nonaggressive. Soft is physical and power is cerebral. Soft is durable and power is creative'. –Daly Goggin, 2015, p.159

Harris (1988, p.50) discusses the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp protesters of the 1980s and 90s who previously exploited the feminine connotations of textiles to fabricate anti-nuclear statements in order to declare the 'boundary between femininity and masculinity, life and death, nature and technology'. Protesters wove vibrantly coloured yarns into the fencing that enclosed the airbase to create text and images, thereby creating a visual contrast between their peaceful campaign and the masculine representations of the airbase (Horton, 2010). The familiarity and tactility of hand-stitching were used initially to attract viewers, ultimately engaging them in controversial ideas, while overturning comfortable stereotypes of war and needlecraft (Flood and Gavin, 2014). Similarly, Trent Newmeyer (2008) discussed the use of quilting to raise awareness to the AIDS epidemic and rid it of its negative societal stereotypes. To change the notion that AIDS was a gay disease spurred by aggressive male (homo)sexuality, organisers employed the soft feminine associations of a quilt (Newmeyer, 2008). The NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt (1988) was viewed as non-confrontational, thus communicating in a very different way to a protest march or sit-in demonstration. Its aesthetic beauty drew people in before forcing them to look at the facts. The quilt has been criticised as 'kitschy, lyrically impotent and [a] memorial to the dead that does nothing for the living' (Newmeyer, 2008, p.450).

Much scholarship discusses the high-profile project led by Danish artist Marianne Jørgensen called *Pink M.24 Chaffee* (2006) as it is an excellent illustration of craftivism's exploitation of materiality, colour and gender stereotypes to make an activist statement. The project involved yarnbombing a Second World War military tank in Copenhagen's main square to protest against the Iraq War, particularly the Danish and British involvement. To widen the field of participation, the project used online recruitment, calling for volunteers worldwide to contribute pink-knitted and crocheted squares. With the help of London's Cast-Off Knitting Club, Jørgensen sewed together over 4,000 squares to cover the tank, symbolising a handcrafted petition of resistance (Black and Burisch, 2011; Wallace, 2012).[59] By exploiting the polarity of needlecraft and war, Jørgensen was able to disarm the tank with the societal connotations of needlecraft as feminine and domestic (Pentney, 2008; Wallace, 2012; Daly Goggin, 2015). For Daly Goggin (2014, p.102), 'The incongruity of the yarn pieces against the military machinery wrenches viewers out of their customary habits of perception by disrupting familiar habits of mind so as to move them towards another perspective'. For instance, Fowler (2017, p.133) found that the different shades of pink feminised the tank 'removing its militaristic power and undermining the weaponry's violent potential by rendering it absurd. The tank finds a new

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[59] Although this project was a collaborative and collective effort, it was also driven by individual responses to war and conflict (Fowler, 2017).

identity; it becomes tactile, amusing and unthreatening'. Pentney (2008) and Adamson (2010) believe that the material's gendered undertones lead viewers to contemplate the consequences of war, including the many deaths of innocent women and children. The 'cold, cumbersome and murderous' traits of the tank, Kidd (2016, p. 144) explained, are amplified by the textile's representation of softness, warmth and the home.[60] Black and Burisch (2011, p.208-9) also noted the textile's symbolic resonance, which they found 'links [the] remembrance of war with our collective ability to reinterpret and affect it through public action, dissent, and dialogue'.

Alongside Jørgenson, several contemporary textile artists, including Barb Hunt and Theresa Honeywell, have also played on the soft nature and feminine stereotypes of knitting to gender-neutralise objects which are conventionally associated with overt masculinity, such as weapons and military equipment (Moore and Prain, 2009; Prain, 2010, Haveri, 2013). Hunts' knitted landmines, in particular, initially appear cheerful although they ultimately represent the lives that they have taken worldwide (Black and Burisch, 2011, p. 210).[61]

'HOW TO' LITERATURE

High-profile projects such as Cat Mazza's *Nike Blanket Petition* (2003-2008) and Marianne Jørgenson's *Tank-Cozy* (2007) have inspired individuals and groups worldwide to execute their own craftivism projects within their local communities (Williams, 2011). To aid these new makers, a proliferation of 'how to' books were published in the early 2000s which contained patterns, instructions and tips for creating craft for social and political ends. Several of these early books (*Subversive Cross Stitch* (2006), *Knitting for Peace* (2006), *Quilting for Peace* (2009)) do not reference craftivism, despite it being a widely recognised movement of the time. Tapper and Zucker's (2011) *Craft Activism* provides a brief explanation of craftivism in its introduction, but does not reference it again within the main text.[62] Greer

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[60] Knott (2015) believes the age-old presumption of knitting as amateur labour and, by implication, an inferior activity, also renders the tank impotent by subverting established hierarchies.

[61] The booklet that is distributed with the work includes information about landmines and their use worldwide (Black and Burisch, 2011).

[62] *Subversive Cross Stitch* (2006) provides crafters with ideas and modern subject matter through which to communicate using traditional cross-stitch techniques. *Knitting for Peace* (2006) and *Quilting for Peace* (2009) are early texts that promoted charitable textile-making by featuring collective projects that have aided communities affected by war, epidemics and natural disasters globally. Tapper and Zucker's (2011) *Craft Activism* also provides detailed stories and examples from practitioners involved in projects made for charity, socio-political causes and community building.

(2008) and Corbett (2013) were amongst the first to publish widely on craftivism. In *Knitting for Good,* Greer (2008) outlines the use of knitting to facilitate positive change at a personal, local and global level. Although the book explicitly discusses knitting, she reassures readers that her ideas can be implemented through any form of creativity or craftsmanship (Greer, 2008). English artist-activist Sarah Corbett has also written extensively on craftivism, including two popular handbooks for makers. With a long background in traditional activist organisations, she found that craftivism served as a counterbalance to the more 'angry' and 'aggressive' forms of activism demonstrated in many rallies and demonstrations (Corbett, 2013, 2017; Brewer, 2017). She found that craftivism offers a gentler, quieter alternative to traditional forms of activism, thereby enabling individuals and groups to 'effectively protest against harmful structures, attract people to protest, and reflect on the way we want our world to be' (Corbett, 2013; 2017, p. 30; Hopkins, 2017). Her work *A Little Book of Craftivism* (2013) serves as a tutorial for new makers by providing suggestions of how best to socially engage an audience to spread a message. She encourages craftivism to be 'attractive, non-aggressive in color, message, font and size' while demonstrating 'a time commitment to the cause' (Corbett, 2019, p.544). She explains, 'If we want a world that is beautiful, kind and fair, shouldn't our activism be beautiful, kind and fair? Being a craftivist can sound like a novel gimmick, but it can also be world-changing.' (Corbett, 2019, p.534). Her later book, *How to be a Craftivist* (2017), she also suggests communicative and aesthetic tactics for makers, but this work differs in that it focuses largely on taking care of one's mental and physical self as a craftivist by slowing down, reflecting, and practicing mindfulness.[63]

Australian craftivists Sayraphim Lothian (2018) and Tal Fitzpatrick (2018b) have also published guidebooks for craftivists, providing advice for researching, making and circulating work. In *Guerrilla Kindness and Other Acts of Creative Resistance*, Lothian (2018) covers topics such as sustainable making, ownership of work, utilisation of social media, as well as the importance of being historically aware and culturally sensitive to words and symbols utilised in craftwork. Similarly, Fitzpatrick's *Craftivism: A Manifesto/Methodology* (2018b) covers the history and ethos of craftivism. She, however, doesn't consider craftivism a replacement for other forms of activist engagement, but rather considers it as another option or 'hands-on strategy for engaging in non-violent resistance' that does not rely on existing political structures or organisations to be effective (Fitzpatrick, 2019, p.455).

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[63]Artist-Activist Sarah Corbett founded the UK-based group the 'Craftivist Collective' in 2009, which aims to challenge 'human rights injustices through the power of craft and public art' (Corbett, 2013, p.6). With a long background in traditional activist organisations, she found that the gentleness of craftivism served as a counterbalance to the more 'angry' and 'aggressive' forms of activism that most people are familiar with (Corbett, 2013, 2017, p. 21-25; Brewer, 2017). Her guidebooks including tips for phrasing thoughts and questions without being off-putting; how and where to display craftivism for maximum effect; and how best to aesthetically attract viewers.

Several scholars strived to give makers more visibility by incorporating artists' statements into the text as they are often left out of conversations about their work (Gschwandtner 2007; Robertson and Buszek, 2011). Levine and Heimerk's (2008) *Handmade Nation* and Tapper and Zucker's (2011) *Craft Activism* provide detailed stories and examples from practitioners involved in projects made for charity, socio-political causes, and community building. Greer's (2014) *Craftivism: The Art of Craft and Activism* also gives a voice to craftivists across the world by featuring artist interviews and projects undertaken through both individual and group efforts, demonstrating the various ways of using handcraft to engage politically, such as public crafting, community participation and performance.

EXHIBITIONS

Many exhibitions featuring craftivism have been shown across Europe and North America over the past decade, many of which took place in Britain.[64] Although most of these exhibitions did not explicitly use the term 'craftivism' or focus solely on textile art and clothing, they nonetheless all featured handcrafted objects used to stage socio-political confrontations in the hope of promoting societal change. *Disobedient Objects* (The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 2014) examined the role of objects and their making within social movements from the late 1970s to the early twenty-first century, particularly those crafted to defy traditional modes of art and design. Several textiles are featured, including banners made by suffragettes, trades unionists, and Greenham Common Peace Camp protesters, in addition to appliqued textiles known as *'arpilleras'* made by Chilean women. Although there have been many exhibitions featuring social movements, this was the first to focus specifically on the objects and their fabrication processes (Flood and Gavin, 2014). Similarly, *Challenging the Fabric of Society* (Peace Museum, Bradford, 2016-2017) and *People*

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[64] British exhibitions include: *Big Ideas and Small Disruptions* (Brighton Museum, Brighton, 2013-2014); *Disobedient Objects* (Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 2014); *Challenging the Fabric of Society* (Peace Museum, Bradford, 2016-2017); *People Power: Fighting for Peace* (Imperial War Museum, London, 2017); *Hope to Nope: Graphics and* Politics 2008-18 (The Design Museum, London, 2018); *Home Strike* (l'étrangère Gallery**,** London, 2018); *Fashioned from Nature* (Victoria and Albert Museum, 2018), *T-shirt: Cult – Culture – Subversion* (Fashion and Textile Museum, 2018)**,** *Fabric of Protest Exhibition* (People's History Museum, Manchester, 2018); *Represent! Voices 100 Years On* (People's History Museum, Manchester, 2018-2019); *Women Power Protest* (Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Birmingham, 2018-2019). Early exhibitions featuring craftivist work occurred in the U.S. in 2007-2008. These include: *Radical Lace and Subversive Knitting* (Museum of Arts and Design, New York, USA, 2007); *Pricked: Extreme Embroidery* (Museum of Arts and Design, New York, USA, 2007-2008).

Power: Fighting for Peace (Imperial War Museum, London, 2017) also showcased objects made for peace campaigns and anti-war demonstrations during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in Britain, largely featuring handmade banners and quilts. These have served to bring the stories of protesters back to life.

Several recent exhibitions have focused specifically on female makers within the last century who have used handcraft to explore protest, social commentary and identity in their work (e.g. *Home Strike* at the *l'étrangère* Gallery**,** London, 2018; *Women Power Protest* at the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Birmingham, 2018-2019). The exhibition, *Represent! Voices 100 Years On* (People's History Museum, Manchester, 2018-2019) discusses the progression of women's equality in Great Britain from 1918 to 2018, presenting protest objects used by women who campaigned for better representation. Suffragette banners and sashes were displayed alongside modern-day textile art and clothing created by marginalised individuals and groups such the LGBTQ communities and migrant women (see figure 7). Although the exhibition showed the progression of women's equality, it also highlighted that much still needs to be accomplished. Lastly, the *Fabric of Protest Exhibition* (People's History Museum, Manchester, 2018) also explored the use of textile art and clothing to address such topics as representation, vulnerability, visibility and experiences of oppression. Unlike previous exhibitions, the work displayed was formally identified as 'craftivism'.

Figure 7: *Represent! Voices 100 Years On* exhibition (2018-2019) People's History Museum, Manchester, England, Image credit: Anna Boonstra.

2.2   THE GENDERED HISTORY OF ART AND CRAFT: TEXTILES AND NEEDLECRAFTS

THE DIVISION OF ART AND CRAFT

Generations of women have repeatedly drawn on handcraft to highlight issues of education, empowerment, advocacy and protest. Needlecraft, in particular, has a longstanding history which is intertwined with feminism and civil rights. It was used to raise consciousness and challenge injustices and it has easily lent itself to activism due to its materiality, accessibility, mobility, and historical associations with both femininity and domesticity. To fully understand the utilisation of textiles in activism, this chapter will discuss the relationship between the female experience and textiles. To do so comprehensively, the historic positioning of needlecraft within the art/craft hierarchy and its connection to femininity will be discussed. As it is already well documented (Parker and Pollock, 2013 [1981]; Robinson, 2015) and thus does not form the central focus of this study, this thesis will refrain from providing a complete historic deconstruction of the art/craft dichotomy and will instead highlight the most salient points of interest.

The notional division of arts and crafts began in the Renaissance when changes arose within arts education, wherein there was a movement away from craft-based workshops toward institutions and academies (Callen, 1984; Kristeller, 1990; Parker and Pollock, 2013 [1981]; Robinson, 2015).[65] By the mid-nineteenth century, there was a clear separation between 'art' and 'craft' in Europe which was dictated by the prevailing economic and social systems that organised art forms into a hierarchical classification based on social class (Parker and Pollock, 2013 [1981]). Fine arts, such as painting and sculpture, were deemed 'high art' and performed and consumed by privileged classes, while craft, or 'applied arts' such as ceramics and needlecraft were essentially trivialised, being regarded as inferior and therefore associated with the working classes (Broude and Garrard, 1982; Bryan-Wilson, 2009; Parker, 2010 [1984]; Robinson, 2015).[66] Callen (1984) describes how the sexual division of labour was reinforced during the epoch of the 'Arts and Crafts Movement', a time when craft itself split into branches that were deemed to be either 'masculine' or

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[65] Even within the fine arts, certain genres were assigned to women. For instance, flower painting was a predominantly female genre and was therefore considered less intellectually demanding (Grant, 1952).

[66] Glenn Adamson's (2007) *Thinking Through Craft* explores the various aspects of craft's second-class identity and constructed inferiority in art history. Garth Clark's (2010, p.445-446) article 'How Envy Killed Craft' in the Adamson's *The Craft Reader*, considers the status placed on craft in the twentieth century as an 'art with an inferiority complex' and 'less than [fine] art'. In *The Culture of Craft*, Peter Dormer (1997, p. 219) found that craft is a 'body knowledge with a complex variety of values' that is not demonstrated through language and written theory, but rather through practice.

'feminine' in nature. 'While the split appears to some extent in all crafts in which women were engaged', she explains, 'in none is it so explicit as needlework, and in no other [craft] are the sexual characteristics attributed by our society to men and women so aptly reflected' (Callen, 1984, p.4). For Bermingham (2000, p.129), the artistic hierarchy aided in relegating the skills of women to 're-masculinise the public sphere of high art' (Knott, 2011, 2015). Although much scholarship has since been devoted to the influence of class structure on the hierarchical division of arts, discourse addressing the impact of gender was not widely discussed until the latter half of the twentieth century.[67] In her pioneering article 'Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?' Linda Nochlin (1971) discusses the underrepresentation of women within the art world, attributing their exclusion to social and cultural institutions that instilled the European/American male perspective as the only viewpoint meriting artistic recognition (Nochlin, 1989). She argued that these systematic structures, which are embedded throughout art history, have been used gender to channel the work of women into marginalised categories associated with the domestic environment, including 'women's work', 'domestic crafts' and 'amateurism' (Nochlin, 1971; Jefferies, 2016).[68] For Nochlin (1971, 1989), the questions of who is an artist and what constitutes art are thus deemed to be both socially and culturally constructed (Parker and Pollock, 2013 [1981]).

Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock founded the Women's Art History Collective in 1973, also seeking to redress the omission of women from European art history. They also published their ground-breaking book, *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology* (2013, [1981]), which reviewed the value system in relation to art, artists and femininity, in order to illustrate the position of women within the 'masculine discourses of art history'. They argued that 'the sex of the artist matters [as] it conditions the way art is seen and discussed' (Parker and Pollock, 2013, [1981], p.50). The division between art and craft, they claimed, stemmed from where the work was created (Parker and Pollock, 2013 [1981]). For example, as needlecraft was predominately undertaken in the private space of the home, it was duly considered a 'lesser art' and subcategorised under 'domestic crafts' and 'women's work' (Parker and Pollock, 2013 [1981]). Robinson (2015, p.236) further explains:

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[67] Mildred Constantine and Jack Lenor Larsen (1981) were key figures in ridding the hierarchical distinction between art and craft which aided the transition of fibre from the low sphere of craft (Auther, 2008). 'Fibre art' is three-dimensional sculptures made from woven fibre (Deepwell, 1995). Similar categories, such as 'soft art' and 'soft sculpture' also faced resistance in being elevating to fine art forms due to their problematic association with femininity and domesticity (Auther, 2008).

[68] Since the advent of the Arts and Crafts Movement, negative connotations, such as poor skill and lack of commitment, have accompanied the title 'amateur', while professionalism was known for skill and expertise and thus linked to the monetary compensation (Callen, 1985; Knott, 2015). Knott (2015) explains that amateur makers threatened to match the skills of professional tradesman who were already struggling to justify their necessity against the mechanical production of the Industrial Revolution. This is why professionals created the stigma that amateurism was inferior. Amateurism was also feminised by its connection with domestic handcraft (Knott. 2015).

'When women embroider, it is seen not as art, but entirely as the expression of femininity. And, crucially, it is categorised as craft […] The art/craft hierarchy suggests that art made with thread and art made with paint are intrinsically unequal: that the former is artistically less significant. But the real differences between the two are in terms of *where* they are made and *who* makes them'. – Robinson, 2015, p.236[69]

In her most widely known text, *The Subversive Stitch, Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine,* Parker (2010 [1984]) explored the segregation of the art/craft hierarchy, specifically in terms of how needlecraft was viewed as an expression of femininity rather than as art.[70] She draws attention to the role that embroidery played in the societal construction and maintenance of the feminine ideal. She believed that the 'changing ideas about femininity are reflected in the history of embroidery', confirming 'that femininity is a social and psychological product' (Parker, 2010 [1984], p.2-3). Several academics since have also explored how women have 'performed their femininity' through needlecraft and how the patriarchy has long sought to control this performance so as to keep women within the domestic sphere (Parker and Pollock, 1987; Barnett, 1988; Elinor et al, 1987; Harris, 1988; Jefferies, 1995, 2000).[71] Much discourse has thus been devoted to embroidery's historic role in educating Victorian girls into the feminine ideal, thereby becoming a societal tool by which to gauge a suitable housewife (Barnett, 1988; Newmeyer, 2008; Pritash et al, 2012). In *Women, Art and Society,* Chadwick (2007, p.9) discusses the characteristics associated with 'femininity', such as 'decorative', 'sentimental' and 'amateur', and how these qualities were excluded from objects deemed 'high art'. For Lauter (1993, p.24), there were 'traces of femininity [that] appear in the materials, techniques, and production of [textile] objects', aiding in their devaluation. Similarly, Tobin and Daly Goggin (2009) considered how societies have historically gendered material practices by constructing social meanings that link women to more 'feminine' forms of material culture, such as needlecraft, despite it being a practice undertaken by both men and women throughout time (Callen, 1984). This viewpoint resonates with Harper (2012, 2018, p.263) who states that 'there is nothing inherently or essentially "female" about the act of sewing or indeed any other form of creativity, including cloth and threads. Rather, though, there is a historic

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[69] Howard Becker's (1998) *Art Worlds* demonstrates how materials, practices, and practitioners often blur the boundaries between art and craft. For Taylor (1999), debating whether something is art or craft merely diverts attention and energy away from a critical assessment. Adamson (2007, p.2) also discusses the trouble with defining and separating art from craft. He writes, 'Anything can be taken for art, craft included, and that's all there is to it'. Several other academics within the twenty-first century who have engaged in theoretical arguments concerning the division between art and craft include: Auther (2008), Buszek (2011), Fariello (2011), Owen, (2011) Kettle, (2013) and Stevens (2011).

[70] Parker also uncovered the close connection between needlecraft and the socio-economic history of women, confining them to the domestic sphere. Her legacy was honoured at the 2013 conference 'The Subversive Stitch Revisited: The Politics of Cloth' (29-30 November 2013, V&A, London).

[71] Harper (2012) also discusses the continued association of textiles with women owing to cultural rituals, such as birth, marriage and death. Gale and Kaur (2002) also accredit this to childbirth and childcare that culturally ties them with the home and its associated activities. They also consider the argument of labour division and gender abilities, for instance men taking on more mobile and physically challenging work (Gale and Kaur, 2002). Harris (1999) also finds that textiles failed to receive recognition due to their association with females and domesticity.

trajectory where women were understood to mend and tidy up that has constructed sewing as such'.

FEMINISM AND 'DOMESTIC CRAFTS'

Early twentieth-century female artists tried widely to elevate their work by avoiding 'low' materials and techniques associated with 'women's work', out of fear of being labelled as 'feminine artists'. Art critic and activist Lucy Lippard (1973) explained that many women artists hesitated to use needlecrafts, domestic themes, or pastel colours such as pink, understanding that such choices stereotyped them (Rickett, 2013). Parker and Pollock (1981, p.66) described that 'for a female to assert their skill as an artist they had to reject embroidering as the embodiment of femininity and female art practice'. By the early 1970s, however, women's art had begun to change as the 'second-wave' feminism was underway internationally, a movement that had already garnered a substantial presence across Britain, Western Europe, the United States, Australasia, and Japan (Pugh, 2015).[72] Feminist principles were extracted from women's everyday lived experiences and inequalities. These were circulated within the popular writings of Kate Millett (1969), Shulamith Firestone (1970), Germaine Greer (1970) and Juliet Mitchell (1971). The Women's Liberation Movement (WLM) of the 1970s advocated equal opportunities in the workplace, women's reproductive rights, and an end to sexual harassment and domestic violence (Broude and Garrard, 1994; Rowbotham, 1999; Skeggs, 1997).[73] For Lippard (1973), the WLM gave female artists the confidence to recoup 'low' materials to make feminist statements not only about the prejudice and sexism lying at the root of the art/craft field, but also about the broader social and political systems.[74] She argued that 'domestic handcrafts' were sites of feminine agency and, if used for activism, they would gain attention because of their political irrelevance as mundane, ordinary household items (Lippard 1973; Knott, 2015). Embroidery, knitting and quilting were thus brought out of the domestic setting and subverted as tools of resistance to discuss the very issues that they historically represented; namely women's oppression and inequality. Many British women raised their voices and visibility through

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[72] While some consider feminism as being those concerns exclusive to women, this study views it as a quest for the equality between the sexes. Rickitt and Phelan (2001, p.11) take a similar perspective, defining it as an 'enquiry into sexual difference that challenges gender distinctions'.

[73] The WLM was an organisation founded in the 1970s that attempted to express the needs of all women through the following seven demands: equal pay; equal education and job opportunities; reproductive rights; free 24-hour nurseries; legal/ financial independence; lesbian rights; an end to violence and sexual assault (Wise, 1996; Skeggs, 1997). This was later criticised by women of colour and those with disabilities who felt excluded (Wise, 1996).

[74] To make a feminist statement, Rosenberg explains that artists 'swapped their paint brushes for a needle and thread' (as cited in Parker, 2010 [1984], p.xiii).

handcraft, advocating for women's rights. For Parker (2010 [1984], p.xiv), embroidery was the 'perfect medium' for consciousness-raising, being 'steeped in the personal, yet shaped by the political', representing the 'power of the political on personal life, as well as the political implications of personal relationships'.[75] Their subjective experiences as artists and women were thus materialised using handcraft. Parker and Pollock (1987, p.3) describe this period of women's art (1970–1985) as representing a shift from 'practical strategies to strategic practices'. Jefferies (2001, p.191; 2016) explained that textile art was no longer a 'purely' aesthetic and visual medium, but instead a tactic by which women could define and defy 'worn-out dichotomies and hierarchies'. Critical discourse concerning amateur craft as being subversive also developed in the 1970s alongside feminism, punk anti-fashion and the rise of DIY culture. In *Thinking through Craft,* Glenn Adamson (2007) discusses how the trivialised status of 'amateur' was not strictly a burden, but rather used advantageously by women artists of the 1970s. He writes:

> 'Amateurism became a middle ground through which women artists could articulate the very difficulty of their position […] Feminists conceived amateurism as a strategy that held both the traditional home and the mainstream art world at arm's length. Craft was the most material expression of that strategy. It served as a double duty as a symbol of unjustly quashed creativity and a token of the Feminist desire to break out of the stultification of domesticity'. –Adamson, 2007, p.150

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[75] The renowned feminist movement slogan 'The personal is political' was coined by New York Group Activist Carol Hanisch in 1969 who claimed that women's daily experiences should be regarded as social and political issues rather than problems to be kept private (Dekel, 2013). Lucy Lippard (1980, p.362) considers the various definitions of 'feminist art' before sharing her perspective: '"If one is a feminist, then one must be a feminist artist –that is, one must make art that reflects a political consciousness of what it means to be a woman in patriarchal culture" (Harmony Hammond, 1980)'. For Lippard (1980, p.362), feminist art is 'neither a style nor a movement', but 'a value system, a revolutionary strategy, a way of life'. Pollock (1987, p.93) believes that the gender and political identity of an artist does not constitute feminist art, but is instead shaped by 'the way [it] acts upon, makes demands of, and produces positions for its viewers' (Kokoli, 2008). Vermeulen (2010, p.61) also discusses the complexity of defining 'feminist art' since 'Both words, feminism, and art, mean something different to everyone. The combination of the two highly subjective terms was bound to create problems'. Rickett and Phelan (2001) described how feminists used art as an 'arena for enquiry into both political and personal revision; [as] art was both extraordinarily responsive to political illumination and productive of it'.

TEXTILE ART EXHIBITIONS

Womanhouse (California Institute of the Arts, Los Angeles, U.S., 1972), an exhibition led by artists Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro, was an early example of the utilisation of unconventional materials and display methods to subversively convey women's experiences in domestic roles, making it a hitherto unique exploration. It was set within an abandoned mansion in Hollywood, California, where its seventeen rooms were converted into a series of fantasy environments that explored the social, psychological and sexual constructions of femininity within the domestic space (Rickett and Phelan, 2001; Chadwick, 2007; Chansky, 2010; Musteata, 2015). According to Adamson (2007, p.169), the strategy of *Womanhouse* was to take an everyday household activity (such as laundry, cleaning, or cooking) and to intensify or amplify it until it transcended the normal boundaries of domesticity'. Within the exhibition, Chicago incorporated her 'central-core imagery', which celebrated the female experience and body using vaginal iconography (Broude and Garrard, 1994). Through installations titled 'Menstruation Bathroom', 'Womb Room' and 'Bridal Staircase', they altered conventional assumptions of what constitutes suitable artistic subject matter (Rickett and Phelan, 2001; Chadwick, 2007). In *Feminist Aesthetics,* Ecker (1985, p.17) explained how women artists who possess a 'political consciousness of sexual difference' employed imagery involving 'menstrual blood, clitoral images, feminine body language and pregnancy', aspects which were either absent or altogether repressed in art at large. Although the oppression of women's sexuality was beginning to ease with the advent of second-wave feminism, society still largely disapproved of such 'central core imagery' (Broude and Garrard, 1994). Many struggled to identify with central core imagery, arguing that the universal female experience and identity only represented white, heterosexual, middle-class women, ultimately distancing themselves from any affiliation with feminism (Rickett and Phelan, 2001; Chadwick, 2007, Pentney, 2008).[76] For Pentney (2008), identity politics weighted down second-wave feminism and led to exclusivity, particularly of Black, Asian, LGBTQ, migrant and underprivileged women.

Chicago's most famous exhibition, *The Dinner Party* (created between 1974-79, San Francisco), now serves as an important icon of 1970s feminist art. It incorporated 'low' materials and techniques to commemorate important women in art history while highlighting their ongoing inequality and omission from historical records. Four hundred volunteers who were skilled in needlework, weaving and ceramics, helped Chicago to create thirty-nine place settings that featured dinner plates with 'central-

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[76] Since many felt their needs weren't being met by the women's movement, splinter groups were formed, particularly by black and lesbian feminists (McQuiston, 1997). The issue of exclusion has long troubled the feminist movement, which can be traced back to the suffragettes who notably excluded black women from campaign involvement (Wortham, 2017).

core imagery' to symbolise women's castration from art history (Bryan-Wilson, 2017).[77] Similarly, Deepwell (1995) recognised that, prior to the 1980s, there were few art history publications dedicated specifically to the work of women artists within Europe, and even fewer occupying feminist perspectives within art criticism, particularly discourse concerning textiles.[78] A noticeable increase in these publications occurred between 1985 and 1988, expanding into broader cultural discourses, including the fields of psychoanalysis, anthropology, and queer studies (Deepwell, 1995; Jefferies, 2016). [79]

Several similar exhibitions challenging women's roles and positions in society also emerged in Britain during the 1970s.[80] The postal art event *Feministo* (1974-77, U.K.) developed from the correspondence between two friends Kate Walker and Sally Gollop who, like many women of the time, were discontent with the prevailing societal constraints they felt as housewives and mothers (Walker, 1980; Elinor et al, 1987; Kokoli, 2004, 2014, 2016, 2017; Robertson, 2011; Jefferies, 2016). They began exchanging small pieces of artwork through the post depicting their experiences within the domestic sphere (see figure 8). These illustrated such imagery as housework, childrearing and sex, ultimately addressing deeper issues of identity, vulnerability, isolation and oppression (Harris, 1988). Walker (1980, p.34) explained that the artwork served as a 'visual language accessible to women', which corresponded with their own personal experiences, while creating an outlet for relatability and companionship. For Tobin (2016), 'It was a process of politicisation achieved through self-reflection', one that occurred with the support of other women, both locally and across geographical distances. *Feministo* expanded to include up to thirty women of various ages, backgrounds, artistic abilities, and viewpoints on feminism and activism (Walker, 1980; Kokoli, 2004). Many participants used needlecraft, the very medium of women's historical oppression, to question the gendered art/craft hierarchy and women's wider socio-political inequalities (Kokoli, 2016). For Walker:

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[77] Berger (1980) discusses men's longstanding 'visceral fear' of female sexuality and their hostility towards feminism. He writes, 'Judy Chicago, with just 39 place setting[s], confronts all the centuries of ignorance and misunderstanding and forces us to deal with them' (Berger (1980) quoted in Gerhard (2013)). Freeman (1987, p.55) also noted women's exclusion from art history by writing, 'Sewing is the only lasting material thing many women have left behind them. It is the voice of a huge section of the population who do not feature in history books and who are otherwise silent'.

[78] Several scholars who take a feminist standpoint when discussing the history of textiles and its development in the art/craft sector include: Parker and Pollock (1981, 1987); Parker (2010 [1984]); Elinor, et al. (1987); Barnett (1988); Harris (1988); Jones (2003); Auther (2008); Tobin and Daly Goggin (2009); Ledbetter (2012); Pristash et al. (2012).

[79] Texts between 1985-1988 with a feminist perspective in art criticism include: Ecker's (1985) *Feminist Aesthetics*; Robinson's (1987) *Visibly Female*; Saunder's (1987) *Glancing Fires*; Elinor et al. (1987) *Women and Craft*; Parker and Pollock's (1987) *Framing Feminism*; *Women's Art Magazine* (1987-1992); *Feminist Art News* (1987-1992); Pollock's (1988) *Vision and Difference*.

[80] Exhibitions include: *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Woman* (1975-76 U.K. traveling exhibition); *Women and Work* (South London Art Gallery, London, 1975); *Portrait of the Artist as a Housewife (*1977 installation at London's Institute of Contemporary Arts); *Fenix Arising* (Traveling installation, Britain, 1977-1978); *Issues: Social Strategies of Women Artists* (Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, 1980); *Women and Textiles: Their lives and Their Work* (Battersea Arts Centre, London, 1983); *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery in Women's Lives 1300-1900 & Women and Textiles Today* (The Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester, 1988); *Women and Textiles Today* (Traveling exhibition, Britain, 1988-1989).

'Embroidery was a technique among many which could be combined in new ways to create forms of art truer to our skills and experience […] I have never worried that embroidery's association with femininity, sweetness, passivity and obedience may subvert my work's feminist intention. Femininity and sweetness are part of women's strength […] Quiet strength need not be mistaken for useless vulnerability'. –Walker cited in Parker, 2010 [1984], p.xvi.

The works created dialogue around femininity and domesticity that circulated outside the commercial art gallery system (Chadwick, 2007). More women began to understand that the private spheres of their homes were 'saturated with public meaning' as 'gender-role expectations' were reinforced by public policies (Bailey and Cuomo, 2008, p. 567). What began as long-distanced communication and consciousness-raising transformed into multiple exhibitions featuring their accumulated work (*Portrait of the Artist as a Young Woman* (a traveling exhibition in the U.K. and abroad, 1976) and *Portrait of the Artist as a Housewife* (London's Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA), 1977)).[81] These exhibitions aimed to bridge the division between the social understanding of the private and domestic, and personal and political (Parker, 1977). Although most believed their work to be politically important, not all of the women associated wanted to risk making their 'intimate experiences public and legible' (Parker, 1977; Tobin, 2016). While negative reactions were expected from male spectators, Parker (1977, p.8) found it 'hard to predict whether [the] feminist imagery' would elicit 'anger and insecurity' or 'instant recognition and relief' among female spectators, although she felt assured that no one could 'remain unmoved' by the exhibition.[82]

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[81] Walker (1980, p.34) describes how each installation differed slightly as local groups 'cope[d] with a basic contradiction: how to place effectively these expressions of domestic isolation and frustration – this anger against the prevailing male "artocracy" – within the white-walled neutral spaces intended for a very different kind of art'.
[82] One man described Portrait of the Artist as a Housewife 'bitter and twisted', while another called the exhibitors "miserable bitches" (quoted in Parker, 1977, p.8).
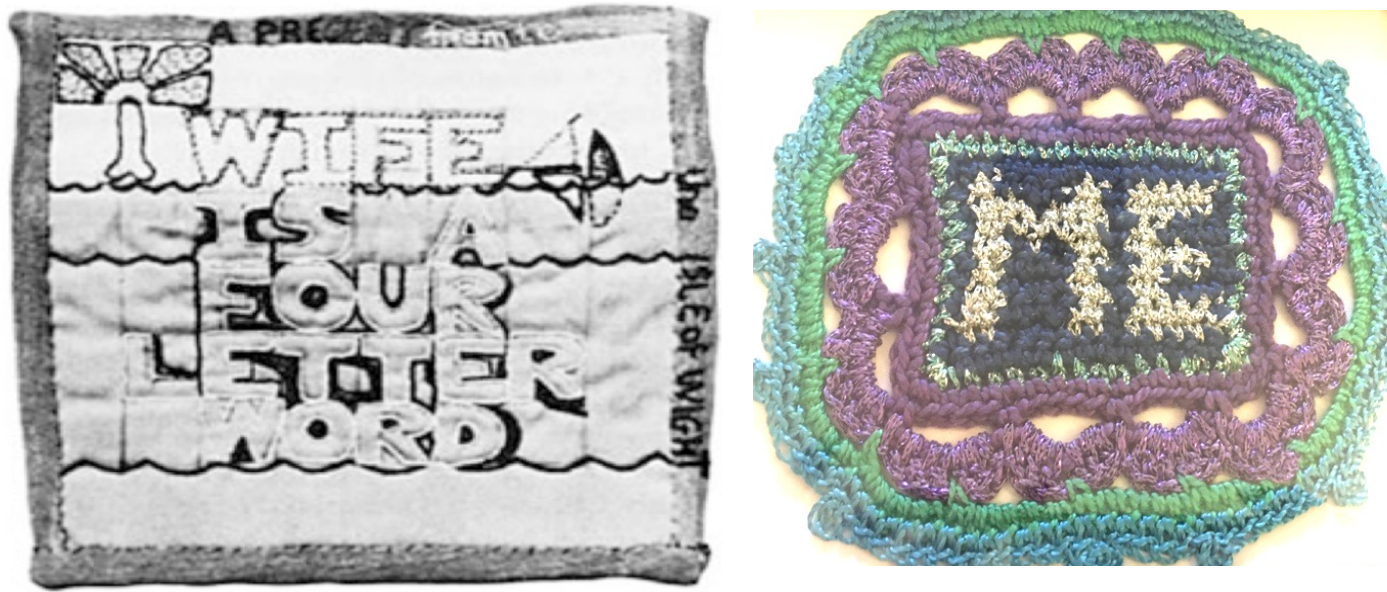
Figure 8: Left: Kate Walker (1978) *Wife is a Four Letter Word*, muslin, hand-stitching, The Women's Art Library at the University of Goldsmiths, London, England. Courtesy of The Women's Art Library; Right: Sue Richardson (1977) 'ME', Crocheted textile art, housed with Richardson's personal collection, Image credit: Anna Boonstra, Courtesy of Su Richardson.

In her book *The Feminist Uncanny in Theory and Practice,* Alexandra Kokoli (2016) uses theories of feminism and psychoanalysis to dissect the relationship arising between femininity and domesticity demonstrated in the exhibitions *Feministo* and *Womanhouse.* Although these home installations conveyed a fictional domestic space, to Kokoli (2016, p.2, 121) they housed very real 'truths', bringing to light the 'silences, inequalities and even violence on which domesticity is founded'. She attributes second-wave feminism to severing the gendered and cultural connotations of the 'home', thus shifting the perspective away from a female domain of safety and security to a locus of potential discontent, crisis and abuse.

Similarly, *Women and Textiles: Their Lives and Their Work* (1983, Battersea Arts Centre, London) also projected domestic skills into a wider social context, creating open discussions on the definitions of art and craft, as well the meanings of the personal and political. The exhibition held an open submission for exhibitors which was advertised through several local arts and craft newsletters, non-art journals, and magazines, requiring those interested to complete a questionnaire regarding their practice and reasons for using textiles as a means of expression (Jefferies, 2001). A large number of submissions derived from an advert printed in *Spare Rib*, a second-wave feminist magazine distributed in the U.K. (Jefferies, 2001). Janis Jefferies (2001), who helped to organise the exhibition acknowledged the importance of the gendered and autobiographical voice in textiles, claiming that the work displayed helped to validate the experiences of women at large. She wrote:

> 'Most exhibitors and their statements commented on the possibility of using textiles as a way of articulating a diverse and multifaceted range of experiences. As it transpired, and as I myself would testify, even the simplest form of observational knowledge depends on corroboration and acknowledgement in either word or deed. When someone is in doubt about what she knows or hears or sees, she is likely to call on someone else to confirm her experience, and 'Women and Textiles' provided just an opportunity'. –Jefferies, 2001, p.146

There was a collective effort mediated through these exhibitions which were intended to explore the art that women were making. This led to a re-evaluation of their creative practices and their position in society (Jefferies, 2016). Tobin (2016) contends that activists of the WLM in the 1970s and 80s were 'supported on a smaller, more personal level to initiate change on a larger one'. She explains:

> 'It meant that women's liberation could become a mass movement without central organisation, but also that many women were politicised by talking about and listening to personal experiences. Women collaborated on their activism, sharing workloads, as well as using new forms of communication to realise the international spread of the movement'. –Tobin, 2016

While some considered feminism as an aid to women's art, exposing cultural assumptions about sexual differences (Lippard, 1995; Rickett and Phelan, 2001), others deemed its impact to be a potential hindrance to the progression of needlecraft to the status of high art. Many artists who emerged after the rise of second-wave feminism rejected a feminist label, as it was viewed as being 'restrictive, [and] threatening to overshadow other elements in their work' (Rickett and Phelan, 2001, p.12-3). In *Fray: Art and Textile Politics,* Bryan-Wilson (2017, p.19) describes textile-making as being two-edged, since it 'affirmed women's labor and skill' while also being 'potentially complicit with antifeminist regimes of domesticity'. In their 1987 exhibition 'The Subversive Stitch' (Manchester, Whitworth, 1987), inspired

by Parker's (2010 [1984]) earlier book, Barnett and Harris found that needlecraft's 'feminine' stereotypes often adversely affected female artists of the 1980s. Its stereotype of being an inherently 'feminine' and 'domestic' pursuit remained strong and unavoidable, affecting the perception of their work (Barnett, 1988, p.37).

Women at large, in the latter part of the twentieth century, were also reluctant to identify as feminists or even to perform feminine roles and activities such as needlecraft, as they feared being associated with negative connotations that were being driven by the media (e.g. 'deviant', 'man-haters', 'lesbians') (Barnett, 2008; Chanksy, 2010; Westen, 2010, p.1-2). Robertson (2011) also attributed the dismissal of domestic crafts by women to both anti-feminism and radical feminism, but also acknowledges the wider framework in which crafters worked, particularly in light of prevailing economic changes which increasingly encouraged women to enter the workforce in the undertow of the rise of mass production and consumerism.[83]

THIRD-WAVE FEMINIST ART AND ACTIVISM (1990s-2010)

Women's activism in the 1990s progressed from presenting a general and collective feminist statement to focusing increasingly on individuality as a means of expanding feminist inclusivity (Pentney, 2008). Third-wave feminism (1990s-2010) was predominantly comprised of younger women who looked beyond gender by focusing on multiple identities of age, race and sexual orientation (Stevens, 2011).[84] Consciousness-raising strategies moved beyond collective activity, instead taking an individualist turn which was concerned with lifestyle 'micro-politics' carried out through everyday acts that were often less recognisable as activism under more traditional paradigms (Harris, 2008; Daly Goggin, 2013). Third-wave feminists communicated their ideas largely through cultural jamming, zine-making and blogging (Drüeke and Zobl, 2012; Mendes, 2015). They also embraced traditional feminine ideals, particularly domestic activities like needlecraft, using them to make

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[83] When considering the rejection of needlecrafts in the 1970s, Stroller comments that, 'all those people who looked down on knitting were not being feminist at all. In fact, they were being anti-feminist, since they seemed to think that those things that men did were worthwhile' (as cited in Robertson, 2011, p.190-91). Glenn Adamson (2007) believed that feminism was responsible for many of the twentieth and twenty-first century shifts in thinking about craft. He believes that Feminist theory has been 'important in its contention that craft is best seen as a pervasive, "everyday" activity, implicated in the contingent flux of modern life' (Adamson, 2007, p.4).
[84] For the purpose of thesis, 'feminism' refers not only to second-wave feminism (1970s and 80s), but also to contemporary and subsequent movements. Daly Goggin (2013, p.6) notes that categorising feminism by 'waves' is problematic since women have not always 'united in unified beliefs and values […]'. Since 'waves' tend to overlap, the dates provided for periods feminism in thesis are estimated.

statements of empowerment (Showden, 2009; Daly Goggin, 2013). Pentney (2008) believed needlecrafts were 'grounded in gendered cultural practice' that could be readily 'politicized for different purposes by different groups and individuals'.[85] Rozsika Parker (2010, [1984], p. xv, xv) credits artist Tracey Emin for her hand in reviving textile art, thereby helping to overturn societal connotations of needlecraft, yet attributes much of her success to the evolution of art practices that were essentially influenced by the work of second-wave feminists. Embroidery in the twentieth century became increasingly categorised as the 'art of personal life' (Parker, 2010 [1985], p.xv), as women were 'embroidering the personal as political' to 'challenge the subordination and oppression of women', whereas contemporary makers, including Emin, use 'embroidery as the prime medium of personal life not to proclaim that the personal is the *political*, but that the personal is the *universal'*.[86] Stevens (2011) argues that much of the tension that exists within craft today has to do with those allegiances and historical conditions that were set forth by a previous political generation and which are now being confronted by another (Stevens, 2011).[87] He notes a disconnect between the ideals and values of second-wave feminists and those stemming from newer perspectives. '"Gen Xers" and third-wave feminists', Stevens (2011, p.53) explained, 'have recognised the 'inherent difficulty, and perhaps the impossibility, of changing the world through direct political action'. The movement has been widely criticised, particularly by second-wave feminists, due to its lack of large-scale political protests which were a mainstay of previous generations (Daly Goggin, 2013, p.6; Pentney, 2008). Portwood-Stacer (2007, p.17) found that the 'individualist turn', which was closely associated with third-wave feminism, has placed those contemporary craftivists who were driven by the ethos of third-wave feminism at a disadvantage relative to those crafters who were involved in second-wave feminism. For [a] feminist praxis to be truly effective, she advises that 'it must transcend the individual and recuperate a social politics that takes broad, radical change as its ultimate goal' (Portwood-Stacer, 2007, p.17).

Debbie Stoller's third-wave feminist magazine, *BUST,* and the subsequent *Stitch 'n Bitch* book series (2003-2007), also helped to both popularise and politicise crafting

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[85] For Chansky (2010), third-wave feminists acknowledge that engaging in craft is a choice as opposed to an act of control by a patriarchal society that their mothers or grandmothers may be endured. Robertson (2011, p.186), however, believes contemporary makers neglected to acknowledge the importance of handcraft for political resistance by their predecessors.

[86] Artist Tracey Emin is most notably known for sewing her autobiography into patchwork blankets revealing such intimate life experiences as rape, abortion and attempted suicide (Brown, 2006). Art critic Melanie McGrath (2002, p.5-6) describes Emin's work as 'dangerous' and 'subversive', yet 'conservative', due to the dichotomy of using age-old hand processes to address modern and provocative issues, thereby shocking and engrossing her audience.

[87] Writer Nancy Whittier describes a 'political generation' as "a group of people (not necessarily of the same age) that experiences shared formative social conditions at approximately the same point in their lives, and holds a common interpretive framework shaped by historical circumstances" (quoted in Stevens, 2011, p.48). Jefferies (2016) considers feminism and craft as unfixed terms and practices that each generation should re-examine. Kokoli (2014, p.2) also finds that 'dwelling on continuity and change may devolve into a policing activity of drawing boundaries along definitions that are meant to be inherently flexible and open to transformation'.

circles amongst young, hip, urban women. She promoted DIY and handcraft through her feminist magazine *BUST*, because she believed that it was time for young feminists to rectify domestic crafts that had been largely discarded by the general population a few decades earlier (Chansky, 2010; Stoller and Henzel, 2011). The idea that needlecrafts were too feminine to be performed in public, for Stroller, was 'proof' that domestic crafts needed to be reclaimed once again (Robertson, 2011).[88] The Calgary Revolutionary Knitting Circle and London's Cast-Off Knitting Club were two such formative groups that arose in the early 2000s to organise public knitting as a means of reclaiming communal space for creative social and political action, thereby aiding in the breakdown of the public-private division (Carpenter, 2010). Although contemporary sewing circles and public crafting are perceived to fit within the scope of feminist art practice, many texts ignore the fact that these groups largely did not view their acts as being intentionally feminist (Pentney, 2008; Jackson, 2019). According to Prain (2014, p.236), The Revolutionary Knitting Circle recruited members of various age, gender and class to refute 'the concept of the stitching circle as a domestic, feminized craft' and to reclaim it as a 'symbol of community, homespun values and independence'. Price (2015, p.88-9) also believes that craftivism is not a strictly feminist activity, but rather instils 'multiple femininities and creative practices that are intergenerational, with complex histories of empowerment, disempowerment and relationships'. Craftivism's assumed correlation with femininity and domesticity is troubling to many academics, as they believe that it reinforces gender stereotypes rather than challenging them (Portwood-Stacer, 2007; Adamson, 2010; Carpenter, 2010; Wallace, 2012). Robertson (2011, p.186) was concerned that the 'political effectiveness' of craftivism relies 'inherently on the gendering of textile work'. She believed that craftivists 'need to quash still-perpetuated, gendered stereotypes of crafting', particularly its strong association with being an older woman's hobby' (Robertson, 2011, p.186). Although these age-old stereotypes of needlecraft can dismiss craftivists, when reapproriated, they are often successful in drawing attention. For example, David Revere McFadden, curator of 'Radical Knitting and Subversive Lace' (2007, New York City), popularised the exhibition by describing it as 'not your grandmother's crocheted doilies' (Robertson, 2011, p.193).

Over the last few decades, there has been significant interest in reviving domestic crafts and rebranding its female involvement (Fowler, 2017). In their *Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism, and the Future*, Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards (2000) devised the term 'girlie feminism' to describe a pro-feminine form of feminism which is popular amongst young women. This emergent ethos embraces traditional feminine ideals, such as appearance, sexuality and domestic activities, in order to make statements in relation to notions of empowerment and freedom (Showden, 2009; Daly Goggin, 2013). Daly Goggin (2013) discusses how 'girlie

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[88] Due to this individualist turn, Brown (2006, p.40) believes there was no identifiable "feminist aesthetic" in the early twenty-first century art and craft as there was in the 1970s and 80s, despite much of the work still addressing gender.

feminists' overtly play on the connotations of domestic crafts and female aesthetics to make activist statements. For Daly Goggin (2013, p.6), 'girlie feminists' are 'not the first, nor the only amalgamation to reclaim and rewrite the feminine, while challenging its stereotypical and hegemonic characterizations'. Parker (2010 [1985], p.197) explains that twentieth-century suffragettes exploited the feminine characteristics of embroidery for their own socio-political ends 'not to transform the place and function of art, but to change ideas about women and femininity'. When ridiculed for lacking womanly attributes for participating in activism, the suffragettes strategically employed embroidery for its representation of the strength of the feminine ideal (Parker, 2010 [1985], p.197).[89] Feminist scholar Laura Portwood-Stacer (2007) found it 'dangerously apolitical' for the third-wave feminist generation to reify traditional gender roles and activities such as domestic crafts, activities which many women in the 1970s and 80s did away with due to their intimate association with femininity and expected gender roles (Williams, 2011, p.312). Jameson also contested the rationale of reclaiming domestic crafts for activism, writing, 'Too many sisters fought to free women from aprons and mops for me to voluntarily become Aunt Bee and pretend it's by choice […] Instead of fighting for real control, like lobbying legislators […] we're playing Holly Homemaker' (quoted in Robertson, 2011, p.191). Jameson believed that creating something by hand gives a person a false sense of hope and control (quoted in Robertson, 2011, p.191).[90]

For Fitzpatrick (2018b, p.5), the practice of craftivism is aligned with fourth-wave feminism (2010–) with its focus on social justice and civil rights using new technologies and social media.[91] She recommends that, for an effective and ethical practice to be observed, craftivists should understand the values, goals and strategies of feminism (Fitzpatrick, 2018b, p.5). Close (2018) recognises that craftivism tends to focus on gender and labour-based oppression, while overlooking ethnicity and race-based issues. Fitzpatrick (2018b) stresses the importance of giving visibility to minority groups and those from diverse backgrounds, including those who identify as LGBTQIA+ and people of different race, ethnicity, class, religion and ability.[92] She also suggests that those craftivists who incorporate different cultures into their work should consult these communities to avoid misappropriation (Fitzpatrick, 2018b).

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[89] Tickner (1988, p.63) explains that the banners demonstrated 'dignified womanly skills while making unwomanly demands'. Similarly, In *Next Wave Cultures: Feminism, Subcultures, Activism,* Harris (2008) explores the ways in which young women participate in feminism through the subversion of popular culture through such genres as punk, riot grrrl and zine culture.
[90] Feminist-writer Germaine Greer also relates crafting to oppression rather than to 'the subversion and enjoyment noted by Stitch 'n Bitchers' (as quoted in Robertson, 2011, p.192).
[91] Since 'waves' tend to overlap, the dates provided in thesis are estimated.
[92] For Derr (2017), women's movements that have claimed that women are the same because of their gender, 'have not, historically, turned out to represent all women'.

2.3   CLOTHING ACTIVISM: THE BODY AS A BANNER

While academics from sociology, cultural studies, history and ethnography, amongst many others, have discussed the communicative capacity of clothing, there is a dearth of scholarship dedicated specifically to clothing as an activist medium. The scholarship that does exist is largely within the last two decades. Very few of the texts employ the term *craftivism* when examining clothing as a form of activism. This chapter, therefore, follows scholarship which discusses clothing as a communicative and/or activist medium, addressing such topics as communication, materiality, representation, identity, solidarity and power. Instead of analysing what fashion, dress and style are and how they relate to each other, this thesis explores how these practices of everyday embodiment transmit affect, disturb totalitarian tendencies and visualise socio-political dissent (Bartlett, 2019).[93]

Quentin Bell (1951) describes the history of dress as that of the 'history of protests' (quoted in Tynan, 2015 p.186). The declarative, affective and performative capacity of clothing has lent itself, across time, as a communicative locus for social reform and political activism. Those marginalised groups involved in politically conscious counterculture and activist movements have historically aligned their appearance with their political activism, expressing their values and beliefs through the medium of clothing, seeking to be seen by those in authority (Hillman, 2015).[94] Although clothing has been repeatedly used as a means of resistance and defiance in response to social, political and economic instabilities that lead to inequality, this was particularly evident in the 1960s and 70s when social movements sought to politicise their appearance to garner support using DIY creativity and customisation (Edwards, 2011; English, 2013). Significant examples include slogan T-shirts worn by the hippie movement advocating for peace and equality (1960s – early 1970s); the Black Panthers' monochrome ensembles (including the black beret that symbolised the oppression of the Black community; late 1960s – 1970s); the clothing of the punk movement that resisted all forms of oppression, promoting self-governed societies (1970s – early 1980s); and several generations of feminists who used clothing to signal women's liberation (Fitzgerald, 2018). Clothing served as a non-violent form of activism, one that provided the opportunity for its wearers to communicate messages of racial pride, sexual freedom or gender nonconformity, amongst many others

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[93] This thesis also uses the terms 'dress', 'clothing' and 'garments' interchangeably, referring to what people wear in daily life to cover their bodies (Roach-Higgins et al, 1995). 'Fashion' is defined for this study as an established style of dress, etiquette, behaviour and appearance relevant to a particular time and place, which can signify personal, social and cultural indicators (Barnard, 2002).
[94] 'For feminists, pacifists and socialists alike, dress', Tynan (2015, p.183) explains, 'was a visible embodiment of social ideals – a glimpse of their vision for a perfect world'.

(Bartlett, 2019). Hillman (2015) and Tulloch (2019) explore self-fashioning styles within activist movements. Tulloch (2019, p.85-6) believes that the 'political activist self' is autobiographical and self-constructed through the agency of the styled body.[95]

SUBCULTURE STYLE

The study of anti-fashion didn't gain academic interest until the 1970s when researchers first turned their gaze towards 'subculture style', referencing alternative clothing choices that challenged an array of social norms, often as an expression of youthful rebellion affiliated with certain musical genres (Cohen 1997 [1972]; Hebidge, 1979; McRobbie, 1989; Willis 1990; Gorman, 2006; Polhemus, 2011).[96] Dick Hebidge (1979) provided an early and highly influential analysis of subculture style, which he described as the formation of an alternative identity that challenged the cohesion of the dominant ideology, for instance, divergences in appearance from that of mainstream culture such as 'appropriating' clothing and inflicting new meanings upon them. Several academics discuss alternative clothing or oppositional styles as the agency embodied by individuals who creatively negotiate the tension between individuality and conformity (Wilson, 2015; Bartlett, 2019; Sullivan, 2019). Oppositional self-fashioning styles were considered a danger to political and social order as they threatened the norms of gender and sexuality (Hillman, 2015).[97]

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[95] Tulloch's research explores individual and collective style narratives, largely amongst black cultures transnationally, as outlined in her book *Birth of Cool: Style Narratives of the African Diaspora* (2016). She also uses the phrase 'style activism' in the preface to Shelton's *Rock Against Racism* (2015) which discusses how seemingly 'safe' presentations of the styled self can have impactful meanings.

[96] For Talbot (2013, P.30), subculture 'refers to a group of people with a culture, either hidden or stated, that differentiates them from the larger culture to which they belong'. Adopting an oppositional style can thereby challenge an array of societal norms including class position, economic status, racial-ethnicity, gender and sexuality (Reger, 2012). Reger (2012), considers subversive clothing as 'a form of political protest [that] blends individual subjectivity and culture by signifying one's membership in a group or subculture'. For Barnard (2014), clothes perform the function of attracting, communicating and representing ideas, values and beliefs of individuals and cultural groups.

[97] The Dress Reform Movement (1850s – 1890s) was an attempt to make clothing more practical and comfortable for women (Ribeiro and Blackman, 2015). Trousers were illegal for women in many parts of the US and Europe (Ribeiro and Blackman, 2015). Even most suffragettes kept a conventional appearance, refraining from wearing trousers, in order not to damage their campaign (Ribeiro and Blackman, 2015).

PUNK ANTI-FASHION

The period from the mid-1970s to the early 1980s has been referred to as 'Britain's decline', which was widely described as the worst economic recession to have hit the country since the 1930s. This was associated with the highest levels of unemployment since the Second World War (reaching 1.6 million in 1977), with young adults being the hardest hit, especially those living in the poorest socio-economic regions of London (Hebidge, 1979; English, 2013; Talbot, 2013; Worsley, 2011). Punk aptly articulated the frustration of the working-class youth through a rebellion of attitudes, style and music, challenging the predominant culture, capitalist power and social conformity (English, 2013; Talbot, 2013). According to Hebidge (1979) and Sladen (2007), the counterculture of punk youth was a direct and symbolic response to the times, visually and visibly constructing a language that served to illustrate the economic deterioration, stagnation and societal discontent of the times. They devised politically controversial clothing using self-styling and DIY techniques, such as adorning, sewing, hand-printing and distressing (Talbot, 2013). To represent their socialist principles, a DIY ethos allowed punks to gain visibility, thereby shifting mass production 'back into the hands of ordinary people' (Talbot, 2013, p.25; Sklar and Donahue, 2018). Vivienne Westwood and the Sex Pistols' manager Malcolm McLaren were ultimately responsible for producing some of the earliest punk looks, attracting anti-establishment youth to their shop located at 430 King's Road in London which fast became the epicentre of the movement (Ribeiro and Blackman, 2015).[98] Their shop sold contentious T-shirts, fetish and bondage wear, plus garments covered in safety pins, chains, zippers, profanity and pornographic imagery (Mendes and de la Haye, 1999; Wilcox, 2004; Sinclair, 2014). Many of their designs featured the swastika intersecting with institutional symbols, stripping them of their political meaning in order to sabotage right-wing politics (Talbot, 2013). Their 'Destroy' T-shirt, for example, featured a swastika overlaying an inverted image of Christ (see figure 9) (Talbot, 2013). The punk aesthetic, Worsley (2011) explains, was steeped in shock value, and its garments were consciously designed to provoke, upset and disrupt the complacency of wider society. In a 1981 interview with Jon Savage (1981, p.25), an influential writer who covered the punk era, Westwood explains that it was her job to confront the establishment and destroy the world of 'conformity'. Although Westwood and McLaren

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[98] McLaren and Westwood's professional partnership lasted from 1970 to 1983. Their Store was first established in 1971, although it had multiple names including 'Let It Rock' (1971), 'Too Fast to Live, Too Young to Die' (1972), 'SEX' (1974) and 'Seditionaries' (Mendes and de la Haye, 1999). Westwood began producing a series of controversial T-shirts 'collaged with feathers, nipple-revealing zippers, studs, chains, potato prints and found objects' (Wilcox, 2004, p. 12). Their popular, though offensive T-shirts included the 'Cambridge Rapist' and 'Paedophilia' T-shirts. In 1975, they were prosecuted under the obscenity laws for 'exposing to public view an indecent exhibition' for a T-shirt showing two naked cowboys (Wilcox, 2004, p. 12; Sinclair, 2014, p. 581-82). Their early T-shirts were hand-printed using a child's printing set and stencil and hand-inscribed with fabric dye, while the later ones were screen printed. Hebidge (1979) describes punk clothing as often having a deeper underlying meaning than was initially perceived.

were a driving force behind the creation of punk anti-fashion, its development and popularity were contributed to by those fashions which were made by the fans and followers of the bands themselves, most notably the Sex Pistols (Sinclair 2014; Worsley, 2011).[99]

Bolton (2013, p.12) believes punk 'smashed every convention of acceptable self-presentation, whether based on age, status, gender, sexuality, or even ethnicity'. Although much of the literature discusses punk as an inherently oppositional, activist style worn by young men, female punks were instrumental in provoking societal change by conveying and subverting power. Several academics examine female subjectivity in subcultures, particularly exploring punk's role in challenging gender boundaries (Leblanc; 1999; Miller, 2011; Reddington, 2012; Buszek, 2019). Barnard (2002, [1996]) explains that conventional clothing was regarded by many as constricting and reproducing a version of femininity that was false. Punk, therefore, enabled many girls and young women to escape such social constructs (Barnard,2002, [1996]). Similarly, Suterwalla (2013, a, b) credits punk in creating a new avenue of expression wherein the gendered body was used as a site of resistance, disrupting conventional notions of gender and beauty, thereby giving women a sense of identity and belonging away from mainstream society (Reddington, 2012).[100]

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[99] Westwood, who is now an established and respected designer continues to use clothing for political expression, largely promoting social and environmental activism in relation to climate change, over-consumption and deforestation (Sinclair, 2014).
[100] Pini (2001), Street-Howe (2009), Marcus (2010) and Downes (2012) explore female subjectivity within subculture, but not specifically analysing its fashion. O'Brien (2009) describes the impact that Westwood and McLaren's store had on empowering and liberating women by selling unisex clothing and options for size 12 women, ultimately encouraging female body positivity.

Figure 9: Left: Vivienne Westwood and Malcolm McLaren (late 1970s) Punk T-shirt, muslin screen-printed, The Horse Hospital, London, England, Image credit: Anna Boonstra; Right: Maker unknown (late 1970s) Punk T-shirt, Hand-drawing using black felt-tip marker on Cotton, The Horse Hospital, London, England, Image credit: Anna Boonstra.

THE T-SHIRT: CLOTHING THAT SPEAKS

As one of the most ubiquitous and affordable items of clothing, the T-shirt became the unisex uniform of the 1960s and 1970s, providing a convenient platform for politically conscious individuals and groups to articulate a socio-political stance or show group affiliation (English 2013; Talbot, 2013; Sims, 2014; Behnke, 2017).[101] The T-shirt can convey one's political viewpoint in a direct manner that is considered by some as more personal than poster art (Sims, 2014). In *Slogan T-shirts: Cults and Culture,* Talbot (2013) describes the T-shirt as an emotive item of clothing and a portal of knowledge which is used as a messaging tactic by positioning language in the line of vision, thereby both informing and intriguing viewers. Abd Manan and Smith (2014, p.208) found that clothing 'speaks' through its material surface, embodying an otherwise '"unseen" depth of cultural disposition. The T-shirt, in this respect, is considered a text, a *technê* of productive knowledge, and read as the textility of both thought and matter'. Text and textiles are etymologically related. Both terms stem from the Latin word *texere*, meaning 'to construct or to weave', which is also related to *textum,* meaning 'texture or web' (Tontiplaphol, 2011; Impey, 2013).[102] As a blank canvas, the T-shirt is readily customised, largely adorned with text composed from hand-writing, screen-printing or more recently, digitally, enabling it to express a broad range of viewpoints (Sims, 2014). Underrepresented groups, particularly in the 1970s and 80s, used the slogan T-shirt as a frontline fashion to advocate equal rights and share messages of empowerment, solidarity, and liberation. For Suterwalla, the slogan T-shirt:

> 'spells out on the body a feeling, thought, or belief. It can act like a personal manifesto or an expression of desire, including resistance. As an object worn on the body it acts as an embodied articulation of an individual's voice and practice of gendered realities. This is critically empowering for marginalised voices, especially

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[101] The T-shirt began life as an undergarment in the World Wars and was worn by army and navy personnel (Wells, 2007; Worsley, 2011; English, 2013; Talbot, 2013). Mendes and de la Haye (1999) consider the T-shirt's communicative capacity as being similar to the posters and billboards used as advertising tools in wartime propaganda to reinforce social thinking. Advertisers in the 1960s and 70s discovered the lucrative power of the T-shirt (Worsley, 2011; Sims, 2014).

[102] Several academics also make metaphoric connections between writing and weaving (Sullivan Kruger, 2001, Jefferies, 2003; Quinn, 2008). Using a semiotic perspective, Barthes (1990, 2009 [1972]) describes written text as a 'woven fabric' made up of a 'weave of signifiers'. Goett (2016) also recognises the metaphoric connection between textiles and several English expressions, particularly narrative phrases such as to 'weave stories, spin yarns and embroider the truth'. Mitchell (2012) particularly links the construction of textiles and literature metaphorically when analysing the children's book *Charlotte's Web*.[102] Mitchell (2000) ties textiles to personal identity when analysing the word 'selvedge', which she defines as the concealed edge of fabric that prevents its weave from unravelling. She literally dissects the word into its prefix ('selves') and suffix ('edge') to link the physical and linguistic structure of textiles to identity using the metaphor that the inner self is contained and kept hidden by individuals who put up fronts and boundaries (Mitchell, 2000). Schoeser (2003) draws metaphors when comparing the composition literature to that of textiles.

if they have felt silenced or been rendered mute by mainstream political forces and culture'. – Suterwalla quoted in Talbot, 2013, p.33[103]

Many of these groups drew on the work of British fashion designer and well-known activist Katharine Hamnett, who used the T-shirt to advocate ethical and environmental rights since the 1980s. Hamnett is best known for the anti-nuclear slogan T-shirt she wore in 1984 in a visit to 10 Downing Street when meeting Margaret Thatcher (the then British Prime Minister), which proclaimed that '58% DON'T WANT PERSHING' (Ribeiro and Blackman, 2015). The slogan referred to polls that revealed significant public opposition to the harbouring of US perishing missiles on UK soil (Tynan, 2015, p.185; Sinclair, 2014). In an interview with the *Sunday Times* in 2008, Hamnett explained that she didn't care to meet Thatcher, but knew that it would be a potential photo opportunity, and thus a means to disseminate her message through the press (Sinclair, 2014). Over thirty years later, she continues to design protest clothing, giving visibility to often taboo subjects in a direct, although non-confrontational manner. She explains that the slogan T-shirt was 'designed to sophisticate protests, to put its issues on the same perceived level as a newspaper headline (see figure 10). They are designed to be seminal: to make people think and hopefully act' (Hamnett quoted in Talbot, 2013, p.115). Her designs largely consist of three or four words, styled in big typography, making them easily read at distances of up to thirty-five feet away in the hope of resonating long after (Sims, 2014). These slogans include, CHOOSE LIFE', 'BAN POLLUTION', 'HEROIN FREE ZONE' and, more recently, 'VOTE TRUMP OUT' and 'WHY BREXIT, MY FRIEND?' (Sinclair, 2014, p.582).

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[103] Suterwalla's (2013a, b) research examines the body as a site of resistance, particularly in relation to how clothing can disrupt the conventional processes that define the female body in culture, changing perceptions about gender and sexuality.

Figure 10: Left: Photograph featuring the brochure for The Fashion and Textile Museum's *T-shirt – Culture – Subversion* (2018) exhibition, which features Katherine Hamnett's (1984) '58% DON'T WANT PERSHING' slogan T-shirt, Image credit: Anna Boonstra, Copyright: The Fashion and Textile Museum; Right: Katherine Hamnett (1990) 'THATCHER OUT' oversized slogan T-shirt, screen-printing on cotton, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England, Image credit: Anna Boonstra.

Sue Rowley (1997) finds that writing and handcraft are both forms of representation where meaning is formed through its production process. She believes that words do not change, only does their context (Rowley, 1997). It is how and whom that reads them that alters their meaning. Clare Rose discusses how location and the clothed body can change the meaning of a message inscribed on clothing. She writes:

> 'Because spoken language is so context-dependent, once you take it out of its spoken format and put that word not only onto paper but also onto a garment, it is no longer context-dependent, it is on the wearer's body […] the wearer creates the context […] the status of the words on T-shirts is very different from the same words used orally' –Rose quoted in Talbot, 2013, p.66[104]

For instance, shortly after the 9-11 terrorist attacks on the US, Iraqi blogger and activist Raed Jarrar wasn't able to board the flight when traveling from New York to the Middle East, because he was wearing a T-shirt that said, 'WE WILL NOT BE SILENT' in both English and Arabic (Wells, 2007). Jarrar likened the experience to 'going into a bank with a T-shirt reading I am a bank robber' (Jarrar quoted in Wells, 2007). 'Watch out!', Wells (2007, p.9) states, 'T-shirts are powerful, make no mistake. They can strike fear into people's hearts. Who'd thought that the real weapons of mass destruction were these soft, comfy items of clothing that just about everybody wears, as a mark of streetwise cool, fashion item or just as underwear?'.[105] Similarly, Hamnett's (2003) 'NO WAR, BLAIR OUT' and Westwood's (2005) 'I AM NOT A TERRORIST, PLEASE DON'T ARREST ME'[106] also caused controversy but communicated differently than Jarrar's situation, as they were when worn by models on a runway (see figure 11).

British writer and curator Shumon Basar is sceptical to the efficacy of the T-shirt in creating societal change. He states:

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[104] Millar and Woodward (2011) discuss how the meanings of clothing can either be context-specific or remain fixed, being carried across other cultural contexts.

[105] Hamnett believes the slogan T-shirt gives a protest credibility (Talbot, 2013). Gildart (2007, 240) discusses textile actions post 9-11, which she describes as a metaphorical textile or material gesture responding to an event or situation. The material reactions included wearable items such as T-shirts and baseball caps, largely with donning FDNY and NYPD, which served as a tribute to the rescue crew, which were endorsed by celebrities and professional athletes (Gildart, 2007). Gildart (2007, p.246) explains that, 'Ordinary folks hoped that, by doing so, they could share in the heroism, as well as show appreciation for the courage of these people. These bits of clothing allowed people to wear their hearts on their sleeves, making the private public'.

[106] Westwood's T-shirts were made in collaboration with civil rights group Liberty in 2005 to protest against the government's strict new anti-terror laws (Sinclair, 2014).

'I believe in the right to express whatever you want to express and the power that it might give you back or act as a catalyst for a community of likeminded people, but I am highly sceptical about it being accepted in any greater scheme and of course they are all context-specific…I think there is a potency for the individual who wishes to demonstrate, express and inhabit the world through the means of their verbal expression, but for me, in the world today, the vast discrepancy in individual agency and actual political or economic power is evident'. – Basar quoted in Talbot, 2013, p.58

Wells (2007) was also concerned that protest T-shirts can give the wearer a false sense of accomplishment, believing they have contributed greatly to a socio-political cause. For Sims (2014), slogan T-shirts might not change anything in themselves, but they can cause others to think long after the message disappears from view.

Figure 11: Vivienne Westwood (2005) 'I AM NOT A TERRORIST' T-shirt, screen-printing on cotton, property of the Lee Price Collection, shown in the Fashion and Textile Museum's 'T-shirt – Culture – Subversion' (2018) exhibition, London, England, Image credit: Anna Boonstra.

American textile artist and writer Lisa Anne Auerbach also incorporates text into her knitted garments. These are largely politically driven slogans, quotations and song lyrics, addressing themes of abortion, terrorism, global warming and religion. When knitted, the message becomes integral to the garment's structure, as opposed to simply being printed on the surface of a T-shirt (Auerbach, 2012). With text as the textile and medium as the message, she believes that knitted garments have 'a stronger voice than a T-shirt' (Auerbach, 2012, p.43; Chrisman-Campbell, 2013). She also recognised the permanence and longevity of the message when knitted, as it can be worn for decades, outliving the relevance of the slogan as opposed to a fast-fashion item like the T-shirt (Auerbach, 2008; Chrisman-Campbell, 2013; Schuiling and Winge, 2019). Auerbach's (2012, p.43) knitted garments were inspired by the guitarist from the American pop band 'Cheap Trick' who wore jumpers which merged patterns with messages such as 'Don't Steal My Girlfriend'. For Auerbach (2012, p.43), 'A sweater claiming ownership of a woman is completely absurd, but because it's a sweater, the request holds more charm than offense'. The cosy nature of sweaters softens the message, making it more acceptable to viewers who might otherwise be put off. She also found humour to be a useful tool in making reference to such serious themes as abortion, terrorism and religion, making them more approachable for some (Chrisman-Campbell, 2013). She described wearing language as a 'transformation' that changes 'a body into a sign' and 'forces the wearer to embody an idea in a physical way (Auerbach, 2012, p.47). It is impossible to relax or to avoid confrontation when wearing a sweater emblazoned with slogans. The sweater is an invitation to a conversation'. Not only can it be confrontational, she also considers it to often be uncomfortable, embarrassing, or even fun (Auerbach, 2012). She encourages others to knit their thoughts and beliefs into garments, writing:

> 'A sweater comes in handy whenever you feel that chill in the air. Sometimes the chill is due to the winds, a sudden gust, a draft, or a blizzard. Other times, the room goes cold when you speak your mind, and suddenly everyone else is clutching their drink a little tighter, clenching their teeth a bit more strongly, and reaching quickly for sweaters and shawls. Continue the conversation with a sweater that talks back'. –Auerbach, 2008, back cover

In 2012-2013, Auerbach led the exhibition *Chicken Strikken* (Malmö Konsthall, Sweden), which featured 'Hønsestrik', a 1970s Danish style of knitting inspired by the hippie, environmental and feminist movements. Much like Auerbach's work, Hønsestrik expressed socio-political ideas through knitted clothing (Auerbach, 2012; Sundbø, 2012, p.28). In the early 1970s, Kirsten Hofstätter devised a series of books called *Hønsestrik,* a Danish word meaning "chicken knits" to describe a new creative method of knitting that gave knitters the freedom to stray from traditional and often restrictive patterns (see figure 12 left). Amidst the wave of DIY culture and a 'green', hippie lifestyle, Hofstätter also wanted to be liberated from yarn producers who refused to part with knitting patterns unless you purchased their yarn

(Sundbø, 2012). By knitting her own ideas, the books not only constituted a rebellion against capitalist consumer society, but also formed part of a larger political uprising. 'Hønsestrik was more than a style. It was a movement', Auerbach (2012, p.51) explains, 'a feminist, anti-authoritarian, socially conscious attempt to break with the traditions and norms of knitting'. The philosophy was adopted by young radical knitters throughout Europe, largely in Nordic countries. With few surviving examples, Auerbach (2012) learned *Hønsestrik* by studying Hofstätter's books and photographs. She found that much of the 'politics woven into garments continue to resonate in the present time' as there were particularly recognisable symbols such as Venus, the fist and peace signs (Auerbach, 2012, p.51). With help of eight women, some of whom participated in the original movement, they crafted some twenty-five Hønsestrik-inspired jumpers in addition to more contemporary iconography, such as surveillance cameras, cocktail glasses, and protestors (Auerbach, 2012, p.52).[107] The exhibition was unique in that the gallery staff participated with their bodies by wearing and displaying the jumpers during their daily routines, making the exhibition fluid and interactive. Like craftivism, the Hønsestrik movement has again gained popularity, particularly among young people, who integrate its original motifs alongside patterns that reflect modern times and issues (see figure 12 centre and right).

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[107] Sundbø (2012) discusses handcraft 40 years after the original movement. She writes, 'Handcrafts were discarded for brand products. Education in textile craft was eradicated, and knitting was no longer passed down through the generations. The new generation considered knitting dreary and old fashioned. It was too time consuming and uneconomic. Chain stores sold knits from low cost countries for less than the cost of yarn' (Sundbø, 2012, p.35).

Figure 12: Left: Honsestrik knit pattern originally created by Kirsten Hofstätter (1974), discussed in her text *Hønsestrik*, Image credit: Anna Boonstra, Pattern design copyright: Kirsten Hofstätter; Centre and Right: Nova Norling (2021-2) Honsestrik inspired knit skirt and vest, the patterns and motifs are partly referenced from the Swedish knitting designer Anna Bauer, Stockholm, Sweden.

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION: SEMIOTICS

Numerous scholars understand clothing as a means of non-verbal communication, expressing ideas via a visual vocabulary (Eco, 1978; Lurie, 1981; Mendes and Amy de la Haye, 1999; Barnard (2002 [1996]).[108] Although written words are often included on the clothing, which can both inform and intrigue the viewer, several scholars believe that there is a level of non-verbal communication that exceeds the slogan, particularly 'read' through such visual codes embedded in its surface, structure, materiality and imagery, which are culture-specific or understood universally (Weiner and Schneider 1989; Davis, 1994; Sullivan Kruger, 2001; Barnard, 2002 [1996]). For McClendon (2019), 'The moment you choose to put an item of clothing on your body, be it a leather jacket, a suit, a fur coat, or even jeans and a T-shirt, you are making your body socially legible to people around you' (The Museum at Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT), 2019, 1:08). Lurie (1981, p.3) describes the materialistic qualities of clothing as being a more 'universal' tongue, one that communicates without speaking. Similarly, Giard (1990) explains that the world is a visual place with a corresponding visual language that is culturally taught, therefore visually literate.

Henss and Hofmann (2019, p.6) discussed the multi-sensory aspects of clothing, such as its visual and tactile characteristics, which they found compensates for any lack of verbal communication.[109] For Dormer (2008), these visual elements of materiality extend language to confer a haptic meaning. Cassell (1974) believed that the materiality of clothing operates below the level of language, expressing a deeper meaning, one which can elicit an emotional response from the viewer.[110] This is what structuralist Ronald Barthes (1964; 2006 [1993]) calls 'second-order language', wherein meaning is communicated through clothing non-verbally.[111] Expanding on Saussure's theory of communication, he speaks of a 'social language' called semiotics that may serve to 'decode' or even 'read' material objects as a form of text to be deconstructed. Numerous scholars have applied the method and theory of semiotics to explore the communicative role of clothing, considering it a type of symbolic

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[108] Umberto Eco (1979) compares clothing to language and, just as words are assembled into sentences, clothes are assembled into ensembles. Alison Lurie's also considers clothing as a language with a particular 'grammar' or visual vocabulary. For Barber (1994), cloth can be "read" by the viewer for social messages and encoded meanings.

[109] Klepp and Hebrok addresses the material properties of wool, shedding light on attitudes constructed from material, experiential and cultural engagement (Woodward and Fisher, 2014).

[110] Barthes (1964) considers second-order language as an underlying language, but one which can never exist independently of it. In the *System de la mode* (1967) or its English version, *The Fashion System (1990),* Barthes focuses on fashion texts, and specifically how fashion is written about in magazines, photographed and subsequently displayed on the page (Ryan, 2014).

[111] 'Semiotics' is concerned with symbolic communication, specifically the production, exchange and interpretation of signs between senders and receivers (Fiske, 1990). This model utilities three key elements, referred to as a sign, signifier and signified. The 'signifier', for this study, is a material substance, such as an image or written word, whereas the 'signified' is a mental concept evoked by the material signifier (Jobling, 2016). When combined, the 'signifier' (image or word) and 'signified' (concept derived from the image or word) produce a sign (meaning) (Jobling, 2016). Structuralism is a school of thought concerned with the study of sign systems with the objective to examine the bases or relationship on which meaning is produced rather than on specific meaning (Berger, 1984).

language that signifies one's identity, affiliations, and beliefs (either deliberately or unknowingly), through a shared system of codes (Saussure, 1966 [1916]; Levi-Strauss, 1968; Lurie, 1981; Barthes, 1990 [1967], 2006 [1993]; Barnard, 2002 [1996]; Calefato, 2004). Being both a functional and symbolic object of material culture, clothing is one of the most visible signifiers of gender and class and is therefore useful in maintaining or subverting symbolic boundaries (Kaiser, 1990; Hollander, 1993; Crane, 2000).

Several scholars, including Barthes himself, notes the difficulties in applying semiotic approaches to items of material culture (Breward, 2003; Woodward and Fisher, 2014). Barnard (2002 [1996], 2014) argues that the shared system of signs is culturally constructed and can shift meaning in relation to subcultures and is thus not universal.[112] Hebidge (1979) explains that subcultures 'appropriate' objects from mainstream culture, inflicting their own meaning on them.[113] If the observer does not possess, recognise or identify with the same cultural values as the sender, then the receiver will not understand the message (Barnard, 2014). The meanings attributed to clothing are often unclear and subjective, and not necessarily shared between the wearer and observer, therefore, problematic and unreliable in terms of 'reading' as a language system based solely on the observer's assumptions (Campbell, 1997; Barnard, 2002 [1996]; Crane, 2002).[114]

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[112] Davis (1994) found that the meaning of clothing is forever shifting and is context-dependent, based on the identity of the wearer and location.

[113] Since the 'signifier and signified' remain fixed, the visual message and sense of identity communicated by the fashion garment are still viewed from an externally derived and interpreted point of view (by the receiver). Morgado (2007) demonstrates this through her semiotic analysis and interpretation of hip-hop dress associated with the rap music culture. Candy (2005) utilised a semiotic framework to explore the experience of wearing denim, but felt that this form of analysis on its own did not consider the perspective of the wearer. Barnard (2002) explains that the wearer's intention may differ from the designer's original objectives.

[114] Crane (2000) also notes that the non-verbal signals embodied in clothing are more susceptible to different interpretations in relation to written or verbal culture. She also points out that observers can 'refuse to perceive' a non-verbal message, while the sender can deny his or her subversive intentions, possibly being not fully aware of them (Crane, 2002).

MATERIAL CULTURE: SELF, IDENTITY AND REPRESENTATION

"Objects are for us, often without our recognizing it, the companions of our actions, our emotions and our thoughts. They not only accompany us from the cradle to the grave. They precede us in the one and survive us in the other. Tomorrow they will speak our language. But are they not already speaking to us, and sometimes much better than with words?" –Tisseron quoted in Dant, 2005, p.108

Since the 1970s, material culture studies have attempted to resolve problems arising between the socio-cultural and the material by shifting focus away from objectivity to subjectivity, exploring such humanistic themes as identity and experience (Woodward and Fisher, 2014; Jenss and Hofmann, 2019). This 'material turn' drew attention toward the diversity of objects and cultural practices, particularly how people think, live and identify through the medium of things (Tilley et al. 2006). According to Barnard (2007), material culture approaches do not presume that fashion should be characterised as immaterial or that materiality is just an unambiguous 'carrier' of meanings as semiotic approaches often do. Miller (2005b) and Ingold (2007) draw upon theorists from the fields of sociology, archaeology and anthropology, including Bourdieu (1977), Gell (1998), Mauss (1973) and Malafouris (2004), in their attempt to understand the division between the mind (immaterial or inner self) and matter (material, e.g., clothing), which they aimed to collapse.[115] Miller references Keane's (2005) critique of semiotics which shows that, when clothing is removed, there is no trace of social relations underneath and, therefore, clothing does not constitute the person, but rather is interwoven with the person(ality) (Miller, 2005a; Woodward and Fisher, 2014, p.5). He considers Hegel's notion of objectification that people and things 'exist in mutual self-construction and dialectical co-dependency' (Miller, 2005a; Woodward and Fisher, 2014, p.6). For Woodward and Fisher (2014, p.10-11), surfaces are central to developing an understanding of the materialities of dress, particularly in respect of the 'dichotomy between an inner self and an outer surface'. Cavallaro and Warwick (1998, p. xv, 6) consider dress to be 'the frontier between the self and the non-self', acting as a catalyst by externalising internal drives. For Miller (2005b), the 'true' interior of an authentic self is articulated across the surface of clothing. Similarly, Barnard (2007) and Braithwaite (2014) discuss an awareness of material processes in which immaterial ideas precede the fashion item. Woodward and Fisher (2014) also discuss material agency, particularly how material properties externalise the wearer's intentions through signalling various cultural categories of identities. Craik (1993, p.1) also suggests that the '"life" of the body' is played out through clothing and

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[115] For Behnke (2017) and Shinko (2017) clothing without a body is just an insignificant piece of cloth.

gesture.[116] Several academics view clothing as a symbolic articulation of cultural identities, social hierarchies, and global economic variances, thereby aiding in the representation of the self (Cavallaro and Warwick, 1998; Jenss and Hofmann, 2019). American pragmatist philosopher William James (1890) believed that 'materiality transcends the body as it is external, with its own origins and lifespans' (James quoted in Kaiser, 2020, p.30). He also believed there are three aspects of the self; namely the material, the social and the spiritual, writing:

> 'The body is the innermost part of the *material Self* in each of us, and certain parts of the body seem more intimately ours than the rest. The clothes come next. The old saying that the human person is composed of three parts- soul, body and clothes- is more than a joke'. – James quoted in Kaiser, 2020, p.30

Adamson explores the slogan T-shirt in relation to its representation, wherein he considers it as a substitute for one's voice, bringing one's internal identity into the public domain (Talbot, 2013). By externalising the internal self, Adamson explains, the T-shirt represents the person wearing it, what they stand for, and who they identify with (Talbot, 2013, p.10). He describes the slogan as 'a tight piece of language that operates really effectively, almost the same way that architecture does, because most people have a sense of what basic English words are which 'really lends itself to a certainty' when compared to an image (Talbot, 2013, p.18). Talbot (2013, p.18) thus believes that T-shirts have an intrinsic validity, because they 'make clear that you are aligning yourself to something outside yourself and there's an honesty in that allegiance'. She finds that words, 'however trivialised, are never simply "only words"', but rather expose deeper meanings underneath the surface impression'. The T-shirt, then, is an outward projection of the internal self (Talbot, 2013, p.10, 13).[117] In *Fashion Theory*, Barnard (2014) proposes that clothing is a prosthesis or an extension of one's self that enhances the properties and capabilities of the body. He believes that clothing is:

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[116] Much scholarship debates whether clothes are 'apart' of an individual or 'a part' from individuals (Cavallaro and Warwick, 1998; Gundry, 2008). Kristeva and Roudiez (1982) discuss the phenomenon of projection, where body's interior self is externalised while the subject introjects the external.

[117] Michael Carter also considers, clothes as an 'outward manifestation, the external condition, of our society [and] our ideas' (quoted in Schuiling and Winge, 2019, p.128). Jenss and Hofmann (2019) explain that clothing's close proximity to the body thus involves all the senses. For Wilson (2015, p.14), 'Bodily adornment is an authentic aesthetic medium whereby ideas, beliefs, thoughts, emotions and aspirations take concrete form. Dress is meaning'.

'something that is not us but which we add to ourselves and without which we would consider ourselves incomplete […] Neither our bodies nor language are us, but we use them to represent ourselves to other people […] What I think of, and experience, as myself is not available to anyone, including myself, expect as representation in, and through, tools such as language'. –Barnard, 2014, p.38

This statement suggests that the body is, in of itself, already prosthetic, thus making the self and one's experiences possible. In *Fashion and Materialism*, Ulrich Lehmann (2018, p.1) also discusses the material world existing outside of the consciousness. He believes that clothing is embodied materialism that creates a second skin or outer shell for the body to be marked by socio-cultural structures and is thus a materialist representation of the body and the subject beneath it (Lehmann, 2018). Lurie (1981, p.232) suggests that, 'To some extent, fabric always stands for the skin of the person beneath it', as we unconsciously attribute its characteristics to the wearer. The body thus gives the corporeal the instrument to signal (Cavallaro and Warwick, 1998). Mimi Thi Nguyen (2015) also considers clothing as 'second-skin', which leads to false perceptions causing social exclusion or even horrific situations, such as the 2012 shooting of Trayvon Martin, an unarmed 17-year-old black teenager in Florida who was wearing a hoodie sweatshirt (Nguygen, 2015). Nguygen (2015, p.792) explains that the negative associations of the hoodie, specifically its link to gangbangers and drug dealers, can create a heightened sense of fear in others, thereby bringing potential danger to the wearer. Clothes are often understood in relation to their wearer, signalling the person's place in the world (Nguygen, 2015). Democratic congressman Bobby Rush spoke out against racial stereotyping arguing that, 'just because someone wears a hoodie, does not make them a hoodlum' (quoted Nguyen, 2015, p.801). Subsequent marches and demonstrations took place in support of Trayvon, the largest being the 'Million Hoodie March' in New York City, where over 5,000 participants wore hooded sweatshirts, making the hoodie a symbol of political unrest (Nguygen, 2015; Kinney, 2016a).

THE CLOTHED BODY: EMBODIMENT, PERFORMANCE AND POWER

Although much attention has been given to the communicative qualities of clothing that comply or resist societal norms (Kaiser, 1990; Craik, 1993; Hollander 1993), the embodied or emotional experience of the wearer was largely overlooked until the late 1990s. Wilson and de la Haye (1999) outline this, writing:

> 'It is therefore not surprising that in recent years the sociological study of dress has shifted to incorporate the study of the human body, itself a growing area of study. The body is now explicitly understood not as a biological given but as a social construct producing multiple meanings. Dress is clearly part of that construction of meaning... and gradually within academia, historical and contemporary garments are increasingly being used as primary evidence for broader-based contextual studies'. –de la Haye and Wilson, 1999

Entwistle's (2015 [2000]) influential work, *The Fashioned Body,* moved the study of clothing beyond dominated visual discourses, bringing attention to how the practice of dress is experienced by the wearer within specific social situations. She refers to the act of dressing as an 'embodied activity' or a 'situated bodily practice' which is personally and socially experienced by the wearer (Entwistle, 2015 [2000]). Although dress is a social and public act, it is also a personal one, due to its intimate and close proximity to the body (Entwistle and Wilson, 2001; Wilson, 2003 [1985]). She recognised that clothing is about bodies, as it is produced, worn and promoted by bodies (Entwistle, 2015 [2000]). It does not simply reflect the body, it embellishes it, it adorns it, it enriches it, adding an array of meanings that would otherwise not be there (Entwistle and Wilson, 2001; Wilson, 2003 [1985]). Calefato (2004, p.6) explains that 'Bodily coverings, clothes and skin decorations "create" the body, shaping it together with the surrounding world'. For Negrin (2016), clothes are significant, not just for the meanings they communicate or for their aesthetic appearance, but because they produce certain modes of bodily demeanour.[118]

As an embodied, performative protest and as a tool for initiating complex conversations, clothing has a long history of challenging power structures (Worsley, 2011; Behnke, 2017). The dressed body, for Shinkto (2017, p.31), is a location of struggles and, therefore, a 'highly charged site' for performing acts of identity, subjectivity

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[118] Ryan (2014) also discusses how the body communicates through gestures and body language, adding to the garment's message.

and power. In *Fashion as Communication*, Barnard (2002 [1996]) explains that fashion and anti-fashion both serve a political function by either complying with or defying a dominant order.[119] By rebelling through clothing, he explains, one is rebelling against ideologies and challenging class and gender identities in an attempt to reverse the prevailing positions of power and privilege controlled by societal structures (Barnard, 2002 [1996], p.129). Punks, for example, opposed the dominant ideology through their clothing, contesting the distribution of power within the prevailing social order, one that is intimately associated with economic and social status (Hebidge, 1979; Barnard, 2002 [1996]). According to Tynan (2015, p.185), refashioning the body is a powerful expression of resistance to the dominant order challenging 'the forces that seek to normalise power over bodies'. She further explains that 'there is something potent about threatening to transform our bodies'. (Tynan, 2015, p.186). 'The need to define and control the human body', Wilson (2015, p.14-5) explains, 'relates particularly to two of the most important fields of human behaviour – sexuality and social order'. Behnke (2017) and McClendon (2019) discuss how clothing both instils social control, empowering the body, such as wearing a military uniform, or else renders it inferior, as illustrated by the prison uniform (The Museum at FIT, 2019).[120] French philosopher Michel Foucault (1991) examined the mechanisms and technologies of power that surround the human body, suggesting that power doesn't emerge from external discourses such as gender and class, but rather is formed within the individual (Sargeant, 2008). He considers the body as a site of both power and resistance which stages acts of resistance in everyday struggles for power (Tynan, 2015, p.185).[121] Tynan (2015, p.185-6) draws on Foucault's concept of power, writing, 'From the simple act of wearing a slogan t-shirt to the subtle insolence against class hierarchies expressed by subcultural styles, the design of our bodies and how we occupy social space become sites of struggle for free expression'.[122] She also explores the notion of 'carnivalesque', a term first employed by Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin when examining transgressive themes adopted in carnivals in medieval Europe and how they inverted power structures (Tynan, 2015, p.183). She believes that, like the carnival, many

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[119] Elizabeth Wilson (2015, p.14-15) describes clothing as representing 'control and provocation, conforming and breaking the rules, but the individual's choice also aims at uniqueness'.

[120] Calefato (2004, p.2) examines uniforms as an example of how clothing can be a controlling device for the body or serve as a means of disciplinary action, forcing it to 'represent a social role, position or hierarchy'.

[121] According to Sennett (1994, p.282), during the French Revolution (1789-99), a radical Parisian newspaper argued that 'for a real revolution, people had to feel it their bodies'. He discusses items of clothing worn to revolutionary festivals, such as the 'liberty' cap, that became part of the wearer's feelings of resistance, in which "the body is roused to take note of the world in which it lives' (Sennett, 1994, 310 quoted in Kaiser, 2020, p.30).

[122] Butler (2007 [1990]) and Hall and Du Gay (1996) use Foucault's theoretical framework when analysing the body as a vehicle of subjectivity and performative expression. Butler (2007 [1990]) criticises Foucault for not addressing issues of gender, race, ethnicity or sexuality. Entwistle is also troubled by Foucault's analysis of power in the body in that 'it does not provide an account of dress as it is lived, experienced and embodied by individuals' (Entwistle quoted in Shinko, 2017, p.29). McLaren (2002, p.106) describes Foucault's complex view of the body as 'oscillating between modes of inscription, internalization, and interpretation' (quoted in Shinko, 2017, p.20).

political demonstrations gain potency from the various ways in which they used their bodies to aesthetically resist through disguise, embodying social alternatives which resisted dominant order (Tynan 2015).[123]

In Emma McClendon's exhibition *Power Mode: The Force of Fashion* (2019-2020, The Museum at FIT), she explains that there is no single, universally accepted definition of power and, therefore, whether a garment is understood as being 'powerful' depends on both the wearer and observer (The Museum at FIT, 2019, 9:25).[124] For McClendon, 'the power of fashion isn't just offensive and aggressive it can also, just as often, be defensive power. As Bill Cunningham once said, "Fashion is the armour to survive everyday life"' (Cunningham quoted in The Museum at FIT, 2019, 9:25). The subversive and communicative capabilities of clothing have played a fundamental role in efforts to address issues of female inequality, sexual harassment, rape and domestic violence. Women used their bodies as symbols of femininity in socio-political protests to become visible and reclaim the power taken from them by prejudice and violence (K. Miller, 2005; Moser, 2012; Behnke, 2017).[125] Behnke (2017) finds that the performance of gender is influenced by power and authority, whereupon women are often victims of these things.

O'Brien (2009) and Moser (2012) describes how the WLM gave women a visual vocabulary, for instance through Barbara Kruger's 1989 ProChoice artwork 'your body is a battleground', which illustrated the political impetus in which the female body was enlisted for the visual examination gender identity and social roles (Moser,

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[123] The terms 'street theatre' or 'public performance' are used to refer to a diverse spectrum of actions designed to attract public attention (Cohen-Cruz). Butler's (1999) concept of performativity of identity is linked to her discussions on gender. She believes that gender identity cannot exist prior to social interactions, but is constructed through the performance of cultural signs: words, acts, gestures, stylization that are produced externally '*on the surface* of the body' (Butler 1999, p. 173). Butler addresses the performance clothing worn in drag, cross-dressing and other transgender identities that defy and reject social and political expectations, as well as their implications for gender performativity (Behnke, 2017). Shinkto (2017, p.22) finds that drag reworks gender norms, exposing 'the fabricated aspects of gender and sex. Although clothing indicates and produces gender identity, it also has the ability to redefine gender (Utopian Bodies Fashion Catalogue, 2015).

[124] McClendon discusses other sartorial power symbols, like 'power suits' and 'power heels' (The Museum at FIT, 2019). She also speaks on the power of association, particularly with modern military uniforms, which she describes as an extension of the state's power (The Museum at FIT, 2019). Uniform-inspired silhouettes, colours, and symbols are thus incorporated into fashion, becoming shorthand for authority and power (The Museum at FIT, 2019).

[125] K. Miller (2005) also discusses how clothing can aid a person in reclaiming power and ownership over their bodies in a very visible and public way, signaling a sense of empowerment. She believed that the T-shirt allowed survivors to overcome fears and facilitate healing by publicly testifying about violence against women (K. Miller, 2005). Visual Cultural Theorist Nicholas Mirzoeff believed that the "The body is involved in struggles that are political but are also inescapably issues of representation" (quoted in K. Miller, 2005, p.271). In the same article, K. Miller (2005) discusses the use of T-shirts adorned with written and visual imagery depicting the experiences of in-school rape victims in South Africa.

2012).[126] Tynan (2015, p.185) found that 'Slutwalk[s]' adopted creative styles which echoed the narrative of 1970s feminists, 'drawing attention to the ways in which the female body is treated as a battleground in modern society'. Participants addressed issues of sexual harassment by mobilising fashion, becoming visible by wearing provocative items of clothing such as bras, panties and stockings (Behnke, 2017). Worsley (2011, p. 30) recognised that 'sometimes it's what you do not wear that can make the greatest impact […] Be it through overdressing or nudity, fashion became an acceptable vehicle for protest. Clothes could be used to shock [and] not merely to flatter the female form'. For Weldes (2017, xiii), 'practices of adorning and (un)covering the body – is fundamentally meaning and political'.

Gorlick (2019) examines the power and control enforced over the bodies of women, specifically through the 2016 'Burkini Ban', in which dozens of towns across the French Rivera banned the burkini, a modest swimming costume worn by some muslin women, which consists of a tunic, trousers and a headscarf. This ban occurred in the wake of the Islamic terrorist attack in the city of Nice on the French National holiday, Bastille Day (14 July 2016), when a cargo truck rammed into pedestrians killing 86 people and injuring hundreds of others (Gorlick, 2019). All other Islamic women's garments were also banned, as some officials argued that, by publicly displaying a religious affiliation, it violated French laws of secularism (Gorlick, 2019). Women who didn't comply were fined or else made to disrobe by officers (Gorlick, 2019). There was an outcry by human rights activists who argued that swimmers who swam in full bodysuits and Catholic nuns who were fully covered in habits were never accused of going against French values, causing the ban to be subsequently repealed (Gorlick, 2019). 'The burkini bans', Gorlick (2019, p.118) explains:

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[126] Germaine Greer encouraged feminists to reject those female beauty norms that were imbued by a patriarchal society through making the political statement of 'going braless', the brassiere being, in her eyes, as a 'ludicrous invention' and an 'instrument of oppression' (Worsley, 2011; Reger, 2012; Marzel and Dahan-Kalev, 2015). Hillman (2015) stresses that the 'liberation' was not from the clothes themselves, but rather from the knowledge that it was not a restriction, but a choice. Hillman (2015) discusses how female activists of the 1970s and 80s rejected the notion that identity was tied to femininity as they cut their hair short and discarded their high heels, dresses and makeup, opting for a unisex style consisting of trousers and blue jeans (Adz and Stone, 2018; Worsely, 2011). Feminist clothing ties into androgyny, which was increasingly seen in the 1920s. They took the idea from gay liberation who broke the stereotyped differences between men and women by cross-dressing. Marzel and Dahan-Kalev (2015) points out that this change in clothing did not liberate women since other means of conforming the body to patriarchal ideals of feminine beauty were developed, such as a new focus on health and exercise.

'had redirected the fears surrounding terrorism onto women's clothes, as if the burkini themselves held the power to "disrupt", "provoke" or otherwise aggress the nation […] The burkini ban was in effect an attempt to process racism and fear of terrorism via the regulation of female bodies and fashions –a figurative attempt to fortify national borders (the national "silhouette")' – Gorlick, 2019, p.118[127]

In *Fashion and Politics,* Bartlett (2019) also discusses how femininity and clothing have been used in activism, becoming a symbol for social movements. She references an incident from a 2013 riot in Istanbul where a woman in a red dress was assaulted by Turkish police when walking past a demonstration (Bartlett, 2019). The attack was captured on camera and circulated globally, with the red dress becoming a visual symbol of injustice, societal dissent and the abuse of state power (Bartlett, 2019). Bartlett (2019) also describes a similar incident from 2011 involving another anonymous woman who was publicly beaten in Cairo by the Egyptian military who dragged her down the street, exposing her bright blue bra. A picture of the incident was disseminated via social media which caused subsequent demonstrations in Cairo protesting against police violence (Bartlett, 2019). The blue bra became an icon of dissent, being employed in murals, posters and graffiti (Bartlett, 2019).

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[127] This prejudice against Islamic dress was also experienced largely within Europe and North America after the 9-11 terrorist attacks.

SOLIDARLITY: VISUAL COHESION

> 'The advance of individualism has brought many benefits, but change and advance often imply loss as well and today the idea of solidarity is in need of strengthening. Throughout most of history, societies and groups within societies have dressed in ways that signify allegiances of many different kinds. Clothes provide an unrivalled way of expressing solidarity and collectivity." – Elizabeth Wilson quoted in *Utopian Bodies Fashion Exhibition Catalogue,* 2015

According to McClendon, it has always been in the interest of a social movement to dress collectively, as a sense of visual cohesion instils reliability within the group and reinforces group identity (The Museum at FIT, 2019). One recent example was the 'pink pussyhat' which was worn by millions of women and human rights supporters across more than 650 cities worldwide in opposition to the 2017 inauguration of US President Donald Trump (Schuiling and Winge, 2019; Kaiser, 2020). For many, the rise of Trump threatened racial and gender equality, triggering a need for solidarity worldwide (Smirnova, 2018; Kaiser, 2020).[128] After a video surfaced which recorded Trump inferring that grabbing women's genitalia is a privilege of being a famous man, Krista Suh and Jayna Zweiman, two friends and avid knitters from Los Angeles, decided to create a symbol of dissent that embodied human rights, empowering those who wore it to speak up against the prejudice he represented, namely misogyny, patriarchy, racism and nationalism (Suh, 2018; Kaiser, 2020).[129] In collaboration with LA artist Aurora Lady and Kat Coyle, the owner of their local yarn shop, The Little Knittery, they designed a 'pussy power hat' knit pattern that was both a simple, yet visually strong symbol (Press, 2018; Kaiser, 2020). The cat ear design was chosen to reclaim ownership over the derogatory term 'pussy', ascribed to the female genitalia, which was used by Trump (Schuiling and Winge, 2019, p.134). They also opted for the colour pink, which is consistently employed within craftivism as a means of disarming dominant and often hegemonic power structures, owing to its connotations in western societies as being associated with femininity (Schuiling and Winge, 2019).[130] To give women and minorities greater visibility, they

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[128] Trump also threatened to restrict immigration from six predominantly Muslim Nations (Kaiser 2020).

[129] The video was recorded by *Access Hollywood* host, on board a bus on the way to the set of the soap opera, *Days of Our Lives* (Kaiser, 2020, p.26). For Suh (2018, p.6), 'The fact is all women are in some sense, smothered by the patriarchy. Misogyny is like a haze; We cannot touch it or even see it, but it's obscuring our vision, often without realizing it'.

[130] Kaiser (2020) found that the use of humour and 'cuteness' made the activist message, for some, more palatable. Schuiling and Winge (2019) recognises that much craftivism takes shape as pink materials, which they call the Pink Craftivist Movement (PCM). They find crafters capitalise on the cultural association within 'western culture' (Europe and the Americas) that pink is stereotypically associated with the female sex (Schuiling and Winge, 2019). Kaiser (2020) explains that the colour pink, in Europe and the Americas, was initially associated with baby boys until the 1930s when it became linked to femininity. In Steele's (2018, p.9) *Pink: The History of a Punk, Pretty, Powerful Colour,* she explores the symbolic meaning of the colour pink, which she believes, 'carries many layers of meaning', signifying very different types of femininity 'from sweet and innocent to edgy and erotic'. She also considers its psychological link to flesh and fetish, which inspired much of Westwood's punk designs (Steele, 2018). Several bands incorporated pink into their stage ensembles and record sleeves. Westwood's fashion store *Sex* on King's Road in London was covered with pink vinyl fabric (Steele. 2018). Breast Cancer Awareness campaigns have also used pink, most notably by their pink ribbons, to visually show support for women affected cancer (Schuiling and Winge, 2019).

planned for the hats to be worn at the Women's March taking place on the occasion of Trump's inauguration, on 21 January 2017 in cities worldwide (Suh, 2018). To gain support and traction, they partnered with over two hundred organisations which supported those issues pertaining to women, minorities, immigrants, and the LGBTQ community (Schuiling and Winge, 2019). The 'Pussyhat Project' was propagated transnationally through social media, largely via its website, which contained a digital, printable pattern, accompanied by instructions, as well as a list of supported yarn shops which subsequently became sites of both production and distribution (see figure 13) (Lilja and Johansson, 2018). For Kaiser (2020), this simple pattern fostered the DIY social movement. The accessibility of the pattern also afforded those knitters who could not physically attend a march the opportunity to be 'materially' present by making and donating hats for other attendees (Kaiser, 2020).[131] Suh (2018, p.6) explained that knitting a pussyhat, 'was an action that was deeply political and also deeply personal', each connected to its own 'making' story (Suh, 2018, p.6).[132] Many makers recycled yarn from pink jumpers, stylising their own versions, while others embellished existing hats (see figure 14 and 15) (Kaiser, 2020). Kaiser (2020, p.32) describes that, 'It was striking at the marches to see so many hats with the same or similar forms, but in various shades of pink and with some unique variations created by the hands of the makers'.

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[131] As march participants posted pictures online, it gave those makers unable to attend a sense of being a part of something larger than the place they were making locally (Kaiser 2020).

[132] Through the slow process of creation, like knitting, the crafter is able to connect to the medium through its therapeutic and meditative qualities (Schuiling and T. Winge, 2019). Gschwandtner (2007) and Schuiling and Winge (2019) discuss knitting as a form of consciousness and physical knowledge of culture. Schuiling and Winge (2019) discuss the polarities of the pink pussyhat and Trump's 'Make America Great Again' (MAGA) red baseball-style cap as the conflict between the feminine and the masculine, the handmade versus the mass-produced, and the donated versus the profitable, which serves to demonstrate the political divisions arising within the US and much of the wider world.

Figure 13: Left: Photograph featuring Kat Coyle's (2016) 'Pussyhat' pattern, digital and printable format. Image credit: Anna Boonstra, Copyright: Kat Coyle; Right: Nancy Jo (2016) 'Pussyhat' knit, made for the Women's March in London, England. Image credit: Anna Boonstra.

Figure 14: Left: Vonnie Bluhm (2016-2017) 'Pussyhat', knit, made for the Women's March in Washington, D.C. USA, Image credit: Anna Boonstra; Right: Emma Zimmerman (2017) 'Pussyhat', appliqué, worn to 2017 Women's March, courtesy of Emma Zimmerman.

Figure 15: Colleen Marguerite (2016-2017) 'Pussyhat', appliqué, worn to 2017 Women's March, Image credit: Anna Boonstra.

The hats were spotted in great numbers at marches held simultaneously worldwide, thereby creating a 'sea of pink' sentiment causing the movement to make the covers of *Time* and *The New Yorker,* ultimately becoming a potent symbol of the marches and, ultimately, of resistance culture (Suh, 2018; Schuiling and Winge, 2019). Many newscasters, writers, and political commentators noted that it was a successful symbol (Suh, 2018, p.2). Jean Railla, writer and founder of the webzine GetCrafty.com, was quoted in the *New Yorker* saying that the pussyhat is a "perfect symbol… it's both wholesome and sexual, handmade yet shared through social media, brash enough for the meme era, but also somehow incredibly sweet" (quoted in Suh, 2018, p.2). Despite all the positive reviews, Suh (2018) recalls the early criticism surrounding the hats, as they were called 'corny', 'girly' and 'a waste of time'. The pussyhat movement was also criticised by groups who felt excluded, particularly women of colour and the LGBTQ community, who labelled the hat as "exclusionary, inappropriate, white-centred, and transphobic" (Gordon quoted in Lilja and Johansson, 2018). Derr (2017) discusses intersectionality in craftivism, specifically examining the 2017 Women's March and Pussyhat Project, which she found to have discounted transgender individuals.[133] She claims that the campaign engaged in a 'form of gender essentialism, which asserts that the gendered characteristics of femininity are directly linked to the biological characteristics of femaleness and, specifically, the presence of a vagina' (Derr, 2017). Suh (2018) maintains that the hat was designed to defend values of inclusivity, equality and kindness in the hope of conveying to oppressors and abusers worldwide that women and minorities have had enough (Housefield, 2019).[134] For Housefield (2019, p.229), the conflicting responses to The Pussyhat Project 'makes it clear the hat is not a universal symbol; its political messages can be interpreted variously'. She continues to explain:

> 'However, the crafted hats are unequivocally powerful vehicles for igniting conversations about the roles of craft and design in society, and the pathways to great equity and gender equality in redesigning society itself'. – Housefield, 2019, p.229

Subcultures and social movements have long before utilised hats and head coverings as a means of creating visibility and engendering group solidarity. For instance, the red Phrygian or 'liberty' cap was worn by working Parisians during the French Revolution (largely in the 1790s) to support a new regime, serving as an emblem of class struggle and the pursuit of freedom (see figure 16 Left) (Harris, 1981; Wrigley, 2002; Wagman-Geller, 2018).[135] Working-class women known as '*les tricoteuses*'

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[133] Intersectionality is a concept derived from the last 1980s that discusses 'layers of oppression', such as gender, race and class. The idea took off during third-wave feminism (Evans, 2015).

[134] This was not the first-time that female genitalia was the subject of craftivism. In March 2012, crocheted uteruses were sent in the mail to members of congress by a women's rights activist group to discourage them from passing laws and regulations impacting women's bodies (Schuiling and Winge, 2019).

[135] The cap, also called the '*bonnet rouge*' is a brimless, felt conical cap adorned with a tricolour cockade (Wrigley, 2002).

sat by the guillotine during hangings turning thread into red liberty caps (Wagman-Geller, 2018). The caps originated in late Republican Rome and were symbolic of freedom as they were worn by non-slaves and given to slaves upon manumission (Harris, 1981). Similarly, Kinney (2016b) and Shinko (2017) discuss the white conical hoods worn by members of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) to create solidarity and impart anonymity, symbolising their desire for white supremacy, racial purity and segregation

 (see figure 16 Centre).[136] The robe ensembles were largely worn amongst white men in the post-war south of America, who collectively contested integration, making their 'Invisible Empire' recognisable (Kinney, 2016; Shinko, 2019). Kinney (2016a) traced the history of the hood, which began as a neutral and classless accessory worn in medieval Europe and later morphed into a garment of violence used by the KKK and criminals of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.[137] Another well-known example is the infamous black beret adopted by the Black Panther party in the late 1960s for its symbolism of pride and proud as it was previously worn by long line of revolutionaries and militaristic persons (see figure 16 Right) (Ford, 2015).

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[136] Originally, they didn't need to wear hoods, because they were not held accountable for their violent actions (Kinney, 2016b). The robes gained popularity after the 1915 film *The Clansman as Birth of a Nation,* which sold promotional regalia (a white one-piece robe with hood with eye holes) in a local shop and via mail order catalogue for $6.50 US (Kinney, 2016b). The Vermont Historical Society has a women's hood which is made of a softer muslin than men's hoods. According to Shinko (2017, p.15), this distinctive attire became emblematic of the terror and fear it created, particularly within black communities, becoming 'deadly when the bodies that it enfashioned enacted their own forms of punishment and those it hunted down and executed'.

[137] Despite now being a popular, everyday item of clothing worn by all, hooded individuals often become victims themselves as they were thought to be connected to crime (Kinney, 2016a).
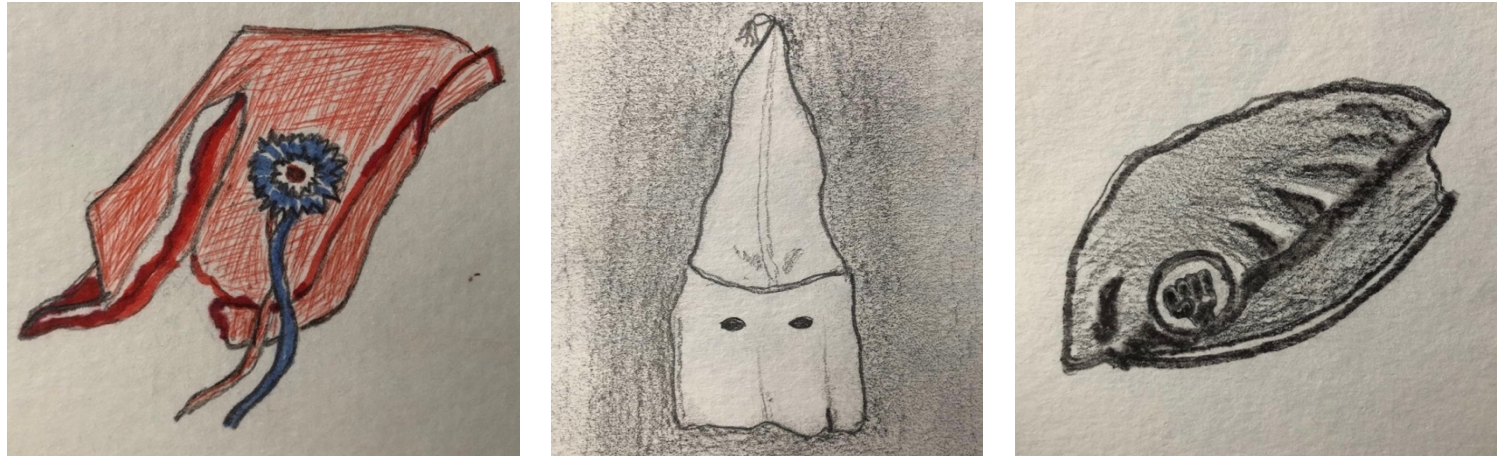
Figure 16: Brenda Twedt (2019) Left: 'Liberty Hat'; Centre: 'Ku Klux Klan Hood'; Right: 'Black Panther Hat'; Pencil hand drawings. Courtesy of Artist Brenda Twedt.

Although Black Power activists were among the first to politicise dress in the 1960s and 70s, this area of research had been largely underexplored until the last few decades. In *Dressing for Cultural Wars: Style and the Politics of Self-Presentation in the 1960s and 70s*, Hillman (2015) discusses activist self-fashioning styles by various groups during the Cold War, particularly examining the distinctive visual styles worn by black activists involved in the Black Power Movement (1960s-70s) in Great Britain, South Africa and the United States, which symbolised equality, self-sufficiency and racial pride. Ford's (2015) research was centred on the significance of protest clothing as worn specifically by female Black Power activists, who utilised a strategy of visibility by wearing clothing embodying visual markers of 'soul style' to redefine their identities against societal stereotypes.[138] 'Soul Style' embraced African heritage through clothing constructed from native prints and fabrics and traditional hairstyles, such as the 'Afro' and cornrows (Ford, 2015; Hillman, 2015). Hillman (2015) acknowledges that, although their style was built on visibility and solidarity, it also made them readily identifiable for harassment. The 1970s was a time in which black women were becoming increasingly visible and active, using their beauty and clothing to write new 'body narratives' and project a newfound sense of sexual freedom, gender nonconformity, and upward social mobility (Bryan,

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[138] Black British women who were situated between major cultural hubs (United States and South Africa) drawing inspiration from both (Ford, 2015).

Dadzie and Scafe, 2018 [1985]; Ford, 2015, p. 7). Ford (2015, p.143) described how 'women in leadership of the panthers realized that, for black youth, the main battle was on for 'dignity and identity' in which their clothing was critical'. Despite schools opposing and repressing black consciousness, mothers involved in the Black Panther Organisation handcrafted T-shirts and tote bags with Black power patches for their children to wear and carry (Ford, 2015; Bryan, Dadzie and Scafe, 2018 [1985]). In *Roots to Reckoning,* photographer Neil Kenlock portrays a snapshot of young black girls carrying these DIY consciousness-raising tote bags to school in London (see figure 17) (Francis et al, 2005).[139]

Figure 17: Neil Kentlock (1970) photograph, school girls with handcrafted 'Black Power' totes, Photograph in The Museum of London display, London, England, Image credit: Anna Boonstra. Copyright: Neil Kentlock.

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[139] McClendon explores contemporary examples of fashion designers who have used black symbols of oppression and subverted them as a form of power (The Museum at FIT, 2019). She discusses US Kelly, who used his label to engage with aspects of African-American identity, particularly incorporating the African fabric kente into his designs (The Museum at FIT, 2019). In his own personal style, he wears denim dungarees, similar to those which black sharecroppers of the US South wore, reclaiming this symbol of subservience into a power statement (The Museum at FIT, 2019). She also highlights the work of the work of Pyer Moss, particularly his Spring 2016 Menswear Collection during New York Fashion Week, which featured police brutality, referencing the Black Lives Matter movement through use of video, street art, and fashion (The Museum at FIT, 2019).

McClendon discusses the importance of colour in activism, which she finds establishes group identity and visibility in an impactful way that communicates deeper meanings, eliciting an emotional response from its viewers (The Museum at FIT, 2019).[140] Cottle and Lester (2011) describe the role of colour and clothing in the anti-world bank/ IMF (International Monetary Fund) protest in Prague, where nearly 50,000 people took to the streets to protest corporate globalisation via the World Trade Organization. Activist organisers split participants into three groups, nominally the 'black bloc' (militant action); the 'yellow bloc' (intermediate level of conflict); and the 'pink bloc' (non-violence) to swarm the building and blockade its main road access (Cottle and Lester, 2011). The black bloc wore jackets, hooded sweatshirts and handkerchiefs as face coverings, and were all dressed in black. The hood and handkerchiefs concealed their identities, while their garments were padded for protection in case they were attacked by police (Cottle and Lester, 2011). Behind a UK-led samba band, the pink bloc dressed in pink skirts, tights and leotards, used music, dance, 'gender-bending' and playful provocation to symbolically usurp power in a carnival spirit (Cottle and Lester, 2011). Their non-violent performance illustrated their vulnerability to armed police, creating a peaceful tone to their resistance, which made them the most successful amongst the various blocs in overcoming the police and reaching the building (Kolářová, 2004; Cottle and Lester, 2011).

The colour black has largely been used by subculture groups and social movements to express identity and render their position visible. Ford (2015) discusses the colour cohesion in the uniform of the Black Panther party which comprised a leather jacket, trousers and a beret, all black, thereby creating an urban militant look to showcase power and pride. Sklar and Michel (2012) also explored the symbolism and cultural associations of the colour black, particularly its use as a base colour in the wardrobes of punks, relaying a sense of rebellion, defiance, intimidation and independence.[141] They explained that dressing in darker colours which appear distressed or dirty can evoke perceptions of anti-sociality and nonconformity, an ethos which punks embraced (Sklar and Michel, 2012). Several other protest movements also embodied the colour black, most recently demonstrated by the black gowns worn by Hollywood at the Golden Globes to raise awareness for the Time's Up campaign, which was, in essence, a protest against sexual misconduct in the workplace (Friedman, 2019). Similarly, black was adopted as the unofficial

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[140] McClendon also references the suffragettes of the late 19th/ early 20th century who formed a collective identity by coordinating outfits in white (symbolising purity and femininity), green (hope), and purple (dignity), giving the movement greater visibility (The Museum at FIT, 2019).

[141] Historically, black dress is associated with death and mourning in certain societies (Calefato, p.2004). Many of the societal associations of black are negative, such as blacklist, black sheep, etc. (Sklar and Michel, 2012).

uniform by pro-democracy protesters in Hong Kong who took a stand against the Beijing government who had exerted forceful control over the city in 2019 (Friedman, 2019).[142]

FASHION: COMMODITY VS. RESISTANCE

As a globally dispersed, highly visual and emotionally charged practice, Bartlett (2019), author of *Fashion and Politics*, recognises the potential of fashion as a platform for social and cultural conversations (Bartlett, 2019). She believes that fashion can potentially serve as a bridge between politics and economics, challenging conflicts at a time when politics are largely mistrusted and causing increasing social divides (Bartlett, 2019).[143] Although clothing as a form of protest generally develops within social movements as a tool of individual agency and group identity, it is increasingly appearing on the catwalk as designers are using the runway as a site for protest (The Museum at FIT, 2019, 7:20). For example, a month after the 2017 Women's March, designer Angela Missoni had models wear pussyhats in her runway show at Milan Fashion Week (Bartlett, 2019). Being a long-term supporter of women's rights, Missoni knew that the act of replicating the hats would be a gesture of solidarity with the millions of women who had marched a month earlier (Bartlett, 2019). At the end of the show, she announced: "I feel the need to recognize that in a time of uncertainty there is a bond that can keep us strong and safe, that unites those that respect all human rights. Let's show the world that the fashion world is united and fearless" (Missoni quoted in Bartlett, 2019, p.25). Since the hats were never produced commercially, Missoni never benefited from them financially (Bartlett, 2019).

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[142] Other examples of colour used for visibility and solidarity in protest includes the red *Handmaid's Tale* robes used in protests for reproductive rights (2017 – ongoing, UK, Ireland, US and Argentina); Democratic congresswomen wore white to the 2018 State of the Union address in Washington; the yellow vests, 'gilets jaunes' worn by the French populist, grassroots protest movement for economic justice, one that was initially motivated by rising fuel prices and the high cost of living, claiming the disproportionate burden imposed by the government (Friedman, 2019).

[143] Jenss and Hofmann (2019, p.5) acknowledge the difficulty in defining fashion, but they contemplate its description 'as an object and image-producing industry and as a symbolic force intimately bound up with embodied experience'. They think of fashion as a noun (fashion as an industry) and as a verb (of the material embodiment of capitalism) (Jenss and Hofmann, 2019). Attfield (2000) and Buckley and Clark (2017) find that the definition of fashion needs to be redefined to consider a wider range of practices and ideologies. For Ribeiro and Blackman (2015, p.247), 'fashion is a word that encompasses many meanings and is frequently used negatively to connotate superficiality'. Mendes and de la Haye (1999, p.7) remind us that fashion is popular due to its 'democratic accessibility: [as] everyone participates in the process of dressing and adornment'.

McClendon explains that the fashion industry started to transform resistance garments in the 1960s, turning hippie clothing, which was originally homemade in opposition to consumerist lifestyle, into luxury products (The Museum at FIT, 2019, 6:20). She explains that true resistance clothing is considered authentic, whereas fashion is often dismissed as a surface-level, empty commodification, essentially compromising its subversive and political potential (The Museum at FIT, 2019, 6:20).[144] Bartlett (2019) and Repro (2020) recognise that certain fashion brands show support superficially, thereby frequently profiting from societal injustices. Repro (2020) specifically discusses 'feminist commodity activism' demonstration by mass-market feminist T-shirts sold in the last few decades. A recent example is Dior's 2017 'WE SHOULD ALL BE FEMINISTS' T-shirt, taken from the title of an essay by Nigerian writer, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, which became closely linked with the 2017 Women's March (see figure 18).[145]. However, while the T-shirt retailed at nearly £612 ($800 US), making it unavailable to the masses, it was endorsed by many celebrities who were pictured wearing it and this was circulated globally (Bartlett, 2019). Dior's creative director, Maria Grazia Chiuri was accused of capitalising on the movement. She however argued that 'It's not a contradiction to be politically serious and [to] take pleasure in fashion […] Fashion can be about rebellion. It's always a conversation, always about curiosity, dynamism, and I need to understand my interlocutors' (quoted in Bartlett, 2019, p.26).[146] Similarly, in 2003, the US Feminist Majority Foundation created the 'THIS IS WHAT A FEMINIST LOOKS LIKE' slogan T-shirt, which became their best-selling item between 2005 and 2006, being sold online and in bulk orders, largely to university campuses (Zeisler, 2016). The goal of the T-shirt, Zeisler (2016) explains, was to rid feminists of negative adjectives and associations such as those predominately created during the 1970s and 80s, including 'unattractive', 'hairy', 'bitter' and 'dykes' (Zeisler, 2016).[147] The T-shirts were marketed to a younger audience of women, as many of the shirts came in a tight-fitting style which was subsequently criticised as being 'pointless', as they reinforced the very same beauty standards that second-wave feminists had wanted to banish (Zeisler, 2016). Britain's Fawcett Society created a similar slogan T-shirt in 2005 to promote their organisation and bring attention to the evolution of feminism (see figure 19 Left). In 2014, the Fawcett Society in partnership with *Elle* and the high street clothing store Whistles, sold a version of the T-shirt for £45. The slogan was no longer in bold block letters, but had evolved into an artsy, handwritten style of font, which they thought would be less confrontational and more aesthetically attractive (see figure 19 Right) (Zeisler, 2016). It was

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[144] In *Fashion and Materialism*, Ulrich Lehmann (2018, p.1) explains that fashion is largely understood as 'a system that promotes the constant renewal of commodities and secondly, more specifically, as an industry that produces textiles and garments', while materialism is 'understood further as a socio-economic philosophy that concerned with social conditions of production, particularly the relationship between labour and capital'.

[145] Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's 2012 talk 'We Should All Be Feminists' started a conversation about feminism worldwide, which was published in 2014.

[146] Chiuri, Dior's first female creative director, designed the T-shirt, conveying that the company was now designing for women, by women (Bartlett, 2019). In Spring 2018, Dior produced another T-shirt with a famous title, 'Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?' referencing an essay by art historian Linda Nochlin (Okwodu, 2017).

[147] The media labelled 1970s feminists as 'man-haters', 'ugly', 'butch' and 'unwomanly', which ultimately turned feminism into a dirty word (Worsley, 2011; Mendes, 2015).

advertised in the September 2014 issue of *Elle*, stating, "we have teamed up with the forward-thinking team at Whistles to reinvent the iconic tee for the modern feminist" (quoted in Zeisler, 2016, p.67-8). Several influential men (e.g. Politicians Ed Miliband and Nick Clegg) wore the T-shirt, in an effort to 'normalise' feminism and raise money for the charity (Katebi, 2014). In Meltzer's eyes (2015), people were effectively recontextualising the T-shirt, as it was worn by men, the LGBTQ community and children (Meltzer, 2015). Despite the Fawcett Society insisting that the T-shirts were fabricated to ethical standards, allegations were made regarding the factory conditions in which the T-shirts were made, given that garment workers are often marginalised women working in exploitative sweat-shops (Katebi, 2014; Zeisler, 2016).[148]

Similarly, the iconic 1970s 'THE FUTURE IS FEMALE' slogan T-shirt has been replicated and re-purposed multiple times by commercial brands. The T-shirt was first designed in 1975 to raise funds for *Labyris Books*, the first feminist bookstore in New York City (Meltzer, 2015). Photographer Liza Cowan took a picture of her then-girlfriend, Alix Dobkin, wearing it at the time (see figure 20 Left). While the T-shirt has been widely reproduced commercially in the past few decades, particularly with the rise of the third and fourth-wave feminism, many craftivists have stylised their own versions using DIY creativity, which were recently spotted at the 2017 Women's March (see figure 20 Right).

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[148] Rachel Berks, owner a graphic design studio in Los Angeles, also made the 'THIS IS WHAT A FEMINIST LOOKS LIKE' T-shirts in 2015, donating a portion of the proceeds from the sales to Planned Parenthood. Similarly, Bob Bland, a fashion designer in Brooklyn, New York, also sold 'NASTY WOMAN VOTE' T-shirts online in response to Trump calling Hillary Clinton a 'nasty woman' during a debate in October 2016, which raised $20,000 for Planned Parenthood (Press, 2018; Wagman-Geller, 2018).

Figure 18: Dior (2017) 'WE SHOULD ALL BE FEMINISTS' slogan T-shirt, Design by Maria Grazia Chiuri, screen-printed on cotton, property of the Civic Collection, the Fashion and Textile Museum, London, England, Image credit: Anna Boonstra.
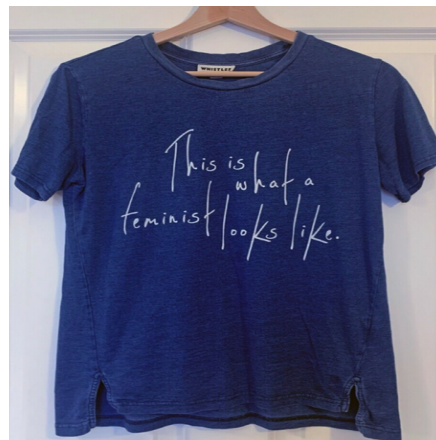
Figure 19: Left: Fawcett Society (2005) 'This is what a feminist looks like' slogan T-shirt front and back, Cotton screen-printed, The Women's Library at London School of Economics, London, England, Image credit: Anna Boonstra; Right: The Fawcett Society and Whistles (2014) 'This is what a feminist looks like' slogan T-shirt, Cotton screen-printed, Image credit: Anna Boonstra.

Figure 20: Left: Liza Cowan (1975) photograph of Alix Dobkin wearing 'THE FUTURE IS FEMALE' slogan T-shirt, cotton screen-printed, photo taken for the slide show, "*What The Well Dressed Dyke Will Wear.*" Preston Hollow, New York, Copyright: Liza Cowan; Right: Sadie McLean (2017) 'THE FUTURE IS FEMALE' DIY slogan T-shirt, Fabric pen on cotton, Image credit: Anna Boonstra.

CHAPTER THREE: Theory and Research Methodology

3.1   THEORISING CRAFTIVISM

As outlined in the literature review, the formal academic study of craftivism is relatively new, having only being established as recently as 2003. This is reflected in the relatively small body of texts that have been dedicated to craft and activism or, more explicitly, to the practice of craftivism itself. These sources have though captured its genesis and ongoing development as makers continuously devise new techniques and approaches. Although most of this extant literature undercovers many important themes related to craftivism, it serves more as a celebration of craft history than as a theoretical analysis. Many of these texts either have unclear theoretical approaches or disregard a theoretical framework altogether (e.g., Chansky, 2010; Yair, 2011; Groeneveld, 2010; Corbett and Housley, 2011; Greer, 2011) (Fry, 2014). Sociologist Trent Newmeyer's (2008) article, 'Knit One, Stitch Two, Protest Three! Examining the Historical and Contemporary Politics of Crafting' discusses the difficulties inherent in creating a comprehensive theoretical framework for craftivism, challenges which he attributes to the inability to conceptualise it as a singular, cohesive movement. As mentioned earlier, craftivism has a multitude of uses, meanings and goals, making it demanding even to define. It can also be studied from various viewpoints, including the sociological, political, historiographical, economic, and gender-oriented, adding further layers of complexity to the application of theories (Fry, 2014). Newmeyer (2008) suggests that an interdisciplinary approach is needed to construct a more comprehensive theoretical framework.

Although the study of craftivism is relatively new, the study of craft itself has long been the subject of theoretical analysis, at least as far back as the seminal work of the nineteenth-century designer William Morris and his predecessor John Ruskin, both of whom advocated the socio-political importance of handcraft in opposing industrialised production (Minahan and Cox, 2007; Burcikova, 2011). They applied the theories of German philosopher Karl Marx (1888 [1848]; 1887 [1867]) and in particular his theory of conflict, one which addressed the perpetual labour-power struggle between classes. His theories are still of relevance today and form the foundations of craft theory. His concepts are pertinent to this study in terms of the hierarchy of power but focus only on the political and do not address society's creative acts to challenge this power structure. In the 1980s and 90s, Peter Fuller and Peter Dormer dominated critical discourse on craft in England, despite many theorists and practitioners disputing their work (Jefferies, 2011). They both draw on Ruskin and Morris's concepts to support the notion that craft's primary role is to

safeguard traditional skills and the conservative values they represent. More recently, Howard Risatti (2007), author of *A Theory of Craft, Function and Aesthetic Expression,* compares craft to art and design, focusing on how craft operates, not just functionally, but also through its aesthetic qualities to communicate ideas, values, experiences, emotions and self-expression. Among the prevailing craft theories, his aesthetic and visual communication ideas are perhaps the most relevant to this study's focus.

To construct a unique theoretical approach to craftivism, this research drew on theories from external disciplines with the hope of bringing new perspectives to this area of study. The fields of visual art and communication were instrumental in studying as they have adapted diverse theories and concepts to understand how thoughts and emotions transmit through art. Graphic design, advertising, and marketing were particularly useful because they discuss communicate strategies used to promote a product, service, or idea to a specific audience (Crow, 2016). Through this extensive review, this study discovered that the theories most applicable to craftivism stem from linguistics (Langer and Derrida) and material culture studies (Gell and de Certeau). When these theories and concepts were combined, this study found that they helped to explain the verbal-visual divide, mainly how art is used tactically to communicate beyond language and culture. This theoretical approach was thus crucial in determining the communicative capacities of craftivism and understanding its makers' role.

Langer's theory of linguistics is particularly relevant to this study, as she suggests that some thoughts and emotions cannot be presented through language but are externalised through the aesthetics of art. This idea aids in understanding how craftivism largely communicates through its material elements. Derrida's theory of the supplement, which considers language to be either an extension of, or an actual substitute for speech, is also drawn upon as it shows how craftivism can serve as a surrogate for the maker's voice and often provide a physical presence. Material cultural theories are also vital, specifically Gell's theories of material agency, as they consider how objects are imparted power through the creative process by their makers. His notion that material objects embody complex intentionalities and mediate social agency is critical in understanding how craftivism is afforded the power to incite social change. Finally, the theories of de Certeau (1984 [1980]) are also useful, particularly in relation to the concept of *'la perruque',* which addresses the everyday, micro tactics of creativity that are used to subvert dominant power structures.

COMMUNICATION THEORIES: LANGER AND DERRIDA

American philosopher Susanne Langer (1942, 1953, 1957) has written extensively on linguistic analysis and aesthetics, particularly concerning language's relation to the art object. Her theory of linguistics is highly applicable to this study, as she suggests that there is a dualistic relationship arising between language and the art object itself. She believes that some thoughts cannot be presented through language but must instead take physical form through the aesthetics of art. This idea aids in understanding how craftivism largely communicates through its material elements. Langer's work expands on Ludwig Wittgenstein's (1922 [1921]) theory of language which investigated the correspondence between thought and word.[149] She believes that a dualistic interrelationship arises between language and art, specifically between thinking and writing and thinking and artistic creativity (Hagberg, (1998 [1995]). Just as Wittgenstein proposed that language serves as a vehicle for thought, Langer considers materials to be vehicles for art (Hagberg, (1998 [1995]). She recognises that the art object bears a resemblance to the inner feelings shared through writing, yet perceives the meaning of art to lie just beyond language, a domain in which those feelings and ideas that cannot be expressed through words alone are painted, built, sculpted, or even sewn into the realm of visual expression (Hagberg, 1998 [1995]). For Langer, emotions are translated into an objects' aesthetics, thereby symbolising the 'unsayable' (Hagberg, 1998 [1995], p.31). Similarly, English philosopher and historian R.G. Collingwood (1958 [1938]) also believed that the imaginative and expressive elements of art sit parallel to language, both being forms of representation of thought and a place in which the free expression of political opinions can take shape.

This conjecture resonates with Derrida's (1976 [1967]) seminal work outlined in *Of Grammatology,* which discusses the concept of the 'supplément' in describing an addition from the outside to complete something that is otherwise missing or to serve as a substitute, or even as a replacement for its original form (Bernasconi, 2015). He uses the example of language, particularly the idea of writing, as an addition (or surrogate) to speech. He deconstructs the work of fellow structuralist Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1992 [1755], 1998 [1781]) who believed that speech is the primary form of language for humans and that writing is a representation of verbal expression. Although Rousseau prioritises speech, he believes that through writing it is possible to discover one's intimate thoughts and feelings, emotions which are otherwise not consciously known (Derrida, 1976 [1967]). Writing thus serves as a supplement, representing those internal, unspoken thoughts, emotions and beliefs that cannot

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[149] Wittgenstein relates objects to the external world, while Langer sees meaning in art relating to the internal world (Hagberg, 1998 [1995]). She perceives both words and artworks as markers of ideas and signs that carry emotional significance (Hagberg, 1998 [1995]).

otherwise be expressed otherwise through verbal communication (Derrida, 1976 [1967]). For Rousseau, writing is a 'dangerous' supplement that one can hide behind or use to disguise the self, embellishing the truth or subverting meaning by writing rather than speaking (Derrida, 1976 [1967]). Drawing upon this theory in the study of dress, Barnard (2014) considers clothing as a 'supplement' (or prosthesis) of the self that makes experiences possible. He explains that the body is 'dressed' in the values of its culture, and thus it is a '(cultural) "addition" [that] makes the (natural) thing possible in the first place' (Barnard, 2014, p.115). For Barnard (2014), the body is only made available through representation, appearing as an image that stands for something else.[150]

This thesis uses the notion of the 'supplement' to analyse how craftivism, as an alternative form of protest, serves as a substitute or surrogate, not only for the maker's voice but also for their physical presence, communicating what they may not be able to say verbally or represent through their physical being. In her article, 'Sick Woman Theory', Johanna Hedva (2016) is troubled by political theorist Hannah Arendt's (1998) writing on political action, specifically her notion that it must be conducted physically within the public space, a contention that remains a dominant societal perspective several decades later. Hedva (2016) believes that this assumption does not take into account those acts of personal, private or reflective activism which are performed by those who cannot otherwise participate physically on the streets, including the ill, frail and oppressed. She further explains that most political protest is 'internalized, lived, embodied, suffering, and no doubt invisible' (Hedva, 2016). With the help of the Internet, craftivism has made activism more accessible, providing those who are unable to physically participate with the opportunity to contribute indirectly through donating, loaning, or selling material forms of protest to those activists without crafting skills. The crafted object then becomes an embodied supplement for their inability to participate directly.

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[150] For Barnard (2014), differences in cultural values generate the differences in intention and meaning. He cites Derrida (1981 [1972], p.30), who said, "all experience is the experience of meaning and all meaning is the differed and deferred product of representation" (quoted in Barnard, 2014, p.217).

MATERIAL CULTURE THEORIES: GELL AND DE CERTEAU

Alfred Gell's concept of human-object agency is especially applicable to craftivism because it demonstrates the relational interaction arising between objects and people, specifically the power invested in objects by their makers. Gell's theory is based on the malleability of objects to act as social agents, producing effects that were intentionally instilled by their creators (Hoskins, 2006). This thesis defines agency as the power to do or to act, often on behalf of another, such as an object acting on behalf of its creator (Dant, 2005, p.60-61). In *Art and Agency* (1998), Gell argues that objects are made as a form of instrumental action to influence others' thoughts and behaviours (Hoskins, 2006). The author draws on Charles Peirce's (1955) theory of semiotics to characterise how the art object itself functions as an *index* of its maker or user. The index is a referent of the sign, just as smoke serves as an index of fire (Dant, 2005). Gell (1998, p.13) believes that the index can infer the intentions or capabilities of a person, such as the agency of the person who lit the fire. The agency of the art object then points back to its human origins while remaining remote from them (Dant, 2005). For Hoskins (2006) and Hodder (2007 [2004]), humans are intentional in their creation of objects, imbuing them with an agency to fulfil a certain purpose. Hodder (2007 [2004]) references English sociologist Anthony Giddens (1979) who asserted that subordinate groups purposively use material culture to counteract dominant forms of discourse in the hope of influencing societal opinion (Hodder, 2007 [2004], p.32). French psychoanalyst Serge Tisseron (1999) deemed objects to be agents of both the self and society, carrying emotions, memories, signs, social relationships (Dant, 2005). [151] He also believed that material objects act as a conduit that extends the body's agency into the world, while also providing a channel back into the person. The object thus serves as an agent, externalising and materialising the maker's thoughts and ideas. Both Tisseron and Gell's theories acknowledge that the material object may impact people in different ways, depending on the viewer's identity in terms of gender, age, social status, ethnicity and so forth (Dant, 2005).

The environmental behaviour theories of Michel de Certeau (1984 [1980]) are also relevant to this study as he explored the practice of subversion in everyday activities and labour, particularly analysing the small tactics of make-shift creativity used to subvert systems of power. In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, he used the phrase *'la perruque'* (wig) to refer to the practice of subtly rebelling. He gives the example of an office worker who executes personal priorities on work time, disguising his or her actions from the employer. He formulates this concept, drawing on Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (1991 [1975]), which discusses how power relations

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[151] Tisseron builds on the ideas of Bourdieu (1977) who believed that the creation of art is dependent upon the world in which it exists and therefore cannot exist independently of the artist or author.

affected punishment within the nineteenth-century penal system, one which borrowed disciplinary techniques from education, medical and military institutions. His theory states that, where there is power, there is also resistance, and, therefore, power relations can be reconfigured in such a way as to potentially redress oppressive institutions and practices (Foucault, 1991, [1975]). de Certeau also considered the study of linguistics and rhetoric, particularly the 'art of speaking', which reappropriates and subverts language by its speakers, including the power to persuade, seduce or manipulate through words, which he thought could also be applied to non-linguistic actions, for instance resisting through the reappropriation of cultural materials (de Certeau, 1984 [1980], p.78). This is achieved by manipulating objects, spaces and technologies to create new functions and possibilities beyond their originally intended use (de Certeau, 1984 [1980]). He was also interested in the spatial strategies used to subvert the public domain in order to surprise society. The concept of la perruque is pertinent to this study as it helps to explain how craftivists convert the tedious act of crafting into a catalyst for political conversation (Newmeyer, 2008). Like la perruque, craftivists use creative and unexpected tactics in everyday life, such as public knitting and yarnbombing, to reconfigure and destabilise city spaces, imparting a sense of agency and voice where they otherwise have none. These acts thus serve as an alternative voice for the oppressed.[152]

When combining the theories of linguistics (Langer and Derrida) and material cultural studies (Gell and de Certeau) into a single unifying theory, this study can then conceptualise craftivism as a social agent, representing the thoughts and beliefs of the maker through its materiality and aesthetics. This theoretical structure also aids in understanding how craftivism is constructed to communicate, evolving from an idea into an object and a wavefront of social change. These theories highlight the investment of intentionality by the makers into objects at the points of design, production and, circulation, preparing them to fulfil their purpose as a medium for the communication of socio-political ideas.

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[152] Hackney (2013, p. 172) finds that de Certeau's notion of 'la perruque' as tactical or strategical, allowing people to turn powerless situations to their advantage.

3.2 MULTI-METHOD METHODOLOGY

CASE STUDIES

This chapter sets out the methodological framework employed for this qualitative study, establishing the chosen research approach to data collection and analysis. The research is centred on four case studies that demonstrate the utilisation of clothing and textile art for resistance, protest and liberation by women since 1970. These include The Women's Liberation Movement (1970 — 1990); Punk Anti-Fashion (1974 — 1984); the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp (1981 — 1991); and contemporary craftivism in the form of The Women's Movement (2008—2018). Each case study comprises smaller cases which serve to highlight the events, stories and experiences of these convergent individuals and groups (Mason, 2018; Yin, 1989). The case studies themselves are deliberately disparate, each hand-picked to represent a different group of women who have utilised handcraft to engage with pressing social and political issues. This multi-case study integrates diverse contexts, allowing for a wider exploration of research questions and their theoretical evolution (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). The unique timeframe selected for each case study reflects important dates, including a specific movement's origin or zenith. The clothing and textile objects, study as created within these specific timeframes, are also examined in the context of each case study. For consistency, a 10-year interval has been chosen for each case study, except in the instance of The Women's Liberation Movement, which spans two decades, owing to its longevity and associations with the other three subsequent case studies.

Punk Anti-Fashion is examined from the mid-1970s when it emerged in England and coincided with McLaren and Westwood's rebranding of their store as 'Sex' in 1974, becoming as it did the focal epicentre of punk fashion (Mendes and de la Haye, 1999). The study traces the punk movement through its heightened popularity at the end of the 1970s through to its denouement in the early 1980s. The period of study dedicated to the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp commences in 1981 with the establishment of the camp. Although it remained in existence until 2001, it was at the peak of its notoriety during the 1980s before its popularity began to wane during the 1990s, as reflected in the selected timeframe for examination. The chosen timeframe for contemporary craftivism in the guise of The Women's Movement spans from 2008 to 2018 for two reasons, the first being the observation that the women's movement gained in interest and momentum during this period as demonstrated by the frequency of protests, marches and revived campaigns. Second, craftivism had become more deeply embedded by 2008 and was, by this juncture, widely utilised in support of women's activism.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design was modelled on a multi-method methodology to examine craftivism in its entirety, from practice to product. Qualitative findings were gathered in four stages using the following methods of primary data collection: archival research, object analysis, semiotic visual analysis, focus group research, pilot study survey and semi-structured interviews (see figure 21). This strategic combination of different methods and sources was best suited to investigate the multi-dimensions of craftivism. All methods were selected based on their feasibility and ability to contribute to the study's principal aims and objectives. One method's weakness was compensated by the strength of the others, thereby providing primary data to compare and confirm findings (Patton, 2002). This chapter is structured chronologically from the initial research stage through data collection and analysis.

Initial Research

- Form research questions to investigate existing gaps in knowledge
- Create a research design to address these questions
- Case study selection

Data Collection

- Literature rand archival research
- Object and visual analysis
- Focus group observation and pilot survey
- Semi-structured interviews

Data Analysis

- Organise data insights
- Process data into findings
- Analyse and compare all data obtained collectively

Theoretical Development

- Review emerging concepts
- Justify original contribution

Stage I

- Historical and contemporary literature review
- Archival research

Stage II

- Object analysis of clothing and textiles
- Visual analysis of photographs

Stage III

- Focus Group Observation and Participation
- Pilot study survey given to focus group participants

Stage IV

- Semi-structured interviews with historians, academics and journalists
- Semi-structured interviews with makers

Figure 21: Research Stage Graph (2017) Image Credit: Anna Boonstra.

Stage I   A literature and contextual review was conducted as outlined in chapter two. This was performed in conjunction with archival research that involved searching for and extracting original information from documents, records, newspapers, pamphlets, photos and other sources relating to those activities, groups and individuals identified as being involved in the defined case studies. Several visits were made to formal institutions housing archival materials across Britain.[153] Information was also obtained from personal archives housed in London, Brighton and Surrey. The information obtained both guided and justified this project's research strategy, particularly in relation to informing subsequent research stages as they provided information on makers, objects and associated events.

Stage II   This stage involved the visual analysis of various objects, wherein clothing and textile objects were thoroughly examined to generate information regarding their history, design, method of fabrication, materiality, function and use. Much of this information was not available as textual evidence, validating the use of this means of analysis. In those instances where objects were unavailable for study, they were analysed visually by means of photographs.

Stage III   Focus group research was also implemented as a constituent part of this study's multi-method approach to investigate the communicative capacity of craftivism and the role of the makers*.* The research was conducted within a textile workshop called 'Fabric of Protest' and was held at the People's History Museum in Manchester, England. The pilot study survey was conducted early on in the focus group research stage to quickly acquire data that could subsequently be analysed to inform the final stage of data collection.

Stage IV   Semi-structured interviews provided interaction with makers, academics and historians who have first-hand knowledge of craftivism. Makers described their involvement and experiences with craftivism in their own words, recounting their design choices, processes of making, as well as reactions and feedback to their work. The research priority was to hear multiple perspectives and untold stories from a diverse range of women which are often otherwise omitted from recorded history.

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[153] Archives visited included The British Library (London); Victoria and Albert Museum (London); Museum of London (London); The Horse Hospital (London); The Women's Library (London); The Women's Art Library (London); Black Cultural Archives (London); The Imperial War Museum (London); Fashion and Textile Museum (London); Peace Museum (Bradford); The Whitworth Art Gallery (Manchester); The People's History Museum (Manchester); The Feminist Archive South (Bristol); The Feminist Archive North (Leeds) and St Fagan's National Museum of History (Cardiff).

While the earlier stages of fieldwork have tended to be exploratory and generative, the latter stages deepened insights and confirmed patterns. The research was obtained through the triangulation of these diverse methods, not only to ensure a rich data collection but also to confirm the authenticity of each source, thereby diminishing bias or skewed logic (O'Leary, 2014; Maxwell, 2013).

3.3   RESEARCH METHOD I: MATERIAL CULTURAL METHOD

OBJECT ANALYSIS

Since objects are central to this qualitative study, the pursuit of a material culture analysis, foregrounding the object as a repository of information, was adopted as an analytical research tool in order to generate primary data. Art historian Jules David Prown (1982) observed that studying objects allows researchers to encounter history at first-hand, as they are often the only evidence of historical happenings that persist to the present day. He considered objects as invaluable resources through which to unlock information which is not already known or is otherwise inaccessible by other methods, often providing a more accurate depiction of the past than what may exist in written form (Prown, 1982). Several other scholars also noted the importance of material culture in conveying the stories of people that are often formulated through the making, displaying and wearing of objects (Pearce, 1993; Miller, 2005a, b; Taylor, 2013). Traces of the individuals are left behind as remnants embodied in the cloth's haptic qualities (Kopytoff, 1986; Mitchell, 2000; Millar, 2013). For social anthropologist Kaori O'Connor (2005, p.41), the 'ubiquity, intimacy, and materiality of cloth and clothing mean that, by studying them, we can obtain nuanced insights into the dynamism of society on many levels [which are] not easily arrived at by other means, if at all'. The application of a close object-focused study can disclose the memories, emotions, aspirations and sensitivities of their makers, or owners, which are not otherwise easily articulated and risk omission from the historical record (Auslander, 2005; Taylor, 2013). Prown (1982) believed that ideas are presented less self-consciously in objects, offering a more 'truthful' expression of cultural beliefs than other forms of historical evidence (Mida and Kim, 2015, p.20-1).[154] Dress

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[154] Several scholars believe that material evidence is superior to text-based history. John Styles and Amanda Vickery discuss material evidence versus text-based history, noting its superiority for studying 'the illiterate majorities that characterized most historical societies' (Styles and Vickery quoted in Taylor, 2013, p. 49). Historian Leora Auslander (2005, p.1017) believes that "people's relation to language

historians Ingrid Mida and Alexandria Kim (2015) discuss the meticulous practice of object analysis which yields valuable information to better inform our understanding of the history and context of objects. They describe the analysis of clothing thus:

> 'In observing and handling clothing that was created and worn by others, we see, touch, and smell the past. We may or may not know the name or names of the people who made or wore the garment under examination, but their traces are there. We feel the texture, the weight, weave, and body of the cloth. We measure the fit of the garment. We witness the shape of the construction, the patterns of the stitching, and placement of the decoration. We see the stains, the patches of wear, and the repairs. We hold the past in our hands'. – Mida and Kim, 2015, p.62

The best-known models for object-based study have been formulated by theorists E. McClung Fleming and Jules David Prown. Their methodologies provide a descriptive and interpretive analysis model that aids the researcher, both visually and intellectually, in studying artefacts. Fleming's (1974) article, 'Artifact Study: A Proposed Model' conveys his approach to material culture analysis which is set out in four progressive investigative steps which he termed the 'Order of Operations'. These include the 'Identification', 'Evaluation', 'Cultural Analysis' and 'Interpretation' of the object (see figure 22 left). The first stage in his model is obtaining the historical information tied to the object of interest. This can assist in its identification and includes such data as the item's origin, maker or owner. A physical analysis and objective description are then conducted, recording its material properties, including the mode of design, construction, style and function. The 'Evaluation' stage judges the object's physical attributes by comparing them to similar objects of their time, classifying them within wider categories. Subsequently, the 'Cultural Analysis' stage examines the object's relationship to the culture in which it was produced in order to determine its culturally constructed values. Finally, the 'Interpretation' stage analyses the overall information gathered at each stage and interprets the object within a contemporary context. Similarly, Prown (1982) articulated his methodology of object-based research in his article, 'Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method', which uses the following three steps: 'Description', 'Deduction' and 'Speculation' (see figure 22 right). This model differs from Fleming's in that it moves toward an emotional framework that considers the cultural values attached to objects that motivate certain responses within the researcher. His model begins with the 'Description' step that includes a formal analysis of the object's materials and visual characteristics, such as its physical description, materiality, content and decorative aspects. The second stage is

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is not the same as their relation to things; all that they express through their creation and use of material objects is, furthermore, not reducible to words" (quoted in Taylor, 2013). Historian Leora Auslander (2005, p.1016) considers objects as 'memory cues', 'expressions of the psyche' or 'sites of aesthetic investment, involving pleasure, distress, or conscious indifference'.

'Deduction', in which the relationship between the object and the researcher is analysed, including the researcher's sensory engagement and emotional response as inspired by the object. Finally, the 'Speculation' stage analyses the object from all stages, including the researcher's own vantage point to form a theory or hypothesis.

Fleming's 'Order of Operations'   Prown's Object Analysis
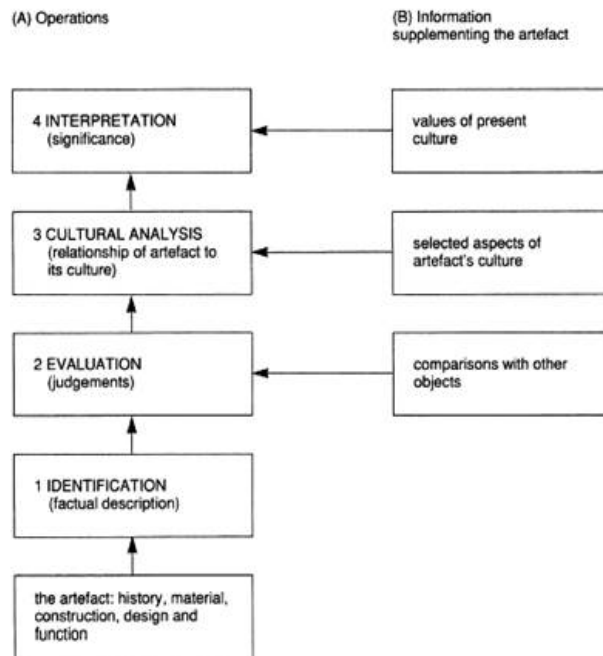
Figure 22: Left: Replication of Fleming's 1974) 'Order of Operations' (2017) Image Credit: Anna Boonstra; Right: Replication of Prown's (1982) Object Analysis Methdology (2017) Image Credit: Anna Boonstra.

This study largely follows Fleming's (1974) 'Order of Operations' due to its precise steps of analysis and its specific 'Cultural Analysis' stage, which is lacking in other comparative models. Although Fleming's model is the best suited to this particular study, it is not faultless, given that it fails to include the experience of the researcher in terms of a sensory response and omits a personal reflection on the object. Historians Mida and Kim (2015) also recognise that there is no single object analysis model offering researchers a clear and systematic approach to the study of clothing and textiles. Therefore, this thesis has built a hybrid model that mirrors Fleming's (1974) methodology, yet also integrates Prown's 'Deduction' stage (1982), which engages the emotional and sensory input of the researcher. The resulting hybrid model is delineated into five stages of analysis, namely 'Identification', 'Observation', 'Cultural Analysis', 'Reflection' (termed 'Deduction' by Prown) and 'Interpretation'. These steps were further subdivided into distinct areas of study which served as a guide when examining selected objects (see figure 23).

HYBRID OBJECT ANALYSIS

Identification: Description or classification of object. Record any historical information about where it was made, when, by whom, changes in ownership and function.

Observation: Factual and visual description. What is made of? How was made? How and what it was used for? List the design elements (subject matter, decoration, embellishment, colours, texture). Take dimensions/ sizing measurements. Consider the embodied experience of the wearer(s).

Cultural Analysis: What is the relationship of the object with its culture, period, place? Did it have any status, value or meaning? How does it compare to similar surviving objects? What is its value in present day culture?

Reflection: What was the researcher's sensory response to engaging with the object (sight, touch, sound and smell)? What was the researcher's personal reflection to experiencing the object (feelings and emotional response)?

Interpretation: What is the significance of the object? Link observations and reflections to theory. What theories or hypotheses can be drawn?

Figure 23: Hybrid Object Analysis Methodology (2017) Image Credit: Anna Boonstra.

The clothing and textile art analysed were found through archival research, participant interviews and contact with formal institutions and personal collections housed across Britain. Personal discretion was used to narrow this potentially large sample size based on contemporary case studies. This study had some difficulty in locating physical examples of clothing and textiles used as forms of protest and resistance by women during the 1970s and 80s due to object age, materiality and environmental exposures. Formal institutions also initially neglected to collect this type of material culture, as they were not deemed to be conventional objects of fine art. This oversight has resulted in few surviving examples of such craftivism (Flood and Grindon, 2014). People often did not keep these items because they did not have monetary or sentimental value at the time. This type of material culture is also evanescent due to continuous wear and tear. For example, protesters at the Greenham Common Airforce Base camped and often lived outside all year-round, subjecting their clothing and textile art to harsh weather conditions. Similarly, much of the clothing of the punk era did not last due to its fragile materiality. These garments tended to be made from cheaper, upcycled fabrics, which were often torn and pieced back together using safety pins, making them extremely difficult to wash. Therefore, it could be argued that they contained an intrinsic and intentional obsolescence. Many banners used for various Women's Liberation protests, rallies and marches also went missing, since they were either stolen or confiscated by the police. In this instance, objects were chosen based on opportunity and availability. Twelve items of clothing and textile art that best exemplified craftivism within the established case studies were examined using the hybrid model (see figure 24). Following the steps prescribed, objects were analysed using the critical processes of looking, listening, touching (where applicable) and reflecting (Taylor, 2013). Mida and Kim's (2015) method of 'slowing looking' was implemented, one which entailed 'working thoughtfully and methodically through the evidence at hand'. This approach proved helpful in observing subtle data. Notes, drawings and photographs were taken as *aides-memoires* for later reference. Each stage of the analysis provided an opportunity to discover further details of the objects' biographies. Several of the older objects housed in museums, galleries and archives were often dissociated from their individual histories when collected or donated, leaving them with little to no historical context, particularly in relation to their makers or wearers. Object analysis was therefore performed to validate existing data and uncover hitherto unknown information which was embedded within the objects themselves (Please see figure 25, which represents an example of object analysis conducted for this study).

Being able to experience the objects at first-hand provided a unique perspective and offered new insights into the design choices, fabrication techniques and the artistic expression of the maker. This was, therefore, crucial in understanding how these objects communicate across wider cultural contexts. By collating and curating these individual objects within specific groupings, this study affords a unique opportunity to examine how these textiles collectively communicate visually, contextually and relationally. To overcome potential bias, the researcher aimed to be as objective in her analysis as possible and to acknowledge any assumptions and judgements

(Taylor, 2013; Mida and Kim, 2015).[155] Although many unanswered questions surfaced during this investigation, these areas of inquiry will be used to guide later stages of the research. All primary data obtained from various sources and methods will be analysed collectively to increase the accuracy and credibility of the findings (Patton, 2014).

OBJECT ANALYSIS GRAPH

WLM

Caryle Webb-Ingall (1988) 'Lesbian Mothers' Banner, Cotton appliqué, The Women's Library at London School of Economics, London, England, Image Credit: Anna Boonstra.

Ellen Malos, Sarah Brown and Linda Ward (1975) 'A Women's Right to Choose' sash, nylon green and purple with black stencilled lettering, made for the Bristol Feminist Campaign, The Feminist Archive South, Bristol, England. Image Credit: Anna Boonstra.

Maker unknown (1978) 'EQUAL RIGHTS FOR WOMEN' jumper, black nylon with gold lettering glued on, The Women's Library at London School of Economics, London, England, Image Credit: Anna Boonstra.

Figure 24: Object Analysis Graph (2019) Image Credit: Anna Boonstra.

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[155] When studying an object, Taylor (2013, p. 56-7) writes, '[…] we need to be alert to our own contemporary cultural and historical assumptions. These are often so deeply embedded in our minds that it is hard to even realize their presence, and they can catch us unawares and lead to errors in dating garments or a false decoding of their historical social place and cultural meanings'.

PUNK

Vivienne Westwood and Malcolm McLaren (late 1970s) Muslin screen-printed, The Horse Hospital, London, England, Image credit: Anna Boonstra.

Maker unknown (1977) Black leather customised jacket, hand-painted images and text, The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England, Image credit: Anna Boonstra. Copyright: V&A.

Maker unknown (late 1970s) Cotton screen-printed, hand-stencil, The Horse Hospital, London, England, Image credit: Anna Boonstra.

GREENHAM
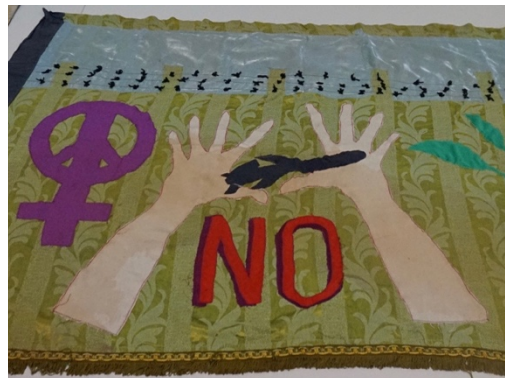
Thalia Campbell, (Early 1980s) Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp banner, appliqué, St Fagans National Museum of History, Cardiff, Wales, Image credit: Anna Boonstra.

Artist Unknown (early 1980s), Cotton screen-printed, The People's History Museum, Manchester, England, Image credit: Anna Boonstra.

Thalia Campbell, (early 1980s) Purple Jumpsuit with purple, green and white ribbon attached to pocket, cotton, The Women's Library, London, England, Image credit: Anna Boonstra.

Figure 24 (Continued): Object Analysis Graph (2019) Image Credit: Anna Boonstra.

Linda Izan (2017-2018), 'What does a WOMAN have to do to be BELIEVED' jacket front and back, embroidered and digitally printed, Courtesy of Linda Izan.

Natasha Peter (2015), mini-banner, cross-stitch, London, England, Courtesy of Natasha Peter.

Helen Jones (2018) sexist headlines shirt, embroidery, Courtesy of Helen Jones and Jacob York.

Figure 24 (Continued): Object Analysis Graph (2018) Image Credit: Anna Boonstra.

OBJECT ANALYSIS: HYBRID METHOD

Title	Banner - Lesbian Mothers
Description	Banner, pink cotton with 'Lesbian Mothers' inscribed in assorted fabrics stitched onto the ground, and adorned with woman symbols in dark pink paint. On the reverse of the banner 'Caryle and Margaret, Apr 1988, Made for Stop Clause 28 Rally on 30/4/88' inscribed in black ink.
Date	30 Apr 1988
Object Name	banner
Access_Status	Open
CatalogueStatus	Catalogued
Maker	Maker unidentified as at May 2010
Object_Number	TWL.1999.259.1

Banner and detailed photography performed by Anna Boonstra, 2017.

The Women's Library (London School of Economics (LSE)) online catalog record, August, 2017.

Caryle Webb-Ingall and banner at the 'Stop Clause 28 Rally', 1988. Photo courtesy of The Women's Library (LSE).

Figure 25: Object Analysis Hybrid Method of 'Lesbian Mothers' Banner (2017) Image Credit: Anna Boonstra.

Identification Stage I	• Little information is known about this banner except for its use. It was made for the 'Stop Clause 28 Rally' in London, England on April 30th, 1988. Clause 28 also known as Section 28 prohibited schools from discussing same-sex relationships with students and all gay or lesbian literature had to be removed from libraries. The banner was made by the 'Lesbian Mother's' group, but the specific maker is unknown at this time of object-analysis. The group was based in south London as a support for families with lesbian parents.
Observation Stage II	• The banner is in good condition for being just over thirty years old. The pink ground fabric is made from cotton. It measures 91.5cm (length) x 19cm (width). The letters are crafted from nine different cotton fabrics. Four of these fabrics are floral prints, four are solid colours (burgundy, mauve, light blue and bright blue) and one is a yellow and white check pattern. The letters are machined stitched using both straight and zigzag techniques throughout the banner. In some areas, it looks as if the maker was comfortable using the sewing machine, while in other areas, it seems like the maker had little or no sewing knowledge. It also appears that hand-stitching was used, possibly by different hands, as the skillsets vary. • The letters are also cut in a non-uniform fashion as if the maker(s) were in a hurry or inexperienced. It also appears the letters were initially attached using glue, which is made evident through liquid stains that seeped through the fabric. This may have been done for extra support when carrying it out in the wind. • Twenty-sex Venus or female symbols of different sizes are painted on in dark pink acrylic paint. The letter 'M' is also outlined with this paint. Holes are cut in the letters 'e' (2), 'a' and 'o'. This is likely a functional element so the wind could pass through the banner when carried outdoors. The two side seams are sewn with a 2" space, presumably meant to hold poles for carrying or displaying the banner. The top and bottom seams of the banner are also finished so no raw edges are exposed. This was likely done for aesthetic reasons. • 'Caryle and Margaret, Apr 1988, Made for Stop Clause 28 Rally on 30/4/88' is inscribed in black ink on the textile's back-right side seam. This is the only design element to the banner's reverse side. 'M + C' is also written in black ink on the banner's front bottom left corner. Figure 25 (Continued): Object Analysis Hybrid Method of 'Lesbian Mothers' Banner (2017) Image Credit: Anna Boonstra.

Cultural Analysis Stage III	• The banner was not donated until the early 2000s. Homemade protest banners from the 1980s were not highly valued at the time. British museums, galleries, or archives did not initially collect items of 'low' skill as they do today. It is similar to other banners of its time, particularly one representing a lesbian group collected by the Feminist Archive South in Bristol. England. Both banners appear to be made collectively as various skill sets are evident throughout. Glue was also used in both to reinforce the stitched lettering. The 'Lesbian Mothers' banner differs from others of the time in its large array of different fabrics. • It is highly valued in present-day culture, holding historic importance, particularly to the LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning) community.
Reflection Stage IV	• The banner is extremely bright, cheerful and inviting due to its many colours and patterns. All of the materials are soft, mismatched and appear secondhand, which gives off a very familial and domestic feeling. Its pink ground fabric and handcrafted elements also signify innocence and maternal notions.
Interpretation Stage V	• This banner was designed by the 'Lesbian Mother's group in south London to use at the Clause 28 Rally in 1988. • It can be assumed that multiple people likely worked collectively on the banner, possibly with help from children, concluded from the variation in needlecraft skills used throughout the banner. The many different fabrics could also suggest that they are recycled or scrap fabrics from other 'domestic' projects. This could be due to availability or by design to make the group look 'more' maternal since there was discrimination to same-sex parents in the 1980s. Maybe this was done to convey a 'normal' familial home-life? Similarly, the word 'Lesbian' possibly loses some of its negative connotations ascribed by society at the time due to the materials it was crafted from.

Figure 25 (Continued): Object Analysis Hybrid Method of 'Lesbian Mothers' Banner (2017) Image Credit: Anna Boonstra.

VISUAL SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS

Object-based research specifically locates and extends history by recording the rich details of an object's construction, fabrication and usage. This offers unique insights which are often only otherwise obtainable through direct interaction with the material object itself. Unfortunately, a close examination of tangible materials is not always possible. Although many significant and interesting examples of craftivism no longer physically exist, they are still accessible in picture form. Since photography has historically played a prominent role in the development of visual inquiry (Emmison et al., 2012), an analysis of existing photographic material has proven to be the only feasible means of obtaining primary data from such items.

This study has employed the method of semiotics to analyse photographs involving clothing and textile art as a form of protest and liberation in Britain (1970-2018). Drawing on numerous sources of visual material, specifically photographs found in archives, newspapers, zines, magazines and personal collections, this study explores the communicative capacity of craftivism using a semiotic approach based on the contributions of its founding fathers Saussure (1966 [1916]) and Barthes (2009 [1972]). Semiotics is concerned with symbolic communication, and specifically the production, exchange and interpretation of signs between senders and receivers (Fiske, 1990). As inherently social beings, humans distinctively generate and use signs to communicate through our language and behaviour (Patton, 2014). In *The Fashion System* (1990), Barthes uses dress to demonstrate how material culture serves as a form of signalling which communicates through a culturally constructed 'system of codes'. Clothing and textiles lend themselves easily to semiotics due to their intrinsically visual nature, serving as functional objects and forms of aesthetic expression which are capable of communicating interpersonally (Kaiser, 1990; Jobling, 2016). Clothing can also convey certain notions about the people who wear them, such as personal, social and cultural indicators (Craik, 2009). In an attempt to 'read' human behaviour, body language is also studied through semiotics to glean a greater insight into a person's character, attitudes, beliefs and values. Barthes' model of semiotics utilises three key elements which are individually referred to as a sign, signifier and signified. The signifier, in this case, is a material substance, such as an image or written word, whereas the signified is a mental concept evoked by the material signifier (Jobling, 2016). When combined, the signifier (image or word) and signified (a concept derived from the image or word) produce a sign (meaning) (Jobling, 2016) (see figure 26). The meanings associated with signs are however not universal but are rather learned through interpretative processes that are unique to a given culture (Kaiser, 1990; Breward, 1998; Barnard 2014).
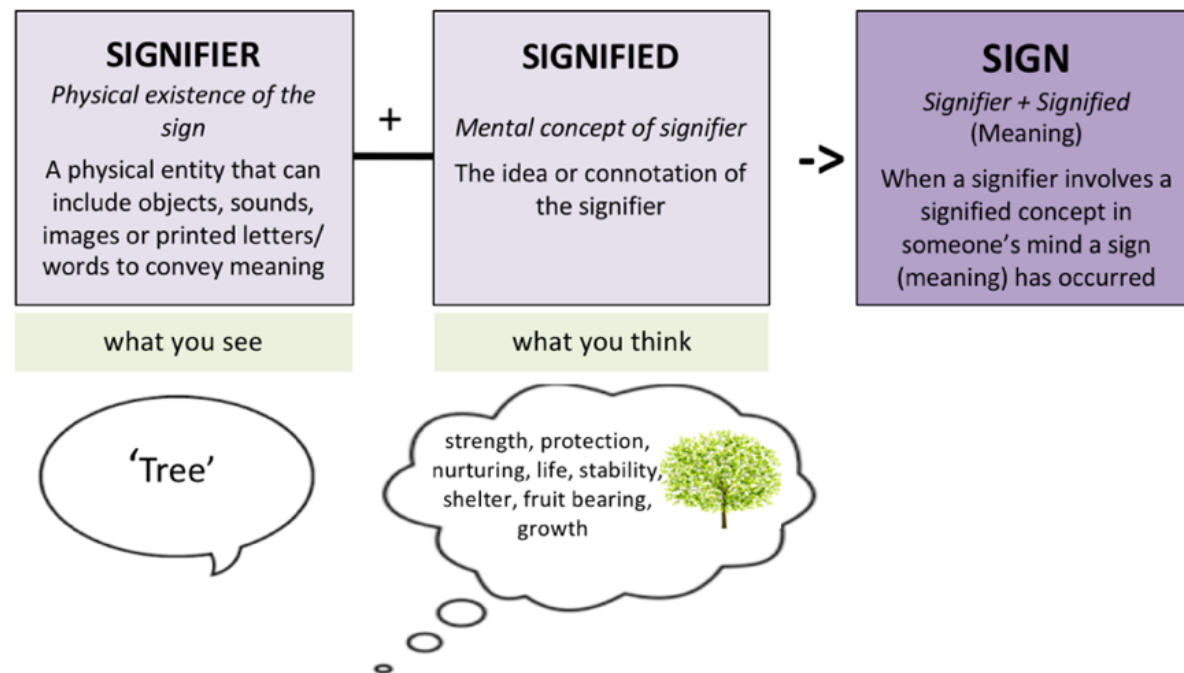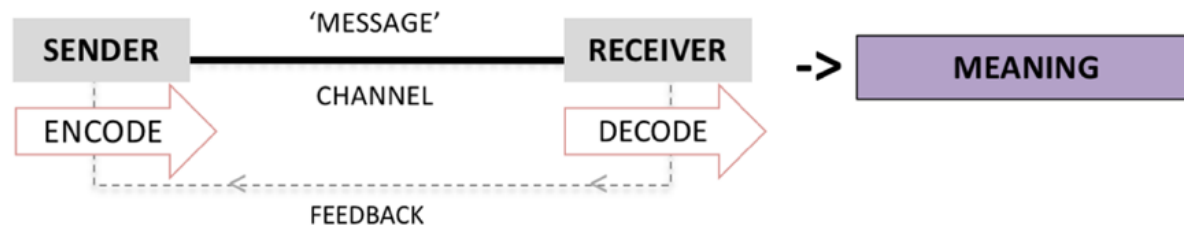
Figure 26: Semiotic Analysis Graph (2017) Image Credit: Anna Boonstra.

As mentioned earlier, this study analyses a series of photographs associated with clothing and textile art used for the purposes of activism within the established case studies. The influence of an object's content and materiality; the context in which it is displayed; and the impact of the dressed body (where applicable) are all examined. This entails studying the signs, both linguistic (i.e., words and symbols) and non-linguistic (i.e., materiality, body) within these photographs to determine their meaning within a broader socio-cultural context (see figure 27 and 28). This process explores how makers use certain words, symbols, colours and materiality to convey their message. It was also beneficial to analyse these photographs to observe the role and influence of the dressed body on the presentation and reception of craftivism.

MATERIAL The type of matter the object is made from	CONTEXT The circumstances/situation surrounding the sender and receiver	BODY The sender or wearer of a 'message'. The actor of the embodied experience	CONTENT Something that is expressed through the medium of text or symbols. Created/encoded by the sender
• **Perceptual Elements (**Classification of fibre, line, shape, form, colour, texture, pattern, structure, weight) • **Condition** (faded, torn, etc.) • **Treatment (**gathered, pleated, distressed, etc.) • **Psychology of cloth** (intimacy, memory, sensory modes of experiencing cloth (haptic modes, tactility, materiality), Preconceptions of cloth	• **Setting / Environment** (domestic / private, public, art, non-art space) • **Social Situation** (business, class, rally, party, etc. • **Group Association** (organisations, peers, family) • **Culture** (history, aesthetic 'rules')	• **Body Interaction** with dress / textile, gesture, **Kinetic Interaction** (sound created with body movement) • **Person characteristics** (gender, age, size, appearance) • **Immediate body space** (body relation to environment) • **Social Performance / experience of actor**	• **Visual text or symbol** (what is conveyed) • **Method / Skill of Text/ Value** (How was it conveyed? stitched, hand-written, printed, knitted, etc.) Style of text, labour, time consumed, value associated with time / skill

Figure 27: Visual Analysis Guide (2017) Image Credit: Anna Boonstra.
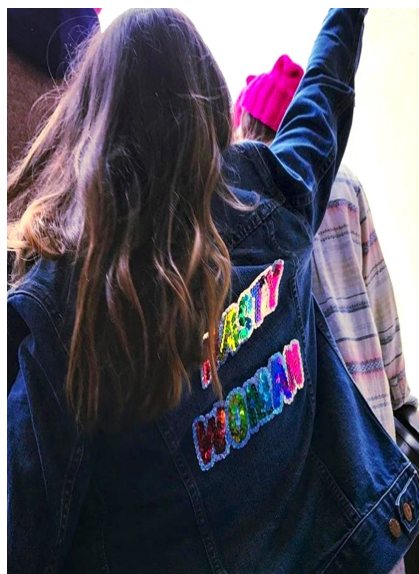
Sophie King (2017) handcrafted sequins patch which is applied to a denim jacket, Courtesy of Sophie King.

MATERIAL

The type of matter the object is made from.

The object is a denim jacket with an iron-on patch that is embellished with brightly coloured sequins. The denim ground fabric signifies a sense of casualness. The words 'NASTY WOMAN' are outlined with silver sequins. Each letter is crafted with a different colour, creating a rainbow effect. Just from the photograph, the patches are very reflective and eye-catching. The design of the badge can be perceived as fun and celebratory.

CONTEXT

The circumstance / situation surrounding the sender and receiver.

The jacket was worn for the Women's March in Washington, D.C., U.S.A. in 2017. It would not be unusual to see similar designs or statements in this particular environment. It may seem out of place if worn outside a protest context.

BODY

The sender or wearer of a 'message'. The actor of the embodied experience.

The jacket is worn by a younger woman, likely in her twenties or thirties. Her body language with her arm up in the air signals a sense of 'pride' or 'empowerment'. Her stance is also interpreted as confident.

CONTENT

Something that is expressed through the medium of text or symbols. Created / encoded by sender.

The phrase 'NASTY WOMAN' is used. *Cambridge English Dictionary (*2018) defines 'nasty' as bad, unpleasant, unkind, rude, offensive and dangerous. Social connotations of 'nasty' are descriptions like evil, mean, disgusting or dirty.

INTERPRETATION

The researcher's observations and reflections. Theories or hypotheses drawn.

The negative denotations and connotations of the word 'nasty' are off-set by the colourful and cheerful sequins design. The bubble font also appears to be fun. This embellished jacket is a statement of women's ownership over the phrase 'nasty woman'.

Cultural knowledge: After final debates in the 2016 United States presidential election, Donald Trump referred to his opponent, Hilary Clinton, as a 'nasty woman' (Press, 2018; Wagman-Geller, 2018; Housefield, 2019). The Women's Movement subverted the phrase, reclaiming it as means of women's empowerment.

Figure 28: Visual Analysis (2017) Image Credit: Anna Boonstra.
Note: Using Berger's (1984) definitions, this study defines 'denotation' as a literal description or meaning of a signifier and 'connotation' as a personal idea or feeling of a signifier.

Although semiotics is a useful tool in exploring how craftivism communicates using signs and ultimately how meaning is made, there are several considerable limitations associated with this method. For instance, Saussure (1966 [1916]) argued that words may convey multiple meanings and thus encompass many different signs. Therefore, a sign is not fixed, but rather is dependent upon the historical, social and cultural contexts in which it is presented. Lurie (1981) found that the receiver could not accurately interpret messages encoded with specific communication intentions unless a shared language system exists between the sender (encoder) and receiver (decoder). Barthes also recognised that meaning is not absolute, but is rather derived from a negotiation between the sign and receiver, one that ultimately hinges on the receiver's own personal and cultural experiences (Fiske, 1990). In *Semantic Visions in Design*, Giard (1990) writes:

> 'We are dealing with a visual world and a corresponding visual language. All languages are learned and the visual one is no different. To assume what we perceive is the same as our neighbour is in fact an error… not only is visual literacy a learned phenomenon, but it is also culturally or contextually biased… no matter how we use colour, shape, form and texture in composing our messages we are sending out signals. The operative question should be "What are we communicating?"'

This study employs semiotics at a preliminary stage and as a reflective means of investigation through which to generate ideas, highlight patterns and explore new avenues of inquiry for subsequent examination at later stages of the research. This analysis was crucial in identifying the principle signs and connotations associated with craftivism and in gaining a better understanding of the communicative nature of clothing and textiles as conceptual vehicles of meaning in society.

3.4 RESEARCH METHOD II: FOCUS GROUP

OBSERVATION AND PARTICIPATION

Focus group research was also implemented as part of this study's multi-faceted approach to investigate the communicative capacity of craftivism and the role of the maker. Observational and participatory methods were utilised to obtain data within a 'naturally occurring' context, an approach which entailed immersing the researcher both physically and synchronously into the fieldwork to observe and experience craftivism first-hand. This phase of the research was conducted in a textile workshop called 'Fabric of Protest' that was held at the People's History Museum in Manchester, England. The workshop explores creativity as an outlet for personal responses to an array of current socio-political issues. Since 2016, participants have met on a monthly basis to share their ideas, learn new handcraft skills (largely needlecrafts) and to work on both individual and collaborative projects (see figure 29). They explored ideas of inequality, visibility, vulnerabilities, oppression and other current political concerns. Although many participants were members of other sewing groups or guilds, they felt that Fabric of Protest was the only real outlet in which they could freely express their socio-political concerns through craft. Helen Mather, an artist-educator, led these two-hour workshops which began with a demonstration of a craft technique used to make or embellish textiles. This was followed by a short group discussion of how to employ these skills as a form of protest. Participants used the remainder of the time to work on their projects and converse with one another. The group was predominantly comprised of British women aged between 25 and 65 years old who resided in and around the city of Manchester. Several of the participants were regular attendees and appeared familiar and comfortable with their fellow group members, as judged by their engagement in free-flowing discussions. Being an active member of the focus group, rather than chairing it, the researcher could partake in learning and making, therefore becoming more involved in and reflective of the research process. To maintain transparency, the researcher made the nature of this study known to the participants from the start.

This research explores the contemporary attitudes of craftivism, particularly in relation to those socio-political issues affecting women in Britain today. Data was generated through a series of close observations of makers on six separate visits, noting their design choices and modes of production. Jennifer Mason (2018) sees participant observation as a means of generating multidimensional data in real time, rather than simply trusting participants' retrospective accounts. Focus group discussions enabled participants to share their perspectives and opinions in their own words, therefore providing a deeper understanding of their practice. One-to-one

and small group (two to three people) conversations with fellow group members were invaluable in eliciting their personal experiences, attitudes and beliefs in such a way as would not be feasible by other means. The group synergy enhanced the quality of the knowledge and ideas produced, data that might not have been uncovered through individual interviews. For instance, a wide range of topics was discussed with various individuals, allowing participants to converse with one another. One participant's statement often evoked comments by others, thereby encouraging a richer and more dynamic exchange of ideas. In a similar vein, the textiles themselves helped to facilitate an interactive dialogue between the participants and the researcher. Their design choices and making processes were discussed, including their respective influences, encoding methods and modes of artistic expression. Three of these conversations led to prearranged semi-structured interviews that were independent of the Fabric of Protest workshop.

Figure 29: Fabric of Protest banner made by Mandy Lawton and Focus group participants (2017) Image Credit: Anna Boonstra.

Since focus group research is open-ended and often unpredictable, this study adopted a semi-structured format. A guide was created to establish an agenda for what to observe and discuss amongst participants based on the overarching research aims and objectives. A list of preconceived ideas and expectations were also made through a brainstorming session and these ultimately influenced the guide's design. Ultimately, the guide served more as a checklist or a reminder to look for certain things or discuss various topics with the participants. This flexible design approach allowed for unexpected, yet salient and interesting data to emerge. All data obtained through observations, interactions and conversations were recorded as written accounts, which were then subsequently reflected on, thematically organised and analysed by the researcher. Shorthand notes were made at the time of observation and helped to sustain conversation flow, while more extensive notes were created immediately after each field session. Photography was also employed, allowing observations to be 'preserved' in raw form for later review and referencing. Although focus group research has many advantages, limitations nonetheless remain. Some of these could be overcome by careful planning and moderation, although others were unavoidable and distinctive to this approach. O'Leary (2014) considers credibility to be the principal limitation of focus group observation and participation. As a participant-observer, simultaneously active and reflective within the process of data generation, the researcher aimed to be a neutral data collector, continually self-questioning and considering any inherent bias. To ensure the collection of valid and authentic data, the field notes were subsequently analysed and classified as being either emic (i.e., derived from the conceptual framework of those being studied) or etic (i.e., based on the researcher's imposed views) data (Patton, 2014). Although data gathered from focus group research tends to be more emic, as it derives from the participants themselves, dividing the data is helpful in differentiating the information, thereby ensuring that appropriate standards of credibility are met (Stewart and Shamdasani, 2015). To recognise and control bias, the researcher also considered her relationships with the research participants and their influences on data collection and analysis. As an academic researcher, participants may have felt uncomfortable in disclosing information to an 'outsider' which could have affected data collection.

Focus group observation and participation were of utility in addressing the research aims and objectives more deeply by interacting with the makers themselves. Through observing and questioning their designs and making processes, the researcher was better able to understand the issues that concern them and their rationale for using craft to convey their feelings. This exploratory process ultimately brought to light new information and aided in developing novel ideas and concepts for further paths of inquiry. Such insights helped the researcher to formulate questions and guide the design for the semi-structured interviews.

PILOT STUDY SURVEY

The pilot study survey was conducted early, during the actual focus group research stage, to quickly acquire data that could be analysed to inform the design for the semi-structured interviews. The survey questions were influenced and shaped by the researcher's initial experiences and involvement in the focus group. The questionnaire was self-administered and distributed on two separate occasions at the Fabric of Protest meetings. Participant selection was opportunistic, targeting amenable focus group members. The survey was designed to be formal, yet not too lengthy or complicated so as to avoid discouraging participation (see figure 30). Participants were invited to answer a set of eight questions regarding their background and practice as contemporary makers. They were first asked to select an age bracket ranging from 18 to 65+. The initial questions were designed to establish relevant background information so as to give context to the latter questions. These were followed by more open-ended questions to encourage self-reflection in the form of more detailed responses. Twenty volunteers contributed to the survey, all of whom were female and resided within and around Manchester (please see the Appendix for the complete pilot study survey).

The survey proved to be pivotal in testing ideas, clarifying design concerns and developing a better understanding of the perceptions, opinions and values held by individual participants (Maxwell, 2013). It also proved to be an invaluable research tool in raising interesting ideas and novel insights while providing data to inform subsequent stages of the research. The survey format was restrictive in terms of the limited feedback gleaned from respondents (O'Leary, 2014). Newly developed areas of interest and those questions that remained unanswered in the survey will subsequently be addressed during interview.

Questionnaire

Hello! I'm Anna Boonstra, a PhD researcher working on a project about handcraft and activism. I would greatly appreciate if you are able to spare a few minutes to complete this short questionnaire. Thank you for participating!

- **Please indicate your age range (*circle*):**

18-24yo   25-34yo   35-44yo   45-54yo   55-64yo   65yo+   Prefer not to say

- **How did you learn to sew?** (*circle*)

Family (specify)_____ Friend   Community   Educational Course   Online   Other: _____

- **What types of objects do you make?** (*circle*)

Textile Art   Garment   Other: _____

- **What types of techniques/ materials do you use?**

_____

_____

- **What types of activist causes do you support and incorporate in your craft work?**

_____

_____

Figure 30: Pilot Study Questionnaire (2017) Image Credit: Anna Boonstra.

- **Why do you utilise craft as a means of activism?**

  _____

  _____

- **How do you share your work?** (*circle all that apply*)

Gallery/ Exhibition   Instagram   Facebook   Twitter   I don't share it   Other: _____

- **How do people react to your work?** Positive   Negative   Neutral   Comment:

  _____

  _____

- **Do you consider yourself an activist?** Yes   No   Undecided   Comment:

  _____

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Figure 30 (continued): Pilot Study Questionnaire (2017) Image Credit: Anna Boonstra.

3.5   RESEARCH METHOD III: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

INTERVIEW DESIGN AND STRUCTURE

To thoroughly investigate the communicative capacities of clothing and textile craftivism, as well as the role of the maker in their design, fabrication and circulation, a qualitative research approach was undertaken in the form of semi-structured, one-on-one interviews. This approach was imperative to capturing that information which could only be derived from the social responses of individuals with first-hand knowledge of the topic (Kawamura, 2011). The interviewees included those women who had utilised handcrafts for the purposes of activism within those groups and social movements selected as case studies for this thesis. The interviews involved talking to participants and studying their textile art, clothing, photographs, and ephemera from the period in question. Makers described their involvement and experience with craftivism in their own words, recounting their design choices, processes of fabrication and methods of distribution, as well as the reactions and feedback to their work. The research priority was to hear multiple perspectives and untold stories from a diverse range of women, accounts which are otherwise often overlooked by recorded history. Academics, historians and those with specific knowledge of this study's subject area were also consulted in order to contextualise and enrich participants' narratives.

A semi-structured format was adopted, allowing for flexibility during the course of the interviews so as to maximise the opportunities for descriptions and discovery. The interview questions were designed to address the specified research aims and objectives in addition to those questions and themes arising from the previous methods of analysis. Due to the diverse range of participants, the interview questions were tailored to each interviewee based on their background information and respective areas of expertise. For the sake of qualitative comparisons, it was also imperative to utilise a group of standardised pre-scripted questions across all interviews (Edwards and Holland, 2013). These questions entailed such topics as design inspiration, fabrication processes, choice of materiality, modes of circulation and reactions to work. Open-ended questions were largely utilised to guide the conversation and approach themes fluidly, rather than strictly directing the direction of the interview. From hearing the participants' narratives, interesting topics often emerged. If the conversation deviated too far from the script, it was steered back towards the prescribed format by the interviewer. Reaching a rapport was essential in discussing lived experiences and behaviours, enabling the researcher to delve beyond superficial responses.

RESEARCH SAMPLE: PARTICIPANT SELECTION

Research participants were recruited predominantly through a combination of purposive and chain sampling techniques. Individuals were initially identified through archival research and exhibition reviews and then their participation was actively sought via email or telephone. This technique helped to reach a wide variety of participants who matched the study criteria based on their background and expertise (O'Leary, 2014). Participants were also recruited through social media networks including LinkedIn, Instagram and Facebook. For example, a post was made on the 'She's a Punk Rocker' and 'Greenham Common Women' Facebook pages, outlining the research project in an effort to recruit additional participants. Those interested were given a 'participant information' leaflet to learn more about what the study entailed before officially agreeing to take part. Additional participants were also recruited as referrals through the interview process itself. A total of thirty participants were interviewed, a number deemed appropriate for such a qualitative methodology, especially as the criterion of 'data saturation' had been met. The interviews were largely conducted in person throughout multiple cities in Britain, including London, Birmingham, Bradford, Brighton, Huddersfield, Manchester and Winchester. The remaining interviews were conducted by telephone due to the age, location or preference of the interviewees. A few participants also requested to answer questions via email correspondence. Where possible, the interviews took place in a public environment, such as a museum, library, archive or university setting. Participants with sizable or fragile artefacts often preferred to be interviewed at their personal residences, a stipulation that was agreed upon in advance. Informed written consent was required, granting the researcher permission to use the information obtained from the interviews within the written and published thesis. The telephone calls and in-person interviews were digitally recorded unless requested otherwise. Each interview began by providing participants with a brief verbal explanation as to the study's nature, its purpose and why their involvement was important. Participants interviewed via email correspondence were provided with a list of questions and their responses were followed up for the purposes of clarification or additional information.

Twenty-two of the interviewees were classified by this study as 'makers', as they handcrafted clothing or textile art for activism. Their skill ranged from amateur to a higher-level as several considered themselves professional artists and designers. All makers are female and aged between 25 and 81 years old. Nineteen of whom were British, and the remaining three were American with ties to the other participants. Information regarding their socioeconomic class was not collected although, based on their educational and professional backgrounds, the sample seemed to be of predominantly lower to middle-class women. The sample size of makers for each case study varied, as there were opportunities to interview contemporary makers and contrast them to those from the 1970s. However, as almost fifty years have elapsed

since the first movement of this study began, many makers have since passed away or are unable to participate due to poor health. This is reflected in the smaller sample size obtained from the older case studies. Despite this constraint, the number of interviewees was appropriate for each study's scope and depth. The eight remaining participants were academics, historians or those with specialised knowledge of this study's subject area. They were instrumental in generating primary data through which to triangulate the accuracy of information gathered from the maker interviews.

Although interviews have long proven to be an invaluable source of primary data, heightening both perception and theoretical generation, this study also recognises their limitations and problems, including the unreliability and fallibility of individual memory (Sandino and Partington, 2013). Lesley Millar (2013) refers to memory as a 're-creative act' wherein memories are reconstructed rather than relived. Philosopher John Sutton (1998) also acknowledged that 'memory mangles and transforms its materials, tending to obliterate as well as construct'. Considering these challenges, this study understands and accepts the possibility that data can be skewed by participants with refracted memories or those who romanticise stories of their younger selves (McLeod and Thomson, 2009). Several participants involved in this study were asked to recall particular events and occasions during the 1970s and 80s, memories that would now be 40 to 50 years old. This study was mindful of the drawbacks of the interview process, flagging any questionable information for subsequent review and removal as invalid data, if necessary.

Interviews were transcribed using Trint, a web-based automated transcription software programme that transforms audio files into a first-draft transcript. Recordings and preliminary transcripts were repeatedly listened to and read synchronously to ensure that transcripts were accurate. Although this process was both painstaking and labour intensive, it nonetheless proved helpful in reviewing the concepts explored and highlighting the vital points arising in conversations. For those who wished that their voices not be recorded, the researcher took extensive notes and wrote a summary transcript of the conversation. All processed data were uploaded to NVivo, a Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) software programme, in which it was analysed using a coding system, specifically involving frequently used keywords, to generate general themes based on the descriptive content embedded within the text. By manually assessing the data, the researcher was able to recognise additional patterns or 'theoretical' themes, which were also subsequently entered into NVivo to further analyse the data (see figure 31). All data thus encoded were collectively analysed to identify where themes converged or else diverged across the body of research (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). To ensure both the richness and accuracy of primary data, all information obtained through the interview process was analysed and compared by triangulation with a broad range of corroborating sources (please see the Appendices for the Interview Participant Directory, Participant Information Form, Participant Consent Form and Interview Transcripts).
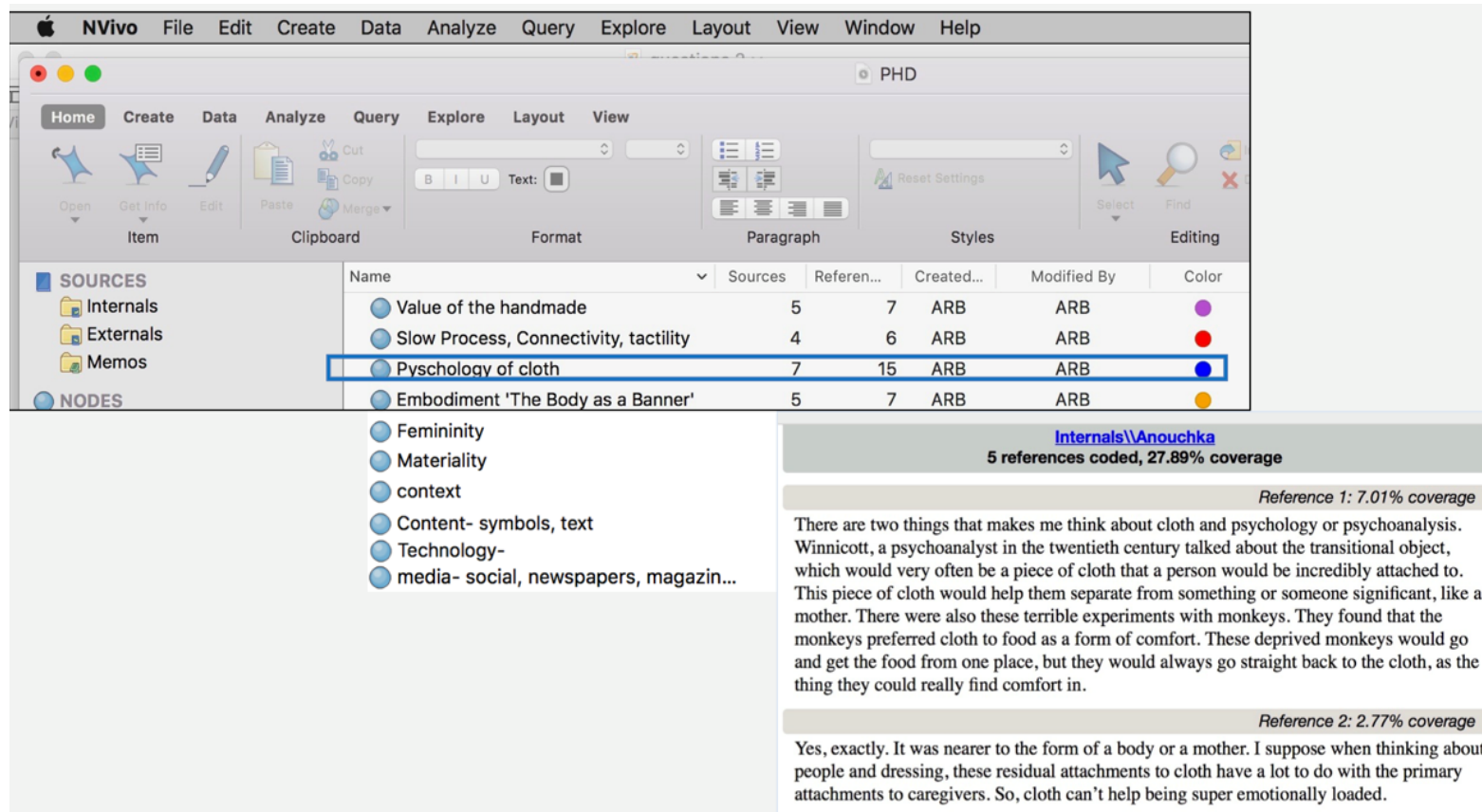
Figure 31: Theoretical themes imported into NVIVO for coding (2017) Image Credit: Anna Boonstra.

CHAPTER FOUR: Research Findings

4.1   INTRODUCTION

The multiple modalities of data collection were beneficial in examining craftivism holistically from practice to product. This approach generated a rich body of research that was analysed to identify important themes. Although many of the same themes emerged across different modes of data collection, each was first examined in isolation before a collective analysis of how they compared and contrasted was performed. The triangulation of all data sources was conducted to validate and clarify findings, thereby increasing the accuracy and credibility of the primary data (Patton, 2014). Since this thesis questioned the communicative capacity of craftivism and the role of its makers, the data generated largely consists of themes that are centred around the object's design, production and circulation, depending on the choices of their makers. This research also brings into focus the influence of medium, content, context and the body on the interpretation of an activist message. This study thus identifies those tactics that have proven most effective in resonating with their target audience during the period from 1970 to 2018. The impact of technological advancements and social media platforms are also explored, specifically examining how they affect the design, fabrication and dissemination of contemporary craftivism. To best convey the research findings, this chapter is organised into three subsections, namely 4.1 *Materiality*; 4.2 *Content;* and 4.3 *Context*.

Section 4.1 *Materiality* discusses the makers' decisions in employing cloth or clothing rather than other media in order to resist, advocate or raise awareness to a socio-political idea or cause. The domestic and gendered associations of cloth are also examined, weighing whether they help or otherwise hinder activism. This section also explores the production techniques of craftivists, particularly analysing how the specific attributes of handcraft, such as embroidery (in terms of skill, value and time) affect its message as compared to an object fabricated by, for example, fabric marker or digital printing. Finally, how the memories and sensory connections arising naturally between humans are embedded in the form of fabrics and how this impacts their ability to communicate activism is explored. Further, how the strategic choices of the makers in terms of colours, fabrics and embellishments are connected to previous social movements is also considered.

Section 4.2 *Content* analyses the text and symbols used in craftivism, particularly in relation to their intention to inform, shock or incite curiosity. The reappropriation of words, recycling of slogans and use of profanity or humour is another point of interest addressed within this section, noting changes in their use across different generations of women. The use of materiality to subvert the meaning of words and symbols is also explored.

Section 4.3 *Context* explores the different types of activism craftivists undertake either collectively (direct and indirect) or individually (public, private, everyday) and how this affects the delivery of their activist message. Craftivism circulated both anonymously and virtually is also an important topic to address. The tactical utilisation of the clothed body, particularly in relation to its use in mobilising protest is also discussed.

4.2   MATERIALITY

Through object and visual analysis, the design and fabrication of each object can be analysed in great detail, specifically examining its materials, colours, treatments and embellishments. These may include stitch (embroidery, crochet, knit, cross-stitch) and non-stitch (fabric pen, paint, iron-on, screen/digital printing) techniques. Semi-structured interviews with craftivists helped to explain their design and fabrication processes, particularly in terms of their choice of cloth and handcraft, as opposed to other media through which to resist, advocate or raise awareness to socio-political issues. Since cloth and handcrafts carry domestic, gendered and sensory associations, this study examined whether craftivists strategically utilise such elements to aid in communicating their message.

Although craftivists commented on the tactical aspects of cloth and needlecrafts, particularly in relation to their being portable and easily compactable (so they can be quickly hidden in a bag to help prevent confiscation), they predominately used cloth and handcraft as this provided a readily affordable medium. These objects were largely crafted from recycled materials, such as second-hand clothing, old bedding, curtains or extra fabric from previous textile projects. In an interview with academic Gavin Grindon (2017), he explained that 'common' materials, like cloth, were often used in social movements because of their availability and affordability to the

masses. [156] Similarly, academic Jane Tynan also expressed her belief that cloth and handcrafts are not deliberately chosen, but rather serve as a medium that is almost universally obtainable. [157]

Tynan (2017) believes that war time knitting and its effort in support of the troops gave inspiration to people who came later on who were interested in using craft as a medium for intervention. She states, 'The realisation that you could be any age, you could be any gender, you could be any social class and you could actually make some kind of humanitarian effort that could make an impact on people' (Tynan, 2017). The information obtained from the interviews, focus group research and the pilot study survey shed light on the varying relationships that each generation of makers have had with cloth and handcraft. The older (50+) research participants seemed to have a different connection with cloth and needlecrafts than the young generation of makers. They described their preference for working with cloth and needlecrafts based on their comfort levels using this familiar medium and skillset. Some described it as a 'natural choice' or else as a medium to they tend to gravitate or always return to. They also discussed their sense of continuity and their familial lineage of needlecrafts, as they were largely taught these skills from a young age by a family member or at school. Research participant Linda Izan stated:

> 'I have lots of sewing machines. I have two treadle machines, which are very, very old, and some hand machines as well. I mention those, because it's very important. Those machines come from women in my family, my grandmother and my great aunts. When I am with those machines I always feel a distinct link or if you'd like, a thread running through […] I always think, they've worked here on this and I'm now working here. It's an extremely comforting to think that you are literally the female line'. — Izan, 2018, interview with author [158]

The younger generation of crafters often learn from each other and often don't place the same sentimental attachment to the medium as the older makers. As discussed earlier in Chapter 2, these skills were disregarded in the 1970s, because of economic changes which increasingly encouraged women to enter the workforce subsequently causing the rise of mass production and consumerism.

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[156] Dr Gavin Grindon is a lecturer in Art History and Curating at the University of Essex. He is also a curator and writer in politicised art. He was co-curator and author of *Disobedient Objects* (Victoria and Albert Museum, 2014, London, England).

[157] Dr Jane Tynan was a lecturer in Fashion Communication at Central Saint Martins. She is the author of *British Army Uniform and the First World War: Men in Khaki* (2013). She is currently an Assistant Professor of Design History and Theory, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Netherlands.

[158] Linda Izan is a craftivist and a current member of 'Fabric of Protest' in Manchester, England.

CLOTH AND NEEDLECRAFT: DOMESTIC, GENDERED, SENSORY AND MEMORY ASSOCIATIONS

Despite the research participants using cloth as a preferred medium through which to discuss socio-political concerns, whether these be women's rights, class disparities, environmental concerns, or issues of human security, most research participants used cloth and handcraft because of their availability and not as a conscious or strategic means of communication. Although their choice was largely not tactical, they were, however, aware of their associations with women and the home. Psychoanalyst and writer Anouchka Grose believes that 'cloth can't help being super emotionally loaded' because of the residual attachments people have to cloth from birth. She stated:

> 'Cloth has a different emotional charge, because of its history in our infantile developmental period. Cloth is very much related to the body, comfort, attachment and separation. It's linked to all of these hard-core human fundamental things. So, I guess by putting a message on cloth, it's always going to bring all of those things with it. You can never get away from that […] What's the first thing that happens to you when you come out of the womb? People put cloth on you. They keep putting cloth on you and changing it. It's a comfort thing. Your mother wears cloth and the people that look after you wear cloth. You are dealing with cloth from the minute you come out. If you think about the layers of the brain, the hardwired core of the brain is where things are just absorbed before thinking comes in. It seems you have big experiences with cloth before any of the higher layers of processing, such as language, starts to happen'. — Grose, 2018, interview with author

In a discussion with academic Catherine Harper (2017), she finds that, since cloth is accompanied by inherent meanings of domesticity, femininity and inferiority, it cannot be simply strategic or neutral. The meanings that accompany cloth make it a useful tool for communication, one which has been particularly evident in feminist art since the 1970s (Harper, 2017). Textile artist Alana Tyson capitalises on this notion, commenting:

> 'Textiles are present in our everyday lives, we are surrounded by them, sleep under them, wear them, use them. They are accessible, familiar, comfortable. They also are visceral, we know what it feels like to touch fabrics, how a heavy quilt feels on our body. There is already a relationship between the viewer and the art object when it is also a textile; a connection that does not inherently exist with for example a painting. […] Art opens up a back door to debate socio-political issues, it's like a sneak attack to transmit ideas and get people to consider something that they are uncomfortable with normally. They can be drawn in for purely aesthetic reasons to consider a new viewpoint presented in an artwork. Textiles are particularly useful as they can be used to link tradition to contemporary events in a particularly non-threatening way. An increase in discussion will naturally lead to a more informed and engaged public'. — Tyson, 2018, interview with author

In an interview with academic Jo Turney (2017), she also commented on the communicative nature of textiles, a property that she contends contributes to people's familiarity, comfort, understanding and expectation of the material as generally being safe and soft.[159] Textile artist Sara Impey (2017) also uses textiles, quilting to be exact, to address controversial issues because it is a mundane material.[160] She explained, 'People respond warmly to them on the whole and that's why I quite like subverting it. It's a medium that looks familiar to people and is welcoming. Most women, even if they're not interested in textiles, will have some experience stitching as a child at home or in school. Even if they didn't enjoy it, they would have been exposed to it in some extent' (Impey, 2017, interview with author).

Many of the other research participants utilised overtly feminine and domestic objects, like samplers, doilies, tea towels, aprons, and hankies to embellish socio-political content onto, in order to create conservations that would not be possible through other materials (see figure 32 top). These objects were used to discuss a woman's place in society, domestic abuse, and human safety and security. By adorning untraditional content onto these items, they subsequently lose some of their domestic undertones like comfort and 'sweetness'. Contemporary Embroidery artist Sophie King often uses corsets and undergarments to discuss the mistreatment of women in today's society. She explained her work, stating, 'I often embroider messages on corsets since they are very feminine and private objects, which are extremely useful in calling attention to particular issues. I want to disrupt the gender stereotypes people make about clothing. The message can allow women to feel empowered and take back ownership of their own bodies' (King, 2018) (see figure 32 bottom).

The haptic and familiar qualities of cloth and handcraft are for Grindon (2017), the gateway to bringing attention to socio-political issues, especially when removed from their traditional environment within the home. He believes that handcraft can create 'emotive and psychological' changes to the feel of protest, explaining:

> 'When the women at Greenham were embracing the base and attaching stuff to the fence they are taking how a military installation feels and radically changing it […] The cops would be reminded of their mother or sister and suddenly its harder for them to enforce their authority. It wasn't about messaging, but about changing the feeling around that. So, it's probably the feeling of cloth that becomes important to it […] It gets people's defences down a little bit. It can be a tactical medium in that sense'. — Grindon, 2017, interview with author

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[159] Dr Jo Turney is a design historian. She is also an associate Professor of Fashion at Winchester School of Art. She is also the author of *The Culture of Knitting* (2009) and *Fashion & Crime: Dressing for Deviance* (2015).

[160] Sara Impey is a textile artist who specialises in quilt-making. She is a former newspaper journalist and the author of *Text in Textile Art: Using Lettering and Fonts with Stitch and Embroidery* (2013). This book is one of few that discuss the implementation of language in textile art.

Figure 32: Top Left: Kate Walker (1978) 'WIFE IS A FOUR LETTER WORD', muslin, hand-stitching, Courtesy of The Women's Art Library, Goldsmiths University, London, England; Top Right: Janis Jefferies (1986) 'Home of the Brave?' 'You Can't Cage the Future. On Guard at Greenham 1981-85', cotton, stitch, mix-media, The Whitworth Gallery, Manchester, England, Image credit: Anna Boonstra, Copyright: Janis Jefferies; Bottom Left: Sophie King (2018) 'STOP MAKING WOMEN FEEL BAD FOR HOW MEN HAVE CHOSEN TO MISTREAT THEM', embroidery on satin, Courtesy of Sophie King'; Bottom Right: Sophie King (2018) 'You're not a bad boy, you're just a bad person', embroidery on lace, Courtesy of Sophie King.

This aligns with the recollections of research participant Judith Baron (2017), who once lived at the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp, who remembered that, 'Many women there participated in some sort of craft, even women who didn't think they were creative. We were always trying to counter or change the space from a negative atmosphere into something positive. We would put up rainbows and women's symbols on the fence'. By bringing domestic handcraft outside of its traditional context of the home, the women used it to lighten the tension shared between the protesters and the guards, making the message of disarmament more approachable for some. These efforts are similar to those of contemporary craftivists who use yarnbombing to change the feel of urban spaces. The displacement of needlecrafts into city spaces creates curiosity in those passing-by, which can prompt people to open their minds to different perspectives.

Although makers did not tactically choose cloth for its materiality, they were noticeably more strategic in their use of colours and fabrics. Besides using bright, eye-catching colours, as many makers did to draw attention to their cause, several capitalised on cultural connotations of colour to support their message. Colour thus serves as a subtext, aiding makers in the act of communicating (Evans, 2017). It is widely known that the fields of design and advertising utilise colour because of its ties to emotion which can influence its audience (Gaimster, 2011). For example, punks largely adopted a black colour palette, one that was often accompanied by red accents to symbolise rebellion and defiance – in essence the same colour scheme as used by the Nazi party, therefore carrying its attitude and beliefs (Hoffmann, 1997). This colour palette also became associated with the concept of anarchy in the 1970s (Baillargeon, 2013). As discussed in chapter three, these colours, within a European and American context, communicate more aggressively than, for example, a pastel colour motif. The colour pink, for instance, is widely used in craftivism as a means of disarming dominant and often hegemonic power structures because of its societal connotation as being associated with femininity (Schuiling and Winge, 2019). A significant example of the implementation of pink in protest is The Pussyhat Project (2016-17) carried out internationally. It is important to note that the meanings attached to colours are not always universal due to varying histories, environments, and experiences (Evans, 2017).

Research participants also utilised colours associated with other past social movements, particularly with the Suffrage Movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The suffragette colours of white (symbolising purity and femininity), purple (dignity) and green (hope) were subsequently used in the women's movement of the 1970s and 80s, at the Greenham Common Peace Camp, and within women's activism today. When asked why, several women responded in a similar vein, suggesting that it is a recognised colour palette, one which is universally associated with women's rights. By using the same colour scheme, a connection can be made to a preceding or prevailing ethos, thereby building on what their predecessors started (Loader, 2018; Archer, 2019). Similarly, a British feminist direct-action

collective called Sisters Uncut also adopted the Suffragette colours for their organisation because their work stems from the efforts of these women before them. Besides using their colours, they also have replicated their banners, staying true to their original pennant shape and tassel trim (Archer, 2019).

MAKING TECHNIQUES: SKILL, VALUE AND TIME

This subsection explores the variety of handcraft skills employed by makers within this study to embellish clothing and textile art, particularly stitch (embroidery, crochet, knit, cross-stitch, appliqué), non-stitch (fabric pen, paint, iron-on, screen/ digital printing) and other mixed media techniques. The object, visual analysis, and interview data highlighted how the various techniques have differing cultural 'values' attributed to them which, in turn, affect how they each communicate. Many of the banners displayed at Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp were made to a high standard using an array of fabrics and intricate stitching, taking days or even weeks to complete. Greenham protester Thalia Campbell (2018) who is known for making dozens of banners for the Peace Movement, explained that several of the banners at Greenham were originally crafted using embroidery or appliqué but were often replicated using a fabric pen or paint after being stolen by the members of the public or confiscated by the police. Since they were often damaged by the elements or else taken, many makers understandably did not want to invest large amounts of time or money in them. Another Greenham protester, Jenny Engledow (2017), remembered making last-minute banners using paint and fabric pen. She stated, 'If something was going on politically at the time, we often made a quick banner to put on the fence […] I can remember laying one on the ground and painting it'. Engledow (2017) believes that the skill and fabrication techniques used in her banners are not noticed and nor should they be, as the message is its explicit objective. Other participants believe that time and skill invested into needlecraft aids in communicating the object's message. For instance, textile artist Sara Impey (2017) believes that people appreciate the time invested into her quilting and thus take its message more seriously versus something made with little effort or time. Curator Greene (2017) also finds that cloth either carries or else embodies a 'hidden labour' and is thus 'understood in ways that aren't necessarily immediately intellectual'. She is, however, unsure whether people without these skills appreciate it in the same way as those who do (Greene, 2017). Nicola Ashmore (2017), who led 'Remakings of Picasso's Guernica: Community, Collaboration and Activism' (2012-2014), believes people notice the hand-stitching when in a gallery setting, but not when it is used in protest. She explained:

'[the] banner functions as both a protest banner and an artwork. When it's on display in a gallery setting, certainly, the different hands can be seen through the stitches. You can study them when you have the time in that type of setting. It's more of a reflective space I'd say. When it's out on protest, it is likely to be more phonetic. There's going to be less opportunity to study it in that way. Certainly, when you can get the opportunity to see the stitches and different hands that have created the stitches then I think that's a definite strength and quality of it. In a way, it manifests this idea of unnamed participations, which I think is important'. – Ashmore, 2017, interview with author

Ashmore (2017) also commented on the power of handcraft, precisely stitching and its ability to communicate in the digital age. She stated:

'The stitch itself is a universal form. No matter what country you travel to, there will be some form of stitching in that country. So, I think there's a power in that and speaks to people and their interaction and understanding of it. Although many people in the U.K. have lost that skill, certainly, its role has dramatically changed, we come in contact with cloth and stitching every day through our clothing. It is inheritably relatable to people even if they don't have any experience with stitching themselves'. –Ashmore, 2017, interview with author

Similarly, Claire Barber commented, 'it stands out when someone has bothered to hand-stitch within a digital context. It kind of elevates it in a degree. I think it's interesting at this point in history. This seems to be tapping into something that maybe we feel is being eroded within our culture'. For Tynan (2017), it's not necessarily the skill that appeals to the onlooker; it is the 'mark of the hand' that is significant in society today because it is dominated by electronic communication. She stated that 'It is only in the context of mass consumerism and mass production that something as a unique, hand-crafted object can actually have power and could actually disarm people in some way. It's the personal nature of the handmade that really affects people' (Tynan, 2017).

Similarly, London-based craftivist Natasha Peter (2018) has taken part in several of Sarah Corbett's Craftivist Collective projects including the 'Don't Blow it Hanky Project' (2015—). This project entailed sending hand-embroidered messages on handkerchiefs to local Members of Parliament and other influential individuals in their community who could utilise their position to make a positive difference (see figure 33). The personalised hand-crafted messages stood out compared to the substantial amounts of emails and letters politicians receive urging them to consider various issues (Corbett, 2013, 2017). The handkerchief recipients could not overlook its message because of the time and labour invested in its construction (Corbett, 2013, 2017). Peter (2018), who has worked in traditional campaigning in the past, noticed the lack of engagement in issues when presented as a petition or letter, but are more receptive to craftivism because it has become a more unique and unusual way to protest in the digital age.
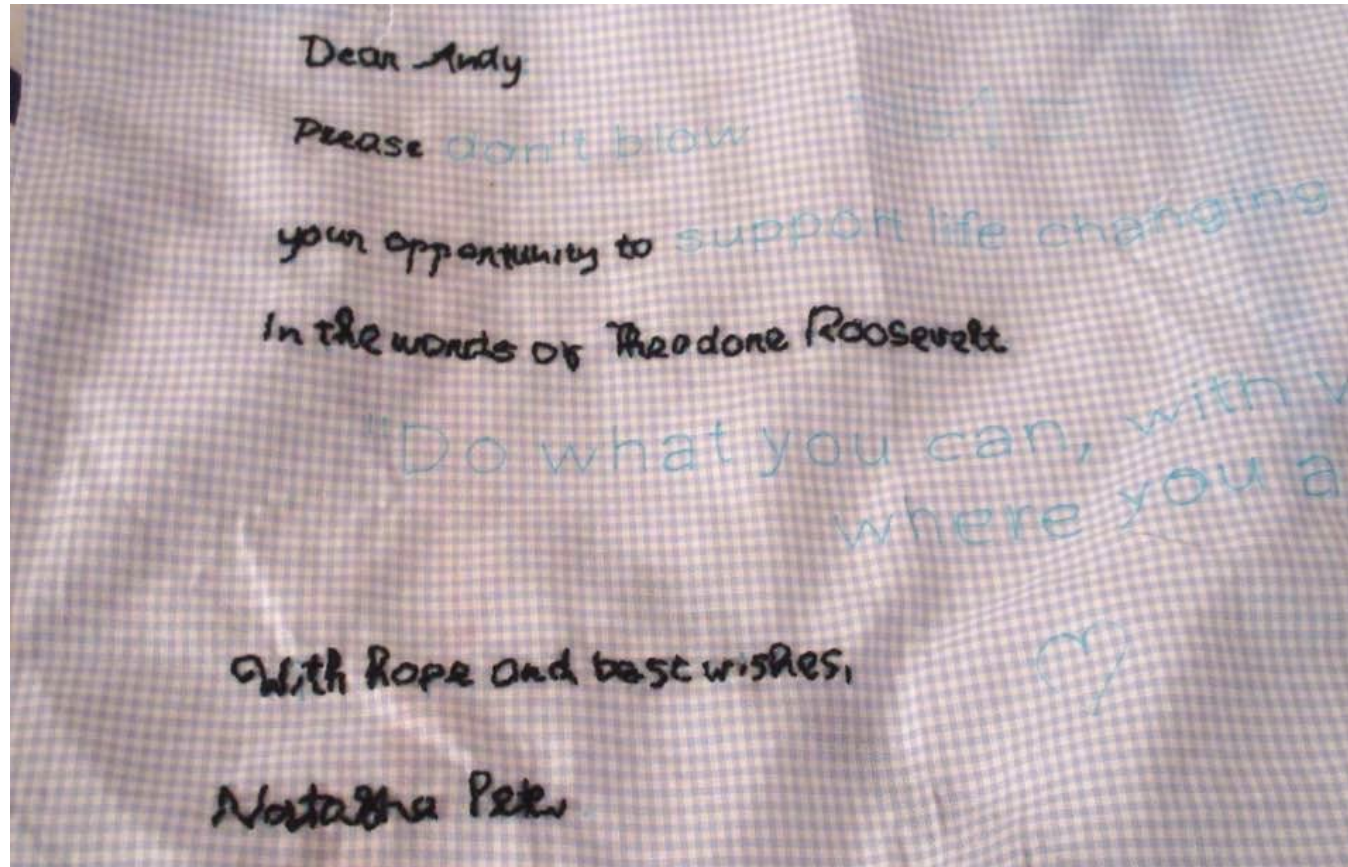
Figure 33: Natasha Peter (2015) 'Don't Blow it Hanky', hand embroidery on cotton handkerchief, made as part of Sarah's Corbett's *Craftivist Collective*, Courtesy of Natasha Peter.

During a conversation with academic Jo Turney (2017), she explained that embroidery is associated with skill, value and time, something traditionally done by middle class women; whereas fabric marker, paint and screen-printing, which had largely been used in punk clothing, weren't techniques that were highly valued by society. She stated, 'I think fabric pen appears more aggressive. It's like cutting out the letters of a newspaper. It's just more threatening, whereas no one can be offended by embroidery even when it is offensive' (Turney, 2017). Please see figure 34 and 35 for a visual comparison of fabric marker versus appliqué and embroidery. Similarly, objects crafted from soft wool are naturally going to communicate differently than an object made of vinyl or leather.

Archer (2019) also discussed using needlecrafts to counterbalance her protest group's all-black uniform. She explained, 'Our black uniforms make us look stark and strong, which is good, but we don't want to come off as too threatening. The stitching and handmade elements we incorporate into our protests make us look a little less aggressive and that we actually care, because of the time we put into making each object by hand' (Archer, 2019). For Grindon, the social connotations of needlecraft and handcraft as being implicitly feminine and domestic inhibits contemporary women's activism, particularly as they are closely associated with middle class women's activism, most notably the efforts of the suffragettes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. He states:

'It's seen as not hard enough or not tough enough. Some people see it as easy to make a pussy hat and go on a demonstration, because it is lacking risk, commitment and militancy […] you see the images on Twitter of black activists making fun of white activists using the pussy hats and protesting […] I think it's interesting. The object becomes like a contentious object within the movement. That's not necessarily anything to do with craft itself, but the way people perceive it as soft is probably the reason you get those reactions. If they had a different kind of object that is more tough I think it would change those labels between groups a bit or at least the stereotyping between them.' – Grindon, 2017, interview with author.

Figure 34: Thalia Campbell (early 1980s) detailed images of banners featuring the Venus or women's symbol, felt tip markers (left), damask appliqué (right), St Fagans National Museum of History, Cardiff, Wales, 2017, Image credit: Anna Boonstra.

Figure 35: Left: Colleen Marguerite (2018) 'FUCK OFF', fabric paint on leather, made to replicate Gaye Advert's punk T-shirt from 1977, Image credit: Anna Boonstra; Right: Colleen Marguerite (2018) 'fuck off', hand embroidery, Image credit: Anna Boonstra.

4.2 CONTENT

The object and its visual analysis were crucial in highlighting the language used to adorn clothing and textile art within the established case studies. While some objects seemed to communicate clearly and directly, others were vaguer and more open to interpretation. The semi-structured interviews with makers were also vital in understanding their intentions in using certain words, slogans and symbols. While some makers used text and symbols to inform or raise awareness of socio-political issues, others wanted to shock, humour, or incite curiosity. Several makers also reappropriated words, recycled slogans, and profanity and humour, which is another point of interest addressed within this section. Changes in the content used amongst the different generations of women is also noted.

TEXT: INFORM, SUBVERT AND RECLAIM

The clothing and textile art from the Women's Liberation Movement utilised words and slogans that were largely composed of five or fewer words to raise awareness of issues pertaining to women's rights and sexual equality. These include, 'EQUAL RIGHTS FOR WOMEN', 'WIFE IS A FOUR-LETTER WORD', 'LESBIAN MOTHERS', 'BLACK LESBIANS', 'RECLAIM THE NIGHT', 'ANTI-RAPE', 'OUT AND PROUD', 'THE FUTURE IS FEMALE' and 'A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO CHOOSE'. Similarly, the slogans seen on clothing and textiles at the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp advocated for nuclear disarmament from a female perspective, stressing the important of the female voice in socio-political issues. These read, 'WOMEN FOR PEACE ON EARTH', 'GIRLS SAY NO TO THE BOMBS', 'WOMEN'S STRUGGLE WON THE VOTE USE IT FOR DISARMAMENT', 'WILL THERE EVER BE WOMANLY TIMES', and 'POWER TO WOMEN'. Several examples of the textile art made as part of WLM movement and the banners at Greenham borrowed slogans and quotes from politicians, humanitarians, novelists and feminists of the past, including Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King Jr, Lord Douglas-Home, Mary Anna Evans, Virginia Woolf and Sylvia Pankhurst (see figure 36). Although humour and irony were often utilised to make their message more approachable, research participants stressed the importance of conveying a clear message to inform the public. Interviewee Jenny Engledow, who made several banners for Greenham Common and who has

continued, more recently, to support environmental and anti-war campaigns is most concerned with informing the viewer. Indeed, she is very thoughtful in selecting both the wording and font, explaining:

'I'm wanting to find the ways it's easiest to read and understand. I also want it to be balanced visually. I think it's important the way something is presented, because it often affects how we take in or process the information. It's quite difficult. Here's something I'm working on right now. It's going to say, "REFUGEES RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS TOO". It also needs to have some sort of qualifying words like "SECURITY", "PEACE", "LOVE" or "SAFETY" […] I [then] go to the computer and work out a font that I like. I'm using two different fonts. The words, "REFUGEES", "RIGHTS" AND "HUMAN" are all in one font and the words relating to the lack of safety are in a font as though they were handwritten. I'm trying to think how someone would read it'. — Engledow, 2017, interview with author
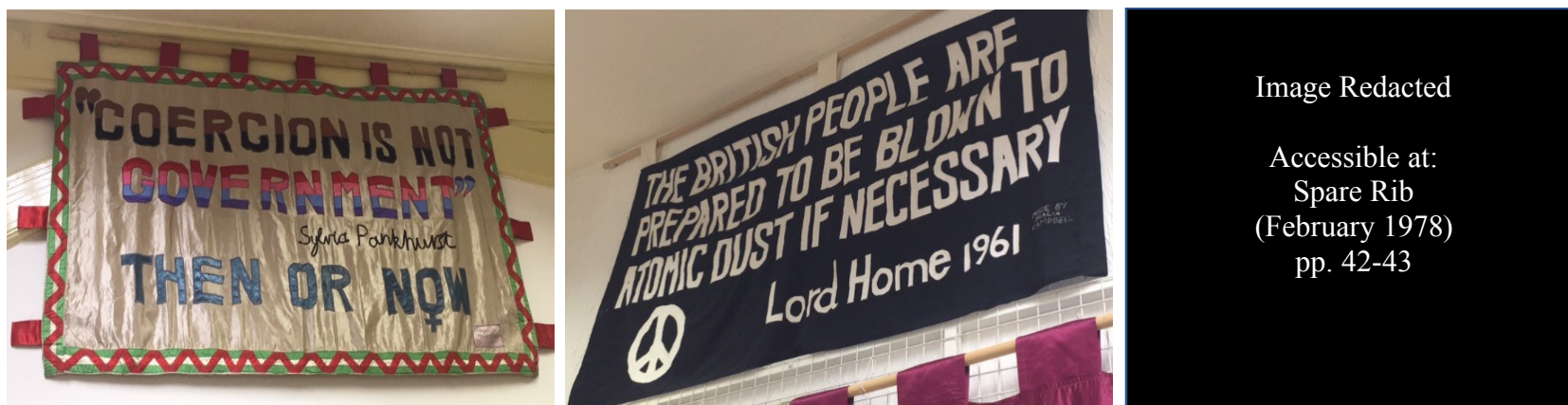
Figure 36: Left: Thalia Campbell (1985) 'COERCION IS NOT GOVERNMENT THEN OR NOW', appliqué; the Peace Museum, Bradford, England, Image credit: Anna Boonstra; Centre: Thalia Campbell (1983) 'Lord Home Banner', appliqué, one of three versions, the first was made by Campbell in 1961, the Peace Museum, Bradford, England, Image credit: Anna Boonstra; Right: Beryl Weaver-Evans (1977) embroidery artwork on cotton, Courtesy of The Women's Art Library, Goldsmiths University, London, England, Also in *Spare Rib* (February 1978) 'Subverting Sweetness' by Anny Brackx, p. 42-43, Copyright: *Spare Rib*.

The language utilised in punk clothing differs in that it was steeped in shock value, consciously designed largely by working-class youth, to provoke, upset and disrupt the complacency of wider society (Worsley, 2011). This is evident in words and slogans like 'DESTROY', 'NO FUTURE', 'ANARCHY', 'FUCK OFF' and 'HATE AND WAR'. These were handwritten, painted, stencilled, and screen-printed, often in all capital letters, onto various items of clothing. The use of profanity in the 1970s was shocking, whereas it resonates very differently today.

Contemporary makers in today's Women's Movement used slogans to promote their rights and equality such as 'TIMES UP THERESA', 'THIS IS WHAT A FEMINIST LOOKS LIKE', 'YES MEANS YES, NO MEANS NO', 'THE FUTURE IS FEMALE' and 'WOMAN'S RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS'. The 'FUTURE IS FEMALE' is an example of a slogan borrowed from the 1970s and is one which continues to be used within the women's movement today. It was widely implemented in clothing and textile art at the International Women's March in 2017. Contemporary maker Linda Izan (2018) also incorporated text into her work, most evident in her project dealing with sexual assault, which she called 'What does a WOMAN have to do to be BELIEVED'. The project involved making a jacket with predominately text that told the story of her elderly mother's sexual assault and not being believed by the police (Izan, 2018). Izan (2018) was very thoughtful in her word choice to best explain the incident. The text was digitally-printed, but Izan embroidered over the keywords to emphasis the sexual assault that occurred. The hem is a repeated pattern of the project's title, making its message hard to miss. She also considered the layout of the words so that they were legible when the garment was on the body (see figure 37). She explained the project:

'I went for a diaphanous Japanese style so that I could get as much information on that as possible. The initiative was not for it to be hung in the cupboard, it was to be seen and also to be seen in Manchester, which is the important thing, because it took place in Manchester with people who should've known better [...] I picked out critical words and phrases like 'not being believed'. I highlighted 'ran up the stairs', 'falling over', 'him kissing her'. It's like this, if you're a beautiful, young woman then you must have asked for it. If you're an old woman than who would want to do that to you. You literally can't win. You're not believed [...] I went to them. I spoke to them on the phone. I wrote to them. They didn't believe me. Nothing worked. It's not being believed. So, now have a garment with it written evidence that it happened. I've done it. You just get to a stage of despair where you think nobody is actually listening. What do you do?'. – Izan, 2018, interview with author

Figure 37: Linda Izan (2017-2018) 'What does a WOMAN have to do to be BELIEVED', jacket front, back and hem detail, embroidered and digitally printed, drawings and plans, Courtesy of Linda Izan.
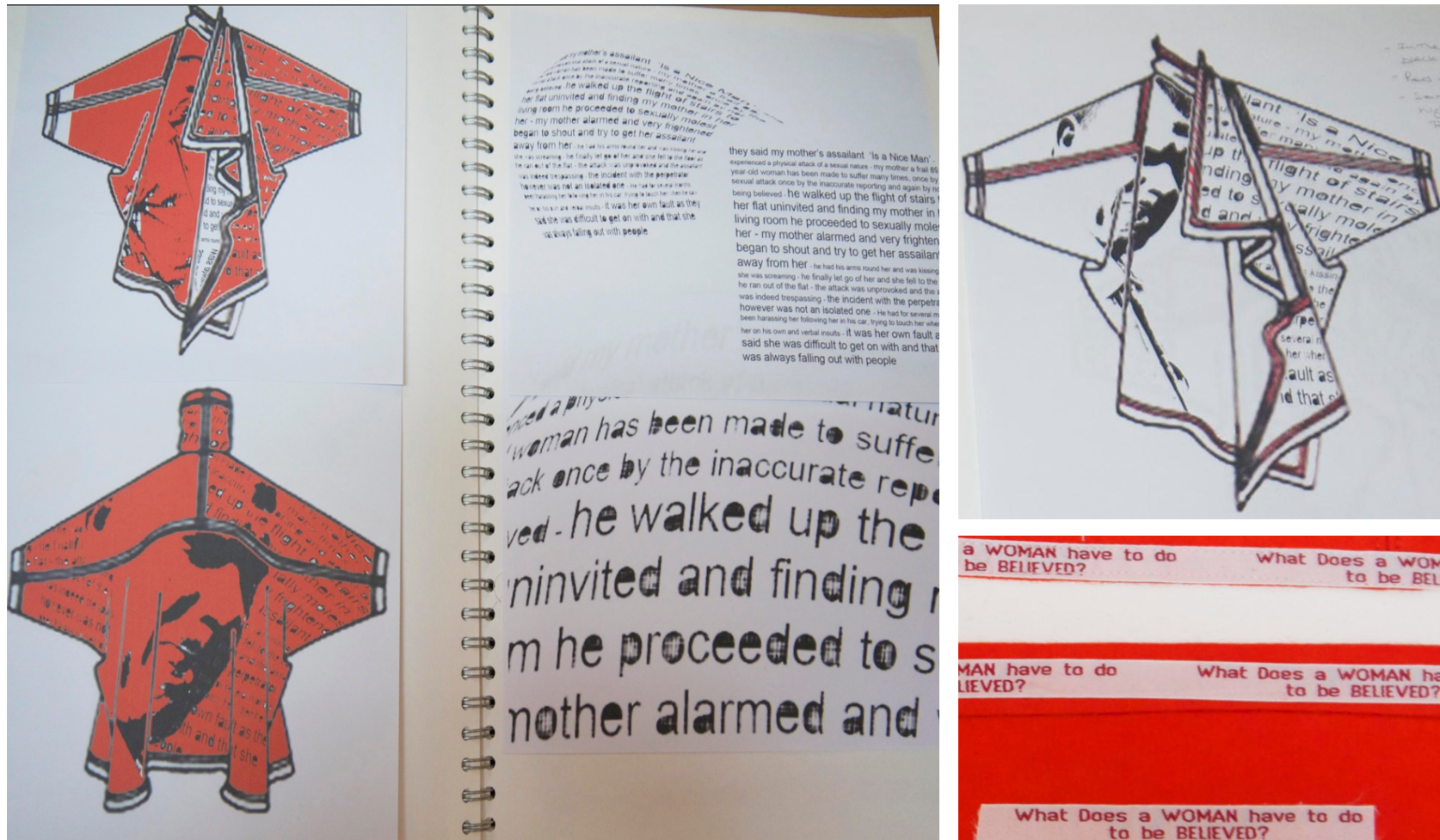
Figure 37 (continued): Linda Izan (2017-2018) 'What does a WOMAN have to do to be BELIEVED', jacket front, back and hem detail, embroidered and digitally printed, drawings and plans, Courtesy of Linda Izan.

Craftivists working with contemporary women's activism today also use inappropriate language to shock the public. This consists of taking derogatory language towards women and reappropriating them as a means of empowerment. Although different groups have attempted this word reversal tactic throughout history, the third-wave feminists in the 1990s aimed to strip the negative terminology, some of which dates back centuries, often ascribed to women who went outside patriarchal norms to challenge dominant ideologies (Russo, 1995; McQuiston, 1997; Owen, Stein, and Vande Berg, 2007; Sollée, 2017; Skelly, 2017). For instance, 'BITCH', 'SLUT', 'WHORE', 'CUNT', 'PUSSY', 'WITCH', 'DYKES' and 'NASTY' were all subverted. Despite their efforts, the meaning of these words largely remained stagnant thirty years later. Although there is still a degree of shock value in seeing them used on textiles and clothing today, although it is perhaps not as potent as it was in the 1990s. Contemporary embroidery artist Sophie King uses this language to draw attention to the meaning of these words, but relies more so on its materiality to aid in its subversion. She explained:

> 'I'm trying to use it in a way that subverts the meaning of the word. I'm trying to bring light to gender stereotypes. If someone sees an eye catching or attractive badge that says 'BITCH' or 'SLUT', maybe it will make them think what that word actually means. I wanted to take a word that has been historically used to shame and humiliate women and subvert it. I wanted the word to be worn in pride instead of embarrassment. Craft has also been historically seen as a domestic hobby or "women's work", so by using it communicate, it naturally draws attention'. —Sophie King, 2017, interview with author (see figure 38).

Figure 38: Sophie King (2014) Sequin patches on denim, Courtesy of Sophie King.

Although materiality can subvert or reinforce the words and symbols used in craftivism, that is always not the maker's intent. For example, the 'Lesbian Mothers' banner showed in Chapter 3.3, figure 24 and 25 was made from a pastel pink ground fabric with brightly coloured lettering that read, 'LESBIAN MOTHERS'. Its domestic and familial undertones could have aided in subverting the negative social connotations that the word 'lesbian' had in the 1980s. However, in an interview with its maker, Caryle Webb-Ingall, she explained that the materials were not strategically chosen but were employed because they were at hand, mainly being scraps of their children's old clothing. For Webb-Ingall, the banner's sole purpose was to inform society that families with lesbian parents were real families needing representation in schools.

SYMBOLS: REAPPROPRIATION

Although the objects were made by women with varying agendas (women's rights; socialism and class disparities; human security and world peace) and during different eras (1970-2019), the same symbols recur within the different case studies, especially those representing the pride and power of persons identifying as female, lesbian or, more recently, LGBTQ (please see figure 39 for a complete list of symbols identified by this study). Women involved in the WLM embellished clothing and textiles with several symbols, the most widely used of which was the Venus or women's symbol, denoting female sexuality (Henry and Smith, 1982). This was often accompanied by the double Venus or two intersecting Venus symbols to represent lesbianism or sisterhood (Henry and Smith, 1982). The first symbol became a popular graphic and was widely used in protests by various groups throughout the 1960s and 70s — predominately black activism — but was incorporated into the Venus symbol by second-wave feminists in 1969 and continues to be implemented in protest art today (Henry and Smith, 1982) (see figure 40). This symbol was widely used by the 'Reclaim the Night Marches' organisation (Henry and Smith, 1982). The 'cunt power' symbol though was a new gesture and icon used by second-wave feminists and was thus not widely recognised by the general public. The symbol is made by positioning one's hands with the pointer fingers and thumbs touching to create a diamond void which is symbolic of a vagina or 'cunt power' (Campbell, 2018). After seeing the icon used by female protesters throughout Europe, *Spare Rib,* a second-wave feminist magazine, used it on its cover in 1977 and it was subsequently adorned onto banners and badges through the 1980s (Henry and Smith, 1982) (see figure 41). The movement also reappropriated several Nazi symbols, specifically the inverted pink and black triangles. The pink triangle originated in Nazi concentration camps to identify gay prisoners but was later reappropriated by second-wave feminists to represent lesbianism and bisexuality and continues to be used to imply a larger community of individuals who identify as LGBTQ to this day (Lesperance, 2020). Similarly, the Nazi party adorned inverted black triangles on the clothing of women who did not comply with the party's ideology of being passive wives and mothers, labelling them as 'asocial' (Lesperance, 2020). The symbol was later reappropriated by feminists in the 1970s as a symbol of defiance. Given the ties that these symbols had to Nazism, they were shocking to society (Stevenson, 1999).

SYMBOLS USED WITHIN: WLM, GREENHAM COMMON AND THE CONTEMPORARY WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

SYMBOLS USED WITHIN: PUNK AND GREENHAM COMMON

VENUS/ WOMEN'S SYMBOL, DOUBLE VENUS
The standard symbol that is used to denote the female sex. In the mid-1700s, Carl Linnaeus adopted it to represent the female sex of plants (Lesperance, 2020). Astrologers also use it to denote the planet, Venus. It became the most widely used symbol by the Women's Liberation Movement in the 1970s and 80s. The two intersecting Venus symbols represent lesbianism or sisterhood (Henry and Smith, 1982).

VENUS/ FIST
The fist symbol is taken from a gesture seen in early protests which became a popular graphic symbol in the mid twentieth century (Henry and Smith, 1982). The fist or 'the black power salute' was largely seen in 1960s and 70s black activism, particularly the 1968 Mexico City Olympics where two black American sprinters, Tommie Smith and John Carlos donned black leather gloves with their fists raised high to denote black pride and power (Tulloch, 2008). The Venus/fist symbol was used by second-wave feminists of the 1970s and 80s to denote female power.

INVERTED BLACK AND PINK TRIANGLES
The black triangle was first a Nazi symbol given to women who did not comply with their ideology of women as passive wives and mothers (Lesperance, 2020). The pink originated in WWII Nazi concentration camps to identify gay prisoners and is now an LGBTQ symbol (Lesperance, 2020).

SWASTIKA
The swastika was first used as a design on artefacts from pre-Christian European cultures to symbolise good fortune. It was reappropriated in the twentieth century by the Nazi party to symbolise the idea of a racially 'pure' state (Hoffmann, 1997).

ANARCHY
A symbol created by youth culture in the late 1960s in Paris. It was most notably used by punks in the 1970s to denote their vision of order without power (Baillargeon, 2013).

UNION JACK
The icon represents the national flag of the United Kingdom. It symbolises individuality and community as it is made up of three different national symbols. It was used mainly in punk clothing and banners at Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp. The flag was renamed the 'Union Jill' in the Peace Movement when it was reappropriated with floral and geometric fabrics in colours like pink, red and green (Campbell, 2018).

Figure 39: Case Studies Symbol Graph (2020) Image Credit: Anna Boonstra.

SYMBOLS USED WITHIN: WLM, GREENHAM COMMON AND THE CONTEMPORARY WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

PEACE SYMBOL
It was designed in 1958 to signify British nuclear disarmament. It is composed of the initials 'C' and 'D' to represent the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) organisation. The symbol was initially rejected due to its Nazi connection as it was used on the sides of their army tanks in World War II (Pater, 2007). The symbol initially stems from the Runic alphabet to signify shielding or protection (Pater, 2007). ᛉ

PEACE/VENUS SYMBOL The Peace/Venus symbol represented women's effort in the peace movement.

CUNT POWER
The positioning of the hands to create a diamond void which is symbolic of a vagina or 'cunt power'. It was used by women protesters throughout Europe in the 1970s and 80s, but wasn't well-known to the general population (Campbell, 2018). It was utilised by the WLM, but widely in the protest materials used at Greenham.

DOVE AND OLIVE BRANCH
The dove and olive branch both used by early Christians to represent peace and harmony. They were widely used in the post-war Peace Movement.

CRESCENT MOON
The moon is representative of creative power in its waxing phase (Lesperance, 2020).

LABRYS
It was originally a Greek symbol, denoting the axe used by ancient female warriors. In the 1970s and 80s, it was reappropriated to symbolise lesbian strength (Henry and Smith, 1982; Lesperance, 2020).

RAINBOW
Gilbert Baker designed the rainbow flag in 1978 for the Gay Freedom Parade in San Francisco, USA (Lesperance, 2020). It was adopted as a symbol of pride and continues to represent the LGBTQ Movement. The icon was largely seen at Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp, as the protesters used the colours to identify the separate campsites (Lesperance, 2020).

Figure 39 (continued): Case Studies Symbol Graph (2020) Image Credit: Anna Boonstra.
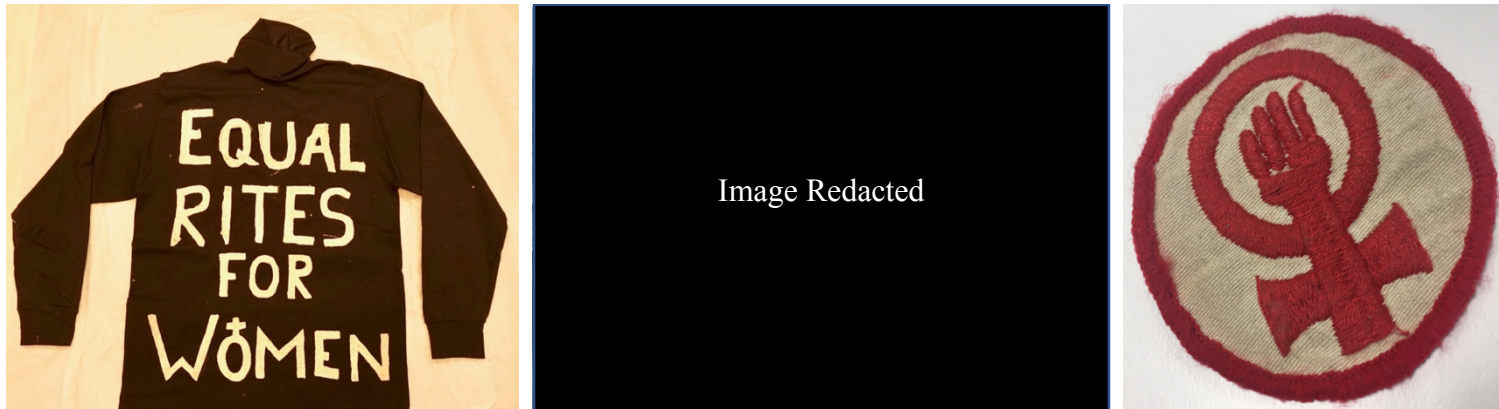
Figure 40: Left: Maker unknown (1978) 'Equal Rights for Women' jumper, black nylon with gold lettering glued on, The Women's Library at London School of Economics, London, England, Image Credit: Anna Boonstra; Centre: Photographer unknown (1980s) 'Black Lesbians' banner, courtesy of the Feminist Archive North, England, Copyright: The Feminist and Nonviolence Study Group and War Resisters International; Right: Maker unknown (1970s) Venus/fist iron-on badge, Feminist Archive South, Bristol, England, Image credit: Anna Boonstra.
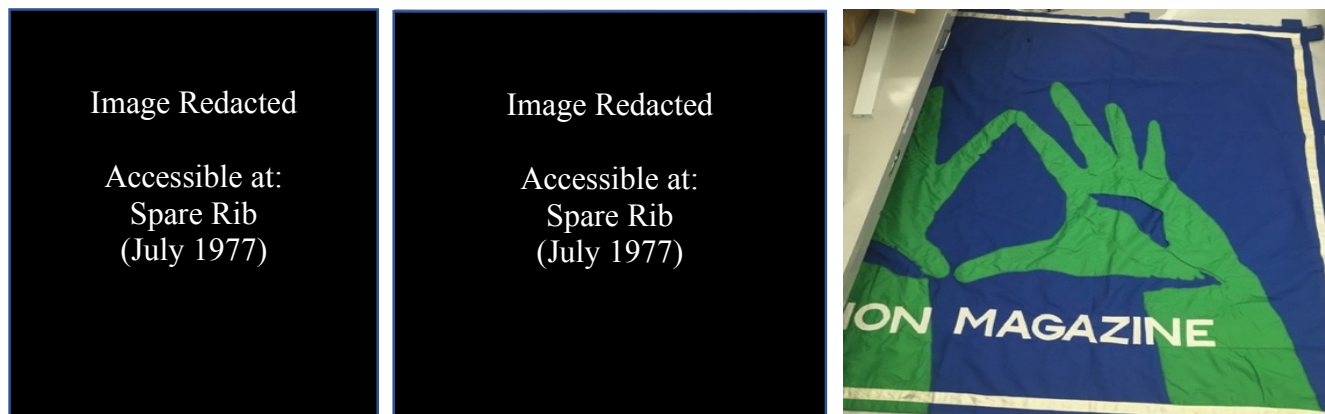
Figure 41: Left: *Spare Rib* (July 1977) magazine advertisement, 60, The Women's Art Library, Goldsmiths University, London, England, Image credit: Anna Boonstra, Copyright: *Spare Rib*; Middle: Photograph featuring *Spare Rib* (July 1977) magazine cover, 60, The Women's Art Library, Goldsmiths University, London, England, Image credit: Anna Boonstra, Photo Copyright: *Spare Rib;* Right: *Spare Rib* (1980) cotton banner, The Women's Library at London School of Economics, London, England, 2017, Image credit: Anna Boonstra.

Similarly, punks often incorporated the swastika symbol into their clothing as a means to shock and draw attention. The swastika, despite signifying Nazism, was not used by punks to signify hate towards any group but was rather used as a superficial emblem of right-wing politics that was intended to upset wider society (Stevenson, 1999). The anarchy symbol, despite being lesser known at the time, was also adopted by punks in the 1970s to denote a vision of order without power (Baillargeon, 2013). The symbol initially emerged in the late 1960s in Paris and was promoted by an extant youth culture which also envisioned a self-governing society (see figure 42).

Figure 42: Left: Maker Unknown (1984) black leather jacket, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England, Image credit: Anna Boonstra.
Right: Maker unknown (1977) Punk shirt, Hand-drawing and stencil on Cotton, The Horse Hospital, London, England, Image credit: Anna Boonstra.

At the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp, protesters used anti-war, anti-nuclear and anti-fascist symbols alongside those representing female life, particularly symbols denoting second-wave feminists and lesbian identity. The Peace symbol was widely used on their protest materials to represent the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CDN). At the time, it was a relatively new symbol, just over twenty years old, but originally stems from the Runic alphabet to signify shielding or protection (Pater, 2007). It was initially rejected as a symbol of peace because it was used by the Nazi Party on the sides of their army tanks in World War II, becoming an emblem of destruction and death (Pater, 2007). The dove and olive branch were also implemented into clothing and textile art to signify peace and desire to restore harmony. Greenham protesters also used many of the same symbols as the WLM to signify female and lesbian power. These include the Venus, the double Venus, the Venus/fist, the inverted pink and black triangles, and the 'cunt power symbol' (see figure 43 and 44). Several banners incorporated the hybrid Venus/Peace symbol to denote women's effort and the emergent power of the peace movement. The labrys was also commonly used, which originally symbolised the double-headed axe used by the ancient Greek Minoan female warriors, but was subsequently reappropriated to denote lesbianism in the late 1970s (Henry and Smith, 1982).

Figure 43: Right: Thalia Campbell (early 1980s) 'Llandrindod/ Greenham Banner', appliqué and embroidery on cotton and damask, St Fagans National Museum of History, Cardiff, Wales, Image credit: Anna Boonstra; Left: Maker unknown (1980s) vest, cotton, The Women's Library at London School of Economics, London, England, 2019 (right), Image credit: Anna Boonstra.

Figure 44: Left: Maker Unknown, (1980s) 'OUT AND PROUD' t-shirt, screen-printing on cotton, Feminist Archive South, Bristol, England, Image Credit Anna Boonstra; Right: Maker unknown, (early 1980s) knitted jumper with inverted pink and black triangles, video still, *Carry Greenham Home* (1983) by Beeban Kidron and Amanda Richardson, 1 hour, 9 minutes, Courtesy of Ellen Lesperance.

The use of symbolism is unique in that they often communicate subtly *in lieu* of actual words, as many of them are not identifiable to the general public. For example, in the 1970s and early 1980s, Michelene Wandor, a member of the WLM created samplers, vests, and jumpers emblazed with the Venus symbol. She often gifted these clothing items to the children of her close friends (quoted in Rose, 2009) (see figure 45). One of the recipients of Wandor's jumpers, Sally Davin recalled wearing it, stating, "I got lots of positive comments from adults who knew about feminism and recognised the symbol. People who were against feminism didn't recognise it" (quoted in Rose, 2009). Although fifty years have passed, the Venus symbol is more recognisable by British society but is not universally known. According to Pater (2007), the perception of symbols is largely culturally dependent and cannot be a neutral communication tool. Many of the symbols seen in protest clothing and textile art from forty and fifty years ago are continually used in contemporary craftivism, particularly the Venus, double Venus, Venus/fist, labrys, Peace, and inverted pink triangle. The Venus symbol and its many permutations have since evolved into several additional symbols which now denote the LGBTQ community, represented in clothing and textile craftivism today (see figure 46).

Figure 46: Left: Unknown maker (1999) 'Transgender Symbol' t-shirt, screen-printing on cotton, Civic Collection, Fashion and Textile Museum, London, England, 2018, Image credit: Anna Boonstra; Right: Yarnachist (2019) 'TRANS RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS', crocheted blanket, Courtesy of Yarnachist.

Figure 45: Michelene Wandor (1970s) vest and jumper, knit, MsUnderstood 2009 Exhibition, The Women's Library at London School of Economics London, England, Courtesy of Dr Clare Rose.

4.3   CONTEXT

The data derived from the focus group research, the pilot survey and the semi-structured interviews shed light on the manner in which craftivism is performed or circulated. Although craftivism often resists classification in craft or activist discourses, the research data reveals the myriad forms or enactments in which craftivists partake to resist, advocate and raise awareness of socio-political issues. Craftivism thus falls into two main categories of dissemination and their respective subgroups, which are 'collective' ('direct' and 'indirect') and 'individual' ('public', 'private', 'every-day', 'anonymous' and 'virtual') action (see figure 47). It is important to note that these subgroups often intersect, and most craftivist projects fit within more than one subgroup.

Activism often takes place through direct action wherein one physically participates in creating change through such acts as marching or striking, acts which are often conducted away from larger organisations or social movements (Graeber, 2009). Much of women's activism as part of the WLM and Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp was carried out using the body in mass gatherings, thereby showing solidarity towards their cause. Their collective identities were expressed in material culture through colours, symbols and text displayed on clothing and banners (Polletta and Jasper, 2001). Although the common perception of activism is that it needs to be carried out physically and publically in organised, mass events like marches and rallies, activism often occurs indirectly and by individual means (Martin, 2007). Individuals can also be active in social movements without directly participating in organising, recruiting or raising funds, a function which is largely done online today (Martin 2007; Graeber, 2009). Several craftivists within this study have contributed to activist organisations and movements indirectly by selling, loaning or donating physical items of protest clothing and textile art. Some craftivists who participate indirectly are unable to participate physically and thereby more visibly, owing to such factors as employment, immigration, race, disability, family, religion, and location, *inter alia*.

Other craftivists identified within this study also choose to work on their own and independently of any group or organisation, many of whom create, display and wear craftivism to make a public declaration or show affiliation towards a cause. Some even incorporated craftivism into their daily lives through small acts of protest rather than intense episodic events. This was done simply by wearing text, symbols or colours to show affiliation towards a cause. A few research participants believe in the importance of self-activism and what it does for one's own consciousness as opposed to publicising it. These craftivists create, display and wear craftivism privately to contemplate the issue at hand and show support subtly and often unknowingly to others. This is sometimes done due to external factors that otherwise inhibit the person

from publicly voicing their socio-political viewpoints. Please see figure 48 for a graph showing the types of collective and individual activism carried out by the craftivists within this study, specifically in relation to the types of object made, their content and how they were disseminated. The graph demonstrates that women involved in the earlier case studies (WLM, Punk, and Greenham) took part mainly in direct action (e.g. marches, strikes, rallies) more frequently than the participants of today's Women's Movement, who largely take part indirectly, privately and through small daily acts of protest.
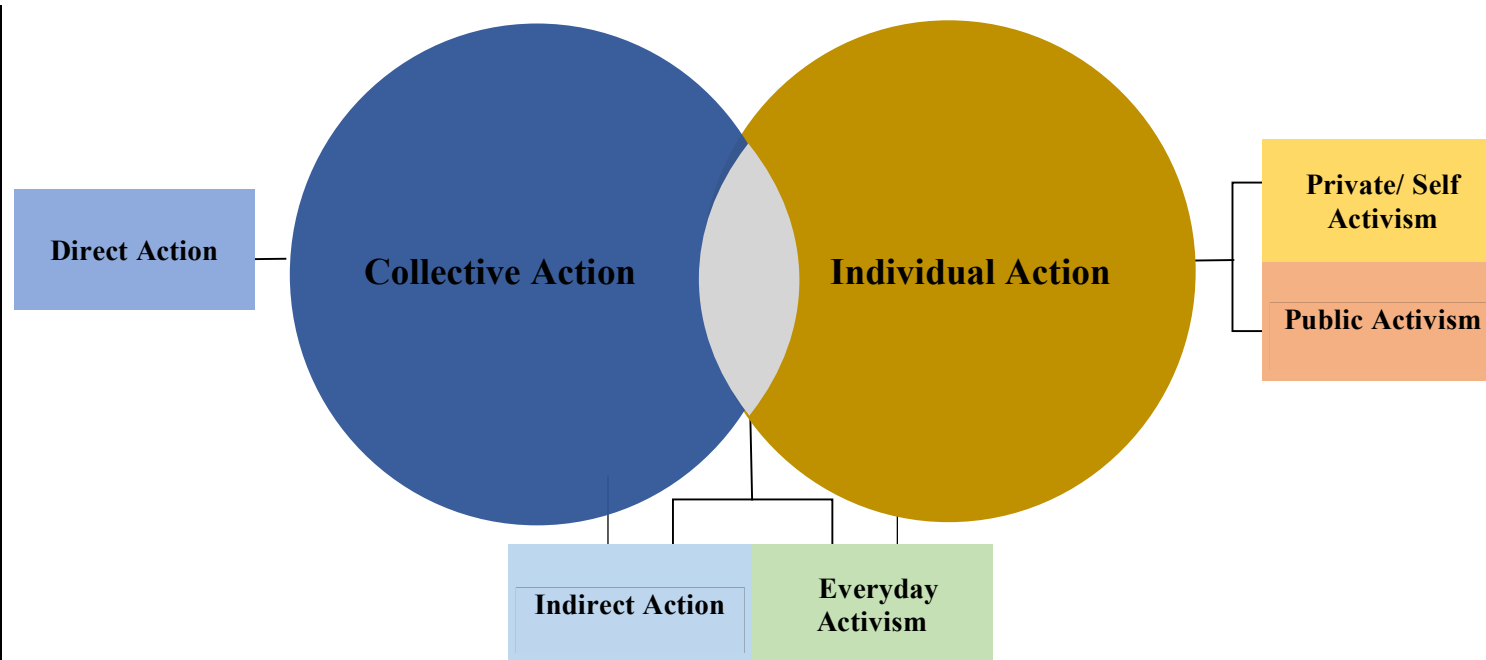
Collective Activism: A group effort to raise awareness or make societal change. **Direct Action:** A physical effort to achieve a goal (strikes, blockades, boycotts, marches, demonstrations, and protests) (Graeber, 2009). **Indirect Action:** Acts carried out to assist collective activism in achieving its goal. This includes organising, recruiting, raising funds, and making protest materials (Graeber, 2009). These activists are often unable to directly participate because of physical or legal restrictions, such as age, disability, immigration, and employment. Many introverted individuals also feel more comfortable contributing behind the scenes (Corbett, 2017; Fowler, 2017).

Individual Activism: An effort to raise awareness or make a change by one's self, often independent of organisations. **Public Activism:** An open support or declaration to a cause taking place in a communal space physically or virtually. **Private activism:** Self-contained action where only one's self is aware. This is often done for one's internal benefit.

Everyday Activism: Small actions that are carried in one's daily life to bring awareness and show support or allegiance to a cause. **Anonymous Activism:** Acts or efforts in a public space to raise awareness of an issue without claiming authorship. **Virtual Activism:** Acts to raise awareness or incite societal change through virtual technology and social media platforms. This can be done anonymously.

Figure 47: Activism Classification Graph (2020) Image credit: Anna Boonstra

	Interviewee Makers	Context	Item Type	Content	Collective Action		Individual Action		
					Direct Action	Indirect Action	Private/Self Activism	Public Activism	Every-day Activism
WLM	C. Webb-Ingall	March	Banner	Text, Symbols	X				
	Sue Richardson	Gallery	Textile Art	Text				X	
	Jo Stanley	March	Banner, Sash	Text, Colour	X	X			
PUNK	Gail Thibert	Street, Club	Clothing	Text, Symbols				X	X
	Caroline Coon	Street, Club	Clothing	Text, Symbols				X	X
	Alex Michon	Post / Gallery	Clothing	Text, Symbols				X	X
GREENHAM	Judith Baron	Demonstration	Banner	Text	X				
	Katrina Howse	Demonstration	Banner	Symbols	X				
	Juley Howard	Demonstration, Street	Clothing: Jumper/ Vests	Text, Symbols	X			X	X
	Jenny Engledow	Demonstration	Banner	Text, Colour	X				

Figure 48: Participant Activism Graph (2020) Image credit: Anna Boonstra.

Vertical label: **TODAY'S WOMEN'S MOVEMENT**

Interviewee Makers	Context	Item Type	Content	Collective Action		Individual Action		
				Direct Action	Indirect Action	Private/Self Activism	Public Activism	Every-day Activism
Elaine Loader	Gallery	Clothing	Text, Colour				X	
Helen Jones	Gallery/ Street	Clothing	Text				X	
Anonymous	March	Clothing	Text, Colour	X			X	X
Natasha Peter	Street	Banner	Text				X	X
Jennifer Kabat	Street	Clothing	Symbols			X	X	
Stella McClure	Selling	Clothing	Text		X		X	X
Niku Archer	Demonstration	Clothing	Text, Symbols, Colour	X				
Ellen Lesperance	Street	Clothing	Symbols		X	X		
Sophie King	Selling	Clothing/Textile Art	Text, Colour		X			
Alana Tyson	Gallery	Textile Art	Text				X	
Sara Impey	Gallery	Textile Art	Text				X	
Linda Izan	Gallery/Street	Clothing	Text, Colour				X	

Figure 48 (continued): Participant Activism Graph (2020) Image credit: Anna Boonstra.

COLLECTIVE ACTION: DIRECT AND INDIRECT PARTICIPATION

Activism largely takes place through direct action wherein one physically participates in creating change through such acts as marching or striking, protests which are often held apart from larger organisations or social movements (Graeber, 2009). Much of women's activism in support of the WLM and Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp was carried out using the body in mass gatherings. Clothing and textile art was also used to serve as prime visual aids in support of their cause. The 'Reclaim the Night' (1977) and 'Take Back the Night' (2004 –) marches show the continuity of using the body in protest, particularly in mass demonstrations to visually highlight solidarity towards a cause. Since activism today is largely performed indirectly and subtly, large demonstrations are visually powerful, as highlighted by the International Women's March in 2017. During an interview with research participant Sue Richardson, who was actively involved in the Women's Liberation Movement of the 1970s, she commented that women's activism today appears to be small-scale in comparison to past efforts, yet she is aware that this can be attributed to the Internet, since many actions such as organising and recruiting, take place virtually today. She states:

> 'I think it's hard to gage how many people are involved in the [current] movement, whereas it was very easy in the 70s, because it was physical. You had to meet together. To communicate you had to go out to a phone box and ring people on a phone tree who then rang other people. That was especially apparent at things like Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp. The communication system was totally different'. – Richardson, 2018, interview with author

Newmeyer (2008) recognises that traditional methods of activism can alienate certain groups of people who are otherwise unable to participate owing to such factors as employment, immigration, race, disability, family lifestyle, religion, location, etc. Through indirect activism, individuals and groups may be active in social movements without directly participating, particularly through such acts as organising, recruiting or raising funds, functions which today are largely performed online (Martin 2007; Graeber, 2009). This study found that much of craftivism is performed indirectly by selling, loaning or donating physical items of protest paraphernalia. Although activism was not commercialised in the 1970s and 80s like it is today, there is much evidence to prove that individuals sold items for protest within these social movements. A few women were involved in selling scarfs to fellow protesters on their 'Walk to Greenham' from Cardiff in 1981. The scarfs were screen-printed with the image of a naked female body, plus Venus/peace symbols and the text 'WOMEN FOR PEACE ON EARTH' (see figure 49). The development of new media and communication channels, such as magazines and zines, also created a space for women to sell items for protest. Women involved in the WLM and Greenham

placed ads in Spare Rib (1972-1993), a second-wave feminist magazine, selling clothing, badges, and jewellery embellished with politically charged symbols like the labrys, Venus, and peace symbol (see figure 50).

Several small start-up businesses sold punk clothing in the late 1970s and early 80s, particularly in London, most notably Westwood and McLaren's store 'Sex' (1974), but were unaffordable, primarily to their target audience: young adults and teenagers. This caused punks to replicate their designs using DIY creativity. Gail Thibert (2017) explained that clothing was often lent and traded amongst fellow punk friends to wear a new look without spending money.

Figure 49: Left: Artist Unknown (August 1981) Cotton screen-printed, The People's History Museum, Manchester, England, Image credit: Anna Boonstra; Right: Photograph by unknown (August 1981) March to Greenham, Courtesy of Feminist Archive North, Leeds, England.

Image Redacted

Accessible at:
Spare Rib
(February 1981, July 1982, March 1987)

Figure 50: *Spare Rib* (February 1981, July 1982 and March 1987) advertisements for clothing, badges and jewellery, examples within The Women's Art Library, Goldsmiths University, London, England, Image credit: Anna Boonstra. Copyright: *Spare Rib*.

Archival research also uncovered several leaflets, particularly from the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp, asking those who could not attend to donate banners. One specifically addresses those who are 'elderly, disabled or housebound', asking them to contribute to the cause by materialising their thoughts and beliefs through creativity (see figure 51). These leaflets do not specifically mention the different races or nationalities who also possibly wanted to participate, but were unable to be present. In a special issue of *Spare Rib* (May 1984, p.19) dedicated to the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp, they discussed the lack of black women within the peace movement. One Greenham protester interviewed within the issue felt that the lack of diversity could either have been attributed to racism by the police, or else to a fear of deportation because of their immigration status (Henry, 1984). Amanda Hassan (1984), who was one of few black women at Greenham, didn't mention feeling that she was at a higher risk of being arrested or fined because of her race. However, like many other black women of the time, she felt that the movement didn't acknowledge race or cultural differences, which they found very off-putting, causing them to partake in other movements.

Similarly, in 2016, a woman called Aram Han Sifuentes founded the 'Protest Lending Library' in Chicago, US, where the public could make, donate or borrow banners free of charge (Miranda, 2018). Sifuentes couldn't always go to protests because she was a new mother and a non-citizen, yet still wanted to participate without fear of affecting her family or jeopardising her immigration status (Morris, 2017). Many such like-minded people came together to contribute to protest through the creation of banners which addressed local and global issues for others to use on marches and rallies (Morris, 2017; Miranda, 2018) (see figure 52). Her project has shed much light on the restrictive nature of traditional activism and the passion of those who still wish to make their voices heard via alternative modes of communication. Although she has exhibited the banners internationally, the library mainly loans domestically. She hopes to expand the library as she recognises the need for them within cities worldwide (Miranda, 2018).
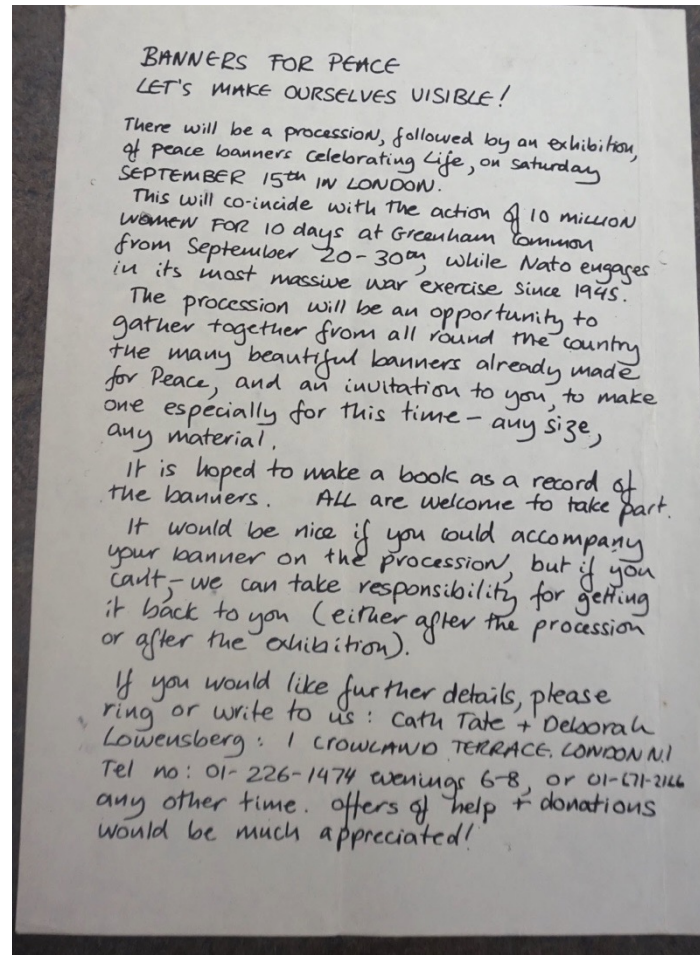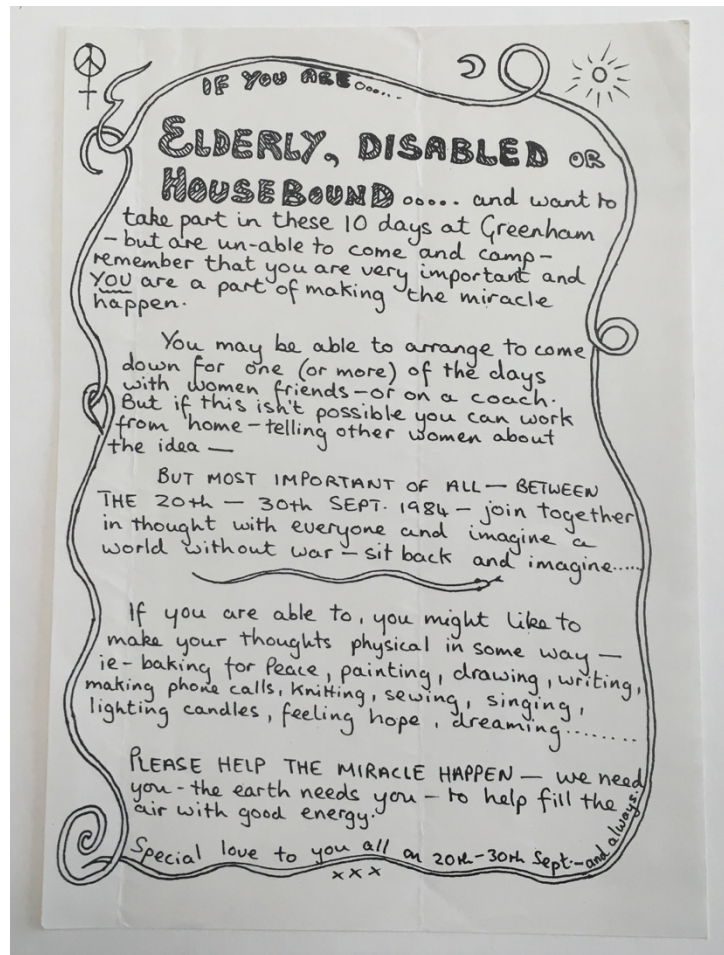
Figure 51: Author Unknown, (1982-1984) 'Greenham Common Peace Camp Campaign Leaflets', The Women's Library archival collection at London School of Economics, London, England, 2017, Image Credit: Anna Boonstra.

Figure 52: Aram Han Sifuentes (2016 –) Protest Lending Library banners, Chicago, USA, Image credit: Anna Boonstra

Online accessibility has also opened up further opportunities for activists to contribute to protest. This was especially evident in the Pussy hat Project (2017-2018) which provided a downloadable pattern that was globally accessible, affording those who were unable to physically attend the Women's March (2017) the opportunity to contribute to women's activism by donating hats for those participants who couldn't make their own (Kaiser, 2020). Although their actions were indirect, they aided direct action in achieving the goal of greater visibility to draw attention towards women's rights

Two of the interviewees within this study participate in craftivism indirectly by selling socio-politically charged clothing and textile art. British textile artist Sophie King sells many items that are embellished with embroidery and sequin designs, largely surrounding the theme of feminism. Many of her clothing items, including sweatshirts, t-shirts and corsets, are purchased for organised protest events and as everyday items of fashionwear. Within the last few years, she has made many customised items for patrons attending protest events. One such example is the 'NASTY WOMAN' badge she crafted for a protester planning to take part in the 2017 Women's March. The woman who wore the badge was also interviewed as part of this study, but asked to remain anonymous because her job requires her to remain politically neutral at a public level. She explained that she reached out to King to customise a badge since she personally didn't have the skillset to do so. She stated that she really appreciated the notion that it wasn't mass-produced and was made by someone with similar viewpoints about women's rights to her own. She also mentioned that she liked being able to help someone in promoting their work while simultaneously protesting her personal beliefs (see figure 53 top). Similarly, British fashion designer and boutique owner Stella McClure also sells premade clothing items as well as customised designs which revolve around social and global issues. She even encourages customers to send in their pre-existing clothing to be embellished. After the US first lady, Melania Trump wore a jacket embellished with the slogan 'I REALLY DON'T CARE, DO U?' to a migrant child detention centre in the States, McClure (2019) replicated the jacket but changed the text to read 'I REALLY DO CARE DON'T U?' (see figure 53 bottom). She donated ten percent of the sale of the jacket to helpreguees.org. She commented on this project, saying:

> 'I was shocked at her deliberate lack of empathy and felt compelled to do something about it. I added the 'no one is illegal' slogan to counteract the whole ethos of Trump's policies. The reaction I received was very positive and even had one customer request that I signed and dated the inside of the jacket and included the limited-edition item number as she felt it was a piece of protest art'. –McClure, 2019, interview with author

Figure 53: Top Left and Centre: Sophie King (2017) handcrafted sequins patch applied to a denim jacket, worn at the 2017 Women's March in Washington, D.C., US Courtesy of Sophie King; Top Right: Anonymous Participant (2017) wearing jacket at Women's March in Washington, D.C., US, Courtesy of Anonymous participant; Bottom: Stella McClure (2018) 'I REALLY DO CARE' jacket front and back, stencil/ paint on cotton, Courtesy of Stella McClure.

By selling protest clothing and textile art, these women are contributing to protest indirectly. They are providing a market for many people seeking items for direct action events or everyday protest. Customers who buy these items often do not have the time or skillset to make or embellish their own items. It also provides an outlet for the more introverted makers to express their political beliefs publicly without physically doing so themselves.

INDIVIDUAL ACTIVISM: PUBLIC, PRIVATE, EVERYDAY, ANONYMOUS AND VIRTUAL

Several craftivists within this study choose to work on their own, independently of any affiliation to a wider group or organisation. Many of those who create, display or wear craftivism do so to make a public declaration and to show affiliation towards a cause in both the physical and virtual space. For example, contemporary embroidery artist and secondary school teacher Helen Jones makes textile art that deals with feminism, labour exploitation, and sustainability. In 2018, she took the sexist headlines found in popular UK newspapers and magazines about women and embroidered them onto a child's school shirt to show the societal pressures which all women, particularly the younger generation face (Jones, 2019). She discovered that all of these headlines were actually written by women, reinforcing feminine ideals that feminists have been trying to rid themselves of since the 1970s (Jones, 2019). She explained:

> 'Everything that is stitched onto the shirt is headlines from newspapers or magazines about women. I started off embroidering the quote about Brexit. It said, "Never mind Brexit, who won Legs-it?". That was the first one I stitched. I then realized that it was written by a female. It was a female journalist who wrote that. I thought that was really interesting. I started finding that every single one was written by a female. I then decided to hon in on this. I think people often think that men are make these comments as a joke or to be cool, but if its women saying it and thinking it then it's so damaging. We need to call people out on it, because it's not right. Since its a school shirt, I thought about a kid picking up a magazine and reading the headline or seeing it on social media. It can have such a bad and negative effect'. –Jones, 2019, interview with author

Much like Nicola Ashmore's 'Remakings of Picasso's Guernica' (2012-2014), Jones' work also functions as both a piece of artwork and an item of protest. Jones displayed the shirt within an exhibition setting and on social media, which allowed many viewers to examine its fine detail. To expose her message to different groups of the population who did not frequent formal institutions like museums or galleries, she wore the shirt out into the urban, public environment, specifically on public transportation (see figure 54). When wearing it, she received a lot of interest, curiosity, and stares from fellow passengers trying to read the embroidery. Unlike an

exhibition, interested viewers had less opportunity to study it closely because of the restriction of personal space. Nonetheless, it was an opportunity for her to participate in activism on an individual level, bringing further awareness to sexist ideals continually reinforced by society, often by women themselves.
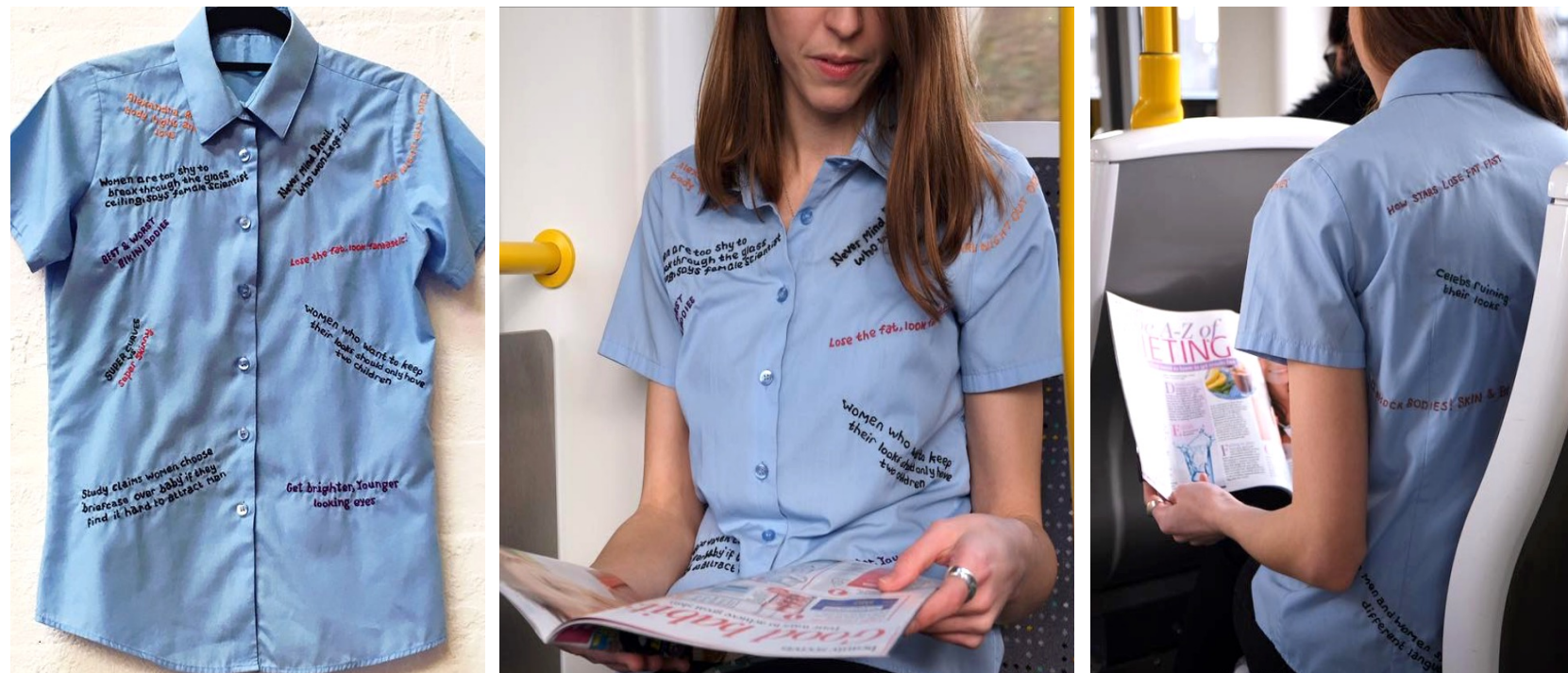
Figure 54: Helen Jones (2018) magazine headline shirt, embroidery on cotton, Courtesy of Helen Jones and photographer Jacob York.

Individuals within this study also participated in activism by incorporating craftivism in their daily lives through small acts of protest rather than intense episodic events. Punk, for example, aptly articulated the frustration of the working-class youth through a rebellion of attitudes, style, and music, challenging the predominant culture, capitalist power, and social conformity (English, 2013; Talbot, 2013). They visually and visibly constructed a language through their everyday clothing to illustrate the economic deterioration, stagnation, and societal discontent of the times (Hebidge, 1979; Sladen, 2007). Through small, daily efforts like wearing safety pin earrings or putting studs and chains onto their clothing, female punks were instrumental in provoking societal change by conveying and subverting power. Similarly, Greenham protester Thalia Campbell aimed to bring attention to socio-political issues through her daily clothing. She often dyed trousers and jumpsuits purple and added green and white accents to show allegiance with the Suffrage Movement (Campbell, 2018) (see figure 55 left and centre). These were subtle acts of protest that often went unnoticed by wider society but were appreciated by her fellow protesters (Campbell, 2018). Another Greenham protester called Juley Howard, also implemented craftivism into her daily life but used a much more apparent approach. She made her protest very visible by making and wearing knitted jumpers adorned with direct messages like 'I OPPOSE THATCHER'S BRITAIN', 'POWER CORRUPTS', 'DON'T VOTE FASCISM', 'POWER TO WOMEN' and 'WILL THERE BE WOMANLY TIMES?' (see figure 55 Right). Although these garments were crafted as part of the Peace Movement, she wore them daily, often outside of the camp environment to places including church, on holiday and when in prison. She explained that the women at Greenham were very receptive to the jumpers and enjoyed seeing them, but she felt that they were dismissed outside of that context (Howard, 2017). She remembered wearing one of the jumpers to Church that said, 'KATRINA IS INNOCENT', and a woman who disagreed with the message approached her to let her know. Similarly, when traveling home from a hiking trip in Ireland, she was stopped at the border for wearing one of her jumpers. She recalled the incident:

> 'I was traveling to Ireland in 1984/85 to go hiking. I was trying to come home and was stopped at the border. I was wearing a jumper I knitted that said, 'Free Anne Francis'. Anne was imprisoned for a year for a law she was accused of breaking at Greenham. They held me in Ireland for questioning. They obviously saw the jumper as threatening [...] I was eventually released and allowed across the border'. – Howard, 2017, interview with author

These small, everyday acts of protest brought her viewpoints of nuclear disarmament, feminism, and anti-fascism into contexts they were not openly welcomed or discussed, thereby exposing individuals and groups to ideas they usually would not consider.

Figure 55: Left: Thalia Campbell (early 1980s) Dyed purple jumpsuit with a purple, green and white ribbon attached to breast pocket, cotton, displayed in the '*People Power: Fighting for Peace* exhibition*, Imperial War Museum, London, England, 2017, permanently housed at The Women's Library at London School of Economics, London, England, 2019 (right), Image credit: Anna Boonstra; Centre: Thalia Campbell (early 1980s) Dyed purple sleeveless jumpsuit, cotton, St Fagans National Museum of History, Cardiff, Wales, 2017, Image credit: Anna Boonstra; Right: Juley Howard (late 1980s) 'POWER TO WOMEN' Jumper, knit, Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp, Courtesy of Juley Howard.

Interviewee Natasha Peter often performs craftivism anonymously by positioning mini protest banners around the city of London in a statement intended to reclaim public space and make socio-political statements (see chapter 2.1, figure 6). Since the craft object is used in place of the protester's physical presence, it thereby 'performs' the act of protest anonymously on their behalf as it is left behind within the urban environment (Fowler, 2017). This type of activism gives those activists who are disinclined towards human confrontation the opportunity to make their statement without encountering any resistance or negativity (Corbett, 2017; Fowler, 2017). This is also less intimidating for the viewer because they get to decide whether to engage with the object on their terms without feeling external pressure

(Corbett, 2017). There is also an element of anonymity incorporated within such virtual activism, since people can post pictures of their work online without revealing their true identities. Several research participants also voiced concerns over the influence and pressures of an online audience and its effect on the themes and concepts they choose to craft. Behind a screen, people feel more confident in their freedom to criticise craftivism than they would in person. Sophie King, for example, is very conscious of labelling her work as 'feminist' because of the negative comments she often receives through social media from both men and women. Although she claims that this hasn't substantially affected her subject matter, she is more careful in explaining her work to avoid negative criticism.

While the practice of craftivism is perceived to be a visible and materialised expression of one's socio-political concerns, whether displayed or worn in the public domain, it often remains in contemporary times, despite the prevalence of digital media, a very private affair. The pilot study survey showed that a quarter of participants didn't share their work. Although these individuals fall within the older age category of research participants (50+), it is unfair to assume that this is due to a lack of knowledge or comfort using digital media. The semi-structured interviews refuted this claim, revealing that the participants' reasoning for not sharing their work is not an issue of digital incompetence, but a preference for engaging in self-activism. These individuals who are predominantly working in contemporary craftivism, recognise the importance of private or self-contained activism, mainly what it does for one's own consciousness as opposed to publicising it. While this can be conducted in the privacy of one's own home, it can also be brought out into the public domain by wearing hidden, cryptic or subtle messages which are only understood by the wearer (or very few other people). For example, in 2015, artist-educator Ellen Lesperance created a project called 'Congratulations and Celebrations', which replicated a jumper from a photograph taken at Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp in 1987 (see figure 56). The jumper was adorned with the labrys symbol, which originally symbolised the axe used by ancient Greek Minoan female warriors, but was reappropriated in the 1970s and 80s as an emblem lesbianism and sisterhood (Henry and Smith, 1982; Lesperance, 2020). For Lesperance, the historical significance of the symbol and its implementation at Greenham symbolised strength and power. Since 2015, she has loaned out the jumper on hundreds of occasions across the world, lending it to anyone needing strength and encouragement. The jumper has since been worn in various contexts, including direct activism in the form of protests and marches, but also more privately for such acts as breastfeeding, sexually transitioning, or just being at home with family members or oneself (Kabat, 2017). In 2016, interviewee Jennifer Kabat wore the jumper to vote and to teach in, as well as to visit a former Cold War missile site, giving her the strength of her feminist predecessors in her time of need. Although it was worn in public, for Kabat, it was more a gesture of private activism, one that connected her to those who wore it before her and the original protester from the photograph

(Kabat, 2017). In today's society, the labrys is still not widely recognisable by society at large, therefore allowing those who wear it the opportunity to protest in public more discretely than wearing a slogan. In a conversation with Kabat, she described the reactions she received when wearing the jumper:

'No one commented on it. I don't think anyone thought anything of it […] My students didn't know what the symbol signified either until I explained its history. I also had the opportunity to wear it while visiting a former Cold War missile site in Marin Headlands, California. A woman around my age stopped me and asked if I knew it was labrys and that it signified lesbian pride. She was the only one who commented on it'. –Kabat, 2018, interview with author

Lesperance (2019) explained that those who have grown up in the 1980s and were exposed to queer culture would be familiar with the labrys as it was seen on t-shirts, jewellery, and literature at the time. She recognises that today's younger generation may be unaware of the symbol and its meaning but appreciates its cryptic nature. She explains her decision to utilise the labrys in her work:

'I thought it was really communicative and simple. I also liked the idea of a battle axe you use to fight for something or a symbol that you can use to identify by. It's so open-ended. And I just thought it would be even more generative than one that was a little bit more, I guess, didactic […] I think it's an interesting code. Instead of having a shirt that says, "I'm a feminist", I think that is something
that only speaks to certain people. So, it acts more like a coded language that people can communicate and identify with. People feel empowered by it'. –Lesperance, 2019, interview with author

Similarly, a number of research participants stressed that the making process was just as important as the displaying of the art, because it helped them to understand people and to contemplate the socio-political issues at hand. Textile artist Claire Barber describes thinking through ideas and empathising with others through cloth. She explained, 'In the past, I thought about engaging with cloth or maybe what's written into cloth or embroidering over it as a way to think about situations through that process […] because stitching can kind of slow you down. It gives you that thinking space, and that enables a degree of empathy through the stitching process' (Barber, 2017). These participants realised that activism does not always fit within its traditional ideology of being a public, collective, and mass event but can be internal and an audience for one (Kabat, 2018).

Figure 56: Left: Photograph by unknown (1987) Labrys jumper, knit, worn at Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp, The Women's Library at London School of Economics, London, England, Courtesy of Ellen Lesperance; Right: Jennifer Kabat (2016) jumper, knit, made by Ellen Lesperance (2015-ongoing) 'Congratulations and Celebrations', Courtesy of Jennifer Kabat.

THE BODY: PERFORMATIVITY, SOLIDARITY AND REPRESENTATION

This study considers the role of the body in protest and how it influences how craftivism is communicated versus textile art. Much of the data obtained from the semi-structured interviews in relation to the body addresses themes of allegiance, solidarity, representation and performance. By wearing craftivism, its proponents are directly associated with the messages they carry and are thus open to direct criticism (or praise), in contrast to the display of a banner hanging in a gallery or placed anonymously within the urban domain. This is because the individual, in person, either stands for or represents the message. Similarly, textile artist Sophie King (2018)

described her clothing designs as 'conversation starters' that create opportunities to discuss socio-political topics. She explained that many of her customers are stopped when wearing her clothing and asked about its design and message (King, 2018). Clothing designer and boutique owner Stella McClure (2019) commented on wearing her work, stating, 'I think it's an excellent way of communicating a belief as it can be seen by many in a variety of situations where perhaps a protest banner would not be acceptable or permitted'.

The utilisation of clothing in protest is significant, not only for the meanings they communicate or for their aesthetic appearance but also their ability to impart feelings on the wearer. These feelings then produce bodily demeanour (Negrin, 2016). Although dress is a social and public act, it is also a personal one due to its intimate and close proximity to the body (Entwistle and Wilson, 2001; Wilson, 2003 [1985]). Protest clothing imparts feelings of empowerment and strength in its wearer. For example, the pussyhat was designed around the idea of an item that would give women the courage and visibility to stand up for women's rights. This idea is also evident in Lesperance's 'Congratulations and Celebrations' project (2015 –). People borrow the jumper for a sense of strength and support to aid them in various situations that range from coming out as gay to their families or finding the courage to ride a rollercoaster (Lesperance, 2019). Similarly, nearly all of the female punks within this research study commented on their clothing serving as armour or a protective shield against the heightened sexual harassment in the 1970s (Coon, 2017; Thibert, 2017). Caroline Coon describes the power of a leather jacket in giving her the confidence to stand up to male predators in the street in the 1970s. She recalled:

> 'At the time, I was writing band reviews. I would go to concerts, which ended at eleven o'clock at night. There wasn't public transport that late so you had to wait on the pavement for a taxi, rush home, write your review and would have to send it to the paper the first thing in the morning. If a woman was standing on the pavement at eleven o'clock at night, it was a very dangerous place to be. Women had to be very on guard. It was a very liberating moment when I was given a black leather jacket from Paul Simonon from the Clash. So, there I was wearing this black leather jacket standing on the pavement and three men lurched up to me and insulted me. Suddenly, I found myself able to stand my ground, protected by a leather jacket. I felt empowered enough to strike the man and to my amazement, they backed off and disappeared. It was a really amazing moment to demonstrate the political significance of clothing. What's interesting is the internal feeling, how this garment made me feel, giving me confidence, but also the external reaction'. –Coon, 2017, interview with author.

In interviews with academics Catherine Harper, Jo Turney and Jane Tynan, they all discussed the mobilisation and performance of the body and the visual impact it has when assembled *en masse*, making a statement very visible. The act of gathering in physical spaces is especially impactful in today's society dominated by digital

communication (Gerbaudo, 2012). Tynan (2017) believes that the body is a good place to stage a protest, since it is constantly moving through city streets, often being surveyed or oppressed. She stated that:

> 'There is something in our collective psyche that understands, not just on the academic level, that the body is the site of struggle for power. That is where you stage your protest. I think the pussyhats were very visually powerful. Also, whenever a group of people congregate and protest, that itself has power, so by extension if you can turn that into a spectacle by dressing similarly or by dressing in a grotesque or strange manner […] I do think the power of dress in a protest in the street is really, really strong. I think there is a huge understanding, as I said earlier, of how effective it can be. Protest is much more likely to be theatrical and performative now. It's much more likely to get people to dress similarly or play music or do drumming [...] It's not really quite enough to just have a placard or a banner anymore'. – Tynan, 2017, interview with author

Similarly, Interviewee Niku Archer (2019), who is part of the feminist direct-action collective Sisters Uncut, explained that they try to make their demonstrations theatrical and visually cohesive by dressing collectively to advertise their organisation which advocates for domestic violence victims. They often use their clothing tactically because protest materials like banners are not permitted in certain contexts. For example, in 2018, they planned to invade the red carpet of the British Academy Film Awards (BAFTA) to protest the Conservative government's cuts in funding and resources for domestic violence victims. They were aware that couldn't carry in their banners as they would have been confiscated by security during bag checks, so they crafted black jumpsuits embellished with their organisation's logo and message stating 'TIME'S UP THERESA' which was temporarily hidden underneath their tracksuit jackets (Archer, 2019). They used the Time's Up Movement to redirect the attention towards vulnerable women who were unsafe in their own homes (Archer, 2019). Knowing the event would be widely covered by the press, they used it to directly address the then prime minister Theresa May who was delaying The Domestic Violence Abuse Bill (Archer, 2019). While watching celebrities walk down the red carpet, Archer and nine of her fellow 'sisters' jumped the fence enclosing the walkway and laid down on the red carpet to stage their demonstration (Archer, 2019). She explained their use of clothing and how the protest played out:

> 'they can just take a banner off you at any time. They can't rip clothes off you. Also, jumpsuits are really easy and comfortable since we were planning to jump over a fence. […] we all turned up with our jumpsuits on and fleeces over them because we didn't want anyone to see the writing. We wanted it to look like we were all wearing black leggings or trousers. […] We had to wear something practical essentially and something easy to reveal why we were really there. We ripped off our jackets and lied down on the carpet. All the pictures kind of show us lined up with the message 'Time's Up Theresa' across us, which is what we were aiming for. […] Logistically, we wouldn't have been able to do anything else. It also worked really well in the media'. –Archer, 2019, interview with author

Unlike textile art, clothing can't be physically removed from the female protesters, making their message unavoidable. The organisers of the BAFTAs didn't want to further heighten the scene by physically removing the women from the space, so the press had ample time to photograph their demonstration and disseminate the pictures that evening, putting pressure on the then Prime Minister Theresa May to comment on her policies (Archer, 2019) (see figure 57).

Figure 57: Left: Niku Archer (2018) 'Times Up Theresa Sisters Uncut' Jumpsuit, Cotton appliqué, Worn to the BAFTAs, Image credit: Anna Boonstra; Right: Photograph of Sisters Uncut organisation pamphlet (2018), Image credit: Anna Boonstra, Copyright: Sisters Uncut.

Similarly, during a discussion with Gavin Grindon (2017), he explained that the body in protest isn't always used to send a message, but rather to change an environment or situation. He explained:

> 'a lot of the writing about [social] movements using the body tends to not see the body as messaging, but about being. Artist-activist John Jordan was also super influential in terms of doing performance in movements in the streets during the 1990s. He doesn't really talk about messaging, but [about] being or changing the situation and how when you use the body it's about performance […] Craft can be seen in the same way. It's about changing a dynamic so that the communication becomes possible where it wasn't. For example, the police can take space and push the crowds back, but when the activists dress up like clowns, the police might feel embarrassed and not push back or want to arrest a clown. Then the clowns get to perform in strange ways that activists can't […] They look quite absurd, ridiculous and really quite vulnerable in a way [...] It then becomes harder for the cop to act. It's very much about performance in that sense rather than the message or convincing'. – Grindon, 2017, interview with author

The protesters at Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp would also create performances using humour to break the tension, gain space, avoid arrest and generate conservations around the topic of nuclear disarmament. Greenham protester Judith Baron remembered one such event:

> 'The fence stretched nine miles around the base. We would cut holes in it so we could take shortcuts without walking all the way around. There was a tip up the road from blue gate so we would get sofas and all sorts of things. At one point, we had too many sofas so we snuck one into the base and made a television out of a cardboard box. When the guards came over, we pretended like we were watching T.V. *Laughing*. We would often joke around with the guards. Some of them would engage in the conversation, others wouldn't. Some of the women tried to talk to them and explain why we were doing this. Some of the guards couldn't handle it'. –Baron, 2017, interview with author

Grindon (2017) explained that the guards would be reminded of their mother or sister and find it difficult to enforce their authority (Grindon, 2017). Similarly, Thalia Campbell remembered walking in a march for the Peace Movement in Upper Heyford where the police didn't know quite how to respond to the women because they didn't fit their assumed stereotype of activists, given that they were predominantly middle-class women with young children in buggies and carrying intricately sewn banners (Campbell, 2018).

This study also considers the body in protest and its impact on how craftivism is communicated versus textile art, which showed that the clothed body is beneficial in communicating a political belief, often in situations where textile art was not permitted. The clothed body is also mobile and able to broadcast its message on a wider

scale as it moves throughout the city streets as opposed to a static banner. The clothed body is also powerful in protest when used collectively by protesters in mass demonstrations, as seen in the 2017 Women's March. Although this tactic has long been utilised throughout history, it is especially impactful in today's society which is dominated by digital communication.

Although dress is a social and public act, it is also a personal one due to its intimate and close proximity to the body (Entwistle and Wilson, 2001; Wilson, 2003 [1985]). This is significant because clothing can impart feelings on the wearer which then produce bodily demeanour (Negrin, 2016). Research participants shared feelings of empowerment and strength that was instilled in them through their protest clothing. The performativity of the body in protest also is also beneficial in changing the feel of protest, subsequently opening up channels of communication that were once non-existent. Since clothing worn on one's person, its wearer becomes directly associated with its message, which subsequently opens them up to direct feedback. Ownership is not always clear with textile art when it is used in protest because it is placed in city spaces anonymously or carried as a banner by multiple people, which is possibly a more desirable approach for more introverted individuals or those unable to visually partake in activism.

CHAPTER FIVE: Conclusion

5.1   REVIEW OF STUDY

This thesis set out to analyse the material language of protest, specifically the communicative capacity of handcrafted clothing and textile art as a form of activism in Britain during the period from 1970 to 2018. The inquiry emerges from the multidisciplinary practice of 'craftivism' (craft + activism), a term that was first coined by writer Betsy Greer in 2003 to represent a movement that aimed to reconceptualise handcraft as an alternative form of protest (Sinclair, 2014). The concept of craftivism, however, existed long before it was christened, having been drawn on for centuries by women and marginalised groups as a strategy of empowerment, advocacy, and protest (McGovern, 2019). This is most notable in the mass demonstrations and grassroots actions of the 1970s and 80s where women used handcraft to

protest social inequality, civil rights, and peace activism, amongst others. Through these visual and material means, women created an avenue of communication through which to share their personal and collective experiences as affected by gender, sexuality and race, marking a rise in the democratic use of art and craft as a socio-political communication tool (McQuiston, 1997).

During recent years, women are once again using handcrafts to engage with pressing social and political issues, largely pertaining to changes to the European and American political systems. The 2016 UK referendum and subsequent Brexit negotiations, and President Trump's 2017 inauguration resulted in societal divides, feelings of powerlessness, and a growing distrust in government, ultimately triggering global protests which engaged not only the marginalised, but also society at large. This profound shift in political engagement demonstrated people's anger and emphasised a real need for change. Trump's presidential victory, in particular, raised anxieties amongst women who feared the advent of a heightened patriarchal power that would ultimately subjugate and exclude them, potentially affecting the future hegemony over their rights, health, and bodies (Smirnova, 2018; Kaiser, 2020). Women worldwide felt it was time to readdress their rights and current position in society. In January 2017, 100,000 individuals gathered in London for the Women's March as part of a global demonstration of solidarity, totalling an estimated five million people worldwide (Bolton, 2017). The march was characterised by a creative outpouring of textile art and clothing, notably the pink hand-knitted 'pussyhat', a symbol that ultimately became synonymous with the campaign. Suggestive symbols and opinionated slogans were sewn, painted, and digitally printed onto T-shirts and banners to raise consciousness and denote allegiance to women's equality at local, regional, and global levels. The subversive and communicative capacities of clothing and textile art seen in the Women's March (2017—) initiated a surprising surge of DIY creativity within subsequent transnational movements geared towards women's rights, particularly 'Take Back the Night' marches (2004 –), 'SlutWalk(s)' (2011—), anti-Trump demonstrations (2016—), the #metoo Movement (2017) and 'Time's Up' Campaign (2018), all of which address ongoing issues of female inequality, sexual harassment, rape, and domestic violence. This resurgence of do-it-yourself (DIY) craft culture in contemporary protests has prompted this critical and retrospective examination.

Although several academics have also conducted similar revaluations of the role of craft in activism, none have comprehensively addressed its communicative capacity, specifically analysing the design, fabrication and dissemination choices of the makers themselves. This research analysed the different design strategies, encoding methods and fabrication processes used by makers to draw attention, garner support and ideally, incite long-term socio-political change. By doing so, this thesis was able to examine the historical continuities, evolution and transformation of fibre-based crafting techniques as a form of individual and collective activism since 1970.

This study identified those tactics that have proven most useful in resonating with their target audience during this study's established timeframe. To best capture and contextualise this approach, four specific case studies were analysed. These were the Women's Liberation Movement (1970—1990); Punk Anti-Fashion (1974—1984); Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp (1981—1991); and contemporary craftivism in the form of The Women's Movement (2008—2018). The case studies are intentionally disparate, each selected to represent a diverse group of women who, despite their various backgrounds and political beliefs, utilised handcraft either individually or collectively to create and embellish clothing and textiles for the purposes of activism.

This research employed a multi-method data collection approach to examine both maker and artefact, an approach that draws upon the literature, archival research, object, and visual analysis, focus group observation, and semi-structured interviews. The multiple methods of data collection were beneficial in examining craftivism in its entirety from practice and product. Twelve items of clothing and textile art that best exemplified craftivism within the established case studies were examined using object analysis. By assembling and categorising these individual objects, this study examined how these historic and contemporary textiles collectively served to communicate extant issues.

This study also gathered the stories behind craftivism by talking to the women who created these objects of activism in recent times and those dating back to the 1970s and 80s. Focus group research was conducted within a textile workshop called 'Fabric of Protest' held at the People's History Museum in Manchester, England. Data was generated through a series of close observations of makers on six separate visits, noting their design choices and modes of productions. Semi-structured interviews were also implemented as part of this study's multi-method approach. Twenty-two interviews were conducted with women classified by this study as 'makers', since they were all women who had utilised handcraft for activism within the social movements analysed as case studies for this thesis. Their skill level ranged from amateur to more experienced artists and designers. In the interviews, they described their involvement and experience with craftivism in their own words, recounting their design, processes of making and dissemination choices, as well as reactions and feedback to their work. The research priority was to understand why these choices were made and whether they effectively conveyed their socio-political concern and brought public attention to their cause. This thesis proposed that four distinct design elements controlled by the maker can influence how craftivism is perceived and responded to, which included the following: materiality, content, the context of delivery, and use of the clothed body.

5.2   RESEARCH FINDINGS: THE COMMUNICATIVE CAPACITY OF CRAFTIVISM

This study unearthed the communicative capacity of craftivism, particularly its ability to reach an audience through the design, fabrication, and dissemination choices of its makers. As Gell's concept of human-object agency suggested, the craftivists across the four established case studies were largely intentional in their creations, imbuing them with a sense of agency to inform, advocate, shock, or incite curiosity. The craftivists described the strategies or tactics they found most instrumental in bringing attention to their work and garnering support, which included the use of certain fabrics, colours, language, or channels of circulation. This study found that many of these tactics often relied on one another to communicate, and thus worked best when integrated. For example, many craftivists were tactical in the type of textile they used because of their underlying gendered and sensory associations that can impact how their message is perceived. Samplers, doilies, tea towels, and aprons were used for activism because of their inescapable and inherent meanings of being 'feminine' and 'domestic'. Craftivists found that the haptic and familiar qualities of textiles and handcraft would initially attract viewers before engaging them with its political content. These items helped soften the object's message, making the subject matter more approachable, ultimately opening up a dialogue. Craftivists also capitalised on the cultural connotations associated with certain fabrics, colours, and handcraft techniques to help reinforce or subvert their message. The cultural codes embedded in the materiality of textiles served as a subtext, aiding the words and symbols in communicating. Colour was largely utilised in craftivism to support the object's message, making it appear more aggressive or disarming. Craftivists implemented the colours black and red to communicate more assertively, within a European or American context, than, for example, a pastel colour scheme (Sklar and Michel, 2012). The colour pink was widely used to disarm dominant power structures because of its societal association with femininity (Schuiling and Winge, 2019). Several research participants also utilised colours associated with past social movements, particularly with the Suffrage Movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, because the purple, green, and white motif visually connected them to the work and ethos of their predecessors (Loader 2018; Archer, 2019).

All the craftivists implemented various embellishment techniques, including stitch (embroidery, crochet, knit, cross-stitch, appliqué), non-stitch (fabric pen, paint, iron-on, screen/ digital printing), and mixed media. This study found that because the various handcraft techniques have differing cultural 'values', it affects how they communicate. Some research participants felt that the social connotations of needlecrafts, particularly their association with value, high skill, and something done by the middle-class, emphasised the seriousness and importance of their message compared to other techniques requiring less time and skill. Others felt that skill is not

appreciated in protest because people often cannot get close enough to study it in its fine detail; therefore, its message should be the maker's primary concern. Although craftivists have credited these tactics for bringing attention to their cause, a few participants noted how the materiality of textiles art had hindered the communication of activism, often because the observer considered needlecrafts a soft or weak means of activism, thus quickly dismissing its message.

This study also considered the body in protest and its impact on how craftivism is communicated versus textile art. Several research participants found that the clothed body was beneficial in protest, especially in situations when textile art was not permitted. Since banners can be confiscated by authority, clothing was often used strategically because it generally cannot be removed from one's person. The clothed body is also mobile and able to broadcast its message on a broader scale as it moves throughout the city streets as opposed to a static banner. The use of the body is particularly powerful in protest when used collectively by protesters in mass demonstrations, as seen in the 2017 Women's March. Although this tactic has long been utilised throughout history, it is especially impactful in today's society which is dominated by digital communication. The performativity of the body in protest is also beneficial in changing the feel of protest, subsequently opening up communication channels that were once non-existent. Since clothing is worn on one's person, its wearer becomes directly associated with its message, which opens them up to direct feedback. There is a sense of ownership when a face can be linked to craftivism, which for some, emphasises the seriousness of the message versus something left in public or posted online anonymously.

This thesis also observed how craftivism is performed or circulated, in additional how its dissemination has evolved since 1970. Although craftivism often resists classification in craft or activist discourses, the data generated from this study found that the dissemination of craftivism is best understood when divided into two main categories and their respective subgroups, which are 'collective' ('direct' and 'indirect') and 'individual' ('public', 'private', 'every-day', 'anonymous' and 'virtual') action. Although much of women's activism in the 1970s and 80s was carried out through direct action, specifically using the body in mass gatherings, ideas around what is considered activism and how it should be conducted have since evolved. This change is largely contributed to the development of the Internet and mobile phone, which provide further opportunities for participation in activism. People who were once alienated from traditional forms activism, due to such factors as employment, immigration, race, disability, and family lifestyle, amongst many more, now have more opportunities to partake indirectly. Many craftivists contribute indirectly to protest by selling, loaning or donating physical items of protest paraphernalia. Although these actions are indirect, they aid direct action to achieve its goal of visibility and to bring attention to its cause.

Other research participants chose to participate in activism anonymously by situating textiles in the urban domain to make their socio-political statements public. Since the craft object is used in place of the protester's physical presence, it 'performs' protest anonymously on their behalf as it is left behind within the urban environment (Fowler, 2017). This type of activism allows the individual who is uninterested in human confrontation to make their activist statement public without feeling any resistance or negativity (Corbett, 2017; Fowler, 2017). This is also less intimidating for the viewer because they can decide whether to engage with the object on their terms without feeling external pressure (Corbett, 2017). There is also an element of anonymity in virtual activism since people can post pictures of their work online without revealing their true identity. The adoption of anonymity and a lack of physical participation could potentially communicate the maker's lack of confidence in public engagement or even be considered an anti-performance since some feel that it's the maker's responsibility to stand behind their opinion (Fowler, 2017). This study found that anonymity and indirect participation, for many, is their only means of publicising their political beliefs. The object's physical being is then a direct representation or supplement of the self. This notion resonates with Derrida's (1976 [1967]) concept of the 'supplément', in which he describes writing as a surrogate to speech. Craftivism also serves as a supplement, representing those internal, unspoken thoughts, emotions, and beliefs that cannot otherwise be expressed through verbal communication.

Although the practice of craftivism is perceived to be a visible and materialised expression of one's socio-political concerns, either displayed or worn in the public domain, it is often within contemporary times, despite digital media, a very private affair. The pilot study survey showed that a quarter of participants do not share their work. Although these individuals fell within the older age category of research participants (50+), it was unfair to assume that this is due to a lack of knowledge or comfort in using digital media. The semi-structured interviews refuted this claim, revealing that the participants' reasoning for not sharing their work is not an issue of digital incompetence but a preference for engaging in self-activism. These individuals, who are predominantly contemporary craftivists, recognise the importance of private or self-contained activism, mainly for their internal benefit versus publicising it. These craftivists found that the making process was just as important as displaying it because it allowed them to contemplate the socio-political issue at hand. While the personal and private, and reflective forms of activism can be carried out in the privacy of one's home, it can also be brought into the public domain by wearing hidden, cryptic, or subtle messages only understood by the wearer or very few people. Symbols were widely implemented by this group of participants because they often communicate more subtly or indirectly than words. Their meanings are more open-ended and often not identifiable by the wider public, making their use in protest more discrete. This idea also chimes with Derrida (1976 [1967]) and

Rousseau's idea that one can hide behind writing as opposed to speech. Since text, symbols, and materiality are all visual codes, often with multiple meanings that are culturally dependent, the maker can easily be deceptive of its actual meaning if they wish.

5.3   THE CONTINUUM AND EVOLUTION OF CRAFTIVISM

This study was afforded a unique opportunity to examine how craftivism in the 1970s and 80s compares visually, contextually, and relationally to contemporary work. By examining current and past examples of craftivism, side by side, this study recognised its many continuities and progressions since 1970. Despite nearly fifty years separating some of these objects, they were visually similar, as they were predominately constructed from comparable materials and handcraft skills. Many were created from recycled materials, such as second-hand clothing, old bedding, curtains, or extra fabric from previous textile projects. Craftivists' testimonies conveyed that textiles were primarily employed for activism because of their accessibility and affordability, in addition to their tactical aspects, particularly their being portable and easily compactable. The sustained use of cloth and needlecrafts in activism can also be attributed to its communicative capabilities. Craftivists were aware of the instinctual and emotional attachment people have to cloth, as well as its cultural connotations, making it an ideal medium of protest to first allure people before exposing them to socio-political content. The hope was that the object's visual and material elements would prompt them to open their minds to different perspectives.

The longevity of cloth and needlecrafts in protest is also related to lineage. Contemporary craftivists have seen the successes of their predecessors who have used the same materials, particularly those collective actions from the 1970s and 80s that have made changes to legislation to improve social, political, and economic equality for women. Although the Women's Movement made substantial progress in improving social, political, and economic equality for women, some of the campaign's goals have yet to be met nearly a half-century later. As a result, women today have inherited these ongoing matters that primarily affect their safety and security. Textiles remain prime material aids in addressing ongoing issues of sexual harassment, rape, and domestic violence. Contemporary craftivism is now used to discuss current topics like sexual boundaries, consent, and accountability to educate the community and ideally prevent future violence. It is also striding towards more

inclusivity and representation by discussing issues affecting African and Asian women and the LGBTQ community, which is reflected in its use of language and symbols.

Despite the rise of technology and new media, twenty-first century craftivists continue to utilise cloth and traditional needlecraft skills. Those makers who implement technological advancements like digital printing and machine stitching in their work often combine these new technologies with traditional needlecraft skills to give their creations a more humanistic appearance. The development of the Internet and mobile phone has created more dissemination channels for craftivists, providing further opportunities for participation in activism, particularly giving those unable to physically or visually contribute more possibilities to partake indirectly through organising, recruiting, and making protest materials. With this development, ideas around what is considered activism and how it should be conducted have also evolved. Craftivism is now carried out anonymously, privately, and virtually more than ever.

5.4   THE EFFICACY OF CRAFTIVISM

It is difficult to gauge how much of a movement's success in creating societal change can be attributed to craftivism. The quantifiable aspects of craftivism, like the number of voting ballots or the attendance at a march, can be calculated, but the political effectiveness of craftivism is hard to measure, often because it does not receive a determinate or immediate outcome (Fowler, 2017, p.138). As seen throughout history, societal change from activism rarely occurs in the manner or timeframe people expect, especially when spanning years, decades, and lifetimes before significant progress has been made.

Those craftivists involved in larger, collaborative events were able to see a more direct impact of their work on societal change than, for example, individuals acting alone. This is due mainly to the media attention given to the event and the pressure put on government officials to change policies or legislation. For example, in 2018, ten or so members of the Sisters Uncut, a feminist direct-action collective, invaded the red carpet of the BAFTAs to protest the Conservative government's cuts in funding and resources for domestic violence victims. The group wore jumpsuits embellished with its logo and message stating 'TIME'S UP THERESA'. Knowing the event would be widely covered by the press, they used it to directly address the then prime minister Theresa May who was delaying the Domestic Violence Abuse Bill

(Archer, 2019). The press photographed their demonstration and disseminated the pictures that evening, putting pressure on May to comment on her policies (Archer, 2019). Although the Bill was under consultation in parliament for some time, a draft was finally published in January 2019.

Similarly, The Pussyhat Project (2016-7) and Women's March (2017) created visual and global solidarity that was captured by social media and the mainstream press. The hats, which were spotted in great numbers at marches held simultaneously worldwide, ignited much debate regarding how women's activism should be conducted. Despite its criticism, the project ultimately created international visibility, thus generating new conversations regarding women's rights. Its strong online presence was also crucial to its large following, recruitment, and widespread dissemination.

The political effectiveness of small-scale, everyday acts of craftivism by individuals is even more challenging to assess. Since many of these objects are worn at demonstrations, carried briefly passed spectators in marches, and even left anonymously within public spaces, it is difficult to evaluate the success of engagement without formal feedback. Although some research participants had the opportunity to engage in conversation with the public, the majority had fleeting non-verbal interactions mainly in the form of stares, smiles, and hand gestures (peace signs, thumbs-up, high-fives, and middle finger signals). These non-verbal interactions indicated to the craftivist that contact was made and their message was sent. Besides believing that a seed was possibly planted in another's mind, these individual craftivists essentially had no measurable indication that their efforts impacted societal change. Nevertheless, many of these lone craftivists never expected their work to create a significant societal transformation. They instead created and shared their craftivism because it gave them a sense of agency, empowerment, and reassurance that they did their part in promoting good, even if that was grabbing the attention and opening the mind of a single person.[161] The efficacy of craftivism may not solely be the changes made to political policies or legislation, but perhaps the changes made in people. The political inclusion gained through craftivism often turns causal participants into lifelong activists, thus, arguably changing society for the better.

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[161] Please see pages 40, 44-6, which discuss small versus large scale craftivism. Greer (2007) and Fitzpatrick (2019) debate the effectiveness of personalised craftivism.

Craftivism has provided women an avenue to share their personal and collective experiences affected by gender, sexuality, and race. It has served as a social agent to represent their unspoken thoughts, beliefs, and emotions. It has allowed women to take charge of their own existence, giving them a voice, presence, and hope that change is possible.

5.5   PERSONAL INVESTMENT AND FUTURE RESEARCH

When this study's fieldwork was conducted, mainly between 2016-2018, The Women's Movement was at its zenith, providing numerous examples of craftivism, making it a straightforward selection as a contemporary case study. As a woman, I felt especially compelled to take on this study because Trump's administration represented a threat to my own reproductive, civil, and human rights. I felt it was a critical time to act and stand for equality. My personal aim was to bring attention to the history of women's activism and the continued injustices facing women today. This thesis thus serves as one of my contributions to The Women's Movement. Ideally, it will also bring some inspiration to seasoned craftivists or to those women interested in becoming involved in politics through the use of craft.

This thesis is a starting point for many other interesting and exciting areas of future research. So much has happened in women's activism since 2019 that merits further research, notably the recent surge of protest around women's safety and security in the streets that echo the initiation of the 'Reclaim the Night' marches in the 1970s. The Grunwick dispute of 1976-78 is another potential topic for future research. It was a protest against the trade union by mostly female, immigrant, and Asian strikers who used many examples of material protest that warrant a closer examination. Similarly, the Black Lives Matter Movement is another area of interest. This movement involves many representations of craftivism that I plan to explore in future research.

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Participant Information Form

The Material Language of Protest: Textile Art and Clothing Craftivism, Britain 1970-2018

You are invited to take part in a research project. Please take the time to read the following information before deciding to participate. If any additional information is needed, please ask.

Subject: The inquiry emerges from a multidisciplinary practice that became known as 'craftivism' (craft + activism), a term coined by writer Betsy Greer in 2003 to represent a craft-based movement that sought to reconceptualise handcraft as an alternative form of protest against social injustice and inequalities. Although the word craftivism is rooted in the twenty-first-century, it is a concept that is historically familiar, having been drawn on for centuries by women and marginalised groups as a strategy of empowerment, advocacy and protest. This thesis analyses the ways in which handcrafted clothing and textile art functioned as a vehicle for conveying activism in Britain, 1970-2018. This study focuses on the events with the Women's Liberation Movement, Punk Anti-fashion and Greenham Common Women's Peace camp and their parallels with activism today. This study aims to understand the communicative capacity of craftivism and the role of the female maker, specifically their design, making and dissemination choices.

Research Organisation: This study is being carried out as part of a research degree at London College of Fashion. Anna Ruth Boonstra (PhD candidate) is the primary researcher under the supervision of her Director of Studies, Simon Thorogood.

Participant Selection / Information: This study is amateur makers, artists, designers or activists who have utilised domestic handcraft as a means of protest and enlightenment to propel social movements since 1970. Historians, academics, curators or those with specific knowledge of this study's subject area are also valuable resources for this project to reach its full potential. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign a consent form. Participation in this study is voluntary and you have the freedom to withdraw from the project at any time without giving a reason. The information you supplied will then be destroyed.

Your participation in this study would involve a one-on-one interview for approximately one hour. Questions will be asked regarding your involvement and experience with soft activism as a medium to drive social change. There are no foreseeable disadvantages or risks to participating in this project. Your contribution of knowledge will contribute to the further development to this thesis, aiding to uncover an underexplored area of research.

Participant Confidentiality: If you choose to participate the information that you provide will be used as data for this particular study and possibly future relevant academic research. If any information you provide is used in future research, you will be notified and re-consented before publication. You will have the option to either be a named or anonymous participant in this research project. If you choose to remain anonymous, the information that you provide during the interview will not be linked to your identity in any publication of this research. The final results of this project will be published as a doctoral thesis. You will be contacted with the publication details by email.

Contact Information: If you believe the research is being conducted unprofessionally at any point, please contact the Research Management and Administration department at the University of the Arts London. Contact details are listed below.

Thank you for your participation in this study.

Research Contact Information
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Participant Consent Form

The Material Language of Protest: Textile Art and Clothing Craftivism, Britain 1970-2018

You are invited to take part in a research project. Please take the time to read the following information before deciding to participate. If any additional information is needed, please ask.

As a participant:

- I confirm I have read and have obtained a copy of the *Participant Information Form* regarding the research project.
- I understand the purpose of the research and my part as a participant.
- I have had the opportunity to consider the information and confirm that the primary researcher (Anna Ruth Boonstra) has answered any queries to my satisfaction.
- I understand that information that I provide during the interview will used as data for this particular study and possibly future relevant research.

I understand that I have given my consent to the following: *Please tick the box that apply*

X ☐ to be interviewed.

☐ to be audio-taped during the interview.

I understand that I have given my consent to the following: *Please tick the box that applies*

X ☐ to be a <u>named participant</u> in all publications of the research findings.

☐ to remain an <u>anonymous participant </u>in all publications of the research findings.

I consent to participate in this study, which has been fully explained to me.   *Please sign below*

Participant's Name *(Please Print):*		Researcher's Name	Anna Boonstra
Signature of Participant (Or Initials):		Signature of Researcher:	
Date:		Date:	