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Abstract

As both practice and discourse, craftivism implies questions of mobility: nomadic knitting while on public transportation; use of mobile technologies to organize yarn-bombing brigades; the installation of needlework in public, urban spaces. It follows what Sheller and Urry (2006) have described as "the new mobilities paradigm," suggesting that increasing physical travel, the simultaneous growth of the internet and mobile telephony, and the international flow of consumer goods are putting issues of 'mobility' at centre stage. With these developments and a conception of mobility as having important implications for modern life, social relations, activism, and connections to space and place, this study examines the relationship of craftivism and mobility, asking how might the practice, politics, and culture of craftivism intersect with questions of mobility (and immobility)? Through an analysis of craftivism's feminist roots and a series of illustrative examples, this study elaborates mobility as a conceptual

frame, knitting and purling it with the craftivist movement and questions of urban space, networks, assemblages, and mobile media and technologies.

Introduction

A vibrant, multi-colored piece of knitting snakes around a parking meter in Montreal's Mile End neighbourhood. A tree in the city's St. Louis square wears "Stellar Fruits" (Figure 1) [1], the trunk wrapped with a wide fabric cuff, adorned with oversized textile blueberries, and a set of raspberry-coloured globules that drape over the tree's broadest branch, like ripe, pillowy fruit, plump with juice and ready to be picked. Each piece is tagged with a pink heart pierced by two knitting needles as crossbones, a sign that Tricot Pirate has been here.[2]

[1] Karine Fournier, "Stellar Fruits", Photography. http://www.flickr.com/photos/80461781@N00/with/5045346519/
[2] Karine Fournier, "Stellar Fruits", Web site. http://yarnbombing.com/tag/montreal

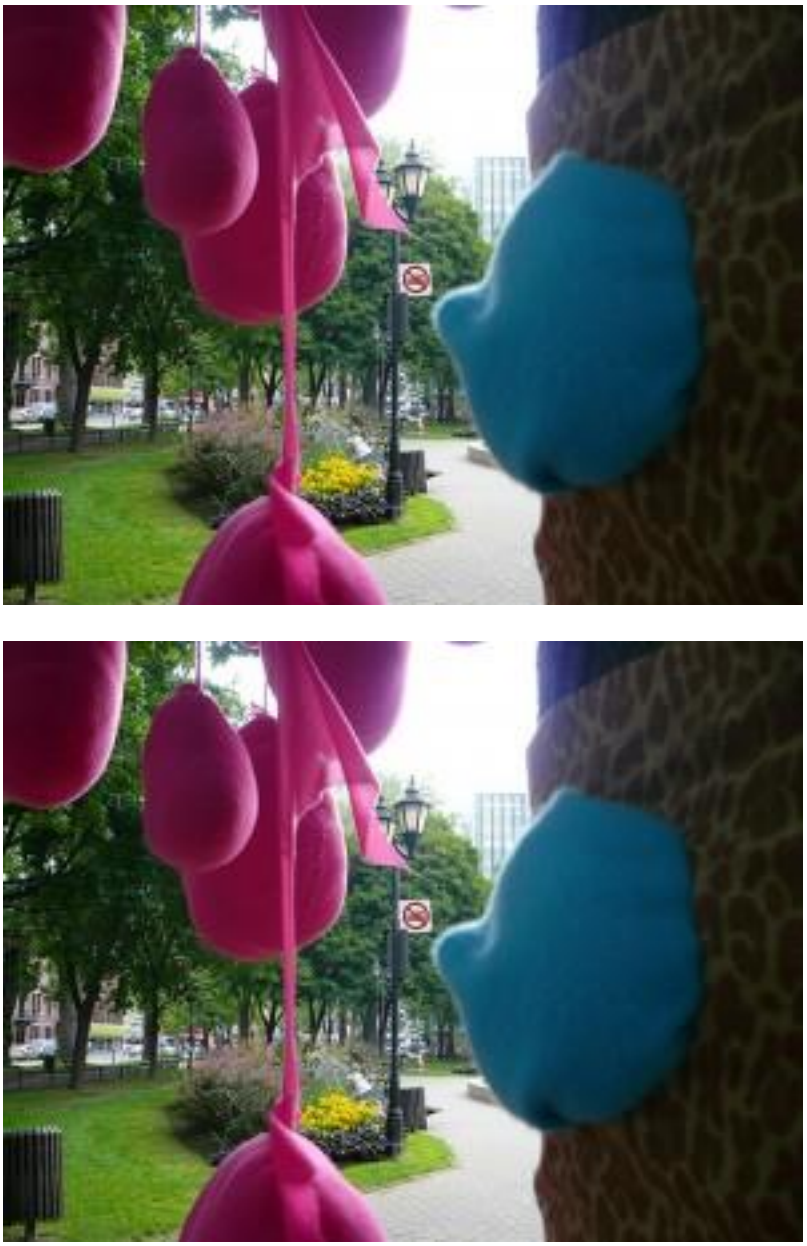

Figure 1. Stellar Fruits © Tricot Pirate

"The Knitted Mile" (Figures 2 & 3)[3] a textile version of the painted yellow centerline that divides most roadways, was stitched together in 2008 from the contributions of ninety

[3] Robyn Love, "The Knitted Mile", Gestures of Resistance: Craft and the Politics of Slowness. Web site. http://www.robynlove.com/knittedmile.html

knitters from around North America. Embroidered with the slogan "slow labour, good results," the entire mile-long stretch of bright yellow needlework was laid out on a road to raise awareness of the fast pace of modern life – an example of collaborative knitting and textile street art. In May 2006 in Copenhagen's main square, a World War II tank was covered from cannon to caterpillar (Figure 4)[4] with more than 4,000 pink squares, woven together from the handiwork of hundreds of knitters as a symbolic act of protest against Denmark's involvement in the Iraq war (along with the United States, the UK, and other European nations).

[4] Marianne Jørgenssen, "Pink M.24 Chaffee: A Tank Wrapped in Pink", Web site. http://www.marianneart.dk/

Figure 2 & 3 The Knitted Mile © 2008 Robyn Love

Yarn bombing, knit and crochet graffiti, and collective knit-ins are acts of 'craftivism,' a termed coined by Betsy Greer in 2003 to signify the merging of crafting and activism. In her words, "craftivism is a way of looking at life where voicing opinions through creativity makes your voice stronger, your compassion deeper and your quest for justice

more infinite."[5]. Combining a do-it-yourself ethic, the covert movement of street art, and needlework, craftivists bomb urban spaces and inanimate objects as a means of art and consciousness-raising – sometimes political, sometimes humourous, sometimes dazzling, but always unexpected. In a similar vein, collective knit-ins juxtapose the act of knitting, which is "generally constructed as a feminine and domestic craft [...] with its sheer out-of-placeness at protests, undermining accepted ideas of protesters as violent, and offering, what is seen, at least to knitters, as a constructive approach to activism that encourages interpersonal interaction and everyday resistance" (Robertson, 2007, p. 210).

[5] Betsy Greer, "Craftivism". Web site. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Craftivism

Figure 4 Pink M.24 Chaffee © 2006 Marian Jorgenssen

Although not necessarily overtly expressed, the practice and discourse of craftivism imply questions of mobility: nomadic knitting while on public transportation; use of mobile technologies to organize and execute yarn-bombing brigades; installation of needlework in public, urban spaces; and the recording and publishing of knit graffiti or knit-ins by mobile devices. It follows what Sheller and Urry (2006) have described as "the new mobilities paradigm," suggesting that increasing physical travel, global transportation networks, the simultaneous growth of the internet and mobile telephony, the international flow of consumer goods, and many other examples are putting "issues of 'mobility' [at] centre stage" (p. 208). With these developments and a conception of mobility as having important implications for modern life, including social relations,

activism, communication, patterns of experience, and relations to space and place, this study seeks to explore the relationship of craftivism and mobility. At its most basic, what does it mean to think of craftivism through the purview of mobility? Or, said another way, how might the practice, politics, and culture of craftivism intersect with questions of mobility (and immobility)? Further, how does the craftivist movement spread and multiply? What are its networks and connections? How do craftivists engage with urban space? And, how might mobile technologies and media articulate with craftivist practice? To examine these questions, this paper considers a number of illustrative examples of yarn bombing, knit and crochet graffiti, and the international community of guerilla textile artists participating in the craftivist movement, seeking to establish their relationship to mobility.

I will return to these questions shortly; but first, I'd like to trace a brief history of craftivism to the present in an effort to situate its politics, feminist roots, and media, offering some insight into the nature of the practice.

Craftivism: A brief history

The practices of radical crafting are not new. Writing on craftivist history, Kirsty Robertson (2010) reminds us that craft as a subversive form was used both as a method of feminist expression and critique of the male-dominated art world in the 1970s and 80s, with artists such as Judy Chicago and Joyce Wieland creating textile work that upset the "phallocentric and abstract-dominated art world," noting that feminist "artists using embroidery, knitting and sewing attempted to unsettle the ease with which

expectations of domesticity and child rearing were imposed on many female artists" (p. 184). Moreover, Robertson points to crafts' political history as means of resistance and activism, citing crafts' important role in numerous 1970s and 1980s political actions, including that of knitters involved in the Women's Peace Camp protest, staging a near 20-year opposition to the installation of American cruise missiles at Greenham Common Royal Airforce Base in England (p. 189).

Yet knit-ins and revolutionary knitting circles are not just a thing of the past. More recently, acts of radical crafting have expanded their tactics, reach, and politics. Since 2000, knitting as form of protest has positioned itself among some of the most volatile clashes of the political-economic establishment and global activist organizations. In The Revolution Will Wear a Sweater: Knitting and Global Justice Activism (2007), Robertson describes a scene at the Summit of the Americas in Quebec City in April 2001, where, amidst more than 50,000 protesters, tear gas, and riot police, "a group of people sat in a circle, knitting" (p. 209). An act of protest – seemingly entirely out-of-place – gained potency as a disruptive, unexpected yet peaceful gesture, where knitting as activism sought to raise consciousness as an act of resistance, weaving together the collective, anti-globalization politics and craft as a means of solidarity, in order to foreground, according to the protesters, the handmade as inherently anti-capitalist. Organized by the New York-based Activist Knitting Troupe, the Quebec City knit-in against the Free Trade Area of the Americas Agreement was followed by other similar protests mounted against G8 summits and US Republican conventions. Another group,

the Revolutionary Knitting Circle of Calgary, Alberta[6], brought together knitters to expressly protest the G8 summit held in nearby Kananaskis Country in 2002, and they've continued to express their politics through collective knitting, "organizing a series of events including the knitting of peace armbands, black flags to represent Iraqi civilians killed, and socks with intarsia lettering calling for peace in Arabic and Hebrew" (2007, p. 211).

Contemporary knit-ins and the sister practices of yarn-bombing and knit and crochet graffiti mark (at least in part) a modern-day incarnation of what Rozsika Parker famously called The Subversive Stitch (2010 [1984]), her seminal work of feminist art history that reconsidered the decorative arts – the crafts of embroidery, knitting and weaving, in particular – interrogating their status as trivial practices associated with the feminine and domesticity. Bringing the crafts out of the home and into public space, Parker critiqued the art world's marginalization of the decorative arts as "lowly women's work," pointing out the so-called fine arts' deeply institutionalized misogyny. In the book, Parker reveals how women in the 1970s and 80s subverted the decorative arts as statements of feminist politics. Examples such as Kate Walker's 1978 deliberately defiant embroidery sampler 'Wife is a Four Letter Word' (Figure 5; Parker, 2010, p. 205) marked the tensions for 1970s feminists between the constraints of the feminine and that of needlework as creative resistance, noting that "embroidering the personal as political was, above all, intended to challenge the subordination and oppression of women" (p. xv). Today, using knit and crochet graffiti as a means of consciousness

[6] Grant Neufeld. "Revolutionary Knitting Circle". Web site. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revolutionary_Knitting_Circle

raising and as a surprising juxtaposition of employing decorative arts in urban, public spaces may no longer be a singularly feminist gesture, however its second-wave feminist lineage is undeniable.

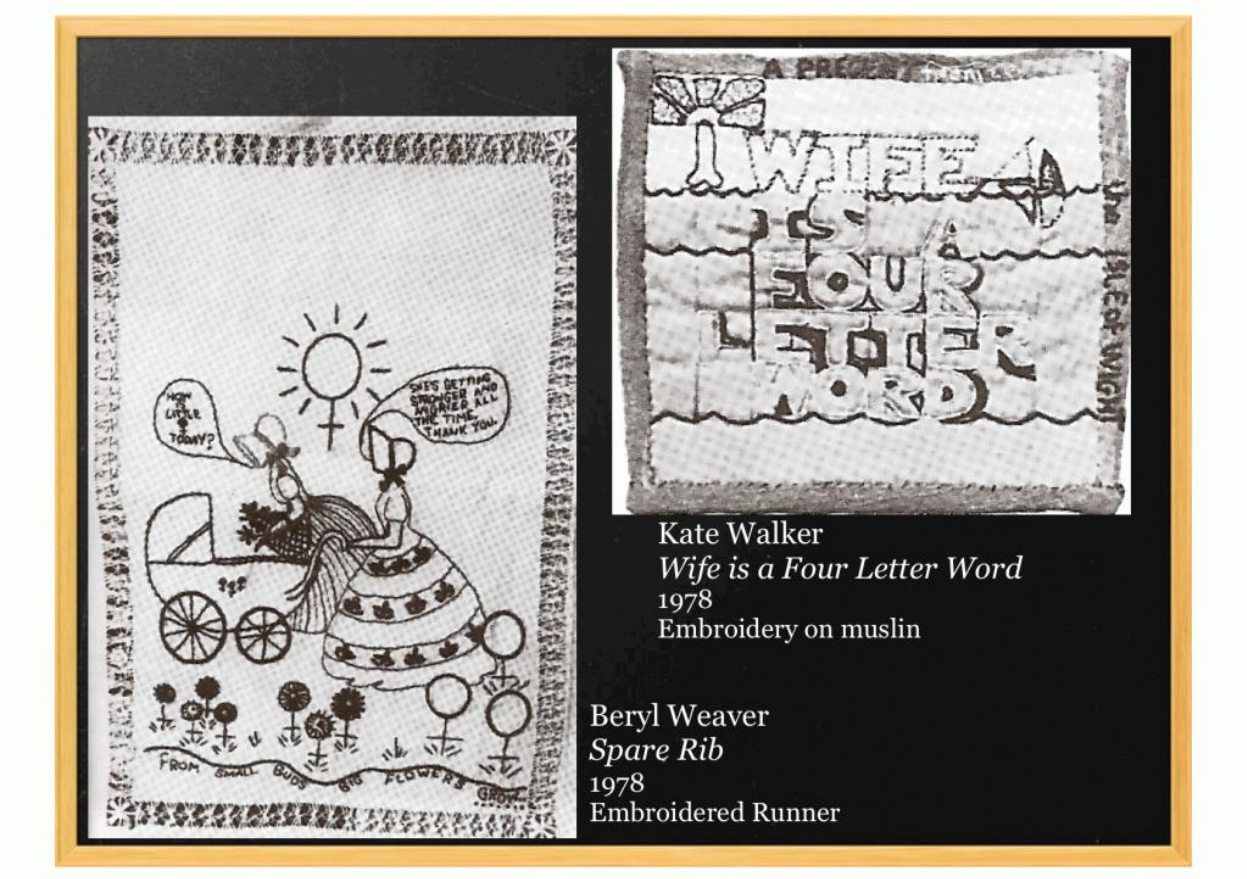

Figure 5. Wife is a Four-Letter Word Source: Parker, R. (2010 [1984])

Yet, the contemporary practice of yarn-bombing and guerrilla textile work – bringing craft out of the home and into the streets as urban artistic and political expression – arguably owes equal debt to the culture and practice of street graffiti as to its feminist roots. Under the cover of darkness, graffiti's renegade reputation was earned through the spray painting of symbols, tags and, more recently, stenciled artwork – most notably in the political statements of the UK's mysterious Banksy. But, where male-dominated

graffiti is often associated with vandalism, gang markings, and individual credibility gained by tagging hard-to-reach places, knit and crochet graffiti employ the inspiration from graffiti toward a divergent cultural formation, where a largely female contingent of knitters perform a collectivist approach to crafting expressly non-violent politics in their work. Indeed, the impermanence and sheer unexpectedness of knitwork installed in urban settings tends to be bound up with positive messages and progressive politics and considered a non-violent form activism. "We don't knit for hate, we knit for change" (Gonzalez, 2011), says Magda Sayeg, yarn-bombing pioneer and founder of Austin, Texas-based Knitta, Please! (aka Knitta)[7].

As craftivist acts, knitting and crocheting also represent a kind of tactical media, a form of resistance and social struggle characterized by Garcia and Lovink (1997) as "media of crisis, criticism and opposition." Alessandra Renzi (2008) integrates this line of argument further by noting some of the recurring tendencies of a tactical media to include temporality, use of available resources, collective work, polymorphism, wit, and the overlapping of art and politics (p. 71). Moreover, knitting as handwork is tactile in its very nature, where the looping and purling of wool emerges into cloth, textured and physically palpable. Our human instinct is to feel its contours between our fingers. In this light, craftivism represents a merging of media – both tactile and the tactical. The wooly mischief of yarn-bombing and activist textile work – the DIY materials and physical needling, the stitching together of multiple crafters' work, the stealth job of collective installation – draws on both the tactile and tactical in various capacities, intentionally eluding precise definition and enabling craftivists to express their dissent

[7] Magda Sayeg, Knitta, Please!, Web site. http://www.magdasayeg.com/home.html

and to trouble systems of power through their ever-changing approaches, locations, and tactics.

Craftivism and Mobility

So what does all this have to do with mobility? Mobilities research is an emerging field elaborating conceptual, theoretical, methodological, and discursive terrains of an area that is itself in motion – morphing and changing while scholars put pen to paper in an effort to grasp its developments and articulate moments in the field's trajectory. Moreover, at first blush it may seem that craftivism and mobility are only loosely related, through an intuitive sense of implied connections or weak ties. I have pondered this question at length, and it has led me to consider the questions through a framework of 'multiple mobilities,' conceptually articulated by Sheller and Urry as a notion of fluid interdependence. The concept of multiple mobilities represents not a 'new grand narrative,' nor a view that can isolate discrete boundaries or separate spheres, but "suggests a set of questions, theories and methodologies rather than a totalizing or reductive description of the contemporary world" (2006, p. 210). This idea of multiple mobilities and fluid interdependence, in my view, invokes a set of articulations and assemblages that may connect the diverse lenses through which craftivism and mobility might intersect, including such possible layers as spatial, informational, social, technological, mediated, and presumably others.

Sheller and Urry's notion of multiple mobilities casts a broad net to include the physical movement of people and goods; transport networks; digital, wireless, and fixed infrastructures and technologies; mobile telephony, networked computers and the world

wide web – all of which have some bearing on a possible analysis. For the purposes of this study, however, I specifically probe three concepts: (1) urban space; (2) networks and assemblages; and (3) mobile technologies and media. These three thematic nodes offer lenses through which to contemplate the relationship of craftivism and mobility, relative to my research questions and congruent with Sheller and Urry's framework of multiple mobilities and fluid interdependence.

Urban Space

How do craftivists engage with urban space? Space, and more precisely urban space, marks an important point of intersection between mobility and craftivism. Sheller and Urry reconcile the need for a new mobilities paradigm by arguing that social science has largely neglected to consider questions of mobility as central to its inquiry. Rather, researchers have assumed a sedentary position, which the authors critique, faulting much of current social science research as having "largely ignored or trivialized the systematic movements of people for work and family life, for leisure and pleasure and for politics and protest" (p. 208). If we think of daily patterns of movement – riding the metro to work or school, walking through an urban plaza on the way to our favorite café, boarding a plane to visit friends, attending a conference or experiencing a new city – we quickly realize notions of mobility as bound up with questions of space. An examination of "how the spatialities of social life presuppose both the actual and imagined movement of people from place to place, person to person, event to event" is practically embedded in much of craftivist work (Sheller & Urry, 2006, p. 208). Yarn-bombers seek to disrupt daily patterns of life through the staged intervention of installing knitwork on the inanimate structures of urban life – park benches, stop signs, parking meters, railings,

and sometimes, more spectacularly, statues, iconic buildings or historical landmarks. Yet their 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. Indeed, the spatialities of social life are upset by craftivist interventions, which force a new contemplation of everyday patterns of movement embedded within public, urban space. This public dimension of urban space compels us to recall that such space is commonly understood and has been theorized as a shared social milieu and linked to notions of democracy and citizenry (see Habermas, 1989; Fraser, 1993). However, it is also one that has been deeply problematized by critical theorists as wrought with questions of access, privilege, and power. And, importantly for craftivist work, public space has been conceived of as a site of struggle – as spaces where social discourses and counterdiscourses circulate. Feminist geographer Doreen Massey (1994) argues that public space is socially constructed and that "social relations are inevitably and everywhere imbued with power and meaning and symbolism" (p. 3). As such, craftivists are constantly negotiating the geography and social relations of public space to practice their resistance and to counter the hegemonic structures embedded within public space.

Further, like graffiti artists, yarn-bombers assume urban space as the canvas for their artistic and political expression. Yet, their practice inherently necessitates recognition that mobility and its expression through urban space presuppose significant and highly embedded immobile infrastructures. These fixed infrastructures of urban space, along with the socio-technical systems of transport, are essential for organizing the physical movement of people and goods through space, underscoring that "mobility is always

located and materialized, and occurs through mobilisations of locality and rearrangements of the materiality of places" (Sheller, 2004).

The stealth movement of craftivists taking to the streets and bringing craftwork into public space by tagging the urban landscape or engaging in collectivist knitting as political activism serves to contrast the standardized order of the city and movement through it. Through a process of dérive (Debord, 1967), or, perhaps more aptly, de Certeau's (1984) notion of 'spatial tactics,' we can further situate craftivist practice, urban space, and questions of mobility as a set of fluid interdependences. De Certeau elaborated a theory of spatial tactics as a "metaphor to analyse everyday spatial practice," mobilizing one aspect of the two-part couplet of 'strategic' and 'tactical' approaches to space, which he appropriated from military discourse (Tonkiss, 2005, p. 138). Through this conceptual device, de Certeau opposes the overarching order of the city to the range of invisible moves that make up everyday urban life, suggesting that "in between the lines on the grid, ordinary users of the city tell spatial stories […]; individuals 'speak' the city by moving through it" (Tonkiss, 2005, p. 138; see also Renzi, 2008, pp. 76-81). This approach highlights the power relations and differentials between the official order of the city and people's colloquial use of it. Yarn-bombers, such as the Dutch collective Knitted Landscape[8],rely on such tactical use of space to make their commentary, knitting delicate flowers and multi-colored mushrooms and leaving them in the urban landscape, bringing colour and a sense of living, breathing organic form to spaces of concrete and steel (Figure 6). As one member of Knitted

[8] Knitted Landscape, "2007-03-17 Liejyklos g., Vilnius, Lithuania" Photography. http://knittedlandscape.com/

Landscape puts it: “The landscape changes for us, and the landscape changes for other people also. They look at it differently because there’s something there that is strange, that can make them smile and think ‘what person leaves a thing like that?’” (Moore & Prain, 2009, p. 86).

Figure 6. Knitted Flower © 2007 Knitted Landscape

Craftivists’ tactical appropriation of space necessitates not only a consideration of the urban landscape but also an equal recognition that people are moving through that space and their physical mobility enables them, at times, “to make their own spatial meanings, producing urban space in canny and idiomatic ways” (Tonkiss, 2005, p. 138).

We don't always take the beaten path; in fact, sometimes we choose to take the scenic route, or we take a shortcut through an alley or diverge from our normal course because of a special memory or particularly secret affection for a hidden garden or an eclectic piece of urban architecture. We don't always cross at the lights, and sometimes we play games and choose a random path not knowing where it might lead. Yarn-bombers appropriate the subjective mobility of urban dwellers and express their fondness for the element of surprise, hiding their knitted creations on occasion in unsuspecting locations, so that only those that stray from the norm will encounter them. And, of course, on other occasions they choose to gallantly subvert the official order of the city by making a bold statement front and centre, like when yarn-bombers Knit The City tagged an iconic red phone box in the direct sightline to London's Big Ben tower (Figure 7). With the capacity to transform the experience of urban space, the act of tagging attempts to reengage urban dwellers with their everyday landscape in new and novel ways, where space and mobility come together in a state of fluid interdependence.

Figure 7. Telephone Cosy © 2009 Knit The City

Networks and Assemblages

From the materiality of urban space to physical and virtual spaces of community and collectivity, this next section questions how the craftivist movement spreads and multiplies. What are its networks and connections? Here again we consider the idea of fluid interdependences and multiple mobilities as a conceptual frame through which to view craftivism as mobility, articulating it with the notions of networks and assemblages. One of the most striking aspects of the craftivist movement has been the speed and vast dispersal of the practice. Contemporary knit-ins and the world of knit and crochet graffiti are part of an international craftivist movement[9]. Collectives have gathered in all corners of the globe for knit-ins and yarn-storms alike. Combining physical travel with installation needlework has become a significant part of the movement's activity and also part of its creed. Sabrina Gschwandtner, author of KnitKnit (2007), notes that,

Since 2005, Knitta, Please! has been traveling the globe, handcrafting wooly legwarmers for statues, colorful cozies for fire hydrants and striped hats for outdoor chess pieces. They channel the current knitting trend into international guerrilla art, inspiring other knit graffiti groups in Sweden, Japan and South Africa. Their most impressive feats to date include yarn-bombing the Great Wall of China, tagging the Notre Dame and wrapping half of Seattle's Monorail[10].

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[9] See Utne Reader, "Yarn-Bombing Coming to a Neighborhood Near You". Web site. http://www.utne.com/Arts/Yarn-Bombing-Art-Activism.aspx for a short article and examples of international guerrilla knitting, accessed April 26, 2011

[10] Sabrina Gschwandtner, "Knit Wits", Hint Magazine. Web site. http://www.hintmag.com/post/110224-knit-wits

From bombing the Great Wall and Wall Street's bull to knitting-in from Bulgaria to Boston, craftivists have sought to expand the reach of their woven work and activism beyond their own localities or territorial borders.

They have done this through the formation of a broad community, powered by both personal relationships of close proximity and face-to-face contact and online connections networked through information and communication technology. The traditional idea of the network as a system of nodes (places) and paths (connections between places) is further complicated within the new mobilities paradigm (see also de Souza e Silva & Frith, 2010). Indeed, the contemporary networked society embraces a host of considerations and mobilities, including: the increased aeromobility of physical travel; the flow of information and images; one-to-one and many-to-many communications, including e-mail, SMS, and VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol); and mobile telephony and other network-enabled communications. Furthermore, craftivists have embraced the use online social networks like Facebook, Twitter, and Ravelry.com, a social network expressly for knitters. Sheller and Urry describe these multiple mobilities relative to the new networked society, noting, "it involves examining how the transporting of people and the communicating of messages, information and images increasingly converge and overlap through recent digitisation and extension of wireless infrastructures" (p. 212). Importantly, they underscore the significance of this convergence and fluid interdependence, arguing that rather than examining these as discrete categories, it is necessary to "begin from the complex patterning of people's varied and changing social activities" (p. 213).

This complex patterning of social activity, or what Wittel (2001) terms "network sociality," is vital to craftivists' ability to connect and for the movement to spread. How craftivists form their social networks and the vast and varied expansion of the movement's activities do not fit into a neat and orderly box. Rather, they reflect a fluid set of interdependences that assemble and disassemble relative to the flows and connections of craftivists and their activities, where questions of social relations, space, time, technology, and mobility are in flux, assembling around a particular yarn-bombing project or an organized knit-in and then disassembling or reconfiguring the assemblage, in turn.

Wiley et al. (2010) pick up on this notion and build, in part, from Sheller and Urry's examination of the 'mobilities turn' in social science research, extending the analysis by drawing on assemblage theory (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), social network theory, mobility studies, and media ecology analysis to formulate a model of "assembling social space." Forsaking the notion that social space is anchored in geographic, political or legal terms of a specific territory or nation-state, Wiley et al. "define an individual's social space as the sum of the social relations, geographic mobilities and emplacements, and communication networks that link that individual into a specific constellation of assemblages" (p. 342). This idea of a constellation is crystallized in the model through four interrelated concepts: assemblages, networks, activities, and subjects. Applying Wiley et al.'s expanded model to the craftivist community, assemblages are formed when individuals or groups of radical knitters and textile street artists (the subjects) are linked "via networks and activities to particular arrangements of bodies, technologies, and materials in order to do something" (p. 344). Here, "doing something" ranges from

group knitting in public spaces, to yarn-bombing the urban landscape, to knitting-in in protest of the political-economic establishment. Based on the examples discussed, craftivists express their art and politics in various ways: as a response to the dehumanizing qualities of the urban environment; as opposition to war, globalization, and consumerism; or as a means to cultivate awareness and community to combat the isolation and alienation of the fast pace of modern life. Yarn-bombers and radical knitters occupy a hybrid model of socially networked space, forming traditional social networks via knitting groups that emerge from existing personal networks, such as family and friends, work colleagues, or other shared-interest leisure groups, and via online social networks that attract like-minded and motivated individuals interested in participating more fully and being part of a wider community. The community grows by word-of-mouth and over the internet, as links form between individuals and multiply as a networked web of social relationships, actualized through participation and craftivist practice.

The impressive Pink M.24 Chaffee project, which I described in the introduction, provides a fitting example to illustrate the constellation of assemblages, networks, subjects, and activities that converge in Wiley et al.'s model. The World War II tank was covered with more 4,000 pink knitted squares, each measuring 15 x 15 centimetres, as a means of craftivist protest against Denmark's entry in the Iraq war. An international network of volunteer knitters crafted each square separately. Below, Marianne Jørgenssen comments on the assemblage for the project:

People were invited through [London's] Cast Off Knitting Club, from friend to friend either by word of mouth or over the internet, and by a number of knitting groups made

for this specific project, or other already existing knitting groups. The physical and personal acknowledgement in all of these knitted patches are, when joined together, a powerful visualization of thoughtfulness. The main impression of the knitted tank is that it consists of hundreds of patches knitted by many different people in different ways: single colored, stripes with bows or hearts, loosely knitted, closely knitted, various knitted patterns [...]. They represent a common acknowledgement of a resistance to the war in Iraq[11].

The project reflects the complementary ideas of fluid interdependences and assemblages. Jørgenssen describes the various networks – both physical and virtual – that came together to contribute to the project, linking subjects, networks, and activity (knitting distributed across many pairs of needles, near and far) into a particular assemblage to achieve the project's political and artistic objectives. Moreover, she notes that the knitted contributions were then stitched together by a local group of five volunteers (Figures 8 & 9) and that passers-by in Copenhagen's main square also helped to stitch the pieces together as the tank was covered in its pink blanket, extending the assemblage even further to include an element of spontaneous participation. To this end, Wiley et al., argue that, assemblages in this model, are the bundles of arrangements and logics that shape a subject's (whether individual or collective) emplacement, mobility and connectivity [...]. Assemblages are compositions of heterogeneous elements 'deducted from the flows' and made to function according to a certain set of

[11] Marianne Jørgenssen, "Pink M.24 Chaffee: A Tank Wrapped in Pink", Web site. http://www.marianneart.dk/ , accessed April 16, 2011.

logics. As these elements are brought into relations of composition with one another, they constitute a specific territory for a certain duration [...]. (2010, p. 344)

The Pink M.24 Chaffee reflects the organizational, mobile, networked, and temporal arrangements of such an assemblage bound around the distinct objectives for the project. Its very composition necessitates the participation and linking of social networks, the distributed activity of the knitting production, and the positioning of the tank in urban, public space under certain material and temporal conditions relative to the artistic and political aims of protesting the war in Iraq. Furthermore, the immense scale of the project is visually arresting; the symbolic use of knitting and the color pink all play into a certain set of logics undergirding the ideological discourse of the assemblage, which, by Jørgessen's account, allows for the possibility of "knitting your opinions." Together, it was the social relations, networks, technologies, activities, and a common ideological commitment form a specific assemblage that enabled the Pink M.24 Chaffee project to come to life.

Figures 8 & 9. Pink M.24 Chaffee © 2006 Marianne Jørgenssen

Articulations with Mobile Media and Technologies

This assemblage model described above inevitably begs the question of how mobile media and technologies might articulate with craftivist practice? It follows – with the understanding of people as increasingly mobile, both physically and virtually – that a set of interdependent media, tools, and technologies, enabling organization, coordination, and communication are being mobilized by craftivists as essential to their practice. Radical knitters and yarn-bombers are networked and linked via a host of mobile technologies and media, assembling and disassembling around craftivist activities of both large and small scale. Moreover, miniaturized, privatized, digitized, and mobilized machines (phones, laptops, and cameras, for example) and the software and networked technology of the internet are becoming increasingly interwoven into daily life (Sheller & Urry, p. 221). Mobile smart phones, GPS-enabled mapping, WiFi, mobile digital photography, web sites and blogs, and the use of annotation and metadata are just some of the technologies and media that articulate with craftivist practice. These media and technologies enable a layer of informational data to be overlaid on craftivist activities fluidly articulating with the individuals, material practice, networks, and fixed and digital infrastructures that underpin the conditions of the new mobilities paradigm. Specifically, in what follows, I look at examples of mobile digital photography, digital mapping, and hybrid analog-digital annotation that articulate with yarn-bombing and guerrilla textile activities.

The use of the mobile photography – images shot using cell phone digital cameras – is one of the most pervasive uses of mobile media associated with craftivism and an integral aspect of recording and sharing the practice. These photos become the visual evidence of an ephemeral practice, captured by the yarn-bombers as documentation of

their installations, which can remain in place for a long while or can be quickly removed by authorities or the curious. Passers-by will also often take photos with their mobile phones as a means of capturing a political disruption or unexpected visual surprise in the urban landscape. They will then circulate the images more widely by posting them to a social network site or photo-sharing website. Indeed, these photos are often uploaded to a photo-sharing site by way of a mobile application that enables the posting of images directly from the phone's camera roll to a social network. Flickr.com, the early leader of web-based photo-sharing, is one of the most trafficked properties on the internet today with a global traffic ranking of #34 and more than 320,000 other web sites linking into the property, according to Alexa.com[12]. A search on the site for yarn-bombing yields nearly 5,500 results[13].

Another example includes one of Knitta's most recent yarn-bombing projects – an installation in the plaza in front of the Blanton Museum in Austin, Texas called "Knitted Wonderland" (Figure 10). Here, the trunks of ninety-nine trees are wrapped in orange, pink, turquoise, and olive-colored knitted "sweaters." Digital photos were taken and uploaded to Flickr by numerous individuals, including organizer Magda Sayeg and those involved as knitters, crocheters, and weavers in the project, along with others who happened upon the project and took photos to share with their own networks.

[12] See Alexa search "Flickr.com", Web site. http://www.alexa.com/siteinfo/flickr.com#, accessed March 20, 2011.
[13] Search "yarn + bomb" on Flickr. Web site. http://www.flickr.com/search/?q=yarn%20bomb, accessed April 28, 2011

Figure 10. Knitted Wonderland © 2011 Shawn Thomas

A pool of over 1,200 images of "Knitted Wonderland" has been uploaded to Flickr to date[14]. For example, a photo entitled "Knitted Trees" was uploaded by user Shawn Thomas to his Flickr stream[15]. Two additional detail photos of the yarn-bombed space are also included in the stream, and they are part of the larger pool because they were specifically tagged with the keywords "knitted" and "wonderland." The imagery circulates from its point of capture through its mobility in virtual spaces via the internet and the act of networked photo-sharing applications and websites. Flickr has also developed mobile applications available on the Apple App Store and BlackBerry's App

[14] Search "knitted + wonderland" on Flickr. Web site. http://www.flickr.com/search/?q=knitted+wonderland, accessed April 28, 2011.
[15] Shawn Thomas, "Flickr Photo Stream", Web site. http://www.flickr.com/photos/shawnpthomas/5520103492/, accessed April 6, 2011

World that enable immediate uploading to the site from smart phones with built-in camera technology to instantly share imagery while on the go.

These technologies enable craftivists to open up a hybrid space where physical space is overlaid with digital information (de Souza e Silva & Frith, 2010; de Souza e Silva, 2006). Craftivists augment their work by adding contextual information and metadata to digital photography when posting images to Flickr, including tagging each photo with relevant keywords, and assigning them to digital galleries and shared pools that can be browsed or searched directly. Flickr's metadata fields also provide figures representing image views, comments, favorites, and the number of times a photo has been added to a gallery, generating web-based analytic data and using metaphors, vocabulary, and participatory actions now common to social networking and media-sharing websites. Moreover, these images can be geo-tagged and mapped using Flickr's mapping functionality, which is further enhanced by its integration with Yahoo!'s NAVTEQ technology (Figure 11), allowing for additional layers of mapping including a country and state map, a road map indicating major and minor roadways, and finally a satellite image map where one can zoom in to view the exact coordinates and physical location of the mapped point of interest.

Figure 11. Map of Knitted Wonderland @ the Blanton © Flickr/Yahoo!

Magda Sayeg, founder of Knitta, also uses digital mapping on her personal website – specifically, an interactive e-map as a graphical interface – as a means to geographically pinpoint the precise locations of her craftivism around the world. In the 'Gallery' section on her site, a bright pink world map is dotted to indicate the cities where she has installed knit graffiti and yarn-bombing (Figure 12)[16]. Each dot is hyperlinked to a gallery of images that further detail the guerrilla textile work in situ, recording instances of her yarn-bombing work moored to various fixtures in public urban spaces. This type of mapping may not always fully integrate mobile technologies with location awareness and GPS capabilities. It does, however, make use of geo-tagging and keywording to connect information about the city and physical geographic location within that city

[16] Magda Sayeg, "Gallery", Knitta, Please!, Web site. http://www.magdasayeg.com/knitta_please_gallery.html, accessed April 6, 2011.

where the yarn bomb and knitted street art are installed. Given the ephemeral nature of this work, a digital photographic record linked to mapping software and graphical interface that is geo-tagged aids in capturing and archiving these moments of guerrilla craftivism.

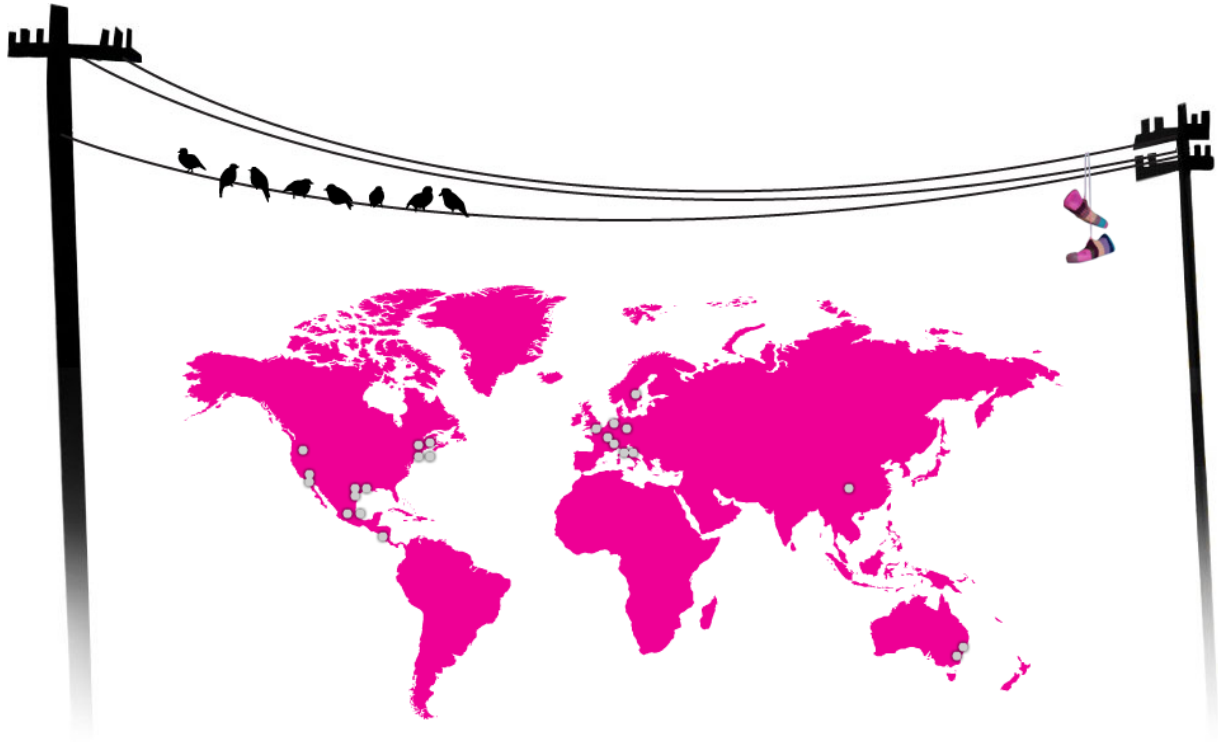

Figure 12. E-map of Knitta's Yarn-bombing Locations © 2010 Magda Sayeg

Lastly, a consideration of annotative media and technology as articulating with craftivism illustrates that knit graffiti artists typically mark their work with a physical tag or unique signature that links the installed needlework to them as the creator(s). Most often, the tag includes their street name such as Knitta, Tricot Pirate, or Knit The City and an indicator on how to acquire more information by listing their web address,

Twitter handle, or Facebook page. Lemos (2010) distinguishes between electronic and material annotations as "ways to 'write' the urban space," describing the former as "new ways to produce invisible annotations using the power of mobile technologies and networks to index to data to location," and the latter as forms of "physical annotations, such as posters, stickers," or what he calls "analogical locative media" (p. 406). Yarn-bombing's use of urban electronic annotations enables a layer of informational territoriality beyond physical space, coupled with physical tags and stickers, to form a hybrid of analog and digital modes of annotation. The physical tag annotates the street name of the yarn-bomber and directs one to a digital space where more detailed information is available, not fully exhausting the interactive possibilities of electronic annotation yet recognizing the interplay between physical tagging and the augmented informational capacity of digital media and technologies. In this way, annotation makes it possible to connect a curious onlooker to added content – visual and informational – about the yarn-bomber and her or his work.

Together, these examples of mobile media and technologies demonstrate how acts of yarn-bombing and radical knitting move beyond traditional conceptions of locality or territorial borders, invoking mobility as central to how uses of digital photography, mapping and geo-tagging, and modes of electronic annotation contribute to the opening of hybrid spaces and informational layering as key to an understanding of craftivism and mobility.

Conclusion

A consideration of craftivism through the purview of mobility yields no clearly demarcated boundaries or tidy categories. It does not pretend to have exhausted the discourses of activism through craft, nor the cultural politics, power relations, or social implications of expressing resistance or enacting interventions through yarn-bombing or collectivist knit-ins. Rather, this study has opened up a space to elaborate mobility as a conceptual frame, articulating it together with the craftivist movement and questions of urban space, networks, assemblages, and mobile media and technologies. The remarkable advancements in communication and information technology, the pervasive social connectivity enabled through the internet and mobile technologies, and increases in the physical and digital movement of people, information, and goods underpin the new mobilities paradigm, which has formed the conceptual and analytical backbone to this study. It reflects the amplified environment of connectivity, mobility, and the productive capacity of a networked world, making evident points of intersection with craftivism.

With a creative ethos, DIY ethic, and a desire to create change through the art and politics of everyday resistance and activism, craftivists have embraced the new mobilities paradigm and it has become entangled within the heart of their work. Through their transformation of urban space and the use of spatial tactics as intervention, the capture and posting of mobile photography, digital mapping and annotating, the formation of community through personal and online social networks, and the composition of distinct assemblages to execute yarn-bombing brigades or

radical knit-ins, mobility and craftivism are expressly complicated far beyond a point of implied connection.

Yet, is it critically important to also recognize how privileged social spaces, access to technology, media literacy, and questions of class, economics, gender, and labour are not erased by this study. Rather, they remain productive questions for the field of mobility studies; ones where the work of feminist geographers, theorists, and cultural critics can lend great insight. The social conditions of craftivism in an ever-increasingly mobile society cannot ignore the implications for those who experience the 'gates' of immobility – limited expression, physical travel or technological access, within the broader inequalites of global capitalism characterized by the relocation of the textile industries to the developing world and rampant first-world consumerism. These conditions, as Kirsty Robertson suggests, may have largely contributed to the current resurgence of knitting and sewing and ideas of radical crafting as intervention (2010, p. 199). Yet, I would add that craftivism is further complicated by the fluid interdependences of connectivity, immediacy, social networking, technological devices, and other innovations that have put questions of mobility at center stage. Furthermore, today's craftivists knowingly or unknowingly draw from the space opened up by 1970 and 80s feminists, where craft's subversive artistic and political potential was seized. Considering the feminist dimension of craftivism alongside questions of mobility also opens up the possibility for broader feminist insight on mobility studies – ensuring that questions of gender, privilege, and power are in play in research, theory, critique, and method. Together, all of this yields a highly-heterogeneous and complex bundle of historical, social, and political-economic conditions that mark the contemporary

craftivist movement, bound up and contributing to emerging field of mobilities research, while leaving no shortage of additional directions for future research.

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