// Leena Crasemann &
Anne Röhl

INTRODUCTION //
HARD-PRESSED: TEXTILE ACTIVISM, 1990–2020

It is just after 11 am on a Sunday morning – 5 April 2020 – and 14 women are waving from small, rectangular video screens. All of the women are wearing cloth face masks, and almost all of them are sitting at sewing machines. On the YouTube channel *einfach nähen*, a sew-along is about to begin under the heading "'*Nähfluencer*'[1] sew masks with the community: how many can we make in one hour?". In this collaborative action, amateur seamstresses from YouTube's sewing community are presenting a variety of patterns for DIY face masks. The text to accompany the video refers to organisations that "urgently need masks" due to the Covid-19 crisis (einfach nähen 2020). Since around mid March, countless tutorials and instructions for making DIY face masks have been published on the internet, and above all on social media platforms. Besides the online sewing community, representatives of volunteer fire departments have shared their recommendations and rural women's associations in the Allgäu region of southern Germany, among others, have been busy sewing cloth masks, while some sectors of the textile industry, including fashion design studios and suppliers of interior fittings for cars, have switched to manufacturing face masks.[2] Production switches of this kind can be compared to measures implemented during wartime, but producing DIY face masks at home also stands in a long tradition of – domestic – textile craft in times of war. Following the outbreak of the First World War, the *Schwäbische Frauenzeitung*[3] reported that "A large-scale mobilisation of wool and woollen articles has begun" (Koch 1997: 44). Information on the website of the #StayHomeAndSew initiative testifies to the mobilisation of cotton fabrics, elastic bands and bias binding that is currently under way: in its FAQ, the initiative notes that many cities have "fabric warehouses" where materials can be obtained free of charge. The homemade face masks are then donated to people who work on the "coronavirus front line" – for example, in medical practices or care homes. While feminists in the bourgeois women's movement in Austria hoped that their patriotic service on the "textile home front" during the First World War (Gaugele 2011: 22) would bring them a step closer to emancipation, namely by earning them citizenship rights, slogans such as "Remember Pearl Harbor – Purl Harder", which exhorted American women to knit supplies for soldiers during the Second World War, were part

1) From the German *nähen* (to sew) + influencers [Trans.].

2) On the use of war rhetoric during the Covid-19 crisis, see Werber 2020; von Müller 2020.

3) A regional newspaper devoted to "the interests of womankind and the family" [Trans.].

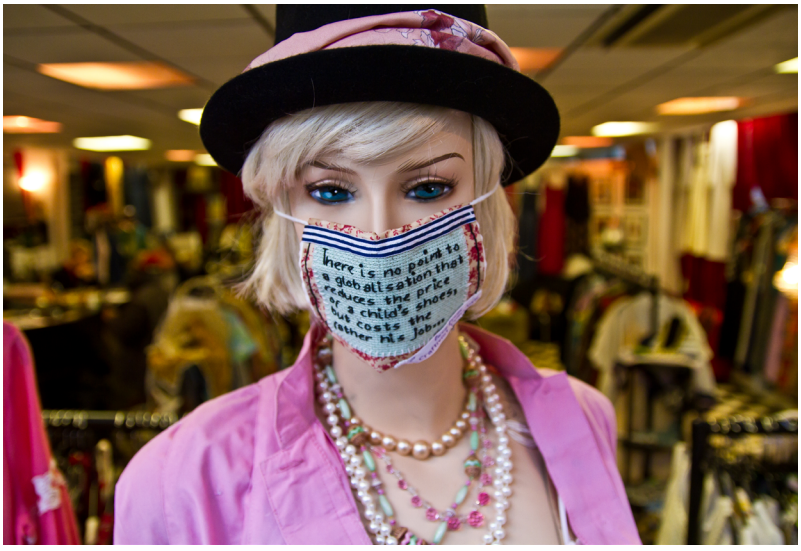
of a national propaganda campaign (Bryan-Wilson 2017: 11). The historian Anne Macdonald has pointed out that due to widespread industrial production, there was far less demand for hand-knitted articles during the Second World War than there had been during the First, or even during the American Civil War, leading her to conclude that "many women knit(ted) because women had *always* knit in wartime" (MacDonald 1988: 295). Domestic handicraft was thus cultivated as a gesture of female support for a national cause (and also, no doubt, as a pacifying, distracting ritual). So how does the activity of the female mask-makers in the YouTube sew-along compare to this?

The desire for self-sufficiency – in response to a shortage economy, but also in the context of a period of uncertainty, when state provisions and directions are no longer trusted – adds a further dimension to the anti-capitalist critique inherent in many textile-based DIY phenomena of the 21st century. As a reaction to the Covid-19 crisis, crafters in German-speaking countries began producing DIY face coverings long before mask-wearing became mandatory. If, therefore, this movement is to be regarded as a bottom-up phenomenon or a kind of grassroots activism, rather than as a measure imposed by the government during a time of crisis, then the American 'knitting directive' during the Second World War provides a useful framework for comparison: in the current crisis, activism in the form of manual craft appears to counteract a feeling of uselessness that is exacerbated by inactivity, immobility, fear and the experience of powerlessness – providing a kind of occupational therapy that has a place in our lives today alongside working from home and caring for others. At a time of lockdowns and social distancing, this occupation can even go from being a hobby to taking the place of regular, paid employment, as a dancer from Vienna has described: while currently unemployed due to theatre closures, she now works every day at her sewing machine. Other mask-makers have even adjusted their production routines to those of employees who are expected to work day and night through a crisis. As Martina G. writes in the chat: "Still half-asleep … mask-making night shift [victory hand emoji]" (einfach nähen 2020). Industrial mask production would doubtless be more efficient, despite the impressive speed of a few seamstresses in the chat, who report that they produce 25 masks per hour. Internet portals such as #StayHomeAndSew, however, channel this solitary, domestic activism by supplying local help groups with homemade masks from other parts of Germany. Due to the nomadic quality of textiles (Albers 1957) – raw materials can be folded up and

distributed by post, and flattened masks can later be opened out to fit around the mouth and nose – DIY face coverings overcome physical distance and cross national borders. Through the making of individual, handcrafted masks, activism establishes a direct link between the seamstresses working alone at home and the people on the coronavirus front line, such as health care workers. At a time when physical contact and proximity are strictly controlled, homemade and useful gifts take on greater significance. Emotionally charged by the voluntary (handi-)work of individuals – perhaps reflected in a variety of fabrics and styles – these homemade face coverings have a seemingly higher value than, say, makeshift solutions from the 'war economy', such as masks produced by a supplier of car interior fittings. This emotional charging of homemade masks is, however, comparable to the positive evaluation of handmade (craft) items in general, which is precisely described by Ezra Shales: "[C]raft restores to consumables – scarves, vests, and tea cozies – a quality of individual agency, and also a property of animism – a vague sense of something 'soulful' […]." (2017: 53)

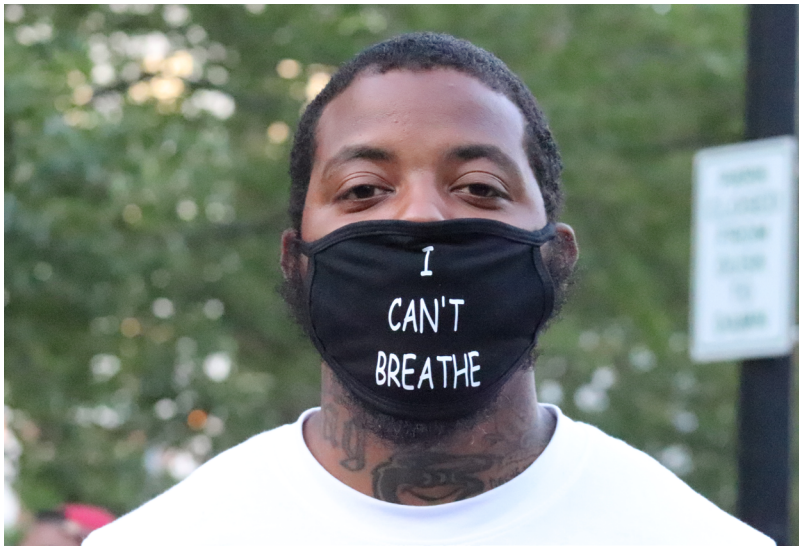
Conversely, however, emotional ties can also be formed to industrially manufactured – in other words, 'soulless' – objects in our possession. Handmade objects are particularly desirable, Shales says, because they bring some life into our homogenised, standardised and automated world, "but discerning craft is increasingly an act of imaginative perception, as few of us know how our possessions are made or can state with certainty where ordinary work ends and skilled labor picks up." (ibid.) What Shales calls "imaginative perception" is one of the prerequisites for the concept of 'craftivism' that has been gaining ground since the 2000s. For Betsy Greer, who coined this portmanteau term from the words 'craft' and 'activism' in 2003, the merit of craftivism lies in its ability "to bring back the personal into our daily lives to replace some of the mass produced." (Greer 2020 [2007]) Here, the mere act of replacing something mass-produced with something handmade and personal is considered to be a subversive gesture. As a basis upon which to consider the role played by textiles in activist contexts, craftivism is both

// Figure 1
Craftivist Collective, Paper Dress Boutique mannequin with mask in shop window, 2012



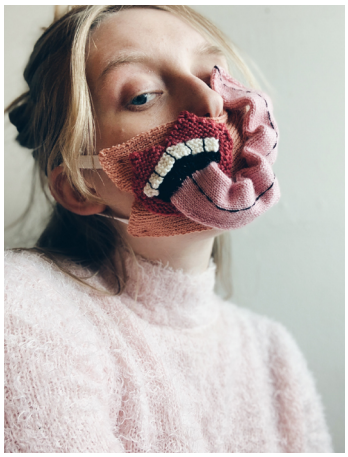
too narrowly and too broadly conceived, as the example of DIY face coverings shows: while the masks produced by the Craftivist Collective (Derwanz 2020; Kuittinen 2015: 36–39), whose elaborately framed, cross-stitched messages consciously evoke the visuality and materiality of handmade objects **(fig. 1)**, are often cited as prime examples of craftivism, some evidently activist practices involving face masks cannot be subsumed under this term because they employ mass-produced props. These practices include a campaign launched by the Weisser Ring victim support organisation to highlight the issue of domestic violence. The campaign slogan was "Schweigen macht schutzlos, mach dich laut", which translates roughly as: "Remaining silent leaves you unprotected, so make yourself heard", and many female celebrities agreed to be photographed wearing masks with this slogan on them. Another example are the masks with George Floyd's dying words "I can't breathe" printed on them, which protesters are often photographed wearing **(fig. 2)**. And even the pragmatic activism of DIY mask-making, as described above, can only be defined as craftivism up to a point, because the production of face coverings during the Covid-19 crisis is driven by necessity rather than by a desire to reject mass-produced equivalents. The knitted fictions created by the Icelandic artist Ýr Jóhannsdóttir during lockdown, meanwhile, which are intended to promote social distancing rather than to serve as actual masks, oscillate between the handmade aesthetic of craftivism and surrealism-inspired contemporary art with their grotesque reproductions of mouths and tongues **(fig. 3)**.

These four (production) contexts – the #StayHomeAndSew community, the Weisser Ring campaign, the Craftivist Collective and the artworks created by Jóhannsdóttir – span from pursuing a hobby for a good cause to wearing prefabricated textiles with slogans on them, to creative projects undertaken by craftivists, artists or designers. As such, they delineate the field in which textile activism can operate, which includes the sphere of hobbies and pastimes as well as the realms of political campaigning, fashion design and contemporary art. As the face masks demonstrate, a craft object can be a fashion statement and a political gesture at



// Figure 2
Elvert Barnes, *Justice for George Floyd*, 2020

// Figure 3
Ýr Jóhannsdóttir, *Face Mask*, 2020



the same time. The example of face coverings also shows, however, that every (sub-)cultural practice can be swallowed by the market and reduced to a passing fad with minimal oppositional content (Fisher 2009).

CRAFT AND CRAFTIVISM The term 'craft' refers both to the activity and the result when objects are created by applying accomplished manual skills in a non-standardised manner – using textiles or organic and inorganic materials such as ceramics, wood, glass, paper or metal (Shales 2017; Harrod 2018). While Larry Shiner advances the theory that the "invention of art" during the Renaissance, for example through its academisation, was what defined the category of craft (Shiner 2001), Glenn Adamson situates the emergence of craft in the context of the Industrial Revolution: "Craft itself is a modern invention" (Adamson 2013: viii). He also regards industry, not art, as its opposite. The distinction between craft and industrial production, Adamson maintains, is linked to a series of other pairs of opposites such as freedom/alienation, tacit/explicit, hand/machine, and traditional/progressive, whereby craft is characterised by the first term in each of these dialectical pairings. The term 'craftivism' is also rooted in this characterisation. Craftivism relates to forms of making that do not involve mechanical reproduction; they are frequently conceived as democratic activities and working methods that are situated outside the industrial mainstream, insofar as the production can also be done by amateurs using learned artisanal skills, rather than it being a process requiring technical expertise. Above all in the English-speaking world, craftivism has dominated debates on the use of textile handicraft and its products as activist gestures since the start of the new millennium. Betsy Greer, who coined the term and set up the platform *craftivism.com* in 2003, defines craftivism first and foremost as the "practice of engaged creativity, especially regarding political or social causes." (Greer 2020 [2007]) She places the various manifestations of this phenomenon in the context of third-wave feminism, a growing interest in sustainability, anti-capitalism – above all, criticism of sweatshop practices in the textile industry – and engagement in pacifist activities as a response to "a rising sense of hopelessness" after 9/11 (ibid.). Viewed from a craftivist perspective, crafters should be thought of as activists per se, even if their craft activities do not involve taking part in protests or becoming involved in social projects (Williams 2011; see also Corbett 2017). This is also made clear by the examples Greer provides, which relate solely to the realm of

textile handicraft; she mentions "teaching knitting lessons" in the same breath as "crocheting hats for the less fortunate, and sewing blankets for abandoned animals" (Greer 2020 [2007]). The reason for this view of craftivism is that its critical potential is seen to lie in the very act of reviving and preserving pre-industrial craft techniques, and simultaneously regarding them as a counterpoint to standardised, mechanised and systematised 'modern' life. The fact that the intellectual history of craft only began with modernity, as Adamson convincingly argues, is not taken into consideration here.

A concomitant of this phenomenon is a new domesticity (Bratich / Brush 2011: 238–39 ; see also Derwanz 2020: 125), which Greer herself distinguishes from the view of housework and domesticity in second-wave feminism. She believes that in the craftivist movement of the early 2000s, so much time had passed since the 1970s that "women began to look again at domesticity as something to be valued instead of ignored. Wanting to conquer both a drill and a knitting needle, there was a return to home economics tinged with a hint of irony as well as a fond embracement." (Greer 2020 [2007])

In Greer's subsequent texts and in the projects she curated, however, the knitting needle plays a much greater role than the drill (Museum of Design 2018). The attitude she proposes towards domestic handicraft – "a hint of irony as well as a fond embracement" – has been criticised by Laura Portwood-Stacer, among others. Taking up as a hobby an activity that is less highly regarded due to its association with femininity and domesticity or housework, is not per se political, Portwood-Stacer argues: "[S]aying that something is subversive does not make it so." (2007: 2) She also emphasises the affluence of the mainly middle-class craftivists who have the money to buy the often costly materials and can also spare the time for craft activities.[4)] Their choice of materials also shows that this form of making is not in itself anti-capitalist, as wool and fabrics are also produced in varying conditions.[5)] This brings us to Portwood-Stacer's final criticism, where she points out that activities which in the West become pastimes of feminists, still retain the status of badly paid (women's) work in other parts of the world (ibid.; see also Williams 2011).

At this juncture, one could raise the objection that some craftivists focus particularly on the textile industry and campaign for better working conditions (Kuittinen 2015: 36–39). But precisely when craftivist ideas are viewed against the backdrop of a social and technological history of textiles – which would make sense

4) Scholars have repeatedly observed that already during the 1970s, above all middle-class women were attracted by the idea of taking up textile handicrafts voluntarily as a subversive action (Gerhard 2013; Bryan-Wilson 2016).

5) Anne Bruder provides the example that in Kat Coyle's first knitting pattern for pussyhats, she recommended using a wool that was produced in fair working conditions. This wool was, however, very highly priced at 12 US dollars per ball. Most pussyhat knitters chose to use cheaper wool produced in China, India or Mexico instead (Bruder 2019: 116–117).

given the numerous textile-related examples of craftivism – they prove to have a number of blind spots and reach wrong conclusions: besides the romantic-animistic qualities, as outlined above with the aid of Shales' observations, the historicity of the concept of craft is also disregarded (Adamson 2013). In the pre-industrial era that Greer and others refer back to, these particular activities did not occupy the ameliorated status of craft, but instead constituted necessary housework or badly paid employment (in the putting-out system, for example).[6] A link is thus established to a romanticised history of textiles before the Industrial Revolution, and with the focus on handicraft, textile-related cultural techniques are conceived more as activities than as techniques. It is, therefore, very surprising that craftivism aligns itself historically, and to an extent also thematically, with third-wave feminism as well as with cyberfeminist thinking of the 1990s, whose accomplishments include the study of weaving as part of the media history of digital formats (Plant 1998 [1997]; Schneider 2007).[7] While the merging of the digital and textile realms does play a part in craftivism, personal, *manual* work is nevertheless the central aspect.[8] Within the logic of craftivism, handicraft is also essential because it is through the process of manual creation that the much-cited personal dimension is revealed. Re-reading Greer's expanded definition of the term, one finds repeated references to particularisation and personalisation, and also to individual speed, which she distinguishes from other forms of protest such as public demonstrations:

> [P]ersonalized activism [...] allows practitioners to *customize their particular* skills to address *particular* causes. Instead of being a number in a march or mass protest, craftivists apply their creativity toward making a difference *one person at a time* [...] but without chanting or banner waving and at *their own pace* [emphasis L.C. and A.R.]. (Greer 2020 [2007])

Making something by oneself and by hand – the individual creative process – contributes significantly, it seems, to the craftivist's sense of wellbeing. Pursuing a slow and time-consuming craft practice is not only a performative protest gesture in the face of the current dictates of speed, optimisation and productivity; it also counters these dictates with a holistic view of protest by emphasising the psychological aspect of the craft activity and the steady physical production process. This holistic approach allows for individual preferences and even evokes Johann Heinrich

6)
Using the example of lace production in Ireland in the 19th century, Adamson shows that precisely those craft objects whose production increased significantly as a result of industrialisation were created under extremely difficult working conditions and involved the exploitation of young women and girls (Adamson 2013: 216–222).

7)
While Sadie Plant constructs a cyberfeminist, alternative history of computer technology in which women are inscribed, among others, through the figure of Ada Lovelace, but also through the development of the Jacquard loom, Birgit Schneider's dissertation presents a media archaeology of the punched card, in which the invention of the Jacquard loom meets that of the computer.

8)
The prior organisation, but also the sharing of designs, instructions or patterns often takes place via social networks and is explicitly intended as a means of multiplication. A move into the digital realm can, however, also be made for the purposes of promotion and marketing (Kuni 2011b: 124).

Pestalozzi's pedagogical motto: "Craft connects your heart, head and hands," according to Sara Corbett, who in 2008 borrowed Greer's neologism for her blog, *alonelycraftivist*, and has since become one of the best-known representatives of craftivism in Great Britain. It is all the more striking, therefore, that both Greer and Corbett simultaneously describe their path to craftivism as a way out of a phase of personal burnout. Corbett's recollection ("In 2007 I felt like a burned-out activist. After being part of many activist groups [...] I was exhausted." [Corbett / Housley 2011: 345]) appears to echo Greer's account of realising how exhausted she was during a women's rights demonstration, where she was "not entirely sure what [she] was contributing to the world" (2011: 177).

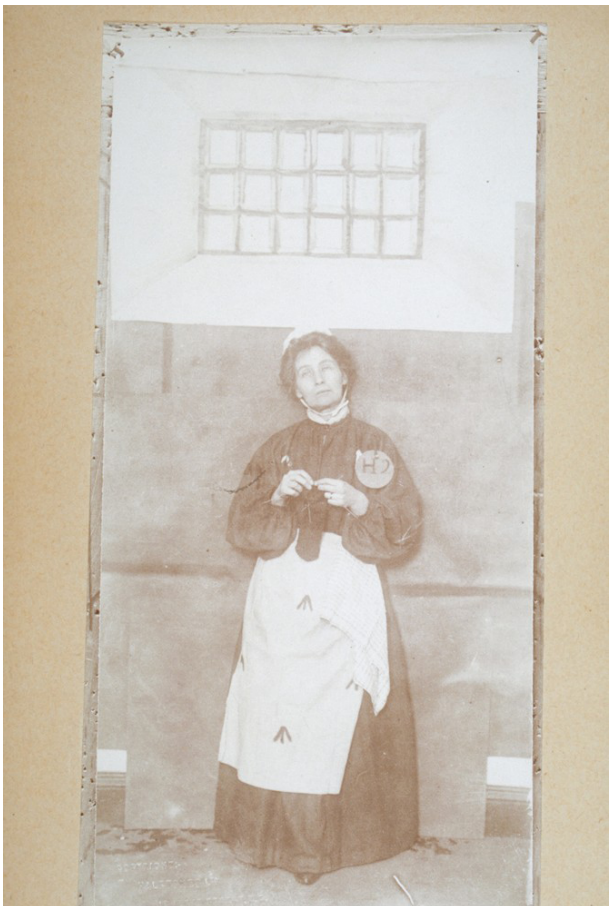
This therapeutic dimension of craftivism has been almost completely ignored in the scholarly literature to date. Dawn Fowler has, however, explored the 'quieter' aspects of craft-based forms of protest – qualities such as tactile stimulation, calmness and slowness – and she regards the time-consuming process of production as an opportunity to reflect on a particular social or political issue. Following Greer, Fowler situates craftivism within a history of feminist recodings of traditionally female handicrafts, and she refutes – with reference to Rozsika Parker's groundbreaking research on embroidery – the frequently heard claim that the very posture of those engaged in handicrafts not only results in physical inertia but also conveys passivity (2017). The topic of craft as a textile-based occupational therapy in the wake of trauma – Greer repeatedly mentions the feeling of helplessness after 9/11 – is not addressed by Fowler. It would be one of the typical tensions that exist within textile-based practice (Bryan-Wilson 2017: 36) – like the fact that independent thinking is indeed possible during conventional embroidery work (Parker 2010 [1984]: 9–11) – if it became clear that the activism on which craftivism is based oscillates between purposeful action and the satisfying indulgence of an impulse to be active. And also if it became evident that, when faced with a political situation that appears hopeless, it can have a calming psychological effect if one can at least knit something for the project one supports. It might not even be detrimental to the aims of craftivists to evoke this aspect of the social history of textiles, given that textile objects produced in psychiatric institutions are now no longer only regarded as the "artistry of the mentally ill" (Hans Prinzhorn), but also as "textile tactics"[9], and prisons are seeing the positive impact of running needlework programmes (see Fine Cell Work 2020).

The reason why quilting bees are more often recalled as the nucleus of feminist activities (Robertson 2016) than acts of

9) Monika Ankele used that term in a lecture at Warburg-Haus in Hamburg, 17th february 2017.

collegiality among female workers in textile factories; and why the elaborately embroidered banners of the British suffragettes are more likely to be presented as precursors of craftivism (Tickner 1988) than an image of Emmeline Pankhurst standing in a prison cell, knitting a sock **(fig. 4)**, lies in the notion of work that craftivists invoke. The ideal of textile production upon which craftivism is based always goes back to pre-industrial working contexts and assumes that at that time, textile handicrafts were above all performed by women for their own household. Alienated but nevertheless manual work such as knitting socks in prisons or concentration camps therefore does not match this image (exhib. cat. Ravensbrück 2013: 128ff., 180ff.). This is problematic because the anti-capitalist stance is undermined if, say, the source of the materials employed is not examined, or if T-shirts are not thought of as handmade products created by textile workers, while the craftivist is realising her own potential in her product.[10)] It is a different situation, however, in the German-speaking world when the emphasis is placed on the "restructuring of work and employment conditions or on the 'creative impulse' of post-Fordist economies" of textiles (Critical Crafting Circle 2011: 9) or when the *kommando agnes richter* group's actions operate in places of social exclusion, such as psychiatric clinics (see below). By emphasising the handmade and a feminist tradition of reappropriating textile handicrafts – which is discernible in the Anglo-American discourse – other textiles and textile-based practices are neglected in activist contexts, including the history of recent feminism.

10)
In her *Shopdropping* series, artist Zoë Sheehan Saldaña undermines such distinctions by meticulously duplicating by hand garments that were bought from Walmart (Bryan-Wilson 2017: 265–266).



// Figure 4
Unknown, *Emmeline Pankhurst, in jail after a suffrage protest*, London, 1909

TEXTILES AS A MEDIUM OF FEMINIST PROTEST Rediscovering and employing traditionally female craft practices are a recognised part of the history of feminism. Among the topics that have repeatedly been the subject of scholarly enquiry are quilting bees as a forum for women's rights activists in the United States, and the strategic use of textile handicrafts as a way of actively engaging in the women's rights movement without appearing masculine – as can be seen, for example, in the self-portraits by Sojourner Truth and Alice Paul, but also in the banners of the British suffragettes

(Grigsby 2015; Lunardini 1986; Tickner 1988). Textile handmaking played a significant role in second-wave feminism, above all in the United States, but was also contentious – as shown, for example, by the controversy surrounding Judy Chicago's installation *The Dinner Party* (1974–79; Gerhard 2013). Another divisive issue was the question of whether a handicraft technique that served as an "instrument for teaching femininity" (Parker 2010 [1984]: 84) could be reappropriated and practised as an appreciation of women's artistic creativity, or whether this perpetuated restrictive traditions and prescribed gender roles. In the German-speaking world, textile handicraft was less prominent during this period: if one looks at the first exhibitions of feminist art in Germany, Austria and Switzerland, it soon becomes evident that textile craft appears here only as a marginal phenomenon or not at all. Of the numerous works on show in the survey exhibition *Künstlerinnen International 1877–1977* in West Berlin, only the *Postal Art Event,* initiated by the British artist Kate Walker, and Yocheved Weinfeld's series of *Sewn Hands* could be described as textile-based handicraft (Kaiser 2013). One reason for this could be that among the exhibition organisers, those who rejected the notion of a "feminine aesthetic" had asserted themselves.[11)] The exhibition *Magna Feminismus: Kunst und Kreativität*, which was curated by VALIE EXPORT and shown in Vienna in 1975, did not include any textile works. This is perhaps not surprising, given that EXPORT's textile activism is manifested in works such as *Aktionshose: Genitalpanik* (Schopp 2020). And in *Frauen sehen Frauen* at the Städtische Kunstkammer zum Strauhof in Zürich – another exhibition presented as part of International Women's Year in 1975 – textile craft also made only a sporadic appearance: a sewing machine was manipulated by Ursula Klar to operate independently in a ghostly manner, and Doris Stauffer's knitted *Peniswärmer* (Willy Warmers), which were conceived as medals to be bestowed upon men who upheld the patriarchy (Züst 2015: 104–106), were illustrated in the catalogue. The presentation never took place because the organisers allegedly "wanted to get away from knitting" (ibid.: 108).[12)]

In the context of third-wave feminism, artistic approaches from the 1970s that had been largely ignored during the 1980s backlash were readdressed; in the United States, for example, they were presented in a number of major exhibitions.[13)] Cyberfeminist approaches combine textile and digital techniques and also reveal where the histories of textile and digital media overlap (see footnote 8). Craftivism uses websites and social media to circulate not only instructions, but also works that would otherwise only

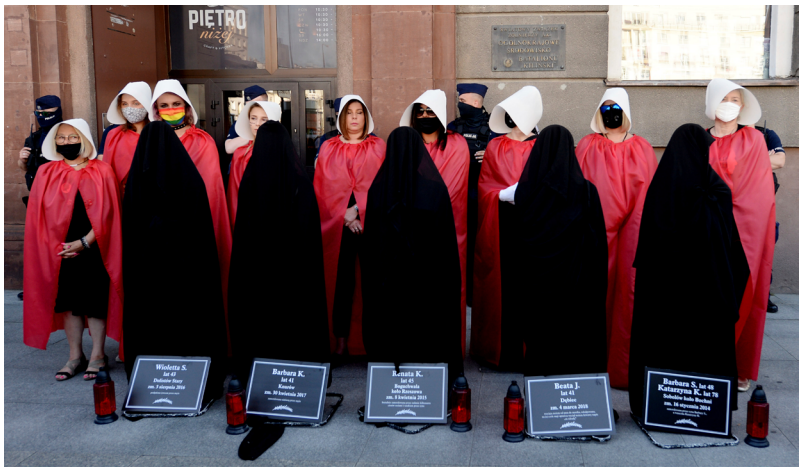
11) According to Silvia Bovenschen, in an interview where she also describes her more conservative colleagues as those who "suddenly started knitting" (Melián 2013).

12) It is striking to see that even the Verbund Collection, which has a specific focus on feminist art of the 1970s, includes works that show textiles in many different forms – as costumes, draperies, coverings and uncoverings, ironing scenes, aprons, threads and balls of string – but present these almost exclusively in photographs and films, rather than as materials or handicraft (exhib. cat. Feministische Avantgarde 2015).

13) For example, ***Sexual Politics: Judy Chicago's Dinner Party in Feminist Art History***, Armand Hammer Museum of Art, Los Angeles, 1996; ***A Labor of Love***, New Museum, New York City, 1996.

be seen in the maker's respective urban surroundings. Above all, however, in the context of (popular) fourth-wave feminism such as the much-cited pussyhat actions (Bruder 2019), one also finds forms of protest that use prefabricated textiles. Among these is Coralina Meyer's *Cunt Quilt*, a project initiated in response to misogynistic remarks made by the American President; women donate their discarded underwear, and these items are sewn together to create large patchwork banners that are used in demonstrations (Meyer 2017). Another example is the gesture made by protesters who wear red robes with white hoods, modelled on the uniforms worn by the handmaids in the TV adaptation of Margaret Atwood's dystopian novel *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985). Identical costumes appeared most recently in late July 2020, in news coverage of protests following the announcement by Poland's Minister of Justice Zbigniew Ziobro that his country is planning to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention **(fig. 5)**. The combination of red and black dresses with a commemoration of victims of domestic violence recalls Suzanne Lacy and Leslie Labowitz's performance *In Mourning and In Rage* (1977), which also became a widely publicised event **(fig. 6)**. Disgusted by the sensationalist media coverage of a serial killer of women in Los Angeles, Lacy and Labowitz organised a public protest on the steps of City Hall, where nine cloaked figures spoke out on behalf of the murdered women and other victims of violence against women. Their joint project was part of a series entitled *Ariadne: A Social Art Network*. Alluding to the mythological heroine Ariadne, the artists called upon women to take action and fight back.[14] Julia Bryan-Wilson has examined how textiles were employed in various feminist contexts in the 1970s, ranging from Betye Saar's

14) "In our version of the myth, ARIADNE's 'ball of red thread' leading out of the labyrinth is represents [sic!] our collective 'rage' transformed into action as we emerged stronger as a community continuing to demand change." (Lacy / Labowitz 2020 [1977])



// Figure 5
Protest in Warsaw, July 2020

// Figure 6
Suzanne Lacy and Leslie Labowitz, *In Mourning and in Rage*, 1977

use of raw cotton as a material in her assemblages to the T-shirt produced by the Ladies' Sewing Circle and Terrorist Society (1974; Bryan-Wilson 2016: 210; 2017: 1–4). An investigation of the ways in which textiles – beyond craft objects and handicraft techniques – are employed for activist purposes could be extended further – from the rejection of corsets to the burning of bras, to stripping naked as a form of protest, as German students did in 1968 and the members of Pussy Riot have done recently, to alternative uniforms such as the white trouser suits worn by women on the day of the United States presidential election in 2016, which linked the white dresses worn by American suffragists to Hillary Clinton's signature pantsuits (see also Ellwanger 1999).

HANDICRAFT AND HANDLING In addition to the movements that are subsumed under craftivism, phenomena can be observed that we refer to as 'textile activism': the activistic use of textiles within established contemporary art; the continuation of textile activism in times of crisis (wars, pandemics); textiles as familiar media of activism (banners, coverings, articles of clothing) as well as their hybrid forms. Activism generally refers to efforts, campaigns and actions carried out on behalf of different segments of the public and with the aim of bringing about social change (Roggeband / Klandermans 2017: 186f.). Looking back over the past 30 years – with the political and cultural upheavals of 1989/1990, anti-war demonstrations, third- and fourth-wave feminism, criticism of the textile industry, and a growing preoccupation with digital and immaterial spaces – the question is raised as to whether, and to what extent, textiles are used as a means of activism. The term 'craftivism' cannot be applied in these cases, given that it is already problematic with regard to textiles: while on the one hand it refers to many more media and materials than just textiles, it simultaneously invokes supposedly pre-industrial handicraft and situates itself in opposition to industry. In this way, not only is the complex industrial and work-related history of textiles ignored, but also a history of textile protest media and gestures involving prefabricated textiles. In the context of textile activism, above all for the 21st century, visual politics must also be taken into account: the staging of textiles for digital photographs that are circulated via news platforms and social media channels. The photogenic quality of textile banners was already an important criterium for the British suffragettes (Tickner 1988), and photographic images of crowds of protesters dressed in bright pink at Women's Marches around the world are familiar to us all from Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, etc.

As Julia Bryan-Wilson notes, textiles are per se ambivalent, above all when they serve political ends: "[T]extiles have been used across history for both pacifying and radical causes." (2017: 12). The forms of textile activism that are examined in this issue of the journal illustrate this symptomatic ambivalence. They range from processes of embroidering, weaving, mending and sewing to actions such as putting on, wearing out, unfolding, laying out and publicly displaying, and in this way outline merely a selection of the potential forms. Textile-based protest cultures that reach far back into (European) cultural history are concretised in the politically motivated use of textiles. While representatives of craftivism have already been called "new Luddites" (Adamson 2013: 165) – in other words, they have been compared to 19th-century workers who wanted to destroy the newly introduced weaving looms, regarding them as a threat – we propose lines of tradition for textile activism in which not only manual production, but also the performative handling of textiles is taken into account. Face coverings can once again serve as an example: wearing a mask in public spaces can be intended as an activistic expression of solidarity, as the minimal act of covering one's mouth and nose is not only a prescribed means of self-protection, it is also a demonstration of community spirit as it protects *others* from possible infection.[15)] Mask-wearing thus joins other textile-based forms of concealment, unfolding, drapery, masquerade and fashion from the past 30 years that in turn have historical precedents. The history of textile activism shows that craft practice and sartorial strategies can run parallel: during the French Revolution, for example, *citoyennes tricoteuses* took to the streets for women's rights alongside Olympe de Gouges, but also knitted during the patriotic civic ceremonies of the Commune as a public display of support for the revolutionary cause (Gaugele 2011: 15). A pendant to the *tricoteuses'* craft-based action is found in the contemporaneous protest by lower-class working men and peasant farmers, who visibly distinguished themselves from the nobility by refusing to wear knee-breeches, and went down in history as the *sans-culottes* who wore long trousers, Phrygian caps and *carmagnole* jackets (Meyerrose 2016: 85). The joint, popular protest by these revolutionaries was expressed through a dress code. Their wearing of long trousers thus symbolises political resistance and makes a vestimentary statement alongside the *citoyennes'* knitting actions.

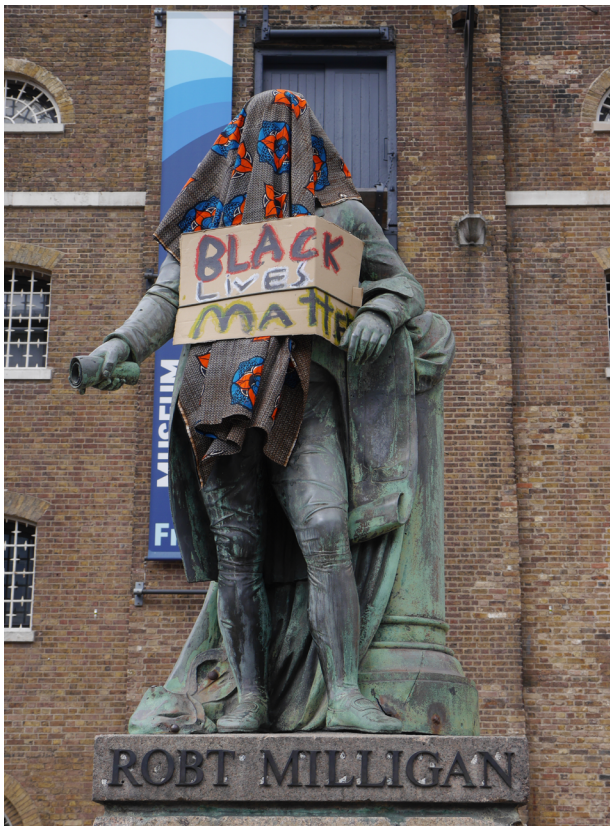
In a field that is, with few exceptions (Critical Crafting Circle 2011; Held 2015), deeply marked by an Anglo-American debate, we are particularly keen to focus on other regions. Textile-based

15) Protests by coronavirus deniers show that solidarity can in turn be viewed by others as conformity.

activist practices can also be observed in the (continental) European context. The Munich-based group *kommando agnes richter* may appear to fit perfectly into the referential framework of craftivism, in terms of when it emerged, its collective practices and its employment of craft techniques, but the group's actions do not operate on any nostalgic or romantic level – quite the opposite, in fact: the very inclusion of the word 'commando' in its name alludes to military warfare tactics. In German cultural history, this automatically conjures up memories of militant attacks such as those carried out by the Red Army Fraction, whose operations were named not after their targets, but after their fallen comrades (Dietl in conversation with Kuni, in Kuni 2011b: 125). At the same time, however, the group is named after Emma Richter (1844–1918), who was a patient in a psychiatric institution at Hubertusburg in Saxony for over two decades until her death in 1918, and whose embroidered jacket, made from hospital linen, became iconic as a form of protest attire against the power of the institution and the medical gaze (Foucault 1973 [1963]; Röske 2010; Ankele 2005). Through its provocative choice of name, the trio[16] makes reference to outlying sites of production and devotes its current practice to a person who, based on normative premises, would doubtless have vanished from the official history of textile creation.

The actions performed by the *kommando agnes richter* "are aimed at places whose political past and present are to be brought to light through textile markings." (Kuni 2011a: 83) In 2011, the group covered the Bismarck Monument in Munich – a subject of heated debate ever since it was created by Fritz Behn and erected in 1931 – with crocheted red-and-white barrier tape. A counterpart to this action can be found in present-day activist campaigns. As part of the worldwide protests against racism and police brutality that have taken place in response to the killing of Georg Floyd in May 2020, several statues and monuments have likewise been covered with textiles. Protestors wrapped a piece of patterned wax print fabric around the head of a statue at the West India Quay in London, which was installed in 1813 and commemorates the Scottish merchant and slave-owner Robert Milligan **(fig. 7)**. When the previously accepted practice

16) The three members of the group are Stephanie Müller, Klaus-Erich Dietl and Fabian Zweck.



// Figure 7
Statue of Robert Milligan with wax print fabric, London, 9th June 2020

of commemorating powerful colonial figures in the urban environment is highlighted by a textile intervention, the historical and cultural coding of a textile design with its own colonial history[17] is linked to postcolonial critique.

Viewed in the light of textile activism, some protest actions that are firmly implanted in cultural memory also show themselves to be textile moments. One of these took place in the context of the 1968 student movement; during the inaugural festivities for the new rector of Hamburg University on 9 November (!) 1967, two students, Detlev Albers and Gert H. Behlmer, pulled a banner from beneath their suit jackets: unfurled, it read "Unter den Talaren – Muff von 1000 Jahren" (under the academic gowns – the mustiness of 1000 years). Here, textile metaphors and operations coincided: Albers later described his clothing as a "camouflage suit" (Nath 2007); the gowns represent the dignitaries as well as the concealment of their Nazi past; and the fact that the banner could be folded up and hidden made the protest action possible in the first place. What is striking is that the text on the banner was written with white sticky tape on black cloth – rather than as black text on a white background, as is more common. The writing on the black banner thus named what was concealed beneath another black fabric.

Similarly, some much-quoted topoi of art and cultural history can be understood as forms of textile activism. One involves Saint Veronica, who presents the true image of Christ on her veil (Wolf 2002; Weddigen 2015) and is also considered to be the "bleeding woman" described in the Gospels of Mark and Matthew, who touches the hem of Jesus's garment and is thereby healed from her illness (Baert 2017). The reverse situation is created when Veronica encounters Jesus after he has been condemned to death and is carrying his cross to Calvary: she hands him her veil so that he can wipe the sweat from his forehead, and the image of his face is imprinted upon the cloth. Veronica's handling of textiles consists of two gestures of touch that also constitute transgressive acts of resistance: she touches the garment and is healed, but in doing so contravenes gender etiquette; and she subsequently hands her veil to Jesus to give him minimal relief from his suffering, in opposition to the crowd who demand that he be condemned.

TEXTILE ACTIVISM

The examples given here show that activist tendencies, including those expressed with the aid of textiles, are not a 20th- or 21st-century phenomenon. They can be found as part of, but also separate from, artistic practice, and may even

17) The origins of wax print fabrics are transcultural in every respect: their production is based on an Indonesian batik technique that was industrialised by the Dutch in the late 19th century, so that the products could subsequently be distributed in the colonies in West Africa (Nielsen 1979). See also the contribution by Ulrike Bergermann in this journal.

appear as an "undercurrent of art in general" (Marchart 2019: 15). For artistic practices are always symbolic practices that deal with political content, and in which the performative potential goes hand in hand with their criticality (ibid.: 23). Lucy Lippard examines the characteristics and media formats of activist art in her influential text on this subject, *Trojan Horses: Activist Art and Power*, which was published as early as 1984. The innovative aspect of her essay consists in the very fact that she makes an art-theoretical argument for the consideration of activist practices. Lippard believes that activist art subverts the prevailing characteristics of the art system, such as the elevated status of the unique piece, and opposes the singular artist of the high-art establishment with a culture of collaboration (Lippard 1984: 348). Activist art, she maintains, does not function only on a representative level; it takes place both inside and outside the system of art; its realisation is often process-oriented; it creates social alternatives; and it is not only socially concerned but also socially involved (ibid.). Lippard's argument for activist art resembles other attempts to ascribe value to marginal artistic practices and make them the subject of future theoretical research. An example of this from the field of textiles would be quilt making, a craft practice that was employed as a means of political expression and non-verbal communication from the 18th century until well into the 20th century, but was never regarded as art, let alone 'political art', as Kirsty Robertson critically observes (2016: 199). Lippard bases her argument on the complexity of activist art. Her differentiation between the various practices is, however, founded on a not yet obsolete dichotomy between the art world and a political grassroots movement, between art versus craft – whereby she ascribes a power to the latter that she denies the former.[18)]

As Carrie Lambert-Beatty shows, citing the example of the *Women on Waves* project (2008) and re-reading Lippard's stance in 2008, bridging a diagnosed gap[19)] between art and activism, between politics and art, or even their respective hybridisation, is not the real objective. Because activistic artistic practices that explicitly address the traditional separation of these realms have been around for many years already, and in some cases use this division tactically for their own artistic purposes. Against this backdrop, an iconic work such as Tracey Emin's *Everyone I ever slept with 1963–1995* (1995) appears as textile activism in the field of art: for this work, Emin inexpertly appliquéd the names of all the people she had shared a bed with during the named period – lovers, friends, her grandmother and two foetuses she subsequently aborted – onto

18) Lippard mentions craft in an etymological juxtaposition of (grass)roots and craft with the terms art and culture. In the history of the word roots, she thus discovers radical – from the Latin *radicalis* = rooted – and in craft she finds the German word *Kraft* = strength/power (Lippard 1984: 358).

19) Tanya Harrod also emphasises this gap between art and craft, which has only narrowed in recent decades thanks to feminist critique (Harrod 2018: 14; see also Lippard 1978: 35).

the inner walls of a standard igloo tent made of polyester. Emin's tent occupies the exhibition space, brings private, personal details into the public sphere of the museum, and even expresses a pro-choice position. Rivane Neuenschwander's interactive installation *Bataille* (2017) operates in a different way: here, huge pinboards hold a large selection of machine-embroidered fabric patches with designs and slogans borrowed from protest banners, posters and graffiti.[20] The slogans collected by Neuenschwander as digital copies are presented in a greatly reduced, textile format and thus refer to the sewn-on patch as an established protest medium. Viewers of her work – at Art Basel in 2019, for example – could combine these patches to create new messages on the board or attach them to their own clothes. *Bataille* repeats prior activist practice *en miniature* in the exhibition space, whereby the formerly expressive content literally becomes an ironed-on label.

We are not interested in proposing a rigid definition of textile activism as an umbrella term for heterogeneous phenomena. The hybridity of textiles makes it inherently difficult to grasp them as a single entity or make generalisations about them; while they form the basis of every culture, they can only be described as an "endlessly adaptable form" (Smith 2015: 12), whose diverse materialities, handlings, treatments and modes of operation are continually changing. Our understanding of the term 'textile activism' is on the one hand intended to draw greater attention to a minimal action that is carried out with something which is literally 'at hand' – unlike other means that appear equally basic, such as paper and pen – and that is directly visible, for example as clothing worn on the body. On the other, it is only when textiles are viewed as handicraft and industrial product, as a nostalgic act, art object or progressive action, that the charged relationship described by Bryan-Wilson is revealed, which in turn has political potential. A coordinate system still appears to exist that has traditionally been used to categorise and comprehend textile practices, but this system also has its limitations: along one axis we find traditional and folksy handicrafts, domesticity and conservatism, conventional notions of gender and hobby art. Along the other – to continue the metaphor – we could gather together political protest and craftivism, digital craft cultures, textile media as high art, and the sustainable use of resources and labour. These historical and more recent bipolarities of retrogression and progressivism do not always apply, however: Virginia Gardner Troy has already noted the transgressive quality of textiles, their ability to cross borders and establish connections between the most diverse realms. With reference to the art of the avant-gardes, she describes textiles as

20) See https://www.stephenfriedman.com/art-fairs/10-art-basel-unlimited-rivane-neuenschwander/ (02.10.2020)

a "crossover medium" that can break down traditional boundaries between art and craft, art and industry, high and minor arts; textiles can open up social strata and gender norms; and can also explore concepts of art in non-Western cultures (Troy 2006: 15–16). For this reason, it is not surprising that the "significance of textiles within contemporary modes of thinking and forms of practice" (Buchmann / Frank 2014) has grown markedly, above all in the last 30 years – in relation to an increasingly globalised art world, debates on transculturality and postcolonialism, and a much greater focus on applied arts. As a result, textiles are hard-pressed to openly address urgent concerns without getting flattened in the process.

ON THE CONTRIBUTIONS The six contributions to this journal show not only the broad spectrum of textile activism, but also the difficulty of making definitional distinctions in this field. Although the works discussed in the papers by Caroline Lillian Schopp, Friederike Korfmacher, Ulrike Bergermann and Meike Kröncke can all be categorised as contemporary art, only the first two consist of permanent objects; the kangas examined by Ulrike Bergermann serve as articles of clothing and Katharina Cibulka's work *Solange*, which is discussed by Meike Kröncke – is a temporary action in the public, urban sphere and is disseminated online in the form of photographs. The contributions by Bergermann and Derwanz also deal with phenomena that involve websites and social media. These approaches differ, however, in their use of handicraft: neither the kangas (Bergermann) nor the embroidery on scaffolding nets (Kröncke) are made by the artists themselves; this part of the production is outsourced. The works discussed in this issue of our journal address a range of themes – from those one might expect to encounter in this context, such as feminism, LGBTQ rights and migration policies, to topics that initially appear more conservative, such as the care of textiles in the domestic realm, sustainability or national commemoration. Apart from the criticism that is frequently aimed at craftivism, that it upholds traditional values – as the preservation of craft traditions (Williams 2011) can go hand in hand with the preservation of conventional gender roles (Bratich / Brush 2011) – textile activisms are seldom found in politically conservative contexts (Mandell 2019: 5–7). Katharina Primke's analysis of *The Great Tapestry of Scotland* reveals that it is not so much a gesture of critical protest as a form of national conservative collaboration with a nostalgic, commemorative function. This large-scale project is not directed *against* something – such as injustice or discrimination – but instead uses

traditional handicraft to highlight Scotland's national history and incorporate this into cultural memory. The project conforms to conventional modes of national commemoration, and only when viewed against the backdrop of Scotlands's potential independence from the United Kingdom can it in any way be considered as an emancipatory gesture. Caroline Lillian Schopp's contribution, which opens this issue, spans the period from 1970s feminism to the 1990s with an examination of Ingrid Wiener and Dieter Roth's collaborative weaving projects. Schopp contrasts Wiener's weaving-based works with VALIE EXPORT's feminist actionism, and suggests that Wiener's tapestries can be viewed in the light of a feminist ethics of care. The aspects of care and preservation also underlie the installation *Courier* by the artist Gülsün Karamustafa, which is examined here by Friederike Korfmacher: *Courier* transports an activist, textile-based practice that is often found in the context of persecution or flight – sewing personal items inside articles of clothing – into an auto-fictional installation. Korfmacher highlights how Karamustafa's artwork harnesses the oppositional potential of 'textile tactics'[21] to represent flight and migration as a constant of human history. Ulrike Bergermann's and Meike Kröncke's essays both deal with works that incorporate textile elements from folk art. Bergermann's contribution broadens the otherwise European context of this issue by focussing on an East African textile, namely kangas produced by the artist Kawira Mwirichia. Her designs for these kangas – textile items with genuinely transcultural origins, situated between an everyday article of clothing and a fashionable accessory – are circulated via social media and in some cases produced for particular exhibition contexts, and are adorned with statements on human rights, queer identity and love. Embroidered cross-stitch is the fundamental element of Katharina Cibulka's project *Solange*, which Meike Kröncke has examined. The messages Cibulka embroiders onto scaffolding nets on building sites can be understood as a demand for societal renovation work. And while cross-stitch can symbolise the gendered history of embroidery, the concept of visible mending described by Heike Derwanz subverts traditional techniques of mending textiles, such as darning. The ostentatious display of mended and darned areas on articles of clothing presents frugality as a statement of opposition to fast fashion. In this case, textile activism presents itself as a simple, everyday act using the means at hand.

Translation Jacqueline Todd, Berlin.

21)
See footnote 9.

// Literature

Adamson, Glenn (2013): The Invention of Craft. London, Bloomsbury
Albers, Anni (1957): The Pliable Plane: Textiles in Architecture. In: Perspecta: The Yale Architectural Journal, no. 4, pp. 36–41
Ankele, Monika (2005): Alltag und Aneignung in Psychiatrien um 1900: Selbstzeugnisse von Frauen aus der Sammlung Prinzhorn. Cologne, Vienna, Weimar, Böhlau
Baert, Barbara (2017): Hem. In: Reineke, Anika / Röhl, Anne / Kapustka, Mateusz / Weddigen, Tristan (ed.): Textile Terms: A Glossary, Emsdetten / Berlin, Edition Imorde, pp. 141–144
Bratich, Jack Z. / Brush, Heidi M. (2011): Fabricating Activism: Craft-Work, Popular Culture, Gender. In: Utopian Studies, no. 22.2, pp. 233–260
Bruder, Anne (2019): Stitching Dissent: From the Suffragists to Pussyhat Politics. In: Mandell, Hinda (ed.): Crafting Dissent: Handicraft as Protest form the American Revolution to the Pussyhats, Lanham, Maryland, Rowman & Littlefield, pp. 111–121
Bryan-Wilson, Julia (2016): Fabrications: race, genre et travail du textile. In: Perspective, no. 1, pp. 210–215
Bryan-Wilson, Julia (2017): Fray: Art + Textile Politics, Chicago, London, University of Chicago Press, 2017
Buchmann, Sabeth / Frank, Rike (2014): Umfrage zur Bedeutung des Textilen innerhalb zeitgenössischer Denk- und Praxisformen. In: Texte zur Kunst, no. 94, may, pp. 163–182
Corbett, Sarah (2017): How to be a Craftivist. The Art of Gentle Protest, London, Unbound
Corbett, Sarah / Housley, Sarah (2011): The Craftivist Collective Guide to Craftivism. In: Utopian Studies, no. 22.2, pp. 344–351.
Critical Crafting Circle (2011): Crafti(vi)sta! Handarbeit, Aktivismus, Politik und Kunst. Über dieses Buch. In: Critical Crafting Circle (ed.): Craftista! Handarbeit als Aktivismus, Mainz, Ventil publisher KG, pp. 8–10
Derwanz, Heike (2020): Protest im Fast Fashion-Alltag. Visible Mending als textile Intervention. In: Crasemann, Leena / Röhl, Anne (ed.): Hard-pressed. Textilien und Aktivismus, 1990–2020, FKW // Zeitschrift für Geschlechterforschung und Visuelle Kultur, no. 68, pp. 115–128
einfach nähen (2020): 'Nähfluencer' nähen gemeinsam mit der Community Masken: Wie viele schaffen wir in 1 Stunde? (05.04.2020). In: youtube.com https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YF-hbshL7zCk (17.08.2020)
Ellwanger, Karen (1999): Kleiderwechsel in der Politik? Zur vestimentären Inszenierung der Geschlechter im Raum des Politischen. In: Design 2000, FKW // Zeitschrift für Geschlechterforschung und Visuelle Kultur, no. 28, pp. 7–29
Exhib.-cat. Crafting Democracy. Fiber Arts and Activism, Rochester, New York, 2019. Decker, Juilee / Mandell, Hinda (ed.), RIT Press.
Exhib.-cat. Feministische Avantgarde, Vienna et al., 2015. Schor, Gabriele (ed.), Munich, London, New York, Prestel
Exhib.-cat. Das Frauen-Konzentrationslager Ravensbrück, Ravensbrück, 2013. Bessman, Aylin et al. (ed.), Berlin, Metropol
Fine Cell Work (2020): finecellwork.co.uk https://finecellwork.co.uk (17.08.2020)
Fisher, Mark (2009): Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative? Alresford, Zero Books
Foucault, Michel 2002 [1963]: Die Geburt der Klinik. Eine Archäologie des ärztlichen Blicks, Frankfurt am Main, S. Fischer
Fowler, Dawn (2017): Sometimes the Quieter the Revolution, the Louder It Is Heard: Craftivism, Protest and Gender. In: Harpin, Anna / Nicholson, Helen (ed.): Performance and Participation: Practices, Audiences, Politics, London, Palgrave, pp. 128–144
Gaugele, Elke (2011): Revolutionäre Strickerinnen, Textilaktivist_innen und die Militarisierung der Wolle. Handarbeit und Feminismus in der Moderne. In: Critical Crafting Circle (ed.): Craftista! Handarbeit als Aktivismus, Mainz, Ventil publisher KG, pp. 15–28
Gerhard, Jane F. (2013): The Dinner Party. Judy Chicago and the Power of Popular Feminism, 1970–2007, Athens, Georgia, University of Georgia Press
Greer, Betsy (2011): Craftivist History. In: Buszek, Maria Elena (ed.): Extra/Ordinary: Craft and Contemporary Art, Durham, London, Duke University Press, pp. 175–183
Greer, Betsy (2020 [2007]): Craftivism Definition: The Long (Encyclopedia) Version. In: craftivism.com http://craftivism.com/definition/ (17.08.2020)
Grigsby, Darcy Grimaldo (2015): Enduring Truths: Sojouner's Shadows and Substance, Chicago, University of Chicago Press
Harrod, Tanya (2018): Introduction: Craft Over and Over Again. In: Harrod, Tanya (ed.): Craft. Documents of Contemporary Art, London, Whitechapel Gallery / The MIT Press, pp. 12–21
Held, Sarah (2015): Critical Crafting und Craftivism: Textile Handarbeit, Feminismus und Widerstand. In: Lehmann, Sonja / Müller-Wienbergen, Karina / Thiel, Julia Elena (ed.): Neue Muster, alte Maschen? Interdisziplinäre Perspektiven auf die Verschränkungen von Geschlecht und Raum, Bielefeld, transcript, pp. 321–339

Kaiser, Monika (2013): Neubesetzungen des Kunst-Raumep. Feministische Kunstausstellungen und ihre Räume, 1972–1987. Bielefeld, transcript
Koch, Elke (1997): "Jeder tut, was er kann, fürs Vaterland": Frauen und Männer an der Heilbronner ‚Heimatfront'. In: Hirschfeld, Gerhard et al. (ed.): Kriegserfahrungen. Studien zur Sozial- und Mentalitätsgeschichte des Ersten Weltkriegs, Essen, Klartext, pp. 36–52
Kuittinen, Rikka (2015): Street Craft. London, Thames & Hudson
Kuni, Verena (2011a): Verstrickt und zugenäht? Die Handarbeit, die Kunst, die Mode und ihre LlebhaberInnen. In: Critical Crafting Circle (ed.): Craftista! Handarbeit als Aktivismus, Mainz, Ventil publisher KG, pp. 74–87
Kuni, Verena (2011b): kommando agnes richter. Im Gespräch mit Klaus Dietl von *kommando agnes richter*. In: Critical Crafting Circle (ed.): Craftista! Handarbeit als Aktivismus, Mainz, Ventil publisher KG, pp. 122–127
Lacy, Suzanne / Labowitz, Leslie (2020 [1977]): Ariadne Myth: The Feminist Version. In: againstviolence.art https://www.againstviolence.art/about-myth (17.08.2020)
Lambert-Beatty, Carrie (2008): Twelve Miles: Boundaries of the New Art/Activism. In: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, no. 33.2, pp. 309–327
Lippard, Lucy (1978): Something from Nothing (Toward a Definition of Women's 'Hobby Art'). In: Harrod, Tanya (ed.): Craft. Documents of Contemporary Art, London, Whitechapel Gallery / The MIT Press, pp. 31–36
Lippard, Lucy (1984): Trojan Horses: Activist Art and Power. In: Wallis, Brian (ed.): Art after Modernism: Rethinking Representation, New York, New Museum of Contemporary Art, pp. 341-358
Lunardini, Christine A. (1986): From Equal Suffrage to Equal Rights: Alice Paul and the National Woman's Party, 1910–1928, New York, London
Macdonald, Anne (1988): No Idle Hands: The Social History of American Knitting, Boston, Ballantine Books
Mandell, Hinda (2019): Introduction: Yarn, Thread, Scissors, Fabric: A Crafter's Tool Kit for Mending Democracy as Engaged Citizenp. In: Mandell, Hinda (ed.): Crafting Dissent: Handicraft as Protest form the American Revolution to the Pussyhats, Lanham, Maryland, Rowman & Littlefield, pp. 1–11
Marchart, Oliver (2019): Conflictual Aesthetics. Artistic Activism and the Public Sphere, Berlin, Sternberg Press
Melián, Michaela (2013): Künstlerinnen International [Interview mit Silvia Bovenschen und Sarah Schumann]. In: Frieze, 29. march https://www.frieze.com/article/k%C3%BCnstlerinnen-international (17.08.2020)
Meyer, Coralina (2017): Cunt Quilt / Underwear Audit. In: Coralinameyer.com http://www.coralinameyer.com/projects/cunt-quilt-underwear-audit (17.08.2020)
Meyerrose, Anja (2016): Herren im Anzug. Eine transatlantische Geschichte von Klassengesellschaften im langen 16. Jahrhundert, Göttingen, Cologne, Böhlau publisher
von Müller, Johannes (2020): Krieg und Krise. Ein fataler Vergleich, https://bilderfahrzeuge.hypotheses.org/4953 (01.04.2020)
Museum of Design (2018): Making Change: The Art and Craft of Activism. In: museumofdesign.org https://www.museumofdesign.org/making-change (17.08.2020)
Nath, Dörthe (2007): "Der NS-Muff ist vertrieben" – Detlev Albers im Interview mit Dörthe Nath, in: Süddeutsche, 07.11.2007 https://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/68er-revolte-der-ns-muff-ist-vertrieben-1.355603 (18.08.2020)
Nielsen, Ruth (1979): The History and Development of Wax-Printed Textiles Intended for West Africa and Zaire. In: Cordwell, Justine M. / Schwarz, Ronald A. (ed.): The Fabrics of Culture: The Anthropology of Clothing and Adornment, Den Haag, Mouton, pp. 467–498.
Plant, Sadie (1998 [1997]): nullen + einsen. Digitale Frauen und die Kultur der neuen Technologien, übersetzt von Gustav Roßler, Berlin, Berlin publisher
Portwood-Stacer, Laura (2007): Do-It-Yourself-Feminism: Feminine Individualism and the Girlie Backlash in the DIY/Craftivism Movement [Paper presented at the International Communication Association Convention, San Francisco, 2007]. In: academia.edu https://www.academia.edu/1863481/Do_It_Yourself_Feminism_Feminine_Individualism_and_the_Girlie_Backlash_in_the_CraftivismMovement (17.08.2020)
Robertson, Kirsty (2016): Quilts for the Twenty-First Century. Activism in the Expanded Field of Quilting. In: Jefferies, Janis (ed.): Handbook of Textile Culture, London, Bloomsbury, p. 197–210
Roggeband, Conny / Klandermans, Bert (ed.) (2017): Handbook of social movements across disciplines, Cham, Springer International Publishing
Röske, Thomas (2010): Krankheitssymptom oder kritisches Aufbegehren? Stick-, Näh- und Häkelwerke aus der Psychiatrie. In: Weddigen, Tristan (ed.): Metatextile: Identity and History of a Contemporary Art Medium, Emsdetten/Berlin, Edition Imorde, pp. 51–62
Schneider, Birgit (2007): Textiles Prozessieren. Eine Mediengeschichte der Lochkartenweberei. Zurich, Berlin, Diaphanes
Schopp, Caroline Lillian (2020): Feminist In-Action. Ingrid Wiener's Tapestry Collaborations. In:

Crasemann, Leena / Röhl, Anne (ed.): Hard-pressed. Textilien und Aktivismus, 1990–2020, FKW // Zeitschrift für Geschlechterforschung und Visuelle Kultur, no. 68, pp. 52–73
Shales, Ezra (2017): Craft. In: Reineke, Anika / Röhl, Anne / Kapustka, Mateusz / Weddigen, Tristan (ed.): Textile Terms: A Glossary, Emsdetten / Berlin, Edition Imorde, pp. 52–56
Shiner, Larry (2001): The Invention of Art: A Cultural History, Chicago, University of Chicago Press
Smith, T'ai (2015): Why Textiles Matter as Art (or Whatever) as Never Before. In: Exhib.-cat. Wow! Woven? Entering the (sub)Textiles, Graz, Halle für Kunst und Medien, 2015. Droschl, Sandro (ed.), pp. 28–40
Tickner, Lisa (1988): The Spectacle of Women: Imagery of the Suffrage Campaign, 1907–14, Chicago, London, University of Chicago Press
Troy, Virginia Gardner (2006): The Modernist Textile: Europe and America, 1890–1940. Aldershot, Lund Humphries
Weddigen, Tristan (2015): Weaving the Face of Christ. On the Textile Origins of the Christian Image. In: de Riedmatten, Henri et.al (ed.): Senses of Sight. Towards a multisensorial approach of the image. Essays in honor of Victor I. Stoichita. Rom, 'l'Erma' di Bretschneider, pp. 83–110
Werber, Niels (2020): Von der Grippe zur Seuche. Corona-Kommunikation. In: pop-zeitschrift.de https://pop-zeitschrift.de/2020/03/24/von-der-grippe-zur-seuche-corona-kommunikationautor-von-niels-werber-autordatum24-3-2020-datum/ (17.08.2020)
Williams, Kristen A. (2011): "Old Time Mem'ry": Contemporary Urban Craftivism and the Politics of Doing-It-Yourself in Postindustrial America. In: Utopian Studies, no. 22.2, pp. 303–320.
Wolf, Gerhard (2002): Schleier und Spiegel. Traditionen des Christusbildes und die Bildkonzepte der Renaissance. Munich, Fink

// Image Credits

Fig. 1: © Craftivist Collective 2012
Fig. 2: Elvert Barnes, Justice for George Floyd. Youth-led Rally in front of City Hall at War Memorial Plaza in Baltimore MD, 01.06.2020. https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/45/JUSTICE_FOR_GEORGE_FLOYD_IMG_8388_%2850017035812%29.jpg (25.08.2020)
Fig. 3: © Ýr Jóhannsdóttir
Fig. 4: Unknown, *Emmeline Pankhurst, in jail after a suffrage protest*, London, 1909. Gelatin silver print, 10,8 × 21,6 cm. © The Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.
Fig. 5: © Czarek Sokolowski, picture alliance / ASSOCIATED PRESS.
Fig. 6: Suzanne Lacy and Leslie Labowitz, *In Mourning and in Rage*, 1977. © Studio Suzanne Lacy
Fig. 7: Statue of Robert Milligan with wax print fabric, London, 9th Juni 2020. Photo: Chris McKenna, Creative Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Statue_of_Robert_Milligan,_West_India_Quay_on_9_June_2020_-_statue_covered_and_with_Black_Lives_Matter_sign_03.jpg

// About the Authors

Leena Crasemann is a research associate within the research network *Bilderfahrzeuge: Aby Warburg's Legacy and the Future of Iconology* at the Warburg-Haus in Hamburg. Her doctoral thesis on postcolonial critique and whiteness in contemporary photography was defended at Freie Universität Berlin in 2012. Her research areas are photography in contemporary art as well as the history and theory of photography, postcolonial critique and *Critical Whiteness*, and textile media in art and architecture of the 20th and 21th century. She edited the volumes *Um/Ordnungen. Fotografische Menschenbilder zwischen Konstruktion und Destruktion*, Munich 2010 and *Re-Inszenierte Fotografie*, Munich 2011. Recently published: *Textile Rekonfigurationen des Spinnennetzes: Zum Verhältnis von Form und Material in Stoffmustern und Fadeninstallationen Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts*, in: Burcu Dogramarci (ed.): Textile Moderne, Vienna et al. 2019.

Anne Röhl is a lecturer in Contemporary Art at the University of Siegen. She graduated in 2018 from the University of Zurich with a doctoral thesis on textile handicraft in US-American Art of the 1970s. Her research areas are textile media in modern and contemporary art, issues of materiality, techniques, and gender in contemporary art as well as the practices of art education. She edited the volume *Textile Terms. A Glossary*, Berlin 2017 (with Anika Reineke, Mateuez Kapustka and Tristan Weddigen). Recent publications include: *Polkes Bett*, in: Sigmar Polke und die 1970er Jahre, Imorde, Joseph / Schmidt, Eva / Spies, Christian (ed.), Cologne 2020; *Von Elektronen als Fäden: Über den (un-)zeitgemäßen Einsatz textiler Handarbeit in den Videoarbeiten von Beryl Korot und Stephen Beck*, in: Unzeitgemäße Techniken. Historische Narrative künstlerischer Verfahren, Bushart, Magdalena / Haug, Henrike / Stallschus, Stefanie (ed.), Vienna et al. 2019.

// FKW is supported by the Mariann Steegmann Institute and Cultural Critique / Cultural Analysis in the Arts ZHdK