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‘I like knowing when the zombies arrive, I won’t be naked’: Young women and leisure handcrafting in the United States

Keywords

handwork
crochet
patchwork

Abstract

In a modern world where technology is readily available, handwork is sometimes taken for granted, hidden or viewed with suspicion by outsiders, without fully understanding the benefits of engaging in such mindful activity. Younger women face challenges of trying to fit into a hobby subculture that is stereotypically reserved

for older women (45 years and older). In-person and online qualitative research with 32 young women leisure crafters (aged 18–44 years) attest to some of the difficulties of trying to engage in time- and labour-intensive creative activities. In this research, we demonstrate that young women rely on both traditional and new ways of learning creativity; they resist consumer culture to learn handcrafting practices; they have to negotiate space and time to engage in craft; and they find themselves defending their choices of handcrafting as young women.

quilting
domesticity
stigma
third wave feminism
DIY

Introduction

Creativity and ‘creative capital’ are currently buzzwords in the United States, with university campuses designing ‘maker spaces’ to encourage the merging of creative thought with high-technology areas of STEM study (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math). Handcraft is included in these new maker spaces, offering gender-stereotyped activities such as sewing, knitting and crocheting a new, trendy and mainstream shelf-life, but is often not given the positive press that STEM receives, still relegated to a gendered and hidden space. Knowing how to use a sewing machine is a skill that few have, but the technology within a sewing machine (in the factory sense) just keeps us clothed. STEM is highly masculinized, focusing on research areas that continue to be male-dominated, whereas ‘making’ includes female-dominant activities. Merging STEM with feminine creative activities could be considered a demonstration of ‘fabriculture’ defined by Bratich and Brush as:

- 1) The spaces of production, especially as they are gendered.
- 2) The relationship between old and new technology or how the digital and the tactile merge.
- 3) How this popular cultural form, weaving together folk and commercial culture, provides new modes of political activism.

(2011: 233)

Fabriculture is demonstrated by the tactile merging with high-tech, publicly revaluing feminine domestic arts and seeing historically gendered spaces in line with handcrafting practices. Important in the STEM creativity conversations, handcrafting provides (mostly women) the outlet of making, but with the feminine-gendered stigma comes an underestimation of skill level. When people in maker spaces learn to knit, and making connections to the hard sciences, knitting’s visibility is raised, along with a more positive (and more masculine) billing. In other words, the previously old-fashioned, or fuddy-duddy practices of handcrafting are viewed with a contemporary eye that positively frames handcrafts as a part of mainstream popular culture.

Women have been engaged in leisure feminine handcraft for generations, with an upswing in research on midlife women's handcraft practices such as patchwork (Stalp 2007), and knitting (Turney 2009), coinciding with an upswing in international activity. Some women start handcrafting at a young age and practice throughout the course of their life, while others learn how to handcraft at midlife. Crafting provides a less consumer-based way to make and give gifts (Stalp and Winge 2008; Winge and Stalp 2013), part of the countercultural response to technology and consumption, known as Do-It-Yourself (DIY) (Bratich and Brush 2011; Dawkins 2011).

We examine how and why younger women become involved in creative leisure activities such as sewing, patchwork, knitting, crochet, beading and jewellery-making. Similar to midlife and older women, younger women who craft for fun are confronted with time and space challenges, keeping their leisure crafter identities somewhat private from less sympathetic parties.

We are interested in why women in their 20s and 30s are engaging in handcraft activities. What barriers do they encounter? How does this differ from research about midlife and older women handcrafters?

Literature review

Research centres on the majority demographic of middle-aged and older women, who support the global multi-billion dollar handcrafting industry (Stalp 2015). Older women are likely to have more time, space and money to use towards leisure activities, they are more visible consumers and practitioners, and therefore more visible and more easily studied (Doyle 1998; King 2001; Nelson et al. 2005; Piercy and Cheek 2004). The US Baby Boomer generation converted patchwork into a successful economic situation (Bingham 2011; Cox 2007; Rushman 2012). In the United States, there are a large number of brick-and-mortar shops (e.g., physical buildings with website or Facebook support, rather than e-business/mail order only), a well-connected quilt guild network, which develops critique groups (Cerny 1991; Langellier 1992), and international support for US quilt festivals in Texas and Kentucky (Przybysz 1987). Women use quilting as a way to deal with grief (Enarson 2000; Krone and Horner 1992), to build community (Chan 2012), to support well-being (Burt and Atkinson 2011) and to make family heirlooms while connecting with friends and family (Cheek and Piercy 2004; Piercy and Cheek 2004; Stalp 2007).

Younger women (e.g., twenty somethings) are knitting, part of the 1990s emergence of Third Wave Feminism (1990s–present), DIY culture and the 'stitch n bitch' phenomenon (Stoller 2004). Looking at how Third Wave Feminism came to be, growing from and responding to the first and second waves of feminism in the United States, we can see how amateur handcrafting and the re-valuing of the feminine came to be:

During both the first and second waves of United States' feminism, the connection between women and crafts encouraged an emphasized support for 'women's things' (Mainardi 1975). The turbulence and social changes evident in the struggle for gender equality were reflected in the negative attitudes toward domesticity, specifically, through the changing and evolving roles for women. What happened in the home (including sewing and cooking), stayed in the home, and often, disappeared from view (Matthews 1989). Third wave feminists now contribute to this tension, adding both generational changes and a reconsideration of femininity as a valuable part of women's lives (Henry 2004). The Do-It-Yourself (DIY) movement entered into our society again in the 1990s, along with the emergence of Third Wave Feminism (TWF). Both DIY and TWF focus on valuing hand skills such as home improvement like woodworking, as well as sewing, knitting, and crocheting.

(Stalp 2015: 264)

Third Wave Feminism framed domestic activities positively (Golec 2006; Johnson and Lloyd 2004; Stoller 2004), highlighting younger women knitting in public (Shin and Ha 2011) in coffee houses, and while riding public transportation (Ritzer 2011; Ruland 2010; Turney 2009). Making something for another by hand is valuable (Turney 2012), as is relaxation and environmental awareness (Greer 2008; Jackson 2006; Levine and Heimerl 2008; Parker 1984), with even celebrities joining in (Parkins 2004). Young crafters also produce blogs, using the Internet to teach and learn in ways not available to previous generations (Myzelev 2009), and younger women are continuing the tradition of quilting, via the Modern Quilt Guild (2016) and blogs/shops such as the BadAss Quilters Society (2016).

Research about young crafters is missing from the conversation (Schultz 2011; Rushman 2012 are exceptions). Our research increases understanding of leisure through the life course, especially handwork.

Data and methods

The data for this article come from two sources, and involve 32 participants. First, in 2007–08 the first author interviewed five young white Midwestern women (aged 20–21 years) identified as crafters and were enrolled in a US university. The first author conducted the tape-recorded interviews on campus, assigning pseudonyms. In the findings section, these interviews are noted as 'Author Interview 2008'.

The second set of data comes from a collaborative research effort. In 2015–16 we constructed a 26-item open-ended online survey using personal contacts and snowball sampling methods to collect data. We asked younger women when and why they participated in handcrafting activities,

and how they dealt with barriers, if any, to their chosen leisure pursuits – 27 women between the ages of 18 and 44 years are included in this second data collection effort. All participants were assigned a pseudonym and noted as ‘Online Survey 2016’.

We turn to the findings of this study, organized into four subheadings: Learning creativity; Creativity as resistance to consumerism; Creativity takes time and space; and Coming out of the closet: Dealing with non-crafty friends.

Learning creativity

Q: How did you learn your craft?

A: Grandma! And, YouTube Supplements (Lori).

(Online Survey 2016)

The women in this study were involved in over 25 different creative crafting activities, most of which would not be included into a (masculine) maker space endeavour: crochet, knitting, spinning, weaving, cross-stitch, jewellery-making, hand and machine sewing, painting, quilting, latch-hooking, hand and machine embroidery, furniture, art, cosplay, costume-making, dyeing, origami, ceramics, drawing, sculpture, photography, scrapbooking, collage, home decorating and nail art. Participants mentioned on average three activities in which they were engaged, consistent with previous research (Stalp 2007, 2016).

Learning how to engage in creative work is an important process, with generational differences in terms of how people learned to handcraft. Midlife/older women are likely learning through paid instruction (Stalp 2007), while younger women learn from older family members and friends, or watching a free YouTube video (Stalp and Winge 2008).

The participants in this study fall in line with the research findings about younger women. That is, all five women from the interview data learned creative activities from a grandmother or an older relative or friend, two women participated in the rural US youth organization, 4-H (4-H Youth Development Organization 2016) and all were engaged in multiple creative activities. Rachel indicates:

Well, my grandma, like every time we would go see her we would have [creative] activities. So that was probably when I first like actively, that was at a small age but that was probably like once a year was doing that. And my mom always sewed. And then in 4-H I started sewing.

(Stalp interview 2008a)

Tina links creativity with her grandmother: ‘My grandma quilted and she made some really good quilts, so I had always wanted to make a quilt’ (Stalp interview 2007a). Finally, Julie discusses her learning process:

I think in the beginning when I was learning how to sew it was fun and something that my mom had done. I actually learned how to knit in trigonometry class in high school because there were only four of us in the class and our teacher knitted all the time and so we took a day off from our studies and she taught us all how to knit. She was really excited to teach us, and we all wanted to learn.

(Stalp interview 2008b)

Christie learned to crochet from a friend, noting one special time she spent crocheting with a co-worker while at work:

I had just learned to crochet 30 minutes before going to work, it was a really slow shift so I could crochet there. And [this girl that I work with] brought in this like gorgeous afghan and I was like, wow.

(Stalp interview 2007b)

This trend also holds for the survey data, where the majority learned from a family member or friends. These women learned through taking classes, the Internet (e.g., YouTube.com, Pinterest.com, Ravelry.com), and some were self-taught, including Grace, who stated, 'I learned on my own. I was a child of the 80's, we didn't even have internet, but I had a needle and thread and I went to town' (note: 'went to town' is a colloquialism for really getting interested in something) (Online Survey 2016). Recall that the two sets of data were collected eight years apart, and in that time, the use of the Internet and the emergence of YouTube.com (started in 2005), Pinterest.com (started in 2010) and Ravelry.com (started in 2007) have increased significantly.

Asking young women why they chose to engage in creative work when there were so many other options available to them resulted in responses similar to extant research findings. Beth discusses why she regularly engages in creative work:

I like working with my hands. I guess it's just the more personalized feel if you're going to give somebody something you can say, 'Hey I made that for you.' I took the time and didn't just go, 'Oh, crap, I forgot their present' and then go buy it. I like just being able to sit there and relax and work with my hands.

(Stalp interview 2008c)

Beth finds creative work relaxing, derives a sense of accomplishment from completing a hand-made project and she references the DIY nature of the work (especially when it is completing a

gift). Beth appreciates working with her hands and presenting a handmade gift to someone special.

Helen discusses how crafting helps her develop her skills in patience: 'I don't kill anyone [...] I like knowing that when the zombie's arrive, I won't be naked'. Wendy links crafting to personal fulfilment:

I find it relaxing and it makes me feel productive to knit while watching TV instead of feeling like I'm wasting time. I also enjoy gifting things to others' and Shannon's comments are similar: 'Crafting is primary relaxation and time fillers when I am waiting for a bus or class or traveling.

(Online Survey 2016)

In discussing what they enjoy the most about their creative activities, Tina states:

I like to hand sew more than I like to use the machine, because the machine will always screw up and I hate ripping. That's why I like to hand sew even though it takes a little more time. Then I can do it outside of my house and things like that.

(Stalp interview 2007a)

Tina reveals some important values in this passage – she does not like how the technology of the sewing machine lets her down – she states, 'I hate ripping' (Stalp interview 2007a). Tina notes that being able to have a portable creative project is important. She folds in her creativity with the rest of her life when she says, 'Then I can do it outside of my house' (Stalp interview 2007a).

Creativity as resistance to consumerism

A key factor for younger women engaged in creative work is the third-wave feminist concept of DIY. Christie values making a handmade gift, proud of learning how to make something by hand:

I like homemade type things because I don't like consumer culture very much at all. I like to buy things from people that are made really well or look really cool. Otherwise I'll buy secondhand. But making it, I definitely think that it is going against the cultural norms a little bit and kind of taking it back, economically I mean.

(Stalp interview 2007b)

Christie knowingly takes a stand against consumer culture and saves money by making something by hand.

Julie provides similar opinions on consumer culture and her reasons for resisting it through craftwork:

And then the idea of feminist crafting, the idea is like DIY, do it yourself. And this is about things that aren't about consumerism and making your own things. My interest in that has increased. There's family and politics and personal interest in the creation of it too.

(Stalp interview 2008b)

Unpacking Julie's statement reveals that she is fully aware of the politics of DIY. In 'making her own things', she demonstrates a value for the homemade, in spending time with her aunt to learn how to crochet (Stalp interview 2008b). Julie weaves in family, politics and personal interest into her concept of 'feminist crafting' and links this up with her understanding of DIY (Stalp interview 2008b). Less political, perhaps, Beth highlights the personalized nature of handmade gifting: 'I don't know, it's more personalized. It's not, 'Hey I got this at a store for you, Happy Birthday' (Stalp interview 2008c).

Creativity takes time and space

It is problematic to carve out enough time and space to engage in creative work, which can be linked to the concept of fabriculture, specifically, 'gendered spaces of production around new domesticity and the social home' (Bratich and Brush 2011: 233). Beth likes to set 'aside big blocks of time for it because I hate when I go to drag it all out and then five minutes later you have to put it all back' (Stalp interview 2008c), Tina states, 'You need a big space' (Stalp interview 2007a), and Alice states: 'Anywhere I can' (Online Survey 2016).

As Beth's mom does not sew (but her grandmother does), Beth finds that her creativity is sometimes viewed as a mess in her parents' house:

This summer, I had two days off in a row so I just sat in the living room and scrapbooked and left it all there and my mom's like, 'Are you going to pick this up?' 'No, I'm going to use it tomorrow.' 'I don't have my own space. And then if I have extra time, it's like, 'Okay, what am I going to do with it? Am I going to go home and see my family, am I going to hang out with my boyfriend, am I going to just sit and have time for myself and just read or scrapbook or do whatever it is I want to do?' Sometimes you have to schedule it in.

(Stalp interview 2008c)

Christie shares space constraints as she details how crafting in her university dorm room does not always work out well.

Sometimes we have to put our crap away because sometimes [the room] just fills up. Like our other roommate, her biggest thing is jewelry. She's really good but she always has stuff everywhere too. So we're going to have to confine it to an area or something.

(Stalp interview 2007b)

Christie compares her living experience to that of art majors, whose uncontained materials are considered normal and part of the creative process, which she considers a positive thing:

My boyfriend is an art major and all the art people live together because they're trying to feed off each other. And that's cool because then you can converse with people and expand and stuff like that. The people that are around definitely facilitate to make this like more meaningful than what it is just for me.

(Stalp interview 2007b)

In addition to seeing the contextual importance of art majors' works-in-progress, living alone is another option to dealing with time and space constraints.

Lisa plans a future crafting space for when she moves out of her apartment:

I work on my couch in the living room. All my supplies are in nice shoe boxes in my office and bedroom. It's not very organized because I do not have much space in my apartment, but I plan to have room dedicated to crafting when I move into a house.

(Online Survey 2016)

Amber spreads out her crafting in her apartment too: 'I store my materials in any nook or cranny I can find in my tiny apartment, and I create everywhere. In the living room, on the dining room table, outside [...] anywhere' (Online Survey 2016). Tracy shares that she crafts 'pretty much everywhere, but mostly in my room. I keep my yarn and needles/hooks in a big laundry basket' (Online Survey 2016).

Patricia takes her crafting with her:

Crocheting lets me work on the go: car rides, and plane trips. Mostly, I work on stuff while I am watching TV/Netflix or relaxing. My creative space travels with me, so I try to keep everything (yarn, hooks, scissors) together in a bag of some sort.

(Online Survey 2016)

Linda also crafts on the go:

I have a basket in which I store all of my knitting materials and I tend to knit wherever life takes me. I will knit wherever my life takes me that given day' (Online Survey 2016). Margaret states that 'where I create depends on what I'm making.

(Online Survey 2016)

Beth discusses her future internship and what kinds of opportunities she will have to engage in her creative activity:

I think I'll have projects all over the place because I won't have anyone else there to worry about. I think I'm going to have a lot of time every night after work and I won't have anyone else there to worry about.

(Stalp interview 2008c)

In seeing the possibilities for more time and space for her creative practices, Beth continues along this line of seeing how creativity will have a place in her long-term future:

Something I kind of envision further on like when I graduate and my boyfriend and I get married, which we probably will, but something that I've always wanted is a little craft room. A place that's my own. He's into cars and working on them, and I don't mind it. But this will be my own space, I'm going to go sit in here for a while and do what I want, so I'm not in everyone's way with it and it's my own space and if I want to make a mess I can and just shut the door when I leave and won't have to pick it up. It's not in the middle of the living room.

(Stalp interview 2008c)

Sharing space with others is challenging, especially for those who engage in creative activities that require lots of stuff. Beth is currently negotiating how to be in a relationship and work on her creative projects without it becoming a point of contention in the relationship. Beth describes her frustration in trying to communicate how she, like many other creative women, chooses to multitask to combine family and creative efforts:

Beth: When I go to my boyfriend's house and hang out with him or something and I want to bring something to work on, if we're just sitting there and watching TV, I'd rather just be sitting there doing something. And he says, 'Why can't you just sit here, why can't you just sit

here with me?’ And I say, ‘Well, I am sitting here with you, I’m just doing something.’ So I can see him doing the same thing when we get married, if I’m in my room working. ‘Why won’t you just come out here and sit with me, why do you have to be in that room?’ I can see him being like that.

Author: Why do you think that matters – have you talked to him about this?

Beth: I’ve asked him and he says, ‘I don’t know. I just like it when you are with me not doing anything. It’s like you’re focusing on other things than me.’ I don’t know. It’s weird.

Author: What if you’re both watching TV, is the focus the TV?

Beth: That’s why I don’t think it’s a big deal. We’re watching TV anyways, it’s not like we’re sitting here and talking and carrying on conversation the whole time. And I’m listening. I’ll be doing something and he’ll say, ‘You’re not even listening to me.’ And I’ll just rattle off what he just said and he’ll say, ‘Never mind.’ I told you I was listening, I’m not zoning you out or anything’.

(Stalp interview 2008c)

Beth’s negotiation with her boyfriend is not that different from scholars’ findings regarding heterosexual women in relationships trying to find time for independent leisure pursuits (Walker 1996).

Coming out of the closet: Dealing with non-crafty friends

People face multiple constraints when trying to pursue pleasurable leisure activities such as quilt-making and knitting, and many midlife and older quilters and knitters hide their creative work and identities from others (Stalp 2006a). Younger women face scrutiny for having creative talent, and they are burdened additionally with the unusualness of their pursuits at their young ages. Each woman discusses the negative reactions that they encounter upon being ‘discovered’ as a creative person. First, Beth responds to my question, ‘How do people [e.g., friends] react to you being a quilter?’: ‘Ah, they’re just kind of like, “Uh, that’s kind of weird”’ (Stalp interview 2008c). Rachel adds to this phenomenon in her discussion of keeping her quilting secret while in high school:

Rachel: No, none of my other friends did it. It was kind of like one of those things I didn’t really talk about in school because I didn’t want to be like, ‘Ugh, she’s the girl that does that.’ I thought that they would see it as more of a grandma thing. That’s not the cool thing to do, quilt. I think that I’m afraid people will view it as a waste of time, and time that I could have spent doing something better. Some people brag about how much time it took them and

how dedicated they were, I am more about let's not tell people how long I spent doing this because I don't want them to think that I don't have a life (even though I'm not saying that's how it is but that's how I'm afraid that they'll view it).

(Stalp interview 2008a)

Rachel's comments here are fascinatingly complicated as to how and why she hides her creative talents. She points out the ageist/fuddy-duddy stereotype that midlife and older quilters face; she uses the easily available reason of American efficiency, and others viewing her creative activities as important.

Julie notes how secret she was about her sewing, and even with her close friends:

Well (my best friend) knew about my sewing but she also lived with me so she had to deal with me having fabric all over the place when I was doing a quilt or she knew that I was packing off to the studio to sew or pin something out so she probably knew it mostly because she was my best friend and my roommate. And once, I had to sew this sweater up that had a big hole and I was sitting there stitching. This woman was like, 'What are you doing?' I was like, 'Fixing my sweater.' And she's like, 'You're weird.' And I was like 'Yeah, whatever.' And I think I would enjoy knitting at (the coffee shop) because that for me has been really completely my space, public space is different. I would feel like I had a bubble around me and still social.

(Stalp interview 2008b)

We can link the crafty stigma in young women to research about quilters who both stash their fabric and their identities as creative women from others in their lives (Stalp 2007, 2006b, 2006c). This is likely more difficult for younger women to deal with as they are fighting an ageist assumption about creativity – that women who quilt are supposed to be old – especially in US culture with the young-is-valued emphasis.

Looking at the interview data and the online data collected nearly nine years later, there is still a pattern of non-support, or at least suspicion from family and friends. The majority of online participants stated that they tried to *not* talk about crafting with others who did not share their passion. Patricia receives encouragement, *but only if people want her to make them something*: 'I mostly get encouragement because people want you to make them something. It's not something I flaunt because it's not overly popular and some people think it's an introverted-crazy-cat-lady thing to spend time doing. Haters gonna hate' (Online Survey 2016). Helen shares the subtle scepticism from her family here: 'My husband and son smile and roll their eyes when I bring more yarn home, but we have an understanding: I don't bring up their video game addictions, and they don't bring up my yarn addiction' (Online Survey 2016). Cleverly, Helen has a comeback to her son and husband, highlighting that everyone in the family has a hidden (or not so hidden passion).

Amanda states: 'I don't really talk about crafting to many people who don't craft – and those conversations aren't really long enough for them to discourage me. But I don't think I would pay attention to them if they did discourage me' (Online Survey 2016). Grace simply says: 'I don't. They don't get it', while Stephanie states: 'I don't really talk about crafting with non-crafters – unless they go out of their way to ask about it' (Online Survey 2016).

Summary

The experiences of younger women crafters are similar to their older counterparts in terms of facing stigma due to their leisure choice; these data reveal new insights as well. We discuss our four main findings in turn.

First, we focus on the research finding of *Learning creativity*. From this research we have learned that young women seek out more ways to learn to create. That is, in addition to connecting with older female family members and/or pay for formal lessons as older women did, younger women crafters are also likely to turn to social media platforms such as YouTube.com, Pinterest.com and Ravelry.com in order to further their knowledge of their craft as they download patterns, chat with others around the globe and pose questions online where a response is likely prompt, even in the middle of the night.

Second, in *Creativity as resistance to consumerism*, young women crafters differ again from older women as they express motivation to indulge in craft for leisure through a resistance to consumer culture. The young women in our study indicated feeling accomplished in the productivity of their leisure pursuits and in their ability to create unique, handmade items for themselves and friends alike – they took personal gratification in being able to present a handmade gift to someone rather than purchase a less personal and more commercial store-bought gift. These insights not only add to the existing literature on Third Wave Feminism, DIY and women crafters generally (and specifically midlife women) but they have potential economic implications for craft supply marketing and businesses that may employ the information to reach young women customers.

Third, in *Creativity takes time and space* we learn that space and time matter to crafters, whether they are midlife or young women in their 20s. Participating in feminine handcrafts also presents special challenges to younger crafters – handcrafting is shaped by gender, age and generational influence. Negotiating space for crafting is challenging for young women crafters as they contend with shared spaces they do not explicitly control, such as spaces shared with parents or roommates. This presents a unique social challenge for younger crafters versus midlife and older crafters who more often negotiate space with an intimate life partner and may be established enough to possess a dedicated room or area for their leisure activities. This information is valuable because it demonstrates that there are age differences in the obstacles faced by women engaging in craft for leisure.

The distinction found in this study calls for subsequent research that is either inclusive of younger crafters or examines younger crafters specifically.

Fourth, in *Coming out of the closet: Dealing with non-crafty friends*, young women face challenges in needing to negotiate their 'crafty' stigma from family and friends that older women also face but they additionally face ageist stereotypes (Stalp 2007). Recalling the online survey, the majority of study participants indicate that they try to not share their crafting with others, and when they are encouraged to talk about their passion, it is often because someone wants them to make them something. Young crafters learn to be careful about how and when they talk about their handcrafting – similar to midlife and older women, by mentioning that they can sew, quilt, knit or crochet, they may feel pressured to make a handmade object for someone, which contradicts some of their positive reasons for leisure handcrafting.

Together, these findings demonstrate the concept of fabriculture, primarily the first and the third portions of the definition. The first point of fabriculture is the spaces of production, especially as they are gendered (Bratich and Brush 2011: 233). Not only is the act of leisure handcrafting gendered, but how and where young women engage in this practice illustrate the gendered space of production – women clean up their creative spaces to accommodate others, not craft in front of others, and defend their hobby. The third point of fabriculture is 'how this popular cultural form, weaving together folk and commercial culture, provides new modes of political activism' (Bratich and Brush 2011: 233). In the case of political activism, we turn again to the article's abstract, where Bratich and Brush (2011: 233) note that 'Ultimately, we conceptualize craft as power'. In our research, 'craft as power' as it relates to 'new modes of political activism' can and should include the home or the 'social home' as Bratich and Brush (2011: 233) state.

This research supports the concept of fabriculture, and contributes to what we know about leisure handcrafting. Young women have a lot of similar reasons for handcrafting as their older women counterparts. Yet, they pursue leisure handcrafting as resistance to consumer culture, which could be understood as both a political and an economic stance, as younger women will likely have less access to disposable income than older women. Young women continue to face the challenges to leisure handcrafting as older women, and there is an additional barrier for young women – younger women 'should not' be engaging in these activities, as it is something that older women do. Despite these challenges, young women find great pleasure in leisure creative practice, aligning with the Third Wave Feminism ideologies, resisting consumer culture by engaging in DIY creative pursuits to produce thoughtful, handmade gifts for others.

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