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There is a long history that thinks of practices of needlework like quilting in reductive binary categories of traditional vs subversive, or the feminine vs the feminist. My research tries to complicate these binaries by focusing on needlework practices as a form of meaning-making in personal and collective forms of feminist activism.

Abstract

My interdisciplinary research project *Everyday Textures: Practices of Needlework, Meaning-Making and Socio-Political Transformation* examines practices of needlework, for example quilting, dressmaking, embroidery and knitting, as a form of politics within feminist anti-racist and anti-capitalist activism. Drawing on the work of Margaret Wetherell and Ann Cvetkovich, I conceptualize these craft as affective social practices of meaning-making in order to attend to their texture in the context of their everyday performance. As a result, I hope to gain further insight into the relationship between personal and social transformation, social movements, politics and the role of everyday practices on the level of affect, knowledge and the phenomenology of making. My sample of case studies is necessarily eclectic because neither the everyday nor practices of needlework can be neatly fitted into disciplinary or methodological boundaries as they bridge that which is ordinary but also exceptional, forms of repetition, moments of disorientation and breakdown as well as potentiality. As such, I critically engage with a number of text(ures) from women's writing to textile artefacts to the works of the US based youth organization the Social Justice Sewing Academy and the Afghan-European embroidery initiative Guldusi to the contemporary craftivism movement. Through this attention to texture on the level of everyday affective social practices of creative making, I follow different trajectories of meaning-making across the textured web of everyday life lines situated not in an abstract realm but in concrete material and affective experiences.