

Crochet in Abstraction

by Cristina Golubovich

I began this series with the intent to show the progression and development of a large-scale crochet project. From kindergarten to eighth grade, I attended a Waldorf school that focused on developing various artistic skills, knitting and crocheting among them. As I ventured into high school, I found other passions to spend time with (namely photography), causing me to leave handwork behind for years. It wasn't until my junior year of college when I got COVID and was quarantined to my room did I pick up the craft again. I started by making something simple: a scarf for my newborn cousin. Then came the hats, bags, holders, and finally, one tank top (which was far from perfect). Later that year, when this project was introduced to my advanced lighting class, it felt like an opportunity to create something bigger and more complex than I had ever attempted before. In developing my vision, I referenced an art history course I took called Politics of Abstraction. It highlighted several different abstract art movements, ranging from the 1950s to the 1990s. I became enthralled with the inner workings of the Arts and Crafts movement, so much so that I created a short film dedicated to the teachings of the movement ("The Act of Sewing and the Female Experience", viewable under MOTION on my site). I fell in love with the powerful gendered commentary of the movement, continuing to explore the missions and manifests and searching for more ways to intertwine it with my own work.

My initial inspiration for this project existed in a much different way than the result. Originally, I wanted to shoot the progress images documentary style with the completed outfit being shot as editorial/high fashion. However, upon taking my first few shots, I felt bored and didn't see an advancement in my skills or photographic style. I decided to put the images I had in Photoshop, playing around with different tools, backgrounds, and blend modes. The results caught me completely off guard; dramatic colors and eccentric editing were suddenly so intriguing to me. The time spent working on this project allowed me to experiment with photography in ways I have never tried before. The more images I shot and reworked, the more I saw my vision developing and evolving. I didn't make notes, create sketches, or even do heavy research; in fact, I would usually conceptualize the next image's composition while I was crocheting. It felt fitting that my ideas came to me while I was working with the subject matter.

More than anything, I was keen on executing this because it's a huge part of who I am. Art has been with me since I was a young child, leading my life to where it is now. It feels powerful that my love for this craft has come full circle. At the start of this project, I hoped to intertwine the experimental qualities of crochet and photography. After five weeks of labor, editing, conceptualizing, and finalizing my series, I feel like I did just that (and got a little something more out of it, too).