

Knittedness: On the expressivity of knitting as metaphoric process

Kilpi, Linnea (2023.0)

ABSTRACT ORIGINAL

Knitted fabric is a part of everyday life for many, whether it be worn, made or metaphorically referenced. It can also be, when critically considered, an expressive practice with philosophical merit. The ostensibly simple looping of yarns into a continuous surface suggests conceptual depth through poetic comparisons to processes of living and storytelling, among others. The practice-led research project 'Stranded colour-work: Meaning-making through experimental knitting practices' worked to define the intrinsic qualities of knitting that make it meaningful, and to uncover its expressive potential as an experimental artistic practice. Through the creation of a series of figurative machine-knit artworks, the confluence of knitting and narrative created an opportunity to study the implications of stitched life. This article elucidates the theoretical framework behind the project and focuses on knittedness, a concept proposed through the research. Knittedness refers to the specific aesthetic and technical qualities inherent to the process, and how these qualities can become symbolically significant both in art making and in finding meaning and connection in life. The idea of pixelness is also proposed as an integral part of knitting and other pixelated processes, where the process and aesthetic quality is informed by a repetitive technical structure. These concepts can be expanded to advocate for a notion of craftedness, suggesting the value of determining the idiosyncratic expressivity of individual creative practices, and how a maker might use this knowledge to create technique-focused work and find new appreciation for the process. © 2023 Intellect Ltd.