



The Crafter:

words from the craft world

Who knew that music and knitting were so closely entwined? I've always taken my knitting everywhere until a rather unfortunate episode with a black mohair creation at a Patti Smith concert (just think sticky beer and dog ends and you'll get the picture). Some things have matured slightly since then and recently I found myself knitting in a small classical ensemble. You heard me right, knitting. And it wasn't just me; there were five of us who volunteered for the task.

We were all there as part of a Voluntary Arts project at the Connected Communities conference in Cardiff. The performance of *Killing Time* was commissioned as a result of Voluntary Arts Wales' involvement with **Co-Creating CARE**, a Connected Communities research project led by the **University of Falmouth**. This project looks at how creative activities like knitting that millions of people engage in each year represent important skills that are often devalued.

Having confidence in one's own abilities is a powerful position from which to take on new skills so is a step on that road to fulfilling your potential. Joining a knitting group could be a 'gateway drug' to a new world of social enterprise and even activism. You have been warned. At one of our meetings I met with the inspirational Viv who joined the group early on and has been inspired to get out her knitting machine again and start designing. Proof that it really does work.

I digress, back to *Killing Time* at the lovely **Norwegian Church and Arts Centre** in Cardiff, commissioned by the MATA festival, New York. The metal needles that we were using were wired up to a computer that played snippets of sounds when activated – that is when the circuit was completed by touching the needles. Pembroke-based composer **Jobina Tinnemans** had recorded local sounds, so when the whole was played you could imagine yourself walking along a blustery beach in Wales. Knitting as music – lovely.

Not quite concert standard perhaps, but I was certainly humming to myself after the launch of the **Craftivist's Garden** at the Drink, Shop & Do Cafe in Kings Cross. The idea is that making things can make you blossom and society flourish – see what we did there? The World Health Organisation says there are three criteria for wellbeing: the ability to realise our own potential, deal with daily stresses and contribute constructively to society. What does that mean to you in practical terms? You can join in the **#welIMAKING** project by downloading the Craftivist app and answering that question as you knit, sew, or crochet a flower. We'll be presenting the data that we collect to the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Arts & Health in January 2015.

It might not make you burst into song, but should prove conclusively that craft is good for you and has the power to improve our society. Gardens will be popping up all over the UK so get involved. Find out more at www.craftivist-collective.com/wellmaking.



Applying this sentiment at the Craftivist's Garden launch

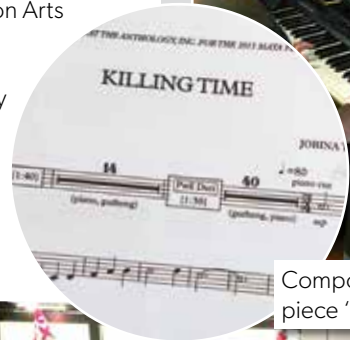
Too true



Craftivist's Garden



Knitting as music



Composer Jobina Tinnemans' piece 'Killing Time'



Killing Time performance