

Guerilla Knitting: Vandalizing the Library in a Cute and Fuzzy Kind of Way



By Sarah Ziolkowska

What do you get when you combine the language and style of graffiti with the cozy comfort of knitting? Guerilla knitting of course! If you have had success with crafting programs in your library before, or if you would like to introduce a project that could appeal to a crowd that might not ordinarily enjoy crafting, a graffiti-knitting program might be ideal for your group of teen patrons.

Guerilla knitting is a new phenomenon that evolved out of the unfinished knitting pieces of a group of knitting hobbyists. After complaining about the futility of putting so much work into something that was never going to amount to anything useful, they realized that they could stitch their unfinished projects together and use them for something totally unique and amazing – knitted graffiti. A group called Knitta Please formed and immediately set out to surprise and enchant city residents by “bombing” objects around the city

landscape. From giving statues woolly mittens and leg warmers, to embroidering an endearing pattern on the back of a bench, Knitta Please has traveled all over the world, leaving their woolly tags behind. Other alternative knitting groups around have developed their own personal style and creative messages, such as Knitted Landscape, the members of which knit woollen representations of nature, and then leave them in a natural habitat.

WHAT: Guerilla Knitting!

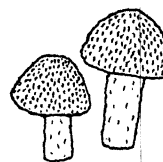
WHY: It's cheap, fun, expressive, social and community oriented

WHO: Teens, though this might become so popular adults will be itching to join in

HOW: All you need is materials such as colourful yarn, a collection of knitting needles (of which the teens could provide their own), a few basic instructions, an experienced knitter who could provide coaching along the way, some sturdy cardstock paper (to make little cards explaining the project)

WHERE: The projects can be done in any space where teens can sit, chat and knit comfortably, whereas the “bombing” can take place anywhere that could use some playful colourful additions

WHEN: Afternoons or evenings on weeknights or weekends



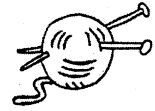
Once your group is comfortable knitting basic patterns and with the idea itself of guerilla knitting, you can work together to decide where you want to go as a group. Is it enough for everybody to “bomb” somewhere in the library itself, or do they want to explore the possibility of bringing their fuzzy graffiti outdoors? Make sure that you have gone over any safety concerns beforehand with the group, such as covering

up something essential or other risky behaviours. It might be best to confine the “bombing” to the library’s property, both inside and out. Perhaps the library sign could benefit from a cozy, or the doorknob could be transformed with a fuzzy door handle? If there are some expert knitters in the

group who would like a more challenging project, perhaps you could felt or knit together a woollen book to display among the best sellers, which would not only advertise to other patrons about the guerilla knitting group but also makes the library a more interesting place.

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