



# Hope is in Our Hands

Higher Education  
Humanities  
Minnesota



*T. knitting with mohair wool, on a quilt their  
grandma made for them.*

I grew up with my grandma, and she has always been a sewer. She makes quilts, primarily. I grew up hearing the whir of her sewing machine going on downstairs and sitting with her when she was hand stitching the binding. She is a big inspiration for why I love textile and fiber art.

I am a crocheter. My grandma tried to teach me multiple times. At the beginning of my college career, it stuck. I've been crocheting for six years.



*Checkered vest made  
with alpaca yarn*

More recently, I was gifted one of her old sewing machines, and so I've been starting to sew. I've been making clothes for myself, mostly.

So much of fiber and textile methods are interconnected. My skills crocheting garments transferred into being able to sew clothes with fabric.



*Two sewn dresses*

The very act of making something by hand, particularly garments in a world full of fast fashion, is inherently related to the environment, consumption, and climate change.

There is so much fast fashion in the world, and especially in the United States, that we're divorced from the construction of our garments. Most people don't know what it takes to make just a shirt. And often the shirt has been made from synthetic materials, which contributes a ton of carbon emissions.

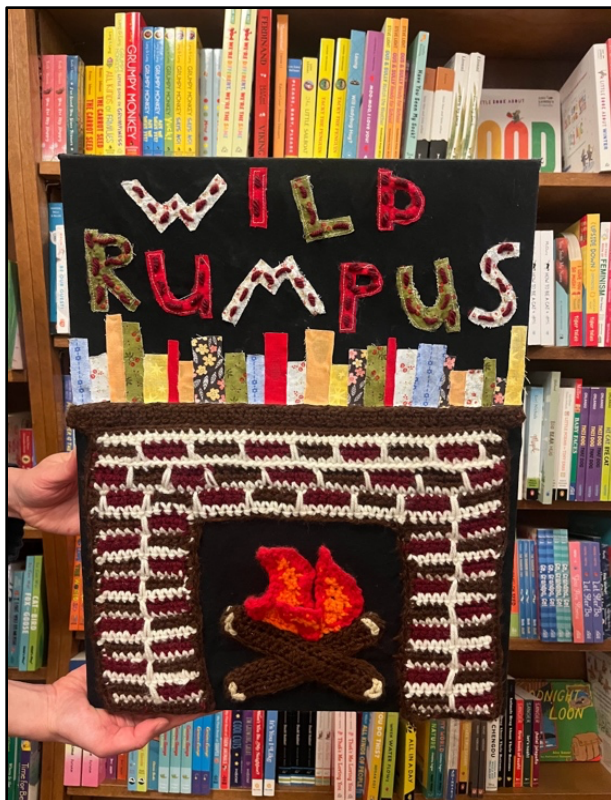
I think about my art as slow fashion, to go against consumerism, because it takes a long time to make one garment, especially if you're knitting or crocheting every stitch by hand.

Each year, the fashion industry creates fourteen times as many garments as there are people in the world. That is mind-boggling to me. There's such a surplus of clothes in the world, and it's not stopping; from 1960 to 2019, textile waste has increased over eight times. It is just not an unsustainable industry, but yet it is one of the fastest growing consumer industries in the world and one of the top three consumer industries for producing carbon emissions.

In college, courses on environmental biology, social class, and pedagogy opened my eyes to environmental racism and environmental justice—especially how certain groups are bearing the brunt of the climate monstrosities, including poor communities and communities with primarily Black and Brown folks. For a group project, we read *Toxic Communities* by Dorceta E. Taylor, which highlighted examples throughout the country. Communities don't have any say in a factory being built, or they get money incentives to have this factory in their community. Years later, they notice various health effects, like higher rates of asthma and cancer.



*T.'s capstone project for an art and identity course*



*Fiber art T. created for bookstore catalogue*

I work at an indie bookstore in my city, and it is very community-minded—not only regarding the people who work there, but for the greater community, too. This is a place for joy, love, books, and people who love books. In this age of book banning, we are wanting people to read whatever they want and feel supported and loved in those choices.

The free little libraries are also giving me hope. I am so grateful to live in a city where literacy is valued. The little libraries are community-centered, and a lot of times they're done with so much care.

I just read *The Service Berry* by Robin Wall Kimmerer. She wrote about gift and circular economies, where things go round and round, and it's not transactional, money changing hands and ownership but spreading the wealth in the community. For instance, my friend's birthday is coming up soon, and every year she does a clothing swap. That is a beautiful example of how we *do* have resources that we can share.

And making art with my friends, you know?

Yeah, so this is what's giving me a lot of hope.



*Daily squares*