



## I Create to Heal

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### ABSTRACT

Nalân's handicraft to heal.

### KEYWORDS

*Feminist healing, handicraft*



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## I CREATE TO HEAL

I am six years old; I will start primary school in September. Summer days, and I am bored. My mother or grandmother, gives me cloth with drawings of fruits and colorful sewing yarn, and a needle. I remember, sewing them on the pattern in my grandmother's garden, on a sunny day. I remember feeling nice. (As I am writing these lines I remember once more the feeling of satisfaction back then, and the desire to be recognized, accepted, and respected, valued, endless efforts to that effect years after, and the traumas that they caused.) But I also realize that I do all just for my own pleasure. And knowing this is good.



There is no pattern in these years-long creative engagements. It is something to do for keeping myself busy, for not getting bored. The main goal is keeping busy in long summer holidays. I have been knitting since my grandmother and younger aunt taught me how to. In time I have had motivations, extending from meeting my needs to making on my own the clothes and goods that I like, and finally, to come to terms with the happenings in my life and around. Starting from my Ph.D years, when I was in my 20's, the main motivations have been calming my mind, putting my thoughts in order and resting. An escape from extremely stressful settings, and one that helps me to settle my mind. I remember; I knitted three meters-long lyce for sheet sides when my mother had a heavy depression due to my brother's compulsory military service. I knitted not because I dreamed of using it in the future, just to make the day pass. Later, I learned that as I was trying to survive in this way, my mother was complaining about my continuous knitting.



I have been knitting, at times one project after another; and at times I take a break. I understood the soothing effect of knitting more clearly during the therapies I took in my 40's, especially in the art therapy workshops that I attended. Using both lobes of my brain, overcoming my problems with occupational therapy got me closer to knitting. But there is no similarity among the projects or a repeating motif; I knit whatever I want, sometimes with knitting needle, sometimes with crochet needle. They are similar, but they also involve different handicrafts.



Besides, I also do ceramics works – though I have given a break recently.



## I Create to Heal

I have grown up in a family where everyone is involved in handicraft in some form. Knitting, sewing, repair works, bookbinding, and the like. There was some kind of self-sufficiency prudence in these works – as if creating the most beautiful with scarce opportunities. Our dresses that my mother sewed, my aunt knitted were admired by everyone. Apart from that, another tendency that I inherited from my family is turning the new models, new handicraft into gifts for our close acquaintances. For example, I remember that I gave the dish towels I knitted when I was six years old to all the close relatives. Afterwards, I also knitted for various people. (Through the years, only one person made a face for the projects I knitted for him. Well, this is his problem.)



There are applications that I follow for handicraft. Some of my creations come out of those applications, some during my conversations. These are shaped by the taste or needs of the person for whom I create. Besides, I design some of them; thinking this person would like it a lot. And sometimes, for example, when knitting for my niece, I directly ask what she wants. Thanks to her, she always comes up with a new model. For example, lately I have been knitting crochet bags. The idea belongs to my niece.



I tend to give to the people I love the things that I make, putting my labor into that. So, for me love, value and care are embedded in my works. (Certainly, there is another dimension, here: political theory, specifically labor, production and sharing. But this is the topic for another narrative.)



Certainly, I also knit for myself, especially those projects that I need, that I will use, and mostly those, which I cannot buy or find, or those for which I do not want to spend money.

In brief, from my childhood onwards I have been knitting to avoid boredom, not to lose my mind, to calm myself, and because I cannot stay idle. I love to give the projects to the people I love. Each one of the projects are created by the ones for whom they are produced; and their value for me is integrated into the production process. I do not produce anything for those whom I am not fond of. My labor is valuable.





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