

TRANSCRIPT

One Continuous Thread

In the past year, I've been asking people about what they struggle most with in the fibre arts. And if you knit, spin, weave, or dye or enjoy any combination of more than just one craft, this will hopefully resonate with you. There is a unique challenge that plagues people who love more than one craft. We want to make all the things, but there's only so much time, money, space, and resources to spread around. And so we get caught up feeling overwhelmed and spread thin all the time, while at the same time also feeling like we're not getting anything done. Does any of this sound familiar? I know it's exhausting and I know that there must be a different way of approaching our creative work in a way that it feels more fulfilled, more satisfying, more rich and enjoyable. So in these videos, I want to lay out some of my strategies that I use to look at my time, money, space, and energy and focus and how I can best distribute those resources amongst my goals, to help me reach the, the deep satisfaction that I want that crafting can bring.

Some of these strategies are simply tactical and other strategies are more like ways of thinking or ways of managing your mental load. Creative work involves your mind as well as your heart. And so how we feel about things is extremely important. It's not just about getting the garment made or getting the cloth woven or getting the shawl knitted. It's more than just simply reaching the destination in the most efficient way possible. It's very much about savoring the entire process, feeling really competent and confident, and then feeling joyful and hopefully pleased with your results. So I hope that you'll find something here that will help you achieve your craft equals.

Let's start with trying to wrap our arms around the concept of the fibre arts. The fibre arts is a big broad group of processes and activities involving everything to do with yarn and fibre, whether it's from plants or animals. My framework for how I view the f-fibre arts is that it's a big long continuum from the source to the finished object. So that source might be the animal, or it might be the plant. And knitting is kind of in the middle, you know, weaving is kind of in the middle because you're working with yarn that has been made from that fibre. So you'll immediately sort of recognize that spinning is before knitting and dying may be before spinning or maybe before knitting and sewing and quilting are after knitting and weaving. So this is kind of like a rough assignment of where the crafts go on this continuum. I also recognize things like fibre preparation, so carding or making rollags to prepare the fibre for making a woolen spun yarn using a drum card or using hackles or combs to create a fibre preparation that you need for making smooth worsted spun yarn. I also recognize that there are skills involved with choosing a fleece or, you know, working backwards from the source, like learning to raise your own sheep or your own fibre animals in order to create the fleece that you want to spin. I also recognize that there are topics like growing your own natural dye plants in order to create dye colors in order to then dye the yard. So there's all of these topics like growing your own flax in order to cultivate, um, the plant fibre that you're going to use for spinning linen. There's also quilting. There's macrame, there's Barcelo, there's embroidery. We're talking about everything from growing and harvesting the fibre all the way to creating the fabric, to making something from that fabric. What this means is that knitting and spinning and weaving and dyeing and tapestry are not actually all silos of activity and learning. It means understanding how fibre is grown and harvested and what those natural properties are, how it functions. All of that information helps inform what choices we make about putting yarns into our weavings

and then into our garments. It means that understanding what weave structure we used in the cloth will affect our choices in what we make from that cloth.

What it means is that the greatest challenge of being somebody who enjoys the fibre arts is that it's easy to be excited about this whole spectrum of activity. It's very easy to want to dye the yarn and grow the plants, and also love making rollags and also wanting to spend yarn for socks. That means like that it often feels like we are doing so many things and getting nowhere. Like we aren't making progress with all the energy that we invest into the activity. And so I feel like there are very often resources or there's guidance for people who are purely knitters and there's guidance for people who are specifically production spinners, or people who are specifically production weavers, but what about some guidance for someone who's like, like us, like doing all of it all the time. And so that's what I'm hoping to try to unpack here.