

Sock Manifesto

An Essay on Real Things

I have been knitting these socks for approximately nine months now and with fate, luck, and stitches, I lay ten pairs before my family this Christmas day of 2009. The least among them took me perhaps twelve hours to knit. Some upwards of forty. I tell you this not merely to frighten you out of putting them through the dryer.

I'm making a point.

We live in a world of ghosts. A world in which the things that surround us are made with little care, purchased with even less still, and discarded without a thought. They are made to be disposed of, with so little attention that it is as if they never existed at all. We touch them every day without feeling them, look right through them, use them up and toss them out. They are made as ghosts, haunting us without ever having been substantial.

These socks, though, are *real*. They are grounded to this world not only by the work of my fingers, but because as you are holding them now, you are looking at them, really looking at them.

Take these socks. Wear them well. When they earn holes, bring them back to me. Real things can be repaired and these socks come with a warranty. I will darn holes and reknit heels and toes. If you care for them well, these socks will be with you for a long time coming. How long? The oldest piece of knitting known to the world is an Egyptian sock. It's nine centuries old.

Today I clothe my family. It's a small gesture, and maybe a small point, but it bears stating. The way we look at the things around us can be altered.

For the record, I don't think a pair of socks can change the world. But maybe a pair of socks – *real socks* – can change a person just a little bit. And a person, even just one person, is capable of an infinite variety of amazing and wonderful things.

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