

Knitting the brioche, finishing the thing (January in review)

In the land of knitting, there seems to exist a Great Divide: that between process knitters and product knitters. Those who revel in all the glorious colors of yarn, the zen-like rhythm of the needles, the making of each little stitch – and those who just want to Get Shit Done. I myself fall into the second camp.

Considering my personality, it's no wonder. I always want to know 'where things are headed'. When I was in my twenties I used to say I loved spontaneity and surprises, because I thought that was the cool thing to say. I was lying. I hate surprises. What I want is to make a plan and stick to it and cross it off my list. And then feel accomplished and eat a snack. In the same vein, I want to make a plan for what I'm knitting and then knit it and feel accomplished.

And eat a snack.

This approach to crafting has its advantages, some of which are apparent in my January projects.

Learning brioche

People often ask how I learn new things so fast (not to toot my own horn, but...I kinda do). The answer is not any kind of exceptional ability. It's sheer tenacity. When something I want to make contains a new technique, I simply jump in and learn it. Not because I enjoy doing things that are hard, but because doing things that are hard means I end up with beautiful knitwear. In this case, a very versatile brioche cowl:



The idea came from a friend who asked for an orange-and-black cowl to match his motorcycle (yes, really). For this project I used Rico Baby Classic DK in color numbers 18 and 99. It was knitted on a 5mm (US 8) circular needle in order to get a loose structure. I learned the brioche by watching [this excellent tutorial](#) by Mina Philipps of The Knitting Expat.

I'm happy to report he loves it! Annd I was kind of sad to part with my cowl-hat-facebeard-neckroll. I might have to make myself another one now...

Knitting through Maeve Madder

Another advantage of being a tenacious product knitter, is being able to finish tough projects. I know how to *close*, y'all. Or, more appropriately, how to bind off.

On Christmas Eve 2016, I cast on a much anticipated project: the [Maeve Madder Shrug](#) by Carrie Bostick Hoge. I had such high hopes. This was going to be for *me*. It was going to be amazing. It was going to change my life.

And the end product IS kind of amazing:



What I did not anticipate is that a high collared, long sleeved shrug means stockinette. FEET and FEET of stockinette. Followed by YARDS of garter stitch, over more than 200 stitches. Yeah.

But hey, luckily I'm a product knitter! Which means I pushed through, and now I own this gorgeous shrug that feels like a cloud of cotton candy giving you a hug all day long. In a non-sticky way. It's pretty great.

I knit this out of Katia Cotton Merino in color number 102 (I used 8 skeins) on 4mm/5mm (US 6/8) circular needles. I already knew how to do stockinette and garter, but I owe a huge debt of gratitude to Netflix, 'Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries' in particular.

Annd that's where I'll end this! I made a bunch of other things this month, too, but most of them are gifts so I can't show them yet:).

I'm noticing this post is only singing the praises of product knitting. But I'm curious about process knitting, too! Are you a process knitter? What are the benefits of process knitting

for you? I imagine something about living in the moment and catching butterflies and appreciating the beauty of the here and now. I might be totally off, though. After all, I only appreciate one kind of moment: the moment immediately after I Got Shit Done.

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Till next time!