Sometimes revolution can be a scary thing. It brings to mind images of violence, dominant men and really bad fashion. But luckily, you have stumbled on a beautiful revolution: the craft revolution.

The craft revolution started a long time ago when people were resisting the Industrial Revolution. The people decided that they had no interest in soul-less objects made by soul-less machines. The people knew that there was an inherent greatness in stuff that was hand made by people in their own communities. And they knew that encouraging creativity within their community would spill over into all sorts of domains beyond the craft. Imaginative people make better decisions. They create wonderful spaces in which to work, play and love. And imaginative people do not need to rely on violence to create a world they want to live in.

However, the Industrial Revolution did get its way for a while. Our communities have been quite successfully duped into believing that we need to buy stuff to feel like proper human beings. And if we happen to get an empty feeling in our soul now that we are getting more and more disconnected from our communities, we can fill this hole by buying more stuff.

Stuff is no longer a wonderful, special part of our lives. Now stuff is disposable, unemotional and we have no idea where most of it comes from.

Luckily a new craft revolution has been born. People all over the world are realising that buying things won't make you happier, sexier, brainier or better looking. The people are realising that the reason there is so much unhappiness and violence in our communities is because we have become so disconnected from the land, our friends and family and most of all from the processes that are needed to make this world function.

The people are returning to the earth and hearing what she has to say.

Some people will try and tell you that we can buy our way out of ecological crisis. "It's OK folks, we might be facing an environmental apocalypse far greater than any Hollywood movie will be able to portray (but they'll try, get your tickets here!), but have no fear we have the gizmo for you!" But what's the point in buying a magic widget made in a sweatshop by someone you don't know and then shipped halfway across the world?

What we really need is LESS STUFF. It's remarkable to think, but there's already enough stuff in the world, we just have to use it properly. That means finding the stuff you were going to throw away and spending half an hour making it into something else much more useful. That means digging up your little square patch of grass and turning it into a vege patch. That means finding some old drums and collecting rain water in them.

Isn't this starting to sound like a whole lot more fun?

Rethinking the world around us is what led me to creating radical cross stitch. I like to decorate old clothes with hand stitched text. I like to make little patches for my friends to attach to their clothes. And I like to get my friends to create their own too. But sometimes it seems like a daunting thing. So I've made a few little kits and patterns to get you started so you can see how easy it is. And hopefully you can also see that there is a radical potential to cross stitch. It's not all wanky farm yard scenes and home sweet homes.

Once you've discovered how easy it is, you can try your own. It's easy once you try. And there are plenty of resources out there in op shops just waiting to be snaffled up and created into something beautiful. Beware the consumerisation of crafting!!

Welcome to the revolution. Saving the world one stitch at a time.

radicalcrossstitch.com

\*

Fence Hijackers: A Radical Cross Stitch Tutorial

Materials:

Small square of calico

Needle

Embroidery thread

Embroidery pen

Strips of fabric – eg any spare material you have lying around that doesn't mind being cut into long skinny strips

Scissors

Stiff plastic shopping bag (the ones you get from fancy

boutiques)

Sewing machine (optional)

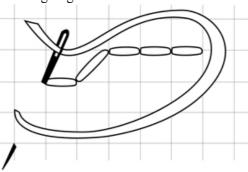
## Instructions:

Step one: Cut fabric in half. Draw your picture on one side with dissolvable embroidery pen. Be sure to leave a few cms space around the edge for sewing. Try and keep your picture/words simple and clear.

Step two: Embroider your design using backstitch or running stitch.

## Back Stitch

Follow the lines in the pattern but do each stitch backwards. So you are drawing a straight line but each step is stitched in the opposite direction than you are going.



## Running stitch

Same as back stitch except working the stitches forwards leaving a space between stitches like this - - - - . Depending on your design, you can leave the stitches spaced, or work back through the stitches and fill in the gaps.

Step three: Rinse your fabric to remove the embroidery pen and dry and iron.

Step four: Cut a piece of plastic from your shopping bag the same size as your calico. The plastic will act as a liner for your little plant pocket. Try to avoid any lettering on the bag as it may show through. Pin the plastic to the back of your calico.

Step five: Fold an inch seam down on the top of each piece. Place one of your material strips under the fold and pin down. Leave a length of material strip at the ends. Do not trim. These will serve as ties when you go to hijack a fence. Sew along the seam and both edges starting at the edge. This will secure the strip inside the fold and make the top of your garden stronger. Repeat for the other piece of fabric.

Step six: Place two pieces together with the plastic sides facing out. Pin the sides and bottom and sew together.

Step four and five variation: Sew it together in a different way. Go for it! It's just a guide and rules were made to be broken.

Step seven: Turn inside out, ta dah!

Step Eight: Find a fence to tie this to. Fill with soil, attach to the fence and plant a wee plant. Remember to look at how exposed your site is before deciding on which plant to use. Succulents are a good fall back plant if you're not sure.