

The Kudzu Project - Guerrilla Knitting in Charlottesville, VA

CONFIDENTIAL

Please do not post on Facebook, Instagram or other social media. Share only with trusted friends in your personal knitting network.

Participate – Calling All Knitters!

I invite knitters of all levels to join in knitting kudzu for a public art installation on Confederate statues in Charlottesville, VA (see background and inspiration on page 2). Given that we will need hundreds of kudzu leaves to complete the project, I ask that you knit as many as you can and send them to me by the target date of **October 30**. Beginner knitters may substitute a green square knitted in garter stitch for the leaf pattern. Patterns for the kudzu leaf and square are on page 3.

Instructions

Please use green yarn only. While shades may vary, I request that you not use teal or other colors. I have added emblems, such as a peace sign, heart, #BLM, to some leaves using duplicate stitch in a contrasting shade of green. If you choose to include an emblem on your leaf, please do that in green yarn too.

Send it in

Please send your knitted materials to The Kudzu Project, P.O. Box xxxx, Charlottesville, VA, 22902 **by October 30**. We plan to install The Kudzu Project on a Confederate statue in Charlottesville in November.

Assemble

Join other knitters to assemble The Kudzu Project. Please contact me by email below if you are able to participate in this way.

Contact

You can contact me at any time by email at thekudzuproject@gmail.com.

If you would like to be notified when The Kudzu Project is installed, please send me your email contact. I am working on a website and will launch social media via Facebook and Instagram after installation of The Kudzu Project. If you want your participation documented on social media, please send pictures to me as email attachments.

Surprise and secrecy are key components to effective guerrilla knitting. Please only share this information with people you trust.

Background

I am a knitter who lives in Charlottesville, Virginia. This summer my progressive university town was thrust into the international spotlight when white supremacists, neo-Nazis and other hate groups violently protested the planned removal of statues of Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson from our public parks.

While many localities rushed to take down their Confederate statues, Charlottesville is unable to do so because of a pending lawsuit. In the meantime, I propose to make a Confederate statue the subject of a temporary public art installation that encourages people to think about and question their relevance. My project involves covering the statues with knitted kudzu.

It is called The Kudzu Project.

Inspiration

This project was inspired by a drawing by Dave Loewenstein titled “Defunct Monument I - Racism.”



Why Kudzu?

Kudzu is ubiquitous throughout the American South. It covers trees, telephone poles, old cars and houses. Virtually anything that is not constantly tended will be engulfed by this fast-growing vine.

As with Confederate statues, kudzu-covered ruins elicit all sorts of romantic notions about the past. And just as kudzu obscures what lies beneath it, the statues valorizing Confederate generals hide a more sinister intention to intimidate and oppress African-Americans during the Jim Crow era, when many of the statues were erected.

Because kudzu grows only on those things that have passed out of use and are no longer relevant, its presence on Confederate statues invites us to ponder whether they serve an actual purpose today. Or are they relics of a bygone era that we could abandon for the sake of unity and social justice for all?

Patterns

Simple Kudzu Leaf

CO 3

Work in I-cord for 4 to 6 inches

Row 1 (WS): Purl

Row 2 (RS): K1, M1, K1, M1, K1 (5 sts)

Row 3: Purl

Row 4: K1, M1, K1, M1, K1, M1, K1, M1, K1 (9 sts)

Row 5: Purl

Row 6: K1, M1, K1, M1, K1, M1, K1, M1, K1, M1, K1, M1, K1, M1, K1, M1, K1 (17 sts)

Row 7: Purl

Row 8: K1, M1, K1, M1, K13, M1, K1, M1, K1 (21 sts)

Row 9: Purl

Row 10: K1, M1, K1, M1, K17, M1, K1, M1, K1 (25 sts)

Row 11: Purl

Rows 12-15: Knit (RS), Purl (WS)

Row 16: SSK, Knit to last 2 stitches, K2T

Row 17: Purl

Row 18: BO6, K to end (19 sts)

Row 19: BO6, P to end (13 sts)

Row 20: Knit

Row 21: Purl

Row 22: SSK, K to last 2 stitches, K2T (11 sts)

Row 23: Purl

Repeat rows 22 and 23 twice until 7 stitches remain

Row 28: SSK, S2KP2, K2T (3 sts)

Row 29: Purl

Row 30: S2KP2, cut yarn and pull last stitch through, weave in end on WS.

Abbreviations

CO = Cast on

K = Knit

P = Purl

M1 = Make 1 increase. Loft bar between stitches from front to back with the left needle and then knit through the back of it with the right needle.

BO = Bind off in pattern.

SSK = Slip two stitches to the right needle knitwise, one at a time. Insert left needle through front of both stitches from left to right and knit together.

K2T = Insert needle through next two stitches as if to knit and knit together.

S2KP2 = Slip 2 stitches together to the right needle as if to knit, knit the next stitch, then pass the slipped stitches over the knit stitch.

Simpler Kudzu Leaf

CO 30 stitches, knit each row (garter stitch) until you have made a square, BO.