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The Close-Knit Circle: American Knitters Today (American Subcultures)

Kerry Wills

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Knitting has recently exploded in popularity. Professionals, punks, and feminists are embracing this ancient craft, an activity that was previously relegated to the realm of the traditional woman, the mother and homemaker. While knitting books featuring such hip projects as iPod cozies and yoga mat bags abound, few explore the subculture of knitting in any depth. Who are these people? Why knitting, why now? Wills takes the reader on a fascinating tour of this subculture, complete with lively anecdotes and revealing interviews. Those who are new to the craft will enjoy a fascinating introduction to the knitting community, while those who have been unable to put down their needles since knitting that first scarf will glean new ideas for their next blog session, online shopping spree, or knitting group get-together.

Knitting has recently exploded in popularity. Professionals, punks, and feminists are embracing this ancient craft, an activity that was previously relegated to the realm of the traditional woman, the mother and homemaker. Books that cater to this new generation of knitters are flooding the market with patterns for such contemporary projects as iPod cozies, yoga mat bags, and laptop covers. The attitude of these publications is decidedly hip, featuring models sporting tattoos or piercings. Missing from the avalanche of knitting books, until now, is one that fully explores the subculture of knitting. Who are these people? Why knitting, why now?

Intrepid journalist and avid knitter Kerry Wills set out to find out. She takes us on a fascinating tour through the history of knitting, exploring the lives of such women as the revolutionary Elizabeth Zimmermann, whose strong opinions and classic book, *Knitting without Tears*, popularized knitting in the 1970s, anticipating current trends. Wills visits knitting groups that meet at such places as a feminist vegetarian restaurant, churches, pubs, and senior centers. She describes political activists who knit tree cozies to protect the trees against developers, groups that knit afghans for Afghans, and knitters who make shawls for people with cancer. She also explores online knitting communities. Those who are new to the craft will come away feeling more connected to the history of knitting as well as to their place in today's universe of knitters, while those who have been unable to put down their needles since stitching that first scarf will glean new ideas for their next blog session, online shopping spree, or knitting group get-together.

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