

Amy D. Wells
amy.wells@unicaen.fr
Research Team ERIBIA
Université de Caen Normandie
+33675737951

Pairing Text with Craft: Craftivism's Use of the Manifesto Genre

The Merriam-Webster dictionary offers a very basic definition of what a manifesto is: "a written statement declaring publicly the intentions, motives, or views of its issuer."¹ The manifesto genre has been used by various women throughout the 20th and 21st centuries in the United States. We can point to Mina Loy's "Feminist Manifesto" from 1914; Valerie Solanas's 1967 "SCUM Manifesto"; or Donna Haraway's "Cyborg Manifesto" published in 1985.

In "Capturing the Ethos of the Manifesto Genre," Lane Chasek suggests that voice and nakedness of expression, or the manifesto writer penning down what comes to their mind, are additional attributes of the genre.² Concerning voice, Chasek says, "When I think of strong voice, I usually have in mind literary or artistic manifestos."³ Indeed, the craftivism movement relies on the manifesto genre to communicate the relationship between craft and political protest. As these manifestos set out and declare principal thoughts, they also serve to argue. Anglophone craftivists manifestos have emerged from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, and they have converged over the last decades to promote core values of making a better world and advancing social justice. Here, we will cross Betsy Greer's "Craftivist Manifesto" (circa 2003) alongside that of Tal Fitpatrick's (2018) and then the Craftivist Collective's (2018). This analysis will demonstrate how the manifesto genre is an integral part of craftivism communication strategies, underscoring the dynamic synergy of pairing text with craft.

Amy D. Wells is an Associate Professor of English in the Applied Foreign Languages Department at the Université de Caen Normandie where she teaches American Studies and Economic Intelligence. Her research interests include the places women create for themselves in American society, whether through literature or political protest. She published the book *Liberté Francophonie Sexualité: Cinq écrivaines américaines en Normandie dans l'entre-deux-guerres* in 2019, and her research qualification dossier of 2025 is titled "Craftivism: What's the Point? Spatial and Economic Approaches to Social Stitching." Forthcoming publications include the article "Anaïs Nin and her Graphic Self," an interview with Léonie Bischoff.

¹ Merriam-Webster Dictionary, "Manifesto," n.d., n.p.

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/manifesto>

² Lane Chasek "Capturing the Ethos of the Manifesto Genre," *Jokes Review*, www.jokesliteraryreview.com, 16 March 2021, n.p.

<https://www.jokesliteraryreview.com/blog/2021/3/15/capturing-the-ethos-of-the-manifesto-genre>

³ *Ibid.*, n.p.