

The Basics of Crochet

The word crochet is derived from the word *croc*, which is French for hook. Crocheting is an art of fabric creation from a thread, yarn or other materials using a crochet hook.

Origins

Some say that the craft of crocheting began in some parts of South America, Arabia and China. However, there has been no concrete evidence of this claim. It eventually became popular in the 19th century in Europe. There have been claims that the process used in crocheting was present during the ancient times but the hook itself which is used in crocheting was not yet invented. People back then used their fingers which were bent in a hook shape to make loops and chains.

There's evidence that crocheting, as we know it today, gained popularity throughout the mid 1700s. It was also was this time when tambour embroidery reached Europe. Tambour embroidery was accomplished using a smaller crochet-like hook. The earliest evidence of crocheting can be traced back to around 1800. Samples have been found in archaeological digs that may answer the question if crochet existed before the 1800s. Some people say that crochet pieces can be found in Egyptian tombs and others say that nuns made crocheted pieces to beautify early churches. It has been argued that crocheting is a very basic technique and it most likely had its beginnings some time in ancient history. Unfortunately, no pieces have been found to legitimize these claims about ancient crocheting.

In the 1800s, crochet became a substitute for lace. Back then, laces were quite expensive, and people turned to crocheting to produce less expensive fabrics. Crocheting didn't require much equipment and other tools, and people of every kind can do it. People started crocheting by working with natural fibers and used hooks which made of brass, ivory and hardwood.

As time went on, crocheting became more and more popular, finding its niche as a cottage industry. The craft supported some communities when their livelihoods were deposed by imperialism. The finished products were purchased by the middle class, or those who were emerging in society. Some say that crocheted fabrics were nothing more than a mere imitation of the symbol of richer families. The people who were able to afford the more expensive fabrics looked down on crochet.

Queen Victoria somewhat lessened the bad attitude of some people against crochet. She purchased crochet laces produced by the Irish and learned how to crochet herself.

Evolution

Crocheting was done mostly with thread from the beginning of the 19th century to the 1950s. The most popular kinds of crochet methods were the filet crochet and the crochet in the round. These methods were worked in rows of closed or open mesh to build patterns. Steel hooks were mass produced and were popular beginning at the beginning of the 20th century.

In the 1950s, crocheters used thick yarns to create less detailed clothing and fabric. The craft of crocheting using thread was popular throughout the 1960s. Homemakers were very involved in crocheting but during the 1960s, more and more people became hooked to crocheting, particularly the younger generations. The popular patterns emerged, such as the granny squares. These squares were done in round style and usually incorporated bright and fun colors. The interest of the younger generation in the 1960s gave crocheting a much-needed popularity boost.

Method

For modern crocheters, crocheting is done by creating a slip-knot on the hook, and this loop is pulled with another loop. The second loop is pulled through the first one and this pattern is repeated to create the fabric. The chain is worked in rows or turned to create a pattern. Rounds are created by pulling several stitches through one loop. These methods separate crocheting from other kinds of fabric making methods.

Crochet is a relatively young craft if one compares it to other fabric-making procedures. It has gone through several steps of evolution to become the art that we know today. With the advent of different technologies and modern ways of making fabric, crochet is in danger of becoming a thing of the past. However, there are still many people who love crochet and with any luck, these people will pass on the art to the generations to come.