

Podcast Transcript for Stories of
Making and Migration with Rosie Taheem

Rosie:

I was just talking to Natasha about it, just actually, and she said, mum, since you started in lockdown, she said, it's the first time I've actually seen you doing something that you, for you, you've never done that before.

And looking back, I'm thinking, yeah, I haven't actually, I've had this creativity and I think it's just, I feel like it's been locked inside me and now it's just pouring out.

Sometimes I just say, oh, I wish I didn't have to work. And I could just sit here making things all day. I could literally, you know, forget to eat and drink. I just sit here creating all day, every day.

Hayley:

At Craftspace, alongside our current exhibition, Made in the Middle, we've been collecting stories of making and migration from across the Midlands.

As part of this project, I spoke today to Rosie. Rosie started crocheting with her mum during lockdown and since then has tried out a really wonderful range of different craft styles and techniques. She's always trying out something new and is always excited about what her next creative project could be.

Alongside this podcast, I'd recommend visiting the Crafts[ace website where you can see photos of Rosie's absolutely beautiful work.

It was so lovely hearing her story. And if you're anything like me, Rosie is sure to leave you feeling inspired to, to go and try your hand at something new.

[Music]

Rosie:

My name's Rosie. I love to crochet, knit, make baubles, a couple of dolls. I like trying lots of different things. During lockdown, my mom came to stay with us. She was knitting slipper socks for family just to keep herself busy.

And we would sit together and I'd watch her knitting and it just looked like fun. I thought, I'd like to have a go at that. But I did think, oh, it looks very complicated. I'm

not sure if I'll be able to do it, but Mom showed me how to start crocheting granny squares.

She said that might be a good place to start. A little granny square turned into a continuous Granny Square blanket. And I loved it, absolutely loved it. It was so nice to sit there in the sunshine with my mum while she was knitting her socks. I'd be knitting my granny blanket and chatter together. And I like the way it made me feel. I got to spend that time with her that I'll treasure that time, it was lovely. And then when I see my blanket, it takes me back to that time.

It started with the crocheting and then I had so many bits of fabric that I'd got from Mom because she sews Indian suits and she has lots of remnants of fabrics. And I had a lot.

I must have seen something online and thought I could turn them into baubles. So then I sort of did a bit of research, had a go and then, oh yeah, I loved it. That was my new favourite thing. It was all about the colours and the fabrics and which ones to put together and how they would look.

So recently, I don't know where the fascination with little dolls came from, but then I made 2 dolls and in my head I was going to make loads and loads of dolls. I got to two and then I got bored and moved on to something else.

At the moment, my newest thing is knitting a pair of socks. The socks that I'm knitting at the moment, I'm so excited about knitting them, just excited about putting them on and wearing a pair of socks that I've knitted. First, I had to decide just a few different ways of starting and the first method I tried I must have cast on about 30 times over two days and got really frustrated and thought, no, no, I can't do this, it's not working. And then I tried another method. So it was on a 9 inch circular crocheting needle which seems to be working. I've got about three quarters of the way through my first sock and I'm like, yes, I can do this. And I'm really excited, and just choosing the wool for it and the colours, it's just so exciting. And my dream is to eventually have a drawer of hand knitted socks.

In terms of well being, it's had such a big impact on me. It's really slowed me down. And you do hear the word about being in the moment and being grounded. You hear those often said. It's one thing to, for somebody to say that and one thing for you to actually feel that. And I think the crafting has really, it's made me learn how to be present in that moment and not have continuous chatter in my head.

It's really allowed me to actually learn, because I've heard about it before, but it's really hard to do and crafting I think has allowed me to do that for the first time in my

life. And that's why I think I'm obsessed with it, because it makes me feel so lovely and this makes me happy, really makes me happy when I think about it, when I dissect it and I think about it. And that's why I don't think I'm ever going to stop now. And to have found it at this stage in my life, I'm in my 50s, is like, I'm so grateful that I found it and I'm just not going to let it go.

My granddad and my grandma, when they moved from India they started their own little business of making jackets and selling them. And my grandad built on that with my dad and his two brothers, my two uncles.

And we had our own factory where we manufactured undergarments for stores like Marks & Spencer's and British Home Stores. I remember school holidays, summer holidays were spent, a lot of the time we spent in the factory with my cousins where our mums would be working either sewing or packing the garments.

We would be there running around causing havoc and I've got such fond memories of that time and sometimes we'd be called in to help with packing but we'd just be running around and it would just be such an exciting place to be.

So yeah, I've grown up around that sort of making. Looking back now, a lot of my cousins, we all have a creative streak. One of my cousins is a pattern designer, one of my aunts, she loves crocheting and crafting. And it'll be at least once a week we'll have a catch up together where we talk about, we'll be like, okay, what are you doing right now? What are you making? And we'll share what we're making, and we'll have a cup of tea and a chat over the phone about what we're doing and what we're making and we both just, I get excited about what she's doing, she gets excited about what I'm doing and may influence what we do.

We've got that creative streak running through. Especially my mom, she is a brilliant seamstress. She makes Indian suits which comprise of like a tunic top and the bottom is called a salwar.

It's a salwar kameez. She stitches for people and she's amazing. She's brilliant. A lot of the remnants of fabrics that I use for my baubles have come from my mom, the bits of the fabric that she's got left over.

So my younger daughter, when I started crocheting, initially requested a Harry Styles granny square cardigan which she'd seen on TikTok. Had a look at it and I thought, oh, I'm not sure Millie, I don't, I've only done blankets, I'm not sure I can make a cardigan. But then I had a little look at it and it was just built up of granny squares, so I thought, oh, yeah, I can have a go at this and anything I'm not sure of, I'm sure there'll be a tutorial online or something. So that was really exciting to see that take shape.

And then that led me to different tutorials for other things. And then I'd start saving, I'd be like, oh yeah, that looks good, maybe I can look at that. And it actually made me realise that I'm a very visual learner.

And then I'll start something and then I can, because I've developed the basic skills and the groundwork from looking at tutorials, I've started sort of just making things up. So there have been a couple of bags that I've made, which I've actually just made than without looking at a tutorial, which I never would have thought I'd be able to do. But it's because I'm just expanding my skills. And then you can use those skills that you've learned and sort of mould them into your own.

And there's a few things that I've done, and then I've watched a tutorial where they've said 'and this is a little hack' and I thought, oh! I've already done that without looking at this. So I'm learning and I'm, like, really pleased with myself and proud of myself. I thought, oh, I've just worked that out for myself.

One thing that it's taught me is actually patience, and that it's okay to get it wrong and start again, because I'm constantly starting, ripping out my knitting or my crocheting and starting again. It's a process.

And some of the things where I have made little mistakes, like going back to my socks, there's a couple of stitches that maybe I've, I've lost a stitch somewhere, or I've knitted and purled when it should have been stockinette in that part of the sock, but I've left it there because I thought, this is my first sock, it's not going to be perfect. And as I knit more socks, they'll get better and better. So I actually thought, no, I want to keep that. There's slight imperfections in there, because it will remind me that I was learning.

[Music]

Hayley:

This podcast was produced by Craftspace, for Stories of Making and Migration, a project sitting alongside our current touring exhibition Made in the Middle, funded by Arts Council England.

We met with makers across the Midlands. They are everyday makers who craft for themselves. This could be making at home in a local studio with a community group as a form of activism for their well being or much more.

You can view more stories from this project on the Craftspace website with podcasts, photos and short films. Visit <https://craftspace.co.uk/mitm-making-stories/>.

We're also on social media so let us know your own making stories and journeys through craft. We'd love to hear from you.