



THE ART OF REPAIR

Mindful mending: how to stitch old things to new life

Molly Martin

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'A beautiful, honest, fascinating book, which celebrates slow living and the real worth of things.' Lindsay Duncan

'Molly's beautifully simple and thoughtful work with garments imbues a love and respect for the things we wear.'
The Vendeur

It all started with a pair of socks... White, woollen – my favourite pair. The heels had become thin and threadbare; then a small hole appeared on one of the toes. Too precious to throw away, I decided to mend them. I chose a ball of yarn from my mother's wool collection and she found me her old darning mushroom, which had once belonged to my granny, and explained the basics. I remember the feeling of it: threading the needle with a strand of contrasting grey wool, while pulling the heel over the domed wooden mushroom; weaving my needle in and out of the surviving strands; making little bridges back and forth like a lawn mower; slowly closing the hole. The process was instinctive. I can still recall the feeling of pride and achievement when I had finally finished. Sure my darn looked a little rustic, but I had given my socks a new lease of life, a second chance.

In *The Art of Repair*, Molly explores the humble origins of repair and how the act of mending a cherished item carefully by hand offers not just a practical solution but nourishment for the soul. Using her own beautiful illustrations, she guides us through the basics of the craft – from piecing and patching to the ancient Japanese art of Sashiko. Inspiring personal repair stories are interwoven throughout.

A recent study at Harvard Medical School discovered that stitching, weaving, and knitting all create a measurable state of relaxation, slowing down the heart rate and lowering blood pressure. In the last few years, and particularly during 2020 with national lockdowns and ongoing anxieties, there has been an upsurge in hand-based crafts and skills. We are also looking for an alternative to our increasingly disposable lifestyles. Molly Martin shows how we can learn from the Japanese philosophy of Wabi Sabi, which values and celebrates the process of ageing and the imperfections that come with it. Instead of buying new, you can choose to care for the old; you can choose to repair and the repair itself can add to the beauty and meaning of the object.

Molly Martin is an artist, illustrator and professional textile repairer, specialising in delicate fabric restoration and traditional Japanese Sashiko repair. Molly also works for the slow fashion company Toast and has collaborated with them on several workshop 'repair' tours.

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'Nothing lasts, nothing is finished & nothing is perfect'. - Japanese Proverb

EXTRACTS AND ILLUSTRATIONS ARE AVAILABLE
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