



Kruse's Proposal for NUNO:

"A pilgrimage is a ritual journey with a hallowed purpose. Every step along the way has meaning. The pilgrim knows that life giving challenges will emerge.

A pilgrimage is not a vacation; it is a transformational journey during which significant change takes place. New insights are given. Deeper understanding is attained..."

Macrina Wiederkehr

"For artists, who anyway struggle with issues of isolation as a consequence of self-employment, the need to build networks and be part of an active community is vital for career success. For autistic artists, who may struggle with communication and social isolation, building peer networks and communities is hugely important and probably doubly hard.

My initial intention with this project was to travel from my studio to the homes or studios of the other artists taking part in the project, either through walking or taking public transport to highlight the distance and sense of isolation that may affect other autistic people. In keeping with the overall title of the project, Neither Use Nor Ornament, I planned to create a knitted 'drawing' as I travelled; knitting as a metaphor for connected community, with 6 central stitches (representing the 6 autistic artists I planned to visit) looping over each other in a cable pattern.

As the project moved forward my own autistic imperfections and struggles impacted themselves on the work. The first walk, from Birmingham to the Welsh coast had to be taken in short sections rather than in one go. The main Welsh section, from Knighton to Aberystweth had to be abandoned after three days as my walk was unsupported and I was struggling to carry supplies for the four-day 'wilderness' section of the walk.

Returning to my studio after making an unsuccessful attempt was crushing. Worse, as the original plan had failed I struggled to adapt my thinking and planning to develop a new route. This impacted on my plans to travel to the other artists until I found myself in the new year with none of my initial plans completed.

At this point I realised that this 'failure' was the work. My inability to physically reach the others on this project, my struggles with communication, support, rigid thinking and impaired planning skills is the reality of functioning with a neurodivergent brain.

I am still knitting an object of no use, using fine sock yarn and 3mm needles I'm knitting every mile that lies between myself and the other autistic artists on this project. The central 6 stitches remain, looping in cable pattern, each loop representing one of the 488 miles between us. Each inch of knitting represents 1 mile and I commit to knitting 10 'miles' of knitting every day.

Alongside the knitted object is a series of landscape photographs taken on various walks. The landscapes have been digitally remastered to create scenes of bleak isolation; cold, remote, unpeopled vistas. In the sky hang strange moons and suns made by a device I wear or carry as I walk, which turns my movements into inked dashes and dots. While the knitted object expresses the labour required to function socially as an autistic person, the digital images evoke the inner distance from others; an inner solitude which can be both comforting and painful.”