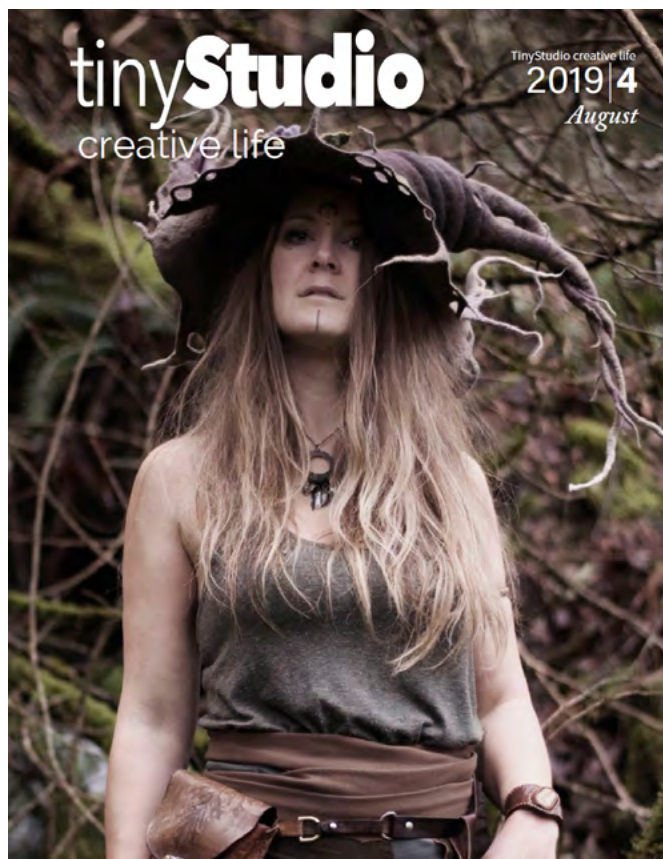
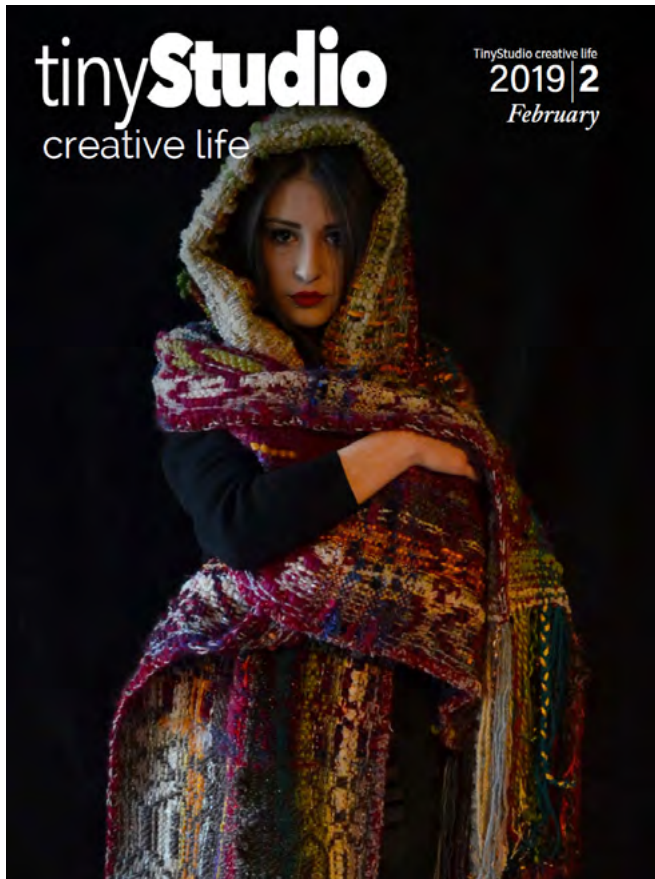




tiny**Studio**
creative life

TinyStudio creative life
2019
Special Edition

FIRST BIRTHDAY
EDITION



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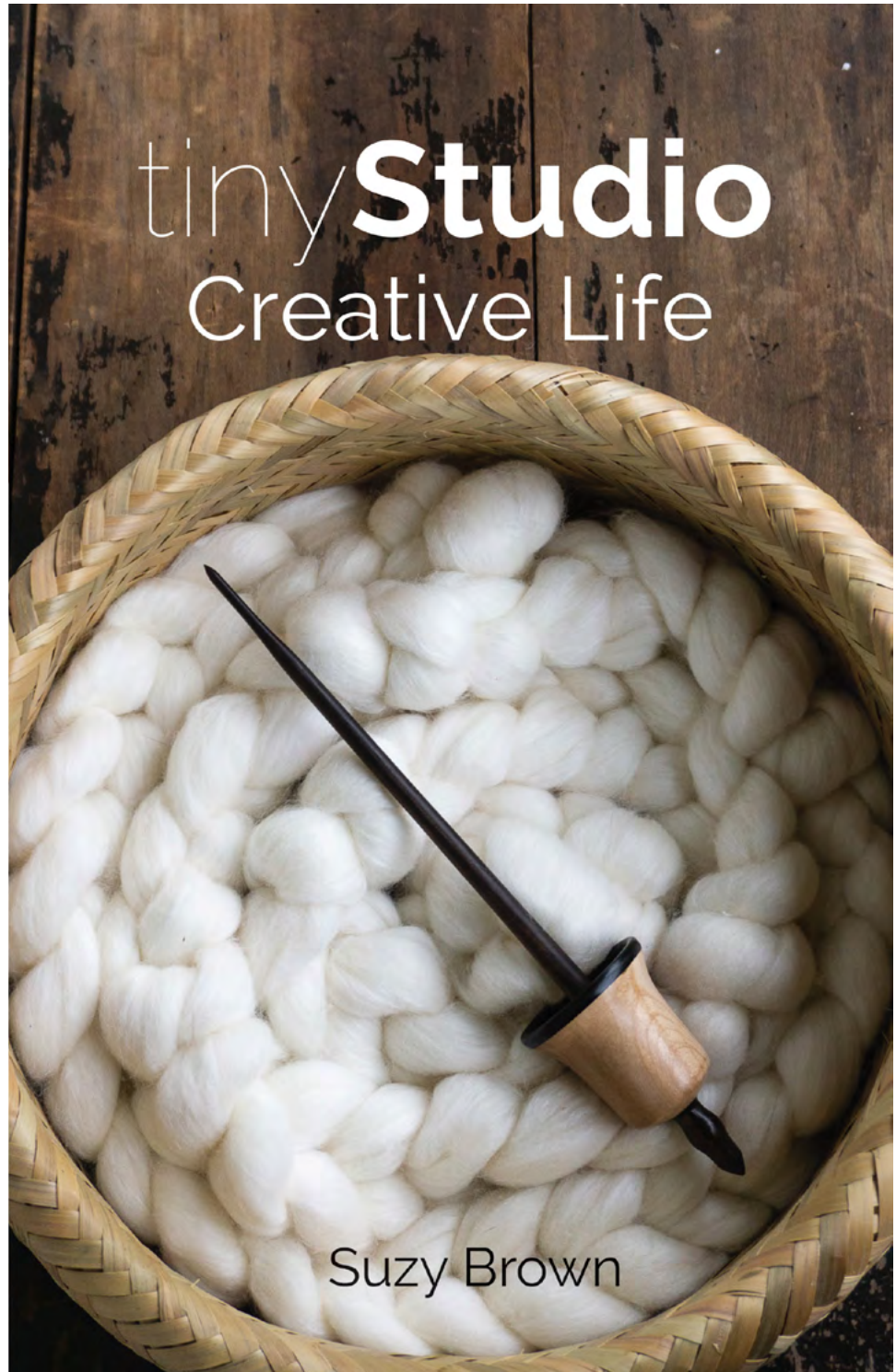
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Hello & Welcome

Welcome to the very first 'Special Edition' of tinyStudio Creative Life magazine, created to celebrate our first birthday! It is hard to imagine that a year ago I was writing the first Welcome message to Issue One, it seems forever ago but also like it was just yesterday!

This magazine has become my greatest passion and complete creative focus in the last 12 months. I have had the most wonderful contact with fiber artists and tool makers around the globe, and at times have even been brought to tears by the generosity of these creative people. I am utterly grateful to those who have given me their trust in bringing their unique and beautiful fiber stories to our community of subscribers.

This edition is a special one not only because it is something I am able to share with everyone as a birthday gift, but also because it is a compilation of just some of the amazing content we have had in the first four issues of tinyStudio. While putting this together the biggest problem I had was selecting which articles to include, there is so much richness and incredible content in each issue, what follows here is literally just a taste of the entire dish!

I would like to also give a special thanks to the tinyStudio subscribers who have shared this entire year with us, your support and ongoing loyalty has literally kept this all possible! My biggest goal is to give you an amazing magazine experience every time you open each Issue, I hope to inspire, motivate, spark new ideas, and bring you great pleasure with the stunning eye candy and in depth articles and tutorials.


My thanks also to subscribers who have joined in part way through the year and continued on with us, I can't tell you how much of a thrill I get when I also see new subscribers purchase the back issues as well, it gives me a big glow knowing that you have loved the current issue so much you want to collect them all! As well as the magazine I am also loving creating the fortnightly video podcasts, our library is really building up, and it's great that new subscribers can also go back and watch any and all tinyStudio TV episodes no matter when they subscribe. I hope this way you get to know me too, and feel free to contact me with requests or questions too!

And now, without further ado - lets get reading! Happy Birthday!



Suzy Brown
Editor in Chief





Sometimes your joy
is the source
of your smile,
but sometimes
your smile
can be the source
of your joy.

— Thich Nhat Hanh

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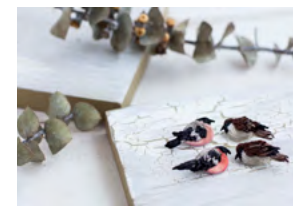
Cover Image: Photo by Madeleine of Yama Yarns: visit her shop for more eyecandy and stunning yarns at YamaYarn.com

INSPIRATIONS



My name is Polina Laamanen and I have been a full time embroidery artist for more then 2 years now. I started my career with crocheting and ribbon embroidery and throughout the years developed my own technique. It takes several hours to complete even the smallest miniature but it is full of positive energy and my love. For a very long time I was making only miniature birds and fish but in 2018 I made a new step towards wall art. If you want to follow my process and find out first about newest pieces, follow me online!

Visit my [Website](#) see my latest work on [Instagram](#) and check out my [Shop on Etsy!](#)







WORDS AND PICTURES MADELEINE BOTHA



THINGS TO LOVE

INTRODUCTION SUZY BROWN

If you have not yet discovered the beauty of Yama Yarns, I would like to introduce you to this talented Dyer and Fiber artist, Madeleine Botha, the owner of Yama Hand Dyed Yarns and Roadhog online store. I was captured by the beauty and gorgeous composition of Madeleine's images first on Instagram, and then upon visiting her website, further captivated by

the stunningly dyed yarns and gorgeous colourways she has available.

I am very happy to bring you the story behind the yarns in the following images and introduction that Madeleine has shared with us, I hope you feel as inspired as I do to support her work and talents!







Where are you based and do you draw inspiration from your environment?

I am based in Noordhoek, a laid-back coastal suburb of Cape Town in South Africa. I draw inspiration from my environment, I am fascinated with our fynbos, a totally unique kind of shrub-land or heathland vegetation that makes up 80 percent of the Cape Floral Kingdom.

What is it you love the most about what you do?

I love that adding colour to yarn is only part of the process, and that what I create will be used by someone else in their own unique way to create something more that is useful and beautiful. I love that it teaches me to look closer at the things that surround me and that I have become much more aware of the cycle of life as it is displayed through the colours in nature.

Can you give a little background of how you came to being an indie dyer?

I have always loved colour. My earliest childhood memories are of my colouring books, crayons and pencils, and of my mom teaching me to knit at about the age of 5! While knitting fell by the wayside for almost 30 years thereafter I have always been involved with colour. In high school, art was my favorite subject. I would spend hours on my oil painting projects, blending colours over and over..the subject matter was usually less important.

I went on to study graphic design and worked in the industry for over a decade. Somewhere in my thirties my inherent love for knitting was triggered in Switzerland on a snowboarding trip where I saw a beautiful knitted hat..which gave me the idea that knitting can look "cool".. As a result of my new interest, I started dabbling in a few fibre crafts alongside seriously getting into knitting, from only knowing how to knit and purl and knit scarves in acrylic yarn..to knitting sweaters in my own handspun natural fibres. I learned to spin and prepare raw fibre and to weave and crochet.

In 2015 I took over a small online yarn shop from its original owner as a fun side project while still doing freelance graphic design. Through this shop I learned so much about the industry. In September 2017 I dyed my first batch of yarn and the rest is history!





Now my hobby is my work and my work is my hobby. Yarn and fibre is such a wonderful, grounding medium for artistic expression from colouring through to knitting, crochet and weaving and finally making use of the product.

Your colours are very beautiful, can you tell us a little about your dye process and the palettes you like to work with?

I dye with typical protein fibre dyes that use a fixative like white vinegar and is set with heat. For my dye baths and to wash and rinse the yarn I use harvested rain water.

My "dye studio" is an outdoor space - a corner of our patio from where I overlook the garden and get to listen to the sugarbirds and white-eyes twittering while I work. My dyeing is my art, I work alone and create small batches of unique colourways in a very hands-on process through which the results are rich and layered. My palette is everything autumn and rustic, I would describe it as "a dreamy woodland fairytale".

How did you first learn to dye yarns?

I really just dived into learning how to dye! I watched some Youtube videos and read the instructions that came with the dyes..and from there developed my work space and process around what I have available to me.

How do you get into your creative flow?

To get into my creative flow I love to walk around our little garden looking at the wonderful colours of the leaves, branches, flowers, stones and so much more, often through a macro lens which reveals the most incredible details. Other than that, I go in armed with a big mug of coffee, fire up the dye pots and get going!

What kind of items do you best like to knit and how does that influence your yarn dyeing?

I have also fallen head over heels in love with sweater knitting..especially beautiful fair isle colourwork yokes! We are so blessed in our makers community to have platforms like Ravelry and Instagram where we have access to the work of so many wonderful contemporary designers from all over the world.

This certainly influences my dyeing - I am always thinking "what colours would I knit this or that pattern in". I like to dye "wearable" colours and if I wouldn't personally knit and wear a colour that comes out of the dye pot, it will go back for another layer of dye to tone it into something that sits well with the typical Yama palette.

I am most active on Instagram as [yama_fibre_art](https://www.instagram.com/yama_fibre_art) and sell my yarn through my existing online store www.yamayarns.com



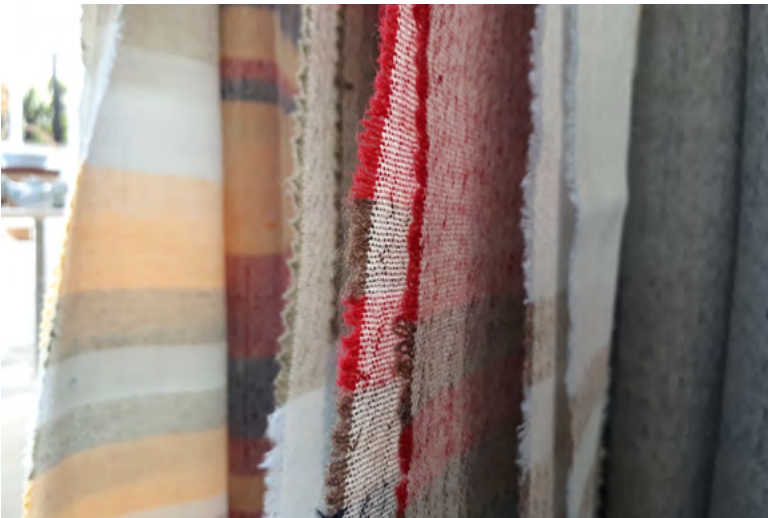
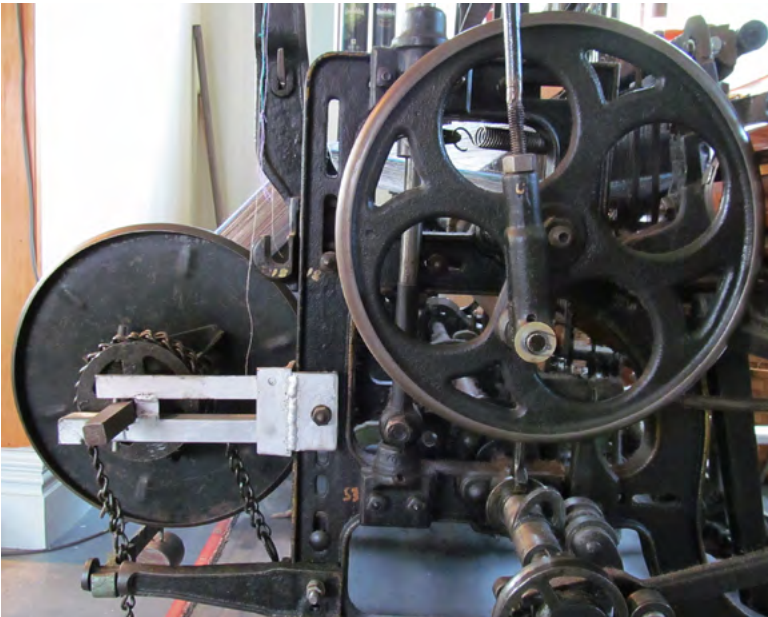




Keeping the Tradition

WORDS AND PICTURES **SUE MCLEAN**

Rod and Sue McLean, weavers and textile designers, share the story of their journey into tradition, wool, and fabric production in the south island of New Zealand.



Being a creative soul is not for the faint hearted ... and when you get two creative Leo souls in one household, things can get interesting, and loud, or quiet, and messy – literally and metaphorically.

Take my husband and myself; we are life and business partners. He is Rod, I am Sue, and together we are **McLean & Co: Weavers**. He is the McLean, I am the Co. He does the weaving, I do the rest. It's an arrangement that works well most of the time. It has been an interesting journey from being a young plumber in love with a young teacher in 1979, to being artisan weavers in Oamaru (New Zealand) in 2018.

Our life together has taken many turns, not all of them happy. We have both survived serious illness; Rod a life changing brain hemorrhage in 1988, and breast cancer in 2006 for me, along with the accidental death of one of our four children in 2007.

Our tenacious Leo grit and determination, coupled with a good dose of creative ability, enjoyment of the ridiculous and a sense of gratitude have guided us through the harrowing times and given us the skills and attitudes necessary to be part of the 'slow fibre' resurgence, quite a feat in these frantic, consumeristic, technological times.

We own a Hattersley Domestic Weaving System, one of very few remaining intact globally. It comprises of three cast iron looms which are pedaled, a bobbin winder and pirn winder which have been converted to electricity, and a warping mill which is operated by hand.

The looms were designed in the late 1890's by George Hattersley and Sons, a textile machinery manufacturer in northern England. Although they were originally designed for the Balkans, many ended up in the Scottish Isles, particularly Lewis and Harris where they became the mainstay of the Harris Tweed industry. The first thirty looms arrived in the Outer Hebrides in 1919, providing disabled WW1 soldiers with rehabilitation and a means of earning a living.

The history of our looms is undocumented before 1946 when they were imported by the RSA (Returned Services Association) Rehabilitation League in Christchurch NZ. From there they travelled to four different New Zealand towns before arriving in Oamaru in 2006 in a state of disrepair.

In a lovely serendipitous twist, our looms, having been used in the rehabilitation of soldiers returning from two World Wars with various physical and neurological disabilities, have played an important part in Rod's rehabilitation.

We have lived in the historic and artistically diverse town of Oamaru, on the east coast of the South Island for 25 years. It has been a fabulous place to raise our children and establish ourselves as artisan weavers. We are part of a culturally and socially inspired heritage community whose eyes are firmly glued on the future, working together to protect and enhance what we have inherited in a sustainable and ethical manner.

In 2016 together with several local artists and artisans we established CRAFTED: Waitaki Artisan Gallery in the historic part of Oamaru. During the course of doing our commission work we have met such lovely people, passionate about their yarn and the whole 'woven by hand' concept. We enjoy working through the design process with them, then creating the fabric and, with some commissions, making the fabric into homewares or fashion items. It is such an honour to be part of bringing textile dreams and ideas into reality and building respectful relationships.

We are often asked where we source our yarns from. It is increasingly difficult to find New Zealand grown and processed yarns suitable for us to weave as more manufacturing moves off-shore, and minimum processing quantities rise. More often the yarn finds us, often in quite circuitous routes. We have found people in the wool industry, from growers to processors and manufacturers to be passionate about this versatile fibre and the future of the NZ woollen industry, and we are proud to be part of it all, even in such a small way.

Our style of weaving is influenced by our looms and what they were designed to weave – long lengths of tartan and tweed – and by our appreciation of culture, heritage, community, and a desire to tread lightly on the Earth. We weave wool, with some alpaca, possum and silk. Our designs are mainly variations of traditional herringbone, representing strength and unity and referencing our heritage and values. Many of our designs are influenced by what yarn we have on hand or based on a commission. To begin with a lot of our yarn was end of line or discontinued stock from New Zealand spinning



mills, but as we have become more established, we have been able to buy finer yarns, mostly merino or merino cross which Rod really enjoys weaving.

Hand weaving is a lengthy process in which the weaver must engage totally. First you need to know what you are going to weave - the purpose of the fabric, the type and weight of wool you will need, the design, pattern, colours, where you can get the yarn from, where you can get it dyed, the finished length of fabric, how much yarn you will need.

Once that is sorted the yarn is wound onto bobbins and the warping mill is set up, the warp is constructed, the threads are organised through heddles, shafts and the reed.

Once Rod starts weaving he has to 'tune' the loom - getting everything balanced and tensioned and the threads flowing smoothly so they won't break. Every loom has its own personality and each warp is different, so this is a very important part of the warping up process and can take some time.

Because these Hattersley Domestic looms were designed to weave commercial lengths of fabric in domestic settings, they are pedaled, or treadled. This means long lengths of fabric can be woven relatively quickly as the shuttle shoots from side to side and the beater moves forwards and backward automatically with each pedal.

Once the weaving is complete, the length of fabric is checked, darned and then 'fulled' - in warm, soapy water. It is wound through a mangle under pressure repeatedly until it looks and feels just right - weavers call this the 'handle' of the fabric. Some yarns full up very quickly, and some don't, so it can take between

six and fifty times through the mangle before the fabric has the right handle.

Once the fabric is fulled, it is rinsed and spun out in the washing machine. Then it is carefully wound onto a drying drum (which hangs in our lounge bay window in the sun) so it can air dry.

[You can view the process in more detail on our website](#)

McLean & Co works for us because after forty years together we know each other fairly well. We have a shared history and a shared future. Our skills are complementary. We know when to be loud, and when to be quiet. We both love learning, creating, the aesthetic and the beautiful; and Rod is very 'as one' with his looms. He loves everything about them - their simple complexity, their staunch cast-iron-ness, their ability to produce fine woollen textiles day after day into their second century. And all they need is love and a little vegetable oil to keep things lubricated. I guess that is just what we all need - love and lubrication, metaphorically speaking...







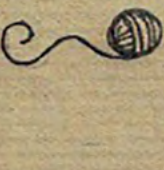
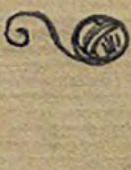



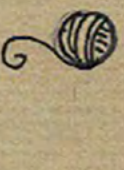
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Combining textiles
with the world of
natural history



EVANITA W. MONTALVO - Fiber Artist, Photographer, & Teacher



Studio

creative spaces for creative people

By Sally Coulthard

Inspiration lives in this book! If you are building your creative studio now, planning to in the future, or if you already have your studio set up but are open to new ideas for organising it, this is a book filled with some really motivational and inspirational studio spaces from a range of well known artists, including one of my personal art heroes Lisa Congdon, and seven different countries.



The book is split quite logically into three sections: Studio Inspirations, Studio Work, and Studio Elements. The first part of the book is pure inspiration based around colour and style, followed by a look at function and the different types of studio created by different kinds of artists and craftspeople. The final part of the book gets super practical, covering elements such as work surfaces, storage, lighting, studio organisation, and even 'drying spaces; for those who need to dry art, or in our case, yarn and fiber! There are also amazing stories of innovation, with one artist having made their entire studio out of recycled wooden pallets!

This is a book you can pick up and flip through any time for general inspiration and creative pick-me-up, but it is also a book you can read, either front to back or a section at a time depending on your studio requirements.

It is filled with gorgeous images that can't fail to capture your imagination. Sometimes I can feel a little overwhelmed at the beauty others have achieved in their workspaces, which can make me feel quite inadequate when I compare my own humble attempts, however this is usually a temporary feeling, as I find I can also take one or two smaller and more reachable ideas (such as storage options) and apply them to my own space in a way that gives me a lift every time I enter my studio. The value of a book such as this is not only to help us set up our daily workspace but also to give us something to aspire to and dream of, and one day achieve for ourselves.

Studio: Creative spaces
for creative people.
Sally Coulthard, 2017
Published by Jacqui
Small, London







INSPIRATION

My Fickle Friend

WORDS AND PICTURES BY SUZY BROWN

It's something we often have to wait for, it doesn't always come when we want it to. Its lack is found in the blank piece of paper, the empty bobbin, the undyed fiber... Is inspiration like some kind of fickle friend who thinks only of themselves and comes and goes from our lives like a butterfly in the wind? Unreliable, untrustworthy, mostly never there when you want it to be.

That's how inspiration often feels to me. Annoying.

Sometimes it can be gone for days, only to return in a rush, which tends to be either like the sun suddenly coming out and pouring its glow all over your skin in a delightful warmth of ideas, or it's like the outpouring of beans when you accidentally tip the coffee jar over on the bench and you can't move fast enough to catch the overwhelming escape of thoughts and creativity.

Inspiration, you ARE my fickle friend.

But IF inspiration was more like a constant awareness, a consistent and continuous flow of small sparks, something we could count on to always be available, always be the same shape, would it still be.. inspiration? I might curse the days when I know I have creative tasks to perform and inspiration has failed me and not even arrived on the doorstep to be ushered in and put to work. I might find frustration in the blank pages and empty bobbins, but I am starting to think that if I was in a constant state of inspiredness, I would far too quickly take that for granted and treat it like part of the furniture. I think the edge would go off it, the excitement would go out of it. Maybe I would wake up every morning with the thought that, oh yes, another idea, doesn't matter, I will have ten million more in the next hour anyway so who cares.

So today I am going to work on valuing my downtime, loving my blank paper and appreciating its potential to excite me and fill me with a will to be active and alive and inspired, and I am going to work on living with a full appreciation of how much I love my fickle friend despite its tendency to hide when there are deadlines and run away when there are demands! I will work on accepting that I am not an inspiration machine, stop requiring myself to be able to switch inspiration on and off at will, and let it come as it pleases, to be welcomed by me with open arms and a vast amount of appreciation at whatever time it decides to show up.

Today my inspiration can exist like a waterfall, flowing around the bumps, making its own path through my life and I will not be a dam and try to capture it and keep it in the shape I want it, because then, it wouldn't be a waterfall anymore.



Making Time and Space for Creating Through Rituals

WORDS AND PICTURES BY [FRANCIOSE DANOY AROHA KNITS LLC](#)

I am a very structured person. I love patterns and flows, finding comfort in the familiar and the repetition. In fact, I already have my entire business year of 2019 mapped out regarding quarterly, monthly and sometimes even weekly activities, based on my vision and direction I want to go for the year.

Yes, the structure keeps me organized, but more importantly, it helps nurture and foster my creativity. It allows me to be more creative and imaginative, carving out space every day for me to dream and make.

How? Why? That's what I'll be attempting to share in this article with you all today. Now, I want to put in a quick disclaimer, and then follow it up with a bold statement.

First, I am a knitwear designer. This is my day job, so it is essential for me to be creative on a daily basis. In fact, creativity IS my job! Contrary to popular belief though, knitwear designers do not spend the entire day sitting around knitting.

No, there are so many other aspects and tasks that I have to do first before I can even think about picking up the knitting needles: answering emails, paying bills, writing up patterns, checking in on test knits, taking photos, preparing social media posts... Oh, and here's a big one. Managing my team and determining which tasks to outsource.

So the disclaimer: it is my job to be creative, and I have a team of people helping me behind the scenes to free up time. So, of course, I would have the time and space to create!

And my bold statement? Everyone has the time and space to create. Even if you think you're busy... sometimes you just need an itty-bitsy bit of structure

(and discipline) around your day to give yourself that bubble to make.

Now that I've made my bold statement let's get into the nitty-gritty of things.

PART 1: STRUCTURE AND CREATIVITY ARE NOT ENEMIES

When one thinks of an artist or a creative, the image of the person with their head in the clouds comes to mind. Or someone who just goes with the flow, or waiting for inspiration to strike at the right time. To put shortly: structure is out of the question. An artist is free! Without boundaries or restraint!

However, when I tried to harness that same raw, wild creative energy that society had fed to me, I found myself... lost in a vast wilderness. Where do I go? What do I do? This is TOO much. I needed some level of restraint; a foundation of sorts.

The moment I put some structure around my artistry, that's when my creative juices started to really flow.

Putting structure and discipline around my desires is what helped me to make real process on my creative goals. Contrary to popular belief, structure fuels creativity. The constraint we put on ourselves frees up our minds to focus and hone in on what's really important. That's why I love repetition and familiarity, finding the patterns and flows in my work. I am able to see what can be easily repeated, or what's not truly important and redirect the brain power that I would have used on figuring out the minute details into creation and transformation.

PART 2: YOU NEED LESS TIME THAN YOU THINK

But my original problem was that I had NO restraint. What about you, who might be exercising the opposite issue? What if you're so busy throughout

the day? You need MORE hours in a day to create, you say to yourself.

Have you ever noticed that workout routines say things like “Just 20 minutes a day!”, in an attempt to convince you to pick up their work-out method? (It’s rarely worked out for me because I just don’t like to move).

I’m not only a knitwear designer but also a design coach, helping aspiring knitwear designers learn how they can transform their yarn into publish-worthy designs. One big objection I get is, “I want to design, but I don’t have the time!” The reason for this is because they see knitwear design as one big project that requires several hours of work a day.

This is actually entirely false.

If you chip away at the huge block, you can find that each step of the process can be broken down into 30-minute chunks that can be completed day-to-day.

I wonder if those work-out companies are onto something.

Instead of thinking that you need to find hours and hours to create, break it down.

30 minutes.

I think everyone can find at least 30 minutes to create. 30 minutes is all we need. If 30 minutes is plenty for our bodies for a rigorous workout, why shouldn’t it be enough for our creative souls?

PART 3: CREATIVE RITUALS

Now that we’ve challenged the myth that structure is bad for creativity and discovered that 30 minutes is plenty of time to create, now let’s make it intentional through a creative ritual. The word “ritual” seems pretty ponderous and self-important, but the time we set aside for ourselves is essential. We are worthy of carving space and time out purely for ourselves!

Now you can’t sit down and knit for 30 minutes. Not without some prep work first.

Plan for the upcoming 24 hours. What activities, tasks, and other to-do’s do you need to get to first? When? Where? Write it all down; everything! Including professional, personal, friends and family activities... integrate all aspects of your life together instead of separating it. I like to write out each hour of the day and list when I’m doing each task on my to-do list. Once that’s all sorted out, take a look: where can you create for 30 minutes? Maybe it’s the first thing in the morning, or the last thing at night, or right in the afternoon.

A ritual implies getting in the right mindset, which is definitely important here. When you’re first starting out, this is going to be experimental for you. In step 1, I had you look when during the day you can create: morning, afternoon, evening. Maybe you’ll try setting aside for yourself in the morning, only to find you’re not in the right mindset at that time, and you are much too rattled to center yourself. You may see you’re much more relaxed in the evening. I’m an evening creative: if I try to start the day off with a creative task, I get much too jittery. It has to be the last thing I do.

Remember patterns and familiarity? Set a space for you to create or designate an area that you’ve used before as yours. This will help train your mind that, if you’re sitting in this chair, and you have this particular scented oil on, and just one light on, then it’s making time. It takes a few moments for your mind to settle into the creative mindset, and each minute of our thirty minutes counts. The faster we can slip into creation mode, the better. Create your space and take note of what makes you comfortable.

And lastly... distractions are going to try to get you the most during this time. Set a timer on your phone for 30 minutes, and then put that phone far away from your creating spot. This is what I call a Pomodoro sprint. During that 30 minutes only, I am focused on ONE thing. After those 30 minutes, I’ll be done for the day, and then I can go back to social media.

PART 4: FINAL WORDS

Creative rituals don’t have to be just for knitting or making. It can also be a time to reflect, dream or envision your next project. Basically, this 30 minutes is just for YOU, and you can do whatever you want during this time. Let it be a time for your mind to fly free and imagine.

The first few times you try this, it may not go the way you want. That’s normal.

You’re seeing what works and what doesn’t, refining the process bit by bit each time. You are worth the time and effort. Remember, little steps day-by-day count, and are much more do-able and less daunting. And... there is no one right way to be creative.

And unlike working out, chances are you’re going to be looking forward to this time and make it into a habit (although, if you are one of those people who like exercising, please tell me your secrets).

If you miss a day, or life throws a curveball your way: that’s ok too. It’s essential to grant yourself grace. Tomorrow brings a new day to be creative.





WORDS AND PICTURES BY **CHRISTINE REED**

As wool crafters who want to support 'buying local', it is great to know the stories behind our local breeds: what is their history, and how did they get to be 'local' to us? This is the story of Valais Blacknose NZ and the beginnings of their journey to establish a pure bred flock of the cutest sheep in the universe, in New Zealand!

It was an internet photo of these gorgeous sheep that, several years ago, took the eye of Sally Strathdee. At the time it may have been a pipe dream, as sheep imports to New Zealand had remained closed from the UK and Europe for many years. The thought of a paddock of the cutest lamb faces in New Zealand was put aside as Sally and her husband Lindsay planned a move from the city to the countryside.

But they could not let this idea go! They contacted Christine Reed to explore imports further. Christine had worked in biosecurity for many years and was aware of a rule change that would finally allow sheep embryos and semen into New Zealand from the UK.

Christine had bred Dorper sheep for a decade, but never heard of this 'new' breed, she googled Valais Blacknose Sheep to also find the cutest sheep in the world peeking back! And so the partnership that became Valais Blacknose New Zealand was formed!

Christine set off to the first ever National Valais Blacknose show in Carlisle, England in August 2016 to check out the best breeders and the availability of animals for embryo collection. Right from our first encounters with this breed we had decided to focus on the best possible genetics available in the UK to establish in New Zealand. The supreme champion

sheep in 2016 and again in 2017 went to Highland Breeze, owned by Raymond Irvine and Jenni McAllister from Valais Blacknose sheep Scotland. A visit to their farm in Tomintoul Scotland started a conversation that was to result in 10 embryos from their top ewes coming to New Zealand in May 2017. One of those ewes was Supreme Champion Highland Breeze herself! We feel so grateful that Raymond allowed his best ewes to undergo what can be a stressful and risky exercise.

Another highly successful breeder at the Carlisle show was Jamie Woods from Prendwick farm in Northumberland. Jamie's top Swiss import ram Prendwick Eros was sire of the Champion ram and Reserve Champion ewe at the 2016 show with the ram placing Reserve Supreme Champion. Jamie also worked with Valais Blacknose New Zealand to send another 14 embryos sired by Prendwick Eros and Prendwick Basil (another maximum points ram).

It was quite a challenge to win the confidence of both Jamie and Raymond to send out their embryos at a time when the rules for New Zealand were still under review. An import rule change, that had been in the pipeline for some time, led to one of the requirements being eased, so at the 11th hour we were able to import from their flocks after all! We successfully implanted in June 2017, and in October had the most gorgeous 16 lambs on the



ground – 9 girls and 7 boys. Miraculously, one of the embryos implanted in Sally and Lindsay's flock resulted in twin girls! A very unusual event but very welcome. One of the most wonderful surprises for us was that not only were these the cutest sheep in the world, but they had friendly inquisitive natures unlike any other sheep breed, more like the family dog following you around the fields.

Valais Blacknose NZ has gone from strength to strength since then. Our facebook page now has almost 12,000 followers and we are receiving daily emails from all over the world for imports and a substantial interest in New Zealand as well. We have visitors willing to jump off cruise ships and rent cars just so they can see the sheep. Many Valais Blacknose fans in North America have been reading recent MSN and News Hub articles on our New Zealand sheep. One photo that was quickly taken on a cell phone in January 2018 has now had 2.3 million views!

Valais Blacknose NZ partners all went back to the National show in Carlisle in August 2018 and sponsored two classes that were both won by Tim and Susan Dunne of Westmorland Valais, another top breeder we are hoping will supply us embryos. Valais Blacknose NZ was also extremely lucky to have outbid other interest and purchased Highland Egbert for a new record 10,000 guineas and two

other Highland ewes – Diamond and Deedee to begin our own embryo collection programme. Highland Egbert offers a very unique bloodline to us in NZ, one that is not yet available even in the UK. The animals will be maintained in the UK as live imports are not yet possible to New Zealand.

So now a year on the second crop of lambs in New Zealand are being born. We have lambs on the ground from a new line from Highland Valais and our own lambs are due soon from embryo flushing our first generation ewes!

English Leicester ewes in lamb to our Valais rams are proving very popular in New Zealand as we help kiwis breed up their own flocks given that purebred ewes are not likely to be available for a while and they will be very expensive.

Valais Blacknose NZ will be exporting semen to the USA later this year from our top young rams Heartland Aragorn (yes named after the Lord of the Rings character) and Stratheden Alexander. These lovely rams are by Prendwick Eros and Prendwick Basil, top Swiss sheep. We are proud to be supporting the [Valais Blacknose Sheep Association of North America](#) in their breeding up programme and establishment of a registry and breed standard for North American breeders.

Adventures with Plant Dyes

WORDS AND PICTURES BY **JENNIFER DENNIS**

Always looking for ways to combine my love of plants with my fiber hobbies, this summer I decided it was time to try my hand at dyeing with plants.





I started things out in my usual fashion, with some small experiments to get a feel for the whole process. As a gardener I'm particularly interested in plants that I can grow myself or are readily available in my local environment. This meant that my dye adventures began months before I ever brewed my first dye bath, in the dead of winter poring over seed catalogues and dye books to see what plants they had in common.

PLANTING

Once the soil was warm enough to plant, it was time to grow my dyes. This step was one of my favorite parts of the whole process. Getting to know the plants, their preferences, and habits added a depth to the experience that I don't think I would have gotten from store-bought dyestuff. With all the environmental factors that affect the color a plant will produce, natural dyes really are a snapshot of a specific growing season in a specific place.

While the plants were growing I wove and mordanted small samples of wool and cotton fabrics and yarn so they'd be ready when the plants were ready to harvest. I also threw a few scraps of

linen in the mordant pot because I wanted to see how the dyes would act on different fibers. For a mordant I stuck with alum, since it is one of the safer ones and I don't have a separate dye kitchen (yet). I followed the processes outlined in 'The Modern Natural Dyer' (Kristine Vejar).

Once the plants and flowers were ready to be harvested I consulted the dye books again, this time to learn which plants give better color when used fresh, and which can be frozen or dried for short or longer storage. I ended up freezing most of my dyestuff since I wasn't always able to brew a dye bath the same day I harvested, but knew I would be using the dyestuff relatively quickly.

DYEING

Then came the exciting part: Dyeing! There are so many different methods out there, and the one I settled on for my experiments was as follows:

1. Add dyestuff to a pot with enough water that it can move around freely and heat pot to just below a simmer for two hours.



2. Remove dyepot from heat and allow dyestuff to steep/cool in the bath overnight.
3. In the morning strain out/remove dyestuff from the pot leaving behind the colored dyebath.
4. Add pre-wetted samples to the bath, then return pot to heat and heat to just below a simmer for two hours.
5. Remove pot from heat and allow the dye and samples to cool overnight.
6. The next morning, remove the samples from the bath, rinse until the water runs clear, wash with a pH neutral soap, and hang to dry out in direct sunlight.

Occasionally I modified the length of time I left the dyestuff or the samples in the dyepot, as my schedule required, and sometimes I'd continue to use the dye bath for exhaust dyes. Regardless, when I was done with a bath I would discard it down the kitchen sink with lots of water.

JOURNALING

Probably the most important thing that I did, though not a step in and of itself, was writing everything down. While I don't expect plant dyes to behave as "predictably" as commercial dyes, recording what I did gives me a starting point for when I want to explore colors from a specific plant more or try to repeat a color in the future.

Some of the things I recorded in my "Dye Journal" were:

- Where and when (what time of year) was the dyestuff harvested or purchased?
- How was the dyestuff stored (dried, frozen, used fresh)?
- Did I do anything special to the dyestuff before making the bath (chopped, blended, rehydrated, crushed, etc...)?
- What was the material of my dyepot (aluminum, stainless steel, copper, iron...)?
- What was the pH of the water used to make the bath?
- What were the weights of the dyestuff and samples?
- What steps did I follow for dyeing my samples?
- What temperatures did the dye bath reach (both while brewing the bath and dyeing the samples)?
- How long did I brew the dye bath? Did I let it steep overnight?
- Did I add any modifiers (like iron, copper,

vinegar, ammonia)?

- Did I notice anything unusual during the process (for example, the Venetian mallow dyebath I made this summer had a slimy texture)?
- Would I do anything differently next time?

All of these things and more can affect the results of a dye pot, and my memory certainly isn't good enough to remember it all.

I am still very much a beginner in my exploration and experimentation with plant dyes. I'm considering my summer experiments a success, not only because I got some wonderful colors, but because I learned so much in the process. I'm looking forward to playing around with all the effects of pH and modifiers like iron the the colors in the future.

If you're interested in natural dyes, don't be afraid to experiment and play with them! Try plants that you're not sure will give you any color (wouldn't it be wonderful to discover that a pesky weed is actually a dye plant in disguise?) and growing your own dyestuff. Try adjusting pH, or using different fibers, or solar dyeing. As long as you use common sense and good safety measures, you'll be fine. There's a whole world of color out there waiting to be explored.

SAFETY:

Safety is important regardless of whether you're working with commercial or natural dyes. For more information about safety measures to take when experimenting with natural dyes, please read any of the dye books below.

[A Dyer's Garden - Rita Buchanan](#)
[The Modern Natural Dyer - Kristine Vejar](#)
[Dyes from American Native Plants - Lynne Richards & Ronald J. Tyl](#)
[Natural Dyes and Home Dyeing - Rita J. Adrosko](#)

Seed Sources:

[Baker Creek Seeds](#)
[Botanical Interests](#)

Dyestuff Sources:

[A Verb for Keeping Warm](#)
[Botanical Colors](#)
[Maiwa](#)

TINYTurtle Loom (used for weaving samples)
[Bluebonnet Crafters](#)

FOR YOUR STUDIO

When creating your personal workspace, it is really hard to go past IKEA as a source of excellent storage ideas and options. One of the most fun things to do is wander through their showrooms, being able to explore the 'rooms' and see how they have used their furnishing in different context, this can give you lots of ideas for using them in your own space.

One of the best things I have found with IKEA furniture is it is often modular, you can add pieces, stack them, add drawers or shelves, and make something that fits your exact requirements.



This simple shelving has the freshness of the white wood that is pleasantly off-set with the warmly coloured natural rattan baskets (BRANÄS)

Keeping your materials organised in a pleasing way will not only bring you joy but will free your creativity by removing clutter and knowing just where to find what you need!
Click the image to shop Ikea



Visit the [Ikea Website](#) for three ways to personalise your storage chest!



Ikea even has cool DIY mini-tutorials for things like this [woven chair hanger](#)

GREAT STUDIO STORAGE
Click the image to go to the product page at IKEA





[UrbanBLtd on Etsy](#)



[Braid and Wood Design Studio](#)



A very special book from Japanese designer: **'Deco Room With Plants'** by **Satoshi Kawamoto**



[AuraMore on Etsy](#)



If you are not green-thumbed then consider some of the wonderful arty options available today, such as this amazing plant art (above) from [AliciaRogersonArt](#) or the lovely silk arrangement (left) from [HiRusticReach on Etsy](#)



PLANTS!

If you are looking for a way to bring some peace and calm to your creative space, you might want to think about adding some greenery, living green in the form of plants. Not only can they enhance your oxygen supply (essential for creativity) they can also give you a feeling of relaxed energy, a wonderful precursor to your creative moments.

Clicking the images on this page will magically transport you to the website each item can be found on, for more information or purchase!



And if you love to fill your house with flowers, this is a book that will sing to your heart: **'A Tree in the House'** by **Anabelle Hickson**



CATEGORISE!!

Split your stash into categories.

- Items you have plans for
- Items you have no plans for but you love and will use
- Items you are unlikely to use.
- WIP's

Pick up each item and decide if you want to keep it. Set up a series of boxes and storage containers to put items of each category into.

Keep the 'plans for' box in your studio. Store the 'will use' box, and destash the 'unlikely' box.

Give your creativity space to
grow AND *bloom*

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An Artists Life

A glimpse into the creatively inspired home and studio
of magical fiber artist and felter **Brigitte Eertink**

WORDS AND PICTURES BRIGITTE EERTINK

INTRODUCTION SUZY BROWN

Brigitte is a Dutch fiber artist who I met around six or seven years ago when I was living in the Netherlands. She is one of those people you are immediately drawn to; warm, kind, open, and immensely talented. To me Brigitte embodies the Dutch notion of gezellig', a wonderful characteristic that you can learn more about in this interview and studio tour which Brigitte has shared with us, it is a real treat! Everything you see in these images is a delightful expression of the beautiful world Brigitte has created and which she shares as inspiration with her students, and now with us!



Brigitte, what is one of your most important considerations when you are designing a space in your home and studio?

Mhh, the only thing that's important to me is that it makes me happy and gives me a warm, comfy feeling! Most of the time in my home, function is not really an issue. In my studio however, it's a little bit different, things have to be functional and organised. So in my studio I combine my love for old, handmade and colourful with functional.

I love to surround myself with lots of colour and old stuff. Visiting flea markets is one of my favourite things to do, especially in France. All the furniture in my house and in my studio is second hand. The excitement when you find a treasure at a flea-market is such a great feeling, and all those old things have a story and a whole secret life. I love to re-use these things instead of buying new.

Did you design your studio primarily for your own work space or also for teaching? What is important to consider when designing space for teaching felting classes?

My studio is primarily designed for teaching. The most important thing was to create as much working space as possible. For felting you need tables and a floor that can get wet. Also important is the ability to stand and work on a high table when you are felting, so I found two very old solid work benches which I painted.

Now they're perfect felting tables. I covered all the tables in my studio with plastic cloth so the water won't ruin them. I have a simple grey concrete floor which can get wet and is easy to clean.

I would love to put a couch next to the wood stove, it would be a really nice cosy place to sit, drink some coffee or tea and do some embroidery. Unfortunately my limited space won't let me but it's still a dream and maybe some day I'll find a way to make it work and reorganise everything so it will fit in.

What are your inspirations? (I know you love the pinks and teals!) Why have you chosen to work with these colours? Do you think you will ever change that?



Inspiration can come from everything. I often get inspired by a colour or a colour combination. Just seeing it in a magazine, in nature or on television can be a starting point to creating something new. I can also get inspired by the creations of my students. I inspire them to create and they in turn can also inspire me, it's a never ending circle.

I really love colours like pinks and teals and use them a lot in my work and also in my house. Most people know me for using those kinds of colours. Lately I have added more and more colours into my work as well as in my house.

I combine the pinks and the teals with shades of green and yellow. I even painted a wall on my porch yellow which makes it a bright sunny place to sit. So yes, it changes and it can change according to my mood, but I think I will always love the soft colour shades of pinks and teals.







Do You have a dedicated creative space in your house or studio?

One of my favourite working spots is in the dining room next to the wood stove. It's a cosy and warm place, especially in winter. I can look outside and watch the birds, we feed them just in front of the window. In the evening I love to sit in the living room in front of the wood stove (I'm a big fan of wood stoves!). It's a lovely place to sit and do some embroidery or some knitting and watch tv or listen to some music.



When I'm felting, I always go to my studio which is in my backyard. It's much easier to felt there because I have all my equipment and everything can get wet.

How does is your style reflected in your environment?

My whole house, garden and studio are actually the same style and the same colours as my work, it's the way I am I guess. I would say it's a romantic, colourful style with lots of flowers. I love roses and you can find them all over my house but I also love to embroider them. There is nothing I made that's finished without an embroidered rose. I collect old embroidery with roses, and I am trying to fill a whole wall with them. I also love to collect old porcelain cups, plates and teapots with roses, as well as vintage embroidered cushions with roses. I am always on the search for those things at flea markets and online.

How does your environment influence your creativity and crafting?

Everything I create, I wear or use myself. I love to make functional things like clothes, bags and jewelry. It's so much fun to be able to create whatever you would like to wear yourself.

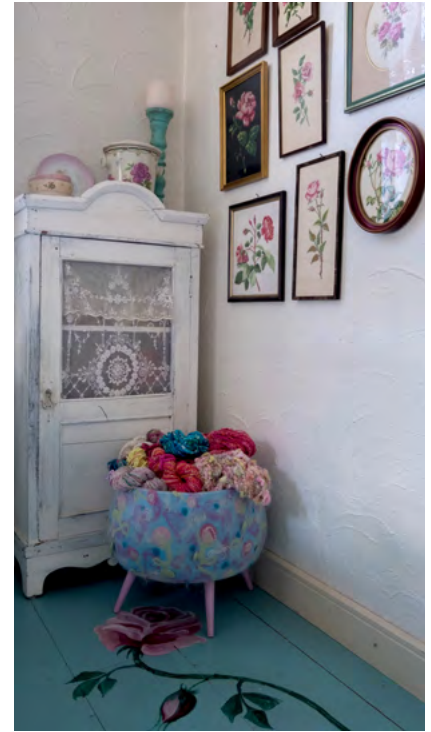
In my house you can find projects everywhere that I'm working on, bags with unfinished knitting projects, boxes with embroidery yarns, handspun yarns waiting to get used or just being beautiful. A couple of months ago I also started with ceramics, so besides all the wool stuff you can now also find clay, tools for ceramics and glazes in my house and studio. I even bought myself a kiln! So happy with it! Now I can make my own mugs, plates, beads etc..

How do you keep your materials and fibres organised? Are you a very organised crafter or do you have a more chaotic stash with a will of its own?

Am I organised.....well yes and no. I have to be organised because I teach a lot. If my studio wasn't organised nobody, including me, would be able to find the things they need. During a workshop we always have lunch in my house so I also need to keep that part of the house organised and clean. Besides those places I'm more of a chaotic person. I love to create but I don't like the "after" part, the cleaning. When I'm free for a couple of days it just takes me one day to make a big mess in my studio and my house. I work everywhere leaving a big mess behind wherever I've been working. I'm really happy that I teach a lot so I need to clean and put everything back to where it belongs once in a while.

Please tell us about the Dutch concept of 'gezellig' and how that is important to design and creative spaces in the Netherlands?

Ahh, "gezellig", that's my favourite Dutch word and very important to me. Some consider that the word to encompass the heart of Dutch culture. It's difficult to translate and when I google-translate the word it says, cozy, snug, convivial, intimate. "Gezelligheid" is a kind of feeling, the atmosphere can be "gezellig", a person can be "gezellig", and also a house can be "gezellig". It often is used to describe a social and relaxed situation, like spending time with your loved ones, catching up with an old friend or just the general togetherness that gives you a warm feeling. Your house can be "gezellig", meaning it gives you a warm welcome, a warm cozy feeling to be there. To me that's very important. I really love to make my house "gezellig" by using soft colours, putting flowers on the table, a burning woodstove, the smell of fresh coffee. To me that's the ultimate "gezelligheid" and I actually need it as a start to being creative.



Visit with Brigitte on Facebook
www.facebook.com/AtelierRozevilterije
 and on instagram you can find her as:
 @Rozevilterije

Home Made Trap

WORDS AND PICTURES BY **EMILY YEADON**

The artists story, in which Emily shares with us the source of her inspiration and creation process. We learn that not all is perfect and from mistakes can come sweet illumination.



My name is Emily Yeadon, and I am the maker behind Homemade Trap. I create one of a kind 3D textile sculptures of predominantly moths and butterflies.

I am completely self-taught and the processes and techniques I use to create my pieces are somewhat 'made up' in my opinion. But that's where the fun comes in. I have complete freedom to create how I feel comfortable, no strict guidelines to follow and having no predetermined formulas is what keeps me so interested in what I'm doing. I've found my own way and have become very confident in my own unique style, but I'll talk a little about that later.

When I was a little girl, I would spend my evenings after school sat in the branches of an old willow tree

in our back garden with a set of binoculars and a collection of old hand-me-down bird books. I still clearly recall the sound of a 'white headed' blackbird singing nearby, the smell of the dewy grass and the chill of the fresh country air against my cheeks as dusk approached. I was always accompanied with a set of muddy fingers, grazed knees and long blonde tangled hair. My wonderful parents were my role models and they both equally inspired and encouraged me to be the little explorer I was.





When I was eleven years old I decided to pursue my goal of becoming a ballet dancer and moved 240 miles south from my home in the North of England to attend a prestigious performing arts boarding school in Tring, Hertfordshire. Whilst there, I suffered terribly from homesickness. I missed my parents. I missed my freedom but strangely, I missed my magical back garden the most. I exchanged that little haven which was brimming with life for the stale dusty corridors of an old Rothschild mansion, which had been renovated into what can only be described as a 'Hogwarts' like school.

It wasn't long before I discovered the Walter Rothschild's Zoological museum in the local village. Famous for holding one of the finest collections of stuffed mammals, birds, reptiles and insects in the United Kingdom. Between those four walls of that museum I felt comforted and reunited with wildlife. I was introduced to taxidermy at its very best and I become completely enthralled by the vast collection of animals.

I spent most of my weekends in that museum, pressed up close to the glass cabinets, studying and sketching small illustrations of the creatures

that fascinated me the most. I remember one particular cabinet with heavy wooden shutters. Once opened you were presented with a little microscope positioned behind the cabinets glass. On closer inspection, you would catch a glimpse of two tiny fleas dressed immaculately in traditional Mexican attire, complemented by minute sombreros. The intricacy involved in this display absolutely staggered me.

Years later, I am still very fond of nature and it is the inspiration behind all of the work that I create. But that museum has remained imprinted in my mind and Homemade Trap has become a way for me explore how I can recreate those fascinating displays I was once so transfixed on. I chose to recreate moths and butterflies because of their gorgeous wing patterns and the diverse range of colour palettes they obtain. I'm really drawn to a challenge and I love getting lost in a really difficult piece, being constantly forced to think outside the box. How can I make this butterfly look realistic? How can I recreate the scales on its wings? Intricacy and the attention to detail is a fundamental part of my work and it is what drives me to improve my skills daily.





Sometimes a mistake has really surprised me, and I have ended up using it again and again.

As I mentioned earlier, I am self-taught, and because of that I think I've become pretty good at problem solving. I learnt how to use my sewing machine by breaking it a hundred times. My experience of 'making it up as I go along' and working with, instead of against my mistakes has allowed me to feel relaxed in the way that I work.

When my sewing machine eats up the fabric or when my thread of cotton ties itself into a knot, I instantly feel as though the piece is almost creating a personality for itself. It's trying to annoy me, and that's ok.

These little problems are what builds its story and helps us grow as artists. I've previously found that more and more of my attention was being drawn towards fixing my mistakes. Trying to make it

perfect. I'd overwork it and either make it worse or be left feeling frustrated and wanting to give up. I consciously decided to change my mindset and instead of fixing mistakes, I just worked with it, learnt from it and think of ways to solve it for next time.

Sometimes a mistake has really surprised me, and I've ended up using it again and again. As an example, I made the head of a moth separate to its body. I tried stitching it together and it just didn't look right. It ultimately fell off, and I ended up giving up on the heads completely.

I decided to work with what I was capable of doing and redesigned the structure of the moth entirely. That's pretty much how all of my processes have evolved, lots of mistakes, remaining calm and trying to not put so much pressure on myself.

A typical day for me begins with a cup of coffee, a good clean up of my studio and a moment of silence to let my mind wander. The mornings are when I usually feel the most productive, and I find that my ideas tend to blossom at this time. I'm able to solve a difficult pattern whilst hundreds of new concepts come flooding in.

When starting a new piece, I use this moment of calm to flick through a moth and butterfly book that I own. Searching for something that catches my attention. I'm often looking for complex patterns and lots of colours. Something that will challenge me.

Once I find a moth or butterfly that I'm in love with, I initially go straight to YouTube. Watching a number of videos allows me to capture it in motion and helps me to visualise how I'll recreate it. I gather as many photographs of the moth or butterfly I want to create from Pinterest, Instagram and various websites, building a sort of mood-board that I can keep referring back to.

I always begin with creating the wings, and I predominantly use my sewing machine for this. I've owned the same machine for 12 years and only recently really started getting some good use out of it. It may come as a bit of a surprise, considering my pieces can take days to make, but I'm pretty impatient when it comes to physically making something. I think the speed of my machine subconsciously makes me feel like I'm working faster than what I am, who knows. After exploring all sorts of different mediums to recreate the moths and butterflies that I envisioned, my sewing machine seemed to fit my personality the best.

After a while of experimenting with different ways to create the wings, free motion embroidery is what I ended up enjoying the most. However, I did stumble a number of times with this technique at first. I didn't own the correct foot, I had no idea how to set up my machine to stop the bobbin thread from going berserk and I must have broken at least 10 needles. Gradually my machine became my friend, but we still love to challenge each other every now and then.

My pieces are almost like a collage of experiments. I use lots of different techniques and materials to create detail and texture. I love to recycle old bits of fabric and have a set of drawers in my studio full of old buttons, beads, paints and materials. I try to make whatever I already own purposeful. If it's not the right colour I'll paint it, and if I don't have the

right sized scrap of fabric I'll re-evaluate my design. Using lots of different processes and materials instead creating the same thing over and over again has kept me feeling motivated and in love with what I'm doing. I've given myself a bit of variety which keeps me focused and inspired to experiment.

I've been told countless times "you must have so much patience". It's actually far from the truth. If you're not creating something that you're passionate about you'll find it difficult to remain focused and interested. Once you've found something that you really enjoy doing, you'll find the entire process fun, no matter how long it takes. You'll be surprised by how much "patience" you suddenly have. Eventually, you'll master your craft and create your own unique style.

I love nature, I love sewing and I love making moths and butterflies. My experience of making my pieces has been an absolute joy simply because I've combined all the things I love and I'm having so much fun. It has however, taken multiple experiments to get to this point where I feel genuinely happy with what I'm producing. But that's what it's all about, right?







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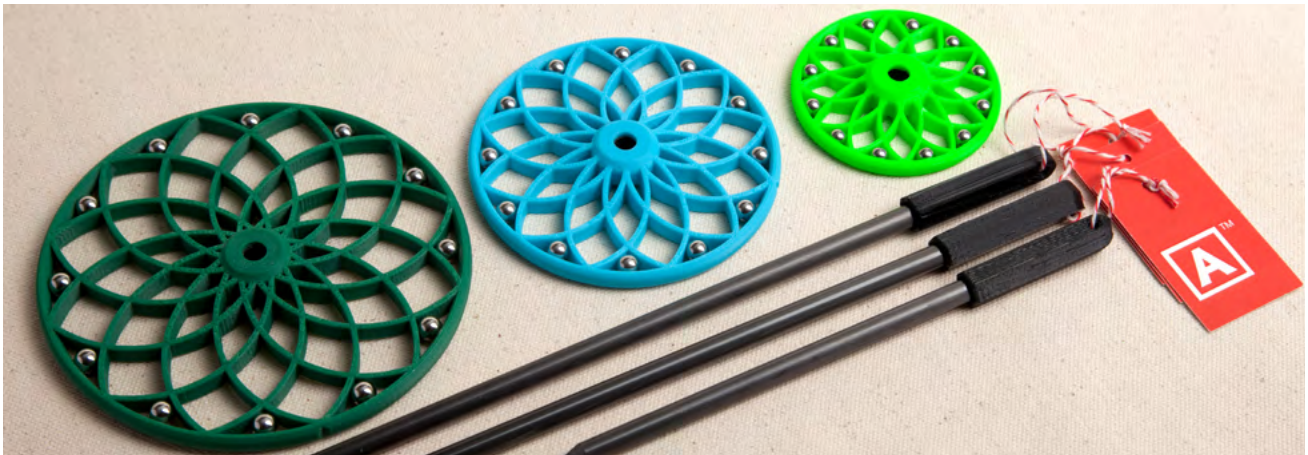
PRODUCT REVIEW: WORDS AND PICTURES
EVANITA MONTALVO

Akerworks Modular Spindles are one of my absolute favorite spindles. Like many Akerworks products they provide endless possibilities for things you can do with them, and because of this they are not only fantastic spindles for experienced spindlers but also excellent for those just starting out.

For new spinners, the wide world of spindles can be a bit intimidating. There are so many options available and it can be hard to choose what might be a good fit for you, are you going to be a drop spindle or a support spindle person, or maybe even both? Akerworks Modular Spindles, as their name implies, are modular - you have the ability to change your spindle in various ways to just what feels right to you and for your project.

More specifically, the modular aspect of these spindles allows you to mix and match a variety of whorl styles and sizes, as well as lengths of shaft, to create the perfect spindle for you.

There are three different whorl styles: Trillium, Geranium, and Lotus. Each comes in a small, medium, and large size. In addition to the whorl styles all being beautifully different, each style and size is weighted differently to provide a variety of weight options. Each whorl has stainless steel weights in them to provide rim weighting. This style of weighting helps these spindles achieve long, fast, and beautiful spins.



The weight ranges from Trilliums as the lightest, then Geraniums, and Lotus as the heaviest. The whorls are 3d printed and come in a variety of 19 different colors. The shafts are carbon fiber and come in lengths of 6, 8, 10, or 12 inches as well as custom lengths. The whorls can be placed at any position on the shaft and can be removed at any time during your project. In order to attach the whorls to the spindle shafts, you simply press and twist.

The great thing about the modular aspect of these spindles is you have the ability to swap out the whorls and place them in different positions so you can discover what type of spindle suits you. You can even make a special request for pointed tips on the shafts which can allow you to use the spindle as a support spindle in addition to being a drop spindle. For me, this was an excellent way for me to dip my toes into support spinning without fear of getting a spindle that may or may not be a good fit for me.

The spindle whorl can be adjusted or changed at any time, even when you have yarn on the spindle, so you can remove the whorl and replace it with a different one, change it from a bottom whorl to a top whorl, or vice versa. For me, I absolutely love that I can hand pick which spindle whorl I want to

use for a project and even color coordinate it with my fiber. They are perfect for spinning on the go as I don't have to worry about accidentally breaking the shaft, the carbon fiber is super durable. The whorls are also very durable so you don't have to worry as much about accidentally dropping it while spinning as you do with spindles made of wood. They are wonderful spindles to teach on. I find it easy to keep a few extra whorls, shafts and fiber with my project just in case someone wants to learn and give it a whirl. I also love that you can pop the whorl off and put it onto a brand new shaft once the first shaft is filled up, rather than wind off to create a plying ball. Once I finish a project I ply directly off the shafts rather than creating plying balls.

I highly recommend these spindles for all spindlers whether you are new to spinning or experienced. Their modular nature allows you to fully adjust your spindle to meet your needs as well as the needs of your project. Finding the right storage to tote your spindle project is also easier as you can select shafts and whorls that fit within your storage parameters and you can even pop the whorl off if necessary and place a smaller one on to allow it to fit better on the go.



[Visit the Akerworks Website for more information and purchasing](#)



Imperfectly Perfect:

A lesson in every project

WORDS AND PICTURES BY **MELISSA ROSE**

"This was terribly disheartening! A problem I have had once before and thought it was just something I'd messed up unknowingly, as a beginner. But it appears I did the same again..."

I'm not the only one who's had this experience right? Just when you think you've nailed a new fibre skill but then all sorts of weird and wonderful things don't go according to plan. Sometimes a happy accident turns into a design feature, other times you want to throw your work across the room. Almost.

Raranga (plaiting with New Zealand Flax - harakeke) is a traditional form of Māori weaving. The techniques are traditionally taught in person, as knowledge was always passed down verbally.

During a one year course in Raranga I got into the good habit of taking notes, to assist my learning. There aren't quite as many books out there on Raranga as with other fibre crafts, so the best way to fix my mistakes was to problem solve along the way.

I was asked to weave and bind six journals to accompany an art collection. This opportunity blossomed when someone saw the cover I made for my own journal. I was super excited and fresh with enthusiasm! I'd already woven one without a problem, another six shouldn't be too difficult. Yet I was once again humbled by the lessons this amazing fibre always has for me.

I encountered: mould, creases in my work, strands sticking out where they shouldn't be and wavy edges that should be sitting flat. Needless to say I wove nine covers to get the six that I needed.

It's exactly those challenges and mistakes that taught me the best lessons! As tempting as it was to quickly move onto the next project, that would be skipping over the most crucial moments of learning.

Uncovering the lessons in your mistakes:

These are the kinds of questions you could ask yourself when analysing your work and writing your project up in your journal.

Do you make samples and run a series of tests first? These are great to analyse before embarking on a full scale project.

Look closely at your tension, are there any unwanted gaps or twists in your work.

Is anything on a funny angle that is supposed to be straight?

Did your design go to plan? Is there a mistake that could make a great feature to emphasise in a future project?

Watch your hand movements as you create, is this causing a problem or allowing you to get something right?

How is your speed when you work? If you speed up or slow down, what changes?

What about your tools and equipment? Does the quality, weight, size or material make a difference to your final product.

You might be like me and always have so many ideas that you just want to race ahead and create the next one. All this fibery goodness can be so exciting! Yet making a **ritual** of reflecting on your finished project BEFORE beginning a new project, is most worthwhile.

I found that because I'd taken the time to make my own journal, I always felt so proud to use it. This definitely helps me keep a regular note taking practice. How you feel about your work really does make a difference. This reflection time is just as important to me as the project itself and an invaluable part of advancing my skills.

Remember to celebrate your progress and your successes too! Write these down, so when you look back in your journal you can see all the wins you made to get to where you are today. It's ok if your work is imperfectly perfect.

Any mistakes are amazing learning opportunities to help you progress and develop your own unique style.

The best place to store your notes:

The best place, is all in one place! Decide on a system that works for you and stick with it. Here are a few ideas:

If you spin, knit or crochet then www.ravelry.com has a great setup where you can type up your project notes and add photos (free signup required). Note that other users can see your projects and you can see theirs. This is a great way to get involved in the online community by learning from one another.

Use Microsoft Word or a similar program to create a digital journal.

Use your phone by adding all your project photos into one album. You can easily add notes to your photos (use the iphone photo editor or search for an app that works for you).

Keep a physical journal so you can attach fibre samples and swatches. I highly recommend covering your journal with your craft of choice, this is an exciting project in itself!

Continue enjoying the lessons you uncover as you refine your fibre skills. Happy creating!



Melissa is passionate about creating with local, sustainable fibres to lower her impact on the earth. She finds co-creating with nature in this way, to be a beautiful moving meditation. Currently exploring: Raranga, spinning & knitting.

Connect with Melissa on [Instagram](#) or Facebook: [@melissa.rose.creations](#)

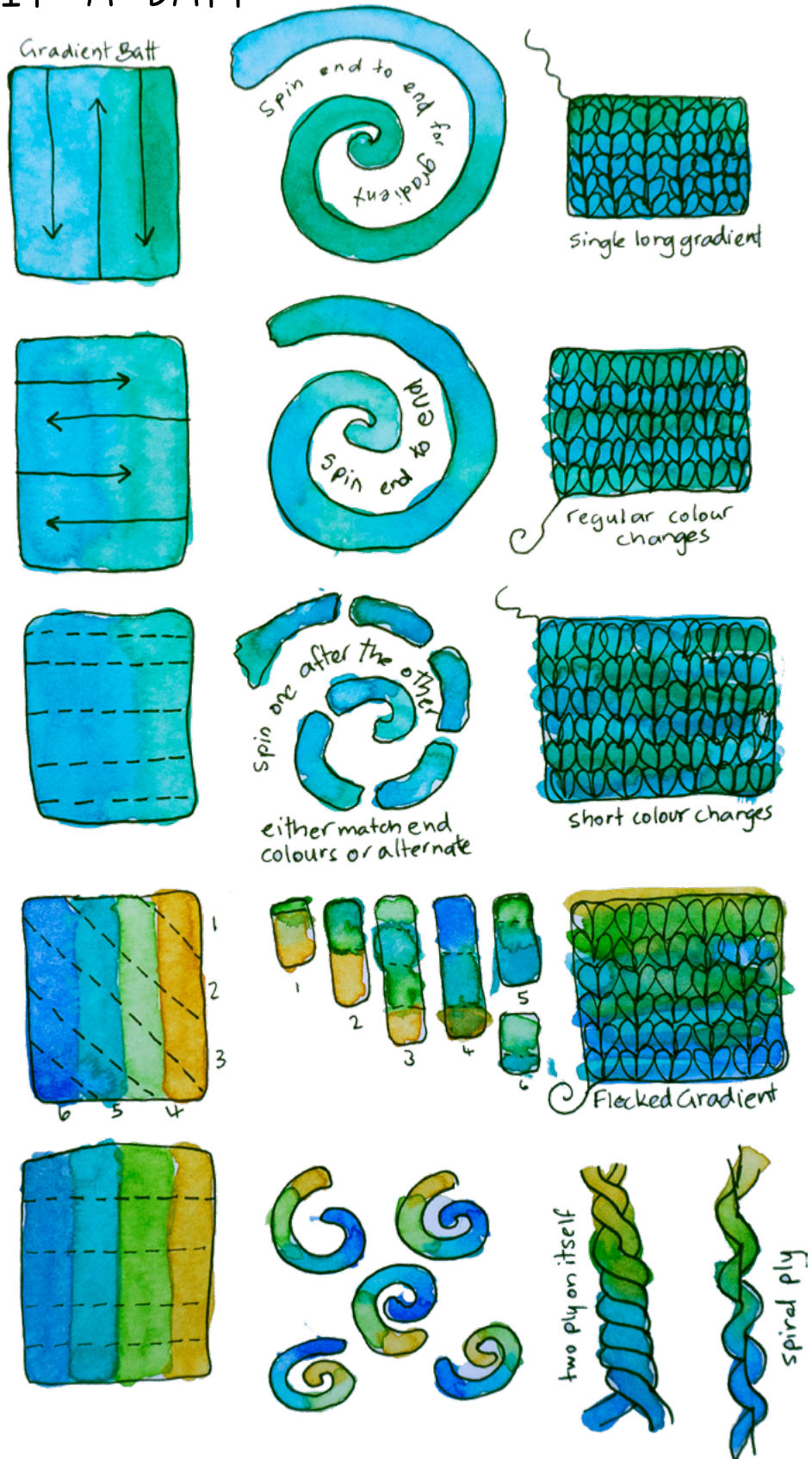


WAYS TO SPLIT A BATT

YOU CAN SPLIT UP A BATT READY TO SPIN IN DIFFERENT WAYS, EACH WAY WILL GIVE YOU A DIFFERENT ARRANGEMENT OF COLOURS IN YOUR FINAL YARN AND FINAL PROJECT.

HERE ARE TWO KINDS OF BATT, GRADIENT AND STRIPED, YOU CAN ACHIEVE EITHER LONG COLOUR LENGTHS OR SHORT CHANGES OF COLOUR JUST BY THE WAY YOU STRIP AND SPIN YOUR BATT, AND THE ORDER IN WHICH YOU SPIN YOUR STRIPPED PIECES. IN THE STRIPED BATT WITH ANGLED STRIPS (RIGHT) YOU CAN EVEN MAKE A BEAUTIFUL 'FADE' IF YOU SPIN THEM IN THE ORDER NOTED.

BATTS LIKE THESE ARE GREAT STASH BUSTERS! DOWNSIZE YOUR STASH BY USING IT UP!



Creative Rituals

The habits we rely on to get us in the
'zone' and find our creative flow.

WORDS AND PICTURES **SUZY BROWN**



I am a serial procrastinator with a short attention span. I let the smallest distraction become a reason to not begin something, and I allow myself to flit around between projects and tasks with a kind of 'splatter' effect in which I hope eventually something will inevitably be completed.

This is not my best creative self! People have commented on how prolific I appear to be, which has surprised me because what others perhaps don't realise is the ridiculous amount of time I generally put into my creative activities, while the reality is that the productive time in which actual THINGS GOT DONE over say, a period of a week of 'working', could have been condensed down into about 4 hours if I was to actually focus and concentrate the way I 'think' I should, despite my being 'busy' every moment of the day.

Take my spinning, first I have an idea of something I would like to spin. It might be a particular fleece in my stash, or a yarn idea I have been building in my head for some weeks. I have my spinning time set aside for 'after all the chores are done then it will be my treat'. Days will go by in which I climb into bed thinking that there's always tomorrow.. and feeling frustration at not getting to my wheel.

At this point I start to make snatched attempts at starting the spin project. One day I will spend silly time finding the fleece so I can take it out ready to process. Two days later wash it, and always at some point forget about it, panic that its cooled down too much and the lanolin will go yucky and I will never get it out, or that my lack of rinsing because of impatience and other jobs will mean its not clean enough or worse, I rush the rinsing and might felt it... I realise multi-tasking is not working for me in this. Despite my fears it usually all goes well but at the end of that day all I have achieved is the small amount of washed fleece drying.

Some days after that I might manage to start processing the fleece. Let me just point out now that right at this moment I have some lovely grey Polwarth on my drum carder that has been there for a minimum of six days waiting to be removed because I didn't know at the time where the doffer was. Two days after carding I found the doffer and put it near the carder. Four days later it is still waiting to be removed and spun.

I lost my momentum with the very first obstacle (lost doffer) and didn't get it back. I got tangled up in lots of other things and once again my spinning is back to 'after I get my jobs done...' THIS is the problem, and THIS is why rituals are important. Having a ritual



to begin my creative time is vital for me, because without it I will be far too open to all the distractions, side-tracks, chores, and 'just do this first' things.

Without my ritual I easily find myself leaving my spinning wheel to 'quickly' write an email, get the dishes washed (it will only take a minute!) or pop out to the supermarket for chocolate.. I mean.. healthy salad. And the day goes on and I don't get back to my wheel.

I have found that if I start with my ritual I am actually giving myself permission to JUST SPIN, and if I give myself a set time to do this then I can much more easily put aside distractions as they come up. 'I will send that email after my two hours spinning'. And then its ok.

A ritual will give you the break between 'all the things' and 'creating stuff now'. Your ritual will separate those times so that once you begin your

creative time you can be fully in the moment and 'all the things' are put aside as 'unimportant till later'.

My ritual signals the beginning of 'me time' in which I have let go of all the other activities and have made myself free to be my pure creative self. The ritual is a moment to breathe and release myself from responsibilities, give myself permission to enjoy my spinning without feeling any guilt or distracted by 'jobs'.

My rituals are really simple, my main one is just sitting down with a cup of pre-spinning coffee. This is different from my usual coffee as it is done with the intention of taking a proper break, and it is with my tools and materials already set up. I start by putting my wheel where I want to spin, finding my materials and laying them out ready to use, and then making my coffee and settling down to drink it while enjoying the feeling of anticipation I have

when everything is ready to start. This is the time when I let go of all the things and just focus on one thing, just one! It feels like a wonderful luxury.

The reason this ritual works for me is that I have now done the 'work' of setting up my space and getting my fiber ready, there is nothing left to do except enjoy the moment and think about what I am going to spin and how I want to do it. This coffee time is a quiet reflection, to reset my brain and get into the zone. It is when I relax and let go.

This is also a trigger for feeling creative too. It is my 'habit' that when I am sipping my coffee surrounded by my fibers and tools that I feel ready to create. Even if I was feeling flat before, this is the activity that I always follow with fun fiber and because I have done it many times, it now automatically puts my mind into creative mode.

The key is to repeat your ritual, make it a routine, you know how your brain loves routines! Your routine takes away the need to make decisions about things like.. what you will cook for dinner, or when you will fit in your Christmas shopping, this routine frees you to do nothing except create.

And if all else fails, I go to the beach!

If I am finding myself completely stuck, a trip to the beach will revitalise, re-energise and give me a fresh start. I do not take work with me, and while I am at the beach I simply enjoy the waves, the breeze, the feel of the stones and sand and the enjoyment of treasure hunting the shells and driftwood. It takes a little more time than making and drinking a cup of coffee, but it always works to give me a boost and feel creative again! Maybe you have your own place that gives you these feelings of revitalisation.

Doing just one thing at a time like this is also essential to being mindful and fully in the moment with a creative activity. This is when you will most easily find your flow, all the distractions and disturbances of daily life are put aside while you are completely engrossed in just spinning, whether that is spinning your go-to yarn or something entirely new, this is your time to explore the way the fiber feels in your hands, how it smells, the colours it brings, and the way you are twisting it into its new and wonderful form.

This is being free to create!





Bubble Tea

A STASH BUSTER!

YARN TUTORIAL AND PICTURES BY **SUZY BROWN**

Even though in tinyStudio Creative Life we are focussing on simplification and minimalism, this does not mean you should just get rid of stash for the sake of clearing the decks and making space. Instead you can do things like following the process outlined on page 101 to organise stash into useable 'project lots'. You can even make your own kits by re-organising your stash and blending fibers specifically. However sometimes you just have a pile of somewhat random fluff 'bits, and this is one kind of yarn you can make with it! Using up stash first, before stash enhancing activities will help you keep it under control while still giving you wonderful yarns to use, sell, or give to your bestie!

TO MAKE THIS YARN YOU WILL NEED:

This 'Bubble Tea' yarn is very much a box of bits yarn, so grab a skeins worth of whatever you want to use up! It works with any colours and fibers.

You will also need a nice strong corespinning thread, this should be fairly thin and fluffy enough to grab your fibers easily.

Plying thread should be thin and strong, I used a gold nylon thread.

This yarn will be plied twice. You will also need a Lazy Kate and an extra bobbin.

Start by setting up your fiber supply close to your spinning position. You will be taking pieces of fiber out randomly, kind of like a lucky dip! So you need to have your supply within a comfortable arms reach.

I usually set my core thread in front of the wheel on the floor so it is easy to draw the yarn up off the cone.

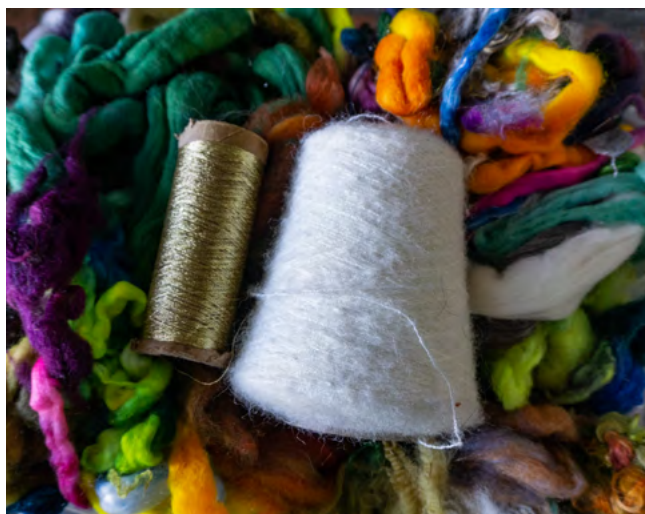




IMAGE 1

STEP ONE - CORESPIN BUBBLES

Corespin a single! If you are new to corespinning make yourself a cup of your favourite hot beverage and pop over to watch my [video tutorial!](#)



IMAGE 2

As you are spinning, at regular intervals (I usually count about four treadles), break off your fiber to leave about a staple length (image 2)

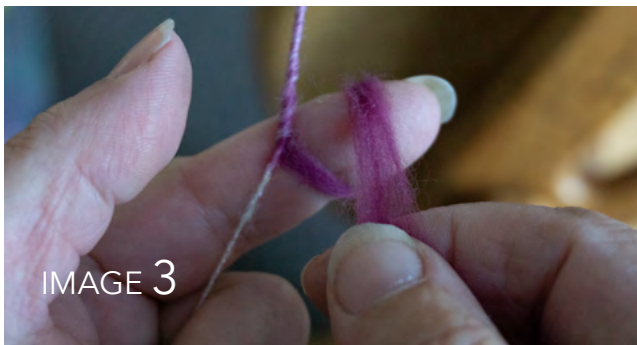


IMAGE 3

Now take that staple length and wrap it around your finger, this is going to make the 'bubble'. (image 3)

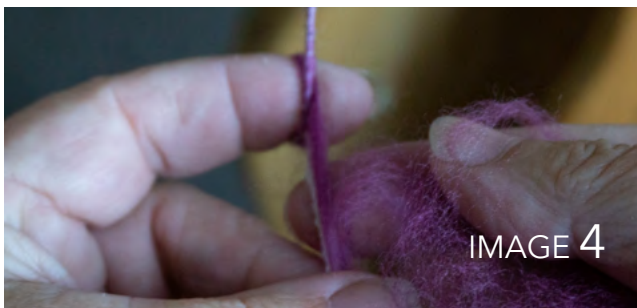


IMAGE 4

Turn your finger so the fluffy end of your staple length is back against the core thread. (Image 4)



IMAGE 5

Reattach your fiber supply and remove your finger from the fiber loop. Carry on corespinning being sure to catch the end of your loop staple back into the yarn to secure it. This will leave a bubble texture in your yarn single. (Image 5)

STEP TWO - THREAD PLY

Ply your single with a fine but strong thread. Make sure you overtwist the plying because we will be plying it again after this!

Keep your plying angle at about 90 degrees, with your thread out towards you with tension on it, and the single feeding onto that from the side with very little tension.

You should check regularly that you have enough twist to ply again, do this by stopping your spinning and pulling some of your yarn back off the bobbin, let it double up on itself, it should ply nicely together. If there is a loose loop at the end of it then you need more twist. If it feels hard and looks too tight then you could slow your treadling and add a little less twist.

STEP THREE - PLY AGAIN

Using the same thread as before, ply your yarn again, remembering to spin this in the opposite direction from the previous ply.

Keep your ply angle fairly sharp as you can see in image 8. This will help your texture and give you a nice criss crossing of the ply threads. It will also puff out your bubbles!



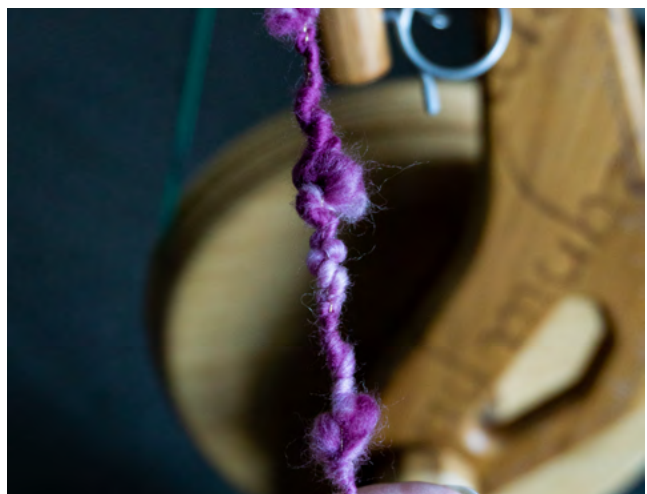
IMAGE 6



IMAGE 7



IMAGE 8



Finish this yarn in the usual way. For me this means giving it a lovely soak in some warm water, and then heartlessly dropping it into a cold bath. For a yarn like this that has lots of areas of soft, loosely twisted fiber, I repeat that process about three times just to lightly 'full' the fibers and make it slightly less prone to pilling. This process will also allow any fibers likely to bloom the opportunity to do so, enhancing the texture even more!

This is a yarn that I would most want to use in a weaving, the textures would really make it a wonderful highlight in any woven project. It will not be super hard wearing, but it would also knit up to look amazing in a larger knit project, perhaps as some stripes through a shawl, or the edging of a hat.



Click here to subscribe and watch the hands on spinning tutorial in which Suzy demonstrates spinning this yarn!



FOR MORE STASH-BUSTING TECHNIQUES AND TOOL TUTORIALS CHECK
OUT THE FIBERYGOODNESS VIDEO COURSE ON COMBS AND HACKLES!



TWISTED ZISTERS DESIGNER YARN AND GARMENTS

Annette Montgomery is a talented spinner and designer, follow her facebook page and be inspired by her explorations of fiber and garment design with art yarns.



We feel privileged to be one of the first partnerships of breeders to bring these beautiful sheep to New Zealand. We have set our breed standards to match the stringent original Swiss Breed Society Standards and we will be in a position to offer a limited number of lambs, embryos and semen in 2018 to New Zealand and to export to the USA.

Please contact us for more details and to register your interest. (click the logo to visit our page)



Embroidery Course

Polina Laamanen, Embroidery Artist, presents this course which comes complete as a downloadable PDF file containing 36 pages of tutorial and 99 images to illustrate the techniques. Polina shares a variety of materials and textures and shows how you can apply them in your own way in your project. Click the images and visit her Etsy shop for more tutorials and beautiful finished items.

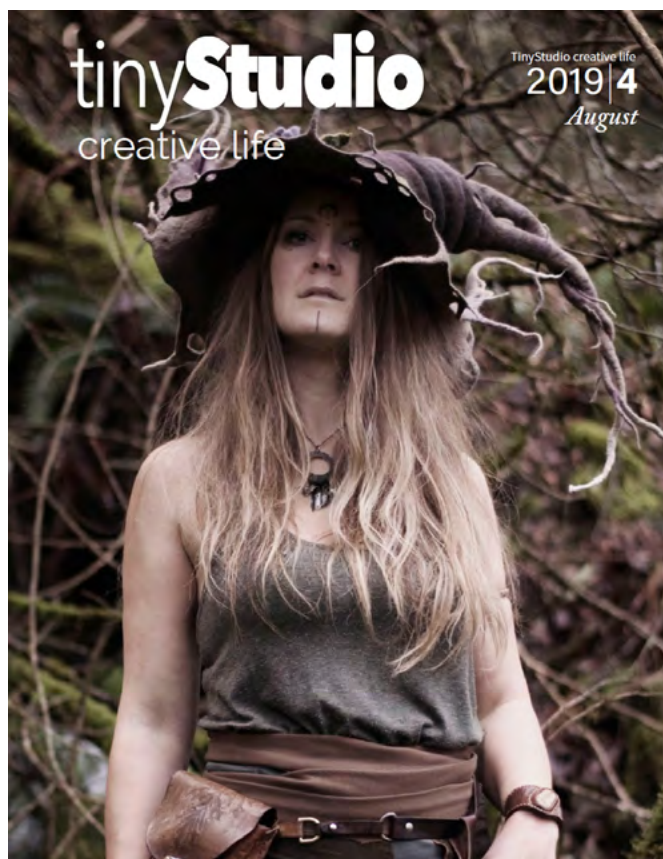
Special for tinyStudio Subscribers, use the coupon code "TINYSTUDIO" and for 10% off the entire order

knitting the



MAGIC LOOP TEDDY

Download the pattern and follow the video tutorials with Julie Tarsha of Simply Notable and create this gorgeous teddy for someone you love!



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Minimalism

A Craft-filled Life

WORDS BY **TEEGAN DYKEMAN-BROWN**

On social media, minimalism is often breathtakingly beautiful. It is white walls and perfect lighting, tools made of bamboo and stainless steel, vessels of polished wood and glass. But for many of us, minimalism—whether we call it that or not—is a bit more shabby. It's about not always having the finances to buy much to begin with, about wanting to use up what we already have, and about trying to cobble together solutions from the tools at hand.

Two and a half years ago, a friend of mine invested in two sheep, and I thought the obvious response would be to learn to spin, as my friend had neither the time nor inclination to do so and wanted the sheep for a green landscaping business. I bought a drop spindle and a tiny sampler of roving on Etsy, checked out every book on handspinning my local library had to offer, and taught myself the basics. To my surprise, all these seasons later, I haven't amassed a collection of spinning wheels. In fact, I don't have any spinning wheels, though I do have a few more drop spindles. I have no lazy Kate, no bobbins. I have no ball winder, no swift, no drum carder. I don't have a scale to weigh my fiber, and I measure my skeins by wrapping them around the sturdy, two-foot, plastic ruler my mother bought for me to use for cutting fabric when I was in high school.

I have splurged on a pair of handcards, because I knew of no other way to turn the rough-cut Shetland fleeces my friend sheared herself into something spinnable, and I did treat myself to some rare-breed

wool online from a small sheep farm a couple hundred miles away, just to have the pleasure of spinning wool that was already well cleaned and prepared.

Not long after that, the librarian, from whom I bought the handcards, told me that she was "retiring" from spinning and offered me her stash of materials: a mismatched collection of uncarded fiber samples, ranging from Angora and Cormo to dog hair.

Working with such basic tools and castoff materials is my minimalism. It forces me to be patient with my own glacial process, in fact to focus on the process rather than the product. I can't possibly spontaneously decide to spin, for example, a sweater's worth of yarn in a weekend—partially because I don't have more than a few ounces of anything and partially because the drop spindle limits my speed enormously. But I have found that my little yarn experiments are perfect for small weavings, and my drop spindle is a wonderful way to occupy my hands while keeping an eye on my two young boys.

Do I dream of getting my hands on an entire fleece of Icelandic? Or of finally finding a small, sturdy spinning wheel to occupy a corner of my front porch? Of course I do. But these things will be all the sweeter when I've developed the skills and appreciation for them on my roundabout journey through the art and craft of spinning.



Fiber, Passion, Art

WORDS **ARLENE THAYER** PHOTOGRAPHY **SARA NORINE JAMES**

There is a place inside of us that we all wish to have access to: the deeply creative, expressive part. Our true nature lives there, the most special part of our being. For fiber folk, the intersection of fiber, passion and art takes us to this authentic place.

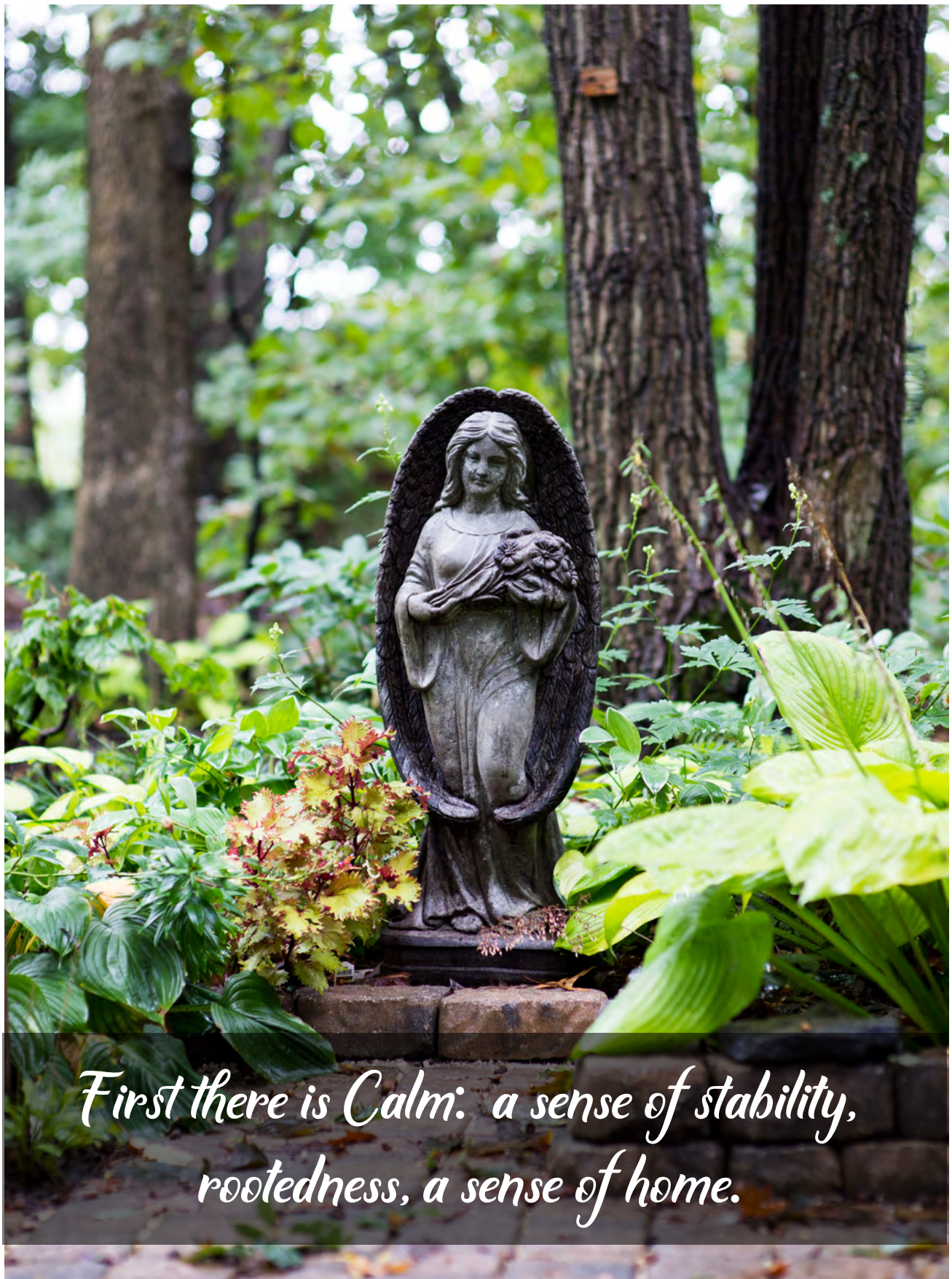


We know when we arrive at this place of true nature because there are unmistakable signs. These are qualities we all have if we allow them to

shine

In this photo essay, let's take a look at these touchstones and use them as places to help us mark when we are in authentic self and allow them to guide us to our own unique ways of expression.





*First there is Calm: a sense of stability,
rootedness, a sense of home.*



And with Calm, comes a Clarity of purpose. With Clarity comes a knowing beyond words.





Next, let's examine the impact of Compassion -- love has many forms but arguably the most powerful is

Compassion.

We start by opening our heart to ourselves. From there we can then expand further and further the circle to whom we may extend loving kindness.

*Begin to experience this by
trusting in your heart as you
express yourself.*

As you begin to trust yourself, you will find your **Confidence** -- a belief in our own abilities.

When we are in a confident state, we react to present situations with certainty that we can handle or repair whatever happens.

Confidence builds our **Courage** and with courage, we are able to express our truth in our artistry -- whether or not anyone else likes it -- we decide that if something is worth doing, it is worth failing at, so we roll up our sleeves, and begin our process.



Creativity cannot be stopped at this point.

Embracing and acting from our creative self, we begin to feel a sense that we are here to make some type of contribution -- that we are operating out of the place of our highest and best self. If we make an effort to see ourselves as the hero of our own creative journey, we can then see all of life as the path of our self expression.

With Creativity firmly established, we allow ourselves to be **Curious**.

We bring ourselves back to "beginner's mind" over and over by being full of wonder about the world.

The Buddhists call this kind of non-striving, open curiosity toward our inner thoughts, emotions and intuitions, mindfulness.

All of these qualities lead us to the place we seek: **Connection**.

In **Connection**, we find relief of being able to drop the heavy masks with which we try to impress or hide from one another.

The beauty of this is that operating out of our sense of connectedness, these vibrations will set off the same in others.

Finally, we have **Joy**: the mixture of all of these qualities -- the yoga of the moment when Fiber, Passion and Art merge and we experience the feeling of being in our flow state. We let go with faith and take delight in whatever the moment brings.

It has been my pleasure to share some glimpses with you of my studio, my work and even my silliness. In closing, I ask you to consider these qualities as they relate to your fiber practice. Perhaps to use them as the basis for meditations. Be on the lookout for these qualities in your life and work and when you find them, breathe into them and enjoy the moment.



***Click here to Subscribe and watch the tinyStudio TV video pod-
cast with Arlene, we chat about MIndfulness and what that actually
means to spinners and fiber artists!***





Nearly Weightless Produce Bag

PATTERN AND PHOTOGRAPH BY **JULIE TARSHA**

This lovely produce bag from Julie Tarsha of '[Simply Notable](#)' was designed to corral her apples, avocados, and other such purchases. It is very light so won't add weight at the cash register, and has handles to tie the top closed. It is also stretchy and expandable to put in just a few items, or many! The bag weighs only about 1/2 an ounce (14gm).

If you want to knit up your own, you'll need:

- Size 10 Fingering weight cotton yarn or crochet cotton
- Size US 8 (5mm), and US 3 (3mm) circular needles. Use ones with a nice long cable and if you haven't already, go ahead and teach yourself the MAGIC LOOP method to knit these. You can thank me later.
- Tapestry Needle to weave in ends

Using larger needles, cast on 48 stitches.
Knit 1 row through back loops.
Join in the round.
Knit 1 round.
Place marker

1. (YO twice, K2tog) repeat to marker.
2. Knit to marker. (knit only once through the 2 yarn overs. If it helps, just drop off the first yo, then knit through the second)

Repeat the above two rounds 16 times.
Change to size 3 needles.

1. Knit 1 round.
2. Purl 1 round.

Repeat the above two rounds twice more. Remove marker.

Bind off 12 stitches (count each stitch as bound off only when you drop it off the needle)
Knit 11 (12 stitches on right hand needle after bound off stitches).
Bind off 12 stitches.
Knit 11
Cast on 20 stitches using BACKWARDS LOOP method
P 12, Cast on 20 stitches using BACKWARDS LOOP method, P12. (here is a nice [tutorial](#) for this method)

Place Marker
Knit 1 round
Purl 1 round

Repeat above two rounds once more.
Bind off all stitches firmly.

Weave bottom together with beginning thread, knot firmly and turn inside out.

Finish by weaving in loose ends.

Knotty Solutions

TIE DYE YOUR YARN!

Adventures in tie dyeing skeins of yarn, to create variegated colour for a beautiful flecked finish.

WORDS AND PICTURES BY **SUZY BROWN**



Tie dye, 1970s psychedelic, T-shirt's and rainbow pants. Those are the mind pictures the term 'tie dye' gives me. The technique of tie dyeing is a form of resist dyeing, and can be used to create a wide range of effects, usually in fabrics, not necessarily crazy wild 70's style (think Shibori for example) and it can also be used for yarn dyeing!

This method is one I have been teaching at workshops, it is always fun, and always surprising! It will give you wonderful colour variations in your yarns that knit up beautifully.

One of the interesting things I have found is that each time I have done this I have had different results, even when using the same dye colours. Variations in the final dye bath influence the end result quite dramatically.

This means that you should dye all your skeins intended for a single project at once in the same batch. This will give you matching skeins, so please make sure you have enough to complete your project. You can dye as many skeins at once as you can fit in your dye pot.

YOU WILL NEED

- Yarn. I like to use finer yarns for this technique, most sock yarns are ideal. Keep in mind that different fibers will take the dye differently, I have found that super wash (machine washable) is particularly good for this technique as it over-dyes well and the dye strikes quickly.
- String for ties
- Scissors
- A large dedicated dye pot with lid
- Vinegar or Citric Acid
- Dye colours - For my base I use: Dharma Dye colours - Fluorescent Lemon, Fluorescent Fuschia, and Electric Violet. For over-dyeing you could choose between the Fuschia or the Violet. Alternatively you could take whatever yellow, pink/red and purple dyes you have and try those!

I suggest trying out the technique with these colours first so you can really see how it works, and then start experimenting with different colours too.





Above: After Step 4, the Fuschia dye bath. Top right: after step 6, the Violet dye bath. Right: yarns heating in the Fuschia bath.



THE TECHNIQUE

There are two important things you need to know before you start. The first is that you should always start with the lightest colour, as each successive dye bath is effectively an over dye of the previous colour.

The second is that every tie you add will create the 'resist' and the section of yarn held inside it will remain the colour it is when you tie it. The outside will be overdyed but the previous colour will remain inside the tied off area.

My tinyDyeStudio approach to dyeing consists primarily of simple, no mess, no fuss techniques. This is very true of tie dyeing, you get a great effect with very little fuss, the only time consuming part

is making the ties and waiting for the dyes to heat set. I like to spend a few hours on this, doing other things as the dye heats and then as the yarns cool for the next ties.

Step One

Take your DRY skein and add four or five ties to it, you can space these however you like but I find it's often easiest to put them fairly evenly along the doubled up skein. Tie them tight and let them loop around the skein several times along the length of it, to trap more than just the width of the single tie.



Above: Step 7, after all the ties have been removed. Right: After reskeining to see the effect of the colour placement. The yarn will not look like this after the final dye bath!

Make sure all your ties are made as a bow not as a double knot, you will thank me later when its time to remove them!

Step two

Prepare your Fluoro Lemon dye bath with your mixed dye solution (just make sure it is enough to give good solid colour to your yarns) and add a teaspoon of Citric Acid or about a quarter cup of vinegar to the water. Quantities of both dye and acid will vary depending on your water and yarn quantities. If your dye is not 'exhausting' and the water becoming clear after about half an hour of heat you could add a little more acid.

Step Two

Place all your skeins into the dye bath. It can be cold or already hot, just keep in mind your dye will strike quickly on the outside of the skein when it is hot and may be paler on the inside. This is perfectly fine either way as we will be over dyeing a number of times yet!

Bring your pot up to about 80 degrees Celsius. This temperature will ensure the dye develops with

good colour, and will encourage the dye to exhaust. It should not boil. If you have no thermometer just make sure the dye bath is steaming well but not bubbling. Let it sit at temperature for half an hour or until the dye is exhausted.

Step three

After the dye has at least mostly exhausted (the water should be clear or almost clear) remove the yarns (use tongs) and just hang it to cool and drain off the excess liquid, do not remove the ties. (For experimenting later you could remove some and get a different effect from those areas when dyed). When it is cool enough to handle, add another four ties spaced between the existing ties.

Step Four

Pour your Fuschia dye mix into the pot, it doesn't matter too much if the water has a yellow tint. Use about the same amount of dye as you did for the yellow.

Drop your yarns into the pot and watch them turn bright orange!



Above: After a final dye bath of very diluted Violet. This is the yarn used for the shawl on page 90.

Top Right: The first step in the same process but this time using pale pink, followed by Fuschia, and then Purple.

Again heat to 80 degrees and let it sit there for about half an hour. You may find the fuschia does not exhaust as well as the yellow did, if this is the case you can push it along a bit with another 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon of Citric acid or a slurp of vinegar, and make sure it is hot enough.

Step Five

Remove your skeins and let them cool again so you can handle them. Do not remove any ties, instead add another four or five ties between the previous ones.

Step Six.

Empty your dye pot this time and start fresh, new water, acid, and this time violet dye. Drop your tied skeins into this pot and heat to temperature for half an hour. This should be well saturated and quite a dark colour

Step Seven

Remove skeins from the pot and let cool. This time you are going to remove all the ties (but do leave

your loose skein ties in there to avoid tangles!).

At this stage you might be wondering what you have gotten yourself into! and I have occasionally had students who really wanted to keep the yarn just like this, but the next step is going to alter the look of the yarn to make its final colour.

Step Eight

Using a fresh pot of water and the usual amount of acid, add just a small quantity of your final dye colour - I suggest either a fushcia and red mix (half and half) for quite red/rust finish, or another violet bath for a more purple glaze. You could also use a blue. If you are not sure what end colour you want I suggest you take a small amount of yarn and try dipping it into some different colours and choose the one you like best, you can get greens, oranges, or purples depending on your final dye colour.

This time add very little dye to the pot. You should be able to easily see the bottom of the pot though the liquid. The amount you add will vary depending on how much yarn you are dyeing, but I definitely recommend adding less than you think you need, you can always add more, but you cannot remove



Swatches knitted from the (not yet overdyed) pink based yarn from the previous page ABOVE, and then of the SAME yarn overdyed with Sapphire blue.

excess if your over-dyed yarn ends up too dark. The goal of this final bath is to 'glaze' the yarn, you don't want to make it a solid colour, you want to tint the existing colours, tone them down, and make the yarn more cohesive in the colour range. Lift your yarn every five minutes or so and check the amount of colour you have, stir in more dye if needed. Let the yarn reach 80 degrees and let sit there till the dye is exhausted and you have the amount of colour tinting you like.

EXPERIMENT!

Now you have the technique and the steps required to make this multicoloured and multi tinted yarn, you might want to start playing around with the colours you use at each step.

Remember to stick with the basic principle of starting with the lightest colour and finishing with the darkest. Your final dye bath can be adjusted to

give you the depth of colour you want. You can see from the purple to blue yarn above that the final dye bath for this one was dark enough to recolour the yarn and make it entirely blue, however the underlying colours provide the variegated finish in the final yarn.

There are many variations you can make with your colour choices when using this dye technique, and the process of over-dyeing multiple times always gives you a deep, rich, and saturated colour range, it is really beautiful and knits up into a lovely even multicoloured, or subtly variegated fabric.

If you would like to get even more in depth with this technique and all its possibilities, I will be adding a video podcast to the 'tinyStudio TV' page on the website in which I will be demonstrating and talking further about this technique, check the schedule in the back of the magazine. I will also have some variations for you to try!

Click here to Subscribe and watch the tinyStudio TV video podcast in which Suzy does a complete hands on tutorial for creating Tie Dye Yarns, elaborating even further on what she has shared in this article!





Raising Yarn

WORDS AND PICTURES BY **ALENA BUCKMASTER-HIXEN**

Alena Buckmaster-Hixon is Russian-born, world-raised career-mother and wife-by-day, Yarn Grower-by-night, from the Southeastern Swamps of the Magical Kingdom of Dragonwool Acres. She is accompanied on her fibery quest by her husband, Junior Shepherd and an army of rescue dogs, raising yarn from the Clouds-on-the-Hoof, heritage Jacob Sheep.

This is the first of a series of articles in which Alena shares her joys and heartaches as a fiber farmer.



HOW IT ALL BEGINS

Part 1. The sound of countryside silence glistens in diamond dew.

It's all quiet on the eastern plains. Only the song of the crickets and breathing of my sheep cuts the silence to remind me I am not alone. Somewhere in the distance I hear a cow occasionally hollering in labor. I love watching the stars from my porch. It is so peaceful. It is not cold, yet I am shivering because I dumped a stock tank over on myself and my jeans are soaking wet. I have dirt under my fingernails and I smell like dirty, wet wool - earthy and grounding. I imagine not having this view of the stars and fields, not being able to hear my silence, and I do not know if I could cope if I had to give it up.

Every day I wonder "What are my fluffy dreams worth? Why am I dreaming of this? Since I did not nurse it in with my momma's milk, how did I end up here?" Perhaps it's something that skips a generation, or I am just an oddball in the family. It is an interesting change in my state of being, existing as a solitary Yarn Grower in the middle of nowhere. I no longer have to hurry through traffic, blinded by neon lights. My social circles changed. Keeping the house clean and the dishes done is no longer a problem since my new friends spend time with me at the barn, not in my house. It takes only a skillet to make a couple of fried bologna sandwiches, and who needs a plate when we can eat it over the sink while discussing shearing, micron count and breeding plans?

I do end up asking myself 'are these dreams worth it?' I get up before the roosters to tend to the farm before my day job in town, then I have to hurry back home to tend to my flock, feed, health-check, pull hay and debris out of their soft cloud of a bodies. This is not a hobby... This is a way of thinking: it is my life. Why did it call my name and grab me like a carnivorous vine, wrapping my arms and legs immobile, taking my ability to escape, my ability to run away and drown it out by the loud city noise, blinded by neon lights so I could never find my way back?

The simple truth is that my heart was not run over by a flock of sheep and buried in mud after all. It

peacefully scattered in a million diamond pieces around here on the Eastern plains. You can see it on a brisk morning, when the sun is just stretching from under its fluffy blanket. You can see it in the droplets of dew.

This may be a new life for me, but I hope it will never change. My answer will always be "I'd love to have a drink downtown, but I've got to get home and check on my Yarn Seeds. It is lambing season." It's not an excuse... It is my real life. Now it's time to go make that bologna sandwich for supper, clean the miracle of birth off my hands, apply some lanolin to my dry cracking hands and chapped lips. My jeans are almost dry. It's time for bed, because tomorrow we do it all over again.

Part 2: The tall mountains and sharp cliffs in the way: Facing the sharp burrs of reality with a mug of cold coffee in hand

Raising Yarn reality is often laced with burrs in the soft and fluffy exteriors of cute lambs and fluffy fleece pictures. There are Monday mornings when I wake up to a different routine. There are no hints of a change in pace when in the darkness I swing my legs from under my warm blanket and onto a cold hardwood floor, shuffle my feet for the slippers that always hide away in the middle of the night.

I begin my daily rounds by letting the dogs out while feeding inside family of all kinds, but when my "bad dog" comes in nervous and shy like she did something naughty I know it is going to be a different morning. She settles in her corner for breakfast, but watching her eyes I know something is up. I know I didn't leave a chicken out because I counted them several times the night before. I have an idea, though. I take care of inside family, brush teeth, braid hair and put on farm clothing, unlike my usual mismatched PJ's and bedhead for feeding livestock. The beautiful thing about flocks is that they are very non-judgmental of appearance as long as you come with a bucket of feed.

I eat breakfast for the first time in months, because I know I will need the energy. I change the order of operations from end to beginning, because in my heart I know this morning is going to be different. A flock of black birds fly over, happily singing their migration song, and the morning is smiling. It is a new day with new adventures for many souls. I can't stop thinking about the circle of life. We have

birth on the farm, and we have losses. It is nearing Christmas, and while excited posts flood groups and friend lists about "Santa being generous" to the poster, we have new and amazing gifts to the farmstead in the form of the treasured livestock fiber pets I lovingly call my "Yarn Seeds."

One year my Santa brought us four treasured ewes and a doe from Colorado. The next year, about the same time, we lost one of our precious ewes: she was ill, but was looking so much better. She had promised to make it through the night as I got out of bed every hour, heavily pregnant, to check and medicate her.

My "Bad Dog," who faithfully assists with every nightly check up at the barn, jumped the dog-yard fence first thing in the morning, ran to the barn to check on her and found her passed on, sometime after the last check we did under the stars with a flashlight, praising the Lord it was not freezing outside as it had been several nights before. As most GOOD "Bad Dogs" she felt personal failure, personal responsibility, just like her predecessor, Brenna who, in her younger days, (she is now retired to "making sure my pillow does not run away" duties), felt crushed every time we could not save a newborn lamb.

For every tear of joy on the farm, we also weep a cup of salt. For every "Hoorah" for successful project completion, we often have a sentence full of choice curse words reminding us to try again - harder. For every minute of celebration there is a day spent wanting to crawl under a rock and hide from life.

For those hugging that new Christmas present with a heartbeat this season, while running your fingers through the soft curls of its fleece, raise a glass to the breeder, for their ups and downs, and for not giving up, enabling your Santa to bring you that doeling with an amazing udder, a treasured fiber ewe, a spicy heifer or magnificent peacock, a hard-working herder or fearless guardian dog. Behind each and every one of those gifts is a farmer or breeder who pushes forward tomorrow no matter how much it hurts today, with a flashlight and a "Bad Dog" by their side. They are out there under the stars in pyjamas and muck boots: shivering in the cold, pelted by the rain, and eaten alive by mosquitoes. And I do not know if I could cope if I had to give it up...

....to be continued in Issue 2....

Spinning
ISN'T
JUST
making YARN

IT IS A PRACTICE IN
mindfulness

HOW TO...

GET INNOVATIVE WITH YOUR STASH



- Start by taking everything out and spreading it all over the floor. If you have too much you can just do a section at a time.
- Sort your fibre into piles, by colour or by fiber type.



Pinkies



purples



greens



blues

- If you find fiber you know you are unlikely to use yourself, collect it up and gift it to someone who can make use of it instead!
- You will start to see colour themes emerging, these are your 'go to' comfort colours.
- There will be smaller amounts of 'odd' colours, not enough for a project, but you can blend these with others later.
- ☑ Now start combining your colours in piles. Maybe you don't have enough blues to make up a project quantity, but you CAN combine these with your greens, or purples to use together, or you can blend them with your pinks to make a new purple!



THE GOAL IS TO MAKE PROJECT QUANTITIES
Combining smaller less useful amounts







Finding Creativity THROUGH FREEFORM

WORDS AND PICTURES BY **HANNAH MARTIN**

Of Mars

I have always dabbled in many crafts – ping ponging between different mediums trying to find “my” thing. It wasn’t till I found freeform crochet that I really felt like I was able to bloom and cross the threshold from crafter into artist.

Freeform crochet allows you to express your creativity and originality in a way that goes beyond the rows and rounds of traditional crochet. I like to think of freeform as a fiber art puzzle where you mix and match yarns, stitches, and shapes to form your own unique vision and style. There is no right or wrong in freeform – you are FREE to make your own rules and FORM items how you choose to. I know, that was corny but it’s the truth!

Freeform can be done regardless of your skill level or perceived amount of creativity. Once you get started the yarns and shapes can guide your intuition. Experimenting with colors, patterns, stitches, and textures is the key to creating unique and exciting freeform crochet. Stepping out of the traditional mold is challenging at first, but with time you will be able to naturally progress to becoming more out-of-the-box.



ONE OF MY FAVORITE ASPECTS OF FREEFORM IS THE ABILITY TO CREATE MOVEMENT IN A PIECE, ALMOST LIKE PAINTING WITH YARN.

In order to fully immerse oneself in freeform crochet I believe there are 3 suggestions one needs to follow:

#1 LET GO OF YOUR EXPECTATIONS

Freeform is an acquired taste and there can be a learning curve. I was so disappointed with my first freeform piece I didn't attempt it again for months! Just keep trying and pushing to find your own creative style - you'll get hooked!

#2 - INCORPORATE EVERYTHING YOU'VE EVER LEARNED

Those bullions you had no idea what to do with? What about puffs, bobbles, and other textured stitches? Use them! Incorporate them into a piece to add texture and build your freeform skills.

Freeform crochet **doesn't just have to be crochet**, either. You can also incorporate small woven sections, knitting, felting, embroidery, homespun, beading, etc! Do what feels right... or maybe do what feels wrong? Any path is fair game in freeform.

#3 - MAKE A PLAN

Despite there being no particular "rules" in freeform I believe that creating a plan can make a project go much smoother!

When I start freeforming, my plans are usually quite simple. I start by selecting my main yarns for the piece, then I add a few accent yarns for some pop,



and then I create a fabric template of what I want to make. The template acts as a canvas to place motifs (also called “scrumbles” in the freeform world) and guides the basic shape of a project.

By forming my project on a template I am able to turn, flip, and combine scrumbles with ease while seeing how they fit within the span of the project.

Once I have figured out my desired placement I pin the scrumbles to the template and either whipstitch or crochet the elements together.

I usually like to keep my templates fairly simple - for example, a large triangular piece of fabric is perfect for a shawl and a small rectangular piece of fabric works wonderfully for a bag.

TO GET YOU STARTED I AM SHARING WITH YOU MY THIRD EYE HEADBAND PATTERN. THIS IS A GOOD JUMPING OFF POINT FOR LEARNING HOW TO CREATE SPIRALS, DO SURFACE EMBROIDERY, AND COMBINE MOTIFS.





Third Eye Headband BY HANNAH MARTIN

PATTERN NOTES

- Pattern is written using standard American English crochet terminology
- The pattern has been written to fit an adult head and can be made child sized by using a smaller hook and yarn.

MATERIALS:

- Small amount of black, white, and another color worsted weight yarn (for eye)
- 4 other worsted weight yarns in varying shades
- Stitch markers

- 5.00 mm hook
- Yarn needle

GAUGE

Gauge is not essential for this project, but the eye should measure ~3.5" wide

TERMINOLOGY

Ch	Chain
Sl st	Slip stitch
Sc	Single crochet
Hdc	Half double crochet

Dc	Double crochet
Htr	Half treble crochet
Tr	Treble crochet
Sts	Stitches
Rnd	Round
BLO	Back loop only
PM	Place marker
Lp	Loop
Rep	Repeat
Cs	Crab stitch

Eyeball Motif

SPECIAL STITCH

- Picot: ch 3, sl st in first ch st made

With black:

Ch 4, sl st in first ch st to form ring

Rnd 1: ch 1, 9 hdc in ring, cut yarn, needle join to first hdc (9 hdc total)

With iris color:

Rnd 2: attach yarn to any stitch of rnd 1 with sl st, ch 1, [2 sc] in same st as joining, [2 sc] in each st around, cut yarn, needle join to first sc, weave in end (18 sc total)

With white:

Work the following round in BLO

Rnd 3: attach yarn to BL of any st with sl st, ch 1, sc in same st as joining, sc in next 4 sts, *[hdc, dc] in next st, [htr, tr] in next st, picot, [tr, htr] in next st, [dc, hdc] in next st, ** sc in next 5 sts, rep from * to ** once, cut yarn leaving a long tail, needle join to first sc (26 sts, 2 picots total)



Use the tail to embroider a small "x" in the pupil of the eye. Weave in end

With Color #1:

Work the following round in BLO

Rnd 4: attach yarn to BL of 2nd tr st of rnd 3 with sl st, ch 3 (counts as dc), [dc, hdc] in same st as joining, *hdc in next st, [2 hdc] in next st, PM in last st made, hdc in next 7 sts, [2 hdc] in next st, hdc in next st, [hdc, 2 dc] in next st, PM in last hdc made, sk picot st, ** [2 dc, hdc] in next tr st, rep from * to **, sl st in beg ch 3 to join, cut yarn, weave in end (38 sts total)



Spiral Motif (make 2):

With Color #2:

Ch 4, sl st in first ch st to form ring

Rnd 1: ch 1, 8 sc in ring, do not join - continue stitching the next rnd in a spiral around rnd 1

Work the following two rounds in BLO

Rnd 2: [2 hdc] in next 5 sts, [2 dc] in next 3 sts, PM in last st made

Rnd 3: [2 dc] in next 5 sts, (dc in next st, [2 dc] in next st) x2, dc in next st, [2 tr] in next st, break off yarn leaving a long tail





Joining spirals and eye motif:

To join the pieces together you will whipstitch the spirals to the eye motif using the tail of the spiral. Lay the spirals on either side of the eyeball motif – you will be stitching the spirals on between the two marked stitches on either side of the eyeball motif. Include these marked stitches as you're stitching the spirals.

It may take a bit of trial and error to distribute the stitches evenly. I recommend experimenting to see what works for you. See photos on next page for reference. The central eye may look slightly buckled after stitching on the spirals – this should flatten out a bit after the edgings. If it is very buckled and you are concerned try removing the spirals, adjusting your placement, and stitching them back on.

Edging #1

With Color #3:

Attach yarn to BLO of the last tr of one of the spirals with sl st, ch 1, sc in same st as joining, *work the following sts through both loops of eye motif: sc in next 10 sts, hdc in next st, dc in next st, work the following sts through BLO of spiral, hdc in next st,, sc in next 6 sts, [2 hdc] in next st, PM in first hdc of [2 hdc] made, sc in next 4 sts,, [2 hdc] in next st, sc in next 7 sts, rep from * around omitting last sc, sl st in first sc to join, cut yarn



Sides of headband:

With Color #1:

Row 1: Attach yarn with sl st to marked st from edging 1, ch 1, hdc in same st as joining, sc in next 5 sts, hdc in next st, turn (7 sts total)
 Row 2-3: ch 1, sc in each st across, turn (7 sts total)
 Row 4: ch 1, sc in next 5 sts, 2sctog, turn (6 sts total)
 Row 5-6: ch 1, sc in each st across, turn (6 sts total)
 Row 7: ch 1, sc in next 4 sts, 2sctog, turn (5 sts total)
 Row 8: ch 1, sc in each st across, turn (5 sts total)
 Row 9: ch 1, 2sctog, sc in next 3 sts, turn (4 sts total)
 Row 10: ch 1, sc in each st across, turn (4 sts total)
 Row 11: ch 1, sc, 2sctog, sc, turn (3 sts total)
 Row 12: ch 1, sc in each st across, turn (3 sts total)
 Row 13: ch 1, 3sctog, sl st in base of last sc made, break off yarn (1 sc total)



Repeat rows 1 – 13 for opposite side of headband, do not break off yarn – Continue straight to edging 2

Edging #2:

ch 1, sc evenly around the entire headband – working 1 sc in edge of each row from sides of headband and 1 sc in each st of edging #1.

*** Please note: In this round you will be aiming to make the edges of the headband smoother. If there are any spots where you need to work a hdc rather than a sc to make the edges more smooth do so ***

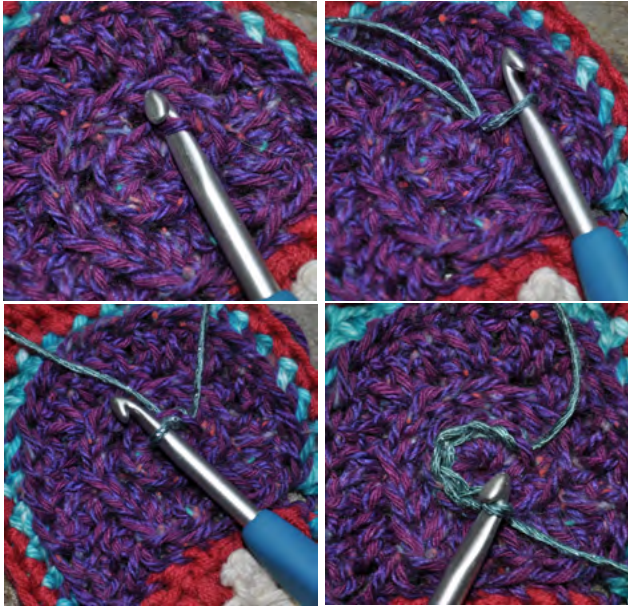
Edging #3 (optional):

With Color #4: attach yarn with sl st to any st from edging #2, ch 1, cs in each st around, cut yarn, needle join to first st, weave in end

Spiral embroidery:

With this embroidery you will be making surface crochet stitches in the free loops of the spirals

With Color #4: attach yarn to first free Lp from rnd 1 of spiral with sl st, sl st in each free Lp around spiral, ch st, break off yarn and pull tail to back of headband, weave in ends. Repeat for other side



With Color #3: insert your hook through one of the stitches from edging 1 beside the side of the headband. Use the instructions above to slip stitch embroider through the piece. I recommend just free-handing this bit and experimenting with what works for you. I usually do a squiggly pattern.



Ties: Cut 6 pieces of yarn approximately 30" long. Separate these into two groups of 3 pieces and attach one group to the edge of the headband using a larks head knot. Braid these pieces and knot the end. Repeat for side #2 with second group of 3.

Side embroidery (optional):

With this embroidery you will be making surface crochet stitches through the entirety of the headband on the sides.

How to Surface Crochet

Insert your hook through the right side of your work and pull up a Lp - make sure to hold your yarn in place at the back of your piece so you don't pull the yarn all the way through - insert your hook through the next stitch you want to work in, yarn over, pull up a Lp - now there should be 2 Lps on your hook - pull 2nd Lp through 1st Lp on hook - your first surface crochet stitch has now been made.

Continue inserting your hook through the next st and rep above steps to make more surface stitches.





LISTENING TO THE WOOD

WORDS AND PICTURES BY **MIKE & TJ KING.**
THE SPANISH PEACOCK

It's 6:30 on a cool March morning. The sun is coming up, but a chill lingers in the air. I fire up the heaters in my workshop, not just for myself but for the wood as well. It's show season, and today I will be working to make the fiber arts world more beautiful, one hand spindle at a time.

There is much more competition in the spindle market than when I started 16 years ago, so beautiful design is more important than ever. But spindles differ from other artistic creations, because all design considerations must come second to functionality. If a spindle does not spin flawlessly, the most harmonious design in the world won't help its owner spin fiber.

Anyone with a lathe knife and practice can turn a piece of wood into the shape they want, but true artistry comes from listening to the wood and coaxing it into revealing what it wants to be. Perhaps wood seems old-fashioned. These days, fiber artists can buy spindles that are 3D-printed, laser cut from plywood or acrylic, or other engineered contraptions churned out by machines. But there is a tactile experience to using a spindle made of wood, a warmth and character that cannot be mass produced. Every Spanish Peacock spindle is as unique as the person who spins with it, and the yarn they will create together.

Spindle design begins with the selection of wood, either at the store, or from pieces I already have. The availability of woods has changed over time due to laws, regulations, politics, and supply and demand. Wood must be purchased in person, limiting my options further to the local supply, because uneven grain and cracks or splits will make wood unsuitable for precision spinning tools. I hunt for a variety of woods, with different color variations and combinations for visual appeal. Unfortunately, highly figured woods, while beautiful, don't always make good spindles because varying densities may throw off the balance, or hide minuscule flaws like cracks that can compromise the life of the tool. The shapes of pieces in the store constrain what one can do with the wood, which in turn guides what type of spindle can be made. I need to find end grains that are even, straight, or slightly curved. Grain affects the balance, and even once I cut blanks, there's no guarantee the resulting spindle will be balanced and spin true.

Once the wood is cut into blanks for shafts and whorls, the wood's fate is sealed because the size of the blank dictates its end use. The blanks are set aside to relax and allow the moisture to stabilize, to reduce the chance of warping. This is particularly important for shafts, but even whorls have warped due to extremes in humidity levels. Each blank is checked for straightness again before actually being made into a spindle.

Once the chill has fled the workshop, I get to work. These spindles aren't going to make themselves! I select a purpleheart wood blank to turn a whorl.

At fiber shows, people often ask I where I get my ideas.

I find inspiration from a variety of sources - traditional designs, nature, and physics (such as rim-weighting for the top whorls and Tibetans). The traditional spindles are truly inspiration, however, and not outright copying. For example, Spanish Peacock Russian Lace spindles should properly be called "Russian style" spindles. The traditional Russian Lace spindles from Orenburg are very light-weight for production spinning, and spun with a different technique where the hand is always flicking, rather than allowing the spindle's momentum to do some of the work. The Spanish Peacock "Russians" are too heavy for them - Galina Khmeleva has even told me this to my face!

Honestly, not all traditional spindles shapes have worked equally well. A Balkan spindle features two whorls for added stability but they didn't catch on with customers so I only make them by special request now. And I still have new spindle designs to try. We recently introduced Pu-yoks, a variation of Tibetan spindles, to our lineup. The whorl shape provides an amazingly long spin for a supported spindle. In the future, maybe I will make Dealgans, a whorl-less Scottish spindle.

The spindle whorl provides balance and momentum. Many spindles have some variation of a whorl, although some (like Russian style spindles or the aforementioned Dealgans) do not. Spanish Peacock whorl design has evolved over time with experience, new tools and techniques, and feedback from customers. Originally I cut the whorl on a band saw, roughly shaped it with a belt sander, and used the lathe solely for finishing touches. This resulted in flat round disk, that quietly did its job. Nowadays, I shape whorls primarily on the lathe, to ensure the hollowed out areas are perfectly symmetrical. Spanish Peacock whorls feature additional wood hand-carved away between the shaft and the rim, which puts more of the whorl's weight towards the rim, enhancing the momentum of the spindle in motion.

Some decisions about the whorl were made when the wood was first cut into blanks, like whether it will be a disk-shaped whorl (as for a drop spindle) or a rounder whorl (as for a Tibetan). However, until I am actually turning at the lathe, with the knife in my hand, I don't know whether it will be a bottom whorl or a top whorl. If rough turning the wood results in a thinner piece, it becomes a bottom whorl, which for Spanish Peacock style tends to be thinner and flat on the side that faces up. Similarly, the choice for a Tibetan, bead or ninja (a hybrid between the Tibetan and bead) was already made based on the size of the piece of wood when it was cut into a blank. But the decision about which one, specifically, is made while the wood is spinning at 1500 RPM. The shapes of bead whorls - whether round, fluted, or heart-shaped - also emerge based on how the wood speaks to me.

Once the whorl is turned, I have additional design decisions to make. Since adding a laser engraver to our shop equipment in late 2013, we can now embellish the whorl further, adding to its beauty and sometimes utility as well. We have different types of laser engraving designs; ones which

cut wood entirely out of the whorl (also known as cut-out spindles or "do not drop" spindles), designs which etch the surface of the wood, and a few designs which incorporate both cut-out and etching aspects. The right cut-out design can save a whorl that is too heavy, or slightly unbalanced due to grains with different densities. Removing wood from the whorl also results in more weight being at the spindle's outer rim, which increases momentum further. And sometimes when we laser cut the whorls, tragedies occur in the pursuit of perfection. Some types of wood, such as Caribbean walnut and holly, change color when engraved with an etched design (rather than having the wood completely cut out), adding another element to the final question: finding the perfect shaft to complement the whorl. For the whorl I just completed, I choose a cut-out design we call "Arabesque". Purpleheart is dense wood, and this will shave some weight from the finished spindle.

Back out in the shop, it is time to turn the shaft. I select a slender, pale blank of hard maple. Even from the beginning, the whorls and shafts were always created as separate pieces, even if I chose the same woods for both. Now I use different woods for whorls versus shafts, but the shaft is always turned to go with a specific whorl to assure the tightest fit and the best overall design. Matching the whorl to the shaft involves many different factors, including wood color, balance, and harmony. Which part of the spindle should draw the eye? For the spindle design we call "Snow Queen" - a holly whorl cut with a snowflake design on a matching white shaft - all attention centers on the snowflake. For a supported spindle known as "My Heart Beads", the focus is entirely on the hot pink, almost heart-shaped whorl. In other spindles, the two woods work together in balance. For example, the shaft color can match or complement the color of an engraved design. The hook color is also intentional; drop spindles with a holly shaft (such as the aforementioned "Snow Queen") always get a hook that is silver, rather than the warmer-toned brass used for the rest.

Shaft design, like whorl shapes, has evolved over time, to better support the function of a hand spindle. Originally they featured elaborated carving all along the shaft - even right next to the whorl. Of course the growing cop covered any carving, which in turn prevented the cop from being easily slipped off the shaft. Later spindle versions lost the shaft carving, thanks to

feedback from experienced spinners, but sometimes tapered towards the whorl, which again made it hard to slide the cop off. Also as I discovered more hand spindle families, the types of shafts I could turn grew - each had their own unique shape, their own unique needs of the wood, their own unique balance and harmony. But each type - whether it be a drop spindle or supported spindle - has an aesthetic that makes Spanish Peacock spindles stand out in a crowd.

While the shaft type is pre-determined by the blank, the end length and thickness depend on how many passes it takes to work every last bit of wobble out of the shaft. For the spindle I am making now, the maple shaft remains relatively long, adding stability to the three inch whorl.

Once the shaft and the whorl are united, the final step for a drop spindle is the hook. Many spindles from other makers feature a notch on the whorl to prevent the spun yarn from slipping around the whorl while the spindle is in motion. Potential customers frequently ask why my spindles have no notch. While a small groove wouldn't upset the spindle's balance too much, the impact on its appearance would be irreparable. My spindle hook's "pig tail" curve is engineered to prevent the singles from slipping around the whorl, and has been a feature of Spanish Peacock drop spindles since the beginning.

At last, the new top Whorl is complete. But however beautiful the spindle, however harmoniously matched the colors, however elegant the lines, function still wins out. Before being packed for a show, each spindle's balance is checked one final time. Even the slightest wobble disqualifies the spindle from being sold with the Spanish Peacock name. We transport the spindles to the show and display them there perfectly upright, with no pressure at all on the shaft which might change the precious balance.

At the show, I enjoy watching the wood speak to each spinner as well. The colors and shapes draw the eye, and they test flick several spindles in their hand to check the weight and balance. But often a decision is made because one spindle just "feels" right, compared to the other options. The purpleheart "Arabesque" top whorl is the first spindle to sell that day, and I smile to myself, knowing the fiber arts world just became a little more beautiful.

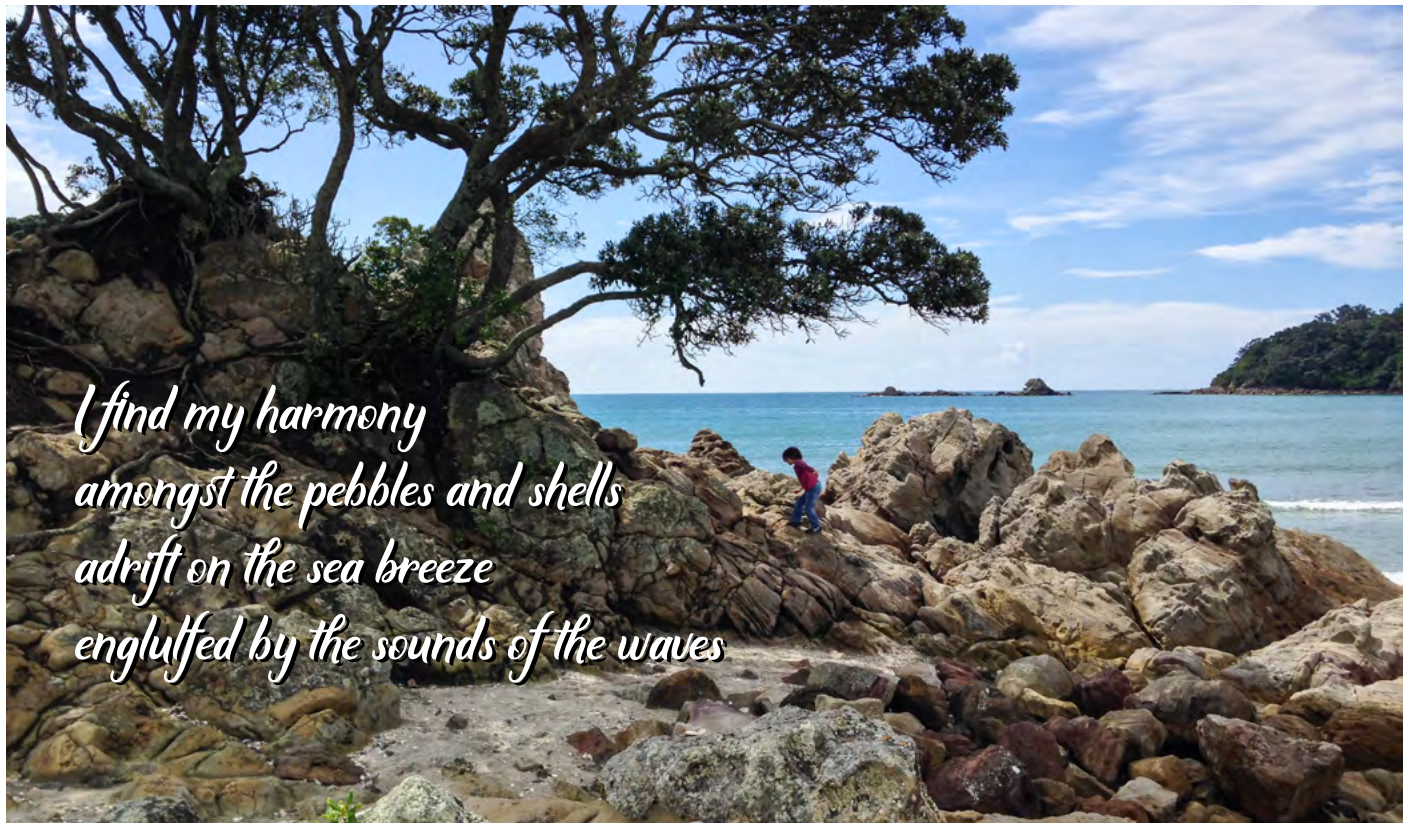


An example of "tragedies occurring" when trying to laser engrave spindle whorls - an "Arabesque" whorl that caught fire in the laser engraver



(Above) The world's most beautiful supported spindle & matching bowl. (Below right) A pu-yok engraved with the "Classic" design, which shows the shaft matching the color which results from laser-etching the whorl. (Below) The purpleheart "Arabesque" top whorl in the story





Corset

A CREPE YARN RECIPE

WORDS AND PICTURES
SUZY BROWN



This yarn can be made with either a smooth fibre preparation, or with a more textured option in place of the coloured single that runs through the centre, for example a lockspun in which the tips are left sticking out to show between the smooth singles it is plied with.

1. Spin a thick single of any kind (Z direction)
2. Spin a thinner black single in the Z direction
3. Spin another black single of the same thickness as the last one, but this time in the S direction
4. Ply the first single and the Z spun single in the S direction. Very important - over twist these so the yarn plies gently back on itself when you pull some off the bobbin. Ply as evenly as you can.
5. Ply the two ply you just created with the last (S spun) single, in the Z direction, adjust your treading so your third ply criss crosses with the other fine spun single to create the corset effect.

MY TINYSTUDIO BOX

WORDS AND PICTURES BY SUZY BROWN

In the tinyStudio Creative Life e-book I wrote about my 'tinyStudio Creative Life Box', and how you could also develop your own 'go to' studio in a box. In each issue of the magazine my goal is to help you identify the tools and equipment you need in order to be free to create, anytime, anywhere!

In case you did not yet read it (download the 'PDF for free from this [LINK!](#)) I thought it a good idea to recap a little before we dive in.

One of the main life events that prompted my whole 'tinyStudio' approach was a move from the Netherlands to New Zealand. My return to NZ was much like my departure, carrying little more than a couple of suitcases. Luckily I had discovered already that I can be perfectly happy with a bare minimum of 'stuff', and that also this 'stuff' tends to re-accumulate alarmingly quickly! I realised that I much prefer a minimalist life, to me it feels simple, easy, light, and free to have only things I really love and things are that essential to my creativity, but nothing more. Clutter makes me feel claustrophobic, as though I am living my life in an obstacle course, both physically and metaphorically.

The return to my homeland highlighted a few things for me. These are what I discovered.

1. A borrowed spinning wheel (no matter how lovely) will never replace my own familiar wheel, the one I made friends with, the one I understood every quirk and trait of, and that told me my own story with every little ding. This is on my 'essential' list.

2. I need to have a portable fiber studio. This is really essential if you teach, and also if you travel often to fiber events, spin days, workshops, festivals... And in this portable studio I need to have everything essential to spin any kind of yarn.

It seemed like an impossibility. After I had been back in New Zealand for a while I started to re-gather my equipment and rebuild my stash. I would travel to events with a car full of tools and fiber that it had taken me a day and a half to pack and made the car bulge! And then we moved into our new

house. It's an old cottage, cute, comfortable, but not brimming with storage space and no extra room for a purpose built studio!

This was when I decided to rationalise my stuff.

If you have taken the '[tinyStudio Personality Quiz](#)' (go take it now if you haven't!) you will know what considerations I kept in mind when selecting just the right things to create a 'studio box'. As an 'Experimenter' I knew I needed to be able to comb and card at will, that I would also need my hackle to manage my colours. I would want to have a wide selection of fibers, although not more than a kilo or so for a days outing. I also needed effect and ply threads, spare bobbins, lazy kate, niddy noddy.. all the basics.

Whether you are doing this to create a portable tinyStudio Box or to get control of your studio, start by asking yourself the following questions.

- Have my spinning and spinning requirements changed over time?
- Which of my tools have I not used in the past 12 months?
- Which tools do I regularly use?
- How many bobbins can I fill in one day?
- How much fiber can I spin in one day?
- Exactly which colours do I need to have on hand to feel like I have enough to blend, mix and match, and create?
- What are my go to colours and fibers?

Make yourself a list! Imagine you are moving into a tiny house! What would you be sure to keep and what could you do without?

I look at my storage in two ways. I have a system of 'Primary and Secondary Storage'.

My Primary storage is my tinyStudio Box, always handy and it has everything in it I usually need. My Secondary storage is less accessible (in the garage) and includes things I use less often such as my blending board and hand cards, as well as larger quantities of fiber such as unwashed fleece waiting

for processing and a bump of Merino Top. I have promised myself never to have more than two raw fleeces and 5 kilos of top and roving in my secondary supply. I also have one plastic box of 'scraps' of various colours and fibers suitable for making batts.

My Primary Storage - the tinyStudio Box., is where I keep all my most precious things. I started with a simple plastic box. If you scroll through the gallery images below you will see the layers I added to the box.

At the base of the box there are two smaller boxes with lids. In those are my fibers, mohair locks, merino silk top, hand pulled top from the hackle, Pol-warth locks ready for combing, some silk, and some angelina for bling. Its amazing how much fiber you can fit in a small space! I have more than enough for a days spinning in those boxes, and a wide enough range that I can make both smooth and textured yarns.

Above this layer I have my tools, hackle, combs, hand cards and bobbins and a cone of core spinning thread that also doubles as a plying thread. I also have my Majacraft Travel Kate. There is actually still enough room on this layer to add more fiber if I need to for a project.

The top layer is a simple insert that fits the top of the box. I bought this at the same hardware store as I found the boxes! There are a range of systems you can use including ones with separate compartments that sit on the top edge of the box, but I like my 'tray', as it has long compartments that fit my spindles perfectly, my niddy niddy comes apart and fits there too. I have my hackle clamps, flick carder, threads, diz, lace bobbin and flyer.

I also have kept room in my box to store a thermos flask for hot water and my small 'Minipresso' plus cup and milk container, so I can make myself a great coffee no matter where I am! You will find you have enough room to really personalise your tinyStudio box too.

When I travel now I can have my car packed in ten minutes and often leave feeling like I have forgotten something because it seemed too easy! In fact I know I always have everything I could possibly need all in my tinyStudio, it's a great feeling and leaves me free to be creative without needing to worry about things like 'where is my flick carder?!'

Click the arrows to through the gallery below for a closer look! (ebook reader only)





Handmade Gifts

SPINNERS HAND BALM

Our precious spinners hands, so vital to every step of our creative process! We put them through a lot: in and out of fleece washing for hours on end, dye sessions and rinsing, it dries our skin and can leave our hands rough, something you then really notice with your fine fibers and silks.

Here is a recipe that I love for moisturising and caring for my hands at the end of a washing or dyeing day. This is a rich nourishing balm to pamper yourself, or to make the perfect gift for the spinners in your life!

Honey is full of antioxidants, is very moisturising and soothing. I used cold pressed local honey. Avocado oil is loaded vitamins A, D, and E. It is a natural moisturiser and also an anti-inflammatory. I used cold pressed Avocado oil, grown and bottled in my own region of New Zealand, but if you can't find

Avocado oil you can also use cold pressed virgin Olive oil, or Almond oil (or a mix of the two).

For the scent I used a mix of Lavender, Bergamot, and Orange essential oils for calming and uplifting, but you can replace these with any oils you love.

Ingredients

2 tablespoons of coconut oil
 1/4 cup avocado oil
 4 tablespoons beeswax pellets or pieces
 2 tablespoon shea butter
 2 tablespoons raw honey
 Essential oils of your choice to the strength you like.
 8-ounce glass jar or several small tins with lids

Mix the oils, beeswax and Shea butter together in the heatproof bowl. Place the bowl into a saucepan of water, there should be enough water to come half way up the sides of the jar, do not get any water in the jar. Heat the water to just below simmering to gently melt the mix until it is completely liquid, stirring frequently.

Remove from the heat and mix in the raw honey and the essential oils, I suggest around 20 drops of essential oils in total but adjust to your own preference. Pour into the smaller jars or tins to set.

You can also download the circular label I created for the Spinners Hand Balm, by [clicking HERE](#). Please feel free to print out, and use on your own jar or tin.

Handmade Gifts

LINEN MIST



Linen mist is great for giving you wonderfully fresh scented laundry, but of course you can also use this on your woollen items! The use of especially chosen essential oils means you are not masking scents but using the antimicrobial properties of the oils to actually remove odours.

This spray uses Lavender oil, which is disinfecting and cleansing (and smells amazing!), Citrus oil, another great cleanser but also giving a fresh invigorating scent. White Fir and Cypress also provide antibacterial and refreshing properties.

Ingredients

12 drops of Lavender essential oil
 18 drops of any citrus essential oil
 15 drops of Fir essential oil
 15 drops of Cypress essential oil
 1 tablespoon of either Vodka or rubbing alcohol
 Filtered or distilled water

8 ounce spray bottle.

Combine the alcohol and oils in the spray bottle, and give it a good swish around to combine. Let it sit for five minutes then give it another shake.

Add water until the bottle is almost full. Cap the bottle and shake again to combine.

To use the fabric spray, shake the bottle well before each use, and spray directly on fabrics as desired. This spray is safe for most fabric types, but patch test a small area if there are any concerns. Because of the alcohol, this spray will last for months without refrigeration.

I have also included a download of the label I made for my spray bottle, please feel free to print out and use on your Linen Mist bottles too! [Click HERE](#) to get your download!



Bust the Stash With Speckles!

BATT TO HAT TUTORIAL

WORDS AND PICTURES **SUZY BROWN**

TUTORIAL: MAKE A SPECKLE BATT

SPIN IT

MAKE A HAT WITH YOUR SPECKLE YARN

Don't you just love the speckle yarns available now?! These are specially dyed yarns that literally use a speckling effect with dye colours to create a pattern that looks great knitted up. I have dyed these myself and really enjoy the process and results, but I also wanted to come up with a fun way to create this effect without dyeing! So this is what I did... and it's a great way to use up small bits and pieces of coloured fluff from your stash.

In this article we will start by selecting some fibers, card up a Speckle Batt, spin it, and if you want to, make a cute hat out of it!

YOU WILL NEED:

Around 200 grams (7oz) of **white fiber** of any kind, check your stash to see what you can use up! I tend to like the finer fibres for hat making.

About 50 grams of different **coloured fibres**. You can use any bits and pieces you might have, or if you have it, waste from combing or hackles is great for this! I like to use about four different colours but you can use less or more depending on taste.

In general, shorter staples rather than longwools for the speckle technique will give the best results.

I also prefer to use commercial top for the base but you could also prepare any locks you have in your stash to use up, just be sure to pre-card it well for a smooth prep to use in the speckle batts, which only go once through the carder.

A **drum carder**, or you could use a blending board for this technique too.

We will spin this into a bulky 2 plyed yarn and aim for about 90 meters/yards which should be enough for a chunky hat.

A pair of **US13 needles** if you decide to use the hat pattern but you should check your gauge!

MAKE A BATT: CARDING TIPS

Loading the carder: If you are using previously prepared fiber such as strips from pre-carded batts, or commercial roving or top, be sure to spread your fiber out evenly across the feed tray, you should be able to see through it, the trick is not to load too much at once, especially if you want to create a smooth batt.

If you are starting with washed locks, there is some choice about feeding locks onto your carder tip end first or butt end first, but for this kind of batt it's not too important which direction you have them, just open them out and load them in small quantities so you don't get jams. You can also load them on sideways if you want! This really helps to ensure they open right out and can add some extra loft to your batt too. Why? Just think about it, a carded preparation is fluffy, lofty, with very opened up locks, what better way to do this properly than to feed them in from the side? The action of the licker-in and the drum will ensure that the lock is completely opened out.

Remember, the goal of carding is also not to 'line up' your fibers all organized in the same direction, the goal is actually to create a 'batt' of unaligned fiber, that will keep its lofty and springy characteristic also in the final yarn.

My suggestion is that you try various ways to feed your fiber onto the drum, tip first, butt end first, jumbled up, and sideways, or just picked open with your hands into a fluffy cloud, see which preparation you prefer and choose the one that gives the result you need for your spinning.

Another useful tip to keep in mind is to not crank the carder too quickly. **Slower is better** when carding fiber, particularly if you are blending and preparing fine fibers. If you are getting nepps forming in your batt it may be because the fiber is too fine for the carding cloth you are using, and/or you are turning the crank too quickly and the tines are snapping the fiber, creating short pieces that form into nepps.

Thirdly, do not hold back the fibers on the feed tray as they move onto the carder, it will cause them to wrap around the licker-in drum and not feed onto the batt easily. This is true for all carders with a feed tray, however if you have a Louet Classic, you do not have a feed tray. This carder is built to 'take' the fiber from

your hand, a bit like hand feeding an animal. Let the fibers catch onto the licker drum as you turn it and watch them open up as the carder pulls them from your fingers. This gives you a lot of control over your carding and is a very good way to deal with your washed fleece and locks, often not even needing the first step to pre-open the locks.

IN THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS I DESCRIBE THE STEPS FOR MAKING A SPECKLE BATT WITH ONE BASE COLOUR AND MULTIPLE COLOURED SPECKLES.

Speckle Batt

Split your fiber up into two stacks of around 100grams (4oz) each if you can comfortably fit that onto your carder, smaller stacks if your carder works better with smaller quantities.

This gives you lots of control over colour placement and reduces the temptation to add thicker layers of the white, your goal is not to fill the carder to get a whole 100 grams (4oz) in your batts but to get your colours organised where you want them, and this is easier if working with easily manageable quantities.

STEP ONE

Start by adding enough white fiber to the carder to create a layer around the drum that is thick enough that you cannot see the drum underneath it. This is your base. If you want to make something with a contrasting gradient like I used for the hat, you can use the solid colour on just one side of the drum, taking up no more than about a quarter of the drum width. Layer this colour on as you layer on each quantity of white so it will build up at the same time, forming a slight gradient where they meet.

STEP TWO

Once you have your base layer on you can start to 'dab' the speckle colours directly onto the large carder drum. You want to add very small amounts, if your spot of colour is too thick then when you spin it the colour will spread

You might also like to try what I did for the yarn used in the hat pattern and create some gradient stripes. You can do this by adding your dark colour to one side of the carder in a strip, keep building up the layers on that section with only your dark colour, adding in speckles when you add them to the white part of the batt. You will end up with a batt that has one colour on one side merging into the main colour of the rest of the batt along the length of it,



out as you draft it and become a small stripe rather than a speckle. Since we are using high contrast between the white base and the colours speckles you need very little to make an impact.

Do not feed your colours through the licker in, they will spread out too much and not 'speckle', add them in touches directly to the large drum.

Dab your colours fairly randomly but evenly around the entire drum, not too close together because we will be adding more layers yet! If you are using sparkle this is a good time to add some as well. The colour speckles and sparkles will become integrated inside the batt.

STEP THREE

Next we need a second layer of white, just enough that you no longer see any of the colour speckles from the previous layer showing through it.

STEP FOUR

Now it is time to dab on the colours around the batt again, be careful not to over do it. You can choose if you want to add speckles to the contrasting piece or not.

Repeat these steps until you have used up your first pile of fluff.

Remove the fiber from the carder as your first batt, then repeat the process with the rest of your fiber to make another batt, giving you a total of around 200 grams (7oz) of fiber.

IF YOU ARE USING A BLENDING BOARD to make your speckle fiber, follow each step in the same manner, creating layers of your white base colour then adding small dabs of speckle colours in between. Since the blending board is less likely to spread your fibres out than the drum carder you can be sure your colours will stay just as you have placed them, however you may find that your layers of white don't integrate quite as much as they do on the carder and won't become quite as lofty, because the board doesn't 'card' so much as holds everything in place nicely. This is just fine for our purposes!

Use a reasonably strong brush, something like a wallpaper brush works well, to brush every layer in before you add the next one and try not to make the layers too thick. Especially brush the white into place before you add your dabs of colour, this way they will catch smaller amounts and work better as speckles.

When you have filled your Blending board simply lift your fiber off from the end and pull it away as a batt, then start over with the next batch until you have used all your fiber!





SPIN YOUR SPECKLES!

For this fiber prep its best to go for a **chunkier** yarn rather than fine one. Fine spinning will have the effect of stretching out the colours into short stripes rather than splotches while spinning thick will keep nice colour placement and look more speckled. Of course if you have managed to get lots of really small fiber flecks you can spin finer and it will be great!

If you have not spun a lot of bulky yarn there are a couple of things to keep in mind!

- Treadle slowly, you need less twist in a bulky yarn than a fine one.
- Use your largest whorl for less twist (on an Aura just use the middle one).
- Keep your hands a bit further apart than usual.
- If your yarn starts to thin, let the twist get into your supply fiber and grab more fiber to draft out, it will instantly be thick again.
- Draft shorter amounts than usual.

I would suggest spinning this as a straightforward two ply yarn. Weigh your fiber and make sure you have two quantities of the same amount (you might need to take some off one batt and add it to the other) so you will get approximately the same amount per bobbin. Spin two singles. You could also spin one single and make a centre pull ball of it for plying but you may find it tricky to make a ball with this quantity yarn. When you ply you should also find that the speckle effect will be further enhanced as you combine the two singles and the colour placement will be more jumbled.

Set this yarn as usual by tying in three or four places then dropping into a warm bath. Let it sit a couple of minutes then take it out and gently drain then drop into a cold bath (eek!) The fibres will start to grab onto each other for comfort and increase the outer layer stability by slightly fulling. Repeat the process a couple of times avoiding agitation.

Do you want to knit this into a cute hat?!

Follow the pattern and use your speckle yarn for this fun project!

Speckle Beanie

You will need

US13 (9mm) knitting needles

Gauge: 2sts = 1" (2.5cm)

Finished size: 23" circumference hat

Instructions

Cast On 46 sts with a long tail cast on

Row 1: *k1, p1. Rep from * across row

Repeat row 1 until 10" from cast on edge.

Next row: *k2tog across entire row.

Next row: purl row

Next row: *k2tog across. entire row

Next row: purl row

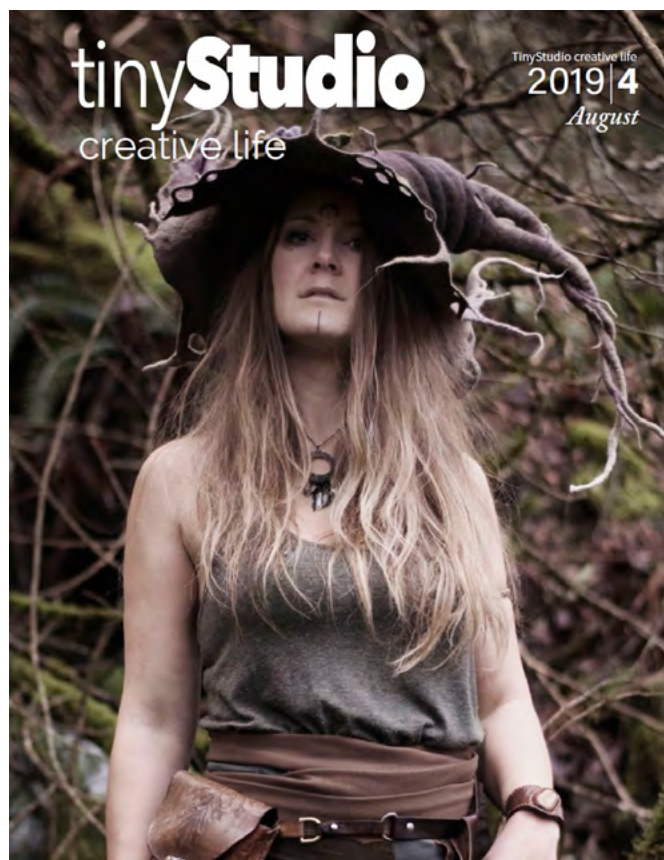
Next row: Cast off: *pass the 2nd to last st up and over the last st and off the needles. Rep until only 1 st remains. Fasten off, leaving long tail for sewing up seam.

Assembly:

Sew up side of hat. Weave in loose ends.

You can also add a pom pom!





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COLOPHON

tinyStudio Magazine

703A Beech Road, Hastings 4122, New Zealand
email info@fiberygoodness.com

Editor Suzy Brown

Assistant Editor Evanita Montalvo

Editorial Assistance Arlene Thayer

Information

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A close-up photograph of a light-colored, woven basket filled with dark, curly wool. Several small, colorful felting projects in shades of pink, blue, and green are scattered on top of the wool. The basket is resting on a surface of dark, smooth stones and some dry twigs.

tiny**Studio**

creative life

Woolwench: Suzy Brown