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JUNE 2012

knitting Yarns



JUNE 20: MEGHAN ERIN

Ryerson Fashion Design graduate Meghan Erin will share with us her Autumn/Winter collection, *Willomyne*, at our June meeting.

Born and raised in Edmonton, AB, Meghan has been developing herself as a designer for the past five years. An intrinsic love of the arts and all things beautiful led her to first discover her passion for sewing while making her own dance costumes in high school.

After earning a diploma in design from Marvel College in her home town, she decided to broaden her experiences and left home for Toronto at the age of 18. For the past four years she has been attending Ryerson University, and is proud to have recently earned her bachelor's degree in Fashion Design.

Meghan is currently doing freelance work and interning part-time with Roots Canada. Her future plans include

participation in Toronto's upcoming FAT week (Fashion Alternative Toronto), and the development of her own yoga-centric knitwear line.

For their graduating thesis, each student was required to create a collection of five outfits. Meghan's collection incorporates the use of locally-reared alpaca products to provide the customer with warmth, luxury and style.

What inspired the outfits in Meghan's collection? What steps were taken in developing and refining the collection? What process was used in creating the individual pieces, in particular those that were hand knit? What challenges were encountered along the way? What was learned?

She will answer all of these questions, and share with us where she sees her future in the fashion world.



Upcoming Meeting Dates

Wednesday, June 20, 2012

Wednesday, September 19, 2012

Wednesday, October 17, 2012

Location

Innis Town Hall, 2 Sussex Ave.

NW corner of St. George St. and Sussex Ave.
on the University of Toronto campus.

TTC Access

Five-minute walk south from St. George subway station.

Parking available at several nearby locations.

Meeting Time: 7:30 p.m.

Doors Open: 6:45 p.m.

Admission

\$6.00 for guests and Newsletter Only Subscribers

Free to Full Members (please show card at door)

All Downtown Knit Collective meetings, functions and events are governed by the Rules of Conduct as determined by the Executive.

To read a copy of the Rules, please visit
www.downtownknitcollective.ca/dkc_conduct.html

We had a full house at the May meeting. There were approximately 170 people, at least 18 of whom were first-timers.

Announcements

The executive nominations are over, and hooray! There is no election required. Everyone on the executive is staying put.

Carole gave a brief recap of Frolic 2012, and extended thanks to all volunteers and committee members for making it such a successful event.

Edna came to the podium to speak briefly about the focus group and World Wide Knit in Public Day (June 9). Carole has obtained a permit for the use of Speaker's Corner at City Hall, which is a pleasant place with lots of trees and shade. Participants are encouraged to bring lawn chairs and whatever else they might need. Carole noted that there is a Tim Horton's across the street.

The date for the annual bus trip has been confirmed: October 27. One of the destinations is Shelridge Farm, the other (and lunch location) is still up in the air. Joan is open to suggestions from members.

Show & Tell

Nora Galsi showed a Hoari sweater in gorgeous purples and blues. She noted that she customized it extensively for her body, with wide width, medium length and short sleeves. All together a beautifully constructed piece (though Carole did locate one unfinished end in the cuff).

Elizabeth Hilton created an amazing rainbow vest using Kauni yarn. She based her vest on the popular Swiss cheese-like Braden shawl, knit in one piece and sewn up one hour before the meeting. Nothing like Show & Tell for a little finishing motivation.

Alison showed a very attractive Seaport skirt from Modern Top-Down Knitting. It's a superwash from Malabrigo in Ravelry Red. She highly recommends Spanx to anyone thinking of trying a knit skirt.

Linda and her friend Reet dazzled the audience with a number of Haapsalu shawls (at least five or six). Linda showed one that was knit by her mother, who

recently passed away. Dismissing it as "old lady stuff" when she was younger, she now appreciates the work that went into it. Traditionally a Haapsalu should be fine enough to pass through a wedding ring, and many of the shawls shown would easily pass the test. Amazing work.

Bonnie Jull showed a purple beret she finished with the help of Dr. Knit. She says you wouldn't believe the hours of work it took to make it fit her head.

Christina and Tamara put on a little "Not too knitty" mini fashion show in honour of Stephanie Pearl-McPhee, whose daughter Sam once remarked that you can easily spot a knitter in a crowd because none of their knitted accessories match.

Raffle

It was announced before the drawing that as of the May meeting, we have exceeded this year's fundraising goal. The Yarn Harlot agreed to sign her books, but warned that "a rare, unsigned copy" is probably more valuable.

A gift basket including *Things I Learned From Knitting* was won by Yvette.

At Knit's End, *Things I Learned From Knitting* and *Free Range Knitter* were won by Michelle Bennett.

Two skeins of yarn from Wellington Fibres was won by Judy Renton.

A copy of *Stitch 'n Bitch Nation* was won by Sandra Wetherald.

Guest Speaker

Before beginning, Stephanie took a picture of the crowd to show to her mother, to prove that we're more than just "a knitting club". She admitted that despite the fact that she speaks all the time, she always gets nervous in front of a hometown crowd. If she makes a fool of herself, there is nowhere to hide. For example, she can't go back to Philadelphia because her fly was down the entire time, and no one told her. She can never go back to Calgary, because she accidentally locked herself out of her hotel room wearing only a towel.

Stephanie began her presentation by noting that to admit you're a knitter to someone else can be a risky proposition. They will likely assume you are dim (and if you tell them you're a spinner, you're both

dim and archaic). You might as well tell them you enjoy licking salt off of crackers, or pressing all the buttons in the elevator. Yet have you ever noticed that if you knit in public, people can't take their eyes off you? If they're brave, they may very well come up and ask you a bunch of questions. "Is it hard? How long did that take? Did you know you can buy socks at Wal-Mart?" No one asks a carpenter these kinds of questions ("Haven't you ever heard of IKEA?") But it's the classic, "I wish I had the time to knit!" that truly drives Stephanie up the wall. Because this person is sitting there, riding the bus, or waiting at the doctor's office, doing the exact same thing, minus knitting. We're all given the same 24 hours—and it's possible to do two things at once. Consider that the average North American spends four hours per day watching TV, but somehow it's *knitting* that's a waste of time?

To help us feel better about ourselves, Stephanie then launched into a fascinating exploration of the mind—or more specifically—the knitting mind. It won't come as news to knitters that our craft of choice has many benefits. For starters, it's a great stress reliever. Considering that 75% of visits to the doctor are for complaints that are made worse by stress, this is a fairly big deal. Quieting the mind turns down the stress hormones that can hurt you. Repetition, focus, counting, keeping track of something—we do all of these things when we knit (note: this probably doesn't apply to lace knitting).

Serotonin is a neurotransmitter that's very important to our daily mental function. It levels out our moods and gives us a sense of well-being. If your serotonin levels are too low, it can result in depression, impaired decision-making and increased sensitivity to pain. Concentration and repetitive movements can enhance the effects of serotonin on the brain.

Dopamine is the feel-good neurotransmitter that is related to reward-seeking behaviour. It's secreted when we experience praise, hugs, kisses, even nicotine and cocaine. When you do something that has given you pleasure in the past, dopamine floods the body in anticipation. But what's really interesting is that dopamine works even better if you're

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Here's some fun for the summer!

Tunesian Knitting

Any number of Stitches

Row 1 (WS) Sl 1 k-wise, bring yarn to front (as if to purl), sl 1 k-wise, * yo over needles & back under to left (i.e., like a purl-to-purl yarn over), sl next st k-wise *. Repeat across row (NO stitches are knit in this row. After slipping the last stitch, make sure to complete the yo. This last yo will be loose and must be held in place when turning work to begin next row.

Row 2 * K2tog-B* (knit the yo and sl st together through the back loop). Repeat across row knitting each stitch together with the yo that lies ahead of it, through the back loop. The last st will always be without a yo. k-B the last stitch.

Repeat Rows 1 and 2.

Note: Slipping the stitch k-wise twists the stitch on Row 1 so that it lines up properly with the yo on Row 2. Knitting the K2tog through the back loop untwists the slipped stitch, but catches and locks the yo in place.

When on the left needle (in position to begin Row 2, the yo's of the previous row cross the back/behind the slipped stitches.

Tunesian Rib Stitch/Mock Vertical Tunesian Knitting

Odd number of stitches

Row 1 (WS) K1, * yo, slip 1, k1; repeat from *.

Row 2: K1, * k the yo and sl st of previous row tog through back loops, k1; repeat from *

Repeat Rows 1 and 2

Horizontal Tunesian Knitting

Any number of stitches

Row 1 (WS) * Sl 1 k-wise, yo * Repeat on every stitch. (i.e., Sl 1, then bring the yarn forward between the needles, and slip the next st. Take yarn over the needle and under to the front again, and slip the next st., etc.)

End the row with a yo, and keep the left thumb on it to retain it in position while turning to begin the next row.) [It may seem like there is an extra yo]

Row 2 *K2tog-B*. Do this all along the row, every slipped stitch being knitted together with the correct yo. (i.e., insert the needle through the back of the last yo and the last slipped stitch and knit them together.)

Notes & Tips: Each slipped stitch has its own yarn over. Make sure they are paired up before starting Row 2. You may need to do an "extra" yarn over to start row 2.

When on the left needle, (in position to begin Row 2) the yo's of the previous row cross the front/ facing side of the slipped stitches.

The yo's want to pair up with the stitch following rather than the preceding stitch. For this variation of Tunesian Knitting stitch, the yo's must be paired with the preceding sl st.

Mock Horizontal Tunesian Knitting

Multiple of 2 + edge stitch(es)

Row 1 (WS) *Yo, sl 1 p-wise, k1, repeat from *

Row 2 *K1, k2tog-tbl (yo and sl st of previous row), repeat from *

Row 3 *K1, yo, sl 1 p-wise, repeat from *

Row 4 *K2tog-tbl, k1, repeat from *

Repeat from Row 1.

Notes: Instructions do not include the edge stitch(es)
tbl = through back loop

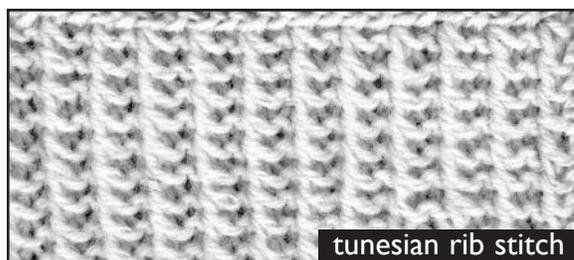
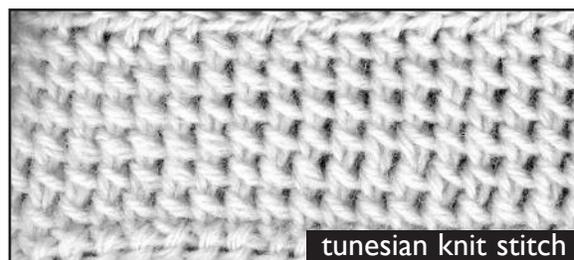
Sources:

Knitting Encyclopedia: 1500 Patterns, Mon Tricot Special - 0184, Pingouin/Mon Tricot

Mary Thomas's Book of Knitting Patterns, Mary Thomas

A Treasury of Knitting Patterns, Barbara Walker

Principles of Knitting, June Hemmons Hyatt



MEETING HIGHLIGHTS CONTINUED

not sure you're getting a reward or not. Something that's given you pleasure in the past, but doesn't always have a predictable outcome... sound familiar? That element of chance can turn an already pleasurable activity into a completely addictive one.

Another side benefit of knitting is reduction of pain. When you touch something, your brain has to prioritize what it's going to focus on, and can lessen input from other senses.

Stephanie went on to talk about theta, a state of mind it's very easy to slip into when knitting. We usually experience it at least twice a day: when we're slipping into sleep and when we're just waking up. It's a floaty state of enhanced concentration when thoughts flow freely and judgement is turned off (no "that's a stupid idea"). Theta can be induced by focus and repetition (hello, knitting!) and it can also happen while driving or meditating. It makes us better problem solvers and better at being creative. Monks, who spend long stretches of time in theta while meditating, have been shown to have more neural connections than the average person. All this means enhanced neural coordination, enhanced focus, awareness and heightened activity in the left prefrontal cortex—the part of the brain associated with happiness. Monks are happy, and so are knitters—these are all measurable, permanent (and awesome) changes in the brain.

You may not think knitting and video games have much in common, but Stephanie noted that there are many surprising parallels. Behold the striking similarities in this list of seven common traits of the most addictive video games... is it any wonder we can't stop knitting?

- Progress bars
- Many long- and short-term goals
- Rewards for effort
- Rapid, frequent feedback
- An element of uncertainty
- Moments of risk-taking resulting in increased confidence
- Engagement with other people

Stephanie concluded with a final, delicious bit of information. In our brains, cells called motor command neurons have been identified that fire whenever we perform an action. It's been discovered that 20% of these neurons are mirror neurons, that fire whenever you watch *someone else* perform an action. It's the very essence of how we learn. So just imagine—whether they want to or not, people who watch us knit are learning. It's the ultimate revenge.

We'd like to thank the Yarn Harlot for spending the evening with us, in spite of being a bit under the weather. Stephanie is as funny in person as she is on paper, and many audience members laughed until they cried.

We are pleased to announce the DKC Executive for 2012-2013

President (returning)	Carole Adams
Communications Coordinator (new)	Donna Campbell
Program Coordinator (returning)	Cristina Simionovici
Promotion Coordinator (returning)	Edna Zuber
Secretary (new)	Trish Denhoed
Special Events Coordinator (returning)	Joan Kass
Treasurer (returning)	Wendy Mauzeroll

A special thank-you to Wendy Eng, our current Secretary, who will be leaving the executive team. However, Wendy will continue to be involved in many ways.

UPCOMING EVENTS

TTC Knitalong 2012

The Great TTC Knitalong is a yearly yarn-filled Toronto event that brings together knitters and hookers (aka crocheters) alike from all over the GTA, Ontario and beyond! This year's Knitalong (KAL) will take place on Saturday July 14th, 2012 and runs from 11 a.m. to approximately 7 p.m. All proceeds to benefit Sistering.

Visit ttcknitalong.blogspot.ca for registration information.



All proceeds from the raffle table at DKC meetings are donated to the Canadian Cancer Society. So far this year we have raised \$1,601 with an end-of-season goal of \$1500. That's right, we've exceeded our goal! Thanks to everyone who has contributed.

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