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Hi. We're Misha & Puff.

Maybe you've been following our brand since the beginning in 2012 (thank you!). Or maybe you're new to the Misha & Puff community (welcome!). Either way, we're glad you're here.

In these pages, you can learn more about what makes us, us. This includes stories about our own history, [our artisan partners](#), [our responsible fibers](#), and [our approach to Fair Trade](#). Because to "get" us, you need to understand all of those things.

As with all good stories, let's start at the beginning...



Once upon a time, a girl loved a boy.

In this case, the girl was Anna Wallack, our founder and creative director, and the boy was her newborn son. Anna knitted him clothes that he would be cozy and comfortable in (no itchy yarns!). "I was making up my own styles," she says. "I was making things that weren't in the marketplace."

Let's just say word got around about Anna's gorgeous knits. She started knitting clothes for a couple of boutique shops, but that ended up being too much for one person to handle.

What to do? Anna wanted her knits to be available to a wider audience. "But I didn't want it to be me knitting these things," she says. "I wanted to work with knitters." She also wanted to use quality, responsibly sourced materials while practicing Fair Trade principles that protected artisans.

Anna rolled up her sleeves and began researching things like yarn production, which ultimately led her to Peru, the textile capital of the world. She happily discovered the country had the right infrastructure and artisan partners to help her bring her vision to life. Misha & Puff was born in 2012.

OK, maybe it didn't happen as quickly or as smoothly as that sentence suggests. But you get the idea.

[Learn more about our Artisan Partners](#)



Our brand, in the proverbial nutshell

We love slow fashion that's stylish, yet unfussy. Hardwearing and long lasting. Expertly crafted. Thoughtfully manufactured. Good for the planet. Kind to animals. Fair to all people involved in the process.

Every day, we strive to be a company that makes lovely, meaningful things while doing good in every aspect of our business.

That's Misha & Puff.

Questions? We love hearing from you. [Ask away!](#)

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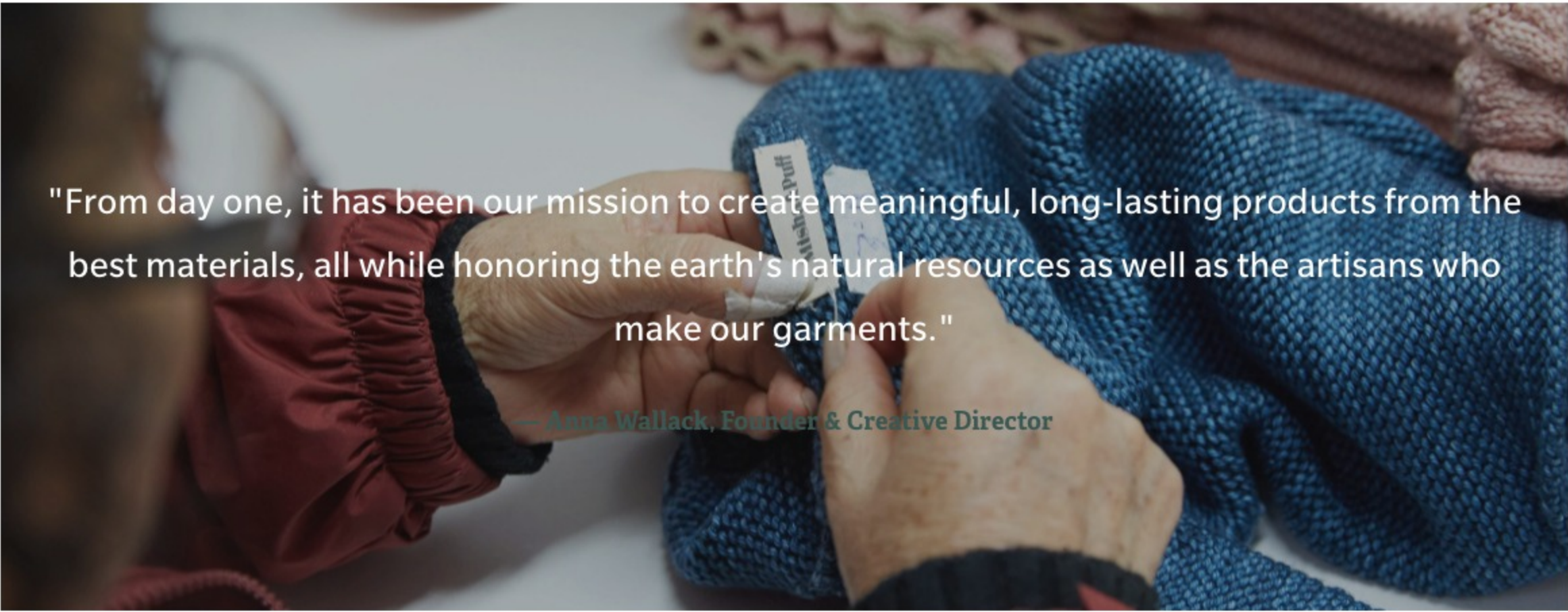
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"From day one, it has been our mission to create meaningful, long-lasting products from the best materials, all while honoring the earth's natural resources as well as the artisans who make our garments."

— Anna Wallack, Founder & Creative Director

A reverence for things made well & made thoughtfully

At the core of every garment we make is reverence. Reverence for artistry. Reverence for history. Reverence for cultural traditions. Reverence for people and the planet.



Our passion for S L O W fashion

We’ve all seen the fashion industry’s frenetic pace in movies like The Devil Wears Prada or shows like Project Runway. While exciting to watch from the comfort of our couches, there are inherent problems with the “fast fashion” approach: What’s happening behind the scenes? Who’s getting hurt? People? Animals? Our planet? All of the above?

None of that is OK with us.

See, we want this planet to be around for our children. And their children. And so on. We want our children to see the value in artistry and craft. And most of all we want our children to see the value inherent in every person who brings a product to life.

THIS is what drives our brand. And we're talking every aspect of it. From **the materials we use**, to **the artisan partners we build relationships with**, to our own production schedules.

Smaller collections, deliberately

We purposely have smaller collections that we stagger throughout the year rather than following the fast fashion focus on two big seasons. Scaling handmade items, like knits, is a delicate dance. You can't snap your fingers and scale overnight. And we refuse to participate in the nauseating practice of intentional overproduction.

This approach means we'll have less than demand. Not because we want to, but simply because we'll not answer the call to make more at any cost. We get that it's a strange concept in a world that's become increasingly normalized to immediate gratification and two-day shipping. But what is truly responsible? What is truly sustainable?

We won't scale manufacturing faster than our comfort level. To us, it's more important to make fewer, perfect items than more items that don't meet our standards for quality and ethics. We believe that slow and steady is the way to go when it comes to sustainable, organic growth

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A thoughtful approach to every aspect of our business.

To us, being thoughtful means asking questions, especially HARD questions. It means understanding how materials are sourced and manufactured. It means putting people and the planet first, always.

When we first sought to make our garments, we never thought we'd be able to scale in a way that allowed us to produce quality products with integrity in the process. Think **Fair Trade** and **sustainability**.

What made us realize we could do it? **Our artisan partners in Peru**.

Peru is the knitting capital of the world, so it's no wonder we first looked to Peru when we started on this journey. But Peru offered us so much more than simply expert knitters. In Peru, sustainability is the default. Peruvians cherish the land and the resources it provides. And Peruvians are natural innovators. They figure out solutions to puzzles and problems.

The country's ongoing shift from "informality" to "formality" — **a complex topic that's worth digging into** — is also important. This shift is helping protect more workers, most of whom are women, many of whom practice trades, like knitting.



Together, figuring out what's possible

Our artisan partners showed us what is possible with our vision. Together, we figured out how to scale quality hand knit garments (including hand-dyed wool) and handmade shoes in a responsible, ethical way that everyone can feel good about.

Learn more about our artisan partners:

- OUR KNITTING PARTNERS
- OUR HAND-DYED YARN PARTNER
- OUR HANDMADE SHOE PARTNER
- OUR ORGANIC COTTON PARTNER

Questions? We love hearing from you. [Ask away!](#)

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Did you know that many brands in the fashion industry don't want anything to do with the word "handmade" because of the difficulty with scaling? Add in other elements to the mix—like **hand-dyed yarn**—and plenty of folks thought we were out of our minds when we first started. (At moments, we did, too.)

It hasn't always been easy. In fact, it's still hard at times. (Especially during a pandemic.)

Let's back up. Why'd we decide to do something so HARD?

This goes back to **our reverence for traditional, handmade things**. Expertly handknit garments were the original vision for Misha & Puff. To truly honor the knitting tradition, we knew we had to go to the knitting capital of the world: Peru.



Why Peru?

Did you know some Peruvian textile artifacts date back 6000+ years? The Peruvian people have been expert artisans not simply for centuries, but for millennia. You could say knitting is in their blood, and you wouldn't be wrong. Family members pass on the skills and tricks of the trade, one stitch at a time. So, to us, Peru was the obvious choice for production, provided we could do it in a responsible way.

How could we scale handknit garments fairly and responsibly in Peru?

We wanted to make sure that everything we did adhered to **Fair Trade principles**. If we only celebrated the craft, but overlooked the artisans making the craft, we knew we would have failed. Good intentions weren't enough.

We knew that who we partnered with in Peru would matter. We wanted to work with artisan partners who shared our values and ethos—reverence for the craft, respect for the crafts people, and respect for the environment.

Luckily, we found them.



Our knitting partners in Lima and Arequipa have built strong textile businesses that produce quality knitwear in a responsible manner.

Our knitting partners are our lifeblood. They handle the day-to-day operations on the ground in Peru by working closely with their knitting leaders. (Think of knitting leaders like subcontractors.)

The knitting leaders operate as small businesses and manage their own groups of knitters. We refer to these groups of knitters as **knitting cooperatives**, and they exist all over Lima, Arequipa, and beyond. Our partners are careful about the knitting leaders they work with. They work with leaders who understand their responsibilities, like following Peruvian labor laws and paying appropriate taxes.

As you can see, this is very much a business based on relationships and trust. We've built strong relationships with trusted knitting partners in Peru. They, in turn, have built relationships with the knitting leaders they trust. We trust each other to do good, and to do the right things.

Ours isn't a long-distance romance, either. Our team has visited Peru many times and will continue to do so. We love meeting with our partners and the talented artisans who bring our designs to life.

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[Read the Next Chapter: About the Knitting Cooperatives](#)

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Empowering women, strengthening communities

The knitting cooperatives provide reliable jobs and steady income for a segment of the Peru population that has often been overlooked and marginalized for a variety of reasons. This is a bright spot in a country where the poverty rate hovers at 19 percent.

"There's so many women, especially 'mompreneurs', behind this process. Anna's a mom, I'm a mom, and a lot of the knitters and knitting leaders we work with are moms... They are women who are wanting or needing to stay in their home to be close to the children or closer to their children and need some sort of income that can give way to that and allow them to do that... And being able to provide work that women are able to fashion around their own lives and take on as much or as little as they want... there's a lot of flexibility that comes with the work. And that I think is one of the biggest values. Because it's the inflexibility of the traditional job structure that marginalizes a lot of these people that really have a lot of value to offer."

— Kelly P., Managing Director/Owner, & one of our knitting partners

How the cooperatives work

At Misha & Puff, we work directly with our knitting partners in Peru. Our partners work directly with their knitting leaders. Think of knitting leaders as sub-contractors. The knitting leaders have their own groups—or cooperatives—of knitters who they pay for their knitting expertise.

Informality vs. Formality

When talking about labor in Peru, you might hear the terms "formality" and "informality." This is a complex topic that we encourage you to read more about. An article published by the International Labour Organization cites statistics that say "73 percent of employed work [in Peru] is in informal conditions." This affects more than 12 million workers, mainly women.

The short of it goes like this: Informal employment lacks social protections and clean working conditions, among other things. The move to "formality" ensures workers have better protections. But like any change, it takes time.

One of our knitting partners explained the process to us: "We work with a knitting leader who's set up as a company that's formalized with the Peruvian tax entity... because the Peruvian tax entity also requires us to work with formalized entities."



The knitters set their own payment terms with their knitting leaders.

The knitters in the cooperatives also decide how much work they take on. Collaborating with their knitting leaders, they negotiate payment terms based on what goes into knitting and assembling a garment.

Every pattern is different. When we come up with a new design at Misha & Puff, the knitting leader and their knitters assigned to the design will produce a sample and quote a price. How much time goes into making a garment helps us determine the final cost. (But many other factors contribute to final cost besides the actual knitting—there's the material itself, the hand-dyeing, the quality control process, and so forth.)



Where and when the knitting takes place

Knitters might opt to work in their knitting leader's space or from their own homes (or a combination). This flexibility is critical. Flexible, part-time work allows knitters to be home with their children.

The steady work and regular pay also offer an alternative to other work that would likely require not only long commutes, but also long stretches away from their kids. Giving moms the chance to earn income while being home with their children during their formative years has helped strengthen local communities.



Knitting Cooperatives at a Glance

The number of knitting leaders and cooperatives has grown since our founding because of the reliable pay, reliable work, and reliable life/work balance that the cooperatives offer. Many of the knitters come in by word of mouth, often from within the same families because they've heard about the opportunities.

Knitters have control over how much work they do—and when they do it. Most knitters have other responsibilities, most notably taking care of children. They knit part time and on their terms.

Knitters have control over where they work. Some of the knitters do their work from home. Others come into cooperative knitting spaces or workshops run by their knitting leaders. Some do a combination.

Many knitters have work year-round. We want the knitters knitting 12 months a year rather than for two big fashion seasons. This hasn't necessarily been an easy thing to accomplish in an industry that values speedy production. Our solution: We have more frequent collections with staggered deliveries.

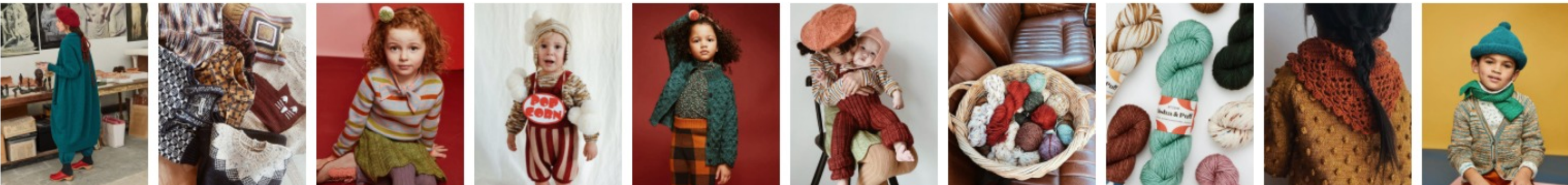
Knitters are paid regularly and reliably. Workers in the cooperatives are regularly and reliably paid by their knitting leaders, which is a requirement of this shift to "formality." Plus, the knitters have input regarding what they get paid.

Communication doesn't simply flow in one direction. From start to finish, it's a collaborative process. The feedback we've received from knitting leaders and their knitters has helped us create better products.

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Hand-dyed yarn is truly unique.

Now, we know what you're thinking: The word "unique" gets thrown around A LOT in the fashion industry. But in this case, it's true.

What does hand-dyeing even mean?

Hand-dyed yarns are just that: yarns that artisans dye with their hands—turning and manipulating while adding in their own essence into each thread.

Every kilo of our hand-dyed wool yarn will be a little different because each kilo is dyed by a different person.

And in that little difference? MAGIC. Possibilities. The result is a one-of-a-kind garment that you can't get anywhere else. A garment with (dare we say it) soul.



Making the magic happen in Peru.

Scaling handknit garments is HARD. And it becomes even harder when you want to use hand-dyed yarn.

Luckily, we found a fabulous Peruvian textile partner who has helped us turn our vision into reality—respectfully and responsibly—thanks to the company's eighty-plus years working with natural fibers like merino wool. (Speaking of wool, our textile partner also works with us **to make sure that the sheep providing our wool are treated properly.**)

In addition to the gorgeous colors, hand-dyed yarn also offers another benefit: smaller batches. Our artisans focus on one kilo of yarn at a time. Machine-dyed yarn requires more material—typically a lot more.

Even better? Our artisans use **low-impact dyes**, which absorb better into the yarn. This means less water is needed during the rinse process and less run-off of dye during the rinse.

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A cotton partner that goes way beyond organic.

For our organic pima cotton, we work with a family-owned company in Peru that's been a pioneer in the production and promotion of organic cotton for over thirty years.

This company is certified by the **Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS)**, which is the most rigorous standard in the world since it involves every step in the transformation of raw materials. Think cotton that you can trace right down to the farm in Peru and to the worker who handpicked the cotton.

To say our cotton partner lives and breathes organic cotton would be an understatement. But "organic" is only part of the story. Our partner is also certified by the **World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO)**.

As the **WFTO website** states, "We are the global community of social enterprises that fully practice Fair Trade. Our Guarantee System verifies that our members are truly Fair Trade Enterprises. This means they pioneer **models of business that put people and planet first.**"

People and the planet first. Values that we share at Misha & Puff as well.

Did you know?

Organic cotton reduces water consumption by 91% compared to conventionally grown cotton.

Source: [The Soil Association](#)

Full transparency regarding when and how we use organic pima cotton.

We love shining the spotlight on our artisan partners, but we don't want to mislead people into thinking that the cotton we use is always organic. It isn't. Currently, only our "cut and sew" products (rather than our knits) use 100% organic pima cotton. To understand why, take a deeper dive into our [pima cotton page](#).

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Spotlight: Meet Adriana Crocco

Adriana Crocco's Italian grandfather started making handmade shoes in Peru when he came to the country after World War II. (He had a Peruvian grandparent, so he was returning to his roots.) Eventually, Adriana's father took over the business. He often brought young Adriana into the factory. "I grew up around shoes," she says with a laugh.

After earning her college degree in business management, Adriana joined forces with her father and re-envisioned the business, turning it into what it is today: an artisan footwear manufacturing company called D'Art Cuero. Based out of Lima, the company works with responsible brands around the globe—brands that appreciate expert craftsmanship and products built to last.



Reinvigorating a dying art

As Adriana says, "Making shoes by hand is amazing, but it's really hard." Shoemaking is also a dying art, yet one that Adriana and her team of expert shoemakers keep alive in Lima.

And we're so grateful that they do.

Did you know each sole of a handmade shoe is carved specifically for that shoe? Adriana explains, "Here, they get the sole as raw as you can get it, and the person does all the work—all the sanding, all the crafting—and on the shoe. Not like separated and at the end you kind of stick it on, like a sticker. No! They actually carve the sole according to the shoe. So that's something special that not everyone does."

The quality of work is indeed unparalleled. It's also more expensive because it's done right. And by "right," we don't simply mean in terms of the craft itself. We also mean in terms of the shoemakers' welfare.

Adriana says, "What we have is special, but what we have is also expensive. Because we can't sell cheap shoes if you have all these responsibilities of the life of your workers. So if someone comes and wants a \$40 shoe, I'll be like 'I'm sorry, I can't do it.' ... I have to do everything I do to make sure my workers have a job and are well paid."



A people first approach and formal payroll

Adriana is a force to be reckoned with when it comes to protecting her workers. She explains that the people are the most important aspect of her business. "We can't make handmade shoes without the people."

Before Adriana came on board, many of the shoemakers were accustomed to a more informal approach to business. Barter and cash are still popular among artisans in Peru, even today. Known as "informality," this approach has been shifting over recent years to "formality." But like any other change, it takes time.

A proponent of formality, Adriana established a formal approach that follows Peru's rigorous labor laws and is designed to protect workers. This approach includes a formal payroll that directly deposits employee wages into their bank accounts and includes other benefits, such as company retirement contributions, paid holidays, and health insurance not just for workers, but also their family.



A factory with heart & soul

Adriana re-envisioned the concept of what a modern factory could be as well. Several years ago, the company opened a new factory, one that makes everyone proud with great lighting (including naturally lit space for people to eat lunch) and spacious work stations. (So you won't see images of people squished on top of one another.)

This also made it easier for the company to work during the pandemic, since the spacing between workers was already naturally socially-distanced.

A match made in shoe heaven

When Anna Wallack first started Misha & Puff, shoes weren't on her radar. But as the brand grew, the idea surfaced. The question became: Was this even possible? Would we be able to find a shoemaking partner in Peru as wonderful as our other partners? A shoemaking partner who shared our values for slow fashion, high quality, and strong ethics?

One of our knitting partners told us YES and made the introduction to Adriana and her team. Based on everything we described above about Adriana and her company, you can probably understand why it quickly became clear to us that Adriana would make an EXCELLENT partner. Luckily, the feeling was mutual.

Adriana says, "Misha & Puff is amazing. I like that they are not a fast fashion brand. They already loved what Peruvians can do. So it was just closing the chapter on having the whole thing... the clothes and the shoes! Plus, Misha & Puff know what they want to do. But they really appreciate when you give them suggestions. And they know how to listen. And that's something really nice to have as a client... it's a two-way street when you listen to the other. And I think Misha & Puff is really good at doing that."

Why should you buy handmade shoes?

Honestly, Adriana sums it up best: "Buy handmade shoes. Because eventually it's going to be a dying art. It's important to do it. It's also a philosophy. It's important to have something that is unique, and it's special, and it has a meaning. Because if we start buying cheap stuff online all the time, with no caring about what's behind the product, I don't know how the world is going to be in the future."

[Shop Child Shoes](#)



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When making a Misha & Puff garment, the integrity of every step in the production process matters. We can broadly break down the processing into the following...

- Animal welfare (the sheep!)
- Land management (the pastures!)
- Social welfare (the workers and local communities!)

We're careful about who we work with. We choose artisan partners who share our values and who care about the above as much as we do.



What *is* a Responsible Wool Program Anyway?

Imagine being able to trace every thread of a garment back to its source—think a specific sheep from a specific farm—so you can confirm animal welfare and integrity of the land. THAT'S where we're headed.

Our responsible wool program complies with the best practices promoted by the Responsible Wool Standard (RWS) and **Fair Trade principles**.

Is Misha & Puff's Responsible Wool Program "Certified"?

Currently, we're working with **our wool yarn partner** to add a responsible wool sourcing certification to our process—one that follows the practices set forth by the RWS. We're about six months into this certification (as you can imagine, it takes time!). We'll update this section once things become official.

What is the Responsible Wool Standard (RWS)?

The RWS website says it best: "The goals of the Responsible Wool Standard are to provide the industry with a tool to recognize the best practices of farmers; ensuring that wool comes from farms that have a progressive approach to managing their land, practice holistic respect for animal welfare of the sheep and respect the Five Freedoms of animal welfare."

The Five Freedoms of Animal Welfare

1. Freedom from hunger and thirst
2. Freedom from discomfort
3. Freedom from pain, injury, and disease
4. Freedom to express normal and natural behavior
5. Freedom from fear and distress



Learn More

- Wool Sheep Welfare – International Wool Textile Organization
- Responsible Wool Standard (RWS)

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To understand complex topics, we find it helps to take a step back. So let's break this down, starting with the basics.

What is cotton?

Cotton is a fiber that comes from cotton plants. The fiber is used in textiles (among other things). It's an incredibly popular textile in the fashion industry because of its versatility.

What is organic cotton?

Organic is a tricky word. The media, consumers, and brands use it so much that it has almost lost its meaning. Almost. It doesn't help, of course, that many countries have their own designations around what organic means. Even within environmental circles, debates persist.

Both organic and "non-organic" cotton come from plants. The difference is in the farming and harvesting of these plants.

What makes cotton "organic"?

Again, the difference is in the farming and harvesting of these plants. Here's what makes cotton organic:

- No genetically modified seeds are used
- No toxic chemical inputs used in the soil – only natural fertilizers and regular crop rotation to help maintain soil integrity
- A more natural approach to insect and weed management – again, no synthetic pesticides or herbicides
- No human or chemical intervention when it comes to defoliating plants – defoliation happens through a naturally-occurring frost

Learn more about our Organic Cotton Partner



What is pima cotton?

Pima cotton, which originated in Peru, has a longer fiber than traditional cotton (pima cotton is often referred to as "extra-long staple cotton"). This makes for a softer and more durable weave (important when making products for children—or for any product that you want to last a lifetime).

What type of cotton does Misha & Puff use?

Misha & Puff garments made with cotton use 100% pima cotton from Peru. And when we say 100%, we mean it! No blends here.

In addition, some of our pima cotton fabric is 100% organic certified (we note this on the product pages).

Why not 100% organic cotton 100% of the time?

There are a couple of reasons.

First, we haven't figured out a way (yet) to hand dye organic cotton yarn in a manner that won't be cost prohibitive. We're working on this, and if/when we can bring hand-dyed organic cotton yarn to the market in a responsible way, we will.

Second, it's important to keep in mind that organic certifications cost money and involve lengthy processes. Not all farmers, especially smaller farmers in developing countries like Peru, can afford organic farming certifications.

We've been to Peru several times to meet with our partners, and one of the things we've learned is that sustainability is the default mode in Peru. Peruvians respect their land and understand how precious their resources are. Many farmers practice responsible, sustainable farming, even if they aren't officially "certified" due to costs.

We can honestly say that we feel good about the cotton we get from Peru. (And remember, our kids and families wear our garments as well, so this matters to us, too!)

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We care deeply about the impact our products have on artisans, customers, and the environment. And this most certainly holds true when it comes to the dyes we use in our garments.

After all, our own kids and family members wear Misha & Puff, too! We care about what we're putting against our loved one's skin... and how anything we do affects the planet.

We use two types of dyes in our products: plant-based dyes and low-impact dyes.



Plant-Based Dyes

Plant-based dyes are about as natural as you can get. Not to mention, they are simply lovely! We once visited the farm in Lima that makes our plant-based dyes, and our host put his hand into a dye bath and drank it. It was just mango! (Note: We do NOT recommend drinking dyes. We're simply illustrating how gentle plant-based dyes are.)

Plant-based dyes do tend to fade faster than their synthetic counterparts, however. And if you're growing crops to make plant-based dyes, you need to consider land management and the environment, just as you would any other crop used for eco-friendly textiles.



Low-Impact Industrial Dyes

When we use industrial dyes, we make sure they're "low impact." Low-impact dyes are still synthetic, chemical-based dyes. But they don't use the same toxic chemicals as conventional dyes.

Low-impact dyes have better absorption rates into the yarn. This means less water needed during the rinse process and less run-off of dye during the rinse. So low-impact dyes are better for the environment.

Low-impact dyes are also known as "azo free." Azo dyes are used in conventional dyes, and they can be toxic.

Low-impact dyes don't contain heavy metals. This is better for the skin and for people with metal allergies.

Note: Oftentimes, low-impact dyes are referred to as "fiber-reactive dyes." Generally, this is accurate—most fiber-reactive dyes are considered low impact according to the STANDARD 100 by OEKO-TEX. Fiber-reactive dyes that don't meet the standard usually have trace amounts of toxic metals.

Any synthetic dyes we use at Misha & Puff are certified low impact according to the STANDARD 100 by OEKO-TEX.

Questions? We love hearing from you. [Ask away!](#) [Read the Next Chapter: About Machine Knitting](#)

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Expert skills, gorgeous results

Misha & Puff is famous for producing gorgeous, knitted garments. If our knits immediately conjure pictures of Peruvian women with knitting needles, their fingers going a mile a minute, you wouldn't be wrong.

But did you know that there are other ways to knit besides using traditional knitting needles?

And that our garments today may incorporate a bunch of techniques from start to finish?



Let's talk about different ways to knit...

Hand-knitting. Think knitting needles and skeins of yarn.

Manual knitting machine. It's NOT electric. Think of it like the knitting version of a loom that you would use in weaving. Some people classify manual knitting machines as hand knitting, but some don't. It depends on your definition of hand-knitting.

Industrial knitting machines. This is an electric machine, and it can range in size, style, and capabilities.

Machine knitting requires specialized skills. It is its own art form, and it offers many benefits to boot:

- It's easier to knit patterns that use multiple colors.
- It's easier to maintain the right tension.
- It's speedy.

As we mentioned, some of our knitted garments might use a combination of techniques.

The **knitting cooperatives** do a combination of knitting by hand, manual machine, and industrial machine. It's because of this combination of techniques and flexibility that knitting in Peru is so special. For example, one part of the garment might be done with an industrial machine, but then another part might have crochet edging. Two different knitting groups might be working together on this garment (or multiple knitters within the same group).

We also have a textile partner in Arequipa that has a machine knitting factory in addition to knitting cooperatives.



The magic of knitting with our partner in Arequipa

Our knitting partner in Arequipa is the owner of a textile factory that originally started two decades ago. One of the co-founders was a woman with a big dream: to celebrate Peru's rich textile history and bring work to an area of the country where people, primarily women, needed reliable jobs.

Today, the successful business provides work for 250+ factory workers and 500+ artisan knitters in communities in and around Arequipa.

Our Arequipa knitting partner has GOTS and Fair Trade certifications.

The company lives and breathes the concept of "people first." In addition to the steady and quality work it provides, it has a daycare on site so that workers can see their children. It also created a non-profit association that focuses on improving the quality of life in Andean communities in the Arequipa region, particularly for women and children. It not only values its employees, but also its clients like us. We're grateful for the partnership.

One of our favorite anecdotes: Our partner told us that the reliable work and income over the last decade-plus helped one machine knitter save money for his son's education. Today, that son is a doctor. Those are the stories we love to hear and **one of many reasons why we bring our work to Peru.**

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Read the Next Chapter: Why We're Passionate About Fair Trade

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What exactly is Fair Trade?

Fair Trade is a global movement that encourages companies to embrace responsible approaches to making and selling products, particularly in developing countries. For example, paying fair wages, using sustainable resources, and supporting local communities where factories are based. (This isn't an exhaustive list, either.)

Fair Trade also encourages consumers to make better choices about who they buy their products from. Because after all, what we buy and use in our daily lives not only affects ourselves and our families. These decisions also impact other people, animals, communities, and our planet.

Fair Trade isn't simply a philosophy. It's a way of life—and a lifelong pursuit.

For **companies**, this means actively monitoring its Fair Trade practices, learning from mistakes, and listening—really listening—to its workers, vendors, partners, and customers as well as best practices from recognized Fair Trade organizations.

Consumers also need to remain vigilant. Looking for words like "Fair Trade" and "sustainability" on labels isn't enough. As consumers, we need to dig deeper and go beyond the marketing copy. We need to ask tough questions and hold companies—and ourselves—accountable.

No, it's not always easy. But it is important.



What Fair Trade means to us at Misha & Puff.

To us, Fair Trade isn't merely a better way to do business. It's the only way to do business.

One of the questions we often get asked is this: Does Misha & Puff work with Fair Trade Certified vendors?

To us, it's critical that we work with artisan partners who always put people and the planet first. Several of our vendors are Fair Trade certified.

For example, our **wool yarn partner is Fair Trade certified**. Our **knitting partner in Arequipa is Fair Trade certified**. And **our organic pima cotton farmer** is not only Fair Trade certified, but also GOTS certified. Other partners are actively pursuing certification. As you can imagine, it's a lengthy process.

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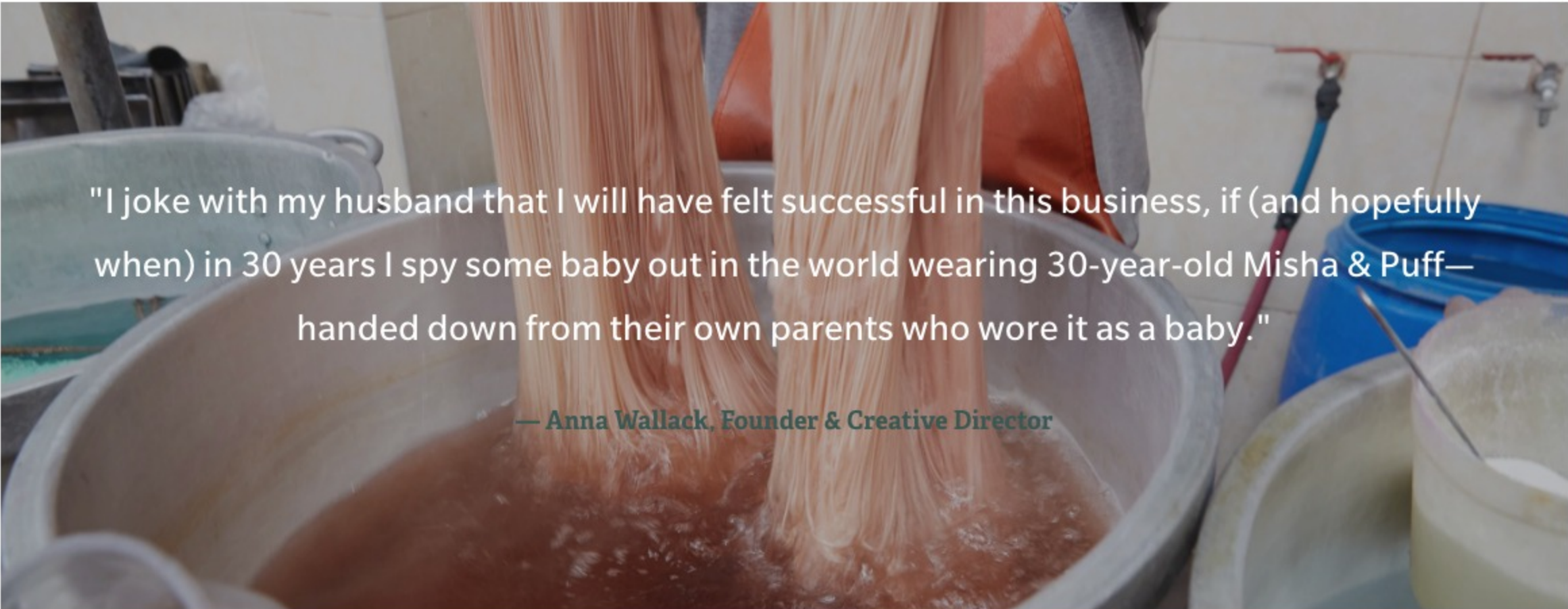
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We call ourselves a sustainable brand. But what does that mean?

To us, a sustainable brand is all about organic, measured growth. It's the opposite of fast fashion. Because if you scale too quickly, you'll stress certain areas.

For example, if you suddenly need a ton of wool sweaters RIGHT AWAY, this will cause stress on the supply chain and on workers. You'll be scaling up knitters too fast and you might flood the market with products and suddenly you don't need those same knitters six months later.

When we invest in people and their communities—whether in Peru or even our own backyard—we've made a commitment to them, and we have a responsibility.

A slower, steadier, sustainable approach to fashion—and the future.

This is a marathon, not a sprint. We're ardently against overproduction. We are conservative buyers. Our garments and yarn have a long lead time for production. The best time is six months. But we even start way before that to get to the volume we need. This means that ordering within the same season isn't an option.

We have a long-term vision, not only for our business, but also the earth. Our kids live here, too. So will their kids. And so on. We have a responsibility to them and the planet.

To be a sustainable brand, it goes back to **our thoughtful approach**. What can we do—as a business—to make sure we're protecting the planet?

For us, this means using **low-impact dyes** in our **hand-dyed wool yarn**. It means working with **farmers who understand how to cultivate cotton in a responsible way**. It means ensuring animal welfare through things like our **Responsible Wool Program**. Even how we ship products comes into play. We've moved away from using plastic, and we have changed our shipping materials to be more eco-friendly. We also use Shop Pay to help offset emissions incurred during delivery.

This isn't an exhaustive list, either. And we're constantly asking ourselves "What can we do better?"



Reviewing, improving, growing

No process is perfect. And no doubt, we've made mistakes. We're constantly reviewing processes and looking for better ways to make our products by returning to our guiding principles: people and planet first.

As Anna Wallack, our founder and creative director, likes to say, "We never reach perfection, but that doesn't stop us from trying. It's the act of trying, though, where you find the real magic and growth."

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The majority of Misha & Puff products rely on Peruvian land, farms, and artisans to bring our products to life. This is intentional and reflects **our commitment to Free Trade principles** by working with producers in developing countries and achieving equitable and sustaining trade relationships with them.



Peru became the obvious choice for producing our products, thanks to its long history in textiles.

Did you know some Peruvian textile artifacts date back 6000+ years? The Peruvian people have been expert artisans not simply for centuries, but for millennia. You could say knitting is in their blood, and you wouldn't be wrong. Family members pass on the skills and tricks of the trade, one stitch at a time.

Plus, sustainability is the country's default.

Peruvians recognize that resources are precious, that waste isn't an option, and that doing quality work is the only way to approach a craft, whether it's **hand knitting, farming, making shoes, or hand-dyeing yarn.**



So when our label says “Made in Peru,” this label reflects...

The artisans' love for their craft. Peruvian artisans never fail to WOW us with their quality handiwork. When we say they're world-class artisans, we're not exaggerating.

Techniques and/or materials produced in Peru. Whether it's hand-dyed yarn or locally grown pima cotton or the sole of a shoe being expertly sanded and carved to fit that shoe, the techniques and materials that go into making our products celebrate the country's rich textile heritage.

Our hearts. For us, Peru isn't simply a place to make stuff. The Peruvians inspire and share our vision for the way we want to make our products.



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Read the Next Chapter: How We Design & Develop Our Products

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Collaboration is at the heart of everything we do.



The visionary behind Misha & Puff is our founder and creative director, Anna Wallack. You've probably seen her on Instagram. :)

If you're not familiar with Anna's story, here's the short of it: After Anna's first child was born, she knitted him clothes that he would be cozy and comfortable in (no itchy yarns!). Let's just say... word got around about Anna's gorgeous knits. (She's been a lifelong knitter, and she spent over a decade as a stylist... she's got a GREAT eye.) Anna started knitting clothes for a couple of boutique shops, but, as you can imagine, that ended up being too much for one person to handle.

So, what to do? Anna wanted to make these gorgeous knits available to a wider audience. She wanted to use quality, responsibly sourced materials while practicing Fair Trade principles. She rolled up her sleeves, researched, and reached out to potential partners/vendors, and Misha & Puff was born. (OK, maybe it didn't happen as quickly or as smoothly as that sentence suggests. But you get the idea.)

Today, Anna continues to serve as Misha & Puff's Creative Director. She works closely with the rest of the Misha & Puff team as well as our artisan partners in Peru to design and develop our products.

Here's some insight into the process...

When we design an item, we're usually envisioning multiple pieces that go together in a certain style. We then work closely with our artisan partners to make sure the design is translated appropriately.

Our partners collaborate with us on designs and colors. They are truly the experts at what they do, whether it's hand knitting, making shoes, or developing colors for our hand-dyed yarn. We welcome their suggestions and ideas because they make our designs even better. This ongoing collaboration has not only strengthened and solidified the Misha & Puff look, but has also served as a rewarding experience for our Peruvian partners and our team in the U.S.



It's sample time! The artisans make a sample and send it to us along with initial pricing. Yes, our partners tell us how much things will cost, not the other way around. Bet you weren't expecting that, right? No, the price point doesn't always work for us. We've had to abandon designs for that reason. But we can also communicate concerns to our partners. And sometimes there are things they can do with a design (for example, shortening a section) that can make a difference. Collaboration is essential. If we dictated an unrealistic and unfair price point to our partners, someone on their end would lose out, like the artisans. That's NOT the way we want to do business.



If the sample looks great and the pricing works for our line, we include it. In many cases, we may need to drop one or more of the items from the new designs, cut it from certain channels, or take a smaller margin, which is what we often do. We work with the knitters and our vendors on fair pricing that works for all of us, meaning everyone who is involved in the process from start to finish.

From there, we discuss capacity and timing and place a purchase order! This is truly an exciting moment for everyone involved in the process. There's nothing quite like bringing an idea to life and knowing we'll be releasing it into the world.



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