

GUEST of a GUEST

Crazy, Sexy, Wool: Wool And The Gang Talk Knits To Wear All Year Round

By Annie Rooney | Mar 7, 2012 3:24 PM | Interviews



If you don't own a sweater, scarf, hat or snood from [Wool And The Gang](#), keep on itching. Their Peruvian wool is not only warm and chunky, it's so soft you'll want to wear this wool all year round. Aurelie Popper and Jade Harwood are the Gang's designers. They create knitwear that is easy to wear, but more importantly easy to knit, considering the team of about 250 knitters in Peru hand stitch each piece hanging in their Soho showroom. "This was a string of yarn before," a co-worker said as Jade held up the chic [Superbowl sweater](#) -- a best seller in white. The designers shed some light on the Gang's beginnings, from their creative 3 year roller coaster ride of managing their [recently closed Thompson Street shop](#), to their latest collaboration with Eileen Fischer (who had the next appointment after I left their showroom). She currently carries a few of the Gang's chunky pieces.

[Although she favors the tunic, Jade holds the Golden Tala Tank in from the Spring/Summer collection. She wears the Hemingway Hat.]

Empowering is their craft as the Gang transcends the knitwear stereotypes for only the cozy winter and fall seasons. Jade says they have a "nice challenge to break the barrier of knitting to be only winter and fall fashions." And their grassy green and golden Spring/Summer collection of knitted tanks and tees are sure to be popping up along the Montauk waterfront.



["We think the Supremes Sweater trio are THE perfect lightweight knits to throw on during warm weather season" - [Source via](#)]

How did you first become involved in Wool and the Gang? How did you meet the founders, Lisa and Carolyn?

Aurelie: I was working at Balmain just after finishing my studies at Central Saint Martin's School in London when I was contacted by Lisa Sabrier, who had heard about me and my specialization in knitwear. We are both from Geneva, Switzerland and through word

of mouth and luck we found each other.

What countries influence WATG style the most?

Aurelie: The designs are made in NYC, so obviously it is a big influence on us, however Jade and I studied together in London, we worked together in Paris and we travel often to Peru for production- so it is a really interesting mix of influences.



[Fun and comfortable sweaters and tunics hang in their Soho Showroom]

What's your favorite part about knitwear design

Aurelie: Beyond knitwear it is the textiles and craftsmanship.

Jade: Our mission is to inspire people. Because knitting really is something people can do.

Why?

Aurelie: We love creating swatches and samples and imagining what elements can translate to become a scarf, a hat or a dress.

Do you knit? When did you learn? How long did it take you to master the technique and what's the hardest part about it?

Aurelie: It was at Central Saint Martin's that I have experimented the most, but it's with the Gang, we took knitting to another level. For the designers the challenge is to design pieces that look great but are easy to knit. Knitting is accessible to everyone, nothing is hard about it, it's just about getting started.



[These chunky knitted scarves are made out of what they call their "Crazy, Sexy, Wool" from Peru where the Gang originated]

Do you offer classes?

Aurelie: Yes of course! But we don't call them classes. We call them knitting parties. It's more fun and relaxed. A cup of tea (or a glass of wine), the therapeutic sound of WATG's big knitting needles and the gentle burble of conversations make for a unique experience. We've organized them in different places and cities for example at the Standard Hotel in NYC or at Brunch Bazaar in Paris. We also have our successful online video tutorials, and we answer questions through our Facebook page and our website. WATG has a thriving online community. People are sharing photos of their projects, helping each other, asking and answering each others questions... it's pretty amazing.

Jade: There are [Free Patterns](#) on our website. The pompom is actually quite easy to make.

Why is Peru the place from where you get all WATG yarn? What makes it so unique?

Aurelie: Because that's where it all started. Lisa, our founder was traveling in Peru where she found this amazing chunky yarn and was fascinated by the people and communities involved in this very local textile industry. Our Peruvian yarn is so unique for its sheer qualities – softness, chunkiness and style.



What are your favorite pieces in the NEW spring/summer collection?

Aurelie: The Cast Away Scarf is my favourite. It's beautiful and a little bohemian – you can wear it with a white t-shirt, your favorite denim, some chic shades and the day is yours! You can customize it in so many different ways or just wear it simple... definitely my favourite for the spring.

Jade: The tunic and Diana Sweater Shirt.

What's your favorite go-to classic WATG piece?

Aurelie: The Zion Lion Hat. It's easy to wear and easy to knit. It comes in more than a dozen colors, it is the perfect accessory to finish almost any outfit. If you knit it you can easily accessorize it by adding stripes or a pompon. It's chic and playful at the same time.

Jade: The Zion Lion Hat is great and you can knit it in an hour

An hour?!

Jade: Well for beginners, maybe an evening. I also love the Snood. It's an all time classic



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[This bench of WATG classics includes from left to right the White Superbowl Sweater, Black Off Pistie Hood, Blue Sugar Ray Mittens, Red Zion Lion, Blue headband, Black Toque & Roll Hat and scarf and a stack of Snoods]

How many people actually do the knitting for all the knitwear WATG sells? Where do they knit?

Aurelie: It's been amazing to work and get to know our knitters in Peru. There are approximately 250 of them today in the Gang. Some of our knitters work in a workshops and some of them are mothers who knit from home. Jade and I go to visit them wherever they are.

Has WATG ever styled any celebrities?

Aurelie: We've seen quite a few celebrities wearing our pieces in magazines, like Marion Cotillard. And top model Erin Heatherton has been a part of the Gang since the beginning, and has been in some of our photo shoots including our FW 2011 collection shot by Pamela Hanson in NYC.



Which celebrity would be WATG's most accurate style muse?

When we think of the WATG muse, we imagine her to be in so many different women. She can be many things, confidently owning each different facet of her personality. Above all, she has a conscience.

She's the curious 17 year old looking to learn something new- funny, carefree and adventurous. She loves her gang of friends. She loves to dance, and embraces imperfections- wearing her first scarf with

pride, celebrating its reminders of times and places.

She's the 25 year old wanting to channel her creative impulses into a beautiful garment. She is daring, playful and not afraid to experiment. She travels, collecting unique and vintage pieces to add to her wardrobe, and is addicted to information- she reads anything and everything. She is fun and rock n' roll, while still maintaining a sense of awareness.

She's the Mum with a young family, sharing her craft with her daughter, bestowing her knowledge and kindness through creating and giving. She knits on the subways.

So, What's next? Fashion Week? A new NYC boutique?

Jade: Maybe we'll do fashion week at some point. A presentation or something. But WATG is really focused on making it more intimate. Our goal is to really get into education. Knitting is all about learning and sharing. The craft of it already has a natural community aspect to it and it would be great to establish that community at a young age in schools.

<http://guestofaguest.com/new-york/interview/crazy-sexy-wool-wool-and-the-gang-talk-knits-to-wear-all-year-round>