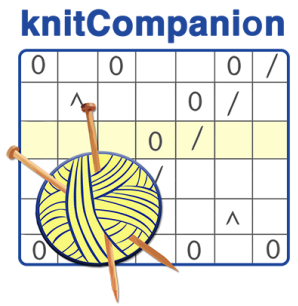




## Inside the Designer's Studio

# Ambah



*One of the very best things I get to do more and more is spend time with knitwear designers. These wonderfully creative artists bring us daily inspiration and joy. I'm always amazed (and intimidated) at the unlimited possibilities in a blank sheet of paper and have huge respect for those who have the vision and skill to fill in the page and create amazing and unique designs.*

*Recently I had a chance to spend some time chatting with Ambah. We are on separate continents and hemispheres so it was a virtual sit-down, but isn't it grand how technology can bring us together! She is delightful and it's my pleasure to share our conversation.*

*Sally*

### **Sally: How did you come to be a knitwear designer?**

Ambah: Somehow, in my wibbly wobbly life's path, after many years of being an artist and a few early years working as a wholefoods cook and baker, dabbling in natural therapies I have unexpectedly found myself here, a knitwear designer. I am a fairly obsessive person and when I take up something I really go for it. As you know, knitting is already seriously addictive, I resisted the call for years, but once I really discovered it I felt like I was coming home. Designing just happened, I had some ideas and tried them out. I found myself with a picture in my mind of the thing I wanted to knit and not quite being able to find it on Ravelry, even among all the gorgeous designs already available, so I began designing. It quickly became a rabbit hole, the more I do the further I fall into it. I have been encouraged by a positive response to my designs and I simply keep getting new inspiration that I feel compelled to manifest. Some designs take a long time to incubate and evolve and others flow readily off the needles.

### **You have wonderful clean lines in your designs and photographs. Do you do your own graphic design work and photography?**

*(pictured: [Lilli Pilli](#))*

Thank you. I take my own photographs - occasionally enlisting some help when I am in them. I do some of the easier graphics, but credit to my lovely layout, logo, website and more! goes to Polly from Butterscotch Press. It's wonderful to find someone to work with who is aligned with my style and who can bring more to the Graphics side than I am able. Plus it frees me up for more design time.





You've done some gradient friendly patterns before. I think of Kalari, [Inara](#) (pictured left), Sea Dragon, and Sea Urchin. I'm so excited you are focusing on gradients in 2016 with the Chroma Collection (pictured below: Allira available Nov 2015). What inspires you about gradients?

As someone who comes from a background of painting, I think my love of gradients is simply about extending the colour palette within a design. I particularly love Ombre gradients, playing with shades of light and dark. I also enjoy introducing a pop of an unexpected colour into the mix too. I like the challenge of how best to incorporate a gradient into a design.

**Beyond gradients, color is obviously an inspiring force in your imagination. Do you find your local environment inspires you in new ways to combine color and design elements?**

Fashion inspires me, observing what people are wearing, admiring unexpected colour combinations. I also think about palettes I have enjoyed working with when painting and use these as a starting point for designs. In addition I am inspired by the yarn, when a dyer creates a colour that is irresistible I am inspired to design with the colour. I am quite obsessed with colours and notice the details everywhere I look; when walking in the bush, admiring artworks - the bold colours of the Graffiti Art in Melbourne excite me, even my own decor choices reflect current colour crushes and inspire my work.



**If you could take a knitting or design class or retreat with anyone (living or dead) in the whole world, who would it be?**

Oh that's hard, I think I'd be pretty happy if I made it to a Squam retreat. If Asa Tricosa were one of the designers there it would be fabulous! I love her aesthetic, her innovations and her sparkling wit, I'm sure it would be a fun and mind blowing class.

**When you aren't knitting and designing (does that ever happen!?) what is your favorite activity or pastime?**

In those rare moments! I love gardening and cooking, particularly to then enjoy the fruits of these with friends and family. My garden is largely Australian native plants and edible fruit and vegetables. I would like to paint a new painting for my house, it's just so hard to tear myself away from the knitting! I also like hunting for things, thrifting, garage sales, etc. I have a few collections and like to decorate my house in retro/industrial pieces.

**Do you like to listen to audio books or watch movies while you knit? If so, do you have any favorites?**

I mostly watch, (or at least listen to during the lacier sections of a knit!) movies and some of the fantastic television series on offer. I listen to some podcasts and enjoy knitting pod/video casts too. I love a good moody series, like The Bridge and the French series The Returned - loved this! I'm a Firefly fan, generally enjoy anything HBO and don't mind a good period costume drama - love the eye candy and design fodder! Pretty diverse tastes really, right now I'm enjoying the Great British Bake off - so good. My son loves to make extravagant cakes, so we've been watching this together.

**If you were stranded on a desert island what is the one size and configuration (DPN, Straight, Circ) of knitting needles you would want with you?**

Easy, I pretty much always reach for 3.75 mm/ US 5 circulars, I'd need a longish cable so I can magic loop and make a big shawl, perhaps 32"/80cm.

Gallery shown clockwise starting upper left: [Shawl of Destiny](#), [Oyster Shawl](#), [Goldwing](#), and [Allira](#) (available Nov 2015)

